

**The State and Development of the
Hospitaller Grand Priory
of Messina
in the
*Seicento***



L-Università
ta' Malta

University of Malta Library – Electronic Thesis & Dissertations (ETD) Repository

The copyright of this thesis/dissertation belongs to the author. The author's rights in respect of this work are as defined by the Copyright Act (Chapter 415) of the Laws of Malta or as modified by any successive legislation.

Users may access this full-text thesis/dissertation and can make use of the information contained in accordance with the Copyright Act provided that the author must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the prior permission of the copyright holder.

**The State and Development of the
Hospitaller Grand Priory
of Messina
in the
*Seicento***

Dissertation
submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Ph.D. Degree in History
in the Faculty of Arts, Department of History
University of Malta

Ray Gatt

December 2020

‘...una nazione senza confini, un regno senza dinastia, un regime statale fondato da un Ordine ospitaliero e militare abbia potuto funzionare per tanti secoli...¹

¹ Giacomo C. Bascapè, *L'Ordine Sovrano di Malta e gli Ordini Equestri della Chiesa: nella Storia e nel Diritto*, (Milano, Ceschina, 1969), 18.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my history teachers. They made it possible for me to discover a fascinating world, parallel to the one I was hitherto used to.

PREFACE

It was effectively a chain of events, one building on the other, that brought about the usurpation of all the Hospitaller assets in Sicily in 1801. The agonizing closure came when King Ferdinand I conferred the priory of Messina to his son Prince Leopold, done with the blessing of Paul I of Russia, de facto Grand Master of the Order at that point.¹ This act ended what was almost seven hundred years of continuous Hospitaller presence in Sicily, a saga enriched by successive historical, social, and political events which the Order negotiated with equanimity and capability, maintaining its relevance throughout the centuries. The original goal of this dissertation was to focus on one of these, a century near the end of its lifetime, and one when the fabric of the Priory, including its immobile assets, social interactions, and political clout, was at its zenith.

It is, however, the wider context which ultimately determines the nature, form, and character of any phenomenon in history. The Grand Priory of Messina is one such phenomenon which had reached the state it assumed in the seventeenth century through a slow, long-term process of development. In a parallel fashion, the city of Messina also evolved through the centuries, acquiring status and privileges which had also peaked in a similar fashion. The Hospitaller Sicilian province did not exist in isolation or sprout suddenly into existence in the seventeenth century. It is precisely the purpose of the present dissertation to try to reconstruct this gradual process of change in order to understand better this integral part of the Hospitaller institution. Like any other phenomenon, the state the Grand Priory of Messina had reached in the seventeenth century was the product of its past centuries. For this reason, it was felt indispensable to trace its gradual, at times tortuous, stages of the whole process of its evolution, to underpin the scope of this monograph.

It is by knowing the past, that one can better understand the present.²

¹ Buono, Pace Gravina, *La Sicilia dei Cavalieri. Le Istituzioni dell'Ordine di Malta in Età Moderna (1530-1826)* (Messina, Fondazione Donna Maria Marullo di Condojanni, 2003), 92. See also H.J.A. Sire, *The Knights of Malta* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1996), 173.

² Quote Carl Sagan (1934-1996), cosmologist and astrophysicist.

Acknowledgements

There has been scholarly research on various aspects of the history of the Hospitaller institution, including its landed assets spread out on the Italian mainland, with some topics focusing more specifically on the Order in Sicily. Of the latter, particular mention should be made of the extensive monograph carried out under the editorship of Pace Gravina and Luca Buono on the different estates and churches that made up the Grand Priory of Messina.¹ It was this wide-ranging study that had initially triggered my interest in a small Sicilian Hospitaller asset in 2012, when I was researching the commandery of St John of Ragusa to fulfil the requirements of my Master's dissertation.²

For the present monograph to come to fruition, it required the selfless help of several tutors and members of my immediate family. Foremost amongst these is Prof Mallia Milanes, who with his untapped quantities of patience, diligence, professionalism, and academic competence, persisted until closure of this project. This finished thesis is a testament to his erudition and perseverance. I would like to salute Prof Helen Nicholson as well who entered the fray at a particular juncture of the dissertation which was lifesaving for me; and Prof Giacomo Pace Gravina for implanting the idea and his general comments. I would also like to thank Dr Emanuel Buttigieg and Mr Charles Dalli for their support.

Much appreciation should be given as well to the staff at the National Library in Valletta, and Dottoressa Serena Falletta at the *Soprintendenza Archivistica della Sicilia, Archivio di Stato di Palermo* for their unstinted help.

¹ *Le Istituzioni dell'Ordine di Malta in Età Moderna (1530-1826)*, L. Buono, G. Pace Gravina (eds), (Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta, Sicilia, 2003).

² Gatt, R., 'The Hospitaller Commandery of San Giovanni Battista of Ragusa in the 17th and the 18th Centuries: Its State and Development', Unpublished M.A. dissertation, (Faculty of Arts, University of Malta, 2014).

I have only gratitude for my immediate family who bore my long absences in my room with equanimity. However, I must mention Estelle Fenech Imbroll who made some sense of the typescript she was given and organized it into its present professional format.

Finally, deeply felt appreciation for my forbearing wife, who have proof-read the dissertation many times over and ironed out many grammatical gaffes; I must hasten to add, however, that any residuum of these, met with in the dissertation (very doubtful), should be laid at my door.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Dedication | i |
| Acknowledgements | iii |
| Table of Contents | v |
| List of Figures | x |
| List of Tables..... | xi |
| Chronology of Sicilian History | xii |
| Currency and Measurements in Early Modern Sicily | xiv |
| Definitions..... | xvi |
| Chapter 1: Introduction and Historiography | 1 |
| 1.1 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.2 Messina ‘ <i>La Nobile</i> ’ | 2 |
| 1.3 The Hospitaller Sicilian City par excellence | 5 |
| 1.4 Narrative and/or Analytical Delivery? | 8 |
| 1.5 Historiography of the Grand Priory of Messina | 9 |
| 1.6 Bibliographies of the Order | 19 |
| 1.7 Primary Sources of the Grand Priory of Messina..... | 21 |
| 1.8 Objectives of the Present Dissertation..... | 24 |
| 1.9 Methodology..... | 26 |
| Chapter 2: The Hospitaller European Commandery | 30 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 30 |
| 2.2 The Concept of a Priory within the Hospitaller Order c.1120-1140. | 31 |
| 2.3 The Nature of the Hospitaller Priors in the West, c.1150 - 1400. | 35 |
| 2.4 The Office of the Hospitaller Receiver, c. 1350..... | 40 |
| 2.5 The Management of Hospitaller Commanderies after 1400 | 42 |
| 2.6 Conclusion..... | 48 |
| Chapter 3: The Hospitaller Sicilian Patrimony | 49 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 3.1 Introduction | 49 |
| 3.2 The Growth and Development of the Grand Priory of Messina, 1060 - 1798. | 49 |
| 3.2.1 First Phase: Foundation to the End of Acre 1291..... | 49 |
| 3.2.2 Second Phase: c.1300 – c.1400s | 60 |
| 3.2.3 Third Phase: c1500 - 1600 | 61 |
| 3.2.4 Fourth Phase: c. 1600 - c1650 | 65 |
| 3.2.5 Fifth Phase: c1660 - 1798 | 68 |
| 3.3 Functional Specialization of Hospitaller Assets | 73 |
| 3.4 Conclusion..... | 75 |
| Chapter 4: Management of the Sicilian Commandery in the Seventeenth Century | 76 |
| 4.1 Introduction | 76 |
| 4.2 The Commandery of Chevissement or <i>di Cabimento</i> | 77 |
| 4.2.1 Eligibility to a Commandery..... | 77 |
| 4.2.2 Conferment of a Commandery | 80 |
| 4.3 The <i>Visita dei Miglioramenti</i> (Visitation to check Improvements)..... | 81 |
| 4.4 The Cabreo | 87 |
| 4.5 The Commandery of Magisterial Grace (<i>Commenda di Grazia Magisteriale</i>) | 95 |
| 4.6 The Commandery of Magisterial Chamber (<i>Commenda di Camera Magisteriale</i>) | 98 |
| 4.7 The Commandery Pensioners..... | 100 |
| 4.8 The Sicilian Commanderies of <i>Jus Patronatus</i> in the <i>Seicento</i> | 104 |
| 4.9 Conclusion..... | 111 |
| Chapter 5 The State of the Priory of Messina in the Seventeenth Century..... | 112 |
| 5.1. Introduction | 112 |
| 5.2 The <i>Ricetta</i> | 113 |
| 5.3 The State of the Priory of Messina 1580-1760..... | 114 |
| 5.4 Some Observations on the Brethren Belonging to the Messina Priory in 1631 ... | 133 |
| 5.5 Conclusion..... | 137 |
| Chapter 6: The Sicilian Hospitaller Priory - the Religious Cult | 140 |
| 6.1 Introduction | 140 |
| 6.2 Obsequium <i>Pauperum et Tuitio Fidei</i> | 141 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 6.3 The Origins of the Hospitaller Cathedral in Messina | 150 |
| 6.4 The New Hospitaller Church of San Giovanni Battista | 152 |
| 6.5 Descriptive Analysis of the Church of San Giovanni Battista in Messina in the 1603 and 1749 visitations..... | 156 |
| 6.6 Silverware of the Hospitaller Church | 162 |
| 6.7 The Religious Hierarchy at San Giovanni Battista in Messina in the Seventeenth/Eighteenth century. | 164 |
| 6.7.1 The Ecclesiastical Vicar..... | 166 |
| 6.7.2 The Choir Chaplains. | 168 |
| 6.7.3 The Church Sacristan..... | 171 |
| 6.7.4 Office of the Dead..... | 172 |
| 6.7.5 Sepulchral Monuments in the Cathedral of San Giovanni Battista | 172 |
| 6.8 Conclusion..... | 174 |
| Chapter 7 The Hospitaller Prioral Mansion in Messina..... | 175 |
| 7.1 Introduction | 175 |
| 7.2 The Hospitaller Priory in Messina..... | 175 |
| 7.3 The Archivist..... | 179 |
| 7.4 Conclusion..... | 181 |
| Chapter 8: The Insurrection of Messina of 1674 and the Hospitaller Grand Priory | 182 |
| 8.1 Introduction | 182 |
| 8.2 The Setting..... | 184 |
| 8.3 The Downfall of a Privileged City | 186 |
| 8.4 The Status of Neutrality Professed by the Order..... | 188 |
| 8.5 The Pre-eminences and Prerogatives of the Order | 191 |
| 8.6 The Grand Priory of Messina at the Time of the Messina Revolt 1674..... | 194 |
| 8.6.1 Disturbances at Trapani. | 194 |
| 8.6.2 Messina 'The Gallant and Virtuous' | 195 |
| 8.6.3 The Grand Priory of Messina in 1674 | 197 |
| 8.6.4 Involvement of the Order's Naval Squadron..... | 200 |
| 8.7 Political Conflicts at the Grand Priory of Messina..... | 205 |
| 8.8 Diplomatic Maneuvers in the Bay of Milazzo. | 207 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 8.9 Ramifications of the Insurrection on the Grand Priory of Messina and Beyond | 215 |
| 8.10 The Aftermath | 220 |
| 8.11 Conclusion | 224 |
| Chapter 9 General Conclusion | 226 |
| Bibliography | 231 |
| Primary Sources | 231 |
| Archivium Ordo Melitensis (AOM) National Library of Malta, Valletta | 231 |
| Archivio della Magione, Archivio di Stato di Palermo, University of Palermo | 237 |
| Secondary Sources | 239 |
| Unpublished Dissertations | 267 |
| Appendix A | 269 |
| An Outline of the Grand Priory of Messina in the Seventeenth Century | 269 |
| 1. The <i>Ricetta</i> of Messina | 270 |
| 2. The Hospitaller Assets in Agrigento | 283 |
| 3. The <i>Ricetta</i> of Augusta | 284 |
| 4. The <i>Ricetta</i> of Caltagirone | 287 |
| 5. The <i>Ricetta</i> of Catania | 293 |
| 6. The <i>Ricetta</i> of Marsala | 297 |
| 7. The <i>Ricetta</i> of Modica-Randazzo | 303 |
| 8. The <i>Ricetta</i> of Palermo | 310 |
| 9. The <i>Ricetta</i> of Piazza | 319 |
| 10. The <i>Ricetta</i> of Scicli | 329 |
| 11. The <i>Ricetta</i> of Siracusa | 330 |
| 12. The <i>Ricetta</i> of Trapani | 334 |
| Appendix B | 337 |
| Lingua d’Italia Tomo 1 | 337 |
| Vol. ‘Lingua d’Italia Tomo 1’ contenente la indicazione dei possessori delle commende delle Lingue d’Italia, coi rispettivi pensionisti dal 1645 al 1747 | 337 |
| Commende de fra Cappucini et fra Servienti | 348 |
| Appendix C | 350 |

Criteria set up by the Order of St John for the Institution of Jus Patronatus
Commanderies in the Eighteenth Century.350

Appendix D354

The Church of the Hospitallers' San Giovanni Battista in Messina, 1604 - 1749.....354

 The Interior of the Old Church.....354

 The Interior of the New Church355

List of Figures

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure 3.1. Map of the Hospitaller Sicilian Commanderies and other Land Assets at the end of the Seventeenth Century. | 55 |
| Figure 4.1: Topographical plan of the Hospitaller manor of Licodia, Sicily, in the Cabreo of the Commandery known as La Torretta of Cannizzaro in the city of Vizzini at the time of fra Gaeta Despuches, 1559, (Archivio della Comenda del Magione 379), ink on paper and thinly water coloured..... | 92 |
| Figure 4.2: Topographical plan of the ‘rustic assets and houses pertaining to the commandery of Ragusa under the title of St John in possession of Signor Commendatore Fra Carlo Maria Olgiati 1746’. This was the Scorsonara. The main asset of the commandery San Giovanni of Ragusa, (AOM 6108. f2r)..... | 93 |
| Figure 4.3 The estate of the Order at the <i>cava delli Chiaramidi</i> just to the north of Ragusa Ibla. The property of the Order is clearly marked in red ink; one of the water mills and the two small <i>lenze</i> of land with their measurements accurately given. (Archivio della Comenda del Magione 379)..... | 94 |
| Figure A1 The <i>Ricetta</i> of Messina. | 270 |
| Figure A2 The <i>Ricetta</i> of Caltagirone..... | 288 |
| Figure A3 The <i>Ricetta</i> of Marsala..... | 297 |
| Figure A4 The <i>Ricetta</i> of Modica Randazzo circa 1650..... | 305 |
| Figure A5 The <i>Ricetta</i> of Piazza. | 320 |
| Figure A6 The fief called the <i>Cugno di San Giovanni</i> in the territory of Vizzini aggregated to the commandery of St John of Ragusa in 1771 (AOM 6109, fol 1r, 24v). | 331 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|-----|
| Table 2.1. The Sicilian commanderies in the second half of the seventeenth century showing their change in status during these fifty years | 46 |
| Table 3.1 The State of the Grand Priory of Messina at the end of the Seventeenth Century (various sources). | 71 |
| Table 5.1. Table of land assets Grand Priory of Messina 1583-1760. Multiple sources. | 115 |
| Table 5.2 The Commanderies of the Grand Priory of Messina from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century..... | 118 |
| Table 5.3 Sources of Table 5.2..... | 119 |
| Table 5.4 Estimates of Income/Responsiones be paid by the Commanderies of the Order of St John in 1583 | 121 |
| Table 5.5 Sicilian commanderies donated through private patronage reserved for knights between 1583 and 1644..... | 127 |
| Table 5.6 A list of the commanderies of the priory of Messina, their annual incomes and responsiones c1660..... | 128 |
| Table 5.7 The Commanderies of the Priory of Messina 1699 | 129 |
| Table 5.8 The Income of the Priory of Messina 1583 – 1699..... | 130 |
| Table 5.9 Commanderies of the Grand Priory of Messina, 1733..... | 131 |
| Table 5.10 List of the Commanderies under the administration of the Priory of Messina in 1760..... | 132 |
| Table 5.11 Knights Hospitaller of the Grand Priory of Messina in 1631 | 135 |
| Table 8.1 Knights who professed in the Grand Priory of Messina between 1600 and 1695..... | 224 |

Chronology of Sicilian History

| | |
|------------------|--|
| May 1061 | Norman incursions (Robert Giscard) into Sicily. Fall of Messina |
| 1068 | The siege of Palermo and the defeat of the Ayyubids at Misilmeri by Roger I. |
| ? 1070 | Documented earliest known Hospitaller properties in Messina |
| 1091 | Sicily under Norman hegemony. Town of Noto was the last Muslim stronghold. |
| 9 August 1099 | Battle of Ascalon, end of the First Crusade |
| 25 December 1130 | Foundation of the Kingdom of Sicily, Roger II of Sicily |
| 1189 | Death of William II (Roger II grandson). End of the Hauteville succession |
| 1189-1194 | Constance of Sicily (married to Henry VI) became the legitimate heir. However, Tancred of Sicily (illegitimate grandson of Roger II) voted in by Sicilian barons. |
| 1189-1194 | Donation of the Hospital Ognissanti (Palermo) by Tancred of Sicily and his vice-chancellor D'Ajello. |
| 1194 | Death of Tancred of Sicily |
| 1194 - | Hohenstaufen Reign. Henry VI (Holy Roman Emperor 1191-1197) crowned King of Sicily in Palermo. Birth of Frederick II (Frederick I of Sicily) |
| 1198 | Frederick II crowned King of Sicily |
| 1224 | Expulsion of last Muslims from Sicily |
| 1266 | End of Hohenstaufen rule with the death of Manfredi at the battle of Benevento. Charles I, Duke of Anjou crowned King of Sicily. |
| 1282 | The start of the war of the Sicilian Vespers. Supported by Peter III of Aragon and crowned King of Sicily. Kingdom of Sicily split into two with Peter II reigning Sicily and Charles I ruling Apulia. |

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1302 | Peace of Caltabellotta |
| 1298-1337 | Frederick III of Sicily (Frederick II of Sicily) |
| 1409 | The Kingdom of Sicily became part of the Crown of Aragon |
| 1434 | First university founded in Catania |
| 1479 | Union of the crowns of Aragon and Castille. Sicily became part of the Spanish dominion ruled by viceroys. |
| 20 August 1535 | Charles V of Spain lands in Trapani and begins the construction of new city walls in the major towns in Sicily |
| 16 January 1556 | The abdication of Charles V. Philip II becomes emperor. |
| 7 October 1571 | John of Austria defeats the Turks at Lepanto. |
| 1590-1650 | The rise of feudal aristocrats in Sicily, involving a redistribution of the population back to the countryside. |
| 4 July 1591 | The baronial representatives in the Sicilian government would only authorize new taxes in lieu of continued respect by the King of various Sicilian privileges. The viceroy wins the vote with ecclesiastical help. |
| 9 November 1630 | A proposal by the Messina jurats to split Sicily in 2 vice-reigns with two capital cities in Palermo and Messina was defeated in parliament. |
| 25 May 1647 | The revolt of Palermo |
| 1656 | Black death |
| 17 January 1664 | Messina unilaterally imposes its ancient monopoly over silk production and trade in eastern Sicily after the Viceroy refuses to confirm it. |
| 1674-1678 | The rebellion of Messina against Spanish hegemony and supported by the French. |
| 1693 | Major earthquake hits eastern Sicily. Subsequent rebuilding constituted the Sicilian baroque. |
| 1734 | Union of the Sicilian Kingdom with the Bourbon-ruled Kingdom of Naples |

Currency and Measurements in Early Modern Sicily¹

The monetary system in seventeenth century Sicily had been unified by the Angevin dynasty in the thirteenth and had remained practically unchanged from that point in time until the reformation of the Bourbons in 1818.

Measure of Currency

The central unit of currency was the *onza*. This was essentially a virtual denomination on account and was never minted. The *onza* was equivalent to 30 *tari*, one *tari* equalled 20 *grani* and a *grano* was equivalent to 6 *piccioli* or *denari*. One Sicilian *scudo* was equivalent to 12 *tari* and 2 and half *scudi* made up an *onza*. Other units of Sicilian currency included the *ducato* (10 *tari*), the *carlino* (10 *grani* or half a *taro*) and the Sicilian *fiorino* which was equivalent to 6 *tari*.

Measure of Length

The *palma* was the basic unit of length which equalled 25.8 cms. The *passetto* was the length of 2 palms. The *mezza-canna* was the equivalent of 4 palms and the *canna* eight palms (2.06 mts). 4 *canne* made up a *catena* and 4 *catene* a *corda*. The top unit of length, the *miglio* was equivalent to 45 *corde*.

¹Giuseppe Piazzì, Domenico Marabitti, Paolo Balsamo, *Codice Metrico-Siculo Diviso in Due Parti* (Catania, Stamperia dell'Università degli Studi, 1812).

Measure of Area

The *quartiglio* was a squared *canne*. The *quarto* was equivalent to 4 squared *canne*, the *carozzo* 16 squared *canne* and the *mondello* 64 squared *canne*. The *tumolo* was equivalent to 256 squared *canne*, the *bisaccia* corresponded to 1024 squared *canne* and the *salma* 4096 squared *canne*.

Measure of Weight

The *rotolo* was the basic unit of weight. This weight was equivalent to thirty *oncie*. 12 *oncie* made up a *libbra*. The *dramma* was one-eighth of an *uncia* and a *scrupolo* made up a third of a *dramma*. A *cantaro* was equivalent to 100 *rotoli* (79.35 Kgs).

The main measure for agricultural products was the *salma*, equivalent to 222-225 kgs. This measure of weight was 20% larger in eastern Sicily than that in the west.

Definitions

The words Convent, Order of Malta, Order of St John, and Religion are used interchangeably in the text, but within the constraints of the time period under discussion, they are meant to signify the same institution and/or establishment. Each title, however, does have its own particular significance, at different specific stages of development of the institution but it is not the remit of this monograph to define and expand on these. In addition, the word Hospitaller/s in the text encompasses all the ranks of the institution, including Knights of Justice, Knights of Grace, Sergeants-at-arms, and Sergeants-at-Office, together with the Conventual chaplains.

The meaning of some terms in this monograph sometimes has a contextual latitude. The words priory and grand priory can indicate the Hospitaller seat in Messina, encompassing the prioral palace and the adjoining cathedral only. However, in specific contexts, it can also include the assets of the Hospitaller *ricetta* in Messina, and finally the whole enterprise of the Order in Sicily. In a similar manner, the word Messina can mean the peloritan city, the province, or the Hospitaller assets in Sicily.

The names of the Sicilian commanderies and other Hospitaller assets, as well as regional toponyms were left in the mother language, as much as was reasonably possible.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Historiography

1.1 Introduction

The present thesis sets out to examine the state and development of the Hospitaller priory of Messina during the seventeenth century, a period of growth and activity for this small but very influential priory within the Order of St John. It will also look at the deep bonds between the town of Messina and the Hospitaller Order. This chapter will then trace the current historiography of the grand priory of Messina, identifying lacunae leading to the objectives of the present dissertation.

In the end, despite the fact that the seventeenth century might have been a defining one for Spain and its vice-royalties, the Hospitaller Priory of Messina emerged reasonably unscathed; this is revealed by the increase in tangible assets acquired by the priory, together with a concomitant increase in the entry or professed brethren into the Order during this period, notwithstanding the political misadventure of the 1674 revolt, where an unruly Hospitaller Priory chose unwisely the losing side of the confirmation.

1.2 Messina '*La Nobile*'¹

By the middle of the eleventh century, the population of Sicily was made up of an eclectic society of Christians (Greek and Latin rites), Arab Muslims and Moriscos, all existing together in a thriving symbiosis.² However, rebellion by the Zirids of Ifriqiya³ created an opportunity for the Norman Robert Guiscard of the Hauteville clan,⁴ together with his younger brother Roger, to besiege the city of Messina in May 1061, and take control of the strategically essential straits between Sicily and the mainland. Within a matter of a hundred years, the Normans overran the last remnants of the Byzantine Empire that had occupied the southern part of the Italian peninsula and the Emirate of Sicily (831-1091), including the principalities of Capua, Benevento, Salerno, and the Duchy of Amalfi. The *Mezzogiorno* had become a Norman Kingdom by 1150.⁵

Sicily was ideally placed in the middle of the Mediterranean, acting as a transshipment terminal for the relocation of merchandise to the east and west. There was an Amalfitan diaspora throughout southern Italy, resulting in increased commercial activity in the port city of Messina and an abundance of warehouses to store stock temporarily, which would be shipped later on to other parts of the Mediterranean.⁶ Messina lay to the east of the Peloritan range of mountains and was situated in one of the three regions or *valli* of the island,⁷ the eastern *Val Demone*.⁸ This region catered for the highest density of the population despite its harsh environment. Like most major

¹ M.E. Grant Duff, '*Sicily*' in *Oxford Essays Contributed by Members of the University*, London, John W Parker and Son, 1857, ii 67.

² Stephan R Epstein (1992), 240.

³ Amar S. Baadj, *Saladin, the Almohads and the Banū Ghānija: The Contest for North Africa (12th and 13th Centuries)*, (Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2015), 33.

⁴ Italian textbooks translate the family name to Altavilla.

⁵ David Charles Douglas, *The Norman Fate, 1100-1154* (Eyre Methuen, Madison, 1976).

⁶ Patricia Skinner, *Medieval Amalfi and its Diaspora, 800-1250*, (Oxford University Press, 2013), 59 et seq.

⁷ From Arab dominion in the eleventh century to Bourbon rule until 1812, Sicily was divided into three major historic subdivisions, or *Valli*, Val Demone to the northeast, Val di Noto to the southeast and Val di Mazzara to the west. See Michele Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia* (Firenze, Successori le Monnier, 1868), vol 1, 346-48.

⁸ Tommaso Fazello, *Delle Storia di Sicilia, Deche Due* (Giuseppe Assenzio, Palermo, 1817), 296. Gives a description of *Val Demone*.

medieval cities, its own port led to consequent advantages over other cities, as it could be supplied from inland as well as from across sea routes;⁹ it had long been offering safe anchorage to mariners.

The close attachment between the town of Messina and the Hospitaller Order of St John dates back to the early beginning of the second millennium, and indeed to the early years of the Hospitaller Institution. Even before this, the current conjecture is that there existed a similar and close connection between the town and a nucleus of Amalfitan merchants residing there, as the latter set about establishing an *hospitio*¹⁰ for sick and poor itinerants as they travelled eastwards on their pilgrimage to the Holy Places; it would be brother Gerard of this *hospitio* who would then bring together a like-minded group of charitable people to become what would essentially be the nidus of the Order.¹¹

The town of Messina had a *corpus* of privileges and concessions that dated back to ancient times. During the Roman period, the province had been a confederacy of regions that were emancipated and unshackled, and this privileged position continued to be renewed with each successive sovereign ruler.

The city enjoyed other autonomous rights granted by the Aragonese (1282-1492) and later reinforced by the Habsburg Kings.¹² This allowed Messina to suspend any vice-regal order that the Senate felt went against the spirit of its closely guarded

⁹ Salvatore Bottari, *Post Res Perditas: Messina 1678-1713* (Messina, 2005), 121-124.

¹⁰ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant, c.1070-1309* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 17. Riley-Smith sets up an interesting discussion of what the original 'hospital' actually was; a *xenodochium*, a *hospitale* or a *hospicium*. See also Miri Shefer, 'Charity and Hospitality: Hospitals in the Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern Period', in *Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Contexts*, eds. Michael Bonner, Mine Ener, Amy Singer (New York, SUNY Press, 2003), 121 et seq. Hospitality, in the context of the first buildings used by the Hospitallers for this service which was called *Hospitio*, is the correct word. However, what the Order was doing in Jerusalem was charity, the spiritual act of helping unselfishly the dispossessed, the sick and the hungry. Luigi Michele de Palma further develops the theme of the Spirituality of the Hospitaller knight and Hospitality versus Charity. See Luigi Michele de Palma (2013), '*Si trattava di una fraternitas di laici hospitalarii, dediti cioè all'esercizio della carità sotto la forma dell'ospitaliá*'. See also Luigi Michele de Palma (2007) and (2017). This expands on the same theme of *Tuitio Fidei* and how fra Sabba Castiglione lived his personal life on these strict tenets.

¹¹ Riley Smith, 16 et seq on the foundation of the Amalfitan hospital in Jerusalem. The author describes Brother Gerard and his *fratres conversi* as a proto-order. See also B. Z. Kedar, 'A Note on Jerusalem's Bīmāristān and Jerusalem's Hospital', in *The Hospitallers, the Mediterranean and Europe: Festschrift for Anthony Luttrell*, ed. Karl Borhardt, Nikolas Jaspert and Helen Nicholson, (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2013), 7-13.

¹² Francesco Benigno, *Favoriti e Ribelli: Stili della Politica Barocca* (Roma, Bulzoni, 2011), 237.

privileges.¹³ Another onerous privilege was the granting of the monopoly of silk exportation from Sicily in 1591.¹⁴

The Spanish Viceroy was also obliged, during his mandate, to share his residence between Palermo and Messina, putting the latter on a quasi-equal status to the former, as the capital city.¹⁵ As a privilege of residency in the province, any inhabitant who transgressed the rule of law had the right to be tried before a Messinese court. Such was the perceived consequence of Messina that emissaries sent out from the city's *Universitas* were accorded the titles and privileges of an ambassador.¹⁶ The prestige of Messina was further augmented by the Jesuit College in the city (1604) which competed directly with the *Studium* in Catania, the creation of the Academia delle Stelle (1595) which was a military academy for the nobility classes, and the religious role adopted by Messina with St Placido (1588).

During the seventeenth century, Messina had a municipal government consisting of six jurists; four were selected from the noble strata of society, whereas the other two were chosen from among the populace. The governor of the city, the *stratigoto*, was directly nominated by the Spanish crown and presided over the *curia stratigoziale*, the central government, which in turn was responsible for the criminal courts.¹⁷ The bishop of Messina was the third power resident in the city: he was the designate of the papal curia in Rome. Other official posts were given to the nobility and the so-called *togati*.¹⁸ Formally a subjugated city, Messina appeared in the early seventeenth century as a Republican oligarchy, led by an authoritarian senate who administered a city growing in population and riches, brought about by the extraordinary development of the silk trade.

¹³ M.T. Napoli *Ministero, Feudalità, Potere Sovrano in Sicilia; le Corte Stratigoziale di Messina* (Rome, La Sapienza, 1981).

¹⁴ Francesco Benigno, 'La Questione della Capitale: Lotta Politica e Rappresentanza degli Interessi nella Sicilia del Seicento', *Società e Storia*, xiii, 47 (1990), 44.

¹⁵ Benigno, *Favoriti e Ribelli*, 239.

¹⁶ Émile Laloy, *La Révolte de Messine l'Expédition de Sicile et la Politique Française en Italie (1674-1678)* (Librairie G. Klingksieck, Paris, 1929), vol 1, 58. There is the famous episode of Philip IV who orders the Marquess D' Aytona, breaching etiquette formality, to give the young Charles II still in arms, to the envoys from Messina, declaring that the ambassadors of Messina had the trust of the King. See also Benigno (2011), 242. Juan Everardo Nithard, an Austrian Jesuit and confessor to Mariana of Austria, annulled the title and services of ambassadors in 1665 to those emissaries who were sent from Messina. This was a privilege that was always respected by King Philip IV.

¹⁷ Traselli (1975), 210.

¹⁸ Benigno (2011), 219.

The economy of Messina depended very much on its geographical position. Although the city was situated in non-wheat territory and imported grain from Lentini, Catania and Licata, it re-exported wheat to Calabria and Malta. This commercial activity somewhat slowed down by the middle of the seventeenth century, partly because of the Turkish advance in Europe, and partly because of the increased importation of grain from Turkey, the former Byzantine Empire, the Latin kingdoms in the Aegean (at that point, part of the Ottoman Empire), and the Low Countries.¹⁹

1.3 The Hospitaller Sicilian City par excellence

As already indicated, it was, most probably, merchants from the Duchy of Amalfi, transplanting part of their commercial activities to Messina, who first laid down a *Hospitio* in the city.²⁰ They had already set up a similar hostel in the city of Jerusalem in the peri-crusade period of 1099, with the aim of temporarily sheltering pilgrimage devotees.

From its first mention in the papal document of Paschal II's *Pie Postulatio* (1113),²¹ Messina soon became synonymous with the Hospitaller Order, and eventually

¹⁹ C Traselli, 'Messina 1674', in *La Rivolta di Messina (1674-1678) e il Mondo Mediterraneo nella Seconda Metá del Seicento*, Saverio di Bella (ed.) (Cosena, Luigi Pellegrini Editore, 1975), 174

²⁰ See A. Luttrell, 'The Hospital's Privilege of 1113', in *The Military Orders Vol VI (Part I): Culture and Conflict in the Mediterranean World*, Jochen Schenk and Mike Carr (eds), (Taylor and Francis, London 2016), 3-9. Luttrell proposes that the Order could have had a church in Messina by 1101, possibly a hospice by 1113, but definitely possessed a *domus* and a hospice by 1135. See also Anthony Luttrell, 'From Jerusalem to Malta: The Hospital's Character and Evolution', *Peregrinationes: Acta et Documenta* 1(2000), 13-22. Luttrell sows doubt as to whether the six properties mentioned in the bull belonged to the Hospitallers at that point in time. 'The pope also confirmed the Hospitallers in possession of their properties both in Asia and the West; these were said to include a xenodochium or hospice at Saint Gilles in Provence and six others in Italy, but it seems likely that all or most of them did not exist or, if they did, that they were not in Hospitaller hands in 1113. The Hospital may have been attempting to secure various hospices which had been founded for, and sometimes dedicated to, the Holy Sepulchre; alternatively, certain xenodochia planned in 1113 had not yet been founded'.

²¹ See M Camilleri, 'The Pie Postulatio Voluntatis Papal Bull of 1113: A Diplomatical and Palaeographical Commentary', in *Melitensium Amor. Festschrift in Honour of Dun Gwann Azzopardi*, T. Cortis, Th.

was to become known as *la città gerosolimitana per eccellenza*.²² The statistics of numbers would tend to confirm this claim, particularly during the Malta Phase of the Order's existence. Between 1500 and 1700, Messina had the greatest number of knights coming from the province who had professed in the Order. Between 1550 and 1799, almost 300 Messinese knights had joined the ranks of the Hospitallers, which was more than a third (36%) of all Sicilian knights admitted at that time.²³ During the same period, Palermo promoted 160 knights (20%). The figures are even more interesting as Palermo was nominally the capital city of Sicily and Messina was a provincial town. In 1635 the Langue of Italy saw the greatest numbers joining its ranks when compared with the other Langues, with Messina boasting the highest input.²⁴

For the Order, Messina left deep imprints. Created a grand priory in the very early years, it was one of two (the other was the priory of St Gilles in the Languedoc region in France) that attempted to take part in the administration of Hospitaller estates in most of eastern and parts of Western Europe.²⁵ Messina became the priory which was geographically closest to the Convent when the Order was pushed westwards after the loss of Rhodes in 1522.²⁶ Because of this proximity, it served as the hub through which

Freller, L. Bugeja (eds.) (Gutenberg Press, Malta 2002), 17-36. And Luigi Michele de Palma, 'La Pie Postulatio Voluntatis di Pasquale II in Favore dell'Ospedale di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme (1113)', *Lateranum*, lxxix, 2, 2013, 469-484. See also G. de' Giovanni Centelles, 'Il fondatore degli Ospedalieri "Ego Geraldus, servus Hospitalis Sanctae Jerusalem"', *Annali della Pontificia Accademia di Belle Arti e Lettere dei Virtuosi al Pantheon* iii, (2003) 59-90.

²² Fabritio D'Avenia, 'Nobiltà 'Sotto Processo' Patriziato di Messina e Ordine di Malta nella Prima Èta Moderna', *Mediterranea Ricerche Storiche*, ii, (2004), 40.

²³ See Andrea Minutolo, *Memorie del Gran Priorato di Messina*, (Messina, Vincenzo d'Amico 1699)43-347. Also *Ruolo delli Cavalieri, Cappellani Conventuali e Serventi d'armi Ricevuti nella Veneranda Lingua d'Italia della Sagra Religione Gerosolimitana, e distinti nelli Rispettivi Priorati*, (Malta, fra Giovanni Mallia, 1789); Giuseppe Galluppi, *Nobiliario della Città di Messina*, (Milano, Tipografia Ditta Wilmant, 1874), 263-271; C. Marullo di Condojanni, *La Sicilia e il Sovrano Ordine Militare di Malta*, (Messina, Grafiche LaSicilia, 1953), 211-229.

²⁴ Angelantonio Spagnoletti, *Stato, Aristocrazia e Ordine di Malta nell'Italia Moderna*, (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1988), 75 -100. See also D'Avenia (2004), 42 et seq. Between 1550 and 1789, Messina had 168 enrolled knights, with Palermo second with 96 brethren. (Spagnoletti, 75). This increase was in the first half of this time, however. Between 1750-1799 Palermo had surpassed Messina in the new professed entrants to the Order. This is also reflected in the dues sent to the convent by the two provinces. See also Fabritio D'Avenia, 'Le Commende Gerosolimitane in Sicilia: Patrimoni Ecclesiastici, Gestione Aristocratica', in *La Sicilia dei Cavalieri. Le Istituzioni dell'Ordine di Malta in Età Moderna (1530-1826)* (Messina, Fondazione Donna Maria Marullo di Condojanni, 2003), 74. The annual balance of the priory of Messina between the years 1771 and 1784 was 263 *onze*, compared to that of Palermo during the same years of 10877 *onze*. However, this discrepancy was not only related to income.

²⁵ Thomas Freller, *The German Langue of the Order of Malta* (Malta, Midsea Books, 2010), 74.

²⁶ With hindsight, the donation of the archipelago by the Holy Roman Emperor to the Hospitallers was an extremely shrewd move on the part of the former; a Hospitaller naval squadron harboured in Malta

the funds of the Order including the annual responiones and commerce reached their final destination in Malta.²⁷ It was also one of the temporary refuges which the Order sought during its nomadic existence between the years 1523-1530.

In its turn, the presence of the Hospitallers in Messina gave status and consequence to the city. The presence of a supranational tightly-knit religious and military group of experienced soldiers, administrators, and land-owners, part of a larger force that helped in the security of the region against the forces of Islam, arguably served as reassurance to the different sovereigns of the island. The Order had a multi-faceted purpose in the town; a depository for the young scions of nobility, an employer for the semi-skilled and unskilled sectors of society, and a source of revenue for most of the commerce between the town and the convent in Malta for the best part of three hundred years. It enhanced and augmented the religious cult within the island of Sicily by the construction and embellishment of tens of churches and chapels and offered solace and spiritual direction to its inhabitants.

Notwithstanding the above, the grand priory of Messina was certainly neither the richest nor a star asset of the Order. The French priories were probably in this league, and the level of responiones sent onwards towards the common treasury from the province was modest.²⁸

continued to pester relentlessly the Ottoman might and by default served as a substantial bulwark to the outer boundaries of the Empire. From Ottoman archives, this constant harassment by the Order's naval squadron on Ottoman shipping in the Mediterranean, disrupting commerce and religious commitments was given as one of the main reasons for the planned assault on the Malta fortress in 1565. See Arnold Cassola, *Süleyman the Magnificent and Malta 1565-Decisions, Concerns, Consequences* (Editore Morrone, 2017).

²⁷ Ivan Grech, 'Capital, Conflict, and Mediterranean Frontiers: The Mobilization of Funds from the Order of St John's European Estates in Early Modernity', *Journal of Maltese History*, v, 2 (2018), 13.

²⁸ H Bresc, 'I Cavalieri in Sicilia tra Potere e Società', *La Presenza dei Cavalieri di San Giovanni in Sicilia* (Palermo, Palazzo Chiamonte, 2001), 28. 'Nella storia dell'Ordine, rispetto alla Provenza e alla Linguadoca, o anche ad altre 'Lingue', la Sicilia non conta molto. Il Priorato di Messina... non rappresenta le capacità di reclutamento e di mobilitazione dei priorati francesi'.

1.4 Narrative and/or Analytical Delivery?

There are two main paths for the discernment of history. One is the traditional story-telling way and includes the narration and description of timelines and events. The other approach, possibly building on the narrative and the descriptive, is an analytical assesment of these events. Although the general title of this thesis 'State and Development' lends itself to a narrative mode, as unpublished archives are exhumed and presented, an analytical approach was also used, in an attempt to present scientific sound statistics and opinions.

In the narrative mode, the story is culled from multiple sources, including archival information in its original form, or copies of this with the associated transcriptive problems, memoranda (*memoriali*), correspondences and even physical assets that together will weave an account.²⁹ This was the essence of the prose of the old historiographers of the Order, extolling the Order's multiple virtues and merits, as will be shown later. There are advantages to the use of primary sources of events by the scholar, but it must also be realised that primary sources can be far from objective. Very commonly there would be gaps and missing pieces, not unlike a jigsaw picture, but eventually a story would still emerge for the telling. Although it is a historical truism that the storytelling is normally the prerogative of the victor, with its built-in bias, the same can however apply to history writing by the vanquished, which would also understandably have a similar bias. This can be seen, for example, in the European and Muslim accounts of the Third Crusade, and the Byzantine and crusader accounts of the Fourth Crusade. This antiquarian approach, however, lacks the depth of analysis and critical perspective required by modern scholarship.

²⁹ W.H. Dray 'Narrative Versus Analysis in History', in Margolis J., Krausz M., Burian R.M. (eds) *Rationality, Relativism and the Human Sciences*. (Studies of the Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium, vol 1. Springer, Dordrecht (1986), 23 et seq.

The other approach is the analytical one, an innovative method to read history, in the style of Ranke, who made a serious attempt to place history as a 'science'.³⁰ However, even here there is also a built-in bias, as the analytical construction is often tinted by the context of time, place, political leanings and other precepts of the writer.³¹ The narrative of the Messina Insurrection of 1674 in the present monograph is an analytical attempt of the events as seen through the lens of the over-arching Hospitaller convent; most scholarly accounts of the event make the reader none the wiser about the motives and intents that prompted the besieged in the Hospitaller priory to act the way they did.

1.5 Historiography of the Grand Priory of Messina³²

The Hospitaller Order in the sixteenth century was well served with its officially sanctioned historiographers. The main one was arguably Giacomo Bosio (1544-1627), who was elected *historiographus* by the highest echelons of the Order in 1589,³³ initially sponsored by a pension for a three-year term and given the remit to consolidate the history of the Order of St John, from its beginnings and bring it to date. The end-result

³⁰ Leopold von Ranke, 'The Ideal of Universal History', in *Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present*, Fritz Stern (ed.), Macmillan International Higher Education, London, 2015, 54 et seq.

³¹ See Paul George Pisani, Adaptations in Hospitaller Historiography, *Symposia Melitensia* Vol 8 (2012), 49-62. This article emphasizes the factors that influence the historian in his writing, including the character of the writer himself, the society he lived in at the time and other external pressures, such as the output of other historians. The author divides the historiographers of the Order in three phases, pre-Rhodian, Rhodian and Malta phases. See also Robert Thake, *A Publishing History of a Prohibited Best-Seller: The Abbé de Vertot and his Histoire de Malte* (New Castle, Delaware, Oak Knoll Press, 2016). This book highlights some aspects of Hospitaller historiography as it relates the saga of one of the more notorious historians of the Order and his writing of, arguably, the most famous of the narratives of the Order.

³² See Kristjan Toomaspoeg, *Templari e Ospitalieri nella Sicilia Medievale*, (Centro Studi Melitensi, Bari, 2003). This gives an excellent *tour de force* of the historiography of the Order's settlements in Sicily.

³³ Anthony Luttrell, 'The Hospitallers Historical Activities, 1530-1630', in *Annales de l'Ordre Souverain de Malte*, 26 (1968), 57-69

of this was to be the quintessential history of the Hospitallers, ³⁴ *Dell'Istoria della Sacra Religione et Illustrissima Militia di San Giovanni Gierosolimitano*.

Although Bosio was careful to present a unified chronicle from the surfeit of archival material, *Dell'Istoria* had intrinsic defects. It had to be given the Order's *imprimatur* as well, providing an element of bias, as he had to respect the Order's policies and directions. *Dell'Istoria* is essentially a narrative exposition of the Order's achievements, presenting the latter in all its glory and in the best light possible. However, Bosio did try to correct perceived errors by previous historians, particularly Foxa and Geoffroi, but these were done always within the narrow remits of the glorification of the Order.³⁵

Bosio's *modus operandi* was the mining of information from the primary sources available to him. In his study of the Hospitallers' historical activities, Luttrell states that Bosio should have been more careful with the extraction of important information (the citation of Zurita's history of Aragon, on a relatively unimportant episode of 1336, but ignored other more significant details in the same work), more reliable (the obscure expedition of Hospitallers which reached Greece under the command of the Master Fr. Juan Fernandez de Heredia in 1378), and evinced less faulty replication, reproducing documents *ad litteram* but transcribed incorrectly.³⁶ Another problem with Bosio is the tongue-in-cheek narrative of fantastical events that stretched the imagination of his readers to some extent: the detailed account of the Rhodian dragon is a case in point.³⁷ Luttrell described him as a *compiler*.³⁸

The grand priory of Messina does not score a lot of mentions in this official history of the Order. Giacomo Bosio ignored most of the events that involved

³⁴ See Anthony Luttrell, The Hospitallers' Historical Activities: 1291-1630, in *Annales de l'Ordre Souverain Militaire de Malte*, xxiv-xxvi (1966-68).

³⁵ Anthony Luttrell, 'The Hospitallers Historical Activities: 1530-1630', in the *Annales de l'Ordre Souverain Militaire de Malte*, 1968, 26.

³⁶ Luttrell, 'Hospitallers Historical Activities 1400-1530', in *Latin Greece, the Hospitallers and the Crusades*, (Variorum, London 1982), 145-150.

³⁷ Bosio, *Dell'Istoria*, (1630), 71. 'Eravi nell'Isola di rodi, un grande, e spaventevole Dragone; il quale habitando in una Caverna, dalla quale uscì a una Fontana; non lontana dalla Città più du due miglia...'

³⁸ *Ibid*, 9. See P. Falcone, Il valore documentario della storia dell'Ordine Gerosolimitano di Giacomo Bosio, (*Archivio Storico di Malta*), x (1938).

Hospitaller activities in Sicily.³⁹ Volume 1 of Bosio's *Dell'Istoria* (1594)⁴⁰ showed that Messina was mentioned 30 times whereas the Priory of Messina is only mentioned twice. In volume 2 (1629)⁴¹ Messina is mentioned 25 times and the Priory of Messina 18 times, which indicates a better score. However, in Volume 3,⁴² Messina is mentioned 9 times and the Priory of Messina only twice again.

The reasons why Bosio disregarded the priory of Messina are not clear. One explanation could be that Messina, up on the northern tip of Sicily was not on the forefront of Muslim encounters, and although Muslim *razzias* happened all over Sicily, these were more common in the southern coastal regions.

Fra Bartholomeo dal Pozzo (1637-1722) penned the second chronicle of the Order's history, entitled *Historia della Sacra Religione Militare di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano detta di Malta*.⁴³ Dal Pozzo continued the history of the Order from where Bosio had left off, tracing it to 1688. Despite the fact that the Chancellery of the Order had solicited dal Pozzo to continue the history of the Hospital as the official historiographer after Bosio, his work was not initially acknowledged,⁴⁴ although events fast-tracked its printing, a fact that the Order grudgingly accepted after the event.⁴⁵ The involvement of the Messina priory in the revolt in 1674 was given some length by the author, suggesting that the rebellion was a significant event for the Order.⁴⁶

A third chronicle, the *Histoire des Chevaliers de Malte*, was the work of the Abbé René d'Aubert de Vertot d'Aubœuf (1655-1735) and a first edition was printed in

³⁹ Toomaspoeg 33.

⁴⁰ Giacomo Bosio, *Dell'Istoria della Sacra Religione et Illustrissima Militia di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano, Prima Parte* (Roma, 1594).

⁴¹ Giacomo Bosio, *Dell'Istoria della Sacra Religione et Illustrissima Militia di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano, Seconda Parte* (Guglielmo Facciotto, 1629).

⁴² Giacomo Bosio, *Dell'Istoria della Sacra Religione et Illustrissima Militia di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano, Terza Parte* (Antonio Parrino, 1684).

⁴³ Dal Pozzo printed his first volume in Verona in the printing press of Giovanni Berno in 1703. This took the history of the Order from when Bosio had left off, in 1571, to 1636. The second volume was printed in Venice in 1715 by Giovanni Albrizzi and this volume was dedicated to Bartolomeo Ferdinando Piloni, general procurator of the priory of Venice.

⁴⁴ William Zammit, 'Vertot's *Histoire des Chevaliers de Malte* Its Prohibition in the Context of Hospitaller Historiographical Practices', in *VII Encontro Internacional sobre Ordens Militares. 'Entre Deus e o Rei. O Mundo dos ordens Militares*, I.C. Ferreira (ed), (Palmela, 2016), 109-37.

⁴⁵ *Ibid* 117.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 1715, 420 et seq.

1726.⁴⁷ This work passed neither the scrutiny of the Order's chancellery nor the censorship of the Roman Curia.⁴⁸ However, it became very popular with its readership audience, perhaps because the style of writing was different from the ponderous style of his predecessors. Vertot borrowed heavily from the works of Bosio, but as Luttrell admits, Vertot not only perpetuated Bosio's errors and inaccuracies, but also planted new ones of his own, so that this historical work was neither popular with the highest echelons of the Order at the time, nor with current scholarship research.⁴⁹ In 1754, fra Francois-Zacharie Pourroy de Quissonas de Lauberiviere published a pamphlet to denounce the wholesale inaccuracies (deviations) and inventions present in parts of this unofficial history of the Order.⁵⁰

Two Sicilian historiographers focused on particular institutions of the Order in Sicily in the seventeenth century. These were the secular priests Antonino Amico (1586-1641) and Rocco Pirri (1577-1651). Toomaspoeg describes both as the founders of Hospitaller historiography in Sicily.⁵¹ Amico was appointed *storiografo regio* by King Philip IV of Spain sometime around 1625, while the same appointment was given to Pirri by the same king in 1643.

Despite Spanish prejudice which affected both, Amico's close association with the Hospitaller grand priory of Messina was probably stronger than that of Pirri's. The literary output of Amico regarding the priory was plentiful and served the Order well, especially as he succeeded in unearthing long-forgotten deeds of donation to the Order which he transcribed. Between 1625 and 1629 he researched archives in Messina, Palermo, Naples, and Simancas to publish the history of the Hospitallers and Templars in Sicily, entitled *Diplomata, litterae etc. Ad sacram domum militum S. Joannis Hyerosolymitani et militum Templariorum pertinentia*. This was followed by another work, published in 1640, of particular relevance to the Hospitaller Priory in Sicily, the *De Messanensis Prioratus Sacrae Hospitalis Domus Militum S. Johannes*

⁴⁷ See Robert Thake (2016), and William Zammit (2016), 109-37.

⁴⁸ Zammit, 118.

⁴⁹ Luttrell, (1968), 26. Comments on the distortions given by Vertot on the 1378 papal enclave.

⁵⁰ See 'Prospectus d'une nouvelle histoire de l'Ordre de Malte degagee de laprolixite de Bosio des ecarts de Vertot et continuee depuis l'annee 1567 d'apres le dernier siege ou ils l'avaient abandonnee jusqu' CI la presente', *Archivio Storico di Malta*, ix (1938), 474.

⁵¹ Toomaspoeg (2003), 37.

Hyerosolimitani Origine.⁵² It was unfortunate, however, that Amico never revealed his archival sources of these books.⁵³

Rocco Pirri is better known for his *magnum opus*, *Sicilia Sacra, Disquisitionibus et Notitiis Illustrate*. A section in the book listed the commanderies under the Messina priory with the dates of foundation, their provenance, and the annual income they yielded.⁵⁴ This is followed by a list of grand priors, which however is both incomplete and inaccurate.

Most biographers of Amico indicate that he had an inflexible and dogmatic character, suggesting an unbiased author who could not bring himself to ignore the veracity of facts. In 1618, he was sent to the Court in Madrid by the Senate of Messina to research the provenance of Castanea,⁵⁵ as both the Senate and the Order were claiming the rich estate as their own. It transpired eventually that the endowment belonged to the the Hospital, and although commissioned by the Senate, this did not prejudice him against the former.⁵⁶

In 1699, another bibliophile of the Order, albeit not of the same scholarly calibre as Amico and Pirri, published a work on the grand priory of Messina.⁵⁷ Fra Andrea Minutolo⁵⁸ was lieutenant to the prior of Messina, fra Giovanni di Giovanni, to whom he dedicated his tome, *Memorie del Gran Priorato di Messina*.⁵⁹ A list of priors of Messina is given in the second section of the book. This list, however, is not exhaustive and, in

⁵² Antonino Amico *De Messanensis Prioratus Sacrae Hospitalis Domus Militum S. Johannes Hyerosolimitani Origine* (Palermo: Petrus Coppola, 1640).

⁵³ Toomaspoeg (2003), 29

⁵⁴ Rocco Pirri, *Sicilia Sacra Disquisitionibus, et Notitiis Illustrata*, (Apud haeredes Petri Coppulae, 1733). The section on the priory of Messina is in the second volume of the work, 929-947, and is entitled *S. Johannes Baptistae Domus Hospitalis Hierosolymitanæ Prioratus Messanae*.

⁵⁵ The *casale* of Castanea was situated on the hills of Sarrizzo and was a suburb of Messina. It had breathtaking views of the strait of Messina. It had been in the possession of the Hospitallers since the fourteenth century.

⁵⁶ Toomaspoeg (2003), 28.

⁵⁷ *ibid*, 37.

⁵⁸ Fra Andrea Minutolo, of the Barons of the Casale of Callari and the fiefs of Boccarrato was received in the Order in 1691. He distinguished himself in the siege of Candia in 1692. He was to reach the higher ranks of the institution, becoming bailiff, grand cross and receiver, and Lieutenant of the grand priory of Messina in the 1730s. He was also a scholar and author and was also a co-founder of the Regia Academia named Pericolanti in 1729. See Gallo (1756), vol1, 86.

⁵⁹ The *Memorie del Gran Priorato di Messina* was printed in Messina by the printing rooms of Vincenzo d'Amico in 1699.

some parts, obviously incomplete.⁶⁰ The *Memorie* provides an important source of information on the structure of the grand priory of Messina at the end of the seventeenth century, including a list of the commanderies under its jurisdiction. It also includes the quinquennial visitations for the verifications of improvements of the various commanderies. Finally, the monograph gives a lengthy roll of the brethren who were members of the priory from 1136 to 1695, and the genealogical trees of the then resident Hospitallers in Messina.

Minutolo's sources were limited to Messina's prioral archives. Although of extreme importance, this work had major deficiencies, including a lack of acknowledgement of previous historiographers like Amico; and lack of conviction in his historical analysis, which remains porous and not construed on historical facts. However, it served the Order's historiographical niche for the priory of Messina well for some time, as it was more than two hundred years later that fra Michele Gattini, in 1928, published *I Priorati, i Baliaggi e le Commende del Sovrano Militare Ordine di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme nelle Province Meridionali d'Italia prima della Caduta di Malta*.⁶¹ Although certainly not comprehensive, this two 200-page book deals with the Order's priories in the south of Italy, including Sicily. Although mostly based on the modern era, it does provide insight into the assets of Messina in the fifteenth century.

Another major historiographical work which refers to the priory of Messina is Joseph Delaville Le Roulx's *The Cartulaire Général de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem (1100-1310)*. It is a four-volume collection of the early medieval cartularies of the Order and was printed between 1894 and 1906. It is the most exhaustive stockpile of information on the history of the Hospitallers in the earlier centuries of the Order and has some relevance to the Sicilian Hospitaller's assets.⁶² The *Cartulaire* is a scientific collection of various charters and documents, and is an

⁶⁰ There are three lists of priors and grand priors of Messina that are extant: one in the *Memorie*, another in Pirri's *Sicilia Sacra* and a third one in Condojanni. All three are certainly not comprehensive.

⁶¹ See Fra Michele Gattini, *I priorati, i baliaggi e le commende del Sovrano Militare Ordine di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme nelle province meridionali d'Italia prima della caduta di Malta*, (I.T.E.A. 1928).

⁶² See Joseph Delaville le Roulx, *Cartulaire Général de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem (1100-1310)*, (Paris. E. Leroux, 1906).

excellent Hospitaller resource, set in chronological order, but the four volumes are limited to the middle ages of the Hospitallers, up till 1310.⁶³

Carlo Marullo di Condojanni's *La Sicilia ed il Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta* published in 1953,⁶⁴ is an account of the origins of the Order's settlement in Sicily, which eventually became the grand priory of Messina, and a review of the involvement of the priory in hospitality,⁶⁵ the religious and divine cult, its military endeavours and political rapprochement towards the different sovereigns of Sicily. Of considerable significance, however, is the section of the book dedicated to Antonino Amico, containing transcriptions of letters and deeds of the early years of the priory. Marullo de Condojanni catalogues most of the transcriptions found by Amico that relate to the Messina priory. This is a most important resource as some of the original documents have been lost.⁶⁶ It also lists the assets that the priory of Messina had at the time of the prioral visitation of 1749, drawing most of the information from the Minutolo archive, which it acknowledges. *La Sicilia*, like Minutolo's *Memorie*, does not pretend to give a full and extensive history of the Messina priory, and it has errors of fact as well; but the chronological listing of Amico's transcribed documents is of some importance.

The main aim of the above authors, especially those with strong ties to the Hospitaller Order, is easily deciphered. Writing within narrow remits and constraints, the main aim of both Giacomo Bosio (who was not a professed member of the Order) and fra Bartolomeo dal Pozzo (who was) was the exultation of the Order's passage and accomplishments through the centuries. Blemishes were avoided and a romantic approach was chosen, particularly in Minutolo's *Memorie*. There is little objective and critical analysis of the Order's achievements; they tended to be more of a literary

⁶³ Toomaspoeg (2003), 40. '*Il Cartulaire é rimane la piú esaustiva e complete raccolta di fonti per la storia degli Ospitalieri in Sicilia mai pubblicata...*'

⁶⁴ Condojanni, (1953).

⁶⁵ The Benedictine Rule imposed that it was the duty of monastics to offer hospitality to other monks, clerics, and pilgrims (peregrinis). The latter were united with the poor. For these St Benedict advocated that these should be offered more care and attention because they typified the hailing of Christ himself. '*Pauperum et peregrinorum maxime susceptioni cura sollicite exhibeatur, quia ipsis magis Christus suscipitur; nam divitum terror ipse exigit honorem*', (S. Benedetto, La Regola, a cura di A. Lentini, Tip. Pisani, Montecassino 1980, 460-461; 466-468). See Luigi Michele de Palma (2013), 477.

⁶⁶ Toomaspoeg (2003), 26 et seq.

glorification of the Hospitallers, extolling their ancestry, nobility, and courage in battles, and providing a promotional narrative from a blinkered point of view.

Hospitaller historiography of the Early Modern Period, including Bosio's opus, has tended to follow an antiquarian rather than an analytical and critical approach, focusing primarily on the narrative delivery of history and historical events. Most scholars of the time were overwhelmed by the surfeit of archival resource material for this period, and the strong antiquarian attraction that the early chronicles of the Order had for these historians.⁶⁷ Emanuel Buttigieg suggests that these two facts militated against the more arduous historical analysis and gravitated to narrative story-telling.⁶⁸ Hence, scholarly interest remained focused on the Hospitaller medieval period (the Latin East) rather than on Malta, helped, presumably by the attraction of old-world chivalry, although arguably it was mainly because scholarly interest in the Hospitallers was closely tied to the fascination of the crusades in the Latin East. Hence the assertion in Buttigieg's comments why little interest has been shown in the Hospitaller's early modern Period, until the second half of the twentieth century.

From this point in time, a substantial amount of comprehensive and detailed research has been done by various scholars on the Hospitallers in general, and to a lesser extent on the Italian Langue. Foremost amongst these, arguably, with a voluminous output are Anthony Luttrell, Jonathan Riley-Smith, and Helen Nicholson. Kristjan Toomaspoeg, in his *Templari e Ospitalieri nella Sicilia Medievale*, gives an excellent *tour de force* of the historiography of the Order's settlements in Sicily.⁶⁹ A considerable amount of this expert authorship, understandably, can be found in the Italian literature.

⁶⁷ J.T. La Monte, 'Some Problems in Crusading Historiography', *Speculum*, xv, 1 (1940), 57-75.

⁶⁸ Emanuel Buttigieg, *Nobility, Faith and Masculinity* (London, Continuum Publications, 2011), 3-4.

⁶⁹ Kristjan Toomaspoeg, *Templari e Ospitalieri nella Sicilia Medievale*, (Centro Studi Melitensi, Bari, 2003).

Angelantonio Spagnoletti,⁷⁰ Fabritio D'Avenia,⁷¹ Giacomo Pace Gravina,⁷² Antonino Giuffrida,⁷³ Francesco Benigno,⁷⁴ Nasalli Rocca di Corneliano, Lorenzo Tacchella,⁷⁵ Arena, and Luigi Michele de Palma⁷⁶ have all written on different facets of the Order, with particular emphasis on the Italian perspective, which made up the Order of St John a religious, military, diplomatic, and financial force to be reckoned with, at least up till the end of the *ancien régime*. There are scholars, closer to home, including Victor Mallia Milanese, Emanuel Buttigieg among others who have also added to our knowledge of Hospitaller history.

However, the theme of the priory of Messina in the seventeenth century in Hospitaller literature remains somewhat deficient. Riley-Smith remains a crusader historian and Hospitaller medievalist with most of his articles never encroaching beyond the fifteenth century.⁷⁷ The significant output of Anthony Luttrell is more focused on

⁷⁰ See Angelantonio Spagnoletti *Stato, aristocrazia e Ordine di Malta nell'Italia Moderna*, (Boccard, 1988), (This presents the sometimes difficult relationship between the Order and the Italian aristocracy before the end of the ancien regime), *L'Ordine di Malta e La Sicilia in La Sicilia dei Cavalieri. Le istituzioni dell'Ordine di Malta in Età Moderna (1530-1826)*, (Roma, 2003), and *Elementi per una Storia dell'Ordine di Malta nell'Italia Moderna* (Mélanges de l'école Française de Rome, 96-2, 1984), 1021-1049.

⁷¹ See 'I processi di Nobiltà degli Ordini Militari: Modelli Aristocratici e Mobilità Sociale', in *Noblezza Hispana, Noblezza Cristiana. La Orden de San Juan*, M. Rivero (ed), (Proceedings, Alcázar de San Juan-Spain, 1-4 October 2006), vol. II, 1087-1126, 2009, and 'Le Commende Gerosolimitane in Sicilia: Patrimoni Ecclesiastici, Gestione Aristocratica', in *La Sicilia dei Cavalieri, Le istituzioni dell'Ordine di Malta in età moderna (1530-1826)*, (2003, L. Buono, G. Pace Gravina (eds)), 35-86. And *Nobiltà allo Specchio: Ordine di Malta e Mobilità Sociale nella Sicilia Moderna* (Palermo, Associazione Mediterranea, 2009).

⁷² *La Sicilia Dei Cavalieri, Le Istituzioni dell'Ordine di Malta in Età Moderna (1530-1826)*' eds. Luciano Buono and Giacomo Pace Gravina, (Fondazione Donna Maria Marullo di Condojanni, Roma 2003).

⁷³ See *'La Sicilia e l'Ordine di Malta (1529-1550): la Centralità della Periferia Mediterranea'*, (Associazione Mediterranea, 2006).

⁷⁴ See *Favoriti e Ribelli: Stili della Politica Barocca* (Bulzoni, 2011), 'Messina e Il Duca d'Osuna; un Conflitto Politico nella Sicilia del Seicento', in *Il Governo della Città, Patriziati e Politica nella Sicilia Moderna*, Domenico Ligresti (ed.), (Catania CEUCM, 1990), 'Aristocrazia e Stato in Sicilia all'Epoca di Filippo III', in *Signori, Patrizi e Cavalieri in Italia Centro-meridionale nell'età Moderna*, Maria Antonietta Visceglia (ed), (Roma Laterza, 1992).

⁷⁵ Lorenzo Tacchella, *Il Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta nella storia di Verona*, (Mario Bozzi, 1969) and *Le "Donate" nella storia del Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta*, (1987).

⁷⁶ *Il Frate Cavaliere. Il Tipo Ideale del Giovannita fra Medioevo ed Età Moderna* (Bari, Studi e Ricerche: Ecumenica Editrice, 2007). Other insightful articles by the author include 'La Spiritualità dell'Ordine Giovannita' in *Studi Melitensi*, xxv, 2017, 11-34, and *Servus Pauperum et Miles Christi. La Spiritualità Giovannita da Rodi a Malta, Da Gerusalemme a Roma - Itinerario Storico Spirituale* (Ordine di Malta, 2015), 47-90.

⁷⁷ See *The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus, c 1050-1310*, (London, Palgrave, 1967); *Hospitallers: The history of the order of St. John*, (London, Hambledon Press, 1999), see 89 et seq; *Templars and Hospitallers as professed religious in the Holy Land*, (Indiana University of Notre Dame,

the military and religious Orders; but again his research rarely surpasses the Rhodian phase of the Hospitallers, apart from a minority of papers on certain aspects of the Malta phase, including their convent in Birgu.⁷⁸ His text on the early Italian Hospitallers has some relevance to the topic but is limited.⁷⁹ His scholarly output does include the Hospitallers of north and south Italy but is time-limited to the fourteenth century. The scholarly output of Helen Nicholson could be construed as mostly restricted to the Hospitaller Late Middle Ages, although her main output is mostly on the Order of the Templars in substance.⁸⁰ The same can be said of Jochen Burgdorf who has written on the central convents of the Hospitallers and Templars but is limited to the beginning of the Order's stay on Rhodes.⁸¹

Italian scholarship on Hospitaller themes is exhaustive and abundant, although, as Luttrell suggests, the thematic representation of Hospitaller literature here remains limited. The topics remain narrow and restricted; the subject matter is mostly related to specific commanderies, mostly small and in isolated regions; limited themes on diverse subjects like the spirituality of the Order, the economy, and the ceremonial aspects. Two exceptions include Spagnoletti's *Stato, Aristocrazie e Ordine di Malta*⁸² and Bascapé's *Gli Ordine Cavallereschi in Italia*,⁸³ which have a more unrestrictive canvas. Maria Rosaria Salerno has also written on the Hospitallers in southern Italy but limits herself to the end of the fourteenth century.⁸⁴

2010), 4, 'I shall be concentrating on the activities of the two orders in the Levant,...'; and *The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant, c.1070-1309*, (Springer, 2012).

⁷⁸ 'Hospitaller Birgu 1530-1536', in *Crusades*, 2, (2003), 121-150.

⁷⁹ 'Gli Ospedalieri nell'Italia Settentrionale dopo il 1312', in *Studies on the Hospitallers after 1306*, (Aldershot, Variorum, 2007), 171-188; 'Change and Conflict within the Hospitaller Province of Italy after 1291', in *Studies on the Hospitallers after 1306*, (Aldershot, Variorum, 2007), 185-199; 'Iconography and Historiography: the Italian Hospitallers before 1530', in *Studies on the Hospitallers after 1306*, (Aldershot, Variorum, 2007) 19-46, 'Gli Ospedalieri nel Mezzogiorno', in *Il Mezzogiorno Normanno-Svevo e le Crociate*, (Bari, edizione Dedalo, 2002), 289-300, 'The Italian Hospitallers at Rhodes: 1437-1462', in *The Hospitaller state on Rhodes*, (Aldershot, Variorum, 1992), 209-231.

⁸⁰ See *Knights Hospitaller*, (Boydell and Brewer, 2001), Chap 6. This gives a brief survey of the Order's Malta period but does not discuss the Hospitaller European commanderies in any depth.

⁸¹ *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars: History, Organization, and Personnel (1099/1120-1310)*, (Leiden, BRILL, 2008).

⁸² *Stato, Aristocrazie e Ordine di Malta nell'Italia Moderna*, (Ecole Française de Rome, 1988).

⁸³ *Gli Ordini Cavallereschi in Italia: Storia e Diritto: Gli Ordini dello Stato Italiano: il Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta: gli Ordini Cavallereschi della Santa Sede: gli Ordini della Repubblica di San Marino : gli Ordini Dinastici e Gentilizi*, (Eraclea, 1992).

⁸⁴ Maria Rosaria Salerno, 'The Hospitallers in Southern Italy: Families and Power', in *The Military Orders* vol5, *Politics and Power*, Peter W. Edbury (ed), Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012, 263-272.

Toomaspoeg's productive output includes some research material that is relevant to the subject matter of the present dissertation. His scholarly works include the settlement of the military Orders in Sicily in the high and late middle ages and the geography of Hospitaller patrimony in medieval Sicily. His main output however is focused more on Teutonic Order historiography, and the Order of the Temple to a lesser extent. However, there is almost nothing that dates beyond the sixteenth century.

Thus, the present dissertation attempts to build on this mass of scholarly output, most of which is limited to epochs up to the sixteenth century. It will endeavour to augment the current state of knowledge on the Hospitaller priory of Messina a century later, particularly by referral mostly to the primary sources of the Order at the time. The main objective remains an impartial review of the state of the Sicilian Hospitaller priory in the seventeenth century, followed by a critical analysis of the evidence obtained. The growth of the landed assets, the manpower, and how the priory interacted with the people of Messina and with extraneous events will also be evaluated.

1.6 Published Bibliographies of the Order

Several general bibliographies of the Order were scrutinised to unearth pointers to the Sicilian priory. These are usually compendia including several hundreds of titles of published works. All have various degrees of accuracy and completeness, but despite this they all provide an important resource for research. All of them are divided into classifications and sub classifications to make them more navigable and useful. The earliest one, printed in the late eighteenth century was the *Catalogo* of Smitmer, an Austrian conventual chaplain of the Order.⁸⁵ Section XII entitled *Istorie e Descrizione di diversi Priorati, Commende, e Chiese dell'Ordine Gerosolimitano* gives only 5 titles

⁸⁵ Francesco Paolo de Smitmer, *Catalogo della Biblioteca del Sagro Militar Ordine di S. Giovanni Gerosolimitano* (1781)

that in some way relate to the priory of Messina. Two relate to the archconfraternity of San Placido in Messina, and the other three are *Sacra Sicilia* by Pirri, *Prioratus Messanensis* by Amico and the *Memorie* by Minutolo.

Boisgelin's Catalogue (of the principal Works written on Malta and the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, methodically classed according to the order preserved in the Table of Contents) printed in 1804, is also of some help, although it is not limited to the Hospital and is not exhaustive.⁸⁶

However, the benchmark bibliography of the Order was probably Hellwald's *Bibliographie* published in Rome in 1885.⁸⁷ It was the first most comprehensive list of all the known titles on the Hospitaller subject and it is still used as a yardstick, together with the *Aggiunta* of Rossi,⁸⁸ published nearly 40 years later, of the Order's bibliographies. Twenty-seven editions have been published between 1885 and 1995, giving testimony of the usefulness of this research tool.

A *Bibliography of the Order of St John of Jerusalem (1925-1969)* by Father Joseph Mizzi,⁸⁹ brought up to date Hellwald's bibliography from 1884/5 to 1924. Mizzi rearranged parts of the classification in Hellwald, presumably to make it more accessible, and although a continuation of previous bibliographies by dates, it is not a precise continuation by format.

In 1938, another bibliography of the Order was published entitled *Saggio di una Bibliografia di Malta e del S.M. Ordine di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme*.⁹⁰ The list is also divided in several sub-sections, but these are not precisely conforming to the others published previously, making continuity more complex.

⁸⁶ Louis de Boisgelin, *Ancient and Modern Malta*, 3 vols (G&J Robinson, London, 1804), xv-xlvi.

⁸⁷ Ferdinand von Hellwald, *Bibliographie Méthodique de l'Ordre Souverain de St. Jean de Jérusalem* (Rome, Impr. Polyglotte de la Propogande, 1885).

⁸⁸ Ettore Rossi, *Aggiunta alla Bibliographie Méthodique de l'Ordre souverain de St Jean de Jérusalem di Ferdinand de Hellwald* (Rome, 1924).

⁸⁹ Joseph Mizzi, 'A Bibliography of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, 1925-1969, in *The Order of St John in Malta, with an exhibition of paintings by Mattia Preti Painter and Knight*', (ed.), The Government of Malta and the Council of Europe (St Paul's Press Malta, 1970) 108-204.

⁹⁰ Teresa Maria Guarnaschelli and Enrichetta Valenziani, 'Saggio di una Bibliografia di Malta e del S.M. Ordine di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme', in *Archivio Storico di Malta*, ix (Roma, 1938), 435-93.

Two other bibliographies, yet unpublished, have been drawn up. These updates include the years 1970 to 2007,⁹¹ and 2008 to 2015.⁹²

1.7 Primary Sources of the Grand Priory of Messina

The main extant repository of the archives of the Order of St John is found in Malta, at the National Library in Valetta.⁹³

The Archives of Malta (AOM) are divided into 17 sections; the main source for this dissertation has been Section 16 part XII, which includes the Visitations of the priory of Messina, enforced by the statutes of the Order every five years.⁹⁴ These consist of 81 volumes, from codex 6054 to codex 6134.⁹⁵ The first 29 volumes cover the visitations of *cabimento*⁹⁶ and *miglioramento* commanderies,⁹⁷ whereas the latter volumes include the *cabrei*⁹⁸ of some of the Sicilian patrimony. They also comprise documents, *atti recognitori*, and Ordinations that resulted from the prioral visit of

⁹¹ Isabel Xuereb, 'A Bibliography of the Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem (1970-2007)', unpublished B.A. Honours dissertation, Faculty of Arts, University of Malta, 2007.

⁹² Nicholas Grima, 'A Bibliography of the Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem (2008-2015)', unpublished B.A Honours dissertation, Faculty of Arts, University of Malta, 2016.

⁹³ The initial archives, mainly, of the records of the Order of St John have been catalogued by Rev J. Mizzi and A. Zammit Gabaretta.

⁹⁴ AOM 1666, 94. '*Miglioramenti non fatti non possono opporsi, se non cinque anni dopo esser entrato in rendita delle Commende, Baliaggi, e Membri e de' Priorati.*'

⁹⁵ These cover the *visite di Miglioramenti* of the commanderies of San Antonio dell'Albigiana, San Giovanni di Caltagirone, Calli, Malandrina, San Giovanni di Rodi di Marsala, San Stefano di Schiettina di Palermo, San Giovanni di piazza, Polizzi, Ragusa, Borea di siracusa, San Giovanni di Taormina, and San Nicola di Trento.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 37. This is the first commandery that is awarded to young members of the Order. There are also cabrei of the commanderies of San Giovanni and San Giacomo della Seracina di Castiglione e Bonanni, Mazzarino, San Giovanni di Marsala, Modica and Randazzo, Albigiana di Palermo, San Stefano Schiettino di Palermo, San Giuseppe di barberino di Piazza, Polizzi, San Giovanni di Ragusa, and Guilla di Palermo.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 38. '*Commenda di Miglioramento può aversi fatti in quella di Cabimento i Miglioramenti.*'

⁹⁸ Sire, 107. This was a report, or document drawn up every 25 years, as per the Order's statutes, that described each property with its dependencies, boundaries and worth. Some *cabrei* had annotated drawings of the property.

1603/4. The set is not complete. The commandery of St John of Ragusa, given as *jus patronatus* to the Order in 1626 must have had quinquennial visitations from the point of donation; however, there are only extant copies of visitations of 1669, 1704 and 1795.⁹⁹ A very similar situation exists with the *cabrei*, despite the fact that these were mandatory every twenty-five years.

Further information was obtained from accessing parts of Section 2 (Liber Conciliorum), Section 3 (Liber Conciliorum Status) and Section 5 (Liber Bullarum). Section 6 (The Treasury) contains documentation regarding the receiver's accounts of the priory of Messina for the years 1792-95. AOM 833 also gives a balance sheet of the Messina priory and its dependencies between the same few years near the end of the Maltese era, in the years 1795 and 1797.

Section 9 (Correspondence) includes the registers of copies of the Italian letters addressed to various sovereigns, ambassadors, and others from Grand Master Cottoner; this was relevant to the research of the Messina revolt. Section 14 of the AOM appertains to the corporate function and deliberations of the different Langues; more specifically, the fourth subdivision deals with the Italian Langue. There are 60 manuscripts, of which 5 volumes are directly relevant to the present study: AOM 2159-61 contain various transcripts and copied charters on the foundation of the Italian Langue. There are also contracts and various other scripts on the establishments of various commanderies of the Langue between 1253 and 1769, including those of Messina. AOM 2162 provides data on the annual responsiones due of the various priories and bailiffs and commanderies of the Langue between 1604 and 1663.

Another major archival source of documentation of the Order is found at the University of Palermo in the *Commenda della Magione*. These were the main remnants of the original archives of the grand priory of Messina, which, at some point in time were transferred to a Hospitaller building in Catania and then subsequently moved to their present place. The documents that relate to Hospitaller history consist of two parts; those that appertain to the Order of St John in Rhodes and those that relate to the grand

⁹⁹ See Ray Gatt, 2014. There are only six volumes that cover the visitations of the commandery of Ragusa (AOM 6073 to 6078).

priory of Messina (volumes 410 to 606).¹⁰⁰ Some documents are duplicate copies that are also found in the Malta National Library and this probably corroborates the Order's obsession to have documents and charters copied in triplicate and stored in different locations. Obviously, the content of these documents depended very much on the reliability of the copyist, and on the care taken in their transcription.

Toomaspoeg makes the point that three quarters of the documentation of the Templars and the Hospitallers have been unearthed and is available for use by scholars.¹⁰¹ However their accessibility and use is still somewhat random, and this applies with particular emphasis to the Sicilian Hospitaller patrimony. Much has been lost over the centuries, but whatever remains should be collated and catalogued for ease of research.

The prominence of the Hospitaller Order is still partly evident in the splendour of its existing structural buildings and in the *masserie* in the Sicilian hinterland, albeit decrepit and ruined today. Countryside chapels and Hospitaller churches, emblazoned with the eight-pointed cross on their pediments, boundary markers of Hospitaller lands having the same cross on a stony pedestal, donated paintings etched with the symbol of the Order, sepulchral monuments; all give testimony of this once great Religious and Military Order of the Church. However, in conjunction with this, there are hundreds of archives and documents that survive and would underpin this evidence qualitatively. The graphical analysis of the extant *cabrei* and planimetric surveys gives valid testimonials of the assets that the Order had in the Messina priory. If these are merged with the different types of inventories existing on the archives, including inventories of leases, house and churches' contents, the various incomes accruing to these Hospitaller estates in the different years and epochs of European history, the lists of *dispropiamenti* of the brethren, the multi-piece jigsaw will start to form a decipherable image of Hospitaller life in the period. There are obviously evident gaps in the image, as the archival material that has come down through the ages is not complete, but it is still sufficient to outline an emerging picture.

¹⁰⁰ Kristjan Toomaspoeg and Giulia Rossi Vairo, 'Le fonti e la Storiografia' in *Templari e Ospitalieri nella Sicilia Medievale*, (Centro Studi Melitensi, 2003), 21.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 44

1.8 Objectives of the Present Dissertation

Anthony Luttrell, in his 'Hospitaller Historiography: Heritages and Heresies' wrote the following few lines:

The rural landscape itself may sometimes be considered as part of the heritage. An entire region can be approached through its Hospitaller buildings and art, and it may be possible to reconstitute the past of an abandoned commandery and its estates by supplementing written texts with topographical surveys, place-name information, aerial photographs, early modern estate books, and so forth.¹⁰²

This was what sparked the idea for this current dissertation; an initial plan to resurrect from obscurity a currently defunct Hospitaller priory as well as an analytical review of Hospitaller estate management in the seventeenth century. There has been considerable scholarly output on some Hospitaller priories; the priory of England¹⁰³ and Hungary¹⁰⁴ come to mind, but in reality, both estates were situated on the geographic margins of Latin Europe. Research on the central priories of the Order, including the Italian ones,¹⁰⁵ has been unfocused and piecemeal; one reason could be the sheer amount of archival material still currently extant, which makes systematic review more difficult as Buttigieg has pointed out. There are many scholarly publications on the state of various Hospitaller commanderies throughout Europe, but research at the prioral level is still somewhat deficient. There are some expert papers on the various components of the priory of Messina, particularly in the Italian literature, although a good number of these

¹⁰² Anthony Luttrell, *Hospitaller Historiography: Heritages and Heresies*, in *The Military Orders vol 3, History and Heritage*, Victor Mallia Milanés (ed) (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 3-12.

¹⁰³ Gregory O'Malley, *The Knights Hospitaller of the English Langue 1460-1565*, (Oxford, OUP, 2005); and Simon Phillips, *The Prior of the Knights Hospitaller in Late Medieval England*, (Boydell Press, 2009); Jürgen Sarnowsky, 'Kings and Priors, The Hospitaller Priory of England in the Later Fifteenth Century', in *Mendicants, Military Orders, and Regionalism in Medieval Europe*, (Ashgate, 1999), 83-102.

¹⁰⁴ Zsolt Hunyadi, *The Hospitallers in the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary, C. 1150-1387*, (Budapest, Central European University, 2010).

¹⁰⁵ See Nicola Montesano, *Il Priorato di Barletta. Insediamenti Giovanniti nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia* (Altrimedia, 2011); Francesco Ciociola, *Il Gran Priorato Giovannita di Capua* (Altrimedia, 2008)

are mostly descriptive.¹⁰⁶ The overall proposal of this monograph was to provide an analytical survey of a central Hospitaller priory in the Early Modern Period, particularly in the different facets of its relationship with the Convent, which essentially was on its doorstep.

This dissertation sets out to revive, within the constraints of the primary sources available, the historical state and development of the Messina priory during the seventeenth century. As this Hospitaller institution did not appear abruptly in Sicily in the seventeenth century, time and effort is spent to reconstruct the gradual process of its advancement from earlier centuries. This background will make it easier to understand its constitution and rationale of its engagements later on. The scope will also be enhanced by the amalgamation of relevant secondary sources. This will be done in the context of events happening outside the immediate domain of the Hospitaller priory in the Sicilian kingdom. The complex interrelationships between the provincial town and a resplendent Order whose presence gave considerable endorsement to the former will be shown as well.

Why was the seventeenth century focused upon?

The seventeenth century was selected specifically for two reasons. The first half of this century saw an unprecedented resurgence of physical growth of this grand priory. The main reason for this was a spate of privately endowed *jus patronatus* commanderies which augmented the size of the grand priory to some degree (although possibly this was not reflected in the level of accruing income). The second half of the century then saw the priory combating political predicaments and physical problems which were afflicting Sicily at the time. Of particular relevance was the Messina municipality revolt of 1674 against its Spanish overlords. Issues of a diplomatic misadventure, neutrality concerns embraced by the Order, disobedience towards the grand master by some Messinese Hospitallers; all these came to the fore leaving the priory and Messina scarred for a long time. A timeframe incorporating a particular century rather than a particular phase of

¹⁰⁶ See Luciano Buono, Giacomo Pace Gravina, *La Sicilia dei Cavalieri, Le Istituzione dell'Ordine di Malta in Èta Moderna (1530-1826)*, (Fondazione Donna Maria Marullo di Condojanni, Rome, 2003). Chapter III gives an exhaustive inventory of the known assets and institutions of the Hospitaller Order in Sicily.

the Order associated with a place of domicile (the Acre-phase of the Order, the Rhodian phase or the Malta phase) has been chosen as the context was to be the state of the priory at a particular point in time to enable analysis of certain forces and events which impinged on the priory of Messina at that point.

One of the earliest as an instituted priory and grand priory, Messina was to become an important asset for the Order, enriched by the monarchs and the higher ranks of society. Arguably it had reached its zenith in the seventeenth century, when its enrollment of professed members had peaked, together with a resurgence of donated landed assets. For the Order it was a beacon of what the institution stood for, in all its facets. However, the deep association between the priory and Messina was brought again to the fore in the 1674 revolt, undermining the vow of obedience of the Messina Hospitallers towards their grand master. Despite this 4-year interval, life at the priory of Messina continued, until the next calamity in 1693. In this instance, recovery was partial; the second half of the eighteenth century saw the ricetta of Palermo surpassing that of Messina both in the number of professed brethren and in the level of income and responsiones sent to the convent.¹⁰⁷

1.9 Methodology

The holistic development of the grand priory of Messina in the seventeenth century will be tracked following two lines of approach.

One will outline the composition of the priory, including the various Hospitaller commanderies and other assets of the institution.

¹⁰⁷ D'Avenia, *Commende Gerosolimitane*, 74.

The other line of approach will look into an assessment of the human resources and income of the priory of Messina in the seventeenth century, as well as an assessment of their augmentation or reduction with time. These parameters can be used to assess the state of health of the priory.

The two prioral visits of 1603/4 and 1749 will serve as the start and finish of this review. Both visits, but particularly the latter, provided an exhaustive survey of the assets that appertained to the priory at the time. (Appendix 1 gives a descriptive analysis of the assets). The core of the thesis is based largely on unpublished manuscript material preserved mainly in Valetta and Palermo.

The dissertation will be partitioned into separate chapters.

The introductory chapter set out an overview of some aspects of the city of Messina and its role as the quintessential Hospitaller city. It reviewed a historiography of the Hospitaller Order in Messina, followed by a discussion of the methodology used in this dissertation.

The second chapter discusses the conceptual aspect of a Hospitaller priory as a management tool, essential to the development of the Order after its expulsion from the Holy Land. It also focuses on the urgent need for new management stratagems which the Order needed to embrace in the fourteenth century. The concept of the priory, whose development has been analyzed in detail by Sellwood is extrapolated to place the post of the Hospitaller Receiver as the link that shored up the primary failing management systems and the resulting resurgence.

Chapter Three describes the Hospitaller Sicilian patrimony and proposes an outline of five phases during the development of the priory throughout its existence.

The next chapter looks at the different types of commanderies existing in the Messina Priory in the seventeenth century and their management.

Chapter Five will concentrate on the state of the priory of Messina in the seventeenth century illustrating, using different parameters, the vigour of the Order in Sicily at the time. The different yardsticks include the intensity of the human resources

throughout the decades, the income accruing in the various commanderies, and the level of responsiones payable to the convent on an annual basis, the increase of the Sicilian landed patrimony through this particular century, and the relationship of the various noble families in Messina with the grand priory of the Hospitallers. All these statistics indicate that the Hospitaller priory was in reasonably good shape, despite various mishaps including famine, plague, earthquakes, and rebellion.

The next chapter introduces the religious cult of the Hospitaller Order in a general way, but particularly how this was embraced by the Sicilian priory. An exposition is given on the old and the new (essentially rebuilt) cathedral church annexed to the Hospitaller priory and a last section will focus on the religious hierarchy in the cathedral.

Chapter 7 gives a description of the main prioral buildings in Messina.

Chapter 8 discusses the Hospitaller involvement in the Messina revolt of 1674, and analyses the complex relationship between various stake holders, including the Spanish and French monarchs, high ranking brethren of the grand priory of Messina, the Messina jurats and population, and the Order's convent in Malta.

Chapter 9 concludes the dissertation.

Appendix A is mostly a descriptive narrative of the various commanderies that made up the components of the Sicilian priory.

There are some limitations to the present dissertation. Being a priory in the Italian Langue, most of the researched archives were derived from the business meetings of the same Langue, which to a great extent were in the vernacular Italian. All the medieval charters were in Latin, sometimes in Latinized Italian. Most of the archives researched were sourced either from the National Library of Malta (Archives of Malta) or from the University of Palermo (*Commenda Magione*). Little information was accessed from Spanish sources particularly the *Archivo General de Simancas*, which houses the monarchical charters and viceroy mandates in Sicily, except in a few

instances.¹⁰⁸ Information from Spanish and French primary sources would have enriched the present analysis more. Other resources for the present thesis have also been unavailable; through attrition and the passage of time, no cabreum of the prioral buildings could be unearthed, either in the archives in Malta or Palermo.

The same applies for the accessed secondary sources that appertain to the Italian langue in general and the Messina priory. Most of these came from Italian scholarship and indeed there is little of note in the English language, except for the several scholarly papers by Anthony Luttrell, some of which were published in the mother language.

1.10 Conclusion

As Hunyadi notes in the introduction of his Ph.D. thesis on the Hospitallers in the medieval kingdom of Hungary, there are several different premises which can be utilized in the writing of the history of the Hospitaller priory.¹⁰⁹ Although the primary aim of the present dissertation is focused on various considerations that moulded the state and development of the grand priory of Messina in the seventeenth century, a secondary useful endeavour would be to characterize the policies and methods of how the Messina priory dealt with particular situations that it found itself in, during the turbulent times of its existence.

¹⁰⁸ For archival material from Spanish sources regarding the earthquake in Sicily in 1693, see Fernando Rodriguez de la Torre, Spanish Sources concerning the 1693 earthquake in Sicily, in *Annali di Geofisica*, Vol XXXvIII, n 5-6 Nov-Dec 1995.

¹⁰⁹ Zsolt Hunyadi, *The Hospitallers in the Medieval kingdom of Hungary 1150-1387* (Central European university Press, 2010), xiv.

Chapter 2: The Hospitaller European Commandery

2.1 Introduction

In its early years, the Order of the Hospitallers, focused as it was on its militancy against an increasingly belligerent adversary in the Middle East, had to contend also with more mundane problems that came about because of its accomplishments. Its exponential success resulted in an inflow of donations in the first century of its existence that veritably swamped its simple management organization available at the time. Another issue was the vast physical distance between the administrative Council in Convent and its estates in Europe, with the resultant delay in communications between the centre and the peripheries.

To remedy this, the Order came up with various interim measures bolstering efficient supervision and administration. It was not, however, until the middle of the fourteenth century that the office of the Receiver was set up which was essentially a game changer, thus making the system more efficient in the gathering of funds, more accountable to the administration and more stream-lined.

2.2 The Concept of a Priory within the Hospitaller Order c.1120-1140.

It is unlikely that Blessed Gerard, the founder of the Knights Hospitaller of Jerusalem, could have envisaged the exponential rate of growth of the landed assets and endowments donated to his institution by every stratum of society in the crusader era.¹ Initially stoked by Urban II (c.1042-1099) at Clermont at the very end of the eleventh century,² this resurgence of spirituality and the embracing of fundamental Christian beliefs acted as the catalyst for these donations. The stockpile of properties which the Order accumulated was such that, by the time the institution had settled on Rhodes in the early fourteenth century, it had become one of the largest piecemeal landowners in Europe. Scattered all over the different European kingdoms, the organization and administration of this Hospitaller patrimony became a veritable gargantuan task. Back-to-back with this, there was an equally heavy responsibility on the Hospitallers to deliver what was expected from them by their donors: hospitality for the poor and the infirm, and militancy in defence of the Christian faith. In order to service the two facets of their *raison d'être*, extensive funding from the Common Treasury of the Order was necessary, and these were derived from their farmed and leased properties both in the Latin East and in Europe. When revenue from the Latin East had dried up especially in the latter half of the thirteenth century, due to the usurpation of their landed properties by their enemies, the European granges became the mainstay of supply both in hard currency and

¹ Pope Paschal II in the *Pie postulatio voluntatis* dated 1113 denotes Gerard as *institutor* (founder) and *prepositus* (Father Superior). See Luigi Michele de Palma, 'La Pie Postulatio Voluntatis in Favore dell'Ospedale di S. Giovanni (1113)', *Lateranum*, lxxix, 2 (2013), 470.

² Bongars, 'Gesta Dei per Francos', 1 pp 382 f., trans. in *A Source Book for Medieval History*, O J Thatcher and E H McNeal, (eds.) Scribners New York 1905, 513-7.

in kind to the Order in Acre.³ Particularly at this point, a reliable and dedicated supply of provisions and armaments was never taken for granted.⁴

It must have been increasingly difficult to manage the unwieldy mass of land assets from a considerable distance away and to maximise profits which would continue to oil the Order's military and hospitality machinery.⁵ This was particularly true in the pre-Rhodian years up to 1291, where the operational section of the Order was in the Latin East, which had major financial needs to garrison the multiplicity of castles and forts as the main deterrent to the Muslim groundswell;⁶ and the passive component on mainland Europe which served as the replenishment nucleus for the supply of funds, material and manpower to the active side.⁷ This became essentially more acute in the middle years of the thirteenth century, when the Mamluk Sultan Baybars began to overrun the Order's estates in the Latin East, isolating the Hospitaller garrisons to their fate.⁸

³ Mercieca, Simon, 'Aspects of the Hospitaller Commandery, 1631-1798', unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Malta, 1993, 19-20. 'Already from the twelfth century, but especially in the thirteenth, they were being forced to accept a slow but constant retreat in the East. Such a retreat was to be counterbalanced by an endeavour to consolidate their position in Europe'.

⁴ Riley-Smith, 2012, 185-6. 'This resulted from the sometimes appalling administration of certain provincial provinces and the incurring of large debts; there was incompetence and corruption at all levels of the hierarchical levels, compounded by bad harvest in the West; this has to be seen in the context, also of the European economy at the time. In view of the great distance involved between east and West, there must have been great wastage and brigandage in the transport of commodities and funds as they traversed the great Mediterranean Sea'.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 189. '...a response to a situation in which a hard-pressed administration in the East was faced with the prospect of receiving and managing scattered endowments 3500 kilometres away'.

⁶ See Alison Hoppen, 'The Finances of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in: *European Studies Review* 3 (1973), 103-119. See also Adalberto Donna d'Oldenico, *Redditi e spese dell'Ordine Militare Gerosolimitano di Malta nel 1587*, (Cirie: Tip. Cav. Giovanni Capella, 1964). Aside from the altercations between the Bishop of Malta fra Tommaso Gargallo and grand master de Verdalle, this document gives an idea of the annuities of the Order in 1587. Also Jean Baptiste Bosredon de Ransijat, J.M Wismayer, The seven year balance sheet of the Order of St John of Jerusalem from 1st May 1778 to the end of April 1785 (Naxxar, Universal Intelligence Data Bank of America Europe 1984).

⁷ Riley-Smith, 2012, 186. This geographical and administrative split was certainly not without problems. Because of the immense distance between the Order's eastern colony and the western provinces, the author highlights a suspected dissonance between the two parts, including non-enforcement of statutory decisions in the west, taken by the convent in the east. However, he maintains that 'the primary task of the European communities was to support the central convent in the East, which every now and then would take steps to improve the provincial structure or adapt it to political realities.

⁸ Delaville le Roulx, Joseph, *Cartulaire Général de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem (1100-1310)* (Paris. E. Leroux, 1906), *Cart Hosp* 4:291-2, no 3308. This was the Master Hugh Revel's heartfelt request in 1268, asking for aid from the Kingdom of Palestine as he admitted 'for the last eight

In reaction to this, as Dominic Selwood points out, the Order did attempt to come up with a partial solution to this managerial problem.⁹ This was through the creation of ‘responsive, manageable European satellites’, in effect the establishment of a prioral structure:¹⁰ a microcosm of conventual hospitaller life with its hierarchical setup, with members of the brethren including a prior, a hospitaller, a chaplain and a sergeant-at-office with their domestic entourage in communal residence.¹¹ The institution of the priory came into being very early on, so that by 1120, the priory of St Gilles had been established, followed by the priory of Messina in 1136.¹² By 1142, as both priories became more immersed in the running of all the European Hospitaller assets, they became known as Grand Pories.¹³ This three-tiered system, as Selwood describes it, consisted of a wide-based triangle, with the Convent at the apex, the priories as middle management and finally the hundreds of commanderies at the base. This set up was intended to manage all the European commanderies of the Order more expeditiously and efficiently.

The model of the Hospitaller priory was innovative for the time. Although the Hospitallers chose to be governed by the Augustinian Rule,¹⁴ along with their vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, their concept of the priory as a management tool

years we have had no supplies at all from the Kingdom of Jerusalem...’. The plea must have also been directed at the European estates, however.

⁹ Dominic Selwood, *Knights of the Cloister* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2001), 143.

¹⁰ Riley-Smith, 2012, 188. ‘A feature of the second quarter of the twelfth century, however, was the gradual transference of power to act more freely from the provincials to the local officers and the delegation to the latter of some of the powers of trusteeship.’ Selwood’s descriptive analysis and conceptual evolution of the priory (see footnote 111) is more developed than that of Riley-Smith, particularly on the delegation of power.

¹¹ Bresc, 18. By 1277 at least, the priory of Messina had a fully organized management hierarchy with a prior, a preceptor or commander, a treasurer, a seneschal and a Hospitaller and five brothers who were each in charge of a vineyard situated in the peripheral of the city ‘*a quell anche è l’attività delle fumare messinesi, la produzione e l’esportazione di vino*’.

¹² Condojanni, 34. But see Toomaspoeg arguments later in the next chapter, on the earliest possible establishment of the Messina priory.

¹³ Selwood, 142 et seq.

¹⁴ There is still uncertainty about the Rule embraced by the early hospitallers. The ties of the latter with the Benedictine community at Santa Maria Latina argues for the Benedictine rule. Indeed, the *Liber Vitae* commissioned by Giovanni of Subiaco lists 13 fratres of the Hospital of Jerusalem, headed by Raimundus prior as ‘*committunt se sanctis orationibus religiosorum Fratrum Sanctissimi Benedicti de Sublacu*’. Other scholars see a deep imprint of Augustinian influence in the Rule of Raymond du Puy, *Presepta et statuta*. See De Palma, *La Pie postulatio*, 482, who makes the point that the Hospitallers did not embrace either the monastic Rule (twelve lessons) nor the canonical one (nine lessons) but wanted to maintain their status quo as lay Hospitallers transformed into a Religious Order.

differed from that of other religious Augustinian-run mother-houses. The idea of the Hospitaller priory (or grand priory) was created to serve as a hub, relatively close geographically to its dependent ‘satellites’ or commanderies, to manage the latter and channel funds and personnel from the commanderies to the central convent; a particularly important link in the three-tiered system as described by Selwood. This was decidedly different from the model of most monastic orders at the time, where the motherhouse was a self-sufficient entity, financially independent of the peripheral daughter houses, as were most Benedictine abbeys which were traditionally so.¹⁵ The complexity of this relationship between mother and daughter houses varied in the different secular and ecclesiastical Orders, but the basic model remained the same. The Cistercian system was similar to the management structure that the Hospitallers were looking for, except for one major difference. As Selwood reiterates, ‘the Military Orders required their houses to be grouped regionally, but the Cistercian model of affiliation could not accommodate this, in view of the great distances between the units’.¹⁶ The priories of the Hospitaller Order, and the grand priories in their turn when they were instituted later on, were a part of the whole, and indeed their very existence was created to serve the central convent.¹⁷

Another facet of the Order’s emulation of their monastic brothers was the relative seclusion of the convent, which in the early years was physically segregated from the remainder of the town and stood hidden from prying eyes. As Elizabeth Rapley asserts, this reinforced an old tradition of the separation of pious celibate communities from the humdrum of daily life and the strict avoidance of any taint from outside influences. Perfection in deeds and thoughts was to be achieved within the walls of the cloister or *claustrum*. ‘A monk outside his monastery is like a fish out of water’.¹⁸ The *collachium*

¹⁵ Riley-Smith, 18, on the endowment of Benedictine abbeys independently of their mother houses.

¹⁶ Selwood, 143.

¹⁷ See also Janet Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000 - 1300* (Cambridge University press, 1994), 66. Note the concept of Dependency in religious Orders: the relationship of a monastic community with a newer community which it has founded. See Martin Heale *The Dependent Priors of Medieval English Monasteries* (Woodbridge, Boydell & Brewer, 2004), 64 et seq.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Rapley, *A Social History of the Cloister* (Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 112

of the early Hospitaller convents reproduced this ethos.¹⁹ Initially, physically excluded by high walls from the remainder of the community, as in the Muristan in Jerusalem and to a lesser extent on Rhodes, it became only a token in the convent in Birgu after 1530 and eventually ceased to exist in Valletta after 1570, during their residence on Malta, where the whole island, not unlike its Rhodian predecessor, had become an island order state.²⁰

2.3 The Nature of the Hospitaller Priors in the West, c.1150 - 1400.

There were clear differences in the *modus operandi* of the daily life of the Hospitallers on their estates in the West, between the early years of their first two centuries of existence and the later longer period until the end of the eighteenth century. These differences could be possibly construed as being due to conceptual changes in the ethos of the Order, as well as in the Knights' spiritual ideals, becoming more focused on material gains. In the earlier phase, this was probably reflected more in the European estates, away from their military presence in the Middle East.

Lorenzo Maria Guida has stressed some crucial differences in certain aspects of the commanderies of the Order between these two periods.²¹ D'Avenia, in his turn, when discussing Hospitaller endowments in the first two hundred years, makes a further

¹⁹ Quentin Hughes, 'The Architectural Development of Hospitaller Malta', in *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, V Mallia Milanes, (ed.) (Mireva Publications Limited, Malta 1993),486.

²⁰ Joan Abela and Emanuel Buttigieg, 'The Island Order State on Malta and its Harbour c. 1530-c.1624' *The Harbour of Malta*, C. Vassallo and S. Mercieca (Eds), Progress Press, Malta, 2018, 49-74. See also Anthony Luttrell, *The Town of Rhodes: 1306-1356* (Rhodes, 2003), 170; and Simon Phillips, 'The Hospitallers and Concepts of Island Existence' in E. Buttigieg and S.Phillips (eds), *Islands and Military Orders, c.1291-c.1798*. (Farnham, Ashgate, 2013), 11-18.

²¹ L. M. Guida, *L'Ordine di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme. Le Sue Commende e i Suoi Conventi*. (Centro Studi Melitensi, Taranto, 2007). 209 et seq. '

distinction between the very initial donations given to the Order, and the later land assets and manors which would become the preceptories.²² This period, when the initial donations were transformed with the institution of preceptories, bolstered by several successive royal charters, he asserts, lasted until the early decades of the fourteenth century.²³ These two phases as described by D'Avenia would be equivalent to Guida's first phase of the development of the Hospitaller's priories.

According to Guida, the first phase included the period from when the Order started to receive bequests and donations in earnest, around the decades 1160/70, to the middle of the fourteenth century.²⁴ Each commandery (or preceptory) was a microcosmic Hospitaller religious community whose two main aims were to manage the donated assets diligently and live strictly within the precepts of the Rule of the Order.²⁵ These assets were also called *obedientiae* (in the statutes of Raymond de Puy), *domus*, and *mansiones*.²⁶ All of these incorporated a resident household, with the occupants leading a semi-enclosed life, with regular daily attendance at prayer, much as their

²² (Nicholson, 2020). Contemporary French documents called them commanderies or priories; in Latin, they are *preceptoriae* or *prioriae*. For the term 'commandery' and its meaning, see the volume *La Commanderie: Institution des ordres militaires dans l'Occident médiéval*, ed. Anthony Luttrell and Léon Pressouyre (Paris 2002). The historical practice is to apply the word preceptory to Templar assets, and the word commandery to Hospitallers'. So, there should be no preceptories post 1310, and what was a preceptory, when transferred to the Hospitallers, became a commandery. However, this is not always the case and there are several instances in the primary sources where Hospitaller preceptories continue to be mentioned beyond the sixteenth century. See also Mercieca, 1993, 14. 'It was only in the seventeenth century that the word commandery definitively substituted all these terms'.

²³ 'Le commende gerosolimitane in Sicilia: patrimoni ecclesiastici, gestione aristocratica', in *La Sicilia dei Cavalieri. Le istituzioni dell'Ordine di Malta in Età Moderna (1530-1826)*, L. Buono, G. Pace Gravina (eds), 2003, 37. See also D'Avenia (2003), 'L'istituzione delle precettorie costituì una fase successiva a quella delle donazioni –concentratosi in Sicilia soprattutto tra la seconda metà del XII secolo e i primi due decenni del secolo successivo – ed era l'evidente segnodi una progressiva stabilizzazione dei beni dell'Ordine, che significava garanzia e protezione da parte dei sovrani, svevi prima, angioini e aragonesi poi.'

²⁴ Sire, 115/160. The foundation date of the two earliest priories of the Hospitaller Order are given; St Gilles in France incorporated in 1115 and the priory of Messina in 1136.

²⁵ Guida, 209. 'Il primo periodo fu caratterizzato dallo sviluppo delle precettorie come comunità religiose, centri di assistenza e di sfruttamento economico.'. Valentina Burgassi in *Il Gran Priorato di Lombardia e la Commenda di Moncalieri*, (Studi Piemotesi, XLVII (1), 2018), 243, discusses these two phases in the Priory of Lombardy existence. 'Oggi le tracce documentarie sopravvissute consentono di suggerire una divisione della storia dei Giovanniti in due macro periodi: il primo concernente l'istituzione dell'ordine in Terra Santa e la fondazione del primo ospedale, con il fine di albergare i pellegrini in viaggio spirituale verso Gerusalemme; il secondo riguardante l'amministrazione delle commende nel Priorato di Lombardia come fonte di alimentazione della cassa del "Comun Tesoro" per la costruzione della nuova città e delle fortificazioni'.

²⁶ D'Avenia (2009), 36.

monastic brethren did. Some of the preceptories also had *hospitia* which offered refuge to pilgrims and sick itinerants.²⁷

These commanderies had a multiplicity of structures and functions. They included the main residence of the commander which would have had, in most instances, a large hall and his living quarters, lodgings for the chaplain and other brothers, and the servants' quarters. The land was used mostly for agricultural work by the brethren themselves, although leasing must have come in at some point.²⁸ Some commanderies also became a place of refuge for the surrounding villages, especially in times of war and disease.²⁹ Most properties incorporated a church/chapel which served the local communities and acted also as a place for burials of the brethren and donors/helpers of the Order. Parts of the outbuildings were used for hospitality of pilgrims and travellers.³⁰ There was a strong bond between the members of the Order and the neighbouring inhabitants; the spirit of the Order was on site permanently enhancing the connectivity between the two.

The second phase dates from around 1350 onwards. In practice, the driving aim of the asset had by now become almost exclusively its efficient economic management to render maximal profits. As a result of this, Guida asserts that the Hospitaller commandery now encompassed a much-decreased hospitality agenda,³¹ and religious activity in the daily life of the members of the Order was also reduced.³² This modification from the Hospitaller norm was compounded by various events happening in the fourteenth century, the arrival of plague in Europe (1348-1350), intemperate

²⁷ See Boisgelin, 247. 'He could employ a portion of the revenue for the maintenance of his community, and for the relief of the poor in his district'.

²⁸ Nicola Montesano, 63.

²⁹ The Hospitaller domus of Kilmainham in Ireland had a fortified gateway and the whole estate was surrounded by defensive walls guarded by four towers. See Noel Peart, *The Knights Hospitallers in Ireland*, in *Annales*, a XXI, 3 (1963), 60-64. See also Schermerhorn, Elizabeth, *On the Trail of the Eight-Pointed Cross* (New York, G.P. Putnam, 1940).

³⁰ Guida, LM, 212.

³¹ See Noel Coulet, 'Le vie Quotidienne dans les commanderies du Prieuré de St Gilles de l'Ordre de l'Hôpital d'après l'enquête pontificale de 1373', in Antony Luttrell and Léon Pressoure *La Commanderie, Institution des Ordres Militaire dans l'Occident Médiévale* (Paris, 2002), 147 et seq. At the papal inquest of 1373, none of the commanderies of the grand priory of St Gilles practised hospitality on site.

³² There is some evidence that the religious obligations and activities continued, sometimes transferred, if properties were merged. Also, in the fifteenth century at least, chaplains of the Order who were travelling, or aboard galleys, carried portable altars to celebrate mass before daybreak. (Simon Phillips, personal communication, 2021).

weather, recurrent episodes of famine,³³ and the Hundred Year War in France (1337-1453), all of which had grave social and economic repercussions. Bestowing a commandery to a knight became part of his *cursus honorum* in the Hospitaller Order. It augmented his social status according to the different types of commanderies that were offered to him, and increased his personal gain, at least during his life. Guida reiterates that rather than being an administrator of part of the patrimony of the Order, the commander became the beneficiary of the income, most of which he kept for his personal use.³⁴

Interestingly, the same chain of events in the fourteenth century was also reflected in the major houses of medieval monasticism.³⁵

There were no statutory shifts in the Order for this to be allowed to happen. Indeed, the painful memory of what had befallen the Templars was still fresh in the Hospitaller mind-set; and the loss of hospitality services, one of the main *raison d'être* for the institution of donations, was akin to treading onto dangerous territory. The highest echelons of the Order tried to reverse the trend. In 1325, Grand Master Hélon de Villeneuve instituted a hospice and chapel in Aix-de-Provence; fra Leonardo de Tibertis, the prior of Venice, similarly set up another hospice for the poor and the sick in 1360.³⁶

Despite this, the previously strong ties between the resident brethren on the commandery of the Order and the local communities started to decline.³⁷ Increased absenteeism of the commander on commanderies *di cabimento*, the least onerous of all types of commanderies, with the justification of sub-standard and at times a total lack of a main residence, aggravated this situation to a certain extent. As noted earlier, the

³³ Famine hit the European continent in the fourteenth century in 1302-3, 1304, 1305, 1310, 1315-7, 1321, 1328-30, 1333, 1339-40, 1346-7, 1349-51, 1358-60, 1369, 1371, 1374-5, and 1390-1. See Guido Alfani, *Italian Famines: An Overview (ca. 1250-1810)* (Dondena Centre, Bocconi University, 2015).

³⁴ Guida, 210.

³⁵ See Christopher Kleinhenz, *Medieval Italy: an Encyclopedia*, (Routledge, 2004), 731.

³⁶ Anthony Luttrell, 'The Hospitallers' hospice of Santa Caterina at Venice: 1358-1451', in *The Hospitallers in Cyprus, Rhodes, Greece and the West 1291-1440* (originally published in *Studi Veneziani*, XII, Florence, 1970), 369-383.

³⁷ Guida, 222. '*l'uso di moltissimi commendatori di non risiedere nelle commende non solo in molti casi contribuì in modo sostanziale alla rottura dei legami tra l'Ordine e le comunità locali, ... ma ebbe ripercussioni anche nel ruolo stesso dei commendatari all'interno nell'Ordine*'.

Order did try to halt this regressive process, and its statutes militated against the increasingly common custom of commanders not living on site because of the lack of adequate accommodation.³⁸ Later on, in a similar manner, and for the same reasons, most commanderies of *jus patronatus* in seventeenth century Sicily had also no live-in members of the Order.

By the middle of the fourteenth century, it was becoming evident that the two parts of the Order of St John, the convent located on Rhodes in the eastern Mediterranean and the European Western provinces, were becoming dysfunctional to some degree. Riley-Smith suggests that there was a long history of financial difficulties besetting the Order at least until 1310.³⁹ After this date, the incorporation of Templar assets to Hospitaller domains must also have caused the Order initial difficulties with re-organization and incorporation of the several additions of landed assets and the inevitable long-drawn out court litigations.⁴⁰ The convent was the seat where economic policies were instituted. These were targeted at the European provinces which financially supported the central convent in the East, thousands of miles away. Communications of new policies took weeks, sometimes months, to cover the distance from convent to priory. It soon became clear that statutory decisions taken in the East were not always being enforced in the West.⁴¹ Because of this, as Riley-Smith maintained, the Hospitaller model of reliance of the convent in the Middle East on the European states in the West was becoming unhealthy.⁴²

³⁸ Codici del Sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano (Malta, 1782),364, XLIII, ord 53.

³⁹ Riley-Smith, 185.

⁴⁰ See Simon Phillips, 'The Hospitaller Acquisition of the Templar Lands in England', in *The Debate on the Trial of the Templars (1307–1314)*, H. Nicholson, P. F. Crawford, J Burgtorf, (eds) Routledge, London, 2016, 233-242.

⁴¹ There were several instances, however, where 'decisions' taken in the East were ratifications of what had been decided in the West, (Simon Phillips, personal communication, 2021).

⁴² *Ibid.*, 186.

2.4 The Office of the Hospitaller Receiver, c. 1350

The state of affairs in the management of the basic assets in the middle of the fourteenth century led the Order to implement another management stratagem. This was the designation of the office of a Hospitaller Receiver, created about the middle of the fourteenth century (c.1358),⁴³ which bridged the two phases and brought more efficiency to the finances of the Order.⁴⁴ Indeed, the introduction of this new post in the management structure of the Order showed the latter's determination to abide by the original statutes and rules governing it, and not let questionable novel practices by members in the western provinces push the institution into statutory decadence. The other side of the argument, however, includes the assertion that it was the institution of this office which triggered the changes in practice, where the assets became more material commodities.

The post of Hospitaller Receiver was essentially a position of trust, selected by the Council and given to the most trustworthy members of the Order. The duties assigned to the Receiver of the Order were many and complex.⁴⁵ The statutes and the capitular ordinances, especially those pertaining to the Common Treasury laid down in specific detail the job description of the post and the expectations of the central convent from the recipient.⁴⁶ The receiver, residing in the priory,⁴⁷ and possibly even managing commanderies in his own right,⁴⁸ would become the essential human link between the

⁴³ The post of Receiver was officially recognised in the statutes of the Order by 1375, if not before. See *Statuti della Sacra Religione di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano*, (Borgo Nuovo, 1675), 65, in an ordination promulgated by grand master Ruggiero de Pins (1355-65): '*...vogliamo che in ciascun priorato e Castellania d'Emposta siano costituiti e deputati Ricevitori dal Maestro.*'

⁴⁴ Anthony Luttrell, *Studies on the Hospitallers after 1306: Rhodes and the West*, (Ashgate/Variorum, 2007), XXI, 295. Discusses the unreliability of Hospitaller priors in the management of the land assets and the institution of the post of the Receiver around 1358. See Sire, 106. Riley-Smith notes that a post of receiver was in existence by 1255, but this in reality was a treasury assistant. See Riley-Smith, 144.

⁴⁵ AOM 1666, *Compendio del Codice Gerosolimitano*, 133 Ricevidori.

⁴⁶ See Giovanni Maria Caravita, *Trattato dell'Offizio del Ricevitore, e de Procuratori del Comun tesoro, fuor di Convento* (Don Nicolò Capaci, Malta, 1763).

⁴⁷ Curiously, the Receiver of Messina had to reside in Palermo. See Caravita, 1763, 3

⁴⁸ Giuffrida, 32. The Order's receiver in Sicily, fra Giorgio de Vagnon (1537-1548), on the day he was nominated for the post possessed the commandery of San Bartolomeo of Nice, and San Giovanni of

central convent and the peripheral commanderies. His duties included management of the finances of all Hospitaller assets within his *ricetta*, overseeing strict exchange control of the various monetary denominations coming in from the different European kingdoms, whilst conducting them safely towards the convent.⁴⁹ This of necessity also involved the physical transportation of coinage and letters of credit by land and by sea, the secure delivery of which was also his task. He maintained accounts, detailing debts, and credits for the common treasury in the *Libri dei Conti*. He also kept notarial authenticated copies of the leases and rents in all the commanderies under the auspices of his priory. The receiver deputised for the prior when the latter was absent on Conventual duties abroad or was incapacitated by illness. He policed the obligations of the *miglioramenti* and the *cabrei*, the commitments of the visitations and was responsible for punishments meted out to bad administrators. He took physical possession of the commanderies once these fell into mortuary or vacancy and collected their respective dues as well as those of the *spogli*.⁵⁰

The job description of the receiver, substantial as it was, included other initiatives as well. When the Order was based on Malta, he was involved in the procurement and purchase of tax-free grain from neighbouring Sicily, and then had to organize transport for these commodities to the Convent.⁵¹ He also acted as an ordinary ambassador for the Order when circumstances demanded, particularly where there was no resident ambassador, as was the case with the *Serenissima*.⁵²

Roncaglia in the territory of Acqui. His nomination meant that he had to transfer to Sicily, but he continued to manage these assets by power of attorney.

⁴⁹ AOM 1666, *Compendio delle materie contenute nel Codice del Sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano*, (Stamperia del palazzo, Malta, 1783), 133.

⁵⁰ F. D'Avenia (2003), 40. On what constituted the *spoglio*, see Stefan Cachia 'The Treasury, Debts and Deaths: a Study of the Common Treasury', unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Malta, 2004) 186-198.

⁵¹ The non-payment of the *tratte* by the Order constituted one of the conditions stipulated in the deed of donation by Charles V in 1530. See Carmel Cassar, *Society, Culture, and Identity in Early Modern Malta* (Mireva 2000), 32 et seq. See also Eleni Sakellariou, *Southern Italy in the Late Middle Ages: Demographic, Institutional and Economic Change in the Kingdom of Naples, c1440 - c1530* (Leiden, Brill, 2012), 426 et seq; '...the innovations of grain production in Italy were supported by changes in the institutional organization of the market, which warranted virtually tax-free grain trade within the kingdom'. Grain traded on the international market was subject to the *tratte*, the grain-export tax. See also Stephen Epstein, *An Island for Itself: Economic Development and Social Change in Late Medieval Sicily* (Cambridge University press, 2003), 280 et seq.

⁵² See AOM 1666. The *Compendio* gives the duties of the Receiver of the Order, 133-136.

2.5 The Management of Hospitaller Commanderies after 1400

The *Compendio (delle Materie Contenute nel Codice del Sacro Militare Ordine Geroslimitano)*,⁵³ printed in 1783, listed several different types of Hospitaller commanderies. These included the so-called start-ups, the commanderies of first acquisition,⁵⁴ referred to as commanderies of *chevissement* in the French vernacular, or commanderies of *cabimento* in Italian. The commandery of *cabimento* was usually the first commandery which was awarded to a new knight after having endorsed and committed himself to several obligations as set up in the Order's statutes.⁵⁵ This type of commandery had a small income, as it was usually the first step in the hierarchical ladder for the recipient. A scale higher included those entitled commanderies of improvement (*di miglioramento*), which were richer commanderies and were usually given to a knight who had judiciously managed his first commandery to the Order's benefit. Each priory had a commandery of magisterial grace, reserved for the use of the grand master; it was his sole prerogative to award this to whomsoever he pleased, without the vacant commandery being submitted to the usual smutation⁵⁶ in the relevant Langue. Other types of commanderies included those of magisterial chambers (*camere magisteriali*) which enriched the grand master's private coffers so that *il Gran Maestro possa piú comodamente rappresentar la sua Dignitá*. Meanwhile the commandery of

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁵⁴ Sire 106. See L'Abbé de Vertot, *Histoire des chevaliers hospitaliers de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem: Appelés depuis chevaliers de Rhodes, et aujourd'hui chevaliers de Malte*, Vol 6 (Paris, Lequien Fils, 1830), '...ni accorder aucune ancienneté pour chevir, sinon par mort, ou après que ceux qui ont les anciennetés, seront réellement chevis et pourvus de la commanderie de leur premier chevissement,..'. see also in the English translation, *The History of the Knights of Malta*, Vol II, (London. G. Strahan, 1728), 116, describes these as those of *chevissement*. He suggests this word comes from an old French word *cheveir*, which means to undertake an enterprise one hopes to go through with. It was used to signify the first commandery a brother obtained in right of his seniority. Also *Codice del Sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano* (Stamperia del Palazzo, 1782), XXII, Della Significazione delle Parole, defines *cabimento* as; *vocabole Francese, da cabire, che significa cose qualcosa, dalle quali altri stimi poter dare buon conto ed e così che s'chiamo la prima commenda che si concede al fratello*.

⁵⁵ Magri, *Notizia de' Vocaboli Ecclesiastici e de Riti Sacri*, (Roma, 1669), 82. *Cabimentum - nelli Statuti della sacra Religione Geroslimitana significa la provista di qualche commenda vacante in persona del cavaliere più antiano. Vocabolo Franzese antico, derivandosi dal verbo cabire, che significa prendere in consegna qualche bene per darne buon conto*'.

⁵⁶ For an explanation of this term see Chap 4.2.2.

prioral grace was one that a prior himself could confer to a deserving knight. A commandery of recuperation was one that had been reinstated back to the patrimony of the Order by a member of the Order, after having been usurped by an avaricious neighbour, or left to deteriorate and depreciate.⁵⁷ This recovery usually involved years of litigation, but once successful, several benefits accrued to the involved member, including personal use of the profits from the asset during his lifetime, and the waiving of the payment of the annual *responsiones* to the Common Treasury. Another type of commandery instituted later on was that of *jus patronatus*, a patronal endowment that came with several restrictions and constraints.

Strict management of the assets of the Order was *de rigueur* throughout, but this was certainly no easy task for the administrative head. This division of a central convent involved in the setting up of an agenda and implementing it, and the peripheral priories whose objective was the provision of funds continued even after the post-Acre era. Like any good administrator, each financial stumble which the Order met with, was followed up by a corrective response which resulted in a more efficient use of their resources afterwards.⁵⁸

By the end of the thirteenth century, probably in the pursuit of better administration, the members of the Order became divided into several bodies, limited though not exclusively, to the mother tongue and national boundaries.⁵⁹ These became known as Langues or Tongues.⁶⁰ Luttrell makes the point that the idea of Langues in the

⁵⁷ AOM 2129 fol 246v.

⁵⁸ Sire, 105. In the aftermath of each crisis, the Order's Council set up new administration ideas enhancing efficiency and less wastage. In 1262, under the leadership of Hugh Revel, the monetary contributions, to become known as *responsiones* started to be implemented by each and every commandery. This was a worked and agreed fraction of the annual income that had to be sent to the common Treasury as dues for the collective pot.

⁵⁹ See Joseph Brincat, *The Languages of the Knights: Legislation, Administration and Diplomacy in a Multilingual state (14th-16th Centuries)*, in *Language and Diplomacy*, ed. Jovan Kurbalija and Hannah Slavik, (Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, University of Malta, Malta, 2001), 261-280. In the English text, *Langue* refers to the administrative element of the Order, and 'language' refers to the usual connotation. Hence, English makes a distinction between the two words, assigning a different meaning, whereas this is impossible to do in the Romance languages, in a way even more stressing the point of the inseparability of the institution and the language of its members.

⁶⁰ Sire, 104. Grand master Revel's letter of 1268 enumerates seven areas as the separate sources of the Hospital's revenues: the three French priories of Saint-Gilles, Auvergne and France, together with Spain, Italy, England and Germany. See also Joseph Brincat (2001), 261. In the English text, *Langue* refers to the administrative element of the Order, and 'language' refers to the usual connotation. Hence, English makes a distinction between the two words, assigning a different meaning, whereas this is impossible to

pre-Rhodian phase (at least by 1291) had 'scarcely evolved'.⁶¹ Riley-Smith, however, indicates that the Tongues 'must have been formally in existence by 1283, when the different regions in Europe were sending quotas to the East'; he adds that they were fully established by 1295.⁶² In extension of this, the concept of the individual groupings of the knights in crudely national units (with geography, language and culture forming the basis of each unit, and in place by the time of the auberges on Rhodes) and the post of a receiver followed one another, and were definitively instituted by the middle of the fourteenth century.⁶³

The Langues was initially under the management of a Grand Commander; they were made up of several priories, each of which was made up of several tens of commanderies. The number of units which made up the European provinces of the Order was large; these were spread out from Portugal to Bohemia and from Scandinavia to Sicily. By 1530, at the beginning of their Malta phase, the Order had around 630 commanderies, large and small, throughout Europe.⁶⁴

Efficient governance of these far-flung units throughout Europe was still difficult for the Order, despite major adjustments in the administrative models and the creation of new alternatives. Fra Giovanni Maria Caravita, in his *Trattato delle Commende*, writing in the sixteenth century, opined on the difficulties that the Order was faced with when dealing with the administration of territories many miles apart, and communicating with the different nationalities of the members.⁶⁵ In an attempt to initiate and maintain better efficiency and competence in the administration of their component units, the Order installed several check systems to increase proficiency. One of these was the

do in the Romance languages, in a way even more stressing the point of the inseparability of the institution and the language of its members.

⁶¹ Anthony Luttrell, *The Town of Rhodes 1306-1356* (City of Rhodes Office for the Medieval Town, 2003), 72.

⁶² Riley-Smith, 129.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 97.

⁶⁴ Sire, 108.

⁶⁵ AOM 1682 (Trattato delle Commende ed Amministrattioni - Giovanni Maria Caravita), fol 1v, 'Ma quanto spetta al nostro istituto siccome I beneficij, e la chiesa vogliono talvolta conferirsi non in titolo, ma raccomandarsi e commetersi all'altrui amministrazione con assignamento di tutte o parte di quelle rendite, la qual amministrazione si chiama commenda; all'istesso modo non potendosi la facolta dell'Ordine nostro amministrar bene in commune per la distanza dei luoghi e per la varieta delle nazioni li nostri maggiori ne raccomandarono o sia incommendarono ai nostri fratelli'.

competitive assignment of vacant commanderies to brethren of the Order, although patronage was not lacking in certain situations, even in so strict a regime as the hierarchy of the Order.

By 1700, there were several pre-requisites that a pretender to a commandery had to have before he was even considered for the least endowed of these units, the commandery of *cabimento*. The next step in the Order's hierarchical ladder was the award of a commandery of *Miglioramento*. For this, the candidate had to have all the pre-requisites that had originally earned him his initial commandery. He also had to provide evidence that he had not lapsed in any of them, together with a notary-endorsed certification that he had done improvements in his original commandery,⁶⁶ together with a proven five-year residence on it. He had to have observed all the precepts of the official visitation that was routinely carried out by the two commissioners sent by the Priory or Council. One of the goals of the visitation was the perceived continuous ownership of the land asset in question by the Order, which involved renewal of the leases and the refreshed stated boundaries of the commandery. This information was officially noted by the assigned notary. Finally, if indicated he had to renew the *cabreo* of the commandery during his five-year tenure.⁶⁷

In the grand priory of Messina, the number of commanderies in the different categories would fluctuate during the years (see Table 2.1).⁶⁸ Certainly these conversions between the various types of commanderies had been happening throughout the lifetime of the Order, and they were neither parochial nor restricted to Messina. The statutes of the Order catered for these changes. Thus Grand Master Philibert of Naillac (1396-1421) had authorised the priors and the Castellan of Emposta, to incorporate 2 commanderies of low income into a single entity, to make them economically viable.⁶⁹ These oscillations depended on various variables, some intrinsic (economic management

⁶⁶ This was usually done by a highly organized and timely visitation sent by the relevant priory of which the commandery was a part.

⁶⁷ Fabrizio D'Avenia (2003), 36.

⁶⁸ AOM 1666

⁶⁹ See *Gli statuti della Sacra Religione di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano* (Roma Giacomo Ternieri, 1589), 215.

Table 2.1. The Sicilian commanderies in the second half of the seventeenth century showing their change in status during these fifty years⁷⁰

| Grand Priory | Year | | | | | |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 1640 | 1650 | 1660 | 1670 | 1680 | 1690 |
| Polizzi | | | | | | |
| Guilla | | | | | | |
| Modica-Randazzo | | | | | | |
| Marsala | | | | | | |
| Giogenti | | | | | | |
| Piazza | | | | | | |
| Caltagirone | | | | | | |
| Bizzini | | | | | | |
| San Stefano | | | | | | |
| Saracina | | | | | | |
| Borea | | | | | | |
| Mazzarino | | | | | | |
| Ragusa | | | | | | |
| Albigiana | | | | | | |
| Bonanno | | | | | | |
| Calli | | | | | | |
| Malandrina | | | | | | |
| Barberino | | | | | | |

| Legend | |
|--------|-------------------|
| | Camera Magistrale |
| | Miglioramento |
| | Gratia Magistrale |
| | Cabimento |

⁷⁰ See Appendix 2. from AOM 2171, fol 161r – 182r.

of the asset, size, location and type) and others extrinsic (famine, disease, theatres of war).

The commandery of Modica and Randazzo was one of *miglioramento* when Don Antonio Carafa was awarded the asset on 28 August 1645. But when fra Girolamo Altieri succeeded Carafa in January 1646, the commandery had become one of magisterial grace, and hence under the patronage of the grand master. It remained so until 1672, when it was awarded to fra Scipione Monforte; at the end of the latter's tenure, it reverted to one of *miglioramento* and given, by the process of smutition, to fra Tommaso de Gregorii. By the end of de Gregorii's tenure, the commandery had reverted to the status of magisterial grace. After this it reached its nadir when it regressed, presumably as its income diminished, to a commandery of *cabimento*, the lowest in the hierarchical order of commanderies when income was the main consideration. Most certainly, the two members who were awarded the commandery of Modica and Randazzo between 1698 and 1721, then as a commandery of *cabimento*, fra Giuseppe Manuel Pallavicino and fra Felice Landi did manage to improve this land holding and this must have been shown in the increased income that the commandery then generated. The next incumbent, bailiff fra D Pietro Platamone, was awarded this commandery on 5 May 1721, then as one of *miglioramento*.⁷¹ This hierarchical fluctuation of commanderies was reflected in most of the members under the jurisdiction of the grand priory of Messina. The commandery of Polizzi, a magisterial *camera* remained so during the whole of the seventeenth century, but most of the others vacillated. Most of them did become, at some point or another, commanderies of magisterial grace as well.

⁷¹ AOM 2171, fol 165r

2.6 Conclusion

In recognition of its charitable activities, the Order was endowed with multiple donations, both in Western Europe and the Middle East. With time and the sheer volume of contributions, the whole ensemble became unwieldy and unmanageable. The response of the Order to this event was multifaceted. The institution of the priories, the splitting of the Order into national entities, but under a supranational head, the creation of the post of a receivership, the meticulous supervision of the peripheral land assets and patrimony: all brought efficiency and accountability, which was important both to the Order, but more so, to the donors of the Order themselves, as they saw their donated assets being used judiciously.

With these safeguards of better management in focus, the patrimony of the Sicilian Hospitallers in Messina will be reviewed next from the inception of the priory to the end of the eighteenth century. The whole timeline will be divided into various phases to understand better the growth of this priory.

Chapter 3: The Hospitaller Sicilian Patrimony

3.1 Introduction

Although the state of the grand priory of Messina fits neatly within Guida's two phases of commandery functionality, its growth and development in the period between its foundation and the end of the Malta phase can further lend itself to be partitioned into 5 specific segments of timelines or phases. These phases are based on the intermittent fluctuations in the development of the grand priory through the centuries.

3.2 The Growth and Development of the Grand Priory of Messina, 1060 - 1798.

3.2.1 First Phase: Foundation to the End of Acre 1291.

During the first crusade in 1099, the port of Messina served the war effort and was to become a regular stopover for merchants¹ and pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem.² As

¹ See Idrisi, il libro di Ruggero, translated and edited by Umberto Rizzitano, (Palermo, Flaccovio, 1966), 41-42. Muhammad al-Idrisi was a geographer from Andalusia, who resided in Sicily at the Court of Roger II. He portrayed the port of Messina as the hub where Muslim and Christian commerce met to load and unload various products and merchandise.

² David Abulafia, *The Merchants of Messina: Levant Trade and Domestic Economy*, Papers of the British School at Rome, Vol. 54 (1986), 197. By the same author, reprinted in *Commerce and Conquest in the Mediterranean. 1100-1500* (Aldershot-Brookfield, Ashgate, 1993), 196-212. See also Amelio Ioli Gigante, *Le Città nella Storia d'Italia* (Messina, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1980).

indicated earlier, some sort of hospitality service was present in Messina from as far back as 1070, with a small *ospitio* to accommodate sick and tired itinerant pilgrims and a chapel dedicated to St John the Baptist.

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact date when the Hospitaller Order took over this Messina *ospitio*, however. Fra Andrea Minutolo, probably researching Amico's transcripts of ancient charters and donations found in the priory of Messina,³ in the preparation of his book *Memorie del Gran Priorato di Messina*, suggests that the Amalfitan merchants in Messina had built warehouses in that port to store merchandise coming from Amalfi to be shipped to various other Mediterranean locations.⁴ They had also built a small *ospedale* for the use of pilgrims in the same place, as the latter travelled from Europe to cross the great sea on their pilgrimage to the Holy Sites,⁵ and it was this place that Minutolo proposed as the nidus that would later on morph into the Hospitaller priory of Messina. He dates this to 1070.⁶

Indeed, historians disagree on the earliest dates of a Hospitaller settlement in Messina. Riley-Smith argued that this Amalfitan hospice in Messina was a satellite of the one in Jerusalem (set up by the same or other Amalfitan merchants) and he dates this to between 1063 and 1070.⁷ H.J. Sire suggests that the erstwhile Amalfitan asset in

³ The manuscripts of Don Antonino Amico are located in Qq H 12 of the Biblioteca Comunale di Palermo.

⁴ Clifford Backman, *The Decline and Fall of Medieval Sicily: Politics, Religion and Economy in the Reign of Frederick III, 1296-1337* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 107. It seems Messina owed much of its growth and business development to merchant immigrants from Amalfi. See also Minutolo, 2. Rather than a hospital in the modern meaning of the word, the *ospitio* was a guesthouse accommodating wayfarers on very short-length stays.

⁵ Riley-Smith (2012), 180 et seq. However, see also AOM 6129, fol 17v.

⁶ Andrea Minutolo (1699), 2. Even more, he states that this date 1070, was 22 years after the setting up of the Jerusalem hospice in 1048, and 29 years before the First Crusade in 1099. *'Ripassarono alcuni degli amalfitani fundatori, che negoziavano nella Soria, e nell'Egitto, in Italia ed invaghitisi del Porto di Messina, miracolo della Natura, invidia delle Provincie, e Chiave del Levante, e ponente, risolverono come eseguirono d'erigere ivi una casa, o Gancia per riponervi la mercanzia, che d'Amalfidoveva trasportarsi in Gerusalemme...e nel medesimo luogo fundarono un piccolo Ospedale per commodita' dei pellegrini. Questa fu l'Origine e fundazione del priorato di Messina, sortita nell'anno 1070'*. The archives of the Messina priory had one diploma that predated the first crusade. In 1092, Count Roger of Sicily had donated to Michele, abbot of the church of St John the Precursor, a concession of several pieces of land, which had been previously donated, along the river Mili as well as 200 gold scudi for the building of a 'house' dedicated to the Santa ed Immacolata Concezione in Messina. See Condojanni, 95. Was this the kernel of what was to become the grand priory of Messina in later years?

⁷ Riley-Smith (2012), 17. St Mary of the Latins and its dependent homes were established during the reign of the Fatimid caliph, al-Mustansir (1036-93). A more accurate date would be closer to 1063, when

Messina was adapted by the early Hospitallers for their use.⁸ The papal document *Pie postulatio voluntatis* by Paschal II in 1113 had listed seven localities which were called *Ospedali* of Jerusalem; Messina was the last one to be mentioned.⁹ Luttrell reiterates however, that the confirmation of these Hospitaller possessions in various port cities in Italy in this document, including Messina,¹⁰ was too early a date for this to have been so.¹¹ A charter by King Roger II of Sicily (1095-1154) dated 1136 in which the king donated to the Hospitallers the land where the church of San Giovanni Battista stood in Messina has also recently been found to be bogus. Toomaspoeg suggests that the earliest *known* Hospitaller properties in Messina were not dated earlier than 1171.¹² Nevertheless, a resumé of the early history of the Order in one of the Order's archives dated 1762 clearly claims that it was Count Roger (1031-1101) who had donated *un magnifico spedale nell'antichissima chiesa* to the Gerosolimitan Order as he was

the Christian quarter in Jerusalem was being defined; certainly not after 1070, when Egyptian rule over the city was being challenged by the Seljuk Turks.

⁸Sire (1996), 160. Sire holds that Messina, one of the six hospices of the Order in Italy set up by 1113, was a trading post of these Amalfitan merchants in busy ports and adapted as hospices by the Order.

⁹ See Anthony Luttrell, 'Gli Ospedalieri Italiani: Storia e Storiografia', in *Studi Melitensi*, VI (1998), 73-88. Also, by Luttrell, *The Earliest Hospitallers, in Montjoie Studies in Crusade History in Honour of Hans Eberhard Mayer*, ed Benjamin Z Kedar, Jonathan-Riley Smith and Rudolf Hiestand, (Aldershot, Ashgate, 1997), 37-54.

¹⁰ See M. Camilleri (2002), 17-36. See also Luigi Michele de Palma (2013), 469-485.

¹¹ Anthony Luttrell (1997), 44. See also by the same author Anthony Luttrell (1998), 13-22, and 'Gli Ospedalieri Italiani. Storia e Storiografia', in *Studi Melitensi*, VI, (1998), 76. Luttrell sows doubt as to whether the six properties mentioned in the bull actually belonged to the Hospitallers at that point in time. 'The pope also confirmed the Hospitallers in possession of their properties both in Asia and the West; these were said to include a xenodochium or hospice at Saint Gilles in Provence and six others in Italy, but it seems likely that all or most of them did not exist or, if they did, that they were not in Hospitaller hands in 1113. The Hospital may have been attempting to secure various hospices which had been founded for, and sometimes dedicated to, the Holy Sepulchre; alternatively, certain xenodochia planned in 1113 had not yet been founded'. See also Vito Ricci, *La Commenda di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano a Bitonto nel XV secolo* (Studi Melitensi, 2017), 'Tuttavia nessun altro documento coevo conferma l'esistenza di queste istituzioni, che molto probabilmente in quel momento non erano in possesso dell'Ospedale e, se esistevano, dovevano essere in qualche modo legate al Santo Sepolcro, radicato in Puglia in una maniera più precoce'.

¹² Kristjan Toomaspoeg (2003), 51. Toomaspoeg quotes several other scholarly papers to uphold this argument including KA Kehr, *Die Urkunden der Normannisch-sizilischen Könige*, (Innsbruck 1902), 336, Lynn Townsend White, *Latin Monasticism in Norman Sicily* (Cambridge, The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1938), 368-9, F Chalandon, *Besprechung von Karl Andreas Kehr: Die Urkunden der Normannisch-sizilischen Könige*, in *Le Moyen Age*, 16 (1903), 304, C Bruhl, F Giunta, A Giullou, (ed), *Rogarii II Regis Diplomata Latina* (Codex diplomaticus Regni Siciliae ser 2 vol 2,2 (Cologne-Vienna 1987) 136-41. It seemed that forgeries of other charters being contemplated and executed in Acre until at least 1250, possibly in the convent of the Order and with the arguable consent of the highest stratum of the Order. See Theresa M Vann, 'Hospitaller Record Keeping and Archival Practices', in the *Military Orders Vol 2, Welfare and Warfare*, Ed Helen Nicholson, (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing, 1998), 281.

reluctant to leave the care of pilgrims to any other religious institution.¹³ If reliable, this sets the date of donation to, at the latest, before he died in 1101. The same resumé identifies King Roger as the son of Count Roger, the original donor which places him at the very end of the twelfth century.¹⁴

The pilgrim's refuge was initially described as a *grancia*,¹⁵ later named as *hospitio*.¹⁶ It was this which eventually evolved into the Hospitaller priory of Messina. It might be that the whole argument rests on when the transition from the ownership of the Amalfitan merchants to a *de facto* Hospitaller property happened. Riley-Smith suggests that a Hospitaller *hospitio* was functioning by 1101, although he admits that evidence for this is tenuous.¹⁷ It was very likely that the Order had property in Messina by 1136, when one of the brethren, Fra Ubaldo, was invested as a prior.¹⁸

A year later, in 1137, King Roger II (1095-1154) gave a concession to the Order in Messina.¹⁹ The grand master Raymond du Puy, as head of the Order, was given royal protection, the free use of grass, water, dead wood and forests from the royal demesne,

¹³ AOM 6129, fol 17v. '...scelse (Conte Ruggiero) egli pertanto la città di Messina perche borgo del nostro Regno il più comodo e adattato a navigare. Inalzo quindi ivi un magnifico spedale nell'antichissima chiesa e sotto gl'auspici di S Giovanni Battista ne ad altri volle affidarne la cura se non a religiosi spedalieri di Gerosolimitana...'. Admittedly written 650 years after the event together with the notorious unreliability of eitheenth century historians (Nicholson).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Non dissimile al Padre fu il suo figlio il Re Ruggiero che siccome nel Regno, così gli fu successore nella pietà; attestando delle sue liberalità inverso l'ospedale l'abate Pirri nella sua storia della Sicilia Sacra. L'Esempio del Monarca fu di stimolo a Vassalli, e tra primi benefattori dell'Ospedale si contano il Vescovo Arnaldo di Messina, ed il Conte Simone di Policastro..... ne fece donazioni...

¹⁵ *Grancia* is translated as a grange, or a country farm. Florio's 1611 Italian/English Dictionary (London, Melch, Bradwood, 1611)

¹⁶ Minutolo, 2. *Ripassarono alcuni degli amalfitani fundatori, che negoziavano nella Soria, e nell'Egitto, in Italia ed invaghitisi del Porto di Messina, miracolo della Natura, invidia delle Provincie, e Chaive del Levante, e ponente, risolverono come eseguirono d'erigere ivi una casa, o Gancia per riponervi la mercanzia, che d'Amalfidoveva trasportarsi in Gerusalemme.....e nel medesimo luogo fundarono un piccolo Ospedale per commodità dei pellegrini. Questa fu l'Origine e fundazione del priorato di Messina, sortita nell'anno 1070*. Rather than a hospital in the modern meaning of the word, the *hospitio* was a guesthouse accommodating wayfarers on very short-length stays.

¹⁷ Riley-Smith (2012), 187. The author suggests that a hospital in Messina run by the Order may have been built by 1101, although he questions the evidence. But at least the priory must have been established by 1150. The priory of Apulia (later known as Barletta) was established by 1171.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 197. The foundation of Messina as a hospice, and the setting up of the post of Prior in the 1170s, can be contrasted with the earliest known dates of foundation of the other elements of the Langue of Italy. The priory of Apulia (later known as Barletta) was established by 1171; that of Lombardy, Venice and Pisa instituted by the early 1180 (Sire suggests 1176, 1180 and 1182 in order). The priory of Rome was set up by papal bull (Pope Innocent III 1198-1216) and given as land assets, the Basilian monastery in the forum of Augustus). The priory of Capua was established by 1220 (Sire suggests 1223).

¹⁹ Bresc, 14.

and the transport of merchandise by sea and/or land unencumbered by duties and levies throughout the royal kingdom.²⁰ This concession also included the setting up of new foundations and hospices, and the unrestricted bearing of arms.²¹ This was the time of the Kingdom of Sicily (1130 – 1198),²² set up on Christmas day 1130 by Roger II with concurrence by the antipope Anacletus I, to unite all the lands that the son had acquired from his father under one head.²³

Following these, there were other concessions given to the Order in Messina by succeeding monarchs, including Henry VI (1194 – 1197) in 1196, Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor (1197 – 1250) in 1209,²⁴ and Conrad IV (1250 – 1254) in 1252.²⁵ Frederick II in 1208 donated two large plots of land near the valley of Milazzo to the then prior of Messina fra Garsia.²⁶ A year later, another bequest by the same donor consisted of the mountain of Mesofletu near Novara, which was part of an extended territory called Rodi Milici.²⁷

²⁰ AOM 6131, fol 122r-123r. *‘Il conte Ruggero concesse alla detta Religione tutto il Terreno nel campo di Messina fuori le mura con le fabbriche, case, cimiterio e sue pertinenze situato e convicino della chiesa di San Gio Batta comprendere ... la sua special difesa e protezione l’ospitale con frati, case e possessioni e huomini della famiglia di quella. Doppo la cui morte, il figlio di detto conte nominato parimente Roggero che fu il primo Re di sicilia doppo l’estirpatione de saraceni confirmo detta donatione concesse molte gratie fra l’altre che i rettori e frati del detto ospedale di S Giovanni Battista con la loro famiglia potessero per tutto il regno in qualsivoglio loco portar arme per difeso de suoi beni e persone. Il re Fiderico nell’anno 1209 concede al medesimo priorato molte esentioni e fra l’altre che gli huomini (sono le formali parole) del detto Ospedale di Messina e dell’altre case di San Giovanni di questo regno siano liberi d’ogni vassallaggio e serviggio secolare ne siano obbligati a rispondere per qualsivoglia pretensione in presenza d’altri fuorché nelle corte del medesimo ospedale tanto in cause civili come criminali che spettano alle re.’*

²¹ *‘...suis protetione & defensione nostra...concessione Pontificium liberalitate Principum oblatione...suis plateatica...quam de meu seu, quibuscumque alium ecclesias...seu castris & villis...deferent arma.’*

²² David Abulafia, *The Two Italies: Economic Relations Between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Northern Communes* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005), 42. Abulafia maintains that Messina in the thirteenth century was the product of ‘A Norman Phenomenon’ and also a ‘Phenomenon of the crusades’. Indeed, Messina gains commercially and administratively with the unification of Norman territory. It also developed political predominance over the southern Calabrian mainland. See Epstein (1992), 240-267.

²³ Douglas, 230

²⁴ Minutolo, 10

²⁵ *Ibid*, 9

²⁶ Magione 401, fol 183v. The prioral visitation of 1603/4 had looked over several pieces of agricultural land in the plain of Milazzo, in various sizes from 10 tumini to 14 salmi and even bigger; San Giovanni, dello Garnici, Milotti, di Janni, *‘ un altro pezzo di terra seminativa nominata ...in sudetta piana di milazzo misurari quali et consisti in salmati quattordici...’*

²⁷ Bresc, 17

Various other donations of large parcels of land and property in the province were bequeathed to the Order by the royal entourage, concentrated mainly in the eastern part of Sicily, but also, to a lesser extent in other regions.²⁸ Under the reign of Tancred of Sicily (1189-1194), a hospital called Ognissanti founded in Palermo by his chancellor Matteo D'Ajello²⁹ was given to the Order to be managed by its confraters; the assets that funded this hospital were to become the nucleus of the Guilla commandery of Palermo.³⁰ Tancred's successor Queen Constance (1194-98) bestowed several new donations to the priory of Messina and confirmed others that had been donated previously. At some point in time, the Queen had also taken the priory with all its holdings under royal protection. In 1199, Margaret di Lucy, daughter of the count of Paternò and founder of the Cistercian monastery at Roccamatore, gave the village of Mineo as a donation to help the Order continue with its charitable work. In 1203, Guglielmo Malconvenant also donated the hamlet of Cellaro, a village near Sciacca.³¹ Seven years later, Hermann of Striberg, Count of Gesualdo then donated the whole territory of Rodi Milici to the Order.³²

An analysis of these royal diplomas, together with the papal bulls, concessions, and donations, awarded to the Hospital of St John in the early years of its existence in Sicily, do show that these were numerous and massive, consisting of huge estates, swathes of land and even whole villages. These were the donations which coincided with the aftermath of the early crusades.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4. 'Nel Regno della nostra Sicilia furono concessi molto podori alla Grancia, o sia Ospedale per esser più commodamente trattati i Pellegrini, Fratelli e Servienti, che di passaggio dimoravano nella città di Messina'.

²⁹ The monk chronicler Petrus di Ebolo entitles this vice-chancellor as Scariothis line 196, Templum Luciferi, fol 33, line 973, peccati bigamun, fol 33 line 990. See Eduard Winkelmann, *Des Magisters Petrus de Ebulo Liber ad Honorem Augusti*, (Leipzig, 1874).

³⁰ Besc, 17. This had been another Cistercian monastery, and was the property at one time of the Teutonic Order.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 17

³² Minutolo, 25. The author gives a copy (probably from the original collected by D'Amico) of the deed of donation by Count Hermann of Striberg. 'concedimus & in perpetuum confirmamus eidem Hospitali Casale quod dicitur Milici, cum omnibus iustis tenementis & pertinenti...'



Figure 3.1. Map of the Hospitaller Sicilian Commanderies and other Land Assets at the end of the Seventeenth Century.

It was these regional religio-political conflicts in the Latin east that triggered two particular events in early Hospitaller history.³³ The first was the emergence of the Military and Hospitaller Orders. The second was a surge of charitable contributions to these Orders, in return for which donors militated for a rapprochement towards spirituality. In the context of the Order of St John, this was cause and effect. In contradistinction to the Templars, who were wholly military, the Hospitallers had what was essentially a brand name. Hospitality and charity were what they were established to do, and the example set by the founder of the Order was emphatic.

Up till the very end of the eleventh century, the Hospital was awarded only two donations in Sicily, as evidenced from the transcriptions of Amico.³⁴ One, dated 1092,

³³ Nikolas Jaspert, *The Crusades*, (English translation by Phyllis Jestice) (Routledge, New York and London, 2006), 145 et seq.

³⁴ Condojanni, 96-143.

was a concession from Count Roger to Michele, abbot of the church of San Giovanni Precursore, of multiple pieces of land along the river Mili. The other donation was made by Godfrey of Bouillon to the Hospital of St John the Baptist, near the very end of 1100. This was a house in the area called *Monalem Mamboise* with all its appurtenances, a gift to compensate the Hospital's brethren 'for its spirit of charity towards the poor and the sick'.³⁵

The next four centuries, however, saw an exponential increase in the number of royal high-value concessions awarded to the Order in Messina. In the twelfth century, the order had received no less than 43 concessions/awards. These rose to 70 in the thirteenth century, decreased to 45 in the fourteenth, and rose again slightly to 53 diplomas in the fifteenth. However, between 1501 and 1600, there were only five concessions, dropping to two in the following century. Apart from these high-status donations, there must have been many others consisting of much smaller land assets, and many hundreds of small leases gifted by the plebeians and the lower social strata.³⁶

There was also a marked difference in the type of bequests given by the king together with his retinue, and the church. The donations given by monarchs were mostly physical assets, mostly cultivated land. These included the whole spectrum of landed assets from estates and hamlets (the *casale* of Milici was donated to the Order in 1211 by the Count of Gesualdo, Hermann of Striberg) to extensive mountainous terrains (donated by Frederick II in 1209).³⁷ Sometimes the donations came in the form of royal exemptions and concessions. In July 1206, King Frederick II conferred to the Order the authority to deal in any form of commerce in total freedom without incurring tax on any of the transactions of whatever type, free pasture on the royal demesne and the free use of wood. Significantly, the king also exempted the members of the Order from any military service to the feudal lords and any other forms of vassalage. The Order was given the authority to have its own criminal and civil courts, and members were allowed the faculty to make wills favouring the Order.³⁸

³⁵ Condojanni, 96.

³⁶ *Ibid*, See charters of Amico.

³⁷ The main estates of the Order were already *de facto* established by the Early Middle Ages.

³⁸ Condojanni 101, Charter enumerated by Amico no. 35.

Conversely, the support that the Order received from the church was of a more spiritual nature. Some high-ranking prelates did bequeath landed estates (in 1147, archbishop Arnaldo of Messina donated the church of Santa Maria near the river of Vaccaria to the Order);³⁹ but the papal curia assisted more by spiritual favours. These included exhortations to Christians to assist the Order in their mission of care, multiple indulgences, alms-giving by the population in the form of monetary donations, the right of burial in their own churches and chapels which triggered remittances to the Order, exemptions of tithes and *decime*, and the free use of pasture land of bishoprics. A litany of popes, starting from Paschal II and his *Pie postulatio* confirming the Order's 'possession' of the 7 domiciles as property of the Hospital of St John in Italy (including Messina in Sicily),⁴⁰ instigated and promulgated bulls and decrees that had aided the Order in no small degree.⁴¹

Although the gifting of charitable donations in the beginning of the twelfth century was a presumed collateral effect of the first crusade (1096-1099), warfare was not the main reason that prompted donations to the Hospitaller Order. Nearly all the initial donations and bequests endowed by royal decree or papal bulls were tied to one reason, namely the exhortation to assist the Order in its continued hospitality. Donations to other Orders followed the scope of the relevant institution.⁴² No donation of these early

³⁹ Condojanni, 96. Diploma 9: '*Arnaldo, Eletto per grazia di dio della Chiesa di Messina, e di troina, col consiglio ed il consenso del Capitolo, dona all'Ospedale di S. Giovanni Gerosolimitano la Chiesa di Santa Maria con tutte le sue pertinenze, sita presso il rivo antico di Vaccaria*'

⁴⁰ On the issue whether the *Pie Postulatio* was a papal document or bull see Anthony Luttrell, 'The Hospital's privilege of 1113: Texts and contexts', in *The Military Orders, Volume 6.1: Culture and Conflict in the Mediterranean World*, ed. Jochen Schenk & Mike Carr (London, Routledge, 2017), pp. 3-9.

⁴¹ See Condojanni, 96 et seq. Several popes endowed the Hospitaller Order in the early years. In 1154, Pope Anastasio IV (1153-54) confirmed the papal protection of Raimondo, master of the xenodochio in Jerusalem and his brethren: the same Pope also established standards in the Hospitaller mission of assisting the pilgrims and the poor. It also included the right of burial of the brethren in their churches. Pope Alessandro III (1159-81) in 1164 ordained to the bishops and prelates of the catholic church to concede whatever help to the Hospitallers together with other privileges including the collection of alms, burial privileges, exemptions from the payment of tithes and the free use of pastureland. Bulls instigating a helping hand of the clergy to the Hospitallers emanated from Popes Innocenzo II (1130-43), Adriano IV (1154-59), and Innocenzo III (1179-80).

⁴² See Toomaspoeg (2003), 48, on the objectives why the Templar and the Hospitaller Orders were created. See also, Helen J Nicholson, 'Margaret de Lacy and the Hospital of St John at Aconbury, Herefordshire', in Anthony Luttrell, Helen J Nicholson, *Hospitaller Women in the Middle Ages*, (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2006), 160. 'Lacy donations to the Hospitallers, in contrast to those of the Templars, were by members of the family.....who wished to give to an order which helped to defend the Holy Land and also played a broader charitable role than the purely military role of the Templars'.

years was given to support openly the military capabilities of the Hospitaller Order in the Middle Eastern crusades. The main motive remained the same: Godfrey de Bouillon - *in recompensa e premio dello spirito di carità esercitato dai frati verso i poveri a gli infermi...*,⁴³ King Roger in 1137 - *..potestá di fondare Ospedali e ricoverare infermi e ricevere elemosine*,⁴⁴ and Pope Anastasio IV in 1154 - *..alla missione dell'assistenza ai pellegrini ed ai poveri*.⁴⁵

Difficult situations arose when the Hospitallers' allegiance was caught in the cross hairs between the secular monarch and the spiritual protector. When in 1267, the Kingdom of Sicily was occupied by Charles of Anjou, brother to King Louis IX of France, the supporters of the incumbent monarch, Conradin (last of the Hohenstaufen kings of Sicily), rose in sympathy against the French incursion. Pope Clement IV had asked the Order for military support to help the French take-over against Conradin, their suzerain. Philip of Egly, the prior of France immediately assigned the military resources of the Order to help the French cause, thus causing destitution of the French Hospitaller estates, whereas the land assets in Sicily were similarly devastated.⁴⁶

With time, the Sicilian assets of the Order became richer and more ostentatious. Even then, the prioral buildings of the Order in Messina must have been set out on a grand scale and furnished lavishly, sumptuous enough to house Kings and Popes, together with their entourages. In 1165, when Pope Alexander III (1159-1181) left hurriedly the papal estates after having clashed with Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, he landed in Messina and was welcomed in the priory of the Order.⁴⁷ Again in 1179, Grand Master Roger des Moulins stayed for a while at the priory of the Order in Messina *en passant* to Jerusalem.⁴⁸

By the end of the fourteenth century, the priory of Messina had an extensive patrimony, mostly located in Eastern Sicily but also across the straits in Calabria. These

⁴³ Condojanni 95.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁴⁶ Riley-Smith, 186-187.

⁴⁷ Minutolo, 4. The priory of the Order in Messina was 'eletto piú comodo albergo di un Santo Vicario'.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 4. '...che circa a questi tempi soggiornò nel detto Ospedale il Gran Maestro Fra Roggiero de Molins settimo, maestro, eletto nel 1179, nel passaggio che fece da Ponente al suo Convento o sia casa del ospedale della Città Santa di Gerusalemme...'

included Adernò, San Filippo of Argirò, the village of Rodi Milici with Mesofleto at Novara, land assets at Polizzi,⁴⁹ the hamlet of Cellaro, the assets of La Guilla in Palermo,⁵⁰ several parcels of land at Taormina, hamlets at Castanea, vineyards at Piazza, other hamlets in Itala and Guidomandri, and several houses and gardens in Messina and Gallica in Calabria. Other holdings included those in Girgenti,⁵¹ and Marsala.⁵² Later, other assets at Castrovillari were added (notarial deed in 1271) and the bequests of St Eufemia in 1305.⁵³

The documentation of the proceedings of a court case instituted by the Order against the archbishop of Messina in 1277 provides insight into the range of human resources managing the priory of Messina at that point in time.⁵⁴ The priory supported twenty brothers, including a prior, a commander, a treasurer, a seneschal, a hospitaller, another commander in charge of the commandery of Paternò and five other brothers in charge of five vineyards, indicating that one of the main produce of the priory at the time was wine.

⁴⁹ Pirri, 934. The foundation of Polizzi as a Magisterial camera goes back to the end of 1200. It started as a small parcel of land with a watermill and was the donation of Roger of Aquila, Count of Avellino in 1177. By the middle of the seventeenth century, it was a rich commandery and was conferred to the most prestigious higher echelons of the Order by the grandmaster. The accommodation included several commodious houses, 10 in 1623 and 16 in 1681, covered and opens courtyards, a garden with cellars underneath used in winemaking, freshwater wells, stables with an adjoining hay loft and chapel. It also owned several manors and townhouses. The whole establishment was surrounded by a perimeter wall of 630 feet.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 943. The nucleus of della Guilla was a house in the Albergheria quarters of the city and donated in 1203 by William Malcovenant, grand admiral of the Order. It served at one time as the hospital of Ognissanti.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 704, 937/8. The basis of the commandery of St Mary Magdalene was a small hospital and chapel which was given to the Teutonics in 1215. The hospital was rebuilt in 1339 and embellished by Giovanni Chiaramonte, Seneschal of the Realm. It was dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, to whom Chiaramonte had a special devotion. In 1392, Andrea Chiaramonte, a descendent of Giovanni, was decapitated, and all the assets reverted to the King, Martin I, who then granted the endowment to the Order.

⁵² Pirri suggests that the commandery of St John of Rhodes in Marsala was ancient – *antichissima*. Pirri 945.

⁵³ Minutolo, 18

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

3.2.2 Second Phase: c.1300 – c.1400s

The second period encompassed the fourteenth and fifteenth century and includes two significant developments in Hospitaller history: the first was the dissolution of the Religious and Military Order of the Temple in 1312, followed by Clement V's bull *Ad providam* - where Templar assets were passed on to the Hospitallers;⁵⁵ and the second was the establishment of the post of Receiver in the Order's administration, as has already been discussed in Chapter two.

In 1312, with the annihilation of the Military Order of the Temple inculcated by King Philip IV of France, most of the ex-Templar properties across Europe were transferred to the Order of St John, albeit at some legal cost:⁵⁶ some of these land assets in Sicily were incorporated into the priory of Messina.⁵⁷ These included the commanderies of Lentini (after which it became known as the Commandery of San Giovanni *li Bagni*) and Caltagirone,⁵⁸ the church of Paternò with its manor, tenements

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 25. The transfer of ex-Templar property to the Order of St John did not come cheaply. Although the papal bull *Ad providam* of Clement V on 2 May 1312 authorized the transfer of property to the Order, the actual physical act was not that simple. The Order had to institute several court claims, necessitating lengthy and arduous proceedings, which came at a cost to the Order. As Minutolo states, transcribing what another author Giovanni Villani had written before him, (Giovanni Villani *Nuovo Cronaca*, (ed) G. Porta, (Parma, Ugo Guanda Editore, 1991), the cost of litigation to embrace these ex-Templar properties came near enough to the actual cost of buying them outright. '*Sudò non poco a recuperare in parte, dopo un gran dispendio, e lunghe liti, a segno di avere speso tanto, per intieramente possederli, quanto se si fosse accinta a comprarli*'.

⁵⁶ A substantial part of the Templar patrimony was given to the Hospitallers when the former was suppressed at the beginning of the fourteenth century. See Helen J. Nicholson, *The Knights Hospitaller*, (Suffolk, Boydell & Brewer, 2001), 48. 'Despite papal support and enormous expense, met by heavy borrowing from the Italian banking houses, the Hospitallers never received all the Templars' lands to which they were entitled'. The Hospitallers also inherited the debts and obligations attached to them.

⁵⁷ All the assets that the Templar Order had in Sicily (rather than Messina) were given by papal decree to the Order of St John's priory in Messina. See AOM 6129, fol 17v. '*...fu a cuore e de sovrani, e de vescovi, e delle persone del secolo il Pio Istituto della Religione quanto allora quando sotto il Ponteficato del Quinto Clemente nel Concilio di Vienna tenuto al 1307 si aboli l'Ordine de Cavalieri Templari, perche col di loro Gran Maestro Giacomo di Molay caduti erano in varie perniciose eretiche dottrine onde poi ne furono dannati vivi al meritato castigo delle fiamme e tutti di loro beni, che nella sicilia possedevano furono assegnati a nostri religiosi e all'ospedale*'.

⁵⁸ Pirri, 671. The commandery of St John of Caltagirone, also known as St Mary of the Temple had a church dedicated to the latter. This was also the name of the ancient manor in the same place on which the church of St Mary of the Temple was built on top of a hill under which ran a river called the Temple or Tenchio. It was renamed St John in 1391. See also Fabrizio D'Avenia (2003), 37.

and other estates in the territory of Scordia, the hamlet of San Michele and land in Mineo.⁵⁹

Other donations, including land holdings in Catania were given to the Order at this time, and by 1375, new parcels of property were also incorporated with the Guilla commandery in Palermo. Various other donations spread out all over the island included Patti near Messina, which was given to fra Giovanni Clavostro as a concession in 1396,⁶⁰ Gela and Agrigento to the south, and Gangi and Corleone in the central mountainous region.⁶¹ The commandery of Sant'Angelo di Brolo was also a medieval donation to the priory. Some of these bequests consisted of non-arable land, possibly of no major importance to the Order. By 1400, it had acquired other commanderies in Piazza Armerina, Modica, Mazzara, Caltagirone, Randazzo, Taormina, Marsala and Nicosia.

3.2.3 Third Phase: c1500 - 1600

The third period covered the sixteenth century, which was a quiescent interval as far as donations to the Hospitallers were concerned; it was a time when the priory and its commanderies were consolidated but no new major donations were added to the Hospitaller priory. The grand priory remained in *status quo* until at least 1603.

With the loss of Rhodes in 1522, the grand priory of Messina was to serve as a refuge to the vanquished Order. All the injured and sick Hospitallers were accommodated in the priory building and outbuildings, so the priory must indeed have been palatial.⁶²

⁵⁹ Minutolo, 25

⁶⁰ Condojanni 116, Magione 401, 155, Pirri 943.

⁶¹ D'Avenia (2003), 37.

⁶² Minutolo 31. 'allogiando nel Priorato tutti i Signori della Gran Croce, il cui salone fu accomodato per il feriti ed Iammalati, venuti da Rodi con l'armata della Religione, al numero piú du cinque mila.' The grand master was met at the quayside by the Sicilian viceroy the Duke of Montileone, Ettore Pignatelli who, at the time was residing in Messina, by the archbishop of Messina Don Antonio della Legnante and the *stratigoto* Don Vincenzo Ladran.

In 1530, when the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V gave the Maltese archipelago and the municipality of Tripoli as a feudal concession to the Hospitaller Order, it brought the latter's convent geographically closer to the sister island of Sicily, a mere sixty miles distant, and a few hours away by *felucca* or galley. By then, the priory of Messina was considered to be one of the oldest institutions of the Order.⁶³ It had four commanderies, the so-called *camere priorale*,⁶⁴ situated in Lentini,⁶⁵ Catania, Taormina and Paternò.⁶⁶ Apart from these, it also managed one of the oldest and richest donations given to the Order in Sicily - a prosperous inventory of ancient rents and leases of houses and lands, vineyards and olive groves, incorporating the great estate of Milici.⁶⁷ The land assets included various commanderies, town tenements, gardens, houses, windmills, water mills, and bridges.⁶⁸ As a priory it oversaw and administered all the commanderies in its province. The Priory also collected the *responsiones*, the annual obligations of the different commanderies as set by the various Chapters General;⁶⁹ the portion was calculated on the net worth of the land asset.⁷⁰

The lack of donations at this point in time did not only affect the Order of St John; indeed, the same phenomenon was happening in the universal church in general,

⁶³ D'Avenia (2003), 36.

⁶⁴ AOM 1666, *Compendio delle Materie contenute nel Codice del Sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano*, 40.

⁶⁵ Lentini was an ex-Templar possession awarded to the Hospitallers in 1312. During the visitation of 1604 it consisted of the fief of San Leonardo Sottano, the fief of San Leonardo Soprano, the fief of San Lio, the fief Trigona and the fief of San Giovanni delli Cugni and Catalicciardo. These fiefs included several estates and manors, large tracts of cultivated lands, vineyards, several tens of leases, houses and stores including large caves where the grain was stored and conserved.

⁶⁶ Each Priory had a maximum of 4 commanderies reserved for its use and given as concessions to the brethren of the Order by the prior or grand prior. Their derived income supported the priory. Similar to Messina, the priory of Lombardy also had four commanderies entitled prioral chambers, including the commandery of San Egidio di Moncaglieri. See Valentia Burgassi, 'Il Gran Priorato di Lombardia e la Commenda di Moncalieri', in *Studi Piemotesi*, XLVII (1), 2018), 239-250.

⁶⁷ The estate of Milici was awarded to the Order by King Frederick II as a concession on the 8 March 1211.

⁶⁸ AOM 2162, f93v. this provides a list of the commanderies of the priory of Messina, their annual incomes and *responsiones* at the end of the seventeenth century.

⁶⁹ Minutolo 26. The annual quantum that was charged to each commandery in 1695, as had been previously agreed in the Prioral assemblies, which had to be forwarded to the Convent of the Order in Malta by the end of April of each year.

⁷⁰ In the late sixteenth century, a new charge was added twice, in 1574 and 1588. This was added to the earlier, so called *responsioni ordinarie*, so that after 1588, the *responsiones* consisted of these three elements. The *responsiones* were stipulated to be, two thirds of half the income of each commandery. This was essentially a third of the income which had to be channelled to the common treasury annually. See Caravita, *Delle Commende ed Amministrazione*, AOM 1682, fol 10v et seq. Also, Hoppen (1973), 103-19.

affecting its organizations. Noble and royal donations and privileges to the Spanish church rose substantially between the tenth to the thirteenth century, and then declined in the late middle Ages, although the quantum donated then remained substantial.⁷¹ Other European religious Orders experienced the same occurrence.

The reason for this relative dearth of donations was probably multifactorial.

The crusades were a chain of events initiated by Pope Urban II after the Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus had appealed to him for aid to recapture Seljuk overrun territory. However, the situation with the Spanish religious pogroms, particularly near their end, in the sixteenth century, had a totally different context. Arguably, the twelfth century crusades could be construed as trans-European ventures which also worked with Byzantine Greeks, whereas the sixteenth-century wars against Islam were based around national states (although in reality nascent national states were clearly around in the twelfth century crusades).⁷² The latter events were dominated by a European monarchy trying to regain its sovereign territory,⁷³ in renaissance Europe associated with great social changes where humanistic sentiments were surfacing, and with the protestant onslaught on the Catholic Church, all happening at the same time.⁷⁴ Another premise could be that in the twelfth century, the concept of the crusade indulgences was novel and attractive, whereas after Luther's challenge in 1519, indulgencies were discredited

⁷¹ See Teofilo F Ruiz, *Spanish Society, 1348-1700*, (Taylor and Francis, London and Rome, 2017), 91 et seq.

⁷² Ediberto Romain, *Citizen and its Exclusions*, (New York University Press, 2010), 49. Particularly Chap 4, 'The Movement towards Nascent Nation-States'.

⁷³ Indeed, the Spanish monarchy had enticed the different Religious and Military Orders to help the Kingdom in the process of extirpation of the Muslims from the mainland. See Guida, 80: '*Con l'avanzare della reconquista si consolidò sempre più il patto tra Ordine militari e le corone di Aragona e Castiglia. Un patto non scritto, ma i cui termini appaiono chiari: generoso appoggio delle monarchie allo sviluppo territoriale, economico e giurisdizionale degli Ordini in cambio del loro apporto incondizionato alla guerra ed al processo di strutturazione politica dei territori sottratti ai musulmani*'.

⁷⁴ Note the Spanish Reconquista, with the capture of Granada in 1492. For a different viewpoint on this, see Alan Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the early Fourteenth Centuries* (Basingstoke, McMillan, 1992), 39 et seq. Forey argues the point that the Papacy made little attempt to involve the established military orders directly in campaigns against heretics and other opponents of the church in western Christendom. But also note the counter argument brought by Demurger that the Papacy 'allowed to the warriors fighting in Spain the same spiritual rewards as those granted to the participants of the First Crusade'. See Michel Balard, 'The French Recent Historiography of the Holy War' in *La Papauté et les croisades / The Papacy and the Crusades: Actes du VIIIe Congrès de la Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East/ Proceedings of the VIIIth Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East*, (Routledge, Abingdon, 2016), 49.

to a certain extent, and lost their significance to donors. Pious gifting to the church simply did not happen, as it did four hundred years before, notwithstanding a phase of relative calm Europe was then experiencing.⁷⁵

The reasons for this lack of donations to the Order become even more complex when this is seen in the context of what was happening to the Order of St John at the time. Two major events, the siege of Malta in 1565 and the naval encounter off Lepanto in 1571, had seen the star of the Order in its ascendancy. Although the siege of Malta did not really halt the steadfast progress of the Ottoman Empire on the European mainland, and probably left only a temporary dent in the Ottoman military machine, the Order came out of the ordeal with banners flying, even though they were extricated at the eleventh hour by the Sicilian viceroy.⁷⁶ Prestigious accolades and gifts were showered on the Order in the aftermath of this epic battle. However, it seemed that the spiritual connotations of the outcome, the triumphant success of the Catholic Faith over Islam, did not have the same bearing on the faithful, as it most certainly did in the earlier crusades in Palestine, and did not compel them to help in a tangible fashion this victorious Order. Decreased relevancy of the Order in the context of the sixteenth century is often cited as a cause for this lack, but this argument becomes untenable with the spate of increased donations to the Hospitaller cause later on in the seventeenth century.⁷⁷

In 1568 there was only one grant of land to the Order; Santa Maria della Giumarre, in the district of Mazzara in the *Val di Mazzara* region of Sicily, but this in reality fell within the administration of the grand priory of Lombardy.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ The Peace of Cateau-Cambresis on the 3 April 1559 between Henry II of France and Philip II of Spain brought to an end the 60-year wars, on the European mainland and the Mediterranean Sea, between the Habsburg and the Valois. With the terms of the treaty, Spain maintained control of Milan, Naples, Sicily and Sardinia. There followed 40 years of relative tranquility in Europe until 1595, when Henry IV of France declared war on Spain. This was again followed by the Treaty of Vervins on 2 May 1598 under the auspices of Pope Clement VIII. See Domenico Sella, *Italy in the Seventeenth Century*, (London, Routledge, 1997).

⁷⁶ See Mallia Milanese, 'The Siege of Malta 1565: A Reassessment', in *Valetta. Malta's Hospitaller City and other Essays* (Midsea Books, Malta, 2019).

⁷⁷ See Mallia Milanese, 'A Living Force of Continuity in a Declining Mediterranean: the Hospitaller Order of St John in Early Modern Times', in *Mediterranean identities: Environment, Society, Culture*, ed Borna Fuerst-Bjelis (Bod, 2017), 27-46.

⁷⁸ Pirri, 865/945. When Pope Pius V was asked to establish a convent of Dominican priests in the north of Italy, he gave them the Hospitaller commandery of Santa Maria del Bosco, which was a component of the

There were no more donations for the remainder of that century, but in the first half of the seventeenth century the Order in Messina saw a curious spate of endowments that augmented its land assets.⁷⁹

3.2.4 Fourth Phase: c. 1600 - c1650

The fourth phase was a period of fifty years, from 1600 to 1650 where a number of *jus patronatus* commanderies were founded within the priory of Messina in a short span of time.

Between 1603 and 1644, the grand priory of Messina was supplemented by no less than 15 new commanderies, donated by patrons who looked favourably at the Order and its activities.⁸⁰ Most of these donated commanderies were reserved for knights, whereas a small number were for the lower grades, the Chaplains and the Sergeants-at-Arms.⁸¹ There were various reasons for this surge, which will be explained in a later chapter. However, the nature of these donations was different from those given prior to this point. These were commanderies of *jus patronatus* or patronal endowments, with the difference that unlike the earlier donations, came shackled with several conditions that bound the Order to various commitments.

Priory of Lombardy. In exchange, the pope gave the Hospitallers the Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria Della Giumarre in the district of Mazzara in Sicily.

⁷⁹ D'Avenia (2003), 36-38.

⁸⁰ Pirri, 943-945. The author gives a list of eleven commanderies of *jus patronatus* but misses one. His list (with founder and date of institution in brackets) includes the commandery of S Giuseppe Barberino of Piazza (Dario barberino, 1628), the commandery of Vizzini (Melchiorre Cannizzaro, 1603), the commandery of S Stefano of SchiETTina (Stefano Schittino, 1628), the commandery of s Antonio Albigiana of Palermo (Antonio Albigieno, 1644), the commandery of S Giovanni Battista and Giacomo known as Saracena of Caltagirone (Giacomo Ottaviano, 1637), the commandery Bonanno (Giovanbattista Bonanno, 1637), the commandery of the Borea of Siracusa (Barone D. Pietro Borea, 1641), the commandery of San Giovanni of Ragusa (Blandano Arezzo, 1626), and the commandery of Calli (Michele and Aliosio Calli, 1631). D'Avenia adds another: the commandery Malandrino of Noto (Baron Giovanni Matteo malandrino, 1641). Apart from these there were two other commanderies for the provincial chaplains and the sergeants-at-arms: these included the commandery of Mazzarino (D. Pietro Cusmano, 1633) and the commandery of Butera (D. Angelo Morrone, 1644).

⁸¹ D'Avenia (2003), 37. D'Avenia maintains that the commandery of private patronage was not solely a Sicilian phenomenon. Between the end of the 1400 and 1658, the Langue of Italy saw the foundation of 57 such commanderies, with an incremental rise in the first half of the 1600; 32 commanderies of *jus patronatus* were set up from 1633 to 1658.

Arguably, since time immemorial, all donations carried out between the church and its members can be construed as having been quid-pro-quo transactions. Each side is granted an advantage or favour to the satisfaction of both. From the ecclesiastical side, the benefit bestowed on the donor was mostly of a spiritual nature - an indulgence, prayers for respite during the mortal life of the donor and relatives, or in the afterlife, consolidated by a firm assurance of eternal life. On the other hand, the donor's transaction included mainly material gains for the church. This could have been anything from the transfer of landed estates, large or small, according to the status of the donor, expensive artisanal embellishments to churches and chapels, and also monetary donations.

The early post-crusade Hospitaller donations from the higher strata of society mostly reflected the above. They were endowments given mainly in the spirit of charity and compassion to an Order which was visibly seen to be serving the poor and the sick members of society. This applied for the very early years, but as the Order was becoming increasingly militant, other gains for the high worth donors included protection from the Islamic tide at the peripheries of the newly set up kingdoms and principalities, which in the end also made economic sense.⁸²

In the seventeenth century, however, donors of *jus patronatus* assets were not satisfied simply with the spiritual gifts that the Order (and the church) gave them in return for tangible assets. They started to request material favours as well, in their turn. In most cases these donors asked for an instant step-up on the ladder of social status, with an increase in privileges and pre-eminences. This included awards of knighthoods to instantly augment the prestige of the donor.

Nicholson suggests that *jus patronatus* bequests were not dissimilar to other schemes of donations found in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries which had features in common with the system of usufruct, by which patrons donated property to the Order

⁸² See Ilana F Silber, 'Gift-giving in the Great Traditions: The Case of Donations to Monasteries in the Medieval West', in *European Journal of Sociology* vol 36, no 2 (1995), 209-243.

but retained the absolute use of the asset for their enjoyment, *vita durante*, and also for the benefit of their successors, in some cases going down several generations.⁸³

The conditions associated with patronal donation reflected a semi-business transaction and immediate pay-back. This included bestowing on the donor the cross of the Order immediately the assets changed hands. Proofs of nobility mandated by the statutes were bypassed. The donor also had the right to name his successor to the commandery, and in some instances this was repeated even up to four times, before which the property devolved to the priory and the Order.⁸⁴ The income of most of these commanderies averaged about 300 *scudi* annually,⁸⁵ and some much less.⁸⁶ Some were small and were eventually incorporated into others to make the commandery viable economically.⁸⁷

⁸³ Nicholson communication, 2020. Earlier commanderies may have continued a connection with the patronal family (in England the case of Aconbury Priory in the 1230s suggests this, as does John Stillingflete's book of 1434), although this was not explicit in donation charters. In contrast, in *jus patronatus* commanderies the family retained an explicit link and control over the commandery that they had donated. See Helen Nicholson, 'Margaret de Lacy and the Hospital of St John at Aconbury, Herefordshire', in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 50 (4) 1999,629-651.

⁸⁴AOM, cod. 2161, fol. 140r. The setting up of a *jus patronatus* commandery in the Langue of Italy in the seventeenth century was conditional on the following nine precepts: 1) the annual income accruing had to be acceptable to the grand master and Council. The founder was then given the privilege to name the new commandery, either by giving it its family name or the name of a saint. 2) Although the founder was allowed to enjoy the commandery during his lifetime he was not necessarily given the title of commander. 3) The founder together with his consort could put on the habit of the Order and to bear a golden eight-pointed cross. 4) The founder could enjoy the commandery for up to four generations of a family line, at the end of which the commandery would revert to the priory for smutition. 5) The founder was spared the ceremony of passage and the mandatory four *caravane*. He was asked to be obedient and loyal to the grand master. 6) The founder could bestow the remainder of his property as he wished. 7) The founder and his descendents were obliged to pay the annual *responsiones* 8) if any of the descendants decided to submit to a regular profession, they had to undergo proofs of nobility and the statutory 4 *caravane* amongst other conditions 9) at the end of four generations, the commandery would revert to the priory for smutition.

⁸⁵ Pirri, 945.

⁸⁶ AOM 2162, f93v. When fra Francesco Maria Gabuccini was the incumbent commander in the commandery of Ragusa between 1666 and 1671, the income of the commandery was 120 *onze* and apparently no *responsiones* were being paid at the time. At the same time, the priory of Messina together with its *camere priorale* had an income of 2240 *onze*, nearly twenty times the amount being generated by the minor commandery.

⁸⁷ Gatt, 83 et seq, on the dismemberment of parts of commanderies and their re-attachment to others, presumably to make them more viable. An example was the Cugno.

3.2.5 Fifth Phase: c1660 - 1798

The fifth and last phase of the development of the Messina priory covered the years from 1660 to 1798, the year which marked the end of the Order's Malta period.⁸⁸ During these years there was continuous consolidation of the Hospitaller estate of Messina. Some commanderies were amalgamated which made for more efficient management. Others with a larger acreage were dismembered down to more manageable assets and the resultant appendages added to smaller commanderies to make them profitable. Despite this continuous flux, by 1660 the priory of Messina had grown to nineteen commanderies. In a 1660 list of commanderies under Messina, the commandery of Butera and Borea were left out of the roll. Both commanderies were of the type *di cabimento*. However, by at least 1733, both were included again in a census of assets of that year.

By 1760, the priory of Messina had reached the largest physical extent ever in its existence, incorporating no less than 19 commanderies including the last one, that of Malandrina; their typology differed as some of them were *di cabimento* and *di miglioramento*,⁸⁹ and others were prioral commanderies of Grace.⁹⁰ See Table 3.1.

The seventeenth century was a particularly turbulent time for the island of Sicily and this, directly and indirectly, had major consequences for the grand priory of Messina. Major catastrophes took their toll on the island and its inhabitants. These included geological disruptions, fulminant infections that overran the country, famine, and war.

Sicily is a seismologically active island. There were tens of volcanic eruptions from Etna, and these were grouped mostly in 1614-1624, 1634-1638 and 1651-1653.⁹¹

⁸⁸ In 1801, the priory of Messina with all its assets was conferred to Prince Leopold. See Sire (1994), 173.

⁸⁹ These were the commanderies that had to be earned. There were several stipulations for a prospective holder, including payment of the passage fees, taking part in four *caravane* with the Order's navy, and not being in debt with the Common Treasury.

⁹⁰ AOM 899, f125 to f 142.

⁹¹ Corsaro RA, Cristofolini R, Patanè L, 'The 1669 Eruption at Mount Etna: Chronology, Petrology and Geochemistry, with Inference on Magma sources and Ascent Mechanisms'. *Bulletin of Volcanology* (1996) 58: 348-358

These caused disruptions and damage mostly on the eastern side of the island, essentially where the priory of Messina had the bulk of its estates. These activities were followed by the catastrophic eruption of 1669 where the lava flow reached and partly overran the city walls of Catania. Most of the estates and towns on the south and eastern flanks of the volcano were totally destroyed by the pyroclastic flow and buried by lava. On 9 January 1693, a foreshock heralded the Val di Noto earthquakes which continued for the next few days; the damage to estates and buildings was massive and the estimated death toll exceeded 50,000.⁹²

Catastrophic waves of plague ravaged Sicily in the seventeenth century, the main ones occurring between 1629 and 1630 and between 1656 and 1657. These devastated the Sicilian population by an estimated 30 to 43%.⁹³

Famine following either the adverse geo-medical events listed above or war (especially the Thirty-Year War of 1618-1638) was a frequently recurring event in Sicily resulting in major morbidity and mortality of the population.⁹⁴

The Thirty Years War was arguably the worst conflict that involved the major European countries of the early modern period. Hospitaller estates on the mainland caught up in the fields of war were mostly usurped;⁹⁵ however there seems to have been minor direct involvement of the priory of Messina. The effect of the thirty-year conflagration had major collateral damage to the Order of St John, as after 1635, France and Spain were on opposing sides.⁹⁶ Two other conflicts which impinged directly the Hospitaller priory in Messina were the rebellion of 1674, brought on by a perceived

⁹² Stefano Branca, Raffaele Azzaro, Emanuela De Beni, David Chester, Angus Duncan, 'Impacts of the 1669 eruption and the 1693 earthquakes on the Etna Region (Eastern Sicily, Italy): An example of recovery and response of a small area to extreme events', *Journal of Volcanology and Geothermal Research* 303 (2015) 25–40.

⁹³ Guido Alfani, Plague in seventeenth-century Europe and the decline of Italy: an epidemiological hypothesis, *European Review of Economic History*, Volume 17, Issue 4, November 2013, Pages 408–430.

⁹⁴ Alfani (2016). Italian famines: an overview (ca. 1250-1810). Famine episodes in Italy in the seventeenth century were frequent; they were recorded in 1600-01, 1607-8, 1618-22, 1628-32, 1648-49, 1672 (particularly in southern Italy), 1678-79 and 1693-95.

⁹⁵ Peter Cauchi, The Hospitaller Order of the Knights of Malta and the Thirty Years' War, 1618-1648, unpublished MA Hosp Stud dissertation, University of Malta, 2017.

⁹⁶ Pozzo, 20. *'E Consiglio scrissero at Re Christianissimo, dimostrando a Sua Maestá l'incomodo, che ricevevano da alcuni Cavalieri Francesi Religiosi loro, i quali corseggiando con Vascelli sotto le sue bandieri in questo Canale con far preda de' Siciliani, interrompevano il commercio trá la Sicilia e malta, e li ponevano in grave sospetto appressi i Ministri Spagnuoli'*.

increased centralization of Spanish rule, and the hostilities in Palermo of 1648 brought on by famine.

All these upheavals had a negative effect on the priory with the loss of buildings, agricultural land usurped during wars or left abandoned after seismic activities with a major loss of substantial revenue which took years to be overcome.

Notwithstanding all these calamities, by the middle of the eighteenth century the grand priory of Messina still enjoyed a large residue of assets, which were listed during the general prioral visit of 1749.

It was yet another earthquake that finally brought to rest the physical structures of both the prioral buildings and the adjoining church in Messina, when it hit eastern Sicily in 1908;⁹⁷ nothing substantial remained of these structures, except for the southern vault of the once monumental church. And in truth, the priory of Messina with all its satellite commanderies had already been dismembered more than a century before by monarchs and governments with the sequestration of most of the Sicilian commanderies by 1811.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 152. There had been another earthquake prior to this one, in 1783 which had damaged extensively the Prioral Palace of the Order in Messina, as well as a large part of the church. As soon as the convent in Malta was aware of the tragedy, grand master de Rohan sent several galleys with 60,000 scudi, 600 slaves to help with the clearing of the debris and the reconstruction of several wooden sheds, doctors and surgeons, and a great quantity of pharmaceuticals and victuals.

⁹⁸ Sire, 173.

Table 3.1 The State of the Grand Priory of Messina at the end of the Seventeenth Century (various sources).

| Region/Place | Name of Priory/Commandery |
|------------------------|--|
| Messina | Grand Priory of Messina Castanea – <i>casale</i> Santa Maria of Milici Mineo Patti St Angelo of Brolo Siracusa Commandery Calli - <i>jus patronatus</i> . Commandery Lo Pozzo - <i>jus patronatus</i> Commandery Marullo- <i>jus patronatus</i> |
| Agrigento | Commandery of Santa Maria Maddalena. It had five manors: Busuné, Azzalora, Chimento, Torcicuda and Vito Soldano. Augusta - the main victualling centre of the Hospitallers in Sicily. Butera - Commandery Grienti. <i>jus patronatus</i> |
| Caltagirone | Commandery of San Giovanni (or Santa Maria del Tempio) Commandery of San Giovanni Battista e San Giacomo Maggiore (k/a) Saracena of the city of Caltagirone Commandery Bonanno (San Girolamo) |
| Catania | Commandery of San Giovanni of Fleri (Camera Priorale) |
| Lentini | Commandery of San Giovanni li Bagni (Camera Priorale) |
| Marsala | Commandery of San Giovanni of Rhodes Corleone Alcamo Caltabellotta Mazara - Commandery Santa Maria dell'Alto or della Giummare. Magistral commandery 1784. Mazzarino - Commandery of San Pietro Gusmano Milazzo - Commandery Marchese |
| Modica-Randazzo | Commandery of San Giovanni Battista Adrano (Adernó) Agira |

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| | Chiaramonte |
| | Gratteri |
| | Nicosia |
| | San Filippo (Agira) |
| | Randazzo. Commandery di San Giovanni Battista |
| | Spaccaforno (Ispica) |
| | Terranova (Gela) |
| | Noto - Commandery Malandrino |
| | Palazzolo (Acreide) - Commandery Martinez |
| Palermo | Commandery San Giovanni la Guilla |
| | Commandery of San Antonio Abate Albigiana |
| | Commandery Schiattina (k/a St Stephen Protomartire). <i>jus patronatus</i> |
| | Commandery Morana |
| Paternò | Commandery San Giovanni Battista - Camera Priorale. |
| | Feudo di Schiettino |
| Piazza (Armerina) | Commandery San Giovanni Battista (San Giovanni Caldarera) |
| | Aidone |
| | Commenda San Giuseppe Barberino. <i>jus patronatus</i> |
| | Castrogiovanni (Enna) |
| | Gangi |
| | Licata |
| Polizzi | Camera Magistrale. (one for each grand priory). |
| Ragusa | Commenda San Giovanni Battista or Scorsonara. |
| San Mauro (Castelverde) | |
| Scicli | Commandery Salemi |
| Siracusa | Strategic hub situated on the routes of the eastern Mediterranean. |
| | Commandery San Giovanni Battista. |
| | Commandery Borea (Borgia). <i>jus patronatus</i> |
| | Commandery Abela |
| Taormina | Commandery di San Giovanni Battista. camera priorale |
| Trapani | Ricetta. |
| | Commandery Calli |
| Vizzini | Commandery Cannizzaro |

3.3 Functional Specialization of Hospitaller Assets

There are indications that the Order in Messina used specific localities and commanderies for particular tasks and responsibilities.⁹⁹

The Order's Receiver in Messina was responsible for the procurement of provisions and their safe passage to Malta. He also had to supervise the transport of funds in safety on their last leg of the journey from the European Hospitaller estates to Malta.

When in 1648, the city of Siracusa, which up till then was the main port used for provisioning the Order's navy, was involved in a belligerent confrontation with the naval squadron of the Order, the grand master moved his procurement services to the town of Augusta.¹⁰⁰ The *ricetta* of Augusta took care of the bakery and the biscotti requirements for the Order's navy. When the 1693 earthquake and the following tsunami devastated the eastern half of Sicily, nearly obliterating this port and town, the incumbent grand master sent his galley squadron loaded with food supplies to succour the people of Augusta, supplying them with food, water and iron nails to help the initial recovery.¹⁰¹ When reconstruction of the town began, the Order acquired a stretch of land close to the quay, where it could rebuild its warehouses for transshipment, ovens, mills, a slaughterhouse and other factories for the manufacture of ship biscuit, crackers and salted meat, all set up for the consumption of the naval squadron of the Order.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Pace Gravina. Personal communication 2015.

¹⁰⁰ Dal Pozzo, 166. *'Sentivasi anco da qualche tempo difficultato il commercio di queste Galere con la Città di Siracusa, dove andando esse a provisionarsi, erano da quie Giurati, e Capitan d'Arme poco civilmente trattate.'* The sea voyage for the galleys of the Order was longer as the port of Augusta is further north than Syracuse on the East Coast of Sicily.

¹⁰¹ AOM 1459, f15r *'Per rimediar a questo bisogno s'inviato da noi gli ordini necessari al ricevitore di Venetia sia per supplire al mancamento delle ciurme che e molto grande mentre che volendo noi mandare le galere in Siracusa et Agusta per porgere qualche aiuto e sollievo a quie miseri popli, mossia cio noi dalla carita christiana, habbiamo a pena potuto armar cinque di esse, non vediamo altro modo che di supplicar nostro signore a volerci concedere qualche numero di forzati, come fecero benignamente altri sommi pontifici, suoi predecessori.....'*

¹⁰² AOM 263, f237v, *'E perche si rovinarono ancora i forni e molini che servivano per la fabrica de biscotti per la futura Campagna hanno similmente ordinato che s'imbarci di nuovo il Com fra Domenico*

The *ricetta* of Palermo took care of the banking needs of the Order.¹⁰³ The very high influx of different currencies from all of Europe, generated by the different commanderies of the Order, flowed through its treasurers to the various banks.¹⁰⁴ Consequently the Order's estate in Palermo had an availability of 'ready cash' to support the members of the Order. Several different types of currency made its way to the priory of Messina including, German, Dutch and Hungarian talers, Spanish doubloons and piastres, Venetian zecchini, genovine, livournine and louis d'or. The Receivers of the Order in Sicily had two options in this scenario; either stock up the liquid wealth in a strong room on the prioral premises (something that, despite the vivid description of the priory buildings of the two prioral visits of 1604 and 1759, was not hinted upon in either), or arrange for the funds to be sent to the local banks in Messina and credit obtained. One of the banks in Messina mostly used by the Order was the Majorcan bank Perotto Torongi.¹⁰⁵ However, Catalan depositories and Genovese banks were also used. Palermo was in fact a point of reference between the commanderies of Sicily and the *Comun Tesoro* as far as coinage in the various denominations was concerned.¹⁰⁶ Its banks were also involved in the exchange of the different coinage being funnelled through the grand priory from the far-flung estates that the Order had in Europe.

Firrao Procuratore della Religione in Augusta per vedere che vi sara modo di continuare detta fabrica di biscotti a qual fine se sara necessario se gli daranno dalle galere l'aiuti necessari'.

¹⁰³ See Carmelo Trasselli, *Un Banco Genovese a Palermo nel 1570*, *Revue Internationale d'Historie de la Banque*, (Geneva 3, 1970), 177-236. '*Nel 1570 la ricevitoria dell'Ordine a Palermo, retta da fra' Onofrio Acciaiuoli, è già una banca che tiene i propri fondi presso il Gentile. ... L'Ordine, dunque, funzionava come una grandissima banca internazionale e le sue ricevitorie come filiali; non so se tale funzione dell'Ordine sia stata già messa in luce altrove; comunque, per la Sicilia è una novità. Tra le ricevitorie di Palermo e di Barcellona esisteva una specie di conto di corrispondenza; senza muovere una sola moneta, l'Ordine lucrava i suoi 4 o 5 per cento più volte in un anno. Così esso finanziava Malta*'.

¹⁰⁴ Giuffrida, 42. The bankers that the Order dealt with around the first half of the sixteenth century include Perotto Torongi e Antonio Mardigal. Chapter IV of the same article deals with the transfers of capital of the Order in sixteenth century Sicily. It gives a baseline of the complex transfers of monies across Europe to Sicily, even from far-flung Ireland, the use of promissory notes and the balance of payments that was sent to the Order after their settlement in Malta. See also Ivan Grech, 'Flow of Capital in the Mediterranean: Financial Connections between Genoa and Hospitaller Malta in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries', in *International Journal of Maritime History*, xvii, 2 (2005), 193-210.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 76 et seq.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 23. '*...pur funzionando secondo gli schemi previsti dai capitoli dell'Ordine, diventa la chiave di volta necessaria per garantire l'interscambio finanziario tra Malta e tutte le altre precettorie sparse per l'Europa e per garantire il flusso dei rifornimenti necessari alla sopravvivenza della struttura operativa maltese*'.

With the grand priory of Messina serving as a conduit, linking the various commanderies to the central convent, it served as a transshipment terminal for all the supplies and goods that the Order and the inhabitants of Malta needed. Apart from the grain and cereals, there were other commodities that were sent to Malta, including hemp and silk, ammunition, timber, pitch for caulking, wine, and other perishables.

3.4 Conclusion

Cultivated over centuries, the grand priory of Messina continued to flourish and accumulate assets gifted by pious donors. This expansion was not uniform throughout this time, and it was certainly modified by external events that impinged on the local and international scene. There were epochs when the growth was comparatively large, particularly in the early years and the first half of the seventeenth century. However, despite these impinging external events, the progress of the priory was never snubbed, and this continued to the end of the Malta Phase.

Chapter 4: Management of the Sicilian Commandery in the Seventeenth Century

4.1 Introduction

The different types of commanderies as set up by successive statutes of the Order were all exemplified in the territory of the grand priory of Messina. All were represented in the priory, from the least onerous, typified by the commandery of *cabimento*, to the more affluent, including those of magisterial grace and some commanderies of *miglioramento*. The following review will attempt to distinguish between each type and discuss the necessary requirements for these to be earned by the brethren of the Order.

The extreme diligence and care that the Order invested in the proper management of their donations was understandable.¹ There were several valid reasons for this. Firstly, it was an essential public relations exercise with particular emphasis on the acquisition of new donors. Donated assets which were mismanaged and misused would have sent the wrong message to other potential benefactors. Secondly, the income accruing from good stewardship was needed to service the multiple projects that the Order was involved in, be they military activities, naval provisions, diplomatic endeavours, hospitality, and the provision of religious worship. Thirdly, well-maintained assets emblazoned with the Order's insignia were a solid advertisement of the Hospitallers' cause, wherever they were and a magnet for new recruits. Fourthly the

¹ Emanuel Buttigieg, *Nobility, Faith and Masculinity: The Hospitaller Knights of Malta, c.1580-c.1700* (London, Continuum Publications 2011), p. 77 et seq. See also Simon Mercieca, *Aspects of the Hospitaller Commandery, 1631-1798*, unpublished MA Dissertation (University of Malta, 1993), on the administrative role of the commandery within the Order.

Hospitallers' property provided sheltered accommodation for the aged and infirm members of the Order.²

The requirements for eligibility to a commandery were dictated by the statutes and ordinances of the Order.³

4.2 The Commandery of Chevissage or *di Cabimento*

4.2.1 Eligibility to a Commandery

By the seventeenth century, each Chapter General of the Order had clearly refined the various prerequisites for eligibility.⁴ This was done not only to improve the choice for the best administrator, but also concurrently to hone in on the quintessential characteristics of a Modern Age Hospitaller.

Grand Master Raymond Berenger (1365-74) had stipulated that the recipient should be upright and decent, advanced in years, and deserving.⁵ At the time of Grand Master Claude de la Sengle (1553-57), the concept of the award was broadened to

² See Helen Nicholson, 'Charity and Hospitality in Military Orders', in Isabel Cristina Ferreira Fernandes (Coord.), *As Ordens Militares. Freires, Guerreiros, Cavaleiros. Actas do VI Encontro sobre Ordens Militares*, Vol.1, GEsOS / Município de Palmela, Palmela, 2012.

³ Possibly the most important had to be the shrewdness of character and the assertiveness of the individual in front of litigious neighbors; it seemed several commanderies were burdened with lengthy and expensive legal battles for a variety of reasons.

⁴ See *Statuti della Sacra Religione di S. Gio Gerosolimitano con le Ordinationi dell'Ultimo Capitolo Generale, Titolo Decimoquarto* (Borgo Nuovo, 1674) 176-197, *Gli Statuti della Sacra Religione di S. Gio Gerosolimitano con le Ordinationi dell'Ultimo Capitolo Generale, Titolo Decimoquarto* (Roma, 1589), 201-224, *Codice del sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano* (Malta, Fra Giovanni Mallia, 1782). Also AOM 1666, *Compendio delle Materie Contenute nel Codice del Sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano* (Malta, Fra Giovanni Mallia 1783).

⁵ *Codice del Sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano* (Stamperia del Palazzo, 1782), 329. Statutes of grand master Raymond Berenger (1365-74) candidates for awards had to be given '*a quei Fratelli che saranno da bene, anziani e benemeriti*'. See also *Statuti della Sacra Religione di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano* (Antonio Scionico, 1718).

include any asset of the Order, and the word commandery was defined as an umbrella-term to include priories, the Castellany of Emposta, bailiwicks, estates, holdings, houses, possessions and all other assets of whatever nature.⁶

Only fully professed members of the Order, with paid passage fees, were entitled to apply. D'Avenia points out that, as a rule, a knight could only be eligible for an asset which was geographically in the priory of which he was a member.⁷ This principle, however, excluded the Italian Langue (of which Messina was a part) and the Langue of Provence. In the Langue of Italy, in fact, any knight could apply for any commandery in the Italian provinces without being limited to the priory to which he appertained. Spagnoletti defines this issue as the system of 'promiscuity'; although it reflected the supranational status of the Order, it also caused a lot of problems, as 'foreigners' could apply for any vacant commanderies available, when, as in the priory of Messina, these were scarce.⁸

Another condition specified in the statutes of the Order at the time of Grand Master Claude de la Sengle (1553-1557) was the five-year sojourn (either a continuous term or piecemeal) in the central Convent in one of the community houses of the respective Langue.⁹ This was mandatory for knight-brethren of the Order, as it formed part of their military training. One exception to this rule was the time spent outside the convent while acting as a Receiver for the Order in the different priories.

During the time of the Grand Master Jean Parisot de Valette (1557-68), another precondition was added to the eligibility criteria. This was the completion of three (later on, fra Emanuel de Rohan will mandate four) six-monthly stints on one of the galleys.¹⁰

⁶ Statuti, 1782. *'Sotto nome, o vocabolo di Commende, vengono i Priorati, la Castellania d'Emposta, i Baliaggi, i poderi, i membri, le case, le possessioni, e tutti gli altri beni di qualsivoglia sorte dell'Ordine nostro'*.

⁷ D'Avenia (2003), 38.

⁸ Spagnoletti (1988), 171 et seq.

⁹ Statuti 1674, 177. *'...haverá fatti cinque anni di residenza continua, ò per intervalli nel nostro Convento,'*.

¹⁰ Codice del Sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano (Stamperia del Palazzo, 1782), 334. *'Statiamo che tutti li Fratelli Cavalieri, e Serventi d'Arme del nostro Ordine devono personalmente, ed in effetti far quattro intere Caravane sulle nostre squadre nei modi prescritti dalle nostre leggi prima di essere capaci a conseguire Commende con qualsisia titolo'*.

Other eligibility criteria included the strict absence of official progeny of the knight. This clause was inserted at the time of Grand Master Pierre de Corneillan (1353-55) and it excluded applicants if they had a wife and/or fathered children before entry into the Order.¹¹ At the point of conferment of the commandery, the member had also to be free of any debt owed to the common treasury.¹²

If the years required to fulfil all the eligibility provisions are then summed up, a Hospitaller needed at the very least, 7 years from profession into the Order to the point of eligibility to a commandery; and this minimum time was never practical as the member had to do the four *caravane* back to back to achieve this time frame.¹³ So in reality, the length of time was closer to 10 years, with the age of the member nearer to 28 years or thirty, before he was considered to be eligible. It was a long and arduous process, during which time however, the Order did offer subsistence including accommodation,¹⁴ food and clothing.¹⁵

¹¹ Statuti 1674, 177. There were exceptions to this, such as fra Hildebrand Inge in England.

¹² Fabrizio D'Avenia (2003), 36.

¹³ No knight could take part in the *caravane* before the age of 18 years. See Compendio, 30. '*L'età requisita per le Caravane su i Vascelli é di diciotto anni compiti, riservata al gran maestro la facoltà di dispensarvi*'. Minors, seventeen years of age were expected to present themselves in the convent for conscription into a *caravane* eventually. See also Simon Mercieca, 'Maritime Caravans and the Knights of St. John: Aspects of Mediterranean Seaborne Traffic', in M. Fusaro, C. Heywood, M.S. Omri (Eds.), *Trade and cultural exchange in the early modern Mediterranean: Braudel's Maritime Legacy*, London, Tauris Academic Studies, 2010, 157-175.

¹⁴ This was shared accommodation with peers in the auberge of the Langue in the convent. See *Residenza Conventuale* in Compendio, 129.

¹⁵ AOM 1666, 147-8. This was called the *soldea*. This was a sum given annually given both to the member in the period of the novitiate or to a fully professed member, either in cash (in 1783 this amounted to 22 scudi annually to knights, sixteen scudi and 6 tari to Chaplains and Sergeants, and deacons up till the time they celebrate mass, 12 scudi. This sum was paid either in cash or in kind at the then going rate as decided by the secretary of the Common Treasury. Members of the Order who were enjoying assets of the Order rendering more than 60 Rhodes florins, or 35 Maltese *scudi*, or who were enjoying the fruits of a commandery were exempted from receiving the *soldea*. The latter was also given to members of the Order who became slaves while acting in the interests of the Religion. Knights also had a supplementary income of grain and oil called *Tavola*. See Compendio, 152.

4.2.2 Conferment of a Commandery

Once eligible, the conferment of a commandery of whichever grade could be bestowed in various ways. One way was the assignment of a ring-fenced commandery by the grand master himself. This was called the commandery of magisterial grace, and it was the grand master's prerogative to assign this to whomsoever of the members of the Order he thought merited it. The assignment was usually for a period of five years and the recipients were usually Grand Crosses¹⁶ and high dignitaries of the Order including former ambassadors.

Another method of conferment was through a procedure called *smutizione*.¹⁷ *Smutizione*, translated into the English vernacular as (s)mutition, originated from an old French word which meant 'a naming' or 'pronouncing', and was a process where, after discussion by members of the Langue, the latter nominated the most suitable candidate for the award of a commandery.¹⁸ The same process of *smutizione* was also used for the conferment of other awards, be it a title or dignity, or a position in the hierarchy of the Order.¹⁹ The final nomination would then have to be acceptable to the grand master and council.

Smutition was a long-drawn out process. As soon as a commandery became vacant, formal notice of potential awardees was sent to the respective Langue, either by the priory of which the commandery formed a part of, or through the Order's Receiver/procurator in the region. Interested members could correspond with the Langue directly. An *ad hoc* commission of the Langue would then consider the

¹⁶ The title of grand cross was one of the highest of the 'dignities' given to members of the Order. A grand cross had a place in the Ordinary Council of the Order and had a residence in the convent in Valetta during the Malta Phase. See the section on the Dei Gran Croci in Giuseppe Manara, *Storia dell'Ordine di Malta ne' suoi Gran Maestri e Cavalieri*, (Milano, Claudio Wilmant, 1846),

¹⁷ Vertot, 116. The brothers use this term in the languages to declare the person upon whom the vacant commandery is conferred'.

¹⁸ The *smutizione* was done at a meeting in the auberge of the Langue. This event was triggered into action as soon as a commandery started its period of vacancy. '*subito che perviene certo avviso della loro vacanza, cioè con lettere del Priore, Ricevidore, o Procuradore, o d'un Fratello che scriva d'averlo veduto morto, purché a lui niente appartenga, o per sua affermazione, se viene in Convento, o per istromento di Notaro, o Giudice*'. See also AOM 1666, 146.

¹⁹ AOM 1666, 146. '*Smutizione é la nominazione, che fanno le Lingue del fratello, al quale si dovrà fare la collazione della Dignità, o Commenda*'.

eligibility of the applicants. Seniority of each applicant would also be noted as it was an important part of the selection process. A secret vote would then be taken, and one member chosen. Once this was carried out, the selection of the successful member would be made public, and time allowed for any formal objections to be made to the Langue. However, the final arbiter of the choice made by the Langue was the grandmaster and his council.²⁰ The granting of the commandery to the successful member was eventually confirmed by a magisterial bull.²¹

4.3 The *Visita dei Miglioramenti* (Visitation to check Improvements)

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the grand priory of Messina had sixteen commanderies under its administration. These were made up of a spectrum of land assets from commanderies of *cabimento* at one end of the net worth scale, to commanderies of *miglioramento* and commanderies of magisterial grace and magisterial chambers at the other, comprising the fixed patrimony of the Order in Sicily. Each commandery essentially mirrored the hierarchical structure of the mother convent,²² sustaining its incumbent brethren in a life-style compatible with their status.

One of the mechanisms which the Order extensively used to oversee the prudent management of its commanderies was an official visitation, the aim of which was to check on improvements carried out on the asset. When it started to be implemented, the visitation was not a new concept and other religious houses had been doing such an exercise, usually at the instigation of the grand abbot of the mother house or even the

²⁰ Guida, 424.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Guida describes ‘*jus ad rem, cioe’ il diritto legale all’acquisizione della commenda nell’immediato futuro, ma senza il suo effettivo possesso e senza il diritto all’uso del titolo di commendatore. lo Jus in re e il diritto di possesso; scattava solo dopo il dichiarazione dell Gran Maestro e consiglio’.*

²² J. Riley-Smith, (1967), 347.

Roman Curia.²³ The visitation was carried out by a delegation made up of reliable and stalwart members of the Order, appointed for the purpose. It was an exercise which was carried out on a regular basis and its aims were mainly twofold: primarily, inventorying the asset which included a list of rents and leases, together with an assessment of its microeconomics, and secondly, confirming that the religious function of the particular asset was being carried out and adequately maintained.²⁴

In the seventeenth century, this *visita dei miglioramenti* was part of the armamentarium which the Order of St John had established to maintain discipline and order in its ranks.²⁵ It ran like clockwork;²⁶ every commandery and bailiwick had to be visited on a five-year roster, although this time interval was extended to a period of six years for a commandery of magisterial grace and even seven years for a magisterial *camera* (see later on in this chapter).

It was initially the responsibility of the head of the Langue or priory to undertake these visits,²⁷ but with time, this task was delegated to two brother knights and/or conventual chaplains.²⁸ These were designated Visiting Commissioners and were recommended by the Provincial Council or the Provincial Assembly of the priory. The two commissioners had to be resident in towns and villages within the territorial limits

²³ Mercieca, 1993, 133. 'Owing to the religious services that the commandery came to provide, the Church authorities considered it their duty to pay periodical visits to the commmanderies'. *Ibid*, 134. 'The Tridentine reforms resuscitated the Visita Apostolica', as well as the Hospitaller visits after the Chapter General of 1631.

²⁴ J. Sarnowsky, 'The Convent and the West: Visitations in the Order of the Hospital of St John in the Fifteenth Century', in K. Borhardt, Nicolas Jaspert, and Helen J. Nicholson, *The Hospitallers, the Mediterranean and Europe Festschrift for Anthony Luttrell* (Ashgate publishing Limited, 2007), 151-162.

²⁵ AOM 6228, fol 208r. Such a visit for improvements was carried out of the De Guilla (noted as Del Aguilla) Commandery of Palermo. The date of transcription was 21 May 1567 and fra Ubertino Solerio was the commander in charge of the asset and a member of the Italian Langue '*miles sacre religionis hierosolimitane di lingie Italie commende suis subtitolo Sancti Johannes la guilla...*'.

²⁶ Gatt, 12. 'It was important that the *visita dei miglioramenti* was done regularly. It exposed within a relatively short span of time whatever maladministration was being carried out on any commandery, or whether parts of the commandery were usurped and taken over by third persons; the problem was essentially nipped in the bud and damage to the Order's possessions limited to a minimum'.

²⁷ As an example, Prior Thame of England undertook local visitations in 1338, but in the late fifteenth century the Turcopilier, fra John Kendal, carried out a visitation of the priory and its commanderies.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 160. The statutes of the Order mandated that the two visiting commissioners delegated to visit the Order's churches, oratories, chapels, and holy sites had to be a conventual chaplain together with the church prior or his vice-prior. The two commissioners who visited the commanderies of the priory were usually a knight commander of the Order, resident in the territorial limits of the priory itself and a conventual chaplain. Although this general rule applied to most priories of the Order, the German Langue had its own rules on the rank of its visiting commissioners.

of the grand priory of which the commandery to be visited was a part thereof, and they also had to have done a five-year period of conventual residence as well.²⁹

The two visiting commissioners had a large protocol to work through, before they could certify that the asset in question had indeed been improved.³⁰ Consequently, the outcome of the visitation was the net result of extensive groundwork. It involved the thorough itemisation of all the incomes generated by the commandery, including all the leases of its various assets. The structural integrity of the buildings and/or their maintenance was looked at, as well. The commissioners also considered the various burdens carried by the commandery, including disbursed pensions.³¹

Apart from the two commissioners, the delegation included a complement of supporting personnel. A typical delegation included the *attuario*, a clerk who did the measurements and mathematical calculations of the acreage and agricultural output; there was also one or two *agrimensori*, land surveyors who established the boundaries of the lands pertaining to the Order. The group also included scribes who wrote down all the information acquired, as well as a notary who took down the oaths and authenticated all the facts. For a medium-sized commandery the whole exercise would have taken several days for it to be adequately finished as was mandated by the statutes of the

²⁹ AOM 1666, 95.

³⁰ AOM 6078, f45r. A set of twelve questions were asked, each related of course, to some aspect of the commandery. (1) Whether the church of the commandery was well-maintained and served the faithful adequately; whether the divine cult was celebrated, and whether there were enough priests to cater for the faithful. (2) Whether the commandery did any hospitality, and gave alms, and how these were served by the commander in charge. (3) Whether the commander had alienated any part of the commandery, either as fixed assets or movable objects; whether he had given, donated, or dispensed with any portion of the commandery to any secular person or to others outside the Religion. (4) Whether the commander had sold or given on perpetual lease any part of the commandery or possession temporarily or for life. (5) What improvements and reparations were done during the present commander's tenure, and instigated by his efforts, and most particularly those that were paid for by the personal emoluments of the commander himself. (6) What were the deteriorations and what had gone into ruin in the commandery and its members, and whether these were the fault of the commander himself or because of his negligence, and did they happen during the time of his administration, for which the commandery or the Religion would be prejudiced. (7) Whether the improvements and benefits were greater than the deteriorations and others that got worse. (8) What types of lawsuits was the commandery involved in, what stage had they reached, and with what diligence did he sustain and prosecute each case. (9) Whether the commandery had any particular breed of horses, cows, sheep and others. (10) Whether the commandery engaged any civil or criminal jurisdiction and how it maintained and administered justice. (11) Whether the commander had paid annually the perpetual rent to the ministers of the County. (12) If the commandery had other burdens, apart from the charges of the Common Treasury annually.

³¹ The latter needed dispensations from the grand master and council.

Order.³² The whole assembly needed food and lodgings within a short distance of the commandery to avoid wasting time travelling. However, it was not the onus of the commander to furnish these to the visiting commissioners and their assembly.³³ The assembly, including the two visiting commissioners, notary and scribes were paid for by funds from the priory of Messina. When the commandery of Malandrina was being instituted in 1642, the *Sedici* in Council had declared that the deputizing commissioners should not be paid more than 3 gold scudi a day to each of them. From these they had to disburse both their personal expenses and those of the remainder of the entourage. The accompanying notary was paid one and half gold scudi a day.³⁴

Together with the assessment of the profitability of the asset, the commissioners also looked at the spiritual services provided by the commandery. Most commanderies included a church or chapel, and part of the remit of the visiting delegation was to take cognisance of the built structure, including its renovation, and assess whether the spiritual needs of the local community was being adequately met. Multiple inventories had to be carried out to include the sacred paraphernalia of the churches and chapels, the furniture, and furnishings of the commander's house as well as exhaustive lists of the farm implements that appertained to the commandery.

Part of the responsibility of the visiting delegation was also to ascertain whether the various directives and instructions set down by previous visitations had been fulfilled by the incumbent commander.³⁵ These precepts were an essential part of the policing which the Order regularly carried out on its land assets, and had to be abided to, if the commandery was to be maintained in a good state. Keeping a commandery in good running repair was however complicated and there were various instances where the commander of a run-down commandery tried to exculpate himself with the visiting commissioners.³⁶ The various plagues and theatres of war which overran Sicily were

³² The Knights Hospitallers in England: Being the Report of Prior Philip de Thame to the Grand Master Elyan de Villanova for AD 1338, vol 65. (Camden Society, 1857), xxxviii and 283.

³³ AOM 1666, fol 160. '*Li Commendatori visitati altro non devono somministrare ai Visitatori, che il vitto moderato, mentre sono sulla Commenda...*'

³⁴ AOM 6254 fol 3v.

³⁵ AOM 1666, fol 161.

³⁶ AOM 2129, fol 261r, '*... la prima si cava per haver egli esposto et attribuita la rovina della comenda di casale alla guerra et alla peste et pure note verifica legalmente quanto inverisimilmente suppone mentre si sa che da molto tempo cessa la guerra et che non fu per tutti li membri et che egli fu negligente*

frequently presented as the culprits. When the instructions of the Visiting Commissioners were not adhered to, the commander was liable to incur severe penalties, which included fines and possibly and even loss of the commandery itself.

The main Hospitaller commandery of the district of Palermo, De Guilla, underwent one of these regular visitations on 21 May 1567, less than two years from the end of the abortive Ottoman siege in Malta in 1565. The commander in residence was an Italian knight, fra Ubertino Solario. Earlier on, the commander had done substantial repairs and improvements on the commandery and its assets.³⁷ He was thus awaiting the visitation with eager anticipation. The visiting commissioners were fra Baldassare Imperatore,³⁸ commander of the commandery of Marsala, and fra Centorio Cagniolo³⁹ who was the Receiver and the Procurator General of the Order for the Kingdom of Sicily.⁴⁰

The visit commenced with the church of the commandery. There is no mention of the patron saint of this particular church at the time; rather interestingly however, note was taken of a reliquary of Saint Brendan (*San Blandano*),⁴¹ which was held in a decorated engraved silver case on brass feet.⁴² Despite the improvements of fra Solario, the commissioners found that the church needed some maintenance, including its main door which opened on to a public street. This had deteriorated to such an extent that it

in riparare et rimetter le cassine et trascurato in cultivar et affittar li beni delle masserie vicine attender piuttosto di recever pagamenti anticipati et ricoverare li soliti impresti che si danno alli massari et vender li beni et le nacche appartenenti allo stato et conservatione'.

³⁷ AOM 6228, fol 208r, '*Ipsuis comende meliorata et reparata et viceversa si tempore et negligentia dicti commisari*'.

³⁸ Francesco Balbi di Corregio, *The Siege of Malta 1565*, (Bogtrykkeriet Antikva A/S, Copenhagen 1961), 196. Fra Baldassare Imperatore was one of the knights of the Italian Langue who took part in the siege of 1565 and his name is seen in the rolls of those who survived it. Fra Baldassare Imperatore is also mentioned in the *Memorie* of Minutolo. He was from Palermo and professed in 1535. He held the dignity of Prior of Capua, Captain General of the naval squadron of the Order and confirmed his presence in the siege of Malta (date given wrongly as 1569).

³⁹ AOM 6228, fol 208r. In 1567, fra Centorio Cagniolo was the receiver and general procurator catering for the whole Sicilian administration. '*Centorio Cagniolo receptori et procuratori generali in hoc Sicilia Regno pro dicta sacra Religione...*'

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 208r

⁴¹ The name of San Brandan or Borondan has come down from very ancient times. It was said that a Scottish (or Irish) abbot who lived in the sixth century was known as Blandano or Blandanus. In the martyrology of the order of Saint Augustine it is said that he was the abbot superior to three thousand monks. See Washington Irving, *The History of the Life and Travels of Christopher Columbus* vol IX (Turin 1829), 122-123. The cult was probably brought to Sicily by the Normans.

⁴² AOM 6228, fol 209r.

was rotten and breaking up.⁴³ The commissioners noted that this same door had been in perfect working condition more than sixty years before, around 1500, when a previous visit had commented on this precise fact. Fra Solario had also repaired and reconstructed part of the roof of the church and had whitewashed the interior of the church. The commander had disbursed the sum of 7 tari and 14 grani on these repairs.

The chaplain in attendance at the church of the commandery de Guilla was responsible for the celebration of three masses weekly and had a salary of 4 onze and 24 tari annually.

The large residence which served as the commander's accommodation was situated next to the church and had three small gardens containing mostly fruit trees. The large door of the residence led directly to these gardens and the latter had adequate water for irrigation. There was a surrounding wall to these gardens, but because it was low, it permitted outsiders to enter the garden and carry away whatever they wanted. Aware of this, fra Solario had increased the height of the surrounding wall for a total of 29 canes in length at a substantial cost of 13 onze and 29 tari. A receipt was handed to the commissioners, which indicated that the works had been done by master builder Petro Matta.

The commissioners also visited other buildings that lay within the footprint of the commandery. There was a small house near the church which was partly in ruins. It needed a great many repairs, and it was leased for 5 onze a year, together with a patch of ground behind the house.

Reference was also made to a slaughterhouse which, despite its ruinous state was being rented for the sum of 30 onze. However, fra Solario, as he did with other buildings on the commandery, managed to repair it, admittedly at some personal expense and also succeeded to lease it to Bonofrio di Batista for the annual fee of 38 onze.⁴⁴

The commandery also had agricultural tenancies including two manors, Ocebia and Mucatelli. The former consisted of 180 salme of arable land which was leased for

⁴³ *Ibid.*, fol 209r.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, fol 209v,

the sum of 47 onze. Mucatelli on the other hand, was a rocky and sterile terrain, situated just outside Palermo.

The commandery had other rents and leases, the collection of which was proving difficult for various reasons, including problems with proof of ownership, vagueness about the exact boundaries, or missing contracts. Consequently the commandery was involved in a whole spate of litigations in front of the High Court and assistance had to be sought from the Roman Curia as well.⁴⁵ The commander of de Guilla admitted that the commandery had around seven debtors, which together owed the sum of 17 onze and 9 tari on an annual basis.

After the visitation, the decision made by the visiting commissioners was that the number of improvements on the commandery done by fra Solario far outweighed the little evidence of deterioration, and the memorandum of the visit was approved.

4.4 The Cabreo

The *cabreo* was another fail-safe mechanism to maintain the integrity of the Order's patrimony for posterity.⁴⁶ Probably established at the time of Grand Master fra L'Isle

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 210v. 'per la manutenzione dello stato et ragione di essa comenda quali autentici...ho fatto venire scomunica papale di Roma contra li occupatori delli beni ...aprile 1566'.

⁴⁶ Magri, 82. Cabreum - Vocabolo delli statuti della religione Geroslimitana, che significa il catasto, o inventario di tutte le possessioni, case, & altri beni stabili con le piante e misure. Voce corrotta dovendosi dire Capibrevium. Sono tenuti li Priori, Balii e Commendatori rinovare ogni venticinque anni il Cabreo con le solite legalità'. See also AOM 1682, fol 114v: ' *Che cosa s'intende sotto nome di cabreo? S'intende l'inventario di tutti gli beni mobili, e stabili delle commende. Le scritture appartenenti alle misure delle terre e delle riconoscenze dovute al commendatore; quali inventarij o siano libelli censuali, alcuni chiamano papieri di terra, altri riconoscenze, ed altri apedamenti.*' See D. Borg, V. Burgassi, M. Spiteri, V. Vanesio, Studying historical landscapes: the cabreo and related archival sources from Italy and Malta – from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century, in *Arkivju*, 8 (2017), pp. 23-32. See also M. Camilleri, The Archives of the Order of Malta. AOM 6520-6577: a case of "Irrespect des Fonds?" in J. Azzopardi, *Scientia et Religio. Studies in memory of Fr. George Aquilina OFM (1939-2012) Scholar, Archivist and Franciscan Friar*, Malta, Wignancourt Museum Publication, 2014, pp. 39-44; Also, *L'archivio dell'Ordine di Malta, in La Puglia dei Cavalieri. Il territorio pugliese nelle fonti cartografiche*

Adam (1521-34), the need to present a *cabreo* became mandatory with the Improvement visits.⁴⁷ Essentially the *cabreo* was an inventory which listed the fixed assets of a commandery, and included maps, servitudes and prerogatives, as well as valuation of the properties of the Order therein.⁴⁸ It detailed the precise boundaries of the commandery;⁴⁹ it set out the physical dimensions of each building on the property, including a detailed plan of the mansion, house, church or chapel, the topography of the land, with hills and pastureland, the exact acreage of land that could be cultivated and others that were stony and barren, as well as a detailed account of all the rents, leases and charters pertaining to the asset.⁵⁰ Some *cabrei* included fine pen and ink, detailed water coloured and/or sepia illustrations of the buildings of the commandery as well as the actual land plan; most were an exhaustive exercise which listed in meticulous detail every feature of the commandery. A *cabreo* had to be done afresh every twenty five years by the incumbent commander.⁵¹ A clause inserted at the time of Grand Master Philippe de L'Isle Adam mandated that no visits of Improvement could be approved before the visiting commissioners, under oath, would have declared that they had consulted the '*libelli censuali*' or *cabrei* of the commandery.⁵²

For the Order, the creation of a *cabreo* served several purposes. All the *cabrei* of its properties gave the Order a thorough assessment of its net worth,⁵³ and this was continuously being updated. The institution of the twenty-five year limit was essential, as this was well within the defined period of legal prescription;⁵⁴ during this period the

del Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta, (eds) A. Pellettieri, E. Ricciardi, Viterbo, Beta Gamma, 2009, pp. 13-17; particularly, G. Gatt, Gli archivi di Malta durante il periodo della occupazione francese e i primi anni della dominazione inglese, *Archivio Storico di Malta*, 9 (1937-38), pp.411-428, 412-413, 418.

⁴⁷ See gli statuti della sacra Religione di S. Giovanni Gerosolimitano, Item 21, 'Dei libelli Censuali', (Rome, Giacomo Tornieri, 1589), 207.

⁴⁸ Sire, 106 '... known in Italian as a *cabreo* (caput breve) described each property, often with detailed illustrations, and with a record of its value..'

⁴⁹ AOM 1682, fol 114v.

⁵⁰ AOM 1666, 21. The *Compendio del Codice Gerosolimitano* gives a succinct definition of what constitutes a *cabreum*.

⁵¹ See Statuti 1782, statute 41 on the section of the Commanderies and their administration.

⁵² See Statuti 1589, 207. Other words given for the *libelli censuali* included *papyri della terra*, *riconoscenze*, *cabrei* and *appiedamenti*.

⁵³ The assesment of its net worth obviously depended on how honest the assessment was. The value may have been underplayed in order to pay less in responsiones, although all *cabrei* were notariially endorsed.

⁵⁴ AOM 6123, *Ordinazione della Visita Generale del Gran Priorato di Messina del 1749*, titolo 11°.

When, during the census of 1749, the visiting commissioners were going round the assets of the magisterial commandery of Polizzi, they noted that the last *cabreum* of the commandery was carried out in

Order could initiate legal proceedings against estranged neighbours who misappropriated its assets and were within time to launch litigations.⁵⁵ Every *cabreo* gave a net worth of each commandery that could be set up in a league table; comparison could be done of rich and less onerous commanderies, commanderies of *di cabimento* and others of *miglioramento*. The net worth of the commandery could also be used by the Order's Chapter General to set out the required responsiones which had to be paid to the convent annually.

There were instructions on how a *cabreo* was to be produced. The erudite Prior of Lombardy, fra Giovanni Caravita had strong views on most things that appertained to the Order, including the method on how a *cabreo* should be prepared. He stressed that each *cabreo* should be completed according to the legal precepts and usages of the country where it was being done.⁵⁶ He reiterated that the assignment should be carried out under the auspices of the visiting commissioners, and preferably with observers from the royal court, to give it the proper vigour of royal approval.⁵⁷

These two commissioners would be accompanied by the same personnel who followed them during the Improvement visits. The presence of a notary was essential.

Extreme circumspection was taken of adjacent landowners who shared common boundaries with the Order; their names and ancestry were noted for proper identification.

1698, more than fifty years previously! They had requested the prior of Messina to furnish a new *cabreo* of the asset to the convent within five years, '*essendo ormai trascorso il tempo prescritto dallo Statuto V° delle Commende*'. Regrettably another 24 years had to pass before this was done. See D'Avenia, *Le Commende Gerosolimitane*, 39.

⁵⁵ AOM 1682, fol 114v.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 114v '...*gli cabrei devono esser intieramente e diligentemente rinovati secondo l'uso del paese in cui si rinnovano..che si ottenghi una commissione regia e del padrone della Provincia ad una persona qualificata con faculta sufficiente per assegnare gli confini..*'.

⁵⁷ Magione 401, 709r. During the prioral visit of 1603, the two commissioners had declared that *cabreos* should be carried out of various properties of the Order. '*...fra termino di anno...debbia aver fatto fare lo cabreo di tutti li beni ...con specificata mensione di loro confini moderni di detti beni..nella città di Messina, Taormina Catania Paterno, Lintini,Minio, et Vizzini*'. This was done so that the exact boundaries of the Hospitaller assets are known, to avoid *liti inconvenienti in grave danno del detto priorato*. For the defaulters there was a penalty of 200 scudi to be paid to the common treasury, apart from other penalties that were established in the *stabilimenti* of the Order. Another proposal was that the Arms of the religion would be 'painted' inside all the Hospitaller churches and in all the storehouses of the priory. The penalty for defaulters was 50 scudi.

Comparison of the current boundaries with a previous *cabreo* was done by the notary and the land surveyor. The notary then refreshed the jurisdictions of the asset, its set of immunities, all the leases, and all these would be compared with the same ones in previous *cabreos*; and obviously note would be taken of whether any particular parcels of land leased would have been left to deteriorate, or alienated,⁵⁸ and others improved. After the *cabreo* was finished, the procurator had the option to renew the leases to the same stakeholders or terminate and assign new leases to new individuals. Any interested member of the public had three days to come forward and contest any portion of land that he felt was being usurped by the Order. In fact, construction of a *cabreo* was a thorough exercise on how the Order could become more efficient in the management of its property and milk more funds to send onwards to the Common Treasury.

Various copies of the *cabreo* were done; one copy was kept at the commandery, another copy was sent to the Priory of which the commandery formed a part of and a third copy was sent to the Order's convent. All three copies would have been legally authenticated as true copies by the public notary, which would define them as legal documents.⁵⁹

One of the *cabreos* of the Commandery of San Giovanni of Ragusa was dated 1666, at the time of commander fra Francesco Maria Gabuccini. The procurator was his uncle fra Gasparis Gabuccini. Presumably because the latter was involved in other matters of the Order in the Langue of Italy,⁶⁰ or to avoid the taint of nepotism,⁶¹ a

⁵⁸ AOM 2129, 246v. Because of the huge patrimony that the Order had in Sicily, and despite the methodical care it took to maintain it, attrition was not uncommon. ' *Adi 14 Genaro 1632...letta un a lettera del Cav. Don Vincenzo Crescimanno scritta ad essa Ven Lin, li 10 del presente mese per la quale dimanda facolta di poter ricuperar a suoi spese alcuni beni dependenti dalla comenda di piazza occupati da persone secolari et altri alieni della nostar raligione per goderli vita sua durante come li habba ricuperati tutti*'.

⁵⁹ AOM 1682, fol 114v.

⁶⁰ AOM, 6107 fol. 21r. Correspondence dated 4 May 1666 mentions that head of the Venerable Langue of Italy was the Knight Fra Gasparo Gabuccini in the absence of the admiral Fra Capon Capponi.

⁶¹ Away from Messina, things worked out differently, and nepotism not so much frowned upon. When fra Raimondo Moncada, the main procurator of the grand priory of Messina between 1702 and 1708, decided to lease some parcels of land in the far away commandery of Lentini, he sought the help of a local notary, Don Alfio Parisi. It turns out this particular notary was already leasing two fiefs of the same commandery. These new parcels of land to be leased were awarded to a priest, Don Filadelfio Parisi and the deeds were carried out in front of another notary Don Gianbattista Parisi, all three hailing from Lentini and presumably related. See D'Avenia *Le Commende Geroslimitane*. 48. ' *Questi intrecci cosi complessi erano normali*'.

substitute procurator, the Jesuit Francisco de Oliviero,⁶² was engaged. It was precisely the latter who, along with notary Lutius lo Magno⁶³ took the responsibility of drawing this new *cabreo* of the Commandery. The notarial deed notes that the notary was paid 6 onze and 20 tari for the original *cabreo*,⁶⁴ and other copies that were ordered by de Olivieri.⁶⁵ This was dated 8 August 1665.

The Visiting Commissioner, fra Diego Palermo gave a detailed description of the territory making up the commandery of San Giovanni of Ragusa in 1666.⁶⁶ The commandery was made up of three pieces of terrain, more than half of which could be cultivated. These included the largest one called the *Scorsonara*, another called the *Casuzza* and another small member known as *delli Chiaramidi*. This contained a watermill, in ruins for a long time past, before Gabuccini took over the management of the possession in 1657. The total acreage of San Giovanni of Ragusa with all its members measured 39 salmi 12 tumoli 2 mondelli of land.

⁶² AOM, 6107, fol. 7r. The *procura* that elected the Jesuit reverend Francisco Olivieri to become a substitute procurator is dated 31 March 1665

⁶³ *Ibid.*, fol. 10v. Lutio lo Magno was a master notary of the commandery of Modica and Randazzo, one of the Sicilian commanderies of the Order.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 5v

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 17v: '*pro con fettione cabrei et illis copijs facti de ordinazione detto de Olivieri*'. The usual custom was to do three copies: one was to be kept by the Commander of the Commandery on site, the second copy to be sent to the Grand Priory to be kept in the archives, and the third one to be released and kept at the Convent.

⁶⁶ AOM, 6078, fol.41r



Figure 4.1: Topographical plan of the Hospitaller manor of Licodia, Sicily, in the Cabreo of the Commandery known as La Torretta of Cannizzaro in the city of Vizzini at the time of fra Gaeta Despuches, 1559, (Archivio della Comenda del Magione 379), ink on paper and thinly water coloured.

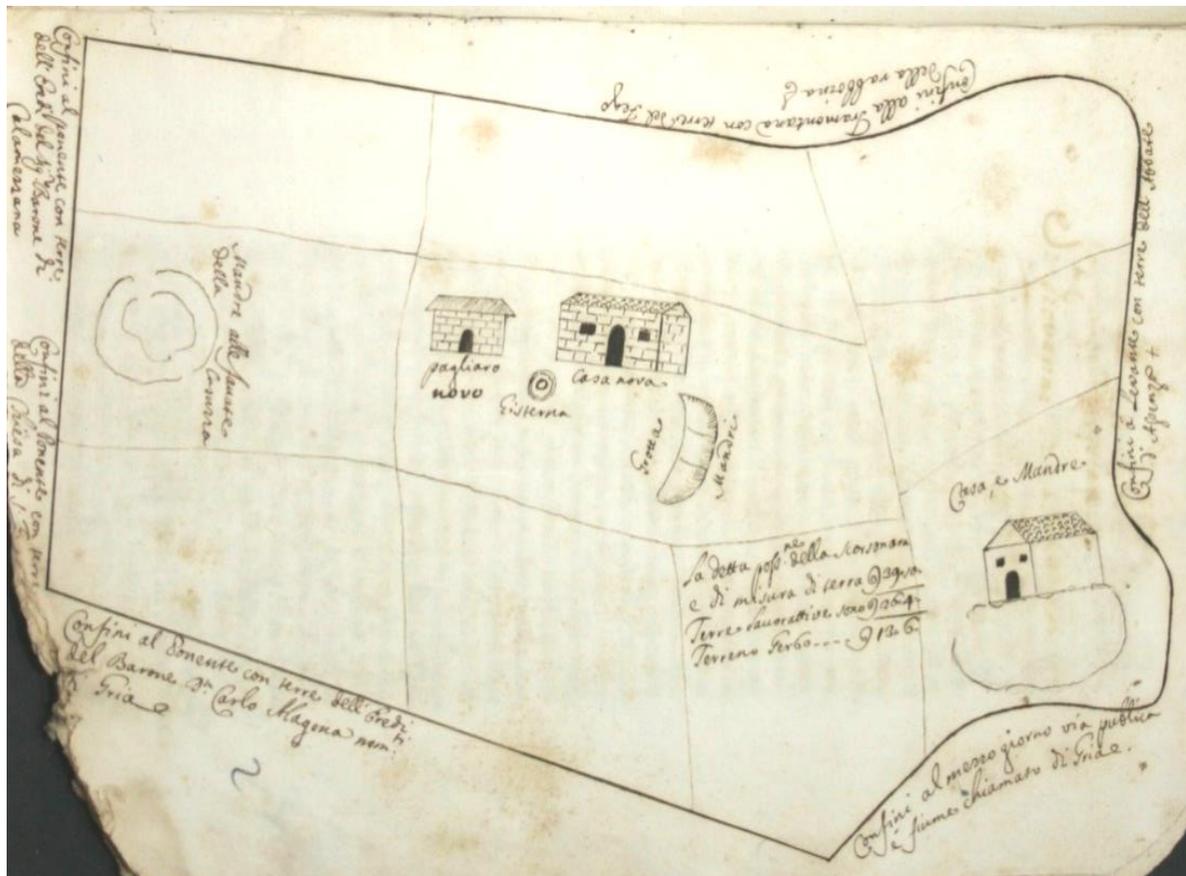


Figure 4.2: Topographical plan of the ‘rustic assets and houses pertaining to the commandery of Ragusa under the title of St John in possession of Signor Commendatore Fra Carlo Maria Olgiati 1746’. This was the Scorsonara. The main asset of the commandery San Giovanni of Ragusa, (AOM 6108. f2r).

4.5 The Commandery of Magisterial Grace (*Commenda di Grazia Magisteriale*)

It was at the time of Grand Master Piero Raimondo Zacosta (1461-67) that the statute regulating the conferment of a commandery to the magistracy was instituted.

³⁵⁹ Every priory, and Messina was no exception, conferred a commandery every five years to the grand magistracy for its reserved use. In most instances, the same commandery would remain *de facto* as a commandery of grace when the five years elapsed. The asset was to be utilized as the grand master desired.³⁶⁰ The head of the Order had various options in this regard. He could ask a procurator and/or receiver of the Order to manage the property as a going concern and obtain an annual disbursement, to be added to his personal coffers. An alternative, and this was essentially the norm, was to donate the commandery to one of the brethren who was a current favourite with the magistracy and council. The grant was for a period of five years,³⁶¹ on the expiry of which, the commandery would be bestowed to another favourite.³⁶² The status of commanderies of grace were not fixed in perpetuity either, and what, at a point in time was a commandery of grace could become a commandery of *cabimento*, the least prosperous in the hierarchy of commanderies. The reasons for this eventuality were various, the most important of which was the loss of income from the asset due to internal mismanagement and/or external influences such as surrounding conflicts and contagion. By the same token, a commandery of grace was not necessarily one of the richest land assets either. However, commanderies of magisterial grace usually remained so, for most of their lifetime.

³⁵⁹ See Statuti 1589, 24 of the commanderies, 208.

³⁶⁰ AOM 1665, fol 20v.

³⁶¹ Riley-Smith, 191. Commanderies of grace were first mentioned in the annals of the Order in 1262, when they were bestowed directly by the central administration for life or for a term.

³⁶² Usually, the commandery of magisterial grace became vacant either with the death of the incumbent, or promotion to some other dignity, or when the commandery is renounced by the brother. Riley-Smith indicates that the allocation of a magisterial commandery was either for life or for a term, 191.

When a grand master conferred a commandery of magisterial grace to a knight, it had to be accepted within the stipulated time of 20 days from the end of its vacancy.³⁶³ Once the commandery was bestowed, the grand master had the privilege to keep one year's income from it; the statutes also stipulated that if this annuity was not paid, the concession could be annulled by the grand master.³⁶⁴

A commandery of magisterial grace would also support a list of pensioners, maintained from funds that accrued from the annual income.

The commandery of Palermo, della Guilla was a commandery of magisterial grace throughout most of the seventeenth century, in particular from 1645 onwards.³⁶⁵ The commandery of Modica and Randazzo, one of the oldest assets of the priory of Messina, was also one of magisterial grace throughout the same time period, except for a few years in the 1670s when it became a commandery of *miglioramento*. In 1698, possibly because of a drastic decrease in income, it reverted to a commandery of *cabimento*. The same pattern is seen with the Order's main asset in Caltagirone, where, throughout most of the seventeenth century, it was a commandery of magisterial grace, reverting to one of *cabimento* in 1686.³⁶⁶

Essentially as can be seen from the above, the priory of Messina had, at any one time, more than one commandery which was designated of magisterial grace. See Table 2.1. In the five years between 1675 and 1680, there were at least 5 properties of the Order in the priory of Messina that were concomitantly entitled commanderies of magisterial grace, and hence under the personal mandate of the grand master. These were the commandery della Guilla in Palermo, that of Modica and Randazzo, the commandery of Marsala, that of Giorgenti (Agrigento) and the commandery of Caltagirone. The reason for this is difficult to explain. Statute 24 of the Commanderies does state that a commandery in each priory should be reserved for the grand master as an asset of Grace every five years. The statute, however, continues that if the first

³⁶³ AOM 1666, 38. '*...puo conferir di Grazia ogni cinque anni il Gran maestro, e quella, ch'egli vuole, vacate in Convento, o fuori. Ma solamente per morte, o promozione a qualunque Dignità. Con dichiarare se vuol darla, o nó, fra venti giorni, dopo l'avviso della vacanza, e fra dieci altri a chi la vuol dare, o l'avrá data*'.

³⁶⁴ Schermerhorn (1929), 153.

³⁶⁵ D'Avenia (2003), 38,

³⁶⁶ AOM 2171, fol 161r *et seq.*

commandery is not awarded within five years, he was allowed to dispense two at the end of ten years, which might explain the multiplicity of Commanderies of Grace at the same time.³⁶⁷

This fact made it even more problematic for the Sicilian members of the Hospitaller Order to acquire land assets by smutition, although some members seemed better catered for than others, under the guise of nepotism and pre-eminential conduct. The higher echelons and the more influential members of the Order were favourite candidates for the award of commanderies of magisterial grace or commanderies that were entitled *camerae magisteriali* (see later), but the lower ranks were limited to awards by the process of smutition, when these commanderies became vacant on the death of their incumbents, or the latter promoted to better acquisitions. And even then, the commandery had to go through a process of one year or part thereof of the mortuary, and then another year of vacancy, during which time span the income accruing from the commandery was directed by the receiver of the Order to the Common Treasury. This income was lost to the awardee of the commandery.

Apart from the considerable number of commanderies of magisterial grace found in the province of Messina (five of them at one time), the patronage of most of the remainder was also entailed to some degree, and consequently out of reach for most members of the brethren. The commandery of Polizzi was a *camera magisteriale* and hence under the direct authority of the grand master.³⁶⁸ Of the others, at any point in time but in reality, throughout most of the second half of the seventeenth century, nearly half were commanderies of *jus patronatus*. This meant that, for most of them, as can be seen from the respective notarial archives when they were incorporated, their succession was restricted, some up to four generations before they were given to the priory to be awarded by smutition. There were also some commanderies of Prioral grace. Hence, out of 15 commanderies under the jurisdiction of the priory of Messina in the middle half of the seventeenth century, only 3 or 4 were available to the Langue of Italy to be awarded by smutition. There must have been cut-throat competition for the conferment

³⁶⁷ Statuti, (1674), 182.

³⁶⁸ See Statuti 1782, 342,

of such a commandery by the Italian Langue especially to its Sicilian brethren as the brothers were relatively many but the commanderies few.³⁶⁹

4.6 The Commandery of Magisterial Chamber (*Commenda di Camera Magisteriale*)

Apart from the commandery of magisterial grace, the priory of Messina had another type of commandery whose revenue was specifically targeted to maintain the grand master's quasi-royal status among his peers. This was a commandery with the designated name of magisterial chamber, or *camera magisteriale*. Each priory had one such commandery, which was perpetually united to the magistracy and its income was reserved to keep the grand master in state.³⁷⁰ The commandery of Polizzi, one of the richest located in the boundaries of the priory was a *camera magisteriale*, set up at the time of Grand Master Claude de la Sengle and under the direct authority of the grand master. The annual responsiones owed by the *camera* to the convent was 746 onze in 1660, second only to those payable by the priory of Messina with its *camere priorale*. The commandery of Polizzi had several rich manors and estates in the district of Polizzi, Caltavuturo and Petralie. This was a noble manor with civil and criminal jurisdiction, subject only to the

³⁶⁹ However, for some esteemed members of the Order, acquisition of a commandery, albeit of *cabimento* was not difficult. When the commandery of St John of Ragusa was up for smutition as its previous commander fra Ruffo had relinquished it in 1686, fra Matthias Preti had asked the Italian Langue for it during the process of its smutition as his commandery of *cabimento*. In the end it was awarded to him. See AOM 2133, fol 71v.

³⁷⁰ There are technical differences between commanderies of magisterial grace and commanderies of magisterial chambers (or *camerae magisteriali*). The latter were perpetually bound to the magisterial office and part of its income went to the central convent as a magisterial pension. Commanderies of magisterial grace, although under the auspices of the grand magistracy, were given for a finite period of five years (in the seventeenth century) and they had to settle responsiones directly to the common treasury. See JRS 192.

Hospitaller Order. The residents were not subject to baronial villeinage and they were also free of any obligatory royal military service.

In a similar way to the commandery of magisterial grace, the grand master had the option of either keeping this commandery for his personal needs, but also had the power to bestow it to a brother who in his turn had to reserve part of the annual income of the commandery as a pension for the grand master.³⁷¹ The *camera magisteriale* could also be leased, but the terms of the lease only applied during the lifetime of the particular grand master.

The statutes of the Order recorded the penalties incurred if these rights were not observed. If the magisterial pension was not paid within four months of the lapse in time, the payment due was doubled. Moreover, if this pension was not paid within two years, the rights of the commander to continue to manage the commandery were terminated.³⁷² On conferment to a brother, the grand master had the power to retain two whole years of income, which if not paid incurred similar penalties. During the mortuary and the vacancy of the *camera magisteriale*, pensions were still handed out; however, during the mortuary period these were not to exceed a third of the net income of the commandery, whereas during the vacancy period, not more than a third of the gross income.

The titles of commanderies could also be rotated, as the statutes of the Order allowed this. A commandery of magisterial grace could be turned into a *camera magisteriale*, and the grand master or his delegated commander could donate one or more pensions, which could be added to ones already existing, as long as in their totality they did not surpass a fifth of the true value of the Camera. This did not include the magisterial pension.³⁷³

³⁷¹ AOM 1666, 39. 'il Gran Maestro può non solo tenerle per se, ma eziandio conferirle in perpetua locazione in vita ai fratelli; salvi i dritti del Tesoro, e la pensione che riserva per se.'

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 39 et seq.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 40.

4.7 The Commandery Pensioners³⁷⁴

The income of most commanderies supported a number of dependants described as *pensionisti*. These included both pensioners, accruing an annual remuneration by reason of their advanced age, but more likely, boarders in a hospitality institution, or lodgers.³⁷⁵ These stipends would have been supported by the priory or the commanderies as an annual disbursement.

The statutes of the Order mandated that the global amount of these pensions sourced from one commandery could not exceed the fifth (*quinto*) of the annual income of the respective commandery.³⁷⁶ When consideration is given to the fact that the priory of Messina throughout the second half of the seventeenth century administered more than 80 pensions, from small sums of 25 scudi as an annual gratuity, to 300 or more scudi, and extrapolated back from the maximum *quinto* to the gross income (*introito brutto*), the latter would translate into thousands of scudi.

³⁷⁴ The English Hospitallers in the fourteenth century had a similar financial assistance called a corrody. These were allowances, in cash and form given to non-members of the Order, and included cash, and accommodation at the commandery. See, for example, *The Knights Hospitallers in England: Being the Report of Prior Philip de Thame to the Grand Master Elyan de Villanova for AD 1338*, vol 65. (Camden Society 1857), xxxvi. See also Helen Nicholson, 'Relations between Houses of the Order of the Temple in Britain and their Local Communities, as indicated during the Trial of the Templars, 1307-12', in Norman Housley (ed), *Knighthoods of Christ: Essays on the History of the Crusades and the Knights Templar* (Aldershot, Ashgate publishing Ltd, 2007), 203 et seq. There were however several differences between the corrodaries given in English priories and the Hospitaller *pensionisti*. Most of the pensioners of the Messina priory were members of the Order, and not necessarily advanced in years. Only the exceptions were extraneous to the Order. There is no mention that these *pensionisti* were accommodated in house or given any other hospitality. The payment given to corrodaries was probably payback of funds lent, or commissions on estates granted or even agreed returns on favours received. Apart from corrodies, pensions were also awarded in the English priory, but these were more like annuities, secured on the interests of sums lent to the priory, donated assets and more uncommonly so-called gratifications for charitable acts.

³⁷⁵ See Treccano Vocabolario Pensione: 'Prestazione di vitto e alloggio (talvolta soltanto di vitto) fornita dietro corrispettivo di una somma fissa giornaliera'.

³⁷⁶ Pensions granted to deserving brothers were included as annual burdens (*carichi*) that the relevant commandery shouldered. The statutes of the Order in the seventeenth century mandated that these should not exceed a ceiling of the annual income of the commandery. This limit varied to some extent depending on the Langue. The French commanderies of Provence, Auvergne and France were limited to a third of the annual income, whereas the Langue of Italy was limited to 22% and the Spanish provinces (Aragon, Catalunya, and Navarre) to 20%. These remained without change for a great number of years and their totality could only change in the case of a new imposition set up by the Order. See Codice, 107.

The way these beneficiaries were chosen is difficult to decipher, although Hospitaller statutes regulated which brothers could be candidates to earn a pension from commanderies of magisterial grace.³⁷⁷ The brother had to be a professed religious, and had to have attended the Convent in Malta on a regular basis, including a 3 year-long residence. He had to have taken part in 2 six-month stints on the Orders' galleys, and also had to be of the same nationality as the respective Langue, and in Italy, a native of the district which the particular commandery conferring the pension was a part of.³⁷⁸ He also had to have paid in full his passage fees and was not indebted to the common treasury. These pensions could be exchanged by the recipients and given to other members of the Order as well.³⁷⁹

Pensions were given to members of the Order both prior to them having been endowed with a commandery, as well as to knights after they had relinquished their position as holders of these same assets. Fra Annibale Vimercati was voted an annual stipend of 60 Sicilian scudi by the Priory of Messina on the 22 July 1697; this was followed by an additional pension of 40 scudi on the 18 March 1716, possibly to counter inflation rates.³⁸⁰ After the passage of sixteen more years, fra Vimercati was to become the Grand Prior of Messina, and at that point in time he was also the admiral of the Order's navy and Pilier of the Italian Langue.³⁸¹

Another pattern suggesting an allusion to nepotism which emerges from these accounts is the recurrence of the same family names, both in the rolls of the *pensionisti* as well as the holders of the supporting commanderies; rarely the same family names are found across different commanderies. Fra Giovanni Bichi was awarded the commandery of Polizzi on 17 April 1658. He was installed by special dispensation by the grand master at the time, Polizzi being a magisterial *camera*. The first point to be made here is that more than five years prior to this award, fra Bichi had already been

³⁷⁷ AOM 1666, 107

³⁷⁸ AOM 108. French aspirants to a pension from a commandery of magisterial grace had the faculty to be from the French three Langues, Provence, Auvergne, and France and not specifically from one of them.

³⁷⁹ AOM 1666, 39. '*Puó permutar le pensioni riservate sopra le Commende di grazia, o Camere Magisteriali con alter Pensioni, o Membri, e dar una pensione, per averne molte, e quelle, o quelli conceder ad altri Fratelli;*'.

³⁸⁰ AOM 2171 fol 161r. (See Appendix 2).

³⁸¹ Fra Vimercati was elected grand prior of Messina on the 28 Jan 1732. See AOM 2171, fol 161r.

receiving a remittance of 100 scudi from this commandery (at least from 30 March 1653). The second point is that during his tenure at Polizzi, 150 Sicilian scudi were awarded to a certain Mario Bichi,³⁸² *nobile*, on the 15 February 1665, who turns out to be the nephew of the incumbent. The pension to Mario Bichi continued during the time that his uncle remained the holder of the commandery of Polizzi until June 1676.³⁸³

San Giovanni della Guilla of Palermo was a commandery of magisterial grace, certainly between the years 1645 and 1747.³⁸⁴ The awards and pensions that it supported show a similar pattern to those given by the magisterial *camerae*. Fra Francisco Sylos was the commander of della Guilla, beginning his tenure in March 1650. Giuseppe Sylos, another *nobile*, was awarded an annual stipend of 100 Sicilian scudi on 13 May 1660 and this was augmented on 20 May 1666 by another 50 scudi. This obviously happened during the tenure of his Hospitaller relative in the commandery.³⁸⁵ Apart from the Noble Giuseppe Sylos, the commandery of Palermo also supported fra Giovanni di Giovanni to the tune of 40 scudi in 1668, fra Gaspare Gabuccini 40 scudi in 1669, the Noble Giuseppe Gabuccini 40 scudi in 1670, fra Matthia Preti 30 scudi in 1673; and even a Benedictine deacon, the cleric Cocco Palmieri (later on to become Archbishop of Malta 1684-1711) by awarding him an annual remittance of 40 scudi.³⁸⁶

In view of their lower annual income, smaller commanderies including those of Bizzini, Borea of Siracusa, San Pietro di Guzmano di Mazzarino, San Giovanni of Ragusa, San Antonio Abbate of Albigiana, the commandery Bonanno of Caltagirone and the commandery of Don Michele Calli did not maintain any pensions throughout most of the seventeenth century. Some of these commanderies saw their inception in the third and fourth decades of this century and were commanderies of *jus patronatus*. Essentially small in acreage, their income was correspondingly small. Indeed, this was the norm amongst most commanderies of *jus patronatus*; being small bequests, their annual income could not support regular outlays to pensioners, and this was reflected

³⁸² AOM 4064 contains the Proofs of Nobility of fra Mario Bichi. He was born in 1653 and was admitted as a postulant in the Hospitaller Order in 1664.

³⁸³ AOM 2171, fol 163r

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, fol 163v.

³⁸⁵ See D'Avenia (2003), 71.

³⁸⁶ AOM 2171, 165r

also in the low level of responses that annually filtered to the common treasury in Malta. The exceptions were two commanderies, both of them *di cabimento* from their inception in the mid-1650s to the end of the seventeenth century; these were the commanderies of Santo Stefano of Palermo and the Saracina, who supported 2 and 4 pensions respectively.

However, other commanderies within the jurisdictional boundaries of the grand priory of Messina, and indeed the grand priory itself, more than compensated for this deficiency. The priory of Messina supported at least 80 imbursements in the hundred years between 1645 and 1747. These ranged from the lowest of 25 scudi *per annum* to the princely sum of 300 scudi.³⁸⁷ The commandery of Polizzi supported 19 stipends, della Guilla 16 pensions, whereas the commandery of Marsala provided for 70 grants. The commanderies of Piazza and Giorgenti (today's Agrigento) supported 21 and 14 pensions, respectively. These were annual incomes, and they must have been an onerous outlay, which naturally came out of the commanderies' coffers. All the pensions were given annually until the death of the recipients.

Some recipients did receive remuneration from more than one commandery. Fra Matthias Preti (1613-1699) was a Calabrian artist and professed as a Knight of Grace (1642) before arriving in Malta. He embellished the vault of the main church of the Order in Malta between the years 1661 and 1666, and possibly as part payment for this project, he was awarded a pension from various commanderies of the priory of Messina. On the 1 February 1667 he was awarded the small sum of 25 scudi from the priory which he was to receive on an annual basis.³⁸⁸ The commandery of Giorgenti enrolled him as a stipendiary for the sum of 30 scudi on 13 June 1669 which was eventually renounced for some unknown reason.³⁸⁹ He was then awarded the sum of 30 scudi by the commandery of St Giovanni della Guilla on 9 May 1673.³⁹⁰ The artist obtained

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, fol 161r. 25 scudi of the Sicilian coinage were awarded to fra Matthias Preti on 1 feb 1667. Fra Carlo Giuseppe Barone was given 40 scudi on 29 October 1682, to the knight Annibale Vimercati 60 scudi in 1697, to fra Andrea di Giovanni 80 scudi of the Sicilian coinage in 15 June 1711, and to fra Don Raimondo di Moncada 240 scudi of copper coinage awarded on the 18 June 1697.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 162r.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 168r.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 164r.

another quantum of 30 scudi from the commandery of Modica and Randazzo on 4 May 1676, which was again renounced.³⁹¹

There were three smaller commanderies incorporated with the priory of Messina whose recipients came from the ranks of the sergeant-at-arms and the conventual chaplains. These were the commanderies of Malandrino, that of Mazzarino and Grientio of Butera and the commandery of San Giuseppe Barberino of Piazza. None of these carried the burden of any pensions from the time of their incorporation to the end of the seventeenth century; their acreage was small and consequently their income was little. In fact, to make them viable, the commandery of Mazzarino of Butera was assimilated with that of Barberino of Piazza by a magisterial decree of the 19 Sept 1699 to make their accruing income more practical.³⁹²

4.8 The Sicilian Commanderies of *Jus Patronatus* in the *Seicento*

The seventeenth century saw the foundation of several new commanderies in the Sicilian priory. These were *jus patronatus* gifts to the Hospitaller Order, but the endowments were not unique to Sicily. D'Avenia suggests that the conferment of commanderies through private patronage was a widespread phenomenon in the Order.³⁹³ The Italian Langue of the Order accepted 57 such commanderies in its territory, between 1500 and 1658 and nearly two thirds of them (32) were donated between 1633 and 1658. This does reflect essentially what was happening in the territory of the Grand Priory of Messina in Sicily.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, fol 165r.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, fol 181r

³⁹³ Fabrizio D'Avenia (2003), 37

The practice was also not limited to the seventeenth century. As Nasalli Rocca indicates, the previous century also saw a few endowments of such assets to the Order.³⁹⁴ Furthermore there were other military orders which were also granted similar endowments, concurrently to what was happening in Sicily, possibly in competition with the Hospitallers.

The Order of Santo Stefano was set up by Cosimo I de Medici, Duke of Tuscany in 1562. It had similar aspirations and mechanisms as the Hospitaller Order, but as Luttrell points out, it lacked the pedigree of the latter.³⁹⁵ It did attract however, most noble families of Florence away from the Hospitallers, together with their assets which were donated to the Order of Santo Stefano. To join, pseudo-aristocrats would endow the Order of Santo Stefano with a commandery of *jus patronatus*, which secured for them instant noble status. Commanders could be married, and their sons would inherit the family asset under the same conditions. Contrary to the statutes of the Hospitallers four quarters of nobility were not mandatory, and if deficient, could be bought. Despite attracting a smaller amount of prestige, however, the Order of Santo Stefano had amassed, between 1563 and 1737, no fewer than 675 commanderies. Between 1600 and 1718, 1983 had professed in the Order of Santo Stefano against 356 in the Hospitaller Order.³⁹⁶ Most of them came from the Grand Duchy of Florence and other Tuscan cities. If the Tuscan region is excluded however, at the same time-period of 1600-1718, there was nearly three times the number of knights which had professed in the Order of Malta than in the Tuscan Order. These figures do, however, indicate the overall haemorrhage of manpower and assets that the Order of Santo Stefano was inflicting to the detriment of the Hospitallers, albeit mainly in Tuscany.

The nature of the *jus patronatus* commanderies given to the Hospitallers in the first half of the seventeenth century was distinct and substantially different from those

³⁹⁴ E Nasalli Rocca, *Le Commende Italiane dell'Ordine di Malta alla fine del sec XVI*, (Archivio Storico di Malta, 1936), 205. *'intanto possiamo subito rilevare che il numero di esse (Commende) non si modificó sensibilmente; in questo periodo non vi furono eventi degni di particolare rilievo nella storia patrimoniale fondiaria dell'Ordine, almeno per quanto riguarda le commende italiane di libera collazione magisteriale, poiché le commende di riservato patronato gentilizio sembra invece abbiano subito un notevole incremento'*

³⁹⁵ Anthony Luttrell, 'The Military Orders, 1312 – 1798', in Riley-Smith, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, (Oxford University Press, 2001), 351.

³⁹⁶ Spagnoletti, *Stato* (1988), 64 et seq.

which had been awarded to the Order in the previous centuries.³⁹⁷ These commanderies were founded and donated through private patronage³⁹⁸ in the course of which, the Order received a degree of assets but in turn, renounced certain obligations that bound its members during the process of *smutizione*. In this arrangement, the Order had to submit to various conditions, including the wavering of the full status of nobility in the four quarters (in the Italian language) of one's ancestors, and curtailment, albeit temporarily, of the inalienable right of the Order to assign the estate, and acceptance of the patron to manage the *jus patronatus* estate and even, in certain cases, to allocate his own successor/s.³⁹⁹ The type and size of assets were also different from the massive estates and terrain that typified earlier donations. *Jus patronatus* commanderies consisted of small acreages, and collections of a few tenements, rendering a moderate income of a few hundreds of scudi annually. The assets came entailed with various other obligations as well. The commanderies of *jus patronatus* were essentially quid-pro-quo semi-business transactions, with the Order acquiring hard assets bartered for instant prestige acquired by the patron.

The institution of a *jus patronatus* commandery in the Langue of Italy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries followed a mostly standard pattern, although there were minor variations in the specifics of each foundation. Eventually, the Council of the Order formalised several requirements addressed to potential benefactors, to regulate what was becoming another lucrative means of revenue for the Order.⁴⁰⁰ See Appendix C.

Although most founders bartered the donation for a prestigious title in the hierarchy of the Order with its associated privileges, the rank bestowed was not identical in each case. Some founders were given the rank of a knight of Justice, others that of a

³⁹⁷ C. Astorri, *Il Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta e le sue Commende familiari nel Diritto Italiano* (Roma, 1930), 35-37. The bequest of patronal commanderies was not equivalent to those given by *fideicommissi*, as they were not donations *per se*. They remained separate from the patrimony of the Order and were at the disposition of both the beneficiary i.e. Order and the donor. According to whatever contract was laid down, the donor as well as his progeny could continue to benefit from the bequests during their life-time until such time as stipulated in the contract and/or the direct family tree becomes extinguished, when the Order would become the sole beneficiary.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

³⁹⁹ Sire, 106

⁴⁰⁰ AOM 2161, fol 140r.

knight of Grace. Ultimately this decision rested with the higher ranks of the Langue and the grand master.

The commandery of Saracena was donated to the Order in 1637 by Don Giacomo Ottaviano. It was to yield an annual income of 200 scudi. The commandery was made up of territory from the paternal legacy. It was a rich donation, compared to others, as it included 130 *salme* of cultivated land, fifty thousand vines and several gardens. However, unlike Don Blandano d'Arizzi, founder of the commandery of Ragusa, who was made a Knight of Justice in return for his donation, Don Giacomo Ottaviano was admitted into the Order as a Knight of Grace and was to be made a commander for life.⁴⁰¹

The most important issue that made the whole concept of donating a commandery to the Order agreeable to the donor was the fact that the scheme served as a bypass for some of the major hurdles that were present in professing into the Hospitaller Order of St John. Apart from acting as a fast-track into the Order, circumventing the presentation of the mandatory proofs of nobility which a regular candidate had to do before entering its exclusive ranks, in some instances it also bypassed other rites of passage of a knight in his *cursus honorum*.⁴⁰² It avoided the three (and with time, four) six monthly interludes on the galleys; this was necessary in the regular ranks of the Order if one was to be considered a candidate for the conferment of a commandery. The four interludes, at least 2 years of a knight's life, together with the dangerous exposure to life and limb, was obligatory, and was factored in the *antianitas* of each member of the Order.⁴⁰³ This arrangement opened up a route for hitherto ineligible members of the 'new' Sicilian

⁴⁰¹ Giacomo Pace Gravina, 141. '*commendatore a vita*'.

⁴⁰² AOM 6254, fol 4r. The first pre-requisite asked by the founders of the Malandrina commandery was not for the Order to waive the proofs of Nobility; they had asked the grandmaster to institute just one process for this to be done. This proof of nobility for the elder brother would then apply for the other two younger siblings. They were also to pay their passage fees to the common treasury as well.

⁴⁰³ This was essentially a scale of seniority, a ranking order enshrined in the hierarchy of the Order. Seniority was not just a linear scale of time since profession, but also incorporated milestones and hurdles that a member of the Order had to accomplish in the passage of time. This included, living a meritorious life, taking part in the 4 *caravane* that the Council mandated, spending a period of five years in conventual life, etc. See AOM 1666, fol 9. '*Anzianità è effetto della ricezione, ed ai Cavalieri, e Servienti d'Arme ricevuti di età maggiore corre dal di della presentazione delle loro prove alla Lingua, se sono minori di venti anni, ed hanno già compita l'età di 16 anni, ed otto mesi; altrimenti da questo giorno, purché però si presentino in Convento prima di compire il ventesimo anno della loro età; altrimenti non lo ricominceranno a contare, che dal giorno del loro arrivo della grazia.*'

nobility of the seventeenth century, circumventing statutes, and ordinances of the Order in the process. Conversely, patronal endowment must have been a scheme that the Order needed to introduce, possibly because of external pressure from the founders themselves, but also perhaps forced by the lean times that parts of Europe were going through at that point. As implied earlier, there must have been also indirect (and direct) rivalry with other military Orders who were head-hunting potential donors by endorsing regulations with less strict mores of nobility and celibacy. In the end, the criteria set out by the Hospitaller Order for these donors late in the seventeenth century approached the middle ground between it and other military Orders.

Once set up, commanderies of *jus patronatus* were managed and assimilated in the Order as other regular commanderies. The founder, and his descendants who came into possession of the commandery after his death, were obliged to pay the mandatory disbursements to the common treasury. These included the annual *responsiones*, the several impositions that the Council had put up in the sixteenth century, as well as the *mortorio* and the *vacante*. If not initially present, the founder had to build and administer a chapel on commandery land together with the provision for a salaried diocesan priest, so that the locality would be enriched by these services. If the donation did not consist of land, there was an obligation to include the furnishing and dedication of a side altar in an existing Hospitaller church. This does indicate that, repeatedly, the Hospitallers continued to live the ethos of their institution; the assets donated, apart from furnishing the material gains had to come combined with the obligation of divine office, to cater for the spiritual needs of the inhabitants in their territories.

No less than fifteen commanderies of *jus patronatus* were presented to the Order on the Sicilian mainland over a period of forty years, from 1603 when the first commandery was instituted, up till 1644.⁴⁰⁴ After the last patronal commandery (this was the commandery of Butera, founded to be managed by the provincial chaplains of the Order) was set up in 1644, the priory of Messina was not endowed with other commanderies, patronal or otherwise.

⁴⁰⁴ Pirri, 943-5. In his *Sacra Sicilia*, printed in 1733, Pirri gives a detailed list of private donations transferred to the Hospitaller Order on the Sicilian mainland. All of them were donated in the first half of the seventeenth century, specifically between 1603 and 1644.

The income from these commanderies was only moderate and rarely exceeded 300 scudi annually; this can be compared to the annual income of 2250 onze (equivalent to 5625 scudi) of the grand Priory of Messina in 1676.⁴⁰⁵ See Table 5.6. In 1603, on its foundation, the Commandery of Vizzini was planned to generate an income of 220 scudi annually, with another 10 scudi to be given as a stipend to the diocesan priest for the availability of divine services in the commandery chapel. When the Commandery of Ragusa was established in 1626, it was designated to earn 300 scudi annually. In addition to this sum, in a similar pattern to other commanderies, a salary of 10 scudi was to be given annually to a diocesan priest to conduct divine services in a newly built chapel which was part of the contract between the founder of the commandery, fra Blandano d'Arizzi and the Order. Similarly, the annual income of the commandery of Santo Stefano of Schiettina was 132 onze (330 scudi), whereas that of Sant'Antonio of Albiana of Palermo was 216 scudi.⁴⁰⁶ Another commandery was set up by the Genovese Stefano Scattino (also Schiattino or Schiettino)⁴⁰⁷ in the *ricetta* of Palermo, in exchange for professing in the Order without the mandated proofs of nobility of his ancestors.⁴⁰⁸ The annual income of this new commandery was to be 300 scudi, which would accrue from the capital of various leases on houses and other fixed assets which Scattino had in Palermo.⁴⁰⁹ Other commanderies of *jus patronatus* followed a similar pattern.

In view of their very moderate income, the relevant responsiones paid by *jus patronatus* commanderies to the convent in the seventeenth century was a very modest modicum of the revenue generated annually. The same state of affairs remained in the eighteenth century.⁴¹⁰ They ranged from 4 onze paid by the commandery of San Giovanni Barberini of Piazza, and the commandery of Borea, and 14 onze by the

⁴⁰⁵ AOM 2162, f93v

⁴⁰⁶ Spagnoletti (1988), 83

⁴⁰⁷ Around the early 1620s, and presumably up till 1628 when he had asked to be admitted to the ranks of the Order, Stefano Scattino was a very busy procurator of the grand prior of Messina La Marra. See AOM 6124, fol 2v.

⁴⁰⁸ AOM 6127, fol 3v. '*per esser io ricevuto per cavaliere di essa Veneranda Lingua senza obbligo di far prove, et d'haver a goder tutti li honori prerogative et voci come tutti altri cavalieri*'.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 4r. The capital included 8 pieces of real estate consisting of 4 items listed as 'property', a house, a lease and 2 others that were unnamed. The annual income from these came to around 301 scudi; this was based on a capital of 3788 scudi.

⁴¹⁰ AOM 899, f125 to f 142

commandery of La Saracena and Moschiti of Palermo; to 25 onze paid as responsiones by the commandery of Santo Stefano of Palermo, also known as Schiattina. When these sums are compared to the responsiones owed by other commanderies in the grand priory of Messina at the same time, there are marked differences. The commandery of San Giovanni of Rhodes of Marsala gave an annual contribution to the Common Treasury of 100 onze; the commandery of Polizzi 103 onze, the commandery of The Guilla of Palermo 60 onze and the commandery of Santa Maria del Tempio at Caltagirone 53 onze.

The eighteenth century also saw the foundation of other commanderies of *jus patronatus* in the Italian Language outside of Sicily, roughly based on the same principles that were promulgated by the Order in the previous century.

Not all attempts at establishing a donation of *jus patronatus* were successful. In 1637 the reverend Don Bernardo Zacco from Modica had expressed a wish to assemble his property together and donate them to the grand priory of Messina as a commandery of *jus patronatus*. It was proposed that the revenue generated from this commandery would be about 80 scudi annually and that the obligation towards the common treasury would be 1 scudo a year.⁴¹¹ In return he had asked the Order to enrol him as a conventual chaplain and that his seniority would count as from his first day of profession. The Order was to waive the obligatory proofs of nobility of his lineage. He also expected to continue enjoying his donated patrimony until his death when the commandery would be given to the grand priory of Messina to be assigned by smutition as a commandery of *cabimento*.

However, the two commissioners, fra Alessandro Orlandini and the reverend Carini, delegated by the grand prior of Messina to review the paperwork, found this to be very deficient and the proposition was not accepted.⁴¹²

⁴¹¹ AOM 6231, fol 19r. '*Desidera professare in grado di fra cappellano conventuale...fundar una commenda di scudo 80 l'anno sopra alcuni beni stabili che detto esponente tiene nella citta di Modica con goderla sua vita durante et doppo lasciarla alla Ven Lingua...da smutirsi per cabimento in grado di fra capellani et fra servienti...con pagare solamente per recognitione al comun tesoro scudo uno l'anno*'.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, fol 19r '*3 di giugno 1637, fra Alessandro orlandini and rev dot Carini commissari deputati..hanno riferito haver visto et considerato il contenuto in detti memoriali et scritture et dicono che da esse scritture non si puo cavar alcuna luce ne costruito circa la pretensione del detto Don Bernardo Zacco il che inteso da detta Ven lingua tutti ND hanno ordinato che non si tratti piu del sudetto negocio*'.

4.9 Conclusion

The Hospitaller Order guarded its rich and extensive patrimony of landed assets assiduously and with extreme care. Chapter fourteen of the Statutes of the Order focused essentially on the commanderies and their administration and it laboriously lists the various decrees by successive grand masters as each tried to improve the management and supervision of these assets, the result of which would be greater profitability and income to the Order, which in turn, would more easily finance its projected aims and life-style of its members. The conferment of these valuable land assets was also an important rite of passage for the brethren to progress up the hierarchical ladder and gave status and much coveted pre-eminence to the individual knights. Rich assets were usually associated with eminent members of the Order. The award of a commandery of Grace added prestige to the recipient.

In lean times, the Order was not averse to accept patronal donations that came tied with conditions; an indication that, rather than remaining entrenched in its silo and unaware and disinterested in its surroundings, the Order moved on with the times and emulated other Orders when necessary.

The next section will discuss the state of the grand priory of Messina in the seventeenth century, where despite major obstacles, the asset continued to flourish, and the Order consolidated its patrimony.

Chapter 5 The State of the Priory of Messina in the Seventeenth Century

5.1. Introduction

The seventeenth century saw an incremental rise of donated properties to the Hospitaller Order in Sicily. Although the number of assets more than doubled, this did not equate to a corresponding increase in either acreage or income. As discussed before, the donated assets were patronal in type and consequently modest. However, this increase in donations did partly show the increased relevance of the Order in the local scene at that point in time, at least. In the latter half of this century, the priory saw no further major expansion and the following decades showed only consolidation of its properties. By 1760, the grand priory had amassed another three commanderies, all of *jus patronatus*, whereas two were amalgamated together to give a totality of nineteen.

This chapter will discuss the concept of what constituted a *ricetta* of the Order, and this is followed by an analysis of the state of the Grand Priory of Messina in the seventeenth century, overlapping to some extent, adjacent centuries. Finally, a few biographical notes are added on the brethren of the priory at the time.

5.2 The *Ricetta*

By the seventeenth century, the land assets of the grand priory of Messina were divided into several provinces, each of which had a single administrative and financial office. Each of these areas was termed a *ricetta* and the Order had at least twelve of these spread out all over the Sicilian territory.¹ The word *ricetta* is a shortened version of *receptoria*, which in its turn is a corrupted form of *precettoria* meaning a preceptory, or commandery.

Each *ricetta* or administrative unit was composed of several land assets of the Order; these were made up of commanderies, chapels, leased stretches of farmland, water mills and huge estates or *tenute*. A *ricetta* was managed by several procurators, appointed by the commanders of each commandery, and this method oversaw the day-to-day supervision of the asset in the most efficient manner and to the absolute benefit of the Order.² The procurators of the Hospitaller assets in each of the Sicilian Valle (di Noto, di Mazzara and Demone) then worked under the umbrella of the Hospitaller Receiver, of whom there were at least three in Sicily at the time.³

The twelve *ricette* making up the grand priory of Messina included primarily the *Ricetta* of Messina which, for various reasons, was the most important. Geographically it housed the grand prioral palace which was the official residence of the grand prior in Sicily; it also accommodated the cathedral church of the Hospitallers and included the main port in which the Order's fleet berthed on a regular basis. This *ricetta* incorporated

¹ Each of the *ricette* had boundary markers or milestones which indicated the margins of the Hospitaller assets. The Ordinations (1749) of the Order even set out the mechanism how these milestones would be changed or refurbished by the incumbents. See AOM 6123 fol 66v, *Ordinazioni Generali della Visita Priorale fatta nell'anno 1749. Avendo noi incorso della medesima osservato di quanta conseguenza sia il disordine di non erigersi ne confini de terreni e Predj delle commende i pilastri o siano Pilieri volgarmente detti le mire ne luoghi dove non vi sono segni immutabili di confini, ordiniamo perciò che nelli cabrei e visite de miglioramenti debba farsi costare la erezione ed attuale esistenza dell'anzidetti pilastri, che dovranno essere di macigno (boulder) e colla croce ottogona giacche vi sono molte citta e luoghi che portano nel loro stemma la croce dritta'.*

² Ivan Grech, 'Capital, Conflict, and Mediterranean Frontiers: The Mobilization of Funds from the Order of St John's European Estates in Early Modernity', *Journal of Maltese History*, v, 2 (2018), 10.

³ D'Avenia, 40. In the early seventeenth century, Hospitaller Sicily was serviced by one Receiver - 'in toto hoc Sicilie Regno' - but later on the posts multiplied.

4 *camere priorale* (Taormina, Catania, Lentini and Paternò) and the rich assets of Castanea, Milici and Polizzi (a commandery of Magisterial Grace). It also included 3 commanderies (Calli, lo Pozzo and Marullo) and 4 churches, all of which were maintained by the priory. Other *ricettae* included that of Augusta, Agrigento (mainly the commandery of Santa Maria Maddalena), Caltagirone (containing three commanderies, the main one being San Giovanni or Santa Maria del Tempio, and the two commanderies of jus patronatus, San Giovanni Battista and San Giacomo Maggiore and the commandery Bonanno), Catania, Marsala (which included the commandery of Rodi, Corleone, Alcamo and Caltabellotta), Modica-Randazzo with its several assets, Palermo (with the main commandery of Magistral Grace della Guilla, and three other commanderies *di Cabimento*, Albigiana, Schiattino and Morana), Piazza (including the main commandery of San Giovanni Battista, the manor of Aidone, and secondary commanderies of San Giuseppe Barberino, Castrogiovanni and Licata), Scicli (mainly the commandery of Salemi and the commandery of Ragusa), Siracusa (containing the commanderies of San Giovanni Battista, Borea, and Abela), and finally the *ricetta* of Trapani. See Table 5.1.

5.3 The State of the Priory of Messina 1580-1760.

The increase in the number of commanderies in the territory of the grand priory of Messina in the seventeenth century also implied a general increase in acreage, most of which consisted of cultivated land. See Table 5.2. This, however, was not necessarily symmetrical. Thus, this increase needs to be properly analysed, and the the revenue accrued from the various commanderies assessed over time to see whether this increased territory led also to a corresponding economic expansion. An increase in size of the priory does not necessarily correlate with a proportionate increase in revenue, especially since most added assets during the seventeenth century were relatively small.

Table 5.1. Table of land assets Grand Priory of Messina 1583-1760. Multiple sources.

| <i>Ricetta</i> | Name of Priory/Commandery | Date of Institution/Founder |
|--------------------|--|---|
| 1. Messina | Grand Priory of Messina | ? 1171 |
| | Castanea - <i>casale</i> | Hospitaller ownership at least from 1404. |
| | Santa Maria dei Milici | Concession of Frederick II on 8 March 1211. |
| | Mineo | |
| | Patti | 1396 concession by fra Giovanni Clavostro |
| | St Angelo di Brolo | |
| | Siracusa | already belonging to the grand priory XVI cent. |
| | Commandery Calli - <i>jus patronatus</i> . | 1631 concession by Michele e Luigi Calli. |
| | Commandery Lo Pozzo - <i>jus patronatus</i> | 1631, Giovanni Lo Pozzo. Rendered 500 scudi. |
| | Commandery Marullo- <i>jus patronatus</i> | 1644, Ettore Marullo. |
| 2. Agrigento | Commandery of Santa Maria Maddalena | 1368 - Bishop of Agrigento donated the hospital of Mary Magdalene and church to OSJ. |
| | Butera - Commandery Grienti. <i>Jus patronatus</i> | 1644 concession by the chaplain fra D. Angelo Marrone. |
| 3. Caltagirone | Commandery of San Giovanni (or Santa Maria del Tempio) | |
| | Commandery of San Giovanni Battista e San Giacomo Maggiore (k/a) Saracena of the city of Caltagirone | 1637 (Doc Don Giacomo Ottaviano) |
| | Commandery Bonanno (San Girolamo) | 1637 (Giuseppe, Giovan Battista and Giacomo Bonanno of Caltagirone) |
| 4. Catania | Commandery of St Giovanni of Fleri (Camera Priorale) | |
| Lentini | Commandery of San Giovanni li Bagni (Camera Priorale) | Donated to the Templar order by Frederick II in 1210 and known as San Leonardo. Devolved to the Hospitaller Order after 1312. |
| 5. Marsala | Commandery of San Giovanni of Rhodes | |
| | Corleone | |
| | Alcamo | |
| | Caltabellotta | |
| | Mazara - Commandery Santa Maria dell'Alto or della Giummare. Commandery Magistrale 1784. | |
| | Mazzarino - Commandery of San Pietro Gusmano | 1633. Benedictine priest D. Pietro Gusmano, donated the manor of Mazzarino. |
| 6. Modica-Randazzo | Milazzo - Commandery Marchese | 1628, fra Giacomo Marchese. Annual income 1500 scudi. |
| | Commandery of San Giovanni Battista | Union of two of the oldest Hospitaller institutions in the Kingdom of Sicily. Modica - Chiaramonte sec XIV. Randazzo - medieval origin. |
| | Adrano (Adernó) | |
| | Chiaramonte | |
| | Gratteri | |
| | Nicosia | |

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| | San Filippo (Agira) | |
| | Randazzo. Commandery of San Giovanni Battista | |
| | Spaccaforno (Ispica) | |
| | Terranova (Gela) | |
| | Noto - Commandery Malandrino | Foundation 1642 by Giovanni Matteo Malandrino. |
| | Palazzolo (Acreide) – Commandery Martinez | 1641 Don Lucio Martinez. |
| 7. Palermo | Commandery San Giovanni la Guilla | ? 1203. the nucleus of the commandery was a house in the Albergheria quarters donated by the Grand Admiral of the King Guglielmo Malcovenant. |
| | Commandery of San Antonio Abate Albigiana. | Established in 1645 by two sponsors Flavio Velo and Antonio Albigiano. |
| | Commandery Schiattina (k/a St Stephen Protomartire). <i>Jus patronatus</i> | Foundation in 1628 by the Genovese Stefano Schiattino (or Schittino). |
| | Commandery Morana | Founded by the priest Carlo Morana |
| Paternò | Commandery San Giovanni Battista - Camera Priorale. | |
| | Fief of Schiettino | |
| 8. Piazza (Armerina) | Commandery San Giovanni Battista (San Giovanni Caldara) | 1299 Domus Hospitalis (Vespers war) |
| | Aidone | |
| | Commandery S Giuseppe Barberino. <i>Jus patronatus</i> | The Noble Dario Barberino Foundation 1629. |
| | Castrogiovanni (Enna) | |
| | Gangi | |
| | Licata | |
| Polizzi | Camera Magistrale. (one for each grand priory). | Foundation end 1200. |
| San Mauro (Castelverde) | | |
| 9. Scicli | Commandery Salemi | Foundation by Giovan Battista Salemi of Scicli in 1642. |
| Ragusa | Commandery San Gio Batta o Scorsonara. | 1625 jus patronatus foundation by fra Blandano Arezzo. |
| 10. Siracusa | Commandery San Giovanni Battista. | |
| | Commandery Borea (Borgia). <i>Jus patronatus</i> | Foundation in 1641 by Baron D. Pietro Borgia. |
| | Commandery Abela | Founder Paolo Abela 1649 |
| Taormina | Commandery di S Gio batta. camera priorale | 1551 |
| 11. Trapani | Commandery Calli | 1631 Michele and Aliosio Calli. In the ricetta of Messina |
| Vizzini | Commandery Cannizzaro | 1603. Melchiore Canizzaro di Vizzini. Brothers Gaspere, Giuseppe and Baldassare. Income of 220 scudi annually (part sent to the Treasury (20 scudi) and part to the Italian Langue (200 scudi). |
| 12. Augusta | Constituting the main victualling centre, including bakeries, mills, and abattoirs of the Hospitaller Order in Sicily | From 1648 |

endowments which generated a moderate income for their incumbents and a smaller level of responsiones for the Order.

The individual incomes of the different components of the priory over several decades were assessed to see whether a particular asset was being administered profitably or at a loss at a specified point in time. The same exercise involved an assessment of the amount of responsiones paid to the Common Treasury on an annual basis by the different parts of the priory. This is however less precise for evaluating improvements, as the amount of responsiones was determined by the Chapter General and remained fixed until it was changed by the next,⁴ regardless of the vagaries affecting the commanderies during these long periods of time, and did not necessarily reflect incomes.⁵

Table 5.2 shows the different commanderies under the administration of the priory of Messina at different points in time, between 1583 and 1760. This data has been collected from various sources, see Table 5.3. Table 5.2 gives a range of data that covers broadly the seventeenth century but overlaps adjacent centuries to give the relevant lists some contextual depth together with a sense of continuity.

The main surge of new donations which augmented the size of the priory occurred between 1583 and 1644. These were all *jus patronatus* commanderies. This addition of new donations came to an end by the middle of the seventeenth century, when the priory had collated almost all its assets, which it held until 1798.

Table 5.2 does show some discrepancies in the data. The commandery of Butera (also known as the commandery of Grienti), initially commissioned in 1644 and intended to be awarded to chaplains, is not mentioned in the 1660 and the 1699 lists. The reasons for this could be an unlikely scribal error or a possible temporary usurpation by third parties. Another explanation for this omission could have been the ruinous state of the commandery to the extent that it stopped being economically viable to manage. This is improbable, however, so soon after its foundation. The latter could also have

⁴ See Ann Williams, Constitutional Development of the Order of St John, in *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, 287. Between 1583 and 1631, there were 6 Chapters General convoked, in 1583, 1587, 1597, 1603, 1612 and 1631.

⁵ See Compendio AOM 1666, fol 138.

Table 5.2 The Commanderies of the Grand Priory of Messina from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century.⁶

| | 1583 ⁷ | 1644 ⁸ | 1660 ⁹ | 1699 ¹⁰ | 1733 ¹¹ | 1760 ¹² |
|----|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Priory of Messina | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2 | Polizzi | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 3 | Della Guilla | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 4 | Girgenti | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 5 | Marsala | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6 | Caltagirone | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 7 | Piazza | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 8 | Vizzini | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 9 | Stefano di Schiattino | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 10 | Albigiana (Palermo) | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 11 | Saracena | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 12 | Borea | | ✓ | ? | ? | ✓ |
| 13 | Ragusa | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 14 | Calli | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 15 | Mazzarino (chaplains) | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 16 | Butera (chaplains) | | ✓ | ? | ? | ✓ |
| 17 | Mazzara | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 18 | Modica Randazzo | ? | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 19 | Barberino | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

⁶ The symbols in Table 5.3 indicate the following: a tick means that the asset is mentioned in the indicated source, a blank means no mention and a query indicates inaccurate data.

⁷ Mallia Milanes (2017), 68-102.

⁸ AOM 2171 (*Vol. Lingua d'Italia Tomo 1' contenente la indicazione dei possessori delle commende delle Lingue d'Italia, coi rispettivi pensionisti dal 1645 al 1747*), fol 161r to 182r.

⁹ AOM 2162, f93v.

¹⁰ Andrea Minutolo, 26 et seq.

¹¹ Michele Gattini, *I Priorati, I baliaggi el le Commende del Sovrane Militare Ordine di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme nelle Provincie Meridionali d'Italia Prima della Caduta di Malta* (I.T.E.A. 1928).

¹² AOM 899: introductory page of the manuscript and subsequent fol 125-142.

Table 5.3 Sources of Table 5.2

| Date of Review | Source |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1583 | <i>Lo Stato dell'Ordine di Malta</i> of 1583 |
| 1644 | AOM 2171 (<i>Vol. Lingua d'Italia Tomo I' contenente la indicazione dei possessori delle commende delle Lingue d'Italia, coi rispettivi pensionisti dal 1645 al 1747</i>) |
| 1660 | AOM 2162 (<i>Serie dei Priorati, Baliaggi e Commende della detta Lingua colla corrispondente annuale rendita e responsioni</i>) |
| 1699 | Minutolo's <i>Memorie del Gran Priorato di Messina</i> |
| 1733 | Gattini's <i>I Priorati, I baliaggi el le Commende del Sovrane Militare Ordine di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme nelle Provincie Meridionali d'Italia Prima della Caduta di Malta</i> |
| 1760 | introductory page of AOM 899 and subsequent pages |

been the reason why the commandery Grienti later on was eventually merged with the commandery of Guzmano of Mazzarino in 1725.¹³

Another peculiar detail is that the commandery of Modica/Randazzo was also not listed in the inventory of 1583,¹⁴ but included in a subsequent list of commanderies under the control of the Priory of Messina in 1631. It is a strange omission from the 1583 inventory, as Modica was of ancient provenance, and had been one of the earliest donations to the priory of Messina, and part of the latter at least by the end of the thirteenth century. The reason for this particular omission is difficult to explain.

A third inconsistency, which however had a justification, related to the commandery of Borea (or Borgia). Table 5.2 indicates that although this was marked as an asset of the Hospitallers in 1644 (the commandery was set up as a bequest by the Baron Don Pietro Borgia in 1641),¹⁵ it failed to make an appearance in two subsequent

¹³ AOM 6087,

¹⁴ V Mallia Milanese, *Lo Stato dell'Ordine di Malta 1630*, (Centro Studi Melitensi, Taranto, 2017), 89.

¹⁵ Pirri, 944.

lists, those of 1660 and 1699, reappearing again in the inventory of 1733. This foundation did not come without litigious difficulties for the Order. After the demise of the founder, his heir, Don Gregorio Borgia, instituted civil proceedings against the testament of his predecessor, challenging its legality. This particular lawsuit dragged on for nearly a hundred years; in 1731, a consensus was reached between the incumbent commander fra Giuseppe D'Andrea on behalf of the Order and Giuseppe Maria Borgia, one of the descendants of the founder. It was agreed that the Order would keep the townhouse but that all other assets including rents and leases pertaining to the Borgia patrimony would be relinquished.¹⁶

Table 5.4 shows the state of the Hospitaller Order in 1583, including a list of Hospitaller priories (550 commanderies in total) of the European provinces together with their net income and obligations (responsiones and impositions). When all the Hospitaller priories are compared, the priory of Messina was the smallest as regards the number of commanderies and also had the smallest income of all the other priories of the Order. Apart from the priory of Bohemia, Messina also owed the smallest amount of responsiones and impositions to the convent. The dues paid were a direct reflection on the income of the priory as ascertained by a previous Chapter General. In 1583, the value of the responsiones and impositions transferred to the Common Treasury by the priory of Messina was 1,031 scudi,¹⁷ which was a moderate sum when compared with the wealthy highflyers, such as some of the French and Spanish grand priories; the grand priory of San Gilles paid 33,987 livre at the same time (nearly equivalent to 6,797 Sicilian scudi).¹⁸

From the same table, it can also be seen that the grand priory of Messina had nine commanderies in 1583. At that point in time, these consisted of the four commanderies

¹⁶ Magione 376.

¹⁷ The total amount of responsiones garnered in 1583 was from the grand priory of Messina and its five commanderies, 9 commanderies in all, as the table suggests.

¹⁸ The nominal income of the Sicilian assets of the Order in 1583 amounted to about 5600 scudi. By 1776 this had more than doubled to 11600 scudi. The real income (factored on the cost of grain) had increased by a 100%. The whole of the Sicilian land assets fluctuated between 20,000 and 25,000 hectares, of which the commandery of Lentini made up 2,600 hectares, Polizzi 3,700 and the *ricetta* of Palermo 300 hectares. The Jesuit Order had twice as much acreage in Sicily at the same point in time as the Hospitaller Order. See D'Avenia (2003), 65.

Table 5.4 Estimates of Income/Responsiones be paid by the Commanderies of the Order of St John in 1583¹⁹

| Nationality | Langue | Priory ²⁰ | Commanderies (Knights + chaplains/ servants) | Income | Estimate of Resp/ Imp | Denomination ²¹ | |
|-------------|------------------------|----------------------|---|--------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------|
| French | Provence ²² | San Gilles | 34+6 | 125530 | 33987 | lire | |
| | | Toulouse | 15+4 | 65310 | 21006 | lire | |
| | Auvergne | | 40+12 | 116910 | 33736 | lire | |
| | France | France | | 35+12 | 144400 | 29200 | lire |
| | | Champagne | | 14+6 | 60410 | 14597 | lire |
| | | Aquitaine | | 26+6 | 69920 | 22722 | lire |
| | | Fiandra | | 21 | 45150 | 12436 | lire |

¹⁹ V Mallia Milanés (2017), 68-102. All together, the priories, bailiwicks and commanderies paid 177023 scudi on an annual basis.

²⁰ By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Hospitaller Order of St John was made up of 32 priories and bailiwicks. These included (Provence) the priories of St Gilles (54 commanderies), Toulouse (35) and the bailiwick of Manosque; (Auvergne) the priory of Auvergne (48) and the bailiwick of Lion; (France) the priories of France (45), Aquitaine (65), Champagne (24) and Corbeil and the bailiwick of Morea; (Italia) the priories of Rome (19), Lombardy (45), Venice (27), Barletta and Capua (25) and Messina (12), together with the bailiwicks of St Euphemia, Santo Stefano of Monopoli, Trinita di Venosa and San Giovanni of Napoli; (Aragon/Catalonia/Navarra) the priories of Aragon (29), Catalonia (28) and Navarra (17) together with the bailiwicks of Majorca and Caspé; (Castiglia/Portugal) the priories of Castiglia/Leon (27), Portugal (de Crajo) (31) and the bailiwicks of Povede and Negroponte; (Germany) the priory of Haitersheim (67) and (England) the priories of St John (London), Ireland and Eagle (32).

²¹ The rate of exchange between the French livre, the Sicilian onza and the Florentine florin (minted until 1533) wavered throughout the centuries. As a rough guide however in the seventeenth century, 1 Sicilian scudo was equivalent to 5 livres, and 1 Sicilian onza was worth 5 florins. This exchange rate between florin and onza had been present from the sixteenth century and varied little. One Sicilian onza (equivalent to 26 gms gold) was equivalent to 30 tari. See Toomaspoeg, *Templari e Ospitalieri*, 11; also, Edward Corp, *The Stuarts in Italy, 1719-1766: A Royal Court in Permanent Exile* (Cambridge University press, 2011), 373.

²² Mallia Milanés (2017), 57. *'Nella Lingua di Provenza vi ha la Religione il Priorato di S. Gil, col Baliaggio di Monasca, e commende de cavalieri 34, di cappellani e Fra Servienti 6, che sono valutati in lire 125530 d'entrata, e pagano di carica alla religione lire 33987.2.11.'*

| | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|---------|
| Italian | Italian | Roma | 17+1 | 18840 | 3365 | scudi |
| | | Lombardy | 34+2 | 28430 | 6638 | |
| | | Venice | 24+1 | 21295 | 4966 | |
| | | Pisa | 23+1 | 8805 | 2298 | |
| | | Messina | 9 | 5642 | 1031 | |
| | | Barletta | 12+1 | 24410 | 5204 | |
| | | Capua | 17+3 | 23045 | 5467 | |
| Spanish | Aragon | Castellany d'Emposta | 28 | 61050 | 13747 | lire |
| | | Catalonia | 20 | 19697 | 4441 | scudi |
| | | Navarre | 10 | 8720 | 1513 | scudi |
| | Castille and Portugal | Castille | 36+2 | 134841 | 26284 | scudi |
| | | Portugal | 19+5 | 57750 | 11573 | scudi |
| German | Alemagna | Alta Alemagna | 31 | | 4620 | florins |
| | | Bassa Alemagna | 12 | | 1689 | Florins |
| | | Bohemia | 28 | | 687 | Scudi |

of *camere priorali* servicing the grand priory, together with the commanderies of Polizzi, Palermo, Girgenti, Marsala and Caltagirone. The four commanderies of *camera priorali* included the commandery of San Giovanni Battista of Taormina, the commandery of San Giovanni in the *ricetta* of Catania, the commandery of San Giovanni li Bagni of Lentini, and the commandery of San Giovanni Battista in Paternò.²³

From 1583 to at least 1699, a time span of more than a hundred years, the official annual income of the grand priory and its commanderies, together with the commanderies of Polizzi, Palermo, Girgenti, Marsala and Caltagirone, remained static at 2240, 746, 438, 234, 560 and 380 onze respectively.²⁴ The estate of Polizzi financed the magisterial chair directly. These were all being administered by professed knights; none belonged to chaplains or sergeants-at-arms.²⁵

By 1631, at the time of the Chapter General held under Grand Master De Paule, the list of commanderies of the grand priory of Messina had increased by another four. These included Piazza (Armerina), le Fumare,²⁶ Modica-Randazzo and Bizzini (Vizzini).²⁷ Modica Randazzo was missed in an the earlier inventory, but as already alluded to, was actually an asset of ancient provenance. The commandery of Vizzini, established by Melchiorre Cannizzaro in 1603, and the commandery of San Giovanni Battista of Piazza, donated by Dario Barbarino in 1628, were both donations of *jus patronatus*. Curiously, the commandery le Fumare was also listed in the territory of

²³ See Appendix 1. The *camere priorale* generated little profit. The prior was entrusted with five assets called *di camere priorale*; one was for his personal benefit - *quinta camera* - and the others could be dispensed to the brethren as perpetual allocations. See Mercieca, (1993), 180.

²⁴ Mallia Milanese (2017), 89

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 58

²⁶ The commandery Le Fumare had an annual income of 415 and a third ounce from a capital of 12000 ducati. It is mentioned by Maria Pia Mazzitelli in '*Documenti per la storia del Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta conservati nell'Archivio di Stato di Reggio Calabria e nella sezione di Archivio di Palmi*', 171-198. The founder was the abbot Lelio Fumari Monsolino who donated the asset by a notarial act of the 22 June 1643, which included a palace in Reggio, 3 gardens in Gallico, Ceci and Cardato and various leases spread around the area of Reggio, on the condition that his son Don Nicola Monsolino (the product of a conjugal union between his father the abbot and a household slave, Caterina d'Alessandria) would be received as a knight of Grace and of Justice in the Order without the mandatory proofs of Nobility (he had none), exemption from paying the passage fees, and the option for the founder to nominate two other successors of the commandery after his son, before the whole benefice became the definitive property of the Order, reverting to smutition. The only connection between this commandery (under the tutelage of Messina but situated in Reggio across the straits) and the founder is its name Fumare, which is also the middle name of the abbot, Fumari.

²⁷ Nasalli Rocca, 223

Messina; however, this *jus patronatus* commandery donated in 1643, was located in Reggio across the Strait of Messina, and hence technically lying outside the jurisdiction of the latter. In fact, by 1660 le Fumare was not listed under the patronage of the priory of Messina anymore. Another intriguing point is that the commandery of San Giovanni of Ragusa, founded in 1626 was not included in this particular roll.

Between 1603 and 1644, eight commanderies for knights and another two commanderies for conventual chaplains and sergeants-at-arms were incorporated in the priory of Messina as foundations of *jus patronatus*. (See Table 5.5). The first one to be instituted was in 1603; after a lapse of several years there was another in 1626, two in 1628, one in 1631, one in 1633, two in 1637, one in 1641, and another two in 1644.²⁸ As noted before, these were relatively of small acreage, with an income of between 80 and 800 scudi, but averaging 200 scudi. The donation of these commanderies came encumbered with several restrictions and provisos, but ultimately all the assets would revert to the Order for *smutizione*.²⁹

Twenty years later, in c.1660, the grand priory of Messina had sixteen commanderies in its territory (Table 5.6). As can be noted from the table, the income of the priory with its *camere priorale*, as well as that of Polizzi, Palermo, Girgenti, Marsala and Caltagirone had remained essentially the same as before; this was also reflected in the responsiones owed to the common treasury.

Of these sixteen commanderies, one was reserved for the provincial chaplains (commandery Barberino), and six were listed as being *di Gratia*; whether this was of magisterial or prioral grace was not specified. This meant that only just over half of the available commanderies could be awarded to the various Sicilian Hospitallers after smutition. This was not a large number, when one considers the numerous Sicilian knights seeking promotion every time one of these commanderies became vacant. Out of the remaining nine available for smutition, seven were commanderies of *cabimento*,

²⁸ Pirri, 943-5

²⁹ Le Commende Gerosolimitane in Sicilia: Patrimoni Ecclesiastici, Gestione Aristocratica, L. Buono, G. Pace Gravina (eds), *La Sicilia dei cavalieri. Le istituzioni dell'Ordine di Malta in Età Moderna (1530-1826)*, 2003, 37. D'Avenia suggests that between 1603 and 1644 there were 15 of these commanderies of *jus patronatus*.

the start-ups of the hierarchical models and the ones with the lowest income when compared to the other types of commanderies.

Table 5.6 also indicates the state of the grand priory of Messina in 1660 with the respective incomes and responsiones. The priory of Messina together with its four prioral chambers yielded an annual income of 2240 scudi. The next richest commanderies of Messina were commanderies of magisterial grace but the income of these went straight to the grand master's purse. These included the rich property of Polizzi, the commandery of Di Guilla of Palermo, the commandery of Marsala and the ex-Templar property of Caltagirone. The commandery of Modica was also of magisterial grace in the 1660s. So, notwithstanding the relative sterility of the assets that Messina embraced, the income of the top commanderies bypassed the lower ranks of the Order. The remaining commanderies had a relatively meagre income as their title indicates.

An analysis of incomes of the different parts of the grand priory of Messina and their respective responsiones (Table 5.7) showed that these remained the same between the end of the sixteenth and the middle of the eighteenth centuries. Indeed, the incomes in 1583 of the Priory (presumably the responsiones to be paid and allocated at the time of that year's Chapter General reflected this), was set at 2240 onze, Polizzi at 746, Palermo at 438, Giorgente (Girgenti) at 234, Marsala at 560 and Calatagirone (Caltagirone) at 380 remained much the same, at least until 1699, and very possibly until the subsequent Chapter General summoned in 1776. This meant that the five Chapters General of 1587, 1597, 1603, 1612 and 1631 did not revise the incomes of these commanderies and consequently did not adjust the responsiones owed to the Common Treasury. Since the Messina priory saw its almost exponential growth in the first half of the seventeenth century, the assessment of income had been set before the foundation of most of these commanderies and was not revised until the Chapter General of 1776. No revision of income was done despite understandable inflationary processes over this time.

During the forty years from c.1660 to 1699, there were no changes in the makeup of the grand priory of Messina: no major assets were lost or added. However, the priory

had been beset with various trials and tribulations during this period. These included, first, the insurrection of Messina from 1674 to 1678, when the grand priory found itself on the losing side of the vicious conflict between the Spanish and the French. After a short respite, in 1693, the eastern Sicilian seaboard in the region of Val de Noto was hit by a massive eruption from Mount Etna, multiple earthquakes followed by a tsunami, which left almost 60,000 people dead and hundreds of thousands injured.³⁰

Despite the above, the priory of Messina did not suffer any major reductions of the income from its various commanderies, at least as noted officially, and the sum of responsiones also remained the same, regardless of the actual revenue. (See Table 5.8).³¹ The income of the priory remained the same, at 2240 onze annually. So did the income of most of the commanderies in its territory, with just a few exceptions. One was the commandery of Girgenti which saw a major deficit, with its income going down from 234 onze to 74. On the other hand, the commandery of Marsala saw an incremental rise from 360 onze to 550. This, however, was not reflected in increased responsiones, and the latter remained the same throughout. The income of the commandery of Saracena also increased from nought in 1660 to 120 onze in 1699. The commandery of Santa Maria della Giummare also saw a rise in income, although technically this asset fell under the jurisdiction of the priory of Lombardy. (see Table 5.8).

Thirty years later, in 1733, the number of commanderies under the jurisdiction of Messina decreased by one, as two commanderies, that of San Giovanni Battista and San Giacomo known as the Saracina of Caltagirone and the commandery Bonanno were amalgamated. (Table 5.9). Finally, by 1760, the priory of Messina had not registered any additions or deletions to its complement and remained with the same configuration as in 1733. (See Table 5.10).

³⁰ Stefano Tinti, Alberto Armigliato & Elisabetta Bortolucci, Contribution of tsunami data analysis to constrain the seismic source: the case of the 1693 eastern Sicily earthquake (*Journal of Seismology* 5:2001), 41–61,

³¹ Codex Barberini Latino 5036, fol 12v '*...e pigliar la quinta parte per la Religione, la quale il Commendatore é tenuto pagare non ostante che non riscota e non se gli ammette scusa alcuna...*'

Table 5.5 Sicilian commanderies donated through private patronage reserved for knights between 1583 and 1644.³²

| Commandery | Founder | Year of foundation | Endowment on foundation |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Commandery of Vizzini | Melchiore Cannizzaro | 1603 | 220 scudi + 10 scudi <i>pro capellano</i> |
| Commandery of San Giovanni of Ragusa | fra Blandano Arezzo | 1626 ³³ | 300 scudi and 10 scudi <i>pro capellano</i> ³⁴ |
| Commandery of S. Stefano of Schiattina | Stefano Schittino | 1628 | 132 onze |
| Commandery of S. Giovanni Battista of Piazza | Dario Barbarino | 1628 | |
| Commandery of Calli | Michele and Aloisio Calli | 1631 | Capital 2400 onze |
| Commandery of S. Giov. Batt. and Giacomo k/a Saracina of Caltagirone and Bonanno | Giacomo Ottaviano | 1637 | 200 onze |
| | Giovanbattista Bonanno | 1637 | 80 onze for a capital of 1600 onze, a villa for 1122 onze and a <i>domus</i> for onze 82.15 |
| Commandery of Giovanni lo Pozzo of Messina | | 1639 | |
| Commandery of Gio. Battista Salemi of Scicli | | 1642 | |
| Commandery of Borea of Siracusa | Baron D. Pietro Borea | 1641 | 800 scudi |
| Commandery of Lucio Martinez di Siracusa | | 1642 | |
| Commandery of S. Antonio Albigiana of Palermo | Antonio Albigieno | 1644 | 216 scudi |

Sicilian commanderies donated through private patronage reserved for Provincial Chaplains and the Sergeants-at-arms between 1583 and 1644.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|------|-----------|
| Commandery of Mazzarino | Sac. D. Pietro Cusmano | 1633 | 440 scudi |
| Commandery of Buttera | Sac. D. Angelo Morrone | 1644 | |

³² Pirri, 943-5.

³³ A. Spagnoletti (1988), 83

³⁴ Bruno d'Aragona, 7.

Table 5.6 A list of the commanderies of the priory of Messina, their annual incomes and responsiones c1660³⁵

| Commandery | Income (onze) | Responsiones (onze) | Incumbent | Pension | Type |
|--|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| The priory of Messina with its <i>camere priorale</i> (Lentini, Catania, Taormina and Paternò) | 2240 | 490 | Fra Flumineo Balbani | | |
| Polizzi, <i>camera magistrale</i> | 746 | 103 | Fra Giovanni Bichi | Pensione Magistrale 93 onze | Gratia |
| Palermo | 436 | 60 | Fra Francesco Sylos | | Gratia |
| Giorgenti | 234 | 32 | Fra Francesco Sylos | | Cabimento |
| Marsala | 360 | 100 | Fra Gregorio Caraffa | | Gratia |
| Caltagirone | 380 | 53 | Fra Alberto Orsi | | Gratia |
| Caltagirone k/a La Saracena | nil | nil | Fra Giovanni Balsamo | | Cabimento |
| Piazza | 310 | 44 | Fra Vincenzo Crescimanno | | Miglioramento |
| Le Guimmare of Mazzara | 429 | 86 | Fra Renato Cocia? | | Cabimento |
| Modica | 317 | 48 | Fra Scipione Manfre' | | Gratia |
| Bizzini | 48 | 4 | Fra Ignatio Denti | | Langue Gratia |
| Ragusa | 120 | nil | Fra Francesco Gabbuccini | Pensione Ragusa? | Cabimento |
| Stefano Protomartire of Palermo | 120 | nil | Fra Stefano Goch? | | Cabimento |
| Antonio de l'Albigiana | 212 | nil | Nil | | |
| Mazzarino | nil | nil | Fra Cristoforo Colobani | | Cabimento |
| Commandery of Calli | 120 | 8 | Fra Michele Calli | | Fondazione |
| Giuseppe Barberino of Piazza (Chaplains and Servants-at-Arms) | 60 | 4 | Antonio di Lucia | | Cabimento |

³⁵ AOM 2162, fol 93v. The date 'circa 1660' was extrapolated from the fact that this particular list indicated the incumbent of each commandery. Fra Francesco Maria Gabuccini was commander of the commandery of St John of Ragusa at the time.

Table 5.7 The Commanderies of the Priory of Messina 1699³⁶

| Commandaries | Annual income (scudi) | Resposiones (scudi) | Pensions (scudi) |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| The Grand Priory of Messina with its <i>camerae priorale</i> | 5600 | 490 | |
| The commandery of Polizzi <i>camera magisteriale</i> | 1865 | 257 | 232 |
| The commandery of Palermo | 1093 | 150 | |
| The commandery of Giorgenti | 185 | 80 | |
| The commandery of the city of Marsala | 1375 | 250 | |
| The commandery of Caltagirone | 950 | 132 | |
| The commandery of Caltagirone known as Saracena | 300 | 24 | |
| The commandery of the city of Piazza known as S. Giovanni | 775 | 110 | |
| The commandery of the city of Giumarre of Mazzara | 1657 | 212 | |
| The commandery of Modica | 792 | 137 | |
| The commandery of Vizzini founded by fra Nicolo Cannizzaro in 1602 | 120 | 10 | |
| The commandery of Ragusa | 300 | 15 | |
| The commandery of S. Stefano Protomartire of Palermo | 300 | 20 | |
| The comamndery of S. Antonio of Abrignana | 530 | | |
| The commandery of Mazzarino | | | |
| The commandery of Galli founded by Fra Michele, and Fra Aloisio Galli brothers in 1631 | 300 | 20 | |
| The commandery of S. Giuseppe Barberino of Piazza | 150 | 10 | |

³⁶ From Minutolo (1699).

Table 5.8 The Income of the Priory of Messina 1583 – 1699

| Year and Income (in Onze) | 1583 | 1660 | 1699 | Difference 1699 and 1660 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| The Priory of Messina | 2240 | 2240 | 2240 | nil |
| Polizzi, <i>camera magistrale</i> | 746 | 746 | 746 | nil |
| Palermo | 438 | 436 | 437.2 | + 1.2 |
| Giorgenti | 234 | 234 | 74 | - 160* |
| Marsala | 560 | 360 | 550 | + 190* |
| Caltagirone | 380 | 380 | 380 | nil |
| Caltagirone k/a La Saracena | | nil | 120 | + 120* |
| Piazza | | 310 | 310 | nil |
| Le Guimmare di Mazzara | | 429 | 662 | + 233* |
| Modica | | 317 | 317 | nil |
| Bizzini | | 48 | 48 | nil |
| Ragusa | | 120 | 120 | nil |
| Stefano Protomartire di Palermo | | 120 | 120 | nil |
| Antonio de l'Albigiana | | 212 | 212 | nil |
| Mazzarino | | nil | nil | nil |
| La Commenda delli Calli | | 120 | 120 | nil |
| Giuseppe Barberino di Piazza (Cappellani et Servienti) | | 60 | 60 | nil |

*despite these fluctuations, the responsiones paid by the respective asset were fixed in a similar manner to the statutory established income of each asset by a Chapter General.

Table 5.9 Commanderies of the Grand Priory of Messina, 1733³⁷

1. The Commandery of Polizzi
2. The Commandery of S. Giovanni della Guilla of Palermo
3. The Commandery of Modica and Randazzo
4. The Commandery of S. Giovanni di Rodi of Marsala
5. The Commandery of S. Maria Maddalena of Girgenti (Agrigento)
6. The Commandery of S. Giovanni Battista of Piazza
7. The Commandery of Vizzini
8. The Commandery of S. Maria del Tempio of Caltagirone
9. The Commandery of S. Stefano of SchiETTina
10. The Commandery of S. Antonio Albigiana of Palermo

11. The Commandery of S. Giovanni Battista and Giacomo k/a Saracina of Caltagirone and Bonanno
12. The Commandery of Borea of Siracusa
13. The Commandery of San Giovanni of Ragusa
14. The Commandery of Calli
15. The Commandery of Mazzarino
16. The Commandery of Butera

³⁷ Gattini, *I Priorati*,

Table 5.10 List of the Commanderies under the administration of the Priory of Messina in 1760³⁸

1. The Priory of Messina
2. The commandery of Polizzi
3. The commandery of Le Guilla of Palermo
4. The commandery of Giorgenti (Girgenti)
5. The commandery of St John of Rhodes of Marsala
6. The commandery of Caltagirone
7. The commandery of Piazza
8. The commandery of Modica
9. The commandery of Mazzara
10. The commandery of Bizzini (Vizzini)
11. The commandery of St John Barberini of Piazza
12. The commandery of Ragusa
13. The commandery of Mazarino and Butera
14. The commandery of La Saracena and Moschiti
15. The commandery of St Stephen of Palermo
16. The commandery of Borea
17. The commandery of Malandrina
18. The commandery of St Anthony of Albigiana
19. The commandery of Calli of Palermo

³⁸ AOM, 899: introductory page of the manuscript.

5.4 Some Observations on the Brethren Belonging to the Messina Priory in 1631³⁹

At the time of the Chapter General of 1631, a census carried out the manpower of the Order still extant at that point showed that there were 550 Italian knights belonging to the Italian langue. Of these, 60 were associated with the priory of Messina. The Italian Langue consisted of seven priories (Barletta, Capua, Lombardy, Messina, Pisa, Rome, and Venice), and as discussed above, the Messina priory had the fewest number of commanderies, and also the smallest annual income. By default, this resulted in it sending the smallest amount of responsiones annually to the Common Treasury. Despite this, Messina had a tenth of the total number of knights in the Italian Langue (60 knights who made up 10.9% of the total). This was not a comparatively small number, as the average number of knights per priory should have been 78 members (14.2%). 10.9% of the total number of knights was a disproportionately large number when considering the fact that all the other priories had a much larger *ricetta* incorporating many more commanderies than Messina.

Angelantonio Spagnoletti, in his *L'Ordine di Malta e la Sicilia*, gives some interesting statistics on the manpower of the priory of Messina in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴⁰ In the twelve months between June 1555 and July 1556, 7 Italians professed in the Order; in the same time span, 38 others had done the same from all the other Langues. The ratio of Italian knights to others professing in the Order a mere twenty years later however increased. Between April 1574 and January 1575, almost ten years after the siege of Malta by the Ottomans, 86 new members were admitted to the ranks of the Order. Of these 57 were Italians, whereas 29 came from all the other Langues. In 1590, out of 496 knights of the Order, 222 appertained to the Italian langue, 156 hailed from the French Langues (French, Auverge and Provence),

³⁹ Mallia Milanese (2017), 135 -62. This is a purged version of a longer list with the title *Lista dei cavalieri, Cappellani e Serventi d'Arme Ricevuti nell'Ordine di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme dal 1555 al 1797*.

⁴⁰ Spagnoletti (2003), 24.

101 came from the Iberian Langues (Castille-Portugal and Aragon-Catalonia-Navarre), and 17 came from the German Langue.⁴¹ Fifty-five years later, in 1645, a census showed that there were 431 Italian knights; of these 97 were Neapolitans, and 68 were Sicilians. If the number of professed members is used as a yardstick of support, the Italian Langue comes out as a highly active component of the Order, and in its own way, Messina was on par with this. Of these 69 Sicilian knights, 22 hailed from Messina, 12 came from the Palermitan *ricetta*, 12 from Trapani, 7 from Piazza, 4 from Caltagirone, 2 from Castrogiovanni, 2 from Siracusa, 2 from Agrigento and 1 from Noto.

Table 5.11 provides the names and the date of profession of the Italian knights still living, associated with the priory in 1631.

Some interesting points emerge from this.

First, there does not seem to be any pattern in the rate of profession into the Order during the four decades which are listed, from the earliest professed in 1578 to the latest in 1629. However, 1621 stands out as a particularly good year for admissions to Messina, as no fewer than 10 members were admitted into the Order that year. If the number of admissions is taken by decades, the second and third were particularly good as 1610-1619 saw the maximum entry of 22 professed, whereas 1620-1629 welcomed another 19 new members. The other decades were comparatively lean.

Secondly, the same family name appears in frequent runs in the roll of professed knights; particularly, the Gotto family of Messina which had three family members admitted into the Order, Federico and Raffael in 1612, and Stefano in 1616. The Zumbo family of Siracusa had another two family members and the Grimaldi of Castrogiovanni another two. It was evident that as reiterated before, the family obtained prestige from its members' affiliation in the ranks of the Order of St John, and this is shown in the recurrent professions of its *secondogenitos*.⁴²

⁴¹ Carmelo Trasselli, *Una Statistica Maltese del Secolo XVI*, in *Economia e Storia*, (1966), 479.

⁴² This point is further emphasised when particular family names with a strong and close association with the Order are looked at. The noble Sicilian Di Giovanni scions furnished several members to the Order; between 1582 and 1784 there were at least 9 members who professed, and some of these had reached the top rungs of the hierarchy. These were Aliosio (professed in 1582), Antonio Maria (1617, becoming a Lieutenant of the Order), Giovanni (1640, also a lieutenant and a grand prior), Mario (1656), Andrea

Table 5.11 Knights Hospitaller of the Grand Priory of Messina in 1631⁴³

| Member of the Order | Year of Profession |
|---|---------------------------|
| Fra Filippo Moleti di Messina | 1578 |
| Fra Don Andrea Marqueto di Messina | 1578 |
| Fra Don Carlo Valdina di Messina | 1588 |
| Fra Pietro Paulo Grimaldi di Castrogiovanni | 1589 |
| Fra Don Giovanni Ventimiglia di Palermo | 1589 |
| Fra Don Pietro Ciampolo di Messina | 1590 |
| Fra Don Nicola Zumbo di Siracusa | 1591 |
| Fra Giovanni Minutolo di Messina | 1591 |
| Fra Don Gastone Notar Bartolo di Palermo | 1594 |
| Fra Francesco Paris di Trapani di gratia | 1594 |
| Fra Don Jaime Zumbo di Siracusa | 1594 |
| Fra Don Pietro Salonia di Siracusa | 1594 |
| Fra Don Giuseppe Dinga di Caltagirone | 1597 |
| Fra Don Francesco Paternó di Catania | 1597 |
| Fra Angelo Maria di Tomasi di gratia | 1597 |
| Fra Lattantio di Napoli di Traina | 1599 |
| Fra Scipione Agliata di Palermo | 1599 |
| Fra Marco Bobbeo di Caltagirone | 1603 |
| Fra Carlo Corseto di Palermo di gratia | 1605 |
| Fra Don Vincenzo Crescimanno di Piazza | 1612 |
| Fra Frederico Gotto di Messina | 1612 |
| Fra Raffael Gotto di Messina | 1612 |
| Fra Girolamo Braciforte di Palermo | 1612 |
| Fra Don Francesco Impeli Zeoi di Noto | 1612 |

(1660, Lieutenant and Vicar General of the Grand Priory), Domenico (1682), Andrea Fortunato (1683), Andrea (1750) and Giuseppe Domenico (1784). See D'Avenia (2003), 45.

⁴³ Mallia Milanés (2017), 135-162.

| | |
|--|------|
| Fra Don Cesare Romio di Randazzo | 1612 |
| Fra Don Francesco di Moncada di Messina | 1612 |
| Fra Lutio Sciortino di Noto | 1612 |
| Fra Don Vincenzo Landolina di Noto | 1612 |
| Fra Don Girolamo Grimaldi di Castrogiovanni | 1612 |
| Fra Diego di Marco di Messina | 1613 |
| Fra Don Francesco di Campagna di Messina | 1613 |
| Fra Placido Marchesi di Messina | 1614 |
| Fra Don Giuseppe Procopio di Messina | 1615 |
| Fra Stefano Gotto di Messina | 1616 |
| Fra Marc'Antonio Peracontata di Siracusa | 1617 |
| Fra Don Pietro Minutolo di Messina | 1617 |
| Fra Don Tommaso di Gregorio di Messina | 1618 |
| Fra Don Antonio di Maria di Giovanni di Messina | 1618 |
| Fra Giovanni Salvo di Balsamo di Messina | 1618 |
| Fra Andrea Bellomo di Siracusa | 1619 |
| Fra Don Alfonso del Carretto di Giorgente | 1619 |
| Fra Don Andrea di Bologna di Palermo | 1620 |
| Fra Alosio Ramundeta di Catania | 1622 |
| Fra Giovanni Stagno di Messina | 1622 |
| Fra Giuseppe Marchese di Messina | 1622 |
| Fra Don Ignatio Dente di Palermo | 1623 |
| Fra Don Tomaso d'Averna di Messina | 1623 |
| Fra Don Francesco Giovanni Innocentio di Trapani | 1623 |
| Fra Don Francesco Dente di Palermo | 1624 |
| Fra Don Blasco Ferro di Trapani | 1624 |
| Fra Don Antonio Abela di Siracusa | 1625 |
| Comm fra Giovanni Francesco Morano di Trapani | 1625 |
| Fra Don Carlo Ansalone di Palermo | 1626 |
| Fra Don Brandano d'Arizzo di Ragusa | 1626 |

| | |
|---|------|
| Fra Don Cesare Ferro di Trapani | 1626 |
| Fra Don Francesco Bisogno di Messina | 1626 |
| Fra Don Francesco lo Porto di Palermo | 1627 |
| Comm fra Don Ferdinando Montalto di Palermo | 1629 |
| Fra Don Martino Fardella di Trapani | 1629 |
| Fra Giovanni Solima di Messina | 1629 |

This confirmed a known fact that the recruitment knights in the various Military Orders happened through families, in most cases even becoming a family tradition.

5.5 Conclusion

The seventeenth century was an eventful time for the grand priory of Messina. The first half of the century saw a major growth in the number of commanderies in its territory with the acquisitions of several commanderies of *jus patronatus*. This had collateral effects, including some increase in the responsiones sent to the common treasury, although most of them were low-revenue acquisitions. This increase in donations was also associated with an increase in the admission of professed members. Indeed, the two effects were possibly the result of the same stimulus: an increased interest in the Hospitaller agenda by the Sicilian population. There was a degree of resurgence in the affection of the donors towards the Order, most of whom appertained to the Sicilian lower nobility classes, and also a perception that professing in the Order would enhance the prestige and status of the donor and his family.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ See Spagnoletti (1988), chap. 5, *Le Prove e le Fedeltá, in Stato, Aristicrazie e Ordine di Malta nell'Italia Moderna*, 137 et seq.

This century indicated an increase in the number of prioral assets in conjunction with an associated increment of professed Italian and particularly Sicilian brethren into the Order. Whether these statistics are inter-related is debatable. It may prove difficult to understand and convincingly explain the surge of *jus patronatus* commanderies in the Sicilian Kingdom in the first half of the seventeenth century. It would appear equally problematic to justify the increase in the recruitment of Italian brethren in the same period. It is a known fact that the Italian nobility made up less than 1% of the population (compared to other Kingdoms) and hence proportionally should have in theory attracted less membership into the Order than France or Spain. The level of recruitment became even more restricted from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, when the Hospitaller statutes militated against admission from the recently ennobled classes. Further research needs to be done to understand Hospitaller reasoning why, with the latter requirements in place, it would only be a few decades later that the concept and indeed the whole philosophy behind *jus patronatus* commanderies began to be so apparently easy to be accepted and put into practice, two basic principles that look so effectively contradictory. Could it be that the Order had begun to imitate the working practices of other Military Orders, possibly to partake of the same cake? On the other hand, the recent positive outcomes of the sieg of Malta in 1565, and the widely renowned battle of Lepanto only six years later could have trumpeted the Order's resilience and relevancy and rendered it more attractive. There is a third plausible explanation that one could sound more deeply. Was it possible that the lower nobility in Sicily could have pressurised the Order to loosen up its too restrictive admission requirements and offer them the prospect or hope of achieving a higher status, honorific or otherwise, in its hierarchy and indeed in the wider social world? It does not appear likely that this increase in manpower on the part of the Order could have been the outcome of the bias of successive Italian grand masters. Between 1535 and 1690, there were only three, from a sequence of 17, most of whom were from the French kingdom. As Caruana Galizia enquires, 'whu would a military and religious Order choose to limit its recruitment rather than expand it?'. Could catholic resurgence catalyzed by the Council of Trent (1545-1563), have been a determining factor in all this developement? Further

research needs to be carried to untie this particular knot with some modicum of plausibility.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Anton Caruana Galizia, 'The european Nobilities and the Order of St John, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries', in the *The Military Orders Vol VI (Part 2): Culture and Conflict in Western and Northern Europe*, Jochen Schenk, Mike Carr (Eds), (Taylor and Francis, 2016), 213-221.

Chapter 6: The Sicilian Hospitaller Priory - the Religious Cult

6.1 Introduction

The *raison d'être* of the Order of St John, embraced essentially from its foundation, was the old motto *Obsequium Pauperum et Tuitio Fidei*. The first part of the adage was indeed the original maxim to be adopted by brother Gerard and his companions in the very early days of the Hospitaller Order as they welcomed and cared for the sick and poor pilgrims in Jerusalem at the end of their journey.¹ The '*tuitio fidei*'² part of the motto came to be embraced later on,³ and it directly refers to the confrontational nature which the Order developed towards the enemies of the Christian faith.⁴

¹ See Marco Letta, *Tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum. La vita all'ombra della croce ottagonale* (Sacco, 2014). See also Malcolm Barber, The Charitable and Medical Activities of the Hospitallers and Templars, in *A History of Pastoral Care*, ed G R Evans (London, Cassell, 2000), 148-168. See also Angelantonio Spagnoletti, Militia e Carità nella Storia dei Cavalieri di Malta, in *Studi Melitensi XXVI* (Taranto 2018), 45-68.

² See Mons Luigi de Palma, 'Verso la Santità: Obsequium Pauperum, Tuitio Fidei', in *Servire*, supplement 72, (2012), 16.

³ The first castle given to the Religion to be garrisoned was Beth Gibelin in 1135. (See footnote 4 below).

⁴ There is no historical consensus when militarization of the Hospitallers came about. Certainly by 1136, they may have had the castle of Beth Gibelin on the approaches to Ascalon. See Riley-Smith, *The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant, c1070-1309*, chap 2 (27 et seq) on the militarization of the Order, and by the same author, *Knights of St John in Jerusalem and Cyprus 1050-1310* (MacMillan 1967), 52-54. Riley-Smith suggests that the first hint of militarization of the Hospitallers came during a church meeting in Nablus in 1120, when 'clerics' were exempted from culpability if they bore arms. Also, Alan Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries*, (Macmillan, 1992), 44 et seq. Forey argues that the unity between the diverse Muslim territories in the early twelfth century militated for a stronger enemy and forced the military Orders to diversify. See also his 'The Militarization of the Hospital of St John, in Military Orders and the Crusades' in *Studia Monastica* 26 (1984), 75-90. Antonella Dargenio, 'La Spiritualità Giovannita Antica e Moderna', in *Studi Melitensi*, xxiv, (2016), 250: 'a seguito dell'approvazione dell'Ordine dei templari, e quindi alla legittimazione ecclesiastica del primo ordine militare, anche i Giovanniti assunsero di fatto la veste dei *milites Christi*...' - essentially repeats what James of Vitry reiterated in the early part of the thirteenth century when he stated that the Hospitallers bore arms in imitation of the Templars. See Jacobus de Vitriaco, *Historia Orientalis et Occidentalis*, (Balthazaris Belleri, 1597), 1084. *Veste dei milites Christi*...'

This chapter will focus on the Hospitaller's perception of religion and spirituality, with particular reference to practices in the Italian language. The next section is devoted to the Hospitaller cathedral in Messina, tracing its origins, development and description. The Hospitaller ecclesiastical hierarchy in the Hospitaller cathedral in the seventeenth century will be discussed in the last section.

6.2 *Obsequium Pauperum et Tuitio Fidei*

The first chapter of the Rule of Raymond de Puy,⁵ first Master of the Order, laid down what was to be the main remit of the Order; '*fratres ad servitium pauperum venientes*' (the brethren, engaging in the service of the poor). Later versions of the Rule, at the point when the Order had accepted its military role in Palestine, began to reflect this change; '*fratres accedentes ad obsequium pauperum et tuitione fidei catholicae*' (brothers came for the service of the poor and the protection of the Catholic faith).⁶ The two tenets of the motto now joined together and inseparable,⁷ essentially reflected the main commandments of the Christian faith.⁸ As De Palma reiterated in his essay '*La Spritualità dell'Ordine Giovannita*':

⁵ Cartulaire Général de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean de Jerusalem, 110-1310, ed J. Delaville le Roulx (Paris 1894-1906) vol 1, no 70. Rule of Raymond de Puy. There is an English translation in *The Rule, Statutes and Customs of the Hospitallers, 1099-1310*, ed E.J. King (London 1934), 20.

⁶ G. Caoursin, *Premium in Volumen Stabilimentorum Rhodiorum Militum Sacri Ordinis Hospitalis Sancti Johannis Hierosolymitanis*, (Ulm, 1496), f23r.

⁷ Antonella Dargenio, 254. The two tenets of the motto were brought together in the revision of the rule of Du puy, in the *Stabilimenta* published in Venice in 1695 and a year later in Ulm. But see also Anthony T. Luttrell, 'Hospitaller Historiography: Heritages and Heresies', in *The Military Orders* vol 3, ed. V Mallia Milanes (Aldershot, Ashgate 2008), 8. The phrase *Tuitio Fidei* was coined by Guillaume Caoursin in *Premium in Volumen Stabilimentorum Rhodiorum Militum Sacri Ordinis Hospitalis Sancti Johannis Hierosolymitanis* (Ulm, 1496), fol 23r.

⁸ Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Mark 12:30-31. ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your entire mind and with all your strength.' ³¹ The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than this'. On the spirituality of the Military Orders see K. Toomaspoeg, 'La Spritualité des Ordes Religieux-Militaires du Moyen Âge: l'état de la Recherche', in *Cister e as Ordens*

The constant exercise of hospitality, in the service of the sick and the poor, humbling oneself to dress putrid wounds and assisting pilgrims in their last hours, must have instilled in the brethren a deep sense of spirituality in this nursing service.⁹

He stressed that these selfless acts were a response to a divine vocation and indeed this profound love for the poor, the maimed and the sick led the early members of the Order to the point where they identified with Christ in his similar actions with the disenfranchised of his times.¹⁰

The spirituality of the brethren and their love for their deep-rooted Christian faith were demonstrable in their actions and reflected in their practice of the Catholic faith on their estates and commanderies.¹¹ They built countryside chapels, churches and cathedrals on their lands, both for their personal use and also for the benefit of their dependants, tenants and the general population.¹² Some churches were less ornate than others, some less well-endowed,¹³ but all had the provision of either a diocesan priest, in most cases receiving a stipend directly from the commandery, or the services of the Order's conventual chaplains.

The three sections of Hospitallers all had their individual devotional practices. The conventual chaplains, not unlike the Regular Orders, practised the *liturgia horarum*, which included devotional practices and praying at fixed times of the day. However, the knights had a less onerous commitment in their devotional practice than their brethren

Militares na Idade Média. Guerra, Igreja e Vida religiosa. II Colóquio Internacional Cister, os Templários e a Ordem de Cristo, (ed) J. Albuquerque Carreiras-C. de Ayala Martinez, (Tomar, 2015), 23-45.

⁹ Da Palma (2017), 79 -82.

¹⁰ Da Palma (2012), 15. Spiritual works commissioned by early Hospitallers included; *Miracula et Regula Hospitalis Sancti Johannis Ierosolimitani*, defining the early history of the order and the rule of Raymond du Puy, translated into Anglo-Norman by a Hospitaller clerk for the English priory c.1181-5, printed in *The Hospitallers' Riwle*, ed. K. V. Sinclair,(1984); and Brother Johannes von Frankenstein's poem on the Passion of Christ, 'Der Kreuziger', written in 1300: *Der Kreuziger der Johannes von Frankenstein*, ed. F. Khull, BLV 160 (Tübingen, 1882).

¹¹ Religiosity is the condition of being excessively religious, whereas spirituality relates to the condition of being concerned with matters of the human spirit (or soul) as opposed to the material. Religion or religiousness can be considered a form of spirituality but spirituality per se is a broader concept.

¹² AOM 6123, fol 2r.

¹³ See Theresa Vella, The Depiction of Charity and Pious Deeds in Hospitaller Art, in *The Military Orders Vol VI*, Jochen Schenk and Mike Carr (eds), (Routledge, 2017), 188-196.

the chaplains who were exempt from bellicose activities.¹⁴ Their contemplation was limited to the night and morning, and their Offices of the day were brief; this left them ample time to hone their martial arts and other occupations. Fra Sabba Castiglione, a knight Hospitaller from Milan, the quintessential Renaissance man who encompassed various roles in his life, including *commendatore* of a commandery in Faenza, papal courtier, author and antiquarian, was instrumental in setting up guidelines for members of the Order to lead a pious and God-fearing life. His *Ricordi* project the essential daily liturgical responsibilities of the individual Hospitallers on the Italian commanderies, stipulating eleven hymns and prayers in the early morning while dressing and last thing at night.¹⁵ He emphasized the need to hear Mass daily, recite the prescribed prayers, observe the tenets of feast days and their vigils, confess and take Holy Communion at least four times a year.¹⁶ The sergeants-at-arms, less cultured and possibly semi-illiterate were asked to say 150 paternosters, a prayer that was recited parrot fashion. The *Ricordi di fra Sabba Castiglione*,¹⁷ published in Venice in 1554, is described by Moore Cavaceppi as ‘the *vade mecum* of the Order’s essential practices for its members’,¹⁸ it goes into minute detail in the description of what a Hospitaller’s virtuous and devout life should be.

This deep spirituality of the brethren was reflected physically both in their rapport with the deprived and the downtrodden as well as in their unremitting defence of the Catholic faith against all its enemies, whether Islamic or heretical, and this continued to

¹⁴ In actual fact, they could not take up arms. Chaplains, priests, and monks - professed ecclesiastical members who celebrated Mass - were prohibited by Canon Law from participating as combatants in military campaigns. See Lawrence G. Duggan, *Armsbearing and the Clergy in the History and Canon Law of Western Christianity*, (Boydell and Brewer Ltd, Woodbridge, 2013), 115.

¹⁵ Sabba Castiglione, *Ricordi ovvero ammaestramenti*, ed. Santa Cortesi (Faenza: Stefano Casanova, 1999), 19-20:

¹⁶ Emanuel Buttigieg (2011), 101, indicates that the obligatory days of communion for the Hospitallers were the first Sunday of Lent, Easter, Pentecost, birth of St John the Baptist, the Assumption, the Immaculate Conception, and Christmas.

¹⁷ Sabba da Castiglione wrote three editions of his work: *Ricordi di fra Sabba da Castiglione* (Bologna: Bartolomeo Bonardo da Parma, 1546) had 72 chapters. The next edition, substantially increased to 124 chapters, was printed in 1549, and the last edition, *Ricordi ovvero ammaestramenti di monsignor Sabba da Castiglione, cavalier gerosolimitano: ne i quali con prudenti, & christiani discorsi si ragiona di tutte le materie honorate, che si ricercano ad un vero gentilhuomo* (Venezia, Paolo Gherardo, 1554), was enlarged to 133 chapters.

¹⁸ Ranieri Moore Cavaceppi, ‘Devotions in Sixteenth-Century Italian Hospitaller Commanderies’, 2.

be the ethos of the Order in the following centuries of their existence.¹⁹ This devotion to the Catholic tenets was seen in the constant haemorrhage of its members, some of whom, like the Italian knight fra D'Agostino Grimaldo e Rosso who died fighting the Muslims in Candia in 1660,²⁰ embraced the ultimate sacrifice, achieving finally the pinnacle of Christian martyrdom.²¹

The Counter-Reformation was instrumental in channelling the spiritual focus of the Hospitallers towards an even deeper and fuller religiosity. Starting with the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and continuing with the end of the European wars of religion in 1648, it stirred members of the higher ranks of the Order to enact and promulgate rules and statutes to improve Hospitaller life and morals.²²

Giacomo Bosio, erudite historian of the Hospitaller Order, apart from his *Dell'Istoria*, also wrote on various spiritual aspects, including saintly lives that had bloomed from within the ranks of the Hospitallers. His *Le Immagini de' Beati e Santi* gives an account of the devout life and post-mortem miracles of several members, both men and women of the Religion.²³

Fra Marcantonio Zondadari, still going through the ranks of the Order, before eventually becoming the 64th Grand Master (1720-1722) must have known and read Castiglione's *Ricordi*. The latter had been essential reading for up and coming

¹⁹ See Emanuel Buttigieg (2011), 89-128. Luigi Michele la Palma (2012), 17. The author stresses the point that it is difficult to ascertain the number of Hospitallers that embraced the ultimate sacrifice in the fields of war, and those that died of diseases while enslaved, as well as those that ended up catching an infective and terminal illness from their patients. See also Sabba Castiglione, *Ricordi*, 262.

²⁰ 2 years later a friar of the Discalced Carmelite congregations, Antonino Parisi published a book on Grimaldo entitled *L'idea del Cavalier Gerosolimitano* (Messina, Giacomo Mattei, 1662). More than a biography of the fra Grimaldo, the book also expounded on the philosophy of the Hospitallers. See Emanuel Buttigieg (2011), *Nobility, Faith and Masculinity*, 94.

²¹ See Matthias Ebejer, The Concept of Martyrdom within Hospitaller Devotional Practices; the Fallen at St Elmo as a Case Study, in Maroma Camilleri (ed.), *Besieged* (National Library, Malta, 2015) vol 1, 125-135.

²² See Anne Brogini, Brogini, Anne, 'Crisis and Revival: the Convent of the Order of Malta during the Catholic Reformation (16th-17th centuries)', in *The Military Orders*, vol 6.1: *Culture and Conflict in the Mediterranean World*, Jochen Schenk and Mike Carr (Eds), (Routledge, 2017), 169 et seq. Also, Matthias Ebejer, 'Sanctify Yourselves and be Holy', Hospitallers and their Counter-Reformation Saints', in *Journal of Baroque Studies*, Vol 2 iss1 (University of Malta, 2017), 201-227.

²³ Giacomo Bosio, *Le Immagini de' Beati e Santi della Sacra Religione & Illustrissima Militia di S. Gio. Gerosolimitano con un brevissimo Compendio della Vita e de' Miracoli loro* (Rome, Guglielmo Facciotti, 1622). The author wrote other volumes on the same theme of spirituality. These include *La Corono del Cavalier Gerosolimitano* (Roma, Francesco Zanetto, 1588), and *La Trionfante e Gloriosa Croce* (Alfonso Ciacone, 1610),

postulants in the Order. Indeed, various *Ricordi*²⁴ resonated in Zondadari's *Breve*,²⁵ published in 1719, followed by reprints in Paris (1721) and Padova (1724), extolling the multiple virtues that professing members of the Order should embrace. He maintained that the latter should be endowed with two main qualities necessary for their eligibility to enter the Order:²⁶ first, the purity and generosity of their family trees, eclipsing any hint of criminal discord; secondly, the acceptance of the three substantial vows of obedience towards their divine and temporal masters, personal poverty, and chastity. Despite the embracement of these vows, Zondadari made a distinction between their status as military and religious Hospitallers and the situation of conventual monks.²⁷

This avowed religiosity of the Order is seen in other pieces of spiritual literature which emanated from within the Order.²⁸ Father François-Aimé Pouget, in his *Instructions*, published in French in 1712 and translated immediately into Italian in 1713, discussed the deep spiritual ethos that bound the individual Hospitaller to his creator.²⁹ One argument brought up in these *Instructions* was that the Hospitaller, in

²⁴ Di Castiglione, 3, 31, 98. (Ric. 1, *Amare Dio*, Ric. 45, *Circa l'honore l'habito*, Ric. 47, *L'Acquistare della Virtù*, and Ric. 94, *dell'huomo Spirituale & Mondano*).

²⁵ Zondadari, Marcantonio, *Breve e Particolare Istruzione del Sacro Ordine Militare degli Ospitalari*, (2nd Edition Padova Stamperia Giuseppe Comino, 1724),

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5, 'La Prima è il vanto di sangue generoso, ed illustre, e di purità d'origine, per aver quasi nella distinzione dei natali un obbligo, ed un'inclinazione più precisa a tutto ciò che può a virtù avere di più ardito e di grande'.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 6, 'Dobbiamo perciò essere ospedalieri senza divenir Monaci, e senza perdere la decente disinvoltura...'

²⁸ See Cristina Dondi, 'Liturgical policies of the Hospitallers between the Invention of Printing and the Council of Trent', in *The Military Orders*, Vol. 3: *History and Heritage*, ed Victor Mallia-Milanes (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008), 63-72. And by the same author, 'Hospitaller Liturgical Manuscripts and Early Printed Books' in *Revue Mabillon* vol14 (2003), 225-256. The latter article gives a list of antiphonies, breviaries, calendars, and missals which were instigated and commissioned by the Hospitallers in the Rhodian Phase. One such breviary was commissioned by grand master la Cassiere and presented to the Archbishop of Monreale, Ludovico I de Torres (1573-84) on the consecration of the Conventual Church of St John on the 20 May 1578, Dondi (2003), 234.

²⁹ *Instructions sur les principaux devoirs des Chevaliers de Malte. Dressées par l'Auteur du Catéchisme de Montpellier, sur les Mémoires d'un Chevalier de Malte : A l'usage des Chevaliers, de leurs Confesseurs, & de tous ceux qui veulent entrer ou faire entrer leurs Enfants dans cet Ordre. Où l'on trouvera des veritez importantes pour toutes fortes d'Estats*, (Chez Nicolas Simart, Imprimeur & Libraire ordinaire de Monseigneur le Dauphin, rue S. Jacques, au Dauphin, Paris, 1712). From the Italian translation (1713), 'E se ben'è vero, che tutti gli altri Religiosi di qualsisia Ordine, anzi tutti i Cristiani siano indispensabilmente obbligati ad amar Dio sopra tutte le cose, e'l prossimo come se medesimi, né vi sia in ciò alcuna differenza di condizione, o di stato; nulladimeno i Religiosi degli altri Ordini, e'l comune de' Cristiani non fanno una professione solenne d'espore le lor vite, e di sparger il sangue in difesa della Fede, combattendo contro gl'Infedeli, o di servir a' poveri negli Ospedali; la dove questi due obblighi, uniti assieme, costituiscono il carattere proprio de' Cavalieri di Malta, e possono collocarli nel numero ben'avventurato de' Servi di Dio, purché vengano adempiti con quelle disposizioni, che Iddio

contrast to what members of other military Orders and indeed all normal Christians did, needed to go beyond the love of God; the Hospitaller needed to show factually this love of God by placing his mortal life in danger in defence of the faith and in treating the sick. In 1718, Fra Giovanni Maria Caravita wrote a treatise on the concept of poverty of the Hospitallers,³⁰ and fra Luc de Boyer d'Argens also published a book entitled *Reflections on the duties of the Knights of Malta*.³¹ These were authors from within the ranks as it were, but a driving force to equate spirituality with the life-long philosophy of the Hospitallers.

The Italian Langue stipulated to all prospective patrons planning to set up commanderies of *jus patronatus* that the donated asset had to have a place of worship in its territory. This was to be either a new building complete with furnishings and equipped for the practice of the religious cult, or the refurbishment of an existing one. Sometimes a donor was given the option to furnish and maintain the upkeep of a particular altar in a nearby Hospitaller church or cathedral, if building a new chapel was not practical. Whatever the logistics, a new donation to the Order meant, among other things, a new opportunity to continue the spread of the faith and their religiosity.

In 1712, fra Marc'Antonio Zondadari, as bailiff and Captain General of the fleet of the Order, had a string of commanderies spread all over the territory of the Italian Langue. These lay in Mugnano, Verzati in Modena, San Ippolito in Bologna, and the commandery of San Giovanni of Rhodes in Marsala. It was in the latter Sicilian commandery that he decided to refurbish a chapel in the manor of *San Giovanni il Cellaro*. The chapel had carved columns on its front porch, two waterspouts on the roof to channel rainwater, and interestingly had 3 iron rods, manufactured, and inserted at great expense to give stability to the whole edifice. The whole chapel was whitewashed

ricerca da essi, cioè a dire con una fede viva, con una ferma speranza e con un'ardente carità'. See also Gianandrea de Antonellis, *La preghiera del Giovannita nelle Istruzioni sopra gli obblighi più principali de' Cavalieri di Malta di François-Aimé Pouget* (Studi Melitensi, XXVI 2018), 227-246.

³⁰ *Trattato della Povertà de' Cavalieri di Malta, raccolto dal fu venerando priore di Lombardia Garavita* (Antonio Scionico, Borgonovo, 1718). And Carmen Depasquale, *La vie intellectuelle et culturelle des chevaliers français à Malte au XVIIIe siècle*, (Malta University Press, Msida, 2010), 27-49. See also Luigi Michele de Palma, Jean-Baptiste Le Marinier de Cany un Maestro della Spiritualità Giovannita in *Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum, Studi in onore di Fra' Giovanni Scarabelli per i cinquant'anni di sacerdozio* (Edizione La Villa 2019), 95-118

³¹ L. de Boyer d'Argens, *Reflexions Politiques sur l'Etat et les Devoirs des Chevaliers de Malthe*, (La Haye, 1739).

inside and out.³² This is indeed evidence of the great care that members of the Order took of their chapels and churches.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the grand priory of Messina had consolidated 16 commanderies on its territory in Sicily.³³ These land assets of the Order maintained at least 59 named chapels and churches, some of which were built by the Hospitallers and others - especially the parish churches which were taken over by them. The working relationship between the Sicilian ecclesiastical authorities and the Order was not as turbulent as in other European provinces.³⁴ Problems including the collection of tithes on land cultivated for their own use (*labores*) and newly acquired territory (*novalia*), as well as the privilege to build their own churches on their lands were not a major cause of dissension between the two landowners (ecclesiastical authorities and the Hospitallers) in Sicily. Difficulties were mostly related to the control of post-mortem donations and legacies left by parishioners to the Hospitaller cause. In their turn, the latter required the local bishop for the consecration of the Order's churches and ordination of its chaplains. Although the Hospitaller Order, like other military Orders, was mostly exempt from Episcopal jurisdiction, the Papal See, at the point of decision, although supporting the Orders, never trampled over the unalienable rights of bishops.³⁵

Hospitaller churches, including parochial ones, catered for all the inhabitants of the local villages, whether under Hospitaller dominion or not.³⁶ The churches of *jus*

³² AOM 6229, fol 368. Three of these came at a cost of 2 onze, 23 scudi and 10 tari, with the blacksmith being paid 16 scudi for his labour. The total expenditure of the renovation came to the considerable sum of 18 onze, 6 scudi and 2 tari.

³³ Minutolo, See Table 5.

³⁴ See Kristjan Toomaspoeg, *The Military Orders and the Diocesan Bishops: A Pragmatic Relationship*, *Ordines Militares XXIII* 2018, 93–125. See also Daniela Santoro, 'L'Arcivescovo e l'Ospedale. Raimondo de Puyolis contro i Gerosolimitani di Messina (1344)', in *Istituzioni Ecclesiastiche e Potere Regio nel Mediterraneo Medievale. Scritti per Salvatore Fodale*, Patrizia Sardina, Daniela Santoro and Maria Antonietta Russo (eds), Associazione Mediterranea, Palermo, 2016, 75–89.

³⁵ Luis García-Guijarro Ramos, 'Exemption in the Temple, the Hospital and the Teutonic Order. Shortcomings of the Institutional Approach', in *The Military Orders, vol. 2, Welfare and Warfare*, ed. Helen J. Nicholson (Aldershot, Ashgate, 1998), 289–293; Thomas Krämer, *Dämonen, Prälaten und gottlose Menschen. Konflikte und ihre Beilegung im Umfeld der geistlichen Ritterorden* (Berlin–Münster: LIT, 2016), 85–145.

³⁶ See Riley-Smith (2012), 101. 'They (the priests) had an additional cure of souls because their churches and cemeteries were as attractive to the public as were those of other exempt religious orders'. Some churches of Hospitaller Sicilian commanderies were parochial churches, which meant they were essentially ex-Diocesan churches that serviced the local communities but became affiliated/donated to the Order at a point in time. One such example was Santa Maria dei Milici.

patronatus commanderies were usually wayside chapels, but each had to be provided with a salaried priest, either diocesan or a Hospitaller conventual chaplain. These were instituted to supply religious services to the local communities, even though most patronal commanderies were too small to support adequate houses for a commander to live in. Both the commanderies of Vizzini and San Giovanni of Ragusa had a chapel and provisions for a salaried priest, but neither had a commander's *domus*.³⁷ The several Improvements visits extant did not list any tithes payable to the local Episcopal See. The religious services held in these Hospitaller chapels were usually limited to feast-days or Sundays, but occasionally masses were said even during weekdays.³⁸

The saints depicted on the main altarpieces of these Hospitaller churches and chapels in Sicily gave an indication of the patron saints who enjoyed the Order's deepest devotion. Out of 59 chapels and churches sited on their commanderies, towns and villages, nearly half of these (27 out of 59) were dedicated to the Protector of the Order, St John the Baptist. Twelve of these commandery chapels attested their Marian devotion, under its various guises and dedications, the most common being the Annunciation.³⁹ Local piety and religious fervour was reflected in the designations given to this Marian cult; Santa Maria del Bosco, Santa Maria dei Milici, Santa Maria della Misericordia, Santa Maria dell'Idria, Santa Maria dell'Giummare, Santa Maria della Croce, Santa Maria dell'Alto and others that demonstrated the parochial devotions of the neighbourhoods around the Hospitaller commanderies. Some commanderies were even entitled by the appellation of their churches' or chapels' namesake; the designation San Giovanni of Ragusa applied both to the commandery as well as to the chapel that belonged to it. The remainder of the chapels had a variety of titular saints, including San

³⁷ See Gatt, *The State and Development of the Commandery of St John of Ragusa* (2014).

³⁸ As an example of the liturgical practices in the parochial church of Santa maria di Milici in 1604, see AOM 401, fol 120. '*...il quali cappellano che ha ...obbligo di celebrari in detta ecclesia per lo presente salario tutti li giorni della domenica et festi comandati del anno...*' See also AOM 401, fol 683r on the masses said in the church of Santa Maria della Croce, where celebrations were carried out on the feast day as well as on every Friday during Lent. The commandery church of della Guilla dedicated to San Giovanni Battista also had masses stipulated in certain days of the week and feast days. See AOM 401, 25r. '*...facendo tutto quello e necessario per il culto divino...nella festa di Santo Giovanni gloriosissimo facendoli cantare solenni con musica et altre solennità nella quali ecclesia...che ogni festa comandata et domenica del anno vieni celebra messa per il cappellano ordinario...*'

³⁹ See Buttigieg (2011), 106 et seq, on the Hospitallers and their Marian cult, the most widespread of which was the Annunciation.

Giacomo Maggiore in the ex-Templar commandery of Caltagirone, San Leonardo in two or three chapels, San Rocco (in the Milici land-holdings), San Giorgio, San Michele, San Lorenzo and one main titular and other side chapels dedicated to the Magdalene cult.

Some patrons gave their patronal name to the commanderies they donated to the Order, especially in the mid-seventeenth century run of *jus patronatus* commanderies. A few even gave their patronal name to the altarpiece of the commandery chapel (probably not even built at that point). In 1637, when Don Giacomo Ottaviano donated the whole territory entitled Serracina to the Order, in exchange for the rank of a Knight of Grace, he was given the privilege to name (as indeed did other donats of *jus patronatus* commanderies), both the commandery (commandery of San Giovanni Battista and San Giacomo Maggiore, also known as Saracena, or Serracina), and the non-existent chapel that he was yet to construct.⁴⁰

Some commanderies, not necessarily the larger ones, had more than one church on their estates or as their dependencies. One of the oldest land assets included in the Messina priory was the commandery of Modica-Randazzo. This commandery had the patronage of three churches: San Giovanni Battista of Modica was the main church together with the adjoining hospital of Santa Maria della Pietá, the church of San Giuliano (also known as the church of Santa Maria dell'Itria); and the church of Santa Maria del Crocefisso. The commandery had the fiscal burden of each church; in 1690, the church of San Giovanni Battista of Modica had to re-imburse the annual salaries of four Chaplains of Obedience who serviced the religious cult of the church.⁴¹

However, there were some Hospitaller commanderies that defaulted on the necessity of providing for the religious administration of their communities. The Siracusan *ricetta* under Hospitaller management had several commanderies under its administration; these included the commandery of San Giovanni Battista which had no

⁴⁰ AOM 2160, fol 19r. Fra Giacomo Ottaviano amassed a collection of assets, all of which he had inherited from his paternal side, that included the whole undivided territory that was entitled the Serracina (or Saracena), but also came under the name of the *Fontana dello Conti*. This whole territory consisted of 140 salme of land and included leased parts, several houses and farm stores, rooms and a tower, a garden and several thousands of vines, a large bamboo grove, several holdings of trees, several water sources and large cisterns and several enclosures of pine and fruit trees. At the time, the whole donation was worth 10,000 scudi, calculated to render about 200 *onze* annually to the Order's treasury.

⁴¹ AOM 6098.

chapel (little is known about this commandery), the commandery of Borea (or Borgia) had only a palace as its main asset,⁴² and the commandery Abela, set up in 1649, had no chapel either.

6.3 The Origins of the Hospitaller Cathedral in Messina

The site of the Hospitaller's cathedral in Messina was hallowed ground from quite a long time before its erection. Carlo Marullo di Condojanni, in his book *La Sicilia ed il Sacro Militare Ordine di Malta*,⁴³ quoting Caio Domenico Gallo before him,⁴⁴ indicated that in that precise location there had been a previous Benedictine monastery as well as a small chapel dedicated to San Giovanni Battista. These were established at least by AD 530.⁴⁵ The patron of this establishment was Faustina, a Roman noble and presumably a wealthy donor.⁴⁶ Her son Placido, who would be canonised later on, was the founder of the Benedictine abbey. Together with his siblings, Vittorino, Eustachio and their sister Flavia, they had joined the Benedictine congregation to help in the process of foundation.⁴⁷

⁴² Gravina, Buono, 265. 'La commenda possedeva solo il palazzo, non aveva chiese, non aveva carico "d'Ospitalità, d'elemosine, né de altre Opere Pie".

⁴³ Condojanni, 150.

⁴⁴ Gallo, 144-45.

⁴⁵ This date is interesting. Officially the date of foundation of the first Benedictine monastery in Subiaco was 529 AD. The monastery in Subiaco was the first of a dozen monasteries that St Benedict had set up. The monastery in Messina was just one year after Subiaco. The Catholic Encyclopaedia suggests that the Saint Placido mission with the Benedictines to Sicily in 534 AD (?) to establish a monastery is merely anecdotal. Supporting evidence includes the fact that the dozen or so monasteries set up by St Benedict were all around the region of Subiaco which was in the territory of Lazio. Downloaded from [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_\(1913\)/Benedictine_Order](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_(1913)/Benedictine_Order) on the 31 August 2019.

⁴⁶ Minutolo, 3. 'In questo medesimo luogo era il Monastero antico costruito nel fondo paterno di San Placido, vivente il Coriseo dei Monaci Latini Benedetto...'

⁴⁷ See also Gilbert Huddleston, 'St. Placidus', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 12. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911).

In fact, both Condojanni and Gallo were reiterating the version of events first promulgated by Fra Andrea Minutolo, in his *Memorie* (1699).⁴⁸ The narrative of the event, including the date AD 530, is basically repeated in both. It relates that, only ten years after this event, Abdala, ruler of the Saracens, and his commander Mamucca, allegedly coming from Spain, overran Sicily and gave martyrdom to all the inmates of the Benedictine monastery including the four siblings. Minutolo with his hyperbole describes this event as happening in AD 541.⁴⁹

A definite link would eventually develop between the Hospitallers and San Placido, especially in connection with the Order's cathedral in Messina. However, the events described by the three historical narrators above are inconsistent, historically incorrect both in date and place, and might only be a time-honoured traditional chronicle. It seems also that there were two saints bearing the same name of San Placido (or Placitu), hence the confusion with the dates and events, when these are mixed.⁵⁰

When the Normans conquered Sicily from Saracen hegemony in c. 1065, one of the first munificent acts that Roger of Hauteville did was to fund the restoration of the church for the edification of the people of Messina. The church was to be full of mosaics in the Byzantine tradition.⁵¹

However, it was King Roger II who decisively came to the aid of the Hospitaller Order.⁵² Amico transcribed two charters, the first one dated 1136, which donated the church of San Giovanni Battista in Messina to the Hospitallers. A year later, in 1137, the Norman King donated several large tracts of lands to the Order to lease and/or work to fund their mission.⁵³ As has been seen already, Toomaspoeg suggests that the 1136

⁴⁸ Minutolo, 3.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 3. ‘*da quali il primo sfogo fu il sangue di quei Agnellini, che il recinto di quell Monasterio teneva come vittime di Dio, placido presdieva nel Monasterio, e non so quanti monaci, e la bella vergine Flavia sorella, Eutichio e Vittorino fratelli di Placido...furono in questo luogo martirizzati...*’. Doubt is shed on the veracity of this date, as the Umayyad initial expansion into the Iberian Peninsula started almost two centuries later, in 711. Presumably this particular *razzia* must have come from the coast, with galleys coming from North Africa rather than from the Iberian Peninsula, if Minutolo is to be believed.

⁵⁰ Gilbert Huddleston, ‘St. Placidus’, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 12. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911). Downloaded on the 23 Mar. 2020 from <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12142b.htm>. St Placidus was a disciple of St Benedict, and the son of the patrician Tertullus. He accompanied St Benedict to Subiaco in 529.

⁵¹ Minutolo, 3

⁵² See KristjanToomaspoeg (2003),45-110.

⁵³ Gallo,24.

charter was a hoax, perpetrated by the Convent a hundred years later while in Acre, possibly to acquire the church property surreptitiously.⁵⁴

6.4 The New Hospitaller Church of San Giovanni Battista

In 1588, the Siracusan prior of the Hospitallers, fra Rinaldo di Naro initiated some reconstruction work in the church of San Giovanni Battista in Messina. As part of the embellishment, it was decided to move a covered rostrum to a space near the front end of the church, away from the walls abutting on the adjacent *ospedale* which had almost enclosed it and was causing damp. During the initial excavations, a solid marble tomb was uncovered near the church's main door, 10 palms long and 6 palms wide, which when opened, exposed four skeletal remains, presumed to be the four martyred siblings, Placido, Euthicio, Vittorino and Flavia.⁵⁵ The discovery was received with great joy and solemnity by the Order and led to a whole week of sombre celebrations.⁵⁶

The unexpected exhumation of the remains of the saintly martyrs led to two events. As soon as the remains were verified, the Pope designated San Placido as co-patron of Messina together with the incumbent Madonna della Lettera.⁵⁷ Following this, the Senate of Messina, possibly aware of the effect on the Messinese of the papal-

⁵⁴ See KA Kehr (Ed), *Die Urkunden der Normannisch-sizilischen Könige*, (Innsbruck 1902), 336, LT White, *Latin Monasticism in Norman Sicily* (The Medical Academy of America, 31), (Cambridge 1938), 368-9; F Chalandon, Review of Karl Andreas Kehr, *Die Urkunden der Normannisch-sizilischen Könige*, in *Le Moyen Age*, 16 (1903), 304; C Bruhl, F Giunta, A Giullou, (ed), *Rogierii II Regis Diplomata Latina*, Codex Diplomaticus Regni Siciliae ser 2 vol 2,2 (Cologne-Vienna, 1987) 136-41.

⁵⁵ Pace Gravina (2003), 93.

⁵⁶ See Theresa Vella, Piety and Ritual in the Magistral Palace of the Order of St John in Malta, in *The Military Orders Vol VI (Part I), Culture and Conflict in the Mediterranean World*, ed Jochen Schenk and Mike Carr (London, Routledge, 2017), 191. The grand master of the time, fra Verdalle on returning from Rome in 1588 had instructed that the Cathedral church in Messina was to be restored.

⁵⁷ Gallo. 123. The feast day commemorating the event was the 4 of August. On the day of the saint's veneration, vigils were held, and a grand procession was carried out in Messina which included the regular and secular clergy, the chapter of the cathedral and the members of the Senate. This designation was initiated by Sixtus V in 1588, and later on confirmed by Paul V in 1621.

sponsored election of a martyred co-patron, decided to fund the reconstruction of a chapel dedicated to the martyr in the Hospitaller cathedral. The discovery of the relics had also prompted the Order to restructure the whole edifice of the church.⁵⁸ The proposed reorganization was to be radical; the older church was to be given a new orientation on an east-west axis.⁵⁹ The main altar was to be repositioned on the western side where previously there had been the main door of the older church.⁶⁰

With the passage of time, however, the expense for the reconstruction of the main Hospitaller Church and that of the chapel dedicated to St Placido came under one head. In the final plan, the side chapel dedicated to San Placido in the main church became the centre of attention and was transferred to the chancel, which became a complex of large rooms including the rostrum dedicated to the saint. The senate commissioned father and son architects from Messina, Francesco and Curzio Zaccarella, who were well known in the city, to execute the design of the main church, and oversee its construction. Another engineer was requested to supervise the building of the apse, behind the main altar, which would house the sacred remains of San Placido and his companions. After some political machinations from the viceroy, Camillo Camilliani was selected, a highly competent engineer and architect working in Sicily from 1574 to c. 1603. In the end, however, the planning and building of the apse and the prospect of the façade of the church was carried out by Jacopo della Duca, a pupil of Michelangelo Buonarroti and the chief architect appointed by the Senate of Messina at the time.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Francesca Paolino, Giacomo del Duca, *Le Opere Siciliane*, (Messina 1990), 18. The initial proposition by the Messina senate was only to fund the reconstruction of a chapel inside the Hospitaller cathedral. In an excerpt from the segnate archives of 18 April 1593, '*Elezione di un soprastante per invigilare alla fabrica della capella di S. Placido e compagni nella chiesa di S. Giovanni Gerosolimitano..*' By 1657, sixty years after initiation of the project, the Senate of Messina was still footing the bill of reconstruction of the whole church, which was being called 'the Church of St Placido and Companions'.

⁵⁹ Arneitz, Patrick, Draxler, Andrea, Rauch, Roman, Leonhardt, Roman Orientation of churches by magnetic compasses? (*Geophysical Journal*, 198, Issue 1,2014) 1-7. The orientation of catholic churches on a east-west axis, with the altar on the east side, as had been the older Hospitaller church, was not strictly adhered to after the reforms of the Tridentine Council in 1564.

⁶⁰ G. Bonfiglio Costanzo, *Messina Città Nobilissima descritta in VIII Libri*, (Venezia, 1606), 30. "A proposito dei lavori intrapresi dopo il 1588 dal priore Rinaldo di Naro per ridur l'altare maggiore alla parte Occidentale, dove prima era la porta, e quella rifare dov'era prima la tribuna...Oggi la città con spesa grande e Reale rifabbrica un nuovo tempio sopra il modello di Francesco Zaccarella.. "

⁶¹ Francesca Paolino, Giacomo del Duca, *Le Opere Siciliane*, (Messina 1990), 17 et seq.

Most of the expense for the new church was eventually shouldered by the municipality of Messina. An inscription on the façade of the cathedral attested to this fact.⁶² The Senate of Messina had issued several 'direct orders' over the years for the setting up of adjudicating boards which would oversee the provision of funds (usually sums reaching 200 onze at a time) and the superintendence of the work for the construction of the 'new' church.⁶³ From the Senate act describing the discovery of the saintly remains of St Placido and his companions in 1588, the next act was issued on 11 December 1590 when a set of deputies were selected to supervise *'la fabrica della nova cappella di S. Placido nella chiesa di S. Giovan Battista Gerosolimitano...'*. This does confirm that, initially, the main scope of funding by the Senate was for the building of a chapel dedicated to the new patron saint inside the Hospitaller church. Successive acts were issued on 18 April 1591, 1593, 1594, 14 June 1599, 20 December 1604, 9 April 1607, 1612, and 1628. The city imposed taxes on consumables, including wheat, cereals and wine to help fund the reconstruction.⁶⁴ An example was the tax of one tari imposed over a set weight of flour. The last act that emerged from the Senate was on 2 August 1657 where the authorities gave the board permission to spend another 200 onze to pay for the construction of the splendid flight of steps in front of the cathedral.⁶⁵

The construction of the new church of San Giovanni Battista took nearly 70 years to complete. Initial works, spearheaded by the prior di Naro, would have started soon after 1588. Under the priorship of fra Flaminio Balbiani, in 1653, the extensive reconstruction works of the church were brought to an end, although as indicated above, the last part of the project, which included the impressive flight of steps and the parvis in

⁶² Magione 578, fol 72r. A stone inscription dated 1629 on the architrave of the main door of the Hospitaller cathedral indicates the contribution that the Senate of Messina gave in its maintenance. *'... decreto Messana nobilis et Regni Caput Templum hoc quod olim cum adjuncto cunobio Placidus Joanne Precursori. Dicavit quod cumque Barbarorum Christianem fidei...corumdem corporibus...et magnificentius restituendum curavit. Senatoribus. D Francisco Marullo, Sebastiano di Marini, D Thoma Bonfiglio, ... Cellari equite Calatrava,*

⁶³ Most of the documentary patrimony of the Senate of Messina was lost in the earthquake of 1783. Copies of these acts were transcribed by the master notary Salesio Mannamo in 1794 in the *Giuliana*, and the evidence quoted above derive from these. See Vol 2: *Giuliana di scritture dal secolo XV al XVIII dell'Archivio Senatorio di Messina* (Messina 1983), 303-307.

⁶⁴ Paolino, 18

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

front of the church, were only funded in 1657. On completion the church was consecrated by the archbishop of Messina, Simone Carafa in 1653.⁶⁶

The prioral visitations of 1603/4, occurring around 14 years after the presumed start of reconstruction of the cathedral, gave little inkling of any major reconstruction on site. As is typical in such circumstances, the visiting commissioners gave quite an exhaustive inventory of the cathedral and its paraphernalia. There is a comprehensive description of the cathedral, its layout, and the different altars in which specific described paintings were hung in the lateral aisles (the lack of mention of side chapels is significant); but there is no indication that structural works were then being carried out or that some artefacts had been moved to safer places because of this.⁶⁷

Presumably, this means that the Hospitaller church visited during the prioral visit of 1603 was the older church and that little structural reconstruction of the new church had yet started at that point.

Another clue for the argument that the old church was still extant in 1603 was the wooden side altars present in the old church. The visiting commissioners, as was their wont after the official visits, indicated ways that the Hospitaller assets could be improved upon. One advice given in 1603 concerned the wooden altars on the side of the lateral naves, four on each side. Their suggestion was that, *pending the reconstruction of the church*, these could then be altered to side chapels made of masonry.⁶⁸

Furthermore, there is no indication, from a look at the finances included in the prioral visit of any official fiscal provisions that the Hospitaller priory of Messina had initiated to help in the funding of the cathedral works.

⁶⁶ Pace Gravina, 94

⁶⁷ Magione 401, fol 297r - 301r.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 300r.

6.5 Descriptive Analysis of the Church of San Giovanni Battista in Messina in the 1603 and 1749 visitations.⁶⁹

The church of San Giovanni Battista of Messina was the epitome of the Hospitaller place of worship in Sicily. Its provenance was shrouded in mystery, but its ties with the Hospitaller Order were long and deep. Its location on hallowed ground was ancient, and there were a series of edifices, one following the other, and each one surpassing the one before in size and endowments. The exuberance of the new cathedral, with its Baroque architecture, monumental size, and its endowments, attests to the power, stable finances, and influence which the Order attracted both locally in the Sicilian milieu, as well as internationally. A comparison of the two churches would provide evidence of this, consonant with the social stature of the Hospitallers among the Sicilian nobility in the seventeenth century.

The prioral visit of 1603 gave an extensive appraisal of the existing church buildings and their layout.⁷⁰ As the above indicates, *this* church was indeed the old church that grand prior di Naro had thought of reconstructing, although to what degree he had in mind is open to surmise.

The Hospitaller church which was completed by 1657 was a different church altogether. The earliest description of this monumental church dates about a hundred years after its completion. There are no indications that war or local geographical disturbances had destroyed any major part of this building, and this is evident from descriptions still surviving from the period between 1749⁷¹ and 1772.⁷² It was only the earthquake of 1908 in the territory of Val demone which finally obliterated most of the edifice, leaving only the apse at the back still intact; intriguingly the latter was the main

⁶⁹ Magione 578, fol 68r et seq.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 68r et seq.

⁷¹ V. di Paola, *L'Ordine dei cavalieri dalla caduta di Malta ad oggi*, in *L'Ordine di Malta ed il Tempio di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano a Messina* (Delegazione Gran Priorale di Messina del Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta, Messina, 1998), 22-23. A description of the church is given here.

⁷² Magione 402, 297r et seq.

reason that had triggered the construction of the new Hospitaller cathedral in the first place back in 1588.

There were major architectural differences between the old and the new churches, including the plan of their internal layout. This was reflected in the different furnishings and decorations of the side altars and chapels. Manpower numbers however remained the same; there were only marginal differences in the number of chaplains who assisted church services between the two epochs.

A description of the old church of San Giovanni Battista was given by the visiting commissioners during the prioral visit of 1603. However, the description of the new church was provided by the main sacristan of the Hospitaller cathedral in 1758. He left a detailed account of the whole complex in Messina, including the cathedral and the adjacent prioral palace with all their movable assets. The sacristan, a Messinese by the name of Francisco de Angelo, was a chaplain of Obedience in the Order,⁷³ at the time of fra Diego Maria Gargallo, the Lieutenant of the Priory.⁷⁴

The dimensions of the churches were different. The older structure was a smaller edifice with a central nave and two lateral ones. The latter had four altars down each side, made of wood, but there is no indication that these were recessed into the lateral wall of the space down the naves, or set into alcoves.⁷⁵ One altar on the right hand side, the evangelical wing, dedicated to the Madonna delli Miracoli was set to one side of a second altar with the altarpiece showing the Madonna dell'Itria, and presumably not in line against the wall with the others.⁷⁶

There is no mention of the different orders that made up the prospect of the old church (if any).

⁷³ See de Thame, lxiv, 'But the chaplains were of two classes: the conventual or professed chaplains, and those ex obedientia, who were not professed, but who performed ecclesiastical functions for the Order, and received stipends for their services, lxiv. See also Statuti 1674, 10, *'di piu l'ordine de' Sacerdoti diviso in due gradi, Sacerdoti conventuali e sacerdoti di ubidienze'*.

⁷⁴ Fra Gargallo was the receiver of the Hospitaller Order in Messina, and one-time Lieutenant and Vicar General of the Grand Priory of Messina (31 August 1772).

⁷⁵ Magione 401, fol 297 r et seq.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 297v. *'Collaterale al sudetto altare (i.e. Madonna dell'Itria) ci a lo altare intitolato nostra signora delli miracoli. Il giocali e di gran devotione..'*

There is certainly more information about the new church. The prospect of the church had two orders. The lower order was made up of alternating white marble (*macigna bianco*) and red stone. The whole façade was divided vertically by two huge pilasters, with an empty niche set in the middle of each.⁷⁷ Two columns supported the architrave of the main door, set in the middle space; there were two smaller lateral doors, one on either side of the main door. The upper or second order remained incomplete and was constructed of Siracusan stone. There was a main central balcony, framed by two columns over the main door of the church and two smaller windows on either side. The whole prospect was finished at the top by a wide band of masonry running across the whole façade. On this wide band was an inscription with the date 1635.⁷⁸

The interior of the church consisted of three long naves, a large central one and 2 narrower lateral ones. Two rows of seven pilasters holding seven arches separated these. The arches in their turn supported a running cornice. The second order also consisted of seven pilasters. In the space between them were ornate stained-glass windows on either side and another large window over the main door. Each lateral nave had seven side chapels on either side.⁷⁹

The axis of the churches was also different. The older church was aligned on an east-west axis with the main altar facing east and the main door on the western side. The axis of the newer church was reversed and the place where the old main door stood became the end where the new altar and rostrum were sited.

In 1588, when the first initial excavations were started near the main door at the west end, they uncovered the tomb of St Placido and his companions. This event must have impeded to a degree the impetus of restructuring of the church. During the prioral visit of 1603, the visiting commissioners described a great pit (*fossa grande*) right at the back of the church on the left-hand side, beyond the fourth altar dedicated to Our lady of Philermos and adjacent to the sacristy door.⁸⁰ This pit was the result of the excavations that uncovered the tomb of the saints. Over the site the prior set up an altar and choir,

⁷⁷ Magione 578, fol 71v

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, fol 71v.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, fol 80r to 90r.

⁸⁰ Magione 401, fol 298v.

and a side door was walled off to give seclusion to the place and space for meditation. When the new church was being planned, the site where the pit was near the main west door became the focal point of the new church, and the site of the rostrum behind the main altar. This was a complex of large rooms in the chancel and included the main chapel which held the depositary containing the remains of the saints, an oratory and several other rooms at a higher level which could be reached by a flight of 24 steps. These rooms were located where the old sacristy had been, near the main door of the old church.⁸¹ There was, consequently, an axis reversal between the old and the new church.

The cathedral of San Giovanni Battista fronted a large main square which took the same appellation as the church. There was a great fountain in the middle of the square, called the *aberevatura*.⁸² The cathedral stood on the left side of the prioral palace and its gardens. The prospect of the church faced east.

The façade of the new church was reached by a great semi-circular flight of 17 steps that started from the square up to the massive great door. There were several window openings around the whole flight, covered by iron grilles which gave ventilation and light to the basement of the church. The latter housed the arch-confraternity of San Placido. At the top of the flight of steps was a running balustrade with an iron gate, which could be closed for privacy.⁸³

Both the exterior and the interior of the new church, including the various small flights of steps to the side altars as well as the altars themselves and the pavement were covered in different expensive and exclusive marbles. The commonest marble used was the *pietra di Tavormina* (Taormina)⁸⁴ which came in two shades, grey and pink, and Siracusan stone. There were marbles from Genoa, *pietra libercioli* from Trapani, white/green marble from Gimigliano, and *mischio* marble from France. Some rooms in the prioral buildings even had flooring made up of polished Maltese stone.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Magione 578, 78v.

⁸² *Ibid.*, fol 69r. The word *aberevatura* probably derives from the word *abbeveratoio* which means watering place.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, fol 71r. The balustrades had been advised to be done by some previous Visiting Commissioners to '*obviare l'inconvenienti e disordini che con scandalo universale si di giorno e di notte commettevansi sudetto vestibulo apposto a tutte le inclemenze*'.

⁸⁴ Antonio Nibby, *Roma nell'Anno MDCCCXXXVIII*, (1838, Roma Tipografia delle Belle Arti), 66.

⁸⁵ Magione 578, fol 71r.

There were also differences between the two main altars of the respective churches. The older altar was situated on the eastern side and the altarpiece had 4 reliefs of the 4 martyred saints, St Placido, St Flavia, St Euthicio and St Vittorino.⁸⁶ The newer main altar, on the west side, was made of different coloured and textured marbles. It rose by two steps from the main floor of the church. In front of the main altar was a large ante-altar situated on the congregation side of the altar and even this was made up of different marbles.⁸⁷ The tabernacle was encased in expensive marbles; its wooden door was gilded in silver (*innargentato*) and had a marble crown with the eight-pointed cross on it. Under the altar was an urn containing the remains of San Luca, a Basilian monk and the first Archimandrite of Messina.⁸⁸

Even the chancel was different in the two buildings. In the older church, there was an iron gate, plated in silver which separated the main altar and the chancel which contained the chapel holding the reliquary of the martyred saints.⁸⁹ This was called the Sanctuary. The reliquary cases were made of gold brocade and contained the remains of the four siblings and an ampoule full of the blood of the saints. The reliquary had three keys, one kept by the Archbishopric of Messina, another by the Senate of Messina, and the third by the prior of the Order of Messina. There were also several instruments of torture of Roman provenance displayed on the wall of the chapel.

The chancel behind the altar of the later church was a more complex edifice. Immediately behind the main altar was a choir where the divine office was sung. This was for the sole use of the conventual chaplains of the Order. It consisted of 16 stalls, mostly on the right side and a few on the left. This side also incorporated an organ. The room of the choir had a vaulted ceiling resting on columns with a running cornice which reflected the architecture of the whole church. The room was lit by an ornate stained-glass window. Two great paintings in elaborate frames of plaster hung on the walls, one depicting San Ilarione, the other San Pietro in Vincula.⁹⁰ Immediately behind the choir,

⁸⁶ Magione 401, fol 297r. These were described as *'immagini di rilievo'*.

⁸⁷ Magione 578, fol 76v.

⁸⁸ The floor of the naves of the old church was made of geometrically positioned bricks (*mattoni*) and it contained 23 burial inscriptions including an old one covered by a marble slab of the first archimandrite of Messina. The slab contained a Greek inscription.

⁸⁹ Magione 401, 297r. *'...una grada di ferro innargentato guarda dentro una cappella ovale...'*

⁹⁰ Magione 578, fol 77v et seq.

five steps rose to the rostrum decorated with 4 plaster statues of the siblings. The vault was painted with a frescoed glory of the angels. The rostrum also had another minor altar covered by a small canopy which had an old faded image of San Placido. A private chapel called the Sanctuary contained the reliquaries holding the remains of the saints. Another room off the rostrum called the Oratory held reliquaries of various other martyrs, but these were not exposed to public devotion. There were several memorials on the walls of this room too.

Both churches had a wooden pulpit on the first left-hand column in the aisle. The one in the older church was made of carved chestnut wood and rested on four columns. It had been donated by Prior Languiglia.⁹¹ The pulpit in the newer church was also made up of carved wood; it had a small, gilded statue of St Paul with sword in hand.

The entrance to the sacristy in the old church was through a chestnut door next to the fourth chapel on the left-hand side. The sacristy itself was endowed with great wardrobes containing the sacred liturgical vestments and a holy water-font with the coat-of-arms of Prior di Naro. Through the sacristy was another room which had an altar with a canvas painting of the Madonna. There was a window that faced the priory buildings. Above the door of the sacristy stood the bell-tower, which was thus situated on the left-hand side of the main building. The bell-tower contained one great bronze bell and two small ones. Next to this was a side entrance to the main church, for the use of the public.

The sacristy had an antependium of the figure of San Placido and his companions, decorated with silver thread and embroidered with gold. Several chasubles and tunics had the coat-of-arms of the viceroy Don Diego Enriquez Gusman, Count of Alba de Lista embroidered on them. Other vestments had the coat-of-arms of previous priors, including fra Signorino Gattinara and fra di Naro.⁹²

There were several large rooms in the crypt of the basilica which were also utilised for the religious cult. One large hall and several other rooms were used by the arch-congregation of San Placido. These consisted of an anteroom and an oratory and three

⁹¹ Magione 578, fol 79v.

⁹² Pace Gravina, 94

large interconnected halls. The large central oratory contained the main altar and the altarpiece painting dedicated to San Placido and companions. On either side of the main altar were two minor ones, commemorating the flagellated Christ on one side and the *Ecce Homo* on the other. To the right lay another altar with an alabaster statute of the Immaculate Conception, a statue of San Placido and the sepulchral memento of fra Antonino Nesci. To the left stood the oratory of St Anthony of Padua with several paintings depicting the virtues of the saint and the altarpiece on the same subject. To the right was a painting of the Madonna della Lettera.

The church of the Order in Messina had at least two confraternities attached to it. One was the Confraternity of the Bakers, which had a chapel in the church dedicated to San Sebastiano, in existence at least until 1630.⁹³

The other confraternity was that of the Company of Master Caulkers (*Compania delli Mastri Calafati*) dedicated to San Demetrio. It remained in existence until 1730.⁹⁴

6.6 Silverware of the Hospitaller Church

The church of San Giovanni Battista had a large inventory of ornamental silverware to embellish the sacred place. The visitation of 1603 listed most of the objects found in the church and sacristy.⁹⁵ In its report, some of these were described in minute detail, but information about provenance and/or their merits as works of art was scarce.

Occasionally a family shield or coat-of-arms would indicate its provenance and donor, but most of them were not so embellished. There is no indication of the workshops where the various pieces of silverware had originated, and no mention is provided of the

⁹³ Gallo, 241

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 119

⁹⁵ Magione 401, fol 304v.

master craftsmen who had moulded them. Rather than workmanship and/or provenance, the gross weight in silver in pounds and ounces was meticulously given; this must have been thought by the Order to be related to the prestige of the item.

The objects were many.⁹⁶ Examples included a silver mantle hung over the picture of San Placido, weighing 19.7.2 lbs, which would come to around 9 kilos of silver. There was also a great cross, with a silver crucifix on one side and the figure of the Madonna on the other. The donor was Prior Languiglia, as the cross bore his coat-of-arms. On the sides were also the four evangelists, San Placido, God the Father, and the Madonna. The weight of the cross was 17.0.2 lbs. Other articles included a great hanging silver lamp with images of San Placido weighing 14.6 lbs. The donor was from outside the Order and was one of the viceroys of Sicily. There were other lamps, two of them donated by di Naro, and another large basin lamp covered by a crown with the coat-of-arms of the Viceroy Bernardino Cardenas, Duke of Macqueda. Its weight in silver came to 12.4 lbs. There were also great altar chandeliers and other ornaments.

Other silver liturgical objects included several chalices used during special functions in the churches' calendar. A great and old chalice decorated with the coat-of-arms of the Order and of the Prior Ugo Moncada, Viceroy of Sicily (1513-1528) weighed 4.2.2 lbs.⁹⁷ A less heavy chalice bore the coat-of-arms of the Raccuja.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 314v et seq.

⁹⁷ Magione 401, fol 315r.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 301r.

6.7 The Religious Hierarchy at San Giovanni Battista in Messina in the Seventeenth/Eighteenth century.

As indicated in a previous section, every prioral visitation resulted in various instructions. These included suggestions and proposals on improvements that the visiting commissioners would have decided should be done by the custodians of the various Hospitaller assets. The ordinations which resulted from the prioral visit of 1749 give an idea of the customary everyday practices in the Sicilian commanderies in the decades before, and also reflected on the adherence and/or laxity of the brethren to their statutes and regulations.⁹⁹

The ordinations of 1749 covered both the spiritual side of the daily lives of the brethren, as well as their material aspect. They included recommendations on the commandery churches and other churches of the Order, ecclesiastical objects, and the religious discipline of the members.

Their physical presence inside a church did not impede the higher ranks of the Order from sticking solidly to the pre-eminence and prerogatives which positioned each member on the hierarchical ladder of the Order. Confounding issues that needed resolution at the time included whether the lieutenant, in the absence of the grand prior, being a *piccolo croce* should sit under the prescribed canopy (*dosello*), usually occupied by the prior during a church service, particularly when Grand Crosses were in attendance as well.¹⁰⁰ During formal ceremonies, knight Grand Crosses preceded Small Crosses, but it was evident that in this situation, the Lieutenant was the representative of the grand prior in his absence. One of the ordinances stipulated that in this instance, if the lieutenant was in attendance, in the presence of Grand Crosses he should occupy the throne of the prior but under a different canopy called the *campana*.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ AOM 6114. Relazione e Spoglio della Visita Priorale di Messina 1749.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 2r.

¹⁰¹ AOM 6123, fol 9r.

At the beginning of official church ceremonies, it was customary for the prior or lieutenant on entering the church to be offered holy water in which to dip his fingers and make the sign of the cross while standing at the main door of the church. This offer was made to the prior by the ecclesiastical prior, who was the head of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the church of the Order. In his absence, in descending order of rank, the offer was to be made by a magisterial chaplain, the magisterial sacristan, or by the most senior chaplain present.

The ordinances stipulated that the master of ceremonies should be a chaplain of obedience, well versed in the ceremonial gatherings of the cathedral church. His position in the church was also designated; he was to sit by the side of the throne of the prior, on a stool, wearing a surplice and black mozzetta.¹⁰²

It had also become habitual for members of the Order to make confessions to clerics and priests who were not Hospitallers. This was a custom which was frowned upon in the inner circles of the Hospitallers; in fact one statute of the Order, going back to Grand Master Ugo Revel (1258-77), specifically directed the brethren to make confession either to the prior (conventual) or to any other chaplain of the Order.¹⁰³ Any member who wanted to confess to priests outside the Order needed a special dispensation from the conventual prior. The Ordinances of 1749 renewed this stipulation, where confessors had to be approved by the grand master or the prior of Messina.¹⁰⁴

An alternative viewpoint to this custom of hearing confession by clergy outside the Order is endorsed by Buttigieg who points out that the Hospitaller knights on seventeenth-century Malta were overseen by the Jesuits for the sacrament of confession, while the local Inquisition itself appointed Jesuit priests to oversee punishments meted out to Hospitallers.¹⁰⁵ It is fair to state that the customary confession to the Jesuits was

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, fol 9v.

¹⁰³ Statuti 1674, 27.

¹⁰⁴ AOM 6114, fol 1r

¹⁰⁵ Buttigieg, 112. See also Emanuel Buttigieg, Knights, Jesuits, Carnival, and the Inquisition in Seventeenth Century Malta, in *The Historical Journal* 55, 3 (2012): 571-96.

also reflected to some extent in Sicily (most members of the Jesuits arriving in Malta devolved from the neighbouring island).¹⁰⁶

It is curious that the ordinances of 1749 specifically tried to correct this practice and urged the brethren to revert to what the statutes of the Order mandated. It was only ten years later that the first suppressions of the Order of Jesus occurred in the Portuguese Empire, followed, eight years later, by the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Kingdom of Sicily, making members of the Order of Jesus unlikely to have remained confessors of the Order, as they were all transported under pain of death to Civitavecchia, in the Papal States.¹⁰⁷ Could this have meant that the Hospitallers had an inkling of the major problems that were to beset the Jesuit Order, including their suppression a few years later, and tried to steer themselves away from this danger?

The grand prior had both spiritual and temporal jurisdiction over all members of his priory and commanderies. In order to delegate some of his authority in the maintenance of spiritual control on the brothers in Messina, the post of an ecclesiastical vicar was created in the Ordinances of 1749.

6.7.1 The Ecclesiastical Vicar.

The post of ecclesiastical vicar was chosen by the grand prior and was to be selected from the pool of conventual chaplains. The ordinations however also indicated that if no conventual chaplains were available, a chaplain of obedience could be selected, and if the latter were also scarce, a mundane secular priest could fill the post.

¹⁰⁶ Frans Ciappara, Malta, Naples, and the Holy See in the Late Eighteenth Century, *Mediterranea-Ricerche Storiche* 12 (2008): 173 et seq.

¹⁰⁷ Manfred Barthel. *The Jesuits: History and Legend of the Society of Jesus*. Translated and adapted from the German by Mark Howson. (William Morrow & Co., 1984), 223 et seq.

The brief for this post was given by the grand prior directly or by his lieutenant.¹⁰⁸ His authority was limited to the Hospitaller cathedral church of Messina,¹⁰⁹ the chaplaincy of the priory and the churches and chapels of the commanderies which made up the priory.¹¹⁰ In everything else, the vicar had to submit, as all the other members of the Order, to the exigencies of the grand prior.

The post came with a salary of 8 *onze* annually.

The duties of an ecclesiastical vicar were various. He had to carry routine inspections of the buildings of the cathedral church of the priory and all other churches of the commanderies under the jurisdiction of Messina. These were carried out to ascertain that all the necessary maintenance of the buildings was being taken care of. He had to supervise the proper and correct execution of religious worship in the churches of the priory; his position included authority to oversee the brother chaplains on their quality of service in their churches as well as in their dress and habits. If punishment to the transgressors was to be meted out however, this was outside his remit. This came directly under the office of the grand prior of Messina.

The proper execution of the religious office included the timely and proper recital of the canonical hours during the day and night, as well as all the other services held in the churches. The ecclesiastical vicar also made sure that the ceremonial vestments were properly cared for and not ill-used. The chaplains had to maintain absolute reverence inside the churches, undue noises were frowned upon and silence embraced. Modesty of dress and manners were also looked for, and punishment was dispensed for disobedience. The ecclesiastical vicar had to make sure that clerics and chaplains of the

¹⁰⁸ AOM 6114, fol 3r et seq. Firstly, the General Ecclesiastical Vicar would have the prerogatives usually enjoyed by the Vicar General; secondly, the Ecclesiastical Vicar could be removed *ad nutum* (instantly and without hesitation.) by the Prior or his Lieutenant; thirdly, the authority granted to the post concerned only the cathedral church and the chaplains and in everything else was subordinated to the Grand Prior or his lieutenant; fourthly, the job description of the post was to be handed to the Vicar by the Grand Prior.

¹⁰⁹ Although a cathedral is, by definition, the seat of a bishop, and in Messina, this was the Duoma (Basilica Cattedrale Protometropolitana di Santa Maria Assunta), there were several instances in the primary sources, particularly in AOM 6123, where the prioral church is described as a 'cattedrale chiesa'. Whether this was scribal intemperance, or the title was closer to the truth needs further research. The prioral church was never a bishop's seat.

¹¹⁰ AOM 6123, fol 13r.

choir participated in the sacraments and received Holy Communion at least twice a month.

The ecclesiastical vicar resided in the prioral palace. He was given a set of rooms for his personal use and comfort. The same conditions essentially applied to all the other magisterial chaplains and clerics of the cathedral church. These were also given board and lodging in the prioral palace although it was to be expected that their accommodation would have been less sumptuous than that of the vicar. Some of the domestic servants working in the palace were also housed in the building itself, but being at the lowest end of the hierarchical scale, their rooms must have been the least opulent of them all.¹¹¹ Certainly, the higher echelons of the priory upheld the belief that it was better to fill the rooms of the prioral palace with members of the order, or those who held allegiance to it, rather than extraneous and secular laity from outside the Order. Other individuals were offered semi-permanent lodging through a dispensation of the grand master himself,¹¹²

The incumbent occupying the position of ecclesiastical vicar could be removed from office at any point by the grand prior or his lieutenant.¹¹³

6.7.2 The Choir Chaplains.

The manpower complements of the older Hospitaller church of Messina at the time of the prioral visit of 1603 were not inconsiderable. It consisted of eight church ministers, the foremost of whom was designated a head chaplain, a position equivalent to an abbot of the regular monasteries. He was a chaplain of obedience and had a salary of 12 onze annually.¹¹⁴ The remaining seven consisted of three other chaplains of obedience and

¹¹¹ AOM 6114, fol4.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, fol 4r.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 6114, fol 3.

¹¹⁴ Magione 401, fol 300r.

four secular priests.¹¹⁵ All had an annual salary of 6 onze.¹¹⁶ There were also five deacons; one was salaried at 4 onze annually, whereas all the others had 3 onze. There were also two minor deacons (*diaconetti*) to serve at mass.¹¹⁷ These posts came tied up with several obligations. They had to celebrate masses daily, including Sundays and feast. It was stipulated that one of the masses had to be sung. They also had to recite the canonical hours.

There were minor modifications in the number of the religious personnel in the newer church, as the visitation of 1749 confirmed. The number of conventual chaplains, now called choir chaplains remained at seven.¹¹⁸ It was advised that the conventual chaplains serving in the cathedral church would be chosen by the grand prior. Each prospective candidate had to be a priest and his election to the post of choir chaplain had to be endorsed by his immediate superiors. There were other stipulations, however, that had to be considered before a choice was made. The priest had to have led an exemplary life up till that point, with good customs and manners. He had to be from the district of Messina or its close environs. He also had to be supported by benefices given to him by the diocesan synod.

Other requirements included the ability to write and expertise in singing, particularly in the form of singing called *canto fermo*.¹¹⁹ By 1749, choir chaplains had a salary of 14 onze annually; of these 9 were to be paid immediately by the prior and 5 onze were to be paid from the distribution of alms during church services or other donations.¹²⁰ However, the allocation of how much was to be given and by whom fluctuated; the ordinances stipulated that if church collections were bountiful, the chaplains' instalment from the donation would increase. This would obviously be

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, fol 301v. The chaplains of obedience of the Order had immunity and other prerogatives. They were authorised to carry the Holy Sacrament in all parts of the city (of Messina) and could not be impeded. They also had the right to, processionally, bury the dead.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, fol 300v

¹¹⁷ Magione 401, fol 301r et seq.

¹¹⁸ AOM 6123, fol 16v.

¹¹⁹ Collins English Dictionary. Copyright © HarperCollins Publishers 1. a melody that is the basis to which other parts are added in polyphonic music, 2. the traditional plainchant as prescribed by use and regulation in the Christian Church.

¹²⁰ AOM 6123, fol 18v.

associated with a corresponding decrease in the quantum supplied by the grand prior, so that the salary package would remain 14 onze.¹²¹

The choir chaplains enjoyed board and lodging at the prioral palace, with comfortable rooms to live in. They used the services of the prioral kitchen, and had the partial use of a subaltern, who acted as their personal attendant. The latter was also responsible for the cleanliness of the prioral palace as well as acting as a guard for those held prisoners in the palace.¹²² The subaltern was paid an annual salary of 12 onze.¹²³

The chaplains were prohibited from entertaining relatives or friends in their rooms at the prioral palace on pain of being expelled from the Order. More specifically, the chaplains could not entertain any women, be they friends, relatives, or strangers at the prioral buildings for whatever reason, not even under the guise of helping an itinerant during the day or night. As a general rule, accommodation for women in the prioral palace was banned anytime, day or night, although this was not a generalized prohibition.¹²⁴ The higher ranks in the priory allowed women of mature years to be kept in service, particularly during the daytime. Regardless of everything, the main prioral door was locked at two in the morning, and the key was delivered to the grand prior when in residence, or to his lieutenant in his absence. In the absence of both, the next in the hierarchical ladder was the ecclesiastical vicar, and failing this, the most senior chaplain would hold the key.¹²⁵

The choir chaplains were responsible for the celebration of masses in the cathedral church.¹²⁶ This was particularly done every Sunday and every feast day, but during a

¹²¹ This could be compared to the annual salaries of the skilled and clerical workers in the Order's bakeries in Augusta in 1796, about fifty years later. The annual salary of a clerk at the bakeries was 36 *onze*, and 30 *onze* were paid to the accountant. A skilled worker like the keeper of the windmill earned 12 *onze* a year. The *ricetta* of Augusta also paid some pensions to widows; these were given a stipend of 6 *onze* annually.

¹²² Some Hospitaller estates were medieval fiefs with the authority given to the Hospitaller commander to apportion high and low Justice to the inhabitants of the territory. Castanea was one such estate. See Rosella Cancila, *Merum et Mixtum Imperium nella Sicilia Feudale*, in *Mediterranea, Ricerche Storiche*, Anno V Dec 2008, 14, 469-504. *Merum et Mixtum imperium* is a legal state where a ruler can infringe on certain rights of subjects in cases of necessity when the common good of the community is at stake. It was an ability to act above the law in certain circumstances

¹²³ AOM 6114, fol 6.

¹²⁴ AOM 6123, fol 19r.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 19r.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 19v. these obligations had not changed much from the suggestions offered by the previous Visitation in 1604

normal week masses were held daily by four chaplains at the high altar in turn, with the remaining chaplains celebrating mass on the low altars. Some chaplains were exempted from particular parts of the canonical hours, such as the vespers, but legitimate absences due to sickness had to be endorsed by a written note, from two clerics in the same church.¹²⁷

Chaplains of Obedience sang the canonical hours as well, and their vestments included a black mozzetta with a white cross on the left shoulder.¹²⁸ They celebrated the feast of St John the Baptist with the grand prior and all the knights in the cathedral church and took part in all the celebrations of the church.

Two secular priests, a deacon and a sub-deacon, and other servants were present to assist the seven chaplains of the cathedral church, in their religious and personal services.

6.7.3 The Church Sacristan.

The Ordinances of 1749 also contemplated the post of a magisterial sacristan and an assistant sacristan.¹²⁹ These two people were accommodated in the prioral palace, and each was given a black soutane¹³⁰ every year by the grand prior of Messina. The post of sacristan was chosen from outside the chaplaincy to avoid disruption of the church services; this enabled the incumbent to continue with his tasks in the sacristy. Both the sacristan and his assistant were also involved in the recitation of the canonical hours,

¹²⁷ AOM 6114, fol 8r.

¹²⁸ The wearing of the black mozzetta with a white cross on the left shoulder was an important part of the habit of the Hospitaller Chaplains. It served to highlight to the public the priests of the Order and the latter were very protective of this fact. The Ordinations resulting from the prioral visit of 1749 included several stipulations highlighting this fact. Chaplains of Obedience were abjured not to serve in secular church functions if the diocese did not allow them to wear their black mozzettas. They were also not to serve in secular churches as salaried priests and were also prohibited to visit families in their home in the parish. Finally, they were also not allowed to teach children in their homes.

¹²⁹ AOM 6123, fol 23r.

¹³⁰ An ankle-length cassock worn by Roman Catholic priests.

took part in conventual masses, and on the Sabbath were solicited to add the liturgy of the Virgin Mary.

6.7.4 Office of the Dead¹³¹

On the death of a brother, a whole ritual was triggered off by his brethren, called the Suffrage of the Dead. Once the death of the brother was known, bereavement letters were sent to all the members of the priory, including professed members of every grade as well as novices. There was the recitation of the office of the dead and 150 paternosters were said by each member of the priory and of its dependent commanderies. This was the suffrage prescribed by the statutes of the Order. The mortal remains of the dead knight were accompanied to the grave in a procession that included all the brethren residing in the priory and the novices of the Order. The procession also included all the distinguished benefactors of the Order.

6.7.5 Sepulchral Monuments in the Cathedral of San Giovanni Battista

The new cathedral church of the Hospitallers hosted several sepulchral mounds and lapidary inscriptions inside, either as marble grave slabs or as free-standing monuments. The floor of the chancel immediately behind the main altar served as the repository for the deceased Hospitaller brethren.¹³² A marble slab in the flooring indicated this burial site; however, by 1749, the burial place was no longer used as it had been filled up and burials were done in consecrated ground outside the cathedral buildings.

Some side chapels had the memorial of a single member of the Hospitallers, usually high-ranking, and who, in most cases, would have bequeathed a considerable

¹³¹ AOM 6123, fol 15v.

¹³² Magione 578, fol 91r.

amount of funds for the embellishment of the same chapel. There was ample evidence of the name and rank of the donor on the sepulchral marble slab. The second chapel on the right, the chapel of the Holy Crucifix, had a marble ensemble commemorating the mortal remains of the Bali and Grand Prior fra Andrea Minutolo, as shown by the family crest of the Gran Croce on the two half columns of the monument.¹³³

Just inside the main door, the first chapel on the right, that of the Holy Sacrament, bore the funerary marble slab of fra Andrea di Giovanni, Lieutenant of the Grand Priory. The ensemble included an obelisk supported by the marble figures of two slaves, one of which was of bronzed marble and the other white. This iconography suggested a knight's life spent obeying the precepts of the Order, fighting Muslims and the heretical enemies of the Catholic Church. The mound was also adorned with several trophies as well. Other furnishings of this chapel, including three solid silver lamps, bore his family crest, indicating their provenance.

The third chapel on the right dedicated to the Madonna della Lettera, was reserved for the burial of deceased members of the arch-confraternity of San Placido.¹³⁴

The left-side chapels contained the burial mounds of the Marullo family in the first chapel, the commemoration of the conventual chaplain fra Bartoli and a mass grave for the members of the brethren who had died in the plague of 1743 and could not be buried in the chancel for lack of space.

In the central aisle were several burial mounds, including those of the Bali fra Ludovico Ferretti, fra Carlo Gammbergh, fra Carlo Piangiolino, as well as some members of the congregation of San Placido.¹³⁵

¹³³ *Ibid.*, fol 91r.

¹³⁴ A marble inscription set up by the congregation of S Placido was in the church See Condojanni 170. *Hic placidam, Placidi Fratrum sors nacta quietem cum placid tandem surgere sperat ovans. Anno 1650.*

¹³⁵ Magione 578, fol 93r.

6.8 Conclusion

The axiom of the Order ‘Service of the Poor and Defenders of the Faith’ embodied the whole philosophy of what the Hospitallers stood for; it enshrined the two Christian commandments of love. Their love for the Faith was reflected in the care they lavished on their cathedrals and churches, on the building of new places of worship on each bit of land they were given, and, in some cases, on the provision of salaried secular priests to take care of these places. Even matters concerning the liturgy of the church were encompassed in the third part of the Orders' Statutes. The care they lavished on their reconstructed cathedral of San Giovanni Battista in Messina was testament to this devotion.

The church of San Giovanni Battista, particularly the newly reconstructed church completed by the 1650s, was also a Renaissance tour de force, with its fourteen side chapels, embellishments and the chancel dedicated to one of Messina’s patron saints. The imposing cathedral church was a beacon for the Order, visually expressing the philosophy of an Order that was in its heyday.

Chapter 7 The Hospitaller Prioral Mansion in Messina

7.1 Introduction

As befitted the rank of one of the highest posts of the Order, the official residence of the Hospitaller Prior in Sicily was palatial. Located in Messina, rather than in the city of Palermo which was the *primus inter pares* as far as the residences of the Sicilian nobility were concerned, it typified the set-up of an elite establishment of the higher echelons of society in seventeenth century Sicily. The whole establishment was set in extensive grounds and adjacent to the Cathedral church of the Order, San Giovanni Battista, overlooking the *piazza*. The time between the two prioral visits of 1604 and 1749 showed major refurbishments which were carried out on the prioral buildings.

7.2 The Hospitaller Priory in Messina

The city residence which lodged the grand prior of Messina and his extensive entourage was a veritable mansion and included several out-houses, and a large garden. It consisted of a rambling ground floor containing the quarters of the lower social minions including most of the supporting staff of the priory, the quarters of the conventual chaplains and also the prisons which would house transgressors of the Order. The first floor, the *piano nobile*, consisted of at least three grand suites, made up of a collection of rooms, fit for a king or pope, as indeed they were. There are two extant descriptions of this domicile, similar to those describing the adjacent Hospitaller church of San

Giovanni Battista; both were given in two different prioral visits, one in 1603/4 and the other in 1749.¹ Both gave a vivid portrayal of the layout of the house and surrounding garden but whereas the earlier account looks fragmented and the description of the house given in piecemeal fashion, the later report gives a more holistic picture making it possible to visualize the building more effortlessly. More specific details were given, however, in the earlier account which included the coats-of-arms of the different donors, be they carved in stone on the lintel, on the various wooden doors and on donated paintings and other endowments. Most of these earlier donations were not mentioned in the later 1749 visit, almost a hundred and fifty years later; it could have been that none survived the intervening years.

Although the blueprint of size and location of the mansion with respect to the prioral house and garden remained much the same in this span of time, the numerous rooms upstairs described in 1603 remained individual and separate, whereas in the later account, the rooms were aggregated into separate suites, and labelled the North, East and South apartments.² Two separate stone staircases at ground level led from the outside to the *piano nobile* on the first floor; one serviced the North and East apartments and another led to the South suite of rooms. All the rooms were well-lit through huge stone-carved windows furnished with wooden shutters, and some were also protected with iron grilles. The ground level of the house and its assorted outhouses included the service quarters of the house, the accommodation of the myriad staff, the stables, and the prison cells.

The visit of 1749 gives an extensive description of the prioral building.³

The large house was located adjacent to the north side of the Hospitaller church and had a sizeable garden at the back, or the west side of both house and church. The main door was situated on the south side of the building and had a carved stone lintel⁴

¹ See Commenda della Magione 401 which is a transcription of the prioral visit of 1603/4 and Magione 578, 68r et seq which is that of 1749.

² Magione 578, fol 113r.

³ *Ibid.*, fol 111v to 117v.

⁴ The 1603 account indicated that the top of this lintel carried the coat-of-arms carved in stone of the grand prior Naro.

which supported a massive wooden door.⁵ This led to a huge courtyard which was partly roofed over; the latter being supported by two massive stone arches just inside the door. Just opposite was the main staircase that led to the first-floor rooms. The remainder of the courtyard was uncovered and had a large fountain in the middle and a large olive tree.⁶

The ground floor of the edifice together with several rooms which extended into the large courtyard⁷ made up the kitchens, storerooms and pantry.⁸ This floor also included a large warehouse which was converted into the priory stables⁹ and a well with a platform made up of carved stones. Some small rooms also served as prison cells. Adjacent to these was a covered stone staircase made up of 26 steps¹⁰ that led to the first floor apartments situated on the north and east side.¹¹ Another set of steps adjacent to the garden wall led to the south end suite of apartments. Underneath this stairwell was the entrance to the prisons and the quarters of the religious community servicing the church.¹² On one side of the courtyard there was also a water font with a grotesque marble mask situated in a niche between two other marble statues. This led piped water for use in the stables. Near to this font, five steps led down to the garden behind the house.¹³

The prioral palace had three major apartments which were designated the East, North and the South suites (overlooking the Square of San Giovanni), named according

⁵ In the 1603/4 description of the manor house of the priory, all the doorways including those inside the house and also most of those outside, were given the same description: a large arched doorway of carved stone with its wooden doors. '*un porticali grandi fatto ad arco di pietra intagliata con soi porti di legnami*'.

⁶ Magione 578, fol 112r.

⁷ Magione 401, fol 344r. The earlier description indicates a few large storerooms abutting the house in the courtyard space. All of these had arched carved doorways with massive wooden doors, windows which had their own wooden panels, and secured by iron grills. These storehouses were covered by wooden joists (*travetti*) supporting the roof tiles (*chiaramidi*).

⁸ Magione 578, fol 112r.

⁹ Magione 401, fol 345v. The stables of the older house had 6 mangers.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 345v. The *piano nobile* of the older mansion in 1603 was still reached by the same number of steps. '*La scala grandi si sagli al palazzo di pietra intagliata. scalini 26 di petra.*'. This makes the ground floor 14 feet high (the average height of a riser in seventeenth century buildings was around 7.5 inches. 26 steps made the height of the ground floor to be around 14 feet. See Francois Blondel, *Cours d'Architecture enseigné dans l'Academie Royale D'Architecture*, (Paris, 1675).

¹¹ Magione 578, fol 112v. It seemed the different apartments could be reached by different flight of steps.

¹² *Ibid.*, fol 113r.

¹³ *Ibid.*, fol 113r et seq.

to their location.¹⁴ Each apartment was a collection of sumptuous rooms in the *piano nobile* of the mansion and were used to host high-ranking members of the Order, members of government, and members of Royalty.¹⁵ Each room of the main apartments had a geometrically arranged polished brick floor (*mattoni*), a wooden soffit and lighted by several windows.¹⁶ Most windows were adorned by stained glass. There was also a grand *salon* (*gran sala*) with its flooring of worked bricks, a wooden soffit and with several windows to the east and west.¹⁷ In a corner of this *salon* there were three large, locked cupboards¹⁸ which contained the prioral archives.¹⁹ The mansion also included many other smaller rooms which housed the several tens of low-ranking members of the Order and the servants who catered for them all.

The large walled garden²⁰ at the back of the house had a sizable number of citrus trees, most of which were newly grafted in 1772.²¹ It had also four large water cisterns which received water via an aqueduct from the main city. From here water was piped to the courtyard of the palace. Close to the priory there were eight small houses called *barrachelle* which were leased to third parties.

¹⁴ Magione 578, fol 113v

¹⁵ Magione 401, fol 344v. Most of the rooms in the *piano nobile* were panelled in wood (*coperta di legname*). Some of the rooms were painted in the modern style by the incumbent prior Languiglia during the prioral visit of 1603/4. See Magione 401 fol 350v. ' *biangheggiato moderno aspese del prior Languiglia*'.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 346v. One of the first-floor rooms in the older mansion had the coat-of-arms of prior Languiglia sculpted in stone over the doorway. Fra Aleramo di Languiglia (di Albenga) was grand prior of Messina from 1596 to 1608. On the wall inside, there was also the coat-of-arms of another prior, Gattinara. This particular room had several ancient large windows with their wooden panels overlooking the walled garden behind the palace. In between two of these windows was a grand fireplace (*una ciminia grande*) of carved stone bearing again the coat-of-arms of Gattinara. Another coat-of-arms in between two windows in one of the grand rooms had the inscription fra SIGNORINUS GATTINARIA MDLXIII. Fra Signorino Arborio Gattinara (di Vercelli) was grand prior from 1528 until 1567. See *La Sicilia* by Carlo Marullo di Condojanni, 145.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, fol 347r. Some of the staircases inside the house were wooden.

¹⁸ Magione 578, fol 113v.

¹⁹ Magione 401, fol 344r. The room housing the archives of the priory was located on top of storeroom in the courtyard of the house in 1604. It was described as a studio and had a set of stone steps that led to it. '*un'altra porta ad arco di pietra intagliata led to una scalone di pietra intagliata which rose to a studio..riposto di tutte li scritturi del priorato.*' It was only several decades later that this space was not good enough to store all the parchments and archives of the priory during the Visitation of 1749, and by 1772 all the archives were stored in the main house.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 346r. In the older house, there were some rooms set out in the courtyard, with arched doorways and windows. Near to these was a wall surrounding the garden. The top of the wall had 27 merlons. In the middle of the wall there was another arched doorway made up of carved stones which had five stone steps that led to the garden. This doorway also had the heraldic arms of prior Gattinara sculpted over it.

²¹ Magione 578, fol 116v.

The *domus* of the grand prior of Messina together with the adjoining church of San Giovanni Battista, described as a *chiesa cattedrale* typified the accommodation of the higher ranks of the Messina nobility in the seventeenth century. The *piano nobile* of the eighteenth-century edifice, with its three suite of rooms, essentially self-contained apartments, the servants quarters on the ground floor, several outhouses used as stores and surrounded by what must have been a large garden, together with its own prisons, was perceived as a self-contained stronghold of the master, not shackled by temporal or ecclesiastical overlords, it seemed. However, the Order was subject both to the temporal master (technically the Order was a vassal state of the Spanish monarchy) and to the Papal See.

7.3 The Archivist

The Order set great store on the preservation and safe storage of its documentation. These included privileges, some of which were dated to the earliest times of the Order, statutes, deeds of land ownerships, acts of donations, records of rents and leases, documentation of deeds of nobility of the brethren and other certificates which fleshed out what was quintessentially assets of the Religion.²²

The prioral mansion of Messina had a particular room, where all these documents were stored under lock and key.²³ It lay on the first floor and was on the right-hand side as one entered the main building when ascending the great outside staircase. The door of the room was locked, and two copies of keys were available. One key was kept by the grand prior and the other was held by the archivist. The room had to be secure

²² A religious order in the medieval and early modern period was called a 'Religio' ('Religion' in English). (HN).

²³ AOM 6123, fol 60v. It seemed that the Visita generale of 1749 stipulated that the grand Prior had to move the room which housed the archives to a better, stronger, and drier room. The room chosen was on the first floor...'

against any problems including humidity which could damage the stored documents. All the documents were arranged in various bundles for easy retrieval. They were stored in cabinets and these were also locked. It was also the responsibility of the archivist to set out an inventory of all the documents available.

The appointment of an archivist was not carried out by the grand prior alone, in contradistinction to the selection of the other human resources of the priory. The post was appointed by a majority of votes from the General Assembly. The archivist also necessarily had to be a member of the Order, as he also was to act as secretary to the General Assembly which was held every year in the priory of Messina.

The archivist was prohibited from extracting, lending, or giving any document from the archives without the express instructions of the grand prior or his lieutenant.²⁴ If permission was granted, he could only present copies of the extracts. This was standard practice with all archival material owned by the Order. Copies of the privileges of the Order which related to the jurisdiction, the state and the interests of the Religion concerning the grand priory and its commanderies, could only be given with the permission of the grand prior.

The archivist must also have had several scribes or copyists to do the reproduction of the documents. It was mandated that the archivist could not expect any remuneration for his copying work, but the paper and ink were to be supplied by the priory.²⁵ The scribes did all the copies of the improvement visits and the *cabrei*. The Order instructed that all these documents had to be stored in triplicate; one copy was to be held by the grand priory, another went to the central convent and the original was kept at its place of origin, in most cases the rural commandery or the urban townhouse. Lost documents from the prioral archives could be reproduced from any of the other two copies in existence.

It was stipulated that the archivist could not leave the room unguarded at any time. If a document was misplaced, the responsibility for its loss fell squarely onto his shoulders and he had to accept whatever punishment was prescribed by the grand prior.

²⁴ AOM 6123, fol 61v.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 62r.

Apart from the scribes, the archivist also had the use of a subaltern, who kept the archival room tidy and clean.

The archival room also held a Book of Privileges, or more commonly known as the Black Book.²⁶ It contained all the charters and privileges which the Order in Messina had amassed throughout its existence. The visitation of 1749 had set up several queries on the condition of this book and noted that its script was becoming discoloured and its sheets torn through age and usage. The grand prior was urged to preserve the original copy and conserve it as much as possible. He was also asked to make a copy of it, using the best of everything that went into its creation; good ink, good paper and ultimately a good copyist. An index of the contents was to be made in this copy. After this was done, the contents had to be verified against the original script, and then the copy was to be authenticated at the next General Assembly, so that its contents could be admissible evidence in whatever court or tribunal which requested them.

7.4 Conclusion

The abode of the grand priory in Messina, resplendent as it was in the seventeenth century, indicated the wealth and status of this official of the Order outside the convent. The lifestyle and support for it compared well with that of the mainstream Sicilian nobility at the time and indirectly also suggested a certain prestige and status for the Hospitallers. It was a palace that befitted dukes and princes with an expensive tab to match. Today there is nothing left of the edifice and the only memories that have come down to posterity are the archives which were obsessively kept with care.

²⁶ AOM 6123, fol 63r. See also Toomaspoeg *Templari e Ospedalieri*, 19. His italics. ‘un *Libro con coperta nera di tutti i privileghe e Bolle Pontificie* (forse il già citato *Liber Privilegiorum Hospitalis Sancti Johannis Baptistae Messanae*)’.

Chapter 8: The Insurrection of Messina of 1674 and the Hospitaller Grand Priory

8.1 Introduction

The seventeenth century was one of uninterrupted catastrophes for the Mediterranean region.¹ Trevor-Roper defines it as a ‘general crisis’, where the middle years of the century in Western Europe experienced major demographic, economic, and political upheavals.² These included the Thirty Years War in the Holy Roman Empire (1618-1648) and several major revolts against the Spanish crown in Catalonia (1640-1652), Naples (1647) and Portugal (1640). Spain was fortunate to retain a hold on Catalonia and Naples but lost Portugal. Indeed, Geoffrey Parker identifies the seventeenth century as the ‘The century of the Soldiers’.³ He reiterates that there were only three years in the entire century where the states of Europe were not involved in any form of hostility. These crises would bring about a structurally radical change: the Mediterranean would no longer remain the centre of the ‘*grande histoire*’, and landmark events would shift to the north of Europe which, in time, would eventually become a battle ground.⁴ It was during this period that there was an upsurge of Bourbon France, with a consequent curtailment of Habsburg ambitions.⁵ France, unlike Spain, was gradually evolving into a modern and centralized state, and this became evident in the succeeding decades.⁶

¹ C. Traselli, ‘Messina 1674’, in *La Rivolta di Messina (1674-1678) e il Mondo Mediterraneo nella Seconda Metá del Seicento*, Saverio di Bella (ed.) Luigi Pellegrini Editore, Cosena 2001, 174.

² Hugh Trevor-Roper, ‘The General Crisis of the 17th Century’, *Past and Present*, xvi,1, (1959), 31-64.

³ Geoffrey Parker, *Global Crisis*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2017), 24 et seq.

⁴ M. Aymard, ‘Il Mondo Mediterraneo nella Seconda Metá del Seicento’, in *La Rivolta di Messina (1674-1678) e il Mondo Mediterraneo nella Seconda Metá del Seicento*, Saverio di Bella (ed.) Luigi Pellegrini Editore, Cosena 2001, 63.

⁵ The House of Habsburg died out with the death of Charles II of Spain in 1700 and he was succeeded by the House of Bourbon. See also Diana Carrió-Invernizzi ‘A New Diplomatic History and the Networks of Spanish Diplomacy in the Baroque Era’, *The International History Review*, 36:4, (2014), 614

⁶ See Henry Kamen, ‘The Decline of Spain: a Historical Myth?’, in *Past and Present* 81(Nov 1978), 24-50.

Messina, one of the jewels of the Spanish Empire in the Kingdom of the two Sicilies, would also be involved in a disastrous civil war. The Messina revolt of 1674 could be described as a *jacquerie*. Ellis Francois describes this as a movement springing from a group's patrieistic frustrations, since peasants certainly had a common social culture although, unlike aristocrats, they had no conscious national or international appreciation of that fact. Success for such a movement (thus, a real counterrevolutionary spiral) was only possible if the participants had some external support (either the support of another group or territorial patrieistic movements, or foreign aid) or if the forces of the "establishment" were slow to marshal against it (e.g., the counterrevolutions in Sicily, Naples, and the Pugachev Revolt in Russia).⁷ Messina in the second half of the seventeenth century easily fitted Elliot's *patrie*, defined as the idealization of the local community, as applied to a city or provincial area. At the time of the rebellion, Messina had been set up as a corporate entity, with a sense of corporateness, 'a legal and historical entity, which had acquired certain distinctive characteristics with the passage of time, together with certain specific obligations, rights and privileges'.⁸

As a result of the revolt, Messina lost its ethos, privileges, and commercial strength as the focus of political attention moved northwards.⁹

The first section intends to provide a background to help identify better the motives that catapulted the city of Messina into the midst of a civil war. Then attention will focus on the priory of the Order, as this institution tried to remain afloat in the resulting chaos. The issue of the Order's pre-eminences and its neutrality stance will follow. Though the events of the Messina rebellion of 1674 will be presented in a chronological order, particular emphasis will be given to the involvement of the Hospitaller priory. The tug-of-war between the Sicilian viceroy and the grandmaster will be analysed, and the resultant actions of the admiral of the Order in the bay of Milazzo will be appraised, as he tried to conform with the difficult instructions received

⁷ See Martha Ellis Francois, 'Revolts in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe: A Spiral Model', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 5, 1 (1974), 19-43.

⁸ J. H. Elliot, 'Revolution and Continuity in Early Modern Europe', in *Past and Present*, 42 (1969), 35-56.

⁹ Aymard, 64.

from the convent in Malta. Finally, the ramifications of the revolt on the priory will be discussed.

8.2 The Setting

Forged several centuries before the Christian era by the Greeks and occupied successively by the great powers of the time, Messina, and its Hospitaller priory, truly lived up to the name that Homer gave the dangerous strait that divided it from mainland Calabria. The art of negotiating dangerously, of steering a fine line between two perilous situations, is epitomised by the mythological axiom ‘between Scylla and Charybdis’.¹⁰ This was exactly the situation that Spanish Grand Master Nicholas Cotoner found himself in when the grand priory of Messina, one of the oldest institutions of the Order, and the nearest of the territorial assets to the Convent in Malta, unilaterally and against his instructions decided to hoist the banner for the revolutionaries against Spanish dominion.¹¹

This was the politically dangerous situation in 1674 that the Hospitaller priory of Messina found itself in. The grand master and council had to try and manoeuvre a path between the two superpowers of the time, as each fought for supremacy, rendering incalculable collateral damage to the moribund city in the process. After the Spanish Empire partially regained what was theirs by the Peace Treaty of Nijmegen in 1678,¹² Messina underwent a *razzia* that was unequalled in its ferocity and savagery. Physically, but even more so politically, Messina was almost annihilated; more than six thousand of its patricians and remnants of the *malvizzi* were exiled outside the Spanish

¹⁰ Samuel Butler, *The Odyssey by Homer: Rendered into English Prose* (Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2015), Book 12.

¹¹ AOM 6131, fol 122r.

¹² Cathal J. Nolan, *Wars of the Age of Louis XIV, 1650-1715: An Encyclopedia of Global Warfare and Civilization* (ABC-CLIO, 2008), 128 *et seq.*

Empire, most of whom were never to see their homeland again. These included the majority of the brethren of the priory who had supported what turned out to be the vanquished side; only two Hospitallers managed to obtain a partial pardon several years later.¹³ The *Universitas* was closed down, and all the pre-eminences that Messina had enjoyed were foreclosed. A great fortress, ironically designed by an architect of the Order of Malta, was erected on the headland of the harbour, as a symbol of Spanish dominion over the defeated.¹⁴ Messina became a subjugated possession and was no longer a favoured city.

To recognize the motives behind the political manoeuvring which will be described in the following sections, it is important to understand the parameters and tenets that generally governed the *ancien régime* in the seventeenth century,¹⁵ and this with particular relevance to the Order of St John. It is essential to understand the hierarchical structure of seventeenth-century society, of which the Order formed an integral part, and the astute politics which the latter employed to transact treaties with the various royal families of Europe. There were other important issues of prerogatives and pre-eminences that the Order cherished; an essential pecking order with its rules and regulations which an institution trespassed at its own peril. Because of its multinational composition, of necessity it practised a stringent form of neutrality that left no loopholes which could be transgressed.

¹³ Condojanni, 68.

¹⁴ Fra Carlos de Grunenbergh was a colonel in the Spanish army. He was appointed as military engineer to the Viceroy of Sicily in the latter half of the seventeenth century and was the architect behind the erection of the *Real Cittadella* in Messina between 1680 and 1686.

¹⁵ David Parker, *Class and State in Ancien Régime France: The Road to Modernity?* (London, Routledge, 2002), 144.

8.3 The Downfall of a Privileged City

It was during the reign of the last Habsburg King Charles II (1661-1700),¹⁶ that the prestige of Messina began to crumble, and as each concession in its turn was lost, the city was edging ever closer to insurrection and revolt.¹⁷ Within a span of ten years, there was a concerted attempt to decimate and erode the privileges which the city of Messina had accumulated over the previous centuries. Queen Mariana (1634-1696), mother and regent to Charles II, tried to reduce the autonomy of Messina. This included attempts to remove its monopoly on the exportation of silk and resume the full-time residency of the viceroy in Palermo. She also refused to receive the emissaries from Messina in the status of ambassadors.¹⁸

Francesco Caetani, eighth Duke of Sermoneta and Sicilian Viceroy between 1663 and 1667, annulled the prerogatives of the customary exportation of silk from the city.¹⁹ In its turn, in 1667, Messina declared void and illegal the *quarta dogana*,²⁰ an imposition brought on against the Messinese, as it was felt that this went against the privilege of citizenship.²¹ In January 1669, another viceroy, the Duke of Albuquerque, opposed some of the privileges that the Messinese enjoyed, taking two jurors to court in the process. In August 1670, as public disorder escalated, the *stratigoto* Pietro Isimbaldi allegedly fell off a balcony to his death; that same year, the subsequent viceroy, Claude Lamoral, Prince of Ligné, closed down his residence in Messina and departed for his

¹⁶ Charles II (1661-1700) the last Hapsburg King was called the Bewitched (*el Hechizado*) and suffered from extensive physical, intellectual and emotional disabilities.

¹⁷ Benigno, 243.

¹⁸ See Silvia Z. Mitchell, *Mariana of Austria and Imperial Spain: Court, Dynastic and International Politics in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, an unpublished PhD Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the University of Miami in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (2013). See also Francesco Benigno, *Integration and Conflict in Spanish Sicily*, in *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion 1500-1700*, eds Thomas James Dandeleit, John A. Marino, American Academy in Rome (Leiden, Brill, 2007), 23-44, on the relationship between the Queen Regent and Messina.

¹⁹ Traselli, 161

²⁰ Benigno, 243

²¹ Giovanni Evangelista Di Blasi, *Storia Cronologica de Vicerè, Luogotenenti e Presidenti del Regno di Sicilia*, (Palermo, Dalla Stamperia Oreetea, 1842), 385-395. The *quarta dogana* was essentially a subsidy that served to pay the wages of the Spanish garrisons in and around Messina. To the Viceroy this was a just tax as it was this soldiery that would protect and defend the citizens of the province.

other official seat in Palermo. With each act of repudiation, the umbilical cord that had hitherto tied the Peloritan city to the Spanish Court was being severed. Events came to a head with the induction of the next *stratigoto* of Messina, Luis de Hoyo, arguably the spark that ignited the dry tinder to an inferno. The Machiavellian antics of de Hoyo towards the Messinese continued to churn up popular discontent to the point of rebellion.²²

The population of Messina during the insurrection was loosely divided into 4 partisan factions. The largest faction was made up of the *merli*; a shapeless, amorphous mob consisting of port workers, matchmakers, insignificant merchants, unlicensed hawkers, carriers and haulers, thieves, prostitutes, and beggars. Then there were the *maestranze*, the skilled workers and artisans, merchants of average stature and shop owners; these included the silk and silver merchants, labourers in general, the unemployed and emigrants and indeed some minor nobility, most of whom were also allied to the *merli*. The third group consisted of the middle class who were allied to the Nobility and made up most of another faction, the *malvizzi*. The fourth group included not only the patricians of Messina, but also some artisans, the secular clergy, and the religious Orders. These also were aligned with the *malvizzi*. There was no social demarcating line between the *merli* and the *malvizzi* and the boundary was fluid. Effectively there were two groups: one group included the members of senate, the patricians and aristocrats of the city as well as the rich merchants and the rich middle-class, against the other group which contained the barons (the feudal aristocracy), Spanish allies and the working classes (including doctors, notaries and lawyers).²³

The main goals of the *merli* was to eliminate the main oligarchic government from any involvement in the trade of grain and other cereals, to stop the hoarding of cereals, and finally to stop the government from speculating greedily on the grain market. Basically, the *merli* were royalists and partisans of the governor of Messina, not outwardly anti-Spanish, whereas the *malvizzi*, the faction of the jurats and senate were Francophiles and defenders of the prerogatives and rights of Messina.

²² Traselli (1975), 168. See also Benigno (2011), 218.

²³ *Ibid.*, 164. It is still not clear what motivated the clash between the *merli* and *malvizzi*, and what pushed the different classes to cross the bounds of loyalty to Spain

Incidents continued to escalate, and in March 1672, as the price of grain continued to rise amid grave suspicion of grain hoarding, the famished Messinese resorted to arson.²⁴ In that particular incident, de Hoyo attempted to stop the rabble from torching the whole city, but by then the disgruntled masses had reached the point of no return.²⁵ In the following months, more arson attacks occurred,²⁶ culminating in open rebellion in May 1674. The *malvizzi* had won the day, for the time being. Their ultimate aim was secession of Sicily from the Spanish Crown. For four years, Messina continued to represent a threat to Spanish dominion in Sicily, but in the end the status quo was again achieved, when Spain regained Sicily from the French.

8.4 The Status of Neutrality Professed by the Order

The multinational structure and organization of the Hospitaller Order of St John was always to be a complex establishment to handle. The supranational ethos of the Convent provided some advantages,²⁷ but an institution that incorporated multiple nationalities from the main kingdoms of Europe, many of whom were fractious and bellicose throughout most of Hospitaller history, provided major challenges when it became necessary to maintain equidistance between opposing forces. The members of the Order hailed from various countries. At the time of the Messina revolt in 1674, the Order was made up of eight Langues segregated on cultural and linguistic mores. These included three French Langues - Provence, Auvergne, and France, and another two from the Spanish kingdom, Castile, and Aragon. Nearly half of the professed brethren of the

²⁴ Benigno (2011), 223.

²⁵ Dal Pozzo, *Historia della Sacra Religione Militare di S. Giovanni Gerosolomitano detta di Malta*, (Venice, Gerolamo Albrizzi, 1715), 420.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 421.

²⁷ S. Bono, 'Naval Exploits and Privateering', in *Hospitaller Malta, 1530 – 1798: Studies in Early Modern Malta and the Order of St John of Jerusalem*, V. Mallia Milanese (ed.) (Mireva Publications, Malta 1993), 390.

Order were French, and the income arising from the commanderies constituting the French priories, as has been discussed in Chapter 5, ran into hundreds of thousands of *scudi*, providing an enormous injection of funds into the Common Treasury annually.²⁸ Therefore good diplomatic relations with France needed to be maintained at all costs.

Often, the other side of the coin was the Spanish Court. It was the Spanish King Charles V who had donated the Maltese archipelago and the Spanish *presidio* in Tripoli to the Order in 1530.²⁹ The charter of donation obliged the Order to refrain from assisting any enemies of Spain in whatever future altercations which might occur. The Order was also statutorily bound not to take sides in conflicts between Christian nations; its aggression was to be directed only against the Muslim faith.³⁰

As Malta produced little agricultural produce to sustain its inhabitants, the Order depended on nearby Sicily, a Spanish Viceroyalty, for its annual supply of tax-free grain. Malta and the Order relied on this importation and when these supplies stalled, famine ensued. Thus, the Hospitaller Order was beholden to both the ‘Most Christian of Kings’ and the Spanish Monarch for diverse reasons, and it needed a wise and shrewd grand master to perform and ratify actions and deeds that kept the Order safely equidistant between the two.³¹ This was done not without great difficulty at times. It was unfortunate then, that these two great benefactors of the Order were perpetually at loggerheads throughout most of the *ancien régime*.³²

This ‘retaliation in kind’ of politics created major headaches for the grand master of the Order. Sometimes the effort to give the perception that the Order stood indeed equidistant between its two main patrons was so obsessional, that the result defeated the purpose. During the magistracy of Grand Master Lascaris-Castellar (1636–1657), the Sicilian Viceroy, the Duke of Montalto, ordered all Maltese vessels in Sicilian ports to

²⁸ See Mallia Milanese (2017), 68 et seq. the statistics of the Order of St John in 1630 were thus: the income of the combined three French Langues amounted to 125526 scudi annually, contrasting with the income of the Italian langue of 130467 scudi. At that point in time French members in the Order incorporated all the three French Langues amounted to 993, whereas the Italian langue comprised 566 members.

²⁹ Williams, 289.

³⁰ Elizabeth W. Schermerhorn, *Malta of the Knights* (London, Heinemann 1929), 171.

³¹ dal Pozzo, 420. ‘*che fu in sommo pericolo d’incorrere nel disgusto dell’una, o dell’altra corona*’.

³² On 19 September 1673, Louis XIV declared war on Spain. Both a *memoriale* from the senate of Messina, and the mediation efforts of John of Austria acted in vain to halt the hostilities.

be sequestered as pay back for the many French Hospitallers servicing the French fleet who were attacking Spanish interests.³³ Despite this, the French knights in the service of the French navy continued to harass Spanish and Sicilian tonnage. As a conciliatory gesture to the viceroy, the grand master took occasion to open the guns from the Valletta bastions onto a French galley as it sought refuge in Marsamuscetto harbour after having been attacked by a Spanish galleon outside Gozo. The viceroy was temporarily placated, and the confiscation order was lifted. At the same time, however, this action dampened the relations between France and the Order, and at one point, France threatened to confiscate all the French commanderies on its territory. The enormity of the French reaction stunned the Order, throwing it and the whole of the Maltese archipelago into bereavement mode. In addition to the outward manifestations of mourning for the fate of the Order brought on by the French reaction, the grand master co-opted Dionysius de Polastron la Hilière and the Marshall de Faye-Gerlande together with most of the other Piliers of the Order, assisted by the Prior of Navarre Martin de Redin to draw up a *memoriale* explaining the Order's ancient and inviolable obligations to neutrality; the chancellery documents were searched thoroughly looking for reasons and arguments to justify the unfortunate act to which the Religion had been driven. As Elizabeth Schermerhorn eloquently puts it:

'In their extremity, they turned to Signor Iddio, and the 'Venerabile' was ordered exposed, the celebration of the carnival was forbidden, and a solemn public mourning was proclaimed'.³⁴

³³ Dal Pozzo, 14 et seq.

³⁴ Schermerhorn (1929), 171.

8.5 The Pre-eminences and Prerogatives of the Order

‘Pre-eminent’ means surpassing others in quality or rank, of outstanding excellence.³⁵ This was the ethos which the Order aspired to. From the very early days of their institution, but more so at the peak of the *ancien régime*, the Order vied with other noble establishments to attain primacy, striving for the apex of a social pecking order that brought them status and power. This could be seen from the Jerusalem phase of their history, when their cavalry and soldiery became famous for their courage and intrepidity, and from the way they consolidated the army of the Kingdom of Jerusalem by forming (together with the Templars) the vanguard and the rear-guard of the main phalanx, thus taking up the most difficult and potentially dangerous positions of any marching army.³⁶ The fearlessness of their fighting was set as an example to others.³⁷ Because of this, with time they were given positions of precedence and promoted as leaders of men. In the Rhodian phase, when they had developed their own navy, and more so during their sojourn in Malta, whatever role their human resources assumed, be it at sea or on land, this innate yearning for pre-eminence remained. This sense of privilege came to the fore again in 1571 during the battle of Lepanto when they were

³⁵ Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford University Press, 2003).

³⁶ See Stephen Bennett, 'The battle of Arsuf/Arsur, A Reappraisal of the Charge of the Hospitallers', in *The Military Orders Vol VI (Part 1): Culture and Conflict in the Mediterranean World*, Jochen Schenk, Mike Carr (eds), (London, Routledge, 2016), 49 et seq. 'Both accounts agreed that Saladin was seeking to bring the crusaders to battle and that the (Templar) vanguard had halted near Arsuf, they both related that the (Hospitaller) rearguard was under some pressure'. See Steve Tibble, *The Crusader Armies: 1099-1187* (Yale University Press, 2018), 332, describing the formation of the Military Orders in the pre-amble of the Battle of Hattin: Raymond of Tripoli and his men in the van; the King and the main royal contingents in the centre; and the rearguard commanded by the Templars but also including the Hospitallers.'. Also, Forey, 89, 'James of Molay's claim that in the East the Templars and Hospitallers always provided the vanguard and rearguard for crusading forces was certainly exaggerated, but they did fulfil this task on numerous occasions. See also Helen J Nicholson (2001), 23. Also, Alan Forey, 'The Military Orders, 1120-1312', in *The Oxford History of the Crusades*, Jonathan Riley-Smith (ed), (Oxford university Press, 1999), 189.

³⁷ See Riley-Smith (2012), 38-39. '...sent the heads of the dead to Nur ad-Din, who, recognizing among them those of the Castellan of Crac des Chevaliers, rejoiced at the sight, for this man' was esteemed for his bravery and piety and was like a bone in the throats of the Muslims'.

specifically chosen to be positioned, from amidst all the other members of the Holy League, to the very right of the Spanish *Reale* of Don Juan, under the aegis of General Gustiniani, a position of the utmost prestige.³⁸

This mind-set of pre-eminence entertained by the Order was further reinforced by outside influences. The King of France thus called the grand master of the Order *Mon cousin*,³⁹ and the galleys of the Order of St John had the prerogative of the first salute from all Christian princes;⁴⁰ additionally, none but a crowned Prince could claim pre-eminence over the Religion.⁴¹

So ingrained was this issue of pre-eminence in the Order's mindset, that when for one reason or another it was denied them, rather than accept secondary fall-back positions, they would make justifications not to take part in the endeavour at all, or else depart after a few days, on the pretext that the season was too far advanced for them to venture onwards, or that they had more urgent business elsewhere.⁴² Thus in Messina in 1596, when the prestigious position to the right of the Spanish *Reale* was given to the Genoese Admiral Gian Andrea Doria, on the excuse that he had arrived first on the scene, the general of the galleys of the Order, fra Pierre de la Roque Leure, on arrival turned around and sailed back to Malta as the Order felt that its customary pre-eminent position had been usurped.⁴³ Another incident occurred in the port of Barcelona, in 1666, when the general of the galleys of the Order, fra Giliberto del Bene got his own way and had the *Capitana* of the Order berthed to the right of the Spanish *Reale*; however it seemed that the King had acquiesced to the request of the Order only because he wanted the Hospitaller squadron to escort his daughter for her pre-nuptial voyage.⁴⁴

³⁸ Schermerhorn (1929), 238. See also Dal Pozzo, I, 15 et seq, where neither Don Juan's declaration nor the Papal brief endorsed this fact as a precedent.

³⁹ All French admirals and galley commanders were to salute Valletta when entering the port and they were also obliged to salute the *Capitana* of St John when they met her at sea.

⁴⁰ Bosio, Vol. III, 152. The Order considered itself as a Religiosa Repubblica because it saw itself as the Defender of the Faith, had multinational members coming from the nobliest of members, and enjoyed ecclesiastical privileges.

⁴¹ Schermerhorn (1940), 240. In 1672, the Court of Spain put out a decree that when the *Capitana* of the Order was alone with the Spanish *Capitana Reale*, the Religion was to be on the left. If several other galleys were present, the Religion was to be on the right, and all the others to be moored on the left.

⁴² Joseph F. Grima, 'The Order of St. John's Gallery Squadron at Sea' in *Storja*, 78 (1978), 31.

⁴³ Schermerhorn (1929), 239.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 238.

The deep sense of entitlement which the Order considered as its own by right was taken very seriously. An incident that occurred in the harbour of Genoa in 1655, between the two naval squadrons of the Republic of Genoa and the Order of St John, carried political repercussions which continued for decades afterwards. As a result of this incident, the Council of the Order put out decrees that all Genoese vessels had to salute the Flag of the Order, no Genoese was to be admitted to any of the ranks of the Order, and the Receiver post for Genoa was to be discontinued. This squabble between two allies of the Roman Curia continued unabated despite various attempts at reconciliation, including those of Pope Alexander VII in 1661 and Pope Clement X in 1675. It was only in 1694 that appeasement was reached between the two sides.⁴⁵

It was with these two concerns in mind, the neutrality clause embraced by the order and their deep sense of pre-eminence and entitlement, that the involvement of the Hospitaller priory in the Messina revolt, and by extension, the Order in Malta, has to be viewed. For the priory, right in the middle of the skirmishes, aligning themselves with the Senate of Messina and the *malvizzi* faction, most of whom came from the nobility was understandable. The social and physical interrelationships, between both were too strong to be thwarted. However subsequent events proved even more dangerous and complex, particularly the conduct of the priory brethren against the explicit dictates of the grand master, the potentially disastrous confrontations with the viceroy, and the entanglement of the Hospitaller and Genoese navies in the Bay of Milazzo. Grand Master Nicolas Cotoner was faced with a multifaceted problem that necessitated the best diplomatic tact to unravel it.

⁴⁵ Christopher Wright, 'Non ex Unica Natione sed ex Plurimis: Genoa, the Catalans and the Knights of St John in the Fifteenth Century', in *Mediterranea - Ricerche Storiche*, xxxvi, 13 (2016), 9-44. The Genoese Hospitaller conflicts predated this by at least 200 years.

8.6 The Grand Priory of Messina at the Time of the Messina Revolt 1674

8.6.1 Disturbances at Trapani.

Even before the revolt of Messina in 1674, some brethren of the Order had already been involved in similar conflicts with their Spanish overlords, and a few had paid for this with their lives. There had been various uprisings throughout Sicily, and this was symptomatic of the social unrest that was brewing in the kingdom at the time. When the inhabitants of Messina sacked and burnt some twenty houses of the nobility in April 1672, the Viceroy Claude Lamoral de Ligné brought a battalion from Naples and mercenaries from Calabria in an attempt to defuse the situation.⁴⁶ A month later, there was another uprising in the town of Corleone over the scarcity of grain,⁴⁷ but in January 1673, a major insurrection occurred in the western coastal town of Trapani. There were arson attacks throughout the city including the devastation of the palace of the Prince of Pacheco.⁴⁸

At least two members of the Order were involved in these uprisings. The captain of the *Magistrale*, fra Nicolo Cavarretta was strongly suspected to have been involved in the Trapani unrest.⁴⁹ He had formed part of a delegation which included several ecclesiastics sent over by the *Consiglio delle Maestranze* to meet with the Viceroy in Messina in August 1672, six months prior to the uprisings.⁵⁰ After the arson of the Prince of Pacheco's palace, Cavarretta had escaped to Malta before the Spanish army

⁴⁶ Luis Ribot, *La Rivolta Antispagnola di Messina*, (Rubettino, Catanzaro 2011), 215.

⁴⁷ Il Mondo Mediterraneo nella Seconda Metá del Seicento', in *La Rivolta di Messina (1674-1678) e il Mondo Mediterraneo nella Seconda Metá del Seicento*, Saverio di Bella (ed.) Luigi Pellegrini Editore, Cosena 2001, 262.

⁴⁸ Ribot, 211.

⁴⁹ AOM 262, fol 19v.

⁵⁰ Salvatore Costanza, *Tra Sicilia e Africa: Trapani, Storia di una Città Mediterranea*, (Corrao 2005), 164-166.

caught up with him, but the viceroy wrote to the grand master and Council to detain fra Cavarretta for one year in Malta, to which the grand master consented.⁵¹

Another Hospitaller embroiled in the Trapani uprisings was a sergeant-at-arms fra Giacomo Fardella who was prosecuted for his involvement and imprisoned. The grand master and Council had nominated the Receiver of Palermo, fra Giovanni Tarasconi, and the bishop of Mazzara to investigate the affair and if found guilty, gave them also authority to defrock Fardella and expel him from the Order.⁵² Eventually, Fardella ended up in front of the secular courts after having lost the immunity he had enjoyed as a member of the Order. In January 1673, the Trapani uprisings came to an end⁵³ with the beheading of Fardella and another seven ringleaders of the insurrection.⁵⁴

8.6.2 Messina 'The Gallant and Virtuous'

The attempted secession of Messina from the Spanish Crown was a major political event, symptomatic of an anti-Spanish feeling that was flooding over Spanish territories in the latter half of the seventeenth century.⁵⁵ For the Spanish dominions this century was an eventful one, disrupting the economy with a multitude of political disputes and social turmoil.⁵⁶ The catalyst was a general popular dissatisfaction with the anti-fiscal measures which the government was implementing.⁵⁷ This was happening throughout

⁵¹ Giuseppe M di Ferro, *Biografi degli Uomini Illustri Trapanesi dall'Epoca Normanna*, (Presso Manone e Solina, Trapani 1831), 72. There were several Cavarretta members in the Order of St John. Their ancestors had settled in Trapani when they came accompanying Count Roger. There is a Giacomo Cavarretta who, on the 18 September 1634 was enrolled as a page with the Order. A namesake of the above, Nicolo Cavarretta was a Prior of Capua in 1625 and Grand Prior of Venice in 1626.

⁵² AOM 262, fol 19v.

⁵³ Laloy, vol 1, 195. 'The Sicilian Viceroy Bayona headed back to Palermo, from Trapani, with a son of Fardella who was a Knight of Malta (i.e. Giacomo Fardella) and three other prisoners. Because of these disorders, the city of Trapani was almost ruined. More than 4000 craftsmen fled in fear of death, making it impossible for the city to flower. All had fled the Kingdom. They departed in over thirty boats. It was suspected that they went to Tunisia, increasing their risk that they would run into the Turkish Army'.

⁵⁴ Trasselli (1975), 162.

⁵⁵ Kamen, 24-50

⁵⁶ M. Fontenay, 'The Mediterranean 1500-1800', in *Hospitaller Malta, 1530 – 1798: Studies in Early Modern Malta and the Order of St John of Jerusalem*, V. Mallia Milanese (ed.) (Mireva Publications, Malta 1993), 74

⁵⁷ Jaime Vicens Vives, *Economic History of Spain*, (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2015), 453.

the Spanish domains which constituted a substantial part of the European mainland.⁵⁸ As mentioned earlier, there were uprisings in Portugal and Catalonia in 1640 and a rebellion in Naples and Palermo in 1647.⁵⁹ This was then reflected at a provincial level in the revolt of Messina of 1674. The basis for each civil disturbance essentially revolved around the *maestranze*, the skilled and manual workers, who created a force against their common cause of dissatisfaction, which, in most instances came from the upper strata of society, the landed gentry and the nobility.

This anti-Spanish sentiment began to pervade the whole of Sicily from the beginning of the second half of the seventeenth century.⁶⁰ The aim was ultimately secession from Spanish rule and the main instigator was the city of Messina which, along the years had built up pre-eminences, authority and prestige. The main contender for an alternative capital city of Sicily, Messina wanted to go its own way, playing the political situation for its own gains, single-mindedly going for the ultimate prize. In contrast to the previous Neapolitan revolt in 1647, when the Senate of Messina together with all the Messinese nobility, including the Hospitaller grand priory, maintained Spanish allegiance, a stance that in the end brought them great rewards and munificence, the current rebellion found them on the opposite side of the fence. The Senate was now alone, fighting for its rights and trying to preserve its privileges and entitlements against the might of Spain.⁶¹ To make a deteriorating situation even worse, it sought to liaise with Louis XIV, who at that point was at war with Spain. Messina was aspiring for complete liberation and ultimately hoped to become an independent Republic.

As Benigno claims, the revolt of Messina was not born of the effects of the famine and other crises that had hit the Peloritani region at the time, but it arose from the fear of a decline of a once prosperous economy.⁶² It did not develop from panic as the

⁵⁸ Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal*, (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), chap 15. 'The eastern principalities of the Spanish Crown paid much less than did the Eastern Territories...'

⁵⁹ Benigno (2011), 218

⁶⁰ Salvatore Salomone Marino, 'La Rivoluzione di Messina Contro la Spagna, Storia e Documenti', *Archivio Storico Siciliano*, xxxii (1907), 549-580.

⁶¹ Angela De Benedictis, *Tumulti: Moltitudini Ribelli in Etá Moderna* (Bologna, Studi e ricerche 654, Il Mulino, 2013). De Benedictis prefers to use the term tumult rather than the term revolt or rebellion in her portrayal of the rebels' exploits. The term tumult is probably preferable as it suggests that the rebels or *malvizzi* (at least initially) did not want to sever the cord from Spain. They were rather defending their ancient pre-eminences and liberties.

⁶² Benigno (2011), 219.

inhabitants descended into the pits of poverty, but from a dread of the loss of wellbeing; in essence, it was not a revolution of misery, but one of a perceived loss of riches and privileges that the city had acquired throughout the centuries. The hostility between Palermo and Messina was ‘a conflict of interests born of the different productive and social structures’.⁶³

8.6.3 The Grand Priory of Messina in 1674

It would have been remarkable had the grand priory of the Order not become embroiled in the political machinations that culminated in the rebellion of Messina of 1674. The priory was an enclave of some of the noblest echelons of Sicilian society. It sheltered military personnel of the highest calibre, and very frequently the seven galleys that made up the Hospitaller naval squadron were berthed across the street from the Priory, at the quay in the harbour of Messina. Ironically, this fleet of galleys was essentially larger than the one that the Spanish viceroy had at his disposal in Messina at that point.⁶⁴ The relationship between the Order and the Spanish viceroy was indeed mercurial at times. Despite its perceived might and pre-eminences, when dealing with an irate Viceroy, the Order of St John did so in the most obsequious of manners, typifying the multifaceted relationship that existed between the Sicilian viceroy and his Spanish masters on the one hand, and the grand priory and its grand master on the other.⁶⁵

When the grand priory desperately needed a pair of steady hands to steer it safely through the gathering storms that were upon it, initially it found none. Its grand prior at the time was the Grand Cross fra Giovanni Caracciolo, an ailing Neapolitan, over 80 years of age and an ex-galley captain. He had left the grand priory a few years before these latest uprisings and retired to spend his twilight years in the Convent on Malta.⁶⁶ However, in his stead he left a remarkable and truly capable man, a member of one of

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁶⁴ David Goodman, *Spanish Naval Power, 1589-1665: Reconstruction and Defeat* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁶⁵ AOM 262, fol 31v.

⁶⁶ Condojanni, 63.

the old patrician families in Messina,⁶⁷ fra Giovanni di Giovanni, who was one of the Sicilian receivers of the Order.⁶⁸ With an exemplary career that spanned a lifetime, fra Di Giovanni typified everything that was quintessentially good in the Order. He was responsible for the priory at a very crucial and vulnerable time of its existence.

So, it was a curious incident why in the latter end of 1673, fra Di Giovanni together with a relative of his, Don Antonio di Giovanni, who was not a member of the Order, had to depart hurriedly from Messina.⁶⁹ Their reasons were unclear. They had proceeded directly to the Convent on Malta and had presented themselves voluntarily to the magistracy on their arrival.⁷⁰ Their departure to Malta had been followed closely by a letter sent by the viceroy of Sicily to the grand master, to keep both persons under house arrest in Malta, a request which the grand master acceded to. They were certainly *personae non gratae* to Viceroy de Ligné, who in his letter of Prohibition dated 4 December 1673, to Grand Master Nicolás Cotoner, indicated that they were accused ‘of certain excesses in the city of Messina’.⁷¹ What these excesses were was not stipulated in the letter and they may not necessarily have had anything to do with the insurrection of Messina. However, the viceroy wanted both men out of his way.⁷²

Fra Di Giovanni returned to the priory in Messina, at the latest by the end of May 1674.⁷³ Hence, at the beginning of the turmoil in July 1674, he was the Lieutenant in charge of the Order’s holdings in Sicily, in the absence of fra Caracciolo. A number of Hospitallers residing in the grand priory at the time came from the scions of the Messinese Patriciate, including the Cigala, the Crisafi, and the De Gregorio families.⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Laloy II, 95. Fra Don Giovanni di Giovanni was a member of the household of the Tre Castagni, an old and noble family of Messina.

⁶⁸ F.M. de Spuches, in his *La Storia dei Feudi e dei Titoli Nobiliari di Sicilia*, gives a glowing testimonial of this star of the Order.

⁶⁹ AOM 262, fol 26v.

⁷⁰ Laloy, vol 2, 95. Two relatives of fra Giovanni di Giovanni, receiver of the Order of St John at that point in time, were imprisoned by the Sicilian Viceroy Ligné in 1673.

⁷¹ AOM 262, fol 26v. ‘*imputati di certo eccesso commetto nella città di Messina*’.

⁷² The reason for this is not clear, although other relatives of Di Giovanni had fallen foul of the Viceroy a year previously.

⁷³ AOM 125, fol 18r. It might be that fra Don Giovanni di Giovanni, who was also the procurator of the Order in Messina, had returned to Messina and was in the city at least by the 29 May 1674. In a letter sent by the vice-chancellor of the Order in Malta, listed in the *Camera Dei Conti* to fra Don Diego Vesperano (or Veferano) receiver of the priory of Castile, it dictates payment by the latter of the sum of eighty thousand reals in gold.

⁷⁴ Condojanni, 63.

Most of the families who had enrolled their *secondogenito* into the grand priory were also involved in the political life of the city. Like the Di Giovannis, particularly Scipione and Vincenzo, brothers of Giovanni, they had various members of their extended families involved in the insurrection;⁷⁵ some of them siding with the *malvizzi* against the pro-viceyroy *merli* and their Spanish overlords.⁷⁶ It is possible that family influences had become more important to these members of the priory than their loyalty and obedience to the grand master.

It is likely that as the political environment began to change inside the priory, certain members of the Order, whose families were aligned to the *malvizzi*, took over the management of the priory to support the Senate of Messina. This collaboration was obviously against the express wishes of the grand master and his council.⁷⁷ At a point in time, and probably by early 1675, fra Giovanni di Giovanni had to leave the oppressive atmosphere of the priory and headed either for Palermo, to stay in an official residence of the Order in town, or to his commandery at San Giovanni del Tempio in Caltagirone, fatefully leaving the management of the priory to the senatorial supporters.

A year into the revolt in 1675, fra Giovanni di Giovanni, the Lieutenant of the priory was well known to be loyal to Spain by the leaders of the revolt. It seems, as Fabrizio D'Avenia concurs,⁷⁸ that there was no issue at all on this loyalty of fra Di Giovanni towards the Convent and by extension to the Spanish monarchy. The ascendancy of his career after 1678 indicates without shadow of a doubt that both the Convent and Spain were pleased with his endeavours during the uprisings.

⁷⁵ F.M. de Spuches, vol 7, 409. In September 1675, the brothers of fra Giovanni di Giovanni, the titular heads of the family were declared enemies (*esosi et inimici*) of the city of Messina.

⁷⁶ Giuseppe Galluppi, *Nobiliario della città di Messina*, (Milan, Tipografia Ditta Wilmant, 1874), 277.

⁷⁷ Condojanni, 63.

⁷⁸ D'Avenia (2004), 48.

8.6.4 Involvement of the Order's Naval Squadron

Every four months it was customary for the Council of the Order to issue instructions to the captain general of the galley squadron to depart to the main ports of the Mediterranean to collect the monetary funds from the various Receivers,⁷⁹ as well as provisions and transport these safely back to the Convent in Malta.⁸⁰ The previous two visits of the galley squadron before the start of the insurrection of Messina were on December 1673 and April 1674; as usual, the captain general of the naval squadron, fra Paolo Raffaele Spinola, was instructed to proceed to Messina and repatriate the funds to the Convent.⁸¹ On the latter date the captain general did not manage to gather all the funds and was given further instructions to go to the port of Augusta, further south, to collect the remaining dues. Here he was also advised to replenish the ships' provisions, including biscuit, salted meat, and water.⁸²

The next visit was still in preparation, when three months later, on 27 July 1674, the naval squadron of the Order was pitch forked into a melee that turned out to be a long and bloody conflict.⁸³

Because the Viceroy of Sicily, the Marquis of Bayona, had sent most of his fleet to assist the Spanish King in the various wars that Spain was involved in at the time, he was caught lacking in naval resources as he tried to contain the escalating insurrection in Messina.⁸⁴ He needed to transport Spanish military personnel and supplies from

⁷⁹ AOM 262, fol 27r.

⁸⁰ Samuel Baron, *A Collection of Voyages and Travels* (London, John Churchill 1745), 614. 'One afternoon while we were at Messina, came into port two Malta gallies, hung full of colours, flags, banners, &c. upon the masts, fails, &c. Which made a very fair shew; which gallies received pratique, and then they gave four guns, answered by Ca. Salvatore with three; then gave the Viceroy four, who answered also with three. At last the gallies of Sicily were saluted with four, who returned their welcome with three shot. They came for money, which they had of their receiver, who collects all their revenues in this island'.

⁸¹ At this time, fra Paolo Raffaele Spinola was captain general of the squadron of the Order (later to become admiral of the squadron and Piler of the Italian langue), bailiff of Cremona and prior of Lombardy.

⁸² AOM 262, fol 28r.

⁸³ *Ibid*, fol 31r.

⁸⁴ Laloy, vol 1, 299. From the very beginning of the insurgency, both the Stratigoto of Messina Astorga and the Sicilian Viceroy Ligné had asked for the assistance of the Italian Princes to try to contain the political unrest that was starting to appear perilous. The Republic of Venice was occupied with the pirates of the Adriatic. This was quoted in a dispatch sent by the Serenissima on the 28 August 1674. The Roman Curia postponed the response to the Sicilian Viceroy for some time only to finally offer the answer 'mediation

Palermo and Calabria to support the Spanish army outside Messina and to contain the rebellion from spreading to other cities in Sicily. On 27 July 1674, the Council of the Order, having received a letter asking for help from the Sicilian viceroy, gave orders to fra Paolo Raffaele Spinola to depart to Palermo with his squadron, a full month before the customary visit, and provide what was to be limited assistance to the viceroy.⁸⁵

Not surprisingly, the Council had deliberated over all aspects of this request, but in the end, the vote to help the Viceroy had been unanimous. However this came tied up with several pre-conditions which reflected the Order's concerns, most importantly that its neutrality barriers should not be transgressed.⁸⁶ The main assistance to be given would be the transport of the viceroy and his personal guards only, together with his ministers and other passengers from Palermo to their destination. Spinola was to abstain from any act of aggression between the two factions,⁸⁷ and to expressly stay within pre-defined constraints that the statutes and ordinances of the Order stipulated. One such precept was that the Order was never to wage war on other Catholic states. Furthermore, his ships were not to transport either ammunition or food, nor were they to transport Spanish or allied troops.⁸⁸ It was obvious that the grand master was complying with the spirit of the letter sent by the viceroy, but not with its substance; in reality he felt he had no choice.⁸⁹ It was obvious that the viceroy had wanted the squadron of the Order to help transport the Spanish army and its war machines, not just his august person.⁹⁰

Spinola did not waste time on his arrival to the Sicilian shore. On nearing the port of Milazzo, on 1 August 1674, he sent one of the brethren, fra Grimaldi de Castro-Giovanni, as his envoy by boat flying the Order's flag to meet with the Senate in

with apostolic blessing'. The Grand Duke of Tuscany answered Ligné that it would be impossible to supply any ships to the war effort as it was reserving them for a trip by the Royal women in France. Only the Republic of Genoa, notoriously dependent on Spain, and Malta, stronghold of the Kingdom of Sicily could not refuse to send naval support to the Sicilian Viceroy. There were provisos to this, however. The Order, with their neutrality status in mind, accepted to help, on condition that the galleys will not be carrying troops.

⁸⁵ AOM 262, fol 31r.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 31r. '*poter cagionare a noi qualche impiccio di gran pregiudizio*'.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, fol 31v. '*di dover(e) star(e) lontano di qualsisia atto di hostilità*'. '*dentro i limiti del nostro istituto sempre inviolabile di non intrometterci in fatti, ed interessi dei Christiani*'.

⁸⁸ Laloy, vol 1, 313.

⁸⁹ AOM 262, fol 31v.

⁹⁰ Laloy, vol 1, 313. The Maltese galleys were a disappointment to the Viceroy. Transport was to be provided for the Viceroy only.

Messina, and presumably also with the members of the grand priory.⁹¹ He had been asked by the grand master to attempt various diplomatic manoeuvres to defuse the dangerous conflict between the Messinese Senate and Spain before it continued to escalate.

This meeting with the Senate of Messina, resulting in a mixture of intimidation and rational arguments, was an attempt to convince the Senate to submit to negotiations with the viceroy, rather than embark on the belligerent rattling of swords. Fra Grimaldi de Castro-Giovanni informed the Senate of the Spanish Viceroy's extensive preparations to annihilate the city. He extolled the supremacy of the House of Austria and its powers; and he admitted that even the Republic of Genoa which had no active interest in this particular war would join (as the Republic eventually did) on the side of Spain to protect its commercial interests. The Senate of Messina was urged to consider prudence and arbitration.⁹²

This mediation effort was rejected outright by Messina, but Spinola persisted in arguing his case for diplomatic negotiations.⁹³ In several letters sent to the Messinese Senate, he admitted that even Grand Master Cotoner and the Order were working directly with the viceroy in this affair. It was eminently appropriate for the senate of Messina to come to terms with the Spanish viceroy, to circumvent the menace of a solitary city fighting against a great Kingdom. This message from Spinola was underscored by the arrival of two regiments of Spanish veterans, one from Milan, transported by the galleys of Genoa and the other from the Kingdom of Naples. Finally, Spinola urged the Messinese Senate to send a deputizing commission to agree on some basic points of submission.⁹⁴

Despite being faced with such threats, the Senate held firm. It stipulated two conditions before the initiation of any peaceful negotiations. First, that the Spanish viceroy had to bring to a complete halt the war preparations that were taking place; secondly, that the viceroy had to return to his domicile in Palermo from Milazzo, the

⁹¹ Condojanni, 64.

⁹² Laloy, vol 1, 303.

⁹³ Condojanni, 65.

⁹⁴ Laloy, vol 1, 303. This *memoire*, sent by the Admiral Spinola probably had the blessing of the Sicilian Viceroy, the Marquis of Bayona.

centre of operations at his palace there. It was only then that the senate would consider sending their ambassadors to Palermo to discuss reconciliation. This rebuff caused more strident efforts by the viceroy to urge the grand master and his council to help in the war effort with Spain against the recalcitrant city.⁹⁵

The viceroy had actually refused the limited assistance that Spinola was constrained to provide, when the captain general arrived in Palermo on 3 August 1674.⁹⁶ Together with his ministers, he demanded that the Order, in view of its fiefdom status acquired when Emperor Charles V had awarded the Maltese archipelago to the Order,⁹⁷ was obliged to openly help Spain with all its military potential, against its enemies.⁹⁸ Grand Master Cotoner took exception to this. Through a memoire he answered back that the diploma of the Investiture had released the Order from any military obligations or any responsibility expected from a state of vassalage.⁹⁹ He also bound himself to send an authenticated copy of the diploma so that the viceroy could verify this with his own eyes.¹⁰⁰

Despite having made this point with all the arguments at his disposal, the Spanish grand master did a volte-face and conceded more assistance to the viceroy. The mental anguish that Cotoner was labouring under at this point must have been great, as the concept of neutrality seemed to become more blurred. On 5 August he gave orders to Spinola to help the viceroy in the transportation of the Spanish soldiers and their equipment and ammunition from any location on Sicily or Calabria. However, Spinola was not to assist in the siege of the city, or to use cannon against it. He was also urged not to put the squadron of the Order in precarious situations where it could suffer damage.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Condojanni, 64.

⁹⁶ Laloy, vol I, 313. On the 14 August 1674, the Sicilian Viceroy Bayona sent a *memoire* to the Queen Regent Mariana of Austria, asking her to force the Religion not to maintain its neutral stance between the rebels and Prince (later King Charles II). He reminded the Queen that the Order was being freely supplied by grain unencumbered by the payment of duties.

⁹⁷ AOM 262, fol 32r.

⁹⁸ Laloy, vol I, 313. This was discussed in the council of the Order on the 3 August 1674, where the act of donation was scrutinized and studied. Also, AOM 262 fol 32r:

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 369. A review of the act of donation of Malta granted by Charles V indicated the exemption of knights of the Order from military service. Also, AOM 262 fol 32r: '

¹⁰⁰ AOM 262, fol 32r'

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, fol 32r.

On 11 August 1674, Spinola in pursuance of this decree given out by the grand master and his council, sailed to Reggio Calabria with three of his galleys to transport Calabrian mercenaries to Messina to help the Spanish effort.¹⁰²

By co-operating with the viceroy on the transportation of soldiers to Messina, the grand master was walking a veritable minefield.¹⁰³ Intelligence had been brought to him that the French were showing some interest to enter the conflict on the side of the revolutionaries. At this point it became even more important to remain absolutely equidistant from both the French and the Spanish Kings, and it was also necessary to be perceived to be so, both by the brethren of the Order, who in the main had co-nationals on both sides, as well as by the two sovereigns. In Dal Pozzo's words, the Order 'was in great danger of incurring the disgust of one or the other sovereign'.¹⁰⁴ In actual fact, the grand master continued to put pressure on Spinola to urge the viceroy to make every effort to take the city preferably through diplomatic manoeuvres; but at this point hostilities were not excluded, possibly to end the conflict as quickly as possible.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, fol 32v.

¹⁰³ Giovanni E. Di-Blasi, *Storia Cronologica dei Viceré Luogotenenti e Presidenti del Regno di Sicilia*, (Stamperia Orotea, Palermo, 1842). *'il Marchese di Bajona) teneva egli bloccata la città per impedire che vi entrassero delle vettovaglie non tanto per terra, che per la via di mare, facendo guardare il porto dalle galee di Sicilia, a da quelle di Malta, che il gran maestro gli avea spedite per mostrare lo zelo, che avea il suo ordine per il servizio del monarca delle Spagne'*. Essentially the Viceroy was using the galleys of the Order of St John, Spain, and Genoa to blockade the port of Messina.

¹⁰⁴ Dal Pozzo, 420. *'fu in sommo pericolo d'incorrere nel disgusto dell'una o dell'altra Corona'*.

¹⁰⁵ Laloy, vol 1, 349.

8.7 Political Conflicts at the Grand Priory of Messina

With time it became evident that those Hospitallers who remained in the priory of Messina were siding with the senate and the revolutionaries, expressly against the wishes and orders of the grandmaster.¹⁰⁶

Even more awkward for the grand master was the fact that he had received information that the grand priory had organized a company of around 80 men, well-trained and armed, which included some ecclesiastical members of the Order and their assistants.¹⁰⁷ Under the command of Don Pietro D'Angelo, and his second lieutenant fra Don Carlo Musarra, a prelate and secretary to the senate of Messina, this company of armed men was being accommodated at the grand prioral buildings and was fighting alongside the revolutionaries against the viceroy.¹⁰⁸ Rather exaggeratedly, Condojanni reports that the militia of the grand priory of Messina took part 'in a thousand battles'.¹⁰⁹

These were turbulent times indeed, with open revolt on the doorstep of the convent in Malta.

The disagreements between the grand priory and Cotoner were distressing, as, arguably, no other grand priory or city enjoyed such intimate and sympathetic ties with the Order. As mentioned before, Messina was the seat of one of the important priories of the Order, not least because of its proximity to the convent.

The choices facing the grand priory were stark. They could either renounce the revolution, thus betraying their city, family, and friends; or go against the express orders of their grand master, openly rebelling against the Religion and fighting against Spain.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 350. It seemed that, already in 1673, the various families whose kin had enrolled as brethren of the Order in the Grand Priory of Messina had formed an armed company that had given some concern to the then Sicilian Viceroy, Prince De Ligny.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 301. Priests took an oath to defend the city. This ecclesiastical call for military employment was done to spare the expense to the city. Those members of the clergy who took up arms were blamed by the Spanish Crown and were excommunicated. They argued back that the defence of their homeland, of themselves and the innocents is the law of nature and comes immediately after the love of God.

¹⁰⁸ Condojanni, 66.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

If they chose the latter, they would be outlawed forever and eventually face the Order's discipline and expulsion from its ranks. For the Order, the definitive loss of the Sicilian priory would have been disastrous and the cause of major logistical problems.¹¹⁰

On 31 August 1674, the senate of Messina sent a Dominican priest, Father Lipari, a foremost member of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Messina, as an envoy to the grand master in Malta. He was accompanied by one of the jurats of Messina, Domenico Saija.¹¹¹ A letter was presented to the grandmaster, explaining the motives behind the uprising of the city and the resultant revolution.¹¹² It lamented the hostilities that the Order's galleys were committing against Messina, and reminded the grandmaster to maintain his Order's principle of neutrality.¹¹³ More importantly, the senate also asked for the naval squadron to be removed without delay. This would have hampered the viceroy in the transportation of soldiers to the theatres of war. The Spanish grand master, together with his Council, met the embassy from Messina; their response to the senate was couched in general terms. Cotoner exhorted the senate to renounce the rebellion and maintained, diplomatically, that the senate was wrong in construing that the transport of people from one place to another in the countries of His Catholic Majesty was an act of hostility. In the end, despite the Order's statutes on neutrality, Cotoner could not avoid supporting the viceroy; his assistance was a moral obligation for the Order and a fulfilment of a service compatible with the endless debt of gratitude the Order owed the Spanish monarchy.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Condojanni, 66.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 67. The senate of Messina had organized other embassies to support their revolt. One such attempt was instigated by two Messinese patriots, Don Filippo Cicala and Don Giuseppe Balsamo who had asked the French Ambassador to the Vatican for assistance, who in his turn wrote to King Louis XIV to initiate diplomatic overtures with the Order in Malta and a cessation of any help that the Order might give to the Spanish Army. Spinola was to leave the ports of Sicily and sail back to Malta as soon as possible.

¹¹² AOM 262, fol 33r.

¹¹³ Laloy, vol 1, 349.

¹¹⁴ Condojanni, 65.

8.8 Diplomatic Maneuvers in the Bay of Milazzo.

In 1674 it seemed that fate had again decreed that the naval squadron of the Republic of Genoa would encounter the fleet of the Order, not in its jurisdictional waters this time, but in the port of Milazzo.¹¹⁵ The events of an earlier convergence, those of 1655, were still uncomfortably fresh in the mind of the Council of the Order. With hindsight, it was intriguing that the key player, or possibly even the instigator of the 1655 events, would be playing another significant role in 1674 at Milazzo, in an almost perfect replica of what had happened before, and with exactly similar actions being taken and with the inevitable similar repercussions.

At the time of the Messina uprising, Spinola occupied the post of admiral of the Hospitaller fleet and Pilier, or head of the Italian Langue. During these events he was acting also as captain general of the fleet, and together with the captains of the other galleys was directing operations across the northern coast of Sicily.¹¹⁶

In the first week of September 1674, a squadron of five Genoese galleys was due to arrive in the port of Milazzo,¹¹⁷ transporting personnel and munitions, to help its ally Spain.¹¹⁸ For the previous few weeks, the naval squadron of the Order had also been transferring soldiers and ammunition for the Sicilian Viceroy and was berthed in the port of Milazzo, away from Messina, as the latter was under siege. Knowing of the impending arrival of the Genoese galleys, and the quarrelsome encounters of the past when these two fleets met, Viceroy Bayona sent for Spinola to decide on what actions to take on their arrival, to try and forestall similar problems.¹¹⁹ He asked Spinola to be

¹¹⁵ At the time of the insurgency, the port of Messina was a theatre of war with Spanish warships harassing the beleaguered port from the sea. The port of Milazzo was the next safe port on the north-eastern coast of Sicily to the left of Messina and it was the port where transshipment of the hardware of war was carried out.

¹¹⁶ In the Order's hierarchy, the post of admiral was usually a land-based post, residing at the convent and the main remit was administrative work. It was rare that the admiral (usually also the Pilier of the Italian Langue) was exposed to the fighting arena. That was assigned to the captain general of the Order's naval squadron. At this point in time, Spinola was functioning in a dual role.

¹¹⁷ Milazzo is a port town on the northern coast of Sicily to the west of Messina.

¹¹⁸ Laloy, vol 1, 369.

¹¹⁹ AOM 262, fol 33v.

courteous to Genoa and forego his place alongside the Spanish *Reale* for the Genoese *Padrona*.¹²⁰ As soon as the *Padrona* of Genoa arrived in port, Spinola was to leave his berth of pre-eminence on the left-hand side of the Spanish *Reale* to make way for the Genoese *Padrona* which would berth in its place; a clear signal that the Order was to go down a rung in the hierarchical ladder.¹²¹ Spinola did not readily give his assent to this, although in the end he capitulated.¹²² When he discussed these instructions with the other captains of the Order's fleet, there were some protests against the proposed action of the admiral.¹²³

On the arrival of the Genoese squadron in Milazzo, the Genoese *Padrona* tried to berth in the allotted place as specified by the viceroy. Although Spinola had finally acquiesced to the viceroy's wishes, he continued to harry the Genoese, and did not change berths. Thus, the Spanish *Reale* had to be moved to make space for the Genoese ships. Spinola continued to persevere in his obstructions and even passed a cable from his *Capitana* to hinder the berthing of the Genoese *Padrona* alongside.¹²⁴ In view of this impertinence, the viceroy sent a message to Spinola to uphold the pre-agreed plan, but the general of the galleys of the Order insisted on having his way, and even went to the viceroy's palace in Milazzo, arguing his point in the presence of the Genoese admiral. Finally, under considerable pressure from the viceroy, Spinola had to relent although he continued to make life difficult for the Genoese squadron. Acting on an order sent by the grand master, he denied a safe spot to the *Padrona* of Genoa in the middle of the Order's squadron. Eventually the fleet of the Republic of Genoa left Milazzo to go to Reggio and Scaletta to transport soldiers and food back to Messina.¹²⁵

It is difficult to understand why Spinola acted the way he did, bowing his head to Genoa under duress, as the Republican fleet tried to trample on the pre-eminence of the Order yet again, prejudicing the foremost position the latter enjoyed among the other

¹²⁰ Laloy, vol 1, 369. Emile Laloy got the date of the encounter wrong. It was 1655.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 369. The Viceroy Bayona negotiated with Spinola an arrangement that the galley of the Order would be berthed on the right and the *Padrona* of Genoa (which served as the *Capitana* of the Republic of Genoa) would be on the left.

¹²² AOM 262, fol 36r. The instructions given by the Viceroy to Admiral Spinola for the berthing of the *Padrona* of Genoa were different to those obtained by the ambassador of the Order to the Spanish Court.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 33v.

¹²⁴ Laloy, vol 1, 369.

¹²⁵ Laloy, vol I, 369.

European navies. Both Viceroy Bayona and Spinola knew that this pre-eminence was of great significance to the Order.

On 9 September 1674, the Council of the Order set up a commission to investigate these incidents.¹²⁶ It had various remits, but the most important was the verification of whether the pre-eminences and prerogatives of the Order had been trampled upon by the Republic of Genoa.¹²⁷ The board was made up of the Grand Conservator fra Felix de Ayerbe, a grand bailiff fra Ferdinando Ludovico, Count of Kollowrath, the grand prior of France fra Henry Destampes Vallancay, and the Bailiff of Armenia fra Carlo Gattola.¹²⁸

It did not take long for the commission to scrutinize the events that occurred in Milazzo. They had at their disposal all the letters that Spinola had addressed to Council as well as others from the Viceroy; they even had a diagram of the bay of Milazzo, drawn by Spinola and the position of the various galleys on that fatal day.¹²⁹ Two days after their institution, on 11 September 1674, they sent a lengthy dispatch to the grand master with the results of their enquiry.¹³⁰

The commission had been asked to decide on two main issues. The first was whether the pre-eminence of the Order had been prejudiced by the actions of the fleet of the Republic of Genoa in the bay of Milazzo; the second involved an analysis of what were the obligations due to the naval squadron of the Order from the other European fleets.¹³¹

With regards to the first point, the commission found that the *Capitana* of the Order was not put in any awkward position by the events.¹³² The advice on the second point was that the recent actions of the Genoese naval squadron towards the Order

¹²⁶ AOM 262, fol 34r. After these events in the bay of Milazzo between the two naval squadrons, a commission was set up by Grandmaster Cotoner to investigate. One of the remits was specifically to ascertain whether *'la Padrona non facci figura, innanzi la sua capitana come questa, che viene commandando una squadra.'*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, fol 33v.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 33r.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 34r.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 33v. Under the heading *'die 11 Sett 1674. Relazione e decreto sopra quanto e accaduto a Milazzo con le galere di Genova'*.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, fol 33v.

¹³² *Ibid.*, fol 34r.

should not be used as a benchmark for acts of courtesy with other European naval squadrons.¹³³ They were of the opinion that while in the service of the King of Spain they should avoid violence at all cost with other allies of the Spanish Kingdom. The ramifications of the board of enquiry were even felt in Madrid. It was here that the ambassador of the Order in Spain had discussed this issue of pre-eminence of the Order of St John with the Spanish Court, and directions were given to the Sicilian Viceroy on what protocol the different allied naval squadrons (Sicilian, Neapolitan, Sardinian and Hospitaller) should follow when they met. From the Order's perspective, when the *Capitana* of the Order found itself alone with the Spanish *Reale*, its position should be on the latter's left side. If it found another *Capitana* on the left side of the Spanish *Reale*, its place would then be on the right side of the royal *Capitana*.¹³⁴

On 22 September 1674, the Council of the Order asked Spinola to request the viceroy to give them permission to depart from Sicily, remarking that they had now been in Sicily for some time, and were running short of provisions, with the advancing winter season 'and a thousand other valid reasons that the General could use to achieve his departure'.¹³⁵

The permission from the viceroy for the naval fleet of the Order to return to Malta, however, was not forthcoming. The fleet remained in Sicily and together with the navy of the Republic of Genoa continued to transport soldiers and ammunition from other parts of Sicily and mainland Italy to Messina. Admiral Spinola ensured that he kept the galleys of the Order apart from those of Genoa.¹³⁶ Each went its own way, much against the wishes and written instructions of the Viceroy of Sicily who had stipulated that the Genoese *Padrona* should be protected in the middle of the Order's galleys.¹³⁷

The viceroy was hugely irritated by the intransigence of the Order and on 1 October 1674, he issued a decree to his ministers that all commerce between the Order and the Kingdom of Sicily was to stop forthwith.¹³⁸ For the Order and the inhabitants of

¹³³ *Ibid.*, fol 34r.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, fol 34r.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 34r.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 35r.

¹³⁷ Laloy, vol 1, 369. 'Pendant ce temps arriva, le 19, un ordre du grand-maître interdisant de donner place à la Patronne de Gênes dans l'intérieur de son escadre.'

¹³⁸ AOM 262, fol 35r.

Malta this decree was a harbinger of starvation. A lot of commercial activity was carried out with the neighbouring island; there were the most important cereals, the annual tax-free grain imports as well as other essential commodities such as wood. Malta in its turn exported the harvests of cotton and cumin for much needed cash

To the grand master and his council, it seemed that these political shenanigans were growing from bad to worse. Escalation of the diplomatic incident in the bay of Milazzo to the point where importation of essential foodstuffs was halted would have resulted in a major predicament for the grand master. On a daily basis, the naval squadron of the Order was involved in a theatre of war far away from the convent, being harassed by a supposedly 'friendly' ally; Spinola had already slipped once as far as the Council of the Order was concerned. It was understandably difficult for him and the other galley captains to obey the almost weekly missives that emanated from the convent on Malta, and to do everything within the spirit of the ordinances and customs that regulated neutrality. Then again, the grand priory of Messina was right in the middle of the revolt. It was a chaotic situation that Grand Master Cotoner faced, and one that could have potentially undermined his authority.

The grand master resorted to diplomacy and tactful negotiation to find a solution. Knowing that the longer the naval squadron of the Order stayed shuttling across the northern coast of Sicily, the more liable it would be to get involved in other issues of political pre-eminences and prerogatives, it was deemed safer if the fleet was granted permission to sail back to Malta. On 1 October 1674 Cotoner sent an embassy, led by fra Don Manuel Arias, the Vice-Chancellor of the Order, to discuss outstanding issues with the viceroy.¹³⁹

The mission was straightforward enough. The vice-chancellor had to persuade the Viceroy with solid arguments and an unyielding line of reasoning, of the utmost fealty of the Order towards himself as the representative of His Majesty and towards the King Himself. Arias went prepared with the parchment of the deed of Donation awarded by Charles V to show the Viceroy the liberty that the knights enjoyed under the charter, the

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 35v.

exemptions that it gave the Order, and the line of neutrality which they embraced.¹⁴⁰ Further explanations detailed the particular reasons why the Council had adopted the stand it took regarding the issue with the Republic of Genoa in Milazzo. Arias had to make sure that the viceroy understood perfectly that any action taken by the Order during its involvement in the revolt was not to be construed, in any way, as an act of disloyalty to the Crown. In order to remove any vestiges of such a doubt, the grand master had agreed to suspend his decision to separate the two naval squadrons of the Order and Genoa ‘and begged the Viceroy to revoke his ban on commerce between the two islands as he could not have believed that they had merited such an action’.¹⁴¹

It was also on 1 October 1674 that Admiral Spinola obtained information from Council that a naval squadron of 10 French ships had left the port of Toulon¹⁴² and was heading towards Capo Peloro¹⁴³ to join the fray in Messina.¹⁴⁴ It was at this point that the French King had accepted the request of the Messinese for help in their efforts to overthrow the Spanish yoke.¹⁴⁵ For the Council of the Order in their convent on Malta, but even more so for Admiral Spinola and the squadron in Sicily, this was the worst of news. It would have been difficult to comprehend how the French knights in the Order’s squadron would get themselves involved in a pitched battle with their co-nationals in the French naval squadron. They would be fighting on the side of the Spanish King, against

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 35v.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, fol 35v.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, fol 35v.

¹⁴³ Condojanni, 67. Spinola was at anchor in the bay of Milazzo when he received intelligence that the patrol boat, he had sent to scour the area around the Eolian Islands had sighted the vanguard of the French fleet under the control of Commander Valbelle.

¹⁴⁴ Laloy, vol 1, 301. The Order had warned the Sicilian Viceroy that the French had a naval squadron of 22 galleys at Toulon.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 428. It was about two months before, on the 2 August 1674 that the Duke of Estrées in Rome wrote to the King Louis XIV about the insurrection. The senate of Messina had been waiting for France to come to their defence for a long time, as they were expecting that the Order would be assisting the Sicilian Viceroy (Condojanni, 65). Most of the information is contained in a memoire written on 5 July. The Messinese patricians wrote to friends and relatives to wait for the assistance expected from His Majesty, and they begged the King to hasten the departure of a squadron of between 15 to 16 galleys, ‘*at the sight of which the city (of Messina) and the aldermen will take great courage*’. The French squadron was being led by the French general of the galleys Vivonne, and it would prevent the relief being provided by the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily to the Sicilian Viceroy Marquis Astorga. The Duke of Estrées had also asked Louis XIV to communicate and warn Grandmaster Cotoner not to involve the Order in the Messina revolt, not to meddle in the matter and not to provide the galleys that had been requested. The duke finally had advised the King, that the intention of the jurats of Messina was not to establish a Republic, but rather to retain the immunities and privileges that they had acquired over the decades, and to do this under the auspices of the King.

their sovereign, and against their brethren.¹⁴⁶ The whole scenario was evolving into a series of frightening events that was continuously putting more pressure on the Order's stance of neutrality and making accommodation to Spain even more difficult.

The advice that the Council had given Spinola was to withdraw with his galleys as soon as the French appeared over the horizon. There was certainly no wish to enter into any conflict with the French, and more so with an adversary that had more ships. There were, however, other more imperative reasons why the Order could not continue to play an active part in the Sicilian theatre of war. First, there was the prestige and the diplomacy of the King of France, Louis XIV, a great patron of the Order. Secondly, there was a well-founded fear that the naval squadron of the Order would be defeated by the French fleet if they found themselves in a face-off with a better-equipped rival.¹⁴⁷ Thirdly, grand master Cotoner still harboured a desire not to break forever all relations with the grand priory, permanently and irrevocably.¹⁴⁸

However, for Spinola to leave Sicily, especially after the problems that the Order had encountered in Milazzo and with the viceroy, he needed the latter's express permission. In lieu of this, the council urged Spinola to ask for a partial authorization that would enable the Order to keep three galleys in Sicily and the other four to leave for Malta.¹⁴⁹ With autumn fast approaching with its expected storms and rough seas, Spinola was anxious to return to the safe harbours around Valetta for the winter. His instructions were that should permission be granted; he was to return straight to Malta without making the usual stops at Augusta and Siracusa.

Eventually the viceroy's permission to leave was granted. The full naval squadron of the Order, seven galleys in total, entered the Maltese harbours on 15 October 1674. The Council of the Order ordered the commission,¹⁵⁰ which they had previously appointed, to report its findings on the events that had occurred in the Bay of Milazzo to the grandmaster, to initiate legal proceedings against Admiral Spinola and the other

¹⁴⁶ Condojanni, 65.

¹⁴⁷ AOM 262, fol 36r.

¹⁴⁸ Condojanni, 68.

¹⁴⁹ AOM 262, fol 35v. The *Padrona*, *San Pietro* and the *Magistrale* were to remain in the service of the Viceroy whereas the other four galleys were to return.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 36v. The Bailiff Gattola was replaced by the Prior of Bohemia Frá Wratisslaw as the former was ill.

galley captains, and to adjudicate whether they were guilty of any misdemeanours. The commission also had the duty to keep the admiral and captains under house arrest, presumably to separate them from each other, so as not to pool their version of events until each account had been given and was verified under oath and the commission reached its conclusion.¹⁵¹

This process took some time to conclude and was certainly not finished before 23 October, at which point the Treasury procurators were asked to check the galleys before they departed for Augusta to bring back provisions. The captain assigned to the *Padrona* was the commander fra Sancio Gravina. This change of master of the Order's squadron suggests two things; first, that Admiral Spinola was still incommunicado and, secondly, that the decree of the viceroy to stop all commerce between the two islands had been repealed.

The admiral was facing treason charges for his actions, with dire consequences if found guilty. The tribunal hearing the case against Spinola and the captains continued through November until the first week of December 1674, when the Council received a letter from the Sicilian Viceroy, the Marquis of Bayona, asking for clemency for Spinola.¹⁵² A decision was taken the next day, but not before the grandmaster had made the issue plain to the Council that Spinola's action at the bay of Milazzo had been a very grievous fault indeed. This opinion was endorsed by the Council. However, Cotoner acquiesced to the viceroy's wishes and Spinola was pardoned and released. A similar judgment was passed over the other galley captains.¹⁵³ It is interesting to note that, as Schermerhorn comments, the commander of the Genoese fleet in Milazzo at the time was a nephew to Spinola by marriage.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, fol 36v.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, fol 37r.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, fol 37r.

¹⁵⁴ Schermerhorn (1940), 241.

8.9 Ramifications of the Insurrection on the Grand Priory of Messina and Beyond

Life could not continue in its ordinary way for the grand priory while the surrounding insurrection was devastating the city of Messina. The administration of the priory faltered: its function as a nodal conduit for the transfer of the responsiones from the various commanderies in Sicily was interrupted. By 1675, Messina was a besieged city under French Rule, surrounded by the Spanish companies of war and other paid mercenaries. Although some form of business transactions continued to be carried out between Messina and the outside world under the patronage of the French, it was not business as usual.¹⁵⁵

Scheduled assignments as set out in the Order's Statutes, like the quinquennial visits of all priories and commanderies, had to be postponed to a later date in the hope of a quick resolution of the revolt.¹⁵⁶ The grand prior of Messina, *in absentia*, had asked for such a postponement of the *visita di miglioramento* that was due at the priory itself.¹⁵⁷ In fact, there was uncertainty even as to the amount of damage that the Sicilian properties of the Order might have sustained during the fighting.¹⁵⁸

The grand priory was also having difficulty with the presentation of the proofs of nobility of prospective brothers. The regular visits to the various commanderies belonging to the Order in Sicily as well as every other service commitments involving the day-to-day running of the Order's assets wavered.¹⁵⁹ Because communications to

¹⁵⁵ Cathal J Nolan, *Wars of the Age of Louis XIV 1650-1715*, (Westport, Greenwood Publishing Group 2008), 170 et seq. During the Messinese rebellion, Spanish and French galleys fought alongside ships of sail in a vicious engagement in Messina harbour in 1675. Dutch galleys fought at Augusta on 22 April 1676. The French fleet, 30 sail and 7 fireships under the Marquis de Duquesne put out of Messina to break the Dutch blockade of Sicily. They were met three days later by a Dutch fleet of 29 sail and 9 galleys under Admiral de Ruyter. The French won the fight during which de Ruyter was mortally wounded.

¹⁵⁶ AOM 126, fol 20v.

¹⁵⁷ AOM 125, fol 100r. In fact, Caracciolo's supplication was accepted by the council. He was given permission to do the *visita di miglioramento* two years after the termination of the present conflict. See also Stefan Cachia 'The Treasury, Debts and Deaths: a Study of the Common Treasury (Unpublished MA dissertation, University of Malta, 2004) 117 et seq.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 100r.

¹⁵⁹ AOM 1446, fol 55r.

and from Messina were intermittent and unreliable, the Council of the Order decided, in a decree dated 28 June 1677, to transfer the Assembly to Palermo, although the right of the grand priory of Messina to hold such assemblies was not removed, if there were the requisite number of brethren.¹⁶⁰

However, some semblance of normality appears to have been maintained at the Prioral buildings in Messina. On 23 January 1677, the Convent in Malta sent a communication to the president of the assembly in Messina that procedures could be initiated for the examination of the Proofs of Legitimacy of Gabriele di Miceli, from Siracusa, a deacon at the church of St John the Baptist in Messina. If everything was found to be in order, the deacon was to be elected to the grade of a conventual chaplain.¹⁶¹

During the insurrection, the church of San Giovanni Battista, being the prioral church of the grand priory of Messina, suffered depredations of its mobile assets, including most of its silver liturgical ornaments.¹⁶² On 29 July 1681 fra Roberto Solaro, the procurator of the grand priory, admitted that the majority of the silver ornaments of the church had been taken by the jurats of the senate of Messina, others had been stolen or pledged by the various sacristans of the church who then absconded, and the remainder had been broken.¹⁶³

Despite its expeditious withdrawal from Milazzo, the Order's squadron was still offering its services to the Sicilian viceroy. Fra Emanuele de Tortesillas, a captain on one of the Order's galleys, was instructed by Council to transport the viceroy, secretly and safely from the port of Augusta to Milazzo.¹⁶⁴

Commerce between the European continent and Malta was still being harassed in the vicinity of Sicily, to the detriment of the convent in Malta. The whole island of Sicily was being blockaded by the French fleet and privateers under the French flag.

¹⁶⁰ AOM 126, fol. 20v.

¹⁶¹ AOM 1446, fol 18r.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, fol 145v.

¹⁶³ AOM 2133, fol 235v.

¹⁶⁴ AOM 1445, fol 17v.

On 6 January 1677, the receiver of Messina, residing in Palermo, fra Rondinelli, was notified that a cargo ship laden with grain bought by his counterpart in Naples on behalf of the Order was captured by French ships just outside Messina. The Convent instructed Rondinelli of Messina to investigate the case. The official interpretation was that the French navy had captured the merchandise, on the mistaken perception that it had been bought by Neapolitan merchants, then at war with France.¹⁶⁵ Fra Rondinelli was asked to start enquiries for the restitution of the ship and its cargo and the passports of the personnel involved. The cargo had been loaded in Taranto and was destined for Malta.¹⁶⁶ This communication was reinforced the very next day, 7 January, and Rondinelli was solicited to recuperate the property of the Order with no expense spared.¹⁶⁷

This loss of merchandise suffered by the Order at the hands of French interests during the blockade of Messina was not a solitary incident. On another occasion five months later, on 16 May 1677, the Convent informed the Prior of the Roccella that the annual grant of tax-free wheat and grain had arrived in its entirety in Malta except for the load of two *tartane*, one of which was taken by the French and the other by the Turks just outside the bay of Messina. From the annuity of 6,340 *salme* of grain, 1,360 *salme* were missing. French galleys had already stolen another two shiploads of grain, one of 1,700 *salme* and another of 700 *salme*.¹⁶⁸ It seemed that the French garrison in Sicily was scavenging anything they could lay their hands on.

It was not only the Order's cargo ships that suffered loss. A small *tartana* owned by the Maltese Lazzaro degli Alberi and his father Giovanni Maria was doing its usual rounds between Sicily and the Barbary Coast involved in slave-trading, on behalf of the Order,¹⁶⁹ and other commodities including oil and soap that was brought over from North Africa to Sicily and Malta. On this occasion they were picked up by two French galleons just outside Trapani. The Sicilian viceroy was entertaining some suspicions that the *tartana* might have been spying for the French as it was on its way to Messina.

¹⁶⁵ AOM 1446, fol 10r.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 10r.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, fol 11r.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 47r.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 11r.

The Convent had sent instructions to their Receiver Cigala on 2 July 1677 to beg the Sicilian viceroy to release degli Alberi along with their boat, as the Order was certain that there could not be any legitimate reason for their incarceration.¹⁷⁰

The Maltese islands too suffered as a direct result of the Messina revolt. The transport of wheat that usually came from Messina became erratic. The *memoire* dispatched to one of the Order's procurators fra Fortunato Caraffa, on 20 June 1676 is self-explanatory:

*'We have been reduced to the point of extreme necessity, without any exaggeration as we have written to the Viceroy, having already finished the wheat in the stores and what little has been collected from this barren countryside will first be consumed by the peasants who have finished harvesting it. The resolutions have taken too long a time, and if in a few days permission is not given to send our boats to load the wheat from Licata, I do not know how these people could be restrained from some desperate action'.*¹⁷¹

By the end of 1677, the conflict involving the eastern part of Sicily had been going on for over three years; the priory had been estranged from the convent in Malta and was led by a group of brethren sympathetic to the Senate and allied to the *malvizzi*.¹⁷² The Lieutenant di Giovanni was still residing in Palermo, which was under Spanish rule. During one of the Assembly meetings in Messina two commissioners were deputed to look into a particular set of circumstances involving this brother. They were fra Michele Calli and fra Pietro di Gregorio.¹⁷³ The dates of the alleged offences were not stipulated. It resulted that fra Giovanni di Giovanni in his remit as a Receiver as well as a procurator of the grand priory, fell into debt for an unspecified amount of money during the administration of the Priory and management of its assets.¹⁷⁴ Another issue was the purported salary of Giuseppe Pellegrino, Di Giovanni's notary, who had not been paid even after several remonstrations. Things had come to a point when one of the

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 51r.

¹⁷¹ AOM 1445, fol 178v.

¹⁷² AOM 126, fol 20v-37v.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, fol 37v.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, fol 37v

storerooms in the grounds of the grand priory was broken into and ransacked.¹⁷⁵ These contained the belongings and effects of Di Giovanni which he had left under lock and key before his departure to Palermo. This matter was to proceed from the General Assembly to the Provincial Chapter in Messina, but there was some delay as the latter could not meet because of the ongoing revolt.¹⁷⁶

In the meantime, fra Giovanni di Giovanni appealed against the accusations in his regard. However, it turned out that despite the fact that the court case was still *sub iudice* and no sentence had as yet been handed out, three witnesses present - fra Thomaso Gregorii one of the procurators of the Common Treasury, together with fra Giuseppe Maradia, a chaplain of obedience and sacristan to the grand prioral church in Messina, and the master notary of the grand priory Giuseppe Pellegrino - all attested that the personal effects of Di Giovanni had been put up for sale to try to recoup some funds to offset his debt. Five months later, on 7 February 1678, there was another Assembly held in Messina, where it was declared that these perpetrators had not only to stop forthwith from continuing with the sale of Di Giovanni's personal property,¹⁷⁷ but they had to return the brother's belongings to the state they were in before.¹⁷⁸ Di Giovanni was to appear before the court at a later date for judgement to be passed in his instance.

On 25 March 1678, a decree sent by the Convent on Malta to fra Francisco Bisagno, president of the Assembly, directed the latter to notify one of the procurators in Messina, fra Don Diego Barone to take over the administration of the grand priory of Messina in the absence of the grand prior.¹⁷⁹ This indicates that, at least up till that point, fra di Giovanni's case was still being addressed by the tribunal and he could not be involved in the administration of the priory. In order to correct this absence, the convent installed one of the Sicilian procurators *ad hoc* to manage the priory in lieu of the lieutenant.

By 15 October 1678, fra Giovanni di Giovanni must have been re-instated as the Lieutenant of the grand priory of Messina. This emerges from a letter addressed to the

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 37v.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 37v.

¹⁷⁷ AOM 1446, fol 121v.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 121v.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 145v.

prior of Rocella by the Convent, advising him that the usual presentation of the falcon to the Sicilian Viceroy on the first of November was to be left to the Lieutenant of the priory of Messina who was fra di Giovanni, in the absence of whom the Receiver of the priory, fra Silvio Sortino would be delegated.¹⁸⁰ This would imply that the Council of the Order did not find against him for the alleged misuse of priory funds, and probably had exonerated him totally.

8.10 The Aftermath

The convent in Malta got to know of the sudden and unexpected retreat of the French army from Messina through its Receivers in Sicily.¹⁸¹ Fra Cigala sent a letter from Siracusa notifying the grand master of the total retreat of the French army from Augusta on 29 March 1678.¹⁸² Fra Diego Barone informed the convent of the retreat from Messina the very next day. The French had left Sicily abruptly, only for the Spanish to regain their territory and obtain the *status quo*.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ AOM 1446, fol 190v.

¹⁸¹ AOM 1446, fol 133r. The retreat was so unexpected that the Convent reiterated: ‘ *Restiamo hor aspettando di ricever avvisi più minuti del successo, e non lasceremo di congratularene subito, con lettera nostra partita con il Signor Vicerè.* ’

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, fol 133r.

¹⁸³ AOM 1447, fol 11r/v. Even months after the Spanish take-over, commerce between the two islands was still sporadic as a letter dated 10 January 1679 sent from the Convent to the Prior of Rocella indicates: ‘ *...e la speranza che ci date di dover avere il complimento delle nostre tratte, ma non sappiamo se potremo aspettarle più a Feb e più che potranno navigare andando sempre le spedizioni a lungo, il che cagiona la mina di queste piazze, come siamo sperimentando mentre delle parte concedutaci, non si e potuta più ora condurre che pochissimi quantita per esser sopraggiunto con tante dilatationi, dil vigor della stagione, con che le tartane mandate alli caricatori per li mali tempi, non poterono caricarsi, et alcune ritornano più d’una volta vacanti, altri si dispersero qua, e la, et alcuni si persero, e se non fosse stata la misericordia di Dio, che fece entrare per forza de tempi in questo porto alcune imbarcationi francesi, che andarono con frumenti ad altre parti, sariamo infallibilmente morti tutti di fame. Percio ci raccomandiamo sempre al vostro effetto, giache l’istessa aprovidenza di Dio, cui trattiene cosi assistere a nostri bisogni e procurarci i necessari soccorsi.* ’

With the French army gone, the city of Messina found itself at the mercy of Spain. Charles II annulled all the privileges that Messina had accumulated and endorsed over the centuries. All signs of municipal power were erased, and a Spanish fort was planned to be constructed on a slip of headland, right at the mouth of the harbour.¹⁸⁴

Six thousand Messinese left Sicily, either on their own or with the departing French navy, leaving all their possessions behind them. At a stroke, most of the old patrician families and nobility of Messina abandoned their homeland, never to see their native soil again. Members of the priory of Messina as well as the clergy departed to avoid the ire of their Spanish overlords. The residue that remained in the priory lay low and was urged by the Order to live quietly, so as not to cause more offence and lose further privileges.¹⁸⁵ The grand master and Council had also severed all connections with the members of the grand priory who had disobeyed them - *come membri putridi*. There was no hope of reconciliation or sanctuary for these. Not even the Papal States offered asylum for these refugees. Most of them moved to France and were installed in the Court of Versailles, penniless, their spirit broken, and with no hope of ever setting eyes on their motherland. Others were taken to Tuscany, Parma, and Modena.¹⁸⁶

More than twenty years after the event, on the coronation of Philip V (1683 – 1746) in 1700, a large group of Messinese exiles, residing in Rome sent a supplication letter to the Spanish king, begging him for mercy and the possible restitution of their Sicilian possessions which they had lost after the revolt. The refugees had asked the prince of Monaco, who was then French ambassador to Rome, to petition the king on their behalf. The letter was short and to the point. In it they implored the new monarch to become aware of their deplorable condition, having used up what little they had managed to take out of the country during their flight from Messina in 1678. They maintained that they were supporting dependant women and children, and they implored the king to interject and use his powerful offices for their re-instatement. This would

¹⁸⁴ Benigno (2011), 211.

¹⁸⁵ AOM 1447, fol 32r

¹⁸⁶ Condojanni, 68.

have been difficult even for the new King with all his powers as most of the possessions usurped at the time had been sold to new owners and tenants.¹⁸⁷

This large group of exiles in Rome included two members of the Order of St John, most probably ex-residents of the grand priory of Messina. Fra Scipione Cigala (or Cicala) was a Knight Hospitaller, having professed in Messina in 1639.¹⁸⁸ The other was Commander Fra Don Pietro Gregori. Exiled from their country, discarded by their grand master, and forgotten by their spiritual protector, these two members of the Order were left destitute and begging for alms. Even after the passage of twenty-two years the ire of the grand master was still pitiless and obdurate.

Fra Don Tommaso di Gregorio was another member of the Gregorio family and a refugee who had escaped from Messina after the French withdrawal. He had been luckier than his other family member Fra Pietro, as he had left Messina to become the Prior of Venice and lived in the Serenissima together with his exiled extended family.¹⁸⁹

Soon after the Spanish overlords took repossession of Messina and its environs, a Council of State was set up to help the viceroy in the administration of the city. The post of governor of Messina, the *stratigoto*, had been terminated after the revolt. An extant *memoire* drawn up by the Duke of Alba, who was a member of this Council, on 17 July 1678, laid down an analysis of the problems that the city of Messina was facing

¹⁸⁷ Laloy III 823. ‘Sire, les Messinois exilés de leur patrie depuis 1678 par les accidents connus à Votre Majesté, prosternés à ses pieds, exposent leur état déplorable, ayant consommé le peu qu'ils avaient emporté avec eux, et étant de plus chargés de femmes et d'enfants incapables de gagner leur vie. A l'occasion de l'avènement de Philippe V, ils implorent à genoux avec des larmes pleines de respect la généreuse pitié du Roi Très Chrétien pourqu'il daigne interposer ses puissants offices afin de leur faire obtenir laréintégration in pristino statu.

(Signé :)

D. Gio. Campolo, marchese di San Todaro. D. Francesco Crisafi. D. Mario Crisafi. Don Filippo Crisafi. Don Mario Romeo. Don Domenico Giurba. D. Gioseppe Marchese. D. Diego de Patti. D. Ansaldo de Patti. **Com.re Fra Don Pietro Gregori.** Abb. Don Vincenz'o Gregori. D. Alfonso Trovati. D. Francesco Alibrando. D. Paolo Trovato. D. Vittorino Trovato. D. Carlo Ruffo, visconle di Francavilla. D. Francesco Antonio Romeo. D. Liborio Romeo. D. Ant.no Miglio. D. Nicolo Gregori. D. Giacomo Messina. Christoforo Mayorana. Paolo Mayorana. D. Girolamo Mayorana. Francesco Maria Pisciotta. D. Matteo Rao Fuscha barone di Micciche. Carlo Calignami. Giovanni Calignami. Francesco Maria Mayorana. Il marchese D. Giovanni Gregori. **Scipione Cigala, cav. Gerosolimitano.**D. Cesare Cigala. Don Gioseppe Ardoino. D. Nicolo M* Solyma di Ant. D. Gioseppe Gregori. D. Gio. Batta. Romano Colonna. D. Mario Spatafora. Anlonino Moleti. Mario Reitano. Gio. Francesco Pellegrino. Francesco Scarlata. Girolamo Bellomi. Francesco Sirano. D. Tomaso Gotto. D. Asdrubale Moleti. D. Francesco Madrens. D. Giuseppe Madrens. D. Gioseppe Durante. Giovanni Tomasi. D. Francesco Spatafora. D. Giovanni Spatafora.

¹⁸⁸ Minutolo, 80.

¹⁸⁹ Dal Pozzo vol II, 458.

after the rebellion and also the opinion of the council regarding what needed to be done.¹⁹⁰ Interestingly the third point of this *memoire* highlighted an incident involving a number of armed servants of fra Don Giovanni di Giovanni, Lieutenant of the Hospitaller priory, who had apparently resisted Spanish troops marching around the battlements of the city. These servants were immediately marched to the galleys to be deported but were released the following morning by the explicit orders of the President of the Council of State, Don Pedro Olivieri. In conclusion, this third point suggested that no office could be entrusted to those who had been traitors, and also advised that an enquiry should be set up to ascertain the nature of the resistance of the servants of the grand priory of Messina.

In reply, Viceroy Gonzaga gave a lengthy explanation to the Council of State about these happenings. It seemed that the altercation between the servants of the priory and the Spanish soldiers had occurred when the latter attempted to rob the former. After running away and hiding in the priory, the servants had returned armed with muskets and retaliated.¹⁹¹

One facet that might reflect on the viability of the grand priory of Messina during and after the insurrection was the number of professed brethren it attracted at the time.¹⁹² The first half of the seventeenth century saw the admission of 161 knights in this priory, whereas in the second half, only 92 were admitted. This reduced number can be further broken down. In the seventh decade, during the years of the insurrection, only 8 members were admitted in the first two years and 10 in the following eight years, including two years which were completely sterile.¹⁹³ This shows even more the dire straits that the priory was going through, and the situation was even worse compounded by demographic ravages caused by plagues and earthquakes.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ Laloy III, 655.

¹⁹¹ Laloy III, 656.

¹⁹² See D'Avenia (2009), 40 et seq.

¹⁹³ Minutolo, 51.

¹⁹⁴ Spagnoletti (1988), 92. '*il crollo demografico di Messina, funestata nel '700 da epidemie e terremoti (i gerosolomitani messinesi passano dal 35.97% al 12.26%)*'.

Table 8.1 Knights who professed in the Grand Priory of Messina between 1600 and 1695¹⁹⁵

| Decade | Number of Professed Knights | Year | Number of Professed Knights |
|-----------|-----------------------------|------|-----------------------------|
| 1601 - 10 | 12 | 1671 | 5 |
| 1611 - 20 | 35 | 1672 | 3 |
| 1621 - 30 | 32 | 1673 | 0 |
| 1631 - 40 | 49 | 1674 | 1 |
| 1641 - 50 | 33 | 1675 | 2 |
| 1651 - 60 | 14 | 1676 | 0 |
| 1661 - 70 | 20 | 1677 | 2 |
| 1671 - 80 | 18 | 1678 | 2 |
| 1681 - 90 | 33 | 1679 | 1 |
| 1691 - 95 | 7 | 1680 | 1 |

8.11 Conclusion

The grand priory of Messina had been one of the oldest establishments of the Order of St John. It attracted professed members, impressive in both number and quality.¹⁹⁶

Arguably it remained the most favoured of all the priories of the convent, being strategically close to Malta and acting as the conduit for most of the resources that the convent needed. On this particular event, the grand priory chose to sit on the wrong side of history against the specific instructions of its Grandmaster, with execrable consequences. Messina was the Order's city and when the city rose in revolt, it could be envisaged that the priory had no other alternative but to follow the insurgents. With time the priory was rehabilitated but fate had other ideas. There was not enough time for all the sins to be forgotten before the priory was struck again, twenty years later with a

¹⁹⁵ Minutolo (1699).

¹⁹⁶ D'Avenia (2004), 40.

massive earthquake in 1693 that left the buildings and the occupants in a very pitiful state.

Chapter 9 General Conclusion

The Grand Priory of Messina was one of the oldest institutions of the Order of St John. Along with the Provençal grand priory of San Gilles, it was one of two priories which were given an internal mandate to manage all the assets belonging to the Order in *Outremer*, when the Convent, in the early years, was located in the Middle East. The rich history of the Sicilian Hospitaller priory was, of necessity, seamlessly merged with the history of the Mediterranean island as it shifted from one sovereign to another, and what was happening outside its walls must have impinged on the life of the priory and has to be taken in context.

The main aim of the present thesis has been to flesh out this Institution and provide a basis for a clear and convincing account of its state and development in the seventeenth century. This could not have been done in isolation to time. Although the lifetime of this priory was more than 700 years, the researched time of this study was ring-fenced to this particular century. For the Priory, this period was historically significant. Although it was a turbulent time for the various Italian states under Spanish control and indeed for the whole of Europe, the Hospitaller priory of Messina may be said to have flourished, as evidenced by an increase in its component parts and in its membership. The rebellion that broke out in the city in 1674 served to highlight a particular facet of how this priory dealt with a situation that attempted to upend the mores of the Order.

The proposal of this dissertation has been addressed in various ways. The lines of reasoning included the growth of the Hospitaller patrimony on Sicily, its management by the various incumbents, the spread of religious practice through the construction and embellishment of multiple Hospitaller chapels and churches in urban and rural settings and the spiritual services offered in them, the increase in the number of professed Italian knights in this period, and the relationship between the priory and the ecclesiastical and secular authorities on the island. An attempt has been made to evaluate the connection between the Convent, as the administrative centre on Hospitaller Malta, and the Sicilian

priory, a peripheral satellite but closest geographically than all the other priories. Perhaps even more important, as demonstrated in particular in the 1674 insurrection, was the viewpoint offered by the Sicilian priory in its relations to the Convent on Malta: the priory looked inwards as it tried to come to grips, on the one hand, with the instructions issued by the grand master and council, and, on the other, the actual realities in the war-zone. The clash of these two forces created enormous difficulties for the brethren in Messina. Chapter 8 has indicated the manner how convent and priory dealt with what proved to be an institutionally explosive situation.

The surviving data is sufficiently strong to posit a historical, geographical, and economical picture of the Messina priory in the seventeenth century. It gives an insight into the geographical economy of the area, of which the priory formed a part; it demonstrates the transformation of agro-economic practice with the passage of time. One classic example was the processing of wheat into ship biscuit. There were others, like the production of salted meat on a massive industrial scale on one site in the Order's factories in Augusta; the development of social mobility for the donors of *jus patronatus* commanderies to the Order; and the relations, sometimes turbulent, between the Order and the local senatorial and ecclesiastical authorities (the decades-long legal battles between the Order and the Archbishop of Messina). Essentially this information weaves a cross-section of life on a Hospitaller commandery and Priory in the early modern historical age.

It is evident that the grand priory of Messina enjoyed a number of attributes, some excellent and others mundane, that set it apart from other Hospitaller priories.

Of all the priories the Order owned in Christian Europe, Messina was probably the smallest in acreage.¹ Compared with the other 26 priories existing in 1583, it had the smallest number of commanderies. This was in turn reflected in the reduced income which the priory had at its disposal, impinging on the amount of responsiones it sent to Malta on an annual basis.

¹ D'Avenia (2003), 36.

The priory of Messina, located as it was on the periphery of the European mainland, was in an ideal position to function as the final common pathway for the channeling of most of the funds emanating from all the commanderies of the Order to the Convent. In this sense, the Priory of Messina evolved into an *ad hoc* financial depository for the Order, through which all the hard currency was conducted before finally reaching the Common Treasury in Malta.²

Another attribute of the Sicilian priory was the increased number of knights who professed in it; this was not only limited to the seventeenth century but was already evident in the early sixteenth century.³ This trend was indeed reflected in the entire Italian Langue, of which Messina was one small component; for some odd reason it was this priory that attracted the greatest number of brethren.

Sicily was also the closest landfall to the convent in Malta after 1530. By default, the first ports of call for the naval squadron of the Order were Sicilian ports, mainly Siracusa, Augusta and Messina, all of which were on the eastern coast. These were essentially roll-on roll-off ports for the Order, supplying the naval squadron's victuals before embarking on the *caravane*, and off-loading a continuous chain of provisions to the almost barren island of Malta. The transshipment of tax-free grain to Malta, coming various Sicilian ports, was mainly supervised by the Receiver in Messina.⁴

² John A Consiglio, Juan Carlos Martinez Oliva, Gabriel Tortella, *Banking and Finance in the Mediterranean: A Historical Perspective* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2013), 48. See also Giuffrida (2006), 76. *'Le piazze finanziarie di Palermo e di Messina rappresentano per la Sacra Religione uno snodo strutturale molto importante per garantire la circolazione dei flussi finanziari prodotti dai diversi priorati sparsi per l'Europa e, soprattutto, per spostare capitali in sicurezza e con estrema rapidità. L'intuizione del Trasselli è corretta quando afferma che la ricevitore di Sicilia ha anche la funzione di vera e propria Depositoria, una sorta di banco privato, che si relazionava con l'analoga struttura barcellonese. A questa riflessione è opportuno aggiungere un'altra: la struttura siciliana è posta al vertice di una rete di Depositorie sparse in tutta Europa, con il compito di convogliare verso Malta le risorse finanziarie necessarie per supportare la sua funzione d'avamposto militare contro la pressione turca nei confronti dell'Occidente'*. See also Trasselli (1970), 203.

³ Spagnoletti (2003), 24 et seq.

⁴ The Order's Receivers in Sicily were based in coastal towns; mainly Messina, Palermo, Siracusa and Augusta, but at least by the beginning of the eighteenth century, there were also receivers in the towns of Licata, Scicli and Trapani. This was practical as it was from these places that the annual quantum of cereals left the Sicilian ports to Malta. Another valid reason was the refurbishment of the naval squadron of the Order, both of provisions as well as manpower. See D'Avenia (2003), 40. See also Mark Aliosio, 'A Test Case for Regional market Integration? The Grain Trade between Malta and Sicily in the Late

Finally, the priory had also served as a temporary place of refuge when the Order, discomfited and disheartened after the fall of Rhodes, gravitated to Messina, possibly around May 1523. Here, the whole enclave, including the multitude of the injured and sick who had survived the journey from Rhodes, was hosted in the Grand Priory of Messina and the peripheral buildings.

The present dissertation has also offered a number of new insights and considerations on the Hospitaller Priory of Messina. These include the creation of the post of Receiver of the Order, instituted around the middle of the fourteenth century, in order to revamp an ailing management and administrative system. This was not, of course, restricted to the Institution's Sicilian landed assets. The thesis also indicated various phases of growth of the priory, one of which showed the surge in the first half of the seventeenth century, of donated *jus patronatus* commanderies. This thesis has also analysed the direct involvement of the priory in the Messina rebellion of 1674, with particular emphasis on such issues as that of allegiance to the Order, and its principles of neutrality. Despite a calamitous seventeenth century, the priory may be claimed to have evolved and flourished, when the parameters of manpower, funds and assets are taken into consideration. The dissertation has also discussed several examples of the close interrelationships forged between the Hospitaller institution and the Sicilian community, across all strata of society.

Finally, the dissertation has highlighted the composite, multifaceted character of the archetypal Hospitaller. He has been depicted as a Renaissance man at ease with the higher echelons of Society, a scion of the nobility dedicated to the Faith with his daily religious instructions, but equally at home with a sword in hand, fighting the infidel. He was used to spend countless hours at sea, with all its attendant discomforts and dangers, but was also accustomed to living in palatial residences. An opulent commander, wearing expensive clothes, surrounded by expensive furnishings and accoutrements, and adequately serviced by an array of retainers. He was a shrewd administrator and conversant with the uncertainties of the world of finance. These endowments, together

Middle Ages' in Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe: Essays in Honour of John H.A. Munro, Lawrin Armstrong, Martin M. Elbl, Lawrin david Armstrong (Eds), Leiden, Brill, 2007, 297-309.

under one hat, showed, as Giuffrida suggests, the irreconcilable reality that was the Hospitaller in the seventeenth century.⁵

There is much further scope for research on the topic of the development of the Messina Priory. The state of the priory in earlier centuries, the assessment of the life and times of its sometimes-enterprising priors, the diplomatic controversies the priory incurred in the various epochs of its existence - all these will add further insight on this marvellous and extraordinary institution. To pick up one small example: an in-depth scrutiny of the remaining extant cabrei of the various Sicilian land-holdings under Hospitaller dominion, should shed more light on the geographical economy of the region through the different epochs, on the ways agriculture in Sicily was transformed with the passage of time, on the increasing development of social mobility, insight into the evolution of local governance, and the relationship between the Order of St John and the secular and ecclesiastical powers in different ages. Indeed, each cabreo provides a living cross-section of past times.⁶

It would also prove a useful and interesting exercise to carry out a comparative analysis with other priories of the Order within and outside the confines of Italy; the relevant comparisons and contrasts will highlight the idiosyncrasies of the Grand Priory of Messina. Notwithstanding the statutes governing the Order as one institution, to what extent can one claim that functional uniformity was ensured throughout the dependencies of all its eight Langues?

The Hospitaller Order of St John bequeathed a rich patrimony for posterity. More than the still extant architecture in the Knights' erstwhile territories in Europe and the Middle East, and their buildings in the convent city in Malta, they also left a wealth, a treasure trove of archival documentation which up till now has only been tapped sporadically. It still needs to be thoroughly and professionally catalogued. There is still a huge repository of as yet undiscovered information and detail that would shed more light on this prime Hospitaller institution.

⁵ Giuffrida (2006), 113.

⁶ See Giuseppe Scuderi, I Cabrei Figurati dell'Ordine di Malta, *Agorá* 41/2012, 46-53.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Archivium Ordo Melitensis (AOM) National Library of Malta, Valletta.

Section 2, the *Liber Conciliorum*, gives a record of the transaction and dealings carried out by the Council of the Order. Apart from decisions concerning promotions, pensions and admissions, the Council, in its ‘Complete’ form was also the last court of Appeal in cases involving the brethren. It contains 186 volumes spanning the years from 1459 to 1798. Specific volumes that have so far been consulted for the present work are:

| | |
|-----|---|
| 107 | Liber Conciliorum 1674 - 1676 |
| 108 | Liber Conciliorum 1677 – 1680 |
| 125 | Liber Conciliorum M.M. Fr. Nicolaus Cotoner. Ann. 1674-76. |
| 126 | Liber Conciliorum M.M. Fr. Nicolaus Cotoner. Ann. 1677-80 |
| 212 | Libri Conciliorum, 1459-1798 |
| 232 | Indici dei decreti del Consiglio Ordinario e di Stato del 1597-1688. (An index of the decrees approved by Council). |

Section 3 is the *Liber Conciliorum Status*, which covered the external administration managed by the Council, including political, diplomatic, and military matters of the Order.

| | |
|-----|---|
| 262 | Liber Conciliorum Status Nicola Cotoner 1672 – 1686. Deliberations of the Councils of State held under grand masters Cotoner/Carafa |
|-----|---|

- 263 Liber Conciliorum Status MM Gregorii Carafa et Adriani de Wignacourt 1687 – 1693. Deliberations of the Councils of State held under grand masters Carafa/Wignacourt
- 264 Liber Conciliorum Status Adriani de Wignacourt, Raymundi Perellos y Roccaful 1693 - 1700

Section 5 is the *Liber Bullarum*, containing the records relating to the activity of the Chancery of the Order. These include copies or registration (*libri bullarum*) and minutes (*libri minutarium*) of magistral and conventual decrees.

- 402 Liber Bullarum M. Magistri Fratris Fabritii de Carretto: 1513.
- 578 Liber Bullarum M. Magistri Fratris Francisci Ximenez de Texada : 1774.

The Treasury, Section 6, has also some interesting documentation regarding the Receiver's accounts of the priory of Messina for the years 1792-95.

- 639 Libro dei Chirografi della Camera del Tesoro. No. 5 - 1775-1779.
- 640 Libro dei Chirografi della Camera del Tesoro. No. 6 - 1780-1782.
- 641 Libro dei Chirografi della Camera del Tesoro. No. 7 - 1782-1786.
- 814 Bilancio annual della Ricetta di Messina 1795 - 1797
- 815 Primo Conto del Commendatore Chiaranda. Procuratore in Agosta. Dal Primo Maggio 1796 a tutt'Aprile 1797
- 833 Bilanci annuali from the Register of the Receivers, 1795-1797.
- 835 Bilanci D'Alemagna dal Primo Maggio 1795 a Tutto tprile 1797
- 881 Bilancio Decennale del Comun Tesoro, 1778-1788.
- 899 Libri de' Donativi 1790-1795

Section 9 consists of 464 volumes of **correspondence and letters** from the Grandmasters to the various monarchs and to members of the Order regarding issues involving the institution.

- 1201` *Lettres de la cour escrites aux Eminentissimus Grands Maitres de Gessan, Raphael et Nicola Cotoner. 1660 – 1678*
- 1227 *Cotoner. Lettres des Religieux et particularis 1672 – 1679*
- 1445 Registro delle lettere Italiane spedite a vari sovrani, ambasciatori ed altri personaggi del Gran maestro Cotoner, 1675-1676
- 1446 Registro delle lettere Italiane spedite a vari sovrani, ambasciatori ed altri personaggi del Gran maestro Cotoner, 1677-1678
- 1447 Registro delle lettere Italiane spedite a vari sovrani, ambasciatori ed altri personaggi del Gran maestro Cotoner, 1679-1680
- 1459 Registro di lettere spedite dal gran maestro de Paola, 1693-1694
- 1631 Fasci di lettere riguardanti lo finanzia dell'Ordine spedite ai Procuratori del Tesoro de diverse Provincie di Messina, Catania, Palermo e Siracusa 1797 - 1798

Section 10 includes the **Statutes and Ordinances**

- 1665 Statuti, Titolo XIV: delle Commende 18th Century.
- 1666 Compendio del Codice Gerosolimitano (2 vols): Compendio delle materie contenute nel codice del sacro militare ordine gerosolimitano (Malta 1783) and Stabilimenti per gli schiavi, armamenti e case (Malta 1784)
- 1682 Trattados delle Commende del Priore Caravita

Section 12 covers the Order's **Navy**.

- 1778 *Scritture sulla Neutralità dell'Ordine Gerosolimitano e del Porto di Malta (17th and 18th Century).*
- 1779 Diverse scritture sulla neutralita' del porto (di Malta).
- 1780 Fatti riguardanti la neutralita del porto (di Malta).

Section 14 includes the **Deliberations of the Langues**. Sixty manuscripts (2125 to 2184) belong to the Italian Langue and they range from 1253 to 1793. The following were retrieved from *Sezione Quarta* of the Italian Langue.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2129 | Deliberations of the Italian Langue |
| 2133 | Deliberations of the Italian Langue, 1678-1688 |
| 2159 | Fondazione della Lingua d'Italia. Scritture relative all'erezione di varie delle commende della medesima Lingua 1253 – 1769 |
| 2160 | Fondazione di Baliaggi, Commende, et altre opere pie della Veneranda Lingua d'Italia 1633 - 1658 |
| 2161 | Fondazione della Lingua d'Italia. Scritture relative all'erezione di varie delle commende della medesima Lingua 1709 – 1769 |
| 2162 | Rolli di tutti i Commendatori Cavalieri della Veneranda Lingua d'Italia, 1604 – 1663 Serie dei Priorati, Baliaggi e Commende della detta Lingua colla corrispondente annual rendita. Responsioni. |
| 2171 | Possessori delle Commende delle Lingue d'Italia, 1645 – 1747. Tomo I: Dignità e Commende di sette Priorati della Lingua d'Italia. |

Section 15 includes the **Proofs of Nobility**

- | | |
|------|--|
| 4064 | Part II: Proofs of Nobility of Italian Knights. Mario Bichi, 1664, Pisa. |
|------|--|

Section 16, sezione duodecesimo, covers the **Visitations to the Messina Priory** (6054 - 6134). These make up 81 volumes, the first 29 of which cover the visitations *di cabimento* and *di miglioramento*, whereas the latter volumes include the *cabrei* of most of the Sicilian patrimony.

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 6047 | Part XI: Visitations, Priory of Barletta. Scritture appartenenti al Baliaffio di S. Stefano di Fasano |
| 6054 | Miglioramento della Commenda di S. Antonio dell'Albigiana |
| 6055 | Miglioramento della Commenda di S. Antonio dell'Albigiana |
| 6056 | Miglioramento della Commenda di S. Antonio dell'Albigiana 1684 |
| 6057 | Miglioramento della Commenda di S. Giovanni di Caltagirone (hand-coloured plans) 16/17 century |
| 6058 | Miglioramento della Commenda di S. Giovanni di Caltagirone 1691 |
| 6059 | Miglioramento della Commenda di S. Giovanni di Caltagirone 1728 |
| 6060 | Miglioramento della Commenda di Trapani detta di Calli 1794 |
| 6061 - 6066 | Miglioramento della Commenda di Malandrina (6, dei quali di Malta 5) |
| 6067 - 6069 | Miglioramento della Commenda di S. Giovanni di Rodi di Marsala (3) |
| 6070 | Miglioramento della Commenda di S. Stefano di Schiattina di Palermo |
| 6071 | Miglioramento della Commenda di S. Giovanni Battista di Piazza |
| 6072 | Miglioramento della Commenda di Polizzi |
| 6073 - 6078 | Miglioramento della Commenda di S. Giovanni di Ragusa (6), 1630, 1641, 1677, 1795, 1704, 1669. |
| 6079 - 6081 | Miglioramento della Commenda di Borea di Siracusa (3), 1739, 1686, 1692 |
| 6082 | Miglioramento della Commenda di S. Giovanni di Taormina, 1574 |
| 6084 - 6086 | Cabreo della Commenda di S. Giovannie Giacomo della saracena di Castiglione e Bonanni (3), 1637, 1766, 1651 |

- 6087 Cabreo della Commenda di S. Giovanni di Mazzarino, 1633
- 6088 - 6092 Cabreo della Commenda di S. Giovanni di Marsala (5), 1749, 1708, 1708, 1706, 1749
- 6093 - 6097 Cabreo della Commenda di Priorato di Messina (5)
- 6098 Cabreo della Commenda di S. Giovanni di Modica e Randazzo (3), 1690
- 6099 Cabreo della Commenda di S. Giovanni di Albigiana di Palermo, 1678
- 6100 Cabreo della Commenda di S. Giovanni di S Stefano Schiattino di Palermo, 1680
- 6101 - 6103 Cabreo della Commenda di S. Giuseppe di barberino di Piazza (3), 1660, 1680, 1680
- 6104 - 6106 Cabreo della Commenda di Polizzi (3), 1708, 1766, 1684
- 6107 - 6109 Cabreo della Commenda di S. Giovanni di Ragusa (3), 1666, 1746, 1796
- 6110 Cabreo della Commenda di San Gio della Giulla di Palermo, vol 6, 1692
- 6111 Atti Recognitori e Spese della Commenda di Caltagirone
- 6112 Incartamento di Scritture spettanti alla Commenda fondata da Giacchi Calli vol1-2, 1631
- 6113 Scrittura attinenti alla Commenda di Calli
- 6114 Relazione e Spoglio delle Visite del Priorato di Messina,
- 6115 - 6116 Scrittura attinenti alla Commenda di S Giovanni di Mazzara (2 fasc)
- 6117 - 6121 Scrittura attinenti alla Commenda di S Giovanni di Piazza (5 fasc)
- 6122 Rolle appartenenti al Priorato di Messina
- 6123 Ordinazioni Generali della Visita Priorale di Messina fatta nell'anno 1749 nel Gran Priorato di Messina
- 6124 - 6134 Scritture del Priorato di Messina (11)
- 6228 Miglioramento di diverse commende della Lingua d'Italia, 1567

- 6229 Diverse commende della Lingua d'Italia, hand-coloured plans
- 6231 Visitations
- 6254 Fondazione della Commenda Malandrina in Noto: vol. 1: 1642

Archivio della Magione, Archivio di Stato di Palermo, University of
Palermo

Gran Priorato di Messina; elenco dei cabrei.

Commenda del Magione No. 379

Busta 549 (1664-1665)

Busta 553 (1694-1698)

Busta 578 (1758-1773)

Busta 579 (1629-1773)

Busta 545 (1546-1773)

Busta 511 (1814-Feudo Schiettino)

| File | Date | Contents |
|------|-----------|--|
| 369 | 1472-1749 | Commandery of San Giovanni of Rodi in Marsala: assets that the commandery possessed in Palermo and in the territory of Trapani |
| 373 | 1712 | Cabreo of Marsala with various plans: supplement to the Cabreo |
| 374 | 1752-1801 | Commandery of Taormina and the Grand Priory of Messina: cabreo of stable assets and leases, concessions, recognisory acts, receipts and expenditure lists. |

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------|--|
| 379 | 1665-1796 | Commandery of Ragusa and Vizzini: cabreo |
| 383 | 1620, 1690, 1730 | Cabrei for the <i>miglioramento</i> of the commandery of Piazza |
| 384 | 1648-1784 | Commandery of Piazza, Mazzarino and Butera: cabreo |
| 387 | 1739 | Cabreo of all the assets of the commandery of S. Giovanni Battista of Piazza |
| 390 | 1625-1757 | Commandery of S. Stefano Protomartire k/a Schittini: cabreo |
| 401 | 1603-1609 | Commandery of S. Giovanni Battista of Polizzi |
| 402 | 1604 | Commandery of S. Giovanni Battista of Polizzi |
| 543 | 1658 | Grand Priory of Messina: cabreo of Lentini |
| 574 | 1752-1801 | Commandery of Taormina and Grand Priory of Messina: cabreo of stable assets and leases, concessions, recognisory acts, receipts and expenditure lists. |
| 578 | 1758-1765 | Hospital and Grand Priory of Messina: cabreo (volume I) |

Secondary Sources

Abela Joan and Buttigieg Emanuel, 'The Island Order State on Malta and its Harbour c. 1530-c.1624' *The Harbour of Malta*, C. Vassallo and S. Mercieca (Eds), Progress Press, Malta, 2018, 49-74.

(Discusses the concept of an Island Order State as typified by Rhodes and in extension to Malta).

Abulafia, David, *The Merchants of Messina: Levant Trade and Domestic Economy*, (Papers of the British School at Rome, Vol. 54 (1986)), 196-212.

(This monograph gives the importance of Messinese merchants in Mediterranean trade in the late middle ages and how they became a focal point under Norman Rule.)

Abulafia, David, *The Two Italies: Economic Relations Between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Northern Communes*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005).

(A study of the economic development of twelfth century Italy under Norman rule).

Agnello, G., 'Siracusa e l'Ordine dei Cavalieri di Malta', in *Archivio Storico Per la Sicilia Orientale*, (serie II, a. XI, 1935).

(The relations between the maritime city of Siracusa and the Hospitallers).

Alfani, Guido, *Italian Famines: An Overview (ca. 1250-1810)*, (Dondena Centre, Bocconi University, 2015).

(Provides a chronology of Italian famines, incorporating earlier chronologies together with recent research on preindustrial mortality crises covering the whole period from 1250 to 1810.)

Alfani, Guido, 'Plague in seventeenth-century Europe and the decline of Italy: an epidemiological hypothesis', in *European Review of Economic History*, xvii, Issue 4, November 2013.

(Compares the effect of plague across Europe during the seventeenth century, with infection being more severe in the south than the north, and Italy being the country most affected. This had direct regional impact on Hospitaller human resources and asset management.)

Amari, Michele, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia* (Firenze, Successori le Monnier, 1868).

(A traditional romantic historiography of the Muslim Sicilian rule from the end of Byzantine hegemony to the arrivals of the Normans.)

Amico, Antonino, *De Messanensis Prioratus Sacrae Hospitalis Domus Militum S. Johannes Hyerosolimitani Origine* (Palermo: Petrus Coppola, 1640).

(On the origins of the Hospitaller priory in Messina.)

De Antonellis, Gianandrea, 'La preghiera del Giovannita nelle Istruzioni sopra gli obblighi più principali de' Cavalieri di Malta di François-Aimé Pouget', (Studi Melitensi, xxvi, 2018).

(The essential message of Pouget, and adopted by the Hospitallers, is the embracing of serving God and neighbor at the cost of one's own life.)

Aquilina, Frederick, *Benigno Zerafa (1726-1804) and the Neapolitan Galant Style*, (Boydell & Brewer, 2016).

(A study of an eighteenth-century composer, Benigno Zerafa (1726-1804), a specialist in sacred music composition, and his links with Naples, where the composer studied for six years.)

D'Aragona, Bruno, 'Don Lucio Martinez d'Aragona: Fondatore della 'Commenda Martinez' di Siracusa nel Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta', *Melita Historica* ix, (1984).

(An excerpt on the Hospitallers in sixteenth century Sicily and the institution of the commandery Martinez by jus patronatus.)

D'Argens, L. de Boyer, *Réflexions Politiques sur l'Etat et les Devoirs des Chevaliers de Malthe*, (La Haye 1739).

(This work dwells on both the material obligations of knights and the spiritual duties expected from them, including the ultimate act of self-immolation in the interests of the Order.)

Arneitz, Patrick, Draxler, Andrea, Rauch, Roman, Leonhardt, 'Roman Orientation of churches by magnetic compasses?', in *Geophysical Journal*, cxcviii, 1, (2014).

(Dwells on Christian symbolism of constructing churches on an East-West axis.)

Astorri, C., *Il Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta e le Sue Commende Familiari nel Diritto Italiano*, (Roma, 1930).

(Details how the Hospitaller jus patronatus commanderies fitted in the Civil laws of the land.)

D'Avenia, Fabrizio, 'Le Commende Gerosolimitane in Sicilia: Patrimoni Ecclesiastici, Gestione Aristocratica' in *La Sicilia dei Cavalieri. Le Istituzioni dell'Ordine di Malta in Età Moderna (1530-1826)*, (Messina, Fondazione Donna Maria Marullo di Condojanni, 2003).

(Description of the Sicilian commanderies together with their institution and the work of the Receiver of the Order).

D'Avenia, Fabrizio, *Nobiltà allo Specchio. Ordine di Malta e Mobilità Sociale nella Sicilia Moderna* (Palermo, Mediterranea Ricerche Storiche, 2009).

(D'Avenia uses the mandatory Proofs of Nobility of the Order in the Italian Langue as a reflection of Sicilian nobility).

D'Avenia, Fabrizio, *Nobiltà "Sotto Processo". Patriziato di Messina e Ordine di Malta nella Prima Etá Moderna* (Mediterranea Recherche Storiche anno1 Dicembre 2004), 19-56.

(Section 4 is about the Sicilian Hospitallers during the revolt of 1674).

D'Avenia, Fabritio, 'Note sulla Camera Priorale di Milici: Casali, Chiese, Feudi', in *Sulle Tracce dei Cavalieri di Malta: il Restauro del Palazzo Priorale di Rodì Milici*, Pietro Di Maria, Cinzia Accetta (eds), (Caracol, 2010).

(Gives a description of one of the Sicilian assets of the Hospitallers.)

Aymard, M., 'Il Mondo Mediterraneo nella Seconda Metá del Seicento', in *La Rivolta di Messina (1674-1678) e il Mondo Mediterraneo nella Seconda Metá del Seicento*, Saverio di Bella (ed.) (Cosena, Luigi Pellegrini Editore, 2001).

(This selection of papers gives insights on the Messina revolt of 1674 in a background of what was happening in the Mediterranean countries at the time. The civil war is given in the context of the key players, Spain, France, Holland and the Ottoman Empire.)

Baadj, Amar S., *Saladin, the Almohads and the Banū Ghānija: The Contest for North Africa (12th and 13th Centuries)* (Leiden, Boston, BRILL, 2015).

(The author gives an all-inclusive analysis of the Ayyubids, the Almohads and the Banu Ghaniya in North Africa in the twelfth and thirteenth century).

Backman, Clifford, *The Decline and Fall of Medieval Sicily: Politics, Religion and Economy in the Reign of Frederick III, 1296-1337* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002).

(This book researches Sicilian life in the reign of Frederick III (1296-1337). This sovereignty marks the transition from a busy and prosperous island to a place torn up by violence).

Balbi di Corregio, Francesco, *The Siege of Malta 1565*, (Bogtrykkeriet Antikva A/S, Copenhagen 1961).

(An eye-witness account of the Siege of Malta 1565 by a Spanish soldier of Fortune.)

Barber, Malcolm, 'The Charitable and Medical Activities of the Hospitallers and Templars', in *A History of Pastoral Care*, G R Evans (ed), A&C Black, (2000).

(Describes the medical activities of the Hospitallers in the 2000-year history of the Church in action.)

Barberi, Giovanni Luca, *Beneficia Ecclesiastica*, (Illuminati Peri, Manfredi, 1962).

(On the ecclesiastical benefices of the Italian church.)

Baron, Samuel, *A Collection of Voyages and Travels* (London, John Churchill, 1745).

(Part of the itinerary goes to Messina with various scenes described of Messina harbour and town in the middle of the eighteenth century).

Barthel, Manfred, *The Jesuits: History and Legend of the Society of Jesus*. Translated and adapted from the German by Mark Howson. (William Morrow & Co., 1984).

(Presents an exhaustive study of this powerful and sometimes controversial Order of the church.)

Bascapè, Giacomo C., *L'Ordine Sovrano di Malta e gli Ordini Equestri della Chiesa: nella Storia e nel Diritto* (Ceschina, 1969).

(This work describes the history of the Hospitallers and other lay Orders of the Church, in the context of their privileges.)

De Benedictis, Angela, *Tumulti: Moltitudini Ribelli in Etá Moderna* (Bologna, Studi e Ricerche 654, Il Mulino, 2013).

(Analysis of four Italian insurrections, one of which was the Messina revolt of 1674.)

Benigno, Francesco, *Favoriti e Ribelli: Stili della Politica Barocca* (Roma, Bulzoni, 2011).

(This study gives an insight on rebellion and monarchy supporters in early Modern Sicily in the context of Baroque politics. The third part of the book entitled *Lotta Politica e Radicalizzazione Ideologica: La Rivolta di Messina del 1674-1678* is of interest to the current work).

Benigno, Francesco, 'La Questione della Capitale: Lotta politica e Rappresentanza degli interessi nella Sicilia del Seicento', *Società e Storia*, xiii, 47 (1990).

(The author scrutinizes the struggle for pre-eminence between Messina and Palermo in the seventeenth century).

Benigno, Francesco, 'Messina e Il Duca d'Osuna; un Conflitto Politico nella Sicilia del Seicento', in *Il Governo della Città, Patriziati e Politica nella Sicilia Moderna*, Domenico Ligresti (ed.), (Catania CEUCM, 1990),

(Describes the interrelationships between the Spanish viceroy and Messina in the Messina revolt.)

Benigno, Francesco, 'Aristocrazia e Stato in Sicilia all'epoca di Filippo III', in *Signori, Patrizi e Cavallieri in Italia Centro-meridionale nell'Etá Moderna*, Maria Antonietta Visceglia (ed), (Roma Laterza, 1992).

(Discusses the nobility of 'State' in Sicily at the time of Philip III (1578-1621).

Benigno, Francesco, 'Integration and Conflict in Spanish Sicily', in *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion 1500-1700*, Thomas James Dandeleet, John A. Marino (eds), American Academy in Rome, Brill, (2007).

(Analysis of the reciprocal nature of Spanish-Italian relations and their interaction in the early modern period.)

Bennett, Stephen, 'The battle of Arsuf/Arsur, A Reappraisal of the Charge of the Hospitallers', in *The Military Orders Vol VI (Part 1): Culture and Conflict in the Mediterranean World*, Jochen Schenk, Mike Carr (eds), (Taylor and Francis, 2016).

(Investigates the ill-omened Hospitaller charge that in effect pre-empted Richard the Lionheart battle strategies.)

Di Blasi, Giovanni Evangelista, *Storia Cronologica de Vicerè, Luogotenenti e Presidenti del Regno di Sicilia* (Palermo, Dalla Stamperia Oreetea, 1842).

(An exhaustive chronological history of the Viceroy, Lieutenants and Presidents of the Sicilian Kingdom. This was important to timeline the events of the Messina rebellion of 1674).

Blondel, Francois, *Cours d'Architecture enseigne dans l'Academie Royale D'Architecture*, (Paris, 1675).

(On architecture from this great French Architect of the time.)

De Boisgelin, Louis, *Ancient and Modern Malta*, 3 vols (G&J Robinson, London, 1804).

(A description of Malta from ancient times to the end of the period of the Knights.)

Bonazzi, Francesco, *Elenco dei Cavalieri del S.M. Ordine di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme: Ricevuti nella Veneranda Lingua d'Italia dalla Fondazione dell'Ordine ai Nostri Giorni* (Napoli, Forni Editore, 1907).

(This work gives a roll of professed members of the Order in the Italian language from the early days until the end of the twentieth century).

Bonfiglio Costanzo, G., *Messina Città Nobillissima descritta in VIII Libri*, (Venezia, 1606).

(The history of Messina from ancient times.)

Bongars, Jacques, 'Gesta Dei per Francos', 1 pp 382 f., translated in *A Source Book for Medieval History*, O J Thatcher, and E H McNeal, (eds.) (New York, Scribners, 1905).

(A collection of several contemporary French writers who described the early crusades in the Holy Land).

Bono, S., 'Naval Exploits and Privateering', in *Hospitaller Malta, 1530 – 1798: Studies in Early Modern Malta and the Order of St John of Jerusalem*, V. Mallia Milanes (ed.) (Malta, Mireva Publications, 1993).

(A collection of papers on the Hospitallers in Malta expounding their achievements and accomplishments).

Borg, D., Burgassi, V., Spiteri, M., Vanesio, V., Studying historical landscapes: the cabreo and related archival sources from Italy and Malta – from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century, in *Arkivju*, viii, (2017).

(Describes Sicilian and Maltese cabrei of the seventeenth century.)

Bosio, Giacomo, *Istoria Della Sacra Religione Et Illustrissima Militia di San Giovanni Gierosolimitano*, vol. 3 (Roma, Facciotti, 1602).

(The Hospitaller official historiographer narrates the events that the Order of St John went through from the very beginning up till the Battle of Lepanto in 1571; there is obviously a very perceptible Hospitaller bias as can be expected).

Bosio, Giacomo, *Gli Statuti della Sacra Religione di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano* (Roma, Giacomo Tornieri, 1589).
(The Statutes of the Hospitaller Order).

Bosio, Giacomo, *Le Immagini de' Beati e Santi della Sacra Religione & Illustrissima Militia di S. Gio. Gerosolimitano con un brevissimo Compendio della Vita e de' Miracoli loro* (Roma, Guglielmo Facciotti, 1622).
(Describes the life and miracles of the Hospitaller blessed and saints.)

Bosio, Giacomo, *La Corona del Cavalier Gerosolimitano* (Roma, Francesco Zanetto, 1588).
(Describes the trials and tribulations of the Hospitaller knight to the ultimate goal of sainthood.)

Bosio, Giacomo, *La Trionfante e Gloriosa Croce* (Alfonso Ciacone, 1610).
(Lessons on the devotions expected from every good christian.)

Bottari, Salvatore, *Post Res Perditas: Messina 1678-1713* (Messina, 2005).
(analyses several aspects of Messina, including the political elites, productive activities of the city and culture between the humanistic age and the Renaissance.)

Branca, Stefano, Azzaro, Raffaele, De Beni, Emanuela, Chester, David, Duncan, Angus, 'Impacts of the 1669 eruption and the 1693 earthquakes on the Etna Region (Eastern Sicily, Italy): An example of recovery and response of a small area to extreme events', in *Journal of Volcanology and Geothermal Research*, 303, (2015).
(Description of the 1693 east Sicilian earthquake.)

Bresc, Henri, 'I Cavalieri in Sicilia tra Potere e Società' in *La Presenza dei Cavalieri di San Giovanni in Sicilia* (Palermo, Palazzo Chiaramonte, 2001).
(Bresc records the early days of the Hospitaller Order in Sicily in the context of a robust Norman State which discouraged and was afraid of the power of autonomous military Orders, with special emphasis to those linked to papal authority).

Brincat, Joseph, 'The Languages of the Knights: Legislation, Administration and Diplomacy in a Multilingual State (14th-16th Centuries)', in *Language and Diplomacy*, Jovan Kurbalija and Hannah Slavik, (eds). (Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, University of Malta, Malta, 2001).
(Investigates the administrative difficulties faced by the Order due to linguistic issues between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.)

Brogini, Anne, 'Crisis and Revival: the Convent of the Order of Malta during the Catholic Reformation (16th-17th centuries)', in *The Military Orders: Culture and Conflict in the Mediterranean World*, vol 6.1, Jochen Schenk and Mike Carr (Eds), Routledge, (2017).
(Explores the difficulties faced by the Hospitallers with the Reformation.)
Brown, Reginald Allen, *The Normans* (Woodbridge, Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 1994).

(Features the supremacy of the Normans as they descended from the north to envelope Europe from Ireland to Syria and down to Sicily).

Bruhl, C., Giunta, F., Giullou, A., (eds), *Rogarii II Regis Diplomata Latina* (Codex Diplomaticus Regni Siciliae ser ii vol 2, 2 (Cologne-Vienna 1987).
(Studies the diplomas and charters of King Roger II.)

Burgassi,Valentia, *Il Gran Priorato di Lombardia e la Commenda di Moncalieri*, (Studi Piemotesi, xlvii, 1,2018).

(Investigates the Grand Priory of Lombardy with specific emphasis on the commandery of Moncalieri. Of importance when comparing with the priory of Messina.)

Burton, Janet, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000 - 1300*, (Cambridge University Press, 1994).

(Traces the ascent of monasticism in the British Isles from 1000 to 1300. Studies the complex interactions between the religious houses and their founders, patrons, and their congregations.)

Butler, Samuel, *The Odyssey by Homer: Rendered into English Prose* (United State of America, Steed Publishing, 2011).

(This is an unabridged edition of the ancient Greek text Odyssey translated by Butler in 1900).

Buttigieg, Emanuel, *Nobility, Faith and Masculinity* (London, Continuum Publications, 2011).

(This is an important study of elite European *secondogeniti* who joined the Order of Malta. It highlights the requirements and qualities that a prospective candidate had to have to enrol. It also processes the complex interaction of internal factors - hierarchy, patriarchy, and age - set within external mechanisms such as papal patronage and interference.)

Buttigieg, Emanuel, Simon Phillips (eds), *Islands and Military Orders, c1291 - c 1798* (Ashgate publishing Ltd, 2014).

(Explores the interaction between islands and the Military Orders and vice-versa.)

Buttigieg, Emanuel, 'Knights, Jesuits, Carnival and the Inquisition in Seventeenth-Century Malta', in *The Historical Journal* lv, 3 (2012).

(Analysis of the complex interface between the Hospitallers and the powerful Jesuitical order in the seventeenth century.)

Camilleri, Maroma, 'The Pie Postulatio Voluntatis Papal Bull of 1113: A Diplomatical and Palaeographical Commentary', in *Melitensium Amor. Festschrift in Honour of Dun Gwann Azzopardi*, T. Cortis, Th. Freller, L. Bugeja (eds.), Gutenberg Press, Malta 2002.

(Studies the great institutional significance of this papal bull, which catapulted the Order to the pinnacle of its existence.)

Camilleri, Maroma, 'The Archives of the Order of Malta. AOM 6520-6577: a case of "Irrespect des Fonds?" in *Scientia et Religio. Studies in Memory of Fr. George Aquilina*

OFM (1939-2012) Scholar, Archivist and Franciscan Friar, J. Azzopardi (ed), Wignancourt Museum Publication, Malta, 2014.

(A series of archives of the French era after the expulsion of the knights from Malta grouped together).

Cancila, Orazio, *Impresa Redditi Mercato nella Sicilia Moderna*, (Mediterranae recherche storiche Palermo, 2003).

(Discusses the business transactions of early modern Sicily and the creation of an intermediary land manager, the *gabellotto*, between the indebted feudal lords and the impoverished peasants).

Cancila, Rosella, 'Merum et Mixtum Imperium nella Sicilia Feudale', in *Mediterranea, Ricerche Storiche*, anno v, Dec 2008.

(On the feudal jurisdiction in Sicily and the right to administer justice to one's vassals and the surge of transactions of this prerogative in the seventeenth century).

Caoursin, G., *Premium In Volumen Stabilimentorum Rhodiorum Militum Sacri Ordinis Hospitalis Sancti Johannis Hierosolymitanis*, Ulm, 1496.

(The statutes of the Order published during the Rhodian phase of the Order.)

Caravita, Giovanni Maria, *Trattato dell'Offizio del Ricevitore, e de Procuratori del Comun tesoro, fuor di Convento*. (Don Nicolò Capaci, Malta, 1763).

(Treatise on the post of the Order's receiver and procurators, including their job description).

Caravita, Giovanni Maria, *Trattato della Poverta de' Cavalieri di Malta*, (Antonio Scionico, Borgonovo, 1718).

(An exposition on the meaning of poverty for a member of the Order.)

Carrafa, Placido, *Prospetto Corografico Istorico di Modica*, translated to Italian by Filippo Renda, vol. I (Modica, la Porta, 1869).

(On the history of Modica, original edition published in 1653.)

Carrió-Invernizzi, Diana, 'A New Diplomatic History and the Networks of Spanish Diplomacy in the Baroque Era', *The International History Review*, 36:4, 2014.

(Gives an insight of diplomacy and relations between central and peripheral government at the time of the Messina insurrection).

Cassar, Carmel, *Society, Culture, and Identity in Early Modern Malta* (Malta, Mireva Publications, 2000).

(an analytical approach on the history of early modern Malta, dissecting the evolution of culture and identity of the island after the siege of 1565.)

Cassola, Arnold, *Süleyman the Magnificent and Malta 1565-Decisions, Concerns, Consequences* (Editore Morrone, 2017).

(Discusses the Maltese 1565 siege from the Turkish perspective).

Castelli, Vincenzo, *Memorie di Roberto Diana, Cavaliere Gerosolimitano, Gran Priore di Messina, di Venezia e di Roma* (Palermo, Stampe de Solli, 1798).

(The biography of one of the priors of Messina – three times over - and one of the most colourful of the Hospitallers to ever grace this seat).

Castiglione, Sabba, *Ricordi di Monsignor Sabba da Castiglione*, (Bologna, Bartolomeo Bonardo da Parma, 1546).

(On the suggestions and counsel of a humanistic renaissance knight on how to live a righteous life in the Order.)

Chalandon, F., 'Besprechung von Karl Andreas Kehr: Die Urkunden der Normannisch-sizilischen Könige', in *Le Moyen Age*, 16 (1903).

(Analysis of the Norman-Sicilian Kings in the Middle Ages.)

Ciappara, Frans, 'Malta, Naples and the Holy See in the Late Eighteenth Century', *Mediterranea-Ricerche Storiche*, xii, (2008).

(Discusses the foreign relationships between Hospitaller Malta, the Kingdom of Naples and the Holy See.)

Ciociola, Francesco, *Il Gran Priorato Giovannita di Capua* (Altrimedia, 2008).

(On the Grand Hospitaller Priory of Capua based on a cabreo found in the AOM.)

Codici del Sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano (Malta, Giovanni Mallia, 1782).

(The statutes of the Order published in 1782.)

Di Condojanni, Carlo Marullo, *La Sicilia ed il Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta*, (Messina, Grafiche La Sicilia, 1953).

(Relates on the origins of the Sicilian Priory of Messina and includes copies of original charters and a list – not absolutely accurate – of the priors and grand priors of Messina.

Consiglio, John A., Oliva, Juan Carlos Martinez, Tortella, Gabriel, *Banking and Finance in the Mediterranean: A Historical Perspective* (Ashgate Publishing, 2013)

(An analysis of the many trends and developments of banking in the Mediterranean area over the past two centuries.)

Corp, Edward, *The Stuarts in Italy, 1719-1766: A Royal Court in Permanent Exile* (Cambridge University press, 2011).

(An assessment of the exiled Stuart court in Rome in the eighteenth century.)

Corsaro R.A., Cristofolini R., Patanè L., 'The 1669 Eruption at Mount Etna: Chronology, Petrology and Geochemistry, with Inference on Magma sources and Ascent mechanisms', in *Bulletin of Volcanology* (1996) 58.

(An analysis of the Etnean eruption of 1669).

Costanza, Salvatore, *Tra Sicilia e Africa: Trapani, Storia di una Città Mediterranea* (Trapani, Corrao Editore, 2005).

(Includes some history of Trapani which was relevant to the topic in question).

Coulet, Noel, *Le vie Quotidienne dans les commanderies du Prieuré de St Gilles de l'Ordre de l'Hôpital d' après l'enquête pontificale de 1373*, in *La Commanderie, Institution des Ordres Militaire dans l'Occident Médiévale*, Antony Luttrell and Léon Pressoure (eds), Paris, 2002.

(On the daily life on the Hospitaller commanderies of the Priory of St Gilles, according to the pontifical inquiry of 1373.)

Dargenio, Antonella, 'La Spiritualità Giovannita Antica e Moderna', in *Studi Melitensi*, xxiv, (2016).

(Discusses the vocational spirituality of the members of the Hospitaller Order.)

Delaville le Roulx, Joseph, *Cartulaire Général de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem (1100-1310)*, (Paris. E. Leroux, 1906).

(The most definitive cartulary of Hospitaller charters to date.)

Depasquale, Carmen, *La Vie Intellectuelle et Culturelle des Chevaliers Français à Malte au XVIIIe Siècle*, (Msida, Malta University Press, 2010).

(Discusses the French Enlightenment in Hospitaller Malta.)

Dondi, Cristina, 'Liturgical policies of the Hospitallers between the Invention of Printing and the Council of Trent', in *The Military Orders History and Heritage*, Victor Mallia-Milanes (ed), (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing, 2008).

(Analysis of Hospitaller religious cult in the sixteenth century).

Dondi, Cristina, *Hospitaller Liturgical Manuscripts and Early Printed Books* in *Revue Mabillon*, xvi, 2003.

(Presentation of an array of missals and other religious books commissioned by the Order.)

Douglas, David Charles, *The Norman Fate, 1100-1154* (Madison, Eyre Methuen, 1976).

(The phenomenon of the Normans in the first half of the twelfth century).

Dray W.H., 'Narrative Versus Analysis in History', in *Rationality, Relativism and the Human Sciences*, Margolis J., Krausz M., Burian R.M. (eds), (Springer, Studies of the Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium, vol 1. Dordrecht, 1986.

(On the ongoing discussion between analytical history and narration.)

Ebejer, Matthias, 'The Concept of Martyrdom within Hospitaller Devotional Practices; the Fallen at St Elmo as a Case Study', in *Besieged*, M Camilleri (ed), National Library, Malta, (2015).

(Expands on religious themes of Hospitaller life including martyrdom.)

Ebejer, Matthias, 'Sanctify Yourselves and be Holy', Hospitallers and their Counter-Reformation Saints', *Journal of Baroque Studies*, ii, 1, University of Malta, (2017).

(Discusses the Counter-Reformation saints with a special emphasis on Hospitaller religiosity.)

Eidinow, J., *The Rule of Raymond du Puy*, with an English translation of the Rule, (Oxford, 2011).

(The Rule of the first master of the Order.)

Elliot, J. H., 'Revolution and Continuity in Early Modern Europe', in *Past and Present*, xlii, (1969).

(Discusses the general crisis of the seventeenth century and argues that rather than discontinuity, these events gave stability to Europe.)

Epstein, Stephen, *An Island for Itself: Economic Development and Social Change in Late Medieval Sicily* (Cambridge University press, 2003).

(Discusses the economic development of medieval Sicily and its dependence on regional political and institutional structures which regulated access to markets.)

Falcone, P., *Il Valore Documentario della Storia dell'Ordine Gerosolimitano di Giacomo Bosio*, (*Archivio Storico di Malta*), X (1938-1939).

(Analysis of Bosio's *Istoria* and correction of several factual errors in the text.)

Fazello, Tommaso, *Delle Storia di Sicilia, Deche Due* (Giuseppe Assenzio, Palermo, 1817),

(A reprint of the original history of Sicily, first published in 1558)

Di Ferro, Giuseppe Maria, *Biografi degli Uomini Illustri Trapanesi dall'Epoca Normanna*, (Trapani, Presso Manone e Solina, 1831).

(Several excerpts on who's who in Trapani in the Norman era).

Florio, John, *Florio's 1611 Italian/English Dictionary': Queen Anna's New World of Words*. Downloaded on the 17 May 2014 from the site <http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/florio/>

(Useful to translate old Italian terms that are no longer used).

Fontenay, M., 'The Mediterranean 1500-1800', in *Hospitaller Malta, 1530 – 1798: Studies in Early Modern Malta and the Order of St John of Jerusalem*, V. Mallia Milanes (ed.) (Malta, Mireva Publications, 1993).

(Discusses several aspects of the milieu of Hospitaller Malta.)

Forey, Alan, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the early Fourteenth Centuries*, (Hampshire, McMillan, 1992).

(encompasses a comprehensive survey of the military orders, including their military significance, governmental structure, and daily life.)

Forey, Alan, 'The Militarization of the Hospital of St John', in *Military Orders and the Crusades*, ix, Aldershot, (1994), published earlier in *Studia Monastica* 26 (1984).

(A short essay on Hospitaller militarization and its impact on the future Hospitaller's way of life.)

Forey, Alan, 'The Military Orders, 1120-1312', in *The Oxford History of the Crusades*, Jonathan Riley-Smith (ed), (Oxford university Press, 1999).
(Analysis of the Military Orders up to the disbandment of the Templar Order.)

Foti, Giuseppe, *Storia, Arte, Tradizione nelle Chiese dei Casali di Messina*, (Grafo Editor srl, Messina, 1983).
(An appraisal of the chapels and churches in the hamlets around Messina.)

François, Martha Ellis, Revolts in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe: A Spiral Model, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol I (Summer 1974), 19-43.
(Describes a unique pattern of several revolts, what brought them about and how they were resolved).

Von Frankenstein, Johannes, Passion of Christ, 'Der Kreuziger', written in 1300: *Der Kreuziger der Johannes von Frankenstein*, F. Khull (ed)., BLV 160, Tübingen, (1882).
(Verses on the passion of Christ written in c1300).

Freller, Thomas, *The German Langue of the Order of Malta* (Malta, Midsea Books, 2010).
(An overview German Hospitallers in the first 800 years of the Order, and their assets in the Holy Roman Empire)

Gallo, Cajo Domenico, *Annali della Città di Messina* (Messina, Francesco Gajpa, 1756), volumes 1 and 2.
(Chronicles the history and events of Messina through the ages).

Galluppi, Giuseppe *Nobiliario della Città di Messina*, (Milan, Tipografia Ditta Wilmant, 1874).
(Describes the nobility of the city of Messina with information on their genealogy).

García-Guijarro Ramos, Luis, 'Exemption in the Temple, the Hospital and the Teutonic Order. Shortcomings of the Institutional Approach', in *The Military Orders, vol. 2, Welfare and Warfare*, Helen J. Nicholson (ed), Aldershot, Routledge, (1998).
(Discusses the papal exemptions of the Military and Religious Orders with the consequent weakening of diocesan jurisdiction).

Gatt, G., 'Gli archivi di Malta durante il periodo della occupazione francese e i primi anni della dominazione inglese', *Archivio Storico di Malta*, 9 (1937-38).
(Discusses the state of archival material in the interval between the expulsion of the knights, French occupation, and the English dominion).

Gattini, Michele, *I Priorati, i Baliaggi e le Commende del Sovrano Militare Ordine di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme nelle Province Meridionali d'Italia Prima della Caduta di Malta*, (Napoli, ITEA 1928).
(A historiographer of the Order gives an account of the status of the state of the Order and its landed properties in Southern Italy before 1798).

de' Giovanni Centelles, Guglielmo, 'Il fondatore degli Ospedalieri "Ego Geraldus, servus Hospitalis Sanctae Jerusalem', *Annali della Pontificia Accademia di Belle Arti e Lettere dei Virtuosi al Pantheon*, iii (2003)

(On the founder of the Hospitaller Order in its early years).

Goodman, David, *Spanish Naval Power, 1589-1665: Reconstruction and Defeat* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003).

(This book attempts to give the most complete study of the Spanish naval squadron in the aftermath of the defeat of the Great Armada in 1588).

Grech, Ivan, 'Capital, Conflict, and Mediterranean Frontiers: The Mobilization of Funds from the Order of St John's European Estates in Early Modernity', *Journal of Maltese History*, v, 2 (2018)

(Communication between the central convent and the Hospitaller peripheral assets)

Grech, Ivan, 'Flow of capital in the Mediterranean: Financial Connections between Genoa and Hospitaller Malta in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries', in *International Journal of Maritime History*, xvii, 2 (2005), 193-210.

(Discusses the financial burdens of Hospitaller Malta from acquisition, transfer and budgeting).

Giuffrida, Antonino, *La Sicilia e l'Ordine di Malta (1529-1550) La Centralita' della Periferia Mediterranea*, (Associazione Mediterranea, 2006).

(The author describes the link between the Order of Malta and Sicily through an analysis of the function of the Hospitaller presence in Palermo).

Guarnaschelli Teresa Maria, Valenziani Enrichetta, 'Saggio di una Bibliografia di Malta e del Sacro Militare Ordine di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme', in *Archivio Storico di Malta*, ix (Roma, 1938).

(A bibliography of the Order up to 1938).

Guida, LM, *L'Ordine di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme. Le Sue Commende e i Suoi Conventi*. (Centro Studi Melitensi, Taranto, 2007).

(An in-depth study of the evolution of the Hospitaller Order and analysis of its landed assets).

Heale, Martin, *The Dependent Pories of Medieval English Monasteries* (Boydell & Brewer, 2004),

(Discusses the dependent pories of English monasteries in the medieval era).

de Hellwald, Ferdinand, *Bibliographie Méthodique de l'Ordre Souverain de St. Jean de Jérusalem*, (Rome : Impr. polyglotte de la propogande, 1885).

(One of the first systematic bibliographies of the Hospitaller Order).

Hoppen, Alison, 'The Finances of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *European Studies Review*, iii, 2 (1973).

(An analysis of the finances (revenues and expenditures) of the Order in the sixteenth/seventeenth centuries).

Hughes, Quentin, 'The Architectural Development of Hospitaller Malta', in *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, V Mallia Milanes, (ed.) (Malta, Mireva Publications Limited, 1993).
(An architectural analysis of the building development in Hospitaller Malta)

Hunyadi, Zsolt, *The Hospitallers in the Medieval kingdom of Hungary 1150-1387* (Central European University Press, 2010).

(An In-depth dissertation of the Hungarian Hospitallers, despite the paucity of archival material locally, derived from his Ph.D. dissertation, Central European University, Budapest, 2004).

Al-Idrisi, Muhammed, *Il libro di Ruggero*, translated and edited by Umberto Rizzitano, (Palermo 1966).

(A narrative account of the geography of the Mediterranean and Sicilian life at the time of the first Normans)

Ioli Gigante, Amelio, *Le Città nella Storia d'Italia*, (Messina, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1980).
(A dissertation on the history of Messina)

Irving, Washington, *The History of the Life and Travels of Christopher Columbus* vol IX (Turin 1829).

(A fictionalised life history of Christopher Columbus, very popular at the time).

Jaspert, Nikolas, *The Crusades*, (English translation by Phyllis Jestice) (Routledge, New York, and London, 2006),

(Discusses the religious crusades over a long chronological span of time and in two continents)

Kamen, Henry, 'The Decline of Spain: a Historical Myth?' Past and Present, lxxxi, (1978).
(The author promulgates the argument that there was indeed no decline of the Spanish Empire in the strict sense of the word. Rather he formulates the idea that Spain, an essentially country never had chance to reap the benefits of Imperialism).

Kedar, Benjamin Z., 'A Note on Jerusalem's Bīmāristān and Jerusalem's Hospital', in *The Hospitallers, the Mediterranean and Europe: Festschrift for Anthony Luttrell*, Karl Borhardt, Nikolas Jaspert and Helen Nicholson (eds), (Hampshire, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2013).

(Exposition on the first Hospitaller *ospitio*).

Kehr, K. A. (Ed), *Die Urkunden der Normannisch-sizilischen Könige*, (Innsbruck, Verlag der Wagner'Schen Universitats-Buchhandlung, 1902).

(An analysis of the documentation of the Norman-Sicilian Kings).

King, E. J., *Rules, Statutes and Customs of the Hospitallers, 1099-1310* (London, Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1934).

(The author gives a compilation of the statutes of the Order of St John under various Grandmaster masters, translated in English, from its inception until the beginning of the Rhodian period).

Kleinhenz, Christopher, *Medieval Italy: an Encyclopedia*, (Routledge, 2004),
(This manual is a tour-de-force of recent scholarship on Medieval Italy, incorporating all aspects of life in Italy during the Middle Ages).

Koenigsberger, H.G., The Revolt of Palermo in 1647, *The Cambridge Historical Journal*,
viii, 3 (1946), 129-144.
(Describes the previous revolt of Naples of 1647, as Palermo allied itself to Naples).

Krämer, Thomas, *Dämonen, Prälaten und Gottlose Menschen. Konflikte und ihre Beilegung im Umfeld der Geistlichen Ritterorden* (Berlin–Münster: LIT, 2016).
(A treatise on the three great religious and military orders of knights and their assets.)

Laloy, Émile, *La Révolte de Messine l'Expédition de Sicile et la Politique Française en Italie (1674-1678)* (Paris, Librairie G. Klingksieck, 1929), volumes 1, 2 and 3.
(These three volumes give a broad and wide-ranging review of the Messina revolt and is a very well-researched text.)

La Monte, J.T., 'Some Problems in Crusading Historiography', *Speculum*, xv, 1 (1940),
57-75.
(Highlights lacunae in the historiography of the crusades and proposes further research).

Letta, Marco, *Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum. La Vita all'Ombra della Croce Ottagona* (Sacco, 2014).
(Discussion on the dual motives that spurred the Hospitallers)

Luttrell, Anthony, 'The Hospitallers' hospice of Santa Caterina at Venice: 1358-1451', in
The Hospitallers in Cyprus, Rhodes, Greece and the West 1291-1440 (Studi Veneziani,
XII, Florence, 1970).
(A short monograph on a Hospitaller hospice in Venice).

Luttrell, Anthony, 'From Jerusalem to Malta: The Hospital's Character and Evolution', in
Peregrinationes: Acta et Documenta (Malta, Accademia Internazionale Melitense, 2000),
13–22.
(Insight on how the Order of St John evolved in the four centuries of existence from Jerusalem to Malta).

Luttrell, Anthony, 'The Hospitallers Historical Activities: 1291-1400', in the *Annales de l'Ordre Souverain Militaire de Malte*, 24 (1966), 1-10: reprinted in his *Hospitallers in Cyprus*, 20.
(Post-Acre historiography of the Order with a review of the activities of the Chancery of the Order).

Luttrell, Anthony, 'The Hospitallers Historical Activities: 1400-1530', in the *Annales de l'Ordre Souverain Militaire de Malte*, 25 (1967), 145-50: reprinted in his *Latin Greece, the Hospitallers and the Crusade, 1291-1440* (London, 1982), 2.
(Historiographical activities of the Order).

Luttrell, Anthony, 'The Hospitallers Historical Activities: 1530-1630', in the *Annales de l'Ordre Souverain Militaire de Malte*, 26 (1968), 57-60: reprinted in his *Latin Greece, the Hospitallers and the Crusade, 1291-1440* (London, 1982), 3.
(Historiographical activities of the Order).

Luttrell, Anthony, 'The Hospital's privilege of 1113: Texts and contexts', in *The Military Orders, Volume 6.1: Culture and Conflict in the Mediterranean World*, Jochen Schenk & Mike Carr (eds.) (London, Routledge, 2017).
(On the privileges assigned to the proto-Hospitallers by Paschall II).

Luttrell, Anthony, Nicholson, Helen J, *Hospitaller Women in the Middle Ages*, (Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2006).
(Discusses the role of women in the Hospitaller Order in the Middle Ages).

Luttrell, Anthony, *The Hospitallers of Rhodes and Their Mediterranean World* (Variorum, 1992)
(Several papers on the Rhodian phase of the Hospitallers, including its role in the Levant and in the western provinces).

Luttrell, Anthony, *Studies on the Hospitallers After 1306: Rhodes and the West* (Ashgate/Variorum, 2007).
(A collection of papers on the Hospitallers in the 14th century, including their repeated clashes with the Muslims and their landed assets on the European provinces).

Luttrell, Anthony, *The Hospitaller State on Rhodes, and Its Western Provinces, 1306-1462* (Ashgate/Variorum, 1999).
(Another collection of papers on the Rhodian Hospitallers).

Luttrell, Anthony, 'Hospitaller Historiography: Heritages and Heresies', in *The Military Orders* vol 3, Victor Mallia Milanés (ed) (Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008).
(Discusses the pitfalls and shortcomings on a review of existing Hospitaller historiography).

Luttrell, Anthony and Pressouyre, Léon (eds), *La Commanderie: Institution des Ordres Militaires dans l'Occident Medieval*, (Paris 2002).
(Focuses on the religious history of the Middle Ages, with special emphasis on the military and religious Orders).

Luttrell, Anthony, *The Town of Rhodes 1306-1356*, (City of Rhodes Office for the Medieval town Publication, 2003).

(discusses the evidence for the history and topography of the town of Rhodes during the first fifty years of the Order's rule).

Luttrell, Anthony, 'Gli Ospedalieri Italiani: Storia e Storiographia', in *Studi melitensi*, vi, (1998), 73-88.

(Examination of the historiography of Italian Hospitallers).

Luttrell, Anthony, 'The Earliest Hospitallers', in *Montjoie Studies in Crusade History in Honour of Hans Eberhard Mayer*, Benjamin Z Kedar, Jonathan-Riley Smith and Rudolf Hiestand (eds), Aldershot, Ashgate, (1997).

(Review of the earliest Hospitallers at the time of the first crusades).

Luttrell, Anthony, 'The Military Orders, 1312 - 1798', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, Riley-Smith (ed), Oxford University Press, (2001).

(Discusses the Military Orders with particular emphasis on the Hospitallers).

Magri, Domenico, *Notizia de' Vocaboli Ecclesiastici e de Riti Sacri*, (Roma, 1669).

(An ecclesiastical vade mecum)

Marchese de Villarosa, *Notizie di alcuni Cavalieri del Sacro Ordine Gerosolimitano* (Napoli, Cartiere del Fibreno, 1841).

(Details a biography of prominent members of the Order of St John).

Mallia Milanes, Victor, 'The Siege of Malta 1565: A Reassessment', in *Valetta. Malta's Hospitaller City and other Essays* (Midsea Books, Malta, 2019).

(The thesis here is that in the Siege of Malta, neither the Catholic faith, nor Christian Europe were at stake; it was the very existence of the Hospitallers which was).

Mallia Milanes, Victor, 'A Living Force of Continuity in a Declining Mediterranean: the Hospitaller Order of St John in Early Modern Times', in *Mediterranean Identities: Environment, Society, Culture*, Borna Fuerst-Bjelis (ed), (Bod, 2017).

(Discussion of the continuity (or not) of the importance of the Mediterranean region in the international economy and exchange in the Early Modern Period).

Mallia Milanes, Victor, 'Lo Stato dell'Ordine di Malta 1630', *Melitensia*, 16, (Centro Studi Melitensi, Ecumenica Editrice, 2017).

(The State of the Hospitaller Order in 1630 with a list of all the assets and manpower).

Manara, Giuseppe, *Storia dell'Ordine di Malta ne' suoi Gran Maestri e Cavalieri*, (Milano, Claudio Wilmant, 1846)

(A general history of the Hospitaller Order).

Marino, Salvatore Salomone, 'La Rivoluzione di Messina. contro la Spagna, Storia e Documenti' in *Archivio Storico Siciliano*, xxxii (1907).

(The author gives the historiography of the Messina revolt of 1674).

Mazzola, Gioacchino, *Storia di Aidone* (Giannotta, Catania, 1913).

(Gives the history of Aidone, a city in the province of Enna, near to the ancient city of Morgantina).

Mercieca, Simon, 'Maritime Caravans and the Knights of St. John: Aspects of Mediterranean Seaborne Traffic', in M. Fusaro, C. Heywood, M.S. Omri (Eds.), *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean : Braudel's Maritime Legacy*, London, Tauris Academic Studies, 2010, 157-175.

(differentiates between the commercial fleets and the Hospitaller caravane in the period between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries.)

Minutolo, Andrea, *Memorie del Gran Priorato di Messina* (Messina, Vincenzo d'Amico 1699).

(Written by one of the main historiographers of the Order, the book traces the main events of the grand priory of Messina and gives various lists including one of the grand priors of the Order in Messina. Not very comprehensive, but the book gave a resurgence of the history of the Order after Dal Pozzo.)

Mongitore, Antonino, *Monumenta Historica Sacrae Domus Mansionis SS. Trinitatis Militaris Ordinis Theutonicorum Urbis Panormi, Et Magni Ejus Praeceptoris*, (Panormi: Aiccardo, 1721).

(Description of the land assets of the Teutonic Order in Palermo).

Montesano, Nicola, *Il Priorato di Barletta. Insediamenti Giovanniti nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia* (Altrimedia, 2011).

(On the Priory of Barletta and its assets in the south of Italy).

Moore Cavaceppi, Ranieri, 'Devotions in Sixteenth-Century Italian Hospitaller Commanderies', in *University of Cambridge Domestic Devotions Conference*, 2015.

(Discusses devotion and sainthood of Italian Hospitallers in the sixteenth century).

Mori Ubaldini, Ubaldino, *La Marina del Sovrano Militare Ordine di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme, di Rodi e di Malta* (Roma, Regionale Editrice, 1971).

(This book gives the history of the naval squadron from its very beginnings until 1798; written by a knight of Honour and Devotion and an admiral of the fleet of the Order.)

Napoli M.T., *Ministero, Feudalità, Potere Sovrano in Sicilia nel sec. XVII; le Corte Stratigoziale di Messina* (Roma, La Sapienza, 1981)

(Expands on the stratigozial court in Messina as one of the pre-eminences of the city).

Nasalli Rocca, E., 'Le Commende Italiane dell'Ordine di Malta alla fine del sec XVI', in *Archivio Storico di Malta*, 205, (1936).

(Discusses the Italian commanderies of the Hospitallers up to the fifteenth century).

Nibby, Antonio, *Roma nell'Anno MDCCCXXXVIII*, (Roma, Tipografia delle Belle Arti, 1838).

(Description of Rome from ancient times to the present).

- Nicholson, Helen J., *The Knights Hospitaller*, (Boydell & Brewer, 2001).
(A general history of the Hospitallers from its inception to the Early Modern Period).
- Nicholson, Helen, 'Margaret de Lacy and the Hospital of St John at Aconbury, Herefordshire', in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 50, iv, 1999.
(The institution of the hospital of St John at Aconbury and the legal wrangling between Margaret de Lacy, The Hospitallers and the papal Curia).
- Nicholson, Helen, 'Charity and Hospitality in Military Orders', in Isabel Cristina Ferreira Fernandes (Coord.), *As Ordens Militares. Freires, Guerreiros, Cavaleiros. Actas do VI Encontro sobre Ordens Militares*, Vol.1, GEsOS / Município de Palmela, Palmela, 2012.
(Discusses the hospitality initiatives of the Order in England).
- Nicholson, Helen, 'Relations between Houses of the Order of the Temple in Britain and their Local Communities, as indicated during the Trial of the Templars, 1307-12', in *Knighthoods of Christ: Essays on the History of the Crusades and the Knights Templar*, Norman Housley (ed), Ashgate Publishing Ltd, (2007).
(Discusses the public relations of the Templar Order).
- Nicholson, Helen, 'Martyrum Collegio Sociandus Haberet': Depictions of the Military Orders' Martyrs in the Holy Land, 1187–1291', in *Crusading and Warfare in the Middle Ages: Realities and Representations: Essays in Honour of John France*, ed Simon John and Nicholas Morton, *Crusades Subsidia* 7, Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, (2014).
(The martyrdom ethos of the Hospitallers in their early years)
- Nicholson, Helen, 'Saints Venerated in the Military Orders', in *Selbstbild und Selbstverständnis der Geistlichen Ritterorden, Ordines Militares: Colloquia Torunensia Historica XII*, J. Sarnowsky and R, Czaja, (eds), Toru'n, (2005).
(Sainthood in the Hospitaller Orders).
- Nolan, Cathal J., *Wars of the Age of Louis XIV 1650-1715* (Westport, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008).
(Europe in the latter half of the seventeenth century saw a series of wars across the continent. A consequence of these was the emergence of theories, practices, and technologies that characterize modern warfare. Gives an insight of the political machinations and wars during the period of the Messina rebellion).
- d'Oldenico, Adalberto Donna, *Redditi e spese dell'Ordine Militare Gerosolimitano di Malta nel 1587*, (Cirie: Tip. Cav. Giovanni Capella, 1964).
(Analysis of the balance sheet of the Order in 1587 sent to the Pope for inspection and queried by Bishop Gargallo).
- Pace Gravina, Giacomo, *La Sicilia Dei Cavalieri, Le Istituzioni dell'Ordine di Malta in Etá Moderna (1530-1826)*, eds. Luciano Buono and Giacomo Pace Gravina, (Roma, Fondazione Donna Maria Marullo di Condojanni, 2003).
(This is the third volume of a collected works carried out under the auspices of the grand priory of Naples in an international convention in 2001).

Pace Gravina, Giacomo, 'Ex Arca Privilegiorum'. Regesti delle pergamene dell'universitas di Caltagirone', in *Rivista di Storia del Diritto Italiano*, 69 (1996).
(Discussion of the privileges found in the ancient charters of the University of Caltagirone).

Palermo, Daniele, 'Le Rivolte Siciliane del 1647: Il Caso degli Stati del Principe di Paternó', in *Mediterranea Ricerche Storiche*, anno iv, December 2007, 457-490.
(Indicates the problems sustained by the Paternó principality by the insurrection of 1647 in Naples).

Palermo, Daniele, 'Un Viciré e la Crisi. Il Marchese di los Veles nella Rivolta Palermitana del 1647', in *Los Libros de la Corte*, 4, 2012, 126-140.
(The problems that the Sicilian Viceroy Los Veles faced in the Naples revolt of 1647).

Palizzolo Gravina, Vincenzo, *Il Blasone in Sicilia ossia Raccolta Eraldica* (Palermo, Visconti & Huber, 1871-1875).
(This book gives the genealogy of the Sicilian nobility from ancient times to the eighteenth century.)

De Palma, Luigi Michele, *Il Frate Cavaliere. Il Tipo Ideale del Giovannita fra Medioevo ed Età Moderna* (Bari, Studi e Ricerche: Ecumenica Editrice, 2007).
(Discusses the epitome of the Hospitallers, the religious hospitaller, laical, military knight and noble).

De Palma, Luigi Michele, 'La Spiritualità dell'Ordine Giovannita' in *Studi Melitensi*, xxv, 2017, 11-34.
(An evocative dissertation on the spirituality of the Hospitaller Order).

De Palma, Luigi Michele, 'Servus Pauperum et Miles Christi. La Spiritualità Giovannita da Rodi a Malta', in *Da Gerusalemme a Roma - Itinerario Storico Spirituale* (Ordine di Malta, 2015) 47-90.
(Discusses the changes in the obligations of the members towards the Order brought on by changing circumstances)

De Palma, Luigi Michele, 'La Pie Postulatio Voluntatis in Favore dell'Ospedale di S. Giovanni (1113)', *Lateranum*, lxxix, 2 (2013), 469-484.
(A detailed study of the papal charter and its different ramifications).

De Palma, Luigi Michele, 'Verso la Santità: Obsequium Pauperum, Tuitio Fidei', in *Servire*, supplement 72, (2012), 16.
(Analysis of the ethos of the Hospitaller Order).

De Palma, Luigi Michele, 'Jean-Baptiste Le Marinier de Cany un Maestro della Spiritualità Giovannita', in *Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum, Studi in Onore di Fra' Giovanni Scarabelli per i Cinquant'Anni di Sacerdozio*, (Edizione La Villa, 2019).
(Study of the spirituality of the Hospitaller Le Marinier de Cany).

Di Paola, V., 'L'Ordine dei Cavalieri dalla Caduta di Malta ad Oggi', in *L'Ordine di Malta ed il Tempio di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano a Messina* (Delegazione Gran Priorale di Messina del Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta, Messina, 1998).
(Discussion of the travails of the Hospitaller after their expulsion from Malta).

Paoli, Sebastiano, *Codice Diplomatico del Sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano oggi di Malta*, 2 vol, (Lucca, Marescandoli, 1737).
(The Statutes of the Order, 1737).

Paolino, Francesca, *Giacomo del Duca, Le Opere Siciliane*, (Messina, 1990).
(An exposition of the architectural works of del Duca).

Parisi, Antonino, *L'idea del Cavalier Gerosolimitano* (Messina, Giacomo Mattei 1662).
(On the life and times of fra Agostino Grimaldi).

Parker, David, *Class and State in Ancien Régime France: The Road to Modernity?* (London, Routledge, 2002).
(This book explores the economic and socio-political foundations of French Absolutism. The author presents this as a successful attempt to preserve the political and ideological structures of the traditional order.)

Parker Geoffrey, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2017).
(This book analyses a series of calamities that affected the middle of the seventeenth century. It gives a series of revolutions, droughts, famines, invasions, wars, and regicides which wiped out a third of the global population. The root cause of this, Parker asserts, was climate change.)

Payne, Stanley G., *A History of Spain and Portugal*, 2 vols. (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1973).
(This work deals with the political, institutional, and socio-economic history of the Iberian Peninsula, but is not so detailed on the Spanish-dependent realms outside Spain.)

Peart, Noel, 'The Knights Hospitallers in Ireland', in *Annales*, a XXI, 3 (1963).
(Some insight on the Irish Hospitaller Priory).

Phillips, Simon, *The Prior of the Knights Hospitaller in Late Medieval England*, (Boydell Press, 2009).
(The role of the Hospitaller prior in the Order and in European politics).

Phillips, Simon, 'The Hospitaller Acquisition of the Templar Lands in England', in *The Debate on the Trial of the Templars (1307–1314)*, H. Nicholson, P.F.Crawford, J Burgtorf, (eds) Routledge, London, 2016, 233-242.
(on the difficulties encountered by the Hospitallers to acquire Templar properties).

Phillips, Simon, 'The Hospitallers and Concepts of Island Existence' in E. Buttigieg and S. Phillips (eds), *Islands and Military Orders, c.1291–c.1798*. (Farnham, Ashgate, 2013), 11-18.

(Discusses the characteristics of an island order state, typified by Hospitaller Rhodes).

Piazzì Giuseppe, Marabitti Domenico, Balsamo Paolo, *Codice Metrico-Siculo Diviso in Due Parti* (Catania, Stamperia dell'Università degli Studi, 1812).

(A monograph incorporating the Sicilian metric system of measurements).

Pirri, Rocco, *Sicilia Sacra Disquisitionibus, et Notitiis Illustrata* (Panormi, apud haeredes Petri Coppulae, 1733).

(Gives an overview of the church's role in the history of Sicily. The book gives several transcriptions of the earliest charters of the Order as well as references to the priory of Messina).

Pisani, Paul George, 'Adaptations in Hospitaller Historiography: An Overview', *Symposia Melitensia* vol 8 2012 (special issue), 49-62.

(Looks at the three main historiographers of the Order and discusses whether they modified what they wrote to gratify their superiors).

Dal Pozzo, Bartolomeo, *Historia della Sacra Religione Militare di S. Giovanni Gerosolomitano* (Venezia, Gerolamo Albrizzi, 1715).

(Another historiographer of the Hospitaller Order who continued where Bosio left off).

Privitera, Serafino, *Storia di Siracusa Antica e Moderna del Parroco*, Volume 2 (Pignatelli, 1879).

(The history of Siracusa from the times of Charles V to the 1565 siege).

von Ranke, Leopold, 'The Ideal of Universal History', in *Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present*, Ritz Stern (ed.), Macmillan International Higher Education, London, 2015.

(Von Ranke was the Master of modern historical scholarship. He reiterated that 'History should be written only from eyewitness reports and from the "purest, most immediate documents').

de Ransijat, Jean Baptiste Bosredon, Wismayer, J.M., *The seven year balance sheet of the Order of St John of Jerusalem from 1st May 1778 to the end of April 1785* (Naxxar, Universal Intelligence Data Bank of America, Europe, 1984).

(The balance sheet of the Hospitallers at the end of their sojourn in Malta).

Rapley, Elizabeth, *A Social History of the Cloister: Daily Life in the Teaching Monasteries of the Old Regime* (Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).

(This book builds up the complexity of the characters and lives of these closeted women from their own letters and records and other writings that the inmates wrote about themselves.)

Renda, Francesco, *Bernardo Tanucci e i Beni dei Gesuiti in Sicilia*, (Ed Politica e Storia, Roma, 1974).

(Analysis of the administration Jesuit assets before their expulsion, and the reformation policies of Tannucci. The book also contains an analytical description of the Jesuit assets in Sicily before and after the annihilation of the Order).

Ribot, Luis, *La Rivolta Antispagnola di Messina* (Catanzaro, Rubettino, 2011).

(This is the Italian edition of a classic of contemporary historiography on Sicily and on a central theme in the history of one of the major cities in the Mediterranean: Luis Ribot, "La revuelta antiespanola de Mesina Causas y antecedentes" (1591 -1674) (Valladolid, 1982). The revolt of Messina in 1674-78 was one of the most important rebellions in the Sicilian Kingdom in the modern age. Ribot maintains that the Messina revolt should not be labelled an anti-Spanish uprising, as Messina could only hold on to her commercial monopolies and privileges only if it remained entrenched with Spain.)

Ricci, Vito, *La Commenda di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano a Bitonto nel XV Secolo*, (Studi Melitensi, 2017).

(On the Hospitallers arrival to Bitonto in 1224, a settlement on the Trajan road).

Riley-Smith, Jonathan, *The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant, c.1070-1309* (Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

(An account of the activities and internal history of the Knight Hospitallers in the first two centuries of its existence. It deals with the lives of its professed religious members and its conflicting role of Hospitaller and military activities.)

Riley-Smith, Jonathan, *Knights of St John in Jerusalem and Cyprus 1050-1310*, (MacMillan 1967).

(Analysis of the early years of the Hospitallers, their growth to power, their political participation in the Latin East, its organisation, and methods of administration as a landlord in feudal states).

Roccella, Alceste, *I Templari é gli Spedalieri in Piazza Armerina*, (Piazza Armerina, Stab. Tip Fratelli Bologna La Bella, 1878).

(Monograph on the Templars and the Hospitallers in Piazza).

Rossi, Ettore, *Aggiunta alla Bibliographie Méthodique de l'Ordre souverain de St Jean de Jérusalem di Ferdinand de Hellwald* (Rome, 1924).

(A continuation of Hellwald's bibliography of the history of the Hospitallers).

Ruiz, Teofilo F., *Spanish Society, 1348-1700*, (London, and Rome, Taylor and Francis, 2017).

(Provides an extensive and compelling exploration of Spain's transition from the Middle Ages to modernity).

Ruolo delli Cavalieri, Cappellani Conventuali e Serventi d'armi Ricevuti nella Veneranda Lingua d'Italia della Sagra Religione Gerosolimitana, e distinti nelli Rispettivi Priorati, (Malta, fra Giovanni Mallia, 1789).

(Rolls of knights, conventual chaplains and sergeant-at-arms of the Langue of Italy in the last quarter of the eighteenth century).

Ruolo delli Cavalieri, Cappellani Conventuali, e Servienti d'Armi Ricevuti nella Veneranda Lingus d'Italia del Sovrano Ordine Gerosolimitano (Roma, Tipografia delle Belle Arti, 1843).

(Roll of honour of knights, conventual chaplains and sergeant-at-arms of the Italian Langue of the Order).

Sakellariou, Eleni, *Southern Italy in the Late Middle Ages: Demographic, Institutional and Economic Change in the Kingdom of Naples, c1440 - c1530* (Leiden, Brill, 2012).

(Reviews the late medieval and early modern economy of Naples).

Salerno, Mariarosaria, *Gli Ospedalieri di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia, sec XII-XV* (Taranto, Centri Studi Melitensi, 2001).

(Relates the history of the Order in the south of Italy with several references to the grand priory of Messina).

Salerno, Mariarosaria, 'The Hospitallers in Southern Italy: Families and Power', *The Military Orders: Volume 5: Politics and Power*, Professor Peter W Edbury (Ed), Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013, Chap 22

(Discusses the second-born sons of the Sicilian nobility as they profess in the Order and bolster alliances and power).

Santoro, Daniela, 'L'Arcivescovo e l'Ospedale. Raimondo de Puyolis contro i Gerosolimitani di Messina (1344)', in *Istituzioni Ecclesiastiche e Potere Regio nel Mediterraneo Medievale. Scritti per Salvatore Fodale*, Patrizia Sardina, Daniela Santoro and Maria Antonietta Russo (eds), Associazione Mediterranea, Palermo, 2016.

(Study of a complex moment in the social and religious life of Messina in the mid-fourteenth century, between Raimondo de Puyolis, Catalan archbishop of Messina, and the Hospitallers: a clash resulting from the non-payment of tithes, behind which articulated city policies were hidden).

Sarnowsky, J., 'The Convent and the West: Visitations in the Order of the Hospital of St John in the Fifteenth Century', in *The Hospitallers, the Mediterranean and Europe Festschrift for Anthony Luttrell*, K. Borchardt, Nicolas Jaspert, and Helen J. Nicholson (Eds), Ashgate publishing Limited, (2007).

(The role of the visitations after the Templar dissolution, as the Hospitallers tried to maintain a grip on their vast assets, stretching from Spain to southern Germany and from England to southern Italy).

Schermerhorn, Elizabeth W., *Malta of the Knights* (Surrey, Heinemann, 1929).

(A very comprehensible book on the Order of St John).

Schermerhorn, Elizabeth W., *On the Trail of the Eight-Pointed Cross*, (New York, G.P. Putnam, 1940).

(A study of the heritage of the Knights Hospitallers in Feudal Europe).

Sella, Domenico, *Italy in the Seventeenth Century*, (London, Routledge, 1997).

(A comprehensive overview of seventeenth century Italy, crushing the old view that the country was in decline but rather that it was a time of sharp contrasts and shifts in fortune).

Sellwood, Dominic, *Knights of the Cloister* (Suffolk, Boydell Press, 2001).

(This book examines the work of the main religious and military Orders, The Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller in south-west France. The book addresses several themes including their involvement with pilgrimage to Jerusalem, their innovative administrative structures, and their logistical operation.)

Setton, Kenneth, *The Papacy and the Levant 1204-1571* (Philadelphia, The American Philosophical Society, 1976).

(The third of four volumes that traces the history of the later crusades up to the time of the Battle of Lepanto).

Setton, Kenneth Meyer, *A History of the Crusades: The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1975).

Shefer, Miri, 'Charity and Hospitality: Hospitals in the Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern Period', in *Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Contexts*, Michael Bonner, Mine Ener, Amy Singer (eds), New York, SUNY Press, 2003.

(Analysis of the several hospitals commissioned during the time of the Ottoman Empire).

Silber, Ilana F., 'Gift-giving in the Great Traditions: The Case of Donations to Monasteries in the Medieval West', in *European Journal of Sociology* vol 36, ii, (1995).

(Discusses religious donation in the great traditions and their relations with more archaic forms of exchange and donation previously attested outside the West).

Sire, H.J.A., *The Knights of Malta* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1996).

(A well-balanced account documenting the first complete history of the Order of St John from its political and military role during the Crusades to the modernised Catholic institution that it is today.)

Skinner, Patricia, *Medieval Amalfi and its Diaspora, 800-1250*, (Oxford University Press, 2013).

(Description of the medieval Italian maritime Republic of Amalfi during and after its period of political independence. It explores Amalfi's significance in the history of the medieval Mediterranean world).

de Smitmer, Francesco Paolo, *Catalogo della Biblioteca del Sagro Militar Ordine di S. Giovanni Gerosolimitano*, (1781).

(A compartmentalised catalogue of the library of the Order).

Spagnoletti, Angelantonio, *Stato, Aristocrazia e Ordine di Malta nell'Italia Moderna*, (Rome, École Française de Rome, 1988).

(Spagnoletti defines the concept of honour as found in the Italian nobility of the seventeenth century and reconstructs the stories and the strategies of these from the archives of the Order of St John who harboured a great number of noble Italian sons in its ranks.)

Spagnoletti, Angelantonio, 'L'Ordine di Malta e La Sicilia' in *La Sicilia dei Cavalieri. Le Istituzioni dell'Ordine di Malta in Età Moderna (1530-1826)*, (Roma, 2003).

(Discusses the symbiosis between the Hospitallers in their Maltese headquarters and Sicily, the military bastion of Spain in the central Mediterranean).

Spagnoletti, Angelantonio, *Elementi per una Storia dell'Ordine di Malta nell'Italia Moderna* (Mélanges de l'école Française de Rome, 96-2, 1984).

(The Author discusses the Order as one of the main sources of legitimization of the nobility and of the power it exercised at all levels).

Spagnoletti, Angelantonio, 'Militia e Carità nella Storia dei Cavalieri di Malta', in *Studi Melitensi XXVI* (Taranto 2018).

(Analysis of the ethos of the Hospitallers).

De Spuches, Francesco San Martino *La Soria dei Feudi e dei Titoli Nobiliari di Sicilia* (Palermo, Scuola tip. Boccone del Povero, 1924).

(A roll of honour of the Sicilian nobility).

Thake, Robert, *A Publishing History of a Prohibited Best-Seller: The Abbé de Vertot and his Histoire de Malte*, (New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2016).

(This book highlights some aspects of Hospitaller historiography as it relates the saga of one of the more notorious historians of the Order and his writing of, arguably, the most famous of the narratives of the Order.)

De Thame, Phillipus, *The Knights Hospitallers in England: Being the Report of Prior Philip de Thame to the Grand Master Elyan de Villanova for AD 1338*, Lambert Larkin (ed), vol 65, (Camden Society 1857).

(Description of a report sent by the prior of Hospitaller England to the grand master Villeneuve in 1338).

Tibble, Steve, *The Crusader Armies: 1099-1187* (Yale University Press, 2018).

(Analysis of the Crusader armies' strategy, adaptation, evolution, and cultural diversity).

Tinti, Stefano, Armigliato Alberto, Bortolucci, Elisabetta, 'Contribution of Tsunami Data Analysis to Constrain the Seismic Source: the case of the 1693 Eastern Sicily earthquake', *Journal of Seismology*, v, (2001),

(Scientific research on the 1693 earthquake and subsequent tsunami).

Tommasi, Francesco, 'Uomini e Donne negli Ordini Militari di Terrasanta: per il Problema delle Case Doppie e Miste negli Ordini Giovannita, Templare e Teutonico (sec. XII-XIV)', in *Doppelklöster und Andere Formen der Symbiose Männlicher und Weiblicher Religiösen in Mittelalter*, Kaspar Elm and Michel Parisse (eds), Berlin, (1992).

(Discussion on the manpower of the Military and Religious Orders in the Holy Land).

Toomaspoeg, Kristjan, 'La Geographia del Patrimonio dell'Ordine di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme nella Siciliamedioevale 1145-1492', in *La Presenza dei Cavalieri di San Giovanni in Sicilia* (2001), 89-99.

(This work provides one of the earliest descriptions of the heritage of the Knights of Malta in Sicily during the Middle Ages including their development and evolution thus giving a perspective on their economic and political power on the island.)

Toomaspoeg, Kristjan, 'La spiritualité des ordres religieux-militaires du Moyen Âge : l'état de la recherche', in *Cister e as Ordens Militares na Idade Média. Guerra, Igreja e Vida religiosa. II Colóquio Internacional Cister, os Templários e a Ordem de Cristo*, J. Albuquerque Carreiras-C. de Ayala Martinez (ed), Tomar, (2015).

(Discusses the evolution of the historiography on the spirituality of the medieval military orders).

Toomaspoeg, Kristjan, Guilia Rossi Vairo, *Templari e Ospitalieri nella Sicilia Medievale*, (Centro Studi Melitensi, Bari, 2003).

(A dissertation on the Orders of the Templars and Hospitallers in Medieval Sicily).

Toomaspoeg, Kristjan, 'The Military Orders and the Diocesan Bishops: A Pragmatic Relationship', in *Ordines Militares*, xxiii, (2018).

(Analysis of the relationship between the Military Orders and the Diocesan powers, from twelfth to the fourteenth century).

Toomaspoeg, Kristjan, Salerno, Mariarosa, *L'Inchiesta Pontificia del 1373 sugli Ospedalieri di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia*, (Bari, Adda Editore, 2008)

(The papal investigation of the Hospitallers in 1373).

Trasselli, Carmelo, 'Una Statistica Maltese del Secolo XVI', *Economia e Storia*, 4 (1966), 477-80.

(Gives some figures of the amount of wheat transferred tax-free from Sicily to Malta in the seventeenth century).

Trasselli, Carmelo, 'Un Banco Genovese a Palermo nel 1570', in *Revue Internationale d'Historie de la Banque*, iii (1970).

(Analysis of Genoa influence in Sicily especially in the Banking sector).

Traselli, Carmelo, 'Messina 1674', in *La Rivolta di Messina (1674-1678) e il Mondo Mediterraneo nella Seconda Metá del Seicento*, Saverio di Bella (ed.) (Cosena, Luigi Pellegrini Editore, 1975).

(This book gives several different articles of the Messina Revolt in the context of what was happening in the Euro-Mediterranean basin in the second half of the seventeenth century presented in a Convention in Messina in 1975. It details the insurrection of Messina which developed in a civil war that pulled in France and Spain, the Ottoman Empire and Holland.)

Trevor Roper, Hugh, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* (Pennsylvania, Liberty Fund, 1967).

(Chapter two of this book entitled 'The General Crisis of the 17th Century' is of relevance to focus on the events happening around the time of the Messina rebellion in 1674).

Vann, Theresa M., 'Hospitaller Record Keeping and Archival Practices', in *The Military Orders Vol 2* Helen Nicholson (ed), Ashgate Publishing, (1998).

(Describes the assiduous record keeping of the Hospitallers from their pre-Acre era).

Vella, Theresa, 'Piety and Ritual in the Magistral Palace of the Order of St John in Malta', in *The Military Orders Vol VI (Part I), Culture and Conflict in the Mediterranean World*, Jochen Schenk and Mike Carr (eds), Taylor and Francis, (2017).

(Discussion on the practice of private religious devotion of the Hospitallers and their art commissions).

De Vertot d'Aubœuf, René d'Aubert, *Histoire des Chevaliers Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jerusalem* (Paris, Rollin, Quillau and Desaint, 1726).

(The unofficial historiographer of the Order repudiated by both the Roman Curia and the Order itself presents a more readable account of the history of the Hospitallers).

Vicens Vives, Jaime, *Economic History of Spain*, (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2015).

(This book gives a comprehensive account of the economic development and social evolution of Spain, from prehistoric times to the end of the nineteenth century).

De Vitriaco, Jacobus, *Historia Orientalis et Occidentalis*, (Balthazaris Belleri, 1597).

(An important source for the historiography of the Crusades).

White, Lynn Townsend, *Latin Monasticism in Norman Sicily* (Cambridge, The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1938).

(On the ascent of monasticism in Medieval Sicily).

Williams, A., 'Constitutional Development of the Order of St John', in *Hospitaller Malta, 1530 – 1798: Studies in Early Modern Malta and the Order of St John of Jerusalem*, V. Mallia Milanese (ed.) Mireva Publications, Malta 1993.

(Analysis of the development of governance in the Hospitaller ranks).

Winkelmann, Eduard, *Des Magisters Petrus de Ebulo Liber ad Honerem Augusti*, (Leipzig, 1874).

(A narrative by Peter of Ebola on the Hohenstaufen conquest of Sicily, written in 1195)

Zammit, William, 'Vertot's Histoire des Chevaliers de Malte Its Prohibition in the Context of Hospitaller Historiographical Practices', in *VII Encontro Internacional sobre Ordens Militares. 'Entre Deus e o Rei. O Mundo dos ordens Militares*, I.C. Ferreira (ed), (Palmela, 2016).

(The author dissects the provenance of Vertot's history, presenting its strengths and weaknesses).

Zammit Gabarretta et al, *Catalogue of the records of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in the Royal Malta Library* (Valletta, Malta University Press, 1964).

(Consulted during the research on the Archives of Malta).

Zondadari, Marcantonio, *Breve e Particolare Istruzione del Sacro Ordine Militare degli Ospitalari*, (Padova, Stamperia Giuseppe Comino, 1724).

(Spiritual and secular instructions to the young and professed Hospitallers).

Unpublished Dissertations

Alfred, Bonnici, 'The postal System of the Order of St John 1530-1798', (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Malta, 2012).

(Describes how the Order's letters during the period 1530-1798 reached their destination in Europe and vice-versa).

Cachia, Stefan, 'The Treasury, Debts and Deaths: A Study of the Common Treasury based on Giovanni Caravita's Trattato del Comun Tesoro', (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Malta, 2004).

(Discusses the relationship between the Hospitaller and the treasury and the meaning of 'personal poverty' which each member of the Order embraced).

Cauchi, Peter, 'The Hospitaller Order of the Knights of Malta and the Thirty Years' War, 1618-1648', (Unpublished MA Hosp Stud dissertation, Department of History, University of Malta, 2017).

(Analysis of the Thirty Years' War and its impingement on the Hospitaller Order.)

Gatt, Ray, 'The Hospitaller Commandery of San Giovanni Battista of Ragusa in the Seventeenth and the Eighteenth Centuries: Its State and Development', (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Malta, 2014).

(A monograph on the state of the commandery of Ragusa from its inception to its nationalization).

Grech, Ivan, 'Hospitaller Malta's Communication System with the Mediterranean World in the Early Seventeenth Century', (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Malta, 2016).

(Has a lot of important insights into the role of Sicily - and the Priory of Messina - in the Order's wider communication system).

Grima, Nicholas, 'A Bibliography of the Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem (2008-2015)', unpublished B.A Hons dissertation, Faculty of Arts, University of Malta, 2016.

(A continuation of the bibliography of the Hospitaller Order up to 2015)

Mercieca, Simon, 'Aspects of the Hospitaller Commandery, 1631-1798', (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Malta, 1993).

(Chapter one was useful to understand the set-up of the commandery and the concept of this in the context of feudalism).

Mercieca, Simon, 'Aspects of the Office of the Receiver of the Hospitaller Order of St John', (Unpublished B.A.(Hons). dissertation, University of Malta, 1991).

Mitchell, Silvia Z., 'Mariana of Austria and Imperial Spain: Court, Dynastic and International Politics in Seventeenth-Century Europe', unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Miami, 2013.

(The story of Queen Mariana, regent to Charles II).

Schiriha, Mario, 'Disaster Management in Late Seventeenth-Century Hospitaller Malta (c.1675 – c.1700)', (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Malta, 2015).

(The tribulations in Sicily reflected the plague and earthquakes in the local context in the relevant two chapters).

Xuereb, Isabel, 'A Bibliography of the Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem (1970-2007)', unpublished B.A. Honours dissertation, Faculty of Arts, University of Malta, 2007.

(Hospitaller bibliography from 1970 to 2007).

Appendix A

An Outline of the Grand Priory of Messina in the Seventeenth Century

This section is a review of the state of the Sicilian land assets under the administration (the *ricetta*) of the grand priory of Messina in the time span between the two prioral visits of 1603/4 and 1749. The two visits separated by a period of a hundred and fifty years incorporating the *seicento*, gave a thorough inventory of all the physical assets of the Hospitaller *ricetta* as well as the improvements to the estates that were done throughout the century. It gave testament to the shrewd management processes that had been honed by the Order at the time.

The Sicilian commanderies of the Order had to disburse a quantum of their income as responsiones and other charges (impositions) to the Order; in 1583, this sum amounted to about 5600 scudi.¹ By 1776 this had more than doubled to 11600 scudi. The real income of the various commanderies (factored on the cost of grain at that point in time) had also inflated by a 100%.² During the seventeenth century the whole of the Sicilian hospitaller land assets fluctuated between 20,000 and 25,000 hectares, of which the commandery of Lentini made up 2,600 hectares, Polizzi 3,700 and the *ricetta* of Palermo 300 hectares.³ The Jesuit Order in Sicily had twice as much acreage at the same point in time as the Hospitaller Order.⁴

¹ D'Avenia (2003), 65.

² Orazio Cancila, *Impresa Redditi Mercato nella Sicilia Moderna*, (Mediterranea Recherche Storiche Palermo, 2003), 29-34.

³ To keep this Hospitaller Sicilian patrimony in context, the area of Malta is 31,600 ha.

⁴ Francesco Renda, Bernardo Tanucci e i Beni dei Gesuiti in Sicilia, (Ed Politica e Storia, Roma, 1974), 54-6. The gross revenue of the Sicilian Jesuits in 1765, comprising active leases, legacies, leases of houses, herds and land and others amounted to 144,697 scudi.

1. The *Ricetta* of Messina



Figure A1 The *Ricetta* of Messina.

The *ricetta* of Messina included several manors and fiefs as well as chapels and churches. This *ricetta* was important to the grand priory as the derived income would service the many expensive portfolios under the jurisdiction of the priory, including administration, maintenance of assets, projects, and payments of salaries and pensions. As Messina was a port city, its harbour gave safe berth to the naval squadron of the Order. The priory of Messina and its Receivers were also involved in the logistical support of the annual transaction and transhipment of wheat to Malta. In view of its various annual outlays, the priory of Messina had its own independent income from several wealthy assets which included three commanderies, estates and manors. The total income generated by all these was reflected in the quantity of responsiones which

was sent on an annual basis to the convent in Malta.⁵ Messina was also the recipient of several foundations set up by some of the higher ranks of the Order to provide revenue for specific functions. The Fondazione Ventimiglia was founded by fra Pietro Ventimiglia, Prior of Capua in 1626.⁶ Its aim was to provide maintenance and upkeep of a galley of the Order, San Pietro, built from the personal funds of Ventimiglia himself. The foundation included two palaces, situated on the quayside of Messina, the Palazzo della Fondazione Ventimiglia and the Palazzo della Marina, together with several associated shops. The income accruing from the lease of these immovable assets amounted to 1000 scudi annually. Other property of the Order in Messina which was leased included the townhouse of fra Diego Barone,⁷ and property emanating from the *spoglio* Bartoli. This income maintained the office of the Receiver of Messina in its operational activities, including the salaries of a secretary and accountant, an advocate, one procurator, a notary, a solicitor, a debt collector, and a currency exchanger. This large number of office workers was necessary as Messina was the endpoint where all the money fluxes finished off on their final leg of their journey to Malta.⁸ There was also the foundation Cavarretta with a capital of 12,000 scudi.⁹

⁵ AOM 899, fol 125 et seq. The responsiones and impositions paid by the grand prior Fra D. Marco Gironda between 1/5/1760 to the end of April 1771 amounted to *onze* 6744.1.1.3. Two years later, the next grand prior fra Michaelae Paterno' paid *onze* 3117.28.18.8 for the period between 1/5/1773 to the end of April 1777.

⁶ Pozzo 1715, fol12. '*E poco appresso il Prior di Capua Fr. D. Pietro Vintimiglia fece una perpetua Fondazione d'un'altro Buco di Galera a prò della Religione. Il fondo consisteva in due Palazzi posti sopra il Molodi Messina con Botteghe di mille scudi di rendita. La galera doveva portar il nome di S. Pietro con l'arme alla poppa della religione, del Gran maestro e d'esso fondatore, con patto che dell'entrate di detta Fondazione fosse pagato il passaggio a D. Tommaso Vintimiglia suo nipote e dopo di lui a i figli e discendenti di D. Placito altro suo nipote, sostituendo in caso d'estintione della sua discendenza i figli e posterì di D. Pietro terzo suo nipote, il che approvato dal Consiglio, in grata riconoscenza diedero facoltà al Gran maestro, che compiacendosi di concedere l'habito di divotione in virtù d'una sua gratia capitolare ad uno de' detti nipoti, potesse ancora rimmettergli il pagamento delli quattromila scudi d'oro per il suo passaggio, mentre il Priore prometteva di far fabbricare subito e anticipatamente la detta Galera nell'arsenale di Malta'. See also Pirri 1733, 946. 'Anno 1626. Fr Petrus di Vigintimiliis. vir erga suam Religionem officiosissimus construendam curavit triremem S. Petri, & ut navigare semper posset, nobile emit palatium Messane 22m aureis, cujus proventus ad triremem sustinendam expenderentur, reliquit ex spolio 30m sc Obiit Messane mense martio anno 1639'.*

⁷ This was described as a *palazzo alla Marina, contrada Porte Reale*.

⁸ Le commende, 187.

⁹ Pozzo 1715, fol 12. The Fondazione Cavarretta also was involved in the sponsorship of a new galley.' *Un'altra Fondazione per un Buco di Galera fù fatta nel mese di luglio (1636), dal Prior di Venezia fr. Nicolò Cavarretta, mediante il capitale di dodeci mila scudi fondati in diverse suggugationi in Palermo, con che la Galera si chiamasse S. Nicol; portasse l'Arme alla poppa della Religione, del Gran Maestro, e del Fondatore, e fossero franchi di passaggio, i Discendenti d'Andrea, e Mario Cavarretta suoi Pronipote così per minorità, come per età compita'.*

The priory of Messina had also three commanderies whose income reverted to the priory treasury.

Commandery Calli

The commandery of Calli was set up by two young brothers, Michele and Luigi (also known as Aloisio),¹⁰ probably at the instigation of their father Giaches Calli.¹¹ Both brothers were still too young to profess in the Hospitaller Order as Michele was 16 and Luigi 15 years old. The assets of the new commandery were to be located either in the geographical limits of the Messina priory, or Valetta, the city of the convent in Malta. The intention of the founders was also to build a chapel whose appellation would give the name to the commandery as well.¹² It was proposed that Michele, the eldest would be the first incumbent of the commandery, followed by his sibling on his death.

The foundation of the commandery was carried out in 1631 and its annual income was to be 300 scudi on a capital of 2400 onze.¹³ The proposal for this new foundation was to be set on the same outlines as those used for the commandery of San Giovanni of Ragusa.¹⁴ The desire of both brothers to enter and serve the Order was understandable as

¹⁰ AOM 2129, fol 241r. The name is also given as Alwigi.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, fol 241r. 'Adi 15 di Giugno 1631...sopra la proposta fatta in lingua per parte delli signori Michel et Alwigi Calli li 21 di Maggio proxime passato per mezzo di un memoriale del tenor seguente cioe Ill. fra Fabritio Cagliola come comissionato delli nobili Michel et Aliosio Calli li espone qualmente per la divotione grande che sempre essi et loro antenati portorono alla Sacra Religione Gerosolimitana et a questa Veneranda Lingua d'Italia desiderano di esser ricevuti in grado di cavaliere et far professione et morir in essa, e per maggior dimostrazione et prova di questo loro affeto funderanno una commenda di scudi di 300 di rendita per lo stato di cavallieri nella citta di Messina perche hanno limiti in quel priorato, o in questa citta di Valetta come li parera piu commodo et sara l'intrata in cosa stabile di prezzo tale che rendera a ragione di cinque per cento offerendosi di fabricare una capella del cui titolo prendera il nome la comenda.

¹² AOM 6112, fol 4v. Rather than construct a chapel, this stipulation was changed to estanlishing a side chapel in the church of San Giovanni Battista in Messina, under whatever name they wished.

¹³ Pozzo, 801-2. 'Fu fatta quest'anno la Fondatione della Commenda Calli da Giachi Calli Maltese con lo sborso di seimila scudi, che furono investiti nella Tavola di palermo col frutto di cinque per cento'. See also *Sicilia Sacra* Pirri 943.

¹⁴ AOM 2129, fol 241r. 'La quale godera prima sua vita durante il sudetto michele con pagare scudi 12 di responzioni l'anno, et il solito passaggio al comun tesoro et il mortorio et vacante doppo la morte loro, et piacendoli di riceverli sia la recettione con l'anzianita dello stesso giorno , et insieme con tutte le prerogative usci conforme ricevuti et godono li commendatori Arizzo et scattino permettendoli di portar la croce d'oro del quel tempo insino che faranno la espresa professione essendo il maggiore cioe

they had well-known maternal uncles in the Order; fra Francesco Moleti, Captain General and later on admiral of the Order's squadron, and the commander fra Filippo Moleti. Both ancestors had taken part in the Siege of Malta in 1565 with remarkable valour sixty years before and this must have left indelible memories for the two brothers.¹⁵ The paternal grandfather, it seems, was equal to the exploits carried by the maternal uncles as well. Michele Calli, during a skirmish at Montechiaro in Sicily against the notorious pirate Ucciali (Ulug Ali), had saved the Order's standard from falling into the sea and had carried it successfully to land.¹⁶

The responsiones to be paid to the common treasury by this commandery were set at 12 scudi annually. The years of experience (*antianitá*) with the Order for the titleholder of the commandery were to be reckoned from the point when the bull of consent and approval by the grandmaster was presented to the Italian Langue, together with the brief of confirmation by the Pope.¹⁷

The revenue from this commandery went to fund two student positions in two *Universitates*, those of Ventimiglia and Vicari.¹⁸ The same decree upheld that there was no necessity for the commander to invite the mandatory visits of improvement, so long as he presents confirmation that the two posts were funded on an annual basis.¹⁹

Michele di eta d'anni 16, et l'altro minore di un anno, et si contentano fare le loro caravane et altri servitii che si toccheranno per loro torno, ...'

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 241r. '...essendo questa loro intentione cioe di servire come prima di loro fecero do i zii materni cioe Ill sig Amm Moleti et comm fra filippo moleti et l'ave et bisano paterno nell'assedio di Malta nell'anno della giornata, et poi nell'incontro con la squadra dell'Ucciali dove l'avo Michel Calli con grandissimo pericolo et honore salvo lo stendardo con butarsi in mare con esso portandolo con salvezza in terra...'

¹⁶ Buono and Pace Gravina, *La Sicilia dei Cavalieri*. 189

¹⁷ AOM 2129, fol 245v. '...senza obbligo di far prove di sua nobilta et che habbi da goder detta comenda vita durante con pagare ogni anno al commun tesoro scudi 12 in segno di recognitione et in loco della responsione, et che debba pagare al tesoro il solito passaggio di cavaliere et provar la sua ltimita et quella dei suoi paterne et materne et che l'antianita gli corra del giorno che si presenteranno in Lingua le bolle del consenso et approvatione dell'Emm G Mastro et del suo Ven Cons, et anco il breve dilla confermatone dilla santita di NS spedito il tutto in buona et autentica forma, se quali speditione dovera ottenere detto Giaches calli alle sue spese come hanno fatto il comm Arizzo et scatino per le commede fundate et erette da loro.'

¹⁸ AOM 6060.

¹⁹ Pace Gravina, 271.

Commandery Lo Pozzo

The commandery of Lo Pozzo in Messina was also instituted in 1631 by Giovanni lo Pozzo and was planned to have an income of 500 scudi on a capital of 25000 scudi.²⁰ The commandery consisted of a large garden of citrus fruit trees, the attached house, running water and several fountains in the grounds, and other fruit trees.²¹ The commandery also provided for a chapel dedicated to San Giovanni Battista. The prioral visit of 1749 listed this chapel as being part of the grand priory of Messina.

Commandery Marullo

The third commandery in the *ricetta* of Messina was the commandery Marullo.²² The year of foundation was 1644 and the patronal endowment was set up by fra Ettore Marullo. It had a capital of 16000 scudi and its income was used to supply additional provisions *gratis* for the knights and other religious brethren residing in the Italian auberge in Malta. These additional provisions were to be given to the brethren on the first three days of the week, Monday Tuesday and Wednesday and the fare would be equal to that on Sunday.

In recognition, the grand master decorated fra Marullo as a grand cross and elected him also as a Capitular Bailiff.

There were 4 churches under the patronage of the Grand Priory of Messina, and all were situated in the administrative and judicial precincts of the priory.

One was the chapel in the commandery Lo Pozzo dedicated to the Holy Precursor.

Another was a small chapel dedicated to Maria Santissima Annunziata, and was extant in 1604. However, when the visiting commissioners reviewed this church in the

²⁰ AOM 6128, follet seq.

²¹ Pirri, 943.

²² Pozzo, 94.

prioral visit of 1749, they found it to be in a mostly ruinous state and had the place deconsecrated.²³

The parochial church of St Michael was also visited by the commissioners in 1749. The description included a stone statue of St Michael the Archangel on the facade of the church. The church had 5 altars inside. The first altar had a picture of the Madonna and Child together with St Michael and St Nicholas. The second altar showed the adoration of the Magi. The third altar had a painting of Our Lady of the Rosary together with St Dominic and St Anthony surrounded by the souls in purgatory. The fourth altar also depicted the Madonna with Child. The fifth altar was in a small side chapel and contained a statue of the image of the *Santissimo Crocefisso* in papier-mache.²⁴

A fourth church fell under the responsibility of the priory of Messina. This was the parochial church of the Santissima Annunziata. This dependency of the Messina priory was situated about 4 miles from the city centre and took spiritual care of the surrounding villages and hamlets.²⁵ As was the norm, the cleric associated with the church was a salaried person, who was re-imbursed by the Order; the latter was also responsible for the maintenance of the church. It was a large establishment and had 7 altars, the main altar, and three secondary altars on either side of the nave.

The main altarpiece of the church was dedicated to the Annunciation.

One side altar contained a small plaster statue of the Madonna. There was also a crucifix and another composite statue of the Madonna with the baby Christ in between St John the Baptist and St Nicholas. There were also 3 small paintings, one showing the *Dormitio Virginis*, Christ and two apostles, and another one of Christ and three apostles.

Another altar had its main painting showing the Madonna of the Holy Rosary between St Dominic, St Thomas, St Catherine of Siena, and St Rosa.

A side altar displayed the statute of St Francis de Paule.

²³ Magione 578, fol 97.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, fol 101.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 106r to 108r.

One altar was dedicated to St Joseph. It had a painting of the saint and a small plaster statue of St Joseph with the boy Christ.

Another altar was dedicated to St Anthony of Padova.

The last altar had a great statue of the crucifix in *papier mache*.

Castanea

The manor of Castanea was situated about 10 kms to the north east of Messina.²⁶ It was a donation to the Hospitaller Order and the assets present in the *casale* were the main source of wealth of the grand priory of Messina.²⁷ The property had two churches maintained by the Order. One was the parochial church of San Giovanni Battista, and the other was dedicated to Santa Maria del Bosco.

The church of San Giovanni Battista was the main church of the village of Castanea,²⁸ and it was a superb building. It was extensively described during the prioral visit of 1604.²⁹ It had three naves, the main nave in the centre and two side naves, separated by 2 colonnades with 5 columns each and had four large windows.³⁰ The main altar had a large angel on either side. The main altarpiece showed St Peter and St Paul and was commissioned in 1546. The side naves had 4 altars on each side. The

²⁶ Foti Giuseppe, *Storia, Arte, Tradizione nelle Chiese dei Casali di Messina*, (Grafo Editor srl, Messina, 1983), 426. ‘*l'espressione usata da Rocco Pirri nella sua Sicilia Sacra, là dove dice che l'antichissimo Priorato di Messina aveva molti possessi e beni, fra i quali la città (sic) di castanea, poco distante da Messina*’.

²⁷ Magione 401, fol 204r - 283r. This contains a huge inventory of the leases owed to the manor of Castanea in 1603, which in totality was more than 4650 units, by far the single largest asset of the Order in Sicily that attracted this large a number, and by inference, the richest. The average lease amounted to 5 scudi; this gives a potential annual income from the manor of Castanea of 23,250 scudi.

²⁸ Foti, 426. As the Hospitaller Order had large tracts of land and a major number of assets, it was their presumption that apart from the civil jurisdiction which they had over the inhabitants the Order also expected ecclesiastical authority as well; something with which the archbishop of Messina could not concur. There was a stratigozial sentence dating back to 1404 siding with the Hospitaller Order in this deliberation. The disagreements continued however and in 1762 the archbishop of Catania was asked by Pope Clement XIII to interpose again between the two litigants. For a long time Castanea was indeed *nullius dioecesis'ossia fu esente sia dalla giurisdizione dell'Ordine di Malta, sia da quella dell'Arcivescovo di Messina, er era il Sommo Pontefice che la esercitava a mezzo di un delegato Apostolico*.’

²⁹ Magione 401, fol 190r et seq. This contains the visitation of Castanea during the prioral visit of 1603.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, See also AOM 6129, 6133.

altrapieces on the left-hand side included, from the eastern end, St John the Baptist, with the main painting on wooden panels. Next to it was the Circumcision of Christ, and then St Michael the archangel.³¹ Next to this side chapel was the door leading to the bell tower, and the last altarpiece on the left-hand side was dedicated to the Madonna del buon Consiglio. The dedications on the right-hand side of the main nave, in the same order, were dedicated to St Sebastian with a small painting of the Pietá. Next to this first chapel was the door leading to the sacristy. The next chapel was dedicated to St Francis de Paule and the next one to St Francis of Assisi; in this chapel there was also another painting of a Madonna with two angels. The last chapel near the western end was dedicated to the Madonna della Portella. On either side of the western door were two side doors. The wooden pulpit was worked in chestnut and was adjacent to the first eastern column on the left-hand side. It had 4 engraved panels depicting our Saviour, St John the Baptist, St Peter, and St Paul.

One hundred and fifty years later, in the prioral visits of 1749, the visiting commissioners did not call on this church, probably because at that point in time ownership of this estate by the Order had become problematical. Almost certainly, the reason was the centuries-old dispute which the Order had with the archbishop of Messina over the tenure of the rich possession of Castanea.³²

The manor of Castanea supported another church called Santa Maria del Bosco.³³ This church was mentioned in a 1690 document when the chaplain Domenico Arena, the main organist and violinist of the choir at the grand priory of Messina, was transferred there. The church was outside the village precincts and was situated about 3 kms from the manor of Castanea in front of the bay of Milazzo on the north-eastern coast of Sicily. It had two altars.

³¹ Foti,434.

³² See footnote 403.

³³ Magione 401, fol 286v - 287r. The church was described as '*piccola...ben conditionata con suo altare coperto di sopra con suo baglio.*' The church was under the jurisdiction of Messina and had three benefices amounting to about 5 *onze*. There was an obligation to celebrate one mass a week on the main altar of the parochial church of San Giovanni Battista in the casale of Castanea.

The Manor of Santa Maria dei Milici

Milici was a territorial concession given to the Order by Frederick II on 8 March 1211.³⁴ It was one of the rich possessions which the Order had outside the city of Messina.³⁵ The asset consisted of two hamlets, Rodi and Milici, with their estates, churches and chapels (over which the grand prior of Messina had absolute spiritual jurisdiction), the three manors (Milici, San Giovanni of Rodi, and part of Musufleti) and territory along the river Patrì which ran through the territory of Milici down to the sea.³⁶ The manor³⁷ had three churches and was situated 160 kms east of Palermo and 35 kms west of Messina.³⁸

The main church was the parochial church of Santa Maria di Milici which serviced the nearby villages and took care of their religious cult.³⁹ The church adjoined the main residence or prioral palace of the commander and was called *Torre Grande*.

The church was dedicated to Santa Maria. In 1604, the main altarpiece showed St Mary holding a child Christ between the two St Johns, the Evangelist on the right and the Baptist on the left.⁴⁰ Above the altarpiece, there were also two frescoes of the Holy Trinity and another depicting St Peter and St Paul.

³⁴ Magione 401, fol 127r. ' *quali sudetto feudo fi Milici consisti in una montagna aspera nella quali vi sonno diversi arbori di rivoli, carpani, ...acini. nello quali feudo li sonno due casali uno nominato milici et l'altro rodi. et tutti li casi di detti dui casali con loro arbori di chiusi ..pagano censi perpetui di diversi dominii all detto priorato di Messina*'.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 105r-112v. The prioral visit of 1603 registers no less than 70 leases appertaining to the manor of Milici. These were censuses which were paid every year to the prioral commandery of Milici, some with a definite contract and others without (*senza contratti ..di consuetudini antiqua annotati in un rollo*).

³⁶ D'Avenia, 'Note sulla Camera Priorale di Milici: Casali, Chiese, Feudi', 20, in Pietro Di Maria, Cinzia Accetta (eds), *Sulle tracce dei Cavalieri di Malta: il restauro del palazzo priorale di Rodi Milici*, (Caracol, 2010).

³⁷ The name Milici was used to describe the *casale* and the manor and estates as well.

³⁸ Magione 401, fol 115v et seq. This contains an inventory of the mobile assets seen during the prioral visit to Milici in 1603. The actual visit starts from fol 100r et seq.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 120v. The chaplain taking care of this at the time was the chaplain fra Augustino Perroni against an annual salary of 10 *onze*. He was obliged to say mass in the church on Sundays and feast days throughout the year.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 113v. ' *...vi é un quadro di legnami antiquo con sua cornicetta piccola indorata nel quale vi sonno depinti cioe nel mezzo la Madonna seu Santa Maria di Milici con il Christo in braccio a man destra di quilla santo Jo. Battista nostro padrone et aman sinistra Santo Joanni Evangelista*'.

The church had three altars recessed in their alcoves on the right side.⁴¹ The alcoves were separated by two doors. The eastern one connected with the internal courtyard that led to the prioral palace,⁴² whereas the western one led to the sacristy.⁴³ Starting from the eastern one, the three altars were dedicated to Santa Maria del Rosario, surrounded by the fifteen stations of the rosary; it had also a small painting of the archangel San Michele and a crucifix, (*di mostura*).⁴⁴ The middle altar was dedicated to the Madonna della Itria, and the western altar, near the western door of the church had an altarpiece showing Santa Maria la Perpetua with six angels around her.

The church had five altars on the left-hand side. The eastern one was dedicated to the Annunciation and also had a crucifix and a marble statue of Our Lady of Grace.⁴⁵ The second altar was dedicated to the Assumption, the third to the Annunciation, and the fourth altar to the Adoration of the Magi. The fifth altar, close to the western end of the church was dedicated to Santa Caterina of Alexandria.⁴⁶

In a 1667 Cabreo, the church was described as having 9 altars, the main one in the centre and 4 on either side; however, in the prioral visit of 1749, only 7 altars are described.

The adjoining prioral palace was a two-storied tenement.⁴⁷ The main archway showed the engraved escutcheon of fra Signorino Gattinara, the Grand Prior of Messina

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, fol 100r et seq.

⁴² *Ibid.*, fol 114r. '...vi é una porta di pietra intagliata la quale si intra nel cortiglio della torre del priore con sua porta di legnami'.

⁴³ The sacristy had undergone extensive repairs before the 1603 visit. The doorway of the sacristy was closed by a wooden door. It had a ceiling of wooden beams supporting roof tiles. It also had a wooden altar which was used by the chaplain to say mass. The sacristy had a small window barred by a grille which overlooked the courtyard of the *Torre*.

⁴⁴ Magione 401, fol 114r. '...ci é un Cristo in Croce di mostura quali crucifissi servi accompagnarti li morti et processioni'.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 114v. '...ve é una cappella nel muro stucchiata con sua cornici con uno altare di....sopra il quale c'è le immagini di la madonna con un christo in braccia di marmora bianca grandi bellissima intitolata Santa Maria della gratia sotto la quali immagini vi é il suo scannello di marmora bianca nel quali vi sonno sculpiti e nel menzola nunziata a man destra la assumptione di Maria vergine et nella man sinistra l'adoratione delli tre maggi et di una parti et l'altra dui serafini.'

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 114v; also, Magione 401, 113 et seq.

⁴⁷ The residence of the commander is described in Magione 401, fol 105r-126v. It had a large courtyard with a huge garden full of citrus trees and other fruit trees, sveral storehouses and resplendent large rooms for accomodation.

between 1528 and 1567. It had a large courtyard with an adjoining garden full of citrus trees and other fruit trees, and several storehouses.

The residence consisted of a basement which was a series of large rooms opening onto a central uncovered courtyard. The *piano nobile* on the first floor had an impressive large room which was the *sala grande*, and two other large apartments.

The manor of Milici also incorporated the ruined remains of an abandoned mill, and the territory of the Moniaci, near the boundary of Milici. Attached to the latter was also the fief of Solice.⁴⁸ The cabreo of 1667, set up by fra Domenico del Carretto gave the measurements of the different fiefs that made up the manor of Milici, the *casale* and the adjoining church of San Giovanni di Rodi, and part of the terrain of Musufleti called Ginestrito. Milici had 375 perpetual leases devolving from its assets, payable on an annual basis.⁴⁹

The church of San Rocco in Milici was in the process of being erected during the prioral visit of 1749.⁵⁰ According to tradition, San Rocco had appeared to defend the inhabitants of Castoreale from the plague of 1473. The high altar was dedicated to San Rocco and had a statue of the saint. The chapel also had a picture of Jesus with his mother, and another statue of San Biagio in gilded wood.

There was another chapel in the manor of Milici, dedicated to San Giovanni di Rodi. This was situated in the village of the same name. In 1604, the church was exercising its religious functions. It had a small wooden rostrum which had been commissioned by the prior Languiglia. However, by 1749, both the village and the church were in a ruinous state.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Magione 401, fol 123v.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 144r - 179v. The roll of tenants included those in the fiefs and manors, hamlets of Milici, Rodi, Ginestrito and the land of '*Castro Regali*'.

⁵⁰ Magione 578, fol 146r.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, fol 137r

Mineo

The town of Mineo is in the district of Catania between Gela to the South-West and Catania to the North-East, north of Vizzini. The Hospitallers also had estates in Mineo and a church. This church of San Giovanni Battista, mentioned in the prioral visit of 1604, was joined to that of Santa Maria della Misericordia, also called della Pietà.⁵² During the priorship of grand prior fra Signorinus Gattinara (1617-1620) a monastery for Benedictine nuns, Santa Maria degli Angeli, was founded in this church.⁵³

Patti

The assets in Patti were a concession to the Hospitaller Order in 1396 to fra Giovanni Clavostro. The donated lands included a church of San Giovanni Battista, which in reality appertained to the commandery of Milici.⁵⁴ The main altarpiece showed the patron of the Order and the baptism of Christ.⁵⁵ At the bottom of the painting was the coat-of-arms of the grand prior fra Rinaldo di Naro. Masses were said twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays.⁵⁶ This concession gathered 75 leases every year.⁵⁷ This church was mentioned in the Prioral Visit of 1604,⁵⁸ but by 1749 was run down and ruined and by the end of the eighteenth century was deconsecrated and closed off to the public.⁵⁹

⁵² Magione 401, fol 774v. 'In una ecclesia esistenti in questa città di mineo sub titolo di Santo Giovanni Baptista incorporata seu aggregata con un'altra ecclesia nominata Santa Madonna della Misericordia seu della Pietà...'

⁵³ *Ibid.*, fol 775r 'In detta ecclesia fundata un monasterio di donne subiaculo sancta maria delli angeli allo quali monasterio fu concessa detta ecclesia dal qdam signore fra signorino gattinara olim priore del priorato di Messina quali fu concessa con obbligattione et reconoxenza di rotulu uno di cera l'anno et tari tri '. See also fol 777v.

⁵⁴ Magione 578, fol 155v.

⁵⁵ Magione 401, fol 100v. 'depicta ed immagini di vi Joannis bapte patroni nostri et baptismatis d n! Jesucum duo angelis.'

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 102v. The chaplain, fra Jacobo Chioppu was paid 6 *onze* and 6 *tari* annually.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, fol 102r - 112v.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 100r et seq.

⁵⁹ Magione 401, fol 735v. The visiting commissioners in 1604 set out rulings on what should be done when Hospitaller churches and chapels became derelict and in ruins. 'farli mettere una croce di lignami o

The church of San Leonardo in Siracusa

This church was already offering religious services in the sixteenth century and was under the administration of the grand priory of Messina by the sixteenth century.⁶⁰

The main altar of the church had the altarpiece of St Leonard with other secondary paintings of the Madonna and the crucifix. There was a wooden canopy over the main altar which was painted over with images of the four evangelists and another four doctors of the church.⁶¹

The side altars on the left side of the nave included a reliquary dating from 1598 and a painting of San Giovanni Battista. Next to this was a side chapel dedicated to San Biagio with paintings showing the ten miracles of the saint. Adjacent was a door that led to the house of the chaplain of the church.

On the right-hand side, the first altar next to the main was dedicated to the Holy Crucifix. There was a painting which showed the crucified Christ with St John the Evangelist on the left and the Madonna on the side. Next to this first altar was a door leading to the sacristy. The next altar inside a side chapel was dedicated to St Leonard, with an adjacent door to the courtyard of the church. The next two altars showed one painting of San Giovanni Battista together with San Leonardo and the last altar showed San Nicola of Tolentino. The arch-confraternity of San Leonardo was associated with the church.

A sepulchral marble inscription commemorated fra Leonardo Balducci, who had died in action and was buried inside the church.⁶²

di pietra in segno che detto loco é sacro et sotto detta croce farli mettere una pietra intagliata con lettere che dica hox extant templum.'

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 410r. The commissioners visited this church on 22 April 1604.

⁶¹ Visita 1749, 246-253.

⁶² G. Agnello, *Siracusa e l'Ordine dei Cavalieri di Malta*, in *Archivio Storico per la Sicilia Orientale*, (serie II, a. XI, 1935), 57-58.

The priory also had several houses and warehouses that it leased and earned hard currency.⁶³ It had also a house with a large walled garden and shop in the quarters of the bishopric.

St Angelo di Brolo

St Angelo di Brolo was another commandery under the direct jurisdiction of the grand priory of Messina from medieval times.⁶⁴ It had a church dedicated to Santa Maria dell'Idria.⁶⁵

2. The Hospitaller Assets in Agrigento

The Commandery of Santa Maria Maddalena.

The Hospital of St Mary Magdalene and the adjoining church dedicated to the same saint in Agrigento had been the property of the Teutonic Order since 1215. The hospital had to be rebuilt in 1339 and continued to be embellished by the noble Giovanni Chiaramonte, Seneschal of the Realm. It was probably at this time that the dedication to St Mary Magdalene came into being, as Chiaramonte had a special devotion for this saint. The bishop of Agrigento, Matteo Fugardo donated the hospital and church to the Order of St John in 1368 as a jus patronatus endowment.⁶⁶ Parts of the endowment were

⁶³ Magione 401, fol 719r et seq. Next to the church was a house owned by the Order. The main door led to a yard and some ground floor rooms. From the yard, *'una scala fatto di legnami con suo parapetto di tavoli per la quali si sagli in la stanza'* over the groundfloor rooms. It was roofed with tiles. This room had two windows.

⁶⁴ AOM 578, Visita 1749

⁶⁵ Pirri, 943. *'S. Maria de Itria Broli'*.

⁶⁶ Antonino Mongitore, *Monumenta Historica Sacrae Domus Mansionis SS. Trinitatis Militaris Ordinis Theutonicorum Urbis Panormi, Et Magni Ejus Praeceptoris*, (Panormi: Aiccardo, 1721), 209. *'Anno*

assets previously part of the Palermitan la Guilla commandery. The church of Santa Maria Maddalena had two altars, one dedicated to St John and the other to St Mary Magdalene. After the Chiaramonte family fell out of favour with King Martin I and the patriarch Andrea Chiaramonte beheaded, all his land property including that given by jus patronatus reverted to the monarch. However, a few years afterwards Martin I returned the assets to the Hospitaller Order.

From a cabreum dated 1536, the great house of the commandery was attached to the hospital of St Mary Magdalene. The house was made up of a group of buildings containing an uncovered courtyard, a small garden, and a water cistern. It also had 5 manors; Busuné, Azzalora, Chimento, Torcicuda, and Vito Soldano.⁶⁷

Butera

The commandery Grienti was set up in the region of Butera in 1644, by the chaplain of the Order, fra Don Angelo Marrone. The deed is in the notarial acts of Erasmo Bruno of Butera.⁶⁸ This commandery was reserved for the conventual chaplains and chaplains of obedience. In 1725, the land assets were merged with the commandery of Guzmano of Mazzarino, to make the new commandery more economically viable.

3. The Ricetta of Augusta

The town and seaport of Augusta had both strategic and economic importance to the Order. It was preferred by the Hospitaller navy because it had a reasonably safe

etenim 1368. Matthaëus Fugardo Panormitanus, Episcopus Agrigentinus, assentienibus Joanne & Matthaëo de Claramonte, hujusce Ecclesiae patronis, eamdem ecclesiam Prioratui S. Joannis Baptistae Messanae concessit... habentibus ius patronatusin hospitale predicto.'

⁶⁷ Pace Gravina, 129.

⁶⁸ Magione 578.

harbour, particularly from the dreaded *gregale*. On the leeward side of the town of Augusta, the Order had secure moorings for its galleys. Both the ports of Augusta and Siracusa, on the eastern Sicilian seaboard, were used for the transshipment and commercial activity between Sicily and Malta; indeed, both ports were important stopovers, situated as they were in the middle of the Mediterranean. They were also necessary visiting ports to replenish the Order's galleys before they started their *caravane*. However, in 1648, after some long-standing disagreements with the senate of Siracusa, fra Marcello Beringucci, the procurator of the Order in Siracusa, left the city and took the latter's business transactions to the nearby town of Augusta. Beringucci took with him his whole coterie of people, including his secretary, chaplain, administrator, and quantity surveyors, which at least until 1767 were all under the Order's civil and criminal jurisdiction.

Even before this incident, Augusta had sustained and supplied the Order's virtualising needs for its navy. Tons of the main staple, the hard biscuits or *biscotti*, salted meat, water, and wine were supplied to the Order's galleys on a regular basis. To service this recurrent need, the Hospitallers had a major industrial enterprise close to the quays in the port of Augusta, including several large storerooms to receive and store the grain, windmills to grind it to wheat, several bakeries to make the biscuits, and abattoirs to provide and process the meat.⁶⁹ This whole project needed the services of a whole army of skilled human resources that maintained the needed supplies to the Order's navy.

This whole venture came to nought during the night of the 9 January 1693, when a massive earthquake with its epicentre outside Catania levelled most of the eastern coast of Sicily. This was followed up by a major tsunami which inundated the port towns, including Augusta. At the time the Order had 4 galleys moored in the harbour of

⁶⁹ AOM 815 (Primo Conto del Commendatore Chiaranda. Procuratore in Agosta. Dal Primo Maggio 1796 a tutt'Aprile 1797) fol 2r et seq. That there was indeed a large industrial and manufacturing concern in Augusta in the formation of the *biscotti* is shown in the financial statement of 1796, carried out by the procurator of Augusta fra Giacomo Maria Chiarandá. Apart from his annual salary of 120 *onze*, there was a major outlay of the buying of cereals and their transport overland to bakeries in Augusta; this came to 3821 *onze*. There were salaries of the clerical side which included a clerk, secretary, and a chaplain. The bakeries had six sets of ovens, each with its teams of workers, including the 'governors' and other workers. The annual salaries of these came to 95 *onze*. The *ricetta* also supported 4 pensions.

Augusta to take in supplies.⁷⁰ A letter from the grand master to the ambassador of the Order to Rome, fra Marcello Sacchetti less than a week from these disastrous events attests to the collateral loss that the Order sustained in Augusta.⁷¹ The bakeries which supplied the Order collapsed, killing most of the *ciurma*⁷² under tons of rubble, as they slept inside the buildings, shackled to the walls to prevent escape. The same earthquake had also caused some damage in the Order's main city, Valetta and on the island of Gozo. As soon as the Grand Master fra Adrien de Wignacourt heard the news of the catastrophe in Augusta,⁷³ he sent 4 galleys, laden with emergency rations and other items including large amounts of nails to succour the beleaguered port.⁷⁴ The viceroy

⁷⁰ Despite the tsunami that followed soon after the earthquake, drowning what was left of the inhabitants of Augusta, the four galleys did not sustain any major structural damage. See AOM 1459, fol 32v. *'Corsero in vero gran pericolo di sommergersi le nostre galere che si trovavano nel porto d'Agusta quando successo quwell horribile terremoto degli 11 di Genn, ma per gratia di Dio restorno libere, e non ne sentirono altro danno che la perdita di molte persone che si trovavano in terra.'*

⁷¹ AOM 1459, fol 15r. *'Doppo il terrore apportato a questi nostri religiosi e popli da terremoti che si fecero sentire la notte delli 9 del corrente verso le 10 hore a la seguente domenica alle due hore doppoe mezzo giorno, daneggiando molte chiese e case di questa citta e casali particolarmente della citta notabile, continuando a sentirsi fin oggi il movimento della terra ogni giorni e notte, ci arrivo l'infrausta nuova che sara gia pervenuta costa delle rovine deplorabile che il medesimo terremoti hanno cagionato nella citta d'Agusta e siracusa.... li trovavano nel tempo di detti terrimoti quattro delle nostre galere in Agusta mandati a portar biscotti et altre provisioni e come si eran sbarcati in terra molti schiavi et altra gente per condurre detti biscotti alle galere ne habbiamo perduto gran numero degli usci e l'altri che rimasero sepelliti sotto le rovine delle case atterate. Pensati noi hora come ci troviamo provisioni di ciurma per le galere, mentre gia prima di questa nuova perdita ne ha veniamo molta mancanza a segno cheper la futura campagna l'ottava galera, et oltre la scarrezza delle ciurme, ci tiene ancora in pensiero in modo di provederci di biscotto, essendo rovinati i forni e molini d'Augusta e Siracusa. Per rimediar a questo bisogno s'invia da noi gli ordini necessari al ricevitore di Venetia sia per supplire al mancamento delle ciurme che e molto grande mentre che volendo noi mandare le galere in Siracusa et Agusta per porgere qualche aiuto e sollievo a quie miseri popli, mossia cio noi dalla carita christiana, habbiamo a pena potuto armar cinque di esse, non vediamo altro modo che di supplicar nostro signore a volerci concedere qualche numero di forzati, come fecero benignamente altri sommi pontifici, suoi predecessori...'*

⁷² These were the galley rowers, which included non-Christian slaves, mostly Muslims, civil and criminal prisoners with a commuted sentence to row for life on the galleys and *buonavoglia* who were paid rowers, usually debtors.

⁷³ The Senate of Augusta had also sent to the grand master a letter begging for immediate aid. See AOM 263, fol 142v. *'In un caso di cotanto estremo bisogno, come il corrente ci troviamo merce laa consaputa desolatione di questa afflitta citta, ricorriamo a nome del Pubblico alla somma pieta di VE; alle quale stimiamo superfluo insinuarle le lastime presenti, potendoli molto bene VE concepire colla sua costumata saviezza solo le rapportiamo che chi implora l'aggiuto ed il sollievo di VE, e quella stessa citta che sempre visse special propensione verso la Relig di VE, alla quale facciamo profondissimi inchini con implorarle dal cielo l'ange d'ogni sodo bene. Agosta, e Genn 28 dell 1693. Umilissimi servitori I giurati'*

⁷⁴ AOM 263, fol 137v *'hanno stimato debito della charita christiana e delle professione di questa sacra relig il porgere tutto il sollievo possibile a quei popli e percio Vos Em hanno ordinato, che il Ven Gen con le cinque galere che si trovano atte a navigare parta subito per detta citta al fine di soccorrerle nel miglior modo che sara possibile in una sciagura ovi deplorabile, et a questo effetto porteranno medicamenti per li feriti, et infermi, et anco quantita di chiodi per quello che porra occorete con il rimanente che si stimera pportuno a detto effetto'*

was cognizant of the immediate help that the Order had given to the inhabitants of Augusta as a letter he sent to the grand master in June 1693 confirmed.⁷⁵

The reconstruction of Augusta began some months after. It was at this point that the Order, after much debate on taking the right decision, decided to ask the Senate of Augusta for help. The final decision taken was to rebuild, on land donated by the Senate, a whole complex for the manufacture and processing of the victuals need for the Order's naval squadron. This included warehouses to store grain, windmills to ground this to flour, several ovens to produce ship biscuits and *galletti*, abattoirs to provide salted meat, and cellars for the storage of wine and water.⁷⁶

4. The *Ricetta* of Caltagirone.

The Hospitaller Order had three commanderies within the district boundaries of Caltagirone. One of them was a fief that was given to the Hospitallers by a decree promulgated by Pope Clement V, after the Templars were eradicated in the early fourteenth century. The other two were the fruits of a jus patronatus donation in 1637.

⁷⁵ AOM 264, fol 10r. *'Essendosi lette per ordine di Sua Eminenza le seguenti lettere della Maesta Cattolica e del Signor Duca di Uzeda, Vicere di Sicilia in testimonianza del gradimento con che la maesta Sua ha inteso l'assistenza prestata dalla Religione alle città di Siracusa et Agosta nell'occasione delli terrimoti che cagionarono danni gravissimi in dette città'.*

⁷⁶ AOM 1459, fol 32v. In a letter dated 28 March 1693 to the procurator of Augusta fra Domenico Firrao from the convent in Malta. *'Intenderete da venerabile procuratore del nostro comun tesoro la deliberatione che habbia fatto con il nostro venerabile Consiglio di edificare costo magazzeni, forni e molini per farci a suo tempo le fabricche de biscotti, e riceverete ins da quelli gli ordini... di quanto doverete operare da parte nostra su questo affare onde noi rimettendoci a sud ven proc a raccomandandoci l'opera con tutto il zelo che ricerca il buon servitio della Religione, ne occorendoci da soggiungervi a loro ...'.*

The Commandery of San Giovanni (known also as the commandery of Santa Maria del Tempio)

Santa Maria del Tempio was the name of an ancient fief on the outskirts of Caltagirone; it also gave the name of the church on the same site. The church was situated on the top of a hill around the base of which, the river Tempio or Tenchio skirted outside the city walls.⁷⁷ The ruins of the *domus* of the Templar commandery



Figure A2 The *Ricetta* of Caltagirone

⁷⁷ Magione 401, fol 570r. 'la ecclesia nominata S Jo Bapta esistenti fora li porti di questa città di calatagironi..'

stood nearby. Tradition maintained that the Blessed Gerlando, a knight of the Order of the Templars, of German or Polish origin had died here and the church kept his relics.⁷⁸ After the Templar dissolution, the relics were transposed to the basilica of San Giacomo in Caltagirone and the territory was given to the Hospitallers. The massive estate was put under Hospitaller governance in 1391 by the senate of Caltagirone,⁷⁹ and had a church which became the church of San Giovanni Battista of the commandery.

San Giovanni Battista was a small edifice with four altars. The main altarpiece had a painting that was so old it was in a deplorable state and the image could not be decipherable.⁸⁰ Three other altars on the sides included one dedicated to St John the Baptist, (damaged and broken);⁸¹ another had two paintings on the wall, one of the archangel St Michael, and the other showing Christ with the cross. The altarpiece of the third had a torn painting of the Madonna dell'Itria. On the left was a side door, near to which was a holy water font.⁸² This door led to a walled yard. The bell tower supported two bells, one of which was broken.⁸³ All the altars were refurbished in 1617 by fra Alessandro Benci.⁸⁴ The floor of the church had 4 sepulchral marble slabs; one of these had the coat-of-arms of fra Luca Pujades under which was the date 1497.⁸⁵ Another had only the date 1476. The sacristy had another altar with the altarpiece showing many saints for which there was great devotion.

⁷⁸ Pirri, 671-2.

⁷⁹ Giacomo Pace, "Ex Arca privilegiorum". *Regesti delle pergamene dell'universitas di Caltagirone*, in *Rivista di Storia del Diritto Italiano*, 69 (1996), 249.

⁸⁰ Magione 401, fol 563r. During the visit of 1604 the main altarpiece of the church of San Giovanni Battista was ruined beyond recognition: '*ci sonno dui quadri vecchi in tela tutti strazzati che per la antichità non si ponno riconoxiri che immagini sonno*'. The incumbent commander was given instruction by the visiting commissioners, that within 4 months from the day of the visit, he had to hang on the main altar, a new painting 'in tela o in tavola a sua volunta di pictura d'oglio un quatro per lo altare maggiore'. Magione 401, fol 565v. The large, fractured bell was also to be replaced, also within the prescribed period of 4 months; there was a penalty of 100 scudi payable to the common treasury if this was not done.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, fol 563r. '*vi é uno altaro di pietra intagliata in diversi pezzi ...*'

⁸² *Ibid.*, fol 563v. '*In detta parti sinistra nel muro vi é un fonti di marmora per l'acqua benedicta con una mano di sotto pure di marmoro bianca che teni detto fonti nello quali...*' Inscribed on this was the coat-of-arms of the commander fra Pujades.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, fol 564r. '*..ci sonno due campani di bronzo una di cantaro uno ..quali é rotta et l'altra di rotola sissanta incirca senza battaglia con loro mioli di lignami*'.

⁸⁴ AOM 6057.

⁸⁵ Magione 401, fol 564r. On a marble slab had the following inscription: '*Il commendator fra Luca Impugiades nel anno 1497*'.

By the seventeenth century, the commandery of San Giovanni in Caltagirone included several assets that were located both inside the town and outside it.

The extra-mural possessions included the main manor of Santa Maria del Tempio.⁸⁶ The buildings on the manor included the main tenement with its tower, several warehouses, one of which was of enormous dimensions and was called the *Ribatteria*, stables, and several watermills on site whose performance was increased by deviating the river to form a water reservoir held by a dyke.⁸⁷

There were also other land holdings. These included parcels of arable land of various acreage in San Mauro in the district da Pileri, at San Basilio in the district of Russa,⁸⁸ Moschitto o Portosalvo, several windmills in the district of Mantello, and other land holdings in the district of Birdilini around the church of San Giovanni. They also possessed an estate called San Giovanni, with an area of 17 salme, including a house on site in the district of Fuorichiana,⁸⁹ and other land assets in Poggioguardia.⁹⁰

The commandery also had several leases on buildings inside the town. The Order was also in possession of a great palatial building in one of the main streets of town, San Giacomo street, which served as the main residence of the commandery and his court including the procurator of the *ricetta*.⁹¹ The house opposite the palace also belonged to the Order.

⁸⁶ Magione 401, fol 591v - 592r. The manor was 110 salmi in size, with a hundred salmi that were agricultural land, and ten that were '*terreni rustici*'. It held 4 water mills. These were leased for 140 scudi a year together with the '*carnaggi*'. In 1602, the leases were signed by the commander of the commandery of Caltagirone at the time, the bailiff fra Malaspina. See fol 601v: In 1604, the fief was situated between the cities of Caltagirone and Piazza in Val di Noto. The commander at this point was fra Cola Xiortini. The latter had the authority to administer civil justice in the fief, could appoint judges, master notary and a bailiff. The fief was not subject to compulsory services by the overlord (*angaria*).

⁸⁷ Spagnoletti (2003), 139.

⁸⁸ Magione 401, fol 594v. This asset was two miles away from the city.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 594r

⁹⁰ AOM 6059,

⁹¹ Spagnoletti (2003), 137

The Commandery of San Giovanni Battista and San Giacomo Maggiore (known as the Saracena)

The donor of this *jus patronatus* commandery was Don Giacomo Ottaviano and the contract of donation was carried out in 1637. In exchange for acquiring the habit and the prerogatives of a knight of Grace, Don Ottaviano set up a commandery from inherited paternal property which he was to donate to the Order.⁹² The commandery was made up of the whole inheritance of the territory called the 'Saracena' or the 'Fontana delli Conti', which was 140 salme in size. The donation had 130 salme of cultivated agricultural land, including 50,000 vines and several gardens, a large thicket of canes, several thickets, streams, wells and enclosed pine trees and fruit trees.⁹³ The territory also included the leases of various houses, warehouses, several rooms in town and a half-finished tower. With these he also donated other assets that amounted to a capital of 10,000 scudi. As with other commanderies of patronial endowments, Don Ottaviano also built a church on the donated property which was to be given the same name of the commandery. The church was fully equipped to provide religious services to the surrounding hamlets.

There are at least three *cabrei* still extant of this commandery, which are dated 1637 (the year after its institution),⁹⁴ 1651⁹⁵ and 1766.⁹⁶ In 1693, as the result of the major earthquake which shook eastern Sicily and the ruinous state that this asset was left in, this commandery was merged with that of Bonanno.⁹⁷

⁹² Pozzo, 20. '*concedendo ad esso D. Giacomo l'Habito di Cavaliere, e l'usufrutto di detta Comenda durante la sua vita*'.

⁹³ AOM 2160, fol 19r.

⁹⁴ AOM 6084.

⁹⁵ AOM 6086, fol 11r. This *cabreo* reveals that 14 years from its inception, the commandery included 140 salme of land, a large block of houses (called the Palace or tower) with its walled garden and courtyard which accommodated the church of Santi Giovanni e Giacomo, a large vineyard containing 50000 vines, another garden with running water, several sources of water including water cisterns, fruit trees, another house surrounded by a wall and a large cane thicket enclosed by a wall, the house called Salto delli pecuri, another house called della Grazia, and finally a vegetable garden 7 tumini in size. See *La Sicilia dei Cavalieri*, 142.

⁹⁶ AOM 6085.

⁹⁷ AOM 6128, fol 9r.

The Commandery Bonnano (San Girolamo)

The institution of this commandery came in the wake of the foundation of the commandery known as the 'Saracena'. This commandery was founded in the same year as the latter. It was also the time when the senate of Caltagirone donated to the grand master, the relic of the right arm of the blessed Bernardo Gerlando.⁹⁸

The founders were to be three brothers, Giacomo, Giuseppe, and Giovan Battista. Giacomo, the oldest brother who was only 16 years of age at the time, already had a severe brush with the law of the land when he had committed murder.⁹⁹ Don Giuseppe Bonanno, who had approached the Italian Langue asked that, on the death of Giacomo, the Order would accept the other two brothers, in turn, as knights of Grace. After the death of the last brother, the commandery would revert to the Italian Langue. Don Bonanno also requested that the Langue would waive the necessity of the three brothers being present at the Messina priory and that their seniority in the Order would count from the day of the request for institution of the commandery. Finally, the three brothers asked to submit one set of proofs of nobility for all the three brothers, including Giacomo pending a papal dispensation.¹⁰⁰

The income of the commandery was to be 80 onze annually; this was based on a capital of 1600 onze,¹⁰¹ including the lease on a country house worth 1122 onze and another house worth 82.15 onze.¹⁰² As part of the contract of institution, the Bonnano brothers were obliged to furnish and maintain an altar in the church of the other commandery in Caltagirone Santa Maria del Tempio. This was to be done with the

⁹⁸ Pirri, 669. 'Ann. 1637 hujus Beati Rodium Majorem brachii dexteri Senatus Calath elargitus est magno Magistro Religionis Melite per fratres Caesarem Ferrum & Angelum Piccolomini equitis Hieros...'

⁹⁹ AOM 2160, 25r. This is reflected in the *memoriale* sent to the Italian Langue in the act of institution. It suggests that the Italian Langue would be the administrator (*commendatrice*) during the lifetime of Giacomo (by reason of him being detained elsewhere), with the obligation to send him the annual income from the commendary, from which he had to pay the annual responses to the common treasury.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 27r. Don Giacomo Bonanno was found guilty of heinous crimes and sentenced to life imprisonment. He later escaped from prison. It is not beyond reason that the donation of part of the Bonanno patrimony could have been a ruse to avoid the assets being taken over the criminal courts; on top of which the brothers would have lived with the usufruct of the commandery and under the protection of the Order.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, fol 25r. The capital of the commandery was planned to be 7000 Sicilian scudi.

¹⁰² Pirri, 945.

consent of the incumbent of the commandery of St John, fra Bernardo Vecchietti; however, if the latter was not agreeable to this, the brothers would have been constrained to construct a small chapel, furnish it with a priest and maintain both with a sum of 25 scudi annually.

5. The Ricetta of Catania

The Commandery of San Giovanni di Fleri.

This commandery, located in the *ricetta* of Catania, was a *camera priorale*. This meant that the income accruing from this commandery would revert to the priory of Messina and would help with the several disbursements that the priory was involved in its management. The commandery consisted of several estates including that of Jazzo del Piraino, and another called del Portiero (also called di Sinagra) in the district of Paternò. It also had the estates of Agnelleria, Spinasanta, Cavaliere, Fontanazza, Trepunti, Cimina, Pezza di pulice, Piano del Fico, Rossotto, Pezza di San Giovanni, Mangiante, and Taruso di San Giovanni. The prioral visit of 1604 listed at least 40 leases annually that reverted to the grand priory.¹⁰³

The commandery also included the church with the same name in the district of San Giovanni di Fleri. Just inside the main door was a marble font standing on a marble column held by an iron bracket to the wall. The main altar was made of marble and the altarpiece consisted of two old paintings on wood showing San Giovanni Battista on the right and San Giovanni Evangelista on the left.¹⁰⁴ Underneath the altarpiece were paintings of the twelve apostles. On the left-hand side of the main altar was a side altar and painted on the wall was the image of the patron saint with the coat-of-arms of the

¹⁰³ Magione 401, fol 421r - 428v.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, fol 420r.

Religion. Next to this altar was a door leading to the courtyard of the commandery house. Outside, next to the main door of the church was the belltower containing a bronze bell. Mass was celebrated every Sunday.

The prioral visits of 1604 found the church to be neglected.¹⁰⁵ Its roof was supported by six large stone columns and eight arches. In the centre of each arch, the keystone displayed the coat-of-arms of the Order.¹⁰⁶

Near to the church of San Giovanni di Fleri was the palatial house of the commandery. Access to the grounds was through a great carved arched portal. This gateway had several coat-of-arms including those of the Order. This portal led to a large courtyard which contained large storerooms, stables, and several outbuildings. It had also a large vegetable garden which included trees, a well, and a smaller garden. Through another arched portal with the heraldic emblem of the Order, a stairway led to the *piano nobile* which contained a great hall with two mullioned windows adorned with marble columns, another large room with another three mullioned windows which overlooked the courtyard, and several other rooms.¹⁰⁷ Most rooms were panelled in wood.

The commandery was extensively damaged during the Catania earthquake of 1693 and the *domus* of the commandery totally destroyed.¹⁰⁸ The church did not perish however and was restored by 1749.

The Commandery of Lentini (San Giovanni li Bagni)

The commandery of San Giovanni li Bagni was also a *camera priorale* of the grand priory of Messina. By 1210 it was already in existence and appertained to the Order of

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 419 et seq.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 420v. also Magione 584. ' *detta ecclesia e tutta damusata substenata da sei colonna fatti di pietra intagliata ...nel muro con otto archi in due cruce tutto di petro et in mezzo di ditto cruce ci é in menzo in ogni parti una pietra intagliata con li armi della Religione* '.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, fol 429r.

¹⁰⁸ A cabreo of 1703 indicates that the church was damaged by the Catania earthquake of 1693. ' *diruta nel dammuso e parte delle mura* '.

the Templars. Under the administration of the latter, it was known as San Leonardo. The donation was carried out by King Frederick II in 1210 and confirmed by the same sovereign in 1229.¹⁰⁹ In 1312 after the Templar Order was dissolved, it was donated to the Hospitaller Order.

The commandery at the beginning of the seventeenth century¹¹⁰ consisted of several estates,¹¹¹ including San Leonardo Sottano (salme 140),¹¹² San Leonardo Soprano,¹¹³ San Leone (with an area of 109.6.2, of which 86 salme went to the coffers of the priory of Messina) (salme 35.3), Trigona (with salme 86 as flat agricultural land and 10 salme under water), Bolliti (salme 36)¹¹⁴ San Giovanni delli Cugni (104 salme)¹¹⁵ and Cataliccardo (140 salme).¹¹⁶ Some of the estates were old fiefs that gave the grand prior power to elect officials to apportion civil and criminal administration. The commandery also incorporated a village called Borgo San Giovanni. The list of leases paid to the commandery in 1604 were more than 200 contracts.¹¹⁷ All these manors were coming from feudal times; all were exempt from servitude, and compulsory military services. However, the inhabitants and leasees were subject to the dictates of the Grand Prior of Messina who was fra Aleramo Languaglia at the time.¹¹⁸

The commandery also had a church which the prioral visit of 1604 had named as San Giovanni delli Bagni. The main altarpiece of the church depicted the image of Jesus

¹⁰⁹ Among other concessions, the Templars had absolute ownership of the river, fishing rights and transport of the fish to the market.

¹¹⁰ Magione 401,

¹¹¹ Pirri, 935. '*Constitutis itaque in praesentia nostra frater Guillelmus magister domus militia templi in Sicilia, majestati nostra supplicavit, ut tenimentum, quod dicitur Pantanum Salsum in tenimento Lentini cum pertinentiis suis, sicut Comes Raynaldus de Modica de voluntate & confirmatione salicium August, parentum nostrorum diva memoria eidem domui militia templi obtulis, nec non & barcam ad usum piscandi per totum fluvium Lentini, piscariam quoque alosarum in ipse flumine ..*'

¹¹² Magione 401, fol 749v - 750r. This fief was 7 miles outside Lentini. In 1604, this estate was 110 salmi in area, 10 salmi of *terreni lavorativi* and 100 salmi of *terreni rustici quali servino per erbaggi*.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, fol 750v. The estate of San Leonardo Soprano was 63 salmi in area, most of it agricultural land.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, fol 762. This estate was 6 miles outside Lentini.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 759v. The estate of San Giovanni delli Cugni was 12 miles from the town of Leontini and was made up of 65 salme that were productive and 7 salme which was stony.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 375r et seq. Also, fol 796r.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, fol 375r - 408v. '*Censuali perpetui che si pagano ogni anno da diversi personi esistenti in questa città di leontini supra casi terreni vigni et altri ...*'

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 766r. The grand prior of Messina or his delegates had the absolute authority to settle civil and criminal cases. In the 1604, the appointed judge was Doctor Sigismundi Cartella and the master notary was Francisco Prospero and the bailiff was Cola Pantano.

Christ with St John the Baptist on his right and St John the Evangelist on his left side.¹¹⁹ On the left-hand side was a small window overlooking the courtyard. On the other side was the door leading to the commandery house.¹²⁰ The chaplain had the duty to say mass twice on weekdays, on Wednesdays and Fridays; in addition, mass was celebrated on Sundays and Feast days.¹²¹ The grand prior Languaglia paid his chaplain 9 onze a year.¹²²

Another church supported by the commandery was dedicated to Santa Maria Maddalena.¹²³ There was also an archconfraternity associated with the Order.¹²⁴

In the same pattern of other houses of similar commanderies, the domus of San Giovanni li Bagni was a grand affair.¹²⁵ It had an enclosed courtyard with a large arched doorway¹²⁶ and had several storehouses in the grounds. Li bagni also had an enclosed vegetable garden. The actual house was in two stories. The large kitchen on the ground floor had two ovens with their chimneys. An external stairway of 11 stone steps took one up to the first floor. On the left-hand side there was door that led to a wooden-panelled room and a patterned brick floor. This room was lighted by 4 large windows, two of which alighted on the main road and the other two overlooked the walled garden. This room had been recently refurbished by the grand prior Languaglia.¹²⁷

A cabreo of the commandery was carried out in 1658 when the incumbent was fra Flaminio Balbiani.¹²⁸

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 363v. The painting bore the coat-of-arms of the grand prior fra Aleramo di Languaglia (1596 - 1606).

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 364r.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, fol 368r.

¹²² *Ibid.*, fol 368r. The chaplain at the time of grand prior Languaglia was Don Mario Minardo of Lentini.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, fol 744v et seq.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, fol 746r. 'In detta ecclesia vi é una confraternità di personi onorati quali confraternità portani li sacchi di tela turchina et ...di terzo nello turchino con cappello et cappucchioidi la seta bianchi et nella muzetta portano la cruci bianca ottagonale insigno che detta ecclesia e ecclesia suggetta al priorato di Messina et SR'. Their chaplain in 1604 was Don Guseppi Rodolfo.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 369r.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 339v. 'Vi é un porticali grandi antico ad arco di pietra intagliata con sua porta di lignami con soi bandi di ferro et sua firmatura quail porticali e connessa alla sudetta ecclesia di San Giovanni delli bagni per lo quail al porticali si entra in suo baglio grandi in mezzo al quail baglio ci é un pozzo di fabrica con sua acqua sorgente con dui pilari di pietra intagliata'.

¹²⁷ AOM 402, fol 371v.

¹²⁸ Magione 543

6. The *Ricetta* of Marsala

The district of Marsala had four commanderies under the jurisdiction of the grand priory of Messina. These included the commandery of San Giovanni di Rodi, and three others located at Corleone, Alcamo and Caltabellotta.¹²⁹



Figure A3 The *Ricetta* of Marsala.

¹²⁹ Pirri, 945.

The Commandery of San Giovanni di Rodi.

The commandery of San Giovanni di Rodi was one of the oldest commanderies in Sicily. Pirri described it as *antiquissima*.¹³⁰

This commandery had the main residence of the commander, and consisted of several estates, including that of Mandre Rosse, Mola, Ricartisi and Piraino. The income of the commandery was also bolstered by several leases on properties in the district of San Matteo. The hospital of San Antonio Abate had been part of the commandery since 1570.¹³¹ The confraternity of St John the Baptist, which catered for the running of the hospital, was subject to the incumbent commander.

The commandery of San Giovanni di Rodi had the authority to exercise administrative and judicial powers on the tenants and inhabitants of the district.¹³² At least until 1716, the commandery had the authority to administer political, fiscal, military and judicial power; after this date there is uncertainty whether this right continued to be exercised, as there were no regal concessions extant. The commander, or in his absence his procurator, had also the right to take part in the council meetings of the city of Marsala and the jurats' courts in the administration of public affairs.

The commandery hosted and maintained two churches, one dedicated to San Giovanni Battista and the other to San Antonio Abbate, although by the end of seventeenth century the state of both churches was becoming precarious.¹³³ The *domus*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 945. 'S. Jo. de Rhodo Marsala Cimmenda antiquissima cum aede hospitali S. Antonii ... habet grangias S. Ioannis de Cellaro in agro Sambuce, S. Hippoliti Calatabillothe, S. Ioannis de Corleone, hanc R. Martinus cum institutione capellani maioris dedisse lego, et S. Ioannis de Alcamo extra moenia'.

¹³¹ AOM 6228, Miglioramento/Cabrei, 1570. The commander at the time was fra Francesco Catania.

¹³² *Mero et mixto imperio* is a medieval Latin phrase that indicated the delegation of the exercise of all powers - political, administrative, fiscal, military, judicial - to a feudal lord. It is about the power, much sought after and often bought, to exercise judicial power not only in civil cases, but also in criminal cases. See also Rosella Cancila, *Merum et Mixtum Imperium nella Sicilia Feudale*.

¹³³ Magione 373, fol 329r. '... avendo visitato due chiese, una dedicata a S. Giovanni Battista e l'altra a S. Antonio abbate, l'abbiamo trovate per l'antichità (principalmente quella di S. Giovanni) così lacera di tetto, e di pareti, ch'è necessario riedificarla dalle fondamenta; sono inoltre le dette chiese in distanza l'una dall'altra soli palmi trenta; onde noi stimiamo, acciò fossero servite con più decoro, di levarsene una e riducendo l'altra in buono stato... mettendo tutti e due i santi nell'istessa chiesa nel medesimo quadro...molto più che, non avendo il commendatore altr'obbligo solo che di due messe ogni settimana, resta una di loro quasi sempre serrata..'

of the commandery stood behind the two churches and its main doorway was situated between the two churches. Both edifices were ancient; however, the commandery had no commitment to provide hospitality or maintain a regular religious cult. The only obligation of the commander was to celebrate the vespers on the eve of the feast of the birth of San John the Baptist in the church of the saint, followed by a sung mass the next day. Additionally, the commander was also obliged to offer mass in both the churches on the commandery during holy days and feast days.

The Hospitaller Commandery in Corleone

Apart from farmed agricultural land this commandery also possessed several leases on houses and lands.¹³⁴ It had also an estate named Pozzillo near the town of Corleone.¹³⁵ The commandery was responsible for the maintenance and function of a church named San Giovanni Battista, with its adjoining houses, one of which formed the residence of the chaplain. There was also an adjoining piece of land of about 6 salme.¹³⁶ By 1749, the church and outlying buildings were derelict, and because of the recurrent earthquakes it was not deemed cost-effective to engage in repairs.¹³⁷

The Commandery in Alcamo

This commandery was situated *extra moenia*, outside the walls of the city. It had a chapel dedicated to St John the Baptist, but the rural edifice was small; it had no sacristy, relics, and the responsibility of celebrating masses and/or feast days. At a point

¹³⁴ AOM 6088

¹³⁵ Pirri, 945. ' *S Jean.de Corleone, hanc R. Martinum cum institutione Capellani Majoris dedisse lego*'.

¹³⁶ Pace Gravina, 167.

¹³⁷ Magione 373, fol 381.

in time in 1733, it was a faithful widow Giacoma Giacalone who contributed to the repairs on the chapel.¹³⁸

The Commandery of Caltabellotta

The church of the commandery was named after San Ippolito, near the city of Marsala.¹³⁹ It did not cater for the care of the souls, and there was no regular celebration of masses. This was the situation at least until 1730 when an inheritance left by the conventual chaplain fra Domenico Abbruzzo was enough to sustain a basic religious cult in the church including the regular celebration of masses on Sundays and feast days.¹⁴⁰

The Commandery of Mazzara.

Although in the geographical jurisdiction of the grand priory of Messina, the commandery of Mazzara was administrated by the priory of Lombardy. This was a veritable *quid pro quo* conducted by Pope Pius IV.¹⁴¹ When the Dominican priests decided to found a new house in the region of Lombardy, the Pope donated a commandery of St John in the region to them, called Santa Maria del Bosco.¹⁴² To recompense the Hospitaller Order for their loss, they were given a Benedictine monastery in the diocese of Mazzara, called Santa Maria della Giummare. The new commandery in 1568 had the same appellation as the monastery, della Giummare, but was also called Santa Maria dell'Alto. It was to become a commandery of magisterial grace in 1784.

¹³⁸ Magione 374, fol 569.

¹³⁹ Pirri, 945. ' *S. Hippoliti Calatabillotha* '.

¹⁴⁰ Magione 369

¹⁴¹ AOM 6115, fol 1.

¹⁴² Pirri, 945. ' *S. Maria de Immaris Mazara Commenda sub jurisdictione Prioris Lombardiæ ordinis S. Joan. Hieros. Ab an.1568. Papa Pio IV. Volente, est constituta.* '.

The church together with the monastery was established in Norman times; the donor was Judith, daughter of Count Roger.¹⁴³ It was originally set up as a Basilian community, but in the middle of the fifteenth century was given to the Benedictines.

The commandery was engaged to celebrate three masses every Saturday and in all the feasts dedicated to the Virgin Mary, particularly on the fifteenth August (the Assumption) and the 8 September (the Nativity). In 1682, the commandery paid the conventual chaplain the substantial sum of 20 onze annually, for all these services to be carried out, and to maintain the fabric of the church.

In 1647, the commandery was exempted from paying tithes, both to the royal court and also to the Deputies of the Kingdom. This was confirmed by a judicial verdict handed out by the tribunal of the monarchy on the 7 November 1647. Essentially the commandery della Giummare became an independent jurisdiction with its own judicial, fiscal and administration management.¹⁴⁴

The Commandery of San Pietro Guzmano in Mazzarino

In 1633, the Benedictine priest Pietro Guzmano decided to donate the fief of Mazzarino to the Italian Langue of the Hospitaller Order.¹⁴⁵ The bequest was to be given to the chaplains of the Order, in return for which Gusmano asked to be admitted as a chaplain into the Order. The foundation was to render an annual income of 440 scudi.¹⁴⁶ It consisted of a water mill called della Foresta, with its tower, various tenements, waterways, cane thickets, trees, and fields. Another estate contained the vineyards of the commandery, with nine thousand vines; the estate also possessed another tower,

¹⁴³ Judith (1080 - 1136) was the youngest daughter of Count Roger and his second wife Eremburga of Mortaigne.

¹⁴⁴ AOM 6115. Several letters on the enfranchisement from Royal control 1569 - 1637.

¹⁴⁵ Gattini 158. The commander of San Pietro Guzmano in 1763 was the Maltese chaplain of the Order, fra Michelangelo Atard.

¹⁴⁶ Pirri, 945. '*S. Io. Mazarini Commenda á F. Capellano Petro Gusimano Mazar. Cim sc. 440 annuis fundata..*'.

several houses, a small chapel, incorporating a courtyard and a wood. All these were situated in the fief of Mazzarino, which was situated in the district of San Francesco.¹⁴⁷

The cabreo of 1658 shows several other assets were added to the commandery, including other houses, a vineyard, and several other leases. The commandery had no adequate places for worship; there was only a small dilapidated unconsecrated chapel, which was found in the vineyards of the commandery.¹⁴⁸

At some point before 1725, the commandery of Mazzarino was amalgamated with that of Butera, probably due to the ravages sustained with the 1693 earthquake in Catania.¹⁴⁹

The Commandery Marchese in Milazzo

This commandery was set up in 1628 by fra Giacomo Marchese, giving his name to it. The income, on the large capital presented, was planned to be 1200 scudi annually. In return, fra Marchese had asked to be given the status and pre-eminences of the Grand Crosses and Capitolar Bailiffs. He also requested that two priests in the service of the church would be made chaplains of Obedience, and the designation of Knight of Devotion would be given *una tantum*.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Magione 384.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Pace Gravina, 186.

¹⁵⁰ AOM 6128, fol 19r et seq.

7. The *Ricetta* of Modica-Randazzo

The Commandery of San Giovanni Battista of Modica-Randazzo

The commanderies of Modica and Randazzo were two ancient institutions¹⁵¹ of the Order which were eventually united probably prior to 1628.¹⁵²

The foundation of the commandery of Modica went back to medieval times,¹⁵³ and was set up by a Chiaramonte foundation in the fourteenth century.¹⁵⁴ It had an income of 450 onze annually. As mentioned before, with the revolt of the Chiaramonte dynasty against King Martin I, the latter, on emerging victorious, appropriated all their lands and assets including their benefices to the Hospitaller Order. The commandery of Modica was eventually returned to the priory of Messina.¹⁵⁵

Randazzo's origins were indeterminate but it certainly had medieval origins as well.¹⁵⁶

By 1604, the commandery of San Giovanni Battista in Modica-Randazzo had its own hierarchical institution with a deputy, fiscal arbiter, master notary and treasurer.

¹⁵¹ Pirri, 686. 'S. Joannis hospit. Jerosolym. Commenda antiquissima, quam uti de iure patron. reg. simul et alias ragusiæ, et Heracliae Rex Martinus ann. 1391 15 ind. in lib. Cancell. fol. 134 dedit. Nunc subiicitur priori Messanæ; huic templo inserviunt quatuor presbyteri eiusdem religionis'.

¹⁵² Fra Filippo di Gaeta was the first incumbent commander of the merged commandery Modica-Randazzo in 1628.

¹⁵³ Placido Carrafa, *Prospetto corografico istorico di Modica*, translated to Italian by Filippo Renda, vol. I (Modica, la Porta, 1869), 57: "Qui oltre i maestrati della gran Commenda di malta, che tengono sotto il loro dominio altri paesi, sta una Commenda sotto il titolo di SanGiovanni Battista nella cui chiesa molti presbiteri sono insigniti della croce bianca gerosolimitana. Quattordici nobili fratelli di mezza croce pur vi sono addetti, che volgarmente diconsi fra donati. troviamo che fosse costruita una tal chiesa di S. Giovanni pria della venuta del sacro ordine dall'isola di malta. Il re martino la die' in ospizio nel 1391 a' Gerosolimitani, che gl'illustri conti arricchirono di gran feudi, e rendite'.

¹⁵⁴ Pirri, 944. 'S.Ioannis Motycu Commenda ex fundatione Claramontanorum sita intra oppidum in pervetusto templo.. Annuï proventus erant unc 450.post mortem Commend. Fratris Philippi Moleti Mess. Comes Motycanus quædam prædia sui esse jiris contendens, ea habet..In eadem Commenda ex antiquo jure Commendatarius eligit 14 ut vocant. .'.
¹⁵⁵ ASPA, Conservatoria di registro, n. 1424 bis, c.7r-v.

¹⁵⁶ Gattini, 139. Not a lot is known about the commandery of Randazzo, prior to its union with the commandery of Modica. Gattini gives some names of the commanders prior to the union: fra Antonio Remocurto (1420), fra Giovanni Sidos (1434) and fra Giovan Antonio Turchetto (1529).

The commander had also the faculty to elect 14 half crosses (*martiletti*), all of which were donors of the commandery.¹⁵⁷

The commandery possessed three churches.

The main church linked to the commandery was called San Giovanni Battista di Modica. The main door was reached by going up a few steps. On the lintel there were several coats of arms, including that of grand prior fra Rinaldo di Naro (1586 -1596),¹⁵⁸ the cross of the Religion and the commander fra Vincenzo del Ponte.¹⁵⁹ There were also four stone steps leading to the main altar, whose altar piece was a stucco relief of San Giovanni Battista.¹⁶⁰ The church had other side chapels including one dedicated to the Madonna dell'Itria, another to the Immaculate Conception and another to the Nativity.¹⁶¹ The serving chaplain was paid to say mass every Friday and Sundays and on feasts days.¹⁶² The church also offered the option of burial inside the church for any member of the commandery against a payment of 2 tari and 10 grani.¹⁶³ This church was adjacent to a hospital called Santa Maria della Pietá.¹⁶⁴

From 1690, the church had 4 chaplains of Obedience to provide the religious cult and service to the surrounding hamlets. The church of San Giovanni Battista also

¹⁵⁷ Magione 401, fol 605. ' *et nel arco di detta cappella vi e scolpita in pietra una mezza croce seu martelletto quali sudetta capella e di currao? turco della mezza croci di questa commenda.*'

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 605v.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 660v. Fra Del ponte is described as '*cavalere virtuoso, bon christiano di bona vita..costumi timoroso di Iddio et della giustizia bon christiano e elemosinario.*'

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 604r. '*In detto altare ci sonno l'immagini di rilievo di stucco cioé un S. gio Battista con Christo che lo baptiza grandi et...di detto immagini vi sonno altre immagini piccoli almeno sei cioé un Christo ed S Jo Battista dui angili grandi et dui piccoli fatta ancora di rilievo quali sonno riposti dentro, dentro un tabernacolo*

grande di legname tutto depicto con diverse immagini, cioé e di parte sinistra la visitazione della madonna, ed Santa Elizabetta e nei parti destra li e depicto zaccaria profeta., e di dentro di qualli immagini nel detto tabernacolo vi sonno depicti li armi del commandatore Aponte.'

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, fol 604v. '*nello quali quadro vi e depicta in mezzo l'immagini di la Madonna della Itria et a man destra l'immagini di S Lucia et di parti sinistra l'immagini di S Agata et di sopra di detto quadro vi e depicta un dio pa..attorniato di angelo..*'

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, fol 611v. '*In detta ecclesia il suo capellano salarito il quali cappellano obligato celebrare in detta ecclesia tutti li dominici festi comandati et venerdi del anno al quale cappellano detto ...commendatore li dona per il suo salario due pezzi di vignalotti ... nello territorio di questa città di Modica nella contrada chiamata di Lo Campanaro..* The sacristan of the church was paid one *onze* annually. In 1604 there was only one serving chaplain in the church of San Giovanni Battista.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, fol 614v

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, fol 606v. '*collaterali al detto altare vi e una porta facta ad arco di pietra intagliata con sua porta di lignami quali li nello piano dello ospitali di detta terra di Modica quali porta li lignami e inchiavata di chiave grossi e ben guarnita. Sopra la quali porta vi sonno scolpiti in marmorea li armi della Religione.*' See also AOM 6098, fol 7.

possessed agricultural lands including vineyards. The first procession of Rogation was carried out from this church.¹⁶⁵



Figure A4 The Ricetta of Modica Randazzo circa 1650.

The commandery had two other churches; one church in the town of Modica had two appellations, San Giuliano, or the church of the Madonna dell'Itria.¹⁶⁶ This church

¹⁶⁵ Downloaded from Wikipedia on 31 January 2020. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rogation_days. Rogation days are days of prayer and fasting in Western Christianity. They are observed with processions and the Litany of the Saints. The so-called major rogation is held on 25 April; the minor rogations are held on Monday to Wednesday preceding Ascension Thursday. The word rogation comes from the Latin verb rogare, meaning "to ask", which reflects the beseeching of God for the appeasement of his anger and for protection from calamities.

¹⁶⁶ La Sicilia dei cavalieri, 197.

had an annual benefice of 4 onze for the celebration of masses a week.¹⁶⁷ The other was called Santa Maria della Croce.¹⁶⁸

The commandery of San Giovanni Battista in Modica-Randazzo also possessed a fief in the district of Ragusa called San Iconio.¹⁶⁹

The Hospitaller Assets of San Giovanni Battista of Modica-Randazzo

In Adrano (Aderòn), the commandery of Modica-Randazzo had an enclosed field of about 5 salme in area. It also maintained a small chapel of San Giovanni Battista which was noted in the Prioral visit of 1749.¹⁷⁰

The commandery in Agira had a small church called Santa Maria dell'Alto.¹⁷¹

In the town of Chiaramonte, the commandery possessed a church in the quarters of the castle¹⁷² under the name of San Giovanni Battista.¹⁷³

In Gratteri, the Order also had a small chapel with the name of St George. This was associated with the fief of St George. This chapel was already in ruins by 1628 and had been so for a good number of years.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁷ Magione 401, fol 612r.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 683r. In 1604, the main altarpiece of this church was dedicated to the Madonna dello Spasmo; it was framed in a black wooden frame. Over the tribine that framed the picture was the coat-of-arms of fra Aponte. The feast of the Cross on the 3 May was celebrated in this church. A mass was said by the attendant chaplain of Obedience on the feast day as well as on every Friday during Lent.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 680v. *During the prioral visit of 1603, the commissioners went to the site with the misuratore with Vincenzo la Licata. '...un feogo nominato Santo Ijcono esistenti nello territorio di questa terra di Ragusa quali feogo consisti in terreni scapoli et una chiusa nominata lo agriumi et circonda miglias dui ...pezze di terreni salmati sittanta dui cioè di terreni seminatorii cinquanta sette et di terreni rustici salmati quindici.'*

¹⁷⁰ Pirri, 934. Rogerius di Aquila Count of Avellina in 1177 passed several donations to the Hospitaller Order in Sicily. One such was the church of St John in the region of Aderòn, built on his land; this was donated to fra Gebellino, second prior of Messina.

¹⁷¹ AOM 6098, fol 83

¹⁷² It was situated in the '*quarterio dello baglio*'.

¹⁷³ Magione 410, fol 690r. The main altarpiece was a wooden relief of St John the Baptist with four gilded wooden angels at its foot. This picture was found inside an '*armario grandi di tavola ... coloritodi dentro di color turchino et nelli porti di detto armario vi sonno depicti dei dui quarnetti di miraculi..*'.

¹⁷⁴ AOM 6098, fol 60. The 1373 papal enquiry on the Hospitallers sheds some light on the usurpation by the latter of the Premonstratensian abbey of Gratteri. See Kristjan Toomaspoeg, The Military Orders and the Diocesan Bishops: a Pragmatic Relationship, in *Ordines Militares Colloquia Torunensia Historica*

The church of Santa Margherita in the town of Nicosia was also Hospitaller property.¹⁷⁵

In Spaccaforo (Ispica), the chapel of San Giovanni Battista also belonged to the Order.

The church of San Biagio in Gela (Terranova) was also a Hospitaller possession.¹⁷⁶

The Commandery Malandrino of Noto

This commandery was established in 1642 by Baron Giovanni Matteo Malandrino,¹⁷⁷ and was one of a spate of commanderies of jus patronatus at the time.¹⁷⁸ The planned income from this commandery was to be 150 scudi annually.¹⁷⁹ The capital providing this income included gardens and tenements found in and around Noto which would be leased to third persons.¹⁸⁰ It was to be reserved for the chaplains of the Order and the

(XXIII, 2018), 105. Also Salerno and Toomaspoeg, *L'Inchiesta Pontificia del 1373 sugli Ospedalieri di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia*, (Bari, Adda Editore, 2008) 123-4.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 67.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 53.

¹⁷⁷ AOM 6254, fol 94r. The notarial deeds for the foundation were ready by 12 May 1641. The two visiting commissioners were fra Diego Honofrio Mansione and fra Giovanni Francesco Impellizzeri. The bull signed by the Vice Chancellor fra Francisco Habela stated that the *sedici* had declared that the two deputising commissioners should not be paid more than 3 gold scudi per day, *'per ciascuno di essi commissari tanto per le spesi loro, come delli servitor at al notaro si debba dare solamente uno scudo e mezzo d'oro per ognio giorno...'*

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 4r. Malandrino was Baron of Regilifi, in the town of Noto.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 4r. *'Illustrissimo signore Gio Mattheo Malandrino Barone di Regilifi della città di Noto, devotissimo servitore l'espone come ritrovandosi avere tre fratelli tutti sacerdoti con desiderio di dedicarsi al servizio di cotesta sacra Religione. Nel grado di riverendi frati capellani di giustizia della loro veneranda lingua d'Italia....la fondazione di una commenda per l'istesso stato di cento e cinquanta scudi di rendita annuale e perpetua sotto le conditioni, dichiarazioni e gratie sottoscritte.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 94r. To have an annual income of 150 scudi, at a rate of interest of 5%, the quantum of this particular capital had to be 3000 scudi. (see AOM 6254 fol 127v) *'..gio:mattheo et egidia malandrino fratelli e sorella di questa città habbiano donato ne subiugato l'infratti beni.. un giardino esistente nel territorio di questa città nella contrada chiamata la fumara et il giardino del salto della vecchia confinante da una parte con lo giardino di don orlando Sortino barone di Busulomone dal altra parte colo giardino del monasterio di santa clara et altri confini. Due tenementi di casi contigue e contralaterali siti opposti in detta città di Noto consistenti in sedici corpi terranei e solerati confinanti da una parte colo ..convento do santo doemnico dell'altre p[ar]te coli casi di nicolao scammaca et altri confini..'*

sergeants-at-arms. As in almost all patronal gifts, this particular endowment came with various obligations stipulated by the founder which the Order had to endorse.

The Order was obliged to receive the brothers of Malandrino as conventual chaplains in the Langue of Italy, one after the other; there were three of them, Don Giuseppe, 44 years of age, Don Corrado 35 years, and Don Mariano 34 years.¹⁸¹ In contradistinction to other benefactors of the Order setting up similar commanderies, the baron did not want the Order to exempt his brothers from undergoing the proofs of Nobility as dictated by the statutes. What he asked for was that only one such process was to be carried out, *per evitarsi le superflue spese*.¹⁸²

The second obligation was that the three brothers, during their life in turn, would be recipients of the income of the commandery after the payment of the necessary taxes.¹⁸³ After the death of the third brother the commandery of Malandrino would be offered up for smutition by the Italian Langue.

The commandery of Maladrino was also bound to pay the responsiones and the impositions as any other commandery of the Order, except that the first commander of the asset would only be liable for the payment of 10 scudi annually. To free their assets from the income of the commandery, the patron set out the sum of 4500 Maltese scudi, 3500 of which went for the purchase of two houses in Valetta.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, fol 3v. The designation of the three brothers were given thus; the *Reverend Dott Don Giuseppe Malandrino*, *Il Sacerdote Don Corrado Malandrino*, and *Il Dottor in Theologia Don Mariano Malandrino, sacerdote della città di Noto*.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, fol 4r.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, fol 59v. '*Che la comenda ha sottoposta subito dopo il possesso comandare al mortorio e vacanze e le impositione e responsione secondo il corso dell'altre comendea favor del comun tesoro...prima comandare per le peso dovero pagano per li sudea carichi e responsione e riconsocervri alla religione dieci scudi l'anno*'.

¹⁸⁴ Pace Gravina, 220. *La prima casa (di proprietà del dott. Giovanni Battista Piot, della moglie Giovannella e dei figli) fu acquistata il 27 agosto 1667; era posta dirimpetto la "loggia di piazza di Palazzo, attaccata alla Conservatoria di nostra Sacra relig.e consistente in diverse stanze terrane e solerate, et in due botteghe sotto con mezzane, che tengono le loro porte per la strada pubblica". La seconda (di Biagio Corallo), più piccola, era ubicata nella strada stretta in vicinanza della porta inferiore della Sacra Infermeria e consisteva in due "Camere soprane, una terrana con la porta per la strada pubblica, cucina, due cisterne, et altre comodità; nel frontespizio della Casa Corallo è posta l'arma del fu em.o Caraffa con Croce ottagonale e sotto l'iscrizione maria Vergine SS.ma madre di dio pregate a Gesù per me la Corona S. Filippo neri della Com.da malandrino 1709". Le due abitazioni furono acquistate rispettivamente il 27 agosto 1667 e il 23 luglio 1668, con atti in notaio Marcello Matrenza.*

Another requirement was that the eldest brother only, Don Giuseppe, was to fulfil his novitiate and to be able to wear the habit of the Order, outside the Hospitaller convent in Malta. The wearing of the gold cross of the Order was also only allowed after the proofs of Nobility were confirmed, and the endowment was confirmed by the Council of the Order.

When the youngest of the siblings Don Corrado Malandrino came his turn to profess into his beloved Order, cruel fate dictated otherwise. After various invitations to travel to Malta to undergo his profession were unfulfilled, the council of the Order received a letter dated 19 September 1656 from his doctor,¹⁸⁵ asserting that Don Carrado after having had chronic hepatic problems had now become *icterico, cachectico, and febricoloso*.¹⁸⁶ Although at death's door, it seems he did eventually profess and only died in March 1663 at Noto.¹⁸⁷

The Commandery Martinez of Palazzolo Acreide

Palazzolo Acreide is a town in the Hyblean Mountains in the province of Syracuse. It is about 43 kms from the city of Syracuse.

This commandery was set up by its patron Don Lucio Martinez as a commandery of jus patronatus in 1641.¹⁸⁸ It was planned to render 250 scudi on an annual basis.¹⁸⁹ The capital was the sum of 5000 scudi; this was to be incorporated from

¹⁸⁵ AOM 6254, fol 146r. '19 sept 1656. *Il sacerdote fra Don Corrado malandrino della citta di Noto supplicando..che molti mesi si fanno si ritrova citato per ordine della VVSS Illma dall reverendo sacerdote don fra Elia Astuto ...si dovesse conferire nell 'isola di Malta dovesse fare sua professione conforme tiene obbligatione...il povero esponente altro desiderio no tiene et perche si ritrova malato grave gravissimo non potendo la sua persona fare questo neufraggioso viaggio per esser gravimente infermo che se il povero esponente tante volte facesse questo viaggio e facesse mutatione d'area senza misura datio verra a perdere la vita;....lo potranno reconoscere dalla occlusa fede authentica fatta dell suo prothomedico suo medico curante'.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 147r. 'Don Corrado malandrino della citta...sono molti anni che e stato infermo per una mala costituzione delli parti naturali e particolarmente del fegato, il quale per la sua stemperanza havendo molto sanguificato l'ha reso tutto...icterico, cachectico febricoloso,..'

¹⁸⁷ Pace Gravina, 220.

¹⁸⁸ Bruno D'Aragona, Don Lucio Martinez d'Aragona: Fondatore della 'Commenda Martinez' di Siracusa nel Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta, (Melita Historica 9 (1984) 1, 19-48.

¹⁸⁹ AOM 2160, fol 66r to 68v, AOM 212, fol 57-58,

outstanding funds yet to be paid by the Common Treasury of the Order for wood that was culled from his oak forests.¹⁹⁰ These were in various manors including those of Santa Lucia de Montaneis, of Casalicchio, of Vallefame and Bibia. Don Martinez included also various other property and tithes which he had inherited in 1597 and also procured various other leases and patrimonial assets.

In return he had asked the Langue of Italy to accept several conditions implicit in the contract of foundation. The first condition, not unusual in such contracts, was that the four sons, Giuseppe 18 years of age, Cesare 13, Carlo 7 and Antonio 1 year, would in turn be allowed to profess in the Order as Knights of Justice and enjoy the benefits of the commandery during their lifetime.¹⁹¹ The seventh condition was intriguing; if on examination it was found that the period of 200 years implicit in the proofs of nobility lacked a number of years because of lack of documentation, it was proposed that a testifying witness could be used in lieu of the actual documentation, and that the proofs could be presented *directly* to the Langue of Italy rather than, as per normal procedure, to the grand priory of Messina.¹⁹² This could have implied that Don Martinez knew *ab initio* that there were problems with the conditions of foundation. In the end, fra Girolamo Marullo and fra Don Carlo Valdina, the commissioners delegated to investigate the foundation, advised the Italian Langue to accept this condition.¹⁹³

8. The *Ricetta* of Palermo

The *ricetta* of Palermo was a particularly important asset for the Order of St John. Apart from the fact that for most of the seventeenth century, its main commandery della Guilla was one of Magisterial Grace and hence prosperous, the receiver allocated to this *ricetta*

¹⁹⁰ D'Aragona, 22. *'di quelli che ha da ricevere per ultima paga di maggior somma, tra il tempo di venti mesi, dall'Illustrissimi Signori del Comun tesoro per un partito che ha con essi di provvedere l'Ordine delle legna solite delli proprii boschi'*.

¹⁹¹ The four siblings were Giuseppe (born 1624), Cesare (born 1628), Carlo (born 1634) and Antonio (born 1641).

¹⁹² D'Aragona, 24.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 25.

became the main repository of most of the different currencies that was collected from the European continent and was to start being funnelled toward the Hospitaller convent in Malta. In view of the money fluxes channelled to Palermo and the ready cash available, this *ricetta* was used in the settlement of many payments, both by the other Sicilian *ricette* as well as by the common treasury of the Order in Malta.

The *ricetta* of Palermo possessed four commanderies inside its borders. During the seventeenth century, the commandery San Giovanni della Guilla was one of magisterial grace, and hence at the service of the grand master; the other three, which included the commanderies of San Antonio Abate (Albigiana), Santo Stefano Protomartire (Schiattina) and Morana were all di cabimento.

The Commandery of San Giovanni della Guilla.

The nucleus of the commandery della Guilla in Palermo was a house in the Albergheria quarters¹⁹⁴ of the city donated in 1203 by Guglielmo Malcovenant, Grand Admiral of the King.¹⁹⁵ Probably together with the house, a hospital called Ognissanti, established in 1175 was also donated to the Hospitaller Order.¹⁹⁶ With time, it gathered several assets including several town houses, leases on several houses in the city, cultivated lands and country manors. One of the latter was the manor dell'Occhio,¹⁹⁷ a garden called the Giardinello della Guilla and a slaughterhouse.

In 1567, when fra Ubertino Solerio was the resident commander, the place was undergoing one of the many visits of improvement. This was the first visit which indeed had shown some upgrading from long years of neglect and the three commissioners

¹⁹⁴ Magione 401, fol 26v. The Albergheria quarters in Palermo was one of the oldest and was also the Jewish quarter of the city.

¹⁹⁵ Toomaspoeg (2001), 41-49

¹⁹⁶ Pirri, 943-4. Pirri suggests that the commandery started from the initial donation of a hospital Ognissanti in the region then called Guilla. The hospital was associated with a very ancient subterranean chapel which was adjacent to the metropolitan church. The founder was Matthaeo, Vice-chancellor to the King in 1182.

¹⁹⁷ Magione 401, fol 17r. The manor dell'Occhio was situated about 9 miles from Palermo in a place called *Montis Regalis* (Monreale). It had a *paglioro*, a hayrick but more probably a barn and a herd of cows. The manor had four sources of water, all named.

overseeing the improvements were fra Rinaldo de Naro, fra Francisco Boniauto and fra Centorio Cagnuolo.¹⁹⁸ The latter was also the procurator General at the time attached to the Messina priory.

The church of the della Guilla commandery was a smallish affair. In 1604, it consisted of one nave with the main altar in the apse and two side chapels. The picture over the main altar showed the baptism of Christ. The painting of the lateral chapel on the right showed two figures, San Giovanni Battista on the right and a barely discernible figure on the left, because of the bad state of the painting.¹⁹⁹ The chapel on the left was dedicated to the Madonna dell'Itria.²⁰⁰ The floor hosted several sepulchral mounds and stone inscriptions of previous commanders.²⁰¹ The church incorporated a bell-tower in which hung 2 bronze bells, the larger one weighing some 80 rotolos.²⁰² It had a large main door made of wood, which opened up on the main street. During the 1567 visit, it was noticed that this door was rotten and damaged, and it was stipulated that it should be replaced.²⁰³ The actual building was whitewashed and maintenance of the fabric of the building was carried out frequently.

The chapel possessed a reliquary of San Blandano (or Brandano).²⁰⁴ The reliquary box was made up of silver with engravings over the body of the casket. The base was made of brass. The sacred vessels included a chalice and paten of decorated silver.

¹⁹⁸ AOM 6228, fol 208r.

¹⁹⁹ Magione 401, fol 5r. Later on, in the prioral visit, the visiting commisioners gave the commander della Guilla or *suo legitimo procuratore* one month to restore this painting, *per conservare dalla polvere*.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 6r. One side chapel was dedicated to Our Lady of Grace and had a devoted following.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, fol 5v. One sepulchral mound had two marble lions and contained the remains of a previous commander of della Guilla, fra Egidio Andrada. Another one was for the knight fra Aliosio Sammudio.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, fol 6r.

²⁰³ AOM 6228, fol 209r. *'Et primo per detta visita e posto bene il stato della chiesa di essa comenda che consiste in li corpi altari campanili et campanette di metallo come in detta visita si contiene egli ben vero...de detti visitatori detto esserli di bisogno far una porta grande di ligname in la strada pubblica perche quella che li era era rotta et fracida questo non a stato necessario farlo perche detta porta non era rotta ne fracida et cossi sia oggi appari evidenti che la istessa porta di essa ecclesia che oggi si ritrova era quella medesima che vi era in detta ecclesia al tempo di essa visita che fe nell'anno ?1500 et che non e rotta ne fracida et e bona et sana bona per molti anni et non e necessario farsi detta porta come le signore nostre oculatamente vederario et se informeranno da persone degne di fede'*. This door was indeed replaced as the Prioral Visitation of 1603 indicated that the main doorway of the church was of carved stone and had the coat-of-arms of several grand masters of the Order together with those of previous commanders of della Guilla. The wooden door was adorned with large-headed nails and the doorway had 5 carved stone steps that led to the inside. See Magione 401, fol 5v.

²⁰⁴ Magione 401, fol 6v. *'Item una custodia di argento con lo pedidi ramo indurata dentro la quali ci é un pezzo di reliquia di Santo Brandano'*.

There is an inventory of the vestments used by the chaplain servicing the chapel of della Guilla.²⁰⁵ The vestments included an amice,²⁰⁶ of white ermine damask with a cross of white satin on it. There was also a stole,²⁰⁷ maniple²⁰⁸ and chasuble²⁰⁹ made of the same material. The chasuble had the family arms of fra Ubertino Solario embroidered in it as well. There was also a silk handkerchief for use at the church.²¹⁰

Other church paraphernalia included a new brass lamp, a ladder of 17 steps (reaching about 15 feet) and a kneeling footstool.

The incumbent chaplain in 1567 taking care of the religious cult was fra Pellegrino de Gregorio, a man living an apparently virtuous life.²¹¹ The chaplain had a salary of 4 onze and 24 tari annually; he was responsible for the celebration of three masses a week.²¹² This included Sundays and Holy Feasts.²¹³

In 1604, the great house on the commandery was adjacent to the church and was surrounded by three small gardens that contained mainly fruit trees.²¹⁴ It was a two-storied affair with storehouses at ground level and apartments above.²¹⁵ The main door

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 8v. The chaplain in charge of the the church of St John della Guilla in 1603 was Don Stefano Grandi.

²⁰⁶ A white linen cloth worn on the neck and shoulders, under the alb, by a priest celebrating the Eucharist.

²⁰⁷ A priest's silk vestment worn over the shoulders and hanging down to the knee or below.

²⁰⁸ A vestment formerly worn by a priest celebrating the Eucharist, consisting of a strip hanging from the left arm.

²⁰⁹ An ornate sleeveless outer vestment worn by a Catholic or High Anglican priest when celebrating Mass

²¹⁰ AOM 6228, fol 209r.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, fol 209v. *'in detta ecclesia era il capellano noie' fra pellegrino de gregorio uomo di bona vita...con il carico di celebrare tre messe la settimana et con lo salario di unci quattro et tari vintiquattro l'anno... il detto capellano et sempre ha servito la detta ecclesia et l'ho fatto celbrari ogni giorno dandoli di salario unci sei et tari vintiquattro l'annoet della habilita et fama di esso Capellano potranno vedere et informarsi per testimonii degni di fede certificando et jurando in poter mio da poi...non mi essser pervenuti altri locali reliquii ne ornamenti di detta ecclesia....'*

²¹² Frederick Aquilina, Benigno Zerafa (1726-1804) and the Neapolitan Galant Style, (Boydell & Brewer, 2016), 50.

An organist at the Mdina cathedral earned 12 *onze* a year in 1593.

²¹³ Magione 401, fol 25r.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, fol 8v. The garden was situated on the side of the church and was small (described as *giardinello*). It had a small well to water the trees. It was about 2 *mondelli* in area and was surrounded by a wall. It contained 153 citrus trees, oranges, and lemons. It had also 2 fig trees, a laurel tree, 19 prune trees and 3 of peaches.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, fol 9v. This house which accommodated the commander was described in some detail in the Visit of 1603. It was noted to be a large house close to the church and garden of della Guilla. Its wooden door was encrusted with large nails, in a similar manner to the main door of the church. The house was surrounded by a garden and had running water. On the left-hand side of the house were the stables and a hay loft.

led into a great hall covered with panels. Just inside the main door, on the left-hand side there was another door over which was displayed the coat-of-arms of a previous commander fra Galletti.²¹⁶ There was also a large kitchen which had a large fireplace and a great oven. The gardens were well watered as there were four sources of water which could be used.²¹⁷ Unfortunately the wall surrounding the gardens was low and this proved no deterrent for people to enter the gardens and have their pick of the ripe fruits when in season. It was at this point that a decision was taken to build up the wall to increase its height to make it insurmountable.

The commandery also had several assets which provided an income through leasing to tenants.²¹⁸ In front of the church and garden, the commandery owned some tenements. These had a walled garden in front and the whole block was serviced by a massive wooden door. On the right-hand side there was a source of running water which was used by the washers.²¹⁹ Next to the tenement was a large town house. There was a small house, almost derelict, close to the church, which also included a small piece of land that was rented for 5 onze a year in 1567. There was also a slaughterhouse²²⁰ which dispatched beasts for their meat, which had been leased for 30 onze.²²¹ This building, like the property mentioned before it, was also in ruins and had been left in this dilapidated state by the previous resident knight. In 1567 fra Solario had totally overhauled the building, repairing the collapsed beams supporting the roof and also repaired the water channels on the roof. The refurbished building was leased anew, but now for the augmented sum of 38 euros annually.²²²

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, fol 10v.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, fol 11r.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 12r-16v. During the prioral visit to the commandery della Guilla in 1603, the notary listed no less than 55 leases and rents which substantial income devolved back directly to the grand master.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 9r. '*..appresso detto palazotto una cuchina terrana con la porta dentro detto cortiglio coperta di chiaramiti con suo fucularo per commodo di detta casa*'.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 11r. There is an extensive description of the slaughterhouse which was part of the commandery della Guilla in 1603. The lease by this time had risen to 65 *onze* annually. It seems the output of the abattoir was solely to directed towards the Spanish infantry and the ships that berthed in the port of Palermo. '*...servino solo la Infantaria Spagnola et delle galere che sonno in questo porto..*'.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, fol 9v.

²²² AOM 6228, fol 209v.

The Commandery of San Antonio Abate Albigiana.

This commandery in the Palermitan *ricetta* was founded in 1645 as a jus patronatus bequest. The donors were Flavia Volo and Antonio Albugiano, with the latter being the first incumbent of the commandery. The income was 213 onze annually, but with a net of 150 onze, with the remainder used to maintain the tenements used as capital.²²³ The act of foundation did not provide for the construction of a chapel as part of the requirements, which was standard practice with other foundations. Instead it gave the founder the option of setting up an altar dedicated to the namesake of the commandery, San Antonio Abate in a side chapel of the church of San Giovanni della Guilla, complete with the altar painting and the mandated celebratory sung mass in the feast day of the saint.²²⁴

The capital of the fund consisted of various houses, shops, and workshops in the old Albergheria quarter of Palermo. However, over the years the outlay of maintenance proved too much and by 1755, the incumbent commander, fra Antonio Ildaris asked for and obtained a derogary from the statutes of the Order to lease the whole lot, with the proviso to maintain and upgrade them. However even this proposal was insufficient to keep a semblance of income and the commandery was united with another in the same *ricetta*, the commandery Schiattina in 1779.

The Commandery Schiattina

This commandery was created in June 1628 by a Genoese Stefano Schiattino (or Schittino). The latter was a long-time functionary of the Order in Sicily,²²⁵ as a procurator of various commanderies in Sicily. At the time of foundation of the Schiattina, he was one of the procurators of the Commander of della Guilla, who at the

²²³ Pirri, 945. The date of foundation is given as 1644, and the annual income was given as 216 *onze*.

²²⁴ Pace Gravina, 230.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 230. Schiattini was around 60 years of age when he instituted his commandery.

time was fra Nicolo della Marra.²²⁶ Schiattino offered to deposit a sum of 2000 scudi in a bank, which sum was to be utilised to procure leases and properties on which an income of 150 onze²²⁷ would devolve annually back to the coffers of the Order.²²⁸ The properties included first floor lodgings and ground floor houses, of various sizes, in the district Olivella in Palermo. There were also some ovens which were leased and a small slaughterhouse in the neighbourhood of the other abattoir which was the property of the commandery della Guilla.²²⁹ In return, Stefano Schiattino asked to be invested as a knight in the Order without the obligation of submitting his Proofs of Nobility.²³⁰ The seat of the commandery would be a chapel in the Church of St John della Guilla, dedicated to the first martyr of the Catholic Church, St Stephen, which the founder promised to construct; furthermore he also vowed to commission an altarpiece for the chapel and finally, he bound himself and his successors to maintain the chapel in the future. A further obligation included the celebration of mass on the feast day of the saint.²³¹

²²⁶ AOM 6127 contains various acts of donation relating to the commandery Schiattina and correspondence between the two commanders of Della Guilla and Schiattina.

²²⁷ Pirri, 944. The annual income from the commandery is given as 132 onze.

²²⁸ AOM 6127, fol 3r-3v. '*In conformita della offerta che il Sig Cav fra Don Luis de Cardines come mio procuratore et in mio nome fece per memoriale presentato nella Ven Lingua li 14 di Giugno 1628 di fundar et eriger una commenda et a questo effetto depositar in banco o in tavola scudi due mila di tari dodeci per scudo per esser impiegati in compra di censi o beni stabili...'*

²²⁹ Pace Gravina, 231. Although the slaughterhouse of the commandery Schiattina was not a large affair, it could accommodate the butchery of all types of animals including oxen, pigs and sows and castrated lambs. However, it was only permitted to slaughter oxen as another abattoir in Palermo, with politically powerful owners had the sole prerogative of this. The abattoir was divided in several sections; two uncovered courtyards where the animals were kept temporarily, another large room where the slaughter was carried out, another room where the entrails were hung and an adjoining room which served as a shop where the meat was sold.

²³⁰ AOM 6127, fol 3v. '*per esser io ricevuto per cavaliere di essa Veneranda Lingua senza obbligo di far prove, et d'haver a goder tutti li honori prerogative et voci come tutti altri cavalieri'*.

²³¹ There is only 1 cabreo of the commandery in the seventeenth century. The date was 1680 when the commander was fra Sancio Gravina Cruillas (AOM 6100, Magione 390/I).

In 1631, fra Schiattino augmented his foundation with other fixed assets²³² to increase the income of the commandery from rents and leases to 300 onze annually.²³³

The commandery remained a commandery of Cabimento throughout its life as the income was modest. In 1779, the commandery Schiattina was amalgamated with the Albigiana to make this joined asset more profitable.

The Commandery Morana

This commandery was founded by the reverend Carlo Morana. Not much information is available on this commandery, although presumably it was a commandery of jus patronatus and instituted in the first half of the seventeenth century. In 1665 the commandery reverted to smutition making it possible for the Common Treasury to obtain the respective annual dues or responsiones.²³⁴

²³² AOM 6127, fol 3v-4r. *feci resolutione di fundar la detta commenda non solo di scudi cento cinquanta d'intrata ma aumentarla sino a scudi trecento di annua rendita per far cosa piu grata alla Ven lingua et non trovando detti SS Prior di Messina et Com Accarigi commissari a questo deputati cosi in pronto come poter impiegare il denaro per tanta rendita furono di parere che io assignassi per detta commenda scudi trecento d'annua rendita sopra beni et redditi che io teneve nella citta di palermo franchi et liberi come in effetto io fondai detta commenda sotto il titolo di Sto Steffano di Scatino dentro la chiesa della commenda di San Giovanni la Guilla di Palermo et con l'intervento et consenso delli sud Prior di Messina et Comm Accarigi assignai et donai per dote della detta commenda l'infra effetti..'* This is followed by a long list of fixed assets including houses, shops with a capital of several thousands of scudi.

²³³ *Ibid.*, fol 4v. One point of contention brought up by fra Stefano Schiattina 1632-4 was that the added assets would remain the patrimony of his family as long as the annual income from the commandery to the Italian Languge remained 300 onze yearly. If this point was not agreed upon, the founder was ready to rescind the second agreement reached with the Order. *'...perche in detto instrumento tra li patti si e posto che sempre et quando cum io, o, i mieie heredi comprissimo altrettanta rendita di scudi trecento sicuri per lo stato di detta commenda li beni et censi come sopra assignati dovessero restar per me et li miei heredi, per maggior sodisfattione della Ven lingua et farli cosa grata intendo et mi dichiaro che voglio che detto patto sia cancellato annullato et casso come se non fosse stato posto. Volendo che l'assignatione et donatione delli sudetti beni et rendite nel sudetto instrumento ricevuto da Notaro Francesco Portovenere nominate et ance sopra espresse nel presente memoriale insieme col beneficio fatte a detta casa resti perpetua mentre ferma et stabili, et che non si possino detti beni et rendite mai alienare in nessuna maniera et...'*

²³⁴ AOM 6128, fol 14 et seq.

The Commandery of San Giovanni Battista in Paternò²³⁵

The commandery of San Giovanni Battista in Paternò was one of four commanderies of Prioral Chambers (*Camere Priorale*).²³⁶ In 1404, the grand prior of Messina fra Roberto Diana merged the manor of Schettino with the assets of the commandery. Schettino was a noble manor with its own court and land and had civil and criminal jurisdiction over the tenants.²³⁷ It had boundaries with lands owned by the Monastery of San Nicola of Catania.²³⁸

The commandery was about a mile outside the city walls of Paternò. During the prioral visit of 1604, there was a roll of at least 88 rents and leases that reverted to this commandery of prioral chambers.²³⁹

The commandery had a church dedicated to San Giovanni Battista.²⁴⁰ It had an arched main door. The main altar had the main picture dedicated to the Patron of the Order, and also had the coat-of-arms of the Religion and bore the date 1396.²⁴¹ The commandery had a salaried priest who was obliged to say mass on feast days and Sundays.²⁴² In the visitation of 1749 on the right hand of the aisle there was a small headstone enclosing an iron grate which ancient tradition maintained contained the innards of King Frederick III (II of Sicily) (1272-1337).²⁴³

²³⁵ AOM 6093 has the cabreum of the grand Priory of Messina which includes those of the prioral chambers of Catania and Paternò.

²³⁶ Pirri, 943. Pirri lists 4 commanderies of Prioral Chambers: 1. San Giovanni of Catania, 2. San Giovanni of Lentini which was ex-Templar property, 3. San Giovanni of Taormina, 4. San Gan Giovanni of Paternò.

²³⁷ AOM 6093, fol 293-303, 986. See also Magione 401, fol 444v.

²³⁸ Magione 401, fol 447r.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 455v - 467v.

²⁴⁰ Pirri, 943. Rogerius di Aquila, Count of Avellino bestowed a church of St John in the town of Paternò to the prior of the Hospitaller Order fra Gebilino in 1177. Fra Gebellino was the second grand prior of Messina taking possession in 1146. See List of Grand Priors of Messina La Sicilia of Condojanni, 143.

²⁴¹ Magione 401, fol 440v.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, fol 443r.

²⁴³ Pace Gravina, 233.

9. The *Ricetta* of Piazza

The Hospitallers had several properties in the district of Piazza Armerina. The main estate was the commandery of San Giovanni Battista (or San Giovanni Caldarera). This commandery was responsible for the maintenance of several churches and chapels, including the church of San Giovanni Battista attached to the eponymous commandery, the chapel of Santa Maria del Soccorso, the chapel of the Maddalena and the church of San Giorgio. Other assets included the manor and extensive territories in Aidone, the commandery of Giuseppe Barberino set up by jus patronatus, the commandery of Castrogiovanni in Enna and another commandery in Gangi. Some Hospitaller estates were also found in Licata.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ Prri, 944-945. 'S.Ioan. de Calderera Platia Commende cui annexæ sunt grangiæ Aydonis, Castro Ioannes, & Alecate, est Commendatarius F. Ioan. Bapt. Croce Lampugnani Mediolan. Cum annuis unc. 440... Altera commenda S. Iosephi in agro Platien. Scaranti dicto, fundata, dotataque est ann. 1628 a F. Dario Barbarino Plat. Ejusdem ord. Presbytero militiae..'



Figure A5 The *Ricetta* of Piazza.

The commandery of San Giovanni Battista (or San Giovanni Caldarera)

This commandery was one of the oldest pieces of real estate that the Hospitallers owned in Sicily. The nucleus was a *Domus Hospitalis* which was extant already during one of the skirmishes in 1299 in the war of the Vespers (1282-1302).²⁴⁵

By the time of the prioral visit of 1604, the estate was extensive. It consisted of a large manor house called the Palazzo della Magione, situated adjacent to the church of San Giovanni Battista. There were also various houses of different proportions which were rented and leased, several shops, vast territories most of which were cultivated, two

²⁴⁵ Alceste Roccella, *I Templari e gli Spedalieri in Piazza Armerina*, (Piazza Armerina, Stab. Tip Fratelli Bologna La Bella, 1878), 24.

watermills (molini di Ardoino) in the district of San Giacomo, a large land holding called La Valle and various vineyards.

The commander's residence was a substantial building. It had various tenements around a large courtyard which was entered through a grand doorway. There was also a large garden together with an orchard and several wells for the storage of water. There were also several storehouses in the grounds of the estate.²⁴⁶

The church of San Giovanni Battista had a main altar dedicated to the Madonna.²⁴⁷ The tabernacle was made of gilded wood.²⁴⁸ During the prioral visit of 1604, the main altarpiece painting showed the Madonna, on either side of which there was Saint John the Baptist on the right and San Biagio on the left.²⁴⁹ A few years later this was substituted by another, commissioned from Filippo Paladini by fra Giulio Accarigi, the Receiver of the Order in Scicli, for his relative fra Giocondo Accarigi, the commander at the time.²⁵⁰ The new painting showed again the Madonna with the baby Jesus in arms, surrounded by St John, St Charles Borromeo, St Catherine of Siena and St Biagio. The church had another four minor altars. The one next to the main altar was dedicated to St Francis de Paule.²⁵¹ Behind this was a wall painting showing the nativity of St John the Baptist surrounded by the Holy Virgin and St Joseph and St Zacchary and St Elizabeth dated 1555.²⁵² The floor of the church was of bricks and it had 25 sepulchral marble inscriptions. The bell tower supported five bronze bells.²⁵³

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

²⁴⁷ Magione 401, fol 472v. Mass was said every day of the week by the two incumbent chaplains, who in 1604 were Don Vincenzo Pizzuto and Don Jacobo Lauria. Each was paid 6 *onze* a year, disbursed by the commandery. The sacristan was paid 4 *onze*.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 473v.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 474r. '*sotto altaro e una tribunetta di detto ecclesia quali tribuna escorrata col un muro fatto di gibso con dui colanni fatti di gibso et di supra vi sonno scolpitiin stucco li armi del commendatore Puchino de Puchini.*'

²⁵⁰ AOM 6120, fol 69v.

²⁵¹ Magione 401, fol 474r. At the bottom of this picture was the coat-of-arms of fra Baldassare Imperatore.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, fol 759.

²⁵³ Magione 402, fol 475r. '*..tri grandi et dui piccoli et la maggiore é di cantara quattro incirca et l'altri dui sonno da cantaro uno et mezzo incirca et li piccoli sonno da rotola dudici l'una incirca.*'

The Chapel of Santa Maria del Soccorso

In 1604, the altarpiece above the main altar of the church showed Santa Maria del Soccorso between Santa Agata and Santa Lucia, in an antique wooden frame.²⁵⁴ To the right of this was a rostrum holding a Christ on the cross in plaster relief. Another altar had a painting of the Madonna della Grazia and flanking her were St Sebastian and St Roque. A large side chapel was dedicated to the Madonna del Soccorso and flanking her were four saints on either side.

On the side of the church was a crenelated belltower with two bronze bells.

In 1629 the church was assigned to the commandery of San Giuseppe Barberino, changing its title in the process to that of the new commandery.²⁵⁵

The Church of St Mary Magdalene²⁵⁶

The church was in the town of Piazza in the district called Castellina. The painting on the wall over the main altar of the church showed Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection 'noli me tangere'. At the bottom of this painting was the coat-of-arms of a previous commander fra Bernardo Imperatore with the date 1572.²⁵⁷ To the right was another mural of the Magdalene surrounded by four angels. The prioral visit of 1604 had advised the commander at the time, fra Puccino Puccini to refurbish the titular painting as it had deteriorated to a great extent.

²⁵⁴ Magione 401, fol 482r.

²⁵⁵ Magione 384.

²⁵⁶ Magione 401, fol 485r.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, fol 485v.

The Church of St George

The church stood outside the village of San Giorgio.²⁵⁸ During the prioral visit of 1604, the main altar was devoid of paintings. Later, a painting of the Virgine dei Miracoli was set up. To the right of this was another altar with a mural painting of St George. Next to the door was a marble font.²⁵⁹ By 1679 another altar had been erected dedicated to St George with the titular painted on canvas. On the wall behind the altar was another gouache painting of the saint on horseback; the image carried the coat-of-arms of the commander fra Imperatore and bore the date 1590.

The Manor of Aidone

The territory and assets of Aidone were located in the district of Flomaria, and were donated by King Frederick II to the Order of the Templars in Sicily and Calabria in September 1229. Fra Hermani de Petragros (grand master Armand of Perigord, grand master of the Temple c1232-c1244) was the recipient.²⁶⁰ After the extinction of the Templars, the assets passed on to the Hospitallers after 1312.²⁶¹

The manor of Aidone consisted off several pieces of agricultural land. These included 9 tumini of land around the main buildings; 1 salma and 4 tumini in the district of Scupina; the land holding called Stritto o Cozzo del Lupo which measured 8 and a half salme; another holding called Scalisi with its mill measuring 14 salme;²⁶² the land holding called Capuano 14 salme.²⁶³ The whole area measured 58 hectares.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, fol 484r. '*..ecclesia santo Georgi existenta extramoenia*'.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, fol 484v. '*Collaterali a detta porta di dietro vi é nelmuro un fonte piccolo di marmoro bianco con una mano della videsmi marmoro che teni dicto fonti in fronti dei quali fonti vi sonno scolpiti in un... l'armi del qdam commendatore fra Baldassaro Imperatore*'.

²⁶⁰ Pirri, 595.

²⁶¹ Gioacchino Mazzola, *Storia di Aidone* (Giannotta, Catania, 1913), 61

²⁶² Magione 401, fol 524v. This piece of land was about six miles from the Aidone.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, fol 524r. This piece of land was also six miles outside the town of Aidone.

The church of the commandery was dedicated to San Giovanni Battista and was outside town.²⁶⁴

The Commandery of San Giuseppe Barberino

The commandery was set up as a jus patronatus bequest by the noble Dario Barberino in 1629.²⁶⁵ It was planned to have an annual income of 150 scudi. The main assets of this commandery included *La Clausura Sottana*, which was a land holding with a large garden of hazelnut trees and an orchard of fruit trees; another hazelnut grove in a property called Donna Guirrerera. There were also some shops in the town of Piazza on which rents were paid.

As it was a small foundation reserved for the benefit of the conventual chaplains of the Order only, with a somewhat meagre income, there were no instructions in the contract to erect a new church/chapel. However, a decision was taken to provide an existing place of worship for the new commandery. This was the church of the Madonna del Soccorso, previously part of the patrimony of the main commandery of Piazza Armerina.²⁶⁶ The name was changed to the eponym of the new commandery, San Giuseppe Barberino.

The first incumbent was Dario Barberino himself, who was followed by the Maltese fra Marcius Beccoli.²⁶⁷ Other holders of this commandery in the seventeenth century, which throughout its existence was *di cabimento* because of its frugal income, included the Reverends fra Michele Serra, fra Henrico di Martino who came into possession in 17 September 1646,²⁶⁸ fra Antonio di Lucia (28 June 1662), fra

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, fol 521v - 522r. '...una ecclesia nominata S Joanni Bapta esistenti in questa terra (cittá crossed out) quali ecclesia é isolata ...altaro maggiore...e depicta l'Immagini di San Jo Bap nostro padrone..collaterali al detto altare maggioer nel man sinistra un altro altare ..il quale vi é depicta nel muro l'Immagine della madonna.'

²⁶⁵ Pirri, 945. Pirri gives the year of foundation as 1628.

²⁶⁶ Magione 387.

²⁶⁷ Pirri, 945.

²⁶⁸ Pace Gravina, 249.

Massimiliano Miceli and fra Luiggi Calvario (30 January 1688).²⁶⁹ All of these were conventual chaplains with the Order.²⁷⁰

There were two cabreos carried out in the seventeenth century; one in 1660²⁷¹ and another in 1680.²⁷²

The Church of San Lorenzo at Castrogiovanni.

The order had a dependency at Castrogiovanni, today Enna, which was the church of San Lorenzo.²⁷³ This was a small church which in 1601 was still being built. It had a main altar dedicated to the saint facing the east side. Throughout the years the church went through various vicissitudes; in 1654 it was still without a roof, and in 1712, it was described as 'having been in ruins since old times'.

The Commandery of Gangi

The region of Gangi was about 80 kms southeast of Palermo. The Order had various possessions in Gangi which included several houses and shops which were rented. They also had a fief, called *Feudo della Magione* of some considerable size (more than 220 hectares), over which they could exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction.²⁷⁴

The commandery also had a church, San Giovanni Battista di Nicosia. The main altar had a painting of the Patron of the Order together with the Madonna and other

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 249. Interestingly, the holder of the commandery Barberino in 1793 was also called Don Luigi Calvario, who was also a conventual chaplain.

²⁷⁰ AOM 2171, fol 182r.

²⁷¹ AOM 6101. Cabreo di Barberino

²⁷² AOM 6102/6103. Cabreo di Barberino

²⁷³ Magione 401, fol 838r.

²⁷⁴ In fact, in 1567, the commander of Piazza at the time, fra Baldassare Imperatore nominated his own judge to preside cases, Francesco Russo.

saints.²⁷⁵ During the prioral visit of 1604, the church was dilapidated, and the commissioners had asked for timely repairs.²⁷⁶

The Commandery of Licata

This commandery possessed several houses and townhouses (*palazzotti*). A Receiver of the Order lived in the commandery house.²⁷⁷ The asset had a church as well dedicated to St John the Baptist but by the prioral visit of 1749, this was described as being in ruins.

The Magisterial Chamber of Polizzi

The Hospitaller possession of Polizzi goes back to the very early years of the Order. The first nucleus was a mill (most probably a watermill) donated in 1177 by Ruggiero d'Aquila, Count of Avellino.²⁷⁸

Polizzi was a commandery of magisterial chambers. Several illustrious personages of the Order were presented with this commandery, including fra Pietro de Medicis who came into possession of the commandery of Polizzi in 27 March 1645, fra Don Carlo Valdina seven months later, fra Giovanni Bichi in 17 April 1658, fra Stefano Lomellini (Prior of England) in 25 June 1676, fra Domenico Maria Spinola in 12 September 1699, followed by his brother fra Giovanni Battista Spinola (marquis of Roccaforte, *Bali*, Captain General of the fleet, and Grand Cross) in 5 April 1700.²⁷⁹

The commandery had two churches, side by side and communicating with each other through three arches in the lateral wall of the churches. Both were also

²⁷⁵ Magione 383.

²⁷⁶ Magione 401, fol 842r. '*..abbia et debbia et scatenuto reparare et conziare la sudetta ecclesia di santo Io baptista di detta terra di Gangi et sua cappella stavi che a minaccia gran rovina..*'.

²⁷⁷ AOM 6047, fol 95r. This was fra Filippo Romeo.

²⁷⁸ Pirri, 943. '*& praeteria molendinum in terra nostra Politii. Nec non ego Comes di Avellina concessi & confirmavi omnia, qua domina avia mea Delicia dedit hospitali Hierosolimitano*'.

²⁷⁹ AOM 2171, fol 163r.

constructed on an East-West axis. One was dedicated to St John the Baptist and the other to St Augustine. The church of St John the Baptist had a single nave; the altarpiece commemorated the Patron Saint of the Order, on top of which was another painting of the Holy Trinity associated with angels, and at the bottom a picture of the Jerusalem hospital with the brethren serving the sick. Underneath this was the coat-of-arms of the donor, fra Bernardo Capece dated 1603. Four other gouache pictures hanging in the church included one of the Madonna della Catena, St Stephen as a deacon, St Roque and St Stephen in his martyrdom. The church had a bell tower and housed four bells of different sizes. The church held several relics, including some bone fragments of the saints Giuliano, Felice, and Marcello. It also had a small part of the cranium of St John the Baptist.

The church of St Augustine was slighter smaller than its neighbour. The main altar was dedicated to St Augustine and the altarpiece commemorated the Saint with an angel presenting the cross to him.

Underneath his feet were the images of two Turks.²⁸⁰ This church also had a bell tower with 2 bells.

Adjacent to the church on the north side were the quarters which housed the brethren of the Order. This consisted of several dwellings including a ground floor abode and other larger roofed houses. They were grouped around a courtyard that was partially covered, a garden containing a millstone, a freshwater cistern, and stables together with a hayloft. The perimeter of the whole ensemble was around 200 metres.²⁸¹

The commandery of Polizzi had several rich manors and estates in the district of Polizzi, Caltavuturo and Petralie. One of the richest was the manor of Susafa in the territory of Polizzi. This was a noble manor with civil and criminal jurisdiction that was only subject to the Hospitaller Order and its commanders. The residents were not subject to villeinage except to the Hospitaller Order; and they were also free of any mandatary military service. During the prioral visit of 1603, the estate of Susafa was measured to be 590 salme of agricultural area and another 176 of *terre forti* (soil that

²⁸⁰ Pace Gravina, 252.

²⁸¹ Prioral visit of 1603.

was not productive and very clayey). At the time this was being leased as pastureland for 575 onze in the first year, 500 for the second and 425 in the third. By 1681, the estate had remained the same size, but the proportion of cultivated land had increased. The lease at this point had risen to 620 onze annually.²⁸² Another rich manor was called Malluta. This was 336 salme in area, half of which was leased for 300 onze annually. It had several houses, 2 mills, one of which was used to press olives, and the other to produce flour.²⁸³

The commandery of Polizzi also included a hamlet with its church called Madonna dell'Olio. The name of the hamlet came from a certain fountain in the area, which apart from water, also gave an oily fluid with a balsamic flavour.

An idea of the income of the commandery of Polizzi can be derived from the responsiones that were payable to the Common Treasury on annual basis. After the Chapter General of 1631 these were revised. In the period between 1631 and 1706, the annual obligation of the Priory of Messina was 490 onze, Polizzi 103 onze and the commandery della Guilla 60.²⁸⁴ The total income from the Sicilian priory and commanderies to the Common Treasury via responsiones was 1120 onze; the commandery of Polizzi was contributing over 9% of the total income.

The Commandery of San Giovanni Battista of Ragusa²⁸⁵

This commandery of jus patronatus was instituted in 1625 by the noble Blandano Arezzo.²⁸⁶ It was planned to have an income of 300 scudi with another 10 scudi for the Chaplain who would say mass when this is was to be constructed.²⁸⁷ As the

²⁸² Pace Gravina, 253.

²⁸³ Magione 402, fol 38v.

²⁸⁴ D'Avenia (2003), 73.

²⁸⁵ Gatt, Unpublished Dissertation 2014.

²⁸⁶ Pirri, 945. The act of donation was finalised in 16 May 1626

²⁸⁷ There is no mention of any church that was erected in the commandery of Ragusa at least until 1746. In this year, a new cabreum was done by the residing commander fra Carlo Maria Olgiati, and there is no mention of the edifice here. However, in the prioral visit of 1749, there is mention of an old church that was destroyed by an earthquake in the past; a new church had been rebuilt by the incumbent chaplain, Don Giorgio Odierna, in the same place as the old one and at his own personal expense. The church was

commandery would be founded in the territory of Sicily, it would become under the jurisdiction of the grand priory of Messina. In return, Arezzo asked the Italian langue to be admitted as a knight of Justice without the necessity of presenting proofs of nobility.²⁸⁸

The bequest consisted of two pieces of agricultural land; the Scorsonara was 38 salme in area and the Casuzza 5 salme. The asset also included a watermill.

In 1771, grand master Pinto added another 33 salme to the commandery of Ragusa, by dismembering part of the territory that appertained to the grand priory of Messina. This addition was called the Cugno di San Giovanni.²⁸⁹ See figure A6.

10. The *Ricetta* of Scicli

Scicli is a town in the south-east of Sicily, about 25 kms from Ragusa. In the seventeenth century it was an important location, both for its strategic importance along the southern coast as well as for the Hospitaller Order. Its small port of Sampieri was one of the closest landfalls to the convent in Malta. The town of Scicli also maintained a good military presence to guard the Sicilian coast against marauders. Since the inception of the post of Receiver, the Order had always had one in Scicli. Several knights and conventual chaplains had occupied this post. The Receiver in Scicli also kept a fast boat in Sampieri. This was utilised to transport official letters and *memoriali* between the Malta convent and Sicily as fast and quickly as possible.

Because Scicli was close to Ragusa, some of the commanders holding the title of commanders in the latter became receivers in the former. One reason was that all the

dedicated to St John the Baptist and the prospect of the church had the coat-of-arms of grand master Pinto, fra Carlo Maria Olgiati and the chaplain Odierna. See Pace Gravina, 258.

²⁸⁸ AOM 6074, fol 20r.

²⁸⁹ Magione 379. Also AOM 6109, fol 24v.

commanders of the commandery of Ragusa did not live on site; the house in the commandery was not adequate and all of them resided in Scicli.²⁹⁰

The Commandery Salemi

This commandery, set up within the confines of the *ricetta* of Scicli, was founded by Giovan Battista Salemi, a resident of the town in 1642.²⁹¹ It was planned to provide an income of 300 scudi annually.

11. The *Ricetta* of Siracusa

Siracusa is a port town on the eastern seaboard of Sicily. In the seventeenth century it was a strategically important seaport for the Hospitaller convent in Malta. It was the vital link that provided all the provisions that the barren island of Malta needed throughout most of the year. The transport by sea of victuals was a continuous process and the route was an essential lifeline both for the Hospitallers as well as the Maltese

²⁹⁰ Pace Gravina, 262.

²⁹¹ Pirri, 945. Pirri indicated that the commandery was set up in the region of Pozzallo. See also dal Pozzo, 70. Pozzo relates that three foundations to set up commanderies were instituted at the same time, around May 1642: '*la prima fatta da D. Gio: Battista Saleme della Città di Scicli sopra un territorio nelle marine del Pozzallo fruttante sopra 300 scudi per lo stato de' Cavalieri della Lingua d'Italia*'. The other two foundations incorporated the commandery Martinez and the commandery Malandrina.



Figure A6 The fief called the *Cugno di San Giovanni* in the territory of Vizzini aggregated to the commandery of St John of Ragusa in 1771 (AOM 6109, fol 1r, 24v).

population. Besides this, at least until the middle of the seventeenth century, it was also the main seaport where the navy of the Order replenished provisions before embarking

on their *caravane*.²⁹² Apart from the salted meat and the *biscotti* which were the staple diet of the mariners and the rowers, they also stocked their galleys with essential water and a supply of weaponry. Siracusa was an important stopover for the Hospitallers' navy and essential for their enforcement in the eastern Mediterranean against the Turk.

This close commercial relationship between the Order and the senate of Siracusa eventually soured; despite the great number of years of mercantile relations, Siracusan supplies stopped being provided to the Order's navy as in previous years, to an extent that the Receiver of the Order in 1648 changed venues to Augusta, another seaport on the East coast, north of Siracusa.²⁹³

The Commandery of San Giovanni Battista

The only indication of the existence of this commandery comes from two sources. One is Giovan Luca Barberi, Italian jurist and notary (died in Messina 1523).²⁹⁴ Serafino Privitelli also mentions the Siracusan commandery at the time when grand master L'Isle Adam was sojourning in the town in 1529.²⁹⁵

²⁹² It was from Siracusa that the Order, bruised and beleaguered embarked on the final lap of their 7-year stateless journey to Malta. See Serafino Privitera, *Storia di Siracusa Antica e Moderna del Parroco* Vol 2, (Pignatelli, 1879), 146. *'I superstiti campioni dell'inclito Ordine andando più anno raminghi per varie commende d'Italia, nel 1529 sen vennero in Siracusa per indi trasferirsi in Malta conceduta loro in feudo da Carlo V sin dal 1525. Una squadra di dodici galee vestite a lutto entrava il 12 Ottobre nel porto. La Bandiera che sventolava su l'albero maestro della capitana dov'era uk gran Maestro F. Filippo Villers de Lillidamo mostrava il segno della grande sciagura: era orlata a nero, nel mezzo avea dipinta l'Addolorata con alle braccia in su le ginocchia il morto figliuolo, e attorno il motto: Afflictis Tu Spes unica Rebus'* (In all that afflicts us, you are our only hope).

²⁹³ Dal Pozzo, 166. *'Sentivasi anco da qualche tempo difficultato il commercio di queste Galere con la Città di Siracusa, dove andando esse a provisionarsi, erano da quei Giurati, e Capitan d'Arme poco civilmente trattate, e nella compra delle robbe angiarate, ancorche da tal commercio per il danaro, che vi lasciavano, quella Città infiniti utili, e comodi ne ricevesse. Perciò il Gr. Maestro prese ispediente d'indirizzarle quest'anno in Augusta, luogo pur vicino...'* This was 1648. It must be said that when Siracusa was ravaged by famine in 1641, it was the Order that had sent out her galleys full of grain and wheat to help the beleaguered city. See Pozzo, 60. It was in 1687 that reconciliation was carried between the Order and the senate with a little nudging by the Viceroy and the Spanish Emperor. See Pozzo 631.

²⁹⁴ Giovanni Luca Barberi, *Beneficia Ecclesiastica*, (Illuminati Peri, Manfredi, 1962), 39.

²⁹⁵ Serafino Privitera, *Storia di Siracusa Antica e Moderna del Parroco*, Volume 2 (Pignatelli, 1879), 147. *'Ma dopo la breve dimora d'un anno in Siracusa, dove già esisteva la Commenda affigliata a quella di Messina...'*

The Commandery Borea (or Borgia)

The founder of this bequest was Barone Don Pietro Borgia, who set up this commandery of the Hospitaller Order on his personal assets including an exceptionally large town house (called *palazzo*) in the cathedral square and other rents and leases. The income from this was to be 800 scudi on an annual basis.²⁹⁶

The cabreo of 1739 indicates that the house consisted of two parts and had a huge doorway, courtyard, a main staircase garden and chapel.²⁹⁷

The Commandery Abela

This commandery was founded in 1649 as a jus patronatus by Paolo Abela. There is no knowledge of the income that this commandery secured for the Order; the receiver of the Order in Scicli fra Beringueri spent 75 scudi on the proceeds of this commandery, so the quantum must have been small.²⁹⁸

The commandery of San Giovanni Battista in Taormina

²⁹⁶ Pirri, 945. However, Giacomo Pace in *Le Sicilia dei cavalieri*, 264, indicates that the stipend was to be 1600 *onze*. Dal Pozzo, 60 the income was to be '*capitale di 4 mila scudi fruttanti il cinque per cento...*'

²⁹⁷ Pace Gravina, 265.

²⁹⁸ AOM 6128, fol 17r.

The commandery of Taormina was a commandery of Prioral grace (*Gratia Priorale*).²⁹⁹ The first account of its existence was in 1551 when fra Bernardino Gibillino, procurator of the prior Gattinara leased two pieces of land for 29 years.³⁰⁰

In 1574, fra Giuseppe Comerso de Arboreo, as the commander, asked permission to the Italian Langue to construct a new church dedicated to San Giovanni Battista in the town. By May 1575, two commissioners sent by the Order visited the new church and saw the improvements that the incumbent did on the commandery.³⁰¹

The prioral visit of 1604 inspected the church. It consisted of a single nave with a main altar under an arched tribune made of plaster.³⁰² The main altarpiece was a wooden relief of San Giovanni Battista. The main door of the church had the name of fra Signorinus Gattinara engraved on the lintel.³⁰³ The church had two windows on both sides, and a small bell tower containing a bronze bell.

The cabreo of 1697 indicated that the assets of the commandery at that time included holdings in Graniti (3 salme), Calatabiano (1.4 salme), Granatelli (12 tumini)³⁰⁴ and costa del Tempio di San Giovanni (5 salme). There were also some small houses in the town of Taormina being rented.³⁰⁵

12. The *Ricetta* of Trapani

The Receiver of Trapani had influence and authority over the whole of the region called Val di Mazara. There were two other Receivers with such jurisdiction, and these were

²⁹⁹ Magione 401, fol 409r et seq.

³⁰⁰ Magione 574, fol 73.

³⁰¹ AOM 6082.

³⁰² Magione 401, fol 409r.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, fol 409v. '*..quali porta.. con queste lettere intagliati nell'architrave cioè D. Fr. Signorinus Gattinara prior Messane ...et sopra detta lettere vi é una cornice et di sopra detta cornice vi e una croce della Religione intagliata in pietra.*'

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, fol 410r.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid*

the Receiver of Palermo for the Val di Noto region and the Receiver in Augusta for the Val di Demone. These three Receivers were delegates in the court of the Priory of Messina. This 'court' or commission had various other members including advocates, notaries, scribes, fiscal procurators and surveyors, all professions necessary to keep the juggernaut of the Order's patrimony moving smoothly forwards.

The Commandery of Vizzini

The main possession that the Order had in Vizzini (or Bizzini) was the commandery Canizzaro which was established at the church of the arch-confraternity of St John the Baptist.³⁰⁶ The act of foundation was in 1603 and was done by the noble Melchiorre Canizzaro, with the consent of his three brothers, Gaspare, Giuseppe and Baldassare.³⁰⁷ In return, Cannizzaro asked the Italian Langue to waive his Proofs of Nobility as they had done with other founders of jus patronatus commanderies; however he promised to comply with all the other obligations of his brother knights including the requisite *caravane*. The annual income from the commandery was planned to be 220 scudi, of which 20 scudi were due to the Common Treasury, and the remainder went to the Langue of Italy.³⁰⁸

The cabreo of fra Scammaca (1785) contains a description of the assets that the commandery had. They were in two estates; one was called the Torretta di Vizzini, and the latter the estate of Santapau.³⁰⁹ The former was 30 salme and 6 tumini in area, and it had a tower (hence the name), several storehouses and warehouses, a farm shop, another

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 707r. During the prioral visit of 1603, Mauri de Gandolfi, a land surveyor, personally measured *'una tenuta di terri seminatorii esistenti in questa val di noto nominata li fontanasi et in lo territorio in questa città di Bizzini distanti da detta città miglia ri in la contrada nominata dello fego dello fiumi grandi confinanti per la parte di mezzogiorno et livanti con lo fego di Calia et per la parte di ponente et tramontana con li terri di Gasparo Cannizzaro et via publica..'* Other estates included Li Cugni di San Giovanni, situated about a mile from the city. This was dated on the 9 May 1604.

³⁰⁷ AOM 2159, fol 363. The act of foundation was dated 2 May 1603.

³⁰⁸ Pirri, 945. Pirri also includes another 10 scudi for the chaplain yearly. He also adds that the commandery also had a vineyard in the outskirts of Bizzini and a house in Licodia.

³⁰⁹ AOM 6073, fol 17r. The small estate of Santapau was aggregated to the commandery of Vizzini at a later date. It was the property of fra Don Carlo Santapau, a knight of the Order.

farmhouse with a millstone, another derelict house, an irrigation cistern and two pits of limestone. The estate of Santapau³¹⁰ had a field measuring 1 salme and 11 tumini with three houses which were conjoined and could not be divided.³¹¹

The commandery also had a vineyard³¹² and a house in the town of Licodia.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, fol 9r. In 1628, the small estate of Santapau was leased for a period of 9 years, the first 6 for 10 *onze* and the next 3 years for 12 *onze* annually.

³¹¹ Magione 379. Fol 6.

³¹² AOM 6073, fol 10r. In 1628 the procurator of the commandery fra Giuseppe Ingo at the time of fra Giovanni Battista della Croce Lampugnano when the latter was the incumbent commander, leased the vineyard to Pietro la Munella. The lease was 10 *onze* for the first 2 years followed by 12 *onze* yearly.

Appendix B

Lingua d'Italia Tomo 1

Vol. 'Lingua d'Italia Tomo 1' contenente la indicazione dei possessori delle commende delle Lingue d'Italia, coi rispettivi pensionisti dal 1645 al 1747.¹¹³³

Dignita e Commende de sette Priorati della Lingua d'Italia

- Priorato di Roma
- Priorato di lombardia
- Priorato di Venezia
- Priorato di pisa
- Priorato di Barletta
- Il priorato di Messina
- Priorato di Capoa

Il Priorato di Messina

- Il Priorato di Messina
- La Commenda di polizzi camera magistrale
- S Gio della Guilla di Palermo
- Modica et Randazzo
- Marsala
- Giorgenti
- Piazza
- Caltagirone
- Bizzini

¹¹³³ AOM 2171.

- S. stefano protomartire di Scattino di Palermo
- S Gio batta e S. Giacomo apostolo della saracina della città di Caltagirone.
- Borea di Siracusa
- S Pietro di Guzmano di Mazzarino
- S Gio di Ragusa
- S Antonio Abbate di Albigiana
- Bonanno di Caltagirone
- S Michele Calli

Commende de fra cappucini et fra servienti

- Malandrina
- Mazzarino et grientio di Butera
- S Giuseppe barberino di Piazza.

Fol 161r

Il Priorato di Messina

Fr Scipione Pappafacca 17/2/1644

Fr Flaminio Balbiano 17/2/1650

Fr D Gio Batta Caracciolo 29 /8/1669

Fr Domenico del Carretto 2/6/1680

Fr Andrea Minucatti 18 /8/1693 **renunzia di detto Priorato 5/3/169?**

Fr D Gio di Giovanni 20/4/1693. **(Everything crossed out).**

Il medesimo rinizio il priorato sotto la riserva della Gran Croce, e di una pensione di Sc 500 per tre anni come per decreto delli 18 Aprile 1693.

Fr D Gio di Giovanni gia Priore di Barletta 20 Aprile 1693.

Fr Ottavio Tancredi gia Ammiraglio 24 Marzo 1699

Fra Giulio Ginori gia Ammiraglio 17/3/1721

Fr D Carlo Reggio gia Ammiraglio 11/2/1728

Fr Annibale Vimercati gia Ammiraglio 28/1/1732

Fr D Giuseppe de Nobili gia Ammiraglio 20/10/1737

Fr Carlo de Ricci gia Ammiraglio 6/7/1738

Pensioni sopra il Priorato di Messina

Circa 80 *pensionanti* having between 25 to 300 scudi. Including fr Matthias Preti 25 sicilia 1 feb 1667. Carlo ghiuseppe barone 40 scudi 29 Ott 1682, cav Annibale Vimercati 60 scudi 22/7/1697, fr D Andrea di Giovanni 80 munita di Sicilia 15/6/1711, al Cav fr D Raimondo di Moncada 240 mun di rame 18/6/1697 , il detto di Moncada rinnunzio di quella pensione 230 di rame quali furono provvisti come segue. Al com fr Annibale Vimercato 40 di sicilia 18/3/1716

Fol 163r

La Commenda di Polizzi Camera Magistrale

Fr Pietro de Medicis 27/3/1645

Fr D Carlo Valdina 30/10/1645

Fr Gio Bichi 17/4/1658. As a pensioner Bichi had 100 scudi 30/3/1653; al nobile Mario Bichi 150 di Sicilia 15/2/1665

Fr Stefano Lomellini 25/6/1676

Fr Domenico Maria Spinola 12/9/1699

Fr Gio batta Spinola 5/4/1700

Fr Lucio Crescimanno 25/1/1736

Pensione sopra la Commenda di Polizzi.

19 pensioners between 20 and 200.

Fol 164r

S Gio della Guilla di Palermo

Fr Gio Batta Macedonia

G magle fr Francesco Parisi 28/8/1645

G magle fr Fran Sylos 1/3/1650

G magle fr D Francisco Maria Carafa 19/6/1668

G magle fr D Scipione Marchesi fu dal medesimo permutata con Mariggio 12/10/1679

G magle fr D Carlo Carafa 2/1/1688

G magle fr D Ottavio Emmanele Maria Scarangi 9/3/1716

Pensioni sopra la commenda di Palermo.

16 pensioners 30 – 138, coinage includes d'argento di Sicilia.

Al nob Giuseppe Sylos 100 sicilia 13/5/1660. Al medesimo nobile 50 20/5/1666. Fr Gio di Gio 40 19/6/1668. Fr Gaspare Gabbucini 40 23/5/1669, al nob giuseppe gabuccini 40 8/10/1670, fr matthia Preti 30 9/5/1673, al diacono benedetto chierico Cocco Palmieri 40 22/3/1688,

Modica et Randazzo

Migl Fr D Antonio Carafa 28/8/1645

Gra mag Fr Girolamo Altieri 3/1/1646

Gra mag Fr Scipione Monforte 30/3/1653

Migl Fr D Tommaso de Gregorij 30/3/1672

Gra mag Fr D Sancio ***quina 4/3/1675

Gra mag Fr camillo Alberini 17/3/1680

Cab Fr Giuseppe Manuel Pallavicino 8/10/1698

Cab Fr Felice Landi 1/4/1712

Migl Baglio fr D Pietro Platamone 5/5/1721.

Gr Magle com fr D Fabrizio Francone 14/7/1738.

Pensioni sopra la commenda di Modica.

Tommaso di gregori 140 10/1/1646 flaminio balbiani 70 11/1/1646, gaspare gabuccini 50 scudi 30/3/1653,
fr matthia preti 30 sicilia 4/5/1676 (rinnunziato),

fol 166r

Marsala

Migl Fr Gio Girolamo Salvago 22/4/1645

Migl Fr Ottavio Solaro 23/8/1656

Gra mag Fr Don Gregorio Carafa 4/7/1660

Gra mag Fr D Carlo Spinelli 17/5/1680

Gra mag Fr d Marco Antonio Zondadari 19/11/1708

Pensioni sopra la commenda di Marsala

70 pensionati. Fr Vincenzo del pozzo 50 scudi 17/5/1680, cav fr Bartilmeo del Pozzo 50 (the last two were
ultra vires), canv fr Giacomo del Pozzo 50 14/5/1710

Fol 168r

Giorgenti

Fr Bernardo Vecchietti

Cab Fr franc Sylos 11/5/1654

G magis fr D Ottavio Castelli 13/6/1669

Migl fr Fortunato Vecchij 6/5/1680

Mig fr D Thomaso Castromediano 18/3/1683

Migl fr D Vincenzo Riccio 19/6/1692

Migl fr d'Andrea de Joanne 13/10/1708

Migl fr D Orfeo di Vincenzo 18/7/1715.

Migl fr d Pietro de Gregorio 16/6/1729

Gr Magis com fr Pietro Crescimanno 14/10/1733.

Pensioni sopra la commenda di giorgenti

14 pensioners from 30 to 119 di sicilia. Al cav matthias preti 30 sicilia 13/6/1669 (rinunzia), orfeo di vicenzo 46 di malta 4/2/1698, fr D Andrea minutolo onze 18.6.27 di sicilia 14/10/1714,

Fol 169r

Piazza

Fr Pietro Salonia

Migl fr Flaminio Balbiano 20/7/1645.

Mig fr D Vincenzo Crescimanno 17/2/1650

Mig fr D Scipione Monforte 20/4/1671

Mig fr D Carlo Gattola 3/2/

Fr D Carlo Crisafi

Gra Mag fr d Raimondo Moncada 22/6/1697

Gra mag fr Francesco Girolamo Giona 10/5/1704.

Cab fr D Pietro Danieli 2/5/1732

Pensioni sopra la commenda di Piazza

21 pensions including fra Carlo Lomellini 10 8/1/1645, scipione monforte 60 24/8/1651, fr stefano maria lomellini 60 in 30/3/1653,

Caltagirone

Gr magis al cav fr Alberto Orsi 20/8/1651

Gr mag fr D Gio de Gio 23/5/1669

Cab fr d Francisco Ruffo 30/3/1686

Gr magis fr Cappone Capponi 27/4/1706.

Migl fr Papirio Bussi 12/5/1736.

Pensioni sopra la commenda di Caltagirone

Al nobile Bernardo Vecchietti 75 sicilia 7/5/1646, plus 70 19/6/1648 and 90 sicilia 21/4/1651, al cav fr Carlo maria Olgiati 12 27/1/1728. Followed by 12 oncia di sicilia 3/8/1733.

Fol 171r

Bizzini

Fr D Ignazio Denti

Cab fr Alessandro Fattinelli 1/5/1670

Cab fr Antonio Sbarra 30/8/1679

Cab fr D Carlo Caraffa 1/5/1688

Cab fr Annibale Vincerati 24/4/1704

Cab fr d Gio Cafarina 22/4/1711

Can fr Ignazio Trajano Castelli 6/10/1736

No pensions

Fol 172r

S. stefano protomartire di Scattino di Palermo

Fr D Federico Gotho

Cab fr d Giorgio Seriale 5/3/1649

Cab fr Stefano Gotho 11/5/1654

Mig fr d Sancio Gravina 12/8/1679

Cab fr Bartolomeo di Vicenza 21/10/1682

Cab fr Arrigo Rondinelli 21/5/1697

Cab fr Scipione Malaspina 20/6/1733

Cab com fr Afranio Petrucci 30/8/1736

2 pensioners.

Fol 173r

S Gio batta et S. Giacomo apostolo maggiore della saracina della città di Caltagirone

Fr Marco Rubes

Cab fr Gio Capece Burlo 1/10/1648

Perm fr Maolino Giorgini permuta da sua commenda di Boiano ..con questa della saracena 12/8/1649

Cab fr Giacomo Balsamo 1/5/1655

Mig fr Lorenzo de Vecchii 10/5/1664

Cab fra don Sancio Gravina 20/5/1671

Rinin cab fr Bartolomeo Signi 19/10/1677

Cab fr D Antonio Paredes 26/4/1689

Questa commenda della Saracena con quella di Bonanno di Caltagirone furono unite insieme come appare decreto del consiglio 24/4/1693.

Cab F D Saverio Gravina 27/4/1693

Cab fr D Pietro Platamone 5/10/1709

Migl com fr D Gio Maria de Nobili 10/5/1721.

Pensioni S Gio batta et S. Giacomo apostolo maggiore della saracina della città di Caltagirone.

4 pensions.

Borea di Siracusa

Nob Giuseppe Landolina chiamato dal fondatore 3/9/1645

Fr Luigi Settimo 16/2/1655

Cab fr Vecchietto Vecchietti 29/4/1679

Cab d Domenico Firrao 16/9/1686

Cab fr Giuseppe Pagano 21/4/1693

Cab fr don Silvio Sortino 13/5/1694

Cab fr d'Andrea Platamone 25/5/1695

A di 23/10/1696 fu commutato al detto de Platamone il titolo di cabimento in riceperazione che appariscono nel decreto.

No pensions

Fol 175r

S Pietro di Guzmano di Mazzarino

Fr Lutio Crescimanno

Cab fr Marcello Biringucci 26/5/1648

Cab fr Tomaso Ventimilla 2/5/1652

Cab frBalbiani 17/4/1662.

No pensions.

Fol 176r

S Gio di Ragusa

Cab fr Nicolo Rondinelli 2/5/1652

Cab fr Silvio Sortino 3/11/1671

Cab fr d Simone Statella 11/10/1688

Cab fr Silvio Sortino 31/3/1702

No pensions.

Fol 177r

S Antonio Abbate di Albigiana

Fr d' Antonio Albugiani

Fr D Carlo Valdina 12/9/1655

Cab fr D Gio Batta Brancaccio 4/7/1658

Cab fr d Assentio Dodisco 4/6/1660

Cab fr Hippolitto Borromei 12/7/1672

Cab fr d Francisco de Cardona 21/9/1678

Cab fr D Ottavio Valguarnera

Fr D Andrea Platamone

Cab fr Michel'angelo Cappa 2/5/1709

Cab fr Benevieni da Scorno 23/6/1739.

No pensions

Fol 178r

Bonanno di Caltagirone

Cab fr D Diego di Palermo 7/5/1652

Cab fr Bartolomeo del Pozzo 21/6/1684.

No pensions

Fol 179r

S Michele Calli

Cab fr D Ascanio Bologna 8/7/1695

Cab fr D Michele de Requesens 22/9/1695

Cab fr D Sigismondo Pilo 17/2/1700

No pensions

Commende de fra Cappucini et fra Servienti

Fol 180r

Malandrina

Fr Corrado malandrina

Cab fr Elia As**** 29/1/1663

Migl fr Domenico Muscat 25/5/1679

Cab fr Carlo Pascalino 14/12/1708

Cab fr Ottavio Garsin 21/2/1727

z\zxda\No pensions

Fol 181r

Mazzarino et Grientio di Butera

Fr Giuseppe Todino

Mig fr Cosma di Marco 27/8/1675

Ricuperaqzione fr Gio Fran Humana 21/4/1678

Cab fr Giuseppe Focularo

Questa commenda essendo rinunciata dal sudetto Com fr Giuseppe Focularo sotto li 18/7/1729 e stata in esecuzione del decreto emanato li 19/9/1699 unita alla commenda di Barberino di Piazza.

Fol 182r

S Giuseppe barberino di Piazza

Reverendo fr Michele Serra

Cab rev fr Henrico di Martino 17/9/1646

Cab Rev fr Antonio di Lucia 28/6/1662

Rev fr Massimiliano Miceli

Cab Rev fr Luiggi Calvario 30/1/1688

Appendix C

Criteria set up by the Order of St John for the Institution of Jus Patronatus Commanderies in the Eighteenth Century.

There were nine criteria which the Order set up to regulate the founding of an Italian *jus patronatus* commandery in the seventeenth century.¹

The first condition was approval by the grandmaster and his Council regarding the level of income to be generated by the new foundation. The founder was allowed the privilege of naming the foundation; the choice was usually the paternal name or the name of a patron Saint of the Order, most commonly St John the Baptist.

Secondly, the founder would enjoy the usufruct of the asset during his lifetime;² however, the title of a commander (*commendatore*) was not necessarily given.

¹ AOM 2161, fol 140r

² In almost all cases, the founder was allowed to continue with the administration of his donated asset and also enjoyed its income during his lifetime. However, each contract had its own specific provisos, which typified the uniqueness of each agreement. See AOM 2129, fol 241r. The commandery Calli in the area (*ricetta*) of Messina was typical of many which were set up by *jus patronatus*. The particular commandery was instituted around June 1631. ‘...sopra la proposta fatta in lingua per parte delli signori Michel et Alwigi Calli li 21 di Maggio proxime passato per mezzo di un memoriale del tenor seguente cioe Illustrissimo fra Fabritio cagliola come comissionato delli nobili Michel et Aliosio Calli li espone qualmente per la divotione grande che sempre essi et loro antenati portorono alla sacra Religione Gerosolimitana et a questa Venerabile Lingua d’Italia desiderano di esser ricevuti in grado di cavaliere et far professione et morir in essa, e per maggior dimostrazione et prova di questo loro affeto funderanno una commenda di scudi di 300 di rendita per lo stato di cavallieri nella citta di Messina perché hanno limiti in quel priorato, o in questa citta di Valetta come li parera piu commodo et sara l’intrata in cosa stabile di prezzo tale che rendera a ragione di cinque per cento offerendosi di fabricare una capella del cui titolo prendera il nome la comenda. La quale godera prima sua vita durante il sudetto michele con pagare scudi 12 di responsioni l’anno, et il solito passaggio al comun tesoro et il motorio et vacante dopo la morte loro, et piacendoli di riceverli sia la recettione con l’anzianità dello stesso giorno, et insieme con tutte le prerogative usci conforme ricevuti et godono li commendatori Arizzo et scattino permettendoli di portar la croce d’oro del quel tempo insino che faranno la espressa professione essendo il maggiore cioè Michele di età d’anni 16, et l’altro minore di un anno, et si contentano fare le loro caravane et altri servitii che si toccheranno per loro torno, essendo quasta loro intentione cioè di servire come prima di loro fecero do i zii materni cioe Ill signore Ammiraglio Moleti et comm fra filippo moleti et l’ave et bisano paterno nell’assedio di Malta nell’anno della giornata, et poi nell’incontro con la squadra dell’Ucchiali dove l’avo Michel Calli con grandissimo pericolo et honore salvo lo stendardo con butarsi in mare con esso portandolo con salvezza in terra....’. See also AOM 6073, fol 83r. Fra Blandano d’Arizzo, the

Thirdly, the founder and his wife (if married) were given the privilege of wearing the linen habit of the Order and the gold eight-pointed cross on the breast, like other members of the Religion.

Fourthly, the founder could establish a family line that would enjoy the commandery; this was stipulated to be not more than four consecutive generations.³ Identifying which family line would enjoy the commandery would be the prerogative of the founder himself. Other contracts had even more fastidious conditions, possibly tailored to the individuality of the contract. When the Malandrini family decided to donate and set up one such foundation, one stipulation, accepted by the grand master, was that the commandery would be administered, in turn, by three brothers, all of whom were diocesan priests. One after the other, on the death of the eldest sibling, these were to profess in the Order as conventual chaplains, with the eldest living brother administering the commandery. On the death of all the three brothers, the commandery was to be taken over by the Order for smutition.⁴

Fifthly, the founder was spared the procurement of the stringent proofs of nobility and the mandatory *caravane* that the other brethren had to undertake before being considered for a commandery *di cabimento*. He was asked to observe fealty and obedience to the grandmaster. The founder could dispose of his patrimony and other assets at will, excluding the assets making up the foundation.

Sixthly, the founder was given the concession that should he obtain masculine issue from this present marriage, his son together with the future wife that he would marry would be able to wear the habit of the Order, a prerogative that was given to his

founder of the Hospitaller commandery of St John of Ragusa kept his commandery and continued to enjoy its revenue until his death when the asset went for smutition in the Priory of Messina.

³ AOM 2161, fol. 140v. The founder could establish a family line that would enjoy the commandery up to four consecutive generations. It was also up to the founder to choose the family line who would be assigned the commandery after the death of the incumbent.

⁴ AOM 6254, fol. 126v. '*La comende doveranno godere essi tre fratelli successivamente l'uno dopo l'altro, e morendo alcuno di questi senza giungere a conseguir la comende si possi et debbia subrogar un altro in tuo luogo della famiglia loro per dover essere ricevuto in detto grado anche che fosse costituito in ordini fatti in maniera che tre sole persone habbiano a godere loro vita durante detta comenda successivamente, et finire queste tre vite, l'un dopo l'altro vada alla libera smutizione della Venerabile lingua*'.

father and mother.⁵ This concession was given on condition that this would count as one of the four successive generations that would be eligible for this. The successor would also be obliged to pay the annual tax and impositions to the common treasury that the commandery was subjected to but was free to bequeath his patrimony whichever way he liked.

Seventhly, the founder and his descendants were obliged to pay the annual *responsiones* to the common treasury. After the death of the holder of the commandery, the Religion was due to receive the annuities from the day of the death of whomsoever possessed the commandery to the first of May following, under the title of *mortorio*, and from this day to the end of April following, this being a full year, entitled *di vacante*. However, this did not apply on the death of the founder.

Eighthly, should the descendants of the founder enjoying the commandery decide to undergo the proofs of nobility and present them to the Order, take part in the several *caravane*, and submit to the regular profession like all the other brethren,⁶ these would count for their *anzianità* and would make them eligible to obtain other commanderies *di cabimento*, or bailiwicks, in addition to retaining their commandery of *jus patronato*.⁷

⁵AOM 2161, fol 140v. The rules even allowed options for uncommon eventualities. The sixth guideline stated that the founder was given the benefit that finding himself without a successor be it masculine *or feminine* (my italics). This meant that the Order was accepting the possibility of one of the four successors to be a woman, potentially the patron of the commandery of the Order. Helen Nicholson (April 2020) also drew my attention to a similar practice which existed before 1219, where a married couple could become associates of the Order, taking limited vows; when one died, the other (man or wife) would take full vows and enter the Order. See Francesco Tommasi's article 'Uomini e Donne negli Ordini Militari di Terrasanta: per il Problema delle Case Doppie e Miste negli Ordini giovanita, templare e teutonico (secc. XII-XIV)', in *Doppelklöster und andere Formen der Symbiose männlicher und weiblicher Religiösen in Mittelalter*, ed. Kaspar Elm and Michel Parisse (Berlin, 1992).

⁶ AOM 6254, fol 146r. On 19 sept 1656, the secular priest fra Don Corrado Malandrino, the patron of the Malandrino commandery, had sent a memo to the chancellery of the Order, in which he asked to be exempt from travelling to Malta to undergo his profession because of severe illnesses. His *supplica* was accompanied by a supplementary letter of his caring doctor. '*Il sacerdote fra Don Corrado malandrino della citta di Noto supplicando..che molti mesi si fanno si ritrova citato per ordine della VVSS Illma dall reverendo sacerdote don fra Elia Astuto ...si dovesse conferire nell'isola di Malta dovesse fare sua professione conforme tiene obbligatione...il povero asponente altro desiderio no tiene et perche si ritrova malato garve gravissimo non potendo la sua persona fare questo neufraggiato viaggio per esser gravemente infermo che se il povero esponente tante volte facesse questo viaggio e facesse mutazione d'area senza misura datio verra a perdere la vita;....lo potranno reconoscere dalla occlusa fede autentica fatta dell suo prothomedico suo medico curante...*'

⁷ AOM, 2161, fol. 140v

Ninthly, the founder's descendants, before assuming possession, had to wait for the relevant magisterial bull to be issued from the chancellery. After four successive generations, the commandery would revert to the common treasury and undergo *smutizione* in the Langue of Italy, as happened with every commandery that fell vacant.

Appendix D

The Church of the Hospitallers' San Giovanni Battista in Messina, 1604 - 1749.

The Interior of the Old Church¹

There were 8 side altars, four on either side. On the left side starting from the east end nearest to the main altar, the first chapel was dedicated to St Flavia, and included a stucco relief of the saint. This was commissioned by the priest Pietro Cuchillo who also founded a chaplaincy. The altar painting of the chapel carried his coat-of-arms. The second altar was dedicated to St Liberante; the altarpiece had a gilded frame and the small chapel, decorated with stucco, contained several scenes of the miracles attributed to the saint. The third altar had a large crucifix in relief. The fourth altar had an altarpiece of the Madonna of Philermos; tradition maintained that it had been brought over from Rhodes after their expulsion by the Ottomans in 1521. Next to this chapel was a painting of the crucified Christ with the figure of the Madonna on one side and St Mary Magdalene and St John the Evangelist on the other, donated by Raffaele Crispino. Adjacent to this painting was a small side door leading to the sacristy. On the right side of the nave, next to the side door leading to the garden, was the first chapel dedicated to the Annunciation, and the altarpiece was an antique oil on boards with a gilded frame. The second chapel was dedicated to the Madonna of the Idria, with an old painting of the Madonna done *alla greca*. It contained also a silver hanging oil lamp and the chapel was *jus patronatus* of the family della Rocca. This chapel also had a benefice responsible for the celebration of 2 masses a week. The third altar was dedicated to the Madonna delli Miracoli and the Messinese had great devotion to this chapel. Several

¹ Magione 401, fol 297 r et seq.

masses were celebrated in this chapel. The altarpiece was an antique oil painting on wooden boards enclosed in a gilded frame. The fourth altar was devoted to St John the Baptist and it contained an old statue of the saint with the coat-of-arms of di Naro.

The Interior of the New Church²

There were 14 side chapels, seven on either side. On the left epistular side starting from the west end nearest to the main altar, the first chapel was dedicated to St John the Baptist, with the altarpiece showing the saint in the desert. The chapel also contained a niche containing the statue of the saint, holding the standard with the cross in his right hand and a book on the other. The second altar was dedicated to St Sebastian; the chapel was lighted by a stained-glass window covered by an iron grille. The maintenance of the chapel was funded by the congregation of St Sebastian. The third chapel was dedicated to *Nostra Signora della Pietá*. The chapel also contained a holy crucifix from Rhodes. The fourth altar had a large painting of the Immaculate Conception. The painting was enclosed by a big black frame and was also heavily gilded. The Madonna had twelve silver stars around her head, and a silver half-moon under her feet. The chapel was all painted al fresco, including its vault with images of St Joseph, St Anne, and St Joachim. The fifth chapel was dedicated to St Francesco Saverio and was painted al fresco, including the walls and vault. The altarpiece showed the saint preaching to the masses. The sixth chapel was dedicated to the Signora della Grazia with the main painting showing Our lady spanned by St Anthony of Padova and St Nicholas of Bari. The seventh chapel was dedicated to St Biagio. On the right evangelical side starting from the main altar, the first chapel was dedicated to the sacred Host. The chapel had a stained-glass window covered with an iron grille and had a domed ceiling. The titular showed the Holy Trinity crowning the Holy Virgin accompanied by choirs of angels. The second chapel was dedicated to the blessed Crucifix. There were two large paintings showing the saints of the Hospitaller Order,

² Magione 578, fol 80r to 90r.

Flora, Ubaldesca and Toscana on one side, and Nicasio, Gerlando and Micasi on the other side. The third chapel was dedicated to Nostra Signora della Sagra Lettera. The altarpiece showed Our Lady holding the baby Jesus on her arms and the figure of St Luke the Evangelist in the act of painting her. The fourth chapel was dedicated to Maria Vergine dei Miracoli. The main painting showed the Virgin Mother with the eternal father on top and at the foot of Our Lady was the city of Messina. The fifth chapel was dedicated to St Spiridione and the sixth chapel to the Annunciation. The seventh chapel was dedicated to Nostra Signora della Pace. The altarpiece showed Our Lady of Peace and Mary Magdalene and St Vincenzo di Anastazio.