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The British Gaze on Malta in the Nineteenth Century.

An historical reconstruction of the
sites and the Knights' Order.

Relatore

Ch. Prof. Emma Sdegno

Correlatore

Ch. Prof. Jeanne Frances Clegg

Laureando

Anna Comellato
Matricola 760988

Anno Accademico

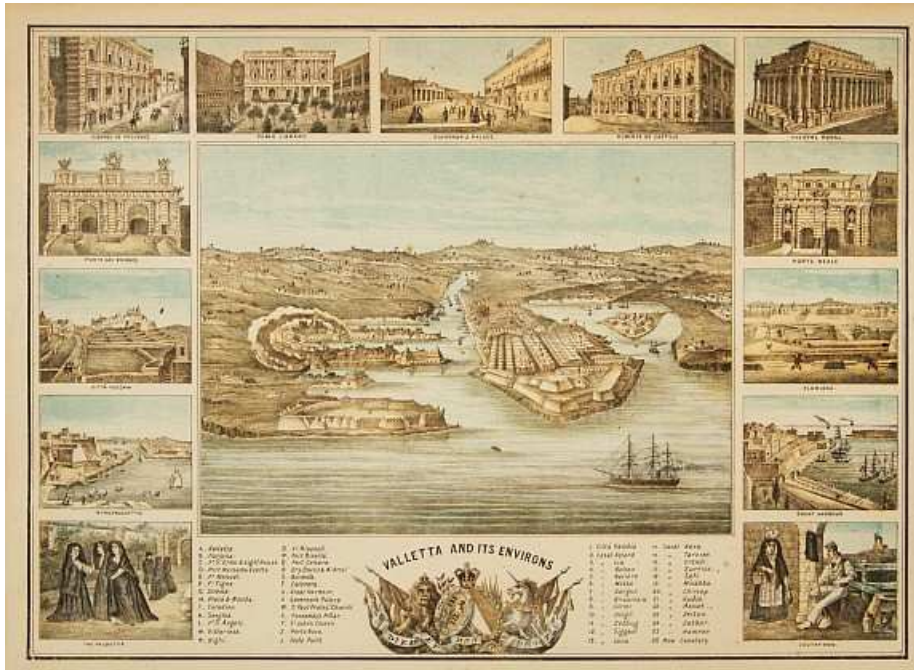
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Preface



[1.1] Anonymous Publisher, *Valletta and its environs*, c.1850, Lithography on tinted grounds, Paulus Swaen Old Maps and prints, Florida, U.S.A.

The aim of this research is to provide an account with an overview of the deep historical connection between the island of Malta and the Order of St. John, with special reference to the Knights Hospitaller naval shipping network presented in a masterly manner in the splendid pictorial art of Joseph Mallord William Turner. Sources which include a wide survey of the most important heritage sites of fortresses, abbeys and ports of England in an overall vision concerning the Tour theme in the Anglo-German cultures. During this demanding job, I have tried to underline the main Maltese authors' point of view, cataloguing their works dating between 1096 and 1800, poring over the abundant archival material kindly placed at my disposal. Furthermore, I have outlined the main British Romantic writers' Grand Tour from England to the Mediterranean during the Nineteenth century, giving emphasis to the description of their difficult journeys onboard

the galleys or throughout the Alps, and reporting their landscapes' impressions and what they were inspired from to write their new books or create new characters. Far from expressing the mental and physical exertion of dealing with specific voluminous archives in the past, the practical point was that the documentary sources were often scattered in all sorts of records left in the various libraries. Even if, the new didactical technologies helped me getting along and picking up after this research work among manuscripts and records, which I had found great satisfaction in developing. At first sight, last but not less important, the point of contact of these different cultures has been possible thanks to the hospitality of all the researchers around the world sharing the same passion of mine and devoting to these subjects and major issues.

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I would like to thank and show my gratitude to many of the persons who collaborated and helped me fulfil my thesis during these years in Venice. Their support and guidance enriched my interest in the Grand Masters of Malta and Knights of St. John history, together with the Grand Tour voyages. I am sincerely grateful to my parents Gianni Comellato, Rita Talbot and family for their assistance and translations from Maltese into Italian. A special thank is turned to my Professors, especially the Supervisors of this thesis, who with their suggestions and advices have made the whole work possibile. Futhermore, I would like to express my sincere appreciations to the various Associations I have dealt with, such as The Sovereign Military Order of Malta and Biblioteca Magistrale e Archivi dell'Ordine di Malta in Roma, Heritage Malta, Malta Historical Society, The National Museum of Fine Arts, St. John Cathedral Valetta, Maritime Museum in Vittoriosa and Venice, Gutenberg Project, Tate Britain Gallery,

The National Gallery, the Turner Society London and The Hoarding. In addition, I am deeply indebted also to the following Librarians from: The Museum of the Order of St. John, The British Library in London, Oxford and Cambridge Libraries, National Library of Malta, Melitensia in Valletta, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library in Mdina.

Among others, who deserve a particular recognition of a service are the international bookshop suppliers, that promptly provided me with all the necessary and brand new publications regarding my researches, some among which Aquilina, Meli, Maltaonline bookshop (Mr. Patrick Anastasi), Merlin, PEG, Agenda Bookshop, Amazon U.K., Waterstones Booksellers Ltd., WHSmith, Feltrinelli, Hoepli, Libreria Universitaria and the typing-office CopyCartotecnica in S. Croce n. 182 (Ve).

Finally, I want to express the acknowledgement for the help I acquired from all the authors' sources I have mentioned in my bibliography and for the kind permission to reproduce the paintings, engravings, photographs and table lists I have included.

Introduction

Historical layout of the island and description of THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA



[1.2] Map of Malta and its archipelago
AIESEC, University of Malta, Msida

I was inspired to reconstruct Joseph Mallord William Turner's path and journey up to the Maltese archipelago, because I am of Maltese origins and very fond of the Hospitaller Order of St. John's works and history.¹ Growing up as I did in Venice, the Maltese islands always represented the height of exoticism. They consist of three islands with the highest concentration of inhabitants in Europe. They have always played a very important historical role thanks to their geographical position in the centre of the Mediterranean. There are many historic sites and features for visitors to explore² even today, among which we find monumental remains, baroque cathedrals, fortresses and rich features of Maltese folklore.

¹ Victor Mallia-Milanes, *Hospitaller MALTA 1530-1798*, Msida, Malta: Mireva Publications, 1993. Chapter 1, Introduction to Hospitaller Malta, pp. 1-42.

² Eric Gerada-Azzopardi and Chris Zuber, *MALTA, un'isola, una repubblica*, Paris, France: Editions Delroisse, 1980, Chapter 1, All' incrocio delle vie del destino, pp. 1-51.

The Maltese Hymn (L-Innu Malti)

Guard her, O Lord, as ever Thou hast guarded,
This Motherland so dear whose name we bear:
Keep her in mind, whom Thou hast made so fair.
May he who rules, for wisdom be regarded,
In Master mercy, strength in man increase:
Confirm us all, in unity and peace.³

Malta has always aroused much curiosity as, since early pre-history, it was thought to have been inhabited by primitive Phoenician ancestors of a cyclopean race of giants.⁴ In fact in a passage of the *Odyssey*, Homer mentioned the island of Hyperia, which a Sicilian chronicler identified as Malta. In fact, on the island the size of megalithic remains assumes the presence of powerful men, furthermore the human bones and skeletons found in the local sites, especially on the island of Gozo, close to Calypso Cave, by the archaeologists could only have belonged to a race of giants.

Subsequently, the Greeks arrived with their works of art, followed by the Carthaginians in 550 B.C., who introduced their constitution, before Roman domination in 216 B.C. Roman influence and the account of St. Paul's shipwreck represent another important aspect of the development of administrative and religious civilization. Malta was frequently conquered and dominated by various populations, not only Byzantine, but also by the Arabs in the year 870 A.D. until 1090. Even though Arab rule over the Maltese population created considerable difficulties between Christians and Muslims, the affinity of the Arabic and Maltese tongues allowed them greater oral and written understanding.

The Knights Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, founded in 1080, when the city of Acre, in northern Israel, was captured in 1291, took shelter in Cyprus. They lived also in the island of Rhodes from 1309, but were expelled 400 years later by Sultan Suleiman. This is the reason why they were given the island of Malta, by a Charter dated 24th March 1530 of Charles V⁵ of Spain, as King of Sicily.

³ Maltese Hymn English translation by May Butcher.

⁴ Allister Macmillan, *Malta and Gibraltar Illustrated*, London: Midsea Books, 1985, Introduction: History of the Maltese Islands, Alleged Progenitors of the Maltese, p. 12.

⁵ Simon Mercieca, *The Knights of St. John in Malta*, Tarxien, Malta: Miller Distributors Ltd., 2010,

The picturesque arrival of the Grand Master and all the Knights at the Convent of Birgu from Syracuse,⁶ has often been described and depicted in art in Malta, and the galleries where these works can be viewed are of considerable importance today. The presence of the Knights until June 1798, before the French Armada invasion by Napoleon Bonaparte, contributed greatly to the field of education and to the improvement of the Magisterial Palace in the capital of Valletta.

p. 25. The document of the Act of Donation of Malta to the Knights, by Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, King of the Germans and King of Spain, is kept in the National Library of Valletta.

⁶ Ibid., 25.

Chapter 1

1. The discovery of Turner's watercolour 'Grand Harbour of Malta'



[1.3] Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Grand Harbour, Malta*, c.1830, watercolour, Fine Arts Museum, Valletta

On 15th July 2003 this particular Turner painting was placed in a new location in the National Museum of Fine Arts in Valletta.⁷ This piece of work is part of an exhibition on the painting of the Grand Harbour created in 1830 by the English watercolourist, Joseph Mallord William Turner, one of the most important 19th century Grand Tour artists.

The Arts Minister Mr. Jesmond Mugliett and HSBC Chief Executive Officer Chris Hothersall contributed to the presentation of this picture, which reflects the whole

⁷ Charles Mula, *The Princes of Malta*, The Grand Masters of the Order of St. John in Malta 1530-1798, San Gwann, Malta: PEG Ltd., 2000, p. 29. Grand Master L'Isle Adam sent a commission to provide a descriptive account regarding the islands' conditions, before allowing the Orders' occupation.

view of the Grand Harbour from Fort Ricasoli.⁸ Commissioned by the engravers William and Edward Finden was used as the basis for an engraving in a book, published by John Murray, regarding the life and travels of the remarkable poet Lord Byron, who visited the island between 1809 and 1811.

Retracing the history of this painting it emerges that it had at least 13 different owners, including John Ruskin, who was a well-known writer, art critic and collector and Robert Durning Holt, Lord Mayor of Liverpool.

1.1. The influence of the Grand Harbour on other painters



[1.4] *Aerial view of Valletta and Malta island*, 2011, Maltavista.net, Malta Tourism Authority

In addition to Turner many other painters have been fascinated by the Grand Harbour in Valletta and this artistic interest remains up to the present days.

One of the main projects of the National Library⁹ of Valletta is to exhibit some of its valuable art works to international art enthusiasts. Mrs. Bernadine Scicluna and

⁸ Stephen Spiteri, *Fortresses of the Knights*, Malta: BDL Publishing, 2001, p. 56. Part I – Historical Context, A Bulk of Christendom,. Building of Fort Ricasoli dedicated to the Knight Giovanni Francesco Ricasoli.

⁹ Joseph Attard, *The Knights of Malta*, Malta: BDL Publishing, 2010, p. 155. National Library, Valletta, Interior photo.

Theresa Vella are responsible for researching and drafting the two volumes containing watercolours by Charles de Brocktorff, whose General Editor is Giovanni Bonello.

The two publications forming part of the National Library's artistic legacy consist of 89 watercolours, which reproduce views of Malta by Charles Frederick de Brocktorff (1775/85-1850), an artist of Northern German origins, who visited Malta and opened an art shop,¹⁰ close to the crowded Kingsway in Valletta in the 1820s. He depicted in majestic style a selection of scenes, which might have been of interest to wealthy patrons of art visiting the islands, such as St. John's Co-Cathedral, the Governor's Palace, not to mention the attractive seascape of the Grand Harbour from the rocky promontory. Furthermore, he also drew faithful portraits of various Maltese social classes designed for the English buyers, who were curious enough to get to know how the Maltese used to live, and their habits and customs.

The importance of Girolamo Gianni (Italian artist 1837–1895) however depends on his painting titled *Grand Harbour, Valletta* (1869) and now preserved at the Museum of the Order of St. John Ambulance in London. The painting depicts a panorama of the Grand Harbour, Valletta, various small craft can be seen in the harbour, including a paddle-driven steam vessel towing a number of barges. He first went to Malta in 1866, with the express aim of selling his paintings to the local art patrons. Over a period of twenty years, he built up a very successful business,¹¹ which he eventually passed on to his two daughters. His huge success was founded on the formula of representing a nostalgic and romantic ideal of Malta, which attracted not only local but foreign art lovers, and in fact he also had some prominent patrons, including the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales.¹² Among the most recent of Turner's artistic disciples, whose works date back to 1928, are John Dimech and William Lionel Wyllie.

¹⁰ See: Miranda 360° Collection, in collaboration with The Times: “*Underground Malta 360°*”, p. 31, p. 55, “Malta 360° by night”, p. 57, 59, Allied Newspapers Ltd., Sliema - Malta, 2009.

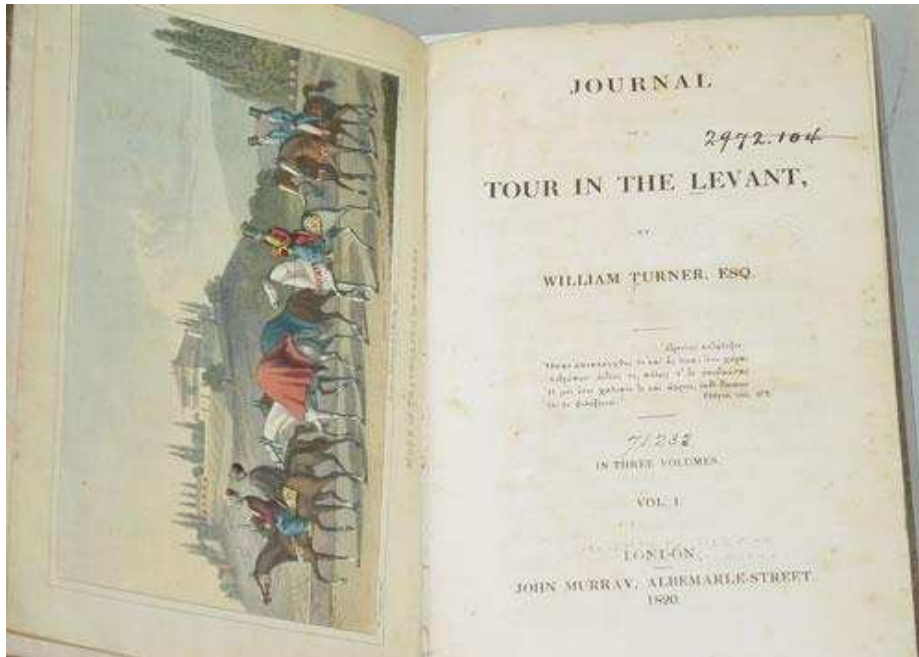
¹¹ Marmarà, Desmond, Zammit, *Pawlu Boffa*, Malta: SKS Union Print Co. Ltd., 2010, p. 128. The socio-economic reality of the country, by Dr. John Chircop, History Department, University of Malta.

¹² De Marco, Guido, *The Politics of Persuasion an authobiography*, Malta: Allied Publications, Valletta, 2007, p. 7; The trilingualism: Second language, foreign, ethnic, frank; Ref. from Paolo E. Balboni, *Le sfide di Babele*, Novara: De Agostini Scuola S.p.A., 2008, pp. 57-59 and *La comunicazione interculturale*, Venezia: Marsilio S.p.A., 2007, Chapter 1 - 1.4. Una “filosofia” per la comunicazione interculturale, see pp. 23-31.

1.1.1. Turner's arrival at the Grand Harbour

'Journal of a tour in the Levant' Volume 1, by John Murray

London, Albemarle Street (1820), Printed by W. Clowes, Northumberland-Court Illustrated
Volume 1 Malta, Vol.2 Arabs, and Vol.3 Turks



[1.5] Turner, William. *Journal of a Tour in the Levant*

3 Volumes. London: John Murray, 1820. First Edition. 8vo - over 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ " - 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ " tall. Hard Cover. Ex-Library. Good condition. Complete with 2 fold-out chromolithographic plates, 2 fold-out maps, 4 chromolithographic plates, 1 b&w fold-out plate, 15 b&w plates, with numerous text illustrations throughout. Bound in 3/4 leather and marbled paper with marbled page edges all around. xxiii, 1 1 1 480pp; vi, 1 1 600pp; vi, 1 1 546pp errata [1]. Portions of back strips absent, covers rubbed, front cover loose on vol. I, IN PROTECTIVE MYLAR JACKETS

The first introductory pages of this literary finding are dedicated to George Canning (11th April 1770 - 8th August 1827), a British statesman and politician, who served as Foreign Secretary and briefly as Prime Minister.

He was the one who enabled Turner to visit the countries he wished to paint. In fact, the painter kept no regular Journal during his time in the Levant, particularly the three years belonging to the period in Constantinople, and had no intention at all of publishing it at the very beginning of his Tour. The need arose long after his return, having gathered all his material together as reported in "*Journal of a tour in the Levant*": "I was preparing to arrange my materials in the formal and laboured style in which Travels are usually written" having loaded his own table with Homer, Strabo, Pausanias,

Diodorus, Siculus, amongst others, when he realized the need to describe the manners of the countries he had visited, as a real topographer.

Furthermore, he wanted to personally thank Lord Castlereagh for his annexation to the Embassy and Sir R. Liston, British Ambassador at the Porte, for having permitted him to change his official employment and turn to the pleasure of travelling and discovery.

1.1.2. The account of his journey to Valletta

In his diary Turner often wrote in his own hands all the experiences had during his cloudy journey, since they left the Bay of Palermo on 19th May 1812 and then passed the island of Gozo, well known for the famous Calypso Cave. Turner was really surprised by the miniscule island and its barren sandy soils. Only continuing their navigation, did they finally reach the harbour of Valletta¹³ and enjoyed the magnificent view. Being the capital built on a very high hilltop, a traveller can imagine the difference of view from below, reaching Valletta on a galley, instead of gaining the entrance onboard a modern cruise ship. In fact, the author said:

I had never witnessed any thing so
grand as the prospect of the city,
when we coasted down its port.¹⁴

The author settled in Malta for nearly a week, but the very first impression he reported is rather singular; to his eyes the island seemed like a gigantic quarry rather than an inhabited island, presumably because made of the vast quantity of calctufa stones. However, as soon as he entered the city he was startled by the mixture of houses and fortifications, the arched galleries, the precipitate heights thronged with spectators and the port crowded with shipping. The Palace, where Sir Hildebrand Oakes, the Civil Commissioner of the island, hosted them is a large quadrangle, containing large

¹³ Attard, Joseph, *Britain and Malta*, San Gwann, Malta: P.E.G. Ltd., 1988, pp. 15-17. Chapter II, Birth of a Colony, The British in Malta, picture of a feudal society.

¹⁴ See Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Journal of a Tour in the Levant*, 1st Volume, John Murray, London: W. Clowes, Northumberland-Court, 1820, Chap. II, p. 26.

apartments, elegantly furnished in Baroque style, adorned with fine locally manufactured tapestries and portraits of all the Grand Masters.¹⁵

Inside the building, it was possible to visit the public library, with its twenty thousand volumes, officially inaugurated by Sir Hildebrand Oakes in 1812. Among them, we can find lots of French editions sent as present to the Knights, by the Kings of France. Of particular interest to the author was the Palace of the Armoury,¹⁶ which at the time contained a display of twenty-five thousand stands. The internal court yard gardens of the Palace gave an unexpectedly pastoral effect. They had the opportunity of visiting St. Anton's gardens too, reaching the area driving in a carriage, like the calèche of Cadiz, drawn by a remarkable sized mule, nowadays they are mainly conducted by horses.

They spent the rest of the day visiting the ornamented and mosaic Church of St. John¹⁷ in Valletta and very probably reached Fort Ricasoli, point from where he painted or initially drew as his habit, the famous view '*Grand Harbour of Malta*'.



[1.6] Fort Ricasoli, Malta

¹⁵ Paul Mizzi, *The Grand Masters of Malta, from the origins to modern times*, Malta: Midsea Books Ltd., 2000.

¹⁶ Michael Galea, *MALTA, The Palace of the Grandmasters and the Armoury*, Valletta, Malta: M.J. Publication Ltd., 1990, p. 39, p. 47-60.

¹⁷ Aldo E. Azzopardi, *MALTA e le sue isole*, Narni-Terni, Italia: Ed. Plurigraf and Miller Distributors Limited, 1991, pp. 17-45, See pp. 28-31, St. John Cathedral and its chapels dedicated to each Order.

1.1.3. St. Paul's Grotto near Città Notabile of Mdina

Because of the bad and windy weather conditions, they remained on the island for another day and therefore reached the famous Grotto of St. Paul, remembrance of his shipwreck on the island. The Maltese guide¹⁸ showed them the small chapel, and gave him a piece of the chalky stone from the grotto, as an infallible talisman against the bite of vipers and any venomous insect. He was also shown some catacombs of considerable extent, in which the Saracens used to take refuge.

[...] We found some ruins of a small pyramidal building, (the base of one side of which was in good preservation,) that had evidently been a tomb, whose foundations, enclosing two distinct chambers, were still very distinguishable. Round it lay several hewn stones, with circular serpentine ornaments sculptured on them; and the old Maltese peasant who accompanied us said, that he remembered an old church standing near there, in which it was said, that some great man of old lay interred.

Our detention for a day by a contrary wind gave me an opportunity to visit the famous Grotto of St. Paul, which is at Città Vecchia, about eight miles from Valetta.¹⁹

Moreover, he was also told, that network of underground passages, extended nearly two miles beyond the city. His Maltese experience ended on the 28th of May 1812, when they were towed out of the Harbour of Malta, headed for the Greek coast.

¹⁸ Michael Galea, *MALTA, Grajjiet Storici*, San Gwann, Malta: P.E.G., 2004, A Maltese detailed description of the island's main monuments and historical events.

¹⁹ J.M.W.T., *op. cit.*, pp. 29,30.

1.2. Turner's journeys



[1.7] Turner, *Self-portrait*, c.1799, oil.
Turner Collection, Tate Gallery, London

1.2.1. British Period 1775-1799: London and his Masters



[1.8] Conway Castle, 1798

The artist's experience not only emerges on the occasion of his voyages, but thanks to an artistic background, that he developed along his whole life, especially in his motherland. Another aspect of his genius emerged from the fact the peculiar representations of natural phenomena come to life, as if they were animate and the landscape descriptions take us on a journey into a mythical and real photographic documentary of all those countries. Turner's sentiments and impressions reflect his romantic surroundings amid point of view, opening the perspective towards his geo-aesthetic²⁰ curiosity for the world.

Many testimonies remain of Turner pictorial taste where he was born in London close to Covent Garden, accompanied by the particular deep Cockney tone of his voice that always deeply marked his personality. The artist William Frith has left a description of Turner speaking "the stammering, the long pauses and the bewildering mystery".

During his childhood, the neighbourhood where he was brought up was not at all one of the best ones for the epoch, surrounded by thieves and pickpockets, even though his father was able to modestly run a barber's shop in Maiden Lane.²¹

What certainly stimulated his interest as a child was the presence of theatres of prestigious value, such as the Royal in Drury Lane and the Royal Opera House. At the very beginning he was encouraged to try to complete his first sketches, including the Thames observations and visions, the Dockside of London and the merchants companies descriptions.

²⁰ E. Sdegno and Keith Hanley, *Ruskin, Venice, and 19th Century Cultural Travel*, Cafoscarina, Venice, 2010, Chapter 10, Transporting Venetian Architecture, Geo- Aesthetics: Venice and the Architecture of the Alps by Anthony Ozturk, pp. 187-211, See p. 195.

²¹ James Hamilton, *TURNER A Life*, London: Sceptre, 1997, pp. 7-21, p. xiii Map of England, Wales and Scotland showing Turner's principal tours, p. xiv Map of Europe showing his journey.



[1.9] Westminister Abbey, London, England

He reached personal and artistic maturity, as soon as he went in for a profession in his first job in Brentford, painting the engravings in Henry Boswell's volume *The Antiquities of England and Wales*.²² During this period the main subjects he wanted to present included pictures of Cathedrals and Abbeys, adding an important Oxford architect's practice which contributed to his lifelong interest in art. Thomas Hardwick and Thomas Malton represented the most important Masters in his pictorial path, who conducted him to get to know the Royal Academy's President Sir Joshua Reynolds, being able in this way to become one of the first artists, he was only fifteen, who in 1790 presented his first water-colour. He was very proud of having been hired in the quality of scenic artist assistant at the Opera House in Oxford Street and we can only imagine his disappointment during its sudden burnt down, but this did not prevent him from accomplishing the work of *Pantheon the morning after the fire*.

Turner's application to art made so that drew his brilliant inspiration on the occasion of his many trips along Britain and Europe. In fact, in 1793 he was awarded with the 'Great Silver Pallet for landscape drawing', moreover his paintings started to be

²² Peter Ackroyd, *Turner*, London: Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 89-95. Travel description to Scotland.

asked for in many illustrated magazines. He often travelled towards Wales, Dover and Canterbury,²³ reflecting like in a sort of cinematography the most impressive scenarios and regularly walking 25 miles a day thanks to the support of a walking stick.

In 1794, wandering in the Midland counties and the Isle of Wight reproduced his Marine World romance representations. His first development as visual landscapist was then, to express in oil at the Royal Academy. Over the next year he was employed by Doctor Thomas Monro to copy some watercolours in Monro's collection at Adelphi Terrace.

Two years later, he paid a visit to the North of England Lakes area and that was the longest painting expedition he had yet undertaken, taking with him two large leather-bound sketchbooks. Just to imagine his northern enterprise he went to Yorkshire, Durham, Northumberland, Lake District, hired two boats to capture his subjects, spent hours within churches, naves and crypts; underlying his love of old stones and wilderness of mountains, such as in Kirkstall Abbey and Norham Castle.²⁴ Soon after returning to Oxford his wish was to be elected as Associate of the Royal Academy. In 1790 he was acquainted with the Danby family, John Danby was a composer²⁵ of Catholic mass songs and later on cohabited with the widow Sarah Danby.

²³ P. Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-95.

²⁴ Eric Shanes, *The Life and Masterworks of J.M.W. Turner*, New York, U.S.A.: Parkstone International, 2008, p. 154-155. Turner Bequest, Tate Britain, Watercolour Norham Castle, on the River Tweed, 1822

²⁵ P. Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

1.2.2. Academic Qualification 1799-1802: Associate of the Royal Academy



[1.10] Royal Academy by William Hodges, 1744-97

Inspired by Claude Lorraine,²⁶ the seventeenth-century painter, and his magical play of landscapes, sunlight and harmony produced watercolours for the book '*Picturesque Views of the Southern Coast of England*' and in search of sublime visited places like Dorset, Devon, Cornwall and Somerset. Unfortunately, in this period (1802) fell ill of the Maltese Plague, but the achievement of his objective to be elected as an Associate of the Royal Academy must have paid off all his efforts. In the meantime, erected a villa house at Sandycombe Lodge, designed by himself.

The quality of his pieces of art was immediately apparent in the painting with his journey in the West Country *Teignmout* (1812), in the Royal Academy *Snow Storm* and in the Romantic imagination of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

²⁶ E. Shanes, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

1.2.2. Journey in France 1802-1805: Travel through Paris and the Alps



[1.11] Jacques-Louis David, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* or *Bonaparte at the St Bernard Pass*, 1800-1, Oil on canvas, Chateau de Malmaison, Rueil-Malmaison

While Italy was still considered the natural home for art and artists, France was his first stage of a tireless journey to the mountains of Switzerland.

In 1802, middle of July he travelled to Paris and crossed the Channel in a packed-boat from Dover to Calais, during a severe storm. When he arrived in Paris, he hired a cabriolet and drove to Switzerland, going right down magic valleys and tempestuous mountains: Mont Blanc, Mer de Glace, St. Bernard Pass,²⁷ St. Gothard Pass and Devil's Bridge. He was a person really caught up in his work and was able to make nearly 400 sketches during these wanderings.

Returning to Paris he made a sudden pilgrimage on the Louvre, where he wanted above all to endeavour to measure with the works of Titian, Poussin, Raphael and Correggio.²⁸ This is rather a technical examination of pictorial effects, the travel investigation of the artists' professional skills, in order to absorb from their knowledge. In

²⁷ J. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 75. The Grand St. Bernard Pass into Switzerland.

²⁸ André Chastel, *L'art italien, Storia dell'arte italiana*, Flammarion, Paris: 1982, pp. 327, 369, 384, 521. Text of a careful traveller, who gives an overview of bibliographic and historical European art in Italy.

the spring of 1804, his incessant desire to embrace all his paintings in a whole perspective of his own, urged him to open a shop gallery in Harley Street.

1.3. Practical Art 1805-1811: Turner's drawings and paintings

Soon after the greatest naval struggle the world had seen the Battle of Trafalgar,²⁹ in autumn of 1805, the body of Nelson was carried by the ship *Victory* to the entrance of the Thames. During this particular event Turner was given permission to go onboard to record sketches, drawings and take notes of what happened. This river had for him an allegorical meaning, along which the figures of myths and legends might flourish. In one sketchbook he quoted some verses of Pope,³⁰ which sang *The Silver Thames*, metaphorical contemplations of a classical antiquity at the service of his art.

Since, he had experienced the most profound meditation and contemplation of the Thames³¹ from the early childhood, he decided to build a boat of his own, because he wanted to be part of the river's wild life. Turner sailed very difficultly upstream to Hampton Court and Windsor, and then onwards to Reading and Oxford, finally going down to the Port of London and the estuary. Lot's of his studies pointed out on the glimpse to nature, to the trees bending across the riverbank, to unloading barges, to shadows of buildings on the water. The Thames was displaced by the black and dirt of the working river.



[1.12] Tower Bridge, London

²⁹ E. Shanes, *op. cit.*, p. 166-167.

³⁰ P. Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

³¹ E. Shanes, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

A certain amount of compositions were oil-paintings reported directly on wooden boards or canvas, evolving in the range of possibilities of light and tone en plain air. He used to walk carrying a portable paint-box, with his various pigments wrapped up in bladders. His favourite technique was when he drove the paint with his fingers, feeling the colours change, as they all intermingle.

In 1806, the other painting *The Goddess of Discord choosing the Apple of Contention in the Garden of Hesperides* suggests the seriousness of Turner's intent and it was shown at the British Institution. He also sent a painting to the Royal Academy,³² of course, but got angry, when it was badly hung in the exhibition room.

On the other hand, the painting entitled *Fall of the Rhine at Schaffhausen* was a fine expression of the movement of waters between rocks. During a visit to the fellow-worker artist, W.F. Wells in Kent, he was suggested to undertake a series of new landscapes' versions and so started putting a plan into practice. He preferred to divide his whole productions into six principal sectors: Historical, Pastoral, Elevated Pastoral, Mountain, Marine and Architectural. His preparatory drawings consisted in sepia ink with watercolour, marking out the salient features in pen and washing in the shading with brush. By the beginning of 1807 he exhibited *Sheerness and the Isle of Sheppey, with the Junction of the Thames and the Medway from the Nore* together with other typical river views.

From the diaries emerges Turner had a vivid imagination, which included the following feelings: serenity and storm versus tranquillity and chaos. Among other paintings of different kinds, it should not be forgotten one oil-painting entitled *Country Blacksmith disputing upon the Price of Iron, and the Price charged to the Butcher for shoeing his Poney* Turner was trying to apply paint to the Flemish painter's genre called Teniers the Younger, made up-to-date by the Scottish artist Sir David Wilkie.³³ He also displayed *Sun Rising Through Vapour; fishermen cleaning and selling Fish*, underlying his admiration for the sun splendour and vapour.

³² J. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 102-103.

Despite all his many commitments, his collaboration with the Royal Academy was reinforced during that year, as soon as he was appointed as Professor of Perspective,³⁴ but giving his first lecture four years later.



[1.13] Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace,
Household Division

During his tour in 1808, he was hosted at Tabley House in Cheshire and completed two home views, for Sir John Leicester too. On his travels, he always fancied a transcript by Izaak Walton's *The Complete Angler* and owned an umbrella, which was converted in a fishing rod, for his favourite hobby. According to the last travels' accounts he also visited Petworth House, under the maecenas of Lord Egremont, who allowed Turner to use his house as a painting studio. The artist also completed a series of Petworth drawings on blue paper, which collect and focus on precise scenes or objects, as in *Petworth: The Old Library* and *The Apotheosis of Lord Egremont*.

In 1808, Turner became acquainted with another important patron in his life Walter Fawkes, member of the Yorkshire parliament. He was an estate manager and Turner visited his country house Farnley Hall, over a period of sixteen years. The east Lodge gates opened the view to a partly Jacobean and eighteenth-century house, that contained a private museum of Civil War artefacts too, some of which the artist drew.

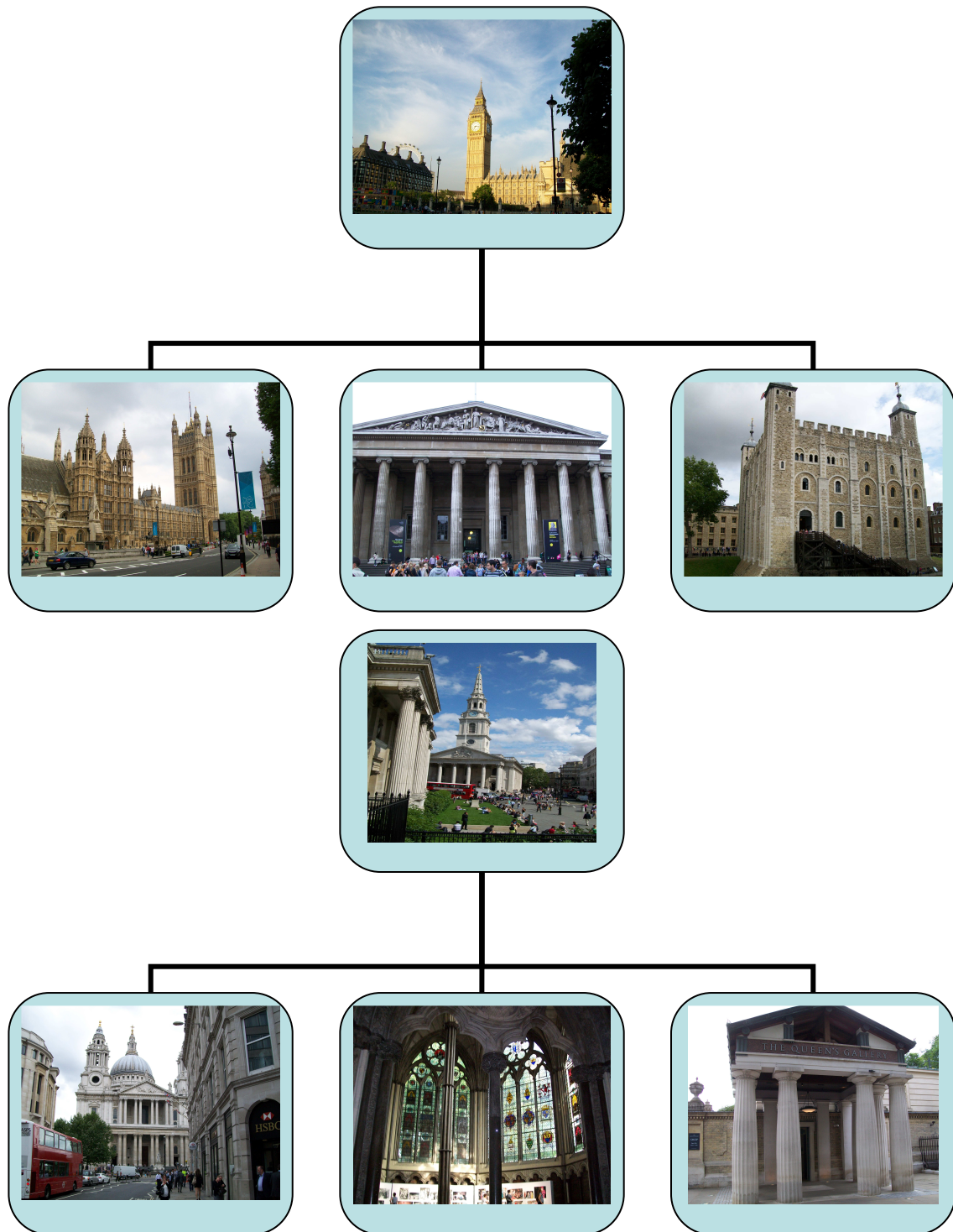
³⁴ John Ruskin, *The elements of perspective*, vol XV, *The Elements of Drawing and The Laws of Fusole*, Cambridge University Press: 2010.

In the same year, he exhibited paintings reflecting serenity and spaciousness, such as *Pope's Villa at Twickenham* and *View of Richmond Hill and Bridge* or the seaside, as for instance *Margate* and *Sheerness from the Nore*, another kind of particular painting presented at the Royal Academy was entitled *The unpaid bill* or *The dentist reproving his son's prodigality*.

An exclusive painting expedition was carried out in Oxford, in the early months of 1810, because he had been asked by a publisher to complete a view of the High Street in that city and was very pleased about it. The tireless artist, in the same year, exhibited three paintings devoted to his patrons' homes in the Royal Academy, two of Lowther Castle in Westmorland and one entitled *Petworth, Sussex, the seat of the earl of Egremont: Dewy Morning*. Then, the painter soon returned to some of his favourite themes in the Harley Street exhibition: such as a lake, a bridge and ancient palace, a ruined castle, an avalanche and a fish market on a beach. In the following year, he continued his work at the Royal Academy delivering two great classical pictures *Apollo and Python* and *Mercury and Hersoé*, the latter was inspired by a Veronese painting. The newspapers³⁵ especially *The Sun* described it, as a masterpiece and very fine.

³⁵ J.Ruskin, *The Harbours of England*, VII Letters to the Press, p. 329.

1.3.1. Geographic view 1811: Liber Studiorum's prints



[1.14] Following Turner's city route map, by Anna Comellato

In January 1811, he gave the first lectures as Professor of Perspective, began composing verses in 1793, and kept on teaching during the following years.

He could never depart from London for too long, he loved too much to surround himself with crowds, smoke, glare, soot, dust and dunghills. At the very beginning of his career he turned his interest as a scene-painter at the Pantheon, a place that inspired him most.

On observing classical works, such as *Dido building Carthage*, or *The Rise of the Carthaginian Empire*, the spectators felt as if they were involved here in front of the most splendid scene in a theatre. Turner often devoted himself to paint fires and shipwrecks, when all these subjects represented the major protagonists of nineteenth-century ballets and melodramas. It has been stated that Turner's paintings did change the art of scenery in the Victorian period. He declared that the inspiration for his famous painting *Ulysses deriding Polyphemus* came from a song in a pantomime entitled 'Melodrame Mad'.

He was struck by the general egalitarianism of the citizenry, even if many of his patrons were noblemen and were leading a lifestyle and had beliefs pretty different from the daily troubles of the lower middle classes of the epoch. He had a special fondness of John Wycliffe and George Fox, who were sort of reformers during those times, challenging rituals and looking for independence. In Turner's view the world was impregnated with mythic symbols,³⁶ which assumed a relevant importance together with the presence of emblems and allegories. He curiously loved to represent on purpose conflicts, cataclysms, chaos and confusion surrounding all the human beings.

Moreover, he was a thoroughly irreligious person, even if emerged the existence of an apocryphal story regarding his uttering on the deathbed of '*The sun is God*'. What about his provenance? If we give a glance at his writings, we understand straight away he is a Londoner. From head to toe, his strangely and contorted style characterises his whole verses, most of which were meant to be appended as commentaries upon his works of art. As protégé of his master *Blake*, he considered the poet's role as being in part prophetic.

Turner seemed to have composed at high speed and in a variety of locations, writing in a particular notebook, which he reserved for his poetry. His poetry is totally cerebral, however, adding and writing in terms of the eighteenth-century versions of didactic and pastoral local verses. If we had to fix a point in time, to stand for his nature, we could say his painting looked very further ahead, and his poetry observed behind, this

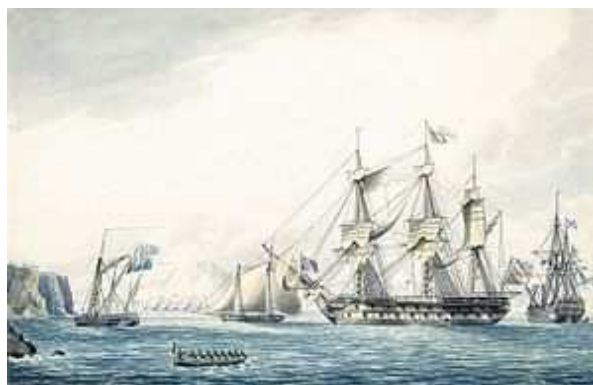
³⁶ E. Sdegno and Keith Hanley, *op. cit.*, pp. Xxxiii – xlvi, See p. xl, Introduction: Ruskin and the Myth of Venice, by Emma Sdegno.

is the reason why he was very fond of James Thomson's *The Seasons*, an epic of natural observations. In the epic poem he wished to complete, entitled *The Fallacies of Hope* appear all the feelings of the interior imagination of isolation, anxiety and despair of the author. A great difference, between his poetry and his paintings comes to the surface, he activated thinking while writing, but on the other hand indeed he did not need to think, while he was painting, reaching a sort of freedom.

1.3.2. Maritime period 1812: The artist in Malta

In 1811, the author kept on selling copies of his 'Liber Studiorum'. There were journeys to Corfe Castle, to Lulworth, to Lyme Regis and Land's End, Tintagel and Clovelly. While in the neighbourhood of Barnstaple, he took the chance to meet his father's family. The major work of this year was reserved for the Royal Academy. In this last perception of Turner very fond of the mountains' nature, we move into the next period to an interest in the Mediterranean basin.

HMS *Argo*³⁷ was a 44-gun fifth-rate *Roebuck*-class ship of the Royal Navy. She was launched in 1781 from Howdon Dock. She was the largest vessel that had been launched on the River Tyne. After having served for 36 hours under the French flag, she returned to British service, distinguishing herself in the French Revolutionary Wars when she captured several prizes. She also served in the Napoleonic Wars and was sold in 1816.



[1.15] Royal Navy Ship HMS Argo, c.1799,
Thomas Buttersworth, XIX cent.,
National Maritime Museum, London

³⁷ John Murray, *Journal of a Tour in the Levant*, Northumberland-Court: W. Clowes, 1820, Volume 1, Chapter 1, p. 1.

Lastly, she sailed for Constantinople with Sir Robert Liston and his suite on 6th April 1812. Turner embarked on Argo with Captain Warren on 8th April 1812 towards Dardanelles. The voyage continued towards Cadiz, thence to Gibraltar, Sicily, Malta³⁸ and Constantinople. The crew left Palermo on 19th May and passed alongside Gozo on the 23rd, believing by mistaken, facing the countryside, it was the main island Malta's coast. Approaching the isle, they docked in front of the majestic Fort St. Angelo and tried to climb the high stairs, called some time ago by the sailors *Nix mangiare*, to be conducted to the nearby Palace, in order to be hosted by the British Civil Commissioner Sir Hildebrand Oakes.³⁹ The group spent four days there, leaving Malta on the 28th May and reached Greece in a couple of days, precisely on the 31st May.

1.3.3. Yorkshire tour 1813-1816: Barnard Castle

Turner and John Constable were present at the Royal Academy and in 1813 painted *Frosty Morning*, the artist stated that he was travelling by coach in Yorkshire and sketched it while on route. In the same summer he stayed at Devonshire and Plymouth making various excursions, Turner was a good pedestrian and sailor too. Cyrus Redding, a journalist, used to accompany him on some of these trips, fruit of those sketches was *Picturesque Views of the Southern Coasts of England* and *The Rivers of Devon*. The artist started also a second career as a Lecturer. Of this period is *Appulia in search of Appullus saw Ovid*, while in June visited Portsmouth in order to sketch a review of the British fleet⁴⁰ by Prince Regent and the Emperor of Russia. All the forms of naval display seemed to excite him, these paintings were a history of his inward life. In 1816 he exhibited *The Temple of Jupiter Panellenius Restored* presenting the temple in pristine form. He expressed also sympathy for the Movement of Greek liberation, which Lord Byron took part in.

In 1816 he was not in the mood and did not exhibit any works at his own gallery, because he preferred travelling again to Yorkshire and took some time for himself horse riding over Stake Pass across Redmire Moor to Barnard Castle. Just after this parenthesis, he was engaged to make drawings for a history of Yorkshire, he was commissioned to

³⁸ Ibid, p. 26.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 27.

⁴⁰ P. Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

complete 120 drawings, even if the project was abandoned for over-costs and he wandered as far as to Leeds, Doncaster and Grantham. During these arduous rides he managed to complete 450 drawings.

1.3.4. Northern travels to Scotland: 1816-1819

Turner concentrated his attention on drawing and painting the English landscape along 25 years. He had created a panorama of England, but it had not been entirely insular by the end of 1816, when he began making plans for a European journey.⁴¹

In the summer of 1817 he sailed from Margate to Ostend, with in his hands a preparatory list of Dutch phrases with their translations. He travelled by carriage inside Ghent and Brussels, and spent a whole day inspecting the site of the Battle of Waterloo. He directed to Cologne and prepared sketches of the Rhine, then walked some 40 miles, and took a boat to Mainz before returning to Cologne. Then he turned his steps towards Antwerp, where Rubens's works were to be admired, reaching Rotterdam and Amsterdam to see Rembrandt's *Night Watch* and *The Anatomy Lesson*.⁴²

As soon as Turner got back to England, he travelled North once again and spent some spare time at Raby Castle in County Durham. The pencil drawings in the last completed watercolours communicate a new atmosphere and powerful colours.

On 4th June 1818, Turner used the excursion to great effect by finishing a sepia drawing of *Windsor Castle from Salt Hill*. In autumn, he travelled to Scotland preparing the drawings for *The Provincial Antiquities of Scotland* which Sir Walter Scott⁴³ accepted to write the text. Unfortunately, financial sources must always have influenced his artistic path, in comparison to the wide working production, he had developed on his own worldwide. Anyway, luckily his reputation was highly recognized, in fact Sir John Leicester and later on Walter Fawkes fascinated by his works always supported him by exhibiting and displaying his oil paintings and watercolours.

At the Royal Academy in 1819 he decided to display two oil-paintings *Entrance of the Meuse: Orange-Merchant on the Bar, going to Pieces* and *England: Richmond Hill*, the former was immediately observed by the famous visionary painter Samuel

⁴¹ See J. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p.xiv. Map of Europe showing Turner's principal tours.

⁴² P. Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

⁴³ J. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

Palmer, the latter instead can be viewed as an affirmation of the belonging and unity of a nation or a celebration of the Royal Family's social activities in the landscape tradition.

1.4. Turner's Italian Tour: 1819-1827



[1.16] J.M.W. Turner, *The Dogana and San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice*, Exhibited c.1834, Landscape

As part of his artistic formation, during the Grand Tour period, of considerable importance in England was the artists' direct experience and practice, not only in their mother country, but also in the other territories that had seen the birth to the most famous masters and works.

The prestige acquired by Turner, thanks to these local experiences stands out from the volume entitled *Tour in Italy*.⁴⁴ He confessed Sir Thomas Lawrence his deep wish to be able to visit the Eternal capital city, Rome. Therefore, at the beginning of August 1819 he set off across the Channel on his way to Italy. He journeyed to Turin by way of Paris, Lyons and Grenoble. From there he travelled to Como and the lakes in the vicinity before moving on to Milan and Verona. Later on, he had the chance to encounter the beautiful

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 195-204 and P. Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-100. Second phase of Turner's travels into Europe, from the Alps to Italy.

city of Venice⁴⁵ for the first time. His first thoughts on seeing the floating city are not recorded, as he did before visiting other surroundings, but we may imagine his feelings at the sight of the Laguna. This city represented his marine world of boats and gondolas, so different from his working boats, of masts, sails and coloured flags at that time. Furthermore, from the architectural point of view, it was a world of great palaces, magnificent churches, arches, piazzas and houses of character.

The sailors' strength was opposite to that of the crew, that sailed on the ships along the channels in Great Britain, where the rivers were exploited for hard commercial needs, surrounded by bewildering lock gates, crossover and swing bridges, aqueducts, wharfs and tunnels. The major towpath bridges often made of stone ridges in order to enable horses to climb and descend, also the Thames, Trent and Severn rivers were completely different from the romantic Venetian canals, such as the Canal Grande. Heavy products, as for instance loads of timber, stones or iron had to be carried near a good river to keep a well-established traffic among important cities like Bristol, Liverpool, South Wales, the City and Newcastle. Life was certainly hard, not to mention the obvious seasonal difficulties, but there was also a good import and export trade to and from all the major local ports and industrialized cities.

Even if the slow growth of the technology during the 16th and 17th centuries could not easily advance and set the future scene for the English canal age. The Duke of Bridgewater owner of mines, who supplied coal situated at Worsley, close the north-west of Manchester was one of the first persons who realised the potential of the new form of transport, without which the Industrial Revolution⁴⁶ would have been hampered. In fact, the popular early printing press of the days,⁴⁷ reported the first waterwheels and weirs were built across the rivers to create mill ponds, which provided a head of water to turn the principal source of machine driving power and on the other hand was used to grinding flour and later as part of papermaking and other processes. In 1845 a radical change took place, as soon as the railways arrived and the traffic hugely raised.

⁴⁵ Andrew Wilton, *VENEZIA Acquerelli di Turner*, Milano: Edizione Italiana L'Ippocampo, 2009. Curator of Turner's collection at the CloreGallery in Tate Gallery of London, roundup of Poetry and Art.

⁴⁶ Stan Yorke, *The Industrial Revolution Explained, Steam, Sparks & Massive Wheels*, England's Living History, Countryside Books, Cambridge: University Press, 2005.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12, Fig. 1.2: Early printing press (Example machinery held in the Leeds Industrial Museum, Armely Mills, U.K.).

Turner's new landscape paintings were full of spaciousness, but at the same time accompanied by the presence of inextricable and narrow alleyways 'callette'. The going up and down among waterways and the usual view of bank devices, staircase locks and aqueducts must have represented an experience so different in his imagination at the very beginning. His oil paintings of the Adriatic city give our eyes more brightness. His various periods in Venice lasted less than four weeks but in the last twenty years of his painting life, he devoted one third of his productive work to views of that city.

From Venice, he went down to Rome,⁴⁸ arriving within the end of October and remaining until the middle of December, in order to complete an average of fifteen hundred pencil sketches. He was deeply moved to visit and draw the city and its surroundings, drawing everything he met on his way: columns, fascias, entablatures, pillars, ruins and inscriptions. Living the city firsthand, the artist painted and studied sculpture within the Corsini and Farnese's palaces, visited the main churches and the chapels, walking among the temples and savouring the smells of the markets of the ancient Rome.

He was bewitched by the Italian capital and travelled to Naples⁴⁹ too, reproducing the Vesuvius. He also felt the need to make a private pilgrimage to the grave of Virgil, just outside Naples, where the poet was able to connect the pastoral and the allegorical spiritual landscape. He rushed up north through Turin and the Mont Cenis Pass,⁵⁰ where they were caught in a snowstorm so that his carriage capsized, and all the rest of the passengers were obliged to complete the journey on foot or climbing. In this way, he was able to complete a watercolour for Walter Fawkes, entitled *The Passage of Mt. Cenis* on 15th January, 1820.

Other fruits of his Italian journey were represented by the large oil painting for the Royal Academy entitled *Rome from the Vatican: Raffaele, accompanied by La Fornarina, preparing his pictures for the decoration of the Loggia*.

However, his most important concern this year was the building of a new gallery, moreover he was also involved with the enlargement and remodelling of the house in

⁴⁸ Alberto Angela, *Una giornata nell'antica Roma*, Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore S.p.A., 2007, I numeri di Roma, pp. 20-21, la Città eterna, p. 61, Ore 9.10 Le strade di Roma, p. 113, I nomi dei romani, pp. 143-145 Ore 10.45 Breve sosta in un'oasi di pace e di capolavori, pp. 175-180 Ore 11.10 Arrivo nel Foro romano, pp. 191-194 Intanto, nel Colosseo ...

⁴⁹ J. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-202 and E. Shanes, *op. cit.*, *Illustration Mount Vesuvius in Eruption*, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A., 1817, p. 135.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Ill. *Passage of Mont Cenis*, City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, U.K., 1820, pp. 150- 151.

Queen Anne Street. He busied himself about its architectural details and made elaborate plans for the furnishing of his new residence. The new gallery was opened with a flourish in 1822. The whole ménage was supervised by Hannah Danby, the niece of his erstwhile mistress. Turner's studio⁵¹ was adjacent to the gallery and he was so protective of his works that had fitted a spy-hole, so he could see exactly what the visitors were doing in his apparent absence.

The *secreta secretorum* of Turner's⁵² art was called the cave of making and very few persons could have had the permission to visit it. It represented his own world full of shelves with several glass bottles filled with different colours, many brushes, a bureau of old paints and oils, models of ships and some views of foreign scenery. There he used to work hard from early morning, for long hours. He created there *What You Will* a painting hung in the Royal Academy exhibition of 1822, which is a study of a scene from the *Twelfth Night*, describing various Shakespearian characters grouped among statuaries and trees.

In the summer he ran like the wind to Edinburgh, in order to record the arrival of King George IV,⁵³ and found the opportunity on his journey to sketch various rivers and ports for a book of engravings on that subject. During this occasion, George IV commissioned Turner to paint the important *Battle of Trafalgar*, to be placed in one of the state apartments of St. James's Palace. He readily wrote to the King's Marine Painter for details of the ships that took part in the naval action and was instructed daily by the naval men about the somewhat intricate and different Court's customs.

As part of his character and tidiness, in this period he was carefully arranging and labelling his sketchbooks, putting numbers on the spines, as well as compiling a table of contents. His biggest concern was to leave his legacy to posterity in a perfect way. He employed four of these sketchbooks⁵⁴ on a tour in the summer of 1824, when he travelled to the rivers Meuse and Mosel. In one of these books he enclosed little diagrams of the areas he was visiting, completed with miles, local inns and important sights. They were soft-covered, and could be rolled up in order to be stowed in a capacious coat-pocket.

⁵¹ P. Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, Studio Secreta Secretorum, pp. 103-113.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Artist Self-Portrait, 103 and E. Shanes, *op. cit.*, Portrait of J.M.W. Turner, 1845, p. 58.

⁵³ J. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 217, 218. George IV and The Battle of Trafalgar.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Sketchbooks' Illustrations, pp. 126-127.

Very often he travelled on a boat or on a barge pulled by horses; actually there are a lot of notations describing the horses' swimming across the river. He also travelled on the road, although on one occasion his diligence or coach overturned and had to be dug out of a ditch between Ghent and Brussels. He used to sketch all the things that surrounded him, his capacity and eyes' perspective taking in scenes and landscapes at once, such as whole churches, the panorama of the bridges, the mountains, the views of the castles, the colourful villages, the inns and the impressive medieval buildings.⁵⁵

At the end of August, he travelled to Holland then progressing to the Rhine, in fact he was revisiting the landscapes of the Dutch Masters⁵⁶ he mostly hold in esteem. He visited The Hague, Amsterdam, Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges. The success of these highlanders' themes came from the locally renowned painting entitled *Cologne: the Arrival of the Packet Boat, Evening*. Unfortunately, soon after his return from this journey he received the bad news that his closest friend and patron Walter Fawkes had passed away and during the same period of time his father became ill.

Turner was also working and paying attention to the largest series of his engravings, exactly 120 drawings entitled *Picturesque Views in England and Wales*.⁵⁷ This is the reason why, in order to be get by additional material for his drawings compositions, he embarked on a number of visits to various parts of England in the southern sides, not to mention Margate, Petworth and to the Isle of Wight. This time he found tranquillity and repair by the architect John Nash. Here he found the ideal environment to fill his three sketchbooks and started brand new jobs, for instance *Study of Sea and Sky, Isle of Wight*, dated 1827. He continued his tour to Petworth, where other works touched his artistic sensibility and which included *Petworth Park: Tilling church in the distance* and *The Lake, Petworth, Sunset*, working with the door locked in the studio provided by Lord Egremont, because of the need to be surrounded by privacy and seclusion to find out his own concentration and creation.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ S. Spiteri, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-11.

⁵⁶ J. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁵⁷ E. Shanes, *op. cit.*, Illustration: *Flint Castle, North Wales*, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, U.K., 1835, pp. 208, 209.

⁵⁸ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1996, pp. 279-286. Chapter 16, Schooling the Emotions, Rethinking schools: teaching by being, communities that care.

1.4.1. Seen through Colours 1827-1833: Watercolours for the England and Wales series

Turner's ill health led him in 1827 to visit Margate, the place he lived as a child, seen that he enjoyed the seaside air and the general town's amenities. He visited also Norham Castle fresh mountain area on three occasions in 1797, 1801 and 1831.

From 1827 onward, he often went various times there for summer weekends, either by coach or by steamer. There he had the chance to meet and sympathize with the widowed Sophia Caroline Booth. The relationship remained unknown until after his death, because he was naturally reticent and not often eloquent.

At the Royal Academy's exhibition of 1828, in addition to the classics enthusiasts for the oil painting of Dido's mythological career, there was another painting entitled *Boccaccio relating the Tale of the Birdcage*. In the first week of August 1828 he left London for Rome, whereas at the very beginning he stayed in the south of France. In the apartments in the Quattro Fontane he exhibited *Regulus* and *The Vision of Medea*. At the beginning of 1829 he reached Rome with difficulty, under very bad weather conditions. A traveller left a description of him as a good-tempered, funny, little, elderly gentleman. He spoke a very few words of Italian, like most of the English, but about as much of French to be clearly understood by the local population, who at that time could not utter or write a word of English at all, being accustomed to speak in regional dialects.

After this particular experience, returning to England, he began preparing for another exhibition at the Royal Academy with *Ulysses deriding Polyphemus*, from Homer's Greek Odyssey., Book IX.⁵⁹ He kept on working very hard, because there was a large exhibition of his watercolours, from 'England and Wales series' of engravings, to be organised at the Egyptian Hall along Piccadilly.

In the autumn of 1829, his father passed away too, after the funeral and burial in St. Paul's Church in Covent Garden⁶⁰ and Turner needed to find refuge with some old friends of the family to recover. Taken from the sad time he made all the arrangements to sign his own last will and long testament before, because he wanted his name to be preserved after his death: leaving sums to relatives, bequests to the Royal Academy, inaugurating a Turner's Gold Medal to be awarded every two years, the rest of his estate

⁵⁹ P. Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁶⁰ J. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

was left for a College of Charity⁶¹ devoted to the care of decayed English Artists and left two paintings to the National Gallery. Turner burst back into work and began to paint what seemed the embodiment of his mood and desolation: *Calais Sands, Low Water*, exhibited at the Royal Academy in the spring of 1830. During this same period, the English romantic painter John Constable and Turner had paintings next to one another, devoting themselves to the same pictorial line.

Not everything is always perfect and on many occasions, Turner was deeply struck by the unfinished canvases he had to send, which he would then 'work up' with brush and knife or fingers on the spot, thus completing an entire job, while they were already hanging on the walls of the Academy. While in the experimental *Jessica*, a flaming portrait of the character in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, the yellow background of the painting actually could have caused consternation among the usual public and critics.

Between the summer of 1830 and 1831, he passed through the Midlands, that is the wide central England territories corresponding to the very early medieval Kingdom of Mercia and subsequently he travelled up crossing Adrian's Wall path to Scotland and Antonine Wall (real fortified Empire borders), having accepted the invitation to illustrate a new edition of *Scott's Poetical Works*.⁶² Thus, he had then the chance to complete other water-colours of the landscape, studying the famous tourist lochs areas and the hidden sites of the Scottish mountains.

Among the paintings asked to be placed on the following exhibition of 1832, can be found *Staffa, Fingal's Cave* can be found, representing a sort of symphony of mist in the Inner Hebrides isles of the National Nature Reserve and *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the Burning Fiery Furnace*, describing a biblical scene from the Hebrew Bible the Book of Daniel (part of the old testament), dated 164 B.C. and the most recent Protestant versions.

⁶¹ P. Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

⁶² J. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

1.4.2. Historical events 1833-1844: The Ducal Palace of Venice, The Fighting Téméraire in the Battle of Trafalgar and The Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons



[1.17] The Battle of Trafalgar, HMS Victory, 1822-1824, Oil on canvas painting, ordered by King George IV, Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

Two paintings of Venice were exhibited in 1833, *Ducal Palace, Venice* and the celebrated *Bridge of Sighs, Ducal Palace and Custom House, Venice: Canaletti Painting*, a work executed in homage to Canaletto.⁶³ Once again he focused on the light, reflecting from an azure sky on to the calm surface of the water.

He was travelling back to the city after an absence of fourteen years and arrived in Venice at the beginning of September, having previously travelled to Vienna and Verona. He tried to work as quickly as possible and completed two hundred sketches in pencil, because he always had a nervous fear of wasting time. He felt to be estranged from public taste and was obliged to paint for himself, even if it might have seemed appropriate to him that he would only be fully appreciated and understood by next generations. He was

⁶³ André Chastel, *L'art italien, Storia dell'arte italiana*, Flammarion, Paris: 1982, p. 556.

considered as a predecessor of the ‘modern movement’ in art, in the role of *Cezanne* or *Van Gogh*.

When his supporters, such as Fawkes, passed away, his clients completely changed from the members of the aristocracy to the common ranks of commerce. Among his patrons there were now a horse-dealer, a whaling tycoon, a textile magnate, a clothing manufacturer and a brewer by the name of William Whitbread. Therefore, later on fifty of his water-colours were purchased by a Bishopsgate, Benjamin Windus, who exhibited them at his house in Tottenham. He elucidated the work of *Byron* and *Scott*, as well as works by *Samuel Rogers* and *Thomas Moore*. Consequently he hired the agent Thomas Griffith of Norwood to protect his interests, because the commercial expansion of his engraving works had become very complicated. In 1834, at the Royal Academy exhibition, Turner exhibited five oils, among them *The Fountain of Indolence*’ and *‘The Golden Bough*.

Furthermore, he was still possessed by a visionary imagination, like a sort of Stendhal’s Syndrome, that is hyperkulturemia, or Florence syndrome⁶⁴ is a psychosomatic illness that causes rapid heartbeats, dizziness, fainting, confusion and even hallucinations, when an individual is exposed to art, usually when the art is particularly beautiful or a large amount of art is in a single place.

Another event broke suddenly on 16th October 1834 a fire closed in the old buildings of the Houses of Parliament,⁶⁵ leading to a wide *conflagration*, during which crowds of Londoners assembled on the banks and the bridges of the Thames. Turner was present at the destruction, making sketches from Westminster and Waterloo Bridge. The exhibited work *The Burning of the House of Lords and Commons* hit much more for its magnificence. In fact Turner was an element artist in comparison to John Ruskin in *‘The Stones of Venice’*,⁶⁶ fire, water and air were his divinities. He exhibited at this year’s Academy exhibition also three paintings entitled: *Juliet and Her Nurse*, *Rome from Mount Aventine* and *Mercury and Argus*.

Even if, by 1837 he complained that he had the baneful effects of the ‘influenza’. This period was a bit difficult to him, because he lost lot’s of old friends, who used to

⁶⁴ Daniel Goleman, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-58, Chapter 5, Passion’s Slaves.

⁶⁵ E. Shanes, *op. cit.*, *The burning of the House of Lords and Commons, 16th October 1834*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., pp. 206, 207.

⁶⁶ John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, London: J.G. Links, Pallas Athene Editions, 2005, Chapter XI, The Material of Ornament, pp. 83-94.

keep company around him, that winter in fact W.F. Wells passed away together with Lord Egremont. His production continued during the spring of that year preparing four large canvases, to be open by the King, for the new galleries of the Royal Academy. Turner created *The Grand Canal*,⁶⁷ *Venice and Snow Storm*, *Avalanche and Inundation*, taking up a lot for *The Story of Apollo and Daphne* and *The Parting of Hero and Leander*, as a matter of fact, the technique used in these works was compared to the violinist's progress of Paganini.⁶⁸

In the following year, he presented a painting entitled *Modern Italy – the Pifferari* and *Ancient Italy – Ovid Banished from Rome*, but resigning his post as Professor of Perspective. Afterwards, among his productive career *The Fighting of the Téméraire* has become one of the button-holes and it was really appreciated, when it was shown at the Royal Academy in 1839. In this representation the art of colour is taken to the high levels, it is explained like music or the language of poetry, for its own sake without any recourse to some ultimate reality.

His tour continued in 1839 directed to revisit the three rivers he had explored before in 1817, that is the Rhine, the Meuse and the Mosel, to reproduce all the scenes.⁶⁹ In these years, he continued exhibiting at the Royal Academy and displayed no less than six canvases in 1840 among them we may find *Slavers throwing overboard the Dead and the Dying* and *Typhoon coming on*, the first one recalling the colonial Empire,⁷⁰ an historical view, in all its splendors and triumphs, on the contrary of deceits and messes.

In the four years 1841 to 1844, he was very busy exhibiting an average of twenty-three large oil-paintings and thanks to his works *Rain, Steam and Speed*,⁷¹ *The Great Western Railway* and *Snow Storm*, wanted to reflect how a scene really appeared. The latter painting of this very tireless period, an accident he affirmed he was involved in, was called *Steam Boat off a Harbour's Mouth making Signals in Shallow Water, and going by the Lead. The Author was in this storm on the Night the Ariel left Harwich*.

⁶⁷ Andrew Wilton, *Venezia Acquerelli di Turner*, Milano: Edizione Italiana L'Ippocampo, 2009, Bibliothèque de l'image, Parigi, 2001, pp. 68-73.

⁶⁸ Claudio Sartorato, *Alla scoperta dei suoni perduti, canti suoni e musiche antiche*, Regione Veneto: Associazione Claudia Augusta, 2003, pp. 63-79 La ricostruzione degli strumenti antichi: la ricerca delle fonti, Paolo Zerbinati, pp. 126-149.

⁶⁹ J. Ruskin, *Harbours of England*, Sketches and drawings, Part I, Catalogue, p. 191.

⁷⁰ Niall Ferguson, *Empire*, London: Penguin Books, 2004, Introduction: pp. xi-xxviii

⁷¹ Stan Yorke, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

1.4.3. Group activity 1844-1851: John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* copy for Turner

By the mid-1840's he confidentially wrote a friend: "the evening beat me", eloquent assertions. In 1846, he felt the necessity to leave his home and gallery in Queen Anne Street to the care of Hannah Dandy, who he had the funny habit of calling in a loud voice "my damsel". He moved to a small house in Cremorne Road, Chelsea, where he constructed a kind of gallery on the roof of this building, which he shared with Sophia Booth.

Before, in 1824 he had become a founder member of the *Athenaeum*,⁷² discussing his usual half-pint of sherry. When he was talking to Walter Fawkes's son, Hawksworth, in a London hotel he staggered around saying 'I am the real lion. I am the great lion of the day, Hawkey'. His peculiarity was to be able to provide six canvases for the Royal Academy exhibition of 1846, but producing just one the following year, because no matter the fact he was no longer in good health and had obviously to reduce his own production there at the gallery. That was a bad piece of bad luck for him and became quite nervous, because he was placed on diet of rum and could not give up smoking, falling ill once again. Furthermore, due to local careless he seemed to have contracted cholera, an epidemics that already spread over London in the mid-nineteenth century. Actually he survived just thanks to the care of Mrs. Booth's nursing.

Despite his health conditions he was very fond of the new invention of photography. In the late 1840s Turner used to visit the photographic shop run by a Mr. Mayall and expressed the wish to see the beautiful copied images, it was for Turner after all, a surprise, a new pictorial world. During his last period, in 1848, he tried to finish all his last paintings, as every master would have done and a Venice theme work was placed at the National Gallery *The Dogana, San Giorgio, Citella, from the steps of the Europe 1842*,⁷³ (transferred to the Tate Gallery, in 1949).

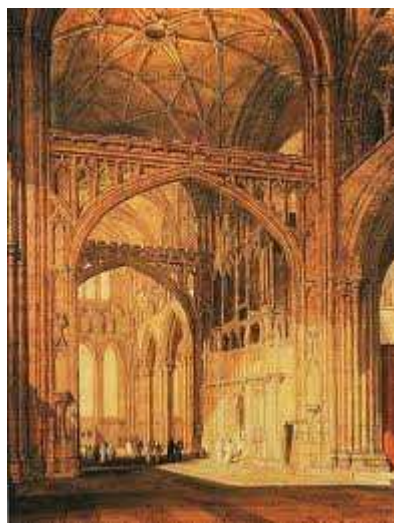
In the following year, he laboriously reworked a canvas that he had completed some forty years before but was never able to approach, *The Wreck Buoy*. He was also refacing four new canvases, exploring the myth of Dido and Aeneas, a subject that had imprisoned him for so many years. Some ten unfinished paintings where found too, maybe unfinished as a result of age or weariness.

⁷² P. Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

⁷³ E. Shanes, *op. cit.*, pp. 217, 218.

He was now in his seventy-fifth year and was living in Cremorne Road. In 1851, Mrs. Booth took him to Margate for a change of air, but he insisted returning home to London, maybe he wished to spend the last period in the only place he really deeply loved. A doctor visited him and turning to him, the artist remarked “I am soon to be a nonentity” and after a couple of days and having carried out a life of artistic ingenious successes, exhaled in no other place, but along his most precious river Thames.

1.5. Turner’s techniques



[1.18] Interior of Salisbury Cathedral, looking towards the North Transept

Turner basic academic lectures⁷⁴ may be divided into five main categories. At the very beginning, he turned his attention to the following subjects:

- 1- Vision, subdivision of the elements and forms of perspective, parallel perspective and the cube by the Old Masters.
- 2- Angular perspective, the circle (column), the difficulties attending the circle and the impropriety of parallel explained.
- 3- Aerial perspective. Light, shade and colour.
- 4- Reflexes, reflections and colour.
- 5- Introduction of Architecture and Landscape.

⁷⁴ J. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-133.

1.5.1. The artist's pictorial itinerary

English art par excellence, the watercolour, in which Turner was already skilled, enjoyed an illustrious tradition that included both the labours of artistic navigators or explorers and the refined research of the antiquaries of the late eighteenth century. This technique was used also by the architects of the time,⁷⁵ in order to present a preview of their commissioned works. Representing the new genre in 1790, Turner exhibited at the Royal Academy a view of London at a distance in watercolour painting also by hands on coloured papers. We note that during his career he had the chance to alternate and develop both the watercolour and the oil painting. Of all the works of the most famous landscapes an important part is covered by the views of the country property of the landed aristocracy. The taste for these issues is found in many works by Turner, which enabled him to study some of the best collections of past masters and to receive further commissions, in addition to the works often carried out.



[1.19] Canterbury Cathedral Altar

The English Gothic⁷⁶ style characters were portrayed by Turner in many buildings, with a fairly elaborate technique, the artist emphasized particularly the importance of the relieves, inlaid and bows. The portals are surmounted by cusps and flanked with pinnacles by turrets typical of this architectural style, as suggested by works such as *Tom Tower, Christ Church, Oxford (1792), South View of the Cloister, The*

⁷⁵ E. Shanes, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-25, 72, 73, 84, 85, 94, 95.

⁷⁶ J. Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, J.G. Links, London: Pallas Athene Editions, 2005, pp. 139-170, Part Two, Chapter IV The Nature of Gothic.

Chapter House (1797), *Salisbury Cathedral* (1802) or *Interior of Salisbury Cathedral* (1802). Since 1791, many works of landscape⁷⁷ style were linked to his summer holidays, during which he felt the need to precede external explorations, to his detailed taste of light and shadows play of the interiors, as one can grasp by numerous frescoes. The most significant interpretations of the landscape paintings emerge from his travels in North Wales and Scotland, before moving to France and to the laborious study of the Alps' views.⁷⁸

In addition to being inspired in his paintings by well-known Masters more concentrated on proportions and related to conventions, such as Poussin, Lauren, Titian and the Guercino. He continued to study the intrinsic characteristics of water, which he reported in great many masterpieces, among them we can mention *The Wreck of a Transport Ship*, where we find the turbulent genius expressed in the stormy seas (c.1810), *Helvoetsluys; -The City of Utrecht, The Sun of Venice going to Sea* and its undulated calm, *Dutch Boats in a Gale: Fishermen endeavouring to put their fish on board* and the majesty of the sails blown by the wind or *The Mew Stone at the Entrance of Plymouth Sound*, with the waves crashing on the white rock (1814).

Unlike, later cannot fail to surprise the firmness of the waters in the oil on canvas *Dort, or Dordrecht, the Dort Packet-Boat from Rotterdam becalmed* (c.1818), also the light blue and green colours of the sea that are opposing the impressive wooded ship First-Rate affect our vision in this watercolour on white paper. On the other hand, an apocalypse almost suffocating is perfectly represented in *Loss of an East Indiaman*, where we can hardly see masses of bodies, which lose their balance in an ocean that seems to swallow them. Of particular impact is the vivid blue of the watercolour *A Storm (Shipwreck)* (1823), as well as that perfectly designed of the entrance of the town in *Portsmouth* (1825) and the ochre Sienna natural colour of the sea covering the whole *Whalers* (1845).

1.5.2. The European Grand Tour

As I have mentioned previously, before his intrepid journey of exploration started up, he was impressed by the works of famous landscape artists, from whom he drew

⁷⁷ P. Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-93.

⁷⁸ J. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-79.

some fundamental characteristics. Of great importance in his works was the invocation of the sublime in the numerous marine paintings represented by the artist in his reproductions of Poussin landscapes. The possibility of resuming his journeys, soon after the victory of Waterloo in 1815, heaped him of great joy and among his first projects of exploration there was immediately the crossing of the Alps, in order to present the new watercolours of alpine views, for his maecenas Sir Walter Fawkes.

In this period Turner mainly found inspiration in Claude Lorrain, whose works are particularly characterized by his seventeenth-century views of the sun at the centre of the painting, creating a sort of sunlight illuminating the surrounding buildings. The English artist drew inspiration for his own technique and atmospheres from the previous volume of drawings of the Master of painting Lorrain known as *Liber Veritatis*.

1.5.3. Court commissions and Patrons

When we deal with the importance of the theme of the journey in Turner, we must emphasize the fact that (as in Ruskin's mind), he had not just a mere speculative purpose, but consisted of a wide precious collaboration of various editors, engravers, and subsequent revisions of the latter. Despite the skill and training taught by his father as a businessman were not underestimable, he kept on devoting himself expressing in pictures the major views, then exhibited at the Royal Academy and thus made accessible to the public audience.

As found in Turner's piece of work *The Grand Harbour of Malta*,⁷⁹ he often made sketches in pencil en plain air and rarely added the range of colours on the fly, but only later on in his studio in quietness he allowed colours to dry up properly. This is demonstrated by the fact that the oil sketches too were not made by real. While travelling along England⁸⁰ he took the opportunity of reproducing manufacturing and industrial innovations of the time.

In the years following Waterloo battle, he turned his attention abroad especially to the Rhine area, which summarized in 51 watercolours, often reproduced in this particular and avant-garde azure, as observed in the Seine and Meuse reproductions. His impressions from travels emerged especially during his two journeys in Italy, of 1819 and

⁷⁹ S. Spiteri, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁸⁰ J. Ruskin, *op. cit.*, Preface pp. 9-11.

1828. His ecstasy in front of the Italian landscape contributed to elaborate the engraved views from his first watercolours.

He had now followed a technique of painting water-colours in batches, sometimes he repeated and painted the subject on several different sheets, adding and refining it, until one of them caught the atmosphere in the way that he required.⁸¹ On certain occasions it seems he would take advantage just of one colour on several different compositions, before changing and turning to another colour. There was another interesting technique that one artist observed him using, perhaps owing directly to the factory system, it consisted in four drawing boards, each of which had a handle screwed to the back. Turner, after sketching his subject in a fluent manner, grasped the handle and plunged the whole drawing into a pail of water by his side. Afterwards he quickly washed in the principal hues he required, flowing tint into tint, until his work was complete. Leaving the first drawing to dry, he took the second board and repeated the operation. By the time the fourth drawing was laid in, the first would be ready for the final changes.

1.5.4. The artistic comparison with ancient historical topics

Compared to the first known works by Turner there is an extreme difference from the painting executed in the last phase of his career. The palette presents brighter and undetermined colours, with very few particulars. Despite its sequential methodology on separate sheets,⁸² in the second half of the 1820s, he conceived a new way to interpret the changes in brightness throughout the day, displaying paintings focused on the red and orange colours, as during sunset. Turner's compositional scheme was to observe some subjects for long hours, in order to grasp its sense of form and light. The study of colour for its fine watercolours was described in the artwork by Goethe and consulted by the artist 'Theory of colours'.

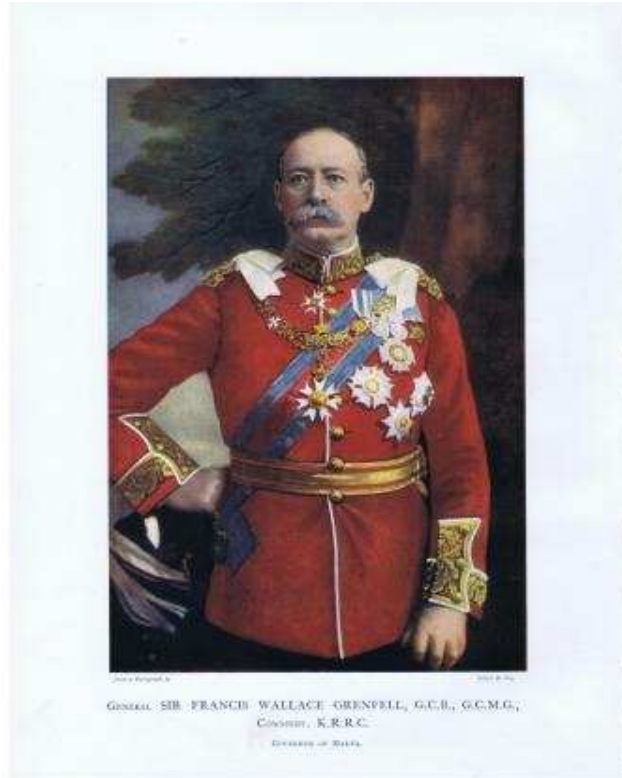
The elaborate structure of the last painting dated 1850, are complete solutions that refer back again to Claude Lorrain

⁸¹ E. Shanes, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁸² A. Wilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 10, 12, 14, 22, 40, 54, 58, 84.

Chapter 2

2. Maltese authors on the Order's activities



[2.1] General Sir Francis Wallace Grenfell, 1st Baron,
British Army, Governor of Malta 1899

2.1. Malta the birth of a Colony 1800-1964

The Victorian era is considered one of the most important periods for the island of Malta and this is still reminded to the passing foreign tourists by the presence, in Republic Square, next to the National Library, of Queen Victoria's memorial statue of her fiftieth year of reign and the centenary of British colonial rule anniversary in Malta.⁸³ She was sovereign of the United Kingdom from 1837 until she passed away in 1901, during a prosperous and peaceful period covered by a strong expansion of the British

⁸³ Joseph Attard, *Britain and Malta*, San Gwann-Malta: P.E.G. Ltd., 1988, pp. 62, 63. St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral was founded by Queen Victoria in Valletta.

Empire.⁸⁴ From this point forward an industrial, cultural and political development started, provided by an extraordinary implementation in the communication connections.

At the very beginning a wide range of improvements included trade facilities to convey subsequently in new official telegraph and radio established links. During the Victorian age, such power flowed in specific disciplines, for instance in science and natural history. In fact, among them we have Charles Darwin's first attempts to go deeper into the evolutionary theory and the origins of species. In 1882, another progress concerned the introduction of electric lights all over the cities, thus reducing the use of candles that lit up very little harming the sight and limiting all the various activities carried out by the local population.

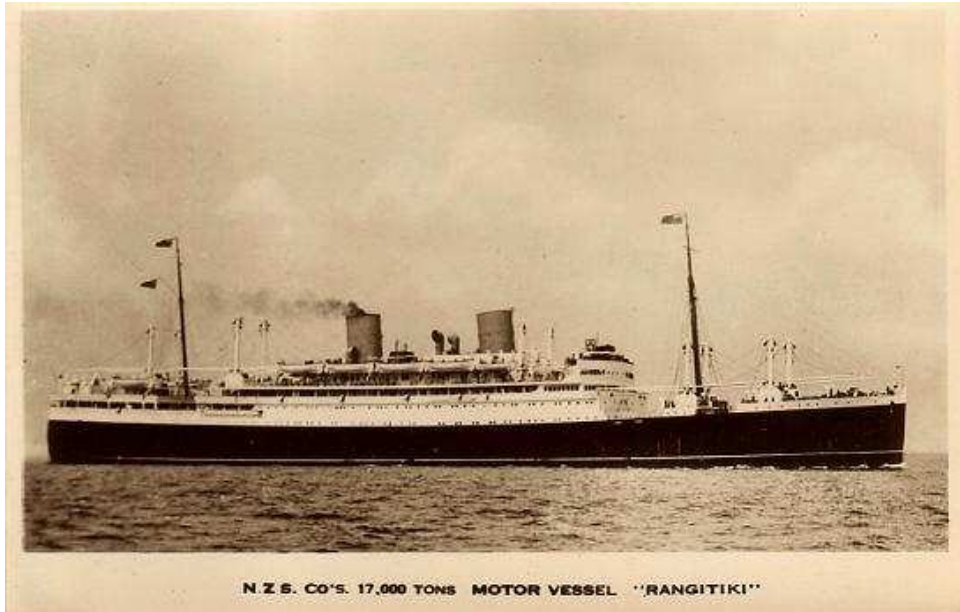
According to the census reports of the time the Victorian working class used to carry out many handworks, among the trades there were women devoted to home-making services, dressmakers or cooks, young children employed to help the numerous families and male workers usually miners, dockers or blacksmiths, who did not save in physical work. Life and labour was very hard, but craftsmen, artisans and mill workers always contributed especially in Malta - where agriculture was difficult to develop - to the survival of families. During the British colonial period,⁸⁵ Malta had the chance to become a bilingual country and the first working middle classes reverted soon in skilled professionals in various fields all over the world, because of a very wide shipping emigration of the first pioneers to distant destinations, such as the United States, Canada, South America and Australia, where new Maltese communities formed. In this particular context it is interesting to observe the people and gentlemen, who were prepared and eager to reach the Mediterranean islands, in part thanks to the mild climate and for bilingualism,⁸⁶ which greatly influenced the children of school age.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Niall Ferguson, *Empire*, London: Penguin Books, 2004, pp. 1-17. The British Empire expansion.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-68, pp. 102-112, pp. 113,114. The colonies and the British Mission.

⁸⁶ Marcel Danesi, *Neurolinguistica e Glottodidattica*, Padova: Liviana Editrice S.p.A., 1988, pp. 47-65, pp. 67-80. Hemispherical specializations and bilingualism neurologic researches.

⁸⁷ Paolo E. Balboni, *Le sfide di Babele*, Novara: De Agostani Scuola S.p.A., 2008, pp. 165-170.



[2.2] Rangitiki Ship on charter used by Maltese migrants from Malta to Australia
Length: 168,7 m Beam: 21,35 m GRT: 16,755 t, Built: 1928 John Brown & Co Ltd., Clydebank,
Scotland, Operator: New Zealand Shipping Co, Speed: 15 kn
Passengers: 598, Departed from Malta 10th January 1946, Arrived in Melbourne on
8th February 1946, Number of voyages - 1 Number of Maltese Passengers – 64

2.1.1. Victorian Malta during the British era



[2.3] St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral Valletta, Author: Robin & Bazylek

While sailing to Malta Coleridge observed the shapes and appearance of the sails. his gazing at the sails is not unlike his gazing into the fire in 'Frost at Midnight: on both occasions, thoughts lead on to dreams and a recognition that the language of dreams is creative and fluid'⁸⁸

Among the authors who faced the issue of Malta's entry in the Victorian era we recall Maurice H. Micallef in *Malta during the British Era* (2010), Henry Frendo in *The Epic of Malta* (1993) and Joseph Attard in his *Britain and Malta* (1995). Among the famous Victorians writers attending the islands during that period, we have Samuel Taylor Coleridge, George Gordon Byron, Sir Alexander Ball, Sir Walter Scott and Lord Byron, as well as Donald Sultana, Alethea Hayter, John Galt and William Makepeace Thackeray.

Before the end of November, says Mrs. Davy, a great sensation was produced in Malta,

⁸⁸ Jennifer Ford, *Coleridge on Dreaming: Romanticism, Dreams and the Medical Imagination*, Cambridge: University Press, 1997, p. 65.

as well it might, by the arrival of Sir Walter Scott. He came here in the Barham, a frigate considered the very beauty of the fleet, a perfect ship, as Sir Pulteney Malcom used to say, and in the highest discipline.⁸⁹

Thanks to the authors' comprehensive view and perspective not only is a detailed travel experience and landscape sceneries offered, but also the impressions the authors had, together with their romantic literary inspiration, which involved them while preparing to leave and looking for the perfect planned journey. It is interesting to point out the great importance of their strong imagination, which contributed to the creation of enthralling poems, when they returned to England, enriched of peculiar aspects and going into certain details. If compared to the Royal visits in Malta, during the last ones more emphasis was given to the court entourage following Her Majesty, the diplomatic meetings and the administrative audit of accounts' role being a British colony.

2.1.2. William Makepeace Thackeray's Journey to Grand Cairo in 1844

From *The Newcomes: memoirs of a most respectable family*, Chapter XIII,

AMONGST THE PAINTERS

Lord Kew and his family resided neighbouring hotel on the Chiafa at Naples and, that very evening on returning from the Pompeian excursion, the two painters were invited to take tea by those friendly persons. J.J. excused himself, and sate at home drawing all night. Clive went, and passed a pleasant evening; in which all sorts of future tours and pleasure-parties were projected by the young men. They were to visit Paestum, Capri, Sicily; why not Malta and the east? Asked Lord Kew. Lady Walham was alarmed. Had not Kew been in the east already? Clive was surprised and agitated too.⁹⁰

On the other hand in the notes collected on a *Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo* by William Makepeace Thackeray,⁹¹ (who was born in Calcutta, but brought up in London and Cambridge), is reported the cultural journey he spent once he reached Malta

⁸⁹ John Gibson Lockhart, *Memories of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, Vol. 4, Paris: Baudry's European Library, 1838, p. 288.

⁹⁰ William Makepeace Thackeray, *The Newcomes: memoirs of a most respectable family*, Volume 2, pp. 11-12.

onboard P&O cruise ship, about thirty years later, in 1844. The entrance of the harbour, the sight of Fort St. Elmo and the Military Hospital was an unaccountable view by the sea-sick travellers. They experienced the crowded harbour spotted with hundreds of vessels, merchantmen with crews, black steamers or men-of-war barges and colourful town-boats. During their visit among the narrow streets of Valletta, they were welcomed by the lively population and disappeared into the famous stairs, the palaces with balconies, and the chapels, the fruit-shops, meeting boatmen, capuchins, drama actors and carriages. “A pleasant confusion and liveliness as I have never witnessed before” Thackeray said. The travellers went into raptures over different typologies of persons, such as army officers wearing their neat jackets, midshipmen riding hired horses and various agents of the local inns. They were attracted by all the small size of the house-shops selling outdoors several manufactured products. He reported a different description of Kings Way, also known as Strada Reale, where court-houses, libraries, London shops, Union Clubs and perfumeries used to predominate, as it is deduced from the photos of the time.

Entering the Cathedral of St. John they were deeply surprised by its magnificence and all the heraldic devices of the passed away gentlemen of the Order, together with the pompous monuments of the Grand Masters, until they reached the crypt the heart of the chapels. Also the Governor’s House delighted their eyes, with its lofty halls and the Grand Masters’ portraits, together with the armoury within the Grand Master Palace. They drove also in the countryside and admired the fields with their confinements of rocks, the stone villages,⁹² and villas taking refreshment in the summer residence of the flowery botanical St. Anton Gardens, the official residence of the British Governor from 1802 until 1964. This first tour was so interesting, that they paid another visit a couple of months later in November, which they defined as the most delicious May in England, establishing at Fort Manuel quarters, amusing themselves in the town with a little opera, an old book and quietness. We have knowledge of some interesting aspects regarding Thackeray’s journey also from the following chapters especially about Rhodes. Many references concern the passengers among which there were different nationalities dressed

⁹¹ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Notes on a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, London: Dodo Press, 2009, pp. 28-33.

⁹² William Frank Fenech, *The Farmhouse with the Blue Turret*, Malta: Gutenberg Press Ltd., 2011. The stone villages.

in their costumes, such as Poles, Russians, Frenchmen, Germans, Spaniards and Greeks, but also noble figures and several families of Jewish Rabbis. Furthermore, the author describes the types of travel consisting not only of great tours, but also of journeys to buy provisions and purchase in the bazaars, where vendors often spoke English fluently. He explained also their astonishment in front of the poor state of the children, the particular market's people customs and usages. Describing the beauty of the many chivalrous relics, the modern military architectures, the decay of some of the consuls' houses and the old mosque by the sea-shore. In the space of a few years, as soon as he returned home, his written production developed widely, he dedicated not only to satire and parody as at the beginning of his career, but explored the inner way to become a gentleman, as in *The Luck of Barry Lyndon* (1844) and *Vanity Fair* (1847), a satire of society characterized by opportunism. It seemed the experience of that sort of travel among poverty and difficulties completely changed his subjective perspective towards the world and human relationships' value.

From *The Newcomes: memoirs of a most respectable family*, Chapter XIII,

AN OLD FRIEND

I might open my present chapter, as a contemporary writer of Romance is occasionally in the habit of commencing his tales of Chivalry, by a description of a November afternoon, with falling leaves, tawny forests, gathering storms, and other autumnal phenomena; and two horsemen winding up the romantic road which leads from—from Richmond Bridge to the Star and Garter. The one rider is youthful, and has a blonde mustache: the cheek of the other has been browned by foreign suns; it is easy to see, by the manner in which he bestrides his powerful charger, that he has followed the profession of arms. He looks as if he had faced his country's enemies on many a field of Eastern battle. The cavaliers alight before the gate of a cottage on Richmond Hill, where a gentleman receives them with eager welcome. Their steeds are accommodated at a neighboring hostelry—I pause in the midst of the description, for the reader has made the acquaintance of our two horsemen long since. It is Clive, returned from Malta, from Gibraltar, from Seville, from Cadiz, and with him our dear old friend the Colonel. His campaigns are over, his sword is hung up, he leaves Eastern suns and battles to warm younger blood. Welcome back to England, dear Colonel and kind friend ! How quickly the years have passed since he has been gone! There is a streak or two more silver in his hair. The wrinkles about his honest eyes are somewhat

deeper, but their look is as steadfast and kind as in the early, almost boyish days when first we knew them. We talk awhile about the Colonel's voyage home, the pleasures of the Spanish journey, the handsome new quarters in which Clive has installed his father and himself, my own altered condition in life, and what not.⁹³

William M. Thackeray, as an experienced freelance journalist for *Fraser's Magazine* and *The Morning Chronicle* was able to professionally underline in many of his comments and accounts the political, cultural and commercial interest in the eastern Mediterranean, particularly India and Egypt. He wrote articles regarding his trip he reached the excellence in the contribution to the success of *Fat Contributor*, published as a whole collection afterwards, which increased his incomes at that time. Even if, he tried to complete his course of law studies in England and in the Louvre, being brought up as Anglo-Indian, he had the chance to travel to and fro on several occasions, such as after his father's death and thanks to the improvement of the means of communication, even if the voyage lasted also up to four months. During the 1813, the main route to India was in fact supported by the East India Company and the British attempt to preserve the Ottoman Empire. Also the travel to Egypt in 1844 was meaningful to Thackeray, who learnt a lot about the usual steamships' transits for Alexandria, the local customs by the foreign adviser Muhammand Alì and the safer companies caravans ways.

In his diary, as in the *Irish Sketchbook*, he reported above all his favorite reading passages, such as *Eothen* by Alexander William Kinglake, *Adventures of Hajji Baba and Antar* by James Morier. Inspired he fulfilled his own work *Our Street* (1869), delineating the typical Eastern traveller⁹⁴ and focussing on ordinary people, as in *The Newcomes* (1855), and in contrast with his previous publication *The Book of Snobs* (1848), where he provided a series of descriptions concerning the main British personalities of rank. Furthermore, Thackeray let the reader observe the similar place recreations of the residence places in the cities of the British Empire, which mostly resemble the service clubhouses, lodgings and quarters, where the Officers or Captains came from in England, a sort of recreation of their own environment and acquaintances abroad. In his anectodes

⁹³ William Makepeace Thackeray, *The Newcomes: Memoirs of a Most Respectable Family*, Volume 2, Arthur Pendennis, London: Bradbury and Evans, 1855, pp. 70-73.

⁹⁴ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Notes on a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, Dodo Press, London, 2009, pp. 13-19.

he drew many sketches about Indian and British life and introduced them giving a lecture of humorist, comic and theatrical reminiscence.

2.1.3. Presence of the Royal Navy in Malta



[2.6] The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850

Soon after this, said he, I sailed for Malta,
and there parted with both my heart and ring.⁹⁵

As the British High Commissioner, Vincent Fean, underlined in Jesmond Grech's book *British Heritage in Malta*, "the connection between the United Kingdom and Malta goes far back centuries and is indissoluble".⁹⁶ J. Grech, the son of a Royal Navy Petty Officer, persisted offering a dolly shot of the main events from 1800's British Corps in Malta, throughout the English rule, the Army and the RAF, remembered in the Memorial situated in Floriana-Valletta.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century among the military Commanders Captain Alexander John Ball (1756-1809) was a key figure of the Royal Navy, being a senior British naval officer, who was first appointed to administer the islands in 1799 and was asked to reach Malta to block the French troops in the capital city by Admiral Nelson. He was skilful enough to reorganize many sectors in Malta and created a real centre of commerce there.

⁹⁵ Source: Thomas Moore, *Letters and journals of Lord Byron*, Vol. I, New York: J & J. Harper, 1830, p.153.

⁹⁶ Jesmond Grech, *British Heritage in Malta*, Luqa – Malta: Miller Distributors Ltd., 2003, p. 3.

The article VII of the *Treaty of Paris* dated 1814 definitely confirmed the belonging of the Maltese islands to the British sovereign. The new Governor and Commander-in-Chief Sir Thomas Maitland⁹⁷ reached the island on 4th October 1813, when a severe plague was affecting Malta, causing more than 4,600 deaths. During Maitland's administration various reforms⁹⁸ revolutionized the judicial system, on the basis of the British Crown Constitution and the Commercial Court was substituted for the Maritime Consulate. Furthermore, another change needed to be carried out regarding the use of the English language for the fulfilment of legal procedures and in the educational field.

His Excellency has found it necessary entirely to new-model the Constitution of the Commercial Court, and to adopt a mode of proceeding approaching, as nearly as circumstances will permit, to that admirable system of distributive justice established in England.⁹⁹

Even though Malta was a traditional country and not ready yet to face the arrival of a culture whose religious beliefs were founded mainly on Protestantism,¹⁰⁰ Sir T. Maitland received also the investiture as first Grand Master of the chivalric Order as recognition of his service activities for the Order on the islands, at the end of 1818. Apart from St. Paul's Cathedral, other representative Protestant religious sites, which can be found in Malta are Holy Trinity Church in Sliema, Wesleyan Church at Floriana close to Valletta, Ta' Braxia military cemetery in Pietà, were many famous Anglicans with their families, who settled in the island, were buried and Sa' Maison Garden. There are also numerous memorial buildings recalling the British interregnum, in Valletta and its surroundings, such as Queen Victoria's statue with the renowned Victoria gate and lines, the national monuments commemorating Sir Alexander Ball and Marquis of Hastings at Lower Baracca Gardens, the Naval Officer Sir Robert Cavendish Spencer's obelisk at Blata l-Bajda, the R.A.F. World War II eagle and the Latin Cross of the War memorial in Floriana at which base two speeches by King George VI and President Roosevelt are reported.

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 34-36. Sir Thomas Maitland first Lieutenant Governor in Malta.

⁹⁸ Joseph Attard, *Britain and Malta*, San Gwann – Malta: P.E.G. Ltd., 1988, pp. 36-39. British Reforms.

⁹⁹ From the Proclamation of November 1st, 1815.

¹⁰⁰ J. Grech, *op.cit.*, pp. 48-51. Protestant places of worship in Malta.

Some Maltese historians, such as Albert Laferla and Hannibal Scicluna reported to Allister Macmillan that between 1836 and 1838 two Royal Commissioners¹⁰¹ Mr. John Austin and Sir George Cornwall Lewis stayed in Malta for nearly two years to inquiry into every branch of the islands' administration. Soon after the first Council of Government was founded, acquiring legislative powers by mid-nineteenth century, which fought against the local Government, but thanks to Lord Milner's intervention, was proposed an Imperial Unity on local autonomy basis.

During that period Malta became a fundamental Maritime way towards the East, Egypt and India, therefore the British realized how its acquisition meant the achievement of strategic Mediterranean naval station. The Order as naval-base built many ship-docking and repairing sites, which were then modernised by the British during their occupation. Nowadays naval spirit is kept standing by the numerous Naval Dockyards Societies and Foundations, thanks to which many scholars and collectors still work together and continue the many historical researches, collections and restorations of their ancestors' artefacts. As for instance, the Naval Dockyards Society by the National Maritime Museum in London Greenwich founded in 1977, which is concerned with the publishing of many important subjects including terrestrial and underwater heritage.

In this context it is important to recall the shipping connections between Malta and the Royal Navy, as recounted and described by Jonathan Coad, in his *The Royal Dockyards, 1690-1850: architecture and engineering works of the sailing Navy*. He noticed that the Victorians produced some new stylish steam engines in a delighted over-the-top way, which recalled especially the 1830-1880 years. During that period, the steam engine was submitting to several modifications and was converted to portable, not just to pull goods like a railway or steam lorry, but also to take power to the location were it was mostly needed, usually in agriculture and to fairgrounds in 1860s. The steam engine was used to provide power to everything in daily life trades until the diesel and the electric motors time arrived. J. Coad underlines that at that time steamships had a unique problem to cross throughout the Atlantic too loaded and using just those types of engines, carrying all the coal and pure water needed for the entire long journey, and then much of the ship

¹⁰¹ Allister Mac Millan, *Malta & Gibraltar Illustrated*, Valletta – Malta: Midsea Books, 1985, p. 156. Royal Commission.

would be taken up by fuel. These problems obliged the technicians to develop more efficient engines, designing triple and even quadruple expansion engines, either for ships and or land use. Just around the mid 1800s the new availability of iron and steel enabled the idea to elaborate a turbine. In 1884, it was the engineer Sir Charles A.Parsons, who had patented the ingenious steam-driven turbine, originally developed to give higher speeds for generating electricity in the systems.

2.1.3. Care of the sick and wounded: The Naval hospitals in England

The Royal Navy is the principal source of information concerning records of battles in the 18th century.¹⁰² The 1763 Annual Register reported that out of the 184899 sailors serving during the Seven Years' War, 133708 were lost by disease and desertion, while 1512 were killed in action. On board the warships the crews were kept in bad conditions, either if they were in good health or if they were suffering from disease or wounds. The space allocated for the sick was very limited, tiny and isolated, the diet was poor and a rudimentary surgery ensured. Therefore the number of men who died from diseases far exceeded the one of those killed during enemy actions.

Statistically, along the wars from 1793 to 1815, 78.1 to 81.5 per cent of deaths were the result of disease and accidents. The period 1700-1763 had a higher mortality rate, particularly in the fleets that were operating in hot climates, such as that of the West Indies colonies. From 1705 onwards the Royal hospital at Greenwich, founded at the express wish of Queen Mary, as thanks for the victory of La Hogue in 1692, had provided wellbeing to all the seamen. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the British Army staff of Nurses' methods of caring for sick and wounded seamen had hardly changed in the years. In times of peace, care consisted in having surgeons on board ships, hiring sick quarters at the principle ports, and serving a number of beds at the great London hospitals. Instead War saw the appointment of the Commissions for sick, wounded and for prisoners of war.

It was common for civilian surgeons to contract on a *per capita* basis in order to be available to look after sick seamen at Forton and Portsmouth. Nathaniel Johnson ran

¹⁰² Jonathan G. Coad, *The Royal Dockyards, 1690-1850: architecture and engineering works of the sailing Navy*, London: Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1989, pp. 293, 294. The Royal Navy hospital fleet.

the Fortune Hospital, which cared for up to even 700 men in 1713, but at the beginning of the eighteenth century the Admiralty ordered an enquiry into the whole subject to be carried out by the Fifth Commission for Sick, Wounded and Prisoners.



[2.7] Fort St. Angelo Grand Master seat in 1530

2.1.4. The overseas bases colonies

By the end of the seventeenth century, the Royal Navy had ceased to be in charge just of the patients hosted by the British Isles' hospitals, and was getting ready to widen its role within a global imperial reality. As far back as 1620, King James I had already enlarged his horizons, when he had ordered Sir Robert Mansell's Squadron¹⁰³ into the Mediterranean, the first time that the Royal Navy had operated as a political force in that area. Later on the Commonwealth Government¹⁰⁴ supplied naval escorts for important Levant convoys, and if the Battle of Leghorn in 1653 temporarily destroyed the British naval power, it was not long before it was re-established, first by Blake and then by Stokes. Meanwhile, towards the West, the islands of the Caribbean were being colonized by English, French and Dutch conquerors. In those areas the protection of England's

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 295. First Royal Navy squadron in the Mediterranean.

¹⁰⁴ N. Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 358-363. The British Commonwealth and Empire.

increasingly lucrative trades was rapidly becoming one of the navy's main tasks. During the reign of Queen Anne a permanent squadron was setup in Jamaica, while individual warships used to cruise near the plantation-dotted Leeward and Windward Islands.

This increasing role was giving logistic problems to both Admiralty and Navy Boards. Even though logistics were formidable, during special events, risks and problems became the regular occurrence and the local dockyards¹⁰⁵ had to face each year with preparing new squadrons for far distance services. Although a sailing warship was not provided with the necessary fuel, long periods far off at sea produced several complications, such as marine growths affecting the vessel's speed to be properly cleaned in a sheltered haven or friendly port and, the crews were more fragile, because of the imperfect art of food preservation troubles and cold storage of the time.

Great Britain's shipping movement in the Mediterranean is underlined not only by the letters the sister nurses wrote to the Matron-in-Chief, which took up to two months to reach Britain from Malta, but also by the detailed high ranking Military Commanders and Officers' paintings and self-portraits in the island, especially at the Maritime Museum and in other great palaces. Reproduced with their high neck uniforms the fringes on the shoulders of their jackets and a foulard accompanied by medals, which showed their rank, had smooth shorter hair. Their appearance rather typically classical north European remind us what they symbolized during a period of conquests in the southern seas' basin.

¹⁰⁵ Cav. Dott. Vincenzo Mastropasqua, *Technical Nautical Dictionary*, Genova, Libreria Editrice Mario Bozzi, 1997, pp. 462, 463. Different types of Docking.

2.2. From medieval castles to forts and bastions

The rocks were not only cut into fortifications,
But likewise into artillery to defend these fortifications.¹⁰⁶



[2.11] The city gates of Città Notabile of Mdina

The first author, who represented Malta's architectural surroundings and development, from the twelfth to the nineteenth century, is Stephen C. Spiteri. His work is a real extraordinary graphical illustration, which provides new building methods and techniques in the art of fortress construction.¹⁰⁷ Many other historians contributed to the study of the Order of St. John's fortifications and to *Fortresses of the Knights* development, such as Jonathan Riley-Smith, Pierre Olivier Deschamps, Ettore Rossi, Albert Gabriel, Anthony Luttrell, Quentin Hughes, Alison Hoppen and Denys Pringle.

S.C. Spiteri stresses the importance of taking into consideration all the Hospitallers' achievements in the building of fortresses, together with the famous architectural landmarks, such as the Laparelli's walls of Valletta, and all the other minor fortifications erected by the Knights to protect their properties. These strongholds and

¹⁰⁶ Patrick Brydone – 1773, Scottish traveller and author wrote *A Tour Through Sicily and Malta: In a Series of Letters to William Beckford, Esq. of Somerly in Suffolk*.

¹⁰⁷ Stephen C. Spiteri, *Fortresses of the Knights*, Malta: BDL, 2001, pp. ix-xi. Fortresses defensive role.

towers, surrounding the perimeter of the islands as a supervision coastal point of observation represent the Hospitallers' outposts against the manifold raid attacks. Today these structures are silent witnesses of devoted Hospitaller nuns' lives, such as Ubaldesca, who dedicated her life to the care of pilgrims, and at the same time they are places of recovery of the most ferocious homicides, as recounted in detail by Edward Attard's reports of all the cases of very premature murders of the time.¹⁰⁸

Particular attention has been addressed to the raw materials used and the pattern of development to make out what the real nature and extent of the Hospitallers' contribution to the art of fortification was. The author explained his whole project through drawings, thus enabling the planning reconstructions and the illustration of particular aerial views. The Rhodian defences are significant because they represent an embryonic form of early gunpowder fortifications, while Maltese defences display a rich collection of the bastioned form in its various styles, as introduced by the Italians in the sixteenth century, including the beginning in the emergence of the polygonal manner of fortification.

Another important element of the Hospitaller fortifications is the religious aspect¹⁰⁹ because of the conventual's nature of the Order, most of the knight fortifications surrounded by a network of their own churches, chapels, cathedrals and hospitals we can observe when sightseeing Mdina and visiting the contemplative communities and Priory of the Carmelites Church, houses and refectories of the old city by Lorenzo Gafà. Enjoying the majestic experience of immersing among the towering quarry walls conservation and restoration gives the opportunity to better and closely understand their own lifelong historical culture, which has been through the approbation of St. Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem in 1214, who set them up in a community which had been given a special 'formula of living', a sort of enclave, as for instance the landlocked sovereign city-state of the Vatican, the 44 Church of England Dioceses divided into the two Provinces of Canterbury and York, the Amish Mennonites after the Swiss schism or the Jewish's in the Old Ghetto of Venice.

¹⁰⁸ Edward Attard, *Delitti F'Malta 1800-2007*, San Gwann-Malta: Book Distributors Ltd., 2008, pp. ix-xviii.

¹⁰⁹ S..Spiteri, *op.cit.* p. xi. Religious culture.

2.2.1 The Crusaders' Fortresses

The need to create new fortifications sufficiently protective of the interests of the Knights' Hospitallers emerged during the wars of conquest of the Holy Land in eastern Latin territories, around 1291. Among one of the most majestic defensive spur castles that can be observed and an example of memorable fortifications construction rebuilt in 1200 is represented by *Crac des Chevaliers* in Syria, situated on the top of a 650 metre promontory. Its importance is underlined not only for its military purpose, but also for the admirable medieval frescoes preserved inside the walls and the chapel. Since, to provide a large army within a short period of time to arrange the defence of the local population and the whole territory was quite a difficult task, the Crusaders in Outremer contrived to find out a rapid solution to solve and speed up the problem, exploiting the existing Byzantine and Muslim fortifications. Therefore they started talented pieces of work showing their best styles¹¹⁰ in fortification and standing the guards rising bulwarks and bastions for the castles' protection in the entire place. Their very first attempts consisted in simple rectangular towers of the types completed by the Normans. It is reported that due to wood shortages in that period, crusaders' tower-keeps were manufactured of heavy masonry and were vaulted internally, making them squatter and shorter in the exposed side. Obviously their simple shape presented limitations at defensive level, this is the reason why they strived in developing new forms of castle design. One of the main ones was the *castrum* type of fortress, which consisted of an enclosure fitted with corner towers and with additional towers built in the middle of each wall. Byzantine influences are recognized in the two-tiered chemin-de-rondes, the shape of arrow-slits and the frequent use of posterns.

From the precise graphical reproductions and plans the towers' defensive merits are depicted, which projected beyond the main wall allowed standing on guard above the watchtowers. The u-shaped and polygonal towers, which followed the rectangular shape building, were a typical feature, before the lunette's period construction, being a new Hospitallers' test to join both styles in a unique structure of that kind. Entering the main forts of the island, the front perspective radically changes in proportion to the architectural plan conceived in each harbour city at the time. Sometimes, it is possible to

¹¹⁰ S. Spiteri, *op.cit.*, pp. 8, 9. Fortifications' style and shapes.

walk through a main arch to be offered of the interior view or as in many forts to cross a bridge surrounded by a deep ditch, leading to the main gate. Initially gates, which denoted the weaker part of the building, were first placed in the flanks of towers, but subsequently they changed into tower-gates, consisting of two mural towers placed together and a series of obstacles developing to obstruct the enemies slip into the castle. The drawbridge along the entrance passage was hollowed in the vaulted ceiling with *meurtrieses*, which enabled the defenders to violently shower the attackers with missiles or combustibles. Furthermore, gatehouses were sometimes protected further by barbican, which is a series of linked towers.

During the twelfth century, the most meaningful working out introduced in the crusaders' fortifications design was the use of particular military concentric defences,¹¹¹ supported by castle wards set one inside the other. It was meant to create a double line of defence, the inner walls had the double function of protecting and separating the brethren's quarters from those of the mercenaries forming the great part of the garrisons. The geographical position mapping of all these strongholds in the Mediterranean islands and area always covered an important cultural aspect to be deepened. They were usually erected close to the highest scarps, but they were built on flat plateaus, they were made defensible as much as possible by the skilled manual workers of that time.

2.2.2. The Garrisons of a Hospitaller Stronghold

Ever since, a castle with the adjoining fields were conferred to the Order, this particular social status implied not only a series of privileges but also the responsibility for maintaining all those possessions. At first the Order fulfilled its duties by hiring mercenaries, but soon the need of a distinct class of brethren-knights got on in years, because of the new increased difficult military obligations. Thus, the Hospitaller castle fell into the hands of specific persons: a castellan, a senior knight and an experienced warrior. Under the castellan's command there was a small nucleus of fighting brethren, supplemented by vassals, while the Hospitaller brethren were divided into Knights and Sergeants. This distinction was made more clearly by the colours they wore on their armours, as reproduced in many ancient portraits, a black surcoat for the knights and a

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 10, 11. New forts defences' types.

red one for the sergeants. The Hospitallers tended to employ a large number of brethren in defence of coastal fortresses and salaried troops were increasingly taking part in the Order's military forces, both on campaigns and in garrisoning castles.

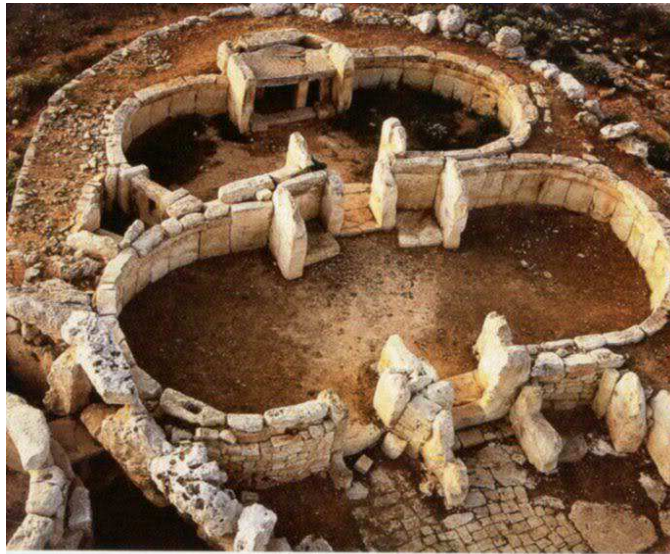
Most of the authors, who dedicated to the study of the Knights' castles, developed also a great variety of characters. Even if mainly Christians and native mercenaries were employed by the Hospitallers, there were also native troops, such as Syrian and Armenian auxiliaries. On the contrary, their most important officer was the so called *turcopolier*, Commander of the turcoples. Hospitallers' troops were accustomed to and governed by strict rules, discipline and regulations, also for the sake of their whole communities. Besides, the castellan had also to provide that his fortress were completely supplied with the arms, munitions and all the necessary to withstand a siege.¹¹² Each castle consisted of a small, but lively protected city within the walls, requiring large storerooms, mills, presses and cisterns to enable the hording of adequate supplies. The main military difference between Muslim and the Christian forces was based on their access to larger labour sources. From the records it emerges that the Hospitaller garrisons were rather inadequate, when they had to face massive armies during a besiege, in fact their survival depended only on the passive strength of the fortifications and their sites.

While the Muslims were able to complete a whole siege within a short time, thanks to the great number of soldiers available and the power of their new ballistic weapons. The principal engines in use in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were the ballista, the mangonel, the petrarie and the trebuchet, all stone throwing weapons. The solid masonry construction of crusader castles, especially terraces of vaulted ranges and casemated ramparts provided stable platforms for the development of artillery. Two main siege techniques were used to breach a castle's walls that is undermining the foundations and causing a section to collapse, digging a cavity, which was shored up with timber and combustible to be fired. Furthermore, often small parties were sent on raiding expeditions, into enemy Muslim territories to inflict devastation and extract tributes. These procedures allowed the Hospitallers to impose their domination more easily. The loss of a castle to the enemy represented the renounce of a strategic military position,¹¹³ but also the lack of the earnings from its dependent territories.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 12,13. The Castellan figure.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 15. Military positions' importance.

2.2.3. Itinerary through the early bastions erected around Malta



[2.12] Mnajdra Megalithic temple made of coralline Limestone, Neolithic origins, 3.400 B.C.

The passage from early ancient structures and medieval castles present all over the islands to the introduction of gunpowder-cannons in the late fourteenth century imposed a gradual change in the walls' external architectural plans. S. Spiteri implied the castles' defence remained a prerogative that focussed on the boundary walls' raise. During the later Middle Ages the development of firearms was reflected in the provision of gun-loops and gun-ports¹¹⁴ to fix up the new weapons. Between 1454 and 1467 the Hospitallers added various large, but low polygonal towers provided with gun-ports along the faussebraye of the city's land front defences. These particular modifications were needed to protect gateways and entrances, where the citizens walked through, but also to enable enfilading fire to be directed along the faces of the curtain walls.

Nevertheless the considerable importance S.Spiteri gave to the second level transformation from medieval castle to bastioned fortresses explaining their connection to the first developments, which first took place in Italy during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. All along the Order's stay in Rhodes and later on in Malta, the

¹¹⁴ Jesmond Grech, *British Heritage in Malta*, pp. 84, 85. Fort Rinella at Kalkara with its massive 100 ton gun.

Institution made increasing use of Italian expertise engineers¹¹⁵ also during the rest of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries, and their presence is well documented in Malta. The first group was responsible for executing and maintaining all works of fortifications and the second one to design specific projects by some European Monarchs and Popes, such as Leon X in 1521.¹¹⁶

They were able to show the latest improvements in the arts of fortification:

- The semicircular and polygonal bulwarks
- The use of caponiers, curved parapets and gun embrasures.

The fortifications were soon tested in the course of the following years, being able to resist several months against Turks massive attacks against the Knights and the local defenceless population. Nowadays, they are also of particular interest by many foreign specialists, who becoming curious like the English romantic authors during their nineteenth century's tour, go right down to the streets and bastions of Valletta to observe the majestic structure of the tufa walls all around.

2.2.4. Hospitallers' fortresses building methods

Along with the description of the new types of forts it is stressed the Knights' main aim was to retain, adapt and build their strategic strongholds, especially on the coastal hill-sites facing good harbours or with a direct access from the sea. The collaboration and connection among the various Mediterranean islands, was an important aspect especially with reference to the provisions and reinforcement necessities, which could be delivered directly by the Orders' equipped ships.

As the British authors noted during their stay in Valletta, owing to frequent corsairs assaults, the castles were located some distance inland from coastline, such as on the Mdina area. This rendered them slightly more secure and enabled all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood to assemble within the safety of the fortified places once the alarm was sounded on the sighting of unknown galleys approaching. Their structure was very likely the best known buildings and fortified villages on the Greek acropolis, which were

¹¹⁵ S. Spiteri, *op. cit.*, p. 33. Italian engineers collaboration

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34. Pope Leon X

conceived as a refuge to fight against the vulnerability of the other islands' sites of the Peloponnesus. In fact, during the archaic, classic and pre-Hellenic periods the artistic study and attention turned to the building of the Jonick columns, the propylaeas and the whole Parthenon and Greek tiers theatres covered an important cultural role in their culture. Another fundamental element for the survival of local citizen was constituted by the water supplies,¹¹⁷ particularly needed in hot climates. Big cisterns could usually help a garrison during an emergency, but would not have been adequate enough for the everyday requirements of the whole fort community.

The Hospitallers strongholds were built with stones found in the nearby sites and used indigenous workmanship functioning in Byzantine manner. S. Spiteri evidently took inspiration from the majority of the objects recovered inside the forts which were made of rubblework, heavily galleted with tile, pottery and stone pinning, which were usually laid in heavy mortars indispensable in holding the walls together and for the whole process of fill.¹¹⁸ The efforts to consolidate the Hospitallers' castles can be noticed on the surrounding walls, which often reflect different layers' stages in the castle development, from heavily plastered rubblework to opus quadratum of neatly-laid, quarry-faced ashlar of volcanic rock and yellowish sandstone.

The fulfilment of the works on the Forts was then authorised by the *Grand Master* and his *Council*, which was in charge of taking the decisions on the basis of the bare necessities, after the consultation with proper delegations of commissioners appointed to carry out specific tasks. Knights and *Military Engineers* were part of a team of appointed commissioners in charge to prepare all the technical reports, examine the fortifications, execute the new designs, or mobilize the local work force. The *Capomastro dell'opere*, who was the supervisor of works, usually represented by a local artisan, was responsible for executing the orders of the engineer and supervising the works of the craftsmen and labourers. Below the foremen came the *Master Masons*, each of whom had to follow a company of labourers and slaves. Nicolò de Flavari an architect who accompanied the Order of Malta in 1530 described himself as “*muratore et capo mastro delle opere di Muraglia*”.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 37 and J.Grech, *op. cit.*, p.86. Aqueduct construction.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.41. Practice duties and limestone.

2.2.5. The defensive fortification of Malta and Francesco Laparelli's designs

In this phase of his composition S. Spiteri stated also that when in 1523 the Knights arrived in Malta, they found a real pure and simple group of islands, whose only refuge was within the walls of three old *medieval castra*, but none of these strongholds were considered of providing sufficient defence to the Knights. At that time the Order of St. John at first needed an imposing harbour-city to be built,¹¹⁹ from where its naval forces could conduct all the maritime activities struggling against the Ottoman Empire.

From an old iconography of the Order we know that it was the Grand Master Philippe Villiers de L' Isle Adam and his knights, who anchored the carrack St. Anne on the island in October 1530 and after receiving the city keys by Baron Giacomo Angeraldo Inquanez, found his accommodation within a castle and all at once ordered Birgu to be immediately enclosed by a fortified wall. Even if the military engineers called in to hurry up for the beginning of a brand new fortress work on the ideal heights of the Sciberras peninsula. At first the Turks attempted to conquer Birgu and the old city of Mdina, but they were not strong enough to climb on the highest fortifications. As reported in the Melitensia Archives the project to build a new fortress on the peninsula as soon as possible was carefully elaborated by a Commission of three Knights assisted by the Military Engineer Pietro Prato, but this brilliant plan was to be carried out in different stages. Following the election of Jean de Valette to the Magistracy, enthusiasm for a new fortress on Sciberras hill gathered straight away the council of the Order in June 1558, implying that the Hospitallers had at least to settle down in Malta for a while to follow all the necessary frame dispositions of the great work. Bartolomeo Genga, one of the foremost European military engineers, was persuaded to visit Malta to draw up the plans for the new fortress, but he died before setting to work. Thus, in 1562 Baldassarre Lanci¹²⁰ was brought over to design the new fortress and by the following year, finally the project had received the Papal approval.

In the reports it is narrated that in the meantime, while they were busy on the constructions, during the early 1560s, reports began to ooze out from the Levant of a new Ottoman Armada being prepared for an incursion from the western Mediterranean. All those events could had been noticed by the English authors in Valletta on the thirteen oil-

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 49. Construction of the new harbour city on Sciberras heights, 200ft/60 mtrs.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p.51. Baldassarre Lanci was convoked for the fortifications' design.

paintings scenes of the Italian painter Matteo Perez d'Aleccio, who painted when the Turkish Armada disembarked on Malta, on the 18th of May 1565. However, the Knights got prepared in great advance and the Grand Master ordered them the arrangement of enough provisions, gunpowder, ammunitions, troops or recruited mercenaries and the fortifications strengthened in the best possible way. Through the siege, the Knights held strategically four defensive positions within the harbour area and two to the rear. Nowadays, among these masterpieces, we can give admiring glances at the powerful buildings of Fort St. Elmo, Fort St. Michael and Fort St. Angelo. The Turks were so quick and cunning enough to exploit the basic weakness that threatened all these defences: the high ground that overlooked them. S. Spiteri traced an itinerary through the forts showing how the first to surrender to the enemy was Fort St. Elmo after a month-long siege assaults conducted by the Turks. After this stronghold they concentrated their efforts on both Birgu and Senglea, which coasts used to be an important and a strategically well-protected wharf area.

Their winning attack techniques were based on trying to hit the nail on the head, storming the enemy defences from various directions at the same time and mining a section of the bastions to slide inside the Forts.¹²¹ From a number of interesting houses in the capital and città nobile, which belonged to noble local families, not to mention several precious portraits or relics of the Knights in their armouries, coins, notary and the Assembly of Conventual Chaplains records, repertories and deliberations was possible to recreate the whole route followed by our protagonists through the Hospitallers' Maltese history.

The Knight Fra' Melchoir d'Eguares, who was stationed on the old hilly capital city of Mdina on the other side of the island, caused so much confusion and panic among the Turks, who were about to capture Fort St. Michael shortly, throughout a very surprisingly intervention there of the small Christian cavalry. So by mistake, they were forced to beat a quick retreat in order to face what they thought it was a larger Christian force attack from the rear. At this point the Turkish strength and morale declined rapidly and a real larger Christian relief force arrived in early September and convinced them to abandon their enterprise and sail back to Constantinople.

¹²¹ Emilio Lombardi, *The Maltese Messenger of the Grand Master*, San Ġwann, Malta: Book Distributors Ltd., 2008, pp. 68-74. Meeting the Grand Master.

In the latter part of this chapter S. Spiteri asserted the successful conclusion of this siege had weakened considerably the Order and all the forts were damaged, huge debts had been incurred and many Knights had died. The surviving members of the Order expressed their preference to leave the island at the very beginning and set up some bases elsewhere. There is some reason to believe that Jean de la Vallette did not accept this point of view, preferring to remain in Malta, since he foresaw the isle general rehabilitation. A letter dated 26th October 1565 sent by *don Garcia de Toledo* from Messina urged and encouraged him not to loose time and to proceed with the construction of the new fortress on mount Sciberras, despite the efforts, for which a new labour force and an engineer would be provided. The Order's financial problems, however, were so grave that Grand Master de la Vallette was worried that the project, once initiated, could not be completed before the Turks were returning the following spring. *Pope Pius IV* himself willing to support the Order offered kindly immediate financial assistance and sent one of his ablest military engineers, *Francesco Laparelli*,¹²² to design the new fortified city.

Laparelli reached Malta at the end of December 1565 and was promptly informed by the Grand Master that the walls of the new fortress had to be completed before the next expected Turks attack. Thus, Laparelli prepared a report on how this could be achieved actually his plan consisted of a completely bastioned land front sited on the highest part of the peninsula. As soon as, Jean de la Vallette overcame his raising debts about adequate needed labour forces, materials supplies and enough troops to provide the defensive element, the first stone was laid by Grand Master on 28th March 1566 in the presence of members of the Order, the *Bishop of Malta* and a multitude of people.

¹²² S. Spiteri, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53. Francesco Laparelli da Cortona (1521-1571) designed the fortified city of Valletta.

2.2.6. Valletta: Città Humillissima and the Palace of the Grand Masters under the British administration

The foundation stone contained this inscription in Latin:

Fra Jean De La Vallette, Grand Master of the Hospitaller Order of Jerusalem, mindful of the danger of which, a year before, his Knights and the Maltese people were exposed during the siege by the Turks, having consulted the heads of the Order about the construction of a new city and the fortifying of the same by walls, ramparts and towers sufficient to resist or to repel or, at least, to withstand the Turkish enemy, on Thursday the 28 March 1566, [...] laid the foundation stone of the city on the hill called Sceberras by the natives, and having granted for its arms a golden lion on a red shield wishes it to be called by his name, Valletta.

Being S. Spiteri's book composed of three main parts Hospitallers' castles in the Holy Land, Fortifications in Rhodes and in Malta, Gozo and Tripoli in this last part he gave particular emphasis to the various phases of the building of the capital and its entrance Porta Reale recently modified once again by the Genoese architect Renzo Piano. The following year in 1567 the capital fortifications were nearly taking shape, together with a brand new ditch, the batteries, the bastions and the platforms for the construction of the new arsenal with its galley pen. In 1569, Laparelli left the island leaving his Maltese assistant Gerolamo Cassar the buildings construction continuation. The military engineer artistic design¹²³ and project was therefore brought to life and proving his technical ability internationally. Once, the whole plan was defined some improvements suggested by Scipione Campi were added and the quality of the fortresses was longer locally debated by various Spanish engineers. In this way, all the ports' perimeters were being protected by very high fortifications very difficult to be exceeded during the invasions. Cassar received the support and collaboration of the Grand Master, Pietro del Monte and erected many churches and shops. During 1571, year in which the Turkish fleet was defeated in Lepanto Battle, the Grand Master prepared the Knights' operational headquarters accommodation on the new capital Valletta. The figurative culture of the Grand Masters in the Maltese Palaces paintings is one of the predominant aspects of the

¹²³ Ibid., p. 53. Gerolamo Cassar artistic projects for the city.

period, the self-portrait represented one of the major demands to painters, such as F. Paladini at Verdala Castle and many other Italian artists, who left their paintings to the care of Casa Rocca Piccola, not to mention the Presidential Palace.



[2.13] Saluting Battery Anniversary Valletta 24th December 1941,
Sunday Times Malta by Darrin Zammit Lupi

The first structure of the Palace of the Grand Masters,¹²⁴ where the President of Malta Dr. George Abela follows actively the parliamentary tasks of the Republic, was built during the reign of Grand Master Jean de La Cassier in 1572 and contains a great cycle of important wall paintings of Grand Masters' coat-of arms attributed to Lionello Spada and Caravaggio. The entrance opens into the courtyard of Prince Alfred Duke of Edinburgh, the second son of Queen Victoria, who visited Malta in November 1858. On the Piano Nobile the pictures of the Grand Masters stand proudly posing for the portrait and giving a display of their costumes and armours or of their care for the long hair, curled wigs and beards with moustache properly cut are portrayed on very large images. While in the Hall of the Supreme Council the frieze of frescos by Matteo Perez

¹²⁴ Michael Galea, Mintoff Mario and J. Bartolo, *MALTA The Palace of the Grand Masters and the Armoury*, Valletta, Malta: M.J. Publications, 1990, pp. 6-35.

D'Aleccio (1547-1628) appear, in the Ambassadors' and the Yellow Room the paintings like the lunettes and the marble flooring medallions in the long Prince of Wales Corridor recall history scenes and naval battles of the Order.

After the French occupation the Palace was taken by the British administration around 1800. Of particular interest is the State Dining Room Hall, which is adorned with numerous portraits of the members of the British Royal Family, among them the ones of Queen Alexandra, the wife of Edward VII, Queen Victoria, King Edward VII, King George III and his successor, Elizabeth II and her father King George VI. The expansion of the city (which can still be visited on a 'Karrozin') was rapid and the possibility of taking a tour in the inner splendid historical sides and narrow streets or to walk along the whole fortifications up to the new bridge and the Malta Experience¹²⁵ at fort St. Elmo Bastions, where a show regarding Malta takes place in the multivision theatre auditorium, together with the local multilingual guides make the prospect of this spectacular city something special and relaxing for anyone. The film production 'History Highlights', by the company's Director Matthew Scicluna is also screened in other sites, such as the Waterfront Valletta and the Limestone Heritage Gardens Museum, instead San Pedro International Ltd., set up the Mdina Experience.

Another Media museum overview takes place also at the Great Siege of Malta 1565 Museum, close to the National Library in Valletta, where Cities Entertainment Ltd. is developing a real combination of scenic sets in an audio-visual walking tour through a tunnel adventure, with special effects that contribute to a thrilling experience. Actually, lately the audio-tours conducted by entertaining characters are gaining ground in the whole island, which companies are specializing in these new projects and audio-visual spectacles, in order to present all the cultural, historical and artistic events concerning Malta and Gozo in a modern perspective enjoyable for school children and adults.

¹²⁵ See: Journal of the Mediterranean Studies, 2003. Museum Education and Cultural Contestation, by Carmel Borg, Bernard Cauchi & Peter Mayo, University of Malta.

2.3. Social services from the Knights to the first British Medical Association in Malta



[2.14] Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta

2.3.1. The Knights Hospitallers and the Sacra Infermeria

In this building the British Army Surgeon David Bruce together with Dr. Giuseppe Caruana Scicluna confirmed the existence of the microbe of undulant fever in the Human spleen in 1887.¹²⁶

Medicine represents another important branch in the Maltese islands dating from prehistoric¹²⁷ times until the Knights' epoch, from the Hospitallers' practice and relief of the poor to the care of all the sick. The most representative authors of this particular sphere of teaching are Dr. Charles Savona-Ventura, Dr. Anton Mifsud and Dr. Paul Cassar and the late Dr. Saverio Fenech. From their texts a detailed account emerges outlining the evolution of various aspects of medical practices during the Knights Hospitallers period (1530-1798). Furthermore, living an experience in Hospitaller Malta, like the one carried out by the English Romantic writers, especially with reference to their

¹²⁶ Commemorative tablet with Maltese inscription on the Infirmary main portar left wall.

¹²⁷ Dr. Charles Savona –Ventura and Mifsud, Dr. Anton, *Prehistoric Medicine in Malta*, Mosta – Malta, The Authors Malta, 1999, pp. 9-16. Prehistoric medicine in Malta.

precarious health state, underlines the importance taken by the island, which dedicated for several centuries to the care of the persons suffering from various types of illnesses.

Dr. P. Cassar focused mainly his attention on the development and construction of the famous Knights' Sacra Infermeria situated in Valletta. His book is composed of a general introduction describing the arrival of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in Malta followed by a series of chapters reporting the hospital's situation during the French, British and Maltese periods. By the twelfth century, there is great deal of evidence in fact there was a tradition of hospice in Jerusalem for Christian pilgrims, who offered and provided a place to rest, to recover and to pass away in dignity. In 1113, Pope Paschal II granted a Papal bull to Brother Gerard, founder of the Hospital of St. John. One of the first hospitals in Malta was Santo Spirito in Rabat, founded in 1374 which was under the regulations of the Church and the Mdina authorities.

In 1574, the Grand Master Jean de la Cassiere proposed the construction of the so called *Sacred Infirmary*,¹²⁸ and also the Knights built this new hospital in Malta, as soon as they moved to the capital Valletta. Soon the hospital was well-renowned for being one of the best hospitals all over Europe, because of its higher standards of hygiene for the time. The Hospitallers' welfare system soon improved on the island and they started specializing in different fields taking care of the sick, the infirm, the elderly, the poor, the orphans, abandoned women and soldiers in various hospitals, such as Ospidaletto or Casetta, Infermeria delle Schiavi, Birgu Sacra Infermeria and Hospitals of St. Julian and St. John in Gozo. Many foreign visitors attended the Infirmary around 1600 and expressed great interest and appreciation regarding its activity, among them there were George Sandys, the Archbishop of York, the German Count George Albert Erbach and the traveller Samuel Kiechel.

Furthermore, from the Maltese philately covering the last century many stamp depictions recall the Maltese commemorative medical history and personalities, while on the other hand from the Naval Health Reports dated around 1860 and the Nutrition Policy Report the British colonial health status is recorded and reported as follow.

Since many British armed Forces and Naval Officers, who were stationed in Malta, brought with them their whole families, the Maltese food system completely changed under the British rule. A lot of English products were imported, such as gravy, roast meat

¹²⁸ Dott. Paul Cassar, *The Holy Infirmary of the Knights of St. John, La Sacra Infermeria*, Valletta – Malta: Mediterranean Conference Centre, 1994, pp. 1-3.

meals, sponge cakes, crisps, puddings and many Maltese cookers were employed to support the families. On the contrary, during the World Wars food provisions were curtailed, so the British Government promptly organised the Victory Kitchens, which contributed to the introduction of another range of food, especially corned-beef, cheddar cheese and salty butter. Mediterranean Maltese traditional food is varied nowadays, even if traces of the British influence are still present. In fact, Fondazzjoni Fulkar was lately created to infuse and promote the knowledge of the local cuisine especially during The Mediterranean Food Festival on March and the local feasts, together with the Wine Festival on July.¹²⁹

2.3.2. Structure and Doctors of the Hospital

Located on the periphery of Valletta and overlooking the Grand Harbour, with an imposing architecture always represented along the path, the hospital is one of the most important historic buildings attended in time by thousands of persons. The arrival of the English in 1800 represented the consequent passage, which can be summed up from an old school type of medicine towards a more modern academic and military line.

In the first part of his book Dr. P. Cassar highlighted how the Infermeria was built on the fourth side of the courtyard and that under the level of the ground the spacious Department store is found with 109 beds, where there was room for the Maltese and foreign sick. It was divided into different sectors: the zone of the Phalanges was destined to the venereal diseases, while close in the Heater in the subsoil there was the oven to burn the firewood to heat the rooms during the windy wintertime. Whatever the conditions were the physicians, who reached the island used to, be professionals who came from Italy and France. At those times, the greater part of the treatments consisted of a mixture and a variety of strange ingredients, in comparison to the ones produced nowadays, but with successful active principles. They used to take particular attention to the utilization of specific materials,¹³⁰ in fact the wares in the cafeterias were made out of

¹²⁹ Elise Billiard *When tradition becomes trendy: social distinction in Maltese food culture*, Slovene Anthropological Society, Université de Provence, 2006, pp. 113-124. Historical and social aspects of the Maltese Food Culture.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-33. Inventory of the Infirmary Silver.

silver¹³¹ in order to keep a high standard of hygiene and in the Pharmacy different types of decorated majolica jars, called *Albarelli* and globular vases were kept.

In addition, around 1685 they afforded the presence of a first chemist and a bookkeeper. At last the popular superstitions started to disappear towards progress and in 1675 Father Joseph Zammit was in charge of the doctoral desk of Anatomy and Surgery. His own private library¹³² consisted of an average amount of 15.000 volumes.

The injuries suffered were minimum, because in the area of the famous Botanical Gardens of Fort. St. Elmo in Valletta were continuing the experiments in natural medicine, thanks to the help of the first naturalists and science teachers, especially in the field of the care of the nervous, alimentary and circulatory system, the infections and the skin cancers, adding the metabolism and chest pain studies. Later on also Gabriele Hanin and Mikielang Grima were appointed to the desk of Anatomy and Surgery. There was still hope and an important achievement was reached in 1676 when the Grand Teacher Nicola Cotoner established the first real School of Anatomy and Surgery¹³³ right there in the Sacred Infirmary. The following years were really difficult and painfulness since from 1675 till 1676 the large crown of the population gathered to witness a terrible event the plague spread.

The Order survived in Malta until 10th June 1798, as soon as Napoleon Bonaparte took possession of the Sacred Infirmary for the use of sailors and soldiers converting it into a Military Hospital. On 12th June 1798 the island was conquered by the French, who reorganized it as a hospital, while Dr. Dimech and Joseph Grech were in charge of administering the whole structure. At the beginning of September 1800 the English entered as Assistants and they rechristened the Infirmary in the General Hospital.

In the following chapters I explain how the British influenced the Maltese medical culture thanks to the regular contacts among practitioners, who served in the islands with the British Service Forces. Furthermore, in this interchange many Maltese physicians were appointed to reach the United Kingdom for practical purposes, among them Dr. Cleardo Naudi, who went to London in 1812. It was around 1836 that a *Royal Commission* was called to enquire into the university administration and in 1879 the

¹³¹ Judith Banister, *An introduction to Old English Silver*, London: Evans Brothers, 1965, pp. 7-21 and illustrations. Silver plated items.

¹³² Dr. Charles Savona –Ventura and Mifsud, Dr. Anton, *Knight Hospitaller Medicine in Malta 1530-1798*, San Ġwann-Malta: P.E.G. Ltd., San Ġwann - Malta, 2004, pp. 179-182. Medical library.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-143. School of Anatomy and Surgery.

Resident Commissioner of National Education in Ireland, Mr. Patrick Joseph Keenan, was asked to reach Malta in order to inquire into the Educational System of the island. His recognition reported:

This little School of Medicine and Surgery might...be able to hold its own with any other Medical College in the British Empire and be fairly entitled to the recognition and privileges accorded to students in the Universities and Colleges of Great Britain, Ireland and the Colonies.

During this century, all the medical studies were reorganised on British standards and the first *Malta Branch of the British Medical Association*¹³⁴ was founded in 1888. The British Forces in the Mediterranean and the civil hospitals were soon provided with all the necessary vaccine against epidemic, anaesthesia and X-rays. During the First World War, a great number of wounded troops from Gallipoli were instead hosted in the hospital under the care of the Knights.

In recent times, until 1940, this social service structure remained under the authority of the local Police Forces. During these years was born important publications and medical journals appeared, such as *La Rivista Medica*, *St. Luke's Hospital Gazette* and *Maltese Medical Journal*. Unfortunately, the Sacra Infermeria was terribly damaged during the Second World War and was rebuilt and reopened only on February 11th 1979, when it was inaugurated as the present *Mediterranean Conference Centre*. In 1987 the curtains were set on fire and suffering the umpteenth damages was reopened again subsequently in 1990. Today the Knights of Malta continue their long tradition of hospital work, such power and courage had been seen as the George Cross reminds us. Despite the many tribulations faced by the Order, its religious ideal still keeps on sustaining ambulance services, relief efforts for refugees, food supplies to the starving, disease control in Africa and aid to Latin America and else where in the world.

2.3.3. Temple Period and natural Medicine in Malta

The local population was devoted to medical assistance, but also to the study of natural aspects as emerges from the Malta Museum of Natural History at Mdina, which is

¹³⁴ Dr.Charles Savona –Ventura and Mifsud, Dr.Anton, *Outlines of Maltese Medical History*, Valletta, Malta: Midsea Books Ltd., 1997, p. 36.

housed in the Magisterial Palace of Justice. It covers a wide range of themes, the most important of which is in Maltese geology, human evolution, and marine ecosystems.

In fact, as reported particularly by Dr. C. Savona-Ventura and Anton Mifsud in their *Prehistoric Medicine in Malta*, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, cave excavations¹³⁵ were carried out at Ghar Dalam at Birzebbuga, where a number of ancient human fossils in the Red earth layers came to light. Thanks to all these archaeological investigations and findings a great difference in the skeletal remains dimensions of the pre-Neolithic man period, dating back before 5,200 B.C. came to the surface.

Among burial practices posthumous trepanations were interestingly found and there are innumerable examples which had a superstitious significance. In fact, during the late Neolithic age religion and magic¹³⁶ were strictly connected, this is underlined on the one side by the discovery of the presence of amulets, decorated personal ornaments, sea-shells, and on the other side by ex-votive offerings including artistic representations of an organ or their own portrait in the caves. The idol statuary sculptured remains and fertility cave figures represent the very first forms of art,¹³⁷ together with a particular interest in the skulls' morphology.¹³⁸

2.3.4. Portraits and engravings of the Sacred Infirmary collection

Outlining the Maltese medical history and practice, emerged the continuous evolution that took us to the end of the medieval period, which saw the Hospitallers tradition taking place. Their significant presence and activity is represented in many works of art and poetic frescos all over the island, in particular at the Fine Arts Museum, in St. Paul's Church in Rabat and in many Palaces' private collections of ancient noble Families of Malta. Their gorgeous reproductions in canvas, during their public health administrations or community social services are demonstrated in a majestic way. Painted figures often in foreground seem intent in their activities of caring for the sick, almost involving the observer in their work, movement and concentration. The shades are often

¹³⁵ C. Savona – Ventura & A. Mifsud, *op.cit.* p. 17.

¹³⁶ C. Savona – Ventura, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-102, pp. 160-167.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-152.

¹³⁸ C. Savona – Ventura & A. Mifsud, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-74.

dark, but often show the brightness of a luminous halo, the white of the Maltese Cross and the red, yellow or blue coloured parts of their wrapped cloaks. In the Hospitallers' iconography particular importance has the theme of the dinner for the sick, where more Knights are usually represented in group in the same painting.

2.4. In search for evidence: Vittoriosa and the Inquisitor's Palace from 1562 until the British period



[2.15] National museum of Ethnography
Birgu (Città Vittoriosa)

In the period between the 1562 and 1798, we can distinguish a pattern in which religion, inquisition and trials were strictly connected.¹³⁹ These crucial events had been carefully studied and analysed by a lot of Maltese authors particularly interested in these delicate questions and cases, all over those centuries. Apart the possibility to recover valuable piece of works, regarding the Roman Inquisition, in the Mdina Cathedral's archives, among the writers included in this group, who turned their attention and interpretation of the phenomenon can be found Reverend Alexander Bonnici of the Franciscans Conventual in Rabat, Kenneth Gambin Head Curator of Heritage Malta, the

¹³⁹ Reverend Dr. Alexander Bonnici, *A Trial in front of an Inquisitor of Malta (1562-1798)*, Conventual Franciscans Rabat, San Gwann - Malta P.E.G. Ltd., 1998, pp. 3-6. Religion and Inquisition.

Senior Lecturer Frans Ciappara and Andrew P. Vella of MUHS (Malta University History Society), apart Carmel and Charles Cassar.

The first one, of whom I have mainly dealt with Reverend Bonnici tackles the matter under the theological aspect of singular cases in his *A Trial in front of an Inquisitor of Malta (1562-1798)*, the second one K. Gambin focused her research on the prison experience at the Inquisitor's Palace. The third one dedicated to the sociological and reformation point of view in Later Enlightenment, while one of the last ones A. Vella considered another important theme the Tribunal institution itself and the Cassars provided an Index of the Inquisition.

2.4.1. The Inquisition in Malta: 1575-1798

Before the arrival of the Order, Malta had an old medieval Inquisition tribunal, which was closely connected to the authority of the Bishop of Palermo. Only in 1562, did the Pope appoint the Bishop of Malta *Domenico Cubelles* (1542-1566) as local Bishop and Inquisitor. In 1574, the Inquisition Tribunal was divided and constituted a separate Court from that of the Bishop. All this happened by accident as Grandmaster La Cassiere wanted to inform Pope Gregory XIII regarding a quarrel between the Bishop and himself. The Pope took immediate action and asked *Pietro Dusina* to travel to Malta to be in charge as mediator, apostolic visitor and Inquisitor.¹⁴⁰ He stayed there along a period of nine months, during which he took the chance to visit the parishes and establish the Inquisitor's Court at Birgu.

2.4.2. The Inquisitors and the index of prohibited books

The first Medieval Inquisition was founded in 1184 against the heretics, while the Spanish Inquisition aroused in 1478 to find out Spanish Jews or Muslims, who practiced their religion secretly in Spain. The Roman Inquisition¹⁴¹ (or Holy Office) was set up by the Catholic Church in the person of Pope Paul III to fight the spread of Protestantism in

¹⁴⁰ Kenneth Gambin, *The Inquisitor's Palace, Vittoriosa, Sta Venera* - Malta: Midsea Books, 2003, pp. 5,6. Bishop and Inquisitor two separate Courts.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 31. Sentences and official edicts of the Inquisitors in the Tribunal Room, called Camera Secreta.

the Catholic countries in 1542. The Inquisition was given power over various aspects of daily life and government, acting against heresies, blasphemy, apostasy, bigamy, reading of prohibited books, which were usually brought to Malta by foreign Protestants,¹⁴² and the practice of magic. This particular aspect was strictly connected to the presence in the islands of British writers and poets also of Anglican religion, some forbidden literal themes at that time especially under the French dominion were the sprout of what was indeed going to represent in the following years the contrary British Empire rule in Malta. Speaking in general terms the index of prohibited books and the strong censorship in France deeply influenced the knowledge, politics, religion and education of the country. It was only the Governor of Malta's ordinance dated 1839 which made censorship illegal, besides the exceptions of moral and political facts.

Maltese women practicing sorcery and magic was the most common offence typical of the 17th century, this practice was probably brought to the island by Muslim slaves. When the Inquisition started to decline in the 18th century, the commonest cases were blasphemy, bigamy and conversion to Islam. The Inquisitor, as a Papal Ambassador, had great power over Malta and when he happened to have quarrels with the Grandmaster or the Bishop, he usually came out victorious. Most Inquisitors of Malta were able and ambitious clergymen, some of them later became Cardinals and two were even elected Popes, such as Alexander VII in 1655 and as Innocent XII in 1687.

2.4.3. The Inquisitor's Palaces at Vittoriosa

The Inquisitor's Palace at Vittoriosa¹⁴³ is one of the very few buildings of its kind still surviving in Europe, which impressed the British Romantic artists. Until 1571 the Inquisitor's Palace had been used as the seat of the Castellania (Law Courts) of the Order. The building had been left vacant when the Knights moved to Valletta until it was handed over to Mgr. Dusina as the first Inquisitor of Malta in 1574. In the 17th and 18th centuries, some Inquisitors made additions and alterations to the original building in order to make it more comfortable as a residence a court and a prison of the Inquisition. At Siggiewi, the location where the Limestone Heritage Museum was created, the Inquisitor

¹⁴² Victor Mallia - Milanes, *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, Msida, Malta , Mireva Publications Ltd., 1993, pp. 339-343. Protestants and trade in Malta during the Inquisition period.

¹⁴³ K.Gambin, *op.cit.*, pp. 7-9. Palazzo del Sant'Officio in Vittoriosa.

Onorto Visconti built also his summer residence called Girgenti Palace in 1625, today known as the official residence of the Prime Minister G. Abela, even if Auberge de Castille in Valletta represents his main headquarter, erected by the architect Girolamo Cassar in 1574.

2.4.4. The prison warden of the Inquisitor

On the basis of the recounts reported and reconstructed in the Mdina Dungeons and in Vittoriosa Palace, there were different persons in charge of the Inquisition Prisons itself, among them an important role was covered by the prison warden.

The warden had to carry out various specific tasks and the following jobs:

- Visit the prisoners every morning and evening, to take them food and water rations.
- Buy things with the money they gave him.
- Take them to their sentence or to hear Mass.
- Open and close the main door of the Palace.
- Take care of the torture instruments (corda and cavalletto)¹⁴⁴
- Keep the keys of the cells in a safe place.
- Make sure prisoners did not escape.

As an officer of the Holy Office, the prison warden had to lead an exemplary life and carry out his job dutifully. Those who did so were given a pension on their retirement. Warden were fired only when caught quarrelling, gambling, drinking, practicing magic, stealing money from prisoners or having close relations with female prisoners.

2.4.5. Life in the Inquisitor's prisons

Entering the underground Inquisition prisons, quite similar to the ones in the Ducal Palace at the time of the Venetian Doges the internal structures of the penitentiary and the Courtroom can be observed. There were two main prison sections: one for detention (*ad custodiam*) before a trial, and one for punishment (*ad poenam*) after a

¹⁴⁴ A. Bonnici, *op.cit.*, pp. 15-22. Torture instruments present also in Mdina's prisons.

sentence. In both cases, prisoners were kept in separate cells. Prison sentences were frequent but of short duration – from a few days to a few years.

In the 1630s Inquisitor Fabio Chigi had to slow down the sentencing processes because the cells were so full up that they could not host any other prisoner. Life in the prisons¹⁴⁵ was not as desperate as in most civil prisons of the time. In civil prisons, women and children were put together with adult criminals in cells with no beds or sewers. While in the Inquisitor's prisons, prisoners could receive presents and food from relatives and friends. Actually there were no fixed schedules for eating. They could make use of a candle at night and have beds with straw mattresses and blankets. Some had toilet facilities in their cells, others were taken by the warden to the toilet pit. Prisoners were kept in good health by regular visits by a doctor, giving medicine to sick prisoners or taking them to hospital. The Inquisitor took care also of the spiritual needs of the prisoners: they could confess in their own cell, taught catechism and attend Mass.

Prisoners usually used their free time to decorate the walls of their cells with all sorts of graffiti (E.g. ships, religious motifs, symbols, dates, initials). Gambling, singing and playing music were other common pastimes. Attempts at escape were most common at night and one prisoner Pietro Licini was able to escape eight times in 1697-98, once by removing a stone from the wall of his cell that led to one of the streets. Others trying to commit suicide by poison or hanging. On leaving the prison, prisoners had to take an oath not to reveal anything they had witnessed or heard within the prisons' walls. The overall contribution of the Inquisition was to introduce the concept of the prisoners' reform¹⁴⁶ whereby prisoners were made to 'pay' for their misdeeds. The emphasis of most Inquisitors was on the 'reformation' of the prisoner not on his 'elimination' as was usually the case in the civil prisons of the time.

¹⁴⁵ K. Gambin, *op.cit.* pp. 13-24. From inside the prison constructed by Inquisitor Gori Pannellini in 1640, the chapel erected by Tommaso Ruffo in 1696 and the Bibliotheca.

¹⁴⁶ A. Bonnici, *op.cit.*, pp. 48-50. Prisoners' Reforms.

2.4.6. Cases of the Inquisition Prison given by the Malta Tribunal

When studying the cases reported by the Malta Inquisition Tribunal, it is important to bear in mind the exemplification list does not include all the cases, because a great part of them are still considered facts that occurred in other documents, which are property of the Church. In fact, prior consultation emerged that the Inquisitor could use discipline and torture not only on common citizen, but also on Knights and Chaplains of the Hospitallers, who were accused of having committed certain crimes against the Catholic faith. In other common cases the inquired were reported also for less serious events, but who were given strong punishments at the time of the Grand Masters¹⁴⁷ and Inquisition.

Foreign visitors involved very often remarked the difficulties in understanding such exaggerated religious devotion and rules given by the Knights Hospitallers. A situation like this put a great number of Maltese in a sort of never ending denounce and accusation system. Of course, they did not follow the normal Civil Courts methods, suspicion was just enough to inquire a person of guilty. A lot of persons that were imprisoned did not commit a real crime, but they simply went to report violations carried out by other individuals.

The trial's procedure¹⁴⁸ was very oppressive and tiresome, because consisted of long phases including the denunciation, the witnesses, the torture, the abjuration, the verdict and at last the severe execution of sentences. The use of torture represented a physical pain for the condemned, but the moral constraint of the abjuration could lead them to the humiliating confession and admitted accusation. The expiatory sentences were being divided in short or longer periods, during which they were obliged to row onboard the Knights' galleys all over the Mediterranean Sea, but above all to take part in the whole construction of the Cottonera fortifications or to pay a fine and have their belongings confiscated. Unfortunately, the worst side of the matter, which caused an

¹⁴⁷ Joseph Attard, *The Knights of Malta*, Malta: BDL Publishing, 2010, pp. 80-86. Protocol during the Grand Master and Inquisitor's meetings.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-15. The trial's procedure and verdicts pronunciations.

increased escalation of violence and terror, concerned the possibility of the application of the Capital Sentence¹⁴⁹ by the Inquisitor.

This type of system was rather controversial and linked to a very old fashion Tribunal organisation, where life and recovery were not taken into consideration at all. On the other hand, at that time, the so called medicinal sentence consisting of spiritual personal prayers, supported by these Catholic representatives, was really part of their daily existences. The social aspect of being easily implicated and reduced in life-long slavery and sufferings, living in a sort of fear of death or to be burned alive, after flogging, is a reality difficult to be understood by anybody nowadays, but to what they were accustomed to. The only hope for all those condemned was to make an appeal soon after the definitive verdict, to present the Judge the extenuating circumstances and proofs that led to unthinkable actions.

During a period of great poverty and contingency, the only two Inquisitors, who immediately realized the local situation and tried to give some support to the poor defenceless population, without being pitiless towards them that can be mentioned, are Ranuccio Pallavicino and Innico Caracciolo. In fact, from Bonnici source *Maltin u l-Inkizizzjoni* (The Maltese and the Inquisition), emerged that the local population often remained victim of the tricks perpetuated by slaves and foreigners.

2.4.7. The end of the Inquisition and the British colonial period

The Inquisition in Malta came to a sudden end when the French took over the islands in June 1798. The Inquisitor was given 48 hours to leave the island and the Tribunal was closed down. The archives¹⁵⁰ of the Inquisition were taken over by the Bishop's Curia and today these archives are kept at the Cathedral Museum at Mdina,

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 28,29. Capital Sentences. See also Malta Police Force's Crime Museum at the Police General Headquarters in Floriana.

¹⁵⁰ See also: Mdina Cathedral Archives Molino Malta, Microfilm Projects: N. 1794 p.5 until 6512 Lettere e Decreti della SS. Congregazione riguardanti il Vescovo di Malta, l'Inquisitore, il Grand Maestro e i giurati (1570-1688); Miscellanea vol. 273 N. 4070 p.75, Dissertazioni storiche sullo Stato Civile di Malta e Gozo e loro leggi, usi e consuetudini, dall'espulsione dei Saraceni fino al tempo presente. Dr. di Legge Vincenzo Bonavita Giudice di Sua Maestà Britannica avente sede nella Superiore Regia Corte criminale e nell'alta Regia Corte d'Appello; N. 6385 until 7820 Istruzioni agli Inquisitori di Malta 679, N. 6530 p.67, This project is a compilation of various "istruzioni" handed by the Holy Office in Rome to the person nominated as Inquisitor in Malta prior to his departure from the island; N. 4943 Miscellanea 75 p.86, Notizie per la carica d'Inquisitore e Delegato apostolico a Malta. From the original italian treatises regarding the Inquisition, Code De Rohan and Civil Code and moralità.

where scholars and historians can consult them for researching purposes beyond demand to the Priory. These archives give us an important piece of information on how the Malta Inquisition functioned, who were the persons involved, why and what happened inside its underground prisons.

During the British occupation¹⁵¹ in 1830, as reported in Kenneth Gambin book *The Inquisitor's Palace* passed in the hands of the military authorities, changing its function into a military hospital and settling there as 'perpetual users without payment', unless they left it to the government. Because of its particular structure, it was soon converted into a mess house for the officers of the British garrison, who used to station at the barracks of Fort St. Michael in Senglea, which looked like the recently restored ones at Tigné in Sliema. The militaries were more interested in the palace from a practical point of view and along the years of occupation they modified the original plan, adding a fireplace, water cabinets and a wine cellar under the basement. As many of the palaces in Malta, the hall of the Piano Nobile acquired the shape of officers' offices and headquarters and also the chapel was demolished for these purposes following a modern British style. The Palace was not demolished and finally, thanks to the intercession of Sir Temi Zammit and the care of the Antiquities Committee, it was converted with the support of the curator Vincenzo Bonello in heritage museum in 1926.

In 1936 he restored the palace to its first magnificent origins, works that were carried on by the Maltese sculptor Antonio Sciortino. The Dominican Friars found refuge in its interiors during the Second World War and celebrated liturgical rites until 1954, when their convent was finally reconstructed. This Museum is of particular interest among the others also for the ethnography performance,¹⁵² that had been taking place there, since 1992.

¹⁵¹ K. Gambin, *op.cit.*, pp. 25-28. The British Colonial period in Malta.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 33. National Museum of Ethnography.

Chapter 3

3. Sir Walter Scott's journey to Malta and *The Siege of Malta*



[3.1] The Museum of the Order of St. John, London

Tis well the gifted eye which saw the first light sparks of fancy burn
should mark its latest flash with awe, low glimmering from its funeral urn.
And thou mayst mark the hint, fair Maid, how vain is worldly esteem;
Good fortune turns, affections fade, and fancy is an idle dream.
Yet not on this poor frame alone, my palsied hand, and deafened ear,
But on my country's fate the bolts of Fate seemed doomed to spend.
The storm might whistle round my head, I should not deprecate the ill,
So I might say when all was sped, 'My country, be thou glorious still!' ¹⁵³

The tradition of the British Grand Tours in the Mediterranean clearly emerge from the reading of the full text of Mrs. John Davy's Diary and the Journal of Scott's Malta Visit. In every respect, towards the end of November 1831 the arrival of Sir Walter Scott in Malta, who travelled there to find recovery from his frequent stroke attacks and a new poetic creativity, raised great surprise among the population. He was sixty, when widower and baronet left for the archipelago, sailing to Malta onboard galley frigate Barham, ¹⁵⁴ to be hosted by the Royal Navy.

¹⁵³ Walter Scott and David Douglas, *Journal, from the original manuscript at Abbotsford*, Vol. II, Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1890. Stanzas written in Dora Wordsworth's Album by Scott on the eve of his departure from Abbotsford (22nd September, 1831) for Malta and Naples.

¹⁵⁴ Donald Sultana, *The Journey of Sir Walter Scott to Malta 1771-1832*, Hampshire, U.K: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 1987, pp. 30-34.

In September 1831, Sir Walter wrote his first impressions about this planned journey to his friend Robert Cadell, “Malta is a place I have always longed to see”. Scott as a novelist and poet had grown up with the publication of René Vertot’s *Knights of Malta*, a book which is an interaction between history and romance and that was translated from the French and sold in Edinburgh from the local press around 1728. He was well prepared and had a wide knowledge of the Scottish Knights Templars and Hospitalers. Another desire to visit Malta rose from the fact that being a Napoleonic Wars’ veteran, he acquired a huge scholarship of the historical events of the time (1800) as comes out from his book *Life of Bonaparte*. He was really pleased as soon as the Doctor suggested his family - especially his younger daughter Anne, who suffered from chronic stomach attacks - to spend some time from Abbotsford to Malta, being considered a natural health centre, thanks to its warmer weather. He availed of the occasion and asked all his servants, maids and domestics to join in during this journey to the Mediterranean.

October 23.—Portsmouth; arrived here in the evening. Found the *Barham* will not sail till 26th October, that is Wednesday next. The girls break loose, mad with the craze of seeing sights, and run the risk of our losing some of our things and deranging the naval officers, who offer their services with their natural gallantry. Captain Pigot came to breakfast, with several other officials. The girls contrived to secure a sight of the Block manufactory, together with that of the Biscuit, also invented by Brunel. I think that I have seen the first of these wonderful [sights] in 1816, or about that time. Sir Thomas Foley gives an entertainment to the Admiralty, and sends to invite [me]; but I pleaded health, and remained at home. Neither will I go out sight-seeing, which madness seems to have seized my womankind. This ancient town is one of the few in England which is fortified, and which gives it a peculiar appearance. It is much surrounded with heaths or thin poor muirs covered with heather, very barren, yet capable of being converted into rich arable and pasturage. I would [not] desire a better estate than to have 2000 acres which would be worth 40 shillings an acre.¹⁵⁵

The day was dawning when he set off from London by coach with his team to embark on 23rd October. Captain Basil Hall was the writer of best-selling travel books, who assured a free passage to Scott onboard the ship, which was sailing a couple of hours later, because of contrary winds. Hall published also the *Fragments of Voyages and Travels*, recounting Scott’s tour, together with their conversation at Portsmouth. Scott’s

¹⁵⁵ Franklin Burt, *The Journal of SIR WALTER SCOTT*, from the Original manuscript in Abbotsford, Volume II, New York: Lenox Hill Pub. & Dist. Co., Originally published in 1890, Reprinted in 1970.

plan was to collect the travel expenses from the publication of his journal, and the series of his journey *Letters from Malta*¹⁵⁶ published in epistolary form.

Before leaving the person in charge of his city and appointed to act as Deputy Sheriff of Selkirshire was the Scottish poet William Laidlaw.

October 29 (The Barham).—The weather is changed and I think we shall sail. Captain Forbes comes with offer of the Admiral Sir Michael Seymour's barge, but we must pause on our answer. I have had a very disturbed night. Captain Pigot's summons is at length brought by his own announcement, and the same time the Admiral's barge attends for our accommodation and puts us and our baggage on board the *Barham*, a beautiful ship, a 74 cut down to a 50, and well deserving all the commendations bestowed on her. The weather a calm which is almost equal to a favourable wind, so we glide beautifully along by the Isle of Wight and the outside of the island. We landsfolk feel these queerish sensations, when, without being in the least sick, we are not quite well. We dine enormously and take our cot at nine o'clock, when we sleep undisturbed till seven.

Scott looked forward to the day of leaving impatiently at the Fountain Inn, an accommodation booked by Hall, which is described by him in detail in his journal. He delineated also the vessel as observed at a first glance, named after Sir Charles Middleton, as a beautiful ship of seventy-four guns reduced to fifty to increasing speed limit with four hundred and eighty hands. Captain Hall was also allowed to carry out a careful inspection of a range of cabins assigned to Scott's party. In less than no time, a while before his departure he set the objective to write a new novel entitled *The Knight of Malta*, therefore alerted his publisher Robert Cadell of the project. He wanted to work out on it like the *Ivanhoe*, adding several descriptions and real histories, it represented a three week reflection in London while reading the Waverley Novels. Captain Hall, was the person who wrote a letter to *The Times*, reporting their departure onboard the vessel Barham. Furthermore, being an inveterate reader, Scott mainly committed himself through various books during his journey, such as *A Voyage to Lisbon* by Henry Fielding, *Peregrine Pickle* by Tobias Smollett and Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

Their rhumb line was due South, after leaving Plymouth, they reached Cape Finisterre, the Bay of Biscay, Torres Vedras and Capes St. Vincent in Portugal and Trafalgar in Spain. Here he took inspiration for his cantos' introduction of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. He also expressed his satisfaction to the friend Cadell about his easiness in

¹⁵⁶ D. Sultana, *op. cit.*, p. 11, 12. Series for his travel-book.

writing and the better spirits he was surrounded of in that moment. He was also looking forward to receiving updated news from him about the publication of his last *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous*. As soon as the trip continued between Gibraltar and Tangier, the place recalled to his memory the British General Counsellor for Morocco, Edward Drummond Hay. The vessel went beyond Cadiz passing through the Strait on 14th November and presenting the passengers the picturesque landscape of Andalusia. The chain of mountains reminded him of the Scottish Highlands and the Isle of Skye, while the Gibraltar's fortification descriptions were meticulously quoted in his journal. He elaborated straight away the episodes of the battles between Christians and the Moors in Spain as recounted in *The Vision of Don Roderick*, dated 1811. Afterwards they sailed to Ceuta and along the coastline of Algiers, reminded in his journal by the reference of General Bourmont's capture of the city. Many oriental scenes and local characters were created thanks to his fervid imagination, emerging also from his correspondence, in *The Talisman*, *The Arabian Nights* and *Tales of the Genii*. Since Tunis, Tripoli and Algiers were strongholds belonging to the corsair Dragut, he started sketching the story of a Spanish Knight convoked by Grand Master Jean de la Valette in Malta to protect the islands against the Turkish attacks. The whole crew included Lt. Walker were since then waiting to approach the volcanic island called Graham, which was situated between Sicily and Malta, steam, heavy temperatures and boiling earth made it impossible to walk along the beach. Scott was only able, before leaving for Gozo, to pick up a lava evidence and some shells to be given to the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Approximately a fortnight later they reached Malta from Portsmouth, remaining surprised by the ideal bays for the Knights' rowing-boats, called *scampavie*.

They were welcomed by the steam-packet from Falmouth, which arrived there a couple of days before, bringing them English newspapers and the latest letters including information regarding Scott's tour to the Maltese archipelago.

November 21.—Indifferent night. In the morning we are running off Gozo, a subordinate island to Malta, intersected with innumerable enclosures of dry-stone dykes similar to those used in Selkirkshire, and this likeness is increased by the appearance of sundry square towers of ancient days. In former times this was believed to be Calypso's island, and the cave of the enchantress is still shown. We saw the entrance from the deck, as rude a cavern as ever opened out of a granite rock. The place of St. Paul's shipwreck is also shown, no doubt on similarly respectable authority. At last we opened Malta, an island, or rather a city, like no other in the world. The seaport, formerly the famous Valetta, comes down to the sea-shore. On the

one side lay the [Knights], on the other side lay the Turks, who finally got entire possession of it, while the other branch remained in the power of the Christians.¹⁵⁷

Since a cholera epidemic was spread out in England, most of the visitors had to compulsory spend a period of quarantine in the lazaretto, but Sir Walter Scott was able to be transferred directly in some good apartments within Fort Manuel run by Captain Dawson, where he had the chance to receive all his numerous visitors during his stay. This accommodation was of particular interest to Scott being the burial place of the General Sir Ralph Abercromby, quoted in his *Life of Bonaparte* and the connection with the Governor of Malta General Sir Frederick Cavendish-Ponsonby, an important hero reminded in *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk*¹⁵⁸ and *The Field of Waterloo*,¹⁵⁹ dated 1815.

Furthermore, this construction was surrounded by many legends of ghosts, an experience which was reported not only in the novels and tales, but also in his Journal in London. Scott was also very pleased by the welcomed letter received by Sir John Stoddart, offering to be his guest at his house close to the Anglican Church of Valletta, who had not long after offered it to Samuel Taylor Coleridge too. They used to meet also at Stoddart's country-house at St. Julian Bay and while he was there Scott received a letter from his friend William Wordsworth, through the steam-packet Falmouth.

Scott's sojourn at the Beverley's Hotel in Valletta,¹⁶⁰ situated in Strada Ponente, was studded by the presence of the Master of ceremonies, Mr. Walker, an Officer of artillery, who was responsible for the direction of all the ballads, the dining and entertainments. During his wandering on the island he wrote *The Siege of Malta*, a plot mixed between his journey's account and the tale. The historical novelist took the opportunity of spending most of his time visiting St. John Cathedral, the beautiful knight's temple, he was very pleased and interested in.

November 29.—Lady Hotham was kind enough to take me a drive, and we dined with them—a very pleasant party. I picked up some anecdotes of the latter siege. Make another pilgrimage, escorted by Captain Pigot and several of his officers. We took a more accurate view of this splendid structure [Church of St. John]. I went down into the vaults and made a visiting acquaintance with La Valette, whom, greatly to my

¹⁵⁷ Franklin Burt, *op. cit.*, *November 21*, Gutenberg Project.

¹⁵⁸ Walter Scott, *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, Philadelphia: Republished by Moses Thomas, from the Edinburgh Edition, 1816.

¹⁵⁹ Walter Scott, *The Field of Waterloo; A Poem*, Edinburgh: James Ballantyne & Co., 1815.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65. The Beverley Hotel (Palazzo Britto) in Valletta.

joy, I found most splendidly provided with a superb sepulchre of bronze, on which he reclines in the full armour of a Knight of Chivalrie.

December 1.—There are two good libraries, on a different plan and for different purposes—a modern subscription library that lends its own books, and an ancient foreign library which belonged to the Knights, but does not lend books. Its value is considerable, but the funds unfortunately are shamefully small; I may do this last some good. I have got in a present from Frere the prints of the Siege of Malta, very difficult to understand, and on loan from Mr. Murray, Agent of the Navy Office, the original of Boiardo, to be returned through Mr. Murray, Albemarle Street. Mr. Murray is very good-natured about it.¹⁶¹

From his memoirs the strict connection he had with Turner appears. With his illustrations Turner contributed to the edition of Scott's *Poetical Works*, composed in twelve volumes in 1833. He deeply hoped to find comfort and relief during his stay, but still his tour was suspended by sudden hit of paralytic attacks. Dr. Davy was the person who kindly took care of him and rushed to visit him as soon as he suffered from this chronic pathology, supported by the good company of the friend Coleridge too, as testified by the rare pictures preserved at Casa Rocca Piccola¹⁶² in Valletta. It is also reported they drove to St. Anton Gardens, delighting the perfume of oranges, while on 10th December he went to visit Città Vecchia together with Mr. Frere and on the 11th returned to Valletta. They left just on 14th December sailing for Naples, onboard Barham vessel.

December 10, [Naples].—I ought to say that before leaving Malta I went to wait on the Archbishop: a fine old gentleman, very handsome, and one of the priests who commanded the Maltese in their insurrection against the French. I took the freedom to hint that as he had possessed a journal of this blockade, it was but due to his country and himself to give it to the public, and offered my assistance. He listened to my suggestion, and seemed pleased with the proposal, which I repeated more than once, and apparently with success. Next day the Bishop returned my visit in full state, attended by his clergy, and superbly dressed in costume, the pearls being very fine. (The name of this fine old dignitary of the Romish Church is Don Francis Caruana, Bishop of Malta.)

The last night we were at Malta we experienced a rude shock of an earthquake, which alarmed me, though I did not know what it was. It was said to foretell that the ocean, which had given birth to Graham's Island, had, like Pelops, devoured its own offspring, and we are told it is not now visible, and will be, perhaps, hid from those

¹⁶¹ Franklin Burt, *op. cit.*, *December 1*, Gutenberg Project.

¹⁶² Casa Rocca Piccola with its underground air raid shelter is a 16th century Palace of a noble Maltese family the 9th Marquis and Marchioness De Piro. The interiors and the library are visitable as most of the ancient Palaces Palazzo Falson in Mdina and Palazzo Parisio in Naxxar.

who risk the main; but as we did not come near its latitude we cannot say from our own knowledge that the news is true.¹⁶³

Before leaving for his journey Scott turned his attention to poetry, novels and several plays, a curious but significant phenomenon occurred, because he started writing after distance and faced a particular subject *Tales of a Grandfather*, a series of books on the history of Scotland dated 1831 and *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, regarding a diary he kept between 1825 and 1832.

While Walter Scott was returning to England, after his travel and convalescence throughout the Mediterranean, he felt deeply inspired by the Knights and enlarged his previous travel experience trying to finish to reproduce his whole personal voyage in various incomplete works, such as *The Siege of Malta* and *Bizarro*, evoking characters like his knights in *Ivanhoe*, the heroines of the *Waverley* series of novels or *The Pirate* adventures. Therefore, two hundred years after they were composed, these two lost works found a publisher in the Edinburgh University Press, which carried out a single volume including both works.

The story of the Siege deeply fascinated Sir Walter Scott, who spent most of his time on the island collecting a lot of material and information to write his novel, based on the imposing key figure of the Grand Master La Valette. The original manuscript consisted of an average of 75.000 words, written with difficulty by the author, because of his half-palsied hand, this is the reason why he started dictating it to complete a first pull of a shorter proof.

Written between 1831 and 1832, it is a real epic tale of the Knights' endurance against the Ottoman forces, where Scott reported not only the main historical event, but also the inhabitants fear towards new invasions, the respect kept towards the Knights' institution and representation, the Commanders sense of reverential approach, the ancestry pre-determination of the sons of the Maltese Knights together with the vicissitudes of the young señorita Angelica engaged to fulfill the promise to enter the convent of the Holy Cross, after her mother's death in the sternness of the novitiate. The claim of different classes equality between Knights' nieces of the Commander of the Great Order and noble Florentine families, her simple attempts to learn how to nurse and

¹⁶³ Franklin Burt, *op. cit.*, December 10, Gutenberg Project.

cure the wounded in war time was highlighted by her wish to leave for Malta onboard the galley *Santa Anna*. She reached Valletta's harbour in her boy's cloths, facing a frenetic context of reinforcement of Fort St. Elmo and the Grand Master completely busy asking for support of men and stores to the Viceroy of Sicily. The next Turkish assault of the island immersed her in a new knightly reality.

3.1. The origins of first Templars in the Kingdom of Acre and the Hospitallers



[3.2] Knights Templar and the Crusades

3.1.1. First crusade outline and artistic religious representations 1095-1100

Many cultures in the world place the emphasis on Medieval and Renaissance religious art around the figure of Christ or of the Holy Family. Especially in Western art there are many masterpieces which deal with these particular subjects, among the artists we can mention, who gave significant contributions there are: Cimabue, Giotto di Bondone, Masaccio, Giovanni Bellini, Leonardo, Raffaello Sanzio, Michelangelo Buonarroti and Giorgio Vasari. There is no better way to understand the artistic ideals of all these painters, than visiting the major Italian cities, which gave them birth such as Venice, itself, Florence and Rome. The first various artistic Schools have interpreted the concept of composition and pictorial reality of triptychs, the iconographies of the

Assumption, of scene from the Bible and the Saints' stories so masterly. There pictorial formation between artists and craftsmen brought to life the entire human forms that we admire in the Academies nowadays. In the second half of the sixteenth century, there is the presence in Venice of artists, such as Tintoretto, Jacopo da Ponte 'Bassano' and Paolo Veronese, who dedicated their artistic horizons completely to the religious themes and developed art in faith, as we can observe in the Ducal Palace, in the Gallerie dell' Accademia and Scuola Grande di San Rocco. Suddenly the disciples multiplied enormously and progressively advanced a creative frenzy of participation in apprenticeship of painting of the great Masters. Were taken all the themes linked to the Genesis and Apocalypse, including 'The Last Supper', the Cycle of the Passion of Christ and the Crucifixion, they altogether represented the triumph over darkness and the brightness of the pyramidal shapes.

On 28th October 1999, James M. Powell, presented an inaugural lecture from Malta Study Center, at Saint John's University, in Collegeville, Minnesota, U.S.A. He gave a series of lectures concerning an outline of background history of the great sermon preached, on 27th November 1095, by Pope Urban II, during Cleremont's Council, who contributed to the whole Church's Reform. That most attractive setting is situated on side of a hill, close to the cathedral, while he was turning to the people, among which there were Counts and Knights,¹⁶⁴ assembled below the valley. They had been asked to make an effort to free Christians in the East living under Muslim rule. Especially at that time, Jerusalem¹⁶⁵ was considered the Holy Place, which represented the whole Christianity, this is the main reason why its conquest, on 15th July 1099, proved and brought about a sudden change. As far as books go back, the first crusaders' victory still exerts its influence on the Western Powers and Church. Current historical data suggest that actually the popular preacher, Peter the Hermit,¹⁶⁶ and his knights carried out the first popular crusade, with the aim to set Jerusalem free from the Muslims. Almost at the same time, Pope Urban II,¹⁶⁷ organized an official military campaign, under the leadership of Papal legates like Adhemar, Bishop of Le Puy and both gradually coalesced towards common

¹⁶⁴ Desmond Seward, *The Monks of War, The Military Religious Orders*, London: Penguin Books, 1995, pp. 17-19.

¹⁶⁵ Alain Demurger, *I Templari, un ordine cavalleresco cristiano nel Medioevo*, Translator Emanuele Lana, Original Title: *Les Templiers. Une chevalerie chrétienne au Moyen Age*, Milano: Garzanti Libri S.p.A., 2006, pp. 83-93.

¹⁶⁶ Ernle Bradford, *Mediterranean Portrait of a Sea*, London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2000, pp. 345-351.

¹⁶⁷ Joseph Attard, *The Knights of Malta*, Malta: BDL Publishing, 2010, p. 1.

goals. The Pope required the participants at Clermont to mark them with a clothing Cross, these type of banners started to be conferred as a sign, in occasion of military expeditions. Several leading personalities, such as the Duke William of Normandy and the Normans of southern Italy used to wear these distinctive banners during their conquests of England and Sicily respectively.

The principal components of the First Crusade were constituted of contingents led by Western Princes, who all wanted to take part, at their own expenses, in this heated conflict on this neutral ground. With regards to the historical sources, we are pretty sure Raymond of St. Gilles,¹⁶⁸ Count of Toulouse, who had fought also against the Muslims in Spain, was among the first to reach them. Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine, and his brother, Baldwin of Boulogne, joined Baldwin of Le Bourcq. Hugh of Vermandois, brother of the French King, Robert II, the Count of Flanders, and Robert, Duke of Normandy, the eldest son of William the Conqueror,¹⁶⁹ as well as Stephen of Blois. One of the most prominent leaders was also Bohemund, Prince of Taranto, the son of the Norman Duke of Calabria, Robert Guiscard. As soon as, each group succeed in reaching the opulent capital of Constantinople, Alexius Comnenus, Byzantine Emperor, bound them by oath to restore to the Dominion all the lands they would conquer, before the invasion of the Seljuq Turks. The crusading army had to climb the difficult route from Constantinople to Jerusalem consisting of a steep ascent leading to the great Anatolian fortifications of the Turks. In addition, they started facing these new enemies. In May 1097, Nicaea surrendered to the Emperor Alexius. In July, the crusaders met their first test at Dorylaeum, where they defeated the forces of Kilij Arslan, the Sultan of Iconium. Not to mention that this victory opened the way to the ancient city of Antioch,¹⁷⁰ whose river was the coastal outlet to the Mediterranean Sea and the main entrance to Syria and Palestine. On 28th June 1098, the citadel surrendered the Turkish forces, and Antioch ended entirely in the crusaders' hands. Later on in July, the city was affected by a severe epidemic which struck among the army camp, despite victory. The troops began their March heading towards south, at the very beginning of the following year, because their principal target was Jerusalem.

¹⁶⁸ Piers Paul Read, *The Templars*, London: Phoneix Press, 2001, pp. 68, 69.

¹⁶⁹ Andrea Frediani, *I Grandi Condottieri che hanno cambiato la Storia*, Le imprese militari di cento straordinari Generali, Roma: Newton Compton Editori, 2011, pp. 306-311.

¹⁷⁰ Fausta Vaghi, *I Templari*, La storia e la leggenda, Firenze: Giunti, 2005, p. 11. Antioch map.



- [3.3] Stained glass at Edward the Confessor, Barnsley: This magnificent window, installed in 1936, shows the ship of the church approaching land and the shore of the Holy City - the new Jerusalem

The hub of the matter was that it became a potent symbol during these centuries, since all the Pilgrims¹⁷¹ were flocking to the Holy Places and the crusaders wished to consecrate their vows.

In Jerusalem there was a handing over of power from the Turkish, to the Fatimid rivals, such as the Caliphs of Cairo,¹⁷² who always hardly tried to keep a close alliance with the crusaders. On the contrary, the crusaders were afraid of concluding a treaty like this, because the Fatimids were always ready to quite easily sacrifice Jerusalem, for their expansionistic aiming, in exchange for the control of the important network of trade routes and of Syria. The siege of Jerusalem, which began on 7th June, 1099 was particularly difficult, because the crusaders had little knowledge regarding war's machinery tactics. Even if the precious support of the Genoese and English ships sailing to the Israel port city of Jaffa, made it possible for the crusaders to get in touch with their skilled carpenters needed to construct new machines. Still the city held out, counting on a relief force from Egypt.¹⁷³ Prayers and processions around the city were made in

¹⁷¹ D. Seward, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-33.

¹⁷² P.P. Read, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-55. Caliphs of Cairo and Fatimids.

¹⁷³ Howard Reid, *In search of the Immortals*, London: Headline Book Publishing, 1999 (Italian Translator: Maria Grazia Oddera, Title: *Il mistero delle mummie*), Newton Compton Editori, Roma, 2006, pp. 82-101; See also Roberto De Meo, *Giordania*, Archelogia Viva (Petra), Firenze: Giunti Gruppo editoriale, 1999, pp. 26-33.

preparation for a final assault, which took place on 15th July; it was a success and the whole city was sacked. Victory at Jerusalem brought about a very new set of circumstances. The crusaders had to defend their conquest, but even in this advantageous position to do that, they had to organize some kind of permanent government. From the selection of Godfrey of Bouillon, as interim ruler of Jerusalem and the succession of his Brother Baldwin,¹⁷⁴ as the first king of Jerusalem, can surely be dated the beginning of the necessity of crusading. With this victory, the evolution of the machinery of recruitment, the almost constant demand placed upon the West, by the precariousness of the situation in the East, and the growth of a profound religious commitment founded on devotion to the Holy Places, worked to transform virtually all aspects of Western life.

Immediately after the First Crusade, the leaders of the crusade were celebrated in the popular Chanson de Geste, entitled the "Chanson d'Antioch",¹⁷⁵ recalling the preparations for departure, the arrival at Constantinople and the Siege of Antioch. Furthermore, some historians have interpreted the crusades as the beginning of a sort of European colonialism;¹⁷⁶ while on the other hand others have explained them as an example of religious intolerance. Even if, the development of Western colonialism began during this period as an outgrowth of commercial expansion, it benefited little from the crusades; it prospered more after the main period of the crusading ended in the fourteenth century. The crusaders did not see themselves as missionaries¹⁷⁷ trying to convert Muslims, only during the thirteenth century, under the influence of the Mendicant Orders there was a beginning of missionary work among Muslims.¹⁷⁸

The ending phase of the nineteenth century represented the period, when the conflict and generation gap between those who embraced the world of secular modernity and those who sought to preserve ancient Christianity became stronger. The three main religious groups, that are Christianity, Judaism and Islam,¹⁷⁹ were more interested to insulate their followers, than to pursue real programmes of conversion.

¹⁷⁴ D. Steward, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-30.

¹⁷⁵ Chaucer, *The Knight's Tale, Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. Introduction 1-111.

¹⁷⁶ Niall Ferguson, *Empire*, London: Penguin Books, 2004, p. 3.

¹⁷⁷ A. Demurger, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-50.

¹⁷⁸ Helen Nicholson, *The Knights Hospitallers*, London: The Boydell Press, 2001, pp. 1, 2.

¹⁷⁹ E. Bradford, *op. cit.*, pp. 107, 257-265. Jews of Babylon.

3.1.2. The Orders of Chivalry and Grandmasters' Armoury from the last crusade to the present times



[3.4] Knights Templars and Grand Commanders Jacques DeMolay

The Association of Italian Knights Sovereign Military order of Malta, called ACISMOM is placed in Rome, Luigi Ercole Morselli Street, n. 13 and was founded in 1877. It has numerous healthcare facilities including the most important San Giovanni Battista Hospital, specializing in rehabilitation, particularly in Neurorehabilitation. The structure has 240 beds meant for patient-treatments, a unit of awakening, a day hospital and a clinic.

Its institutional activity covers various assistance fields among them they supported the creation of hospitals, clinics, health departments and nursing homes. Since its foundation the association has set up a military Corp to be used in assistance in cases of natural disasters, such as earthquakes or conflicts, which is referred to as Auxiliary Military Corps of Italian Army. They also cooperate with the Grand Priories of Italy, who are mainly linked to the function of preserving the high spirituality and charitable activities, each in their respective Priory. The Order of Malta is one of the few Orders, which was born in the middle ages and is still active, its gentlemen members and volunteers are principally moved and animated by a strong high-mindedness and altruistic

behaviours and nowadays they fight against diseases, poverty and any type of social exclusions, defending and promoting their religious belief and educational projects.

3.1.3. The age of the Orders of Chivalry

Among the numerous manuals and resources collected in the archives to reconstruct the Orders of Chivalry historical periodization and categorization, an innovative source, was given by François Velde's Heraldica website, discussing important topics concerning Knighthood.

Beginning in the early 1100s for almost two centuries, the Crusaders represented the basis for the formation and the birth of a new type of institutions, which introduced some characteristics common to the monastic circle of old generation and the chivalry, a phenomenon that directed towards other countries, such as Spain and Eastern Europe. These noblemen were usually vowed to poverty, chastity and obedience, living a monastic life, because of their religious calling, devoted to guarding the Mediterranean and protecting the Christian merchantmen against Turks and Barbary Corsairs.¹⁸⁰ A crucial time was also represented from the period between 1335 to 1470. As a matter of fact, the Kings belonging and heading the most important monarchies of the epoch began to constitute new associations, in order to gather around them as many people as possible. Thus, the military orders¹⁸¹ reached their political development exactly during these reigns.

In addition to this, what is more from 1560 to the present times is the fact that this particular period covered an important role, observing a progressive transformation of the ancient Monarchic Orders, which saw breaking their previous hospice functions for the various pilgrims, converting these groups in real Honorific Orders, offering rewards. Furthermore, the last crusade on 7th October 1571, was a crucial date that indicated a strong galley's battle for the Mediterranean conquest. While, all these new honorific orders, have started developing since 1693, without possessing any type of nobility lineage's requisites.

¹⁸⁰ E. Bradford, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-139 and Allister Mac Millan, *Malta & Gibraltar Illustrated*, Valletta – Malta: Midsea Books, 1985, pp. 56-57.

¹⁸¹ A. Demurger, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-141.

3.1.4. The Great Siege of 1565 and ‘*The Maltese Messenger of the Grand Master*’

Many Maltese patriots showed great courage during the four-month Great Siege of 1565, during which the Order, the Maltese galleys and its citizen were deeply defeated by the Ottomans’ ferociousness.¹⁸² The protagonist, Toni Bajada, for instance, of the translated historical novel by Emilio Lombardi has remained famous for the way he used to spy on the Turks and for swimming at length to bring messages for the Grandmaster. However, there were others who were entrusted with specialised important works by La Vallette. Andrew Zahra, James Pace, Anton Cascia, Francis Xerri acted as spies and informed the Grandmaster¹⁸³ about the Turkish plans for the attacks. Girolamo Cassar and his brother Andrew, both of whom were military engineers, also helped to destroy the bridge that the Turks had built in order to attack Fort St. Michael. Andrew Cassar even invented a type of weapon with which he managed to destroy one of the catapults, which the Turks had placed on "Kordin" heights to shoot canon balls at "Birgu".¹⁸⁴

3.1.5. Origin of the Institution of the Knights’ Order

Among the writers who had a particular interest in the institution of the Orders of Chivalry can be found three main categories, which included the Templars, the Knights and the Grand Masters. In the collections’ developing these types of subjects and themes, authors such as Ernle Bradford, Desmond Seward, Victor Mallia and Piers Paul Read devoted much of their creations and works, giving their impressions of the discoveries about these disciplined Orders, which embodied the spirit of medieval Europe.

The first founders of the religious Orders of Chivalry¹⁸⁵ can be found particularly in the zones that interested the Western European Christendom in the middle ages. Thus, it was coming no surprise for the first historians had to focus their researches to that specific period of time and in those areas. The new brethren had joined these Orders, representing a fundamental institution during those troubled times, struck by fierce

¹⁸² Emilio Lombardi, *The Maltese Messenger of the Grand Master*, translated by Anthony Zarb Dimech and Salvino Lombardi, San Ġwann, Malta: Book Distributors Ltd., 2008, pp. 7, 8.

¹⁸³ Charles Mula, *The Princes of Malta, 1530 – 1798*, PEG Ltd, San Ġwann - Malta, 2000.

¹⁸⁴ Michael Galea, *Ġrajjet Storiċi*, San Ġwann, Malta: PEG, 2004, pp. 169-171.

¹⁸⁵ Eric Gerada, Azzopardi and Zuber, Christian, *MALTA, un’isola, una repubblica*, Boulogne, France: Editions Delroisse, 1980, pp. 151-154.

crusades, because called by a sense of belonging to a lasting religious belief and behavioural rules corresponding to their creed, which prevented them the subjugation, or to come and live by any type of compromise, that could had induced them to their soul's sin. Along the 14th century, as soon as the crusades ended up, monarchs used the symbols of these orders to create their own institutions, which could have contributed to help them look for new vassals, of whom to surround themselves. Immediately after the Renaissance, the old monarchical orders changed into honorific orders, this is the reason why, we are today accompanied in all our voluntary activities we accomplish, by all these particular institutions, such as The Order of Malta, The Order of the Holy Sepulchre, The Garter, The Golden Fleece, The Orders of Bath or Calatrava.

3.1.6. St. Bernard: The birth of a new vocation (1100 to 1350)

Towards the 12th century, Europe assisted a period of continuous pilgrimages and a new ecclesiastical reform, supported above all by the Cistercians Order, led by the French Abbot St. Bernard of Clairvaux.¹⁸⁶ In 1128, he witnessed the Council of Troyes, under the Pontificate of Pope Honorius II, during which the first Rules of the Knights Templar were established and regulated other matters of the Church of France.

It was only a matter of time and many movements were born, such as ecclesiastical Knights, Crusaders and Pilgrims. From his overcrowded monasteries, he directed his monks to the main European congregations in England, Germany, Ireland, Switzerland and Italy. Connected to this phenomenon new monastic orders can be found, which rose starting from the Benedictine experience,¹⁸⁷ such as the regular canons, which took care of the praise and the divine cult in collegiate and churches. Christian mobility along the European roads towards the Holy Land, both to visit the Holy Places and to organize the Crusades, produced the double consequence of the rediscovery of the places¹⁸⁸ linked to the whole long biblical history.

Back from the Holy Land's Pilgrimages they used to bring relics and memoirs

¹⁸⁶ F. Vaghi, *op. cit.* pp. 17, 22, 23.

¹⁸⁷ Helen Nicholson, *The Knights Hospitallers*, London: The Boydell Press, 2001, pp. 69-97.

¹⁸⁸ Young, John K., *Sacred sites of the Knights Templar*. Astronomers and Freemansons at Stonehenge, Rennes-le-Château, and Santiago de Compostela, Newton & Compton Editori srl, Roma, 2003 and Parrocchia di S. Giovanni Battista, *La Chiesa dei Templari a Tempio di Ormelle*, Cooperativa Servizi Culturali, S. Lucia di Piave, Treviso, 2001.

connected to those places in their countries, this is the reason why they devoted themselves to the construction of chapels and churches in order to guard them. In the period the orders were born, developing hospital, military and other mixed congregations that had monastic communities of regular canons as point of reference.

Filtering into the epoch that begins from the XIII century, we assist to numerous conflicts, pestilences, battles and hard contrasts with the Islam, imprisoned, slaves and sick were to the daily agenda. The creed in God answered to the needs of the afflicted populations, through the new intercession and activities conducted by the Hospitallers¹⁸⁹ Orders.

3.1.7. The First Templars



[3.5] Armour from Medieval Warfare Resources

A first idea of the Templar appeared in Sir Walter Scott novels, such as *Ivanhoe* with the Knight Brian de Bois-Guilbert, also *The Talisman* took place at the end of the third crusade, where the main protagonist is the Scottish Knight Sir Kenneth.

Tribute is due to the *Parsifal*, the opera in three acts by Richard Wagner, based on the 13th century epic poem of the Arthurian Knight Parzival.¹⁹⁰

The origins of the Orders of chivalry can be delineated starting from the 11th century and appearing in the Western Europe's military context, struggling against the

¹⁸⁹ Mallia, Prof. Victor, Milanes, *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, Mireva Publications Ltd., Msida, Malta, 1993, pp. 1-42.

¹⁹⁰ Piers Paul Read, *The Templars*, London: Phoenix, 2001, Preface pp. XI - XIII.

non-Christian populations on the Spanish and Middle East borders. As the authors often reported in their recounts the Knights' wars often employed the twofold commitment to religious and military life. Usually their books are composed of a general introduction of the main historical events linked to the orders' movements in the Mediterranean area, in order to give the readers a complete overview of their activities. The term "orders of chivalry" is used to refer to associations¹⁹¹ of fervent believers, dedicating to specific religious activities and following strict rules. It is also rather interesting to observe their peculiar inner organization, in fact, their duties usually took the form of vows, and the regulation of their sphere of activities took the form of an institutional corporation submitted to precise statutes and managed by officers. Ever since, orders of chivalry were rapidly developing, persisted the existence of ancient monastic orders, such as those belonging to the following religious groups Carthusians, Cistercians, Franciscans and Dominicans. According to their traditional aims they had to cooperate in order to fulfil various tasks including devotional and charitable activities, put up a desperate fight against the "unbelievers", favouring the protection of all the pilgrims or participating in defensive or offensive military operations.

The origins of the Order, which is known as the Knights Hospitaller of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, and of Malta,¹⁹² date back to around 1050, when the Republic of Amalfi obtained permission from Caliph Ali az-Zahir of Egypt to build a hospice in Jerusalem along with a church and convent to offer treatment and care to pilgrims of any faith or race. The hospice was built on the site of the monastery of Saint John the Baptist and was served by Benedictine brothers. Following the First Crusade, and under the guidance of its founder, the Blessed Gerard, the establishment of the Hospital and its Order was approved by one Papal Bull issued by Pope Paschal II in 1113.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ H. Nicholson, *op. cit.*, *The Order of St. John from 1798 to the present days*, pp. 138-146.

¹⁹² Aldo E. Azzopardi, *Malta e le sue isole*, Narni-Terni: Miller Distributed Limited, Plurigraf, 1991, p. 9.

¹⁹³ Simon Mercieca, *The Knights of St. John in Malta*, Photographer Kevin Casha, Malta: Miller distributors Ltd, 2010, pp. 9-11. Papal Bull.

3.2. The Knights' Association

One of the principal reasons why the members of the Orders of Chivalry¹⁹⁴ gained particular ecclesiastical privileges, among which donations or lands, was due to the fact that they were making an effort to belong to a new spiritual path. Obviously, their past history was therefore connected to the concept of property and landowning; their estates were called *commendatoriae* and were managed by appointed *commendatores*.

The Pope has always covered an important role in this circle, having the main authority to grant his approval to the orders' statutes or to officially recognize their institutions. Among his headquarters religious activities, he was busy, thanks to his advisors' collaboration, to affect a preventive control and abolishing an order, merging it with another order, reforming its statutes or appointing a Grand Master.¹⁹⁵ At the very beginning of their foundation, towards the twelfth century, the first generations of elderly Templars and Teutonic knights, were mainly focused on the Crusades, much more than the Holy Land, in fact they were never able to gain enough independence and territorial sovereignty, because of their continuous military assistance, and this could only had been possible just later on after the 14th century.

The fighting brotherhood of these monastic orders, thus called *Orders of Chivalry*, for whom taking part with their shipping troops to the military expeditions was a real professional activity.¹⁹⁶ Their strategic attacks, the launch of the nearly nine crusades in Jerusalem, Egypt and Africa, between 1099 and 1270, the defence of strong points and fortresses, describe the military potential of these monk-knights.

The crusaders' spirit, marching across desert lands, towards undefeated populations, against the Sultans' assaults, gave a contribution not only to the historical events of those times, but also to the network's martial appearance and means, which were formed.

¹⁹⁴ R. Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, London, 1970.

¹⁹⁵ Pawlu Mizzi,, *The Grand Masters of Malta*, photos 2000, Malta: Heritage Books, Revised edition, 2000, pp. 5-37.

¹⁹⁶ D. Steward, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-156.

3.2.1. The Feudal Cavalry

For a long time the cavalry has represented for a long time an important political and social Institution. In ancient Greece¹⁹⁷ cavalry meant “combatants on the chariot”, and it is stated that only one class of nobility owned horses and coaches; with the increasing importance of the democratic class, the cavalry remained as title of nobility and of social distinction.

In Rome,¹⁹⁸ the equites were Knights’ first citizens enrolled in 18-centuriaequitum fair publico. The cavalry had its great development in the middle ages, at the end of the Carolingian and Frank period. The first Knights were ferocious and outlaw, this depended on the structure of the Frank feud, granted by the Lord behind oath of allegiance and transmissible only to first-born son, at that time. The children, deprived of all the patrimonial incomes, used to obtain a horse and armour and risked everything, making their way through violence. These Knights usually stood at the service of any mercenary feudatory, who used to recruit them.

Only following the progress of civilization, a change in chivalry and knightly morality was established, giving military and social purposes to this type of Institution. A special education was imparted to the young nobleman who wanted to become a Knight: after a traineeship at the Court of a feudal Lord or King, there was the ceremony of dressing. In addition to the education in use of weapons,¹⁹⁹ there were studies that refined the mind and moral sense of the selected. Therefore, the cavalry in the middle ages became a synonym of courtesy, justice, defence,²⁰⁰ support of the weak and a tribute to beauty. Thus, the myth of the medieval knight arose, supported by these ideals, looking at the women as a source of inspiration and a pleasant oasis from the brutality of life. The life of chivalry was inspired by medieval songs and poems of cycles of deeds. In the 15th century, with the extinction of the feudal world, with the invention of firearms and the mercenary troops, cavalry declined and remained only as honorific title.

These Orders are called military-monastic to emphasize their dual nature, which

¹⁹⁷ Enciclopedia Minerva, Volume IV, pp. 148-149.

¹⁹⁸ Alberto Angela, *Una giornata nell'antica ROMA*, Milano: Mondadori, 2007, pp. 264-279.

Chapter: Ore 15:30 Arrivano i gladiatori!

¹⁹⁹ Michael Galea, Mintoff Mario and J. Bartolo, *MALTA The Palace of the Grand Masters and the Armoury*, Valletta, Malta: M.J. Publications, 1990, pp. 47-63.

²⁰⁰ J. Attard, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-62.

sets them apart, from any other organization of the time. While it may appear difficult for modern-day Christians to understand how one could sanctify oneself by killing, this notion did not seem shocking in a time that took the expression *Milites Christi* quite literally. Some orders, however, did separate their tasks having fighting knights next to praying chaplains. These orders reflected in their structure (chaplains, knights, sergeants) and the three Orders of feudal society (clergy, nobility and third estate).

3.2.2. The Sea Knights conquered Rhodes (1291-1319)

As in all the writings concerned about the Orders, an important place is covered by the major changes, which happened when the Kingdom of Acre,²⁰¹ an important stronghold in Palestine, fell in the hands of the Arabs, in 1291. At the very beginning, the Order sailed to take refuge in the island of Cyprus, while the remaining orders of chivalry had to reorganize themselves, having lost the Holy Land. Soon after, the Teutonic Knights completely transferred all of their activities first to Venice and then to Eastern Europe in 1309, where they faced the heathen populations of Poland and the Baltic territories. On the other hand, there are very interesting descriptions of life at the time the Order of Saint-John, headed by Grand Master Fulk of Villaret embarked to conquer the other Mediterranean island of Rhodes²⁰² in the year 1300. Converting into a real naval power, chasing after enemies, such as Barbary pirates, the Egyptians and the Ottoman forces. Hundred Knights used to live there, devoting their monastic lives to heal the patients in the great hospital, even if the main Hospitallers' activity was at sea having quite a great success against the Muslim traders. They tried to shelter and conquer the whole Dodecanese archipelago, where they could get the necessary supplies for their diets. Rhodes possessed two main ports, where their flotilla of galleys stationed and its market was one of the greatest in the Mediterranean provided with all the luxuries and spices needed. Their honey-coloured stone monastery represented the heart of the activities carried out by the Reverend Grand Master and his brethren, who were always ready to the attacks from the watchtowers.

In the meantime, the order of the Templars, which had become prominent bankers, resisted the attempts of merging with the Order of Saint-John. It was the King of

²⁰¹ E. Bradford, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-89 and P.P. Read, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-219, 235-243.

²⁰² D. Seward, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-242.

France Philip IV, who impatient with this resistance and irritated by the general morality disorder arrested them, to what followed Pope Clement V pronouncement of their dissolution, in 1312. Just two branches of the Templars survived in the form of new Orders: the Order of Christ in Portugal and the Order of Montesa in Spain.

3.2.3. Main Orders' Classifications (1335-1470)

Images of romanticized orders of chivalry of the past still persist in recent literature, thanks to the tales of the Knights of Saint-John ruling their kingdoms and above all by the popularity of the Arthurian novels,²⁰³ detailing the glorious times of the Knights of the Round Table.²⁰⁴ Even if, like most medieval poetry, *The Knight's Tale*, the first of the *Canterbury Tales* written in Middle English by Geoffrey Chaucer is not original in its story, because these writers did not use to invent their own stories, but uttered their thoughts:

Whilom, as olde stories tellen us...

Some classical written sources from Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio were still unknown in the English culture, furthermore the Italian poets expressed themselves in Latin, so we could presume his chivalric romance was translated from authentic Italian books, while he visited Italy, before the sixteenth century. Covering the role of diplomatic negotiator for the Royal business, reached Genoa and Florence in 1372, could speak French fluently, but was one of the first writers, who learned some Italian from merchants and bankers in London. The manuscripts Chaucer studied in Italy represented the basis for a creative borrowing, between the two cultures. Adventure is not the only aspect of Knightly activity, but medieval social rank by birth or marriage, wars against courtly love, religion and friendship, gentillesse and pitee or competition against judicial tournaments are recognized as the basis of the narrative process.

In the 14th centuries we saw the end of feudalism and the birth of powerful monarchies, which during the first few years developed as sorts of orders of chivalry, but with the aim to create a close circle of noblemen around the person of the sovereign.

²⁰³ Angela Bianchini, *Romanzi medievali d'amore e d'avventura*, Milano: Garzanti Libri S.p.A., 1985, pp. VII-XL.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 133-238.

The second generation of orders of chivalry, started including a wide variety of institutions, also Princes and Lords²⁰⁵ made a common use of badges and liveries, which they distributed to their servants and followers.

D'Arcy Boulton, a Canadian heraldic author, being a great connoisseur of the Orders has suggested a first classification of the associations, in 1987:

1. *Monarchical Orders*: organizations modelled as devotional confraternities, but whose presidential office was joint to a crown or dominion, and whose aim was loyalty to the President (Order of Garter and Golden Fleece).
2. *Confraternal Orders*: they look like the first one, but with an elective presidency and a cooperative membership. Boulton distinguished three additional classes among them:
 - *Princely Orders* founded by the Princes. Most were created after the Golden Fleece in 1430, but their presidency was not hereditary.
 - *Baronial Orders* were like the aristocratic versions of the professional guilds of the time.
 - *Fraternal Orders*: these were a form of brotherhood-in-arms, formed for a specific purpose and a limited duration. They distinguished by the use of the name "order" and of insignia.
3. *Votive Orders*: these were a form of association formed for a specific purpose and for a definite time, based on a vow. Only three of them are known, on the basis of their statutes.
4. *The Cliental Pseudo-Orders*: these were not really orders in that they had no statutes and no limited membership. They were a group bound by a simple oath of allegiance to a Prince, who bestowed a badge or insignia.
5. *Honorific Pseudo-Orders*: these bodies of knights required no specific obligations, and were usually just an honorific insignia bestowed with knighthood, upon a celebration or a pilgrimage.

To this end, various outward elements of the military-monastic orders were adapted. The members were knights, the head of the order was the Grand Master and insignia were developed, to be worn on their cloaks or in the form of badges, suspended from collars or

²⁰⁵ M. Galea, *op. cit.*, 26. Lord Baden Powell f'Malta, San Ġwann, Malta: PEG, 2004, pp. 87-89.

attached to vestments. The orders were placed under the protection of a tutelary saint and regularly held religious offices.²⁰⁶ The knights swore oaths of allegiance, but to the sovereign rather than to the rule of the order, which was never monastic in nature. The sovereign usually controlled the membership, at least to some degree.

3.2.4. Honorific Orders and the Maltese Cross

Among the Orders that survived or changed in nature in 1525, Garter in England, Annunziata in Savoy, Golden Fleece in Spain and Saint-Michel in France could be mentioned.

With the 16th century, the monarchs' transition from powerful head of the feudal pyramid to absolute ruler of a modern state was complete. The prestige which surrounded these monarchical orders made them useful for other purposes, namely honouring individuals or rewarding a good behaviour. Restriction of membership to the knightly class became meaningless as the knightly class itself had already evolved from a professional class to a hereditary caste.²⁰⁷

For some of the old military-monastic orders, the transition was sometimes hasty. Soon after the Reconquista²⁰⁸ in 1492, the Spanish orders were quickly brought under Royal control, with papal assent and some orders were also relieved of their vow of chastity. Similarly, the Pope approved the merger of the Order of Saint-Lazarus with Savoy's order of Saint-Maurice in 1572. The remaining estates of the order in France were joined with the newly created Order of Notre-Dame du Mont-Carmel in 1608. The French King never made himself Grand Master of the order, but carefully checked it, becoming protector and Grand Master in 1757. Thus, when a military-monastic order had estates over several countries, the ideas of various parts could diverge. The Teutonic Order was all at once secularized by the Elector of Brandenburg in 1525, which embraced Lutheranism.²⁰⁹ In England, Henry VIII²¹⁰ simply confiscated the assets of the Order of

²⁰⁶ Eric Gerada, Azzopardi and C. Zuber, *MALTA, un'isola, una repubblica*, Boulogne, France: Editions Delroisse, 1980, pp. 5-9, 54-62. Organization and importance of the local religious feasts.

²⁰⁷ Stephen Friar, *Heraldry for the Local Historian and Genealogist*, London: Grange Books, 1997, pp. 1, 4-5, 16-19, 26-40.

²⁰⁸ Mallia, Prof. Victor, Milanese, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

²⁰⁹ Giardina A., Sabbatucci G., Vidotto V., *L'Età Moderna*, Roma-Bari: Editori Laterza & Figli S.p.A., 1995, p. 99-102. Martin Luther.

²¹⁰ Giardina A., Sabbatucci G., Vidotto V., *op. cit.*, pp. 109-112. Henry VIII.

Saint-John, without any pretence of perpetuating the order. Even if, restored by Mary in 1557, it was finally abolished in England in 1560.

In the German lands, the Bailiwick of Brandenburg of the Order of Saint-John had already acquired more autonomy, and some of its Pories decided to embrace Protestantism.²¹¹ In 1648, the situation was settled by the Treaty of Augsburg, and the Evangelical Order of Saint-John emerged, with Hohenzollerns as Grand Masters. The transition from monarchical order to honorific orders was not easy at all in some cases.

3.2.5. The Grand Masters of Malta and new Orders towards the Nineteenth Century



[3.6] Grand Master Jean Parisot de la Valette, the founder of Valletta (1557-1568)

New orders soon multiplied throughout Europe, to serve the new purpose devolved on some of the old military-monastic orders or the more recent monarchical orders. In reality, they were honorific orders, designed either as a reward for past services to the sovereign, or as a way to confer prestige and distinction. Some of the orders maintained nobility requirements and limited membership, but many orders followed a pattern set by Louis XIV, when he created the *Order of Saint-Louis*, with a Maltese cross

²¹¹ Weber, Max, *L'etica protestante e lo spirito del capitalismo*, Original title: *Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, Milano: RCS Rizzoli Libri S.p.A., 1991, pp. 101-114, 157-214.

and red ribbon and sashes, he also imitated Maltese nomenclature with three ranks: Grand-cross, Commander and Knight. These ranks were awarded for military merit and had no nobility necessary qualifications. These categories cover a wide variety of orders, from pure merit orders to orders more closely connected to the monarchical orders of old (Saint-Esprit, San Gennaro, Constantinian Order). Santo Stefano Order is rather unique, in that it imposed substantial obligations on its members, and engaged in naval activities against piracy in the Mediterranean.²¹²

Evidence of the Grand Masters' influence in Malta can be found in many references, I have taken the following bibliographies, by the authors Pawlu Mizzi and Charles Mula, into very high consideration, because they offer to a large extent, an interesting scholarship to the new generations of the historical and civil development's path effected by the Maltese population during the Grand Masters' naval period. Moreover, the frescoes and portraits of the Grand Masters in Valletta and Mdina represented a very precious gem to draw inspiration from, for the numerous British writers on their traditional Grand Tour along Europe and the Mediterranean. For that matter by their published accounts ideal peculiarities are provided regarding their experience entirely.

On 26th October 1530, when Malta was given to the patronage of the Hospitallers, a French Grandmaster was sailing from Syracuse to the Convent of Birgu, which he wanted to restore, his name was *Philippe Villiers De L'Isle Adam*²¹³, King of Aragon and Sicily. His first attempts were to completely change the island's previous administration, dividing it into two parts and imposing a new civil jurisdiction of magistrates, who passed new criminal laws opposing the Università²¹⁴ local system. He passed away at Rabat, always very worried about the economical situation of the land and succeeded by the Piedmontese Grand Master, *Pietro Del Ponte*, in 1534. He is mostly remembered because of the Gran Carracca's and galleys shipping enterprises carried out to support Charles V's armada in Tunis, against the corsair Ariadeno Barbarossa. He fought and won against the Maltese villages' raids and slavery, favouring the Christians' victory.

Another particular Knight was the Aragonese, *Juan D'Omedes*, who in 1536

²¹² Joseph Muscat and Cuschieri, Andrew, *Naval activities of the Knights of St. John*, S.ta Venera - Malta: Midsea Books Ltd., 2002, pp. 14, 15.

²¹³ Pawlu Mizzi, *The Grand Masters of Malta*, Malta: photos 2000, Heritage Books, Revised edition, 2000, p. 5.

²¹⁴ C. Mula, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-36.

pretended to improve the island emergencies, but imposing new taxes and reducing salaries, not to mention he had to face the Turkish corsair Dragut attacks in Gozo several times. This is the reason why he called once again the engineer Leone Strozzi to inspect and reinforce Malta's fortifications in a new different way.

The successive elected Grand Master had to be strong enough to fight against a dangerous enemy in the Mediterranean and be valorous and brave to protect the whole archipelago, the next candidate was the French Knight *Claude De La Sengle*, in 1553, to whom was dedicated the rocky promontory of the city of Senglea. He extended the islands' fortifications, because realized was a necessary work to be carried out, against the enemy attacks and for defence. Furthermore, at the beginning of October 1555, they submitted a great loss four galleys of the Orders sank, with nearly 600 men of the whole fleet, because of very bad grigal sea weather conditions. During the same year, he witnessed the first collections acquired from the deceased Knights donated to the Order and gathered together by the National Library in Valletta, contributing to the publishing of important criminal laws.

*Jean Parisot de la Valette*²¹⁵ from the Langue of Provence, became Grand Master, very young at only twenty years old, on 21st August 1557, bearing the responsibility to reinforce the Order. Being elected Master he fought several years against the Turkish attacks of Suleiman The Magnificent, who wished to expel the Knights from Malta as he previously did from Rhodes. Having declared war on the Order, he landed in Malta onboard 138 galleys, on 18th May 1565, but La Valette was definitely not going to surrender and with the help of 400 Spanish Knights, who joined from Sicily, women and children support, silently encircled the enemy during the nights. Despite having lost Fort St. Elmo, the inner port of Marsa, represented a defensive crucial point, during the four month Siege against the Turks, permitting the way out to the Grand Harbour by land, avoiding to be intercepted from the other forts. Their withdrawal meant a great victory for La Valette, Pope Pius V offered him a personal sign of prestige, represented by a cardinal's hat, but he refused accepting the possibility to build a new city for his population he fought for in his Faith, as a gentlemen and a warrior. The laid of the first stone of the city of Valletta, taught us that inspired by simplicity of the efforts to struggle altogether, they reached a very high ideal of freedom and unity, also in a small island like

²¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 63-94.

Malta.

During the whole sixteenth century, other great Masters were considered valiant Commanders and supported the Orders' activities, among them can be remembered *Pietro Del Monte, La Cassière and Hughes de Verdalle*. The first one, an Italian dedicated to the finishing of the building of the capital, during the time of the great battle fought in the Gulf of Lepanto on 28th October 1571. His successor, thanks to the period of peace, paid for the construction of a majestic monument, the conventual's church of St. John, where are buried all the great Grand Masters of Malta. While on the other hand, the last one was well-known for the Palace, which was given his name Verdalle Palace, close to Rabat and Il-Buskett, nowadays summer residence of the President of Malta. The Knight of French Language, *Alof De Wignacourt*²¹⁶ was elected Grand Master on 10th February 1601 and his main civil achievement was to bring precious water supply to Valletta utilizing an aqueduct from the other side of the island, in Mdina.

Other four Grand Masters were of great importance, during the seventeenth century, a difficult plague and bloody war time against the Turkish fleet, consisting of the eighty-gun Sultana galleon, among them can be mentioned *Jean Paul Lascaris Castellar, Raphael and Nicholas Cotoner* and *Adrien De Wignacourt*. Lascaris, the chief executor of a progressive return to a former great period, this meant the promulgation of a range of internal laws, connected to public and civil regulations, procedure and police in 1640. Another step forward was taken, with the introduction of the first printing press in the island, on 25th May 1644, even if then some of those books could be confiscated. The brothers Cotoner,²¹⁷ Bailiffs of Majorca, respectively devoted to the enlargement of the Sacred Infirmary Raphael and to the Cottonera Three-Cities semicircular fortifications' constructions Nicholas. On the other hand, Adrien de Wignacourt, nephew of Grand Master Alof, was elected on 24th July 1690 and was famous being Grand Treasurer of the whole Order. An earthquake catastrophe afflicted Sicily at the very beginning of 1693, causing thousands of human losses, the Grand Master's men, restored the damaged sides of the islands and he in first person supported the local families. Soon after, he built an arsenal for the construction of galleys and was keen on modifying the model of all the ships' Order.

The Grand Masters' hairstyle completely changed by the mid-18th century, during

²¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 129-136.

²¹⁷ P. Mizzi, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

the Age of Enlightenment, emphasizing their sumptuousness. *Marcantonio Zondadari*²¹⁸ born in Siena in 1720 and nephew of the Pope Alexander VII, used to serve on the galleys of the Religion of Naples and soon became Commander and Admiral. He re-organized the Orders' fleet and allows the Christian ships to enter free in the Grand Harbour, opposing in this way to piracy. After sometime also the social extraction of the Grand Masters improved, fact underlined by their noble origins, this is the case of the Portugues *Antonio Manoel De Vilhena*, who was very fond on shipping too and Captain of the Admiral's Galley. He covered several important roles during his naval career, such as Colonel of the Militia, Commissioner of the Navy and Grand Chancellor. Vilhena, like Raphael Cotoner, became also great patron and protector of the arts, dedicating to the building of the Public Theatre in Valletta. Instead, *Emanuel Pinto De Fonseca*, who passed away at the age of 92 and *Emanuel De Rohan Polduc*²¹⁹ (1775-1797), are renowned as example of Grand Masters dedicating their studies to the civil rights and the Code of Laws called after him, De Rohan. An important ancient constitutional law book, promulgated in two volumes in 1782, containing many new reforms, the main customs and traditions of the local Maltese legislation. The following elected Grand Master the first German was indeed, *Ferdinand Von Hompesch*²²⁰ born in Bolheim in 1797, who was representative of the Order at the Court of Vienna and had to face a severe commercial and industrial decline. He made every effort to learn Maltese, in order to help his population, publishing various security laws and integrating in the villages of Siggiewi (or Città Ferdinand) and Żabbar (also known as Città Hompesch). He represented the expulsion of the Grand Masters from Malta, in fact after the 472 fleet's arrival of Napoleon Bonaparte,²²¹ on 8th June 1798, hoping to make Malta and the Mediterranean a French possession and the country people tired of the Knights' despotism, he had to capitulate and abdicate on 6th July 1799. But the absence of the Knights' rules on the island, soon showed the impossibility to exercise self-govenment alone and this situation of isolation required the election of another group of Grand Masters, coming from Russia too, such as *Tzar Paul I*, during the period 1798 to 1888.

The succeeded Grand Masters and the Lieutenants of the nineteenth century,

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 26

²¹⁹ C. Mula, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-234.

²²⁰ Ibid., pp. 235-242.

²²¹ E. Bradford, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

started living during the British rule in Malta and saw the reconstruction of the languages of Italy, Spain and Germany. One of the last and well-known Grand Masters of English origins to be remembered was *Fra' Andrew Bertie*, born in 1988, who passed away in Rome in 2008. The Maltese Association of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, set up in Valletta in 1965, collaborated through diplomatic relations with many foreign countries all over the world and is represented in important organizations, during experts' meetings, such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

By now, the religious character of the orders have almost disappeared, and the 19th century witnessed a lot of political disorders, and the development of new forms of government, military dictatorships, constitutional monarchies and republics.

3.2.6. Evolution of the principal Military-Monastic Orders

Nowadays, the original military-monastic orders have submitted various changes, turning their main activities from the military aim to those of international representatives taking part in the local hospital and voluntary services' associations.

To sum up their evolution until the present times:

- *The Order of Saint-John* lost its territorial sovereignty in 1798. Since then, it has retained its statutes and is dedicated to medical and charitable activities recognized at international level.
- *The Templars*, the very first uniformed army in the Western territories were abolished in 1312.
- *The Teutonic Knights* left their status as order of chivalry in 1929 and became a simple religious order.
- *The Order of Saint-Lazarus* split into two branches, one obeying the papal orders and merging with the order of Saint-Maurice in 1572, the other falling under the protection of the French Crown in 1608. In July 1791, it was definitely abolished by Louis XVI.
- *The Portuguese orders* were all secularized in 1789, and remained as national orders. Abolished at the fall of the monarchy in 1910, they were recreated as national orders in 1918. *Avis* currently rewards military services, *Christ* rewards

civilians and foreigners, and *Santiago*²²² rewards accomplishments in arts and sciences.

- *The Spanish orders* (Santiago, Calatrava, Alcantara, and Montesa), secularized in the late 15th, being abolished in 1873-74, and were abolished for the Spanish law in 1934. Their activities were unofficially revived in 1978, and King Juan Carlos I is their Grand Master and Perpetual Administrator on behalf of the Holy See. They are therefore dynastic orders of the Royal House of Spain.

3.3. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's voyage in the Mediterranean

The close friendship between Coleridge and Wordsworth emerged from a piece of work among the selected poetry by Coleridge dedicated to Wordsworth, where the deep philosophy of Nature and the metaphor of life as a circular journey is perfectly conceived. The passage I quote below opens with a literal account of their voyages and feelings during their formative years and maturity, where the authors reflected and narrated those travels in an introspective way, as a sort of spiritual path of mind, throughout and during the crossing of various different countries.

My soul lay passive, by thy various strains driven as in surges now beneath the stars,
With momentary stars of my own birth, fair constellated foam, still darting off
into the darkness; now a tranquil sea, outspread and bright, yet swelling to the moon.²²³

Coleridge stayed in Malta for sixteen months, sailing for the Mediterranean hoping to restore his precarious health²²⁴ too. During the first three months of 1804 he spent frenetically most of his time planning and collecting advice and equipments for this tour. From his diary and friends' letters we can reconstruct his whole journey, starting on 6th April 1804 on Captain John Findlay's boat, called Speedwell, in Portsmouth. His first decisions to leave for Malta arose in August 1803, because of Dr. John Stoddart²²⁵

²²² D. Seward, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-19.

²²³ S.T. Coleridge, *The Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Prose and Verse: Complete in one Volume*, Philadelphia: Thomas Cowperthwait, 1840, p.42.

²²⁴ D. Sultana, *op. cit.*, p. 11. Favourable climate and the British health.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 55, 56. Dr. John Stoddart friendship.

invitation, Advocate at the Admiralty Court in Malta, even if at first he thought to stop just as far as Sicily. He was a man of only 31, carrying curly black hair and with large eyes, who could not breathe properly, approached the harbour warmly dressed, as did not expect to find a covered shelter onboard a ship of such small dimensions, with the crew reduced to its half. For the most part it consisted of the Master of Mr. Edridge, the Mate, four seamen and two boys, just as soon as they left London other three deckhands were added.

He felt very excited, because the vessel departure was often postponed, before actually leaving. As a consequence of the bad winter weather conditions in England, he suffered from poor health, as many other English authors who reached Malta during those periods of time, hoping to heal thanks to the warmer climate. Coleridge's fellow-travellers were the Lieutenant Mr. Hastings and the housekeeper in a general's family Mrs. Ireland. He did not have a good knowledge of shipping, but was fascinated by the sailing techniques, the great merchant ship convoys gathered together in the harbours ready to leave for the Mediterranean, and realized the economical importance of the British Fleets movements in that strategic area. Many Commodors were well-trained and in charge of escorting convoys there, which was a very difficult maritime activity, but most of the passengers were not ready to face stormy winds gusts or rough seas. In fact, the English fleet forces were also in charge to keep a watch over Toulon and the Spanish ports, defending the merchant convoys from privateers in Gibraltar and the Eastern side of the Mediterranean.

During Coleridge's journey his work programme consisted of books' composition, such as *Consolations and Comfort*, in the morning and devoting himself entirely to poetry in the afternoon, soon after tea time. Being fond of reading and edifying literature he had brought with him among his favourites a book of mineralogy, works by Pascal and Marcus Aurelius Leibnitz's *Essais de Theodicée sur la Bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal*, a folio of Sir Thomas Browne, dated 1686 and a copy of the *Divina Commedia* of Dante Alighieri, because he was studying Italian grammar. He tried to recollect all the necessary observations to re-publish the new revised version of *The Ancient Mariner*, thirteen years later. He noted in the journal he kept also in Malta, about the astronomical twilights and the moving waves' foam he observed from the Speedwell's deck, hearing the frenetic chatters of the crew about one

thing and another. To face this voyage he brought various personal belongings, among which cloths, notebooks, kitchen supplements, medicines and his inseparable spirit of wine. His horrible nightmares were beyond description, in many of his notes he reported the half-conscious sleepless minded states he had to tolerate, probably caused by the opium he was given to reduce the chronic side effects of gout, which started showing in 1800.

In mid April, before being off Oporto, he gave details in his reddish-brown leather memoranda to nostalgic daydreaming about the northern hills and lakes. On 19th April Cape Trafalgar was reached and the day after they went ashore in Gibraltar, luckily without bearing any type of privateer's convoy attack. By the time they continued their journey towards the Mediterranean, some miles south of Cartagena, he started writing in his new black leather notebook all his glanced impressions. At the beginning of May they were close to the Balearic Islands, such as Formentera and Majorca, willing to arrive in Malta within a fortnight. In the meantime, onboard he kept on reading his books and telling anecdotes about his children. The convoy was supposed to reach the island on 16th May 1804 at noon time, their delay was caused by sudden unfavourable winds, in fact the vessel docked on 18th May, receiving permission to enter the harbour by the signal tower. This travel was a very profitable activity, as while he was in Malta, Coleridge was appointed as Secretary to the Governor Alexander Ball.²²⁶

Letter CLVI dated 20th April 1805 by Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Daniel Stuart, Volume 2.

LETTER TO DANIEL STUART.

Favoured by Captain Maxwell of the Artillery. —
N. B., an amiable mild man, who is prepared to give you any information.

Malta, April 20, 1805.

DEAR STUART,

— The above is a duplicate, or rather a sex or *septem*-plicate of an order sent off within three weeks after my draft on you had been given by me ; and very anxious I have been, knowing that all or almost all of my letters have failed. It seems like a judgment on me. Formerly, when I had the sure means of conveying letters, I neglected my duty through

²²⁶ Maurice H., Micallef Eynaud, *Malta during the British Era*, Valletta – Malta: Allied Publications, 2010, pp. 7-15. Captain Alexander Ball (1756-1809).

indolence or procrastination. For the last year, when, having all my heart, all my hope in England, I found no other gratification than that of writing to Wordsworth and his family, his wife, sister, and wife's sister ; to Southey, to you, to T. Wedgwood, Sir. G. Beaumont, etc. Indeed, I have been supererogatory in some instances — but an evil destiny has dogged them — one large and (forgive my vanity !) rather important set of letters to you on Sicily and Egypt were destroyed at Gibraltar among the papers of a most excellent man, Major Adye, to whom I had entrusted them on his departure from Sicily, and who died of the Plague FOUR DAYS after his arrival at Gibraltar. But still was I afflicted (shame on me ! even to violent weeping) when all my many, many letters were thrown overboard from the Arrow, the Acheron, and a merchant vessel, to all which I had entrusted them ; the last through my own over care. For I delivered them to the captain with great pomp of seriousness, in my official character as Public Secretary of the Islands. He took them, and considering them as public papers, on being close chased and expecting to be boarded, threw them overboard ; and he, however, escaped, steering for Africa, and returned to Malta. But regrets are idle things.

In my letter, which will accompany this, I have detailed my health and all that relates to me. In case, however, that letter should not arrive, I will simply say, that till within the last two months or ten weeks my health had improved to the utmost of my hopes, though not without some intrusions of sickness ; but *latterly* the loss of my letters to England, the almost entire non-arrival of letters from England, not a single odc from Mrs. Coleridge or Southey or you; and only one from the "Wordsworths, and that dated September, 1804! my consequent heart- saddening anxieties, and still, still more, the depths which Captain John Wordsworth's death sunk into my heart, and which I heard abruptly, and in the very painfullest way possible in a public company — all these joined to my disappointment in my expectation of returning to England by this convoy, and the quantity and variety of my public occupations from eight o'clock in the morning to five in the afternoon, having besides the most anxious duty of writing public letters and memorials which be- longs to my talents rather than to my *pro-tempore* office ; these and some other causes that I cannot mention relative to my affairs in England have produced a sad change indeed on my health; but, however, I hope all will be well. ... It is my present intention to return home overland by Naples, Ancona, Trieste, etc., on or about the second of next month.

The gentleman who will deliver this to you is Captain Maxwell of the Royal Artillery, a well-informed and very amiable countryman of yours. He will give you any information you wish concerning Malta. An intelligent friend of his, an officer of sense and science, has entrusted to him an essay on Lampedusa, which I have advised him to publish in a newspaper, leaving it to the Editor to divide it.

It may, perhaps, need a little *softening*, but it is an accurate and well-reasoned memorial. He only wishes to give it *publicity*, and to liave not only his name concealed, but every circumstance that could lead to a suspicion. If after reading it you approve of it, you would greatly oblige him by giving it a place in the " Courier." He is a sensible, independent man. For all else to my other letter. — I am, dear Stuart, with faithful recollections, your much obliged and truly grateful friend and servant,²²⁷

S. T. COLERIDGE.

²²⁷ Letter CLVI dated 20th April 1805 by Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Daniel Stuart, Volume 2, pp. 493-496.

Soon after his return to England Coleridge started drafting all his huge successful proses, he had half a mind to write literary projects including plays about Gibraltar and Malta, political commentaries, essays and his voyages in verses. He was inspired by and confronted with the members of his London circle: Wordsworth, James Tobin, Southey, Tom Wedgwood, Lamb and Humphry Davy. Among his wide poems' productions, written between 1795 and 1807, are to be considered *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Kubla Khan*, *Christabel*, *The Eolian Harp*, *Reflections on having left a Place of Retirement*, *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison*, *Frost at Midnight*, *Fears in Solitude*, *The Nightingale*, *Dejection: An Ode*, *The Pains of Sleep*, and *To William Wordsworth*, *Early Visions, 1772-1804*, *Darker Reflections, 1804-1834*.

The increased curiosity to explore new lands and worlds emerged very early with the construction of the first galleys, an aspect Coleridge deeply underlined in his lyrical ballad in archaic form *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. This poem was inspired by James Cook's exploration voyages. In a broad outline, he re-evoked a sailor's experience, after returning from a long sea voyage he narrated his adventure to a passer-by. The poet, as a real story-teller, gives emphasis to various aspects connected to the voyage, such as the way they were taken by surprise finding themselves in new unknown sites, the psychological effects of travelling on the Mariner, the feelings of suffering, fate and loneliness, being excluded from civilization, the power of Nature over man prevailing. At the end of the poem, Coleridge describes the Mariners' sense of respect and harmony for the natural and spiritual world, crossing smooth seas where one can experience also the sublime, far away from the pleasures of societies.

3.3.1. The Phoenicians' first shipping routes to Malta



[3.7] The Phoenician trading routes in the Mediterranean

Multiple authors are dedicated in studying and discovering the origins of the Phoenician people,²²⁸ who held considerable importance in the Mediterranean commercial relations and trade exchanges, among them we can particularly mention Brian Blouet, Maria Eugenia Aubet and Charles Dalli.

Furthermore, it is interesting to analyze what inspired such a curiosity in our protagonist William Turner, who as reported in the book *‘Journal of a tour in the Levant’*, left Malta on 28th May 1812 and reached Greece three days later. Later on, returned to travel to Syria and Egypt in February 1815 and wanted to visit the Holy Land and the pyramids. A real wandering scholar in the Levant, ready to join vessels’ navigations and look for local interpreters of Embassies²²⁹ to enter into a world of which coming from the United Kingdom ignored almost completely the cultures and languages. Loving and being brought so much for the art, those archaeological finds may have whetted his investigation of researcher. Curiously, at the entrance greets us, in the capital of Valletta, the imposing Hotel called Phoenicia, therefore, we can imagine how the intuition of a scholar of navigation felt inspired by such historical and artistic contexts. The phrases he reported in his diary reflect his inner feelings:

²²⁸ Major Alexander George Chesney, *Historical records of the Maltese Corps of the British Army*, Malta: Melitensia Books, 1986, pp. 1-5.

²²⁹ John Murray, *Journal of a Tour in the Levant*, Volume 1 Malta, Northumberland-Court, London: W. Clowes, 1820, pp. 62-63, Chapter IV Interpreters of Embassies.

We had a light north-east breeze, by favour of which we went down the river at an easy rate. How superlatively beautiful was the bright sun-set behind the thick palm groves on the west bank of the Nile.

The island's name comes from the Phoenician 'Malet (h)' that means 'refuge', in close connection to the early ports that this population founded in the island. In fact, around the year 1000 BC., these merchantmen left Syria coast sailing in purple boats venturing by sea up to the Maltese shores. Their main purpose was actually to open new commercial connections²³⁰ and therefore they settled in many of the major islands of the Mediterranean, such as North Africa, Cyprus, Rhodes, Sicily, Sardinia and apart Malta, Corsica even in Spain. Having the Phoenicians²³¹ a strictly coastal navigation usually used the islands' moorings and its natural harbours as water or food supplying and rest area.

In addition to the main port of Valletta, they were attracted for easy of achievements from the ports of Marsaxlokk in the South of Malta, which was very well-known for its fishing market and Mġarr in the island of Gozo, not so far from the Citadel²³² fortifications and its megalithic temples of Ġgantija.²³³ Importations and relations between these two populations were highly fundamental for Malta, because considerable shortage of water or adapted water-systems during that period and the rocky territory did not allow the growing of all types of raw materials necessary to produce various finished products. More specifically, in addition to the commercial progress many inscriptions in the Phoenician language have been found and deciphered, not to mention the small gods, marble candelabras and vases in stones of funeral rites. Thanks to all these objects, which they used to trade mostly with the Greeks and were found in numerous local villages, the 'Canaanniti' culture developed greatly. In their time they were skilled seamen and builders of ships, which allowed them to negotiate several products important for their survival, including the Cornwall tin, the iron rings and nails or the flat cast joined figurine merged into lead from Spain.

²³⁰ J. Muscat and A. Cuschieri, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

²³¹ Maria Eugenia Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies and Trade*, Cambridge: University Press, 2001, pp. 12, 13.

²³² Mgr. Nicholas Cauchi, *Ta' Pinu Shrine*, Gozo, Malta: 2nd Edition, Ta' Pinu Publications, 2008, pp. 9-10, 59-66, 129 and Stephen Spiteri, *Fortresses of the Knights*, Malta: BDL, 2001, pp. 237-243.

²³³ Aldo E. Azzopardi, *Malta e le sue isole*, Narni - Terni: Miller Distributed Limited, Plurigraf, 1991, p. 106. Ġgantija Temples in Gozo.

The Etruscan²³⁴ silver, ivory and ebony wood from Africa and India, together with honey, spices. Furthermore, the Mesopotamian linen textiles and the glass potteries, as the precious artifacts at Ta' Qali, just down the hill of the older capital Mdina. The last Phoenician and Punic inventory ruins found in the island made emerge collections²³⁵ of potteries of various shapes, especially in tombs and earthly or underwater caves. Among them the archeologists have rediscovered amphorae, urns, jars, bowls, open pots, incense cups, cooking pots and lamps. (Most of them have been catalogued in St. Agatha's Museum and in Dr. Claudia Sagona catalogue observations).

Combining the legend of the King of Tyre and the Homeric texts calling the Phoenicians 'Sidones', not only their own trading empire, but also the linked Roman Empire and Byzantine cultures or excavations can be appreciated. Interestingly, together with the Roman port's remains, various scholars, such as Anthony Bonanno and David Trump underlined the importance of the roads' margins and stonework, the large number of anchors found in Salina Bay and the agricultural estates of over thirty Roman villas. The most famous of which is the peristyle court of the Roman Villa²³⁶ in the Silent City of Mdina, called *Domvs Romana*, with its mosaic pavements, furnished of marble statues with busts of Roman personalities and terracotta masks. For the most interested scholars, nowadays the Auberge de Provence in Republic Street houses the National Archaeology²³⁷ Museum of Valletta, these earliest prehistoric and artistic representations, dating back to the Neolithic period, from Għar Dalam cave and Tarxien catacombs, contains also the still studied "*Sleeping Lady figurine*"²³⁸ from Hal Saflieni Hypogeum.

3.3.2. Naval strength of the Knights

The authors who have mostly undertaken specific researches on the Order's fleet in Malta and had a lifelong interest in the Maritime history, are Anton Quintano, Joseph Muscat - model maker restorer - and Father Andrew Cuschieri.

²³⁴ Anthony Bonanno, *Malta: Phoenician, Punic and Roman*, Photography Daniel Cilia, Malta: Midsea Books Ltd., 2005.

²³⁵ Claudia Sagona, *Beyond the Homeland: Markers in Phoenician Chronology* (Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement), Malta: Peeters Bvba, 2008.

²³⁶ A. Azzopardi, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-111. *Domvs Romana*.

²³⁷ Eric Gerada, Azzopardi and Zuber, Christian, *MALTA, un'isola, una repubblica*, Boulogne, France: Editions Delroisse, 1980, p. 106. Main archaeological sites map of the Maltese islands.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 108-112.

Furthermore, nowadays the technological innovations developed several great filmed reconstructions, especially with 3D contemporary graphic images, of the whole sailing age, of the most famous ancient ships and the Royal Navy activities in the Mediterranean. It is a unique compilation tracing the history of the British shipping, throughout the presentation of programmes and scenes featuring wonderful vessels such as liners, warships and steamers, the Masters' tactics and their battles. It is a real exciting didactical exploration from the pages of books to visual and auditory learning.

Being the most Maltese authors devoted to Knights' galleys recounts, they emphasized in their books, also the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, known as the Order of Rhodes and Malta, as a military, religious and Hospitaller Order of Knights.

In the past ships were built to convey troops into battle, but from this particular point of view the Order's Navy²³⁹ covered the aspect of a real first aid aim.

If we try to trace and underline the importance of the long Order's navy presence²⁴⁰ in the Mediterranean area, it is interesting to notice the main factors which influenced it. From first the activities of the fleet of St. John were carried out for more than six centuries, secondly its harbours and squadrons acted as rampart of European Christianity, containing the strongest Turkish and Barbary naval attacks and finally, but not less important, the navy and its Knights had a great influence on the future generations. The navy of the Order of St. John does not exist anymore, but when we give a glance to the ancient remains, we can observe the presence of numerous hospital services, historical-artistic entertainment recreations and documentaries turned to the interested scholars, which are based on the religious principles of the Knights.

The place of the earliest galleys²⁴¹ is now covered by a prompt fleet of the white-cross first aid vehicles, numerous skilful hospitals have taken the place of the previous wall fortifications, an item of clothing like the nurses' uniforms has substituted for the Knights' armoury uniforms and the frenetic naval battles in the Mediterranean has become a real worldwide voluntary activity towards weaker population.

It is then not a surprise, as many references report, that once in Malta the

²³⁹ Anton Quintano, *The Maltese Hospitaller Sailing Ship Squadron 1701-1798*, San Ġwann-Malta: P.E.G. Ltd., 2003, pp. 11-22.

²⁴⁰ Robert von Dauber and Antonio Spada, *The Navy of the sovereign Military Order of Malta*, Brescia: Grafo, 1992, p. 111.

²⁴¹ J. Muscat and A. Cuschieri, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-11. Arrival of the Order of St. John's galleys *San Filippo*, *San Giovanni* and *Santa Croce* carrying the Grand Master Philip Villiers de L'Isle Adam in the Grand Harbour of Malta.

Hospitallers were active in strengthening their resources, but in naval and military terms. Rhodes represented a Garden of Eden for the Order from 1309 to 1522, but after King Charles V donation²⁴² of Malta island and their arrival in 1530 a new and significant challenge was proposed to them to change forever the political, economical and social character of the first farming small Maltese and Gozitan communities.

The organization of the Order's navy was slightly different from that of other navies. The ranks followed precise regulations, in fact the Knights made specific vows of chastity, poverty or obedience and the novices were often appointed onboard the ships too and were subject to the same Order's religious laws.²⁴³ Overall there was the Prior of the Church, who was responsible for the religious rules and to whom the Prior of the Galleys together with the Prior of the sailing warship appealed. Another important role was covered by the activity of the Chaplains, known as Vice priors or Missionary Fathers, whose duty was to celebrate a 'dry Mass', offering moral support to the members and paying also particular attention to the brothers on board the galleys outside Malta, the boys in service or all the rowers. Therefore, the spiritual atmosphere on the Order's galleys and warships was deeply different from the one on other nations' ships.

The authors often carried the news that the navy of St. John of Jerusalem's special character consisted of hospitality, together with their professional functions in the specialized areas of medicine, health and quarantine. One of their main tasks was to offer the transport of the religious and medical care of the pilgrims in the Holy Land on the Order's ships during the Middle Ages; the naval protection²⁴⁴ of pilgrimages from corsair pirates and Muslim enemies (the freeing of Christian slaves from Muslim boats), the rescue of medical care and sailors of all the creeds, the protection of the coastal Christian population from raids made by pirates, corsairs and Muslim fleets, the transport and distribution of food in time of famine, help in times of catastrophes, as was the case with the last great earthquake in Sicily. Particularly the Hospitaller from the Langue of France was in charge of all the Order's works of hospitality, while the Grand Master kept up with the hospital services. Among other components of the crew there were the

²⁴² Allister Mac Millan, *Malta & Gibraltar Illustrated*, Valletta – Malta: Midsea Books, 1985, p. 57, Cession to the Knights of St. John, p. 170, illustration of Queen Mary and His Majesty King George V.

²⁴³ Malcom Barber, *The Military Orders: fighting for the faith and caring for the sick*, Brookfield: Vt: Variorum, Aldershot, 1994, Chapter 39 by James Brundage 'Lawyers of the Military Orders', pp. 346-357.

²⁴⁴ Victor Mallia Milanese, *op. cit.*, pp. 388-397. Knights, Corsairs and Pirates.

Commanders of the squadrons of galleys, a surgeon, the barber-surgeons and their assistants.

During the eighteenth century the senior caravanist, was called “*Re di Galera*” and had to principally sign all the medicines’ prescriptions. We have learned from the major historical Maltese sources that in the Middle Ages the Order’s navy was already using hospital ships, similar to the Greek and Roman *Grippo*, for example during the naval battle at Laiazza in 1510, when the Order used two transport ships, as infirmary ships,²⁴⁵ and in 1523, when the fleet struck with the plague in Sicily and the fleet of the white cross fitted a galleon out as a hospital ship. Health care on the Order’s galleys and ships developed quickly to high level of standards, thanks to the continuous contact with the main ports’ health centres.



[3.8] The arrival of the Order of St. John in Malta, 26th October 1530, Maritime Museum

3.3.3. Different types of ships and galleys

Naval historians have delineated an archival research in order to present an explanatory list of the Knights’ galleys’ main features.²⁴⁶ In Vittoriosa, the first harbour city in Malta, on the site of the old galley Arsenal of the Knights of Malta, by the Maritime Museum - once used as a bakery of the Royal Navy - a wide range exhibition of

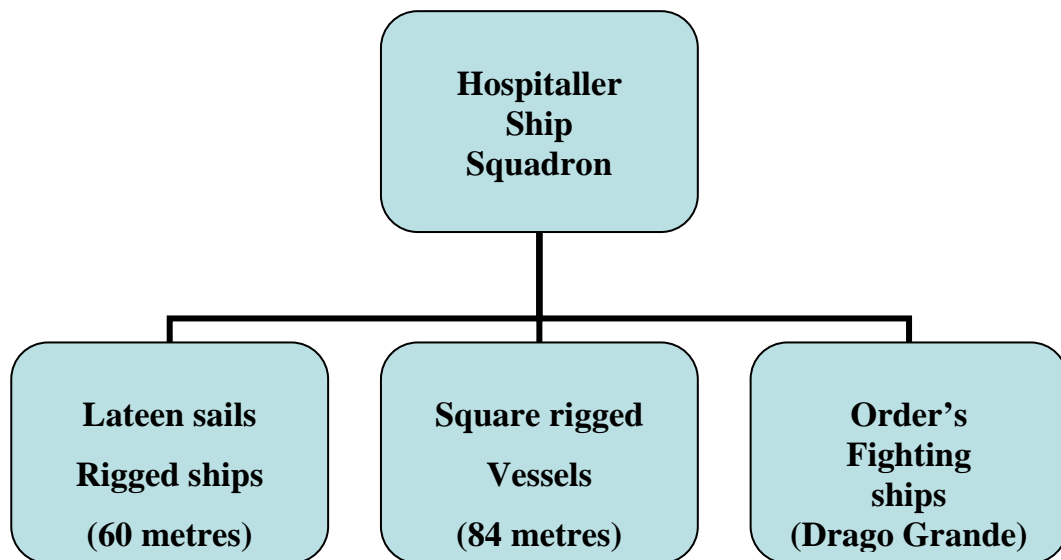
²⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 377- 388.

²⁴⁶ Ubaldino Mori Ubaldini, *La Marina del Sovrano Militare Ordine di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme, di Rodi e di Malta*, Roma: Regionale Editrice, 1971, pp. 72-85. Types of vessels and their way to sail and fight.

Maltese traditional boats, British vessels and Galleys' models is hosted.

This heritage conserved collection shows and includes naval and marine engineering findings from the Knights of St. John era, the Roman period and the British time in Malta.

The Hospitaller sailing ship squadron²⁴⁷ included various types of vessels:



1) Principal fighting ships of the Order

Fighting vessels gave an important contribution to the emergencies of the Order, their main task was to transport the necessary provisions and protect all the cargo vessels.

Of great importance in the naval sector were also the boats of small and average dimensions, similar to the Sicilian boats, which with their rowing forces contributed to various services and duties, were used to scout for enemy vessels or to carry soldiers and loads. Together with the larger sea-vessels were used by the Order and his Knights to guard the harbour's area and coast or as emergency life-boats. Among these smallest but fast tenders, which resemble today's regatta's boat,²⁴⁸ called *dghajsa*,²⁴⁹ we find: the

²⁴⁷ A. Quintano, *op. cit.*, Chapter 6, pp. 79-105. The Ships.

²⁴⁸ Joseph Bonnici and Michael Cassar, *The Malta Grand Harbour and its Dockyard*, Malta: Maritime Authority, 1994, pp. 358-359. Grand Harbour Regattas.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 352-357. Dghajsa N° 513 owned by Anthony Attard onboard HMS Duchess D154 arrived in Venice on 22nd March 1958.

demi-galley, the galleot, the felucca,²⁵⁰ the caique and the fregantina.

Before the development of the mercantile activities in the eighteenth century, other specific fire ships were conceived during the second half of the sixteenth century, called the *bombarda* or *palandra* and *MMM Compendio*. In the first case, they used to carry large mortars on the bows meant for sea-battles, while in the second case they were filled with gun-powder and were steered against enemy ships, with few sailors onboard. They were never requested on a large basis in the Mediterranean and their number was in proportion to the requests, even if the Knights were trained to handle them.

2) The Merchant Ships

They carried provisions because the islands depended on imported food supplies, as they were able to produce just one-third of the annual necessary provisions.

The Knights left all the mercantile activities in *Padroni's* hands and they were able to manage with success all this work.

Muslim ships looking for safe anchorages:

The Maltese Masters of merchant ships had to face two main problems:

- Muslim Corsairs²⁵¹ and bad weather conditions.

In fact, for their strategic importance in the middle of the Mediterranean and their natural harbours Maltese islands very often offered safe anchorages to all the vessels crossing this sea.

The Galleys of the Order training troops:

The new Admiral²⁵² and recruits on board the Orders' vessels had to follow an accurate preparation, consisting of specific steps, which enforced their moral attitude too, the most important among them are reported as follow:

²⁵⁰ Joseph Muscat, *The Gilded Felucca and Maltese Boatbuilding Techniques*, Pietà-Hamrun – Malta: Publikazzjoni Indipendenza, 2001, p. 1-2.

²⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 121-131. The Maltese and the Muslim Corsairs.

²⁵² U.Mori Ubaldini, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-55. The naval organization.

a	The training of the Maltese for fighting on the galleys (Grand Master Emanuel Pinto founded two navigation schools in 1742 and 1769)
b	The Maltese galleys became an official school for foreigners (A real training ground)
c	Galley soldiers, their life on a galley, hierarchy and Order religious practices (Was considered the hardest, punishments and classes were strictly defined)
d	The Grand Master found the solution of substituting terms of imprisonment ²⁵³ (Criminal law 1558 and 1583, long periods of rowing on the galleys)

3.3.4. The Order's warships in action

Of particular interest is the account of the voyages carried out around the year 1523, as soon as the plague²⁵⁴ arrived from the Middle East and took special importance for the squadrons and ports of Rhodes and Malta, which were often used by European ships, as their first quarantine stations. They were considered real sanitary institutions, which soon reached very high standards in the Order's naval organization. In the port of Rhodes the Health Statutes and Commissioners were already trained and responsible for the proper running of the quarantine and the measures to be taken in case of an epidemic. Whenever the Order's galleys returned to Malta, they had first to pass through quarantine in the Marsamxett Harbour, where there was also a settlement called Lazaretto Quarantine Hospital.

In spite of this poor health social situation, during the following centuries, the Order assembled its own abilities and efforts towards the importation of all the metals from Salonica necessary to the skilful forging of the weapons to be used during the various fights. The Orders' fleet was carefully provided of artillery and captured slaves, besides the fact the first experiments with gunpowder from Genoa and Leghorn, which were conserved in the local mills, began. The Knights were brave and strong enough to handle rather heavy weapons, such as iron gun port, mortars, cannonballs, fire barrels and

²⁵³ Ibid., pp. 130-131, pp. 138-144. Rowers and slaves' life on the Galleys.

²⁵⁴ Dr. Charles Savona-Ventura and Dr. Anton Mifsud, *Knight Hospitaller Medicine in Malta 1530-1798*, Foreward by Grandmaster Fra Andrew Bertie, San Ġwann-Malta: P.E.G. Ltd., 2004, pp. 44-64. Quarantine control in the Mediterranean.

hand bombs. All these munitions were hidden in safe places, inside the main Forts, like Fort Rinella, which were considered the first examples of harbours' store and tactical defence sites.

3.3.5. The shipyards and Dry dock of the Knights

The harbours' activities always represented an important progress and economical help for the Order of St. John and the local population, during their daily life. The increase of the navy of the Order and the corsairs' invasion of Sicily and Malta required the building of modern logistic naval basis. During the Knights' time the Maltese shipyards eagerly developed very quickly, allowing the construction of many galleys and large ships of the line in the ships' arsenal at Senglea. The writers gave a full description of how the naval squadron found excellent and well equipped shipbuilding infrastructures, including officers, sailors and craftsmen. Since, the management of a whole shipyard was particularly difficult task and needed a long experience, the arsenal at Malta were administered by the Common Treasury and the Dockyard Commissioner. Furthermore, the Military Engineers²⁵⁵ employed by the Order were often of French origins and the master craftsmen were often trained abroad to acquire better skills, only the *maestranze*, consisting of tradesmen, were recruited among the local population. Craftspeople²⁵⁶ used to run their shipyard's shops and had to turn directly to the *Provveditore di terra* to receive the necessary materials for the constructions.

a) The Shipyards²⁵⁷

There were four galleys shipyards in use in Malta during the Order's stay, the largest was at Vittoriosa, which was built in 1597, while the three other shipyards were situated in Valletta. These galleys' arsenals, called *Cantiere delle Navi*, were built in 1652, close to upper Barracca, Fort St. Elmo and Birgu, by the Prior Fra Girolamo Salvago.

b) The Dry dock

Its project owes to the Knights, especially Grand Master Rohan started the

²⁵⁵ A. Quintano, *op. cit.*, p. 115-116.

²⁵⁶ For example: Shipwright builders (*Maestro d'ascia*), carpenters, coppersmiths, painters, oar-makers and porters like the ones building gondolas at Antico Squero San Trovaso in Venice.

²⁵⁷ J. Muscat and A. Cuschieri, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-194. Building of the Maltese galleys in the shipyards.

construction of a dock during his magistracy but the work could not continue because of water seepage. It was only in 1681 that Colonel Charles Grunemberg devised a machine that could rapidly drain the water from the Maltese dry docks, solving rapidly the problem.

3.3.6. The Navy of the Order and its active service

The study of the Maltese history periods shows how many local people were employed within the Order, especially on ships and many others worked at the arsenals. Amongst other benefits, the local sailors and soldiers gained valuable experience on the ships of the Order, as regards discipline and above all they travelled frequently in the Mediterranean, hence gaining a valuable experience for the mercantile activities at sea. The galleys of the Order symbolized the protection against the Turkish assaults on the island, even if many men of the Order and its navy were also killed or injured during the wars in contrast to infidels. Bearing this in mind, the harbour was organized in such a way that there were always some beds reserved for the crews of the navy, who by means of a special lift could be directly transported from the ships at sea level to the large hospital in Valletta situated ten metres higher up.²⁵⁸

The main theme examined by the authors consisted on how the Order of St. John, which since the eleventh century registered countless successes, both on land and sea, could find in Malta the best conditions for the organisation of its own fleet.

The navy of the Order was not very large in number, but its high reputation, based on the results attained during its active service at sea against the enemies, reached many countries and was well-known. All the crowned heads of Europe were somehow connected with the vessels of the Order and it was a great honour to travel on one of its carracks. The story of the ships of the Order is the same one for many Maltese who worked, fought and died for a living and survival, during a period when Malta changed fast from an almost insignificant island to a well established centre of attraction in the centre of the Mediterranean.

Despite this success, perhaps the most important thing found out about was the uninterrupted training the naval Knights of St. John received, it is of no surprise they took

²⁵⁸ S. Spiteri, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56, p. 270, pp. 276-277. The Valletta 16th and 18th century graphic view plans of the city general layout and harbour fortification.

part in and made a real contribution to the whole European exploration of the world. Apparently, until then the exploration of the world carried out by the Knights was not only inspired by political, commercial and scientific interests, but a missionary spirit which aimed at spreading the Christian faith throughout the whole world.

The key figures of explorers that can be recalled are:

1-	Henry the Navigator: Known for the agreement between Portugal and the Order of Rhodes
2-	Knight of Rhodes: Fra' Antonio Pigafetta
3-	Knight of St. John: Fra' Jofre Garcia di Loaysa
4-	Knight of St. John: Fra' Claude de Razilly
5-	Knight of St. John: Fra' Philippe de Poincy
6-	Knight of St. John: Fra' Nicole Durand de Villegagnon

3.3.7. Relationships between Venice and Malta

One of the most important publications, regarding the first studies describing the presence of the Maltese Consulate in Venice and its close connection to the Maltese Hospitallers, was interestingly carried out by the historical scientific coordinator of Malta University Prof. Victor Mallia-Milanes in his book *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*. His books do not only give useful details of the Order institution, but give resources of Malta's important position in the Mediterranean area from 1530 to 1798. His studies report how the increased fear of new attacks, determined the sudden need for new military defences and precautions in the Maltese panorama. The capital's fortified walls offered a sense of protection and security to the population, like the Order itself, a great stimulus for the island's economic growth, based on building industries, the brisk, the cotton trade and privateering. The commercial relationships and trade activities widened rapidly, contributing to the recruitment of new foreign working force for the manual jobs carried out in Valletta's fortifications and thanks to the first eighteenth century contacts with northern Venetian personalities.

At first the social context, in which they had the opportunity of meeting was that

of the Inquisition period in 1760, when Mgr. Angelo Durini, reported the fact that “Malta was a prosperous meeting-place not only of one people, but of several nations, where sailors and merchants proceeded from as far north as the Baltic Sea to the shores and harbours of Valletta for the exchange of merchandise and other trade purposes”. Among the collections there are narrations of a large number of foreign travellers to Malta, who diarized their observations about the country improvements and development.

The Venetian Gian Battista Leoni pictured the place as composed by land workers and simple people, who without the Order’s support could have hardly survived, especially during the mid-seventeenth century. While Giacomo Capello, the Venetian Minister, officially visited the island in 1716, dispatching accurate reports on the status of the mission abroad, directed to the Venetian Doge and Senate. Like other visitors before, he was attracted by the small inhabitants’ houses²⁵⁹ with gardens, built of stones and very finely sculptured. He analyzed another important matter concerning the slavery presence in Malta, which arrived to an average total of 6,000 individuals. They used to work in the following sectors: fortifications, arsenals surroundings, magazines and on galleys too. Instead, when kept busy in the private areas they used to collaborate in all the kitchen activities or sent on shopping errands. Actually, the Knights Hospitaller golden age helped to the improvement of the country’s renovations.

The tensions between Venice and Malta increased as soon as the Order and the Grand Masters allowed corsairing²⁶⁰ activities, with the aim to provide support to the local population. Being against piracy and privateering, the only way for the Venetians to protect themselves towards possible damages was to issue a ‘*sequestro*’, a considerable financial lost for the Order in favour of the Grand Priory of Venice. The two last decades of the sixteenth century faced an increase in these conflicts and in the piracy phenomenon due to heavy European food shortages.

²⁵⁹ William Frank Fenech, *The Farmhouse with the Blue Turret*, Malta: Gutenberg Press Ltd., 2011, p.

²⁶⁰ Prof. Victor Mallia Milanes, *op. cit.*, Chapter 9, Naval Exploits and Privateering, by Salvatore Bono, Knights, corsairs and pirates, pp. 388-397.

3.4 The British Royal Dockyards



[3.9] HMS Victory is the Royal Navy's most famous first-rate, Ship-of-the-line, 1759-1765. She is the world's oldest commissioned Ship and a proud memorial to Vice Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson

3.4.1. Structure of the Royal Navy

In the introductory chapters of his book about the Royal Dockyards between 1690 and 1850, Jonathan Coad tried to find out what they represented and underlined the fact, that there could have not been the Royal Navy without their construction.²⁶¹

After the first explorations²⁶², knowledge of organizing expeditions completely improved during that period, skills and tactics enabled the English ships to be very good at sailing against the wind, the whole success of their undertaking depended on their storage and provisions, as well as their ability to replace the damages quickly. As J.Coad often highlights in his book, in the United Kingdom a great deal of interest has been generated by Chatham, Portsmouth and Devonport, which have been established as dockyards over the last hundred years, while the overseas base of Gibraltar,²⁶³ was founded at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In exploring these docking sites they all include important architectural buildings, such as the Royal Dockyard School in Portsmouth, open by the Admiralty in 1843, the Royal Naval Association, with its 385

²⁶¹ Jonathan G. Coad, *The Royal Dockyards, 1690-1850: architecture and engineering works of the sailing Navy*, London: Aldershot, Scolar Press, 1989, p. XXV. The Royal Dockyards.

²⁶² Peter Dietz, *The British in the Mediterranean*, London-Washington: Bresssey's, 1994, pp. 4-5.

²⁶³ Quentin Hughes, *Britain in the Mediterranean and the defence of her naval stations*, London: Penpaled Books, 1981, pp. 15-20.

branches in U.K. and overseas or the Royal Victoria Dock, the first one built in 1855 to accommodate large steam-ships.

The main naval development in the northern countries concerned particularly the British fleet in the period from c.1700 to the 1850s, since Celtic Britain, with its particular cultural habits, as pictured to us by Alistair Moffat, during his journey in the northern isles was completely different.²⁶⁴ This imperial age of the sailing navy saw a host of famous Commanders, a string of notable victories and a series of remarkable voyages of exploration. The Commanders and battles are known to us now only in print or illustrations, while HMS Victory is the sole surviving flagship, which lies in Portsmouth Dockyard. Around this ship are many other connections to famous characters, such as Nelson, Collingwood, Howe, Hawke and Anson and Rooke.

The British Government realized that the older part of these naval bases have had a fundamental historic value and is doing its best to preserve surviving buildings belonging to the sailing Navy in Chatham, Portsmouth, Devonport, Gibraltar, Minorca, Malta, Antigua and Bermuda.

3.4.2. The Navy Hierarchy

The main Officers and Commissioners²⁶⁵ of the Navy called Navy Board, were key figures in charge of the dockyards management before 1832, which included the building, equipping and maintaining of the Royal Navy ships. In 1780, it was composed of eleven Commissioners, seven of whom were Londoners with specific duties, while all the others were stationed abroad. From the end of the seventeenth century, the Navy Board had Commissioners, who were in charge of the three main dockyards of Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth. From 1759, the Navy Board assumed direct control of the Thames yards, while the Chatham Commissioner had the responsibility for Sheerness too until 1796. These Commissioners were responsible for the daily requirements on the running of their dockyards and formed the conjunction between the full board in London and Senior yard Officials. They had the collaboration of a staff of clerks, in charge of the office correspondence and the copying of shipping books.

²⁶⁴ Alistair Moffat, *Sea Kingdoms*, London: Harper Collins Publisher, 2001, pp. 4-5, pp. 27-29, pp. 130-143. Celts and Vikings.

²⁶⁵ J. Coad, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24. The Navy Corps.

3.4.3. Dockyard's limits of defence

J. Coad reported that from their institution, the Royal Dockyards had defined their own boundaries, Portsmouth for instance, during the sixteenth century, consisted of a hedge and ditch, with gates at intervals. During the following century, this was not adequate anymore for its defensive purposes and the hedge was replaced by "pallisadoes". The most important dockyards, such as Chatham, by 1688 had a wall 12 feet high and the new Plymouth Dockyard was surrounded from the start with a 12-foot high stonewall. While Portsmouth was not provided with a boundary wall until quite late, probably because of the protection afforded by the Military Engineer Sir Bernard de Gomme's²⁶⁶ defences. The new wall was completed in 1712 and needed the construction of a new gate, for this reason the local Officers designed a safer entrance. Inside the main gates, there were two-storey buildings, which are now occupied by the local Ministry of Defence Police, even if they were originally meant to be the dockyard porter home. From 1690 onwards the usual method of gate constructions still remains standard; a variant on dock gates was a caisson entirely independent from the dry dock, a prototype invented by St Lo, while he was Commissioner at Chatham.

3.4.4. Eighteenth century dockyards' development

Many references are related concerning the great deliberation of expansion,²⁶⁷ which took place at Portsmouth and Plymouth in the 1760s, which was organized to arrange all the necessary facilities for building and repairing warships. They planned to form a compact group in the centre of the dockyard and were to be known for a number of innovations, because the maritime and economical traffics were increasing, together with technical progress.

The works at Portsmouth were considered to be a valuable investment even if between 1764 and 1796, an average of nine different projects were drawn to reshaping the docks. Furthermore, in March 1765 the Navy Board concluded a contract with Mr. Templar for the repair and the deepening of the South or Great Basin, as they previously did in the Northern side. In fact the free coastal outlet and the practical knowledge of the

²⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 80-81.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 101-102. Dockyards expansion programmes

nautical sciences helped the dockyards expansion, to which the presence of Peter the Great,²⁶⁸ with his delegation contributed during his European travel and especially his journey to England in 1697. The Tsar of Russia witnessed to the construction of ships at Deptford, at Portsmouth learnt the planning of cargo boats and at Manchester studied the city building techniques, which he applied at St. Petersburg on his return to his country. As a matter of fact, his foreign politics foresaw the maritime expansion and the commercial activities of the Soviet naval fleet in the Mediterranean area too. In particular, the Russian fleet boasted very ancient and early origins; their shipping campaigns between the VII and the X century were already known, in comparison to the British one, which developed under Alfred the Great, King of Wessex, around 870 and 896.

3.4.5. Dock Storehouse Workshop

In the second part of his book, J. Coad focussed on what the Royal dockyard's storehouses represented as an important part of the shipping structure, being supplied with all the sorts of manufactured equipments. Among the materials, which had to be properly stored there were raw materials, goods of different kinds and equipment from ships. During the eighteenth century some stores were built close to the main wharves, where all the items needed by warships after their active service were held. Storehouses acquired a specializing role, thanks to the following factors overseas establishments' collaborations, their strategic position in the dockyards and the system of storage, which is still in use nowadays.

The necessary materials²⁶⁹ used in large quantities for the construction and fitting out of a wooden warship consisted of timber, oak, elm and pine, while iron was also consumed for a multitude of items of equipment, such as anchors and buckets. Also canvas for sails was another important material, together with hemp for the rigging. Many of these are still in use, while at Chatham rope making is still carried out with the old techniques. Apart from these materials were used glass, tallow, tar, leather, lead, brass and copper in large quantities once sheathing was introduced in the 1770s.

Of course, the construction and maintenance of a ship required a considerable

²⁶⁸ Giorgio Giorgerini, *Cenni di storia e politica navale Russa*, Roma: Rivista Marittima, 1986, pp. 9-13.

²⁶⁹ J. Coad, *op. cit.*, p. 141. Basic building materials.

amount of inflammable substances, all of which needed particular attention in handling and storage. The choice of certain materials was important, tar, varnish and glass were substances, which used to arrive at the dockyards ready for the use and required just simple processes, such as heating or cutting to size, to be transported within the yards. All the other materials arrived in a raw state, requiring numerous workshops and working areas²⁷⁰, where they could be turned into finished products ready for final completion or fitting on the warships. A great deal of the construction processes, together with blacksmiths' and anchor smiths' forges were carried out in temporary constructions, in the immediate vicinity of the dock building, of which no trace remains.

3.4.6. The birth of Steam Engines

During the British Industrial Revolution, around 1799 the first steam engine owned by the navy started pumping water out of the dry docks in Portsmouth Dockyard and represented the creation, some years before, of the post of Inspector-General of Naval Works. In the following pages, J. Coad tried to give relevance to the way the steam engine was a source of power,²⁷¹ which was easily situated where there was the necessity and not just near river basins or where they naturally run into the sea. During those times the only non-human support available was that of the horses, but their help was limited to transporting timber and stores, operating gins for dock-pumping and from the 1770s providing power for certain processes. The majority of the works connected with shipbuilding and repairing needed several manual abilities and was not suitable for mechanization.

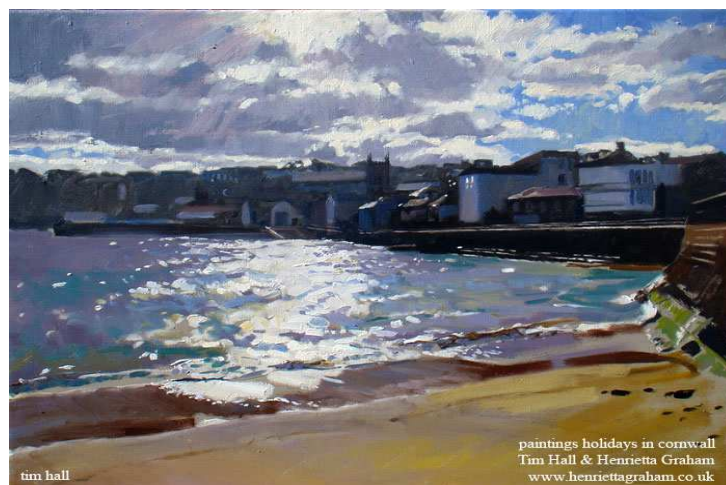
In 1690s, Edmund Dummer, Surveyor of the Navy Board, had drawn up an elaborate plan to employ a waterwheel for dock-pumping at Portsmouth, even if that could have been a partial solution as the waterwheel could only have operated intermittently, and consequently horse gins had to be incorporated in the design once again. In 1795, another application of water power was proposed at Plymouth by General, Sir Samuel Bentham, who devoted particular attention to the modernization of the naval works, constructing a long leap to supply water to a 45-foot diameter overshot wheel, to

²⁷⁰ Stan Yorke, *The Industrial Revolution Explained, Steam, Sparks & Massive Wheels*, Cambridge University Press: Countryside Books, 2005, pp. 104-109. Factories and buildings.

²⁷¹ J. Coad, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-226.

be built outside the carpenters' and joiners' workshop. The eventual decision to introduce and keep on experimenting the steam engine later on was practically due almost entirely to him. Of course, the early engines had used brass for the cylinders but, as bigger the engines were demanded, the cost of it became prohibitive. The engines consumed vast quantities of coal too, and this product was heavy and difficult to move over land. During this period, improvements were taking place in all the industrial activities,²⁷² many engineers specialized and worked hardly to improve the previous systems, concerning the higher pressure engines, the boilers and the conditioners steam power, the pumps and valves mechanism arrangements.

3.5. Turner's pictures for Ruskin's '*The Harbours of England*'



[3.10] Painting holidays and Art class in Cornwall
by Tim Hall and Henrietta Graham

In the preface of *Harbors of England* John Ruskin wrote that in 1856 it was necessary, being particularly interested about shipping, that the genesis of the harbours were known. In 1826, Turner projected a serial publication entitled '*The Ports of England*' and was considered one of the first topographer²⁷³ and surveyor of his era. This is underlined by the fact that he served as Ensign in the Sicilian Regiment too, Rank in Army 6th February 1812 and later on joined Captain Warren, in April of the same year to

²⁷² S. Yorke, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-18. Industrial activities.

²⁷³ John Ruskin, *The Harbours of England*, Vol. XIII engraved by Thomas Lupton, London: E. Gambart and Co., 1856, p. 11. Topographical details.

go towards the Dardanelles. He became a real wandering scholar not only in Europe, but also in the whole Levant, carefully observing and reproducing in a sort of plan metric scale all the sites he had been through.

Harbors of England written by Ruskin in 1855, on his return from Deal, where he was carrying out his studies of ships, consisted of twelve plates²⁷⁴ regarding the Turner's marine paintings of the southern coast ports of England, which included also Dover and Portsmouth's topographical details. England having always been a maritime power has excellently represented in this book and its series of illustrative views. The sea ports and harbours, he mostly treated are still of notable importance along the English Channel, in how much they assured an important economical connection between U.K., France and the Atlantic Ocean and at the same time a natural defence for the island from invasions. *The Harbours of England*, first draft by Ruskin, represents a great encyclopaedic volume, the thirteenth, of the whole Victorian period, minutely subdivided in specific sectors and chapters²⁷⁵ relating to art, painting, geography and studies on vegetation and nature.

All the contained pieces in the book have a chronological and topical unit; they deal with Turner and were written from 1856 to 1858. In his works he often referred to important painters known during his career, among them are recalled: John Constable, William Blake, Sir Thomas Lawrence, Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough and Stubbs. The second part of the book, included the whole collection of letters to the press, catalogues and reports that Ruskin used to write upon Turner's sketches and pictures at the National Gallery, while the third and final part, before appendix, contains the Notes written to illustrate Turner's drawing exhibition in London (1878).

Among the most significant marine village towns he describes along the Channel's 560 Km. (350 mi) the first to be mentioned was:

²⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 48-49. Point n. 42 Turner drawings.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 81-85. Letter to the Editor of the *Times* dated 1856 by John Ruskin.

I. DOVER



Dover represented under his heraldic Coat of Arms,²⁷⁶ is nowadays very well-known for its cliffs, faces France and lies south-east of the majestic Canterbury Cathedral area. This port was the first one to be presented in Turner's plates, because on behalf of the author's opinion thanks to his particular position along the coast was the most representative picture, which reflected the hospitality of England to the majority of the visitors, who firstly reached its shores. The author always painted, not just the place itself at a first sight, but his impression of it, leaving the topographical task to other minor artists. This design is a little bit smaller than the real Dover Cliffs dimensions, but from the stormy seas the restlessness, which he had noticed there and transferred to the observers emerge. The strive of some rowers in the foreground stressed the figures in the space, through the arches that form their arms, the expressing the tension and progress during the whole movement.

²⁷⁶ Stephen Friar, *Heraldry for the Local Historian and Genealogist*, London: Grange Books, 1997, pp. 232-241.

II. RAMSGATE



The Royal Harbour of Ramsgate is situated in the south-east side of England, close to the English Channel. In the effects the naval theme is concretized in this plate, which consists of the lifting of the brig on the waves and the gale in the foreground surrounded by a darker sky. The wild expression of winds on the sails, while the vessel is going to repair into the harbor takes your breath away. There is another singular aspect connected with the composition of this drawing, a couple of years before Turner drew a design of Ramsgate for the *Southern Coast Series* representing the same day, moment and view. The perseverance in this concept provides evidence of his very highest imaginative capacity that enabled him to perfectly reproduce and handle the same situation afterwards tracing it in a masterly way, without omitting any particular. His optics in representing reality, suggests that he puts into be more perspective systems, with the strength of his orthogonals gave emphasis to the diagonal of the vessel's principal figure.

III. PLYMOUTH



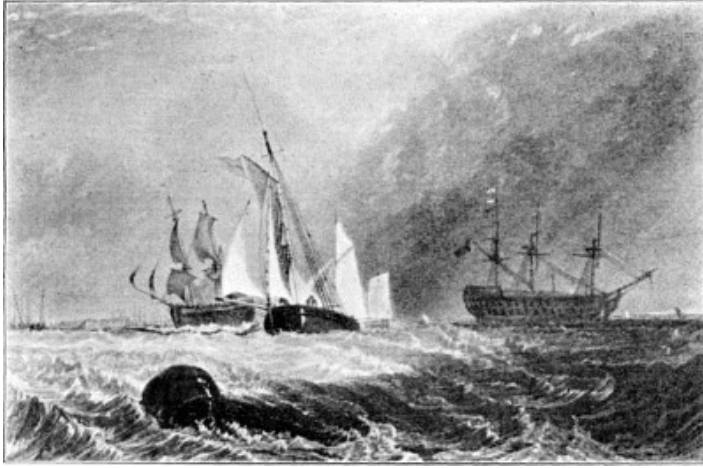
Plymouth, which is localized in south-west England and is renowned for the Palaeolithic Homo Sapiens bones found in its caves. The drawing for this plate contains the brightest rainbow ever painted by the author, through the variety of colours reflected; one can admire another important naval subject, the whole scene of eighteen-pounder batteries and ninety-gun ships. Interpreting the theme in symbolic key, related to the radical idea of war and peace are considered the perspective of the dark cloud and the light of the sunshine at a distance. It was discovered that the design was made from a vigorous sketch by Mr. S.Cousins, Turner was then realizing not at all a fact seen in first person, but a representation supposed to have been observed by another person. In this reproduction the ships look as if they were confused and incompletely drawn like the fort in the background.

IV. CATWATER



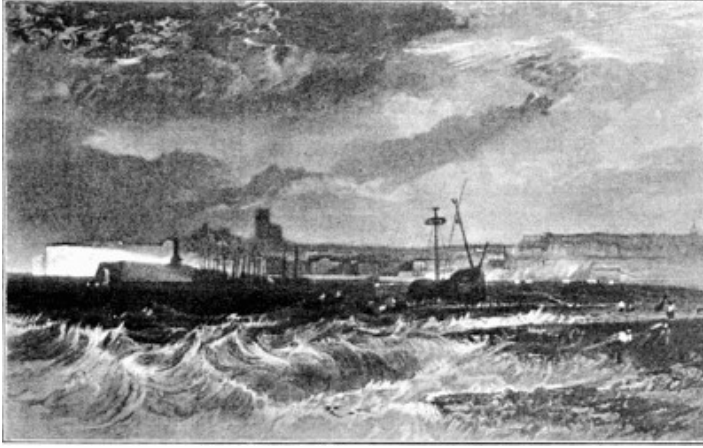
After contemplating paintings of arid and suffocating deserts or magnificent sunsets, in this engraving the breezy entrance to the crowded cove of Plymouth can be observed. The projection of the galleys on the plan, while they approach the cliffs, seems to represent their return to the country and the dark sail against the light on the left side, with the rock makes shield of the waves' brightness. When Turner prepared these drawings, his portfolio was full of the most relevant subjects sketched and gathered during his last European Grand Tour, attaching importance to mountains' sceneries of France and Italy. Much more than to defined forms attributed worth to the atmospheric phenomena that happen in nature, what is seen or experienced on which he meditated. Another fundamental perception in his works was given by the painting of familiar environments, a sort of patriotic feeling, where the values of light-air and light-water were easily reproduced and delineated.

V. SHEERNESS



Sheerness a town located on the northwest corner of the Isle of Sheppey in north Kent, England, was the Royal Navy Dockyard. This picture is very refined among his sea-fronts, a description of the absolute or ideal beauty in the elected nature. Even without the expansion of the fleet, the clearness of the sky, a dim light from the horizon, with the thunder-cloud, behind the powerful ship of war, drawn with complete rigging and the mass of the hull are all in evidence. When the action occurred emerged the contrast of the black sloop and the glistening side of those white sails, with the rough sea. What can be noticed is the fact, that he did not want to proceed very close to the scene, but to admire the grace of the waves' motion. The chief aim of the heaving and black buoy in the foreground gives comparative lightness to the shadowed part of the sea, which is overcharged in darkness.

VI. MARGATE



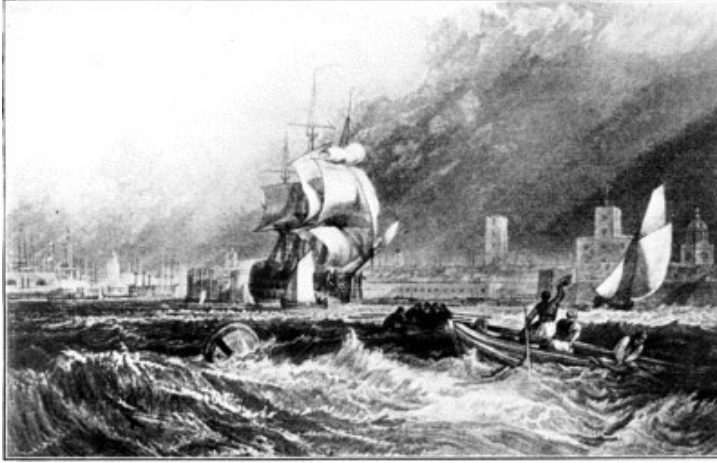
Margate on the south-west English coast, where T.S. Eliot commented in his

The Waste Land Part III - The Fire Sermon:

On Margate sands
I can connect
Nothing with nothing.

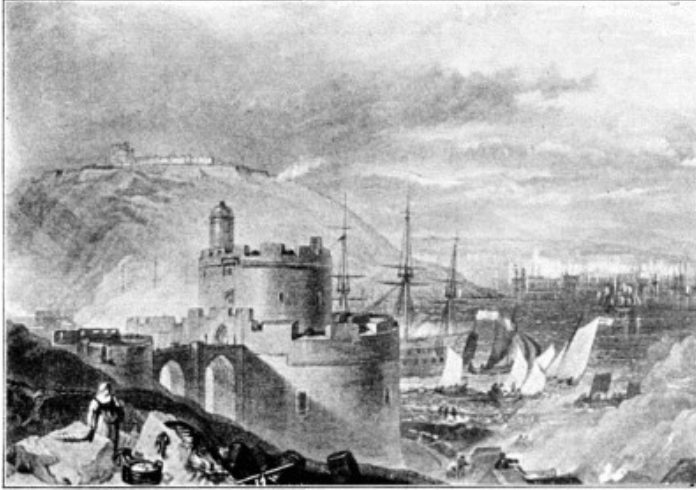
Completely rethinking his strategy when elaborating the drawings to present English ports and watering-places, this is one of the most prosaic representations of the picturesque and romantic interest for Margate. There is no doubt the eminence of the cliffs, the old harbour, the straggling fisher-hamlet and the fragment of the castle or abbey on the highest part above, became a leading point in the picture. He used to paint once the beautiful bays of Northern Devon and Cornwall, but on the other hand he repeated several times the environments of Ramsgate, Deal, Dover and Margate. Previously inspired by the placing of some Rhenish fortresses, a French city or Gothic towers, his primarily aim was now to mainly reproduce English bathing-places. The vivid white of the piece of chalk cliffs is one of the subjects he shot his own attention on too. In the composition the sea is so far of a dark blue, the sky bluish and the grass on the top of the cliffs slightly sunburnt.

VII. PORTSMOUTH



Portsmouth is located in centre of south England and has had a significant naval port for centuries, that constitutes a tourist attraction for famous ships. In the Southern Coast series this naval drawing reflects Turner's impression of Portsmouth harbour. In this new seascape generally prevail the return to his first flat proofs, setting his attention on the stately appearance of the ship of the line' swollen sails, already reproduced in his earlier drawings. The wave painted on the left side, provides Turner's technique to retouch his works several times. The perspective theory of the visual pyramid is observed in depth, in fact the theorem of the proportions gives the mathematical law of the degrading of the sizes, according to the distances. All the parts of the city in the background are represented as a system of proportional metric relationships of the lined up buildings' heights. He applied a sort of dynamic tactics as soon as he thought a plate looked a bit dull, as compared to the drawing, he used to play a game of bright lights giving physical substance to the elements, as a sculpture on a bass-relief, who settles depth to prominence, giving emphasis to the opera.

VIII. FALMOUTH



Falmouth's name comes from the river Fal, with its art gallery, which includes many nineteenth century Cornish artists' collections. Seldom did Turner leave his compositions unfinished, apart from Margate, this is one of the best finished plates of the harbors' series. The author has been inspired by one the King Henry VIII's device forts, that is Pendennis Castle, whose main tower with its simple round form of the circle is very similar to Castel St. Angelo in Rome and was built against the French and Spanish invasions in 1539. The English fort in this picture is surrounded by a lively port atmosphere and environment, consisting of the crossing of lots of boats and the ship of the line or the traditional woman busy washing and the men opposite working.

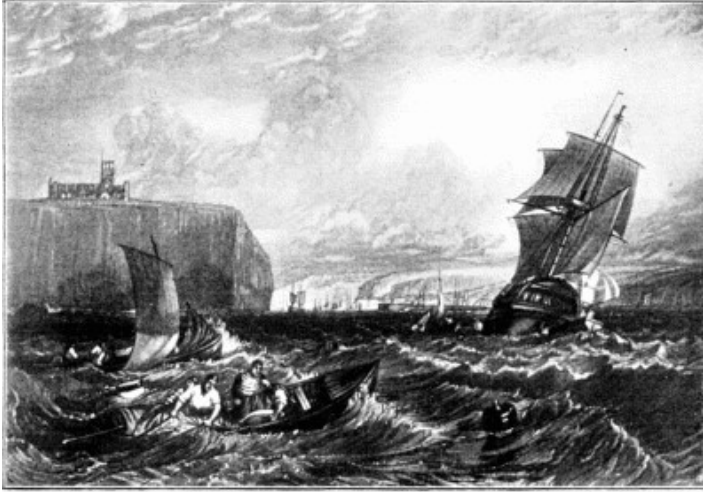
The imposing mountain at the back, with its solid volume gives a sort of stability to the whole representation, the sight turns to the high dorsal hill followed by the city buildings on the right side. The depths offered by the smoke and flashes are part of his methodology, which puts the study of the buildings' construction and nature into relation.

IX. SIDMOUTH



Sidmouth is a small town on the Devon coast, south west England, where in summer time the famous annual Folk Festival is held. The greatest marine representation of the wave on the left side suddenly roaring and breaking against the rocks and the beach is something only a deep structured sound can reproduce in our minds. The spectator remains impressed by the rush and sparkle of water, the effects of the sea upward, as during a tornado around a solid nucleus is actually something indescribable. Together with the presence in the fore-ground of the lonely man on his boat, who is directing among the waves towards Sidmouth harbour, stressing the dramatic tendency of the plate. In opposition, in the distance second ground of surveying the heights above the English fishing village, are put in relief by the various dark-red sandstone cliffs, typical of the Turnerian masterworks.

X. WHITBY



Whitby, meaning the white settlement in Old Norse, is a sea-side town situated north-east in the centre of the English coast, in the suggestive area of the late Christian King of Northumbria called Oswy and the famous legendary local Museum of the gothic novel Dracula. An area, where it is interesting to observe that in all the parts of the island where found fossils ammonites. To remind an important shipping heritage there is the sculptured bronze statue of Captain James Cook and memorial museum, the birthplace of those good ships that bore him on his enterprises.

If this picture is compared with other naval descriptions, are once again highlighted the bad weather conditions, the rising winds on the shores, a particular maritime outline surrounded by the elevated Benedictine abbey on the main cliff, founded in 651 AD. It represents a very old English tradition of monastic life in Whitby, which included the spiritual meaning of peacefulness and learning, destroyed during the Vikings' invasions in 867 AD, was rebuilt by a Norman Knight in the eleventh century.

XI. DEAL



Deal in south-east England eight miles of Dover, with its finest building of the Tudor's Castle, a place that James Cook visited returning from his voyage to Australia in 1771; the first home of the Royal Marines.

At the beginning of his tour, Turner was accustomed to the boat-life at Venice, where the heavy craft, massy in build and in sail, reached with their masts-vanes the huge marble palaces and used to anchor among them. The town of Deal was indeed crossed by the strong English sailors and boatmen walking along the trim strip beach, which the sea rhythmically washes, in a long bay crowded of tiny boats. Turner was very fond of this neat fishermen village and painted it very early in the Southern Coast series, paying his attention to one of the tavern windows as the principal subject, with flashes of lightning out at sea. Once again in this work the opposition between the confusion among the ships on the left side and the stillness of the shore and sunshine along the beach on the left can be found.

XII. SCARBOROUGH



Scarborough is placed in North Yorkshire and its castle was bombed by the German ships, during the First World War, where many scenes were filmed on the location. This is the last plate of the series, with the author's specific intent to let the reader observe the synthesis of its morning quietness and of the visual deception of the sea. In John Ruskin's opinion nothing was perfectly represented so calm as in Turner's calmness, much of it is owed to the gloom obtained by the local blackness of the boats on the beach, but much more is obtained by the distant harbour's entrance. If we compare it to the sounds and music the increasing of an echo, its repetition of the notes or syllables of sound, gives an idea of the calmness attainable through a landscape or bay. Calmness is here provided not just by physical beauties, but from small spots represented by a black stone, white figurine holding a stick, a starfish, a dog next to a basket, a fisherman and his wife, two unfinished ships, two fishing-boats with their sails down, two vigorous colliers observing the whole scene and two thinner ones leaning towards each other. Another feature was the doubling of every object and the importance of shadow throughout the picture. The dim light over the distant cliffs, the promontories and the two piers below them underline the optic view, with the reflection of two long shadows on the beach. In particular, J. Ruskin often suggested putting one finger over a plate's central figure and then observe the differences in the new given view.

Turner was very keen on reproducing this subject of Scarborough, in fact there are four drawings left. Natural impression is repeated in the light of the bathes, on the field of

the grass. John Ruskin thought we have often considered the sea view as a rough enemy to be subdued, and suggested to try to accept it, imagining it as a perfect Human Spirit:

The memory, like a cloudless air,
The conscience, like a sea at rest.

Travelling along the country, as Turner did is very interesting to highlight not only the painting aspect and production, but also the cultural past of the aristocratic society of the Court, who commissioned him the works of art, consisting of Nobility and Gentry.²⁷⁷ These themes can be deepened in the precious text, written by Stephen Friar, regarding heraldry, especially in the United Kingdom, where can be observed visiting many effigies,²⁷⁸ processions and façades, concerning an important subject connected to the Kings duties and responsibilities to be assumed for the countries' sake. Coat of Arms, seals, stoneworks' wall tablets and timbers incised in secular buildings, churches and abbeys all over the islands, are specifically intended to identify an historical and genealogical family and rank background, particularly felt in the British traditional social system.

If the Knighthood itself is compared to the local complex social organization, one can get to know the importance of the tasks attributed by the Royal Family to Knights, Peers and Lords in the past and to Dukes, Marquis, Earls (Counts), Viscounts and the Barons with the Baronets, who support the whole working classes in modern times. The memorials in churches, erected to perpetuate the memory of the individuals, are very common in England and thanks to the various tomb chests, the livery collars,²⁷⁹ the military brasses and memorial boards in the monuments; such devices provide a rich source of information and an appropriate terminology and knowledge of the signs belonging to different Counties. During his whole journey William Turner had the possibility to closely get into touch with the Welsh and Scottish nobility, who is the division of the British Peerage. While in 1798, he travelled a lot all over Wales and in 1830 crossed Scotland, coming into contact with new Gaelic and Celtic linguistic expressions, rather conservative governments and peculiar historical cultures, which enriched his pictorial production.

²⁷⁷ S. Friar, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-40.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-149.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 216-225.

Chapter 4

4. The Knights' artistic heritage from Britain to Malta



[4.1] Drury Theatre, London

4.1. Lord Byron in Valletta

As o'er the cold sepulchral stone some name arrests the passer-by;
Thus, when thou view'st this page alone, may my attract thy pensive eye!
And when by thee that name is read, perchance in some succeeding year,
Reflect on me as on the dead, and think my heart is buried here.²⁸⁰

John Galt (1779-1839) in his *The Life of Lord Byron* dealt with the figure of Byron as a scouting explorer and poet crossing new countries starting from Aberdeen and extracting the most important piece of information from Mr. Hobhouse's travels and Byron's notes.²⁸¹ They first had the chance to meet in Gibraltar's garrison library after Colonel Wright's invitation, while J. Galt was leaving towards Malta, Sicily and Sardinia onboard a Townsend Packet²⁸² from England too. They left Cagliari, which he dearly remembered and spent eight days onboard, remaining particularly fascinated by his Lordship's manners and the formality of the ambassadors' welcome during the evening dinners and the theatre entertainments, to which the Royal Family was present.

²⁸⁰ George Gordon Lord Byron, from lines written in an album in Malta.

²⁸¹ John Galt, *The Life of LORD BYRON*, Rockville - Maryland, U.S.A.: Arc Manor, 2008, pp. 41-44.

²⁸² Allan Massie, *Byron's Travels*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1988, pp. 32-36. The Scot novelist John Galt was trying to set up a trading company to overcome Napoleon's embargo, called Continental System, in 1807.

LETTER 35.
TO MR. HENRY DRURY.

Falmouth, June 25. 1809.

My dear Drury,

We sail tomorrow in the Lisbon packet, having been detained till now by the lack of wind, and other necessaries. These being at last procured, by this time tomorrow evening we shall be embarked on the wide world of waters, vor all the world like Robinson Crusoe. The Malta vessel not sailing for some weeks, we have determined to go by way of Lisbon, and, as my servants term it, to see 'that there Portingale'--thence to Cadiz and Gibraltar, and so on our old route to Malta and Constantinople, if so be that Captain Kidd, our gallant commander, understands plain sailing and Mercator, and takes us on our voyage all according to the chart.

"Will you tell Dr. Butler that I have taken the treasure of a servant, Friese, the native of Prussia Proper, into my service from his recommendation. He has been all among the Worshippers of Fire in Persia, and has seen Persepolis and all that.

"Hobhouse has made woundy preparations for a book on his return; 100 pens, two gallons of japan ink, and several volumes of best blank, is no bad provision for a discerning public. I have laid down my pen, but have promised to contribute a chapter on the state of morals, etc. etc.

"The cock is crowing,
I must be going,
And can no more."

GHOST OF GAFFER THUMB.

Adieu.--Believe me yours as in duty bound
BYRON

P.S. - We have been sadly fleabitten at Falmouth.-²⁸³

Lord Byron travelled to Malta on 9th September 1809, sailing onboard Spider brig,²⁸⁴ with his friend Hobhouse, but his three weeks' permanence in Malta is still surrounded by mystery. In this period the tour to the Continent was considered a forced stage for a young noble man's education, but for Byron it seemed a real hunting to adventure.

He was very delighted in contemplating all the places planned for his journey, such as Lisbon, Joannina, Prevesa, Zitza, Athens or Alexandria, reporting the impressions

²⁸³ George Gordon Byron Baron Byron, *Lord Byron: Selected Letters and Journals*, pp. 22-23.

²⁸⁴ J. Galt, *op. cit.*, p. 47. Travel on Spider brig.

and traditions, the character of the various inhabitants, the effects of these adventures on his mind and revealing the very first sketches of his new characters. This mutual contact emerged also by the precise comments made by the citizens of the countries he wandered about, on his noble features and origins inferred from his appearance. Apart from the notes carrying the news of the enthusiasm of all his fellow-passengers towards a new tour of that kind, most of the Lord's traits are given prominence in the portraits of all his heroes and thanks to the correspondence to his several close friends it is possible to realize his inner feelings and thoughts.

His experience, with respect to that of other writers, was not one of the best ones celebrated in his writings, because of the missed batteries' salute on entering the Grand Harbour and a quarrel he was involved in locally with an Officer. What happened in those circumstances was probably caused, besides his hostility towards officials, by his lively spirit and the innate temperament originated by his Scottish kings' ancestors, but even though he had a gentleman's manners he was never extremely unguarded. Although he had a wide range of interests, from martial arts to Navy careers projects, he did not stand despotism and deeply sympathised with people who were subdued to any type of tyrannies. We find this concern in the poem entitled *The Prisoner of Chillon*,²⁸⁵ a place on the Geneva Lake he visited in 1816, where the background of religious persecutions and the criticism to despotism clearly emerge. The paradox of this intolerance is given prominence by the narrator-hero in the description of his dungeon, the dramatic use of Nature and the wrongness of imprisonment.

Byron to Captain Cary, from 3 Strada di Torni, Malta:

The first of four challenges which Byron issues at different times. No duels are fought.
[Capt. Cary / Private]

3 Strada di Torni
September 18th. 1809

Sir,

The marked insolence of your behaviour to me the first time I had the honour of meeting you at table, I should have passed over from respect to the General, had I not been informed {that} you have since mentioned my name in a public company with comments <that are> not to be tolerated, <after> more particularly after the circumstance to which I allude. – I have only just heard this, or I should not have postponed this letter to so late a period. –

²⁸⁵ Andrew Rutherford, *Byron a critical study*, Edinburgh-London: Oliver and Boyd, 1961, pp. 66-75.

As the vessel in which I am to embark must sail the first change of wind, the sooner our business is arranged the better. Tomorrow morning at 6 will be the best hour, at any place you think proper, as I do not know where the officers and gentlemen settle these affairs in your Island. – The favour of an immediate answer will oblige

your obed. Ser.
Byron²⁸⁶

In spite of all that, Malta was living a thriving period of commercial growth, the merchants were very hospitable and they were accommodated by the Governor Sir Alexander Ball, who was the Senior British Naval Officer and represented one of the most important Captains in the maintenance of order within Valletta and the archipelago, during the nineteenth century, arranged a lodge for the guests in Strada Forni, belonging to Dr. Moncrieff.²⁸⁷ Soon they had a hand in the local military and merchant community, taking part in official dinners, consisting of delicious menus based on quails and mussels. Lord Byron devoted a lot of his time to attending the opera, learning the Arabic language, taught to him by a monk of the Public Library and was romantically attached to Mrs. Spencer Smith, who became the inspired muse character Florence in his *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, but taking just advantage of him. Another young fellow, who accompanied him during this trip from Athens was the butler Nicolo Giraud, who was but left by Byron in a monastery of the island to study. How could have been explained the deep-rooted compulsion, which force a writer to continually escape, from ethical poetry and criticism, longing for solitude or to emulate the glory of our own ancestors as a picaroon.

Byron to Catherine Gordon Byron, from Malta, September 15th 1809:

Malta Sepr. 15th. 1809.

Dear Mother,

Though I have a very short time to spare, being to sail immediately for Greece, I cannot avoid taking an opportunity of telling you that I am well, I have been in Malta a short time & have found the inhabitants hospitable and pleasant. –

This letter is committed to the charge of a very extraordinary woman whom you have doubtless heard of, Mrs Spencer Smith, of whose escape the Marquis de Salvo published a narrative a few years ago, she has since been shipwrecked, and her life has been from its commencement so fertile in remarkable incidents, that in a romance they would appear improbable, She was born at

²⁸⁶ Source: NLS Acc.12604 / 4246; 1922 I 5-6; QI 57-8; BLJ I 224-5.

²⁸⁷ Fiona Mac Carthy, *Byron Life and legend*, U.K.: Faber and Faber, 2003, pp. 98-99. Accomodation in Valletta where the guests spent their sojourn.

Constantinople, {where} her father Baron Herbert was Austrian Ambassador, married unhappily, yet has never been impeached in point of character; excited the vengeance of Buonaparte by a part in some conspiracy; several times risked her life; & is not yet twenty five. --

She is here on her way to England to join her husband, being obliged to leave Trieste, where she was paying a visit to her mother {by the approach of the French,} and embarks soon in a ship of war, since my arrival here I have had scarcely any other companion, I have found her very pretty, very accomplished, and extremely eccentric. -- Buonaparte is even now so incensed against her, that her life would be in some danger if she were taken prisoner a second time. -- You have seen Murray and Robert by this time and received my letter, little has happened since that <time> date, I have touched at Cagliari in Sardinia, and at Girgenti in Sicily, and embark tomorrow for Patras from whence I proceed to Yanina where Ali Pacha holds his court. So I shall soon be among the Mussulmen. -- Adieu believe me with sincerità

yrs ever
Byron²⁸⁸

He sailed from Malta to Ithaca on 19th September 1809, directing to Albania and spending two months in Constantinople. The experiences reported from the travellers stressed the difficulties while covering long distances, climbing within grottos, the lack of pure waters' fountains and their escape from darkness or starvation, being afraid also of cannibalism. In any event guides covered a crucial role to survive in the wilderness of certain countries and insecurity feelings aroused among the participants especially when visiting the slave markets. Actually part of Byron's character was hinged of melancholy,²⁸⁹ as emerged while he was in Malta again in 1811, struck by the experiences of life and the numerous losses of relatives and friends. Although those inner feelings, a mood of gaiety was evidenced in plenty of his humorous writings. J. Galt underlined that the Greek poems' production reflect a brilliant poetical expression, an original view of the facts and the particular environment that inspired Byron's imagination.

Lord Byron wrote also about his religiousness, stating he was a moderate Presbyterian and recounted the experiences shared with Dr. Kennedy, while he was stationed in Cephalonia. His deep interest in and support of the local population's conditions, together with his sense of active duty helping in the delivery of the pious tracts among the community, would however have never converted him into a real Christian able to understand the Scriptures. He was sensible enough to explain the Doctor his whole point of view and doctrine, stating that in his philosophy devotion represented

²⁸⁸ Source: text from Morgan Library, photocopy from microfilm; LJ I 243-6; QI 56-7; BLJ I 223-4.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 13, 215-219. Lord Byron artist's melancholy.

the affection of the heart and he was very desirous of understanding the other countries' Christianity, but not without a deep investigation, feeling reconciled mostly to St. Paul.

FAREWELL TO MALTA

Adieu, ye joys of La Valette!
Adieu, Sirocco, sun, and sweat!
Adieu, thou palace rarely entered!
Adieu, ye mansions where—I've ventured!

Adieu, ye curséd streets of stairs!
(How surely he who mounts them swears!)
Adieu, ye merchants often failing!
Adieu, thou mob for ever railing!
Adieu, ye packets—without letters!
Adieu, ye fools—who ape your betters!
Adieu, thou damned'st quarantine,
That gave me fever, and the spleen!
Adieu that stage which makes us yawn, Sirs,
Adieu his Excellency's dancers!
Adieu to Peter—whom no fault's in,
But could not teach a colonel waltzing;
Adieu, ye females fraught with graces!
Adieu red coats, and redder faces!
Adieu the supercilious air

Of all that strut *en militaire*!
I go—but God knows when, or why,
To smoky towns and cloudy sky,
To things (the honest truth to say)
As bad—but in a different way.

Farewell to these, but not adieu,
Triumphant sons of truest blue!
While either Adriatic shore,
And fallen chiefs, and fleets no more,
And nightly smiles, and daily dinners,
Proclaim you war and women's winners.
Pardon my Muse, who apt to prate is,
And take my rhyme—because 'tis "gratis."

And now I've got to Mrs. Fraser,²⁹⁰
 Perhaps you think I mean to praise her—
 And were I vain enough to think
 My praise was worth this drop of ink,
 A line—or two—were no hard matter,
 As here, indeed, I need not flatter:
 But she must be content to shine
 In better praises than in mine,
 With lively air, and open heart,
 And fashion's ease, without its art;
 Her hours can gaily glide along.
 Nor ask the aid of idle song.

And now, O Malta! since thou'st got us,
 Thou little military hot-house!
 I'll not offend with words uncivil,
 And wish thee rudely at the Devil,
 But only stare from out my casement,
 And ask, "for what is such a place meant?"
 Then, in my solitary nook,
 Return to scribbling, or a book,
 Or take my physic while I'm able
 (Two spoonfuls hourly, by this label),
 Prefer my nightcap to my beaver,
 And bless my stars I've got a fever.²⁹¹

May 26, 1811

From the main subjects of his poems, such as *Lara*, *The Corsair*, *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*,²⁹² many romantic musicians, such as G. Verdi, Schuman and H. Berziol have drawn inspiration. Also W. M. Turner depicted and recreated the last narrative poem in 1823, whose title recalls Lord Byron's piece of work, standing out among the painters of his age. Especially in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, published by John Murray, the figure of the young Byronian hero Harold, reflects the figure of the traveller, who followed the itinerary carried out by Lord Byron from the Mediterranean to the Aegean Sea between 1809 and 1811. He enhanced contrasting feelings of love, hate,

²⁹⁰ Mrs. Susan Fraser published, in 1809, "*Camilla de Florian* (the scene is laid in Valletta) and *Other Poems*. By an Officer's Wife." Byron was, no doubt, struck by her admiration for Macpherson's *Ossian*, and had read with interest her version of "The Address to the Sun," in *Carthon*, p. 31 (see *Poetical Works*, 1898, i. 229). He may, too, have regarded with favour some stanzas in honour of the *Bolero*, p. 82.

²⁹¹ W. Hone, These lines, which were published for the first time in the sixth edition of *Poems on his Domestic Circumstances*, 1816. They were first included by John Murray in the collected *Poetical Works*, in vol. xvii., 1832.

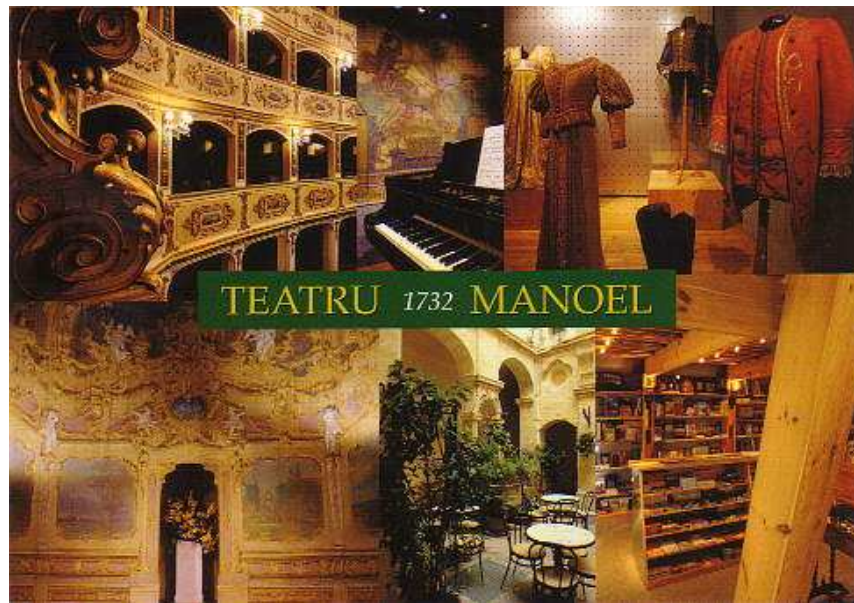
²⁹² John Nichol, *Byron*, Harper & Brothers: New York and London, 1902, p. 55-57, pp. 140-147, pp. 152-154.

rebellion and regret, enriched by a sense of anxiety and a need of justice. He reported every detail in a climax of irony, idealism and lyricism, surrounded by a deep realism, a careful observation of the world about and being very sensitive to the suffered human experiences. Also during the first editions of *The Corsair*,²⁹³ which was meant to be confessional for the delicate themes he faced, Byron received many praises. It was published in 1814 and is composed of three songs of neoclassical matrix, where the leading and lonely character Conrad represents the mysterious hero in exile, who is lost in the vastness of the sea.

He is a particular type of corsair who kept on struggling against injustices and also fought against the tyranny of the Muslims on the Greek land. During the 1820s and 30s, many opera adaptations were taken from this subject – also presented at La Scala Theatre in Milan – *Don Juan* another important epic satire was composed of sixteen cantos in 1818, whose Spanish picaresque theme is predominant. His travels between Cadiz and the isles of Greece and adventures from Russia to England contribute some important theatrical influences to this play, whose hero is presented as a victim of the environment in which he used to live. Many of his works, such as *Childe Harold*, were romantic travelogues, where he revived his interest in the surroundings, made observations on mankind and reflections on the states where he travelled.

²⁹³ Andrew Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 33-39.

4.1.1 The Manoel Theatre



[4.2] Manoel Theatre, Publisher: Robinson French & Associates

Governor of Malta, hither am I bound;
My ship, the Flying Dragon, is of Spain,
And so am I: Del Bosco is my name;
Vice-admiral unto Catholic King.²⁹⁴

More good hearted characters had the English Romanticism,²⁹⁵ which was characterized by nature's goodness, equality of social classes, the search for truth and the enduring power of visual arts which emphasised emotional and spiritual representations. An exception for the attitudes between mental and immoral was reflected by Byron's drama plays, among which composed during his Italian exile, can be recalled: *Manfred*, *Cain*, *Heaven and Earth*, *Marino Faliero* Doge of Venice, *Sardanapalus* and *The two Foscari*. Deeply influenced by Vittorio Alfieri and the dramatist Monti, his first experiences were carried out by the Drury Lane Theatre, which reopened in Covent Garden on 10th October 1812, after a fire destruction, presenting a Lord's prologue. It was his deep interest in comedy and satire, which led him to start attending almost every

²⁹⁴ Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, Dover Publications, Inc., Mineola – New York, 2003, p.21.

²⁹⁵ Steve Gooch, *Writing a Play*, A & C Black Publishers Ltd., London, 2001. What is about shaping a play with the right ingredients and characters as masks of a drama to be performed in the arena of the playwrights' dominio? Discovering the key of the play, the spontaneity of the atmosphere and the excitement in the audience during an opera.

evening, the local Maltese theatre during his stay in Valletta. Also Samuel Coleridge was present to English plays performed by the garrison officers on February 1805.²⁹⁶

Saturday September 2nd 1809: Got up at eight. Breakfasted with the family – debated about going to Smyrna, and found, after determining upon buying sheep, eggs, and a dozen fowls, that the four English saddles were left in the *Townshend* – called on Ball and told our case. He wished us good morning, but Mr Larry his secretary told us he had got Dr Moncrieff's house for us, No 3 Strada di Forni – took us to the public library – very good. Lord Byron bought an Arabic Grammar for a dollar. Introduced to and took a lesson of an Arabic master – went to bathe in a well-constructed bath in Mr Chabot's *calesa*. Came back – dined with General Oakes at his *casa di campagna* – grand dispute about Billy Pitt with his *aide-de-camp*, a rude fellow who grinned. Carried off by the General to town for fear of battle – saw his apartments in the palace. Went to the Opera – small – bad house – boxes let twelve dollars per month but half price always paid by entrances – tolerable Italian opera – *Il Falso Philossofho*, with a good orchestra – though ill-paid, but the dancing so-so. *Gli Amanti Burlatti* in the bad style of Lisbon. Eat for the first time at General Oakes' – beccaficas, a fat bit of a bird, smaller than larks, and a curious fish, found in a shell like a mussel enclosed in a rock. Prompter at the opera with coat on, and two large rings on his fingers. Found a capital lodgings at Dr Moncrieff's, and a very civil letter from Colonel Dickens – wrote this from August 31st.²⁹⁷

4.1.2 The theatre from Grand Master Vilhena's inauguration

The great Manoel Theatre²⁹⁸ in Valletta was inaugurated on January 1732, by the Grand Master Antonio Manoel de Vilhena and constituted one of the most important meeting points and places of interest, not only for the young Knights, but also for many Romantic writers. The very first performances were carried out by the Knights of the Italian Tongue in their Auberge from 1631, where religious plays were arranged throughout the year, while comedies and other plays were allowed only during the Carnival period. The Italian architect Romano Carapecchia was in charge of designing and building it. His work began on 16th March 1731 and was completed within ten

²⁹⁶ Donald Sultana, *The journey of Sir Walter Scott to Malta 1771-1832*, Hampshire, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 1987, p. 97.

²⁹⁷ From the diary of Sir John Cam Hobhouse, 1st Baron Broughton, Edited from B.L.Add.Mss. 56527, Malta, August 31st–September 19th 1809. At Trinity College Hobhouse became friend with Lord Byron, and accompanied him in his journeys in the Peninsula, Greece and Turkey. Contributed with notes to the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*. Source by Peter Cochran.

²⁹⁸ Paul Xuereb, *The Manoel Theatre: a Short History*, Sta Venera –Malta: Midsea Books Ltd., 2012, pp.13-16. The Theatre's inauguration. Romano Carapecchia design and Cabreo Vilhena structure prospect.

months. For this reason, two houses in Strada del Carmine were purchased by the Fondazione Manoel, for the price of 2.186 scudi.²⁹⁹ The original model of the theatre resembled the Palermo theatre of the time, Teatro Santa Cecilia built in 1692 and the oval shape of the auditorium was originally U-shaped with straight sides projecting onto the stage.

Furthermore, as in the Theatre's prospect by Cabreo Vilhena, it had a pit furnished with benches and a parterre consisting of eight numbered boxes, three of them reserved to the Grand Master's party and four vacant. The Magisterial of the first tier consisted of thirteen boxes, the central three of which intercommunicated. Above this was another tier of thirteen boxes and above this tier the so-called 'Paradiso' consisting of another thirteen boxes was situated. There was a whole number of 39 boxes versus the current 67 boxes and the gallery. Important structural modifications were carried out to the boxes by the later Sir George Whitmore, who opened them in order to make the charming customs more visible to the audience, as seeing was also becoming more important than hearing. Count G.A. Ciantar also reported at first that the theatre had 'palchetti di pietra' which were indeed then changed into wooden fronts. To a great extent the 'Machine de Cieli' was mainly used for the scenes of divine intervention in Opera and Tragedies.³⁰⁰ The stage was located on the basement and big lamps, usually collected in a store-room, also illuminated the scenes. The original design for the façade as reported in the Archives underwent some modifications from what appears today, since the main street-door structure was sustained on both sides by half-pillars supporting a small balcony at the first floor level. Next to the theatre a building was situated which used as a place conceived for visiting the artists who were performing at the theatre.

The theatre was under the management of the Congregazione del Forte Manoel and controlled by a Protettore,³⁰¹ who was one of the Senior Knights, who was responsible for overlooking the direction of the impresario or arranging suitable programmes and singers. The figure of the Impresarios in the Valletta had to cover the task of renting the theatre from season to season usually from 1st September till the last day of Carnival. One of the first impresario on record was Melchiorre Prevost Laparelli,

²⁹⁹ Lately Renzo Piano is planning the new open-air theatre for concerts' season in the capital.

³⁰⁰ Robert Bechtold, *Tragedy and Melodramma*, Heilman: London-Seattle, 1968, pp. 1-73. Dramatists interest in the tragedy's victims and popular Melodramma.

³⁰¹ Allister Mac Millan, *Malta & Gibraltar Illustrated*, Valletta – Malta: Midsea Books, 1985, p. 215. Rules within the Congregation.

in 1736. The theatre was usually rented furnished with all the requirements, including backdrop ‘colle scene, viste ed apparenze’ in good condition ‘apt for the performance of opera and comedy’.³⁰²

Monday September 4th 1809: Up at ten. Took a lesson of Arabic. Colonel Dickens called. Walked to his house – went to bathe – dined at home, took a walk round the town by myself – naked children in the streets. Went to the Theatre and saw a play of Kotzebue’s performed without an after-piece – pit very full. Play very dull, but the people like it better than the operas. Joined by Mr Forresti – turned out of a box (all boxes rented here and days kept). Introduced by Mr Forresti to *la célèbre* Mrs Spencer-Smith and the son of the Spanish ambassador at London. Not knowing this latter, we talked lightly of the Spaniards. Mrs Spencer Smith a tall pretty woman, with fat arms, well made. Saw the church of St John this day and the coffin and box containing the body and “*praeordia*” of Count Beaujolois which in better times is to be sent to France!! The wife of Egalité lives at Minorca pensioned by Napoleon – Angelica Catalani certainly a whore – Mr Forresti knew her in Milan in that trade.

4.1.3 The first performances on stage

After its inauguration the first tragedy performed on mid-January 1732 was *Merope* by Scipione Maffei,³⁰³ acted by Knights of the Italian Tongue. The Italian Knights had shown their enthusiasm for the theatre for a century at least. After *Merope* then followed two comedies by the French and Italian Knights, two ‘opere serie’ of a German composer, an ‘opera buffa’ and an intermezzo of a short comic piece.

The theatre was often used for theatrical performances, but also for balls held during special celebrations, such as Carnival and on occasions of birthdays (1751 a grandson to Louis XV of France). The same year witnessed performances of at least two other operas, *Farnace* by Leonardo Leo and *Sallustia* by G.B. Pergolesi. In the meantime Andrea Belli followed Prevost Laparelli as impresario, being considered an important architect of the time, who designed the Auberge de Castille. In 1777, after visiting Malta Comte de Borch underlined how the Knights spent most of heir time performing Italian and French comedies and operas.

³⁰² Gaetano Reboul, *Compendio del giornale de’ successi dell’ isole Malta e Gozo dall’anno 1729 sino all’ anno 1750*: V.Laurenza, Malta Letteraria, 1939. NLM, Lib. 20,22.

³⁰³ P. Xuereb, *op. cit.*, pp.16-20. Main performed Italian, French and German comedies covering the period from 19th January 1732 until 1740.

Tuesday September 5th 1809: Still a severe scirocco; pain on the eye. Up at ten. Lesson in Arabic. Mr Spiridion Forresti³⁰⁴ called and showed us how to go to La Pietà to bathe in a boat – dined at home. Mr Spiridion Forresti took us to the theatre in the evening. Mr Forresti is a ward of Mr North's. When a boy, "Mr Gibbon" took a pleasure in hearing him read Greek ... He told us that Lord Elgin had defaced many fine columns at Athens to get at the reivos, which the French never did ... Mr Wright, author of *Ionicæ*, never once left Corfu for two years, and knew no Greek, giving up all his time to his wife, and having a fine library which he never opened ... No tours are correct. Witness Major Taylor's account of Mr Forresti's father.

4.1.4 Grand Master Manoel de Pinto Fonseca's theatre predilection

The following Portuguese Grand Master Manoel de Pinto Fonseca,³⁰⁵ was very fond of theatre, and for this reason many of his anniversaries and election were regularly celebrated with an evening of drama and music at the theatre. These particular programmes often included prologues with praises turned to the Grand Master, many handwritten by the Maltese noblemen Conte G.A. Ciantar. In January 1741, he attended the performance of an opera 'Arminio'. The front rows of the pit were always reserved for members of the Order, while Maltese notables crowded the last five rows. A week later the Grand Master was able to enjoy another opera, G.B. Pergolesi's 'Sallustia'. Among the Grand Masters Pinto's presence at the theatre prolonged until he was nearly 92.

In 1772, a crucial matter regarded the start of the performances, as far as the 'Protettore' of the theatre, Bailli de St. Simon's consideration that the young Knights should had been obliged to withdraw in an orderly way very early at night, even if the theatre represented one of the few places of entertainment offered by the city in a place like eighteenth-century Malta. They came up to an end when the old Grand Master decided and ruled that the productions should start at 5.00 rather than of 8.30.

Major impact had to be faced under the British rule, where men from Britain's armed forces were to be involved in many accidents in the theatre occurred when the Knights' reserved seats were occupied by the English naval officers. Much more

³⁰⁴ Mr. Spiridion Forresti (1752-1822) native of Zante, Britain's Ionian Consul during the Napoleonic Wars and Intelligence Agent. Foreign Service position: Minister at large in Malta from August 1807 to September 1809.

³⁰⁵ P. Xuereb, *op. cit.*, pp.20-23. Grand Master Manoel Pinto de Fonseca

exhilarating was the matter in 1770, when the Knights launched each other eggs in order to conquest the beloved singer at the theatre.

4.1.5 Main brilliant Plays from 1750 until 1790

At the very beginning of 1750 it was Giovanni Artuffo³⁰⁶ the manager, who organised the arrangements to display important operas by G.B. Pergolesi, Tommaso Prota and Gaetano Latilla. The *'Merope'* performed in 1751 was presented in several Cities, such as in Vienna in 1749, Barcelona in 1751 and Pesaro two years later. The Pergolesi opera was *'Il prigioniero superbo'* dated in 1751, while Prota's *'L'abate'* and Latilla's *'Il giuoco dei matti'*, even if his better known opera was entitled *'Madama Ciana'* represented in 1743. Carlo Goldoni wrote *'La finta ammalata'* for the 1750 Carnival of Venice, which was staged in 1759, one of whose aims was to combat the satire on medical doctors in the plays of Molière, a theme particular heart-felt by the Hospitallers of the Order of St. John. The comedy *'Il volone'* was displayed also in front of the Bishop of Malta by a number of clerics.

Two years later clerics from the parish of St. Paul Shipwrecked, in Valletta gave the first of a series of performances of a *'Sacred opera'* about St. John the Baptist, the Order's Patron Saint. Despite the fact that a production of this sort would not have been presented by the impresario of the time, but the Parish or some internal congregation. In 1762 there was an Italian professional company, called the Compagnia dei Comici Lombardi, who used to perform a number of musical works, including an intermezzo.

Wednesday September 6th 1809: Up ten. Lesson in Arabic. Bathe at La Pietà. Dinner (being the weekly public day) at Sir Alexander Ball's – large party. Pressed to go in a cutter next day to Constantinople. Old Maltese came in the evening to walk in the gardens where there was a band. Captain Sharpe, my "swallow" friend, told me the English were not liked except by the more opulent Maltese, who had houses to let to them, they having raised the price of provisions &c. considerably. Lord Forbes told me things were going on very badly in Sicily. Went to the play, where there was a speaking Punchinello – and a most beastly scene of a young girl putting a pestle into her hand near the waistband of his breeches. Mr Forresti came home with us. Sir Alexander Ball talks Maltese. Dreadful scirocco brought on a violent cold on me directly.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 23-24. Impresario Giovanni Artuffo.

³⁰⁷ Sir John Cam Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, Edited from B.L.Add.Mss. 56527, Malta, August 31st–September 19th 1809.

4.1.6 The Theatre during the British period

Towards the end of the French domination in 1801, during which the Theatre was under the management of a joined group of four patrons, we have Domenico Caisseler, Domenico Bianco, Diego Cannizzaro and Pietro Paolo Muscat,³⁰⁸ while the first British period was under the direction of the English officer as Thomas Walsh.³⁰⁹ Until the end of 1812 George Whitmore of the Royal Engineers was committed to the improvement and embellishment of the auditorium owing to an increasing audience, under the direction of Sir Hildebrand Oakes, increasing the present boxes and decorating the whole building. Other additional works were carried out towards the end of 1825, thanks to the precious support of the Italian painter Paolo Caccianiga, together with the raising of the building height, the placing of another Pit, a brand new roof and further dressing-rooms.

During the British phase, the commissioner's post was replaced by the one of *Protettore*, a position often covered by a nobleman or the president of the Court of Appeal. Among them emerged personalities such as, Nicholas Nugent, George Whitmore's son-in-law and the Chief Secretary Hector Greig. This particular role was also run by more than a person, able to bear all the commercial risks, such as the *Comitato di Direzione*, composed for instance in 1801 by Filippo Izzo, Gaetano Fossati and Filippo Casaccia. The contracts of the impresarios usually lasted at least one year, even if they were often required to remain and protract for another year. Another innovation in that period consisted of their application through a government public call in *The Malta Government Gazette*.³¹⁰

From 1804 the theatre was very busy with English plays performances, operas and comedies and at the end of 1811 another English private theatre was inaugurated in the university building, close to the Merchants' Exchange. In the meanwhile, at the Manoel Theatre the numerous guests assisted among the various performances to *Speed the Plough*, a comedy by Thomas Morton or *Village Lawyer*, where men were the main and only protagonists at that time. Later on, in 1824 the new *British Amateurs* in Valletta staged important theatre plays, which met a certain success among the theatre-goers, who

³⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 21-23. The theatre's French period with General Vaubois in 1798.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 24-26. Report by Aenas Anderson, English Officer in Malta from November 1800 until 1801.

³¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 28-29, 31-34. Financial situation, rent charged to the impresarios in *scudi* and admission prices.

started attending the stage on many good occasions such as Lord Byron, Coleridge and Benjamin Disraeli, who defined:

“Valletta as a city of palaces built by Gentlemen for Gentlemen, which equals in its noble architecture, if it does not excel, any capital in Europe”.

Clandestine Marriage and *The Review*, displayed in 1828, were considered great works by George Colman and David Garrick. The following year another comedy by Colman Jr. *John Bull* was performed and a farce by J. Kennedy *Love, Law and Physic*. Popular soprano singers and actors performed also in 1839 in the presence of Queen Adelaide,³¹¹ who agreed to keep them under her patronage.

Taking this extraordinary opportunity, the operas presented by the various impresarios until 1866, noticeably increased, including many important composers and foreign singers, who settled in Malta too, being so affectionate to Anglo-Maltese audiences. Among them for instance, Camilla Darbois, Lorenzo Del Riccio and Carlo Leonardis. Celebrations and Gala events³¹² were carried out at Manoel Theatre on several events, such as the arrival or the return of a new British Governor, Admiral or Royalty representatives. The theatre had an Orchestra of its own only in the following century, from April 1968 under the Director Joseph Sammut, who had been also Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet’s orchestra during the colonial period. What lately became, after 1997, the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra

³¹¹ Ibid., pp. 35-36, 47-48, 59-60. The Dowager Queen Adelaide at the theatre’s gala.

³¹² Ibid., pp. 59,60. Celebrations at the Manoel Theatre.

4.1.7 The Royal Opera House in 1862

Yes, he existed in flesh and blood, although he assumed the complete Appearance of real phantom; that is to say, of a spectral shade.³¹³



[4.3] *The Royal Opera House, Valletta as it once was.* E. M. Barry. 1862-66; Rebuilt after a fire, 1873-77 (Ellul 13); bombed on 7 April 1942, by Andreas Praefcke, from his fine collection of theatre postcards at Carthalia

The Royal Opera House Theatre was built in 1862 and had a huge Pantheon structure planned by the English architect Edward Middleton Barry, who contributed also to the erection of the one of Covent Garden. On the foundations of Casa della Giornata³¹⁴ raised the Opera House, that could accommodate up to 1300 persons and was inaugurated with a ceremony performing Bellini's opera *I Puritani*, in 1866. The opening opera season, which started on October and ended on May, saw the interpretation of no less than sixteen operas, among which *Un Ballo in maschera*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Crispino e la comare*, *Ebreo*, *Elisir d'amore*, *Ernani*, *Gemma de Vergy*, *Jone*, *Merope*, *Poliuto*, *Rigoletto*, *Roberto il diavolo*, *La Traviata*, *Il Torvatore* and *Lucrezia Borgia*. The brass band of the La Valette Philharmonic Society used to play during the intervals, proposing pieces, such as a *galop* and a popular dance entitled '*Il Principe di Galles*'.

³¹³ Vicki Hopkins, *The Phantom of Valletta*, Beaverton – Oregon: Holland Legacy Publishing, 2010, pp. 9-11. Le Fanto[^]me de l'Opéra.

³¹⁴ Michael Galea, *Ġrajjet Storiċi*, PEG: San Ġwann, Malta, 2004, pp.257-259. The Royal Theatre inauguration, further details of the day from the original Maltese version.

Unfortunately, a fire broke out in 1873, interrupting the great productive period and badly damaging the interior of the structure, only the façade hold on to the last.

After several years of uncertainty, the Committee appointed from the local Council of Government approved of the theatre's restoration, which reopened to the public with a Grand Gala and Verdi's performance of *Aida* in 1877. The international repertoire included scores by Italian artists, such as Donizzetti, Bellini, Verdi, Puccini, Mascagni, Leoncavallo and Giordano together with French and German operas. Among the most important Maltese composers were Paolino Vassallo (1856-1923), with his *Amor Fatal*, *Frazir* and *Edith Cavell*, Anton Nani with *I cavalieri di Malta* in 1877, *Agnese Visconti*, and Carlo Diacono (1876–1942) with *L'Alpino*.³¹⁵ The impresario was in charge of choosing singers and conductors, among the most renowned were soprano Camen Melis, baritone Antonio Scotti 1866, La Scala mezzo soprano Gianna Pederzini and Giulietta Simionato 1900-10, baritone Mariano Stabile and Riccardo Stracciari 1875-88, soprano Licia Albanese 1913, tenor Auereliano Pertile and Giovanni Zenetello 1885. During the closing of the opera season the theatre was used by other companies, such as Italian Company Carlo Goldoni, the Russian Ballet and some English plays.

During that period many important composers and foreign productions from Dublin and The Old Vic of London were invited to Malta to conduct various illustrious compositions, for instance Ottorino Respighi, Riccardo Zandonai, Giuseppe Mulè and Mons. Licino Refice. Unfortunately, the well run activity of the theatre met a sudden interruption during the Second World War, when it was radically destroyed by Luftwaffe aerials bombers, leaving at least the opportunity on April 1907 to attend a gala of Act 1 and 2 of *La Bohème*, also for King Edward and Queen Alexandra.³¹⁶

Thursday September 7th 1809: Got up very ill with the wind. Short lesson in Arabic. Went to St Julian's & dined with Colonel Dickens at his seat, about four miles from Valetta. These country houses, except the General's and Admiral's, not very good, nor so cool as town.

Theatre in the evening – *Gli Amanti Burlatti*.³¹⁷

Sunday September 10th 1809: At home – lesson in Arabic – dinner with Duke Humphrey on Bolognas. Play in the evening. Dance, "*Statua Mobile*."³¹⁸

³¹⁵ *The Times of Malta*, dated 23rd June 2009, by Frances Zammit Dimech, Artiche: The Opera House – rich in history. Opera repertoires, singers and composers.

³¹⁶ Maurice H. Eynaud, Micallef, *Malta during the British Era*, Valletta – Malta: Allied Publications, 2010, pp. 104,105. *Malta Herald* dated 10th April 1907.

³¹⁷ Opera Lord Byron had already seen; See entry for 2nd Sept. 1809.

³¹⁸ Sir John Cam Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, September 10th 1809, Edited from B.L.Add.Mss. 56527, Malta, August 31st–September 19th 1809.

4.2 St. John's Cathedral and the Illuminated Manuscripts

4.2.1 The builders of the cathedrals in Malta



[4.4] Mosta Dome, Malta

Applied arts and picture-galleries were enriched in the islands by the arrival and presence not only of literary composers, but also by artists such as Caravaggio and Mattia Preti, who were convoked in Valletta by the Knights themselves. During the early seventeenth century, both of them were commissioned to contribute to the exhibition of very large canvas paintings, which would become the masterpieces' symbols of one of the most renowned cathedrals in the Mediterranean sea, called after St. John.

In the effort of trying to trace the background of the Cathedrals' builders,³¹⁹ some interesting information and curious facts came to light. The only trouble was that non-architectural projects were never found and corporations of 'Free Masons' were probably protected by a series of privacy constraints. From the documents emerged that there was a 'Magister Operis', who was very likely appointed as Director of or as the person, in charge of paying the wages. Those majestic Cathedrals should be understood and

³¹⁹ A. Mac Millan, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-278. St. John's Church by Augusto Bartolo.

conceived as collective works carried out by architects, skilled workers and volunteer labours. It seems certain that the first Muratorie Associations were formed and that the Templars were able to educate and pass on to their heirs the whole necessary knowledge. Many scholars³²⁰ and artists stared in fascination at the intricate structures of these grandiose designs, asking themselves about the possible origins of all those Master masons.

In fact, the erection of such constructions implied a considerable workforce, presumably there were definitely friars, but also members of families and nobles,³²¹ who through their offerings compensated to some extent the need for funds. The stone blocks necessary for the implementation of the work were extracted from Quarries, also distant from the place of erection, cut and transported to the shipyard, on animal-drawn carts. Each had its own specific lapicida "brand" (which could be a tool to work, the compass, a geometric figure or a letter of the alphabet) on the lock cut. On further investigations they distinguished a block as made from a precise stone-cutter, who was so responsible for his work and easily identifiable by the foreman, giving in this way high competence and skills to a certain family of stones or group.



[4.5] Ta' Pinu Shrine, Gozo by Rob Smith

³²⁰ Victor Mallia Milanes, *Venice and Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, Msida-Malta: Mireva Publications, 1993, pp. 491-507. Architectural development by Quentin Hughes.

³²¹ A. Mac Millan, *op. cit.*, pp. 279-291. The Maltese nobility and the Maltese Corps of the British Army.

4.2.2 St. John's Cathedral in the capital of Valletta



[4.6] St. John's Co-Cathedral Interior

As soon as a visitor crosses the threshold of the Cathedral of St. John³²² in Valletta, as most of the British authors and most famous painters did, he realizes how this Baroque monument represents a unique work of huge importance. The Grand Masters and Knights donated works of great artistic value still admired by a large number of people from all over the world and adorned it with valuable works produced by the greatest artists of the era.

Completed in 1577 and dedicated to St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of the Order, contains a wide range of monumental creations, real academic-style inlays and majestic paintings.³²³

³²² Cynthia De Giorgio, *St John's Co-Cathedral Valletta, Sta Venera – Malta: Insight Heritage Guides*, 2007, pp. 3-7. Baroque architectural heritage.

³²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-19. The vault paintings with episodes from the life of St. John the Baptist, church marble tombstones and the choir stalls.

4.2.3 Conventual's Church Historical overview

Commissioned in 1572 by Grand Master Jean de la Cassière³²⁴ as the conventual's church of the Order of the Knights Hospitaller of St. John and designed by the celebrated Maltese military architect Gerolamo Cassar,³²⁵ St. John's Co-Cathedral stands as a unique monument of international importance. The Knights were noblemen from the most important families of Europe, and their mission was to protect the Catholic faith from the attacks of the Ottoman Turks. After defending the tiny island of Malta from the Ottomans in the Great Siege of 1565, they turned Malta into a fortress that befitted a military Order and built a new capital city worthy of noblemen. Pride of place in the centre of the new city 'Valletta' was reserved for their Church.

Building was completed on St John's in 1577. The plain façade flanked by two large bell towers is austere and has the character of a fortress reflecting the sober mood of the Order after the Great Siege. The nave is 53 meters in length and 15 meters wide with side chapels on either side. These chapels were assigned to the various languages according to seniority. The French, Italian and Aragon languages, being prominent, were placed closest to the altar. During the 17th century Grand Master Cottoner³²⁶ ordered the redecoration of the Church's interior. While on 12th July 1798, the Knights reluctantly handed over the Islands to General Napoleon Bonaparte and, in so doing, left their conventual's church. It was at this time that the church was made into a Co-Cathedral.

The French capitulated in 1800 and the British Governor soon took over the island. The same privileges enjoyed by the ruling Knights were reserved for the British Governor and, one of these privileges, was the church of St John's. In the 19th century, the chapel of the French Langue was the main target of Nazarene fanaticism and St. John's was entrusted to Giuseppe Hyzler (1787-1858), the local undisputed leader of this movement. Under his direction, even the sepulchral monuments in the chapel were to be reformed and some damages had already been wreaked on the monument to Grand

³²⁴ Ibid., pp. 20-37. All the Cathedrals' chapels and their respective Langue.

³²⁵ Victor Mallia Milanese, *op. cit.*, pp. 409, 410, 492-494, 498-501. Gerolamo Cassar (1567-92) Engineer *Capo Mastro dell'opere* in Valletta architectural style.

³²⁶ Simon Mercieca, *The Knights of St. John in Malta*, Photographer Kevin Casha, Malta: Miller distributors Ltd, 2010, pp. 80,81. The brothers Grand Masters Cottoner contributed to the interiors' decoration.

Master de Rohan,³²⁷ when a strong protest in the summer of 1840 led the authorities to halt the attack. In 1941, during the Second World War, St John's Co-Cathedral suffered severe damages as a result of a bombing attack over Valletta. Part of the Loggia on Merchants Street suffered most as the church narrowly escaped total annihilation. Since 1974, the Bishop's throne has stood in place of that once intended for the Grand Masters and their successors – the British Governors - who had then also left Malta. Today, St John's is also a venue for cultural events and is one of the most popular cultural attractions visited by tourists in Malta. It is administered by the St. John's Co-Cathedral Foundation,³²⁸ which was set up in 2001 to ensure the church's and museum's conservation.

4.2.4 St. John's Tapestries

Visiting the Cathedral another impressive collection is represented by the largest Flemish tapestry series, including 29 pieces of very great dimensions. Along the 1st Hall *The Triumph of Charity*, *The Triumph of Faith* and *The Institution of the Feast of Corpus Christi* are catalogued, while on the 2nd Hall we find the majestic pieces of *The Resurrection*, *Raising Cross*, *The last Supper*, *Entry of Jerusalem*, *Adoration of the Magi* and *The Nativity of Jesus*.

The tapestries were made according to the designs of Peter Paul Rubens³²⁹ at the Flemish atelier of Judecos de Vos, famous as the court Weaver for King Louis XIV. They were presented to the church in 1701 by the newly appointed Aragon Grandmaster Ramon Perellos y Roccaful as part of a traditional custom. The tapestries are of a truly impressive size, fourteen of them measuring six by six-and-a half meters. They were specifically designed for St John's Co-Cathedral to cover the nave of the church. The large tapestries depict the life of Christ with allegories³³⁰ portraying the principal and fundamental divine truths of the Catholic faith. The allegories were meant to convey a

³²⁷ C. de Giorgio, *op. cit.*, p. 30-34. The Chapel of the Langue of France and the monument to Grand Master de Rohan.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 51. Interior of the museum: sculpture by Alessandro Algardi *Christ de Saviour*, 1639.

³²⁹ Aldo E. Azzopardi, *Malta e le sue isole*, Narni-Terni: Miller Distributed Limited, Plurigraf, 1991, pp. 28-31. Co-Cathedral tapestries by Rubens, Poussin and Preti.

³³⁰ Joseph Attard, *The Knights of Malta*, BDL Publishing, Malta, 2010, pp. 120-123. Tapestry Chamber and Rubens Flemish allegories.

message - that of the supremacy of the Catholic Church and the fame and grandeur of the Grandmaster and the Knights of the Order of St. John. Another fourteen panels represent the Virgin Mary, Christ the Saviour and the Apostles.

In 2006, two of a set of 18th Century precious Flemish Tapestries were sent to De Wit Laboratories in Belgium for restoration. The Belgian Government paid for the transport, with the assistance of the Belgian Ambassador to Malta, Thomas Baekelandt.



[4.7] 18th Century Flemish tapestries in St. John Cathedral

The pair represented *The Triumph of the Catholic Church* and *The Portrait of Grandmaster R. Perellos*.³³¹ The process usually includes careful removal of dust, washing with a fine mist, consolidating loose parts and finally stitching.

The restoration of the complete range of tapestries will take up to ten years at an estimated cost of one million euros. The Foundation intends to restore all the tapestries – two of which were already restored in 1997. At present two other tapestries are in Belgium: *The Institution of Corpus Christi* and *The Triumph of Charity*. The King Baudouin Foundation of Belgium committed to supporting the restoration of Flemish works of art and sponsored the one of the tapestry Charity.

³³¹ Charles Mula, *The Princes of Malta, 1530 – 1798*, San Ġwann - Malta, PEG Ltd, 2000, pp. 192-196. Grand Master R. Perellos tapestries.

4.2.5 Manuscripts and Choral Books



[4.8] Original Manuscripts by St. John's Cathedral

- i. The De Paule Illuminated Choral books (square musical notes)
- ii. The Verdalle Illuminated Choral books

The L'Isle Adam Illuminated Choral Manuscripts

This represents one of the most attended sectors by writers and scholars keen on literature and librarianship. A place where one can see the first book bindings of great volumes and furthermore take their coloured imagines as a starting point for the elaboration of their works' engravings.

The researches carried out the most celebrated illuminated choral books³³² in Malta are connected to the Order of St. John's first period on the island and to the liturgical developments, which came out from the Council of Trent (1545-1563). The origins of all those manuscripts remain covered by mystery. Some Maltese researchers, such as I. Formosa, H. Scicluna and M. Buhagiar, state that the books probably belong to the post Rhodian period and were possibly first used in the conventual's church in Birgu

³³² Martina Caruana, *The L'Isle Adam illuminated Manuscripts and other Illuminated Choral books in Malta*, Valletta – Malta: MJ Publications Ltd, 1997, p. 4, 60-61. Introduction to the study of Choral Manuscripts and glossary of technical terms.

around 1530. Presumably the codices were kept later within the city of Valletta in 1578, after the consecration of the newly built Church of St. John's. The choral books are a set of graduals bearing the arms of Grand Master L' Isle Adam³³³ and the motto of the Order of the Knights Hospitallers Pour La Foy.

The measurements taken reveal that each volume corresponds to 790 x 550 mm and the folios accommodate six music lines with the accompanying text. The text is painted and written in a double gothic textualis script form. Each choral book's folio is drawn in outline with some large historiated or inhabited initials³³⁴ carefully placed and an equal number of full panelled of rectangular shape borders. The whole delicate compositions are enriched by decorated initials and refined with gold leaves adding brilliance to the illuminations. Among the great heavy volumes knitted, there are twenty-three historiated initials and one inhabited initials, all approximately the same size 200 x 190 mm. Of these initials five are of the candelabrum type, the others generally being constructed either in blue pigment with white highlights or in gold with vivid coloured designs. The particular sense of the third dimension is present in all the initials and landscape is the most represented theme reproduced in the tapestries, which includes naturalistic surroundings with trees and rocks.

Analysing the huge iconography³³⁵ examples, some stylistic differences are noticeable at a first sight, making it clear they are the creation of superimposed Masters. All these differences emerge not only in style, but also in the drapery, the use of palettes and paintings' materials. In all the illuminated borders we find the panel containing the armoured hand holding the flaming sword around which there is a scroll with the motto of the Order. Italian Renaissance elements, like stuccos are also the main subjects in several symmetrically panels, which are embellished with typical arabesques, festoons, putty, foliate and masks, together with the famous Romaine ribbons.

Therefore the production of the L' Isle Adam graduals in a cosmopolitan scriptorium satisfactorily combined new trends of smaller initials in floral designs, with the old traditions of the scribes towards a Gothic quality result. The diversity of idioms accompanied by a variety of styles could have resulted in a most expensive commission, but giving emphasis to the very high competence and attempts of the illuminators of the

³³³ Ibid., pp. 5-9.

³³⁴ Ibid., pp. 10,11.

³³⁵ Ibid., pp. 12-14.

time. Those provincial craftsmen seem to have been trained in the tradition of the illuminators associated to Bisiniano, the scribe³³⁶ of the 1573 Royas graduals. It seemed the craftsmen revision carried out the task of keeping on embellishing the manuscripts. The general belief is that the set of ten graduals were produced in 1533 in a Parisian scriptorium, and in addition were commissioned by the Grand Master during the Knights' stay in Malta. During the 1580s all the volumes were furtherly revised following the liturgical reforms established during the Council of Trent.³³⁷ Of particular interest is the original workmanship of each group of ancient manuscripts, reflecting specific characteristics and needs during their restoring phase. Among them the following choir and mass books can be observed:

The Verdalle Illuminated Choral Manuscripts

The Verdalle³³⁸ antiphonaries, which date back to 1595 are seven and contain the Proper and Common of Saints, who in Malta are particularly important with special reference to their restoration in occasion of the Saints Day feasts. Their preciousness is underlined by the fact that their painted and decorated initials are in number of nearly 150

The Royas Illuminated Choral Manuscripts

All these are the choral books belonging to Bishop Martin Royas, dating and commissioned in 1573. The foliate are more elegantly bordered and the initials follow a precise hierarchy decoration of south Italian origins, presumably Sicilian.

The Paule Illuminated Choral Manuscripts

These volumes consist of two manuscripts from the collection of Grand Master Antoine de Paule.³³⁹ Even if, the first Volume is in a slightly bad state of preservation, the rubrications and notations have something in common with the sixteenth century hand works.

³³⁶ Ibid., pp. 43-46.

³³⁷ Ibid., pp. 22,42, 58.

³³⁸ Ibid., pp. 34-42.

³³⁹ Ibid., pp. 47-53.

The Wignacourt Illuminated Choral Manuscripts

The situation of illuminated manuscripts in Malta and their production reflect the general artistic scene on the island at that time. The Order and the Church were important patrons of these arts importing works executed overseas and gaining foreign artists and craftsmen. In the Vestments Hall³⁴⁰ *The Annuciation (Jodieus de Vos)* and *The Sam Evangelist* are kept under glass in order to avoid damages.

The Picture Gallery MGR COLEIRO HALL

This type of cathedral has always represented a fulcrum of artistic and sculptural interest, both for Christians and tourists of other creeds. The most attractive side from the artists' perspective is preserved, apart from the vault paintings, in the Coleiro Hall with masterpieces celebrated master craftsmen, such as Matteo Perez D'Aleccio (1547-1616) with his *The Baptism of Christ*, Antoine De Favrey, Alessio Erari, Raimondo Perellos and Mattia Preti with *The Martyrdom of St. Caterine*.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 54-57.

4.3 Caravaggio and Mattia Preti

4.3.1 The magnificence of CARAVAGGIO (1571-1610)



[4.9] Caravaggio, Self-Portrait

Michelangelo Merisi born in the town of Caravaggio,³⁴¹ about 30 kilometers from Milan, on 29th September 1571, was the first great representative of the Baroque movement. He represented the archetypal rebellious talent and led a very unrestrained life, that is, he matched the high-drama of the *chiaroscuro* style of the paintings he became famous for. He was admired by many artists for years also inside St. John's Cathedral, in fact, the art of the master is exhibited in Valletta's paintings, such as *Beheading of St. John the Baptist*, together with *Saint Jerome writing*.

Caravaggio's researchers have always been particularly concerned with the tracing of his journey, which was indeed a travel called by life's necessities, rather than a Grand Tour of knowledge's exploration. Since, his father Fermo Merisi and brother

³⁴¹ Sandro Debono, *Understanding Caravaggio and his Art in Malta*, Santa Venera- Malta: Heritage Books, 2007, pp. 9-11.

passed away in 1577, due to the local plague epidemic they were exposed to a few years later, and only his mother Lucia Aratori remained, the 13-year-old young lad was greeted by his patron Simone Peterzano in Milan, to be instructed on the basic pictorial techniques in the space of four years. Caravaggio spent most of his time in Milan, a city permeated by the presence of the powerful archbishop Carlo Borromeo and including some Lombard painters he learned from, such as Lorenzo Lotto, Moretto da Brescia and Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo.

In 1592, during his first Roman pictorial phase at the bottega of Giuseppe Cesari, called Cavalier d'Arpino,³⁴² he took inspiration from Giorgione and Pietro Muttoni della Vecchia. These common elements emerge including the particular use of light, the disposition of the figures on the canvas and their romantic items of clothing. Among these collections *Saint Catherine, Martha and Mary Magdalene, Judith Beheading Holofernes, Sacrifice of Isaac, Saint Francio of Assisi in Ecstasy* and *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* are worth mentioning. During this sojourn he mainly loved depicting the following themes in closed environments, such as fruits and flowers' compositions, musical instruments with their various geometric forms, concerts and he was initiated as a student into the classical naturalism of human figure drawings. In his paintings the bodies shed the diagonal reflections of light, as observed indirectly in a mirror, but missing the typical human warmth of Velazquez and Rembrandt.³⁴³ He reproduced for his clients the magnificent enlargement of the characters and saints, with their prominent arms or hands in action in foreground, which reflect through the bestiality of violence the artistic triumph of a divine and human reality of Christ.³⁴⁴

Other paintings have always been extremely interesting to be looked at among his collections, they include still lives, as in the canvas *Basket of Fruit* in Pinacoteca Ambrosiana in Milan or *Young man with fruit basket* (1593) by Galleria Borghese in Rome, giving special emphasis to the virtues and qualities of the single object in itself. In this circle many young artists attempted to imitate and emulate his technique, style and subjects. Around the year 1600, he turned his attention to the completion of the commissions for the Contarelli Chapel, painting a whole series dedicated to *Saint*

³⁴² Ibid., pp. 12,16. Studios and patrons Caravaggio worked for.

³⁴³ Bernard Berenson, *Caravaggio, delle sue incongruenze e della sua fama*, Milano: Abscondita srl., 2006, pp. 49-51.

³⁴⁴ I Grandi Maestri dell' Arte, *Caravaggio*, Milano: RCS Libri S.p.A., 2003. Caravaggio by Vittorio Sgarbi, pp. 7-13.

Matthew, such as *The Martyrdom*, *The Calling* and *The Inspiration*, which contributed to the edification of the Caravaggism by his younger followers. Even though, in 1606 whilst working in Rome, one of his many brawls resulted in Caravaggio killing a young man called Ranuccio Tomassoni.³⁴⁵ With a price on his head,³⁴⁶ Caravaggio fled and headed for Naples where he would be outside the Roman jurisdiction and under the precious protection of the Colonna family. During this artistic phase he introduced his heroic characters from the common people of the lower classes, placing them among more formal and noble figures, recalling also the picaresque theme. After just a few months, despite a successful period in Naples, where he was given a number of important church commissions, Caravaggio left for Malta,³⁴⁷ the headquarters of the Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, arriving on the island on 12th July 1607. His journey started sailing on a voyage from Marseille, through Naples and travelling crossing Sicily, onboard the fleet of the Knight and General Captain Fabrizio Sforza Colonna.³⁴⁸

Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt invested Caravaggio as a knight of magisterial obedience, so taken was he at having such a great artist as official painter of the Order. It was during this time that Caravaggio was commissioned to paint the two main works both of which are displayed in St John's Co-Cathedral, with the *Portrait of Alof de Wignacourt*, commissioned to underline the dignity of his court and preserved in the Louvre and *Sleeping Cupid*.³⁴⁹ This period of relative calm in his life was short lived, and by late August 1608, Caravaggio was arrested once again for causing troubles, this time badly wounding a high ranking Knight in another fight. Imprisoned at Fort St. Angelo,³⁵⁰ disgraced and unable to paint, he used his inventive powers to plan his escape. Caravaggio's incredible break-out took place in October 1608 and once again he was on the run, climbing out of the three meters ditch, called guva and embarking to Syracuse in order to reach his close friend Mario Minniti. As a matter of fact, the Council has informed and immediately forced to expel him from the Order's Congregation.

³⁴⁵ M. Galea, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-183. Caravaggio Orders' Statute and Pope Paul V papal dispensation (Maltese original version).

³⁴⁶ S. Debono, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-19. Issue of the Bando capitale and Naples period.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-31. Recount of Caravaggio's journey onboard a galley to Malta.

³⁴⁸ B. Berenson, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

³⁴⁹ V. Mallia Milanes, *op. cit.*, pp. 527-539. Caravaggio paintings and St. John the Baptist flat proof study.

³⁵⁰ C. de Giorgio, *op. cit.*, p. 44. Caravaggio escaping plans from Fort St. Angelo imprisonment.

After a nine month stay in Sicily, moving among Syracuse, Messina and Palermo,³⁵¹ he tried to secure a pardon from Pope Paul V, and finally returned to Naples under the protection of the Colonna family. This Period is particularly remembered for the creation of his altar-pieces, *The Burial of Saint Lucy*, *Resurrection of Lazarus* and *The Adoration of Shepherd*. His style and technique as an artist was still evolving and he enjoyed a productive time in his second period in Naples, during which he worked out *The Denial of St. Peter* and *The Martyrdom of Saint Ursula*. An attempt was made on his life, and an incorrect account of his death was reported in Rome. Although Caravaggio survived, his face was left seriously disfigured.

In 1609, during the last phase in Rome he tried to reconcile with the Church, painting *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist*. He depicted his own head on the platter and sent the work to de Wignacourt as a plea for forgiveness. The following year, Caravaggio took a boat north to receive a pardon, thanks to some powerful allies in Rome. The cause of his death has always been shrouded in mystery, supposing he passed away after being lead poisoning from the oil paints utilization, from malaria fever or a brawl. The artist was reported as dead in a private notice, dated 28th July, but his body, however, was never found. Prof. Vincenzo Pacelli, from the University of Naples, spoke of his recent discoveries stating that Caravaggio was killed at the age of 38, after he mortally wounded a Knight. His body was then thrown into the waters close to Rome, without giving him a funeral service. Even if, a couple of years ago some Italian researchers made an official statement declaring to have discovered his remains in a church grave at Porto Ercole in Tuscany. Furthermore, in comparison to other artists, Caravaggio never carried out a workshop of his own, where his followers could have caught his art, because of his numerous take to flight. This is the reason why they learnt directly from the pictures ascribed and left by him in the various cities.³⁵²

More recently, in 1984, the *St. Jerome*³⁵³ suffered an adventurous vicissitude having been stolen from the Cathedral, calling for the intervention of the Interpol and the Police. As reported in his book *Caravaggio Diaries* Father Zerafa,³⁵⁴ Dominican Prior and Director of the Museum, personally faced the long negotiation with the thieves. As

³⁵¹ S. Debono, *op. cit.*, pp. 20,21. 1608-1610 the Sicilian period.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 39-51. Caravaggio's followers in Rome, Naples, Genoa and northern Europe.

³⁵³ Fr. Marius Zerafa, *Caravaggio Diaries*, Grimand Co. Ltd.: Lija-Malta, 2004, pp. xi, 1-3, 12-18.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-12.

soon as all the main Maltese newspapers – i.e. *The Times*, *The Democrat* and *L-Orizzont* – reported the news of the theft the police intensified the researches of stolen Caravaggio. Fr. Zerafa received a confidential letter with a tape,³⁵⁵ where he was asked to pay a ransom of half a million Maltese Liri, if he had not contacted the police or the local press, or the picture – being in Italian hands – would be taken to America.

Many threats followed the request, such as a fire of the Tapestries, damaging the works by Mattia Preti and vandalizing St. John's Cathedral. The thieves gave Fr. Zerafa the password "Merisi", promising they would call him again shortly to arrange the matter. When they phoned they spoke in Maltese³⁵⁶ asking for the envelope receipt confirmation, while in order to gain time Fr. Zerafa pointed out from the photo that the painting seemed practically ruined, while in the meantime he asked for the support of the Minister and his experts. Trying to reduce the ransom, he had been told where the exchange would take place. At that time also the Italian Prince Emanuele di Savoia and his team were in Malta for the restoration of Manoel island.

On 12th February 1986, Father received an envelope with new Polaroid photos and a piece of canvas,³⁵⁷ while his phone was again out of order and under repairing. They finally accepted the offer of Lm. 35,000, while the phone calls had then been traced by the technicians from the area of Zejtun. The negotiation lasted also the following year,³⁵⁸ while Fr. Zerafa was not in very good health conditions. They played in this way for a long time and the situation was becoming odd, while he was receiving the umpteenth tape-recording. At least Father told them "As a priest I advise you to go to confession, as a Maltese I would tell you to return it to where it belongs". Reaching the exhaustion, they informed Merisi & Co. the lawyer was ready with the amount of money, while Mr. Calleja, a person who was in duty of the Police Force a couple of years before, while was at the Priory in despair, insisted on the phone on receiving another piece of the precious canvas to crosscheck its originality. All of a sudden, thanks to the parallel investigation carried out by the local police, they were caught. At the Police Department the Caravaggio was returned to Fr. Zerafa and all went for the best. The two Maltese thieves Andrew Facchetti, Frederick Attard, and a priest were arrested with the piece of canvas in

³⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 27-30.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 31-33.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 38,39. Evidence of the pieces of canvas cut from the painting, 15th May 1986.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 45-82. Report of the pending negotiations from January 1987 until August 1987.

their pockets.³⁵⁹ The opera was finally sent to the Istituto del Restauro in Rome to be repaired by the Vatican experts and returned back to Malta after a long time on 6th April 1991.

The detective stories on stolen paintings and pieces go on also nowadays, in fact the last verifications regard the one hundred unpublished drawings by Caravaggio recently discovered in the Fondo of the Castello Sforzesco in Milan, by two art historians Maurizio Bernardelli Curuz and Adriana Conconi Fedrigolli.³⁶⁰

A selection of his great works as follows.



[4.10] Beheading of St. John the Baptist

³⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 84-96. Arrest of the accused of the stolen Caravaggio and Marius Zerafa, Director of the Malta Museums, relation of the recovery.

³⁶⁰ Article from *La Repubblica* dated 6th July 2012, by Armando Besio and Carlo Alberto Bucci: 'Il giallo del giovane Caravaggio trovati cento disegni inediti'.



[4.11] Portrait of Fra Antonio Martelli



[4.12] St. Jerome writing



[4.13] Supper at Emmaus

4.3.2 Portraits of MATTIA PRETI (1613-1699)



[4.14] Mattia Preti, Self-Portrait, 'St. John the Baptist Preaching'

Mattia Preti, called also "*Il Cavalier Calabrese*" was born in the small town of Taverna, in Calabria in 1613. The artist was considered the last of the Caravaggisti and this is the reason why, as a disciple of the master, he remained in Malta as a sort of keeper and prosecutor of his works and art. He was brought up and closely in touch mostly with the capital and the southern cities of Italy, very capable to catch all Caravaggio's painting secrets and representing them on canvas.

Preti decided to join his brother Gregorio, who was also a painter in Rome and there he painted fresco cycles in the churches San Andre della Valle and San Carlo ai Catinari. After a brief stay in Venice, between 1640 and 1646, he returned to Rome for sporadic periods up until 1661 and painted frescoes for various churches.³⁶¹ Here he came into contact with Caravaggio's style and then spent most of the years 1656 – 1660 in Naples, where he was influenced by some of the major contemporary Neapolitan artists and produced one of his masterpieces, the large 'ex-voto' of the plague fresco. These

³⁶¹ C. de Giorgio, *op. cit.*, p. 8. Mattia Preti influences, style and commissions in Venice, Rome and Naples.

were once painted on seven city gates, but have been lost over the years. The paintings depicted the *Immaculate Conception* or *Saints delivering the people from the plague* with two sketches which are housed in the Capodimonte Museum in Naples.

In 1659, Preti having been made a Knight of magisterial obedience came to Malta³⁶² most probably attracted to the island by the possibility of gaining the Knights' patronage. He was soon commissioned by Grand Master Martin de Redin to paint a new altarpiece for the chapel of the Aragonese Langue. The following Grand Master, Raphael Cotoner, requested him to decorate the entire vault of the church with scenes from the life of St John the Baptist, the patron saint of the Order. The artist was then promoted to the rank of Knight of Grace, by the Italian Langue.

Preti spent most of the remainder of his life in Malta, where he set up a well run Bottega of his own, which was very much appreciated among the artistic audience. His paintings had undergone the strong influence of masters such as Nicolas Poussin, Giovanni Lanfranco and Guercino.³⁶³ His mastery in the use of colour use is undoubted, thanks to the light and shade effects he made in his canvases.³⁶⁴ He died in 1699 and is buried in St. John's Cathedral, will be remembered as a great Baroque artist. Mattia Preti's contribution to the Co-Cathedral is immense and his works adorn most of the church's interior and other altars in Luqa, Mdina and St. Paul's Grotto. Among these pieces of art in the various chapels of Langue we can recall: *The Martyrdom of St. Catherine*, *St. George and the Dragon*, *Conversion of St. Paul*, *Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine* and *The Passion of Christ*. While in the numerous chapels around the island: *The Assumption of the Virgin*, *The Visitation*, *Last Supper*, *Mocking of Christ*, *The Madonna and child*, *Saint John the Baptist and Publius*, *The stoning of St. Stephen* and *The conversion of St. Paul*.

³⁶² Ibid., p.9. Malta spell in Malta for the decoration of the church of Santa Caterina and the Co-cathedral vault.

³⁶³ V. Mallia Milanes, *op. cit.*, pp. 553-555. Mattia Preti patrons and stylistic influences.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 557-559. His Baroque working procedure.



[4.15] Platone and Diogene



[4.16] St. George victorious over the Dragon



[4.17] St. Augustine



[4.18] The soldier

4.4. Musical Archive Project in Mdina



[4.19] St. Paul's Cathedral on the fortified medieval hill of Mdina

Monday September 11th 1809: Went with Mr Forresti to Civita Vecchia – saw St Paul's cave. Assured by the priest who showed it, that St Paul had lived there three months, that since his times vipers had not been venomous in Malta, and that the stone of the cave was a preservative, and had been tried in England against viper's venom. Saw the catacombs – very spacious and tolerably perfect – bats chasing in clusters to the cave. To the Boschette, large convent. Large neat palace, gardens of pomegranates, orange and lemon, and grotto with a fine fountain of clear water where the cits of Valetta take cold dinners. Observed ye cotton plant in abundance – delightful shower of rain, the second since leaving England. Informed by Forresti that Lord Valentia had caught the shitten pox in Egypt, as he heard from his surgeon – also that there are 95,000 inhabitants of Malta – 15,000 visitants ... dined at home – lesson in Arabic. Went to the play with Mr Forresti – Lord Byron gallanting at Mrs Fraser's.³⁶⁵

4.4.1. Maltese Language and Literature at the time of the Knights

The presence of the Order of St. John in Malta could only be expected to consolidate and develop further the cultural tradition already existing among the educated class. As aforementioned, the presence on the islands of renowned romantic writers and important historical personalities, created a new link between the English and Maltese culture and local language.

³⁶⁵ Sir John Cam Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, Monday September 11th, Edited from B.L.Add.Mss. 56527, Malta, August 31st–September 19th 1809.

Oliver Friggieri,³⁶⁶ a Maltese novelist and literary critic devoted his interests and studies especially to the Semitic written language that is ‘Malti’, an ancient Punic and Etruscan language, which is spoken only in the archipelago, also throughout the collaboration of Henry Frendo from the literal point of view. From the latest researches actually it emerged that the older spoken language Maltese³⁶⁷ was an originally Arabic dialect present among the Mediterranean communities, which goes back to the Arab occupation (870-1091) and had no written or recognised culture of its own. It was only in the late 18th century that it started to be used for literary purposes on a larger scale, being Christianity and Latinity the most evident features of the island’s cultural identity. As soon as the order of St. John reached Malta for the first time, they never guessed to have to face linguistic problems of such type, above all becoming the cultural and political protagonists of an epoch.³⁶⁸

The connection with Italy was always very deep and many English writers had gone to Malta, during the Grand Tour, knowing about important sources of study of the Italian literature, from Tuscany, Verona, Naples, Rome and Syracuse on the island. One of the first Italian documents, which can be found dates back to the early 1409, when Franciscu Gattu was elected Mayor and Ambassador of the island with the aim of relating directly on official matters with the King of Aragon and Sicily. The Spanish domination favoured, to a great extent, the birth and development of a proper Italian tradition. This is known to us through documents of significant importance, among which a memorandum of 1419, which was presented by the government of Malta to the Viceroy of Spain in Sicily. Together with Latin, Italian was also the official language of the Church, in fact the archives at the Mdina Cathedral are written in both these languages. Also all the historical inscriptions of the era, such as the librarian and historical sources, are actually ink written in a good hand in Italian, as well as “le numerose liste di arrivi e partenze di mercantili con i rispettivi carichi”.³⁶⁹ The use of the Italian language included internal and official communications, for instance, the laws of the Order, as they were the well-known manuscripts of the Council of the Knights. Italian was also used on special occasions, when Senior Officials of the Order and the Maltese people met together for

³⁶⁶ See *The Sunday Times of Malta*, dated 17th February 2008 by Oliver Friggieri.

³⁶⁷ V. Mallia-Milanes, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-185.

³⁶⁸ A. Mac Millan, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-211.

³⁶⁹ V. Mallia-Milanes, *op. cit.*, pp. 312, 313.

some official celebrations. For instance when Valletta's foundation stone was laid in 1566, Padre Pelo Angosciola delivered a sermon drafted in Italian. Furthermore, the Sicilian Pompeo de Fiore brought all the necessary material to open the first printing press on the island in 1642 and a couple of years later Paolo Bonacota followed his example.

Cultural societies started flourishing in Malta mainly in the 19th century, when many *Maltese men of Letters* met and gathered together to devote themselves to culture and to the translation of this new Italian language piece of works on their islands. In fact, we can suppose that they first got in touch and heard only the neighbouring Sicilian at the time.³⁷⁰ Obviously, the tradition of Italian societies and academies was already very strong in the 15th century, but nothing is known of Maltese cultural societies before the 17th century, so we can presume that labour skills and shipping were predominant.

However, as we know from records at the National Library of Valletta, a radical change took place when Ignazio Saverio Mifsud founded the *Accademia Fervida* in 1743. This first contact with the Academia allowed the new Maltese intellectuals and their children to take part in manifestations and discussions of higher educative levels, modelled on what was studied in the Italian schools. A huge interest in the language, which was always Italian and rarely Maltese, together with a deep devotion towards the more recognised and esteemed Italian Poets, such as Petrarch, Dante and Ariosto, largely explains why such activities seem to have flourished so much.

Only during the Romantic period, some writers began the first attempts to write in Maltese on their own, attempts which are now part of the early Maltese literature. An important poetic composition in Maltese, which remains to posterity, is represented by *Lill-Gran Mastru Cottoner*, written around 1675 by Giov. Francesco Bonamico (1639-1680). This poem survived thanks to Gian P. Francesco Agius de Soldanis (1712-1770) and was first published in 1931. In fact, Bonamico was able to write in a lexically detailed Latin and Italian, but seemed to be mostly attracted by the beauty of the Maltese spoken language. Among the main collections we can find: *Il-Ktieb tal-Poezija Maltija: Francesco Wizzino Lil Sant'Anna* (1730), *Lill Glorjuż Arkanglu San Mikiel* (1741); Gian Francesco Agius de Soldanis: *Sonetto Punico-Maltese in onore dell' Illmo. Signr. Dr.*

³⁷⁰ A. Mac Millan, *op. cit.*, pp. 63,64.

Ludovico Coltellini (1758).³⁷¹ It took quite a long time for this old type of language to cover a minimal role in the official literature and to understand why the epic works were mostly absent from their background knowledge. It was only the arrival of the Romantic Movement, which had given to numerous writers the chance to overcome certain difficulties and give vent to the passage from the epic sentiments into real lyricism.

Maltese literature written in both Italian and Maltese caught its fundamental source of inspiration in its ancient history. The earliest interest in Maltese was philological and Mikiel Anton Vassalli (1764-1829) was one of its representatives. In the “Discorso Preliminare”, published as an introduction to his “*Ktyb yl Klym Malti*” (1796), he outlines a detailed programme for the rehabilitation of his country and provides an excellent account of the local language problems. Thanks to the close contact with the religious Order and so many foreign languages during the following years, Maltese culture broaden and is enlarging its interests, together with its own identity, contributing to the international historical and literary experience, many new scholars are devoted to, through the collaboration nowadays with the Dante Alighieri Italian Institute Committee in Valletta and the University of Malta.

³⁷¹ V. Mallia- Milanese., *op. cit.*, pp.472, 473. Gian Francesco Abela: *Della Descrizione di Malta* and Canon Agius Soldanis.

4.4.2. Music, Songs and scores from Mdina Hill Museum



[4.20] The Lute Player by Caravaggio, Wildenstein Collection, 1596

In so far as the ancient Medieval instrument studies carried out by Castelbrando in Veneto, the researchers traced a path into an official inquiry and instrumental recreation. All these scrupulous restoration works were carried out in local craftsman's studios, which could have been given a quick glance while walking around the main streets.

Who has not participated in Pageants in our cities, villages and walled-in districts, admired Renaissance or medieval costumes rippling Baroque dances, minuets, fake duels and Equestrian tournaments? Anyone visiting any city that retains traces of the past in its monuments, will observe a significant number of views in which the music plays a role of equal importance to that of the Visual Arts. Furthermore, it is difficult to imagine that the visitor does not even arise the desire to know what music they performed and in what contexts. Also the images of the sound can be made by those who today imagine and describe the life of that period. Nowadays making the history of music means striving to become contemporaries of our own ancestors and taking part with their events, which animated the cities in which the music had its space and function. In some ancient volumes and scores are shown the origin and development of a musical context by

various Italian composers in Mdina.³⁷² The archives continue to provide researchers with updated news on masters of Chapel or other singers-composers active in the Cathedral – i.e. Amato D. Vincenzo, Amore Domenico, Arconati Paolo, Cagliero Giovanni, Carissimi Giacomo, Sabino Francesco, Vincenzo Tozzi and Guizolo – and the wide variety of musical instruments³⁷³ of the time such as violas, 1st, 2nd violins, cellos, contrabasses and organs.³⁷⁴

As the oldest explicit memories came from the religious side, it is a must to start our journey from cathedrals, patriarchy and dioceses, they in fact originated the first boot to common liturgical traditions, which includes the musical component. A new repertoire overlapped primitive local traditions, to make room for new customs. For some years the repertoires and codes have been the subject of intense research and conservation works by scholars of the subjects that were proposed to be analysed under various aspects. Unfortunately the almost complete disappearance of Latin from liturgy after the Second Vatican Council has dragged into oblivion this florid tradition; made of two Sopranos motets, three voices motets, antiphons, solemn Masses to eight voices in Latin music and singing in alto and tenor.

However, we can rethink and admire the numerous scenes in frescos or miniatures depicting churchmen intent to singing in liturgical moments or sacred images playing antique musical instruments in churches. If in the thirteenth century the centre of the cultured musical life was the Palace,³⁷⁵ with its *danza storica*, in the fourteenth century instead we must turn our attention to the great schools linked to the cathedrals. They became like the monasteries the place for learning music that serves simultaneously for worship and for social life. Biographies of some Masters' singers today are assuming more precise contours, which clarify the role of the city of Mdina in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the Cathedral not a few masters alternated in the teaching of singing and in the chapel. At the side of compositional practice we cannot fail to mention the widespread teaching that was imparted both within official institutions, and for the work of individual masters. Silent and devoted work of some of his monks and nuns

³⁷² Ibid., pp. 186-189. Liturgical Music and documentaries in Mdina Cathedral. Teachers and organists employed.

³⁷³ Claudio Sartorato, *Alla scoperta dei suoni perduti, canti suoni e musiche antiche*, Regione del Veneto, Associazione Claudia Augusta, 2003, pp. 63-79. La ricostruzione degli strumenti antichi: la ricerca delle fonti, Paolo Zerbinati.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 125-149. *Organo*. Stili e strumenti della musica nel Medioevo, Giuseppe Paolo Cecere.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 161-189. Rievocazione e sacra rappresentazione.

proceeded from the 17th century until the early attacks of the Siege of Malta. As witnesses of the intense musical activity at Mdina, remain numerous folios,³⁷⁶ including musical fragments preserved in the archive today.

4.4.3. Mdina Cathedral Liturgy of the Knights



[4.21] Handwritten music from St. Paul Cathedral, Mdina

At Mdina Cathedral, the Curator Monsignor John Azzopardi and the museum committee contributed to the creation of a complete inventory of Music Collections of the Cathedral's Museum, which is part of the precious ecclesiastical archives. In 1973, thanks to the collaboration together with the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library of St. John's University of Minnesota (U.S.A.), the microfilming project of the whole recovered material, which ended in 1989 was started. A year later, Dr. Franco Bruni, lecturer in Musicology and singer, completed the cataloguing of the collection, which included an average of 160 sacred music works by Italian 17th century composers, 630 manuscripts by Italian and Maltese composers, together with the *Madrigals* by Gesualdo da Venosa.

While I was carrying out my researches inside the Cathedral's Archives, thanks to the support of the archivist Mario, I dealt with many printed part books at that time, among which the researches carried out by the Professor in Musicology Giacomo Baroffio. From his detailed Liturgical Bibliology Notes, the careful analysis of the liturgical codices in Illuminated Manuscripts preserved in Malta, the nature of the liturgy of the Knights and a comparative examination of the material, scholars have the opportunity of knowing the very interesting musical codes of the Order. Art historians

³⁷⁶ Mdina: Malta Film Project, N°. 3311, 3318 printed Mus. pp. 33-36. 111, n. 3327, n. 3319 p. 38. Works, composer and instruments.

have allowed acquiring interesting relative data³⁷⁷ in some groups of liturgical miniated codes preserved in Malta. Baroffio examined that, under the liturgical historical profile the problem was to distinguish the origins, clients and destination of the Maltese material and to be able to assign every witness to its own original tradition. Specifically he dealt with seeing which book belonged to the secular churches and which instead to the Order of the Knights. This precise statement was preliminary in sight of a further footstep in the research that wants to specify the nature of the liturgy proper of the Order of the Monks. The liturgical tradition seems in fact to confine itself to the dispositions related to few liturgical actions of the Order especially, for instance, the novitiate, the rituals that pertains to the celebration of the Mass and the liturgy of the hours. The impression had is that the Templars followed the whole arrangement of the local Churches in which they were found, a shed in the whole Europe for the single communities. A particular case is offered by the principal Maltese centres, where the liturgical tradition seems to be assimilated to that of the continental European Churches of the southern areas. Even though, he believes, a clarifying answer can still be given only after a comparative examination of the whole available material, beginning from the consistent nucleus of the *Lezionaris of the Ufficio* to the different groups of musical codes in which materials of different continental origin are evident.

Another interesting connection was found with the Venetian School, while the Roman *Maestri di Cappella* paid greater attention to the sacred music, the Venetians composed mainly secular compositions, such as *Madrigali Guerrieri et Amorosi*, *Madrigali e Canzonette* and other Madrigali concerted by Giovanni Rovetta, disciple of Monteverdi.

³⁷⁷ *Melitensia*: Notes of liturgical bibliography (with musical examples in *Malta: notes de bibliologie liturgică*, "Acta Musicae Byzantine" 5, 2003, 56-61).

4.4.4. History of Maltese GHANA Folk Songs



[4.22] Ghanafest - Malta Mediterranean Folk Music Festival 2011 with traditional instruments by Manuel Casha

From the analysis of numerous pictorial representations of musical instruments we notice that there are numerous romantic allusions and allegories inspired to the music as harmony of love, faithful feelings and as food for the spirit. The main Maltese folk music, which could have been listened among the islands' narrow streets of the time, can be broken up into formal and informal practices. Especially, the word *Ghana*, pronounced 'aana' can have two literal meanings.³⁷⁸ The first is richness, wealth and prosperity; the second is associated with singing, verse, rhyme and even *kantaliena*, a type of singing with a slow rhythm.

This melody has been sung in the islands for a long period of time and is mainly the music of the local working classes, which are very keen on rhyme and song abilities.³⁷⁹ The very first studies of *Ghana* date back to 1792, the Knights' last period in Malta, among the last *ghanjiet* testimonies that remain, we can find St. Priest, a French Knight book entitled '*Malte par une voyageur Francais*'. Nowadays modern *Ghana* has been thoroughly revised with the addition of younger *ghannejja* and also *kitarristi* or by making it more theatrical, as did Frans Baldacchino, called 'II-Budaj', born in Zejtun,

³⁷⁸ *Ghana* Presentation, by The Maltese Performing Historical Art Association (Australia)

³⁷⁹ Malta Music Festival

who contributed to its diffusion overseas, in order to keep alive the traditional heritage of their ancestors and recorded the first *Ghana CD*.³⁸⁰



[4.23] Frans Baldacchino called 'Il-Budaj'

³⁸⁰ <http://www.allmalta.com/ghana/index.html>, by John J. Cassar, 1997.

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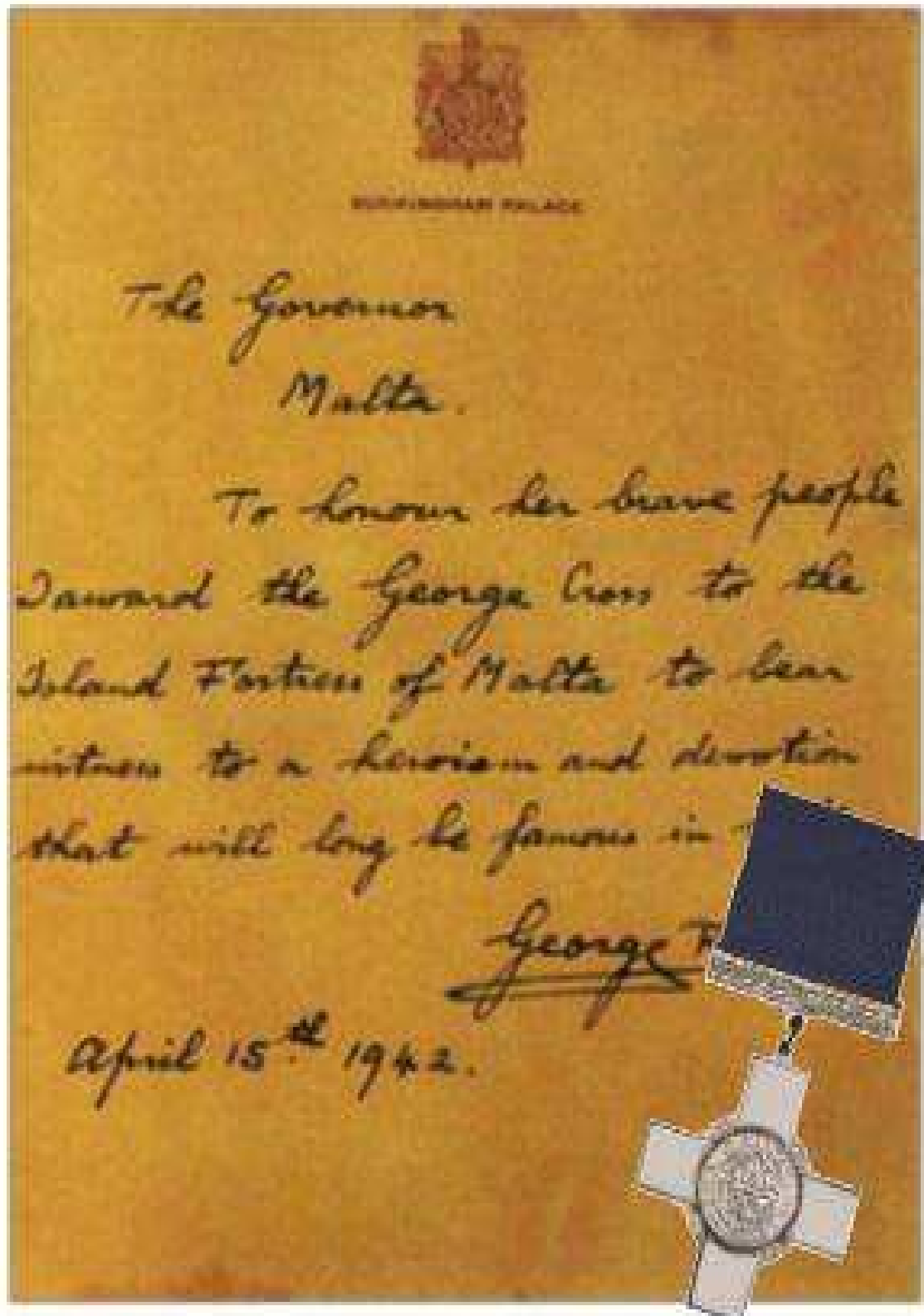
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APPENDIX





LIST OF THE GRAND MASTERS

1. Blessed Gérard, founder	f.3 Sept. 1120	36. Jean de Lastic	1437-54
2. Blessed Raymond du Puy	1120-58/60	37. Jacques de Milly	1454-61
3. Auger de Balben	1158/60-62/3	38. Pierre Raymond Zacosta	1461-67
4. Arnaud de Comps	1162/3	39. Jean-Baptiste Orsini	1467-76
5. Gilbert d'Assailly	1163-69/70	40. Pierre d'Aubusson, Cardinal	1476-1503
6. Gaston de Murois	c.1170-c.72	41. Emery d'Amboise	1503-12
7. Joubert	c. 1172-77	42. Guy de Blanchefort	1512-13
8. Roger des Moulins	1177-87	43. Fabrice del Carretto	1513-21
9. Ermengard d'Asp	1188-c.90	44. Philippe Villiers de l'Isle-Adam	1521-34
10. Garnier de Naplous	1189/90-92	45. Pierre del Ponte	1534-35
11. Geoffroy de Donjon	1193-1202	46. Didier de Saint-Jaille	1535-36
12. Alphonse de Portugal	1202-06	47. Jean de Homedes	1536-53
13. Geoffroy Le Rat	1206-07	48. Claude de la Sengle	1553-57
14. Garin de Montaigu	1207-27/8	49. Jean de Valette	1557-68
15. Bertrand de Thessy	1228-c.31	50. Pierre de Monte	1568-72
16. Guèrin	c.1231-36	51. Jean L'Evêque de la Cassiere	1572-81
17. Bertrand de Comps	1236-39/40	52. Hugues Loubenx de Verdala	1581-95
18. Pierre de Vieille-Bride	1239/40-42	53. Martin Garzes	1595-1601
19. Guillaume de Châteauneuf	1242-58	54. Alof de Wignacourt	1601-22
20. Hugues de Revel	1258-77	55. Louis Mendez de Vasconcellos	1622-23
21. Nicolas Lorgne	1277/8-84	56. Antoine de Paule	1623-36
22. Jean de Villiers	1284/5-93/4	57. Jean de Lascaris-Castellar	1636-57
23. Odon de Pins	1294-96	58. Martin de Redin	1657-60
24. Guillaume de Villaret	1296-1305	59. Annet de Clermont-Gessan	1660
25. Foulques de Villaret	1305-19	60. Raphael Cottoner	1660-63
26. Hélion de Villeneuve	1319-46	61. Nicolas Coronier	1663-80
27. Dieudonne de Gozon	1346-53	63. Adrien de Wignacourt	1690-97
28. Pierre de Corneillan	1353-55	64. Raymond Perellos y Roccaful	1697-1720
29. Roger de Pins	1355-65	65. Marc'Antonio Zondadari	1720-22
30. Raymond Bèrenger	1365-74	66. Antonio Manoel de Vilhena	1722-36
31. Robert de Juilliac	1374-76	67. Raymond Despuig	1736-41
32. Jean Fernandez de Heredia	1376-96	68. Manuel Pinto de Fonseca	1741-73
33. Richard Caracciolo	1383-95	69. Francesco Ximenes de Texada	1773-75
34. Philibert de Naillac	1396-1421	70. Emmanuel de Rohan-Polduc	1775-97
35. Antoine Fluvian de la Rivière	1421-37	71. Ferdinand von Hompesch	1797-99



ABSTRACT

Titolo Tesi: The British Gaze on Malta in the Nineteenth Century.
An historical reconstruction of the sites and the Knights' Order.

Abstract: My dissertation deals with the Great Voyages of the English painter Joseph Mallord William Turner and some Romantic writers to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem's archaeological sites in the ancient capital Valletta and the Maltese Citadel of Mdina, during the nineteenth century. I have carried out an investigation from the castles of the United Kingdom to the catacombs of the Mediterranean, in order to find out if the watercolour "Grand Harbour, Malta", presumably painted by Turner on the island, was really made there by the artist. I have also focused on the historical overview of the Orders of the Grand Masters who ruled in Malta and the Hospitallers, outlining the naval activities of the Military Monks. I have examined the ways in which various authors and historians have tackled some peculiar aspects of the Templars during the last decades. Underlining William Makepeace Thackeray's cruising towards Cairo, Sir Walter Scott's and Samuel Coleridge's inspiration in Malta's landscape and reporting the adventurous travel of Lord Byron visiting Valletta, the Manoel Theatre and St. John's Cathedral, which hosts Caravaggio's paintings.