THE FIRST DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS
IN MALTA AND GOZO IN 1828

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When Richard Temple Nugent Grenville, first Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, called at Malta towards the end of May 1828 for a stay of sixteen days, he had already completed the first half of an extensive yachting cruise in the western and central Mediterranean which, with the other half, would last two years. He was fifty-two years old. His suite on his cruise, discounting the officers and crew of the yacht, consisted of his secretary, his Anglican chaplain, his surgeon and a few domestics.1 The yacht’s name was the Anna Eliza, after the Christian name of the Duke’s wife, Anne Eliza Brydges, the only daughter and heiress of the third Duke of Chandos, whose ancestors, as far back as the thirteenth century, had claimed descent from a companion of William the Conqueror from Chandos in Normandy.2 In other words, the Duchess was a lineal descendant of King Henry VII of England.

On his cruise the Duke was keeping, with extraordinary meticulousness, a day-to-day journal of his travels written in a plain, eminently readable style. It was not his intention to publish it; hence its great virtue of absolute truthfulness and immediacy as narrative interspersed with a wealth of descriptions of places, people, incidents, and anecdotes. Many years, however, after his death in 1839, it was published in three volumes by an anonymous editor, who was almost certainly his grandson, the third Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, contrary to the information in the Dictionary of National Biography, which has attributed its publication to the second Duke. No copy of this rare book is available in Malta in public libraries or private collections.

The second volume of The Private Diary of Richard, Duke of Buckingham and Chandos (1862) contains a chapter chronicling the events of the Duke’s call at Malta,3 followed by half a chapter4 which, besides much useful general information about Gozo, gathered by the Duke from Major (later Lt.-Colonel) Charles Bayley, the island’s Governor, includes a factual and detailed eye-witness account of the Ggantija Temples which had been explored or ‘excavated’ only a few years previously by Bayley’s predecessor as Governor, Colonel Otto Bayer, assisted by

3. 78-91.
the Chief Magistrate, James Somerville. Moreover, the account itself includes details of the Duke’s own findings or ‘discoveries’ of antiquities, for, being an antiquary like his late father, the first Marquess of Buckingham, as well as an amateur archaeologist, he had himself done some digging, precisely as he had already done, on a much more extensive scale, at Syracuse and outside Naples at Pompeii and Herculaneum. Hence the first of the two central values of those two chapters. For the account of the temples, besides its historic significance in the context of Ggantija’s having been the first of all the prehistoric temples of Malta and Gozo to be excavated, and in the context also of the Duke’s account having been one of the earliest written descriptions, albeit unpublished, of the temples, has provided a crucial clue to the provenance of the famous album of water-colour drawings of the same temples by Charles Frederick de Brocktorff, which has been in the possession of the National Library of Malta since 1925.

The clue stems from the fact that either before or during or after the Duke’s two-day call at Gozo, attended by Major Bayley, who also provided him with information about what had been found by Colonel Bayer and James Somerville in their own excavation, the Duke was ‘presented’ – as one source would have it – with that album water-coloured by Brocktorff, or as the more common belief would have it – had himself ‘commissioned’ Brocktorff to execute the water-colour drawings for him. Whatever the exact circumstances leading to his acquisition of the album, the fact remains that on his return to Stowe Park, his ancestral seat in Buckinghamshire, he added the album to the many treasures of art, literature, and antiquities, that his father, the first Marquess, and himself had accumulated. When, however, several years after the Duke’s death, the contents of Stowe, but not Stowe itself, which happily survived as one of England’s stately homes, came to be auctioned in 1848 in consequence of the bankruptcy of the Duke’s son and heir, the second Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, the Brocktorff album passed by purchase to Henry Beaufoy, a Fellow of the Royal Society, whence it was afterwards acquired from a London dealer by the Bibliotheca, as the National Library of Malta used to be called.

In view of some confusion of identity and dating in two or three reputable local articles and references in connection with the provenance of the Brocktorff water-colour drawings, it seems useful to repeat, first, that it was the second Duke, not the first, who was formally declared bankrupt in 1848, which was the date of the commencement of the extremely protracted auction sale of the contents of Stowe (including the sale of the Brocktorff water-colours); second, that in 1848 the first Duke of Buckingham had been dead since 1839; and third, that the second Duke of Buckingham never called at Malta on cruise in 1828, although he has been represented as having done just that.

It may also be worth explaining – again to clarify one or two local misunderstandings – that, although the first Duke of Buckingham had an annual rental income in excess of £100,000 from his estates in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire, he had drained his exchequer and had burdened his estates with debt on account of his extremely generous but imprudent hospitality to the French royal family in the persons of King Louis XVIII and his court. The latter had sought refuge in England in 1808 when Richard Temple Nugent Grenville had sat in Parliament for Buckinghamshire with the title of Earl Temple. King Louis and his followers had been accommodated throughout their exile and until the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in France in 1814, on one of the Buckingham family’s estates at Hertwell, first, by Earl Temple’s father, the first Marquess of Buckingham, and then, on the latter’s death in 1813, by Earl Temple himself on his succeeding his father as second Marquess. Moreover, both father and son had lavishly entertained the King and his followers at Stowe, where a high tower, specially erected and named the Bourbon Tower, commemorating the link between the French and English families, has survived to this day in the celebrated landscape garden of Stowe, designed partly by Charles Bridgnan and partly by William Kent, the fathers of English landscape gardens.


6. Private Diary, II, 96.


10. D. Boswell, ‘Malta: behind the façade’, Treasures of Malta, i, 1, 1994, 53. But Dr. Boswell was in error in representing the ‘presentation’, of which there is no documentary evidence, as having been made to the second Duke of Buckingham ‘instead of the first Duke’ in the 1820s.

11. Cf. J. Attard Tabone, ‘Brocktorff’s Ggantija Water-Colours’, The Sunday Times [Malta], 25.3.1990, 8; Bonello, 22. Attard Tabone was however in error in representing the Brocktorff coloured drawings as having been ‘commissioned by the second Duke of Buckingham in 1828’ instead of ‘by the first Duke’. Bonello, while certainly correct in stating that the first Duke of Buckingham in 1828 commissioned a large portfolio of Maltese views from Brocktorff, was also in error in going on to represent the first Duke as having become bankrupt ‘in 1848’. The Duke died in 1839.


17. Stowe’s landscape garden is nowadays the property of the National Trust.
The expenditure incurred by the second Marquess of Buckingham in this munificence had been aggravated by his insatiable passion for collecting the luxuries of art and literature and building the appropriate structures for them at Stowe. In consequence of this life-style of a grandee, on whom, in the course of time, two very high honours had been conferred, first in 1820 in the form of the Order of the Garter (England’s oldest and most prestigious order of chivalry), and then in 1822 on his being raised by King George IV from second Marquess of Buckingham to first Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, it had come to be felt necessary by the mid-1820s that his expensive establishments should be reduced, and that he should go abroad in order that his large estates could be nursed so as to meet the heaviest and most pressing demands on his exchequer. Therefore, his Mediterranean cruise of 1828 was precipitated by his ‘financial embarrassments’, but not by bankruptcy, which was certainly to be the case in 1848 with his son and heir, the second Duke, who had to flee to France and remain there for several years until his own son, the third Duke, a cabinet minister, a governor of Madras, and a model of prudent living, gallantly succeeded in paying off his father’s debts and settling the majority of the claims on the family estates. Financial embarrassments, if not the rule, were certainly no rare occurrence in those days among the aristocracy, who were the ruling class.

As for the second central value of the Malta and Gozo chapters in the first Duke’s private diary, this stems from the fact that, although the Duke certainly responded with sympathy to the acute poverty and hardship that he saw among the Maltese lower orders from unemployment on account of overpopulation, and from the economic effects of the plague of 1813, and from the closure of service establishments in Malta in consequence of the recession in Britain after the end of the war with France under Napoleon, and although the Duke referred to some of the remedial measures that had been taken at the time of the governorship of the late Marquess of Hastings, and that were still being taken at the time of the Duke’s visit during the lieutenant-governorship of Major General Sir Frederick Cavendish Ponsonby, notably the opening of a silk factory at Verdala Palace and a cotton factory at Città Vecchia (Mdina), and a House of Industry in the premises nowadays serving as the Police Headquarters at Floriana, and although the Duke praised the cleanliness and the ‘well-built town’ that he found at Victoria in Gozo, where he afterwards referred in his journal to some of the existing public institutions – granting all this measure of interest on his part in the local scene and people, the fact remains that the Duke’s Malta journal is essentially focussed on the elite of the English establishment, current and recent, in a setting of a garrison/naval town at the time of the battle of Navarino.

By ‘recent’ is meant that General Ponsonby’s immediate predecessors, Lt General Sir Thomas Maitland and Lord Hastings, are included in the reported talk or judgments of the establishment, although in sharp contrast, for, whereas Maitland is dismissed as ‘detested here’ (meaning ‘by the establishment’), presumably on account of his rough manners and ruthless, eccentric character, but without regard to the many radical and much-needed reforms that he effected, Lord Hastings is presented in a much more favourable light, particularly for his additions to, and tree-planting at, San Antonio, for his popularity with the Maltese in response to his stately bearing, and for the measures to alleviate the economic distress. On the other hand, the Duke of Buckingham, who had known Hastings in England as second Earl of Moira before his elevation to a marquessate, merely confirmed from the English establishment that Hastings had been ‘heart-broken here’ at having had to accept, purely for the salary (in the context of his heavy debts), so small a post as that of Governor of Malta after having been Governor-General of India. Moreover, it was in Malta that Hastings, shortly after his arrival, had first received the news – and had remained cut up about it – that his former masters, the all-powerful Court of Proprietors of the East India Company, had passed a qualified censure upon him over his link with an English banking-house in India.

At the head of the elite of the establishment in Malta was of course General Ponsonby, who, on the Duke of Buckingham’s arrival, gave him a salute of nineteen guns from the saluting battery on the lower baracca, ‘which my yacht returned with the like number’. Ponsonby (whose post of governor had been downgraded to that of lieutenant-governor for economy) was a son of the third Earl of Bessborough and a brother of Lady Caroline Lamb, one of Lord Byron’s mistresses. He was a distinguished ex-cavalry officer, first, in Spain as aide-de-camp to the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular War, and then at Waterloo where he had been severely wounded and left for dead on the battlefield, but had survived miraculously. His wife Emily was a titled lady in her own right as a daughter of the third Earl of Bathurst, an ex-cabinet Minister, of whom the Duke had been a junior colleague under the great wartime prime minister William Pitt. The Duke considered the Ponsonbys, after his first call on them in the former palace of the grand masters of the Order of St. John, to be ‘better lodged than most sovereigns in Europe’. Their country-house at San Antonio, where the Duke dined with them, was ‘a pleasant one’, surrounded by ‘a beautiful garden of orange trees… and rare exotics, brought

21. Ibid., 98.
here, many of them, by Lord Hastings, from India'. The Japanese cherry, which was flourishing, had also been brought to Malta by Lord Hastings.28

General Ponsonby's right-hand man for administration was the Chief Secretary, Sir Frederick Hankey, whose town-house, formerly the Auberge d'Aragon, the Duke found to be 'most spacious' and his dinner 'so splendid and rafféché'. Situated in Piazza Celsi (nowadays Independence Square), the house was ideally placed near the water-front for rows about Marsamuscetto Harbour, which was precisely what the Duke treated Hankey and his party to on his waiting barge on a delightful moonlit night after dinner. The party then returned for cards, which invariably meant whist. 'There is no gambling here', the Duke recorded in his journal.29

Hankey, whose wife was Greek, had served at Corfu under General Maitland when Malta and the Ionian Isles had been ruled by one governor. So had George (later General Sir George) Whitmore, the ablest and most versatile of the colonels commanding the battalions of the four or five regiments - two or three of infantry, one of artillery, and one of engineers - commonly stationed at Malta. Whitmore had certainly left his mark upon Valletta with his designing and refurbishing of half a dozen buildings and monuments,30 all of them in the neo-Grecian style in fashion in Regency England and Scotland. One of them was the Supreme Council Chamber of the Order of St John in the Grand Masters' palace. Whitmore had converted it not too wisely - on General Maitland's orders, into the Hall of the recently instituted Order of St Michael and St George,31 which at the time of the Duke of Buckingham's visit was also being used as a ballroom32 for such purposes as the 'very cheerful dance and large party' to which the Duke was invited. He described the ballroom as 'larger than Almack's', the famous and exclusive assembly rooms in London, 'and much higher'. At dance it was perfectly cool - and indeed here the palaces are so vast and large, and such precautions are taken to cool the rooms, that no one need be hot'. Inevitably the Duke echoed all visitors to Malta in praising the excellently laid and low steps of the palace's staircase: 'one might ride up it'.33

At the dance the Duke was introduced to 'a little old man in a silk coat',34 who was Malta's greatest human curiosity for contemporary visitors, particularly when he appeared in Valletta's streets dressed in a black velvet suit and scarlet cloak in winter, and, in milder weather, in a green-pea suit, complete, at all seasons, with a small cocked hat, gold-headed cane and small sword.35 He was le Châtelier Charles de Grèche, the last of the Knights of St John,36 whom the British government, on coming into possession of Malta, had allowed to remain on the island, together with a few other old and infirm knights, on a British pension. He had first come to Malta as a page to Grand Master Pinto, and, according to Whitmore,37 to whose house and to those of all the English establishment he had instant access, 'for the last forty years he had never once quitted the island'. To the Duke of Buckingham he seemed, at the 'very cheerful party', to be able to 'talk of nothing but the battle of Lepanto [1571 in date] and I should almost think that he was there himself'.38

As for the other notable building in Valletta that Whitmore had remodelled, it was the Manoel Theatre,39 or the 'Theatre Royal', as it had been renamed. The Duke, who had excellent musical taste and was a connoisseur of opera, was taken twice to it. His companion was probably Whitmore's son-in-law, Nicholas Nugent. The Duke had known of Nugent in London as 'a singing celebrity'40 and as a half-brother of Henry Luttrell, a brilliant wit and poet of society.41 Although Nugent was officially a government employee as collector of revenue in the Treasury, he was busied, as the Duke confirmed in his journal,42 'entirely with the opera', which was a leading source of entertainment for English officers, civilians, and travellers as well as for the Maltese gentry and nobility. The performances in the theatre were supplemented by private concerts,43 sometimes with the participation of Italian opera singers from Naples and Sicily, like the good-looking prima donna whom the Duke heard singing at a dinner party organised by Mrs Whitmore, a gracious hostess, with musical talent and wide interests like her husband. The prima donna seemed to the Duke to sing much better at these private parties than in the theatre, because her colleagues there 'sing so loud that they force her above her voice'.44 One of them - 'a good buffo' - had come from the Fondo Theatre at Naples, where the Duke had lately enjoyed himself watching traditional Italian comedy after attending several spectacular operatic performances and balls at the celebrated San Carlo theatre during his stay of four months in the capital of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.45

28. Ibid., 79, 91.
29. Ibid., 81-2. For Auberge de Provence as the Chief Secretary's private residence see G. Badger, Description of Malta and Gozo, Malta 1838, 154.
33. Private Diary, ii, 83.
34. Ibid., 88.
35. Whitmore, 44-45.
37. 45.
38. Private Diary, ii, 88.
40. Cf. Private Diary, 80.
42. IL 81.
44. Private Diary, ii, 80-1, 85, 88.
45. Ibid., 1, 239-40, 265, 268-9, 274.
As host to the Duke, Whitmore was second to Colonel Pitt, an old friend of the Duke’s, probably dating from the time when the Duke, as colonel-in-chief of the Royal Bucks Militia, had marched at their head to Paris to form part of the Allied army of occupation of France under the Duke of Wellington. Pitt, as the Duke’s principal host, was at the landing place of Grand Harbour to welcome him on arrival and introduce him to General and Lady Ponsonby. Mrs Pitt, a pleasing, handsome lady, entertained him at ‘a very charming party’ in their house with a garden where ‘the banana and plantain grew in perfection’, although the fruit that he found most delicious in Malta was ‘a small fruit, half apricot, half greengage, called the Alexandrina. I never saw it in England. I have ordered six plants to be sent me’ at Stowe.46

Pitt introduced the Duke to the officers of his regiment (the 80th) in their mess, and made a long speech about provincial battalions like the Royal Bucks Militia that the Duke that had raised. Pitt was duly answered by me, and when we had complimented each other like Lord Noodle and Lord Coodle in the play, we separated.47 Pitt would have wanted to show the Duke the regiment out on parade at Floriana, but ‘the weather was so boisterous that fortunately he could not’. Within twenty-four hours they were together again, this time with Mrs Pitt and a party from the Duke’s yacht in order to see the cotton and silk factories after a look at Città Vecchia. The cotton factory lay in rooms in the deanery of the ancient capital, a spacious and high baroque palace occupied by the amiable Abate Giuseppe Bellanti, a brother of the artist Michele.48 At the factory they made table covers, the best being those which ‘retain the natural colour of the cotton, which is a light brown’. The factory ‘afforded some occupation for the poor, who are very wretched, and ought, therefore, to be encouraged’ here as the Duke did with a payment in Spanish dollars.49

The silk factory lay in Verdala Palace at ‘La Boschetta, a valley containing pure springs and a grove of orange trees’ in ‘a romantic situation’.50 The view contrasted, in the eyes of the Duke, who had a highly developed aesthetic sense, with the generally ‘dreary’ aspect of the landscape51 (not the seascape) of Malta – an impression expressed by one visitor after another before and after him.52 In his case the impression was accentuated by two circumstances, first, that, as master of Stowe with its extensive landscape garden, he lived constantly in an environment of verdure and natural beauty, and second, perhaps more significantly, that he had called direct at Malta after cruising along some of the most beautiful scenery in the world in and around Naples and its islands, followed by the renowned panoramas of Calabria, varying from the picturesque to the sublime, and succeeded in turn by the scenic splendours of the east coast of Sicily, dominated by the majestic Mount Etna.

The Duke found that Verdala Palace, standing solitary and desolate amidst rocks and winds, had fallen into decay during the war with Napoleon when it had been used to accommodate French prisoners. Thousands of mulberry trees had been planted for the growth of silk worms, hundreds of which were also being given to such peasants and people as had mulberry trees or the means of raising them.53 Pitt introduced the Duke to Mr Walker, the agent of the British, Irish, and Colonial Silk Company, which owned the factory. It was largely funded by Moses (later Sir Moses) Montefiore, the Jewish financier and philanthropist, who only a few months before the Duke’s visit had paid two calls at Malta, on the first of which he had entertained a very large number of the factory’s employees with their wives and children to a sumptuous dinner in the Hall of the Order of St Michael and St George in the lieutenant-governor’s palace.54

The Duke, whose extensive estates in England abounded in magnificent trees, had never seen larger shoots than those that had been made by the young trees that had been planted around Verdala Palace. The high winds that sometimes prevailed in Malta were all the hindrances that the growth of the trees received. The Duke gathered from Walker, who had originally been got over by Lord Hastings, that high hopes were being entertained of the silk industry’s coming to rival, if not

47. Private Diary, ii, 79.
48. Ibid., 91.
49. Ibid., 86. Lord Noodle and Lord Coodle were two minor but memorable characters in Henry Fielding’s burlesque Tom Thumb (1730).
50. Private Diary, ii, 86.
51. Cf. Life and Letters of Robert Clement Scone, compiled by his daughter Sarah Susanna Bunbury, London 1861, i, 283; ii, 305.
52. Private Diary, ii, 86-7. The Spanish dollar was ‘the international currency in most extensive circulation throughout the Mediterranean’, but English money was current in Malta (Anne K. Elwood, op. cit., 386). The Spanish dollar was worth about 4s.2d. 
53. Private Diary, ii, 87-8.
55. Cf. R. Cecil Hoare, A Classical Tour through Italy & Sicily, London 1785-1791 (publ. 1819), ii, 271: ‘Nothing can be more uninteresting than the first aspect of this territory [Malta] to those who enter it on the landside [from St. Paul’s Bay] ... villages ... raised on a barren rock, with scarce a tree to enliven the dusky-tinted view ...’.
56. S.T. Coleridge to Mrs Coleridge, June 1804 (Collected Letters, ed. E.L. Griggs, Oxford 1956-71), ii, 1138: ‘... Nothing green meets your eye – one dreary grey-white – and all the country Towns from the retirement & invisibility of the windows look like Towns burnt out & desolate ...’ 
57. Benjamin Disraeli to his brother Ralph, Sept. 1830 (Disraeli Letters, op. cit., i, no. 99, 161): ‘... At present most families are what is called “in the country”, that is, living some dozen miles away [from Valletta] in a site very much like a quarry without a tree to be seen, or shrubs enough to feed their bees....’
58. Elliot Warburton, The Crescent & the Cross, London 1844, i, 14: ‘... Thence [from Floriana] we passed through what would be the dreariest country I ever beheld but for the brilliant sunshine smiling over it. Scarcely a particle of vegetation shaded the brown, burning rock ...’.
59. Private Diary, ii, 87.
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Fig. 6. Admiral Sir Edward Codrington (1776-1851) after a portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

Fig. 5. Le Chevalier Charles de Chevigny by A. W. Crawford, MacFaul (Malta 1880) from a replica of a small statue.

(Casa Rocca Piccola Collection)

Fig. 7. Ggantija Temples drawn by Captain (later Admiral) William Henry Smyth (1776-1859), published in Archaeologia, XXXII (1829), 293-4.
excell, in quality that of South France. In the event, however, although the hopes were realised regarding quality, the factory was to prove commercially unprofitable, so that it was to be abandoned some ten years after the Duke’s visit.

At the Boschettro, Pitt (perhaps not unmindful of the scores of peasants on the Duke’s estates at home) drew out his interest in folklore by relating to him how on the feast of St John ‘all the natives of Malta, especially of the old people, wear the dresses they were married in, which they carefully preserve for this day’. The feast was of course l’Imnarja, the spirit and humour of which were admirably preserved posterity by Pitt’s colleague, Whitmore, in a water-colour drawing in the manner of Thomas Rowlandson’s caricatures.

Pitt finally sealed his friendship with the Duke of Buckingham by asking him to stand godfather to one of his daughters, and, accompanied by Mrs Whitmore and Mrs Brown, the wife of the colonel commanding the Rifle Corps, they proceeded for the christening to ‘the government chapel’, as the small chapel on the ground floor of the lieutenant-governor’s palace (formerly the kitchen of the grand masters) was called: the only chapel at the time for Anglican worship at Valletta several years before the building of St Paul’s Pro-Cathedral at Piazza Celsi.

After the small dinner party that followed the christening, the Duke, while fully recognising that ‘the people here are splendidly hospitable’, complained that ‘their style of dinner is not pleasant. Their fashion is to dine very late, for the cool, to drink an enormous quantity of iced champagne, and to eat enormous hot dinners’. It was Nugent, the Duke had gathered, who ‘has introduced champagne here, which was not before known’. He suspected Nugent ‘to be rather interested in encouraging the taste, the expense, and a manner of living which Pitt and his fellow colonels would not thank him for’, in view of the strict barric regulations that they were bent on enforcing upon their officers.

While the Duke’s yacht lay at anchor in Grand Harbour against a background of grand fortifications and in the shadow of several vessels of the British Mediterranean fleet based at Malta, while the Duke seems to have concluded from his surveys of the harbour scene that ‘the Maltese are the finest divers in the world, and pass the greatest part of their time in the water’, H.M.S. ‘Asia’, the flagship of Admiral Sir Edward Codrington, a veteran of the Battle of Trafalgar, was still at sea on cruise. The admiral ranked next to the Governor in the English establishment. The Duke had heard in Sicily of the victory that Codrington, who had commanded the Allied fleets (British, French, and Russian), had gained at Navarino by destroying the Turkish fleet, following the uprising of the Greeks for independence from the Ottoman Empire. The Duke had also heard at Messina that Codrington himself had had some narrow escapes: his epaulette had been carried off by a shot, and a heavier shot had torn off the coat from his back without touching the skin. Before the Duke met Codrington himself, he learned, while dining with Lady Codrington, her daughter and a son, that another son had been wounded in the battle, but was quite recovered. In Malta, therefore, Codrington was the hero of the day, as became clear to the Duke when, on dining again with Lady Codrington, Lady Ponsonby, Mrs Pitt, and some gentlemen who included the Duke’s secretary named Wilcox, a report was made that the ‘Asia’ had fallen to leeward and could not come in that night, but that Codrington had put off in his barge and was coming on shore. Great excitement, confusion, and fuss ensued at Codrington’s impending appearance, particularly among the ladies – ‘Lady Codrington and family all retired to the verandah, fanning themselves out of the heat of expectation’. And when ‘the astonished admiral, who had expected to have gone quietly to his wife and dish of tea, found himself produced in a room full of lights and hot people’, all ‘waiting to perform the Ko Tow simultaneously to the great man’, even Wilcox’s cheeks grew redder and redder and his eyes rounder and rounder, as he stared upon the hero – in contrast to the Duke of Buckingham, who afterwards drew the ‘comic scene’ in his journal in the best manner of light raillery of his favourite English wits and novelists of the eighteenth century.

As the Duke still harboured political ambitions, he had taken steps, before his departure for the Mediterranean, to keep himself informed of expected ministerial changes and other developments affecting the ruling Tory (Conservative) government in his absence abroad. Accordingly he had heard with interest at Gibraltar, at the start of his cruise from Southampton, of the death of George Canning, the Prime Minister, who had issued the original instructions to Codrington as to how he should conduct himself towards the two belligerents, the Greek insurgents and the Turkish fleet. Canning, as a liberal Tory, was not averse to change
in the old order re-established in Europe by the Great Powers after the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. Canning had already earned his place in history by leading Europe to recognise the independence of the new Latin American republics from Spain. Canning, therefore, favoured the Greeks, but after his death a predominantly High Tory government had come to power with the Duke of Wellington as prime minister and John Ward, the Earl of Dudley, as foreign secretary. This government was suspicious of Russia's designs on the East European countries still under Turkish rule, but who might break away, like the Greeks, if Turkey's power were weakened. Wellington, who had refused office under Canning, had declared in parliament that the battle of Navarino itself was 'unexpected', thereby implying that Codrington had exceeded his instructions, and that its outcome, namely, the destruction of the Turkish fleet was 'untoward'. In consequence Codrington, although a hero in Malta, was a controversial figure in Britain, where his Tory press critics and others were nicknaming him 'Sir Bombastes Furioso' after a popular burlesque on the London stage.

Codrington, for his part, at once succeeded in drawing the Duke of Buckingham, who was a liberal Tory, into his camp on dining with him and having 'a long set talk about Navarino'. On being shown the instructions that Codrington had received before Canning's death, the Duke persuaded himself that nothing could have been 'more precise, defined, and clear', unlike the allegedly 'vacillating, contradictory, and weak' instructions that had reached him from the High Tory ministry after Canning's death. He was full of sympathy for Codrington on hearing that 'what appears to cut Codrington most is the refusal to thank him and his fleet'. The Duke was convinced that Dudley, the foreign secretary, having bungled the instructions, was sacrificing Codrington to keep his place. Codrington, in the event, was recalled shortly after the Duke left Malta. In the meantime the Duke established the most cordial relations with him. Codrington received the Duke aboard the 'Asia' with 'a salute with his 32-pounders'. He conducted the Duke over his vessel, which seemed to him to be in high order, her lower-deck battery being the finest he ever saw. The Duke was accompanied by a young member of his suite named 'Signor Donati', who 'had never been in an English man of war before, and his ecstasy was extreme'.

As for the late George Canning, his merits were afterwards rehearsed in eloquent verse in Malta by his old Eton friend and former Foreign Office colleague, the retired diplomat, poet and translator John Hookham Frere, in response to a request from Whitehall for an appropriate inscription for a projected statue of Canning by Sir Francis Chantrey to be erected in Westminster Abbey. Frere had been living quietly in Malta as a classical scholar for the last seven years with his invalid wife, Elizabeth Jemima Blake, the Dowager Countess of Erroll. Frere was a few years older than the Duke and had been a colleague of his before going out to Portugal and Spain as ambassador. Both were former privy councillors. The Duke was an old, close friend of Lady Erroll. In his journal, however, she emerges as a tragic figure. A great Irish beauty, she had lost the Earl of Erroll by his own hand. After many years of courtship, the indolent and procrastinating Frere had eventually married her, but a year or two afterwards she had caught a serious cold on going to the British Museum to see the newly opened rooms for the newly purchased Greek marbles from the Earl of Elgin. Although Frere had hired a brig and her captain had brought him and Lady Erroll out to Malta, she had never really recovered, so that the Duke of Buckingham, on calling twice on her and Frere and dining with them, 'never felt more melancholy in all my life. She remembers too well all that has passed; and in the state of ruin in which she is - kept drunk by opium - she talks of nothing but of times gone by, and persons with whom we passed our early and gay days. She was very wild - sometimes laughing, sometimes crying. In short, I was most rejoiced when I escaped'. Lady Erroll died within two years afterwards.

Frere himself, as a representative of a bygone age, wore a black wig and silk coat, and seemed to the Duke, who had such a close knowledge of the eighteenth-century English theatre, to resemble a famous comic actor named Richard Saett. Frere also seemed to the Duke to have grown 'very old'. In the event, however, he was to live another sixteen years and see much happier times for Malta economically. For the first steamships in place of sail had recently appeared in Grand Harbour and augured great commercial benefits by transforming the island into a leading coaling station for the East.

73. Cf. Private Diary, ii, 85; Benjamin Disraeli, op. cit., i, 1815-34, letter no. 103, 137n4.
74. Wendy Hinde, op. cit., 458.
76. Cf. Private Diary, iii, 232n.
77. Ibid., ii, 84.
78. Ibid., 84-6.
79. Ibid., 90-1.
81. Ibid., i, 180; B.S. Freer, A Record of the Family of Freer of Suffolk & Norfolk, New York 1982, 305-6.
82. Ibid., i, 182.
83. Private Diary, ii, 83-4, 88.
85. Private Diary, ii, 83-4.
86. Cf. A.V. Laferla, British Malta, Malta, 1946, i, 184n1.
Although the Duke did not specify where exactly he had called on the Freres, it is certain that it was at their town-house named Casa Correa in what is now Old Bakery Street corner with Old Theatre Street on the site of St. Albert's College rather than at their country-house on the water-front of La Pietà. For, although all the members of the English establishment whom the Duke dined with had both town and country houses (a favourite site for the country-houses being St Julian's), the exodus from Valletta at the approach of warm weather used to start — on Colonel Whitmore's own evidence — towards the end of June rather than in May (the month of the Duke's call). It coincided with the end of the opera season. It is certain too that the Duke's dinner and musical evening with the Whitmores took place in the latter's town-house below Piazza Celsi commanding a fine view of Marsamuscetto Harbour rather than at Casa Leoni with its large garden at Santa Venera which, as the Duke had seen for himself on the way to San Antonio for lunch with General and Lady Ponsonby, was 'lined with villas belonging to officers and merchants'.

Whitmore was probably the Duke's source for the secret information that the defences of Grand Harbour were being materially strengthened 'since the Russians and French have been in such strength in the Mediterranean', following the insurrection of the Greeks and the first stirrings of the Risorgimento on the Italian mainland for the liberation of northern, central, and southern Italy and Sicily from Austrian, papal, and Bourbon rule respectively, and for the ultimate unification of the whole country under Victor Emanuel II. The Duke was informed that the Grand Harbour's vulnerability to a coup de main leading potentially to the island's fall into enemy hands had been particularly exposed when the Russian navy had first come to Malta as part of the victorious Allied fleets after the battle of Navarino. The Russians had brought four thousand men with them who, according to the system that prevailed with them, were 'armed regularly and drilled like soldiers', capable of fighting ashore like marines, if necessary, whereas, according to the Duke's military informant, 'we had scarcely a gun mounted on any point' bearing upon the anchorage of Grand Harbour. Since then 'more than 50 additional guns have been mounted on the different points which more immediately command the harbour'.

One other piece of information about the Russians in Malta that came the Duke of Buckingham's way — this time, more likely, from Whitmore's son-in-law, Nugent, than from Whitmore himself — would appear to have been tantamount to blaming the Russians for the excessively loud singing to which the Duke had objected going to the Manoel Theatre. For his informant gave him to understand that the Russians 'took it into their heads to applaud violently the two worst singers, more for the sake of quizzing' than for any other object, and the consequence has been that these two animals fancy themselves the first singers in Italy, and squeak so loud that there is no bearing them'.

The person in the English establishment who, the Duke of Buckingham gathered, suffered from self-deluding fancies like those of the Italian singers was Lady Stoddart, the wife of Sir John Stoddart, the Chief Justice, of whom the Duke had known in England as the editor of the New Times. Lady Stoddart, whose maiden name was Isabella Moncrieff, was the daughter of a Scots baronet and a forceful Church of Scotland preacher in Edinburgh. She had married, against her parents' wish on grounds of class, Dr John Stoddart when he had first been appointed to Malta as an advocate in the newly established Court of Vice-Admiralty or Prize Court during the war with France. After she had returned to England with Stoddart, her husband had turned journalist and had been a leader-writer on The Times, but had broken with that newspaper following a disagreement, and had set up the rival New Times as a violently pro-Tory ministerial publication. His critics had nicknamed him 'Dr Slop' after the bigoted and clumsy physician in Tristram Shandy, the novel by Laurence Sterne, who was one of the Duke of Buckingham's favourite authors. The ruling government had awarded Stoddart a knighthood and appointed him Chief Justice only two years before the Duke's visit. In that office, as head of the judiciary, Stoddart was constantly at daggers drawn with Sir Frederick Hankey, who, as Chief Secretary, was the head of the executive, even though they were very close neighbours at Piazza Celsi, for Hankey's Auberge d'Aragon faced Stoddart's Auberge d'Allemagne, formerly the hostel of the German Knights of St John, which was later demolished for the building of the Anglican Pro-Cathedral.

Beating this constant in-fighting between the two heads of government in mind, it seems that the Duke of Buckingham himself might have been drawn into Hankey's camp, for, on being introduced to Stoddart, he dismissed him as 'the greatest bore

88. Whitmore, 77.
89. Ibid., see illustration between 116 & 117.
90. Ibid., 71, 77.
91. Private Diary, ii, 79.
92. Ibid., 856.
93. Ibid., 85-6.
94. Meaning 'making fun of them'.
95. Private Diary, ii, 81.
98. Cf. A.V. Lafaëla, op. cit., i, 150.
99. Ibid., 177; Alan Keighley, Queen Adelaide's Church, Trowbridge, England 2000, 12-4.
in the island’, and recorded in his journal an incident which had earned Stoddart no
credit with his legal superiors in London. ‘He has got into a scrape by recommending
the suspending proceedings against some pirates, on a quibble in law, which they
have declared to be frivolous. But so much time has elapsed that probably
the pirates will escape hanging’. 100

As for Lady Stoddart, she had originally impressed the poet Coleridge with
her manners and countenance when the Stoddarts had lived at Casa di San Poix in
Strada Mezzodi (South Street) in Valletta, when they had first come out to Malta in
1803, and Coleridge had afterwards been their house-guest for two months before his
appointment pro tempore as secretary to the Civil Commissioner (in effect the
Governor) Sir Alexander Ball.101 But, after twenty years or so, on Stoddart’s second
appointment to Malta as Chief Justice in 1826, his lady had apparently undergone
a transformation, precisely in ‘manners and countenance’, for the Duke of
Buckingham recorded about her that ‘there are many laughable stories about Lady
Stoddart, a great, fat, full-blown, scolding woman, who governs Sir John, and fancies
she can do the like with the rest of the island’.102

It was not only Lady Stoddart who was fat and unpopular. Lady Codrington,
according to a note in the Duke’s journal before his departure, was also stated to be
— to his surprise — ‘not popular here’; and in his earlier description of the ‘comic
scene’ at Admiral Codrington’s first appearance, the Duke had referred to ‘his fat
wife and long daughter’.103 This observation, however, did not reflect in the least
any insensitivity on his part to her hospitality to him. On the contrary, her name
was high on the list of fifty guests whom he invited to a déjeuner on board his yacht
before his departure as a demonstration of thanks to ‘all who had been civil to me’.
He, or rather, his yacht’s officers, crew and domestics served him and his guests
with ‘turtle soup and beef steaks (the latter a favourite luncheon dish here) and all
the rest cold. The whole company sat down at two o’clock, and afterwards had a
dance on the quarter-deck’. Despite the numerous guests there was ‘ample room,
and all parties were in high good humour. I dressed the ship, manned the yards, and
cheered the Admiral when he came on board; and when the General left me, I
saluted them with fifteen guns each. At eight o’clock I went and dined with the
Admiral, where I met some of my morning’s party. But everybody was dead tired,
and went to bed’, including Miss Codrington, who had danced with Signor Donati,
and ‘he was in the highest heaven’.104

100. Private Diary, ii, 90.
101. Donald Sultana, op. cit., 142.
102. Private Diary, ii, 90. Lady Stoddart wrote Scottish tales published in London between 1819 and
1850 under the pen-name of Martha Blackford. See British Library, General Catalogue of Printed
103. Private Diary, ii, 82, 90.
104. Ibid., 89-90.

THE FIRST DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS

The Duke departed from Malta for Gozo on 10th June 1828 after watching with
admiration from his yacht the skilful manner in which one of the frigates in Admiral
Codrington’s squadron had got under way and stood out to sea under the walls of
Fort St Elmo.105 For he had come to know from Colonel Pitt and others of the
shipwrecks associated with that fort in the absence in those days of a protective
mole at the mouth of Grand Harbour against the gales that prevailed in winter
during the gregale season. (The Duke himself had experienced on his yacht — during
the blustery weather before his excursion to Città Vecchia and Verdala — how
dreadfully those gales could be by throwing up a heavy swell right into the
harbour).106

On the way to Gozo the Duke skirted Comino, about which he afterwards
gathered that it was uninhabited except by a corporal, who was ‘the solitary inmate
of a strong tower, [and] whose duty it is to preserve the rabbits that swarm there,
and which are kept for the amusement of the Governor of Malta and his friends’107
in an age unconcerned with environmental issues and animal rights. Although the
Duke fully shared General Ponsonby’s traditional aristocratic taste for field sports,
and had in fact a double-barrelled gun in the great cabin on his yacht, which he had
recently targeted on wild boars in a shooting session with King Ferdinand V of
Naples,108 he does not appear to have had time or opportunity in Malta to join
General Ponsonby at Marfa for the seasonal shooting of quails in May on the
migration of those birds in large numbers from North Africa. (General Ponsonby
had a shooting lodge at Marfa).109

Before going ashore with Major Bayley, the Duke surveyed Gozo from his
barge. Being a keen student of geology at the time that Charles (later Sir Charles)
Lyell was laying the modern foundations of that subject with his Principles of
Geology (1830-33), the Duke found Gozo to be composed of calcareous limestone
like Sicily, and to be ‘one mass of shells and teeth — the latter principally sharks’.110
Well aware from his grounding in the classics in early life as well as from his
reading in Fénelon’s Les Aventures de Télémaque (1699) that Gozo was believed to
have been the island of Calypso, the Duke remarked that ‘it only wants Calypso,
her nymphs, wood, water, and verdure to make it perfectly resemble Fénelon’s
description; but wanting all these requisites, the traveller may search in vain for the
reality of Fénelon’s dream’.111

105. Ibid., 92.
106. Ibid., 86.
107. Ibid., 101.
108. Ibid., 1, 262-7.
110. Private Diary, ii, 94.
111. Ibid., 93.
For his part, Bayley briefed the Duke about Gozo’s population (a mere seventeen thousand souls on a mere twenty-six square miles of land) and its seven parishes, each governed by a deputy of the Chief Magistrate. As in Malta, the poor, ‘who are very much distressed’, were finding some relief from a cotton factory and the traditional Monte di Pietà for the pawnng and redemption of goods. The growth of cotton was central to Gozo’s economy, one tenth of the land being annually cultivated in that crop. In parts of the country there were large gardens and gardens which answered extremely well and produced a variety of fruits and vegetables. Gozo’s animal work on the farms was done by oxen imported from North Africa and by mules and asses, the last-named being ‘very fine’ and fetched high prices if sold for breeding. 

In was precisely donkeys, besides crude vehicles, that were in waiting for the Duke’s whole party when they went ashore on a day of high temperature and were received by a guard of honour and a salute from the citadel on instructions from Major Bayley. ‘I got into one of the vehicles as long as the road would admit of it, and then mounted a donkey.’ The party then proceeded about four miles to Xagha for the Ggantija temples, many of the features of which – position, size, measurements, shape, carving, facing, portals, pavements, altars, etc. – the Duke and his party examined thoroughly and comprehensively. Wilcox, his secretary, presumably took down a draft or notes to the Duke’s dictation on the spot, and the latter afterwards tidied, enlarged, and worked the transcript into the long entry – his pièce de résistance – in his Gozo half-chapter. 

Adopting the current nomenclature, he dubbed the style of architecture of the large, rude stones ‘Cyclopean’ in keeping with the belief that ‘the aborigines of the island’ – as he called the prehistoric settlers – were some race of giants like the famed one-eyed Cyclops of Sicily, but that these temples, having afterwards been ‘desecrated’, were ‘restored and adapted by the Phoenicians to their own worship’. Accordingly, despite differences in perfection and refinement between the two temples within a circle of ‘cyclopean’ stones, the Duke again conformed to the current nomenclature or attribution by believing that the exploration conducted a few years previously by the late Colonel Bayer had unearthed ‘the only Phoenician temple extant’. 

Colonel Bayer had died suddenly shortly after the excavation, and the very full account he had intended to write of the temples had never seen the light of day; hence the enhanced value of the Duke’s journal entry. Hence also the very useful service lately rendered by a friend of Colonel Bayer in the form of information about the temples for the wider world of scholars, antiquaries, and dilettanti throughout England and Europe. This friend was also well known to, and his work was much admired by, the Duke of Buckingham, although not as an antiquary but as a naval surveyor. His name was Captain (later Admiral) William Smyth, who was a former member of the English establishment in Malta, although his principal duty had been an extensive survey of the Mediterranean for the Admiralty, particularly of the coasts of Sicily, Italy, Greece, and North Africa. Captain Smyth, who was a Fellow of the Royal Society and of the Society of Antiquaries, had apparently collaborated with Colonel Bayer in his excavation of Ggantija, of which he had taken measurements, and had made his own remarks about the remains on the spot, and had passed them to Bayer for his intended publication in England. Having heard of Bayer’s sudden death, Smyth had resorted to his own drawings of the temples, and had forwarded them to the Royal Society in London for publication in the learned journal called Archaeologia. The drawings were accompanied by a letter containing general information about megalithic structures and their association in the Mediterranean with the Phoenicians, who were themselves commonly ‘identified’ – as Captain Smyth put it – ‘with the Phoicians, or supposed aborigines’ of Malta and Gozo. 

Although there is no evidence in the Duke of Buckingham’s journal that during his call at Gozo he heard any mention of Captain Smyth from Major Bayley, he specifically named Smyth as the designer of ‘a beautiful collection of the very best Admiralty charts [of the Mediterranean] from the Hydrographic Office’, with which the Duke had taken care to equip his yacht. Moreover, the charts had been ‘corrected

112. Ibid., 93-4. The finest breeds took part in the popular horse races on St John’s Day and other festivals (cf. L. de Boisgelin, Ancient and Modern Malta, London 1805, 1, 91).
113. Private Diary, 94-95.
114. Ibid., 95-7.
115. Ibid., 95. For an interesting, analogous interpretation of ‘desecration’ or destruction and later restoration by different people, cf. the view expressed by a contemporary visitor to Ggantija, Prince Puckler-Muskau, cited by Giovanni Bonello, ‘The Gozo Megalithic Sites: Early Visitors and Artists’ in Malta Prehistoric Art 5000-2500 B.C., ed. Anthony Pace, Malta 1996, 22, col. 1, line 16up.
116. Private Diary, ii, 98.

118. Captain Smyth’s link with the English establishment was also reflected in his having been, according to Whitmore (p. 66), ‘the originator’ – together with Colonel Brown of the Rifle Brigade – ‘of the Blue Rum [alias Gin] Club at Malta – the members of which met for convivial purposes’. Many years after Smyth’s death his eldest son, General Sir Henry Augustus Smyth, was appointed Governor of Malta from 1890 to 1893.
119. 1829, vol. XXII, 294-5. Before his examination of Ggantija Captain Smyth, according to Whitmore (50), who knew him well (cf. 66), had prepared a very satisfactory report of the ruins of Leptis Magna in Libya, which he submitted to the Admiral on the station for transmission to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, following an offer from the Bashaw of Tripoli to the Prince Regent (the future King George IV) ‘of any marble he might be pleased to select from the ruins of Leptis’.
120. The ‘Phoicians’ had been Homer’s name for the race of giants who were supposed to have first peopled Malta and Gozo. Cf. the Rev. Moses Margoliouth, A Pilgrimage to the Land of my Fathers, London 1850, 1, 190-1.
down to the last moment by Captain Smyth himself', before the start of the Duke's cruise. Smyth's charts, according to the Dictionary of National Biography, were 'the basis of those still in use'. They reflected - together with other nautical instruments on board the 'Anna Eliza' - not only the latest technology of the Duke's yacht but the great advances that were being made in the hydrography of the Mediterranean by English and French naval surveyors in the early nineteenth century.

For his part, the Duke of Buckingham was interested to hear from Major Bayley that Colonel Bayer's excavation had been suspended - and was still suspended - mainly because of lack of funds and also because parts of the 'cyclopean walls' impinged on private property. The Duke trusted that he persuaded Bayley to employ some convicts imprisoned in Gozo under his charge, and condemned to hard labour, to forward the excavation - exactly as Bayer and Somerville had employed galley slaves to clear the large mound of earth and rubble that had accumulated over the temples. In that way they had laid bare the interior, according to Colonel Whitmore, who was to claim in his memoirs that it was originally 'my discoveries at Carucchio in Corfu' when he had been architect and engineer to the Governor of Malta and the Ionian Isles, General Sir Thomas Maitland, that had 'probably suggested to the Governor of Gozo - Colonel Otto Bayer - the possibility of obtaining archaeological information by an examination of the Giants' Tower'.

Although there is no reference to Whitmore at all in the Duke of Buckingham's journal in connection with Ggantija, it does not seem inconceivable or implausible that Whitmore, in his several dinners and conversations with the Duke in Malta before his crossing to Gozo, might have briefed him about the temples, bearing in mind not only the excavations that the Duke himself had conducted in Sicily before he sailed to Malta but also the 'good collection of Syracusan sepulchral remains' that was lying in boxes or cases on board his yacht for eventual deposit, with numerous other acquisitions from various parts of the Mediterranean, in his museum of antiquities at Stowe.

Whitmore himself appears to have originally interpreted the 'cyclopean' enclosure or circle of stones that had retained the mound of earth and rubble on a small hill before Bayer's excavation as analogous to the circle of stones at Stonehenge and other places in England, which were commonly believed in Whitmore's time to be 'druuidical and the work of Celts from Ireland. Therefore, in his memoirs Whitmore was to refrain from using the current epithet 'Phoenician' for Ggantija, and instead he was to dub the temples 'Celtic'.

121. Private Diary, i, 22.
122. Ibid., ii, 98.
123. 73.
124. Ibid.
125. Private Diary, i, 199-200.
126. Whitmore, 73. Captain Smyth (op. cit., 294) was also to designate the temples 'Druuidical or Celtic structures'.

The Duke of Buckingham, for his part, claimed that, on digging in the central area of one of the Ggantija temples where 'the great altar' stood, he 'discovered what had never before been observed or known'. This was 'a columnar emblem of Priapus', the ancient oriental deity representing male generative power. The emblem was about four feet high, and the Duke, drawing apparently on knowledge he had gained when, as junior minister in the government of William Pitt, he had served as Indian Commissioner, also claimed about the emblem that it was 'precisely similar to those seen in the excavations in India at the present time'. Its 'discovery' by the Duke appears to have strengthened his persuasion that Ggantija was a 'Phoenician temple', that is, of near-eastern origin, so much so that, a year later, on travelling through Tuscany from Rome to see for himself the great discoveries of Etruscan art that were being made in the excavations of tombs and other ancient structures at Corneto - all of which were of near-eastern, including Phoenician, origin - the Duke, on hearing that 'several symbolic cones' had been found in a ruined temple, at once represented them in his journal as 'similar to that [the columnar emblem of Priapus] which I discovered in the island of Gozo'.

The Duke and his party appear to have passed several hours in examining the megalithic ruins of Ggantija, after which they proceeded to Rabbato (Victoria), where its nine thousand inhabitants - constituting more than half Gozo's entire population - 'turned out to stare at me'. At the town-house he was received by the civil leaders and by a Latin address on the part of the clergy 'to which I responded by profound bows, and many compliments to their erudition in a lingua franca of my own'. In the town-house were preserved specimens of bones of animals and birds, and the remains of two stone figures and a clay vase with cover and handles that had been found at Ggantija by Bayer. All, according to the Duke, were 'of the rudest workmanship', including the heads of the two figures, 'apparently of young persons' with close-cut hair and parted on the forehead.

From the town-house the Duke was conducted to the citadel of Gozo right up to 'the topmost pinnacle of the highest tower of the earth' for a spectacular view of 'the whole island and the beauties thereof', which might have made up in some

127. Private Diary, ii, 96.
128. Ibid., iii, 139.
129. Ibid., ii, 98.
130. Ibid., 98.-99.
131. Ibid., 98. Although the Duke was informed that 'no coins have been found', earlier visitors (e.g. The Rev. S.S. Wilson, whose guide in 1819 had been James Somerville (op. cit., pp. 95-96) recorded that the effigy of Ashtaroth, the Phoenician goddess, had been found on coins excavated from Ggantija.
132. Private Diary, ii, 99.
measure for the generally ‘dreary’ impression he had formed of the landscape of Gozo’s sister-island. On descending from the citadel, he was led to the civil hospital and the Monte di Pietà, although not, it seems, to Gozo’s only college. Eventually, ‘after expressing my gracious approbation of all these establishments’, the Duke, ‘exhausted by heat and covered with dust’, was ‘permitted to retire from the capital to the sea-side and the coolness of my own vessel, where the thermometer stood at only 84 F.’ Bayley, on dining and passing the evening with the Duke, ‘too happy to have a soul to speak to’, followed up the morning’s tour with some information about the powers of Gozo’s judicial court as well as with the observation, drawn from his experience, that, although ‘the people are naturally very litigious, the Governor exerts an arbitrary power, and forces them to agree, and make up their quarrels without going to law, for which he, no doubt, gets abused on all hands’.  

Although the Duke’s yacht seems to have been anchored off Mgarr, he made a point, before leaving Gozo, to go to the other side of the island in his barge for a view of the famous Fungus Rock at Dwejra, so highly esteemed by the local people for its styptic and astringent crop. The scene led to a little dramatic incident which drew a short passage of graphic writing. For the Duke found the Rock standing ‘in the middle of a wild rocky bay, in a tempestuous sea, which was so rough and boiling owing to the rebound of a very heavy swell from a line of precipitous cliff... that my barge was much nearer being swamped in approaching it than I liked at the time... and especially as, had we overset, every man must have perished...’ On rounding the furthest point of this wild bay, the Duke’s barge came to a low-browed, inaccessible cavern, which opened into ‘a large rocky basin of salt water... about half a mile round’: ‘I never saw a scene of greater desolation than this place. No vegetation is to be seen - not even a blade of grass; nothing but white arid rock and precipice, and a stormy, raging sea - for there is nothing to break the wave from the coast of Africa. Once more braving the tossing and trembling sea round the point, we got into smoother water, set our sails, and reached home to dinner’.  

On 13th June 1828 the Duke and his party sailed from Gozo to Sicily, just as they could see Admiral Codrington quitting Malta for Navarino with a squadron which included three ships-of-the-line, as battleships with three decks or three tiers of guns were then called. One of them was H.M.S. Revenge, which the Duke had himself already noticed while she had been in quarantine in Grand Harbour. Being a Grenville, he was aware that the battle honours of her name stretched back to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, when Sir Richard Grenville, in command of the Revenge, and isolated near the Azores, had fought fifteen Spanish ships for fifteen hours.  

In the Duke’s own lifetime H.M.S. Revenge had played a conspicuous part in the battle of Trafalgar, which is memorable in his journal for a little, touching, human incident. It deserves to be recorded in his own words as typical of the mode that had prevailed in the age in which he had been brought up in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The mode is commonly described in English literature as ‘the cult of sensibility’. The incident itself had arisen when the Duke’s own yacht had sighted Cape Trafalgar on the way to Gibraltar. At that point the Duke had written:  

The action was fought within five miles of the place where we were... Carpho the boatswain had been in the action on board the “Britannia”. We called him aft, and made him tell the longest story he had of the action, which he did with much unction and interest; then I bade him go below and give his men a can of punch, and drink the health and memories of his own comrades. The rough sailor’s eyes filled with tears as he turned round, hitched up his trousers, and walked off the deck.”

133. Ibid.  
134. Ibid., 101-1.  
135. Ibid., 96.  
136. Grenville’s action was to be immortalised in a ballad, The Revenge, by Alfred Tennyson, who was a student at Cambridge University when the Duke of Buckingham was on cruise.  
138. Private Diary, I, 32.