BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON MELITENSIA – 1*

Albert Ganado

When the Malta Historical Society was set up over fifty years ago, it declared its various aims to promote the study of Maltese history (article 2 of the Statute). One of those aims was the compilation of a bibliography of publications of local historical interest.

With this in mind I thought of contributing to the Malta Historical Society's journal some notes which have a bibliographical content.

De Soldanis

One of the earliest publications by a Maltese author was Della Lingua Punica presentemente usata da Maltesi written by Canon Gio: Pietro Francesco Agius de Soldanis. It was published in Rome in 1750 and dedicated by the author to a member of the Order of St John, Bali Commendatore Fra Sesto Angelo Dericard.1 I have come across two editions of this book, the only variation being in the frontispiece. The title, dedication, date and place of publication, the corrections, and the contents, are the same in both editions, but the imprint on the title-page is completely different. On one edition it reads Appresso Gregorio Roisecco Mercante Libraro in Piazza Navona, while the other edition has the imprint: Per Generoso Salomoni alla Piazza di S. Ignazio.2 Besides, the decorative design inserted between the dedication and the place and date of publication has a different motif, and the quotation from a book of 1739 by J.B. Passerius on the verso of the title-page in the Salomoni edition is wanting in the Roisecco edition.

The preposition per which is indicative of movement usually means on a book or print per opera di, while appresso or presso (apud in Latin, chez in French) normally conveys the message of availability. Consequently, it is likely that the book

*All the illustrations featured in this paper are from the Albert Ganado Collection, except for Fig. 5 which is from that pertaining to Dr. Michael Refalo.

1. Sexton-Ange de Ricard (or Richard) was born in Aix-en-Provence. He became a Knight in the Langue of Provence in 1695. Captain of the magistrat galley from 5 December 1698 to 6 November 1700. He distinguished himself on 8 October 1700 in the capture off the coast of Barbary of the Sultana Binghen (Binghen), a large ship of 80 guns, with 300 fighting men on board (Relazione della vittoria... d'una sultana denominata Binghen, Rome 1700). As a testimonial of his bravery, Grand Master Ramon Perellos ordered that the ship's standard be placed in the church of St John at Aix-en-Provence, and he conferred on him the honour of Grand Cross. He enjoyed the Commandery of La Villelieu et Astrès. De Soldanis dedicated the book to de Ricard because he had the honour of serving him as his Procuratore generale in Malta for almost 20 years. In his dedication, dated 15 August 1750. De Soldanis praised the liberality of de Ricard and his generosity towards the poor both in Malta and in Paris.

2. Next to Piazza San Ignazio is the Biblioteca Casanatense which holds many books, manuscripts and maps of Maltese interest. It was named after Mgr Girolamo Casanata (1620-1700), a Prince of the Catholic Church.
was printed and published by Salomoni, but at a later stage it was being sold by Roisecco who had the title-page reprinted with his own imprint. It is interesting to note that the paper in both editions has an identical watermark: a fleur-de-lis in circle 5 cm wide. This seems to indicate that both editions came out of the same printing press. The imprimitur on page twelve of the book, dated 2 August 1750, is the same in both editions; yet the Salomoni edition refers specifically to the imprinitum on the title-page by stating Con licenza de Superi, while a similar statement is wanting on the Roisecco edition. If this came out later, the omission is understandable.

Another feature on the Salomoni title-page, wanting in Roisecco’s, is the statement: Si vendono in Malta. However, it is printed in a type different from the rest of the title-page. Possibly it was added later, after the title-page had been printed.

Vassalli’s alphabets
In Rome in 1790 Michael Anton Vassalli published his Alfabet Malti – Alfabeto Maltese. Per Antonio Fulgoni. It had 24 numbered pages, and only five lines of text on the last page. When Vassalli discovered some mistakes in the printing, out came a second edition with eleven Errori – Correzioni, inserted on the last page beneath the text. The Fulgoni imprint appears in both editions and the said corrections seem to be the only difference between the first and second edition.

Another Alfabeto Maltese of 8 pages, without date, presumably published in Malta, has been ascribed to Vassalli. It appears that even this alphabet was printed twice. One printing came out on white paper, which was watermarked with three crescents differing in size, while the other edition was printed on slightly thicker paper with a greyish-green tinge and no visible watermark. The use of coloured paper was usually resorted to when the printing press ran out of normal white paper. It happened, for instance, to Antonio Lafieri in Rome in 1565 when the demand for his maps of the Great Siege of Malta escalated so much that he had to make use of bluish-green or bluish paper for a reprinting of two Malta siege maps.

Like Francesco Vella, the other scholar of the Maltese language, Vassalli published most of his books in Italy, although a new printing press had been inaugurated in Malta in 1756.

3. A similar watermark is to be found on the paper of publications printed in Malta in the early days of British rule. The five copies of Lingua Ponica at the National Library of Malta in Valletta have the Salomoni title-page. As no book cleaning takes place at the Library, one particular copy could barely be opened as it was full of live bookworms.
**Sonnet by the printer Capaci**

In the wake of an agreement reached between Grand Master Emmanuel Pinto (1741-1773) and the Holy See, the Grand Master’s printing establishment, a state-owned monopoly, was set up in June 1756, under the direction of a priest, Don Niccolò Capaci. In order to commemorate the event, a Sonetto was printed dedicated to Pinto, *Gran Maestro degnissimo, ... Nell’apertura della nuova Stamperia da Lui splendidamente stabilita a comun beneficio di questo suo felicissimo Stato*. It was signed: *Umillissimo ossequio di D.N.C.S. which represent Capaci’s initials Don Niccolò Capaci Stampatore*. Only one example is known of this sonnet, which had been copied by Edgar Parnis and published by him in 1916 but not in facsimile. The sonnet is dated 1756 and it was probably the first publication that came off the new press which was open to the public on the 5th June while the official blessing took place on the 28th June. The first work for which payment was received was recorded on the 1st July.

**The tariff of 1756**

One of the earliest publications bowed to the exigencies of trade and a sound economy. It was a Tariff of diverse monete forestiere ridotte in moneta di Malta, *con buon ordine, e perfezione. In Malta nel Palazzo, e Stamp. di S.A.S. 1756. Per il Capaci – Con lic. de’ superiori (17 x 12 cm)*. Pinto’s fine oval escutcheon adorned the title-page. In 60 pages the rates of exchange were given in respect of Tari and Onze di Sicilia, Ducati di Napoli, Zecchini di Malta, Zecchini Veneziani, Doppie di Spagna, Lisboine, Luigi d’oro di lire 24, Pezze di lire 6, di Francia. The equivalent in Maltese scudi was given for each currency. The first printing of the booklet consisted of 54 pages and on the last page the word *FINE* was printed. However, pages 55 to 60 were later added to give the rate of exchange of Scudi Romani. On page 54, above the word *FINE*, the author had listed the currency of Malta in these terms:


According to the manuscript records of the Order’s press, this *Tariffa* was printed on 11 October 1756 under which date there is the following entry, numbered 21:
ALL'ALTEZZA SERENISSIMA DI
F. D. EMMANUELE PINTO
GRAN MAESTRO DEGNISSIMO
Dalla Sagra Rilievo Gentilissima
PRINCIPE DI MALTA
GOZO, ERODI, &c.
SIGNORE DEL REAL DOMINIO DI TRAVOLI,
Nell'apertura delle sueve Stampina da Li rilievatamente abitata a convegno benefico di questa sua presente Stato.

SONETTO.

Un'Alto mai la vaga luce appela
In quelle Suede alle Palladie carte ;
Chi alle Calde sore ontai comparte
Il prec' omor ; Chi l'Elto riposa e detta ;

Di tua provvida Ment re opra è ben quella
SIGNORE , che reggi il chiaro Stuo di Marte ;
E per compiere tue glorie in ogni parte,
E' ogn' i suoi Lauri al tuo Palme illecita.

Onde in tua lode de' suoi propri doni
L'usato prim'a ne fa, e l'usarmenno
Morti del Donatore in lor risonni.

Ma questi Turchi fideranno invano.
Se Spota, e vinti ai Porti lue nosti doni
Con tua virtù ed Nome tuo Sovrano.

Fig. 5. Printed sonnet by Nicolo Capaci

TARIFFA
DI DIVERSE MONETE
FORESTIERE

Ridotte in Moneta di Malta, con
buon ordine, e perfezione.

In MALTA nel Palazzo, e Stamp.
Di S. A. S. 1756.
Per il Capaci (Con lic. de' Superiori.

Fig. 6. Title-page of the Tariff of 1756
Al II del sud[ett]o mese d’Ottobre
Furono per Comm[issione] del Cav[aliere] de St. Paul stampate in
Sedici quinterni di Carta francese duecento, e sedici libetti d’una
tariffa delle monete

Prezzi
*Per la composiz[ione]e sia caglatura de’ caratteri di tre f[ogli]* e
mezzo

- **Tiratura**: Sc. 4.8.-
- **Consumo di caratteri**: 1.9.-
- **Prezzo di d[ett]a caria**: 2.4.-
- **Prezzo di d[ett]o caria**: 2.8.-
- **Prezzo di d[ett]o armato**: 11.5.-

This was followed by entry number 26, dated 18 October 1756, which completed
the booklet by the addition mentioned above of the rate of exchange of Roman
scudi:

*Sì è stampato p[er] Commissione del Cav[aliere] de St Paul un altro f[ogli]o per supplemento alla Tariffa delle monete dal med[esimo]mo
fatta stampare com’al n.ro 21 sotto li 11 del d[ett]o mese, e questo in
quattro quinterni, e dodici f[ogli]i di Carta francese, ed un f[ogli]o
Bastardina."

The total cost of this supplement was two Maltese scudi. It appears that on the
said *altro foglio* the pages 55 to 60 of the booklet were printed and then bound with
the other pages.

The 1756 edition of the *Tariffa* is not mentioned in the bibliographies consulted,
and a copy is not available at the National Library of Malta.10

**Almanacs of transition**

Two rare almanacs stand in silent testimony to a traumatic event in the annals of
Malta when the aristocratic Knights of St John were summarily displaced by the


10. F. de Hellwald, *Bibliographie Méthodique*, Rome 1885, 134, mentions only the editions of 1758,
1765 and 1775. In their updates of Hellwald’s bibliography, E. Rossi and J. Mizzi do not mention
any other edition. The 1775 edition was priced at 2 tari (see ms. note on the copy at the National
Library, 110). Dr William Zammit kindly informed the present author that the existence of another
edition published in 1790. In order to examine the copies at the National Library of *Della Linguag
Punicca* and *due Tariffa*, the author had to go to the Library in Valletta on two different days although
all the work was done in less than an hour. This is because of the stupidity of a Regulation of the
year 2001 that ‘A researcher is not allowed to request more than eight manuscripts or books per
day’.
generals of revolutionary France. One of the almanacs is the last one published by the Order in 1798, while the other is the first one issued in 1799 under French rule. Both are in Italian.

The Order’s almanac consisted of twelve pages. It was entitled Almanacco Maltese per l’anno 1798, Malta, Con permesso de’ Superiori, with the eight-pointed cross on the title-page. Notwithstanding its title, it did not contain a calendar of months and days. It was compiled by the Noble Antonio Desbrull who dedicated it to the Grand Master, Fra Ferdinando de Hompesch Regnante. In a note directed Al Pubblico he wrote that he was printing this new almanac and Notiziario all’uso delle Nazioni colte di Europa. Furthermore he stated that: Malta è un Paese dove regna il buon gusto della letteratura, e non scarseggia di Uomini Illustri, che sanno apprezzare le pit piccole produzioni allorché sono utili.

The compiler then passed on to list the Grand Masters who reigned over Malta, with their respective dates of election. This was followed by a chronology of the Bishops of Malta, and the Priors of the Conventual Church of the Order in Rhodes and Malta, from 1317 to 1785.  

The French almanac was entitled Lunario, Calendario, e Pronostico Nuovo dell’Anno 1799. This time the almanac was a standard calendar with the details it usually contains, including feast days of obligation and the principal feasts in the Christian calendar. Marriages could only be celebrated between 7 January and 5 February, 1 April and 10 November. But the most practical feature of this almanac was the confronento dei giorni secondo il sistema della Repubblica Francesca, day by day. Just to give a few examples, the calendar gave this information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 January</td>
<td>2 Pluviose</td>
<td>St Publius, Bishop of Malta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 February</td>
<td>22 Pluviose</td>
<td>St Paul’s shipwreck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 March</td>
<td>2 Germinal</td>
<td>Good Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 April</td>
<td>4 Floreal</td>
<td>St George</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 May</td>
<td>7 Prairial</td>
<td>San Filippo Neri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 June</td>
<td>3 Messidor</td>
<td>San Luigi Gonzaga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Malta passed under the protection of the British Crown in September 1800, the almanacs of 1799 and 1800 are the only ones which gave both the Gregorian and Republican calendars.  

11. The last Bishop was Fra Vincenzo Labini (1780-1807), while the last Prior was Fra Rainondo Albino Menville (1785-1801).  
12. These almanacs were recorded by Gażé Gatt in his article ‘Li Stampa f’Malta u l’ewwel c’tob bil Malti’, published in Labour Opinion on 9 October 1924. In his specialized study on publications during the French period, William Zammit referred to Gatt’s article, adding that the location of the almanacs was untraced, cf. W Zammit, ‘Communicating a new regime: the Maltese printed product during the French occupation (1798-1800)’, in Proceedings of History Week 1999 ed. W Zammit, Malta 2002, 41, 47, nos. 64 and 86 respectively.
The Giornale di Malta and the Government Gazette

Shortly after the French surrender, Major-General Henry Pigot, as Representative of His Britannic Majesty in Malta, issued a Proclamation in which he assured the Maltese in no uncertain terms that His Majesty, in taking the Maltese under his Protection, would use every possible means to make them contented and happy. The same noble sentiments were repeated ad nauseam by Pigot’s successors. Yet, the laws of the Order were kept in force, including the state monopoly of printing. The Maltese leaders appointed John Richards as their agent in London to plead their cause. In their Instructions dated 25 February 1806, they strongly protested against ‘the present unlimited despotism under which they groan’ under which ‘no man dares to speak his sentiments’. They consequently requested ‘that the Maltese people may have a legitimate channel through which to state their grievances’. After the death of Sir Alexander Ball, who was Civil Commissioner from 1802 to 1809, further instructions were sent to Richards on 28 February 1810 requesting him to demand the restitution of the ancient sacred rights of the Maltese people ‘violated by the latter Grand Masters of the order of St John’, principal among which was a free representation of the people or Consiglio Popolare. The demands included ‘A press, free but not licentious, nor offensive to religion; independent Tribunals; trial by jury; a constitution which combined the spirit of the ancient Maltese government with that of the English Constitution’. The same demands were incorporated in a petition addressed directly to His Britannic Majesty in 1811, which induced the new Civil Commissioner, Lieutenant-General Sir Hildebrand Oakes (1810-1813), to insult the signatories in an official publication and to sack from their employment some of the signatories. As a result of this agitation, a Royal Commission was appointed in 1812 for a full and immediate inquiry into Maltese affairs.

It was in that year that the government started publishing an official weekly gazette titled GIORNALE DI MALTA. The first number was issued on January 7, 1812. In the present volume’s version of this gazette the title-page, which bears the Royal arms, gives the names of the compilers and states that it was printed at the press of the Sicilian Regiment: Giornale di Malta scritto dalli Signori Vittorio Barzoni and Giuseppe Casolani. In Malta MDCCCCXII, Dalla Stamperia del Giornale. Presso Gaspare Sevaglio, Sergente Stampatore del Reggimento Siciliano. It was a weekly gazette, published every Wednesday, priced 2 tari, sold at the Ufficio della Posta del Governo, Piazza della Conservatoria, No. 247 (today’s Casino Maltese). In the issue of 25 November 1812 it was stated that the Giornale was being printed and sold at the Government Press – Questo Giornale si stampa, e si vende alla Stamperia di Governo. It was announced in the next issue (December 2, 1812) that the subscribers were to pick up their copy at the Government Press – Questo Giornale si stampa, e si vende e si distribuisce agli Associati nella Stamperia di Governo.

17. Barzoni was born in Lonato, province of Brescia, on 17 December 1675, not far from the Lake of Garda. After graduating in law at the University of Padua, he started practising as an advocate in Venice in 1792. Yet he devoted most of his time to various writings against Napoleon and republican France. Under French pressure, he was forced to leave Austria in January 1804 after a two-year sojourn, and found refuge in Malta where he started a violent anti-Napoleonic propagandistic career in books and journals. Between 1804 and 1810 he published Argo and Il Corsaro, which were clandestinely circulated in southern Italy and other French-occupied territories. He made use of Il Giornale di Malta also for a programme of the unification of Italy. He left Malta in October 1814, shortly after the fall of Napoleon. He died in Lonato on 22 April 1843. In Malta Barzoni made many friends from the circle of whom were Barone Sir Giuseppe Maria De Piro and Sir Vincenzo Siracusa.

18. The author has a portrait of Barzoni drawn by Baron De Piro. In 1808 Barzoni was already drawing a salary from the government. On 16 June 1808 the Civil Commissioner ordered the Treasurer to pay Barzoni scudi quaranta uno e tari oto per month as from the 1st May 1808, in addition to his monthly salary of Lire Due. This was meant to compensate him for the journals and other publications he produced for the government. (Dizionario biografico degli italiani, vol. 7, 1965, 41-4; G. Ferrugia, ‘Il Barzoni a Malta’, La Brigata, III, 6 (Oct. 1935), 152-6; L. Sciaravone, ‘Barzoni Vittorio (1767-1843). Heritage, I, 10 (Feb. 1978), 187-90; P. Condolino, ‘Vittorio Barzoni, Avvocato Lombardo…’, Il Definio (Torino), XI, 60 (1981), 6-10; National Library of Malta, Lib. Ms. 358).

19. Giuseppe Casolani’s father, Antonio, was born in Bologna, settled in Malta in 1777, married Girolama Agius in 1784, and became one of Alexander Ball’s confidential advisers during the French interlude (1798-1800). Giuseppe became an Assistant Collector at the Land Revenue Department in 1823, and he succeeded his brother, Sir Vincent Casolani, as Cashier of the Government Treasury on May 1, 1838. He was also a member of the Committee of the Government Charitable Institutions and Government Charities. In a bad state of health, he left for Italy on 16 August 1844 per Leonidas. He died on board ship between Naples and Civitavecchia, where he was laid to rest. He was survived by his wife and children.

20. The Royal Sicilian Volunteer Regiment was formed in Messina at the Convent of San Girolamo in May 1806 by order of Major-General Sir John Stuart, the General Officer in command of the British Expeditionary Force occupying Sicily and Calabria. It was composed of Sicilian and Calabrian volunteers, but the officers were to be English and Sicilians of good family. The proposed regimental uniform was a smart red tajuto alla cacciatora with green facings. The commanding officer was Captain Francisco Rivarola, who eventually became Lieutenant-General Sir Francis, Count of Madia. He died on 7 October 1853. Around 1811 the corps (set up to serve with British troops in the war against France) was 1, 201 strong and it was in the highest state of efficiency. On 7 February 1811 Rivarola was placed in command of the Cottonera district when he was Lieutenant-Colonel. Regarding Sevaglio see infra fn. 29.

21. The Press was invariably referred to as Stamperia del Governo in the Giornale. However, it was stated on a separate publication Instructions to be given to the visitors of shipping, dated 15 June 1813, that it was ‘Printed, with the approbation of the Government, at the Public Printing Office’.

15. Ibid., 91.
Oakes described some of the signatories as weak and inconsiderate persons, and the principal ones as a few turbulent and factious individuals. Among those deprived of their job was later Sir Paolo Parisio.
Between August 1812 and the end of June 1813 the paper in the present author’s copy of the *Giornale di Malta* is watermarked with three crescents of varying size. The crescents on the issues between August and the 4th November 1812 are accompanied with the letters PF in a decorative shield.

The National Library has two copies of the *Giornale di Malta*, both without the title-page mentioned above. The paper of those copies could not be examined because of the Library’s regulations regarding newspapers.21

In all ninety-four numbers of the *Giornale di Malta* were printed, the last one being dated October 20, 1813. This official gazette had its name changed a week later to *Gazzetta del Governo di Malta*, the first number of which appeared on October 27, 1813. It stated that all the official notices would thenceforth be published in the gazette; as such they were to be considered valid and authentic, to be obeyed by all public functionaries and all the other persons residing in the Maltese islands. The public was informed that this gazette was being compiled by the same editor of the *Giornale di Malta*,22 a reference presumably to Vittorio Barzoni, and that it was printed, sold and distributed at the Government Press. Indeed, this note was published regularly in all issues up to the 26th October 1814.23

It seems that Barzoni was succeeded by Gustavo Adolfo Braccini who occupied this post of editor until 31 March 1816, while Vincenzo Mamo (1789-1864) was joint editor for two months.24 Vincent Casolani (later Sir), Cashier at the Government Treasury since 1814, became Editor of the Gazette as from 1 April 1816, at an additional salary of £103, until the end of March 1819.25 On the retirement of Gavino Bonavita Champion26 from the superintendence of the printing office, Henry Harper was appointed on 1 June 1819 Superintendent of the Government Printing Office and Editor of the Malta Government Gazette, which posts he held until his

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21. The Regulations lay down that ‘Newspapers are to be viewed on microfilm, if available’. Various researchers have suggested an amendment to this regulation for a special permission to be granted to examine the original newspapers, but the proposal was refused. Meanwhile, the original newspapers in bound volumes are neither cleaned nor handled, a perfect breading for the ravages of bookworm.

22. As from the issue of the 10th November 1813 this note was amended to read *dall'Estensore del cessato Giornale di Malta*, thus confirming that the latter gazette was no longer being published.

23. The issue of the 26th October 1814 was number 53. The next issue, due on the 2nd November, did not appear, as Barzoni had just left the island. Number 54 was published on the 9th November with a note stating simply: *Questa Gazzetta si distribuisce agli Associati nella Stamperia del Governo*. Barzoni started drawing a yearly pension of £100 as from 1 June 1815, until his death in London in 1843. His salary had been 2, 200 scudi (£198).

24. In 1816 the editor’s salary was reduced to 1, 200 scudi, equivalent to £103 at the then prevailing rate of exchange. For biographical data on V. Mamo see A. Ganado, ‘The growth of the Malta General Post Office 1802-1886’, in *The PSM Magazine*, XV, 3 (Dec. 1986), 30, fn. 23.


26. G. Bonavita Champion died on 19 April 1837 in his 76th year. He occupied various government posts, including that of Inspector (or Superintendent) of the Government Printing Office until 31 May 1819 when he retired on a pension of £33.7s.0d. per annum. He was well known among visitors to Malta for his erudition and wide knowledge. One of his children, Sir Ignazio Gavino Bonavita, became President of the Court of Appeal in 1839.
death. Charles Harper was then appointed to both posts on 1 August 1826; in addition to his annual salary of £257.3s.0d, he was granted rent free as his official residence apartments attached to the Printing Office at the Auberge d’Italie, 27 Strada Britannica, Valletta.27

In view of the fact that the liberty of the press was granted on 15 March 1839 by Ordinance IV of 1839, the Governor decided that the Government Gazette would no longer be issued as a newspaper, but it would only contain official acts and notices. Consequently, the two offices held by Charles Harper were suppressed and he was appointed Magistrate of Judicial Police for Malta on 1 July 1839.28

The plague
An unexpected surge in the volume of official documents printed at the Government Press was the result of the plague epidemic which struck the Maltese islands in 1813. They included government proclamations and other communications, notices and instructions issued by the Board of Health, daily bulletins of the dead and the sick, pastoral letters and a hymn to St Roque with indulgences issued by Archbishop Ferdinando Mattei, orders by the Magistrate of Police and the Inspector General, returns of the Society for the Relief of the Poor29 and of the Charitable Fund for providing clothes for infected and suspected persons, a letter tariff from the Ufficio della Posta, notices on the organization and duties of the Volontarie Guardie Urbane, and a sad, solitary, report of the execution of Antonio Borg, shot to death for covering up symptoms of the malady, on the fateful 17th August 1813.

The volume (in the present author’s collection) containing all these documents was assembled by Notary Francesco Cachia J.U.D.30 who signed his name on various pages of the volume. He placed at the beginning of the volume an unusual, detailed, plan of Valletta, a very rare map, printed in the early days of Governor Maitland’s

28. National Archives of Malta, dispatches Governor to Secretary of State nos. 40 and 85 of 1839. Charles Harper was born on 15 August 1790. He remained a Magistrate of Judicial Police for Malta until he retired on 9 June 1865, receiving an annual pension of £235.11s.6d. He committed suicide on 24 November 1874 and was buried in Zone C (no. 131) of the Msida Basilica Cemetery in the grave of his wife who had died on 31 December 1836. In 1836, while still in charge of printing, he became a member of the Government Savings Bank Committee. In 1867 the honour of C.M.G. was conferred upon him. In 1858 he was still living at 27 Strada Britannica, but he then moved to 32 Strada S. Paolo.
29. Vittorio Barzoni contributed 6 dollars (namely, 15 scudi) to the Society. At the end of the volume in the author’s collection on which this feature is based there is a manuscript Descrizione di Vittorio Barzoni. La sera dell’undecimo giorno di Luglio dell’anno 1813 in Malta. in tempo della Peste. It is dated 1815. This description was later published in Sicily with a slightly different title: La peste di Malta. Notte di Vittorio Barzoni. La sera dell’undecimo giorno di Luglio 1813. In Act Reale 1818. Dalla Tipografia del Sac. Giuseppe Ragionisi. Per Gaspare Sebaglos Impresori. 202 mm., 8 pp.
30. Notary Francesco Cachia practised his profession in Valletta between the years 1811-1828, cf. A. Attard, Index of Notaries (1465-1894), Malta 1979, 11.
rule. The map, entitled PLAN OF THE CITY OF LA VALLETTA, measures 280 x 420 mm. All the streets of Valletta are named, all the churches are distinguished by a cross, while the numbers marked on buildings in various streets refer to the houses of merchants and principal sworn brokers. Besides, the plan shows the site of important buildings, including the Governor’s Palace and the Grand Armory (sic), the Courts of Justice, the Treasury, the Library in its new seat at the back of the Università office, the Monte di Pietà, the Civil Hospitals, the Market, the Commercial Rooms in Strada S. Paolo, the Bishop’s Palace and St John’s Church. In connection with the Services, the map maker included the Admiral’s House, the Barrack Office, the Commissary General’s Office (at the former Auberge de France), the Main Guard, the Office of Ordnance and the Navy Hospital.

Of particular interest are two hotels: Thorns in Strada Reale lodged in the Auberge de Provence, and, ‘McKenzie’s’, which occupied the site of number 31 Strada Mezzodi corner with Strada Forni, where St Andrews Scots Church now stands. The presence of these hotels helps to date the production of the map.

The reference to the Palace of the ‘Governor’ proves that the terminus a quo of the map is October 1813 as Sir Thomas Maitland took office in that month as the first ‘Governor’ of Malta. At the time, George Thorn had already taken on lease from the government the Auberge de Provence for the yearly rent of 4,000 scudi and in 1814 it was referred to in the Government Gazette as Thorn’s Hotel or Royal Hotel. It is not known when William MacKenzie (or McKenzie) started operating his hotel, but an advert in the Government Gazette of 4 September 1816 mentions the Hope Hotel of Mr MacKenzie at Strada Mezzodi. However, on 27 May 1817 a Commission of Bankruptcy was issued against him which described him as innkeeper, dealer and Chapman. It is therefore safe to conclude that the map is question was issued between late 1813 and early 1817. This would make it perhaps the earliest map printed in Malta under British rule.

31. Sir Thomas Maitland (17597-1824) succeeded Oakes in the government of the Maltese islands and took the oath of office with the title of Governor (instead of Civil Commissioner) on October 5, 1813.
32. The deed of lease was received by Notary Diego Vella on 13 February 1811. The original lease was for one year as from January 1811, but it was probably renewed.
33. The author came to know of the reference to the said two hotels in the Government Gazette from the excellent book by Michela D’Angelo, Mercanti inglesi a Malta 1800-1825 published in Milan in 1990.