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FRANS CIAPPARA

SOCIETY AND THE INQUISITION IN MALTA, 1743-1798

Ph. D. thesis

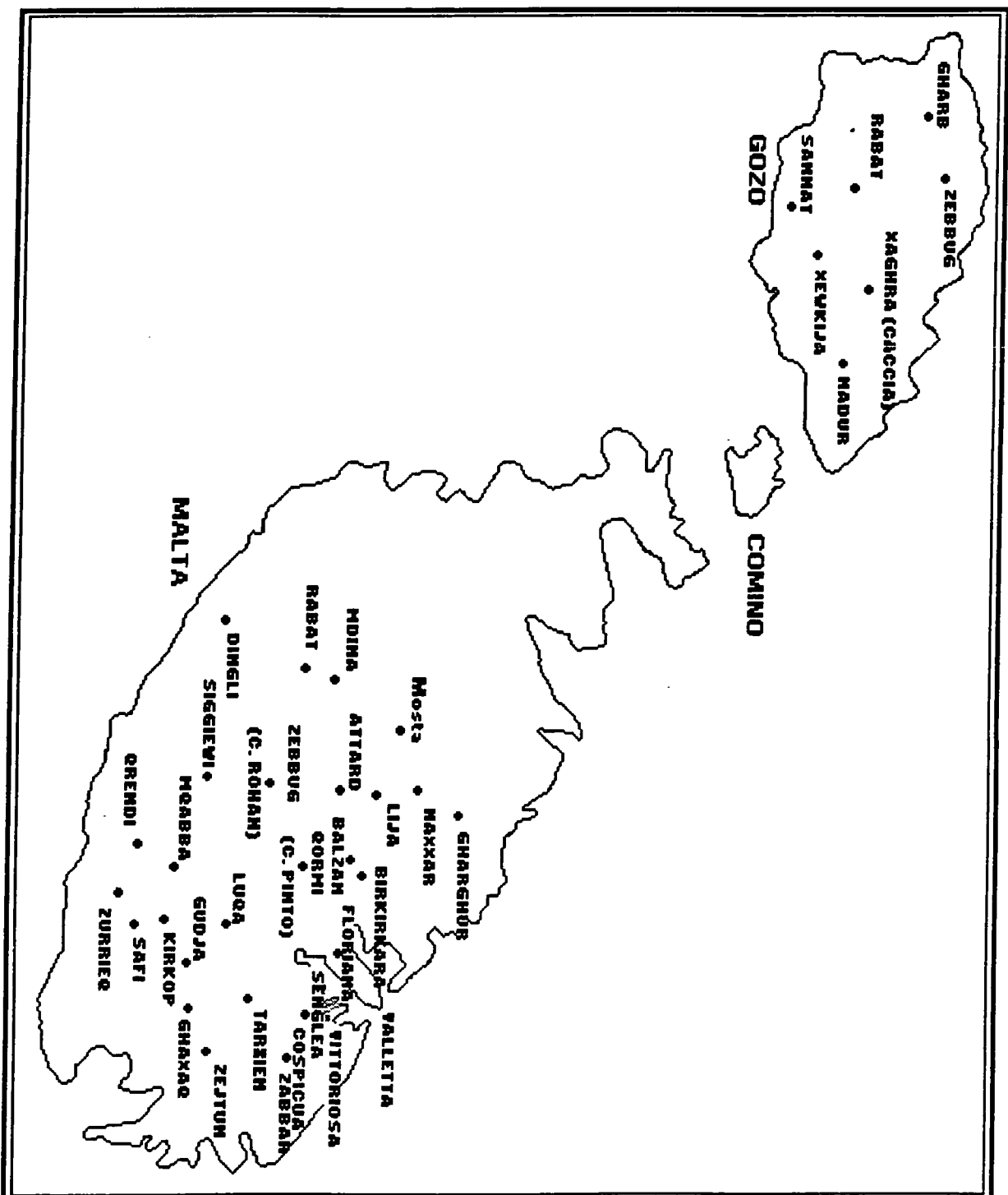
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The thesis falls into two main sections. It endeavours to analyse the major aspects of Maltese society in the second half of the eighteenth century as they emerge from a close scrutiny of the Archives of the Inquisition in Malta. The approach is mainly that of the ethnologist, a social history written 'from below'. The ultimate purpose was to try to arrive at as clear and accurate a picture of the Maltese *mentalité* as the archives permitted. Unfortunately, the Archives of the Inquisition in Malta have hardly ever been seriously studied by the social historian. Their richness and diversity not only cast enormous insight into the mental habits and frame of mind of a wide cross-section of Maltese society; they even shed sufficient light on a wide range of the social life of the Maltese.

The subject is also approached from the point of view of the legal historian. The Inquisition was a Tribunal of Faith set up to stop the onslaught of Protestantism, as well as to reform the superstitious accretions to popular religion practised by the remaining part of the Catholic Church. The thesis examines the events leading to the charge and possibly arrest of the accused. Most of the reports were self-accusations and those arrested were taken into custody only after much deliberation. If the Inquisitors did make use of torture the accused was assisted by the defence counsel and produced his own witnesses. No instance of death sentences are encountered with in the second half of the eighteenth century and those found guilty were kindly dealt with, the Inquisitors being only after their conversion.

12 MAR 1999



THE MALTESE ISLANDS IN THE 18TH CENTURY

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Abbreviations

<i>AAM</i>	Archiepiscopal Archives, Malta.
<i>AC</i>	<i>Atti Civili</i> .
<i>AIM</i>	Archives of the Inquisition, Malta.
<i>AO</i>	<i>Acta Originalia</i> .
<i>Arch.</i>	Archives.
<i>ASPN</i>	<i>Archivio Storico per le Provincie Napolitane</i> .
<i>Bapt.</i>	<i>Baptizatorum</i>
<i>CEM</i>	<i>Curiae Episcopalis Melitensae</i> .
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>Confirmatorium</i> .
<i>Conj.</i>	<i>Conjugatorum</i> .
<i>Corr.</i>	<i>Corrispondenza</i> .
<i>Def.</i>	<i>Defunctorum</i> .
ed.	Editor/s.
<i>É.S.C.</i>	<i>Économie, Sociétés, Civilisations</i> .
<i>Ibid.</i>	In the same volume.
<i>Lib.</i>	<i>Liber</i> .
<i>Libr.</i>	Library.
<i>Matr.</i>	<i>Matrimoniorum</i> .
<i>Mem.</i>	<i>Memorie</i> .
<i>Misc.</i>	<i>Miscellanea</i> .
<i>Mort.</i>	<i>Mortuorum</i> .
<i>NAV</i>	Notarial Archives, Valletta.
<i>NLM</i>	National Library, Malta.
n.s.	New Series.
<i>op. cit.</i>	<i>Opus citatum</i> .
<i>PA</i>	Parish Archives.
<i>Proc.</i>	Proceedings
<i>RAC</i>	<i>Registrum Actorum Civilium</i> .
<i>SA</i>	<i>Status Animarum</i> .
<i>Univ.</i>	<i>Università Manuscript Collection</i> , National Library of Malta.
<i>VP</i>	<i>Visitationes Pastorales</i> .

Glossary

<i>Ballata</i>	Women who beat crushed potsherds for roof-surfacing
<i>Beduini</i>	Villagers
<i>Buonavoglia</i>	Voluntary rowers on galleys
<i>Calesse</i>	Coach drawn by a mule
<i>Campagna</i>	Countryside
<i>Campagnoli</i>	Villagers
<i>Capotto</i>	Mantle
<i>Casal</i>	Village
<i>Casino</i>	Countryhouse
<i>Castellania</i>	Lawcourts of the government
<i>De formali</i>	Formal heretic
<i>De Levi</i>	Lightly suspect of heresy
<i>De vehementi</i>	Gravely suspect of heresy
<i>Diffun</i>	Ground pottery
<i>Forzato</i>	Prisoner condemned to row on galleys
<i>Fuklar</i>	Stone stove
<i>Ghonella</i>	Faldetta
<i>Ghorfa</i>	Upper room
<i>Imnara</i>	Oil lamp
<i>Inunctions</i>	Smearings, rubbings.
<i>Macalugio</i>	Raw cotton
<i>Mahlut</i>	Mixture of corn and barley
<i>Marzeppa</i>	Wooden rammers
<i>Patentees</i>	Those who fell under the jurisdiction of the Inquisitor
<i>Piazzanti</i>	Pensioners
<i>Promotor fiscale</i>	Prosecutor
<i>Qorq</i>	Shoes
<i>Religion</i>	The Order of St John
<i>Rotolo</i>	Weight
<i>Setah</i>	Terrace
<i>Stanga</i>	Bar
<i>Terra</i>	Village

Acknowledgements

This thesis would never have been completed if it had not been the kind assistance of several people. Prime of place goes to my tutor, Dr J. Rogister, who was very generous with his advice and though busy with his own work, he would go out of his way to help me.

I would also like to thank Fr John Azzopardi, the curator of the Cathedral Museum at Mdina, where the Inquisition Archives are kept. In Malta I received help also from the staff of the National Library, University Library, the Church Archives at Floriana, the Notarial Archives and the Parish Archives.

The British Library and the *Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Vittorio Emanuele II* of Rome always supplied me with the necessary material. I also remember with pleasure the time I spent at Durham University Library and the *Bibliothèque Nationale* at Paris.

I would like to mention by name Alain Blondy and Michel Fontenay of the Sorbonne; John Tedeschi of Wisconsin University; Hans Chr. Johansen of Odense University; Francisco Malia Sanchez of Cadiz, Spain; *Dott.* Paolo Selmi, Director of the *Archivio di Stato*, Venice; *Dott.* Marino Zorzi, Director of the *Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana*, Venice; *Dott.* Pierluigi Agostini of the University of Trento; *Dott.* Salvatore Bono, of the University of Perugia; Prof. Giuseppe Bonaffini of the University of Palermo. To all these, as well as to the editors of the *Rivista Storica Italiana*, I owe a lot of gratitude.

Nearer home at Malta the regular contact with my colleagues was of great benefit to me but I would like to mention especially my nephew, Kurt Zammit, whose expertise in computing made the printing of the thesis not as difficult as I had thought.

CHAPTER 1

THE BACKGROUND

By the second half of the eighteenth century Malta's population had increased from about 20,000 as it was in 1530¹ - at the time of the arrival of the Hospitallers - to about 87,535 inhabitants, excluding mainly the knights and the religious orders.² Such an increase was accompanied by marked changes in the distribution of population. As had happened in Europe³ and north Africa⁴ the tiny rural villages and hamlets were abandoned⁵ and were replaced by larger settlements. These, however, varied considerably in size. As Table 1.1 shows eleven of these *casali*⁶ were below the 1000 mark. Ten

¹ Jean Quentin d'Autun, The Earliest Description of Malta, p. 29.

² *AIM, Mem.* 21, ff. 351r-v.

³ For the case in Italy, Aldo Landi, 'La Diocesi di Luni-Sarzana nella Seconda Metà del Cinquecento', Nuova Rivista Storica, Anno LIX (Sept-Dec. 1975), p. 544.

⁴ R. Lawless, 'The Lost Berber Villages of Eastern Morocco and Western Algeria', *Man*, vii (1972), pp. 114-121.

⁵ Godfrey Wettinger, 'The Lost Villages and Hamlets of Malta', Medieval Malta: Studies of Malta Before the Knights, Anthony Luttrell, ed., pp. 181-216.

⁶ This is the Italian equivalent of the Maltese *hal* or *rahal*. Originally the latter term denoted a 'station' or 'stopping-place' which later developed into hamlets and then villages. See Gian Francesco Abela, Della Descrittione di Malta, pp. 76, 77. The majority of these *rahal* names are composed of that word followed by the name of a person associated with the village, possibly its founder. See J. Aquilina, 'A Brief Survey of Maltese Place-Names', in his Papers in Maltese Linguistics, pp. 191-193

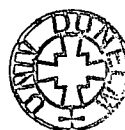


Table 1.1 Population of Malta and Gozo in 1784.

MALTA	
Citta Notabile and Rabat	3,549
Terra Birchircara	3,252
S. Paolo Valletta and Floriana	8,326
Citta Vittoriosa (Birgu)	4,077
Terra Naxxar	2,201
Città Pinto (Qormi)	3,019
Terra Gudja	762
Casal Zejtun	3,882
Casal Zurrieq	3,463
Casal Siggiewi	2,247
Città Rohan (Zebbug)	4,448
Porto Salvo Citta Valletta	9,339
Greeks - Valletta and Vittoriosa	71
Casal Attard	790
Città Senglea	4,728
Città Burmula (Cospicua)	6,975
Casal Kirkop	272
Casal Tarxien	903
Casla Lia	972
Casal Safi	202
Casal Mqabba	788
Casal Gharghur	854
Casal Mosta	3,458
Casal Zabbar	2,401
Casal Qrendi	845
Casal Ghaxaq	1,054
Casal Luqa	1,004
Casal Balzan	540
Casal Dingli	356
TOTAL	74,779
GOZO	
Matrice and Collegiate Chiesa	3,059
Rabat	1,993
Casal Xewkija	1,432
Casal Caccia (Xaghra)	1,340
Casal Sannat	738
Casal Nadur	1,983
Casal Zebbug	784
Casal Gharb	1,490
TOTAL	12,759

villages, of which two were described as *terra*, had more than 2000 inhabitants, and of these seven had more than 3000. Zebbug, with its 4448 dwellers, was by far the biggest village and together with Qormi had reached the coveted status of town or *città*.⁷ At the same time the harbour area was surrounded by an almost continuous line of heavily fortified towns.⁸ Such a demographic pattern meant that a little over half of the inhabitants or eleven Maltese out of twenty lived in the villages. Put differently, as many Maltese lived in the countryside as in the towns. Valletta and its suburb, Floriana, together with the Cottonera area of Senglea, Cospicua and Vittoriosa had a population of 33,516 or 44.8 per cent of the population of the island. This pattern was repeated in Gozo where 39.1 per cent of the inhabitants were concentrated at Rabat.

The importance of towns in the Maltese islands offers a sharp contrast, for instance, to pre-industrial Britain, which was 'decidedly not an urban country'.⁹ In Malta such a pattern possibly arose out of two specific contingencies. The possibility that the island could be attacked by the 'Turks' was very real up to the sixteenth century. Both the Apostolic Visitor in 1575¹⁰ and the first Maltese historian and antiquarian in 1647¹¹ as well as Prof. Wettinger in recent times¹² all testify to this fact and the consequent quest for security¹³ as the main reason for the decaying of small settlements. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this fear had abated¹⁴ but was not at all remote. It

⁷ For their respective application to carry this title see *NLM, Libr.* 142 (iv), pp. 399-412.

⁸ Brian Blouet, 'Town Planning in Malta, 1530-1798', *The Town Planning Review*, vol. XXXV, no. 3 (October 1964), pp. 183-194. Alison Hoppen, *The Fortification of Malta by the Order of St John, 1530-1798* and Sandwich, *A Voyage performed by the Late Earl of Sandwich Round the Mediterranean in the Years 1738 and 1739*, pp. 513-518.

⁹ Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, p. 58.

¹⁰ *NLM, Libr.* 643, pp. 322-323.

¹¹ Gio. Francesco Abela, *Della Descrizione di Malta*, pp. 89-90 - '*... per sfuggire le spesse scorrerie e continue invasioni de' barbari corsari ...*'

¹² Godfrey Wettinger, 'The Lost Villages and Hamlets of Malta', *Medieval Malta: Studies of Malta Before the Knights*, Anthony Luttrell, ed., *passim*.

¹³ For the same remarks regarding Alsace, see Jean-Marie Pesez and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, 'The Deserted Villages of France: An Overview', *Rural Society in France*, Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, eds., p. 85.

¹⁴ For the ballad *L-Gharusa tal-Mosta* (The Bride of Mosta) abducted by the Turks see Luigi Bonelli, 'Il Dialetto Maltese', *Supplementi Periodici all'Archivio Glottologico Italiano*, G. I. Ascoli, ed., pp. 85-87.

was a serious preoccupation in 1715,¹⁵ 1722,¹⁶ 1733¹⁷ and in 1760 after the capture of the Turkish flagship or 'Sultana';¹⁸ and though rare it was not unknown that Moslem corsairs ventured even on land.¹⁹ However, Brian Blouet puts forward a much more plausible social and economic theory for the displacement of people and the creation of large, compact and socially cohesive villages. The pull of these settlements, he explains, must have been irresistible on the smaller ones; besides greater security they offered such services as a physician, an apothecary, better church services and better shops and taverns.²⁰

The Maltese lived in flat-roofed houses built of limestone which is very abundant in the island. The rooms were situated round a courtyard and when there was a room upstairs (*ghorfa*)²¹ it led on to a terrace (*setah*).²² Generally, walls were double, with an infilling of rubble. Roofs were supported either on stone-arches²³ or, more commonly, on wooden beams made of whole tree trunks across which slabs of stone were laid; they even had a layer of *diffun* composed of small pieces of broken earthenware pots laid over them. This was the work of women (*ballata*) who, while singing traditional Maltese songs,²⁴ beat the material with wooden rammers

¹⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 103A, f. 96r.

¹⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 22, f. 164r.

¹⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 19v.

¹⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 100, ff. 250r-v.

¹⁹ *NLM, Arch.* 1513, f. 167r.

²⁰ Brian Blouet, 'Rural Settlement in Malta', *Geography*, vol. lvi, part 2, April 1971, pp. 112-118. See also his other article 'The Impact of Armed Conflict', *Institute of British Geographers. Transactions New Series*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1978), pp. 367-380.

²¹ *AIM, AC* 567, f. 204r.

²² *AIM, AC* 568, f. 152v. Guzepp Micallef, *Hal-Luqa : Nieshau Grajjietha*, pp. 138-140.

²³ Joan Fuguet I Sans and Anthony Luttrell, 'Diaphragm Arches and Stone Slab Roofs', *Melita Historica*, vol. XI, no. 4 (1995), pp. 325-335.

²⁴ For an example of such a song, Anthony Preca, *Studju Lingwistiku Folkloristiku ta' Snajja' Bikrin Maltin*. M. A. thesis, University of Malta (1978), p. 330.

(*marzeppa*).²⁵ Doors were closed with large keys²⁶ and by a wooden²⁷ or an iron²⁸ bar (*stanga*). Light was supplied by a candle²⁹ but more commonly by an *imnara* or oil-lamp, which was lit by a tinder rubbed against a piece of iron, but even a match could be used.³⁰ Kitchen utensils, like plates,³¹ bowls³² and frying-pans³³ were made of pottery but the stove (*fuklar*) was made of stone, fuel being supplied by wood,³⁴ thorns³⁵ or coal.³⁶ Furniture must have been simple consisting of a few chairs,³⁷ a table and a bed. Woolen mattresses were in common use,³⁸ though when Francesco Bianco of Mdina visited Tomaso at *Città Pinto*, where he had gone to barter his horse, he slept on straw.³⁹ On the wall there hang some holy picture⁴⁰ with, perhaps, a lighted candle in front of it.⁴¹

The village was characterised by its windmills⁴² and by its strait, winding streets which radiated from the parish church at the centre.⁴³ Here resided the élites of the

²⁵ Quentin Hughes, The Building of Malta during the Period of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, 1530-1795, pp. 195-9.

²⁶ *AIM, AC 523*, f. 126v.

²⁷ *AIM, AC 532*, f. 12v.

²⁸ *AIM, AC 524*, f. 196r.

²⁹ *AIM, AC 539* (ii), f. 298r.

³⁰ *AIM, AC 522*, f. 63v.

³¹ *Ibid.*, f. 57r.

³² *AIM, AC 535*, f. 58r.

³³ *AIM, Proc. 131B*, f. 710r.

³⁴ *AIM, AC 541* (i), f. 153r.

³⁵ *AIM, AC 567*, f. 210r.

³⁶ *AIM, AC 547*, f. 85r.

³⁷ *AIM, AC 511*, f. 152v.

³⁸ *AIM, AC 508*, f. 153v. *AIM, AC 522*, f. 57r.

³⁹ *AIM, AC 535*, f. 165r.

⁴⁰ *AIM, Proc. 136A*, f. 19v.

⁴¹ *AIM, Proc. 125C*, f. 1092v.

⁴² *AIM, Proc. 134A*, f. 393r; *AIM, Proc. 135A*, ff. 149r-v; *AIM, Proc. 136A*, ff. 165r-v. Joseph M. Attard Tabone, 'From Wheat to Bread Through the Gozo Windmills', in A Focus On Gozo, Joseph Farrugia and Lino Briguglio, eds., pp. 152-171.

village while in the outskirts farmhouses dotted a countryside of small fields with their rubble walls.⁴⁴ Another characteristic of rural settlements was their peaceful atmosphere broken by creaking wheels and horses' hoofs as well as by the voices of hawkers crying their wares - handkerchiefs,⁴⁵ bran,⁴⁶ poultry,⁴⁷ fish,⁴⁸ fruit and vegetables,⁴⁹ oil, honey and water.⁵⁰ The chief disturbers, however, were the church bells; they rang for mass, tolled for funerals and even regulated the daily lives of the villagers. The *Pater Noster*,⁵¹ early at four o'clock in the morning, signalled the start of another working day; at noon it was a time for rest, while the *Angelus* and a little later the *Salutazione dei difonti* marked the return of the peasants to their home.⁵²

The village imparted a distinct identity to its inhabitants. Incomers were never really accepted and integrated into the life of the village; they were made to feel that they did not belong to their place of adoption and they remained outsiders as their nicknames pointed out. Salvatore Azzopardi, therefore, a shoemaker at Zurrieq, was still *iz-Zebbugi* (the man from Zebbug) in the eyes of the inhabitants.⁵³ This was despite the fact that villages were situated in great proximity to each other, sometimes even a few paces away. Contact must have been very frequent; and if girls did not marry in their own village they generally took a man from a nearby locality.⁵⁴ Villagers attended each

⁴³ Jeremy Boissevain, *Hal-Farrug : A Village in Malta*, p. 7.

⁴⁴ For this concentric pattern of residence, Jeremy Boissevain, 'Residential Inversion : The Changing Use of Social Space in Malta', *Hyphen*, vol. V, no. 2 (1986), pp. 57-59.

⁴⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 136B, f. 629r.

⁴⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 133B, f. 716r.

⁴⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 135B, f. 644v.

⁴⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 136A, f. 152r.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 154r.

⁵⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 421r.

⁵¹ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, f. 1r.

⁵² On the importance of bells in the life of the people see the Herbert Ganado, *Rajt Malta Tinbidel*, vol. 4, pp. 278-281.

⁵³ *AIM, AC* 499, f. 220r.

⁵⁴ Frans Ciappara, *Marriage in Malta*, pp. 47-50.

others' feasts⁵⁵ or even some fair like the one held at Santa Venera.⁵⁶ Liberata Calafato of *casal* Lia⁵⁷ and sixty-year-old Maria of Mqabba⁵⁸ both made their way to Zurrieq where they sold cotton yarn; others left their villages to buy fodder, to fetch a doctor⁵⁹ or to go to work.⁶⁰ On Sunday, 16 February 1783, towards the first *Ave Maria*, Giuseppe Magro of Qrendi was in the village square of Siggiewi where he had an argument with Giuseppe Farrugia over two *rotoli* of raw cotton (*macalugio*).⁶¹

Despite this continuous contact there was much rivalry between villages.⁶² The title of town (*città*) was the ultimate honour they coveted and the parish priest of Hal-Qormi even inflated the number of its inhabitants so as to make it appear it had a large population deserving of that title.⁶³ Villagers were very jealous of their independence, too, and the inhabitants of Xewkija and Gharb at Gozo proudly pointed out that they were unlike the other four villages of the island. These showed their subjection to the Matrice by a yearly contribution of candles to the Archpriest on Assumption Day during High Mass in the presence of all the people; and they even took part in the processions held every year on Rogation days, St Mark's and *Corpus Domini*.⁶⁴ Such rivalry can also be detected in a sort of 'rebellion' organised in 1764 by the militias of Siggiewi and Zebbug when they both demanded preferential treatment over the other in the

⁵⁵ AIM, AC 539 (ii), f. 323r.

⁵⁶ AIM, AC 541 (i), f. 124r.

⁵⁷ AIM, AC 565, f. 265r.

⁵⁸ AIM, Proc. 128B, f. 802r.

⁵⁹ AIM, AC 547, f. 183v.

⁶⁰ AIM, Mem. 13, f. 659r. Andrea Gatt of *città* Pinto worked in a quarry at Zejtun (AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 43r) and Giuseppe Muscat *tal-barun* (the baron's son) of *casal* Lia was employed as a muleteer with Teodoro Gristi of *casal* Balzan - AIM, AC 563, f. 22r.

⁶¹ AIM, AC 565, ff. 113r-114v.

⁶² Mariella Attard, *Haz-Zebbug u l-Festa ta' San Filep*, pp. 58-59.

⁶³ S. Fiorini, 'Status Animarum 1: A Unique Source for 17th and 18th Century Maltese Demography', *Melita Historica*, vol. V111, no. 4 (1983), pp. 335-336.

⁶⁴ AIM, AC 546, ff. 88r-95v.

military exercises that were being then made.⁶⁵ The people of Zebbug had been involved in a similar incident of identity ten years before. When Fr Giusto Sammut died in Rome in 1754 he left the holy body of St Theodore to the altar of St Catherine's at the parish church of his native village but his cousin and heir, Anna Tanti, donated it instead to her own parish of Lija. When they came to know of it Fr Simone Buhagiar and Fr Giacomo Vassallo, at the head of five hundred villagers, on 4 February 1750, descended on *casal Lia* and, pretending that they were on their way to the sanctuary of Our Lady at Mellieha, they entered Anna's residence by force and brought the *corpo santo* back home.⁶⁶

Such solidarity to one's place of residence was shown on the personal level, too. One morning Giovanni *tà Santa* (Santa's son) of Cospicua was selling mackerel at the Valletta wharf. Giovanni Camilleri, a notary from Senglea, protested that he was being cheated and demanded to have the fish weighed. The fishmonger first claimed that he could do with his property whatever he liked and then, taking the fish out of the servant's basket, he threw them violently on the ground. But what is more relevant to our argument is that he told his adversary that being an *isolano* (a man from Senglea) did not entitle him at all to act smartly, meaning that a Cospicua man was no inferior to a Senglean - '*per esser isolano non gli dovesse fare del bravo*'.⁶⁷

Contact between villages and towns must have been frequent. Being the capital city the villagers had perforce to go to Valletta for their special needs. The *Sacra Infermeria* or the General Hospital,⁶⁸ the Bishop's and the Government's courts were all situated there. Slave prisons were to be found only in the cities and here did the *beduini* or *campagnoli*, as the people of the *campagna* or the villages were called, often come to consult slaves about their illness or to manufacture some spell.⁶⁹ They also came to town to make a will⁷⁰, to enrol on the Order's galleys, to sell water,⁷¹ to buy maize for

⁶⁵ AIM, AC 538, f. 149v.

⁶⁶ NLM, Libr. 12, p. 12. See also S. Ciappara, *Storia del Zebbug e Sua Parrocchia*, pp. 51-4, 60-1.

⁶⁷ AIM, AC 503, ff. 331r-332v.

⁶⁸ In 1788 those women who were inmates here were the following - Valletta, 39; Cospicua, 9; Birkirkara, 7; Città Rohan, 7; Gozo, 4; Città Pinto, 3; Gargur, 2; Gudja, 2; Ghaxaq, 2; Senglea, 2; Attard, 1; Kirkop, 1; Lija, 1; Mosta, 1; Mqabba, 1; Qrendi, 1; Safi, 1; Siggiewi, 1; Tarxien, 1; Vittoriosa, 1; Zejtun, 1; Zurrieq, 1. CEM, SA 31, pp. 96-98.

⁶⁹ AIM, Proc. 131B, f. 694r.

⁷⁰ AIM, AC 569 (i), f. 181r.

the pigs,⁷² or it could be an escapade to the prostitutes.⁷³ For some special reason, perhaps because they had been given some marriage legacy, a couple would marry in town, too.⁷⁴ Others came to Valletta to visit their kin,⁷⁵ to see a doctor⁷⁶ or to bring their produce, like melons,⁷⁷ to market. Pietro Debono⁷⁸ and Giuseppe Cassar, both of *casal* Qormi transported flour from their village; and late at night, on 12 April 1769, the latter went to enquire whether the confectioners needed any more of the produce so as to supply them with the necessary quantity the next morning.⁷⁹ Work, indeed, attracted most villagers to the towns. Agostino of Naxxar beat cotton in the house of Pietro Zammit at Vittoriosa. On weekdays he slept in his master's house and only returned to his native village on Sundays and feast days, to report for work the next day, carrying his lunch-bag (*sacchetto di pane*) with him.⁸⁰ Michele Psaila of Birkirkara, however, did not have to travel that far and could afford to go daily to Valletta where he was employed with Michelangelo, the carpenter.⁸¹

The number of villagers who took up residence in towns must have been negligible. Village girls would rather marry men from rural areas and, anyway, they preferred to stay near their relatives.⁸² It was rather economic factors which made them migrate to the towns, where job opportunities were greater. Girls, for instance, sought domestic service and Maria travelled several times a month from *casal* Ghaxaq to

⁷¹ AIM, AC 534, f. 166r.

⁷² AIM, AC 567, f. 215v.

⁷³ AIM, Proc. 130, f. 192r.

⁷⁴ PA (Vittoriosa), Lib. Matr. IV, f. 15v.

⁷⁵ AIM, AC 539 (ii), f. 329v.

⁷⁶ AIM, AC 523, f. 126r.

⁷⁷ AIM, AC 492, f. 55v.

⁷⁸ AIM, AC 536, f. 234r.

⁷⁹ AIM, AC 539 (ii), f. 308r.

⁸⁰ AIM, AC 532, ff. 13r-v.

⁸¹ AIM, Proc. 124A, f. 290r.

⁸² Frans Ciappara, Marriage in Malta, pp. 47-50, 57-58).

Valletta where she resided for days at the house of *Signora* Giovanna Mannarino, whose servant she was.⁸³ The *Status Animarum* of Mqabba for the year 1790, scrupulously done by the curate, Fr Aloisio Caraffa, contained three girls aged 17, 18 and 19 respectively who were serving in Valletta⁸⁴ and Senglea.⁸⁵ A young man, aged 23, was also in domestic service⁸⁶ but men generally had other occupations, like *soldato nel Quartiere*.⁸⁷ Movement in the opposite direction must not have been so frequent: a doctor would go to see a patient;⁸⁸ the upper classes had their country-houses or *casino*⁸⁹ while relatives would attend a christening ceremony⁹⁰ and a widow would leave town to go and stay with her brother in a village.⁹¹

Rivalry between town and country was no less intense than that between the villages themselves. This is well illustrated by the following incident. One Carnival day four young men Vincenzo Catania, Giuseppe and Salvatore Buttigieg and Andrea Vella made their way from Valletta to *città* Pinto. As they were watching a troupe of dancers Salvatore remarked sarcastically that it must be an impromptu dance. Tomaso Borg, a villager, felt himself hurt and exclaimed that the 'city donkeys' had come to amuse the people of the countryside. Vincenzo replied that they had come rather to entertain the 'Arabs'. This was not the last word and when the dance ended and the four townsmen were strolling through the village they were set upon by the *campagnoli* and were so beaten up and bruised that they were ashamed to enter Valletta.⁹²

⁸³ AIM, AC 536, f. 241r.

⁸⁴ CEM, SA X1, p. 4.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 13.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 4, 7.

⁸⁸ AIM, AC 535, f. 151r.

⁸⁹ AIM, AC 536, f. 241r.

⁹⁰ AIM, Proc. 124A, ff. 209r-210v.

⁹¹ This was the case of Teresa Boffugno who left Cospicua and went with her three children to her brother's at Tarxien - CEM, AO 669, f. 165r.

⁹² AIM, AC 535, f. 177v.

As travellers⁹³ and painters depicted them most Maltese went barefoot, and when they did put shoes on these consisted of pieces of cow- or pig-skin (*qorq*).⁹⁴ In their dress⁹⁵ the men resembled Lorenzo - a thirty-two-year-old, rather tall, well-built cotton-beater with moustaches from Cospicua; he wore a shirt, white trousers and a black cap, while in his sash he carried a knife with a black handle 'like the ones sailors use'.⁹⁶ On feast days the shirt could be the best one the villagers had, perhaps - if they could afford it, like Giovanni Domenico Spiteri, one of the marshals of the Inquisition - of Dutch linen and with silver buttons. Some would even wear a waistcoat⁹⁷ or, like Gaetano Bugeja, a fishmonger, a golden earring.⁹⁸ At night they went about with a mantle (*capotto*)⁹⁹, which resembled a friar's tunic with a hood (*barnuza*) and reached down to the knees. When they went to church women wore the traditional black *ghonella* on their heads¹⁰⁰ but at home they used the bluish *dgezwira* with white stripes.¹⁰¹

Eighteenth-century Maltese gave each other good morning¹⁰² and good night¹⁰³ as well as the season's greetings¹⁰⁴ when they met in the streets. They blushed when

⁹³ See, for instance, Di Riedesel, *Voyage en Sicilie et dans la Grande Grèce*, p. 51.

⁹⁴ *NLM, Libr.* 142 (v), p. 218.

⁹⁵ For a general picture, Joseph Cassar-Pullicino, 'Notes for a History of Maltese Costume', in his *Studies in Maltese Folklore*, pp. 133-150.

⁹⁶ *AIM, AC* 507, f. 163r.

⁹⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 125C, f. 1027v.

⁹⁸ *AIM, AC* 517 (ii), f. 478r.

⁹⁹ *AIM, AC* 499, f. 220r. Agius de Soldanis, *Damma tal Kliem Kartaginis Mscerred fel Fom tal Maltin u Ghaucin'*, *NLM, Libr.* 143A, ff. 286r - v.

¹⁰⁰ *AIM, AC* 502, f. 375r.

¹⁰¹ *NLM, Libr.* 142 (v), p. 219.

¹⁰² *AIM, AC* 557 (ii), f. 420r.

¹⁰³ *AIM, AC* 568, f. 160r.

¹⁰⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 169, no. 73.

death of a child,¹⁰⁶ when they were beaten,¹⁰⁷ lost a lover,¹⁰⁸ saw their father on the ground being kicked in the belly,¹⁰⁹ were hit by an antagonist¹¹⁰ or when they were on their way to prison.¹¹¹ An unknown woman cried when a man took off her *ghonella* on her way to church early in the morning;¹¹² and Teresa del Core burst into tears when she came to know that her first husband was still alive at Martinique and that her second marriage was, therefore, null.¹¹³

There were barbers in the villages¹¹⁴ as well as in the towns, especially in the slave prisons¹¹⁵ and at the marina of Valletta. But how often people shaved or cut their hair it is difficult to say. The same uncertainty is encountered when we turn to discuss how often they changed or washed their clothes. Like most women the slave, Giuseppa, washed the clothes of her master, *Signor* Gioacchino Said, at home.¹¹⁶ In some places, for instance at Rabat, women like Teresa Ungaro, washed their clothes in the public fountains of Ghajn Hamiem and Ghajn Gheriexem.¹¹⁷ People did go to swim¹¹⁸ but otherwise they could not have been very particular about their personal hygiene except perhaps in delousing themselves.¹¹⁹ Nor could cleanliness have been a characteristic of

¹⁰⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 113B, f. 384r.

¹⁰⁷ *AIM, AC* 571, f. 202r.

¹⁰⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, f. 34r.

¹⁰⁹ *AIM, AC* 539 (ii), f. 348r.

¹¹⁰ *AIM, AC* 571, f. 202r.

¹¹¹ *AIM, AC* 565, ff. 268r-v.

¹¹² *NLM, Libr.* 142, vol. V1, p. 284.

¹¹³ *AIM, Proc.* 125B, f. 910r.

¹¹⁴ *AIM, AC* 541 (i), f. 185r.

¹¹⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 131B, f. 760r.

¹¹⁶ *AIM, AC* 548, f. 178r.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 226v. *AIM, AC* 539 (ii), f. 348r.

¹¹⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 77A, f. 108r.

¹¹⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 122A, f. 272v.

traditional society, either;¹²⁰ people pissed on the public street¹²¹ and kept animals like pigs inside the house¹²², while the streets were strewn with animal droppings which gave an insistent sting.¹²³

In the villages peasants lived off their own crops and kept their own animals, including rabbits and poultry¹²⁴ which supplied them with eggs.¹²⁵ Bread was their staple food and those who could afford it ate it white; the others took brown or black bread made from barley or *mischiato*.¹²⁶ Fish, which included sardines, herrings and *lampuki*¹²⁷ were abundant and it does not seem that meat was a rarity, either; pork, beef, chicken, mutton,¹²⁸ lamb, rabbit, kid, and veal are all mentioned. References to butchers (*tal-laham*)¹²⁹ are not hard to come by. Battista Zarb of Birkirkara,¹³⁰ Lorenzo Zammit¹³¹ and Gregorio Borg¹³² both of Valletta and Gio. Battista of Cospicua,¹³³

¹²⁰ J. Sutherland, Report on the Sanitary Condition of Malta and Gozo with reference to the Epidemic Cholera in the Year 1865, p. 77.

¹²¹ *AIM, AC 551 (ii)*, f. 86r

¹²² *AIM, AC 535*, f. 182v. *AIM, AC 567*, ff. 213r, 214v. A. Ghio, The Cholera : Malta and Gozo in the Year 1865, p. 33.

¹²³ W. H. Burrell, Appendix V to the Second Report on Quarantine, p. 37.

¹²⁴ *AIM, Proc. 112A*, f. 279r

¹²⁵ On the question of food see the highly informative paper by G. Cassar-Pullicino, 'Antichi Cibi Maltesi', Melita Historica, vol. 3, no. 2 (1961), pp. 31-54.

¹²⁶ *AIM, AC 508*, f. 117r.

¹²⁷ *AIM, AC 517 (ii)*, ff. 47r-v.

¹²⁸ *AIM, Proc. 131B*, f. 710r.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 692r.

¹³⁰ *AIM, Proc. 130*, f. 12r.

¹³¹ *AIM, Proc. 131A*, f. 35r.

¹³² *AIM, Proc. 135A*, f. 132v.

¹³³ *AIM, Proc. 134A*, f. 267r.

among others, were all engaged in this trade. All the same some Maltese could not maintain themselves¹³⁴ and were naked and dying of cold.¹³⁵ Angelo de Caros, a poor married man from Valletta, was out of work for six months and went without food for three whole days.¹³⁶ Landless labourers picked up a day's work when they could but their plight was so miserable that according to Gaetano Pace of Rabat not even God could have helped them in their misery.¹³⁷ Beggars, like eighty-year-old Giovanni la Croce of Valletta¹³⁸ or Francesco Bonello of B'Kara,¹³⁹ were a common feature of the social scene but it was so shameful an exercise that an unidentified woman of Valletta, about forty years of age, made her way to *casal* Qormi not to be seen begging in her own home town.¹⁴⁰ Though these must have been extreme cases various indications point to a state which Peter Laslett appropriately calls, 'perpetual undernourishment'.¹⁴¹ A late age at marriage and a high proportion of celibates all point in this direction; and that the possibility of starvation was a serious preoccupation for the Government and its grain agency, or the *Università dei Grani*, can be also shown by the fact that it sent its *accattapani* round to check prices; such control was most necessary because high prices were a cause of revolt as happened in 1775.¹⁴²

Households were small, 3.9 persons being the average during the period 1750-1798. Generally, the conjugal family of husband, wife and children was the dominant

¹³⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, f. 73r.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 523r.

¹³⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 128B, f. 792r.

¹³⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 126C, f. 1033r.

¹³⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 128B, f. 493r.

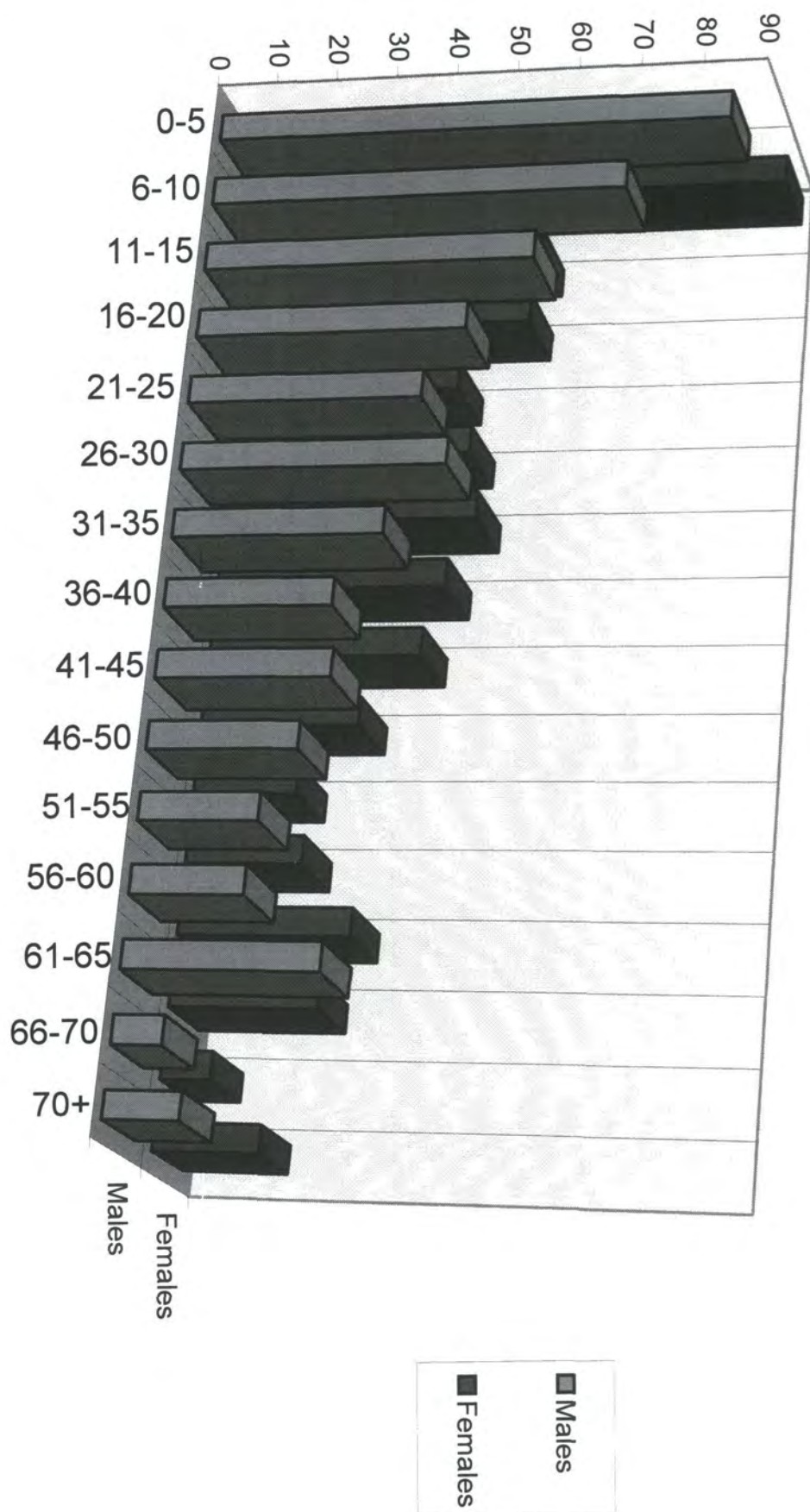
¹³⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 396r.

¹⁴⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 126B, f. 592r.

¹⁴¹ Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, p. 115.

¹⁴² On this revolt, J. Callus, *The Rising of the Priests* and F. Laferla, *Una Giustizia Storica. Don Gaetano Mannarino nella Luce dei Documenti*.

Fig 1.1 The Distribution of Population in Luqa in 1791, by sex and age



type of household.¹⁴³ Extended families were the minority; and if a bachelor, as in the case of Lorenzo Zerafa of Rabat, Gozo, had his married nieces living with him¹⁴⁴ or, still, a widowed mother went to live with her married daughter,¹⁴⁵ these were the exceptions rather than the rule. This latter example leads to a discussion of the situation of the old in traditional society. For instance, how many were they? Contrary to popular impression a good number of people in past times did reach the higher ages. Pietro Gauci of Rabat was ninety-two years of age but he was still strong and healthy and every morning he went to Valletta with his donkey to return in the evening.¹⁴⁶ This could well have been an exception but at Naxxar 15.7 per cent of those who died in the period 1750-1790 were above sixty years of age.¹⁴⁷ At Siggiewi, the percentage over the same period stood even higher - 22.1, and it included two women who were 'over hundred years' old.¹⁴⁸ Even Figure 1.1 which represents the distribution of population of Luqa in 1791 by sex and age fails to give the impression that the old formed a negligible percentage.¹⁴⁹ Table 1.2 is a comparative table of the proportion of the elderly (persons of sixty years and over) and the aged (of sixty-five years and over) in Malta and other places. What at once comes to notice is that the figures for Malta compare favourably well with those from abroad. They are also relatively high in relation to what one might expect in traditional societies; and Malta had with some exceptions a higher percentage than other countries. These figures suggest not only that the Maltese must have lived longer than is popularly imagined but also that once the early critical years were passed life expectation could be quite high.

¹⁴³ For an extensive discussion of the subject see Frans Ciappara, Marriage in Malta in the late Eighteenth Century, pp. 36-9.

¹⁴⁴ *AIM*, AC 567, f. 208r.

¹⁴⁵ *AIM*, AC 505, f. 345r.

¹⁴⁶ *AIM*, Mem. 13, ff. 677r-v.

¹⁴⁷ Calculated from data in PA (Naxxar), *Lib. Def.* 11, 111.

¹⁴⁸ Calculated from data in PA (Siggiewi), *Lib. Def.* 111, 1V.

¹⁴⁹ Calculated from data in CEM, SA 12.

Table 1.2 Percentages of elderly and aged persons by sex.

			Aged 60 and above			Aged 65 and above			Aged 70 and above			Aged 75 and above			Aged 80 and above		
PLACE	DATE	POP.	M	F	BOTH	M	F	BOTH	M	F	BOTH	M	F	BOTH	M	F	BOTH
MALTA																	
Attard	1784	791	15.3	15.0	15.2	7.3	5.9	6.6	3.8	3.3	3.5	1.0	2.0	1.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Dingli	1786	393	8.1	7.7	7.9	3.5	4.1	3.8	3.0	1.5	2.3	1.0	0.5	0.8	0.5	0.0	0.3
Kirkop	1784	272	8.8	10.4	9.6	6.6	6.7	6.6	2.9	5.2	4.0	2.2	3.0	2.6	0.0	0.7	0.4
Mqabba	1790	814	7.9	10.7	9.3	6.2	6.9	6.5	3.3	4.6	3.9	2.1	2.3	2.2	0.5	1.3	0.9
Qrendi	1758	667	8.5	9.2	8.4	6.3	6.3	6.3	4.5	3.9	4.2	2.7	1.8	2.2	1.5	0.9	1.2
EUROPE																	
Denmark	1786	-	8.0	9.3	8.7	-	-	-	2.6	3.4	3.0	-	-	-	0.4	0.7	0.6
Estonia	1782	-	6.8	5.7	6.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
England																	
Ackworth	1767	728	8.5	11.0	9.9	-	-	-	2.6	3.8	3.3	-	-	-	0.6	1.3	1.0
	1772	678	8.5	12.7	10.6	-	-	-	2.6	4.4	3.5	-	-	-	0.6	1.4	1.0
Sandwich	1776	609	14.2	12.2	13.1	-	-	-	6.0	4.6	5.5	-	-	-	1.4	0.6	1.0
France																	
Longuenesse	1778	332	8.5	9.7	9.1	5.9	8.0	7.0	2.0	5.1	3.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	-	-	-
	1790	387	10.2	5.5	7.7	6.4	4.5	5.4	3.2	3.0	3.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Iceland	1787	-	6.5	8.7	7.8	-	-	-	1.6	2.5	2.1	-	-	-	-	-	-

Sources: Malta CEM, S.A. 5, 7, 11, 16, 18.

Europe P. Laslett, Family and Illicit Love in early generations, pp.186 - 188.

Were these old people solitary? Did they enjoy full family membership? Were they appreciated and socially valued or dumped in some institution? As in Bilbao¹⁵⁰ and in eighteenth-century Denmark,¹⁵¹ it does not seem that they lived in residential isolation. For one thing a late age at marriage, together with the fact that 'a high proportion of our ancestors never married at all',¹⁵² ensured that they still had their children at home. And if, as Table 1.3 shows, widows and widowers could be living alone, a daughter might well be living next door or she could come up regularly to tidy up; besides, as in the French village of Chanzeaux,¹⁵³ a grandchild could be asked to move in with them. Some did enter an institution and seventy-year-old Antonio Vella, who enjoyed a government's pension, stayed at the *Sacra Infermeria* at the Religion's expense. Others went to the *Casa di Carità*

Table 1.3 Households inhabited by the elderly

	Widow/er alone	Husband & Wife	Nuclear Family	Widow/er & offspring	Others
Qrendi (1758)	9	5	13	9	10
Tarxien (1790)	11	7	11	8	15
Balzan (1793)	18	18	14	16	10

Sources: *CEM, SA* 16 (Qrendi), 23 (Tarxien), 26 (Balzan)

set up in 1732 at Floriana by Grand Master Manoel di Vilhena¹⁵⁴ whereas those who were infirm were welcomed at Saura Hospital at Rabat,¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Pilar Pérez-Fuentes Hernández and Arantza Pareja Alonso, 'Ageing alone or in a family : the case of Bilbao, 1825-1935', *Continuity and Change*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1997), pp. 79-102.

¹⁵¹ Hans Chr. Johansen, 'The Position of the Old in the Rural Household in a Traditional Society', *The Scandinavian Economic History Review*, vol. XXIV, no. 2 (1976), pp. 129-142.

¹⁵² Frans Ciappara, *Marriage in Malta*, p. 61.

¹⁵³ Laurence Wylie, ed., *Chanzeaux : A Village in Anjou*, p. 322.

¹⁵⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 125C, f. 1109r. *NLM, Libr.* 142 (ii), f. 90r.

at St Joseph's Hospital at Zebbug or else at the Hospital for Women in Valletta, where in 1788 there were thirteen *piazzanti*.¹⁵⁶ The majority, however, were succoured by their own relatives, in accordance with the precepts of religion.¹⁵⁷ In Malta kinship is greatly appreciated and kinfolk are expected to help each other in their needs. When, for instance, Giuseppe Ciappara of *casal* Qormi was wounded in the head while leading his mule into Valletta he was taken to the house of a relative of his.¹⁵⁸ It was his son-in-law who brought Giovanni Mallia of *casal* Ghaxaq back home after he had been soundly beaten at a tavern in the same village.¹⁵⁹ Still, it was to his cousin that Paolo Tonna poured out his heart when he was expelled by his wife on the very day of their marriage. Being at loggerheads with someone meant that you had to bear the ill-will at least of his relatives. Thus, when Feliciano Zahra's wife beat Margherita's son it was not only the sharp tongue of hers that she had to endure but even of her mother, her two sisters and a brother.¹⁶⁰ The Matteis of Senglea accused Dr Gaetano Bertis of flirting with one of their wives, asking her to meet him in his garden and even sending her bouquets of flowers and doing to her other courtesies. On 17 August 1796 towards midnight, on a moonlit night Antonio Mattei, his three sons and his brother-in-law went in search of him armed with swords 'to extract his bowels'.¹⁶¹

If the elderly could be a burden on their children they could also lend them help. While the wife was away in the fields or employed at some domestic craft old women tended their daughters' offspring. References to children are very sparse but this is not because they were few. Rather the documents on which this study is based are mainly legal and largely concern adults engaged in squabbles before the courts. All the same

¹⁵⁵ In 1788 the inmates included five priests, eighteen men and twenty-six women - *CEM, SA 31*, pp. 66-67.

¹⁵⁶ *CEM, SA 31*, pp. 98-99.

¹⁵⁷ Don Francesco Wzzino, *Dottrina Cristiana*, pp. 54-55.

¹⁵⁸ *AIM, AC 509*, f. 481r.

¹⁵⁹ *AIM, AC 547*, ff. 183r-v.

¹⁶⁰ *AIM, AC 577*, ff. 27r-v.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, ff. 49r-68v.

one encounters children having their fortune read in the church square,¹⁶² teasing slaves¹⁶³ even disturbing them at their prayers,¹⁶⁴ or knocking on the window of a neighbour with their hands and a stone.¹⁶⁵ Allusions to children playing are not lacking, either. Seven-year-old Giuseppe was having a game of marbles with six-year-old Giovanni Battista when there arrived an eleven-year-old who took one of the marbles. A fight ensued in which the latter's sister boxed Giuseppe's ears and dragged him to his house. The boy started to cry and was so afraid that he dirtied his trousers with excrement and urine.¹⁶⁶ Such ill-treatment of children easily led to a fight between the respective families. On 19 April 1770 towards the first *Ave Maria* the two sons of Michele Tedesco, eleven-year-old Giovanni and thirteen-year-old Giuseppe, were near the parochial church of *città* Rohan. Giuseppe Pantalco, who had just come out of a shop, got hold of Giovanni and demanded him the 15 grani he still owed to his wife for a scarf he had bought from her on January last. The boy protested his innocence, at which the man threatened to kill him but he succeeded to escape for home. His brother was instead seized by the breast and thrown on the ground. It was then that his father, Michele, armed himself and went to defend his son, whom he found crying.¹⁶⁷

Michele is described as a master craftsman (*maestro*) though his trade is not mentioned. His sons must have helped him in his work since children who succeeded to reach boyhood were apprenticed, for instance, with a bronze-founder¹⁶⁸ or a master tailor.¹⁶⁹ Some children were put in the service of the upper classes 'since their tender age' but most, like Nicola Vella of Zurrieq,¹⁷⁰ were employed on the farm, tending the

¹⁶² AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 266r-v.

¹⁶³ AIM, AC 518, f. 260r. One Sunday afternoon while the cleric, Angelo Dalli of *casal* Ghaxaq, was near the parochial church of the village he saw a slave wearing a jacket, a red cap and linen trousers surrounded by a group of boys all shouting, 'This slave has run away! Let's tie him up!'- AIM, AC 663, f. 3r.

¹⁶⁴ P. Brydone, *A Tour Through Sicily And Malta*, p. 331.

¹⁶⁵ AIM, AC 577, f. 249r.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., ff. 29r-v.

¹⁶⁷ AIM, AC 541 (i), ff. 103r-v.

¹⁶⁸ AIM, AC 503, f. 3r.

¹⁶⁹ AIM, AC 517 (ii), f. 377r.

¹⁷⁰ AIM, AC 538, f. 214v.

sheep,¹⁷¹ ploughing,¹⁷² fetching the water from the fountain¹⁷³ or even searching for a lost pig.¹⁷⁴ Giovanni Borg carried manure for Michele Gambin of Ghajn il-Kbira. On one occasion his cart hit that of one Lorenzo which was coming in the opposite direction; he was thrown on the ground and blood issued out of his mouth.¹⁷⁵

The presence of young people is as thinly documented as that of children but incidents which refer to them do occur occasionally. One of these relates how on Sunday, 22 June 1769 towards 11 p.m., eighteen-year-old Fra Felice Bresmes went at the head of some thirty followers to the house of Rev. Fr. Paolo Zerafa, when this 78-year-old priest of Valletta was about to sleep in his one-storey house near the windmills. Amidst laughter and shouting of

'Hurrah for the Pope! Here comes the Pope! Here comes the Pope!'

the unruly crowd forced the door open. Fr Zerafa rose from his chair, took hold of a stick and hit the leader on his head.¹⁷⁶

No such incident relating to women has been found but there must have been much understanding between females. They visited each other frequently though, since they had to combine their recreation with their work, they took their spinning wheel with them. They counselled each other what to do when their child was ill or, as in the case of Maria, wife of Vincenzo del Core of Vittoriosa, how to dower their daughters.¹⁷⁷ There was much solidarity among them and when Gaetana was ill-treated by her husband, the Greek Antonio Latuc, she sought shelter at her neighbour's, Maria.¹⁷⁸ Their

¹⁷¹ AIM, AC 495, f. 144r.

¹⁷² AIM, AC 557 (ii), f. 410r.

¹⁷³ AIM, AC 547, f. 177r.

¹⁷⁴ AIM, AC 567, f. 217r.

¹⁷⁵ AIM, AC 557 (ii), ff. 416r-420r.

¹⁷⁶ AIM, Proc. 128B, ff. 635r-659v.

¹⁷⁷ AIM, Proc. 128B, f. 452r.

¹⁷⁸ AIM, Proc. 128A, f. 77r.

role even gave them opportunities to meet each other at the baker's,¹⁷⁹ the grocer's or the miller's where they took their wheat to grind.¹⁸⁰

Men had more opportunities than women for social intercourse since they spent most of their time outside the house. They met each other regularly at work,¹⁸¹ on some stone bench in the village square¹⁸² and at the *maglio* during a game of bowls. They went singing through the streets at night time but horse-races, 'performed without either saddle, bridle, whip, or spur',¹⁸³ were the most popular sport. These were held regularly during the year, on St John's,¹⁸⁴ St Roque's (16 August)¹⁸⁵ and at Mnarja, 29th June, the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul. This was one of the principal feasts of the island, which was celebrated with much pomp at the Cathedral and in which a great multitude of people both from the cities as well as from the countryside took part. Towards 10 a.m. people went to amuse themselves at Boschetto gardens where they ate, drank and danced beneath the trees, as well as watched the *gioco delle acque* at the fountain.¹⁸⁶ Another occasion for popular entertainment was Ascension Day (*Lapsi*) when the people of Zurrieq, for instance, went to Binhisa to enjoy themselves by the seaside. In 1783 they were entertained by Liberata, a woman from *casal* Lia. When they returned to the village at night she and Giovanni Baldacchino went singing through the streets to the sound of a violin or a lyre.¹⁸⁷ Carnival was another time for revelries; principally, it was held at Valletta but even in some villages some festivities were organized.¹⁸⁸

¹⁷⁹ AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 461r.

¹⁸⁰ AIM, Proc. 134B, f. 578r.

¹⁸¹ AIM, Proc. 128B, f. 762r.

¹⁸² AIM, AC 547, f. 186v.

¹⁸³ P. Brydone, *A Tour Through Sicily And Malta*, p. 337.

¹⁸⁴ AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 45r.

¹⁸⁵ AIM, AC 539 (ii), f. 304r.

¹⁸⁶ AIM, AC 538, ff. 129v, 143v-144r.

¹⁸⁷ AIM, AC 565, ff. 122v-140v.

¹⁸⁸ See the entry under Sunday, 5 Feb. 1764 in I. S. Mifsud's diary: '*Lo scrittore andò nella città Pinto a far visita al Vicario Generale e trovò che in quella città si faceva il Carnevale con gran concorso di popolo e numero grande di maschere; concorrendosi dalle quattro città e dai casali moltissimi calessi*' - NLM, Libr. 14, pp. 240-241.

It did not necessarily have to be such national festivities for people to amuse themselves. Musical evenings were organised, too and it was on one of these occasions two days before the feast of St John the Baptist that Giuseppe Zimelli with his mandolin and Claudio Debono with his violin played at the residence of Don Raimondo's chamberlain.¹⁸⁹ However, the most popular meeting-place was the tavern where men gave vent to their passions and whims. It was in one of these *bettole* that on 7 May 1769 Lorenzo Fenech of *casal* Balzan found himself after vespers where there was even present Francesco Cortis of the neighbouring village of Lia. After having drunk a *mezzo quartuccio* of wine the latter started swearing and boasting that he was a wizard like his nephew and his dog.¹⁹⁰ People exchanged their ideas in shops where the gossip of the town or village was revealed and any subject discussed.¹⁹¹ It could be a barber's,¹⁹² a carpenter's¹⁹³ or a tinsmith's¹⁹⁴ while the pharmacy of the Holy Infirmary was the meeting place of doctors, surgeons, merchants, priests and men of letters.¹⁹⁵ In May 1779 Rev. canon Giuseppe Preziosi happened to be in the shop of Aloisio the blacksmith, appropriately called *il nero* (the black one). Discussion centred on the miseries which were then afflicting the island. The canon suggested that this was only a reflection of what was happening all over the world and was caused by men's sins. Signor Paolo Ignazio Gauci agreed that hardship was prevalent but insisted that the Government of Rome was the villain of the piece. Michele, the baker, who lived in main street, Senglea 'not much distant from the fleur-de-lys' participated in a discussion in the churchyard. The conversation, in which participated several other people including some sailors, was about an incident which had happened recently when a man violated a girl

¹⁸⁹ AIM, Proc. 128B, ff. 627r-v.

¹⁹⁰ AIM, Proc. 128B, ff. 627r-v.

¹⁹¹ On this topic see John Martin, Venice's Hidden Enemies : Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City, pp. 89-95.

¹⁹² AIM, Proc. 131A, f. 11r.

¹⁹³ AIM, AC 565, f. 166v.

¹⁹⁴ It was here that one morning on 15 Oct. 1672 Giuseppe, the Sicilian, told those present that in Messina on the feast day of St Luke merchants made the sign of the horn with their hands because they believed that the saint was a cuckold - AIM, Proc. 77B, f. 320r.

¹⁹⁵ AIM, Proc. 131B, ff. 788v, 790r.

of minor age. He asserted that for their atrocity God did not, nor could he, pardon them. When he was warned that this proposition was heretical he replied:

*'You modern theologians! Then one can commit any sin
with the hope of obtaining pardon from God!'.¹⁹⁶*

If the documents are silent about the village idiot the village bully on the contrary was very much in the forefront. The three brothers of *tal-habsi* (the prisoner's sons) of *città Rohan* were quarrelsome and vindictive. One who experienced their cruelty was Felice Chetcuti from the same town; he was robbed of his money and given such a beating that he had to stay indoors for three days. At Zurrieq the Baldacchinos held the inhabitants at their mercy;¹⁹⁷ at Qrendi Francesco Muscat *ir-Roman* (the Roman) threw stones at people's houses but the villagers were so afraid of him that they did not dare to report him.¹⁹⁸ Physical assaults must have been frequent since they constituted 31.3 per cent of all cases dealt by the Tribunal of the Inquisition between 1750 and 1798.¹⁹⁹ An antagonist could be hit with two iron bars,²⁰⁰ a *stanga*,²⁰¹ or a bamboo stick.²⁰² Others were pelted with stones,²⁰³ punched on the breast,²⁰⁴ had a knife pointed at their neck²⁰⁵ and an axe thrown at them.²⁰⁶ When Teresa Longo, the 41-year-old widow of Tomaso of Rabat, Malta, cited her former fiancé, Lorenzo Cutajar *ta' Bejbet* (Bejbet's son) to restore to her 29 scudi and 10 tari besides three golden rings, a white sash and a rosary she fared very badly. One afternoon, at about 2.30 p.m., on 28 May 1769, as she was

¹⁹⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 120C, f. 1457r.

¹⁹⁷ *AIM, AC* 557 (ii), ff. 408r-415v; *AIM, AC* 561, ff. 308r-323v; *AIM, AC* 563, ff. 179r-186v.

¹⁹⁸ *AIM, AC* 567, ff. 210r-211v.

¹⁹⁹ Calculated from data in *AIM, AC* 488-577.

²⁰⁰ *AIM, AC* 499, f. 220r.

²⁰¹ *AIM, AC* 547, ff. 187r.

²⁰² *AIM, AC* 509, ff. 479r-v.

²⁰³ *AIM, AC* 553 (ii), ff. 375r-386v.

²⁰⁴ *AIM, AC* 539 (ii), ff. 302r-303v.

²⁰⁵ *AIM, AC* 541 (i), ff. 146r-152v.

²⁰⁶ *AIM, AC* 505, f. 452r.

returning from Valletta she met him at Rabat near the hanging site coming on a donkey. He took her by the plaits and started banging her head against the wall; he hit her in the face and kicked her all over the body.²⁰⁷

In the case of Giovanni di Lorenzo, a marshal of the Inquisition, swords were drawn. On 26 March 1754, a little after the second *Ave Maria*, he was in the shop of Antonio Bugeja in the square of Vittoriosa. He was summoned by Giuseppe Castagna who, calling him a vile coward, cautioned him not to greet his wife whenever he met her. Raising his voice he warned him that he was much more of a man than he; and following him into the shop he drew his sword from beneath his overcoat.²⁰⁸ Giovanni was not touched but in another incident Francesco Pizzuto had his jacket torn in two.²⁰⁹ Antonio Azzupardo of Siggiewi fared even worse. He had his new linen shirt, which had cost him 3 scudi and 6 tari, pulled apart; and in the scuffle with Michele Gambin he even lost a new dark blue cap valued at 20 tari.²¹⁰ Carlo Magri of Naxxar, however, and Giuseppe Chetcuti *tal-biccier* (the butcher's son) did not come to blows. The latter called the other a scoundrel and an assassin when he was reproached for having thrown a stone at his dog.²¹¹ Such verbal quarrels amounted to 15.4 per cent of all cases in the Inquisition Tribunal. The commonest words used against men included *gifa* (coward),²¹² *buonavoglia* (voluntary rower on the galleys),²¹³ pig,²¹⁴ *briccone* (knave), *ruffiano* (pimp), fool, ignorant, vile, Jew, thief,²¹⁵ liar, bankrupt and donkey,²¹⁶ dying of hunger,²¹⁷ and *cornuto* or *becco futtuto* (cuckold)²¹⁸. Women were addressed as

²⁰⁷ AIM, AC 539 (ii), ff. 329r-360v.

²⁰⁸ AIM, AC 502, ff. 393r-395v.

²⁰⁹ AIM, AC 492, f. 71r.

²¹⁰ AIM, AC 566, ff. 245r-250v.

²¹¹ AIM, AC 576, ff. 108r-v.

²¹² AIM, AC 563, f. 1r.

²¹³ AIM, AC 541 (i), ff. 132v-133r.

²¹⁴ AIM, AC 502, f. 371v.

²¹⁵ AIM, AC 545 (ii), f. 360r.

²¹⁶ AIM, AC 577, f. 249v.

²¹⁷ AIM, AC 541 (i), f. 133r.

²¹⁸ AIM, AC 505, f. 452r.

vecchiona (old)²¹⁹ mad (*pazza*),²²⁰ stinging (*puzzolente*),²²¹ pig-sty (*mandra*),²²² dung (*merda*),²²³ procuress,²²⁴ flirt (*fraschetta*)²²⁵ and especially as a whore (*puttana*).²²⁶ The singing of obscene songs was another form of verbal insult. So did a group of young men one evening behind the door of Ubaldesca, wife of Arcangelo Bugeja, who was away at the time. They asked her to let them in and enjoy her as they had once did. But it was not necessarily a woman who was abused in such a way; one Saturday night, towards 11 p.m., five men in a boat sang under the window of the house of Giovanni di Lorenzo. Sometimes these insults ended in such threats as '*I will kill you even if I were to be hanged*'. The priest, Fr Salvatore Muscat of *casal* Qormi, not only blasphemed at Pietro Debono and threatened him that some day he would eat his liver but he continued

- *'If I had a pistol I would shoot at your breast!'*

Nicola Mallia of Zebbug would have liked to divide in two the cleric Nicola Gambim;²²⁷ others threatened to drink the blood of their opponents²²⁸ or to disfigure their face.²²⁹

Insults were not necessarily verbal. On Wednesday night, 24 May 1753, someone pelted with stones the door of the parish priest of Cospicua, Rev. Giovanni Battista Crispo, and - 'a symbolic violation of his domestic space'²³⁰ - stuck to it a libel with the words

²¹⁹ *AIM, Proc. 577, f. 27v.*

²²⁰ *AIM, AC 577, f. 241v.*

²²¹ *Ibid., f. 242r.*

²²² *Ibid. 577, f. 242r.*

²²³ *AIM, AC 541 (i), f. 132r.*

²²⁴ *Ibid., f. 242r.*

²²⁵ *Ibid., f. 27v.*

²²⁶ *AIM, AC 563, f. 1r.*

²²⁷ *AIM, AC 536, ff. 234r-239v.*

²²⁸ *AIM, AC 561, f. 324v.*

²²⁹ *AIM, AC 563, f. 15v.*

²³⁰ Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy*, p. 99.

*'Miserly parish priest, you either change your life or else we send you to the devils!'*²³¹

Insulting gestures, which included the lifting of the skirt²³², spitting in one's face,²³³ the making of horns with the fingers²³⁴ and the throwing of human excrement behind someone's door,²³⁵ were not less frequent forms of insults. Pietro Magro threw a vase of urine from his balcony right in front of the house of Francesco Bugeja. He repeated this action some days later but now the material was thrown at the door.²³⁶ When Fr Giuseppe Grech of Senglea moved house the owner gathered all the rubbish his tenant had left behind and sent it to him by a porter.²³⁷

This incident was witnessed by no one and therefore it lacked one important element which characterized such occasions, the presence of by-standers, a crowd being an essential ingredient of such brawls. People went to see a fight and it is only rarely that there is no reference to 'a great quantity of people'. These spectators played an important part in what was going on. Primarily they amused themselves since the actors were - as the Maltese expression has it - '*idahhku n-nies bihom*' (making fun of themselves). But the onlookers also saw to it that matters did not generate into a real fight.²³⁸ Descriptions of such brawls give the impression that the antagonists were acting a part and were only repeating what Peter Burke calls 'a ritualized sequence of words and gestures'.²³⁹ The drama could start by hurling insults in front of your enemy's door²⁴⁰ or going up and down the street with the gun and ammunition bag on your shoulder.²⁴¹ During the performance the aggressor often used expressions like

²³¹ *NLM, Libr. 11*, p. 239.

²³² *AIM, AC 577*, f. 28r.

²³³ *AIM, Proc. 125C*, f. 1036v.

²³⁴ '*... la viddi anche in atto che alzando due dita delle mani e formandone due corna mi disse = prendete = ...*' - *AIM, AC 541(i)*, f. 132v. For another example see *AIM, AC 511*, ff. 214r-v.

²³⁵ *AIM, AC 577*, f. 249r.

²³⁶ *AIM, AC 505*, f. 452r.

²³⁷ *AIM, AC 577*, ff. 239r-240v.

²³⁸ '*... sopravvenne la gente che ci divide*' - *AIM, AC 505*, f. 470v.

²³⁹ Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Europe*, p. 11.

²⁴⁰ *AIM, AC 563*, f. 1r.

²⁴¹ *AIM, AC 577*, f. 49v.

'zommini' (hold me) and not infrequently he is called 'xeni' (scenes) for the theatricals he makes. The *buonavoglia*, Pasquale Cilia, even took off his clothes and stark naked as he was started making much noise.²⁴²

In Malta political power was firmly in the hands of the Hospitallers. On their arrival in 1530 they replaced the self-governing Maltese commune²⁴³ by their own theocracy and from then onwards the inhabitants had no say at all in the government of their country. The new masters had only arrogance for the people in general and such highly placed personage as the *Depositario* of the Holy Office risked seeing his home violated by a knight and a company of soldiers if he refused to give a mattress for the use of some soldiers who had just arrived in Malta.²⁴⁴ A parish priest would be warned lest he reported them to the Holy Office for eating meat on prohibited days.²⁴⁵ Not even holy places were immune from their insolences. On Sunday, 11 September 1757, two knights entered the church of Zabbar and stayed seated even though they were asked by the Inquisitor's chaplain to kneel down during the elevation of the Host.²⁴⁶ If such was their attitude towards respectable people the way they treated the lower classes must have been downright cynical. Daughters were prostituted to their wishes²⁴⁷ and a husband would be exiled so that a knight would enjoy his wife with impunity.²⁴⁸

For this reason it is safe to say that Maltese society was a 'one-class society'. This does not mean at all that it was homogeneous and that the inhabitants lived in an idyllic state of equality. On the contrary they were acutely divided by a system of status, which consisted in how much respect people could earn from their fellowmen. A title, for

²⁴² AIM, AC 505, ff. 470r-v.

²⁴³ On municipal government before the knights, Charles Dalli, 'Medieval Communal Organization in an Insular Context: Approaching the Maltese Universitas', *The Making and Unmaking of the Maltese Universitas*, J. Manduca, ed., pp. 1-12.

²⁴⁴ AIM, Proc. 170, case 12.

²⁴⁵ AIM, Proc. 131B, ff. 696r-v.

²⁴⁶ AIM, AC 510, ff. 144r-157v.

²⁴⁷ F. Panzavecchia, *L'Ultimo Periodo della Storia di Malta Sotto il Governo dell'Ordine Gerosolimitano*, p. 43.

²⁴⁸ P.J.L.O. Doublet, *Mémoires Historiques sur l'Invasion et l'occupation de Malte par une Armée Française en 1798*, p. 5.

instance, was earnestly sought both from the Grand Masters and from European powers. This was especially true in the eighteenth century when out of the thirty-six titles of nobility conferred by the Order in its stay in Malta twenty-nine of them - or 80.6 per cent - were issued during this period.²⁴⁹ A title conferred a mark of distinction which made you different from others and no expenses were to be spared to gain one. This is clearly seen in the case of Giovanni de Piro, who paid 572,000 maravedis to gain the title of Marquis from Philip V of Spain.²⁵⁰ He was not the first Maltese Marquis, however, which honour belonged to Mario Testaferrata who had been given that title by the same king in 1716. De Piro was thus not content with this one title either and obtained a second one from Victor Amadeus of Sardegnia; he even made it a point to remark that in Spain, unlike in Malta, such a title was superior to that of Baron.²⁵¹

The nobility stood at the top of the social hierarchy. They further enhanced their standing by their alliance with the ruling élites with whom they dined and went hunting.²⁵² At the theatre they stayed in the same box with the knights²⁵³ and Baron D'Amico even had his son baptised in the Grand Master's palace.²⁵⁴ Their relations with the Inquisitor, most of whom were his patentees, were as strong. Inquisitors stood as godfathers to their offspring²⁵⁵ and marriages were celebrated in their chapel.²⁵⁶ These privileged people married within their own circle;²⁵⁷ they were so exclusive that they could disinherit a son who ignored such a strict rule²⁵⁸ and not even the daughter of

²⁴⁹ Calculated from data in John Montalto, The Nobles of Malta, Table 3, pp. 32-33. The percentage for titles issued in this same span of time by European sovereigns was only a bit less, ten out of thirteen, that is 76.9 per cent - *ibid.* Table 4, p. 41.

²⁵⁰ *NLM, Arch.* 547, f. 167r. *NLM, Arch.* 627, unnumbered.

²⁵¹ John Montalto, The Nobles of Malta, p. 45.

²⁵² *NLM, Libr.* 12, pp. 224-225.

²⁵³ This was the case of *Signor* Giovanni Francesco Dorell who attended Goldoni's Padre di Famiglia put on stage by Sicilian actors, when he was in the same box as the Hospitaller de Pennes - *AIM, Proc.* 124C, ff. 1479r-v.

²⁵⁴ *NLM, Libr.* 14, p. 439.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 317r.

²⁵⁶ *NLM, Libr.* 367, ff. 41v-42r.

²⁵⁷ John Montalto, The Nobles of Malta, p. 234.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

auditor Fabrizio Grech was considered a worthy match for Count Nicola Perdicomati Bologna.²⁵⁹

Besides their residences at Mdina and Valletta nobles had their summer residences throughout the island, especially at the three villages of Attard, Balzan and Lia. Such buildings as Casa de Piro, Villa Bologna and Villa Preziosi with their extensive grounds and gardens all made the simple folk conscious of their inferiority. They also overawed the *campagnoli* with their wigs²⁶⁰ and clothes, their Italian language which for them was *lingua materna* (maternal tongue)²⁶¹ rather than the vernacular, their carriages²⁶² and their servants, their wealth and extravagance. What further distinguished them from the lower classes was the leisure that they could enjoy. They invited each other to supper,²⁶³ while one of their favourite activities was the *sentuta*, when they assembled in one of their houses for a game of cards,²⁶⁴ sipping chocolate with some water.²⁶⁵ For them the afternoon was a time for rest; and *Signor* Paolo Asciach, the Inquisitor's Procurator, protested that it was improper for 'a civil person' like him to be disturbed at about 1 p.m.²⁶⁶

As has been shown for some Italian dioceses²⁶⁷ the upper echelons of the Maltese clergy belonged to the nobility so that during the period under review nearly all the archdeacons of the Cathedral were members of noble families.²⁶⁸ But even without

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

²⁶⁰ *AIM*, AC 509, f. 486v.

²⁶¹ Francesco Saverio Farrugia, *Discorsi Accademici*, pp. 7-10.

²⁶² *AIM*, AC 539 (ii), f. 330r.

²⁶³ *AIM*, Proc. 131A, f. 273r.

²⁶⁴ *NLM*, Libr. 1202, p. 9. See also A. Macckenzie-Grieve, 'A Window on 18th. century Malta', *Sunday Times of Malta*, 8 April 1956, p. 5.

²⁶⁵ *AIM*, AC 547, f. 211v.

²⁶⁶ *AIM*, AC 571, f. 211v.

²⁶⁷ Aldo Landi, 'La Diocesi di Luni-Sarzana nella Seconda Metà del Cinquecento', *Nuova Rivista Storica*, Anno LIX (Sept-Dec. 1975), pp. 590-591.

²⁶⁸ J. Montalto, *The Nobles of Malta*, p. 136.

such valuable connections the clergy as a social entity enjoyed immense prestige among the population. They were not only the intermediaries between the people and the supernatural; they were also involved in the daily lives of the people as well. The parish priest registered baptisms, marriages and burials. Midwives had to have a certificate from him regarding their morals;²⁶⁹ and those Maltese who received any financial relief from the Order had to be recommended by him.²⁷⁰ He distributed alms,²⁷¹ acted as notary²⁷² and his advice was earnestly sought.²⁷³ He conducted censuses²⁷⁴ and, as in 1708, he registered men for the militia.²⁷⁵ He taught the village children,²⁷⁶ brought to his parishioners' notice that some piece of land was to be given on lease²⁷⁷ and read out to them any letters which they received.²⁷⁸ These last two cases are excellent examples of how the clergy fulfilled an important role in communication; being literate they were the only link the ordinary people had with the outside world.

Other notables in the village could include *il Signor Dottore*,²⁷⁹ *il Signor Giurato*,²⁸⁰ *il Signor Giudice*,²⁸¹ *il Signor Magnifico* (the notary).²⁸² This is how the parish priest of Birkirkara took pains to describe an aromatory's household²⁸³ -

²⁶⁹ CEM, AO 693, f. 115v.

²⁷⁰ AAM, Corr. X11, p. 175.

²⁷¹ NLM, Libr. 22, f. 129r.

²⁷² PA (Gargur), Lib. Bapt., Def., Matr. 1, ff. 94r-106r.

²⁷³ AIM, Proc. 135B, f. 607v.

²⁷⁴ AAM, Edicta Labini, vol. X11, f. 93r.

²⁷⁵ S. Fiorini, 'Status Animarum : A Unique Source for 17th and 18th Century Maltese Demography', *Melita Historica*, vol. VII, no. 4 (1983), p. 330.

²⁷⁶ AAM, Suppliche 4, ff. 83v-84r.

²⁷⁷ AIM, RAC C8, ff. 91r-v.

²⁷⁸ AIM, Proc. 130, f. 391v.

²⁷⁹ CEM, SA 3, no. 6 (Mqabba, 1767), f. 5v.

²⁸⁰ AIM, AC 515, f. 280r.

²⁸¹ AIM, AC 527, f. 2r.

²⁸² CEM, SA 13, no 9 (Siggiewi, 1792), p. 24.

²⁸³ CEM, SA 21, no. 1 (B'Kara, 1788), p. 11.

Il Signor Aromatorio Paulo Zammit.

La Signora Anna, moglie.

Il Signor Salvatore, figlio.

La Signora Graziella, figlia.

La Signora Vincenza, figlia.

The word *Signor/a* was the title which divided the privileged from the nobodies. It also brings to mind the difficulty we experience today to understand the meaning of such status symbols which no longer convey the meaning they once did. They are empty titles now, when formerly they were clearly intelligible and of actual value. To be important you had to have that magical prefix. It distinguished you from the other ordinary mortals, who took off their caps to you²⁸⁴ as you went with a stick in your hand²⁸⁵ or, as in the case of Dr Vincenzo Galli,²⁸⁶ a sword even.²⁸⁷ Such carriers of titles constituted only a tiny minority of the population. The only exception was Mdina, but this is no surprise at all, the old capital being the official residence of the bishop and the nobility had always lived there. In 1785, for instance, out of a population of 368 there were 118 titled persons, or 32.1 per cent. This did not include the sixty inmates at the seminary who, with the exception of Antonio Petrozella, the cook, who had only his name and surname to show, were all *Signori*.²⁸⁸ On the contrary at Siggiewi in 1792 only nine were distinguished by this title, excluding the clergy.²⁸⁹

These held the lower classes in contempt and referred to them as '*uomo di berretta*'²⁹⁰ unworthy, as Fr Damiano Pullicino put it, referring to a servant, to put off their master's shoes.²⁹¹ When the notary Gaetano Spiteri had a law suit with Orsola Attard the court ordered the confiscation of the woman's household goods. They were to be kept by her son *iz-zizzu*, a calesse-driver, but *Signor* Spiteri objected to the

²⁸⁴ AIM, AC 496, f. 300r.

²⁸⁵ AIM, AC 515, f. 263v.

²⁸⁶ AIM, AC 514, f. 445v.

²⁸⁷ AIM, AC 543, f. 242v.

²⁸⁸ CEM, SA 19, no. 5 (Rabat and Mdina, 1785).

²⁸⁹ Calculated from data in CEM, AO 13, no. 9.

²⁹⁰ AIM, AO 510, f. 18r.

²⁹¹ AIM, AC 537, f. 59r.

Table 1.4 Titled Persons at Mdina in 1785

Title	No.
Signora	34
Signor	29
Rev. Sigr. Canco.	22
Sigr. Don.	20
Sigr. Dottor	3
Illo. e Rmo. Mons. Vesco.	1
Revo. Sigr. Arciprete	1
Sigr. Avvocato	1
Sigra. Baronessa	1
Sigr. Barone	1
Sigr. Chierico	1
Sigra. Contessa	1
Sigr. Conte	1
Sigr. Dottor	1
Sigra. Marchesa	1
Sigr. Marchese	1

nomination of '*un'uomo vile*'.²⁹² This disdain did not mean that there was open conflict between the two groups because to preserve their own importance and maintain the *status quo* the élites had to keep their inferiors quiet, which was done particularly by charity and employment.²⁹³ In their turn, in the insecure world of the village community, the commoners had to accept a personal relation of dependence and heed the warnings of the Maltese proverb 'not to dilute the fountain you want to drink from' - (*iddardarx l-ghajn li trid tixrob minnha*). The workings of this relationship is well illustrated by the case of Antonio Dimech, the servant of *Signor* Barone Pietro Paolo Testaferrata, who even let him sleep in his coach-house. As a sign of gratitude Antonio sought out a slave to make the mare of the Baron take first prize in the races; and when this first

²⁹² AIM, AC 551 (i), ff. 274r-v.

²⁹³ For such master-client relationships see Alain Morel, 'Power and Ideology in the Village Community of Picardy : Past and Present', *Rural Society in France*, Robert Forster and Ørest Ranum, eds., pp. 107-125.

experiment which had cost 10 scudi - no mean sum for such a miserable nonentity who had no home of his own - failed, he even asked the services of another Turk.²⁹⁴

Many of the common folk did not question such paternalistic patronage. Resentment, however, did flair up sometimes in moments of tension. Emanuele Maxta was a thirty-five-year-old purser on board the ships of the Order. On Friday September 1771 at 5.30 in the evening, as he entered Valletta, he was asked by a boy for the house of judge Lafebbre. Near the *ferreria* (iron foundery) he saw Raffaele Farrugia, a calesse-driver, whom he asked -

'Suffarell, would you show this young man where the judge Lafebbre lives?'

At these words Raffaele retorted angrily -

'Who are you to order me about and call me squib? Do you think that because you wear a wig and a hat you are superior to me? Imbroglione!'

He kept repeating this proposition time and time again, and he even tried to hurl himself upon him.²⁹⁵ This is not an isolated instance of protest from below. The sailor Carlo Inglott reminded *Signor* Filippo Camilleri of Senglea that he should remember that only recently had he joined the rank of the respectable.²⁹⁶ Still, Felice Duranti could tell *Signor* Dottore Delia to his face that he was afraid neither of him nor of a hundred such like;²⁹⁷ and the servant, Rosa Bonomo, told her mistress, *Domina* Maria Giglio, the wife of the Inquisitor's Captain, that her ancestors had been *sbirri* (soldiers) while she herself had been born of a better station than she.²⁹⁸

Status, however, was not invariably tied to a title and some of the nobodies did succeed after all to enjoy some consequence in the village community. As members of some lay confraternity,²⁹⁹ they had the right to vote for the local church's procurators,³⁰⁰

²⁹⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, ff. 45r-47v.

²⁹⁵ *AIM, AC* 543, ff. 242r-v.

²⁹⁶ *AIM, AC* 499, ff. 214r-v.

²⁹⁷ *AIM, AC* 511, f. 193v.

²⁹⁸ *AIM, AC*, ff. 152r-v, 155v.

²⁹⁹ *AIM, AC* 546, f. 84r.

³⁰⁰ *AIM, RAC* C3, f. 318v.

or hold one of the poles of the canopy (*baldacchino*) in a procession³⁰¹ - but the importance they enjoyed was localized and parochial. Status among the common people was the result of many factors. Connection was one of them, and examples exist of making a doctor³⁰² or some other grandee carrying the title of *Illustrissimus Dominus*³⁰³ stand as witness to one's marriage. Wealth was another but occupation was the most obvious cause. The word *maestro* must have carried some weight because such master craftsmen could stand as jurats or aldermen,³⁰⁴ be procurators of confraternities³⁰⁵ and the parish priests made it a point to mention them all by name in the lists they made of the inhabitants. In 1791 they totalled eight at *casal* Luqa³⁰⁶ and nine at Siggiewi the following year.³⁰⁷

The *gabellotto* or tenant-farmer denoted the occupation of most of the Maltese. But there were great variations between those, for instance, who rented Ghajn il-Kbira for 1000 scudi a year and those who had to supplement their incomes from other jobs. Such land tillers were known for their indefatigable industry in cultivating the ground and making it fruitful. 'They break it into very little plots' - reported one Inquisitor -

'to produce any kind of crop. It is admirable how they endure the fatigue, always barefoot under a baking sun and sustained only by bread, barley and water'.

Other Maltese were employed with individual knights as cab-drivers,³⁰⁸ sedan chair carriers³⁰⁹ and, especially, as servants³¹⁰ - if they were not dismissed for drunkenness³¹¹ or after a silver spoon or fork was found missing.³¹² Some, like

³⁰¹ AIM, AC 508, f. 143r.

³⁰² PA (Vittoriosa), *Lib. Matr.*, vol. 1V, f. 26r.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, ff. 26v, 34r.

³⁰⁴ CEM, SA 11 (Mqabba, 1790), p. 4.

³⁰⁵ AAM, *Registrum Supplicationum*, vol. X1, f. 322r.

³⁰⁶ Calculated from data in CEM, SA 12, no 5 (Luqa, 1791).

³⁰⁷ Calculated from data in CEM, SA 13, no. 9 (Siggiewi, 1792).

³⁰⁸ AIM, *Proc.* 135B, f. 514r.

³⁰⁹ AIM, *Proc.* 130, f. 183r.

³¹⁰ See, for instance, *ibid.*, f. 171r.; AIM, *Proc.* 131A, f. 283r. and AIM, *Proc.* 133C, f. 942v.

³¹¹ AIM, *Proc.* 134B, f. 635r.

Michel' Angelo Vella of Valletta, who was in the service of *Signor Cavaliere* Grifone, captain of the galley *San Luigi*,³¹³ served their masters on board ships; others even accompanied them abroad to Syracuse,³¹⁴ Calabria³¹⁵ and Valenzia.³¹⁶ It was, however, with the Government that many found work. They were employed as shipwrights at the dockyard,³¹⁷ guards at the powder-magazine,³¹⁸ nurses³¹⁹ and pharmacists at the *Infermeria* and at the Hospital for Women in Valletta,³²⁰ clerks at the Magistral Palace,³²¹ gardeners at San Anton,³²² *algozini* at the slave prison, archivists at the law courts,³²³ *sbirri*,³²⁴ captains of the Gates of Valletta.³²⁵ All the same the Order's navy engaged most of the Maltese. This is clearly borne out by the statements made in the period 1750-1753 by those who applied for a marriage licence, two hundred and twenty-two in all. As Table 1.5 shows more than two-thirds of them, or 82.0 per cent, were sailors and soldiers but there was even a sprinkling of cabin-boys, voluntary rowers, apprentice-boys, port wardens, pilots, mates, drummers and barber surgeons.³²⁶

³¹² *Ibid.*, ff. 672r-v.

³¹³ *CEM*, AO 779, f. 385r.

³¹⁴ *CEM*, AO 784, f. 46r.

³¹⁵ *CEM*, AO 783, f. 69r.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 86r.

³¹⁷ *AIM*, Proc. 134A, f. 257r. For the Order's dockyard see the article by Joseph Muscat, 'The Arsenal: 1530-1798', *Birgu: A Maltese Maritime City*, Lino Bugeja, Mario Buhagiar, Stanley Fiorini, eds., vol. 1, pp. 257-325.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 281r.

³¹⁹ *AIM*, Proc. 134A, f. 275r.; *AIM*, Proc. 134B, f. 623r.

³²⁰ *AIM*, Proc. 135B, f. 453v.

³²¹ *AIM*, Proc. 131B, f. 771v.

³²² *AIM*, Proc. 133A, ff. 110r. - 112r.

³²³ *AIM*, Proc. 135B, f. 526v.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 491r.

³²⁵ *AIM*, Proc. 134B, f. 899r.

³²⁶ As it was to be expected the maritime cities supplied just half of the applicants though there was hardly a place which is not mentioned, those missing being only Balzan, Dingli, Gudja, Safi and Tarxien.

Table 1.5 Maltese Employed with Order's Navy, 1750-1753

	SAILORS	SOLDIERS	CABIN-BOYS	ROWERS	APPRENTICE BOYS	PORT WARDENS	CLERKS	PILOTS	DRUMMERS	BARBER-SURGEONS	OTHERS	TOTAL
Attard	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
B'Kara	15	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	19
Cospicua	11	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Floriana	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Charghur	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ghaxaq	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Kirkop	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Lija	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Luga	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Mdina	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Mosta	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Mgabbra	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Naxxar	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Qormi	9	5	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Qrendi	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Rabat	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Senglea	12	-	1	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	1	18
Sigglewi	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Valletta	26	8	-	2	2	5	3	1	2	2	1	52
Vittoriosa	23	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	26
Zabbar	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3
Zebbug	6	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Zejtun	12	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
Zurrieq	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
TOTAL	139	43	8	6	7	5	3	2	2	2	6	223

By the eighteenth century a strong commercial class had come into being.³²⁷ Cospicua, noted the eighteenth-century erudite De Soldanis, was '*popolatissima, particolarmente di persone che hanno negozi marittimi*'.³²⁸ During the period 1750-1760 a total of 307 *literae patentes* were issued to masters of sea-craft to travel to the 'four parts of the world'.³²⁹ But what really establishes the presence of a strong commercial class is that out of the 3251 applications for a marriage licence filed at the Bishop's Curia between 1750 and 1798 by men who had been abroad five hundred and forty-six, or 16.8 per cent, concerned merchants.³³⁰ Two-thirds of them - or 67.3 per cent - came from the maritime cities but while most villages are either not represented at all or else very poorly so Zejtun with ninety two cases comes just after Cospicua and Senglea.³³¹ These merchants were to be found all over Europe. In France they enjoyed double nationality³³² but Spain was by far the country most of them resorted to.³³³ They settled at Barcellona,³³⁴ Valenzia³³⁵ and, on the testimony of Stefano Freri,³³⁶ especially at Cadiz.³³⁷

³²⁷ For trade in general see Carmel Vassallo, 'Trade in 18th century Malta', The Sunday Times (Malta), June 12/19, 1994.

³²⁸ *NLM, Libr.* 143 (i), f. 65r.

³²⁹ Calculated from data in *NLM, Arch.* 554-564.

³³⁰ Calculated from data in *CEM, AO* 779-836.

³³¹ See Table 1.5.

³³² Alain Blondy, 'La France et Malte au XVIII^e Siècle: Le Problème de la Double Nationalité', Malta: A Case Study in International Cross-Currents, Stanley Fiorini and Victor Mallia-Milanes, eds., pp. 175-186. Jacques Godechot, Histoire de Malte, p. 54.

³³³ Carmel Vassallo, 'The Maltese as Catalysts of Economic Change in Spain', The Sunday Times (Malta), 25 June 1989, p. 20.

³³⁴ Carmel Vassallo, 'The Maltese Merchant Colony in Eighteenth-Century Barcellona', paper given at the Congrés Historia Moderna Historia en Constipuccio, 14-16 Nov. 1996.

³³⁵ Carmel Vassallo, 'The Maltese in 18th Century Valencia' ('Los Malteses en la Valencia del Siglo XVIII') - Actas Primer Coloquio Internacional Hispano Maltes de Historia, pp. 65-79.

³³⁶ *CEM, AO* 779, f. 45r.

³³⁷ Francisco Malia Sanchez, 'Tradition and History of Pablo Malia 'El Maltes'', photocopy of the book kindly sent to me by the author.

We can follow these merchants on their way out to Milazzo, Stromboli, Procida, d'Anzo³³⁸ as well as on their return on the *speronare*, the rowers, as one visitor put it, pushing the oars 'like the Venetian gondoliers, always fronting the prow of the boat, and seldom or never sit down while they row; allowing the whole weight of their bodies to be exerted with every stroke of the oar'.³³⁹ Usually, however, no mention is made of the type of work they did abroad. The crew and master of the brigantine *Crocefisso e Santa Caterina* transported their 'goods and merchandise' to the customs at Civitavecchia and then stayed at the inn *La Falcone*.³⁴⁰ Other vague references allude to '*bottega che teneva di negozio*',³⁴¹ '*mi portai per negozio*',³⁴² '*vendere le mie merci*',³⁴³ '*nella bottega ove negoziavamo*'³⁴⁴, '*prese bottega*'.³⁴⁵ However, Gio. Andrea Debono was distillor of *acque ardenti* at Almeida in Lisbon. There also lived Matteo Grech, a street-vendor,³⁴⁶ while Giorgio Azzarello was a merchant draper at Marseilles. There is much more evidence about the wares that these merchants imported into Malta, especially from Sicily, which provided ricotta³⁴⁷, milk³⁴⁸ and cheese³⁴⁹ but it could also be oil from Roccella³⁵⁰ and Calabria, wine from the Scoglietti³⁵¹ and Vittoria;³⁵² wheat from

³³⁸ AIM, Proc. 112B, f. 452r.

³³⁹ P. Brydone, *A Tour Through Sicily And Malta*, pp. 287-288.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, ff. 448r-v.

³⁴¹ CEM, AO 810, f. 238r.

³⁴² CEM, AO 779, f. 28r.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, f. 389r.

³⁴⁴ CEM, AO

³⁴⁵ CEM, AO 820, f. 327r.

³⁴⁶ CEM, AO 782, f. 68r.

³⁴⁷ CEM, AO 794, f. 40r.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 58r.

³⁴⁹ CEM, AO 795, f. 428r.

³⁵⁰ CEM, AO 782, f. 34v.

³⁵¹ CEM, AO 784, f. 131r.

³⁵² CEM, AO 809, f. 104r.

Girgenti³⁵³ and Licata;³⁵⁴ tunny-fish from the fishing-grounds of Capo Passero³⁵⁵ and Marsamemi;³⁵⁶ animals from Modica,³⁵⁷ coal from Syracuse;³⁵⁸ and snow from Catania.³⁵⁹ However, the most important item was specie. Several Maltese left the island with considerable sums of money belonging to many individuals '*ad effetto di negoziarli nel viaggio ... per Marseglia, Barcellona, ed Allicanti*'.³⁶⁰

Some, like Antonio Bontempo of Cospicua, stayed away from Malta for as long as seven years. Here they became regular residents, feeling much at home in their country of adoption. One of these was Gio. Battista Attard of Senglea, who resided at Barcellona. He frequented the house of Giuseppe Gomes and was on so an intimate relationship with him that he betrothed his daughter to his son Nicola Antonio. Giuseppe Mallia of Cospicua, who had a shop at Girgenti, divided his time between here and his country of origin, staying six months in each place. These Maltese helped each other start some business,³⁶¹ visited each other when sick in hospital, gave each other shelter on their way to some other place³⁶² and not infrequently they even formed a trading company together.

Some of these merchants never returned to Malta., Giovanni Battista Gatt of Vittoriosa being murdered in his shop at Marseilles. There are references, in fact,

³⁵³ CEM, AO 807, f. 28r.

³⁵⁴ CEM, AO 787, f. 307v.

³⁵⁵ CEM, AO 796, f. 18r.

³⁵⁶ CEM, AO 788, f.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, ff. 194r-195v.

³⁵⁸ CEM, AO 790, f. 254r.

³⁵⁹ CEM, AO 807, f. 224r.

³⁶⁰ It was to these places that on 28 April 1766 Francesco di Lorenzo of Zurrieq bound himself before notary Filippo Amato to go after receiving 100 scudi from Fr Saverio Said, 100 scudi from the widow Teresa Farrugia, 100 scudi from *Signor* Giuseppe Bonanno, and 50 scudi from Fr Giuseppe Scerri all of Zebbug - NAV, R21/10 (Filippo Amato), ff. 390r-391r. See also Louis de Boisgelain, Ancient and Modern Malta, p. 115.

³⁶¹ CEM, AO 830, f. 309v.

³⁶² Fr Aloisio Magri, the Maltese Prior of the Augustinian convent at Caltagirone, let Raffaele Musci of città Pinto, stay in his convent - CEM, AO 829, f. 245r.

to some rowdy behaviour by these ex-patriots. They fought each other out at Lisbon³⁶³ and Rosario Psaila of Valletta, who had exercised the craft of carpenter at Marseilles before taking to drink, was so beaten up by the local people that he died seven days later.³⁶⁴ The fate of Andrea Camilleri of Zurrieq was even worse. When he lost everything he became a beggar until he was taken up by a confectioner whom he murdered one night and threw him into the sea. For this he was broken on the wheel in the presence of several Maltese and at the age of thirty was buried in the cemetery of the principal church of the city.³⁶⁵

By the eighteenth century Malta was no longer an inward-looking community with its back to the sea. It was a dynamic society with its inhabitants spread throughout the whole Mediterranean and even as far afield as Martinique³⁶⁶ and Havana.³⁶⁷ Some went to the fair at Salerno³⁶⁸, visited a sister at Toulon³⁶⁹ or a brother at Licata.³⁷⁰ There were Maltese in the Austrian armies³⁷¹ and in the Russian navy³⁷² and took part in the siege of Belgrade.³⁷³ In the *Status Animarum* of Birgu for the year 1792 the word *fuori* (abroad) was used fifty-eight times by the parish priest who conducted the census.³⁷⁴ No

³⁶³ CEM, AO 829, f. 310r.

³⁶⁴ CEM, AO 836, f. 157r.

³⁶⁵ CEM, AO 830, f. 308r.

³⁶⁶ CEM, AO 779, f. 99v. CEM, AO 802, f. 427r.

³⁶⁷ CEM, AO 779, ff. 50r-v.

³⁶⁸ CEM, AO 788, f. 91r.

³⁶⁹ CEM, AO 784, f. 251r.

³⁷⁰ CEM, AO 786, f.

³⁷¹ CEM, AO 782, f. 254r.

³⁷² CEM, AO 826, f. 325r.

³⁷³ CEM, AO 781, ff. 176r, 182r-v.

³⁷⁴ CEM, SA 35 no. 8.

mention is made of where they were staying and what they were doing but other sources do give such needed information. Young men went to study law at Rome;³⁷⁵ medicine at Aix-en-Provence³⁷⁶, Montpellier³⁷⁷ and Naples.³⁷⁸ It was in this latter city that Giuseppe Biancardi of Valletta learnt music for nine months;³⁷⁹ and there were Maltese seminarists at Prato³⁸⁰ and sculptors at Rome.³⁸¹ Others left their island home to learn optics at Palermo,³⁸² clock-making at Recanati³⁸³ and Geneva,³⁸⁴ the craft of farrier at Barcellona,³⁸⁵ hairdressing at Marseilles,³⁸⁶ Aix³⁸⁷ and Toulons,³⁸⁸ which last named city,³⁸⁹ like Cartagena,³⁹⁰ offered work to the Maltese at the shipyard. At Licata, Filippo Durante of Senglea worked in the marble quarries; Lorenzo Mangion of *Città Pinto* was

³⁷⁵ See, among various references, *CEM*, AO 780, ff. 147r, 148r, 370r.

³⁷⁶ *CEM*, AO 779, f. 149r.

³⁷⁷ *CEM*, AO 801, f. 168r.

³⁷⁸ *CEM*, AO 780, f. 211r; *CEM*, AO 781, f. 44r; *CEM*, AO 782, f. 158r.

³⁷⁹ *CEM*, AO 787, f. 291r.

³⁸⁰ *CEM*, AO 817, f. 170r.

³⁸¹ *CEM*, AO 781, f. 190r.

³⁸² *CEM*, AO 779, f. 214r.

³⁸³ *AIM*, *Proc.* 131B, f. 713r.

³⁸⁴ *CEM*, AO 825, f. 57r.

³⁸⁵ *CEM*, AO 785, f. 13r.

³⁸⁶ *CEM*, AO 786, f. 65r.

³⁸⁷ *CEM*, AO 802, f. 50r.

³⁸⁸ *CEM*, AO 784, f. 249r.

³⁸⁹ *CEM*, AO 800, ff. 229r-232v.

³⁹⁰ *CEM*, AO 814, f. 55r.

a day labourer at Girgenti while Felice Attard and Giacinto Grech both of Senglea went to Calabria to cut wood for ship-building.³⁹¹

This exodus of Maltese was well counterbalanced by the influx of foreigners. In 1791 twenty-three foreigners made their Easter obligations at the parish of St Paul's, Valletta.³⁹² An uncle would summon his niece to Malta³⁹³ though Michele Deragio of Barcellona was brought over by Ferdinando Muscat to work in his shop as razor-grinder.³⁹⁴ Paolo Torrese, from Catania, was a silk weaver at Floriana and even his dyer, Andrea Rizzo, was a compatriot of his.³⁹⁵ These foreigners did all kind of work from soldiers and sailors to jewellers,³⁹⁶ diamond polishers,³⁹⁷ gilders,³⁹⁸ embroiderers,³⁹⁹ cutlers,⁴⁰⁰ tinsmiths,⁴⁰¹ blacksmiths,⁴⁰² shoemakers,⁴⁰³ book-binders,⁴⁰⁴ hair-dressers,⁴⁰⁵

³⁹¹ *CEM*, AO 784, ff. 1r-7r.

³⁹² Most of them came from Genoa, eight; Naples, seven and Procida, four; but there was a representative from Syracuse, Pantelleria, Sicily and France. *CEM*, SA 31, no. 5, p. 170.

³⁹³ *CEM*, AO ff. 81r-86v.

³⁹⁴ *CEM*, AO 830, ff. 355r-v.

³⁹⁵ *CEM*, AO 817, ff. 29or-291r.

³⁹⁶ *CEM*, AO 785, f. 278v.

³⁹⁷ *AIM*, *Corr.* 5, f. 23r.

³⁹⁸ *CEM*, AO 779, f. 355r.

³⁹⁹ *CEM*, AO 780, f. 160v

⁴⁰⁰ *CEM*, AO 779, f. 162r.

⁴⁰¹ *CEM*, AO 780, f. 81v.

⁴⁰² *CEM*, AO 782, f. 166r.

⁴⁰³ *CEM*, AO 789, f. 135r.

⁴⁰⁴ *CEM*, AO 786, f. 145r

cooks,⁴⁰⁶ tailors,⁴⁰⁷ weavers,⁴⁰⁸ hemp-carders,⁴⁰⁹ painters⁴¹⁰, workers at the mint,⁴¹¹ clowns⁴¹² or musicians⁴¹³ at the theatre or at St John's Conventual Church.⁴¹⁴ Still, some were in the service of the Inquisitor,⁴¹⁵ the rector of the University⁴¹⁶ or of some Hospitaller,⁴¹⁷ though Angela Cartia, of Scicli, who had come to Malta at the age of eight was in the service of *Signor* Giuseppe, the apothecary of Cospicua.⁴¹⁸ And, above all, corsairs who with their spoils made Malta, as Braudel observed for Algiers,⁴¹⁹ an active commercial centre.

⁴⁰⁵ CEM, AO 779, f. 66r. CEM, AO 784, f. 238r.

⁴⁰⁶ CEM, AO 784, f. 158r.

⁴⁰⁷ CEM, AO 780, f. 299r. AIM, Proc. 77B, f. 239r.

⁴⁰⁸ CEM, AO 783, f. 190r.

⁴⁰⁹ CEM, AO 780, f. 159r.

⁴¹⁰ AIM, Proc. 77B, f. 320r.

⁴¹¹ CEM, AO 785, f. 278r.

⁴¹² Cem, AO 799, f. 272r.

⁴¹³ CEM, AO 821, f. 91r. CEM, AO 834, f. 113r.

⁴¹⁴ CEM, AO 809, f. 128r.

⁴¹⁵ CEM, AO 822, f. 121r.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 31r.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 264r.

⁴¹⁸ CEM, AO 812, f. 119r.

⁴¹⁹ Fernand Braudel, The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World at the Time of Philip II, vol. II, p. 870.

By the time Napoleon forced the Hospitallers out of Malta in 1798 the island had changed radically since 1530.⁴²⁰ Then the Commissioners, sent to report on the island's suitability, had commented on its hopeless misery⁴²¹ but now not only the population had increased considerably but new towns and villages had grown up and the Grand Harbour with its fine facilities had developed into an important trade centre.⁴²² The inhabitants, especially those who lived in the towns, had lost their forefathers' north African flavour and developed a cosmopolitan, largely European, outlook⁴²³ not only in their dress⁴²⁴ but also in their speech, preferring an 'insipid and shocking patois' to their national language.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁰ For similar remarks see *NLM, Libr.* 1202, p. 15.

⁴²¹ Giacomo Bosio, Historia della Sacra Religione et Illustrissima Militia di S. Giovanni Gerosolimitano, vol. 111, pp. 29-31.

⁴²² Jacques Godechot, Histoire de Malte, pp. 53-56.

⁴²³ B. W. Blouet, The Changing Landscape of Malta During the Rule of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, 1530-1798. Ph. D thesis, University of Hull (1963). See also Victor Mallia-Milanes, 'Introduction to Hospitaller Malta' Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798. Studies on Early Modern Malta and the Order of St John of Jerusalem, pp. 1-42.

⁴²⁴ *NLM, Libr.* 142 (V), p. 218.

⁴²⁵ M. A. Vassalli, Ktyb Yl Klym Malti, pp. XV1-XV11.

CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Roman Inquisition signified that the Holy See, alarmed at the spread of the Reformation even in Italy,¹ especially at Lucca,² had lost hope of ever reuniting with the Protestants. This failure had already been foreseen in 1541 when the Colloquy at Regensburg ended in deadlock; and a possible accord was further doomed with the death, the next year, of cardinal Contarini, the most prominent of the mediators between the two camps.³ The cryptoProtestants who had harboured great hopes for their dreams realised their failure and, in the anguish of their conscience, followed the lead of Ochino, the Vicar-General of the Capuchins, Pietro Martire Vermigli, the prior of San Frediano, and Pier Paolo Vergerio, the bishop of Capodistria, into enemy territory. It was in this year, 1542, that Paul III, by means of the Bull *Licet ab initio*, set up six *commissarii et inquisitores generales et generalissimi*, the future *Sacra Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio*, with power to nominate their representatives all over the Catholic world⁴ and watch over the remaining part of Christendom. This Tribunal which in 1588, as part of Sixtus

¹ For the reality of this fear see John Martin, Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City; Pio Paschini, Venezia e l'Inquisizione Romana da Giulio III a Pio IV; L. A. Ferrai, 'Il Processo di Pier Paolo Vergerio', Archivio Storico Italiano, vol. XVI (1885), pp. 30-32.

² For the spread of Protestantism at Lucca see Philip McNair, Peter Martyr in Italy: An Anatomy of Apostasy, pp. 206-238. At Viterbo, cardinal Reginald Pole where he was Vice-Legate, gathered round himself a group of believers in the new faith. See the article by Tommaso Bozza, 'Introduzione al Processo del Carnesecchi', Annuario dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea, vols. XXXV-XXXVI (1983-1984), pp. 81-94.

³ On this cardinal, the soul of the *spirituali*, see John Martin, Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City, pp. 35-42.

⁴ For the setting up of the Roman Inquisition, Ludovico von Pastor, Storia dei Papi, vol. IV, pp. 673-676; Leopold von Ranke, The History of the Popes, their Church and State and especially of their Conflicts with Protestantism in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, vol. 1, pp. 156-163; Edward Burman, The Inquisition: The Hammer of Heresy, pp. 157-160; Owen Chadwick, The Reformation, pp. 268-270. For the initial difficulties faced by the Cardinal Inquisitors to nominate their delegates themselves against the prerogatives of the Religious Orders, Guido Dall'Olio, 'I Rapporti tra la Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio e gli Inquisitori Locali nei Carteggi Bolognesi (1573-1594)', Rivista Storica Italiana, vol. CV (1993), pp. 248-250.

V's reorganization of the Roman Curia,⁵ assumed the first place among the other congregations to be henceforth referred to as the *Suprema*⁶, was not a brand new institution. However, unlike the independent Tribunals of the Medieval Inquisition⁷ and the state-dominated Spanish Holy Office,⁸ it was governed directly from Rome.⁹ Ultimate authority rested with the Pope¹⁰ so that Julius III intervened energetically when it threatened to become a centre of uncontrollable power. The occasion arose when the *spirituali* were being accused of Protestant leanings so that the Pope appointed his own theologian, the Dominican Gerolamo Muzzarelli,¹¹ to sidestep the Inquisitors and by means of pressures, menaces and intimidations make the delator, Bernardo de Bartoli, whom he called a 'coward' (*poltrone*), retract his charges against cardinal Morone; and even Mgr Soranzo, bishop of Bergamo, who was found to have in his possession correspondence with Luther and Bucer, was acquitted and reinstated in his diocese.¹²

⁵ Jean Delumeau, 'Les Progrès de la Centralisation dans l'État Pontifical au XVI^e Siècle', *Revue Historique*, no. 226 (1961), pp. 399-410.

⁶ John Tedeschi, 'Inquisitorial Law and the Witch', *Early Modern European Witchcraft. Centres and peripheries*, Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds., pp. 87-88. See also Niccolò Del Re, *La Curia Romana: Lineamenti Storico-Giuridici*, pp. 89-101.

⁷ Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages* and the same author's *The Inquisition of the Middle Ages: Its Organization and Operation*. For a survey of the literature on this Tribunal see Giovanni Gonnet, 'Bibliographical Appendix : Recent European Historiography on the Medieval Inquisition', *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe*, Gustav Henningsen, John Tedeschi and Charles Amiel, eds., pp. 199-223.

⁸ Despite this difference the Roman and Spanish Inquisitions followed much the same legal practice. A number of manuals, for instance, used in the Roman Tribunals were written by Spaniards, like Eymerich and Carena. For their similar procedure in the case of witchcraft see Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, vol. IV, pp. 242-247.

⁹ G. Bertora, 'Il Tribunale Inquisitorio di Genova e l'Inquisizione Romana nel '500', *La Civiltà Cattolica*, anno 104 (1953), vol. 11, p. 173. For the evolution of the Tribunal from the loosely-knit Medieval Inquisition to the tightly controlled Spanish and Roman Inquisitions see Richard Kieckhefer, 'The Office of Inquisition and Medieval Heresy: The Transition from Personal to Institutional Jurisdiction', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 46, no. 1 (Jan. 1995), pp. 36-61.

¹⁰ Vincenzo Ferrone and Massimo Firpo, 'From Inquisitors to Microhistorians : A Critique of Pietro Redondi's *Galileo Eretico* ', *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 58, no. 2 (June 1986), p.514.

¹¹ On Muzzarelli's role in bringing to the attention of the Venetian government the existence of a large and well-organised network of Anabaptists in their territory, see Pio Paschini, 'L'Inquisizione a Venezia ed il Nunzio Lodovico Beccadelli (1550-1554)', in his *Venezia e l'Inquisizione Romana da Giulio III a Pio IV*, p. 87.

¹² For such revealing matter see M. Firpo and Dario Marcatto, 'Il Primo Processo Inquisitoriale contro il Cardinal Gio. Morone', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. 93 (1981), pp. 105-117.

These singular episodes were not just a struggle for power but the clash between two opposing visions of the church; the old and corrupt Italian aristocracy of the Renaissance faced men of humble origins like Michele Ghislieri (Pius V) and the gardener's son, Felice Peretti (Sixtus V) but dedicated to reform in an epoch-making encounter. In spite of initial difficulties, the latter won because through the Holy Office they became the most important element in the Catholic Church.¹³ Clerical advancement was firmly in their hands so that bishops were increasingly recruited from former Inquisitors; but what is even more significant is that they carried the decisive weight in conclaves and cardinal Pole, so near to snatch the papal tiara, had his chances wrecked by Carafa's disclosure that he was under investigation.¹⁴ In other words, the cardinals of the Holy Office established themselves as a versatile instrument of power at the summit of the church.¹⁵

Their programme though was not only repressive but, as Pio Paschini has long ago remarked,¹⁶ contained within itself a serious attempt at internal renewal, a recognition even that Protestantism had been the result primarily of the immorality of the clergy and the venality of several officers of the Curia. The two movements were not mutually exclusive¹⁷ and their leaders could be found in both camps. It was, for instance, that 'violent Neapolitan',¹⁸ Cardinal Carafa, one of the founding members of the Oratory of Divine Love,¹⁹ who recommended to Pope Farnese the setting up of the Roman Inquisition.²⁰ Technically, this institution was established to hunt out heretics

¹³ The authority on this subject is Paolo Simoncelli, 'Inquisizione Romana e Riforma in Italia', Rivista Storica Italiana, anno C (1988), pp. 5-125.

¹⁴ Massimo Firpo - Dario Marcatto, 'Il Primo Processo Inquisitoriale contro il Cardinal Giovanni Morone (1552-53)', Rivista Storica Italiana, vol. 93 (1981), p. 87; Ludovico von Pastor, Storia dei Papi, vol. VI, p. 619. How Ghislieri later blocked Morone see *ibid.*, vol. VI 11, pp. 18-19.

¹⁵ Adriano Prosperi, 'L'Inquisizione in Italia', Clero e Società nell'Italia Moderna, Mario Rosa, ed., pp. 300-308.

¹⁶ Pasquale Lopez, Inquisizione, Stampa e Censura nel Regno di Napoli tra '500 e '600, pp. 6-7; Ludovico von Pastor, Storia dei Papi, vol. IV, parte II, pp. 548-603; R. G. Elton, Reformation Europe, 1517-1559, pp. 176-186. For the contribution to Catholic Reform by San Juan de Avila through his education theory and practice see David Coleman, 'Moral Formation and Social Control in the Catholic Reformation: The Case of San Juan de Avila', Sixteenth Century Journal, vol. XXVI, no. 1 (1995), pp. 17-30.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the subject, Hubert Jedin, Riforma Cattolica 0 Controriforma?.

¹⁸ Pastor, Storia dei Papi, vol. VI, p. 308.

¹⁹ Edward Burman, The Inquisition: The Hammer of Heresy, p. 156.

²⁰ Owen Chadwick, The Reformation, p. 269.

but one did not need to be a formal heretic to fall in its clutches; and most of those who appeared in the Tribunal had no idea at all of ever seceding from the Catholic church. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was proclaimed only in 1854 but much long before that those who doubted it were arraigned before the Inquisitor. In other words the purpose of the Holy Office could be easily construed to fit any circumstance. For instance, witches were condemned for *attributing* to planets the power of coercing man's free will;²¹ apostacising from the Faith meant the *denial* that one's soul could only be saved inside the Catholic religion;²² the action of confessors who solicited their penitents in the confessional implied that they held it *lawful* to abuse of the sacrament of penance for dishonest ends;²³ and if the eating of eggs and cheese on prohibited days was not an article of faith, the Inquisitors could still charge the accused of *repudiating* the church's right to pass such a legislation.²⁴ As such the Roman Inquisition was particularly suited to bring the necessary measures of Trent into operation;²⁵ Catholic life would be reactivated and popular religion purified.²⁶ This was especially so in the period under discussion since, by the late eighteenth century, Protestantism had definitely established itself as the religion of the northern half of Europe and cases of Catholics who embraced the 'new' faith were only sporadic. The Inquisition was concerned with the Christian's whole life²⁷: whether he blasphemed or uttered heretical propositions, attended church and received the sacraments, which books he read, if

²¹ *AIM, Proc.* 123A, f. 73r.

²² *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 180r.

²³ *AIM, Proc.* 127B, f. 1221r

²⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 8, f. 76r.

²⁵ Jean Delumeau, Catholicism Between Voltaire And Luther : A New View Of The Counter-Reformation; John Bossy, 'The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe', Past and Present, no. 47 (1970), pp. 51-70.

²⁶ On this subject, William A. Christian, Jr., Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain.

²⁷ Agostino Borromeo, 'The Inquisition and Inquisitorial Censorship', Catholicism in Early Modern History: A Guide to Research, John O'Malley, ed., p. 257.

Table 2.1 Denunciations by year, 1744-1798

Year	Total		Year	Total
1744	116		1772	53
1745	96		1773	55
1746	82		1774	41
1747	83		1775	23
1748	116		1776	57
1749	98		1777	33
1750	90		1778	84
1751	49		1779	47
1752	10		1780	52
1753	83		1781	53
1754	112		1782	63
1755	89		1783	74
1756	130		1784	37
1757	141		1785	48
1758	121		1786	39
1759	54		1787	57
1760	87		1788	55
1761	49		1789	59
1762	69		1790	50
1763	60		1791	34
1764	73		1792	48
1765	53		1793	45
1766	44		1794	102
1767	55		1795	113
1768	44		1796	62
1769	53		1797	76
1770	49		1798	18
1771	36			

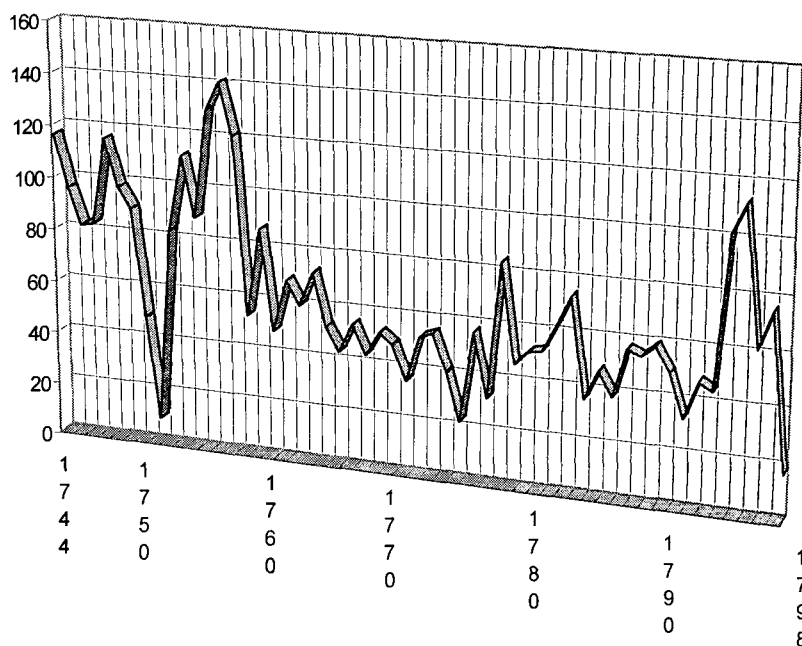
he committed bigamy and apostacised his faith, practised illicit sex or witchcraft and was a member of secret societies like Freemasonry. This first part of the thesis, therefore, is more concerned with the strains and stresses, the tensions and the disruptive forces in the religious life of the people.

Between 1744 and 1798 the total number of 'heresies' reported to the Holy Office in Malta amounted to 3049, an average of 55.4 denunciations each year. The data (see Table 2.1) however, must be regarded with caution. In the first place, it is difficult to arrive at an entirely accurate pattern because of the gaps that exist in the data. In the second place, these figures speak only of reported 'heresy', which implies that its actual spread was very likely to have been much wider. As the statistical data in figure 2.1 indicate, totals differed sharply from one year to another and in no period did they remain stable. The graph drawn from this data is characterised by significant fluctuations, and by four periods of sharply falling levels: 1744-1752, 1757-1775, 1778-1791 and 1795-1798. The highest peak occurred in 1757, followed by 1778 and 1795. This last date indicates that the Tribunal, contrary to the case in Toledo²⁸ and even in Italy - where 'the various branches of the Roman Inquisition were somnolent'²⁹ - appears to have thrived almost up to its last years of its existence in Malta.

²⁸ Jean-Pierre Dedieu, L'Administration de la Foi : L'Inquisition de Tolède (XVIe-XVIIIe Siècle), pp. 238-243, 351.

²⁹ E. William Monter and John Tedeschi, 'Toward a Statistical Profile of the Italian Inquisitions, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries', The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe. Studies on Sources and Methods, Gustav Henningsen, John Tedeschi, Charles Amiel, eds., p. 133.

Fig 2.1 Denunciations by year, 1744 - 1798.



Blasphemy, which unlike in Venice, where it was cognizable by the court of *Gli Esecutori contro la Bestemmia*,³⁰ pertained to the Holy Office, constituted one-third of all denunciations. As at Chalons in the eighteenth century,³¹ it was so common a vice among the Maltese populace that it could be heard even in church;³² and people like Giovanni *agiusa* (the old woman), a fisherman from Cospicua - who fasted on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays and began his day by invoking the help of the Blessed Virgin and the souls of Purgatory - would blaspheme when the catch was poor.³³ There are instances of six-year-old swearers³⁴ and, besides, some were habitual

³⁰ R. Derosas, 'Moralità e Giustizia a Venezia nel '500 - '600: Gli Esecutori contro la Bestemmia', *Stato, Società e Giustizia*, G. Cozzi, ed., pp.431-528.

³¹ Gabriel Le Bras, *Études de Sociologie Religieuse*, vol. 1, p. 65.

³² The case occurred on the feast of St John the Evangelist, 1794. Gio. Battista Falzon *tal-barbier* (the hairdresser's son) of *casal* Balzan quarrelled with the other members of the Sodality of St Michael on who was to be the standard-bearer during the procession which was to take place that same day - *AIM, Proc.* 136B, ff. 749r-v.

³³ *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 288v.

³⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 129, f. 69r.

Table 2.2 'Heresies' denounced to the Holy Office, 1744-98

Heresy	Total	%
Blasphemy	1030	33.3
Witchcraft	883	28.9
Heretical Propositions	429	14.1
Apostasy	281	9.2
'Heresy'	116	3.8
Non-observation of fast days	102	3.3
Polygamy	57	1.9
Offences against confession	48	1.6
Immoral life	43	1.4
Freemasonry	22	0.7
Prohibited books	21	0.7
Offences against baptism	8	0.3
Offences against Tribunal	6	0.2
Greek Orthodoxy	3	0.1

blasphemers.³⁵ One of these was Gio. Maria Rapa, a curse of whom was so dirty that - so did the Pro- Inquisitor of Gozo inform Mgr Passionei in 1744 - '*it is improper for a priest to write it down!*'³⁶ On 25 September 1758, therefore, Mgr Salviati informed the *Suprema Sacra Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio* that he had determined to publish an edict requiring parish priests and confessors to instruct the people of the enormity of such a misdeed. He suspended this resolution only because blasphemy, as in New Castille in the sixteenth century, was a linguistic custom³⁷ which could be directed against animals and insensate objects. He asked the Cardinal Inquisitors to counsel him³⁸ and they sent him an edict and an encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XIV.³⁹ It does not seem that such initiative wrought much success since in Lent 1763 Mgr Durini

³⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 126C, f. 1138r.

³⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 120A, f. 341r.

³⁷ Jean-Pierre Dedieu, 'The Inquisition and Popular Culture in New Castille', in *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe*, Stephen Haliczer, ed., p. 136.

³⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 96, f. 127v.

³⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 30, ff. 451r-453v. For Pius V's Bull of 1 April 1566 see Ludovico von Pastor, *Storia dei Papi*, vol. V111, p. 157.

again directed parish priests to admonish their parishioners about the wickedness of this excess.⁴⁰ Moreover, the *Veneranda Congregazione di Gesù Maria*, set up in the parish of St George at Gozo, organised sermons and spiritual exercises throughout the year for this end. And in 1794 it started sending two 'Correctors' to shops, inns and taverns charitably warning blasphemers, if need be even kneeling before them, that God was their Creator and Benefactor, who had given them their tongues to praise and thank Him and not to despise and offend Him.⁴¹

The term *blasphemia* included such blasphemous acts as stabbing a crucifix with a knife⁴² or throwing a chair at it.⁴³ The consecrated host could be put among the genitals⁴⁴ though Imperia Mifsud of Valletta for four consecutive times placed it in her white handkerchief to drop it on the church's floor or in the street.⁴⁵ A statue would be smashed to the ground;⁴⁶ a holy picture trampled underfoot,⁴⁷ pelted with a cap,⁴⁸ given a blow⁴⁹ or torn to pieces.⁵⁰ Spitting at heaven⁵¹ or at a cross drawn on the floor,⁵² belonged to this category, as well as fixing one's eyes on heaven and exclaiming:

*'My God, you have forsaken me! You are not the God of righteousness and mercy!'*⁵³

⁴⁰ AIM, Mem. 5, ff. 349r-v.

⁴¹ AAM, *Registrum Supplicationum*, vol. 12, ff. 455v-458r.

⁴² AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 121r.

⁴³ AIM, Proc. 121C, f. 1378r.

⁴⁴ AIM, Proc. 128A, f. 79r.

⁴⁵ AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 128r-v.

⁴⁶ AIM, Proc. 124C, f. 1505r.

⁴⁷ AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 171v.

⁴⁸ AIM, Proc. 124C, f. 1505r.

⁴⁹ AIM, Proc. 121B, f. 928r.

⁵⁰ AIM, Proc. 77A, f. 40r.

⁵¹ AIM, Proc. 121A, f. 439r.

⁵² AIM, Proc. 131A, ff. 53r, 75r.

⁵³ AIM, Proc. 124C, f. 1082r.

It could even be, as in the case of Teresa who had a loaf stolen, beating the floor with the hands and threatening to maltreat a picture of the *Ecce Homo* if the thief were not found.⁵⁴

Men constituted the greater part of the accused. An analysis of them reveals that these belonged to the lower strata of society - *forzati*, slaves, *buonavoglia*, soldiers and sailors; though solitary examples of priests, notaries or knights are not lacking.⁵⁵ As Table 2.3 shows blasphemy was the result of very definite conditions: fighting, ill-treatment on the galleys or in prison, drunkenness and gambling. In the case of women, who appeared in only sixteen cases or 9.2 per cent of the total, they swore for totally different reasons: when they were angered at their children,⁵⁶ imprisoned for debt,⁵⁷ in despair for having nothing to eat,⁵⁸ beaten by their husbands,⁵⁹ when had their monthly pension stopped⁶⁰ or, again, when they quarrelled with the neighbours.⁶¹

The eating of meat was prohibited on all Fridays and Saturdays all the year round;⁶² and fasting was prescribed for the duration of Lent, Vigils and *le quattro tempora*.⁶³ On such days Catholics were supposed to eat bread with, for instance,

⁵⁴ AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 41r.

⁵⁵ Blasphemers by occupation, 1760-1777: *Forzati*, 42; slaves, 9; *buonavoglia*, 6; soldiers, 5, sailors, 4; artisans, 9; shopkeepers, 3; *facchini* (porters), 3; fishermen, 2; clerics, 2; priests, 1; knights, 1; notaries, 1; corsairs, 1; caless-drivers, 1; ship's captains, 1; *sbirro*, 1; *alario*, 1; *algozino's* mate, 1; unknown, 63. Calculated from data in AIM, Proc. 126A - 131B.

⁵⁶ AIM, Proc. 126A, f. 326r.

⁵⁷ AIM, Proc. 131A, f. 5r.

⁵⁸ AIM, Proc. 126B, f. 552r.

⁵⁹ AIM, Proc. 126C, f. 1266r.

⁶⁰ AIM, Proc. 128A, f. 75r.

⁶¹ AIM, Proc. 126C, f. 1246r.

⁶² *Digiunare la Quaresima, le vigilie comandate, e le quattro tempora, e non mangiar carne il Venerdì, ed il Sabato* - Don Francesco Wzzino, *Dottrina Cristiana*, p. 60. In Gozo people refrained from having eggs all the year round 'ex consuetudine immemorabili' - AIM, Proc. 112A, f. 279r.

⁶³ *Synodus Dioecessana ab Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Domino Fratre Davide Cocco Palmerio*, pp. 13-14. See also AIM, Corr. 99, ff. 116v, 123r.

sardines,⁶⁴ herrings,⁶⁵ pepper, onions, anchovies dipped in oil,⁶⁶ garlic and salted fish⁶⁷ and not meat, eggs and dairy products. Those only were exempted who were ill and

Table 2.3 Causes for blaspheming 1760-1777

Fighting	42
Ill-treatment on galleys or in prison	29
Anger	25
Gambling	20
Ill-habit	14
Drunkenness	11
Hunger	6
Robbed	3
Accused unjustly	2
Received bad action	2
Unknown	103
Total	173

Source AIM, Proc. 126A-131B

could produce a doctor's certificate,⁶⁸ or else bought the *Bolla Crociata*.⁶⁹ But as at Montailiou around 1300⁷⁰ and at Boulogne in the eighteenth century⁷¹ some disregarded this order of the church; and M. Pedò, a ship's captain, excused himself with saying -

*'That which enters the mouth is no sin. A sin is that which comes out of the mouth.'*⁷²

Perhaps, Gio. Antonio Cavadini could be excused since he had nothing else but cat-stew to eat in Lent.⁷³ Some felt no need for an apology and like sergeant Groppi of the

⁶⁴ AIM, Proc. 124B,, f. 479r.

⁶⁵ AIM, Proc. 131B, f. 648r.

⁶⁶ Baron de Riedesel, *Voyage en Sicile et dans la Grande Grèce*, p. 65.

⁶⁷ De Boisgelin, *Ancient and Modern Malta*, pp. 77-8.

⁶⁸ AIM, Proc. 131B, f. 362v.

⁶⁹ AIM, Proc. 129, f. 186r.

⁷⁰ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montailiou : Cathars and Catholics in a French Village, 1294-1324*, p. 314.

⁷¹ Arlette Playoust-Chaussis, *La Vie Religieuse dans le Diocèse de Boulogne au XVIIIe Siècle, 1725-1790*, pp. 227-228.

⁷² AIM, Proc. 123B, f. 502r.

⁷³ AIM, Proc. 129, f. 21r.

New Militia 'never ate meat with so much pleasure than today!'.⁷⁴ Comedians ate roasted cockerel on stage on prohibited days⁷⁵ and meat was served unashamedly at the taverns, inns⁷⁶ and even in the village square.⁷⁷ Not even the religious were free from this omission⁷⁸ and in 1760, Fra Boyer, the Conventual Chaplain of the Langue of Auvergne, who was rabbit hunting in Comino, ate capons though he had fish readily available.⁷⁹

Besides fasting Lent was also the time for spiritual exercises⁸⁰ as a preparation for Easter. This was the time of the annual duty of confession and the receiving of holy

Table 2.4 Age at First Holy Communion

Ages	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	21	Unknown	Total
Girls	10	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	16
Boys	13	16	17	6	4	2	2	1	3	64
Total	23	21	17	7	4	2	2	1	3	80

Source: CEM, Contumaci

communion⁸¹ had been proclaimed by canon 21 of the fourth Lateran Council, *Omnis Utriusque Sexus*, of 1215.⁸² The Council of Trent renewed this dual obligation⁸³ and

⁷⁴ He was one of a company of six soldiers who on September 1776, towards 3 p.m., entered the inn of Gaetano Camilleri at Senglea where though it was a Saturday they ate sausages all the same - AIM, Proc. 131B, f. 676r.

⁷⁵ AIM, Proc. 124C, ff. 1476r-1479v.

⁷⁶ AIM, Proc. 126A, ff. 420r-v.

⁷⁷ AIM, Proc. 131B, ff. 696r-v.

⁷⁸ Ibid., f. 664r.

⁷⁹ AIM, Proc. 127A, ff. 347r-v.

⁸⁰ AIM, Proc. 136B, f. 821r.

⁸¹ *Confessarsi una volta l'anno almeno, e Comunicarsi almeno la Pasqua* - Don Francesco Wzzino, *Dottrina Cristiana*, p. 60.

⁸² H. J. Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils*, pp. 259-260.

⁸³ Sess. XI11, *De Eucharistia*, c. 9.

Mgr Pietro Duzina, the first Inquisitor General for Malta, ordered Bishop Martino Royas in 1575 to make a list of those who did not communicate at Easter time.⁸⁴ The synod of 1703 held by bishop Cocco Palmieri for the Maltese diocese reminded the faithful of this responsibility, too.⁸⁵ Children started receiving the Eucharist when they reached the age of reason, which was fixed between the ages of twelve and thirteen.⁸⁶ However, it could be very much later that some were admitted to the Eucharist. In 1794, for instance, the parish priest of Rabat, Gozo refused the sacrament to sixty-four boys and sixteen girls. Only one of the latter was beyond the Synodal age of thirteen; but as Table 2.4 shows the boys could be as old as sixteen, seventeen, eighteen and there was even one instance of a twenty-one-year-old, Antonio Camilleri.

To ascertain that those under their cure fulfilled these Easter duties parish priests distributed to them the *Bollettino* which was to be handed in between Palm and Low Sundays. Only those who knew their catechism and their prayers,⁸⁷ or were not blasphemers or drunkards were issued with this 'ticket'.⁸⁸ Those who would not communicate were first warned by their parish priest and recusants were refused entrance in church as well as burial in consecrated ground. They could even be excommunicated⁸⁹ and their names affixed to the main door of the church for all to see.⁹⁰ An edict to this effect was issued by the bishop's curia and measures were put into effect after its third publication.⁹¹ This period of grace must have extended for a long time, even as late as the month of August⁹² or November. Some, like Felice Camilleri of *città* Pinto - who confessed at San Calcedonio's House for Retreats at Floriana - did

⁸⁴ *NLM, Libr.643*, pp. 17-18.

⁸⁵ Synodus Dioecesis ab Illustriss. et Reverendiss. Domino Fratre Davide Cocco Palmerio Episcopo Melitensi, pp.26-27.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, *Appendix ad Synodum, Prima Pars*, pp. 84-86.

⁸⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 135B, f. 658v.

⁸⁸ '*... esame del proprio parroco, ed il biglietto che suole darsi dal parroco*' - *Ibid.* f. 659v.

⁸⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1506r.

⁹⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 136B, f. 722v.

⁹¹ *CEM, Contumaci* (1793), f. 1r.

⁹² *Ibid.*, f. 15r.

amend their ways.⁹³ In 1793, after Fr Felice Calleja of *casal* Balzan had rebuked and menaced the ten defaulters of his parish, God '*touched the heart of three of them*'.⁹⁴ Shaming must have been an effective deterrent and people who never confessed or communicated during the year did so at Easter time.⁹⁵ Others paid a *tallare* for the 'ticket'⁹⁶ but the ruse tried by Giuseppe Mamo of *città* Rohan proved at last ineffective. He kept a tavern at Senglea and every year the parish priest went round collecting the *Bollettino* he assured him he did his Easter duties in his own home-town. He fooled the parish priest for eleven years⁹⁷ but others - like Matteo Fenech, Francesco Abela and Aloisio Mifsud of Mosta - spitefully assisted at mass and all the other services in the parochial church to the scandal of all the parishioners,⁹⁸ even accompanying the *Viaticum*.⁹⁹

Several parishioners, unlike those of sixteenth-century Rimini,¹⁰⁰ took their duty only lightly; and not only did Isabella Grech of Senglea not receive holy communion herself but she also refused to give water to those of her neighbours who did.¹⁰¹ When Filippo Sultana was warned that time was running out to do his Easter duties he was prompt to reply:

*'Do you really believe that those who fulfil their Easter duties are saved?
Absolution is only a simple prayer with no power to forgive sins'*.¹⁰²

Others did not even care to go and collect their 'ticket' or, else, did not present themselves for the catechism examination. If in some parishes for some particular years

⁹³ *Ibid.*, f. 20v.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 13r.

⁹⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, f. 15r.

⁹⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 129, f. 282v.

⁹⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 135B, ff. 652r-660v.

⁹⁸ *CEM, Contumaci* (1793), f. 25r.

⁹⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 137, ff. 113r-114v.

¹⁰⁰ Angelo Turchini, *Clero e Fedeli a Rimini in Età Post-Tridentina*, pp. 127-130.

¹⁰¹ *AIM, Proc.* 133A, ff. 177v-180v.

¹⁰² *AIM, Proc.* 135A, ff. 141r-143v.

there were no recusants¹⁰³ in others, as Table 2.5 shows, some did not receive the sacrament for several years.

Table 2.5 No. of *habitués* (repeat offenders) at B'Kara, 1794

Period of years	2 yrs	3 yrs.	4 yrs.	<i>molti anni</i>	<i>moltissimi anni</i>	Total
Number	8	6	2	12	3	31

Table 2.6 demonstrates that the number of recusants, contrary to the situation at Nantes,¹⁰⁴ could be surprisingly high; in 1794 they numbered two hundred and ninety-one. At Birkirkara they amounted to 34, while at Naxxar they were only one less; at Zabbar, 25 and at Siggiewi, 20. Unlike the case at Auxerre¹⁰⁵ there was not much difference between town and country since at Cospicua the *contumaci* for that year numbered 26, while at Vittoriosa for the previous year they were just 25. Men, as it is to be expected, were more numerous than women - 204 as against 87. Unfortunately, no comparison could be made regarding the social class of the defaulters since the incumbent rarely put down these distinctions. A very important observation, however, can be made; most of these recusants could be *habitués*. At B'Kara, for instance, out of 34 they numbered 31.

Though there are examples when not even the parish priest could fathom why people stayed away from church in 73.5 per cent of the cases the curate did mention the reason in the report he sent to the Bishop. Some are described as mad¹⁰⁶ and imbeciles;¹⁰⁷ though Gio. Battista Xiberras did not lack judgement to the extent of not

¹⁰³ This is what Fr Salvatore Zarb, parish priest at Gargur, declared in 1758 - '*Omnes supradictos meos parochianos adimplixisse Sacramentis Ecclesiae de annua Confessione et Comunione in Paschale*'. CEM, SA 16 (Gargur), f. 5.v.

¹⁰⁴ E. Biraud and Y. Poutet, 'Le Clergé Séculier à Nantes à la fin du XVIII^e Siècle', *Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France*, vol. L1, no. 148 (1965), pp. 107-110.

¹⁰⁵ Gabriel Le Bras, *Études De Sociologie Religieuse*, vol. 1, p. 45.

¹⁰⁶ Maria said publicly that she wanted to kill her husband, the notary Michel'Angelo Farrugia, to take on another husband - CEM, *Contumaci* (1794), unnumbered.

¹⁰⁷ CEM, *Contumaci* (1793, città Pinto), f. 20r.

Table 2.6 Recusants for the year 1794.

	Males	Females	Unknown	Negligence	Scandalous	Separated	Did not know catechism	Concubinage	Did not come for 'Bollettino'	Did not come for catechism exam	Incorrigible	Hardheaded	Drunkard	Mother abets daughter's licentiousness	Blasphemy	Would not befriend her sister	On the galleys	TOTAL
MALTA																		
Balzan	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Birkirkara	31	3	31	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
Cospicua	13	13	7	3	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	26
Gharghur	8	2	2	3	1	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Ghaxaq	5	2	5	2	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Gudja	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Lija	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Luga	5	1	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Mosta	2	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Mgabba	5	2	4	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Naxxar	21	12	1	9	5	10	3	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	33
Qormi	4	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	7
Qrendi	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Sigiewi	13	7	-	9	9	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	20
Tarxien	3	2	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Zabbar	20	5	3	4	3	1	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25
Zebbug	8	2	2	6	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
GOZO																		
Gharb	11	4	3	3	5	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	15
Nadur	6	3	5	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
Rabat	6	5	-	-	8	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	11
Sannat	15	6	-	12	6	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21
Xaghra	11	5	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Xewkija	5	2	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	7
Zebbug	6	5	-	2	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
TOTAL	204	87	77	69	62	25	24	13	5	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	291

differentiating the good from the bad.¹⁰⁸ The most common cause regarded illicit relations, with negligence as a second best - 23.7 per cent. Some are described as 'incorrigible' or 'hard-headed'. As in France, social hostility was one of the reasons why people did not make their Easter communion.¹⁰⁹ Anna Borg of Siggiewi was refused the *bollettino* because she would not befriend her sister, even though she had been warned several times by the parish priest, who organized a meeting for them at his own house. Hatred was also the reason why Michele Busuttil of Zebbug, Gozo¹¹⁰ and Giovanni Zammit of Zejtun, who bore his brother so much ill-will,¹¹¹ refused to present themselves for the *bollettino*. Pietro Camilleri of *casal* Balzan could not provide for his very numerous family; on this account he led a desperate life and could not hear of confession.¹¹² Parish priests were particularly attentive that the 'souls' in their cure knew their catechism. Felice Calleja, a 40-year-old man from Gharb, was described by his archpriest as '*di buonissimi costumi*' but he did not know his prayers. The curate went to look for him several times and appointed a priest to teach him but in eight days he was unable to learn even two articles of the creed.¹¹³ Giuseppe Mallia of *casal* Luqa went to the parish priest himself in the evenings to learn '*what every Christian should know*';¹¹⁴ whereas the Provost of Birkirkara made Carlo Gauci be instructed by his mother.¹¹⁵

Oral teaching was the only possible way to bring the Christian message to the people. The realization of the Protestant revolution had been made possible only with the invention of printing, without which both Wycliff and Huss had failed. Protestantism, as Elizabeth L. Eisenstein claims, was the first religious movement to utilize to the full the possibilities of the new presses.¹¹⁶ Gutenberg's invention emancipated the

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 13v.

¹⁰⁹ Jeanne Ferté, *La Vie Religieuse dans les Campagnes Parisiennes (1622-1695)*, p. 318, fn. 167. See also John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700*, p. 47.

¹¹⁰ *CEM, Contumaci* (1793), f. 40r.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, f. 26r.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, f. 13r.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, f. 36r.

¹¹⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 135B, f. 731r.

¹¹⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 136B, f. 724v.

¹¹⁶ Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, 'L'Avenement de l'Imprimerie et la Reforme', *Annales, É.S.C.*, (1971), *Année* 26, p. 1355.

Germans from bondage to Rome and brought the light of true religion to a God-fearing people.¹¹⁷ Did not Luther himself boast that printing was

*'God's highest and extremest act of grace, whereby the business of the Gospel is driven forward?'*¹¹⁸

The Catholic church was caught unawares and had no ready answer to this onrush of propaganda.¹¹⁹ Apologetical works such as Bellarmine's Controversies availed it little. Much more effective was the setting up of the Congregation of the Index with its lists of prohibited books.¹²⁰

In Malta a printing press had been re-established at the Grand Master's palace in 1756 under the direction of a priest from Catania, Fr Capace.¹²¹ A rigorous system of censorship was set up¹²² and the *imprimatur*, as in Florence at the end of the sixteenth century,¹²³ was signed by the Bishop, the Inquisitor and the Order's Vice-Chancellor.¹²⁴ Material for publication was scrutinised minutely since even that which seemed innocuous,¹²⁵ like the *Bandi* or the Government's proclamations, could have contents harmful to ecclesiastical jurisdiction and immunity.¹²⁶ One had to be very cautious especially in Malta where, one Inquisitor remarked, the authority of the Holy See was

¹¹⁷ Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, The Printing Press as an Agent of Change, p. 35.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in S. L. Greenslade, ed., The Cambridge History of the Bible. The West from the Reformation to the Present Day, p. 432.

¹¹⁹ Pasquale Lopez, Inquisizione, Stampa e Censura nel Regno di Napoli tra '500 e '600, pp. 1-3.

¹²⁰ A. Rotondò, 'La censura ecclesiastica e la cultura', Storia d'Italia, vol. V, *I Documenti*, 2, Ruggiero Romano and Corrado Vivanti, eds., pp. 1399-1402.

¹²¹ The first printing-press in Malta had been set up in 1642 but it stopped production in 1699 over the right of censorship between the Grand Master and the Inquisitor after Rome gave the right of the *imprimatur* to the latter. For this background see Alberto A. Gauci, 'Origine e sviluppo della Stampa in Malta durante il governo dell'Ordine Gerosolimitano', Archivio Storico di Malta, vol V111 (1936-1937), pp. 178-217.

¹²² For the part played by Fernando de Valdés, Inquisitor in Spain, against Protestant books see the article by José-Luis Gonzales Novalin in Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique Doctrine et Histoire, fascicules C11-C111, cc 119-122.

¹²³ A. Panella, 'La censura sulla stampa e una questione giurisdizionale fra Stato e Chiesa in Firenze alla fine del secolo XVI', Archivio Storico Italiano, serie V, tomo XL111 (1909), pp. 144-148.

¹²⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 28, f. 119r; *AIM, Corr.* 91, f. 172r; *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 181v, 183r-184r.

¹²⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 96, f. 38r.

¹²⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 30, ff. 155r-v. *AIM, Corr.* 91, f. 245v.

being continually undermined.¹²⁷ Nothing contrary to the interest of the Catholic religion was to be published; and the diligence with which the Holy Office's censors went about their work can be fully realized in the following example. The work Propugnaculum Hyerosolimitanum, which had been published in Spain in 1662 by the Spanish lawyer Ferdinando de Escano, was to be issued again in Malta. The Bishop's censor gave his approval without any difficulty; not so the Holy Tribunal's *revisore dei libri*. He found opinions inconsistent with Rome's sentiments such as that commanderies, bailiwicks and priories were not ecclesiastical benefices but military prizes given to merit and service and that consequently they were not subject to simony. Mgr Salviati discussed the matter with his Consultors, the Auditor and the Assessor who judged the author's opinion directly contrary to the constant belief of the *Sacra Rota Romana* and to a Brief of Clement XI of 1719. Such an erroneous view, they commented, had taken root at the beginning of the century and had caused so much confusion that it was held by many theologians. Believing that an unexpurgated edition of the book could easily resuscitate such discord the Inquisitor sought the opinion of the *Suprema*, warning the Cardinal Inquisitors of the facility with which dignities and ranks, especially the Grand Mastership, were obtained.¹²⁸

This dispute must have been a rare case since in Malta, unlike in Naples,¹²⁹ church authorities and the Government did not quarrel over books. As can be seen from Table 2.7 most of the printed material was devotional, amounting to 32.0 per cent. In Florence the setting up of the ducal printing press had been followed by such classics as Vasari's Lives of the Artists and Alberti's Architecture¹³⁰ but in Malta the only books of any worth were really few in number, including Fr Ignazio Saverio Mifsud's Biblioteca Maltese, a Relazione by the well-known surgeon, Michel'Angelo Grima,¹³¹ and an

¹²⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 96, f. 40v.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, ff. 47v-48v. Mgr Salviati interpreted the affair as an attempt by the Government to meddle in a matter which pertained exclusively to the Holy Office - *Ibid.*, f. 72v.

¹²⁹ *Relazione delle Stamperie e Stampatori e Proibizione de' Libri per causa di Giurisdizione*, *ASP*, vol. 111 (1878), pp. 199-210.

¹³⁰ Berta Maracchi Biagiarelli, 'Il Privilegio di Stampatore Ducale nella Firenze Medicea', *Archivio Storico Italiano*, vol. CXXIII (1965), p. 310.

¹³¹ G. Cassar-Pullicino, 'Michel'Angelo Grima - Chirurgo Maltese del Settecento', *Rivista di Storia delle Scienze Mediche e Naturali* (Florence), Anno XL, no. 1, 1949, pp. 1-39.

unidentified two-volume Grammar book. If printers presented no difficulty¹³² so did booksellers. For one thing, since the absolute majority of the population was illiterate,¹³³ these catered for only a very small minority. In my researches I have come across only two, a Frenchman, Jean by name, who had his shop and house at Valletta¹³⁴, and an Italian, Michele Aprile of Syracuse.¹³⁵ The absence of references in the late eighteenth

Table 2.7 Matter printed in Malta, 1761-1770.

Devotional literature	175
'Biglietti'	81
Legal documents	56
Thesis	41
Poetical Works	34
'Polizie'	28
Theatrical works	19
Bills of health	17
Books	14
'Patenti'	10
Almanacs	10
'Responsali'	9
'Ruolo dei Cavalieri'	8
Coats-of-arms	6
Prescriptions	4
'Cambiali'	4
Chocolate wrappers	2
Passports	2
Others	27
Total	547

Source: NLM, Arch. 2042-2051

century to the burning of books¹³⁶ in front of bookshops or - as it was more frequently done at Naples - in front of the cathedral on the feast of Saints Peter and Paul¹³⁷ - all

¹³² See also *AIM, Mem.* 15, ff. 36r-39r - *Diverse Materie Stampate in Malta, 1756-58.*

¹³³ Frans Ciappara, *Marriage in Malta*, p. 16.

¹³⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 133B, f. 808v.

¹³⁵ He had deserted his regiment at Sicily and, under the name of Francesco Messina, came to Malta as a *sottosargente* on board the Order's flagship - *AIM, Proc.* 129, f. 371r.

¹³⁶ On 2 June 1601 Cardinal di Santa Severina had written to Mgr Verallo: '*Si è inteso che in cotesta Inquisizione vi sono alcuni volumi della Repubblica del Bodino, et libri proibiti, raccolti in diversi*

point to the minimal impact the book had on the cultural life of the country. There are no references, either, that the Inquisitors visited bookshops¹³⁸ or ordered booksellers to put down in an appropriate register the names of those who bought any of their ware they had exhibited in their shops.¹³⁹ In Malta the Holy Office relied on informers or on the willingness of those who read, kept, printed and defended prohibited books to accuse themselves.¹⁴⁰ The inhabitants were reminded of this duty through the edicts which the Inquisitors sent to the parish priests; these were explained in Maltese on the first Sunday of Advent and Lent and then affixed to the main door of the church.¹⁴¹ In its turn the *Suprema* informed the Inquisitors with the latest condemnation of books and Cardinal Corsini told Mgr Salviati that Voltaire's *poème héroï-comique, La Pucelle d'Orléans*, which had appeared anonymously in 1754, was full of impious blasphemies and mocked the dearest mysteries of Religion and Holy Church. Its most obscene and impure descriptions could corrupt the habits of any reader¹⁴² and so on 20 January 1757 the book was condemned and copies of the decree were sent to the Inquisitor.¹⁴³

It should not be supposed that 'schools' in the various villages spread heterodox ideas. Most of the teachers were clergymen who had to be approved by the bishop.¹⁴⁴ The case of Giuseppe Zahra who taught mathematics in a class near the windmills of Valletta was only a rare exception; his pupils, including the subdeacon from Zebbug, Giovanni Bonnici, saw him read among other books a work of Voltaire '*attacking the Catholic religion*'.¹⁴⁵ The same could be said of the professors at the University; these,

tempi, i quali non si possono correggere. Però di ordini dei medesimi Signori Cardinali ella gli faccia bruggiare in publico per dar esempio agli altri, ed usi diligenza che per l'avvenire non si tengano, ne portino colà libri proibiti. AIM, Corr. 1, ff. 105r-v.

¹³⁷ Pasquale Lopez, *Inquisizione, Stampa e Censura nel Regno di Napoli tra '500 e '600*, p. 215.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁴⁰ AIM, Mem. 9, f. 294r.

¹⁴¹ AIM, Proc. 120A, ff. 3r, 4r, 6r.

¹⁴² AIM, Corr. 30, f. 235r. AIM, Corr. 91, ff. 260r-262r.

¹⁴³ AIM, Corr. 96, f. 82v. For other references see AIM, Corr.4, f. 175r; AIM, Corr. 17, ff. 287r.

¹⁴⁴ V. Borg, "Developments in Education outside the Jesuit 'Collegium Melitense'", *Melita Historica*, vol. VI (1974) no. 3, pp. 215-254.

¹⁴⁵ AIM, Proc. 126A, f. 33r.

in accordance with Pius IV's demand of 1554, swore annually at the Inquisitor's hands to shun heresy.¹⁴⁶ Likewise, Academies like the *Accademia dei Fervidi* must have been too innocuous to indulge in prohibited readings.¹⁴⁷

Some sort of intellectual yearning did exist, however, among the privileged few. Evidence of this openness of Maltese culture to European movements is the number of libraries then in existence. All the convents of Malta, but especially that of the Friars Minor at Valletta, were enriched by great libraries. There were other deposits of books, chief among these were the Bishop's, the Grand Prior's, the Medical School's, that of Mgr Domenico Xiberras¹⁴⁸ and - the most important - the Public Library started by Bailli de Tencin.¹⁴⁹ Some of the Hospitallers, too, like Fra Francesco Tondutte de Maregiac had their own private libraries.¹⁵⁰ This tiny minority of intellectual élites had their books somehow, which if they were listed on the Index of Prohibited books special licence had to be obtained from the *Sacra Congregazione dell'Indice*. The above-mentioned Fr Ignazio Saverio Mifsud, a lawyer and one of the eighteenth-century erudites, had such a faculty. It was given to him to exercise better his office of Consultor of the Inquisition as well as for his greater knowledge.¹⁵¹ Such an allowance could be general covering all condemned books but Fr Giovanni Cachia of Senglea could read only works specified by the Sacred Congregation.¹⁵² Aloisio Locchi, an apothecary, demanded to read those books which concerned his profession, for instance *Il Teatro Chimico*. He, therefore, filed an application to Rome -

¹⁴⁶ AIM, RAC, C7 (1782-1787), f. 148r.

¹⁴⁷ V. Laurenza, 'Società Culturali in Malta durante il Settecento e l'Ottocento', *La Brigata*, Anno 1, no. IV (1932), pp. 86-87.

¹⁴⁸ AIM, Mem. 15, f. 42r.

¹⁴⁹ NLM, Libr. 13, f. 367.

¹⁵⁰ AIM, Proc. 127A, f. 376r.

¹⁵¹ AIM, Corr. 30, ff. 210r-211r. AIM, Corr. 91, f. 253v.

¹⁵² AIM, Proc. 120C, ff. 1393r-v.

Emi. e Rmi. Sigri.,

'Aloisio Locchi, Aromatorio, della Diocesi di Malta, avendo alcuni libri proibiti appartenenti alla sua professione di Aromatorio, supplica l'EE.VV. della facoltà di ritenerli e leggerli per l'uso della sua arte, essendo in età d'anni quaranta due et abile per l'implorata facoltà secondo l'annesso attestato del suo Vescovo'.¹⁵³

Besides, he had other books not covered by that faculty, which proves that as elsewhere¹⁵⁴ even in Malta strict as it was censorship could not completely shut off the literate from accession to the printed word. A truly effective control of the circulation of books was impossible;¹⁵⁵ and prohibited works found their way to those who needed them just the same.¹⁵⁶ Even if - and there are no references to such practice - the Holy Office as at Venice¹⁵⁷ had its representative at the customs control this could not have been totally foolproof. Pietro Felice, to take one example, brought from Venice Voltaire's *Lettres Philosophiques*.¹⁵⁸ Did he do this by himself or was there a clandestine network for the smuggling of prohibited books?¹⁵⁹ The documents are silent though contact with abroad was very frequent; and galley convicts,¹⁶⁰ slaves,¹⁶¹ corsairs and soldiers¹⁶² all could be, and were, in the possession of printed material. Once they

¹⁵³ *AIM, Proc.* 124B, f. 688r.

¹⁵⁴ For Italy see A. Rotondò, 'La censura ecclesiastica e la cultura', *Storia d'Italia*, Ruggiero Romano e Corrado Vivanti, eds., vol. V, *I Documenti*, 2, pp. 1413-1416.

¹⁵⁵ For the difficulty to control the circulation of books see Adriano Prosperi, 'L'Inquisizione Fiorentina dopo il Concilio di Trento', *Annuario dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea*, vols. XXXVI-XXXVIII (1985-1986), pp. 110-116. See also Gaetano Cozzi's review of Grendler's book in *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 51, no. 1 (March 1979), p. 90. For Spain see Henry Kamen, *Inquisition and Society in Spain*, pp. 87-100.

¹⁵⁶ How books were smuggled into Venice and how they were acquired and distributed see Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605*, pp. 102-108; John Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City*, pp. 79-81; John Tedeschi, 'Northern Books and Counter-Reformation Italy', in his *The Prosecution of Heresy*, pp. 335-353.

¹⁵⁷ Paul F. Grendler, 'The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press', *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 47 (1975), pp. 54, 57.

¹⁵⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 126C, f. 1045r.

¹⁵⁹ For the contraband of books in France see Robert Darnton, 'Le Livre Français à la fin de l'Ancien Régime', *Annales, É.S.C.*, 28e Année, no. 3 (1973), pp. 735-744.

¹⁶⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 123A, f. 73r.

¹⁶¹ *AIM, Proc.* 127B, f. 668r.

¹⁶² *AIM, Proc.* 134B, f. 612r.

arrived in Malta such books were exchanged,¹⁶³ sold, given as presents,¹⁶⁴ bequeathed¹⁶⁵ or even copied.¹⁶⁶

Prohibited books which fell in the clutches of the Inquisition concerned catechisms and devotional books, like Il Cristiano Occupato nei dieci giorni d'Esercizi.¹⁶⁷ It could also be a book which contained things 'no Christian would hear without shame'.¹⁶⁸ According to Fra Giuseppe Zammit there was also in circulation translations of the Koran in Italian.¹⁶⁹ Most references, however, are to occult titles¹⁷⁰ and comprised such classics as Merveilles de la Magie Naturelle et Cabalistique du Petit Albert¹⁷¹ and Enrico Cornelio Agrippa's De Occulta Philosophia.¹⁷² Fra Michel' Angelo Danieli *ta' Peites* had such a manuscript two fingers thick which contained prescriptions against various illnesses, including headaches. This religious, who loved to talk obscenely and relate dirty stories, was regularly visited by Gaetano Revest *quattr'occhi* (bespectacled) in the afternoons and at night-time to discuss magical practices.¹⁷³ Such prescriptions were sometimes written on separate sheets and were widely distributed.¹⁷⁴

The ghost of Protestantism was not yet dead. Translations of the Bible in the vernacular and books attacking the celibacy of the clergy all fell into this category. The British consul in Malta, John Dodsworth, was accused of harbouring such ideas. He did

¹⁶³ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1382v.

¹⁶⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 124B, f. 693r.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 693r.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 719v.

¹⁶⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 131B, ff. 374r-375v.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 674r.

¹⁶⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 120B, f. 852r.

¹⁷⁰ Rule 1X of the Tridentine Index prohibited all occult works except astrological books that preserved free will.

¹⁷¹ *AIM, Proc.* 124B, ff. 687r, 692r.

¹⁷² *AIM, Proc.* 121C, f. 1374r.

¹⁷³ *AIM, Proc.* 132A, ff. 366r-367v.

¹⁷⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 124A, ff. 29r-32r.

not consider the inhabitants of Geneva as bad as they were thought to be; and according to his Scottish friend, Alexander Jardine, he was particularly against the authority wielded by the Church which had been given to her by the '*weakness of man*'. He possessed copies of Middleton, Shakespeare's Henry 1V, The Spectator, James Thomson's Spring and Milton's Paradise Lost, which, even if they were not heretical, could not be held by Catholics as being written by Protestants. However, the London Magazine attacked the 'injustice' of the Papal Bulls and he had even some ten to twelve volumes of Tracts against the Catholic church. He possessed, furthermore, writings of Locke,¹⁷⁵ which was particularly reprehensible since this English writer, who had been condemned on 19 June 1734 by Clement X11, was considered especially harmful.¹⁷⁶ His Essay On Human Intellect was the favourite of the period of the Enlightenment but the chief representative of this era, when man '*dared to think*',¹⁷⁷ was Voltaire. Besides the already mentioned The Maid of Orleans there are references also to Essai sur les Mœurs¹⁷⁸ and Letters to the king of Prussia.¹⁷⁹ Other classics found in Inquisitorial proceedings include Montesquieu's The Spirit of the Laws¹⁸⁰ and Persian Letters¹⁸¹ as well as Bayle's Il Dizionario Critico Istorico¹⁸² and the works of Giannone and Machiavelli.¹⁸³

Most of these copies were in the possession of the Hospitallers who, being the sons of the most distinguished families on the continent, were abreast with the main

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, ff. 60r-70r.

¹⁷⁶ '*... con metodo preso dalle scienze più nobili e con cognizione delle leggi della natura e della società, va insinuando certi principi che sembrano universali ..., fabricandoci sopra un perfidissimo ateismo*'. Comment by Cardinal Giannantonio Davia reproduced in A. Rotondò, 'La censura ecclesiastica e la cultura', p. 1488.

¹⁷⁷ Immanuel Kant, 'An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?' in Kant, Political Writings, ed. Hans Reiss.

¹⁷⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1382v.

¹⁷⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 442v.

¹⁸⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 127A, f. 376r.

¹⁸¹ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 211r.

¹⁸² *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1382v.

¹⁸³ *AIM, Proc.* 123B, ff. 886r-v.

currents of European thought. By that time Freemasonry¹⁸⁴ had attracted to itself the best elements of society and Malta could not have remained foreign to such intellectual mode. On 4 May 1738, Clement XII through his encyclical *In eminenti* had fulminated in biblical language against the

*'thieves who break into the house and, like foxes, endeavour to root up the vineyard'.*¹⁸⁵

There is no evidence that the Inquisitor, Mgr Luigi Gualtieri,¹⁸⁶ took any steps to enforce the papal letter but two years later, on 15 March 1740, he reported to the *Suprema Sacra Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio* that a company of Hospitallers, headed by de Liuris, a young Frenchman of twenty-five, were recklessly calling themselves Freemasons. When reproved they constantly protested that they met simply as friends and would willingly submit to any penalty whenever it was proved that they committed anything against Religion or the State. The Inquisitor believed that in their meetings they did nothing substantially contrary to dogma but they were simply a group of libertine adherents. And when on 2 April¹⁸⁷ the seven knights left for France¹⁸⁸ it was generally surmised that the seed of the supposed evil had been definitely killed.¹⁸⁹ It was a wrong conclusion. De Liuris was a veritable Freemason and the Craft was well established in Malta with many adherents. Every initiated paid four *zecchini* to him on his joining and swore never to reveal what went on inside the sect, under threat of death. Lodges consisted of five aggregates each and in their gatherings the brethren wore a ram's skin and a woman's apron.¹⁹⁰

From that time till almost the end of the century the Brotherhood is frequently encountered in the proceedings of the Inquisition. In the 1750s, for instance, - perhaps as a result of Benedict XIV's condemnation of the Craft¹⁹¹ - six denunciations were

¹⁸⁴ Carlo Francovich, Storia della Massoneria in Italia. Dalle Origini Alla Rivoluzione Francese.

¹⁸⁵ Quoted in Edward Burman, The Inquisition: the Hammer of Heresy, p. 202.

¹⁸⁶ For the time this former Inquisitor spent as nuncio in France see the highly informative book by John Rogister, Louis XV and the Parlement of Paris, 1737-1755, pp. 249-251.

¹⁸⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 107v-110r.

¹⁸⁸ W.A.M. Broadley, The History of Freemasonry in the District of Malta, p. 4.

¹⁸⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 116r-v.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, ff. 110r-112r.

¹⁹¹ Fulvio Bramato, Napoli Massonica nel Settecento: Dalle Origini al 1789, pp. 23-28.

made.¹⁹² Unlike in Sicily,¹⁹³ and at Avignon¹⁹⁴ Freemasonry continued to flourish in the 60s. It even spread into the villages¹⁹⁵ and infiltrated the convents. The French Hospitaller, Giacinto Herbestein, for instance, assured Gesualda Zammit, a nun at the monastery of Santa Scolastica, Vittoriosa, that most literate men, including the clergy, were enrolled in it. The nun agreed to become a member and wrote her adhesion on a piece of paper.¹⁹⁶ Herbestein's companion, Agostino Formosa, was known as *tas-sahta* (the cursed one), which illustrates the common man's attitude towards members of the sect. He was an influential member of Freemasonry and in September 1766 he sent for Antonio Grech, the gilder, whom he commissioned to draw on a piece of canvas a door with two columns, seven stars above, a compass, an eye, an ear, the sun, the moon and the three letters *S.B.S.* Formosa's denunciation was one of seventeen reports made to the Holy Office that year. This tide of information, which incidentally coincided with the crackdown of the Freemasons in Naples,¹⁹⁷ followed the self-accusation of Vincenzo Vella, the clock master at the Magistral palace, the previous year.¹⁹⁸ Freemasons are again mentioned in 1785 when Count Kollowrat, a Bavarian, was supposed to have set up a lodge in Malta.¹⁹⁹ After two months it boasted forty members and there also joined twenty-one officers of the Venetian fleet, which happened to be in Malta. According to Doublet, the Secretary, the most happy harmony reigned among the members but then one of them, a Conventual Chaplain, revealed the secret to a woman with an 'indiscreet tongue' who divulged it to the Inquisitor's auditor.²⁰⁰ In the archives of the Inquisition in Malta there is no reference at all to such intrigues but on 11 July 1790 Celestino Galea

¹⁹² *AIM, Proc.* 164, ff. 118r-119r.

¹⁹³ Emanuele Librino, 'I Liberi Muratori in Sicilia dal Regno di Carlo 111 a quello di Francesco 1', *Archivio Storico Siciliano*, vol. XLV, pp. 383.

¹⁹⁴ C. Mesliand, 'Franc-Maçonnerie et Religion à Avignon au XV111e Siècle', *Annales Historiques de la Revolution Française*, no. 197 (1969), p. 456.

¹⁹⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 164, ff. 132r-133r.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 152r.

¹⁹⁷ Michelangelo d'Ayala, 'I Liberi Muratori di Napoli nel secolo XV111', *ASPN*, anno XX11, pp. 551-631; anno XX111, pp. 49-110, 305-364, 567-604, 742-789.

¹⁹⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 164, ff. 1r-26r.

¹⁹⁹ G.A. Vassallo, *Storia di Malta*, p. 721.

²⁰⁰ Pierre-Jean-Louis-Ovide Doublet, *Mémoires Historiques Sur l'Invasion et l'Occupation de Malte Par une Armée Française en 1798*, pp. 81-108.

implicated the General of the Galleys, Bailli De La Tour du Pin and his brother who, together with other Brethern, met at Semison gardens.²⁰¹

Names of Freemasons who abjured their 'heresy' at the Holy Office keep on recurring in the archives of the Inquisition till the end of the eighteenth century when the Tribunal finally closed its doors. Why did the vigilance of the *Sant'Officio* prove ineffective? First of all Freemasonry had its social side. It was a great social leveller since '*what is good for a marquis or baron is also good for a poor man*'.²⁰² The Brethern promised each other help and were at the service of the poor and the needy, for instance those ill in hospital.²⁰³ Giorgio Gellel found himself in chains in the West Indies but he was set free, given a good sum of money and put on board a ship.²⁰⁴ A much more plausible reason is the Craft's religious dimension. The guiding word was Virtue which protected the initiated against the passions of glory and pride that oppress the mind of man.²⁰⁵ He was to be on his guard against women, too, since these were the origin of vice and discord. Nor could he be a drunkard, a perjurer, a charlatan or apostate from the religion in which he was born, either.²⁰⁶ Adherents renounced atheism though their God or, as the Catechism called Him, *Eternal Mover*, belonged to no confession. As yet there is no evidence that in Malta, as there is for France, Freemasons could be members, or even rectors, of *Confreries de Pénitents*.²⁰⁷ However, priests, monks and nuns did form a part. Could this be a reflection on the ineptitude of formal Catholicism to satisfy the religious urges of its adherents? In any case, it was one more example of the strains and stresses in the religious life of the people.

By the eighteenth century the strenuous exertions of the Counter-Reformation to restore and revive Catholicism had lost much of their former practical incisiveness; and

²⁰¹ *AIM, Proc.* 141, ff. 18r-19v.

²⁰² *AIM, Proc.* 164, ff. 177r-v.

²⁰³ *Ibid.* f. 166v.

²⁰⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 220r.

²⁰⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 141, ff. 55r-v.

²⁰⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 164, f. 5v.

²⁰⁷ On this topic see the informative work by Maurice Agulhon, *Pénitents et Francs-Maçons de l'Ancienne Provence*.

if the Catholic Church could still be identified with the whole body of Maltese society its efforts bent under the double weight of time and inertia. As in other parts of Europe²⁰⁸ Dechristianisation had set in and much work was needed to infiltrate the customs, institutions and the hearts of men - though the Inquisition was well fitted to accomplish this task.

²⁰⁸ For France consult Michel Vovelle, Piété Baroque et Déchristianisation en Provence au VIII^e Siècle and Jean Delumeau, Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of the Counter-Reformation, pp. 203-231.

MARRIAGE AND CARNAL SIN

As the enforcers of post-Tridentine sexual morality the Inquisitors kept a special watch on the moral life of the Maltese, which they found particularly disturbing. The Instructions issued to them before leaving Rome reminded them of the great number of prostitutes on the island;¹ and, according to Mgr Mancinforte, perhaps there was no other place where one saw so many scandalous practices.²

The church took much time to develop its theology of marriage. To establish whether a couple were validly married it first adopted the Roman criterion of *marital affection*.³ As such evidence, however, was difficult to establish the fourth Lateran Council ordered couples to solemnize their union only after the calling of the banns. Private marriages still continued to be extremely common though and it was only the Council of Trent that succeeded to make marriage a public affair, contracted *in faciem ecclesiae* in front of the parish priest and two witnesses.⁴ All the same it seems that marriage long continued to be regarded as a personal affair⁵ and clandestine marriages

¹ '... moltitudine delle meretrici che d'ogni sorte di nazione vi concorrono' - AIM, Mem. 3, f. 2r; '... molte persone di sesso femminile, notoriamente prostitute, o abituate in peccaminose consuetudini' - AIM, microfilm no. 6530, ff. 1r-v.

² AIM, Mem. 21, f. 120r.

³ See the studies by James A. Brundage, 'Concubinage and Marriage in Medieval Canon Law', *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1975), pp. 1-17; and Michael M. Sheehan, 'Theory and Practice : Marriage of the Unfree and the Poor in Medieval Society', *Medieval Studies*, vol. 50 (1988), pp. 456-487.

⁴ Thierry Pech, 'Foy et Secret : le mariage clandestin entre droit et littérature dans les *Historiques Tragiques* de Boaistuau à Camus', *XVIIe Siècle*, 48e année, no. 193 (1996), pp. 891-909. H. A. Ayrinhac, *Marriage Legislation in the New Code of Canon Law*, pp. 234-236. For the significance of the innovative legal dispositions of Trent according to which the church came to consider cohabitation after a clandestine marriage as sinful see Piero Rasi, 'Le Formalità nella Celebrazione del Matrimonio ed il concilio di Trento', *Rivista di Storia del Diritto Italiano*, vols. XXV1-XXV11 (1953-1954), pp. 189-207.

⁵ John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700*, pp. 23-26.

in the celebrated way of Renzo and Lucia of Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* fame remained a regular feature of church courts even in the late eighteenth century.⁶ One late afternoon, for instance, on 11 July 1781, as Fr Felice Borg of *città* Rohan was at home, he was notified that a German Hospitaller was waiting for him at the parish church. As he entered through one of the lateral doors he was surprised by a young man who told him, '*This is my wife*', pointing to a young girl in front of him.⁷ Even the Archpriest of the Cathedral, Fr Joachim Cannuzzi, was taken in. On Sunday, 14 August 1746, towards 4 p.m., he was stopped by two men in the Cathedral square. One of them, Francesco Mangili, a Milanese, took him by the hand and told his companion, Gio. Battista Crotti, to fetch him the sword from the *calesse*. Instead there came a girl, Rosa Carnisi, and the two asked the Archpriest to give them the nuptial blessing.⁸ Parish priests were surprised in the confessional-box⁹ at some inappropriate hour very early in the morning,¹⁰ as for instance, at the *missa dell'aurora*;¹¹ or, as in the case of *Padre* Giacinto Maggi, parish priest of Porto Salvo, Valletta, when they were putting back the sacrament in the Tabernacle after they had just returned to church with the *Viaticum*.¹² They could be easily deceived but Fr Gio. Battista Crispo of Cospicua stopped a couple from committing such a crime 'in the house of God'. He looked threateningly at them, raised his voice and frightened them with his stick; the man ran out of the church and the girl, who had stayed near the altar of San Cristoforo, hurriedly left too, accompanied by another woman.¹³

Clandestine marriages were due to two common motives: the parents would not give their consent to the union¹⁴ and, as one author reminds us,¹⁵ it was extremely hard

⁶ For the continuance of such marriages in Rimini see Angelo Turchini, *Clero e Fedeli a Rimini in Età Post-Tridentina*, pp. 104-109,

⁷ *AAM, Dicta* 27, no. 42.

⁸ *AAM, Dicta* 23, no. 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 51.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 53.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, no. 42.

¹² *Ibid.*, no. 15.

¹³ *Ibid.*, no. 41.

¹⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 126B, f. 856r.

not to honour a promise to marry. If the man, therefore, encountered a better bargain or, as in the case of Ignazio Sciberras, he found that his girl was 'scandalous and licentious'¹⁶ it was only through such a desperate stratagem that he could extract himself. Betrothals were a public affair contracted in front of witnesses, when the man received a handkerchief as a token of his commitment.¹⁷ Such promises were binding and instances when legal proceedings were instituted against the groom to honour his word are met regularly in the bishop's court. Antonio Stuppelli spent two days in prison¹⁸ but Giacomo Cafielo was released only after three months, presumably because he refuted his girl's allegations. Yet Gionella, with whom he had had carnal relations, still succeeded in having her way, even though perhaps 'with the word and not with the mouth'.¹⁹ When he was ill in bed and - according to his own version - nearing his death, having already received extreme unction, she brought Don Nicola to administer the sacrament of marriage by the bed-side.²⁰ He was in a difficult position anyway, since he had impregnated the girl, in which case he had either to marry or to dower her. The same was the case of Giovanni Angelo Sammut, who, as a patentee of the *Sant'Officio*, was put in the dungeons of the Holy Office. On 24 October 1760 he appeared in front of Mgr Durini and stated:

'Your Excellencies, I know the cause of my imprisonment. Modesta Bravin, who says that I have raped and impregnated her, demands that I honour my word. I confess the truth that, having loved her, I knew her carnally. However, I am only willing to take her to wife'.

Such illicit relations must have been common and at the parish of Porto Salvo, Valletta, twenty-five per cent of the children born in the period 1750-1800 were illegitimate.²¹ Besides, in Malta,²² like other countries, not unusually the man tested his

¹⁵ Genevieve Laribiere, 'Le Mariage à Toulouse aux XI^e et XV^e Siècles', *Annales du Midi*, vol. 79 (1967), p. 343.

¹⁶ '... s'avanzò a quell'eccesso solamente per evitare i sponsali che si asseriscono da ess'Oratore contratti con una giovane libertina e scandalosa' - AAM, *Supplicationes* 16, no. 129.

¹⁷ AIM, Proc. 121B, ff. 613v, 615r. AIM, Proc. 123A, f. 446r.

¹⁸ AIM, Proc. 129, f. 391r.

¹⁹ AIM, Proc. 127A, f. 409r.

²⁰ AIM, Proc. 122A, f. 119r.

²¹ Frans Ciappara, *Marriage in Malta*, Table 6.3, p. 84.

future wife's fecundity,²³ and rejected her if she did not get pregnant. These instances point out in a most forceful way the people's disregard of the Church's teachings; and as at Nantwich, Cheshire²⁴ couples ignored its exhortation to delay sexual intercourse till after the marriage ceremony. References to people being scandalized at the immoral lives of their neighbours²⁵ should not be made much of; and examples of wives discarded after marriage for not being found virgins must have been an exception rather than a general rule.²⁶ The case of Angelica who, having suspected that her father had come to know that she was with child, escaped from her home at *tas-Samra* and made her way to her sister's at Floriana, was rare, too. Promiscuity must have been well spread among the population,²⁷ and people like Rosario Pugliesi of Mascoli, Sicily, who contracted venereal disease went to the Holy Infirmary to be treated with mercurial inunction at the *falanga*.²⁸

The church tried to impose its own type of sexual behaviour. This was done not only through exhortations in the confessional or in the pulpit but also, though there is no mention of fines for sexual deviance,²⁹ by the bishop's use as in medieval England of the power of privy search³⁰. Action was taken whenever the *Profiscale* received report that, for instance,

²² See for instance, '*Mi conobbi carnalmente con avermi deflorata con la promessa di matrimonio, ed indi sotto tal fiducia di dovermi sposare continuò a conoscermi carnalmente di quando in quando*' - AAM, *Dicta* 26, no. 94.

²³ For Malta, Frans Ciappara, *Marriage in Malta*, pp. 76-78. England, Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, p. 148. France, P. Valmary, *Familles Paysannes Au XVIII^e Siècle en Bas-Quercy*, p. 130.

²⁴ Grace Wyatt, 'Bastardy and Prenuptial Pregnancy in a Cheshire Town during the Eighteenth Century', *Local Population Studies*, no. 49 (1992), pp. 38-50. For England in general, P. E. H. Hair, 'Bridal Pregnancy in Rural England in Earlier Centuries', *Population Studies*, no. 20 (1966), pp. 233-243.

²⁵ '*... una delle dette zitelle di nome Lorenza pochi anni sono rimase incinta con scandalo del vicinato*' - AAM, *Informationes* 6, misc., no. 72. See also *ibid.*, no. 104 - '*... di tale amicizia scandalosa tutto il popolo si lamenta*'.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 90.

²⁷ '*... scalare di notte tempo alla mia casa per sedurre Orsola mia figlia maggiore ancor zitella*' - AAM, *Dicta* 23, no. 38. For similar examples see AAM, *Dicta* 27, nos. 21, 30.

²⁸ AIM, *Proc.* 137, ff. 198r-200v.

²⁹ For such fines, E. D. Jones, 'The Medieval Leyrwrite: A Historical Note on Female Fornication', *English Historical Review*, vol. 107 (1992), pp. 945-953.

³⁰ F. G. Emmison, *Elizabethan Life: Morals and the Church Courts*, pp. 8-10. For the workings of a church court, Sandra Lee Parker and L. R. Poos, 'A Consistory Court from the Diocese of Rochester, 1363-4', *English Historical Review*, vol. 106 (1991), p. 652-665.

'il Sacerdote, D. Gio. Battista Gafà, della città Burmola, teneva nella sua casa una pubblica meretrice, Rosa; ... mi portai per tanto seriamente nella casa del medesimo Sacerdote, ed ivi ritrovai veramente ad ambidue rinserrati in detta casa; anzi detta Rosa ritrovai nascosta nella stanza superiore, ed avendo ciò osservato introdussi alli alarii che portavo meco, e d'un subito li condussero nelle pubbliche carceri, ove si ritrovano'.³¹

These searchings were made at night, early in the morning at five o'clock³² or, even, in the afternoons at 1 p.m.³³ Not that the officers found no resistance. They could knock on the door in vain,³⁴ or else risked having a pistol pointed to their chest. This is what Fr Giorgio Schembri of Mosta did and he cheekily admitted that he did have whores in his house and defiantly summoned one of them.³⁵ However, most of those taken *flagrante delicto* tried to excuse themselves as best they could. The Deacon, Don Gio. Battista Cassar, denied he was sleeping with a Gozitan woman and claimed he had spent the night on an overcoat on the floor; but the woman lay naked in bed and the other part of the mattress was still warm.³⁶

For the Catholic church marriage was a necessary evil, entered into from fear of being unable to lead a chaste life, a remedy against fornication - *'per liberarsi dalli pericoli mondani'*.³⁷ Sex was dangerous and suspect so that it could hardly be performed without sin. According to St Augustine, not without some tinge of manicheism to which he had been addicted in his younger days, only the begetting of offspring and the preservation of continence excused marital intercourse.³⁸ The organs of generation were referred to as *the shameful parts* but this contempt for sex was also clearly discernible in the fear of contamination by semen, menstrual blood³⁹ or the blood of childbirth. This

³¹ AAM, Dicta 24, no. 45.

³² AAM, Informationes 6, misc., no. 101

³³ AAM, Dicta 23, no. 29.

³⁴ AAM, Dicta 25, no. 70.

³⁵ AAM, Dicta 26, no. 10.

³⁶ AAM, Informationes 6, misc., no. 69.

³⁷ NLM, Unità. 55, 14/2/1772.

³⁸ St Augustine, *Matrimonio e Verginità*, A. Trapè, ed., pp. 393-453.

³⁹ Patricia Crawford, 'Attitudes to Menstruation in Seventeenth-Century England', *Past and Present*, no. 91 (May 1981), pp. 47-73.

taboo was implicit in discussions on nocturnal emission, the general custom of 'churching' or the woman's purification after birth⁴⁰ and the prohibition of coition during menstruation.⁴¹ Sex was incompatible with holiness, which made intercourse improper in Lent or immediately before or after communion.⁴² The married couple's consciences were under continuous assault and their embraces fell within the purview of the moralists. Their love must not be inordinate since, as St Jerome put it, nothing was more vile than to love one's wife like a mistress. Even the position during copulation was minutely regulated and only those postures which resulted in the insemination of the woman were licit.⁴³

These moral considerations found themselves in confessors' manuals to be administered in the confessional box. In Malta the Capuchin, *padre* Pelagio, wrote a full length treatise on the need of continency in marriage.⁴⁴ Perhaps, he was prompted by the relaxation of much of this sexual repression in the late eighteenth century, as his indignation at the number of separated couples may point out.⁴⁵ The Catholic church does not admit divorce but for specific reasons it can dissolve marriages (divorce *a vinculo*). The circumstances mentioned by the Maltese records for granting annulment are impotence,⁴⁶ duress,⁴⁷ the prohibited degrees of consanguinity⁴⁸ or affinity⁴⁹ and a former valid marriage. To circumvent such canonical restraints as well as expensive

⁴⁰ Joseph Cassar-Pullicino, *Studies in Maltese Folklore*, p. 234. For Britain, David Cressy, 'Purification, Thanksgiving and the Churching of Women in Post-Reformation England', *Past and Present*, no. 141 (Nov. 1993), pp. 106-146; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 38-9, 59-61.

⁴¹ Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation*, p. 168.

⁴² J. A. McHugh and C. J. Callan, *Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests*, p. 355.

⁴³ Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Families in Former Times : Kinship, Household and Sexuality*, pp. 161-164.

⁴⁴ *ACM*, Misc. 56, ff. 62r-95v - '*Dissertazioni Parenetiche intorno l'Istituzione ed Essenza, Qualità, Uso e Pratica della Virtù della Continenza del Sacramento del Matrimonio*'.

⁴⁵ '*... quest'altro avvertimento, di cui oggidì veruna coscienza se ne faccia : l'abuso è passato tant'oltre, che si deplora tollerato, e pertanto a man salva praticato ..., ed appunto è il divorzio de' congiugati*'. - *Ibid.*, f. 64r. For the rise of separations in England in the eighteenth century, Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800*, pp. 3330-4.

⁴⁶ *AAM*, '*Super Divortio Inter Alicunda Vella et Alessio Vella*', unclassified documents.

⁴⁷ *AIM*, Corr. 85, ff. 3r-4Av.

⁴⁸ *PA* (Naxxar), *Lib. Matr.* 11, ff. 182r-v.

⁴⁹ *CEM*, A0 697, ff. 179r-221v.

legal action there existed another type of marital arrangement, wife abandonment. Many married women were used to spend a good part of their life alone with their children, which made the moral and financial support of relatives particularly important. The registers of the *Status Animarum* are interspered with such remarks as *soldato sulle navi*,⁵⁰ *partito*,⁵¹ *partito in Napoli*,⁵² *a Lampedusa*.⁵³ The case of Elena Ferrani well illustrates how married life was regularly interrupted by absences. Four months after her marriage with Gusmano Ruffo he left for the Levant where he stayed for seventeen months. The next time his absence lasted four years and then he enlisted on an English ship, after which he went to Venice, ending finally at Teneriffe.⁵⁴

In the archives of the Inquisition there are such references as '*after a year of cohabitation the said Antonio left with the galleys for Sicily, without having ever returned*';⁵⁵ '*Giovanni departed on a Sicilian felucca for Messina ... and since that time he was seen no more here, nor has he written any letter back home, either*';⁵⁶ '*I have never received from him any letter in answer to the many I sent him*'.⁵⁷ This documentation for Malta, however, is too scanty for one to say that as in England,⁵⁸ desertion was common. No Poor Law records exist on which a serious study of the subject could be based; and such information could be gleaned only incidentally, for example, from instances of bigamy in which women described their predicaments. Still, the number is too scanty - eleven calculations in all - which does not include though women whose spouses were slaves in Turkish *bagni*⁵⁹ or those who found themselves

⁵⁰ *CEM, Status Animarum* 11 (Mqabba, 1790), f. 4r.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, ff. 8r, 14r.

⁵² *Ibid.*, f. 6r.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, f. 8r.

⁵⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 12A, ff. 301r-302r.

⁵⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 120C, f. 1319r.

⁵⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 120B, f. 488r.

⁵⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 122C, f. 1126r.

⁵⁸ R. B. Outhwaite, 'Introduction : Problems and Perspectives in the History of Marriage', in R. B. Outhwaite, *Marriage and Society. Studies in the Social History of Marriage*, p. 8.

⁵⁹ See, for instance, *AIM, Proc.* 126B, ff. 834r-980v.

deceived by already married husbands. With all these limitations the examples for Malta corroborate many of the conclusions arrived at elsewhere.⁶⁰ As in England, the age of the deserted wife at her marriage was considerably below that of the mean age of women, 14.6 years as against 22.2 years. Most of the marriages were shortlived, which was why, perhaps, most women were generally childless. Though concern for children was only minimal⁶¹ the absence of offspring must have reduced somehow the husband's guilty conscience to desert though the chief reason must have been that most of the men were foreigners. They had no roots in the local community; and no family or friends acted as constraints on them, either. Even when Maltese were involved they were men who, like Felice Pace of *casal* Ghaxaq living at Cospicua,⁶² had left their villages for some town, family desertion being characteristic of the urban environment rather than of the countryside. Another peculiarity which Malta shared with England was that to escape husbands enlisted in a foreign army like the Neapolitan or joined the French⁶³ or English⁶⁴ navies. Others are simply described as 'went abroad', emigration to Spain and France being a chief characteristic of eighteenth-century Malta. Still, others went to sea and Raffaele Abdilla enlisted as a pilot on a Venetian vessel⁶⁵ and Pierre Martin on a French ship.⁶⁶

A dissatisfied husband though did not necessarily have to leave Malta; he could be separated from his wife (divorce *a mensa et thoro*). These judicial separations were difficult to get as the Church always wanted couples to 'return to holy matrimony, as God commands';⁶⁷ much more common were cases of couples who left each other without any formal authorisation. The number of those who took the law into their own

⁶⁰ David A. Kent, 'Gone for a Soldier': Family Breakdown and the Demography of Desertion in a London Parish, 1750-91', *Local Population Studies*, no. 44 (1990), pp. 27-42.

⁶¹ Nancy F. Cott, 'Eighteenth-Century Family and Social Life Revealed in Massachusetts Divorce Records', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 10 (1976), pp. 28-30. On this topic of children in traditional society see also the classic by Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*.

⁶² AIM, Proc. 131B, f. 633v.

⁶³ AIM, Proc. 133B, ff. 820r-836v.

⁶⁴ AIM, Proc. 127A, ff. 47r-54v.

⁶⁵ AIM, Proc. 120B, ff. 683r-684v.

⁶⁶ AIM, Proc. 125B, f. 917r.

⁶⁷ AAM, *Supplicationes* 16, no. 99.

hands so alarmed Bishop Labini that on 28 October 1780 he issued an edict ordering them without delay to join each other.⁶⁸ The reasons for such separations were various.⁶⁹ The Mangions of Zurrieq were both to blame; they were an honest couple but both of them were obstinate, sharp tongued, liked to have their own way and could not bear each other. A wife would be abandoned because she was of a simple mind⁷⁰ but the chief cause of these *de facto* separations was wife battering.⁷¹ Eugenia of Siggiewi was treated so badly by her husband that often she took refuge with the neighbours with whom she stayed for several days; and one night the parish priest of the village, Fr Pietro Decelis, had to go to their house to warn him to treat her well. This is what Angela Said of *casal Caccia*, Gozo, reported to the Bishop's court -

'... my husband, Andrea, beats me almost daily ... Last Sunday, towards 10 p.m., without any reason at all he hit me with a stanga on the right thigh and bit me twice in my left thigh, as Your Excellencies can see. I am so oppressed by him that I demand to be separated from him. I can't stay with him any longer lest he kills me with his tyranny'.

However, it could be dangerous for a wife to leave her husband. One afternoon Maria was spinning cotton with other women when her husband, Giovanni Buhagiar, of Rabat, arrived. He sat down on the door's threshold and tried to persuade Maria to return to him. When his endeavours failed he took a dagger out of his pocket and shaking it desperately about he wounded one of the women in her head, ear and shoulder.⁷² Another incident refers to one *Signora* Eugenia, who was living with her uncle at *città Rohan*, and who sent word to her husband not to think any more of her as she was dead to him. He desired nothing more though than to live again with her and she was counselled to keep the door of the house closed after the first *Ave Maria* lest she be surprised by him.⁷³ But if it is only natural to suppose that husbands were responsible for the breakup of marriages women had also their share in these separations. A woman

⁶⁸ *AAM, Edicta Labini*, vol. 12, ff. 11r-v.

⁶⁹ On this topic see Andrew Finch, '*Repulsa uxore sua* : marital difficulties and separation in the later middle ages', *Continuity And Change*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1993), pp. 11-38.

⁷⁰ *AAM, Supplicationes* 19, p. 112.

⁷¹ *AAM, Dicta* 28, no. 27. *AAM, Dicta* 30A, *misc.*, no. 11. On this topic see the article by Leah Leneman, 'A tyrant and tormentor' : Violence against wives in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Scotland', *Continuity and Change*, vol. 12, part 1 (May 1997), pp. 31-54.

⁷² *AAM, Dicta* 28, no. 6.

⁷³ *AAM, Informationes* 6, *misc.*, no. 84.

would hit her husband⁷⁴ or refuse to give him the '*matrimonial debt*' - though, as regards Anna, the doctor testified that she suffered from intestinal hernia, which copulation rendered harmful.⁷⁵ The occasion generally arose, however, when the wife started having an affair with someone else.⁷⁶ For instance, according to the parish priest, Giacinto Tedesco's wife was '*one of the most shameless women that are to be found within the limits of my parish*'. In this instance the man is said to have horns (*cornuto*), which reference is to be found all over the Mediterranean.⁷⁷ However, if in other countries such infidelity demanded that the man's honour be avenged the documents in Maltese archives are very scanty on this topic. This can perhaps mean that, as Carmelo Trasselli has observed for traditional Sicily,⁷⁸ a sense of honour was lacking in Malta and the injured man had to suffer his dishonour in silence. A rare incident does refer to one Michele Farrugia of Valletta who was unable to bear this offence any longer though his attempt to regain his honour ended in defeat. On 7 January 1757, at midnight, this cuckolded husband knocked on the door of the house of Gio. Battista Muscat and asked for his wife. He was hit instead on his left shoulder with a piece of wood and wounded with a dagger under his left breast and under the navel and had to make his way with difficulty to hospital.⁷⁹

The family, indeed, as it has been proved elsewhere, was not that tightly-knit bond of love which moralists like so much to extol.⁸⁰ This is not to be wondered at when marriage was so devoid of sentiment that it exhibited the cold peculiarities of a hard and fast bargain made in the interests of families. As in Ireland⁸¹ the young couple counted

⁷⁴ AAM, *Dicta* 28, no. 1. AAM, *Dicta* 30A, *misc.*, no. 66.

⁷⁵ For circumstances in which the wife could refuse her 'due', especially when the coitus endangered the woman's health see Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Families in Former Times*, pp. 217-220.

⁷⁶ AAM, *Supplicationes* 19, no. 112.

⁷⁷ Anton Blok, 'Rams and Billy-Goats: A Key to the Mediterranean Code of Honour', *Man* vol. 16 (1981), pp. 427-440.

⁷⁸ Carmelo Trasselli, 'Criminalité et Moralité en Sicile au début de l'époque moderne', *Annales, E.S.C.*, vol. 28, no. 1 (1973), pp. 226-246.

⁷⁹ AAM, *Dicta* 25, p. 72. For other rare examples in late medieval Malta see Godfrey Wettinger, 'Honour and Shame in late Fifteenth Century Malta', *Melita Historica*, vol. V111 (1980), pp. 65-77.

⁸⁰ On this topic see Frans Ciappara, *Marriage in Malta*.

⁸¹ K. H. Connell, 'Peasant Marriage in Ireland : its Structure and Development since the Famine', *The Economic History Review*, second series, vol. XIV, no. 3 (1962), pp. 502-523.

little in the transactions. These concerned the parents rather than the son and, more especially, the daughter⁸² and could be conducted by some marriage broker.⁸³ Women were objects, whom men demanded to discharge their conjugal indebtedness according to the Pauline precept:

*'The husband must give the wife what is due to her and the wife
equally must give the husband his due'.⁸⁴*

If this implies an equality between the sexes in actual fact, as Jean-Louis Flandrin points out,⁸⁵ the husband was the active partner whereas the wife was to endure his advances. As a wife was only a chattel when she could no longer render the services for which she had been contracted she was beaten,⁸⁶ given some poisonous potion to drink,⁸⁷ or simply discarded. When Rosa, therefore, was ill her husband got engaged to Grazia whom he married when a few days later he became a widower.⁸⁸

Instances of affection are not lacking, it is true; and there must have been many who, like Pietro Srafa, a migrant at Cadiz, sent greetings to their wives and children.⁸⁹ This should not mislead us in supposing that endearment characterised the relationship between the couples in past time. Matteo Zanniti, a slave at Constantinople, did correspond with his uncle but he did not bother to insert any reference at all to his wife.⁹⁰ Such callousness on the part of husbands can be shown in the case of Felice Pace. He returned to Malta after twenty-five years of absence, during which time he had

⁸² Consider, for example, such statements - 'A month ago I promised my daughter, Maria, aged seventeen, to Angelo Zammit' - AIM, Proc. 126B, f. 624r; 'Vincenzo Muscat, my father ... would have liked to marry Giovanni to a girl from Zurrieq' - Ibid., f. 522r.

⁸³ AIM, Proc. 122A, f. 157r. This could be a priest (AIM, Proc. 126C, f. 1335r), a woman (CEM, A0 662, f. 68r) or a slave (AIM, Proc. 124A, f. 418r.)

⁸⁴ 1 Cor. 7, 2-4.

⁸⁵ Jean-Louis Flandrin, 'Sex in married life in the early Middle Ages : the Church's teaching and behavioural reality', Western Sexuality. Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times, Philippe Ariès and André Bejin, eds., p. 118.

⁸⁶ AIM, Proc. 126C, f. 1266r.

⁸⁷ AIM, Proc. 131B, f. 471r.

⁸⁸ AIM, Proc. 123A, f. 446r.

⁸⁹ AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 374r-v.

⁹⁰ AIM, Proc. 120B, ff. 725r-730v.

never cared to send a word of his whereabouts, or any subsistence to his wife. Yet, he made his way straight to the Bishop's curia where he demanded that Eugenia, who had meanwhile taken on another husband, come and live with him.⁹¹

This last case was an example of bigamy. During the period 1743-54 the number of such proceedings before the Tribunal of the Inquisition numbered ten. Only two cases concerned Maltese; of the rest, six were Italians, one French and one Dutch.⁹² The poor circumstances in which women whose husbands were away from the island found themselves are well illustrated by the case of Maria; she bought bread on credit or else had to pawn a hat or a skirt to buy food.⁹³ There is no mention that she indulged in illicit relations with men but Maria Buhagiar was the concubine of Felice Taliana and besides she sold her sexual favours to the slaves Balta, Leonardo and Salvatore.⁹⁴ For 16 tari Manena would have gone to bed even with a Moslem;⁹⁵ and in the miseries she found herself, having sold or pawned all her belongings, Anna let herself be seduced.⁹⁶ Maria could not even do that and had to ask a slave make her some witchcraft to find some client.⁹⁷ There was, however, another possibility, to enter into a stable relationship and marry the man.⁹⁸ Take the case of Margherita. Her husband, Pietro Farrugia of Cospicua, had left Malta on board a corsair ship when he fell a slave to the Turks. At first he did send some letter to his wife but then he stopped corresponding altogether. After twenty-three years she brought two witnesses to the Bishop's Curia testifying he had meanwhile died inside the *bagno* of Constantinople. Nicola, a Maronite from Tripoli, Syria but married in Malta, swore he had actually seen him dead and buried. Another old man, '*whose name I don't know*', declared under oath he had *heard* that Pietro had died. On this flimsy evidence Margherita, on 7 January 1742, married

⁹¹ '*Io intendo voler con la medesima coabitare, e per tal'effetto ne fo precisa istanza a' Loro Signori*' - AIM, Proc. 131B, f. 633v.

⁹² Calculated from data in AIM, Proc. 120B-122C. See Appendix 1.

⁹³ AIM, Proc. 131B, ff. 616r-v.

⁹⁴ AIM, Proc. 126A, f. 17r.

⁹⁵ AIM, Proc. 131A, f. 104r.

⁹⁶ AIM, Proc. 126B, f. 592r.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 586r.

⁹⁸ For similar examples in Spain see Jean-Pierre Dedieu, 'Le Modele Sexuelle: La Défense du Mariage Chretien', in *L'Inquisition Espagnole, XV-XIX Siecle*, Bartolomé Bennassar, ed., pp. 314-315.

Michel'Angelo Tanti. Pietro returned to Malta thirty years later after he had mutinied together with other Christian slaves on the galley of Mustafa Bassa.⁹⁹ In fact these 'ocular' witnesses could be the cause of much confusion later on. They could easily be bribed by some poor woman abandoned by her husband and looking for a man to look after herself and her children. Constantius Vizini's sister, Maria, even found a Neapolitan galley convict who, for six tari, made a false death certificate for her.¹⁰⁰

Similarly, foreigners away from their families in a strange land sought the comfort of a wife. Village girls generally married Maltese men but this was not so in the towns. At Vittoriosa, for instance, in the period 1750-1800, the number of foreigners who took local girls totalled fifty-eight. As Table 3.2 shows these came mostly from Italy but there was also a few from France and elsewhere, including one, James Cole, from London, who on 14 November, 1758 married Catherine, daughter of Antonio and Maria Pagliares.¹⁰¹ Married men and women who took on another spouse did so at their great risk as it generally proved impossible to evade the clutches of the Inquisitors who were in correspondence with each other. Vincenzo Colombo of Majorca paid dearly for his daring. Maria Mizzi of Cospicua accused him of having another wife, Catarina, at Argentiera, whose relatives were living as apostates at Tripoli in Barbary. On this information Mgr Angelo Durini, on 20 April 1773, sent a memorial to the *Padre Prefetto delle Missioni* there. Two months later the Inquisitor received two *attestati* of Angelo Marciano and Paolo Gelfo, who both testified that Vincenzo was really married.¹⁰² In such a case the second marriage would be declared null, which sentence would even be affixed on the door of the church.¹⁰³ This was very different from what Fr Michele Dandalora of Rabat, Gozo, reported to Mgr Durini on 9 June 1760. '*A few months ago someone whose name I can't remember told me*' that a Gozitan married at *casal Caccia* had returned to his native village after a very long absence. There he found that his wife had taken on another husband, Pietro, a barber and a ploughwright; she,

⁹⁹ AIM, Proc. 122C, ff. 981r-1007v.

¹⁰⁰ AIM, Proc. 131B, ff. 654r-655r.

¹⁰¹ PA (Vittoriosa), Lib. Matr. IV, f. 32v.

¹⁰² AIM, Proc. 127B, ff. 622r-665v.

¹⁰³ AIM, Proc. 131B, ff. 540r, 546r.

however, expressed her wish to continue living with this man while her legitimate husband left Gozo again.¹⁰⁴

Carlo Damiano, however, would let no one accuse him for bigamy. He had stayed for eight years with his wife Elena Sardi of Lodi, Italy, when he joined the Imperial army, and was taken to Sicily. At Agrigento, having brought two witnesses to swear to the death of his wife, he married, on 15 February 1727 Aloisa Carella. He even brought her to Malta, where he enlisted as a soldier in the *Compagnia del Gran Maestro*. But then, on 19 April 1748, he presented himself before Mgr Passionei, to whom he showed the letter his first wife, supposed to be dead, had sent to him -

'Carissima Consorte,

*Essendo molti anni già scorsi che mi era venuto all'orecchie che voi vi siete partito da Sicilia con una donna, ma questo non l'ho mai creduto. Anzi stavo sempre con desiderio di vedervi una volta a consolarmi con la vostra persona. Vedendomi del tutto priva di questa consolazione di più vedervi e molti anni che vi credevo morto. Solo che li miei occhi sono fontane di lagrime perchè vi piango giorno e notte che voi eravate il solo oggetto dell'anima mia. Ma O Dio! Qual funesta nova io sento d'una persona religiosa che viene da Malta, cioè che voi avete un'altra moglie!"*¹⁰⁵

Possibly Carlo denounced himself only because he feared that he would be found out and be sued in the Tribunal of the Inquisition. Otherwise, the tone of late eighteenth-century Maltese society would have matched perfectly well with his irregular style of living. Men like Giovanni Maria Rapa *is-sultan* (the king) of Xewkija would beat and ill-treat their wives who scolded them for their extra-marital relationships and, when warned to avoid such an approximate occasion of sin would exclaim,

*'I won't leave her even if I am exiled to the remotest part of the island.'*¹⁰⁶

Teresa, wife of Carlo Delia, was imprisoned at the Bishop's prisons for infidelity; but her lover, Salvatore Bonanno, still continued to pester the jailer to let him see her at midnight.¹⁰⁷ Some even boasted of their illicit liaisons;¹⁰⁸ and, as Table 3.3 shows such

¹⁰⁴ AIM, Proc. 127A, ff. 372r-v.

¹⁰⁵ AIM, Proc. 121A, ff. 467r-471v.

¹⁰⁶ AIM, Proc. 120A, f. 340r.

¹⁰⁷ AIM, Dicta 24, no. 24.

¹⁰⁸ The case concerned Giuseppe *tas-sapun* (the soap seller). Though he had his wife back in Malta he lived with a 35-year-old woman at Rabat, Gozo. AIM, Proc. 130, f. 29v.

propositions that *carnal commerce* is no sin¹⁰⁹ or that '*fornication is ... but a relief of nature*'¹¹⁰ are not difficult to encounter in the Inquisition documents.

Prostitution was illegal and, unlike Florence¹¹¹ and the towns of south-eastern France of the fifteenth century with their public brothels,¹¹² there were no licensed prostitutes. Legal action, therefore, was taken against Anna by the *Corte Capitaniale* of Mdina for being found in the company of two young men.¹¹³ However, prostitution was accepted since as one author put it, 'it is an outlet, a safety-valve', which lets marriage maintain its authority.¹¹⁴ And if Francesca, a 30-year-old married woman *di mal nome* of Senglea, was expelled from her house at the instance of her neighbours¹¹⁵ this was not for her illicit practice but only because she did not exercise her 'trade' in one of the *strade di postribolo* ('hot streets').¹¹⁶ Prostitution was also practised in the villages¹¹⁷ but generally such *donne di partito*¹¹⁸ made their way to towns¹¹⁹ where they joined such foreigners like the Sicilian Giuseppa Laurè.¹²⁰ Prostitution is essentially an urban phenomenon: travelling merchants, large groups of unmarried young men, the scale of the population contribute to the existence of such a profession.¹²¹ The

¹⁰⁹ AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 11r.

¹¹⁰ AIM, Proc. 123B, f. 715r.

¹¹¹ On the organisation of prostitution in fifteenth-century Florence see Richard C. Trexler, 'La Prostitution Florentine au XVe Siècle : Patronages et Clientèles', *Annales*, vol. 36, no. 6, pp. 985-1015.

¹¹² Jacques Rossiaud, 'Prostitution, Youth and Society in the Towns of Southeastern France in the Fifteenth Century', *Deviants and the Abandoned in French Society*, Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, eds., pp. 1-46. See also John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700*, pp. 40-41.

¹¹³ AIM, Proc. 130C, f. 559v.

¹¹⁴ Jean-Pierre Dedieu, 'Le Modèle Sexuel : La Défense du Mariage Chrétien', *L'Inquisition Espagnole, XV-XIX Siècle*, Bartolome Bennassar, ed., pp. 330-331.

¹¹⁵ AIM, Proc. 130, f. 114r.

¹¹⁶ AIM, Proc. 131B, f. 686r.

¹¹⁷ 'Donna publica del Nasciaro' - AIM, Proc. 128A, f. 25v.

¹¹⁸ AIM, Proc. 129, f. 194v.

¹¹⁹ For instance, Maria *ta' Fiorunda* (Fiorunda's daughter), a widow of Qormi but who lived at Senglea - AIM, Proc. 128A, f. 26v. See also AAM, Dicta 23, no. 20.

¹²⁰ AIM, Proc. 121C, f. 1155r.

¹²¹ Leah Lydia Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society. The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc*, p. 2.

Table 3.1 Origin of Bridegrooms at Birgu, 1750-1800

M A L T A	
A ttard	4
B 'K ara	8
C o s p i c u a	1 4 7
F l o r i a n a	4
G h a r g h u r	1
G h a x a q	3
G u d j a	2
K i r k o p	3
L i j a	1
L u q a	9
M d i n a	2
M o s t a	2
M q a b b a	1
N a x x a r	9
Q o r m i	1 1
Q r e n d i	2
R a b a t	5
S e n g l e a	9 0
S i g g i e w i	4
T a r x i e n	3
P o r t o S a l v o	7 5
S t. P a u l's	4 3
'V a l l e t t a'	1 6
V i t t o r i o s a	7 5 8
Z a b b a r	2 6
Z e b b u g	1 0
Z e j t u n	1 4
Z u r r i e q	1 0
G O Z O	
N a d u r	1
M a t r i c e	2
R a b a t	3
X a g h r a	1
X e w k i j a	1
F O R E I G N R S	5 8

Source: *Lib. Matr. Iv* (1746-1801).

Table 3.2 Origin of foreigners who took Vittoriosa girls

ITALY		FRANCE	
Naples	6	Marseilles	3
Venice	4	Santrope	2
Ancona	2	Toulons	2
Procida	2	Blois	1
Conca	1	Tours	1
Genova	1	Gap	1
Catanzaro	1	'France'	1
Vico	1		
Bianco (Calabria)	1		
Foligno	1	OTHERS	
Aquilea	1		
Elba	1	'Illyria'	3
Rome	1	Ragusa	2
Tivoli	1	Zara	1
Nola	1	Corfu	1
Macerata	1	Cefalonia	1
		London	1
		Barcellona	1
		'Unknown'	4
SICILY			
Palermo	2		
Siracusa	2		
Alcamo	1		
Terranova	1		
Trapani	1		

documents make no mention why women sold their favours but as in eighteenth-century France¹²² poverty must have been the chief cause. Some of them like Maria *c-ckejkna* (the little one)¹²³ managed their own affairs, perhaps using a tavern¹²⁴ or their own homes.¹²⁵ Catarina, wife of Giovanni Busuttill, 'a scandalous woman, who is publicly held to be a whore', visited Benigno Curmi and Giovanni Mangion at their sanctuary in the convent of St Augustine, Rabat.¹²⁶ Rosa, however, a fifty-year-old woman from Senglea¹²⁷ acted as a procuress for others; and Giovanni Bonnici of Tarxien procured for his own wife.¹²⁸

Even abortion was practised¹²⁹ and the Bishop felt the need to remind his faithful that this was the most horrible villainy one can commit against one's fellowmen.¹³⁰ Forms of contraception were also used¹³¹ through long periods of lactation¹³² and *coitus interruptus* or withdrawal¹³³ - though it is difficult to say how common this 'sin of sodomy not to make children' was.¹³⁴ Besides, it was believed that if a woman quickly stood up or urinated immediately after coitus or got on top of the man she did not

¹²² Olwen H. Hufton, *The Poor of Eighteenth-Century France, 1750-1789*, pp. 306-317.

¹²³ *AAM, Informationes* 6, *misc.*, no. 103.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 18.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 93.

¹²⁶ *AAM, Informationes* 5, no. 47.

¹²⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, f. 103r.

¹²⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, f. 9r.

¹²⁹ For such examples see *AIM, Proc.* 125C, ff. 1203r-v; *AIM, Proc.* 127B, ff. 1181r-1205v. *AIM, Proc.* 135B, f. 597r; *AIM, Proc.* 136A, ff. 188v-189r; *CEM, AO* 696, f. 286r.

¹³⁰ *AAM, Edicta Labini*, vol. 12, ff. 175r-v.

¹³¹ C. Savona-Ventura, 'The Influence of the Roman Catholic Church on Midwifery Practice in Malta', *Medical History*, vol. 39, 1995, pp.28-33.

¹³² E. A. Wrigley, *Population and History*, p. 42.

¹³³ Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Families in Former Times*, pp. 221-225.

¹³⁴ For this expression of Mgr Angelo Anzani, bishop of Campagna in Naples, see Gabriele de Rosa, 'Problemi Religiosi della Società Meridionale nel '700 attraverso le Visite Pastorali di Angelo Anzani', *Rivista di Sociologia Anno* VI, no. 15 (1968), p. 41.

Table 3.3 Heretical Propositions

Heresy	No.	%
Unjust God	42	26.1
Disbelief in God	28	17.2
Disbelief in hell	21	13
Illicit love not a sin	15	9.3
No fire in hell	10	6.2
Our Lady not a virgin	8	5
Disbelief in God's omnipotence	7	4.3
Disbelief in sacraments	7	4.3
Disbelief in purgatory	6	3.7
Disbelief in the Pope	5	3.1
Disbelief in heaven	3	1.9
Disbelief in Christ's divinity	2	1.2
Others*	7	4.3
Total	161	100

*Soul's immortality, sin is lawful, transmigration of souls, Islam better than Christianity, disbelief in the Bible, St. Joseph was the devil, Crucifix is only a piece of wood.

Source: *AIM, Proc.* 120A-131B

conceive, either.¹³⁵ This last case belonged to the category of sins against nature. Examples of unnatural sex were not unknown and confessors asked their women penitents¹³⁶ whether, in the words of the Directoire des Confesseurs, they had relations with their husbands in ways other than according to the laws of marriage.¹³⁷ Naturally, they would not have been concerned with a problem which did not exist. And Rosa admitted it was only during the first month of their marriage that her husband, Giuseppe Buhagiar,

*'usò meco il sacramento del matrimonio come comanda la Santa Chiesa,
in tutto il restante sempre usò meco sodomiticamente'.*¹³⁸

Instances of deviant sex, however, are too scanty to allow any generalization. However, it does not seem plausible that such incidents were rare. The high degree of licentiousness that existed in late eighteenth-century Malta coupled with a late age at marriage¹³⁹ and a high incidence of celibacy¹⁴⁰ must have all resulted in much deviant sex. Were such practices, therefore, tacitly permitted rather than talked about?

The worst of all the sexual sins was homosexuality,¹⁴¹ which had forced down supernatural fire from heaven¹⁴² and was equated with heresy.¹⁴³ It was regarded with such peculiar horror that like Sir William Blackstone, the eighteenth-century English judge,¹⁴⁴ the Capuchin *padre* Andrea could not bring himself to name it directly and referred to it as *il peccato nefando* (the nefarious sin).¹⁴⁵ Unfortunately, the available documentation is so scanty, only six cases being encountered in Inquisitorial

¹³⁵ Thomas N. Tentler, Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation, pp. 198-200.

¹³⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, ff. 155r-207r.

¹³⁷ Quoted in Thomas N. Tentler, Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Protestant Reformation, p. 188.

¹³⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1506v.

¹³⁹ Frans Ciappara, Marriage in Malta, pp. 33-43.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-62.

¹⁴¹ 'No mercy, either, when a man has commerce with another man as if he had been a woman; either is guilty of a foul deed, and both must die' - *Leviticus XX*, 13.

¹⁴² For the story of Sodom and Gomorrah see Genesis 18-19.

¹⁴³ Arno Karlen, 'The Homosexual Heresy', The Chaucer Review, vol. 6, no. 1 (1971), pp. 44-63.

¹⁴⁴ Frank McLynn, Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England, p. 284.

¹⁴⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 120B, ff. 840r-841v.

proceedings. This was to be expected since homosexual behaviour was stigmatized¹⁴⁶ and as in Christian Europe, though unlike the rest of the world,¹⁴⁷ Maltese society objected to all forms of homosexual behaviour. The paucity of evidence makes it very difficult to describe in a satisfactory way how familiar a part was this illicit underworld and nothing like what William Monter has produced, for instance, for Aragon¹⁴⁸ or for Geneva and Fribourg¹⁴⁹ can be expected for Malta.¹⁵⁰ Yet, some observations, for all their small worth, are not to be passed over.

Homosexual practice was found where it was most likely to occur. When deprived of women, for instance in prisons,¹⁵¹ men turned to each other for comfort. This was especially so if there were Moslems among them, with their reputed addiction to such practices.¹⁵² Thus, Harrat sodomized the three sons of Antonio and Maria Psaila of Valletta. This tall, well-built and black slave with moustaches entered their house at will and gave them one *tallere* each from the money he earned as a *palioliere*.¹⁵³ The baptized slaves, Ignazio Calleja¹⁵⁴ and Natale Vassallo¹⁵⁵ were sodomized by and were the minions of Turks and Christians, including galley-convicts, in the *bagno* which must have served as a molly-house. Ships were another source of homosexual behaviour. According to the Roman Stefano Nisi, a surgeon on board the corsair frigate *Santa*

¹⁴⁶ For such prejudice in England in the early nineteenth century, A. D. Harvey, 'Prosecutions for Sodomy in England at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, vol. 21, no. 4 (1978), pp. 941-943.

¹⁴⁷ Randolph Trumbach, 'London's Sodomites: Homosexual Behaviour and Western Culture in the 18th Century', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 11 (1977), pp. 1-33.

¹⁴⁸ William Monter, *Frontiers of Heresy. The Spanish Inquisition from the Basque Lands to Sicily*, pp. 276-299.

¹⁴⁹ E. William Monter, 'La Sodomie à l'époque moderne en Suisse romande', *Annales:É.S.C.*, vol. 29 (1974), pp. 1023-1033.

¹⁵⁰ The Viceroy of Sicily, the Duke of Terranova, had informed Charles V in 1577 that '*il vizio nefando è cosa generale e che le pratiche omosessuali sono diffuse in tutto il regno*' - quoted in Giovanni Morrone, *La Schiavitù nella Società Siciliana dell'Età Moderna*, p. 217.

¹⁵¹ AIM, Proc. 141, ff. 216r-219v. See also P. Labat, *Voyages du P. Labat de l'Ordre des FF. Prescheurs en Espagne et en Italie*, vol. V11, p. 4.

¹⁵² See, for instance, these remarks in Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, '... among those barbarous Turks a handsome boy or youth is more highly prized than the most beautiful woman', p. 884.

¹⁵³ AIM, Proc. 128B, ff. 665r-668v.

¹⁵⁴ AIM, Proc. 138, ff. 45r-48v.

¹⁵⁵ AIM, Proc. 139, ff. 238r-241v.

Croce, sodomy was rampant on board; and he instanced Lorenzo Stafracci, who kept a boy, Salvatore Fsadni, to satisfy his desires, as the chief culprit.¹⁵⁶ As Bartolome Bennassar has pointed out for Aragon¹⁵⁷ and as has been observed for Lucca¹⁵⁸ and Prato,¹⁵⁹ homosexual behaviour also surfaced in convents. Fra Rosario Bugeja, a Dominican, was reputed to be a sodomite; and in 1786 the 57-year-old Capuchin friar, Fra Fortunato à *Melita*, who lived in Gozo, accused himself of committing for three times the sin against nature in his cell with a friend of his, the surgeon Dr Michel'Angelo Garroni.¹⁶⁰ Padre Serafino first let the friars return to their cells after matins and then he visited a fellow friar with whom he had anal intercourse.¹⁶¹ These examples are silent about the habits of the upper classes¹⁶² and, moreover, they do not concern examples from the rural areas - though it was only in cities that anonymity could allow people to escape the taboo attached to such deviant behaviour.¹⁶³

Besides homosexuality did Maltese lads and lasses indulge also in masturbation as their French counterparts did?¹⁶⁴ Perhaps we may never know but it was generally believed that such practices were of a lesser evil than fornication because they gave no scandal¹⁶⁵ and, besides, '*they bring no harm to third persons*'.¹⁶⁶ Masturbation caused great apprehension to the Church; if it became a habit people might not want to get

¹⁵⁶ AIM, Proc. 132A, ff. 329r-340v.

¹⁵⁷ Bartolome Bennassar, 'Le Modèle Sexuel : l'Inquisition d'Aragon et la Répression des péchés abominables', *L'Inquisition Espagnole, XVe-XIXe Siècle*, Bartolome Bennassar, ed., p. 353.

¹⁵⁸ Philip McNair, *Peter Martyr in Italy: An Anatomy of Apostasy*, p. 212.

¹⁵⁹ Romano Canosa, *Il Velo e il Cappuccio*, pp. 195-210.

¹⁶⁰ AIM, Proc. 134A, ff. 147r-150v.

¹⁶¹ AIM, Proc. 120B, ff. 840r-841v.

¹⁶² For the beheading of the Earl of Castlehaven in 1631 in the Tower of London see Caroline Bingham, 'Seventeenth-Century Attitudes Toward Deviant Sex', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 1 (1971), pp. 447-472.

¹⁶³ For the contrary view that such deviant behaviour 'was almost exclusively a rural crime' see Henry Kamen, *Inquisition and Society in Spain*, p. 208.

¹⁶⁴ Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Amori Contadini*, pp. 125-147.

¹⁶⁵ '*... questo (peccato della mollizie) è meno peccato della fornicazione perchè questi vivono senza scandalo, perchè fanno il peccato da se medesimi ...*' - AIM, Proc. 122A, f. 13r.

¹⁶⁶ AIM, Proc. 131B, f. 384r.

married and if they did marry they would refuse to carry out their conjugal duty, with the result that the other partner would in turn pollute himself.¹⁶⁷ In the proceedings of the Inquisition there are only seven cases. Twenty-year-old Teresa of Senglea, '*moved by the desire to sin carnally*', used a statue of Holy Mary and Baby Jesus to arouse herself.¹⁶⁸ It could also be a crucifix,¹⁶⁹ which was the instrument used by a 25-year-old nun at the convent of Santa Scolastica, Vittoriosa. She practised this habit daily for fifteen years to spite God and the Saints. Sometimes she masturbated with her hands during elevation or the exposition of the host.¹⁷⁰ Orsola Boffa, of Senglea, held a papier mâché crucifix in her hand and imagining she was holding a man she polluted herself.¹⁷¹ The other cases concerned three religious. The Augustinian, Fra Vincenzo Carnisi, asked the novice, Nicola Sultana, to pollute him ten times.¹⁷² Masturbation also took place during confession. The 39-year-old Conventual Chaplain of the Langue of Auvergne, Fra Stefano Dauphin, was not the only one to be charged of such an abuse.¹⁷³ The nun Vincenza Crispi accused the Discalced friar, *padre* Eustachio Lombardelli, that during confession he sinned mortally by touching himself, and while inviting her to do the same he told her that he had already polluted himself twice.¹⁷⁴

Against Luther's theology of man's sinfulness¹⁷⁵ the Catholic church, claiming - as Margaret L. Anderson¹⁷⁶ reminds us - exclusive authority over salvation, stressed the power of the keys and the confessor's words of absolution. Sins were defined,

¹⁶⁷ Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Families in Former Times*, p. 190.

¹⁶⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, ff. 79v-80r.

¹⁶⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 128B, ff. 754r-757v.

¹⁷⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 127A, ff. 251r-258v.

¹⁷¹ *AIM, Proc.* 126B, f. 778r.

¹⁷² *AIM, Proc.* 134B, ff. 818r-829v.

¹⁷³ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, ff. 177v-178r.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 193r.

¹⁷⁵ For a clear exposition of Luther's attack on sacramental confession see Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation*, pp. 349-363.

¹⁷⁶ Margaret Lavinia Anderson, 'Piety and Politics : Recent Work on German Catholicism', *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 63 (1991), p. 700.

numbered, weighed, measured¹⁷⁷ as well as denounced privately to the priest. For all this official urgency, however, on the popular level some disbelieved outright in the sacrament's institution by Christ.¹⁷⁸ Such '*ciarle*'¹⁷⁹ were invented by the Popes to discover men's affairs since, so the Piedmontese servant of a French Hospitaller knight believed,

*'I have read the four Gospels and nowhere have I found it had been ordained by God.'*¹⁸⁰

This was also the belief of Don Carlo who, though his piety was remarkable, claimed that his stand was supported by the teachings of some of the Doctors of the church.¹⁸¹ Some confessed out of habit¹⁸² and even ridiculed the sacrament. While waiting, for instance, for the parish priest to start the baptism ceremony the Frenchman, M. Brondò - who was to act as godfather - installed himself in the confessional-box in the parish church of Qrendi. Giovanna Muscat, a twenty-four-year-old spinster from Vittoriosa, knelt down and revealed her love to him. As penitence, he ordered her to love him all the more.¹⁸³ Even seventeen-year-old Gio. Francesco pretended to be a confessor when he visited a relation of his, the blind 82-year-old Anna. Claiming he was the vice-parish priest he asked her if she uttered dishonest words and when she denied he warned her to tell the truth because he was God's representative. He even cautioned her that if she failed to bequeath 150 scudi to her nephew, Paolo, she would be damned.¹⁸⁴

The archives of the Inquisition at Malta also contain references to confessors who disregarded the church's command not to make a penitent reveal his accomplice in sins of the flesh. Such was the case of the *padre priore* of the Carmelite convent of St. Teresa, Fr Giuseppe Vittorio a Sant'Angelo,¹⁸⁵ Fr Salvatore Calleja of Zebbug even

¹⁷⁷ For the canons of Trent regarding confession as well as a historical background of the sacrament, A. Marranzini - A. di Marino, *Il Sacramento della Penitenza. Analisi Storica e Prospettive Pastorali*.

¹⁷⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, ff. 392r-v.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 101r.

¹⁸⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 127A, f. 35v.

¹⁸¹ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, ff. 392r-393r.

¹⁸² *AIM, Proc.* 139, f. 122v.

¹⁸³ *AIM, Proc.* 124A, ff. 209r-210v.

¹⁸⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 120C, ff. 1367r-1376v.

¹⁸⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 122B, ff. 598r-599v. *AIM, Proc.* 125C, ff. 1293r-1294v.

menaced his women penitents that otherwise he would not give them absolution.¹⁸⁶ A far more stringent law was never to break the seal of confession.¹⁸⁷ According to the Fourth Lateran Council those who violated the confessional were to be suspended and relegated to a monastery of strict observance to do penance for the remainder of their life.¹⁸⁸ However, when Maria Dalli quarrelled with Grazia the latter reproached her with the sins she had confessed to her brother, Fr Salvatore Casha.¹⁸⁹ The Catholic church even reserved to itself the right to give or withhold the faculty to absolve sins to confessors. Yet, the Conventual Chaplain, Fra Blasio Conti, without having such power, confessed Rosalinda, the wife of Giuseppe Decos; and knowing that she was having a love affair with *padre* Costaguti, the University's rector, he asked her of their relations. He even took the liberty to touch her leg and moved his hand towards her *secret parts*.¹⁹⁰

Such acts on the part of confessors were called *sollecitazione ad turpia*, the tempting of penitents for dishonest ends.¹⁹¹ Since concubinage and illegitimate relations conducted in the light of day were no longer possible for them sinful priests made confession an outlet for their sexual needs.¹⁹² To prevent such scandal and the most obscene circumstances the confessional-box was invented¹⁹³ and the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office on 4 December 1694 had issued special directives to confessors of women. They were to be of mature age and of good morals; besides, penitents were to kneel at the side and not at

¹⁸⁶ AIM, Proc. 126A, ff. 312r-313v.

¹⁸⁷ Synodus Dioecesana ab Illustriss. et Reverendiss. Domino Fratre Davide Cocco Palmerio, p. 34.

¹⁸⁸ H. J. Schroeder, Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils, p. 260.

¹⁸⁹ AIM, Proc. 134A, ff. 491r-492v.

¹⁹⁰ AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 159r-160v.

¹⁹¹ AIM, Proc. 120A, f. 112r. On this topic, Adriano Prosperi, 'L'Inquisizione in Italia', Clero e Società nell'Italia Moderna, Mario Rosa, ed., pp. 310-320. That such acts could be possibly linked to Quietist influences see Claudio Madricardo, 'Sesso e Religione nel Seicento a Venezia: La Sollecitazione in Confessionale', studi Veneziani, n.s., vol. XV1 (1988), pp.121-170.

¹⁹² Carla Righi, 'L'Inquisizione a Modena nel '700', Formazione e Controllo dell'Opinione Publicaa Modena nel '700, Albano Biondi, ed., p. 75.

¹⁹³ Wietse De Boer, 'Ad Audiendi non Videnti Commoditatem'. Note sull'Introduzione del Confessionale Soprattutto in Italia', Quaderni Storici, n.s., vol.77 (1991), p. 543-572. See also John Bossy, 'The Social History of Confession in the Age of the Reformation', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, vol. 25 (1975), pp. 21-38.

the front of the confessional-box as well as in a place where they could be seen by all.¹⁹⁴ Even the popes sounded their warnings and urged penitents to report their tempters;¹⁹⁵ but with all these precautions in the period 1743-1798 such instances found in the proceedings of the Inquisition amounted to thirty-two. As Table 3.4 shows most of the accused came from the regular clergy but there was a good number of secular priests, too. Confessors were generally accused with seducing women but there are cases involving child abuse, too. Fra Giacinto Maggi, the parish priest of Porto Salvo, Valletta, kissed and fondled a boy with '*an impure love*'. A little later another young man came and still '*with words and actions*' he expressed his '*dishonest intent towards him*'.¹⁹⁶ Confessors were generally accused of illicit or love words. These ranged from simple expressions such as '*I love you, my heart*',¹⁹⁷ '*Your face attracts people*'¹⁹⁸ or '*I'll come to your house to torment you*'¹⁹⁹ to advice on posture during coitus.²⁰⁰ Fr Baldassare Marchesan, the organist of the parochial church of Senglea, was a jovial, short, pale, curly-haired priest with an aquiline nose. He was held by most to be a flirt and was in love with 35-year-old Elisabetta Durante. He told her during confession -

*'I have spent all this night with you ... I have dreamed that you have come to me
and you stayed on your knees by my bed. Then you went to sleep and then ...'*

He also accused Anna Lanzun, whom he had seen at Cospicua, of going there in search of handsome men and warned her that he would have pulled her by the hair if she had not been accompanied by another woman.²⁰¹ Worse still, Fr Michele Micallef, who claimed that priests could know a woman carnally once a month, was reputed to have illicit relations with Maria, the wife of Giuseppe Zarb of *casal* Balzan.²⁰²

¹⁹⁴ Synodus Dioecesisana ab Illustriss. et Reverendiss. Domino Fratre Davide Cocco Palmerio, Appendix, p. 94.

¹⁹⁵ See Gregory XV's Bull *Contra Solicitantes in Confessionibus* and the Holy Office's letter dated 27 September, 1624. *Ibid.*, pp. 87-93.

¹⁹⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, ff. 147r-148r.

¹⁹⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 122A, f. 195v.

¹⁹⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 125B, f. 646r.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 646v.

²⁰⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 120A, f. 111v.

²⁰¹ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, ff. 105r-132v.

²⁰² *AIM, Proc.* 122A, ff. 199r-202v.



A confessor would ask his penitent to visit him at his residence but though the parish priest of Naxxar, Fr Domenico Caruana, locked the door and tried to lay Grazia she successfully resisted his attempt.²⁰³ The Capuchin, Fra Emanuele, did succeed in his intent. Towards the end of June 1762 he was conducting the spiritual exercises at the parish church of Gharb, Gozo. After he had confessed Catarina, a widow, he asked her to come at 3 p.m. to his lodging-place, where he knew her carnally.²⁰⁴ It was early in the morning that, as previously agreed, Imperia Mifsud went to confess to the Dominican friar, *padre lettore* Gaetano. He led her to his cell through a staircase where they exchanged dishonest acts in the presence of two other friars, Fr Crespi and Fr Salonia.²⁰⁵

Table 3.4 Confessors accused of Solicitation, 1743-1798

Secular priests	12
Augustinians	5
Dominicans	5
Capuchins	4
Friars Minor	3
Discaled friars	2
Conventual Chaplains	1
Total	32

Another Capuchin, Fra Romualdo, took the liberty to touch Maddalena Burlo's private parts when he fetched her at her house to confess when she was ill.²⁰⁶ Other confessors were accused of touching their penitents' hands, legs, belly and face,²⁰⁷ even the covered breast²⁰⁸ of some woman though kissing was very rare, only three cases

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, ff. 203r-204v.

²⁰⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 126C, ff. 1025r-1028v.

²⁰⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 127A, ff. 310r-313v.

²⁰⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, ff. 287r-288v.

²⁰⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 134B, ff. 606r-609v.

²⁰⁸ This is what the Augustinian friar, Fra Michel'Angelo Mifsud, accused him on 8 February 1748- *AIM, Proc.* 122A, f. 67r. In the case of the friar minor, Fra Pio Francesco, it could have been an accident - *Ibid.*, ff. 376r-v.

being recorded.²⁰⁹ The aforementioned Fra Stefano Dauphin was the confessor of the monastery of St Orsola. He was in love with four of the nuns there but he loved *suor* Vincenza Assenza best, who would slide her finger through the grate for him to kiss. On his part he put to her dishonest questions about the parts of her body and he would have wished to see her naked. For fifteen times she lay bare her breast which she kissed and twice she uncovered her thigh.²¹⁰

These illicit transgressions even on the part of some of the clergy point to the Church's uphill battle to reform popular morality and belie the protests of moralists who try to paint an idyllic past from which the present has irretrievably deviated. A chief cause for such an irregular state of affairs must have been that the people regarded sexuality as a personal affair and resented the Church's intrusion in the regulation of their most intimate lives. Fully-fledged marriage was challenged by alternative forms of relationships, whether transitory or durable. This secular view of marriage is attested by the accompanying number of illegitimate births, dumped anonymously and indiscriminately at the *Ospedale dei bastardi*.²¹¹ Virginity, as in medieval Normandy,²¹² was not appreciated and what counted was that the girl got pregnant. To break the binding force of betrothal clandestine marriages were fairly common; but even the marriage bond itself was shattered through wife abandonment or *de facto* separations. It was not unusual either for abandoned wives to take on another husband even if they ran the risk of being found out and punished by the Inquisition, a most active agent in the regulation of sexuality in the post-Tridentine church.²¹³

²⁰⁹ See, for instance, *AIM, Proc.* 123A, ff. 399r-400v.

²¹⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, ff. 177v-178r.

²¹¹ John Howard, An Account of the Principal Lazarettos in Europe, p. 60. For the same situation in Portugal see the well-informed article by Isabel Dos Guimaraes Sa, 'Child Abandonment in Portugal: Legislation and Institutional Care', Continuity And Change, vol. 9, no. 1 (1994), pp. 68-89.

²¹² A. J. Finch, 'Sexual Relations and Marriage in Later Medieval Normandy', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, vo. 47, no. 2 (1996), p. 253.

²¹³ Jean-Pierre Dedieu, 'Le Modèle Sexuel: La Défense du Mariage Chretien', in L'Inquisition Espagnol. XVe-XIXe Siecle, Bartolome Bennassar, ed., pp. 316, 328.

PROTESTANTS, GREEK ORTHODOX AND JEWS

By the late eighteenth century contact between Malta and Protestant northern Europe was firmly established. Consuls were appointed on the island and ships from these nations regularly flowed into the Grand Harbour, making use of its fine facilities.¹ The rates at the Lazaretto were the cheapest in the Mediterranean² and merchandise for transit could be kept at the bonded stores.³ As Table 4.1 shows between 1760 and 1775 no less than 172 such vessels entered Malta. Some were warships⁴ and others underwent repairs.⁵ When a Dutch captain died on his ship, carrying sulphur to Amsterdam, he was brought to Malta in a box and buried in the 'Lutheran' cemetery at the Lazaretto.⁶ Some vessels were on their way with merchandise to their destinations⁷ but a number of them supplied the island itself with tobacco, oil, caviar, barley and wheat.⁸

¹ Michel Fontenay, 'Le Développement urbain du port de Malte du XVI^e e au XVIII^e e siècle', Le Carrefour Maltais, Christiane Villain-Gandossi, ed ,pp. 99-103.

² Alain Blondy, 'L'Ordre de Saint-Jean et l'essor Economique de Malte, 1530-1798, Le Carrefour Maltais, *ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

³ Jacques Godechot, Histoire de Malte, pp. 55-56.

⁴ *NLM, Arch. 6529, f. 211v.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, ff. 209v-210r.

⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 206v-207r.

⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 314r.

⁸ *NLM, Arch. 6528 - 6530, passim.*

Table 4.1. Northern Ships Undergoing Quarantine in Malta.

	Danish	Dutch	English	Swedish
1760	5	3	3	1
1761	1	3	7	1
1762	3	3	2	-
1763	1	8	2	-
1764	-	4	5	-
1765	2	1	10	-
1766	-	1	10	1
1767	-	3	15	-
1768	1	2	7	-
1769	-	2	2	-
1770	-	-	5	1
1771	-	-	4	-
1772		1	18	-
1773	-	-	7	1
1774	-	3	9	-
1775	-	3	10	1
Total	13	37	116	6

Source: NLM, Arch. 6528-6530.

English ships far outnumbered those of other nations; and as Mgr Durini reported in 1738 they called at Malta 'almost continuously',⁹ six of them entering the Grand Harbour on 31 December 1772.¹⁰ In the seventeenth century English commerce in the Mediterranean had risen to immense proportions.¹¹ The treaty between England and Spain in 1604 opened Leghorn, Naples and Sicily to the enterprise of English merchants, who also established themselves in the Ottoman Empire. The island of Malta, in the centre of this inland sea, stood much to gain from this situation. It became an English naval base where Charles II stationed two men-of-war to protect freedom of trade against the Barbary corsairs.¹² One of the creeks in the Grand Harbour, henceforth known as *Porto degli Inglesi*, started to be used as an anchorage for English merchant ships. Malta's pre-eminence was further enhanced in 1753 when an act prohibited any goods from the Levant to be landed in England without a clean bill of health from the consul in the port where they had been laden, unless they had been aired in a Lazaretto.¹³ The impression one gets, however, on reading the Maltese quarantine registers is that direct trade with England was non-existent by the late eighteenth century. It was so insignificant, indeed, as to be ignored by British customs statistics. Much of the produce that entered Malta came from Mediterranean countries or else was for transit. The English consul arranged for the landing and handling of such merchandise as oil, soap, tallow, couscous, butter, leather¹⁴ and wheat.¹⁵ Unlike their counterparts in the Levant¹⁶ consuls in Malta even traded on their own account and

⁹ AIM, *Corr.* 95, f. 61v. A similar remark had been made earlier in 1723 by Mgr Antonio Ruffo: '... *the English arrive in this island daily*' - AIM, *Corr.* 22, f. 219r.

¹⁰ NLM, *Arch.* 6530, f. 139r.

¹¹ Ralph Davis, 'England and the Mediterranean, 1570-1670', *Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England*, F. J. Fisher, ed., pp. 117-137.

¹² NLM, *Arch.* 261, ff. 124r-125r.

¹³ Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, p. 149.

¹⁴ NLM, *Arch.* 6529, f. 383v.

¹⁵ NLM, *Arch.* 6530, f. 142v.

¹⁶ Ralph Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square. English Traders in the Levant in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 46.

John Dodsworth and Angel Rutter were the agents of merchants in north Africa and Smyrne. Rutter handled live animals, especially oxen, but also soap, salted meat, dates, leather, and hides. It was only towards the end of the century that English goods were sold in Malta. As another English consul, William England, reported to the Foreign Office on 13 January 1790, coal, salted fish, salmon, herrings in brine, salted butter, different types of cheese, cutlery, Manchester cloth and dried codfish sold well in Malta, though foodstuffs were best consumed at Christmas time during Lent.¹⁷

By the eighteenth century Protestants were no longer a threat to the Catholic church; and in Malta, like Venice and Friuli,¹⁸ as well as in Spain,¹⁹ the preoccupation with them, which had characterised the Inquisition in earlier periods, abated considerably. Comparing Tables 2.2 and 4.2 it is easily seen that they were no longer molested by the Holy Office. There are no instances in the archives of the Inquisition of this period that, as at the time of the Inquisitor, Mgr Fabrizio Verallo (1600-5), Protestants were imprisoned²⁰ or, as in the case of the two Quakers, Katherine Evans and Sarah Cheevers, treated as mad²¹ because of their religious belief.²² All the same the fear that they

*'disseminate great errors in this Island and impress several heresies upon the hearts of idiots'*²³ was great and they were to be kept under the watchful eye of the Tribunal.²⁴ Before setting out on their destination, therefore, the Inquisitors were issued with instructions which

¹⁷ Quoted in Michela D'Angelo, *Mercanti Inglesi a Malta, 1800-1825*, p. 56.

¹⁸ E. William Monter and John Tedeschi, 'Toward A Statistical Profile of the Italian Inquisition, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries', in *The Inquisition In Early Modern Europe*, Gustav Henningsen, John Tedeschi and Charles Amiel, eds., p. 134.

¹⁹ Jean-Pierre Dedieu, *L'Administration de la foi : L'Inquisition de Tolède (XVIe-XVIIIe Siècle)*, p. 296.

²⁰ For such examples, *AIM, Corr.* 1, f. 165r. *AIM, Corr.* 88, f. 94r.

²¹ For this incident see T. R., *A Brief History of the Voyage of Katherine Evans and Sarah Cheevers to the Island of Malta where the Apostle Paul Suffered Shipwreck*. Also, Andrew P. Vella, *The Tribunal of the Inquisition in Malta*, pp. 31-37.

²² In 1704 the Cardinal Inquisitors ordered Mgr Giorgio Spinola that Protestants who arrived in Malta, even if they stayed on board ships, were to be prosecuted but at the instance of the Grand Master they were allowed to sell their merchandise without being molested - *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 31v-32r.

²³ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 143v.

Table 4.2 'Heresies' denounced to the Holy Office, 1546-81.

Heresy	No. of cases	%
'Heresy'	208	41.9
Abstinence	43	8.7
Prohibited Books	43	8.7
Blasphemy	23	4.6
Witchcraft	16	3.2
Apostasy	12	2.4
Bigamy	6	1.2
Others	146	29.4

Source: C. Cassar, 'The First Decades of the Inquisition, 1546-81'

always contained a reference to sailors, soldiers and merchants from Northern Europe. These could possibly have been accompanied by their preachers, who, on disembarking,²⁵ performed their 'impious rites' and Calvinistic Suppers. The Inquisitors were briefed to prevent such activities; they were to see to it, too, that they did not distribute heretical literature and other pernicious books which ridiculed ecclesiastics, Catholic rites, the sacraments and the Pope's authority.²⁶ Contact with them was so shunned that when in 1709 an English ship with some forty crew on board entered Malta the parish priests earnestly appealed to the Inquisitor to take prompt action, and Mgr Caracciolo demanded the *Gran Visconte*, or Minister of Police, that they reside in 'some remote and segregated place' until their departure.²⁷ Those who had met the son of the Landgrave of Hesse on a visit to Malta in 1629 were to seek a confessor to absolve them from the censures they had

²⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 13, f. 123r.

²⁵ For the ease with which Englishmen went ashore and several Hospitallers and Maltese boarded ships anchored in the grand harbour see Henry Teonge, *The Diary of Henry Teonge*, pp. 44-51.

²⁶ *AIM, Microfilm* no. 6530, ff. 15r-v.

²⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 18, ff. 141r-142v.

incurred.²⁸ Merchants could reside on the island only with the approval of the Cardinal Inquisitors²⁹ and only for an established period of time. This could range from two³⁰ to three³¹ months or - as in the case of Simon Calvas, a merchant from Nîmes, who transported cloth and other merchandise for the use of the crew of the Order's galleys - for six months³² or even one year.³³ It seems that the concession concerned only individuals since when in 1735 the English merchants resident at Messina asked to be allowed to come to Malta with their families in case war broke out between England and Spain, the *Suprema* refused their petition.³⁴ Protestants in the retinue of French and German knights and those of them who worked on board the Order's galleys³⁵ were to be reconciled to the Church with discretion and prudence or else sent back home.³⁶ The case of the Danish count, de Louvenor, though, presented a special problem. He had come to Malta in 1737 to learn the art of navigation on board the corsair ships of the Order. Mgr Durini talked the matter over with the Grand Master but Despuig had his hands tied since the Dane had been recommended by Cardinal de Fleury. The Inquisitor was assured, however, that the count did not discuss religious matters with anybody and retired with his servant to the captain's cabin during mass and the morning and night prayers. However, he sang his prayers loudly for everybody to hear and ate meat on Fridays and Saturdays, which was a bad example especially to the young French Hospitallers already imbued with 'new maxims'.³⁷

²⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 5, f. 153r.

²⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 15, f. 92r.

³⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 11, f. 166r.

³¹ *AIM, Corr.* 13, ff. 125r-126r. *AIM, Corr.* 14, f. 105r.

³² *AIM, Corr.* 14, f. 199r.

³³ *AIM, Corr.* 13, ff. 134r-135r, 228r.

³⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 37v-38r.

³⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 4, f. 147r.

³⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 18, f. 172r. *AIM, Corr.* 19, f. 62r.

³⁷ For the Tribunal's relief the count was soon called back home by his Government - *AIM, Corr.* 26, f. 235r. *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 54r-v.

The Tribunal's apprehensions, therefore, were not at all imaginary; and, as Mgr Pallavicino informed Rome, Protestants were wont 'to disturb the peace of the Island in matters of religion by their scandals'.³⁸ They did not pull off their hats and kneel down when the *Viatico* passed by; and, as in the case of the three Frenchmen, Pierre Gardio, Jacques Bourguet and Louis de la Farelle, they did mock Catholic rites, for instance the procession held on Maundy Thursday commemorating the Passion and Death of Our Lord, in which flagellants took part.³⁹ The three were arraigned in the Tribunal of the Inquisition⁴⁰ but this does not mean that in Malta Protestants were objects of hostile attention. No *Comisarios*, for instance, the part-time lay officials of the Spanish Inquisition, visited ships that came into the harbour to find out whether 'Lutheran' services had been held on board; and nor were Protestants forced to attend mass, either.⁴¹ Indeed, they could even be protected as happened in 1608 when the Cardinal Inquisitors ordered Mgr Carbonese not to molest the English corsair, Captain Edward, and his men,⁴² whose forays against the infidels were of inestimable service to Christendom.⁴³ They enjoyed freedom of action provided that they did not enter church during Mass or other Divine service⁴⁴ and did not offend in any way the Catholic faith.⁴⁵

Unlike their ancestors in the distant sixteenth century they had no Catholic background, and had been brought up in the new faith. As in Spain⁴⁶ those of them who appeared in the Tribunal did so voluntarily in order to be converted to the Catholic Church.

³⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 13, f. 143r.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, ff. 53r, 54r. For this traditional Maltese pageant, Gorg Aquilina, *Il-Gimgha l-Kbira tal-Belt*.

⁴⁰ For these proceedings see *AIM, Proc.* 78A, ff. 224r-228v.

⁴¹ Pauline Croft, 'Englishmen and the Spanish Inquisition', *The English Historical Review*, vol. 87 (1972), pp. 249-268.

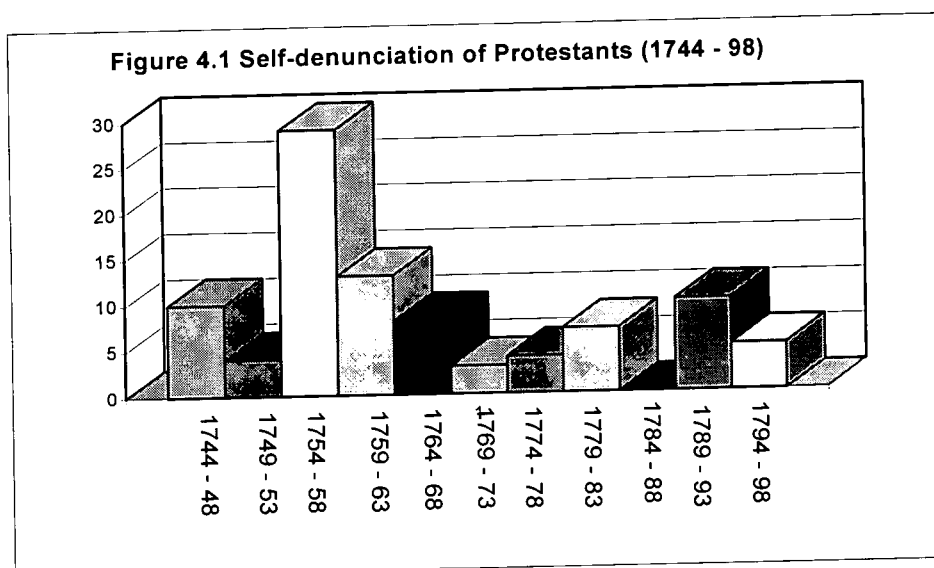
⁴² *AIM, Corr.* 1, f. 343r.

⁴³ *AIM, Corr.* 2, f. 91r.

⁴⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 18, f. 229r.

⁴⁵ Victor Mallia-Milanes, 'English Merchants' Initial Contacts With Malta : A Reconsideration', *Melita Historica*, vol. VI, no. 4 (1975), pp. 356-9.

⁴⁶ William Monter, *Frontiers of Heresy*, p. 250.



Between 1743 and 1798 there were ninety-five such instances in the Maltese Holy Office. As Figure 4.1 shows the greatest concentration was in the ten-year period 1754-63, with forty-two examples, or 45.9 per cent of the total. A plausible explanation for such high incidence could have been the Seven Years War. For instance, John Bottomly of Hull,⁴⁷ Thomas Sciard of Scotland,⁴⁸ George Habuet of Dorchester⁴⁹ and James Cove of Essex⁵⁰ were all on board English ships when they were caught by French men-of-war and brought to Malta as prisoners-of-war.

Most of the self-accusers whose confession could be identified were Lutheran or Calvinist, though half of them are vaguely described as 'Protestant'. The great majority were inhabitants of the British Isles⁵¹ but as Table 4.3 shows there was also a sprinkling of Swedes, Germans, Danes, Swiss, French, Dutch, Prussians and Americans, with Hungary,

⁴⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 124B, f. 835r.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, ff. 917r-922v.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 923v.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 933v.

⁵¹ Cp. converts in Charles 11's Spain: Germans, 43%; Swiss, 16%; English, 14%; French, 13%; Dutch, 9%; Scandinavians, 5%. William Monter, *Frontiers of Heresy*, Table 17, p. 252.

Table 4.3 Origin of Protestants and their sects (1743-1798)

	'Protestant'	Anglican	Presbyterian	Lutheran	Calvinist	Zwinglian	TOTAL
England	37	1	-	1	1	-	40
Sweden	1	-	-	9	-	-	10
Germany	-	-	-	8	1	-	9
Denmark	-	-	-	7	-	-	7
Switzerland	-	-	-	-	4	1	5
France	-	-	-	-	4	-	4
Holland	1	-	-	2	1	-	4
Ireland	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Scotland	1	-	2	-	1	-	4
Prussia	-	-	-	1	1	-	2
America	2	-	-	1	-	-	3
Hungary	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Norway	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Turin	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
TOTAL	47	1	2	31	13	1	95

Norway and Turin supplying one case each. Only one was a woman, Marie Russion of Montpellier; she followed her husband, Jean, who two years previously had migrated to Malta as a potter.⁵² Most were sailors and soldiers on board merchant- and battle-ships, though a number, like Johann Gottfried, were corsairs. This Lutheran from Saxony, who had enrolled with the corsair captain, Andrea Scarinci, at Corsica, stayed in the Levant for three months, after which he came to Malta with a prize.⁵³ Others were carpenters,⁵⁴ or pilots⁵⁵; whereas Michele Laub of Copenhagen had been sent to Malta by the king of Denmark to attend the nautical school.⁵⁶ Federico Augusto Umbtein, a thirty-two-year-old German, was a surgeon⁵⁷ but Carlo Haffner of Strasbourg was a corporal in the Malta Regiment or, as it was then called, the *Reggimento del Quartiere*.⁵⁸ James Scelen of Berne had first enlisted as a soldier with the troops of the king of Sardinia, then with those of the Republic of Genoa and the kingdom of Naples; when the galleys of the Order visited Syracuse he escaped from that garrison to Malta.⁵⁹

Proselytising was assiduously pursued and the English Catholic consul, Alexander Young, was indefatigable in trying to convert several of his countrymen, for which purpose he translated the catechism into English.⁶⁰ James Cole, an English hairdresser, was particularly active, too. He lent religious literature and showed the 'errors of Anglicanism' to John Casey of Newport⁶¹ and to the two Londoners, Thomas Fennelly⁶² and Edward

⁵² *AIM, Proc.* 120C, f. 1389v.

⁵³ *AIM, Proc.* 122A, ff. 153r-156v.

⁵⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 124B, f. 923v.

⁵⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 120A, f. 436r. Among the latter could be mentioned John Casey of Newport who worked on board the ship captained by the Venetian vice-admiral, Condulmer. *AIM, Proc.* 135A, f. 334v.

⁵⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 422v.

⁵⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 131B, ff. 746r-753v.

⁵⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 134B, ff. 718r-725v.

⁵⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 121C, ff. 1546r-v.

⁶⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 95, f. 116v.

⁶¹ *AIM, Proc.* 125A, ff. 334r-341v.

⁶² *Ibid.*, ff. 342r-349v.

Harden, a sailor on board the corsair ship of the Grand Duke of Modena.⁶³ In this activity Cole was supported by Peter Swan of Guttonborg. When the Protestant, Johann Berg, a seventeen-year-old artist from Amsterdam, arrived in Malta, Swan conducted him to various churches in Valletta, where he heard prayers and sermons.⁶⁴ The Capuchins of Floriana,⁶⁵ the Dominicans⁶⁶ and the Minor Observants of Valletta,⁶⁷ carried such missionary work, too; but the convent of Santa Teresa of the Discalced Carmelites at Cospicua appears to have been the centre of conversions. It was here that Raphael Robinson of Newcastle came⁶⁸ to seek advice from *padre* Carlo Felice *a Santa Rosa*⁶⁹ and his companions, Fr Claudio *a Nostro Sacramento*⁷⁰ and Fr Riccardo *a Sant'Angelo*. It was at the hospital though that the latter met the Anglican Isaac Austin; and here it was, too - where he stayed for two months - that James Grand was '*enlightened of the falsehood of the Protestant sect*'.⁷¹ So were Richard Raftel, who abjured in the hands of Mgr Zondadari in the room of the *guardiano* of the Holy Infirmary;⁷² William Milmar;⁷³ the Irishman from Dublin, Richard Walsh;⁷⁴ and John Moore, who was much edified by the inmates' recitation of prayers, twice or thrice a day.⁷⁵

⁶³ AIM, Proc. 132A, ff. 87r-94r.

⁶⁴ AIM, Proc. 136B, ff. 601r-602v.

⁶⁵ AIM, Proc. 127A, f. 279r. AIM, Proc. 134B, f. 718v.

⁶⁶ AIM, Proc. 124A, ff. 106v, 342v, 459v.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 294v.

⁶⁸ AIM, Proc. 124B, f. 867v.

⁶⁹ AIM, Proc. 131B, f. 747r.

⁷⁰ AIM, Proc. 132B, f. 708v. AIM, Proc. 135A, f. 402r.

⁷¹ AIM, Proc. 123B, f. 565v.

⁷² AIM, Proc. 132B, f. 696r.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, ff. 1042r-v.

⁷⁴ AIM, Proc. 137, f. 153v.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 145v.

An obstinate opponent of such conversions was the fore-mentioned John Dodsworth, the English consul in Malta. He was a restless character who countenanced Englishmen who disregarded Malta's neutrality and conducted war operations in Maltese territorial waters.⁷⁶ To protect himself he hoisted the British coat-of-arms over the door of his residence but he was disavowed by the British government itself⁷⁷ and replaced by Angel Rutter. Though a Catholic he reserved the most debasing words for those Protestants who joined the Catholic faith, describing them as drunkards and *canaille*. The Dominican, Fra Waldauro Spucches, a Palermitan who lived at Valletta, and one of the interpreters of the Tribunal, claimed before the Inquisitor that his efforts to convert Northerners were often being foiled by Dodsworth. The latter would have liked that captains threw the Dominican overboard when he went to talk to the crew;⁷⁸ and he even so much as coveted the authority to punish all those who were reconciled to Catholicism.⁷⁹ William Simpson of Jarmouth, England, claimed he had been incarcerated precisely because of his conversion.⁸⁰ When in November 1755 Dodsworth was asked to allow an English sailor held at the *Castellania*, or lay prisons, to go to the Holy Office to abjure his faith, he accused the Inquisitor of interfering with his affairs. He even reprimanded his assistant, Daniel Collins, who was endeavouring to convert a Dutchman, ill at the *Sacra Infermeria*, and he forbade him to go there any more.⁸¹

Dodsworth claimed the right to reclaim Englishmen who sought refuge in the convents. At the time of Mgr Passionei, two young sailors, each of the age of twenty, escaped from their ship anchored in the Grand Harbour, and went to the Inquisitor's palace asking to become Catholics. The Prelate, who also undertook to pay the expenses for their upkeep, put them under the charge of a Discalced Carmelite, who was to teach them the

⁷⁶ Joseph Galea, 'English Privateers in Malta And A British Consul's Misfortunes In The Eighteenth Century', *The Malta Year Book*, 1973, pp. 377-388. For the same article see *Revue de l'Ordre Souveraine Militaire de Malte*, vol. XVI (1958), pp. 218-227.

⁷⁷ R. Cavaliero, 'John Dodsworth, a Consul in Malta', *Mariners' Mirror* (Nov. 1957), pp. 306-321.

⁷⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 124A, f. 67v.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 66v.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, ff. 69r-v.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, ff. 66r-67r..

rudiments of the Catholic faith. They enjoyed sanctuary only for nine or ten days, until Dodsworth one morning came to fetch them and took them both with him.⁸² The next Inquisitor, Mgr Salviati, sent three Englishmen to the Dominican convent of Porto Salvo at Valletta. They were instructed by Fr Spucches and they were given the last room in the convent's lower corridor near that of their mentor. After a few days Dodsworth sent his servant to Fr Giacinto Maggi, the parish priest, to inquire whether the three sailors were really there. Some time later the consul himself met the parish priest and expressed surprise that he had put his convent in danger of being attacked. When the friar denied that there were any Englishmen hidden in the convent Dodsworth replied that he would refrain from conducting any search simply to avoid doing any harm to the community. Nonetheless, at lunch time, while the friars were leaving the refectory, six English officers were seen going round the convent; they went up to the terrace, where the fugitives had first been hidden, as well as into the church.⁸³

Dodsworth may well have been apprehensive lest those converted did so only to stay behind in Malta rather than because they were really convinced of the truth of Catholicism.⁸⁴ In this he was only echoing the mind of Cardinal Barberini who in 1643, in answer to the entreaties of Mgr Gori Pannellini that Rome intervened that converts recovered their salaries,⁸⁵ had expressed himself thus -

'The fear that fewer heretics would reconcile themselves if they don't recover their salaries is not substantial; it is rather evidence that conversions are of pure interest and not the result of a healthy conscience'.⁸⁶

This was also the opinion of the Catholic captain, the Irishman Peter Bommart, who, when three of his sailors deserted his ship, appeared before Mgr Durini and belied that they 'had been called by God'. The case of Carlo Federico Gramstorff of Stockholm is a classic

⁸² *Ibid.*, ff. 74v-75r.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, ff. 71v-72r.

⁸⁴ In 17th-century Valencia the excuse would be to find work. William Monter, *Frontiers of Heresy*, p. 251.

⁸⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 8, f. 44r.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 59r.

example. He had enlisted as a sailor for seven scudi a month on board an English ship; then, regretting this agreement, he decided to stay in Malta.⁸⁷ This was not an isolated instance, William Wallen⁸⁸ and George Grigg of Edinburgh did likewise. The latter had sailed in the Mediterranean for three years; in 1759 his ship entered the Grand Harbour, and, so he claimed, 'I left the service and stopped on this island to realise what I had been meditating for three years and become a Catholic'.⁸⁹ Ship captains were reluctant to release their men, who were to be replaced by others. As a precautionary measure the crew could be placed inside the Government prisons and even, as happened to a Swedish Lutheran who expressed his wish to embrace Catholicism, put in chains.⁹⁰ John Jones had to escape from a warehouse where he was staying with other sailors to go to the Inquisitor's palace.⁹¹ There is no sequel to this incident, but John Walls, who had deserted his ship at Smirne and became a Catholic in Malta, was forced on board by Dodsworth.⁹²

Protestants were not the only 'heretics' to embrace Catholicism. Some Greeks did likewise. The Greek community, some five hundred strong, had followed the Hospitallers to Malta from Rhodes in 1530⁹³ but by the second half of the eighteenth century⁹⁴ few families were left on the island. This is corroborated by the *Status Animarum* for the year 1797, which lists only fifty-nine communicants for that year, and by the paucity of baptisms and marriages for the period 1750-1800, seventy-six and twenty-four respectively.⁹⁵ Those of them who could be identified in the Proceedings of the Inquisition were mantle-makers,

⁸⁷ AIM, Proc. 131B, ff. 722r-727v.

⁸⁸ AIM, Proc. 122B, f. 606v.

⁸⁹ AIM, Proc. 124C, f. 1592v.

⁹⁰ AIM, Proc. 124B, f. 938v.

⁹¹ AIM, Proc. 124A, f. 459v.

⁹² AIM, Proc. 121B, f. 696v.

⁹³ Stanley Fiorini, 'Demographic Growth and the Urbanization of the Maltese Countryside to 1798', *Hospitaller Malta, 1530-1798*, p. 299. See also the same author's 'The Rhodiot Community of Birgu, A Maltese City 1530C - 1550', *Library of Mediterranean History*, no. 1 (1994), pp. 183-241.

⁹⁴ AIM, Corr. 94, ff. 177v, 241v.

⁹⁵ Parish Archives, Greek Catholic Church, Valletta - *Libro dei Battesimi, delle Conferme e dei Matrimoni. Libro Secondo*.

corsairs,⁹⁶ caulkers,⁹⁷ galley convicts⁹⁸ and servants to knights.⁹⁹ They had their own consul, Giuseppe Elia Luri¹⁰⁰ who, on 1 January 1762, received among other merchandise, 150 *oche* currants and a sack of sesame.¹⁰¹ These were only a small sample of goods that Greek vessels brought to Malta. Such commodities included not only wheat, by far the most common import, but also flour, barley, cheese, honey, oil, tobacco, rice, olives, beans and wood for the construction of ships.¹⁰² Some, for instance Pietro Casulachi and his 16-year-old son, Manoli, of Candia, found themselves here only accidentally, having been rounded up by Maltese corsairs in their villages.¹⁰³ In this case they were released on the initiative of the Holy Office who offered its services to Catholics and schismatics alike so that, as Mgr Stoppani put it,

*'they did not endure the hard condition of slavery to the prejudice of the Catholic religion.'*¹⁰⁴

This co-existence between the two faiths, which also involved helping the Greek Orthodox recover their goods taken by Catholic corsairs, is evidence of the tolerance the Roman church showed towards the Greeks of the levant who 'have never been denounced as schismatics'.¹⁰⁵ The dividing-line between the two faiths must not have been a hard and fast one and Don Silvestro Bruno, the Papas of the Catholic Greek church at Valletta, left out the words *filioque procedat* when reciting the creed and was reported saying that Easter should fall on the day celebrated by the Greek Orthodox.¹⁰⁶ Don Constantino buried two

⁹⁶ NLM, Arch. 570, f. 187r.

⁹⁷ AIM, Proc. 120B, f. 958v.

⁹⁸ AIM, Proc. 113B, f. 303v.

⁹⁹ AIM, Proc. 131A, f. 303v.

¹⁰⁰ NLM, Arch. 6530, f. 154r.

¹⁰¹ NLM, Arch. 6529, f. 67r.

¹⁰² NLM, Arch. 6528-6529, *passim*.

¹⁰³ AIM, Proc. 123A, ff. 373r, 385r.

¹⁰⁴ AIM, Corr. 95, f. 13r.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, ff. 19v-20v.

¹⁰⁶ He was even reported of saying that Pope John XXI was a woman, who got pregnant - AIM, Proc. 122A, ff. 17r-26r.

Muscovites at his church at Vittoriosa¹⁰⁷ and another Papas, Don Giuseppe Cuccia, received mass stipends from them.¹⁰⁸

On the other hand in the period under survey I have come across eight cases of them who left their church to join that of Rome. Even in this case the preferential treatment is apparent since they did not abjure formally their old religion but simply made a profession of faith. They came from Athens;¹⁰⁹ Tripolitza, the capital of Morea;¹¹⁰ the Greek islands like Argentiera;¹¹¹ Transylvania¹¹² and Russia.¹¹³ Two of them were Papas, one of whom, the 55-year-old Lafronio Macri, was a monk of St Basilio and a former abbot of the monastery of St John the Baptist.¹¹⁴ The other, one Crisanto, came to Malta in 1790 after he had been ordered to leave Silesia after Prussia had declared war against Russia and the Emperor. He was in search of some Greek parish that could afford him a living.¹¹⁵

As in the case of the Greeks the documentation in the Inquisition archives regarding Jews in eighteenth-century Malta is so fortuitous and sporadic that it is greatly difficult to retrace with some form of precision a picture of their activities. This uncertainty does not concern the Jewish slaves who lived in Malta during the rule of the Order of St John. Members of this community, which has been ably studied by Cecil Roth,¹¹⁶ included

¹⁰⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 129, ff. 163r-176r.

¹⁰⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 135A, ff. 169r-196r.

¹⁰⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 135A, ff. 199r-224v.

¹¹⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 130, ff. 110r-113v.

¹¹¹ *AIM, Proc.* 120B, ff. 665r-666v.

¹¹² *AIM, Proc.* 131A, ff. 303r-308v.

¹¹³ *AIM, Proc.* 129, ff. 228r-233v. *AIM, Proc.* 131B, ff. 386r-387v. *AIM, Proc.* 132B, ff. 575r-576v.

¹¹⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 130, ff. 110r-113v.

¹¹⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 135A, ff. 199r-212v.

¹¹⁶ Cecil Roth, 'The Slave Community of Malta', *The Memorah Journal*, Dec. 1929, pp. 219-233. This article is repeated as the second part of the same author's article 'The Jews of Malta', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society*, vol.12 (1931), pp. 212-242.

shoemakers,¹¹⁷ tailors¹¹⁸ and pawn-brokers¹¹⁹ while others served in the Holy Infirmary¹²⁰ or on the Order's galleys.¹²¹ But were there any free Jews resident with their families? On 24 February 1544 Paul III had granted the Jews a charter by which they were allowed to settle at the papal city of Ancona.¹²² However, on 12 February 1729 Mgr Serbelloni reported there were only three Jews then resident in Malta,¹²³ and references are generally to individuals rather than to communities. Whatever the case they must have been as in Friuli¹²⁴ and Naples¹²⁵ only a very small number not to be compared at all to the situation in 1240 when 2.94 per cent of the total population were Jews. By 1493, the year of their expulsion from the islands, they numbered some five hundred, that is 3 per cent of the Maltese population, 4 or 5 per cent that of Gozo and almost 30 per cent that of Mdina, the capital of Malta. It was a thriving and fully integrated community, doing watch- duty and angara service (corvee work) and engaged in trading and in the purchase and sale of land.¹²⁶

What was the legal status of those Jews who occasionally resided in Malta in the next three hundred-odd years? And what was their position in the community? Were they assimilated within Maltese Christian society or did they live on its fringes without taking any part in communal life? Present research cannot as yet answer these queries satisfactorily but it does not seem that such Jews as may have lived in Malta were an oppressed

¹¹⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1561r.

¹¹⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 132B, f.

¹¹⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 124B, f. 537r.

¹²⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 127B, ff. 502r-v.

¹²¹ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1561r.

¹²² Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550-1670*, pp. 173-4.

¹²³ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 226v.

¹²⁴ Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, 'The Jews and the Inquisition of Aquileia and Concordia', *Jews and Conversos. Studies in Society and the Inquisition*, Yosef Kaplan, ed., p.235.

¹²⁵ Giuseppe Coniglio, 'Società e Inquisizione nel Vice Regno di Napoli', *Annuario dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea*, vols. XXXVI-XXXVII (1985-1986), pp. 130-134.

¹²⁶ For an excellent study of the Jews in this period, Godfrey Wettinger, *The Jews of Malta in the Late Middle Ages*.

minority.¹²⁷ They did not live in a ghetto and one, Samuele Farfara, who lived in Malta for more than five years, resided at the palace of the Grand Master and kept the key of his room.¹²⁸ True, like all infidels, they entered Malta only with the Grand Master's permission, under punishment of arrest and the confiscation of their goods.¹²⁹ They also had to present a memorial to the Inquisitor¹³⁰ for which they paid 1 scudo to the chancellor on their first application and 4 tari on each successive confirmation.¹³¹ They could not lend money at interest,¹³² approach fortresses and other military positions; it was prohibited them to hawk their wares in the streets but only trade in the Valletta market.¹³³ In accordance with Paul 1V's Bull *Cum nimis absurdum* of 1555¹³⁴ they wore a yellow, finger-wide ribbon tied round their turban to differentiate them from the Christians.¹³⁵ They were not supposed to go abroad at night time, either; though the Tunisian merchant, Juda Sitbon, disobeyed this order and went several times to the theatre and even to see the fireworks at Valletta. He had arrived in Malta together with his servant in 1768 and lived in two rooms at the far end of the *barriera* or quarantine post. They were locked inside at the first *Ave Maria* by an officer of the *Gran Visconte*, who then opened it in the morning well before sunrise. This was no act of discrimination against Jews but affected all inmates in this place of

¹²⁷ A. Mifsud, 'Tracce dell'Antica Vitalità Giudaica Maltese', estratto dall'*Archivum Melitense*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1912).

¹²⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 94, ff. 216v, 226v.

¹²⁹ *NLM, Libr.* 704, f. 102r.

¹³⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 2v. On 1 Aug. 1716 the Cardinal Inquisitors left it to the Pro-Inquisitor's discretion whether to let Sabatai Gignati come to Malta from Venice with his son and servant to attend to his business affairs which demanded his presence here - *AIM, Corr.* 21, f. 61r.

¹³¹ *NLM, Libr.* 703, f. 21r.

¹³² The literature on this particularly Jewish activity is vast. See, among others, Reinhold C. Mueller, 'Les Preteurs Juifs de Venise au Moyen Age', *Annales, É.S.C.*, (1975), pp. 1277-1302. Yom Tov Assis, 'Hebrew Moneylenders in Medieval Santa Coloma de Queralt', *Jews and Conversion. Studies in Society and the Inquisition*, Yosef Kaplan, ed., pp. 21-38. Anthony Molho, 'A Note on Jewish Money-lenders in Tuscany in the Late Trecento and Early Quattrocento', *Renaissance Essays in honour of Hans Baron*, Anthony Molho and John A. Tedeschi, eds., pp. 99-117.

¹³³ *Codice Rohan. Del Dritto Municipale di Malta*, pp. 254-261.

¹³⁴ Anna Antoniazzi Villa, 'Per la Storia degli Ebrei a Venezia : Pier Cesare Ily Zorattini ed I 'Processi del Sant'Uffizio di Venezia contro Ebrei e Giudaizzanti'', *Nuova Rivista Storica*, vol 67, nos. 1-2 (1983), p. 139.

¹³⁵ *NLM, Libr.* 703, f. 21v. Philip Skippon, *A Journey Thro' Part of the Low-Countries, Germany, Italy and France*, Annsham Churchill, ed., p. 621.

quarantine. During daytime anybody could enter at will; and according to the testimony of Giuseppe D'Andria, a Ragusan living in Floriana, Judas was often visited by prostitutes and frequented a nearby warehouse.¹³⁶

The Sitbon family, which also included Samuel and Elia, was extremely active in the business between Tunis and Malta. Juda travelled several times from Tunis and Sousse in 1768¹³⁷ and imported not only live animals, especially oxen,¹³⁸ and calves, but also beans, canary seed, spelt,¹³⁹ dates, camel skins and tobacco,¹⁴⁰ barley¹⁴¹ and maize.¹⁴² He was also engaged in the transit trade and on 27 June 1768 he brought to Malta on board the Ragusan ship *La Madonna del Rosario, S. Biagio e S. Nicola* (captain Luca Sargotta) 833 jars of oil, 69 jars soap, 13 jars sallow, 2 sacks of couscous, 6 jars butter, 970 salted oxen hides, 380 heads of oxen and 11 dozen tanned sheep leather.¹⁴³ Commerce between the two countries, as L. Valensi has already observed,¹⁴⁴ must have been thriving. On 6 August 1760 three Jews had arrived in Malta on board a Ragusan *checcio* from Monastir, bringing 179 casks of oil for Jusef Coen and Company.¹⁴⁵ And if this evidence is too flimsy about information on imported products other references may give us some clue about such contacts. Between 1743 and 1782 nineteen Jews loaded seventy-two ships from Tunis to Malta. In 1753 Abraham da Paz, a Jewish merchant, sent 170 *quintali* olives and 11 bottles

¹³⁶ AIM, Proc. 129, ff. 335r-338v.

¹³⁷ NLM, Arch. 6529, *passim*.

¹³⁸ Ibid., ff. 404r-v.

¹³⁹ Ibid., f. 398v.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., f. 363r.

¹⁴¹ NLM, Arch. 6530, f. 29v.

¹⁴² Ibid., f. 128v.

¹⁴³ NLM, Arch. 6529, f. 383v.

¹⁴⁴ L. Valensi, 'les relations Commerciales Entre la Regence de Tunis et Malte au XV¹¹e Siècle', *Cahiers de Tunisie* (1963), p. 81.

¹⁴⁵ NLM, Arch. 6529, f. 6r.

of oil to Malta.¹⁴⁶ Salamon Nataf,¹⁴⁷ Jacob Herif,¹⁴⁸ Mustafa, son of Hamsa,¹⁴⁹ and Friza Abile,¹⁵⁰ all of Tunis, were other traders with Malta. Abraham Busnah, who had his warehouse at the marina of Valletta and was, possibly, in frequent contact with north Africa¹⁵¹ had in his service Aaron Acris; the clerk, Jacob; and Raffaele, a Jew from Susa. He seems to have been of some importance since he was visited by several merchant Jews who sometimes ate together. But, again, what was their share in the exportation of local goods?

There is no indication that Jews were persecuted for their faith; and those who molested them - throwing stones at them or insulting them on their way to their burial - could be sentenced to five years on the galleys.¹⁵² Jews worshipped at their synagogue,¹⁵³ baked their unleavened bread for the Passover and had their own cemetery, which had been paid for by the *Cassa degli Ebrei* of Leghorn.¹⁵⁴ Those who like Abraham;¹⁵⁵ David Lopez Barganza;¹⁵⁶ the lame and bearded Gioacchino Battista de Caros;¹⁵⁷ and the tall and well-built Emanuele, who lived at Hens' Street, Valletta¹⁵⁸ turned Catholics they must have all done so on their own free will. True, Isaach, a dark Jew from Gerba, was manhandled but

¹⁴⁶ *NLM, Arch.* 6528, f. 278v.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 474v.

¹⁴⁸ *NLM, Arch.* 6530, f. 30r.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 86v.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 60r.

¹⁵¹ For the contact of Portuguese Jews at Amsterdam with their country of origin, Yosef Kaplan, "The Travels of Portuguese Jews from Amsterdam to the 'Lands of Idolatry'", *Jews and Conversos. Studies in Society and the Inquisition*, Josef Kaplan, ed., pp. 197-224.

¹⁵² *Codice Rohan - Del Dritto Municipale di Malta*, p. 260.

¹⁵³ *AIM, Proc.* 78A, f. 119r.

¹⁵⁴ *NLM, Libr.* 429, vol. vii, ff. 178r-179r.

¹⁵⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 120B, f. 930r.

¹⁵⁶ He was one of eleven passengers who arrived in Malta on 28 June 1758 on board a French *tartana* - *NLM, Arch.* 6528, f. 595r.

¹⁵⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 127B, f. 502r.

¹⁵⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1561r.

that was only because he had stolen four tari from Giuseppe Falzon. If persecution existed it must be supposed that during Holy Week the Jews were well on their guard to protect themselves against some possible molestation by Christians. But such incidents as the following annul such impression. On Friday, 1 April 1757, the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, Claudio Azzupardo, the procurator of the *Sodalità della Beatissima Vergine dei Dolori*, was receiving alms at the entrance of the convent of the Friars Minor, Valletta. Towards 4.30 p.m., while the faithful were gathering at the Oratory nearby to assist at Vespers, a six-year-old Jewish boy slapped an *Ecce Homo* of papier mache' exhibited on a small table.¹⁵⁹ It must not be imagined that had he feared savage reprisals he would have had the temerity to commit such an act. Not only were Jews not harassed but they themselves perpetrated offences against Christians. Take the next case. On Saturday, September 1749, towards 3 p.m., Moyse Buynac, a Jew who wore a large wig and a dark blue jerkin, entered the above-mentioned church and went round the altars; as he looked fixedly at the paintings he spat each time on the ground.¹⁶⁰

Moyse was only expelled from church and was not summoned by the Holy Office. Those who appeared before the Tribunal were generally slaves accused of witchcraft¹⁶¹ though instances of Judaizing do crop up. Giuseppe Lopez of Algiers, for instance, was heard saying, '*I have been a Jew and I am still one!*' and took the scapular and the rosary from round his neck and threw them on the floor.¹⁶² Ludovico del Mar not only regretted his conversion but he also blasphemed his new faith; though according to his wife, who reported him herself to the Inquisitor, he had had an epileptic attack which must have affected his mind badly.¹⁶³ No such attenuating circumstance is mentioned in the case of the *converso* Raimondo Spuic, whose delator was also his wife. He never recited the rosary,

¹⁵⁹ AIM, Proc. 124B, ff. 665r-667r.

¹⁶⁰ AIM, Proc. 121C, ff. 1540r-1543v.

¹⁶¹ See, for instance, AIM, Proc. 121B, 639r; AIM, Proc. 121C, ff. 1363r-v.

¹⁶² AIM, Proc. 120B, f. 924r.

¹⁶³ AIM, Proc. 124C, f. 1561v.

heard mass, confessed or received Holy Communion; Holy Mary, he claimed, was no Virgin, and he laughed at Christians who adored 'a piece of wood'.¹⁶⁴

These are not the only incidents of Judaizing. Though Bernardo Nicolao Bernai, a Jew from Leghorn, was baptised in the chapel of the Holy Office he pitied those who left the Mosaic law and his great wish was to leave for London as soon as possible where he could live as a Jew. Christianity, he maintained, was another form of idolatry and a dirty religion full of inventions, which labelled mysterious anything like the Holy Trinity which could not be understood. He had only mocking words for the temptation of Christ:

'This God must be of paper to let himself be transported from one place to another'.

And every time he came across the name of Jesus in a small book of Christian doctrine, he spat at it, saying, *'I don't believe in you!'*. He possessed two phylacteries or pieces of leather containing passages from Scripture which the Jews wear on their head and on their arms while praying; besides, he sang Jewish songs and fasted the *Noveals*, commemorating the destruction of Jerusalem.¹⁶⁵

Another case of Judaizing concerned Girolamo Tamaio y Nigron. He had been publicly baptized by his parents at Madrid at the age of twelve but then at the insinuation of other Jews, who lived secretly in Spain, he had abandoned Christianity for Judaism.¹⁶⁶ To excuse himself before the Inquisitor he put up the story that he had gone to Algiers *'to baptize all those Turks who had not yet reached the age of reason'*. Here he assumed the name of Jacob Gomes from Tetuan where, not to arouse the suspicions of some Jews, he was even circumcised.¹⁶⁷ Another Judaizer was Alberto Molin, son of Racamin Farfara of Tripoli who, at the age of thirteen, came to Venice where he stayed with Samuele, his grandfather and a merchant. He was baptized at the instance of the Hospitaller Knight, Sabastiano Molin, in the church of San Giovanni Battista dei Catechumeni. After six months he returned to his father but a Rabbi gave him a penitence of three hundred and one

¹⁶⁴ AIM, Proc. 120A, ff. 370r-371v.

¹⁶⁵ AIM, Proc. 132B, ff. 943r-952v.

¹⁶⁶ AIM, Proc. 120C, ff. 1361r-1366v.

¹⁶⁷ AIM, Proc. 121A, ff. 25r-30v. See also AIM, Proc. 120C, ff. 1361r-1366v.

fasts, and prohibited him to talk to Christians and enter their houses. Alberto started observing the Jewish rites and at the instance of his father he also took a Jewish wife, but when a child was born to him he baptized her secretly before she died.¹⁶⁸

It was because of his parents, too, that Bernardo Nicolai Bernai of Leghorn embraced again Judaism.¹⁶⁹ Amadeo Giuseppe Maria Pescarolo of Turin did not heed his father's threats and was baptized secretly by Mgr Cattinara, archbishop of Turin. But when he was in strait financial conditions he started corresponding with the Jews of Leghorn and Holland and apostacized - '*although internally I intended to remain a Catholic*'. Together with his wife and their little child they made their way on an English ship to Alexandria. Here they stayed first at the house of the English consul and then with the Jew, Salamone Owen, before taking up residence in the Jewish quarter. He lived as a Jew, assented to his child being circumcized and maintained himself at his co-religionists' expense, frequenting the synagogue and observing the Jewish rites. With the help of the consuls of France and Venice he went to Rhodes and then to Smirne where he lived among the Jews. From here the whole family boarded a French ship, captained by Nicolò Rebeu to Malta and on 4 January 1751 he presented himself before the Inquisitor.¹⁷⁰

An unidentified Jewish neophyte was allowed to leave Malta before being baptized. He had arrived in 1780 with letters of recommendation from the Prefect of Missions in Tripoli, which he presented to Mgr Lante. The Inquisitor not only paid for his stay at an inn in Snow Street, Valletta; he also sent his captain, Don Pasquale Galea, to the archpriest of St Paul's, urging him to take good care of him. The Jew attended catechism lessons in the evenings, when he received particular help from Fr Antonio Re but he left for Leghorn after seven months without receiving baptism.¹⁷¹ The documents do not mention whether he kept his word but in the case of Emanuele de Servi we can follow the story to its end. Mgr

¹⁶⁸ AIM, Proc. 127B, ff. 1021r-v.

¹⁶⁹ AIM, Proc. 132B, ff. 907r-910v.

¹⁷⁰ AIM, Proc. 122A, ff. 391r-397v.

¹⁷¹ AIM, Proc. 132B, ff. 948r-v.

Serbelloni put him under the care of the Discalced Carmelite, *padre* Giuseppe Vittorio a Sant'Angelo, who instructed him for sixty-five days. He edified all who saw him hearing mass, saying the rosary, abstaining from meat on feast days and saluting any friar he met at the convent with the words '*Sia lodato Gesu Cristo*'. He would have liked to have as godfather the Inquisitor or some other person of quality, like a Hospitaller, to help him earn his living. When they refused he decided to go to Rome, hoping to receive the 100 scudi supposedly given to catechumens there and set up himself as a tailor. Mgr Serbelloni, therefore, commissioned Giuseppe Attard, the captain of a brigantine to take him to Rome. Emanuel's desire to receive baptism, however, was only a sham; he wanted to die as a Jew and on his way to Rome he read the psalms and refused to eat such food prohibited by his religion, eating instead the unleavened bread (*pane fatto in modo di pizza o ciambelle*) he had brought with him from Malta. He even had a letter of recommendation written by Farfara the Jew to the leaders of the ghetto at Rome. These paid the captain all expenses and sent Emanuele to Leghorn to stay with his uncle, a merchant.¹⁷²

In the documents of the Inquisition there is also reference to two Jews who after joining the Catholic church apostatised to Islam. One was Giuseppe Fedele of Leghorn who, in 1750 proceeded to Rome for the *Anno Santo* and thence to Naples where he enlisted for three years as a soldier in the Albanese Regiment. From Ancona he embarked on a Greek vessel to the Levant, where, in a tavern, and, as he later claimed, '*somewhat drunk*', he apostatised.¹⁷³ The second case concerned Giuseppe Maria Caprili of Udine. He had become a Christian at Trieste, at the Jesuits' church, having the Knight Hospitaller, Zindildolf as god-father. He later moved to Tunis, where the Bey, knowing that he was a medical doctor, urged him to stay on and exercise his medical profession there.¹⁷⁴

By the late eighteenth century the Inquisition no longer minded the Protestants as long as they did not offend against Catholic sentiment and did not indulge in proselytising. Rather, like the Greek Orthodox and the Jews they could be largely ignored and some of

¹⁷² AIM, Proc. 112B, ff. 417r-456v.

¹⁷³ AIM, Proc. 124A, ff. 391r-399v.

¹⁷⁴ AIM, Proc. 124B, ff. 641-648v.

them even joined the Catholic church. The new challenge came from Islam,¹⁷⁵ which is the subject of the next chapter.

¹⁷⁵ For this preoccupation of the Holy Office see Anita Gonzalez Raymond, 'Les Esclaves Maures et l'Inquisition dans les Îles Espagnoles de la Méditerranée (1550-1700)', Revue d'Histoire Maghrebine, 16ème Année, nos. 53-54 (July 1989), pp. 101-122; Raphael Carrasco and Anita Gonzalez, 'Le Probleme Morisque dans les Îles de la Méditerranée', Revue d'Histoire Maghrebine, 11ème Année, nos. 35-36 (Dec. 1984), pp. 39-70; Raphael Carrasco, 'Morisques et Inquisition dans les Îles Canaries', Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, vol. CC11 (1985), pp. 379-387.

V

APOSTASY

By the late eighteenth century Islam had replaced Protestantism¹ as the chief antagonist of the Catholic Church.² Malta, being so near to the African coast and with its large population of Moslem slaves, was particularly exposed to the 'violent whirlwind of the wicked Moslem faith'. Inquisitors were therefore given specific instructions before they left Rome to watch out against these 'tiring tempests'.³ And it was the Religion's duty - so Mgr Durini reminded the Grand Master - to attack the '*barbarians*' wherever they were to be found.⁴

Malta was regarded as safeguarding the frontier between Islam and Christendom. However, this religious cleavage was elastic and followed conflicting lines. The conventional representation of a rigid dividing-line was unreal in actual fact since it ignored

¹ Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550-1670*, p. 22.

² William Nobles is a rare example of a Protestant who turned Moslem. At the age of seven he set out on a voyage to the Indies but was shipwrecked off the French coast. He made several voyages to Genoa, Turin, Alexandria and Constantinople but at Candia he deserted after quarrelling with the ship's captain and took up residence with an English renegade. He abjured his religion, being given the name of Brahmin, and even married a girl with whom he only cohabited for fourteen days. Later he came to Malta where he became a Catholic - *AIM, Proc.* 132A, ff. 133r-144v.

³ See, for example, *AIM, Mem.* 3, f. 1v.

⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 48, ff. 104r-v.

existing conditions. Besides diplomatic considerations⁵ in border territories like Malta, where historical and geographical circumstances brought Christians and Moslems together, cultural contact was not impossible. Put differently, the constant religious and ideological confrontation between Islam and Christianity did not prevent connection between the two groups. Unmistakable friendly relations, for instance, were exhibited in 1755 when the Bey of Tunis freed seventeen slaves,⁶ in return for which the following year the Grand Master sent the galley squadron to help him against the Algerians and his predecessor's son.⁷ Such signs of friendship were also shown on the election of De Rohan to the Grand Mastership when the 'commander' at Tripoli sent Hag Mahmet Aga with his congratulations;⁸ and still in 1781 when Maltese merchandise found on a Ragusan ship captured by Moroccan corsairs was returned to its owners.⁹

Yet, the most important reason not to identify Malta and North Africa into two irreconcilable blocks was their essential economic interdependence. Though they still preyed on each other's shipping¹⁰ Malta carried on a considerable trade direct with the Regencies which were the island's granary and meat supplies.¹¹ To circumvent its statutes of perpetual war with the Infidel the Order made use of foreign ships, especially French and Ragusan, but even Italian vessels were frequently employed. A few Maltese craft did make their way to north African ports, too, so that on 8 Oct. 1761 Mustafa, a Tunesian supercargo arrived on board the Maltese *martingana* San Nicolò, carrying forty-three oxen and two

⁵ In 1765, for instance, the Pope instructed Pinto order his ships not to attack Turkish merchant vessels in the Adriatic so that the peace that then reigned between the Ottomans and the Latin West would hold - *AIM, Corr.* 100, f. 279r.

⁶ *NLM, Arch.* 6528, f. 401r.

⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 96, ff. 17r-v.

⁸ *NLM, Arch.* 273, f. 83r.

⁹ The case occurred in 1781 when the king of Morocco, Mhammet bin Abdalla, sent his ambassador, Sidi Muhammet bin Abdilheidi, to De Rohan to settle the matter - *NLM, Arch.* 273, ff. 266r-v, 278r.

¹⁰ Fernand Braudel, The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, vol. II, pp. 865-886.

¹¹ Jean Mathiex, 'Le Ravitaillement Moghrebin de Malte au XVIII^e Siècle', Cahiers de Tunisie, no. 6 (1954), pp. 191-202.

barrels of tobacco.¹² The documents of the Quarantine in Malta are full of references to the arrival of several Turkish merchants. These generally arrived on board Christian ships as on its side the Government of the Order of St John was very parsimonious with issuing passports to Turkish captains, the safe conduct issued to *rajes* Salem ben Kranina of Tripli to bring his 8-cannon brigantine to Malta with food supplies being one such rare example.¹³ The object of this kind of foreign relations was to subject the economy of the Moslems to the merchant navy of the Christian states.

Christians even settled within Moslem territories. When Francesco Spiteri was at Alexandria on business matters there he met Gaspare Calleja and Francesco Refalo, where they exercised the trade of tailors.¹⁴ At Tunis, Antonio Archetti of Brescia, brother of cardinal Andrea, made various building projects for the Bey.¹⁵ At Tripoli, Pasquale Muscat of Mdina was employed as butler at the French consulate;¹⁶ and the Roman, Melchior Lovoisier, acted as the Pasha's French secretary.¹⁷ There were other residents in this city, among whom Benedetto Bellia, where he stayed for three months in 1768, selling pots, pilchards, wine and *acquavite*; there he had a sister married to an apostate, and a brother who was a tavern-keeper.¹⁸ These residents must have led a comfortable life and had nothing to do with those 'miserable Maltese, the disgrace of Christianity', who, as a missionary at Tripoli informed the Sacred Congregation of *Propaganda Fide*, went through the streets 'half naked' and lived on what they received as alms.¹⁹

¹² *NLM, Arch.* 6529, ff. 62r-v.

¹³ *NLM, Arch.* 566, ff. 182v-183r.

¹⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 121B, f. 866r.

¹⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 136B, f. 525v.

¹⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 120A, f. 401r.

¹⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 123B, f. 528r.

¹⁸ *AAM, Corr.* XV11 (1771-1780), ff. 531-532r.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, ff. 532r-v.

There were various means how Christians reached Barbary or the eastern Mediterranean. Fra Quintino of Lisbon, a religious of the Order of St Paul the Hermit, ran away to Tunis when his relatives sent him no more money.²⁰ It was to this city, too, that in 1771, the surgeon, Gaetano, directed his way. He took with him Saverio Navanzin, a one-armed lad of Vittoriosa, who entered the service of renegade Christians there, including a Maltese.²¹ The two *buonavoglia*, Giovanni Maria Vella and the Gozitan, Fedele Zammit, together with the slave, Ibrahim, escaped on a boat from Rinella Bay to Zuara.²² Soldiers could desert their garrisons and sailors abandon their ships. Giuseppe Voti of Vittoriosa, for instance, had enlisted as a corsair on the *mezza-galeotta* of Pietro Schiavone. As he was timely warned of the inhuman way with which the captain usually treated the crew he refused to embark, but was taken by force and loaded with chains. So desperate was he that together with a Messinese he swam to the land at night when five miles distant from Cape Bon.²³ Again, at the *presidios*, or coastal forts, virtually places of deportation, life could be so unbearable and burdened by debts that soldiers, Braudel assures us, would desert for Islam.²⁴ It was, however, as slaves that most Christians found themselves in Moslem lands.²⁵ Some soldiers, like Bartolomeo Jovares of Catalonia, were captured during military conflicts. This fusilier had been stationed at Maniglia, when in 1776 the Turks besieged the fortress, and he and forty others offered to set the enemy's trenches on fire. Eight of them were ambushed, whereas the rest, including Bartolomeo, were taken slaves to Morocco.²⁶ Ambrogio Taddeo of Mursia, who was stationed at Oran, was captured in one of the frequent engagements with the Turks;²⁷ and another Spaniard, Giuseppe Demauro, a short, twenty-one year-old young man of Granada, was seized while at Ceuta and taken to

²⁰ AIM, Proc. 125C, f. 1295r.

²¹ AIM, Proc. 131B, f. 351r.

²² AIM, Proc. 132A, ff. 398v-399v.

²³ AIM, Proc. 133A, ff. 92r-v.

²⁴ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. II, p. 862.

²⁵ Charles-Andr  Julien, *History of North Africa*, pp. 308-310.

²⁶ AIM, Proc. 132B, ff. 599r-v.

²⁷ AIM, Proc. 128A, f. 201r.

Fez.²⁸ Others were simply on duty at the *presidios* so that Sebastiano Gherrero of Serpo, Portugal,²⁹ was enslaved when he went to fetch wood and water.³⁰ Some Christians like Giovanni Abela of Zejtun, who worked on board the privateer owned by Domenico, a Portuguese, were captured in naval engagements, corsairing³¹ being a common cause of slavery. Corsairs could even be caught on land and it was while Gregorio Cassar of Cospicua was repairing some old barrels on the shore at port Heiman that he and his fellow companion, a blacksmith, were enslaved.³² It was most unfortunate, too, when a ship was driven into some 'Turkish' harbour by a storm.³³

Not all captives though were directly involved in the Holy War and ordinary men and women were carried off during incursions made by Moslems on Christian territories.³⁴ The case, however, applied only remotely to late eighteenth-century Malta. Stories of abduction, especially of females, still stirred the imagination of the Maltese and if the launching of some possible assault was constantly in the air such exploits belonged to a former age. Malta was by now impregnable not only because of the awe-inspiring fortifications around the Grand Harbour but also because a line of watch-towers ran along the shores of the island. Slaves were caught while fishing or carrying merchandise like wheat,³⁵ rice,³⁶ wine,³⁷ flour,³⁸ honey,³⁹ cotton⁴⁰ and coal.⁴¹ It was while he was a sailor on a

²⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 136B, f. 545r.

²⁹ *NLM, Arch.* 6530, f. 126r.

³⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 130, ff. 142r-v.

³¹ On this topic, Peter Earle, *Corsairs of Malta and Barbary*; Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. 11, pp. 865-886; Michel Fontenay, 'Corsaires de la foi ou rentiers du sol? Les Chevaliers de Malte dans le *corso* méditerranéen au XVIIe siècle', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, vol. XXXV (1988), pp. 361-384; Michel Fontenay, 'Les missions des galères de Malte : 1530-1798', *Guerre et Commerce en Méditerranée. 1Xe-XXe Siècles*, Michel Vergé-Franceschi, ed., pp. 111-112; J. de Courcy Ireland, 'The Corsairs of North Africa', *The Mariner's Mirror*, vol. 62, no. 3 (1976), pp. 271-283. Also the same author's 'Rais Hamidou: The Last of the Great Algerian Corsairs', *The Mariner's Mirror*, vol. 60 (1974), pp. 187-196.

³² *AIM, Proc.* 132B, f. 511v.

³³ *AIM, Proc.* 121B, f. 1010r.

³⁴ Ellen G. Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age*, pp. 3-32. *AIM, Proc.* 126C, f. 1307r.

³⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 322r. *AIM, Proc.* 77A, f. 35r.

Spanish warship transporting lime to the fortress city of Aluxema that Giovanni Ximenes of Malaga was caught by two Algerian *sciambecchi*.⁴² Again, Christians within Turkish territory not only paid the tribute; they also experienced the arbitrary rule of their conquerors. This is shown in the case of Anastasio, who had left the Morea in 1762 and went to Tunis where he set up shop as a tavern-keeper. When the Russians conquered Navarino the Bey decreed all Greeks from the Morea slaves in his kingdom - one hundred and thirty-four of them. There was also a trade in Georgians and Circassians, who were sold and transported in all the Ottoman Empire; like the negroes of Africa they were objects of commerce and not prisoners of war, and as such could not be ransomed.⁴³

The number of slaves in the Ottoman Empire has never been established but we do have some pointers to guide us. Maltese captives must not have been as significant as other nationalities but in 1722 as many as 106 applied for one of the Maltese ransom trusts. Most of them were at Constantinople (31 cases) but there was also a good number at Tunis (22), Algiers (18), 'Barbary' (10) and Tripoli (9) as well as a few at Rhodes (4), Scio (2), Canea (1), Dulcino (1), Jerusalem (1) and Negroponte (1) whereas six have their provenance unknown.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, the documents rarely refer to the place of origin of the applicants. One exception was the list for 1717 which, as it is to be expected, refer to the cities round the harbour area as the place where most of the slaves came from. As Table 5.1 shows these amounted to 45.2% of all applicants. With the replacement of the galley by the

³⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 123B, f. 494r.

³⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 132B, f. 894v.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 745r.

³⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 123B, f. 972r.

⁴⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 129, ff. 80v-81r, 85r.

⁴¹ *AIM, Proc.* 124B, f. 944r.

⁴² *AIM, Proc.* 133A, f. 234v.

⁴³ Lucette Valensi, 'Esclaves Chrétiens et Esclaves Noirs à Tunis au XVIII^e Siècle', *Annales, É.S.C.* vol. 22, no. 6 (1967), p. 1280.

⁴⁴ *PA* (St Paul's, Valletta) *Veneranda Confraternità della Beata Vergine della Carità, Legato Denapoli, Redenzione delgi Schiavi*, vol. 3, ff. 38r-39r.

Table 5.1 Residence and place of origin of Maltese slaves, 1717

	Algiers	'Barbary'	Constantinople	Rhodes	Tripoli	Tunis	Unknown	TOTAL
Cospicua	1	1	-	-	5	1	-	8
Luga	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
Mdina	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Qormi	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Senglea	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Siggiewi	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Valletta	3	-	1	1	-	1	1	7
Vittoriosa	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Zabbar	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Zejtun	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Gozo	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Unknown	4	-	3	-	1	6	-	14
Total	14	1	5	2	6	12	2	42

sailing ship and the necessary decrease in the demand for rowers⁴⁵ as well as with the decline of the *corso* in the eighteenth century⁴⁶ the number of slaves must have diminished sensibly. At Algiers, they numbered seven thousand in 1749 but by 1767 they were reduced to two thousand six hundred and sixty-two; after the plague of 1787 and some huge ransoms they shrank to something like five hundred.⁴⁷ At Tunis, in the seventeenth century they numbered 6/12,000; in 1780, two thousand.⁴⁸

When the hostages arrived at their destination those who were not claimed by the ruler of the place were put up for sale at the market place.⁴⁹ The mornings were reserved for their inspection, when, almost naked, they were sold by auction. They had their teeth examined to ascertain whether they could eat the hard biscuits distributed on corsair ships. The inspection of the hands was particularly important because it revealed not only their addiction or otherwise to labour but also through palmistry whether they were destined to live long, or whether they would escape.⁵⁰ The price varied considerably according to their quality⁵¹ - nobles, religious, knights of Malta, young pretty women, craftsmen - being the more valuable.⁵²

⁴⁵ Michel Fontenay, 'Le Maghreb barbaresque et l'esclavage méditerranéen aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles', Les Cahiers de Tunisie, vol. XLV, no. 157-158 (1991), pp. 16-17.

⁴⁶ R. Cavaliero, 'The Decline of the Maltese Corso in the XVIIIth Century. A Study in Maritime History', Melita Historica, vol. 2, no. 4 (1959), pp. 224-238.

⁴⁷ Salvatore Bono, I Corsari Barbareschi, pp. 220-221.

⁴⁸ Lucette Valensi, 'Esclaves Chrétiens et Esclaves Noirs à Tunis au XVIII^e Siècle', Annales, É.S.C., vol. 22, no. 6 (1967), p. 1276.

⁴⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 133A, f. 234v. *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 207r. For a general survey of this topic see Giovanni Zalin, 'Traffici e Schiavi nel Mediterraneo tra Cinque e Seicento', Archivio Storico Italiano, vol. XVI (1885), pp. 463-474.

⁵⁰ For a heart-rending description of an auction sale as a result of the separation of members of the same family, Gaston Bonet-Maury, 'La France et la Rédemption des Esclaves en Algérie à la fin du XVII^e Siècle', Revue de Deux Mondes (1905), pp. 901-904.

⁵¹ Pierre Dan Histoire de Barbarie et de ses Corsaires, pp. 438-440.

⁵² Salvatore Bono, I Corsari Barbareschi, pp. 221-223.

Slaves were kept in great establishments called *bagni*,⁵³ which belonged either to the state or to private individuals, though the latter could send their slaves to the government's by paying a small tax. Those, who like Giuseppe Rodriguez of Madera, Portugal, were assigned to row on the galleys, found themselves in 'great torment'.⁵⁴ Life was unbearable on board corsair vessels,⁵⁵ and there are instances when the men had their nose or ear cut off. Agricultural workers were in no better condition, especially if they were sent into the interior, away from the towns and from contact with other Christians, where their hope of ever being redeemed was slim. Public works were as toilsome,⁵⁶ though work in the bakeries, so Michel'Angelo Cachia of Cospicua, who himself had been in captivity, asserted, was 'most exhausting', too.⁵⁷ He instanced the case of Gioacchino Mercieca who had such a job at Algiers and was made to work night and day, being treated with so much cruelty that though he was advised by the doctors to go and cure himself at the hospital the *algozino* lashed him four times on the face.⁵⁸

Comments such as these by apostates, however, must not be taken at their face value. These self-accusers tried to make the Inquisitor believe that they had denied their faith only because of the beatings and the ill-treatment they had received. Besides, if the level of civilization which Godfrey Fisher would like us believe reigned in the Barbary Regencies must be exaggerated,⁵⁹ description of uncontrolled licence by, for instance, the intolerable Father Dan⁶⁰ - a French Trinitarian who visited Algiers on a ransom expedition in 1634 - was made on purpose to excite Christians all the more to donate as much as they

⁵³ Pierre Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie et de ses Corsaires*, pp. 411-412; Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves*, pp. 53-68. For the description of one of these *bagni*, Alberto Sacerdoti, 'Le Plan du Bagne de Tunis dit de Saint Leonard et de Kara Ahmed', *Revue Africaine*, vol. XCIX (1950), pp. 149-152.

⁵⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 131B, f. 422v.

⁵⁵ Salvatore Bono, *I Corsari Barbareschi*, pp. 228-230.

⁵⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 133A, f. 304r.

⁵⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 129, f. 97r.

⁵⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 133A, f. 89v.

⁵⁹ Godfrey Fisher, *Barbary Legend. War, Trade and Piracy in North Africa, 1415-1830*.

⁶⁰ His well-known book *Histoire de Barbarie et de ses Corsaires* was written partly to demonstrate the Moslems' cruelties, their brigandage and their superstitions.

could for the redemption of captives. Though slaves, in fact, could be given a 'miserable pittance' on which to live,⁶¹ and suffer much overwork, it must be borne in mind that a slave was 'an asset to his Moorish or Turkish master and so was worth preserving in good condition'.⁶² Indeed, instances of fair treatment are rather common.⁶³ This was especially the case when the slave exercised a craft; some were caulkers,⁶⁴ carpenters,⁶⁵ rope-makers and stone carvers,⁶⁶ coopers and lathe turners.⁶⁷ A captive was an investment, and if he got ill or died he had to be replaced by another. There are even examples when the master allowed his slave to exercise freely some job. Both Antonio Sancis of Alamanca,⁶⁸ and the Maltese, Matteo Scolaro,⁶⁹ kept taverns during the time they spent in slavery, the former at Tunis, the other at Algiers. Gregorio Cassar of Cospicua paid the Bey of Tripoli, his master, a daily allowance for letting him exercise his craft of tailor.⁷⁰ Treatment depended on the type of work done and on the master one had. Giuseppe Voti, who was owned by the Bey of Tunis, was well-dressed and lacked nothing;⁷¹ and even Francisco Pinto of Porto preferred to be sold to him than to any other master.⁷² In contrast the Bey of Costantina ill-treated Tomaso Camilleri of Senglea with the stick and even kept him locked up in the palace.⁷³

⁶¹ *AIM, Proc.* 132A, f. 401r.

⁶² G. N. Clark, 'The Barbary Corsairs in the Seventeenth Century', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, vol. 8 (1945-1946), p. 22.

⁶³ Godfrey Fisher, *Barbary Legend*, pp. 97-105.

⁶⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 124B, f. 650v. *AIM, Proc.* 126C, f. 1306r.

⁶⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 129, f. 295r.

⁶⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, ff. 77r-82v.

⁶⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 132B, f. 511v.

⁶⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 121A, f. 311r.

⁶⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 129, f. 83r.

⁷⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 132B, f. 511v.

⁷¹ *AIM, Proc.* 133A, f. 100r.

⁷² *AIM, Proc.* 128B, ff. 74r-v.

⁷³ *AIM, Proc.* 135B, f. 608r.

On one matter there is general consensus among historians. Christian slaves were allowed to exercise their religion freely⁷⁴ so that after a day's work the fore-mentioned Gioacchino Mercieca stayed at the front door of his master's house, holding the rosary in his hand and saying his prayers, being especially devoted to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. This was an aspect of the Moslems' respect for the 'People of the Book'. More important, they did not want to lose the price of their human merchandise or its services, which they would forfeit if slaves recanted the Catholic faith. The Neapolitan, Vito Esposito, tried hard for three days to make the Pasha of Tripoli accept his apostasy but his demand was refused 'since as a Turk he would not do the work he did as a Christian'.⁷⁵ At Algiers, Christians were allowed to attend the church of the *bagno* and that of the hospital; others were free to pray at the chapels of Christian consuls. There was never a shortage of priests to conduct religious services. For one thing, a number of the captives were clerics themselves, one of these being the Maltese Fr Giuseppe Calleja⁷⁶ whereas four Capuchins were captured while they were on a Genoese ship between Sardinia and Leghorn.⁷⁷ The Redemptionist fathers were not just concerned with ransoming slaves and during their stay they also administered to their religious needs. The Trinitarians did the same and the documents refer to similar activities by the Capuchins, Friars Minor and Jesuits. Christian captives heard mass, confessed, and communicated; and in Morocco they founded confraternities (*confradias*) which held processions on feast days and on the first Sunday of every month. At Tunis, days of obligation were celebrated with dances and processions, not only inside the *bagno* but even through the streets of the city. Holy Week was particularly commemorated at Algiers, where the adornment of the churches was not inferior to any city's in Spain.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Pierre Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie et de ses Corsaires*, pp. 429-431.

⁷⁵ AIM, *Lettere Consolari*, vol. 13, f. 109r.

⁷⁶ PA (St Paul's, Valletta). Veneranda Confraternità della Beata Vergine della Carità. Legato Denapoli - Libro delle Consulte e Relazioni, vol. 5, p. 14.

⁷⁷ AIM, Proc. 126C, f. 1307r.

⁷⁸ Ellen G. Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age*, pp. 84-86.

Slaves did not necessarily end their days in captivity and there were various means how they regained their freedom.⁷⁹ They were exchanged with Moslems⁸⁰ or, as in the case of Giuseppe Barbara of Valletta⁸¹ and Francesco Manet of Girgenti,⁸² set free after their master's death.⁸³ The Bey of Tripoli emancipated Vito Imperato of Naples after two years to thank him for taking care of his son.⁸⁴ The hope of the great majority though lay in being ransomed.⁸⁵ At Algiers, the price of a French slave increased tenfold in a century, from about four hundred *livres* in 1690 to four thousand and five hundred *livres* in 1793. The same was the case in Morocco, where the price increased from 2/400 *livres* in 1624 to 4200 *livres* in 1765. These prices concerned those captives who were redeemed in groups. Those who were bought individually fetched a higher price which in the period 1778-82 ranged from 4200 to 4500 *livres*, as compared to 1800/2000 *livres* for those redeemed in batches.⁸⁶ The availability of ransom money though did not necessarily guarantee freedom to the slave. Domenico Drago, a Genoese enslaved at Gerba, remained still in servitude even though his mother had written his master enquiring about the price of his ransom.⁸⁷ The document does not explain why he was not let go but the sum offered could be unacceptable to the owner⁸⁸ or, knowing the ability of his slave, he was reluctant to let him

⁷⁹ On 4 May 1772 entered Grand Harbour the Maltese *tartana*, captain Alessandro Libri, carrying six passengers who had been held captives at Corfù - Nicola Camilleri of Siggiewi; Francesco Xerri and Giuseppe Tabone of Cospicua; Ignazio Sciberras of Valletta; Antonio Indrivet of Senglea and Angelo Farrugia of Zabbar - *NLM, Arch.* 6530, f. 101r.

⁸⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 123B, f. 988r.

⁸¹ *AIM, Proc.* 127A, ff. 154r-v.

⁸² *AIM, Proc.* 136B, f. 585v.

⁸³ For such examples see Giovanni Marrone, *La Schiavitù nella Società Siciliana dell'Età Moderna*, p. 277.

⁸⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 132A, f. 386v.

⁸⁵ On this subject see the informative pages in Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World at the Time of Philip II*, vol. 11, pp. 887-889; Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves*, pp. 102-129; Peter Earle, *Corsairs of Malta and Barbary*, pp. 86-91; Michel Fontenay, 'Le Maghreb barbaresque e l'esclavage méditerranéen aux XVI et XVII siècles', *Les Cahiers de Tunisie*, vol. XLV, nos. 157-158 (1991), pp. 23-29.

⁸⁶ Jean Mathiex, 'Trafic de l'Homme en Méditerranée aux XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles', *Annales, É.S.C.* (1954), no. 2, pp. 162-163.

⁸⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 120C, f. 1433r.

⁸⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 133B, f. 459v.

go. Bartolomeo Chetcuti, for instance, had been sent the money by his father, but the Bey of Tripoli, who appreciated his craft of rope-maker, demanded six hundred *zecchini*.⁸⁹

As this last example shows slaves could be ransomed by some relative but Francesco Serena was redeemed for 1194 Maltese scudi by the Venetian consul at Tunis, Agostino Maria Gorgolioni.⁹⁰ Giuseppe Bugeja was emancipated by Federico Muscat from the Governor of Sfax, Mahmud Gellieli, the contract being signed at the French Consulate.⁹¹ Giovanni Farrugia and Angelo Imbroll, the slaves of Sidi Hameida Bin Ayat, Governor of Gerba, were redeemed by Nicola Borzone, a merchant at Tunis, for 1968 scudi and Giovanni Stafrag who paid another 500 Tunisian piastre.⁹² The financial arrangements involved in these transactions⁹³ are only dimly specified in these instances but the next case provides well-defined clues. Antonio Bondi, who even he belonged to the same master, was ransomed for 800 Maltese scudi through Filippo Pulis, Hameida's agent in Malta, under the condition that if Bondi failed to pay this sum to Pulis, he would return to slavery.⁹⁴ In other words, ransoming involved he who advanced the money on the spot and his correspondent in Christendom to whom the ex-slave reimbursed the price of his ransom.

Slaves ransomed in this way must have been sufficiently well-off to pay for their own freedom but the great majority, as Goethe found out in Sicily,⁹⁵ depended on others' generosity. These charitable institutions were financed by the governments,⁹⁶ the papacy,⁹⁷

⁸⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, ff. 77r-82v.

⁹⁰ *PA* (St Paul's, Valletta), *Vda. Confraternità della Beata Vergine della Carità, Legato Denapoli, Redenzione degli Schiavi*, vol. 3, f. 139r.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, *Libro delle Consulte*, vol. 5, pp. 702-3.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 622-4.

⁹³ For the transactions of some particular ransoms, Giuseppe Bonaffini, *Sicilia e Maghreb tra Sette e Ottocento*, pp. 23-47.

⁹⁴ *PA* (St Paul's, Valletta), *Vda. Confraternità della Beata Vergine della Carità, Legato Denapoli, Libro delle Consulte*, vol. 5, pp. 617-8.

⁹⁵ J. W. Goethe, *Italian Journey (1786-1788)*, p. 238.

⁹⁶ James W. Brodman, 'Municipal Ransoming Law on the Medieval Spanish Frontier', *Speculum*, vol. 60, no. 2 (1985), pp. 318-330.

pious foundations⁹⁸ and religious Orders like the Mercedarians⁹⁹ and the Trinitarians.¹⁰⁰ These were not the only, if the most famous, of such agencies since in 1188 Alfonso 1 of Aragon established the ransoming hospital of the Holy Redeemer at Teruel and placed it in the care of the Order of Mountjoy.¹⁰¹ The Lazarists, founded by St Vincent de Paul, who himself had endured captivity in Tunis, not only succoured the captives with their money¹⁰² but they also organised for them a postal service with their families.¹⁰³ In Malta, a *Monte della Redenzione de Schiavi* was set up in 1607 by Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt¹⁰⁴ on exhortation of a Capuchin, *padre Raffaele*;¹⁰⁵ and on 28 February, 1684 *Donna Messia Fighera* established a trust of 1000 scudi for the redemption of Maltese Dominican friars.¹⁰⁶ There were also confraternities for this purpose; besides the *Confraternità della Santissima*

⁹⁷ J. Kleyntjens, 'L'Azione della Santa Sede per il riscatto di schiavi sardi catturati dai Barbareschi', *Archivio Storico Italiano*, Anno XCV, 1937, vol. 11, pp. 88-95.

⁹⁸ For Rome's *Arciconfraternità del Gonfalone*, see Salvatore Bono, 'La Pirateria nel Mediterraneo. Romagnoli schiavi dei Barbareschi', *La Piê* (1953), pp. 205-210, and 'La Missione dei Cappuccini ad Algeri per il Riscatto degli schiavi Cristiani nel 1585', *Collectanea Francescana*, vol. XXV (1955), pp. 149-163, 279-304. For the *Confraternità di Santa Maria del Gesù della Redenzione dei Cattivi* founded in 1548 in Naples, Giuliana Boccadamo, *La Redenzione dei Cattivi*. For Sicily's *Arciconfraternità della Redenzione dei Cattivi*, Giuseppe Bonaffini, *Sicilia e Maghreb tra Sette e Ottocento*, pp. 17-22, *Sicilia e Tunisia nel Secolo XVII* and *La Sicilia e i Barbareschi: Incursioni Corsare e Riscatto degli Schiavi, 1570-1606*. See also Giovanni Marrone, *La Schiavitù nella Società Siciliana dell'Età Moderna*, pp. 290-301.

⁹⁹ On these Brothers of Mercy see the excellent study by James William Brodman, *Ransoming Captives in Crusader Spain*. Giovanni Marrone, *La Schiavitù nella Società Siciliana dell'Età Moderna*, pp. 285-290.

¹⁰⁰ Pierre Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie et de ses Corsaires*, pp. 452-489. Giovanni Marrone, *La Schiavitù nella Società Siciliana dell'Età Moderna*, pp. 283-285.

¹⁰¹ For this small institution see A. J. Forey, 'The Order of Mountjoy', *Speculum*, vol. 46 (1971), pp. 250-266.

¹⁰² G. N. Clark, 'The Barbary Corsairs in the Seventeenth Century', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, vol. 8 (1945-1946), p. 23.

¹⁰³ Gaston Boney-Maury, 'La France et la Rédemption des Esclaves en Algerie à la Fin du XVIIe Siècle', *Revue de Deux Mondes* (1906), pp. 910-911.

¹⁰⁴ For a comprehensive history of this Fund see *NLM*, *Libr.* 404, ff. 26r-142v.

¹⁰⁵ *NLM*, *Treasury* 309, series B, pp. i-xix. Bartolomeo dal Pozzo, *Historia della Sacra Religione Militare di S. Giovanni Gerosolimitano detta di Malta*, vol. 1, pp. 533-534. Barone V. Azzopardi, *Raccolta di Varie Cose Antiche*, p. 124.

¹⁰⁶ *NAV*, 28 Feb. 1684, Not. Gio. Callus, R 125/32 (1683-1684), ff. 717r-721r. See also St. Dominic's Priory, Valletta: *Contro Libro di Cassa della Fondazione della fù D. Messia Britto Fighera per la Redenzione della Schiavitù delli RR. PP. Domenicani* and also the other volume *Incartamento delle Scritture appartenenti alla Fondazione Britto Fighera per la Redenzione delli Schiavi Domenicani Maltesi*.

Trinità e Redenzione degli Schiavi at Senglea¹⁰⁷ there was the *Confraternità della Carità* at the parish of St Paul's, Valletta.

The latter had been set up on 7 April 1631 by Gio. Domenico Denapoli, who left a house and two shops at Valletta, out of whose rent 80 scudi went for the ransom of a slave annually.¹⁰⁸ Its procedures can be easily followed from the registers which are still extant. First, an application was filed by the captives through their father,¹⁰⁹ mother¹¹⁰ or wife.¹¹¹ When all the petitions were received two Commissioners were elected to study them diligently and with 'true charity'.¹¹² Their report was read to the *General Consulta* after a period varying from one month¹¹³ to twenty days,¹¹⁴ the *ammonitore* going round with an alms-box for the 'brothers' to cast their ballot-ball in.¹¹⁵ Elections were held in September or, at the latest, October; and when for some reason it had to be postponed for some other time permission was asked of the bishop.¹¹⁶ Generally, all the applicants were approved in consideration of their poverty.¹¹⁷ These could amount to 106 as happened in 1722¹¹⁸ but in special circumstances only one petitioner was chosen. Children, for instance, were preferred

¹⁰⁷ *Il Trionfo della Religione*, 18 September 1843, pp. 101-102 - 'Notizie concernenti la Ven. Confraternità della Santissima Trinità e Redenzione degli Schiavi eretta nell'insigne Collegiata e parrocchiale chiesa della città Senglea'.

¹⁰⁸ *NAV*, 7 April 1631, not. Lorenzo Fiteni.

¹⁰⁹ *PA* (St Paul's, Valletta), *Veneranda Confraternità della Beata Vergine della Carità. Legato Denapoli - Redenzione degli Schiavi, 1699-1796*, vol. 3, f. 30r.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 17r.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, ff. 9r, 79r.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, ff. 2r, 5r, 17v.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* f. 52r.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 32r.

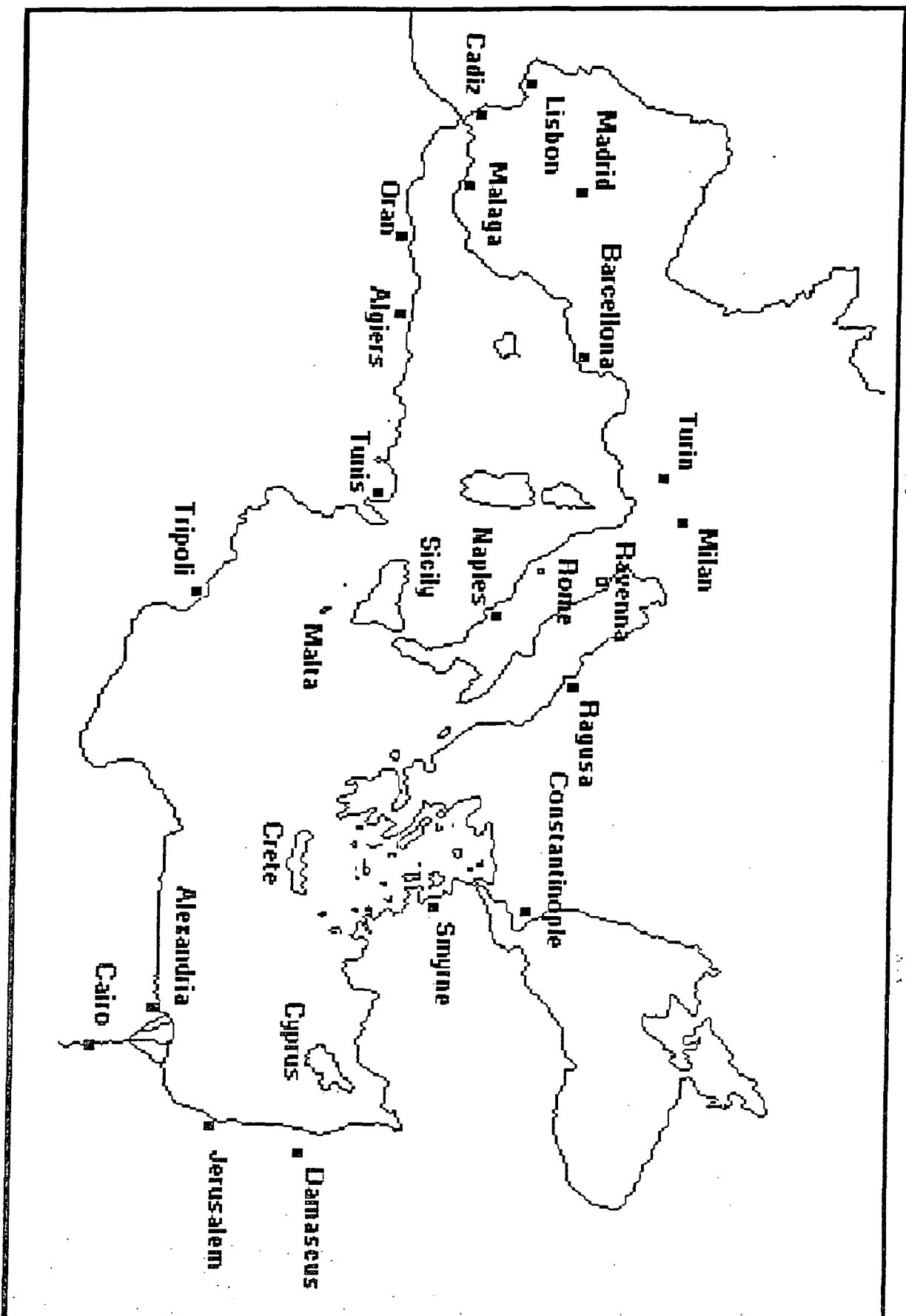
¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, ff. 37v, 39r.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 1r-3v.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 32r, 35r.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, ff. 38r-39r.

Fig. 5.1 The Mediterranean in the Eighteenth Century



to all others. This was the case of 11-year-old Giovanni Andrea Ricupero of Valletta¹¹⁹ and 12-year-old Rosario Garina of Vittoriosa,¹²⁰ both slaves at Tripoli and in great danger of turning Moslems. Whenever captives only needed the legacy's 80 scudi they were the ones chosen. Giovanni Gatt, for instance, a captive in Tripoli for the last ten-odd years, was chosen on 15 February 1699. His master, the pasha, had sold him to a 'Turk' who had high hopes that he would be redeemed for a great sum in a few months; but as this proved impossible he ill-treated him 'out of the ordinary'. Giovanni had already got 120 scudi from the *Monte della Redenzione* as well as six casks of wine and he only needed about 100 scudi more.¹²¹ The case of Giuseppe Hagius of Valletta was a special one. The *legato* was awarded to people still in captivity - '*essendo ancor sotto il gioco servile*'¹²² - but in this case a special concession was made. Agius had suffered unbelievable ill-treatment on the galleys but what really tipped the scales in his favour was his being the son of a most worthy deceased 'brother' of the Confraternity. The decision was taken by the plenary session, the importance of which was shown by the presence of the rector, the parish priest himself.¹²³

For some years no elections were held so that a particular captive could be helped all the more. Andrea Delandes was one of these fortunate few. He was a baptized Turk living in Constantinople, where he risked being impaled, his maintaining the Catholic Faith being described by the commissioners as heroic. The proceeds of the *legato* were therefore reserved for him in the period 1744-46.¹²⁴ Another case concerned the Gozitan, Giovanni Maria Mercieca who, together with his wife and six children, were enslaved at Tunis. In 1735 he was sent by his master to Malta to collect money for their ransom. The confraternity gave him 160 scudi but as this was only a small part of the sum he needed he

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, ff. 110r-v.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 116r.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, ff. 1r-3v. For a similar case concerning Antonio Schembri, who had spent 30 years on the galleys, *ibid.*, ff. 5r-v.

¹²² *Ibid.*, *Libro delle Consulte*, vol. 5, p. 622.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, *Redenzione degli Schiavi*, vol. 3, ff. 42r-47r.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 80r.

demanded the legacy's proceeds of the next six years. Though this was against the norm followed by the confraternity it was agreed that the present case merited every consideration, so that the 1736-7 elections were suspended.¹²⁵ Luck never struck for some. Domenico Cappaglione of Valletta, a slave at Scio, was elected six times between 1705 and 1721, but all to no avail.¹²⁶ Agabito Cassar and Gio. Maria Gristi fared much better; they returned to Malta only after the first¹²⁷ and second attempt¹²⁸ respectively. A necessary comment, in fact, which one necessarily makes on reading the documents of the confraternity is the extremely small number of those who succeeded to make it to Malta - eighty-seven in all between 1700 and 1795.¹²⁹ In 1707, for instance, all the nine applicants were approved since for the past eight years none of those elected for the *legato* had arrived in Malta.

When slaves returned to the bosom of Christianity, perhaps on a ship purposely contracted for their conveyance,¹³⁰ they went to the Oratory of the Confraternity to demand the *legato*. Their wish was fulfilled only when a special commission had given its report that they fully adhered to the conditions laid down by the testator. On 16 October 1712, after more than a month of deliberations, Michele Pace and Alessandro Gelfo issued their report on Giovanni Maria Gristi of Rabat, Gozo. He had the required evidence showing that he had really paid 200 piastre of Seville to his master, the Bey Hassain. The document had the usual seal of the Bey and was even signed by the Cadi, Hagai Soliman. Giovanni Maria had also in his possession the receipt of 100 piastre given to him by the president of the *Monte della Redenzione*.¹³¹ As the legacy was given to the one who arrived in Malta first a special

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, ff. 55r-v, 73r.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 7r, 14v, 20r, 22v, 32v, 35v.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 20r.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, ff. 14v, 16r, 17v.

¹²⁹ See Appendix 2

¹³⁰ On 9 December 1781 Antonio Bonello of Vittoriosa, who had been enslaved in Tripoli, arrived in Malta on the *martingana* of captain Antonio Esposito. As he could not pay for his *patente* the captain included him in the list of his crew - *NLM, Arch.* 6531, ff. 150r-v.

¹³¹ *PA* (St Paul's, Valletta) - *Veneranda Confraternità della Beata Vergine della Carità. Legato Denapoli - Libro delle Consulte*, vol. 3, f. 174r; *ibid.*, *Redenzione degli Schiavi*, vol. 3, f. 17v.

difficulty arose when, as happened in the case of Grazio Zammit of *casal* Luqa and Giulio Camilleri of Zejtun, two arrived on the same ship and it was impossible to decide who came first. In this instance the prize was divided among them.¹³² The case of Giuseppe Agius was a much harder nut to crack. He had arrived in Malta on 28 September 1724 on a French ship but the prize was given instead to Antonio Mileti, who arrived later, on 14 October. The reason was a technical one; the ship which he boarded had no clean bill of health and had to leave grand harbour.¹³³ Some were believed not to deserve the money. Filippo Portelli, who had been elected to the *legato* on 4 October 1747, returned from Constantinople in 1748 but the Commissioners, Don Girolamo Hagius and Antonio Palma, thought that he could not be helped; his uncle had bequeathed to him hundreds of scudi and he had been helped by the Government's fund, so that he had more than his ransom had cost him.¹³⁴ As Emanuele Carozzo had not filed an application for the *legato* he had a false petition composed when he arrived in Malta but he was found out and disqualified.¹³⁵ Saverio d'Armenia brought no documents with him from Constantinople; besides, it was publicly known that captives at that city 'run away rather than be ransomed'.¹³⁶ Pietro Stellini and Giuseppe Psaila¹³⁷ had not been elected by the Confraternity and so their petition for the trust's 80 scudi was in vain. On the contrary if it was proved that the applicants had all the requirements demanded by the *legato* a *Te Deum* was sung¹³⁸ - though no mention is made that, as in Sicily, a sermon was delivered and a procession held to mark the occasion.¹³⁹

¹³² *Ibid.*, f. 108r.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, ff. 42r-v, 44r-47r.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 83r.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 50r.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, *Libro delle Consulte*, vol. 5, pp. 615-6.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 742-4.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹³⁹ See, for instance, Orazione recitata il giorno 5 Agosto 1771 nella Metropolitana Chiesa della Città di Palermo dal Rev. P. Camillo Di Maria Chierico Regolare delle Scuole Pie in occasione della Solenne Processione dei Schiavi Cristiani riscattati in Tunisi fatta per ordine dell'Ill. Regia Deputazione della Redenzione dei Cattivi.

Only a few succeeded to be ransomed. For most escape was the only road to freedom, which if it could be both difficult and dangerous successful attempts¹⁴⁰ were not an uncommon occurrence.¹⁴¹ At Algiers some twenty Christians, including Angelo Cachia of Cospicua, built a big boat on which they ran away to Ephesus.¹⁴² On 15 July 1761 there arrived Giuseppe Mifsud and Giuseppe Darmanin. These two men from Senglea, who had escaped from Tripoli on a caique, made their way first to Lampedusa and then to the Scoglietti, from where they arrived in Malta in twenty-four hours.¹⁴³ In 1748, the slaves of the *Sea Wolf of Rhodes* brought their ship to Malta;¹⁴⁴ and in 1760 it was the turn of the *Corona Ottomana*.¹⁴⁵ Bonaventura Comunales of Cadiz, who arrived in Malta on 21 March 1770 on a Venetian brigantine (captain Francesco Rossetti) was supposed to be on his way to the Levant.¹⁴⁶ Simone Odmarr was sent by the Bey of Constantina to Tunis in search of his brother; instead, he boarded a French ship to Malta.¹⁴⁷ Elia Duper hid in a barrel on a galley at Smirne,¹⁴⁸ whereas Carlo Risicari disguised himself as a *deruisc*, or a Moslem monk. Vincenzo Vedovelli of Padua was on his way to Smirne when the ship he was on entered the Grand Harbour; he submitted a memorial to the Grand Master through the Commissioner of Police (*Gran Visconte*), seeking permission to stay in Malta.

Christian fugitives were helped by European ambassadors or consuls residing in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴⁹ There is reference to French,¹⁵⁰ Dutch,¹⁵¹ Spanish,¹⁵² Neapolitan,¹⁵³

¹⁴⁰ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. 11, pp.874, 889.

¹⁴¹ *NLM, Arch.* 6529, ff. 287r-v. See also Gaston Bonet-Maury, 'La France et la Rédemption des Esclaves en Algérie à la Fin du XVIIe Siècle', *Revue de Deux Mondes* (1906), p. 906.

¹⁴² *AIM, Proc.* 129, f. 98r.

¹⁴³ *NLM, Arch.* 6529, f. 53r.

¹⁴⁴ Vincenzo Laurenza (ed.), *Giornale de' Successi dell'Isole di Malta e Gozo dall'anno 1729 all'anno 1750 scritto da Gaetano Reboul, compendiato da Ignazio Saverio Mifsud*, pp. 98-99.

¹⁴⁵ *NLM, Arch.* 6529, ff. 14r-v.

¹⁴⁶ *NLM, Arch.* 6530, f. 8r. *AIM, Proc.* 129, ff. 45r-50v.

¹⁴⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 133A, f. 431v.

¹⁴⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 129, f. 71v.

¹⁴⁹ Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Barbary Corsairs*, p. 251.

Venetian¹⁵⁴ and Imperial¹⁵⁵ consuls stationed at Alexandria, Smirne, Salonica, Constantinople, Tunis and Tripoli. It was to the latter city that Tomaso Camilleri of Senglea escaped from Constantina disguised as a Turkish merchant. Here he met a Maltese, who worked in a cooper's shop, and who took him to the Franciscans Minor.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, very often members of the religious Orders lent their help very generously. They offered shelter to runaways,¹⁵⁷ aided them with money,¹⁵⁸ and put them on board Christian ships.¹⁵⁹ It was on the suggestion of the Minor Observants that Giuseppe Demauro of Granada proceeded to Tunis, where he could find a way to escape more easily.¹⁶⁰ Sebastiano Gherrero of Portugal had tried three times to run away, but every time he was apprehended and put in chains. At last, he bribed two Moors with five *piastre* each, who took him out of town towards Constantina, from where he set out for Algiers. Here he went to the *Padre Vicario della Redenzione*, a French Trinitarian, who, in turn, sent him to Tunis fortified with a letter of recommendation to the missionaries there.

Luck though did not always hold and it could happen that a fugitive who had already started out towards freedom was found out and brought back. This was the case of Fedele Zammit. At night he boarded a Venetian *pollacca* anchored at Tripoli harbour but the next day he was compelled to land and put in the Bey's castle.¹⁶¹ Gregorio Cassar's youngest son

¹⁵⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 132A, f. 3v.

¹⁵¹ *AIM, Proc.* 128B, ff. 764v.

¹⁵² *AIM, Proc.* 128A, f. 213v.

¹⁵³ *AIM, Proc.* 121A, f. 404r.

¹⁵⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 129, f. 296r.

¹⁵⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 131r.

¹⁵⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 135B, ff. 619r-v.

¹⁵⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 132B, f. 600r.

¹⁵⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 121C, f. 1325r.

¹⁵⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 127A, f. 9v.

¹⁶⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 136B, f. 546r.

¹⁶¹ *AIM, Proc.* 132A, f. 401r.

was already out at sea on the French vessel of captain Sicard when a boat came in search of a Neapolitan renegade; he had remained on the quarter-deck and the two were taken back.¹⁶² Those caught in the act of escaping had to pay dearly for their daring. Aloisio di Giovanni of Barletta was put inside a pit for twenty-one days.¹⁶³ Giuseppe Barber of Valenza was loaded with chains and incarcerated for three months;¹⁶⁴ and Giuseppe Rodriguez of Madeira was given one thousand lashes.¹⁶⁵ In 1761 Carlo Ruizeto of Granada, together with six other slaves and two renegades escaped from Sale. When bad weather forced them to return the apostates paid with their head: the captives were beaten severely for three days, three of whom succumbed to the injuries; the rest were imprisoned for six years with chains round their neck and feet.¹⁶⁶ It was to forestall such possible contingencies that when Bartolomeo Joveres escaped he circumcised himself; with a piece of thread he tied his member's skin, which he then cut with his razor.¹⁶⁷ This was a rare but not an isolated incident since Giovanni Pigniolo of Terragona and his companions circumcised each other.¹⁶⁸

Escape having also failed there possibly remained one more way to freedom, apostasy,¹⁶⁹ which was not the only reason though to forsake Christianity.¹⁷⁰ To evade the death sentence was another. Giovanni, a Greek, had gone to Constantinople where he enrolled on a Turkish caique carrying grain from the Black Sea. One day he stabbed and killed the ship's cook who had tried to sodomise him; he was imprisoned and loaded with

¹⁶² *AIM, Proc.* 132B, ff. 524r-v.

¹⁶³ *AIM, Proc.* 133A, f. 402v.

¹⁶⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 126C, f. 1306v.

¹⁶⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 131B, ff. 422r-423v.

¹⁶⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 133A, f. 304v.

¹⁶⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 132B, f. 600r.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 745r.

¹⁶⁹ This is what the quarantine officials reported on Giuseppe Suares, a Spaniard from Malaga, when he arrived in Malta on 14 March 1794: '*E comeche ritrovasi nell'impossibilità di ripatriarsi rinegò la S. Fede coll'intenzione però che essendo in libertà di fugire e salvarsi in Cristianità per abiurare e ritornare nella S. Fede*' - *NLM, Arch.* 6532, f. 142r. See also *AIM, Proc.* 136B, ff. 557r-566v.

¹⁷⁰ Pierre Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie et de ses Corsaires*, pp. 333-344.

chains but then to spare himself death he abjured his faith in a coffee shop in front of the Aga.¹⁷¹ Francesco Attard of Valletta was to die for an imposture. In 1760 he had gone to Gerba to trade as was his custom. He took into his service a Moslem boy; but as he would not lend money to a Turk, the latter accused him of keeping the lad as his minion.¹⁷² Another case can be mentioned. Dr Carlo Risiccari of Corfù had graduated as surgeon from the University of Padua, and for two years practised his profession in Venice before returning to his island home. Here he treated the lieutenant of the Pasha of Joannina, the capital of lower Albania. As his patient died the physician was condemned to death on the false charge of having poisoned him but on his way to execution the surgeon decided to apostacise.¹⁷³

There was however a wide range of other factors which encouraged Christians to embrace Islam.¹⁷⁴ Men found with Moslem women, especially if they had relations with them, were to suffer death;¹⁷⁵ and so were they, too, if they did not pay the tribute.¹⁷⁶ Procuring provisions to Christian corsairs was another factor which cost a Christian his life, as was the case, for example, of Pietro Casulachi of Candia.¹⁷⁷ An accident at work could also lead to the gallows. In 1761 Vincenzo Sammut of Naxxar was working with other slaves at the *seraglio* of the *Gran Signore* at Constantinople when accidentally, a big pole at which they were working fell on the mosque nearby, and damaged it; the slaves were beaten and menaced with the gallows.¹⁷⁸ A Christian could also apostacise to avoid being

¹⁷¹ *AIM, Proc.* 121A, f. 366r.

¹⁷² *AIM, Proc.* 126B, f. 660r.

¹⁷³ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, ff. 130r-v.

¹⁷⁴ On apostates in general see Les Chrétiens d'Allah. L'Histoire Extraordinaire des Renégats, XVIe-XVIIe Siècles, a book full of warmth and understanding by Bartolomé Bennassar and Lucile Bennassar.

¹⁷⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 131B, ff. 435r-v.

¹⁷⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, f. 57v.

¹⁷⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 123A, f. 373r.

¹⁷⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 126C, f. 1063r.

harrassed by his creditors;¹⁷⁹ or, still, as was the case of Giuseppe Tagier of Cairo, to earn the love of a girl.¹⁸⁰ A servant would be driven to join his master's faith and boys, like Costantino, an Armenian from Scutari, could be made to join the janissaries.¹⁸¹

The ritual of abnegation¹⁸² consisted in raising the right hand's fore-finger¹⁸³ to heaven and reciting thrice the formula - according to the phonetic transcription of the Inquisitor's chancellor -

'Allah Allah Mihammet Ursulla'

(There is but one God and Muhammad is his prophet)¹⁸⁴

This could followed by a profession of faith like the six articles the fore-mentioned Carlo Risiccari repeated in the presence of a Turk who acted as his god-father:

1. *I confess there is but one God.*
2. *I firmly believe that His angels are true.*
3. *I believe that the four books of Scripture, the Psalms of David, the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Koran of Muhammad are true and that they came down from heaven.*
4. *I believe that the hundred and twenty-four prophets who succeeded Muhammad are both true and legitimate.*
5. *I believe that at the end of the world God will judge all nations as the God of the Universe.*
6. *I believe that all bad and good things in heaven and earth have God as their author.*¹⁸⁵

The new adherent to Islam would then assume a Turkish name, put on a Turkish robe¹⁸⁶ and trample on his European clothes.¹⁸⁷ His hair was shaved, except for a forelock¹⁸⁸ and a

¹⁷⁹ *AIM, Proc. 132B, ff. 668r-v.* This was the case, for instance, of Bernardo Caruana of Valletta, who lost everything he had in gambling - *AIM, Proc. 133B, f. 479v.*

¹⁸⁰ *AIM, Proc. 132A, f. 3r.*

¹⁸¹ *AIM, Proc. 124C, f. 1406v.*

¹⁸² Pierre Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie et des Corsaires*, pp. 348-353.

¹⁸³ *AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 197v.*

¹⁸⁴ *AIM, Proc. 133A, f. 304v.* For various variations of the formula see *AIM, Proc. 124B, f. 650v*; *AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 207r.*

¹⁸⁵ *AIM, Proc. 134A, ff. 130v-131r.*

¹⁸⁶ *AIM, Proc. 133A, f. 93r.*

¹⁸⁷ *AIM, Proc. 120B, f. 478r.*

¹⁸⁸ *AIM, Proc. 120A, f. 401r.*

barber circumcised him.¹⁸⁹ Only if he apostacised of his own free will was he put on horseback and taken round the city to render his conversion known to all;¹⁹⁰ otherwise no public ceremony would be performed.¹⁹¹

The total number of renegades at any one time, some of whom even took a wife or two,¹⁹² is difficult to arrive at, though we do have a few isolated indications. In the archives of the Inquisition of Malta there is the record of two hundred and eleven Christians who turned Moslem. These included, as Table 5.2 shows, fifty-three Italians, forty-nine Maltese,¹⁹³ thirty-four Spanish and sixteen French. Tunisia was the place where most of these renegades were to be found, followed by Algeria and Tripoli, Morocco, Greece, Egypt and Candia. At Algiers, in 1630, there were 8000 men and 1200 women. In 1765 renegades formed the majority of the court at Tripoli, the *casnadar* or treasurer being a Maltese, Mustafa. Apostacising, in fact, could be a way to power and fortune; and renegades were to be found among all sections of society. Some were corsairs; others, industrious merchants¹⁹⁴ and, like the blacksmith Antonio Dumas of Guadalupe - who lived with other renegades at Porto Farina - craftsmen as well. Though away from home they kept contact with their country of origin and with their relatives. In 1776, Fedele Zammit of Gozo wrote a letter to his mother, Aloisia, from Tripoli. With tears in his eyes he regretted having abandoned his country and much more the Catholic faith though he had apostacised only for appearance's sake; he was leading a confessionally duplicitous life and like the

¹⁸⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 132A, f. 400v.

¹⁹⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 132B, f. 587v. For a detailed description of such a ceremony, Sieur du Mont, A New Voyage to the Levant, pp. 335-337.

¹⁹¹ Bartolomè Bennassar and Lucile Bennassar, Les Chrétiens d'Allah, p. 315.

¹⁹² Frans Ciappara, Marriage in Malta in the late Eighteenth Century, p. 131.

¹⁹³ As it is to be expected most of the Maltese came from the harbour area (67.4 per cent) but there was some representative from most of the villages as well. See Table 5.3.

¹⁹⁴ For the role of renegades in north African states, G. N. Clark, 'The Barbary Corsairs in the Seventeenth Century', Cambridge Historical Journal, vol. 8 (1945-1946), p. 26.

Table 5.2 Origin of Renegades and their place of Apostasy, 1743 - 1798

	Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Tripoli	Egypt	Candia	Greece	'Ottoman Empire'	Others	TOTAL
Italy	-	5	18	9	3	-	2	14	2	53
Malta	2	3	13	9	1	1	-	20	-	49
Spain	9	17	5	-	-	-	-	3	-	34
Ottoman Empire	-	3	3	-	3	-	1	16	-	26
France	-	2	2	-	4	1	2	4	1	16
Greece	-	-	-	1	-	-	6	1	1	9
'Muscovy'	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	1	7
Portugal	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	6
Candia	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	7
Giorgia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4
TOTAL	12	31	44	19	11	9	11	68	6	211

Table 5.3 Maltese Renegades: Their origin and their place of Apostasy, 1743 - 1798.

	Constantinople	Tunis	Tripoli	Smirne	Salé	Algiers	Candia	Constantina	Cyprus	Daniëla	Girba	Porto Farina	Stancio	'Turkey'	TOTAL
MALTA															
Attard	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Cospicua	-	-	3	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Dingli	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Lija	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Mdina	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Naxxar	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Qormi	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Rabat	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Senglea	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	5
Tarxien	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Valletta	5	4	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	13
Vitoriosa	2	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	8
Zabbar	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Zabbug	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Zejtun	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Unknown	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
GOZO															
Rabat	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Xagħra	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Unknown	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
TOTAL	15	11	9	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	49

Nicodemite¹⁹⁵ Murcian renegade in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*,¹⁹⁶ he still kept the Christian religion secretly. He asked her to obtain pardon for him from the Grand Master and the Inquisitor, and assured her that if she could get him a safe-conduct he would find the means to escape.¹⁹⁷ Giuseppe Voti showed similar signs of repentance. He wrote home four times from Tunis, though the extant copies of his letters are only those of 20 November 1781 and 2 May 1782. He assured his father Lorenzo, nicknamed *Basulli*, who lived in the *Fortini*, near the church of Santa Liberata in Vittoriosa, that the Moors had been treating him with more charity than the Christians. Nonetheless, he changed his religion '*per un mio intento*' and he asked his dear ones to pray God for him. What he had done was all in good faith and God was witness to his intention and desire -

*'The Most High knew my bitter sorrow and regret, which I now feel in my sorrowful and most afflicted heart. Once more I tell you that with Divine help I intend to return to the bosom of the Holy Mother Church ... in which I wish to end my days, hoping that the Divine Mercy will not reject me'.*¹⁹⁸

Islam presented a different problem from other religions to south European Catholicism. North Africa was so near and Moslem slaves were in such numbers for instance in Malta that the matter was preoccupying. If a number of these slaves did convert to Catholicism¹⁹⁹ some of the Christians, in their turn, were enticed by the new faith. Religious conviction did not count much in this instance and nor was it simply a matter to escape hardship at the hands of Moslems. Islamic society was more open than the Christian. Privilege of birth did not count in Moslem lands and it was merit, courage and know-how that were the cause of fortunes. Such cosmopolitan cities as Algiers and Tunis put aside xenophobic sentiments once a stranger became Moslem; and many Christians condemned because of their birth to an inferior social condition in Christianity were offered marvellous occasions of social advancement.²⁰⁰ The classic example of such a phenomenon was Euldj

¹⁹⁵ This term was first used by Calvin to denote those who temporised in their faith; it refers to the Pharisee Nicodemus who came to Jesus by night not to be known by others.

¹⁹⁶ Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, pp. 357-360.

¹⁹⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 132A, f. 407r.

¹⁹⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 133A, ff. 92r-100v.

¹⁹⁹ See, for instance, *AIM, Corr.* 96, f. 257v.

²⁰⁰ Bartolomè Bennassar and Lucile Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah*, p. 19.

Ali, the Calabrian fisher-boy who became 'king' of Algiers but it is equally demonstrated in the case of a destitute Maltese couple who made their way to Tripoli, hoping that the Pasha would clothe them.²⁰¹ Matteo Arena of Floriana preferred Tunis where he would have liked to go because of the great hunger and nudity he suffered.²⁰² Islam appeared in a better light than Christianity which, as one renegade put it, 'punished the good and rewarded the bad'.²⁰³

²⁰¹ *AAM, Corr.* XV11, ff. 532r-v.

²⁰² *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 285r.

²⁰³ *AIM, Proc.* 126C, f. 1216.

WITCHCRAFT

By the second half of the eighteenth century witchcraft was second only to blasphemy as the most common type of 'heresy' dealt by the Tribunal of the Inquisition of Malta. The term is too generic to frame an exact definition of it that would satisfy everyone.¹ Has witchcraft, for instance, preceded religion?² Or is it, as A. A. Barb contends, the other way round?³ Is there any fundamental difference between the two social realities, or does witchcraft form part of all religious systems, even of the most highly developed?⁴ What is to be made of Margaret Murray's⁵ and Carlo Ginzburg's⁶ claim, among others, that it is a remnant of a pre-Christian fertility cult? Could it have been, as Jules Michelet claims, an expression of the spirit of revenge by the medieval serfs against the social order?⁷

¹ For a bibliographical study of the subject, William Monter, 'The Historiography of European Witchcraft: progress and Prospects', The Journal of Interdisciplinary History, vol. 11 (1972), pp. 435-451.

² J. G. Frazer, The Golden Bough, vol. 1, pp. 61-78.

³ A. A. Barb, 'The Survival of Magic Arts', The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century, Arnaldo Momigliano, ed., pp. 100-125.

⁴ For this theory, Filippo Tamburini, 'Suppliche per casi di Stregoneria Diabolica nei Registri della Penitenzieria e Conflitti Inquisitoriali (Sec. XV - XVI)', Critica Storica, Anno XXIII, no. 4 (1986), pp. 613-615.

⁵ Margaret Murray, The Witch-Cult in Western Europe and The God of the Witches. See also the absorbing article by Maurizio Bertolotti, 'Le Ossa e le Pelle dei Buoi', Quaderni Storici, vol. 41 (1979), pp. 470-499. The author describes a custom of the Modenese peasants who after eating an ox gathered its bones in its skin, hoping thus that in this magical way it would rise up. This same ritual is testified to have been performed at Milan in the fourteenth century. At the end of the meal Madonna Oriente (leader of the women) touched the bones with her magic wand and the animals were restored to life. Giuseppe Bonomo, Caccia alle Streghe, pp. 15, 17. See also Gustav Henningsen, 'The Ladies from Outside' : An Archaic Pattern of the Witches' Sabbath', Early Modern European Witchcraft : Centres and Peripheries, Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds. pp. 203-4.

⁶ Carlo Ginzburg, The Night Battles : Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.

⁷ Jules Michelet, La Sorcière.

In the context of the present work witchcraft refers not only to relations with the devil, conjuring and adoring him, but even to innocuous superstitions. According to an Arabic medieval book, usually referred to as Picatrix, the two leading features of magical art are the forms of the planets or astronomical images and the invocation of demons. That the motion of the heavens affects the earth⁸ and that 'of all sciences there is none more useful than the knowledge of Celestial Movements'⁹ has long been recognised¹⁰ and Albert the Great, Cecco d'Ascoli and Cornelio Agrippa¹¹ all affirmed their belief in their power. Lines and figures drawn in accordance with the aspect of the sky at some instant when the constellations are especially favourable are supposed to produce marvellous works. This interest in astral influences is part of man's universal mentality and present-day Maltese and Lebanese¹² farmers unconsciously participate in it when they do the grafting, sow onions and lay their hens in a new phase of the moon.¹³ The planets are furthermore associated with spirits and prayers are addressed to them to work magic, just as if they were demons; in fact the two are intimately connected and it is not easy to distinguish between them.¹⁴

Ritual magic was not unknown in the ancient world but it developed into a fully-fledged art only in the thirteenth century, when magical books describing conjuration started to be written. Roger Bacon speaks of a considerable body of occult literature in

⁸ Jacob Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, vol. 11, p. 484.

⁹ S. Liddell MacGregor Mathers, The Key of Solomon the King (Clavicula Salomonis), p. 5. I would like to thank the British Library for supplying me with a copy of this book.

¹⁰ Richard Kieckhefer, Magic in the Middle Ages, pp. 125-133.

¹¹ See his La Philosophie Occulte, vols. 1-2. For Agrippa's relations with Erasmus and his plausible writing of Dialogus de Vanitate Scientiarum et Ruina Christianae Religionis consult Paola Zambelli, 'Cornelio Agrippa : Scritti Inediti e Dispersi', Rinascimento, second series, vol. V (1965), pp. 195-316.

¹² Jamal Karam Harfouche, 'The Evil Eye and Infant Health in Lebanon', The Evil Eye, Alan Dundes, ed., pp. 95-6.

¹³ For such medical examples that the physician was concerned with knowing the right moment for bleeding and for administering purges see A. A. Beecher, 'Erotic Love and the Inquisition : Jacques Ferrand and the Tribunal of Toulouse, 1620', Sixteenth Century Journal, vol. XX, no. 1 (1989), p. 45, n. 10.

¹⁴ Lynn Thorndike, A History of Magic and Experimental Science, vol. 11, pp. 813-821.

circulation.¹⁵ These were the pseudo-Solomonic works, which attributed to this Jewish king - who supposedly forced hosts of spirits to help him build the Temple of Jerusalem by means of his magic ring - supernatural knowledge. There are no extant copies of these works but the books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were copied or shaped on them, for instance the Clavicula or Key of Solomon and the Liber Sacer. When these classical books were unavailable then the magician had to supply them himself.¹⁶ Such texts, with their prescriptions and formulae, their characters or symbols, mainly crosses and circles,¹⁷ circulated clandestinely.¹⁸ This was not just because the printed copies were just unavailable but primarily for the experiments to succeed the book had to be copied out preferably by the magician himself.¹⁹

Necromancy, as this type of learned magic is called,²⁰ is closely associated with exorcism, the difference being that while the exorcist tried to dispel demons from a tormented body the necromancer (the *Magus*) attempted to allure and use them for his ends. The spirits were at the service of the magician but it was only with God's authority that he commanded them to do his will.²¹ This is what, for instance, Fra Giuseppe Arena told the spirit -

'I command you through the power I have over you to bring me the money of the treasure tonight'.²²

Treasure hunting was one of those instances when such rituals were gainfully put to use. The hoarding of money was commonly resorted to in traditional Maltese society.²³ The

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 660.

¹⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, ff. 1185r-v.

¹⁷ Such a book with circles and figures was in the possession of Ksema, the slave - *AIM, Proc.* 124B, ff. 1058r-v.

¹⁸ For such examples of manuscripts see *AIM, Proc.* 77A, ff. 49v-50r (book of exorcisms); *AIM, Proc.* 77B, ff. 231r-237v (*per sapere qualche cosa futura*); *AIM, Proc.* 78A, between ff. 221r-222r (*Libretto che conteneva molti secreti d'Alchemia*).

¹⁹ David Gentilcore, From Bishop to Witch. The System of the Sacred In Early Modern Terra d'Otranto, p. 229.

²⁰ For a good summary of the term see chapter 7 of Richard Kieckhefer, Magic in the Middle Ages, pp. 151-175. In his autobiography Benvenuto Cellini describes how he went with a Sicilian priest to the Colosseum, hoping that demons would make him rejoin his girl-friend - Benvenuto Cellini, Autobiography, pp. 120-124.

²¹ Norman Cohn, Europe's Inner Demons, pp. 164-173.

²² *AIM, Proc.* 127B, ff. 1059r-v.

only savings' bank then in existence was the Grain Agency's *Massa Frumentaria*²⁴ and people deposited their cash in fields and gardens,²⁵ under some olive tree,²⁶ at home,²⁷ in the yard²⁸ or the stable,²⁹ in the basement³⁰ and in caves.³¹ The slave Mahruf assured Giovanni Maria Bonello that a treasure was to be found at *Hain Targia* at Naxxar.³² It was alleged, too, that at Bahrija, especially at the territory called *ic-cens l-iswed*, which region, according to tradition, was once inhabited by Jews and 'Saracens', there were hidden two golden bulls and their driver.³³ Such finds were not uncommon and licences were issued by the Government to search for them.³⁴

To entice the demons or these 'Animals of Darkness' the Master had to be 'pure in body and in mind, and without any blemish'. He prepared himself by prayer, piety and fasting³⁵ so that he abstained from sexual intercourse and vain conversation and bathed himself in consecrated and exorcised water.³⁶ He could also supply himself with some

²³ For the same popular activity in Spain see Yvette Hermosilla-Cardaillac, 'Esclavage et Magie chez les Nouveaux Chrétiens en Espagne au XVI Siècle', *Revue d'Histoire Maghrebine*, 11^{eme} Année, nos. 35-36 (Dec. 1984), pp. 129-131.

²⁴ *ACM, Misc.* 58, ff. 314r-v. A. Mifsud, 'L'Approvisionnement dell'Università di Malta nelle passate dominazioni', *Archivum Melitense*, vol. 111, (1917), pp. 22-78.

²⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 133C, f. 937r.

²⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1569r.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 1485r.

²⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 133B, f. 755r.

²⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 135B, f. 154r.

³⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 133C, f. 870r.

³¹ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 151r.

³² *AIM, Proc.* 131B, f. 376r.

³³ *AIM, Proc.* 127B, ff. 860r-v.

³⁴ Godfrey Wettinger, 'The Gold Hoard of 1525', *Melita Historica*, vol. V11, no. 1 (1976), pp. 25-33. See also R. Valentini, *I Cavalieri di S. Giovanni da Rodi a Malta*, p. 41.

³⁵ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 268-272.

³⁶ S. Liddell MacGregor Mathers, *The Key of Solomon the King*, pp. 15, 65, 85. This detachment from the 'flesh' and the 'passions' is also emphasized by Agrippa, *La Philosophie Occulte*, vol. 11, Bk. 111, pp. 8-11.

Biblical instrument like the 'Mosaical rod' which had special divining powers,³⁷ Moses, like Solomon, being especially renowned for his magical prowess. But he not only had to locate the hidden object but also, since demons were dangerous creatures,³⁸ to protect himself from any harm that could result from the experiment.³⁹ This was because it was believed that an evil spirit, popularly referred to in Maltese folklore as the *hares*⁴⁰ or ghost, was likely to be mounting guard over it,⁴¹ or that the owner had made some curse against those who found it.⁴² The magician, therefore, donned 'all the weapons in God's armoury',⁴³ wore special garments⁴⁴ and recited the rosary as well as the litany of Our Lady.⁴⁵ Sometimes, a priest officiated⁴⁶ and read the Divine Office whilst even a child could take part,⁴⁷ his innocence compensating for the unchaste life of the participants. This is how Giuseppe Pace, a chair maker of Valletta, described the way the lame slave, 'Tuppan', went about to find a golden cow and a silver calf which he had dreamed were in the catacombs of Rabat. He lighted eight lamps and stopped at the place where the treasure possibly was, while praising God and cursing the devil. Next he fumigated the place with benzoin three or four times daily; and on the ninth day, having heard several noises, he took out a book and started reading to quieten the devil. Then he cut the throat of a hedgehog, a white hen and a black cock and poured their blood in a hole where the treasure was supposedly hidden.⁴⁸

³⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 121B, f. 978r. See also *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 101v.

³⁸ Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. 11, pp. 964-5.

³⁹ '*... per evitare qualche danno che potrebbe avere in tal esperimento*' - *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 347v.

⁴⁰ A. Cremona, *Race, Language and Myth*, pp. 3-4, 10-12. Joseph Cassar-Pullicino, *An Introduction to Maltese Folk-Lore*, pp. 23-24.

⁴¹ *AIM, Proc.* 120C, f. 1287r. *AIM, Proc.* 121A, f. 473v. *AIM, Proc.* 131B, f. 376r.

⁴² *AIM, Proc.* 127B, f. 1059r, 1060v.

⁴³ *Eph.* 6:11.

⁴⁴ Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. 11, pp. 817-8.

⁴⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 127B, f. 1060r.

⁴⁶ Carla Righi, 'L'Inquisizione Ecclesiastica a Modena nel '700', *Formazione e Controllo dell'Opinione Pubblica a Modena nel '700*, Albano Biondi, ed., p. 74.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 672v.

⁴⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 125B, ff. 595r-608v.

This ritual reveals how much learned magic had been debased. It was no longer the prerogative of the clerics as it had been in late medieval Europe. At that time, dabblers in necromancy all had at least a little learning, some Latin, a basic knowledge of the rites of exorcism, perhaps an acquaintance with astrological images. The spirits now became definitely demonic in whose power men actively believed.⁴⁹ This presence of the devil in the daily life of the people was derived not only from the Old⁵⁰ and New⁵¹ Testaments; the oral tradition was transmitted through sermons, paintings in churches and innumerable stories that made up the collective memory of the people. Having vanquished paganism the over-confidence of the nascent Church slackened whereas the devil became stronger and threatening. Christians became relentlessly helpless and as their optimism faltered they put their hopes in the demon. Though a spiritual being he feigned human personality and acted in disguise of a woman,⁵² a priest⁵³ or a peasant with his mattock on his shoulders.⁵⁴ He dressed *alla levantina* or in black⁵⁵ but to the galley convict, Leonardo Palumbo, the devil appeared in the likeness of a tall man with an overcoat on presumably on 18 January 1755 between 10/11 p.m. near the mosque of the *Marsa piccola*.⁵⁶ To Giuseppe Prota, a young Neapolitan whom the devil had helped find his way out of the forest at Wallachia, the evil spirit introduced himself as one with the name of Asmodeo; he was an old man, with cloven feet, glittering eyes and holding a stick in his hand.⁵⁷ On other occasions this 'roaring lion', as St Paul calls him,⁵⁸ was a 'wicked enemy', inflicting injuries with his 'fire-tipped arrows'.⁵⁹ Wearing a black hat, a

⁴⁹ Fulvio Salimbeni, 'La Stregoneria nel tardo Rinascimento', *Nuova Rivista Storica* (1976), pp. 290-292.

⁵⁰ Job 1, 6-12; 111, 8; V11, 12.

⁵¹ Luke, XX11, 3; Apocalypse, X1V, 9-10.

⁵² *AIM, Proc.* 131B, f. 660v.

⁵³ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1467r.

⁵⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 120C, f. 12874.

⁵⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1141r.

⁵⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 121C, ff. 1598r-v.

⁵⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 123B, ff. 810r-v.

⁵⁸ 1 Peter, 5:8.

⁵⁹ *Eph.* 6:16.

waistcoat and black trousers he tried unsuccessfully to seduce the 30-year-old tertiary nun, Maria Abela of Zabbar. But at her words '*Jesus! Mary!*' the room was set aflame and he disappeared, leaving behind a stench of sulphur and some sperm on her night dress. He spit in her face and pushed her about, though his arm was '*soft like cotton*' and his voice '*as hoarse as a bull's*'.⁶⁰ To Rosa Parnis, a 14-year-old girl of Floriana, he supposedly appeared to her clad in an overall, with a long pipe in his mouth or as a moor with his tongue thrust out.⁶¹

The devil's part in ritual magic became paramount though the power of God was still recognised. The dividing line, however, between the sacred and the ungodly was not so clear; and the invoker could conjure the devil at the same time as beseeching God's assistance. He performed religious and magical rites simultaneously and uttered prayers and incantations almost in the same breath.⁶² In his miserable state the implorer made no distinction between the two antagonistic powers and called on them both to help him, hoping that one of them would somehow heed his wishes; in David Gentilcore's words 'both the devil and the saints of Heaven could give succour in time of need'.⁶³ This dichotomy between the holy and the damned is clear in the following conjuration described by Giuseppe Gallo of Monteleone, who wrote it down in ink:

'Ti lego come Cristo alla colonna.

Diavolo, soccorri.

Possi andar disperso per me

Come andò Maria per suo figlio.

Diavolo, soccorri.

Tanto possi star quieta

Quando sto avanti i tuoi occhi.

Diavolo, soccorri'.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ AIM, Proc. 132B, ff. 1054r-1059v.

⁶¹ AIM, Proc. 120C, ff. 1336r-v.

⁶² Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, vol. 1, pp. 64-65.

⁶³ David Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch. The System of the Sacred in early modern Terra d'Otranto*, p. 249.

⁶⁴ 'I tie you like Christ was tied to the column. / Devil, help me. / You will go and look up for me as Mary fetched her son. / Devil, help me. / You can only remain quiet / as long as you don't behold me before your eyes. / Devil, help me'. AIM, Proc. 128B, f. 613r.

However, even when religious objects were used these were not absolutely needed for the experiment to succeed. They were employed only as charms so that the experiment would succeed better. The power of the devil was complete. To make himself invisible Marzio Ciappetta acquired a piece of a dead priest's head, some blessed incense, three blessed palm leaves, some earth from the cemetery and some holy oil but what was really required was that the conjuror gave a mouthful of food to the devil.⁶⁵ This was also the case of the Neapolitan galley convict, Domenico Bruno. He put a holy picture beneath an altar cloth, at which three low masses were said on three Fridays; it was then tied by a ribbon to the sole of his left foot, with which a cross was drawn on the ground, while reciting -

*'Devil, I am leaving.
And like the wind will I travel
Till I reach my destination'.⁶⁶*

The next experiment explains the matter just as clearly even if at first it appears that Liborio Michille, who tried to make himself invisible, had no doubt at all that the spirits acted on the authority of God. Following directions taken from the Clavicula Salomonis he made the chief visual element of the necromancer's technique and drew a circle on the ground with a stick.⁶⁷ That this was intended to be a protective device within which the magician was safe from the demons can be easily discerned from the reading -

*'Satan, I conjure you, don't let your followers enter the circle. As the soldiers stayed on guard
the Holy Sepulchre, so I command you in the name of the Holy Trinity.'*

But then the second part of the experiment traces the new ground ritual magic had moved on to. Liborio must have been conscious that the experiment was not pleasing to God since he had gone out of town not to hear the pealing of consecrated bells.⁶⁸ What followed made this even clearer. A kettle of water was heated on some wood in the

⁶⁵ AIM, Proc. 123A, ff. 96r-v.

⁶⁶ AIM, Proc. 141, f. 224r.

⁶⁷ For the preparation of this circle without which no experiment to converse with the Spirits could be made see S. Liddell MacGregor Mathers, The Key of Solomon the King, pp. 17-21, 99-100.

⁶⁸ These made the devils flee and refrain from their wickedness - Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, Malleus Maleficarum, p. 403.

middle of the circle. A black cat with its four feet tied up was next put into the kettle and when it uttered its third shriek Liborio recited -

'Prince of the abyss, I conjure you, make me find the bone which makes me invisible. I promise you my body and soul after ten years. I renounce Christ, the Virgin Mary and all the Saints, whom I trample underfoot'.⁶⁹

The original idea of obedience by the demons had been replaced by a pact,⁷⁰ meaning that the spirits had to be paid for their services rendered. Such payment included not only, as in the case of Faust, the pledging oneself to the devil but also disrespect to religion like renouncing the Holy Trinity,⁷¹ removing a picture of Our Lady⁷² and burning⁷³ or urinating on⁷⁴ a crucifix. And whereas before the attendance of a priest had been most desirable if not compulsory now the failure of an experiment could be attributed to the presence of some clergyman.⁷⁵ The devil could also be offered alum,⁷⁶ salt,⁷⁷ morsels of bread, holy oil,⁷⁸ a day's sufferings⁷⁹ and 'some of my blood'.⁸⁰ Others made a *novena*,⁸¹ fasted on bread and water⁸² and said an ave and a pater in his honour.⁸³ Still, others did not go to church⁸⁴ whereas Francesco Debono (*Ic-Cikk*) of

⁶⁹ AIM, Proc. 132A, ff. 345r-357v.

⁷⁰ AIM, Proc. 134A, ff. 347v-348r.

⁷¹ AIM, Proc. 125C, f. 975r.

⁷² AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 347r.

⁷³ AIM, Proc. 124C, f. 1153v.

⁷⁴ AIM, Proc. 128A, f. 192r.

⁷⁵ AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 347r.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 34v-347r.

⁷⁷ AIM, Proc. 131A, f. 291r.

⁷⁸ AIM, Proc. 128A, f. 193v.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 191v.

⁸⁰ AIM, Proc. 120C, f. 1403r.

⁸¹ AIM, Proc. 126A, f. 186r.

⁸² AIM, Proc. 123A, f. 430r.

⁸³ AIM, Proc. 120C, f. 386r.

⁸⁴ AIM, Proc. 131A, f. 83r. AIM, Proc. 133C, f. 863v.

casal Safi - who drew a horned devil with a small fork on his shoulders - lighted an oil lamp for him.⁸⁵

Table 6.1 Motives for summoning the devil, 1743-179

Financial gain	18
Escape from prison or galley	13
<i>Ad mortem</i>	3
identify a thief	3
Get justice at court	2
Regain health	2
Supply woman to sin with her	2
Others	38
Total	81

Any reference to God was suppressed and only the devil addressed. In one of these rituals the hand was placed on the wall near the fireplace (*focolare*), each finger representing the devil. This example of magic, which in Italy was known as *spannar il muro* or *spannar il fogher*, was described by Vincenza and her sister, Catarina, of Valletta but they did not mention any reference to the words of the conjuration. Using other sources for a guide these could have been as follows:

'I conjure neither this wall, nor heaven, nor earth but that great devil of hell, the greatest that there is over all the others, that he should go to the heart of whomsoever and not let him walk, nor do any business, nor come near, nor read, nor write, nor go with man or woman, until he comes to me to do my desire'.⁸⁶

The name of the devil was not specified in this particular conjuration but Gaetano Vuolpa, a Neapolitan living at Vittoriosa, mentioned three demons whom he sent in pursuit of a victim -

⁸⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 138, ff. 85r-86v.

⁸⁶ Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice, 1550-1650*, p. 103.

*'Il letto mio è fatto.
Quello della tale no.
Questa notte gli mando tre diavoli,
Stanasso, Marsabucco e Barbarossa.
Che ne possa mangiare, ne bere, ne riposare,
E sempre a me possa pensare'.⁸⁷*

The devil also played a part in what Frazer called *mimetic* or *imitative* magic.⁸⁸ These rituals, which are based on the principle that 'like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause,' are examples of *dare martello* and were meant to cause pain and torment to the person one hated. These sinister practices were common in ancient Babylon and in classical antiquity. The Romans used sheets of lead 'pierced with nails and buried after being inscribed with the names of the persons whom it was intended to harm by the proper invocation of the infernal demons'.⁸⁹ In late eighteenth-century Malta these *defixionum tabellae*, as the tablets were called, were unknown but nails could be put in an animal's liver while calling on the devil to put them in the mind and heart of N.N. to kill him.⁹⁰ Raffaele bought the entrails of a lamb, and while fixing nails in it, and drinking the health of the devil, recited -

*'Let this nail by virtue of the devil
pierce the heart of my Liborio,
another his chest,
and his side'.⁹¹*

The flesh was cut to pieces, put in a pot and buried, representing the fate that Liborio would meet after three days. Another experiment could be to tie knots in a piece of string, while saying -

⁸⁷ 'My bed is made / but not of N. / This night I will send three devils, / Stanasso, Marsabucco and Barbarossa. / That he will not eat, nor drink, nor rest / But will ever think of me'. AIM, Proc. 120C, f. 1413r.

⁸⁸ James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, vol. 1, pp. 9-49.

⁸⁹ A. A. Barb, 'The Survival of Magic Arts', *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, Arnaldo Momigliano, ed., pp. 119-120.

⁹⁰ 'Diavolo, in nome tuo / ci metto questo chiodo / dentro il cervello e cuore di N.N. / per essere morire'. AIM, Proc. 124B, f. 568v.

⁹¹ 'Questo chiodo per virtù del diavolo / sia ficcato nel cuore di mio Liborio / altro nel costato, altro nel fianco' - AIM, Proc. 124C, ff. 1127v-1130r.

'Devil, as I make these knots

And tie this string,

Tie and kill the algozino'.⁹²

This type of witchcraft was far removed from that described by Gianfrancesco Pico's *Strix*⁹³ and which characterised early modern Europe when theologians projected their fears⁹⁴ onto simple folk, especially women. It was then a common fantasy or - as H. R. Trevor-Roper puts it - 'a craze'⁹⁵ that the devil had made a pact with the damned to eradicate Christianity and thousands were sent innocently to the stake or to the gallows.⁹⁶ In late eighteenth-century Malta the notion that witches flew to the Sabbat with its inversion of Catholic rites,⁹⁷ renouncing baptism and performing sexual orgies in the presence of the devil was unknown.⁹⁸ It finds an echo though in the flying powers of the Discalced Carmelite nun, *suor* Caterina,⁹⁹ and in one Rosa Parnis, who would have liked the Inquisitor, Mgr Passionei, to believe that she had been carried bodily through the air to the seaside. However, this 'feast', which reflected the imagery of an

⁹² *AIM, Proc.* 124B, f. 1015r.

⁹³ Peter Burke, 'Witchcraft and Magic in Renaissance Italy : Gianfrancesco Pico and his *Strix*', in *The Damned Art*, Sydney Anglo, ed., pp. 34-38. For the description of the Sabbath see also P. Villette, 'La Sorcellerie dans le Nord de la France du Milieu du XV^eme Siècle a la Fin du XVI^eme Siècle', *Mélanges de Science Religieuse*, vol. 13 (1956), pp. 51-62.

⁹⁴ For such fears see Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*. For the belief that Jews indulged in ritual murder, Gavin I. Langmuir, 'The Knight's Tale of Young Hugh of Lincoln', *Speculum*, vol. 47 no. 3 (1972), pp. 459-482 and the same author's 'Thomas of Monmouth : Detector of Ritual Murder', *Speculum*, vol. 59 no. 4 (1984), pp. 820-846. And for King Philip V's persecution of lepers for allegedly planning to poison wells and streams all over France, Malcolm Barber, 'Lepers, Jews and Moslems : The Plot to Overthrow Christendom in 1321', *History*, vol. 66 (1981), pp. 1-17.

⁹⁵ H. R. Trevor-Roper, 'The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change*, pp. 90-192.

⁹⁶ For a detailed historiographical study of this type of witchcraft see Fulvio Salimbeni, 'La Stregoneria nel tardo Rinascimento', *Nuova Rivista Storica* (1976), pp. 269-334. And for the history of this phenomenon in various parts of Europe, Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds., *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*.

⁹⁷ On inversion rites see Stuart Clark, 'Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft', *Past and Present*, vol. 87 (1980), pp. 98-127.

⁹⁸ The belief in such fantasies, now altogether discredited, was firmly expressed besides by Margaret Murray also by Montague Summers, *The History of Witchcraft and Demonology* and *The Geography of Witchcraft*.

⁹⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 118B, ff. 855r-863r.

undernourished society,¹⁰⁰ was a small affair since Rosa presumably found only a table laid with sweets and five women spirits who invited her to help herself.¹⁰¹ The documents mention also Raffaele Trinchant who intended to summon to his house all the witches of Malta on Christmas night; but, besides failing in his attempt, it is unknown for which purpose he was to assemble them there.¹⁰² This gathering of witches can be related, if only very remotely, to the Maltese *gawgaw*. It is believed that those born on Christmas eve are transformed into a ghost (*gawgaw*) on this day while asleep; they wander about frightening people with their groanings and return home at dawn exhausted.¹⁰³ The resemblance, however, is much more with the *Benandanti* of Udine studied by Carlo Ginzburg,¹⁰⁴ the Maltese having nothing to do with witches and the fertility cult.

Malta presents, in fact, two major differences in the study of witchcraft as compared to other European countries. Historians have generally emphasized that witchcraft was generally the domain of women¹⁰⁵ which they exercised in rural areas.¹⁰⁶ In Malta, at least as can be gleaned from the documents, it was definitely urban and the majority of practitioners were male slaves residing in the harbour area. This does not mean that in Maltese villages witchcraft belief and practice may not have been as common as in the towns; it only shows that the *campagnoli* were less prone to report their neighbours. The explanation is simply geographical and has nothing to do with religious motives at all. In fact, towns, as Pierre Chaunu affirms, are more profoundly

¹⁰⁰ On the imagery of hunder see Piero Camporesi, *Bread of Dreams*.

¹⁰¹ *AIM, Proc.* 120C, ff. 1335r-1340v.

¹⁰² *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1130v.

¹⁰³ M. A. Vassalli, *Ktyb yl Klym Malti*, p. 310. V. Busuttill, *Holiday Customs in Malta*, pp. 134-6. Joseph Cassar-Pullicino, *Studies in Maltese Folklore*, pp.225-6.

¹⁰⁴ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles*. See also the same author's 'Présomptions sur le Sabbat', *Annales, É.S.C.*, (1984), vol. 39, pp. 341-354.

¹⁰⁵ For the high percentage of female witches in Europe, William Monter, 'Pedestal and Stake : Courtly Love and Witchcraft', *Becoming Visible : Women in European History*, Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, eds., Table 5.1, p. 132. See also Jean-François Galinier-Pallerola, *La Religion en Andorre, XVIe-XIXe Siècles*, p. 141. Jean-Pierre Dedieu, *L'Administration de la Foi : L'Inquisition de Tolède (XVIe-XVIIIe Siècle)*, p. 256, Table C.

¹⁰⁶ William Monter, 'Patterns of Witchcraft in the Jura', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 5 (1971), pp. 1-25. Christina Lerner, *Enemies of God*, p. 199. Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*.

christianised and traditions, beliefs and practices disappear from them relatively less slowly than from the countryside.¹⁰⁷

Female witches in Malta were a little less than a third of the number of men. Why witches should be women has always fascinated historians.¹⁰⁸ This misogyny can be partly attributable to the Bible which lays the blame for the Fall of Man on women. Furthermore, females were credited with strange and dangerous powers. Such influences are particularly harmful during the menstruating period when they would not be allowed to enter church;¹⁰⁹ whatever foodstuffs they touched turned stale¹¹⁰ and water-melons tasted bitter.¹¹¹ For the authors of the Malleus Maleficorum there was no doubt at all that their feeble minds and uncontrolled passions were the prime causes.¹¹² William Monter advances the hypothesis that it could have been women's way of revenge when they could not indulge in physical violence like men.¹¹³ The few references to these women which crop up in the Maltese Inquisition proceedings - besides focusing on the vulnerability of women in traditional society - conform in the main to the stereotype witch. Like Speranza and Rosa, both of Valletta, they were generally old women.¹¹⁴ The connection between sexual immorality and witchcraft was also apparent. One was *donna di mal affare*, known for her loose life and illicit relations.¹¹⁵ Another, Clara of Vittoriosa, was a procuress;¹¹⁶ whereas, besides poisoning one of her sons, Orsola,

¹⁰⁷ Pierre Chaunu, 'Sur la fin des sorciers au XVI^e siècle', Annales, É.S.C., vol. 24, (1969), p. 904.

¹⁰⁸ On this topic especially chapter 8, 'Who were the Witches?' of Christina Lerner's Enemies of God, pp. 89-102. Also David Gentilcore, From Bishop to Witch. The System of the Sacred in Early Modern Terra d'Otranto, pp. 224-5 and Giuseppe Bonomo, Caccia alle Streghe : La Credenza nelle Streghe dal sec. XIII al XIX con particolare riferimento all'Italia, pp. 201-212

¹⁰⁹ Joseph Cassar-Pullicino, 'Maltese Customs and Beliefs in 1575', Folk-Lore, vol. LXII (September 1951), p. 401.

¹¹⁰ Joseph Cassar-Pullicino, Studies in Maltese Folklore, p. 205.

¹¹¹ L. Bonelli, Saggi del Folklore dell'Isola di Malta, p. 30.

¹¹² Heinrich Kramer and James Sprengler, Malleus Maleficorum, pp. 111-125.

¹¹³ William Monter, 'The Pedestal and the Stake : Courtly Love and Witchcraft', Becoming Visible: Women in European History, Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, eds., p. 134.

¹¹⁴ 'Alcune donne vecchie, che sanno fare fatture' - AIM, Proc. 120A, f. 298r; 'Rosa, d'età avanzata' - AIM, Proc. 122A, f. 249r.

¹¹⁵ AIM, Proc. 131A, f. 345r.

¹¹⁶ AIM, Proc. 124B, ff. 980r-985v.

another witch, had eloped to Sicily where she gave birth to an illegitimate child. Giovanna was a bastard (*il-bahla*),¹¹⁷ and Caterina, a widow of Senglea and appropriately nicknamed *is-sahhara* (the witch), was abhorred and shunned to such a degree that nobody would rent her a room. She was, moreover, the concubine of Michele Arrigo but had relations even with Turks, especially with 60-year-old Salem.¹¹⁸ Their anti-social traits are also apparent, Catarina having had her husband hanged.¹¹⁹ They had a nasty tongue and threatened people so that one of them entered the house of her neighbour, slapped her in the face and emptied a bucketful of water on her, as a result of which she was later covered with ulcers.¹²⁰

This last incident leads on to an important consideration: accusations of witchcraft were generally made between people who knew each other well. A woman would seek the death of her husband,¹²¹ though cases of men who tried to ruin their wives are easy to come by, Giuseppe Mallia of Siggiewi being one of them.¹²² It could be a brother who desired to see his sister 'beneath ten spans of earth',¹²³ a son who wanted to reduce his father to begging,¹²⁴ a daughter who hoped to avenge herself for being kept rigorously indoors,¹²⁵ a mother who 'tried to remove from this world' her son-in-law who ill treated her daughter¹²⁶ or a husband would be at loggerheads with his in-laws over the dowry promised to him.¹²⁷ However, as Alan MacFarlane has observed for

¹¹⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 123A, f. 329r.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, ff. 140r-176v.

¹¹⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 342r. For a similar case see Jean-Pierre Dedieu, *L'Administration de la foi : L'Inquisition de Tolède*, p. 313.

¹²⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 120A, ff. 194r-195v.

¹²¹ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 333r.

¹²² *Ibid.*, f. 642r.

¹²³ *AIM, Proc.* 134B, f. 660r.

¹²⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, ff. 33r-37r.

¹²⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 123A, f. 417r.

¹²⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 135B, f. 668r.

¹²⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, f. 228r.

Essex,¹²⁸ most of the examples refer to neighbours - or at least to people residing in the same village or town - rather than to kin. In Christina Larnier's happy phrase witchcraft 'was an experience of village life'.¹²⁹ Tomaso Dimech *ta' l-armla* (the widow's son) and Pasquale Dimech, who quarreled over a garden, were both from Mosta.¹³⁰ This functionalist explanation has its *raison d'être* in a face-to-face community which practised personal norms of behaviour with the consequent social strains.

A curse could be part of a rivalry for the hand of a lover. This happened not only to avenge the breaking of an engagement,¹³¹ but also, as was most common, as retaliation for bringing an illicit relationship to an end.¹³² In 1793 the fore-mentioned Giuseppe Callus *tal-hut* (the fishmonger) denounced Francesca Bonel *l-Ghawdxija* (the Gozitan woman) before Mgr Carpegna. They had lived in concubinage in the past but now that he had settled down with a wife, he spread it round that she wanted to make a spell to exterminate them both.¹³³ Another example. Liborio Laporta was a Sicilian from Caltanissetta but in 1758 he was living at Valletta, engaged to a widow, Felicita Cutruffo by name, even she a Sicilian from Augusta; when he discontinued the relationship she cited him before the Bishop. Meeting her one night he beat her so that she took to bed and as a reprisal she tried to cast a spell on him *ad mortem*.¹³⁴ A witch could also be asked to inflict a spell as revenge for being reprimanded for prostituting one's wife,¹³⁵ after a quarrel,¹³⁶ as vengeance for adultery,¹³⁷ defamation,¹³⁸ for being passed over in a

¹²⁸ Alan MacFarlane, 'Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart Essex', in *Crime in England, 1550-1800*, J. S. Cockburn, ed., pp. 84-88.

¹²⁹ Christina Larnier, *Witchcraft and Religion*, p. 3.

¹³⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 136A, f. 274r.

¹³¹ *AIM, Proc.* 120C, f. 1239r.

¹³² *AIM, Proc.* 130, ff. 12r-v.

¹³³ *AIM, Proc.* 136A, f. 270r.

¹³⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, ff. 1129r-v.

¹³⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, f. 9r.

¹³⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 136A, f. 409v.

¹³⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 136B, f. 680r.

¹³⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 136A, f. 422r.

will, losing a lawsuit¹³⁹ or being dismissed from domestic service.¹⁴⁰ Envy could easily arise between people exercising the same trade and competing for the same customers. Giuseppe Dingli and his wife, Graziulla, were bakers at Mqabba; but when one Giustina opened another bakery enmity started between them. One day, towards the second *Ave Maria*, Michele, Graziulla's son, lowered his nephew, Filippo, into Giustina's house and threw in her bakery a paper containing some soap material, as a result of which it ceased to bake bread well.¹⁴¹ Clemenizio Xiberras of Gharghur sought the help of a slave against Fr Gio. Maria Gafà of the same village, who had accused him before the Grand Master of trying to assassinate the parish priest.¹⁴²

Witchcraft was an outgrowth of the tensions of society,¹⁴³ sometimes a repayment of offences with evil deeds. It was after he was beaten by Fortunata Sacchett of Senglea that the slave, Kasam, menaced her that she would pay for that (*'con dirmi di dover io fare con lui'*).¹⁴⁴ Other slaves, like Abraham, avenged themselves for being refused some light for the pipe¹⁴⁵ or for being sold by their masters.¹⁴⁶ Many of the charges were made by accusers who satisfied their guilty conscience by projecting their guilt on the accused. In this way they relieved their own feelings by asserting that the witch was somehow morally culpable, the projection serving as a kind of catharsis. What the trial proceedings in Malta do not bear out is what John Demos has demonstrated for seventeenth-century New England. There, he claims, young people revolted against the control of older women and avenged themselves on them.¹⁴⁷

¹³⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, f. 267r.

¹⁴⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 479v.

¹⁴¹ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, ff. 109r-118v.

¹⁴² *AIM, Proc.* 126C, ff. 1224r-v.

¹⁴³ On this topic, Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials*, pp. 93-103. See also Jens Christian V. Johansen, 'Denmark : The Sociology of Accusations', in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds., pp. 352-355.

¹⁴⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 136A, ff. 70r-v.

¹⁴⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 132B, ff. 714r-v.

¹⁴⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 126r.

¹⁴⁷ John Demos, 'Underlying Themes in the Witchcraft of Seventeenth-Century New England', *American Historical Review*, vol. 75 (1970), pp. 1311-1326.

In Malta witchcraft was not held responsible for such disasters as smallpox epidemics or periods of drought. In other words it did not concern whole communities but only single persons; or, as one author put it, 'witchcraft explained only individual misfortunes, not general phenomenon'.¹⁴⁸ Such scourges could have natural causes or be accepted as punishment from God, so that blasphemers would be at once warned not to earn God's indictment.¹⁴⁹

Witchcraft thrived on endemic fear and hostilities in the population. Fear of harmful activity was so acute that it extended to the virtuosity performed by jugglers, whom people suspected of performing through diabolical aid. The villagers at Sannat were scandalized at Giorgio Attard who boasted that he could hold an egg suspended in mid-air for two days;¹⁵⁰ and Francesco of *casal* Lija, who likewise prided himself of being a wizard, was denounced for lifting a clay plate just by touching its bottom.¹⁵¹ It could also be someone who pretended to know what was happening in distant places; or, as in the case of Pagnini, an Italian who took church sanctuary for minting counterfeit money, the claim to interpret the number of strokes a key made against a glass over which it was hung by a piece of thread.¹⁵² Suspicion was such that when Michele Lisi felt his face burning and smelling carnations he started screaming for help and those who came to succour him appropriately found a carnation in a corner of the hall.¹⁵³ Whoever lived immersed in daily anguish interpreted extraordinary happenings as the sign of diabolic intervention. The mechanism which generated and diffused this obsession is amply illustrated by the following example. Margherita Schembri and her sister, Maria, found strands of hair wound together hanging from a nail in the wall. Fr Giovanni threw them by means of a cane into the fire and encouraged the sisters to fear nothing. But then a series of misfortunes started which made them believe that they were under the effect of some spell. After four months their brother, Angelo, drowned;

¹⁴⁸ Alan MacFarlane, 'Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart Essex', *Crime in England, 1550-1800*, J. S. Cockburn, ed., p. 82.

¹⁴⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 43r.

¹⁵⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 120A, ff. 136r-v.

¹⁵¹ *AIM, Proc.* 128B, ff. 627r-v.

¹⁵² *AIM, Proc.* 127B, ff. 745r, 753r.

¹⁵³ *AIM, Proc.* 126B, f. 693r.

he was followed by Maria herself who was succeeded to death by her two daughters, Margherita and Giovanna, aged 16 and 23 respectively. All these misfortunes could be easily interpreted as a result of a *maleficium* made by the tenant whom the two sisters had evicted from their house. Put differently, it was the victim who invented the aggressor to find a rational explanation to his misfortunes, which otherwise was incomprehensible.¹⁵⁴ All such incidents were reported to the Inquisition but in Malta, unlike for instance in seventeenth-century France,¹⁵⁵ witches were neither lynched nor forced to leave the village or town or attacked in some way.

Table 6.2 Number of 'Witches' in Malta, 1777-1798

Witch	Number	%
Turks/Slaves	133	53.8
'Women'	63	27.9
Widows	6	2.4
'Men'	19	7.7
Galley convicts	18	7.3
Soldiers	3	1.2
Corsairs	1	0.4
'Buonavoglia'	1	0.4
Priest	1	0.4
Unknown	2	0.8

Source: *AIM, Proc.* 132A-137

The number of these magical practitioners was alleged to be great¹⁵⁶ and according to Francesca Bonello of *casal* Gudia several were those on whom they exerted a harmful effect.¹⁵⁷ Such maleficent magic (*maleficium*), which unlike sixteenth-

¹⁵⁴ Jean-Pierre Dedieu, *L'Administration de la Foi : L'Inquisition de Tolède*, pp. 102-3, 316.

¹⁵⁵ Robert Mandrou, *Magistrati e Streghe nella Francia del Seicento*, vol. 111, pp. 426-436.

¹⁵⁶ This was the idea of the slave, Giuseppe - *AIM, Proc.* 120C, f. 1233r.

¹⁵⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 476r.

century Geneva¹⁵⁸ concerned people rather than animals,¹⁵⁹ was not the most representative activity, although a substantial one, of the witch.¹⁶⁰ This could be the result of the evil-eye, belief in which,¹⁶¹ as all around the Mediterranean,¹⁶² was all prevailing in Malta.¹⁶³ The Inquisitor, Mgr Zondadari, tried to understand such belief of the people 'tenaciously attached to their various customs'; it was, so was he assured, the effect of poison which passed from people's eyes into what they looked at.¹⁶⁴ A malefice could also be manufactured. The components of such *maghmul* or *fattura* (charm) consisted of nails, pitch, pieces of glass, paper and velvet.¹⁶⁵ Other ingredients could be *polvere gialla puzzolante*,¹⁶⁶ hair from a dead dog's neck, bones of dead men, yellow dough,¹⁶⁷ salt,¹⁶⁸ balsam, urine, flour,¹⁶⁹ some flesh of a hanged man,¹⁷⁰ pepper and¹⁷¹ earth.¹⁷² These witchcraft materials were put on¹⁷³ or under the doorstep¹⁷⁴ as well as in bed¹⁷⁵ or else in

¹⁵⁸ William Monter, 'Witchcraft in Geneva, 1537-1662', *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 43 (1971), p. 195.

¹⁵⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 126C, f. 1218r.

¹⁶⁰ See Table 6.3.

¹⁶¹ For a general survey see C. J. S. Thompson, *The Hand of Destiny: Everyday Folklore and Superstitions*, pp. 65-76.

¹⁶² For Greece, Margaret M. Hardie, 'The Evil Eye in Some Greek Villages of the Upper Haliakmon Valley in West Macedonia', *The Evil Eye*, Alan Dundes, ed., pp. 107-123.

¹⁶³ A. Cremona, *Race, Language and Myth*, pp. 7-10.

¹⁶⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 96, ff. 275v-2766r. For this same idea prevalent in Portugal see Francisco Bethencourt, 'Portugal: A Scrupulous Inquisition', *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds., pp. 4414-415.

¹⁶⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 120C, f. 1094r.

¹⁶⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 131B, f. 686v.

¹⁶⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 228r.

¹⁶⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 134B, f. 660r.

¹⁶⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 123A, f. 133r.

¹⁷⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 126r.

¹⁷¹ *AIM, Proc.* 136A, f. 422r.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, f. 430r.

¹⁷³ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, f. 87r.

¹⁷⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 121A, f. 68r.

¹⁷⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 132A, f. 52v.

Table 6.3 Types of Witchcraft, 1777 - 1798.

AIM, Processi	132A	132B	133A	133B	133C	134A	134B	135A	135B	136A	136B	137	TOTAL
Healing	18	12	8	8	1	11	6	10	6	4	7	4	95
Love	10	14	7	2	1	13	7	8	1	3	9	3	78
Ad mortem	1	5	3	2	-	2	2	-	1	2	2	-	20
To find treasure, lost goods	-	-	1	2	2	2	8	1	2	1	1	-	20
To hurt	3	2	1	2	-	3	-	-	1	3	2	2	19
Become rich, virtuous, learned etc.	2	2	2	-	1	1	3	-	1	2	2	-	16
Win at games, races	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	1	1	7
To be made invisible	2	2	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Divination, necromancy, palmistry	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	5
Protection from bullets	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	5
To identify thief, enemy	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	3
To suffer imprisonment, gallows	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Against dogs	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Others	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	4
TOTAL	39	41	23	20	5	40	28	21	14	15	28	10	284

a place where the victim passed by. Generally, however, the *maghmul* occurred through food and drink;¹⁷⁶ and it was when Maria Anna gave two *ravioli* to Lorenzo that he became paralysed in his legs.¹⁷⁷ Likewise, Giovanna Borg of Cospicua felt such a stomach ache when she ate a biscuit that Rosa Stivala had given her to taste.¹⁷⁸ It was after he had eaten a heart-shaped cake with three red designs on top that Francesco Sacco of Zabbar remained dizzy for three whole days and since then always at loggerheads with his wife.¹⁷⁹ Pears,¹⁸⁰ a soup of *broccoli* and beans;¹⁸¹ pigeon broth;¹⁸² *minestra* of couscous and chickpeas;¹⁸³ *cassata*;¹⁸⁴ an egg;¹⁸⁵ a partridge;¹⁸⁶ a tart of eggs and cheese;¹⁸⁷ and marmalade¹⁸⁸ were other ingredients used. In this category is also included 'contagious' or 'tactile' magic, to use other Fraserian phrases. This is based on the concept that a magical contact between two objects is maintained even after they had ceased to be in physical contact with each other. For example, a piece of a person's shirt¹⁸⁹ is obtained and burnt in order to procure that particular person's death or other misfortune. Innumerable instances are to be found in the Inquisition proceedings in which a person's nail parings,¹⁹⁰ pieces of his clothes,¹⁹¹ some hair,¹⁹² a necklace,¹⁹³ a waistcoat,¹⁹⁴ a shirt¹⁹⁵ and a handkerchief¹⁹⁶ were used for magical purposes.

¹⁷⁶ Jean-François Galinier-Pallerola, *La Religion Populaire en Andorre, XVIe-XIXe Siècles*, pp. 144-5.

¹⁷⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 479r.

¹⁷⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 132A, ff. 293r-v.

¹⁷⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 120A, f. 356r.

¹⁸⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 136B, f. 694v.

¹⁸¹ *AIM, Proc.* 137, f. 30r.

¹⁸² *AIM, Proc.* 136A, f. 293r.

¹⁸³ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 18r.

¹⁸⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 468v.

¹⁸⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 18v. *AIM, Proc.* 134B, f. 658r.

¹⁸⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 123A, ff. 185v-186r.

¹⁸⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 124B, f. 980v.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 981v.

¹⁸⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, ff. 77r-v.

¹⁹⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 125A, f. 101r.

¹⁹¹ *AIM, Proc.* 134B, f. 586v.

These ingredients were supposed to produce an illness but, as has been observed for the north of France,¹⁹⁷ the documents may not specify the sort of disease inflicted and a patient could be described simply as 'unwell' (*indisposto*). There are references, however, to stomach ailments,¹⁹⁸ blindness,¹⁹⁹ madness,²⁰⁰ dropsy and lingering illnesses.²⁰¹ When Felice of Senglea had an internal inflammation he could not urinate and was about to die.²⁰² Maria Grech of B'Kara, who experienced fits, threw herself on the ground and, while throwing off her clothes, brayed like a she-donkey or bellowed like a bull.²⁰³ A foot would get swollen²⁰⁴ and a hand paralysed²⁰⁵ whereas Maria Piscopo felt her body burning and her throat was as if it were full of needles.²⁰⁶ Emanuele Grioli of Valletta could not consummate marriage with his wife²⁰⁷ but impotence²⁰⁸ was not so

¹⁹² *AIM, Proc.* 128B, f. 802r.

¹⁹³ *AIM, Proc.* 136B, f. 467v.

¹⁹⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1127v.

¹⁹⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, f. 77v.

¹⁹⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 123A, f. 411v.

¹⁹⁷ P. Villette, 'La Sorcellerie dans le Nord de la France du Milieu du XVème Siècle a la Fin du XVIème Siècle', *Mélanges de Science Religieuse*, vol. 13 (1956), p. 134.

¹⁹⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 599r.

¹⁹⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1322v.

²⁰⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 125A, f. 101v.

²⁰¹ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, f. 9r. *AIM, Proc.* 120C, ff. 1166v.

²⁰² *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 126r.

²⁰³ *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 12r.

²⁰⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 18r.

²⁰⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 124B, f. 981r.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 980v.

²⁰⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, ff. 227r-v.

²⁰⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, f. 227v.

common that, as in France in the seventeenth century, parish priests would prohibit such perpetrators (*noeurs d'aiguillette*) to attend a marriage ceremony.²⁰⁹

To protect themselves against these harmful effects people, as in Sicily,²¹⁰ wore amulets in the form of a horn (*qarn*) or a cowrie shell (*bahbuha*). Even today the Maltese, as the Lebanese,²¹¹ still dislike to be praised without mentioning the name of God in such expressions as *Alla jbierek!* (God bless!).²¹² When such precaution proved unsuccessful patients resorted to professional physicians and surgeons. Maltese medical knowledge was sufficiently known to attract foreigners - Greeks and Sicilians, among others - to come and study here at the School of Surgery and Anatomy²¹³ but orthodox medical services were not always adequate²¹⁴ and Drs Seychell, Perdon, Creni and Consoli all failed to diagnose Rosa's ailments.²¹⁵ In such circumstances²¹⁶ people would resort to purely religious cures,²¹⁷ like putting a small 'cross of Jerusalem' on the chest,²¹⁸ wearing a friar's cordon round the waist,²¹⁹ drinking some 'water of St Feliciano'²²⁰ and putting some oil of St Anthony on the patient's tongue.²²¹ A vow could be made to the Virgin or the saints and an *ex voto* presented as a sign of gratitude.²²² Some had the

²⁰⁹ Robert Mandrou, *Magistrati e Streghe nella Francia del Seicento*, vol. 1, pp. 86-87.

²¹⁰ Giuseppe Pitrè, 'The Jettatura and the Evil Eye', *The Evil Eye*, Alan Dundes, ed., p. 135.

²¹¹ Jamal Karam Harfouche, 'The Evil Eye and Infant Health in Lebanon', *ibid.*, p. 90.

²¹² Joseph Cassar-Pullicino, *Studies in Maltese Folklore*, pp. 184, 246.

²¹³ *AIM, Proc.* 131B, f. 771v.

²¹⁴ 'Il male che non comprendono i medici' - *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 500r; '... essendomi stato detto che il suo male non era naturale ma che era una fattura' - *AIM, Proc.* 120A, f. 326r.

²¹⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 132A, f. 293v.

²¹⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 136A, f. 2v.

²¹⁷ W. Bonser, 'Medical Folklore of Venice and Rome', *Folk-Lore* vol. LXVI, March 1956, no. 1, pp. 1-15.

²¹⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 368r.

²¹⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 131, f. 227v.

²²⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 134B, f. 660v.

²²¹ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, f. 263r.

²²² Prins, A. H. J., *In Peril on the Sea : Marine Votive Paintings in the Maltese Islands*.

gospel,²²³ generally the beginning of St John's, of which the devil had a particular horror,²²⁴ read over their heads by the priests,²²⁵ and patients who were thought to be possessed were exorcised.²²⁶

As in Portugal²²⁷ and Modena²²⁸ most preferred, however, the services of a 'cunning man'.²²⁹ This belief in the power of practitioners of folk medicine was not altogether misplaced. If Grazia *tal-werzieq* (the cricket's wife) died in hospital Valenzia *tax-xwejha* (the old woman's daughter) did cure Rosa *tat-twila* (the tall man's wife).²³⁰ This faith in lay healers was well expressed by Nicola Ciantar of Rabat. He had been swindled one French ounce by a Turk but

'if he had asked me a higher price I would have paid it all the same'.²³¹

People even left hospital when they saw no improvement for their disease, purposely to put themselves under the care of some village expert.²³² Maria Grech had been assured by the doctors that she suffered only from calculus but nothing could take it out of her mind that she was bewitched. Her faith in the slave who promised her to call out the spell was such that she discontinued her general confession to the Capuchin, Fr Anselmo, who had commanded her not to visit him any more; to regain her health, she

²²³ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, f. 263r.

²²⁴ The reciting of the first fourteen verses of this Gospel, called *In Principio*, from the opening words, was believed to have singular and exceptional power in exorcising. See C.J.S. Thompson, *The Hand of Destiny: Everyday Folklore and Superstitions*, p. 159.

²²⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, f. 263r.

²²⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 127B, f. 832r; *AIM, Proc.* 123B, f. 854v; *AIM, Proc.* 124B, f. 981r.

²²⁷ Francisco Bethencourt, 'Portugal: A Scrupulous Inquisition', *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds., pp. 410-411.

²²⁸ Carla Righi, 'L'Inquisizione Ecclesiastica a Modena nel '700', *Formazione e Controllo dell'opinione Pubblica a Modena nel '700*, Albano Biondi, ed., p. 71.

²²⁹ Paul Cassar, 'Healing by Sorcery in 17th and 18th Century Malta', *The St. Luke's Hospital Gazette*, vol., X1, no. 2 (Dec. 1976), pp. 79-88.

²³⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 135A, ff. 410r-412v.

²³¹ *AIM, Proc.* 134B, f. 874v.

²³² *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 432v.

boasted, she would go to the devil.²³³ In the eyes of simple folk this suspicion in witchcraft was further confirmed if the patient vomitted some foreign body like a biscuit,²³⁴ pasta with some hair²³⁵ or even worms.²³⁶

Table 6.4 Residence of witchcraft procurers

MALTA			
Valletta	44	Ghaxaq	2
Senglea	13	Kirkop	2
Naxxar	12	Tarxien	2
Zebbug	10	Zurrieq	2
Siggiewi	10	Balzan	1
Qormi	9	Dingli	1
Cospicua	9	Gharghur	1
Vittoriosa	9	Mdina	1
Gudja	6		
Lija	6	GOZO	
Zejtun	6	Rabat	16
Zabbar	5	Xaghra	3
Floriana	4	Xewkija	3
Luga	4	Sannat	2
Mosta	4	Gharb	1
Rabat	4	Munxar	1
Attard	2	Nadur	1
Birkirkara	2	'Gozo'	2

In the twenty-year period, 1778-98, two hundred and eighty-four instances are recorded of Maltese who procured such practices. As can be seen from Table 6.4 the inhabitants of Valletta and the three cities were predominant but this is explained by the fact that the majority of magical practitioners were slaves, residing in the harbour area. However, there was hardly a town or village in which there was not a magical practitioner, sometimes several in one place, though people did not consult invariably local 'wise men' and could travel far beyond their residence for such purposes. It was not

²³³ *AIM, Proc.* 130, ff. 12r-16v.

²³⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 123B, f. 854v.

²³⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 121r.

²³⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 125C, f. 1217r.

only because of their healing powers that people resorted to wise men and women. Like Udine's *Benandanti*²³⁷ and Sicily's *donni di fuora*²³⁸ these could even detect the name of the witch who had perpetrated the spell. Rosa Dimech of Xewkija was assured by a Turk that her illness was due to a malefice which had been manufactured three years previously in a piece of meat given to her by a spinster.²³⁹ The *processo* which related this case does not mention how the slave had got this information but in another incident Giuseppe de Durino made drawings with lemon juice on a piece of paper, which were recognized when passed over the fire. It was by this means that he made Anna Delicata *tal-kubrit* (the sulphur seller) of *casal* Qormi believe it had been Maria *il-qahqieqa* (the cougher) who had cast a spell on her.²⁴⁰ This type of drawing seems to have been common and it was such an experiment, too that a Turk did to 73-year-old Maria Mangion of Cospicua, who had lain paralysed in bed for the last twenty years.²⁴¹ He did not specify the actual name of the bewitcher and it was up to Maria to identify the figure that appeared between two black letters. This was done on purpose lest he mistook the real antagonist. His part was only to suggest so that by his promptings her fears would be confirmed. These suggestions were supplied either by the client himself or by the latter's acquaintances. Hence, the slave who assured Eugenia Gangan that she had been betwicked by a Moor was previously tipped by the old woman's daughter-in-law, who heard the story from Eugenia herself.²⁴² It was easy to believe you were under some spell when you already were in a bad state of health.²⁴³ In the case of Giovanna it was simple to pinpoint the villain. When reproached for bewitching Maria she kissed the ground and thanked heaven, prophesising that she would die of consumption.²⁴⁴ So was the case

²³⁷ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles*, pp. 80-2, 92.

²³⁸ Gustav Henningsen, 'The Ladies from Outside': An Archaic Pattern of the Witches' Sabbath', *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds., p. 220.

²³⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, ff. 459r-462v.

²⁴⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 468v.

²⁴¹ *AIM, Proc.* 134B, ff. 499r-500r.

²⁴² *AIM, Proc.* 120C, ff. 1315r-v.

²⁴³ *AIM, Proc.* 128A, f. 1v.

²⁴⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 132A, f. 293v.

of Michele Lisi, a coffee-shop owner of Valletta. When he broke his friendship with Stefano the latter had threatened him -

*'I will make you cry. I will make you remember my name'.*²⁴⁵

Fr Ignazio Mizzi and Maria were sworn enemies. She greatly regretted his nomination of parish priest of Sannat, Gozo, and would have preferred instead Fr Michele Grima. When all her attempts proved futile she was heard saying that little or not at all would he enjoy his cure since she would find some means to annihilate him.²⁴⁶ It is not difficult to realise that such threats as the following brought those who unleashed them under suspicion -

*'You will disappear in twenty-four hours'.*²⁴⁷

*'You will remain in your senses till the return of the galleys when I will beat you as the sea beats against the land'.*²⁴⁸

To recognise a spell the lay doctor observed the hand,²⁴⁹ the tongue and the pulse of the patient or smelled some of his clothing.²⁵⁰ To diagnose whether the deacon, Fr Giuseppe Manescalco, was bewitched a slave wrote in ink on a plate and then dissolved the writing in water.²⁵¹ The doctor could look for ulcers,²⁵² bleed the patient,²⁵³ touch the joints of his hand²⁵⁴ or just look at his face,²⁵⁵ examine the headscarf²⁵⁶ or touch a woman's 'secret parts'.²⁵⁷ It was when Felice Triganza of Mdina had his eyelid raised that

²⁴⁵ AIM, Proc. 126B, f. 692v.

²⁴⁶ AIM, Proc. 120C, f. 1094r.

²⁴⁷ AIM, Proc. 131A, f. 345r.

²⁴⁸ AIM, Proc. 131B, ff. 686r-v.

²⁴⁹ AIM, Proc. 131A, f. 24v.

²⁵⁰ AIM, Proc. 117C, ff. 1152r-1172v.

²⁵¹ AIM, Proc. 128A, f. 250r.

²⁵² AIM, Proc. 120A, f. 195r.

²⁵³ AIM, Proc. 126B, f. 524v.

²⁵⁴ AIM, Proc. 128A, f. 1r.

²⁵⁵ AIM, Proc. 126C, f. 1035v.

²⁵⁶ AIM, Proc. 131A, f. 16r.

²⁵⁷ AIM, Proc. 130, f. 466r.

the galley-convict, Palumbo, assured him he was bewitched.²⁵⁸ To know if a person was under the effect of the evil eye Salvatore Calleja of *città* Rohan repeated an experiment known in southern Italy²⁵⁹ and in Toledo.²⁶⁰ He put two or three drops of oil in a plate; if these scattered it was a sign that the person was bewitched and the experiment was repeated twice more, each time using fresh ingredients.

Traditional folk medicine consisted in the healing properties of plants, minerals and animals. Little children 'who felt pain in their ribs owing to coagulated milk' had a hedgehog cut open and applied while still warm on the part which hurt them.²⁶¹ Lemon juice and crushed date stone were used to cure ringworm. And Lorenza, an old woman from *casal* Gudja, who had lain paralysed in bed for a very long time, was given a bath in which were put boiled orange- and lemon-tree leaves, rosemary and wild thyme²⁶² - though, as was the case of Lorenzo Aquilina of Siggiewi, she could have been fumigated with cooked lentils.²⁶³ The insane were given honey to eat²⁶⁴ whereas patients suffering from headaches drank rose water and their head was fumigated with benzoin.²⁶⁵ However, these ingredients were not always sufficient to cure the harmful effects of witchcraft which was believed to have a supernatural cause.²⁶⁶ Instead, written or even blank bits of paper which the patient carried on his person,²⁶⁷ or had them sewn to his dress as amulets,²⁶⁸ were most commonly used. They could even be burnt²⁶⁹ or else, as in

²⁵⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 20r.

²⁵⁹ Ernesto de Martino, *Sud e Magia*, p. 16.

²⁶⁰ Jean-Pierre Dedieu, *L'Administration de la foi : L'Inquisition de Tolède*, p.309.

²⁶¹ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 436v.

²⁶² *AIM, Proc.* 134B, f. 927r.

²⁶³ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, ff. 480r-v.

²⁶⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 126B, f. 525r.

²⁶⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 126C, f. 1081v.

²⁶⁶ Sona Rosa Burstein, 'Demonology and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Folk-Lore*, vol. LXV11 (1956), pp. 16-33.

²⁶⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 121C, f. 1340v.

²⁶⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 9v.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 147r.

the case of Sapienza Farrugia, a young woman of Qrendi, soaked in wine.²⁷⁰ Still, it was on a fish that Gaetano Schembri wrote some letters, which he then gave to Paolo Gambin to eat.²⁷¹

As in Venice such practices were often pervaded by Christian rituals and it was impossible to distinguish between prayers and superstitious invocations. Fumigation frequently consisted of incense as well as of blessed olive and palm branches. Maria Teresa of Senglea said the following Sicilian incantation against the evil eye -

*Occiatura, scantatura,
Sana sia chista creatura.
Due l'anni innociatu.
Tri l'anni Sanctu,
Il Padre, il Figlio, lo Spirito Sancto.
Sanctissima Trinita.
Giesù Christu culla catina,
Questo male si ritira.
Giesù Christu culla colanna,
Questo male mai non torna.
Giesù Christu culla cruci,
Chiestu mali si riduci.* ²⁷²

Anna, the widow of Andrea Fenech of *casal Lia*, recited the Salve Regina and a popular saying:

*'Iech il hain hi cahla tmur phal nahla
'U iech il hain hi zercha tmur phal berca'.*²⁷³

Another incantation against the evil eye was that used by Paolica Galea of Naxxar -

²⁷⁰ AIM, Proc. 121C, f. 1340v.

²⁷¹ AIM, Proc. 137, ff. 246r-v. This is an aspect of north African influence over Maltese customs. In Tunisia, for instance, the fish is considered the ultimate blessing that promotes well-being. See Joel M. Teitelbaum, 'Tunisia, the Leer and the Loom: Social Controls on Handloom Weavers', Clarence Maloney, ed., pp. 70-72.

²⁷² 'Occiatura, scantatura / Let this child be healed. / Two have harmed her. / Three will cure her. / The Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. / Most Holy Trinity. / Jesus Christ with the chain, / Remove this illness. / Jesus Christ with the column, / Make that this illness never return. / Jesus Christ with the cross, / Remove this illness' - AIM, Proc. 133B, f. 82r.

²⁷³ 'If the eye is dark blue let it go like a bee / And if the eye is light blue let it go like lightning' - AIM, Proc. 135B, f. 451v; AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 420v.

'May God set you free from the evil eye.
 May God liberate you from the wicked eye.
 May the sea come with velocity
 And go like a wave.
 May the eye as black as mulberry
 Come out like the ringworm.²⁷⁴

The technique of mimetic or imitative magic was often used in healing. Maria Chetcuti of Zejtun rubbed the warts on her face by three small stones, while reciting three *ave Marias* 'in honour of those three stones on which David wrote the name of Jesus and Mary and with which he killed Goliath.'²⁷⁵ Another good example of such type of magic was used in the experiment described by the Neapolitan Domenico dell'Arena, who was ill with spleen. An orange was pierced at one end with nails in the form of a cross and put on a fireplace. The meaning was simple; as the juice went out of the fruit so would Domenico's illness come out with the sweat.²⁷⁶

Sympathetic magic and incantations were also used in the treatment of pterygium, or - as it was called in the village jargon - *octopus*. Besides calling on St Luke, St Matthew and St Margaret reference is made to the cleansing power of seawater, where the 'octopus' was to find its way again -

*'Salip in Deu,
 Santu Luca, San Matteu,
 handi hainea tugiahni.
 Mur fdac il ginien
 imxejtu b'ringlejja
 saqqejtu b'id-dmugh ta' ghajnejja.
 Aqta' busbiesa helwa
 u imsah bija ghajnejk,
 u mur f'xatt il-bahar
 issib il-qarnit istaham.*

²⁷⁴ AIM, Proc. 136A, ff. 48r-v.

²⁷⁵ AIM, Proc. 132A, ff. 301r-v.

²⁷⁶ The incantation which accompanied the ritual was this - '*Pater noster diboleo, / Chi lo sape è ritondeo. / Ritondeo è Santa Maria, / E l'Angelo che legia. / La litania va cantando, / E per passo e per la via. / Sia lodato Gesù Cristo, / E la Vergine Maria. / Pater Noster piccirello / In ogni mattina vaio con illu, / Gesù Cristo affrontau, / E per la mano mi pigliau, / E mi feci la Cruci alla frunti, / E il nemico non m'affrunti, / E non per passu, ne per via. / Sia lodato Gesù Cristo, / E la Vergine Maria*' - AIM, Proc. 121B, ff. 702r-731v.

*Ahfen seba' hafniet ma' seba' mewgiet.
 Ahsel ghajnejk biex isiru bhall-wardiet.
 Santa Maria Margarita
 tnehhi lehbara mill-qarnita'.²⁷⁷*

The next charm includes what Keith Thomas calls 'narrative charm'²⁷⁸ and A. A. Barb 'magic incantation'. This is an apocryphal story²⁷⁹ taken from the life of Christ and is based on the notion that 'mythical events remain for ever a timeless source of supernatural power'²⁸⁰ or, as Peter Burke suggests, 'the active participation of the patient in this symbolic narrative apparently brings relief'.²⁸¹ This *historiola* relates how

*Jesus met his mother, Mary,
 And asked her, 'Tell me, what ails thee?'
 'My eye hurts me', she answered.
 'Go by the seaside
 And find a herb watered by my sweat.
 St George on horse-back,
 Cure this young lady'.²⁸²*

Incantations - which could be mumbled undertone²⁸³ or in some unknown language like Latin²⁸⁴ to increase all the more their mystique - were especially frequent

²⁷⁷ 'By the cross and the name of God / St Luke and St Matthew / My eye hurts me. / Go to that garden / Which I walked through / And watered by the tears of my eyes. / Pick a sweet fennel / And wipe your face with it / Go to the seaside / Find the octopus in the mud. / Take seven handfuls of waves / Wash your eyes that they become like roses. / St Mary Margaret / Take away the film from the octopus' - AIM, Proc. 134A. f. 438r. For a variant of this charm, Joseph Cassar-Pullicino, *An Introduction to Maltese Folk-Lore*, p. 15-16. See also A(ntonio) C(remona), 'Skungrar u Riqi', *Il-Malti*, March 1931, pp. 17-18.

²⁷⁸ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 179.

²⁷⁹ For other legends concerning a speck in the eye and toothaches, Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, pp. 3-4, 71-75.

²⁸⁰ A. A. Barb, 'The Survival of Magic arts', *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, Arnaldo Momigliano, ed., pp. 121-124.

²⁸¹ Peter Burke, 'Rituals of Healing in Early Modern Italy', *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Europe*, p. 211.

²⁸² AIM, Proc. 133A, ff. 3r-v.

²⁸³ AIM, Proc. 126A, f. 197r.

²⁸⁴ 'Verginitatem Purissima unite carnem meam in nomine Patris, Filii et Spiritus Sancti' - AIM, Proc. 126B, f. 811r.

in amatory magic.²⁸⁵ These incantations, as Origen has long ago attested,²⁸⁶ and as Roger Bacon again emphasized in the thirteenth century,²⁸⁷ testify to the power of words.²⁸⁸ What was needed of the beseecher, Carlo Ginzburg reminds us, was only a mechanical repetition of the formula.²⁸⁹ That dogs be struck dumb, for instance, the following charm was recited -

*'Welcome all you dogs!
I hold three glots of blood of St Vito.
And three hairs of Our Lady.
I tie you dogs
Even if you were a thousand.
St Vito goes out with the cross.
Dog, lose your voice.'*²⁹⁰

Charms were also said not to feel pain when beaten,²⁹¹ to be protected from musket shot²⁹² and even to know whether a woman would be fortunate in her marriage. In this latter instance three *Paters* and *Aves* were first recited in honour of St Elena, 'the sister of Constantine', and then -

*'Sant'Elena che in mare fù buttato
D'argento fù la vostra sepoltura,
D'oro la serratura.*

²⁸⁵ See, for instance, the verbal formula described by Maddalena Giallongo, a widow from Valletta, in 1747: 'I burn this salt. / I burn the heart of N. / for the sake of this Carmena. / That he would not eat, / nor drink or sleep. / And that these leaps / that the salt makes in the fire / would be so many nails / in the heart of N. / For the love of Carmena' - AIM, Proc. 121A, f. 341v. For such other examples see AIM, Proc. 123A, ff. 359r-v; AIM, Proc. 123B, ff. 637r-v; AIM, Proc. 134A, ff. 402r-v.

²⁸⁶ Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, pp. 449-452. *Against Celsus* 1, 25; V, 45.

²⁸⁷ 'When words are uttered with deep thought, great desire, good intention and firm confidence, they have great virtue' - Quoted in Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. 11, p. 665.

²⁸⁸ S. J. Tambiah, 'The Magical Power of Words', *Man*, vol. 3, no. 2 (June 1968), pp. 175-208.

²⁸⁹ Carlo Ginzburg, 'Folklore, magia, religione', *Storia D'Italia*, vol. 1: *I Caratteri Originali*, Ruggiero Romano and Corrado Vivanti, eds., p. 647.

²⁹⁰ AIM, Proc. 125C, f. 975r. Other variations on the same theme : 'Bonasera a tutti. / Miseria e guai. / Sangue di Cristo. / Tre singhiozzi' - AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 107r; 'Gesù Cristo nasciù, / lo cane moriù, / lo cane lo lassa, / Gesù Cristo la lascia' - AIM, Proc. 124B, f. 587v.

²⁹¹ 'Vengo, entro, il cuor ti piglio, la mente ti strocco' - AIM, Proc. 123A, f. 360v.

²⁹² 'Vi lego polvere e palle in questa canna / Come fù legato Cristo in casa d'Anna. / Polvere che stai à stò fogone / Vi lego come Cristo fu legato nella Passione' - AIM, Proc. 125C, f. 975v.

*Fatemi vedere la mia fortuna.
Se è buona una chiesa apparecchiata.
Se è cattiva un fuoco ardente,
Ed un fiume corrente'.²⁹³*

Charms did not necessarily have to be recited to be effective; they could be simply written down. Scraps of paper sewn inside the hem of a skirt were supposed to cause abortion.²⁹⁴ They made people rich²⁹⁵ or invisible²⁹⁶ if placed on the head; wise and virtuous when tied round the arm²⁹⁷ and they had even the power to move people from one place to another if tied to the left foot.²⁹⁸ Such bits of paper were also used as protection against firearms²⁹⁹ though in this latter instance it could also be the letter supposedly sent by Pope Leo 111 to Charlemagne.³⁰⁰

In other cases the emphasis was on the experiment or the ritual itself. Manena of Strait Street, Valletta³⁰¹ and an unknown woman of Vittoriosa,³⁰² among others, both indulged in palmistry. The transposition of several small stones from one place to another indicated whether a galley convict³⁰³ would be set free or a slave³⁰⁴ redeemed. On the way Carolo Cousin and Nicola Mallia touched the page of a book with their finger

²⁹³ 'St Helen, who was thrown into the sea, / Your tomb was of silver, the lock of gold. / Make me see my fortune. / If it is good show me a well-decorated church. / If bad, a blazing fire, / And a flowing river' - AIM, Proc. 121A, f. 193r-v.

²⁹⁴ AIM, Proc. 124B, ff. 1047r-v.

²⁹⁵ AIM, Proc. 128A, f. 493r.

²⁹⁶ AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 101r. AIM, Proc. 134B, f. 565r.

²⁹⁷ AIM, Proc. 133A, f. 169r.

²⁹⁸ AIM, Proc. 121B, f. 901v.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 932r.

³⁰⁰ AIM, Proc. 127B, f. 682r. On this topic see Curt F. Buhler, 'Prayers and Charms in Certain Middle English Scrolls', *Speculum* vol. XXXIX, no. 2 (April 1964), pp. 270-278.

³⁰¹ AIM, Proc. 135A, f. 279r.

³⁰² AIM, Proc. 134B, f. 511r.

³⁰³ AIM, Proc. 121A, ff. 17r, 43r.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 412r.

depended the interpretation of their fortune.³⁰⁵ A thief would be located by writing the names of suspects on pieces of paper which were thrown into a bowl of water; the one which remained afloat denoted the culprit.³⁰⁶ Reference to *bean-casting* is sporadic. Maddalena de Stephani recalled how Antonia *la Siciliana* (the Sicilian) made her an experiment to prove whether a friend of hers would return. She took nine pairs of beans, marking them male and female, which she mixed with a small piece of bread and coal, some salt and a scrap of paper. She tossed them in her hand, reciting an *Ave* and a *Pater* in honour of St Elena, while reciting -

'By the Holy Ship that you boarded,
By the Holy Table that you found,
By the Holy Church that you had,
By the Holy Cross that you found,
Show me the truth whether my friend loves me'.

The beans were then cast but there is no indication on how they were interpreted.³⁰⁷ Beans were also used in an experiment to ascertain a bride's age: a bean would be put in a beaker of water and if it got wrinkled the girl would be elderly, if smooth, youthful.³⁰⁸ The casting of molten *lead* in water and then interpreting its shape was another method of divination. This experiment was tried by Maria Rossi of Vittoriosa to know what sort of occupation her son-in-law would practice; and the lead having taken the shape of a small boat it was presumed he would be a sailor. The same result was produced by sifting earth through a sieve, which had been gathered from 'four corners'.³⁰⁹

A commoner test was that of the *sieve* and the shears. Unlike Venice³¹⁰ and England,³¹¹ in Malta this practice was not used to find lost property or to locate a thief. Generally, it was employed 'to see whether I was in love'³¹² or to know if 'my daughter

³⁰⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 124B, ff. 1058r-v. For a similar experiment when Isaac, a Jewish slave, told Pietro Muscat of Zebbug where he had been the day before and what he had said as well as how much money his wife had, see *AIM, Proc.* 121A, f. 44r.

³⁰⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 120B, f. 691r.

³⁰⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 61A, ff. 15r-v.

³⁰⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 120B, f. 631r.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, ff. 631r-v.

³¹⁰ Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice, 1550-1650*, p. 114.

³¹¹ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 213.

³¹² *AIM, Proc.* 120C, f. 1397r.

went out with men'.³¹³ An old woman of Valletta, Margherita, a Jew's wife, used the experiment to ascertain whether Carmena's lover would come back. She balanced a silken sieve on a pair of shears, while nominating St Peter and St Paul. When the sieve started to turn she continued, '*Show me whether he* (calling the name of the young man) *loves her*'. And the sieve having stopped in front of Carmena that was interpreted that he did.³¹⁴ The same experiment was used to locate a treasure, while saying -

*'Per virtù, forza e potenza
di San Pietro e San Paolo,
se vi è il tesoro girare a destra,
se non vi è, a sinistra'.³¹⁵*

Some object charms were used because of their qualities. The magnet (*calamita*),³¹⁶ which could be even baptized, was one of them and Rosa Bonaccisi put it under her husband's mattress, convinced that it would draw him to her.³¹⁷ It was also believed that some herbs, like *crucifia*,³¹⁸ possessed amorous qualities; so that Francesca Viali fumigated herself with rue in an attempt to earn the love of a young man.³¹⁹ It does not seem that the consecrated Host was used in love magic though it was during elevation time that the goldsmith, Francesco, tied three knots in a red ribbon to gain the attention of a friend. However, the host could be used to heal the obsessed³²⁰ and one could tie the particle to the thigh to become invisible.³²¹ For the same reason Marcellino Farina filled the skull of a dead priest with earth and sowed beans in it to hold in his

³¹³ AIM, Proc. 126A, f. 339r. See also AIM, Proc. 130, f. 607v.

³¹⁴ AIM, Proc. 121A, f. 341r.

³¹⁵ '*By the virtue, power and might of St Peter and St Paul, if there is a treasure turn to the right, if not, turn to the left*' - AIM, Proc. 127B, 746v.

³¹⁶ AIM, Proc. 126A, ff. 402r-404r.

³¹⁷ AIM, Proc. 124B, ff. 847r-v.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, ff. 587r-v.

³¹⁹ AIM, Proc. 124A, f. 310r.

³²⁰ AIM, Corr. 77A, f. 50r.

³²¹ AIM, Proc. 124B, ff. 1093r-v.

mouth when they sprouted.³²² A gallows's rope had particular power since it protected whoever kept a piece of it on himself at night.³²³

These magical practices had been declared a reserved sin as early as 1591 by the synod held by Bishop Gargallo.³²⁴ These '*maleficos, incantatores, sortilegos, striges, daemonum familiaritate utentes, ligaturs, characteribus, signis, somniis, superstitiose incunbents et ad haec Sacramentis, vel Sacramentalibus abutentes*' were to be reported to him or to the Tribunal of the Inquisition.³²⁵ Yet by the second half of the eighteenth century not even officials of the Holy Office were exempt from these superstitious practices.³²⁶ The problem was considered to be so serious that, as in southern Italy,³²⁷ queries about popular magic were a feature of pastoral visitations³²⁸ and 'wise women' could be summoned to the Bishop's palace at Valletta for interrogation.³²⁹ A further consideration. Was the licensing of midwives by the Bishop³³⁰ made just to ascertain whether they could perform the sacrament of baptism? Or had it anything to do with the repression of the use of magic during childbirth? The use of charms during labour make this a very plausible answer.³³¹

³²² AIM, Proc. 124A, f. 168r.

³²³ AIM, Proc. 124C, f. 1515v.

³²⁴ NLM, Libr. 6, f. 35r.

³²⁵ Decreta Melivetanae Synodi, pp. 5-6.

³²⁶ AIM, Proc. 122A, ff. 381r-390v.

³²⁷ Gabriele de Rosa, 'Problemi religiosi della società meridionale nel Settecento attraverso le visite pastorali di Angelo Anzani', in Vescovi, Popolo e Magia nel Sud, pp. 35-57.

³²⁸ AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 433v.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, ff. 435r-v.

³³⁰ AAM, VP, vol. XL1, f. 100r.

³³¹ Joseph Cassar-Pullicino, Studies in Maltese Folklore, pp. 216-234.

PRELIMINARY ENQUIRY

The foregoing chapters, which incidentally prove Prof. Greenleaf's contention that 'perhaps a society is best known through its heretics and dissenters',¹ were an exercise in history from below.² They are the study of the religious attitudes and mentality³ of a traditional society in the late eighteenth century as they appear mainly from the trial records of the Inquisition. Dissenting voices about the validity of these 'archives of repression' for describing the daily life of the people do make themselves heard but such criticism as Carlo Ginzburg's,⁴ Peter Burke's⁵ and Andrea Del Col's⁶ does not in the main undermine their

¹ Richard E. Greenleaf, The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century, p. 1

² For a clear exposition of popular culture see Carlo Ginzburg's preface to the Italian edition of his The Cheese and the Worms : The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller, pp. XI11-XXV1. For such type of history writing see also Peter Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe, Frederick Krantz (ed.), History From Below and Cecil Roth, 'The Inquisitional Archives as a Source of English History', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, ser. 4, 18 (1935), pp. 107-122.

³ On this subject, Jean Delumeau, 'Déchristianisation ou Nouveau Modèle de Christianisme?', Archives de Sciences Sociales et Religions, no. 40 (1975), pp. 3-9.

⁴ Carlo Ginzburg, The Night Battles : Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults Between the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, *passim*. See also the same author's 'The Inquisitor as Anthropologist', in his Myths, Emblems, Clues, pp. 156-164.

⁵ Peter Burke, 'Witchcraft and Magic in Renaissance Italy : Gianfrancesco Pico and his *Stryx*', The Damned Art : Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft, Sydney Anglo, ed., pp. 45-46.

⁶ Andrea Del Col, 'I Processi dell'Inquisizione come Fonte : Considerazioni Diplomatiche e Storiche', Annuario dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea, vols. XXXV-XXXVI (1983-1984), pp. 31-49.

utility.⁷ Granted, the Inquisitor might dictate to the notary to write down what the deponent never intended, and the trial might contain blank spaces, cancelled names, changed words and different handwritings.⁸ Such illegality, however, was very rare since the *Suprema* insisted on a full recording of all events transpiring before the Tribunal.⁹ This second section of the thesis deals with the official procedure of the *Sant'Ufficio*¹⁰ and how it treated unorthodox popular beliefs and practices. The proceedings are of inestimable value even here but equally useful is the correspondence exchanged between Malta and Rome. These despatches go behind the workings of the trials which, taken by themselves, may often seem cold and harsh.¹¹

⁷ On this argument see the highly informative comments by John Martin in his *Venice's Hidden Enemies : Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City*, pp. 10-15. For the refutation of the thesis that '*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*' but that texts 'inscribe the variegated motives and interests, material desires and imaginary dreams that motivate human behaviour' see Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 'History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, vol. 65 (1990), pp. 59-86. See also Joseph Shatzmiller, 'Processi del Sant'Ufficio di Venezia contro Ebrei e Giudaizzanti', *Studi Storici*, Anno 28 (1987), p. 531; Carla Righi, 'L'Inquisizione Ecclesiastica a Modena nel '700', *Formazione e Controllo dell'Opinione Pubblica a Modena nel '700*, Albano Biondi, ed., p. 67.

⁸ This is what a former judge of the lay and the Bishop's courts testified - '*... cassature, aggiungimenti, mutationi di parola, e spatio lasciato in bianco in un medesimo esame ... Dal che tutto come anco dal numero vitiato del processo si raccoglie e si veda e si tocca con le mani che per aggiustare et accomodare il processo a lor modo si sono fatti tutte le predette cose false*' - AIM, Proc. 154, unpaginated.

⁹ '*Avvertasi ancora di scrivere gli accidenti, e gesti, ed i movimenti del Reo mentre si esamina, come se divenisse pallido, se tremasse, se nel rispondere vacillasse, se dicesse delle parole rotte, ed incompatte, se inteppasse nel rispondere, ed imbrogliasse le parole, ed ora affermasse, ora negasse una medesima cosa, se rispondesse superbamente, e con arroganza; e se anco s'inginocchiasse, e con parole umili domandasse perdonanza del delitto commesso; il tutto si noti*' - Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenale*, p. 183. See also John Tedeschi, 'Inquisitorial Sources and Their Uses', *The Prosecution of Heresy*, p. 48.

¹⁰ For a brilliant exposition of the subject, John Tedeschi, 'The Organization and Procedures of the Roman Inquisition : A Sketch' in his *The Prosecution of Heresy*, pp. 127-203. See also the same author's, 'Inquisitorial Law and the Witch', in *Early Modern European Witchcraft : Centres and Peripheries*, Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds., pp. 83-118; Stephen Haliczer, *Inquisition and Society in the Kingdom of Valencia, 1478-1834*, pp. 59-100; Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate. Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition (1609-1614)*, pp. 37-46.

¹¹ For Malta there are no studies, as there are for instance, for Italian tribunals, of such correspondence. For the tribunal of Bologna see Guido Dall'Olio, 'I Rapporti tra la Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio e gli Inquisitori Locali nei carteggi Bolognesi (1573-1594)', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. CV (1993), pp. 246-286. See also G. Biondi, 'Le Lettere della Sacra Congregazione Romana del Santo Ufficio all'Inquisizione di Modena : Note in Margine ad un Regesto', *Schfanoia*, no. 4 (1987), pp. 93-108.

In Malta, *'errori grandissimi di Lutero infettarono quest'Isola ed i principali di essa'*.¹² Such heresy had been spear-headed by the two school-masters, the Rev. Andrea Axiac, and the French cleric, Don Francesco Gesualdo, and was centred at Mdina and Vittoriosa. Its members, who formed the *Confraternità dei Buoni Cristiani*, and belonged to the clergy, the professions and the crafts,¹³ read Erasmus, Luther, Melancthon and translations of the Bible.¹⁴ Following the account of this conventicle Pius IV, on 21 October 1561, founded the Tribunal of the Roman Inquisition in Malta,¹⁵ its first representative being Bishop Cubelles, the last of the Medieval Pro-Inquisitors.¹⁶ There is no mention at all that as at Naples¹⁷ and Valencia¹⁸ the local population protested; opposition came only from the Government which tried, unsuccessfully, to assume Inquisitorial powers for themselves.¹⁹ Due to these differences²⁰ Rome in 1574 sent to Malta Mgr Pietro Duzina as Apostolic Visitor²¹ and Inquisitor, which latter office was wrested from the Ordinary.²² This

¹² *AIM, Proc.* 1A, f. 26v.

¹³ It was these classes, too, who espoused evangelism in Venice. See John Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies*, pp. 147-177, which comments he repeats in 'Salvation and Society in Sixteenth-Century Venice : Popular Evangelism in a Renaissance City', *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 60, no. 2, pp. 221-222. On the same topic see Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Strikes and Salvation in Lyon' in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, pp. 1-16.

¹⁴ Sebastiano Salelles, *De Materiis Tribunalium S. Inquisitionis*, vol. 1, prol. 10, p. 47, no. 22; *AIM, Proc.* 3B, f. 473r; *AIM, Mem.* 12, ff. 16v-18v; Carmel Cassar, 'The Reformation and Sixteenth-Century Malta', *Melita Historica*, vol. X, no. 1, pp. 51-68.

¹⁵ S. Salelles, *De Materiis Tribunalium S. Inquisitionis*, vol. 1, prol. 11, p. 53, no. 11.

¹⁶ For the Medieval Inquisition in Malta see A. Bonnici, 'Medieval Inquisition in Malta 1433-1561', *Hyphen*, vol. VI, no. 2 (1989), pp. 61-75. G. Wetinger, *The Jews of Malta in the Late Middle Ages*, *passim*; G. F. Abela, *Della Descrizione di Malta Isola nel Mare Siciliano*, pp. 558-9; S. Salelles, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, prol. 11, p. 41, no. 2.

¹⁷ Luigi Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio della Inquisizione in Napoli*, vol. 1, pp. 200-202.

¹⁸ Stephen Haliczzer, *Inquisition and Society in the Kingdom of Valencia, 1478-1834*, *passim*.

¹⁹ Bartolomeo dal Pozzo, *Historia della Sacra Religione Militare di S. Giovanni Gerosolimitano detta di Malta*, vol. 1, p. 84.

²⁰ Pompeo Falcone, 'La Nunziatura di Malta dall'Archivio Segreto della S. Sede. 1, L'Età di Gregorio XIII', *Archivio Storico di Malta* (1936), pp. 39-41.

²¹ For such duties see Ludovico von Pastor, *Storia dei Papi*, vol. VII, p. 132 and Angelo Turchini, *Clero e Fedeli a Rimini in Età Post-Tridentina*, p. 13.

was an excellent choice since as Pius V's *uomo di fiducia* Duzina had been sent earlier on in 1571 as Vicar General to Naples²³ where he conducted a vigorous persecution against heretics.²⁴ In fact, the setting up of the Roman Inquisition in Malta must be seen in the wide perspective of the spreading of Protestantism in the Mediterranean, described by one author as '*un vero e proprio Calvinismo del Mediterraneo*'.²⁵ In Sardinia it was the brothers Gallo, among others, who propagated such heterodox ideas,²⁶ whereas in Sicily between 1547 and 1556 eighty-six Lutherans were sentenced by the Inquisitor, among whom the obstinate Maltese doctor, Natale Caspar, then living at Terranova.²⁷

In the Middle Ages criminal prosecution could be initiated in two ways. The *rimedium ordinarium* was the accusatory method by which the criminal was brought to justice on the private initiative of the plaintiff himself. By this legal procedure if the accused failed to be found guilty the delator suffered the *poena talionis*, or the punishment that would have been meted out to the defendant, himself. This process was in contrast to the 'extraordinary' *inquisitorial* procedure under which it was the authorities who collected information from the public to discover crimes and identify the criminals. Only then, when sufficient evidence had been gathered, could proceedings be initiated.²⁸ Responsibility for

²² AIM, Mem. 5, ff. 241r-242v.

²³ For the relation of the Bishop at Naples and his Vicar, who was the delegate of the *Sacra Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio*, see Agostino Borromeo, 'Contributo allo Studio dell'Inquisizione e dei suoi rapporti con il Potere Episcopale nell'Italia Spagnola del cinquecento', *Annuario dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea*, vols. XXIX-XXX (1977-1978), pp. 228-233.

²⁴ For a summary of the influence of the Spaniard, Juan de Valdés, in this city see the article by Domingo Angel Fernandez in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Asctique et Mystique Doctrine et Histoire*, fascicules C11-C111 (Paris, 1992), cc 122-130.

²⁵ G. Spini, 'Di Nicola Gallo e di alcune infiltrazioni della Riforma Protestante', *Rinascimento*, anno 11, no. 2, p. 163; Bruno Pellegrino, 'Inquisizione e Lotte di Potere in Sardegna nel Secolo XVI', *Annuario dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea*, vols. XXXV11-XXXV111 (1985-1986), pp. 163-164.

²⁶ Giancarlo Sorgia, *Studi Sull'Inquisizione In Sardegna*, p. 14.

²⁷ Vito La Mantia, *Origine e Vicende dell'Inquisizione in Sicilia*, pp. 57, 198.

²⁸ For a brilliant exposition of the subject see Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, Louis Sala-Molins, ed., pp. 115-117. See also Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, pp. 431-432; W. Ullmann, 'Some Medieval Principles of Criminal Procedure', *Juridical Review* (1947), pp. 1-28 and Richard Kiechkefer, *European Witch Trials : Their Foundations in Popular and Learned*

such legal development, John H. Langbein²⁹ and Henry Ansgar Kelly³⁰ affirm, must rest largely on the church. In 1215 the Fourth Lateran Council eliminated the ordeals from church practice; and, since the priest had had a central part in the ritual, secular courts were affected as well.³¹ This meant that now the emphasis of Roman law on witnesses and written instruments became the principal means of proof. Judicial proofs by ordeals had required the miraculous intervention of God and constituted a flagrant tempting of Him. But besides theological reasons³² such development reflected, and in a still greater degree, the general movement towards rational legal procedure,³³ inherent in the intellectual revival of the twelfth century.³⁴ The most cogent reason, however, was that the church needed a surer means to deal with the upsurge of heresy that flourished at that time; heresy is difficult to detect since, being an action of the will, faith is an illusive quality.³⁵

The assumption of the inquisitorial process by the Court of Faith was only too reasonable since, as Peña, the sixteenth-century Spanish theologian, remarks, no accuser

Culture, 1300-1500, pp. 18-19; Norman Kohn, Europe's Inner Demons. An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt, pp. 22-24, 160-163; James Given, 'The Inquisitors of Languedoc and the Medieval Technology of Power', American Historical Review, vol. 94, no. 2 (April 1989), pp. 341-343; Henry Ansgar Kelly, 'Inquisition and the Prosecution of Heresy : Misconceptions and Abuses', Church History, vol. 58, no. 4 (Dec. 1989), pp. 440-441.

²⁹ John H. Langbein, Prosecuting Crime in the Renaissance : England, Germany, France, pp. 129-139..

³⁰ Henry Ansgar Kelly, 'Inquisition and the Prosecution of Heresy : Misconceptions and Abuses', Church History, vol. 58 (Dec. 1989), no. 1, pp. 439-442.

³¹ Sir Frederick Pollock and Frederick William Maitland, The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I, vol. 1, pp. 598-599. For one such lay court, appropriately called *Curia Inquisitionis*, see Daniel Lord Smail, 'Common Violence : Vengeance and Inquisition in Fourteenth-Century Marseille', Past and Present, no. 151 (1996), p. 28-59.

³² On this topic see John W. Baldwin, 'The Intellectual Preparation for the Canon of 1215 against Ordeals', Speculum vol. XXXVI, no. 4 (Oct. 1961), pp. 613-636.

³³ Stephan Kuttner, 'The Revival of Jurisprudence', Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century, Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable with Carol D. Lanham, eds., pp. 299-323.

³⁴ Charles Homer Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century. P. P. A. Biller, 'Birth-Control in the West in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries', Past And Present, no. 94 (Feb. 1982), p. 13. R.W. Southern, The Making of the Middle Ages, p. 95.

³⁵ Walter Ullmann, 'Historical Introduction', Henry Charles Lea, The Inquisition of the Middle Ages : Its Organization and Operation, p. 43.

would have come forth to charge others, 'with the consequence that crimes remained unpunished to the great detriment of the State'.³⁶ The Holy Office had no organised police force and though its *famigliari* might assist in the hunting of heretics³⁷ it could not be said that they formed any network of informers;³⁸ nor did it have in Malta, unlike the practice at Milan and Parma, such confraternities as that of St Peter Martyr, the *Crocesegnati* and the *Societas Cruxatorum* to assist it.³⁹ Its prosecutor⁴⁰ and, especially, its captain were the only form of law enforcement officers. The captain saw to it, for instance, that Jews wore their distinctive mark⁴¹ or that Protestants⁴² did not deride Catholic rites. He was particularly on his guard when some suspect tried to escape. Accordingly, on 21 June 1777 Pasquale Galea reported under oath to Mgr Lante that a Greek had tried to run away on an English ship, protesting that he had been a Turk and a Moslem would he die.⁴³ Another such rare incident occurred on 24 April 1782 when Giuseppe Zammit accused his father, Giovanni Maria, of planning to leave Malta for Tripoli to join his Moslem wife, Meriem, and his three daughters. He was supposed to be leaving for Rome but

³⁶ Nicolau Eymeric and Francisco Pena, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, p. 116. (Paris, 1973). For the disadvantages of this type of procedure see also Alfred Soman, 'Deviance and Criminal Justice in Western Europe, 1300-1800 : An Essay in Structure', *Criminal Justice History*, vol. 1 (1980), pp. 9-13.

³⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 6, f. 145r. *AIM, Corr.* 7, f. 206r.

³⁸ For the dependence of the Spanish Inquisition on these *famigliari* see Stephen Haliczer, *Inquisition and Society in the Kingdom of Valencia, 1478-1834*, p. 62, and R. Carrasco and A. Gonzalez, 'Le Problème Morisque dans les îles de la Méditerranée', *Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine*, 11^{ème} Année, nos. 35-36 (Dec. 1984), pp. 42-45. For the political power they enjoyed in Spain, Bartolomé Bennassar, 'Aux Origines du caciquisme : les familiers de l'Inquisition en Andalousie au XV^{ème} Siècle', *Caravelle*, no. 27 (1976), pp. 63-71.

³⁹ N. J. Housley, 'Politics and Heresy in Italy : Anti-Heretical Crusades, Orders and Confraternities, 1200-1500', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 33, no. 2 (April 1982), pp. 193-208. Luigi Fumi, 'L'Inquisizione Romana e lo Stato di Milano : Saggio di Ricerche nell'Archivio di Stato', *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, serie iv, anno 37 (1910), vol. 13, pp. 19-26.

⁴⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, f. 237r.

⁴¹ *AIM, Corr.* 29, f. 226r. *AIM, Corr.* 91, ff. 291v-292r.

⁴² *AIM, Corr.* 19, f. 11r.

⁴³ *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 204r. See also *AIM, Proc.* 125C, ff. 1022r-v; this time it concerned the reported attempt of the D'Almeydas to go to Tripoli on an English ship.

'I know it for certain that he wants to go to Barbary. He beats me daily to take me with him but I want to remain a Christian and save my soul. I often go to the catechism class at St Paul's, Valletta; and I confess and receive Holy Communion once every month. I implore, therefore, the help of your Holiness and of this Sacred Tribunal'.

The Captain of the Holy Office at once informed Stefano Mestre, the *Gran Visconte*, to stop their departure. On 23 May, at about half past four in the afternoon, the small rowing-boat of Marcello Grech was about to leave for Sicily; but the Commissioner of Police checked his notebook and handed both father and son to the Captain who imprisoned them.⁴⁴ It did not invariably happen, however, that the Tribunal had its way. Carolo Calleja could only give the news that Fra Samuele, a Chaplain of Obedience, together with *Signora* Maria Teresa, had escaped to some Protestant country, possibly Switzerland or England, to change their religion.⁴⁵

The Tribunal expected help from the Government as without its assistance it could not accomplish its mission well.⁴⁶ True, the Grand Masters would not run the risk of getting into some diplomatic *débâcle* with France for having heretics arrested on board French ships.⁴⁷ In 1729 a renegade was caught at Lampedusa but despite the entreaties of Mgr Serbelloni, Bali de Boccage, the French king's representative in Malta, refused to hand him over to the Holy Office;⁴⁸ and as the man was ready to denounce himself the *Uomo del Re* sent armed men to have him transferred to another French ship on its way to the Levant.⁴⁹ Even a Greek would be allowed to leave Malta contrary to the wishes of the Inquisitor;⁵⁰

⁴⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 133C, ff. 1166r-1188v.

⁴⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 123B, ff. 538r-539r.

⁴⁶ *'... tolta al Sant'Officio la dovuta assistenza non occorre sperare che il Tribunale passa compire alle sue parti'* - *AIM, Corr.* 18, f. 59r. For the same comment, Yves Dossat, 'L'Inquisition Toulousaine de 1243 a 1273', *Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France*, vol. XXXV11, no. 130 (1951), pp. 188-191.

⁴⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 94, ff. 169r-v, 186r, 188r. *AIM, Corr.* 20, f. 14r.

⁴⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 224v. *AIM, Corr.* 24, f. 15r.

⁴⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 227r. *AIM, Corr.* 24, f. 23r.

⁵⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 131r.

and despite the ruling of His Holiness⁵¹ the French Langue still prohibited the Tribunal's captain to enter the hospital with his rod raised. But such difficulties notwithstanding⁵² Grand Masters helped in the running of the Tribunal; and Anton Manoel de Vilhena informed Mgr Serbelloni of the presence of an apostate on board a corsair ship, flying the colours of the Grand Duke of Tuscany.⁵³ The lay court would even lend its arm to capture a fugitive from the prisons of the Inquisition of Palermo⁵⁴ or to send a detainee to the dungeons of the Holy Office in Rome.⁵⁵

Sometimes, in fact, it was the lay court which urged the Tribunal to take action. Vittorio Ursi was a 60-year-old free neophyte from Algiers who lived, together with his wife and four children, in a one-room house in Strait Street, Valletta. He first worked as a cook on the galleys but now he was a poorly-dressed and barefoot *fachino* (porter) who, like his companions in the job, went with a sack on his shoulders. On 24 September, St Bartolomeo's day, towards eight in the morning, as he was on his way to work, he found a piece of cloth tied with a string near the Marina Gate. It contained an egg with letters in black ink written on it, which he threw on a pile of manure. He was seen by a 13-year-old boy from Floriana, Giuseppe Napolitano, who picked up the parcel and showed it to his friends Francesco Ciappara, Lorenzo Farrugia and Aloisio Galea *mostaccia* (whiskers). They were told by Antonuccio, a clerk at the Customs House, to take it to the *Gran Visconte*. The latter sent them to the criminal judge, whom they found near the *Monte della Redenzione*; and who in turn sent them to the *Castellania*, where they deposited the egg and were interrogated. That same day at about 10 a.m. while he was having lunch with his family, Ursi was arrested by two soldiers (*sbirri*). The next day the Public Prosecutor, accompanied by the notary, one Gonzi, exhibited the egg at the palace of the Inquisitor as

⁵¹ *AIM, Corr.* 24, ff. 76r-v, 84r.

⁵² *Ibid.*, f. 23r.

⁵³ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 227r.

⁵⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 6, f. 7r.

⁵⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 60v.

this piece of witchcraft, so they stated, concerned the Holy Office. Ursi was then conducted by the night captain, with his hands tied behind his back, to the prisons of the Inquisition.⁵⁶

Not infrequently proceedings were started on directions from the Supreme Congregation.⁵⁷ Mgr Giorgio Spinola was ordered to send to Rome the names of those who expounded the philosophy of the *Atomisti* and to confiscate any of their books which entered Malta.⁵⁸ Mgr D'Elci investigated whether Greek children, following a long established custom, received the sacrament of Confirmation immediately after baptism;⁵⁹ and the Pro-Inquisitor, Napulone, was to enquire whether these Greeks commemorated the 'damned memory' of Photius, if they believed that the souls in hell could be saved or if their books contained such errors as *solum expatre procedit*.⁶⁰ Inquisitors were also on the watch to arrest any runaway 'heretics'.⁶¹ Such a one was the fencer, Giovanni Caffattini, of Gallicano, Rome, who had falsified the patents of the Holy Office and forged the signature of His Holiness and the Cardinals. If he came to Malta, the *Suprema* directed, he was to be apprehended; and, since in Genoa he went under the name of Giovanni Mori, Mgr Pallavicino was even sent an accurate description of the man.⁶²

A trial would also start on the initiative of foreign Inquisitors, who demanded, for instance, the capture of a presumed bigamist.⁶³ The Inquisitors were in contact with each

⁵⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 127A, ff. 259r-277v.

⁵⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 18, f. 80r.

⁵⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 17, f. 294r.

⁵⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 19, ff. 273r, 294r.

⁶⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 21, ff. 42r-v.

⁶¹ *AIM, Corr.* 2, ff. 14r-15r. *AIM, Corr.* 27, ff. 176r, 180r.

⁶² He had been condemned to five years on the galleys and had all his property confiscated. *AIM, Corr.* 22, ff. 11r-12r.

⁶³ *AIM, Corr.* 30, ff. 113r-v. This is what the Inquisitor General of Spain wrote to Mgr Salviati from Madrid on 15 Dec. 1758 - '*Nel Sant'Ufficio dell'Inquisizione di questi Regni di Spagna si ritrova denunciato Don Anastasio Bodo, naturale, che si dice essere di Venezia, perchè essendosi maritato nel 1748, è il seguente, nella città Vittoriosa nella chiesa Parrocchiale de' Greci, con certa donna di nazione Greca chiamata Argenta avendo di essa due o tre figli. E vivendo questa nella città Valletta, si è ritrovato a maritare il riferito Don Anastasio in questi Regni ...*' - *AIM, Proc.* 125C, f. 1182r.

other;⁶⁴ and on 18 January 1753 the *Sant'Ufficio* of Palermo informed Mgr Passionei that the Franciscan friar, Fra Bernardino da Trapani, of about thirty-five years of age, of medium height and with a longish face had escaped from prison. In view of this 'incredible news' and knowing how important such a subject was the Inquisitor of Malta was to arrest him if he arrived on the island.⁶⁵ For all the diligence used Mgr Passionei could trace no such friar and those religious who had arrived of late were not suspicious at all. One of them, a Franciscan missionary on his way to the Levant, did at first raise some suspicion but on producing the documents he had from the *Sacra Congregazione di Propaganda Fide* his identity was at once established. Passionei even made the good remark that as the fugitive would be in lay clothes it would have been wise if the colour of his complexion was sent together with the other information.⁶⁶ Some years later, on 17 April 1761, when the Hospitaller Don Luigi Ruffo Moncada set sail for Malta, the Inquisitors of Sicily sent five denunciations against him. He denied there was fire in hell and only admitted the privation of God about which, so he stated, he had been enlightened by a theologian.⁶⁷

A report, in fact, could be made in writing.⁶⁸ Fra Luigi, a Friar Minor, dispatched two letters to Mgr Durini from Sicily, confirming his having solicited a woman penitent in the confessional.⁶⁹ Yet generally such reports were laid against others rather than against oneself. *Padre* Carolo Girolamo da Pavia was a case in point. On 26 January 1774 at Tripoli, towards two in the afternoon, he was on board the French ship of captain Guasqui. While he was talking to a fellow Genoese passenger, Gio. Battista Berenzone, there arrived the chancellor at the French consulate with orders for his arrest. 'He started to scream with all his might that he was a Turk' - so said the *processo verbale* sent to incriminate him -

⁶⁴ For the intimate relations between the Inquisitors of Malta and Sicily, *AIM, Corr.* 7, f. 221r.

⁶⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 29, f. 191r. For a similar incident when Mgr Verallo was to arrest the Friar Minor, Fra Gio. Battista Campiglia, if he were to be in Malta, *AIM, Corr.* 7, f. 187r.

⁶⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 211r.

⁶⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, ff. 279r-290v.

⁶⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 124A, ff. 248r-250v. *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 247r. *AIM, Corr.* 14, f. 244r.

⁶⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 44r.

'uttering with fury the words of the profession of Islam and at the same time making extravagant signs with his arms to the castle of the Pasha to come and rescue him'.

He tried to jump overboard and threatened to cut the captain's throat; and so furious was he that his legs had to be tied. When he entered the Grand Harbour the *Promotore Fiscale* brought such incriminating evidence to Mgr Lante; and that same day, 25 February 1774, towards 8.00 a.m., the friar was taken to the prisons of the Inquisitor.⁷⁰

This official record was signed by the *Prefetto Apostolico* of Tripoli. It was a missionary, too, who reported to Mgr Ruffo that to earn his freedom the captive, Francesco de Rodo, showed his master the best places where to capture Christian prizes. He would have liked to see him punished to give example to others, especially Greeks who, ignoring God and their conscience, trained Turks to do so much harm to the Catholics.⁷¹ Gaetano Tommaso was a 32-year-old miserable *forzato*; yet he was 'a lover of Divine worship and could not suffer the saints to be ill-treated'. Hence he wrote to the Inquisitor accusing Antonio Sacco who after losing 4 tari reduced his rosary to pieces and blasphemed at the scapular of Our Lady of Carmel he had round his neck.⁷² The Roman, Stefano Nisi, was a surgeon on board the corsair frigate *Santa Croce*. On his return to Malta, and while still undergoing quarantine at the Lazzaretto or pest house, he wrote a letter to Mgr Mancinforte, describing the villanious conduct of the ship's chaplain. He accused him of being a blasphemer, a drunkard and a glutton. He never instructed the boys on board and was so ineffectual in keeping the least semblance of morality that sodomy was rampant on board. The crew so despised him that they would not hear him say mass; nor would they fulfill their Easter duties, believing his absolution was null, coming from such a wicked person. The letter was written on 23 July 1778 but on 1 September, after he had been given the clearance certificate, Nisi was summoned before the Inquisitor to confirm the substance of

⁷⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, ff. 237r-239r.

⁷¹ *AIM, Corr.* 16, ff. 37r-v.

⁷² *AIM, Proc.* 132B, f. 640r.

the letter.⁷³ This was in keeping with the rule of the Holy Office which condemned such delations in writing, and which demanded accusers instead to give their report personally.⁷⁴

A suspect could also be brought to trial as a result of rumour.⁷⁵ It would be reported that a slave, who had formerly asked to be baptised, was now - 'perhaps seduced by some Turk' - leaving for Barbary;⁷⁶ or that someone had remarried when the legitimate spouse was still alive⁷⁷ or, still, that a Christian renegade was found on Turkish ships captured by the galleys of Malta.⁷⁸ Instances of licentiousness, especially when incest was involved, was a favourite pastime with people and on 9 October 1756, Rev. Don Ignazio Salvaloco, the Prosecutor of the Bishop's court reported to the Tribunal -

*'Signori, ho presentito che un tal Giuseppe de Bisignani neofito d'alcuni anni à questa parte ha avuto commercio carnale con una tal Alticunda moglie d'Ignazio Vella attualmente abitante nei limiti della parrocchia di Porto Salvo, portandosi così di giorno che di notte nella casa della medesima, e spesso ivi pernottava, dormendo colla medesima in un'istesso letto unitamente col detto Ignazio di lei marito, e dicesi che usava carnalmente con ambidue, come anche corre voce, che la figlia della sudetta Alticunda sia stata procreata dal sudetto Giuseppe. In oltre corre pubblica voce che lo stesso Giuseppe abbia avuto commercio carnale con la madre ed una sorella della mentovata Alticunda con sommo scandalo del vicinato. E però do notizia a questa Gran Corte del fatto sopraccennato per non lasciare impuniti così eccessi enormi'.*⁷⁹

⁷³ AIM, Proc. 132A, ff. 329r-340v.

⁷⁴ '... avvertendo di non ricever mai per scrittura testimonianza alcuna di qualsivoglia persona assente, ma operi che i testimonii di presenza depongano veramente ciò che sanno, ed hanno veduto' - Eliseo Masini, Sacro Arsenale, p. 20.

⁷⁵ 'Mi fù fatta pervenire la notizia che sopra il legno si trovavano due apostati'. - AIM, Corr. 94, f. 169r-v. 'Essendosi qui sparsa voce ...' - Ibid., f. 224v. 'Ho sentito ...' - AIM, Proc. 132A, f. 394r.

⁷⁶ AIM, Corr. 94, ff. 47r, 51v-52r.

⁷⁷ AIM, Proc. 133B, ff. 820r-v.

⁷⁸ 'Si disse per la città Valletta che sopra di quella (tartana) si son trovati due Greci Cristiani i quali si erano arrollati per corsari sul bastimento Turtesco armato a corso ...' - AIM, Proc. 123B, f. 477r.

⁷⁹ AIM, Proc. 124A, f. 392r.

Proceedings were also started after news spread (*'avendolo sentito dirsi'*) that during the performance of Goldoni's comedy, *Il Padre di Famiglia*, one of the actors, a Sicilian who was playing the part of the doctor, ate a piece of roast chicken on a prohibited day.⁸⁰

In these instances no accuser appeared and it was the Tribunal itself which started legal action, summoning witnesses to the crime. Such trials based on hearsay, like anonymous charges so castigated by St Charles Borromeo,⁸¹ were discountenanced by the *Suprema*⁸² and Inquisitors were advised to make diligent researches to establish whether such rumours were well-founded,⁸³ lest they harmed the honour of the accused.⁸⁴ These were very rare cases since proceedings generally started with a formal denunciation.⁸⁵ For the prosecution of heresy the Tribunal in Malta, as Sara T. Nalle has observed for Cuenca in Spain,⁸⁶ was dependant to a very large extent upon ordinary men and women and the duty of tale-bearing was incumbent on everyone, including Moslems who swore 'by the living God'.⁸⁷ Delators, a handbook for Inquisitors warned, were not to be afraid to be called spies. In time of plague no one would be so considered who revealed the names of the infected to

⁸⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 124C, ff. 1476r-1484v.

⁸¹ This is what he wrote to Pius IV who contemplated setting up the Spanish Inquisition in Milan: '*non si poteva admettere nessuna delazione di qualsivoglia delitto senza esprimere il nome del delatore, altrimenti il processo e irritato e nullo*', Luigi Fumo, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

⁸² '*... essendole molto ben noto che questa S. Congregazione non risolve cos'alcuna se non sul fondamento di quello risulta dagli atti giuridicamente fatti*' - *AIM, Corr.* 13, f. 289r.

⁸³ Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenale*, p. 19. On rumour and the weighing of such evidence, L. R. Poos, 'Sex, Lies, and the Church Courts of Pre-Reformation England', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. XXV, no. 4 (1995), pp. 585-607.

⁸⁴ Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, Louis Sala-Molins, ed., p. 118.

⁸⁵ '*... senza delle quali (denunzie) non può procedersi*' - *AIM, Corr.* 27, f. 45r. See also *AIM, Proc.* 133B, f. 827r.

⁸⁶ Sara T. Nalle, 'Inquisitors, Priests and the People during the Catholic Reformation in Spain', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. XVI, no. 4 (1987), p. 567.

⁸⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 136A, f. 39r.

the authorities. Besides, doing something good for God, a just recognizer of our merits, would earn one a prize in heaven, without fearing at all reproach here on earth.⁸⁸

In Malta Inquisitors were installed at the church of St Lawrence in Vittoriosa in the presence of the consultors and the patentees. During High Mass three Bulls⁸⁹ were published from the pulpit by the preacher who delivered the 'panegyric of Holy Faith' which struck terror into the heart of the 'unbelievers'.⁹⁰ An Edict of Justice, which was later repeated in all the churches⁹¹ and fixed on their main door, was also read out.⁹² The inhabitants were given twelve days' time in which to denounce all those who adhered to the rites of Jews,⁹³ Moslems, Saracens and Gentiles; apostacised their Holy Faith; invoked the devil, or had anything to do with magic, necromancy, sorcery and other forms of superstitious practices; those who, though not being priests, celebrated mass or the sacrament of penance; abused of this last sacrament, took part in occult conventicles, blasphemed heretically against God and, especially, the Virgin Mary; hindered in any way the running of the Tribunal, or offended any witness, delator or Minister; those who kept, read, printed or defended heretical books. Whoever refused to report such heretics was to be excommunicated, and could be absolved only by the Inquisitor or by the *Suprema Sacra*

⁸⁸ Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenale*, p. 4.

⁸⁹ These were Julius 111's *Licet ex Diverses*, Pius V's *de Protegendis* and Gregory XV's *Contra Sollicitantes*. Besides, the Bishop and the Conventual Prior published the Bulls *Contra Impedientes Executionem Litterae Apostolicae*, *In Coena Domini* and two others prescribing how doctors were to conduct themselves while curing the sick and the other prohibiting burial outside the tomb. These Bulls started to be read only in 1718, at the installation of Mgr Pallavicini, 'all the Ministers of the Tribunal maintaining that only the usual edict of the Holy Inquisition was published' - *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 210r.

⁹⁰ For this part of Inquisitorial procedure see Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, Louis Sala-Molins, ed., pp. 108-115. Henry Kamen, *Inquisition and Society in Spain*, pp. 161-162.

⁹¹ Such edicts were also published at the Conventual Church of the Order. In 1739 they were signed, besides by Mgr Gualtieri, even by the Prior. The Inquisitor protested and the edicts were replaced by others, though the Prior had already realised his mistake and covered his name with transparent pieces of paper - *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 82v-83r.

⁹² *AIM, Corr.* 1, f. 134r. *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 72r. *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 82v.

⁹³ Charles Amiel, 'Crypto-Judaïsme et Inquisition : La matière juive dans les édits de la foi des Inquisitions ibérique', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, vol. CCX, *Année* 1993, pp. 145-168.

Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio at Rome.⁹⁴ Similar edicts were published in all churches during High Mass by the parish priests⁹⁵ on the first Sunday of Advent and Lent,⁹⁶ besides, penitents swore to inform against heretics in their abjurations⁹⁷ and preachers continually inculcated this duty on the faithful.⁹⁸

However, the impression one gets on reading the trials of the Inquisition is that in Malta people either refused to report 'heretics' at all or else gave their evidence only on compulsion. This aversion to denounce others, which may point out to an uncooperative populace, is well illustrated by Table 7.1. Though every town and village, with the sole exception of Zebbug (Gozo), had its own delators, more than half of the informants, that is 59.0 per cent, came from the maritime cities of Vittoriosa (where the Apostolic Palace was situated), Cospicua, Senglea and Valletta, including its suburb, Floriana, and a number of parishes did not have one single heresy registered for years. This reluctance to be one's brother's keeper,⁹⁹ which has also been documented for Spain,¹⁰⁰ is shown by Maria's case

⁹⁴ *AIM, Mem.* 9, f. 294r. *AIM, Misc.* 2, pp. 6-10.

⁹⁵ This is what Fr Gio. Paolo Zammit, parish priest of Mqabba, reported to Mgr Passionei on 17 Feb. 1744 - 'Io, infrascritto, Rettore della Vda. Chiesa Parrocchiale della terra Micabiba, ne fo piena fede a chi appartiene, come Domenica ultimamente scorsa che furono li 16 del corrente Febraro ' stato in lingua materna promulgato nella medesima chiesa il tenore delli due editti spediti dal Santissimo Tribunale di cotesto Palazzo Inquisitoriale, quali furoni successivamente affissi nei luoghi consueti ...' - *AIM, Proc.* 120A, f. 34.

⁹⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 4, f. 134r. *AIM, Proc.* 120A, ff. 1r-28v. Besides, the Holy Office published edicts for particular occasions. Christian corsairs were letting renegades whom they caught on Turkish ships redeem themselves on the spot or else they sold them back to Turks. Mgr Durini published an edict in 1738 to notify the public of the duty they had to denounce such delinquents, and ordered captain Luca Bartolo, who was soon to set sail for the Levant, to notify the other corsairs he met of such edict. *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 61r-v. For an edict against witchcraft published by Mgr Gualtieri in 1741 see *AIM, Mem.* 9, f. 293r.

⁹⁷ 'Giuro di ... non aver familiarità, ne pratica con Apostati ed Eretici, o che sien sospetti d'Eresia, e se conoscerò alcun tale di denunciarlo a questo Santo Ufficio' - *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 201r.

⁹⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 124A, f. 3r. Following a decree of Pope Urban VIII dated 14 April 1633 at least once a year the edicts of the Holy Office were read to the religious in the refectory or in the chapter and superiors admonished their subjects of their duty to refer to the Inquisitor any matter which pertained to the *Sant' Ufficio* - *AIM, Misc.* 2, pp. 55-57, 75-76; *AIM, Corr.* 6, ff. 21r-v.

⁹⁹ On this topic consult the stimulating essay by Joseph H. Silverman, 'On Knowing Other People's Lives', *Cultural Encounters*, Mary Elizabeth Perry and Anne J. Cruz, eds., pp.157-175.

¹⁰⁰ Henry Kamen, *Inquisition and Society in Spain*, pp. 166-167; Jean-Pierre Dedieu, *L'Administration de la Foi*, pp. 141-2, 153.

Table 7.1 Geographical Distribution of Denunciations.

	Salviati	Durini	Scotti	Carpegna	Total
MALTA					
Valletta	96	107	49	28	280
Vittoriosa	32	27	34	25	118
Senglea	43	15	10	4	72
Cospicua	16	16	22	15	69
Zebbug	12	15	22	7	56
Birkirkara	9	5	9	11	34
Qormi	7	9	9	3	28
Zejtun	12	6	4	6	28
Naxxar	3	8	6	10	27
Zabbar	5	6	8	1	20
Zurrieq	10	1	6	2	19
Siggiewi	3	2	8	3	16
Gudja	9	3	3	2	17
Lija	3	6	6	2	17
Mosta	6	1	2	6	15
Rabat	2	5	7	1	15
Balzan	7	2	-	4	13
Floriana	4	4	4	1	13
Ghaxaq	2	4	4	3	13
Luqa	2	2	5	3	12
Attard	3	1	2	4	10
Tarxien	1	1	3	5	10
Mdina	1	5	3	-	9
Mqabba	5	3	-	1	9
Qrendi	1	2	3	-	6
Kirkop	-	2	1	1	4
Gharghur	-	1	1	-	2
Dingli	-	-	-	1	1
Safi	1	-	-	-	1
GOZO					
Rabat	9	8	22	3	42
Xaghra	2	2	1	-	5
Sannat	-	-	3	1	4
Gharb	-	1	2	-	3
Nadur	3	-	-	-	3
Xewkija	-	-	2	-	2
Zebbug	-	-	-	-	0
'Unknown'	1	1	1	1	4

who, though she did denounce her confessor for solicitation, by no means would she reveal his name to the Inquisitor.¹⁰¹ In most instances denounced and informer were neighbours and, since as at the English village of Terling 'good neighbourliness was a critically important social virtue',¹⁰² one's solidarity with one's community fellows could prove greater than the duties of conscience.¹⁰³ Teresa Caruana was twice refused absolution by her confessor before reporting her neighbour;¹⁰⁴ and when Felicita Cini of Rabat, Gozo, heard Giuseppe Buhagiar profane God's name she blocked her ears; Rosa Farrugia shut the windows and Benedetto Hili, another neighbour, went inside and closed the door behind him,¹⁰⁵ not to hear anything.¹⁰⁶ This was especially the case when the accused happened to be someone most dear to you.¹⁰⁷ Lorenzo Borg, for instance, did not go to church, had asked a Turk work out a spell for him and had damned his mother for leaving some money for her soul; but his wife, Giovanna, always hoped he would some day 'take to the good life again'.¹⁰⁸ Others fulfilled this duty only when they were sure that the denounced could not be brought to book, having meanwhile died¹⁰⁹ or emigrated.¹¹⁰ A wanted man would even be sheltered. The three French Hospitallers, Rossi,¹¹¹ Benenville and Curmonville¹¹² were

¹⁰¹ AIM, Proc. 124B, ff. 879r-v.

¹⁰² Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village : Terling, 1525-1700*, p. 110.

¹⁰³ 'L'altro motivo poi che mi ritardò a dare detta denuncia era di puro rispetto umano, ed il non voler nuocere all'amico.' - AIM, Proc. 124A, f. 68r.

¹⁰⁴ AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 249v.

¹⁰⁵ AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 25r-38v.

¹⁰⁶ AIM, Proc. 120C, f. 1075r. For a similar case see AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 283r - 'Io in sentir tali bestemmie mi son talmente confuso che per non sentirlo più bestemmiare mi son allontanato dal medesimo ...'

¹⁰⁷ '... temendo di far mal a detto mio marito.' - AIM, Proc. 124C, f. 1559r.

¹⁰⁸ 'Io dimorai di venire in questo S. Tribunale per fare la presente denuncia, perchè sempre speravo, che finalmente si riducesse al buono, ma vedendo ed osservando la sua prava continuazione ...' - AIM, Proc. 137, ff. 161r-v.

¹⁰⁹ AIM, Proc. 120C, f. 1319v. AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 356r.

¹¹⁰ AIM, Proc. 136B, ff. 506r-v.

¹¹¹ AIM, Corr. 4, f. 43r.

¹¹² AIM, Corr. 11, f. 171r.

not alone guilty of this crime. When Fra Pietro Brincat, a Dominican friar, came to know that the Tribunal's captain, together with the *cursori* or the marshals, had gone to the convent of Rabat in search of the *padre lettore*, Fra Giuseppe Gristi, he warned him to stay at the house of one Paolo Napolitano; he visited him for four months and helped him in all his needs, especially foodstuffs.¹¹³

The Tribunal of the Inquisition claimed exclusive authority over everybody, including the Inquisitors themselves.¹¹⁴ It shared such jurisdiction with no other court¹¹⁵ and, on the strength of a Brief issued by Julius 111 on 18 March 1550,¹¹⁶ the officials of the *Castellania* would be threatened with excommunication if they interfered with such affairs.¹¹⁷ They were also warned of having exceeded their authority when they indulged in cases concening bigamy¹¹⁸ or witchcraft¹¹⁹ and had to hand in all documents. Even religious Orders sometimes poached over the powers of the Holy Office; and Mgr Durini protested to the *Suprema* when the Friar Minor, Fra Riccardo, was tried by his own Order for scandalous and heretical propositions; he demanded to have the proceedings consigned to him so that he would try the accused himself as well as the usurpers of the jurisdiction of the Holy Office.¹²⁰ The only exception was when Hospitallers were involved. At the setting up of the

¹¹³ *AIM, Proc.* 121C, ff. 1544r-1545v.

¹¹⁴ Mgr Carbonese gathered information on orders from Rome about the dishonest relations his predecessor, Mgr Della Corbara, might have had with several women - *AIM, Corr.* 3, f. 3r. On the same subject see also John Edwards, 'Trial of an Inquisitor: The Dismissal of Diego Rodriguez Lucero, Inquisitor of Cordoba, in 1508', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 37, no. 2 (April 1986), pp. 240-257. For the proceedings against fra Cornelio da Ferrara, the Vicar of the Inquisition of Pisa, see Andrea Prosperi, 'L'Inquisizione Fiorentina dopo il Concilio di Trento', *Annuario dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea*, vols. XXXV11-XXXV111 (1985-1986), pp. 113-116.

¹¹⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 7, ff. 50r, 60r, 212r. For the difficulties that arose between Venice and the Holy Office see Agostino Zanelli, 'Di Alcune Controversie tra la Repubblica di Venezia ed il Sant'Ufficio nei Primi Anni del Pontificato di Urbano V111 (1624-1626)', *Archivio Veneto*, ser. 5, 6 (1929), pp. 186-235.

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Antonio Battistella, *Il S. Ufficio e la Riforma Religiosa in Bologna*, pp. 49-50.

¹¹⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 7, f. 153r.

¹¹⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 94, ff. 187r-v. *AIM, Corr.* 20, ff. 23r, 124r. *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 26v-27r.

¹¹⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 133C, f. 940r.

¹²⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 42v-43r. For a similar case see *AIM, Corr.* 9, f. 23r.

Tribunal in 1561 it had been decreed that in such trials the Inquisitor *pro tempore* was to be assisted by the Grand Master, the Conventual Prior and the Order's vice-Chancellor,¹²¹ reminiscent of the part taken by the *Tre Savii Sopra l'Eresia* at Venice who represented the Republic's government.¹²² By 1696 though the Order had long ceased to enjoy this prerogative;¹²³ and when on the occasion of the arrest of the Italian, Fra Scipione Gaddi, for heretical propositions it tried to re-assert this privilege Rome backed Mgr Ruffo who made the knight abjure *de vehementi*.¹²⁴ All the same the Tribunal tried to retain the good will of the Government and if the Hospitallers could still be summoned in the Tribunal¹²⁵ the Inquisitors were wont to ask the Grand Masters to punish them.¹²⁶ This did not mean, as Mgr Cantelmi feared,¹²⁷ that the Tribunal had no jurisdiction over them but only that such procedure was needed '*per non mettere in qualche impegno il Tribunale e la persona dell'Inquisitore*'.¹²⁸

With some minor exceptions¹²⁹ reports were received in the mornings¹³⁰ at the Apostolic palace at Vittoriosa. For some special reason the prelate would go himself to the

¹²¹ *AIM, Corr.* 1, f. 241r; *AIM, Corr.* 4, f. 209r. S. Salelles, *De Materiis Tribunalium S. Inquisitionis*, vol. 1, prol. 11, p. 5. n. 3; P. Falcone, *La Nunziatura di Malta nell'Archivio Segreto della S. Sede*, p. 38; Alessandro Bonnici, *Evoluzione Storico-Giuridica dei Poteri dell'Inquisitore nei Processi in Materia di Fede Contro i Cavalieri del Sovrano Ordine di Malta*, p. 4.

¹²² Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550-1670*, p. 26.

¹²³ '*... per non usum da molte decine di anni in qua tal privilegio resti inefficace e perduto*' - *AIM, Corr.* 16, f. 15r.

¹²⁴ The case could be followed in *AIM, Corr.* 16, ff. 5r, 15r-17r, 19r, 23r, 29r.

¹²⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 17, f. 182r.

¹²⁶ '*... la meda. S. Congregazione in vece d'ordinare che debba prosieguirsi la causa coll'impinguazione degli atti conforme sarebbe di ragione, ha determinato d'ingiongere a V. S. che si contenti di partecipare in nome di questo S. Tribunale la notizia degli accennati inconvenienti al Sr. Gran Maestro ..., insinuandogli con tutta la maggior efficacia possibile a voler prendere sopra di ciò li più convenienti misure ad effetto d'ovviare onninamente ad abusi sì scandalosi, particolarmente con fare una acre ed esemplare ammonizione ...*' - *AIM, Corr.* 27, ff. 7r-v. For such punishments meted out by the Grand Master see *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 86v-87r, 99r.

¹²⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 13, f. 289r.

¹²⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 38v.

¹²⁹ Pietro Muscat made his report in the evening - *AIM, Proc.* 125A, f. 43r.

¹³⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 136B, f. 656v.

accused though generally he would be so taken up with other duties¹³¹ that he delegated his own power¹³² to the Assessor,¹³³ one of the consultors,¹³⁴ the Vicar General¹³⁵ or even the parish priest.¹³⁶ The occasion arose when the 'heretic' was blind,¹³⁷ ill at home,¹³⁸ at the *Sacra Infermeria*¹³⁹ or the *Spedale della Casetta (Spedale Nuovo)*,¹⁴⁰ detained at the Lazaretto¹⁴¹ or the *Castellania*¹⁴². On 16 May 1778 Mgr Zondadari informed the *Suprema* that the soldiers of the 'New Regiment' were not being given permission to go from Valletta to Birgu since their officers believed it was only an excuse. Hence, he asked the Cardinal

¹³¹ *AIM, Proc.* 154 (1646-1649), unpaginated.

¹³² In such cases 'heretics' still promised that if they regained their health they were to present themselves before the Inquisitor - *'Ingiungendoti in caso di guarigione dalla malattia, a cui sei presentemente soggetto, che debba presentarti avanti l'Eccellmo. e Rmo. Mons. Ingre. di Malta'*- *AIM, Proc.* 134B, f. 190v.

¹³³ *AIM, Proc.* 134B, ff. 908r-911v. For a similar case at the time of Mgr Giorgio Spinola see *AIM, Corr.* 94, ff. 116v-117r. Also, *ibid.*, f. 170r.

¹³⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 154, unpaginated; *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 233v.

¹³⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 15, f. 88r.

¹³⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 122A, ff. 381r-390v; *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1456r; *AIM, Proc.* 137, ff. 123r-124v. For this role of the parish priests, as Vicars of the Inquisition, see Adriano Prosperi, 'Inquisizione : Verso una Nuova Immagine?', *Critica Storica*, vol. 11, no. 1 (March 1988), p. 141.

¹³⁷ *'Fui chiamato in casa di Giuseppa vedova di Salvatore Gatt, e mi portai dalla medesima in quest'oggi, 5 del corrente, e la trovai priva di vista, abitante in una sola e scomoda stanza, con la porta per la pubblica strada, e non potea meco abboccarsi se non prima cacciata fuori in strada la di lei figlia ed una donna che vi era, ed obbligata dal confessore denunciò se stessa ...'* - *AIM, Proc.* 135B, f. 742r.

¹³⁸ When the Dominican friar, Fr Giacinto Maggi, parish priest of Porto Salvo, Valletta, was ill he accused himself of solicitation in his own room at the convent of Valletta to the Pro-Inquisitor, Fr PietroFrancesco Gristi - *AIM, Proc.* 124C, f. 1573r.

¹³⁹ On 18 March 1789, towards five in the evening, the Conventual Chaplain, Fra Giuseppe Beaufort, reported to Mgr Gallarati Scotti that a Calvinist on the point of death wished to join the Catholic church. The Inquisitor, accompanied by the Assessor, Fr Ludovico Barbara, and the Chancellor, Fr Giuseppe Gatt, proceeded to the Sacred Infirmary where they found Giovann Rodolfo Gibau from Berne. He was already sufficiently instructed in the principal mysteries of Catholicism and abjured *de formali* his old faith - *AIM, Proc.* 134B, ff. 726r-729v.

¹⁴⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 8r. *AIM, Corr.* 25, f. 85r.

¹⁴¹ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 24r. *AIM, Corr.* 25, f. 58r.

¹⁴² *AIM, Proc.* 136A, f. 379r.

Inquisitors let them make their deposition to their confessors.¹⁴³ Permission was granted first for one year and then for five years.¹⁴⁴ Nuns presented special difficulties. They wanted to be noticed by no one so that they accused themselves to their confessor in their own convents¹⁴⁵ at night-time when the other nuns were having supper;¹⁴⁶ and they would not even allow a notary to be present, either.¹⁴⁷ Again, when 'insuperable difficulties' arose because some delators were honest women who lived a most retired life under the care of their parents¹⁴⁸ they were allowed to give their report to their confessor, too.¹⁴⁹

Gozitans did not need to cross over to Malta since there was a Pro-Inquisitor in the sister island.¹⁵⁰ This Commissioner of the Holy Office,¹⁵¹ as he was called, reported the

¹⁴³ AIM, Corr. 34, f. 56r.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., f. 98r. Mgr Scotti was given the same permission - AIM, Corr. 95, ff. 29r-30v.

¹⁴⁵ This is what Cardinal Corsini wrote to Mgr Durini on 7 Sept. 1765 - *'Questa Sacra Congregazione è benignamente condiscesa ad accordare a V. S. le richieste facoltà di delegare il Confessore Ordinario del Monastero di S. Scolastica in cotesta città Valletta, ò altra persona Ecclesiastica a di lei piacimento a ricevere secretamente, e senza l'intervento dell'Assessore, ò Cancelliere, lo sgravio della propria coscienza, che intendono fare due Religiose di detto Monastero in materia spettante al S. Offizio ...'* - AIM, Proc. 127A, f. 251r. See also AIM, Corr. 17, ff. 200r, 218r, 254r, 262r. AIM, Corr. 95, f. 171r. AIM, Misc. 2, pp. 65-66, 68.

¹⁴⁶ AIM, Proc. 154, unpaginated.

¹⁴⁷ AIM, Corr. 94, f. 193r. See also AIM, Misc. 2 - *'Ma perchè il trattare di monache è cosa molto gelosa, e che ricerca gran maturità e prudenza per non causar infamia al monastero, et anco alle loro private persone appresso il secolo, si sogliono spedire con ogni segretezza con l'abiura.'*

¹⁴⁸ *'... attese le difficoltà e pericoli da Lei accennati, le faccia ricevere dal confessore delle denunzianti senza notaro'* - AIM, Corr. 94, f. 131v. AIM, Corr. 18, f. 74r.

¹⁴⁹ *'... (questa Sacra Congregazione) ha concesso agli Inquisitori la facoltà, in materia di sollecitazione, di delegare in casi particolari li confessori delle persone sollecitate, quando non possono disfarsi a denunciare nel Sant'Officio nella forma giuridica ordinaria, per ricevere, anche senza notaro, le denuncie ...'* - AIM, Corr. 23, ff. 5r-v.

¹⁵⁰ In the second half of the eighteenth century these were Frs. Baldassare Mangani, Antonio Saliba, Giacomo Galea and Giuseppe Bajada - AIM, Corr. 29, f. 161r. AIM, Corr. 30, f. 134r. AIM, Corr. 35, f. 84r. AIM, Corr. 91, f. 192r. AIM, Corr. 95, ff. 208r, 260v-261v. AIM, Corr. 96, f. 222r.

¹⁵¹ For the *comisarios* of the Spanish Inquisition see Sara T. Nalle, 'Inquisitors, Priests and the People during the Catholic Reformation in Spain', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. XV111, no. 4 (1987), pp. 557-587. Also, Jean-Pierre Dedieu, *L'Administration de la Foi*, pp. 203-208.

denunciations he gathered at his own residence¹⁵¹ to the Inquisitor at Vittoriosa; and only when permission in writing,¹⁵² brought to Gozo by one of the marshals,¹⁵³ was granted¹⁵⁴ could formal proceedings start.¹⁵⁵ Simple cases were dealt with in Gozo though naturally those witnesses, who resided in Malta gave their testimony at the Apostolic Palace.¹⁵⁶ This sharing of power meant that the Inquisitor sent instructions to the Commissioner to follow minutely but he would like to clarify some delicate point himself;¹⁵⁷ and in the latter stages of a case when evidence tilted heavily against the accused the Inquisitor appropriated the case entirely to himself.¹⁵⁸ In this instance not even the witnesses were spared the inconvenience of the voyage to Malta; and if it was impossible for 74-year-old Andrea, a key testimony against Michel'Angelo de Fenech, a slave accused of heretical propositions, to cross over, his son, though much occupied in the fields, then being the sowing season, promised to come the following Sunday, God and the weather willing.¹⁵⁹ The verdict was always given by the Inquisitor and abjurations were made only in Malta.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵¹ *AIM, Proc.* 129, f. 147r.

¹⁵² *Mandamus denunciationem de qua ... recipi per Adm. Rev. Dnum. Don Jacobum Galea Ministrum huius S. Offii. in Insula Gaulos, assumpto loco cancellarii Rev. Dno. Canonico Don Josepho Bajada dalato illi juramento de servanda secreto S. Offii. Dat. in Palatio Nro. Aplico. Smae. Inqnis. hac die 18 mensis Junii 1788. Ph. Gallarati Scotti Inq. Genlis. et Delegus. Aplicus. - AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 41v.

¹⁵³ *AIM, Proc.* 124A, f. 76r.

¹⁵⁴ *In forza delle speciali facoltà conferite da Mons. Inquisitore al Canonico D. Giuseppe Bajada Ministro del S. offio. Nell'Isola del Gozo con decreto dei 7 Dicembre 1792 si presentò spontaneamente avanti il Delegato suddetto la zitella Anna Maria figlia del qdm. Carlo Busuttill della stessa Isola del Gozo - Proc.* 136A, ff. 422r-437r.

¹⁵⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 135A, ff. 41r-46v.

¹⁵⁶ The case of Giuseppa, the widow of Salvatore Gatt of Rabat, is one such example. She and three others were examined by Rev. canon Bajada but Andrea Cassar *tal-Mangu* and his wife, who lived at Valletta, appeared before Mgr Scotti - *AIM, Proc.* 134B, f. 734r.

¹⁵⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 136A, ff. 430r-v.

¹⁵⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 135A, ff. 45r-46v.

¹⁵⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 121B, f. 953r.

¹⁶⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 134B, f. 734r.

When the delator appeared before the Inquisitor he was paternally warned to tell the truth and swore to this effect, touching the gospels with his hands.¹⁶¹ Next he was asked his name, surname, residence, trade, age and father's name, which information the notary put down minutely, as well as the year, month and day of his appearance. He clarified whether he was a *de visu* or *de auditu* witness and if he could produce any other testimonies to confirm his report and supply further information. Besides describing the place of the crime and the precise words said the delator described the accused in detail, including his height, appearance and whether, for instance, he wore a beard. In conclusion he was asked the reason for his report and if the accused was his enemy. He signed his deposition, or if illiterate, made the sign of the cross; and, warned to keep his deposition secret, he was dismissed.

Generally people made their denunciations, as they put it, '*per discarico di mia coscienza*' (for conscience's sake)¹⁶² - not infrequently after listening to some fire and brimstone sermon.¹⁶³ But as Pasquale Lopez points out reports were not necessarily an expression of pure religious sensibility.¹⁶⁴ For one thing, they must have realised that if they presented themselves willingly before the Inquisitor they would be welcomed with all charity¹⁶⁵ as *sponte comparente* and suffered no punishment.¹⁶⁶ As soon as they sensed, therefore, that suspicions were piling up against them they, like Menocchio, the well-known miller of Friuli,¹⁶⁷ tried to forestall any delator and prevent being summoned to stand a

¹⁶¹ AIM, Corr. 23, f. 75r.

¹⁶² AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 28r.

¹⁶³ Ibid., f. 265r.

¹⁶⁴ Pasquale Lopez, Clero, Eresia e Magia nella Napoli del Viceregno, pp. 185-6.

¹⁶⁵ '*E bene, se siete colpevole, come si dice, andate in Sant'Officio, fate vostra confessione e vi perdonerà*' - AIM, Proc. 123A, ff. 168r-v.

¹⁶⁶ '*... riprenderlo con dolcezza degli errori de' quali è stato denunciato*' - AIM, Corr. 17, f. 182r. See also AIM, Proc. 133C, ff. 951r, 967r.

¹⁶⁷ Carlo Ginzburg, The Cheese and the Worms.

formal trial.¹⁶⁸ On his own testimony Filippo Masola denounced himself only of those 'heresies' committed in front of witnesses.¹⁶⁹ No wonder, therefore, that as Table 7.2 shows, and as Mgr Messerano himself testified,¹⁷⁰ a high proportion of reports were self-denunciations, 66.8 per cent.

These included those who went to protest their innocence and anticipate trouble. On his way to Malta on board the dispatch boat from Syracuse the Augustinian deacon, *padre* Vincenzo Mifsud introduced himself to the sailors as a priest. As this was interpreted by his fellow monks that he had celebrated mass before being ordained to the priesthood he appeared before Mgr Serbelloni to state he had always refrained from such a step.¹⁷¹ Fr Publio found himself in a similar situation. On St Publius Day, 22 January 1789, whilst in conversation with three other Capuchin friars at the convent of Vittoriosa, he cast doubt on the existence of his patron saint and demanded as proof his birthplace in Malta. When Fr Gio. Carlo referred him to the Gospels and to the *Acts of the Apostles* he exclaimed, 'But what *Acts*? What Gospels?' As he suspected that he had been denounced to the Inquisitor he made his way to the Holy Office; he admitted that he had not minded his words in the heat of the argument and that he believed in and revered the Holy Scriptures.¹⁷² Another example refers to the cleric, Francesco Pace of *casal* Caccia (Xaghra), who, having heard that he was the subject of the Holy Office's enquiries emphatically protested that no trust should be put in Maria's report that he had dabbled in witchcraft. She was his and his wife's chief enemy for evicting her of the house and citing her in the lay court of Gozo for calumniating him.¹⁷³ The same was the case with Alessandro Grima. When Maria found

¹⁶⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 189v. On 22 May 1790 Giuseppe Camilleri of *casal* Lia reported Giuseppe Pullicino for various blasphemies. On 5 June a witness, Michele Vassallo, was summoned but then on 16 June Pullicino went to the Tribunal and accused himself - *AIM, Proc.* 135A, ff. 75r-80v.

¹⁶⁹ '*Dal che*', remarked Mgr Giacomo Caracciolo, '*apertamente si vede che lui cerca più tosto accomodarla col Tribunale con le spontanee comparse per non esser prevenuto, ne vedersi castigato, che di soddisfare alla propria coscienza*' - *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 160r.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, ff. 39v-40r.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, ff. 238v-239r.

¹⁷² *AIM, Proc.* 134B, ff. 656r-657v.

¹⁷³ *AIM, Proc.* 133B, ff. 755r-757r.

Table 7.2 Social class of the denounced

	Sponte Comparsante										Denounced by others						
Reference	123A	123B	124A	124B	124C	125A	125B	125C	123A	123B	124A	124B	124C	125A	125B	125C	TOTAL
Forzato	18	10	23	37	31	1	-	6	1	-	2	11	10	2	-	5	157
Sailor	4	5	10	11	4	-	-	3	-	-	-	2	2	-	2	-	43
Religious	4	3	4	3	6	-	-	4	2	6	6	-	1	-	-	2	41
Slave	-	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	5	3	-	5	3	6	1	29
Corsair	8	6	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	-	1	-	-	25
Buonavoglia	5	1	3	10	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	1	24
Soldier	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	7
Merchant	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	6
Domestic Servant	1	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Tavern -keeper	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	5
Baker	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Carpenter	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	4
Knight	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	4
Nun	-	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Cotton-beater	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
Barman	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3
Facchino	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	3
Fisherman	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Grocer	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Page	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Ship-pilot	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
English consul	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Pharmacist	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Lay court's officials	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Shoemaker	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
Others*	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	1	-	6	-	-	1	16
Unknown (male)	30	18	14	16	16	-	-	4	3	15	8	11	10	-	2	3	151
Unknown (female)	4	4	5	8	3	-	-	7	3	3	4	5	1	1	2	1	51
Tribunal's officials	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
TOTAL	78	59	67	97	72	1	2	25	10	46	31	37	44	10	12	16	607

*These include one example of each of the following - actor, alcosino, cabin-boy, captain of *buonavoglia*, cook, doctor, hairdresser, hawker, labourer in building industry, lawyer, master of *sciambeco*, shipwright, ship's captain, silversmith, soap-seller, vagabond.

some pieces of paper on her doorstep she put the blame on him. He, therefore, on 16 May 1792, appeared before Mgr Scotti and protested he was an honest man who had nothing to do with sorcery, nor had he ever quarrelled with Maria or her husband, either.¹⁷⁵ Again, when he realised that many were scandalised at his eating meat on days prohibited by the church the baptised slave, Giovanni de Rizzo, presented to Mgr Salviati a medical certificate signed by a doctor and one of the prison's missionaries.¹⁷⁶

The most common reason, however, why people made an appearance at the Holy Office was because the confessor would not absolve them without the concurrence of the Inquisitor.¹⁷⁷ This reduction in the power of confessors was contrary to the practice followed in the Middle Ages. Then absolution had set a heretic free from his guilt; now sacramental and oral confession was transformed into a written denunciation and those absolved by a confessor could still be proceeded against by the Inquisitor. Put in the words of canon law, heretics were reconciled by confessors only in 'the court of conscience' but they had to be forgiven also 'in the exterior court' (*nel foro esterno*)¹⁷⁸ of the Inquisitor.¹⁷⁹ Even so some still hoped that another priest would let them get away with it because not all confessors were sure which sins were heretical. Confessors were perplexed and consulted

¹⁷⁵ AIM, Proc. 135B, ff. 593r-v.

¹⁷⁶ *'Fo fede a chi spetta veder la presente come che lo schiavo della Sacra Religione, Gio. Batta Rizzo, per sue indisposizioni annuali ha bisogno di cibarsi di carne nelli giorni proibiti della Santa Chiesa'.*

In fede di ciò mi sottoscrivo.

Fra Tomaso Schembri.

Il Fisico Bigeni.

¹⁷⁷ AIM, Proc. 136A, f. 189v. For such pressure that confessors bore on the faithful see John Martin, Venice's Hidden Enemies, pp. 185-187.

¹⁷⁸ AIM, Corr. 14, f. 99r; AIM, Corr. 25, f. 23r. On the reduction of confessors' powers and the transformation of sacramental and oral confession into a written denunciation see Adriano Prosperi, 'L'Inquisizione in Italia', Clero e Società nell'Italia Moderna, pp. 310-320.

¹⁷⁹ *'I missionarii deputati dalla Congregazione de Propaganda Fide non hanno autorità di assolvere gli apostati dalla fede se non solo nel foro della coscienza. Se gli assoluti dai medesimi missionarii sogliono essere sicuri nel foro esteriore devono denunziarsi spontaneamente nel Tribunale dell'Inquisizione, o all'Ordinario, abiurar di nuovo l'apostasia, e ricevere i dispacci necessarii, altrimenti se essi saranno denunziati da altri non vi è dubbio che V. S. o gli Inquisitori, o gli Ordinarii medesimi potranno castigarli, ancorchè si dovesse procedere con piacevolezza in tal caso, massimo se apostata fosse vano idiota, e che facilmente avesse potuto credere che le bastarsi nell'uno e nell'altro foro la semplice assoluzione concedutagli dai missionarii - AIM, Corr. 7, f. 154r.*

each other on the matter.¹⁷⁹ Fr Giuseppe Attard was the vice-parish priest of Cospicua yet he could not decide whether Dr Francesco Reno should accuse himself and he advised him to consult the Tribunal's assessor instead.¹⁸⁰ Confessors even gave opposite counsel to their penitents. The cloistered nun, suor Fortunata Gauci, of the convent of St Benedict, Mdina, was first warned by the vice-parish priest of Rabat that she should accuse Fr Giuseppe Fabri for solicitation but the Jesuit, Fr Agius, later told her to keep her conscience quiet.¹⁸¹ However, when another nun assured her that confessors had no right to absolve cases reserved for the Holy Office she decided to write to canon Fr Ignazio Francesco Vella, a consultor of the *Sant'Officio*.¹⁸²

Such confusion is no surprise since the Inquisitors themselves would ask the Holy Congregation to enlighten them¹⁸³ whether, for instance, they had the faculty to correct books prohibited by the *Sacra Congregazione dell'Indice*.¹⁸⁴ The Schismatic Greek, Anania, a monk of S. Basilio, communicated a galley convict with the sacred host but this crime, Mgr Caracciolo was informed, did not pertain to the Holy Tribunal but to the galley missionary to whom he had to consign the copy of the trial he had already made.¹⁸⁵ Mgr Della Lagonessa was censured by the Cardinal Inquisitors for arresting Fra Luca Zinghil, an Augustinian, for saying mass in mortal sin; though this was a most grave misdeed, he was reminded, it did not belong to the Holy Office and the friar was to be set free.¹⁸⁶ Duelling was another such instance in which the Inquisitor was not to meddle, though he could ab-

¹⁷⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 120B, f. 781r.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 280r.

¹⁸¹ Indeed, the Jesuits were not want to order their penitents to make denunciations of solicitations to the Inquisitor - '... non vedersi giammai persone penitenti dei padri Gesuiti obbligate dai medesimi a far simili (sollecitazioni) ò altre denunzie, come accade alla giornata dei penitenti d'altri Religiosi' - *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 136r.

¹⁸² *AIM, Corr.* 17, ff. 218r-220v.

¹⁸³ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 225r.

¹⁸⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 9, f. 111r.

¹⁸⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 14, f. 148r.

¹⁸⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 3, f. 181r.

solve from the censures those who indulged in this illicit activity.¹⁸⁷ It was, however, with the Bishop that the Inquisitor, as has been observed for Bologna¹⁸⁸ and Milan,¹⁸⁹ often clashed.¹⁹⁰ The domain of the Holy Office was mainly the prosecution of heresy and such instances as disputes between parishes¹⁹¹ were not for the Inquisitor to decide.¹⁹² Inquisitors, therefore, were constantly reminded to stick only to the affairs which concerned their Tribunal;¹⁹³ and 'this young Inquisitor', Mgr Diotallevi, was warned not to interfere in matters between the friars and their superiors.¹⁹⁴

Ignorance of what pertained or not to the Tribunale of faith was not the only reason why people did not unburden their conscience to the Inquisitor. Some - like Fr Andrea Borg of B'Kara who had had a love affair with a girl from the same village - were ashamed to disclose their wrong-doing.¹⁹⁵ Still, others did not have the skill to report a crime;¹⁹⁶ and

¹⁸⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 5, f. 83r.

¹⁸⁸ Antonio Battistella, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-55.

¹⁸⁹ Luigi Fumi, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

¹⁹⁰ 'E perchè da qui in avanti i notari della corte Vescovile non ardiscano indagare ciò che si opera in cotesto Sant'Ufficio contro coloro che si vengano processati, Vostra Santità chiamati a se Pasquale di Buono e Giorgio Borg, li ammonirà gravemente della temerità usata in questa parte, con dir loro che quando non si correggano per l'avvenire si procederà contro di essi come si conviene' - *AIM, Corr.* 12, f.30r. See also *AIM, Corr.* 23, f. 60r. On the general relationship between Bishops and Inquisitors, both of the Roman and the Spanish Holy Office, see Agostino Borromeo, 'Contributo allo Studio dell'Inquisizione e dei suoi Rapporti con il Potere Episcopale nell'Italia Spagnola del cinquecento', *Annuario dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea*, vols. XXIX-XXX (1977-1978), pp. 219-276. On the co-operation between the two dignitaries, Thomas Deutscher, 'The Role of the Episcopal Tribunal of Novara in the Suppression of Heresy and Witchcraft, 1563-1615', *Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 77, no. 3 (1991), pp. 403-421. For their disagreements, Bruno Pellegrino, 'Inquisizione e Lotte di Potere in Sardegna nel Secolo XVII', *Annuario dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea*, vols. XXXVI-XXXVII (1985-1986), pp. 168-169.

¹⁹¹ Mgr Vidoni sent the copy of a trial to Rome he had made against a Jesuit who threw to the ground the processional cross of the parish of Porto Salvo on the occasion of the burial of the wife of Giovanni Sagnano at the Jesuit church. The Cardinal Inquisitors judged that the case belonged to the Bishop. *AIM, Corr.* 4, f. 242r.

¹⁹² *AIM, Corr.* 12, f. 35r.

¹⁹³ *AIM, Corr.* 1, f. 193r. *AIM, Corr.* 2, ff. 29r, 174r. *AIM, Corr.* 4, ff. 139r, 235r. *AIM, Corr.* 8, f. 38r.

¹⁹⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 1, ff. 213r-214r, 325r.

¹⁹⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 134B, ff. 704r-709v.

there was even the very practical reason that they would not lose a day's work,¹⁹⁷ which is amply brought out by the fact that the Tribunal was particularly active round the harbour area, near to the Holy Office.¹⁹⁸ A self-accuser would try to make the Inquisitor believe that he had not denounced himself earlier only because he was so destitute, having nothing to put on, that he was ashamed to appear before the Tribunal.¹⁹⁹ Still, others trembled at the penalties of the Holy Office,²⁰⁰ which fear was so real that people would bribe possible accusers not to make their reports.²⁰¹ True, indecent expressions against the Tribunal are met sporadically in the trial records²⁰² and some, like the Conventual Chaplain, Fra Baldassare Cagliares, did speak disrespectfully against its officials.²⁰³ The Prior of Lombardy boasted that he would send his servant when cited by the Holy Office only if ordered to do so by the Grand Master.²⁰⁴ It was not only highly-placed people though who challenged the *Sant'ufficio* and a slave who blasphemed for being hit full in the face by an apple told a priest who reproached him to go and accuse him to the Inquisitor.²⁰⁵ All the same, besides being very minimal such incidents are innocuous when compared to events in Sicily; here Inquisitors had to flee the wrath of the people,²⁰⁶ their officials were lynched²⁰⁷ and their

¹⁹⁶ Ignazia Cassar: *'Io sono venuta altre volte per fare questa mia denuncia, ma per esser affatto sprattica non trovai ricapito, e perciò sono oggi comparsa a farla'* - AIM, Proc. 135A, ff. 21r-v.

¹⁹⁷ AIM, Proc. 137, f. 48v.

¹⁹⁸ See Table 7.1

¹⁹⁹ *'Non avendo che vestire, essendo quasi ignudo mi son vergognato comparire in presenza di V. S. Illma. e Revma'* - AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 348v.

²⁰⁰ *'(Io) ... lasciai sin oggi di dare questa mia denuncia temendo le carceri e castighi di questo S. Tribunale'* - AIM, Proc. 136A, f. 190r. See also AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 91v.

²⁰¹ Fra Michele gave 5 tari and promised even more to Bernardino Cerfella not to report him - *Ibid.*, f. 348r.

²⁰² When Catarina Apap threatened to denounce Mihammet, the slave, he was quick to retort that *'lui stimava a me ed a Mons. Inquisitore in culo'* - *Ibid.*, f. 1167v. For similar examples see AIM, Proc. 120B, f. 860r; AIM, Proc. 120C, f. 1309r; AIM, Proc. 121C, f. 1162r. AIM, Proc. 123B, ff. 888r-v. AIM, Proc. 135A, f. 75r.

²⁰³ AIM, Corr. 2, f. 152r.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 10r.

²⁰⁵ AIM, Proc. 131B, ff. 704r-v.

²⁰⁶ Vito La Mantia, *Origine e Vicende dell'Inquisizione in Sicilia*, p. 44.

residences put to fire.²⁰⁸ In Malta, like Lope de Vega's *Hidalgo*,²⁰⁹ people were overwhelmed by the '*casa grande*' (big house),²¹⁰ as a simple woman referred to the palace of the Inquisition. And a few cases which may give the impression that people were not afraid of the Tribunal²¹¹ do not at all convey the general attitude of the population towards the Holy Office. It was considered, for instance, a mark of dishonour to be cited before the Inquisitor and parties in lawsuits would mention this fact to defame the other's character.²¹² A still greater mark of infamy was to be condemned by the Inquisitor²¹³ and Giacinto Cassia denounced himself 'to prevent imprisonment and shame'.²¹⁴ Cesare Rossi's relatives would rather bribe the Inquisitor than release his effigy to the lay government to have it burnt.²¹⁵ People would have nothing to do with the Tribunal, least of all nuns who would not so much as let its ministers approach their convent.²¹⁶ This attitude was best expressed by Grazia who turned hysteric when threatened with being reported to the Inquisitor;²¹⁷ and Catarina was so depressed, excited and almost in tears that she would rather be killed and exiled than appear in the Tribunal, which '*terrifies everybody*'.²¹⁸

²⁰⁷ Antonio Franchina, *Breve Rapporto del Tribunale della Ss Inquisizione di Sicilia*, p. 65.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 66,68.

²⁰⁹ The story goes that when he came to know that the Inquisitor had sent one of his officials demanding a sprig of orange blossom he became extremely ill, searching his memory for whatever he might have said and done. Then, so that he would never again have anything to do with the Tribunal he sent the orange tree itself. In another version of the story the *hidalgo* is replaced by a Jew and the orange tree by a pear tree. Cited in Joseph H. Silverman, 'On Knowing Other People's Lives', *Cultural Encounters*, Mary Elizabeth Perry and Anne J. Cruz, eds., pp. 163-4.

²¹⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 472r.

²¹¹ *AIM, Proc.* 108B, f. 559v.

²¹² *AIM, Proc.* 132A, ff. 229r-v.

²¹³ '*... tra tutti li delitti non vi è alcuno, che irroghi maggior infamia, et per le persone, et per le famiglie di quelli che spettano al Sant'Ufficio*' - *AIM, Misc.* 2, p. 76.

²¹⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 15, f. 15v.

²¹⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 3, f. 39r.

²¹⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 96, f. 290r.

²¹⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 132A, f. 274r.

²¹⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 123A, ff. 168r, 170v-171r, 174r.

But the most common cause why people failed to report 'heretics' was the fear of reprisal.²¹⁹ This suspicion was not at all unfounded; and Tommaso Zammit *ta` l-Imqabbija* (the son of the woman from Mqabba) did not denounce Giuseppe Grima earlier than he did only because the latter threatened to kill him if he dared.²²⁰ It was only after two years, when she was assured that no harm would befall her, that Veronica accused the Neapolitan, Raimondo, of blasphemy.²²¹ According to Annunciato Zammit of *casal Zurrieq Grazio ta` buras* was a habitual blasphemer, but 'people are much afraid of him'.²²² Likewise, Claudio Gabaretta did not report M. Boyer for eating meat on prohibited days because he was 'a ferocious man who wields the stick against anybody for the least thing'.²²³ Secrecy was promised to informers but this was no foolproof shield against reprisal. In a village community practising face to face relations it was easy to get to know your denouncer, especially if, as generally happened, some personal litigation had taken place. On 2 October 1773 Anna Farrugia reported Giuseppe Sciberras for witchcraft; but as he did suspect whom his denouncer could be he went to fetch her that same day at home and warned her go and belie herself.²²⁴ Anna Delicata of Qormi fared even worse. When on 17 September 1765 she went to report the baptised slave, Giuseppe Durini, he overtook her on the threshold of the Inquisitor's palace and menaced her with death if she disclosed his name. So afraid was she that she discontinued her deposition and returned home. The marshal went to fetch her many a time but as she lay ill in bed she could not appear in front of the Inquisitor, Mgr Lante, before 3 May 1766.²²⁵ The case of Rosa strengthens further the point. Though she resided at Floriana it was only to the Pro-Inquisitor of Gozo that she dared to report her

²¹⁹ AIM, Corr. 5, f. 202r.

²²⁰ AIM, Proc. 124C, ff. 1505r-1510v.

²²¹ AIM, Proc. 121C, f. 1135r.

²²² AIM, Proc. 135A, f. 29r.

²²³ AIM, Proc. 123B, f. 505v.

²²⁴ AIM, Proc. 131A, ff. 17r-v.

²²⁵ AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 467r-v.

husband, who never recited the rosary and ill-treated the statue of the Immaculate Conception.²²⁶

It was to reduce the possibility of delators being spied on that on 19 December 1757 the *Promotor Fiscale* of the Tribunal, Dr Gio. Carlo Calleja, sent a memorial to the *Suprema* pointing out the uneasiness of reporters caused by three small shops in front of the main door of the Apostolic palace. From here anybody could check those who entered; and not a few were those who at first refused to come and then were persuaded to do so only with difficulty. Besides, there was a house behind the palace in Alexandria street, whose windows overlooked the sitting- and the consulting-rooms in which the ministers discussed the most important matters with the Prelate. As this was most prejudicial to the Tribunal the public prosecutor asked that this building be leased to some dependant of the Holy Office.²²⁷ Rome let the Inquisitor, Mgr Salviati, decide for himself whether to exchange them with other property the Inquisition possessed, or else to lease them.²²⁸

Secrecy, claimed a manual for the use of Inquisitors,²²⁹ was the hallmark of the Holy Office.²³⁰ For this the *Suprema* welcomed Mgr Della Lagonessa's project in 1619 to make the palace 'an island' by itself and sever it from the outside world.²³¹ This reticence was imperative not only - for all Beccaria's strong objectives²³² - to protect informers²³³ but also

²²⁶ AIM, Proc. 124C,

²²⁷ AIM, Corr. 96, ff. 103r-104r.

²²⁸ AIM, Corr. 30, f. 376r.

²²⁹ Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenale, ovvero Pratica dell'Ufficio della S. Inquisitione ampliata*, p. 4.

²³⁰ 'il secreto ...è una delle circostanze più essenziali, anzi l'anima del medesimo' - AIM, Corr. 94, f. 124r.

²³¹ AIM, Corr. 3, f. 233r. See also AIM, Corr. 9, f. 219r - 'di molto profitto alle cause che s'agiteranno nel S. Tribunale'.

²³² 'Immunity of the accuser? In that case the laws do not protect him adequately - and are we to suppose subjects stronger than their sovereign?' - Cesare Beccaria, *Dei Delitti e delle Pene*, Piero Calamandrei, ed., p. 204.

²³³ Albert C. Shannon, 'The Secrecy of Witnesses in Inquisitorial Tribunals and in Contemporary Secular Criminal Trials', in *Essays in Medieval Life and Thought Presented in Honour of Austin Patterson Evans*, John Mundy, ed., pp. 60-63.

that the prisoners may not escape. The Cardinal Inquisitors, therefore, protested when the deposition of *suor Catarina del Santissimo Rosario* was made known to the public 'against the custom and the inviolable secret of the Holy Office especially towards the *sponte comparente*'.²³⁴ The Tribunal's officials were bound by a solemn vow of secrecy²³⁵ and records of trial proceedings were jealously kept.²³⁶ The detainees were not to know who had come to make his deposition at the Holy Office and for this purpose the cell in the middle of the 'secret stairs' had its window closed whenever the warden conducted people to the Inquisitor.²³⁷

Yet the trial of the ritual boiling of a child could become a *cause célèbre*.²³⁸ And the Hospitaller, Gaspari, bragged that he would avenge himself on those who denounced him to the Holy Office for heretical blasphemy, implying he would come to know his accusers somehow.²³⁹ The door of the court-room could be left open²⁴⁰ and the minor officials of the Tribunal who stayed outside behind the curtain heard what was going on inside.²⁴¹ A soldier who denounced Antonio Corigliano, a grenadier on the Order's galley *San Pietro*, did not reveal his name; he feared he would be persecuted by the major and his other superiors

*'who refuse us permission to report soldiers. So if I come to grief my wife
will inform you and it will be up to this Tribunal to help me'.*²⁴²

Again, on her own admission, Antonia Abela was assured by the warden that within a certain date she would have left prison.²⁴³ And when Vincenza Sacchett of Senglea

²³⁴ AIM, Corr. 27, f. 115r.

²³⁵ AIM, Proc. 172, ff.

²³⁶ 'Non darà per maniera immaginabile ò copia ò notizia dell'atti fatti in cotesto Sant'Officio a chi si sia ...' - AIM, Corr. 8, f. 159v. See also AIM, Corr. 10, f. 30v; AIM, Corr. 94, ff. 52r-v; AIM, Corr. 101, f. 211r.

²³⁷ AIM, Proc. 125A, f. 64r.

²³⁸ 'Correvano allora rumori per le città per esser state prese tante persone carcerate, meravigliandosi per il gran numero' - AIM, Proc. 27v. See also *ibid.* ff. 133r, 144v.

²³⁹ AIM, Corr. 13, f. 289r.

²⁴⁰ AIM, Proc. 15, f. 138v.

²⁴¹ AIM, Proc. 156, f. 104v.

²⁴² AIM, Proc. 131B, ff. 754r-755v.

suspected she had been denounced to Mgr Carpegna, she summoned Fr Salvatore Bonnici, the archpriest, to her home to counsel her what to do. He bluntly admonished her that those who entered the Tribunal's dungeons were set free only reluctantly and instanced to her his predecessor, Fr Fortunato Vella, who 'despite his innocence languished in prison for twenty-one years'.²⁴⁴ He, thus, urged her denounce herself before being summoned; but as she lacked courage she gave him 10 scudi with which to bribe the assessor's clerk and let him see the report. She had been betrayed, so he assured her, by thirteen informers but for another 50 scudi the case would be dropped.²⁴⁵

If this was a clear case of swindling secrecy, unlike what Nicola Tanti thought,²⁴⁶ was not invariably kept by those who appeared before the Inquisitor,²⁴⁷ especially women.²⁴⁸ Mgr Salviati harboured no doubts at all about this and did not cite a certain Vincenzo to testify against his master, John Dodsworth, the English consul in Malta, for fear lest he ignored the citation or else informed his lord.²⁴⁹ Likewise, when Catarina Minuti of Senglea was acquitted on 12 November 1764 she went straight to the house of her neighbours to tell them the news; and she expressed her delight by improper words and dishonest acts, lifting her skirt.²⁵⁰ Cases of solicitation, as both Mgr Durini²⁵¹ and Mgr

²⁴³ AIM, Proc. 125A, f. 43r.

²⁴⁴ For the vicissitudes of this parish priest, Frans Ciappara *Mill-Qighan ta' l-Istorja*, pp. 25-28.

²⁴⁵ AIM, Proc. 136A, ff. 70r-71v.

²⁴⁶ He had no fear at all that leakages would seep through, which could not be said as regards the lay courts. He had been cross-examined there regarding the murder on Assumption Day 1770 of Modesta Provvedini but 'I did not testify the truth as I feared that my deposition would be known to the knights who would then persecute me' - AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 171r-178r.

²⁴⁷ '... riflettendo d'essere stato franto il giuramento del silenzio dato al denunziante ...' - AIM, Corr. 95, f. 208v.

²⁴⁸ '... non osservando totalmente il segreto di questo Tribunale, come alle volte è successo specialmente nelle donne di questo paese, che non arrivano a comprendere la forza del giuramento del silenzio, che fanno' - AIM, Corr. 95, f. 104r. AIM, Proc. 130, f. 31r.

²⁴⁹ AIM, Corr. 96, f. 135r. AIM, Corr. 30, ff. 474r-475v.

²⁵⁰ AIM, Proc. 123A, ff. 174r-v.

²⁵¹ AIM, Corr. 26, f. 143r.

Gualtieri observed,²⁵² afforded, perhaps, the commonest circumstances when secrecy was not adhered to; several penitents informed their confessors out of charity that they were about to accuse them so that, forewarned, they presented themselves as *sponte comparente* to the Inquisitor.²⁵³

Some, however, could be genuinely excused for not presenting themselves before the Inquisitor. As has been already shown the term 'heresy' was so all inclusive that it incorporated anything. Fr Giorgio Fiteni was preaching to the congregation one Sunday afternoon on God's love to man. He remarked that we should do to others as they do to us, citing a Maltese proverb to prove his point. He only wanted to imply that to merit God's love we should try to please Him; but two priests from the village, Fr Angelo Gatt and Fr Giacomo Schembri, on 7 May 1772, reported him to Mgr Lante for implying that we should hate whoever hates us.²⁵⁴ *Padre* Benedetto Bonnici, an Augustinian friar, came to grief, too when he was delivering a sermon in the Christmas novena. He wanted to impress on his hearers the love the Virgin Mary bears us; and, being carried by the subject, told the faithful they could sin as much as they liked

*'Uditori miei, peccate quanto volete purchè non sieno peccati di ladrocinio e mala fama, perchè questi portano seco "obbligo della restituzione, e ricorrete poi alla protezione della Beate Vergine che sarete salvi'.*²⁵⁵

Once the deposition had been made proceedings could be initiated and testimony gathered. In his effort to arrive at the truth the Inquisitor welcomed all kinds of witnesses²⁵⁶ - harlots, non-churchgoers, former prisoners - and it was up to the defence counsel to point

²⁵² '... pratica che in quest'Isola vi è d'andare la sollecitata sotto titolo di carità ad avvisare il sollicitante avanti di venire a denunziarlo' - AIM, Corr. 95, f. 117r.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, ff. 34r, 95r. AIM, Corr. 27, f. 45r.

²⁵⁴ AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 88r-89r.

²⁵⁵ AIM, Proc. 123B, ff. 587r-588r.

²⁵⁶ See, for instance, Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, p. 144 : 'Tout le monde est admis à témoigner en faveur de la foi. Tout le monde, même les infâmes, les criminels de droit commun et leurs complices, les parjures, les excommuniés, tous les coupables de n'importe quel délit'. See also *ibid.*, pp. 214-221.

out their wicked name. In fact, there were various legal devices which protected the defendant from injustice. This was imperative because though false witnesses were severely punished²⁵⁷ examples of informers who later gainsaid themselves, though rare, do crop up.²⁵⁸ On his first appearance before Mgr Antonio Ruffo, on 24 January 1724, Mihammet of Damasco, the slave of the linen merchant, Sebastiano Larocca, declared he was a Christian who had apostacised to Islam as a child; he belied himself on 30 March when he even asked to be baptised.²⁵⁹ This was an innocuous case because it involved the self-accuser himself. Not so the following examples. On 26 September 1772 Angela Attard of Rabat, Gozo, denounced a certain Maria of Valletta of witchcraft to make a priest love her. But then the following February she admitted it had been she, Angela, who had persuaded the other to perform for her this kind of spell.²⁶⁰ And on 1 April 1769 Emanuele Camilleri, a soldier on the Order's flagship, accused himself for having sixteen years previously reported falsely a certain Giuseppe of having worked a spell for him.²⁶¹

In normal circumstances one sole witness was not enough to proceed²⁶² and the case was at once dropped.²⁶³ Fr Bartolomeo Zarb presented an exception though; his reputation was so wicked and the woman who accused him of soliciting her during confession enjoyed such a good name that the *Suprema* ordered Mgr Chigi to proceed against him all the same.²⁶⁴ Minors,²⁶⁵ like relatives²⁶⁶ and friends,²⁶⁷ were all highly suspect and neither was

²⁵⁷ *AIM, Misc.* 2, p. 76.

²⁵⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 21, f. 146r. *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 213r. *AIM, Proc.* 123B, f. 850r. For such examples see Claudio Madricardo, 'Sesso e Religione nel Seicento a Venezia: Le Sollecitazioni in Confessionale', *Studi Veneziani*, n.s., vol. XV(1988), pp. 139-142.

²⁵⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 108A, ff. 11r-15v.

²⁶⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 131B, ff. 728r-v.

²⁶¹ *AIM, Proc.* 128B, f. 683r.

²⁶² 'Il detto di una sola donna non venghi a costituire, ò carcerare il preteso reo' - *AIM, Corr.* 5, f. 57r.

²⁶³ Gaetano Cozzi, 'Note su Tribunali e Procedure Penali a Venezia nel '700', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. LXXV11 (1965), fasc. 1V, p. 938.

²⁶⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 7, f. 78r.

²⁶⁵ Paolo was accused by his wife of disbelieving in the Virginity of Our Lady; but as she produced only her two young children, aged seven and nine respectively, he was not summoned.

action taken when the witnesses contradicted the delator. On 1 October 1788 Stanislao Gatt of Qormi denounced Fr Clemente Farrugia for having stated that Christ was only tied and not nailed to the cross. He brought as witnesses Fr Angelo Pace and Clemente Camenzuli who both, however, categorically denied they had heard the accused utter such a proposition.²⁶⁸ Neither were loose charges admitted, either and the inn-keeper, Feliciano of Vittoriosa, was let go because the witness, Paolo Camilleri, while admitting that he had heard him utter some heretical proposition, could not specify which.²⁶⁹ Witnesses had to agree to the least detail, including the day and time though if they could not remember such items with precision circumstantial evidence would help the Inquisitor establish the truth.²⁷⁰ The procedure followed by the Tribunal is fully illustrated by the case of Rosa Sammut *ir-Rabtija* (from Rabat) who denounced Paolo Vella for disbelieving in the virginity of Our Lady. Teresa Zammit *Censua* (Vincenzo's widow), who was called as testimony, did not belie the charge but certainly did not confirm it and therefore in the opinion of the consultors the case '*non merita ulteriore attenzione*'.²⁷¹

Nor was a denounced person proceeded against when he was of unsound mind.²⁷² Rosa Sacco, of Zabbar, accused her husband, Francesco, of heretical propositions; but on her own admission he was altogether out of his mind, for which he had been sacked from his work

²⁶⁶ AIM, Misc. 2, p. 9.

²⁶⁷ Eliseo Masini, Sacro Arsenale, ovvero Pratica dell'Ufficio della S. Inquisizione ampliata, p. 245. See also AIM, Corr. 95, f. 194r.

²⁶⁸ AIM, Proc. 134B, ff. 664r-669v.

²⁶⁹ AIM, Proc. 136A, ff. 35r-39v.

²⁷⁰ 'All these witnesses confirm the blasphemies uttered by the accused on the occasion mentioned in the denunciation. Although they do not specify the precise day mentioned by the delator they say that the incident took place about a year before their interrogation, in the place expressed in the charge, and when the defendant was reproved by his wife for returning home late at night. Therefore, it rests proved that they describe the same fact that the delator had exposed, combining with the place and the occasion, even the time of the uttering of the blasphemy, because a year ago corresponds to the time expressed by the delator' - Ibid., f. 140v.

²⁷¹ Ibid., ff. 446r-450v.

²⁷² 'Se questa denunciata è imbecille non si deve molto curare ciò che faccia ò dica' - Ibid., f. 461r.

of weaver and had gone to live with his relatives at B'Kara.²⁷⁴ The least sign of enmity between the parties was enough for the accused to go free, too;²⁷⁵ and the Cardinal Inquisitors felt it incumbent to remind Mgr D'Elci of this duty.²⁷⁶ A delator would be at loggerheads with the denounced person over a garden which he wanted to recover.²⁷⁷ Fr Giuseppe Casanova, parish priest of Zurrieq, was denounced to the Holy Office only because he had previously reported his informant to the bishop for his immoral life and for which he had been disallowed to exercise his profession of doctor.²⁷⁸ The Portuguese, Antonio de Sylvia, accused Bartolomeo Gueiter, a Majorcan weaver of linen and fustian cloth living at Valletta, of blasphemy. But the two were arch-enemies, and Antonio charged his delator of having laid his wife and of threatening to kill him to marry her.²⁷⁹ It could be an employee sacked for theft²⁸⁰ whereas Filippo Caruana accused Michele Vella for blasphemy after he was found out stealing his vegetables.²⁸¹ The Tribunal in fact could be used as a means to avenge oneself on one's enemies. Maria accused her husband, Salvatore Attard of Sannat, Gozo of not letting her go to mass but this was only another machination of the wife who had already petitioned unsuccessfully Grand Master De Rohan to exile him.²⁸² On 24 April 1744 the *Suprema* ordered Mgr Passionei stop the trial against the

²⁷⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 120B, f. 775r. For the case of Maria *ic-ckejkna* (the little one) who abstained from eating for whole days and roamed the streets at midnight see *AIM, Proc.* 134A, ff. 249r-256v.

²⁷⁵ '... V. S. informi se tra li denuncianti e denunciato passa odio ò inimicizia' - *AIM, Corr.* 13, f. 226r. *AIM, Misc.* 2, p. 81.

²⁷⁶ '... non potendosi tralasciare di dire a Monsigr. Inquisitore d'essersi osservato che in tutti li processi che si fabbricano in quel S. O. mancano sempre l'interrogatorio alli testimonii sopra l'inimicizia con li rei ...' - *AIM, Corr.* 20, f. 105v. *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 199v.

²⁷⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 136A, ff. 274r-v.

²⁷⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 34r.

²⁷⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 120A, ff. 344r-355v.

²⁸⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 134B, ff.

²⁸¹ *AIM, Proc.* 136A, ff. 238r-241v.

²⁸² *AIM, Proc.* 135B, ff. 551r-558v.

Dominican, Fra Pietro Maria Brincat, accused of having revealed the confession of *suor* Maria Giuseppa; her father had cited the defendant in court for 400 scudi.²⁸²

In the case of another Dominican, *Fra* Giuseppe Gristi, who was accused of solicitation, the witness mentioned by the informer had died. In these instances character witnesses were summoned to testify on the defendant's reputation.²⁸³ The friar, who was a lecturer and a preacher in his convent, had caused some years before some scandal by his frequent visits to the house of a woman who had two unmarried daughters; and his superior had prohibited him to go out unaccompanied. He was at odds with his kin and when he exercised the office of procurator of his convent he had remained a debtor.²⁸⁴ Fr Gio. Paolo Sciberras had returned to Malta from Venice in May 1714; but as it was rumoured that he had led a life very improper to his clerical state Mgr D'Elci demanded the nuncio, Mgr Aldobrandini, to inform him '*se continuasse in cotesto paese una mala fama contro il medesimo*'.²⁸⁵ Another case concerned the afore-mentioned Giuseppe Buhagiar, whose neighbours confirmed that he was a drunkard, swore for the least thing and uttered dishonest words; besides, he had been exiled to Gozo for the past year but though he had his wife in Malta he kept Maddalena as his concubine with whom he lived in his shop.²⁸⁶ Antonia Abela accused the warden, Gio. di Lorenzo of having impregnated her. In such cases when proof could be impossible character witnesses were particularly helpful. Four women all testified to her bad reputation; she did not go to mass, stayed for long periods separated from her husband and was known to be a prostitute.²⁸⁷

²⁸² AIM, Corr. 28, f. 18r. AIM, Corr. 91, f. 161v. AIM, Corr. 95, ff. 168v-169r.

²⁸³ Henry Ansgar Kelly, 'Inquisition and the Prosecution of Heresy : Misconceptions and Abuses', *Church History*, vol. 58, no. 4 (Dec. 1989), pp. 439-451.

²⁸⁴ AIM, Corr. 95, ff. 185r-v.

²⁸⁵ AIM, Corr. 94, f. 197r.

²⁸⁶ AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 25r-38v.

²⁸⁷ AIM, Proc. 125A, ff. 84r-86r.

Inquisitors made very painstaking research before taking a 'heretic' into custody;²⁸⁸ and Stephen Haliczzer's remark that they 'made little effort to cross-examine witnesses to find out if their testimony was based on fact'²⁸⁹ cannot be proved from the documents of the Maltese Inquisition. Not only did they do their work meticulously themselves but they tried to make others execute their duty as diligently. A typical example of such conscientious Inquisitor was Mgr Gualtieri. He warned the Vicar General to be on his guard in examining witnesses, especially foreigners, who testified to the *stato libero* of couples who were to get married; and he even suggested that the *lettere facultative* which the Holy Congregation sent were to be executed only at the discretion of the Bishop.²⁹⁰ Everything was scrutinised and minutely examined since, as one handbook put it, proof was 'like a body's soul'.²⁹¹ Was a disputation, therefore, on the existence of God made for argument's sake or did it really reflect the beliefs of the speaker? And did the witnesses understand Latin sufficiently well to follow the argument as it developed between the disputants?²⁹² This made proceedings move at such a slow pace since witnesses would not be found in Malta²⁹³ and the Tribunal waited for their return from Sicily²⁹⁴ or from on board the galleys.²⁹⁵ Experts, like surgeons, would be appointed to examine whether a suspected apostate to Islam²⁹⁶ or Judaism²⁹⁷ had been circumcised only recently.²⁹⁸ Giuseppe di Allegra, or as he was

²⁸⁸ 'Ho necessità d'avere qualche poco di tempo per rinvenire tutte quelle notizie e documenti necessari all'uno e altro emergente' - AIM, Corr. 95, f. 87r.

²⁸⁹ Stephen Haliczzer, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

²⁹⁰ AIM, Corr. 95, f. 123v.

²⁹¹ Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenale*, p. 98.

²⁹² AIM, Proc. 129, ff. 342r-407v.

²⁹³ AIM, Corr. 26, ff. 187r-192r. AIM, Corr. 95, ff. 49v-50r.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, ff. 12r-v.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 213r.

²⁹⁶ AIM, Corr. 17, f. 308r.

²⁹⁷ AIM, Corr. 20, f. 30r. AIM, Corr. 94, f. 1192v.

²⁹⁸ For such another case see AIM, Corr. 22, f. 34v. On this topic see Bernard Vincent, 'The Moriscos and Circumcision', *Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain*, Anne J. Cruz and Mary Elizabeth Perry, eds., pp. 78-92.

commonly known Bayram d'Abdalla, an Algerian slave on the Order's galleys, claimed he had been baptised at the *Chiesa della Misericordia* at Venice. But that church was not a parish and children were not generally baptised there; neither were the baptism certificates of his and his supposed two sisters for the years 1617-1648 to be found at the mother church of San Massimiliano.²⁹⁹ Trials for bigamy involved the examination of the death and marriage registers³⁰⁰ and the interrogation of witnesses who had testified to the '*stato libero*' of the accused in the bishop's court.³⁰¹ If one of the parties had married abroad letters were sent to the respective dioceses at Zante,³⁰² Marseilles,³⁰³ Avignon,³⁰⁴ Spain,³⁰⁵ Palermo,³⁰⁶ Naples,³⁰⁷ Vico Equense,³⁰⁸ Syracuse,³⁰⁹ Messina,³¹⁰ Ragusa,³¹¹ Brindisi,³¹² Genoa,³¹³ Leg-

²⁹⁹ AIM, Corr. 13, f. 149r.

³⁰⁰ This is what canon D. Pietro Paolo Mifsud, vice-parish priest of St Paul's, Valletta reported to Mgr Scotti - '*Ieri a sera mi fù ordinato da un Cursore di questo Sant'Ufficio di presentarmi in questo S. Tribale. con esibire il libro dove son solito notare li matrimoni celebrati in detta chiesa parrocchiale, e specialmente verso l'anno 1770; perciò esibisco a lor Signori il presente libro*' - AIM, Proc. 124A, f. 92r.

³⁰¹ AIM, Corr. 95, f. 209v.

³⁰² AIM, Corr. 29, ff. 172r-173v. AIM, Corr. 91, ff. 194r-195v.

³⁰³ AIM, Corr. 1, f. 109r.

³⁰⁴ AIM, Corr. 5, f. 25r.

³⁰⁵ AIM, Corr. 29, f. 128r. AIM, Corr. 91, f. 190r.

³⁰⁶ AIM, Proc. 120B, f. 458r.

³⁰⁷ '*It is true*', so did Cardinal Spinelli write to Mgr Gualtieri on 9 July 1743, '*that Gio. Battista Romania's wife is still alive in Naples. She is called Candida di Paola; and she has been interrogated in this Archiepiscopal Curia, together with Gennaro, their common son*' - AIM, Proc. 120B, f. 784r.

³⁰⁸ AIM, Corr. 29, f. 70r. AIM, Proc. 121B, f. 914r.

³⁰⁹ AIM, Corr. 21, f. 46r.

³¹⁰ AIM, Corr. 95, ff. 32r, 52v.

³¹¹ AIM, Corr. 4, f. 196r.

³¹² AIM, Corr. 2, f. 259r.

³¹³ AIM, Corr. 5, f. 85r.

horn,³¹⁴ Venice³¹⁵ and Milan³¹⁶ for the relative information. This is what the parish priest in Reggio informed Mgr Passionei³¹⁷ -

'Si fa fede da me sottoscritto parroco della Chiesa parrocchiale di S. Maria del Soccorso fuori le mura di questa Città di Reggio, qualmente Francesco Ferrando, nazionale Genovese, e legittimo marito di Domenica Dalfino; da cui ne sono nate due figlie, e tuttocio mi costa per detto di Antonino Dalfino padre di detta Domenica, che mi disse essere stato presente quando si contrasse il matrimonio nella città di Messina tra detto Francesco e Domenica; e lo stesso mi venne confermato da Domenico, Filippo e Antonino figli e fratello rispettive di detta Domenica; ed al presente abita la medesima sola in questa suddetta mia parrocchia, essendosi partito il detto suo marito Francesco per suoi affari, da mesi otto incirca'.

Reggio. 6 maggio 1750

Io Cristoforo Laganà Parroco

faccio fede come sopra.

Since everything was committed to writing such records were dredged up later on against the defendant. Giovanni Domenico Salamone of Floriana was denounced for treasure-finding on 2 July 1778 but unfortunately for him the records of the Inquisition contained a similar charge against him twenty-four years earlier. And in 1764 he had promised to supply for 10 scudi some nails from the coffin of a woman who had died in childbirth. Such was the case too, of the *papasso*, Don Silvestro Bruno, the parish priest of the Greek church at Valletta. In 1716 he had been charged of being a schismatic but the trial was suspended the following year. Thirty years later though, in 1747, Mgr Passionei took up the matter again and transmitted to the Cardinal Inquisitors other circumstantial evidence against him.³¹⁸

³¹⁴ AIM, Corr. 20, f. 186r.

³¹⁵ AIM, Corr. 95, f. 212r.

³¹⁶ AIM, Corr. 29, ff. 71r-72r. AIM, Corr. 91, f. 182r - *'Faccio fede Io infrascritto anche con mio giuramento qualmente Elena Sana volgarmente nella Città di Lodi chiamata Elena Sardi abitante sotto questa mia parrocchia di San Colombano Diocesi di Lodi sia sopravviente avendo io stesso quest'oggi veduta la medesima'.*

Colombano. 30 Dicembre 1748.

Dalle case parrocchiali.

Giulio Alessandro Monti Proposto'.

³¹⁷ AIM, Corr. 29, ff. 133r-135r.

³¹⁸ AIM, Corr. 95, f. 191v.

Because of all this diligence³¹⁹ trials, as that of Cardinal Morone has long ago shown,³²⁰ took a very long time to start. Take the case of Nicola Haelli, a slave from Tripoli and the son of Habdalla and Fatima. When ten years of age Homor - as he was then called - had fallen slave in Naples but in 1796 this tall, well-built and black-haired neophyte with a whitish complexion was a rower on the *San Luigi*. He was popularly known to be a sorcerer but it took a year and a half to imprison him.³²¹ These were the steps which led to his incarceration -

5 June 1795 - Giuseppe Camilleri *l-ahmar* (the red one) of Rabat accused him of having worked a spell for him to escape from prison where he was detained for deserting the Spanish navy.

9 May 1796 - Feliciano Galdes, a baker and a master-builder from Qormi, was summoned as witness and confirmed the former's deposition.

13 May 1796 - Maria, wife of Giuseppe Borg, of the same town, was next summoned. Haelli had offered to bring back her son who had enlisted on an English ship.

26 Sept 1796 - Nicola Haelli himself was next summoned. He admitted that several men and women sought his services for *fatture*. He gave them pieces of paper on which he made lines with ink or coal but which he then made them throw into the sea. He never made use of human hair, sperm or obscene words and though in Naples he did commit the sin of sodomy he never practised it in Malta. He heard mass regularly, fasted and abstained from eating meat on prohibited days and always did his Easter duties, with the

³¹⁹ See, for instance, Peña's warning: '*... il n'y a pas d'arrestation si on ne dispose pas d'indices suffisants*' - Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, p. 121.

³²⁰ He was arrested at Castel Sant'Angelo on 31 May 1557 but he had been under suspicion for the last fifteen years. See Massimo Firpo and Dario Marcotto, 'Il Primo Processo Inquisitoriale Contro il Cardinal Giovanni Morone', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. 93 (1981), pp. 71-89.

³²¹ *AIM, Proc.* 138, ff. 191r-260v.

exception of the last two years. He believed that a Christian should never make any use of sorcery and whenever he transgressed this precept he did it only to gain something for himself and to help other poor people.

16 Nov 1796 - Salvatore Agius, a lawyer of Valletta, charged him of having assured him there was a treasure hidden in his house. He would find it for him if he promised to redeem him from slavery and send him back to Naples.

8 April 1797 - Pasquale Dimech *ta` l-armla* (the widow's son) of Mosta asked Haelli make a death spell against his cousin.

11 April 1797 - Salvatore Borg of Mosta was promised by Nicola that he would become rich.

27 Jan 1797 - Grazio Fenech had gone to Haelli to find the thief who had robbed Maria, the wife of Paolo *il-gendus* (the bull).

20 June 1797 - Haelli appeared in the Tribunal to protest his innocence that since his last appearance he had worked no more spells.

28 Oct 1797 - For a rosary he had round his neck and 18 tari a young man was assured he would not die that day. A peasant gave him 4 zecchini that his wife be cured and a merchant of Senglea gave him 50 scudi to make him find a treasure in his shop.

2 Dec 1797 - Haelli was arrested.

As the promoters of Holy Faith Inquisitors were diligent and zealous, putting aside any self-interest or wordly fear, always bearing in mind that they were defending God's interests. They were the 'world's eye' as well as a piercing and bright sun that made the darkness of errors flee and the light of Faith maintained pure and without any blemish. They were also the Church's sentries so that

*'in the mistiness of the night of the present century the soul's spiritual peace
remains undisturbed and all reach the clear day of eternal happiness in heaven'.³²²*

In no way does this mean that the Inquisitors were often after the blood of the accused, taking pride in humiliating those who lay at their mercy. A careful examination of the trials and the slow pace at which cases moved reveal them as conscientious judges, very attentive to give the defendant a fair hearing. That was plausibly why Fra Riccardo, a Maltese Friar Minor, preferred to be judged by the Inquisitor than by his own Provincial.³²³

³²² Eliseo Masini, *op. cit.* p. 6.

³²³ *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 42v-43r.

EXAMINATION

Inquisitors were all well qualified men on the whole. However, though it was preferable that they be theologians as well as jurists¹ it was only in the latter discipline that most of them were trained. Of the fifty-nine prelates since Dusina forty-two, or 71.2 per cent, were legal doctors.² Like their counterparts in Spain³ and in Mexico⁴ they were first and foremost jurists of which they boasted so much,⁵ hair splitting theological nuances being largely left to their eight consultors.⁶

¹ Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs, Louis Sala-Molins, ed., p. 189.

² Only Dusina himself and Federico Borromeo are mentioned as having a doctorate in theology. Calculated from data in A. Bonnici, Storja ta' l-Inkizizzjoni ta' Malta, vols. 1-111.

³ Stephen Haliczer, Inquisition and Society in the Kingdom of Valencia, 1478-1834, p. 112.

⁴ Noemi Quezada, 'The Inquisition's Repression of *Curanderos*', Cultural Encounters : The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World, Mary Elizabeth Perry and Anne J. Cruz, eds., p. 39.

⁵ *AIM, Corrr.* 101, ff. 213r-214v.

⁶ This was the number established on 31 July 1760 when it was reduced by one - *AIM, Corrr.* 9, f. 143v. The Inquisitor, Mgr Durini, was reluctant to make this reduction. Two of the consultors were of an advanced age and absented themselves; besides, it often happened that someone could not take part for reasons of health. Moreover, as they were all ecclesiastics the Government could not bother at all as they fell outside its jurisdiction - *AIM, Corrr.* 96, ff. 145r-146r. See also *AIM, Mem.* 16, f. 114r.

For all Bishop Balaguer's reservations who referred to them as '*uomini ignoranti e di razza di Mori*'⁷ these were chosen from among the most learned and esteemed men of the island;⁸ and, therefore, one Pietro de Bertis, a simple clerk at the Treasury altogether ignorant of any branch of literature, would have brought dishonour to the office.⁹ They could not devote all their energies wholly to the *Sant'Officio* since despite the remonstrations of Mgr Caracciolo¹⁰ they served clients at the lay courts, too;¹¹ all the same those of them who, like Ludovico Antonio Castelletti, did not display the required ability were of 'no service to the Tribunal'.¹² These advisers to the Inquisitors,¹³ who were also to lead an unblemished life,¹⁴ were lay as well as members of the secular¹⁵ and regular clergy:¹⁶ Carmelites,¹⁷ Discalced Carmelites,¹⁸ Jesuits,¹⁹ Augustinians,²⁰ Oratorians,²¹ Friars Minor,²²

⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 6, f. 252r.

⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 32, f. 42r.

⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 94, ff. 193v-194r.

¹⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 18, ff. 37r, 38r.

¹¹ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 129r.

¹² *Ibid.*, f. 243v.

¹³ *Ibid.*, f. 14v. *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 614r.

¹⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 14v. Mgr Serbelloni protested when Fra Gio. Battista Balsano was made Vicar General and, therefore, an *ex-officio* consultor. The Inquisitor sent a copy of the proceedings which had been instituted years before against his immoral life; a man so inclined to sexuality, so did he point out, would be prone to tolerate it in others - *AIM, Corr.* 94, ff. 223r-v. For the charge of rape see *AIM, Corr.* 4, ff. 101r, 103r, and of fathering bastards *AIM, Corr.* 6, f. 252r.

¹⁵ Some of these were penitentiaries (*AIM, Corr.* 17, f. 218r) and theologians (*AIM, Corr.* 19, f. 100r) of the Cathedral.

¹⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 4, f. 129r.

¹⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 96, f. 229v.

¹⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 29, f. 130r.

¹⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 32, f. 23r.

²⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 55v.

²¹ *AIM, Corr.* 25, f. 113r.

²² *AIM, Corr.* 15, f. 130r. *AIM, Corr.* 96, f. 259v.

Conventual Friars.²³ One of them was always a Dominican²⁴ but in 1748 Mgr Passionei could find no one among these friars who sufficiently merited the office. He, thus, chose the lawyer, Don Ludovico Barbara, a talented and exemplary priest of good reputation.²⁵ In 1630 the bishop demanded that 'to keep that good friendship which he had always had with the Tribunal' parish priests could not be consultants.²⁶ The cardinal Inquisitors acceded to this demand,²⁷ which was confirmed by a decree in 1644;²⁸ it remained in force till the late eighteenth century when in 1778 Fr Vincenzo Azzopardi, the parish priest of Porto Salvo, on the entreaties of Grand Master De Rohan, was given this dignity.²⁹

To help them reach their decisions Inquisitors also availed themselves of their printed and manuscript law-books,³⁰ of which, so Mgr Durini boasted, they had a competent library.³¹ Chief among these was Nicholas Eymerich's influential Directorium Inquisitorum.³² This manual, which was re-edited and expanded in the sixteenth century by Francesco Peña, summed up the theological, juridical and institutional history of the

²³ *Ibid.*, f. 235r.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 258r. *AIM, Corr.* 17, f. 64r. For the relations between the Tribunal and the Dominicans see the highly informative book by M. Fsadni, Id-Dumnikani fir-Rabat u fil-Birgu sa l-1620, pp. 241-247.

²⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 196r-v.

²⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 5, ff. 169r-173r.

²⁷ *AIM, Misc.* 3, f. 41r. *AIM, Corr.* 6, ff. 188r, 252v. *AIM, Corr.* 12, ff. 222r, 230r.

²⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 8, f. 103r. *AIM, Corr* 96, f. 258v.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 264r.

³⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 24v, 106r. For the utility of these handbooks see John Tedeschi, 'Inquisitorial Sources and Their Uses' in his The Prosecution of Heresy, pp. 51-57.

³¹ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 63v - '*Si è fatta qualche spesa di libri legali bisognevoli per il servizio di questo S. Tribunale, onde in oggi vi è una libreria competente*'.

³² A French translation of this work was published by Louis Sala-Molins in 1973. Unfortunately he chose as title Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs which can be easily mistaken with Bernard Gui's manual of the same name, and which was limited in its description to the Inquisition's activities to southern France. See Bernard Gui, Manuel de l'Inquisiteur, 2 vols., G. Mollat, ed.

Inquisition.³³ Other handbooks included Carena,³⁴ Farinacci,³⁵ Masini,³⁶ Albizzi,³⁷ De Simancas,³⁸ Salelles,³⁹ and Desiderio⁴⁰ and Deodato⁴¹ Della Scaglia.⁴² Inquisitors consulted their archives, too, which constituted a form of perpetual and unfailing memory. This depository not only made cross-checking possible to locate recidivists easily but when Mgr Messerano was criticised by the *Suprema* for sentencing a renegade to the galleys without first informing Rome he at once dispatched a note of such sentences passed by former Inquisitors in Malta for the last forty years, and this included even examples of Mgr Marescotti, the then prefect of the Holy Office.⁴³ It was because of such importance, therefore, that archives were kept under the jealous supervision of the Inquisitors,⁴⁴ who excommunicated those who dared to steal any of them.⁴⁵

³³ Edward M. Peters, 'Editing Inquisitors' Manuals in the Sixteenth Century : Francesco Pegna and the *Directorium Inquisitorium* of Nicholas Eymeric', *Library Chronicle*, vol. 40 (1974), pp. 95-107. See also Agostino Borromeo, 'A Proposito del *Directorium Inquisitorium* di Nicolas Eymeric e delle sue Edizioni Cinquecentesche', *Critica Storica*, Anno XX, no. 4 (1983), pp. 499-547.

³⁴ Cesare Carena, *Tractatus de Officio Santissimae Inquisitionis*.

³⁵ Prospero Farinacci, *Tractatus de Haeresi. Editio novissimo*.

³⁶ Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenale, ovvero Pratica dell'Officio della S. Inquisitione ampliata*.

³⁷ Francesco Albizzi, *De Inconstantia in Fide*. This is vol. 1 of *De Inconstantia in iure admittenda vel non*.

³⁸ Iacobo de Simancas, *De Catholicis Institutionibus*.

³⁹ Sebastiano Salelles, *De Materiis Tribunalium S. Inquisitionis*.

⁴⁰ Della Scaglia, 'Pratica Per Procedere nelle Cause del Sant'Officio' - *AIM*, Misc. 2. For the translation of this manuscript into Latin by Giovanni Battista Neri and then publishing it under his own name see John Tedeschi, 'Literary Piracy in Seventeenth-Century Florence : Giovanni Battista Neri's *De iudice S. Inquisitionis opusculum*' in his *The Prosecution of Heresy*, pp. 259-272.

⁴¹ 'La Theorica di Procedere tanto in Generale quanto in Particolare nei Casi Appartenenti all Santa Fede' - *AIM*, Misc. 1.

⁴² For information about these uncle and nephew see John Tedeschi, 'The Question of Magic and Witchcraft in Two Inquisitorial Manuals of the Seventeenth Century' in his *The Prosecution of Heresy*, pp. 229-258.

⁴³ '... essendosi fatta diligente perquisizione nella Cancelleria di questo Tribunale, non solo non si è trovata tal dichiarazione ma si ritrova essersi sempre praticato dagli Inquisitori pro tempore di condannare diversi rei alla pena della galera ... senza partecipazione della S. Congregazione' - *AIM*, Corr. 94, ff. 39r-v.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, ff. 142v-143r; *AIM*, Corr. 101, f. 211r.

⁴⁵ *AIM*, Mem. 20, f. 233r.

As the representatives of the *Suprema* the Inquisitors of the Roman Inquisition,⁴⁶ like their Spanish counterparts,⁴⁷ depended entirely on the Holy Office.⁴⁸ At the end of each year they sent a summary of the cases they had dealt with together with a note containing the abjurations and the number of *sponte comparente*.⁴⁹ Not infrequently their letters commenced with the stereotyped formula 'In compliance with the supreme orders of Your Excellencies'.⁵⁰ Starting from 1669 Inquisitors could execute orders of other Roman Congregations only with the express permission of the *Suprema*. They were to comply rigidly with the commands sent out to them and not to interpret them arbitrarily. Their actions and decisions, they were reminded, were to accord with that maturity and prudence needed in the office they exercised in Malta in the name of the *Sant'Ufficio*.⁵¹ Never were they to take any 'unretractable steps' but to inform Rome of the case and wait for their decisions.⁵² Not even a detainee was to be sent to Sicily without the previous permission of Rome.⁵³ No doctor was to be heeded who, either through ignorance of the ways of the *Suprema* or little experienced in matters under discussion or, still, deceived by his

⁴⁶ Antonio Battistella, *Il S. Ufficio e la Riforma in Italia*, pp. 64-68. Guido Dall'Olio, 'I Rapporti tra la Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio e gli Inquisitori nei Carteggi Bolognese (1573-1594)', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. CV (1993), pp. 246-286. Carla Righi, 'L'Inquisizione Ecclesiastica a Modena nel '700', *Formazione e Controllo dell'Opinione Pubblica a Modena nel '700*, ed., pp. 56.

⁴⁷ Stephen Haliczer, *Inquisition and Society in the Kingdom of Valencia*, pp. 86-91. Jean-Pierre Dedieu, *L'Administration de la Foi*, pp. 132-133. For the restraining hand of the Spanish *Suprema* in witchcraft proceedings, William Monter, 'Witchcraft : The Forgotten Offense', *Frontiers of Heresy : The Spanish Inquisition from the Basque Lands to Sicily*, pp. 255-275.

⁴⁸ See the informative article by Guido Dall'Olio, 'I Rapporti tra la Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio e gli Inquisitori Locali nei Carteggi Bolognesi (1573-1594)', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. CV (1993), pp. 246-286.

⁴⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 3, f. 43r.

⁵⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 33v-34r, 37v, 38v.

⁵¹ *AIM, Corr.* 1, f. 235r.

⁵² *AIM, Corr.* 24, f. 27r. See also *AIM, Corr.* 26, f. 143r - '*Ella non innovi cosa alcuna sopra ciò fino a nuovi ordini della Sacra Congregazione*'.

⁵³ The case concerned the Frenchman, Vernon, who had escaped from the prisons of Palermo. Mgr Alfieri, whom the Inquisitors of Sicily had demanded to send him back, advised them to refer the matter not to him but to the *Suprema* - *AIM, Corr.* 6, f. 31r.

erroneous thinking, suggested proposals contrary to the wishes of the Cardinal Inquisitors.⁵⁴ Not even *padre* Salelles, an experienced consultor, was to be trusted and he had to send two copies of his book *De Materiis Tribunalium S. Inquisitionis* to Rome for inspection before publishing it.⁵⁵ Even to get a marriage certificate of a suspected bigamist the Inquisitors either did so on orders from the *Suprema*⁵⁶ or else asked the Cardinal Inquisitors to get it for them.⁵⁷

Orders were to be promptly executed⁵⁸ though Mgr Carlo Francesco Durini had valid reasons for not sending a copy of the trial against Fra Luigi d'Agosta; he had received a further denunciation against him and the friar had even written to him from Sicily.⁵⁹ No length of time deadened the Cardinal Inquisitors' memory and on 19 December 1705 Mgr Spinola was asked whether Antonio Cassini, whom they had condemned to the galleys the previous April for keeping the host for 'a wicked purpose', had as yet been given the punishment.⁶⁰ This is too short an interval compared with the next instance. On 12 September 1744 Mgr Passionei had been commissioned to write to the Inquisitors in Sicily for a copy of the marriage certificate of bigamist Ignazio Ruggier (Giuseppe Minorfo); seven years later, on 22 May 1751, he was ordered to explain what had happened to the case.⁶¹ In fact, the impression one gets on reading the correspondence that flowed

⁵⁴ AIM, Corr. 22, f. 59v.

⁵⁵ AIM, Corr. 8, f. 16r.

⁵⁶ 'Da a Lei incombenza questa Suprema di scrivere a M. Vescovo di Siracusa che le manda in forma autentica la fede della sopravvivenza di Agata Saraversi prima moglie di Salvatore Mortilla, preteso poligamo' - AIM, Corr. 21, f. 46r. See also AIM, Corr. 95, ff. 89r, 96v, 118v.

⁵⁷ AIM, Corr. 28, f. 70r. AIM, Corr. 91, f. 181v.

⁵⁸ AIM, Corr. 26, f. 111r.

⁵⁹ AIM, Corr. 95, ff. 60r-v.

⁶⁰ AIM, Corr. 17, f. 302r.

⁶¹ '... ma finora non si è avuto dalla S. Congregazione riscontro alcuno di ciocche sia risultato da suddetti ordini; onde si attende qualche notizia per prendere altre misure' - AIM, Corr. 29, f. 126r. AIM, Corr. 91, f. 190r. For similar examples see AIM, Corr. 13, f. 313v; AIM, Corr. 17, f. 14r. AIM, Corr. 29, f. 125r; AIM, Corr. 91, f. 189v.

incessantly between Rome and Malta⁶² is that the Inquisitor, as one writer has already remarked for Milan,⁶³ decided on his own only cases of minor importance; otherwise his duty was only to gather information⁶⁴ for the Cardinal Inquisitors to decide.⁶⁵ This confirms Lord Acton's well-known observation that the Inquisition was peculiarly the weapon and the work of the Popes.⁶⁶

The Tribunal itself not infrequently sought the advice of the Cardinal Inquisitors.⁶⁷ According to Mgr Passionei the consultants, who received by hand copies of the dossiers before discussing them in the *Consulta*,⁶⁸ often did not have the courage to come to a decision after several meetings and resolution was postponed from one sitting to another. As Judaism, like Christianity, prohibited pacts with the devil, was a Jew to be made to abjure witchcraft?⁶⁹ And if so why did not this directive apply to Moslems, too?⁷⁰ Were Moslems to give their evidence in trials in which were involved apostates to Islam? Would they not testify only what their hatred of the Catholic faith suggested to them in favour of

⁶² For such correspondence, Grazia Biondi, 'Le Lettere della Sacra Congregazione Romana del Sant'Ufficio all'Inquisitore di Modena : Note in Margine a un regesto', *Schifanoia*, vol. 4 (1987), pp. 93-108.

⁶³ 'Nella pluralità dei casi, gli inquisitori non furono altro se non relatori presso il tribunale di Roma ed esecutori nei suoi ordini' - Luigi Fumi, 'L'Inquisizione Romana e lo Stato di Milano : Saggio di Ricerche nell'Archivio di Stato', *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, serie iv, anno 37 (1910), p. 43. For such advice by Mgr Marescotti, a former Inquisitor in Malta, wrote to Mgr Di Messerano on assuming the office of Secretary to the *Suprema*, see *AIM, Corr.* 16, f. 194r.

⁶⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 19, f. 344r.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 253r.

⁶⁶ 'It (the Inquisition) stands out from all those things in which they (the Popes) co-operated, followed, or assented as the distinctive feature of papal Rome. It was set up, renewed, and perfected by a long series of acts emanating from the supreme authority in the Church. No other institution, no doctrine, no ceremony is so distinctly the individual creation of the papacy, except the Dispensing power ...' Quoted in H. A. Macdougall, ed. *Lord Acton on Papal Power*, p. 226.

⁶⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 125v.

⁶⁸ '... i processi da discutersi nelle Congregazioni si mandano conforme al solito per mano di tutti i Consultori' - *AIM, Corr.* 12, f. 46r

⁶⁹ *AIM, Misc.* 2, pp. 59-60.

⁷⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 94, ff. 176r-v; 198v-199r.

the accused and to the detriment of the Tribunal?⁷¹ What was to be made of the case of Evangelista, a slave from Crete, who had been baptised on board a corsair ship on her way to Malta but only, so she claimed, by force and on promise of being sent back home? Did not she state though at the *Conservatorio delle Ritirate* where she stayed for a month that she had been born of Christian parents but apostacised at the age of five?⁷² Did the Order's soldiers, like those of France, Spain, Naples and the Empire,⁷³ have the faculty to eat meat on forbidden days?⁷⁴ Was a defendant who refused to talk even after he was tortured to be set free?⁷⁵ Was a self-accuser to be considered a *sponte comparente* after he had been charged by delators?⁷⁶ And what about a plaintiff highly suspect of blasphemy but whom the doctors declared could not be tortured?⁷⁷ Such difficult cases⁷⁸ were dispatched 'with all promptness' to Rome.⁷⁹ According to a circular sent to all Inquisitors on 27 October 1674 and repeated in 1718 these invariably included solicitation and other crimes which merited the punishment of the galleys.⁸⁰ Mgr Messerano was duly warned, therefore, that he had not yet sent any such proceedings, giving the impression that he was the head of an independent Tribunal.⁸¹

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, f. 137v.

⁷² *Ibid.*, ff. 51r-v.

⁷³ *AIM, Corr.* 96, f. 240r.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 233v.

⁷⁵ '... il detto reo più volte in giudizio non ha mai voluto rispondere ad alcuni degli interrogatorii fattigli restando anche in detta invicibile ostinazione dopo le molte diligenze da me ordinate per indurlo a rispondere, e dopo anche la tortura datagli secondo le regole di questo S. Tribunale' - *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 236r.

⁷⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 34r, 59r-60v.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 65r.

⁷⁸ 'Nacque dubbio tra li Consultori circa al modo di spedire il preteso apostata' - *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 174r. See also *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 40v, 46v.

⁷⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 20, f. 193r.

⁸⁰ '... al suddetto effetto di trasmettere a questa S. Congregazione i processi si deve osservare il titolo del delitto sopra cui si procede, e non la rilevanza delle prove ò le circostanze che l'accompagnino, per cui il reo meriti ò assoluzione ò minorazione di pena' - *AIM, Corr.* 21, ff. 132r-133r.

⁸¹ '... la quale (Sacra Congregazione) ha anche osservato che nel tempo del suo Inquisitorato non è stato qua trasmesso verun processo di cotesti rei nelle cause criminali piu` gravi, quasi che cotesto Tribunale fosse indipendente dal Supremo di Roma'. - *AIM, Corr.* 17, f. 51r.

In some instances an 'authentic copy' of the whole trial duly signed by the notary⁸² was dispatched to Rome⁸³ but generally only a summary of the *processo informativo* was demanded; it was written in Italian and contained the salient parts of the witnesses' and defendants' depositions together with the accompanying circumstances.⁸⁴ The lawsuit could be suspended⁸⁵ or come to a premature end, the Cardinal Inquisitors concluding that there were no sufficient grounds for the case to continue.⁸⁶ On some rare occasions the *Suprema* could not see 'the merits of the case'⁸⁷ and referred the matter back to Malta for the local Holy Office to solve.⁸⁸ Such decisions were taken only after a prolonged examination of the case so that Inquisitors, eager to expedite matters, repeatedly asked what had happened to their dispatches.⁸⁹ Mgr D'Elci, for one, had sent a copy of a trial on 1 July 1712 but by 24 December he was still waiting for a reply.⁹⁰ A typical example of the scrupulousness of the Cardinal Inquisitors is the following case. They remarked that neither the prosecutor nor the defence counsel had noticed the blatant contradiction in a bigamy suit. The certificate issued by the Bishop's curia of Catania referred to a marriage by the parish priest of the church of Saints Filippo and Giacomo; on her part the woman attested that she had married at Messina at the parish of Saint Andrea.⁹¹

⁸² AIM, Corr. 12, f. 167r.

⁸³ AIM, Corr. 6, f. 61r. AIM, Corr. 11, f. 91r.

⁸⁴ AIM, Corr. 5, ff. 21r, 51r.

⁸⁵ '... ella sospenda ogni passo ulteriore fino ai nuovi ordini, non essendosi qui prese quelle misure che si sono giudicate più a proposito' - AIM, Corr. 24, f. 51r.

⁸⁶ 'Sopra la denuncia trasmessa da V. S. ... contro il Sacerdote Don Antonio Caffa, questa S. Congregazione ha riconosciuto che non costa della supposta sollecitazione, e perciò ha rescritto = Relata = - AIM, Corr. 22, f. 202r.

⁸⁷ AIM, Corr. 5, f. 19r.

⁸⁸ 'Rimette questa Suprema a V. S. lo spedire secondo la sua prudenza ed arbitrio la causa contro il carcerato Luigi Locchi preteso reo di ritenzione di scritti e libri perniciosi' - AIM, Proc. 124B, f. 785r.

⁸⁹ AIM, Corr. 94, ff. 195r-v. AIM, Corr. 95, f. 58v.

⁹⁰ AIM, Corr. 94, ff. 182v-183r. AIM, Corr. 19, f. 283r.

⁹¹ AIM, Corr. 21, ff. 86r-87r.

In such circumstances the *Suprema* dispatched detailed instructions for the Inquisitor to follow. There was much to criticise, for instance, in the solicitation case against Fr Giovanni Balzan sent to them by Mgr Salviati; and the four women delators were to make their depositions again. None of them had described the accused; nor were they asked about his name and fame. Anna Maria Caccamisi did not state the time when she had gone to confess, or whether there was any enmity between her and the priest. Cristina Caruana did not sign her deposition, not even with a cross. Evangelista Tonna failed to explain precisely what dishonest acts and words the priest told her; nor did she explain whether these preceeded or followed the confession.⁹² In instances of bigamy a woman would have to tell the exact time of the marriage; if it had been performed in church or at some other place; who was present at the ceremony and how these knew the bridegroom.⁹³ The following case is still more illustrative of Rome's concern. The already-mentioned *suor* Caterina was a 40-year-old Discalced Carmelite who spread her deposition to the Assessor over ten sessions, lasting from 3 October to 14 November 1741. She accused herself of various confidences with the convent's doctor, who not only supposedly made love to her himself several times but even took her to a house to be known carnally by three other men. On another occasion he put some ointment on her forehead, lips, breast, arms and feet and, uttering some words incomprehensible to her, there appeared a person who, 'on account of the darkness of the night I could not recognize'. The three were then transported 'I don't know how' to a room in a country house where there stood five persons in red dresses who though they resembled young men their hands and feet were much deformed. Another man was seated on a chair; he did not wear a hat like the others but a very longish cap. He was adored by those present, including the nun, who using milk squeezed from her breasts mixed with some red liquid, offered her body and soul to him. She abjured Christianity, the church's sacraments, the Blessed Virgin and all the saints and thanked the 'Sovereign' for having accepted her among his followers. At that time four other men arrived, who made her undress but for a shirt, and all had sex with her. They had a tail and two small horns

⁹² *AIM, Proc.* 125B, ff. 642r-755v.

⁹³ *AIM, Corr.* 21, ff. 86r-87r.

while the lower part of their bodies were black, which made her realise they must have been 'diabolic spirits'. The 'Sovereign', then, put a silver ring on her finger, as a sign of being his spouse. After three hours, and being very late at night, they anointed themselves with some white and stinking ointment and rode on

'a big ugly animal, which seemed like a cow and all together we were transported through the air' to return to the convent in less than half an hour. Her account closed with revealing that the doctor gave her a potion to abort a still boy of five months, whom he then buried.⁹⁴ The case was regarded by the Cardinal Inquisitors as improbable and incoherent; and writing to Mgr Gualtieri they described the incident as a fiction of a corrupt fantasy, the result of some natural infirmity very familiar to women or, still, the working of a depraved spirit very indulgent to lust. Instead of being believed, she was to be rebuked and urged to recognize her malice and her evil inclination. She was to be put under the care of a doctor and a spiritual director - though not her own confessor, who was to be reprimanded for not seeing through the deceit but with great credulity had encouraged her add one deception to another.⁹⁵

The anointing, the adoring of the devil, the riding on animals, all this brings reminiscences of the notorious European witch craze of earlier centuries. But by the eighteenth century such notions, though defended by such minds as Jean Bodin's,⁹⁶ had long been discredited. Already on 12 July 1625 the Cardinal Inquisitors had left the matter of forty women accused of witchcraft⁹⁷ in the hands of Mgr Visconti.⁹⁸ They must have dismissed the matter as irrelevant, which would not have been the case if they considered it of importance, regarding the jealousy with which they reserved important cases for their sole judgement. The year before, on 9 May 1624, Cardinal Giovanni Garcia Millino had

⁹⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 118B, ff. 855r-863r.

⁹⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 27, ff. 114r-116r.

⁹⁶ Christopher Baxter, 'Jean Bodin's *De La Démonomanie Des Sorciers* : The Logic of Persecution', *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft*, Sydney Anglo, ed., pp. 76-105.

⁹⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 44B, ff. 620r-1067v.

⁹⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 5, f. 19r.

made significant remarks in a letter to the Bishop of Lodi. 'The matter of witchcraft', he instructed him,

*'has always been regarded here as fallacious and very uncertain, as it is indeed ... It is a crime difficult to prove, and in which a great part is played by the frivolity and credulity of women, as well as the deceit of the devil, the tutor and father of lies'.*⁹⁹

Then he made him abide by the Instructions he sent him. This famous *Instructio*,¹⁰⁰ written in the first half of the seventeenth century, was published in its original Latin as an appendix to the 1655 edition of Carena's *Tractatus*. It condemned the abuses committed in witchcraft trials and, according to one author, it signified the virtual rupture of the Inquisition's traditional practice in such proceedings.¹⁰¹ Cardinal Desiderio Scaglia, who had a hand in the *Instructio*, repeated this attitude in the *Prattica per procedere nelle cause del S.to Officio*.¹⁰² This manual, which is still in manuscript, confirmed the influences, deceits and illusions of the devil. It counselled Inquisitors to proceed with great caution against those accused of witchcraft; the origin of the phenomenon was occult and one cannot generally substantiate the counts of the indictment. Illnesses could result from natural causes and a doctor's advice should be sought as well as that of an expert and prudent exorcist.¹⁰³ It was a modest beginning towards solving a complex thing. Together with events in France¹⁰⁴ it was a deadly blow to the *Malleus Maleficarum*¹⁰⁵ which no

⁹⁹ Quoted in John Tedeschi, "Appunti sulla 'Instructio pro formandis processibus in causis strigum, sortilegium et maleficiorum'", *Annuario dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea*, vol. XXXV11-XV111 (1985-1986), pp. 219-220.

¹⁰⁰ For its background see J. Tedeschi, op. cit. and Augusto Panizza, 'I Processi Contro le Streghe nel Trentino', *Archivio Veneto*, no. 7 (1888), pp. 84-85; for a summary of its contents, Henry Charles Lea, *Materials Toward A History of Witchcraft*, vol. 11, pp. 950-963.

¹⁰¹ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles : Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, p. 126. For the complexity of this phenomenon, Lucienne Febvre, 'Witchcraft: Nonsense or a Mental Revolution?', *A New Kind of History from the Writings of Febvre*, Peter Burke, ed., pp. 185-192.

¹⁰² A copy of this mss. is to be found at the Archives of the Inquisition at Mdina - AIM, Misc. 2. For a summary of it see H. C. Lea, *Materials Towards A History of Witchcraft*.

¹⁰³ *'... non si ponno per ordinario provar li corpi delli delitti, e quelle infermità possono venir anco da cagioni naturali, e però si ricerca in giuditio la fede del medico, che quell'infermità non sia naturale, ò almeno, che ne dubiti, et anco la fede di un'esperto, et prudente esorcista, che venga veramente da maleficio'* - AIM, Misc. 2, p. 39.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Mandrou, *Magistrati e Streghe nella Francia del Seicento : Un'Analisi di Psicologia Storica*, vols. 1-111.

longer remained the vademecum of the Inquisitors but lost its credibility and its undisputed primary legal fount for judges.¹⁰⁶ A different spirit was about which eventually spread all over Europe, generating a debate which Johann Wier,¹⁰⁷ among others, had done so much to promote. Supernatural agents were dispensed with and psychological disturbances were taken from the hands of theologians and recognised as part of the exclusive sphere and practice of physicians.¹⁰⁸

It was this invigorating spirit which made the Inquisitor, Mgr Zondadari, ask Mária Abela of Zabbar tempted by an incubus the sensible questions whether she had ever been in love and who else lived in the same house with her.¹⁰⁹ This was in 1781 but already a century before, on 26 May 1646, the *Suprema* had written to Mgr Gori Pannellini that nun Geltrude could not have been impregnated by the devil but that it was the result of human wickedness. An attempt should be made rather to find out and punish the perpetrator of so great a sacrilege -

'Sua Emza. non deve, ne può far fondamento alcuno sopra le deposizioni di Suor Geltruda d'esser stata ingravidata da Aloisio Corogna e dal Cavre. Gianforesta per opra diabolica. Che si deve aspettare, che il Parto esca alla luce, dovendosi tener per fermo, s'egli uscirà, esser derivato da sceleragine humana senz'artificio diabolico, nel qual caso il Giudice competente di Suor Geltruda deve anco per mezzo delli tormenti scopri da lei chi ne sia stato l'Autore per proceder contra di esso con quel severo castigo, che merita sacrilegio tanto grande'.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Sydney Anglo, 'Evident Authority and Authoritative Evidence : The *Malleus Maleficarum*', *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft*, Sydney Anglo, ed., pp. 1-31.

¹⁰⁶ Pasquale Lopez, *Clero, Eresia e Magia nella Napoli del Viceregno*, pp. 207-215.

¹⁰⁷ On this sixteenth-century Lutheran physician see Sona Rosa Burnstein, 'Demonology and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Folk-Lore*, vol. XV11 (1956), pp. 25-33 and the highly informative article by Christopher Baxter, 'Johann Weyer's *De Praestigiis Daemonum* : Unsystematic Psychopathology', *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft*, Sydney Anglo, ed., pp. 53-75.

¹⁰⁸ D. A. Beecher, 'Erotic Love and the Inquisition : Jacques Ferrand and the Tribunal of Toulouse, 1620', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. XX, no. 1 (1989), pp. 41-53.

¹⁰⁹ She took the point at once and since she had two unmarried brothers living with her she was quick to reply that she would have certainly recognised them - *AIM, Proc.* 132B, ff. 1054r-1059v.

¹¹⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 8, ff. 159r-v.

If there were sufficient indicia against the accused the trial could proceed; and if he had not meanwhile escaped¹¹¹ or died¹¹² the defendant was ordered to make a personal appearance or was even arrested.¹¹³ Unlike the 'secular' inquisition the 'ecclesiastical' inquisition did not serve the suspects with a writ containing the nature of their crime;¹¹⁴ they were simply cited by the marshal.¹¹⁵ Prisoners held at the Castellania presented a special difficulty. The Government pretended that the Inquisitor's marshals were to tie the accused and take him to the dungeons themselves; no formal act of the consignment was to be made at the Inquisition's chancery by the lay officials, who were to leave at once after they had accompanied the 'heretic' up to the door of the palace.¹¹⁶ On instructions from Rome Mgr Durini told Pinto that the Cardinal Inquisitors were surprised and grieved to see him raise difficulties where none existed;¹¹⁷ and he even discussed the matter over with the Vice-Chancellor and auditor Belli, who persuaded the Grand Master to give in.¹¹⁸ Generally everybody complied with the summons though in the two exceptional cases of Michele Tabone of Cospicua - who was twice ordered by the *cursores* to present himself before Mgr Carpegna¹¹⁹ - and of Lorenzo Borg of B'Kara,¹²⁰ who both defaulted on their obligation to

¹¹¹ AIM, Corr. 25, f. 6r.

¹¹² AIM, Corr. 21, f. 91r. AIM, Corr. 25, f. 109r.

¹¹³ AIM, Corr. 21, f. 48r. AIM, Corr. 24, f. 107r. This contingency also arose when it was suspected that an accused could leave Malta - '*... fù esso (Gio. Decos) arrestato in questo Tribunale per cautela, che egli non partisse da quest'isola, allorchè è un marinaio arrollato in un bastimento Olandese su del quale venne in questo Porto*' - AIM, Corr. 95, f. 39v.

¹¹⁴ W. Ullmann, 'Some Medieval Principles of Criminal Procedure', *Juridical Review* (1947), pp. 21-22.

¹¹⁵ '*Ieri dopo pranzo si portò un cursore ... ed avendomi trovato in casa di mia figlia ... mi disse di portarmi per questa mattina in questo luogo*' - AIM, Proc. 137, f. 209r.

¹¹⁶ AIM, Corr. 96, ff. 160r-161r.

¹¹⁷ AIM, Corr. 31, f. 122r.

¹¹⁸ AIM, Corr. 96, ff. 164r-v. AIM, Corr. 31, f. 124r.

¹¹⁹ AIM, Proc. 136A, ff. 386r-v.

¹²⁰ *Die 18 Men. Maii 1793. Rt. Aloysius Damato Cursor se de mto. Excellmi. et Rmi. Dni. Genlis. Inquis. Meliten. accessisse in Terra Birchirchara per tres vices, et vocasse Laurentium Borg ad comparendum in Aula Secreta S. Offii.*

appear, they had to be conducted to prison by the captain. It does not seem that there was any problem in getting people behind bars though Giuseppe Coggira, a galley convict, escaped on his way to the dungeons. He went round the countryside committing thefts and other disorders to be finally apprehended on board one of the French ships in the Grand Harbour.¹²¹ The documents do not speak how he latter behaved when imprisoned but another incident throws some light on the psychological state of a man on first entering his cell.¹²² Antonio Cremona of Cospicua got so desperate on being incarcerated that he started swearing at the jailer and also at the members of the Tribunal responsible for his capture. He would eat nothing and got so out of control that he chased the warden out into the yard and - though it was against the wish of the Inquisitor, who wanted to keep the matter secret - it had to be the *sbirri* of the *Castellania* who helped the gaoler lead the prisoner back to his cell two days later.¹²³

There was no time limit within which the accused started to be examined though, on an average, they waited 8.8 days.¹²⁴ Francesco Parnis of Gudja appeared before Mgr Carpegna that same day he was incarcerated.¹²⁵ The baptized slave from Saida, Giovanni d'Anastasi was arrested on 20 June 1771 but he made his appearance before the Inquisitor only on 14 August, after a period of forty-five days.¹²⁶ The cross-examination took place in the secret chancery, though it could also be the archives or even 'a small room beside our cell'. The Inquisitor sat on an armchair at the head of a little table; he was helped by the

Die 25 eiusd. Men. cumpctus. Laurentius Borg non curaverit comparere in aula Secreta S. Offii. Ex tunc Excellmus. et Rmus. Dnus. mandavit pctum. Lautentium Borg duci ad hos carceres S. Offii, et in eis detineri - AIM, Proc. 137, f. 170v.

¹²¹ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 15v.

¹²² Jean-Pierre Dedieu, *L'Administration de la Foi*, pp. 80-86.

¹²³ *AIM, Proc.* 133C, ff. 1274r-1428v.

¹²⁴ Calculated from data in *AIM, Proc.* 120A-141, 162-3.

¹²⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 138, ff. 11r-24v.

¹²⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 130, ff. 204r-255v.

Assessor¹²⁷ on the right and the Chancellor to the left. When the case arose interpreters were summoned. The extraordinary number of Moslem slaves made the 'Turkish' interpreter particularly important¹²⁸ while the frequent occasions when Englishmen arrived in Malta necessitated the presence of such interpreters, too;¹²⁹ though even those who spoke Polish,¹³⁰ Greek,¹³¹ Spanish, French and German were understood.¹³² The accused, who was conducted to the court-chamber by the captain, remained standing.¹³³ Like poor sixteenth-century Essex men who faced the Justice of the Peace in his own country house¹³⁴ he must have felt overwhelmed by the unfamiliar surroundings.¹³⁵ Some were so overpowered by the unusual setting that they entered the room screaming aloud like mad men. Teresa was in tears almost all the time of her interrogation, protesting her innocence; Teodora blushed and got confused;¹³⁶ Maria Mercieca interrupted her trial by cries and laughter; while others looked stupid and dull, and searched for words.¹³⁷

¹²⁷ This was the chief minister of the Tribunal, who acted as Pro-Inquisitor until a new prelate arrived. He was also a canon of the cathedral and enjoyed the same status as the Bishop's Vicar General. Besides legal knowledge he had to have other personal qualities, chief among which to defend the rights of the Church against the pretensions of the Government - *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 35v-36r, 167r-v.

¹²⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 124r.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, ff. 246r-v.

¹³⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 11, f. 86r.

¹³¹ *AIM, Corr.* 12, f. 222r.

¹³² *AIM, Corr.* 94, ff. 171r, 182v.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, ff. 235r-v.

¹³⁴ Noel Samaha, Law and Order in Historical Perspective : The Case of Elizabethan Essex, p. xiii.

¹³⁵ For this 'state of oppression' see Andrea Del Col, 'I Processi dell'Inquisizione Come Fonte : Considerazioni Diplomatiche e Storiche', Annuario dell'Istituto Storico Italiano Per L'Età Moderna e Contemporanea, vols. XXXV-XXXVI (1983-1984), p. 41.

¹³⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 39v.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 55v.

Questions were put by the Inquisitor, sometimes strolling about the court-room.¹³⁸ The Assessor interrogated only those who spoke Maltese,¹³⁹ though when the Inquisitor left the room, as for instance when a Hospitaller dropped in to see him, he conducted the trial himself.¹⁴⁰ Having given his own particulars the accused was asked whether he knew the cause of his imprisonment. Then he was demanded to name any who dabbled in various 'heresies', among which was inserted the one he was being charged of. Questions followed one another naturally, the Inquisitor taking the hint for the next query from the accused's own words.¹⁴¹ Unlike the procedure of the court of the *Esecutori Contro la Bestemmia* in Venice¹⁴² this was in keeping with a firm directive of the Tribunal that suggestive questioning which the accused simply affirmed or denied was to be avoided at all costs,¹⁴³ and constituted 'a most grave crime'.¹⁴⁴ The Inquisitor was not to supply evidence but only to elicit such data which, as the Carolina puts it, 'no innocent person can know'.¹⁴⁵ Put differently, the Inquisitor was not to supply the accused with the details he wished to hear from him but through general queries the defendant supplied particular answers.¹⁴⁶ By way of illustration let us take the example of the 35-year-old agricultural labourer from Zurrieq, Grazio Brincat *ta' buras* accused of blasphemy. He could not name any heretic, sorcerer, heretical blasphemer or any who did not live according to the rites of the Catholic Church. But coming to the particular, did he remember anyone who in anger blasphemed at his own house? -

¹³⁸ AIM, Proc. 156, f. 71r .

¹³⁹ AIM, Proc. 156, ff. 6v, 10v, 13v.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 8v.

¹⁴¹ Eliseo Maini, *Sacro Arsenale*, pp. 32, 50, 52.

¹⁴² Gaetano Cozzi, 'Note su Tribunali e Procedure Penali a Venezia nel '700', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. LXXV11 (1965), fasc. iv, p. 947.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 113.

¹⁴⁴ Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, p. 123.

¹⁴⁵ John H. Langbein, *Prosecuting Crime in the Renaissance*, Article 53, p. 282.

¹⁴⁶ AIM, Misc. 2, p. 82.

'Speaking for myself I do swear when worked up or in a fight but then I will be so much beside myself that I do not know what I am saying. And I add that though in such moments I do utter blasphemies these cannot be vicious since I am not used to swear gravely.'

At this moment the Inquisitor warned him that witnesses had testified under oath against him. Now he remembered -

'In July of last year I had a quarrel in my house with one Giovanni Zammit and Gabriele, his son, who arrived a little later. I demanded them to pay me for some work I had carried out for them in their fields and when they refused I blasphemed. But since it is a long time and also because I was furious I cannot specify the blasphemies I uttered then. If I do remember I will have no difficulty to say so to this Tribunal for conscience's sake.'

The Inquisitor was not yet satisfied and admonished him to be frank lest he be a perjurer and fall into excommunication. To help him recollect his thoughts the blasphemies he was charged with were specified to him, as well as the deposition of the delators. But nothing could move him from his position and received only a warning.¹⁴⁷

As this case testified the accused was subjected to a tight interrogation, which easily derailed the unwary and made him contradict himself. Antonio Stella was charged of apostasy but he denied ever having left his Jewish faith in which he had been born. According to his own testimony he ran away from home at the age of eight and went to Perugia in the service of a bookseller, with whom he visited Rome. Here he attended for four years the *scuole pie* of San Pantaleo and practised only the Christian religion. However, not only was this proved unfounded, which destroyed his credibility altogether, but it was a known fact that when Jewish children were brought up by Christians they were ordinarily baptised.¹⁴⁸

There was one thing though that in Malta, unlike in Venice, the Inquisitors did not indulge in; they did not start theological discussions with the defendant. They concentrated their efforts rather to establish the facts, find out what had really happened and locate the external characteristics of the crime, which led them to assess as accurately as possible the

¹⁴⁷ AIM, Proc. 135A, ff. 29r-40v.

¹⁴⁸ AIM, Corr. 20, ff. 96r-v.

level of the accused's heresy. This attention was especially required in witchcraft cases. There was no problem at all when the adoration of the devil was explicit. But why were the sacraments and sacramentals used in some experiments? Were not blessed water, incense, candles, oil and the host used only to worship God?¹⁴⁹ Did they not imply, therefore, reverence towards another power other than God Himself? And by attributing to the devil powers that are God's alone, would that not mean placing the devil on a par with God? Could he, for example, foresee the future and force the free will of men into love or hate? Is it not unworthy to ask God for such base and selfish ends as to recover stolen goods and capture thieves or to further adultery, theft and murder? Were not such invocations, therefore, directed to the devil? And did not 'unknown characters' written on pieces of paper represent the names of devils?

Such theological notions, formulated in the thirteenth century by St Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*,¹⁵⁰ would never have entered the mind of most of the accused. To quote one author this 'defined the gulf that separated the dominant culture from the unreflective, spontaneous culture of the common people'.¹⁵¹ In these circumstances most were unable to put up a vigorous defence and soon broke down. Imhammet was accused of having conducted experiments to find a gold cow and a silver calf in the catacombs of Rabat. He denied the charge but how long would he withstand the logical force of pressing questions? Had he left Valletta these last ten months? Perhaps he had been to Rabat? For what reason and with whom? Had he the acquaintance of Giuseppe Pace who lived behind the Jesuit College? And had he gone with him to some place where

¹⁴⁹ For the way sacramentals could become magical see Robert W. Scribner, 'The Reformation, Popular Magic, and the 'Disenchantment of the World'', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. XXIII, no. 3 (1993), p. 480.

¹⁵⁰ For the translation of relevant parts of this work see Alan C. Kors and Edward Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe, 1100-1700. A Documentary History*, pp. 53-62.

¹⁵¹ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles*, p. 88.

they stayed for two days? That was the time when he collapsed - 'I am disposed to tell the truth ...'¹⁵²

Some did put up a vigorous defence though and, like the Venetian jeweller, Alessandro Caravia,¹⁵³ even passed on to the offensive and stood up to the Inquisitor.¹⁵⁴ Paolo was a 60-year-old baptised slave who led a most miserable life; his master hired him to a pig-breeder who sent him to gather refuse from the streets of Valletta. He felt so desperate that he was heard saying that Islam was a better religion than Christianity. On being arrested he did not deny his assertion and, asked to explain, had the courage to say -

*'Turkish legislation is more humane than Christian. But as regards religious belief and which is the best before God you and your doctors know it, not I!'*¹⁵⁵

Others tried to dodge the Inquisitor's enquiries and their self-confidence was not easily shaken, even if such resourcefulness is not to be compared to that shown by a heretic in Udine who had his abjuration rewritten by a fellow companion and turned a public apology into an act of defiance.¹⁵⁶ Such was the case of Giuseppe di Durino. This free neophyte from Algiers had been imprisoned on 1 December 1772 and started being examined on 14 January of the next year, which continued on the 15th, 16th and 29th of the month as well as on 1st and 11th February. On 4 March he was riddled by twenty-one questions but he still stood his ground, firmly maintaining that he was being falsely accused of sorcery. It was

¹⁵² *'Io son tutto disposto a dire la verità sopra quello mi fu domandato nell'antecedente mio costituito, e sopra quello per il quale fui come suppongo carcerato, cioè per aver tentato di trovare un tesoro nelle catacombe della Città Notabile'* - AIM, Proc. 125B, ff. 604r-608v. This was also the case of Gio. Pietro : *'Io per timore della giustizia ho detto qualche cosa diversa dal fatto, ma adesso risolvo di dire la verità'* - AIM, Proc. 130, f. 225r.

¹⁵³ For the trial of this philoprotellant writer see Enrica Benini Clementi, 'Il Processo del Gioielliere Veneziano Alessandro Caravita', *Nuova Rivista Storica*, vol. 65 (1981), pp. 628-652.

¹⁵⁴ For the way the accused tried to elude the Inquisitor's interrogations see Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, pp. 126-129.

¹⁵⁵ AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 55r-75v.

¹⁵⁶ Andrea del Col, 'L'abiura trasformata in propaganda ereticale nel duomo di Udine (15 Aprile 1544)', *Metodi e Ricerche : Rivista di Studi Regionali*, nos. 2-3 (1981), pp. 57-72.

only on 12 March and on the eighth sitting that his morale at last broke - 'I plead guilty to everything you have arraigned me for'.

Time-consuming trials, sometimes even continued late in the afternoon,¹⁵⁷ were meant to take their toll on the defendant's power to resist. If this stratagem failed the prisoner returned to his cell to reflect¹⁵⁸ for as long as three¹⁵⁹ or even five¹⁶⁰ months. Here he was visited by confessors¹⁶¹ and perhaps he would ask of his own free will to appear before the Inquisitor.¹⁶² It was after such an exhortation and a further examination of conscience that the slave, Haelli, gave in and confessed all he remembered. It was not to hide his crime but of mere forgetfulness that he had not confirmed the denunciations against him. 'I have never believed', he stated,

'nor do I believe that any Christian, for any reason whatsoever, can dabble in sorcery, which to my greatest displeasure I did in order to ease my miseries. I certainly resolve never again, not even for all the gold in the world, to commit such misdeed, hoping that God the merciful would pardon my crime'.

If the defendant still remained adamant written depositions were read out to him in evidence.¹⁶³ He was not told whom his delators were though it was not difficult for him to suspect from the circumstances of the case whom they could be. Names did crop up in interrogations and when, for instance, Giovanni de Rizzo, was asked whether he knew Ignazio Vella, his arch enemy, his mind must have clicked.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁷ *'Et cum hora esset tarda fuit dimissum examen animo illud proseguendi'* - AIM, Proc. 136A, ff. 384r-393v.

¹⁵⁸ *'... ed io rispondendo di non saperla fui rimandata nelle carceri ad effetto che io mi ricordasse bene'* - AIM, Proc. 155, f. 118v.

¹⁵⁹ *'... e così fui riportata nella prigione da dove per tre mesi in circa non fui chiamata'* - Ibid., f. 109r.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., f. 118v.

¹⁶¹ *'Si è procurato col mezzo de' Religiosi di vedere d'indurlo ad abbracciare la nostra Santa Religione'* - AIM, Corr. 95, f. 40r. See also *ibid.* f. 45r.

¹⁶² AIM, Proc. 155, f. 108r.

¹⁶³ AIM, Proc. 135A, ff. 178r-v.

¹⁶⁴ AIM, Proc. 125A, ff. 362r-v. The lawyers of cardinal Morone identified one of the witnesses against their client even though the copy of the proceedings given to them contained no such names. See Massimo Firpo - Dario Marcatto, 'Il Primo Processo Inquisitoriale Contro Il Cardinal Giovanni Morone (1552-53)', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. 93 (1981), pp. 72-73, 91.

This revelation of names is not to be wondered at since, though this was contrary to the principle of secrecy, in Malta as in Venice,¹⁶⁵ there are even a few exceptional examples of direct confrontation between the defendant and his accuser.¹⁶⁶ According both to the Directorium Inquisitorum¹⁶⁷ and the Sacro Arsenale this was to be used only rarely;¹⁶⁸ and the *Pratica Per Procedere Nelle Cause Del Sant'Officio*, warns that ordinarily it produced more harm than good. A person should be brought face to face with his accusers only if this helped to find the truth and no hatred resulted between them. Such confrontations were to be held between people of low social class and never between servant and master or the lowly and the noble, since through fear or reverence the lowly contradicted himself and put the trial in confusion. It was in the judge's discretion to see whether such confrontations were expedient or not.¹⁶⁹ Such an uncommon example occurred in 1631 in the case of Curt Rais or Nicolò of Patmos.¹⁷⁰ Even Leonardo Xara had to face his accusers in 1648¹⁷¹ and Orsola Negroponte told Giuseppa Bellavillana in full court that whatever she had deposed had been suggested by her.¹⁷² There is another case under Mgr Carpegna and concerned Vincenza Sacchett of Senglea who accused her parish priest, Fr Salvatore Bonnici, of having given him 50 scudi to stop criminal proceedings against her at the Holy Office¹⁷³ -

¹⁶⁵ For the confrontation between *padre* Bonaventura and the delator, Portia, who accusead him of solicitation, see Claudio Madricardo, 'Sesso e Religione nel Seicento a Venezia : La Sollecitazione in Confessionale', Studi Veneziani, n.s., vol. XVI(1988), pp. 139-141.

¹⁶⁶ For such dramatic confrontations see Carlo Ginzburg, The Night Battles, p. 101. Also Olimpia Aureggi, 'La Stregoneria nella Alpi Centrali. Ricerche di Diritto e Procedura Penale', Bollettino della Società Storica Valtellinese, no. 15 (1961), p. 150.

¹⁶⁷ Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs, p. 185.

¹⁶⁸ '... rare volte e ... solamente per cause molto gravi, e mentre non vi è pericolo, suole il Santo Uffizio fare il confronto de' Testimoni col Reo' - Eliseo Masini, Sacro Arsenale, p. 233.

¹⁶⁹ AIM, Misc. 2, pp. 76-77.

¹⁷⁰ 'E perchè egli pertinacemente sta nella negativa, farà confrontar i testimonii in faccia di esso Curt ...' - AIM, Corr. 5, f. 190r.

¹⁷¹ AIM, Proc. 156, ff. 68r-72v.

¹⁷² '... Bellavillana, quale essendo portata qui gli lo dissi in faccia' - AIM, Proc. 155, f. 109r.

¹⁷³ AIM, Proc. 136A, ff. 70r-96v.

Fr Bonnici - *'What Vincenza said in my presence and in my face is false, most false'.*

Vincenza - *'I said all I knew under oath. I did not appear in the Tribunal spontaneously but on being summoned'.*

Fr Bonnici - *'She can say what she wants. It will never be proved that I said and did what Vincenza asserts'.*

If ever the accused claimed he was being mistaken for someone else who made use of his name and surname his identity had first to be established; he could have a scar on his face¹⁷⁴ or a blind eye.¹⁷⁵ A suspected bigamist would be recognised by his first wife or by the parish priest and by whoever had attended the marriage ceremony.¹⁷⁶ Generally, however, a simple procedure was adopted. He was made to stand among at least three others to be identified by the witnesses who had testified against him.¹⁷⁷ On 9 June 1758 Leonardo Farrugia was placed in the middle of the stairs in front of the court room, keeping his body erect and his head high. Fr Arcangelo Formosa of Zurrieq and his brother Gio. Battista looked through the peep hole of the said room -

*'Questo è quel Leonardo Farrugia schiavo neophita della Sacra Religione Gerosolomitana, conciascarpe, che venne in casa nostra per trovare il tesoro promessoci con commettere il sortileggio del quale habbiam deposto'.*¹⁷⁸

He could have been placed between two persons of the same height and of the same appearance for his denouncers to identify him. This was what was done to Gaetano Schembri of Galizia. This 65- year-old free neophite lived at Valletta in the vicinity of the Hospital, where he worked at the *falanga*, treating patients infected with venereal disease by means of mercurial inunctions. On 22 August 1793 he was arrested for sorcery and on 2

¹⁷⁴ AIM, Corr. 14, f. 235r.

¹⁷⁵ AIM, Proc. 131B, f. 633v.

¹⁷⁶ AIM, Corr. 5, f. 85r.

¹⁷⁷ *'Le ricognizioni visuali de testimoni ... bisogna che si facciano inter plures, cioè che col reo siano almeno tre, et oltre le diligenze necessarie perchè siano fatte puramente senza che il testimonio prima in alcun conto habbia veduti gli aggiunti; overo alcun segno che essi siano liberi, e che il preteso reo sia carcerato ...'* - AIM, Corr. 13, ff. 5r-v. See also AIM, Misc. 2, pp. 82-83 and Luigi Fumi, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

¹⁷⁸ AIM, Proc. 125B, ff. 769r-811r.

September he was put between Lorenzo and Giovanni Vella, while Michel'Angelo Labruna recognised him as the one wearing moustaches, fustian trousers and a scapular of Our Lady of Carmel round his neck -

*'Quello che vi è in mezzo tra altre due persone dell'istessa statura, e somiglianza, egli è quel stesso neofita Gaetano, del quale ho come sopra deposto e più volte da me nominato, colle baffe, calzone di fostaino, e l'abito di M. Vergtine del Carmine nel collo.'*¹⁷⁹

Giuseppe de Sacco, however, a married neophyte who lived at Cospicua and was the servant of auditor Grech, was not to blame. Antonia Abela declared -

'I don't know this man, nor have I ever seen him. Giuseppe whom I have incriminated is about forty years old, shorter, has a whiter complexion, with smallpox marks in his face, as well as smaller moustaches. He works on the galleys and if I am not mistaken on the flagship but whether as a slave or as a sailor I don't know. Nor do I know whether he is married, either'.

In fact, the one Antonia had denounced was Giuseppe Saverio di Bisignani, nicknamed *zifzraff*, a Christian slave of the Order from Algiers.¹⁸⁰

The accused was not the helpless victim bullied and cajoled by a sadistic Inquisitor that popular imagination and even scholarly publications¹⁸¹ make out. If a defendant suspected some minister of the Tribunal was unfavourable to his cause he could ask for his recusation.¹⁸² And unlike sixteenth-century England¹⁸³ and France¹⁸⁴ the defendant's right to counsel was an ancient feature of inquisitorial procedure,¹⁸⁵ approved even by the

¹⁷⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 137, ff. 193r-203v.

¹⁸⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 125A, ff. 98r-193v.

¹⁸¹ See, for instance, Henry Charles Lea, *The Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, p. 116.

¹⁸² *AIM, Proc.* 156, ff. 17r-v.

¹⁸³ Joel Samaha, *Law and Order in Historical Perspective: The Case of Elizabethan Essex*, p. xiii.

¹⁸⁴ John H. Langbein, *Prosecuting Crime in the Renaissance*, pp. 235-6.

¹⁸⁵ For the fair treatment given to the defendant, Walter Ullman, 'The Defence of the Accused in the Medieval Inquisition', *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, series 5, vol. 73 (1950), pp. 481-489. See also John Tedeschi, 'Preliminary Observation On Writing A History Of The Roman Inquisition', *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History*, F. Forrester Church and Timothy George, eds., pp. 242-243. Gaetano Cozzi, 'Note su Tribunali e Procedure Penali a Venezia nel '700', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. LXXVII (1965), fasc. iv, pp. 941-942.

Malleus Maleficorum, ruthless and intransigent as it was.¹⁸⁶ Not only could the accused appoint a defence counsel of their own¹⁸⁷ but, as for instance in Venice,¹⁸⁸ the Tribunal provided its own *Avvocato (Procuratore) dei Poveri* for those who could not afford one.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, even if the accused renounced such legal help and put himself at the mercy of the Tribunal - '*Fate di me quello che volete*'¹⁹⁰ - the Holy Office 'which always abounds in piety, clemency and the rectitude of justice',¹⁹¹ made its lawyer take on his defence *ex officio*.¹⁹²

Although the senior of the Consultors¹⁹³ and, therefore, a patentee we cannot agree with Coulton that he was not wholly devoted to the interests of his client and that he was the Inquisitor's rather than the defendant's advocate.¹⁹⁴ Such lawyers, like Dr. Gio.

¹⁸⁶ Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, pp. 455-461. Giuseppe Bonomo, *Caccia alle Streghe*, p. 231.

¹⁸⁷ '*Avendo il reo desiderato che le sue difese fossero assunte non solo dal solo Avvocato dei Poveri ma ancora da un'altro da lui nominato*' - AIM, Corr. 95, f. 283r. See also Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, pp. 7-8. For the three *procuratori* of the bishop of Capodistria see L. A. Ferrai, 'Il Processo di Pier Paolo Vergerio', *Archivio Storico Italiano*, vol. XV (1885), p. 340. Henry Kamen, *Inquisition and Society*, p. 179.

¹⁸⁸ For such an official in Venice see Vittorio Lazzarini, 'L'Avvocato dei Carcerati Poveri', *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti. Anno Accademico 1910-1911, tomo LXX, parte seconda*, pp. 1471-1507.

¹⁸⁹ Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, p. 143.

¹⁹⁰ AIM, Proc. 130, f. 63r. See also AIM, Proc. 112B, f. 441v - '*Io rinuncio al termine de' giorni cinque assegnatimi da V. P. per fare le mie difese, perchè non so che difese farmi, perchè quello che ho detto è la pura verità. Onde mi rimetto in tutto e per tutto all Giustizia e Pietà di questo S. Tribunale.*'

¹⁹¹ Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenale*, p. 252.

¹⁹² '*Se gli dovrà assegnare il termine a far le sue difese, e quando vi rinuncii, se gli dovranno far fare ex officio dall'Avvocato dei Rei*' - AIM, Corr. 26, ff. 244r, 242r. For such expressions see AIM, Corr. 13, f. 243r. AIM, Corr. 15, ff. 215v, 217r, 231r. AIM, Corr. 20, ff. 105v, 195v. AIM, Corr. 21, f. 46r. AIM, Corr. 26, ff. 242r, 244r. AIM, Corr. 95, ff. 94r, 125v-126r. See also Luigi Fumi, 'L'Inquisizione Romana e lo Stato di Milano: Saggio di Ricerche nell'Archivio di Stato', *Archivio Storico Lombardo, serie iv, anno 37* (1910) vol. 14, p. 410.

¹⁹³ AIM, Corr. 96, f. 258r.

¹⁹⁴ On this topic see his *Inquisition And Liberty*, p. 123.

Leonardo,¹⁹⁵ were chosen from among the foremost lawyers in Malta,¹⁹⁶ some even being graduates of foreign universities, like *La Sapienza* of Rome.¹⁹⁷ They were not though a defence counsel in the modern sense. They did not conduct the case or prompt the accused when he was being interrogated. They assisted him not from the start of the trial but only when he was formally charged and by this time he could have made all or most of his damaging admissions. Again, though they visited their clients and argued their case over with them in their cell, they could not maintain their innocence and make them plead not guilty at all costs.¹⁹⁸ If they became convinced of their guilt they forced them to tell the truth¹⁹⁹ and could withdraw from defence on the grounds that they were 'convicted by their own admissions'.²⁰⁰ 'If it were another Tribunal', said one counsel characteristically,

'I would have exhorted them, perhaps, to deny the charges against them but in this court of the Holy Office I could only urge them to tell the truth. They stood their ground even after I had warned them that there was still time to recant if they could not stand by their confessions, being prejudicial to themselves and to others'.

With all these handicaps the defence counsel, who proposed his client's case *in piena Consulta*,²⁰¹ did give valid advice to his defendant.²⁰² He based his arguments, which

¹⁹⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 29, f. 192r. Dr Arcangelo eventually recovered his health - *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 213r-v.

¹⁹⁶ *'... verrà il Sacro Tribunale a far acquisto del più bravo avvocato di Malta'* - *Ibid.*, f. 210v.

¹⁹⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 21, f. 20r.

¹⁹⁸ *'Venne si bene per due volte l'Avvocato, il cappellano di casal Birchercara, dicendomi se l'hai fatto dillo se no, nol dire'* - *AIM, Proc.* 155, f. 109r.

¹⁹⁹ Such was the case of Antonio Stella. He was accused of apostasy but when he persisted in saying he was a Jew his lawyer was commissioned by the Inquisitor to make him submit - *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 207v.

²⁰⁰ Brian Pullan, "'A Ship with Two Rudders' : 'Righetto Marrano' and the Inquisition in Venice", *The Historical Journal*, vol. 20, no. 1 (1977), p. 49. For the pressure put on the accused see Romano Canosa, *Storia dell'Inquisizione Spagnola in Italia*, p. 85 - *'... varie furono le pressioni esercitate su di lei dal suo avvocato, il quale le fece presente che, se non avesse mutato parere, avrebbe rinunciato a defenderla'.*

²⁰¹ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 197v.

²⁰² *M. R. P. Inquisitor accersiri fecit in Sancto Officio D. N. de N. Procuratorem, seu Advocatum Reorum dicti Sancti Officii, quem ortatus est, ut pro charitate velit bonum et utile consilium praeberere N. Reo, et carcerato in Sancto Officio, seu pro causa Sanctae Inquisitionis; et sibi delatum fuit juramentum de secreto servando quod praestitit, tactis Sacris Evangeliiis: et tunc admissus fuit ad colloquendum cum praedicto N. carcerato* - Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenale*, p. 234.

could run into as many as eighteen folios,²⁰³ on sound legal expertise and on the teachings of standard canonists whose works were scrupulously cited, quoting page and all.²⁰⁴ Special attention, Peña emphasized, was to be paid to circumstances which aggravated or lessened the guilt²⁰⁵ so that defendants were pardoned for acting in anger²⁰⁶ after being soundly whipped,²⁰⁷ or for being so under the influence of wine²⁰⁸ that they could not stand on their feet.²⁰⁹ A baptised slave, accused of heretical propositions regarding the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation, was not to be punished, not being sufficiently instructed in the mysteries of the Faith;²¹⁰ and if the widow, Beatrice Gennaro, did blaspheme it was only in a moment of despair, having just heard that her daughter had drowned and she wanted to hurl herself from the bastions.²¹¹ Isaac, the Jew, did dabble in witchcraft, but only 'to gain money and not at all for any evil end'.²¹² To all these the Inquisitor was to be a father and not a judge.²¹³ Such conscientious work of the defence counsel is better illustrated by the following incident. Antonio Lahosa, a baptised slave of the Order, arrested for blasphemy, was superbly defended by his lawyer. His accusers were most vile, all rowers on the flagship of the Religion and of such bad repute that they merited to be disqualified. Two of

²⁰³ *AIM, Proc.* 125A, ff. 290r-294v, 303r-306v.

²⁰⁴ See for instance *AIM, Proc.* 120A, ff. 248r-293v; *AIM, Proc.* 121C, ff. 1203r-1250v; *AIM, Proc.* 122C, ff. 856r-919v, 920r-962v, 1153r-1176v.

²⁰⁵ '*... dans la détermination des peines, on tiendra grand compte des circonstances qui, habituellement, aggravent ou atténuent le délit : le rôle de la peur, l'âge du délinquant, son instruction, son état (laïque, clerc, religieux), etc*' - Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, p. 55.

²⁰⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 120A, ff. 29r-56v.

²⁰⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 122C, ff. 1011r-1016v.

²⁰⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 120C, ff. 1060r-1093v.

²⁰⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 120A, ff. 114r-133v.

²¹⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 213v. Another baptised slave was described as '*persona assai rozza, d'età non ancora matura*' - *Ibid.*, f. 199r.

²¹¹ *AIM, Proc.* 123A, f. 78r.

²¹² *AIM, Proc.* 122C, f. 1281r.

²¹³ Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenale*, p. 246.

them, Gaetano Schembri of *casal* Safi and Andrea Crispola, a Neapolitan, had been condemned by the lay court. The first had stolen some pomegranates and had been sentenced for two years hard labour. As a deserter the second had served for three years rowing on the galleys; and when he escaped one night on an English ship it was a term of six months. The other delator, Francesco Pappalardo, a Sicilian, had been criminally prosecuted six times for fights. Giuseppe Zerafa of *casal* Zebbug had also been arraigned, for having been found abroad at night time and twice for stealing. The latter, furthermore, had not confessed and received Holy Communion for the last six years except to do his Easter duties. For all these reasons the defence counsel pleaded that Antonio be set free, which he was.²¹⁴ The counsel for Giovanni de Rizzo was as conscientious and brought various reasons to defuse the charges against his client, accused of eating meat on prohibited days: Carlo de Ruffo had tried to poison him by giving him some fried liver to eat. Michele de Gatt, another witness, was an intimate friend of Carlo; they were partners of a stall in the slave prison where they sold cheese, oil, olives and vinegar. Ignazio Vella and Giuseppe de Bisignani were mortal enemies of the defendant, the latter being the chief witness in a lawsuit in the Bishop's court against the scandalous relationship de Bisignani had with Ignazio's wife.²¹⁵ Moreover, Giovanni, as the *muzzo* or the subordinate of the *algozino*, was hated by all the slaves.²¹⁶

The defendant could even demand that his accusers be again interrogated.²¹⁷ Such procedure, according to one manual, had to be managed with great skill and prudence since on it depended 'the honour, the life and the property' of the arraigned. It was conducted with great caution and solicitude by the Inquisitor himself, that there be no fraud. Witnesses could be corrupted by money, won over by prayers and menaces, moved by indignation,

²¹⁴ AIM, Proc. 120B, ff. 539r-570v.

²¹⁵ For a report about these relations, which included incest and homosexuality, see AAM, Dicta 25, no. 53.

²¹⁶ AIM, Proc. 125A, ff. 372r-v.

²¹⁷ '... dar prima ad esso reo giuridicamente gli articoli cavati dal fiscale dalle sudette deposizioni de testimoni, acciò egli col suo Avvocato produca gli interrogatorii che gli pareranno opportuni per la difesa' - AIM, Corr. 13, f. 5v. For such an example see AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 64r-68r. See also AIM, Misc. 2, p. 81.

hatred, or by any other illicit means,²¹⁸ so that the innocent would be punished and the culprit absolved against the maxims of justice.²¹⁹ The prosecutor²²⁰ drew up a list of 'articles' incriminating the accused, to which then the defence and his client set the questions to be put to the witnesses,²²¹ who even had their former denunciations read out to them to be approved.²²² Some refused this solution because they were convinced that it was impossible for the witnesses to retract what they had sworn to; besides, it signified mistrust in the Tribunal. In this case they accepted the evidence against them but brought their own witnesses.²²³ This time the procedure was reversed;²²⁴ the defence lawyer presented his *schedulam capitolorum ad deffensam* to which the prosecutor, in his turn, produced the *interrogatoria fisci*, or the questions to be put to the defendant's witnesses.²²⁵ For this purpose the counsel was given a transcript of the proceedings²²⁶ so that he could submit in writing the defence of his client.²²⁷ This dossier was a true copy of the original and, contrary to what the manuals said,²²⁸ did contain the names of the delators and all the

²¹⁸ AIM, Corr. 94, f. 236r.

²¹⁹ Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenale*, pp. 233-4.

²²⁰ 'Dovendosi perciò proseguire la ripetizione, si faranno cavare dal Signor Fiscale del Santo Uffizio le posizioni, ovvero articoli, contro il Reo : quali dovranno contenere i capi di tutte le cose principali, che al detto Reo vengono opposte' - Ibid., p. 235.

²²¹ 'Successivamente si darà copia di essi articoli all'Avvocato, o Procuratore del Reo, presente l'istesso Reo ... Sopra il tutto avvertirà l'Inquisitore di non permettere giammai, che al Reo, ovvero al suo Procuratore, o Avvocato, si dia nota de' nomi de' Testimoni del Fisco, che si avranno a ripetere' - Ibid., p. 237.

²²² 'Adesso che mi si legge la denuncia da me fatta in questo S. Tribale. mi sovengono il fatto e le parole tutte che mi si leggono. Onde io le approvo, e le ratifico in tutto, e per tutto, come son narrate in detta mia denuncia' - AIM, Proc. 130, f. 66r.

²²³ 'Sogliono anche prodursi i testimoni, che lodino, ovvero approvino il Reo, e perciò si chiamano approvatori : e questi giovano talvolta assai, massimamente quando rendono testimonianza d'atti contrari a' delitti opposti, e fanno appunto in contrario rivolgere ciò, che contro di essi Rei è stato detto nel Processo' - Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenale*, p. 245.

²²⁴ AIM, Corr. 17, f. 270r.

²²⁵ Gaetano Cozzi, 'Note su Tribunali e Procedure Penali a Venezia nel '700', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. LXXV111 (1966), fasc. iv, p. 29. See also Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenale*, pp. 246, 248.

²²⁶ '... scrittura di difesa, fatta dal Avvocato dei Rei del Sant'Ufficio' - AIM, Corr. 95, f. 170v.

²²⁷ Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605*, p. 52.

²²⁸ '... commetterà l'Inquisitore al notaro che faccia quanto prima la copia del Processo; avvertendo che in detta copia non siano nè i nomi, nè i cognomi del Denunziatore, e de' Testimoni; ma in luogo loro si pongano

circumstances of the case. No secret was being divulged in this way though because the defence lawyer was one of the Consultants who advised the Inquisitor about the case. For this reason it must not have been shown to the accused who, anyway, could not make use of it, being generally illiterate.²²⁹ The handbooks all speak of the secrecy of delators' and witnesses' names but dossiers from the Inquisition of Malta belie this statement.²³⁰

Having made his defence, and never before, the accused could be made to suffer torture.²³¹ The *rigoroso esame*, which could even be repeated²³² or 'continued' the next day,²³³ had become part of the inquisitorial process in 1252 when the jurist pope, Innocent IV, under the influence of the revival of the study of Roman law, allowed its use against the Albigensians and published the Bull *Ad Extirpanda*. By the fourteenth century it was in general use, particularly in cases of witchcraft, where evidence was always difficult to

nomi finti, o lettere dell'Alfabeto; e si levino ancora tutte quelle condizioni, e circostanze, per li quali il Reo potesse venire in cognizione dei Testimoni, e del Denunziatore : ed in questo dovranno l'Inquisitore ed il notaro esser molto bene oculati. E fatta dal Notaro la copia del Processo, e deputato già dal Giudice l'Avvocato o Procuratore al Reo, gli si consegnerà in presenza di esso Reo la detta copia del Processo; con condizione, e commissione espressa, di non mostrarla ad alcun'altra persona, e di restituirla al Santo Uffizio, finito che avrà di fare le difese', Eliseo Masini, Sacro Arsenale, p. 244.

²²⁹ The case of Giovanni Morone must not be taken as a general rule. The copy given to him did contain blank spaces for names of accusers but this Cardinal could in no way be compared to the simple folk who appeared before the Inquisitor in Malta. Adriano Prosperi, 'L'Inquisizione : Verso Una Nuova Immagine?', Critica Storica, vol. 11, no. 1 (March, 1988), p. 126.

²³⁰ See, for instance, *AIM, Proc.* 130, ff. 574r-577v. It must also be remarked that cardinal Carafa took damaging evidence with him to the conclave of 1549 which the Holy Office had gathered against the *spirituali* and succeeded on this account to prevent the election of Pole to the Papacy. See Massimo Firpo - Dario Marcatto, 'Il Primo Processo Inquisitoriale contro Cardinal Giovanni Morone (1552-53)', Rivista Storica Italiana, vol. 93 (1981), pp. 87-88 and Ludovico von Pastor, Storia dei Papi, vol. VI, p. 619.

²³¹ For general remarks, Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs, pp. 159-164, 207-212.

²³² '*...esame rigoroso ai 22 e 23 di Giugno; esame rigoroso in due volte*' - *AIM, Corr.* 2, ff. 101r, 123r. See also *AIM, Corr.* 26, f. 295r : '*Domenico Fregosi carcerato per pretese proposizioni ereticali ... debba esser dimesso da coteste carceri per il motivo d'aver egli sostenuto due volte la tortura*'.

²³³ '*... tal volta ponno essere gli indizi tanto gagliardi che se gli da la tortura repetita, cioè dividendo lo spatio di tempo, che dovrebbe essere continuata in due volte, un giorno dopo l'altro immediatamente*' - *AIM, Misc.* 2, p. 78.

find.²³⁴ The ending of the ordeals had necessitated some other means to assure the culpability of the accused. The judgement of God was replaced by the judgement of man, who put the defendant to torture to confess.²³⁵ It was a revolutionary innovation which ignored twelve centuries of church practice, and which even the Romans - 'a race of conquerors'²³⁶ - had used only against slaves or when particularly inhuman crimes had been committed.²³⁷ During the time of the last eight Inquisitors, between 1743 and 1798 torture, which was always inflicted within the confines of the palace,²³⁸ was used only sparingly, twenty-four times. Mgr Salviati was the chief culprit with eleven cases. He was followed by Mgr Passionei, seven cases; Mgr Durini, three cases; and Mgr Mancinforte, Lante and Zondadari, one case each. As for the last two Inquisitors, Mgr Scotti and Mgr Carpegna never ordered a 'heretic' to be tortured.

It was generally recognized that torture was an insufficient way to elicit the truth²³⁹ and Eymerich warned that 'it is deceitful and ineffectual'.²⁴⁰ If a few fortunates, for some magical means,²⁴¹ or because of their body's constitution²⁴² or still because they were

²³⁴ H. R. Trevor-Roper, 'The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', p. 118.

²³⁵ John H. Langbein, Torture and the Law of Proof, pp. 5-8.

²³⁶ This is how Beccaria calls them: '*Alcuni avanzi di leggi di un antico popolo conquistatore, fatte compilare da un principe, che dodici secoli fa regnava in Costantinopoli*' - Cesare Beccaria, Dei Delitti e delle Pene, Pietro Calamandrei, ed., p. 145.

²³⁷ Mariano Da Alatri, E l'Inquisizione?, pp. 63-65.

²³⁸ *AIM*, *Corr.* 1, f. 241v.

²³⁹ For its indictment see Cesare Beccaria's forceful chapter XII of his Dei Delitti e Delle Pene, pp. 212-229, Pietro Verri, Osservazioni sulla Tortura, and Alessandro Manzoni, The Column of Infamy. This last classic relates the criminal proceedings and the condemnation of innocent men for spreading the plague in Milan in 1630. See also *AIM*, *Misc.* 2, p. 78 - '*Ma di rado si viene a questi tormenti, che per prova riescono di poco, o niun frutto ...*'

²⁴⁰ Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs, pp. 159-160.

²⁴¹ '*... inghiottando due polize ... scritte con caratteri a me incogniti, nell'atto ... del rigoroso esame, cioè della corda Io non avrei confessato la verità*' - *AIM*, *Proc.* 123B, f. 735r.

²⁴² '*... quasi che il criterio di essa (verità) risieda ne' muscoli e nelle fibre di un miserabile*' - Cesare Beccaria, Dei Delitti e Delle Pene, pp. 215-6.

sustained by the devil²⁴³ could withstand the pain²⁴⁴ and even laugh at it²⁴⁵ others would confess anything to be spared.²⁴⁶ 'I cannot belie myself', said one unfortunate,

*'but if I do it will be only because of the torments you give me'.*²⁴⁷

Others were so frightened that like Pietro Licini they hurt themselves on the way to the torture chamber and had to be sent to hospital for treatment.²⁴⁸ The Cardinal Inquisitors were conscious of these disabilities²⁴⁹ and set up safeguards against possible injustice. Torture could be applied only on those prisoners against whom there was already cogent incriminating evidence²⁵⁰ but no full proof could be brought against them. It would have been unbecoming and a most wicked thing against God's and man's laws if there existed no such legitimate evidence, commented the Arsenale.²⁵¹ Nor could torture be inflicted for a minor offence. Stefano Tancredi, therefore, who had abused neither the sacraments, nor the sacramentals or sacred things, could be accused only of *'una vana osservazione'*; and the Holy Congregation could find no reason whatever for which the Tribunal of Malta could have legitimately tortured him about his intention.²⁵²

²⁴³ *'... non temeva del Sant'Ufficio, ne delli tormenti, perchè il demonio gli dava forza di soffrire qualunque tormento, e quando confessava, non confessava altro che bugie'* - AIM, Proc. 108B, f. 550v.

²⁴⁴ AIM, Corr. 95, f. 64v.

²⁴⁵ *'... burlava della corda'* - AIM, Proc. 156, f. 8r.

²⁴⁶ *'... dal qual tormento territa ... io dissi che avevo detto qualche avessero voluto'* - AIM, Proc. 156, f. 70v. See also *ibid.*, f. 26v.

²⁴⁷ AIM, Proc. 121A, ff. 119r-188v.

²⁴⁸ AIM, Corr. 15, f. 252r. On Campanella's madness to save himself from imminent execution see Joseph Scalzo, 'Campanella, Foucault, and Madness in Late-Sixteenth Century Italy', Sixteenth-Century Journal, vol. XX1, no. 3 (1990), pp. 359-3371.

²⁴⁹ *'Può essere che Gioseppa Bella villana Maltese, e Grazia Zingara abbiano per paura e dolore del tormento onfessata la prave intentione, la qual tuttavia appresso di questi Eminentissimi resta assai dubbia ...'* - AIM, Corr. 8, f. 153r.

²⁵⁰ *'... non resti altro scrupolo di saper quello che egli solo sa, e può rivelare, mentre per tutte le diligenze fatte non si è potuto trovare la verità'* - AIM, Corr. 20, f. 96v.

²⁵¹ Eliseo Masini, Sacro Arsenale, p. 263.

²⁵² *'La tortura anche leggiera non si da se non quando s'obbliga il reo all'abiura de' vehementi'* - AIM, Corr. 22, f. 200v.

Table 8.1 Types of Torture applied to Prisoners

	<i>Corda</i>	<i>Stanghetta</i>
Baptised slaves	6	1
'Men'	3	2
Galley convicts	1	3
'Women'	2	1
Priests	-	1

Nor could a prisoner be tortured without the Inquisitor first seeking the opinion of his Consultors²⁵³ and, especially, the permission of the Cardinal Inquisitors. A fresh authority was required in each case since Inquisitors were only delegates of the *Suprema* and did not have a general grant of authority; as in England,²⁵⁴ the power to torture was never jurisdictionalised, that is Inquisitors never acquired the power to use torture on their own. The Cardinal Inquisitors, moreover, not only expressed their opinion but regulated the matter down to the least detail, specifying the duration of the *rigoroso esame*. It could be a quarter of an hour²⁵⁵ but Lelio Gasparrini was to be tortured for thirty minutes.²⁵⁶

²⁵³ *AIM, Proc.* 156, ff. 14v, 15r, 21v.

²⁵⁴ John H. Langbein, *Torture and the Law of Proof*, passim.

²⁵⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 20, f. 241r.

²⁵⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 17, f. 82r. *AIM, Corr.* 26, f. 277r.

Table 8.2 Crimes dealt with by Torture

	<i>Corda</i>	<i>Stanghetta</i>
Witchcraft	4	5
Prohibited books	3	1
Polygamy	2	1
Heretical propositions	2	-
Blasphemy	1	-
Solicitation	-	1

As table 8.1 shows everyone was liable to torture and not only those of 'vile condition'. Granted, slaves constituted the greatest number (7), succeeded by 'men' (6), galley-convicts (4) and women (3) but the list contained even a priest, the fifty-seven year old Fr Gio. Battista Balzani, from Valletta.²⁵⁷ Witchcraft was by far the crime for which one was most liable to be tortured, followed by blasphemy, polygamy, heretical propositions, reading of prohibited books and solicitation. In the eighteenth century neither the *veglia* or keeping the accused awake for long hours²⁵⁸ nor the *cavaletto* (the rack), were used.²⁵⁹ At first the *stanghetta* was used only sparingly²⁶⁰ either because, as Mgr D'Elci reported on 24 March 1703, the instrument was not well made²⁶¹ or, as happened in 1718, there was no one

²⁵⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 125B, ff. 642r-755v.

²⁵⁸ It was, however, used for lay offences as for instance on Giuseppe Abela who had ordered the death of Dr Federico Ciantar - *AIM, Corr.* 3, f. 147r.

²⁵⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 182r.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 71v.

²⁶¹ '... non essendo in uso in questo paese, ancorche in questo Tribunale vi sia l'istromento, tuttavia non pare benfatto, e per l'esperienza, che si è alcune volte fatta non è stato di verun profitto' - *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 68r.

who knew how to manage it.²⁶² The ten prisoners condemned to the *stanghetta* were laid on the ground, and their naked right ankle inserted and pressed between two concave iron rods.²⁶³ But, as in Bologna²⁶⁴ and in Milan,²⁶⁵ the commonest type of torture²⁶⁶ was the hoist (fourteen instances) called the *strappado* or the *corda*. The victim, undressed by the captain and the doctor,²⁶⁷ had his wrists tied behind his back and, attached to a pulley, he was lifted from the floor, his arms supporting the whole weight of his body.

Before being tortured the 'heretic' was cross-examined again but now the Inquisitor came direct to the point.²⁶⁸ Take the case of Eugenia Mallia from Cospicua. She had married Giovanni Dimech from *casal Ghaxaq* and then Natale Abela when her first husband was still alive in Spain. She was arrested on 16 July 1771 but she stood her ground so well that His Holiness Pope Clement XIV ordered that she be tortured *super intentionem*. She underwent trial again on 13 August but as 'I have nothing to add to what I have hitherto said' she was conducted to the torture-chamber where she was examined by the doctor, Giacomo Bruno, and the surgeon, Nicola Papadopolo, who both certified that she could suffer the *corda*. She was then raised from the ground and in her agony she could only utter

²⁶² 'Ne si è potuto adoprare il rimedio sussidiario della *stanghetta* per mancanza di persona abile ad eseguir l'atto di tal tormento'. - *Ibid.*, f. 214r.

²⁶³ '... in terra prostrata, talo pedis dextri denudato inter duos ferreas taxillos concavos posito, et Ministro cum *stanghetta* comprimente' - *AIM, Proc.* 125A, ff. 171r-172v.

²⁶⁴ A. Battistella, *Il S. Ufficio e la Riforma Religiosa in Bologna* p. 63.

²⁶⁵ Luigi Fumi, 'L'Inquisizione Romana e lo Stato di Milano : saggio di ricerche nell'Archivio di Stato', *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, op. cit., p. 35.

²⁶⁶ *AIM, Misc.* 2, p. 78.

²⁶⁷ '... spogliata nuda dal capitano e barbiere fui posta alla *corda*' - *AIM, Proc.* 156, f. 70v.

²⁶⁸ 'Non dovranno i Giudici con lunghe circuizioni di parole, ed interrogazioni pigliate di lontano, con esso lui procedere, ma discender subitamente al negozio, del quale si tratta ...' - Eliseo Masini, *Sacro Arsenale*, p. 264.

'Alas! Alas!

*Lower me down! This is the truth! I never believed, nor do I believe, and I will never believe it is lawful to commit polygamy. I married for the second time only because I believed my first husband was dead.'*²⁶⁹

Those who were unfit to be given the *corda*²⁷⁰ either because, like 65-year-old Francesco Carullo of Monteleone, Calabria, a discarded galley convict, they were worn out and unwell²⁷¹, or suffered from intestinal hernia²⁷² or had one of their hands paralysed²⁷³ were instead given the *stanghetta*. Pierre Arlò, a French merchant from Avignon, was arraigned for disbelieving in hell and the devils as well as for the unorthodox claim that the sacrament of baptism was not necessary to save one's soul. However, as he suffered from asthma, and as the doctor certified that if he were tortured he could die he was spared.²⁷⁴ In such cases prisoners were only shown the instruments of torture to terrify them. This happened to Fra Innocenzo da Malta and to Giorgio Serra, a tavern keeper from the village of Attard. The first was of an advanced age;²⁷⁵ the other was not only styptic, he had also been stabbed and the scar could still be seen on his face.²⁷⁶

Torture had replaced the judgements of God as the arbiter of crime but as he who withstood the pain of fire or boiled water had been declared innocent so those who endured torture were to be set free. In such cases torture 'purged the strong evidence that there is

²⁶⁹ AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 37r-465v.

²⁷⁰ AIM, Proc. 120B, f. 81v. AIM, Misc. 2, p. 78.

²⁷¹ AIM, Proc. 128B, ff. 535r-584v.

²⁷² AIM, Corr. 94, f. 213r.

²⁷³ Ibid., f. 67v.

²⁷⁴ AIM, Proc. 121A, ff. 119r-188v.

²⁷⁵ 'Attesa la di lui (Fra Innocenzo da Malta) grave età V. S. ponga terrore in vece della tortura per averne la verità sopra l'intenzione' - AIM, Corr. 15, f. 74r. See also AIM, Proc. 121B, f. 611v.

²⁷⁶ 'Avendo noi visto ed osservato a Giorgio Serra c'è parso non esser atto a sostenere il tormento della corda per esser attaccato dell'emostesia, come anche apparisce la cicatrice nell'esternum causata da una coltellata altre volte avuta' - AIM, Proc. 121B, f. 597r.

against him'.²⁷⁷ Cardinal Barberini, therefore, criticised severely the Pro-Inquisitor, Mgr Antonio Tolossenti, for condemning Francesco Leante, who defied his tormentors.²⁷⁸ In such instances Inquisitors found themselves in a dilemma; and Mgr Durini, for one, would have preferred not to put Domenico Fregosi to torture. He was highly suspect of having uttered heretical propositions and several witnesses had testified against him; however, it was believed he would resist the pain and would have to be released.²⁷⁹ The Cardinal Inquisitors ignored Durini's suggestion but as the Inquisitor was proved right this time he suggested that all the same, being a 'rascal and a dissolute', Domenico should be exiled.²⁸⁰

Torture signified the Tribunal's obsession with making the accused confess;²⁸¹ but as this was to be given freely²⁸² statements revealed during the *rigoroso esame* had to be ratified outside the torture chamber²⁸³ after twenty-four hours.²⁸⁴ Not even self-confession, though, could be taken as a sure sign of guilt; conviction demanded so high a standard of proof²⁸⁵ that what ultimately convinced the Inquisitor was when confession was

²⁷⁷ 'Poichè dall'esame rigoroso di Rabel alias la Zaffira non è risultata cosa che l'aggravi, potrà V. S. rilasciarla liberamente' - AIM, Corr. 5, f. 77r. See also Eymerich's remark, 'Si cet accusé n'avoue rien sous la torture, il sera considéré comme innocent' - Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, p. 58.

²⁷⁸ 'No si sa conoscere con che fondamento il sudetto Vicario (Tolossenti) habbia fatto abiurare il sudetto, che non è confesso ne convinto, e quando tutti gli indizii fossero dalla tortura rimasti purgati non poteva condannarsi in detta pena di stare sulla porta della chiesa' - AIM, Corr. 10, f. 28r.

²⁷⁹ '... essendosi luogo a credere che egli potesse sostenerla (la tortura), in tal caso converrebbe poi dimetterlo senza alcun castigo quando così purgasse i forti indizii, che contro di esso vi sono' - AIM, Corr. 95, f. 61r.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 64v.

²⁸¹ 'O, che si confessa il delitto totalmente con le sue circostanze!', yearned one author of a handbook for Inquisitors - AIM, Misc. 2, p. 77. P. Labat, *Voyages du P. Labat de l'Ordre des FF. Prescheursen Espagne et en Italia*, vol.VII, p. 5.

²⁸² 'Il Sant'Officio, che cerca solo la verità, la vuol vedere scaturire dalla bocca di chi si esamina per via naturale ...' - AIM, Misc. 2, p. 82.

²⁸³ '... il sortilegio da lui confessato nel tormento, e poi ratificato' - AIM, Corr. 20, f. 97r. See also AIM, Corr. 2, f. 101r.

²⁸⁴ AIM, Misc. 2, p. 78.

²⁸⁵ John Tedeschi, 'Preliminary Observations on Writing a History of the Roman Inquisition', *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History*, F. Forrester Church and Timothy George, eds., p. 246.

corroborated by material proofs (*corpo del delitto*).²⁸⁶ This made investigations for empirical evidence at the scene of the crime an integral part of the Inquisitorial procedure.²⁸⁷ Did the Inquisitor, therefore, visit the room where the boiling of a child was supposed to have taken place? Was it large enough to hold as many as forty people? Were any of the things used in the ritual murder, like the cauldron, found?²⁸⁸ Material evidence was to be searched for and a rag doll about a span and a half in height and wearing a skirt of red silk and a white top found in a corner of the cellar proved without any doubt that Antonia indulged in witchcraft,²⁸⁹ a flint stone was a sure sign that Giuseppe Agius of *casal Attard* treated people for jaundice²⁹⁰ and a letter to one's wife proved that a husband was still alive.²⁹¹ In his study Giuseppe Zerafa had obscene pictures,²⁹² and Aloisio Lochi, a pharmacist of B'Kara, who dabbled in alchemy, was found to have in his possession suspicious books 'harmful both to the soul and to the body'. The Fiscal, the Chancellor, the captain and four marshals made a diligent search of his residence at night. Besides books they found sheets of paper full of circles, crosses, Hebrew letters and Latin writings and another sheet with a circle with several numbers of the abacus. They wrapped everything in a piece of blue cloth, well tied with a hempen cord, and enclosed it in a white paper having the seal of the Fiscal and the signature of Lochi on the first page of every volume.²⁹³

²⁸⁶ 'La sola confessione non è sufficiente acciò che si condannano quando non consta del corpo del delitto' - AIM, Proc. 156, f. 19r. See also AIM, Corr. 95, f. 10v - '... e mancando il corpo del delitto della lettera da lui scritta ... mi sono quindi astenuto da ogni procedura'. AIM, Misc. 2, pp. 21, 28, 34, 45, 59. For the importance attached by the Spanish Inquisition to such *actos positivos* see Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate*, pp. 295-301; Jean-Pierre Dedieu, *L'Administration de la Foi*, pp. 118-119.

²⁸⁷ AIM, Proc. 123B, ff. 655r-v. AIM, Proc. 124A, f. 27r. AIM, Proc. 15, ff. 16v, 19v, 106v.

²⁸⁸ '... con specificare quanto la stanza sia grande, lunga, e larga. Di quante persone ella sia capace, e se 40 e più fra uomini e donne possano girare e saltellare intorno ad una pignatta, che si fosse posta in mezzo di detta stanza. Se fù mai ritrovato la pignatta, ove si crede seguisse il bollimento' - AIM, Corr. 9, f. 57r.

²⁸⁹ AIM, Proc. 125A, ff. 114r -115v.

²⁹⁰ AIM, Proc. 131A, ff. 309r-310r.

²⁹¹ AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 374r-v.

²⁹² AIM, Proc. 133B, ff.

²⁹³ These books included *Le Nouveau Testament*; *Tractatus Novus de Magnetica Valnerum Curatione*; *Capriccio Medicinali*; *Les Secrets de Seigneur Alexis*; *Kabala e Regola certa per cavare un nome ed ancora due in ogni Estrazione di Lotto di Roma*; *Le Solide Trésor des Merveilleux Secrets de la Magie Naturelle et Cabalistique du Petit Albert, traduit exactement su l'Original*. - AIM, Proc. 124B, ff. 685r-798v.

It was only after taking all these circumstances in consideration that the Tribunal could pass sentence on the accused. This will form the subject of the next chapter.

2

IX

SENTENCE

In a letter dated 24 October 1722 the *Suprema* assured Mgr Antonio Ruffo that it was adamant

*'to preserve the opinion it enjoys throughout the world of its justice, fairness and piety, which even in dubious cases must always prevail in favour of the accused.'*¹

Inquisitors were, therefore, warned against being bribed² or accepting recommendations in writing or by word of mouth³ from any lay or religious person, however dignified or pre-eminent he might be, under threat of being removed from office.⁴ The only concession was that '*personaggi grandi*' could be sent an acknowledgement if only after the end of the trial.⁵

Such a high standard of justice was not shared by the archpriest of Senglea, Fr Salvatore Bonnici, who was reported to have assured Vincenza Sacchett that whoever entered the Tribunal's dungeons was set free only reluctantly; and he was supposed to have instanced to her his predecessor, Fr Fortunato Vella, who 'despite his innocence was left to languish in prison for twenty-one years'.⁶ Such references to public opinion regarding the

¹ AIM, Corr. 22, f. 201r.

² AIM, Corr. 3, f. 17r.

³ AIM, Corr. 5, f. 93r. AIM, Corr., ff. 7r, 145r.

⁴ AIM, Corr. 1, f. 237r.

⁵ AIM, Corr. 7, f. 141v.

⁶ For the vicissitudes of this parish priest see Frans Ciappara, *Mill-Qighan ta' l-Istorja*, pp. 25-28.

Tribunal's objectivity is very hard to come by but in another exceptional instance Mgr Giacomo Caracciolo informed the Cardinal Inquisitors that it was commonly held that the Jesuit, Fr Andrea Agius, accused of solicitation, was innocent.⁷ This charge of partiality was even directed by the Capuchin, *padre* Pelagio, against Mgr Passionei; so he reported to the Cardinal Inquisitors -

*'... he punishes only whom he wants and not those whom he should.'*⁸

The case concerned the *custode*, Fr Bernardo, who, being a compatriot of Pope Benedict XIV, boasted in the refectory of the strong recommendations he enjoyed at Rome, so that when he was denounced for immorality the delator was warned that the friar was a wise person and starting proceedings against him would dishonour the Franciscan habit.⁹

However this may have been Inquisitors' actions were sufficiently circumscribed;¹⁰ their sentences were not definitive but had to be dispatched to Rome¹¹ to be inspected and confirmed¹² by the prosecutor 'with his usual diligence'.¹³ Generally sentences were approved¹⁴ and were marked as *Relata*.¹⁵ This was not invariably true and Inquisitors risked

⁷ *'... venendo nell'opinione di molto creduto tuttavia innocente'* - AIM, Corr. 94, f. 162r.

⁸ *'... l'istesso p. Pelagio ... parlava pubblicamente non meno della persona mia che di questo Venerabile Tribunale del Sant'Ufficio, accusando me di parziale del p. Custode, e d'indolente per rispetto di esser questi paesano del Papa, e condannando il Sacro Tribunale di accettator di persone, con precisa espressione che punisce chi vuole, e non gia chi deve'* - AIM, Corr. 95, f. 208v.

⁹ AIM, Corr. 29, ff. 165r-166r. AIM, Corr. 91, ff. 192v-193r.

¹⁰ *'Onde starò attendendo la risoluzione che da cotesta Sacra e Suprema Congregazione si stimerà conveniente per la terminazione della medesima causa'* - AIM, Corr. 94, f. 54v. See also *ibid.*, f. 39r; AIM, Corr. 17, f. 51r. On this topic see Guido Dall'Olio, 'I Rapporti tra la Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio e gli Inquisitori Locali nei Carteggi Bolognesi (1573-1594)', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. CV (1993), pp. 246-286.

¹¹ *'Non si è mancato però mai tanto dei miei antecessori quanto da me nei casi gravi e di difficile spedizione trasmettere alla Sacra Congregazione la copia di processi in forma autentica, ed aspettare della medesima l'oracolo ...'* - AIM, Corr. 94, f. 39v. See also AIM, Corr. 17, f. 6r.

¹² AIM, Corr. 5, f. 159r.

¹³ AIM, Corr. 17, f. 314r. For these procedures of the Supreme Congregation see P. Labat, *Voyages du P. Labat de l'Ordre des FF. Prescheurs en Espagne et en Italie*, vol. V11, PP. 6-9.

¹⁴ AIM, Corr. 29, f. 11r. AIM, Corr. 91, ff. 174v-175r.

¹⁵ *'Unita al di lei foglio de 6 prossimo passato si è ricevuta copia di tre sentenze ed abiure seguite in cotesto Sant'Ufficio delle quali considerati gli atti, sonosi riconosciuti non solo senza eccezione, ma ben condotti appieno, onde la S. Congregazione fa riscriverle =Relata='* - AIM, Corr. 22, f. 60r.

being countermanded by their superiors in Rome, though sentences could still be allowed to stand if with the proviso -

'This serves as a warning to you for another time and a reminder to the Consultors'.¹⁶

The judicial yardstick used by the Cardinal Inquisitors was both just and sensible. The punishment was to fit the offender; therefore, prostitutes were not to be sentenced to confess and communicate four times a year but to fast, pray and to do other penitences 'proportional to the quality of the unhappy state in which those wretches find themselves'.¹⁷ Another maxim dear to the *Suprema* was that the sentence was to fit the crime.¹⁸ Accordingly, verdicts could be reversed and Inquisitors reprimanded for being lenient. Mgr D'Elci had condemned Antonio Riccardi to imprisonment *ad arbitrio* but when he released him the Cardinal Inquisitors protested this had been a light sentence and demanded that he be rounded up again.¹⁹ D'Elci defended himself strenuously and hoped that the *Suprema* would be persuaded of his justice. Antonio was primarily accused by an antagonist of his who had even been condemned by the courts 'for a most grave thing'. If he did blaspheme this was only in a state of anger; and considering his idiocy and illiteracy not much importance should be attached to his heretical propositions. There was even a practical reason to set him free since if he remained in prison any longer the corsairing season would soon be over and he would have suffered severe financial damage.²⁰ Still Rome was not convinced and Riccardi was to be sentenced to another five years imprisonment.²¹ In another instance Mgr Tornielli had judged Catarina Valenti of Valletta, who had invoked

¹⁶ *AIM, Corr. 9, f. 179r.*

¹⁷ *'... altre penitenze salutari, come di digiuni ed orazioni, e di altri si fatti proporzionati alla qualità dello stato infelice in che si trovano coteste miserie' - AIM, Corr. 6, f. 175r.*

¹⁸ *'... ma non già che (i rei) debbano punirsi con una pena ed abiura del tutto sproporzionata alli loro eccessi' - AIM, Corr. 22, f. 201r.*

¹⁹ *AIM, Corr. 19, f. 274r.*

²⁰ *AIM, Corr. 94, ff. 194r-v.*

²¹ *AIM, Corr. 19, f. 315r. AIM, Corr. 94, f. 182v.*

the devil and abused of the things of the mass, as only slightly suspect of heresy; the Holy Congregation made her abjure *de vehementi*.²²

On the other hand Inquisitors could be charged of being too harsh with 'heretics'.²³ The occasion easily cropped up when recidivists were involved. Giovanni Maria Rapa of Gozo was gravely warned for his blasphemies and licentious life on his first appearance but though he gave his word to the Pro-Inquisitor to mend his ways no sooner had he returned home than he forgot all his promises. 'Clearly the wound', commented the Tribunal's Commissioner, 'has become so gangrenous that there is no hope of healing if not by iron and fire'. This time he got eight days of imprisonment.²⁴ This was a sensible sentence but it was necessary to remind Mgr Antonio Ruffo that light crimes taken together never constitute a grave offence.²⁵ The sentence passed by Mgr Fabio della Lagonessa against Fra Paolo Meliti also seemed 'somewhat excessive'. This Minor Conventual had expressed his wish to turn Moslem and bring the Turkish army to take Mdina, but though he had said it only in fun he had been condemned to be exiled. Rome disagreed and the Inquisitor was to explain his procedure and to send to Rome a summary of the trial.²⁶ Mgr Carbonese was particularly severe. For a simple superstition he had prohibited the Augustinian friar, Fra Francesco Ciantar, from saying mass, preaching and hearing confessions. This was too harsh a sentence, the Cardinal Inquisitors reminded him,²⁷ and he was admonished to

²² AIM, Corr. 3, f. 239r.

²³ For cases when Inquisitors were reprimanded by the Spanish *Suprema* see Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate*, pp. 225, 307, 323. For the restraining hand of the Cardinal Inquisitors on the incumbents at Bologna see Guido Dall'Olio, 'I Rapporti tra la Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio e gli Inquisitori Locali nei Carteggi Bolognesi (1573-1594)', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. CV (1993), pp. 246-286.

²⁴ AIM, Proc. 120A, ff. 340-342r.

²⁵ '... le recidive de' rei nei delitti leggieri operano bensi che i delinquenti debbano soffrire discretamente qualche mortificazione maggiore di quella datagli nella prima caduta, ... essendo nota la regola che nelle delitti leggieri uniti assieme non sone capaci di costituire un delitto grave colla loro unione' - AIM, Corr. 22, f. 201r.

²⁶ AIM, Corr. 3, f. 129r.

²⁷ AIM, Corr. 2, f. 217r.

conduct trials with caution and maturity. Everybody was to be treated fairly²⁸ and his judgement of Margherita Burlo as being gravely suspect of heresy was decreed by the Holy Congregation as null, a note to this effect being even inserted in the trial itself, serving as a warning to him.²⁹

In these cases it was the Cardinal Inquisitors themselves who noticed the injustice but even when they overlooked the matter the accused had the right to appeal to them for redress. The *Suprema*, as G. Bertora has also remarked for the Genoa Tribunal,³⁰ was an appellate court and it was ready to listen to abuses.³¹ When Gio. Domenico Mercurio, therefore, who had been condemned by Mgr Gori Pannellini, asked to have his lawsuit revised they acceded to his wish and demanded a copy of the proceedings.³² It was in fact the over-jealous Mgr Gori Pannellini,³³ the chief offender. Like the Franciscan missionaries in sixteenth-century Yucatan, though fortunately not as cruel and reckless,³⁴ he was involved in a conspicuous instance of the miscarriage of justice which caused much outcry in both Malta and Rome.³⁵ It concerned the supposed ritual boiling in 1683 of the five-month-child of one Orsolica in a cauldron of water, wine, oil and honey on a Sunday near

²⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 150r.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 123r.

³⁰ G. Bertora, 'Il Tribunale Inquisitorio di Genova e l'Inquisizione Romana nel '500', *La Civiltà Cattolica*, vol. 11, Anno 104 (1953), pp. 181, 183.

³¹ Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, pp. 150-152; Henry Ansgar Kelly, 'Inquisition and the Prosecution of Heresy : Misconceptions and Abuses', *Church History*, vol. 58, no. 4 (Dec. 1989), p. 445. Appeals against the Inquisitor could also be launched with the *Penitentieria* - '*ai fedeli era data la possibilità e la facoltà di appellarsi a Roma ... soprattutto contro le incriminazioni giudiziarie degli Inquisitori, le loro sentenze giudicate ingiuste ...*' See Filippo Tamburini, 'Suppliche per Casi di Stregoneria Diabolica nei Registri della Penitenzieria e Conflitti Inquisitoriali (Sec. XV - XVI)', *Critica Storica*, Anno XXIII, no. 4 (1986), pp. 605-659.

³² *AIM, Corr.* 8, ff. 213r, 216r.

³³ '*... il quale era molto zelante della sua carica, e nessuno ardeva di moversi a far mutazione alcuna senza comandamento suo*' - *AIM, Proc.* 156, f. 100r.

³⁴ For this trial notorious for its disregard of legal formalities see Inga Clendinnen, 'Disciplining the Indians : Franciscan Ideology and Missionary Violence in Sixteenth-Century Yucatan', *Past And Present*, no. 94 (Feb. 1982), pp. 32-36.

³⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 8, f. 217r.

the slaughter house at Valletta. Some forty men and women were in attendance, the men jumping round the container while the slave, Mansur, read from a book. When the devil appeared they all knelt down to adore him, offered him their soul and foreswore their faith.³⁶

This Sabbatical scene was extracted from the defendants by abusing power and shamelessly flaunting the dearest principles of the Roman Inquisition. The accused were subjected to psychological stress and warned to confess by fair means or foul³⁷ since, if they did not speak up, they would be threatened with being torn to pieces on the rack³⁸ - the torture chamber being left purposely open to terrify them with its instruments³⁹ - flayed and suffocated,⁴⁰ have their eyes pulled out,⁴¹ beaten and thrown into the well to be thrashed by spirits.⁴² Clara was actually tortured twice on the flimsy excuse that she had not suffered the first torment for the whole time determined by the Congregation.⁴³ When Margherita Gusman denied any knowledge of the matter Mgr Gori stood up in anger, 'changed colour' and took hold of an ink-pot to hurl it at her.⁴⁴ Taking an inkling from the *Directorium Inquisitorium*⁴⁵ and the *Malleus Maleficarum*⁴⁶ the prisoners were promised to be set free

³⁶ AIM, Proc. 153, ff. 72r, 74r, 392r. AIM, Proc. 156, ff. 15v, 68r-v.

³⁷ '... l'hai da dire se non con il bono con il tristo' - AIM, Proc. 155, f. 108v.

³⁸ AIM, Proc. 154, unpaginated.

³⁹ '... mostrandomi da quando in quando la corda ed il cavalletto che erano qui dirimpetto' - AIM, Proc. 155, ff. 118r, 111r, 115r. See also AIM, Proc. 156, f. 20r.

⁴⁰ AIM, Proc. 153, f. 392v.

⁴¹ AIM, Proc. 155, f. 115r.

⁴² AIM, Proc. 153, f. 393v.

⁴³ '... da. Clara non havea havuto tutto il tempo della tortura conforme determinato la Congregazione' - AIM, Proc. 156, f. 8v.

⁴⁴ AIM, Proc. 153, f. 392v.

⁴⁵ Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, p. 133.

⁴⁶ Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, p. 471.

if they confessed.⁴⁷ They were stripped of their clothes and the doctor searched for the devil's mark through their bodies, including their 'shameful parts', ears and hair.⁴⁸ Mgr Gori played on their conscience and assured them that several witnesses whom he could trust had implicated them in the affair. Those who still stood their ground had informers sent to their cells, who for 6 tari and some white bread urged them to confess 'whatever the Holy Office pretended to hear' and even accompanied them during interrogation, telling them what to say.

The power of suggestion was applied systematically, putting questions like '*Your aunt, didn't she abort a child?*' The Assessor would outright tell a name for the defendant to corroborate or he would suggest that a particular person wore a wig, or had small moustaches. Grazia Negroponte was made to nominate Cosmo Greci 'the one who taught abacus', she was told, as well as Dr Gio. Andrea Crispo, 'whose son was taken by the devil and who was the friend of Maria'.⁴⁹ To implicate Pasqua he asked her in Maltese, '*How do you say Ghid in Italian?*', or '*Do you know someone who lives near the church of Our Lady of Carmel, short and with her face marked with smallpox?*' And having suggested a name he would answer, '*Now you have guessed*'. Catarina Violardo was asked what did she put in the cauldron and as she did not know what to say the Assessor pointed to his hair. Answers by the accused were interpreted by Mgr Gori and his ministers the way they wanted. Clara admitted that 'some white substance' was put in the cauldron; this was construed by the Assessor to refer to a consecrated host and though she protested the notary still kept to the original version as dictated by Xara. Even those who denied having adored the devil were warned that witchcraft only served to renounce God and offer one's soul to the damned one. Maria Micallef would not consent to having had sex with the devil, being a most wicked thing to do. But as the other witnesses had consented to that charge it could not be that she

⁴⁷ '*Mi dicevano ... che non vi era altra strada di liberarmi che di confessare nella forma che loro mi dicevano*' - AIM, Proc. 155, f. 113r.

⁴⁸ AIM, Proc. 154, unpaginated.

⁴⁹ Ibid., unpaginated.

had not; and besides, the devil did not need a woman to lift her skirt for him to know her carnally.⁵⁰

Relations with the devil were the chief charge, too against Geltrude (Isabella) Cumbo and Bernardina Petit, of the monastery of St Orsola, Valletta. In a process of acculturation their interrogators passed on to them their theological learning; and the lustful ruminations of the two nuns, triggered off by their sexual frustration and the hopeless melancholy of daily life, were interpreted as if they had really happened. When 'in tears' they denied the reality of these flights of their imagination, they were accused of trying to hide matters pertaining to the Holy Office. Carnal relations with the devil, they were assured on the authority of the *Malleus Maleficorum*,⁵¹ did happen; they were done in great pain by a thorny member. Petit was even made to believe that she had a penis with which she made love with some of the nuns. The two of them were dictated to and if they complied it was only to get rid of the continuous importunities.⁵²

This gross miscarriage of justice was amended by Gori's successor, Mgr Innocenzo Pignatelli. No sooner had he arrived in Malta than he complained of the lamentable state of the Tribunal which was in great disarray. The *Suprema* though, which would go to any lengths that justice be administered fairly,⁵³ trusted in his prudence to find out the truth and settle the matter to the glory of God and the Catholic religion.⁵⁴ He entirely met its expectations and succeeded to locate imposture and persecution and freed the accused imprisoned on so little foundation and on fantastic and flimsy illusions.⁵⁵ It was surprising

⁵⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 156, ff. 68v-71r.

⁵¹ Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, pp. 72-91, 243-254.

⁵² *AIM, Proc.* 154, unpaginated.

⁵³ '... non vi è diligenza anco istraordinaria che non sia ben spesa quando si tratta di far apparire che gli inquisiti nel Sant'Officio siano stati calunniosamente e denunziati e deposti, e la lor causa dai Ministri del Tribunale ingiustamente maneggiata' - *AIM, Corr.* 8, f. 270r.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 207r.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 250r. For a duplicate of the letter *ibid.*, f. 251r.

in fact that even an experienced consultor like the Spanish *padre* Salelles was taken in - 'but this good Jesuit however learned he is must have lost with the years that prudence and shrewdness which are necessary in such cases'.⁵⁶ Following a meticulous revision of the trial the assessor, Leonardo Xara, and the defence counsel, Gio. Battista Farrugia, were arrested;⁵⁷ and on 2 July 1648 the accused were publicly declared innocent,⁵⁸ having been 'fraudulently investigated and calumniated'.⁵⁹

Justice had been vindicated and it is unfair to label the verdicts passed by the Holy Office as being generally vindictive and unfair; like the *Sant'Ufficio* at Venice the one in Malta proceeded according to procedural norms.⁶⁰ Following the setting up of the Tribunal in Malta sentences were public spectacles, the well-known *auto de fe*.⁶¹ These acts of faith, which with their exemplary punishments endorsed the basic values of the Christian community, were delivered at the Cathedral, Mdina or at some other church, for instance the Dominican church of the Annunciation at Birgu.⁶² For this occasion two high platforms were erected; on one side stood the Inquisitor and his officials, on the other the accused holding a lighted candle in their hand,⁶³ 'formal' heretics even wearing a penitential

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 254r.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 267r.

⁵⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 9, ff. 19r, 69r.

⁵⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 8, f. 271r.

⁶⁰ Gaetano Cozzi, 'Note su Tribunale e Procedure Penali a Venezia nel '700', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. LXXV11 (1965), *fasc.* iv, p. 37.

⁶¹ For a description of such a ceremony see Antonio Mongitore, *L'Atto Pubblico di Fede Solennemente Celebrato nella Città di Palermo à 6 Aprile 1724 dal Tribunale del S. Offizio di Sicilia*. See also *Breve Relazione dei Rei Condannati dal Tribunale della SSa. Inquisizione di questo Regno di Sicilia nell'Atto Pubblico di Fede celebrato nel giorno 3 Aprile 1737 nella Real Chiesa di San Domenico di questa Città*. Luigi Fumi, 'L'Inquisizione Romana e lo Stato di Milano : Saggio di Ricerche nell'Archivio di Stato', *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, *serie iv, anno 37* (1910), vol. 13, pp. 39-41. Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate*, pp. 181-193. Henry Kamen, *Inquisition and Society in Spain*, pp. 189-197. Giuseppe Pitre, *Del Sant'Ufficio a Palermo e di un Carcere di Esso*, pp.136-153. Jean-Pierre Dedieu, *L'Administration de la Foi*, pp. 271-277. Also, chap. VI of Voltaire's *Candide* and Diderot's article in the *Encyclopedie*, vol. , p. 775.

⁶² *AIM, Proc.* 28A, f. 66r. For the meaning of this religious ritual, Maureen Flynn, 'Mimesis of the Last Judgment : The Spanish *Auto de fe*', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. XX11. no. 2 (1991), pp. 281-297.

⁶³ *AIM, Corr.* 2, f. 127r. *AIM, Corr.* 3, f. 215r. *AIM, Corr.* 5, ff. 65r, 121r.

garment, the *habitello* or *sanbinot*, at least up to 1609.⁶⁴ In the presence of a large congregation the Tribunal's notary ascended the pulpit and read out the verdicts.

As the Tribunal wished to impress the inhabitants by its severity the death penalty was meted out to whoever remained obstinate in his error and would not repent⁶⁵ or had committed some most execrable crime.⁶⁶ Paolo Somma from Messina, for instance, was reported to have said that his only wish was to do so much harm to Christians that God said, '*Enough! Enough!*'; and he had been the chief spy in the taking of the village of Nicotera by Moslem corsairs.⁶⁷ Those who relapsed into heresy were also given this sentence but this did not apply to whoever accused himself spontaneously before the Inquisitor⁶⁸ or who, like Betta Calvina, relapsed only into a suspicion of heresy.⁶⁹ Before being sent to the gallows heretics were first excommunicated or 'cut off from the church'⁷⁰ and then taken to the place of execution in an open cart to be later buried in unconsecrated ground.⁷¹ Matteo Falzon⁷² and his son, Lorenzo, were spared this humiliation. On 29 May 1575 these Protestant sympathisers, who had already been condemned by Mgr Royas, were sentenced by Mgr Dusina to be delivered to the secular arm but fortunately for them they had escaped from

⁶⁴ *AIM, Corr. 2, f. 8v.*

⁶⁵ '*... rilasciarli al braccio secolare quando stiano pertinaci nel loro errore*' - *AIM, Corr. 7, f. 232r.*

⁶⁶ *AIM, Corr. 8, f. 57r.* With his bull *Cum quorumdan hominum* (1555) Paul IV declared as relapsed those who disbelieved in the Holy Trinity, the Divinity of Jesus and the Virginity of Mary.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* ff. 61r-62r.

⁶⁸ Such was the case of Livia Camilleri who abjured *de formali* in 1612 and in 1616. Her crimes were most abominable, making sacrilegious use of the consecrated host and sinning with a wax figure of the devil; but she was not consigned to the secular arm - *AIM, Corr. 3, f. 159r.*

⁶⁹ '*... questi Emi. hanno ordinato che io scriva a V. S. che ad effetto che detta donna era relassa si ricerca che nel secondo processo sia formale apostata, o eretica, e non basta la vehemente sospitione d'eresia ò apostasia*' - *AIM, Corr. 2, f. 5r.* This did not stop, however, the *Suprema* from warning Matteo Marotta, who twice abjured *de vehementi* to abstain in the future from such excesses under the most grave corporal punishments, including death - *AIM, Corr. 4, f. 9r.* See also *AIM, Misc. 2, p. 11.*

⁷⁰ *AIM, Corr. 3, f. 17r.*

⁷¹ '*... il suo cadavero di parere dei Consultori della Congregazione era stato seppellito in luogo profano*' - *AIM, Corr. 2, f. 5r.*

⁷² *AIM, Corr. 1, f. 66r.*

Malta and it was only in effigy that they were burnt.⁷³ Another such case concerned 'a Maltese cleric' who at the time of Mgr Ruffo left Malta expressly to turn Moslem.⁷⁴ Both Costantino⁷⁵ and Giovanni da Paris though were not that lucky and were strangled at the gallows. The latter, a Greek, who had apostacised to Islam, was condemned to life imprisonment but then he was released and made *consigliere* on board the galley *Santa Maria*. He escaped to be caught on a Tripolitanian corsair ship, whose master and crew were all apostates.⁷⁶

This could well have been the last instance of a death sentence issued by the Tribunal in Malta since there is no more mention of such examples in the correspondence - though the dossiers of the trials might yield a different picture.⁷⁷ In many instances the gallows were substituted by a punishment more utilitarian to the state, rowing on the galleys.⁷⁸ This change was far removed from the needs of criminal justice but it was intrinsically connected with the development of the fleets of southern Europe; hirelings were not always sufficient and they had to be supplemented with convicts (*forzati*).⁷⁹ There was another reason though for bringing death sentences to an end. The Tribunal would rather convert the heretic than send him to death and as the Venetian admiral, Cristoforo Da Canal, optimistically expounded in his *Della Milizia Marittima*, on board prisoners would

⁷³ For an example of the burning of a heretic *in statua* see *AIM, Misc. 2*, p. 17. For this 'pratique très louable, dont l'effet terrifique sur le peuple est évident', see Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, pp. 187, 200.

⁷⁴ *AIM, Corr. 94*, ff. 185r-v.

⁷⁵ *AIM, Corr. 7*, f. 106r.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 80r-v, 100r, 129r.

⁷⁷ Even at Modena there was only one death sentence passed by the Tribunal in the eighteenth century. See Carla Righi, 'L'Inquisizione Ecclesiastica a Modena nel '700', *Formazione e Controllo dell'Opinione Pubblica a Modena nel '700*, Albano Biondi, ed., p. 66.

⁷⁸ '... stile di punir con pena di galera l'apostata formale' - *AIM, Corr. 5*, f. 77r.

⁷⁹ John H. Langbein, *Torture and the Law of Proof: Europe and England in the Ancien Regime*, pp. 29-33. Andrea Viario, 'La Pena della Galera: La Condizione dei Condannati a bordo delle Galere Veneziane', G. Cozzi, *Stato, Società e Giustizia nella Repubblica Veneta (sec. XV - XVI)*, ed., pp. 379-402. See also the article by Paul Walden Bamford, 'The Procurement of Oarsmen for French Galleys, 1660-1748', *American Historical Review*, vol. LXV (1959), pp. 31-48.

Table 9.1 Reports to the Holy-Office.

Reference	SELF-DENUNCIATION						REPORTS					
	de levi	de vehementi	de formali	warned/ corrected	observed	no sentence	de levi	de vehementi	warned/ corrected	under observation	arrested	no sentence
SALVIATI												
123A	9	50	3	15	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	8
123B	12	29	6	11	-	3	-	-	-	4	1	36
124A	7	31	11	12	-	7	-	-	2	8	-	18
124B	15	44	11	23	-	3	-	-	3	4	1	24
124C	9	43	5	11	-	2	-	-	-	7	1	31
125A	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-
125B	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	2
125C	3	11	2	7	-	1	-	-	-	1	5	9
DURINI												
126A	19	21	6	22	-	5	-	-	-	3	-	36
126B	13	30	1	7	-	5	-	-	-	3	4	13
126C	17	32	2	15	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	21
127A	14	33	4	11	-	5	-	-	1	-	2	16
127B	2	17	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	9	2
SCOTTI												
134A	12	6	3	15	1	2	4	3	3	20	-	8
134B	17	14	-	21	-	1	-	-	9	29	-	9
135A	8	7	6	16	-	-	3	1	9	13	-	2
135B	7	3	-	11	-	1	2	1	11	7	-	16
CARPEGNA												
136A	8	9	1	15	2	1	-	-	8	14	5	10
136B	10	5	2	28	1	4	-	1	5	19	-	13
137	-	-	5	4	-	-	-	-	2	2	3	3
TOTAL	183	388	68	248	4	45	9	6	53	135	51	277

change their life 'because blasphemy, games, robbery, luxuries, and gambling and other vices ... are severely prohibited'.⁸⁰ Therefore, Pietro Licini, who should have been consigned to the secular arm for falling again into apostasy in 1697 was condemned only to ten years on the galleys.⁸¹ This new attitude, clearly recognizable towards the end of the seventeenth century, is again in evidence in the case of Giovanni Antonio Bonomo of Pantelleria. He had turned Moslem at Algiers but the warnings of the missionaries at the slave prison proved unsuccessful and he would rather be buried alive than admit his guilt. This time he was extradited to the prisons of the Holy Office at Rome⁸² where, having no contact with Moslems, it was hoped he would embrace the Catholic faith.⁸³ And not infrequently the experiment succeeded, the Inquisitor being informed that '*they resolved to return to the bosom of Holy Church*'.⁸⁴

In the second half of the eighteenth century sentences could be delivered in public only with the approval of the Cardinal Inquisitors;⁸⁵ they were instead read by the chancellor in the *camera secreta*⁸⁶ in the presence of the 'heretic' and two witnesses,⁸⁷ these being the Tribunal's own officials, like the marshal and the clerk.⁸⁸ Abjuration, which was

⁸⁰ Quoted in Alberto Tenenti, *Cristoforo Da Canal : La Marine Vénitienne avant Lépante*, p. 91.

⁸¹ '*Pietro Licini ... ricorso nella pena dei relassi. Ma per grazia V. S. lo condanni predente l'abiura de formali alla galera per dieci anni, et ultra ad arbitrio della S. Congregazione con la comminazione dell'esecuzione della pena di rilassi in caso di reincidenza*' - AIM, Corr. 16, f. 32r.

⁸² He was taken first to Gaeta where he was consigned to the nunzio and then to Rome where he died of apoplexy on 18 Dec. 1738 - AIM, Corr. 26, ff. 262r, 266r, 278r-279r, 297r.

⁸³ AIM, Corr. 95, ff. 57v-59r, 60v, 62r-v.

⁸⁴ AIM, Corr. 7, ff. 88r, 90r.

⁸⁵ AIM, Corr. 23, f. 47r.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 73r.

⁸⁷ AIM, Proc. 122A, f. 384r.

⁸⁸ *Die xvi. Janii. 1787. Lata fuit et est suprada. senta. per Illm. et Revm. Dnum. Gnlem. Inquism. in ea subscriptum pro Tribale. sedentem, et de eius ordine, et mto. lecta, et publi cata per Me I.U.Dm. D. Joem. Gatt SSs. Inqis. Melit. Cancellm. in Camera Secreta eiusd. SSs. Inquis. pnte. pcto. Xaverio Spiteri, et genibus flexis audiente coram Rev. Dno. D. Francesco Budrago scriba, et Aloisio Damato Cursore huius Sti. Offii. testibus* - AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 209v.

formulated by the Prosecutor⁸⁹ and which if *de vehementi* disqualified, at least up to 1643, the penitent from holding any public office,⁹⁰ followed next. If illiterate the accused repeated it after the chancellor; else he read it out himself.⁹¹ 'To remove from the mind of Christ's faithful this grave suspicion against me' he knelt in front of the Inquisitor and touching the Bible, abjured, cursed and detested 'this heresy and error which contradicts the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church' and swore that never again would he fall into similar errors.⁹²

Of a sample of 1467 who made an appearance in the Tribunal only 51 of them or 3.47 per cent were arrested, though if we subtract the *sponte comparante* the percentage rises to 9.6.⁹³ Obviously, not all those taken into custody were convicted and a number were released. As Table 9.2 shows these amounted to 16 which on 150 examples make about a tenth of them. This not small fraction points to the Tribunal's preoccupation with delivering a just sentence and its readiness to admit it had harrassed an innocent man to the detriment of his reputation. One of those who was totally acquitted was Fr Emanuele Oliveira of Lisbon, an ex-Franciscan of noble descent, who lectured at Coimbra where he was consultor of the Holy Office. After the expulsion of the Jesuits he was nominated court confessor by the queen; but following differences with his Order, who accused him of being in collaboration with *padre* Malagrida,⁹⁴ he was exiled by royal order from his native town. He went to the convent of San Giacomo, forty miles away, and then he fled in disguise to Rome where Clement XI issued to him a brief of secularisation. He reached Malta in

⁸⁹ AIM, Corr. 96, ff. 232r, 258v.

⁹⁰ 'Il Passalacqua avendo abiurato de vehementi non può esercitare alcun'ufficio in cotest'Isola' - AIM, Corr. 8, ff. 97r, 109r. See also AIM, Corr. 22, f. 229r.

⁹¹ Battistella, *Il Santo Officio in Bologna*, p. 72.

⁹² *Eodem die facta fuit, et est suprad. abjuratio per Josephum Treti in Camera Secreta huius Sti. Offii. Meliten. coram Illo. et Revmo. Dno. Joe. Philipppo Gallarati Scotti Inq. Gnli. pro Tribli. sedente, me scilicet Cancell. legente, prefo. vero de Treti dm. suam abjuratiōem de verbo ad verbum proferente coram Rev. Dno. Don Franco. Budrago, et Aloisio Damato Cursore testibus* - AIM, Proc. 134A, ff. 201r-v.

⁹³ See Table 9.1.

⁹⁴ For the vicissitudes of this Jesuit, accused of plotting the murder of king Dom José see Kenneth Maxwell, *Pombal : Paradox of the Enlightenment*, pp. 82-3.

Table 9.2 Sentences passed on Prisoners, 1744 - 1798.

	Arrested	Released	Suspended sentence	Time spent in prison as punishment	Warned	Abjured	Whipped	Shamed	Imprisoned	Jailers removed from office	Exiled	Join first spouse	Hard labour	Priest to discontinue pastoral work	Galleys	Unknown
Mgr Passionei	53	8	5	1	5	3	6	8	17	2	-	-	-	-	3	1
Mgr Salvati	36	1	6	3	-	-	6	3	5	-	1	2	-	1	-	1
Mgr Durini	15	-	4	-	1	1	-	-	5	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
Mgr Mancinforte	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mgr Lante	14	5	1	-	1	1	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Mgr Zondadari	13	2	2	-	-	2	1	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mgr Scotti	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mgr Carpegna	17	-	-	-	11	1	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	150	16	18	4	18	8	13	18	37	2	1	3	1	1	3	5

1760, intending to be received as a Conventual Chaplain; not only was his wish repulsed but Grand Master Pinto, a bitter enemy of the Jesuits,⁹⁵ made him leave the island. He returned only in 1773 when Pinto was dead though this time the Jew, Elia Satibon, denounced him of trying to escape to Tunis to apostacise his Catholic faith, which he had described as the work of four fishermen. Towards 5 p.m., while he was at the inn of one Tomaso at Snow Street, Valletta, he was arrested and conducted to Fort Manoel and then to the prisons of the Holy Office. His cross-examination started on 15 January 1774, which continued for another twelve sittings, ending on 30 April. No conclusive evidence against him, however, could be established; and on 31 January, 1775 the *Suprema*, through its Assessor, Cardinal Antonelli, informed Mgr Lante that

*'owing to lack of proof' it was a point of justice to liberate with promptness
this unfortunate after the long imprisonment he had suffered'.*

He was released on 21 February, almost exactly a year after he had been arrested.⁹⁶ No proviso was attached to this verdict though frequently the released was still to be kept under observation⁹⁷ or else he received a suspended sentence (*firmitudo remanente processu*), having to present himself whenever summoned by the Tribunal.⁹⁸ This latter condition was imposed when convincing, if not conclusive proof, could be obtained against the defendant.⁹⁹ In this way the accused's fate remained uncertain on account of the evidence that may arise against him in the future. A case in point was that of Sofie, suspected of having renounced her Catholic faith for Islam. She was arrested but as no sure proofs could be brought against her she was consigned to her master on condition that under pain of 100 *oncie* he neither let her leave Malta nor sell her without the express permission of the

⁹⁵ For the circumstances which led to the expulsion of the Company of Jesus from Malta by Pinto see A. Mifsud, 'L'Espulsione dei Gesuiti da Malta nel 1768 e le loro temporalità', *Archivum Melitense*, vol. 11 (1914), pp. 113-166.

⁹⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 163, ff. 1r-283v.

⁹⁷ *'Riferitosi in questa Sacra Congregazione il processo da V. S. fabbricato contro D. Gio. Paolo Bartolo parroco di Casal Attard, hanno risoluto questi Emi. che per le pretese sollecitazioni in confessione delle quali è stato denunziato, ella non lo molesti, ma procuri farlo diligentemente osservare' - AIM, Corr.* 10, f. 30r.

⁹⁸ *AIM, Misc.* 2, p. 83.

⁹⁹ *'Si è risoluto che si spedischi con fargli dare una sicurtà di rappresentarsi per le cause contenute nel detto processo ad ogni ordine e richiesta di cotesto Sant'Ufficio ò di questa Sacra Congregazione sotto quella pena pecuniaria che a lei parerà convenirsi ...' - AIM, Corr.* 6, f. 99r.

Inquisitor. 'Perhaps', so Mgr Messerano wrote to the *Suprema*, 'other proofs would be brought against her'.¹⁰⁰

Most penitents, however, had to undergo penitential rituals. This temporal penance not only served as a punishment for them so that they would be more cautious in the future¹⁰¹ but also as example to all the Christian community, to whom their crime had served as a scandal.¹⁰² Though the Tribunal did not make use of the pillory¹⁰³ it had its own type of shaming. In inflicting such punishments Cardinal Giudice warned Mgr Ruffo that he should proceed with much circumspection. Everybody was entitled to his good name and even the lowliest people wished to preserve that honour and reputation which belonged to their station.¹⁰⁴ The accused, bareheaded¹⁰⁵ and on his knees, was exposed inside the church or in front of its main door during High Mass, sometimes - in cases of blasphemy - with a gag (*mordacchia*) in his mouth.¹⁰⁶ It could be in only one church¹⁰⁷ but also in two¹⁰⁸ or three¹⁰⁹ different churches. The essentially exemplary motive of such punishment is further illustrated by the fact that Giorgio Serra, a tavern keeper from *casal* Attard, was exposed in

¹⁰⁰ AIM, Corr. 94, ff. 44r-v.

¹⁰¹ '... affinché però questi tuoi sì gravi errori ed eccessi non restino del tutto impuniti, e tu in avvenire sii più cauto ...' - AIM, Proc. 128B, f. 579v.

¹⁰² '... pena temporale di questo mondo, dovendo questa servire d'edificazione agli uomini, ai quali è stata di scandalo la di lui colpa' - AIM, Corr. 20, f. 96v.

¹⁰³ For its use see Frank McLynn, *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England*, pp. 282-285.

¹⁰⁴ '... perchè oltre il tormento che (Tancredi) ha indebitamente sofferto, è rimasto anche contaminato dalla pubblica infamia, dovendosi riflettere, che se bene sia persona vile, nondimeno anche questa qualità di persone anno premura di conservare illeso quell'onore e riputazione che gli può competere nella loro sfera' - AIM, Corr. 22, f. 200v.

¹⁰⁵ AIM, Proc. 115A, f. 441r.

¹⁰⁶ '... e per pena corporale ti condanniamo ad esser esposto colla mordacchia in bocca in un giorno di festa nella porta della Venda. Chiesa della Bma. Vergine del Carmine di questa C. Vittoriosa per tutto il tempo della Messa solenne' - AIM, Proc. 125A, f. 29v. For the treatment of blasphemy in Sicily where the same instrument was used see Giuseppe Pitre, *Dal Sant'ufficio a Palermo e di un Carcere di Esso*, pp. 153-159.

¹⁰⁷ AIM, Proc. 121A, ff. 283r-303v.

¹⁰⁸ AIM, Proc. 122B, ff. 808r-855v.

¹⁰⁹ AIM, Proc. 125A, ff. 1r-41v.

the church of his own village, for his greater shame;¹¹⁰ and the slave, Maumet Maumur, who had blasphemed a Christian his faith, was exposed in harbour in front of the same galley on which he served.¹¹¹

Another punishment which inculcated shame was flogging, with its concomitant fear of infamy and dishonour which it instilled;¹¹² it was used in thirteen cases, two of which included beatings.¹¹³ Mgr Passionei and Mgr Salviati did not think it twice to inflict this punishment but their successors, with the exception of Mgr Zondadari, stopped this penalty altogether. The condemned, who were mostly slaves, were first certified by the prison doctor that they could withstand the pain and those of them who like Imhammet suffered from hernia had their loins tied and were only flogged.¹¹⁴ They sat with their hands tied on an ass or donkey, wearing a mitre on their head and a placard denoting their crime on their breast.¹¹⁵ Though it could also be performed in church¹¹⁶ generally whipping, heralded by the lay court's trumpeteer,¹¹⁷ took place at every corner of one or more of the cities of Senglea, Cospicua, Vittoriosa and Valletta.

¹¹⁰ AIM, Proc. 121B, ff. 559r-611v.

¹¹¹ '... l'operato da V. S. coll'aver fatto per un'ora esporre sul porto in faccia della galera istessa di cui è schiavo il Turco Maumet Battur per aver bestemmiato al Cristiano la sua fede' - AIM, Corr. 15, f. 182r.

¹¹² For the efficient use the Count of Altamira, Viceroy of Valencia (1688-90), made of flogging instead of the death sentence in his fight against banditry see Henry Kamen, 'Public Authority and Popular Crime : Banditry in Valencia 1660-1714', *The Journal of European Economic History*, vol. 3, no. 3 (Winter 1974), pp. 666-7.

¹¹³ AIM, Proc. 125C, f. 1404. AIM, Proc. 162, item 4.

¹¹⁴ AIM, Proc. 125B, ff. 459r-527v.

¹¹⁵ '... su l'asino colla mitra in testa, cartello in petto denotante il titolo dei tuoi delitti ...' - AIM, Proc. 125C, f. 1405r.

¹¹⁶ AIM, Proc. 125A, f. 332v. AIM, Proc. 133B, ff. 775r-801v.

¹¹⁷ '... sul somaro uno schiavo Turco per sortilegi, così risoluto da questa Consulta furono avvisati il Ministro dell Giustizia e il Trombettiero della Curia Laicale a portarsi in una data mattina al Palazzo del S. Offizio' - AIM, Corr. 95, f. 270v.

Table 9.3 Exposed to Shame

	Blasphemy	Sorcery	Total
Galley-convict	4	2	6
Slave	3	3	6
Free neophyte	-	3	3
Maltese	3	-	3
Total	10	8	18

These were not the only forms of shaming. An Augustinian friar, guilty of soliciting his penitents, renounced his sinfulness in the presence of the superiors of religious Orders, parish priests and other confessors called for the purpose by the Inquisitor.¹¹⁸ A friar paid for heretical propositions by staying on his knees in the refectory while the other religious ate their meals.¹¹⁹ For his blasphemies Santoro Pace of Rabat, Gozo was summoned by the Pro-Inquisitor in the sacristy of the collegiate church and there before the Chapter, the clergy and some lay persons he confessed his crime in public and was gravely warned. The case of Fr Gregorio Barbara, parish priest of *casal* Lia, did not involve shaming but a public refusal of his belief.¹²⁰ He was wont to tell his penitents reveal to him the name of those with whom they had sinned against the flesh.¹²¹ This was a false doctrine borne of misplaced zeal by ignorant confessors;¹²² and as ordered by the *Suprema*¹²³ he belied his

¹¹⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 14, f. 142r. For a similar example see *AIM, Corr.* 10, f. 237r. Likewise, Don Simone Azzopardo, parish priest of Kirkop, abjured in front of all the parish priests and some confessors; though he was allowed to say mass again and exercise 'the other Divine Offices' of which he had been deprived five years before, on 19 April 1664. *AIM, Corr.* 11, f. 141r.

¹¹⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 10, f. 111r.

¹²⁰ For this form of shaming see *AIM, Misc.* 2, pp. 21-22.

¹²¹ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 172r.

¹²² *AIM, Corr.* 28, f. 110r. For a copy of the bull by Benedict XIV against such practice, *ibid.*, ff. 111r-114v.

¹²³ *Ibid*, f. 101r. *AIM, Corr.* 91, ff. 169r-v.

erroneous belief in writing before Mgr Passionei¹²⁴ and by word of mouth before his parishioners during High Mass.¹²⁵ Besides he was warned that in case of transgressing this order he was to be deprived of his cure.¹²⁶

Table 9.4 Flogging

	Sorcery	Blasphemy	Whipped/ Beaten	Whipped
Galley-convict	1	1	-	2
Slave	8	3	1	10
Total	9	4	1	12

Sentences meted out by the last eight Inquisitors between 1743 and 1798 involved only three solitary examples of an accused sent to row on the galleys.¹²⁷ This was fortunate since conditions aboard must have been beastly¹²⁸ and Sancho Panza’s remark, after witnessing the boatswain ‘tickling’ the crew’s backs with his whip, that ‘surely this is hell, or at least purgatory’ was not at all out of place.¹²⁹ This almost total absence of galley

¹²⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 120A, f. 173r.

¹²⁵ 5 Giugno 1746. ‘Attesto per la verità come in oggi in questa mattina in tempo della Messa popolare mentre il Sr. Parroco nostro D. Gregorio Barbara predicava in tempo di detta Messa disse fra le altre cose che non è lecito al penitente manifestare la persona del complice del peccato anche di carne à qualunque confessore di qualunque grado, che fosse anche Parroco, etandio che fosse sopra di ciò interrogato, essendo pure questo illecito’. D. Filippo Borg Sacerdote di Casal Lia. *AIM, Proc.* 120A, f. 175r.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* ff. 156r-183v.

¹²⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 120B, f. 817v.

¹²⁸ For conditions on the galleys see Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550-1670*, pp. 66-8; chap. VI of A. Tenenti, *Piracy and the Decline of Venice*; A. Viaro, ‘La pena della galera : la condizione dei condannati a bordo delle galere veneziane’, *Stato, Società e Giustizia nella Repubblica Veneta* (sec. XV - XV111), pp. 398-401.

¹²⁹ Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, p. 880.

sentences though is not surprising because not only was corsairing on the decline in the eighteenth century¹³⁰ and the oared galley facing the challenge of the sailing-ships in the Mediterranean¹³¹ but the Government had a ready supply of *forzati* from all over Europe, especially from the Papal States.¹³² Sentences to hard labour were as scarce, the only instance concerned the 30-year-old perjurer of B'Kara, Angelo Bonnici.¹³³ Others were exiled to the countryside¹³⁴ but Antonio Cremona, a *facchino*, was not to leave his hometown, Cospicua, and Valletta.¹³⁵ There were those who kept their own house for a prison;¹³⁶ others served their sentence at the *Ospedale dell'Invalidi*;¹³⁷ at one of the Capuchin convents of Floriana¹³⁸ and Gozo,¹³⁹ whereas slaves could be sent to their *bagno*¹⁴⁰ which they could leave 'neither by day nor by night' without the Inquisitor's express permission.¹⁴¹ Most, though, were confined inside the dungeons of the Holy Office, which in four cases entailed fasting once¹⁴² or twice¹⁴³ a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays¹⁴⁴

¹³⁰ Roderick E. Cavaliero, 'The Decline of the Maltese Corso in the XVIIIth Century : A Study in Maritime History', *Melita Historica*, vol. 2, no. 4 (1959), pp. 224-238; Peter Earle, *Corsairs of Malta and Barbary*, p. 121.

¹³¹ Michel Fontenay, 'Les missions des galères de Malte : 1530-1798', *Guerre et Commerce en Méditerranée. 1Xe - XXe siècles*, Michel Vergé-Franceschi, ed. (Paris, 1991), pp. 114-5.

¹³² *AIM, Misc.* 55, ff. 1r-20v.

¹³³ He had sworn that he had seen dead at Constantinople Rosa Cauchi's husband, so that she could marry Marcello Gatt - *AIM, Proc.* See also *AIM, Corr.* 9, f. 249r. and *AIM, Corr.* 10, f. 3r.

¹³⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 125A, ff. 98r-1193v.

¹³⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 133C, ff. 1274r-1428v.

¹³⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 130, ff. 367r-465v.

¹³⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 120B, ff. 862r-953v.

¹³⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 121A, f. 175v.

¹³⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 251r.

¹⁴⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 122C, ff. 1213r-1261v.

¹⁴¹ *AIM, Proc.* 125B, f. 513r.

¹⁴² *AIM, Proc.* 122B, ff. 766r-807v.

on bread and water. This was a new role for prisons (*pour la purgation*) since originally they had been used only as places where the accused could be kept in custody (*pour la détention*) until the court acquitted or punished them;¹⁴⁵ but then the Church, followed later by the secular legal systems, used them as a form of punishment.¹⁴⁶

Those who were sentenced to imprisonment *ad arbitrio* did not have to face, generally, a long period of detention; as John Tedeschi has already pointed out,¹⁴⁷ in most instances it would be judged that they had been detained already for too long.¹⁴⁸ Of the thirteen cases whose date of the verdict and date of release could be ascertained only two, Carlo de Ruffo, a baptized slave of the Order,¹⁴⁹ and Gio. Pietro Cristodolo¹⁵⁰ stayed for comparatively long periods, thirteen months and three months respectively. The others - like the 30-year-old hermit from Scicli, Giuseppe Arena, who was sent back home¹⁵¹ and the *forzato*, Francesco Carullo of Monteleone, Calabria, who was consigned to the slave prison of Valletta¹⁵² - were dismissed within a very short time, ranging from nine days to

¹⁴³ AIM, Proc. 121A, ff. 229r-256v. AIM, Proc. 122C, ff. 1030r-1113v.

¹⁴⁴ AIM, Proc. 127B, ff. 954r-1008v.

¹⁴⁵ See, for instance, article 11 of the *Carolina*: '*... gaols should be erected and established for the custody of the prisoner and not intentionally to intensify his suffering*'. John H. Langbein, *Prosecuting Crime in the Renaissance*, p. 270.

¹⁴⁶ See the highly informative article by Nicoletta Sarti, 'Appunti su Carcere-Custodia e Carcere-Pena nella Dottrina Civilistica dei Secoli XI-XVI', *Rivista di Storia del Diritto Italiano*, Anno LIII-LIV (1980-81), vol. LIII-LIV, pp. 67-110. See also John H. Langbein, *Torture and the Law of Proof*, pp. 28-29 and James Green, 'The Inquisitors of Languedoc and the Medieval Technology of Power', *American Historical Review*, vol. 94, no. 2 (April 1989), p. 343.

¹⁴⁷ John Tedeschi, 'Inquisitorial Law and the Witch', *Early Modern European Witchcraft : Centres and Peripheries*, Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds., pp. 104-5.

¹⁴⁸ '*Considerando la lunga carcerazione da te patita, ti liberiamo da qualunque altra pena corporale, ed ordiniamo che sii dimesso*' - AIM, Proc. 120B, ff. 978r-1003v. See also AIM, Proc. 121B, ff. 780r-818v.

¹⁴⁹ AIM, Proc. 125A, ff. 317r-348v.

¹⁵⁰ AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 204r-255v.

¹⁵¹¹⁵¹ AIM, Proc. 127B, ff. 1058r-1180v.

¹⁵² AIM, Proc. 128B, ff. 535r-584v.

that same day of the sentence.¹⁵³ This also could be said, though not invariably so,¹⁵⁴ to definite prison sentences.¹⁵⁵ For this purpose twice a year, at Christmas and at Easter, prisoners forwarded through the Inquisitor such demands to the *Suprema*.¹⁵⁶ Verdicts, as Battistella has observed for Bologna,¹⁵⁷ could also be commuted especially if the beseecher was recommended, as in the case of Lorenzo, the slave, by such an influential person as the Order's Chancellor; he was to serve at the auberge de Castille, though he could not leave the place except to hear mass.¹⁵⁸ The Tribunal was greatly considerate.¹⁵⁹ Fra Giuseppe Castelli, a Sicilian accused of soliciting his penitents, had been condemned as a *forzato* on the Order's galleys; but as he was well-known to the crew, having exercised the office of Prior at the convent of St Augustine at Valletta, he was sent to row on the Pope's galleys instead.¹⁶⁰ Again, a female detainee condemned to leave the cities would be sent to stay at the residence of a priest lest her young age and her well-known poverty make her fall into sin.¹⁶¹

Inquisitors could also transfer their responsibility on to others' shoulders. A friar would be dispatched to his convent in Sicily¹⁶² and a Jesuit to his college;¹⁶³ others were

¹⁵³ The proportions were these : that same day, 3 cases; one day, 2 cases; three days, 1 case; five days, 1 case; seven days, 3 cases; nine days, 1 case.

¹⁵⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 20, f. 103r. *AIM, Corr.* 21, f. 4r.

¹⁵⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 192r. *AIM, Proc.* 120B, f. 504r. *AIM, Proc.* 130, ff. 453r, 461r. Even the well-known Menocchio, sentenced to life imprisonment, stayed incarcerated for only two years. See Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, p. 93.

¹⁵⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 21, f. 24r. See also *AIM, Corr.* 9, f. 55r. *AIM, Corr.* 11, f. 141r.

¹⁵⁷ Antonio Battistella, *Il S. Ufficio e la Riforma Religiosa in Bologna*, pp. 81-83.

¹⁵⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 12, f. 132r.

¹⁵⁹ Claudio Madricardo, 'Sesso e Religione nel Seicento a Venezia : La Sollecitazione in Confessionale', *Studi Veneziani*, n.s., vol. XVI (1988), p. 136.

¹⁶⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 14, ff. 116r-v, 174r, 177r.

¹⁶¹ *AIM, Proc.* 125A, ff. 180r-v.

¹⁶² *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 162r.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, f. 168v.

sent to the Oratory of St Philip Neri and foreigners, like Fra Pietro Magelli, a conventual chaplain, who was allowed to go to spend the rest of the sentence at Florence, were sent abroad.¹⁶⁴ These decisions were due to various reasons. Unhealthiness,¹⁶⁵ as in the case of the '113-year-old' Cesare Palumbo, a false witness,¹⁶⁶ was a major cause; though a detainee, like Gio. Battista Romania, would himself prefer to be exiled from Malta.¹⁶⁷ A merchant would have to attend to his business¹⁶⁸ and a farmer to his agricultural holdings.¹⁶⁹ Others were allowed to go because their families suffered great poverty¹⁷⁰ and were 'dying of hunger'.¹⁷¹ There was no need for Maruzzo Camilleri, a sailor from Vittoriosa, to stay longer in prison; after one month he knew his catechism well and could be acquitted.¹⁷² As there was the fear that the two apostates, Giorgio Calafato¹⁷³ and Curt Rais (Nicola of Patmos),¹⁷⁴ would be exchanged for two Hospitallers in Barbary they were sent to Rome. This was the case, too of Memi Rais; his father resided there and perhaps he would make his son renounce Islam.¹⁷⁵ The main reason, though, why the Inquisitors let go their

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 209v.

¹⁶⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 126B, f. 876r. *AIM, Proc.* 128B, ff. 342r-407v.

¹⁶⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 12, ff. 63r, 64r.

¹⁶⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 172v.

¹⁶⁸ For Pierre Arlò of Avignon, *AIM, Proc.* 121A, ff. 119r-188v. For Domenico dell'Arena of Naples, *AIM, Proc.* 121B, ff. 702r-731v.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* ff. 657r-695v.

¹⁷⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 122C, f. 1172v.

¹⁷¹ *AIM, Corr.* 9, f. 249r.

¹⁷² *AIM, Proc.* 121A, ff. 225r-256v.

¹⁷³ *AIM, Corr.* 5, f. 212r.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, ff. 190r, 204r.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 252r.

prisoners was the one expressed by Mgr Angelo Durini to the *Suprema* - 'not to make matters worse for the Tribunal with further expenses for his (prisoner's) maintenance'.¹⁷⁶

The Tribunal drew its financial assistance mainly from its property holdings which it leased to tenant farmers¹⁷⁷ as well as from the *Reverenda Fabbrica*¹⁷⁸ and the interest it received from the capital invested in the *Massa Fromentaria* or the bank of the Government's Grain Agency (*Università dei Grani*). But though, as other Tribunals,¹⁷⁹ it was often in financial difficulties it was unusual for heretics to be fined. For one, those who accused themselves out of their own free will could not be given a monetary penance at all and Mgr Della Lagonessa was to refund the 10 *oncie* he had made Catarina Valenti pay.¹⁸⁰ But to remove any 'shadow or suspicion of interest',¹⁸¹ even those proceeded against by the Tribunal, were to be fined only sparingly, and, if time permitted, the Inquisitor had to ask first the advice of the *Suprema*.¹⁸² Even so, this money was to be spent specifically for the

¹⁷⁶ 'E perche in quel giorno istesso trovavasi pronto a partire per la Sicilia un bastimento, affine di non aggravare questo Sacro Tribunale con più spesa di alimenti dopo fatta da esso l'abiura è stato in quel giorno istesso imbarcato su quel bastimento e mandato in Sicilia' - AIM, Corr. 96, f. 174r.

¹⁷⁷ Frans Ciappara, 'The Landed Property of the Inquisition in Malta in the late XV111 Century', *Melita Historica*, vol. V11, no. 1, pp. 42-60.

¹⁷⁸ On this Tribunal, of which the Inquisitor, starting from 1655, was the Commissioner, see Aloysius Deguara, 'The Reverenda Fabbrica di San Pietro dell'Urbe in Malta', *Proceedings of History Week 1982*, M. Buhagiar, ed., pp. 9-8. See also by the same author, 'Social and Charitable Aspects of the Tribunal of the Reverenda Fabbrica di San Pietro Dell'Urbe in Malta (1626-1798)', *Proceedings of History Week 1992*, Stanley Fiorini, ed., pp. 89-99. Annetto Depasquale, *Ecclesiastical Immunity and the Powers of the Inquisitor in Malta (1777-1785)*, pp. 156-160.

¹⁷⁹ For Sardinia see Bruno Pellegrino, 'Inquisizione e Lotte di Potere in Sardegna nel Secolo XV111' *Annuario dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e contemporanea*, vols. XXXV11-XXXV111 (1985-1986), p. 169. For Modena, Carla Righi, 'L'Inquisizione Ecclesiastica a Modena nel '700', *Formazione e Controllo dell'Opinione Pubblica aModena nel '700*, Albano Biondi, ed., p. 66.

¹⁸⁰ '... nonostante che fosse sponte comparente, e perciò dovesse esser spedita con l'abiura sola, e penitenze salutari senza imponere pena alcuna' - AIM, Corr. 3, f. 239r.

¹⁸¹ AIM, Corr. 5, f. 248r. See also AIM, Misc. 2, p. 79 - 'Il Tribunale del Sant'Officio, come sia istituito puramente per le salute dell'anime e conservatione della purità della santa fede Cattolica, sta lontanissimo da ogni ombra d'interesse, et in conseguenza da condannare li rei in pene pecuniarie, se non di rarissimo ...' See also Peña' comments : 'Les inquisiteurs modèrent leur ardeur dans l'application de ce type de peine, car rien ne leur serait plus néfaste que l'accusation publique d'avarice et de cupidité' - Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, p. 226.

¹⁸² AIM, Corr. 4, f. 35r.

needs of the prisons and to be paid directly to the *depositario* (receiver).¹⁸³ This decree was repeated several times¹⁸⁴ though fines were not altogether prohibited¹⁸⁵ since in 1639 Bilfadal, a 50-year-old slave from Tunis, demanded that as he was in bad health his sentence to serve on the galleys would be changed for a fine;¹⁸⁶ he would not have made this suggestion if it was not a practice of the Holy Office at that time.

Prisoners were a 'burden' and an 'embarrassment'.¹⁸⁷ Some were of the worst type and desperate men; and the earlier the Inquisitor got rid of them the better. One of these daredevils was Filippo Masola, who 'has alarmed all this island';¹⁸⁸ he dared to blaspheme even in prison¹⁸⁹ and had to be kept in a separate cell.¹⁹⁰ For several homicides and thefts he had been condemned to the galleys but cut off some of his fingers not to be able to row.¹⁹¹ He had even been sentenced to the gallows and would have been hanged if he had not claimed he had been apprehended in sanctuary.¹⁹² Andrea Poleti, who was incarcerated for polygamy, was so violent and fierce that it was impossible to bring him to reason; and on 22 March 1756 Mgr Salviati beseeched the *Suprema's* Assessor to treat his case with urgency.¹⁹³ Giuseppe Coggira, a galley convict, was so feared by the *algozini* that they did not dare to punish him; he dabbled in sorcery *ad mortem* and one of them had had an

¹⁸³ *AIM, Corr.* 1, f. 241v.

¹⁸⁴ See, for instance, *AIM, Corr.* 5, f. 17r.

¹⁸⁵ One of these rare instances was a fine of 30 scudi by Inquisitor Lionetto della Corbara - *NLM, Libr.* 10, pp. 302-3.

¹⁸⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 7, ff. 102r-103r.

¹⁸⁷ *AIIM, Corr.* 94, f. 212r.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 168v.

¹⁸⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 20, f. 203r.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 1r.

¹⁹¹ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 161r.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, f. 182r.

¹⁹³ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 282r.

extraordinarily tormented death.¹⁹⁴ Disconsolate as he was Lelio Gasparini, another *forzato*, tried to poison himself by putting some lime in his soup. He started vomiting and for three days he could not eat so that Mgr Messerano, lest he died in prison, had him taken to the hospital.¹⁹⁵ Giovanni Ducos was likewise unsuccessful in his attempt to commit suicide¹⁹⁶ but others, like Demetrio, who hang himself,¹⁹⁷ did succeed in their intent.¹⁹⁸ The aforementioned Licini became so out of his mind that doctors examined whether he was insane¹⁹⁹ and later he even broke loose.²⁰⁰

The *Suprema* continually reminded the Inquisitors to keep prisoners well guarded and to visit them regularly²⁰¹ but it was not unheard of that they escaped;²⁰² four did so in 1621²⁰³ and three in 1633.²⁰⁴ At first the Inquisitors must have used the prisons they found at the *Castellania* or the Order's lawcourts they occupied as their palace,²⁰⁵ but they were constantly hinting to Rome that prisons were neither safe nor secret.²⁰⁶ Mgr Carbonese did so in 1610 and suggested the building of new ones. He even sent a plan which was examined by two former Inquisitors in Malta, Mgr del Bufalo and Mgr Verallo,²⁰⁷ but it

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 15v.

¹⁹⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 40v.

¹⁹⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 45r.

¹⁹⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 26, f. 121r.

¹⁹⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 22, f. 138r.

¹⁹⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 16, f. 53r.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, ff. 67r, 109r.

²⁰¹ *AIM, Corr.* 17, f. 15r.

²⁰² *AIM, Corr.* 16, ff. 67r, 103r, 109r. *AIM, Corr.* 14, f. 162r.

²⁰³ *AIM, Corr.* 4, f. 105r.

²⁰⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 6, ff. 37r, 53r.

²⁰⁵ Andrew P. Vella, 'La Missione di Pietro Dusina a Malta nel 1574', *Melita Historica*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1969), p. 168.

²⁰⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 11, f. 132r. *AIM, Corr.* 12, ff. 172r-173v.

²⁰⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 2, f. 55r.

seems that funds were lacking and only a house contiguous to the palace was bought.²⁰⁸ In one of his first letters De Messerano brought up the subject again and this time the Cardinal Inquisitors consented to disburse 600 scudi.²⁰⁹ Escape was still possible though and the above-mentioned Augustinian friar, Fra Carlo Girolamo da Pavia, escaped to the opposite church of the Dominicans while the jailer was distributing food to the inmates.²¹⁰ Gio. Maria Zammit²¹¹ had been incarcerated for twenty-six days but on Sunday, 30 July 1725 towards 6.15 p.m. while Vincenzo Mendus, 'that old, tall jailer', was drawing water from the well in the yard, seeing the prison doors open, he ran away. He made his way first to Zejtun then to his home at Siggiewi where he arrived towards eight. He roamed the countryside for thirty-two days but owing to his agility the ministers of the *Corte Capitaniale* of Mdina could not lay hands on him. Then, early one Friday morning, on 31 August, he was surprised by two *sbirri* at Cospicua, who took him tied to the *Castellania* from where he was conducted to the Inquisitor's dungeons. He remained imprisoned for only two weeks when he again broke lose on a Thursday towards three in the afternoon after closing the jailer in his own cell. From Siggiewi he took his wife to Mqabba, where they stayed with his cousin, Cristina. Next morning he sent for the village parish priest, Fr Gio. Paolo Zammit, whom he warned that he was to take refuge in church and even asked him send word to this brother, the Captain of the Holy Office, to come and arrest him.²¹²

It must not be supposed though that prisons were those terrible abodes envisaged by Eymeric²¹³ and that inmates had a hard time in captivity. They were to be treated kindly²¹⁴

²⁰⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 3, f. 171r.

²⁰⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 16, f. 108r.

²¹⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, f. 247r. *AIM, Corr.* 96, f. 225v.

²¹¹ *AIM, Corr.* 23, f. 73r.

²¹² *AIM, Proc.* 109B, ff. 693r-704v.

²¹³ 'La prison dans laquelle les prisonniers doivent purger leur peine sera une prison terrible, car elle est conçue beaucoup plus pour le supplice des condamnés que pour leur simple détention' - Nicolau Eymerich and Francisco Peña, *Le Manuel des Inquisiteurs*, pp. 202-3.

²¹⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 1, f. 80r; *AIM, Corr.* 29, f. 7r.

and the poor among them, like abandoned slaves,²¹⁵ were supported by the Tribunal itself;²¹⁶ the others had their food brought to them by their relatives²¹⁷ or else paid for the cost of their board. Accordingly the monks of Montecassino disbursed 3 scudi a month for the upkeep of one of their religious, Don Teodoro of Monreali.²¹⁸ The Dominicans did so for friar D'Antona²¹⁹ and Mgr D'Elci also demanded to be paid for the time the Franciscan from Palermo, Fra Antonio di Gregali, spent in prison on a charge of polygamy. He urged the *Suprema* ask the General of his Order to pay up especially because he was not yet in a state of good health; and according to the doctors the next spring a larger sum of money would have to be paid for treatments.²²⁰ Expences could sometimes be high as those incurred by *padre* Girolamo da Pavia clearly demonstrate.²²¹ Fortunately, the friar had 27 scudi, 3 tari and 8 grani and could therefore meet the expenses the Tribunal had incurred for him. But not so other prisoners. In 1739 Mgr Gualtieri informed Rome that prisoners continually lament about the poor allowance they received of 15 grani (3 Roman *baiocchi*) daily. They got only two loaves a day, some cheese and onions but no salted meat or soup. He demanded that the allowance be increased to 20 *grani*,²²² which suggestion was accepted.²²³

²¹⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 5, f. 5r.

²¹⁶ 'Si notifica a V. S. per suo regolamento', Mgr Salviati was reminded, 'che quando il reo non è solvibile il Fisco è tenuto a somministrare gli alimenti ai carcerati' - *AIM, Corr.* 30, f. 66r. See also *AIM, Proc.* 127B, f. 993v.

²¹⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 120B, ff. 583r, 587v.

²¹⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 1, f. 229r.

²¹⁹ M. Fsadni, *Id-Dumnikani Fir-Rabat u Fil-Birgu sa l-1620*, p. 232.

²²⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 206r.

²²¹ *AIM, Proc.* 131A, f. 258r.

²²² *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 85r.

²²³ *AIM, Corr.* 27, f. 20r.

Naturally the place was 'damp and cold', as the doctor, Antonio Xicluna, testified²²⁴ but at least the inmates slept in beds²²⁵ on straw mattresses and were covered by a sheet and a blanket.²²⁶ They were not supposed to see or to talk to each other, for which purpose Mgr Giorgio Spinola had a wall built and repaired the doors and windows.²²⁷ All the same they enjoyed much freedom, walking in the corridors with the rosary in their hands;²²⁸ and the Englishman, one Thomas, was even allowed to continue with his work, transporting Turkish slaves to Constantinople, whom he exchanged with Christian captives there.²²⁹ According to an order of the Supreme Congregation dated 2 July 1588²³⁰ the men were to be rigorously segregated from the women but it was still possible for the slave, Giuseppe Asciach, to have sexual relations with a female detainee.²³¹ Such sexual freedom may give the impression that prison life in Malta, as in medieval Carcassaone, was 'anarchic'²³² but it is not to be compared at all to the widespread debauchery practised in eighteenth-century Newgate.²³³

²²⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 133C, f. 1401r.

²²⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 133C, f. 1401r. Fra Carlo Girolamo di Pavia had his mattress and his cotton blanket brought to his cell from the ship on which he had arrived in Malta - *AIM, Proc.* 131A, f. 239v.

²²⁶ John Tedeschi, 'New Light on the Organization of the Roman Inquisition', *Annali di Storia Moderna e Contemporanea*, vol. 2, Anno 2 (1996), p. 272.

²²⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 94, ff. 96v-97r.

²²⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 125A, f. 44r.

²²⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 4, ff. 95r, 119r.

²³⁰ Battistella, *Il S. Ufficio e la Riforma Religiosa in Italia*, p. 33.

²³¹ *AIM, Corr.* 17, ff. 267r, 306r.

²³² James Given, 'The Inquisitors of Languedoc and the Medieval Technology of Power', *American Historical Review*, vol. 94, no. 2 (April 1989), p. 346.

²³³ W. J. Sheehan, 'Finding Solace in Eighteenth-Century Newgate', *Crime in England, 1550-1800*, J. S. Cockburn, ed., pp. 243-245.

Table 9.5 Expenses incurred by Fra Girolamo da Pavia

	Sc	Tr.	Gr.
24 Feb., 1/2 rotolo of meat	-	2	-
24 Feb., 1/2 rotolo of meat	-	2	-
Surgeon	-	3	-
1/4 rotolo of meat for 5 days	-	7	-
Coal	-	1	10
Jailer	-	10	10
Doctor, 3 visits	-	3	-
Surgeon, 3 visits	-	3	-
Almond oil		4	-
Prescriptions		7	-
5 May, jailer	1	2	-
-do-		8	-
-do-		4	-
-do-	2	-	-
Pawner	-	11	-
Washerwoman	-	5	-
Bishop's Prosecutor	1	-	-
Dress for his departure	13	5	10
Repair of the mattress	1	-	-
Total	24	7	0

The inmates depended on the gaolers who visited them at six o'clock in the morning as well as at two in the afternoon to see if they lacked anything.²³⁴ Though like other members of the Tribunal they were sworn to secrecy²³⁵ and to exercise their office faithfully under pain of five years on the galleys Pietro di Cristoforo²³⁶ left all doors open so that those in the civil part of the prisons could mix with those in the criminal ones, both during the day as well as at night. Prisoners were so much left to themselves that they heard each other's interrogation from the stairs opposite the court room. They played cards and ate in the warden's room from which window they could see the processions outside. It was even

²³⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 125A, f. 57v.

²³⁵ *Ibid.* f. 92r.

²³⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 166v.

through the wardens, too that prisoners corresponded with their relatives²³⁷ who came to see them in the jailer's own room. Fr Fortunato Vella, the parish priest of Senglea, for instance, had regular visitors, including Bishop Alpheran's chaplain; and Giuseppe Seichel saw his uncle, Fr Pietro Paolo Callus, thrice. Paulica Cidri, accompanied by her daughter, servant and daughter-in-law, spent a quarter of an hour on the two occasions she went to visit her son, Francesco.²³⁸ The Cardinal Inquisitors continually warned the wardens not to take their duties lightly and never to take any liberty with the prisoners.²³⁹ However, Lazzaro Seichel even had sexual relations with Teresa Piscopo, a detainee;²⁴⁰ and this was not an isolated instance since Antonia Abela claimed she had been impregnated by the warden, Giovanni di Lorenzo,²⁴¹ who pulled her hair, caressed her breasts and told her dirty jokes.²⁴²

In such instances women were sent to their father's home²⁴³ and as Teresa vomitted blood and was in danger of miscarrying the doctor was summoned and the midwife stayed with her for the night. In the morning she was taken inside the Pro-Inquisitor's sedan-chair to Valletta to the house of the consultor, *padre* Salelles.²⁴⁴ When the same Antonia Abela was sick an 'honest' 28-year-old spinster of Vittoriosa, Lorenza Calleja, was entrusted with administering her the medicaments prescribed by the doctor; and she even slept with her.²⁴⁵ Fr Fortunato Vella was treated by the doctor for some ailment in his foot. Others were kept under house arrest²⁴⁶ or pardoned altogether 'to attend to her death the few days that were

²³⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 94, ff. 282v-283r.

²³⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 28, f. 50r. *AIM, Corr.* 91, f. 163v.

²³⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 17, f. 15r.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, ff. 267r, 268r. *AIM, Corr.* 94, ff. 108v, 120r-v.

²⁴¹ *AIM, Proc.* 125A, ff. 42r-v.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, f. 45r.

²⁴³ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 895r.

²⁴⁴ *AIM, Proc.* 156, ff. 89r-v.

²⁴⁵ This was the duty of the warden's wife but at that time she was living at Valletta - *AIM, Proc.* 125A, f. 43v.

²⁴⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 425r.

left to her'.²⁴⁷ Fr Gioacchino Fabri, the parish priest of Cospicua, was even allowed to stroll for one hour a day through the town.²⁴⁸ The following incident further illustrates how considerate the Tribunal was. *Padre Maestro* Rosario Haggius, a Dominican friar, who had been imprisoned for solicitation for three years,²⁴⁹ was removed to his own convent of Our Lady of Porto Salvo, Valletta when this had a bad effect on his health.²⁵⁰ As the cell he was put in was most narrow and almost underground, and hence worse than the prisons of the Holy Office, he again appealed to go to the Dominican convent of Rabat.²⁵¹ The Inquisitor, Mgr Passionei, not only seconded his demand, but even confirmed that the religious was quite infirm. This convent, about six miles from the capital, was distant from inhabited areas and being the place of the novitiate he could live here according to his Order's rule. There were even spacious corridors where he could stroll and take healthy air.²⁵² The Cardinal Inquisitors at Rome gave their consent²⁵³ but the next year the friar again demanded to go to the spa at Sciacca, Sicily²⁵⁴ to prevent a sure death.²⁵⁵ His wish was granted once more²⁵⁶ though on his return the friar asked to be set free or else return to the former convent of Porto Salvo.²⁵⁷ It was the latter demand which was conceded him.²⁵⁸ Camillo d'Ambrogio of Valletta was 'gravely indisposed', too. He was taken to the

²⁴⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 12, f. 216r.

²⁴⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 19, f. 267r. His demand, however, to celebrate mass was not upheld by the Holy Congregation as this concession was reserved for the Pope - *ibid.*, f. 244r.

²⁴⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 171r.

²⁵⁰ *AIM, Corr.* 28, f. 80r. *AIM, Corr.* 29, f. 10r. *AIM, Corr.* 91, f. 174v. *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 171v-172r.

²⁵¹ *AIM, Corr.* 28, ff. 80r, 82r. *AIM, Corr.* 91, ff. 167r-v.

²⁵² *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 171v-172r.

²⁵³ *AIM, Corr.* 28, f. 82r.

²⁵⁴ In another reference the place is put down as the *bagni d'Ischia* - *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 181r.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 175v. *AIM, Corr.* 28, f. 106r. *AIM, Corr.* 91, f. 170v.

²⁵⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 28, f. 106r.

²⁵⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 181r.

²⁵⁸ *AIM, Corr.* 29, f. 10r.

Capuchin convent at Floriana where he was to stay for a year but a month later he asked to be sent home to be cured.²⁵⁹

However, from the great number of applications it seems that the prisoners preferred to be sent to hospital. Antonio Cremona pretended that he was insane and was found half naked on the floor but Francesco Leon Gravagna, the doctor of the *Sacra Infermeria*, refused to be taken in.²⁶⁰ Not that there were no genuine cases; and the neophyte, Paolo Agius, died in hospital the day after he had been taken there.²⁶¹ The Turkish slave, Sayd,²⁶² as well as Luca Damato, a suspected false witness,²⁶³ were actually found dead in their prison cell. The Tribunal was always in financial difficulties, each prisoner costing 1 tari a day in food in 1775; and whenever an opportunity presented itself to save this sum it was most welcome.

Besides a physical punishment the accused received a spiritual penance,²⁶⁴ 'so that from God Our Lord you obtain more easily mercy and pardon for your sins and errors'. They were to confess four times a year and with the advice of their confessor receive Holy Communion at Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and the Assumption of Our Lady as well as recite the rosary every Saturday for the next two²⁶⁵ or four years.²⁶⁶

²⁵⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 121A, ff. 59r-118v.

²⁶⁰ *AIM, Proc.* 133C, ff. 1274r-1428v.

²⁶¹ *AIM, Proc.* 130, f. 71r.

²⁶² *AIM, Corr.* 18, f. 21r. *AIM, Corr.* 94, f. 122r.

²⁶³ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 164r.

²⁶⁴ They were even given a written note of this - '*... appena scarcerato consegnai la nota che mi consegnò da questo S. Tribunale continente le suddette penitenze al Sig. Canco. Tesoriere della Collegiata Chiesa di San Paolo della Valletta*' - *AIM, Proc.* 137, f. 291r.

²⁶⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 134A, f. 488v.

²⁶⁶ '*Ed acciocchè da Dio Nostro Signore ottenghi più facilmente misericordia, e perdono di questi tuoi peccati ed errori, per penitenze salutari t'imponiamo che per anni quattro prossimi devi confessarti sacramentalmente quattro volte l'anno; e col consiglio del tuo confessore comunicarti nelle quattro solennità della Santa Chiesa, sive per Natale del Signore, per Pasqua di Resurrezzione, Pentecoste, e per*

They could also be made to say on their knees every Friday the seven penitential psalms²⁶⁷ with their litanies,²⁶⁸ and there is even one case of a penitent who was to recite three times the Creed every Sunday kneeling before some holy picture.²⁶⁹ A nun who imagined all sorts of lust was to mortify her flesh and allay its insults by penitences. She was to be shown the gravity of her sins against chastity which she had promised to God on her profession, and realise how shameful it was just to imagine obscene acts. Only these means, coupled with prayers to the Virgin Mary and the Saints, could help her banish impure thoughts and temptations from her heart and mind.²⁷⁰

This was the reformatory aspect of the Tribunal; and though, unlike in Venice, Inquisitors in Malta did not enter into lengthy discussions with the accused these were made to realise that they had erred and that some practices were 'illicit, vain and superstitious'.²⁷¹ The Holy Office was to change the way of life of the prisoners, who were comforted by great spiritual charity. Penitents were assigned a 'prudent confessor'²⁷² and before being sent to the galleys Pietro Licini was to be instructed by someone learned and prudent and the Inquisitor was to inform the *Suprema* from time to time about his progress.²⁷³ The neophyte, Giuseppe, was to be shown how necessary the sacrament of baptism was and the effects it produced in the soul of whoever received it.²⁷⁴ An upright religious, so did the *Suprema* on 25 March 1747 direct Mgr Passionei, was to 'nourish the prisoners often with

l'Assunzione della Beatissima Vergine, e dire per detto tempo ogni Sabato il SS: Rosario della medesima - AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 209r.

²⁶⁷ AIM, Proc. 121B, f. 736r.

²⁶⁸ AIM, Proc. 122B, ff. 440r-585v.

²⁶⁹ AIM, Proc. 131B, f. 593v.

²⁷⁰ AIM, Corr. 27, ff. 114r-116r. AIM, Misc. 2, p. 66.

²⁷¹ AIM, Proc. 135B, ff. 554r-557r.

²⁷² AIM, Corr. 3, f. 159r. See also AIM, Misc. 2, pp. 1-2 : '... per mezzo di persone dotte, pie, e prudenti si procura di ridurgli alla cognitione della verità Cattolica'.

²⁷³ AIM, Corr. 16, f. 32r.

²⁷⁴ AIM, Corr. 11, f. 262r.

the Divine Word and 'spiritual conferences' to prepare them receive frequently and with great profit the sacraments.²⁷⁵ There was no need for such a reminder though because the inmates 'of whatever state and condition' had their chaplain to celebrate mass on feast days unfailingly, as well as their confessor; besides, the Jesuit, Fr Rossignoli, came frequently to counsel and to preach to them.²⁷⁶

It was after 'I have heard this is sinful' that Antonio Zuppo, who had swallowed pieces of paper to withstand torture, believed that 'it is not permissible to use witchcraft for any reason'.²⁷⁷ Antonia Aquilina had often heard that through witchcraft illness and death could ensue. But enlightened by her confessor and the Inquisitor that it was illicit for a Christian to believe that witchcraft could make a man die she firmly held now that man's life was in the hands of God.²⁷⁸ Such spiritual counselling left its effect also on Jean de Grett, from Savoy. On 10 October 1776 after eight sittings he was still a Deist -

'I believe in that law that God instilled in the heart of mankind. All the other laws, including the Catholic church's, were all made by man and I disbelieve in them'.

The next day, the Tribunal's chancellor and the two resident catechists, the Conventual friar, Francesco Bonnici and the Discalced friar, Gio. Battista, the Prior of the Convent of St Teresa, Cospicua, started teaching him the articles of the Catholic faith. At first his soul had been troubled by a thousand errors, they commented, but now

*'he is a totally changed man, persuaded of the truth of Catholicism
and desirous of being a good and true Catholic'.*

The Inquisition's main aim had been achieved - the conversion of the heretic 'that he may live'. The Holy Office was no longer the severe Tribunal it had once been but even when

²⁷⁵ AIM, Corr. 29, f. 7r. AIM, Corr. 91, ff. 173r-v. Cp. Kamen's remark, 'A rule of the Spanish and the Roman Inquisitions was that detainees were denied all access to mass and the sacraments' - Inquisition and Society in Spain, p. 173.

²⁷⁶ AIM, Corr. 95, f. 186v. By the time of Mgr Giorgio Spinola a chapel was in use; before this date the inmates did not hear mass not even on feast days - AIM, Corr. 94, ff. 74r, 96v.

²⁷⁷ AIM, Proc. 123B, f. 736r.

²⁷⁸ AIM, Proc. 123A, ff. 412r-v.

heretics were given a life sentence on the galleys or in prison this depended substantially on how much they changed their lives and whether they gave signs of true repentance.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁹ *'Quando poi vi saranno stati qualche tempo, et essi saranno bene instrutti et haver anno dato segni di vera penitenza, farà poi loro qualche gratia con partecipazione di questa S. Congregazione'* - AIM, Corr. 5, f. 149r.

CONCLUSION

One of the last cases dealt by the Maltese Holy Office concerned the often mentioned Gaetano Schembri. This tall and lean fellow from Candia with moustaches, bristling hair and a whitish face, had been caught by the Order's navy on board a Turkish corsair galliot, but then he redeemed himself and married Orsolica. On 21 April 1792 he was seriously admonished not to dabble in witchcraft but as he ignored the warning he was arrested on 22 August 1793. After two months he was released, to be taken again into custody two years later from his residence at Wells Street, Valletta. This time he was condemned to confess and receive Holy Communion once a month for the next three years and fast on bread and water twice a week; besides, he was exposed at the door of the Dominican church, Vittoriosa and at St Paul's, Valletta. Wretched Gaetano, whose wife was now pregnant, was imprisoned for the last time on 26 March 1797, to be shamed at the church of St George's, Rabat.¹

This example typifies in two concrete ways the changes the Tribunal had undergone over the years and the long way it had come from the sixteenth century. It had set aside its terrifying powers² and its former urgent concern with Protestantism was a thing of the past.

¹ *AIM, Proc.* 137, ff. 193r-324v.

² Adriano Prosperi, 'L'Inquisizione : Verso Una Nuova Immagine?', *Critica Storica*, vol. 11, no. 1 (1988), *passim*.

Its interests, as the author of a seminal book has pointed out,³ lay nearer home, with its own faithful, like poor and ignorant Gaetano,⁴ practising a debased form of religion and in need of instruction in the true faith. The Protestant revolution forced the Catholic church to accelerate the pace of reform it had started some years before Luther's revolt⁵ and in Jean-Pierre Dedieu's words, conduct the 'most ambitious attempt at acculturation which Europe was to know only in the nineteenth century with the starting of free and compulsory education.'⁶ An essential element of these genuine efforts was the shearing of popular beliefs and practices of their superstitious and even, sometimes, magical accretions.⁷ This was a formidable task especially to the Catholic Church because, unlike the Reformed Churches,⁸ it shunned education and literacy. It therefore relied on preaching⁹ and instruction for which the clergy were to be well prepared in seminaries which the Council of Trent ordered to be set up.¹⁰ It was here that the Inquisition came in; with its threats and punishments, its networks of informers, and its hold on the conscience of the population, it promised to succeed where the parish clergy failed.

³ Ruth Martin, Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice, 1550- 1650, p. 216. See also John Martin, Venice's Hidden Enemies, pp. 226-227.

⁴ *'Per procacciare il mio e di mia consorte vitto ho fatto diversi sortileggi'* - *AIM, Proc.* 137, ff. 308r-310r.

⁵ H. Outram Evennett, The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation, pp. 11-15. Ludovico von Pastor, Storia dei Papi, vol. 1V, part 11, pp. 548-603.

⁶ Jean-Pierre Dedieu, L'Administration de la foi, p. 360.

⁷ On this topic see R. W. Scribner, 'Ritual and Popular Religion in Catholic Germany at the Time of the Reformation', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, vol. 35, no. 1 (1984), pp. 47-77.

⁸ For the counter-thesis that literacy in the sixteenth century was the result of 'mundane, pragmatic causes' and not of the Lutheran reformation see Gerald Strauss, 'Lutheranism and literacy : A Reassessment', Religion and Society in early Modern Europe, 1500-1800, Kaspar von Greyerz, ed., pp. 109-123.

⁹ Concilii Tridentinum, Sess. V, c. 2, Sess. XXIV, c. 4. William V. Hudson, 'Two Instructions to Preachers from the Tridentine Reformation', Sixteenth-Century Journal, vol. XX, no. 3 (1989), pp. 457-470.

¹⁰ David Coleman, 'Moral Formation and Social Control in the Catholic Reformation : The Case of San Juan de Avila', Sixteenth-Century Journal, vol. XXVI, no. 1 (1995), p. 28. For the setting up of the seminary in Malta see Vincent Borg, The Seminary of Malta and the Ecclesiastical Benefices of the Maltese Islands.

Sixteenth-century Malta, like the rest of Europe,¹¹ was not yet Christianised and Mgr Dusina's report was most disheartening.¹² Despite genuine efforts though to eradicate this spiritual morass¹³ two hundred years later popular religion¹⁴ still retained much of its former overgrowth and the need for reform was still urgent. As in the diocese of Campagna in Naples,¹⁵ superstition held the inhabitants so firmly in its grip that in 1769 the Capitular Vicar, Fr Pietro Francesco Gristi, felt it necessary to exhort all parish priests and confessors to extirpate this 'pestiferous venom'; at least twice a year they were to warn their parishioners about the grave harm such errors brought to their souls as well as to the Divine cult.¹⁶ Indulgences were sold for kissing the foot of Our Lady,¹⁷ to whom an altar was raised commemorating the letter she supposedly wrote to the people of Messina.¹⁸ A preacher would tell his congregation that on his feast day St Francis descended to purgatory to set his devotees free.¹⁹ Licentiousness was prevalent both among the laity - prostitutes carrying on their work unashamedly by the help of their slaves²⁰ - and the clergy. Don Mario Salvatore,

¹¹ On this topic see Jean Delumeau, 'Dechristianisation ou Nouveau Modèle de Christianism?', Archives de sciences sociales des religions, vol. 45 (1975), pp. 3-20. For a similar situation in Italy see, for instance, the study of Aldo Landi, 'La Diocese di Luni-Sarzana nella seconda metà del Cinquecento', Nuova Rivista Storica, Anno LIX (1975), pp. 537-599.

¹² For a copy of this report see *NLM, Libr.* 139, 643. Two good commentaries on it are the two studies by J. Cassar-Pullicino, 'Maltese customs and Beliefs in 1575', Folk-Lore, vol. LXII (Sept. 1951), pp. 398-404; and 'Malta in 1575: Social Aspects of an Apostolic Visit', Melita Historica, vol. 11, no. 1 (1956), pp. 19-41.

¹³ For similar efforts in Spain see Jean Pierre Dedieu, 'Christianization' in New Castille: Catechism, Communion, Mass, and Confirmation in the Toledo Archbishopric, 1540-1650', Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain, Anne J. Cruz and Mary Elizabeth Perry, eds., pp. 1-24.

¹⁴ For the definition of this term see Jean-Claude Schmitt, 'Religion Populaire' et Culture Folklorique', Annales, E.S.C., (1976), no. 5, pp. 941-953; Giovanni B. Bronzini, 'Tradizioni Religiose Popolari', Lares, vol. XL (1974), pp. 143-172.

¹⁵ Gabriele de Rosa, 'Problemi Religiosi della Società Meridionale nel '700 Attraverso le Visite Pastorali di Angelo Anzani', Rivista di Sociologia, Anno VI, no. 15 (1968), pp. 37-40.

¹⁶ *AAM, Corr.* XVI, f. 7v.

¹⁷ *AIM, Corr.* 3, f. 33r.

¹⁸ '... costà non se ne celebri la festa, ne sia altare come si ha notizia essersi fabbricato, e rispettivamente celebrata da tre anni in qua' - *AIM, Corr.* 11, f. 257r.

¹⁹ *AIM, Corr.* 5, f. 236r.

²⁰ 'V. S. (Mgr Giacomo Cantelmo) s'adopri con cotesto M. Vescovo acciò egli procuri di rimuovere gli scandali ed ogni altro errore che dalle case di meretrici sogliono commettere in occasione delle schiave che presso di loro si tengono' - *AIM, Corr.* 14, f. 6r.

for instance, was of so 'perverse customs' that the people could not stand him and had to be exiled.²¹ At the seminary reigned 'grave and intolerable disorders'²² whereas, according to Mgr Gualtieri, the number of confessors who solicited their women penitents at the confessional must have been much higher than that discovered by the Tribunal.²³ Blasphemy was frequently heard,²⁴ sailors being the worst culprits.²⁵ Common, too, were instances of bigamy so that the Bishop stood on his guard in examining witnesses testifying to the *stato libero* of prospective married couples, especially when foreigners were involved; Maltese women were so miserable and so numerous that they married the first stranger who came their way, even that same day he arrived, who with as much ease abandoned them.²⁶

The mission of the reformer was particularly arduous since religion was so much ingrained in the life of the people that the boundaries dividing the sacred and the profane had become blurred.²⁷ Religious terms, for instance, were an integral part of their speech so that *Turris eburnea* - the Ivory Tower of the Litany - would take on the meaning of a great confusion (*turrisabornja*), and *Kyrie eleison* (Lord, have mercy on us) becomes *il-kirjilejs!* or *x'il kirjilejs trid!*, indicating surprise or impatience.²⁸ Even popular entertainment borrowed from the religious and the sacred. On Tuesday 1793, the last day of Carnival, Salvatore Cauchi *ta' neusu* (Neusu's son), a 22-year-old lad of *città Rohan*, and an ex-voluntary rower on the Order's galleys, went through the streets of his native town riding on

²¹ *Ibid.*, f. 73r.

²² *AIM, Corr.* 95, ff. 164v-165r.

²³ '... *per la pratica che comincio avere del paese riconosco frequentissimo il caso della sollecitazione, ed ho fondati sospetti che ve ne sian'ancora in grandissimo maggior numero di quelli che vengono scoperti*' - *Ibid.*, f. 117r.

²⁴ *AIM, Corr.* 14, f. 231r.

²⁵ *AIM, Corr.* 16, f. 65r.

²⁶ *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 123r.

²⁷ On this division see Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Sacred and the Body Social in Sixteenth-Century Lyon', *Past and Present*, no. 90 (1981), pp. 40-70.

²⁸ For more such examples see J. Aquilina, *Papers in Maltese Linguistics*, pp. 25-26.

a horse. He wore a mitre made of two rabbit skins sewn together and a mantle inside out on his shoulders, while in one hand he held a small rod. As he went by, surrounded by a crowd of masqued companions - among whom Baldassare Borg, who held the horse's bridle, and Michele Formosa *tal-mishut* (the son of the cursed one) who played the violin - he blessed the onlookers.²⁹

This seemingly innocuous incident implies an unconscious challenge to the monopoly on religious life by the clergy as leaders of the Christian community and dispensers of Divine benevolence.³⁰ It was to guard against this danger that at Trent the Catholic Church had established what John Bossy appropriately calls 'a system of parochial conformity'.³¹ The parish became the focal point for the faithful and the Christian's life began to be scrupulously monitored, starting from the cradle to the grave. Marriages, baptisms and deaths were regularly registered and the *Status Animarum* assured that the Christian confessed and communicated at least once a year.³² This process of what Jean-Pierre Dedieu refers to as 'clericalisation'³³ was indispensable if religious ritual was to remain the prerogative of the church's ministers and not be debased by passing into the hands of the laity.³⁴ The danger was great since it was easy to procure sacramentals like

²⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 136A, ff. 105r-110v.

³⁰ For such monopoly of the church see Francisco Bethencourt, 'Portugl : A Scrupulous Inquisition', *Early Modern European Witchcraft : Centres and Peripheries*, Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds., pp. 408-414.

³¹ John Bossy, 'The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe', *Past and Present*, no. 47 (1970), p. 52.

³² For the origin and usefulness of these registers see Frans Ciappara, *Marriage in Malta in the Late Eighteenth Century*, pp. 13-18. See also Carlo A. Corsini, 'Nascite e Matrimoni', Comitato Italiano Per Lo Studio Della Demografia Storica, *Le Fonti della Demografia Storica in Italia*, vol. 1, part 11, pp. 647-699; L. Tittrelli, 'I Libri dei Battezzati e dei Matrimoni. Notizie per l'Umbria e in particolare per la Diocesi di Perugia', *ibid.*, pp. 769-781; A. Bellettini, 'Gli Status Animarum: Caratteristiche e Problemi di Utilizzazione nelle Ricerche di Demografia Storica', *ibid.*, vol. 1, part 1, pp. 3-4; Elena Fasano Guarini, 'Gli Stati d'Anime Milanesi al tempo di Carlo e Federico Borromeo', *ibid.*, p. 133.

³³ Jean-Pierre Dedieu, *L'Administration de la Foi : L'Inquisition de Tolède (XVIe -XVIIIe Siècle)*, p. 48.

³⁴ R.W. Scribner, 'Ritual and Popular Religion in Catholic Germany at the Time of the Reformation', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 35, no. 1 (1984), p. 71. See also Guido Dall'Olio, 'I Rapporti tra la Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio e gli Inquisitori Locali nei Carteggi Bolognesi (1573-1594)', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. CV (1993), p. 282.

blessed water,³⁵ incense³⁶ and oil,³⁷ among others, to be used, for instance, in the curing of illnesses. And was not a galley convict abusing of holy things when he took the host from his mouth, put it in a piece of paper and then said 'some words on it' to become invisible and run away?³⁸ Was it not illicit, too, to keep a consecrated *calamita* (loadstone) to win at gambling?³⁹ Preaching, especially, was on no account to be left in the hands of the uninitiated and Alessandro Portelli, a simpleton from *città Pinto*, was to desist at once. He delivered sermons in a windmill in the vicinity of the church of San Francesco di Paola. Gesturing like a preacher he addressed himself to his hearers, including some fifty women and even two priests, Fr Giuliano Felice and Fr Benedetto nicknamed *busbiesa* (fennel). This challenge to the clergy as the leaders of the Catholic community concerned particularly the *beatas* who threatened traditional religious authority.⁴⁰ Cases of 'affected sanctity', therefore, were promptly dealt with; and such women were severely warned to abstain from such matters.⁴¹ The Franciscan tertiary (*bizocca*), Francesca Protoplasta, had died in a halo of sanctity but writings on her life were to be consigned to the fire that her memory be abolished; and she was to be exhumed and buried in a common grave.⁴² Maria Borg of *casal Balzan* had visions and revelations from Our Lady who revealed to her prayers with which souls were set free from purgatory, and those who recited them before death would go to heaven. The Holy Congregation labelled these revelations false and the parish priest

³⁵ *AIM, Proc.* 126A, f. 71r.

³⁶ *AIM, Proc.* 126C, ff. 989r-v.

³⁷ *AIM, Proc.* 127B, f. 1010v.

³⁸ *AIM, Proc.* 128B, f. 538r.

³⁹ *AIM, Proc.* 127B, f. 1010v.

⁴⁰ Mary Elizabeth Perry, 'Beatas and the Inquisition in Early Modern Seville', *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe*, Stephen Haliczer, ed., pp.147-168. See also Richard Kegan, 'Lucrezia de Leon: Per una Valutazione dei Sogni e delle Visioni nella Spagna del Cinquecento', *Quaderni Storici, nuova serie*, vol. 68 (1988), pp.595-607.

⁴¹ *AIM, Corr.* 27, f. 6r. *AIM, Corr.* 95, f. 84v.

⁴² *AIM, Corr.* 13, ff. 204r, 213r-214r, 255r-v.

who had put them down in writing to pass them on to others was reprimanded for his 'simplicity'.⁴³

For all D'Alembert's invectives⁴⁴ to all those who appeared before him the Inquisitor dealt with justice⁴⁵ and moderation.⁴⁶ Even a convinced Jew, like the celebrated Cecil Roth, could '*not fail to be impressed deeply by the method, and indeed conscientiousness, of the Inquisitorial procedure*'.⁴⁷ The Tribunal started to take action only after it was reasonably sure of its facts.⁴⁸ Rosa Haber of Gharb, Gozo, accused herself of summoning the devils who, on appearing, ordered her renounce God. Mgr Scotti wrote to the Pro-Inquisitor in Gozo, Don Giacomo Galea, to send him a report on her mental health and whether she lived in the fear of God.⁴⁹ No sentences were laid if not before a scrupulous examination of the circumstances, which was especially necessary in matters like witchcraft whose causes were occult.⁵⁰ The Holy Office proceeded with great circumspection and slowness since illnesses and disasters could be the result of natural causes. Catarina, therefore, who was supposed to have caused the death of Michele Arrigo's wife - 'her illness was not certainly natural as is evident to all those who saw her suffer' - was dismissed by Mgr Salviati with a simple warning not to molest Michele by word or

⁴³ AIM, Corr. 14, ff. 190r, 194r.

⁴⁴ See his article in the Encyclopedie, vol. V111, pp. 773-776.

⁴⁵ Angelo Turchini, Clero e Fedeli a Rimini in Età Post-Tridentina, p. 135.

⁴⁶ '*Pratticandosi nel Tribunale e cause del Sant'Ufficio più distinta ed esatta contestazione di quella che si suol praticare negli altri Tribunali*' - AIM, Corr. 14, f. 116r. For similar remarks see Yves Dossat, 'L'Inquisition Toulousaine de 1243 a 1273', Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France, vol. XXXVII, no. 130 (1951), pp. 188-191. Joseph Shatzmiller, 'Processi del Sant'Ufficio di Venezia contro Ebrei e Giudaizzanti', Studi Storici, Anno 28 (1987), p. 534. For a neat exposition of the correct procedure of the Holy Office see John Tedeschi, 'The Organization and Procedures of the Roman Inquisition : A Sketch', in his The Prosecution of Heresy, pp. 127-303.

⁴⁷ Cecil Roth, 'The Inquisitional Archives as a Source of English History', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, ser. 4, 18 (1935) p. 107,

⁴⁸ Luigi Fumi, 'L'Inquisizione Romana e lo Stato di Milano : Saggio di Ricerche nell'Archivio di Stato', Archivio Storico Lombardo, serie iv, anno 37 (1910), vol. 14, p. 175.

⁴⁹ AIM, Proc. 134A, f. 388r.

⁵⁰ Thomas Deutscher, 'The Role of the Episcopal Tribunal of Novara in the Suppression of Heresy and Witchcraft, 1563-1615', Catholic Historical Review, vol. 77, no. 3 (1991), pp. 419-420.

fact.⁵¹ Catholic Italy and Spain, therefore, were spared the great witch-hunts of northern Europe, and 'witches' were dealt with much leniency.⁵² The Inquisitors, here, followed not the illusions of the *Malleus Maleficarum* but the level-headedness of the tenth century *Canoni Episcopi*, which had castigated those who believed that women 'ride upon certain beasts with Diana, the goddess of pagans, ... and in the silence of the dead of night traverse great spaces of earth ...'⁵³

In the proceedings of the Inquisition there is no reference to the dungeons of the Holy Office being dirty and offensive like those of the *Castellania*;⁵⁴ and neither were conditions to be compared with those suffered by *padre Michel'Angelo Brincat* at his convent of Valletta. This Dominican friar, accused of homicide, was kept in a humid, dark and underground room, or a most narrow cave, seven spans by five, built for the purpose. His feet were tied firmly to the ground by a cross-bar; and since he made his 'personal needs' inside the cell the smell was horrible. The friar was dying a slow death, getting bread and water only three days a week but Mgr Gualtieri took pity on him and reported the matter to the Cardinal Inquisitors to take prompt action.⁵⁵ Again, terms of imprisonment were shortened or changed to less onerous ones. In shaming prisoners Inquisitors were to abide by the rule that even the lowliest people were entitled to the honour and reputation which belonged to their class. This was not just an act of justice but also of kindness and parents condemned to be flogged publicly were to be spared lest their daughters did not find a husband to marry them.⁵⁶ Not only was the right of

⁵¹ AIM, Proc. 123A, ff. 140r-176v.

⁵² For the great difference in treating witches north and south of the Pyrenees by lay judges and by the Spanish Inquisition see Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate. Basque Witch craft and the Spanish Inquisition (1609-1614)*, pp. 23-25.

⁵³ Alan C. Kors and Edward Peters, eds., *Witchcraft in Europe, 1100-1700. A Documentary History*, p. 29.

⁵⁴ John Howard, *An Account of the Principal Lazarettos in Europe*, p. 58.

⁵⁵ AIM, Corr. 94, ff. 75r-76r.

⁵⁶ 'Nel condannar alla frusta tal volta alcun reo, che abbia figliuole nubili et honeste, il Sant'Officio per la sua solita benignità, e circospezzione s'astiene di eseguire tal pena, e suole commutarla in altra, perchè

appeal granted to the accused but the Holy Congregation - 'ever ready to administer justice to any of the parties' - allowed them to go to Rome to present their case; and if their appeal was held they would be compensated for damages suffered.⁵⁷

It has already been sustained that the Roman Inquisition was more lenient both than the Spanish Holy Office⁵⁸ and the lay governments.⁵⁹ By the late eighteenth century the death penalty had long ceased to be meted out by the Inquisition in Malta but in the three-year-period, 1763-1765, no less than nine persons were sentenced to be hanged by the *Castellania*.⁶⁰ One of these was Saverio, who had stolen a silver crucifix from the parish church of Zebbug. He was condemned to life imprisonment but Grand Master Pinto overruled both the criminal judge and the public prosecutor and sent him to the gallows. Such summary justice⁶¹ was not only unknown to the Inquisitorial process⁶² but, what is still more significant, the Inquisitor would intercede with the Grand Master to spare the

essendo tal pena ignominosa, ridonderebbe in grave pregiudizio di dette figliuole, le quali difficilmente troverebbero da maritarsi - AIM, Misc. 2, p. 83.

⁵⁷ *'Sono hormai in Roma tutti i pretesi rei del bollimento della creatura abortiva d'Orsola Taleusa, e fanno gagliarde istanze appresso la Stà di N. S., et a questa Sacra Congne. d'esser ristorati dei danni, che hanno patito, e gridono contro Mons. Gori. Dall'altro lato li Dottori Xara, Farrugia, et Cancelliere Burlò si richiamano della loro carcerazione, e fanno istanza di presentarsi avanti questa Sacra Congne. Questi miei Emi. che sono pronti ad amministrar giustizia ad ognuna delli parti, han risoluto di consolare i medi. Xara, Farrugia, e Burlò, e di dargli licenza di venire a Roma'* - AIM, Corr. 9, f. 16r. For a copy of this letter see AIM, Proc. 61B, f. 935r.

⁵⁸ For the commotion caused in Milan when the people heard that the Roman Inquisition would be replaced by the Spanish see Luigi Fumi, 'L'Inquisizione Romana e lo Stato di Milano : Saggio di Ricerche nell'Archivio di Stato', *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, serie iv, anno 37 (1910), vol. 13, p. 364.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-120. Sicilians flocked to join the tribunal, so afraid were they of the lay courts, in particular of their system to proceed *ex abrupto*; this meant torturing the accused before concluding the *processo informaticvo* - Gio. Marrone, *La Schiavitù nella Società Siciliana dell'Età Moderna*, p. 219.

⁶⁰ *NLM, Libr.* 14, pp. 160, 165-171, 194, 204-205, 347, 473-4.

⁶¹ In Sicily people were so much afraid of the lay courts that they flocked to join the Tribunal. They hated in particular the Government's system to proceed *ex abrupto*, by which the accused was tortured before the necessary information had been gathered. See Giovanni Marrone, *La Schiavitù nella Società Siciliana dell'Età Moderna*, p. 219.

⁶² *'... inquisitori, i quali, da qualche eccezione in fuori, ci appaiono tutti uomini sereni, equanimi, alieni dagli eccessi e da atti avventati o impulsivi e, per quanto era possibile, disposti alla pietà* - Antonio Battistella, *Il S. Ufficio e la Riforma Religiosa in Bologna*, p. 83.

lives of the condemned.⁶³ In 1759 people were still being quartered⁶⁴ and the slaves who revolted against Pinto a decade before faced a most gruelling death; red-hot pincers tore their flesh and boiling pitch was poured into their wounds.⁶⁵ The Inquisition performed no such 'barbarities', and if it did practice judicial torture this did not mean, as it did in the lay court, one hour of the hoist or as many as fourteen hours on the rack.⁶⁶ The Holy Office rather preferred to instil a sense of guilt in the heretic and it was not through physical force that it directed its strategies of social control.⁶⁷

In judging the Inquisition though it is not just a matter of legal justice; moral justice, as the Tedeschis rightfully remind us,⁶⁸ was impossible⁶⁹ since its persecution of one's belief is unacceptable.⁷⁰ This institution, however, had lost its teeth and become impotent by the end of the eighteenth century.⁷¹ The spirit of the Enlightenment was at large and the Government launched a heavy attack on its remaining powers.⁷² Accordingly, when cited by the marshal the two novice Chaplains of Obedience, *Fra Saverio Vella* and *Fra Giovanni*

⁶³ For such an example see *NLM, Libr.* 14, pp. 165-168.

⁶⁴ *NLM, Libr.* 13, pp. 92-96.

⁶⁵ Carmel Testa, *The Life and Times of Grand Master Pinto, 1741-1773*, pp. 120-126.

⁶⁶ This is what John Howard wrote when he visited the Government's prisons in 1786: '*...there were nine prisoners. One of them, a Turk, had suffered the torture; in consequence of which a mortification had taken place, and the surgeon was applying the bark internally and externally: the second time I saw him he was worse; but I did not continue long enough in the island to know the event!*'- John Howard, *An Account of the Principal Lazerettos in Europe*, p.58.

⁶⁷ For such type of social control see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

⁶⁸ See their 'Note' to their English translation of Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms : The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, p. ix.

⁶⁹ Joseph H. Silverman, 'On Knowing Other People's Lives, Inquisitorially and Artistically', *Cultural Encounters: The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World*, Mary Elizabeth Perry and Anne J. Cruz, eds., pp. 172-3.

⁷⁰ For an impassioned plea in favour of religious toleration see Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, vol. 11, Book XXV, pp. 54-56.

⁷¹ A. Sophie Hasquenoph, 'L'Inquisition au XV¹¹e Siècle', *Historiens-Geographes*, vol. 84, no. 343 (1994), pp. 181-190.

⁷² On this topic see Frans Ciappara, 'Gio. Nicolò Muscat : Church-State Relations in Hospitaller Malta during the Enlightenment, 1786-1798', *Hospitaller Malta, 1530-1798. Early Modern Malta and the Order of St John of Jerusalem*, Victor Mallia-Milanes, ed., pp. 605-658.

Vidal, were ordered by Pinto to go first to the residence of his three auditors, who warned them that they could not keep their depositions secret from His Eminence.⁷³ In his turn De Rohan, as the absolute sovereign of Malta, demanded to know the names of those arrested by the Inquisition. Mgr Gallarati Scotti retorted that he recognised only the *Suprema* as his superior and that nothing revealed in his court of Faith could be disclosed but De Rohan still claimed that his sovereignty depended on no one.⁷⁴ It only needed the high hand of Napoleon for the Maltese to call themselves free men.

⁷³ *'Ieri avendo domandato licenza a Sua Emza. per portarmi qua a deporre, esso Emo. mi ha mandato dai Signori Uditori, dai quali, e da ciascuno di loro mi son portato nelle loro rispettive case, e gli ho significato di essere stato citato dal cursore di questo S. O. per fare una deposizione in materia di Sant'Officio in questo S. Tribale. e tutti e tre mi dissero, 'Badate bene, che non potete fare il giuramento del secreto del S. O. rispetto al Gran Maestro, come vostro Superiore, ma bensì rispetto a tutti gli altri particolari; e per tanto sono in oggi pronto a dare il mio giuramento del secreto riguardo agli altri particolari, ma non già a riguardo all'Emo. Sr. Gran Maestro che mi è Superiore' - AIM, Proc. 128B, ff. 651r-652v.*

⁷⁴ *AIM, Corr. 101, f. 270v.*

Appendix 1 - Proceedings for polygamy, 1743-54

Reference	Husband / Wife	First Marriage	Second Marriage
AIM, Proc. 120B, ff. 488r-520v.	Gio. Corso (Monaco)	Anna Maria (Monaco)	Catarina Bonomo (Senglea)
Ibid., ff. 1010r- 1017v	Francesco Mangilia _____	_____ (Milan)	Rosa Carnisi (Valletta)
Ibid., ff. 779r- 837v.	Gio. Battista Romania	Candida di Paola (Naples)	Diana Vassallo widow of Gio. Batta. Letari (Valletta)
Ibid., ff. 721r- 743v.	Maria (Cospicua)	Mattia Zeniti (Qormi)	_____
AIM, Proc. 120C, ff. 1319r-v.	Antonio Bughetti (Venice)	_____ (Palma, Sicily)	Paolica, widow of Antonio Bughetti (Valletta)
AIM, Proc. 121A, ff. 467r-471v.	Carolo Damiano (Toulouse)	Elena Sardi (Lodi)	Aloisia Carella (Agrigento)
AIM, Proc. 122A, ff. 119r-v.	Giacomo Cafielo (Sorrento)	Gionella di Palma (Naples)	Maria Scesa (Antipares)
Ibid., ff. 323r- 325v.	Abraham Brun (Holland)	_____ (Amsterdam)	Marcella (Senglea)
AIM, Proc. 122C, ff. 981r-1007v.	Margarita (Zabbar)	Pietro Farrugia (Cospicua)	Michel'Angelo Tanti (Valletta)
Ibid., ff. 1126r- 1152v.	Domenico Ognibene (Venice)	Regina Violena (Venice)	Silvestra Modesta (Cospicua)

Appendix 2 - Slaves redeemed by the Confraternità della Carità, Valletta

Reference	Date of Approval	Name of Slave	Residence
Confraternità della Carità, Libro Consulte 3			
f. 84r.	-	Gio. Gatt	Tripoli
ff. 86v, 88v.	4 July 1700	Gio. Andrea Camilleri	-
f. 91r.	-	Gio. Maria Bugeja	-
f. 147r.	5 Feb. 1708	Salvatore Habela	Tripoli
f. 152v.	14 Oct. 1708	Francesco Garsin	Constantinople
f. 158v.	23 Sept. 1709	Ludovico Riccabone	-
f. 162r.	16 March 1710	Giuseppe Martino	-
f. 169r.	23 Aug. 1711	Andrea Schembri	-
f. 169v.	-	Giacomo Di Matteo	-
f. 170v.	-	Francesco Galasso	-
f. 174r.	16 Oct 1712	Gio. Maria Griscti	-
f. 179r.	-	Agabito Cassar	-
Confraternità della Carità, Libro Consulte 4			
ff. 5r, 6v.	26 Aug. 1714	Gaetano Falson	Tripoli
f. 10v.	19 May 1715	Battista Azzupardo	Tripoli
f. 15r.	-	Francesco Gelfo, Pietro Magro	-
f. 19v.	-	Unknown	-
f. 20v.	-	Unknown	-

Reference	Date of Approval	Name of Slave	Residence
f. 24r.	-	Giovanni Zarb Aloisio Spiteri	Constantinople Algiers
f. 31r.	-	Gio. Battista Xerri	Tunis
f. 56r.	23 Feb. 1722	Gio. Di Gregorio	Tunis
ff. 66v - 67v.	21 March 1723	Tomaso Norvaes	Constantinople
ff. 75r, 88v.	29 Oct 1724	Giuseppe Hagius	'Barbary'
ff. 79r, 80r.	19 March 1724	Francesco Cachia	Tripoli
ff. 88r - v.	22 Oct. 1724	Antonio Mulletti	Rhodes
f. 101v.	-	Antonio Mifsud	Tripoli
f. 104v.	-	Unknown	-
f. 114r.	22 Feb. 1728	Antonio Sideri	Tripoli
ff. 125r - v.	13 March 1729	Gio. Battista Caruana	Rhodes
ff. 144r - v.	2 June 1732	Giacomo Muscat	-
ff. 146v, 148r.	14 Jan. 1733	Gregorio Micallef	Tunis
f. 157v.	-	Unknown	-
ff. 159v - 160r.	23 Jan. 1735	Gio. Maria Mercieca	Tunis
f. 160r.	-	Giacomo Vella	-
f. 177r.	13 Dec 1739	Giuseppe Frendo	Tunis
ff. 177v - 178r.	31 Jan 1740	Alessandro Cornelio	Algiers
f. 187v.	-	Unknown	-

Reference	Date of Approval	Name of Slave	Residence
f. 197r.	-	Unknown	-
f. 191v.	-	Raffaele Borg	-
f. 194v.	-	Unknown	-
Confraternità della Carità, Libro Consulte 5			
p.14	14 March 1745	Fr. Giuseppe Calleja Bartolomeo Vella	-
p. 29	10 July 1746	Andrea Delandres	-
p. 48	26 May 1748	Antonio Longaro	Rhodes
p. 49	15 Aug. 1748	Filippo Portelli	Constantinople
p. 62	2 Jan 1752	Pietro Cutajar	-
p. 65	12 Nov. 1752	Natale Gerada	Algiers
p. 65	11 March 1753	Antonio Riccio	-
p. 75	7 July 1754	Andrea Tramblett	Tunis
p. 84	5 Oct. 1755 25 July 1756	Giuseppe Farrugia Michelangelo di Lorenzo	-
pp. 99, 101	19 June 1757	Giorgio Salerno	Tripoli
p. 103	20 Nov. 1757	Carlton Belin	Tripoli
pp. 107 - 8	14 Jan. 1759	Andrea Galea Giuseppe Chircop	-
pp. 119 - 120	16 March 1760	Grazio Zammit Giulio Camilleri	-

Reference	Date of Approval	Name of Slave	Residence
p. 125	31 May 1761	Silvestro Abdilla	Tripoli
p. 131	26 Sept. 1762	Gio. Andrea Recupero Rosario Garsina	Tripoli
p. 138	6 May 1764	Gio. Lombardo	Tripoli
p. 170	10 Oct. 1773	Gio. Battista Bonello	Tripoli
p. 173	11 June 1775	Gio. Battista Agius	Tunis
p. 178	10 March 1776	Gio. Battista Falson	Algiers
p. 182	5 Jan. 1777	Francesco Hellul	Algiers
p.184	13 April 1777	Giuseppe Bonello Lorenzo Mamo	-
p. 211	4 July 1779	Giuseppe Diacono	Tripoli
p. 217	26 Sept. 1779	Giuseppe Misura	-
p. 223	21 May 1780	Giuseppe Brincat Giuseppe Clichina	-
p. 233	-	Unknown	Tripoli
p. 235	-	Giuseppe Borg	Tripoli
p. 345	30 Dec. 1781	Antonio Abela Francesco Stafrac	Tripoli
p. 353	3 March 1782	Antonio Bonel	Tripoli
p. 372	24 Sept. 1786	Salvatore Grech	Tunis
p. 392	14 Oct. 1787	Francesco Aquilina	-
p. 393	23 Dec. 1787	Giovanni Stafrac	Girba

Reference	Date of Approval	Name of Slave	Residence
p. 523	1788	-	-
p. 606	1790	-	-
pp. 617 - 8	20 Feb 1791	Antonio Bondi	Tunis
pp. 622 - 624	12 March 1791	Giovanni Farrugia Angelo Imbrol	Tunis
pp. 702 - 3	10 June 1792	Giuseppe Bugeja	Tunis
pp. 742 - 744	24 March 1793	Giuseppe Calleja Mariano Bardon	Tunis Girba
pp. 782 - 784	16 March 1794	Francesco Serena	Tunis

Appendix 3 - Prisoners of the Inquisition, 1743 - 1798

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
AIM., Proc. 120A ff. 29r-56v	23.iii.1745	Habidrahman Safran (slave)	Blasphemy	-	-	-
Ibid. ff. 57r-87v	22.iii.1745	Nunzio Lafighera (galley convict. Catania)	Blasphemy	-	-	2.x.1745.
Ibid. ff. 92r-109v.	17.iv.1744	Geronima Zammit (Cospicua. Widow)	Blasphemy;	-	-	10.vii.1744
Ibid. ff. 114r-133v.	9.iv.1744	Lorenzo Rizzo (Christian slave of the Order. Misurata)	Blasphemy	-	-	24.vii.1744
Ibid. ff. 196r-223v.	28.i.1745	Paolo de tanse' (Christian slave of the Order. Tripoli of Barbary)	Blasphemy	-	imprisonment ad arbitrio	15.iv.1745.
Ibid. ff. 248r-293v	17.i.1745	Paolo d'Andreana (Christian slave of the Order)	Blasphemy	-	-	15.iv.1745
Ibid. ff. 340r-343v	9.ix.1744	Gio. Maria Rapa (Xeuchia)	Blasphemy	-	-	17.ix.1744

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
AIM, Proc. 120B, ff. 488r-520v	28. ii. 1744	Luca Damato (Senglea)	False witness	-	-	-
	-	Gio. Corso (Monaco)	Polygamy	-	Imprisonment changed into exile	4. i. 1745
		Antonio Lajosa (de Scarampi. Christian slave of the Order.	Blasphemy	-	-	30. iii. 1744
Ibid. ff. 539r-570v	13. xii. 1743	Pietro Cristoforo (Vittoriosa)	Revealed secret of the Holy Office	-	-	7. ix. 1744
Ibid. ff. 571r-624v	8. v. 1744	Gio. Battista Lombardini (Bergamese but married and living at Vittoriosa)	Revealed secret of the Holy Office	-	-	7. ix. 1744
-	28. v. 1744					
Ibid. ff. 779r-837v	2. viii. 1743	Gio. Battista Romania (Naples)	Polygamy	stanghetta	To serve on galleys for five years with chain tied to his foot.	4. i. 1744
Ibid. ff. 862r-953v	4. vii. 1747	Fr Stefano Mario Perni Spaccaforro (Sicily)	Sorcery	-	To be detained for life at the Ospedale degli Invalidi, Floriana, with chain tied to his foot.	22. xi. 1747

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
Ibid. ff. 954r-923v	9. v. 1748	Costantino di Michele (Greek)	Blasphemy	-	-	5. x. 1748
Ibid. ff. 924r-977v	26. iv. 1748	Giuseppe Lopez (Algiers)	Apostasy	-	-	5. x. 1748
Ibid. ff. 978r-1003v	27. xi. 1747	Giannobio Fenech (Valletta. Forzato)	Blasphemy	-	-	29. ii. 1748
AIM, Proc. 120C, ff. 1036r-1059v.	10. v. 1746	Aloisio Castellare (Christian slave of the Order. Costantinople)	Blasphemy	-	Put to shame cum mordacchio	27. vi. 1746
Ibid. ff. 1060r-1093v.	15. x. 1745	Gio. Buttigieg (Rabat, Gozo)	Blasphemy	-	-	4. iv. 1746
Ibid. ff. 1166r-1195v	17. vi. 1746	Mihammet (Alexandra. Slave)	Sorcery	-	-	27. x. 1746
Ibid. ff. 1457r-1478v.	5. vii. 1747	Michel/Angelo Costa (Senglea. Baker)	Heretical Proposition	-	Imprisoned at Inquisitor's discretion	25. xi. 1747
AIM, Proc. 121A, ff. 59r-118v.	9. x. 1745	Camillo d'Ambrogio (Valletta)	Sorcery	-	Imprisoned for one year	19. x. 1746
Ibid. ff. 119r-188v	6. iv. 1745	Pietro Arlio (Avignone. Merchant)	Heretical Propositions	-	Imprisoned for six months in the Capuchin convent, Floriana	9. iii. 1746

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
Ibid. ff. 225r-56v	11. x. 1745	Maruzzo Camilleri (Vittoriosa. Sailor)	Heretical Propositions	-	Imprisoned for two months and to fast on bread and water twice a week.	10. v. 1746
Ibid. ff. 257r-280v	4. vii. 1747	Francesco Farrugia (Senglea)	Blasphemy	-	-	20. xi. 1747
Ibid. ff. 283r-303v	28. xi. 1747	Hussein (Tunis. Slave of the Order)	Blasphemy	-	Shame	25. ii. 1748
Ibid. ff. 472r-515v	4. i. 1747	Hac Homor (Sale. Slave of Giacomo Cachia)	Sorcery	-	Whipped in Valletta	3. vi. 1747
Ibid. ff. 516r-558v	21. i. 1747	Cassem (Africa. Slave of the Order)	Sorcery	-	Whipped in Valletta	3. vi. 1747
AlM, Proc. 121B, ff. 559r-611v	18. v. 1748	Giorgio Serra (Casal Attard. Tavern keeper)	Blasphemy	Stanghetta	Shame	8. x. 1748
Ibid. ff. 612r-638v	27. iv. 1748	Francesco Mizzi (Casal Curmi)	Attempted bigamy	-	To stay in prison ad arbitrio	5. x. 1748.
Ibid. ff. 639r-656v	5. x. 1748	Isaac (Jew from Griba. Slave on Order's galleys)	Sorcery	-	Stay on galley with chain to his foot at Inquisitor's discretion)	10. ii. 1749.

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
Ibid. ff. 657r-695v	14.i.1747	Domenico Gauci (Naxxar. Farmer)	Sorcery	-	Imprisoned for one month	3.vi.1747
Ibid. ff. 702r-731v	4.i.1747	Domenico dell'Arena (Sailor from Naples)	Sorcery	-	Imprisoned for one month	3.vi.1747
Ibid. ff. 780r-818v	2.iii.1749	Andrea Attard (Mosta. Farmer)	Heretical Propositions	Corda	To stay in prison ad arbitrio	19.vii.1749
Ibid. ff. 819r-854v	20.iii.1749	Vincenzo de Montende (Algiers. Christian slave of the Order)	Blasphemy	Corda	Shame	14.ix.1749
Ibid. ff. 855r-882v	30.vii.1748	Antonio Parton (Valletta. Sailor)	Apostasy	-	-	17.xii.1748
Ibid. ff. 940r-968v	20.x.1749	Michel'Angelo de Fenech (Cairo. Slave)	Heretical Propositions	Corda	-	19.i.1750
Ibid. ff. 969r-1009v	2.x.1749	Francesco Palmeri (Scigiliano, Catania. Forzato for life)	Blasphemy	Stanghetta	Whipped	20.i.1750
Ibid. ff. 1039r-1060v.	15.x.1748	Francesco Molina (Salerno. Buonavoglia)	Blasphemy	-	-	10.ii.1749

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
Ibid. ff. 1061r-1078v	16. xi. 1748	Agostino de Gignac (Algiers. Slave of the Order serving at the hospital)	Blasphemy	-	-	10. ii. 1749
AIM, Proc. 121C, ff. 1079r-1100v	15. x. 1748	Gio. Paolo Cortis (Casal Lia. Labourer)	Blasphemy	-	-	10. ii. 1749
Ibid. ff. 1101r-1122v	4. i. 1747	Aloisio de Castellana (Constantinople. Christian slave of the Order)	Blasphemy	-	Whipped	3. vi. 1747
Ibid. ff. 1203r-1250v	3. iii. 1749	Michel'Angelo Falzon (Vittoriosa. Sailor)	Blasphemy	-	-	-
AIM, Proc. 122B, ff. 440r-585v	2. vi. 1744	Fr Rosario Hagius, O.P. Andrea Gauci (Rabat, Malta. Labourer)	Solicitation	-	Imprisoned for 3 years and never to hear confessions and say Mass	6. xi. 1745
Ibid., ff. 738r-807v	18. x. 1751		Blasphemy	-	Shame	8. i. 1752

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
Ibid., ff. 766r-807v.	19.xi.1750	Gio. Maria Caruana (Casal Safi. Labourer)	Blasphemy	-	Imprisoned at Inquisitor's discretion and to fast once a week on bread and water	14.viii.1751
Ibid., ff. 808r-855v.	27.xi.1750	Francesco de Fusco (Tiano, Naples. Forzato)	Blasphemy	-	Shame	16.viii.1751.
AIM, Proc. 122C, ff. 856r-919v	2.vi.1752	Antonio Damato (Salerno. Forzato)	Blasphemy	-	-	10.xi.1752
Ibid., ff. 920r-962v	9.i.1753	Giuseppe Saliba. (Valletta. Carpenter)	Blasphemy	-	-	11.v.1753
-	11.1.1753	Agostino Farrugia (Valletta. Soldier)	Blasphemy	-	-	11.v.1753
Ibid., ff. 1008r-1029v.	12.i.1752	Agostino de Gignach (Sale'. Christian slave of the Order)	Blasphemy	-	Stay in prison at Inquisitor's discretion	21.v.1752

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
Ibid., ff. 1030r-1113v	10. xii. 1750	Eustachio Ferrari (Aquila. Forzato)	Sorcery	-	Stay in prison at Inquisitor's discretion, and to fast on bread and water twice a week.	16. viii. 1751
Ibid., ff. 1030r-1113v.	17. xii. 1750	Leonardo Palumbo (Naples. Forzato)	Sorcery	-	Shame	9. viii. 1751
Ibid., ff. 1153r-1176v.	14. x. 1751	Errico Pace	Blasphemy	-	-	23. xii. 1751
Ibid., ff. 1177r-1212v	14. i. 1752	Giuseppe Pace (Citta' Pinto)	Blasphemy	Corda	Shame	24. v. 1752
Ibid., ff. 1213r-1261v	17. ii. 1752	Casseem (Sale'. Slave of the Order)	Sorcery	-	In slave prison at Inquisitor's discretion with chain tied to his foot.	15. v. 1752
Ibid., ff. 1213r-1261v	19. v. 1752	Gaetano Delia (Valletta)	Sorcery	-	-	-
Ibid., ff. 1262r-1283v	12. i. 1752	Isaac (Jew from Girba. Slave of the Order)	Sorcery	-	With iron chain tied to his foot on the galley	15. v. 1752
AIM, Proc. 123A, ff. 23r-53v.	11. xii. 1754	Michel'Angelo Peluso (Calabria. Forzato)	Blasphemy	-	Shame	11. v. 1755

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
AIM, Proc. 123B, ff. 653r-702v	6.iii.1755	Vincenzo Vedovelli / Giuseppe Ofioman (Venice)	Sorcery	-	-	19.iv.1755
AIM, Proc. 124B, ff. 685r-798v	20.iii.1758	Aloisio Lochi (Pharmacist, BKara)	Reading of prohibited books	-	-	23.vi.1759
AIM, Proc. 124C, ff. 1618r-1671v	24.ix.1756	Lorenzo Spiteri (Cospicua, Cotton beater)	Blasphemy	-	-	6.iv.1757
AIM, Proc. 125A, ff. 1r-41v	14.iv.1757	Antonio di Matteo (San Lorenzello, Abruzzo, Forzato)	Blasphemy	Corda	Shame	30.x.1757
Ibid., ff. 42r-98v	11.vi.1756	Gio. di Lorenzo (Vittoriosa, Prison keeper)	Violated secret of the Inquisition	-	Removed	15.ix.1756
Ibid., ff. 98r-193v	15.i.1756	Giuseppe de Sacco (Free neophyte, Cospicua)	Sorcery	-	-	16.i.1756
Ibid., ff. 98r-193v	15.i.1756	Antonia Abela (Valletta)	Sorcery	Stanghetta	Imprisoned for two months and then exiled from all the cities	20.ix.1756

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
Ibid., ff. 98r-193v	23.i.1756	Giuseppe Saverio di Bisignani / Zifraff (Algiers. Slave of the Order)	Sorcery	Corda	Whipped	10.vii.1756
Ibid., ff. 194r-225v	19.ix.1755	Andrea Cartucci 'Politi' (Ischia. Corsair)	Bigamy	-	-	13.x.1756
Ibid., ff. 226r-316v	24.vii.1759	Simone Quantuccio (Cardito, Reggio di Calabria. Shoemaker)	Bigamy	-	-	30.viii.1760
Ibid., ff. 317r-348v	9.xi.1754	Carlo de Ruffo (Tunis. Christian slave of the Order)	Blasphemy	-	Imprisoned at Inquisitor's discretion	16.iv.1756
Ibid., ff. 349r-400v	8.x.1756	Giovanni Rizzo (Tunis. Christian slave of the order)	Eating meat on prohibited days	-	Imprisoned at Inquisitor's discretion	25.iii.1757
Ibid., ff. 405r-458v	30.iii.1758	Giovanni Satalia (Bari. Forato)	Blasphemy	-	-	4.ix.1758
AIM, Proc. 125B, ff. 459r-527v	24.iii.1757	Mehammet (Algiers. Slave of the Order)	Sorcery	-	Kept at the slave prison at Inquisitor's discretion	18.x.1757

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
Ibid., ff. 528r-594v	7. iv. 1755	Fortunato Mizzi (Valletta. Shoemaker and sailor)	Sorcery	-	-	28. vi. 1755
Ibid., ff. 528r-594v	9. iv. 1755	Michele Busuttil (Valletta. Tanner and sailor)	Sorcery	-	-	28. vi. 1755
		Imhammet 'Tuppan' (Jerusalem. Slave of the Gran Visconte)	Sorcery	-	Whipped	8. i. 1756
Ibid., ff. 642r-755v	10. vi. 1755	Fr Gio. Battista Balzani (Valletta)	Solicitation	Stanghetta	Imprisoned at Inquisitor's discretion	-
Ibid., ff. 768r-906v	7. vi. 1758	Leonardo Farrugia (Smirne. Christian slave of the Order)	Sorcery	-	Whipped	5. i. 1759
Ibid., ff. 768r-906v	8. vi. 1758	Marco di Vincenzo (Constantinople. Christian slave of the Order)	Sorcery	-	Whipped	5. i. 1759
Ibid., ff. 768r-906v	4. viii. 1758	Salvatore di Giacomo (Alaia. Christian slave of the Order)	Sorcery	Corda	Whipped	5. i. 1759

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
Ibid., ff. 768r-906v	28. viii. 1758	Gio. Battista Grima (Smirne. Christian slave of the Order)	Sorcery	Stanghetta	Whipped	5. i. 1759
AIM, Proc. 125C, ff. 1152r-1180v	30. iii. 1758	Innocenzo Ciaulone (Napoli. Forzato)	Blasphemy	-	-	4. ix. 1758
Ibid., ff. 1237r-1286v	9. i. 1759	Ignazio di Giovacchino Villaneida (Bona. Christian slave of the Order)	Sorcery	Corda	-	-
Ibid., ff. 981r-1021v	13. xi. 1755	Giovacchino Battista (Jerba. Christian slave of the Order)	Sorcery	Corda	Shame	18. vii. 1756
Ibid., ff. 1022r-1135v	27. iv. 1753	Anna Maria d'Almeida	Attempted apostasy	-	-	14. xii. 1754
Ibid., ff. 1022r-1135v	27. iv. 1753	Michel/Angelo d'Almeida (Tripoli)	Attempted apostasy	-	-	14. xii. 1754
AIM, Proc. 126B, ff. 833r-986v	20. vi. 1765	Rosa Xicluna	Bigamy	Corda	-	26. iii. 1767
Ibid., ff. 833r-986v	20. vi. 1765	Angelo Bonnici (Casal Balzan)	False witness	-	Public works for three years	-

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
Ibid., ff. 833r-986v	20. vi. 1765	Grazio Borg (B'kara)	False witness	-	To rest in prison till next Christmas	-
Ibid., ff. 833r-986v	27. v. 1766	Giuseppe Calleja (Floriana)	False witness	-	-	26. iii. 1767
AIM, Proc. 127A, ff. 259r-277v	? ix. 1765	Vittorio Ursi	Sorcery	-	-	23. x. 1765
Ibid., ff. 430r-501v	11. ii. 1763	Giuseppe Angelo de Durini (Algiers. Free neophite)	Sorcery	-	-	25. vi. 1764
AIM, Proc. 127B, ff. 504r-590v	18. v. 1759	Domenica Vassallo (Rabat, Malta)	Bigamy	-	-	-
Ibid., ff. 504r-590v	18. v. 1759	Michele Camilleri (Qormi)	False witness	-	-	-
Ibid., ff. 672r-812v	22. i. 1764	Agostino Cipriotto (Vittoriosa)	Sorcery	-	Imprisoned at Inquisitor's discretion	-
Ibid., ff. 672r-812v	22. i. 1764	Giuseppe Pennese / Pugliesi (Messina)	Sorcery	Stanghetta	Imprisoned at Inquisitor's discretion	-

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
Ibid., ff. 813r-850v	27.ii.1766	Fr Celestino (Friar Minor, Syracuse)	Sorcery	-	-	8.vi.1766
Ibid., ff. 851r-953v	11.ii.1761	Ferdinando Barbieri (Naples, Forzato)	Sorcery	-	-	8.xii.1761
Ibid., ff. 851r-953v	11.ii.1761	Angelo Rocca (Erula, Naples, Forzato)	Sorcery	-	-	8.xii.1761
Ibid., ff. 954r-1008v	7.xii.1759	Tomaso Coppola (Monte San Giovanni, Papal States, Forzato)	Blasphemy	-	Stay imprisoned for another month and fast twice a week on bread and water	8.i.1761
Ibid., ff. 1058r-1180v	3.iv.1765	Giuseppe Arena (Scicli, Hermit)	Sorcery	Stanghetta	Imprisoned at Inquisitor's discretion	2.ii.1766
AIM, Proc. 128B, ff. 535r-584v	26.xi.1767	Francesco Caarullo (Monteleone, Calabria, Forzato)	Sorcery	Stanghetta	Loaded with chains for two years at slave prison	-
AIM, Proc. 129, ff. 342r-407v	4.xi.1769	Alessandro Massetti (Rome, Soldier)	Heretical propositions	-	Imprisoned at Inquisitor's discretion	13.iii.1770

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
AIM, Proc. 130, ff. 55r-75v	5. v. 1773	Paolo de Agius (Tripoli. Free Neophite)	Apostasy	-	-	Died in hospital on 17. viii. 1773
Ibid., ff. 204r-255v	20. vi. 1771	Gio. d'Anastasi (Saïda. Christian slave of the Order)	Attempted apostasy	-	Detained at Capuchin's convent, Gozo, at Inquisitor's discretion	-
Ibid., ff. 256r-286v	6xii. 1772	Giuseppe Maria di Ludovico (Levantine. Free neophite)	Sorcery	-	-	19. i. 1773
Ibid., ff. 287r-324v	7. xii. 1772	Gio. di Paola (Cospicua)	Blasphemy	-	-	19. i. 1773
Ibid., ff. 367r-465v	16. vii. 1771	Eugenia Dimech	Bigamy	Corda	imprisoned at her own house at Inquisitor's discretion	11. ix. 1772
Ibid., ff. 367r-465v	19. vii. 1771	Francesco Bonello (B'Kara)	False witness	-	shame	11. ix. 1772
AIM, Proc. 131A, ff. 155r-210v	7. vi. 1774	Fr Gesualdo Azzarello (Augustinian friar)	Solicitation	-	-	11. vi. 1775
Ibid., ff. 237r-262v	25. ii. 1774	Fr Girolamo da Pavia	Apostasy	-	-	6. vi. 1774

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
AIM, Proc. 131B, ff. 549r-602v	10.ix.1776	Gio. Battista de Grett (Bonville, Savoy)	Deism	-	-	20.i.1777
AIM, Proc. 132A, ff. 151r-179v	28.xii.1777	Antonio Cagliaresi (Livorno)	Bigamy	-	-	1.ii.1778
Ibid., ff. 394r-413v	13.x.1778	Fedele Zammit (Gozo)	Apostasy	-	-	2.xi.1779
AIM, Proc. 132B, ff. 800r-879v	2.iv.1781	Domenico Rainieri / Bruno Majorana (Guardavalle, Naples. Soldier)	Sorcery	-	to stay in prison at Inquisitor's discretion	17.vii.1781
Ibid., ff. 893r-906v	25.iv.1781	Salvatore Giurne (Cospicua. Sailor)	Apostasy	-	-	2.v.1781
AIM, Proc. 133B, ff. 485r-587v	30.iv.1778	Gaetano Revers (Valletta. Hairdresser)	Reading prohibited books	Corda	Imprisoned for one year	-
Ibid., ff. 775r-801v	-	Francesco Bonanno (Forzato)	Sorcery	-	Whipped	-
AIM, Proc. 133C, ff. 877r-920v	19.i.1780	Ibraimo (Slave of the Order)	Sorcery	-	Imprisoned at Inquisitor's discretion with chain tied to his feet	-

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
Ibid., ff. 937r-977v	29. xii. 1779	Hac Hajni (Slave of the inn-keeper at the slave prison)	Sorcery	-	-	17. i. 1780
Ibid., ff. 937r-977v	29. xii. 1779	Hac Ali (Cousin of the above. Slave of the Order)	Sorcery	-	-	17. i. 1780
Ibid., ff. 978r-1068v	24. xi. 1779	Pasquale Caiasso (Lanzano, Naples. Forzato)	Blasphemy	-	Shame	2. iv. 1780
Ibid., ff. 1161r-1201v	24. v. 1782	Gio. Maria Zammit (Casal Lia. Beggar)	Attempted apostasy	-	-	8. vi. 1780
Ibid., ff. 1274r-1428v	6. ii. 1778	Ibraimo (Slave of the Order)	Sorcery	-	-	3. i. 1779
Ibid., ff. 1274r-1428v	25. ii. 1779	Antonio Cremona (Cospicua. Porter)	Sorcery	-	To keep Cospicua and Valletta as prison	29. iii. 1779
AlM, Proc. 136A, ff. 15r-26v	6. viii. 1793	Gio. Maria Vassallo (Mosta)	Tearing of holy images	-	-	12. viii. 1793
Ibid., ff. 70r-96v	2. xii. 1794	Fr Salvatore Bonnici (Archpriest of Senglea)	Revealing of the secret of Holy Office	-	-	2. xii. 1794

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
Ibid., ff. 105r-116v	1. iii. 1793	Salvatore Cauchi (Citta' Rohan)	Contempt of church dignitaries)	-	-	1. iii. 1793
Ibid., ff. 145r-163v	7. vii. 1794	Angelo Mifsud (B'Kara)	Blasphemy	-	-	19. vii. 1794
Ibid., ff. 384r-393v	9. ii. 1795	Michele Tabone (Cospicua)	Blasphemy	-	-	14. ii. 1795
AIM, Proc. 137, ff. 29r-42v	31. v. 1794	Gio. Farrugia (Senglea)	Sorcery	-	-	2. vi. 1794
Ibid., ff. 161r-188v	28. v. 1793	Lorenzo Borg (B'Kara)	Did not do his Easter duties	-	-	9. vi. 1793
Ibid., ff. 193r-324v	22. viii. 1793	Gaetano Schembri (Galizia, Free neophyte)	Sorcery	-	-	9. x. 1793
Ibid., ff. 193r-324v	24. iii. 1795	Gaetano Schembri	Sorcery	-	Shame	8. iv. 1795
Ibid., ff. 193r-324v	26. iii. 1797	Gaetano Schembri	Sorcery	-	Shame	15. v. 1797
AIM, Proc. 138, ff. 11r-24v	19. x. 1795	Francesco Parnis (Gudja)	Blasphemy	-	-	21. x. 1795
Ibid., ff. 191r-260v	i. xii. 1797	Nicolo' Haeili (Christian slave of the Order)	Sorcery	-	Shame	9. xii. 1797

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
Ibid., ff. 287r-297v	17. vi. 1796	Salvatore Scicluna (Rabat, Gozo)	Blasphemy	-	-	18. vi. 1796
AIM, Proc. 139, ff. 177r-220v	31. vii. 1795	Pasquale Torregiani (Forzato)	Sorcery	-	-	8. viii. 1795
Ibid., ff. 177r-220v	10. x. 1796	Pasquale Torregiani (Forzato)	Sorcery	-	Shame	17. x. 1796
Proc. 140, ff. 148r-153v	1. viii. 1797	Michele Calamatta (Vittoriosa. Passavolante)	Blasphemy	-	-	27. viii. 1797
Ibid., ff. 276r-301v	13. xi. 1797	Francesco Tabone (Rabat, Gozo. Tenant farmer)	Blasphemy	-	-	23. xi. 1797
AIM, Proc. 141, ff. 228r-369v	31. vii. 1795	Giuseppe di Vincenzo (Christian slave)	Sorcery	-	Shame	16. viii. 1795
AIM, Proc. 162, item 4	19. xi. 1750	Aloisio de Castellana (Christian slave of the Order)	Blasphemy	-	Whipped	12. viii. 1751

Reference	Date of Arrest	Name	Charge	Torture	Temporal Punishment	Acquittal
AIM, Proc. 163, ff. 1r-283v	26.ii.1774	Fr Emmanuele de Oliveira (Portuguese)	Attempted apostasy	-	-	21.ii.1775
Ibid., ff. 1r-283v	9.iii.1774	Giuseppe Manocle de Mathos Domenico Spangaro (Venetian cook of Fr Oliveira)	Attempted apostasy	-	-	1.vi.1774
Ibid., ff. 1r-283v	10.iii.1774	Innocenza Teresa (Wife of Giuseppe de Mathos)	Attempted apostasy	-	-	1.vi.1774
Ibid., ff. 1r-283v	11.iii.1774		Attempted apostasy	-	-	1.vi.1774

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