

CHRISTIAN SLAVES AT MALTA: 1271

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Given the dearth of documents concerning Maltese history before the late fourteenth century, the chance survival of even a single text is of some importance, especially when it was drawn up on the island itself.⁽¹⁾ It is true that for a period following 1268 documents concerning Malta were entered in the registers of the Angevin kings of Sicily, and that some of these do survive, mostly in copies, and still await systematic study.⁽²⁾ The manumission of 1271 published below was copied into a Pisan notarial formulary of which 24 paper folios survive, one document at folio 23 bearing the date 1306; the formulary inexplicably reached the archive of the Catalan Hospitallers now at Barcelona. The information contained seems reliable, though the formulae and phrases used at Malta in 1271 were, not unnaturally, unlike those found in a Pisan manumission of 1172 which are said to have come to constitute the standard Pisan form.⁽³⁾ Why a Pisan formulary apparently compiled after 1306 should have made use of a Sicilian text of 1271 from Malta in order to illustrate the correct form for freeing Christian slaves is unclear; the text could have been taken to Pisa by a notary, possibly the Angelo of the text, who had worked in Sicily. The fact is the more surprising as the manumission of 1271 follows immediately, and on the same folio, a brief and common form of manumission dated at Pisa and freeing another Christian girl apparently from Sardinia, *Maria de tali loco Judicatus arboree*.

The situation on Malta was doubtless unsettled following the Angevin occupation of 1268 and the continuing rivalries of Genoese and Pisans.⁽⁴⁾ The new administration was working regularly by 1271,⁽⁵⁾ though there were always dangers. In 1270 Guido De *Mohac* or Modica in southern Sicily complained that he and his sons, daughters and *familia* had been imprisoned after leaving Siracusa and being wrecked by a storm on the islet of Comino between Malta and Gozo, and on 18 December 1270 the King of Sicily ordered the Castellan of Malta and Gozo to release them.⁽⁶⁾ In 1275 Raymundus, *civis* of Malta and sailor or *marenarius*, was captured by Genoese pirates while sailing from Africa on the *barca* of Bonsignori de Gaudisana of Malta.⁽⁷⁾ It was on 4 March 1271 that Guido de *Moghio* freed a Christian woman named Margarita and her three daughters, Thomasina, Jacobina and Jannicta;

1. Summary of the sources in A. Luttrell, "Approaches to Medieval Malta," in *Medieval Malta: Studies on Malta before the Knights*, ed. A. Luttrell (London, 1975), 5-8. Charles Verlinden and Marco Tangherone most kindly supplied advice and information on particular points and problems.
2. *I Registri della Cancelleria Angioina ricostruiti*, ed. R. Filangieri et al. i - (Naples, 1950-).
3. Text and comment in C. Verlinden, *L'Esclavage dans l'Europe médiévale*, ii (Ghent, 1977), 396-397.
4. A. Luttrell, "Malta e Gozo: 1222-1268". *X Congreso de Historia de la Corona de Aragón: Comunicaciones I y 2* (Zaragoza, 1980); *idem*, "Malta e Gozo: 1268-1282". *XI Congreso di Storia della Corona d'Aragona*, iii (Palermo, 1984).
5. *Registri*, vi. 165-166, 193, 201, 213, 223-226.
6. *Ibid.*, vi. 187.
7. *Ibid.*, xiii. 109-110.

whether they had been imported from Africa, were baptized indigenous inhabitants of Malta, or came from elsewhere was not made clear. *Moghio* was not a name found in thirteenth-century Pisa⁽⁸⁾ and was conceivably an error for Mohac, in which case Guido de Mohac had been freed by 4 March 1271 and was manumitting members of his *familia* who had been imprisoned with him; that is merely a hypothesis. The slaves involved were clearly in a different situation from that of the white girl from Malta, named Maimuna and presumably an indigenous islander, who was sold by a Florentine to a Genoese, presumably at Genoa, in 1246;⁽⁹⁾ or from that of other Maltese slaves being sold by Sicilians or Florentines,⁽¹⁰⁾ or from that of Catherina *Romannica slava* or *sclava Romanitica*, presumably a Greek girl, who had been freed on Malta in or just before 1324 by the late Basilio Limera, *civis* of Malta.⁽¹¹⁾

The manumission was drawn up in proper legal form, using a Sicilian system of dating clauses, by Daniele de Danielis, public notary of Malta and Gozo, before Roberto de Ebulo or Eboli and Stefano de Matho judges of the *castrum* at Malta, and in the presence of witnesses whose names were not copied into the Pisan formulary. Daniele de Danielis is thus the earliest Latin notary recorded as acting on Malta. An Antonius de Cappillerio was a public notary there in 1274 and 1277,⁽¹²⁾ while no less than four notaries appeared in an act drawn up on Gozo in 1299; one of them, Teninus de Daniele, may have been a kinsman of the Daniele de Danielis of 1271.⁽¹³⁾ Thus in 1271, three years after an Angevin administration had been installed, the machinery of notary and *judices* was functioning on Malta.

Text from a Pisan notarial formulary in Barcelona, Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó, Gran Priorato de Catalunya, Armari 24 Legajo 6, f. 2-2v (4 March 1271)

Carta Liberationis Ancille, Angeli notarij camerari⁽¹⁴⁾

In nomine domini Amen Anno dominice incarnationis m̄cc̄l̄ix⁽¹⁵⁾ quarta⁽¹⁶⁾ die mensis marcij quartadecime iudictionis Regnante domino Serenissimo rege karolo dei gratia iuncto Rege Sicilie. ducatus apulee. Principatus Capue, Urbis Senatorie,⁽¹⁷⁾

8. Information from Marco Tangherone.
9. Text in R. Lopez, "La vendita d'una schiava di Malta a Genova nel 1248". *Archivio Storico di Malta*, vii (1936), 391.
10. Indirect references in M. Balard, "Remarques sur les Esclaves à Gênes dans la seconde moitié du XIIIe siècles," *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, lxxx (1968), 668-669. For Tuscan merchants dealing in girl slaves from Gozo, see R. Davidsohn, *Storia di Firenze*, vii (trans: Florence, 1977), 633-634.
11. Text in H. Bresc, "Malta dopo il Vespro Siciliano". *Melita Historica*, vi no. 3 (1974), 320-321.
12. A. Luttrell, "The Sale of Gumerin on Malta: 1318". *Estudios Históricos y Documentos de los Archivo de Protocolos*, vi (1978), 167.
13. Text in Bresc, 317-320.
14. MS: *camerini*?
15. Read m̄cc̄l̄x̄, since Indiction XIV and regnal year six give 1270 of the Incarnation, ie. 1271.
16. The scribe wrote *iiij* and then crossed it out.
17. Sic.

Andegauię prouincie, et fulch[uerii]⁽¹⁸⁾ comite Romani jmperij in tuscia per sanctam Romanam ecclesiam vicario generali. Anno vj sexto⁽¹⁹⁾ Regni eius feliciter Amen. A primordio conditionis humane liberum hominem natura produxit, sed humana necessitate postmodum exigente, bellica inter gentes est orta calamitas. exqua de jure gentium introducta est seruitus. per quam quod natura contulit, jniquitas bellorum obduxit. Ideoque necessaria fuit juris melioris origo. Per quod obductio facta detegitur et libertas obducta patet in publicum dum beneficio juris ciuilis manumissio celebratur. Hac igitur consideratione deducti. Nos Guido de moghio. Considerata fide deuotione et gratis seruitiis, que tu Margarita ancilla nostra, et filie tue Thomasia et Jacobina et Jannicta ancille nostre nobis diu et fideliter prestatis. Considerato etiam quod Xristiane estis et fideles nec debetis de jure laqueis seruitutis jnuolui. quam de seruitute xristi sanguis exiuit. Vt de tua et filiarum tuarum predictarum fide et fidelitate licteris⁽²⁰⁾ te et filias tuas predictas. In presentia Ruberti de Ebulo et Stephani de Natho judicum subscriptorum Castri malte⁽²¹⁾ notarij danielis de danielis puplici jnsularum maltij et Guadicii⁽²²⁾ notari⁽²³⁾ et testium subscriptorum ad hoc specialiter vocatorum et rogatorum manumissionis beneficio tanquem bene meritas. adornamus dantes vobis predictis Margarite et Thomasie. Jacobine et Jannicte et heredibus uestris in perpetuum plenissimam libertatem. Vosque de manu et potestate nostra dimictimus. Vt sine aliquo seruitutis obstaculo ab omni jugo seruitutis extote absolute et libere. et vt in Ciuitate et libertate letemini et habeatis personam et potestatem emendi. vendendi. permutandi obligandi uos et in iudicio persistendi. perhibendi testimonium. testamentum et quamlibet uoluntatem ultimam faciendi. exercendi omnia que posset quilibet ingenua exercere. Nullo uobis super premissis uel similibus preterite conditionis obstaculo existente. Vnde ad huius Rerum certitudinem et Robur inperpetuum ualituram. presens scriptum puplicum factum est de premissis per manus mei predicti notarij danielis nostrum que supra jndictione subscriptionibus et testium subscriptorum testimonio ac sigillo pendente eiusdem domini Guidonis muninime roborate. Actum etc. M̄.cc. etc. Jndictione etc. tali die etc.

18. Ie. Count of Provence, Anjou and Forcalquier.

19. Sic.

20. A word or words seem to have been omitted.

21. MS: *Māt Mālt.*

22. Read *Gaudittij*, ie. of Gozo.

23. Sic.