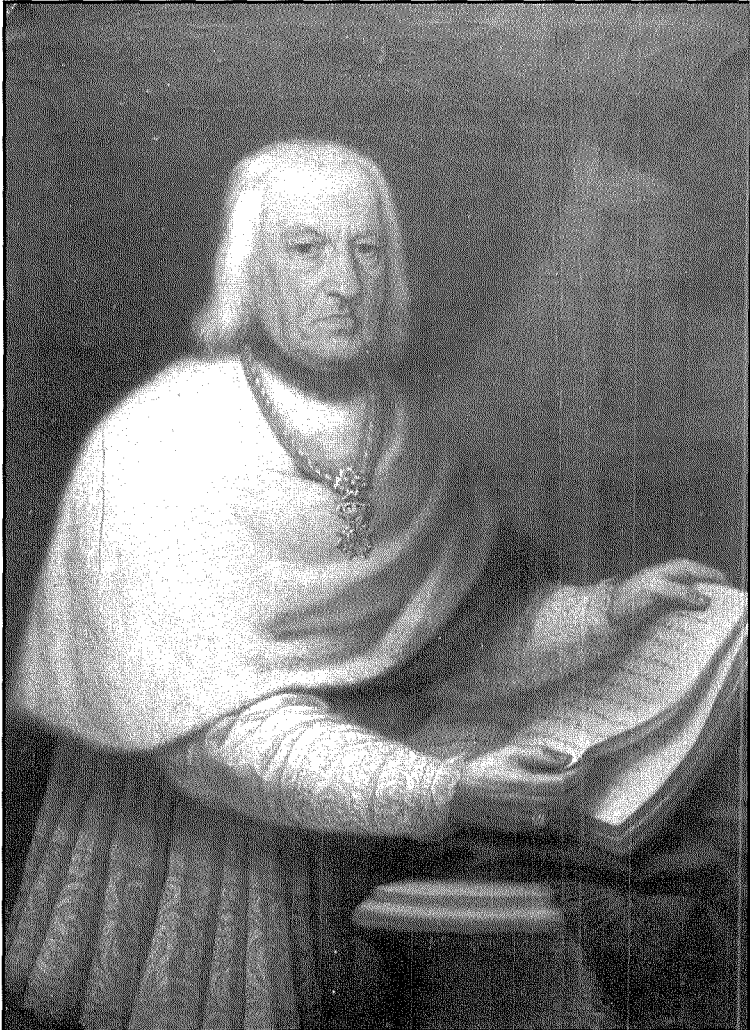


**LETTERS BY ARCHPRIEST S. CASSAR TO
HIS VILLAGE COMMANDERS DURING THE
FRENCH OCCUPATION OF GOZO
PART THREE**

6th September 1798 – 30th October 1798

by Dr. A. Bonnici. KM., MD.



*Archpriest Saverio Cassar
(Photo J. Cremona)*



Archpriest Cassar's Name appearing as Street Name in Victoria Gozo, and house where he lived.

Archpriest Saverio Cassar's letters to his Gozitan Village Commanders.

(continued Part Three)

This issue will conclude the publication of Archpriest Saverio Cassar's letters to his village commanders in Gozo, during the Gozitan insurrection against the French occupation forces during the period 6th September - 30th October, 1798.

From these letters we have learned about

- The difficulties Archpriest Saverio Cassar had to encounter, in organising the civil Gozitan population, into a fighting disciplined resistance, against Napoleon's mighty French occupying forces under Lieutenant - Colonel Lockey.
- The difficulties he faced in providing provisions - wheat, and its distribution to the civil population.
- The intrigue he had to deal with from Gozitan francophiles, especially espionage.

In this issue we will see him meeting Admiral Lord Nelson on board his flagship the 'Vanguard' to draft jointly the *capitulation document*.

He was indeed a remarkable man, a man of stature-fortitude-perseverance.

He was the first to demand for Gozo a separate Diocese from Malta, and between 1800 - 1805 he worked hard to obtain this, but was unsuccessful.

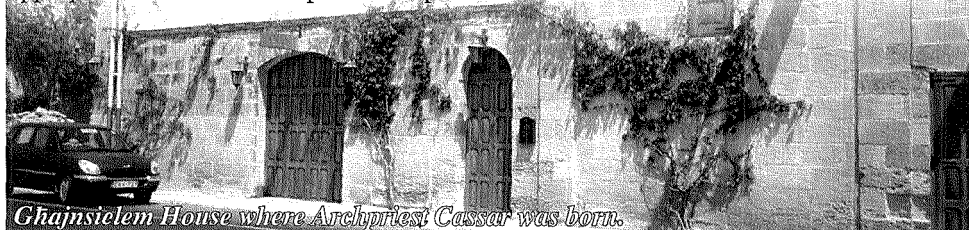
Because of his loyalty to King Ferdinand of the Two Sicilies, he did not consolidate a good relationship with Sir Alexander John Ball, and Charles Cameron, whose loyalties were obviously towards His Britanic Majesty.

He was ignored, side stepped and Notary Emanuel Vitale on 20th August, 1801 was appointed as Governor of Gozo by Commissioner Charles Cameron.

This was indeed painful for his ego and he died on the 16th December, 1805 a very disappointed man.

Although Archpriest Saverio Cassar's name appear as a street name and a marble plaque appears on the wall where he lived in Victoria, Gozo, I do not feel that he is properly commemorated in Gozo - *nobody is a profit in his own land*.

The time has arrived that we pay homage to this great son of Gozo, and an appropriate monument in a prominent position in Gozo be erected.



Ghajnsielem House where Archpriest Cassar was born.



Capt. Alexander John Ball, appointed by Rear. Admiral Sir H. Nelson K.B. to conduct the blockade of Malta, and who signed the French Capitulation document with Lieutenant Colonel Lockey, Commander of the French Troops, in the Castle of Gozo on the 28th October 1798.

Scritt. Sig. Comand.

Per l'affare degli scartucci ho parlato
col Sig. Arcip. quali mi disse, che devo
trattenersi qui al Rubbato. Se vi manca
poi polvere, per fare degli scartucci, mi
dico la quantità, che desidero, per essere
subito servita. Fa prego di mandarmi
altra volta le chiavi del Sig. Mallica,
avendo ancor ivi in sua casa delle carte
contro Michele Xicluna. Del qual favore
la ringrazio anticipatamente, mentre
spero che mi sarà fatto. Ed offerendomi
pronto a' suoi comandi, pieno di stima,

mi dice
Di. G. Deil. Scab. 23 Oct. 1798. Sin. P.
Cap. Tom. Sacca

Al Scritt. del Sig. Cap. Colo.
Sig. Liberato Grech Comand
di Casal

Caccia
P?

This letter is a follow up of the previous letter in which Commander F. Pace of Rabat, informs Commander Liberato Grech of Caccia that "With regard to the matter of the cartridges I have spoken with the Rev Archpriest, who instructs me that the cartridges are to remain in Rabat. If on the other hand you are short of powder for the cartridges, tell me the quantity you require, so that I will soon supply you".

"I ask you to send me next time the key of the house of Sig Mallia, as there are still in his house some papers against Michele Scicluna".

Commander A. Mallia was relieved of his post, and put under house arrest, as will be seen in letters of the 23rd October.

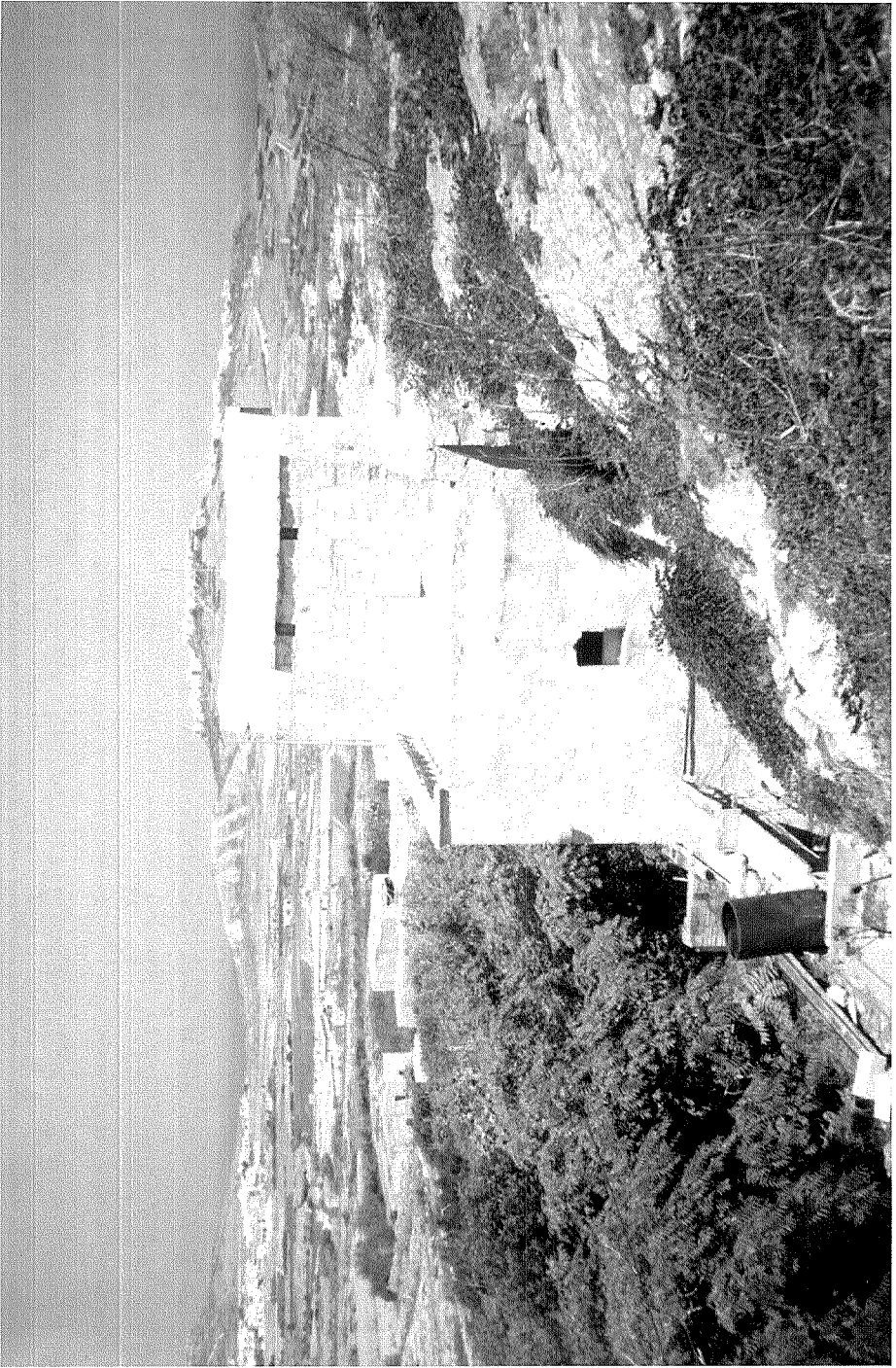
23rd October 1798, Bondi No 52

Sig^{to} Comandant Liberato Grech

Che il Sig^{to} Antonio Mallia si contenti nella sua famiglia o no, - ma che vada in locale Scicli non può essere, mentre si sa, che il Popolo di quel Casale, e dell'altro vicino sanno la posta vostra, e in conseguenza potrebbero suscitare qualche cosa che ci farei intorbidare; onde scelga il Sig^{to} Mallia Casale che gli piaccia, richiami in quello la sua famiglia, purchè non savano li detti Casali Scicli e Sannat; E poi bisogna procurare, che in quel dato Casale da lui scelto s'intenda carente, e un posto uscire fuori dal suo distretto. Secondo. che un popolo frammischiarsi in affari del Sovrano, e terzo, che un popolo per adito caminasse armato, o unirsi con gente armata. E questo mia lettera vorrei, che si palesasse al Popolo delli due Casali



Head Quarters of Archpriest Cassar on Mount Ghelmus(front entrance).



Head Quarters of Archpriest Cassar on mount Ghelmus.

Caccia, e Nadur in libertà delli quali per fine
lascio questo delicato affare;
Inquanto al danaro dell'oro del Santo già li
spedito un tercio per il Comandante arrestato
di postolo al momento il danaro. Long.
li 20. 8. 1908.

Al Sig-Comandante
Liberato Grech
Caccia.

In this letter Archpriest S. Cassar gives specific instructions to Liberato Grech, Commander of Caccia, how to deal with Antonio Mallia who was under house arrest: saying "that Sig Mallia influences his family is all right, but that he should go to the village of Xewkija is not permissible, as it is known that the people of that village, and nearby Sannat, like him too much, and in consequence may organise a resistance, which could give us trouble. Mr Mallia should choose any other village which pleases him, taking with him his family, as long as it is neither Xewkija nor Sannat".

"It is also necessary to instruct him, that in the village he chooses, he should consider himself prisoner, and that he will not be able to go out of the district. Secondly that he will not be involved in Government affairs, and thirdly that he will not carry arms for the time being, or join other armed men. This letter to be communicated to the people of the villages of Caccia and Nadur, and leave it to them to deal with this delicate matter."

"Re the money for the barley for Gharbo, I have given my advice to the Commander advising him that he is to keep the money for the moment".

Perill. di Sig. Comand. di Casal Accia

Prendo parte alle S. L. Perill. che il sig. Antonio Malla mi fece sentire che voleva Egli passare a coabitare con sua famiglia nel Casal Accia, Io non arbitro di dare tale permesso, Perciò la prego di farmi sentire il loro sentimento, prevenendoli d'aver dato anche parte al Dno Sig. Scrip. dal quale attendo l'Oracolo; Ed offrendomi ai loro ordini, e con parziale stima mi dico.

Del S. L. Perill.

Casal Accia 23. Ottobre 1798

In risposta della vostra stimatissima da parte del Popolo si lascia in mano del Sig. Antiprete come fare
 lui, Francesco Attard Comand. del Popolo.

D. S. L. vero
 Liberato Grech

Alli Revill. Sig. Comandanti
 Del Casale
 Nadur

In this letter Commander Liberato Grech, Commander of Casal Caccia, informs the Commander of Nadur that: "Mr Antonio Mallia had informed him that he would like to proceed and live together with his family in the village of Xewkija". Grech says that "he cannot decide and give such permission" and therefore asks the Nadur Commander to let him know what he thinks about this.

"I have informed them, that I have informed the Archpriest about this, and will let them know the reply."

"In reply to your esteemed letter re the involvement of the people I suggest that this is left in the hands of the Archpriest, as F. Attard Commander of Nadur has done".

Undated ? 24th October 1798 Bondi No 43

Sig. Comandante Liberato Grech
 Rispondo alla sua: e l'edico, che nel
 passato maj: e maj just qwer, che
 si potti il Sig. Mallia, perche' serano
 brengimi li uomeati? dell' quito che
 goderi qlla geata, qwerato aruni a
 conto tale soggetto; Oude o l'efti doue

Si trova, o andare al Nadur, o al Zebbug
o al Gharb, e un altro luogo.

off. l. c.
Avv. S. Cassar

Al Sig. Comandante
Lorenzo Grech
Cassar.

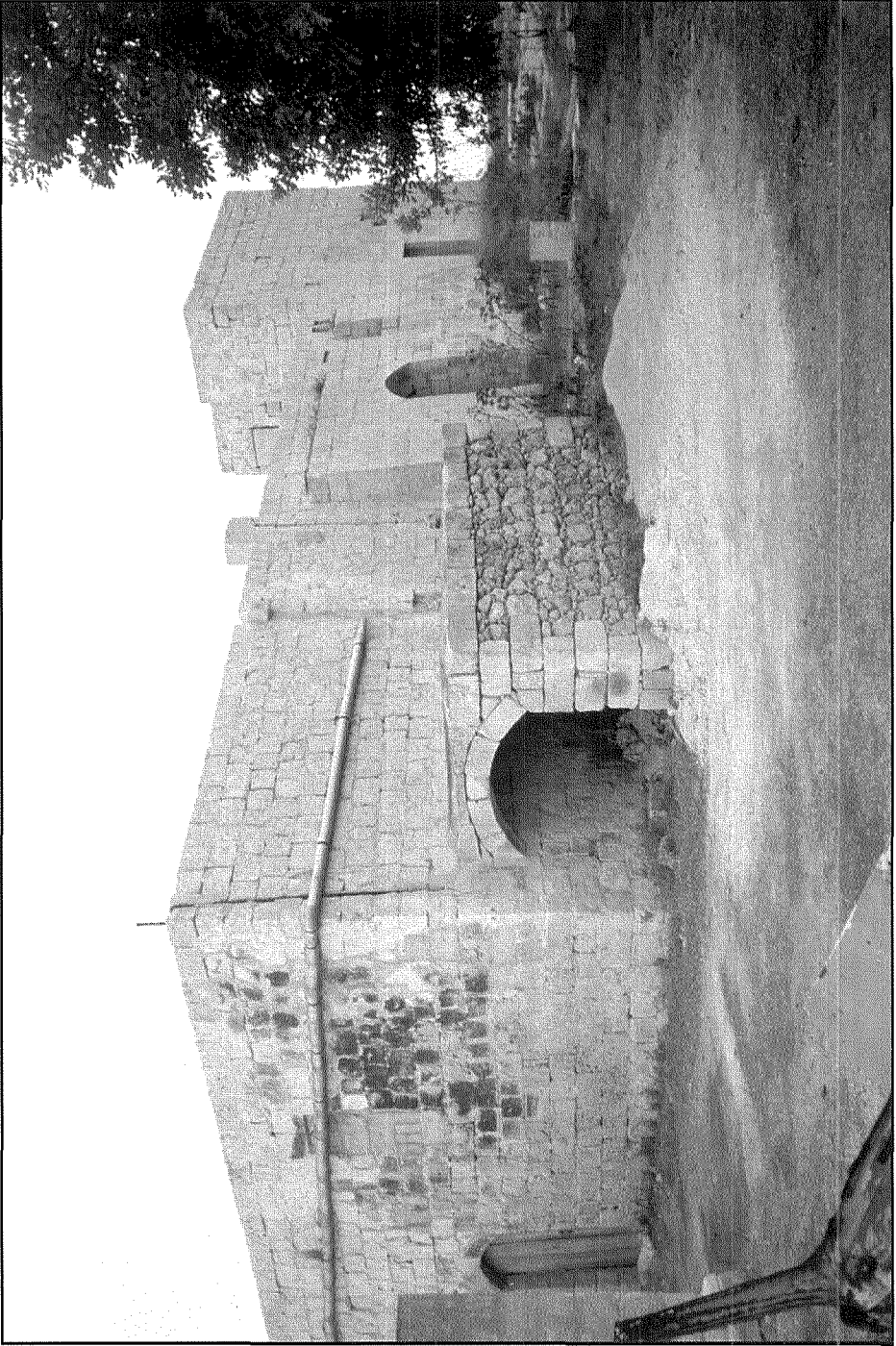
This letter is a follow up of the previous two about where A Mallia and his family should live; Archpriest S. Cassar instructs Commander L. Grech as follows "In reply to your letter, I would advise you that NEVER AND NEVER, should Mr Mallia be brought to Rabat, as the peace enjoyed there at the moment will be short lived if he goes there. Therefore he should either stay where he is, or go to Nadur, or Zebbug, or Gharb and nowhere else".

In this letter Archpriest S. Cassar was more specific, as in the previous communication he only indicated that Mallia was not to go to Xewkija and Sannat. He did not mention Rabat, which he did now.

23rd October 1798, NAG Grima paper. Pass words for the period 23rd-28th October 1798

Nota del Santo per tutti li Porti, e Fortificazioni
Dei incamminamenti dalli 23. 8bre 1798.

23. Martedì: S. Giovanni
24. Mercoledì: S. Francesco
25. Giovedì: S. Pietro



Farm House in Caccia used by Commander Liberato Grech as a Command Post. (front)



Another view of the farmhouse in Caccia used by Commander Liberato Grech as a Command Post.

26. Uscio S. Giorgio
 27. Uscio S. Giuseppe
 28. Uscio S. Lorenzo.

Il Soprintendente
 Avajolo S. Cassar

All' Ill. Comandante di Castel
 S. Pietro

S. Pietro

Because of a great fear of being betrayed Archpriest S. Cassar issued the following passwords to all posts and fortifications for the period 23rd - 28th October, 1798.

for the 23rd Tuesday	San Giovanni,
24th Wednesday	San Francesco
25th Thursday	San Pietro
26th Friday	San Giorgio
27th Saturday	San Giuseppe
28th Sunday	San Lorenzo

23rd October 1798 Bondi No 54

Copia della lettera rimessa dall'
 Ammiraglio Borghese.

Il Marchese di Niza fa molti complimenti
 a S. S. Illma il Sig. Avajolo e gli fa sapere

che sino adesso non ha potuto mandare l'
Officiale che presto mandera, desiderando in:
finitamente vedere la sua Isola libera
e in tutta la sua liberta, e in servirla
avra sempre il suo grande piacere

Li. 23: 8ore 1798:

Agno Lt.
Arif. V. Cassar

Al Sig: Comandante
Liberato Grech

Cassar

Archpriest S. Cassar received the following note from Admiral Niza, which he passed on to Commander L. Grech.

"The Marquis de Niza pays many compliments to the Rev Archpriest, and informs him that up to now he has been unable to send the Officer (that he had promised to send on the 20th or 21st, as per letter of the 19th October, Archpriest S. Cassar to Liberato Grech), but will soon send him, the Officer, as it is my greatest wish to see your Island free in all its liberties, and serving you is my greatest pleasure".

Archpriest S. Cassar had gone on board the Portuguese ship on the 18th October, and was promised that the next day or the day after a Portuguese Officer was to come to the Cittadella (The Castle) to discuss surrender terms with the French.

As the days passed by, and nothing happened, Archpriest Cassar was wondering why this was not done. The reason being that Admiral Nelson was going to be soon in Maltese waters, and the Portuguese Admiral and Capt Ball wanted to consult him, and so were waiting for him before they proceeded further.

Al Signor Comandante

Questa sera bisogna tenere la Vost. gente pronta e
 ben armata, mentre abbiamo un bastimento sulla
 parte di Wied el Asri, che ha dato motivi
 forti di sospetto e pare, che abbia qualche
 corrispondenza colli Francesi, anzi che il capitano
 di essa veduto verso l'ave mania un soldato Fran-
 ceso sulla spiaggia di Wied el Asri, che stava
 d'impetto a d. bastimento; La gente del Felice
 andava sulla marina. Neglatini. e smef.
 Di 24. Ottobre 1798.

Al Signor Comandante del
 Rabato

In this letter Archpriest S. Cassar informed Dr F. Pace Commander of Rabat that "that evening it was necessary to have his men ready and well armed, as at that moment there was a ship in Wied il Asri which had given strong reason for suspicion, and seems to have some connection with the French. He had a report that about the Ave Maria (7pm) a French soldier was seen on the beach of Wied il Ghasri and went alongside the ship".

The information contained in this letter is open to question.

1. How come the English and Portuguese ships patrolling Maltese waters did not investigate the presence of this ship? Maybe they did, and we are unaware of it.

2. How did the French soldier, reported to be seen on the beach of Wied il Ghassi, go alongside the ship, and be able to do this under the watchful eyes of the Gozitans? How did this French soldier get out and come back to the Cittadella, without being captured?

24th October 1798, NAG Grima papers - Copy of Draft Capitulation document

Il retro Ammiraglio il Cavaliere Horazio Nelson. Capitano dell'Ordine del Bagno Comandante della flotta di S. M. Britannica. nel Mediterraneo domandava la Lega del Capello del Gppo a condizione che il Soprintendente generale di detta Flotta del Gppo Avvisprete Laverio Casar con tre Comandanti femmino li Articoli seguenti.

Primo = Che l' Ammiraglio sudd. deve avere la disposizione delli prigionieri Francesi nel Gppo. e che non devono essere maltrattati in nessuna maniera dagli Abitanti, ma devono essere considerati sotto la protezione di S. M. Ammiraglio dal tempo che si rendono.

Secondo = Tutte le Armi e munizioni di guerra trovate nel Capello devono essere alla disposizione del sudd. Ammiraglio, che dirigerà una parte d'esse mandata all' ajuto de' maltesi.

Terzo = Che li Abitanti del Gppo devono alzare la bandiera Napoletana a quel tempo che il sudd. Ammiraglio determinerà con un' Congiunzione d'essere sotto la protezione del Re di Napoli.

L' Ammiraglio non pretende intromettersi nelle regolazioni interne dell' Isola, ma accorderà tutta la sua protezione alli sudd. Abitanti. A bordo della Saverantiquaria li 24. Giove 1798.

Horazio Nelson

Archpriest Cassar went on board Admiral Nelson's ship on the 24th to negotiate this draft copy of the capitulation document which was signed by Admiral Nelson.

Archpriest S. Cassar went on board Admiral Nelson's ship (**as per receipt book NLM Ms 1053 f.53**) (**A, Franco Buttigieg per aver portato colla sua barca l'Arcip a bordo di Nelson - 7:6**) to negotiate terms for the French surrender, and Nelson demanded from Archpriest S. Cassar the following three conditions, as stipulated in the capitulation document.

This document in the national Archive Gozo, reproduced above is a copy of the original, and so the signature appearing on this copy is not Nelson's signature. Where is the original document???

However the document in the National Archives Gozo is a genuine copy, as Commander Ball reproduced its text in his despatch to Nelson on the 30th October, 1798 which was published in "The Sun" of the 26th December, 1798, under Naval news.

"Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson, Knight of the Order of the Bath, Commander of His Britannic Majesty's fleet in the Mediterranean, demands the surrender of the Gozo Castle on condition that the General Superintendent Archpriest Cassar together with three Commanders sign the following articles.

1. That the Admiral will be handed all the French prisoners in Gozo, who are not to be maltreated in any manner by the inhabitants, but to be considered to be under the protection of the said Admiral as soon as they surrender.
2. All the arms and ammunition found in the Castle will be at the Admiral's disposition, part of which will be sent to the Maltese.
3. That the inhabitants of Gozo will raise the Neapolitan flag, at a time that the said Admiral will decide, as a recognition that they are under the protection of the King of Naples.

The Admiral does not expect to interfere in the affairs of the Island, but will leave this in the hands of the inhabitants.

On board the ship Vanguard the 24th October 1798. signed Horatio Nelson."

26th October 1798, NLM Ms 1053 f10

Sij. Comandante
Oggi alle 9. di matt. v'aspetto per comunicare
i sentimenti dell'ammiraglio Inglese, e
non mancate, preteso di affari trattati di subito
consegua. Long.
li 26. 8bre 1798.
Arcip. S. Cassar

Al Sig. Comandante
Dr. Francesco Pace
Rattato

In this note Archpriest S. Cassar informs Dr F. Pace requesting him that: "today at 9am he wants to talk to him as he wants to inform him about the English Admiral's ideas".

The *ideas* referred to, is the draft Capitulation document which Nelson and Archpriest Cassar formulated on the 24th September.

28th September 1798, Bondi unnumbered

Perill. S. S.

Sono molto tenuto alla Parbatezza di P. S. e
la ringrazio quanto mai so e posso della pro-
tezza, colla quale si è compiaciuto favorirmi.
In risposta poi della Sua le dico, che il povero
primier si porta in mia casa per osservare la
qualità suo in quanto alla cottura e bianchezza.
Simandi sono dal Catapano, per essere imbotta-
to, trovandoli il vero peso stabilito dalla anti-
che nostre leggi Pragmaticali. Queste sono
le regole, che d'ora si osservino qui al
Rattato. Ed offerendomi a suoi comandi, pieno
di verace stima mi rassegni.

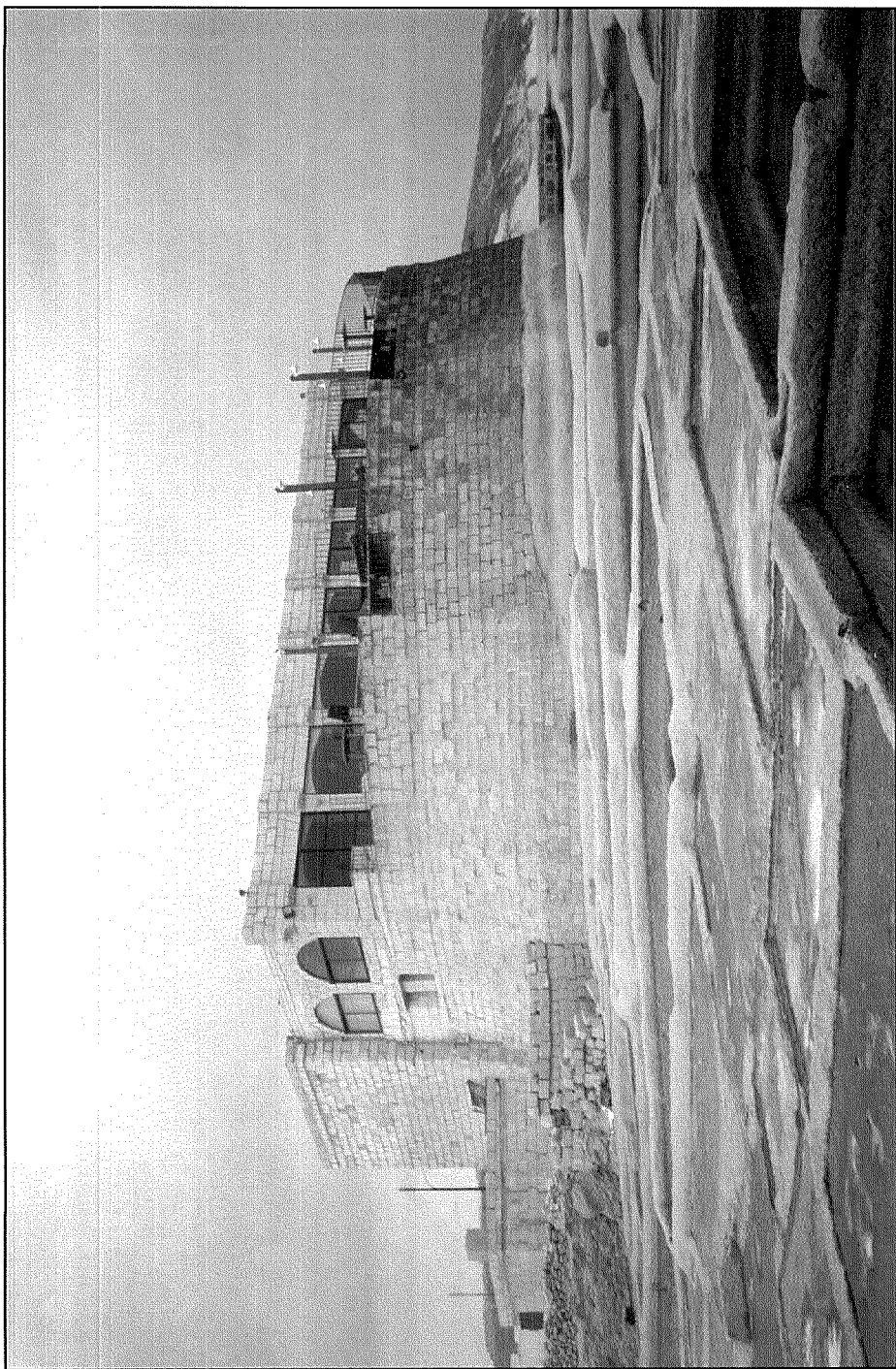
Di R. S.

Rabb. 18. 97. 11729.

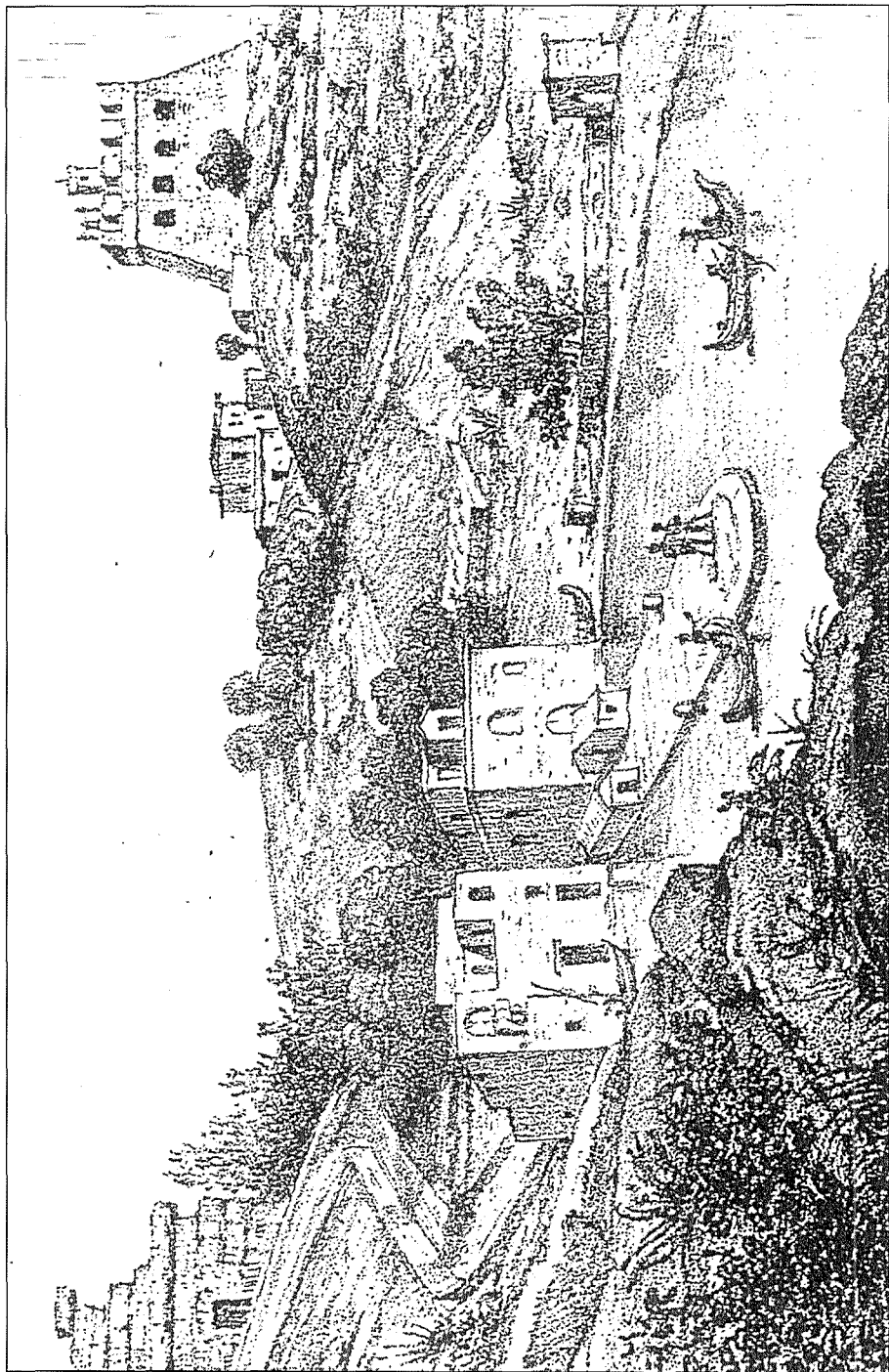
Amil. ed Ol. S. S. S.
Francesco Pace



Colla I-Bajda Fort viewed from the front.



Colla I-Bajda Fort viewed from the sea.



Fort Garzes as it appears from an old print.

*Al Signor Comandante Grech
Grech in Casal*

Caccia

This is a follow up letter of the 18th and 19th October on the bread problem, from Dr F. Pace Commander of Rabat to L. Grech Commander of Caccia, explaining the procedure to be followed in the checking of bread, re baking-whiteness-packing-weight, in accordance with the law.

30th October 1798. The Sun 26th December 1798 Naval News

Alexander off Malta October 30th, 1798

Admiralty-Office, December 25, 1798.
Copy of a Letter from Admiral Earl of St. Vincent,
K. B. Commander in Chief of His Majesty's
Ships and Vessels in the Mediterranean, to Evan
Nepean, Esq. dated on Board Le Souverain, Gib-
raltar, November 27, 1798.

Herewith you will receive the copy of a Letter from Rear-Admiral Lord Nelson, inclosing one from Captain Ball, of His Majesty's Ship Alexander, with the Capitulation of the Island of Goza.

Vanguard, at Sea, Nov. 1, 1798.

MY LORD,

I have the honour to transmit you a Letter received from Captain Ball, dated October 30, together with the Capitulation of the Castle of Goza, and a list of Ordnance, &c. found in it; the prisoners are now embarked in the Vanguard and Minotaur till I can get a vessel to send them to France. Captain Ball, with three Sail of the Line, a Frigate, and Fireship, is entrusted with the Blockade of Malta, in which are two Sail of the Line and three Frigates ready for sea; and from the experience I have had of Captain Ball's zeal, activity, and ability, I have no doubt but that in due time I shall have the honour of sending you a good account of the French in the Town of Valetti.

I am, with the greatest respect, your Lordship's most obedient servant,

HORATIO NELSON.

Admiral Earl of St. Vincent.

Alexander, off Malta, October 30, 1798.

SIR,

I have the honour to acquaint you, that the Commandant of the French Troops in the Castle of Goza, signed the Capitulation the 28th inst. which you had approved. I ordered Captain Creswell, of the Marines, to take possession of it in the name of His Britannic Majesty, and His Majesty's Colours were hoisted. The next day the place was delivered up in form to the Deputies of the Island, His Sicilian Majesty's Colours hoisted, and he acknowledged their lawful Sovereign.

I embarked yesterday all the French Officers and Men who were on the Island of Goza, amounting to two hundred and seventeen.

I inclose the Articles of Capitulation, and an Inventory of the Arms and Ammunition found in the Castle, part of which I directed to be sent to the assistance of the Maltese, who are in arms against the French. There were three thousand two hundred sacks of corn in the Castle, which will be a great relief to the inhabitants, who are much in want of that article.

I have the Honour to be, &c.

(Signed) ALEX. JOHN BALL

Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson.

ARTICLES OF CAPITULATION

Between Alexander John Ball, Esq. Captain of His Britannic Majesty's Ship Alexander, appointed to conduct the Blockade of Malta, under Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson, K. B. on the Part of Great Britain, and Lieutenant-Colonel Lochey, Auf. de Batt. Commander of the French Troops in the Castle of Goza.

I. The French Troops shall march out of the Castle of Goza, with the Honours of War, and shall lay down their Arms as they get out of the Gate.

II. The Castle of Goza, with all the Military Implements and Stores, shall be delivered up to the British Officer appointed to take charge of them.

III. The French Officers and Troops shall be protected in their persons and effects, and the Officers allowed to retain their Side-Arms; they shall be embarked immediately on board His Britannic Majesty's Ships, and sent to France in Transports, at the expence of the French Government. They are not to serve against His Britannic Majesty, or his Allies, during the War, until regularly exchanged.

Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson, K. B. has entered into Articles with the Inhabitants of Goza, that if the French surrender to the British, they shall be considered as under their protection, and they will not offer them the smallest insult or

<p> 18 Eighteen-pounder Gun, good, and 200 Shot. 2 Twelve-pounder Gun, good, and 900 Shot. 4 Six-pounder Gun, good, and 2985 Shot. 400 Hand Granades, filled. 90 Pikes and 90 Halberds. 3200 Sacks of Corn. N: B. No small Arms, except those laid down by the French Troops. </p>

Ball informed Nelson on the 30th that the French had surrendered on the 28th, and had signed the Capitulation "**which you had approved**". In the last part of the Articles of Capitulation there is the following:

Rear Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson K.B., has *ENTERED INTO ARTICLES WITH THE INHABITANTS OF GOZO* THAT IF THE FRENCH SURRENDER TO THE BRITISH, THEY SHALL BE CONSIDERED AS UNDER THEIR PROTECTION, AND THEY WILL NOT OFFER THEM THE SMALLEST INSULT OR MALTREATMENT.

This was quite correct as resulting from the document Nelson negotiated and initialled with Archpriest Cassar on board the Vanguard on the 24th October, 1798.

The above together with the receipts found in Manuscript 1053 f.52 proves definitely that Archpriest Cassar had gone on board Nelson's Vanguard and negotiated and initialled the Capitulation draft, a copy of which has been reproduced on page 20

**Ball's letter to Admiral Nelson informing him of the Capitulation.
Alexander off Malta, October 30, 1798**

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(Signed) ALEX. JOHN BALL.

Rear Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson

Articles of Capitulation

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2 Twelve-pounder guns, good and 900 shot

4 Six-pounder guns, good and 2985 shot

400 Hand granade, filled

90 Pikes and 90 halberts

3200 Sacks of Corn

N.B. No small arms except those laid down by the French Troops

Manuscript. 1053. f.52.

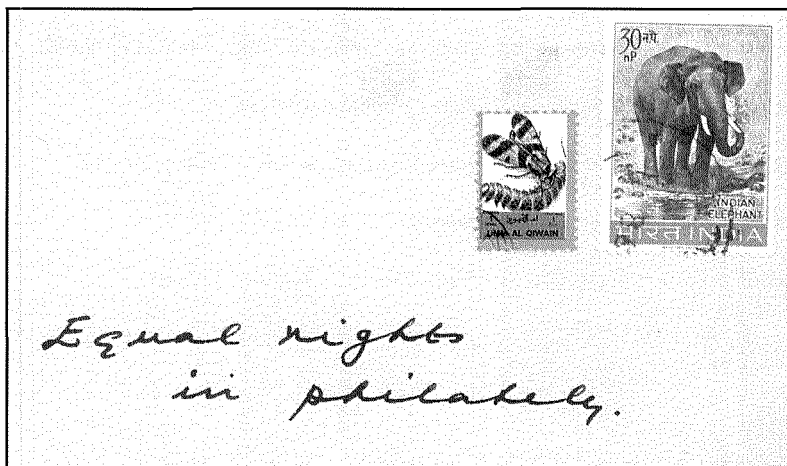
- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. A Michele Grech per cavalcatura che porta l' Archiprete nel Migiaro | 1-- |
| A Pasquale Debrincat per aver portato l'Archip. colla sua barca a bordo de Portughezi | 10-- |
| fol.53 | |
| 2. A Michele Grech cavalcatura che porta l' Archip. in Casal Caccia | 1-- |
| 3. A Franco Buttigieg per aver portato colla sua barca l'Archip. a bordo di Nelson | 7- 6- |
| 4. A Michele Grech che portò con cavalcatura l' Archip. nel Migiaro | 1-- |
| 5. A Michele Cassar che portò colla sua speronara i francesi a Bordo degli l'inglesi | 2- 6- |
| 6. Altra Barca che portò avviso del Command Ball al suo Vascello | 2-- |
| 7. A Salvatore Vella per cavalcatura che hanno portato gli Inglesi e Francesi dal Rabato nel Migiaro | 13- 6- |

References

- 1 Arkivju Parrokkjali. Nadur-Liber Baptistorum 2, f.43 ms 284. 29 Dec 1746
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- 3 Alexander Bonnici OFM Conv. Il-Petizzjoni ta' l-Arcipriet S. Cassar ghat-twaqqif tad-Djocesi ta' Ghawdex
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