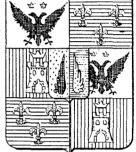
Count Federico de Lazara Cavaliere in Malta. 1662-66

by Dr A. Bonnici

In September 1987, Mr Robson Lowe, published an excellent study on the Lazara correspondence, which at that time, was the property of Dr George Camillery(i) living in the USA. On his demise, his collection together with the

Lazara archives were sold by Christie's Robson Lowe – Auction Sale № 4519, on May 14,1991. This study is based on the information contained in these two publications together with extensive research in the National Library in Valletta.

Federico was born in 1647 and died (cause of death unknown) in Padua in 1668 at the young age of 21 years. His father was Count Giovanni de Lazara, and his mother Contessa Angela nee Malfatti².



Padua passed under Venetian rule in 1405, and remained so up to 1797. The city was governed by two Venetian nobles, a "podestà" for civil, and a "captain" for military affairs, each elected for sixteen months.³ In 1661 Count Giovanni probably occupied this important post of "Captain for military affairs".

In 1661, young Federico became a member of the Grand Priory of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in Venice⁴, and came to Malta in September 1662, after staying in Gaeta and with the Lazari of Messina, for a considerable time, as they had "supplied him every day with a carriage". ⁵ He returned to Padua in 1666⁶⁷.

His first recorded letters from Malta were on November 4, 1662, to his mother "La Signora Contessa Angela de Laze(a)ra and to his father Count Giovanni de Laze(a)ra.

Federico probably arrived in Malta in September 1662, because Sigismos Antonio de Minto and Federico's God Father in Malta Gio Francisco Brazza both wrote to Count Giovanni regarding Federico's welfare on September 20,16628 and September 26,16629 respectively. But if Federico did actually arrive in Malta in September 1662, why did he wait until November 4,1662, to write to his mother and father?

The probability is that there was no transport available during October, and as soon as he knew that in the first week of November transport would be available he wrote to his mother, and father on November 4, 1662.

Carlo Forcahera also wrote to Count Giovanni on November 4,1662¹⁰, no doubt wanting to use the same transport as Federico.

The letters written by Segismos Antonio de Minto and Gio Francesco Brazza although written in September, probably did not leave Malta before November.

In both Federico's letters to his parents he gives them details about his trip. To his mother he says "I have made a good trip — and while standing on the Galley, have seen dolphins, that is a fish larger than a man" and "in Gaeta he saw the brother of the King of France, the one who had besieged Rome, etc". (letter N^2 1)

In another letter written to his mother on February 15, 1663, he tells her "that a Chalice containing a consecrated Host was stolen from a Church, etc".

This sacrilege took place in the Parish Church of Gudja. The College of Cardinals in Rome authorised the Holy Roman Inquisitor in Malta, Gerolomo Casanate to take the matter in his hands and request the help of the Inquisitor in Sicily if he thought that the culprit had taken refuge there. The empty "pyx" was found but the culprit never caught¹¹.

Other letters were cf a personal nature.

Five letters have been recorded addressed to his mother Contessa Angela in Padua from Malta: all written on a single water-marked sheet of paper, with the address written on the back of the same sheet. These letters do not have any postal rate markings.

The dates recorded are: 4.11.62; 15.2.63; 27.6.65; 29.8.65; 10.5.66.2

Only two of these letters have the arrival date in Padua written on them. The letter written on the 27.6.65, has the arrival date of 25.7.65, thus taking 29 days, and the letter written on 29.8.65 arrived on 25.10.65, nearly two months five days later. This time does not reflect the actual transit time, as letters were often kept waiting deposited with the dispatcher in Malta, until transport was available (letter to his father of Feb 7, 1663)². According to Robson Lowe the average time taken in transit was from 32 to 34 days.

The following letters have been recorded from his mother Contessa Angela de Lazara to Federico in Malta.²

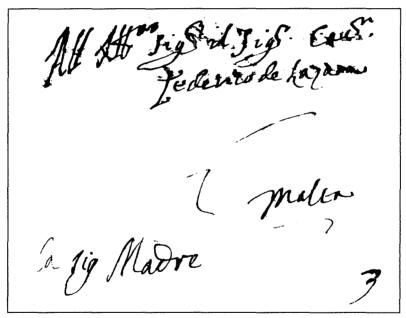
1 7.12.62 This is the first letter sent to Malta, by his mother, in reply to

Federico's letter to her of November 4, in which she says "that with great relief she had received his letter about his safe journey, etc". Although this letter is endorsed "Ricevuta in Malta" the date is missing (Letter N^2 2).

On November 4,1662, Federico wrote to his father acknowledging his father's letter of August 3,1662 (Letter Nº 3). From this date we can assume that Federico had left Padua prior to August 3,1662, and so it is no wonder that his mother was greatly relieved when she received Federico's letter of November 4,1662, after not having had any news of her fourteen year-old son for four months.

She addressed her son as:

All Ill(ustrissimo) Sig (nore) il Sig (nore) Cav (aliere) Federico de Lazara/Malta, and is rated 3 at the back. Probably this is the rate from Messina to Malta.



Both his mother and his father address their son as Cav (aliere), and when he writes to them he signs as Co (nte) Federico de Lazara Ca (valiere) from the very beginning of his stay in Malta.

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4th November1662. Federico's first letter to his mother Contessa Angela de Lazara Letter Nº 1

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7th December, 1662. From Contessa Angela de Lazara to Federico in Malta Letter Nº 2

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4th November, 1663. Federico's first letter to his father, Count Giovanni de Lazara Letter Nº 3

Admission into the Order came in two stages. First an aspirant knight could be admitted as a Member of the Order, the ceremony being held either in Malta or in the country of origin if there was a Priory. In the case of Federico, as there was a Priory in Venice, he became a Member of the Grand Priory of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in Venice⁴. This entitled him to be called a Cavaliere, as indeed we find in all his correspondence addressed to him, and himself signing as Cavaliere.

The second stage was when the knight took his vows and was professed. In fact in the Lista dei Cavaliere, Cappellani, e Serventi d'Arme, ricevuti nell'Ordine di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme dal 1555 al 1797, (1886 Edition, in page 426) we find Federico as having been received officially in the Order on October 18, 1665.

de La Haye Girolamo Francia 13 e Goth 1665 de Lazzara Lederico Stalia 18 8418 1665

However, in page 246/247, Bartolomeo del Pozzo, in his Ruolo Generale dè Cavalieri Gerosolimitani della veneranda Lingua d'Italia, con le loro Dignità, Nomi, Cognomi, Patria, Giorni, Mesi, & Anni, della lor Ricettione, we find that Fr Federico Lazara di Padua was received officially on September 5, 1663.

Ruolo Generale de' Cavalieri Gerosolimitani della Veneranda Lingua d'Italia.

Fr. Antonio Paredes di Barletta. li 30. Luglio 1663
Fr. Achille Maria Sampieri di Bologna. il 1. Settembre 1663
Fr. Federico Lazzara di Padoua. li 5. Settembre 1663

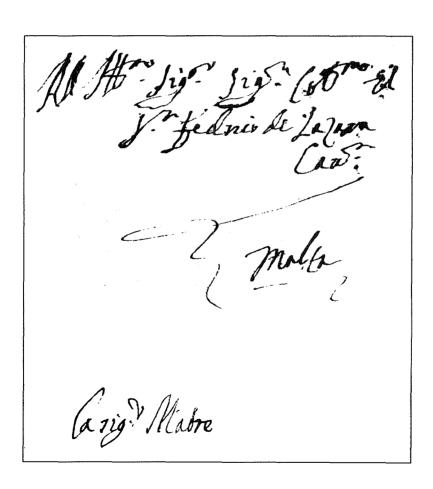
On November 10, 1663, Federico informed his father that he had in his previous letter, informed him that he had become a PAGE to the Grand Master (Letter N° 4). He does not mention that he had taken his final vows, which surely he would have done, if he had done so, as this was more important than becoming a Page. Nor does Gio Battista Pescatore mention anything about Federico taking his final vows in his letter of April 20, 1664, to his father in which he only says "that Federico was being trained as a Page to the Grand Master" 12 .

Moreover Count Giovanni in his letter to Federico of 16.8.65 tells his son, that he would make "adequate fiancial provisions until Federico made his final vows" and continues to say "you will be sent money that is enough for your return when you have had three years residence etc." 13

On January 6, 1666, Count Girolamo Gabuccini wrote to Count Giovanni¹⁴ discussing plans for Federico's return home and on May 20, 1666 Federico himself wrote to his father asking his father's permission to "return home by Galley to Messina, from there by Felucca to Naples, avoiding the galleys of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, to Rome, Ancona, Venice, Padua"¹⁵.

Probably Del Pozzo's entry refers to when Federico became a Page.

2. March 2, 1663 with a postscript from his Grand Mother Casandra Malfatti who calls him Ill (ustrissimo) Sig (nor) nipote. This letter without an arrival date or postal rate is addressed, All Ill (ustrissimo) Sig (nore) Col (endissimo) il Fra Federico de Lazara, Cav (aliere), Malta, and at the back beneath the sealing flap "La Sig Madre".



leysh an quite due right à rivoir Mittien deword manglis some of il more lateure for Rapul Properties on a la field from portra legal de rivoir et is the grave e la mort de la field from mort grave et la field from mort grave et la prince, e la mort grave de Mittie et la prince, e la mort grave et la fille de la prince et la prince de mei sor mort grave nel rivoir de la fina de la fille al la fille al la fille de la fille Constants mi ha batto the revision à 17. Monde più prandi engoni the vigore. The in Carona I ever delle (down, the generans 30 little ex il sign. Dr. M. Mind shi it bounder iston He sign es from mis offered

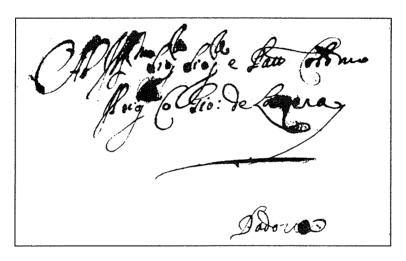
He originate was hi M. How wind was him for rice was now me work the M. M. M. now his rice was a waste fit raise the row entrate passing in Cognale fit raise the row entrate baddio.

10th November, 1663. Letter from Federico to his father informing him that he had become a Page Letter Nº 4

3. April 18, 1663 with a post script from his father. This letter is addressed to him as Al Sig (nore) Cav (aliere) Federico de Lazara, Mio Figlio, Malta. There is no postal rate or arrival date except an endorsement Ricevuta a Malta and signed beneath the sealing flap "La Sig (nora) Madre".

Fifteen letters to his father Count Giovanni have been recorded2.

1 November 4, 1662 is the first recorded letter to his father in which he gives further details of his trip, and thanks his father for his letter of August 3, which came via Messina. He addresses his father as: Al Ill (ustrissimo) Sig (nore), Sig (nore) Pad(ron) Col(endissimo)/il Sig (nore) Co (nte) Gio de Lazara, Padua. There is no arrival date or postal rate.



- 2. November 22, 1662. He sends Christmas greetings to his father. There is no arrival Padua date or postal rate and signs himself as Oblig (atissimo) Figliolo Co (nte) Federico Lazara Ca (valiere).¹⁷
- 3 February 7, 1663. He informs his father that "his letter had been held up in Malta for about five or six days because of no transport etc". This is the first recorded letter which was enclosed in a wrapper, having the father's name and address written on it. There is no postal rate but the date received in Padua is written as April 6, 1663 (Letter N^{o} 5).
- 4 April 13, 1663 arrived 7.6.63 (38 days). This letter is probably the first recorded with a postal rate. V(enice) in Black 6. P(adua) in red 7.17
 - 5 April 18, 1663 rated V12. P 13.18

6 November 18, 1663. This letter arrived in Padua on January 25, 1664 and rated V24 P26. In this letter he informs his father that "Grand Master Rafael Cotoner had died" (October 20, 1663) and that "his brother Nicola Cotoner had succeeded him" (1663-80). "A Page had died during his apprenticeship, and he had been informed by the Italian Admiral about the big size of Capons found in Padua". In this letter we find a very important footnote, stating "that from his father's letter he had assumed, that his father had not received his letter in which he had informed him, that he had become a Page" (Letter № 4).

The fact that he had become a Page was also confirmed by Gio Battista Pescatore, a Jesuit and the Padovian Nuntio in Venice, who was managing Federico's financial affairs in Malta, in his letter to Federico's father of April 20, 1664, in which he had informed him that "Federico was being trained as a Page to the Grand Master".

It was the custom within the Order, that the Chief of the Langue of Italy was the Admiral, and by coincidence, the Italian Admiral that Federico had the conversation with about the size of the "Caponi" in Padua, was called "Cappon Capponi" who was the Admiral from 19.11.61 to 19.5.69, whose job was to organise and protect, the lines of communications, between the centre of the organisation (at that time, Malta) and its branches all over Europe. 19

Federico's letter to his father of the 18.11.1663 enclosed in a wrapper, went via Venice which was rated 24 in black, and then to Padua rated 26 in red. This is an unusually high rate, and according to Robson Lowe only one other example is known.

- 7 April 26, 1663 arriving June 4, 1663, one month nine days later "enquiring if a box had been received..." No postal rate.²⁰
- 8 October 20, 1664 arrived December 6, 1664, one month six days later acknowledging receipt of 50 ducats payable to "Father Savoia". 21
- 9 October 22, 1664 arrived January 25, 1665, two months and three days later. Although this letter was written two days later than the previous one it arrived one month later... the address panel hand written is endorsed "con una scatola" and in red chalk "Scat(ola)". There is no postal rate.²²
- 10 August 3, 1665 arriving Septmber 9, 1665, one month and six days later. This letter is rated V8 and P9, the Courier being Alessandro del Brazza to whom "100 ducats were to be paid".²³
 - 11 October 30, 1665 arrived October 4, 1665 one month and four days later



CREATVS DIE XII. IVNI M.D.C. LXXIII.
Obiit die 2. Martii 1700. hora 6. noctas seguentis.

Ila. Korandi pince

reporting that "Count Girolomo Gabuccini a brother of the Order of St John had paid 190 Venetian ducats and 190 scudi from the sale of 190 minor glasses".24

- 12 January 16, 1666 arrived March 28, 1666, two months and twelve days later in which he informs his father that he was not allowed to join the Caravan. A Caravan was a full year of military service with the Land Forces, or on the Galleys. The earliest age of joining up to 1631, was 17 years, when it was then increased to 20 years. Consequently Federico was unable to join because of his age.
- 13 January 16, 1666. A brief note carried by Fiorano the assistant of Commander Ferretti.²⁶
- 14 April 18, 1666 arriving June 12, 1666, one month and twenty-four days later. "On her way to Venice the Lady Monica Barlotti is visiting the shrine of St Anthony of Padua".27
- 15 May 20, 1666 arriving June 11, 1666, twenty-one days later, asking his father "if he could travel home by galley to Messina from there by Felucca to Naples, avoiding the galleys of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, to Rome-Ancona-Venice-Padua".28

Other family letters to Federico recorded are:

From his brother Nicola in Padua²

From his Grand Mother Cassandra Malfatti on: 20.6.63, 13.9.63, 9.10.64, 11.1.66 and 11.6.66²

From his Grand Father Alba Malfatti: 22.12.622

Count Giovanni de Lazara in Padua was kept well informed by very important personalities in Malta about his son, as the following all wrote to him about Federico².

1 From Grand Master Nicola Cotoner:

9/1/65 arriving 8.3.65 rated V6 P7. This is the only known example of a letter from a Grand Master having a Postal Rate. In this letter the Grand Master tells Count Giovanni that in the best interest of his son he had released him from his Page duties. (Letter N^2 6)

8.5.68 about Federico's death. (Letter Nº 7)

2 From the Holy Roman Inquisitor in Malta, Gerolamo Casanate (1658-1663) 25.6.63 arrived 6.7.63 rated V9 P26. (Letter № 8)

This is the only letter from the Inquisitor Casanate found in the whole archives, as he left Malta for Rome on July 13, 1663 at the age of 43 years. During

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Letter N^2 5 6th April, 1663. This is the first letter in the Archives that was enclosed in a wrapper

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9th January, 1665. Grand Master Nicola Cotoner (1663-1680) to Count Giovanni de Lazara

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5 May, 1668. Grand Master Nicola Cotoner to Count Giovanni mourning the death of Federico Letter Nº 7

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mandakoni W. S.M., havendo eyh solo qualità vi care e siguardonoli che lo sendono sommam amabile appresso regnuno. Ondi io menne mi salegro di cio con v. S.M. e le andito, ett l'éservante ett conserve verve d'les, non ce! la di distatari: ancho nello poriono del sif se sus figlio le cendo vievo gratro per quelle famemi collo sacre. Le banio d'ust. le mani. Malta 26. Maggio 1883.

Mrs. Es: Wagano Par

Letter Nº 8

his five years in Malta he showed exceptional organising and Diplomatic qualities, and was held in great esteem both in Malta by the Grand Master and in the Vatican. At the age of 43 years he was recalled to Rome, and occupied very important posts there, becoming the Librarian of the Holy Roman Church on December 2, 1663 and Cardinal on June 2, 1673. He was the founder of the "Casanatense" Library which bears his name up till today. Cardinal Gerolamo Casanate died on March 3, 1700 at the age of 80 years.²⁹

3 Gio Francesco Brazza, Federico's God Father in Malta.

Recorded letters bear the following dates: 22.5.62; 29.9.62; 3.1.63; 8.1.63; 18.1.63.

The letter of 22.5.62 must have been written when Federico was still in Padua.

4 From Gio Batta Pescatore in Malta, a Jesuit and the Padovian Nuncio in Venice. He managed much of Federico's financial affairs²:

17.12.62, arrived 25.1.63, one month seven days, rated V6 P7; concerning financial matters:

23.2.63 arrived 6.4.63, one month thirteen days;

27.4.63 arrived ? ;

10.6.63 arrived 7.7.63, one month P2 (for local delivery);

19.9.63 rated V18 P20 The only example of this rate;

16.1.64 arrived 12.4.64;

4.1.64 arrived 10.2, one month and six days rated V17 P18. The only example of this rate;

25.2.64 arrived 12.4.64 one month fourteen days;

15.4.64 arrived 29.5.64, one month fourteen days;

27.5.64 arrived ? rated P14;

27.5.64 arrived ? rated P 14;

29.12.64 arrived ? rated V12 P13;

18.5.65 arrived 19.6.65 rated V34 P36;

2.8.65 arrived 9.9.65 one month six days;

12.9.65 arrived 25.10.65 rated V4;

20.10.65 arrived 5.11.65;

15.1.66 arrived 23.2.66;

15.2.66 arrived 10.4.66.2

5 From Count Girolamo Gabuccini, a brother of the Order of St John²:

18.10.63, 3 pages rated P2 for local delivery

15.6.64 arrived 1.8.64, four pages

29.5.65 arrived 24.6.65

15.7.65

3.10.65 arrived 3.1.66, three pages

6.1.66 arrived 25.2.66, three pages plans for Federico's return home

10.2.66 arrived 12.4.66, two pages

27.7.66 arrived 29.10 rated V9 P10

27.9.66 arrived 5.11.66

26.5.68 about the death of Federico²

6 From Pietro Savoco, a Jesuit Priest2:

26.2.65 arrived 12.4.65

25.9.66, three pages rated V24 P26

10.3.67 rated V8 P9

10 2 68 arrived 10.4.68 rated V6 P7

3.5.69 after Federico's death rated V7 P82

7 From Alessandro del Brazza.²:

3.5.66 and 1.6.66.

8 From Prior de la Geriele²:

6.9.63, 13.2.67, 20.1.682, 18.4.68 rated V15 P16

9 From the Knight Paul Lana²:

 $25.5.68^{2}$

10 Father Antonio Tuna²:

27 5 68

References:

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- The Dr GL Camilleri Sale. Christies R. Lowe, (C.R.L.) May 14 1991, Sale Nº 4519
 Encyclopaedia Britannica 1962 Edition Vol. 17 p. 24
- 4 Bertini Frassoni. Il Sovrano Militare Ordine di San Giovanni di Gerusaleme etc. Capitolo Processi dei Nobiltà. Busta Nº 534 p. 178
- 5 Federico's letter to his father of November 4, 1662, Letter № 3
- 6 Letters from Count Gerolamo Gabucci, 6.1.66 C.R. L. Sale Item 39
- Federico's letter to his father of 20.5.66 C.R.L. Sale Item 14
- 8 C.R.L. p.14, Item 25
- 9 lbid, p.12, Item 22
- 10 Ibid, p.14, Item 25
- 11 Story of the Inquisition in Malta Vol II p. 53 by Father Alexander Bonnici, OFM Conv.
- 12 C.R.L. Sale, p. 14, Item 32
- 13 Ibid, p.12, Item 18 14 Ibid, p. 14, Item 39
- 15 Ibid, p. 14, Item 12
- 16 Ibid, p. 12, Item 5
- 17 Ibid, p. 12, Item 6
- 18 Ibid, p. 12, Item 7
- 19 Ettorre Rossi, Storia della Marina dell'Ordine di Malta, Padua p. 130
- 20 C.R.L. Sale, p.12, Item 9
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- 23 Ibid, Item 11
- 24 Ibid, Item 12
- 25 Ibid, Item 12
- 26 Ibid, Item 13
- 27 Ibid. Item 13
- 28 Ibid, Item 14
- Story of the Inquisition in Malta Vol II p. 53 by Father Alexander Bonnici, OFM Conv.

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