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# Thalassic imaginaries: witnesses to (an) unwritten history

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**ABSTRACT**

The objective of this research was to inquire whether it is possible to trace and document remote unwritten history from toponyms and oral lore among other indications which survive among ancient maritime communities such as that of Bormla (Malta). Employing a transdisciplinary approach, the study's starting point was a prominent oral legend which describes St Paul's departure from Malta in AD 61. It transpired that recorded toponyms at Bormla, their language and thalassic meaning supported by an analysis of Biblical text, archaeology, architecture and pictorial sources such as portolan maps, art and other evidence, substantiate the veracity of the legend surviving at Bormla as a historical event. This is sustained by the general toponym as well as those associated with particular sites and neighbourhoods. The linguistic and thalassic meaning of the analysed toponyms and its topography show that Bormla was the main harbour of Malta from antiquity to the sixteenth century and that its ancient toponym contributed to the creation of the toponym of 'Malta'. The study shows that thalassic imaginaries born of toponyms at Bormla, supported with tangible evidence from different sources, are vivid witnesses to (an) unwritten history.

## Introduction

Maritime communities memorized history through oral means and identified sites with toponyms which reflect naval activities and practices connected to the sea. Legends and toponyms are, however, perceived as imaginaries and finding supporting evidence is a challenge. The legend and toponyms analysed in this study mostly occur at Bormla (A): a Maltese harbour community (Figure 1). In this section the author introduces the theme under research and provides information to help the reader visualize and understand the context. This is aided by maps shown as Figures 1 and 5.

Bormla is one of the old cities overlooking the Malta Grand Harbour and facing the Valletta peninsula (B). It forms part of 'The Three Cities'[1] locally called Bormla, Birgu (C) and Isla (D), to which the Hospitaller Grand Masters awarded the epithets Cospicua, Vittoriosa and Senglea respectively. Its five high hills, known as Ta' Pażan (E), Ta' Santa Margerita (F), Tal-Ġonna (G), Ta' Ġerman (H) and Ta' Kortin (I) touch the sea at Xewkija Bay now Kalkara Creek (J), Galleys Port known as Dockyard Creek (K), and Għajn Dwieli Bay known also as French Creek (L). Dockyard Creek is the deepest,

**Figure 1.** Bird's eye view indicating locations and sites round the Malta Grand Harbour. The letters correspond with bracketed letters in the main text. Legend: A: Bormla/Cospicua; B: Floriana-Valletta peninsula; C: Birgu/Vittoriosa; D: Isla/Senglea; E: Ta' Pażan Hill; F: Ta' Santa Margerita Hill; G: Tal-Ġonna Hill; H: Ta' Ġerman Hill; I: Ta' Kortin Hill; J: Kalkara Creek; K: Bormla Creek/Docktard Creek/Galleys Port; L: Għajn Dwieli Bay/French Creek; M: Rinella Bay; N: Fort St Angelo; Castrum maris/castro exteriore; O: Tarxien village; P: Paola; Q: Fgura; R: Santa Lucia; S: Buleben (Żejtun); T: Marsa; U: Qormi; W: Torre Orsi/Ricasoli Point; X: Ras el-Għasses/Fort St Elmo. *Source*: Map courtesy Google Maps and Wikipedia.

longest and most sheltered inlet, and the third creek to the south of the Grand Harbour, preceded by the shallow Rinella Bay (M) and Kalkara Creek. Prior to the construction of the Grand Harbour's breakwater in the early twentieth century, the Dockyard Creek waters were protected from northwesterly waves which battered the northeast shore of Fort St Angelo (N) and the lower Birgu peninsula, Rinella and Kalkara bays. Until the nineteenth century, the Rinella Bay was considered unfit for vessels as it was very shallow, and the Kalkara Bay was considered 'untenable in winter'.[2] The Għajn Dwieli Bay, though wider, was shallow at the inner shore and outside the civic area. The Bormla inlet was, however, the creek where shipbuilding and repair facilities and connected services grew through the ages and at the centre of the civic area.

Bormla, a harbour community, evolved at the end of several valleys and hills which run down to the creeks on the south side of the Grand Harbour. It lies close to the remains of the Tarxien (O) and Kortin megalithic structures (I); Tal-Ħorr, Tal-Borġ (Paola) (P) and Tal-Liedna (Fgura) (Q) neolithic sites; Ħal Saflieni (Paola) and Santa Lucia (R) hypogea; the Buleben (Żejtun) (S) area and various Punic tomb sites such as

Għajn Dwieli and Ta' Ġerman Hill. Due to its early urban and industrial development, dockyards, the ravishes of war, reconstruction, reckless social housing projects and political motives, most of its heritage and archaeological remains were until recent times undocumented and obliterated.[3] Nevertheless, some remain firmly remembered through oral lore, documents and sources not tapped into by earlier studies. Most of its thalassic imaginaries are less often narrated today as the city underwent high migration during and after the war, and suffered neglect and the running down of its dockyard.[4] Despite everything, older generations still tell legends which revive thalassic imaginaries shared by centuries-old toponyms, and these provide insights into unrecorded and/or excluded history.[5] Among these popular legends, tradition holds that in AD 61 St Paul departed to Syracuse from the Bormla wharf, where a church dedicated to the Apostle was later built.[6]

Though some studies maintain that intangibles such as toponyms of places and islands in poetry, oral lore and legends are myths, unreal and imaginary,[7] recent studies and archaeological discoveries show that such places really existed.[8] Taylor maintains that imaginaries are not ideas but witnesses to 'the practices of a society' upon which history and society were built and functioned.[9] Other scholars maintain that even fictional texts which are perceived as imaginary can maintain traces of history.[10] Nash maintains that pristine toponyms popular among locals express a symbolic meaning and knowledge known by the locals and history, as well as provide a link to an unrecorded deeper 'imaginary' of the place and people 'unlocked' through direct contact with the same people.[11] This study has, however, found supporting evidence which adds credibility to the pristine toponyms, legends and imaginaries connected to them. Nash maintains that 'by undertaking fieldwork in pristine toponymy, much progress can be made towards discovering the history of toponyms and their application to linguistics', because the study of toponyms is a way of accessing history and the wisdom owned by local people.[12]

Among ancient communities, memories are zealously recalled, and history is transmitted orally over generations. However, once they remain undocumented, they risk losing their original content, emotions and experiences. A major challenge comes from publications and historiographies which reiterate exclusions of histories promoted by sponsoring or sanctioning authorities. The latter include colonial authorities and their supporters,[13] the Church[14] and the political system of a country.[15] As observed by Duggan, the omission of Bormla happened and is still happening even today, as publications or re-publications deliberately omit the Bormla toponym and any reference to the community, only to narrate a history which is false and inauthentic.[16] Another factor which creates gaps in history and to which answers are demanded are attempts to instil forgetfulness. The study intends to fill gaps and generate further studies on ancient harbours which urbanization and industrialization left with few or no witness of their community's narrated history.

With reference to texts and oral tradition, the study intends to show how site names particularly at Bormla inform about ancient uses and practices connected to harbour activity. Through an analysis of text, site names and oral lore, the study attempts to provide evidence which sustains oral tradition and substantiates the surviving imaginaries indicating that Bormla was Malta's ancient commercial harbour and a well-organized and established Roman 'statio', which by medieval times had a skilled population, shipbuilding and repair facilities, and a defence system. The study, through an analysis of

toponyms, intends also to demonstrate whether and how the 'Malta' and the 'Bormla' toponyms relate. It intends also to trace developments of the toponyms and site names through time. The purpose of the study is to provide a better understanding of toponyms found in Maltese history, such as Ay Nun, Maleth, Melite, Malta, Bormla and Ptolemy's Chersónesos, as they provide evidence supporting surviving imaginaries and oral lore which, after all, are mnemonics of an unwritten or excluded history.

The main contribution of this study is that it adds to the historical debate about Malta and its harbour area from antiquity to the sixteenth century by providing sources, documents and information not tapped into or deeply analysed by previous studies. It provides an interdisciplinary approach upon which history can be traced, written and revised. Toponyms, not only of localities or islands, but also of sites within a locality, aided by tangible and intangible sources, such as language, legends and oral lore, can help fill in gaps in the historic narrative of places, communities and islands. The findings are conducive to a revision of Maltese history,[17] as it shows the development of a harbour community important to the development of historical events in the Maltese islands in a situation where absence, omission or ambiguity in earlier texts left huge gaps and doubts in the historic narrative covering over two and a half millennia.

## Methodology

The study proposes a transdisciplinary approach to research in history, particularly where national historiography presents gaps or excludes the history of communities within society. Initially, the research identified documented thalassic site toponyms and legends associated with their imaginary. It traced connections among them and analysed their linguistic and thalassic significance. Evidence which supports toponyms and oral lore was sought in official documents, publications, geographies, travelogues, archaeology, architecture and pictorial sources which required close observation. Tangible sources were referred to in order to contrast, sustain and connect the imaginaries created. The findings of this research study were likely to confirm or reject the notion that thalassic imaginaries born of toponyms are surviving witnesses to unwritten or excluded history. Indeed, the exclusion of Bormla from later historiography and published works sanctioned by the establishment could point to an educated guess at a plot to alter history.

## Findings and discussion

In this section the author presents how classical authors and geographers mentioned Malta and its harbours, how later authors interpreted them, and evidence found in various sources. It discusses how all these sources relate and connect to construct a coherent picture of the Bormla harbour as Malta's ancient harbour. It includes findings about other toponyms found around the Grand Harbour area which to date were either dubious to interpret or to locate.

### Classical antiquity and earlier

The history of individual towns or villages was scarcely recorded. Greek epic poetry provides the earliest known reference to Malta which, as a Phoenician colony, had

communities in the south devoted to maritime craftsmanship.[18] The rise of Carthage made Malta a strategic location for wars against Greek and Roman Sicily. Knowledge of the use of Malta as a Roman port of call comes through classical authors and geographers, such as Strabo,[19] Diodorus Siculus,[20] Pliny[21] and Ptolemy.[22] However, Roman presence, the use of Maltese harbours by Roman vessels or vessels coming from and going to Rome, as well as the use of Latin and Greek at least among the townsfolk, continued even in the Byzantine era.[23] Witness to the coming together of Phoenicians and Greeks under Roman rule (post-216 BC) are the Cippi of Melqart-Herakles,[24] archaeological evidence,[25] coins and pottery,[26] the language or ethnicity as noted by Cicero,[27] Diodorus,[28] Livius,[29] the Bible[30] and recent studies.[31] The survival of Phoenician/Punic as a spoken language, at least among the common people, through the Roman period is evidenced, for example, by St Augustine (350–430 AD), even on neighbouring North African coasts.[32] Knowledge of the use of Maltese harbours by the Romans and their predecessors comes from classical authors and geographers between the first century BC and the second century AD. Malta also served for over-wintering as well as a transit for Alexandrian grain ships sailing between Alexandria and Rome.[33] While Strabo,[34] Pliny[35] and the *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti*[36] mention the Maltese Islands for navigation purposes, Diodorus Siculus in the first century BC describes them and refers to their harbours.

(1) ἡμεῖς δ᾽ ἐπεὶ τὰ περὶ τὰς Αἰολίδας νήσους διήλθομεν, ἐν μέρει τὰς ἐκ θατέρου μέρους νήσους κειμένας ἀναγραφῆς ἀξιώσομεν. τῆς γὰρ Σικελίας ἐκ τοῦ κατὰ μεσημβρίαν μέρους νῆσοι τρεῖς πρόκεινται πελάγιαι, καὶ τούτων ἑκάστη πόλιν ἔχει καὶ λιμένας δυναμένους τοῖς χειμαζομένοις σκάφεσι παρέχεσθαι τὴν ἀσφάλειαν.

(2) καὶ πρώτη μέν ἐστιν ἡ προσαγορευομένη Μελίτη, τῶν Συρακουσῶν ἀπέχουσα σταδίους ὡς ὀκτακοσίους, καὶ λιμένας μὲν ἔχει πολλοὺς καὶ διαφόρους ταῖς εὐχρηστίαις, τοὺς δὲ κατοικοῦντας ταῖς οὐσίαις εὐδαίμονας: [...].

(3) ἔστι δ᾽ ἡ νῆσος αὕτη Φοινίκων ἄποικος, οἳ ταῖς ἐμπορίαις διατείνοντες μέχρι τοῦ κατὰ τὴν δύσιν ὠκεανοῦ καταφυγὴν εἶχον ταύτην, εὐλίμενον οὖσαν καὶ κειμένην πελαγίαν: δι᾽ ἣν αἰτίαν οἱ κατοικοῦντες αὐτὴν εὐχρηστούμενοι κατὰ πολλὰ διὰ τοὺς ἐμπόρους ταχὺ τοῖς τε βίοις ἀνέδραμον καὶ ταῖς δόξαις ηὐξήθησαν.

(4) μετὰ δὲ ταύτην τὴν νῆσόν ἐστιν ἑτέρα τὴν μὲν προσηγορίαν ἔχουσα Γαῦλος, πελαγία δὲ καὶ λιμέσιν εὐκαίροις κεκοσμημένη, Φοινίκων ἄποικος. ἑξῆς δ᾽ ἐστὶ Κέρκινα, πρὸς τὴν Λιβύην νενευκυῖα, πόλιν ἔχουσα σύμμετρον καὶ λιμένας εὐχρηστοτάτους, οὐ μόνον ταῖς ἐμπόροις, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς μακραῖς ναυσὶν εὐθετοῦντας. ἐπεὶ δὲ περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν μεσημβρίαν νήσων εἰρήκαμεν, ἐπάνιμεν πάλιν ἐπὶ τὰς ἑξῆς τῇ Λιπάρᾳ νήσους τὰς κειμένας κατὰ τὸ Τυρρηνικὸν καλούμενον πέλαγος.

[1. For off the south of Sicily three islands lie out in the sea, and each of them possesses a city and harbours which can offer safety to ships which are in stress of weather.

2. The first one is that called Melitê [Malta], which lies about eight hundred stades from Syracuse, and it possesses many harbours which offer exceptional advantages, and its inhabitants are blest in their possessions; [...].

3. This island is a colony planted by the Phoenicians, who, as they extended their trade to the western ocean, found in it a place of safe retreat, since it was well supplied with

harbours and lay out in the open sea; and this is the reason why the inhabitants of this island, since they received assistance in many respects through the sea-merchants, shot up quickly in their manner of living and increased in renown.

4. After this island there is a second which bears the name of Gaulus [Għawdex/Gozo], lying out in the open sea and adorned with well-situated harbours, a Phoenician colony.][37]

Though some claim that Malta's ancient harbour was the Marsa (T),[38] Diodorus claims that the islands had many good harbours.[39] Marsa مرسى in Arabic does not translate as 'harbour'[40] but as 'berth, moorage or anchorage'. This is supported by the toponym of Marsa's adjacent village Qormi (U): a toponym which derives from the Greek ὅρμοι (hormoi) meaning 'moorage'[41] and which proclaims Marsa as an Arabization of the Qormi toponym. Harbours, in contrast, experienced early urbanization and developed facilities and services for daily maritime activity. As the islands became established on maritime and trade routes of Mediterranean cultures,[42] early geographers included them in their works.

Mela's map (43 BC),[43] which includes Melite and Gaulos,[44] provides visual directions. It positions Malta north of Leptis Magna and Gozo between Malta and southern Sicily.[45] Ptolemy improved on previous geographers. Based on earlier knowledge, Ptolemy's *Geographia*[46] provided coordinates and focused on the visualization from a ship's position at sea,[47] as sometimes navigation entails that vessels sail-by and proceed to other destinations. Though he excludes specific descriptions of harbours, later reconstructions of his work indicate a well-defined Malta harbour showing an inner sheltered creek.[48]

Ptolemy mentions the Μελίτη νῆσος (Melite nesos: island) and its πόλις (polis: city), Gozo and its city, and three important landmarks: the χερσόνησος (chersonesos: peninsula), and the shrines of Hera and Herakles.[49] He presents the peninsula as an easily recognizable landmark from the open sea which leads to the safe harbour. Ptolemy refers to the Floriana-Valletta peninsula which forms the northern shore of the Grand Harbour of Malta. The peninsula, known as the *Xeberras* Hill, Italianized as Sciberras or Sceberras, in Phoenician/Punic ⟨⟨O XBR ⟨⟨⟨ R'S (Xabr-ras) translates into *the headland, the span of the cape* or *middle peninsula*.[50] Later, the Arabs called it *Mu'awija*, which is undulating, open and uncultivated land, in contemporary Maltese *xagħriet mewwija*.[51] Some later authors, who in their research abandoned the Phoenician and local vernacular, logic and the practical navigational perspective of Ptolemy's work, created conflicts about the identity of the peninsula χερσόνησος (chersonesos) and they even added a city to it.[52] Besides, differences also occurred in the development of languages such as Phoenician and Punic, and in Arabic before and after the ninth century AD and its modern vernacular.

Although Ptolemy identifies no specific harbour by a toponym, the likelihood of a harbour in Roman times comes from *Ta' Ġerman*: the toponym of the innermost hill at Bormla Creek.[53] This toponym is phonetically close to and a possible distortion of the Latin '*tegimen*' meaning 'shelter, cover', used by the first century BC to first century AD poets Virgil and Ovid, respectively.[54] It bears a close analogy to Bres' (1816) interpretation of what the Phoenicians called Malta, that is, 'malath', which means a place of shelter, refuge or haven and which in contemporary Maltese can be translated as '*il-Kenn*'.[55] As evidence, Bres mentions Diodorus, who claimed that Phoenician vessels sought refuge in Maltese harbours.[56] Meanwhile, coins show that the Phoenicians identified Malta as ⟨⟨⟨ Ay Nun/ANN.[57] Ay Nun phonetically mirrors the Maltese word *għajnuna* meaning help, relief and assistance,

which can be a distant Semitic word indicative of the act of flight to seek a safe refuge at times of distress; the *maleth* (mlt) means the success of finding it.[58] Since this interpretation was not immediately obvious, I conducted research into whether subsequent and earlier eras in Maltese history used the same toponym and meaning. I found that the 'port shelter' toponym occurs before and after Roman times.

By starting from the legend which took place in Roman times the study has searched for evidence of harbour activity. Half a century before Ptolemy, Malta featured in the Acts of the Apostles as the island where St Paul's shipwreck took place.[59] Paul's departure from Malta was on board an Alexandrian vessel and followed the route frequented by Alexandrian vessels transporting wheat, merchandise and people.[60] Like the Roman fleet, some Alexandrian vessels, as that used by Paul, restricted sailing and sought shelter in safe harbours for winter.[61] Evidence is necessary to substantiate the legend that Paul left from Bormla, and that Bormla was the 'harbour' where Alexandrian vessels sailing to or from Puteoli or Portus/Ostia (Rome), called and departed when weather permitted.[62]

## *Archaeology*

Unfortunately, no archaeological studies have yet been carried out on the Bormla site in question and its contiguous sites.[63] Continuous dredging of the seabed makes matters worse. Yet, until the discovery of the primary source, a secondary source referring to it is worth mentioning. The excavation of seabed deposits by the Royal Engineers in 1841–43,[64] is reported by Smith as:

> During the excavation of the dry docks at Valletta [referring to Dock No. 1, at Bormla], my friend, Mr. John Anderson, of the engineer department, paid particular attention to the phenomena, from which the amount of siltage during the human period could be deduced. According to his report, in that branch of the harbour of Valetta [that is at Bormla], works of art are not found more than six or eight feet [1.8m to 2.4m] below the present bottom of the sea.[65]

Considering these finds Smith concludes:

> The dock is situated in a deep inlet, at the mouth of an extensive valley, and its shores have been from the earliest times the site of a town.[66]

If Smith, who was searching for evidence of St Paul's shipwreck, relied on archaeological evidence, siltation studies and topography, his conclusion on the presence of an ancient town since the earliest times[67] is authoritative. Alongside Smith's conclusions, primary evidence of harbour facilities at Bormla comes from the site of St Paul's church itself. Local lore, sixteenth-century notarial records and seventeenth-century parish records mention the site as *Maħtet it-Tin*[68] (Figure 5, note 1) near a point known as *in loco cruce* (the place of the cross).[69] *Maħtet it-Tin*, which in Maltese and Arabic translates to 'figs' station',[70] suggests the presence of warehouses or sheds that stored dried figs, a common food among ancient maritime communities,[71] to be supplied to vessels moored in the harbour. In the 1687 *Status Animarum* it is recorded as *Quarterium Mactettin*.[72] As no visible architectural remains survive to vouch for it, the toponym became a vague thalassic imaginary.

### Acts of the Apostles

Further proof of facilities and services in Roman times derives from the narrative describing St Paul's departure.[73] Bible versions agree that the local people supplied and loaded the vessel with all *necessities* for the voyage.[74] The Greek text which reads 'οἳ καὶ πολλαῖς τιμαῖς ἐτίμησαν ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἀναγομένοις ἐπέθεντο τὰ πρὸς τὴν χρείαν' ('who also with many honours honoured us, and on setting sail, they laid on [us] the things for the needs')[75] and the Latin Vulgate phrase '*et navigantibus imposuerunt quae necessaria erant*' state that the harbour provided for all 'necessary' supplies and engaged manpower to carry provisions aboard and lay them in place prior to a scheduled voyage.[76] This indicates a well-organized activity or service that was not temporary or improvised, but typical of a well-equipped and fully fledged port rather than a 'marsa'. Bormla, as Malta's harbour, was therefore an established '*statio*'.[77] Cornuke, a keen writer and explorer in search of Biblical remains, describes Malta as 'well-visited as a hub of trade during the time of the Roman occupation and would have been known to any seasoned sailor plying the Mediterranean'.[78] In the mid-first century AD, the Alexandrian grain fleet stopped at Malta on a journey which took around two months.[79] Also, if sailing westwards from Crete, Alexandrians used the eastern Malta shoreline as a landmark to turn north towards Syracuse and proceed to Puteoli.[80] It was not by chance that the helmsman of Paul's vessel kept sailing westwards prior to the shipwreck. The importance of recognizable landmarks is underlined by the fact that those on St Paul's vessel could not recognize the land owing to stormy weather and poor visibility.[81]

### Portolan maps and atlases

Though eleventh- and twelfth-century documents such as the *Kitab ghara'ib al-funun wa-mulah al-'uyun* (1021–51) and al-Idrīsī's *Tabula Rogeriana* (1136–54)[82] show the Maltese islands, like Mela they do not indicate any harbours. After the invention of the compass in the thirteenth century, portolan maps began to show the position of harbours.[83] These maps became very valuable when one had to plan voyages and navigate the seas.[84] Portolan charts indicate a position at sea and facilitate the navigator's effort 'for figuring optimal headings to recover a planned course, or to seek shelter on land'.[85] The *Carte Pisane* (1258–91) and fourteenth-century Catalan portolan maps show Malta with proportionate Valletta and Marsaxlokk harbours.[86] The *Lo Compasso de Navegare* (1296), gives navigational directions about the Maltese islands.[87] Pizzigano's chart (1367/ 73)[88] and the Catalan Atlas (1375)[89] position Maltese harbours in a better way and repeat the Ptolemaic landmarks indicating the Valletta and Marsaxlokk harbours.

Fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century cartography and atlases prominently show the north-east facing Valletta harbours and the peninsulas' characteristics as a landmark of Malta's harbour. Harbours are represented with deeper creeks compared to the open bays of earlier maps. The maps of Mürsiyeli Tabip Ibrahim (1461),[90] de Canepa (1489)[91] and Cornaro's Atlas (1489),[92] as well as the charts of de Aguiar (1492),[93] Maggiolo (1504),[94] de Caverio (1506)[95] and Russus (1511)[96] show the island with the harbours of the Valletta peninsula as the most distinguishable landmark and geographic feature. The Roselli map (1466),[97] which depicts the harbour with adequate clarity, helps to identify the Bormla inlet and the peninsulas leading to it. A 1467 reconstruction of Ptolemy's map of the

**Figure 2.** Detail from Ptolemy's reconstruction map by Germanus (1467) shows the Malta island with a more identifiable design of the landscape leading to the Bormla harbour.

North African coast and Sicily by Germanus[98] shows the peninsula and the Bormla inlet as a safe harbour. However, this detail was omitted in the 1482 edition (Figure 2).[99]

While de Canepa shows inner features of the Malta harbour,[100] de Aguilar's map prominently shows both harbours.[101] A detailed work is the anonymous Venetian 1490 *Chompasso de tuta la starea della marina*.[102] Some sixteenth-century portolan maps again exclude details shown in earlier maps. The Piri Reis map (1521) indicates the two harbours of Valletta and Marsaxlokk.[103] Prior to the Order's arrival (1530) and the Great Siege (1565), charts such as the islands' atlas by de Santa Cruz (*c*.1539) repeat the Ptolemaic landmarks.[104] De Santa Cruz describes Malta as having 'un pueblo con un buen puerto'.[105] While echoing Diodorus,[106] de Santa Cruz specified that Malta had 'a town with a good harbour' rather than 'a city and many good harbours'. The statement[107] was forthright as the Bormla harbour was undergoing major changes with the construction of a new adjacent suburb (borgo),[108] further urbanization and defence works.[109] A 1540 Münster map by an anonymous French cartographer shows the Bormla harbour, its Mandra and the adjacent peninsulas (Figure 3 [a,b]).[110] The Battista (*c*.1544) atlas[111] limits itself to position the harbour. Maps by Homem (1559 and 1561) show the Bormla inlet with prominence.[112] Great Siege maps show more details of the Bormla harbour: the Mandra with small vessels, the port facilities, its favourable geographic characteristics, and larger vessels berthed at its anchoring section.[113]

### The enclosure – Mandra and darsena

Early cartography focused more on main harbours and administrative centres. Other towns and villages were usually omitted or faintly traced. Certain features like the *Mandra* (2) were given prominence. The *Mandra* (μάνδρα), a Greek word literally meaning a pen or an enclosure, in nautical vocabulary refers to a safe place and sheltered sea within a harbour where vessels and boats were kept. Mandra means also 'gathering place . . . . In fact Mandracchio was all that part in front of the landing dock of ships where the operations of loading and unloading took place. Here operated
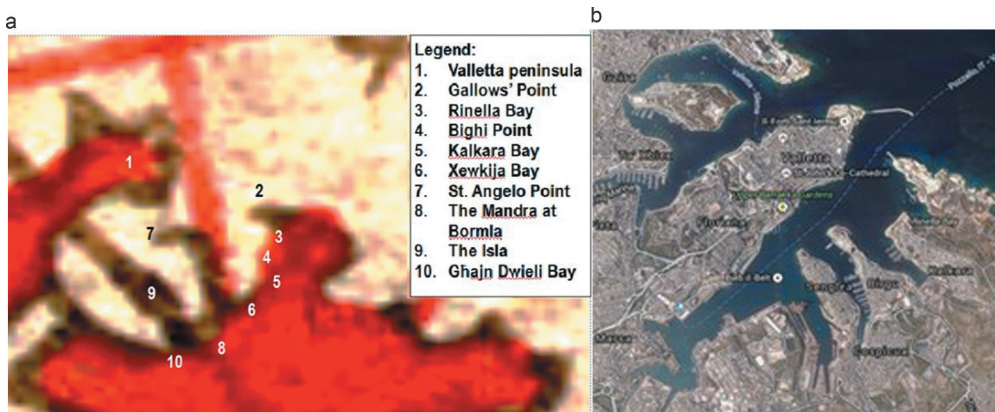
**Figure 3.** Detail from the French Anon., 1540 map (3a) shows the Bormla harbour and its Mandra. The outline shows similarities to the shoreline shown on a recent Google satellite image (3b).

the "vastasi", porters'[114]: a definition which points to the porter services indicated earlier and connected to St Paul's departure. In nautical terminology, *Mandracchi or Mandraccio* meant 'Dock, where you moor small ships. Term registered since the XVIth century'.[115] Thus this is a toponym which supports the notion that the locality had a 'port shelter' function.

A 1551 Lafreri map mentions the Mandra as the innermost part of the Bormla harbour. The Mandra is again mentioned by diarist Balbi de Correggio in the 30 June and 22 July 1565 events.[116] It features on paintings by Matteo Perez d'Aleccio (1575–81).[117] Bosio mentioned it 10 times.[118] It appears on Great Siege maps[119] as Mandrache, Mandrace, Mandraki, Mandrage and Mandrakion from the Greek word for 'internal harbour', similar to the Genoese 'portus interior',[120] the Mandracium at Carthage[121] and the Mandra (luogo chiuso) at Constantinople.[122] Mandarage,[123] Mandracchio,[124] Mandracho[125] and Mandraco, though derived from Greek,[126] are sixteenth-century Latinizations that transformed the Greek 'mandra' or 'mandraki' (diminutive of mandra) into *mandracchio* or *mandraccio*.[127] It is also recorded as *Manderagij* and *Manderagium* in the 1687 *Status Animarum*.[128] '*Mandracchio*' as the innermost part of a harbour is 'prevalent in all Mediterranean and Adriatic countries'.[129] The Mandra features also on 1565–69, 1572 and 1799 maps as an enclosure with berthed vessels.[130] Abela refers to the Mandra as Mandracchio and describes it as the place where the vessels of those navigating between the cities were held.[131]

## Facilities and defence

Apart from the development of cartography, the mediaeval period contributes to what maps do not. Al-Himyari, relying on Al Bakri's work, states that between 877 and 1053/4, shipbuilders visited Malta for the strongest wood available to build maritime vessels.[132] With the availability of such a resource, the importance of a darsena or tarzna,[133] a ship-building and repair yard, in Malta grew.[134] Tenth-century Arab authors report that the building of darsenas to construct and repair warships was a practice of the Arabs and their Byzantine predecessors.[135] In Maltese, '*dar is-sengħa*' means 'home of crafts', indicative of maritime skills earlier met at the Bormla facilities. Derived from Arabic, dàrsena,

[h]ome of industry; factory, through the Genoese dialect [is defined as the] innermost and sheltered part of a port, sometimes within the dry docks, generally surrounded by quays on which are placed the equipment for loading and unloading, workshops, warehouses, etc.[136]

Another definition, attributed to the Genoese, is 'small basin set inside a harbour, for the shelter and repair of ships'.[137]

The existence of a darsena, equipped with workshops and one or more dry docks, where repairs are carried out, ships built and small vessels kept sheltered or covered, is confirmed by the *Annali Genovesi* (1174–1224). They mention the darsena when the harbour served as a base for fleets of Genoese corsairs who attempted to recapture Candia (modern Crete) and attack Pisan and Venetian interests in the eastern Mediterranean.[138] In Malta, the Genoese armed and equipped vessels that sailed from the Greek archipelago to the Catalan coasts, and which became known as '*terrore dei naviganti*' (terror of the navigators).[139] In 1204 Enrico Pescatore willingly supported the Genoese corsair Almanno da Costa, granting him permission to land, equip and gear up his fleet in preparation for an attack on Syracuse.[140] The activity of Genoese fleets in Malta is recorded in 1206 when Pescatore attacked Corfu[141] and in 1210 when supplies were sent to the fleet which was attacking Candia.[142] In 1221 rebelling Arabs exiled from Sicily and aided by infuriated communities deported from the Molise took control of Malta.[143] Consequently, in 1222–23, the Sicilian Regent stripped Pescatore of the countship and the *castro Malte* at Mdina,[144] and opened the harbours to all mercantile fleets including those of the Pisans. The decision, not fully welcomed by the ex-Count, opened commercial opportunities in key harbours including those of Malta.[145] After 1223–24, the Sicilian Crown struggled to suppress the Genoese superiority on the islands by attacking Malta and expelling entire communities from southern Italy to the Maltese Islands.[146]

In 1241 correspondence between Frederick II and Giliberto Abbate, the royal appointee for Malta, for the first time mentions the *castri maris Malte* as one of three castles on the islands serving the Sicilian Crown.[147] It shows that around 1241 the Crown strengthened the defence of the islands' most important centres: Mdina, the centre of administration; Gozo's citadel, the island's refuge; and Bormla's harbour, Malta's maritime and commercial link with the world.

During the short Angevin rule (1263–82), threats from Aragon increased. The necessity to strengthen harbour defences led to the *castrum maris* becoming a stronger defensive structure. The site chosen by the Arabs for a basic coastal watch tower, only to be abandoned during Pescatore's time, was to become a fort. The *castrum maris* is recorded in the *Annali* on 29 July 1274[148] when the Genoese, who continued to frequent Malta, were preparing for a defiant voyage and provocative parade before the Neapolitan regent's residence. The Genoese planned to set off from Malta and Trapani on this mission.[149]

The development of the mandra and the darsena are proof of a medieval industry under the Arabs and the Genoese,[150] and the later *tarzna* at Bormla. If the Mandra developed into the medieval sense of a darsena as defined by Arab authors, then the nature of services and facilities at Bormla were substantial, with rulers playing a major role, and with significant manufacturing activity to construct and equip warships.[151] The presence of a darsena could be the main reason why the Hospitaller Order chose the Bormla harbour for its fleet, and why it decided to build its new city (Birgu) (C) in the

void between Bormla (A) and the *castro exteriore* (St Angelo) (N). In 1542, the Order's chroniclers mention that all maritime facilities were still at Bormla, from Anchor Wharf (3) and the Macina (4) inwards,[152] and Birgu had no arsenal and no wharf facilities.[153]

Further to the thalassic evidence emerging from the evidence given here, one may deduce that the Bormla harbour was divided into three main areas with three specific functions: domestic; commercial or mercantile;[154] and military.

(i) Domestic: the innermost part (now partially beneath the inner dock area) known as the Mandra was reserved for the small vessels of the local community;

(ii) Commercial or mercantile: the part outside the Mandra, inclusive of the small bay at the lower end of the present Triq il-Gendus (5), up to the Galleys' Stores (6) and St Theresa's Landing Place (7), was used for the berthing of vessels (mostly commercial) of various navigators sailing the Mediterranean on trade routes (as the Alexandrian vessels) and those not from Bormla (such as Gozitan vessels)[155] who mainly traded with them, and for whatever maritime vessels that used the facilities and services offered at the harbour;

(iii) Military: the outer part (which extended north from St Theresa's Landing Place to the wharf opposite the Macina), later known as Anchor Wharf,[156] was reserved for the anchoring and berthing of larger maritime vessels mostly of a military nature.

This explains why the military fleet of the Hospitaller Order on arrival in 1530 anchored in that part of the Bormla harbour. In the absence of a landing place, a makeshift wooden bridge was built,[157] indicative of an area external to the normal harbour activity. From that point inwards to the Mandra, the creek provided facilities, services and a sheltered harbour even in stormy weather – a determining factor for maritime vessels.

### Naval and defence architecture

Naval architecture at Bormla could precede the Order's arrival by centuries. Early maps of the sixteenth century show a large building along the western *Stores' Wharf* in Bormla.[158] The building, which has partially survived, shows characteristics of vessel construction arches, possible slipways or low quays. The long-arched structures would have catered for repairs which fleets needed *en route* to, or from, Malta. They resemble the ancient shipyards constructed at Carthage and Roman Portus. It was the British Admiralty that confiscated the ancient privately owned maritime vessel-building and repair yards and wharves. An Ittar map inset (1778–1847) shows vessel-building on the west side of the Bormla harbour.[159]

Coupled to naval facilities is defence architecture. If Bormla were an ancient harbour of importance it certainly required some sort of defence. The name of a cul-de-sac known as *Vicolo Torre* was already connected to the existence of a tower in mediaeval times. The *Status Animarum* of 1687 states that the *Vicolo* (alley) which had no official name was popularly called '*della Torre*'[160] and later *Strada della Torre della Guardie* (Street of the Tower of the Guards).[161] Although post-Second World War reconstruction changed the

**Figure 4.** The defence network intended to guard the Bormla harbour until the early sixteenth century. *Source*: Map courtesy Google Maps.



**Figure 5.** The close proximity of the sites at Bormla. The numbers correspond to the bracketed numbers in the text. Legend: Dotted outline shows the boundary of Ta' Ġerman Hill: 1: Maħtet it-Tin/ site of St Paul's Church; 2: The Mandra which earlier incorporated the area of the ancient market (9); 3: Anchors' Wharf; 4: Maċina/Sheer's Bastion; 5: Site of bay where Gozitan lateen boats moored/lower end of present Triq il-Gendus; 6: Galleys' Stores/Stores Wharf; 7: St Theresa's Landing Place; 8: Oil Wharf; 9: Old Market; 10: Estimated site of ancient Bormla Tower. Map: *Plan of the Harbours and Fortifications of Valetta In the Island of Malta By Captain W. H. Smyth, R[oyal] N[avy. Knight of St Ferdinand and Merit*, Walker, Sculpt., Publ. Hydrographical Office Admiralty, London (19 July 1823).

footprint of the old *Vicolo Torre*, and probably bulldozed the structure, its name was retained as a mnemonic.

An Angevin document dated 29 July 1274 mentions the Castrum Maris, as the *castro exteriore* (exterior tower) (N), and a *castro interiore* (V/10).[162] The latter was a reference to what had existed at inner Bormla. Although a tower-like structure is identified at the end of what became the Scots Street corner with Pilgrimage Street,[163] an earlier tower would have stood somewhere close on the same hillside. A tower at the site of the existing one is shown on Great Siege maps annexed to the first Grand Master's garden[164] and palace – a building still intact with sea-shell sculptures on its windows. The *castro interiore* suggests the sequence and strategy of the defensive system which protected the Bormla harbour. Starting from the ancient inner tower, a second external tower was built during the Arab era at St Angelo's point, then came the *Torre Orsi* (W) at *Punta delle Forche* or Ricasoli Point, and later another structure at the farthest *Ras el-Ghasses* (X) which became Fort St Elmo. This network of towers was intended to alert and protect the Bormla harbour from attacks and invaders. It was a common practice among ancient communities which had the portus interior or the mandra at a place safe from both winds and pirates.[165] The name of *Ras el-Ghasses* tower at Valletta point is self-explanatory as 'head of the guards'. It was the outermost tower capable to alert the rest (Figure 4). Another toponym which confirms the existence of a coastal tower at the farthest sea-looking end of the creek is the toponym of Birgu itself, which some authors maintain is derived from the Greek word πύργος (pýrgos), referring to a coastal tower.[166]

### Toponyms of and at the Bormla harbour

The need to identify places was always essential. Places or sites connected to maritime activities close to a specific water, shoreline or harbour are identified by names connected to maritime practices and uses. Nonetheless, toponyms changed or were subjected to changes under different circumstances as successive rulers and institutions left their mark. The earliest records of Maltese toponyms are in documents of medieval feuds, notarial deeds and ancient Italian portulans (1296–1490).[167] To start with toponyms related to the sea, the 1490 *Chompasso* records the Malta harbour as *Marsachibir*,[168] which translates to 'grand harbour'. From the sixteenth until the eighteenth century, similar toponyms related to the sea were recorded for the Bormla inlet: *Il Gran Porto*[169]; *Porto Principale*; the *Porto Grande*[170]; and *Grand Port*.[171] The inlet was also recorded as *Galleys' Port*,[172] *Porto delle Galere, Port ix–Xwieni* and Dockyard Creek. The wharf was further fragmented into site names related to specific naval activity which, during the British rule (1800–1964), became *Oil Wharf* (8), *St Theresa's Landing Place* (7), *Stores' Wharf* (6), *Anchor Wharf* (3) and others which substituted older site names. Since the thirteenth century, notaries in Malta and the *Cancelleria Regia* (Palermo) recorded tracts of land with details attributed to them by vendors and procurers.[173] Early publications that mention toponyms are those by priest and member of the Order, Quintinus, published in 1536, and Del Rosso's short 1567 description of Malta.[174] A later detailed work about Maltese villages and towns, endorsed by the Order's Superiors, is a 1647 publication by Giovanni Francesco Abela.[175]

Other sources for toponyms are Church records. Although Christian presence in Malta dates from the first century AD, it was consolidated with the arrival of Byzantine

monks who fled the iconoclast persecution (eighth–ninth century AD).[176] After four decades of Aghlabid persecution (870–909), the conquering Fatimid Arabs granted religious freedom again. This permitted some Byzantine clergy to return to the Maltese islands and stay until the Great Western Schism (1378–1418). From the fourteenth century the Roman Catholic Church strengthened its foothold on Malta, and through Apostolic *Visitatio*s (1373), it recorded the toponyms of the property it had. Amid turmoil between Popes and anti-Popes, the Council of Costanza (1414–17) saw those faithful to Pope Martin V in Rome emerge triumphant. These events, together with events within the Sicilian Crown territories, helped the Church to gain property and establish its first *cappelle* (chapels), which later took the role of parishes.[177] The Catholic Church systematically ousted the remnants of the Byzantine Church and any threat to its authority.[178] From the fifteenth century, toponyms of land, villages, hamlets and others are found on records kept by chaplains or trusted clergy.[179] The establishment of parishes primarily meant that a number of villages or hamlets ended up incorporated under one dominant parish with an overarching toponym referring to the entire cluster as a single town or village.[180]

## Language

Apart from exercising power, authorities and institutions used languages like Greek or Latin, among others, for administrative and ceremonial purposes. From the Byzantine (*c.*500–869 AD), Norman (1091–1194) and Hohenstaufen (1194–1266) periods to 1516, the use of 'Mandra' was facilitated, as Greek was an official administrative language of the Sicilian Crown. For two centuries the Arabs ruled Sicily (827–78) and Arabic as an official administrative language ousted Latin completely but not Greek, which in north Sicily survived even as a spoken language.[181] Concurrently, the Sicilian language enriched itself with Arab vocabulary. Since Malta formed part of the Sicilian domain, it was important for this study to find proof of the Greek–Arab influence as it could provide evidence for the harbour function at Bormla.

Evidence for the concurrent use of both languages comes from another toponym at Bormla. '*Bullumeni*' is mentioned in notarial records dated 26 March 1373.[182] It was a colloquial derivation of both Arab and Greek words that refer to 'harbour': 'bur' بور and 'limani' λιμάνι, literally Burlimani. A similar occurrence where Arabic and Greek words blend is the toponym 'Marsaskala',[183] in which 'marsa' مرسى is the Arabic word for a berth, moorage or anchorage, while the Byzantine Greek 'skála' stands for quay, pier, wharf or landing place.[184] Together, *Mandra* (μάνδρα) and *Bullumeni* (Bur-limani) provide evidence for Greek influence in Sicilian domains and Mediterranean maritime communities.

Since the *Ta' Ġerman* (*tegimen), Mandra, Maħtet it-Tin* and *Bullumeni* toponyms, coupled with other evidence, point to a thalassic connection and validate the view that Bormla was an important ancient, classical and mediaeval harbour, at this stage the study posed a question to substantiate the earlier argument of *tegimen*. Was the '*tegimen*' discerned in the *Ta' Ġerman* Hill toponym, perpetuated later with the 'shelter' meaning and the toponym of Bormla? (Figure 5)

## *The sheltered harbour*

Proof of continuation of the 'shelter' meaning after the Roman age comes from an analysis of the Bormla toponym itself. Great Siege maps record the name of Bormla as *Bormola, La Bormola, La Buratora, la burbula, burmola, La Burmola* and *La Burmula, Borgo* and *Borgo dirupato* (or *dirupens*).[185] The use of the term *borgo/borgo dirupato* indicates a demolished area of Bormla, which was the old suburb of the *castrum maris*. Owing to the building and fortifying of the new city (Birgu), Bormla became a suburb of the new *borgo*. In Italy, the term *borgo* indicates the 'fortified group of the houses of the people, opposed to the castrum or castellum, and distinct from the open countryside',[186] and also 'an inhabited center of medium size and of a certain importance, characterized by a mainly commercial economy and with an agricultural periphery'.[187] Historiographers, authors, cartographers, notaries, clergy and others recorded Bormla as Bir Mula, Birmula, Bormola, Burmola, Burmula and Bormula, not to mention the titles of Citta' Cotonera (1670) and Citta' Cospicua (1720)[188] and its *contradas*, which are not the objective of this study.

As authors feared censorship and/or excommunication, they were coerced to subjectivities and biases to sustain the sponsor's standpoint. The denial of approval would have been suicidal. In Malta, the Christianization of toponyms, surnames and historic events attempted to reduce or eliminate their connections to non-Christian origins or Arabic due to its perceived connection to Islam, even if the Semitic roots of the language could not be erased.[189] In the case of Bormla, events indicate collusion. Maritime communities like that of Bormla would not have been held dear to the establishment as news of what happened overseas reached them before it reached those in power. In addition, subjectivities and sanitized historiography excluded the narrative of such communities.

## *Toponyms and variants*

Primarily the etymology and pronunciation of the 'Bormla' toponym appears Arabic, as *Burmla* بور مأوى translates to 'port-shelter'[190] and echoes the meaning of the Roman *tegimen*. The toponym, however, is not completely Arabic, even though Abela attributes *Burmula* to Arabic.[191] Abela overlooks the effects of Latinization or how institutions such as the Church strived to eliminate and obliterate anything that reminds one of past non-Christian cultures and connections. Besides, efforts to reroute attention and importance to seats of religious or civil authority constrained authors to publish whatever such authorities regarded as acceptable by them alone.

Notary Canchur (1501 and 1523) records Bormla as '*contrada ta burmula*' and '*contrada bur mile*'.[192] Notary Cumbo (1537) writes '*ta murmule, suburbii maris, contrada*' meaning 'of m[b]urmule, suburb by the sea and district'.[193] Notary Albano (1582–1636) and others repeatedly record it as '*la burmula*'.[194] *Burmula* is also used in the first baptismal register for 1587 held by the Parish Church.[195] In reports for 1729,[196] 1737[197] and mid-eighteenth-century north European authors recorded it as 'Burmula' and 'Bormola'.[198] 'Burmola' is found written in the works of nineteenth-century authors such as Ferris (1862).[199] In the harbour cities the elite, owing to their tendency to Italianize and later Anglicize the language, changed it to 'Bormla'. However, the old Semitic *Burmla* toponym survived unaltered in the vernacular of the common people and

in the dialect of villagers distant from the harbour area. Their vernacular pronunciation was transcribed on official documents as notarial records, and on travelogues and others, even though changed into a readable Latinized form such as 'Burmola', 'Burmula', 'Bormola' or 'Birmula'.[200]

The *Búrmula* toponym is also mentioned and emphasized by Pirandello in 1848:

> Ma l'isola di Gozzo, prima . . . poi Malta . . . belle! con quel golfo grande grande, d'un azzurro aspro, luccicante d'aguzzi tremolii, e quell paesello bianco di Bùrmula, piccolo in una di quelle azzurre insenature . . . Belle da vedere le cose . . .[201]

Pirandello shows how, on entering harbour, vessels proceeded to Bormla. He describes it as 'that white little town of Bùrmula, in one of those little blue coves . . . beautiful things to see'. Whitewash was applied to houses at old harbours to help navigators identify the place.

### Paintings and the 'ancient market'

An aid to understanding the view of Bormla as seen by Pirandello are paintings from the same age. Two paintings by de Brocktorff (*c.*1810) show *Porto delle Galere* and the Galleys' Stores.[202] Another two, identified by knowledge of the skyline, architecture and similarities to early photography,[203] show the inlet from different angles and include the *Antico Mercato* (the old market) (11). The first shows houses near the church of St Theresa very close to the edge of the seashore and the market in white at the centre of the Mandra.[204] The second, attributed to Mons(eigneur) shows the *market* before its demolition to make way for Dock No. 1 (Figures 6 [a,b]).[205]

Since Roman times harbours included a *Piccolo Mercato* (small market).[206] Local tradition maintains that the Tuesday Market enhanced by the Arabs (870–*c.*1250) was an evolution of earlier activity at Bormla. Also, the main square is popularly known as *Is-Suq ta' Bormla* (the market of Bormla) or *Is-Suq il-Qadim* (the old market). In the seventeenth century, the Order provided a large premises for the '*mercato di Burmula*' constructed from funds of the *Università*.[207] Although elderly people recount the discovery of large Roman amphorae laid in rock-hewn underground locations adjacent to an older market structure demolished during the post-war reconstruction (*c.*1947–52),[208] no reference to such finds was found in the Museums' Annual Reports published in the post-war years.[209] However, more was to be revealed from further analysis of the Bormla toponym through time.

### Bir Mula

Authors who, like Abela,[210] Ciantar[211] and later Letard[212] relied on the Church's interpretation were made to believe that 'Bormla' derived from *Bir Mulaj* ('well of the Lord')[213] or *Bur Mulaj* ('meadow of the Lord').[214] They maintained that 'Bormla', 'Burmula' or '*Burmola*' derived from '*Bir-mula (Pozzo del Signore)*'.[215] Nevertheless, Letard questioned the origins of 'Burmula'.[216] Variants as '*Burmla', 'Burmula*', '*Bir Mula*' or '*Birmula*' occur frequently in written records, maps[217] and publications.[218] Following Abela's 1647 work, 'Birmula' appears again in 1729.[219] Likewise Rat's 1738 travelogue mentions Birmula as 'a **secure harbour**, where the gallies and most of the

a



b



**Figures 6.** Paintings attributed to Mons[eingneur] and the Continental School respectively (1790–1830) show the *'Old Suq'* built in the seventeenth century on land separating the inner *Mandra* from the rest of the harbour.

other vessels of the city lie, which in time of danger, is shut up with a great iron chain'.[220] In 1838, Badger mentions Birmula in his itinerary of Malta.[221] The interpretation of Bir Mula as 'the well of the Lord' is a Semitico-christianized version of the ancient toponym *Burmla* which, as is shown later in this study, is the product of two distinct words from

two different Semitic languages. The Bir Mula toponym was revived with the establishment of the Bir Mula Heritage museum in 1997.[222]

Notary Vincenzo Bonaventura de Bonetijs[223] on 3 May 1557 specifically identifies a water-well called '*ta' Bir mula*' with an adjoining field known as *Tal-Blat*. This was a property purchased by the Order in 1551 and which after 1563 passed to the Bali' of Lango, Fra Pietro (Pierre) de la Fontaine, called *de Chantereine*.[224] Lexicographers attribute the word *Mula* (plural *mwiel*) as to mean Lords, Masters or Patrons: in other words, high-ranking persons in Maltese society.[225] The definition implies that the Bormla harbour belonged to the Maltese ruling or high classes.[226] Yet, Leanti (1761) specified that after Valletta, Burmula was the most populated city with '*Gente Mercantile, che vi attende al traffico per la comodita' di uno spaziosissimo seno*' ('merchant people, awaiting you to trade in the comfort of a very spacious creek').[227]

The building of the new suburb (Birgu) by the Order started in late 1532 and kept going for two decades.[228] Birgu became a Roman Catholic parish in 1560,[229] and churchwise by 1577 it relegated Bormla to a territory falling under its jurisdiction '*burmula citta della Vittoriosa, citta de Malta*'.[230] While it proves that by 1577 Bormla ranked as a *citta* (city) not as a village, authors such as Pirri (1643) called it a *pago* (village).[231] Though Pirri was later proved incorrect and outright biased,[232] subsequent events and publications suggest an educated guess at an establishment-led plot against Bormla and its community.

As a community which had a constant contact with people arriving in harbour and locals travelling to other ports around the Mediterranean and perhaps beyond, the Bormla community was ahead of others in terms of news and ideas from beyond the Maltese shores. This was an inconvenient factor for authorities who tried to maintain power on the Maltese Islands. This became clearer during the British era when the community was 'on the forefront in showing resistance to colonial rule' and British authors such as Badger blatantly did their utmost to turn travellers away from the city and its heritage icons.[233]

High-ranking clergy in the Church, excluding those local, tried their best to damage the reputation of Bormla and the self-esteem of its community. Among these were archbishops who clashed with leftist politicians from the locality and used personal parochial rivalry in order to gain favour with the British authorities. To avoid electoral setbacks, many Maltese politicians supported the Church and the elite.[234] Since the post-war reconstruction phase, politics by the Church and political parties were also instrumental in pulling down old buildings of character in order to concentrate the lower classes in social housing units in the locality. Most of these so-called social housing projects from 1945 to the present day have taken place at the cost of local heritage.[235] This form of exclusion persisted as, up to the 1970s, publications required the sanctioning of Church authorities, and authors feared censorship or, worse, excommunication.[236] A further concerted effort to demoralize the community took place in the 1990s with the introduction of local councils as the Church, political parties and the system supported Act XV, which transferred large areas of the traditional and civil Bormla boundaries to the jurisdiction of neighbouring local councils, giving, among others, precedence to parochialism and electoral interests.[237] Today the plot continues with the complete omission of the Bormla toponym and its community in publications or re-publication of literature on historic events such as that of the Great Siege of 1565, a process which

Duggan perfectly calls 'Deliberate Omission' and 'Falsification of History in the 21$^{st}$ Century'.[238]

The efforts of the Church to Christianize Malta, supported by civil authorities, included ways and means to obliterate the past and instil new meanings and interpretations of history and placenames. Authorities and institutions in power tried to divert attention and importance away from Bormla to their preferred localities and centres of power. Such ploys indicate that authorities had cultivated a plot against communities which resisted their authority or which they considered as a potential threat to their position. Harbour and maritime communities had better and faster communication with the outside world and were more open to ideas, knowledge and cultures from abroad. Since knowledge is power, ruling institutions feared the owners of such knowledge, and Bormla as the main harbour community ranked highest among them.

## *The Phoenician connection*

According to conclusions drawn from Smith, the Bormla inlet and its shores 'have been from the earliest times the site of a town',[239] and could have a Phoenician connection. As shown earlier in this paper, toponyms at Bormla already indicate the port-shelter connection by the end of the third century BC (Roman Malta). Considering that the interpretation of the 'Malta' toponym by various scholars is that of 'malath' meaning 'refugium' – a place of shelter, refuge or haven[240] – the Phoenician 'shelter/refuge' definition fits perfectly with the second part of the 'Bormla' toponym, that is, the Phoenician 'ml(th)' and the later Arabic ملاذ (malāḏ]) meaning haven, hideaway and shelter.

This is substantiated and supported by the fact that the Phoenicians named the larger island 𐤉𐤉𐤋 *I'nan*/ANN,[241] while they referred to its main harbour as the 𐤀𐤋𐤌/ 𐤕𐤋𐤌 *m-l-d/m-l-t*. The Phoenician 'shelter' became 'tegimen' under the Romans, while the '*m-l-t*', developed into Melite/Melita by authors using Greek or Latin to identify the island's harbour 'melita insula/Μελίτη νήσος' as a destination and its town 'melita civitas/Μελίτη πόλις' (Melite polis).[242]

The Arabs (870–1220s) added the harbour ملاذ – bur – in front of the Phoenician 'mlt/mld' to give rise to *bur-malath/d* or *bur-mlath/d*.[243] The present-day Arabic بور مأوى (bur malāḏ) built from the Phoenician 'malath/d' (refuge) and the Arabic 'bur' (harbour), reflect the same meaning retained in the 'Burmla', now 'Bormla', toponym. As the end consonant is a devoiced consonant, it gave rise to 'bur mala[th/d]' and, consequently, 'burmla[th/d]' – the toponym of the harbour town.[244] The elision of the final plosive *t* was common in the transcriptions and pronunciation of Punic names.[245] On the other hand, '*malta*' remained the port of destination for navigators. Thus, the original toponym for the Bormla 'shelter' or 'refuge' later became the toponym of the whole island. This explains why classical authors, geographers and nautical works referred to the island, its city and its harbour as Melita or Malta without specifying a different name for the harbour itself. This is a practice still common among maritime people. Distinctive toponyms survived in the vernacular of the common people until they were recorded in writing.

One may therefore conclude that the creation of the 'Bormla' toponym occurred in two stages: first as the 'mlt/d' (shelter/refuge) in the Phoenician age, and, secondly as the

bur+mla(t/d) (port of shelter, harbour of refuge) in the Arab years after 869 AD. The findings show that the Bormla 'port-shelter' toponym can trace its origin in the Phoenician years and confirm Smith's claim that 'its shores have been from the earliest times the site of a town'[246] : that is, Malta's ancient harbour town. Although the community or communities inhabiting Bormla in the pre-Phoenician and early Phoenician era may have not been maritime, they moved there and became involved in maritime activity when the sea rose (c.1000 < 900 BC) and flooded the creek.[247]

### Limitations

More evidence to unwritten history may come from a wider range of sources which mention and record the Bormla harbour as *the harbour of Malta*.[248] A limitation to this study is that of languages and locations relevant to this topic that are unknown or inaccessible to the author. More evidence may come from archaeological surveys – so far not conducted – at Bormla and its remaining maritime structures and its seabed.

### Conclusion

This research study has concluded that it is possible to trace and document remote unwritten history from toponyms and oral lore which survive among ancient communities. Thalassic imaginaries born out of toponyms and oral lore narrated by maritime communities are therefore not imaginary but the product of memorized historic events, experiences and knowledge. They are thus surviving witnesses to (an) unwritten history. Documented thalassic toponyms are mnemonics of histories whose tangible evidence is minimal or lost; and, which, if supported by evidence from archaeology, architecture, written records and pictographic sources, become proof of events narrated in oral lore and legend, such as that of St Paul's departure from the Bormla harbour. The research showed that Bormla was Malta's main harbour from antiquity until the sixteenth century and that Bormla's original Phoenician toponym contributed to the creation of the 'Malta' toponym.

The transdisciplinary approach adopted proves that the analysis of intangibles such as toponyms, legend and oral lore supported by tangible evidence from other sources can become particularly helpful in research into historical topics and events which remained unwritten or excluded by earlier historiography. This approach can help fill some long-standing gaps, clarify doubts and divergences which exist between formal historiography and the unrecorded, forgotten or excluded histories of communities and places such as that of Bormla, the harbour area and the Maltese Islands. This study adds to the Maltese historical debate covering around two-and-a-half millennia of history and its histories are relevant to more than the local or the national community. It has provided evidence about the functions and development of Bormla as Malta's ancient harbour. It has also provided information about some toponyms (placenames) met in the historic narrative which have long demanded an objective approach to provide the reader with an authentic and inclusive historical narrative of Maltese history. Finally, it is hoped that this research inspires further studies on similar ancient harbours, places and islands, as it shows that thalassic imaginaries born out of oral lore and documented toponyms supported with tangible evidence from different sources are surviving witnesses to (an) unwritten history.

## Notes

1. 'The Three Cities' was the collective term by which the French government described the three fortified cities as one of the 12 administrative municipalities (districts) for the Island in 1798 (Testa, *The French in Malta 1798–1800*).
2. Smyth, "Plan of the Harbours," 1823. See legends A and B on Map.
3. *Reports on the Working of Government Departments during the Financial Year 1950–51*, 391; Grech, "Il-qedem ta' Bormla u l-ewwel knisja taghha" [The antiquity of Bormla and its first church], 2; Sansone, "Housing Works Destroy Historic Tunnel," *MaltaToday*, March 31, 2019.
4. Cutajar, *Bormla: A Struggling Community*, chapters 4 and 5.
5. Vella, *The Pilgrims' Route: The Star, the Cross and the Crescent*, 2018, 88, 89, 92 and 95. Vella, *Homer's Ogygia: An Imaginary or a Historiography*? 2017, 50,51, 55, 58, 61, 62, 65 and 66..
6. Mercieca, "St. Paul's Departure from Malta," 12. See Figure 5, site marked (2).
7. Carpenter, *Folk Tale, Fiction and Saga in the Homeric Epics*, 24, 45, 95, 109; Gill, "Plato's Atlantis Story and the Birth of Fiction," 64; Aseguinolaza, "On Toponymical Regimes," 20–3; and Nicolaisen, "The Toponymy of Literary Landscapes," 75–104.
8. Vella, *Homer's Ogygia: An Imaginary or a Historiography? 2017*, 49 and 66
9. Taylor, "On Social Imaginaries," 1, 19, 51 (unpaginated).
10. Altschuler et al., "Linguistic Evidence Supports date for Homeric Epics," 419.
11. Nash, "An Insular Toponymy," 75.
12. Ibid., 69, 73–4.
13. Chircop, *Colonial Encounters*, 34, 36–7, 39; Badger, *Description of Malta and Gozo*, 220–2; and Duggan, "Review," 291–343.
14. D'Amato, "Healing a Turbulent Past," 9, 11, 12, 17, 22–49, 83–4; Smith, "Priests and Politicians," 113–24.
15. Cutajar, Formosa and Calafato, "Community Perceptions of Criminality," 63–4, 75; Carabott, "Cospicua Man Battles to Save Historic Buildings"; Sansone, "Heritage Activist Forces Chang in Cospicua Social Housing Plans"; Sansone, "Housing Works Destroy Historic Tunnel"; *Times of Malta*, "500-year-old Reservoirs found during Cospicua Social Housing Project Works"; Webb, "16th Century Reservoirs Uncovered by Construction Works"; Galea Scannura, *Cospicua*, issues 1954–57.
16. Duggan, "Review," 291–343.
17. McPherson, "Revisionist Historians."
18. Vella, *Homer's Ogygia: An Imaginary or a Historiography?* 2016, 53.
19. Strabo, *Geography*, book 17, chapter 3, verses 57–8; Strabo,*The Geography of Strabo*: Quote: 'ἔστι δὲ καὶ Μελίτη νῆσος ἐν πεντακοσίοις σταδίοις ἀπὸ τῆς Κοσσούρου'('Melite, an island, is 500 stadia distant from Cossuros.')
20. Oldfather, *The Library of History of Diodorus Siculus.*
21. Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, book 3, chapter 14 (8). Quote: Insulae in Africam versae Gaulos, Melita a Camarina LXXXVII, a Lilybaeo CXIII ('. . . Sicily. Towards Africa, its islands are Gaulos, Melita, 87 miles from Camerina, and 113 from Lilybæum . . .')
22. Nobbe and Augustus, *Claudii Ptolemaei Geographia*, liber IV, cap. 4, 246.
23. Bonanno, *Malta – Phoenician, Punic and Roman*, 25, 86, 142, 268–9.
24. Bonanno and Militello, *Malta negli Iblei, gli Iblei a Malta*, 20, 105, 116–18. A Cippus is at the National Museum of Archaeology (Valletta, Malta) while a second one is at the Louvre (Paris, France); Crawley Quinn and Vella, eds, *The Punic Mediterranean*, 233.
25. Bonanno, *Malta – Phoenician, Punic and Roman*, 57–61, 116–19, 185–6.
26. Sagona, *The Archaeology of Punic Malta*; and Bonanno, *Malta – Phoenician, Punic and Roman*, 86, 142, 155–60, 253, 268–9.
27. Bonanno, *Malta – Phoenician, Punic and Roman*, 155.
28. Diodorus Siculus, *Diodori Bibliotheca Historica*, 1888–90, book V, chapter 12, section 3: αὕτη Φοινίκων ἄποικος ('this Phoenician colony').

29. Bonanno, *Malta – Phoenician, Punic and Roman*, 115, 143.
30. KJBV, Acts 28:2; Bonanno, *Malta – Phoenician, Punic and Roman*, 142. Author's Note: the Latin *barbari* or Greek βαρβαροι (barbaroi) is a reference to people 'of strange speech, speaking jargon, unintelligible' language, which means they were non-Greek or Latin speakers. However, it does not exclude that some did.
31. Brincat, *Malta 870–1054 Al Himyari's Account and its Linguistic Implications*.
32. Crawley Quinn et al., *Augustine's Canaanites*, 176-177 notes 4 and 5; Bonanno, *Malta – Phoenician, Punic and Roman*, 8, 15, 86, 142, 155, 156–7, 253, 268–9.
33. KJBV, Acts 28:11; Bonanno, *Malta – Phoenician, Punic and Roman*, 199, 239; Cunta, *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti*, 517(5)–518(2), q.v section 'Item inter Siciliam et Africam – Insulae Malta, Hefaesta et Falacron.'
34. Strabo, *Geography*, book 17, chapter 3, verses 57–8; Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo*.
35. Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, book 3, chapter 14 (8).
36. Pius, Antoninus, *Vetera Romanorum itineraria, sive Antonini Augusti itinerarium, cum integris, cum integris*, 518, 520.
37. Oldfather, *The Library of History of Diodorus Siculus*. Greek Text: Diodorus Siculus, *Diodori Bibliotheca Historica*, edited by Bekker, Dindorf and Vogel, liber V, chapter 12, sections 1–4.
38. Busuttil, *Maltese Harbours in Antiquity*, 305–7.
39. Oldfather, *The Library of History*, books IV, 59–VIII, vol. 3. Translation: 'Good harbours and a well-built city honour the island of Malta' : '*Melitae insulae portus bonos laudat et urbem bene aedificatam*'.
40. Busuttil, "Maltese Harbours in Antiquity," 307.
41. Vella, "The Origin of the Name of Gozo," 4.
42. Vella, *The Pilgrims' Route: The Star, the Cross and the Crescent*, 2018, 88, 89, 93 and 94; Vella, *Homer's Ogygia: An Imaginary or a Historiography*? 2016, 51 and 65.; Bonanno and Militello, *Malta negli Iblei, gli Iblei a Malta*, 108; Tanasi, "The Prehistoric Pottery," 138–41, 146–7, 151–2; Goodwin, *Malta, Mediterranean Bridge*, 4; Murray, trans., *Homer – The Odyssey,*book V, lines 13–281; Butler and Homer, *The Odyssey*, book V, lines 13–281; Rutter, "Troy VII and the Historicity of the Trojan War, Lesson 27"; Vella, *Homer's Ogygia: An Imaginary or a Historiography?* 2017, 55..
43. Romer, *Pomponius Mela's Description of the World*; Miller and M. M. Bd., Heft VI, Orbis Habitabilis ad mentem Pomponii Melae, Taf. 7, 'Rekonstruierte Karten'– *Weltkarte des Pomponius Mela*, f.29, 101.
44. Vella, *Homer's Ogygia: An Imaginary or a Historiography*? 60.
45. Miller and M.M. Bd., Heft VI, Orbis Habitabilis ad mentem Pomponii Melae, Taf. 7, 'Rekonstruierte Karten' – *Weltkarte des Pomponius Mela*, f.29.
46. Nobbe, *Claudii Ptolemaei Geographia*, liber IV, cap. 4, 246; Ptolemy, *Geographia Aphricae Tabula II*; Ptolemaeus, C. Auctus Restitutus Emaculatus; Malombra, *La Geografia di Claudio Tolomeo*, 1574.
47. Kelley, "Perspectives on the Origins and uses of Portolan Charts," 1–16.
48. Babicz, *The Ptolemaic Atlas*; Angelus, Claudius Ptolemy (original Latin *c*.150AD), *La Cosmographie de Claude Ptolomée*, 156.
49. Nobbe, *Claudii Ptolemaei Geographia*, 246. By the references 'melita insula' and 'melita civitas', Ptolemy meant 'the island of' and 'the city of' the MLT respectively, where MLT is the 'safe refuge' or 'harbour of shelter' not the name of the Island yet. See also Vella, *The Pilgrims' Route: The Star, the Cross and the Crescent*, 93 . Strabo, Strabonis Rerum geographicarum libri XVII, (1829), 42 (book 17, chapter 3, section 16); Strabo, *Geographica*; Nobbe, *Claudii Ptolemaei Geographia*, 246.
50. Author: In Arabic it means the cape, the span of the cape, and hill head/hill cape which explains while the Maltese still call it '*L-Għolja Xeberras*'; Kassab, *Online Phoenician Dictionary*, see *Trans* XBR and *Head* R'C. Note: In Kassab the 'c' at the end of a word sounds like a soft 's'. Aquilina, *Maltese-English Dictionary*, 90, SCIBERRAS (1) Sicilian – place-name; < Ar. xa 'b er-ras meaning 'the spur of the headland.'

51. Delbeke and Schraven, *Foundation, Dedication and Consecration in Early Modern Europe*, 215.

52. Ventura, "Ptolemy's Maltese Co-ordinates: A Reassessment," 253. Ventura mistakenly reports that Ptolemy mentions a *Chersonissos city*, which Ptolemy does not. Attempts to turn the attention to Birgu, the city founded and built by the Order of St John in the sixteenth century, are common as many authors were subjected to the establishment, did not check the original version, and in their absence of further multidisciplinary research, repeated the same errors. https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/bitstream/123456789/24393/1/Ptolemy's%20Maltese%20co-ordinates-A%20re-assessment.pdf Accessed May 01, 2019.

53. Cassar, *Zvilupp tal-Qima lejn Marija Vergni Immakulata f'Bormla*'.

54. Smith, *A Copius and Critical English-Latin Dictionary*, 736, q.v. shelter; Anthon, *A Latin-English and English-Latin Dictionary: For the Use of Schools*, 873, q.v. *tegimen* and verb *tego*. Note: The word *tegimen* was also used to indicate shelter or cover by the first-century BC poets Publius Virgil Maro (70–19 BC) and Publius Ovidius Naso (43 BC–AD 17/18). Virgil, *P. Virgilii Maronis Opera, et nonnulla ejusdem opuscula*, 154, 245; Ovid, *Selectæ fabulæ ex libris Metamorphoseon*, 23 (line 46).

55. Bres, *Malta antica illustrata co'monumenti e coll'istoria*, 46–7. Bres mentions 'malath o melath, che significa refugiarsi' (p. 46) and adds 'Maleth' (p. 47) which he describes also as *rifugiarsi*, thus a place of shelter, refuge or haven.

56. Bres, *"Malta antica illustrata co'monumenti e coll'istoria,"* 46.

57. Sagona, *The Archaeology of Malta*, 174–5, 187–91.

58. Galvin, *Egypt as a Place of Refuge*, 42.

59. KJBV, Acts 28:1–11.

60. Farrugia, *Giovanni Pietro Francesco Agius de Soldanis, Għawdex bil-Ġrajja tiegħu*, 58.

61. Steinby, *The Roman Republican Navy*, 130, 164, 192. Mommsen, *The History of Rome*; Casson, "The Isis and Her Voyage," 81, 43–56, 51; Lucian, *The Ship or the Wishes*, 431–87; and Farrugia, *Giovanni Pietro Francesco Agius de Soldanis, Għawdex bil-Ġrajja tiegħu*, 58.

62. Bonanno, *Malta – Phoenician, Punic and Roman*, 172, 199, 239. The elderly recount that during the excavations for Dock No. 1 (1841–44), besides heaps of pottery from the seabed, on the west side the British found a structure made of large blocks of stone which they identified as a Roman wharf.

63. Gallina, *Le strutture dei porti e degli approdi antichi*, 162.

64. Ellul Galea, *L-Istorja tat-Tarzna*, 46.

65. Smith, *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St Paul*, 285, 240; Cassar, "19th Century Memories of Dockyard Creek – The Building of No. 1 Dock."

66. Smith, *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St Paul*, 285; Vella, *The Rock-Cut Church of Bormla: Origins and Development*, 2016, 49 ; Vella, *The Pilgrims' Route: The Star, the Cross and the Crescent*, 2018, 88.

67. Smith, *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St Paul*, 285.

68. Bormla Parish Church Archives: Status Animarum 1687 f.50 v – f.51 v; Fiorini, "Status Animarum II: a Census of 1687," 49; Galea Scannura, *Ftit mill-Istorja tas-Seklu Sbatax*, 49.

69. Notarial Archives of Malta, Valletta, Malta, Notary Andrea Albano, September 25, 1588 (f.69– f.69 retro). The deed dated October 3, 1590 mentioned by previous authors was not traced in the Albano volume. Another deed mentioning Francia Michalleff, dated November 9, 1587 (f. 207–14), is the *Divisione bonorum Pater* (partition of father's inheritance) between the heirs Francia and Vincentius Michalleff. Galea Scannura, *Taghrif storiku dwar il-Knisja Parrokkjali ta' Bormla*, 5; Vella, *The Pilgrims' Route: The Star, the Cross and the Crescent*, (2018): 88-92, 95; Galea Scannura, *Ftit mill-Istorja tas-Seklu Sbatax*, 1990, 49; Galea Scannura mentioned the contract between Francia Michalleff and Angelo Pace dated October 9, 1608, but omits the 'Revenditio' [Resale] dated September 25, 1588 (f.69).

70. Arabic محطات (mahatat) means 'station/s' and التين (et-tin) means 'fig/s.'

71. Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, 576.

72. Bormla Parish Church Archives: Status Animarum 1687 f.50 v–f.51 v. Quarterium (from It. *quartiere*) is a neighbourhood or district forming part of a city or town; Fiorini, "Status Animarum II: A Census of 1687," 49.

73. KJBV, Acts 28:10–13.

74. *New American Bible*, Acts 28:10: 'they brought us the provisions we needed'; *KJBV*: 'they laded us with such things as were necessary'; *Latin Vulgate* (LV): 'inposuerunt quae necessaria errant'; *New Living Translation Bible*: 'people put on board all sorts of things we would need for the trip.'

75. Helpful sources which indicate the Greek text and translations are found at *Bible Hub*, https://biblehub.com/text/acts/28-10.htm (see analysis table) and *Parallel Greek New Testament*, Acts 28: https://www.greeknewtestament.com/B44C028.htm.

76. LV translation: '*and **they** laded us with all things that were necessary*'; '*when we sailed **they** put on board the things that were necessary*' KJBV, Acts 28: 10–13.

77. Buhagiar, *St. Paul's Shipwreck and Early Christianity in Malta*, 1–16; Hartley, *Greek Loanwords in Nautical Terms*, q.v. 'statio.'

78. Cornuke, *The Lost Shipwreck of Paul*, 31.

79. Rickman, *Roman Granaries and Store Buildings*, 9–10.

80. Casson, "The Isis and Her Voyage," 81, 43–56, 51; Lucian, *The Ship or the Wishes*, 431–87; and Farrugia, *Giovanni Pietro Francesco Agius de Soldanis, Għawdex bil-Ġrajja tiegħu*, 58.

81. KJBV, Acts 27:39.

82. Rapoport and Savage-Smith, *An Eleventh-Century Egyptian Guide to the Universe: The Book of Curiosities* (453 A Fols.30B-31A), Listings 204 and 207; Al Idrisi, *Tabula Rogeriana*,

83. Available at http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52503226n.r=Carte%20pisane?rk=21459;2 .

84. Kelley, "Perspectives on the Origins and Uses of Portolan Charts," 1–16.

85. Ibid., 1–16.

86. BNF (a), *Carte Pisane* 1258–91; Bibliothèque Nationale de France [BNF (b)] Cresque, Abraham, Catalan Atlas/Catalan Atlas, Paris, France, 1375. aka Cresque, Abraham and Cresque, Jehuda. 1375. *Catalan Atlas*, Paris, France. Author's note: Marsaxlokk is a village at the southeast of Malta.

87. Motzo, *lI Compasso da Navigar*, viii, 111–12; and Cassola, "The Maltese Toponomy in Three Ancient Italian Portulans (1296–1490)," 47–8.

88. F. Pizzigano and D. Pizzigano, "Venetia. Some date it to 1373"; F. Pizzigano, "Portolan Chart of the Mediterranean," SP10, 29.

89. BNF (b) Cresque, Abraham and Cresque, Jehuda. 1375. *Catalan Atlas*, Paris, France.

90. Mürsiyeli Tabip Ibrahim. map at the Charts Room Istanbul Naval Museum, Beşiktaş, Istanbul, Turkey, 1461.

91. de Canepa, "In James Ford Bell Library."

92. Cornaro's Atlas, British Library, London, Accessed May 24, 2015. https://recogito.pelagios.org/document/ebmkr0i5xyhmkm/part/1/edit.

93. de Aguiar, *Portugal, in Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library*.

94. McIntosh, *The Vesconte Maggiolo World Map of 1504 in Fano, Italy*; and de Maïolo, "Carte nautique de la Méditerranée."

95. de Caverio, "Cartographe. Planisphère nautique."

96. Russus, Carte nautique de la partie nord-est de l'Océan Atlantique, de la mer Méditerranée et de la Mer noire.

97. Roselli, "At the James Ford Bell Library."

98. Germanus, *Cosmographia Claudii Ptolomaei Alexandrini* (1467), tabula 37, foglio 104.

99. Germanus, *Cosmographia Claudii Ptolomaei Alexandrini* (1482), tabula 37, foglio 104.

100. See note 91.

101. de Aguiar, *Portugal, in Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library*.

102. *Chompasso de tuta la starea della marina* (Venice, 1490). See section 'Qua comença l'isola de Molta'; Cassola, "The Maltese Toponomy in Three Ancient Italian Portulans (1296–1490)," 48–51.

103. Piri Reis, *Kitab-l Bahriye* (1521), the Piri Reis map at the Istanbul Library once more gives the position of the harbours. A translation of the Piri Reis map notes may give further clues about Malta.

104. de Santa Cruz, *Islario general de todas las islas del mundo* (c.1539).

105. Ibid., 229–32 and tabula IV.

106. Oldfather, *The Library of History: Books IV.59-VIII*. Translation: 'Good harbours and a well-built city honour the island of Malta' (Siculus, 1993; Cellarius, 1703).

107. de Santa Cruz, *Islario general de todas las islas del mundo*, 230.

108. Bosio, *Dell'Istoria della Sacra Religione et Ill. ma Militia di San Giovanni Gierosolmitano – Parte Terza*, 353, 378.

109. Ibid., 353, 627; Vella, *The Rock-cut Church of Bormla*, 2016, 56.

110. Anon., *Map of Eastern Mediterranean*; Oliva, *Portolan Atlas*.

111. Battista, *Map of the Eastern Mediterranean Sea from Portolan Atlas of 9 Charts and a World Map, etc.* (1514–64; created/published c.1544).

112. Homem, *Atlas nautique de la Mer Méditerranée de la Mer Noire et de l'Océan Atlantique nord – est*, (1559); Homem, *Atlas de Diego Homem de 1561*.

113. Ganado and Agius-Vadala', *A Study in Depth of 143 Maps representing the Great Siege of Malta of 1565*. See references to *(la)Mandra* and *mandracchio, mandracho, mandraco* as listed in index: vol. II, 323; Bruin et al., *Civitates orbis terrarum*. See map under section 'Calaris, Malta, Rhodus, Famaugusta'; Valegio, *Malta, olim Melita*; and Bruin et al., *Civitates orbis terrarum*.

114. Franzese, "Cultura," 70. See *Mandracchio*.

115. Presciuttini, *Sulla Cresta Dell'onda – Riding the Wave*; see entry '*Darsena.*'

116. Ganado and Agius-Vadala', *A Study in Depth of 143 Maps representing the Great Siege of Malta of 1565*, 3. The method of the Turkish bombardment: Ganado, *Proceedings of History Week 1983*, 125–61, plate IV, C: 139; plate VI, E: 141; and plate IX, K: 144; Balbi, *The Siege of Malta 1565*; Bosio, *Istoria Della Sacra Religione Et Illustrissima Militia Di San Giovanni Gierosolimitano*.

117. Perez d'Aleccio (1575–80), "Collection." See fresco '*Assedio e Batteria di S. Elmo – A.D. 27 Maggio 1565.*'

118. Bosio (1602), 519, 598, 603, 609, 615, 621, 622, 630, 631.

119. Ganado and Agius-Vadala', *A Study in Depth of 143 Maps Representing the Great Siege of Malta of 1565*, 32–3, 105, 105 n.11, 108, 126, 300, 306, 346, 346 n.4, 357, 358 n.18, 364, 364 n.5, 412, 415, 417, and their respective maps in vol. II: 36–37, 54, 57, 94, 95, 109, 112, 114, 126, 129, 131.

120. Corazzini, *Vocabolario nautico italiano con le voci corrispondenti in francese, spagnolo, portoghese, latino, Greco, ingleses, Tedesco*, vol. V, 43, 44; Malingri and Chighizola, *Dizionario della Vela*, 137; Treccani, "Enciclopedia Italiana"; and Franzese, "Cultura: Mandracchio – Dallo spagnolo madrache, darsena," 70.

121. Le Beau, *Continuazione della storia degl'imperatori romani*, 191; Gertwagen and Jeffreys, *Shipping, Trade and Crusade in the Medieval Mediterranean*, 4; Evans, *The Age of Justinian: The Circumstances of Imperial Power*, 129; Holcroft, *The History of the Warres of the Emerour Justinian, on Eight Books*, book I, 21.

122. Vecchj [Vecchi], *Storia Generale della Marina Militare*, 129; and Ganado and Agius-Vadala', *A Study in Depth of 143 Maps Representing the Great Siege of Malta of 1565*, map 71.

123. De Saint Non, "Plan Géométral de la Ville & du Port de Malte, No. 106," 1784.

124. Ciantar, *Malta Illustrata*, lib. I, not. I, 87; and Collignon, *Dichiaratione della piñata delle fortificatini vechie e nuove di Malta*.

125. Nelli, *Il Porto di Malta*, (post-1564); Ganado and Agius-Vadala', *A Study in Depth of 143 Maps Representing the Great Siege of Malta of 1565*, maps 2–7. These maps by Nelli show the Bormla harbour as the Porto Principale.

126. Common both in the Greek lands and maritime harbours of the Italian maritime republics, excluding the Venetian colonies.

127. Presciuttini, *Sulla cresta dell'onda – Riding the Wave*; see entry 'Mandracchio, Mandraccio.' Mandraccio is also the Genoese version.
128. Fiorini, "Status Animarum II: A Census of 1687," 49.
129. Ganado and Agius-Vadala', *A Study in Depth of 143 Maps representing the Great Siege of Malta of 1565*, 105 n.11.
130. Zenoi, *Assedio de l'Isola di Malta 1565/Valetta'* (1567–69) (*c*.1566–67) shows the '*mandrace*' at Bormla; Braun and Hogenberg, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* (1572–1617), 122. q.v. Engraving *Calaris, Malta, Rhodus and Famagusta*; Grognet, *Plan général des villes et forts de Malte* (1799 ed.) shows '*Le Mandarage.*'
131. Abela, *Malta Illustrata*, 18–19.
132. Brincat, *Malta 870–1054 Al Himyari's Account and its Linguistic Implications*, 15, 32.
133. Tarzna is what is referred to as *darsena* by the European maritime cultures. Presciuttini, *Sulla cresta dell'onda – Riding the Wave*; see entry 'Darsena': Available at http://www. sullacrestadellonda.it/terminologia/dterminolindex.htm.
134. Brincat, *Malta 870–1054 Al Himyari's Account and its Linguistic Implications*, 15, 19, 20, 32.
135. Maçoudi, *Les Prairies d'Or*, Texte et Traducion, chapter XXXII, 423; D'Ibn Batoutah, *Voyages D'Ibn Batoutah*, 357; and Engelmann and Dozy, *Glossaire des Mots Espagnols et Portugais dérivés de l'Arabe*, 205.
136. Treccani, "Enciclopedia Italiana"; see entry Darsena [Translation: 'home of industry; factory; through the Genoese dialect – The innermost part of a sheltered harbour, sometimes home to dry docks, usually surrounded by quays on which are placed the equipment for loading and unloading, workshops, warehouses, etc.']
137. *Tesoro della lingue Italiana delle Origini* [TLIO], '*Piccolo bacino posto all'interno di un porto, destinato alla custodia e alla riparazione delle navi.*'
138. Belgrano and Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, "Annali Genovesi 1174–1224 – Annales Ianvensis 1223," L, LIV.
139. Belgrano and Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, "Annali Genovesi 1174–1224 – Annales Ianvensis 1223," L, LIV.
140. Belgrano and Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, "Annali Genovesi 1174–1224 – Annales Ianvensis 1223," L, 91; Houben, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 42, Treccani q.v, Enrico di Malta.
141. De Negri, *Storia di Genova*, 329.
142. Belgrano and Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, "Annali Genovesi 1174-1224 – Annales Ianvensis 1223," LIV; De Negri, *Storia di Genova*, 330.
143. Fratta, *Annales ecclesiastici ab anno MCXCVIII* [1198] …, vol. 1, 489. 'quam civitas incredulis redderetur sed et c.' Translation: 'the state has returned to the unbelievers, and c. [their supporters]'; and La Porta and Russo, *Historia della Contea di Molise*, 55.
144. Belgrano and Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, "Annali Genovesi 1174–1224 – Annales Ianvensis 1223," 193; Luttrell, *Giliberto Abbate's Report on Malta*, 3.
145. De Negri, *Storia di Genova*, 334.
146. Luttrell, *Giliberto Abbate's Report on Malta*, 18 fn.42.
147. Ibid., 16, 22.
148. Laurenza, "Malta nei documenti angioini del regio archivio di Napoli," doc. 40.
149. De Negri, *Storia di Genova*, 410–11.
150. Treccani, "Enciclopedia Italiana": q.v 'darsena'; Presciuttini, *Sulla cresta dell'onda – Riding the wave*; see entry 'Darsena.'
151. Bearman et al.,*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, q.v. *Dār al-Ṣināʿa.*
152. Bosio, *Dell'Istoria della Sacra Religione et Ill.ma Militia di San Giovanni Gierosolmitano*, 214. Bosio reports that the 'molo' (wharf) between Castel Sant'Angelo's ditch and the point beneath the Porta (Gate) which led from Birgu to Bormla was built in 1542 as there was none at the Borgo prior to that year. Author's note: The Macina was a masting-crane used to raise and lower masts into the galleys moored beneath it.
153. Bosio, *Dell'istoria della sacra religione et ill.ma militia di San Giouanni gierosolimitano*, 214; Fiorini, "Birgu, 1530–1571: The Heyday of a Maltese Maritime City," 259.

154. Leanti, *Lo stato presente della Sicilia, o sia breve, e distinta descrizione di essa*, 376–7. This is proved by the way Leanti called the Burmula people: Translation: 'Merchant people awaiting you to negotiate at the convenience of a very spacious bay, well-guarded by a castle.'

155. The presence of Gozitan Lateen-sailed boats berthed at the spot is captured on paintings (Figure 5(a,b)).

156. Smyth, Beaupre' and Lopez, "Corsica and Sardinia; Balearic Islands (Las Baleares); Valletta, the Capital of the Island of Malta" (1831), see map inset: *Valletta the Capital of the Island of Malta*

157. *Storia dei Gran Maestri e Cavalieri di Malta con note e documenti giustifictivi dall'epoca della fondazione dell'Ordine ai tempi attuali*, vol. III, (1853), 100. 'Un ponte di legno decorato a festa è levato sul luogo dello sbarco.' Translation: 'A wooden bridge decorated festively is built on the place of disembarkation.'

158. Ganado and Agius-Vadala', vol. II (1995), 50, 51, 53, 54, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 88, 89, 90, 91, 159.

159. Ittar, *Porto e fortezza di Malta*, q.v. inset *Veduta del Arsenale De Vascelli*.

160. Bormla Parish Church Archives: Status Animarum 1687, f.50 v – f.51 v.

161. Zahra, *Il-Belt Cospicua*, 129.

162. Laurenza, "Malta nei documenti angioini del regio archivio di Napoli," doc. 40; [Author].

163. Pilgrimage Street formed part of St Theresa Street.

164. Ganado and Agius-Vadala', vol. II (1995), 30, 38, 39, 49,56, 57, 69, 76, 77, 78, 79, 87, 91, 93, 118, 168. In Latin, 'garden' is 'viridario.'

165. Corazzini, *Vocabolario nautico italiano con le voci corrispondenti in francese, spagnolo, portoghese, latino, Greco, ingleses, Tedesc*, 44.

166. Zammit, *Malta: The Maltese Islands and Their History*, 98; and Vella, "The Origin of the Name of Gozo," 4.

167. Cassola, "The Maltese Toponymy in Three Ancient Italian Portulans (1296–1490)," 47–64.

168. Ibid., 49.

169. Coronelli, *Isola di Malta e Gozo* and Maps *Citta' e Fortezza di Malta*. Inset map.

170. Bosio, *Dell'istoria della sacra religione et ill.ma militia di San Giouanni gierosolimitano*, 94.

171. Michelot and Bremond, *Nouvelle Carte de L'Isle de Malthes*: see inset map.

172. Pauli, *Codice Diplomatico del Sacro Militar Ordine Gerosolmitano*, 506.

173. Fiorini, ed., *Documentary Source of Maltese History* 1996, 1999, 2004, 2005.

174. Vella, "'Quintinus' 'Insulae Melitae Descriptio'," 197–203; del Rosso, *Statuti della Religione de' Cavalieri Gierosolimitani* (1570) [from the original work of 1567], 475–86.

175. Abela, *Malta Illustrata*.

176. Vella, "The Rock-cut Church of Bormla," 61, 67–9.

177. Ibid., 61, 67–9.

178. [Author]; Fiorini, "St. Lawrence of Birgu before 1530," 87; and Vassallo, *Malta Parish Churches*. AQ12

179. Fiorini, "St. Lawrence of Birgu before 1530," 87.

180. Vella, *The Rock-cut Church of Bormla*, 2016, 67.

181. "Linguistica Siciliana," 2014.

182. Wettinger, *Place-names of the Maltese Islands*, 72.

183. Marsaskala is a seaside village in the south of Malta.

184. Hartley, *Greek Loanwords in Nautical Terms*, q.v. 'scala' and 'skala.' Aguiló assumes that Bullumeni reminds of the Minorcans Binillumani (Aguiló, "Punts de suport Centremediterranis i Nord-Africans per a la toponomía Baleàrica," 257); Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, 991. q.v. skala; Treccani Dictionary online: see 'scalo' (m.) Translation: from Latin scala, which in Byzantine Greek skála turned to mean a stone staircase which at the wharves of maritime ports served for landing/disembarcation, http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/scalo.

185. Ganado and Agius-Vadala,' *A Study in Depth of 143 Maps Representing the Great Siege of Malta of 1565*, vols. 1 and 2, 315, see Index: Bormla; Boulanger, *Plan des forteresse de Vallette, Bourg et Sangle de Malte*; see *La Bourmelle* with *Saincte Marguerite*.

186. Treccani Encyclopaedia Online: http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/borgo.
187. Devoto and Oli, *Dizionario della lingua italiana*, 306.
188. Ferris, *Notizie Storiche sull'etimologia dei nomi appropriati a varie localita' dell-Isola di Malta*, 28.
189. Chircop, *Colonial Encounters*, 25–7, 33, 36.
190. In Arabic: bur بور mla مأوى. In modern Arabic itis also like مَلاذ بور [phonetic: bur malāḏ]: port haven, port refuge or port shelter.
191. Abela, *Malta Illlustrata*, Libro I (1647), 18–19.
192. Notarial Archives of Malta, September 16, 1501, and June 3, 1523. Notary Don Consalvo Ciancur or Canchur (Deeds: 1499–1531). *Contrada* (Italian) is a generic name attributed to subdivisions of an ancient city.
193. Notarial Archives of Malta, Notary Gerolamo Cumbo dated May 19, 1537 said '***ta murmule, suburbii maris, contrada***' meaning 'of m(b)urmule, suburb by the sea and district'; Wettinger, *Place-names of the Maltese Islands*, 65.
194. Notarial Archives of Malta, Notary Andrea Albano, 1582–1636. Among various deeds mentioning 'burmula' are those by Not. Albano dated August 11, 1586 and Notary Gioacchino Grixti, July 21, 1719.
195. Bormla Parish Church Archives, *Baptismale di quelli che si battezano nella Parrochiale chiesa di Burmula dall'anno 1587.*
196. *Compendio del Giornale*, see entry for the day April 21, 1730, 92.
197. Pauli, *Codice Diplomatico del Sacro Militar Ordine Gerosolmitano oggi di Malta*, 508.
198. Bohn and Carl, *Neue Erdbeschreibung des zweyten Theils zweyter Band, welcher Waschland und Grossbritanien enthalt*, 1091; Buesching and de Jongh, *Nieuwe Geographie of Aardrijks-Beschrijving*, 1005.
199. Ferris, *Notizie Storiche sull'etimologia dei nomi appropriati a varie localita' dell-Isola di Malta*, 26.
200. Pauli, *Codice Diplomatico del Sacro Militar Ordine Gerosolmitano*, 508–9, 583.
201. Pirandello, *Novelle per un'anno*, vol. II (1985), 1205.
202. See painting by de Brocktorff, Charles Frederick (c.1810) in *Charles Frederick de Brocktorff: Watercolours of Malta at the National Library, Valletta*, vol. II (2008).
203. The calotype photograph by Rev. Calvert R. Jones, c.1846, retained as the oldest existing photograph of Bormla, shows the southern walls of the Old Suq. Calotype 20 × 15.3 cm (7 7/8 x 6 ins), Courtesy: Princeton University Art Museum, Robert O. Dougan Collection, Gift of Warner Communications, Inc., Object Number: x1977-169 (LL/44587).
204. The first painting, sold at a *Bonhams 1793* London auction as Lot 153 under 'Continental School, nineteenth century, *Exploration, Travel and Topographical Pictures, London, Wednesday, May 21, 2008.*' Available at http://www.artvalue.com/auctionresult–continental–school–19–harbour–view–malta–3–1950304.htm Accessed 9 January 2015 had no details about its author except that it was a '*Harbour View, Malta.*'
205. De Piro, *The International Dictionary of Artists Who Painted Malta*. The painting, attributed to Mons [or Monsigneur'], was erroneously captioned by De Piro himself and copied by the auctioneer as '*Marsaxlokk harbour, Malta.*'
206. Rickman, *Roman Granaries and Store Buildings*.
207. Azopardi, *Raccolta di varie cose antiche e moderni utili ed interessanti riguardanti Malta e Gozo*, 112, 130.
208. The location was beneath the ex-St Theresa Street (now Pilgrimage Street) and the lower part of Srejdek Lane. Coordinates: 35.881707,14.520647, by courtesy of Google maps. Photographs of the market structure before demolition can be seen on photographs at the Bir Mula Heritage museum collection.
209. Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, Museums Annual Reports (MAR), Malta; see https://culture.gov.mt/en/culturalheritage/Pages/Museums–Annual–Reports–(MAR).aspx. The post-war period was characterized by the rationing of paper and this inhibited the recording of archaeological finds during the clearance of war debris and reconstruction phase.

210. See note 191.
211. Caruana, *Glossary of Placenames related to Islam, Christianity and Ethnicity*, 65, and footnote 2 on the same page.
212. Letard, *Brevi Nozioni Storiche Riguardanti L'Isola di Malta (scritte ad uso di giovanetti suoi privati Allievi)*, 8, 167.
213. Ferris, *Notizie Storiche sull'etimologia dei nomi appropriati a varie localita' dell-Isola di Malta*, 26.
214. Cassar, *Zvilupp tal-Qima lejn Marija Vergni Immakulata f'Bormla'*, 8; Ferris, *Notizie Storiche sull'etimologia dei nomi appropriati a varie localita' dell-Isola di Malta*, 26–7.
215. Translation: 'The Lord's well.' Repeated in Pauli, *Codice Diplomatico*, 509.
216. Letard, *Brevi Nozioni Storiche Riguardanti L'Isola di Malta (scritte ad uso di giovanetti suoi privati Allievi)*, 10.e.
217. Michelot and Bremond, *Nouvelle carte de l isle de Malthe*, dediée a monseigner le Chevalier, D'Orleans (1718). Bormla is mentioned as 'Birmula.'
218. Burmula was also recorded as Bormola, Burmola and Bormula.
219. *Compendio del Giornale*, See entry for the day November 14, 1729, 89–90.
220. Abela, *Malta Illustrata*, libro I (1647), 18–19, and Map of Malta titled *In Insulis Maris Nomen D(omi)ni Dei Israel* no. 83 T. Birmula; Rat, "Map of Malta Titled *in Insulis Maris Nomen D(omi)ni Dei Israel* No. 83 T. Birmula," 262–3.
221. Badger, *Description of Malta and Gozo*, 220–1, 225.
222. The museum opened in 1996–97. www.birmula.com
223. The notary also nicknamed as '*il Carpatio*' [the Carpathian] was trusted with the Order's dealings in 1549–67. See: Bosio, *Dell'Istoria della Sacra Religione et Ill.ma Militia di San Giovanni Gierosolmitano – Parte Terza*, 261, 792.
224. Galea Scannura, *Taghrif storiku dwar il-Knisja Parrokkjali ta' Bormla*, 5; Galea Scannura, Il-Knisja ta' "Santarena" (1979), AQ13 33; Notarial Archives of Malta, Vincenzo Bon[aventu]ra De Bonetijs, May 3, 1557.
225. Caruana, *Glossary of Placenames related to Islam, Christianity and Ethnicity*, 65, and footnote 2 on the same page. Caruana associates it with Lord; Caruana, *Glossary of Placenames Related to Islam, Christianity and Ethnicity*, 12. See also footnotes 99 and 100; Serracino-Inglott, *Il-Miklem Malti*, VI, 230; Aquilina, *Maltese-English Dictionary*, vol. II, 876, 100, 407.
226. Bearman et al., *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.
227. Leanti, *Lo stato presente della Sicilia, o sia breve, e distinta descrizione di essa...*, cap. VIII, vol. II, 376–7.
228. Bosio, *Dell'istoria della sacra religione et ill.ma militia di San Giouanni gierosolimitano*, 85, 89, 231, 297, 353, 517; Fiorini, "Birgu: 1530–1571 the Heyday of a Maltese Maritime City," 255–64.
229. Azopardi, *Raccolta di varie cose antiche e moderni utili ed interessanti riguardanti Malta e Gozo*, 46–7.
230. Wettinger, *Place-Names of the Maltese Islands*, 65, referring to a contract at the Mdina Cathedral Museum Archives dated June 21, 1577.
231. Gravius, *Thesaurus Antiquitatum et Historiarum Siciliae ...* volume III (1723), 1078 Not. 6 '..Pago Burbulae non longe ab urbibus Valletta', and 'Burmula' 1081 Not. V. Gravius reproduced and based on the publication of Rocchi [Rocco] Pirri, Melitensis Ecclesiae Notitia VII, Liber III, in *Siciliae Sacrae* (1643).
232. Fiorini, "II Comm. Abela e La Cronologia Episcopale di Malta," 85–7.
233. Mercieca, "St. Paul's Departure from Malta"; Badger, *Description of Malta and Gozo*, 220–2.
234. D'Amato, "Healing a Turbulent Past," 9, 11, 12, 17, 22–49, 83–4; Smith, "Priests and Politicians," 113–24.
235. Cutajar, Formosa and Calafato, "Community Perceptions of Criminality," 63–4, 75; Carabott, "Cospicua Man Battles to Save Historic Buildings"; Sansone, "Heritage Activist Forces Change in Cospicua Social Housing Plans"; Sansone, "Housing Works Destroy Historic Tunnel"; *Times of Malta*, "500-year-old Reservoirs found during Cospicua Social

Housing Project works" ; Webb, "16th Century Reservoirs Uncovered by Construction Works"; Galea Scannura, Issues 1954–1957.

236. In the Catholic Church publications required the *Nihil Obstat* and *Imprimatur,* which were an official declaration by Church authorities that the published work was free from doctrinal or moral error and that those sanctioning the work for publication agree with the content, opinion and statement expressed in them.

237. Bormla Local Council, Minutes, 1994–99.

238. Duggan, "Review," 291–343.

239. Smith, *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St Paul*, 285; Vella, *Homer's Ogygia: An Imaginary or a Historiography?* 49-74.

240. Bres, *'Malta antica illustrata co'monumenti e coll'istoria*, 47.

241. Kassab, *Online Phoenician Dictionary*: see entry for YNN and Malta; Figueiredo, *FREELANG Phoenician-English-Phoenician* online dictionary; see entry for YNN and Malta; Sagona, *The Archaeology of Malta*, 93, 174–5.

242. Angelus, *La Cosmographie de Claude Ptolomée*, 156; Strabo, *Strabonis Rerum geographicarum* libri XVII, (1829), 42 (book 17, chapter 3, section 16). Greek text: https://archive.org/details/strabonisrerumge02stra/page/42; Strabo, *Geographica*.

243. Through Maltese, the loss of the Arabic vowels is common. The *burmalat* to *burmlat* change and *mahatat* to *maħtet* are examples.

244. Almaany English Arabic Dictionary: The translation and meaning of ملاذ in Arabic: malāḏ means haven, harbour – a shelter or a place of refuge or protection, place of safety, a secure place. See https://www.almaany.com/en/dict/ar-en/%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B0/.

245. Kerr, *Latino-Punic Epigraphy*, 125; Crawley Quinn et al., *The Punic Mediterranean*, 186.

246. Smith, *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St Paul*, 285; Vella, 2018, 95.

247. Lambeck and Purcell, *Sea-Level Change in the Mediterranean*; Antonioli, "Variazioni del livello del mare," 49–53; Micallef et al., "The Submerged Paleolandscape," 129–47; Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative*, 27–65; and Thomas, *Exploration of a Drowned Landscape*, 29.

248. Ganado and Agius-Vadala', *A Study in depth of 143 Maps Representing the Great Siege of Malta of 1565*, Maps 2–7, 25, 27, 31–4, 42.

## Acknowledgements

## Disclosure statement

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