Spanish Influence in Late Medieval Malta

Stanley Fiorini

Introduction

Charles of Anjou's (King of Sicily from 1266 to 1282) ambitions and hard-fisted regime provoked the Sicilian catastrophe of 1282 culminating in *Lu Rebellamentu* of the Vespers at the end of March of that year. If the involvement of Malta in the event was peripheral in the planning stages of the coup,[1] it was certainly crucial in its aftermath, for the Angevins continued to resist from the *Castrum Maris* in Birgu which remained in their hands in spite of the decisive naval battle which the Aragonese Don Roger de Luria (1245–1305) won in the Grand Harbour on 8 July 1283. Prior to his departure, Luria stationed 300 Catalan soldiers – 200 at Mdina and 100 in the Gozo *Castello* – to render the islands safe against further Angevin aggression from those still at the *Castrum Maris*, which held out until February 1284.[2]

Direct Spanish contacts with Malta are evident very soon after the Sicilian Vespers, that momentous event whereby Sicily, and Malta with it, passed into a new Western Mediterranean sphere, the confederation of the Aragonese crown. Further to the 300 Catalan soldiers left here by de Luria, already in January 1283, we see King Pedro III (1276–85) granting a *salvus conductus* to the Catalan Ugo de Cambrilis and his party travelling to Malta from Sicily.[3] De Cambrilis, who hailed from Barcelona, was a high-ranking official, sufficiently esteemed by the king to be entrusted with the intermediary role between His Majesty and the Angevins holding the *Castrum* of Malta, including the issuing of *salvi conductus* in his own hand, to the latter.[4] With the final take-over of the *Castrum Maris* by the Aragonese, who appointed Manfred Lancia captain of the islands,[5]

1 G. Aquilina and S. Fiorini, eds, *Documentary Sources of Maltese History* (*DSMH*) IV/2, Malta 2005, 37.

2 R. Muntaner, *Crónica* [bilingual facsimile edition], Valencia 2005, Capitol 84.

3 G. Silvestri, *De Rebus Regni Siciliae: 9 settembre 1282–26 agosto 1283*, Palermo 1882, 318 doc. CCCCXXXII.

4 Ibid., docs. CCCCLXX–CCCCLXXII.

5 G. La Mantia, *Codice diplomatico dei re aragonesi di Sicilia*, 2 vols., Vol. 1: 1282–1290, Palermo 1917, Appendix doc. CCXXII.

the continued presence of Catalans there remains well-documented throughout the whole of the fourteenth century.

A Catalan-Aragonese politico-economic unit

Certainly between 1316 and 1320, but possibly also outside this range, the castellan was Arnau de Solimella who may have had royal connections.[6] A relative of Arnau, Skios de Solimella, was also granted the earliest known fief on Malta, that of Eg̃mieri, sometime before 1318, by which year Skios had died intestate and without legitimate heirs so that the estate had devolved to the crown.[7] Nor was L-Eg̃mieri the only estate in the hands of the Solimella; Castellan Arnau also held land at the Tabrija estate in 1316.[8] The Solimella connection was also beneficial to the Maltese islands in so far as Sibilla d'Aragona, alias Solimella, the boyhood flame of Frederick III (1296–1337), founded the Saqqajja benefice on Gozo towards the mid-1300s.[9] Tabrija was, subsequently, enfeoffed to the Catalan Arnau Guerald of Barcelona in 1398 and inherited by his son Nicolas in 1404.[10] It is clear that Catalan-Aragonese interest in these islands was not restricted to their military and strategic location but was also fanning out into the economic sphere and land acquisition. From the early fourteenth century we have evidence of Catalans settling in Malta, possibly from among the 300 soldiers originally stationed here, notably the Sciriha (Cat. Xérica, Cast. Jérica) family whose descendants are still flourishing in these islands today.[11] In the late fourteenth century the Sciriha couple Symon and Prisinda, and their relatives, are known to have possessed rural land at Żurrieq and at Marsa.[12] Another Catalan owner of land on Malta at this time was Arnau Sasarera.[13] Luttrell so summarizes the situation at the time:

> The urban patriciates of Catalunya ... were responsible for the emergence of a single economic and strategic unit, a Western Mediterranean common market in which the merchants of Valencia, Barcelona and Perpignan could buy and sell in the Balearics, Sardinia and Sicily, while at the same time controlling in those islands the safe harbours they needed along their routes to lucrative markets in North Africa and the Levant. The Catalans also needed imports, notably Sicilian grain, and this economic inter-dependence was reflected in the political structure of the union.[14]

6 S. Fiorini, 'Sibilla D'Aragona and the foundation of the Saqqajja benefice on Gozo', *Melita Historica*, xii, 4, 1999, 367–72.
7 S. Fiorini, ed., *DSMH* II/1, Malta 1999, 194.
8 S. Fiorini, ed., *DSMH* II/2, Malta 2004, 535.
9 Fiorini, 'Sibilla D'Aragona'.
10 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/1, 205; II/2, 59.
11 H. Bresc, 'Malta dopo il Vespro Siciliano', *Melita Historica*, vi, 4 (1974), 313–21, doc. II.
12 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/1, 276.
13 Ibid., 88.
14 A. Luttrell, 'Approaches to Medieval Malta', in A. Luttrell, *The Making of Christian Malta*, Aldershot 2002, II, esp. 44.

Malta fitted conveniently into this political-economic pattern. In 1345, for example, the Sicilian king authorized the Catalan consul at Messina to nominate a vice-consul at Malta and Gozo to protect Catalan interests here.[15] After 1300 the Maltese islands were acquired as a fief by members of the royal family until 1350,[16] when they were returned to the royal *demanium*. Between 1356 and 1372 the royal captain cum *Justiciar* cum *Secretus* cum Castellan was the royal *familiaris* Giacomo Peregrino who was married to a royal kinswoman, Margarita d'Aragona.[17] Power appears to have gone to Peregrino's head and he rebelled against the king. His rebellion spelt his downfall at the hands of Frederick IV (1355–77) and his allies, among whom the Catalan Bernardo Sesportes or Portos from Majorca who was compensated for his exertions by being exempted from all import and export dues in Sicily;[18] he was also given possession of the hull of an old vessel lying in Malta's shipyard.[19] His vessels were used for the transportation of grain to Malta from Sicily.[20] On one occasion in 1376, the merchant encountered shipping grain on Sesportes' vessels for use at the *Castrum Maris* was yet another Majorcan, Antonio Grasso.[21]

These individuals are clearly designated to be of Catalan or, more generally, Spanish origin. But the sparse documentation often hides explicit full mention of a person's identity as to provenance or surname, giving one or other but not both. Although a person surnamed *Catalanu* or *Navarru* or *de Mayorca* is doubtlessly of Spanish origin, these generic appellatives are certainly hiding the person's real surname. In order to substantiate this point I have to cite later instances as the early documents are rather sparse. Thus, although the surname *Navarru* is certainly recorded already in the fourteenth century,[22] one has to wait a full century to encounter an entry such as *Johannes Navarru alias Ortis*,[23] revealing clearly the person's real surname, namely, the Navarrese Ortiz and showing that his place of origin was, naturally, Navarre. Likewise, when the Majorcan blacksmith Joannes Sabacter came to Malta to work in 1489, in the first couple of years he was being referred to in full as *Joannes Sabacter de Majorca ferraro*,[24] but within three years and ever after he came to be called invariably *Joan di Mayorca*;[25] his real surname got lost much in the same way that Maltese people abroad lose their surnames and get called *de Malta* or *Maltisi*. What we can be sure of is that Jaymucius Catalano and Berengarius Catalano, both land-holders on Gozo, and even the Jew Sebdim Cathalano

15 C. Mirto, *Il regno dell'Isola di Sicilia e delle isole adiacenti dalla sua nascita alla peste del 1347–48*, Messina 1986, 265.
16 S. Fiorini, 'The De Malta: Genoese Counts of Malta: *c.*1192 – *c.*1320', *Melita Historica*, xii, 4 (1999), 359–66.
17 G. Cosentino, *Codice diplomatico di Federico III di Aragona re di Sicilia: 1355–1377*, Palermo 1885, docs. CCCI (16.ix.1356) *et seq*. Fiorini, *DSMH* II/1, 6 *et seq*.
18 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/1, 74.
19 Ibid., 122.
20 Ibid., 151.
21 Ibid., 159.
22 E.g., *heredes Andree de Navarra* of Gozo: ibid., 207.
23 Ibid., 254.
24 S. Fiorini, ed., *DSMH* II/4, Malta 2013, 168, 196.
25 Ibid., 278, 308, 327, 346, 369, 399, 423, 442, 443.

de Malta all came from the Iberian Peninsula,[26] as did other Sephardic Jews like Benjamin and Brahimi Catalanu and Abraham, Kitiri, Zerach and Hiski Safaradi.[27]

Another tell-tale detail that singles out individuals as being of Catalan origin is the prefix *In-* / *Im-* attached to a personal name or surname, being derived from the Catalan/Occitan personal article 'En (masc.) / Na (fem.) / N'- '.[28] Thus, in our documentation one encounters Ingallines (< En Gallines), Incorvaia (< En Corvaia), Imblay (< En Blay), Ingarau (<En Garau), Indalmau, Ingomes etc.,[29] some of which names and surnames, like Imbroll, Inguanes, Incorvaia, Ingraw and others, are still with us. In making such conclusions one has to be careful, of course, because fads in naming patterns are contagious and the use of the prefix *In-*, in a particular case, may not be referring to an original Catalan name or surname. But even in such cases, here one still has evidence of Catalan influence.[30] Of a linguistic nature, one can mention that the Maltese particle *imb*, in phrases such as *wiċċ imb'wiċċ*, *ras imb'ras*, etc. (face to face, head to head (tête-à-tête) etc.), is also derivable from the Catalan preposition *amb*, meaning 'with'.[31]

Pre-1400 Maltese documentation yields other surnames which one can, tentatively, suggest as having Iberian origin. Avoiding the common pitfall of Calleja, which is Greek and not Spanish,[32] and Abela (possibly the same as Abella/Abegla), one encounters Alagona,[33] Arexula,[34] d'Aragona,[35] (In)Cardona, Gueraldo, Imbroll, Inbugles, Intriglolu, Ferranti, Juvenio (de Jaén), De Osa, Plozasco, Prades, and Suria, further to others discussed above.[36]

After the death of Frederick IV in 1377, Sicily went through a very turbulent period reflected in the virtually complete dearth of documentation, but with the re-establishment

26 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/1, 23, 99, 172.

27 G. Wettinger, *The Jews of Malta in the Late Middle Ages*, Malta 1985, 11, 205–7. Sephardic derives from the Hebrew *sepharad*, meaning 'Spain'.

28 I should like to express my thanks to the late Romance philologist Dr Joseph Cremona of Trinity Hall, Cambridge University, for discussing this point with me in 1988. He suggested F. de B. Moll, *Gramática histórica catalana*, Madrid 1952, 326–7 as background reading.

29 For instance, (i) Fiorini, *DSMH* II/1, 234: *Bernardus Ingallines Castellanus Malte* and doc. 237: *Bernardus Gallines Castellanus Malte*; (ii) *Acta Juratorum* [published as G. Wettinger ed., *Acta Iuratorum et Consilii Civitatis et Insulae Maltae*, Palermo 1993] (*Acta Jur.*):724: *Notarius Gomes de Brancato* and ibid., 525 (1473): *Notarius Ingomes de Brancato*; (iii) ibid., 517 (1473): *Blay Michola* and 568: *Imblai de Michola*; (iv) S. Fiorini, *Santo Spirito Hospital at Rabat, Malta. The early years to 1575*, Malta 1989, 172: *Indalmao Baglio [Castrum Maris]* and S. Fiorini and W. Zammit, *DSMH* I/2, Malta 1990, 19. *Dalmaus Baglio [Castrum Maris]*; (v) NAV Not. Brandan Caxaro R175/21, f. 535v: *'Inguterra et Agata de Dalli jugales ... Zuna filia dictorum Guterre et Agate'*.

30 For evidence of this long-surviving influence: (i) Fiorini and Zammit, *DSMH* I/2, Malta 1990, 367: *Garita de Infantin ... Garita filia Simonis Fantin*; (ii) Museum of the Cathedral, Mdina (MCM) Curia Episcopalis Melitae (CEM) Acta Originalia (AO) 12, f. 9: *Paula Ncaxaro*, when the surname is Caxaro, which is not Catalan; (iii) National Library Malta (NLM), Università (Univ.) 13, f. 332v: *Ingiamo Brunetto patrono sue sayttie* and ibid., f. 367v: *Jaymi Imbrunetto patrono sue sayttie*.

31 *Routledge English-Catalan Catalan-English Dictionary*, London and New York 1999, 11.

32 S. Fiorini and H.C.R. Vella, 'The *Fondo Mesina* in the Archivo Ducal de Medinaceli', *Melita Historica*, xvi, 1 (2012), 109–29, 113.

33 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/1, 169. The county of Malta was given to Artalis de Alagona in 1393 (*DSMH* II/1, 178).

34 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/1, 232. Alexula/Arexula is a Basque surname (mod. Arejula): www.miparentela.com/mapas/detalles/arejula.html [Accessed 15 June 2013].

35 For Margarita d'Aragona, cf. Fiorini, *DSMH* II/1:92 *et passim*. For Sibilla d'Aragona, cf. Fiorini, 'Sibilla D'Aragona'.

36 Cf. Persons' Index in Fiorini, *DSMH* II/1.

of royal rule under the Martini (1392–1409 and 1409–10), Catalan interest in Malta surfaces afresh, indicating that it had been only, at most, dormant. The island's marine facilities are again quite evidently important as appears even in the sparse documentation of those years. In 1393, Peri Ferranti, a Catalan from Valencia, is documented as being given a galliot of 17 benches that had been abandoned by his co-national, Hugo de Santa Pau.[37] By 1398, the *Castrum Maris* was again in royal hands with the Catalan Bernardo Ingallines as Castellan at the head of seventy men, including twenty Catalan serjeants-at-arms being paid 9.18 *uncie* each annually compared to the salary of 6 *uncie* given to Sicilian and Maltese soldiers.[38] This number of twenty appears to have been upped to thirty when the Catalan Laurencius Cavalcanti granted one of them a lifetime appointment.[39] Land grants on the islands to Catalans who rendered faithful service to the king continued to be popular. Pedro Intriglolu was compensated for serving His Majesty both in Catalonia and for following him to Sicily; he was granted all allodial property in the Maltese islands that had belonged to the rebel Johannes de La Chabica of Palermo.[40] From an incident that took place in 1396, it is clear that Catalan privateers were then using Malta as a base of operations. One of these, Bertrandus Lanza, was involved in a dispute when he attacked a Venetian vessel, taking it to Malta.[41]

The Church

The Spanish presence during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries also influenced the direction the local Church was taking. As the reigning monarchs had the right to nominate bishops to the See of Malta,[42] it went without saying that appointees were prelates who enjoyed royal favour and the way they managed to have their say in the matter was by rallying the support of the local clergy. This is evident in the appointment of the Catalan Joannes de Pino in 1393. In that year Martin and Maria instructed the members of the Maltese chapter living in Syracuse and in Lentini to appoint De Pino in order to ratify his unanimous nomination that had already taken place by the canons living in Catania. By this manoeuvring, the other contender for the See, the Sicilian Franciscan Nicolaus Papalla, was left in the lurch.[43] These kinds of machinations were again resorted to by Queen Bianca in 1411 when she wrote to the captain of Malta to support her candidate for the bishopric.[44] Not all such attempts were successful, such as when Martin the Elder's protégé, Frater Andreas de Pace in 1398, not only had to contend with another Catalan appointee – Antonius Blasi, titular bishop of Athens – but had, eventually, to make way

37 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/1, 177.

38 Ibid., 236, 282.

39 Ibid., 270.

40 Ibid., 241.

41 Ibid., 188.

42 V. Borg, *Melita Sacra*, 3 vols., Malta 2008–09, Vol. I, 64–7.

43 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/1, 181–2.

44 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/2:148.

to Mauro Calì's claims and bulldozing tactics.[45] When Calì was translated to the See of Catania in 1408, King Martin again tried to push his candidate, Michael Latras,[46] exploiting the confusion that reigned during the Western Schism.[47] Spanish bishops continued to be nominated and appointed to the See of Malta down to 1530. Between 1418 and 1420 we encounter Joannes Ximenez, who was approved by the Antipope Benedict XIII (1394–1423) as successor to Andreas De Pace. In 1409 Martin the Elder (1409–1410), in open opposition to the choice made by his son in Sicily, had originally appointed him bishop of Malta. Notwithstanding the opposition of Queen Bianca (1410–12), he obtained Benedict XIII's approval for his election. Pope Martin V (1417–31), whose election to the papacy healed the schism, recognized him as head of the Church in Malta.[48] Spanish bishops continued to be appointed throughout the fifteenth century and beyond: Antonio Alagona *monachus monasterii B.M.V. de Roda Cisterciensis Ordinis Cesaraugustane dioecesis* (1447–78),[49] Petrus De Foix, *consobrinus Regis Ferdinandi* (1489–90),[50] Paulus de la Cavalleria, *monachus S. Emiliani de la Cogolla O.S.B. Calaguritane diocesis* (1491–95),[51] Joannes de Pujades (1512–14), Johannes de Sepulveda (1514–15) and Carolus Urries (1523–28),[52] not to extend the list beyond 1530 into the Hospitaller period, when the trend continued.

Besides the right to nominate candidates for the See of Malta, the kings of Aragon/Sicily also held the right of nomination – *juspatronatus regium* – to various key positions in the Church of Malta, including the *Vicarius Generalis* and the dean of the Cathedral Chapter.[53] This control over the lower ladder rungs,[54] below that of the episcopacy, ensured more secure control at the top. An important and, as it turned out, very beneficial nomination of a Catalan to the joint post of vicar general and dean was that at the turn of the fifteenth century in the person of Bernardus de Yaner (sive Janer sive Gener). There were other ecclesiastics by that surname on the island. Already in 1365, one encounters Don Antonio de Beninato de Janer[55] and, contemporary to Bernardo, there was also his own brother, Benedictus, a Franciscan tertiary.[56] In 1402, Bernardo Yaner, who was already a canon of the Cathedral Chapter, was appointed dean of the same chapter and

45 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/1:257. Borg, I, 44.

46 For the Catalan Latras family, vide P. Corrau, *Governare un regno. Potere, società e istituzioni in Sicilia fra trecento e quattrocento*, Naples 1997, 227 *et passim*. For comments on Michael Latras' election, *vide* E. Stinco, ed., *Documenti per servire alla storia di Sicilia, II/11: La politica ecclesiastica di Martino I in Sicilia: 1392–1409*, Palermo 1920, 102–3.

47 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/2, 128.

48 Borg, I, 44.

49 Aquilina and Fiorini, *DSMH* IV/2, 181, 183 *et passim*.

50 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/4, 184 *et passim*.

51 Ibid., 211, 214–5.

52 Borg, II, 91, 94.

53 I. Peri, Giovan Luca Barberi, *Beneficia Ecclesiastica*, 2 vols., Palermo 1962–63, I, 57–59; II, 98–100, 117, 145.

54 A number of clerics with Iberian surnames are encountered in the documentation; cf. Borg: Balistrera (p. 82), De Bisconis (p. 83), Catalano (p. 102), De Guevara (p. 122), Inguanez (p. 124), Mannara [that is, Mañara] (p. 130), De Nava (p. 134), Navarra (p. 134), Sanchez (p. 139), Saura (p. 140), and Urdub [Cordoba] (p. 147).

55 Luttrell, 'Approaches to Medieval Malta', XV, 163, doc. III (7.v.1365).

56 S. Fiorini, 'The clergy of Malta: 1244–1460', *Melita Historica*, xiii, 2 (2001), 165–208, 187–8.

in 1418, he was made vicar general of the diocese.[57] It transpires from Bernardo's will that he was not only a devotee of St Paul, but also a man endowed with a fine artistic sensibility and the financial means and acumen to look abroad, far afield, for possible sources for his patronage of the arts.[58] Against this background, it is to be noted that at this time some prestigious works of art began to appear in Malta, centre-stage being taken by the St Paul polyptych that was once the *pala d'altare* of the Cathedral's main altar. With its emphasis on St Paul's shipwreck on the island and the inlaid red-and-white escutcheon of the Maltese *Universitas*, this was clearly commissioned for Malta and it has been expertly attributed to the circle of the Catalan Lluís Borrassá (1360–1426).[59] This retable is not documented, but it is worth noting that the circle of Borrassá included his student, the Catalan Guerau Yaner (*c.*1369–*c.*1410) who is known to have worked beyond Catalonia, for instance for the Cathedral of Monreale in Sicily.[60] The retable is very close in spirit to Yaner's pala of *Santa Isabel i Sant Bartomeu* in the chapel of St Mary Magdalene, in the Barcelona Cathedral. The close collaboration between Yaner and Borrassá is well-documented.[61] It is up to the competence of art experts to consider the possibility of the involvement of Yaner in the production of the St Paul polyptych, given the possible family connection with Don Bernardo; this possibility is hinted at but not explicitly stated by Geneviève Bautier-Bresc. This art expert even concedes the influence of Catalan Gothic art in the later fifteenth-century Ħal Millieri frescoes, which admittedly came from a Sicilian workshop.[62]

An architectural element of note in Mdina and elsewhere in Malta is the style of construction of doorways, datable to the turn of the fifteenth century. They have a marked resemblance to others in the north of Spain, particular common features of which are the slightly pointed arch, the large voussoirs starting at the springing of the arch, down to the chamfering of the edges as a softening device. Examples that can be cited from the north of Spain come from Loyola (Navarre) and Girona (Catalonia).[63]

57 Ibid., 177; Borg, I, 57.

58 Details in J. Busuttil and S. Fiorini, 'The Rollo de Mello (1436) and the Will of Don Bernardus Yaner (1442)', in *Melitensium Amor. Festschrift in honour of Dun Ġwann Azzopardi*, eds. T. Cortis *et al.*, Malta 2002, 57–72, esp. 70.

59 G. Bautier-Bresc, 'The paintings at Ħal Millieri', in *Ħal Millieri. A Maltese Casale, its churches and paintings*, ed. A. Luttrell, Malta 1976, 97–104, 102.

60 The Monreale retable has not survived but it is documented as being commissioned on 4.iii.1407 by the nobleman Pere de Queralt and executed between 1407 and 1409: G. Musolino, 'Esempi di pittura siculo-catalana tra i Nebrodi e le Madonie: Il Maestro di Migaido', *Archivio Storico Messinese*, 64 (1993), 26, fn 13 citing J. Guido e I. Ricart, *Pintura gótica catalana*, Barcelona 1986, 52–60, 73–85.

61 For example, the monumental (4.6 x 5m) retable of the Tarragona Cathedral, now dismembered with panels at Tarragona and in the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, is the fruit of this collaboration. The *Resurrecció de Crist* panel of this retable exhibits interesting details – the banner in the hands of the resurrected Christ and the stance of the Lord – which are reminiscent of another Resurrection scene in another Catalan panel at Malta's Cathedral Museum (M. Buhagiar and S. Fiorini, *Mdina – The Cathedral City of Malta*, 2 vols., Malta 1996, 152, pl. 3.8).

62 Bautier-Bresc.

63 Illustrated in Buhagiar and Fiorini, i, 108–9, plates 2.39, 2.40.

Alfonso the Magnanimous

With the ascent to the throne of Alfonso V in 1416 the political scene of the island witnessed a marked change. Spaniards came to dominate key royal positions. On 11 July 1418 the Catalan Antoni Fabra was made *Secretus* in place of the local Vituchius de Livita.[64] Alfonso's belligerence in the face of the intensified aggression from the Hafsids brought in its wake a mushrooming of the military class. Numerous Catalan, Aragonese and Castilian families established themselves in the Maltese islands, including the Dezguanes, De Nava, Del Busco, De Guevara and others who dominated not only the military but also the political scene throughout the century. They were all essentially galley-captains who acted as entrepreneurs in the private *corso* and as officials of the royal *armada*, according to circumstances.[65] Captains-at-arms appointed from time to time in periods of crisis before 1530 were also mostly of Iberian origin: Guillermo de Riera in Gozo (1452), Antoni Dezguanes for Malta and Andreas Navarro for Gozo (1457), Alvaro de Nava (1489), García de Jaén (1510), Diego Zavallos (1510–11), Pedro de Texeira (1513), Rodrigo d'Acuña (1514), Francisco Villanueva (1516), Caesar de Jaén (1517–21), Hieronymus de Campo (1523) and Joannes Ribes Altes (1526–29).[66]

Furthermore, Alfonso's incessant warring against Muslim and Christian alike, in his efforts to expand the Catalan-Aragonese empire, necessitated exorbitant amounts of money to finance his various *amprisas*: Sardinia and Corsica (1420), Kerkenna (1424), Jerba (1432) and Naples (1435–42). His insatiable quest for funds spurred him repeatedly to resort to the pawning of parts of his domains for hard cash. His demanial towns in Sicily, including Aci, Sutera, Naro, Marsala, Termini, Taormina, Licata, Sciacca, Reggio Calabria, and others, were all exchanged for cash.[67] This policy had disastrous repercussions on the Maltese islands when they, like their counterparts in Sicily, were pawned to Consalvo Monroy in 1420–21 for no less than 30,000 florins. The reaction of the Maltese was to rebel against their new overlord and to offer to fork out of their own pockets the exorbitant sum paid for the islands in order to rid themselves of the oppressive presence and be reintegrated within the royal *demanium*.[68] This meant that the Maltese had to produce – *di intra li ossa nostri* (extracted from our bone marrow)[69] –

64 Archivio di Stato, Palermo (ASP) Conservatoria di Registro(CDR) 6, f.196rv.

65 H. Bresc, 'The "Secrezia" and the royal patrimony in Malta: 1240–1450', in A. Luttrell, *Medieval Malta. Studies on Malta before the Knights*, London 1975, 126–62, esp. 146. For evidence of leading Spaniards as galley-captains, cf. e.g. Dezguanes Angaraus (Fiorini, *DSMH* II/2, 29, 66–8, 327, 334, 337, 339–42); Del Busco Pedro (ibid., 417, 440, 452, 456–7,461, 489); De Nava Gutierrez (ibid., 240, 331, 335–6, 339) etc.

66 S. Fiorini, 'Id-Dejma, il-Maħras and the defense of the Maltese Islands in the late Medieval and early modern periods', *Sacra Militia*, 2, 2003, 27, Table III.

67 H. Bresc, *Un Monde Méditerranéen: Economie et Société en Sicile*, 2 vols., Palermo–Rome 1986, II, 856. R. Valentini, 'L'espansionismo aragonese nel Mediterraneo come causa della decadenza di Malta', *Archivio Storico di Malta*, xii, nos. 2–3 (1941) 117–30.

68 NLM Univ. 3, Doc. XII (Magna Carta Libertatis).

69 S. Giambruno e L. Genuardi, *Capitoli delle città demaniali di Sicilia*, Palermo 1918, 329–31, doc. III.

the equivalent of 4,500 *uncie*, a sum which amounted to more than the total tax exacted from the entire Kingdom of Sicily in 1434 and 1439.[70]

It is to be remarked that Alfonso's policy of raising money by pawning curial goods was not restricted to demanial towns but extended also to the pawning of offices in an effort at scraping the barrel clean. The captaincies, *secretie* and various gabelles in Sicily were soon put on offer to the highest bidder.[71] Likewise in Malta, having had to reconcile himself with the fact that these islands, as an entity, were reintegrated within the *demanium*, Alfonso began to dissect and cream off from it the more lucrative offices and, without any change of heart or policy, began to farm them out piecemeal on auction to the highest bidder. In 1437 the *secretia* was pawned to Simon de Mazara for 150 *uncie*.[72] Del Busco obtained the *cabella baiulacionis* (bartering gabelle) and the *cabella barbarie* (barber surgeon's gabelle) for 100 *uncie* apiece.[73] The fief of Marsa was likewise purchased by Del Busco for 3,164 gold ducats.[74] In this connection, a hitherto unnoticed event is the attempt by Alfonso's viceroy, Baptista Platamone, to pawn (to Johannes de Caro) Gozo a second time in 1440 in spite of earlier solemn promises that the Maltese islands had to remain an integral part of the *demanium* for ever and that the inhabitants had the right to resist *manu forti* (by force) any attempts at alienation even by His Majesty himself. In fact, the Gozitans faced Alfonso with precisely this right to which he immediately acquiesced.[75] The captaincy of Malta was pawned to Antoni Dezguanes and to his son Gerardus for 170 *uncie*; the *secretia* was likewise usurped by the same Geraldus; the judgeship of the captain's court went to Notary Corrado d'Alaymo, Angelo de Manuele, Antoni Falzon and Friderico Calavà for them to hold on successive years,[76] thereby carving out for themselves a veritable monopoly. All these offices were subsequently redeemed, but none the less, both the *castellania* (captaincy of the *castrum*) and the *secretia* (finances) went to Iñigo de Guevara in 1446 when, for them and for some other offices including the Gozo *secretia*, he was prepared to pay 1,500 gold ducats.[77] The captaincy of Gozo, too, was similarly pawned to Francesco Platamone and Antoni Vagnolo for them to hold on alternate years for the sum of 50 gold *uncie*.[78] It is worth noting that the total amount extracted from the several pawnings came to some 3,000 florins per annum and a once-only payment of more than 4,500 gold ducats. Over ten years this arrangement procured for the king more than the initial sum of 30,000 florins, provided by Monroy, provoking far less opposition and resentment. Also worth noting is King Alfonso's forgetfulness of his original promises, when in 1450 he made

70 C. Dalli, *Iż-Żmien Nofsani Malti*, Malta 2002, 152–5; T.N. Bisson, *The Medieval Crown of Aragon*, Oxford 1986, 142–4.

71 Bresc *Un Monde Méditerranéen*, II, Table 194, 856 *et seq.* for details.

72 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/2, 380 –1.

73 Ibid., 417, 419.

74 Ibid., 452.

75 Ibid., 454.

76 Ibid., 467.

77 Ibid., 623.

78 Ibid., 413, 389.

yet another attempt at alienating the Maltese islands, this time to the Spanish military Order of Montesa, a move that, likewise, was strongly objected to and threatened to be resisted *manu forti et armatu*.[79] In fact, in 1441 the Maltese and Gozitans were already suspecting moves of this kind and pressed the king for confirmation of their privilege of non-alienation from the *demanium*.[80]

No sooner had the Maltese islands rid themselves of the incubus that was Monroy and begun to recover their strength after their exertions, that another major disaster struck them as a result of Alfonso's expansionist policies. It was probably Alfonso's brother Pedro and his expedition against Kerkenna in 1424 that triggered Hafsid aggression against Aragon, culminating in a massive attack on the Maltese islands that all but took the islands, carrying off into slavery no less than 3,500 captives.[81] The documentation speaks of a savage onslaught by *lu cani Re di Tunisi* and his hordes and of the devastation wrought: *grandi dampni et ardimentu di casali et alu Rabatu et alchidimentu di bestiami grossa e minuta et guastu di vigni et arbori et prisa di genti* that were caught outside the protective Mdina walls.[82] King Alfonso retaliated to this attack of 1429 by leading an expedition against Jerba in 1432.[83] On his return from Jerba, the king stopped for a short while in these islands,[84] and tradition has it that he stayed with the Dezguanes in Mdina in whose palace a room still bears the name of the monarch. This tit-for-tat appears to have worked and a period of a fairly stable truce was established, marred only by the occasional *faux pas* such as when Malta's Antoni Dezguanes' piratical activities, embarrassingly for Alfonso, landed a number of Moorish captives in breach of the agreement.[85]

But Alfonso's major *amprisa* was only just beginning. Queen Joanna II of Naples (1414–35), at a time of crisis when Alfonso was prepared to champion her cause against Louis of Anjou, had adopted him as her heir and successor to the throne of Naples. This promise kindled in his heart the burning aspiration and resolve to reunite once again the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies that had been torn asunder by the Angevin aggression of 1268. There ensued seven years of war before Alfonso concluded his *amprisa* successfully to re-unite the kingdom full 160 years after the Sicilian Vespers;[86] from this time onwards Sicily and the Maltese islands began to pertain to the *Regnum Ultra Farum* (The Kingdom beyond the lighthouse [of Messina], that is, Sicily). During the Neapolitan campaign a number of key figures played a very active role for which Alfonso repaid them

79 *Acta Jur.*, 19–20.

80 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/2, 459. Valentini ['L'espansionismo aragonese', 116, n. 63] points at the presence in Alfonso's entourage of Fra Luigi Despuig of the Order of Montesa precisely at this time.

81 A. Mifsud, 'Le franchigie costitizionali alfonsiane e l'invasione dei mori del 1429', *Archivum Melitense*, iii, 8–12, 1918–19, 303–69. R. Valentini, 'Ribellione di Malta e Spedizione alla Gerba', *Archivio Storico di Malta*, viii, 3 (1937), 153–316.

82 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/2, 286.

83 Cf. F. Cerone, 'A proposito di alcuni documenti sulla seconda spedizione di Alfonso V contro l'Isola di Gerba', *Institut d'Estudis Catalans, Annuari* (1909–10), 51–87.

84 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/2, 484.

85 Ibid., 496, 503.

86 A. Ryder, *The Kingdom of Naples under Alfonso the Magnanimous*, Oxford 1976, 24–5.

with donations of various kinds. Some of these were concessions of offices and of lands on Malta. Foremost among these was Petrus del Busco, castellan of Malta and master of a galley, who for his services was given the lands near Il-Ħemsija called Il-Gżira and Il-Qattara in perpetuity and without any further obligation.[87] On Del Busco's death, Iñigo de Guevara, a Castilian knight, a connoisseur of music and the arts, acquired from Alfonso, further to the title of count of Ariano, Potenza and Apice (stripped from Alfonso's arch-enemy Francesco Sforza),[88] the castellany of Malta, both *secretie* and all fiefs held by Del Busco, excluding Marsa.

Conclusion

These military families that gained prominence under Alfonso integrated well in the fabric of Maltese upper-crust society through marriage, becoming the principal feudatories of the island through their defence responsibilities, and dominating the political scene through their position on the Municipal Council. Appendix 1 gives a measure of the Spaniards' penetration into Maltese society gauging the extent of their integration through marriage alliances. It is to be recalled that various *capitula* enshrined in the corpus of 'Privileges of the Maltese' provide for conditions under which foreigners were allowed to assume offices of responsibility in the island. These included clauses like (i) residence on the island for at least five years, and (ii) being locally married – *nemo exterus possit concurrere ad officium aliquod dicte civitatis nisi ducat uxorem et habitaverit in hac civitate per quinquennium* (no foreigner is allowed to compete for public offices in the city unless he is married there and has been residing there for at least five years) –[89] and this, in order to ensure affectivity for the island: *dijanu esseri habitaturi di la isula et uxorati per haviri affectioni ala isula* (they have to be inhabitants of the island and married there to ensure a personal attachment).[90] For this reason one often encounters in the documentation references to persons typified by *Ferrando de Messana Ispanus habitator Malte [et] uxoratus in Malta*.[91]

As is to be expected, not everything ran smoothly and peacefully. Internal feuds existed – at times so hot that a foreign captain was actually requested by the *Universitas* to quell boiling animosities among leading families such as the De Nava against the De Guevara–Dezguanes axis. Very often the bone of contention was overlapping and encroachment of jurisdictions. This is illustrated in the case of the De Navas presented in Appendix 2.

87 Fiorini, *DSMH* II/2, 440.

88 E. Pontieri, 'Dinastia, regno e capitale nel mezzogiorno aragonese', *Storia di Napoli*, 10 vols., IV, 1, Naples 1974, 1–207, 42, 204, nn. 37, 39.

89 NLM, Univ. 3, Doc. 7, cap. XXVII (Capitula, 1458).

90 MCM, ACM Misc. 34, ff. 177r-v, cap. V (Capitula, *c.*1434).

91 *Acta Jur.*, 543. Likewise, the marriage writ of Joannes Ferriolo to Imperia de Guevara records that the groom was *natione Catalanus*: NLM, AD 52 (Not. Barth. Vassallo, 19.iv.1534); Joannes was a surgeon: Fiorini, *Santo Spirito Hospital*, 62–3.

None the less there is also evidence of fruitful collaboration between Spaniards who settled and the Maltese population. Educated Spaniards who, because of their facility with the language, could present efficiently the case of the Maltese and/or Gozitan *Universitas* before the monarch were often called upon to represent these islands as their ambassadors before the king or his viceroy. Mutually beneficial activities and common financial interests brought many Spaniards and Maltese together in commercial ventures including privateering. But doubtlessly, the single most important collective contribution was the role they played in the political sphere and the offices, like those of jurats (the list is too long to go into) held in the Municipal Government.

Appendix 1 – Marriage Alliances: An Index of Integration

The entries in each sub-section are ordered chronologically by date of document establishing the information. It does not necessarily follow that the marriage took place on that date.

Abbreviations that appear below:

Abela	G.F. Abela, *Della descrittione di Malta, isola nel mare siciliano*, Malta 1647
Acta Jur.	*Acta Juratorum* [published as Wettinger 1993]
AD	Additional Documents
AO	Acta Originalia
ASP	Archivio di Stato, Palermo
CDR	Conservatoria di Registro
CEM	Curia Episcopalis Melitae
DSMH	*Documentary Sources of Maltese History*
MCM	Museum of the Cathedral, Mdina
NLM	National Library, Malta
Univ.	Università

(i) Within the Spanish circle
• Aragona Margarita + Peregrino Jaymo (1372): *DSMH* II/1, 62.
• Arejula Joannes + ? Peregrino (1398): *DSMH* II/1, 232.
• Peregrino Francia + (1) Plozasco Ludovico (1418); (2) De Mazara Simon (1429): Abela, 497.
• Del Busco Pedro + De Nava Paula (1444): *DSMH* II/3,174,261.
• Inguanez Paula + De Guevara Johannes: NLM, Lib. MS. 368, f. 233; NLM, AD 53 (Not. L. Sillato, 18.x.1474).
• De Nava Pietro + Gatt Dezguanes Imperia: NLM, AD 53 (Not. Ing. de Brancato, 21.vi.1489).
• De Nava Pietro + De Guevara Paula: NLM, AD 53 (Not. Giac. Zabbara, 26.i.1499).
• Alagona Betta + Navarra Ugolino Navarra: NLM, AD 56 (Not. Pino Saliba 20.xii.1519).
• Paula Navarra + Calcerano Mompalao: NLM, AD 56 (Not. Pino Saliba 20.xii.1519).
• Gatt Dezguanes Imperia + (1) Zervantes Michael; (2) Ribera Petrus; (3) De Mazara Simon: NLM, Lib. MS. 368, f. 205v; NLM, AD 53 (Not. Ingomes de Brancato, 3.x.1509).
• Zavallos Diego + Dezguanes Antonia (1509): Abela, 547.

- Dezguanes Clara + (1) De Guevara Tristan; (2) Stúñica Ferrante (1511): NLM, Lib. MS. 368, f. 179v; NLM, AD 53 (Not. Giac. Falzon, 2.ii.1510).
- Falca Antonio + (1) De Nava Betta (1512); (2) Inguanes Enziona Angarai: NLM, Lib. MS. 368, f. 175; NLM, AD 52 (Not. Consalvo Canchur, 20.xii.1513); Abela, 517.
- Inguanez Calcerano + Inguanez Imperia (1512); NLM, Lib. MS. 356, f. 206.
- Zervantes Margarita + De Guevara Johannes (1515): NLM, Lib. MS. 368, f. 218.
- Inguanes Enziona + (1) Falca Antonio; (2) De Guevara Pietro: NLM, AD 52 (Not. Consalvo Canchur, 12.vii.1520); Abela 482.
- Ferriolo Agata + Stúñica Petro: NLM, AD 52 (Not. Antonio Rapa, 4.xii.1529).
- Ferriolo Giovanni + De Guevara Imperia: NLM, AD 52 (Not. Barth. Vassallo, 19.vi.1534).

(ii) In the restricted group of upper-crust society

- Banyols Antonio (Vagnolo) + De Bordino Ismiralda (1419): NLM, Lib. MS. 368, f. 205; Abela, 539.
- Dezguanes Antonio + Gatto Imperia: NLM, AD 53 (Not. A. De Manuele, 23.vii.1452); Abela, 493.
- Dezguanes Guglielmo + Falzon Manna (1466): NLM, Lib. MS. 368, f. 218.
- De Nava Giovanni + Mazara del Carretto Isabella: NLM, AD 53 (Not. Ing. de Brancato, 21.vi.1489); Abela 514 (1469).
- Banyols Lisa + De Platamone Sancho (1480): DSMH II/3, 348; Abela 540.
- Pirera Marciano + Francia Vaccaro (1486): DSMH I/1, 40.
- Gatt Dezguanes Antonio + Vagnolo Antonella: NLM, AD 53 (Not. Ing. de Brancato, 21.vi.1489).
- Navarra Imperia + Giovanni Castelletti: NLM, AD 56 (Not. Guglielmo Sansone 1.x.1492).
- Dezguanes Imperia + Antonio De Naso: NLM, AD 53 (Not. Giac. Falzon, 29.v.1504).
- Dezguanes Antonio Lancee + Vaccaro Margarita: NLM, AD (Not. P. Bonello, 26.x.1512).
- Navarra Antonia + De Manuele Angelo: NLM, AD 56 (Not. Pino Saliba 7.iii.1515).
- Falca Antonio + La Habica Zuna: DSMH I/1, 234 (8.viii.1487); NLM, AD 53 (Not. C. Canchur, 20.x.1513).
- Gatt Dezguanes Peruna + De Mazara Simon: DSMH I/2, 372 (15.x.1496).

- (1) Inguanes Clara; (2) De Nava Margarita + Falzon Ambrogio: NLM, AD 56 (Not. Giulio Cumbo vii.1519).
- Navarra Andreas + Pontremoli Paula (1479): DSMH V/1, 58.
- Zavallos Diego + La Habica Zuna (1495): DSMH I/2, 109.
- Stúñica Pietro + De Brancato Paola (1513): NLM, Lib. MS. 368, f. 233v.
- Dezguanes Violante + Sahona Nicola (1527): NLM, Lib. MS. 368, f. 243v; NLM, AD 53 (Not. Antonio Rapa, 3.ix.1529).
- Ferriolo Michael + Falzon Francia: NLM, AD 52 (Not. Antonio Rapa, 4.xii.1529).
- De Guevara Matteo + Caxaro Marchisia: NLM, AD 52 (Not. Barth. Vassallo, 19.iv.1534).
- De Nava Giovanni + (1) Falzon Paula; (2) Calavà Clara: NLM, AD 56 (Not. Antonio Rapa 8.x.1537).
- De Guevara Sebastiano + Xara Margarita: NLM, AD 53 (Not. B. Caxaro, 1.viii.1548).
- Inguanes Antonio Lanza + Vaccaro Margarita: NLM, AD 53 (Not. Graziano Vassallo, 10.ii.1539).
- Inguanes Giovanni Lanza + Caxaro Agata: NLM, AD 53 (Not. Graziano Vassallo, 10.ii.1539).

(iii) Crossing into the wider circle

- Falca Antonio (sr.) + Zammit Ventura (11.v.1486): DSMH I/1, 40, 66; NLM, Lib. MS. 368, f. 243.
- Dezguanes Antonio Lancee + Caruana Guaglarda (1491): NLM, Lib. MS. 368, f. 197.
- Baldes Petrus + De Laymo Simona (1487): DSMH I/1, 273.
- Balistera Giraldus + Bayada Johanna (1482): DSMH I/3, 154.
- De Guevara Manna + De Manuele Matheus (1483): DSMH I/3, 143.
- Villaviciosa Petrus + Delia Peruna (1488): DSMH I/3, 160.
- De Guevara Antonio + Zammit Giacoma: NLM, AD 53 (Not. C. Canchur, 27.x.1507).
- Balistera Clara + Caraffa Joannes (1510): NLM, Lib. MS. 368, f. 180.
- De Bisconis Antonio + Caraffa Joannella (1519): NLM, Lib. MS. 368, f. 198.
- De Guevara Lucia + Abela Diego: NLM, AD 53 (Not. C. Canchur, 16.vii.1520).
- Montagnes Fernando + De Manuele Imperia (1527): Abela, 507.

Appendix 2 – The de Nava as a case-study

The earliest recorded connexion of the De Nava with Malta goes back to March 1429 when Inguterra *sive* Gutierrez de Nava – a *miles Camere Reginalis et patronus galee* in the king's service[1] – was appointed castellan by King Alfonso, following the winding up of the Monroy affair. He contributed solidly to the fortification of the *Castrum*, especially by the purchase of arms[2] and with the service of his galleys;[3] he was in command during the islands' devastation by the Moorish invasion in September of that year. He died sometime in 1435 as a prisoner in Genoa,[4] at a time when he also occupied the post of *Secretus* of Malta.[5] Pedro del Busco, Inguterra's successor in the castellany from 1435 till his death sometime before April 1446, was a beneficiary in Inguterra's will.[6]

In 1441 the name of Consalvus de Nava appears, coupled with that of Castellan Del Busco, both of whom were captaining galleys on royal service.[7] At this time, another De Nava figures on the Maltese scene, the corsair Sueru de Nava, who, in 1447, sought permission to berth in the Maltese harbour, one of those incidents that was a cause of friction between the *Universitas* and the Castellan.[8] The name of Consalvus de Nava re-appears in the 1460s as castellan for a short period.[9] He was dead by 1468,[10] but, in effect, in 1466 Viceroy D'Urrea had already appointed another Inguterra de Nava as castellan.[11] At the same time, yet another De Nava – Alvarus, a captain of two galleys in royal service – was made beneficiary of the Maltese *Secrezia*.[12] In 1486 Alvarus' income came from the fief of *Benwarrad*.[13]

A third De Nava to figure prominently in this scenario was Joannes de Nava. His name appears first in the Mdina council in 1468, being entrusted with the purchase of wheat.[14] After this and for many years, he attended council regularly, contributing actively to the debates.[15] In 1472, he caused a row in council when he wanted to have the Dezguanes coat of arms removed from above the city gate.[16] At the same time, he

1 *DSMH* II/2, 240, 352.
2 An inventory of arms existing in the *Castrum Maris* and purchased by De Nava from Monroy's widow, Costanza, is published in H. Bresc, 'The 'secrezia' and the royal patrimony in Malta: 1240–1450', in *Medieval Malta. Studies on Malta before the Knights*, ed. A. Luttrell, Rome 1975, 126–62, 158–9, Doc. II; *DSMH* II/2: 273–5, 326.
3 *DSMH* II/2, 335–6, 339.
4 H. Bresc, *Un Monde Méditerranéen: Economie et Société en Sicile*, 2 vols., Palermo–Rome 1986, 340–1.
5 *DSMH* II/2, 373, 386, 397, 417.
6 Ibid., 398, 623.
7 Ibid., 456–7, 461.
8 *Acta Jur.*, 5.
9 Ibid., 101, 689.
10 Ibid., 283.
11 *DSMH* II/3, 67. In this first document that refers to Inguterra de Nava as the new Castellan, a *lapsus calami* of the amanuensis gives the Castellan's name in the docket as Consalvus de Nava.
12 S. Fiorini, ed., *DSMH* II/3, Malta 2007, 69, 148.
13 *DSMH* II/4, 25.
14 *Acta Jur.*, 321.
15 Ibid., 383, 441, 596, 636, 690, 699, 725, 738, 768, 737–8, 808, 810 (1470–81).
16 Ibid., 441 (4.vii.1472).

appears in connexion with the fief of Marsa, half of which he had purchased on condition that he provided military service.[17] In that year, Viceroy D'Urrea appointed Joannes de Nava to the captaincy of the island for 1472–73, but the appointment was deferred and only came into effect four years later,[18] by which time he had ceased to hold the post of vice-castellan.[19] As vice-castellan he enjoyed various privileges, including having some debts of his to the Curia waived, in view of the services he rendered with his galleys;[20] being granted a royal pardon for all his crimes;[21] and being invested with the title of baron of Marsa.[22] With his military connections he was well placed to help both the *Universitas* and his own pocket when he sold to the city three bombards in 1473 for 11 *uncie*.[23] In 1477 in council he upheld the privileges of the *Universitas* against the interests of the castellan,[24] and in 1480 his old rivalry with the Dezguanes took centre-stage in council when disputing claims about lands at Selmun which had come to him through his wife.[25]

In 1479 he was appointed captain-at-arms for the Maltese islands jointly with Joannes de Mazara in view of an impending Turkish invasion;[26] in the following year he was made castellan by King Ferdinand after that position had been vacated by Inguterra de Nava who moved on to become castellan of Xiglo in Calabria.[27] Having survived a heavy storm at sea,[28] Joannes was soon once more on the warpath against the city's captain, Carolus de Guevara, on the question of jurisdiction. Both the captain and De Nava had protested with the viceroy over an incident in which the vice-castellan and his followers attacked the captain furiously with drawn arms.[29] Spanners in the wheels of De Nava were being thrown at this time from the direction of Mdina.[30] In the meantime, as rumours of the Turkish attack became more alarming, the former vice-castellan Joannes García was sent to Sicily to purchase arms which were paid for out of De Nava's pocket as the *Secretus* was not forthcoming with payments of salaries and shopping bills for arms.[31] In 1483, the viceroy ordered the town council to purchase two cannon for the defence of the city from De Nava,[32] and in the following year the castellan personally went to Sicily to procure armaments and bombards for his *Castrum*.[33] The presidents of

17 *DSMH* II/3, 150, 166, 174, 196, 261.
18 Ibid., 165, 267.
19 Ibid., 280.
20 Ibid., 241.
21 Ibid., 260.
22 Ibid., 261, 312, 327.
23 *Acta Jur.*, 537.
24 Ibid., 689.
25 Ibid., 761.
26 *DSMH* II/3, 313.
27 Ibid., 334–5.
28 Ibid., 361.
29 Ibid., 368–9, 389, 389.
30 *Acta Jur.*, 888, 890–1.
31 *DSMH* II/3, 383–4, 386–7, 394, 409–10, 422, 436–7; II/4, 26, 42.
32 *Acta Jur.*, 927.
33 *DSMH* II/3, 424.

the kingdom (high-ranking officials acting for the viceroy in his absence), alarmed at the threat of an imminent Turkish invasion allocated up to 400 *uncie* for the defence of the *Castrum*, 50 of which were to be spent at De Nava's discretion.[34] De Nava spent nearly another 100 *uncie* on arms out of his own pocket.[35] He launched a new vessel for the defence of the islands[36] and, by April 1487, he completed the construction of the scarp called *Di Santu Angilu* facing Birgu in preparation for the imminent attack.[37] Realizing that he was being overtaken by old age and availing himself of his right to nominate a successor, in July 1487 he chose his first-born son Petrus de Nava as the next castellan, with whom he shared responsibility for the remaining days of his life.[38] At this time of crisis differences with the *Universitas* were quickly forgotten and he was chosen by the council as an intermediary between them and Commissioner Trovato with whom there had been a confrontation.[39] The Turkish attack materialized in June 1488 and Birgu bore the brunt of the onslaught by the 12 vessels.[40] Joannes de Nava's last recorded act of his life was to send a janissary, captured during the attack, to Palermo.[41] Joannes appears to have been a religious person. He was a benefactor of St Francis church at Rabat, Malta, whose *tribuna*, or apse, he had had built at his own expense.[42] He was probably a Franciscan tertiary as he left instructions in his will of 1 September 1487 that his cadaver should be buried in the Franciscan habit.[43] He also built his own chapel of Santa Maria di Loreto in St Dominic church, Rabat.[44]

When Joannes died on 15 September 1488, two De Navas, Alvarus and Petrus De Nava, assumed prominent positions in the Maltese scene. Joannes' first-born son Petrus took over single-handedly the castellany on the following day.[45] Like his father, Petrus, a one-time page in Ferdinando *el Católico*'s retinue, was to hold the castellany for his life's duration with right of nominating his own son as successor.[46] He was to hold this position for a good couple of decades with one brief interruption in 1490 when he and his brother Joannes de Nava were accused of murder. At this time Alvarus de Nava, who till 1489 had been castellan of Nicosia (in Sicily) and who in the aftermath of the 1488 invasion was made captain-at-arms for the Maltese islands and Pantellaria,[47] was given

34 Ibid., 425, 428.
35 *DSMH* II/4, 7, 20, 50.
36 Ibid., 17.
37 Ibid., 52.
38 Ibid., 59, 136.
39 Ibid., 60.
40 Ibid., 95.
41 Ibid., 109–10.
42 G.F. Abela, *Della descrittione di Malta, isola nel mare siciliano*, Malta 1647, 392.
43 NLM, Lib. MS. 635, f. 64.
44 M. Fsadni, O.P., *L-ewwel Dumnikani f'Malta: 1450–1512*, Malta 1965, 55, 58–9.
45 *DSMH* II/4, 127.
46 Ibid., 141.
47 Ibid., 148–9, 169.

the responsibility of the *Castrum Maris* until Petrus' fate was decided.[48] The crime of Joannes and Petrus was forgotten after having their penalty commuted to the payment of compensation.[49]

Petrus' brother Joannes (junior) was both a military man and interested in local politics. He was appointed captain of Malta in 1491–92 and in 1498–99,[50] and was made Jurat in 1494–95 and in 1504–05.[51] In 1499 he is listed among those islanders who were obliged to keep a horse for military service. He also described himself as acting captain-at-arms for Alvarus de Nava.[52] Joannes was also captain of a vessel which, in January 1498, was pressed into royal service on a mission to Jerba.[53]

Petrus' pugnacious character was certainly suited to his office of castellan. As to his irascible character, suffice it to mention that, in 1505, he was accused of murdering his own wife.[54] In 1489, early on in his career as castellan, he was to clash with the captain-at-arms, Guillelmus Spatafora, on the question of jurisdiction;[55] with *Secretus* Joannes de Guevara over the payments of salaries;[56] and again over jurisdiction, including that over Żejtun villagers, with the captain of Malta, the vice-admiral and captain-at-arms, Ferdinandus de Stúñica.[57] De Stúñica made the grave accusation against De Nava in court that he opted to solve their differences with insults and violence including the use of artillery against him.[58] On all counts except the last, De Nava received the full support of Viceroy De La Nuça,[59] and when De Nava thought it more advantageous, he had direct recourse to his protector, King Ferdinand.[60]

The lawsuit instituted by De Stúñica against De Nava in 1494 was only a prelude to drawn-out court proceedings against him by the *Universitas*. As long as Petrus De Nava was castellan, matters would never settle down. Within the year he was appealing against the sentence and the situation was only resolved when Petrus finally passed away sometime before January 1517, when his son Alvarus first appears as castellan during a council session.[61] Alvarus held this post till the arrival of the Hospitallers in 1530,[62] after which most of the De Navas left the island.

48 Ibid., 170–1.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., 202, 409.
51 *DSMH* II/4, 311; III/1, 70. For details of Joannes d Nava's interventions in Council as Captain in 1498–99, cf. *Acta Jur.*. index, docs. 934 to the end.
52 Ibid., 976–7.
53 *DSMH* II/4, 400.
54 ASP, RC 216, ff. 343v–4.
55 *DSMH* II/4, 138.
56 Ibid., 310.
57 Ibid., 326, 378.
58 Ibid.,319.
59 Ibid., 378.
60 Ibid., 326.
61 NLM, Univ. 12, f. 156v.
62 J. del Amo Garcia, S. Fiorini & G. Wettinger, eds, *DSMH* III/1, Malta 2001, 114; NLM, Univ. 12, ff. 355, 531, 534.