

MALTESE HISTORY

LO6 abcde - Malta under the French



Year 9

Third Edition – 2022

For History SEC 2025



Curriculum Centre Annex

LO6a –The French invasion and takeover of Malta



Hompesch



Czar Paul I



Napoleon



The French fleet entering Grand Harbour.

I. Reasons for which the French revolutionary government ordered the invasion and the capture the Maltese Islands in 1798

- The strategic position and the impressive network of Malta's fortifications;
- France wanted to take Malta before another great power did so (i.e. Great Britain or Russia);
- The new Grand Master Hompesch had just reached an agreement by which Czar Paul I of Russia (1796–1801) became 'Protector of the Order', a role previously held by the King of France;
- Napoleon was informed by French sympathisers in Malta that most people in Malta were discontented and fed up under the Knights;
- Napoleon had already devised a secret plan to take the islands on his way to conquer Egypt.



Napoleon orders the invasion of the islands



The French capture the Order's standard.

2. What was the situation in Malta under the Knights at that time?

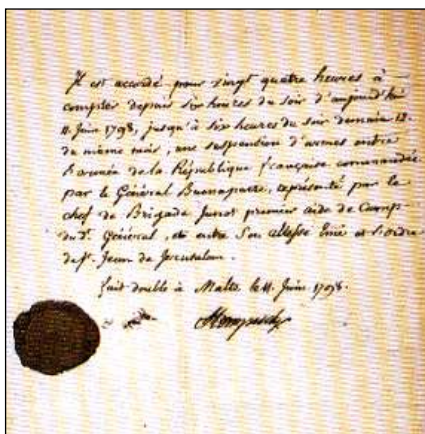
- **Ferdinand von Hompesch** had just been elected Grand Master in July 1797. He was known to have a weak character not adept for the circumstances in which he had to take important and far-reaching decisions;
- French Knights who sympathized with the French Revolution were secretly plotting with the French to bring down the Order's rule in Malta;
- The Council of the Order was undecided about what to do in case the French attacked the islands;
- Most Knights had lost the courage to fight a siege against a trained army like that of the French.



The Grand Master's representatives surrendering the Maltese Islands to Napoleon.

3. Sequence of events of the French invasion and occupation of the islands

- The French fleet was sighted outside the Grand Harbour on the afternoon of Saturday 9th June.
- General Napoleon Bonaparte asked the Grand Master permission to enter Grand Harbour to obtain fresh water for the fleet;
- The Order refused this request because article 13 of the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713, the European Powers had agreed that in time of war between them, not more than four warships from each county could be allowed to enter Malta's harbours at any one time. The Order did not want to appear to be taking sides in the war between France and the Allies;
- Napoleon was expecting this refusal. So in the early hours of Sunday 10th June he gave orders for the invasion of the islands to commence. French soldiers landed at Marsaxlokk, Sliema, Mellieħa and Gozo. By that late afternoon the whole countryside was in French hands and they had surrounded also the harbor towns;
- That same evening representatives of the Maltese leaders requested and were granted audience by the Grand Master. Their demand was to stop fighting against the French to avoid more fuseless bloodshed;
- On the early morning hours of Monday 11th June the Grand Master signed the capitulation (surrender) of the islands to the French Republic;
- On Tuesday 12th June the French took control of Gozo as well. Fort Chambray and the Citadel surrendered to the French. On that same day, Napoleon left his flagship, the *l'Orient* and walked through the streets of Valletta amidst cheers from the people.



The document of the capitulation of Malta with Hompesch's signature.



Napoleon welcomed by the people of Valletta.

Napoleon refused to meet the Grand Master and ordered his departure from Malta. He left on the early hours of Monday 18 June, escorted to Trieste by a French frigate and permitted only to take with him his personal belongings. Those Knights who had left the Order and repudiated their noble titles, were engaged in commercial activity in Malta or expressed sympathy to the French Republic were allowed to remain as ordinary citizens.

LO6a - The French invasion and take-over of Malta

1. Write **true** or **false** to these statements:

a	Napoleon invaded Malta on his way to India.	
b	Napoleon wanted to turn Malta into a naval base for the French fleet.	
c	The French had the secret support of some of the French Knights.	
e	The Maltese refused to support the Knights against the French.	
f	Malta fell to the French between the 9 th and the 12 th of June 1798.	

(5)

2. Mention the **two** motifs which you think were the most important for which the French decided to take-over the Maltese Islands from the Order.

(2)

3. Why was it difficult if not almost impossible for the Knights to resist the French invasion and take-over of the islands? Mention and briefly explain **two** reasons.

(4)

4. Why did the French manage to take over the islands in such a short time and with very little fighting?

(3)

5. Look at the visual sources in page 2. Which of the sources are primary and which are secondary? Explain why you arrived to this answer.

(4)

6. What reason did Napoleon have to refuse the sedan chair offered to him by the Grand Master and instead go through the streets of Valletta on foot?

(2)

(Total: 20 marks)

LO6b –Napoleon’s attempted reforms in Malta

Napoleon spent only six days in Malta - from 12th to 18th June. He made his headquarters at Palazzo Parisio (today the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building next to Auberge de Castile in Valletta). From there he issued a number of decrees, grouped in four categories (see table below). Most of his reforms were inspired by the principles of the French Revolution. But the French did not have enough time to put these reforms to practice. Less than three months after Napoleon had left Malta, the Maltese rose up in revolt against their new French masters.

Some of these reforms, although they seemed progressive for the time, aroused criticism from those sectors of the Maltese who were badly hit by them. For example, for the merchants and businessmen of the harbor towns the expulsion of the Knights meant they would not get back the money they which they had lent them. And the closure of the religious convents deprived the Maltese lower classes the possibility of receiving material aid and shelter in such places.



Centre: While still in Malta, Napoleon published the articles of the capitulation of Malta and had them distributed throughout France. Right: The Journal de Malte, the newspaper issued by the French Commission of Government.

Socio-economic	Administrative	Educational	Church-State Relations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Equality was declared before the law; *Noble titles were abolished; *All political prisoners, slavery and <i>buonavogli</i> were freed; *Slavery and corsairing were made illegal; *Freedom of the press; *Freedom of conscience; *Release of political prisoners; *Jews were permitted a synagogue; *Maltese citizens could apply for permission to wear the French tricolor cockade, symbol of the Revolution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *All the Order’s buildings (palaces, auberges, institutions) became property of the French Republic; *Some 490,000 scudi worth of gold and silver from the Order’s properties were auctioned or melted to make coins; *A Maltese National Guard was set up to maintain public order; *A Commission of Government was set up to administer the islands on the principles of the Revolution; *Malta and Gozo were divided into 12 municipalities (districts). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *15 primary schools were to be set up in the main towns and villages to teach French, arithmetic, navigation ethics, and the French Constitution. *60 students from well-off Maltese families were to be sent to study in France at their own expense; *A Central School modelled on the French <i>Polytechnique</i> replaced the University. It was to teach arithmetic, algebra, geometry, astronomy, physics, chemistry, geography, navigation, mechanics and oriental languages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Religious Orders were to keep one convent only; *All the foreign clergy were ordered to leave the islands. *Church property was taken over by the Government; *All Court appeals to the Roman Curia were stopped. *The Inquisitor’s Court was closed and the Inquisitor ordered to leave the island. *St John church was given to the Bishop to function as a co-Cathedral.

LO6c – Administration by the French Commission

When Napoleon left on 18th June some 300 Maltese joined the French army and went with him to Egypt. He left the administration of the islands in the hands of a **French Commission of Government**, whose head was General **Claude-Henri Vaubois**. Vaubois at once started putting into force Napoleon's reforms, most of which were still on paper. But the way changes were handled very fast made the Maltese inhabitants in the villages who were more somewhat more conservative and tied to the Church than the inhabitants of the Grand Harbour towns fell disappointed and discontented. It was from this section of the people that the revolt against the French was to come about.



*From left to right:
General Vaubois
Reynaud d'Angelis
Bosredon Ransijat
Mons. F.S. Caruana*

Some of the measures taken by the French Commission were intended to implement Napoleon's reforms and in line with the principles of the French Revolution. But the majority of the population was still not prepared to accept such drastic changes. The more the French introduced reforms in the administration, the more discontent grew among the Maltese.

The French Commission published notices for the Maltese to gather in front of the Palace square in Valletta to commemorate the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille on 14th July. This day, although it means a lot for the French, had very little meaning for the Maltese.

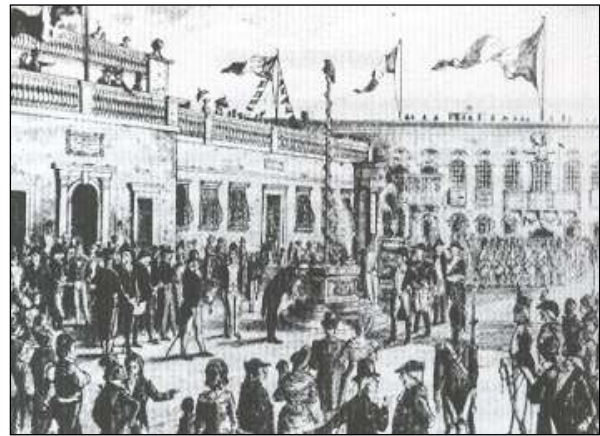
Although Napoleon had abolished censorship, there was no real freedom of the press because the only newspaper in circulation at that time, the *Journal de Malta*, was printed at the Palace and consisted of information provided or approved by the French Government.

Orders issued by Napoleon which dealt with the collection of revenue and taxation by the government were to give rise to widespread discontent. Some of taxes were new to the people and made the Maltese realise that they were going to carry the burden of the new taxes on many commodities and to pay for the expense of government, the Maltese National Guard and French garrison, the upkeep of streets and public places. All these were had been made good from the Order's revenues in the past.

The Commission of Government did not issue wages to the families of the Maltese who had joined Napoleon's army in Egypt. People who had their property damaged during the fighting for the takeover of Malta were not given any compensation as promised. The Government, which from the start found itself short of money, stopped issuing pensions and to distribute charity to paupers. The interest rate of the *Monte di Pietà* was raised from 4% to 6% - this measure hit badly the lower classes who had pawned their belongings to that institution.

Money kept by the *Massa Frumentaria*, from which Maltese farmers used to borrow money to buy seeds and equipment had been taken and used by the Government to pay the garrison. The silverware in the Palace left behind by the Knights was melted and minted into coins.

A tax was imposed a fee on water taken from public fountains or other public places, whether for domestic consumption, for fields, or for ships. Such payment was considered by everyone as outright theft from the whole Maltese population which had never paid anything for its water needs. The shortage of some 200 sailors on the French warships made the Commission order the round up, with the help of the National Guard - a far cry from the elite crews of the Order's ships.



Left: Proclamation urging the people to take part in Bastille Day celebrations.

Right: Commemoration of Bastille Day on 14th July 1798.

The municipalities as set up by Napoleon are listed below. Their first meeting was held between 2nd and 5th July 1798. Each municipality was made up of a President, a Secretary and three or four Maltese citizens from the professional (notaries, doctors, advocates) and business classes.

- Municipality of the West (comprising of Valletta and Floriana)
- Municipality of the East (comprising of Vittoriosa, Senglea and Cospicua or the Three Cities)
- Municipality of Notabile or Mdina (comprising also of Rabat and Dingli)
- Municipality of Żebbuġ
- Municipality of Casal Fornaro or Qormi (comprising also of Luqa)
- Municipality of Naxxar (comprising also Mosta and Għargħur)
- Municipality of Birkirkara (comprising also Lija, Balzan and Attard)
- Municipality of Siġġiewi (comprising also Qrendi and Mqabba)
- Municipality of Żejtun (comprising also Żabbar, Għaxaq and Tarxien)
- Municipality of Żurrieq (comprising also Safi, Kirkop and Gudja)
- Municipality of Rabat (comprising also the Cittadella, Għarb, Sannat and Xewkija)
- Municipality of Xagħra (comprising also Żebbuġ and Nadur)

For the greater part of the Maltese population the changes brought about by Napoleon's reforms and by the French Commission of Government which in most cases acted on his instructions, was strange and unbelievable. After 268 years under the Order which had seen to their needs, they saw the Order and its members expelled from the islands, its property and treasures confiscated, their place taken over by fanatic Republican soldiers. To the Maltese clergy, numerous and exercising great influence on the Maltese and their way of life, Napoleon's reforms appeared far from pleasant. On the other hand, to a significant number of town dwellers, engaged in the professions or in commerce, the arrival of the French with their catchwords of equality and liberty seemed to bring a change for better things which they could not have hoped to acquire under the Order.

During the months of July and August under the new government, more and more Maltese came to realize that the French were constantly short of money. When, then, the French authorities took the decision to take over the treasures found in the churches to make up for this shortage, the discontent that had been brewing for weeks erupted in an armed revolt on 2nd September 1798.

LO6bc - Administration by the French Government Commission

1. Match Column A with Column B by writing the letter from a to d in the middle blank column. (4)

a	Claude-Henri Vaubois		ex-Secretary of Grand Master Hompesch
b	Reynaud D'Angelis		Maltese member of the Commission of Government.
c	Bosredon de Ransijat		one of the French Government Commissioners.
d	Francesco Saverio Caruana		French Governor and Commander-in-Chief in Malta.

2. Choose **one** of Napoleon's attempted reforms from each category of Napoleon's reforms that were directly inspired by the French Revolution of 1789.

(4)

3. How did the French Commission of Government try to solve the problem of shortage of money? Mention **two** measures.

(2)

4. Identify **two** measures taken by the French Commission which you think caused the greatest discontent among the Maltese. Give a reason for your answer.

(4)

5. Why there was no real freedom of the press under the French?

(2)

6. How were the Maltese represented in the district municipalities set up by Napoleon?

(2)

7. How did the revenue of the government differ when Malta was ruled by the Order and then by the French?

(2)

(Total: 20 marks)

LO6d – The Revolt of the Maltese against the French

The events that triggered the revolt of 2nd September 1798

On 25th August, three French warships approached Malta from the east. They brought the news that on 2nd August the English squadron under Lord Nelson had destroyed Napoleon's fleet anchored at Aboukir Bay in Egypt. Vaubois immediately realized that communication between Malta and France would come to an end. He wrote to the French Government about the precarious conditions in Malta. D'Angely made a list of shortcomings in Malta. He closed his letter with the prophetic words 'If we do not receive help soon the whole country would have only bread, water and arms.'

Sunday 2nd September was the day set for the sale by auction of gold and silver objects of the convents and churches of Rabat and Mdina as ordered by Napoleon. Such forcible sale broke the terms of the capitulation and the covenant agreed between Napoleon, the Maltese and the Order. An angry crowd gathered near the church making it impossible for the auction to begin. The crowd helped Notary **Manwel Vitale** carry all these objects to his house nearby. Meanwhile another auction of sacred objects at the Carmelite Church in Mdina proceeded unnoticed until another crowd gathered outside that church. The auctioneers fled and the crowd then dispersed. The French garrison of Mdina wisely kept its distance from the crowd.



Carmelite Church at Mdina



The lynching of Masson by the Maltese mob.

Then, early in the afternoon, **Lazzarre Masson**, the stern French commandant of Mdina thought that his presence in the streets of Rabat, sword in hand, would frighten the local people. But when he and the two other armed soldiers entered the narrow streets of Rabat, he was met with scowls from an angry crowd. Masson escaped and took shelter in the house of a notary nearby, but the crowd forced its way into the house and lynched him on the spot. His dead corpse was thrown from the balcony to the street below. One of the other soldiers suffered the same fate while the third one managed to reach Mdina and raised the alarm.

The bells of St Paul's parish church were hastily rung as a signal to the nearby villages for help. Vitale took immediate command of the insurrection and sent messengers on horseback to the nearby villages to ask for help. The first help came from Żebbuġ under the leadership of Canon **Francesco Saverio Caruana**, a member of the Commission of Government and a French sympathizer who changed his views when the French administration started issuing many unpopular orders and laws.

The 65-strong French garrison of Mdina closed and barred all the doors of the old capital and fired some cannon shots to raise the alarm. Then they opened fire on the crowd which was seen approaching the main gate armed with peasant tools, swords and fire-arms. Malta's struggle for national liberation had begun. They also sent a runner to Vaubois asking for re-inforcements. Vaubois, unaware that it was a national uprising, sent two companies to strengthen the garrison at Mdina. Vaubois message never reached the besieged garrison. The two French soldiers were caught by the Maltese near Attard, and from them they learned the plan of the French and to prepare themselves accordingly.



The Maltese assault on Mdina

Meanwhile the fighting and firing near Mdina's gate continued that whole afternoon and evening. The Maltese tried but failed to scale the walls with ladders. During the night, the villagers cut the water supply through the aqueduct to Valletta. Large numbers of villagers from Żurrieq, Birkirkara and other villages flocked to Rabat to aid their compatriots.

At dawn of 3rd September, a group of 65 men led by Vitale entered Mdina from a secret door in the bastion below the Cathedral. The French garrison offered to surrender, but some French soldiers hidden behind a parapet opened fire and killed three Maltese and wounded many others. The Maltese taught that the offer of surrender was a trap and opened fire on the French who fought to the bitter end. Their corpses were taken to Mtarfa hill and burnt. The fighting at Mdina finished at around 7 am and the white-and-red Maltese flag was seen floating on the bastions. All the French who happened to be in the countryside, including the ex-Knight Sylvan Bosredon Vatanges, were caught and lynched by the angry mob.



Portes de Bombes at the time of the French



From left to right; The main leaders of the Maltese insurgents: Notary Manwel Vitale, a cotton merchant from Birkirkara; Vincenzo Borg 'Brared'; Dun Saver Cassar, parish priest of Rabat, Gozo.



The French surrender Gozo (amateur contemporary drawing)

Vaubois and his friends inside Valletta were unaware of what was taking place at Mdina. At dawn, a detachment of 250 French soldiers left for Mdina to strengthen the garrison there. Upon reaching the area where there is Hamrun, they were met by a volley of fire from the hidden enemy in the fields. The French fell into a panic and fled back to Porte de Bombes for safety.

The suddenness of the Maltese uprising stunned Vaubois and his officers. He accused the clergy and the nobility who had played on the ignorance and superstition of the populace to foment all the trouble. Vice-Admiral Decres was of the opinion that the revolt was the result of a conspiracy planned weeks before. There is no doubt that the seat of the conspiracy was not in the city and that the ring-leaders were only waiting for a favourable moment to act.

By this time the French had already lost control of the countryside. Canon Francesco Saverio Caruana was appointed General with his headquarters at *Casa Leone* in St Venera. Another leading Maltese, **Vincenzo Borg** known as 'Brared' organized the people of Birkirkara against the French.

On 3rd September the Gozitans, learning of what had happened in Malta, rose in revolt too. Dun **Saverio Cassar**, parish priest of Rabat was chosen as leader. The *Banca Giuratale* at Rabat was made their headquarters and the French garrison was blocked in the Citadel. On 28th September the French garrison surrendered Gozo to the British who escorted them safely to Valletta. The following day the British gave the Citadel to the Gozitans. They Gozitans then set up a provisional government, declared King Ferdinand IV of Naples as their sovereign and governed the island in his name.

On 5th September Vaubois, realizing that control over the countryside was lost, prepared his troops for a long blockade within the harbour towns. He sent letters to the France Government asking for urgent help. The French garrison consisted out 4,000 soldiers stationed in the main harbour forts. The French had 640 canons left by the Knights which he could use against the Maltese insurgents.

LO6d – The Revolt of the Maltese against the French

1. From the information in page, identify **two** events that may have triggered the insurrection by the people of Rabat against then French on the morning of 2nd September 1798.

(2)

2. Do you think that the decision to revolt was taken suddenly or was the revolt planned days or even weeks before? Use evidence from history to support your answer.

(3)

3. What makes you think that Vaubois and the French authorities in Malta was caught completely unprepared when the revolt broke out?

(3)

4. Briefly describe the part played by these people in the revolt of the Maltese against the French.

a.	Manwel Vitale	
b.	Lazarre Masson	
c.	Dun Saver Cassar	
d.	Vincenzo Borg Brared	
e.	Ferdinand IV	
f.	Francesco Saverio Caruana	

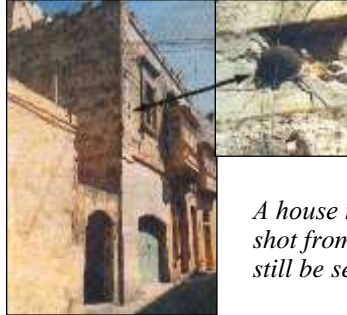
(12)

(Total: 20 marks)

L06e –The blockade of the French garrison in Malta

The Maltese side of the Blockade

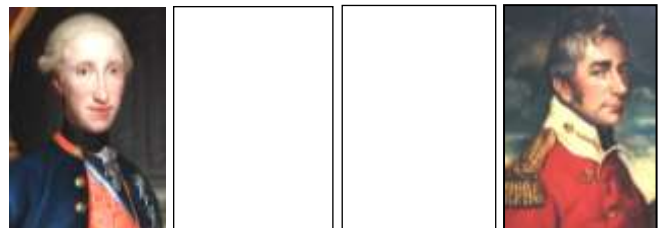
On 3rd September the Maltese set up a National Assembly at the *Banca Giuratale* to govern the islands and to continue the blockade against the French. It appointed a number of officials to govern the islands: a Commander-in-Chief, an ambassador to the Court of King **Ferdinand IV** of Naples, the ruler of Malta, a government secretary, an artillery officer, an inspector of the coastal towers and officers responsible to buy, store and distribute grain among the villagers. The Maltese chosen leaders then started organizing Maltese men in fighting regiments. They also set up cannon batteries around the harbours to stop the French from bringing in soldiers, weapons and food supplies to the cities. The Assembly adopted the medieval coat of arms colours of Mdina (red and white) as the Maltese national flag.



Left: Amateur painting showing the battle that took place in Żabbar on 5th September.

A house in Żabbar with a French cannon ball shot from the Cottonera bastion wall which can still be seen today.

The National Assembly gave shelter and food for thousands of Maltese refugees that were expelled by the French from time to time from the harbour towns. During the winter of 1799 there followed a bad harvest because many peasants had left their fields uncultivated to give a helping hand in the organizing the blockade. A fever epidemic that hit the islands in January 1799 killed hundreds of people. *Santo Spirito* and *Sawra Hospital* at Rabat became overcrowded with patients, so temporary hospitals had to be set up in the villages and in some of the convents.



From left to right: King Ferdinand IV of Naples; Vice-Admiral Horatio Nelson, Capt. Alexander Ball; Major-General Charles Graham

Above. San Ġwann barricade, overlooking Marsamxett Harbour. Similar barricades were erected by the Maltese with British assistance around the two main harbours.

But the Maltese leaders recognized the fact that they were not strong enough to force the French surrender without foreign help. They thus asked the King of Naples for help. At that time the British were allies of King Ferdinand IV. The British Vice-Admiral **Horatio Nelson** came to Malta to assess the situation. He sailed to Malta with some Portuguese ships which block the main harbours. While Nelson was in Malta, the French surrendered the Citadel of Gozo on 28th September 1798. Before he left, Nelson appointed Captain **Alexander Ball** as his representative. Ball's was to use his military experience to advise the Maltese on how to continue the blockade in the most effective way. The Maltese leaders made Ball President of the **National Congress** to assist and advice in the day-to-day government. He chose San Anton Palace at Attard as his headquarters.

During the blockade the King of Naples sent soldiers, money and grain to the Maltese. In 1799 and 1800 respectively, two British commanders, General **Thomas Graham** and Major-General **Henry Pigot** came to Malta with hundreds of British infantry soldiers. The British Government was strengthening its hold on the Maltese Islands. The remaining obstacle to this control was the presence of the French garrison in the harbour towns.

The French side of the Blockade

General Vaubois from time to time during the blockade started expelling thousands of Maltese from the harbour cities so that food supplies could last longer. Those who were permitted to stay were the families of professional people, merchants and artisans such as bakers, carpenters and blacksmiths. By the time the blockade ended about 7,000 Maltese were left from the original 40,000 city-dwellers.

On 5th September 1798 the French made a surprise attack on the village of Zabbar which situated very close to the Cottonera Lines. Their plan was to encircle the village, cut it from outside help and steal as much food as they could. But the French found the village completely deserted. When they went into the narrow streets, the villagers attacked them from the windows and roofs that the buildings. It seemed that someone had informed the Maltese in time to prepare a counter-plan against the French. That was the first and only attempt by the French to break the blockade.

*Left: Dun Mikiel Xerri
Centre: The house where he
lived in Valletta at the time of
the conspiracy.
Right: Dun Mikiel Xerri
monument in Valletta*



In December 1798 a small group of Maltese patriots from within Valletta devised a secret plot to open the gates of the city and to let in some 200 armed villagers. The leaders of the plot were Dun **Mikiel Xerri** (1738-99), **Guliero Lorenzi** and **Matthew Pulis** (a quarantine office). But the French guards at Marsamxett heard noises on the night of 12th January 1798 and spread the alarm. The plotters were caught and 40 of them were executed by a firing squad at the Palace Square. Dun Mikiel Xerri and Lorenzi were among those executed.

Meanwhile, when Napoleon returned to France from Egypt, the relief of Malta was given top priority. But the ships that left Toulon for Malta were caught by the British. From then onwards no relief forces or supplies were sent from France. The French garrison in Malta was left on its own. During the summer of 1800 life for the French garrison became almost desperate and Vaubois had to introduce strict food rationing for all the inhabitants of the cities and the French garrison.

Vaubois had calculated that stored food could only last until the end of September. Without no relief force in sight, he signed the capitulation of the islands to the British commanders on 5th October 1800. The Maltese leaders were left out from the negotiations about the conditions of the surrender of Malta. That would have added defeat to humiliation to a country that was considered as one of the Great European powers of the time. The French garrison was then escorted to the French Mediterranean port of Toulon on board British ships.



The capitulation of the French garrison took place at the Palace Square in Valletta on 5th October 1800.



The French garrison were then escorted to Marseilles on board British ships.

LO6e – The blockade of the French garrison in Malta

1. How did the Maltese govern the islands during the blockade?

(2)

2. Identify **two** problems that the Maltese had to face during the blockade.

(2)

3. (a) Name the **two** foreign powers helped the Maltese during the blockade.

(2)

(b) What kind of help did they provide?

(2)

4. Why did the French attack the village of Żabbar and why did this attack end up in failure?

(4)

5. Match these military leaders of Column A with the information about them in Column B.

A	Horatio Nelson		Portuguese admiral who helped the Maltese.
B	Rizza de Real		British Admiral who sent help to Malta.
C	Thomas Graham and Henry Pigot		helped the Maltese in the blockade.
D	Captain Alexander Ball		British commanders stationed in Malta.

(4)

6. Identify **two** problems which the French faced during the blockade.

(2)

7. Do you think the French would still have surrendered Malta without foreign help? Give **two** reasons for your answer.

(2)

(Total: 20 marks)

LO6abcde - The French Occupation of Malta

Source Question

Read carefully the following sources and then answer all the questions.

'We, the undersigned, Jurats and Headman of these four cities together with some officials of Valletta, fully conscious of the insufficiency of our forces to resist and withstand the fleet of armed forces attacking us, have together petitioned our reigning lord that, for the common good, he should arrive at some sort of agreement, trusting on the generosity of a country which had always acquiesced to a request for peace. And in order that this document should in future bear witness of our efforts, we, whose names appear hereunder, have signed it with our own hands and have affixed the seal of the *Università* where we are today gathered, this 10 June 1798.'

Source A. From a petition of the Maltese leaders to Hompesch, 10 June 1798.

'Apart from the donkeys, mules and horses, which continued to be slaughtered and eaten as before, the greater part of the dogs and cats, as well as a quantity of rats followed their fate. The latest hunt, made quite recently, for those animals in the military bakery netted fifty-five of those frightful rodents. It was solely in this locality that one could hope to find them, being bigger than those found in other places.'

Source B. Part of a letter, written by a French garrison officer during the blockade, dated August 1800.

'You are to insist as long as possible upon the garrison remaining prisoners of war until regularly exchanged...you may agree to their being at once transported to France...however, not to bear arms against His Majesty, or his allies, until they shall be exchanged for an equal number of such prisoners as may be in possession of the French...You will endeavour to stipulate their arms should be given up, on a promise on our part to restore them when they are to sail for France. Those on shore will receive provisions from us for the first few days till an arrangement can be made for their supplying themselves. Those on board will receive the ship's provisions.

If the French General should wish to stipulate that no Maltese should be allowed to enter the place till the French are gone, it should be confined to no armed Maltese...If medicines or medical assistance is required, it should of course be granted to them.

Source C. Instructions of Major-General Sir Henry Pigot to Brigadier-General Graham who was negotiating the surrender of Valletta with General Vaubois.

1. Why did the Maltese leaders write the petition of Source A to the Grand Master?

(2)

2. What light does Source B shed on the living conditions of the French garrison during the blockade?

(2)

3. Give one reason why more rodents could be found in the military bakery.

(2)

4. Do you think that the living conditions of the Maltese in the harbour cities was better than that of the French garrison? Give one reason for your answer.

(3)

5. Why did the British agree to escort the French garrison to France on their own ships?

(2)

6. Why did the British want to get rid of the French prisoners as soon as possible?

(2)

7. Why were the Maltese not represented in the capitulation of the French garrison?

(2)

8. How do you think was Pigot's capitulation agreement with the French seen by the Maltese leaders of that time? Give a reason for your answer.

(3)

9. Where did the official capitulation of the French garrison take place? Suggest a reason for the choice of this place.

(2)

(Total: 20 marks)

LO6abcde –The French occupation of Malta

Carefully read these essay titles and answer ONE using the following word count guide (350–400 words for MQF 2-3 and 200–250 for MQF 1-2).

PAPER MQF 2-3

1. Why were different sections of the Maltese population antagonized by French 'reforms' in 1798? (20)
2. 'Most of Napoleon's reforms in Malta were neither appropriate nor appreciated by the Maltese.' Discuss. (20)
3. Why did the French occupation of Malta last for only two years? (20)

PAPER MQF 1-2

1. In 1798 Napoleon Bonaparte captured Malta and drove away the Order of St John.
 - (a) List four episodes that took place during the French takeover of Malta in June 1798. (4)
 - (b) Mention and comment on four reforms made by Napoleon in Malta. (8)
 - (c) Mention and explain four unpopular measures taken by the French Government after Napoleon's left Malta. (8)
2. What happened during the French occupation of Malta in each of these events?
 - (a) Key events during the French takeover of Malta and Gozo from the Order. (6)
 - (b) Napoleon's reforms that affected the Church and the religious orders. (6)
 - (c) The causes of the Maltese revolt on 2nd September 1798. (8)

