



Women's work in Hospitaller Valletta: 1571-1798

Student's name: Mai Shigematsu
Student Number: 2000138/1

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Abstract

Author Mai Shigematsu		Date 31. January.2023
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<p>When the Knights of St. John arrived in Malta in 1530, the Grand Harbour area was transformed into an increasingly populated and dynamic area. After the victory of the Great Siege in 1565, the Knights of St. John launched a massive project to build the new fortified city of Valletta. The change of government brought to the Maltese inhabitants a different way of life. It influenced the everyday lives of the local Maltese population. Changes were also experienced by the female members of the population. They were employed in different occupations, such as cotton spinners, dressmakers, washerwomen, bakers, etc., some females were employed by the Order of St. John others engaged in informal networks like the trading of second hand goods, laundry services, cleaning, selling pies and cakes and knitting socks. This formed an important part of the economy at the time.</p> <p>This essay seeks to discuss the various types of work women in Hospitaller Valletta engaged in. Data will be collected from bibliographic sources that include books, dissertations academic papers, articles, and reports. The research will serve as a platform through which an alternative tour of Valletta will be created. This will offer visitors the opportunity to experience and learn about an obscure yet fascinating history of Valletta that can also serve to enhance existing tours by exploring off the beaten track areas of the city of Valletta.</p>		
Keywords Women's work, Women in the Hospitaller period, Knights of St. John, Valletta		

Declaration of Authenticity



Student Name and Surname: Mai Shigematsu

Student ITS Number : 2000138/1

Programme : HND in Tour Guiding

Research Title : Women's work in Hospitaller Valletta: 1571-1798

Declaration:

I hereby declare that this research study is based on the outcome of my own research. I, as the author, declare that this research study is my own composition which has not been previously produced for any other qualification.

The research study was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Christine Jones

31.Jan.2023

Date

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mai'.

Student's Signature

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1. Introduction: A Historical Background

Malta saw a lot of changes between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. It was a period of new beginnings for the island and also for its new governors, the Hospitaller Knights of St John. Before 1530, Malta had a population of between 20.000 – 30.000 persons (Muscat, 2021, p. 18). Most of the inhabitants were settled in Mdina and Rabat where the seat of the governing body was located. There was only one small tower known as the Fort. St. Elmo on a peninsula jutting out on the main harbour known as Xebb-Er-Ras. This is where the city of Valletta was constructed in 1571 after the victory of the Great Siege in 1565. In the years following the Great Siege, the Grand Harbour area experienced dynamic economic and physical changes.

Valletta was governed by strict regulations under the rules of the Knights of St. John. The fortress city became a hub of activity, it was a trading centre with a network of communication with various countries (Buttigieg, 2018, p. 6). The change of government brought the Maltese inhabitants a different way of life (Schembri, 2011, p. 4). Prior to the arrival of the Order in 1530, the Maltese economy was mainly based on the cotton industry. When the Knights settled in Valletta, new job opportunities were created. The needs of the Hospitallers were high, and this encouraged people living in the Maltese countryside and beyond to move to the harbour towns. These migrants were service providers, they were jobseekers seeking economic opportunities that would make their lives easier.

1.1 Economy during the Hospitaller period

Early modern women in Malta were involved in a variety of paid and unpaid occupations. Some were farmers, shop owners, cotton spinners, shoemakers, barbers, wigmakers, seamstresses, nurses, maids, tavern keepers, prostitutes, and other kinds of jobs (Vella, 2017, p. 45). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, job opportunities for women grew in synchrony with the harbours economic growth. According to the list of occupations at the time, there were various types of jobs (Vella, 2017, p. 45). With all this economic activity and the safety provided within the fortification, the population of the city continued to grow. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the population of the island was 51,750, and 35% of them lived in the harbour area (Buttigieg, 2018, p. 6). Surprisingly, the population in the eighteenth century reached more than 90,000, which almost doubled in 100 years (Luttrell,

1982, p. 5). The central part of the city of Valletta was laid out with the main administrative buildings, ecclesiastical buildings, and houses that were owned by the member of the Knights Of St. John. These buildings were highly decorated. On the other hand, the inhabitants who were considered to be poor moved into the fringes of Valletta. (Muscat, 2018, p. 60).

1.2 Essay Objective

This long essay will explore the various types of women's work in the city of Valletta in the Hospitaller period. It seeks to identify places in Valletta where women worked. A growing amount of published and unpublished literary works have focused on women's work in early modern Malta, none have focused specifically on the capital city Valletta. This essay will identify places in Valletta where women engaged in paid labour and discuss the various economic opportunities available to females living in the city during the Knights' period.

2. Literature Review

Women's work is an area of study that in recent times has attracted increasing interest. Information on this topic for the purpose of this research was gathered through bibliographic sources that include books, dissertations at the University of Malta, academic papers, articles, and reports.

This literature review will evaluate what has been written on the topic. The online institutional from the University of Malta OAR@UoM was used to acquire previous essays, particularly the ones that includes the data from archives. I approached this long essay by paying attention to the reality of these women's experiences.

2.1 Life and being women in the Hospitaller period

With the arrival of the Knights of St. John, inhabitants experienced a different way of life. Between 1571-1798, the upper part of the city of Valletta was reserved for the high-society living. Streets located between the upper and lower parts were packed with merchants, and all sorts of service providers like seamstresses, wig makers, inn keepers, tavern keepers, and shop keepers. Christine Muscat in her paper *Female Prostitution and Entrepreneurship in Valletta, c. 1630 - c. 1798* states that the wealthy Maltese and the Knights always occupied magnificent buildings, while the workers were housed wherever space was available even inside casemates in fortifications (Muscat, 2016, p. 212). The ground floor of elite buildings at times consisted of stores owned by women. Muscat also mentioned in her paper *Women Entrepreneurs in Malta's Porto Grande in the Baroque Age*, that women were closely involved in the administration of stores such as wine shops. The work included simply serving wine and other types of alcoholic drinks. In some shops, some women also offered food. These were outlets where mostly men gathered to drink, eat, play cards, and gambling. At times, prostitutes gravitated around such shops (Muscat, 2021, p. 20).

2.1.1 Different female occupations

Yosanne Vella in her book on *women in 18th Century Malta* states that the lifestyle especially for women was changed. It seems that before 1530, most women in Malta worked in the fields, some were involved in spinning cotton, domestic work, and midwifery. However, after the Knights Of St. John settled in Malta, women were to be found in a variety of occupations, such as cotton spinners, bakers, women farmers, dressmakers, shop owners, washerwomen, actresses, and even did more than one job (Vella, 2017, p. 33). For example, cotton workers were always in demand, hence they were able to choose as a second job when other work was not available. Moreover, Vella states that Maltese women's work had always existed, and extended far beyond that of a housewife (Vella, 2017, p. 27). One of the main forces of the economy in the eighteenth century was agriculture, and this was the section where women were also employed. Particularly, the production of cotton regularly increased in its importance. It was because cotton provided an ideal way of utilizing the limited land in Malta available. Moreover, spinning and weaving were believed to be good sources of income (Cassar, 2009, p. 2). Vella also states that Maltese were supporting themselves through the cotton industry (Vella, 2017, p. 29). Although many women had the responsibility to take care of their children, clean, cook, sew and mend the clothes at home, they were also involved in remunerated work that formed part of the market economy (Cassar, 2009, p. 2). The author also emphasises that there was an absence of any sort of formal craft guilds unlike in other parts of Europe and this may have offered Maltese women more flexible work (Vella, 2017, p. 45).

Christine Muscat in her book *Public Women* determines that women were engaged in both formal and informal networks of employment. Some women worked at the hospital as a nurse, wet nurses, midwives, hospital servants, and steam bath attendants (Muscat, 2018, p. 167). Others ran shops, knitting, laundering, and selling food. In his book *Daughters of Eve*, Carmel Cassar states that a large number of women were employed in different types of low-income activities such as milling, weaving, and cooking meals. Some women in Valletta worked from their kitchens making pastries like tripe pies these were sold to sailors and soldiers and other persons on the streets of Valletta. (Cassar, 2002, p. 156).

Maltese women during the Hospitaller period were employed in a variety of occupations. In his book *Daughters of Eve*, Carmel Cassar says that the poorest women were multi-

occupational, and none of their jobs were profitable (Cassar, 2002, p. 154). Furthermore, Muscat mentions that multi-occupational women were mostly single women including single mothers, widows, and spinsters who lived on their own. Women were also earning some money from prostitution (Muscat, 2018, p. 27). The author suggests that it is because being a prostitute offered the possibility of higher earnings in the short term. In the eighteenth century, a prostitute earned 1 *scudo* for a service although prostitution was largely seasonal work and it depended on the number of men in the city. On the other hand, a dressmaker could earn only 2 *scudi* to produce an elegant dress that would probably have taken 7 days of work (Muscat, 2016, p. 41). Muscat states that some women became prostitutes because of poverty while others had chosen this option as a way of life (Muscat, 2016, p. 38). While Cassar mentions that prostitution for some women was usually for survival (Cassar, 2002, p. 164)

In her paper, *Female Prostitution and Entrepreneurship in Valletta, c.1630 - c.1798*, Christine Muscat argues that prostitution was not an illegal activity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Valletta (Muscat, 2016, p. 40).¹ Moreover, they were recognised on an equal level as servants of knights, tailors, and sailors. In the eighteenth century, harsh laws were enacted, however, they were rarely implemented and largely served as deterrents (Muscat, 2016, p. 225). Muscat also states in her paper *Women Entrepreneurs in Malta's Porto Grande in the Baroque Age* that another way in which women could get a better profit in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was by trading. Items such as fancy garments, jewelry, ornate household goods, and miscellaneous decorative objects were traded through middlemen. In addition, bartering second-hand goods appeared to have been a popular way for women to make extra income (Muscat, 2021, p. 21). Fine fabrics, clothes, gloves, hairstyling, and other luxuries were in high demand because the lifestyle of elites became more flamboyant. This offered various business opportunities for several women living in the harbour district. She also emphasises that it is important to note that not only upper-class women were successful in this business but also lower-class women had a chance to reach higher ceilings (Muscat, 2021, p. 29).

¹ Procuring, living off immoral earnings, and incitement to prostitution were illegal activities. It was male adulterers and non-Catholics who practiced with prostitutes were largely targeted by laws and the police. However, Prostitutes were not perceived to be undesirable because similar to other subordinates they were taking appropriate action as the situation demanded (Muscat, 2016, p. 116).

Paul Cassar in his paper *Female employees in the medical services of the Order of St. John in Malta* mentions that women were also employed in medical services. It was revealed that some women were even trained as barber surgeons to treat female patients during the eighteenth century. The expense of training was offered by the Knights of St. John, and they were sent to study surgery in Florence. Women were even employed at the Holy Infirmary. There was an area so-called 'Routa' where it allowed mothers to leave their babies without revealing their own identities. Female employees had a duty to take care of those babies. Cassar concludes that there is no doubt that women made a notable contribution to the nation's health (Cassar, 1978).

2.1.2 Gender comparison income in the eighteenth century

According to Vella, a list of the worker employed in a field owned by the Knights of St John in the period August 31st, 1771 to May 7th, 1774 stated that about a quarter of the workers were female (Vella, 2017, p. 29). Having said that, it seems that the working conditions of women were harsh. Vella quotes that women's wages were usually less than what men used to earn. Most of the male workers were paid rates varying between 3 and 3.5 *scudi* per week, while the female workers were paid rates that varied from 2 *scudi* to 2 *scudi* 2 *tari* with working days per week varying in length from six days to six and half days. (Vella, 2017, p. 29). ²

2.2 Single living women during the Hospitaller period

Amanda Schembri in her paper *Women in Hospitaller Malta: 1565 - 1610* suggests that the most important change for the vast majority of women in their life was marriage (Schembri, 2011, p. 10). It was common for women who were over the age of 20 to be married. Schembri also states that living alone without male protection was negatively perceived (Schembri, 2011, p. 95). The Catholic church encouraged women to either get married or become cloistered nuns. According to Cassar, a large number of women at the time were widowed before the age of 40 (Cassar, 1996, p. 37). He concludes that the majority of single women must have found it hard to live decently and were forced to lead miserable lives (Cassar,

² 1 *scudo* is equivalent to 0.24Euro, which translates to 1Euro = 4 *scudi* 2 *tari*

1996, p. 37). Another author Emanuel Buttigieg also mentions in his report on *Social Relationships in the Sixteenth-Century Malta*, that single women in early modern Malta who lived by themselves were viewed suspiciously and were prone to be suspected of bad conduct and easily accused of prostitution (Buttigieg, 2008, p. 13).

Conversely, in her paper, *Female Prostitution and Entrepreneurship in Valletta, c.1630 - c.1798*, Christine Muscat argues that single women were not necessarily perceived to be dishonorable (Muscat, 2016, p. 97). There were ways how a single woman could maintain both her status and her honor. Therefore, some single women lived freely, independently, and successfully in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The analysis section will attempt to shed a light on what it was like to be a working woman in Valletta in the Hospitaller period, it will also explore different ways how unsupported women survived everyday life, and what were their occupations. It also seeks to identify the places in Valletta where women used to work.

3. Methodology

The method used in building this research on women's work in Valletta in the early modern period was based on informative bibliographic research conducted on selected secondary documents. The process of investigation on a selection of reliable and relevant information sources on the subject of this study enabled the creation of a unique study of Valletta focusing solely on women's work from the conception of the city in the post-siege period to the end of Hospitaller rule in 1798. It involved the exploration of existing bibliographical material, selection, and the analysis of material on women's work.

Bibliographical sources included unpublished dissertations at the University of Malta, literature found in books, essays in academic journals, and articles in historical online sources. The methodology followed a set of phases that started with a search for material on the subject followed by an inquiry into the different types of work women were involved in, and the subsequent interpretation, reflection, and analysis of the material found.

The relevance criteria used to collect the data and the analysis of the collected data was a qualitative analysis. This method was considered to be an ideal option to reach an in-depth understanding of women's work at the time because it gave a better overview of the reality that these women had to face in their everyday life. It asked questions like who the working women were, where did they work, what jobs were they involved in, when did they work and how much did they earn. The data obtained from the sources was analysed to create an overview of women's work. It also attempted to extract narratives of working women in the period and sought to understand how they lived.

The main limitation of this research was constructing a complete picture of the representation of women's work in this period because interest in the lives of early modern women in Malta only goes back around forty years. To date information on women's work is fragmented and restricted. Another limitation I faced is language. As a Japanese national the extraction of information, evaluation, and analysis were a challenge that I however faced with great determination.

In the next chapter, the results and analysis of the data gathered will be described.

4. Analysis and Discussion of the results

The analysis and results chapter will confront information gathered on women's work in Valletta with the aim of creating an overview of female occupations in the Hospitaller period. The data will be analysed in two sections. The first section will present information on the different types of jobs women were involved in, living cost, and how much the women used to earn in the Hospitaller times. The second section will discuss and identify places in Valletta related to women's work.

4.1: Working women in Valletta in the Hospitaller period

It was common for women to have multiple occupations (Cassar, 1996, p. 38). Women who were single or not supported by a husband or a male relative were generally regarded to be poor. It was particularly important for these women to multitask if they had young children or elderly parents to care for.

4.1.1: Informal work and formal work

Women were engaged in both informal work and formal work (Muscat, 2018, p. 167). Formal workers were employed by the Knights of St. John and paid by the state. Contrastingly, informal workers engaged in activities that were not directly registered by the state. It represented a significant part of the economy at the time. Informal employment provided women with supplementary income.

In the eighteenth century, formal workers were concentrated on specific sections such as employment in the medical services of the Knights of St John (Bonnici, 2015, p. 4). Women were mainly engaged in three sections of the medical services. One of the sections was caring for unwanted babies at the Holy Infirmary. The main duty carried out by women was to take care of foundlings. In addition, they were instructed to supervise the wet nurses and foster mothers and to check the babies every Easter to ensure that they were well nourished (Cassar, 1978, p. 1).

The second section where women were employed in formal work were at the District Medical Service to support women who were sick and taken care at home. They visited the patients daily to deliver the sick medicine and food ordered by the doctor (Cassar, 1978, p. 6).

The third section was at the women's hospital. Most of the sick were treated at home however the poorest women were treated at a house that was founded by a charitable woman known as Caterina Scappi (Bonello, 2015). The hospital was known as the Ospedaletto. The patients at the Ospedaletto were attended by female nurses and female servants who performed general duties. The female hospital was located very close to Fort St. Elmo. According to Christine Muscat, the number of patients housed inside this hospital was very small, and the age range was between 4 months to 95 years old. The majority of patients were Gozitan women. It indicated that they came to Valletta to seek a job, unfortunately, they ended up being sick and had no one to care for them. Most of the medical cases were related to poverty such as lack of hygiene, malnutrition, and domestic violence.³

Formal workers were controlled by state administrators, and they were usually retained in employment until they retired. Some women were employed as welfare officers, health care, or domestic service in the eighteenth century (Muscat, 2018, p. 167). Women known as *pitanziere* or almsgivers contributed money to the poor and physically disabled handicapped women (Cassar, 1978, p. 7). Other formal work such as wet nurses, steam-bath attendants midwives were also essential women's works in society. These formal workers were paid for their services by the States. Fostering was also a way to earn money for all women (Muscat, 2018, p. 168). The health authorities also entrusted the prostitutes with children who were given to the hospital. Foster mothers received 1 *scudo* a month for raising the child (Muscat, 2018, p. 169). Wet nurses were also employed by private families. Elite women rarely breastfed their children thus, they needed to hire a wet nurse.

The vast majority of women needed to be engaged in different types of formal and informal work to survive. One of the common informal works was knitting socks that were mainly done on the doorstep of their houses. There were records that women were also spinners

³ Reference: The tour 'poverty, sprawl, and squalor in Hospitaller Valletta' conducted by Christine Muscat on the 24th June 2022 organised by the Malta University Historical Society

and weavers. A woman who lived in an area was given two *rotolos* of cotton to work with 14 *tari* in advance⁴ (Vella, 2016). It shows that the cotton spinner could get less profit but at the same time, it seems that the cotton industry was one of the most demanding works. Therefore, they could work whenever they have a spare moment. Sewing jobs in the eighteenth century were in high demand. Some were embroidering, and others were seamstresses. Most women were directly involved in the production of cloth in all its stages, combed, spun, and woven (Cassar, 2009).

Some women were successful in entrepreneurship. They ran businesses like mills, taverns, inns and sold food on the streets. (Muscat, 2021, p. 28). 25% of the shops were registered by female owners at the end of the eighteenth century. Some owned a shop selling bread and pastries, some produced food that was sold on the streets and others ran taverns (Vella, 2017, p. 38). A significant number of taverns were run by women.

Another way of business that women frequently would have made a better income was prostitution. The presence of sailors increased the demand for sex. Although prostitution was a risky occupation, it allowed women to be able to earn more money than any other occupation. It also enabled them to care for their children and or other dependents (Muscat, 2016, p. 43). Thus, these women could be independent and participate in economic life. The Grand Master in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries tried to delegate prostitutes to a designated area by prohibiting them to live on public roads or near churches in Valletta. At Due Balle and the Mandraggio two areas in the Capital city, one would find a concentrated number of living prostitutes. 25% of prostitutes were residing in these areas in the seventeenth century. There was an obvious reason because significant numbers of male customers like soldiers working at the fort, sailors, and male service providers could be found in these areas (Muscat, 2018, pp. 114-115). Cassar states that many single women became prostitutes to gain money for a dowry to help buy them a marriage. Other prostitutes saved money and eventually managed to buy a house within a few years after they started to work as a prostitute (Muscat, 2018, p. 27).

⁴ The denomination was the official currency used during the Hospiteller's time in Malta. 1 *Scudo* was equivalent to 0.24 Euro. 1 *Tari* was equivalent to 0.02 Euro.

4.1.2: Women's life – Living cost and how much the women used to earn

Taking care of their children, cooking, cleaning, sewing, and weaving at home were also the responsibility of women. Some women lived together to share accommodation costs and pool their limited incomes to buy food. According to Christine Muscat, the average female salary up to the seventeenth century was very low. Women generally could earn less than 2 *tari* while men earned 2 to 4 *tari* per day (Muscat, 2018, p. 26). In early modern Malta, 1 *tari* would buy a 750-gram loaf of bread. This amounted to 1 *tari* less than what men would generally earn in a day's work. The average salary of working women in the eighteenth century was approximately 3.5 *tari* per day while the cost of one loaf of bread was 5 *grani*.⁵ Rice used to sell for 10 *grani* per *rotolo*.⁶ One of the most expensive foods was meat. Beef and pork cost 34 *grani* and 26 *grani* per *rotolo* (Attard, 2011, pp. 85-87). Hence, the majority of women who lived in poverty had to survive on barley or bread. The Knights were aware of the plight of single women who needed help to improve their situation. The Grand Master in the eighteen century raised funds to build a home for poor single women and he also provided them with some *scudi* for subsistence (Attard, 2011, p. 105).

On the other hand, some prostitutes in Valletta charged one *scudo* per service others charged less and some may have been charging more than one *scudo*. If a prostitute earned one *scudo* a day she was making four times as much money as a servant earned in a day. Working as a prostitute brought women an immediate income (Muscat, 2016, p. 41). There was a Maltese woman who was abandoned by her husband, she had no means of supporting herself and could only turn to prostitution. She ended up with a good relationship with a member of the Knights and her new life did well (Cassar, 2009, p. 166).

At the lower end of Merchants Street in Valletta, there is the Church of St Mary Magdalene. It used to be part of a female monastery for penitent prostitutes in the Hospitaller period (Muscat, 2018, p. 34). Poorer single women sometimes became nuns (Schembri, 2011, p. 130). They became servant nuns to take care of washing, cooking, cleaning, and taking care of sick nuns.

⁵ 1 cent (euro) can be converted to 12 *grani*

⁶ 1 *Roloto* is equivalent of 793.8 g

4.2: Places related to Women's Work in Valletta

It is clear from the data gathered above that women in Valletta seem to have been very active. Moreover, working women could be seen in various places in Valletta. For example, female shop owners could be seen in almost any of the streets between the upper and lower parts. The streets must have been always busy with various types of shops such as wine shops, bakeries, coffee shops, tobacco shops, etc. (Vella, 2017, pp. 37-38). Some women worked at the houses of the elite because the elite women usually hired wet nurses. They were also hired at the Holy Infirmary to take care of unwanted babies (Cassar, 1978). There were even women who worked at auberges or squares as actresses (Vella, 2017, p. 43). In the sixteenth century, women began to have appeared on the stage. It was because the members of the Knights of St. John were very keen on music and theatrical performance. Women staged theatrical representations in auberges or squares before the Manoel theatre was completed (Attard, 2011, p. 157). Surprisingly, the Manoel theatre was managed by a woman at the end of the eighteenth century, and she organised and financed theatrical productions (Muscat, 2021, p. 26).

Valletta was built for the elite however at the same time, they needed service providers and workmen. Low-cost properties in Hospitaller Valletta were mostly located on the fringes of the fortress and most service providers established themselves on the outskirts or the edges of the fortified city. Fort St Elmo was built as a military machine but there was also evidence that some poor people including unsupported working women lived in the walls of this great fort. Today, 5,157 people live in the city (Buttigieg, 2018). Thus, in the Hospitaller period, the city was definitely overcrowded and people living on the periphery had to live face-to-face.

Although being working women in such conditions was definitely a challenge in the Hospitaller period, working women contributed to the market economy.

5. Conclusion

The objective behind this long essay was to identify places where women worked in the city of Valletta in the Hospitaller period. I tried to picture their lives and works in the capital city by collecting data from the existing bibliographical material. Women living in Valletta in the last quarter of the sixteenth century and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were involved in both formal and informal economic networks. Valletta offered women opportunities for advancement. Places in Valletta like hospitals, the Grand Masters' Palace, taverns, inns, the market, and other businesses were places where women engaged in formal jobs. Most informal female jobs took place in homes, but the streets, alleys, squares, and fortifications also provided opportunities to female entrepreneurs. This research has shown that women were not only homemakers but active participants in Hospitaller Valletta's economic growth. Their contribution to Valletta's history is often overshadowed by other stories or overlooked.

Women's work often tends to be undervalued. This research is an important step into highlighting women's work in Valletta in the Hospitaller period. Further studies on primary sources are likely to reveal deeper knowledge on women's worth. This research opened up the possibility of creating a new tour that will enable visitors to experience a side of Valletta that is rarely seen and explored. Women's workplaces in Valletta take visitors into areas like the Due Balle, the Manderaggio, and the Arcipierku areas that offer opportunities to experience and learn about an obscure yet fascinating history of the city.

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Appendix: HND TG Long Essay Tour Itinerary

The tour entitled *Women's work in Valletta in the Hospitaller period* starts at **St. George Square** with a brief summary of women's work in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This tour will seek to explore both formal and informal forms of female employment in Valletta. There was a change of government in the sixteenth century that brought to the locals including women a different way of everyday life. The central area in Valletta especially around the square was occupied by the elite building while citizens which included poor working women and people who migrated into the city seeking jobs were forced to live outside of the elite zone in multi-familial buildings. The guest will have a comparative view of the area before exploring off-the-beaten-track areas of the city. During the tour, the group will have six stops in total. These are the places where working women related in the Hospitaller period. The guest will also learn how unsupported women survived everyday life.

After leaving the central area, the group will have a quick stop in front of the **Manuel theatre**. In the sixteenth century, women began to have appeared on the stage because the Knights were very keen on music and theatrical performance. The guest will understand how women were active in society with the fact that there were even women who worked as actresses. Following the stop, the group will continue walking down to **Mandaraggio**. It was the place where a number of prostitutes lived during the Hospitaller period. At this stop, the guest will be shared a brief overview of Prostitution with a special focus on what was it like to be a prostitute during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A comparative view of the other informal work will be also given. The next stop will be at **Independence Square**. Upon arriving at the square, the guide will give a detailed explanation of the various types of work that women were engaged in. It was common for women to have multi occupations. Guide also will share the story of what was it like to be a working single woman at the time. The guest will be then lead the group to the area known as **Strada della Fontana/ Strada Stretta / Due Balle**. The guide will share a real story about housing and the life of unsupported women in the Hospitaller period. The details of how much women could earn during the Hospitellor period and the actual living costs will be shared so that the guest will have an idea of how life was challenging at the time.

Following the story of informal work, the guide will take the group to the lower end of Merchants Street. The guide will present what formal work was generally engaged by

women outside of **Ospedaletto**. Formal workers were concentrated on specific sections such as employment in medical services. The details of the Ospedaletto and the explanation of the differences between informal work and formal work will be given. The Outside of **the Church of St Mary Magdalene** will be also seen.

The tour will come to the end at **Fort St. Elmo** with a conclusion. Women's work tended to be undervalued and underestimated however, there is a fact that single women contributed to the market economy. The guest will have an experience of the obscure yet fascinating history of Valletta throughout this tour.