



**I-ACCESS
IMPLEMENTING THE ACCESSIBILITY TO URBAN HISTORIC CENTER'S
USE AND KNOWLEDGE**

**SCHEDA DI ACQUISIZIONE DEI DATI
SUI MONUMENTI DEL PERCORSO**

**DATA ACQUISITION FORM
ON THE ROUTE MONUMENTS**

5 – Palazzo Parisio

**CENNI SULLA STORIA DELLA FABBRICA
NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE MONUMENT**

1.PERIOD (concerning the first construction) 1740

2.INQUADRAMENTO STORICO-URBANISTICO

2.HISTORICAL-URBANISTIC FRAMEWORK

The palace was built in 1740 by **DOMENICO SCEBERRAS**, Titular Bishop of Epifania on a site previously occupied by two houses. Napoleon resided at the palace during his short stay in Malta before proceeding to the invasion of Egypt. In 1800, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, commanding the expedition to Egypt also lodged at the palazzo. Another important personality who resided in this palace was **LORD LYNEDOCH**, friend of Chev Paolo Parisio. During the British period, the palace was taken over by the Government for use as a General Post Office. The top storey was completed after World War I to house the Audit office. Since 1973 it has housed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Napoleon Bonaparte spent six days in this palace during which he issued orders, reports, decrees and proclamations that Malta part of the French Republic, liquidated the Order of St John and transferred the Order's treasures to French ownership.

It is not known whether Napoleon demanded the use of the palace or whether it was put at his disposal by the Parisio family. What is certain is that when Malta rose up against the French, Paolo Parisio not only joined the insurgents but was considered a champion during the insurrection against the French and a high functionary. After his demise in 1841, the building's ground floor for a time became 'Saliba Livery Stables' where horses and carriages could be hired along with an omnibus service for Mdina and Marfa.

Following Paolo's death, the property passed to the de Piro family and by 1886, the Palazzo was in a sorry state and co-owned by close to one hundred individuals! The newly appointed Postmaster General, Sir Ferdinand Inglott, who at the time was searching for a new site for the postal operations, persuaded the

owners first to lease and then sell the property to the Government. Fully restored and refurbished, Palazzo Parisio formally opened its doors to the public in 1886, as Malta's new General Post Office.

The top storey of Palazzo Parisio was completed after the first World War to house the Audit Office. During the Second World War, the Valletta palace was partly destroyed through enemy action, and in the repairs that followed, the exterior was left unaltered, though it was not possible to restore the decorations on the walls and ceilings. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs moved from the "Old Chancellery", Palace Square, to Palazzo Parisio in October 1973.

More information on the palace's history may be found here:

<https://foreignaffairs.gov.mt/en/Pages/Palazzo-Parisio.aspx>

More Information on Napoleon Bonapart's stay in Palazzo Parisio can be found in:

Hibbert, Christopher. "BONAPARTE AND THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA." History Today 20.3 (1970): 153. Web.

More Information on Lord Lynedoch may be found here:

"Memoir of General Lord Lynedoch, G.C.B." The Athenaeum 2106 (1868): 355. Web.

3.COMMITTENZA

3.PATRONS

DOMENICO SCEBERRAS

Monsignor Domenico Sceberras, Titular Bishop of Epifania was the son of Donna Maria Sceberras. Donna Maria had been given the two houses by the Ventimiglia family in exchange for two houses in Kingsway (present day Republic Street). Domenico Sciberras inherited these two houses on his mother's death, demolished these and built the present palace. When he died in 1744, the property passed to his sister, Donna Margherita Muscati. Donna Margherita passed on the property to Don Paolo Muscati who in turn passed it on to his daughter, Anna Muscati.

PAOLO PARISIO MUSCATI

Chevalier Paolo Parisio Muscati was the son of Anna Muscati and Domenico Parisio. Paolo Parisio played an influential role during the latter years of the Order of St John's rule in Malta. It was during this period that the site acquired its lasting name of Palazzo Parisio. He was among the first recipients of knighthood when the Order of St Michael and St George were created and he was raised to the dignity of Grand Cross of this Order in 1836.

LORD LYNEDOCH

General Thomas Graham, 1st baron of Lynedoch (1748-1843) was of Scottish aristocracy. He joined the British Army and later led a political career during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.

For more information on the palace's patrons:

<https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/bitstream/123456789/35798/1/Pages%20from%20Melita%20Historic%20a%20Vol.2%20no.3%201958-4.pdf>

4.FASI COSTRUTTIVE

4.CONSTRUCTION PHASES

The palace as we see it today was built in the first half of the eighteenth century.

The palace was fully restored and refurbished before opening as the General Post Office in 1886. The top storey of the Palace was in turn completed after World War I.

During the Second World War, the building was partly destroyed by enemy action. The repairs that took place just after the War appear to have maintained the original exterior but some of the interior mural decorations have been lost.

The palace underwent restoration in the early 2000s:

<https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/the-capital-starting-to-light-up-as-the-restorers-do-their-work.155337>

For more information on the palace's construction history:

<https://foreignaffairs.gov.mt/en/Pages/Palazzo-Parisio.aspx>

5.TIPOLOGIA E RIFERIMENTI ARCHITETTONICI (descrizione dell'interno, dell'esterno, materiali e tecniche costruttive tradizionali...)

5. ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGY AND COMPARISONS (description of the interior, exterior, traditional materials and construction techniques...)

The palace has an overall plain facade save for an elaborate doorway and one rusticated corner. The storeys of the palace enclose a central courtyard. The palace has a classical restraint when compared to the Baroque style adopted for the nearby auberge buildings.

The palace is three storeys high. Three windows on each side of the main doorway and the same is repeated for the first and second floors. The windows on the ground floor are framed by convex mouldings and capped by a segmental pediment. On the first floor the windows are flanked by shallow pilasters and capped by a flat cornice raised above the frieze. The second floor, which is a later addition, is raised on a cornice, and its windows are smaller than the lower ones.

The main portal is flanked by two fluted columns and is topped by a square 'flat arch' made of keystones large enough to support a large timber balcony. An open segmental pediment surmounts the balcony. The giant pilaster at the corner has its lowest order marked by quoins while the top ones are left plain.

7.FONTI BIBLIOGRAFICHE

7.BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES

DENARO VICTOR F. *The Houses of Valletta*. Malta: Progress Press Co., 1967.

Galea, Michael. *Valletta : Statues, Niches, Small Churches, Public Fountains, Public Clocks, Monuments, Marble Tablets*.

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Hughes, Quentin J. *The Building of Malta during the Period of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, 1530-1795*. London:

London : Alec Tiranti, 1956.

Mahoney, Leonard. *A History of Maltese Architecture : From Ancient Times Up to 1800*. Malta: Malta : s.n, 1988.

Zammit, L., 2004. The use of architectural ornament on the street elevation of secular building in Valletta, between the late sixteenth and the second half of the eighteenth century : an art historical survey. University of Malta. M.A. History of Art.

8.FONTI CARTOGRAFICHE E ICONOGRAFICHE

8.CARTOGRAPHIC AND ICONOGRAPHIC SOURCES

9.ISCRIZIONI, LAPIDI, ETC...

9.INSCRIPTIONS, PLAQUES ETC.....



A marble plaque commemorating Napoleon Bonaparte's stay can be found on the facade of this building.

The marble plaque was paid for by Governor **SIR ARTHUR FREMANTLE** in the late 19th c. This is thought to be the first tablet of its kind to be put up in Valletta and it continued to add to the historical interest of the palace.

For more information on Sir Arthur Fremantle;

<https://vassallohistory.wordpress.com/892-2/21-sir-arthur-fremantle/>

10.ELENCO E DESCRIZIONE DELLE OPERE D'ART

10. WORKS OF ART INVENTORY AND DESCRIPTIONS

A number of works of art can be found here including paintings are by Italian artist **MATTIA PRETI**. The works of art found here include the 'Supper at Emmaus' by Mattia Preti, a Traditional Maltese clock and cabinet, an 18th c statue and a bust of Jean de Vallette.

For more information on Mattia Preti;

<https://www.visitmalta.com/en/mattia-preti>

When Domenico Sceberras built the palace, it was documented to have had mural decorations executed by a Maltese decorator Antonaci Grech, known as Naci. Some of Naci's ceiling fresoes were destroyed when the palace was bombed in World War II.

For more information on the mural decorations:

<https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/bitstream/123456789/35798/1/Pages%20from%20Melita%20Historic%20a%20Vol.2%20no.3%201958-4.pdf>

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