

# Early Maltese Migration to Corfu (1815-1830)

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**Abstract:** The origins of Maltese migration to Corfu go back to the first half of the 19th century, when Sir Thomas Maitland was appointed Governor of Malta on July 23, 1813. A couple of years later, in 1815, the Greek Ionian Islands were declared a British protectorate, and consequently, Maitland was appointed Lord High Commissioner for the Ionian Islands, which included Corfu, Paxos, Cephalonia, Lefkas, Ithaca, Zakynthos, and Cythera. Maitland continued to serve as Governor of Malta until January 17, 1824. Corfu, on the other hand, remained under the protection of the British Crown until 1864. Since Corfu was quite poorly developed, Maitland encouraged Maltese inhabitants to migrate to Ionian Islands and help build the infrastructure there. The scope of this paper is to identify, through the documentation contained in the Corfu Archives, the first Maltese people whose presence was recorded on the Greek island, how they got there from Malta, and other relevant information. According to the certificates of clean bill of health in possession of the Historical Archive of Corfu, in the 1816-1830 period, the number of people leaving Malta for Corfu included 81 men, 18 women, 23 boys under the age of 14, 5 girls under the age of 14, and 9 infants, whose age was not specified. The paper will also show that, unlike in Sicily or Tunisia, where Maltese typically normally married amongst themselves in the first years of migration, in Corfu, it was much more common for Maltese to marry foreigners.

**Keywords:** Migration, Malta, Migrants, Corfu, 19th Century

## Introduction

The island-state of Malta, today a member state of the European Union, has in the past always been characterized by continuous migratory flows. Whilst in the twentieth century, when the country was a British colony, Maltese migrated to English-speaking countries, such as the UK, the USA, Australia, and Britain. In earlier centuries, the preferred destination of Maltese migrants was other towns and cities in the Mediterranean basin.

This research has investigated the presence of Maltese people on the Italian island of Sicily and in the Maghreb country of Tunisia. The results of this research have been published in the following books: *Malta-Pachino: una storia in comune* (2013), *I Maltesi di Trapani (1419 -1455)* (2015), *I Maltesi di Vittoria e Scoglitti (1628-1846)* (2018), *Maltese Migration in Tunisian Coastal Towns – Sousse, Monastir, Mahdia, Sfax, Djerba, Moknine* (2020), and *The Maltese in Scicli and Capo Passero (1675-1777)* (2022).

This paper presents ongoing research concerning the migration of Maltese people to the Greek island of Corfu in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The origins of Maltese migration to Corfu go back to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Sir Thomas Maitland was appointed Governor of Malta on July 23, 1813, during the reign of George II. A couple of years later, in 1815, the Greek Ionian Islands were declared a British protectorate, and, consequently, Maitland was appointed as Lord High Commissioner for the Ionian Islands, which included Corfu, Paxos, Cephalonia, Lefkas, Ithaca, Zakynthos, and Cythera. Maitland continued to serve as Governor of Malta until January 17, 1824. Corfu, instead, remained under British protection until 1864 (Gauci 2007, p. 17).

## Traveling from Malta to Corfu

Unlike British subjects, natives of the island of Malta departing to Corfu were never issued a passport by the British authorities—only certificates of a clean bill of health. The possessor of the certificate was thus provided with documentation that guaranteed that “good health is enjoyed throughout these possessions without any suspicion of Plague or Contagious distemper whatsoever.” These certificates also specified that the passenger was free from any sickness until he departed from Malta. This was indicated in the wording: “Good until the Departure of the said

Vessel,” which effectively absolved the British authorities of responsibility for any disease or infection the “native of the island of Malta” might have contracted after leaving the country.

Forty-two such certificates were issued by Sir Thomas Maitland between 1816 and 1823, four by Sir Manley Power in 1824, twenty-two by the Marquess of Hastings between July 1824 and September 1826, one by Major General Alexander Woodford issued on February 6, 1827, and seventeen by Major General Frederick Cavendish Ponsonby, between February 1827 and November 1830. Certificates of clean bills of health were also issued to a few foreign citizens who embarked for Corfu from Malta.

Various types of sea vessels were used for the journey between Malta and Corfu. The following vessels were utilized: *Brig*, *Bombard*, *Speronara*, *Schooner*, *Pelago*, *Trabaccolo*, *Xebeck*, and *Packet*. The first vessel recorded as making the trip in 1815-1816 was the Brig named *Bonny*, which left Malta for Corfu sometime after June 11, 1816.

The Brig seems to have been the most popular sea transport to the Ionian Islands. Other Brigs that eventually made the trip were the *Fany*, *Superbo*, *Virtuoso*, *Xenofonte*, *Ark*, *Nuovo Mondo*, *Prospero*, *SS. Trinità*, *Tartaro*, *Potente*, and *Vesta*.

The second most popular vessels were the Bombard and the Schooner. The first Bombard to make the trip was the *Concezioni*, which left Malta just after May 28, 1817. This was followed by three others: the *S. Michele*, *Superba*, and *Potente*. As for the Schooners, the *Colomba* was the first to make the trip just after April 19, 1819. The *Prospero* and the *Due Fratelli* followed it.

Two Pelagos also traveled the Malta-Corfu route. The first, *Madonna delle Grazie*, made its trip just after April 14, 1819, whilst the second, *San Spiridione*, left Malta shortly after September 27, 1819. The latter vessel might have been recorded as a Trabaccolo on an earlier trip, which had commenced sometime after June 7, 1819.

Three additional trips were made by a Speronara, the *S. Francesco di Paola*, which left Malta around August 17, 1818, a Xebeck, named *Falcone*, which made the trip just after November 24, 1820, and “His Majesty’s Packet,” called the *Lady Mary Pelham*, which departed after July 9, 1829.

### **The first Maltese in Corfu**

The Maltese government established 1819 as the year the first Maltese landed in Corfu and settled there (TVM News, 2019). According to Vassallo (2014), “The origins of this small [Maltese] community began in 1819, when the British governor of the Ionian islands, Sir Thomas Maitland, decided to build the palace of St Michael and St George”. The surviving registers at the Catholic Diocese Archives at the bishopric in the old town of Kerkyra belie this dating since the presence of Maltese in Corfu has been documented since at least 1815.

Several weeks after having set foot on the island, the Maltese were already intermingling with the other inhabitants of Corfu. The first Maltese person one encounters in the Corfu diocese registers is Paolo Pace, son of Silvestro. On April 23, 1815, Pace is recorded in the baptism register as the godfather of Catterina Bianchini. Her father, Luigi, hailed from Bassano del Grappa, Italy, while her mother, Rosa Agorastò, was a native of Corfu. It can be assumed that to qualify as a godfather, one would need to have a close relationship with the parents.

A second Maltese person registered as the godfather of a child born in Corfu was “il Sig. Dr. Giuseppe Schembri,” son of Giacomo. On November 17, 1815, Schembri was registered as the godfather of Maria Antonia Giuseppa Ruggeri, born on April 11, 1815, daughter of Neapolitan Luigi Ruggeri and Angiola di Pietro, from Valdina, Sicily.

Could this Dr. Schembri have been the surgeon Giuseppe Schembri who, after having been in the service of the Knights of the Order of St. John, joined the British services in 1801 and later took part in the Egyptian expedition as part of the British contingent? According to

Schiavone (2009, 1437), Schembri was taken prisoner by the French on the island of Capri in 1810. He died in 1835.

Could it be that, after his release by the French, Schembri ended up in Corfu? If this were so, it would confirm that a small nucleus of Maltese, amongst whom Paolo Pace and Giuseppe Schembri, could have already established itself on the island before the landing in Corfu of the British Governor of Malta, Sir Thomas Maitland, who arrived there in February 1816. Eventually, he brought over a sizeable group of Maltese, quite many of whom, but not all, were involved in the building trade. Whatever the case, apart from the Catholic religion, the possible common link between these two Maltese and the Bassanese, Corfiots, Neapolitians and Sicilians to whose children they acted as godparents must have been the Italian language which, both in Malta, Corfu and the various regions of Italy, was the common language of culture.

Another person, quite possibly of Maltese origin, is also already recorded in Corfu in the summer of 1816. In fact, on July 29, 1816, a safe passage certificate was issued by the British authorities for Antonio Vella to travel safely from the Ionian island to Venice “per affari suoi”. Vella is described as the 23 year old “Signor Antonio Vella da Corfù”, with physical features denoting a “statura ordinaria, capelli castagni, occhi castagni, naso regolare” and a “bocca media”.

Interestingly, one child of Maltese origin—Antonio Francesco Luigi Faruggia—was born in Corfu before the arrival of Maitland in 1816 and at least three years before the first marriages involving Maltese were recorded. Antonio was born on July 28, 1815, and baptized on July 30, 1815. His parents were the Maltese Mattio Faruggia, son of Pasquale, and the Sicilian Anna Costanzo. His only godfather was Antonio Salemi, son of Vittorio, from Messina, in Sicily (*Baptism Register*, vol. 1778-1817, f. 254v.). This would mean that the first Maltese giving birth to their offspring in Corfu must have already been previously married, either in Malta or Sicily.

### **The frequency of Maltese intermarrying**

As more Maltese started to settle down in the Ionian Islands, unlike what used to happen in Sicily or in Tunisia, where the Maltese normally married amongst themselves in the first years of migration, in Corfu, the Maltese marrying foreigners seemed to be a much more common affair. The four recorded marriages between 1818 and 1821 were all contracted with foreigners: between two Maltese men and two Corfiot women, between the Neapolitan Domenico Guarracino and Elisa Suler, who was born in Valletta, the capital of Malta, and between the Maltese Fedele Eriques and the Croatian Antonia Rubinich, who hailed from the town of Ragusa (today’s Dubrovnik).

This trend continued throughout 1822-1823, where all five recorded marriages were intermarriages with foreigners. In fact, in 1822, the 32-year-old Maltese Antonio Arminio (DARMENIA), married the 22-year-old Corfiot, Catterina Villario, the 29-year-old Giuseppe Caravana, “da Malta, di Città Vecchia”, married Domenica Wsio from Lisso, in Crete, while the 42-year-old Maltese Lorenzo Zammit married the 27-year-old Corfiot Elena Mamuri.

In 1823, instead, on June 7, 1823, the 32-year-old Maltese Giuseppe Pavia married the 22-year-old Corfiot Elisabetta Caliga, while on October 19, 1823, the 29-year-old Giuseppe Raimondo, from Catania, Sicily, married the 25-year-old Margarita Borco, daughter of Giovanni Andrea, “da Valleta di Malta”. It was only in 1824 that marriages began to take place between Maltese. Strictly speaking, the first of these four marriages was between a Gozitan youth and a Maltese lass. In fact, on April 27, 1824, the 25-year-old Bernardo Busuttil, “da Nadur, in Malta” married the 14-year-old “Maria, Rosaria, Carmela, Anna, Fortunata, Nunciata Cammilleri,” daughter of Gaetano, “da Malta”. Gozo is the second largest island in the Maltese archipelago, and Nadur is the second biggest town in Gozo.

This was followed by the marriage, on May 15, 1824, of the 33-year-old Maltese Ignazio Policino to the 19-year-old Maltese, Liberata Attard. Then, on May 27, 1824, the 20-year-old Maltese Giovanni Drago married the 19-year-old Maltese Antonia Mamo. The last fully “Maltese” marriage of the year was contracted on July 4, 1824, between the 22-year-old Maltese Paolo Gallia, who married the 19-year-old Maltese Maddalena Dielò.

In 1825, there was a return to mixed marriages. The only three marriages recorded during this year were celebrated on February 5, 1825, between the 26-year-old Bernardo Borrelli from Lucca, Italy, and the 40-year-old Maltese Margarita Cinetti, daughter of Michiel. The second marriage occurred on April 24, 1825, between the 22-year-old Maltese Melchiorre Mallia, son of Lorenzo, and the 14-year-old Corfiot, Elisabetta Gambaro, daughter of Angiolo. Finally, on December 8, 1825, 19-year-old Maltese Giuseppe Galdies, the son of Filippo, married 18-year-old Giuseppa Ongaro, daughter of Mario, from Trapani, Sicily.

The situation was reversed in 1826 since three of the four marriages contracted during this year were between two Maltese. In fact, on August 19, 1826, the 26-year-old Maltese Giovanni Alloc, son of Giuseppe, married the 17-year-old Maltese Caterina Pensa, daughter of Michiel; on September 23, 1826, the 37-year-old Maltese, Nicola Sagona, son of Franco, married the 46-year-old Maltese, Maria Giordano, daughter of Ignazio; and, on November 25, 1826, the 24-year-old Giovanni Camellieri, son of Giuseppe, married the 17-year-old Maltese Euphemia Cassar, daughter of Michiel. The only marriage between a Maltese and a foreigner during this year was that of September 3, 1826, between the non-Catholic, probably Anglican, Tommaso Greenwood, 22-year-old son of Giacomo, “nato in Malta”, and the 24-year-old born in Lisbon, Portugal, Carlotta Zilkovich, daughter of Rosario.

The three marriages celebrated in 1827 saw the 29-year-old Maltese Vincenzo Grech, son of Franco, marry the 20-year-old Maltese, Vincenza Dimech, daughter of Giovan Battista on January 21, 1827; the 22-year-old Maltese Lorenzo Boffa, son of Pietro, marry the 16-year-old Maltese “Rosaria, Carmela, Vicenza, Orsola, Antonia, Agostina Camillieri”, daughter of Gaetano on September 1, 1827; and finally the 29-year-old Angiolo Canali, son of Michiel from the island of Elba, in Italy, marrying the 22-year-old Maltese Rosa Chircop, daughter of Michiele on November 18, 1827.

In 1828, three couples were composed entirely of Maltese. On May 20, 1828, the 26-year-old Maltese, Francesco Borci (BORG), son of Giuseppe, married the 17-year-old Maltese Carmella Coschiri, daughter of Vincenzo. Two months later, on July 20, 1828, the 32-year-old Maltese, Felice Schembri, son of Salvatore, married the 19-year-old Maltese Maria Attart, daughter of Antonio while, on October 4, 1828, it was the turn of the 28-year-old Maltese, Michiel Zara, son of Angelo, to marry the 17-year-old Maltese Modestia Cassar, daughter of Michiel. The two 1828 mixed marriages involved the 30-year-old Sicilian Pasquale Pascariello, son of Vito who, on January 26, 1828, married the 18-year-old Maltese Vittoria Fenice, daughter of Paolo, and the 32-year-old Giuseppe Imbimbo from Avellino, in Italy, son of Nicolò, who married the 17-year-old Maltese, Giovanna Martorano, daughter of Pietro, on August 30, 1828.

Four of the five marriages registered in 1829 were contracted between two Maltese. On February 28, 1829, the 23-year-old Maltese Giovanni Zamut, son of Agostino, married the 17-year-old Maltese Maria Brada, daughter of Giuseppe. On May 23, 1829, the 48-year-old Maltese Clemente Spiteri, son of Giuseppe, married the 21-year-old Maltese Rosa di Bono, daughter of Giovanni. Then, on November 6, 1829, the 21-year-old Antonio Pace, son of Vincenzo, married the 17-year-old Maria Benedetti, daughter of Francesco. The couple were “ambi da Malta”. Finally, on November 6, 1829, the 21-year-old Maltese Francesco Cassar, son of Michele, married the 16-year-old Carmella Zamit, daughter of Giuseppe, likewise Maltese.

The only marriage that involved a non-Maltese, that of September 6, 1829, contains a quite interesting and unique feature since, for the first time, a member of a Maltese noble

family is mentioned. In fact, the bridegroom is referred to as the “nobil Sig. Gaetano, Fortunato, Pietro, Giorgio Valla figlio del nob. Sig. Filippo d’anni 22 compiuti da Malta”. The nobleman Gaetano Valla from Malta married the “Nobil Sigr. Angelica Machiedo figlia del Nobil Sig. Spiridion d’anni 23 compiuti”, from Corfu. The social standing of the bride and bridegroom is further highlighted through the presence of two of the three witnesses, who were also members of the nobility. Apart from the Sicilian Pasquale Maria Benza, the other two witnesses were Corfiots, “il nobile Sig. Spiridion Varlam da questa Città” and his wife, “la Nobil. Sigr. Marietta Pazvet in Varlam da questa Città”.

The year 1830 witnessed the highest number of marriages involving Maltese. Four of these marriages were contracted between Maltese couples, while the other four involved three Sicilian and one Genoese partner. On January 10, 1830, 25-year-old Giuseppe Delia, son of Angiolo, married the 20-year-old Gaitana Mamo, daughter of Agustin. Both were from Malta. On September 11, 1830, the 24-year-old Maltese, Luigi Chircop, son of Giovanni, married the 17-year-old Maltese, Maria Pulicino, daughter of Paolo; on September 23, 1830, the 23-year-old Maltese, Niccolò Suriaca, son of Stefano, married the 15-year-old Maltese, Sapienza Farugia, daughter of Salvatore and, finally, on December 3, 1830, the 23-year-old Maltese, Michiele Azzopardi, son of Alessandro, married the 18-year-old Maltese, Maria Anna Savona, daughter of Nicola.

With regards to the 1830 mixed marriages, on January 3, 1830, 16-year-old Maltese Anna Schembri, daughter of Michiel, married the 44-year-old from Messina, Sicily, Girolamo Gioffrida, son of Girolamo; on January 30, 1830, the 23-year-old Maltese Giuseppe Cammillieri, son of Gaitano, married the 16-year-old from Genova, Italy, Teresa Musanti, daughter of Giuseppe; on April 25, 1830, the 22-year-old Sicilian Pietro Ungaro, son of Mario, married the 18-year-old Maltese, Angiola Chiolo, daughter of Carmine and on December 3, 1830, the 26-year-old Maltese, Giuseppe De Bono, son of Angiolo, married the 16-year-old girl from Messina, Sicily, Catterina Trussar, daughter of Giuseppe.

Nineteen of these forty marriages contracted in Corfu during 1818-1830 were between a Maltese and a foreigner. If we were to compare with what happened with the first wave of Maltese migrants in the Sicilian towns (Cassola 2013; 2018; 2022) or in Tunisian coastal towns (Cassola 2020) to which the Maltese migrated, one can conclude that the rate of transnational intermarriages in Corfu was much higher than in other parts of the Mediterranean to which the Maltese migrated.

The provenance of the foreign partners married by Maltese was even more varied than that usually encountered in Sicily or in Tunisian coastal towns, where the vast majority came from Southern Italy, in particular from Naples downwards. In Corfu, apart from the seven Corfiots who married Maltese, one comes across three foreign wives, respectively from Lisbon, in Portugal, from Ragusa, in Croatia, and from Lissos, in Crete.

Even with regards to “Italian” partners, the geographical distribution is quite varied: a Ligurian from Genova, two Tuscans, respectively from Lucca and the island of Elba, and a 32-year-old husband from Avellino, in the region of Campania. Of course, the island of Sicily, as in all other places where Maltese migrated to, plays the lion’s part, with two partners generically defined as “Siciliani”, two from Messina, one from Catania and another one from Trapani.

### **The foreign parents of Corfu-born Maltese babies**

Between 1815-1828, there were 145 babies born in Corfu from couples of whom one component, at least, was Maltese. Two of these babies were actually twins. In 105 of these births, both parents were Maltese, 26 saw a foreign mother marry a Maltese father, whilst in 14 cases, it was 14 fathers who had a Maltese female partner.

The foreign mothers who married Maltese men came from five distinct places: Corfu, Zante, Lissa, Messina, Trapani and other non specified areas in Sicily. On the other hand, the

foreign male partners of Maltese mothers, despite numbering nearly half the foreign mothers partnering Maltese men, were geographically much more widely spread. In fact, they came from Messina, Palermo, and other unnamed parts of Sicily, Napoli and Genova, in Italy, Ireland, Corfu, Toulon, in France, Mindrizot, in Switzerland, and Gimera, possibly Guimerà, in Catalunya.

The foreign man who fathered Maltese children was Giuseppe Cacopardo, from Messina, who had two daughters, Giovanna and Rosaria, from his Maltese wife Maria Zamit. He was also godfather to Giovanni Psaila, baptized on December 27, 1819, son of Francesco and Veneranda Psaila. The Genoese Federico Zempi first fathered Francesca in 1821, with his Maltese wife, Catterina Marceca, and then Salvatore Cesare, in 1824.

The Valletta-born wife of the son of the Consul of the Grand Duke of Tuscany in Corfu, Domenico Guarracino from Napoli, whose name was Isabella Elisa Sutter, first gave birth to Federico on August 19, 1819, and then to Elisa Emilia on February 22, 1824.

The other fathers of Italian provenance were Giovanni Giambruno, from Palermo, whose Maltese wife Flavia Febraro, daughter of Paolo, gave birth to Carlo Antonio, born on November 6, 1816, and the Sicilian Pasquale Pascariello, whose Maltese wife Vittoria Fenice gave birth to Francesco on November 5, 1828.

As for the non-Maltese fathers who did not come from Italy, the Irishman Abraham Reed fathered two children, Antonio (August 1820) and Maria (December 1824), with his Maltese wife Camella Izzo. The Corfiot Giovanni Garelli, who had married the Maltese Vincenza Pazzi, was the father to Antonio in August 1820, while the Swiss Giuseppe Brada, husband of the Maltese Rosa Zammit, fathered Margarita Concetta in August 1824.

The last two non-Italian foreigners who fathered Maltese children were Giovanni Teriff, possibly from Catalunya, whose Maltese wife Anna Podestà gave birth to Maria Teresa Giuseppa in 1817, and the Frenchman from Toulon, Francesco Bertan, whose Maltese wife, Maria German, gave birth to Emanuel Antonio in September 1826.

With regards to foreign women who gave birth to children partnered by a Maltese father one can note that, as already mentioned, the Sicilian Anna Costanzo gave birth to the first recorded Maltese child, Antonio, Francesco, Luigi Faruggia, on July 28, 1815, i.e., seven months before Commissioner Maitland set foot on the island, accompanied by those who were considered to be the first Maltese immigrants. On the other hand, Giovanna Zoja from Zante was undoubtedly the most prolific of the foreign wives of Maltese men. In fact, she gave her husband, Francesco Zeraffa, four children in an eight-year period, three boys and one girl. The girl, Rosa Marianna, was born in April 1818, whilst Filippo Giovanni was born in June 1819, Antonio Spiridione in August 1823, and Giovanni, Simone, and Saverio in November 1826.

The Corfiot Catterina Villario, who had married the Maltese Antonio Arminio on January 27, 1822, also gave birth to four siblings. These were Anna Maria Teresa Orsola, born on January 1, 1823; Vincenza Teresa, born on October 18, 1824; Francesco Fortunato Simon Gioachino Giuseppe Giovanni, born April 25, 1826; and Perina Adelaide, born on April 4, 1828. Another Corfiot, Elena Bonomo, had married the Maltese Lorenzo Pavia on January 20, 1821. Together, they had three siblings: Giovanna Gioacchina, born on May 10, 1822; Giuseppe Paolo Napoleone, born on October 10, 1824; and Rosa, born on June 27, 1827.

Four foreign wives bore two children during the period researched. The Corfiot Elisabetta Caligà, who had married the Maltese Giuseppe Pavia on June 7, 1823, gave birth to Giovanni, born on May 18, 1824, and to Rosa Francesca, born on May 5, 1827 while the Messinese Giuseppa Costantino, wife of the Maltese Gregorio Missiotto (Mifsut), gave birth to Giuseppe, on April 22, 1818, and Lugrezia, on June 6, 1822.

The Sicilian Carmela Norcia, wife of the Maltese Salvatore Grech, gave birth to Ferdinando, Leopoldo on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1819 and to Carlo, on September 16, 1823 while the

Messinese Litteria Deodato, who was married to the Maltese Gioachino Enriques, gave birth to Teresa Elisabetta on December 31, 1821, and to Antonino Giulio Francesco Luigi Enrico, on April 14, 1823. The Corfiot Costantina Rocco, who had married the Maltese Giuseppe Zenid on March 1, 1818, first gave birth to Marco (unknown date of birth, but baptized on March 23, 1823) and then to Elisabetta, born on December 12, 1827.

As regards parents of an only child, Francesco Filippo Caravana, born on October 9, 1823, was the son of Domenica Usio, from Lissa, and of the Maltese Giuseppe Caravana; Giovanni Francesco Galdies, born on September 25, 1826, was the son of the Trapanese Giuseppa Ongaro, wife of the Maltese Giuseppe Galdies, whom she had married on December 8, 1825, while Lorenzo Giuseppe Alberto Mallia, born on April 26, 1827, was the son of the Corfiot Elisabetta Gambaxa, wife of the Maltese Melchiore Mallia.

The final two foreign women who gave birth to Maltese children were the Messinese Angiula Mazza, wife of the Maltese Giuseppe Coschieri, who gave birth to Catterina, born on March 7, 1828; and the “oriunda dall’Irlanda”, Anna Swift, who gave birth to the child of an unknown father, Marianna, on February 15, 1822.

## Conclusion

The documentation available at both the State Archives and the Catholic Diocese in Corfu from the 1815-1830 period not only identifies the first Maltese settlers on the Ionian Island but also reveals that a substantial number of the latter were regularly in contact with the local population, as well as with immigrants coming from other parts of Europe, in particular the Mediterranean.

This documentation is also of interest to scholars interested in onomastics, as it allows identification of Maltese surnames present on the island during this period, some of which have never been recorded in Malta itself. It is my intention to eventually study them and to compare them with the surnames of the many Maltese present in Sicily and in Tunisia during the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, thus enabling the creation of a small Maltese onomastic geo-map of the Mediterranean, beyond Malta. But that is the beginning of another story.

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