MALTESE HISTORY

A. The Early Years of the Order of St John in Malta

Form 3
1. The loss of Rhodes
The Grand Master L’Isle Adam and the Knights left Rhodes on 1st January 1523 and sailed to Cività Vecchia in the Papal States. Pope Clement VII gave them Viterbo as a temporary home. During the next six years, the Knights searched for a new base.

2. The agreement between Emperor Charles V and the Knights over Malta
In 1524 Charles V (Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain and Sicily) offered the Knights the Maltese Islands. If taken by the Turks, it could be used as a base for an attack upon Sicily. Malta was poorly defended and its fortifications were old and in need of repair. The population was too large (20,000) for its small size. To turn Malta into a strong base like Rhodes would cost the Order a lot of money. In 1524 a Commission of three Knights came to Malta and concluded that ‘residence in Malta would be extremely disagreeable, if not insupportable, particularly in summer.’ For many Knights, the recapture of Rhodes was the best solution. The Grand Master traveled across Europe to collect money and solders for an attack on Rhodes. But after some years the Knights had to abandon the project. The Grand Master knew that if the Knights were not given a new base quickly, the Order could easily break up.

Charles insisted that with Malta the Knights defend also the fortress of Tripoli. The Knights saw Tripoli as an added burden to their problems. Tripoli was in North Africa surrounded by a Muslim population. In the end the Order had to accept the conditions laid down by the Emperor. In 1530, Malta and Tripoli were given in fief to the Order of St John. The Knights were bound to give a falcon every year to the Viceroy of Sicily. The Knights were not to help countries at war with the King of Spain and Sicily. If the Knights left the Maltese Islands, these were to be handed back to Charles’s successors. The leaders of Maltese did not have any say in the negotiations between the Emperor and the Knights. The Maltese leaders protested by sending a petition to the Emperor. But it was all in vain.

3. The Knights arrive in Malta
In October 1530 the Grand Master and most of the Knights arrived in Malta in three galleys and went to stay in Birgu. At the city gates of Mdina Grand Master L’Isle Adam promised to respect and uphold all the rights and privileges of the Maltese. He was then given the symbolic keys to the city. Some sections of the Maltese were divided about the Knights’ arrival. The people of Birgu, made up of artisans, merchants and sailors, quickly grasped the advantages and welcomed the Knights. The people of Mdina, made up mostly of nobles, saw the Knights as a threat to power and influence which they had over the peasants. Within a few months, the università of Mdina (a sort of local council) lost much of its authority. Many decisions were now taken by the Grand Master and the Knights at Birgu. The Maltese soon came to notice that the Grand Master and the Knights became the new masters of the islands.
1. Draw the map as follows: Lands of Charles V (in red); Ottoman Empire (in green) (2)
2. Before the Order came to Malta, it had its base in ________________________________ (1)
3. How did the Order lose that base in 1522? ___________________________________________________________________________ (2)
4. Who was head of the Order at that time? __________________________________________ (1)
5. How did Pope Clement VII and Emperor Charles V help the Order of St John in the 1520’s?
   (a) ___________________________________________________________________________ (1)
   (b) ___________________________________________________________________________ (1)
6. Who was charged with the local government of the Maltese islands before 1530? ___________________________________________________________________________ (2)
7. What opinion did the Knights have of the Maltese Islands in 1530? ___________________________________________________________________________ (2)
8. Why did the Knights make plan to return to Rhodes? _____________________________________ ______________________________________________________________________________________________ (1)
9. List two conditions made by Charles V when he granted Malta to the Knights.
   (a) ___________________________________________________________________________ (1)
   (b) ___________________________________________________________________________ (1)
10. Why did the Knights make their headquarters at Birgu and not at Mdina? ________________________________ (1)
11. Why did the people of Birgu welcome the Knights in 1530? ___________________________________________________________________________ (2)
12. Why were the nobles of Mdina not happy with the coming of the Knights? ___________________________________________________________________________ (1)
1. The Knights at Birgu
At first the Knights wished to stay in Malta for a short time. They did not want to spend too much money on fortifications and other buildings. The Knights simply turned the Castellan\'s house in Fort St Angelo into a palace for the Grand Master.

After a few years in Malta they built an infirmary (hospital) and several auberges (inns) according to the languages spoken by the Knights. The Knights started to strengthen the fortifications of the Grand Harbour. The best way to use Mount Sciberras was to build a new fortress on that peninsula. L\’Isle Adam supported the plan but the Order did not have enough money for such a project.

In 1534 Grand Master L\’Isle Adam died. He held the Order united when it was in search for a new base. The next important Grand Master was Juan d\’Homedes (1536-1553). In 1541 the Order brought the military engineer Antonio Ferramilino who dug a water-ditch to cut off St Angelo from Birgu.

2. The Crisis of 1551
In July 1551 a Turkish fleet under the command of the Turkish corsair Dragut anchored at Marsamxett Harbour and landed a force of 10,000 men. The Turks found Birgu and St Angelo too strong. So they turned their attack against Mdina instead, looting and burning the countryside on the way. The Knight in charge of Mdina, Fra Villeganion advised the Maltese to take refuge in the town and to man the walls of the city. The Turks thought the garrison was too strong to risk a long siege. Meanwhile, a small Christian fleet appeared off Malta and attacked the Moslem galleys. The Turks lifted the siege and turned their attack against the Citadel of Gozo. The Citadel surrendered to the Turks after a few days. The Turks took about 5,000 Gozitans into slavery. For about 150 years Gozo remained mainly depopulated (empty of people). The Turks then left the islands and took the fortress of Tripoli.

3. A new strategic plan after 1551
After the disasters of 1551 a commission was set up, made up of the engineers Pietro Pardo and Leone Strozzi. They proposed the building of a fortified town on Mount Sciberras and to move the Order\’s Convent (headquarters) from Birgu to the new city. Fort St Elmo and Fort St Michael were started in 1552. But no concrete plans were made to start building a new town on Mount Sciberras. Grand Master La Sengle (1553-37) built walls around Senglea which was already developing into another town. Senglea helped reduce the overcrowded population of Birgu.
1. Identify the town shown in the map of 1551. __________________________________________________ (1)
2. Name the other two towns that developed next to it. __________________________________________________ (2)
3. Name the fort shown in the map. ___________________________________________________ (1)
4. Why did Antonio Ferramololin come to Malta? ___________________________________________________ (1)
5. How did Pietro Pardo and Leone Strozzi intend to strengthen the defences of Grand Harbour? ___________________________________________________ (2)
6. Explain briefly the connections between Dragut and Malta in 1551 and in 1565.
   (a) 1551: ______________________________________________________________________ (2)
   (b) 1565: ______________________________________________________________________ (2)
7. What long-term effect did the attack on Gozo have upon that island? _______________________________ (1)
8. Name two important decisions taken by the Knights in Malta in 1530 and in 1552 respectively.
   (a) 1530: ______________________________________________________________________ (1)
   (b) 1552: ______________________________________________________________________ (1)
9. Choose the correct dates for these Grandmasters who ruled in Malta before the Great Siege: (3)
    (1530-1534) (1534-1535) (1535-1536) (1536-1553) (1553-1557) (1557-1568)
    (a) L’Isle Adam __________  (b) Juan D’Homedes __________  (c) Claude La Sengle __________
10. Write brief captions for sources A, B and C. __________________________________________________________________________ (3)

(Total marks = 20)
1. La Valette elected Grand Master in 1557
There was one man of vision among the leaders of the Order. Jean de La Valette was one of the few Knights who strongly opposed moving the Order to Rhodes. In 1557, having served the Order as Governor of Tripoli and Captain-General of the galleys, La Valette was elected Grand Master. His first plan as Grand Master was to build the new fortified town on Mount Sciberras. The military engineer Bartolomeo Genga came to Malta but died before work was started. In 1562 another engineer Baldassare Lanci came to Malta. At this decisive moment the Knights came to know that the Turks were planning an attack against Malta. Preparations for the siege thus became more urgent. The plans for a new town had to be postponed for the a later date.

2. Muslim Corsairs in the Mediterranean
Piracy had long been a profession on the Barbary coast of North Africa. In the 1500s this business became highly organized by Khair ad-Din Barbarossa and Turghud Reis (Dragut). Sultan Suleiman made Barbarossa Admiral of the Turkish fleet. Barbarossa attacked the coast of Sicily, Italy and Spain. When Barbarossa Dragut became chief of the Barbary corsairs. Dragut raided Malta and Gozo seven times between 1547 and 1554. By the year 1560 the Christians were left with only two strongholds: the Spanish fortress of La Goulette in North Africa and the island of Malta.

3. Turks and Knights prepare for the Great Siege of 1565
In 1564 reports reached the La Valette that a great Turkish fleet was being prepared for an attack on the Maltese Islands. Sultan Suleiman gave the command of the Ottoman army to General Mustafà Pasha and the Ottoman fleet to Admiral Piali Pasha. La Valette made preparations to defend Malta against the Turkish attack. Don García de Toledo, the Viceroy of Sicily, visited Malta and promised to send help. La Valette could count upon the fortresses of St Elmo and St Michael and the fortified towns of Birgu, Senglea, Mdina and the Citadel of Gozo. The defenders amounted to about 9,000 men, made up of Knights, Maltese, and foreign soldiers (Sicilians, Italians and Spaniards). All the cavalry (about 900 men) was kept at Mdina to defend the old town in case this was attacked by the Turks.
Unit A.3 - Events leading to the Great Siege of 1565

1. Write a short caption for above sources A to D:
   (A) ____________________________ (B) ________________________________
   (C) ____________________________ (D) ________________________________ (4)

2. Write true or false to these statements about La Valette.
   (a) La Valette was a man of great vision and leadership. ____________________
   (b) La Valette was elected Grandmaster after La Sengle. ____________________
   (c) La Valette led the Order and the Maltese during the Great Siege. ____________
   (d) La Valette started building a new city on Mount Sciberras in 1562. ____________ (2)

3. Who were these people mentioned in the text:
   (a) Suleiman the Magnificent was ____________________________________________
   (b) Bartolomeo Genga was __________________________________________________
   (c) Baldassare Lanci was ____________________________________________________
   (d) Khair ad-Din Barbarossa was _____________________________________________
   (e) Turgud Reis alias Dragut was _____________________________________________
   (f) Mustafa Pasha was _______________________________________________________
   (g) Piali Pasha was _________________________________________________________
   (h) Don Garcia de Toledo was ________________________________________________ (8)

4. What troubles were the Barbary States causing the Knights and the Christians states in the Mediterranean?
   __________________________________________________________________________ (1)

5. Why were the years 1560-1565 years of fear and uncertainty for the Maltese and the Knights?
   __________________________________________________________________________ (1)

6. Name the four fortified strongholds of the Knights on the eve of the Great Siege of 1565?
   __________________________________________________________________________ (2)

7. Which, do you think, was the strongest stronghold? Give a reason for your answer.
   __________________________________________________________________________ (2)

(Total marks = 20)
Look at these sources and then answer all the questions.

1. Which of the above is not a primary source? ________________________________________ (1)

2. Match these captions with the above sources A to D. (4)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>The arrival of the Gran Soccorso (Great Relief).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii</td>
<td>The Turkish camp at Marsa during the Great Siege.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii</td>
<td>La Valette leading the Knights during the Siege.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv</td>
<td>A canon used by the Turks during the Great Siege.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Which of these fighting man do you think took part in the Great Siege of Malta of 1565 (Spanish, French, Sicilian, English, Greek soldiers, the Maltese, Knights, Turks, Berber corsairs, Muslim slaves). Underline up to six correct answers. (3)

4. Give the months when the Great Siege started and ended. It started on 18th __________ and ended on 8th __________ 1565. (2)

5. Most of the fighting during the Great Siege took place at (Mdina, Birgu, Senglea, Gozo, Valletta, Marsa, Grand Harbour, Bormla, Fort St Elmo, Fort St Angelo, Fort St Michael). Underline up to six correct answers. (3)

6. (a) Which fort was captured by the Turks during the Siege? ____________________________ (1)
    (b) What great loss did the Turks suffer while trying to win this fort? ________________________________________________________________________________________________ (1)

7. Give two reasons why the Turks lost the Great Siege?
    (a) ________________________________________________________________________________________________ (2)
    (b) ________________________________________________________________________________________________ (2)

8. Give two reasons why the Knights and the Maltese won the Great Siege.
    (a) ________________________________________________________________________________________________ (2)
    (b) ________________________________________________________________________________________________ (2)

(Total marks = 20)
1. The immediate (short-term) effects of the Great Siege
The Great Siege of Malta was an important battle in the war between the Christian and Muslim powers in the Mediterranean. Had the Turks won, Malta would have fallen under the Ottomans. The Turks could have used Malta to attack Sicily and Southern Italy. It would have been the end for the Order of St John. For Malta, the victory of 1565 marks the beginning of her modern history.

La Valette came to be seen by the Maltese and by the Knights as their hero and saviour. He received praise and gifts from foreign kings and princes. **Philip II of Spain** gave him a jeweled sword and poniard. The Great Siege remained stuck in the mind of the Maltese for many years. The Turkish threat had served to unite the Maltese with the Knights. The victory of 1565 made the Maltese loyal subjects of the Knights.

During the Siege, the Turks looted and damaged much of the villages and the countryside. There was poverty and hardship amongst the people for some years after the Siege. About 7,000 Maltese and half the Knights had been killed in the fighting. The Order had lost Knights, weapons and money. The existing fortifications were in ruins and the cost to repair them was very high. Notwithstanding all this, La Valette still wanted to make Malta the permanent home of the Order and to build a new city on Mount Sciberras.

2. The long-term results of the Great Siege: the building of Valletta
La Valette asked Pope Pius V to send a military engineer (Francesco Laparelli) to plan the building of the new town. On 28th March 1566 La Valette laid the foundation stone of the new city, named Valletta in his memory. The streets were planned on a grid pattern. It was to be surrounded by a continuous line of fortifications. The new city gave work to a large number of Maltese. The **Officio delle Case** issued regulations on how the building had to be. In 1571 Grand Master del Monte moved the Convent from Vittoriosa (the new name given to Birgu after the Siege) to Valletta. When Laparelli left Malta, the Maltese architect Girolamo Cassar (1520-88) took over and continued the work.

Girolamo Cassar built the Grand Master’s palace, seven **auberges** (inns) for the Knights, the Holy Infirmary (Hospital), the Conventual Church of St John, two armouries, a bakery and a court of justice (the Castellania). Soon two different cultural centres developed: **Rabat-Mdina** as the centre of the village people, Valletta and the Three Cities (Vittoriosa, Senglea and Bormla) as the centre of the towns people. The Three Cities and the lower districts of Valletta served for the poor houses of the lower classes. The upper districts of Valletta were kept for the Knights and the Maltese upper classes. Valletta continued to develop in the 17th century. Its streets became packed with all sorts of people: Knights, foreigners, merchants, peasants, sailors and Muslim slaves.

3. A glance look at the rule of the Knights
All these changes were the long-term results of the victory of 1565 against the Turks.

The Knights:
- improved the defense of the islands by building more fortifications.
- continued the holy war against the Turks by keeping a fleet of galleys, an arsenal, a body of fighting men and hundreds of slave rowers.
- Brought European building styles (Baroque) in churches, hospitals, palaces, villas, public gardens and new towns.
- set up new trades and industries, such as corsairing, the dockyard and cotton.
- Made Valletta an international city for trade, culture and piracy. Many foreigners came to live, work and marry in Malta.

This map is of the 1500s, 1600s or 1700s? __________

Name the places shown with letters A to E.

__________________________

__________________________
1. Source A is an 18\textsuperscript{th} century map of the towns of ______________ and ______________ (2)

2. The map is a PRIMARY/SECONDARY source because ______________________________________________________________________ (2)

3. Identify two characteristic features about the building of Valletta.
   ____________________________________________________________________________ (1)
   ____________________________________________________________________________ (1)

4. Who helped the Knights built the new city of Valletta? What kind of help did he give?
   ____________________________________________________________________________ (2)

5. Name three important buildings built Girolamo Cassar in Valletta.
   ____________________________________________________________________________ (3)

6. Identify one characteristic feature about the building of Floriana.
   ____________________________________________________________________________ (1)

7. (a) Name three Grandmasters besides La Valette that helped to beautify Valletta in the 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} centuries. Name also the project which each of one of them undertook.
   ____________________________________________________________________________ (2)
   ____________________________________________________________________________ (2)
   ____________________________________________________________________________ (2)

8. Mention one short-term and one long-term result of the Great Siege.
   (a) ____________________________________________________________________________ (1)
   (b) ____________________________________________________________________________ (1)

(Total marks = 20)
Unit A.6 – SEC Source Question on the Early Years of the Order in Malta

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

‘The island has no other fortress except a small castle which was in ruins due to its antiquity, and which lay opposite the entrance of the Grand Harbour. Although the Castle was quite high it was nevertheless easy to mine and take, especially from the side of the nearby Borgo, which consisted of a few mariners’ house. Although (the Castle) could, at great expense, be fairly easily cut off it would still remain subject to batteries from various parts. It had a good number of cisterns and wells of brackish water. Inside there were about forty small dwellings and the quarters of the Castellan were not very spacious, except for one hall. Its artillery consisted of one small cannon, two falconets and a few iron mortars, all in a very bad state.

The island has two big harbours which can take two full-equipped fleets. The one where the Castle lies is, however, larger than the other. Although both harbours were exposed to the gregale, they had excellent bottom and contained many large inlets which made them most secure berthing-places. They were however not safe from all sides. A peninsula of the same type of rock as the rest of the island separates these two harbours; the tongue of land could, with great expense and over a long period of time, prove most suitable for the building of a strong fort to protect both entrances.’

1.1 Name the Castle referred to in the extract. __________________________________________ (1)

1.2 Why did the Order’s Commission come to Malta in 1524?
________________________________________________________________________ (2)

1.3 What are falconets and mortars? ______________________________________________ (2)

1.4 The Commission refers to this tongue of land. What is its modern name?
________________________________________________________________________ (1)

1.5 At the end of the extract, there is reference to the building of a strong fort to protect both entrances.

1.5.1 Was this fort ever built or not? YES or NO (1)

1.5.2 If yes, which part of the peninsula was developed first?
________________________________________________________________________ (1)

1.5.3 If yes, what was the name of this first development? ____________________________ (1)

1.6.1 Do you consider the nearby Borgo to have been already fortified? YES or NO (1)

1.6.2 If yes, how extensive were the fortifications? If no, who started the process of fortifications and why?
________________________________________________________________________ (1,2)

1.6 The commission remarks that the Castle could still remain subject to batteries from various parts. Name three of these ‘various parts’.
________________________________________________________________________ (3)

1.7 Was the report of the Commission positive or negative regarding the state of the Maltese Islands at that time? Give two reasons for your answer.
________________________________________________________________________ (1,2)

1.8 Is the above source PRIMARY or SECONDARY? (1)

(Total 20 marks)
Read carefully the following essay titles and answer any ONE in about 200 to 300 words. Essay questions carry 20 marks each.

SEC PAPER 2A

On the early years of the Order in Malta

1. What advantages and what disadvantages did the Maltese Islands present to the Order in 1530? How do we know this?

2. Why were the Turks successful in their raid on the Maltese Islands in 1551 but unsuccessful in their attempt to capture Malta in 1565?

3. The Great Siege of 1565 is reckoned to have been an important historical landmark. Assess its importance in relation to: (a) Malta and (b) Europe. (SEC 1995)

4. Why did the Turks attack Malta in 1565 and with what results? (SEC 2012)

5. Account for the coming of the Order in Malta and the first thirty five years of their rule. (Annual Paper 2009)

SEC PAPER 2B

On the early years of the Order in Malta

1. Malta was officially handed over to the Order of St John in 1530. Say:
(a) Why, whether it liked it or not, the Order had to accept the offer of Malta. (5)
(b) What conditions were imposed upon the Order by Emperor Charles V? (5)
(c) What advantages Malta and Gozo offered to the Order? (5)
(d) What disadvantages were the Maltese Islands to the Order? (5) (SEC 1997)

2. Initially, the Knights of St John were not in favour of accepting Malta but they eventually did so.
(a) Why did they finally accept the islands? (4)
(b) Why did they settle in Birgu and not in Mdina? (4)
(c) How did they organise themselves in Birgu and how was it fortified? (4)
(d) What part did Fort St Angelo play in the Order’s settling in? (4)
(e) Did the Order have financial problems to hinder them in these first years? (4) (SEC 1998)

3. One of the main results of the Great Siege was the immediate start of the building of Valletta.
(a) Which were the other effects and results of the Siege? (7)
(b) Why was it possible to start building Valletta in 1566? (7)
(c) Which were the main regulations governing the building of this new city? (6) (SEC 1998)

4. The Great Siege of 1565 was the last great Turkish threat to Malta. Explain with reference to:
(a) Dragut’s threat to Malta before 1565 (6)
(b) the importance of St Elmo during the Great Siege (6)
(c) why the Turks were defeated in 1565. (8) (SEC 2012)