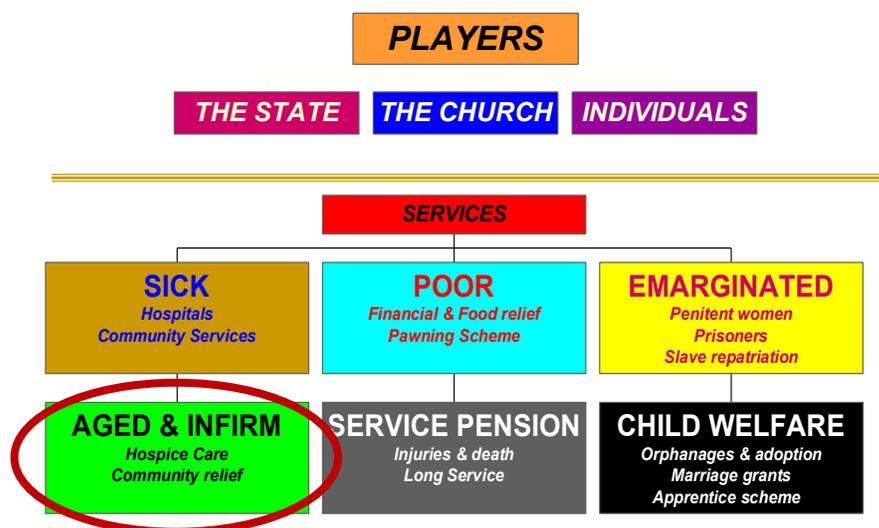


Hospice care in the concept of the social services during the Hospitaller Period

Prof. C. Savona-Ventura

- *Welfare State* during the Hospitaller Period was multifaceted and comprehensive covering a myriad of services.
- A number of players were involved.



Hospice Services

- Care of the needy sick & elderly



Community care



Institutional care

Community care

- *Extended Family Support*



Community care

■ Social service support

- 1592-3: The *Universita`* provided financial assistance to the needy living in Mdina, Rabat, Dingli, Naxxar, Gharghur, Balzan, Attard, Mosta & B'kara - lists include the aged & infirm, decrepit old women.
- *Regolamento per le Povere Inferme di Malta* (1725)
 - System supervised by two Commissioners of the Sick; poor assisted by four *Pitanziere*. Provided daily alms/food, besides distribution of old sheets/coverlets, and bandages/crutches to cripples. 5 physicians + 5 surgeons visited the sick.
 - c.1776: *Sacra Infermeria* dispensed bread & soup to the poor and infirm of the city. Elderly men in need were provided with perpetual beds (c.50) or with financial assistance.

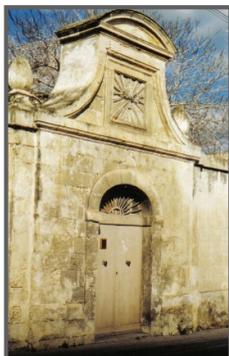


Institutional care *Hospitals in Malta & Gozo: 1798*

- *Sacra Infermeria* - Hospital for males 544 beds; av. patients 400/month; est.1575
- *Casetta delle donne*. 200 beds for women; est.1659
- *Santo Spirito Hospital*: 40 beds; est.<1372
- *Suara Hospital* (Rabat): 80 beds; founded 1667
- *St. Joseph Hospital* (Zebbug) : 15 beds, convalescing; founded 1778
- *Floriana Hospice*. 280 beds for chronic infirm; est. 1732
- * *Quarantine Hospital* (Manoel Is.)
- *St. John's Hospital*: 20 male beds; founded 1719; opened 1729. Staffed by two physicians and a surgeon.
- *St. Julian's Hospital*: 50 female beds; est.1783; closed in 1838 → Gozo Seminary

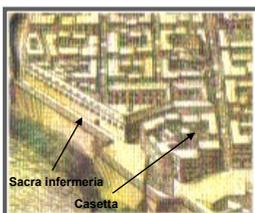
Report by Dr. Vincenzo Caruana prepared for the French Commission of Government: 6 July 1798

Santo Spirito hospice



- *Hospice of St. Francis* set up by King Frederick IV before 1347. Originally managed by the Franciscan Order but in 1433 management transferred to local government [*Universita'*]. In 1467, changed name to *Santo Spirito Hospice*.
- In 1433 the hospice were known to cater for persons too old, poor, or sick to care for themselves. Also resident paupers (*infirmorum et pauperum/ abitanti poveri*) ~8 inhabitants
- *Santo Spirito Hospice* accounts 1494-1548 expenses covered board, lodging, clothing, care in illness, and burial. After 1550, hospice still supported paupers but no board apparently given.
 - *Also Hospital of St. Peter* in Mdina for women [closed down 1418].
 - *Hospital of St. Julian* in Gozo for women set up by bequest of Francesco Bonnici in 1454. Was in very poor state when Mgr. Pietro Duzina visited in 1575.

Casetta delle Donne in Malta



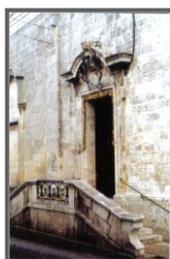
- 1625: Catherine Scapi set apart a small house in Valletta, known as Santa Maria delle Scala for the care of poor infirm women, the house eventually being moved to different premises.
 - This small hospital was closed down after the foundress died in 1655.
- April 1659: The *Casetta delle Donne* was established in Valletta by Grandmaster Martin de Redin.
 - Management: under the direction of the Governess who resided in the institution.
 - Medical care: two physicians and two surgeons. A number of female nurses and a midwife were employed in the hospital serving various functions.
 - Alterations to the building were carried out in the early decades of the eighteenth century so that by 1727 the bed complement was increased to two hundred, each having a canopy for privacy.
 - The hospital's conditions deteriorated in the late eighteenth century.

Hospitaller Period – Hospice care for the needy ill

- *Ospizio* or *Casa di Carita`* set up in 1665
 - new building in 1732: housed ~ 380 inmates annually.
 - 1729: hospice set up in Floriana by Order of St. John in the *polverista*. Accommodation unsatisfactory.
 - 1732: new building in vicinity founded by GM de Vilhena. Inmates 380/yr [in 1798 inmates ~280/yr].
 - Administration left to a *Commission* of 10 members. Staff included a surgeon & guardians/servants.
 - 1785 GM de Rohan issued set of regulations which remained in force until 1816 when management was transferred to the *Committee of Charitable Institutions* set up by Sir Thomas Maitland.
 - Administration entrusted to Commission composed of 10 members.
- Other hospices set up by philanthropists.



Philanthropic establishments for the needy ill



- **Saura Hospital** founded 1667 by Dr. Nicholas Saura.
 - Left all his personal and his daughter's wealth for the building of the edifice. Further funds given by Rev. M. Azzopardi in 1762. Further donations and bequests given by other individuals.
 - Regulations for running the hospice laid down by Bishop M.G. Molina in 1680. After 1762 admission to old priests from Zebbug & those giving service in the Cathedral and St. Paul's Church.
 - 1798: 80 beds for both sexes. 1975: 36 beds
 - Entrusted to care of the Sisters of Charity.
- **St. Joseph Hospital** founded 1778 by a bequest of butcher Gio. Battista Debono from Zebbug.
 - Decree authorising establishment issued by Bishop Labini on 7th November 1787
 - Hospital declared open on 19th March 1788.
 - under direction of the nuns of the Tertiary Order of St. Francis.
- **St. Anne's Hospital** founded by testament bequest of Nikola & Madalena Dingli in 1794. Hospice set up after death of Madalena in 1814 and opened in 1817. Administration left to the Bishop. Priority for admission to relatives and people from Senglea or Siggiewi. Six admissions at a time.

Sacra Infermeria

➤ In Malta, the Order of St. John settled in the maritime centre at Birgu – there they established a new *Sacra Infermeria*.

➤ In 1533, the Order set up a more definite establishment.

They expropriated a number of buildings on the foreshore of the town. By 1538, this edifice was found to be too small for their needs, and the establishment was augmented.



Birgu Sacra Infermeria building



➤ After the Great Siege of 1565, the Order decided to construct a fortified city on the Sciberras Promontory flanking the two main harbours of Malta.

➤ This project necessitated the construction of a new *Sacra Infermeria* in the new city of Valletta.

➤ Building started in 1574 and completed four years later.

Further augmented in 1583, 1662, and 1712



Grandmaster La Vallette



The Valletta Sacra Infermeria



➤ The Valletta *Sacra Infermeria* enjoyed a prominent reputation throughout the subsequent centuries

➤ Several visitors/patients commenting favourably on the care and hospitality given to the inmates irrespective of creed and social status.

1610: American George Sandys wrote that “*Saint John’s Hospital doth merit regard, not only for the building, but for the entertainment there given, for all that fall sick are admitted thereto. The knights themselves there lodge when hurt or diseased, where they have physic for the body and soul also, such as they give: the attendants many, the beds overspread with fine canopies, every fortnight having a change of linen; served they are by the junior knights in silver, and every Friday by the Great Master himself.*”



18th century painting

Flattering descriptions continued to be given throughout the 17th and 18th centuries by various notable visitors.

1790: Englishman Sir Richard Colt Hoare commented: “*the public Hospital is a handsome edifice, and the institution itself is noble and charitable. Two extensive galleries besides smaller apartment are destined for the reception of the sick, who are treated with the utmost attention. A few devout, and perhaps penitent, Knights still observe the ancient custom of attending the sick in person*”

- Hospital doors were open to all, except for criminals.
- Care given to the sick inmates:
 - Bed sheets changed according to the need.
 - Food of best quality served from silver utensils.
 - Inmates given new shirts.
- Order’s Brothers waited on the sick, warmed the food, and gave all necessary assistance.



1588 engraving of the Sacra infermeria

Cost of social services – end of 18th century

- Cost for maintaining Charitable welfare system provided by the Order during period 5/1778 – 4/1785
 - 149 571 scudi annually
- Cost accounted for about 10.4% of the total expenditure of the Order.



- 10 000 scudi = £stg 833
- Total cost equivalent 149571 scudi = ~£stg 12 460 = **€ 14 510**
- Annual salary for Administrator of Civil Hospitals [eq. to modern-day Salary Scale 3 in Public Sector]
 - 18th century = 500 scudi or ~€ 50
 - Annual salary for Scale 3 in public sector = ~€ 35 000
- Total modern cost equivalent of 18th century social services = **~€ 10 000 000** for a population that was ~25% the current one
 - Thus effective contribution was **~€ 40 000 000**