

Worksheet S6.4.3

The decisions made regarding the construction of the city and the difficulties encountered.

DID YOU KNOW . . .

(notes by Mario Debono and George Calleja)

1. The first stone of the new city was placed on 28th March 1566 (in the place where the Victory Church was built). It was decided that the city would be called Valletta in honour of the Grand Master Jean de Valette who had just led the Maltese and the Knights in the victory of the Siege against the Turks.
2. The construction of Valletta required a lot of resources, including:
 - Money – Many of the expenses were paid by the Knights themselves and by the kings of Europe.
 - Planning – This was left in the hands of the architects Laparelli and Cassar.
 - Globigerina limestone – This was to be cut from the quarry in Manderaggio found in the same city.
 - Workers – Since at the beginning there was a lack of workers, to encourage Maltese builders to work, the workers were well-paid and were given food as well. This led to around 10,000 people working on the construction of the city.
3. The auberges of the Knights were not built apart from the rest of the houses in the city (as had been done in Vittoriosa) because it was decided that the collachio (a part of the city reserved only for the Knights) was not to be done.
4. Since the city had no source of fresh water, it was decided that each building should have a well. Rules were also decided regarding the hygiene and the beautification of the city, amongst which it was required that every corner had to be decorated.
5. A difficulty encountered during the construction of the city was the quarry in Manderaggio. In this quarry there was very little globigerina limestone available and as soon as coralline limestone was found, the quarry was abandoned. So globigerina limestone had to be brought with greater difficulty from quarries outside Valletta. Due to the fact that no other plans had been made for the Manderaggio, the place soon filled up with slums which completely ignored the rules regarding both hygiene and the beauty of the city.
6. In 1571 the Grand Master Del Monte, the Grand Master who succeeded Jean de Valette, decided that enough work was done in order for the Knights to go and live in the new city. By

now, the construction work had reached a fast pace. The Maltese started coming wholeheartedly to live in the new city because there they were able to find some work with the Order as well as more security than in their villages. In a span of forty years, the population of the city increased from zero to 10,000.

A: Match the following.

a	The quarry from where stone was to be cut for the building of the city		Ġlormu Cassar
b	The architect who continued the work after Laparelli		Grand Master
c	The city where the knights used to stay before moving to Valletta		Del Monte
d	The Grand Master who wanted the Order to move quickly to Valletta		bastions
e	Walls that defend the city		Manderaggio
f	The leader of the knights		Vittoriosa

B: Write the numbers from 1 to 8 near the sentences to show the order in which these occurred.

Pope Pius V sent Francesco Laparelli to help in the construction of the new city.	
The Grand Master de Valette put a lot of effort into building a new city.	
The quarry of the Manderaggio is abandoned.	
The population of the city increased at a fast rate.	
The auberges of the Knights are built.	
The Knights go to live in Valletta.	
The first stone of the new city is placed.	
The Ottoman Turks leave Malta as losers.	

C: Read this passage and answer the questions

“In 1590, there were more than 3,000 Maltese living in the city and until 1614 there were more than 10,000. Due to the increase of the population, they started to build many slums in places which primarily were supposed to remain empty. The quarry of the Manderaggio was filled with buildings for the lowest classes of society...”

1. How many years had passed from the placement of the first stone when the population of the city became 3,000?

2. What do you think the word 'kerrejja' means?

3. Why do you think they started to build slums in the city?

4. Why do you think many Maltese went to live in the new city?

The picture shows Mattia Preti Square, where once there was a quarry or a large hole known as the Manderaggio.

