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[p.91] Late eighteenth Century

Painters in Malta: a Case Study - the Via Crucis at the Parish Church Naxxar

Keith Sciberras

The artistic production of Maltese eighteenth century painters included the prolific production of cycles of the fourteen devotional paintings representing the Stations of the Cross or Via Crucis. The liturgy of the Via Crucis had, by the second half of the eighteenth century, developed into an important cult practised in the island's many churches and the fourteen paintings marked a number of devotional stopping places in the nave of the church. Prayers were said before each image during the Crucis devotion.

The first nine Stations represent scenes illustrating the Road to Calvary and include Christ before Pilate, scenes of the carrying and falling under the weight of the cross, the meeting with the Virgin, Simon the Cyrenian, the Veronica, and the mourning women. The other scenes respectively represent Christ stripped of his garments, the nailing to the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Pietà and the Entombment.

The presence of the most important artists is rare and paintings were generally entrusted to minor painters who tended to repeat representational models from widely circulated prints. The repetition of the same images in different churches became, therefore, common. The cycle was, however, not always the work of a single artist and there were frequent occasions when the whole became an assemblage of works by different painters. These could include the occasional painting by the better artists, such as Gio. Nicola Buhagiar (1698-1752) and Francesco Zahra (1710-1773). The problems concerning the attributions of such works are, however, great and there has been a tendency to attribute most of the cycles to Zahra, even if this was often not the case.

Single small works were sometimes given to different artists on a competitive basis and it is probable that local church authorities could have used such small works to test the ability of the artists who were later entrusted the execution of larger altarpieces.

[p.92] Despite their conspicuous presence in Maltese churches, Via Crucis paintings have never been systematically analysed and the present study forms part of a wider initial attempt at readjusting most of the present attributions to surviving eighteenth century cycles.[1]

On first analysis Rocco Buhagiar (1723-1805)[2] emerges as the most prolific late eighteenth century artist in this genre of devotional art. Much of his productions were previously confused with those of Zahra, who now has his accredited works reduced considerably. The inconsistency of most cycles in which Rocco Buhagiar is present suggests,

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[1] A more exhaustive study is presented by K. Sciberras, *Rocco Buhagiar and Late Eighteenth Century Painting in Malta*, MA Thesis presented to the University of Malta in 1995, 115-142.
[2] For a detailed study on the artist see K. Sciberras, *Ibid*.

however, that he must have had some kind of workshop production which included other minor painters. Some of his works are, none the less, among the better of late eighteenth century Via Crucis paintings.

There are stylistic references to Rocco in a number of cycles that include those in the parish churches of Birkirkara, Floriana, Mosta, Naxxar, Qormi, Senglea, Tarxien, Zabbar, Zebbug, and Sannat on Gozo. The number of Rocco Buhagiar works in each church varies and ranges from complete collections to two or three works. Most of the these were previously unattributed, or wrongly ascribed. There are also a number of collections of mediocre quality that have aesthetic connections with Rocco's works and can be suggested to belong to painters working close to the artist.

The Naxxar Via Crucis Cycle

The Naxxar Parish Via Crucis cycle is an assemblage of works by different artists and the whole commission is one of the most interesting of late eighteenth century productions. The collection is the work of eight different artists and survives as a unique collective exhibition. The works fluctuate in artistic competence and range from the production of Giuseppe Grech (1755-1787), which are amongst the more important paintings on the island, to other works which are the humble unassuming productions of vernacular artists. This diversity makes the series itself more exciting.

The uniqueness of this collection lies also in the fact that it is thoroughly documented and that most expenses, even the minutest, were recorded in a separate *Via Crucis Esito Diverso* (1777-1780) account book. The book is **[p.93]** preserved in the Archiepiscopal Archives in Floriana.[3] It is also corroborated by a number of loose sheet autograph receipts, including the later dated works, surviving in the Parish Archives of Naxxar.[4] A number of other similar receipts, survive within the A.A.F. book itself.

A comprehensive analysis of the commission entails the discussion of some of the recorded documents. The earliest references to the cycle date 1777 and open with the interesting account detailing 1.0.10. *scudi per calesse, e altro quando venne il capomastro per concertare il disegno delli quadri assieme con Mro. Vincenzo*.[5]

This reference suggests that it was not any of the participating artists who drew up the picture space design but that this was already established by the church authorities before the first direct commission for a painting. There are no indications detailing who this *capomastro* was, but later entries refer to the *Sig Capo Mro* Antonio Cachia (1739-1813),[6] an important figure in Maltese late eighteenth century architecture. The choice of Antonio Cachia, one of the Order's 12 *periti*, as supervisor of the whole commission comes as unexpected surprise. It is, however, indicative of the Naxxar procurator's intention to get the best of what the island provided.

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[3] AAF, Conti, V. 53 Naxxar N. 27 Via Crucis, Esito Diverso, 22-36.

[4] Mr. T. Terribile brought the Naxxar Parish Archives loose sheet receipts to my attention. I thank Mr Terribile for his co-operation.

[5] AAF, Naxxar, *op. cit.*, 23.

[6] For Antonio Cachia see G. Bonello, 'The Cachia Dynasty of Architects', in *The Sunday Times*, December 10 1995, 56-57.

Mro Vincenzo was probably Vincenzo Dimech, *intaliatore*, whose name recurs in the commission itself. A prolific wood carver Vincenzo Dimech is present in a number of other church and Order's commission. He could not, however, write and a number of recorded receipts are signed by others on his behalf. Further Naxxar references detail the expense of travel for Dimech to present the frame design at Naxxar and to take it back to Valletta.[7] These initial references are undated but should probably fall in 1777.

The first reference for a painting proper is indirect and details 10 *tarì* for the horse-drawn carriage that brought an unspecified painting to the village church. 3.6 *scudi* were then spent on iron fittings for fixing two paintings in place. A **[p.94]** further 2 *tarì* were the noted expenses paid to the man who brought over a painting, probably the second one.[8]

These two works are identified as Stations XII and XIII when Vincenzo Dimech received 18.10 *scudi* for producing wood carvings on the frames. The date is noted as 13 November 1777 when the carpenter Giuseppe received 25 *scudi* as an instalment for the frames. The gilder Fidele was paid 14.1.10 *scudi* for gilding the frame for Station XIII. An unknown Ignazio installed a painting for 4 *tarì*, and another man received a similar 4 *tarì* for bringing the work over from Valletta. In June 1778, however, another person received 3 *tarì* for taking the painting back to Valletta.[9] It is, at this stage, unclear why there was all this movement when only two paintings were by this time noted. The later references to artists and gilders suggest that Station XIII was fixed in place and Station XII sent to the gilder at Valletta.

The name of an artist was first recorded on 7 June when Giuseppe Grech received 16.1 *scudi* for Station XII, representing the *Crucifixion*. Giuseppe Grech was a relatively young artist but his prodigious talent had already signalled him as one of brightest futures for Maltese art. He was already employed as a decorative painter by Grand Master De Rohan, who was to later become his protector and sponsor his successful studies in Rome.[10]

Three days later, a second artist, Giuseppe Pace received 14.1.10 *scudi* for Station XIII, representing the *Pietà*. Giuseppe Pace was a prolific portrait painter and was also on the Grand Master's books.[11] He wasn't, however, an equally prolific religious painter and his few known ecclesiastical productions are relatively mediocre.

His signed and dated receipt for the *Pietà* reads:

A di Giu: 1778

Io sotto scritto confesso d'aver ricevuto la somma di schudi quatordici tari **[p.95]** *uno grani dieci per mano del Si. Capelano per la pittura della stazione decima terza dico scudi 14.1.10*

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[7] AAF, Naxxar, 24.
[8] Ibid., 26.
[9] 27.
[10] For a detailed study of Giuseppe Grech see K. Sciberras, *op. cit*, 180-198. An essay on the artist will be published by the same author in *Proceedings of History Week 1994* forthcoming. The Naxxar paintings by Grech, together with specific details of his commission, are discussed in detail.
[11] K. Sciberras, *Rocco*, 143-179.

Gioseppe Pace[12]

On the same day Giuseppe Grech received a further 50 *scudi* as advance payment to execute other works *a conto*.[13] This was recorded in the acts of notary Paulo Vittorio Giamalva who received 3 *tarì* for his fee.[14] This curious Notarial Act suggests that Grech and Pace were probably commissioned on a competitive basis which Grech seemingly won. The young artist was, however, not to complete the cycle.

The work of Giuseppe Grech surpassed that of Pace in both compositioned arrangement and technical structure. Grech's brushwork flows with a freedom rare in late eighteenth century art and his production surpasses all that was then being executed by Maltese painters. The work of Pace is, on the other hand, feeble and dry, inconsistent in draughtsmanship and weak in execution.

The dual commission seems to have been repeated for the gilding since a different gilder, Michael Galdes, received 18.8 *scudi* for executing the gilding of the frame for Station XII. On 4 July, the other gilder, Fidele, received a further 5.10.16 *scudi* as settlement for Station XIII. Another strange entry, of 6 *tarì*, further notes the travel expense for a horse-drawn carriage to Valletta to discuss the frame's design.[15] The latter gilding therefore cost a total of 20.0.6 *scudi*. Michele Galdes, the cheaper of the two, was later entrusted the completion of other works even if another gilder was, at a certain stage, also tried.

In September 1778, the *intaliatore*, probably Dimech, received 7.0.15 *scudi* as an instalment for his work and, on 4 October 1778, the previously mentioned Ignazio was paid 5 *tarì* for placing a painting in its place. This was now probably the installation of the Grech painting with the Galdes gilded frame. Two days later, however, another reference details that two frames were sent to the City, and, on 14 October the carpenter Giuseppe received 25 *scudi* as another instalment.[16]

[p.96] A 7 January 1779 entry may probably identify the latter two frames with those for Stations II and III. On that day, Vincenzo Dimech was paid 18 *scudi* for their carving, and an unknown person received 16 *tarì* for their transport.[17] The carpenter Giuseppe himself probably resided somewhere next to Naxxar. On completion of his work, the frames were sent to Vincenzo Dimech in Valletta who later returned them back to Naxxar. These were then sent back for gilding, sometimes possibly with the painting itself. Antonio Cachia, *capomastro*, possibly supervised all. On 22 February 1779, he received 11.4 *scudi* for designing the frames.[18]

On 2 June, Vincenzo Dimech painted the crosses crowning the frames and executed some restoration works. He was paid 6.10 *tarì*. On 6 July 1779, 33.8 *scudi* were spent on

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[12] PA, Naxxar, unattached loose sheet folios.
[13] K. Sciberras, 185.
[14] AAF, Naxxar, 28. The notarial agreement - NAV, R292/26 Paulo Vittorio Giammalva, 10 June 1778, ff. 846v-857r - is discussed in detail in K. Sciberras, *History Week 1994*.
[15] AAF, *Naxxar*, 28.
[16] 29.
[17] 30.
[18] 30.

expenses for gold to be used in the gilding process and, on the same day, Dimech received a further instalment of 6.8.5. *scudi*.

The artist who executed Station III receives no documented mention but he should have been Giuseppe Grech, to whom the painting can be stylistically and historically attributed. The painting, representing the *First Falling with the Cross*, is an even stronger indication of Grech's talent. Its sober qualities are a direct reference to the School of Rome and an indication of a definite change in aesthetic taste.

The notarial agreement had bound the young artist to execute other works but these could not be produced because within the same year Grech was furthering his studies in Rome.[19] The church procurators therefore turned to commission their third artist.

An interesting reference is noted when 8 *tarì* were paid as expenses for a horse-drawn carriage which took Rocco Buhagiar to Naxxar. The reference is undated but should fit somewhere between July and September 1779. Grech's decision to leave the project was already taken and it is indeed no surprise that the next person to be approached was Rocco Buhagiar, the more established of the local painters and a prolific producer of Via Crucis paintings. The near relationship between Grech and Rocco may also corroborate Grech's suggested training under the master. There was, however, no other immediate payment to Rocco Buhagiar, who delivered his first works the following year. The commission, at this stage, seems to take a number of different turnings.

[p.97] On 12 September 1779 a Mro Stefano received 23 *scudi* for gilding the frames of Stations II and XII. The latter frame had already been gilded by Galdes, and the references should have probably referred to Station III. In October of the same year, a Mro Giuseppe Maria received 21.0.15 *scudi* for executing the *portieri alli quadri*, but the exact nature of the work is unknown. At the same time a frame was brought over from Valletta.[20]

The whole becomes more complex when, in November 1779, a *Pittore Pace*, probably Giuseppe, received 3.2 *scudi* for priming two canvases.[21] Giuseppe Pace had been seemingly excluded from the commission after the probably competitive June 1778 paintings and his reappearance is somewhat indicative of the Naxxar procurators decision to entrust the completion of the work to a single artist. The two canvases were, however, never executed by the artist and it is indeed difficult to believe that Pace was priming the canvases for another artist.

On 18 November, Vincenzo Dimech received an instalment of 5.1. *scudi* for his carvings on the frames for Stations I and IV. These were to be executed by Rocco Buhagiar and indicates that, since the frames were ordered, the artist's earlier visit must have been fertile.[22]

Even though there was the intention of introducing Rocco Buhagiar in the commission, two days later, on 20 November 1779, the *Pittore forastiere d'Aqusto S.to*

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[19] K. Sciberras, *Rocco*, 188.
[20] AAF, *Naxxar*, 32
[21] 32.
[22] Ibid.

Candia[23] received 15 *scudi* for Station II.[24] This painting was probably to be painted by Grech because the frames for Stations II and III had been commissioned together. Santo Candia was probably somehow connected with Rocco Buhagiar because, on both occasions of his only known Malta paintings, the Maltese master was surprisingly very near. His documented receipt for the Naxxar painting reads:

[p.98]

Malta li 20 Novembre 1779

Io infrascritto confesso avere ricevuto scudi 15 dal Cappellano di Nasciaro per averce dipinto un quadro della Via Sacra la seconda stazione, dico scudi 15.

Io Santo Candia.[25]

The person who transported the De Candia painting received 6 *tarì*. On 22 November, Cuzzo the blacksmith received 2.8 *scudi* for fittings for Stations II and IV and, later, a further 14 *scudi* for fittings for Stations I and XIV.[26] Station IV was to be depicted later in the 1780s by Lorenzo Grima.

In February 1780 another painting was brought over from Valletta and, during the same period, frames were prepared for two other paintings. These were then sent to Valletta for gilding. A similar entry notes that, on 25 May 1780, the frames for Stations I and XIV were taken to the gilder, who was paid 13 *scudi*[27] for his labour. On 7 November 1780, Giuseppe Pullicino received 30 *scudi* as an instalment for some frames, and the following day Vincenzo Dimech received a further 21 *scudi* for his carvings on Stations I and XIV.[28]

During the same day the frames were taken back to Naxxar. A subsequent entry notes 8 *tarì* paid for the horse-drawn carriage that brought over Rocco Buhagiar together with the paintings representing Station I and XIV.[29] The exact date is missing but it should also have been 8 November 1780 as transpires from the dated autograph receipt for the two works. It reads:

Li 8 Novembre 1780

Io infrascritto ho ricevuto per mano del Reverendo Signor Paroco Giorgio Fiteni la somma di scudi quaranta tari uno e grani dieci per lavoro di pittura delli due stazioni prima e ultimo dico... scudi 40.1.10

Rocco Buhagiar.[30]

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[23] For Santo Candia see K. Sciberras, *Rocco*, 97.
[24] AAF, *Naxxar*, 33.
[25] Ibid., unpaginated folio.
[26] 33.
[27] 34.
[28] 35.
[29] 36.
[30] Ibid., unpaginated receipts attached at the back.

[p.99] The last entry in the A.A.F. Naxxar Via Crucis volume dates 1780 and the subsequent volume does, unfortunately, not survive. The names of the artists who executed the post January 1781 paintings are however fortunately recorded in the receipts that survive in the Parish Archives.

The local Church authorities were, at this stage, apparently not very coherent and the number of painters involved in the project grew. It is not clear whether this was a deliberate involvement or whether it was the result of a subsequent relinquishing of commissions by the artists themselves. If the idea was to involve as many artists as possible it was indeed strange that they did not, at least, maintain a decent level of artistic competence. A number of painters are only recorded working at Naxxar.

On 16 June 1782, the previously unknown painter Gaspare Montanaro[31] received 15 *scudi* for Station VII, and on 4 January of the following year he was paid 15 *scudi* in two instalments for painting Station VIII.[32]

On 19 July 1783, Rocco Buhagiar received 30 *scudi* for Stations VI and IX, thus ending his connection with the commission.[33]. The sum is a remarkable 10 *scudi* less than what he received for the previous two paintings.

The A.A.F. run on expenditure entries making it difficult to isolate and calculate the whole expenses for a single Station of the Via Crucis. A Naxxar Parish Archives loose sheet account however survives and records such expenditure for Station XII, one of the first to be executed in 1778. The account reads:

Spesa del Quadro Stazione XII

Per guarnicia, e tilaro al farliniame M.o Peppi... scudi 6

Per liniame del intalio, e intalio a M.o Vincenzo... scudi 9.5

Per Indoratura, al Indoratore Michaele Galdes... scudi 18.8

Per Pittura, al Pittore Gioseppe Grech... scudi 16.1.10

Per ferramenti per tenere detto quadro scudi 1.9

[p.100]

Per portare il quadro dell Citta... scudi 0.6

Per piantarlo il farliniame al loco... scudi 0.4

Per tavoli per la cornicia del pilastro e meterla al loco... scudi 0.6

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[31] A certain Gaspare Montanaro is elsewhere described as *scrivano del Monte di Redenzine e Piera*, (AOM, Suppliche, Tom XV 1875-1792, t. XII. 1790).
[32] PA, Naxxar, loose sheet receipt.
[33] Ibid.

Su totum... scudi 53.3.10

Ho avuto... scudi 32.11.10

Resto daver:.. scudi 20.41.[34]

The fourteen paintings allow for an estimate of the artists' competence and the diversity of production provides an interesting cross-section of late-eighteenth century works. Giuseppe Grech emerges as the most powerful artist and, considering his young age, his works show a sound knowledge of anatomical modelling which complements spontaneous brushwork and strong narrative qualities.[35]

The work of his older contemporary, Giuseppe Pace, hardly rises above mediocrity and it is indeed not surprising that the local church authorities entrusted the completion of the series to the hands of the more talented youth. Pace's *Pietà* painting adopts a much hackneyd type, a scheme present in other Via Crucis scenes by unknown artists. His work, as do the smaller works of other late eighteenth century artists, fails to achieve a coherent whole and presents jarring discrepancies in figure modelling.

Rocco Buhagiar's *Entombment* is a better work. It is an interesting painting, well designed and chromatically clear. The scheme itself follows a type much preferred by the artist and used also on other occasions that include Senglea and Mosta. The lethargic sense of drama, which becomes itself the essence of the whole work, is also present in the work of Grech. This is a definite break with the past and it is this that isolates the works of the two artists from the rest. Giuseppe Pace's work remains, as also do his other religious productions, still dependent on the earlier Baroque spirit.

The *Entombment*, however, does present considerable disparity when compared with other Rocco paintings in the same series. This incongruity is apparent when the work is stylistically compared with Station IX executed by the artist in 1783. His general presence in the latter painting is evident but, on **[p.101]** the whole, the painting is a mediocre work that does not reach the artist's better standards. The work fails in its compositional arrangement and the naive approach to the rendering of the executioners is no different than that present in the works of the humbler painters.

The Via Crucis production of Rocco Buhagiar is, as suggested elsewhere, a multi-faceted production that varies tremendously in both compositional organisation and finesse of execution. The ten *scudi* less that the artist received for Stations VI and IX are indeed testimony of such discrepancies. The modelling of the executioner's arm, holding the cross from the frontal side, in Station VI is decisively weaker than the same disposition of Christ's arm in Station XIV. Similarly, drapery folds in Station IX are rudely executed and lack the much finer treatment of Station XIV. The executioner who, on the other hand, toils to fasten Christ's hands in Station I towers in disparingly gigantic proportion when compared to others. The central Christ is however finely painted and typical of the artist. These discrepancies propose the suggested employment of another painter executing minor figures or helping the artist in his prolific Via Crucis production. This remains, however, only very hypothetical. The only Rocco work which achieves a satisfying whole is Station XIV.

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[34] PA; Naxxar, loose sheet receipts.
[35] The works are discussed in K. Sciberras, *Rocco*, 187.

The other works in the series are of very mediocre production, even if the works of Giuseppe They and Santo Candia can be singled out to be better than that of the rest. Giuseppe They, who painted Station X in 1789, is a relatively unknown personality who is suggested to have somehow formed part of Favray's studio.[36]

He is accredited with the altar painting of the *Death of St. Joseph* in the Floriana Parish Church, a feeble interpretation of the Favray Manresa theme, and other paintings that include a *St Christopher* in the church of St Augustine Valletta, and *The Immaculate Conception* at the parish church of Birgu.[37] The altar-painting of *The Immaculate Conception* that survives at Birgu is, despite some weak passages, generally satisfying but its attribution to They, until securely documented altar-pieces are resurfaced for stylistic corroboration, should remain dubious. The painting has been elsewhere ascribed to the seventeenth century[38] **[p.102]** but this iconographical interpretation of the Immaculate Virgin remained also very popular throughout the eighteenth century. The painting of *St Christopher* in the Augustinian Convent is a better work but its attribution should remain hypothetical.

Giuseppe They's accredited portrait production includes Pope Pius VII with Rev. Vincenzo Maria Portelli at the church of St. Dominic, Valletta, and Bishop Mattei in the Cospicua parish church. The Valletta painting should date to the early years of the nineteenth century. A separate portrait of Rev. Portelli could belong to the same hand. They are interesting works, well executed and modelled, but still eighteenth century in spirit. Giuseppe They was, apparently, also active in house decorative painting and is supposed to have painted a decorative scheme with vignettes in a palazzo at Rabat.[39]

Santo Candia's painting, Station II, is a chaotic work that does not reach the better standards of his *Pietà* altarpainting in the church of St. Bartholomew at Tarxien. It is not surprising, however, that, considering this work, this foreign artist failed to achieve great note on the island. He was also involved with the same limited success in portrait production. His only known representation is that of a sitter identified as *Sig. Michelangelo Falzon, Com.te del Cottone Bormla Malta* in a letter that the same sitter holds. The painting is preserved in a private collection and is signed at bottom right.

The remaining works can only be noted as poor manifestations of popular art. What is surprising is that all works remained within the same price bracket and the 16.1.10 *scudi* which Grech received in 1778 is not any dissimilar to the 15 *scudi* which Gaspare Montanaro got in 1782. The latter's production, Stations VII and VIII, fails miserably. There are no other known works by Montanaro.

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[36] J. Gash, 'Painting and Sculpture in Early Modern Malta' in V. Mallia-Milanes (ed.), *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, Malta 1993, 599.
[37] Castagna, *Storja ta' Malta bil Gżejjer Tagħha*, Malta 1890, 226.
[38] M. Buhagiar, 'Artistic Heritage' in L. Bugeja, M. Buhagiar, S. Fiorini (eds), *Birgu - A Maltese Maritime City*, Malta 1993, 495.
[39] The scheme was unfortunately vandalised and destroyed, during a modern conversion of the large house into a number of commercial outlets, one of which is today the premises of the Rabat Local Council. Verbal communication by Can. J. Azzopardi. Source: the late Dr. J.A. Cauchi.

Lorenzo Grima is another vernacular painter who executed the two, equally unhappy, paintings representing Stations IV and V.[40] His name does not, however, remain completely obscure and he is documented elsewhere working on a decorative commission. On 2 August 1797, he received 7.7.10 *scudi* for painting the coat-of arms of Grand Master Hompesch which were to hang above the **[p.103]** main doorway in the *Paggeria*,[41] or Page's Chamber, presumably in the Palace, Valletta.

A small full length portrait of a young girl wearing a long necklace with an eight pointed cross pendant and holding a flower in her hand is signed *Lor Grima fecit 1788* on the back. The signature has been covered by relining it but was fortunately recorded by its present owner. The painting, preserved in a private collection, is a relatively mediocre work yet it is much better than the Naxxar paintings.

The painter who executed Station XI is only recorded by the surname Zahra.[42] His work, however, is a far cry from that of Francesco Zahra and any suggestion that they could have been somehow related remains purely very hypothetical. One of Francesco's sons, Aurelio (1748-1803), is held to have been a painter and that, as noted by Panzavecchia, he died *avvelenato collo pigmento*.[43]

The latter low profile painters do not merit any great distinction, but commissions of this type are of great help in identifying the unknown artists who probably executed the numerous other Via Crucis cycles which fall within the same category of artistic competence.

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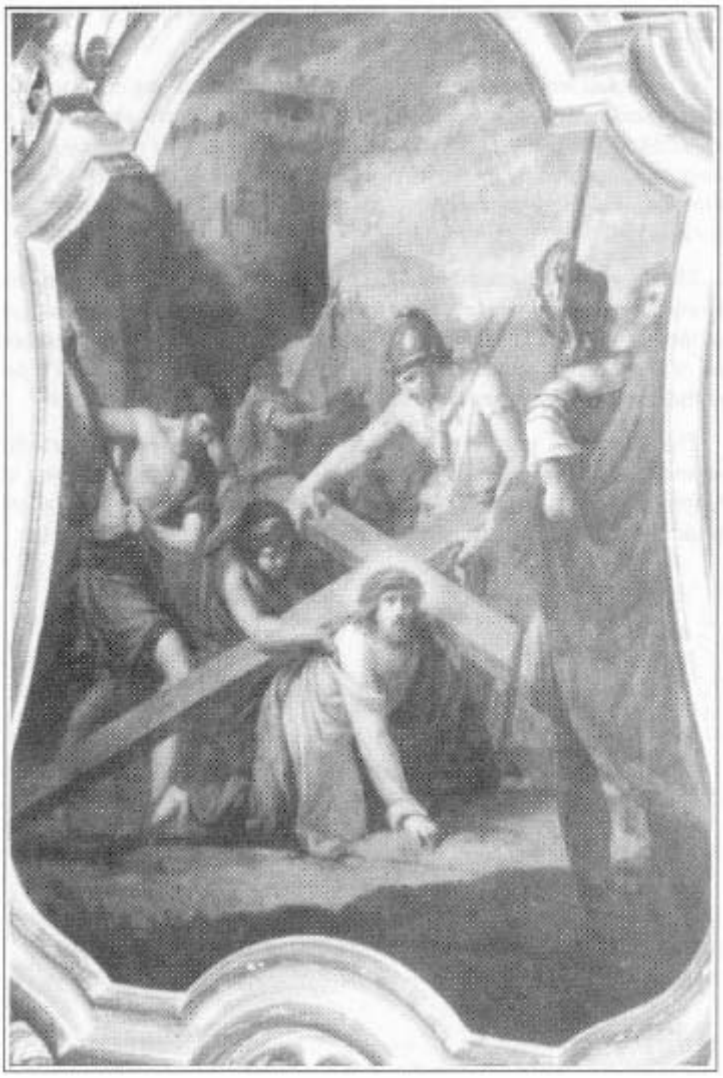
[40] PA, Naxxar, loose sheet receipt.
[41] NLM, Ms 453, p. 10.
[42] PA, Naxxar, loose sheet receipt.
[43] ACM, Pan 84, f.340r published by E. Montanaro, 'Materials for the life of Francesco Zahra', in J. Azzopardi (ed.), *Francesco Zahra 1710-1773*, Malta 1986, 28.



Giuseppe Grech, *The First Falling with The Cross*,
Parish Church of the Nativity, Naxxar.

Giuseppe Pace, *The Virgin of Sorrows*,
Parish Church of the Nativity, Naxxar.

Rocco Buhagiar, *The Entombment*,
Parish Church of the Nativity, Naxxar.