

## **Simon Mercieca: Some aspects of the historical development of the Caravane Maritime based on the personal experiences of Gio Francesco Buonamico (1639-1680)**

In this paper, I shall be analyzing manuscript no 1191 conserved at the Malta National Library which records the voyages undertaken by Gio. Francesco Buonamico held between 1657 and 1666. Buonamico studied medicine at the University of Montpellier in France and on his return to Malta he was employed so serve in the Order of St. John's health care services. He was one of the few privileged Maltese to have undertaken a grand tour of Europe and the Mediterranean. Following the custom of the time, he kept a diary or "Memorie de viaggi" as he called it and included descriptions, amongst others, of a number of European cities in France, Germany, Holland, Flanders, Switzerland, Italy, Sicily, and various islands of the Greek archipelago.

The innovative aspect of his travelogue lays in the fact that he takes a southern perspective. The Grand Tour is normally associated with a voyage that begins in the north towards the south. Furthermore, as his point of departure was an island, Buonamico encountered a number of difficulties related to seaborne traffic which he described in certain detail. Moreover, Buonamico's diary has another important characteristic which normally is not found in travellers' accounts of this period. It contains short philosophical introduction on the perils but also the benefits of sea travelling.