

• A German Clergyman in Medieval Malta

#335 | The famous itinerary of Ludolph von Suchen and the Maltese Islands

• *Un Ecclésiastique allemand dans l'île de Malte au Moyen-Age:*

Le célèbre itinéraire de Ludolph von Suchen et les îles maltaises

• *Ein Deutscher Geistlicher im mittelalterlichen Malta*

Der berühmte Reisebericht des Ludolph von Suchen und die Inseln Maltas

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RÉSUMÉ

Les voyages de Ludolph von Suchen en Palestine, en Syrie et en Egypte, et les diverses rédactions de son ouvrage paru vers 1350: *De terra sancta et itinere hierosolymitano* ont trouvé chez les chercheurs des 19e et 20e siècles un écho important. Pourtant un aspect de l'oeuvre, important pour la science des religions du monde méditerranéen, avait échappé aux chercheurs: la question du rapport 'secret' entre Ludolph von Suchen et le culte rendu à Paul dans l'île de Malte, un phénomène dont les racines et le développement au Moyen-Age commencent seulement à être connus. Ce culte a connu son sommet aux 16e et 17e

siècles: dans le cadre de la Contre-Réforme, l'île de Malte et la 'Grotta di S. Paolo' à Rabat sont devenues un centre de dévotion qui attirait un grand nombre de pèlerins et de voyageurs de toutes les régions d'Europe. Cette nouvelle interprétation de l'itinéraire de Ludolph von Suchen nous offre des indications importantes sur les origines et les premières manifestations de ce culte. Elle nous apporte aussi des données essentielles sur la confusion qui régnait encore à la fin du Moyen-Age en ce qui concerne la localisation de la 'Melita' du Nouveau Testament, le lieu du naufrage de Paul, et cela en raison des insuffisances de la littérature cartographique et géographique.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Reisen des Ludolph von Suchen nach Palästina, Syrien und Ägypten und die verschiedenen Fassungen seines um 1350 entstandenen Werkes *De terra sancta et itinere hierosolymitano* fanden in der Forschung des 19. und 20.

Jahrhunderts bereits ein vielfältiges und nachhaltiges Echo. Eine für die religionswissenschaftliche Erforschung des Mittelmeerraums wichtige Facette des Werkes ist der Forschung allerdings bisher entgangen: Die Rede ist von Ludolph von Suchens 'verstecktem' Bezug

zum Paulus—Kult auf Malta, ein Phänomen, dessen mittelalterliche Wurzeln und Ausprägungen bisher nur ansatzweise bekannt sind. Höhepunkt dieses Kults war das 16. und 17. Jahrhundert, in dessen Verlauf die Mittelmeerinsel Malta—namentlich die im gegenreformatorischen Sinn zum internationalen Devotionszentrum etablierten 'Grotta di S. Paolo' von Rabat—eine Vielzahl von Pilgern und Reisenden aus allen Regionen Europas

anzog. Mit vorliegender Neuinterpretation von Ludolph von Suchens Itinerar eröffnen sich nun zum einen wichtige Hinweise auf Wurzeln und frühe Ausprägung dieses Kultes, zum anderen wesentliche Notizen einer noch im Spätmittelalter—aufgrund unzureichender kartographischer und geographischer Literatur—existenten Verwirrung in der Lokalisierung des neutestamentarischen 'Melita' als Ort des Schiffbruchs des Apostels Paulus.

The voyages of Ludolph¹ 'Rector ecclesiae parochialis in Suchem, paderbornensis dioecesis' to Palestine, Syria and Egypt and the various versions of his work *De terra sancta et itinere hierosolomitano et de statu eius et aliis mirabilibus, quae in mari conspiciuntur, videlicet mediterraneo* made a multiple and lasting echo by the research conducted in the 19th and 20th centuries.² In the course of the 19th century the research on medieval pilgrimages to Palestine grew stronger, and Ludolph von Suchen's work was described as the 'best itinerary account of the 14th century'³, and before the end of the 19th century editions in French and English academic magazines followed.⁴ One track which scholars examining the work missed was the 'hidden' reference that Suchen made to the Pauline cult in Malta, a phenomenon which has recently been hotly debated by scientific circles in Germany and Malta⁵. Indeed the meaning of Suchen's 'De terra sancta' should be seen as one of the earliest literary pieces of evidences for the Pauline cult on Malta. The role of the island in the context of the document will be briefly outlined here.

Before investigating the voyage of Ludolph von Suchen and its references to Malta, it is in place to touch briefly the idea of medieval travelling. The Christian pilgrimage and the medieval voyage constitute complex historical phenomena which cannot be described here in detail.

What, however, needs to be recalled is that in medieval times pilgrimages were by far the most important reason to leave the relative safety of one's home and to risk the dangers of a voyage in the foreign world. Most of the travellers who will be met in this essay were motivated to travel by the idea of seeing the Holy Land. Pilgrimage, which led to such journeys through the Mediterranean being undertaken by nearly all kinds of people who could afford it, has been defined as 'a quest for personal salvation'. Arnold von Harff, a fifteenth-century German knight and pilgrim, paradigmatically says that it was for 'the comfort and well-being' of his soul that he undertook 'this praiseworthy pilgrimage'⁶. The reason for the medieval traveller to set out to the three main pilgrim destinations in Santiago de Compostella, Rome, and Jerusalem was clear: it was the hope and expectation of receiving some kind of help or blessing—material or spiritual. Journeys to the Holy Land are documented as far back as the fourth century. During the period of the Crusades they become more frequent and they start appearing in large numbers in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, the great heyday of pilgrimages.

After the original Latin text of Ludolph's itinerary had already been recopied in the course of the 14th and 15th centuries in various handwritings, and the original text translated into the German language, there followed a Latin version in print that was issued in 1468 in

Augsburg. Thus Suchen's report is the first printed copy of a travel report. A German translation followed in print in 1477.⁷ Thus it may be concluded that the actual intention of the work was for those who wished to make a trip of pilgrimage to Palestine in the 14th and 15th centuries. Both in its intrinsic, as well as its historical side, Suchen's *De terra sancta* must be regarded as proof and witness of the magnitude of a travel culture that existed in late medieval times. The genesis of this work is very closely connected with the Diocese of the north German town of Paderborn. Indeed without the direct encouragement and direct influence of Bishop Balduin von Steinfurth of Paderborn (1340–1361)⁸, the work would not have been finished in such detailed form. Obviously the writing '*Baldewino de Stenvordia, paderbornensis ecclesiae episcop*'⁹ is written in appreciation. As in the case of many medieval scripts the personality of the author was left in the background in favour of emphasis on the work itself. Therefore definite information on the life of the author is rarely given. Ludolph calls himself '*Rector ecclesiae parochialis in Suchem, paderbornensis dioecesis*'¹⁰. His parish was a village called Lichtenau, not far from Paderborn. The research of Georg Schnath, however, has confirmed that Ludolph was a descendant of a wealthy craftsman family from the north German town of Osnabrück¹¹. Already the name and the exact chronological sequence of his voyage proved problematic when studying the work. This is mainly due to the various alterations made to Suchen's text via Sigmund Feyerabendt's collection *Reißbuch des heiligen Lands*¹² (= The Travel Book to the Holy Land). Indeed the author in his original Latin text had given an explicit chronological framework:

... in statu per omnia, prout ipsas partes ultramarinas et earum statum anno domini MCCCXXXVI inveni, et ipsas partes et earum statum anno domini MCCCXLI reliqui.¹³

Suchen came back from the Levant in 1341. Therefore it is assumed that the

time when the document originated must have been the decade between 1350 and 1361. At the end of his work Suchen refers to the persecution of the Jews in Germany in the years 1348 and 1349¹⁴. Bishop Balduin von Steinfurth died on March 31, 1361.¹⁵

The interest in the late 14th and entire 15th century copies or translations of the work and the style of writing in the introduction gave already an indication of the matters of importance which were to concern the author or rather Balduin von Steinfurth, his 'contractor' in the text. As it turned out the primary aim in writing was to be an '*Itinerarium*', a guide for Pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land. The primary aim was not to be the reporting of his own five year voyage to the Levant but to give the reader a reliable and thorough guide. Consequently Suchen suggests each would-be pilgrim traveller get apostolic freedom as '*dum aliquis transiens a domino apostolico bene transeundi licentiam obtinuerit inseritur in bulla super licentia obtenta (. . .). Igitur volens ire ad dictam terram sanctam, cavendum sibi est ne absque licentia domini apostolici transeat. Nam quam primum ad littus Soldani applicuerit, est in sententia papae, quia postquam terra sancta ad manus Soldanus devenit, fuit et est excommunicata . . .*'¹⁶

This style of writing is that of the medieval impersonal literary guide showing the two main routes leading to the Holy Lands:

Si vult transire per terram, ut audiui a talibus quibus erat bene notum, ex tunc transitur rectius per Ungariam et Bulgariam et regnum Traciae, sed dicunt quod sit via multum taediosa. Tamen quid id laborare posset secure, ille per terram et non per mare usque ad Constantinopolin bene perveniret.¹⁷

Due to the dangers of the land route Suchen took the sea route to Constantinople and the Holy Land. Strangely enough we hardly hear anything about Venice which was the meeting point for the majority of those pilgrims and travellers from central Europe who were to

undertake such a voyage to the Levant and Palestine. Even the Adriatic Sea is not mentioned in Suchen's customary detail. In fact Venice represented the most important departure point in the network of sea routes and stages to Constantinople, Palestine and Egypt in the time of Ludolph's voyage. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the '*Serenissima*' used to organize fleets twice a year for pilgrims and for those who wanted to visit the Holy Land. Timetables and Sea routes of these voyages were known in all main trading centres of Europe. Pilgrimages were a 'business' in late medieval times.¹⁸

Which route did Suchen take? The sequence in which the Mediterranean islands are mentioned in his work gives some indication:

Et contemplan famosas insulas ad visum scilicet Corsicam, Sardiniam, Siciliam, Mantam, Goy, Scarpe, Cretam, Rodum et quam plurimas alias insulas magnas et parvas; et his omnibus visis pervenit in Cyprum.¹⁹

The European port of departure of such a route could only have been Marseille or Genoa. Both ports ranked very high with pilgrims from France and North West Italy.²⁰

In connection with this route we hear for the first time of the '*famosas insulas*' 'Mantam' and 'Goy'. Already the translator of Feyerabendt's German *Reyßbuch deß heyligen Lands* identifies 'Mantam' as Malta. The island of 'Goy' is only mentioned.²¹ That this is the same island as ancient 'Gaulos'²² will be shown later on. Ludolph labels the islands as '*famosas*'. In truth Malta did not lie on the route of the pilgrims' medieval voyages. Even for the merchant ships coming from Marseille and Genoa, these passed to Messina to head straight to Crete, then to Alexandria, Acco, Jaffa or Constantinople. Thus Malta could not have been a convenient or often used berthing place. Most of the ships passed through the straits of Messina.²³ All this and the aim of Suchen's work makes one think that the author had never visited the Maltese islands himself. As an example of this type of late

medieval travel reports containing hidden interpolation from second hand sources, one can mention the account of Duke Heinrich von Sachsen's journey to Palestine in 1498. During the voyage the duke described Corfu, Naxos or Cephalonia, but there suddenly appears the island of Malta:

Hinc Naxus insula (...) quondam adversus Titanas in bellum proficiscentis augurio celebris. Ad Austrum est Melitae, quam Maltham vocant. Pauli Apostoli naufragio nobilis, in qua Insula ex (...) tempore serpentes a viperae noxiae ac fine veneno esse ...²⁴

Obviously the practice of inserting into one's own report other passages from older itineraries was a common one.

The first definite reference to an authentic stop-over in Malta is given by Suchen when he is describing in the literary impersonal style of his time the geographical locations around Sicily, while inserting personal experiences and observations:

prope Siciliam sunt multae aliae insulae parvae et magnae, Saracenis inhabitatae. Etiam est prope alia insula nomine Manta, habens unum episcopatum, quam saepius pertransivi. Prope hanc est alia insula Colmat vocata, in qua sunt tot cuniculi, quod eis vix sufficit terra ad inhabitandum. (...) Sed prope has est alia insula Goy dicta, pecoribus et lacticiiniis multum abundans.²⁵

Thus we have an explicit declaration from the author himself that he had visited Malta and its diocese ('*Etiam est (...) insula nomine Manta (...) quam saepius pertransivi*'). A phrase which reveals its meaning only when put in the context of Suchen's introductory passage:

Veruntamen nullus credat, me omnia et singula, quae inserere propono, oculis vidisse, sed ex antiquis gestis bene aliqua extraxisse et aliqua ex veridicis hominibus audisse, quae omnia, in quibus locis scribantur et inveniantur, discreti lectoris iudicio duxi committendum (...). Et tamen adhuc plura inserere potuissem, si non propter rudes detractores et

derisores omitterem, ne aliqua incredibilia dicam, quibus ab eisdem mendax valeam reputari.²⁶

From these lines one realises the effect of the stigma that a so called 'travel-liar', or a writer who exaggerated, had in the 14th century, when he took his information from unauthorised sources. Other authors, like the famous English author Sir John Mandeville (Jean de Bourgogne; 1300–1372), although claiming to have visited the described places themselves, entirely derived and compiled their information from other sources.²⁷ This was not the case with Suchen, although he did produce descriptions that were taken from well known ancient authorities, and reliable contemporary sources (*'veridicis hominibus'*).²⁸ With Suchen's *De terra sancta*, it was a mixture of his personal observations and opinion integrated with his knowledge of 'good sources'. The ambivalence of this work must be discussed more when tackling the passages regarding the Pauline cult in Malta. Now it will be understood why Suchen stresses so explicitly that 'he himself had travelled on several times to Malta'. The relatively exact geographical description referring to the Maltese archipelago supports this belief. With this, however, the 'Goy' and 'Colmat' that Suchen describes remained unclear for a long time. Indeed due to lack of a good map and other related information, the translator of Feyerabendt's German printed *Reisesammlung* (= Travel collection), using Suchen's script, mentioned the name 'Goy' without ever having known of Gozo. Due to his poor knowledge and understanding he totally ignored the passage on 'Colmat' (= Comino).²⁹ It was Ferdinand Deycks who for the first time associated 'Goy' with the ancient 'Gaulos' in his treatment of the Latin text³⁰, while the island 'Colmat' has not been identified even today. In reality one can, according to Suchen's description, identify it with the small island lying to the north west of Malta. A *'Relazione dell'Isola di Malta'* written in 1582³¹ unconsciously repeats almost word for word Suchen's description of 'Colmat':

Tra questa Isola (= Gozo MM) et Malta vi é un altro Isolotto detto il Comino di quattro miglia di circuito tutto dishabitato, ma ripieno di conigli et dove si trova alle volte qualche cignale.³²

Suchen's description of the Maltese archipelago withstands the test in all respects. Malta was already in the 14th century a Diocese and yet, in spite of Count Roger's conquest in 1090 retained its Moorish character (*'Saracenis inhabitatae'*)³³ for a long time, although many 'Saracenis' were expelled in 1224. The land in the neighbouring island of Gozo ('Goy'), is more fertile even today than in Malta and therefore more suitable for cattle rearing and dairy products (*'pecoribus et lacticiiniis multum abundans'*). But perhaps the most convincing evidence that supports Suchen's visits to Malta is his knowledge of Comino as an uninhabited island and therefore full of rabbits (*'cuniculi'*)³⁴.

To strengthen his claims about the authenticity of what he has described, Suchen ends the chapter with a description of a sea storm which he experienced when in the vicinity of Malta:

Inter hanc et alias insulas quadam vice cum maxima nave in maxima tempestate periculosissime pertransivi, nec aliquis tantam navem umquam ibidem transisse recordatur.³⁵

Whether it is consciously intended by the author or not, the reader instinctively connects the description of the storm to that in the Acts of the Apostles when St Paul's shipwreck occurred on the coast of Malta³⁶—an episode from the New Testament which Ludolph demonstrably knew. He mentions this passage, curiously enough not in connection with the storm he experienced near Malta, but integrated with his description of the island of Corsica. He mentions the Acts of the Apostles (*'in actibus apostolorum'*) as a source in the following report on Corsica:

... et pervenitur ad quandam insulam nomine Corsica. Prope hanc insulam sanctus Paulus apostolus, dum in Judaea captus ad Caesarem appelasset, naufragium fuit passus, et de vespere in hospi-

tio prope ignem a vipera morsus illaesus evasit, ut in actibus apostolorum continetur. In hac insula homines adhuc degunt, qui se de genere illius domestiti iactant esse, in cuius hospitio haec sancto Paulo acciderunt.³⁷

It is obvious that the island on which St Paul was shipwrecked had nothing to do with Corsica. There has never been a real Pauline tradition on Corsica, neither do ancient or modern authors or travellers speak of it. In reality Ludolph's description indisputably refers to the ancient 'Melita' i.e. Malta as the place of the shipwreck. More evident is Suchen's reference to the Pauline tradition when speaking of the islanders' habit of protecting themselves from snake bites, and the use of portions of earth mixed with wine against poisoning. Ludolph says:

... ex eo bibere abhorret, ex tunc terram cum vino miscent et dant recipienti illam potestatem seu gratiam dicentes.³⁸

This miracle of nature used as a cure against poison bites and attacks of other venomous animals was traced by the inhabitants to the powers of St Paul. Accordingly, Ludolph reproduces the exact incantation and blessing:

Accipe potestatem et gratiam a deo in honorem sancti Pauli apostoli nobis et nostris successoribus concessam, quam tibi eodem nomine concedimus, ut dum a serpente vel aspidem vel quocumque alio animali venenoso morsus vel laesus fueris, saliva tua te ipsum, et non alium, valeas salvare et curare, quam tibi gratis conferimus et pro deo damus. In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti. Amen.³⁹

In 1533 the French chaplain of the Order of St John, Jean Quintin d'Autun, was witness to the Pauline cult in Malta:

Praeterea (...) Melitae nullum maleficum serpentis genus neque nascitur neque nocet, aliunde invectum. Sunt indigenae quasi terrori serpentibus. Scorpiones, dirum alibi animali, inter manus lascivientum puerorum conspiciuntur innocui; vidi qui manderet. Quod Paulo viperam admorso pendentem digito citra

noxiam excutienti ferunt acceptum. Ex eo, quod modo dixi, antro, nullo non die, per advenas lapidum frustra effringuntur, quibus serpentum et scorpionum ictibus tota Africa et Italia Romae etiam palam sese mederi affirmant. Plebs gratiam sancti Pauli nominat.⁴⁰

On his visit to Malta in 1586 Samuel Kiechel confirms Suchen's report concerning the effect of the serum against poisoning:

Dannenher dem stein der grotta sancti Pauli grose crafft zugemessen wüerd, (...) da von die düsem stein (...) in ein (...) getranckh geschaben, solle keinem das güfft schaden können.⁴¹

The Pauline cult in Malta has its roots in the Bible, while even the description of the Apostle's power had its origin in the Book of Acts.⁴² As St. Paul was on his way to Rome he was forced to land in Malta, he was bitten by a snake while searching for a log to light a fire. Because he survived this mishap the Maltese began to believe that he was a God and began to worship him. The miraculous curing of the father of St. Publius confirmed this reputation. A Maltese tradition now maintains that from then on the snakes in Malta lost their poison and the earth of the island, especially that which is to be found in St. Paul's Grotto in Rabat (where attributed by the folk-legends St. Paul is supposed to have spent most of his time when in Malta), had an effective power against anything that was poisonous.⁴³

Beyond doubt since the 16th century there was, in Malta, another highly esteemed medicinal cure against all sorts of poison: the so called '*Glossopietre*' (lat. '*Glossopetrae*'). In reality this was a fossil tooth commonly found in the earth belonging to sharks, and which from its shape was thought to be a fossilised tongue of snakes. Together with the famous '*Terra Melitensis*' and '*Terra di S. Paolo*' which was derived exclusively from St. Paul's Grotto⁴⁴, they were distributed to various countries of Christian Europe, bearing authentic seals to avoid giving time to fakes.⁴⁵ This Pauline tradition which focused around the Grotto of St.

Paul must have made Malta a place of worship in the centre of the Mediterranean in the course of the 16th and 17th century.

Sources and documents concerning the Pauline tradition in medieval Malta, which have hitherto been traced in the islands' archives, are very scanty. The hints and information provided by writers of foreign chronicles or by travellers therefore assume the greater importance. Malta-based evidence of the medieval Pauline tradition is mostly reinforced by archeological evidence from Rabat. As Anthony T. Luttrell has already pointed out, *'the medieval commentators on the biblical text recording Paul's Maltese visit (...) showed little interest in Malta.'*⁴⁶ The excavations at San Pawl Milqi show a small church, erected when Christianity was re-established in Malta following the first Norman conquest in 1090⁴⁷. The church was built around the opening of a Roman cistern which is traditionally regarded as the place where St. Paul baptized and healed the father of the Roman governor Publius⁴⁸. In a will of 1299, a testator bequeathed a sum *'operi ecclesiae Sancti Pauli episcopatus Malte, processionibus sacerdotibus et clericis qui sue sepulture interfuerint'*⁴⁹, demonstrating that the cathedral of Mdina was already standing and dedicated to St. Paul. In 1370 an image of St. Paul was reported to have been stamped on a bell made in Venice⁵⁰ for the Mdina cathedral. Already in 1366 a certain Bochius de Bocchio was granted by Bishop Ylario land belonging to the church of St. Paul *'de cripta'*⁵¹. The Rabat cemetery adjoining the Grotto is also referred to in 1372 as having a Pauline dedication⁵².

How did such a seemingly bizarre muddle occur in Suchen's writing when confusing the name of Corsica with Malta? As already explained above, Suchen's report belonged to a medieval genre in writing which amalgamated personal experiences with others taken from authoritative sources. Suchen refers to this characteristic style in his work with great detail in his introduction. Consequently he emphasises his own personal experience

in Malta. On the other hand when we hear of the Pauline tradition in 'Corsica' we do not get such a personal account. Therefore the passage on St. Paul seems probably to have been suggested by Bishop Balduin von Steinfurth—and additionally integrated as an interpolation with Suchen's own personal account. In a similar way, Suchen also includes another reference from the Acts of the Apostles when he describes the route from Corinth to the Morea and Crete *'in eadem terra Achaia est Corinthi civitas pulchra et fortissima (...) Ad hanc civitatem sanctus Paulus quam plures scripsit epistolas. Non multum a Corinthia distat Galatas civitas, ad quam sanctus Paulus etiam scripsit epistolas'*.⁵³ Another thing causing such mistakes and incompatibilities may have been the long span, at least ten years, between Suchen's return to the Diocese of Paderborn and the start of his drafting of his script.

Another factor which might have caused this geographical confusion is the imperfect state of high medieval cartography and knowledge of place names. In fact it seems that the European medieval world of the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries surprisingly did not connect the 'Melita' of the Acts of the Apostles with the island of 'Maltha'⁵⁴, 'Mante'⁵⁵, 'Manta'⁵⁶, 'Mancea'⁵⁷ or 'Mauta'⁵⁸. This might be partly explained by the fact that some high medieval maps and cartographical works, due to their geographical neighbourhood, connected the islands of 'Gaulos' (= Gozo) and 'Melita' (= Malta) to the confusing names of 'Gaulometin'⁵⁹, and even more irritatingly, 'Galonie leta'⁶⁰. Perhaps the most convincing explanation for this mix up in terminology and location arises from the fact that other important and well known maps and cartographical works of the 13th and 14th century were showing, not Malta or 'Melita', but the island of 'Corsica'⁶¹ right beside Sicily.⁶² For these reasons it is now better understood why the medieval Western European audience could hardly identify the island of Malta with the ancient 'Melita' touched on by the works of Pliny, Cicero or Diodorus

Siculus and described by the Acts of the Apostles.

Until today it was thought that Quintin d'Autun's description of Malta published in 1536, and the '*Breve Descrizione dell'Isola di Malta*' written by the Serbo-Croat bishop of Dulcigno, Martino Segono in 1480 were the earliest literary evidence of a Pauline cult in Malta.⁶³ With this new interpretation of Ludolph von Suchen's itinerary, we now possess much earlier evidence for the sparsely documented and very little researched medieval Pauline devotion in Malta. It is now better understood why for instance the Maltese Matteo Surdu, parish priest of St. Paul's church ('*S. Paolo di Fora*') at Rabat refers (1549) to an earlier time when people came even from far countries to worship St. Paul for his miraculous powers, and who even wanted to be buried in the vicinity of the Grotto.⁶⁴ Thus more and more reports of voyages in writings similar to that of Ludolph von Suchen are being better appreciated as sources for theological, historical, literary or ethnographic values. This essay has tried to show that the itinerary of '*Ludolphi, Rectoris ecclesiae parochialis in Suchem*' is very probably an important document for the establishment of a new chronology for the Pauline Cult that flourished in late medieval times in the Mediterranean island of Malta.⁶⁵ Such a subject has up to now been attended with great uncertainty.

1 For the different spellings of Ludolph von Suchen cf. Ivar von Stapelmohr (Editor): *Ludolph von Sudheims Reise ins Heilige Land*. Lund 1937 & Aleya Khattab: *Das Ägyptenbild in den deutschsprachigen Reisebeschreibungen der Zeit von 1285–1500*. Frankfurt am Main, Bern, 1982 Diss. (*Europäische Hochschulschriften*. Series 1 Vol 517) p. 23ff. This essay tries to remain true to the original Latin source and to be as near as possible to the author's text which was edited by Ferdinand Deycks. Consequently the pen name Ludolph von Suchen will be adhered to. See: '*Ludolphi, Rectoris ecclesiae parochialis in Suchem, de Itinere Terrae Sanctae Liber*.' Edited by Ferdinand Deycks. Stuttgart 1851 (Bib-

liothek des Literarischen Verein Stuttgart. XXV).

- 2 Besides the above mentioned German edition by Stapelmohr and the research by Aleya Khattab, there are, for example, studies of Ferdinand Deycks and Reiner Moritz from the 19th and 20th centuries. See Ferdinand Deycks: *Über ältere Pilgerfahrten nach Jerusalem, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Ludolfs von Suchen Reisebuch des Heiligen Landes*. Münster 1848. Reiner Moritz: *Untersuchungen zu den deutschsprachigen Reisebeschreibungen des 14–16. Jahrhundert*. München 1970.
- 3 Eduard Robinson: *Palästina*. Leipzig 1856, Vol. 1 p. XXIII.
- 4 Cf. *Revue de L'Orient Latin*. Paris 1884, Tom. II pp. 305–375.
- 5 Cf. Heinz Warnecke: *Die tatsächliche Romfahrt des Apostels Paulus*. Stuttgart 1987 and H. Warnecke; T. Schirrmacher: *War Paulus wirklich auf Malta?* Stuttgart 1992. As a kind of counterthesis to Warnecke's doubts about the 'Sicilian' Malta being the place of the shipwreck cf. M. Galea; J. Ciarlò (Editors): *St Paul in Malta. A Compendium of Pauline Studies*. Malta 1992. With regard to the 'Cult of St. Paul' and to the 'Pauline Traditions' in Malta cf. in depth John Azzopardi (Editor): *St. Paul's Grotto, Church and Museum at Rabat, Malta*. Malta 1990.
- 6 Arnold von Harff: *The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff*. ed. by M. J. Letts. London 1946 p. 2.
- 7 When reading Suchen's text in the German translations of the 15th and 16th centuries, one must observe the abbreviations and the variants—a phenomenon which is to be seen in connection with names in Feyerabendt's version of Suchen's writings too. Instead of '*Ludolph, Rectoris ecclesiae parochialis in Suchem*' it is written here '*Rudolph (sic!) Kirchherr von Suchen*'. See Sigmund Feyerabendt (Editor): *Reyßbuch deß heyligen Lands/ Das ist ein gründliche Beschreibung aller und jeder Meer und Bilgerfahrten zum heyligen Lande. . .* Frankfurt am Main, 1609.
- 8 Cf. *Annal. Paderborn. lib. XIII Tom. II* p. 213f.
- 9 In this connection Suchen writes at the end of his work: '*Et haec ad deductionem et reverentiam reverendissimi in Christo patris ac domini, domini Baldewini paderburnensis ecclesiae episcopi dignissimi conscripsi, et nomine domini invocato incepti et complevi. Cui laus et gloria per*

- infinita saecula.* 'De terra sancta' 1851 p. 102.
- 10 'De terra sancta' 1851 p. 1.
 - 11 Georg Schnath: 'Drei niedersächsische Sinaipilger um 1330. Herzog Heinrich von Braunschweig-Grubenhagen, Wilhelm von Boldensele, Ludolf von Sudheim'. In: Festschrift Percy Ernst Schramm. Wiesbaden 1964 Vol. 1 pp 461–478 here p. 469.
 - 12 First edited in Frankfurt a. M. 1584 Here it is the second edition which is cited (Frankfurt a. M. 1609) wherein it is mentioned '*herrn Rudolph Kirchherrs von Suchen fleissige Auffzeichnung aller Gelegenheit. Reysen / Gebräuchen / Wunder und anderer Werck (. . .) So in dem heyiligen und daran angrenzenden Oertern / von 1336 biß auff das 1350 (sic!) Jahr vermeldt worden*'. S. Feyerabendt (Editor): *Reyßbuch . . .* p. 818. This is mistakenly taken up by Ferdinand Deycks: *Über ältere Pilgerfahrten nach Jerusalem, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Ludolfs von Suchen Reisebuch des Heiligen Landes*. Münster 1848 p. 8ff., or C. C. Dessoulavy: 'Visitors to Malta from the 15th to the 18th century'. In: *The Sundial*. Vol. 3, June 1940, pp. 97–107, here p. 97. In the preface to his edition of Suchen's 'De itinere terrae sanctae' (Stuttgart 1851) Deycks corrects his mistake. See p. XIX.
 - 13 *De terra sancta* 1851 p. 2.
 - 14 Cf. *De terra sancta* 1851 p. 99.
 - 15 Cf. *Annal. Paderborn. Lib. XIII Tom. II* p. 213ff.
 - 16 *De terra sancta* 1851 p. 3.
 - 17 *De terra sancta* 1851 p. 3ff.
 - 18 Cf. Loukia Droulia: 'The Pilgrim Traffic in the Eastern Mediterranean.' In: *Medieval ships and the birth of technological societies*. Malta 1991, Vol. 2 pp 235–242.
 - 19 *De terra sancta* 1851, p. 16.
 - 20 Cf. *Reisebuch Europa 1492. Wege durch die Alte Welt*. München Zürich 1992, p. 226ff.
 - 21 *Reyßbuch deß heyiligen lands* p. 817.
 - 22 Cf. Plinius *Historia Naturalis* III; 8.
 - 23 About the great international sea traffic and the wayside position that Malta held in medieval times read Dominic Cutajar and Carmel Cassar: 'Malta's Role in Mediterranean Affairs. 1530–1699. In: *Mid-Med Bank Report*. Malta 1984 pp. 39–71.
 - 24 The reworked report of this late medieval pilgrimage appears in print in Balthasar Menciis (Editor): *Itinera sex a diversis temporibus in Italiam omnia, tria in Palaestinam & terram sanctam facta*. Wittemberg 1612 pp 78ff; here p. 81. See also Reinhold Röhricht: *Deutsche Pilgerreisen nach den Heiligen Lande*. Gotha 1889, pp. 208–212.
 - 25 *De terra sancta* 1851 p. 22.
 - 26 *De terra sancta* 1851 p. 2.
 - 27 About the problem regarding the authenticity of the medieval travel reports cf. Dietrich Huschenbett; John Margetts (Editors): *Reisen und Welterfahrung in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*. (Würzburger Beiträge zur deutschen Philologie. Vol. 7), p. 8ff.
 - 28 A few years before Suchen started his voyage, a very similar route to Palestine was taken by the ex-dominican monk Wilhelm of Boldensele (Wilhelm of Boldensele cannot be regarded as his original name. The 'Mindensche Chronik' (Script. I p. 567) reads for the year 1315: '*Otto de Nyenhusen de conventu Mendensi recedens nomenque suum, Wilhelmum de Boldensele se nominavit*.' Due to a controversy with the abbot of the monastery of Minden in 1330 Boldensele had to quit the order and immediately he set out for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In 1335 back in Germany, he began to write an account of his voyage. Later this '*Itinerarius Guilielmi de Boldensele*', as it came to be known, was studied very carefully by Ludolph von Suchen and served as a decisive source for Suchen's own itinerary. What is important for the subject of this study is that Boldensele neither mentions an island of 'Manta' or 'Melita' nor a Pauline Cult at Corsica or anywhere else in the central Mediterranean. For an indication of Boldensele's travel route see: '*Sic igitur prospero navigio, Domino annuente, ad has partes Troja perveni, postquam de civitate nauli, procedo perlustravi litora Lombardiae ac Tusciae, Campaniae, Calabriae et Apuliae et transivi famosas Italiae insulas, Corsicam, Sardiniam et Siciliam et postquam transivi sinum seu mare Adriaticum*. . . ' Boldensele's work is printed in *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Niedersachsen* Jahrgang 1852 part II Hannover 1855 pp. 226–286, here p. 239.
 - 29 *Reyßbuch deß heyiligen Lands* p. 821.
 - 30 Cf. footnote 3 in *De terra sancta* 1851 p. 22. In any case Suchen's medieval description sounds like the Maltese term for Gozo 'Ghaudex'.
 - 31 'Relazione dell'Isola di Malta fatta alla S. Tà di N. S. Papa Gregorio XIII dell'Anno 1582' The manuscript is kept in the Library of S. Salvatore in Bologna (Codice

- 1467). Printed in *Archivio Storico di Malta*; Anno VII; 28 Gennaio 1936, XIV; Fasc. II pp. 286–303.
- 32 Cited here from *Archivio Storico di Malta*; Anno VII; 28 Gennaio 1936, XIV; Fasc. II p. 293.
- 33 Malta was mentioned for the first time a bishopric under the jurisdiction of the diocese of Palermo in 1156. Cf. Anthony Luttrell (Editor): *Medieval Malta: Studies on Malta before the Knights*. London 1975 here p. 53. For the Moorish character see also Bishop Burchardus of Straßburg's 'Relatio de itinere in Terram Sanctam'. Edited in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Scriptores XXI Hannover 1869 p. 236. In 1175 Burchardus of Straßburg touched Malta on his way to Egypt.
- 34 The reasons for not being inhabited lies in the continuous danger from piratical and corsair attacks. For some time Comino was even used as a pirates' hideaway. The first habitation on the island is known only since the 17th century. Cf. Stanley Fiorini: *Demographic Growth and Urbanization of the Maltese Countryside to 1798*. In: Victor Mallia Milanese (Editor): *Hospitaller Malta. 1530–1798*. Malta 1993 pp. 297–310; here p. 309.
- 35 *De terra sancta* 1851, p. 22.
- 36 Act. Apost. XXVII ff. By copying Suchen's manuscript Nicolaus de Hude presents a new version of this passage: '*De Troia venit ad insulam Tursitam et ibi prope est insula Cauda et Milicena, ubi Paulus naufragium passus fuit et a vipera tactus sed permansit illesus.*' Nicolaus de Hude's version of Ludolph von Suchen's work is printed in *Revue de L'Orient Latin* Tome II Paris 1884 pp 305–375; here p. 331. The date 'Anno Domini MCCCXLVIII' announced in the manuscript as the year of origin of de Hude's version of Suchen's manuscript must be wrong. Nevertheless de Hude must be considered as a contemporary author. If one interprets 'Troia' as the town of 'Trau' (lat. 'Tragurium') near Spalato, the 'insulam Tursita' as the modern 'Curzola', and 'Cauda' as 'Lagosta', it is not unlikely that Nicolaus de Hude had the Dalmatian island of 'Meleda' in mind when he speaks of 'Milicena, where Paul was shipwrecked and bitten by a viper and remained unharmed'. Hude's main pattern, the Itinerary of Ludolph von Suchen, definitely never speaks of a certain 'Milicena' but of 'Manta'. This interpretation was first introduced by G. A. Neumann. Cf. *Revue de L'Orient*; Paris 1884 Vol. II p. 331, footnote 50.
- There might be a connection between de Hude's passage and the claim of the Benedictine monks of Pulsano, who in the 12th century settled at the Dalmatian Mljet or 'Melitene'—as Ptolemy called the island—that 'their' island was the real site of the shipwreck. It is very likely that the claim of the Benedictine monks of 'Melitene' was motivated by the statement of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII, who, in the early 950s, presumably for political reasons, claimed that his Dalmatian possession 'Melitene' was the real site of the shipwreck.
- 37 *De terra sancta* 1851 p. 17.
- 38 *De terra sancta* 1851 p. 17.
- 39 *De terra sancta* 1851 p. 17.
- 40 H. C. R. Vella (Editor): *The earliest description of Malta*. (Lyons 1536). By Jean Quintin d'Autun. Malta 1980 p. 44f. Although printed in 1336, Quintin D'Autun finished his writing three years before.
- 41 S. Kiechel: *Die Reisen des Samuel Kiechel*. From the manuscripts edited by Dr. K. D. Haszler. Stuttgart 1866, p. 197.
- 42 Act Apost. XXVIII, 1 ff.
- 43 Cf. Cornelius a Lapide: *Commentarius in Acta Apostolorum*. Antwerp 1717 pp. 356–358. This Grotto ('La Grotta di S. Paolo') was visited numerous times by pilgrims and travellers in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries and the curing power of its stone and the devotion for St. Paul was described by many travel accounts and historiographical and geographical works as well.
- 44 Cf. H. C. R. Vella (Editor): *The earliest description of Malta*. p. 44. See also the detailed description of this rock with healing powers and the devotion to St. Paul in the writings of the Suebian traveller and former galley slave who journeyed to the Levant, Michael Heberer von Bretten: *Aegyptiaca Servitus*. Heidelberg 1610 p. 436 ff. For an investigation of Michael Heberer von Bretten's sojourn at the Maltese islands see Thomas Freller: 'Ein Badenser des 16. Jahrhunderts auf Malta. Der Reisebericht des Michael Heberer von Bretten und die frühneuzeitliche Baugeschichte des Ordensstaats der Johanniter auf Malta'. In: *Donaueschingen. Jahrbuch 1994 des Bildhauer- und Steinmetzhandwerks Baden*. n. p. 1994, pp. 194–208.

- 45 Cf. Michael Ruppert Besler: *Gazophylacium rerum naturalium*. Leipzig 1663 Plate 30.
- 46 A. T. Luttrell: 'Approaches to Medieval Malta'. In: A. T. Luttrell (ed): *Medieval Malta. Studies on Malta before the Knights*. London 1975 p. 21, footnote 124.
- 47 Cf. in detail Michelangelo Cagiano de Azevedo: *Medieval Buildings excavated in Malta*. In: A. T. Luttrell 1975, pp. 93–95.
- 48 Cf. M. Cagiano de Azevedo: *Testimonianze archeologiche della tradizione paolina a Malta*. Rom 1966, p. 16.
- 49 Original text printed by Henri Bresc: 'Malta dopo il Vespro Siciliano'. In: *Melita Historica*; VI (1974) No. 3 p 318.
- 50 Cf. A. Mifsud in: *La Diocesi (Malta)*; II (1917/1918) pp 76f.
- 51 Cf. G. Wettinger: 'A land grant by Bishop Ylario to Bochius de Bocchio at St. Paul's Grotto', 1366. In: J. Azzopardi (ed.) 1990, pp. 65–67.
- 52 Cf. Henri Bresc in: Papers of the British school at Rome; XLI document 36. Regarding the cemetery in Rabat, compare also the statement of Matteo Surdu from 1549 in Mdina Cathedral Archive; CEM, *Acta Originalia* 464 f. 103.
- 53 *De terra sancta* 1851, p. 22.
- 54 About the term 'Maltha' see Burchardus of Straßburg: '... insula nomine Maltha, distans a Sicilia per viginti miliaria ...' Burchardus of Straßburg: 'Relatio de itinere in Terram Sanctam' Ed. in: *M G H Scriptores XXI* p. 233f, here p. 236.
- 55 See the description by the Italian pilgrim Nicolas Martoni in 1394: 'Prope vero dictam insulam Gocze per milearis tria est insula Mante ...' 'Nicolai de Marthono, Notarii Liber peregrinationis ad Loca Sancta' Ed. in: *Revue de L'Orient Latin*; Vol. 3, 1895 pp. 577–669, here p. 579.
- 56 So Malta is called by Ludolph von Suchen and partly by his anonymous late 14th century North German copist. See 'De terra sancta' 1851 p. 22 and Ivar von Stapelmohr (Editor) 1938, p. 99.
- 57 See also the North German copist of Ludolph of Suchen's itinerary printed in Ivar von Stapelmohr 1938, p. 96.
- 58 The Languedoc troubadour Peire Vidal seemed to have visited Malta in 1205 by joining the army of count Henry of Malta: 'Ar ai conquist sojorn e. m. bante e Mauta, on sui albergatz ab la Comt' Eric, de quem platz.' Text in V. De Bartholomaeis: *Poesio provenzali storiche relative all'Italia*. Rom 1931 I 118§34. See also Raimondo Lull's reference to Malta in his 'Liber de fine' written in the late years of the 13th century praising the island as a basis for crusading fleets: 'Ulterius dominus admirallus unam navem valde magnam et galeas quatuor seu taridas bene munitas seu paratas, et capiat unam insulam (...) que dicitur Mauta.' 'Raimondi Lulli Libellus de fine' Edited by A. Gottron: *Ramon Lulls Kreuzzugsideen*. In: *Abhandlungen zur Mittleren und Neueren Geschichte*. Heft 39 Berlin, Leipzig 1912, here p. 86.
- 59 Cf. 'Ravennatis anonymi Cosmographia et Guidonis Geographica' Edited by M. Pinder; G. Parthey Berlin 1860, new edition Aalen 1962.
- 60 So Malta and Gozo were named by the early 14th century so called 'Ebstorfer Weltkarte', the most important and most rich illustrated cartographical work of medieval Europe. The 'Ebstorfer Weltkarte' connects Gozo and Malta to one big island. For the most detailed study on this map see Hartmut Kugler (Editor): *Ein Weltbild vor Columbus. Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte. Interdisziplinäres Colloquium* 1988. n p 1991 For Malta cf. especially p. 355 Cf. also Konrad Miller (Editor): *Die ältesten Weltkarten*. Stuttgart 1896 Vol 5 p. 29 Regarding the name 'Nilacā' for Malta cf. Miller 1896, Vol IV p. 21.
- 61 Not to be confused with the ancient 'Cosyra' or 'Kossyra' calling the island of Pantelleria.
- 62 See for example the map which is included in the worldhistory 'Polychronicon' written by the English monk Ranulph Higden. The scholar and historiographer Higden was a direct contemporary of Ludolph of Suchen. For an analysis of this map, cf Konrad Miller, Vol. 3 p. 91f, 96f.
- 63 Printed at A. Pertusi: 'Le Isole Maltesi dall'epoca bizantina al periodo normanno e svevo (Secc. VI–XIII e descrizioni di esse dal sec. XII al sec. XVI)'. In: *Byzantinische Forschungen*. Vol. 5 1977, (pp. 253–306) here p. 294.
- 64 '... ex universo orbe nobilissimi viri consulto in hanc Insulam confluebant ea gratia ut post mortem in eo cimiterio sepe-lirentur quam rem multa monumenta qui

in illo extarat clare testantur.' Mdina (Malta); Cathedral Archive. CEM; Acta Originalia 464 ff. 103.

65 For a study of early modern visitors to the

centres of the Pauline Cult in Malta cf. Thomas Freller: *St. Paul's Grotto (Malta) and its visitors. Pilgrims, knights, scholars and sceptics*. Malta 1995.