

MELITA HISTORICA



Editor: David Mallia



VOL. XVIII No. 2 (2021)
MALTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Obituary: Mgr Prof. Vincent Borg

Renowned historian and ecclesiastic, Monsignor Professor Vincent Borg passed away on 12 July 2022 at the venerable age of 92. His death came a few days after the publication of the fourth volume of his monumental series, *Melita Sacra* on the history of the Church in Malta within its socio-cultural milieu. Borg was born in Birkirkara on 19 September 1929. After his primary and secondary education, he was a student at the then Royal University of Malta, Valletta and at the Archbishop's Major Seminary, Floriana, after responding to his priestly calling. Borg was ordained priest by Archbishop Michael Gonzi on 17 March 1956.



In Rome, in 1961, he acquired a Diploma in Archivistic Studies from the Vatican School of Palaeography and Diplomatic Studies. Subsequently, in 1964, he was awarded a Licentiate from the Pontifical Institute of Christian Archaeology, and in 1967 a Doctorate in Ecclesiastical History from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Borg's praiseworthy doctoral thesis was focused on *Fabio Chigi: Apostolic Delegate in Malta (1634–1639)*. Borg was also instrumental in the classification and cataloguing of the archive of the Order of St John, as well as parts of the archive of the Archbishop's Curia in Malta.

Within the Metropolitan Chapter, to which he had been appointed in 1980, Borg was member of the Commission responsible for the Cathedral Museum. He was an internationally recognised scholar on ecclesiastical history and Christian archaeology. For three decades, from 1965 he taught many cohorts of students. He was an inspired researcher who shared his findings through a wide gamut of publications at various levels. Borg was keen on underlining the importance of the social milieu to any historical event or development, whether in local or universal Church history. Mgr Professor Borg led the Faculty of Theology from 1982 to 1992, both during

the years when it functioned autonomously, and from 1988 when it was reincorporated within the University, as its Dean.

On account of his expertise, Borg was a very active member of the Malta Historical Society. Over the years, he occupied practically all the leadership roles in the Society's Standing Committee. He was a member on the Committee, treasurer, vice-President, as well as President from December 1978 to January 1984. With his colleagues in this learned Society, he introduced *History Week*, as well as the publication of its proceedings. In 1977, Pope Paul VI appointed him member of the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology, while in 1997, Pope John Paul II named him Consultor to the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Patrimony of the Church. Borg's bibliography includes many publications, but his *magnum opus* is the series of volumes bearing the name *Melita Sacra*. In this work, Borg sifted through thousands of documenta and data, and presented his analysis and conclusions to produce a meticulous history of the Church in Malta from mediaeval times to the eighteenth century.

During the homily at Borg's funeral service, Archbishop Charles Scicluna used poignant words to describe the deceased prelate. The archbishop highlighted the fact that, like Borg, we can interpret the present by returning to our cultural roots, while reiterating the adage that *historia magistra vitae*. Borg's legacy lives on not only in his scholarly writings, but also in the many initiatives with which he enriched the local and universal Church, as well as Maltese society.

Mgr Prof. Hector Scerri

- **The 1821 Petition: The early days of British Rule: official promises and Maltese delusions**
Albert Ganado
- **J.J. Dillon's 1807 *Memoir* on Malta**
Mark Sammut Sassi
- **Malta and Conrad I of Sicily:
A new document of 1252**
Stanley Fiorini
- **Grand Master Emmanuel de Rohan-Polduc's forgotten late 18th century project for the defence of the Island of Lampedusa**
Dennis De Lucca
- **Obituary: Comm. Salvatore Mousù**
- **Obituary: Mgr Prof. Vincent Borg**
- **Tuberculosis: a not infrequent ailment among protestant missionaries in nineteenth century Malta**
Roger Ellul Micallef
- **The *dodici maestri periti* of Grand Master Manoel de Vilhena (1722–36)**
Mervick Spiteri
- **The Theotokos Icon at Mdina Cathedral, Malta**
Mario Buhagiar
- **Book Reviews**
Simone Azzopardi
Mariona Camilleri
- **Annual Administrative Report 2021**
- **Malta Historical Society Notes for Contributors**
(updated 2013)

