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K. Ameli
JOHN CRITIEN, 34 STR. REALE.

ARTISTIC VIEWS OF MALTA & GUIDE BOOKS—London Periodicals

STATIONER, BOOKSELLER, & ENGRAVER—London Newspapers weekly

GUIDE
TO THE
CHURCH
OF
S^T JOHN



COMPILED BY
G. W. COWPER.

6^{d.}

PUBLISHED BY

JOHN CRITIEN,
34, STRADA REALE,
VALLETTA.

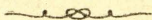
MALTA.

ZU, N512 **WILEY & POLDEN'S AGENCY**

B. 154

LAWRENCE BUSUTTI, Printer,
34, Strada Forni.

PREFACE.



The want of a cheap and handy, yet reliable, guide to the Church of St. John—the principal monument in Malta—has induced the writer to present this small work to the public, trusting that it may meet with favour.

THE AUTHOR.



HISTORICAL SKETCH.

As soon as the works of defence of the new city of Valletta had been sufficiently advanced, the Order of St. John decided to build a Conventual Church, to be dedicated to their patron Saint. Want of funds would have considerably delayed the erection; but the Grand Master, **La Cassiere**, undertook to build the Church at his own expense, and charged **Girolamo Cassar** (1) a Maltese Architect, with the plans.

These so pleased **La Cassiere**, that they were adopted without alteration, and the work was commenced on the 22nd November 1573; and it

(1) **Girolamo Cassar** was the assistant of the Chev: **Lapparelli**, who traced the original plan of Valletta and its defences. The Grand Master's Palace and most of the Auberges and Churches in Valletta were built from the plans of Cassar, who also did good service during the siege. (1565.)

proceeded so rapidly, that the Church was consecrated on the 20th February 1571.

As the new Bishop of Malta, **Monsignor Gargallo**, had not yet been consecrated, **La Cassiere** invited **Mons. Ludovico Torres**, Archbishop of Monreale, in Sicily, to perform the ceremony, and he was conveyed to Malta, in the flagship of the Order escorted by two galleys.

Over the main entrance are the arms of the Order, those of **La Cassiere** and of **Monsignor Torres**. Two marble tablets commemorate both the founding and consecration of the sacred edifice.

The Grand Master, with the assent of Pope **Gregory XIII**, endowed the new Church, partly with the confiscated property of a Maltese ecclesiastic convicted of holding heretical opinions, and partly with the property bequeathed to **La Cassiere** by another Maltese priest.

The remains of former Grand Masters were removed from the Chapel in Fort St. Angelo, and placed in a crypt underneath the choir.

As it has been already stated, the Church of St. John was the **Conventual Church** of the Order, and quite distinct from the **Cathedral Church** of the Bishop of Malta, which was then, as now, in **Città Vecchia**.

When the Order fell, the Church was made over to the Bishop, and it has been used as his Co-cathedral Church since 1816.

EXTERIOR

The exterior is heavy and uninteresting, but well suited to the sanctuary of a semi-monastic order which, whilst living in boundless luxury, made profession of poverty.

Flanking
Buildings

The front is flanked by buildings formerly the residences of the Grand Prior of the Order, and of the Vice Prior, who was custodian of the treasure belonging to the Church.

Towers
& Bells

The two square towers, surmounted by short conical steeples, contain ten bells, of which three are above the right tower, and belong to the clock below.

The bells have a rich tone. Two of the largest, the gift of Grand Master **Pinto** in 1749, are said to contain much gold and silver in the casting.

Clock

The clock has three faces, showing the hour, the day of the week, and that of the month. The name of the maker, **Clerici** (*a Maltese*) is inscribed below.

Balcony
Over the portico is a balcony from which the newly elected Grand Master used to make his first public appearance.

Bronze figure of the Saviour
Above the balcony is a beautiful bronze figure of the Saviour, by Algardi. The words "Salva Nos," appear higher up, and the whole is surmounted by the eight-pointed cross of the Order.

INTERIOR

The interior was originally quite as plain as the exterior, but majestic in its simplicity of style and colossal dimensions.

Successive Grand Masters, (1) and other members of the Order, vied with each other in lavish presents, and in sumptuously decorating the interior, so that, in about two hundred years, it became what we now see it.

Nay, it was grander still, as the gold and silver ornaments belonging to the Church, and estimated at 3,000,000 scudi, (about £ 250,000) cannot but have added lustre to the gorgeous decorations.

(1) Notably the two brothers A. and N. Cottoner, whose monograms appear on the walls of several chapels in token of their munificence.

These treasures, consisting of sacred vessels, reliquaries, and ornaments, were almost all seized by the French in 1798, and converted into money for the payment of their Troops then going to Egypt.

Of the two ships which carried this newly coined money, one fell into the hands of the English, and the other was burnt at Aboukir.

The church consists of a nave, with side chapels connected with each other, and forming side aisles, an apse and choir, an oratory, and a vestry. There are also two covered passages dating from 1735, a "campo santo" and two crypts.

Dimensions

The greatest length is 187 feet, and the total breadth is 118 feet, that of the nave alone being 50 feet. The height to the centre of the vault is 63½ feet. The church was to have been larger, but the great weight of the vault caused some anxiety, and the original idea was abandoned. The style of the architecture is Doric.

Side Chapels

Of the twelve divisions of the side aisles, eight are chapels, and four are merely vestibules. A "Grand Chapter," convened in 1604, assigned a chapel to

each of the seven - "**Languages**" then composing the Order.

The remaining chapel was dedicated to Our Lady of Philermos, and used as a sacramental chapel.

In 1784, a part of the topmost chapel in the left aisle was railed off, and assigned to the newly formed **Anglo-Bavarian Language**.

**Ornamented Walls
of side Chapels**

The walls of the transepts are highly ornamented with gilt sculpture, the design in each being different from the others in detail.

These ornaments were gilded in sequin gold at the expense of **G. M. Nicholas Cottoner**. The gilding in the vault was restored by Government between 1867 and 1874.

Piers

The piers supporting the transeptal arches were encased in green marble between 1663 and 1680, also at the expense of **G.M. N. Cottoner**, and his arms appear at the upper extremity of each.

Fonts

The two marble fonts near the main entrance, were the gift of the Chev: **Zambeccario**, and date from 1641. The Baptismal font was brought here from the Church of La Vittoria in 1643 and is probably of earlier date.

Monument to
G. M. Zondadari

The handsome bronze and marble monument to G. M. Zondadari is also close to the main entrance, and was executed in Siena.

Lighting

The Church is lighted by oval windows placed in the vault above each transeptal arch. There is also a semicircular window above the altar in each side chapel, and also a large window over the gallery at the Western Entrance.

NOTE After the visitor has taken a general view of the interior, he should proceed up the right aisle, visit the choir and apse, and after visiting the crypt, walk down the left, finishing with the vestry. Should he wish to examine minutely the paintings in the vault, we hope he will find the subjoined descriptive list of the different pieces of use.

PAVEMENT

The pavement consists of about 400 commemorative tablets of knights of the Order. They are beautifully inlaid in various coloured marbles, of the richest and rarest.

The typical tablet consists of the arms of the knight, an epitaph, and profuse ornaments

emblematic of the dual quality of the Order, military and monastic.

The noblest families of Europe will here find a namesake.

This large collection of epitaphs is practically the history of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem for well nigh 300 years.

Besides members of the Order there are a few others buried in the church. Of these one is a woman—a niece of **G. M. de Rohan**.

VAULT

The vault is of semi-cylindrical form. It is divided into seven zones; six broad ones from chapel to chapel, and a narrow one at the Western extremity. Between the zones is a projecting narrow belt extending from pier to pier, and highly ornamented with carved palm leaves in gold on a white ground.

The paintings in the vault illustrate the prominent episodes in the life of St. John the Baptist, Patron of the Order of the Knights of Malta.

The figures on each side of the oval windows over the transeptal arches, represent various heroes and martyrs connected with the Order. Of there there are 24.

The paintings in the vault, as well as those in the apse, and over the west entrance, are by **Mattia Preti**, called "il Calabrese," and were executed between 1661 and 1699. (1)

Preti, who was of noble birth, had been created a knight of the Order of St. John in 1642, and had come to Malta to join in the "caravans," or naval expeditions, against the Moors; but having severely wounded another knight in a quarrel provoked by the latter, **Preti** fled to Italy.

Almost twenty years after, **G. M. Lascaris**, hearing of **Preti's** fame as a painter, invited him to return to Malta. The death of **Lascaris** having occurred soon after, the invitation was renewed by **G. M. De Redin**, his successor, and **Preti** came to Malta in 1661. He first painted the beautiful picture in the apse, and which was unveiled on the occasion of the feast of St. John in 1664, under the rule of **G. M. N. Cottoner**. **Preti's** paintings so pleased the G. M. and the Order, that he was promoted to the rich commandery of Syracuse. **Preti** would receive no other remuneration for his works in St. John

In his youth he wielded the rapier and the brush with equal skill.

(1) **Preti** was assisted by some of his pupils, among others Sister Maria Dominicus, who afterwards flourished as an artist in Rome.

He died in 1699 at the age of 86 and is buried at the entrance of the vestry. He is described as having been most pious and charitable.

Besides those in the vault, there are many other works of **Preti** in St. John's, as well as in other Churches in Malta.

The style of the paintings in the vault is that known as "*sotto in su*." The colouring is rich though not tawdry. **Preti** painted in oils over the stone, which he previously prepared.

These paintings, which had suffered considerably from the effects of damp and age, were restored (1) between 1867 and 1874; but much of their pristine beauty has been lost. In fact these paintings now compare unfavourably with the other works of **Preti**, particularly the pictures of St. Michael, St. Paul, and St. Catherine, in the ononymous chapels, and which are still in excellent preservation.

In drawing up the catalogue of these pictures, we have quoted the Gospel verses which the painter so ably illustrated.

(In the following list, the letters R and L stand for the visitor's Right and Left hand as he walks up the nave. C. stands for centre.)

(1) The figures flanking the windows over the transeptal arches were not in need of restoration.

The painting above the gallery over the west entrance represents "Religion" trampling the vanquished Moslems, and holding in one hand the Standard of the Order and a drawn sword in the other. The two brothers R. and N. Cottoner, Grand Masters of the Order, are on the right and left of the lunette. The figure on the right is pointing to a picture of a sea fight, that on the left is tending the sick.

Narrow Zone.

R. Zacharias in the act of composing the Benedictus.

St. Gerald (founder of the Order A. D. 1085).

L. St. Elizabeth (mother of the Baptist.)

Raymond du Puy (he recast the Order on military principles and became 1st Grand Master.)

1st Zone.

L. Zacharias in the Temple.

".....:Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard;....."

LUKE I. 13.

R. The birth of St. John.

"Now Elizabeth's full time of being delivered was come, and she brought forth a son."

LUKE I. 57,



C. The B. V. visiting St. Elizabeth.

“And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth.”

LUKE I. 40.

2nd Zone.

L. John pointing Christ to his disciples.

“And beholding Jesus walking he saith: Behold the lamb of God.”

JOHN I. 36.

R. St. John in the desert.

“And the child grew, and was strengthened in spirit: and was in the deserts until the day of his manifestation to Israel.

LUKE I. 80.

C. St. Elizabeth faints at a vision of the sword and the salver, emblematic of the martyrdom of St. John; an angel bears the infant St. John, and the Heavenly Father appears above.

3rd Zone.

L. Baptism of Christ.

“And it came to pass, in those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee; and was baptized by John in the Jordan.”

MARK I. 9.

R. John preaching in the wilderness.

“.....A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.”

LUKE III. 4.

C. "God the Father in Heaven."

"And behold a voice from heaven, saying :
This is my beloved Son, in whom I am
well pleased."

MATT. III, 17.

4th Zone.

L. John cast in prison by Herod.

"But Herod the tetrarch, when he was reprov-
ed by him for Herodias his brother's
wife, and for all the evils which Herod
had done,

He added this also above all, and shut up
John in prison."

LUKE III. 19. 20.

R. John replies to the messengers from Jeru-
salem.

"And this is the testimony of John, when
the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests
and levites to him, to ask him : Who
art thou ?

And he confessed, and did not deny :
and he confessed: I am not the CHRIST."

JOHN I. 19. 20.

C. John advising soldiers.

"And the soldiers also asked him, saying :
And what shall we do ? And he said to
them : Do violence to no man, neither
calumniate any man ; and be content
with your pay.

LUKE III. 14.

5th Zone.

L. John reproves Herod.

"For John said to him : It is not lawful
for thee to have her."

MATT. XIV. 4.

R. John sends messengers to our Lord.

“ Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ : sending two of his disciples he said to him :

Art thou He that art to come, or look we for another ? ”

MATT. XI. 2. 3.

C. Herodias' daughter with John's head in a salver.

“ And his head was brought in a dish : and it was given to the damsel, and she brought it to her mother.”

MATT. XIV. 11.

6th Zone.

L. Dance of Herodias' daughter.

“ But on Herod's birth-day, the daughter of Herodias danced before them : and pleased Herod. ”

MATT. XIV. 6.

R. Beheading of St. John.

“ And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.”

MATT. XIV. 10.

C. Choir of Angels.

Apse.

[**Demilune** over the Group of the Baptism in the Choir.]

St. John with the Standard of the Order, kneeling before the Holy Trinity.

RIGHT AISLE.

Going up the right side aisle, the first transept is merely a vestibule leading to the Oratory.

Notice the beautiful Portico of the Oratory, and the bronze tablet in memory of **Fra Flaminio Balbiano**, Prior of Messina and Grand Admiral of the Order.

The Paintings are :—

1. Martyrdom of St. Catherine, by F. Pontezano.
2. Baptism of Our Lord. Florentine school.
3. The Visitation. do. do.

Lunettes R. The emperor Julian the apostate, desecrating the bones of St. John.

L. Recovery of St. John's head.

C. (over the portico of the oratory.) The Ambassador of Bajazet presenting the hand of St. John to **G. M. d'Aubusson** at Rhodes.

These lunettes are masterpieces of art, especially the centre one, and are by the Chev: Favray.

The picture over the arch leading to the next chapel, represents St. Sebastian. (Painter unknown.)

ORATORY.

The Oratory, dedicated to the "Decollation" of St. John, was built in 1603, and set off, under **G. M. Alof de Wignacourt**, for the use of the clergy.

This Chapel was ornamented and endowed by **Fra Stefano Lomellini**, in 1684.

Altar.

The Altar is of marble. Over it, is a wooden group of the crucifixion, by **Stefano Algardi**, of Bologna.

The Altar piece, representing the beheading of St. John, is by **Michelangelo da Caravaggio** (1560-1609.)

Altar piece.

This beautiful picture is unfortunately hung in a bad light.

Michelangelo
da Caravaggio.

Michelangelo da Cavaraggio came to Malta in 1608 at the invitation of **G. M. Wignacourt**, who created him a Knight of the Order. **Caravaggio** was to have painted the vault of the church, but he died abroad the year after.

Notice the beautiful Head of the Baptist in a salver, in marble, by **De Puget**, the gift of **Mons. Alpheran**.

Monstrance.

The special monstrance over the altar, the gift of **G. M. Carafa**, is by **Bernini**.

In it was formerly preserved the right hand of **St. John** — the most venerated relic belonging to the Order. This relic was removed from Antioch (where it was originally) to Constantinople by the Emperor **Justinian**, who built a church for its reception.

It fell with Constantinople, in 1450, into the hands of the Moslems, and was finally presented by the Sultan **Bajazet** to G. M. **D'Aubusson**, (at Rhodes, 1522) in hopes that his brother **Zizim**, with whom he was at feud, and who had sought the protection of the Order, might be delivered into his hands. After the expulsion of the Order from Rhodes, **L'Isle-Adam** brought the relic to Malta.

The reliquary, in which it was contained, was of pure gold incrustated with jewels. A beautiful diamond (or sapphire) ring was attached to the case; **Bonaparte** appropriated the case, and put the ring on his own finger, whilst the "dead hand," he contemptuously returned to G. M. **Hompesch**, who presented it to the Emperor of Russia, Paul I. It is now preserved in the Winter Palace.

LIST OF PAINTINGS.

On the walls behind the Altar.

R. The B.V. appearing to the Sisters of the Order of St. John.

L. St. John pointing the lamb to two Knights of the Order.

In the vault.

R. "Getsemane."

L. Christ after the flagellation.

In the Roof.

1. Our Lord crowned with thorns.
2. "Calvary."
3. "Ecce Homo."

The paintings on the right and left walls represent:—

The Blessed Gerard.

St. Toscana.

The Blessed Sir Adrian Fontescue, (an English Knight executed by Henry VIII, in 1534.)

St. Hugh. (Knight)

St. Ubaldesca.

St. Narcisus.

St. Peter of Imola.

| | | |
|--------------|---|-----------------|
| St. Gerardo | } | Painter unknown |
| St. Ignatius | | |

All the above pictures, with one exception, represent knights, or sisters, of the Order, and, except where otherwise stated, are by Preti.

In the second division of the right aisle is the Chapel dedicated to St. James, and which belonged to the "Language" of Castille and Portugal.

Chapel of
St. James
Altar piece

St. James, by Preti.

Lunettes

L. The Madonna del Pilar appearing to St. James.

R. St. James, riding a white horse, appears during a battle with the Moors — Both are by Preti.

Monuments 1. G.M. Manoel de Vilhena 2. G.M. Pinto. (The mosaic portrait is after the Chevalier Favray.)

St. Clement The body of St. Clement, the gift of Pope Clement IX, (1669) is preserved in this Chapel.

* **

Right Vestibule The next division is a vestibule leading to the covered passage, which ends in the Strada Santa Lucia.

Campo Santo Outside this covered passage is the Campo Santo, or " Gods acre ". It is very plain, and has an obelisk in the centre, to the memory of Fra Flaminio Balbiano (1644). Many of the knights who fell in 1565 are buried here.

* **

Chapel of St. George We next come to the Chapel of St. George, and which was assigned to the " Language " of Aragon.

Notice the bronze medallion portrait and arms of G. M. Despuig at the base of the pillars flanking the altar, which was the gift of Despuig.

Altar piece St. George fighting the dragon, by Preti.

In this Chapel are preserved a fragment of the "true cross", as well as the relics of St. Fidele, the gift Pope Clement XIII (1738).

Lunettes R. St. Lawrence meeting Pope Sixtus III going to martyrdom.

L. Martyrdom of St. Lawrence.

Paintings R. St. Firmin, Bishop of Pampeluna.

L. St. Francis Xavier. All the above are by Preti.

Monuments R. 1 G. M. J. Cottoner 2 G. M. Perellos. A beautiful work of art.

The figures are symbolical of Charity and Justice. Both this and the monument to G. M. N. Cottoner are the work of Bernini, of Rome.

L. 3 G. M. De Redin 4 G. M. N. Cottoner, (the symbolical figures of Asia and Africa, in chains, and supporting the Christian Knight's trophy, are after the famous bronze originals of Giovanni di Bologna.

Chapel of St. Sebastian

The next is the Chapel of St. Sebastian. (The dolphin, which was the emblem of Auvergne, to whose "language" this Chapel was assigned, is copiously introduced in the decoration of the walls.)

Altar piece St. Sebastian, by Paladini.

Lunettes
Pope Caius.

R. St. Sebastian being blessed by

L. Martyrdom of St. Sebastian.
(Both are by Gius:d'Arena, a Maltese.)

Monument

G. M. Annet de Clermont Gessan.

* **

The last Chapel on this side is the
Sacramental Chapel Sacramental Chapel, or of the Ma-
donna di Filermo, so called from a
miraculous image of Our Lady of Philermos, which
was here venerated, and which was originally brought
from Rhodes, and said to have been painted by
St. Luke.

Hompesch, the last Grand Master of the Order,
in Malta, removed it to St. Petersburg.

It is now replaced by a modern picture of the
B. V. and child, by the Chev. P. Gagliardi, and the
gift of the late Canon Pullicino.

Silver Gates

The beautiful "Silver Gates" were
presented, in 1752, by the Bailli Gua-
rena or Guerin, and the Chev. de la
Salle, and cost £ 800, this being one fifth of their
personal property.

The gates escaped the rapacity of the French,
in 1798, owing to a coating of paint, which led
them to believe they were of common metal.

On the right and left of the gates are hung some quaint bunches of rusty keys, erroneously said to be those of Jerusalem and Rhodes. The inscriptions on the three silver tablets close by, describe these keys as being those of Amameta, Lepanto, Passava, and Patras, and brought as trophies to Malta after the knights had wrested these strong places from the Turks.

- Keys
- Lunettes The Nativity of the Virgin, by Preti.
- Paintings
(in the vault) 1 The Annunciation 2 The "Assunta" 3 The Incoronation of the B. V.
- (on the walls) R. The Annunciation, (an old picture of great value, after Giotto di Bondone.)

L. Madonna, covered with rich embroidery.

CHOIR.

The choir dates from 1598. The choir seats, as well as the pulpit, were presented by G. M. Garzes in the same year.

- Marble Group The marble group, the gift of G. M. Carafa, was placed here in 1714, and represents the Baptism of Christ. It

was executed after the model of Melchiorre Gafa', (1635-80) a Maltese artist who studied under Ferrata, in Rome.

Altar

The altar under the group is in marble, and the gift of G. M. Perellos (1704), whose arms (in bronze) are placed on the right and left of the altar.

The picture of the B. V. and child, over the altar, is attributed to Andrea del Sarto.

Wooden lectern

The wooden lectern dates from the late XV century or early XVI.

SERVICE BOOKS.

These are 22 in number, and date from the early sixteenth century to the Seventeenth.

They are decorated with the arms of G. Ms. L'Isle-Adam, Lascaris, Paola and Carafa.

HIGH ALTAR.

The High Altar, which dates from 1686, is of *lapis lazuli* and other rich marbles. The ornaments are in gilt bronze. The Altar is after Bernini, and cost 45,000 Roman scudi (about £ 9000.)

SILVER LAMP.

This dates from 1669 and was the gift of the Bailli Rospigliosi.

CANDLESTICKS.

These are of silver, and the gift of G. M. Pinto.

CHANCEL.

The chancel is a little higher than the general level of the Church. It is divided from the nave by a beautiful balustrade mostly of porphyre.

Against the two piers immediately within this lustrade, are two raised seats under red velvet canopies. The one on the left is decorated with the Royal Arms of England, and is reserved for the Sovereign; that on the right, is for the Archbishop of Malta and Rhodes.

Lecterns

The bronze lecterns in the chancel are worthy of notice. The one on the right represents Moses bearing the tablets of the Law; that on the left represents the Eagle of the Apocalypse, and is emblazoned with arms of Lorraine.

There were originally two similar lecterns of silver, but these were melted down, in 1761, owing to a threatened Turkish invasion.

LEFT AISLE.

In the topmost division of the left aisle, are the steps leading down to the "Grand Masters' " crypt.

CRYPT (1)

The Crypt is called the Chapel of the Crucifixion. The frescos are by Nasone.

Here are the tombs of twelve Grand Masters, from 1530 to 1776.

In a recess in the wall facing the Altar is the monument to **La Cassiere**, the founder of the church; those of **G. Ms. A. de Wignacourt** and **Mendes** being on its right, and left, respectively.

In the two recesses in the wall opposite the entrance, are the sarcophagi of **G. M. La Vallette** on the right, and that of **L'Isle-Adam** on the left.

Between the latter and the altar, is the monument to **G. M. Garzes**.

Beneath the three marble tablets at the foot of the altar, are the tombs of **G. Ms. D'Omedes**, **del Monte**, and **La Sengle**.

Facing the entrance are the monuments of **Del Ponte** on the right, and that of **Verdala** on the left.

(1) The keys of the crypt are kept by the verger.

Grand Master **Ximenes** is also buried here; but there is no monument, or tablet, to his memory.

The remains of **L'Isle-Adam**, **Del Ponte**, **D'Omèdes**, and **La Sengle**, were removed here from the chapel in Fort St. Angelo; those of **La Vallette** and **Del Ponte**, from the Church of "La Vittoria," in Valletta.

At the feet of **La Vallette** is buried his private secretary, Sir Oliver Starkey. He was the last English "Turcopilier", and one of the three Englishmen who took part in the memorable siege of 1565. He was the writer of **La Vallette's** Epitaph.

(There is yet another crypt in the Church, nderneath the oratory, but it is of little if any interest.)

CHAPELS.

In the topmost division of the left aisle there are two chapels, viz: the chapel of St. Charles, and the chapel of St. Michael.

This is also called the chapel "of the Relics", and belonged to the Anglo-Bavarian Language, founded by **G. M. De Rohan**, in 1784.

Relics In handsome reliquaries above the altar, are preserved, among many others, a thorn from the mock crown of our Lord, and a fragment from the manger of the Inn at Batlehem, as well as some bones of St. Thomas of Conterbury.

Crucifix The crucifix on the altar is said to have been made from the basin used at the washing of the disciples' feet.

Altar piece St. Carlo Borromeo, by A. Masucci.

Wooden figure The white figure hung on the left of the altar, inside the gates, is of wood, and represents St. John. It belonged originally to the galley in which G. M. L'Isle-Adam entered the port of Malta. It afterwards belonged to the "GRAN CARRACCA", or Flag Ship of the Order, and was placed in the poop. The pole of the ensign used to be fixed in its right hand.

Gates These are of "Corinthian metal", and are said to have cost 4000 scudi, (about £ 330).

Chapel of St. Michael This chapel belonged to the Language of Provence.

Altar piece St. Michael, after Guido Reni.

Over the entrance of the chapel is a
 Lunette representing an apparition
 of St. Michael, and is after Luca

Giordano.

Over the Altar is a small picture, in minia-
 ture on copper, representing the Baptism of our
 Lord. The frame is composed of *lapis lazuli* and
 other costly marbles.

Monuments (1) G. M. Ant: de Paola (2) G. M.
 Jean de Lascaris.

We next come to the chapel of St.
 Chapel of St. Paul Paul, which belonged to the Lan-
 guage of France.

Altar piece The conversion of St. Paul—by Preti.

Lunettes R. The decollation of St. Paul.

L. The shipwreck of St. Paul, both by Killian.

Pictures R. The Holy Family.

L. St. John. Both are by Francesco Penni, "il
 Fattorino."

Notice the arms of Knights introduced in both
 pictures, the canvas of which, has been added to.

Monuments (1) G. M. Atof de Wignacourt (2)
 G. M. Jean de Wignacourt (3) G. M.

Emm : de Rohan (4) The Comte de
 Beaujolais, who died in Malta in 1808. He was
 brother to King Louis Philippe, who erected this
 beautiful monument. It is by Pradier—a Parisian.

The original ornamentation of the walls of this Chapel was removed, and replaced by the present.

Chapel of
St. Catherine

The next chapel is dedicated to St. Catherine, and belonged to the Language of Italy. The altar is highly decorated. The marble statues of St. Catherine, and St. Euphemia are well worthy of notice.

Altar piece

The marriage of St. Catherine, by Preti.

On the altar is a Byzantine picture of the Madonna and Child.

Lunettes

R. St. Catherine disputing with the Philosophers.

L. Martyrdom of St. Catherine. (Both these lunettes are probably by Preti)

Pictures

R. St. Jerome (attributed to Ribera.)

L. St. Mary Magdalen (attributed to Correggio.)

In both these pictures are introduced the arms of knights.

Monument

G. M. Carafa.

Relics

The relics of St. Catherine, and the body of St. Euphemia, are preserved in this chapel.

The next division is used as a vestibule, and, like the corresponding one the right hand side, leads to a covered passage which opens on the square opposite the Law Courts, and ends in the Strada Santa Lucia.

Vestibule

In the fifth division, is the chapel of the Magi, or "Wise Kings of Cologne." It belonged to the Language of Germany.

Chapel of the Magi

The double-headed eagle is in evidence in the wall decorations.

The adoration of the Magi, by
Altar piece Stefano Erardi, a Maltese.

Lunettes R. Massacre of the innocents.

L. Nativity of Our Lord. (Both by Erardi.)

The sixth, and last, division on the left hand side, is used as a Vestibules and leads to the sacristy or vestry.

Lunettes—R. St. John before Herod.

L. St. John Preaching.

Pictures—R. (1) St. Sebastian after martyrdom.
(2) Circumcision of Our Lord. (The above are of the Floren ine school)

L. Coronation of Our Lady—by Andrea di Salerno.

Over the passage leading to Chapel of the Magi. St. Andrew (painter unknown).

VESTRY.

The vestry dates from 1598. Here are hung many valuable pictures, and are also kept the remnants of the "Treasure" belonging to the church, and which escaped the all grasping French. Several beautifully embroidered clerical vestments, the gift of various Grand Masters, are also carefully preserved here, and are still worn on rare occasions. Among the most beautiful are six pieces, the gift of G. M. Lascaris, representing the miraculous conversion of a Turkish princess who was a slave in the power of the Order.

An episcopal vestment brought from Rhodes is also worthy of notice.

LIST OF PAINTINGS.

The pictures are not numbered.

Altar piece—The flagellation (1572)—by Stefano Pieri, called il Piombino.

On the right wall as you go in, are:—

1. Portrait of G. M. N. Cottener, by Michelangelo da Caravaggio.
2. The childhood of Jesus and John (medioeval school.)
3. The Resurrection—by Tibaldi.
4. St. Francis Borgia (unknown.)
5. Portrait of G. M. La Cassiere — by Scipio Pulsone da Gaeta.
6. St. Elizabeth, St. John and Angels (medioeval school.)
7. St. George and the Dragon—by Potenzano.
(The arms of La Cassiere are introduced.)

On the left wall are:—

1. Saints Cosmo and Damian—by Preti.
2. Portrait of G. M. Perellos, by Nicolò Buhariar (a Maltese)
3. The descent from the cross—by Volterra.
4. Portrait of G. M. Pinto—by the Chev: Favray.
5. The Baptism of Christ—by Sebastiano da Lecce.

(This picture was in the place of the marble group in the choir.)

On the wall opposite the altar are:—

1. Pope Clement XI (unknown)
 2. St. Joseph with infant Jesus (unknown).
 3. Pope Benedict XIV—by Favray.
 4. St. Carlo Borromeo (unknown.)
 5. Mattia Preti, called il Calabrese, (probably by a pupil.)
-

SECOND ROOM

The door on the right of the altar, leads into a second room, in which are :—

1. The Crucifixion (painted on a wooden cross and was brought from Rhodes

Notice the scull hidden by the small picture at the foot of the cross).

2. Under the cross, is a small picture by Romanelli, representing St. John pointing Jesus to his disciples.

On the left wall are :—

1. The Visitation—by Stefano Erardi.
2. Madonna and Child—by Zahra (a Maltese.)
3. St. George—by Erardi.

On the right wall are :—

1. Sta. Ubaldesca—after Preti.
2. St. Antonio di Padova (unknown).
3. Sta. Toscana (after Preti).

Over the entrance is :—St. Anne—by Erardi.

In the next room is a good picture of St. Thomas (painter unknown) and also other pictures of various saints and martyrs belonging to the Order. These pictures are old, but of small artistic merit.

Passing out into the largest hall of the vestry, we enter the “ canons’ vestry ”. Here is a triptych of the descent from the cross (formerly in the flagship of the Order); also one or two small pictures of little interest.

THE TAPESTRY (*Arazzi*)

The magnificent tapestry was presented to the Church, by G. M. **Perellos**, in 1697.

It consists of 14 large pieces, 20 by 22 ft, which are hung between the piers in the nave, and of 14 smaller pieces, 6 by 22 ft, which are hung between the larger pieces. There is also one odd large piece which is hung from the gallery over the west entrance.

The larger pieces are, mostly, after the finest works of P. P. Rubens (arranged by Preti to blend with the general style of ornamentation of the church) and executed in Brussels by the Brothers De Vos at a cost of 40,000 Maltese scudi (about £ 3,340).

The whole were completed in three years and were first Exhibited in the church early in 1701.

Each of the larger panels forms a picture in a rich frame, whilst the smaller pieces, which are "en grisaille" represent the apostles, our Saviour, and the Virgin, each on a pedestal in which are introduced the arms of G. M. Perellos and a trophy of arms &c.

The tapestry is on view from Corpus Christi (early in June) until the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul (29th June).

The whole of the tapestry was restored under

the direction of Chev. Palmieri of Naples in 1887 at a cost of £ 3,000 to Government.

LIST OF THE TAPESTRY PICTURES,

1. The Annunciation.
2. The four Evangelists.
3. The Birth of Our Lord.
4. The Adoration of the Magi.
5. Christ's entry into Jerusalem.
6. The last Supper.
7. The Crucifixion.
8. The Resurrection.
9. The institution of the feast of Corpus Domini by Pope Urban IV.
10. The triumph of Charity.
11. The triumph of the Church.
12. The triumph of Faith.
13. "Time" unveiling "Truth"
14. The destruction of Idolatry.

The odd large piece—Portrait of the donor, G. M. Perellos, flanked by two figures representing Charity and Victory.

Note—Nos. 5 and 6 are said to be after Poussin.

APPENDIX

List of the Grand Masters of the Order of St. John who ruled in Malta, with the date of election, and death.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Philippe Villiers de L'Isle-Adam | 1530-34 |
| 2. Pietro Del Ponte | 1534-35 |
| 3. Didier de St. Jailles | 1535-36 |
| 4. Juan D'Omedes | 1536-53 |
| 5. Claude de la Sengle | 1553-57 |
| 6. Jean Parisot de la Valette | 1557-68 |
| 7. Pietro de Monte | 1568-72 |
| 8. Jean L'Evêque de la Cassiere | 1572-81 |
| 9. Hugues Loubenx de Verdale | 1581-95 |
| 10. Martino Garzes | 1595-1601 |
| 11. Alof de Wignacourt | 1601-22 |
| 12. Lois Mendes Vasconcellos | 1622-23 |
| 13. Antoine de Paule | 1623-35 |
| 14. Jean de Lascaris Castellar | 1535-57 |
| 15. Martino de Redin | 1657-60 |
| 16. Annet de Clermont Gessan | 1660-60 |
| 17. Raffaele Cottoner | 1660-63 |
| 18. Nicola Cottoner | 1663-80 |
| 19. Gregorio Carafa | 1680-90 |
| 20. Adrien de Wignacourt | 1690-97 |
| 21. Raymond Perellos y Roccaful | 1697-1720 |
| 22. Marcantonio Zondadari | 1720-22 |
| 23. Antonio Manoel de Vilhena | 1722-36 |
| 24. Raymond Despuig | 1736-41 |
| 25. Emmanuel Pinto de Fonseca | 1741-73 |
| 26. Francisco Ximenes de Texada | 1773-75 |
| 27. Emmanuel de Rohan Polduc | 1775-97 |
| 28. Ferdinand Hompesch | 1797-99 |

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