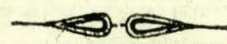


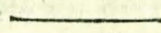
**THE MALTA SOCIETY OF ARTS,  
MANUFACTURES, AND COMMERCE.**



**Prizes awarded for the year  
1857.**



*(Extract from Malta Times, No. 784 & 785,  
23rd February, and 2nd March, 1858.)*



MALTA, 1858.

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One of the means by which the Committee of the Malta Society of Arts has for some time past endeavoured to promote and encourage the advancement of the fine as well as the inferior arts among us, (as many of our readers are doubtless aware), is the yearly appropriation of a considerable portion of their funds to be expended in a series of prizes to be awarded for the best specimens of certain annually specified branches of industry,—branches of the arts in which, in fact, it must be confessed, there is not only much room for improvement, but likewise a great deal yet to originate. That these competitions for prizes, if properly understood and taken advantage of by those for whose benefit they are intended, might be made the means of working vast ameliorations in many of our productions, no one we think will deny; but unfortunately the measures adopted by the Society cannot as yet be said to be suffi-

ciently appreciated to produce the wished for progress. The result of last year's competitions at least is not such as to give much encouragement to the Society. Of the seven competitions thrown open, viz: for specimens of wood-engraving, sculpture, pottery, wood-carving, gilding, book-binding, and architectural designs; only three have been responded to, and these by only about as many individuals, viz: those for wood-engraving, pottery, and architectural designs.

Having been favoured by the Secretary, Mr. Aspinall, with a copy of the report drawn up by Messrs. W. Baker and G. Bonavia, the gentlemen upon whose opinion of the relative merits of the drawings in question, the Committee have based their judgment in awarding the prizes—a document which we conceive to be replete with professional information, as instructive to the student as it is to the builder and the proprietor—we gladly give it insertion in our columns, in the hope that the suggestions it contains may not only be kept in view in any future plans that may be submitted to the Society, but also put into practice by our builders:—

Malta, 2nd February, 1858.

Report on projects and drawings forwarded by the managing committee of the Malta Society of Arts to Mr. W. Baker and Mr. Giuseppe Bonavia for report and opinion on their relative merits.

The designs referred to are the following:  
(*distinguishing*  
*letter*)

- A. & H. Projects (2) for a town-house, with mezzanini and shops.
- B. Project for a building to contain dwellings and shops for artisans.

- C. Project for a building to comprise several dwellings on different floors ; with entrance, stair-case, and yard common to all.
- D. Project for a country-house.
- E. Plan of a fortified front.
- F. Plan of the church in course of erection at Casal Musta, Malta.
- G. Drawings of various orders of architecture.
- H. (Similar to A.)

The majority of these projects having been designed with a view to economize space, and to provide separate accommodation in the same structure for a large number of individuals, or families of the industrious classes, it will be our special duty to examine, independently of architectural niceties and practicabilities, how far the arrangements therein made meet the necessities of close occupation, remove or abate the evils justly complained of in existing buildings similarly appropriated, and provide that accommodation indispensably necessary for the health and comfort, both moral and physical, of the intended occupants.

Before reviewing their designs in detail, we beg to premise a few observations suggestive of the constructive arrangements we consider desirable and feasible when new buildings are erected for the accommodation of the working classes where families would be thickly congregated under one roof, and without which the conveniences and decencies of domestic life cannot be observed.

1. As a general rule we hold that when buildings are constructed to receive many families in immediate proximity, those portions used in common should be *spacious* ; such as stair-cases passages, corridors, yards, washhouses, &c.

2. The main entrances should be sufficiently wide to admit the passage of a covered cart into the court-yard for the periodical removal of sweepings.

3. The yard should be provided with an ash-pit.

4. There should be (on each storey, or at least on the ground-floor) a division appropriated for the washing of clothes, sheltered, and provided with washing troughs or stone benches, and convenience for heating water.

5. There should also be a sheltered drying room or shed for common use when the state of the weather is such as to preclude the possibility of drying clothes in the open air: the want of similar conveniences is much felt by the families of the decent poor in all their present dwellings.

6. In each dwelling occupied by a family there should be *three* sleeping rooms (namely, *one* for the parents, *one* for the male children, and *one* for the female children) a living room, a small kitchen with sink, a small store-room, and a water-closet or privy.

7. The situation of, and access to the privy should be as private as practicable, provided with the ordinary trap not likely to get out of order, and well ventilated.

8. The system of drainage should be simple and easy of access when requiring repair.

9. Every dwelling should have the means of ventilation by flues (when doors and windows are closed) as the accumulation of mephitic air in small dormitories, and especially when sickness supervenes, is injurious to all.

10. When underground cellars are not to be formed the building should be raised on a low arched

basement, to admit the free circulation of air under the ground-floor, which would otherwise suffer from dampness.

11. The supply of water should not be stored in *one* reservoir *only*, as any casualty contaminating the water would inconvenience the whole of the inmates, without the possibility of an early remedy.

12. For the preservation of order in a large building occupied by many families, it would be desirable that the stair-case, corridor, &c., used in common, should be provided with a gas light.

13 The exterior of the building should be expressive of its appropriation.

All these requirements we consider to be practicable and within reach of adoption in any large new building to be erected in Malta for the object under view; and would not entail much additional expense if carefully designed before commencing the work of construction. We make no mention of forcing pumps for the convenient distribution of water, bake-house to be used in common, &c., as much difficulty would attend the practical adoption of these measures in the absence of individual responsibility; and similar services would be more agreeably performed if left to the interior economy of each family.

We will now review the designs, seriatim:—

*Project A.*—Comparatively a small building containing 18 lettings, covering a site 70' feet x 80' feet designed for the town, pursuant to the instructions issued for the guidance of competitors. It is regular and symmetrical in plan, practicable in execution, but the designer assumes the advantage of isolation of site and the consequent power of receiving light

from the four sides : an advantage not easily enjoyed by a town structure of similar dimensions.

The yard to be used in common by six lettings on the ground-floor (two of which are coach-houses) is small, being only  $11\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide.

The *privies* are all in the *kitchens* close to the cooking stoves.

Too many rooms are passages leading from one to the other—and if the rooms marked AA in the mezzanini and upper floor, stated to be common, were appropriated or let separately (which practically would be the case as soon as the proprietor found an advantage in so doing) the entrance to all the lettings on these two floors would be through the kitchens.

The façade of this building is deceptive, having the expression of a large private house. The windows are of different heights in the same floor, with disproportioned entablatures, &c, and the entrance door which is decorated with columns leads immediately from a rather spacious vestibule to a common stair-case only 7 ft. high, consisting in part of winding steps.

The drainage, situation of tanks, water-courses, &c., do not appear to have been considered, nor is there any indication of them in plan.

*Project B.*—Presents a considerable improvement on project A., inasmuch as the rooms are not all passages. It provides for thirty dwellings ; but the kitchens are very small and the privies still near the cooking stoves. The dwellings consist generally of a living room and a sleeping room, but where there are families this accommodation is not sufficient for the due separation of the sexes and the observance of moral decency even in humblest life. The convenience provided in the centre of the yard

for washing purposes is not sufficient for 30 families, and would often be unavailable from sun in summer and rain in winter. The ground-floor having no ventilation beneath would be unavoidably damp from capillary attraction, and consequently unhealthy as permanent dwellings.

The drainage and means of water supply not shewn.

The exterior of this building might be improved by slight alterations, and the principal entrance should have more character assigned to it, to distinguish it from the other openings.

*Project C.*—This project is on a larger scale, provides for 62 dwellings, and presents considerable improvements on the two preceding. It is symmetrical, practicable, admits (by reducing the number of lettings) of a more suitable assignment of rooms, and is in general feature more expressive of its appropriation—but it is still deficient of many of the requisites we enumerated above, many of which become more imperative when so large a number of families are congregated in one structure. In this large building there is only one entrance leading to the two upper floors, and the staircase is only  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide, totally insufficient for the traffic of so large a number of inmates; the whole arrangement in this part of the building is too confined.

The close proximity of the privies and cooking-stoves (in the same small kitchen) is at all times highly objectionable, and from their great number would in the hot season become unbearable.

The ground-floor would be damp for the reasons before stated. No provision made for washing purposes or for the temporary reception of the daily refuse sweepings of so large a number of tenants,



The system of drainage, (an object of primary importance) is not shewn.

In the façade the main entrance should be larger, and have an architectural character assigned to it in keeping with the general front; as designed there is nothing to distinguish it from other openings, and a stranger would be puzzled to find his way into the building.

*Project D.*—For a country-residence, covering an area 100 feet by 200 feet.

The area in this case being ample and the design submitted having architectural pretensions, with columns, ordnance, &c., it is expected that the general interior arrangements should conveniently combine all the accommodation necessary for a family living in refined comfort, and waited upon by an adequate number of servants. On careful examination it will be observed that this design has not been sufficiently studied not to have many improvements desirable.

The ground-floor would be improved by being raised above the street level, and the level of the garden.

The stable and coach-house would have been more advantageously placed out of the body of the building, and a stable-yard provided: as designed, the carriage and horses would have to pass through the vestibule, and the arcaded area in front of the garden would be at all times encumbered by stable services.

The minor offices, so desirable for convenience, cleanliness, and comfort in a well regulated establishment, are wanting; such as pantries, larder, scullery, servants' hall, wash-house, harness and saddle-room, forage-room, wine cellar, fuel-room, &c.; nor will the actual distribution afford the

requisite number of separate bed-rooms and dressing rooms, nursery, bath-room, library, servants' rooms, &c., indispensable to a family living in respectable style.

The garden view is terminated by an Ionic temple, 38 feet x 23 feet; but, desirable as similar embellishments may be in country residences, we would give precedence to the strictly useful. A poultry-yard, a seed-room for sheltering gardening implements and young and tender plants, a site for depositing manure and decomposing vegetable substances, &c. The design shews a garden tastefully laid out with an open Ionic temple, fountains, rockwork, &c., but no convenience necessary for keeping it in order.

The drainage of the building, mode of supply of water to fountains, interior fitments of stables, kitchen, &c., not shewn.

We also notice the following architectural improprieties :—

The symmetry of the vestibule, and of the "Gran Sala" over it, is destroyed by the irregular arrangement of lateral door, ways, the middle of which has a lofty entablature with modillions and consoles unsuited to internal decoration.

The landing on the principal stair-case leads immediately into the "Gran Sala," which is thus made a passage to all the other apartments.

The columns in the angles of the arcade are objectionable as designed, showing only  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the circumference of the shaft, while the others shew  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and the impostes of the arcade would trench on that half (although not shewn so in the drawing). The entablature over the external doorways in the upper floor is so heavy that it projects beyond the columns.

The ground-floor is perhaps unnecessarily high; it would require 40 steps to attain to the level of the principal floor.

The thickness of the external walls might have been uniform.

The wooden framing of roof over temple in garden is not understood as shewn in design.

*Drawings E. F. G.*—These three drawings being copies either of works executed or of other finished designs require no special report. The “modern fortified front” appears to be a modification of Vauban’s third system; but being unaccompanied by an explanation of its assumed advantages, any comment thereon would perhaps be superfluous.

In conclusion, we beg to observe that the whole of the above drawings appear to have been executed with considerable skill and much care, and that great credit is due for the attention and study bestowed upon their production. It may be said, as drawings, they are rather tame and wanting of that relief and effect which designs so fully and and so carefully shaded should present. A defect easily remedied.

The observations we have ventured to offer thereon are not made in the spirit of criticism, but solely with a view to encourage more thought in the production of future designs; to suggest improved accommodation and a better internal arrangement in buildings to be hereafter erected in Malta than have hitherto been obtained,—an advantage often to be procured without additional expense when the original design has been fully studied in every particular, before the work is taken in hand.

*Project H.*—Design for a town-house signed “Compatimento.”

The space covered by this building has not been carefully laid out, much has been wasted considering the value of ground in town. The stair-cases and backrooms in the mezzanini would be nearly in total darkness, as would the two rooms over the same in the principal floor. The general arrangement of the apartments, and the execution of the drawing would both admit of improvement.

With reference to the merits of these several productions, we are of opinion they stand in the following relative order:—

<i>Original designs.</i>		<i>Copies of other designs.</i>	
<i>C</i>	<i>1st</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>1st</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>2nd</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>3rd.</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>4th</i>		
<i>H</i>	<i>5th.</i>		

WM. BAKER.

J. BONAVIA.

TO JAMES ASPINALL, Esq.,  
*Secretary to the Society of Arts.*

(*Translation.*)

SOCIETY OF ARTS,

*Valletta, 4th February, 1858.*

Sir,—Having, in pursuance of our instructions, and in accordance with the resolution of this Society, dated the 31st March, 1857, visited the Hall of the Exhibition, and examined the articles therein presented for competition, in conformity with the aforesaid resolution; we have the honor to submit to the Society the following opinion thereon:

1st. Examined two specimens of *Wood-Engraving*, both distinguished for a peculiar neatness in the cut, and care in the execution generally, one by

Signor Giuseppe Calleja, and the other by Signor Giovanni Farrugia. That by Signor Calleja, representing a subject including human figures, we adjudge the first prize to him, and the second to Signor Farrugia.

2nd. Dr. V. Canataci having distinguished himself in his specimens of *Pottery*, as much for the good taste displayed in the form as for the quality of the manufacture, we award him the first prize.

We have, &c.,

(Signed) { CES. VASSALLO,  
G. P. TESTAFERRATA OLIVIER.

JAMES ASPINALL, Esq.,  
*Secretary to the Society of Arts.*

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*Prizes awarded for 1857.*

*Architecture—*

Original Design C.—Sig. Tom. Gatt 1st Prize £ 6.  
Copy E.—the same..... 1st Prize £ 2.

*Wood Engraving—*

Subject containing Human Figures,  
Sig. Giuseppe Calleja..... 1st Prize £ 4.

Subject without Human Figures,  
Signor Giovanni Farrugia..... 2nd Prize £ 2.

*Pottery.*—Dr. P. Canataci..... 1st Prize £ 2.

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