

OBITUARIES

MARGARET MURRAY

(1863—1963)

The death of this distinguished archaeologist and folklorist on 14 November, 1963 in her hundred-and-first year was described by Prof. E.O. James in "Folk-Lore" (Vol 74, 1963, p. 568) as "an event of unusual interest and importance in the annals of the Folk-Lore Society in particular as well as in the wider sphere in which her influence was felt in so many directions and disciplines".

Maltese Folklore may be included in this "wider sphere". The Editor of this Review, in particular, owes much to her stimulating interest and encouragement since he first corresponded with her in 1947. She had a first-hand knowledge of Malta, having excavated Borg-In-Nadur and other sites in 1921-27. Besides Sir Themistocles Zammit, her friends in Malta included our veteran grammarian and folklorist Dr. A. Cremona, a regular contributor to this Review, who wrote an Obituary of Dr. Murray in *Il-Malti* (1964). Apart from her archaeological publications she is best known in Malta for her *Maltese Folk-Tales* (1932), translated from Maltese with the help of the late Mrs. A.M. (Liza) Galea. A fuller appreciation of Dr. Murray's work in this field will appear in the next issue of this Review.

J.C.P.

BERTHA KOESSLER-ILG

(1881—1965)

Students of Maltese Folklore will receive with regret the news of the death of Frau Bertha Koessler-Ilg which occurred at San Martin de los Andes, Argentina, on August 9, 1965, in her eighty-fourth year.

Bertha Ilg was born at Passau, Lower Bavaria, on December 27, 1881. In the early years of the present century she lived for some years in Malta, being attached to the German Consulate, at that time headed by Baron von Tucher-Simmelsdorf, to whose wife she was related. From this period date her best known works on Malta i.e. the two volumes *Maltesische Märchen und Schwänke* (Leipzig, 1906) and, in collaboration with Prof. H. Stumme, *Maltesische Volkslieder*, a collection of 400 folksongs. German Consulate, at that time headed by Von Tucker to whose wife she was related. From this period date her best known works on Malta i.e. the two volumes *Maltesische Märchen und Schwänke* (Leipzig, 1906) and, in collaboration with Prof. H. Stumme, *Maltesische Volkslieder*, a collection of 300 folksongs.

In 1920 she settled down with her husband, Dr. Rudolf Koessler, at San Martin de los Andes, where she remained till the end — a loving wife and a devoted mother to her family, and a trusted friend to the Araucanian Indians who called her 'la araucana blanca'. Besides helping her husband — the only doctor in a vast region — in his humanitarian work, she turned her attention to the perishing lore and traditions of the Araucanian Indians. She lived long enough to see her work appreciated throughout the world of scholarship. The Universidad Nacional de la Plata honoured her publicly and published the first volume of her *Tradiciones Araucanas* in 1962.

The present writer had been in correspondence with Frau Bertha since 1959. With

characteristic generosity, when she learned of his activities in the field of local folklore, she entrusted to him her unpublished collection of *Maltesische Schwänke*, as well as 200 Maltese quatrains which have since appeared in the first issue of the *Maltese Folklore Review*.

To the end she retained a soft spot for these islands, and always wrote warmly of Malta — her Malta — and of the Maltese. Last June the present writer sent her a copy of *Malta*, recently published by Kummerly & Frey (Berne, 1965). It was his last letter to her — the only one to remain unanswered! However, writing about her death on the 1st September last, her daughter said: “. . . Unfortunately I have not been here during the last month, but mother wrote to me about your last sweet letter and the marvellous book about Malta you sent her. Father wanted to let you know that this book of yours was one of the biggest joys our darling mother had shortly before her death, and that it gave her an immense happiness! She would sit there for hours and hours, looking and reading about her beloved Malta.

“Poor Father (next year he will be 80) just told me, with tears in his eyes, to tell you as well that Mother's big wish was to be able one day to go to Malta once again. It was the dream of her life”

With her death Malta has lost a true friend whose works should be better known and appreciated by the Maltese.

J.C.P.

~~RAFFAELE CORSO~~

~~(1883-1965)~~

~~Con profondo dolore annunziamo la morte del Prof. Dottor RAFFAELE CORSO, fondatore ed Editore del *Folklore Italiano* e Direttore della nuova ed attuale rivista *Folklore*, avvenuta a Napoli il 28 luglio, 1965.~~

~~Con la scomparsa dell'illustre folklorista, noto per le sue numerose opere di studi folkloristici fin dall'epoca del Pitrè, di cui più che allievo della sua scuola era degno collega, gli studi tradizionali popolari italiani hanno perduto uno dei più dotti ed infaticabili cultori.~~

~~Con la cara memoria del defunto ci legano non pochi rapporti di intimità amichevole e di reciproca cooperazione di studi folkloristici nata dalla mia corrispondenza con il Corso fin dal 1925, rapporti che s'intensificarono vieppiù durante gli ultimi anni con la valida coadiuvazione dell'editore di questa rivista, il Sigr. Giuseppe Cassar Pullicino, la cui attività prolifica nel campo folkloristico maltese suscitavano l'ammirazione del Corso stabilendosi in un'amichevole legame che durò fino alla morte del defunto.~~

~~Nel presente annunzio necrologico sarebbe superfluo rilevare le notissime attività ed i lavori per cui il Corso si distinse fra i più cospicui cultori del mondo folkloristico di questo secolo. Basta dire che i suoi studi ammonterebbero ad oltre 130. In vista dei suoi meriti speciali nel campo dell'etnologia generale e di disciplina folkloristica, nel 1952 il *Club Internationale di Folklore* lo festeggiò nella ricorrenza del suo trentesimo anno d'insegnamento in qualità di ordinario della Cattedra di Etnografia nell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli. In quell'occasione ad onorarlo vi aderirono i più distinti etnografi e demologi in America ed Europa.~~

~~Il Corso non disdegnò d'interessarsi, dapprima colla mia collaborazione e dopo con quella assidua del folklorista Sigr. Giuseppe Cassar Pullicino, nelle tradizioni profane e religiose del popolo maltese, come lo dimostra l'ultimo suo pregevole contri-~~