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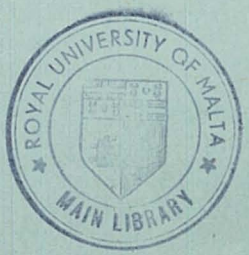

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JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS

Royal University of Malta

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EDITORIAL

THIS year marks the four hundredth anniversary of the Great Siege of Malta and we devote this number of the *Journal of the Faculty of Arts* to articles on various aspects of Maltese history to commemorate it. The source materials for the study of Maltese history are exceptionally rich, but for various reasons they have been generally only cursorily studied. As one of our contributors, J.P. McPartlin, has pointed out there has still neither been a thorough sifting and cataloguing of all the material, nor has there been much attempt to synthesise the detailed information that has been collected into a broader view of Malta's past. This is clearly one of the most rewarding tasks awaiting research in the field of humane studies in Malta. The problems involved are complex and seemingly intractable, but the basic problem is to provide an adequate teaching staff in the University to allow sufficient time to be spent on research work. This is not only simply a matter of appointing more teaching staff – this is fortunately being done bit by bit – but appointing the kind of staff that fits into a feasible pattern of research and teaching. In the case of history it is quite clear that research material abounds and the size of the department ought at least partly to depend on the need to develop research in this field. It would be absurd to leave the writing of Maltese history purely in the hands of foreign scholars indefinitely. Apart from anything else a strong department of historical studies here would help to make more articulate that sense of national identity which is a valuable part of the Maltese heritage.

As well as the size of any department the way in which the specializations are distributed is an important and often neglected consideration in assessing the amount of work the university teacher is being asked to do. It is not always fully appreciated that what determines the real teaching load in a university department is not the number of students taught but the spread over any given area of a subject that is expected from each teacher. The staff/student ratio, which is so often used as the

basis for arguments about the amount of work the teachers of the University do, is really largely irrelevant to this question; a lecturer talking about his special subject does very little more work with a class of 50 that he would with a class of 10, for the bulk of the work lies in preparation, that is, in the reading needed to keep up to date in any area of an arts discipline. The reading required to keep abreast of the new work being done in two centuries of English Literature for instance is not just twice that needed to cover half the time. Because it involves leaving the field of one's specialization the load becomes proportionally heavier the further the area of study is extended. When one considers the amount of new material published every year on a small area of English literature it is asking a lot of any teacher to cover more than a single period thoroughly if he is also to do research. With departments of 2 and 3 it is virtually impossible to expect much research at all.

If one adds to these difficulties the fact that a small faculty involves its members in a good deal more administrative work than a larger one (and a full time Dean who is both a teacher and an administrator must be counted as the worse off of all), that a place where research can be carried on is hard to find in the University and the Source material in most literary subjects is inadequate, the true extent of the problem is clearer. The last two points involve primarily the library faculties of the University. It is unfortunately not realistic at the moment to ask that each teacher should have a room of his own, and short of a room each research work away from a library becomes virtually impossible, but a university library ought in any case to be the centre of arts research. The present library is totally unsuited for this purpose; not only is the seating inadequate, practically no seating or desks are provided in the main hall, but for a number of weeks in the year the larger part of the arts library is out of reach because it is used as an examining hall.

The other problem involves adequate research material. It is obvious that the Royal University cannot hope to compete with large continental universities in the provision of books, but without an adequate supply of books an arts faculty cannot function. Books are to the arts what equipment is to the scientist. Yet we find not only that the Science departments get a large allowance for equipment, but that also each department of the Science Faculty gets considerably more to spend on books than the departments of the Faculty of Arts. The result is that even essential texts for undergraduate studies cannot be purchased and allotments for research requirements can scarcely be afforded at all.

Clearly some of these problems arise simply out of the general shortage of adequate funds, but others like the actual conditions of work in our library could be tackled given a proper sense of urgency. There is much

talk of the need for research at the moment and there is much talk of the need to raise our academic standards, and it is true that both are absolutely essential if we are to have a true university education available in Malta. Yet we have got to ask ourselves seriously what these hopes involve in practical terms. One neccessity is a considerable increase in the money available for the purchase of books in the Departments of the Arts Faculty, can this be made available? Even more important can the right distribution of teaching staff be made between the departments to ensure that no teacher has to cover too wide a range of his subject to make efficient teaching and research at a university level practicable? It is important to discover the most efficient way of distributing the total teaching load of the teachers available in the Arts Faculty over the area taught, not on a narrow departmental basis but by the collaboration of all the departments of the Faculty. For this planning on a Faculty basis is essential.

MALTA AND THE ARAGONESE CROWN: 1282-1530[1]

By A.T. LUTTRELL

LATER medieval Aragon was a mountainous and completely inland region of the Iberian peninsula, which itself was partly cut off from Europe and all but joined to Africa. Its barren rocky highlands were broken by more fertile river valleys; it was hot in summer and extremely cold in winter. The economy was predominantly agrarian, and much of the population lived in a state of isolation which produced its own peculiar brand of insularity and stubborness. The ruling elements were Christian, many of them conquerors and settlers, whose Aragonese tongue was similar to old Castilian and who lived side by side with large communities of Muslims and Jews. Their historical experience was of Moorish occupation, of frontier warfare and of the *reconquista*. In 1137 the King of Aragon gave his daughter Petronilla, together with his whole kingdom, to Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona, and thereafter Catalunya-Aragon was governed by a single ruler as a federation in which Aragon was the lesser partner. As Counts of Barcelona the Count-kings of Catalunya-Aragon not only controlled the Catalan-speaking peoples south of the Pyrenees with their prosperous urban and mercantile classes, but had extensive dynastic connections and ambitions in Languedoc and Provence. After the defeat and death of Pedro II of Aragon at Muret in 1213 and the subsequent conquest of Languedoc by the barons of Northern France, these French pretensions were largely abandoned and the house of Aragon was restricted to its lands within the peninsula in Catalunya and Aragon. The result was expansion in other directions: the *reconquista* and *repoblaciòn* of Valencia to the south; the conquest of the Balearic islands from the Muslims; and in 1282 the seizure from the French of Sicily, which Pedro III of Aragon claimed through his wife Costanza, daughter of the last effective Hohenstaufen ruler of Sicily, Frederick II's son, Manfred.

The decades following saw a tremendous expansion of Catalano-Aragonese power in the Mediterranean. Thebes and Athens were conquered by the Catalan companies in 1311; Jaime II of Aragon married a Cypriot

[1] One difficulty in dealing with this subject is that while Aragon proper covered only a small part of the Iberian peninsula, its kings ruled in Catalunya, Valencia, Mallorca, Sicily and elsewhere. The term 'Aragonese' scarcely conveys this fact; 'Catalano-Siculo-Aragonese' is clumsy and still insufficient. It seems best to refer to the 'Aragonese crown' and its 'lands' — *los paises de la corona de Aragõn.*

princess in 1315; Ferran of Mallorca invaded Southern Greece and died there in 1316; Sardinia was conquered in 1324; and there were recurrent wars with the Angevins and Genoese in defence of Sicily and Sardinia. Catalan, Valencian and Mallorquin traders, slavers and sailors were active in the Levant, in North Africa and throughout the Mediterranean; they settled in Sardinia, Sicily and Greece. Behind these developments lay the commercial interests and initiative of the urban patriciates of Catalunya; Barcelona, for example, largely financed the conquest of Sardinia. There emerged a single economic and strategic unit, something like a Western Mediterranean common market, in which the merchants of Valencia, Barcelona, Palma and Perpignan could buy and sell in the Balearics, Sardinia and Sicily, while at the same time possessing in those islands the safe harbours they needed along their routes to even more lucrative markets in the Levant and in North Africa. The Catalans, with their limited naval and military resources, often preferred not to acquire extensive territories but to concentrate on the retention of certain essential bases and entrepôts, such as the harbours and castles at Cagliari and Alghero in Sardinia. They made diplomatic and consular arrangements which would allow them access to markets in Africa, Asia and elsewhere without involving costly administrative or military commitments. The expensive Southern Italian ambitions of Alfonso V of Aragon in the early fifteenth century and his pursuit of a grandiose crusading policy in the Levant ran counter to this general policy and to the real interests of his subjects, especially those of the Iberian peninsula.

Catalunya – the County of Barcelona – with its flourishing ports and industries stood at the heart of this community. Yet the Catalans not only needed Mediterranean markets but were often dependent on Sicilian grain. The various domains of the Aragonese crown were economically interdependent in many ways, and this fact was reflected in the political organization of the commonwealth. Its subjects were scattered around the Mediterranean, in Aragon, Valencia, Catalunya, Mallorca, Sardinia, Southern Italy, Sicily and even Greece; they spoke Aragonese, Catalan, Italian, Hebrew, Arabic, Greek and many dialect variations on these tongues. Only flexible arrangements based on a spirit of compromise could hold so many diverse elements together. The Aragonese crown did develop such institutions, which allowed it to exploit its subjects' common allegiance to a single dynasty but which also ensured that the crown itself responded rapidly to pressures from its subjects, especially when these were financial. The various kingdoms, counties and possessions of the crown had their own laws and their own *cortes*, representative assemblies with which the crown dealt separately in their own languages and which en-

joyed considerable powers, as did municipal institutions in towns like Barcelona. The kings themselves could not govern personally in all their lands, and so they developed a complex system of imperial administration, appointing governors-general or viceroys, often members of the royal family, to act for them in their domains, holding *cortes*, receiving homages, raising taxes and carrying out business of every kind.

In certain cases the links were comparatively weak. Mallorca, Cerdagne and Roussillon were held by an Aragonese prince as a vassal kingdom for several decades until their reconquest and reincorporation into the crown by Pedro IV of Aragon in 1344. The Sicilian crown was granted to Alfonso III's brother Jaime, but the Aragonese connection remained strong and on Alfonso's death in 1291 Jaime became King of Aragon; then in 1296 the Sicilian kingdom passed to a third brother. On the death of Federigo III of Sicily without a male heir in 1377 the Sicilian crown and the Duchies of Athens and Neopatras reverted, after a period of confusion, to the King of Aragon and the Sicilian kingdom was incorporated into the *corona de Aragón* in 1409. Alfonso V added the Neapolitan kingdom to the domains of the crown, and although on his death it passed to his bastard son Ferrante it remained within the Aragonese orbit. The lands and peoples of the confederation were bound together not only by these formal connections but also by unusually sophisticated sentiments of allegiance to the crown and of political interdependence and responsibility. The doctrine of *pactisme*, the notion of a constitutional contract between the ruler and the leading elements among his peoples, of respect for the king who respected his subjects' rights and customs, was strong above all in Catalunya. When in 1410 there was, for the first time, no direct male heir of the house of Catalunya-Aragon, the Catalans insisted on a peaceful settlement of the succession crisis and on the preservation of a strict legality. The constitutional formulae followed in 1412 when representatives of the *parlaments* of Aragon, Valencia and Catalunya chose one of the six candidates for the throne, helped the Catalans to accept the election of Fernando of Antequera, Regent of Castile, to whom they were strongly opposed and who had in fact been forced upon them. Fernando in his turn had to recognize the liberties of the Catalans. He was also accepted by the Mallorquins whose representatives had been excluded from the election, and by the Sicilians who were not represented in it.

The *paises de la corona de Aragón* thus constituted a political, economic and cultural world with a considerable unity of its own. Internal and external factors continually changed the balance of power within the community. Rebellion in Valencia and Aragon was suppressed by the crown with Catalan help in 1348; after the collapse of the Barcelona

banks in 1381 Catalunya was in serious decline while Valencia grew in wealth and importance; then in 1412 the Aragonese and Valencians imposed a semi-Castilian dynasty upon the Catalans. Fernando of Antequera's son and successor Alfonso V was interested in the Italian sections of the commonwealth rather than in his peninsular domains. In fact, each ruler had his own difficulties to face and his own particular ambitions and tastes, and each had to recognize the special problems and circumstances of his various domains. Yet while these *paises* were considered to have separate identities of their own the king often thought of the peoples of these lands as his subjects, his *naturales*, rather than as 'Aragonese', 'Catalans' or 'Sicilians'. In many cases it would have been difficult and confusing to do otherwise. A number of Sicilian barons, for example, were Aragonese or Catalan in origin and had ties of kinship and felt equally at home in various of the *paises de la corona*. They spoke, or at least understood, several languages and tended to build a palace or a church in the same style in Catalunya or in Sicily. In both countries they lived in a Western Mediterranean world with comparable geographical conditions and a similar background of Muslim occupation and Christian Latin culture, so that in their arts, in their institutions, in their habits of life and thought, many of the peoples of the Aragonese crown had much in common with each other.[2]

* * * * *

Malta and Gozo, two small and comparatively barren islands set in the sea between Sicily and Africa, were always at the mercy of a strong power anxious for a base in the central Mediterranean. Their rocky soil and limited water supply meant that they were usually unable to feed their own population. Carthaginians, Romans, Muslims, Normans, Hohenstaufen and Angevins all held Malta and the Maltese were influenced by them in many ways, but the isolation and smallness of their islands helped the islanders to preserve strong characteristics of their own.

[2] On the 'geo-political' context, see F. BRAUDEL, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris, 1949), and J. HOUSTON, *The Western Mediterranean World: an Introduction to its Landscapes* (London, 1964). The standard political history is F. SOLDEVILA, *Historia de Catalunya*, rev.ed., i-ii (Barcelona, 1962). The more modern ideas outlined above largely derive from the many works of J. VICENS VIVES; see also F. ELIAS DE TEJADA, *Las doctrinas políticas en la Cataluña medieval* (Barcelona, 1950), and F. GIUNTA, *Aragonesi e Catalani nel Mediterraneo*, 2 vols. (Palermo, 1953-1959). Two recent and important books not in Castilian or Catalan which summarize part of this extensive new work are P. VILAR, *La Catalogne dans l'Espagne moderne*, i (Paris, 1962), and J. ELLIOTT, *Imperial Spain: 1469-1716* (London, 1963). *Indice Histórico Español*, i- (Barcelona, 1953-), provides a complete annual bibliography.

Their Christian heritage survived through centuries of Muslim rule, and after the *reconquista* of Malta by the Norman rulers of Sicily in the eleventh century the language of the Maltese on the whole continued to resist the influence of the Latin tongues of their Christian rulers. In 1282 Malta and Gozo were predominantly Christian islands, governed by the Angevin Kings of Sicily and enjoying a measure of prosperity as a commercial outpost of Genoese and other traders.[3]

The conquest of Sicily by the Aragonese crown in 1282 illustrated the strategic position of Malta and demonstrated once again that it was most easily dominated from Sicily, on which it largely depended for its food supply. The Maltese recognized the new regime in December 1282. Charles of Anjou attempted to use Malta as a base for the reconquest of Sicily but his forces suffered a major and decisive defeat in a great sea-battle in the harbour at Malta in 1283, and the Aragonese crown eventually completed the conquest of Malta and Gozo. Ramon Muntaner, a Catalan who had been the King of Sicily's governor of Djerba, an island off the Tunisian coast, described how the Aragonese displayed their joy when they heard rumours of the fall of the castle at Malta, adding: 'and so they should have, for the castle is right royal and beautiful, and that castle and the island are to the island of Sicily as the stone is to the ring'.[4] The new rulers undoubtedly recognized the islands' importance for the retention not only of Sicily but also of their influence in North Africa. In 1287 Jaime of Aragon, then King of Sicily, insisted that he should hold not only Sicily but also Malta, Pantelleria, the Lipari islands and the joint Siculo-Catalan fonduk at Tunis,[5] while in 1292 as Jaime II, King of Aragon, he gave instructions from Barcelona for the castle and garrison at Malta to be strengthened.[6] Neither the Venetians not the Genoese made any very serious attempt to capture Malta during the period of domination by the Aragonese crown, perhaps because Malta did not lie directly on their routes to the rich markets of the Levant, while Venetian

[3] In the absence of any satisfactory history of medieval Malta, the fundamental works are G. ABELA, *Malta Illustrata*, expanded by G. CIANTAR, 2 vols. (Malta, 1772-1780), and the articles and documents published by A. MIFSUD, in *Archivium Melitense*, ii-iv (1914-1920), and R. VALENTINI, in *Archivio storico di Malta*, v-xiii (1934-1942), and *Archivium Melitense*, ix (1935). P. DE JOVE Y HEVIA, *Indagaciones acerca de la dominación de España en Malta de 1285 a 1530* (Madrid, 1863), is brief and seriously outdated.

[4] *The Chronicle of Muntaner*, trans. Lady Goodenough, i (London, 1920), 190-195, 224, 243-244.

[5] F. GIUNTA, 'Sicilia e Tunisi nei secoli XIV e XV,' in his *Medioevo mediterraneo; saggi storici* (Palermo, 1954), 153, n. 60.

[6] G. LA MANTIA, *Codice diplomatico dei re aragonesi di Sicilia*, ii (Palermo, 1956), 309, 317-318.

shipping bound for Spain and the Atlantic usually passed to the north of Sicily.[7] Venice was often in alliance with the Aragonese crown, and the Genoese presumably realized that they would find it hard to capture or retain Malta while Sicily was in Aragonese hands. For the subjects of the Aragonese crown the fact that their resources were insufficient for the acquisition and maintenance of colonies in the Levant gave their trade at Tunis and elsewhere in North Africa a particular importance. Malta and Gozo therefore had a special value, which was emphasized again early in the fifteenth century when the islands were raided by the King of Tunis. These incursions were tantamount to an assault on the whole community of the Aragonese crown, and Alfonso V of Aragon went personally to Malta in the course of the counter-attack he launched against Djerba in 1432.

In a small way, therefore, Malta belonged to the Aragonese common market, and though on occasions the Maltese met high tariffs in Sicily, at other times the customs duties there were lowered in their favour. Catalan, Sicilian and other merchants settled in Malta, and a number of Catalans gained control of the export of the cotton grown there. But Malta's real usefulness was not as a market or a source of raw materials but as an entrepôt and a safe harbour on the routes to Beirut and Alexandria, and above all to Tunis and other African ports. There had long been Catalan vice-consuls at Malta and Gozo by 1345,[8] and ships from Sicily and from the Iberian peninsula must have called there frequently; in May 1479, for example, three biremes captained by the Catalan Fluviá were in the harbour.[9] One item of trade was slaves from North Africa, though the nearby island of Pantelleria was probably a more important centre of the slave-traffic than Malta. The slaves may not always have been Africans; in 1454 one Ludovicus Johannis, a native of Malta, was sold as a slave at Marseilles.[10] Malta's position and its commercial importance also kept it in touch with distant parts of the Mediterranean world and beyond. Thus in 1377 Milos Gunjevic, a merchant from Dalmatia, sold in Malta a cargo of wood he had contracted to carry from the Adriatic to Tripoli in North Africa; later he seems also to have transported some cotton from Malta to Tripoli on behalf of a Jew of Malta.[11] In 1457 there

[7] A. LUTTRELL, 'Venetians at Medieval Malta,' *Melita Historica*, ii, no. 1 (1960).
[8] A. DE CAPMANY Y MONPALAU, *Memorias historicas sobre la marina, comercio y artes de la antigua ciudad de Barcelona*, rev.ed., ii, part 1 (Barcelona, 1962), 232.
[9] E. LEOPARDI, 'Transactions of the *consiglio popolare* during the year 1478-1479', *Melita Historica*, ii, no. 2 (1957), 132-133.
[10] C. VERLINDEN, *L'esclavage dans l'Europe médiévale*, i (Bruges, 1955), 404-418, 756-758.
[11] B. KREKIC, *Dubrovnik (Raguse) et le Levant au moyen âge* (Paris, 1961), 217,

was even an English ship, the *Katharine* of Bristol, near Malta, where it was attacked by the Genoese.[12]

The form of Malta's relationship with the Aragonese crown varied considerably. Whether or not the Aragonese and Sicilian crowns were united in the same person, Malta and Gozo were always part of the Kingdom of Sicily, the language of government was Sicilian or Latin, and the Maltese and Gozitans were subjects of the Sicilian crown and, in that sense, Sicilians. While Sicily was ruled as an independent kingdom by a cadet branch of the house of Aragon during the fourteenth century the formal constitutional link with the crown of Aragon lapsed. When Sicily itself was governed directly by the Aragonese crown through a royal lieutenant or viceroy, Malta was sometimes an integral part of the demesne of the Sicilian crown, and as such was ruled from Barcelona, Zaragoza, Palermo, Messina or Naples through royal officials sent from the peninsula or from Sicily, while on other occasions it was granted or even sold as a county to cadets of the Aragonese or Sicilian royal houses or to Sicilian nobles. Rule by these noble counts, who were often Sicilians of Catalan or Aragonese extraction such as the Moncada or the Alagón, usually led to the exploitation of the islanders and their demand for perpetual reincorporation into the royal demesne. The Maltese did not enjoy all the privileges of the inhabitants of Sicily for their position was obviously a special one. None the less Malta and Gozo both had representative institutions of a communal type which had considerable local powers of self-government. The *università* of Malta was respected by the Aragonese crown and, to some extent, able to bargain with it. The crown was well accustomed to accepting local privileges and institutions and, if at times the Aragonese kings overrode, neglected or even bargained away the rights of the Maltese, on other occasions they recognized the obligations of the crown and proceeded in accordance with the constitutional formulae of *pactisme* with which they were so familiar. From time to time the Maltese were involved in civil strife, in resistance to their overlords or in attempts to assert their constitutional rights, but they shared these experiences with all the other lands of the *corona de Aragón*.

Malta's connection with the Aragonese crown remained strong during the fifteenth century despite the serious economic decline, the civil wars, the depopulation and the piracy which afflicted Catalunya in particular and were reflected in similar conditions on Malta and Gozo. After their alienation to various Sicilian nobles, the islands were reincorporated into

223. The merchant Guglielmo de Malta who was near Dubrovnik in 1409 (*ibid.*, 255) may have been a Maltese.

[12] E. CARUS-WILSON, *Medieval Merchant Venturers* (London, 1954), 71.

the royal demesne at the end of the fourteenth century, and the change of dynasty in 1412, which was accepted in Sicily, made no fundamental difference to this relationship. Fernando de Antequera who was chosen King of Aragon in 1412 was a prince of Castile, but he was also a grandson of Pedro IV of Aragon. He and his successors ruled the Aragonese confederation much as their ancestors of the house of Catalunya-Aragon had done. Even the marriage between Fernando, King of Sicily and heir to the throne of Aragon, and Isabella, the heiress of Castile, in 1469 did not bring Malta into dependence on the crown of Castile, for the subsequent union of the two crowns in their grandson, Charles V, was a personal one and only very gradually led to the unification of the Spanish kingdoms. In many respects – legally, administratively, economically and politically – the Aragonese and Castilian crowns and their lands still remained almost entirely distinct in 1530.[13] After 1479 Isabella's husband, Fernando II of Aragon, who was often known as the 'old Catalan', continued Alfonso V's policies with renewed interventions in the Italian wars, while in the Mediterranean the campaigns during which his forces, including some Maltese, captured Tripoli in 1510 represented a fusion of Aragonese interests with the Castilian ideal of the *reconquista*. The sixteenth-century expansion of the Ottoman Turks, especially into North Africa, and the events which led to the Hapsburg Charles V becoming not only King of Aragon and Castile but also Holy Roman Emperor in Germany and ruler of a world-empire with lands in Africa as well as in Europe and America, resulted in a widening of the struggle; they also left Malta as much as ever on the frontier of Christendom and dangerously exposed to Muslim attacks. Charles V opted for an inexpensive way of defending Malta and Tripoli when he granted them to the Order of St. John in 1530, but he did so as King of Sicily; Malta and Gozo remained, technically at least, a fief held from the Sicilian crown. When the crisis came in the great siege by the Turks in 1565 it was again to Sicily and the Iberian peninsula that Malta had to look for support.

Malta's political and economic links with the Aragonese crown led to other contacts. Bureaucrats and soldiers, nobles who received lands and privileges, priests and merchants arrived in Malta from Sicily and the Iberian peninsula. They often settled there, and came in the course of time to live and think like Maltese. There were other more unusual visitors, such as the Jewish cabbalist scholar from Aragon, Abraham ben Samuel Abulafia of Zaragoza, who spent a few years in exile on the little

[13] There is very little justification for the accepted and thoroughly misleading assumption that a 'Castilian' period of Maltese history opened in 1412; Malta was more 'Aragonese' during its so-called 'Castilian' period than before it.

island of Comino between Malta and Gozo, where from 1285 to 1288 he wrote his *Sefer ha-Ot* – The Book of the Sign.[14] The lands of the Aragonese crown in Malta, Sicily and the peninsula shared a heritage of Muslim tastes and traditions. The language, folklore, architecture and customs of the Maltese were clearly influenced from the Iberian peninsula and even more from Sicily. But as all the *paises de la corona de Aragón* formed part of a single cultural world, and Sicilian fashions and customs were themselves affected by Sicily's links with the Aragonese crown and its peninsular lands, it was often hard or even impossible to judge the movements of trends and influences.[15] The process of expansion was also one of assimilation, and just as the aristocratic ruling classes, the commercial affairs and the political quarrels and alliances of these *paises* were inextricably blended and entangled, so were their cultural and political borrowings and exchanges. When Charles V granted Malta to the Order of St. John in 1530 there was still, practically speaking, no such thing as 'Spain', and even Machiavelli did not define the 'Italian state' in such a way as to include in it the Kingdom of Naples.[16] 'Sicily' existed as an island and as a kingdom, and Malta and Gozo were part of that kingdom, a rather distant and particular part of it enjoying a special relationship with its crown. Like the people of Aragon, like the Catalans, the Mallorquins and the rest, the Maltese preserved their own particular characteristics, and their own ways of life and speech and thought. They were neither 'Italians' nor 'Spaniards'. Between 1282 and 1530 they were subjects of the house of Aragon, and Malta and Gozo formed part of that great Western Mediterranean confederation, *los paises de la corona de Aragón*.[17]

[14] *Jewish Encyclopedia*, i (New York, 1901), 141-142.

[15] Cf. J. WARD-PERKINS, 'Medieval and Early Renaissance Architecture in Malta,' *Antiquaries Journal*, xxii (1942), 169-170.

[16] F. CHABOD, *Machiavelli and the Renaissance* (London, 1958), 71-76, *et passim*.

[17] This is not to deny that strong 'influences' came from Sicily and Italy, but to emphasize that during this period they functioned within the 'Aragonese' context. Maltese history has too often been interpreted by scholars steeped in Italian history rather than in the wider complexities of the medieval Mediterranean world. A brief paper can do no more than offer hints and crude generalizations about a whole series of developments and problems which remain to be worked out in detail in Maltese, Sicilian, Spanish and other archives, as well as in other areas of research, such as folklore. An excellent start has been made with the as yet unpublished lectures delivered by Professor L.H. Butler in Valletta in 1962.

THE DEFENCES OF MALTA

By J.T. McPartlin

In this quatercentenary year of the Great Siege it is perhaps appropriate to lament that the historiography of Malta is still scarcely comparable with that of most European countries. There are, of course, many reasons for this, not the least of which is the deterring volume of historical material to be explored (some of it in a very inferior condition[1]), as compared with the few opportunities for publication open to the Maltese historian; but the resultant lack of depth in our historical imagination is only too obvious, and there is a quite considerable danger that the history of these islands may suffer as much from the lack of a capacity for synthesis as from lacunae in the fields covered by original research.

The present article makes no claim to serve as a model for the future writing of Maltese history. Its purpose is rather to suggest, in one circumscribed field, that there are still questions of importance to be asked even when a fairly complete collection of 'facts' has been assembled. Not being based on original research, the conclusions are naturally very much open to correction, but they are here advanced in the belief that there is some virtue in standing back a little from the established picture of a period and attempting to review its various aspects with a fresh eye.

A concise account of the building of Malta's fortifications in the early years of the rule of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem has been provided, from secondary sources, by Dr. J. Quentin Hughes,[2] and it is easily possible to trace the stages by which these defensive works were constructed. The details are fairly well known, and to probe further might seem useless pedantry – for what could be less mysterious than that a military

[1] For instance, Professor A.P. Vella, O.P., writes of the Inquisitorial archives, currently housed at Mdina, that 'the original documents ... unfortunately are not very accessible and many of them, although bound together in registers, are either unnumbered, or wrongly numbered, or numbered on both sides (old and new numeration), or misplaced, and therefore can be traced only with some difficulty. Let us hope that the Church authorities will find a suitable place for storing these invaluable sources for our local history and appoint a commission to index the registers, bind the scattered documents, re-bind those which are in a miserable condition and make photostats of documents which in a few years' time will be so wormeaten as to be indecipherable.' (A.P. Vella, *The Tribunal of the Inquisition in Malta* [Valletta, 1964], p. 3)

[2] cf. J. Quentin Hughes, *The Building of Malta during the Period of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, 1530-1795* (London, 1956), pp. 10-29.

community should fortify itself in its principal base? Nevertheless, it can be argued – and this paper does argue – that the coming of the Order to Malta involved a revolution in the military dispositions of the island, a revolution which to a large extent dictated the shape of Malta today.

Prior to 1530 the defence of Malta was a matter of the simplest strategy. Because of the great natural difficulties in transporting large forces by ship, the sea itself remained the principal obstacle to a full-scale invasion, as distinct from mere raiding; but it was not envisaged that an invading fleet might be met and countered at sea, such an exploit being far beyond the capacity of the island's corsairs or, later, the navy of the Knights, while on land Mdina, the natural focal point of an administration whose main horizon was the internal affairs of the island, was equally the strategic centre upon which all defensive operations must be based. In the event of an attack on the grand scale, various exploits against the enemy might be attempted, according to circumstances, but defence would consist basically of a simple movement of concentration within the walls of the old city. A strong and determined enemy, if it could cross the sea, could not be stopped on the coast, and the only alternative was a contraction of the lines of defence upon a single, central fortress. Defence, that is, was primarily directed against an enemy who would already be able to range at will over a large part of coastal Malta.

Only when we appreciate this inward-turned nature of the island's defences can we begin to see the true significance of the fortress of St. Angelo. L'Isle Adam's commissioners in 1524 reported that this fort was partly in ruins, and that its armaments consisted of one sizable gun, two light canon and a number of mortars – information which may be a considerable surprise to the modern student, accustomed to think of the protection of the Grand Harbour as a primary military consideration. More bewildering than the fact that St. Angelo was in a state of disrepair is the weakness of the artillery mounted by a fort which we naturally assume to have had great importance, and more bewildering even than the small number of guns is, if we examine the situation more closely, the small area which those guns actually covered. It is impossible to estimate with any accuracy the capacity of 16th-century guns, and we have no detailed information about the pieces mounted on St. Angelo, but Francesco Balbi di Correggio, in his narrative of the siege of 1565, was surprised and dismayed to find the Turkish guns firing effectively at a range of six hundred to a thousand paces,[3] and his surprise is corroborated, in a general way, by the (highly approximate) assertions of other writers of the

[3] cf. F. Balbi di Correggio, *The Siege of Malta, 1565* (tr. H.A. Balbi, Copenhagen, 1961), pp. 49, 61, 64.

same period.[4] A rough calculation on this basis quickly reveals that from St. Angelo the mouth of the Grand Harbour lay somewhat more than a decent canon-shot distant, though the guns on the fort could no doubt range further with a random chance of a hit.

The fact is that St. Angelo was not intended to defend the Grand Harbour at all, but was more modestly confined to the protection of Dockyard Creek and the shipping which lay immediately under its guns. The idea of keeping an enemy fleet out of the Grand Harbour was altogether too grandiose for a pre-1530 commander, who was content to have the capacity to beat off the occasional raider. The Grand Harbour, like the other coastal areas of the island, could not have been defended if the Turks had landed in force before the coming of the Knights, and there is a distinct possibility that, in such an event, the garrison of St. Angelo would have been withdrawn to Mdina, or at most left to conduct what could not be more than a diversionary action.

For the Knights of St. John, however, these existing conditions were far from ideal, and although the excellent harbours influenced L'Isle Adam's commissioners to recommend the acceptance of Malta as a base, the settlement of the Order at the Birgu left them with the vast problem, not only of repairing the dilapidated fortifications (which L'Isle Adam set in train almost at once), but of creating a whole new *conception* of how the island should be defended. Since their main occupation was the prosecution of naval warfare against the Turks, they could not commit themselves to a system of defence whose fundamental principle was a withdrawal inland. It was now the Grand Harbour, not Mdina, which had to be held against an invader, and the auxiliary fortifications which had formerly sufficed for the area had somehow to be transformed into the major stronghold.

[4] 'The orists often said that a culverin could throw an eighteen-pound ball and a demi-culverin one half that weight point blank for seven hundred yards, and at random (extreme range) for about two miles. So, ships 'a long culverin shot' apart were within a little less than two miles of one another, and those distant 'a half culverin shot' were separated by roughly three hundred and fifty yards. In fact, this is modified by the great differences in bore, calibre, weight and performance of guns called culverins and demi-culverins, and further modified by the fantastic variety of sixteenth-century weights and measures and by the cheerful disregard of accuracy on the part of most writers. So a ballistics expert might say that a culverin of such and such dimensions would throw a nine-pound ball twenty-five hundred paces without having any exact idea of what he meant by a pace or a pound, and without knowing whether the foreigner whose statement he was copying (theorists all copied from one another) was using values like his or quite different ones.' (G. Mattingly, *The Defeat of the Spanish Armada* [London, 1959], p. 346.)

This was no easy task, since the Birgu was not well sited for the purpose, although the fire-power of the artillery of the time might encourage a certain optimism which the Great Siege proved to have been misplaced. All the defences of the Birgu, including St. Angelo, lay on the low ground of the seashore, easily commanded by enemy guns placed on Mount Sciberras or the Corradino heights.[5] Both of these stretches of high ground, moreover, were accessible[6] to invaders coming up from one of the other good harbours of the island – from the Marsamxett or St. Julian's on the one side, or from Marsaxlokk on the other. These harbours had been one of the attractions which drew the Knights to Malta; but they might also prove to be the means by which an enemy might enter to expel

[5] 'Before going further,' writes Balbi di Correggio at the beginning of his narrative, 'I wish to speak of how the defence was handicapped because of the heights which commanded the Birgu, St. Michael and also St. Elmo.

It was realised, before the arrival of the Turks, that these heights would be of disadvantage to us, but as they were so far distant it was never anticipated that they would be of as much harm as they proved to be. The enemy's artillery was so powerful and the ammunition so abundant that, notwithstanding the long range, they caused as much damage as if they had fired at thirty paces. As we have seen, some of their objectives were rased to the ground.

Across from St. Elmo, on the other side of the mouth of the Marsamxett harbour, is a place on high ground known as the hermitage of St. Mary. Although this position is at a distance of seven hundred paces from St. Elmo, the guns of Dragut bombarded it most effectively. Moreover, to the south of St. Elmo is a height which commands it, and, although it is at a distance of one thousand paces, the gun fire destroyed it completely. This promontory is about as high as St. Angelo and although the Isola of St. Michael stands high, it is commanded from the spur as far as the Fort. Another height, which is called Cortin, commands the whole Isola of St. Michael and even the Fort itself. The Mandra is another height which commands St. Michael from the front, and it was bombarded from this position. Although the bastions of Provence and Auvergne are both strong and high, they are commanded by the height of St. Margaret. The heights of Kalkara and Salvador command the Posts of Castile, Germany, England and almost St. Angelo'. (F. Balbi di Correggio, *The Siege of Malta, 1565*, pp. 48-9). I have slightly modified the translation.

[6] The movement of heavy artillery, of course, entailed considerable difficulties in itself, and Balbi di Correggio describes the great effort with which, on 25th May 1565, the Turks first brought up their guns to fire on St. Elmo. 'It was no light task, for the guns were heavy and their wheels and carriages were reinforced with iron. The distance they had to cover was nine miles, and the ground was very rough and full of stones. Their many labourers and the beasts of burden which the Maltese had abandoned in the country helped them over their difficulties. From the Spur of St. Michael we could see ten or twelve bullocks harnessed to each piece, with many men pulling at the ropes.' (F. Balbi di Correggio, *The Siege of Malta, 1565*, pp. 57-8). Such, however, were natural and expected difficulties of war, and were of small importance compared with the fact that the guns had a free passage to the positions chosen for the erection of batteries.

them. If the defence of Mdina were to give way to the defence of the Birgu, not only the Birgu itself but the whole coastline from St. Julian's to Marsaxlokk must be included in the Knights' calculations, and to enclose this whole region with a complete circle of fortifications was out of the question. The Knights, in short, were required to find some means of defending one coastal region while knowing that they must leave the remainder of the coast open to the enemy.

Successive Grand Masters were able to leave this problem unsolved, since, after all, an attack on the scale mounted in 1565 was fairly unlikely, in view of the difficulties it presented to the Turks. Malta's principal safeguard remained, as always, the sea which surrounds it, and the elaboration of a complete defensive system could be allowed to wait. An answer to the problem, however, could not be put off indefinitely, and its main features were immediately grasped by Antonio Ferramolino, the Bergamese military engineer whose services G.M. de Homedes secured from the Emperor in 1541, and who came to the conclusion that an adequate defensive system could be constructed only if the principal fortress on the coast were moved to a more appropriate site. Inevitably Mount Sciberras suggested itself for this purpose, since, although it lacked the sheltering creeks which afforded good anchorages on the south-eastern side of the Grand Harbour, it was high ground commanding both the Grand Harbour and the Marsamxett, and was not itself overlooked by other high ground.

G.M. de Homedes, however, had other factors to bear in mind, not the least of which was the financial burden which a completely new set of fortifications would impose upon the Order; and even if the Order could afford these, the outlay of large sums on Mount Sciberras would imply that a final decision had been taken on the still very controversial question of whether or not Malta was to remain the home of the Knights for the foreseeable future. In rejecting Ferramolino's proposals the Grand Master was as right in his own way as Ferramolino had been in his; but the Order was thereby committed to almost a generation of aberrant defensive planning – to the accretion of fortifications south and east of the Grand Harbour which were not to be complete until that dim and distant future date when the Cottonera Lines would close off the Birgu from the south-east, fortifications which by then would be more impressive than useful.

As a consolation for the rejection of his larger plan, Ferramolino was permitted to tinker with the defences of the Birgu, where he dug a ditch round St. Angelo and erected a cavalier to raise the firing platform of the fort, so that its guns might provide a more effective command of the mouth

of the Grand Harbour. The real development of the Birgu and its immediate surroundings, however, was the work of the Prior of Capua, Count Leone Strozzi, and the Spanish engineer, Pedro Pardo. Ten years after Ferramolino's proposals, Strozzi was vigorously putting the case for a new town on Mount Sciberras, to which he was convinced the Convent would sooner or later have to move. (The fact that Dragut, in his raid on Malta and Gozo at precisely this time, regarded St. Angelo as too strong for immediate attack could scarcely be taken as proof that the Knights occupied a position of impregnable security, and the Order's military experts were not deceived.)

In default of a new town on Mount Sciberras, Strozzi and Pardo sought to create a system of defences which, at least for the present, would not be dependent upon a single, central strongpoint, and these defences, substantially complete by 1554, were those which had to bear the weight of the Turkish offensive eleven years later.

In the first place the St. Angelo and Birgu defences were extended to the neighbouring Isola, to provide protection against attack from the Corradino side, and in due course the town of Senglea was founded on the Isola, protected on the landward side by Pardo's star-fort of St. Michael, 'a modern fort built after the plans of the ablest engineers of these times.'[7] St. Angelo and St. Michael between them commanded the whole of Dockyard Creek, and the guns of St. Michael ranged across the approach to both towns by land, just as those of St. Angelo bore upon the waters of the Grand Harbour.

A further elaboration to the design was the second star-fort constructed to Pardo's design at the tip of the Sciberras peninsula, where a watch-tower had been fortified long before, in 1488. St. Elmo was clearly not intended as a substitute for the new town which had been projected for the peninsula behind it: its function was to deny an enemy entry to the Grand Harbour and the Marsamxett, and it could not, therefore, be placed anywhere except on the low ground at the seaward end of the peninsula, whence its guns could not range with any great effectiveness across the peninsula itself.

The aim of the engineers of 1551-4 was to construct an interlocking pattern of smaller works round the Birgu, and by taking in the Isola they were certainly able to create a more compact block of fortifications round the harbour in Dockyard Creek on which the Order's navy depended. They did not, however, succeed in overcoming the basic defects of the site with regard to height, and during the Great Siege St. Elmo, despite its protracted resistance, revealed numerous disadvantages. 'This fort,'

[7] F. Balbi di Correggio, *The Siege of Malta, 1565*, p. 27.

wrote Balbi, 'has high walls surrounded by wide ditches and outworks but, as we have seen to our cost, it lacked traverses and casemates and had no embrasures for guns in the ditch', and the cavalier outside the fort 'would have been very strong had it been built of good stone and lime.'[8] Moreover, he adds, 'St. Elmo was not considered a stronghold. No magazine nor storehouse was there. It lived, as the saying goes, from hand to mouth, and if the Turks did not take it by force they would reduce it by hunger.'[9] While it still held out St. Elmo had to be supplied continuously by boat from the Birgu, the boats crossing, usually by night, over a stretch of water swept by the Turkish artillery and Turkish snipers, whose efforts eventually made the crossing impossible.[10] The galleys, even if they had been designed to give support to a fortification like St. Elmo, could not operate in the Grand Harbour under fire from Mount Sciberras: as soon as Turkish gun platforms were seen under construction on Sciberras, two of the Order's galleys were allowed to fill with water, while two others were retained in the safety of the ditch behind St. Angelo.[11] Moreover, on and after 26th May (the day after the Turkish guns had been brought up towards St. Elmo, when the enemy trenches had already reached the cover of the counterscarp of the ditch, where they could not be seen from the fort) the garrison of St. Elmo repeatedly informed the Grand Master that their position was indefensible.[12]

From this recognised weakness of St. Elmo one should perhaps infer that the fortifications of 1551-4 had been built consciously with a view to the eventual construction of a new town on the Sciberras peninsula. St. Elmo itself defended the mouth of the Grand Harbour, and placed a further complication in the way of an enemy proceeding to an attack on the Birgu; but St. Elmo itself was isolated and readily open to attack from the rear if the Knights could not hold the peninsula as well. When we consider Strozzi's recommendations for a fortified town in the light of the position in which he placed St. Elmo, it seems extremely likely that we should regard the construction of Valletta as an established aim of the Order from 1551 onwards. Certainly the idea was taken in hand by La Valette immediately after his election in 1557, and the remaining eight years before the Siege were taken up with the consideration of the detailed

[8] F. Balbi di Correggio, *The Siege of Malta, 1565*, p. 27; cf. pp. 65, 67.
[9] F. Balbi di Correggio, *The Siege of Malta, 1565*, p. 81.
[10] cf. F. Balbi di Correggio, *The Siege of Malta, 1565*, pp. 59-60, 62, 66, 70, 80-1, 83-5, 91.
[11] cf. F. Balbi di Correggio, *The Siege of Malta, 1565*, p. 59. A dismantled galley was, however, used in an abortive attempt to send relief to St. Elmo on 22nd June (cf. p. 85).
[12] cf. F. Balbi di Correggio, *The Siege of Malta, 1565*, pp. 58, 67-8, 70-4, 81.

projects submitted by Bartolomeo Genga and Baldassare Lanci. The Siege itself, often represented as determining the Knights to move across the Grand Harbour, would thus appear as much more incidental to the development of the strategic conception of the Order's military experts, confirming the possibility of a Turkish attack in force and confirming also weaknesses in the defences which had already been discerned, but important not so much because it established the pattern for future defensive works as because it attracted international attention and therewith the extensive contributions by foreign rulers without which the Order would still have been unable to realise their strategic revolution.

MALTA IN 1565: SOME RECONSIDERATIONS

By B.W. BLOUET

THE four hundreth centenary year of the Great Siege is possibly a good time to reconsider certain aspects of the story of events in the summer of 1565. It has long been commented that we know very little of the Moslem side of the story. This is, of course, hardly surprizing for Turkish sources are not easily available to Western European writers and there is a not inconsiderable language problem. But even allowing for this gap in our knowledge, and Turkish official sources may not prove to be very rich, we still lack a carefully documented and analytical account of the Siege based upon Western European source material. This short paper is not an effort to provide such an account but it is an attempt to ask whether certain assumptions made about the Siege have a reasoned and documented basis.

The story of the Siege, as it has come down to us, has been written by Western Europeans glorifying their own military prowess and there is something of the flavour of a morality play in the accepted account of events. The Turks are usually represented as a vast, brutal, barbarian horde impervious to fear and innately evil. Against this force for evil stands a small band of Christian Knights led by a man who epitomises the Knightly virtues of courage, chivalry and devotion. And of course, in the end, the courage and devotion of a few well-led, intelligent Christian Knights overcomes the bestial Moslem horde which is portrayed as being ill-led and lacking in chivalry.

The story has become stylized and few have questioned it because firstly, it makes such a good story and secondly because the Knights of St. John had a vested interest in appearing to be the saviours of Christendom. The story of the Siege increased their renown and raised their status in European affairs.

In short the chroniclers, by and large, have been more interested in telling a good tale rather than in giving a reasoned analytical account of events. This is not a criticism of them, for the majority are story-tellers rather than historians and, to adapt Prescott's comment on Vertot, 'their appetite for the marvellous sometimes carries them into the miraculous'. Care must be taken when reading the statements of omnipotent chroniclers who, for instance, without any reservation confidently give us detailed accounts of conversations amongst the Turkish commanders as they con-

duct their campaign against the forces of the Order. Certainly renegades from the Turkish army brought some information, but the majority of such deserters were men of lowly position who probably brought no more than camp gossip. This biased attitude of the early writers has led to the distortion of certain aspects of the story which have been incorporated in nineteenth and twentieth century accounts of the siege.

There has been considerable criticism of the way in which the Turkish commanders conducted their campaign in Malta during 1565. Probably the most heroic episode of the Siege was the defence of St. Elmo. However it has been maintained by many that the Turks had no reason to attack this position at all for once the Birgu-Senglea positions fell St. Elmo would fall very quickly. The chroniclers usually give the following reason for the decision of the Turks to attack St. Elmo. The Turkish admiral Piali was jealous of the power placed in Mustapha as general commander of the expedition and did his best to make the Malta campaign difficult. Accordingly, when Mustapha suggested an immediate attack on the Birgu-Senglea defences, Piali insisted that St. Elmo was captured first in order that the Marsamxett could be made available to his fleet. As Piali was the son-in-law of Solyman, Mustapha was forced to acquiesce. Well, this may be so, although it might be asked 'why if Piali was so powerful, did he not gain command of the whole expedition in the first place?' In fact the decision to attack St. Elmo can be justified on tactical grounds without suggesting disensions amongst the Turkish commanders as the reason. Firstly, whilst Marsaxlokk, where the Turks anchored initially, is an adequate harbour from the point of view of weather during the summer, in the event of a Christian fleet coming to relieve Malta it was a very bad one. The entrance was too wide to give any real protection and the Turkish fleet might have been penned up in the horseshoe bay without any room to manoevre. The Turks were obviously worried by this fear as they seem to have manned seaward facing artillery positions at Marsaxlokk to give some protection. Secondly, supply and command problems would clearly be eased if the Turkish army, which established its main camp in the Marsa area, and the fleet were in close proximity. Thirdly and crucially, the most efficient way of attacking the Birgu-Senglea positions may have been by getting control of the Sceberras peninsula which was a good gun platform from which to bombard the major positions. The Order's military engineers had been pointing out since 1530 that the major weakness in the Birgu defences was the fact that they could be commanded by artillery deployed upon Sceberras. From the peninsula artillery could hamper movement within the town and fire onto the defenders' side of the fortifications. Artillery positions on Sceberras would not only significantly

increase the all round coverage of an attackers' fire power but it would be especially efficacious in demoralizing the defenders.

The decision to attack St. Elmo, then, may have been taken as a result of sound tactical reasoning. The Turkish command may have under-estimated the difficulties of capturing St. Elmo and they certainly conducted operations against it in an uneconomical manner. However the chroniclers usually represent St. Elmo as a small weak fortress containing only a few inadequately supplied men. This is not an accurate picture. St. Elmo had been completed about twelve years before the Siege and had been designed by a competant military engineer. The fort had been specially built to deny an aggressor unhampered use of Sceberras, it was modern, with outworks and a cavalier, well supplied with artillery positions on the landward front and, once the Siege started, about eight hundred men were put into it. Eight hundred determined men, stiffened with a strong cadre of the finest fighters in Europe, in a modern, if small, fort surrounded on three sides by the sea could pose a number of problems to an attacker for, however powerful the aggressor, he could only bring a small part of his strength against the fort at one time. It was true that St. Elmo lay on the lowest part of the peninsula and was overlooked by higher ground but even so attacking the compact fort involved considerable difficulties. Any troops deployed along the Grand Harbour side of the peninsula were exposed to the fire of the artillery mounted in St. Angelo. And whilst an attack could be launched downhill, just before the fort was reached there was a shallow col and 300 yards of open ground which the St. Angelo artillery commanded. By controlling this ground the St. Angelo guns protected St. Elmo from complete Turkish investment and allowed the fort to be supplied by sea with fresh men and materials. Finally the fort was on a knoll of higher ground at the tip of the peninsula and was built into the solid rock. This last fact is most important as it made difficult the use of mining techniques by which fortresses were frequently made untenable. As far as is known no serious attempt was made to mine St. Elmo.

In the present state of our knowledge it is impossible to say whether the Turkish commanders undertook the attack on St. Elmo for internal political reasons or as a result of hard tactical reasoning. What is certain though is that a good case could be made for attacking St. Elmo first. Sceberras peninsula was the greatest weakness in the Birgu-Senglea defences as the Order well knew and it is reasonable to suppose that in attempting to take St. Elmo the Turks were attempting to exploit this weakness and at the same time supply themselves with a safe and convenient anchorage for the fleet.

It is possible, indeed probable, that dissensions developed amongst

the Turkish commanders once the campaign started to go against them, but this is a different matter altogether. Dragut, in his criticisms of the decision to attack St. Elmo is being wise after the event – if he did in fact make the statements attributed to him.

The defence of the Turkish command on this matter cannot be extended to cover all aspects of policy for it appears to have made a number of costly mistakes. However, it is true to say that the Turkish commanders have been rather more harshly treated than they deserve and not only in this matter. Piali, the Turkish admiral has been criticised for his failure to intercept Don Garcia's relief force before it reached Malta. Yet it would have been impossible, for the fleet to maintain station in the appropriate area with a northerly wind blowing. A northerly wind is usual in Malta when the Mediterranean summer high pressure system breaks up. There seems little doubt that the break up had taken place as Don Garcia's relief fleet suffered heavy storm damage and was forced to turn back to Sicily on its first attempt to reach Malta.

Of the major characters on the Christian side only one is persistently represented as a man who is unequal to the events taking place around him; Don Garcia de Toledo, the viceroy of Sicily. The impression which has been created of a vacillating, pusillanimous and incompetent commander is unfair. It is not that the viceroy was unequal to events but that the military resources he had at his disposal were completely inadequate for the several tasks he had to perform. There could be no question of his risking the meagre forces he had for the defence of Sicily in a quixotic attempt to relieve Malta. The Knights never appreciated the point but the viceroy had to regard Malta in just the way Valette had regarded St. Elmo – the small fortress bloodily sacrificed to give the main positions time. Malta was simply an outlying fortress in the empire of Philip II and no viceroy could be justified in committing the greatest part of the Sicilian forces to the Order's aid.

Above this, Don Garcia, in the viceregal system operated by Philip II, had very little freedom to make decisions. All important matters were referred back to the emperor and viceroys were dependent on direct orders from Spain. This situation can be examined in the large quantities of viceregal correspondence which have been preserved and at least partially published.

WAS MARLOWE'S "MALTA" MALTA?

By D.L. FARLEY-HILLS

IF FEW modern scholars would go so far as to support Leon Kellner's assertion that 'Der "Jew of Malta" ist fast ein historisches drama[1]' probably fewer still would go to the other extreme and agree with Dr. Roth's opinion that 'the play has not the slightest historical foundation or verismilitude'.[2] But how much history is there in the play and how much sheer invention? The most fruitful suggestions in connecting Marlowe's play with actual history to date have centred largely on connecting the central character, Barabas, with two historical Jews, Juan Miques and David Passi;[3] yet while the connections are quite striking the strange thing is that neither have any close connection with Malta. If Malta were used simply as Shakespeare uses his Sicilies and Bohemias in *The Winter's Tale* this would not perhaps seem a matter of great importance. But one of the features of the *Jew of Malta* is not only the constant and particular references to Malta throughout the play (it is referred to by name over 50 times) but also the central importance given to the whole Society in which the action is supposed to take place. It is a mistake to regard the play as primarily about a rich Jew who happens to live in Malta, one of the most characteristic qualities of the play is the way in which the central character seems to epitomize a whole society that ostensibly rejects him. Had Marlowe only been interested in Barabas much of the cynical picture of Maltese society that we are given throughout the play would be completely gratuitous. The play, indeed, is as much about a society as a single man.

So the question: Why did Marlowe choose Malta? is an important one. Did he find something in contemporary Malta that led him to the choice or was it merely a convenient and well known place (since the Great Siege of 1565) in which to stage a meeting of Christian, Turk and Jew? That Marlowe was not interested merely in recording history is obvious

[1] Leon Kellner: *Die Quelle von Marlowe's Jew of Malta*, English Studies 10, 85 (1886).

[2] C. Roth: *The Jews of Malta*, transactions of the Jewish Historical Society XIII (1931) p. 245.

[3] For a useful account of the conjectured sources for the *Jew of Malta* see J. Bakeless: *The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe* (Harvard 1942) Vol. I pp. 334-360.

from his cavalier treatment of some of the facts. The play as is well known abounds in historical inaccuracies. To start with, if the action of the play is intended to take place during the Great Siege of 1565 as is possible but by no means certain,[4] then the presence of a Merchant Jew operating in Malta at this time is an impossibility. The Jews had been expelled from Malta when it was still part of the Aragonese dominions in 1492, and although some Jews are found in Malta during the sixteenth century (mainly as slaves) a regular trading community was not again established until the 18th century.[5] Barabbas' assertion therefore that he gained his wealth in Malta[6] is unhistorical. Apart from this, Marlowe departs from history at many points: after the arrival on the island of the Knights of St. John (who of course appear in the play) there was no Governor as there had been under the Aragonese regime. The island was ruled over by the head of the Order, the Grand Master, and as a member of a religious order and a sworn celibate he could not have had an acknowledged son as Marlowe's governor does. Then at no time did the Turks ever take either of the 'towns' of Malta (Mdina, the capital or Birgu the port) and therefore there was never any question of setting up a puppet government like the one Barabas heads. At no time did the Order of St. John pay tribute to the Turks as Marlowe has them do.[7] There are other inaccuracies especially in the nomenclature of the characters, but enough have probably been mentioned to make the point.

In spite of this disregard of strict historical truth the play is set in the context of Mediterranean history and geography with a fair amount of general accuracy. Marlowe knows of the presence of the Knights on the island, he knows of the conflict between the Order and the Turks, he knows something of the history of the Order's flight from Rhodes (11. 231f) and of their subsequent wanderings (not entirely accurate) after their heroic fight there (1753f.) he knows that the Spanish King still has a 'title to this isle' (1742), for Charles V granted the Island in fief to the Order in 1530; he knows that a Spanish relief squadron was sent over from Sicily to help the order against the Turks (though Marlowe distorts the chronology and characteristically gives the Spaniards the purely cynical motive of coming to sell their slaves 706f.). Marlowe also seems to have a more than hazy notion of geographical matters: Malta's position in the Mediterranean is understood in some detail (1435, 2230-2236) and

[4] The Courtesan refers to her loss of trade during the 'Siege' 1150f. However there was at least one other major Turkish raid on Malta (1551) between the arrival of the Knights of St. John in 1530 and the date when the play was written c. 1590.

[5] Roth: op. cit. p. 243.

[6] 2168-9. All line references throughout are to the edition of C.F. Tucker Brooke: *The Works of Christopher Marlowe*, Oxford, 1910.

even its lack of natural wealth is recorded in the Governor's reply to the Turks' demand for money: 'In Malta are no golden minerals'. Several times the 'City of Malta's' walls are mentioned and this might well reflect Marlowe's knowledge of the spectacular fortifications built after the Great Siege. Marlowe's use of the term 'City of Malta' is incidentally paralleled in contemporary Jewish references.[7] But the most striking points of similarity between Marlowe's Malta and the real Malta are just at the point in which the setting is of most importance for Marlowe's purpose: in the social conditions prevailing in the Malta of this time.

It has already been noticed elsewhere[8] that one of Marlowe's possible sources, the *Navigations* of Nicolas de Nicolay, refers in its chapter on Malta to the large number of prostitutes to be found in the port of Birgu (where the Knights had their residences until Valletta was built in the 1570's and 1580's) and that this may account for the presence of the Courtesan and her associates in the play. But of course Marlowe's picture of sexual depravity is by no means confined to one scene and one character. One important minor theme of the play (an unusual one for Marlowe) is the sexual immorality that is part of the general cynicism pervading the whole society. This is something that exists almost apart from the character of Barabas, though it is Barabas who sums up the prevailing mood in his famous lines to the Friars:

Friar: Thou has committed –

Barabas: Fornication? but that was in another country: And beside, the Wench is dead. (1549-51)

It is of course the Friars themselves who exhibit the most startlingly cynical attitudes in these matters. Now it has probably not been generally realised that Nicolay's observation on the large number of prostitutes in Malta reflects a situation that became increasingly scandalous until it sparked off an incident that in the early 1580's was a subject of international notoriety. Nicolay was in Malta, as he says, in 1551. In 1565 however, in the year of the Great Siege that is, we read confirmation of Nicolay's observation in the Order's own archives, for we find the Order hastily preparing to evacuate the 'inutili' from the dangers threatened by the Turkish invasion. Special provision we find is to be made to evacuate the prostitutes: 'donne publiche cortegiane tante forestieri come Maltesi e native di questa isola[9]...' That the Order was not slow in bringing these ladies back after the danger was over is clear from the number of attempts

[7] See Roth, op. cit. p. 343

[8] By Bakeless op. cit. p. 232.

[9] Archives of the Order in Malta 91 (A.O.M., Malta Public Library) 10th April 1565.

to discourage their activities made by La Cassière who became Grand Master in 1572. It was one of La Cassière's attempts to restrict the prostitutes to outside the new city of Valletta that, according to the Order's own historian Dal Pozzo, caused the international incident I referred to earlier. It is true that Dal Pozzo seems to gloss over a good deal of the other matters that caused la Cassière to be overthrown and incarcerated in his own castle of San Angelo, but I don't think there is any reason to doubt the accuracy of what he says: it may be only part of the story but it is the part that is relevant to this article. At any rate, according to Dal Pozzo, the Head of the Order of St. John was deposed partly at least because he was trying to tighten up on the Order's morals. This is Dal Pozzo's own account:

> Ma quello che diede l'ultima spinta alla rivolta fu ch'abominando egli i pubblici scandali, ne sapendo trovar altro rimedio alle dissolutezze della Gioventù, publicò un editto contro le Meretrici di dover sfrattare nel termine d'un mese dalla Valletta, ritirandosi al Borgo o altrove.[10]

That the state of public morals implied here is not exaggerated can be seen from further independent testimony: some of it from the Order's own documents. We can read for instance in the records of the Council for April 1574 that a commission was set up after public accusations have been made by a member of the Order of the degenerate conduct of other members, these include accusations of rape, fornication with Jewish women:

> 'ac ... alia maiora peccata atque crimina quae propter Religionis decus ac honestatem tacere ...[11]

A most interesting and ironic commentary on this lurid picture is provided when the Sicilian government decide to send a commission in 1581 to enquire into the dispute in the Order. The commission is headed by Pompeo Colonna, brother of the Sicilian Viceroy and includes a young nobleman Galceran Corbera. On 18th of August 1581 Pompeo writes urgently to his brother that Corbera has been stabbed to death in Valletta after having it seems been involved in a dispute over a prostitute, the mistress of a number of French Knights. The murderers were never discovered.[12]

This kind of immorality even among a community sworn to the Christian life like the Order of St. John is not sufficiently abnormal for the times to

[10] Dal Pozzo: *Historia della Sacra Religione* (Verona 1703-1715) v. 1, p. 180.
[11] A.O.M. 94 p. 3.
[12] H. Koenigsberger: *The Government of Sicily under Philip II of Spain*, (London, 1951) p. 189.

be specially remarkable in itself. One has only to think of Marlowe's own associates in London to see that his view of these events would not be ours. But there are two factors in the situation which might make this society in Malta attractive to Marlowe as a basis for a play about a community dominated by 'Machiavellian' concepts. Firstly as a society ostensibly sworn to upholding Christian values it was an ideal place to choose in exposing discrepancies between Christian (or Catholic) Theory and Christian fact. Secondly the La Cassière scandal of 1581 gave international publicity to this state of affairs. La Cassière, having with the aid of his supporters freed himself from arrest, took the dispute to Rome where we are told fighting broke out between the parties.[13] News of the dispute we find being given in a letter from Cardinal de Foix to Henri III in Paris[14] and from Paris we find Henry Cobham reporting about the affair to the government in London in November 1581.[15]

An even more interesting connection between Marlowe's Malta and the real Malta is the position of the Jews in both the fictitious and the actual society. Once again here Marlowe has flouted actual fact in that Barabas' career would not have been possible in 16th century Malta, but he builds his fiction (whether he knew it or not) against a background of Maltese-Jewish hostility which would fully justify the choice of Malta as an ideal scene for the clash of Jew with Christian. The Jews evidently regarded the Knights of St. John with peculiar abhorence throughout the sixteenth century, using the special maledictory formula 'May its name be wiped out' when speaking of it.[16] A 16th century Jewish chronicler Joseph haCohen sums up the Jewish feeling at the end of his account of the Great Siege: 'The monks of Malta are still today a snare and trap for the Jews'.[17] The main reason for this special hostility seems to have been Malta's central position in the European slave market. The Order's galleys with their constant raids on Jewish and Moslem shipping and seaports brought numerous Jewish and Moslem slaves into Malta and the Jews were especially prized as being better able to fetch higher ransom prices than other slaves, those who could not afford a ransom were either 'exported' as slaves or were made to work as galley slaves in the Order's ships.[18] It is not surprising then that, as Dr. Roth says, Malta became 'a symbol for all that was cruel and hateful in the Christian world.'[19] This feeling seems

[13] E. Schermerhorn: *Malta of the Knights* p. 119.
[14] ibid. p. 114
[15] Public Records Office, London, S.P. 78/6.
[16] C. Roth: op. cit. p. 216.
[17] ibid.
[18] C. Roth: *The Slave Community of Malta*, The Menorah Journal 1928 p. 220.
[19] Roth: *Jews of Malta* p. 216.

to have been reciprocated, because we find La Cassière writing to the Pope in 1578 justifying this hostility.[20] Dr. Roth comments: 'the Knights on their side professed to regard the Jews as more dangerous enemies even than the Turks'.[21] Jewish hatred of the Order was so well known that it occasioned a rumour that the Jews had financed the Turkish expedition against Malta in 1565.[22]

The suitability of choosing contemporary Malta as the setting for a play about the clash between Jew and Christian is now quite clear. But a third connection has still to be made between fact and fiction. Marlowe's play, as the Prologue makes clear, is about Machiavellian 'policy', it is a picture of a society dominated by self-seeking and an unscrupulous exercise of power and wealth. As such it is, from the Christian point of view, a picture of an anti-society. Barabas, as the central exponent of his society's viewpoint, suitably enough is represented on a man obsessed with a desire for wealth, because it is traditionally in the substitution of the money transaction for the true Christian relationships of charity that the Christian writer portrays his vision of the anti-society. Now here again contemporary Malta proves to be an ideal place to represent as a community where *cupiditas* has taken the place of *caritas*. A good part of the Order's wealth at this time came from the loot obtained in acts of piracy against non-Christian and sometimes even Christian shipping[23] and one of the most valuable items of this loot were the slaves taken from captured vessels. Marlowe again, in building up his theme of cupidity, violates fact in representing the Knights as paying the Turks tribute money. But although this is not historically accurate it serves to emphasise his main theme: the dependence of the community's very existence on dubious financial transactions. Once again the actual fact is not strictly accurate but the spirit of both real and fictitious Maltas are remarkably close. Marlowe does of course make considerable play with Malta's connections with the slave trade both in making it the reason for the appearance of del Bosco's fleet (a nice sardonic touch) and in emphasising it again in the scene in which Barabas buys Ithimore. Piracy and especially slaves remained a chief source of income from the Order well into the 18th century. As Dr. Roth tells us 'throughout the Rule of the Knights ... the island was a last European refuge of slave traffic and labour'[24] Grand Master La Cassière's chief opponent in the troubles that led to his over-

[20] ibid p. 216 n. 1.
[21] ibid. p. 216.
[22] Roth *Slave Community* p. 220.
[23] Schermerhorn op. cit. p. 117.
[24] Roth: *Slave Community* p. 219.

throw for instance was a highly successful buccaneer, a former Master of the Order's galleys, Romegas, while the Grand Master who succeeded La Cassière in 1581, Verdalle, had his own private corsairing fleet, his 'supposed fortune had acquired international notoreity'.[25]

There are many features of Marlowe's Malta that are not historically accurate, but one cannot help thinking that for a Protestant (or simply anti-Catholic) playwright out to create a vision of the anti-Christian 'Machiavellian' society, as Marlowe clearly was in this play, the Malta of the day made an ideal starting point. Not only was it a place ostensibly dedicated to the Christian life, but in fact of notorious immorality, whose economy partly depended on plunder and the buying and selling of slaves, but also, as a place particularly notorious to the Jews, it provided a setting for a plot in which a standard of comparison could be made without violating the completeness of the vision of depravity. If Marlowe did not know of the condition of Malta at the time when he was writing his play then the spiritual likeness of the two communities is a most remarkable coincidence.

[25] Schermerhorn p. 145.

THE GALLEY-CONVICTS AND BUONAVOGLIA IN MALTA DURING THE RULE OF THE ORDER

By GODFREY WETTINGER

THROUGHOUT its long stay in the Maltese Islands (1530-1798), the Order of St. John usually employed large numbers of convicts and buonavoglia (volunteer rowers) on the galleys, in addition to the inevitable hundreds of Moslem and Jewish slaves. For its galley-commanders it was really a matter of high policy to do so, because they expected the Christian convicts and buonavoglia to keep a constant watch on the doings and sayings of their non-Christian comrades. Care was therefore always taken to distribute them throughout the places on board that contained Infidels – one of them, for example, being invariably posted to each oar-bench, where he worked in the company of three or four slaves.

In 1632 there were some 357 buonavoglia and 175 convicts, together with the 1,284 slaves, on the six galleys of the Order.[1] About forty years later, Caravita reckoned that there normally were about ninety buonavoglia on the flagship and seventy on each of the other six galleys then in commission.[2] In 1798 Napoleon's officers found seven hundred convicts from the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in the prisons and on the galleys of the Order, at a time when there were only some five hundred slaves there. Several of them had already served their sentence and would have been freed if they had remained in their own country – from which they had been sent to Malta for having been implicated in the plot of a Chevalier Medichi in 1795.[3]

It might not generally be known that few of the convicts and buonavoglia were really local men. Right back in the sixteenth century, we find the Grand Master constantly endeavouring to obtain convicts from other countries of Southern Europe, particularly from France, Naples, and the Papal States. Thus on 4th October 1535 we find Fra Francesco de

[1] Figures taken from the population-estimates of 1632 in RML (Royal Malta Library manuscript) 162, fol. 127rv.

[2] Caravita, Del Commun Tesoro, capitolo 260, primo punto (manuscript copy of treatise written soon after 1680: RML 509, fol. 604).

[3] "Depuy à Bonaparte, Malte, le 25 Prairial An VI (13 June 1793)": *Correspondence inédite officielle et confidentielle de Napoleon etc.*, tom. I, pag. 159. Reproduced ir full in *Archivum Melitense*, vol. V, pp. 131-2. All names in this article, like Medichi here, are reproduced in their original spelling.

Claramonte, captain of the Order's galleon, receiving instructions to accept on board any convicts aged from twenty to twenty-six, who had been procured for the Order by another knight "in Savoy and other parts". He had to keep a proper guard over them, and provide them with the food and drink they needed, putting their expenses into a separate account.[4] Twenty-one years later, we find another knight on a mission to Naples receiving instructions that the King of Spain, Philip II (who was also King of Naples), had promised to grant the Order two fully furnished galleys together with two hundred convicts, in order to enable the Order to reconstitute its galley-squadron, which had been practically annihilated by the capsizing and sinking of four vessels, with heavy loss of life among the oarsmen, as the result of a tornado in Malta harbour in October 1555.[5]

Three years later, the Grand Commander of the Order was sent to "Provence or Languedoc", where – among other things – he had to collect the greatest possible number of convicts, both from those on the galleys of Marseilles and from others ashore, and he was also to get a licence to take them out of that country. He was to do the same at all the other ports he entered in Italy, taking care to leave Naples for his return journey.[6] The chronicler of the Order, Bosio, informs us of two other occasions when His Most Christian Majesty presented large numbers of convicts to the Order (1561 and 1569).[7] In 1572 we find the Council of the Order ordering a proper distribution among the galleys of the convicts who had arrived from abroad "on the large galleon", thus relieving the Maltese, who had been pressed into service against their wishes – who, in fact, had been sent to the galleys "by force, without sentence of court". Incidentally, this was the only known occasion on which something resembling press-gang methods of recruitment for the Order's fleet was ever used in Malta.[8]

The convicts had to be young and their sentences long ones. It was obviously no use at all getting them to Malta merely to have to return them to their own countries within a few months because of the expiry of their sentence. In 1585 or thereabouts we find the Grand Master approving the conduct of its agent abroad, who had refused to accept forty convicts on grounds of old age or the brevity of their sentence (three years), because

[4] AOM (Archives of the Order in Malta) 416, fol. 197r.
[5] Instructions given to Bernardo de Guimeran, 14 February 1555 *ab Incar.*: AOM 425, fols. 211r f.
[6] Instructions given to Fra Carlo D'Urre, 13 January 1558 *ab Incar.*: AOM 427, fols. 260v f.
[7] Bosio, vol. III, pp. 449-50, 833.
[8] Decree of the Council of the Order, 17 May 1572: AOM 93, fol. 62r.

only young men on life sentences or extremely long ones were really acceptable.[9] In 1625 the knight Fra Luigi Magalotti at Avignon was told not to lose any opportunity of sending convicts to Malta, provided he took care that they were not less than eighteen to twenty years old nor more than forty, and that their sentences were, at least, of six years' duration.[10] Another document informs us that out of the 239 convicts sent to the galleys of the Order by the Papal States twelve years before (i.e. in 1651), 168 had already been set free on termination of their sentence, 62 had died, and nine had been set free but had re-engaged as buonavoglia.[11] An additional 166 convicts had been sent to Malta by the Papal States on 3 February 1663.[12] In fact, several other attempts to obtain slaves from the Papal States are on record. Thus efforts were being made as early as 1591 to obtain 200 convicts from there.[13] four years later the Order was again trying to obtain some more,[14] and, more than a century later, in 1700, another 150 convicts are definitely known to have been sent to Malta.[15]

In 1588 the Order was promised some 360 convicts from France,[16] and in 1729 the Viceroy of Sicily offered seventy.[17] Some years before 1755 some 120 convicts had been sent to Malta by the King of Naples:[18] they might have been the "150 or at least 120" whom the Order was attempting to obtain in 1751.[19] In 1789, when all the slaves of the Order had been ransomed by the Emperor of Morocco, the Order was hoping to receive some three or four hundred convicts from Naples.[20]

A large number of petitions from these convicts have survived in the

[9] Grand Master to Wiloubier (?), about 6 December 1587: AOM 1542, fols. 88v f.
[10] Letter dated 30 April 1625: AOM 1404.
[11] "Nota di Galeotti ...", *Inquisitoriato di Malta: Registro di Lettere ...*: RML 1176, fols. 8r to 12v
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] Instructions to Fra Don Vincenzo Carrafa, Prior of Hungary, etc. on his forthcoming journey to Rome, 12 January 1590 *ab Incar.*: AOM 445, fol. 121rv.
[14] Grand Master to Emilio Pucci, 15 December 1595: AOM 1377, fols. 292-3.
[15] Decree of the Council of State, 14 July and 23 September 1700: AOM 265, fols. 12 and 15v f. Lists of them survive among the records of the Inquisitor of Malta: A. Mifsud, "Appunti sugli Archivi di Malta", *Archivum Melitense*, vol. 2, page 65.
[16] Grand Master to Pupetieres, "sur la conduite à Malte des forcaires qui sont à Paris", c. 1 January 1588: AOM 1542, fol. 159rv.
[17] Decree of the Council of State, 19 January 1728 *ab Incar.*: AOM 268, fol. 104v.
[18] Petition of Raimondo Baldacchino, with decree dated 21 December 1755: AOM 1189, item 110.
[19] Letter of Grand Master to Baglio Marulli, Receiver at Naples, 15 March and 17 May 1751: AOM 1509.
[20] Grand Master to "Venerando Ministro D. Francone, Napoli", 1 August 1789: AOM 1539, fols. 133v ff.

archives of the Order, from which something may be learnt of their affairs and about their ultimate freeing. Thus we learn that Giuseppe di Felice, who had been sent to Malta in 1755 and had served for twenty-three years on the galleys before being transferred to a job ashore, was still in Malta in 1796, having lately served for six years as the distributor of bread to the two prisons of Senglea and Vittoriosa. On 27 September 1796 he was granted permission to leave the prisons and to move about freely throughout the island, provided he relinquished his rights to the issues of bread and clothes, having in future to maintain himself as well as he could.[21] In similar circumstances, Francesco Basile, another convict from Naples, expected to earn his living by working as a carpenter,[22] while Gregorio Magrin worked as a barber and drawer-out of teeth, "being much in demand through his ability".[23] His contemporary and fellow-countryman, Giuseppe Savella, also expected to earn his living, on his release from prison, by working as a barber, in spite of having been subject for several years past to pains in the chest and to blood-spitting.[24]

Though, on termination of sentence, the convicts were normally set free, occasionally things went wrong – as happened to Damaschino di Giovanni, no copy of whose sentence could be found, though the Treasury persisted in claiming that he had received a life sentence. His captain, however, recommended clemency, owing both to his age and to his offer to serve as a sailor.[25] If their ship happened to be abroad when the convicts terminated their sentence, they were usually forced to continue their service until their return to Malta, when they were released and given compensation for the amount of extra service they had performed. Thus on 11 January 1659 the Audienza decreed that the convict Rocco Rizzo should be recompensed for his extra service: he was claiming pay for four extra months.[26]

Except that they could not be bought or sold, and had to be set free on termination of their sentence, there was little practical difference between the condition of the convicts and that of their companions, the slaves themselves. We find them both working at the Holy Infirmary,[27] and the

[21] Di Felice's two petitions, with auditor's decrees, dated respectively 13 February and 27 September 1796, and other documents: AOM 1198, items 37 and 57.
[22] Basile's petition, with decree dated 8 November 1796: *Ibid.*, item 58.
[23] Magrin's petition, with decree dated 12 December 1795: *Ibid.*, item 17.
[24] Savella's petition, with decree dated 23 June 1795 and other documents, including a doctor's certificate: *Ibid.*, item 89.
[25] Registration of Damaschino's demand for his freedom and auditor's decrees, 6 and 22 October 1657: AOM 666, fol. 373v.
[26] Registration of Rizzo's claim, and of the decree of the Audienza, 11 January 1659: AOM 667, fol. 38v.

convicts, like the slaves, were also kept by the knights for domestic service in their homes. In 1654 the knight Colonga was permitted to take a Greek convict with him on his journey to the Levant in return for the slave he had handed over to the Treasury.[28] Ninety-two years later, the agozzino of the prison stated officially that he had been allowing six convicts to absent themselves from the prison: two worked at the Holy Infirmary, where they also slept, two worked at the house of a knight named Rosormini, one worked at the Segreto's house, and the sixth was employed at the smithery – the last four of them returned to the prison every evening.[29] Two years previously, he had stated that the convicts in his prison were then employed at the Holy Infirmary, the bakery, and the smithery.[30] For any who escaped the *agozzino* had to pay the conventionally-fixed price, just as if the convict had a marketable value. In 1670 Antonio Scarpello, *agozzino* of the *San Martino*, was fined 100 scudi for the escape at Palermo, several years before, of Lorenzo Massori, a convict from the Papal States.[31] More surprisingly, in 1621 Pasqual Bezina, a Maltese convict, was given permission to send a slave of his own to take his place on the galleys for the remaining part of his sentence of ten years, on condition that he did not leave the island before the ten years had elapsed, and that he sent another slave if the first one died within the said period.[32] Nor is this the only known instance of the practice, because in 1640 we find Gio. Garnier of the city of Aix-en-Provence, who had been condemned to the galleys for life by the court of the Inquisition of Avignon, receiving permission to substitute a slave for himself, provided he found one who was good for rowing, and gave security not to leave the island within six years. He had pleaded that he was completely unfit for rowing on the galleys and for any task ashore.[33]

The buonavoglia were also frequently recruited abroad. In 1601 the Grand Master himself personally recommended the efforts that were being made by Vetriano, a knight, to recruit buonavoglia abroad for the vessel he was himself equipping for a corsairing expedition.[34] And only two years

[27] Decree of the Treasury, 19/24 July 1685: AOM 646, fols. 524, 530 and 532.
[28] Colonga's petition, and decree of the Treasury, 9 February 1654: AOM 644, fol. 10rv.
[29] Promotor fiscale's log-book, 1 April 1746: RML 638.
[30] Promotor fiscale's log-book, 8 and 10 September 1744: RML 638.
[31] Decree of the Treasury, "Carico dato ad Agozzini per schiavi, buonavogli e forzati fuggiti", 16 January 1670: AOM 645, fols. 83-4.
[32] Decree of the Audienza, dated "A di 24 di Novembre benche fusse a 8 di Luglio 1621": AOM 664. fol. 44v.
[33] Garnier's petition, with decree of the Audienza, 20 July 1640: AOM 665, fol. 91rv.
[34] Grand Master to Aponte, 25 April 1601: AOM 1380

later the same Grand Master complained to the King of Spain that his subordinates, the Viceroys of Sicily and Naples, had forbidden the agents of the Order to recruit any buonavoglia in their two countries, "from which it follows that the said galleys are now manned entirely by Turks, a most dangerous thing for forces that have such importance in His Majesty's service." He asked for permission to recruit 150 of them in the two kingdoms. As a result, the King through his secretary wrote to the Viceroy of Sicily that he should permit, after his own galleys had been manned, the officials of the Order to recruit in Sicily half the total number of men they required.[35] Perhaps a similar letter was sent to the Viceroy of Naples for permission to recruit the other half there. In 1606 an agent of the Order was told to have some 150 buonavoglia ready against the arrival of the squadron of galleys of the Order on its return trip from Barcellona and Marseilles.[36] Other documents of the same nature could easily be produced for any later period. Thus on 6 September 1625 the Grand Master thanked Receiver Valdina for having procured seventy buonavoglia for the Order, and on the same day he also thanked Procurator Accarigi for having recruited twenty others and tried to obtain more.[37] Right up to 1798 most of the buonavoglia had Italian-sounding names.

The buonavoglia entered the service of the Order by accepting from the Treasury a sizable sum of money on loan, which they agreed to repay by means of their personal service on the galleys. Their nominal pay, which went to the gradual extinction of their debt, was raised to twenty-two tari a month, i.e. twenty-two scudi a year, in 1614,[38] and was further raised by six tari a month in 1669.[39] When the whole debt had been paid back in this way, the buonavoglia could re-claim his freedom. Thus in 1652 Giacche Vert, a Frenchman, asked for his liberty because he no longer owed the Treasury or his ship's captain any money, and he was duly set free.[40] Four similar cases occurred in 1654,[41] and another one in 1657.[42] There must, in fact, have been hundreds of similar releases.

Those who grew too old or sick for further employment were retired, even if they had not completed the repayment of their debt. Thus on 14

[35] "Lettere al duca di Feria Vice-Re di Sicilia per la concessione di buonavoglie per servitio delle galere", dated: Valladolid, 10 March 1603: AOM 210, fol. 94rv.
[36] Grand Master to Ricevitore Capece, 16 December 1606: AOM 1385.
[37] Copies of both letters are in AOM 1404.
[38] Decree of the Council, 17 July 1614: AOM 105, fol. 73r.
[39] Decree of Council of State, 7 January 1668 *ab Incar.*: AOM 261, fol. 117r.
[40] Decree of the Audienza, 5 October 1652: AOM 666, fol. 16v.
[41] Decrees of the Audienza, 16 January 1654: *Ibid.*, fol. 117r.
[42] Decree of the Audienza concerning the demand for liberty of Battista Pisaila, buonavoglia on the *Galera Magistrale*, 24 November 1657: AOM 667, fol. 7r.

January 1634 the Audienza granted complete freedom to Gioanne Pitropoli, buonavoglia on the *Galera Capitana*, though he still owed the Treasury the sum of twenty-two scudi, because Prothomedico Corogna had confirmed that he was completely incapable of further work.[43] On 16 May 1637 Bartolo San Marco, who served on the *Santa Ubaldesca*, was given his freedom for the same reason, on condition that he left the island forthwith, though he still owed eight scudi.[44] At the age of seventy, Vito d'Adamo still owed the Treasury the tiny sum of eighteen tari, when we find him successfully petitioning the government for his release on grounds of age and infirmities, being now unsuitable "even for the ditches". He had served for fifteen years on the galleys as rower or valet.[45]

The government was not always so compliant. Nimico Cassar of the *Santa Ubaldèsca* was given his liberty only after he had served for a whole month on constructional work ashore in 1637,[46] and Domenico Jarufi was told in 1654 that, as he still owed eight tari, he should serve for the whole of the next cruise of the galleys, but without chains, being counted as *homo di capo*, getting his freedom and compensation for his extra service on the return of his ship to Malta.[47] Gioseppi Prover is found similarly facing great difficulties in achieving his freedom, though he had already served for so much more than he was bound to that he was already owed the sum of thirteen scudi by the Treasury: his captain was insisting that he remain in chains, but after ten years of service he definitely wanted to return to his own country, where he could die surrounded by his relatives. His request for freedom and payment of the money due to him was finally accepted.[48]

In 1633 Tomaso Causero, and in 1638 Vincentio Bartolo, were allowed to leave their ships, the *San Giovanni* and the *San Pietro* respectively, only on condition that they immediately paid the money they still owed

[43] Registration of Pitropoli's petition and decree of the Audienza, 14 January 1634: AOM 664, fol. 212v.

[44] Registration of San Marco's petition, with decree of the Audienza, 16 May 1637: AOM 665, fol. 9r.

[45] D'Adamo's petition, with decree of the Audienza, 20 April 1641: *Ibid.*, fol. 111r.

[46] Registration of Cassar's petition, with decree of the Audienza, 16 May 1637: *Ibid.*,.fol. 9v.

[47] Prover's petition, with decree of the Audienza, 16 January 1644: AOM 665, fol. 183rv. In 1658 we find Gioseppe Farrugia and Gratio Curcop both asking for compensation for the extra period they had been forced to serve (AOM 667, fols. 17v and 31v).

[48] Registration of Causero's petition with decree of the Audienza, 10 September 1633: AOM 664, fol. 196r; Bartolo's petition, with decree of the Audienza, 14 August 1638: AOM 665, fol. 44r.

the Treasury.[49] In 1650 Aniello d'Angelo, a Neapolitan, asked for a similar arrangement or that he be allowed to find another buonavoglia to fill his place, but was told that he would have to find two acceptable buonavoglia not one.[50] Domenico Gallo was told that not only would he have to find another buonavoglia but would also still have to pay the outstanding part of his debt before he could achieve his complete freedom.[51]

On the other hand, Vincentio Tempera and Giovanni de Nicolaci both received their full liberty and complete release from their debt in 1623 because of the promise made them when they were employed in carrying the victims of an outbreak of contagious disease to the Isolotto, where they also saw to the further needs of the sick, thus putting their own life in great danger.[52] Paolo Corrao not only received his freedom in 1660 as a result of his great infirmities, but was also, in recognition of the fifty years of service he had given the Order, granted three loaves of black bread daily for the rest of his life.[53] Paolo Zammit, buonavoglia on the *San Giovanni*, received a grant of bread and pay for the rest of his life as a reward for his eighteen years of service and the wound he received on duty.[54]

Sometimes one wonders what really lies behind the frequently all-too-laconic statements of the documents. Take the petition of Carlo Grecq, for example. He asked for the removal of his chains because, he said, it was only through his misfortune that he had missed his ship – an excuse that would not have been accepted if he had not taken care to report himself as soon as the ship was gone. Then what are we to make of the request of Pietro Maccaria to be set free because he had never taken either clothes or money of buonavoglia? Was he being accused merely of common theft or of having taken the uniform and pay of the buonavoglia – that is, of having become one of the buonavoglia?[55] Petty theft, drunkenness and

[49] Registration of d'Angelo's petition, with decree of the Audienza, 12 November 1650: AOM 665, fol. 360r.

[50] Gallo's petition, with associated documents dated 16 September to 7 October 1656: AOM 666, fol. 328v.

[51] Their petition, with decree of the Audienza, 20 November 1623: AOM 664, fol. 79v. Similar freedom was granted on the same occasion to three galley-convicts for the same reason.

[52] Corrao's first petition, referring to 43 years of service, with decree of the Audienza, 5 July 1659: AOM 667, fol. 47v; his second petition, referring to fifty years, with similar decree, 4 September 1660: *Ibid.*, fol. 68r.

[53] Registration of Zammit's petition, with decree of the Audienza, 23 March 1658: AOM 667, fol. 18r.

[54] Registration of Grecq's petition, with decree of the Audienza, 2 September 1651: AOM 665, fol. 383r.

[55] Registration of Maccaria's demand, with decrees of the Audienza, one of 13

brawling were common enough occupations of the buonavoglia, as the promotor fiscale's log-book of the 1740s shows, but for our last rather unusual item we have chosen, instead, an extract showing the buonavoglia in a much better light:

> On the 12th (January 1745)
> The buonavoglia, four of the *Capitana*, two of the *San Luigi*, and another of the *Magistrale*, ask for permission to perform farces (*burlette*) during the night at Birgu, returning to their galleys at 11 o'clock, at the rate of one carlino per head. – Granted –[56]

May 1651 referring it to the commissioners of the Congregation of the Galleys, the other, of 20 May 1651, granting him the liberty he wanted as he had not taken "either the uniform or the money of buonavoglia": AOM 665, fol. 373v.

[56] Entry in Promotor fiscale's log-book, dated 12 January 1745: RML 638. RML 638 is a continuation of RML 666.

LAMARTINE'S IMPRESSIONS OF MALTA

By Bernerd Clerke Weber and Harry Redman, Jr.

Alphonse Marie Louis de Prat de Lamartine (October 1790 – February 1869) was one of the outstanding French poets of the Romantic movement, the first of the truly important ones. A native of the town of Mâcon, he was descended from a family of Franc-Comtois landowners. Lamartine was a versatile figure who was not only a creative writer but also a noted statesman and orator. He was educated at Lyons and later at the Jesuit *collège* at Belley, where he spent the years from 1803 to 1807. In June 1820 he married at Chambéry a young Englishwoman named Anna Eliza Birch, whom he called 'Marianne' and who was a person of some means. Shortly thereafter he left for Naples, where he served as an attaché of the French Legation. Also during the 1820's he served in the French embassy in London and in Tuscany. King Charles X in 1825 bestowed upon him the cross of the Legion of Honor, a distinction the recipient shared with another Romantic writer, Victor Hugo.

After the July Revolution of 1830 and the fall from power of the Bourbon dynasty in France, Lamartine abandoned his career in the diplomatic service, although he was to return to politics later and was virtual dictator of France briefly after the July Monarchy was overthrown in 1848. In June 1832, accompanied by his wife and only daughter Julia and a large retinue, he embarked upon a leisurely tour of the Near East. This excursion, which lasted sixteen months, took the poet to Malta, Greece, Syria, and Palestine. The entire journey is well described in Lamartine's first prose work, entitled *Souvenirs, impressions, pensées, et paysages pendant un voyage en Orient* (1835). Of particular interest here are some of his comments on Malta which are presented in translation from the French work and compared with material in the same writer's *Correspondance générale de 1830 à 1848.*

Early in preparing for his trip to the East Lamartine knew that he would take in Malta. From Marseilles 20 June 1832 he wrote to Pierre Jean Ronot, a close friend, that his intention was to visit Constantinople, Jerusalem, Lebanon, Egypt, then winter in Smyrna. In the spring of 1833 he would visit Greece, then Malta and Sicily, returning to France via the Adriatic and Venice. This order he was to change quite a bit. Perhaps it will be of interest to note that while Lamartine at this time allowed for

possible poetic inspiration, he declared that he did not plan to write up his trip. Back in France, his economic resources much depleted as a result of his travels, he did not hesitate long when his publisher, Gosselin, proposed an attractive price to print his travel notes.

When it appeared, the *Voyage en Orient* was a record of events, sometimes disconnected descriptions, and random ideas, a book in which the poet made entries almost each day as the things he discussed occurred. Here, as is usual in his works, what happened, incidents, what he saw, were apt to inspire meditations and elicit precious personal opinions. Hence the reader, then as now, learns both what Lamartine did or witnessed and how he reacted. We learn, to take an example, that the Bourbonist convictions to which Lamartine still paid lip service did not prevent his deciding that the English, who had wrested Malta from Napoleon, were a horde of interlopers. While he was prepared to admit that these interlopers, viewed as a whole, were an admirable ethical and political unit, he did not consider them a sociable one. He looked upon them as vain and went so far as to claim that their sole concern was with externals. Happily, he had a chance to discover that there existed remarkable exceptions, to say the least. Sir Frederick and Lady Ponsonby, Sir Frederick Hankey and family, Mr. and Mrs. Nugent, a certain Mr. Greig, and John Hookham Frere, author and former minister to Spain, were to be remembered as persons who, during their week in Malta, received the Lamartines 'less as travellers than friends'.

Of what he saw Lamartine was above all displeased with the government he discovered in Malta, which actually was to be replaced only a decade later with the liberal constitutional system. Lamartine's own political views at this time had started their move toward ever more dominant liberalism. Thus one notes not without interest that the visitor considered British rule in Malta harsh and repressive. He was not consistent on the matter, however, and in one place wondered in print how anyone could regard the contented natives as slaves.

Having put in at Malta instead of going directly to Constantinople, Lamartine had the ill luck to have his ship, the *Alceste*, quarantined, a measure imposed because the dread cholera epidemic then on the march across Europe had already reached France. Lamartine wrote at once to the French consul, M. Miège, an old friend, asking how to proceed to have the quarantine raised. Governor Ponsonby raised it, and in a most curious manner – the *Alceste* was accorded war vessel status, and the seclusion period was thus reduced, by administrative intervention, from ten days to three. In the meantime the Lamartines and their suite were permitted to venture about, even close to shore, in boats at dusk. Hence it was at its

crepuscular best that the poet previewed Malta and found himself comparing it, thus revealed, to the Bay of Naples, Seville, Cordova, Grenada.

Free soon to move about as he chose, Lamartine was not disappointed. With the islands, and with the principal one most of all, he was enchanted. His observations and impressions are at all times those that would occur to a poet, whether the inspiration was Valetta's heteroclite appearance, the Grand Master's palace, Saint John's Cathedral, the harbors, the arid rural areas, or the people and the unusual social complexion. An article's narrow limits do not permit one to quote all that Lamartine wrote about his Maltese visit, so let us choose several remarks more or less at random. For example, those that concern Saint John's, which 'has all the character, all the seriousness that one might expect in such a monument in a place like this: grandeur, nobility, wealth. The keys to Rhodes, carried away by the knights after they had been defeated, hang on either side of the altar, a symbol of eternal yearning or forever disappointed hopes. A superb vault, painted in toto by Calabrese, a work that modern Rome in its best artistic periods could show with pride'.[1] The writer seems to have been unaware that the turbulent Mattia Preti, or Calabrese (1613-1699), was himself a Knight of Malta.

He seems not to have known either that Michelangelo da Caravaggio (1573-1610) was not only a brilliant painter but could also claim membership in the order. 'In the Chapel of the Election, one picture alone creates an effect upon me', he continues. 'It is by Caravaggio, whom the knights of the time had summoned to the island to paint the vault of Saint John's. He assumed the task, but his wild, irritable, untamed nature won out. He dreaded a work that would demand time and depr[illegible]d.' Lamartine could have added that while in Malta this artist was imprisoned in connection with a quarrel he had with another knight and that if he departed, it was because he had a chance to escape to Sicily. Let us return to Lamartine's account, however. 'In Malta he left his masterpiece, *The Beheading of John the Baptist*. Were our modern painters who seek Romanticism with rules instead of finding it in nature to see this extraordinary picture, they would realize that someone had beaten them to their so-called invention. In it one beholds fruit born on the tree and not an imitation moulded in wax and painted with mural colours. An animated picture, artistic poses, depth of feeling, realism and dignity combined, bold contrast and yet unity and harmony, horror and beauty all at the same time. Such is the painting. It is one of the finest I have ever seen. This is the picture that the artists of the current school are looking for.

[1] The sentence fragment, so typical of this work, is Lamartine's.

There it is, it has been located, they need search no more.'

On 24 July 1832 Sir Frederick Ponsonby, who had returned to Valetta from his estate, received the Lamartines at the Grand Master's palace. The French poet admired this British public servant and was at the same time impressed with the simple splendor of the palace itself. His impressions, here as elsewhere, have been transmitted to us as mere notes, such as 'beauty of the whole and nakedness of useless decorations outside and in; vast rooms; long galleries; austere paintings; a wide, pleasant, sonorous staircase; a *salle d'armes* two hundred feet long containing armour from every period of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem's history; library of forty thousand volumes where we were received by the director, Abbé Bollanti, a young Maltese ecclesiastic just like the Roman curates of the old school...'.

Less awesome structures had their appeal too, particularly when bathed in the quiet, serene light that made each and all spectacular. 'Arab mores like the speech, and Spanish houses like the attire', Lamartine generalized in one of his earliest letters home. In the *Voyage en Orient*, he told his readers that each house had the same basic exterior, adding that each 'looks as if it had been built not stone by stone with cement and sand but as if it had been carved alive and upright out of living rock and set down on the earth like a block that had come from its bosom and as enduring as the earth itself. Two wide, handsome pillars stand at the two corners of the façade. These rise a mere two and a half stories high. At this point an ornate cornice carved out of the brilliant stone crowns them and in turn acts as a base for a rich, massive ballustrade which extends the whole distance of the top and replaces those roofs' which, monstrous and hideous, ruin the horizon of European cities.

Lamartine describes other characteristic architectural details as well, such as the steps leading up to the doors and on and around which the natives met and conversed as in a *salon*. These doorstep assemblies presented Lamartine with a chance to describe the Maltese people as well – all so alike, all so handsome to our poet, who, bent on local colour, cast an envious look at them as his boat sailed about the main port and its environs. To describe one such scene, he asserted, was to describe them all. Once more random notes constitute the description. 'One or two men clad in white jackets, with dark faces and African eyes, a long pipe in hand, lie stretched out, without a care in the world, on a cane divan beside the door. Standing in front of them, their elbows propped gracefully against the handrail, three young women in various positions silently watch our bark go by or smile to each other at how odd we look. A black dress which stops at their calves; a white boddice with wide, loose,

pleated sleeves; their heads adorned with black hair; and over their shoulders and heads a silk demicloak like a dress which conceals half of their face, one shoulder, and the arm that holds the cloak. This cloak, made of a delicate cloth inflated by the breeze, takes on the shape of a skiff's windfilled sail and within its capricious folds now hides, now reveals the mysterious countenance that it envelops and that seems to escape it at will. Gracefully some raise their heads to chat with other girls leaning over the balcony above, tossing them pomegranates or oranges. Others chat with young men wearing long mustaches, thick black hair, tight short jackets, white trousers and red belts. Seated at the top of the stairs, two young abbés in black garb and wearing silver-buckled shoes converse in a familiar manner and play with wide green fans, while at the bottom of the last steps a handsome mendicant monk, his feet bare, his brow pale, shaven, and white, no hat on, his body wrapped in the heavy folds of his brown robe, leans like a statue of Mendicity at the entrance to a prosperous, happy man's house, and looks with a detached eye at this picture of contentment, ease, and pleasure. One floor up, on a wide balcony supported by beautiful caryatids and covered with a calico veranda ornamented with shades and fringe, one sees a family of Englishmen, those fortunate, inscrutable conquerors of presentday Malta. There are a few Moorish nurses with sparkling eyes and dark, leaden skin who hold in their arms those handsome children of Great Britain whose blond, curly hair and pink and white skin resist Calcutta's sun just as they do that of Malta and Corfu. Looking at these children under the black cloaks and burning gazes of these half African women, one would compare them to exquisite white lambs hanging from the breasts of desert tigresses. On the terrace there is another scene, one the English and Maltese divide up among themsleves. On the one hand you see a few island girls holding guitars under their arms and strumming a note or two of an old national air, wild like the climate. On the other, a beautiful young Englishwoman, leaning with a melancholy attitude upon her elbow, contemplating with indifference the spectacle of life passing by under her gaze and idly turning the pages of the immortal poets of her country.' This last remark and others concerning the British strike the reader all the more when he recalls that Mme de Lamartine was English and even translated some of her husband's verse into her native tongue.

As we have noted above, Lamartine, with occasional reservations, was pleased with Malta. As he declared at his departure, 'We arrived in Malta unknown, but it is not without regrets that we see its white walls vanish in the distance beneath the waves. To us these houses, which we looked at indifferently a few days ago, now have faces and can speak. We know

the people who live in them, and from the top of those terraces kindly looks are watching the vanishing sails of our two ships.' Julia de Lamartine's ill health (she was to die on the trip abroad) had detained the travellers a while, but when at last they put to sea on 1 August, Governor Ponsonby had extended a further kindness, that of having them accompanied on the next step of their journey by an English frigate, the *Madagascar*, the second of the two ships mentioned in the passage just cited. Lamartine's intention being at this time to proceed to Greece, an escort was welcome protection from the Greek pirates then devastating the coast and islands, and in several letters home the poet records his gratitude toward the governor.

It should be mentioned in conclusion that M. and Mme de Lamartine had not seen the last of Malta. In 1850 they were to visit the Near East once more, this time in connection with an immense venture to restore the poet's almost vanished wealth. Lamartine's hope was to exploit lands that the Turkish sultan had awarded him, but his plans miscarried. Related in *Nouveau voyage en Orient*, this second trip eastward has little detail about places visited earlier, such as Malta. However, the second day at sea, his route well in mind, the writer could anticipate seeing 'the white spots of the rock of Malta' again. From aboard the *Oronte*, somewhat later, he observed the island as the ship took on coal, noted that little had changed since his previous visit, praised the British improvements he could see, but did not step ashore. On the return trip aboard the *Mentor*, the travellers anchored a short while at Valetta but an epidemic in Malta plus sickness on board conspired to keep them on their ship. The *Nouveau voyage en Orient* ends on an abrupt note as Lamartine narrates an old companion's death aboard ship just out of Malta, the dismal burial at sea when no port would permit the ship to land, and the disconsolate travellers' arrival back in France.

MALTA'S ECONOMY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By SALVINO BUSUTTIL

THE economy of the Maltese Islands under Britain took the form of an artificial cycle determined not by the vicissitudes of the market, but by the exigencies of military security. War marked the upswings of the Maltese economic cycle; the return of peace was always the harbinger of a downswing.

With the assumption of the Islands into the British Crown, the economic performance of the country became a function of Britain's demand for Malta's services as a fortress. It is proposed here to describe the unfolding and the evolution of that role since the departure of the Knights of the Order of Saint John.

Malta's economic history makes little sense unless incorporated into the story of her political life. In interweaving both aspects of this period of the history of the Maltese, we hope we are working out a pattern that is more realistic than one that could be given by treating each aspect in isolation.

In March, 1802, the Treaty of Amiens was signed. Article Ten gave Malta back to the Order. But England was not destined to observe the Treaty. Nonetheless, Sir Alexander Ball was appointed His Britannic Majesty's Plenipotentiary to the Order of St. John. Sir Alexander, who had already been to Malta as Nelson's special emissary and who had been ordered to give up his mission to the Maltese in 1801, was now instructed to return to the Islands to implement the stipulations of Article Ten. Charles Cameron, the British Civil Commissioner in Malta, went back to Britain and Ball once again took the reins of civil administration. At the prospect of a return to the days of the Order, Malta was shrouded in mourning. And when, as the Treaty ordained, Neapolitan troops under the Prince of Pantelleria reached Malta on the 8th October, 1802, they only added to the general consternation of the inhabitants.

Francophile infiltration was rampant in the Islands, and it became clear that by reverting to the Knights, Malta would before long become part of the French Republic. Britain had therefore changed her attitude by the time the Neapolitans arrived. Ball was instructed to continue carrying out his duties as Civil Commissioner. Seeing this, Napoleon wanted Britain

to declare unequivocally her true intentions on Malta. After the 'Moniteur' incident,[1] the British Government informed Napoleon that it would not discuss Malta's future unless a satisfactory explanation of the 'Moniteur' report were forthcoming. Bonaparte charged Britain, in turn, with provoking him into war by her retention of Malta.

To add still further to the confusion, the Pope appointed Bailiff Giovanni Tommasi to the Grandmastership of the Order. Tommasi, old and mentally unstable, immediately despatched his lieutenant, Chevalier Buzi, to take charge of the Islands. When the latter reached Malta, Ball informed him that he could do nothing until he had received special instructions from his superiors in Britain.

Napoleon soon heard of this, and his anger knew no bounds. A multitude of letters and despatches were exchanged. As a last resort, Britain proposed that if France evacuated Holland and Switzerland, she would leave Malta within ten years, when the Islands' independence would be acknowledged. But Bonaparte would not stand such a compromise, and war was declared on the 10th May, 1803.

Meanwhile, the administration of the country was chaotic. Confusion had reigned in every government department throughout the blockade. And when the French left, many francophile officials followed suit. Their place was taken by people of little or no experience. To restore some measure of order, Ball directed that government departments should revert to the procedures adopted during the days of the Order. This implied, among other things, that the head of the administration was to be the holder of the joint office of Public Secretary and Treasurer – an over-centralized system that only added to administrative chaos.

Yet hardly anybody really cared about this state of affairs. Ball himself, always an optimist, was quite sure that as the national income increased, and as the government's coffers became heavier, order would be restored. Ball was in a way justified as commerce became an overwhelming concern for a large part of the population. Some idea of the extent of trade at the period may be had from the fact that there was an insatiable demand for warehouses and stores, the rents of which soared to five times the pre-blokade figures.

In an effort to maintain this rate of growth, Ball provided convoys for merchantmen plying between Malta, Sicily, Constantinople, Smyrna and other ports. The climate of Malta and the general health of the population induced several wealthy traders to set up shop on the Islands. In no time, Malta's harbours were preferred to most of the other Mediterranean nations.

[1] The 30th January, 1803 issue of the official 'Moniteur' contained a report about the British army in Egypt which Britain considered very unfair.

New markets were opened for the islanders; the most significant of these was Barbary, with whom no communication had previously been possible, as it was one of the raisons d'être of the Order to destroy the Mohammedan powers.

The Berlin decrees of 1806 favoured Malta even more strongly. For while the Continental blockade brought suffering to England and her allies, it gave a new surge of life to the Islands. British merchants came over in larger numbers, attracted by a host of incentives, not least among which were tax exemption and political stability. General Hilderbrand Oakes, Ball's successor, writing on the 8th March, 1811, says: 'The population of this city (Valletta) is of late years much increased in consequence of the great commerce carried on here'.

Two years earlier, the Civil Commissioner had been empowered to grant licences to any vessel to import or export merchandise to and from Malta, provided that two-thirds of the cargo leaving Malta were of British or Empire origin, and that one-third of the crew were British. Vessels of any nation that wanted to trade in the Mediterranean were consequently virtually compelled to obtain a licence from Malta, if they were to be exempt from capture by British ships.

Government revenue established new records. At the centre of the Mediterranean entrepôt trade, Malta's affluence reached its zenith. The native population at the time was little more than 100,000, about two-sevenths of the 1961 figure. We have no data by which to make any precise estimate, but we may be sure that the per capita income was among the highest in Europe.

But just at a time when economic commonsense might have established Malta on a sound financial basis for many decades to come, ill-conceived political agitation thwarted the course of events. A Mr. William Eton, superintendent of the Lazaretto, Malta's isolation hospital, had got himself, through his endless intrigues, into serious trouble with both the ecclesiastical and the civil authorities. In 1802, alleging ill-health, he had left Malta, but returned nine years later. He was dismissed from the public service but he managed to rally around him a number of individuals and concerted ways and means with them to arouse discontent against the government.

Eton and his men, prominent among whom was Marquis Testaferrata, drew up a constitution based on the claim that the old *Consiglio Popolare* was a legislative body. This was, of course, an erroneous assumption, as the *Consiglio's* powers were nominal to a very large degree. Eton demanded that the *Consiglio* be re-established with powers to rule the Islands. It was to be composed of a *Consiglio Ecclesiastico* of twenty-one clerics,

which would discuss matters on its own, but would have no authority as a separate body; and of a *Consiglio Popolare* proper which would be made up of thirty-nine non-ecclesiastics, ten representing the nobility, seven representing the cities, and twenty-two representing the villages. Ecclesiastical matters were to be decided by a majority vote in a joint meeting with the *Consiglio Ecclesiastico*. Executive power would be reserved to the Governor, who would also be in charge of the Islands' revenue.

Testaferrata went up to London with a memorandum bearing 102 signatures, but the Secretary of State refused to recognise him as the representative of the Maltese people.

Things, however, had come to a head, and Malta's first Royal Commission was appointed in 1812. The Commissioners found an island considerably torn by political strife and decided that, in the first instance, the old *Consiglio Popolare* had not been a legislative body and, in the second place, the inexperience of Maltese in politics could only render the extablishment of a Maltese legislative assembly 'a measure fraught with the greatest danger and involving the most ruinous consequences'.

It may be that the Commissioners were also motivated by the desire to retain control of Malta for Britain due to the vested interests Englishmen held there. But it may be safely asserted that their decision, in the context of the European situation, was a prudent one. Divergent political interests were rampant on the Islands, and no strong individual appeared on the political scene to take charge of the destinies of his country.

Meanwhile Napoleon, angry at Alexander's vacillating attitude towards the alliance, crossed the Yemen. Britain's friendship with Russia increased, and on the 18th July, 1812, the Czar declared he was no longer interested in the restoration of Malta to the Knights. Next year, the Maltese were informed that the Prince Regent was preparing measures for the permanent government of the Islands. Malta had become a part of the British crown.

Paradoxically, the Islands' entry into the Empire marked the nadir of their prosperity. For the plague which had broken out in Constantinople in 1812 soon found its ravaging way to Malta. The malady spread like wild-fire, and by the time it subsided, 4,668 Maltese had succumbed. In its wake, it destroyed Malta's affluence and faced the government with bankruptcy. By September, 1813, the Treasury's liquid assets had gone down to a bare £20,000. Oakes floated a loan at 6%, but only £18,000 was forthcoming. Maitland, his successor, put up another loan at 12%, in a frantic effort to raise money. By then, the Islands' wealth had decreased considerably. Worse still, their main source of income, foreign trade, had

dwindled to nothing.

On the 28th July, 1813, Lord Bathurst, the Secretary of State, sent a despatch to Maitland which set out the main administrative principles by which Malta was to be governed in the succeeding years.

Bathurst acknowledged that the Islands' value to Britain had risen considerably during the Napoleonic Wars, so that 'there is no spot in the south of Europe which appears so well calculated to fix the influence and extend the Interests of Great Britain as the Island of Malta'. It was therefore thought necessary to set up a permanent administration with the chief authority, both civil and military, vested in the Governor who would be subject only to the King-in-Council. A proviso stipulated that Maitland could, if he wished, form a nominated advisory council consisting of not more than six persons besides himself; four of these six were to be the bishop of Malta, the President of the High Court of Appeal, the Public Secretary and the Treasurer. The islanders were to have complete freedom in their religious practices, while ecclesiastical institutions and priviliges were to remain unaltered. Extensive changes were to be made in the Law Courts.

Public revenue would accrue directly to the Treasury, and a warrant bearing the Governor's signature would be necessary to authorize expenditure. Bathurst's despatch concluded by exhorting Maitland to help 'the promotion of every method by which the English may be brought to supercede the Italian tongue'. The evolution of this proviso was eventually to lead to a major flare-up in Maltese politics more than a hundred years later.

By Article Seven of the First Peace of Paris, signed on the 30th May, 1814, Malta became officially a part of the British Empire. England hoped at the time that the Islands would become the cultural and commercial English centre of the Mediterranean. A pan-Mediterranean University was even planned for Gozo. But the hardship which the plague had entailed brought most of these plans to nothing. The people were dispirited, and it was due to Maitland's energy that Malta started recovering towards the end of 1814.

One of Maitland's important innovations at this period concerned the *Università*, a public body which enjoyed a monopoly for supplying grain and most other articles of daily life to the population. Naturally, private initiative had little scope in a situation where the government played the role of a great merchant catering to the entire population. But what particularly worried Maitland was the widespread corruption among the officials who ran the *Università*. Instead of realizing a good margin of profit, the monopoly's books were chronically in the red. The *Jurats*, as the

Università officials were known, had a most complicated and questionable system of accountancy. An inquiry was held, with the result that Mr. Livingstone, the Head *Jurat*, was suspended.

Maitland wanted to throw open the corn trade immediately and thus abolish the monopoly. But the intrigues of local merchants did not allow him to carry out his plan before 1822. By then there was growing discontent on the Islands. To replenish the Treasury, Maitland used his strong hand to levy taxes. Duties on exports and imports were increased, and this lack of foresight led to a greater trade stagnation. The desire for a representative legislative council spread over the Islands. There is no doubt that, given the required administration, such a body could, at this time, have helped Malta's economy; but Maitland did not share this opinion.

Hastings, his successor, even though a worn-out man, tried to better the economic situation and to relieve the distress on the Islands. Through his efforts, several Mediterranean states repealed the strict quarantine regulations, obtaining since the time of the plague, which forbade vessels from Malta to enter their ports. England lifted the duty on Malta-grown cotton, and plans were made for silk cultivation. The employment problem was also tackled, and Naval commanders in the Mediterranean were ordered to accept those Maltese who wanted to join the Service; while Mediterranean regiments could enlist five Maltese recruits for every one hundred British soldiers. Mass migration to Cephalonia was also proposed.

Some progress was made; but Malta could not really recover without British aid, and when Ponsonby became Lieutenant-Governor, on Hastings' death, England was contributing an annual £150,000 to the Islands. In 1821, when hostilities started in Greece, the Maltese Exchequer touched rock-bottom, and beggars roamed everywhere by the hundred. The victory of Navarino in 1827 brought some relief, as the allied fleets of Great Britain, France and Russia sailed to Malta.

Something, however, had to be done concerning Maltese participation in the government of their land. The British administrators of the period had always been averse to Maltese interest in self-government. But their high-handed actions, especially in Maitland's time, had only made matters worse. Much of their activity was directed to depriving the Catholic Church of those immunities which she had enjoyed for centuries, while very little was done to allow the people to express their views and to share in the administration or, even more important perhaps, to set the Islands' finances on a sound basis. The only newspaper that could be published in Malta was the weekly Government Gazette. Moreover, one could not become a printer without a government licence – which was

only forthcoming on two occasions, once for the Commissariat Department and the other for the Church Missionary Society, two presses to which the public had no access.

In these circumstances, Camillo Sciberras and George Mitrovich formed the *Comitato Generale Maltese*. A petition was drawn up, known as the 1832 Memorial, asking for administrative reforms. In particular, the Memorial wanted the institution of a national council of about 30 Maltese to be elected by the votes of the heads of families, land-owners, merchants and professional people.

Ponsonby objected to such a body, but some reforms were carried out. By 1834, the Governor realized the expediency of putting up a small legislative council, composed of the Head of the Government, his deputy, the Chief Secretary, two Maltese nobles and two Maltese gentlemen, with the Bishop of Malta and the Lieutenant-Governor of Gozo as honorary members.

Ponsonby's suggestions were partly approved in London. On the 1st April, 1835, William IV gave orders for the establishment of a seven-man Council, besides the Governor, made up of the Senior Officer in Command of the Land Forces of Malta, the Chief Justice, the Bishop of Malta and the Chief Secretary, as well as three unofficial members, to be chosen by the Lieutenant-Governor, two from the Maltese land-owning and merchant class, and a British-born principal merchant of not less than two years' standing on the island.[2]

The new arrangements were a landmark in Malta's constitutional development. For the first time under British rule, the Governor would no longer be a virtual dictator, but would be obliged to hold consultations with other people. At the same time, the Maltese were finally admitted, even though in a very limited manner, to the government of their own country. So far they had been merely spectators watching foreigners toy with their Islands. Often they had been the guinea-pigs of Colonial administrators. Their only relief had come when the winds of war blew ships over to their Islands; peace would only bring them famine and distress. This consummate irony of fate had been, and would be, it is true, the hinge of the Islands' development. But the sturdy and much-tried islanders now, at last, had some small power to steer their destiny.

Yet the Royal 'Instructions' ran far short of Maltese aspirations. The Colonial Office had, moreover, indulged in its petty jealousy of the influence of the Catholic Church in Malta by imposing an oath on the Council members that they would 'never exercise any privilege, to which

[2] Cf. Cremona, J.J., *The Malta Constitution of 1835 and Its Historical Background*, Malta 1959.

they were or might become entitled, to disturb or weaken the Protestant religion or the Protestant Government in the United Kingdom' – an unnecessary clause which could only arouse ill-feeling, and which led the Bishop of Malta to resign his seat. Protests against the constitution were also forthcoming from the Chief Justice, the Attorney General, the British merchants and George Mitrovich.

Such a state of affairs could not continue for long. On one side, stood the Governor and his Lieutenant, both Englishmen, and on the other the Chief Justice and the Attorney General, Englishmen also. Administration became the development of a fight between the two parties. In between, weary and helpless spectators, stood the Maltese.

The Secretary of State realized that an immediate inquiry was necessary. Colonel Cardew, who was administrating the government in Ponsonby's absence, retaliated by drawing up a long document to defend the official position. He alleged that the Maltese never had a real legislative assembly, and could not therefore claim one now. Cardew also held that the practice of keeping out Maltese from higher government posts was in keeping with the system adopted in other colonies. He admitted that education had lagged behind, but, typically, threw the blame on the Roman Catholic authorities. Years before, however, the University Council itself had drawn up a report on educational reforms, which the government had conveniently shelved. Instead, Cardew boasted that government expenditure on education had increased from £572 in 1813, to £1,350 in 1836. The laws of the land, he added, were being revised, and five codes had been drawn up.

In spite of Cardew's laboured defence of the administration, the majority of the Maltese were really dissatisfied. They had been hoping that a Legislative Assembly would be granted quite soon; but the agitation between the heads of the judicial and the administrative side added considerably to the general chaos.

Lord Glenelg was troubled, and he could see no other course except the sending of a Royal Commission to Malta. John Austin and George Cornwall Lewis, the Commissioners, stayed in Malta for more than a year and a half. The report they drew up gives a dismal but realistic picture of the British administration on the Islands.

The 1838 Commissioners accused the government of a narrow-minded policy in keeping down education and free discussion of public affairs. In their view, many of the Englishmen on the Islands were vulgar, offensive types. The Chief Justice and the Attorney General, in particular, were ruthless demagogues, bent on attacking and interfering in the administration at all times.

The islanders, the Commissioners reported, were in a most miserable condition. Due to official policy, the educated among them were a handful. The nobles, formerly the backbone of Malta, were starving. The rest of the population fared even worse.

Cotton prices had gone down considerably. Many of the farmers were in debt, and no credit was available. Crops were sold at a price varying between one-half and one-third their cost. When bankruptcy overtook him, the farmer would employ himself as a labourer earning from 6d to 8d per day during the harvest; in winter the average farmer's wage was 1d a day, and all his family had to work to avoid starvation.

We are told that the farmer wife's wages would amount to 3d a day in the crop season, while children received an average of 1¼d a day. If one assumes that the farmer had three children working, besides his wife, it would mean that their combined wages were just ten pounds annually, or two pounds per capita. Meanwhile, the Lieutenant Governor of Malta, was earning a salary of £4,000 – which had been reduced from £5,000 only a few years before.

People who followed the traditional employment of lace-making were also in some straits. The average woman spinner worked for something like seventeen hours a day, earning 10 grains (i.e. less than one penny), while a cotton weaver earned 2 taris, or 3.3/10d per day, working thirteen hours. Several children helped in the work, receiving small fractions of one penny daily.

The local population at the time was about 110,000, of whom it is reasonable to assume about 75,000 were income-earners. If we exclude the income of British servicemen and British civilians on the Islands, and if we bear in mind that the land-owning class, most of whom were nobles, were hardly deriving any rents at all due to the utter poverty that stalked the country, we may conclude that the National Income of Malta in 1837 was about £225,000, or just over two pounds per capita.

Under-nourishment and unhealthy living conditions led to widespread disease, which culminated in an outbread of cholera in 1837, killing 4,253 by the time it died out in October of that year.

It was in situations of this kind that the Catholic Church in Malta distinguished herself as the ultimate protector of the population. While the government helped with some small relief money, ecclesiastical bodies came all out to aid the afflicted. Parish priests throughout the Islands sought to relieve the sufferings of the destitute in their parishes. And when nurses and doctors, dreading the cholera onslaughts, held back from the hospitals, it was the Capuchin friars, in particular, who showed the heroism of Christian charity.

Some results of the Royal Commission, meanwhile, began to emerge. The old question of the liberty of the press was finally solved, and Malta's first newspapers appeared. Education received its real impetus at this time due largely to the energy of Sarah Austin, the wife of one of the Commissioners. When she arrived with her husband in Malta, there were just three schools on the Islands: one in Valletta, another in Senglea, and a third in Gozo. Government expenditure on all three amounted to an annual £400. The University was not better off, the highest professorial salary being £25. Through Sarah Austin's prodding, the Commissioners recommended that the Education vote be raised from £1,725 to £4,000 a year.

Another important outcome of the Commission's activity was the complete reform of tariffs. Maitland, as we have seen, had been singularly ignorant in these matters and had helped to ruin trade through his high tariffs. The new system was based on experience and far-sightedness; it went a long way towards restoring commerce to its former tenor. The grain monopoly was totally abolished. Sinecure offices were done away with, and a complete overhaul of salaries was effected. The Commissioners had also been convinced that a considerable amount of the trouble in Malta had arisen at the hands of the Chief Justice and the Attorney General. Both offices were now abolished.

By 1839, trade had recovered somewhat. More ships began calling in the Islands' harbours, and public revenue increased. Undoubtedly, Malta would have gained a lot had the governor who succeeded Bouverie in 1843, Sir Patrick Stuart, been endowed with a wider vision. When planning was necessary to guide Malta to continued well-being, Stuart devoted most of his time to discussions and disputes with the Ecclesiastical authorities – as if the main British interest in Malta were to curtail the prestige of a Church, that in times of distress, had taken upon herself the protection of the needy. Stuart revived the old problem of the right of nomination to the Bishopric, and got himself in difficulties with both the ecclesiastical authorities in Malta and with his superiors in England over the regulation of pious foundations.

A significant advance in Maltese constitutional development took place in 1849, during the governorship of Sir Richard O'Ferall, Malta's first civilian governor and a Roman Catholic.

O'Ferall soon got a clear understanding of the Maltese scene. The people had to be given more power – there lay the solution to most of the Islands' difficulties. Mindful of the dangers inherent in an immediate grant of wide powers at a time when most of Europe was in turmoil, O'Ferall rejected the proposal to establish elective municipal councils

throughout the Islands. Instead, he advocated a Legislative Council of 18 members. There would be ten *ex officio* members, half of whom would be Maltese, and half English. The other eight would be freely elected by the people. This arrangement would give a majority of two to the official side, while there would be an over-all Maltese majority of eight.

The Colonial Office concurred, and by Letters Patent of the 11th May, 1849, 'a body politic under the name of the Council of Government' was erected.[3] A Civil List of £52,273, out of the total public revenue of £113, 972, was approved.

The Council's first activity centred on the Criminal Code, and much time was spent on the religious issues connected with it. O'Ferall, however, continued his policy of boosting trade, especially with the lucrative markets of the Barbary States. The Chamber of Commerce was established through his encouragement. He was, in fact, one of the new British administrators of the period who recognized – perhaps because he was a civilian – that Malta could only set herself up on a sound basis if her trade prospered. He left no stone unturned to carry out this deep conviction. Storage facilities were increased, the Custom House was reformed, and he helped in opening up new markets for Maltese entrepôt trade around the Mediterranean.

It has already been suggested that war in the Mediterranean has inevitably meant prosperity for Malta.

March 1854 saw the beginning of the Crimean War. Malta's position made her the natural headquarters of the Allies. English and French transports arrived daily, and the Islands' harbours reached an unprecedented pitch of activity. The Navy's shore establishments worked to full capacity. Troops poured into the Islands, and at one time three regiments of the Guards and fourteen line regiments were stationed on Malta.

French warships brought Turcos and Zouaves from Algiers, while French troops were constantly reaching the Islands from Marseilles. Malta had never seen such a conglomeration of faces and nationalities. But, more than that, she had never witnessed such an overflow of money. Many of the troops and sailors gave themselves up to pleasure, and foreign spending scattered gold sovereigns all over the place. Employment was full. People in private employment were receiving good wages, and the standard of living began to rise.

The presence of so many warships, some of which needed repairs, called for the expansion of the existing Dockyard facilities. The Admiralty acquired three-fourths of the shores on both sides of Dockyard Creek,

[3] Cf. Cremona, J.J., *The Malta Constitution of 1849 and Its Historical Background*, Malta 1960.

and constructed extensive buildings all over. Most of the marina of Vittoriosa was walled in and, since then, only a small part of it has been accessible to the public. At the head of Dockyard Creek, the first dry dock was constructed, and this was to be a boon to Malta's dockyard activity. 360 Officers and men were now working there. Their total weekly wages amounted to £260, an average of 14s. 5½d per capita weekly. This means that their average annual income was about £38, which compares favourably with the £25 a top-ranking professor earned at Malta University a few years earlier. But perhaps the teaching profession has always been a Cinderella.

In 1854, shipping tonnages entered and cleared at Malta reached a peak of 1,200,000 tons. Economic activity had never been higher. Now was the time to forge ahead, to explore new markets and to develop that entrepôt trade that had helped to make Malta prosperous. But it appears that hardly anyone in Malta realized that the boom was transitory and that once peace returned, rapid decline would follow. It may be, as H. Bowen-Jones and W. A. Charlton assert, that 'the new entrepeneurs attributed the post-war decline to a British Colonial policy adjudged to be both *laissez-faire* and restrictionist in character rather than to the inevitable termination of artificially favourable wartime conditions.'[4] On the other hand, the Maltese merchant could hardly have been expected to formulate economic policies. It is true that, in 1854, Maltese members were sitting on the Council of Government. None of them, however, had any real experience in the Islands' finances. And it seems that Reid, the governor of the time, and one of Malta's ablest, was himself too absorbed in the happy situation prevailing in Malta during the Crimean War to discern that peace would bring new problems.

At the time, the economy of Malta appeared definitely sound. The balance of payments was favourable, as invisible exports were considerable. A large part of the harbour labour-force's pay packet came from non-Maltese sources, tonnage dues by foreign shipping contributed heavily to government revenue while, most important of all, the big commercial turnovers in the form of entrepôt trade produced handsome profits.

Increased prosperity brought a change in the consumption pattern. Where before imports had been dwindling, they now registered a remarkable growth. Previously, local produce had had to satisfy a substantial part of local demand. The increased purchasing power placed a higher effective demand for foreign goods. From about the beginning of the Crimean War up to nearly forty years later, import duties on food and drink made up over forty per cent of Government revenue, while tonnage

[4] Bowen-Jones, *Malta – Background to Development*, p. 117.

dues accounted for a large fraction of the rest. Obviously, such a situation could only obtain as long as entrepôt trade registered a steady rate of growth. As we shall soon see, the belief that such a rate could be maintained perpetually, regardless of changing conditions in Europe, would be Malta's big mistake.

One result of the Crimean War was a severe disproportion in the distribution of income in Malta. While merchants and traders had become wealthy, and some of them had made large fortunes, government employees had continued to receive their old wages and salaries. The War had almost doubled the prices of goods, and many employees could not made ends meet. Over-crowding in government departments, moreover, had added confusion to dissatisfaction.

Le Marchant, Reid's successor, tried to remedy the situation by reorganizing the public service. He was also instrumental in bettering the conditions of service of Maltese soldiers. When, amid the general boom, an unskilled labourer received from 1/- to 1/3 daily, a Maltese soldier received 8½d, which dwindled to 5d after deductions. According to the new arrangements, a Maltese officer in the Artillery Corps would have the same pay as an officer of the line, while the pay of all other ranks was raised by 2½d a day.

Seeing the increase in shipping, Le Marchant decided, in 1858, that a commercial harbour should be constructed at the Marsa, the innermost extremity of the Grand Harbour. His idea was that all vessels could be enabled to load and unload there, with storage accommodation only a stone's throw away. French Creek would then pass over exclusively to the Admiralty; private property within its limits would be evaluated and sold to the Naval authorities. In May, 1859, the Council of Government approved the suggestion. One-half of the expenses would be borne by the Maltese Treasury, and the Imperial Government would pay the rest. Sir Adrian Dingli, one of Malta's great men, carried out the purchase of private property around French Creek for the Admiralty.

When Sir Adrian was Crown Advocate, two constitutional changes took place. Judicial functionaries were barred from the Council by Letters Patent of the 17th April, 1857, and in July of the same year, Letters Patent prohibited any cleric of whatsoever Church from membership in the Council.

An administrative advance was made during the governorship of Sir Henry Knight Stork (1864-67). District committees with consultative status were set up. It was hoped that they would help in supervising sanitary conditions in the towns and villages, while advising the administration of their needs. These committees however, were to meet with poor success.

Malta's progress received a set-back in 1865, when cholera re-visited the Islands, carrying away 1,873 lives. The following year, drought, a problem which was to assume disturbing proportions years later, hit the country. A proposal to sink shafts to sea-level in the centre of Malta, and to pump such water as might be found by steam power was made by Mr. John Bateman, who had been sent by the Secretary of State. The search for fresh water continued in the following years, but 1868 brought abundant rainfall, and the Islands heaved a sigh of relief.

In the same year, Malta's commerce began to suffer some effects of united Italy's efforts to attract trade. The P.&O. Company, whose steamships had long been a feature of the Grand Harbour scene, transferred its central Mediterranean station to Messina.

But this hardship did not last for long. In 1869, the Suez Canal was opened, and Malta entered a new phase of development. In the four preceding years, there had been feverish activity in Malta to have the commercial harbour ready. Several difficulties had to be tackled, paramount among which was the bickering about property around French Creek – a problem that was to emerge as the *leit-motif* of Admiralty-Government relations. It is difficult to see why the Admiralty which, after all, was benefitting considerably from the new arrangements, should not have been more generous in its view. The Malta Treasury was spending £83,087 on the commercial harbour, and the Admiralty could certainly afford a few extra thousands to appease the Government. Eventually, the Admiralty agreed to pay the value of the property at the time it was taken over. To settle its debts, it passed over to the government the Ordnance Office and the adjoining buildings in front of the Opera House at Valletta.

In 1871, the Somerset Dock was opened. The construction of a commercial dock in Msida Creek was undertaken by a Stockport firm. Aware of the possibilities of such a dock, the Council granted the company a portion of Msida Creek, and a gift of £5,000. It was, probably, the first grant to industry ever made in Malta. Perhaps the situation would have been different now had such grants been more frequent.

The structure of Maltese Society now underwent a fundamental change. Agriculture had been the predominant occupation for centuries. The production of cotton and its manufacture had been a stable source of income for many in the suburban and country areas. The American Civil War, however, had stopped the supply of cotton to Europe. While Lancashire suffered, Malta prospered. Cotton production was greatly increased, and workers in the industry received good wages.

At the end of the war, in 1865, the cotton trade receded from Malta. Agricultural workers returned to the cultivation of grain, while the con-

struction of the commercial harbour and of the docks coupled with the flood of vessels calling at Malta, attracted the labour force to the harbour area. The working population registered a constant increase from 1864 onwards, reaching its apex towards 1879. After 1871, agricultural labourers began to decrease, at first gradually; after 1799, they declined spectacularly.

For centuries, the Maltese worker had lived in the relative seclusion of the fields, returning to his *raħal* (village) after work. His communications with his friends were usually limited to conversations on the *zuntir*, the Church square, after church service. He hardly had contact with Valletta, *Il-Belt* (the city), as it is called by the islanders. *Il-Belt* meant the centre of commercial and political activity. At the time of the Knights, the average Maltese farmer would have small reason for going there. His landlord would probably be some nobleman dwelling at Mdina, the quiet old capital. When Britain took over, his reasons for visiting Valletta might have increased; but as long as his rural life was not interfered with, he cared little for the city lights.

Now, however, many Maltese workers were gathered together in the vast industrial complex that covered most of Grand Harbour's marina. The old rural outlook began gradually to give way to new ideas, arising out of intercourse with the city dwellers. Hundreds of foreign sailors and workmen were on the Islands, and the influx of new trends in thought and in the habits of living soon made their impact felt. In about two decades, Malta surged forward from the feudal concepts of the sixteenth century to the hustle and bustle of the mid-nineteenth century.

1871 was a key year in Malta's development, and it serves as a guide to the changes taking place on the Islands. Up to then, agricultural employment had been predominant; but, as has been suggested above, the tide now turned. Industrial activity increased, and it was only the sheer impetus of population growth that kept up the number of farm workers. The following table compares the percentage increases in the male working population according to location.

Location	1861–1871	1871–81	1881–91
Urban	+8	+17	–4
Suburban	+0.7	+17	+5
Rural	+9	+8	+1

The 'Three Cities' area, it will be noted, where most of the dockyard installations were situated, is classed as urban, and it is mostly here that industrial workers tended to settle.

One of the main features of the 1871-81 decade in respect of the previous decade is the increase of the labour force by 37%, or nearly twice that obtaining during the 1861-71 period. Moreover, bunkering was at a higher level during this second decade; so that the greatest increase of workers occurred in the groups of coalheavers, porters and carriers. Their number went up by 100%. For the same period, the number of persons engaged in work connected with commerce increases by 27%.

FUNCTIONAL INCREASES IN OCCUPATIONS – 1871-81

		Increase %
Workers:	Labour connected with Port Activity.	100
–	Labour connected with commercial activity.	27
–	Labour connected with transport.	129
Small Retailers		25
Shopkeepers		11
General Merchants and Traders		8

With the passing away of cotton production after 1871, Malta's National Product underwent a radical change. Internal sources of income were now mainly restricted to rent from property, while the large bulk of the National Product came from external sources. From then on the level of Malta's economy was to become a function of foreign spending on the Islands, mostly through the Naval Base and the invisible exports it entailed. As long as the boom, ushered in by the opening of the Suez Canal, lasted, the importance of this function was not fully understood. When harbour activity declined, it would appear in its gigantic proportions.

Alongside this economic development, the population was registering an increasing rate of growth. It has been a unique feature of Maltese demography that some external element came into play every time the island was in danger of reaching a level of 'overpopulation'. As Mr. Richardson has noted, 'the concepts of 'overpopulation' or 'optimum population' have no historically valid meaning in a Maltese context.'[5]

Just when the Suez Canal boom pushed the population trend upwards, we find that the death rate increased. It stood at 47.87 per 1,000 in 1873, and nearly doubled the following year. It was a time when men looked for the profits to be derived from trade, and the social conditions of certain strata of the population were overlooked. Disease, arising out of bad hygienic conditions and poor housing, spread with considerable speed.

[5] H. Bowen-Jones, op. cit., p. 161.

There were families, particularly in the rural areas, which had thrived on cotton production, and which could not now take easily to either other agricultural or industrial activity. In 1874, Sir Charles Van Straubenzee, Malta's governor, set up an investigating commission. The main point that emerged from this inquiry was that despite the general appearance of well-being in the middle and upper classes destitution prevailed among the lower strata of the population. Hardly any agricultural land was available for them; and emigration was not an easily acceptable solution. Eventually, it was Algeria that welcomed many Maltese migrants, most of whom were to become excellent settlers.

One of the curious elements in this phase of Malta's economic history is the relative insecurity of public finances. Disorganization probably accounted for a large part of the unhappy situation at the Treasury, but the dyarchical nature of the Council of Government undoubtedly contributed to make matters worse.

A striking instance of the factors involved is given by the proposal, made in 1873, for a proper sewerage system. It was agreed that the government of Malta would contribute £40,000 towards the scheme, while the War Office and the Admiralty – who would be benefitting also – would pay £30,000. The Maltese part of the burden does not, at first, seem excessive, but it meant nearly one-fourth of the total annual revenue of the Islands. The official side pushed on with the proposal, suggesting that the money thus lost could be made up by increased duties on cattle and drink. Such a measure would have been detrimental for Malta: livestock was urgently needed, and local importers would have to lessen their sales of beer and wines to foreigners on the Islands.

It was perhaps for this reason that the elected members on the Council rejected the proposal. But, strange to say, the Admiralty and the war Office carried out the sewerage of The Three Cities regardless of the political dispute. They then presented the Council with a *fait accompli*, and asked the government for £3,000 as part of its contribution. Such an action was difficult to explain, especially at a time when people were laying more store on direct representation in government. It is an indication of the problems that a dyarchy in Malta has always generated that, in spite of justified protests from the elected members, the official side of the Council carried the day.

The structure of the Islands revenue was deficient in several ways. Taxes on commodities of daily need formed the main source of revenue. Duties on food and wine, as we have seen, accounted for over forty per cent of government revenue. While, as I have suggested, this indicated a change in the consumption pattern, it also meant that these indirect taxes

were mostly hitting the lower classes, the principal consumers of food and wine. Had there been a heavy tax on luxury articles, the government's position might have been justified.

Wheat, moreover, Malta's staple food in the form of bread, was taxed at 10/- per *salm* (equal to one Imperial quarter), or about ½d per two pound loaf. It was by no means a heavy tax, but the fact that the government was deriving a large slice of its revenue through an indirect tax on the community's daily fare made it open to criticism.[7] It implied that the lower classes were being taxed at an annual average of 15s.7d per capita, while the middle and upper classes, who have always consumed less bread, were only paying an average of 10s.10d per capita.[7]

Eventually, the Colonial Secretary suggested that the wheat duty should be halved. The resulting net loss of £24,000 was to be made up through duty increases on beer, wine and spirits, a rent increase for goods kept in bonded stores, and increases on licenses and education fees. Such changes would bring in £29,000, or a net government excess of £5,000 in respect of the previous total. The Colonial Secretary suggested that this excess should go to defray part of the costs of the sewerage system.[8]

Public funds were also burdened with several obligations. For a long time, the Maltese government had had to pay the Royal Malta Fencibles, and it was only after 1836 that the annual payment from the Treasury was fixed at £5,000. In addition, the pension for the whole corps was also chargeable to public funds. And up to 1873 the Malta Coast Guard Service came from a government with little over £160,000 in total revenue. It was only in 1877 that Malta was exempted from paying the pensions, but her military contribution still stood at £5,000. It is a paradox that when Malta badly required education, she was compelled to spend less on that item than on a military contribution to a military nation that was making free use of several facilities on the Islands.

When Sir Penrose G. Julyan came to the Islands to draw up a Report on the Civil Establishments of Malta, he found that rent from government property was not being collected punctually, and that there was a general laxity in the collection of public revenue. At the same time, he concluded that civil servants performed their duties with care and attention, but

[6] Vide Sir Victor Houlton: *Remarks on the Taxation of Malta and specially in connection with a Bread Tax.* This pamphlet was published anonymously in 1876.

[7] See the Report on the Fiscal State of Malta, by Francis W. Rowsell, of the 18th May, 1877.

[8] When these proposals became known in Malta, public reaction was immediate, and violence took place.

their salaries were ridiculously low. If greater efficiency were to be obtained, their remuneration had to be increased.

Another considerable burden on the Treasury were the Charitable Institutions, which were getting about 20% of the total revenue. As has been suggested earlier, there was a measure of destitution among the lower classes even at the height of Malta's prosperity and the Charitable Institutions had helped in making things easier for them. Sir Penrose, in his 1879 Report disagreed with this policy, as he felt that too much charity would keep the people from striving harder after progress.

The relatively high salaries of the Governor and the senior members of the Imperial Government were also a drain on the Islands' resources. Nearly 12% of Malta's annual receipts went towards the salary of about six people. Sir Penrose, realizing the disproportion, suggested that Malta's share towards the Governor's salary should go down by £2,000 to £3,000.

Yet even in the early 1880's when Malta was still enjoying her golden age, political thoughts were centred far from the economic and educational fields. With the coming of Patrick J. Keeman to investigate the educational system, some urgently needed advances were made. But even then, the thorny language question – concerning the respective role English and Italian ought to have in public instruction – made all other matters fade into oblivion.

In July 1887, cholera struck the Islands once again. Distress soon overtook Malta. Trade stagnated, and few ships called at Grand Harbour. Almost in sympathy with the seamy side of Fate, the Dockyard authorities announced reductions.

The administration was not ready to meet such a situation, and it was left to the Bishop's Administration to calm the population. Through his initiative, a relief committee was formed. Unemployment figures rocketed, and the government decided that the only solution was to start work on the roads. Half a pound of bread and some soup was, at the same time, rationed out to those who were still out of work.

With British interest in the Islands as a fortress declining, and with the Council in the doldrums, Sir J.A. Lintorn Simmons, the Governor, made himself a great administrator by introducing far-reaching reforms in health and education. It is to his unending merit that his Ordinances gave Malta a reasonably sound sanitary and educational system when most of the Maltese leaders were entrenched on the battle-field of language.

In 1891, indeed, Malta's golden age came to an end. Throughout the last decade, exports of British steel had increased considerably, and a procession of steamers called at Malta on their way to the East. On the return journey, they stopped at Black Sea ports to load grain for Western

Europe, calling at Grand Harbour en route. Towards 1890, however, ships grew larger and more powerful, thus attaining a greater range of sufficiency. It was no longer necessary for most of them to make a bunkering call at Malta.

This set-back was partly offset by the opening of the Hamilton Dock in 1892 which enabled the repair of larger vessels. But after that year, decline in bunkering was sharp. The New World began to supply more and more grain to Europe; Black Sea trade dwindled. Shipping tonnages entered and cleared in Malta, which stood at nearly 5½ million tons in 1891, fell to just over 3 million tons three years later. It was not until the close of World War I that, for a fleeting moment, the 1891 tonnage record was broken.

One major outcome of this change of pattern was the closer integration of the Maltese economy with British naval and military interests. In 1891, £35,000,000 worth of goods passed through Malta; only 3% of these were actually landed on the Islands, presumably for local consumption. Much of the rest represented re-exports. The National Product did not register an alarming decline after 1891 due to large-scale construction in the Naval Dockyard, and in public works which absorbed a growing number of workmen. In 1891, 2075 men were employed in coal-heaving, while six years later the number of workers at the Dockyard and other naval works stood at 9,000.

Local economic activity became increasingly a function of Services' expenditure. Entrepôt trade faded into history, and local commerce was mainly restricted to consumer sales. No industrial expansion of any kind was made, no major export or re-export trade was any longer possible. The economic structure of Malta finally took a definite shape; dependence on British interest in the Islands' strategic value seemed to become its corner-stone for all time.

Suez, Black Sea trade, British steel exports and British naval supremacy had brought that value to its zenith. The ascent was essentially transitory, Malta could not rely for ever on the mere possession of good harbours and on her central Mediterranean position for her life. Up to the close of the nineteenth century, the curious inter-play of rise and decline had been rapid; intervals between vacillations in external factors affecting the economy had been short. Malta virtually came to accept them as of right. Hers was a special trade cycle built on the hope of favour from the makers of Fate.

Once more, the islanders were faced with the artificiality of it all. Once more, the people in power paid no attention. The lessons of history fell on ears turned only to language disputes and political strife.

Between 1892 and 1902, the island scene exhibited sharp contrast. Around the Three Cities, the working classes were busy at the Dockyard, making a living as best they could. Female workers fell considerably in numbers as the cotton trade had virually disappeared in numbers as employment was available. Inside Valletta, people talked only politics as the struggle between the two sides of the dyarchy grew bitter.

The language reforms were the topic of the day. When the British Governments' former conciliatory attitude towards Italian changed, the licensed Maltese council members crippled the administration.

Drainage was the only distraction. The Council of Government approved the raising of a loan, in 1897, to carry out an extensive sewerage system. When, however, new elections were held, the elected members tried to repeal the previous Ordinance and suggested the setting up of a special Committee to see how alternative funds could be raised. They had promised their supporters that no new taxes would be levied. To their embrassment, the committee favoured a duty increase on spirits for five years. Not to be outdone, the imperial side proposed to double the duties on wines and spirits, and to introduce a stamp duty. Confronted with this position, the elected members resorted to dilatory tactics; and the imperial representation in government had become a farce.

Mizzi and Cachia Zammit complained of the state of affairs to the Colonial Secretary alleging that Malta's interests had been constantly subordinated to British military interests; while the running of things was left to the discretion of a military government. Chamberlain dissented from all this, throwing the blame on the tactics of the elected members. The latter pointed out the queer structure of the administration. They were the people's representatives and yet every time the official side disagreed with their view, it could, by a mere Order in Council, impose its desires with the finality of law.

Chamberlain subsequently visited Malta to get a better understanding of the position. Not unnaturally, he came down on the official side, and for a brief period his authority brought a hint of peace. Resentment for the imperial side's action, however, soon returned, and the elected members refused to vote supplies for education. Once more Grenfell, the Governor, used his overriding authority. By closing the schools, he compelled the Council to pass the vote.

The language question still admitted no compromise. And when Government suggested that taxation was necessary to raise the £380,000 necessary for school-building and drainage, those who had hitherto shown no interest over the merits of the language dispute, joined sides with the pro-Italianites against the imperial side. The latter did not give way.

Another Order in Council not only imposed taxation but raised the sum reserved for Civil contingencies from £1,000 to £10,000 which would be used at the Governor's discretion, without having to receive the Council's annual approval.

It was the last stroke. No representative Govemment could carry on in such conditions. The imperial side wanted to execute its desires, and it was not going to allow any dissension by the elected members to thwart it.

The close of the nineteenth century indicated Malta's low mark in both economic and political spheres. In the former, it denoted the end of Malta's Golden Age; in the latter, it coincided with the agony of the Council of Government. But the dawn of the twentieth century was to see a curious reshuffle in these positions. Chamberlain was to abrogate the Constitution in June, 1903 – just when Malta was engaged in intensive economic expansion because of new Dockyard work and of the building of the breakwater at the entrance to Grand Harbour.

The end of the century, in fact, saw Malta turn her full circle, and her economic and political life reverted to a position not very dissimilar to that which obtained when the Knights left their home.

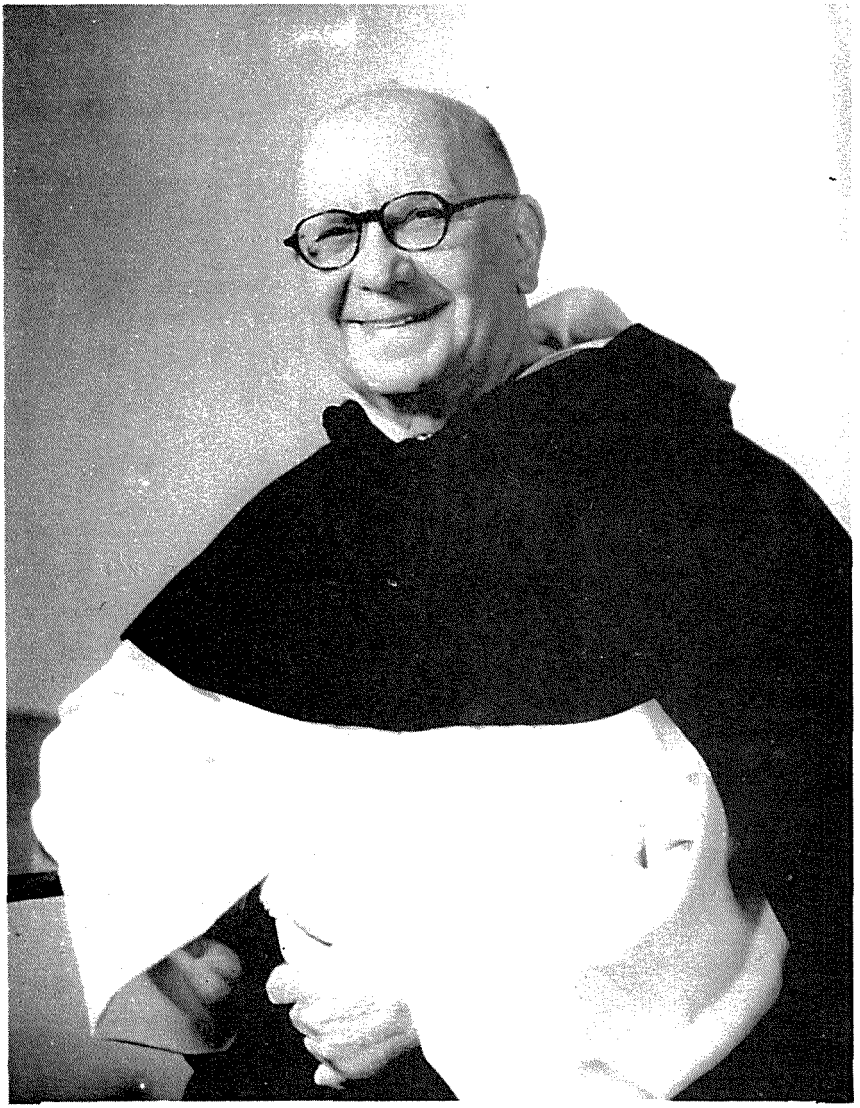
TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR DANIEL CALLUS

By A. VELLA, O.P.

THERE have been in the past great Maltese Dominicans who distinguished themselves in foreign universities, but for us the term 'Great Maltese Dominican' can only mean one, Fr. Daniel Callus, who lived among, conversed with and taught us, and whose recent death leaves us with a sense of irreparable impoverishment.

That he was an old man, 77 years old, does not make his loss any less painful, since some of his recent discoveries in mediaeval thought have not yet been published. Luckily three Oxonian scholars, B. Smalley of St. Hilda's College, R.W. Hunt of the Bodleian Library and W.A. Pantin of Oriel College, have taken responsibility for his literary works, with a view to publishing them.

Fr. Callus was born at Żebbuġ, Malta, on January 20th, 1888, second son of Paul Callus and Theodora *née* Vella. As a child he attended the Government Primary school of his native town and received his secondary education at the Junior College of the Dominican Fathers of Rabat. At the early age of 13 he began his Philosophical studies. By a special dispensation from Rome he was clothed with the Dominican habit when he was less than 15 years old, on December 25th, 1903. Upon completing the Philosophy course he was sent to Fiesole in Florence, where, while still deacon, he received the degree of Lectorate in Theology and Philosophy on July 21st, 1910. A few months later he was transferred to Rome and here was ordained priest on November 6th, 1910, by Mgr. Andrew Frewirth, O.P., Apostolic Nuncio in Bavaria and subsequently Cardinal. In Rome Fr. Daniel pursued a post-graduate course in Holy Scripture and Oriental Languages at the University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), and on his return to Malta he began his teaching career imparting lectures on Sacred Theology, Holy Scripture and Biblical Greek at St. Thomas Aquinas College, Rabat. In 1914, on the recommendation of the Auxiliary Bishop of Malta, Mgr. Angelo Portelli, O.P., he was appointed Lecturer in Theology in the local Seminary of Mdina. On learning that the English Dominican House of Studies at Hawkesyard, in Staffordshire, needed a professor to lecture on Aquinas' *Summa contra Gentiles* and the history of Mediaeval Philosophy he volunteered for that task. In the meantime he prepared for and sat the examination *Ad Gradus*.



Very Rev. DANIEL CALLUS, O.P., M.A.(Oxon.),
D.Phil.(Oxon.), F.R.Hist.S., Hon.D.Litt.

When Fr. Louis Theissling, Master General of the Order of Preachers, amalgamated the Philosophical *Studia* of the Italian, Sicilian and Maltese Provinces at the newly founded International College of La Quercia, Viterbo, Fr. Callus was recalled from England and appointed Prefect of Studies. Here on May 1st, 1924, the Procurator General of the Order, Fr. Filippo Caterini, bestowed on him the degree of Master of Sacred Theology.

Between the years 1924 and 1931 we find him both Regent of Studies at St. Thomas Aquinas College, Rabat, and Professor of Holy Scripture and Hebrew at the University of Malta. As Regent of Studies, he reformed the scholastic curriculum on the pattern of other *Studia* of the Order abroad, and introduced the custom of holding academic celebrations, once a year, in honour of St. Thomas Aquinas, Patron of Catholic Schools and Universities. As holder of the Chair of Holy Scripture and Hebrew, 'Professor Callus proved a very popular teacher for his clear and learned lectures during all the time he remained in the University. I myself attended the first part of his course of Hebrew, attracted by his philological disquisitions about Oriental languages in general. At all the annual examinations the students showed the great profit made under the guidance of the clever lecturer by their exhaustive answers.' These are the words of Sir Temi Zammit, then Rector of the University.

One of the greatest achievements of Fr. Callus, while teaching at the University, was the foundation of Catholic Action. We wish to stress this fact for the sake of historical truth because it seems to me that some of the present leaders of the Catholic Action Movement are not, perhaps, giving Fr. Callus his due.

Catholic Action, as defined by Pope Pius XI, saw its beginning in Malta in 1929 when Fr. Callus founded the *Lega Universitaria Cattolica Maltese*, now the University Students' Catholic Guild. Formally approved by Archbishop Mgr. Maurus Caruana, O.S.B., on February 19th, 1930, it was to serve as an inspiration and a model. The Guild was the first properly constituted branch of Catholic Action. It was acclaimed as such by Mgr. Caruana. From the Guild in the years to come, His Grace hoped, there would accrue to the life of Malta 'un'azione cristiana veramente efficace'. He trusted it would continue to grow and eventually provide the future leaders of Catholic Action.

Fr. Callus did not stop here. After consulting Mgr. Paolo Galea, the Vicar General, he went to explain to Archbishop Caruana his project for spreading Catholic Action throughout the Island. It was his intention to invite the members of the various Circoli, Domus and M.U.S.E.U.M. existing at the time to join in a federation. His Grace welcomed Fr. Callus's

plan and requested him to write a memorandum on the matter. Fr. Callus complied to His Grace's wish. He suggested that an organizing committee be founded under the presidency of the Archbishop, with the Vicar-General, Mgr. D'Andria, Mgr. Pantalleresco and himself as members. This committee met several times to study and put into effect Fr. Callus's projected scheme.

On January 19th, 1931, an important meeting took place, with the Vicar General in the Chair, to encourage the Circoli to form a federation. Present at this meeting were the Committee, a number of parish priests, and many priest and laymen. Fr. Callus, in a long speech, which was published in three issues of *Leħen-is-Sewwa* (January 31st, February 7th and February 14th, 1931), spoke of the nature and of the need for Catholic Action and explained the articles of the Statute.

The last of Fr. Callus's enterprises in promoting Catholic Action was the convention summoned in Valletta on July 5th, 1931, under the presidency of the Vicar General. Representatives from all over the Island attended. Here a solid foundation was laid for the setting up of Catholic Action.

We must also put on record that for three years (1928-31) Fr. Callus worked hard to propagate the idea of Catholic Action in Malta. He delivered lectures in youth clubs and other places on the need for Catholic Action. He explained in articles in *Leħen-is-Sewwa* the aims and ideals of the Movement. (Later on these articles were collected and published in a booklet, entitled *X'Inhija l-Azzjoni Kattolika?*' What is Catholic Action?') He formed groups of young men and women who were to be the first Catholic Actionists. He was as WIEHED MINNKOM said in *Leħen-is-Sewwa* of May 8th, 1962, 'the first one to organize a federation of Catholic Action clubs'.

It was indeed Fr. Callus who gave the initial impetus to the Catholic Action Movement, and his merits in this connexion cannot be passed over.

Fr. Callus left the Island in 1931 and resumed teaching at Hawkesyard. The following year he was assigned to Oxford, the renowed city of learning in which he made his home. Coming into contact with the late Regius Professor of Modern History of the University of Oxford, Sir Maurice Powicke, he plunged himself in research work, delving in Mediaeval manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, at Oxford and Cambridge Colleges, at the British Museum and in Continental libraries.

In 1938 Fr. Callus took the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. In the *Dominican Annals*, published by the English Dominican Province, for July 1938, we read: 'On June 4th, Fr. Daniel Callus, O.P., S.T.M. was admitted to the degree of Rector of Philosophy. He is the first Dominican

since the Reformation to take a Doctorate in the University'. Fr. Daniel was also the first Maltese to receive this degree. The University of Oxford in recognition of his scholarship, further conferred upon him the Mastership in Arts, in 1955, and Fr. Daniel became a member of the Congregation of the University.

On Fr. Callus's 75th Birthday the University of Oxford honoured him by publishing a Festschrift: Oxford Studies presented *To Daniel Callus* (Oxford Historical Society, New Series Vol. XVI) in which eminent Scholars wrote nine special studies, including a full bibliography of his published writings. In the foreword to this book Professor R.W. Southern, Chichele Professor of Modern History, wrote: 'During the thirty years he has been among us Father Daniel has exercised a mild and benevolent influence in the University, without effort, without ambition, without noise. In things of the spirit nothing succeeds like indifference to success, and some small part of devotion and loyalty which he has inspired arises from his belonging to a world quite distinct from that of the University of which he became in turn an undergraduate, a doctor, a lecturer, and a member of Congregation. He has exemplified in a striking degree for all to see those characteristics ascribed in an early biography to the founder of his Order: 'placidam interioris hominis compositionem manifesta de foris benignitate ac vultus hilaritate prodebat', and 'omnes homines largo excipiebat caritatis sinu, et cum omnes diligeret, ab omnibus amabatur'.

There is no need to alter these words, except to put them in the present tense, and this is not the place to add to them ...

'Since 1932 Father Daniel has been at Oxford. His loyalty and energies have naturally been claimed in the first place by the house of Blackfriars, where for twelve years from 1942 to 1954 he was Regent of Studies. But he has also found time to lecture and to supervise research in the University and to deliver lectures in many places in this country and abroad. And all this has been accompanied by a steady stream of discoveries in the field of scholastic thought. These activities fall into place in the great task of elucidating the development of Christian thought in fidelity to that precept in the Constitutions of the Order of Preachers which declares the *studium sacrae veritatis* to be the necessary means to the special end for which the Order was instituted. The University of Oxford is older than the Order of Preachers by a generation or so, but it and the Orders of Friars grew up together, and through the centuries their purposes have never utterly diverged. If they have become closer during the last thirty years, this is owing not only to the renewal of the constitutional links between the University and the House of Blackfriars, but still more to the unassuming and fruitful labours of a few men, and not least the

doctor of the University to whom these essays are a tribute of affection and gratitude'.

The Royal University of Malta did not lag behind the University of Oxford in honouring her Emeritus Professor.

I had myself the privilege of proposing Fr. Callus's name to the Senate of the University for the conferring of the Degree of *D. Litt. Honoris Causa*. My proposal was seconded by Prof. Joseph Aquilina, and supported by Professor Carmelo Coleiro and Professor George Xuereb.

The Senate decided by acclamation that such degree be conferred on him at the Foundation Day Ceremony on November 12th, 1963. The University Council unanimously approved this resolution and decided that for a week he would be the guest of the Royal University. On this occasion Mgr. E. Coleiro, Professor of Latin, finished his splendid oration in Latin by saying: 'Professor Callus is the scholar whose life-long work has been not only a source of solace and satisfaction to himself but also of great help to other scholars. Let others be ashamed if, while devoting themselves to their studies, they have not found it possible to publish the fruits of their labours. In him we have a man of true learning, one indeed who is known to all those who have even a little knowledge of Mediaeval Studies. All his life he has devoted himself to his work. Indeed, even that amount of time which others are wont to bestow on well-earned recreation, he has spent on his research and on his publications.

'In the words of Horace, he has built a monument more durable than bronze to his own accomplishment, to the honour of his Dominican Province and to the glory of his fellow countrymen and of this University, once his Alma Mater. This address of mine, whatever its worth, I have delivered as a token of our admiration and, as it has been a real pleasure to compose, so will it also be, I hope, acceptable to him whom we are honouring and will echo the approval of all of you who are present at this assembly'.

Fr. Callus's works (a list of which has already been published in this *Journal*, Vol. II, No. 3 [1964], pp. 262-264) may be grouped under three categories: Dominican, Biblical and Mediaeval.

On the history of the Dominican Order and in particular on the history of the Maltese Province, his main works are:

1917 – 'Tradizionale Ospitalità Domenicana al Novello Vescovo di Malta', *Archivum Melitense*, 3 (1917), 3-11.

1918 – *Il P. Domenico Ottomano (Fu vero Principe?). Saggio storico-critico*, Rome, 1918, pp. xxii-187.

Giaimo Vescovo di Malta (1447), *Archivum Melitense*, 3(1918), 104-7.

1921 – *I Domenicani in Malta. Cenni Storici*, Malta, 1921, pp. 31.
1926 – 'Due Missionari Domenicani Maltesi in Oriente nel Cinquecento', *Memorie Domenicane*, 43(1936), 386-408.
1929 – 'Un illustre Sengleano del Seicento, P. Giovanni Matteo Rispolis, O.P.', *Archivum Melitense*, 8(1929), 1-34.
1941 – 'The Apostolate of the Press in the Dominican Order', *Blackfriars*, 22, 162-71.

On Biblical Studies he wrote:

1925 – 'A propos des "Conversations de Malines" ', *Revue Thomiste* (1925), 55-73.
La Bibbia alla luce delle recenti scoperte archeologiche. Prolusione al Corso di S. Scrittura e di Lingua Ebraica, Malta.
1941 – 'The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages', Review in Blackfriars, Vol. 22, 664-74.
1961 – 'The Biblical and Patristic Background of the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas (abstract)', *Abstracts of Proceedings of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology* for the academic year 1960-1961, pp. 23-25.

On Mediaeval Studies he wrote:

1943 – 'Introduction of Aristotelian Learning to Oxford', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 19(1943), 229-81 (a paper communicated to the Academy in November 1943).
1946 – *The Condemnation of St. Thomas at Oxford* (Aquinas Papers, 5), Oxford, 1946, pp. 38. (Reprinted 1955).
1953 – 'Robert Grosseteste's Place in the History of Philosophy', *Proceedings of the XIth International Congress of Philosophy*, Bruxelles 1953, 161-5.
1954 – 'The Contribution to the Study of the Fathers made by the Thirteenth Century Oxford Schools', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 5, 139-48 (a paper read at the First International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford, 1951).
1955 – 'Robert Grosseteste as Scholar', *Robert Grosseteste Scholar and Bishop*. Essays in Commemoration of the Seventh Centenary of his Death, edited by D.A. Callus, with introduction by Sir Maurice Powicke, Oxford, 1955, pp. 1-69.
'The Treatise of John Blund on the Soul', *Autour d'Aristote*. Recueil d'Etudes de Philosophie ancienne et médiévale offert à Monseigneur A. Mansion, Louvain, 1955, pp. 471-95.
1959 – 'The Problem of the Unity of Form and Richard Knapwell, O.P.',

Mélanges offerts à Etienne Gilson, Paris-Toronto, 1959, pp. 123-60.

'Introduction of Arabian Philosophy to Oxford', *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 57, 647-50 (résumé of paper read 8 Sept. 1959 at Le Premier Colloque International de la Philosophie Musulmane, Cologne).

'*Fides and Auctoritas* in the late thirteenth-century ibid. 670-2 (résumé of paper read on 10th Sept. 1959 at the X Mediävistentagung, Cologne).

1960 – 'The Problem of the Plurality of Forms in the Thirteenth Century. The Thomist Innovation', *Actes du Premier Congrès International de Philosophie Médiévale*, Louvain-Bruxelles 28 août-4 septembre 1958, Louvain-Paris, 1960, pp. 577-85.

1963 – 'The Subject-Matter of Metaphysics according to some Thirteenth-Century Oxford Masters', *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter. Ihr ursprung und ihre Bedeutung* (Akten des II. Internationalem Kongresses fur mittelalterliche Philosophie. Koln, 21. 8-6.9.1961).

These publications did not pass without recognition. Professor Callus was enrolled among other scholars and honoured with the title of Fellow of the Royal Historical Society as well as Fellow of the Mediaeval Academy of America.

Although always very busy in lecturing, supervising and doing research work he found time to act as spiritual adviser to some Religious Congregations of Nuns. Indeed his kindness and thoughtfulness for others endeared him not only to his brethren but to all who came in contact with him.

Towards the end of 1964 his health was causing much anxiety, and in March 1965 he came to Malta for a rest. On March 25th he celebrated the diamond jubilee of his profession as a Dominican at the Annunciation Church of Vittoriosa. A few days later he went to St. Catherine of Siena Hospital, Attard. Professor Craig who attended him soon diagnosed that he was suffering of a malign cancer. On May 26 he passed away, being quite conscious to the last few minutes repeating the words: 'Cum defecerit virtus mea, ne derelinquas me Domine': 'Sancte Pater Dominice, ora pro me'.

A Solemn Requiem was celebrated at St. Dominic's Parish Church, Valletta, by the Prior of Oxford, Fr. Bede Bailey, O.P., who came purposely to Malta for the occasion. He was buried on May 28th at Żebbuġ Cemetry, Malta.

OUR NEW CONTRIBUTORS

Blouet, Brian W., born 1936, B.A., Ph.D.,(Hull). Assistant Lecturer in Geography at the University of Sheffield. His field of special interest has been the historical geography of Malta from 1530 to 1798 on which period he presented a doctoral thesis, *The Changing Landscape of Malta during the Rule of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.*

Busuttil, Salvino, Ph.L.(Greg.), Ph.D.(Phil.)(Ang.), Ph.D.(Econ.)(Manch.). Lecturer in Economics, in the University of Malta, Hon. Secretary of the Malta Development Finance Corporation Ltd. Author of *Value in Karl Marx* and N.A.T.O. Research Scholar. Contributor to several papers and journals on economic development.

Farley-Hills, D.L., *see* vol. II, No. 3.

Luttrell, Anthony, born 1932, London. Scholar in Modern History at Oriel College, Oxford, 1951. B.A. (1954), M.A., D.Phil. (1960). Further study in universities of Madrid and Pisa. Scholar in Medieval Studies at British School at Rome. Extensive research in libraries and archives in Madrid, Barcelona, Venice, Vatican, Malta and elsewhere on Mediterranean, Spanish and Greek history in the fourteenth century, with special interest in the crusades and, above all, in the Hospitallers at Rhodes. Author of a number of articles on these subjects, including 'Venetians at Medieval Malta', in *Melita Historica,* iii, no. 1 (1960). Taught history at Swarthmore College, a Liberal arts college in Pennsulvania, 1960-1962. At present Lecturer in History at the University of Edinburgh.

M^{c}Partlin, Joseph T., *see* vol. II, No. 4.

Vella, A., The Rev. Prof., *see* vol. II, No. 2.

Weber, Bernerd C., *see* vol. II, No. 3.

Wettinger, Godfrey, B.A.(Hons.)(Lond.), M.A.(Lond.), Senior History Master, Lyceum, Hamrun. At present at work on research in the archives of the Order of St. John at the Royal Malta Library and the Law Courts. Mainly interested in the problems of slavery, piracy and cognate subjects during the rule of the Knights of St. John, 1530-1798.