

CHEVALIER ANTONIO SCHEMBRI



(1813 -- 1872)

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## FATHER OF MALTESE ORNITHOLOGY

*by Joseph M. Attard*

Antonio Schembri was born in Valletta on the 10th April, 1813 (1) of Gian Battista and Rosa Maria, nee' Monteverde, on the day when the Maltese brig, 'San Nikola' departed from Marsamxett Harbour leaving behind it a plague epidemic which raged for over a year and claimed nearly 5,000 victims. Following this epidemic Antonio's father was appointed Captain of the Quarantine Port where he made a name in this appointment both in Malta and abroad after a long career in the Venetian and Austrian Navy. (2) A brother of Antonio, Gian Battista was a lawyer, (3) A step-brother, another Gian Battista was the first professor of midwifery in our University and is remembered for the first Caesarian operation to be performed on a woman living in Malta; (4) a step-sister Agnese was an active member of the Historical and Scientific Society (5) during the early part of this century and in her will she left a bursary for the teaching of music from which our children are still benefiting. This shows that Antonio like his brothers and sister was given a good and sound education.

At the age of 20 Antonio Schembri married Concetta, daughter of Francesco Zammit, of Floriana, a wealthy merchant known as 'Cejlu'. They had no children and this was perhaps a great tragedy for the Schembris as well as another for us because all Schembri's letters and papers were either destroyed or lost. Only some books which used to belong to Schembri's vast library were traced. (6) These are either autographed by Schembri or embossed with his stamp, but nothing personal could be found which could throw more light on his important connections both here and overseas. Fortunately, Schembri published quite a number of papers, books, lectures and studies on different subjects (7) most of which can be found in the Royal Malta Library. These were all written in Italian, as it was customary at that time to write in this language. An exhibition of his works has been set up by the Malta Ornithological Society at the Royal Malta Library to mark the first centenary of his death.

It is clear that Schembri was greatly influenced in his ornithological studies by Charles Bonaparte, Prince of Canino and son of Napoleon's brother, Lucien. After Charles Bonaparte returned to Europe from America where he worked for some important ornithological studies, he established himself in Italy, as a leading naturalist. In 1832 Bonaparte started his publication of the *Monografia della Fauna Italiana* and Schembri was the only Maltese who subscribed to the issue of this important work which took place

years to complete. In this monumental work Charles Bonaparte describes the Trumpeter Bullfinch (*Rhodapechys githaginea*) (then known as '*Erythrospiza githaginea*') on a live specimen sent to him by Schembri. In describing pin-railed Sandgrouse (*Pteroeles alehara*) Bonaparte wrote, "noi lo evemmo da Malta e cio fu dono del valente giovane Signor Antonio Schembri nativo di quell'isola dal suale ricevemmo insieme cento altri oggetti graditi". We have acquired this bird from Malta and it was given to us by able young man Mr. Antonio Schembri an inhabitant of this island from whom we have received also many other interesting specimens. This shows the close collaboration between Schembri and Bonaparte when the former was still in his early twenties. Schembri admired Charles Bonaparte so much as a scientist of Natural History that in 1844 he published in Malta his biography which was later translated into French by Jules Paulet and published in France.

In Malta, Schembri, also made close friendships with several local naturalists who were trying to establish the foundation of the study of our Natural History. Amongst these we find Professor Stefano Zerafa, Prof. Gian Carlo Grech Delicata and Giuseppe Mamo. Later he was also close to others like Dr. Gavino Gulia, and Charles Wright and Nicola Ardoino (8).

In December 1837, the 'Società Medica d'Incoraggiamento di Malta' was founded and besides encouraging the study of all medical aspects, also gave special importance to the study of Natural History. (9) In 1840 Antonio Schembri was accepted as an honorary member of the Società Medica and in 1844 this Society entrusted him with acting as secretary amongst forty chosen members to organise a new Society whose aim was to encourage sound agricultural methods in our Islands. (10) Schembri undertook this work with great ability. This new Society came to be known as 'Società Economico Agraria del Gruppo di Malta' and it was to it that Schembri devoted most of his later years. He served as its secretary from the time of its inception till 1855 and as its President from 1855 to 1872 after which he was struck by a serious illness and died. His contribution in starting the first agricultural shows in Malta and Gozo and then the floral exhibitions; in organising a museum of local agricultural tools and all seeds of local vegetable products at San Anton Palace (11), and in his great organisational ability in running this Society, all show his great undertaking in the social, educational and economic fields. Besides this, he was also a founder member in 1852 of the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce on which Committee he served for many years. Between 1854 and 1855 he served as secretary of the Chamber of Commerce during which period his father was serving as Vice-President. (12) He was also a member of the Malta Public Library Committee and a member on the Commission of Charity and a member on other Government Boards (14).

Together with Capt. Swan of the 2nd Batt., 22nd Regiment, D., A. Commissary-General Furse, Capt. Walter Strickland R.N. (father of Lord Gerald Strickland), and others, Schembri founded the Society of Archaeology, History and Natural Sciences. He chaired the first four preliminary meetings

of this Society which took place during December 1865 and later served as a Committee member until it came to an end in 1868. It was due to his suggestion in one of the preliminary meetings that the object of this Society happened to cover also the study of Maltese History. Soon after a Committee was elected, he proposed that a sub-committee should be set up to examine and report on the state of the monuments of Malta with the object of taking steps for their preservation. In 1866 he also proposed that a special committee should be appointed according to the statutes of the society to examine all papers tendered to the Society and to decide whether or not they were to be read or published. These two proposals were accepted and on the last mentioned committee Schembri was nominated to serve together with four others, amongst whom we find Dr. Leith Adams, Charles Wright and the Maltese historian and poet Dr. Gian Anton Vassallo. (14).

In his contribution to the study of Maltese history, Schembri is also remembered in the translation into Italian of "The Great Siege of Malta, an Extract from the History of the Reign of Philip II, King of Spain", (15) by William Prescott, which Schembri published in 1861. Six years before this work appeared Schembri had also published his 'Selva di Autori e Traduttori Maltesi', a form of dictionary of biographies of famous Maltese personalities. In it, he included as an appendix the manuscript of Fra Giuseppe Zammit M.D., 'Elogia Illustrium Melitensium.'

Schembri was an honorary, an active or a correspondent member of several local and foreign learned societies. (16) In 1854 he attended the VII Congress of Italian Scientists held in Naples (17) where he read the introduction of his 'Vocabolario dei Sinonimi Classici Dell'Ornitologia Europea' and presented the manuscript containing this work. Round about 1852 Schembri read his paper: 'Sulla Coltivazione della Sulla l'Erba Bruca in Malta' at the Reale Accademia dei Georgofili di Firenze which paper was later published in the Acts of this Academy. (18)

Besides these many activities Schembri was in 1849 appointed Consul for Belgium in Malta by King Leopold I, (19) a cultured man who encouraged art, science and education and for which he was frequently spoken of as 'The Nestor of Europe'. We have to consider the political situation of Europe and of Malta during that period to understand the important choice of Schembri for this appointment. In 1848 the throne of Belgium stood unshaken amidst revolutions which marked that year in almost every European country. On the other hand, Malta was the place of refuge for many escaping the effects of the Risorgimento in the Italian Peninsula. It is for a great service rendered, that the King of the Belgians awarded Schembri the Order of Leopold and Pope Pius IX decorated him with the Cross of St. Gregory the Great. (20)

Politics were the only field which did not yield any benefit to Schembri. But his involvement in politics created a landmark in Maltese political history. In February 1856 a vacancy was declared for the representative of Gozo on the Council of Government, in consequence of the death of Dr. Paolo Sciortino LL.D. Later, an election was held for another member by

order of the Governor, Sir William Reid. The result of the poll gave a majority of 276 votes in favour of Schembri over the total number of votes received by the other three contesting candidates, taking into consideration that the number of votes was 372 (21). This was a great victory for Schembri and a great sign of popularity with the Gozitans for whom a year before Schembri together with Giuseppe Gauci Azzopardi had started the first annual agricultural exhibition which is still held on the 15th August of each year. (22) His election was announced in the Government Gazette, but it was soon annulled on the pretext that he had made a declaration on oath to the King of the Belgians in his capacity as Consul for this foreign power. This was the consular declaration which Schembri had to make on being appointed Consul for Belgium. (23) The Governor interpreted this as a breach of the Letters Patent and debarred him from taking his seat as representative for Gozo on the Council of Government. (24).

Schembri protested strongly against this decision (25) and some of the local papers gave him strong backing whilst some others stood by the Governor's decision. 'Il Mediterraneo' of the 23rd April 1856 wrote these ironic remarks, 'We have no bias either for, or against Mr. Schembri as an individual. We will not even quarrel with him for having imitated Sir Robert Peel, and established free trade between Comino, and the republic of Nadur in Gozo'. (26). On the other hand 'The Malta Mail and United Services Gazette' of the 18th April, 1856, commented as follows, "We think that Mr. Schembri should have an opportunity of defending himself before his brother Councillors and not to have the door of the Council banged in his face when the people of Gozo have given him a right to walk in and take his seat..... The oath taken by Schembri and to which we beg to refer our readers, completely alters the facts of the case, and in our opinion is not sufficient to exclude him from his seat in Council as elected member for Gozo."

So far we have seen in brief the varied and chequered career of Antonio Schembri without entering into great detail. Let us now give a quick glance at his earliest works which cover his studies on ornithology and entomology. For some time Schembri interested himself in the Maltese diptera of which he slowly built a fine collection. He donated part of it to the Museum of Naples from whence some of the specimens were afterwards moved and conserved in the Museum of Monaco. (27).

The collection which was kept by Schembri has disappeared, probably destroyed through decay and neglect. Writing in 1894 the Maltese naturalist Alfredo Caruana Gatto had this to say about early entomological collections. "We regret that we have no records of these collections which have had so much valuable time and labour spent upon them, and this chiefly owing to the carelessness of those in whose charge some of our older ones, such as those of Mamo, Schembri and Gulia were placed and suffered them to decay and waste away." (28) Although we have lost this collection, the

only note written by Schembri on the Hymenoptera has survived. It is called 'Descrizioni d'una nuova spece d'Imenottero Maltese, "Leucopis Costae" che si trova nel mese di giugno e luglio in Malta.' This earliest known note on Maltese Entomology was sent by Schembri to Mons. Pierrot and after being translated into French, it was published in the *Annales de la Societé Entomologique de France*. (29)

Schembri also built up a collection of stuffed birds some of which were prepared for him by Nicola Ardoino. This was mentioned by Hugh Strickland in his paper 'Report on the progress and Present State of Ornithology'. (30) The latest information we find about this collection was given in 1932 when the Maltese Naturalist Giuseppe Despot wrote as follows about it: "Quella dello Schembri in San Giorgio a Mare, il rimanente della quale, fu venduta pochi anni fa." (The part of Schembri's collection at St. George's Bay, was sold a few years ago). (31).

The greatest contribution of Schembri is beyond any doubt his three publications on Ornithology namely the "Catalogo Ornitologico del Gruppo di Malta"; the "Quadro Geographico Ornitologico ossia Quadro Comparativo delle Ornitologie di Malta, Sicilia, Roma, Toscana, Liguria, Nizza e la Provincia di Gard", and the "Vocabolario dei Sinonimi Classici Dell'Ornitologia Europea." The "Catalogo Ornitologico" is the most important for us because it is the first work on the birds of Malta wherein Schembri describes 230 species of birds. This publication greatly helped later ornithologists who based their studies on this work and extended their knowledge on the birds of Malta on the foundations laid down by Schembri. In the inaugural lecture of the Society of Archaeology, History and Natural Sciences which took place on 8th January, 1866, Dr. Leith Adams spoke of this in these words, "The Avi-fauna, first illustrated by the able memoir of Mr. Antonio Schembri, aided by the Prince of Musignano, (32) has been since greatly extended through the almost exhaustive labour of Mr. Charles A. Wright, who with great accuracy has recorded upwards of 260 species..." Soon after the "Catalogo Ornitologico" was published, Hugh Strickland commented, "The Island of Malta possesses an able ornithologist in Sigr. Schembri, who has published a 'Catalogo Ornitologico', a highly useful volume..... This forms almost the first work on zoology ever printed in the island of Malta and this shows that even in the most insulated localities an active naturalist will always find abundant occupation."

Besides giving the status of our breeding species and those of the winter and summer residents, Schembri recorded many migratory birds, some of them rare visitors. To most of these birds, he gave a Maltese name and in the compilation of this Maltese nomenclature he collected some of the names from local game-sellers, bird-shooters and bird-trappers. It is interesting to note that although most contemporary ornithologists and even those coming much later, studied birds through the barrels of the gun, Schembri made his studies on his own observations either in the field or on the skins

or live birds which he acquired from shooters and trappers. He also recorded interesting information given to him by reliable persons like Dr. G.C. Grech Delicata, Dr. C. Pisani of the Gozo Hospital and the taxidermist Baldassare Ellul. This is how he describes the robin, "In Valletta the robin is often seen on the chimney-tops and on the flag-poles of consular buildings, on which it perches to render more pleasant and beautiful the days of autumn and winter, from where one can hear its melodious song." (34) On two captive birds he commented, "In July 1834, I had two cream-coloured coursers caught alive at Mosta which remained alive for some time. I fed them on raw meat, insects and bread soaked in water. They were domesticated in such a manner that when I approached them, they used to come running to me, expecting to be fed." (34). Of a maimed black-headed gull he gave the following description, "I have one which was shot in the wing in December 1840. From this time till now, it is still with me alive." (35).

In his description of the golden oriole, we find that after he examined the ovary of some females, he discovered that the eggs were in such an advanced state, that he came to the conclusion that these birds would have laid in three or four days' time. He therefore concluded that once this species is left unmolested by the shooters, it may breed in our climate. (36).

To understand Schembri's attitude on the conservation of our sedentary and breeding species, one has to bring to mind that the protection movement in Europe had not yet started in 1843, but notwithstanding this, he stated, "Our sedentary and breeding species are also limited to very few species, because besides the many natural disadvantages one has to take into consideration the persecution of the many shooters that roam our countryside during all seasons." (39). Schembri also gave the following message to future students of our birds, "I will also be pleased if this work of mine besides succeeding to be of some usefulness to the science of ornithology, will also serve to stimulate someone interested in this study, who can make it more complete and bring it up-to-date," (39).

In his ornithological studies, Schembri made use of old as well as contemporary literature, amongst which he refers to that of C. Linnaeus, G. White, C.J. Temminck, Buffon, J. Gould, L. Benoit, C. Ranzani, G. Cara, and above all C. Bonaparte. When he was attending the VII Congress of Italian Scientists in Naples Schembri met the Italian ornithologist, Filippo di Filippi, when the latter brought to his attention the work of H. Schegel by means of which Schembri brought his list of classical ornithological synonyms more up-to-date.

In his three ornithological publications, Schembri refers to the storm petrel "*Hydrobates pelagicus*" (then known as "*Thalassidroma pelagica*") as a newly discovered species. Schembri found out that the coloration of the tail feathers of the Filfia birds were black with white at the base while the description by previous authorities was as a completely black tail. He even gave it a new name "*Thalassidroma melitensis* (Schembri). (39)

In the "Catalogo Ornitologico" he gives a full description with an illustration of this bird (this appears in the front cover of this issue) showing the alleged difference in its tail coloration and its external tubular nostril. On the 16th December, 1844, Schembri delivered a lecture on the Filfla petrel, to the members of the Societa' Medica d'Incoraggiamento wherein he gave a comparative description of the petrel found breeding on Filfla and that described by other ornithologists. (40). In the meantime, H. Strickland disagreed with Schembri and he proved that the petrel described by Schembri was the same species described by previous authors. (41). While Strickland compared specimens from Filfla with others taken elsewhere, Schembri made his comparative studies on specimens taken on Filfla and on the description which he found in available ornithological literature. Though his theory of a new species was proved wrong, his more accurate description of the storm petrel added a further step forward in the progress of ornithological studies, at the time when the science of ornithology was still in its cradle.

In 1843, Schembri also published the "Quadro Geografico-Ornitologico" which is a comparative study of the birds of Malta, Sicily, Rome, Tuscany, Liguria, Nice and the Department of Gard in France. In this work, he was inspired by the "Specchio Comparativo della Ornitologia di Roma e Filadelfia," (1827) and the "Geographical and Comparative List of the Birds of Europe and North America", (1838) of Charles Bonaparte. This work of Schembri is perhaps one of the first known publications of this type which covered the ornithology of a number of different places in Southern Europe.

On the other hand, the "Vocabolario dei Sinonimi Classici" was written as a work of reference for the student of ornithology. At that time there was no standard scientific nomenclature and this was the cause of confusion in every branch of natural history. Not until much later did the creation of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature bring things to an accurate standard and any such arising problem to a quick and internationally recognised solution. In this work, Schembri collected all available scientific names given so far to each individual species, keeping as a basic nomenclature that used by Charles Bonaparte in his "Catalogo Metodico degli Uccelli Europei." This compilation was then felt as a necessity as is seen in the comments of H. Strickland when he wrote about his undertaking in preparing "a complete Synonymy of all known species of birds with full references to all the works where they are figured or described." "This undertaking", he commented, "requires considerable labour and much careful comparison of specific character, as exhibited both in nature and in books but there is probably no department of natural history in which, from the multiplication of normal species and the wide dispersion of materials, such an analysis of the whole subject is more wanted than in ornithology." (42).



If today, the ornithological works of Schembri are regarded as things of the past, his contribution in relation to his time, is regarded beyond any doubt as a great effort in the progress of both Maltese and European ornithology.

After the last publication of the "Vocabulario" in 1846, Schembri apparently gave up ornithology and absorbed himself in his profession as a merchant (43), in his consular duties, in the many activities connected with different local societies and in his many publications covering various subjects. Probably the political agitation and the wars on the Italian Peninsula affected the connection with his naturalist friends on the Continent, especially when Charles Bonaparte had to leave Italy in 1849 as a consequence of the failure of the revolution in Venice and after he took an active part in politics and declared himself in favour of the independence of Italy.

After a very active life Antonio Schembri died on the 7th. December, 1872, in his home at No. 56 Merchant Street, Valletta. His death was announced in all local newspapers and journals by long and deserved appreciations. Charles Wright, a friend and colleague ornithologist of Schembri and editor of The Malta Times announced his death in this paper as follows, ".....Indeed, many are the friends who mourn over his departure, and all lovers of natural science cannot but lament the loss they have sustained. As an author he was best known by a work on Ornithology which gained for him a European reputation. He was a member of several scientific Societies and for many years President of the Societa Economico-Agraria, for which he worked hard and well....." (44). The Corriere Mercantile Maltese described him in these terms, "The much lamented Chev. Antonio Schembri enjoyed amongst his other merits, the distinction of being the founder of Maltese Ornithology as evinced by competent authorities. Meriting to be specially remembered are his studies and works, all exhibiting a talent to patient and methodical research, in this branch of natural science." (45).

The body of Antonio Schembri was buried in the crypt of the parish church of Ghaxaq in a plain tomb, according to his wishes. His funeral was attended by many of his friends, members of the Societa Economico-Agraria, by all consuls representing foreign countries in Malta, by members of the Council of Government, the Clerk of the Council, a representative of the Naval Commander-in-Chief and by members of the Nobility and Judiciary. After a century of oblivion his activities, merits and contributions are being put again on paper and his name cut in marble. The Malta Ornithological Society has erected a marble plaque at Bosketto Gardens which was unveiled on the 14th., January, 1973, by H.E. Sir Anthony Mamo, Governor General of Malta and Patron of our Society. This inscription reads in Maltese:—

L-GHAQDA ORNITOLOĠIKA TA' MALTA  
 TFAKKAR LILL-  
 ANTONIO SCHEMBRI  
 MESSIER L-ORNITOLOĠIJA TA' MALTA  
 F'GHELUQ IL-MITT SENA MILL-MEWT TIEGHU  
 Mikxufa mill-E.T. Sir Anthony J. Mamo, O.B.E., Q.C., LL.D., B.A.  
 Gvernatur Generali ta' Malta

Translation:— The Malta Ornithological Society  
 Commemorates

ANTONIO SCHEMBRI  
 1813-1872

Father of Maltese Ornithology  
 On the Centenary of His Death

Unveiled By H.E. Sir Anthony J. Mamo, O.B.E., Q.C., LL.D., B.A.  
 Governor-General of Malta



H.E. The Governor-General Sir A.J. Mamo reading the inscription after unveiling the plaque.



Mr. J.M. Attard, President M.O.S. addressing the guests at the unveiling ceremony. Sitting in the front row (from left) The Hon. Minister of Commerce, Industry, Agriculture and Tourism, Mr. P. Xuereb; H.E. Sir A.J. Mamo, Governor General of Malta, Mr. Judge A. Montanaro Gauci President of the Agrarian Society and Mr. O. Vella Acting Director of Agriculture.

## APPENDIX A

PUBLISHED WORKS BY ANTONIO SCHEMBRI

### ORNITHOLOGY

- Catalogo Ornitologico del Gruppo di Malta Malta 1843  
Quadro Geografico-Ornitologico ossia Quadro Comparativo  
delle Ornitologie di Malta, Sicilia, Roma, Toscana, Liguria  
Nizza, e la Provincia di Gard. Malta 1843  
Vocabolario dei Sinonimi Classici dell'Ornitologia Europea  
(Estratto dai nuovi annali delle Scienze Naturali di Bologna) Bologna 1846

### ENTOMOLOGY

- Descrizione d'una Nuova Specie D'Imenottero Maltese  
'Leucopis costae' che si trova nel mese di giugno e  
luglio in Malta tradotta in francese dal Sig. Pierrot  
e pubblicato negli 'Annales de la Société Entomologique  
de France. Vol. 5, 2da serie pag. (xxxv). France 1842

### AGRICULTURE

- Memoria sulla Coltivazione del Riso a Secco Malta 1845  
Rendiconto dei Lavori Scientifico-Pratici fatti dalla  
Societa Economico Agraria dal 12 aprile 1844 al  
5 dicembre 1845 Malta 1846  
Calendario dell'Agricoltore per l'anno 1849  
scritto dai Signori C Camilleri, G. Gauci-Azzopardi,  
G.C Grech Delicata P. Pullicino e A. Schembri Malta 1848  
Detto — per l'anno 1850 Malta 1849  
Sulla Coltivazione della Sulla l'Erba Bruca in Malta —  
Pubblicata negli Atti della Reale Accademia dei  
Georgofili di Firenze. vol XXX, 1852 Florence 1852  
Rendiconto della Prima Esibizione Agraria Malta 1855  
Various Articles which appeared on the Gazzetta Agraria  
Maltese under the initials A., S., A.S. or his full name Malta 1855 - 1856  
Sulla Coltivazione degli Asparagi Malta 1869

### ECONOMICS

- Sul Debito della Massa Frumentaria e Progetto Economico  
per Estinguerlo scritto e presentato al Governo di Sua  
Maesta Britannica Malta 1851

Sul Debito della Massa Frumentaria (Supplimento)	Malta 1852
Sui Contratti di Locazione e di Enfiteusi delle Terre	Malta 1855
Posizione Geografica-Politica Commerciale del Gruppo di Malta Avanti e Dopo l'anno 1870	Malta 1866
Brevi Cenni Sulla Questione Monetari in Malta	Malta 1866

### EMIGRATION

Osservazioni Statistiche sulla Proposta Emigrazione del Gruppo di Malta	Malta 1866
Sulla Emigrazione	Malta 1866
Osservazioni Critiche agli Articoli sulla Emigrazione del Gruppo di Malta pubblicati nell'anno 1866 dal 'Malta Observer'	Malta 1866
Considerazioni Generali sulle Emigrazioni per Ragione Politiche etc.	Malta 1867

### SHIPPING

Osservazioni Statistiche sulle Pironavi in Malta etc. Primo, Secondo, Terzo e Quarto Trimestre degli Anni 1858 al 1866	Malta 1866- 1867
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### CRITICAL STUDY

Le Istituzioni di Pubblica Beneficenza in Malta ed i Giornali Maltesi	Malta 1866
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### BIOGRAPHIES

Biografia del Principe di Canino	Malta 1844
Biographie du Prince Charles Bonaparte, Prince de Canino etc, fils de Lucien; traduit de l'italien par Jules Paulet. Beaune, Blendeau, Deprissieur Imprimeur (Libraire 1844 in 8vo. Page 23).	France 1844
Selva di Autori e Traduttori Maltesi	Malta 1855

### HISTORY

Il Memorabile Assedio di Malta nell'Anno 1565 descritto da Guglielmo Priscott (sic) nella Storia del Regno di Filippo II Re di Spagna	Malta 1861
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## UNPUBLISHED REPORTS PREPARED FOR THE SOCIETA ECONOMICO AGRARIA

Rapporto per indicare il modo di provvedere alla irrigazione  
di giardini e ortaggi.

Rapporto sulla 'Bohemeria Nivea'.

### APPENDIX B

SOCIETIES, INSTITUTIONS, and COMMISSIONS in which  
ANTONIO SCHEMBRI PARTICIPATED

#### MALTESE SOCIETIES

Societa Filologica Maltese — Active Member — 1840 — (18...?)

Societa' Medica d'Incoraggiamento di Malta — Honorary Member — 1840  
— 1870

Societa' Economico-Agraria del Gruppo di Malta — Secretary — 1844 — 1855  
President — 1855 — 1872

Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce — Committee Member  
—1852 — 1857

Chamber of Commerce — Secretary — 1854 — 1855

Casino Maltese — Member — 1852 — 1872

Society of Archaeology, History and Natural Sciences — Committee Member  
— 1866 — 1868

Societa' Gozitana d'Incoraggiamento — Active and Honorary Member —  
1871 — 1872

Societa' di S. Vincenzo di Paola — Member — (18...?)-1872.

Casino Maltese (1852 — 1872)

#### CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF FOREIGN INSTITUTIONS BY 1846

Gabinetto di Scienze Naturali di Siracusa.

Gabinetto di Scienze Naturali di Gibilterra.

Accademia Gioenia di Catania

Accademia di Scienze e Lettere di Palermo

Gabinetto de' Zelanti di Aci Reale

Reale Peloritana di Messina

Aspiranti Naturalisti di Napoli

Reale Accademia dei Georgofili di Firenze

National Institute of Washington

## GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONS

Board for Visitors of Corradino Prison	—	Member — 1854 - 1857
Malta Public Library Committee	—	Member — 1855 - 1856
Commission of Charity	—	Member — 1856 - 1872
Consuls for the Commercial Courts	—	Member — 1857 - 1863

N.B.

A. Schembri served also on many sub-committees of the Societa' Economico — Agraria

## REFERENCES + NOTES

- (1) Records of Births., St. Dominic's Parish, Valletta., Register (1811 — 1817) p. 169.
- (2) Dr. P. Cassar., "Medical History of Malta", London 1964, p. 295.
- (3) Records of Deaths., St. Dominic's Parish, Valletta; Register (1859 — 1867) entry of 22nd October, 1860.
- (4) Dr. P. Cassar., *op. cit.*, p. 538.
- (5) Archivum Melitense, Vol. III, December 1918 — April 1919 p.p. 303 — 304.
- (6) The "Iconografia della Fauna Italica" by Charles Bonaparte is in the possession of Dr. A. Cachia Zammit M.D. M.P. who is related to A. Schembri's wife.
- (7) Vide Appendix A.
- (8) Archivum Melitense, Vol. VIII, No. 4, August 1928, p. 129
- (9) Storia della Societa Medica d'Incoraggiamento di Malta. — Malta 1845, Vol. I, p. xxxviii
- (10) Gazzetta Agraria Maltese., Anno I, 1st May, 1855, No. 2, p. 17
- (11) Gazzetta Agraria Maltese., Anno I, 2nd July 1855., Suppl. al No. 3., p. 76
- (12) Antonio's father served from 1859 to 1861 as President of the Chamber of Commerce.
- (13) Malta Blue Books, 1852 — 1872., Section "Boards", vide Appendix B
- (14) Manuscript No. 588 Royal Malta Library., Register of Proceedings of Monthly and General Meetings of the Society of Archaeological, Historical and Natural Sciences".
- (15) This work was translated into Maltese by Ganni Vassallo and printed in 1903 by order of the Governor.
- (16) Vide Appendix B.
- (17) Prince Charles Bonaparte was the President of the Italian Scientists and he presided over the VII Congress in Naples.
- (18) Vide Appendix A.
- (19) The appointment was signed by King Leopold I on 1st July 1849;

approved by Queen Victoria and the British Foreign Minister, Lord Palmerston on 8th November, 1849 and published in the Malta Government Gazette on 14th December, 1849.

(20) The Malta Times — 14th December, 1872.

(21) The Malta Government Gazette, 14th April, 1856

(2) Gazzetta Agraria Maltese., Anno I, 18th July, 1855., No. 4., p. 202

(23) The Oath taken by Antonio Schembri on his appointment as consul for Belgium. was the following:—

I, Antonio Schembri swear to fulfill with fidelity and in all its parts the commission that has been granted to me according to the instructions and the orders that have been given me and shall be given to me from time to time and to avail with all my power to bring forward the interests of Navigation and Belgian Commerce.

(24) The Malta Government Gazette, 25th April, 1856.

(25) Il Portafoglio Maltese, 26th April, 1856., p. 3.

(26) Schembri owned Comino Island on emphyteutic basis (vide Schembri's will by Notary Giuseppe Metropoli — 4th July 1872, Notarial Archives, Reg. No. 64/943) where he kept a farm and carried out many agricultural experiments which he then reported upon to the Societa Economica Agraria.

(27) Il Barth., Morte del Cav. Ant. Schembri by Gavino Gulia., Anno II 21st February 1873., No. 12., p. 238.

(28) A Caruana Gatto., 'Common Beetles of the Maltese Islands', Malta 1894. p. 5.

(29) Vide Appendix A.

(30) 'Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science,' London 1844.

(31) G. Despott., "Ornitologia delle Isole Maltese." Rivista Italiana dell'Ornitologia; Anno II; serie II 1932, Milano p. 9.

(32) Charles Bonaparte, besides being the Prince of Canino was also the Prince of Musignano.

(33) Cat. Ornit. del Gruppo di Malta. — Malta 1843 p. 43.

(34) Ibid. p. 87.

(35) Ibid. p. 124.

(36) Ibid. p. 34.

(37) Ibid. p. 8.

(38) Ibid. p. 8.

(39) Cat. Ornit. pp. 117, 118, 119., Vocabolario....., p. 401  
Quadro ....., p. 27

(40) Storia della Società Medica ....., 1845., Vol. 1., pp. 12,13,14.

(41) H.E. Strickland., On Thalassidroma melitensis, Schembri, a supposed new species of Stormy Petrel., Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist., London, — 1844. (1) 14, pp. 248, 349., J. Sultana & C. Gauci., Bird Studies on Filfla. — Malta, 1970., pp. 23, 24.



- (42) Report on the Recent and Present State of Ornithology. p. 179.
- (43) Between 1850 and 1854 Antonio's father together with other partners built up a fleet of cargo sailing vessels:— the barques "Schembri — 260 tonnage, "Osiris" — 425 tonnage, "Castor" — 265 tonnage, "Saint John" — 545 tonnage.
- (44) The Malta Times., 14th December, 1872.
- (45) Il Corriere Mercantile Maltese., 11th December, 1872.