

# Remembering Anthony Fenech

(1938 – 2006)

*(second anniversary of his demise – 23 September 2006)*

**A philatelist of international fame  
Member of the Royal Philatelic Society (London)**

*by Commendatore Dr. Phil. Olaf Hein, M.A., Acc.*

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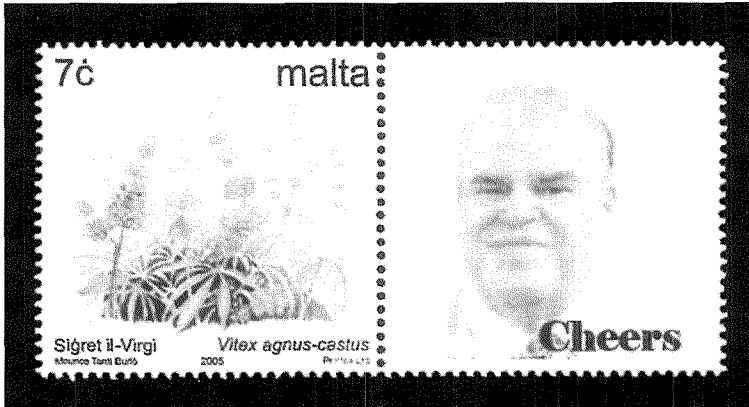
*(Wiesbaden/Germany)*

We became acquainted with Mr Anthony Fenech more than ten years ago in the stamp-shop of Mr Joseph Buttigieg in Malta (Sliema/Manwel-Dimech-Street), which we frequented at regular intervals during our sojourns on the island, devoted not only to scientific research but also to recreation. A man, sitting there every Tuesday morning on a small tabouret at the side of the counter with numerous scribbling sheets of paper before him, at the first moment we took for a customer, having special wishes, apparently as difficult as time-consuming. Not wanting to press forward ourselves (the performance of our own shopping empirically took even more time than an hour), we gave Mr Buttigieg to understand, he first of all might serve this customer; we would wait, of course, as long as necessary.

Smiling, Mr Buttigieg responded: “He is a permanent resident.” At the first moment, we did not know, what this answer should mean, but then we were informed, that this ‘customer’ was not a ‘customer’, but a famous specialist in Malta-philately revisiting Mr Buttigieg’s shop every Tuesday-morning in order to discuss special philatelic questions and to give or to receive multifarious stimulations in the field of stamp-collecting.

With the years, multiplying our visits in Mr Buttigieg’s stamp-shop, we became more and more familiar with Mr Anthony Fenech too and finally, in the course of time, on the occasion of our multiple meetings, it generally happened that we exchanged small philatelic presents with him, mostly peculiarities, not easy or never to find in the field of commerce. On the occasion of these ceremonies, Mr Fenech turned out to be an agreeable person to talk, full of extensive knowledge, a fine sense of humour and noble-hearted helpfulness. When, full of sincere enthusiasm, starting a sentence with the word “Look...”, we knew, that a little more than interesting, philatelically minded scientific lecture would follow.

But not only philatelic themes were discussed. When eg. trying to visit the famous prehistoric Hypogeum Hal Saflieni in Paola (Burial Street); cf. Buttigieg-catalogue-numbers 188, 188a, 211, 211 a = Michel-catalogue-numbers 179, 193,



*Personalized stamp, issued by Maltapost,  
showing the portrait of Mr Anthony Fenech*

202, 227) during a stay on the Maltese islands in the year 2002 (the archeological relics, unique of their kind, have been entered in the “Unisco-World-Heritage-List” since the 5th of September 1980 and the conceded number of visitors is extremely limited; petition with respect to exceptional permissions are refused in the most non-obliging manner), it turned out, that such a visit entails a lot of bureaucratic troubles, being necessary for the future visitor to announce himself on a waiting-list with already exactly fixed visit’s date some weeks in advance, that means, at a moment, normally not yet knowing when to stay in Malta again; moreover the ticket has to be fetched a couple of days before the long-desire survey would be taking place, that means, on a point of time, when we had not yet arrived in Malta at all.

With ample amiability and exemplary helpful, Mr Fenech offered to take the burden on his shoulder and to arrange whatever would be needed, when we did arrive again in Malta some months later, he had prepared the visit of the Hypogeum in the best possible manner and kindly handed over to us the tickets of admission. – Thus, his goodness and his selfless effort covered even such fields having nothing to do with philately at all and not touching his own interests.

When we intended to honour the famous polystoric savant of the baroque-period, Athanasius Kircher SJ (1602-1680), having been at work in Malta 1637/1638, with a Maltese commemoration-stamp, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of his birth, Mr Fenech (for many years a “Member of the plc Maltapost Stamp Advisory Board”) did not hesitate in acquainting us with the competent personalities of the Maltese post-administration; beyond this, he set in for the project in such an intent manner, that the Kircher-commemoration-stamp is now listed in the Buttigieg-specialized catalogue Nr 1920 = Michel Nr. 1245.

For more details concerning this stamp cf. our account in the bulletin *Die Melita*,

published by the German *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Malta e.V.*”, fascicle Nr. 4, 2005, p. 6-7 and even in the “PSM-Journal”, Vol XXXII, fascicle Nr. 2, 2003, p. 22-24).

Mr Anthony Fenech was a philatelist as full of knowledge as of enthusiasm. In 1966 he had been one of the founders of the Philatelic Society of Malta, lifelong he participated in numerous philatelic exhibitions and events and he published a vast number of contributions for philatelic journals, handbooks and catalogues. The column “Postal Diary”, which he had founded many years ago, containing a complete day by day survey of all such event having some relation with the Maltese post, had become a very legend already during his lifetime. With special enthusiasm he had devoted himself to his collection of Maltese Zeppelin-Flights, items of which are to be found as coloured illustrations in the PSM Journal, Vol XXXV (2006), fascicle Nr 1 on the pages 7, 24, 27 (2), 35, 38, 42, 45, 49, 53, 57, 61. Besides this, he was deeply interested in the very difficult speciality of early Great Britain used in Malta (being in use before 31st of December 1884).

His membership in the German *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Malta e.v.* was self-evident for him and a great enrichment for the society; his loss therefore is felt only the more grievously.

But above all, we many cast our glance upon his exemplary attitude of mind and his noble way of thinking, enabeling him to be and to become more and more even an ambassador and a representative of real humanity which he generously spread out all over hidebounded national limits.

## PS

On the occasion of our last sojourn in Malta during November 2007, visiting a stamp-exhibition in the noble Ministry Exhibition Halls on the island of Gozo (8th Gozo Philatelic Society Philatelic Exhibition), we were deeply impressed when seeing a glass show-case with exhibits in commemoration of Mr Anthony Fenech, set up on the very place (first left corner, seen from the entrance) where Mr Fenech was accustomed to have his stand during former philatelic events.

The Malta Philatelic Society  
needs new members  
especially young ones