

The Etching Class at the Malta Government School of Art

Its setting and running by
Carmelo Mangion

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To
My mother
Who has always
Taught me to be passionate
When seeking knowledge & truth

I, the undersigned _____ declare that this Long Essay is my original work, gathered and utilized especially to fulfil the purpose and objectives of this study, and has not been previously submitted to any other university. I also declare that the publications and archival material cited in this work have been previously consulted.

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Preface

The objective of this dissertation is to investigate the setting of an Etching Class during the second quarter of the 20th century within the newly established Government School of Art which had been opened in 1926. This newly formed Etching class will be placed within the philosophy of the Government School of Art along with the island's historical and socio-political context of the time.

The dissertation will furthermore look into the circumstances which contributed to the setting up of the Etching class as well as its running under the guidance of Carmelo Mangion; officially appointed Etching Master at the School in 1936 and who was one of Malta's most important artists of the 20th century. The techniques used by the students in this Etching Class will also be discussed in detail.

The final part of the thesis will be a compilation of a Catalogue of Intaglio Plates that form part of the Government School of Art collection. Under the guidance of my tutor Mr Lino Borg, a re-strike shall be pulled from these original plates, and together with relative data the Catalogue will be carefully assembled. It is hoped that such a Catalogue would help to throw light upon the contribution of Carmelo Mangion as a painter-etcher and as a teacher of etching as well as to give contribution to an important National Heritage.

I am greatly indebted to my tutor Mr Lino Borg who has not only provided constant intellectual stimulation throughout the duration of this dissertation, but has furthermore enriched my artistic understandings through teaching me a printmaking technique. Under his apprenticeship I was trained in the technique of pulling prints using the Intaglio method, which inevitable enabled me to have a complete understanding of the topic in discussion for this dissertation. I found in Mr Borg a true teacher who is ready to offer his kindness and honesty whenever needed. I am also grateful to Mr Joe Micallef, Headmaster of the Government School of Art, who kindly granted me access to the school's large collection of Intaglio plates through which I found my most important methodology.

The journey for this dissertation began with enrolling in The Artistic Printmaking course under the teaching of Lino Borg and held in the same classroom as Mangion's old Etching Class. I would like to thank the support of those fellow students who

provided a healthy and happy environment whilst sharing their ideas and encouraging me when cleaning and printing the many plates from the School's collection. I particularly thank Mr Alfred Caruana Ruggier who frequently visited the classroom and enthusiastically provided interesting discussions on the many re-strikes that hung to dry after each session. I am also appreciative of Mrs. Maritz Cassar who granted me access to the Cavarra/Wirth private collection.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the kindness of Mrs. Adrienne Cassar, Carmelo Mangion's daughter, who was so willing to offer her help for my research. She not only provided me with an understanding of who her father was but also allowed me to study a large portion of his painted and printed oeuvre; an essentiality when studying any artist. The humility and honesty with which many describe Carmelo Mangion are undoubtedly present in his daughter.

I would like to thank Professor Mario Buhagiar for his genuine encouragements in my education and Dr. Giuseppe Schembri Bonaci for his stimulating ideas. I am also grateful to the rest of the academic staff of the History of Art Department namely; Professor Keith Sciberras, Rev. Gino Gauci, Professor Conrad Thake and Charlene Vella who have individually contributed to setting the foundations of my Art Historical education.

I am forever grateful to my family; my mother, my father, my sister, for their constant support and tolerance, and my grandfather Professor Jo Tonna for his presence as an academic figure in my life and his constant contributions to my personal library. I thank Luca for his kind assistance whenever asked for and my friends who motivated me with honest opinions.

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INTRODUCTION

Etching in essence is a printmaking technique which allows for bitten lines to quietly transform when put through the alchemic metamorphosis of acid. This technique possesses a unique quality of character that can be spontaneous as well as subtle and highlights one of the greatest conflicts in Art; that between line versus colour. The etching medium fundamentally provides an intensity of line that whispers colour, yet the only pigment in use is monochromatic ink. Great masters such as Rembrandt, Goya and Zorn have individually testified to this and produced some of the most powerful works of Art using the etching medium.

Malta's affinity with Printmaking can be traced back as early as the Order of Saint John. However, it was not until the 19th century that Malta saw a significant contribution to its printing oeuvre, with the setting of a Lithography Press by Pietro Paolo Caruana upon his return to Malta from Rome in 1837. Lithography is a form of planography printing which essentially relies on the antipathy of grease and water.

The practice and teaching of the Intaglio method of Etching, although not completely obscure, was largely overlooked for a most part of the island's history. Etching principally forms part of the Intaglio family of printmaking, along with Engraving and Drypoint, where an image is incised into a metal plate. The metal plate is then inked and a print is pulled by means of a roller press.

Throughout the 19th century, Malta experienced a significant cultural awakening that was propelled by an influx of the Italianate influence which instilled a national pride and love for the Arts within the Maltese people. This broke the isolation imposed by the British colonial government that had ruled Malta since 1814. Furthermore, the concept of *Italianita'* was instilled within the locals which argued that the Maltese people were of Italian descent. This concept saw the arousal of the *Language Question* when the British Government set out to substitute Italian with English as the language of instruction and administration. However with the granting of a self but restricted government in 1921, Malta was able to make its own decisions on matters such as education. Nevertheless the British continued to forcefully drive a

wedge between the island's pro-Italian past and as a consequence the Maltese language was promoted. The Language Question further contributed to the Italian-British struggle, tragic yet beautiful it waged on until the Second World War and continued to sustain the rising awareness of Maltese culture and identity within the local mentality. In 1926, the long felt need for the establishment of an official local Art school was met by the setting up of the Government School of Art.

Articulating such a context is essential in order to understand the atmosphere that surrounded the setting up of the Malta Government School of Art in 1926 and the initial years under the Caruana-Dingli brothers; Edward pro-British and Robert tending towards a more pro-Italian affinity. The school opened with classes in Drawing, Modelling, Painting, Ceramics and History of Art and where held in the evenings; in order to attract as much a young attendance as possible to come and cultivate a knowledge in Art.

A few years later, in 1932, the Government School of Art acquired a Roller Press thanks to the kind donation of a certain Mrs. Chamier. This opened the way to a new endeavour within the school's curriculum, enriched with the opening of an Etching Class. A call for prospective students was immediately sent out that year however it would take till October 1936 for the class to be officially opened to the public under the direction of Carmelo Mangion; recently appointed master in charge.

Carmelo Mangion (1905-1977) was a pioneer of Modern Art in Malta, both for his artistic endeavours but also for his great gift as a teacher. Mangion's artistic sensibilities were moulded by studies in Rome, Paris and New York, which enriched him with a conscious awareness of the international artistic scene of the century. He dialogued with some of the major artists of the modern era such as Cezanne and Rouault and also challenged many different idioms such as Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism and Fauvism. His all-encompassing mind along with his admirable humility hence also allowed him to become one of Malta's greatest teachers of the 20th century.

His contributions as an Etcher are arguably some of the greatest that contribute to Malta's heritage. His etchings reveal the same consistency in dialoguing and challenging many idioms and themes whilst also providing Malta with innovative approaches through the Modern tongue with which the rest of the world was

speaking in. However Mangion also made copies after the great masters as an exercise to understand the etching medium. He likewise instilled this approach within his students of the Etching Class where copies after great masters such as Rembrandt and Zorn are abundant. Mangion not only instilled in his students a respect and urge to learn from the great masters, but once the etching medium was understood he encouraged personal interpretation and character in his student's prints. Moreover, his firm instruction in understanding the past was beautifully coupled with a boldness for experimentation; a pioneering asset for Malta in the early 20th century.

Articulating the context within which the Government School of Art was set up and functioned together with understanding the personality of Carmelo Mangion who dominated Etching Class, are essential in order to understand the works that were produced. Furthermore it also proved necessary to discuss the technique of Etching to permit a further appreciation of this milieu. A description of the process and its various stages are thus discussed at some length. The technique of Etching is commonly combined with Drypoint and Aquatint which are also elaborated in some detail. References to Mangion's class as well as examples of his etchings are provided to understand the discussion within the context of this dissertation.

However, upon the discovery of the School of Art's large and substantial collection of Intaglio plates belonging to the Etching class, it also proved essential that theory was to be combined with practice. As the School of Art's collection consisted of the original copper plates with no accompanying prints to be found, it was vital to enforce theory with practical, hands-on work on the plates themselves. In order to fully appreciate and understand the etchings that were produced in Mangion's class, it was important to have a print of these etchings at hand, properly reproduced to be studied. Thus under the instructions and supervisions of my tutor Mr Lino Borg, the plates were extensively cleaned and a Re-strike was pulled using the old roller press which had been used by Mangion and his students themselves to pull their own prints. These Re-strikes were then compiled into a Catalogue to be discussed and analysed on artistic grounds. This Catalogue is attached as an appendix to accompany and illustrate the text. A series of Case Studies are also provided to further compliment the artistic validity of the Etching class as part of the Maltese Heritage.

CHAPTER 1

The setting up of the Malta Government School of Art and its Etching Class.

1.1. A Socio-Political Context

Throughout the course of the 19th century Malta experienced an awakening in national and cultural awareness propelled by the influx of an Italianate influence that broke the isolation by the British Colonial strategy.¹ The influence of this influx was particularly felt during the close of the nineteenth century when a flow of Italian intellectuals amongst them; politicians, writers, musicians and of course artists, found refuge in Malta from the *Risorgimento*; the Italian civil war which reached its climax in the unification of Italy in 1870. The Italianate presence instilled a national pride, a love for literature and Art stirring a strong urge for a new local culture and identity. Political thought and groups were also beginning to be formed² along with many cultural associations as the Italian culture became more pronounced.

In 1880 the attempt by the British to implement the Julyan and Keenan Royal report (1878); which recommended the substitution of Italian with English as the language of instruction and administration³, formed great political unrest. At the time, Maltese was still considered the language of the illiterate, and the Italophils propagated the concept of the island's *Italianita*' which argued that the Maltese people were of Italian descent. As a consequence the Maltese organised themselves into political parties and a long and harsh battle ensued between the Italophils and the Anglophils known as the Language Question. The political unrest culminated in the *Sette Gunio* of 1919 was met by the British trying to ease the tension in 1921 by granting the island a restricted local self-government which was entrusted with the administration of the island's strictly internal affairs.⁴

¹ Lino Borg, 'Twentieth Century Religious Paintings and Sculptures in Malta, A Critical and Historical Analysis', M.A. Theology and Human Studies, 2005, 73-74.

² As can be seen with the Reformists and Anti-Reformists parties.

³ J.J. Camilleri, *The Keenan Report: A Definition*, Hypen.1 (1978)4 Autumn, 1.

⁴ Borg (2005), 74.

This cultural awareness instilled throughout the 19th century continued to gain momentum gradually spilling into the first half of the twentieth century. This new awareness materialised in the establishment of the Malta Art Amateur Association in 1908 whose agenda was to encourage the arts, offer teaching instructions for its members and organise exhibitions on a regular basis.⁵ More importantly, this momentum culminated in the establishment of an official Government School of Art. However, if we were to take Sir Isaac Newton's definition of momentum as principally being the product of a certain mass and its velocity, the setting up a national School of Art would indeed be a solid mass to be reckoned with in the artistic domain. Yet it would also depend on its velocity; on how soon and forceful this establishment would be set up and running, to ensure a steady momentum of art, culture and identity.

The need for the establishment of such a school can be clearly seen in an article entitled *L'Arte in Malta*, dating 29th of February 1912. The Fine Arts in Malta are here described as '*well cultivated ... and if a proper school were to be set up, many will make a name for themselves and do an honour to the island.*'⁶

This British-Italian tension accompanied by a flourishing Maltese identity thus provided the context within which the Malta Government School of Art was set up. The 164 years of British rule and the political tension that ensued were of seminal importance, both directly and indirectly, in provoking the Maltese citizens to realize their own identity and ultimately seek independence.⁷

1.2. The setting up of the Government School of Art.

The idea of setting up a School of Art with which to satisfy this newly felt need was the brain child of Francesco Ferris, the Minister for Public Instruction at the time. However the dream was only realised by his successor Enrico Dandria.⁸ In July 1925, Dandria launched a competitive examination for the post of drawing and

⁵ Ibid., 79.

⁶ CF Anon, *L'Arte in Malta*, in *Malta* (29th February, 1912) 2-3.

⁷ Christian Attard, 'An Italian Artistic Presence in 19th and 20th Century Malta, 1850-1960', *M.A. HIST. OF ART*, 1999, 1.

⁸ Prior to this, Malta had only seen the teaching of Art being passed on by private tuition through artists like Giuseppe Cali and Lazzaro Pisano.

modelling teachers for the newly planned school, published in the *Government Gazette*.⁹ The heavy dependence on Italian culture can be seen in the fact that of the three examiners appointed to judge the candidates, two of which were Italian. In June 1926, the School finally opened its doors at 106 Casa Tessi, Old Bakery Street Valletta. Robert Caruana-Dingli as Teacher of Drawing, Secondo Chiardola as Teacher of Ceramics, Vincenzo Bonello as Lecturer of History of Art and general Art knowledge and Antonio Micallef as Teacher of Modelling. It was only three years later that the new minister for Public Instruction in the new compact Government, appointed Edward Caruana-Dingli as Visiting Supervisor and Teacher of Painting.

The fact that Malta's first School of Art offered classes in Ceramics along with the traditional Drawing class, possess an interesting note. Although the fine art and crafts were taught under the same roof by the same institution, they were treated as separate entities altogether.¹⁰ This is something that the Bauhaus, which was the first school of design in Germany, set to do at the same period.¹¹

With a small yet formidable staff artistic education was being offered to Maltese and foreigners over twelve years of age. The courses were free and held in the evenings in order to allow anyone interested in the arts to participate.¹² This decision was an important and tactical one as it reached out to the younger generations and gave them the opportunity to cultivate the arts as a career. It was only up to twenty-six years of age that students were given scholarships to further their studies abroad. Thus it was with national pride and this newly instilled love for the Arts that Malta targeted its young minds to contribute to its artistic heritage.

The Caruana-Dingli brothers along with the teaching staff instilled a passion for the arts. The students followed strict academic programmes which gave them an excellent grounding in Painting, Drawing and History of Art, but experimentation and personal interpretations were forbidden. Following the tradition of foreign academies, the school acquired a number of plaster casts of original Classical,

⁹ 'It is hereby notified that a competitive examination among Maltese artist for the post of Teacher of Drawing in the School of Art will be held on the 14th September 1925'; Government Gazette 1925.

¹⁰ Borg (2005), 83-86.

¹¹ It must be stressed that contrary to the belief that Malta stood physically and metaphorically on its own in the middle of the Mediterranean, it was indeed very conscious of the world around it, contributing and forming part of the whole European artistic sphere of the twentieth century.

¹² Ibid.

Renaissance and Neo-Classical sculptures¹³, which provided as models for the students in drawing, painting and sculpture. Nonetheless, drawing from life did not form part of the curriculum. At the end of each scholastic year, annual competitions were held and prizes were given to the best achievers. Furthermore, scholarships of three to four years provided a strong motivating force amongst students and gave the most promising of students in painting and sculpture the opportunity to further their studies abroad. Annual exhibitions were moreover organised and gave students the opportunity to exhibit side by side their tutors. Hence the artistic scene on the island was being shaped by a strong educational system.

1.3. The setting of the Etching Class

Etching, or rather Printmaking, in its broadest significance, is of no discovery of the modern world.¹⁴ Metal workers have flourished amongst almost every cultured people of antiquity and the engraved line is one of the simplest and most universal modes of ornamentation in their craft. Printmaking workshops had existed for many years on the island, generally to engrave maps and book illustrations,¹⁵ thus Malta's artistic heritage does see the presence of a few artists producing works of decent quality prior to the opening of the school of art, however a lot of which were in fact produced in academies outside of Malta. The art of Printmaking, of taking impressions on paper via a press, was never formally taught in an official academy on the island. This technique required bravura in design but also a knowledge of manufacturing the printing surface; metal.

On a spring day in 1932, a British couple by the name of Mr and Mrs Chamier, presented the School with a fine Printing Press '*with the object of starting a class of etching*'.¹⁶ This press was shipped to Malta from Florence, Italy [**Appendix 1**] and needed five strong men to hoist it up from the yard of the school and set up on the first floor, where the etching class was to be located. It took two days for the press to

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Arthur M. Hind, *A History of Engraving and Etching, From the 15th Century to the year 1914*, Dover Publications, Inc, New York, 1963.

¹⁵ Dennis Vella, *Carmenu Mangion, The rediscovery of his Engravings and Prints*, Catalogue of Exhibition, 1996.

¹⁶ Minutes for the Class of Etching in the School of Art, 14th May 1935, Government School of Art Archives.

be put in working order with the provision of a plank of wood to use as a platform for the press in order for its weight to be distributed evenly on the vaulted roof underneath. Within a couple of days the Press was in working condition, ready to begin printing. Special etching materials were ordered from London and everything was set for an etching class.¹⁷

A notice calling for prospective students was quickly issued in the Government Gazette that year of 1932. However according to notes by the date of 14th April, 1935; there was no adequate response to this call from the public and the class was not consequently formed. Another attempt was made to start this class during the year 1935 under the direction of Mr. Mangion; *'a competent teacher of the craft and who gratuitously volunteered to impart instruction to students attending other classes for a few months as an experiment'* [Appendix 2]. Mangion was employed for one year on probation with effect of 1st May 1935 where he imparted instruction to students following other classes as an experiment.¹⁸ Mangion's post was temporary and provisional as it would take a few more months for a decent number of students to solidly make up the etching class. However, there was a positive response to the experiment and the etchings exhibited at the School's Annual Exhibition was applauded and even received with admiration by Mrs. Chamier, the donor of the printing press and herself an artist.¹⁹ Another applicant by the name of Anthony Caruana²⁰ had also attempted to fill the post as Master of Etching but his application of May 1935 was declined by Edward Caruana-Dingli for the position had already been filled by Mangion.

The Etching class was officially opened to the public in October 1935 with Carmenu Mangion entrusted as its teacher. The attendance of pupils now proved to be satisfactory with fellow artist-painters also joining the class to learn the technique. During the first scholastic year Mr Mangion's lessons were for 3 hours per day but

¹⁷ It is important to distinguish between the Engraving Course which consisted mainly of working with gold and jewellery and that of Etching which would consist of producing artistic impressions on metal through an alchemical process.

¹⁸ Minutes for the Class of Etching in the School of Art, 14th May 1935, Government School of Art Archives.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Anthony Caruana was in fact one of the School's first scholarship holders. In a competition dating to 1927 for a scholarship in Painting, Caruana had placed first and Carmelo Mangion second. It is also interesting to note that Caruana must have probably achieved his education and training in the Etching medium whilst on scholarship in Rome.

reduced to 2 hours the following year.²¹ Students received the necessary drawing skills by Robert Caruana-Dingli; in charge of the Drawing class, whilst Mangion introduced and trained them in the craft and art of etching which was new to the island. Hence students were provided with an all rounded education by some of the best artists of the time, handling different subjects at once and allowing for a mature approach on multiple techniques.

In the early 1950s the future of the etching class was being questioned, however in a letter dated 28th June 1955 signed by Fortuna Mizzi, the Education Minister of the time, evidence can be found of the fact that Mangion was reappointed as Etching Master.²² In 1965 Mangion was officially asked to retire from his teaching post at the Malta Government School of Art, but he requested several times to be granted an extension. Thus the class lasted until 1971 when he was asked, together with Vincent Apap, to retire by the then Minister of Education, Ms Agatha Barbara.²³

Within Mangion's Etching class student artists were given the opportunity to express themselves through different idioms. Through Mangion's ability and enthusiasm, hundreds of copper and zinc plates were etched and given life at the etching class of the Malta Government School of Art as can still be testified by the grand collection of plates in the school's records.

²¹ Vincent Apap, letter dated 22nd May 1950, Government School of Art Archives.

²² Joseph Paul Cassar, *Carmelo Mangion His Life and Works 1905-1997*, Midsea Books, 2007, 28.

²³ Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

The Novelties of Carmelo Mangion (1905-1977)

The Artist – The Etcher – The Teacher of Etching at the Malta Government School of Art.

Carmelo Mangion (1905-1977) was a pioneer of Maltese Art of the twentieth century. His work was very much against the grain of his time, breaking with tradition and the academic stylisation of his contemporaries, their religious themes and portraits.²⁴

2.1. Mangion the Artist, his background and influences.

Mangion's artistic background is a vast and vibrant one. As a young boy his initial artistic training was under Giuseppe Duca who instilled the importance of copying the work of the great masters²⁵; a value Mangion would eventually pass on to his own students as a teacher. Later, Mangion was taken under the tuition of Edward Caruana-Dingli receiving five solid years of instruction in the technique of painting. He studied under his private tuition until he was around sixteen years old²⁶ when Caruana Dingli departed for Britain. This would have a major impact on his career; however what particularly struck Mangion was the realisation that he too wished to travel abroad like his master who was constantly travelling. Nevertheless with a burning desire to achieve more, Mangion proceeded to Rome in 1926.

At the British Academy of Art in Rome, directed at the time by the Maltese sculptor Antonio Sciortino (1879-1947), Mangion was mentored for two years under Aricione and Alberto Carosi (1891-1967), both belonging to the Realist school and whose works can also be found at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Valletta.

²⁴ Raphael Vella, *Cross Currents; Critical Essays on Art and Culture in Malta*, edited by John Baldacchino and Katya Borg, Allied, Valletta 2008, 30.

²⁵ Cassar (2007), 12.

²⁶ Personal Communication between Salvinu Mangion and Lavinia Muscat, 26th February 1998; 'Carmenu Mangion, A Pioneer of Modern Art in Malta', B.A.(Hons) History of Art, 1999.

However by 1927, Mangion was back in Malta to sit for the competitive examination for a scholarship for painting at the Malta Government School of Arts. He placed second in this examination after a certain Anthony Caruana. Results were close between the two however it is interesting to note that the school had reduced Mangion's final result due to the fact that he had studied abroad the previous year [Appendix 3]. Nonetheless observing his marks on the individual exercises, Mangion was the top scorer in *Drawing in Light and Shade*, a skill that he will soon master as an Etcher. By 1928 Mangion was ready to move on, this time to further his studies in Paris.

*Travelling from Italy to Paris caused a little revolution inside me. There I was open to new ideas; the pace of life was faster, there was much more going on than I had experienced in Malta. At first I was at a loss but then as I settled, I started to sieve what I was experiencing and moved forward.*²⁷

His time in Paris spanned over one year but left a lifelong impact on the artist. He was greatly impressed and swayed by the rich cultural climate and sophisticated lifestyle Paris offered. He studied at the *Academie de Grande Choumiere* under Rene Prinnet (1861-1946). It was at this point that Mangion became aware of the different schools in the international art circles of the *Ecole de Paris* that had seen some of the great names of the twentieth century contribute to.²⁸ He returned to Malta around June 1929.

Six months later Mangion corresponded with two of his brothers; John and Joseph, who had emigrated to the United States of America and invited him to visit them. Finding it hard to get a teaching job in Malta and driven by a ravenous urge to further continue learning, he proceeded to New York in search work and to further his education. In New York, he studied at the Grand Central School of Art mastering the technique of Etching. This would later prove to be very beneficial for his teaching career in Malta as well as his whole artistic oeuvre.²⁹ Under the tutorship of Dean Cornwell and Ezra Winter, Mangion was given the opportunity to develop his own individualised style rather than follow their masters and imitate them; another value he would instil within his future students. This experience inevitably injected a

²⁷ Cassar (2007), 16; PC between Mangion and author, 1990.

²⁸ Dennis Vella, *Carmenu Mangion Engravings and Prints*, National Museum of Fine Arts Malta, 1997, 6.

²⁹ Cassar (2007), 17.

powerful and crucial baggage into the history of modern Maltese printmaking. However his contribution and dedication was not expressed through exhibiting his works but through his teaching methods.³⁰

2.2. Mangion the Etcher

Carmelo Mangion's own contribution to the printing genre reveals his mastery of the media in searching for countless new avenues of expression and investigation.³¹ Mangion was not particularly interested in printing whole editions. His works are in fact unnumbered and undated. Furthermore once he achieved the desired effect he never touched the plate again yet he often returned to several favourite subjects. Upon tackling a work, Mangion always drew either from life or the great masters then treated his subjects further in his studio establishing the bases to his compositions. However, he also frequently worked from memory furthermore revealing the artist's creativity and vitality.

He was also an artist who frequently reworked his etchings which are full of corrections usually carried out in pencil or sometimes crayon directly onto the print. He constantly sought ways of improving his compositions, accenting various areas to apply more tonal contrasts through in his signature free yet sure manner [**Plate 2.1 and 2.2**]. Drypoint was also occasionally applied to strengthen the etched lines; a procedure that was done by all etchers. Two of Mangion's etchings that are both entitled *Back door to Addolorata Cemetery* [**Figure 2.1**]; reveal this procedure taking place. The second etching contains the ghost-like figure of a woman clearly carried out in drypoint over the preciously bitten plate. His prints, although contrasting with the vibrant colours of his paintings, all possess vibrancy through the use of contrasting tonal values.

Further analysing his oeuvre, it can also be observed that Mangion frequently drew borders over his subjects, directly onto the copper plate. A signed etching in particular additionally reveals that he sometimes also worked a frame within a frame as seen in [**Plate 2.3**]. Although an unusual work as no other composite prints have

³⁰ Cassar (2007), 25.

³¹ Ibid., 43.

been found, it strengthens Mangion's sense of experimentation. The work could be curiously compared to a work by Felix Buhot titled *Westminster Bridge*, 1884 [Plate 2.4]. Furthermore, he printed in large amounts on any available paper, sometimes handmade, sometimes watermarked. Upon analysing his works this caused a difficulty as it was initially thought that aquatint was being used to cause in order to achieve a darker tint. Further analysing using magnified lenses revealed that the paper itself was of a different texture [Plate 2.5]. Mangion treated paper for etching in the same way he did for oil, pastel, pencil etc. His main concern was in translating his overflowing thoughts onto a decent surface. This essentially exposes an artist who never stopped experimenting.

Just as the Swedish master Anders Zorn often took inspiration from his paintings for his etchings, the same can be observed with Mangion. An oil on canvas of a *Portrait of a Lady*, dated to the early 1930s, is also found as an etching [Figure 2.2]. According to Mangion's wife Josephine, the etching was produced in New York, however the identity of the sitter remains unknown.³² Both the etching and the painting display a woman dressed in a fur coat gazing elegantly as she slightly tilts her head. Their poses are remarkably similar. His lines in the etching effortlessly



Figure 2.1: Left; *Back Door to Addolorata Cemetery*, first state. Right; Second state with the inclusion of the ghostly figure added using the drypoint technique.

³² Ibid., 81.

convey the tactile quality of the fur coat. In an unbroken line he sensitively hints at a necklace around the woman's elegant neck which contrasts with the dark and heavy lines that surround her. Mangion was clearly primarily concerned with her face and gaze, merely hinting at her attire and coat. The same attention is observed in the painting. The print however reveals that the artist was not fully satisfied with his result and pencils in where he intended to rework.

Mangion was above all things consistent in his work. Therefore his etchings also articulate similar themes of his paintings. Such can be seen with the power station at Marsa and its Industrialising element. As previously stated he was fascinated by their structure, thus both in painting and etching Mangion is primarily concerned with giving these chimneys particular importance and meaning [Plate 2.6 and 2.7], almost as if symbolic of the fact that there was no time to look back but instead become consciously aware of progress and change of the present. Other similar elements can be traced throughout his works including electricity wires and cars as seen in [Plate 2.8]. His famous chimneys of the Marsa Power Station are repetitive throughout his entire artistic oeuvre. In etching it was not a question of colour or no colour for Mangion as a true master of etching would know that colour can be just as easily conjured. He was thus more interested in the expressing the idiom of the industrialisation.



Figure 2.2: Left; *Portrait of a Lady*, oil on canvas, 20x60cm
Right; *Portrait of a Lady*, etching, 19x12.1cm

Another common theme in both Mangion's paintings and etchings is that of the Gothic Cathedral. He seems to have been fascinated by the gothic idiom as early as his New York days as can be seen several etchings depicting the cathedrals he had seen there. In Malta he repetitively depicted the Methodist neo-gothic Cathedral in Floriana [Plate 2.9]. He seems to have been fascinated by the towering nature of such cathedrals, exploring their architectural elements and the interaction of light and shade and also their interiors. However he was also highly attracted to the spiritual nature of this gothic idiom, as can be best described in the etching *The Cathedral* [Plate 2.10]. In this etching Mangion depicts a stained glass window within a Gothic church interior. A dark vertical takes the viewer on a mysterious and spiritual journey as it rises to the top and then falls back down. An immensely powerful work, one of Mangion's most spiritual.

Hence his strongest innovation lies in the way he synthesised different idioms throughout his entire oeuvre. He was an artist very aware of his times, perhaps more internationally than locally, and dialogued this awareness through his Art. His etchings see the combination of a 'Rembrandtian' idiom along with other masters, the Gothic idiom, the Architectural and Industrial idiom as well as that of the natural Landscape. His Art was fundamentally concerned with a new mode of how he depicted the world view.

Mangion essentially brought to Malta a spirit that was crucial to the birth of the modern art movement, even if he did not participate in the island's Modern Art Group. Immediately upon his return to Malta in 1933, his New York Etchings were displayed as part of the Malta Art Amateur Association Exhibition at the Grand Gallery Studio in Valletta.

2.3. Influences in Mangion's Etching

It is essential to study Mangion's etchings within a wider European and international context in order not to remain isolated and abstracted from the evolution of world art. The American Impressionist artist and printmaker James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) was the most consistent influence on Mangion's early etchings, especially thematically. Whistler's printing oeuvre ranges from 19th century the French genre,

to the industrial tones of London, to the appealing Lagoons in Venice, treating them with distinctive lines capturing the hazy atmosphere of the watersides.³³ This misty aura vivaciously captured Mangion's eye and it quickly began to feature prominently throughout his works. Moreover, just as Whistler emphasised a Realism that was not received with much grace during the Victorian era, it can be said that a similar impact was made in Malta with Mangion's rejection of the picturesque. He appealed in favour of being truer to what he saw around him; cars, power station chimneys, electricity poles and barges loading cargo. This must have certainly been unexpected for Malta; a world still dominated by 'post-card pictures' of the Grand Harbour and infinite religious devotions to patron saints.

Four years in New York allowed Mangion to fully grasp the modern world where America was becoming the leading economic power, flourishing an innovative and prosperous expansion in all cultural and economic aspects. It was inevitable that Mangion, within this progress, began to print the American landscape at the onset of its domestication with interpretations of skyscrapers, the Brooklyn Bridge with its colossal structure and Gothic cathedrals. Most of the human presence in his New York etchings is not visible but man's activity is felt through metal bridges and horse's ploughs.³⁴ He loved to exploit the linear character of etching in order to animate a towering urban structure.

At times he also turned to the great masters for inspiration, producing copies after Rembrandt amongst others. The idea behind these copies was to solidly grasp the technique of etching in studying the way Rembrandt applied his lines and the way acid would later bite them. The **[Figure 2.3]** reveals an unsigned copy after *Man with a Bald Head* by Rembrandt. The copy exposes that Mangion has understood Rembrandt's great gift of preserving a sense of spontaneity while meticulously attending to close detail. However Rembrandt also possess another character in his etchings, the one where he obtains everything with the greatest economy and this is perhaps what Mangion was predominantly after. Although detail is always studied, Mangion's oeuvre is overly dominated by his spontaneous lines capturing atmosphere and aura, as can be seen in so many of his landscapes and industrial scenes. Like Rembrandt, he also often chose to work small scale. Mangion's *Early*

³³ Vella (1997), 7.

³⁴ Cassar (2007), 46.

Morning is a perfect example of this; however it is essentially the pictorial means and not the scale that evokes a sense of intimacy and encouraging imagination. The print represents three trees and is rather mysterious. However, this is brought about by the fact that it is not printed as it should be and is blurred [Plate 2.11]. Yet, although difficult to decipher composition, the mysterious aura and pensive atmosphere allow for a highly personal interaction with the work. Thus through his etchings Mangion was not solely looking to describe a story. The treatment of his subjects was not merely descriptive, but powerful enough to communicate a visual language.

Perhaps another connection can also be drawn with the Spanish master Francisco Goya (1746-1828). Being one of the greatest Spanish etchers in history, Goya too developed a most striking independence of style and with it attaining to a more typical expression of the sentiment of his country.³⁵ Whereas Mangion did not become as dark and malicious as Goya, he did occasionally attempt to express the feeling of his country; a feeling not embodied by the Inquisition but by a colonial Industrial revolution.³⁶ Moreover, Goya and Mangion were equally isolated within



Figure 2.3: Left; original etching after Rembrandt.
Right; Copy in brown ink after Mangion.

³⁵ Hind (1923), 252.

³⁶ The industrial development in Malta was the content of the Balogh Seers Report which was inspired by the patterns adopted in Northern Ireland to attract investment and establish industries.

their countries as both Spain and Malta had no previous tradition of Etching worthy of mention. Thus there is a possible kinship between these two artists, not in terms of technique, but in terms of aura that embodied their works.

Another innovation by Mangion consisted of treating the idea of Modernity as subject matter, thus linking Modernism in Malta with the idea of progress. He sought to expose the Industrial world that Malta was undergoing, perhaps finding beauty in it instead of shying away from it. Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) found his subjects from the world around him and used them to express grand emotions. Just as Turner's *Rain, Steam and Speed: The Great Western Railway* of 1844 evoked the Industrial revolution. Mangion's representation of the twin chimneys of the Power Station at Marsa, also reveals the same concerns.³⁷ Mangion frequently observed the Power Station from various vantage points and its massive structure clearly left an impact on him.³⁸ Their monumental vertical structure leaves an imposing record of early Industrialisation in Malta in the harbour area.³⁹ Clouds are treated with a circular movement leaving the black smoke to rise freely and boldly contrast the atmospheric sky. This unorthodox technique allowed Mangion to achieve highly expressive effects. Also like Turner, he was a great arouser of mood. His *Rain on Valletta* sets the viewer in a stormy wet day in Valletta, people hurrying under umbrellas over the wet ground.

2.4. Mangion the Teacher of Etching at the Malta Government School of Art

Mangion's teaching career in Malta was a revolutionary and prolific one, his most successful being Master of the Etching Class at the Malta Government School of Art in Valletta as of 1st October of 1936. The school had recently acquired and installed a Florentine Printing Press thanks to the donation of an English couple and were accordingly ready to establish this new class on solid grounds. It is important to state

³⁷ Malta's electricity supply was changed to the three phase system in March of 1959, necessitated by the commissioning of the new power station at Marsa.

³⁸ Mangion and his wife used to frequently meet each other at the *Fosos* of Floriana where Mangion used to have a clear view of the power station in Marsa over the harbour; PC with Adrienne Cassar (Mangion's daughter) November 2013.

³⁹ Cassar (2007), 58.

that this was the first and only class of its kind in Malta, a class that would quickly gain a good attendance among students and fellow artists.

Mangion was fundamentally at the heart of the Etching class; he being the one who got it running, who nurtured it and who's presence gave it life. His impact on his students was strong yet stimulating. All of his students came from Robert Caruana-Dingli's (1883-1940) class, where they would have previously spent at least year specialising in drawing.⁴⁰ Etching as a medium has a technique of its own that the etcher should master, however it is the knowledge of good drawing skills that is the basis for any visual art.⁴¹ It was necessary for students to possess this background in draughtsmanship as working with soft paper and hard copper are essentially two very different tasks. Once students entered the Etching class Mangion immediately instilled and emphasised a respect of the great masters, often using books with reproductions for his students to copy from. In truth as a whole educational body, the Government School of Art strongly believed in studying the great masters, as it was, and still is today, a crucial exercise in order to acquire a deeper understanding of both aesthetics and technique. Copying also obliged the student to reflect on how the master went about producing work. Indeed many of the plates that are found at the School today reveal copies produced after masters amongst them Zorn, Whistler, Goya, Walcot, Rembrandt and others. In Mangion's words; '*What I learnt from my experience abroad was that it was best to measure one's capacities against the works of the great masters ...*'⁴²

Furthermore Mangion also understood the important discipline of drawing from life; hence many more copper plates reveal countless Still-Life's, some illustrating the same subject executed by different students and therefore observed from different angles. This exercise was also given to students as part of their annual examination where students had to work from observation and do interpret a Still Life. This gives particular insight on the way Mangion tested his students. He believed that studying the old master was essential to grasp technique however he never failed to conduct them through the basic rendering of three dimensional objects. Finally, he would also always encourage an independent expression and style.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 19.

⁴¹ PC with Lino Borg; supervisor to this dissertation.

⁴² PC between Mangion and author 1990; Cassar (2007), 33.

Mangion never failed to breathe the modern spirit into his classroom. Along with Carmelo Attard Cassar (1909-1988), a lecturer in History of Art, Mangion encouraged his students to read digests on the modern movement, always pushing the idea of the modern movement amongst the younger generations. His rich cultural background which he acquired through his travels and his knowledge of modern art history were useful assets which he shared with his students. Frank Portelli, fellow artist, ex-student and friend of Mangion, once remarked;

*He channelled me to study aquatint after William Walcott, while painting after reproductions from Frans Hals and Rembrandt. I remember Mangion telling me to emphasise colour and almost forget about drawing. His discussion used to be of great stimulus to me.*⁴³ [Plate 2.12]

Mangion liked to keep a small class, never exceeding ten in number. He would immediately test his students upon joining, showing reproductions of paintings and judging them by their comments, aesthetic taste, appreciative qualities and art historical knowledge.⁴⁴ He also believed in constructive criticism and involved the whole class when discussing each other's work.

*At times the Etching class was not a classroom, but it turned into some form of art society or club. Carmelo Mangion was one of us, always with that smile and cigarette hanging between his lips [Figure 2.4]. He purposely instigated us to ignite a discussion by teasing us in order to see us venture into a heated argument for a while.*⁴⁵

Moreover his relationship with Robert Caruana-Dingli was of particular interest. Robert was his colleague at the School of Art and also an etcher of serious quality. Mangion was frequently visited by him in his class, perhaps asking to prepare copper plates with wax so that he could work in his ideas. Frank Portelli would also testify to this saying that he himself occasionally prepared the waxing and fine needle so that Robert could execute the drawing.⁴⁶ An interesting landscape by Caruana-Dingli

⁴³ Joseph Paul Cassar, *Conversations with 12 Maltese Artists*, Publikazzjonijiet Indipendenza, 2007, 97.

⁴⁴ PC between Charles Cassar and Muscat Lavinia 29.12.1997; Carmelo Mangion, 'A pioneer of Modern art in Malta', B.A.(hons) History of Art, March 1999.

⁴⁵ PC between Frank Baldacchino and Joseph Paul Cassar; *Conversations with 12 Maltese Artists*, Publikazzjonijiet Indipendenza, 2007, 120.

⁴⁶ PC between Frank Portelli and Lavinia Muscat; Carmelo Mangion Winter 1998, 'A Pioneer of Modern Art in Malta', B.A.(Hons) History of Art, 1999.

dating to 1935 reveals the very same year that Mangion started the Etching Class at the School of Art; Robert Caruana-Dingli did produce some etchings [Plate 2.13]. It is not yet known whether it was Mangion himself to introduce Robert to Etching; however one is tempted to conclude that Mangion inspired and taught him the technique.

Whilst the two exerted some influence on the other they were essentially very different. Robert's approach was purely that of a draughtsman and illustrator, relying on precision and detail. Mangion on the other hand was far less systematic; he concentrated on the achievement of various subtle and atmospheric effects rather than detail.⁴⁷ The work of Caruana-Dingli's possessed a romantic aura, different from that of Mangion in both execution and spirit. Mangion was more concerned with expression of emotion through certain spontaneity; his lines are placed without hesitation, treating the copper plate like a sketch book. Perhaps only on one occasion did the two reveal some similarity as seen in *Country Path* attributed to Mangion and Dingli's *Mountainous Landscape*. The same systematic shading technique is pursued. Despite their differences, the two essentially shared a healthy relationship,

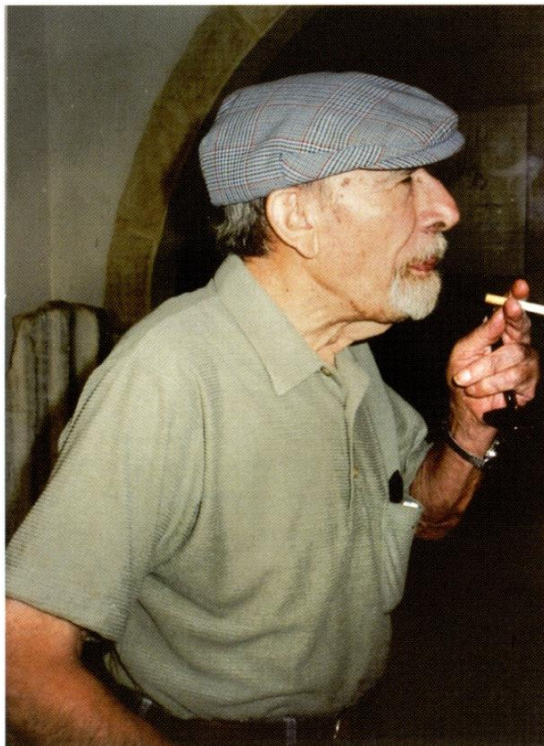


Figure 2.4: Carmelo Mangion traditionally with his cigarette in hand.

⁴⁷ Cassar, *Conversations with 12 Maltese Artists*, (2007), 19.

both admiring each other's professional achievements and frequently discussing technical ideas and assessed results together after the first proofs were taken.

As a dedicated and charismatic teacher, Mangion served as a catalyst to his students and influenced three generations of upcoming Maltese artists. There are many artists whom at one point or another studied under Mangion, expose his significance as an educator.⁴⁸ Painter Joseph Lawrence Mallia (b.1937) claims that Mangion discussed art during art lessons and regularly made references to articles in art magazines. He tells of the immense encouragement he received from Mangion and even dared to call him 'father'.⁴⁹ His students understood his dedication and sought his company in return and he was known to delve deep into their work, discuss for long intervals, sometimes even meeting fifteen minutes before class for a chat.⁵⁰ Furthermore he attracted students from other classes to interact and observe what was going on inside the Etching class.

Mangion's influence was in truth not so much concerned with working or following in his own style but more so by urging the development of a personal idiom. Yet his work still exerted profound influence onto his students. *The Cathedral* for example can be found repeated in etchings by Frank Portelli. Furthermore Joseph Paul Cassar in his publication *Carmelo Mangion, His Life and Works*, notes the similarities between an etching attributed to Mangion called *Rainy Day in Valletta* and an oil on canvas painting by Portelli; *Kingsway, Valletta during Wartime* dated to 1944 [Plate 2.14]. These similarities indeed strengthens the argument that Mangion exerted an influence onto his students, however we cannot be certain that *Rainy Day* is in fact by Mangion as it is unsigned and undated.

Frank Baldacchino, another former student of Mangion's, also tells of how his teacher frequently called him and his class mates *The Bottega Group*.⁵¹ He

⁴⁸ Some of which included Willie Apap (1938-1970), Anton Inglott (1915-1945), Emvin Cremona (1919-1987), Esprit Barthet (1919-1999), Alfred Chircop (b.1933), Marius Zerafa (b.1929), Charles Cassar (1944-2014), Joseph L. Mallia (b.1937), Frank Baldacchino (b.1924), Frank Portelli (1922-2004), Tony Demicoli (b.1946), Alfred Briffa (b.1953), Harry Alden (b. 1929) amongst others.

⁴⁹ PC between J. L. Mallia and Cassar; 'Pioneers of Modern Art in Malta', Volume 1, PH.D Dissertation 2002; 8th February 1997.

⁵⁰ PC with Adrienne Cassar; November 2013.

⁵¹ Baldacchino speaks of being one of the first to form part of the *Bottega* group that met at *Café Dimitri* in Valletta after attending the etching class of Mangion. The group included Gerry Caruana, Saviour Privitera, Joseph Muscat, Joe Gatt and Baldacchino. Baldacchino recounts the full story in the '*L-Orizzont*' of 25th August, 1st and 8th September 1993 in three sessions respectively; PC with Frank Baldacchino November 2013.

recognised the enthusiasm of his students and kept in touch with the group occasionally asking how their meetings were progressing.⁵² His ability to reach out to his students was such they also felt at ease to ask questions and develop an inquisitive mind.⁵³ He believed strongly in the power of discussion rather than instruction through rules. It is in this aspect that Mangion's revolution becomes clear; embedded in the way he believed that teaching was a discipline that had to be sustained by other disciplines in order to truly flourish. As a result to this nourishment, the young minds that surrounded Mangion's personality were slowly being infiltrated with modern tendencies, eventually leading to the formation of the Modern Art Circle in 1952.

*'It is important to live life for yourself and not for others'*⁵⁴, Mangion preached to his students. This is a further testament to his pioneering; in embedding his student's minds with a certain freedom and individuality. He instructed with constructive criticism and insisted on the importance of personal interpretation. Moreover he was against the focusing on too much detail, favouring attention on experimentation. However, former student Frank Baldacchino remarks that Mangion did in fact maintain strong discipline in his class room, believing in a balance between technique and individualisation. Likewise Baldacchino commented on how he used to try to escape the exercise of copying great masters and focus solely on experimentation. He speaks of sometimes disappearing to the classroom next door, where painting classes were held, in order to take some pigment and apply it to his plates, surprising Mangion with his results, his judgement however being generally one of approval. Baldacchino particularly loved to incorporate sepia into his etchings. He experimented in this medium and loved the medium. Moreover he also enjoyed experimenting with aquatint and colour to create more poetry into his subject matter.⁵⁵ Mangion always pushed to his students to discover their personal qualities. The year 1949 saw Baldacchino awarded 1st prize for composition when he competed with one his etchings.

Mangion was unaffected by what his contemporaries were doing or exhibiting, he developed his art in seclusion and only occasionally participated in collective

⁵² Joseph M. Borg Xuereb, *L-Orizzont*, Wednesday 1st September 1993, pg.6.

⁵³ Cassar, 25 – 27.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ PC with Frank Baldacchino, November 2013.

exhibitions after 1933. His career only saw the light of four personal shows, three of which took place in his mature years and were organised for him by others. He used to comment on how he didn't want to read local newspapers⁵⁶, not wanting to know what was going on around him. He therefore maintained a mysterious aura, remaining relatively unknown. He was highly aware of the lack of training in professional art criticism but nevertheless he chose to remain extremely conscious of the international artistic sphere. There is almost a Shakespearean tragedy to Mangion, in the way he was mindful of himself as strong artist but also heavily underestimated by the public. The critical eye of contemporary media and the art critics further strengthened this undiscovered aura that surrounded Mangion as well as his contemporary Josef Kalleya (1898-1999); both of whom have a strong spiritual connection and a strong modernist idiom and language.⁵⁷ It is in these two pioneers that Malta finds her fathers of Maltese Modern Art. Yet his modesty and humility also allowed him to be untainted by fame and focus solely on his work.

The high esteem of his students from his Etching class ensured Mangion's name not to go completely unknown, rather it is perhaps where his name is most powerful. There he did not produce prototypes of himself but allowed each and every mind to go its own way. Frank Portelli tells of how he remembered his master to be constantly sketching but never touching a student's work⁵⁸; never imposing his views. He encouraged his students to develop speed and to work with many inhibitions, insisting on keeping the work fresh and as spontaneous as possible.

In 1957 the School of Art introduced the Decorative Arts Class with Mangion appointed its teacher. The class was essentially '*an oasis of creativity*'⁵⁹ that encouraged students to experiment with different media. However according to a letter dated 15th November 1966, Vincent Apap, head of school of art at the time, writes to the Minister of Education informing him that Etching for beginners has been neglected [**Appendix 4**]. Alfred Briffa former student recalls that at this point Mangion used to occasionally produce his own etchings using the school's press in private.⁶⁰ By the beginning of the 1970s Mangion was asked to step down from his

⁵⁶ PC with Adrienne Cassar, November 2013.

⁵⁷ Giuseppe Schembri Bonaci, *Edging the Secular from the Religious*, Malta Today, November 2013.

⁵⁸ Cassar pg. 27.

⁵⁹ Joseph Lawrence Mallia to Joseph Paul Cassar in a letter dated 8th February 2007; *Carmelo Mangion, His Life and Works (1905-1997)*, Midsea Books, 2007.

⁶⁰ PC with Alfred Briffa, 20th April 2014

teaching post as his services were no longer needed for the scholastic year of 1971/72 [**Appendix 5**].

A man full of depth and mysteries, Carmelo Mangion was a pioneer of Maltese Modern Art and Teaching. He solely dominated the oeuvre of Maltese Etching, speaking with an innovative tongue that eventually led the local Art scene on new grounds whilst also nurturing some of Malta's finest etchers at the Malta Government School of Art. His humility kept him out of the public eye yet his consistency and innovation always drove him forward.

CHAPTER 3

The technique of Intaglio as part of Curriculum of the Malta Government School of Art

The introduction to the printing press in Malta is found to be intimately connected with the agreement of Jean Paul Lascaris de Castellar to the Order's Magistracy in June 1636 in order to print the 1631 revision of the Order's statutes.⁶¹ Yet it must be significantly stated that it was relief printing and not Intaglio that was being carried out during this period and later with Pietro Paolo Caruana importing the first Lithopress in the 19th century.⁶² Nevertheless Printmaking certainly had a lengthy history on the island well before the donation of a roller press to the Malta Government School of Art. However it was the School of Art's Etching class which provided for the first time a public course instructing all those interested in this technique of artistic printmaking.⁶³ With Carmelo Mangion fresh from his experience in New York and appointed Master of Etching at the school, he primarily instructed his students in this Intaglio technique of producing artistic prints.

3.1. The Technique of Intaglio Printing

The term Intaglio is derived from the Latin word *in-tagliare*, meaning to *cut in*. Hence it refers to a number of printmaking techniques in which the image is incised into a surface, so that the sunken areas hold ink which is then transferred by pressure to the paper. Normally the plates consist of copper or zinc. Intaglio covers a number of techniques, amongst them; Etching, Engraving, Drypoint, Aquatint and Mezzotint. With all Intaglio techniques the image is principally incised either directly as in copper engraving or drypoint, or through the use of acid as in etching. The different

⁶¹ William Zammit, *Printing in Malta 1642-1839*, Gutenberg Press, 2008, 4.

⁶² Albert Ganado, 'Pietro Paolo Caruana: The First Lithographs produced in Malta', in *Proceedings of History Week 1981*, edited by Mario Buhagiar, Veritas Press, Malta 1982, 49-60.

⁶³ When the School opened to the public in 1926, a course in Lino-printing was offered and although it fell under the School of Art's Curriculum, the lessons were carried out at the Grandmaster's Palace by means of the Government Printing Press.

techniques used to make these markings distinguish the various processes of intaglio printmaking.

Etching is essentially the most important Intaglio technique after Engraving. The process of etching was originally invented in order to decorate armour.⁶⁴ However it was only until the seventeenth century that the etched line was fully realised. The term is derived from the German word *atzen*, meaning to eat or corrode and refers to the process by which a design is eaten into a metal by acid for the purpose of printing from it.⁶⁵ The genius of etching allows the artist to command spontaneity of expression almost equal to that of drawing with the pen or pencil.

The technique Carmelo Mangion taught his students was that of Etching, and therefore Intaglio. When printing an Intaglio print certain preparations must be made to the plate in order for it to be printable. The plate's edges are firstly filed down at a 45-degree angle using files and *burnishers*. This is done so that the plate will not be sharp enough to cut through the paper upon printing. The artist could then proceed on carrying out his composition using one of the Intaglio techniques.

In the actual process of printing, the Intaglio plate is first warmed on a hot-plate, then printing ink is pushed inside the grooves by means of a dabber [Figure 3.1]. Oil can be sometimes added to the thick ink so as to make it flow and easier to work with. The plate must then be laboriously wiped of all ink using muslin or gauze, taking care as not to clean any ink out of the lines. This procedure is known as '*The Rag-Wipe*'. The printer must wipe in soft circular motion until the surface is



Figure 3.1: Dabbers used to push ink into the grooves of the incised plate.

⁶⁴ Antony Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking; An introduction to the history and techniques*, The British Museum Press, London, 2010, 58.

⁶⁵ Peter Coker, *Etching Techniques*, B.T. Batsford Limited London, 1976, 8.

sufficiently clean and ready for printing. The printer normally finished the wiping by a ‘*hand-wipe*’, which is done by the palm of the hand with whiting.⁶⁶ The printer may also opt to finish his inking process by what is called a ‘*Retroussage*’⁶⁷, which consists of transferring some ink from the group to the sides of the grooves with a soft rag; this in turn gives a softer impression. Naturally the more densely the plate is worked, the more complicated the inking. Furthermore the printer has also to find the right ink and wiping for each plate.

An Intaglio is printed by means of a *Roller Press* which traditionally consists of a sliding bed passing horizontally between two rollers as one turns the operating wheel. Such a press was available at the School of Art thanks to the donation of an English couple [Plate 3.1]. The inked plate is then placed upwards onto the bed of the press and a dampened paper positioned over it. Several resilient blankets further cover the plate and paper in order to even pressure. It is important that the paper is soaked in water a few hours before printing and kept sealed so that they become damp but not dry. As the bed passes between the rollers, the paper is forced into the inked grooves of the plate and an impression is taken. The sheet of paper is hung to dry and the plate is re-inked and wiped for the next impression. The great pressure that is exerted onto the plate produces what is known as the *plate-mark*. This is the line of indentation in the paper where it has been pressed around the edges of the plate.⁶⁸ The plate mark is therefore a characteristic of all Intaglio prints and can be seen in for example in *Brooklyn Bridge New York* [Figure 3.2] by Mangion. Furthermore the way the ink lies on the paper also distinguishes the Intaglio print



Figure 3.2: Carmelo Mangion (signed) *Brooklyn Bridge New York*, etching 14.4x20.3cm with detail of plate mark at the top-right edge.

⁶⁶ Talcum-powder can also be used instead.

⁶⁷ Coker (1976), 51.

⁶⁸ Griffiths (2010), 34.

from any other. In all other printing processes the ink lies flat, but with Intaglio it stands out of the paper as elevations and can be felt with the fingertip.

An important element in all printmaking techniques is the quality of paper used as it will radically affect the appearance of a print. Mangion's personal oeuvre reveals that he used to print on very ordinary paper, showing just the mesh marks and sometimes of better quality with a watermark present. It seems that the selection of a good quality paper was not of major importance for the artist as long as he had somewhere to transfer his thoughts. This also reveals that he was never interested in producing a numbered edition or of selling his prints.

3.2. The Technique of Etching

The metal plate used for etching is usually either copper or zinc, although other metals such as iron and brass have been used [**Plate 3.2**]. Copper, which was acquired from the dockyard in sheets of approximately 5mm in thickness, was provided to the students at the Malta Government School of Art. Zinc was also occasionally used as can be seen by a couple of plates in the School's collection.

For etching, the plate is first coated with a hard ground impervious to acid; composed of a mixture of wax, rosin and bitumen. The plate is warmed and the ground spread evenly over the surface using a dapper or roller. It is then smoked by a '*raper*' to a velvety black colour so that the scratched lines expose the shining metal through the black ground, and thus makes it easier for the etcher to see what he is doing. The design is drawn onto the grounded plate by means of an etching needle, which simply consisted of a thin metal point. However if the ground is not properly laid over the surface, acid will attack the plate with ruinous effect. Moreover, areas of copper wider than a thick line cannot be exposed as they will collapse under the alchemical process.

When working with the technique of Etching one must keep in mind to work opposite to pen and ink. Therefore whereas in order to achieve dark tonalities with the pen one simply draws many lines close together perhaps hatching and cross-hatching them, in etching lines must be incised thinly and spaced out from each other leaving the acid free to bite deeply. If lines are spaced too close together then they

will collapse. This unwanted biting is known as foul-biting. As seen through the collection of plates that belonged to Mangion's students, this is not uncommon and it reveals the ongoing attempts within his classroom.

Once satisfied compositionally, the plate is immersed into an acid bath for a specific amount of time until the lines are sufficiently bitten. The etcher must be able to judge the strength and temperature of the acid which requires certain experience. In order to be sure of the required immersion time, the artist usually creates a test piece by etching a small plate with hatching and cross-hatching and taking note of the duration of each acid-immersion. By printing such a test-piece the etcher would know in advance the time needed for every nuance he plans in his final print.

Three acids are normally used for etching; Ferric Chloride, Dutch mordant with a mixture of Hydrochloric acid and Potassium Chlorate, and Nitric Acid. From the vouchers [Appendix 6] it seems that Mangion's etching class normally used Nitric Acid. This is in fact the most common acid used as it gives the plate a certain character. Another advantage of nitric acid is that it is emblematic and the bubbling itself indicates the cutting process. This however calls for a constant watch on the plate during the bath to ensure an even biting; the bubbles that form in the etched lines have to be brushed away by means of a feather, otherwise the bubbles would stop the acid from reaching into the grooves until it will bite irregularly. A document at the School of Art was found highlighting the different acid solutions and mordant mixtures for both copper and zinc [Appendix 7].

If the artist requires lines of varying depth than the plate must be removed from the acid once the lightest of lines are bitten and blocked from further biting by varnish. The plate can be then returned to the acid bath for a second stronger biting. The process can be repeated as often as needed. Mangion immersed his plates into the acid various times in order to achieve such a variation of tonalities. He was sure and spontaneous when drawing his compositions on the ground revealing a virtuoso, attacking his themes with no sign of hesitancy.⁶⁹

Although Etching is the most complicated of Intaglio techniques to describe, to a certain extent it is also the easiest for beginners to work with. Students had to simply draw lines onto a waxy surface while the hard work of cutting copper is done by the

⁶⁹ Cassar (2007), 44.

acid itself. The laying and biting of the plate is more complicated and is sometimes handed over to a professional, hence there are instances of a relationship forming between Etching Master and non-professional printmakers; painters or draughtsman. This alternately delighted or exasperated artists as it was unpredictable how the impression will come out until a proof is printed. It is possible that this was the reality between Carmelo Mangion and Robert Caruana Dingli at the Government School of Art discussed in the previous chapter.

Moreover it became increasingly popular to combine etching with the Drypoint, Aquatint and occasionally the Soft-Ground technique. However this also reveals cases where it is difficult to distinguish the technique used in a particular plate. Sometimes this is the case in Mangion's proofs.

3.3. The Techniques of Drypoint, Aquatint and Monotype

Drypoint, being the simplest of Intaglio processes, involves a heavy, sharp stylus or needle used to scratch lines directly into the metal plate. The metal displaced on either side of the lines is known as the *burr*, and holds a dense film of ink which prints as rich, velvety black.⁷⁰ In technique, drypoint stands closest to engraving as both work manually directly into the metal without the use of acid. But the drypoint needle can also be handled in the same sort of way as an etching needle as both its lines share the same nervous quality.⁷¹ It is therefore considered as a variety of etching and frequently used by artists to retouch areas of an etched plate. There are two known prints by Mangion titled *Back door to the Addolorata Cemetery* as previously seen in [Figure 2.2] where the artist demonstrates precisely this. In the first proof, Mangion depicts the back door to the cemetery empty of any human presences whilst in the second state a ghostly image of a woman is visible. The figure of the woman can be recognised as drypoint as her fine lines contrast heavily with the etched ones. It has also been found common to sign one's signature in drypoint, seen in several copper plates from the School's collection.

⁷⁰ Wendy Thompson, "The Printed Image in the West: Drypoint", In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000 – http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/drpt/hd_drpt.htm (October 2003)

⁷¹ Griffiths (2010), 71.

Aquatint is often also produced in conjunction with etching. The Aquatint technique was named after the effect it creates which is similar to a watercolour wash and is one of the most important Intaglio tonal processes. This technique can be used to produce tonal areas in a printed etching that range from light to dark, and is useful in figure studies, portraits or landscapes where modelling and atmospheric tones may impart a realistic and dramatic effect.⁷² The key to this technique lies in a special variety of etching ground which consists of miniature particles of resin which are fused to the plate and act as a resist to the acid.⁷³ The tiny etched channels hold ink that when printed give the effect of a soft grain. The particles can be of varying fineness; if large the individual pools of ink will be visible, but if very small they will produce a film of tone which looks very similar to a watercolour wash.

The plate is given an etched outline in the usual way, the ground is removed and then a new aquatint ground is laid on top and bitten to the required depths, after stopping out those areas which are to stay white. Two methods are used to lay the resin ground on the plate. The first is by means of a '*Dust Box*' in which the ground is blown into a cloud and allowed to settle in an even film on the plate. The second is by manually applying the ground through a mesh. The particles are then melted by heating the plate from the back. The second method involves using alcohol to dissolve the resin onto the plate, the solution spread evenly on the surface and as the alcohol evaporates the resin is left as grain on the surface.⁷⁴

There are a few instances where etching Master Carmelo Mangion worked in aquatint.⁷⁵ It is not known what method he used however no record of an aquatint-box has been found in the school's archives. It is therefore most probable that he applied resin powder by dubbing it through a piece of cloth. This method gives a less uniform texture to the aquatint. He would then proceed in the normal way; that is heating the plate to melt and affix the resin, then with a brush varnish over the areas he wished to remain white. After the first acid bath he would apply stopping-out varnish to those parts he wished to print as light grey. He repeated this procedure

⁷² Ives, Colta. "The Printed Image in the West: Aquatint". In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000—http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/aqtn/hd_aqtn.htm (October 2003).

⁷³ Griffiths (2010), 89-90.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Cassar (2007) 44; four examples are observed by the author where Mangion worked in Aquatint.

various times until he achieved different variations of grey, producing tones in a hard-edge manner.

With some of Mangion's prints it is not easy to decide whether they were produced by the use of the soft-ground method or whether the crayon effect is produced by the textured paper he so often used. This needs further study. The soft-ground technique produces the effect of a crayon drawing quite similar to that of a lithograph. The plate is prepared with a special soft ground and a piece of soft paper is then fixed on top where the artist would carry out his drawing. Where the pencil presses the ground, it adheres to the paper, which is carefully pulled away along with the ground, leaving the design exposed to the copper plate.⁷⁶ The plate is then put through the normal etching process.

The technique of Monotype was also observed, examples of which found particularly within Mangion's oeuvre. A Monotype is essentially an unworked metal plate that is painted with ink or pigment and printed onto paper by means of the roller press. This method only allows for one strong impression to be taken, hence its name. A few of such works were found signed by Mangion revealing once again the artist's vitality and innate sense for experimentation [**Figure 3.3**].



Figure 3.3: Carmelo Mangion (signed), title unknown, Monotype 20x16.5cm

⁷⁶ Griffiths (2010), 97.

Mangion instructed the students of the Etching class to handle various techniques and to think in terms of the etching medium, for etching is not another way of producing a pen and ink, but a medium in its own right. The technique of Etching commands the artist to possess certain spontaneity of expression whilst also allowing for the freedom and fusion of multiple Intaglio techniques at once to create highly original works of art. It is this very lack of convention which gives the method so much closer an affinity with modern art than with classical tendencies.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Hind (1923), 105.

CHAPTER 4

The collection of Intaglio Plates at the Malta Government School of Art

4.1. Methodology

The main methodology for this dissertation was dictated by the large collection of Intaglio Plates found at the Malta Government School of Art. The collection, which finds thanks to the co-operation of the Headmaster of the School of Art, was placed at my disposal thus making it possible to conduct research on the Etching class at close contact. The collection was handled, analysed and re-strikes were taken from the plates themselves. Unfortunately, up to date the copper plates were stored in boxes without any precaution for their good preservation. Therefore cleaning and preservation also became an integral part of this methodology. Another hindrance was that there existed no inventory or any other record of the collection. Therefore re-strikes were taken from every plate that was cleaned in order for proper cataloguing to take place.

The printmaker usually produces a limited number of prints from his plate, numbering each and every print to form an edition. These limited editions hold value and are unique as they reveal the hand of the artist on paper as well as the ink of the print. After the edition the artist normally marks the plate and pulls a '*cancellation print*'. As the collection constitutes the work of the students that were intended only as a learning exercise, the plates were not cancelled.

A *re-strike* is a print which is produced from the original plate but usually pulled posthumously and therefore does not form part of the original print run and is not authorised by the artist or his heirs. For the purpose of this research re-strikes were pulled from the original plates. These proved valuable in analysing at first hand the work under investigation that was produced at the Etching class of the Malta Government School of Art.

Before deciding to print a re-strike from each copper plate according to the Intaglio process which is very time consuming, as can be seen in Chapter 3, two other methods were attempted. The first was to document the Intaglio plates through

a surface print. This was carried out by first cleaning the plate from any dirt, oxidation or old residue of ink using metal cleaner and white spirit. Then, using a roller, a thick black ink was spread onto a slab of glass and then applied as thinly as possible to the copper plate. A sheet of paper was laid over the plate and a surface print was pulled through the roller press. The result thus obtained was decent yet unsatisfactory for the purpose of the present research as it fell short to reveal the characteristics of the etched line. Photoshop was attempted to further enhance the result but notwithstanding the quality of the image it did not lend itself for a good analysis.

Another method of taking provisional prints, mentioned by E.S. Lumdsen in his publication *The Art of Etching*, was attempted. Wax was melted and evenly rolled onto a thin sheet of paper, powdered ink was lightly applied to the plate, and the surface cleaned leaving the etched lines filled with powdered ink. The waxed paper was then placed over the inked plate and passed through the roller press, pushing the paper into the grooves and picking the powdered ink. This second method gave better results in showing the characteristic of the Intaglio print; however it was felt that the impression was still not satisfactory for a good analysis. Hence it was decided that although time consuming, a proper re-strike was the finest way to a good and reliable analysis of the collection of plates at Government School of Art.

A group of plates were cleaned in one session. The cleaned plates were then prepared for printing by means of the Intaglio Printing Process discussed in the previous Chapter. The school provided a cream coloured etching paper in order to catalogue the re-strikes using a consistent type of paper. The re-strikes were organised into a catalogue and labelled with the following details; name of etcher when known, title of work when known, type of paper along with technique of printing, size of plate and the date of re-strike. These details were chosen in order to compile a database of the work produced at the Etching class at the school of art.

4.2. Condition of the Intaglio Plates

The Intaglio plates were found to be in a poor state of conservation and therefore needed to be thoroughly polished using a metal cleaner in order to remove

oxidization that accumulated over the years [**Plate 4.1**]. Some plates were found to have old ink and sometimes even paint, therefore a more aggressive cleaning was applied using cellulose thinner and white spirit. Only a few plates were found to be protected by a layer of wax, as custom when storing plates after printing. In this case they were slightly heated over a hot-plate in order for the wax to melt, then cleaned with white spirit and polished with metal cleaner.

The Intaglio plates were found to have been heavily exposed to the atmosphere, moisture and humidity bringing about oxidisation and tarnishing. Moreover there is evidence of bad handling of the plates which resulted in scratches and indentations. For ethical reasons the plates were not treated in any way except for the normal cleaning and therefore blemishes all surfaced the re-strike; nonetheless satisfactory results were obtained which allowed for subject, style and etching technique used for each plate to be properly examined with each print. The Catalogue compiled through these re-strikes essentially throws light upon the nature of the Etching class under the tutorship of Carmelo Mangion, revealing how students worked and their sources of inspiration, interests and guidance.

One of the first observations that were made is that a good number of the copper plates are etched on both sides. This explains the use of the same number followed by *(a)* and *(b)* in the catalogue of re-strike prints, indicating the two sides of the same plate. It was not always easy to identify this scenario due to the mishandling of the plates [**Plate 4.2**]. They were therefore carefully examined to see if a plate needed both its sides cleaned. Plate 55 from the Catalogue proves an interesting example as one side reveals an etching by Robert Caruana-Dingli whilst the other stylistically seems to point to a work by Mangion. Naturally in this case a question arose as to which side was etched first. Although one can only guess upon this, Mangion's character of working must certainly be remembered. As discussed in Chapter 2, Mangion was an artist who was not primarily interested on what he translated his thoughts onto as long as he expressed them. Therefore a possible conclusion to this question is that Mangion's etching came second to that of Robert's. Additionally other plates revealed how not only student-etchers etched both sides of the plate but sometimes even totally destroying the first work by altering the size of the copper plates to suit a second etching on the other side of the plate. Such can be seen in Plate 84(b) where one side reveals a copy after Zorn cut through the middle to suit another

composition. Once again here one tries to understand why this was done; perhaps the most plausible solution is that students recycled plates to save on expensive copper.

4.3. Copies after the Great Masters

Traditionally an important training at any institution of fine arts is in copying the great masters. Etching is predominantly a technique that can only be understood through hard practice. Copying the masters thus obliged students to reflect on how the master went about producing work, but most importantly it enabled them to understand how etching as a technique worked. They familiarised themselves with the handwriting of the great masters, in the way they treated their lines and likewise how the acid behaves according to the width and spaces between the incised lines. A student needs to observe the different ways acid could bite their plates. Copies were not made for the sake of subject matter but in order to understand this sophisticated skill. This practice has resulted in a substantial number of copies after great masters.

One of the most common of masters whose work was copied was the Swedish painter-etcher Anders Zorn. Zorn's etchings provided perfect examples in order for students to tackle plane, form and contrast with deeply etched lines. In a re-strike after the master; *The Artist and his wife*, the student attempted to achieve the same intensity of line as the master himself.⁷⁸ Another fine copy after Zorn titled *Une Premier*, bears the signature of Inglott, in which the advanced student managed to convey the effects of shimmering water on the human body. This plate together with other plates bearing the signatures of Willie Apap and Emvin Cremona, indicate that mature students from other classes joined the Etching class whilst still attending the other classes. Willie Apap, Emvin Cremona and Anton Inglott were enrolled in the painting class under Edward Caruana-Dingli and sat for the scholarship exam in 1937.⁷⁹ However between 1935, when Mangion's class was opened, to 1937, when these artists were working very hard at their easels, yet during this period they were

⁷⁸ Plate 11 from the Catalogue.

⁷⁹ PC with L. Borg, main supervisor of this dissertation.

also producing Etchings as can be seen throughout the Catalogue.⁸⁰ This clearly points to the holistic approach of the school and the healthy interactive relationship taking place between the various disciplines taught in the various classes at the school.

Students were not only stimulated by prints after the old masters, but also by their paintings as seen in the re-strike of Zurbaran's *St Francis in Meditation* [Plate 4.3]. The painting by Zurbaran is rich in tonal values, and the student-etcher managed to interpret it through the etching medium without much sacrifice and shows that the power of a good etching is its capability of rendering the richness of colour through the use of line.

Furthermore a re-strike entitled *At the Piano* reveals another copy from an original by Zorn [Figure 4.1]. It is to be noted that the print by the student is in reverse which indicates that the student-etcher copied the master's print onto the plate without reversing it. This points to two possible procedures; the student could have either traced a print then transferred the image onto the grounded plate by means of a transfer paper, or by directly copying the plate freehand on a paper and then transferring by transfer paper or drawing the image directly onto the grounded



Figure 4.1: Left; original print by Zorn, Right; Reverse re-strike 8 from the Catalogue.

⁸⁰ PC with L. Borg; Esprit Barthet recounted that when preparing for the scholarship exam, these artists were granted a special concession by Edward to attend the school in the morning and work for their scholarship.

plate. Both options are plausible as students attending the etching class would have already had a good grounding in drawing under Robert Caruana-Dingli. In both cases one would not expect the student to follow each and every line accurately, especially in the latter case were no matter how brilliant the student in draughtsmanship one would expect some discrepancies. Other copies after old masters do reveal a certain exactitude which points to another exercise taking place. The student-etcher could have also traced the print in pencil and then placed the side of the pencil tracing against the grounded plate, pass through the press allowing for the image to automatically transfer to the plate. This on the other hand would not give an inverse image.

An experiment was carried out to try to understand what method the students used. For this experiment a copy after a Self Portrait of Goya⁸¹ was used. Seen with the naked eye the copy seems to be very similar, almost identical to the original, including the scripture at the bottom. However, using Photoshop the copy was superimposed onto the original as seen in [Plates 4.4 and 4.5]. When examining the results, certain details like Goya's nose and chin were rather different therefore strongly suggesting the free hand work of the student. The scripture was also compared but it too proved to be of a different hand especially seen in the letter 'y'.

Copying masters also allowed for observation on how the acid would bite certain lines, how close to place lines near each other without the acid biting too much of the plate and also how long to leave the plate under the acid. Hence the management of time was also an important factor in learning how to etch.

Plate 39(b) exposes an attempt to copy the work of Frank Brangwyn; *The Lame Beggars*. The student-etcher seems to have only fully worked one figure. Thus it reveals he worked in stages; from the foreground to slightly articulating middle ground and then simply giving an impression of the background. However, observing the different states by the master Brangwyn himself, it is most likely that the student copied the first state as it shows the same attention to foreground and background [Plate 4.6].

Plates were moreover found to hold incomplete designs. This is particularly interesting as it shows the process of how the student-etcher worked his plate. Such

⁸¹ Plate 7 from the Catalogue.

can be seen in Plate 69(b) showing the half-length figure of a man. The interest is solely in the face, which appears to be more refined and adequately bitten by acid whilst the arms and attire are simple lines. It seems that once the first emersion into the acid was completed, the student-etcher abandoned the rest.

As mentioned in previous chapters, students had access to various books from the school's library. Till today its collection houses a few important Etching publications that the students of the Etching class must have surely consulted, and whose reproductions the students must have used to copy in order to study works by the master.⁸² The publication by Levon West titled *Making an Etching* primarily deals with analysing well-known etchings in terms of technique; of how lines, acid and ink were treated. This must have certainly been essential for students, not just for its illustrations but moreover for technical queries. Furthermore copies were found after Charles Meryon; *La Galerie Notre Dame*, Plate 4(a) from the Catalogue and Edmund Blampied; *Driving Home in the Rain*, Plate 70 from the Catalogue [**Plate 4.7**]. On the other hand, the book by Earl H. Reed; *Etching, A Practical Treatise* published in 1914, provides no illustrations and served purely as a scientific thesis on the technique. The history of etching was also not neglected as seen in the first chapter of *Etching as a Craft, An illustrated Guide for Students & Collectors* by W.P. Robins who gives a brief outline on the development of etching before discussing the practical craft. According to latter book, the master of all Etching was Rembrandt Van Rijn (1606-1669) and thus provided the reader with many examples of his work. Perhaps the most important publication for such this exercise of copying was *The Art of Etching* by E.S. Lumsden. This book discusses the etchings of Rembrandt, Goya, Haden and Whistler; masters who were copied relentlessly by the students of the Etching class. Examples include *The Return of the Prodigal Son* after Rembrandt; Plate 65(a) from the Catalogue, *The Breaking up of the Agamemnon* after Haden; 5(a) from the Catalogue and *Thermae of Caracalla* after David Y. Cameron; 69(a) from the Catalogue of re-strikes.

⁸² Such can be seen with the same re-strike in Figure III after Charles Meryon found in the following publication; Levon West, *Making an Etching*, The Studio Ltd. London, 1932.

4.4. Still-Life's

Another exercise commonly undertaken by students at the Etching class was the interpretations of Still-Life from direct observation. There are several plates in the School's collection that show the same Still-Life observed from different angles. Plate 76(a) depicting a Still-Life with a vase and what seem to be fruit surrounded by a cloth is an example that can be found in several other plates. However some interpretations are of better artistic quality than others. The technique of etching is therefore taken to the next level. Whereas when copying the old masters, students studied and understood the technique of etching, in interpreting Still-Life they were challenged to include their own handwriting by translating three dimensional images into two dimensional onto their copper plates. Students could have tackled this challenge mainly in two ways. The most direct method would be for students to sit around an arrangement of objects and carry out their design directly with an etching needle onto their grounded plates. A second method would be that students would carry out their drawings on paper and later transfer their drawing to copper either by means of transfer paper or through the press for etching. The Plates 83 and 84(a) from the Catalogue provide an example of different hands interpreting the same Still-Life from different angles. The female statue bust in both these Still-Life's can still be located at the school today [**Plate 4.8**]. Still-Life essentially formed part of the



Figure 4.3: Sketch by Lewis Wirth showing Helen Cavarra at her easel. The Still-Life to the left that Cavarra is working corresponds to re-strike 77(b)

student's final assessment at the end of the scholastic year [**Appendix 8**].

A rather interesting observation was made with the Still-Life in Plate 77(b). The arrangement shows a vase with a small figurine which is found in several plates at the school's collection. Furthermore a sketch by Lewis Wirth extant in the Wirth/Cavarra collection shows Helen Cavarra⁸³ at her easel painting this Still-Life [**Figure 4.3**]. She seems to have been one of the best students at the time, winning numerous prizes and competing in the annual competitions organised by the school. Cavarra must have also attended the Etching class as a plate which seems to be a preparatory work for the Annual Certificate competitive examination is existent in the School's collection, while a print of the same unfinished plate and a study for the plate is extant in the Wirth/Cavarra Collection. These competitions were organised for the design of a certificate which the School of Art designed for each prize day. It is possible that the design seen below in was for such a competition as seen in [**Plate 4.9**].

4.5. Landscapes, Seascapes and Robert Caruana-Dingli

The themes of Landscape and Seascapes were also popular amongst the students of the Etching class in Valletta. Like Still-Life it also formed part of the Annual Examination. Examination results show that at least during the scholastic years of 1950 to 1951, students were examined both in Still-Life and Landscape [**Appendix 9**]. The majority of plates depicting Landscapes and some Seascapes found in the collection are by Robert Caruana-Dingli who was giving sterling work in the teaching of Drawing. Caruana-Dingli normally etched his signature in the etching itself. However the few unsigned works can be easily attributed on stylistic grounds. His analytical approach through the way he treated his lines and his dexterity and control, makes his work stand out. His etchings often depict well designed trees and mountains highly modelled with cross contour lines which form part of his autographical calligraphy [**Plate 4.10**]. This recalls his illustrations in local text

⁸³ Helen Cavarra attended the Malta Government School of Art during the late 1940's and early 50's. She was a student of Emvin Cremona, George Fenech, Alfred Chircop, Father Campbell and Lewis Wirth.

books such as *'Gabra ta' Ward'*. However it was not just Robert who dominated this oeuvre.

A favourite subject amongst both Mangion and his students was the depiction of Msida within the harbour. Again Landscape was not restricted to original works as seen in Plate 5(a) showing Cremona copying *The Breaking up of the Agamemnon* after Haden. Cremona's faithful copy reveals his interest in the light and dark contrasts of the different boats and the depth obtained shows control in the acid baths.

Perhaps some of the most entertaining plates found in this collection are the cleverly designed etchings by Robert Caruana-Dingli. Plates 58 and 78, as seen in [Figure 4.4], reveal Caruana-Dingli's humour as well as his skill and capability as a professional illustrator of satires and cartoons.⁸⁴ These etchings represent living creatures in particular situations accompanied by captions with which they are to be understood. This must have been an influence of his English sojourn since the British often depicted animals with a humoristic understatement.⁸⁵ *Help!* depicts a wide-eyed bird struggling to retain balance on a twig, frightened by an approaching caterpillar. Caruana-Dingli's skill is revealed in the way he represented the bird's fear and tension through erect feathers as he tightly clings onto the twig. The circular

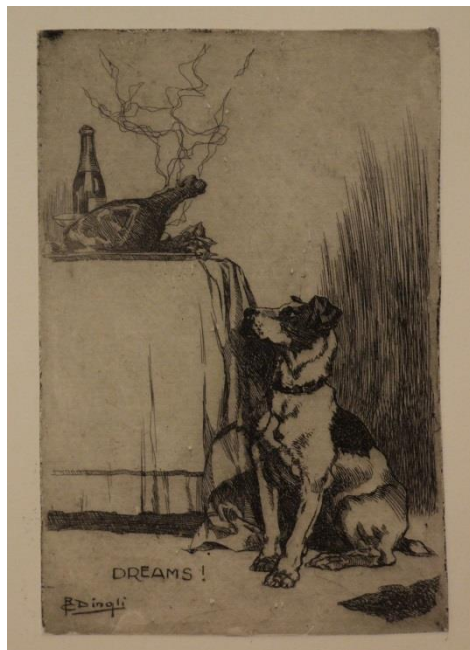


Figure 4.4; Left; *Dreams!* Right; *Help!* - Two re-strikes after Robert Caruana-Dingli.

⁸⁴ Robert Caruana-Dingli executed a number of cartoons for the English papers *Tatler* and the *London Opinion*; Anastasia Anastasi, 'Robert Caruana-Dingli (1882-1940) – A Critical Analysis of his Works', B.A. (Hons.) History of Art, 1999, 22

⁸⁵ Anastasia (1999), 50-51.

shape at the bottom left corner possibly suggests a moon and therefore a night scene, diagonally balanced by a branch of leaves. Less dynamic but more psychologically intense, the very realistic representation of an interior with a dog tempted by the smell and sight of food can be seen in *Dreams!* were Carauna-Dingli combined his masterful draughtsmanship with his intellectual capacity at conveying mood.⁸⁶ Both these etchings reveal a mastery of draughtsmanship and etching technique accompanied by a clever and witty mind.

4.6. Architectural Scenes and Portraiture

Many Architectural themes were copied after William Walcot (1874-1943); the British Architect, graphic artist and etcher, praised for being the best architectural draftsman in London. Students were therefore not simply making copies but were selective in their choice after those masters who could teach them the best. This selectiveness points to the fact that Mangion gave them a good sounding of the international etching scene. Plates 30(a), 31, 60(b) and 75(b) from the Catalogue reveal copies after William Walcot. Re-strike 75(b) is of special interest as the plate reveals the use of the stippling technique affecting the upper corner. This technique involves using a point to build up a mass of dots on an etching ground, creating certain softness [Plate 4.11]. Furthermore, the stippling is accompanied by a general tone that seems to be produced by fine aquatint or by an open bite. Thus this shows the students' readiness to experiment and apply different techniques to their plates.

The collection also includes some interesting portraits worthy of mention. Plate 74(a) is a portrait of an unknown man gazing directly at the viewer. This work has not yet been identified to be a copy after an old master and the confidence of line furthermore points to an original work by a student. Lines are applied with control and understanding, creating balance between light and dark. The same maturity can also be observed in Plate 68(a). The contemporary dress of the sitter strengthens the argument that this is original work. Again, light and shade are effectively handled especially in the facial features of the boy. The intensity of line in Plate 66 creates a

⁸⁶ Ibid.

certain mysterious aura around the sitter, once more emphasising the personal style of the student-etcher.

4.7. Other Work by Students

Once students felt they had reached a certain maturity and confidence through carefully analysing the great masters, original work was pursued. The Catalogue compiled for this study certainly reveals students now confident of their technical ability bringing in their own ideas. This category opened up to the experimentation with themes such as portraiture and local scenery that often spoke through a more modern idiom than the other works. This exposes the atmosphere Mangion ensured in his classroom, forever instilling his belief in individual expression and stylisation. Plate 64(b) shows a group of figures hurrying in the street in heavy rain. The student-etcher's personal style is evident in the way he applied heavy lines emphasising the downpour of the rain and thinner lines to create the shimmering effect of puddles of water. Perhaps inspiration was drawn from a similar etching attributed to Mangion on stylistic grounds titled *Rainy Day in Valletta*, showing the same concerns. Furthermore little attention is given to detail, simply hinting at a shop window and umbrellas, and focusing fully on using the etching medium as a means of expression. The same can be said about Plate 53(a). The old Opera House of Valletta dominates the scene as ghostly pedestrians walk in front of it. A lightly etched car lies in the foreground perhaps revealing a concern with the industrialisation Malta was experiencing in the mid-twentieth century.

The reverse side of this plate aroused further questions. The abstract depiction of what seems to be different contours of the female body does not look finished to the spectator's eye. Indeed this etching could have been intended as a study for another work and not for printing. Moreover the etcher could have intended to simply study certain techniques, such as hatching and cross hatching, and the way acid treated them. There is also the slight possibility that it is in fact a finished work and thus revealing an interest in the abstract. The need to obtain a re-strike from this plate was felt in order to illustrate the diversity of the Etching Class at the Malta Government School of Art.

One particular composition seems to have been most popular amongst the etching students as a number of the same etching exists in the collection. This composition depicts a full length female nude seen from the back standing before a large canvas resting on an easel. The original master of this work has not yet been identified; however the School of Art did not hold the study of the nude figure from life. Moreover, all plates show an execution from the same viewpoint, which proves that the nude was not drawn from observation. The large amount of copies is interesting as it shows that Mangion wanted his students to practice drawing the human figure through etching. They reveal the different hands and minds working the Etching medium. Plate 59(b) as well as 60(a) both reveal heavily bitten plates resulting in dark re-strikes that show the many cross-hatched lines in the background. It is also somewhat significant that these students were not accustomed to drawing the nude figure from life thus a lack of confidence comes out in these works. Nonetheless Plate 59(b) is of superior quality to Plate 14 which reveals some problems in the modelling of the shoulders. However Plate 14 is then void of the heavily bitten background seen in the other two, and focusses more on etching the nude figure.

4.8. Admiration for the Etching Class

The high esteem that the Government School of Art and the Head of the School held for the etching class is betrayed by letters of Thanks received from the British Governor General. The Governor used to pay an official visit to the Annual Exhibition held at the end of each scholastic year where students and teachers exhibited their work together. A letter of thanks dating to 1959 conveys the Governor's gratitude with specific reference to a beautiful etching by a certain S. Attard from the Etching Class received as a Season's Greeting card. Likewise another letter refers to an etching of St. John's by Mr Farrugia [**Appendices 10 and 11**]. This throws light on the prolific nature the etching class and the high standard reached so that the school was not shy to expose the work of students in this creative way. Plate 81 shows one such greeting card signed E. Zahra who is documented to have placed second in an Annual competition of 1945 [**Figure 4.5**]. It is also interesting to note that the copper plate of this etching has been neatly cut with

corners squared and the edges moderately filed. This perhaps points to the fact that it was intended to be used as an official great card and therefore needed to be neatly finished unlike many of the other plates in the collection which lack such finishing touches.

4.9. Annual results and the prospects of the Etching Class

Annual competitive examinations amongst students in the etching class indicate various names of students and those placing first, second and third. The earliest list of names forming the Etching class can be seen in [Appendix 12]. As customary done at the period, students were not judged just by their teacher, in this case Carmelo Mangion, but also by the headmaster of the School and all members of the teaching staff, each awarding a separate mark. This can be seen in the numerous signatures found at the bottom of the result sheet in [Appendix 8].

As previously stated in Chapter 2, the School of Art opened the Decorative Arts and Etching Class under Carmelo Mangion in 1957 where students were encouraged to experiment with different media. Alfred Briffa, former student of Mangion's



Figure 4.5: A Greeting Card designed by student-etcher *E. Zahra* (signed)

Decorative Art's Class recalls his lessons being taught in how to handle charcoal, drawing portraiture from life and designing murals.⁸⁷ Briffa also recalls how Mangion emphasised freshness and spontaneity, encouraging his students to work quickly. Many documents were found outlining these different examinations and competitions, including chalk and charcoal, pastel, oils and mural designing.

In a letter dating to 15th November 1966 by Vincent Apap to the Minister of Education at the time, Mangion is documented to be master in charge for Decorative Art and Etching classes [**Appendix 13**]. However reading on, Apap clearly states that plenty of time was being dedicated to the teaching of the Decorative Arts whereas Etching, especially for beginners, was being neglected. Only on occasion was it being practiced by a few advanced students. The examination results of the 1965, the previous year to this letter, hold true to this abandonment as no exercise in Etching seems to have been assessed [**Appendix 14**]. Apap thus requests for a teacher solely dedicated to the teaching of Etching.

The Catalogue of Intaglio plates that accompanies this dissertation is intended to outline the nature of the etching class, the various exercises and the different themes tackled under the tutorship of the painter-etcher Carmelo Mangion. It has been carefully assembled to concisely expose a portion of the vast collection of plates that form part of the Malta Government School of Art's collection while it is hoped that it will contribute to throw some light to a National Heritage that up to date has been totally neglected. The Case Studies that follow this Chapter aim to further strengthen the argument that the Etching Class under Carmelo Mangion gave an important contribution to the artistic scene in twentieth century Malta.

⁸⁷ PC with Alfred Briffa, 20th April 2014.

CHAPTER 5

Case Studies

5.1. Carmelo Mangion



Attributed to Carmelo Mangion

Title Unknown

Etching on Copper, 6.2x21cm

Re-strike 55(b) from Catalogue

This re-strike etching is attributed to Carmelo Mangion on stylistic grounds. It depicts an arched bridge in the distance surrounded by a landscape of heavy vegetation and rock. Two cars can be seen crossing the bridge under a hazy sky which gives the impression of nightfall. Although it is unsigned, this etching exposes a certain stylistic affinity with Mangion especially through the rhythm of his handwriting. Mangion's work is generally characterised by a certain spontaneity which can be observed throughout his oeuvre, even his paintings. However, when utilising the Etching medium his autobiographical scrawl is visually and atmospherically stronger. He is not utilising colour as in his paintings but instead

utilising tone and texture that strongly suggests colour; the true genius behind the Etching medium. Mangion applies his lines loosely yet he is in full control of the medium to convey his vision. The lines of the atmospheric sky, another trademark of Mangion, are only lightly bitten by the acid giving that sense of subtlety, depth and movement. The middle ground and thus the bridge itself are worked using vertical lines, exaggerating them on the left to imply shadow. The underside of the bridge is heavily bitten and lines becoming barely visible. What seems to be heavy vegetation in the foreground is worked in a very Mangion characteristic. The frantic lines twist and turn, turning areas almost completely black whilst revealing their serpentine nature in others. He is still in control of conjuring the realism of the scene however atmosphere and mood are more predominant. This is essentially Mangion's handwriting.

This work can be interestingly compared with another similar work attributed to Mangion. Located as re-strike 35 and measuring 17.6x22cm [**Figure 5.1**], the similarity is immediately obvious as they both depict a landscape with a bridge. Furthermore the same handwriting can be detected seen in the way his etching needle moves across the plate. The same frantic scribble is observed in the vegetation and the same modelling of tone in the bridge. Likewise the sky is lightly worked yet never failing to inject that atmospheric quality. However in the second depiction there exists a crisper and more complex treatment of lines, making them more visible than the first etching. The element of reflection over water is also introduced, an element that Mangion also frequently utilised in his etchings.

The etching titled *Wied In-Cita* which is signed by Mangion [**Figure 5.2**] strengthens the attribution of the two previous works. The treatment of line, tonality and texture clearly reveal the same hand at work. This can be seen in the modelling of the underside of the bridge, the frantic vegetation to the left and also the serpentine lines towards the right of the etching. Furthermore pencil markings reveal the artist not fully satisfied with the result and making notes as to where he intends to submit to a further biting with acid. This trademark of Mangion who constantly made sketches and notes on his works also sheds light on the fact that the same design had many different states. [**Figure 5.2**] must therefore be one of the first states.

Mangion, as Master of Etching at the Malta Government School of Art, must have certainly had an impact on his students and the way they worked. Although he

never forced them to work in his manner, they admired their teacher and were naturally inspired by him and his modern idioms. The work of Frank Portelli is perhaps the best testament to this as he utilised Mangion's style but in his own personal spirit. It is interesting to compare the impact Mangion on his students with that of Robert Caruana-Dingli who is discussed in the next Case Study.



Figure 5.1: Stylistically attributed to Carmelo Mangion, etching 17.6x22cm, Plate 35 from the Catalogue



Figure 5.2: Carmelo Mangion (signed), *Wied in-Cita*, etching 15.5x23cm

5.2. Robert Caruana-Dingli



Signed

Title Unknown

Etching on Copper,
17.3x14.8cm

Re-strike 54(a) from Catalogue

This signed etching by Robert Caruana-Dingli reveals the master draughtsman in his element meticulously sculpting trees and leaves by means of the etched line. The landscape scene is dominated by two large trees that bend towards each other set in the wilderness as birds fly overhead. The artistic quality of this etching is immediately obvious. Trees are constructed by means of fully controlled and calculated lines yet lacking the looseness and spontaneous touch of Mangion. Attention is shifted onto intricate detail and texture. The tree to the left is constructed of light and dark patches of leaves, cross hatching is used to darken the tone as well as obtain the cast shadow on the ground. The barks of the trees are worked differently to the leaves, constructed of contoured lines to emphasis their roundness and three dimensionality. The second tree to the right bends and intertwines its leaves with those of the left tree. Instead of looking like a disarray of greeneries, Caruana-Dingli models their shape through tone and texture as if drawing from life. The relatively white background emphasises the detail of the mass of leaves and

branches whilst subtly including birds in the distance. This subtlety injects the landscape with life and movement in a seemingly calm composition.

Robert Caruana-Dingli's influence on students was different to Mangion as he normally was the one who initiated the students to Art in his drawing class. Therefore an impression must have certainly been made. Robert Caruana-Dingli's approach perhaps tends more towards the illustration when compared to the expressionistic of Mangion. Moreover, Robert was much more concerned with exactitude of forms through the detailed usage of line, tone and texture. Vincent Apap, ex-student of Caruana-Dingli, once said that his teacher was always insisted on a precise execution of the subject matter.⁸⁸ His teachings essentially formed the necessary foundations on which students later developed into mature artists. Mangion on the other hand, who indeed believed in a strong background in draughtsmanship, tended towards utilising different idioms to emphasis aura and atmosphere. He attempted to expose his students to modern idioms and emphasised the importance of individualisation. Nevertheless, even though Mangion was the pioneer of the Etching class, Caruana-Dingli certainly contributed to its success at the School of Art.

The influence of Caruana-Dingli on students can be seen through a work by Frank Baldacchino, ex-student of the Etching Class. In this work **[Figure 5.3]** Baldacchino depicts part of a large tree emerging into sight from the left as the landscape unfolds revealing a solitary building in the distance. Although it appears Baldacchino emphasised harsher darker tonalities, line is treated with a certain precision that is reminiscent of the master, especially seen through the twigs and rocks. Baldacchino would later form part of the modern art circle, however this landscape scene reflects the influence that Baldacchino as a student at the School of Art, received by both Caruana-Dingli and Carmelo Mangion.

⁸⁸ PC between Vincent Apap and Anastasia Anastasi (Autumn, 1997); 'Robert Caruana-Dingli (1882-1940) – A Critical Analysis of his Works', B.A. (Hons.) History of Art, 1999, 45.



Figure 5.3: Frank Baldacchino, title unknown, etching 10x7.3cm

5.3. Still-Life with Skull



Student-Etcher Unknown

Still-Life with Skull

Etching on Copper, 6.4x21.4cm

Re-strike 62(b) from Catalogue

This Still-Life with a skull is of a rather high artistic quality, executed by a student who was confident in the etching technique. Each object is modelled carefully in light and shade using hatched and crossed-hatched lines to obtain different tonalities. The lighter areas are left completely untouched as seen on the upright surface of the book, highlights of the skull and also the candle. The cloth or table that the objects are resting on is however modelled in dark lines. It is possible that the student inserted the plate into the acid bath several times to achieve this effect, making sure to varnish the lighter areas as to remain unaffected by the acid. The handling of the candle is particularly interesting, modelled in a similar style to that of Mangion. The same scrawl is evident in the modelling of the half burnt candle in quick lines. Moreover this exposes the bravura of the student-etcher. The skull is also interesting for its confident modelling, its haunting appearance immediately standing out from the composition. The background hints to a cloth draping over the objects but is left

rather clear of needling and thus further emphasising the light and dark. An austere mood is created as one imagines the candle burning low and casting macabre reflections onto the skull and book.

Another plate with a similar composition was also found in the School of Art's collection [**Figure 5.4**]. This Still-Life carrying Cremona's signature appears to have the same objects but arranged in a different manner. At first glance it was suggested that Cremona's work was the same Still-Life of this Case Study only executed from a different viewpoint, however the arrangement is in fact different. The skull appears to have a massive crack further instilling this haunting atmosphere. Although similar in subject matter this etching is executed with a very different style. Lines are now treated with a finer quality than the previous work. It is possible that Cremona made use of a finer etching needle allowing him to work with more precision and as a result composed his composition of many fine lines. Perhaps it is reminiscent of Robert Caruana-Dingli's drawing lessons, shedding light on the fact that students were influenced by both Mangiona and Caruana-Dingli. Cremona also makes use of hatching and cross-hatching to model the objects; however it seems that he is a better draughtsman especially when comparing the two skulls. Light seems to be entering from the right, beautifully highlighting the objects and then casting the rest in shadow.

This plate is in a better state of preservation than the first which seems to possess some foul biting and oxidisation stains naturally affecting the printed result. However both works are of a high artistic quality revealing the standard of the Etching class at the School of Art.



Figure 5.4: Cremona (signed), Still-Life with skull, etching 16.2x23.3cm, Plate 29(a) from Catalogue

5.4. Driving Home in the Rain



Student-Etcher Unknown

Driving Home in the Rain, after Edmund Blampied

Etching on Copper, 18.2x24.7cm

Re-strike 70 from Catalogue

This etching is a copy after Edmund Blampied (1886-1966), the American artist and etcher. The original work provides an interesting copy for its sense of movement and evocation of rain through the medium of etching. Thus the student here remains rather faithful to the original composition, clearly interested in achieving the same effects. The horse stretches his neck downwards in effort to pull the heavy carriage as the driver hunches in the storm, whip held high in the rainy air, achieving this all rounded effect of movement. The horse's hair and the simple hinting at the whip with one streak are a case in point. The unbroken line evoking the whip is also reminiscent of Mangion's style. Line itself reflects motion as it flows in different directions in order to model the subjects. The carriage itself is constructed of various lines that seem to flow in the same direction as the downpour of rain. Likewise the wheel is frantically composed of different strokes with emphasis on speed rather than detail. Rain is conjured through long thick lines emphasising the downpour. The

horse's hooves are also rapidly modelled as they crash on the wet ground casting a reflective shadow. It is possible that the student here used different etching needles of varying widths in order to achieve the many different lines.

To further analyse and compare the re-strike with the original work by Blampied, Photoshop was used so that the re-strike was printed in red on transparent paper and superimposed on a photo of the original Blampied reproduction [**Figures 5.5 and 5.6**]. This method proved to be highly effective because it gave an exact and detailed comparison of the re-strike to the original, giving the following conclusions. The student managed to copy the etching very closely in its general design and also was very successful in achieving the rhythm and movement that Blampied's etching possesses yet it became clear that the student did not trace the composition but copied it freehand and tried to be as faithful as possible even to the direction and quality of the etched lines. However when examining more closely particular details of the copy, the personal handwriting of the student became more evident. Likewise the student's work provides a greater contrast in light and dark tonalities especially in the modelling of the horses' head, underbelly and rear end as well as the driver. The horses' hooves are not executed with the same confidence as the original by Blampied, the front right one in particular being somewhat abandoned.

Notwithstanding the fact, the student managed to achieve the sensation of movement whilst capturing the reflective element of water through the same technique as the master.





5.5. Sappho



Student-Etcher Unknown

Sappho, copy after Zorn

Etching on Copper, 24x17.1cm

Re-strike 10(a) from Catalogue

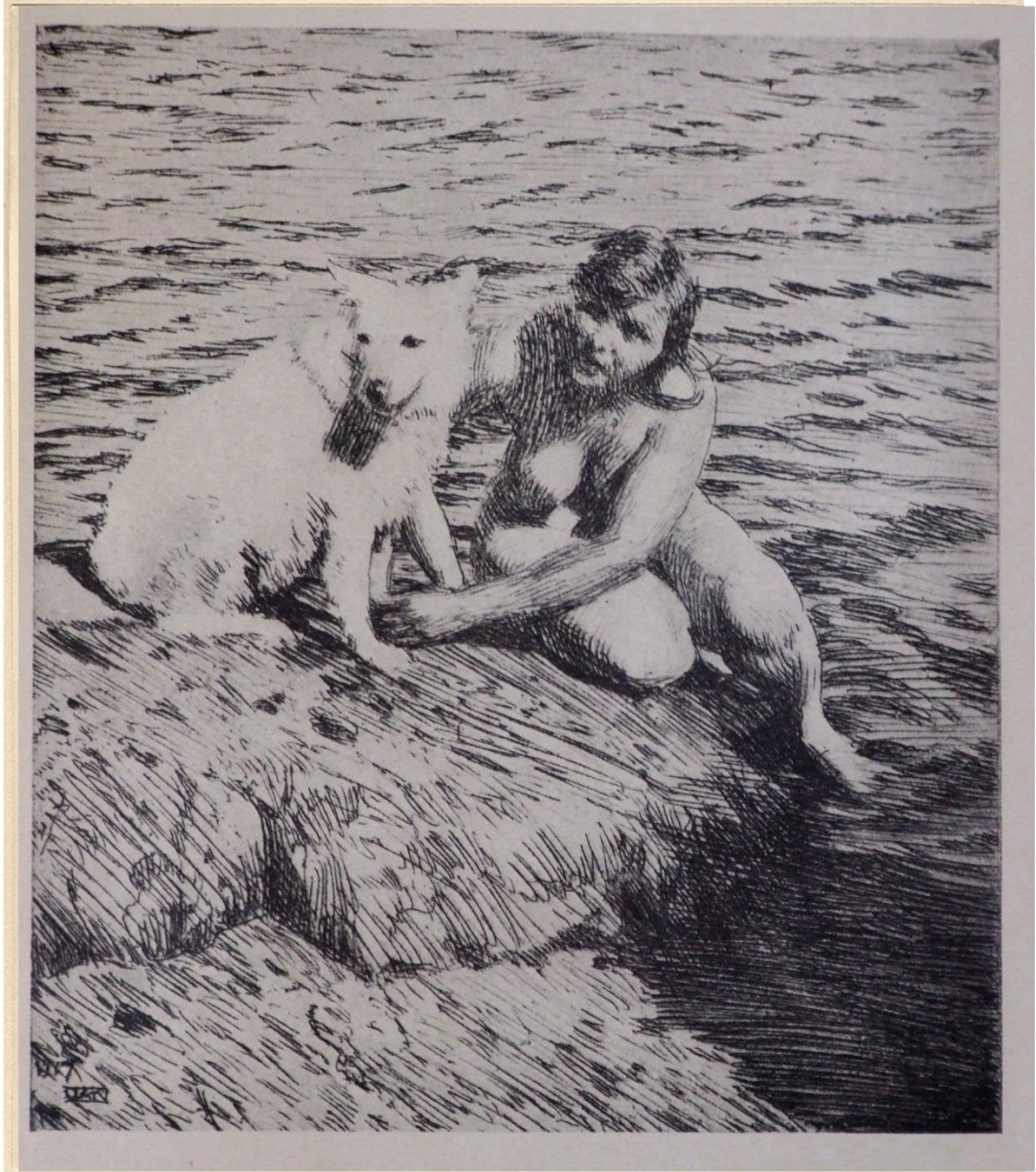
This etching entitled Sappho, after the Swedish master Zorn, depicts a crouched female figure in the nude accompanied by a dog as they sit on a rock surrounded by water. This exercise of copying the great masters was greatly honoured at the Etching Class as it offered the students to think and work the way the master did. In this case the student seems to have been interested in both the human figure and in modelling rocks and sea. The Government School of Art did not permit the study of the female nude therefore students had to rely on either plaster casts or, as in this case, illustrations. Although the etching is of a fair quality the student encountered problems in drawing the arm and outstretched left leg of the female figure. The body is well modelled in hatched lines to render the form and shadow and the cast shadow whilst the lighter part is left free of needling. Her face in particular is worked using parallel lines to hint at shadow and then working with smoother lines to bring out the feature of the eyes, nose and mouth.

For further verification, the exercise of superimposing the student's work was once again applied onto a photograph of the original by Zorn [Figure 5.7 and 5.8]. This exercise shows that the two vary considerably. The face appears more worried looking in the student's work than by Zorn who modelled his face through a lighter chiaroscuro. The same can be said with the group of rocks on which the female sits on. Whilst Zorn models these fine lines reserving the strong contrast for the sea, the student seems to have applied light and dark tonalities with the same intensity throughout, thus missing important tactile values and texture. Moreover the dog is almost handled completely differently to that of Zorn. The leg of the animal is predominantly mishandled and seems to be left abandoned.

The student certainly seems to be injecting his own style into the work yet he did not manage a successful copy when compared to the previous Case Study. The student does not seem to have grasped the concept of producing a copy after a great master, learning from it how to treat the medium in various aspects. All the inaccuracies present in this copy thus detracted from the master's work and not enhanced it. Perhaps it was in observing the biting process of the image that the student was particularly interested in and not overall quality.

The copper plate has suffered from scratches and oxidisation stains which are reflected in the quality of the re-strike. The top edge of the plate also reveals some foul-biting strengthening the theory that the aim to this exercise was primarily to observe the biting process rather than achieving a certain rhythm of style.





CONCLUSION

This dissertation has primarily analysed a unique sector of twentieth century Art in Malta within its context, impacts and philosophy, whilst also providing an in depth survey of the artistic technique that underlies this Art. The main objectives dealt with in this dissertation contribute to various aspects that the Etching Class at the Malta Government School of Art had to offer.

It was observed that the need to set up an official School of Art was long overdue. The teaching of Art had always been practiced privately or within larger institutions such as the Malta Society of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce. In order to sustain itself it therefore it needed to be organised under one roof as a school dedicated entirely to the cultivation of Art, where ideas could be born and flourish and where student-artists could gather to discuss and work. A School of Art would also inevitably ensure the contribution to the island's artistic heritage. Thus the official setting of the School of Art was primarily investigated during the early twentieth century when Malta was undergoing the Language Question that ensued as a consequence of the British colonial government and the influx of new ideas imported by the profugi from the Italian *Risorgimento*. The pro-Italophils envisaged Malta as part of the Latin world whilst the British government and the Anglophils sought to detach Malta from its Italian roots.

The idea of a school of art; the brain child of Francesco Ferris and fulfilled by Mons. Enrico Dandria, was thus set up amidst this tense atmosphere. Inexorably this tension was translated within the walls of Casa Tessi, Old Bakery Street Valletta with the Caruana-Dingli brothers as the first headmasters of the school.

Once the socio-political context was set, the main objective of this dissertation was then properly introduced; the setting of an Etching class at the newly established Government School of Art. Indeed Printmaking possesses its own history on the island long before the dawn of the twentieth century. However establishing an official Etching Class within an Art institution was innovative and highly significant. This is testified by the Catalogue of student's works that was compiled and which constituted the main methodology for this research.

Officially appointed as Master of the Etching Class in 1936, the artistic personality of Carmelo Mangion orbits the very heart of this study; as a pioneer of Modern Art in Malta and one of the greatest teachers of Art the island has ever witnessed. Through studying Mangion's contributions as an artist, especially as an Etcher and teacher, it was possible to understand his role in local Art as well as his import from the international artistic scene. Whilst instructing his students to the Art of Etching, he instilled within them discipline through copying the great masters as well as enforcing the notion of individualisation of one's work. Furthermore he breathed a modern idiom into his class continuously enriching his students with examples from Art history, literature, music and sometimes even religion. The outcome was that Mangion's class was not simply a classroom but an avant-garde society of Art where students like Frank Baldacchino were inspired to go on and form artistic associations such as *The Bottega Group* and later the *Modern Art Circle*.

Due to its complex nature and many techniques, Etching was given great articulation in order to fully grasp the different ways in which both students and their etching master worked. Various techniques that Mangion taught within his class were described in detail and enriched by citing examples from Mangion's own work and his student's output. This in turn allowed for the most important section of this study to be understood; the Catalogue of Re-strike prints.

The main methodology complimenting the literature to this thesis took the form of a Catalogue. A substantial portion from the collection of plates at the School of Art was thoroughly cleaned and a Re-strike pulled from each plate. It was noted that a good number of plates were etched on both sides. The results were compiled into a catalogue from which a proper analysis was made possible. The investigation gave an insight on how students worked, what were their main sources of inspiration were, how their style and lines varied both in quantity and quality and also the ways in which these students were examined. Likewise it was exposed that the Etching class was not only a healthy environment for students but provided an opportunity for other members of the teaching staff to work in the medium. This opportunity was whole heartedly taken up by Robert Caruana-Dingli who left behind a large quantity of copper plates etched in his impeccable draughtsmanship. Thus Caruana-Dingli

must have in a way also influenced the Etching class of the Government School Art, which provided for interesting comparisons with Mangion.

A number of Case Studies were consequently drawn up in order to emphasise the high standard of the Etching Class. Five works were chosen and analysed in terms of technique, composition and style, comparing them with other works from the Catalogue. Furthermore, two Re-strikes in particular describing copies after Anders Zorn (1860-1920) and Edmund Blampied (1886-1966), were minutely analysed and compared with the works of the original print by the master. The re-prints of the students were superimposed onto that of the master in order to investigate on the method the student's utilised in copying the masters and what they were essentially aiming for through these exercises. This was done by printing the work by the student onto tracing paper to clearly see the similarities and discrepancies when superimposed over the original print by the master.

The research behind this dissertation principally consisted of both theory as well as practical hands-on work in Intaglio printmaking and printing. It is hoped that this thorough studying of a significant niche in the history of Art will contribute to further appreciate the National Artistic Heritage of Malta.

**A CATALOGUE
OF
INTAGLIO PLATES
FROM
THE COLLECTION OF
THE MALTA GOVERNMENT
SCHOOL OF ART**

PLATE 1



Attard (signed)
Rotherhithe – after
Whistler
Etching on Copper
24x17.8cm
Re-Strike by L.
Borg (2012)



Remarks:

In a good condition except for slight superficial
oxidisation stains.

Copper Plate

PLATE 2



Cremona (signed)
Cavalier with a horse, servant and dog – after Tiepolo
Etching on Copper
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)

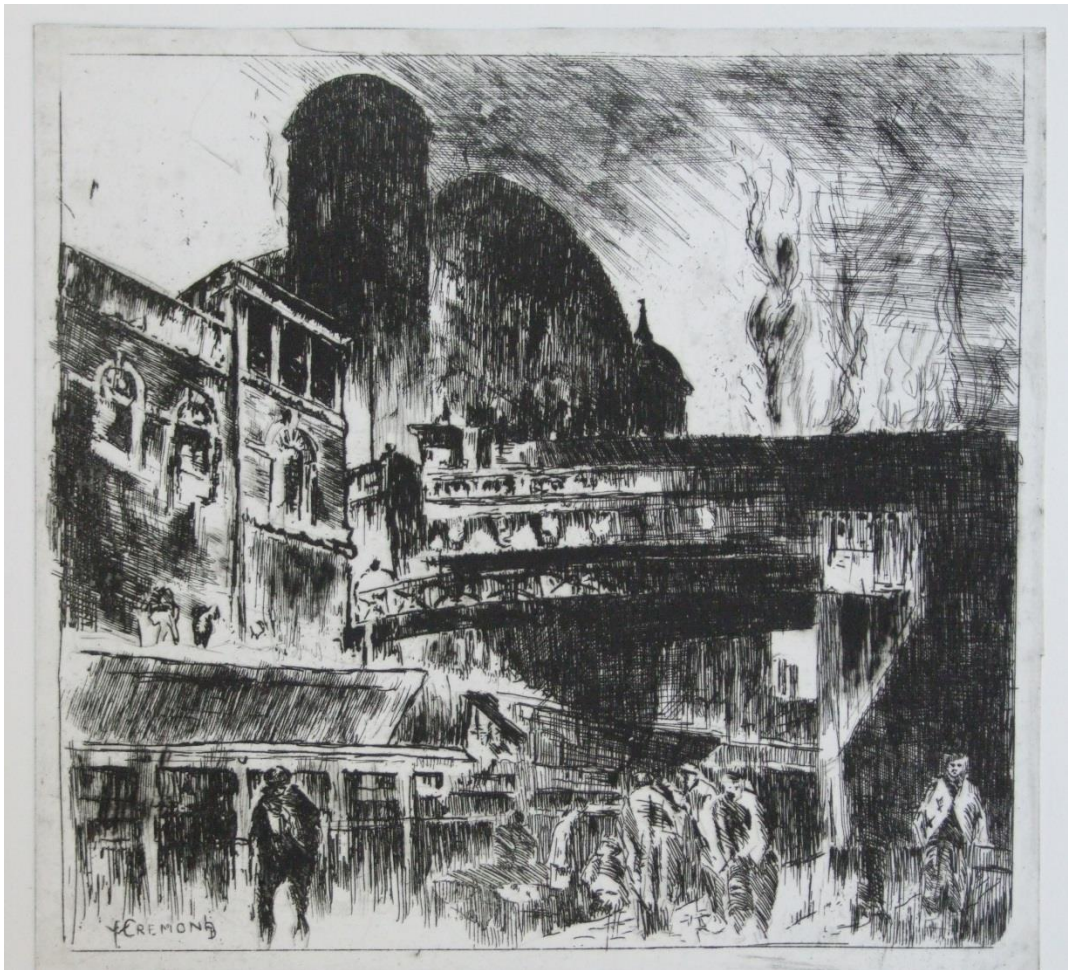


Remarks:

Slight superficial oxidisation stains and minor scratches.

Copper Plate

PLATE 3



Cremona (signed)
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
19x20cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

In a relatively good condition with minor superficial oxidisation stains and scratches.

Copper Plate

PLATE 4(a)



Cremona (signed)
La Galerie de Notre
Dame - after Charles
Meryon
Etching on Copper
23.4x12cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

In fairly good condition except for some superficial oxidisations stains spread all over the plate.

Copper Plate

PLATE 4(b)



Student-Etcher unknown
The Cowherd – after Claude Lorrain
Etching on Copper
14x23.2cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)

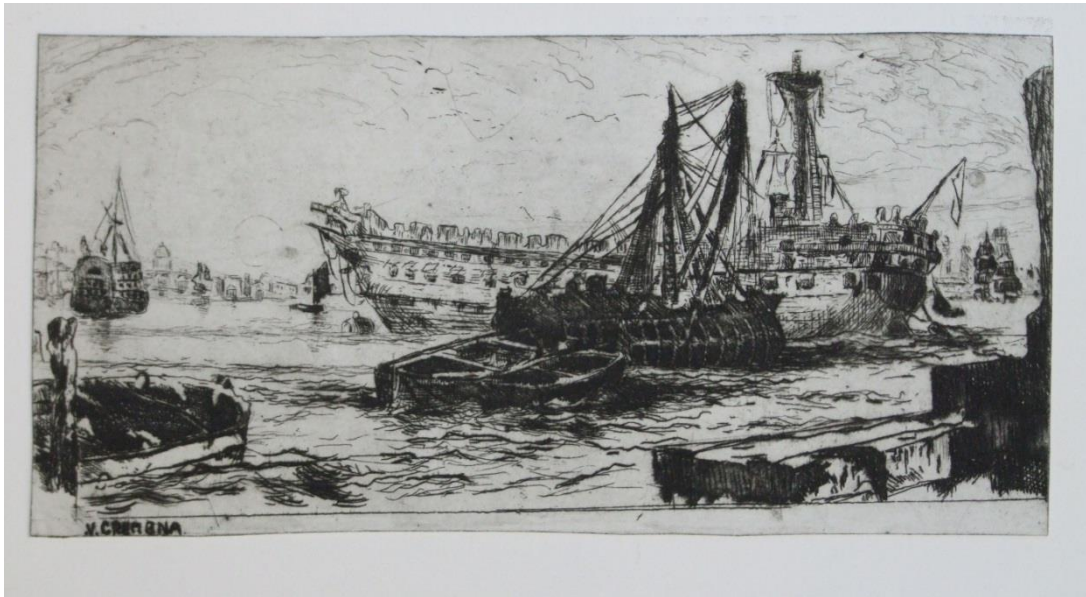


Copper Plate

Remarks:

In fairly good condition except for some superficial oxidisations stains spread all over the plate.

PLATE 5(a)



Cremona
Breaking up of the Agamemnon – after S. Haden
Etching on Copper
11x22.3cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Copper Plate

Remarks:

In a fairly good condition except for a deep scratch in the centre of the plate and slight superficial oxidisation marks. The edges are not cleanly cut

PLATE 5(b)



Student-Etcher unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
22.3x11cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

In a fairly good condition except to some foul biting. Due to the fact that side (a) was deeply etched, embossing and denting has resulted on side (b). The edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 6



Ingott (signed)
Une Premiere – after
Zorn
Etching on Copper
17.9x12.4cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

In a relatively good condition except for some scratching and foul biting. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 7



Privitera (signed)
Self Portrait - after
Goya
Etching on Copper
20.5x16cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

The signature seems to be lightly scratched in Drypoint.
The plate is in a relatively good condition except for some superficial oxidation around the edges.

Copper Plate

PLATE 8(a)



M. Cesareo (signed)
At the Piano – after
Zorn
Etching on Copper
19.1x13.7cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

The signature seems to be lightly scratched in Drypoint. Slight but extensive scratches cover the plate, with minor superficial oxidation stains. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 8(b)



M. Spiteri (signed)
Title unknown
Etching on Cream Paper
13.6x9cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

There are two signatures located at the bottom of the plate that seem to be lightly scratched in Drypoint. Foul biting and slight scratching can also be noted. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 9



Student-Etcher
unknown
King Oscar II - after
Zorn
Etching on Copper
18x12.2cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

Heavy foul biting at the bottom of the plate. Otherwise in a relatively good condition. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 10(a)



Student- Etcher
unknown
Sappho - after Zorn
Etching on Copper
24x17.1cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

Slight but extensive scratches cover the plate, with minor superficial oxidation stains. Foul biting along all the edges which are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 10(b)



Mamo (signed)
Copy after
Rembrandt
Etching on Copper
24x17.1cm
Re-Strike by L.
Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Heavy oxidation and slight scratches all over the plate.
Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 11



Student-Etcher
unknown
The artist & his wife –
after Zorn
Etching on Copper
24.4x16.1cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

Relatively good condition except for some slight scratching all over the plate. Some foul biting is also present at the edge. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 12



Student-Etcher
unknown
Prince Eugene of
Sweden - after Zorn
Etching on Copper
15.2x11cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

Heavy fowl biting found on the left edge. Scratches and indentations on the left top corner. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 13



Student-Etcher
unknown
St Francis in
Meditation - after
Zurbaran (1635-9)
Etching on Copper
23x20.3cm
Re-Strike by L.
Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Print is of high quality and in a relatively good condition

Copper Plate

PLATE 14



E. Tonna (signed reversed)
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
18.5x9.5cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

In a relatively good condition. Edges are not cleanly cut.
Signature is in Drypoint and not in reverse.

Copper Plate

PLATE 15(a)



Willie Apap (signed)
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
17.5x12.5cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)

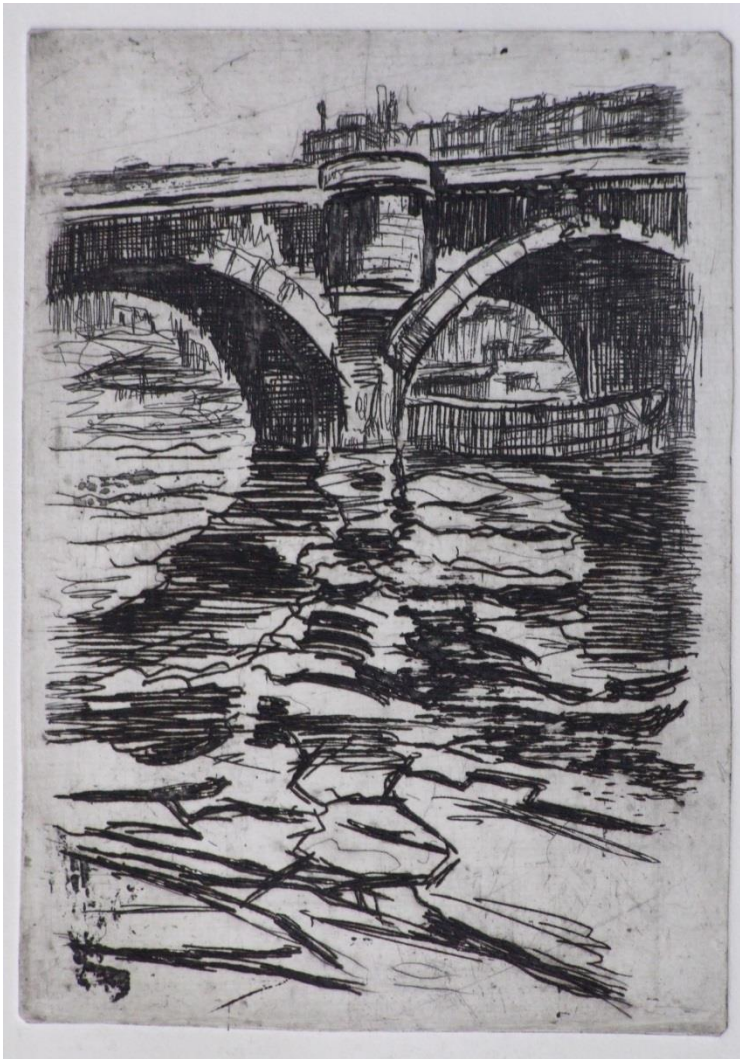


Remarks:

Relatively good condition with slight fowl biting at the edges. Signature is etched and edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 15(b)



Student-Etcher unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
17.5x12.5cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop
(2014)



Remarks:

Slight foul biting and stains. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 16



Robert Caruana Dingli (signed in reverse)
Harbour 3
Etching on Copper
15.5x22.4cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Heavy indentation due to mishandling of the plate. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 17



Robert Caruana Dingli (signed in reverse)
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
13.2x18.5cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

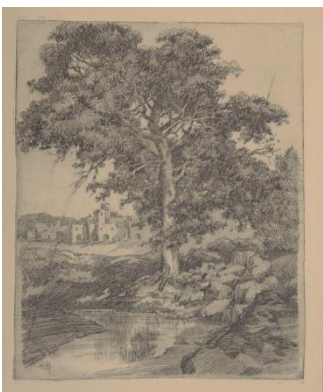
Relatively good condition except for fowl biting at the edges. Edges are also not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 18



Robert Caruana Dingli
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
17.5x12.5cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

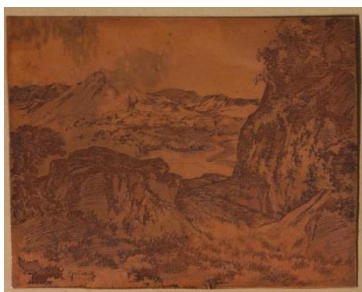
The plate is in a relatively good condition with slight superficial scratching throughout.

Copper Plate

PLATE 19



Robert Caruana Dingli
Mountains
Etching on Copper
14.9x19cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)

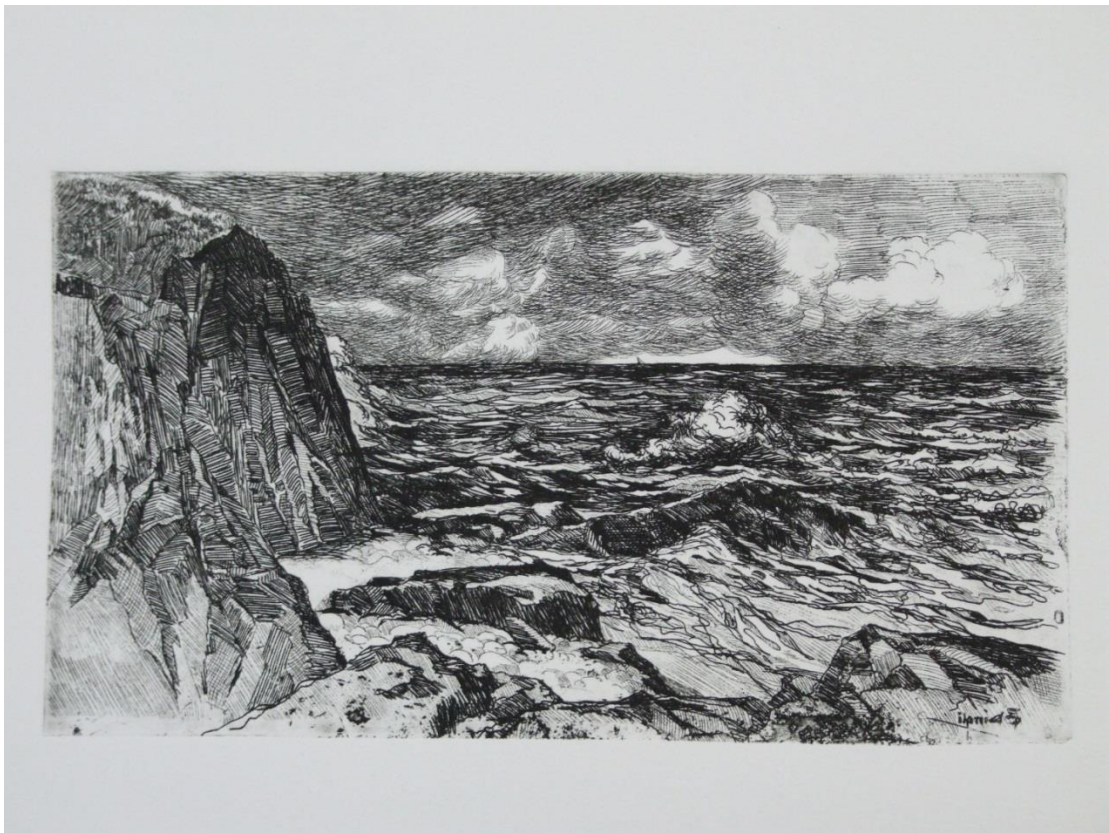


Remarks:

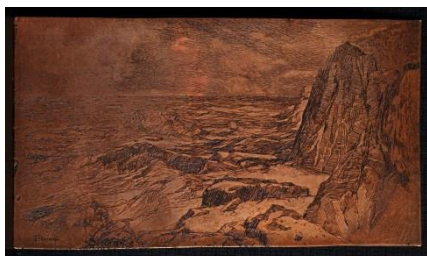
Foul biting at the bottom edge as well as oxidation stains. Signature is etched and edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 20



Robert Caruana Dingli (signed in reverse)
Rough Sea
Etching on Copper
13.2x18.5cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Relatively good condition except for some foul biting. Signature is etched and edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 21



Robert Caruana Dingli
Tree & Mountain
Etching on Copper
22x15.2cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

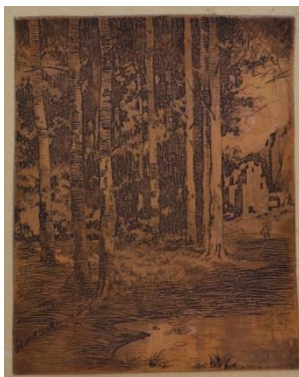
Good condition with a slight dent. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 22



Robert Caruana
Dingli
Tress 2
Etching on Copper
17.6x14.2cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

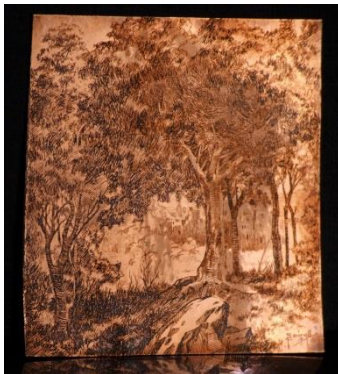
Very good condition. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 23



Robert Caruana Dingli (signed not in reverse)
Tress & Hamlet 2
Etching on Copper
15.7x16.7cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Good condition. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 24



Robert Caruana Dingli
Boat
Etching on Copper
17.4x23.5cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Copper Plate

Remarks:

Very good condition with slight foul biting. Edges are not cleanly cut.

PLATE 25



Attributed through stylistic grounds to Robert Caruana Dingli
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
19.2x19.7cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)

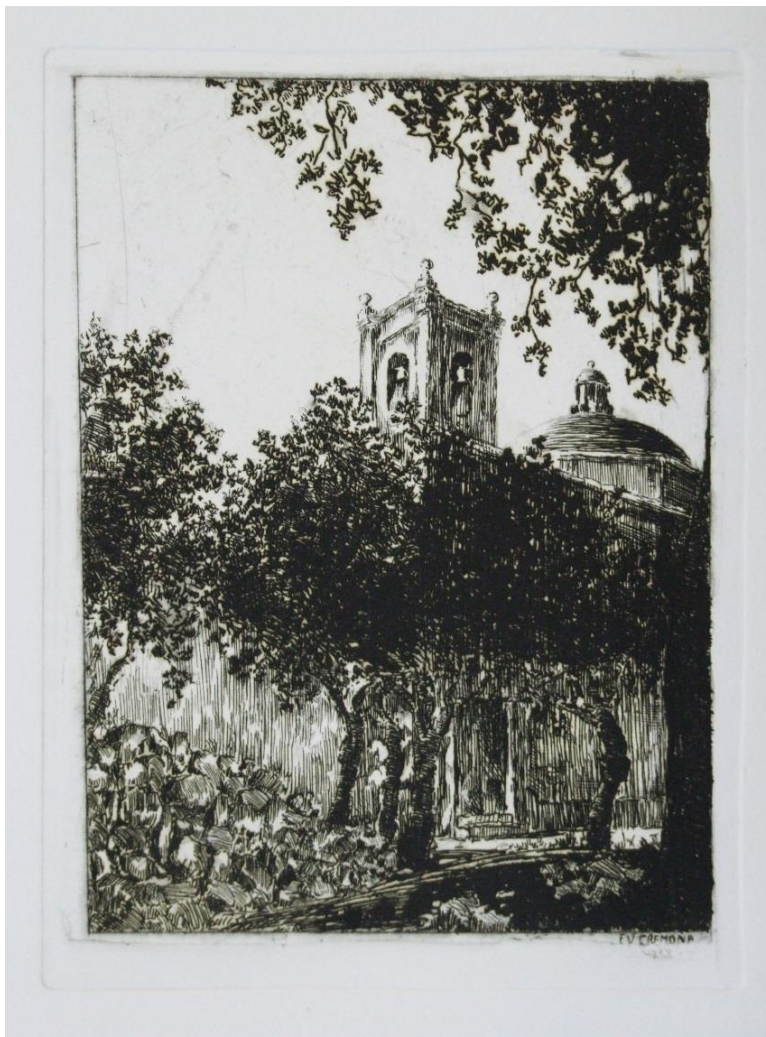


Remarks:

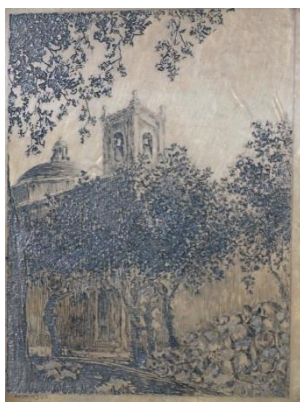
In a very bad state of preservation perhaps through mishandling.

Copper Plate

PLATE 26



Cremona (signed)
Church, 1937
Etching on Copper
21x15.9cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

In a good condition with slight scratches. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 27



Cremona (signed)
Lace 2
Etching on Copper
9.2x6cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)

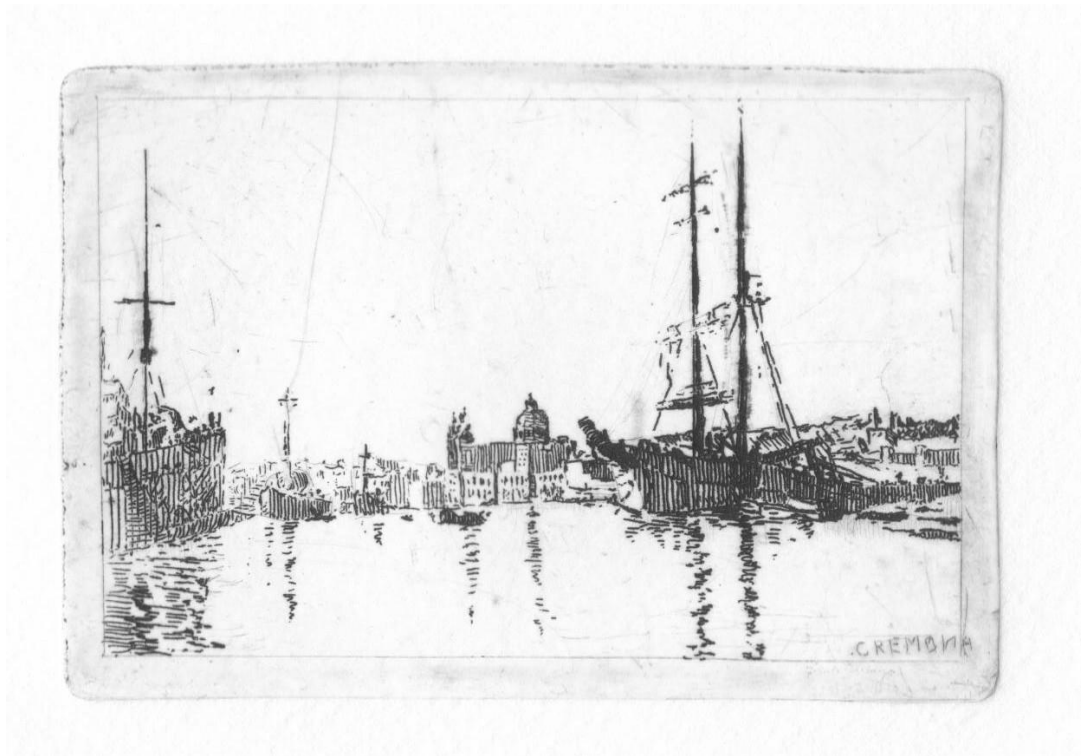


Remarks:

Slight fowl biting at the edges and minor indentations.

Copper Plate

PLATE 28(a)



Cremona
Msida 3
Etching on Copper
9.2x6.2cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Copper Plate

Remarks:

In a very good state of preservation.

PLATE 28(b)



Cremona
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
9.2x6cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

In a very good state of preservation.

Copper Plate

PLATE 29(a)



Cremona (signed)
Skull
Etching on Copper
16.2x23.3cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Due to the fact that side (a) was deeply etched, embossing and denting has resulted on side (b). The edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 29(b)



Student-etcher unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
16.2x23.3cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Oxidisation stains and many scratches. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 30(a)



Portelli (signed)
Egyptian Temple – after William Walcot
Etching on Copper
14.6x19.4cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)

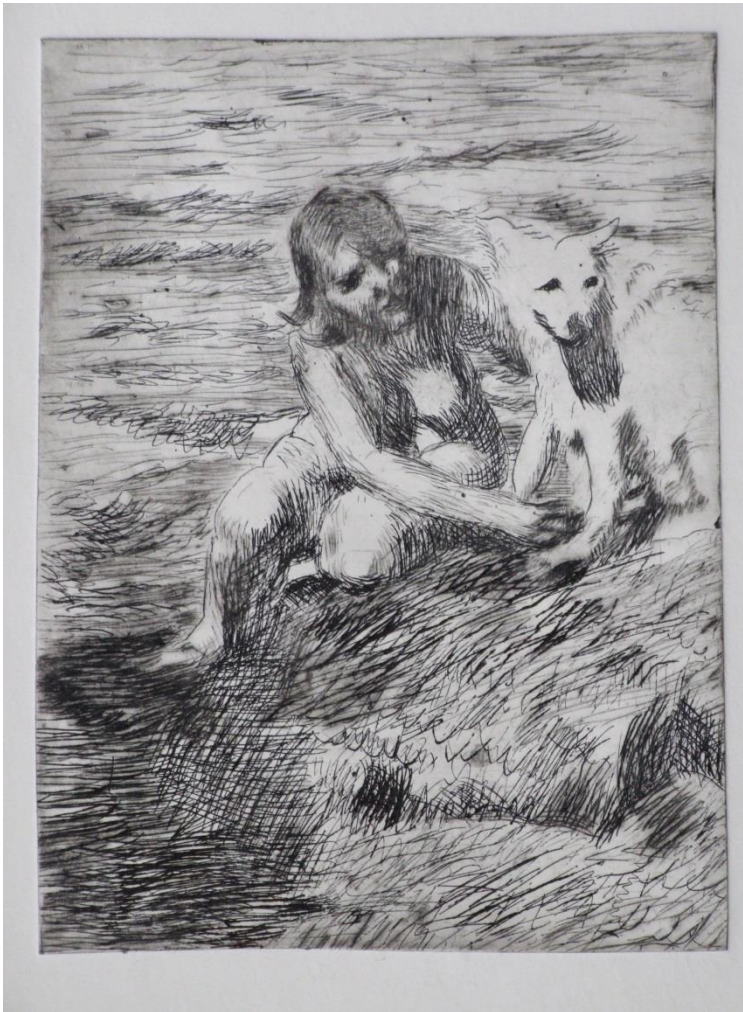


Remarks:

Slight oxidation stains and edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

Plate 30(b)



Student-Etcher unknown
Sappho – after Zorn
Etching on Copper
19.4x14.6cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop
(2014)



Remarks:

In a relatively good state of preservation. Design is however of a weak execution

Copper Plate

PLATE 31



Portelli (signed) 1937
Basilica of Maxentius – after William Walcot
Etching and Aquatint on Copper
14.5x22.9cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Relatively good condition except for heavy indentation

Copper Plate

PLATE 32



Student-Etcher unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
14.5x22.9cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

The plate is in a good condition with slight oxidization stains. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 33



Student-Etcher unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
13.2x18.7cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Very good condition except for slight foul biting at the edges. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 34



Stylistically attributed to Carmelo Mangion
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
21.3x31.5cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Relatively good condition. Horse seems to be in
Drypoint and has been worn away.

Copper Plate

PLATE 35



Mangion (unsigned) ?
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
17.6x22cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

In a relatively good state of preservation accept for oxidisation stains and slight scratching.

Copper Plate

PLATE 36



Student-Etcher unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
14.5x22.9cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

In a good state of preservation with slight superficial oxidisation stains and scratching. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 37(a)



Stylistically attributed to Carmelo Mangion
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
17.5x22.8cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Relatively good state. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 37(b)



M. Camilleri (signed)
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
14.5x22.9cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Heavy oxidation throughout the plate. Signature has faded and in Drypoint. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 38(a)



Stylistically attributed to Carmelo Mangion
Loading
Etching on Copper
17.7x20.6cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Good condition except for slight scratches. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 38(b)



Xuereb (signed in reverse)
Title unknown
Etching on Copper
17.7x20.6cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Good condition except for minor foul biting and slight superficial scratches all over the plate. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 39(a)



Cremona (signed)
Emmaus
Etching on
Copper
23x18.1cm
Re-Strike by L.
Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Fair condition except for some slight oxidisation stains and superficial scratches throughout. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 39(b)



Student-Etcher unknown
The Feast of Lazarus, Lame Beggars – after Frank Brangqyn
Etching on Copper
18.1x23cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)

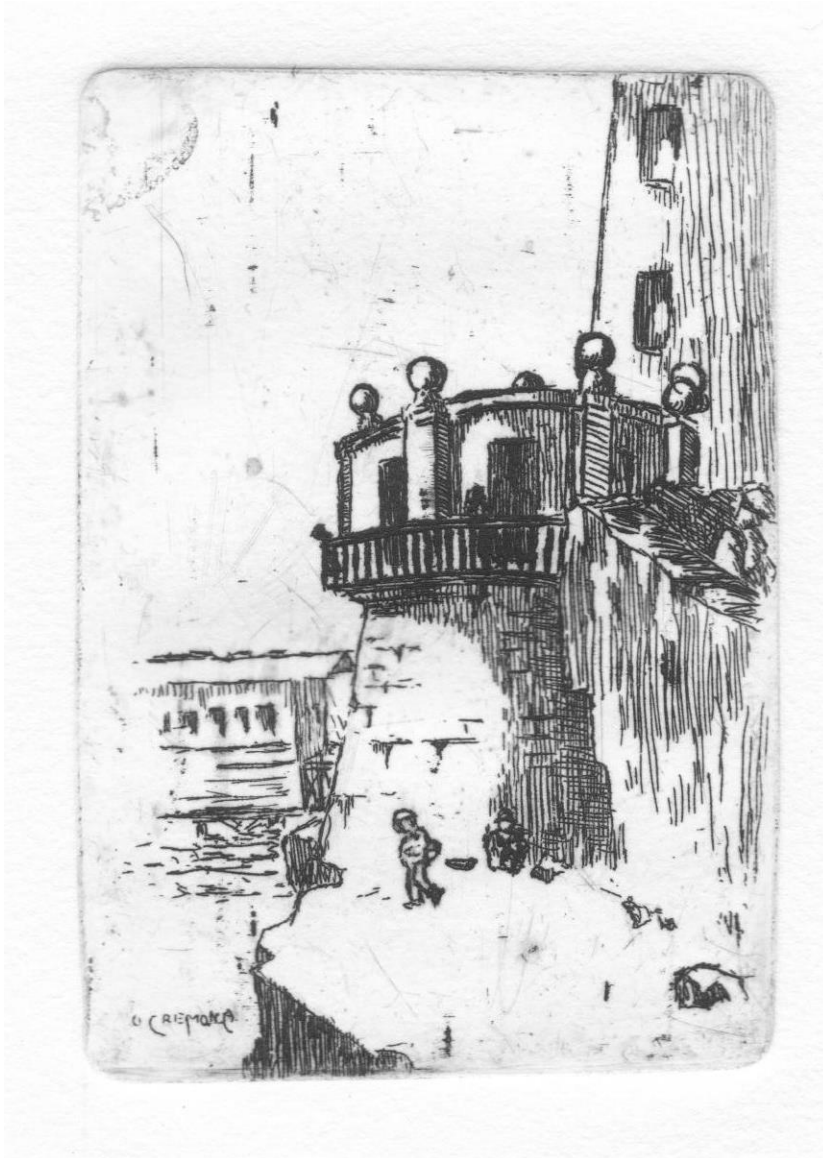


Copper Plate

Remarks:

Relatively good condition except for minor oxidisation stains and fowl biting. Edges are not cleanly cut

PLATE 40



Cremona (signed)
Fisheries
Etching on Copper
9x6.2cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

Scratching and indentations and edges are not cleanly cut.
Side (b) is very faintly etched revealing a donkey and cart.

Copper Plate

PLATE 41



Cremona (signed)
Guard
Etching on Copper
9.3x6.2cm
Re-Strike by L.
Borg (2012)



Remarks:

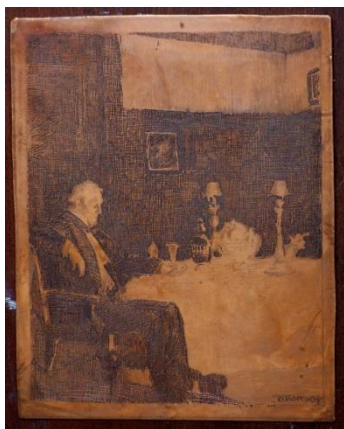
Slight foul bitings at the bottom. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 42



Cremona (signed)
At the Table
Etching on Copper
18.5x15cm
Re-Strike by L.
Borg (2012)

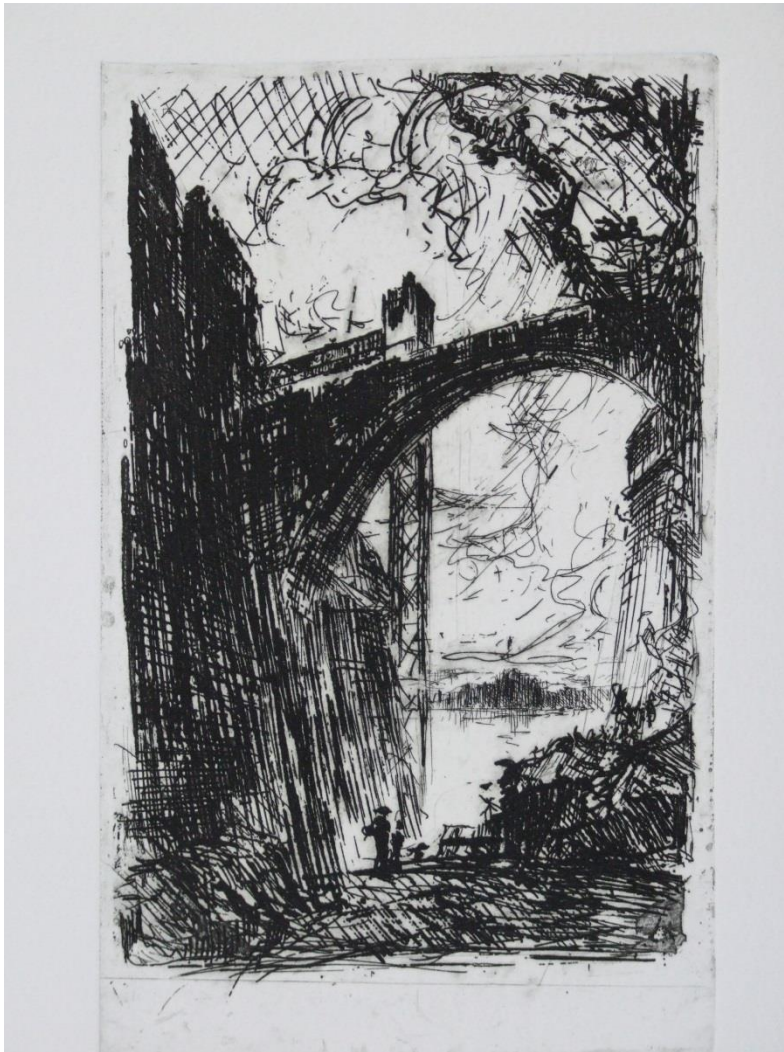


Remarks:

Fairly good condition. Foreground is very slightly etched or drypoint. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 43



Stylistically attributed
to Carmelo Mangion
Barakka Lift
Etching on Copper
22x13.2cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

Good condition except for slight foul biting

Copper Plate

PLATE 44



Stylistically
attributed to
Carmelo Mangion
Barakka Lift
Etching on Copper
21x11.5cm
Re-Strike by L.
Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Good condition.

Copper Plate

PLATE 45



Stylistically
attributed to
Carmelo Mangion
Mosta Bridge
Etching on Copper
20x16cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg
(2012)



Remarks:

Relatively good condition except for fowl biting at the edges and indentions.

Copper Plate

PLATE 46



Stylistically attributed to Carmelo Mangion
Rainy Day
Etching on Copper
16x22.6cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Relatively good condition except for slight indentations. Edges are not cleanly cut

Copper Plate

PLATE 47



Stylistically attributed to Carmelo Mangion
Power Station
Etching on Zinc
22.5x16cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)

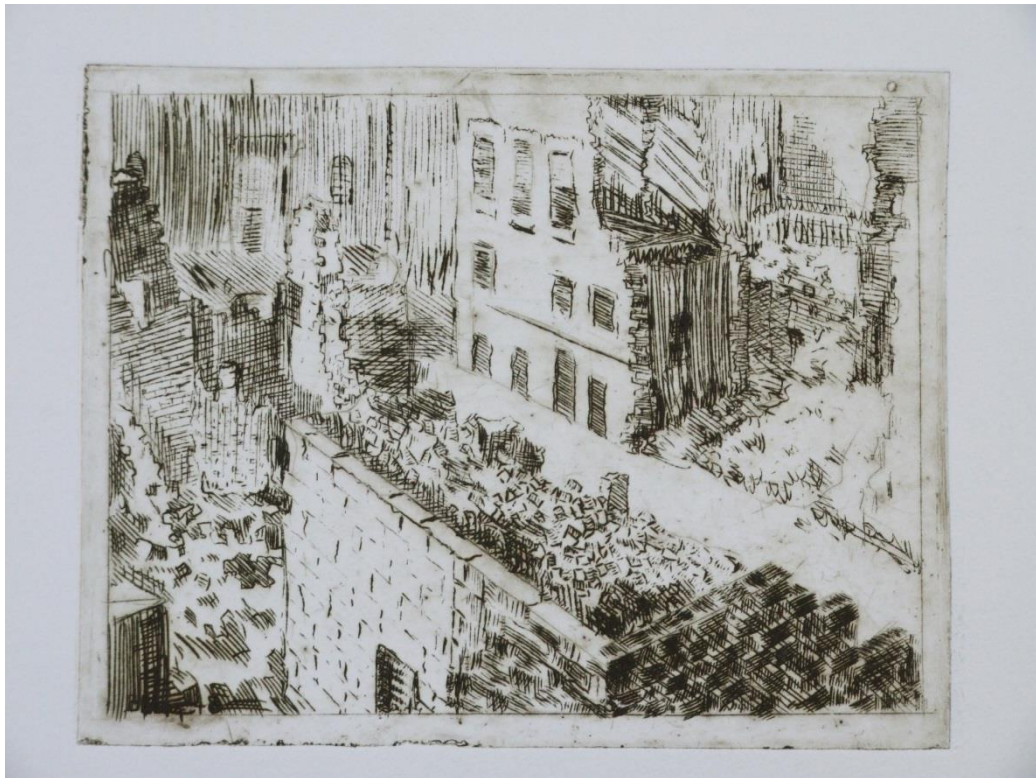


Remarks:

Good condition

Copper Plate

PLATE 48



Student-Etcher unknown
Title Unknown
Etching on Copper
12.5x15.9cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

In a relatively good condition except for some slight scratching. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 49



Portelli (signed)
Villa Quintilii, Ancient Rome – after William Walcott
Etching on Copper
16.5x23.5cm
Re-Strike by L. Borg (2012)



Remarks:

Foul biting and oxidisation stains occur around the corners of the plate. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 50



Robert Caruana Dingli
(signed)
Title unknown
Etching on Cream Paper
17.2x13.2cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop
(2013)



Remarks:

The plate is in a relatively good state of preservation. The edges of the plate are irregularly cut and not beveled. Foul biting occurs at the bottom edge. Light oxidization stains are present in various parts. Damage in the form of ripples is present at top right corner. The plate is etched on both sides but the work on one side seems to have been cancelled by the etcher.

Copper Plate

PLATE 51



Robert Caruana Dingli
(signed)
Title unknown
Etching on Cream Paper
20.8x17.1cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop
(2013)



Remarks:

Foul biting & oxidization & scratches & indentation

Copper Plate

PLATE 52



Etcher Unknown
The Feast of Lazarus Lame Beggars - after Frank Brangwyn
Etching on Cream Paper
17.8x24.2cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2013)



Remarks:

Good condition except for slight scratches and oxidization. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 53(a)



Stylistically
attributed to Frank
Portelli
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
22.2x15.7cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2013)



Remarks:

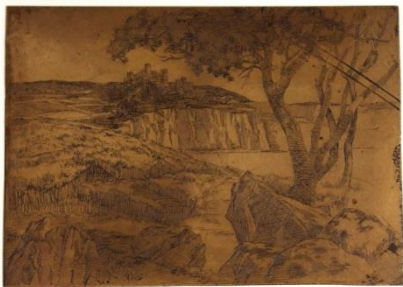
Heavy foul biting and oxidization. Slight indentations also appear. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 53(b)



Attributed on stylistic grounds to Robert Caruana Dingli
Title unknown
Etching on Cream Paper
16x12.4cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2013)



Remarks:

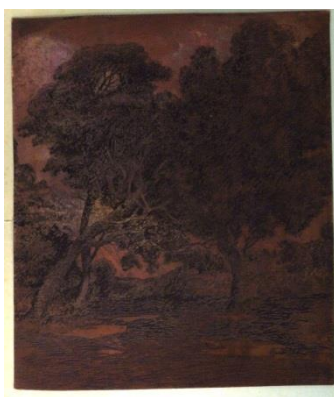
Heavy indentations and slight foul biting on the edges..

Copper Plate

PLATE 54(a)



Robert Caruana
Dingli (signed)
Title unknown
Etching on
Cream Paper
17.3x14.8cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2013)



Remarks:

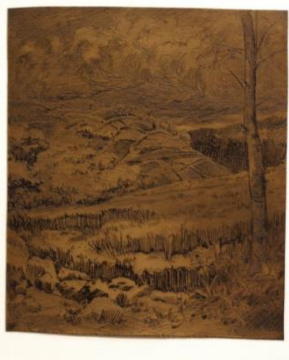
Good condition. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 54(b)



Robert Caruana
Dingli ?
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
17.3x14.8cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2013)



Remarks:

Foul biting at the bottom of the plate. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 55(a)



Robert Caruana Dingli
Title unknown
Etching on Cream Paper
6.2x21cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2013)



Remarks:

Embossing results due to heavy biting on the other side of the plate. Furthermore foul biting occurred at the bottom edges where they also prove to have been unfiled well.

Copper Plate

PLATE 55(b)



Attribute on stylistic ground to Carmelo Mangion
Title unknown – Wied is-Sewda?
Etching on Cream Paper
6.2x21cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2013)



Remarks:

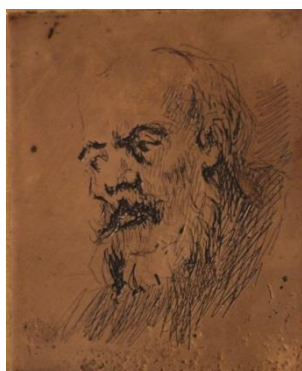
Embossing results due to heavy biting on the other side of the plate. Furthermore foul biting occurred at the bottom edges where they also prove to have been unfiled well.

Copper Plate

PLATE 56



Student-Etcher
unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
8.6x7cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Copper Plate

Remarks:

The plate is finely needled; probably with two needles and two bitings. Foul biting is found throughout the lower part of the plate. The right side of the plate is not squarely cut.

PLATE 57



Student-Etcher unknown
Msida
Etching on Cream Paper
13.2x17.4cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Slight scratching of the plate. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 58



Robert Caruana Dingli
(signed)
DREAMS!
Etching on Cream Paper
23.8x16cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop
(2014)



Remarks:

Relatively good condition except for slight oxidisation and indentations.

Copper Plate

PLATE 59(a)



Student-Etcher
unknown
Clemet De Jonghe,
Printseller – after
Rembrandt
Etching on Cream
Paper
21.4x16.6cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)

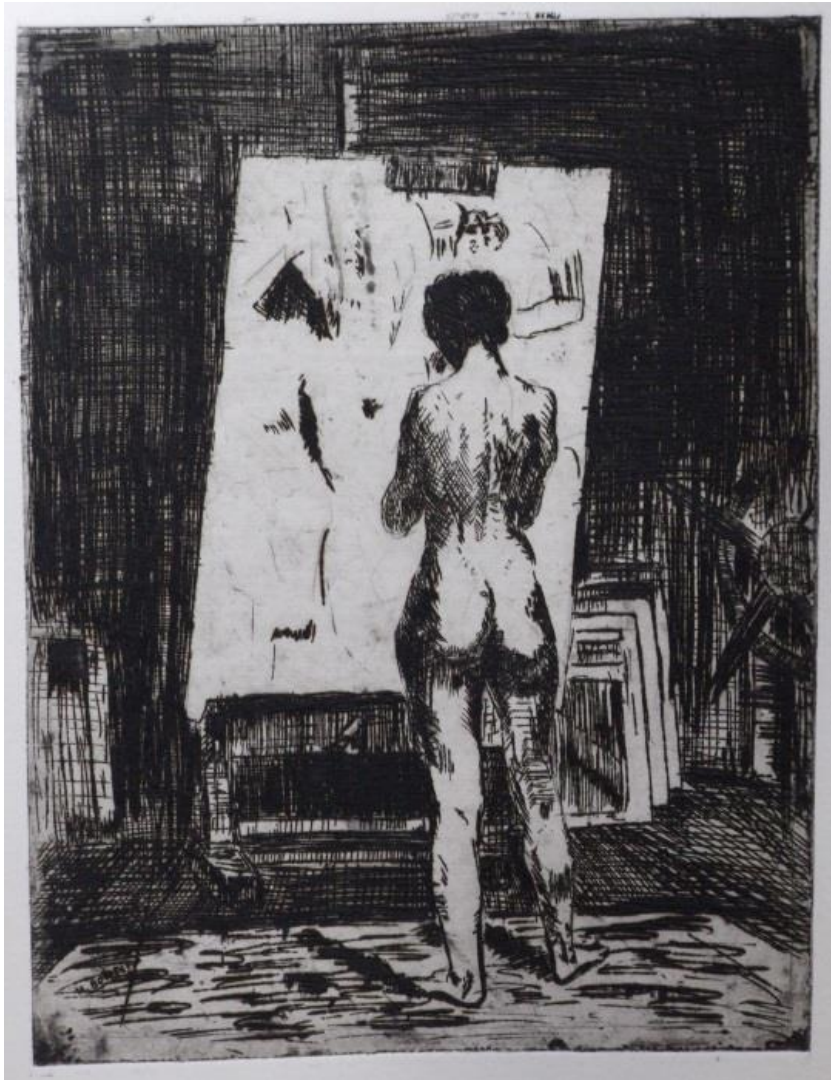


Remarks:

Oxidisation and indentations with an unfinished design.
Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 59(b)



H. Bonnici
(signed)
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
21.4x16.6cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)

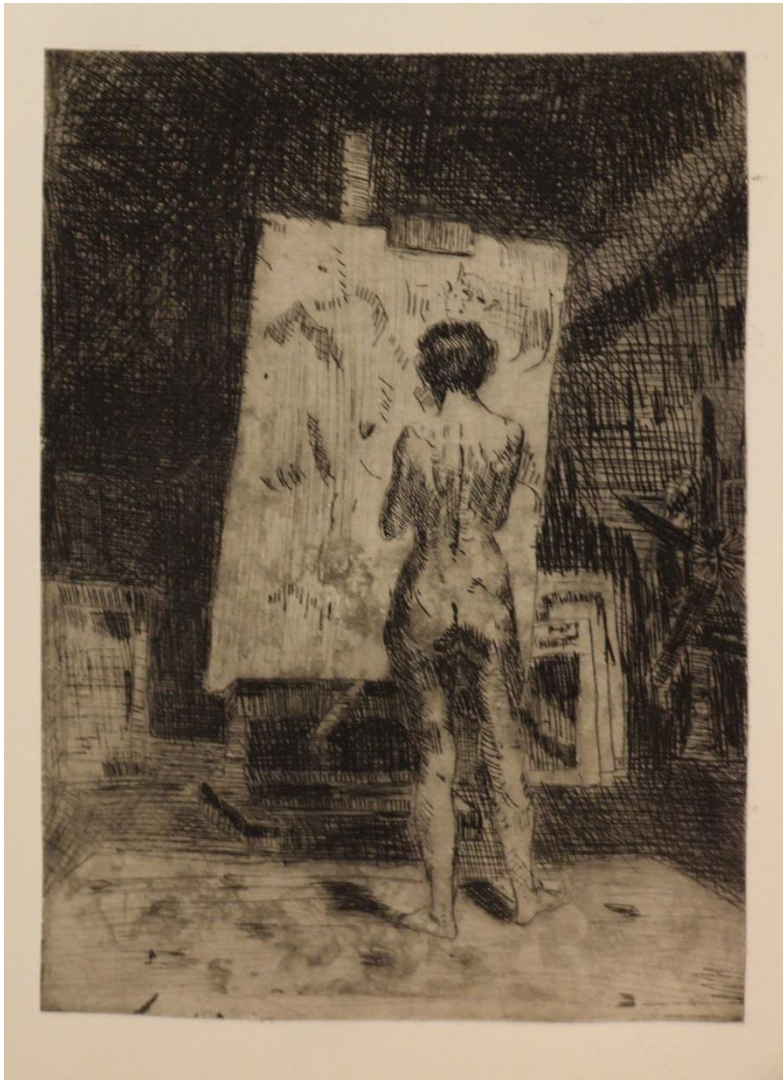


Remarks:

Heavy oxidation occurs throughout the plate. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 60(a)



Student-Etcher
unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
24x17.5cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Oxidisation and heavy foul biting. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 60(b)



Student-Etcher unknown
Villa Quintilii, Ancient Rome Architecture – after William Walcot
Etching on Cream Paper
24x17.6cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

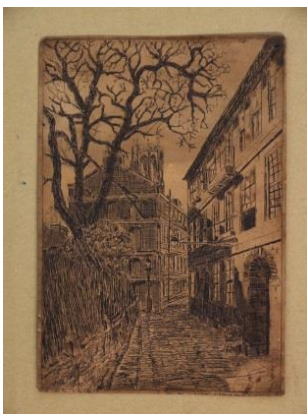
Relatively good condition except for oxidisation stains.

Copper Plate

PLATE 61



Student-Etcher
unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
21.7x15cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Relatively good condition except for edges not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 62(a)



Attributed on stylistic grounds to Robert Caruana Dingli
Title unknown
Etching on Cream Paper
16.4x21.4cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Design is incomplete perhaps due to heavy open biting.

Copper Plate

PLATE 62(b)



Student-Etcher unknown
Title unknown – COPY?
Etching on Cream Paper
16.4x21.4cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Slight scratches and oxidisation throughout and edges reveal fowl biting.

Copper Plate

PLATE 63(a)



Mizzi (signed)
Title unknown
Etching on Cream Paper
14.5x20cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Design is weak and incomplete. Scratches, indentations and oxidisation appear throughout. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 63(b)



Student-Etcher
unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
20x14.5cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)

Remarks:

Oxidisation all over. Edges are not cleanly cut.



Copper Plate

PLATE 64(a)



Student-Etcher
unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
23.5x17.7cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Oxidisation stains throughout and slight indentations.
Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 64(b)



Student-Etcher
unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
23.5x17.7cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Foul biting and oxidation stains. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 65



Student-Etcher
unknown
The Return of the
Prodigal Son –
after Rembrandt
Etching on Cream
Paper
17x15cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Relatively good condition except for slight
scratching. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 66



Student-Etcher
unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
17.5x14cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Relatively good condition except for slight oxidisation stains. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 67



Student-Etcher
unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
7.2x6.5cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Oxidisation stains and scratching throughout. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 68



Student-Etcher
unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
16.7x12.2cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Relatively good condition except for oxidation stains throughout. Edges are not cleanly cut. Side (b) appears to be unfinished.

Copper Plate

PLATE 69(a)



J. Farrugia
(signed)
Thermae of
Caracalla – after
David Y. Cameron
(1924)
Etching on Cream
Paper
12.2x17.7cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Heavy open biting and indentations. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 69(b)



Signed
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
12.2x17.7cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)

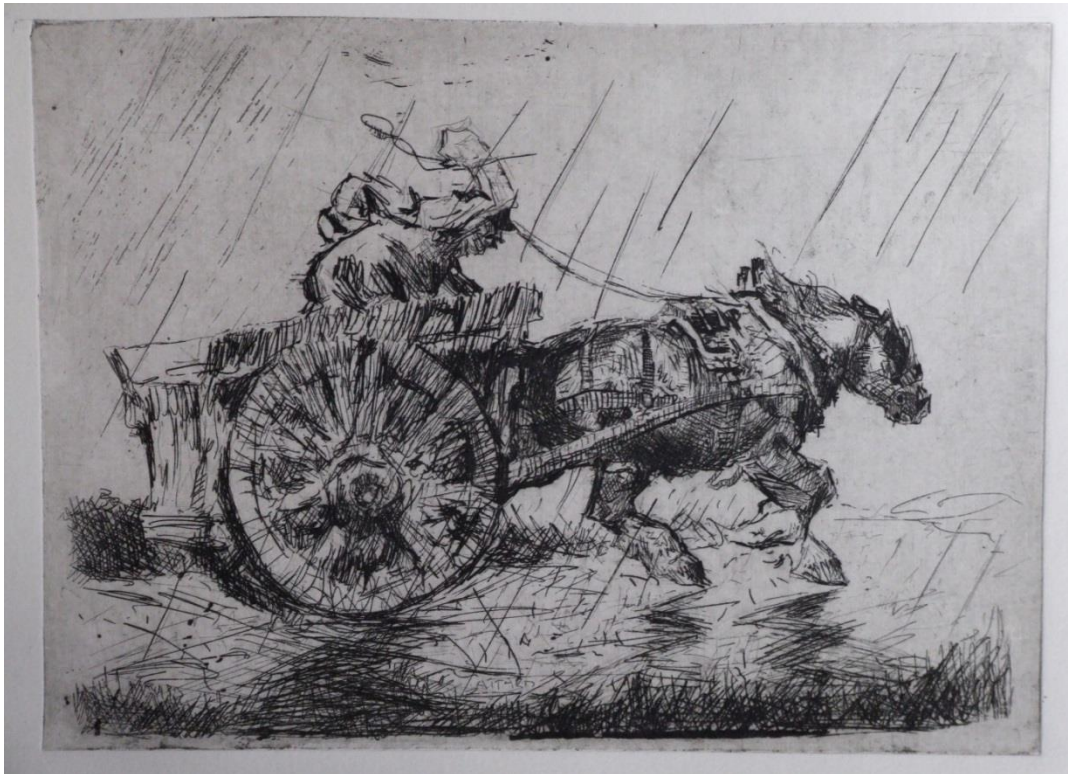


Remarks:

Heavy indentations due to heavy open biting on side (a).
Design is weak and incomplete

Copper Plate

PLATE 70



Student-Etcher unknown
Driving Home in the Rain – copy after Edmund Blampied
Etching on Cream Paper
18.2x24.7cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Foul biting appear at the bottom .Indentations also appear. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 71(a)



Student-Etcher unknown
Vallkulla – after Zorn
Etching on Cream Paper
21.1x13.5cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop
(2014)



Remarks:

Heavy indentations due to heavy etching on side (b).
Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 71(b)



Student-Etcher unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream Paper
21.1x13.5cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop
(2014)



Remarks:

Heavy foul biting and edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 72(a)



Student-Etcher unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream Paper
14x18cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Oxidisation stains around the edges and indentations throughout. Slight open biting also appears. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 72(b)



Stylistically attributed to Mangion ?
Title unknown
Etching on Cream Paper
14x18cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Scratching throughout. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 73



Student-Etcher
unknown
Gerda Hagborg III –
after Zorn
Etching on Cream
Paper
17.5x10.7cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Heavy oxidisation throughout. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 74(a)



Student-Etcher
unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
13x11.5cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Relatively good condition except for slight discolouration due to oxidation. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 74(b)



Student-Etcher unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream Paper
13x11.5cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Copper Plate

Remarks:

Foul biting and slight discolouration due to oxidisation. Edges are not cleanly cut.

PLATE 75(a)



Student-Etcher
unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
18.8x23cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)
24.03.2014

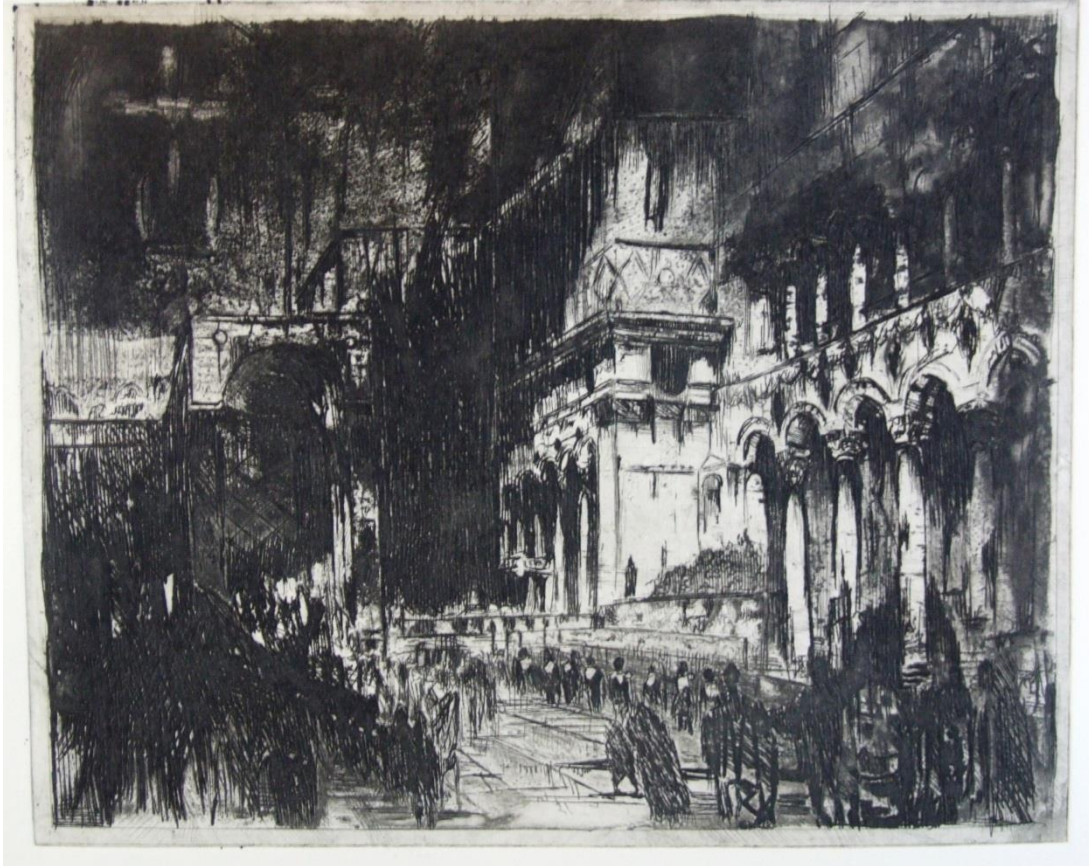


Remarks:

Oxidisation stains around the edges and slight scratching. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 75(b)



Stylistically attributed to Carmelo Mangion ?
Emperor Justinian Theodora Hagia Sofia – after William Walcot
Etching on Cream Paper
23x18.8cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Etching, aquatint and stipling. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 76(a)



Student-Etcher unknown
Still Life
Etching on Cream Paper
20x15.6cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop
(2014)



Remarks:

Oxidisation stains throughout. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 76(b)



Helen Cavarra
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
20x15.6cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop
(2014)



Remarks:

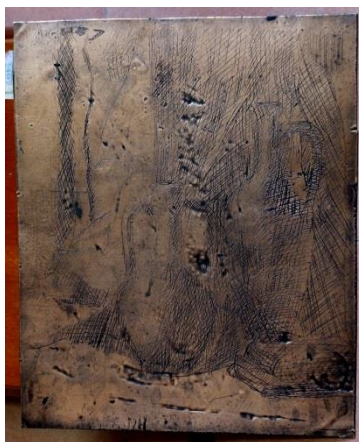
Preparatory sketch and a print of the etching are to be found in the Cavarra/Wirth private collection.

Copper Plate

PLATE 77(a)



Student-Etcher
unknown
Still Life
Etching on Cream
Paper
22.4x17cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Heavy indentations due to foul biting on side (b).
Oxidisation stains are also evident. Edges are not
cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 77(b)



Student-Etcher
unknown
Still Life
Etching on Cream
Paper
22.4x17cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Heavy biting, oxidisation and indentations stains throughout. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 78



Robert Caruana Dingli
HELP!
Etching on Cream Paper
10.5x13.9cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Relatively good condition except to some scratching. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 79



Student-Etcher unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream Paper
20.3x13.9cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop
(2014)



Remarks:

Relatively good condition except for slight superficial scratches. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 80(a)



Student-Etcher
unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
17.5x13cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Foul biting at the edges and slight indentations. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 80(b)



Student-Etcher unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream Paper
13x17.5cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Copper Plate

Remarks:

Heavy foul biting on the edges. Edges are not cleanly cut.

PLATE 81



E. Zahra (signed)
HAPPY
CHRISTMAS
Etching on Cream
Paper
13.3x10.2cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Indentations and slight oxidation stains.

Copper Plate

PLATE 82



Student-Etcher
unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
16.4x11cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Oxidisation stains and foul biting. Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 83(a)



Student-Etcher
unknown
Title unknown
Etching on Cream
Paper
16.3x10.8cm
Re-Strike by S.
Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Foul biting occurs at the edges. Indentations throughout.
Edges are not cleanly cut.

Copper Plate

PLATE 83(b)



Student-Etcher unknown
Self Portrait - after Zorn
Etching on Cream Paper
10.8x16.3cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop (2014)



Remarks:

Heavy scratching and indentations. Plate has been cut to be utilised for side (a). Plate has been used for experimentation

Copper Plate

PLATE 84



Farrugia (signed)
Title unknown
Etching on Cream Paper
19.2x11.7cm
Re-Strike by S. Chircop
(2014)



Remarks:

Foul biting appears at the bottom as well as oxidisations stains throughout. Edges are not cleanly cut. Side (b) has another work which seems to be unfinished

Copper Plate

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Cassar Adrienne, 14th December 2013

Cassar Adrienne, 17th February 2014

Cassar Adrienne, 6th March 2014

Cassar Adrienne, 7th April 2014

Cassar Adrienne, 21st April 2014

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Caruana Ruggier Alfred, 24th February 2014

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Attard Christian

‘An Italian artistic presence in 19th and 20th century Malta, 1850-1960’, unpublished M.A. dissertation, Department of History of Art, University of Malta, 1999

(The socio-political context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was consulted when discussing the context that gravitated around the setting up of the School of Art in Valletta)

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‘Twentieth Century Religious Paintings and Sculptures in Malta: a critical and historical analysis’, unpublished M.A. dissertation, Department of History of Art, University of Malta, 2005

(This Thesis was consulted for its detailed documentation on the setting up of the Government School of Art as well as the socio-political context that surrounded it)

Cassar Joseph Paul

Carmelo Mangion, His Life and Works 1905-1977, Midsea Books, Malta, 2007

(Cassar’s publication outlines the life of Carmelo Mangion, as a personality and artist of twentieth century Malta. It proved highly helpful for its biographical details as well as a catalogue of the most part of Mangion’s works)

Conversations with 12 Maltese Artists, Publikazzjonijiet Indipendenza, Malta, 2007

(This series of recorded conversations between the author and 12 Modern Maltese artists provides a better understanding of the evolution and concerns of Modern and Contemporary Art in Malta. The conversations with Frank Portelli and Frank Baldacchino were applied in context)

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(Cassar provides an in depth analysis of the history of Modern Art in Malta outlining the protagonists. It provided a historical and contextual understanding of the early twentieth century in Malta)

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Etching Techniques, Batdford Limited, London, 1976

(This publication provided helpful illustrations on the technique of Etching)

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‘Vincent Apap’, *Malta: Six Modern Artists*, Fenech, Victor (ed.), Malta University Press, Msida, 1991

(Cutajar provided useful biographical details about one of the headmaster’s of the School of Art; Vincent Apap)

Ganado Albert

‘Pietro Paolo Caruana: The First Lithographs produced in Malta’, in *Proceedings of History Week 1981*, edited by Mario Buhagiar, Veritas Press, Malta 1982

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(This publication was consulted for its detailed study of the different printmaking techniques that proved helpful when discussing those techniques relevant to the Etching Class of the Government School of Art)

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(Hind extensively illustrates the history of Engraving and Etching which proved particularly useful for the latter outlining the major influences)

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The Art of Etching, Seeley Service, London 1925

(Lumsden's publication is located at the School of Art's Library and is perhaps the best publication the students could have consulted. Till today it is regarded as the seminal treatise on the subject of etching)

Muscat Arthur

'Carmelo Mangion (1905-1977); An appreciation of an artist by a friend' in *Treasures of Malta Vol. 20 Issue 1, Christmas 2013*, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2013

(This article was helpful in understanding and appreciating Carmelo Mangion through the words of a friend)

Muscat Lavinia

‘Carmelo Mangion: a pioneer of Modern Art in Malta’, unpublished B.A. honours dissertation, Department of History of Art, University of Malta, 1999

(This dissertation discussed with detail the artist central to my study, outlining his life, his career and his contribution to Modern Art in Malta. The discussion on his Etchings proved furthermore useful)

Reeds Earl H.

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(This publication located at the Government School of Art’s Library immediately informs the reader that it is a scientific treatise intended for students which helped understand what literature students of the Etching Class were consulting)

Robins W.P

Etching Craft: An illustrated Guide for Students and Collectors, Batsford London, 1924

(This publication located at the Government School of Art’s Library illustrates both a brief outline of the development of Etching and the practical side of Etching. This helped to understand what students were consulting to study the technique whilst also providing them with illustrations after the great masters)

Schembri Bonaci Giuseppe

Willie Apap: Descent from the Cross, Mdina Cathedral Museum, Mdina, 2008

(Although Bonaci’s study discussed an unrelated artist, this publication provided an interesting insight on Maltese Modern Art)

Vella Dennis

Carmenu Mangion, Engravings and Prints, National Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta, 1997

(This exhibition catalogue was consulted for its useful essay on Mangion's Artistic career as an Etcher as well an analysis of his etchings collected together)

Vella Raphael

Cross-currents: Critical Essays on Art and Culture in Malta, Vella Raphael (ed.), Allied Publications, Valletta, 2008

(A critical approach on the context of Maltese contemporary Art, Vella's discussion on the Italianate influence in Malta proved insightful when discussing context)

West Levon

Making an Etching, The Studio Publications, London 1932

(Levon directly dealt with the technique of etching whilst analysing well known etchings after old masters. This publication was found in the School of Art's Library which shed light on the what knowledge was being digested by the students of the Etching class)

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(Although this publication does not deal with the related period, Zammit provided an insight of the history of Printing in Malta a hundred years before the Etching Class of Carmelo Mangion)

PLATES

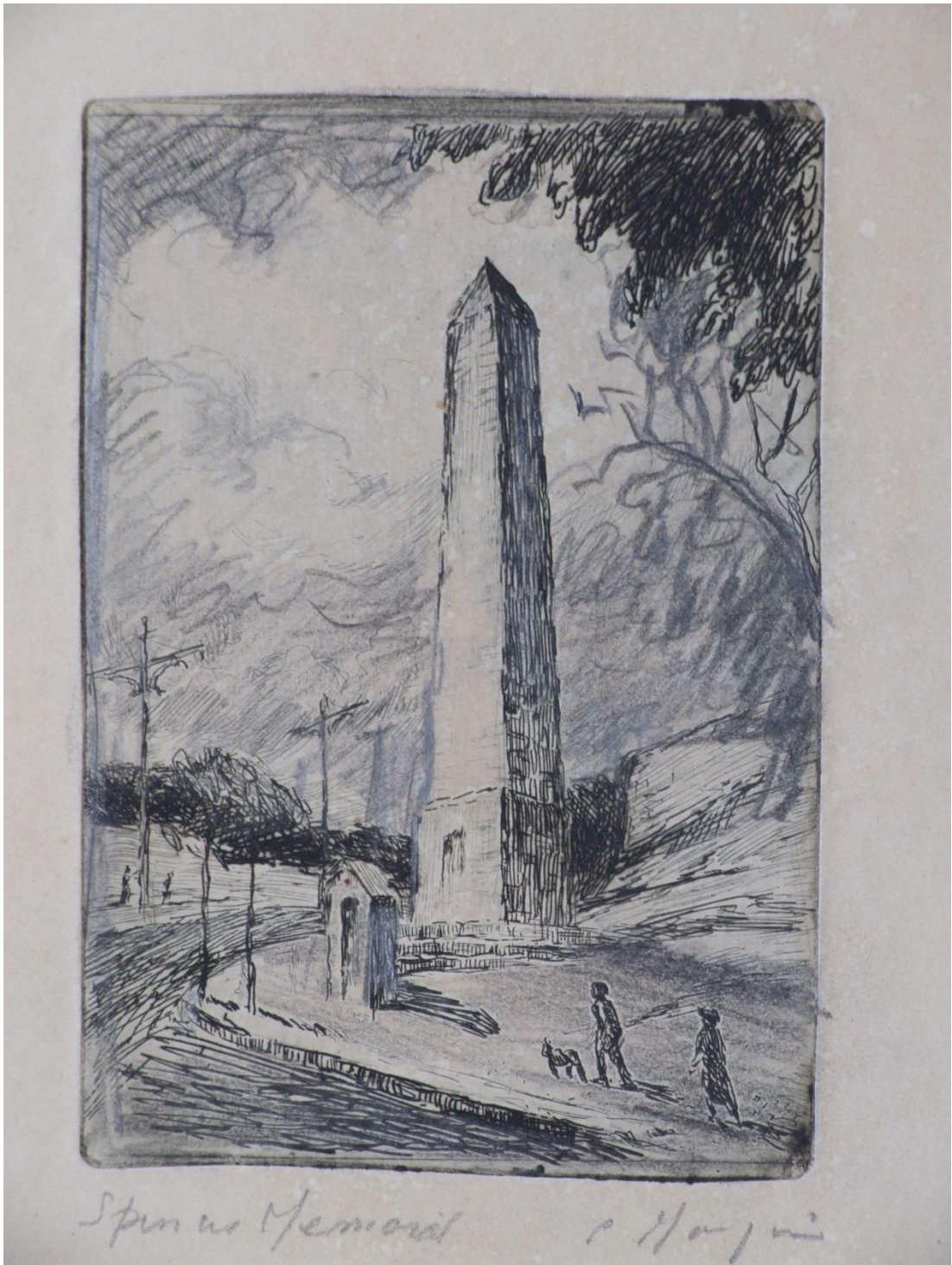


Plate 2.1: Carmelo Mangion (signed), *Spencer Memorial*, etching 14.2x9.7cm, pencil markings revealing the artist indicating his corrections



Plate 2.2: Carmelo Mangion (signed), *Spencer Memorial*, etching 14.2x9.7cm, second state after pencil marked corrections



Plate 2.3: Carmelo Mangion (signed), *Malta of the Knights*, etching 22x29.6cm, showing a frame within a frame



Plate 2.4: Felix Buhot, *Westminster Bridge*, etching 1884, similar frame within a frame as Mangion's *Malta of the Knights*



Plate 2.5: Carmelo Mangion (signed), title unknown, etching 8.7x13cm, placing against the light paper was noticed to be of unusual quality giving the impression that the etching was in fact in aquatint



Plate 2.6: Carmelo Mangion (unsigned), *Power Station*, etching on zinc 20x15.5cm

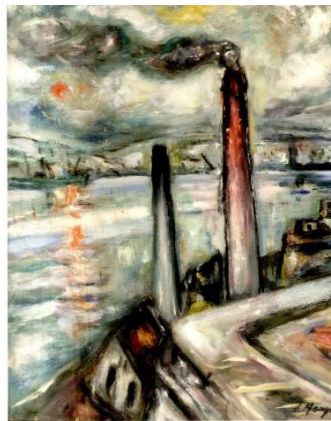
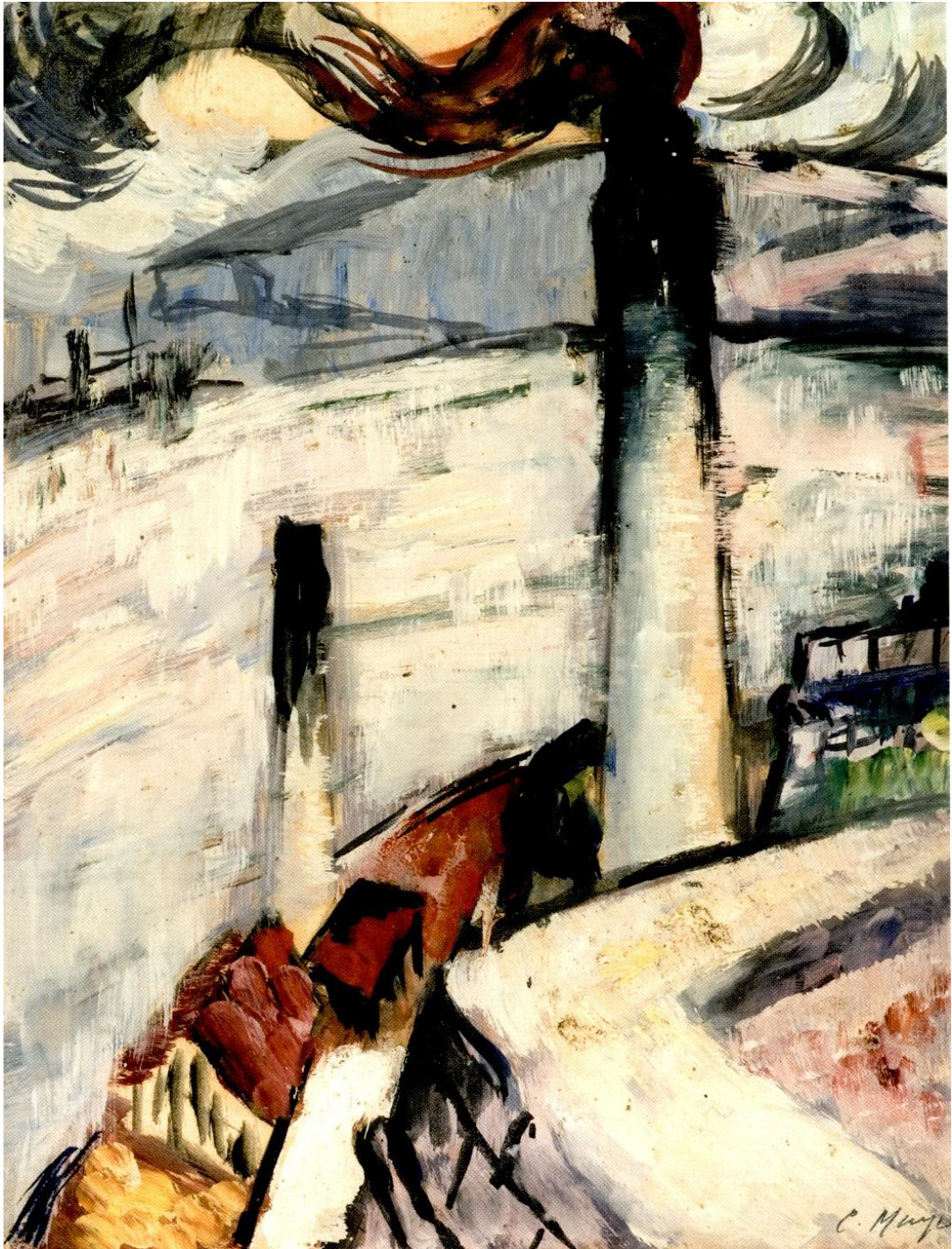


Plate 2.7: A series of signed paintings by Carmelo Mangion illustrating the theme of Industrialisation, particularly with that of the chimneys belonging to the Power Station at Marsa



Plate 2.8: Carmelo Mangion (signed), *Santa Catherina d'Italia*, etching 18.9x13cm, the electricity wire in this etching further links with Mangion's interpretation of Industrialization



Plate 2.9: The Gothic idiom seen throughout Mangion's Art.

Top; Carmelo Mangion (signed), *5th Avenue New York*, etching 15.5x11.7

Bottom; Carmelo Mangion (signed), *Methodist Church*, oil on canvas. 1960

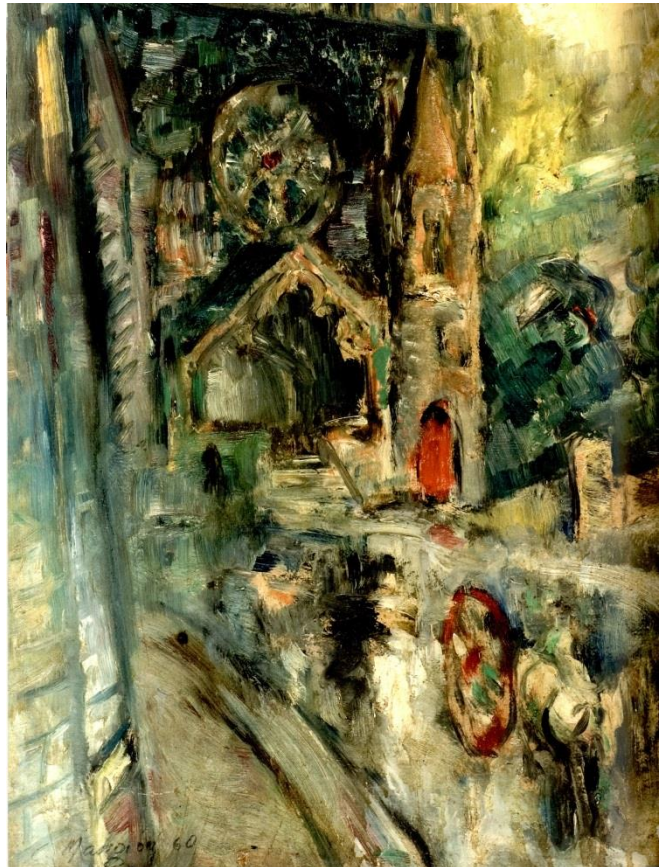




Plate 2.10: Carmelo Mangion (signed), *The Cathedral*, etching 13.7x16.7cm



Plate 2.11: Top; Carmelo Mangion (signed), *Early Morning*, etching 13.1x15.1cm. Bottom; Detail

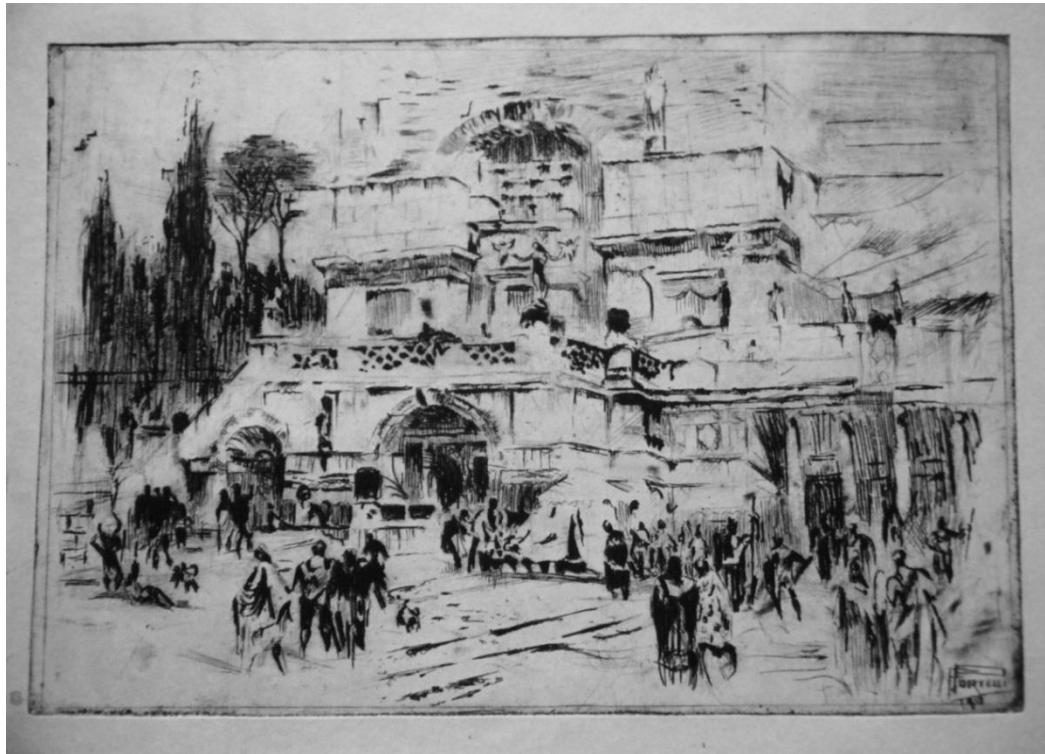


Plate 2.12: Frank Portelli (signed), *Villa Quintilii Ancient Rome*, copy after William Walcot; Portelli working under Mangion's directions and suggestions



Plate 2.13: Robert Caruana Dingli (signed), title unknown, etching 10x11.3cm dated 1935 which shows that Caruana-Dingli was working on Etchings the very same year of the opening of the etching class.



Plate 2.14: Comparison between Frank Portelli's *Kingsway, Valletta during Wartime*, oil on plywood, 36x25cm, 1944 (signed) and an etching stylistically attributed to Mangion, 16x22.6cm



Plate 3.1: The Government School of Art's Roller Press, donated by an English woman in the early 1930s

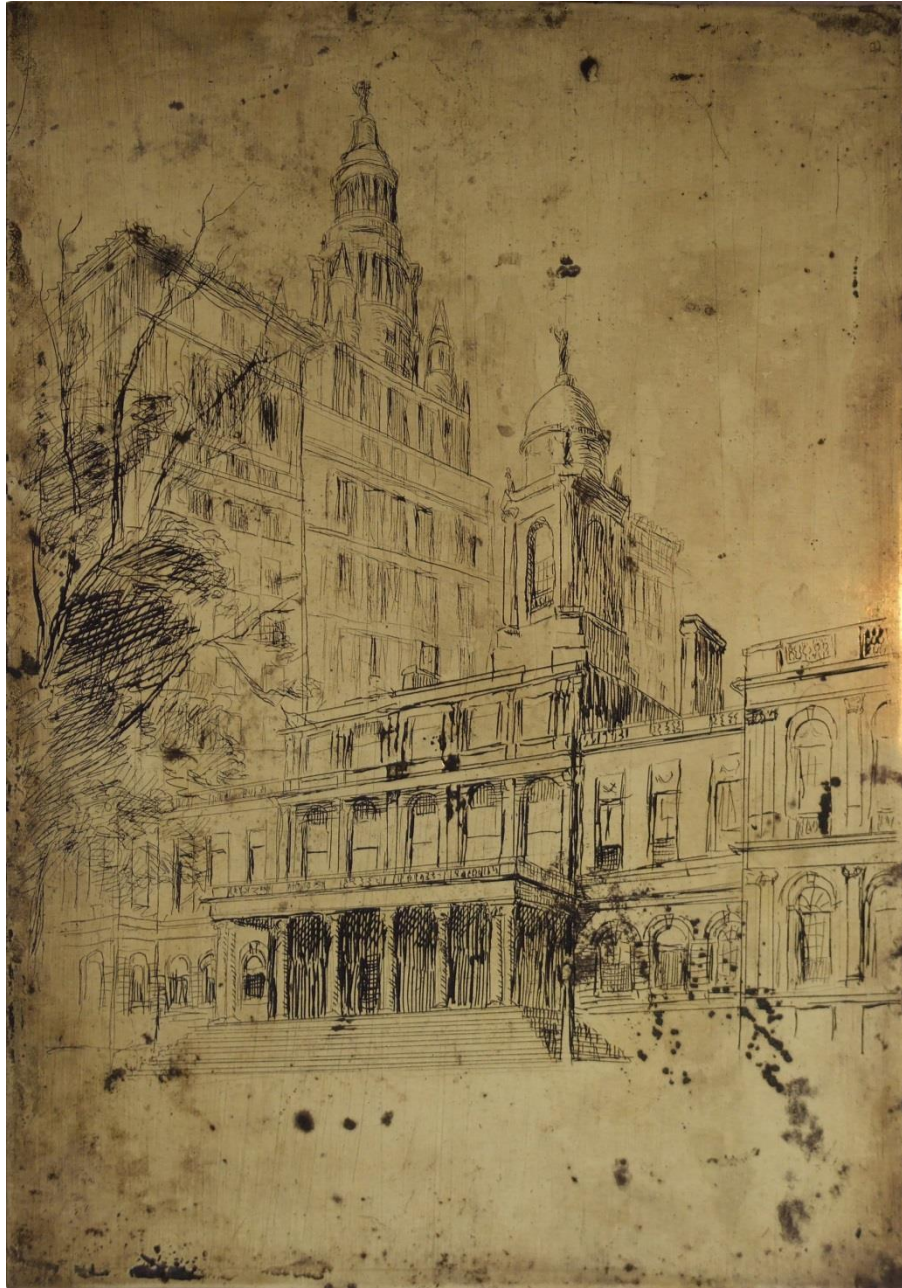


Plate 3.2: Brass Plate after unknown etcher, 7x14.5cm

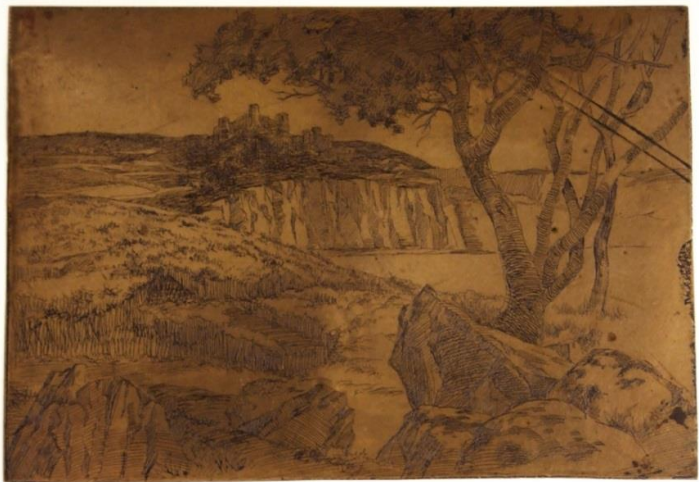


Plate 4.1: State of Plate 53(b) from the Catalogue before and after cleaning



Plate 4.2: Plates were heavily oxidised over the years sometimes making it difficult to decipher whether the contained designs at all

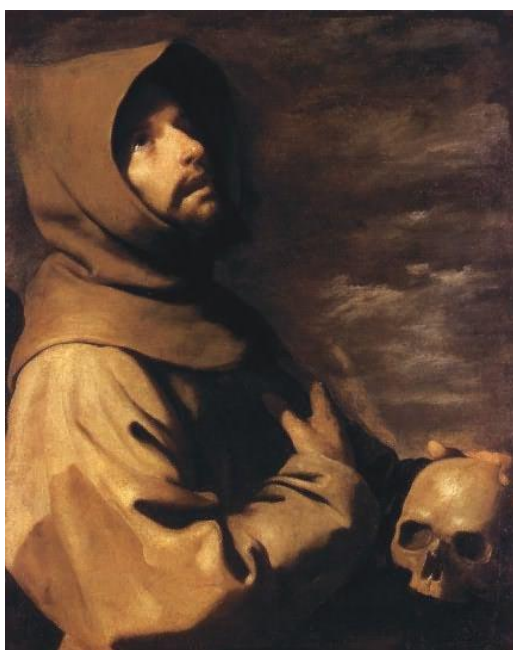


Plate 4.3: Etching by a student showing *St Francis in Meditations*, 1635-39 after a painting by Zurbaran



Plate 4.4: *Self Portrait* after Goya, student-etcher unknown, etching on Copper, 20.5x16cm, Restrike 7 from the Catalogue



*Fran.^{co} Goya y Lucientes,
Pintor*

Plate 4.5: *Self Portrait*, Goya, 1799, etching 21.7x15.1cm



No. 139. FIRST STATE.



No. 139. PUBLISHED STATE.

Plate 4.6: Top; published state after Brangwyn. Bottom; First state after Brangwyn copied in Restrike 39(b) from the Catalogue.

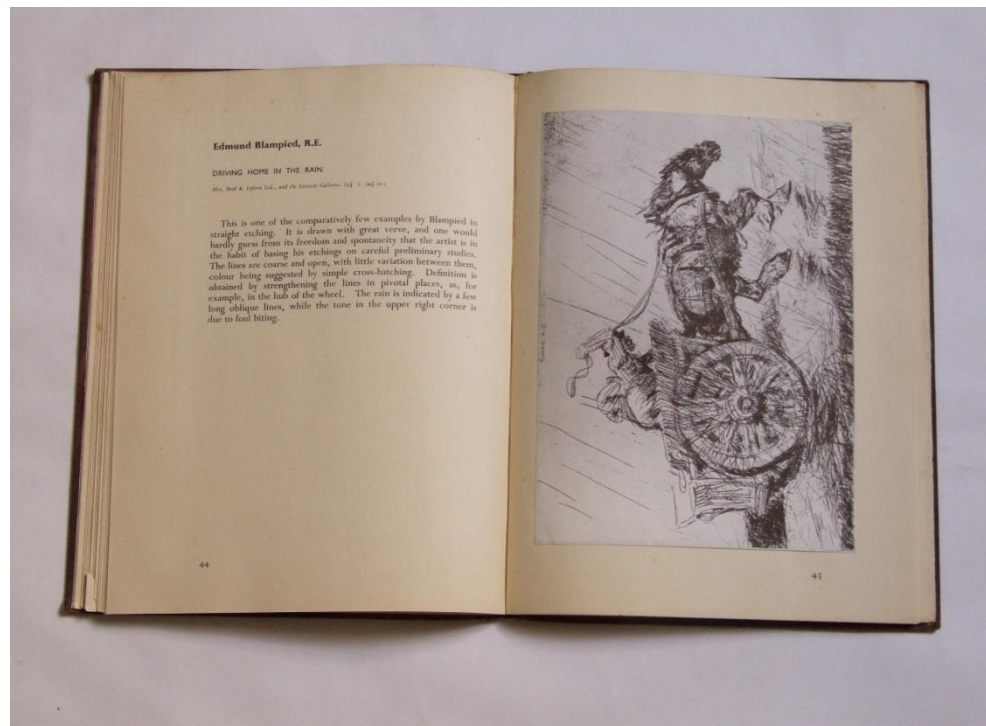
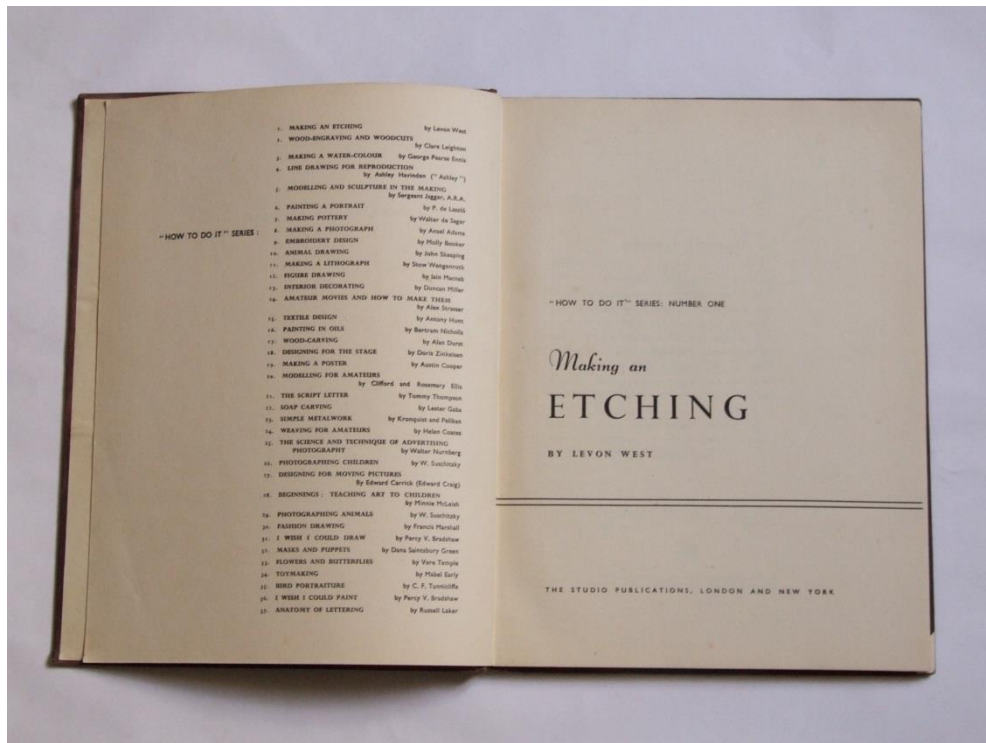


Plate 4.7: *The Making of an Etching* by Levon West found in the School of Art's Library. Page 45 shows an illustration of Edmund Blampied's *Driving home in the Rain*, found as Plate 70 from the Catalogue.



Plate 4.8: Gesso Bust of Virgin found at the School of Art interpreted in an exercise by students of the Etching Class. See Re-strikes 83 and 84(a).



Plate 4.9: Top print was found in the Cavarra/Wirth private collection. Bottom print found as plate 76(b) from the Catalogue.

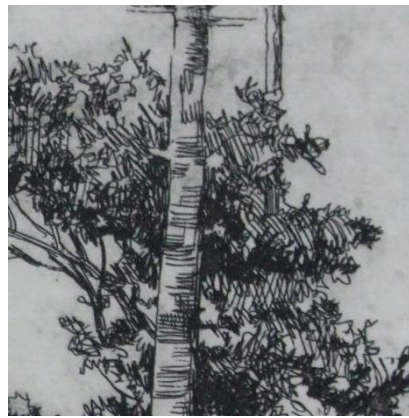
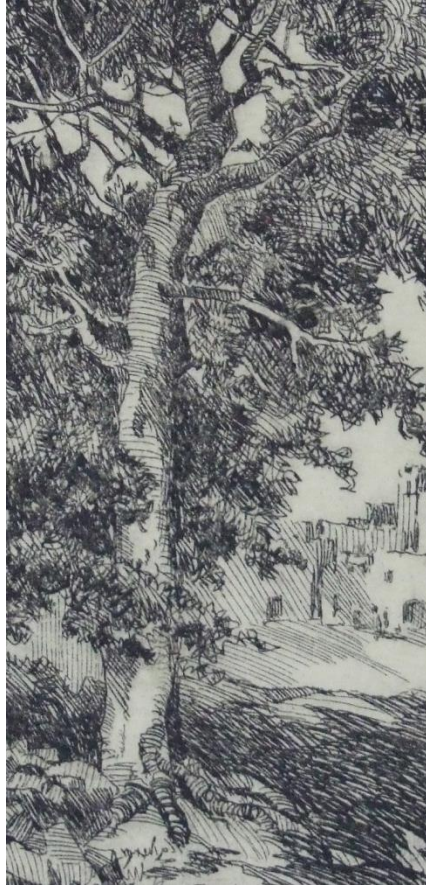


Plate 4.10: Details from signed etchings after Robert Caruana Dingli revealing his signature style of depicting tree barks.



Plate 4.11: Detail of Plate 75(b) from Catalogue revealing the Stippling technique

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Treasury transfer voucher dated 28th March, 1932 for the fee paid for the transportation of an Etching Press from Florence. Government School of Art Archives.

(Form S.) 789
 No. 31.32 (Rule 302)

S. S. J. A. **TREASURY.**

Take notice that I have on 26th inst debited ~~credited~~ the following
 Vote ~~Account~~ relating to your Department with the amount detailed below, which appears
 in the Accounts for the month of March 1932.
 (Date) 28.3.2 1932 } Treasurer. G.P.

SCHEDULE.

Estimate	Head	Subhead	Particulars	Amount		
				Rs.	s.	d.
<u>600P</u>	<u>21.</u>	<u>B. 1.</u>	<u>Agency fee to Mrs. Smith</u>			
			<u>& Co. for transport of</u>			
			<u>an etching press</u>			
			<u>from Florence.</u>		<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>
			<u>1 transport of an</u>			
			<u>etching press from</u>			
			<u>Florence: M. P. S. C. 15/32</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>6</u>
			<u>6 attendances fees of Messrs</u>			
			<u>Mandi & Borg for April</u>			
			<u>in connection with the</u>			
			<u>Evening life class,</u>			
			<u>Brit. Academy, Rome</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>5</u>	
			<u>M. P. S. 17/31</u>			

Appendix 2: A letter dating to the 22nd May, 1950 describing the setting of the Etching Class and signed by Master in charge; Vincent Apap. Government School of Art Archives.

22nd. May 1950.

With reference to minute () I beg to report as follows.

The introduction of the Etching Class in this School's curriculum was due to the kindness of an English lady, who donated the etching press to the school.

By a decision of the School's Director the etching class started, in fact, on the 1st. October 1936, and Mr G. Mangion was entrusted with its teaching.


During the first scholastic year, Mr Mangion's duties were for 3 hours per day, but on the following October were reduced to 2 daily.

The attendance of pupils has always been satisfactory and at one time artists painters joined the class to learn the medium.

With regard to the working hours and salary of the other Masters, may I point out that while the Etching Master works for 3 hours per day, and is in charge of only one class his receipts amounted this year to £83. 10., the former do duty for 3 hours per day and teach primary subjects in four and more classes, with a salary of £300 per annum.

This does not mean that the number of classes could not be increased as it was the case with the other Masters, provided space is available, but so far it was never felt necessary.

In view of the fact that Etching is a subsidiary subject, I am of the opinion that 3 hours teaching per day are quite sufficient. However, I beg to suggest an annual salary of £100.



Master in charge.

Appendix.3: The results to a Competitive Examination for a Scholarship for Painting revealing Carmelo Mangion placing second as marks were deducted for studying abroad the previous year. Anthony Caruana placed first, the same Caruana who applied for the post of Etching Master, succeeded by Mangion.

COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION FOR A SCHOLARSHIP FOR PAINTING—SCHOOL OF ART—VALLETTA.

Index No.	Names	Anatomy		Drawing in Light and Shade		Bas Relief		Sketch in colours		Modelling figure		Ornamental Bas Relief		Drawing from still life		Bas Relief drawing		TOTAL	15 per cent deduction	Definitive result	Remarks
		MAX	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100				
1	Anthony Caruana...	...	90	75	...	...	...	70	...	...	...	...	...	70	85	390	-58	332	Studied abroad last two years.
3	Hugh Carbonaro ...	...	20	40	...	...	...	35	...	...	...	...	...	45	75	215	...	215	
5	Edward Zammit ...	...	35	25	...	...	...	35	...	...	...	...	...	50	70	215	...	215	
6	Carmelo Mangion...	...	80	80	...	...	...	70	...	...	...	...	...	70	65	365	-54	311	Studied abroad last year.
7	Giuseppe Arcidiacono ...	...	15	15	...	...	...	35	...	...	...	...	...	15	20	100	...	100	Not to compete.
8	Raphael Bonnici ...	...	70	60	...	...	...	60	...	...	...	...	...	70	65	325	...	325	
9	Nazzareno Massa...	...	45	10	...	...	...	55	...	...	...	...	...	15	5	130	...	130	
10	Lorenzo Camilleri...	...	35	10	...	...	...	15	...	...	...	...	...	30	20	110	...	110	
11	Domenico Micallef ...	...	60	60	...	...	...	75	...	...	...	...	...	70	85	350	...	350	(A)
12	Paolino Buggeja ...	...	15	30	...	...	...	10	...	...	...	...	...	15	20	90	...	90	Not to compete.

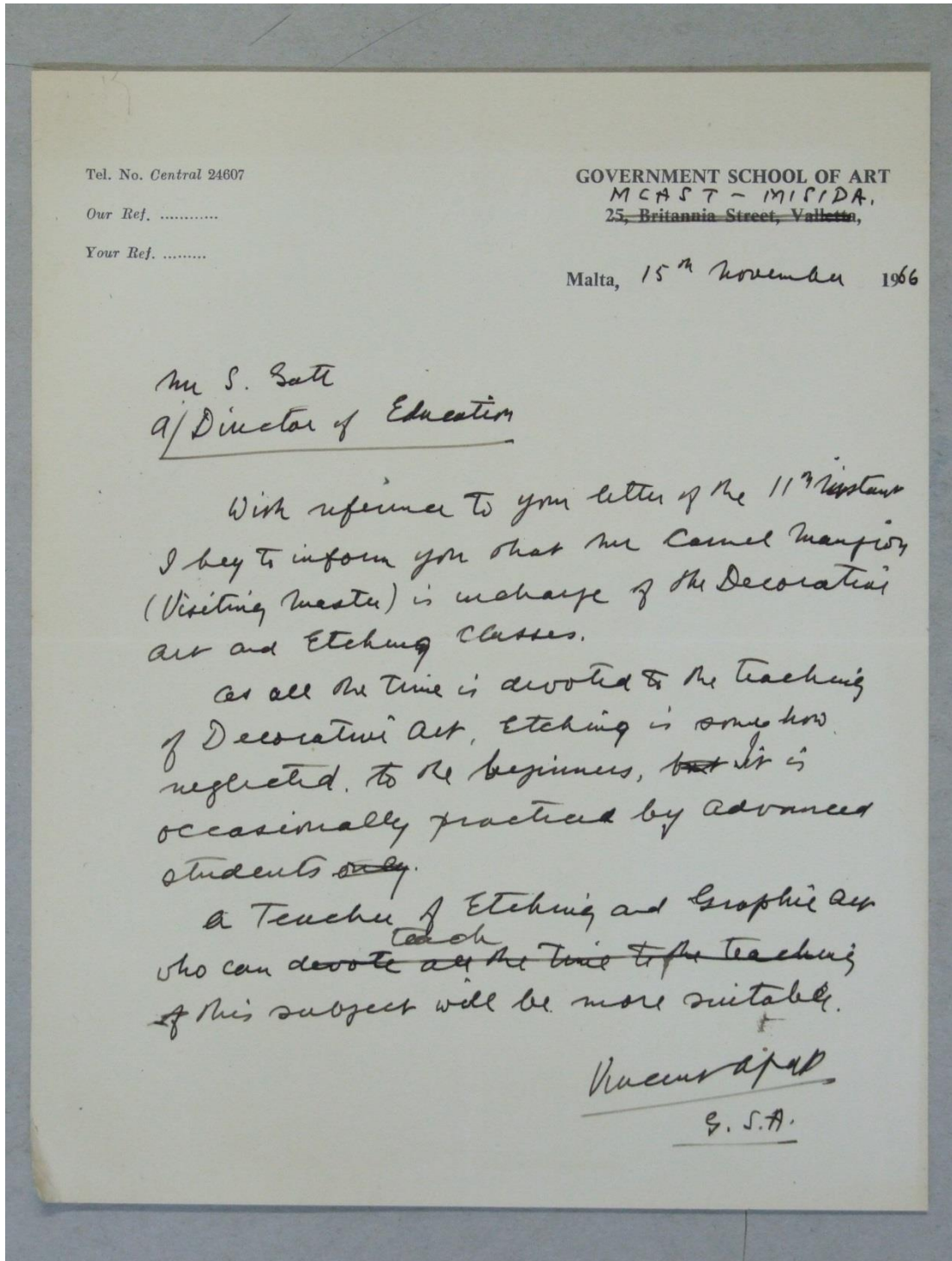
COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION FOR A SCHOLARSHIP FOR MODELLING—SCHOOL OF ART—VALLETTA.

Index No.	Names	MAX		100		100		100		100		100		100		TOTAL	15 per cent deduction	Definitive result	Remarks
		MAX	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100					
2	Giuseppe Calleja ...	...	25	10	45	...	...	...	...	20	75	...	...	20	20	215	...	215	
4	Giovanni Spiteri Sacco ...	...	75	45	80	...	...	...	...	70	80	...	...	35	65	450	-67	383	Studied abroad last year.
13	Vincent Apap ...	...	65	65	80	...	...	...	...	85	90	...	...	75	75	535	...	535	(A)
14	Giorgio Borg ...	...	65	60	85	...	...	...	...	80	85	...	...	65	75	515	...	515	
15	Giovanni Pace ...	...	20	10	30	...	...	...	...	10	40	...	...	15	45	170	...	170	
16	Joseph Portoghese ...	...	45	35	30	...	...	...	...	5	30	...	...	10	10	165	...	165	

VINCENZO BONELLO
SECONDO CHIARDOLA
ROBERT CARUANA DINGLI
ANTONIO MICALLEF.

Awards, subject to medical examination, marked (A).
Valletta, 30th June, 1927.

Appendix 4: Letter dated 15th November 1966 stating that Etching was being neglected for beginners. Government School of Art Archives.



Appendix 5: Letter dated 21st October 1971 showing the termination of Mangion's teaching post as Master of Etching at the Government School of Art. School of Art's Archives

P.F.015948

21st October, 71.

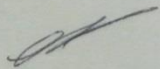
Mr. Carmel J. Mangion,
57, Mrabat Street,
Sliema.

Dear Sir,

I regret to inform you that your services will no longer be required during Scholastic Year 1971/72.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank you for the services you have rendered the Department.

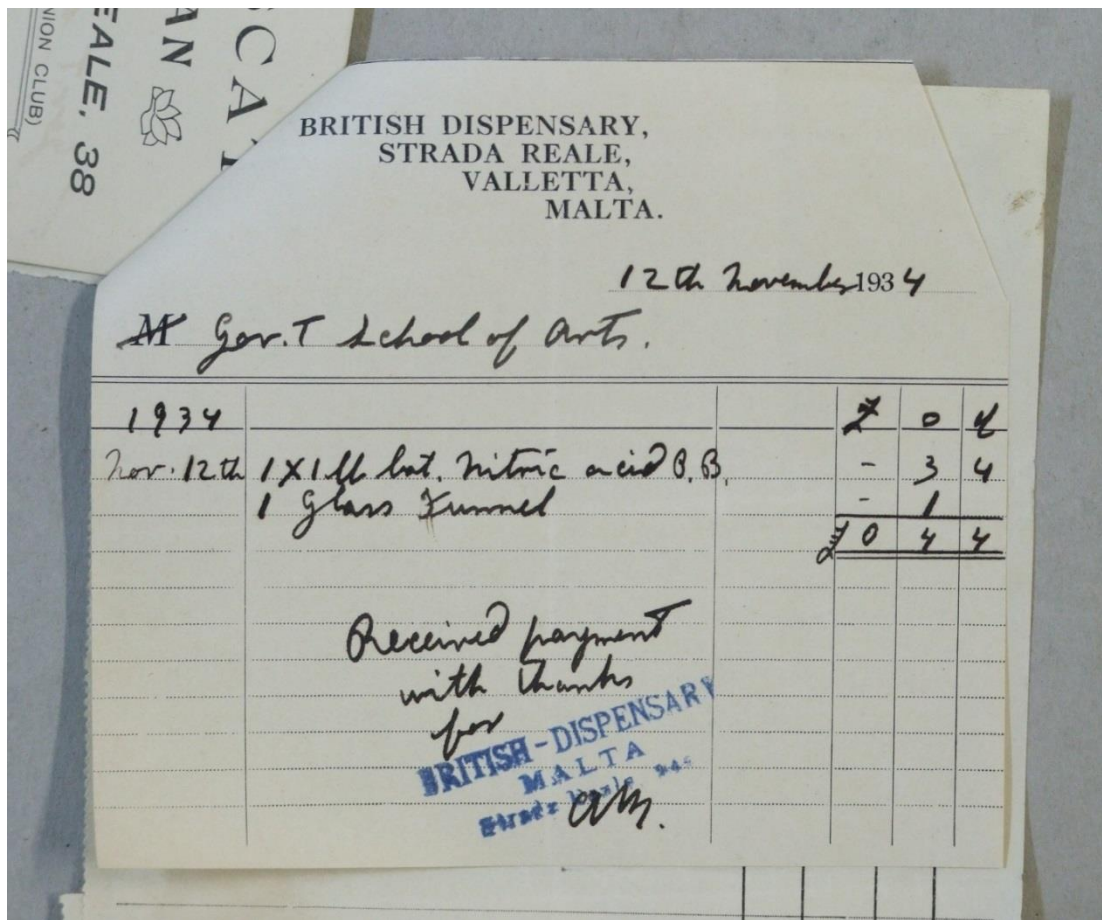
Yours faithfully,


a/DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

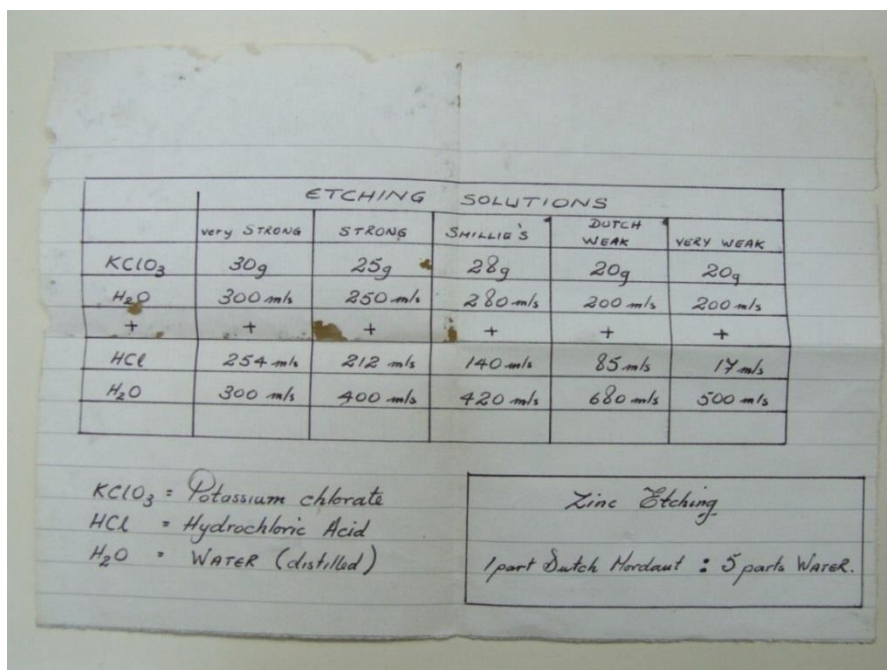
map

c.c. a/Master in Charge
School of Art,
Msida.

Appendix 6: Receipt describing the purchase of Nitric Acid and authorised by the British Dispensary, Valletta. Government School of Art Archives



Appendix 7: Etching Solutions. Government School of Art Archives



Appendix 8: 1955 Annual Examination Results of the Etching Class showing Still Life as part of the final assessment. Government School of Art Archives

No. _____

Government School of Art.
106, STRADA FORNI, VALLETTA.

Etching
Annual School Competition
1955

Still Life

No	Name	MERIT
1	<u>Sciberras Teo</u>	II
2	Debono Victor	
3	Aguilino Teo	I
4	Dagiorjo Teo	
5	<u>Fermosa Edward</u>	III
6	Bell J.	
7	Gradi. Tard.	

Judges.

Mucunragan
Stov Bly
Alfonso
Tri Bermana

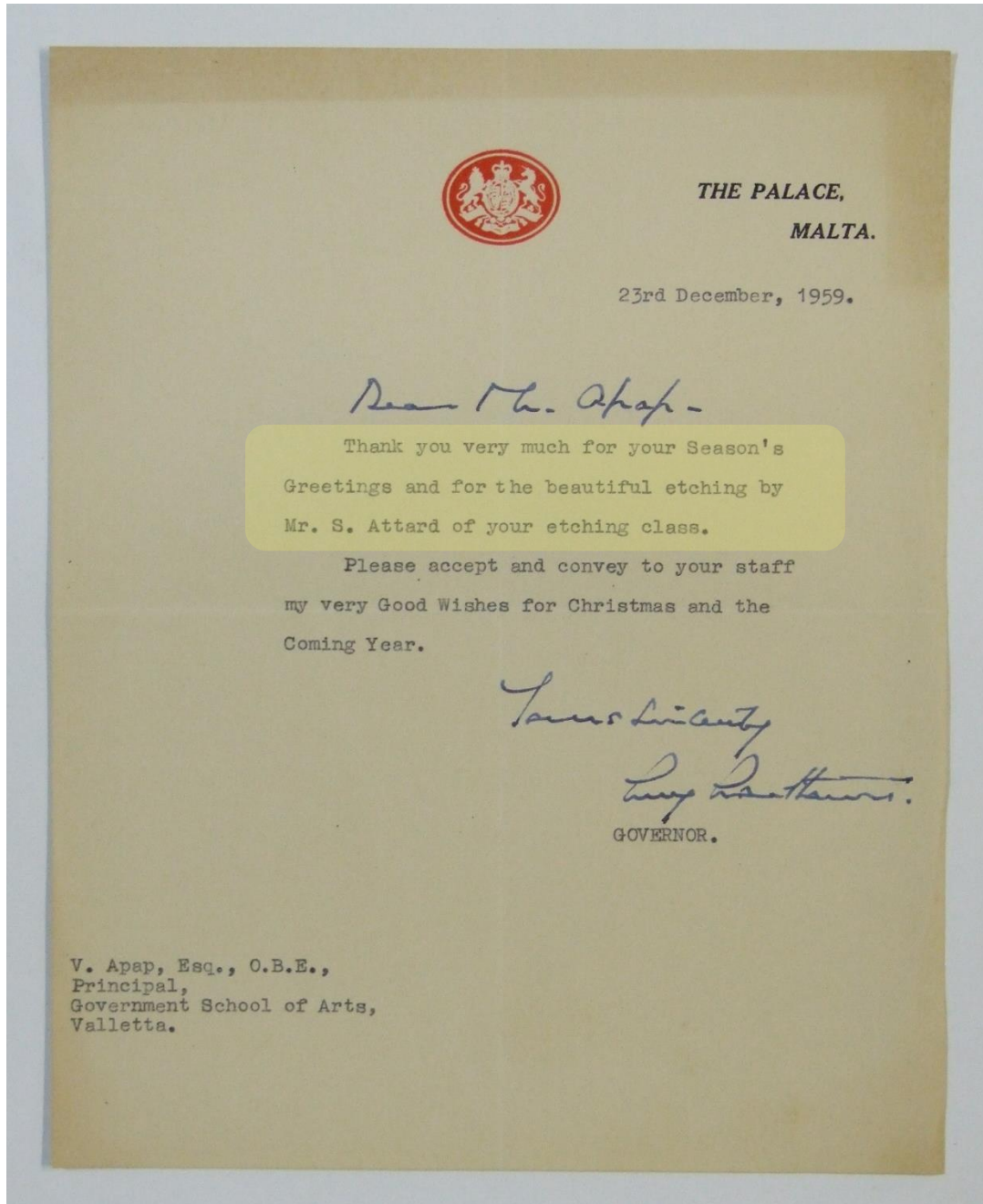
Appendix 9: 1951 Annual Examination Results of the Etching Class showing Still Life and Landscape as part of the final assessment. Government School of Art Archives

Annual School Competition
Government School of Art.
1951
Etching
106, STRADA FORNI, VALLETTA.

Still-life			Landscape (pen)		
no	name	mark	no	name	mark
1	Calapa Joseph	III rd	1	Muscat Joseph	1 st
2	Camilleri Ametto		2	Pruvitera Salvo	5 th
3	Cefai Franco		3	Boley Jos. M.	2 nd
4	Farrugia Amy Roe	II nd	4	Aziz Olive	
5	Debarro Mose		5	Crumma Aldo	
6	Comer Joseph				
7	Muzzi Charles				
8	Muscat Joseph	1st			
9	Crumma Aldo				

Judges
Vincenzo Ajap

Appendix 10: Letter to Vincent Apap, Principal at the time, thanking him for an etching by Mr. S. Attard, a student from the Etching Class of Carmelo Mangion. Government School of Art archives



Appendix 11: Letter found in the School's Archives directed to Vincent Apap, Principal at the time, thanking him for an etching after a certain Mr. Farrugia, student from the Etching Class of Carmelo Mangion. Government School of Art Archives



THE PALACE,
MALTA.

6/5 February, 1967.

Dear Mr Apap

I have been wanting to write and thank you for the beautiful Christmas card which you have so kindly sent me, but pressure of work and other commitments have prevented me from doing so. This letter, therefore, comes to you rather late, but I do wish to say how appreciative I was of your greetings and how much I like Mr Farrugia's etching of St John's. This is one of the cards which I keep.

With many thanks again and sincere good wishes to you and all your staff,

Yours very sincerely
Harold Dorman

GOVERNOR-GENERAL

V. Apap, Esq., OBE,
Principal,
Government School of Art.

Appendix 12: Results to the Etching Section of an Annual Competition held at the Malta Government School of Art 1945. Government School of Art Archives

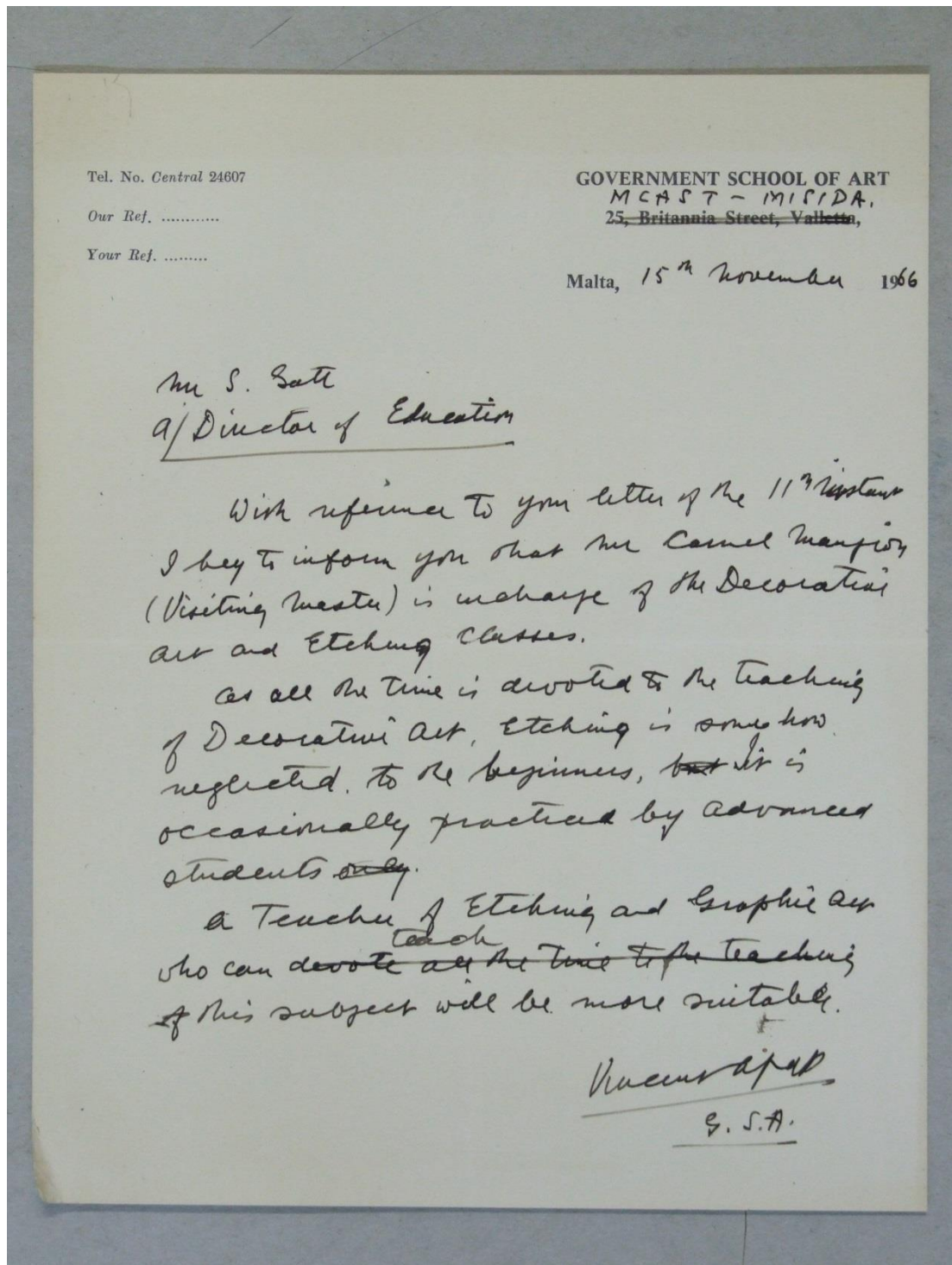
29th, June 1945.

RESULT
ANNUAL COMPETITION held at the
GOVERNMENT SCHOOL OF ART

	ETCHING SECTION	Result
I	Berg Baldassere	
2	Berg Emanuel	
3	Casabene Salvino	3rd,
4	Chircop Alfred	Ist,
5	Darmanin Emanuel	
6	Cummings James	
7	Fischer (Major C. W.)	
8	Mamo Paul	
9	Mc'Keon Charles	
10	Mizzi Charles	
11	Zahra Emanuel	2nd,

Director School of Art

Appendix 13: Letter by Vincent Apap dated 1966 and addressed to the Director of Education discussing concerns about the future of the Etching class.
Government School of Art Archives



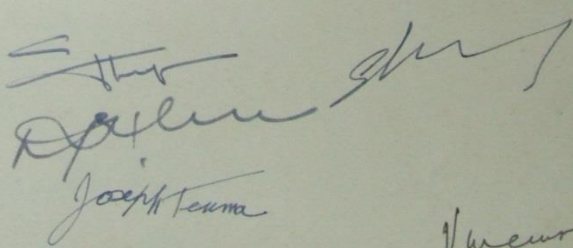
Appendix 14: Results for the Annual Examination in the Decorative and Etching Classes of 1965, showing no sign of any Etching exercises. Government School of Art Archives

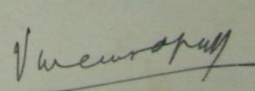
GOVERNMENT SCHOOL OF ART.
106, STRADA FORNI, VALLETTA.

Decorative Art - Etching
Annual Examination 1965

No	Name	Decorative Drawing	Anatomical Drawing	Still life in colour
1	George Chetani	57	54	57 III
2	Alfred Domicoli	78 I	69 I	69 II
3	Arthur E. Reed	68	54	
5	Francis Galea	70 II	53	
6	Joseph Genuis	60		
7	Joseph Grech	63 III	52	56
9	Edith Spiter	60	59 III	56
10	Mario Vella Gatt	57	63 II	76 I

Judges


 Joseph Genuis


 Vincent Veneoropull

1965
 1965
 1965