

History of the Foundation of the School of Anatomy and Surgery

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In the year 1676, Grand Master Fra Niccolo' Cottoner introduced the teaching of Anatomy in the Holy Infirmary of the Order. The decree, laying the foundation for the teaching of Anatomy and Surgery in Our Islands, read as follows: *Diecadem Gran Maestro di haver instituto a proprie spese nella Sacra Infermeria lo studio di Chirurgia et Anatomia, deputando un Medico fisico, perche' facci detta lettione non solamente alli barberotti di essa, ma a qualsiasi altro, che vorra' attendere a detti professioni; intendendo lasciar stabilito lo studio, se riuscirà di profitto sopra le vendite della sua fondatione perche' in avvenire si deputi sempre a d'affetto un Maestro di gli conduminji di Gran Maestri Suo successori. Il che fu da tutto il Venerabile Consiglio non solamente approvato, ma sommamente commendato il zelo di sua per l'introduzione di cose tanto necessario et importante'. A condition laid down in the Cottoner foundation, was that the occupant of the Chair of Anatomy and Surgery had to be a physician, besides being a surgeon. This decree was dated 19th December 1676.*

The first teacher of Anatomy was Dr Fra Giuseppe Zammit, a great honour for a doctor who was only thirty-three years old. Besides being a physician, Zammit was also a priest and a

member of the Order of St John. After the plague of 1675, Dr Zammit suggested to the Grand Master, the foundation of a medical academy to discuss the medical affairs of the Islands. This suggestion was taken and approved and Dr Zammit was elected 'Principe dell'Accademia'. A meeting between physicians was held every Wednesday. Zammit presided these meetings between 1679 and 1694. Zammit also established a Medical Library in the Holy Infirmary. He died at the age of ninety and is buried in the cemetery of the church of Balzan.

Initially only theoretical Anatomy and Surgery were taught. Students eligible to attend the course of Surgery which lasted ten years, had to know how to read and write. No mention of any practical sessions and dissections on cadavers is made. In those times, dissections on cadavers were not approved by the Church and moreover, there were no amenities to carry out such work. Zammit's successor was Dr Giuseppe Farrugia, who although being a most respectable doctor, did nothing to improve the new establishment. No literary work by him is documented.

In 1720, Fra Marcantonio Zondadari became Grand Master and he had all the intentions to improve the study of Anatomy and Surgery. He chose '*Gabriele Hanin, e lo mando' a sue*

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Figure 1: Dr Fra Giuseppe Zammit

Table 1: List of the Teachers of Anatomy in Malta (1676 – 1993)

Date	Name	Title
1676-1740 (?)	Giuseppe Zammit	Director and Teacher of the School of Anatomy and Surgery
1694-1723	Giuseppe Farrugia	Director and teacher of the School of Anatomy and Surgery
1723-1753	Gabriele Henin	Protector and First Teacher in the School of Anatomy and Surgery
1754 (for a few months)	Enrico Maggi Vincenzo Galli	
1763-1797	Michelangelo Grima	1763-71 Lecturer in Anatomy 1771-91 Professor of Anatomy and Surgery
1773 (for a few days)	Giorgio Locano	
1824-1838	Aurelio Badat	Reader and demonstrator in Anatomy and Surgery
1810-1813	Agostino Naudi	Private tutor
1824-1838	Gavino Portelli	1813-24 private tutor 1824-38 Professor of Anatomy and Surgery
1839-1858	Charles Galland	
1858-1875	Salvatore Pisani	Professor of Anatomy
1876-1894	Hamilton Stilon	Professor of Descriptive Anatomy, Histology and Pathological Anatomy
1894-1920	Carmel Sammut	Professor of Anatomy and of Pathology
1920-1939	Ruggier Busuttil	Professor of Anatomy
1939-1953	Joseph Briffa	Part-time Professor of Anatomy
1954-1969	Victor Griffiths	Part-time Professor of Anatomy
1966-1977	Leslie Pace	Full-time Professor of Anatomy
1970-	Alfred Cuschieri	Full-time Professor of Anatomy
1972-	M ^{re} Therese Camilleri	Full-time Professor of Anatomy

proprie spese ad apprendere tale dottrina al Regio Arci-Spedale di Santa Maria Nuova di Firenze, e nello stesso tempo per vie piu' perfezionarsi nella Medical professione'. In 1716 a dissection room was built and was furnished with all the necessary amenities. It was situated in the cemetery of the Holy Infirmary and until the beginning of the Second World War, when it was destroyed by enemy bombardment, it was still in this place. Grand Master Zondadari did not have the opportunity to see Hanin return to Malta and start the dissections, since he died about two years after Hanin left for Florence. In 1723, when Hanin returned to Malta, Grand Master de Vilhena made him head of the Medical School with the title of 'Professore del Sacro Senocodio'. Hanin can therefore be considered the first anatomist of the Medical School. He performed dissections once a week in winter only as in summer the smell of the putrifying body rendered dissections nearly impossible. Hanin was also in charge of all post-mortem examinations. He was a very good dissector and the following are the words of one of his pupils who later on became director of Medicine and Surgery, namely Michel'angelo Grima: *Il professore (Hanin) faceva con applauso e soddisfazione di tutti le sue prelezioni, e dimostrazioni anatomiche in linguaggio Fiorentino esponeva con eleganza, e chiarezza primariamente la fabbrica e la tessitura, e la connessione dell differenti parti componenti il corpo umano, e poscia le notizie fisiologiche, e patologiche dale prime ricavate ad uso di tutte le piu' famose Scuole delle piu' accreditate Universita' d'Europa*'. As a surgeon, Hanin was also famous in Italy from where patients would come to him for operations to remove cataracts and stones. Besides Medicine and Surgery. Hanin taught Italian, Physiology, Pathology and

Obstetrics. Hanin's greatest anatomical publication is entitled '*Observatio Chirurgico – Anatomico in Nosocomio S. Jionannis Hyerosolymitano*' (Messina 1748). In 1753 Hanin stopped working due to health problems. Soon after he became mentally ill and died in October 1754.

Hanin was succeeded by one of his students, namely, Dr Michelangelo Magri, who had also studied Surgery at the Santa Maria Nuova hospital in Florence, where he occupied the post of 'Pubblico Incisore'. In 1748 he became 'Maestro' in Anatomy and Physiology, in the Regio Spedali of Messina. He was renowned for his wax figures showing the blood vascular system of the human body. At this time, Joseph Barth had also made a name for himself abroad. Barth was born in 1745, studied Anatomy and Ophthalmology in Vienna. However, neither Magri nor Barth were in Malta during the death of Hanin and so his post was given to Dr Enrico Maggi. Maggi was described by Michelangelo Grima as being '*uno die piu' insigui professori di Medicina di questa nostra patria, il quale seguito' ancor egli il metodo dei suoi predecessori*'. Unfortunately, however, Maggi soon fell victim of paralytic attack and had to stop giving lectures to his students. The School for Anatomy and Surgery started degenerating. For some time nothing was done to improve matters. Dr Vincenzo Galli, physician of the Inquisitor, is known to have conducted '*per suo esercizio alcune belle dimostrazioni anatomiche*'. This is, however, all that is known to have occurred after Maggi's disabling paralysis.

Michelangelo Grima

Enrico Maggi had efficiently restored and promoted the Medical School, had many good ideas in mind and if it were

not for his illness, could have shown his ability to administrate an ever growing Academy, Maggi's sudden paralysis proved to be a great misfortune since matters began to deteriorate after his illness. Disorganisation became the rule of the day and the teachers of Anatomy who replaced him, were not up to the required standard. The Order of St John as well as the 'Veneranda Camera del Comun Tesoro', in particular Bali' Fra Silvio Vicentini who was the secretary of the Comun Tesoro and who later on helped Michelangelo Grima in establishing the Practical School of the Medico-Surgical Operations on cadavers, were well conscious of this and on 26 September 1763, they providentially appointed Michelangelo Grima as the successor of Maggi. A long time had elapsed between the resignation of Maggi due to paralysis and Grima's appointment. The reason for this delay is thought to be due to the fact that the then Inquisitor Mons. Gregorio dei Duchi Salviati Toscano, was trying to award the post to the physician Vincenzo Galli who had come to Malta in 1754 together with the Inquisitor. This supposition is made more credible by the fact that as soon as Grima was appointed by Grand Master Pinto, Galli left Malta.

Michelangelo Grima was born in Valletta in May 1731 although the exact date is not known. His father Lorenzo was a businessman and his mother was the daughter of a surgeon called Kimitri who lived very near St Paul Shipwrecked Church in Valletta. Michelangelo had a sister called Maria who lived at Qormi and another one called Regina. Michelangelo began his primary education with the Jesuits in Valletta but at the tender age of twelve, he had to stop his studies and start working at Santa Maria Novella hospital. Financial circumstances forced him to do so because his father suffered the loss of 25,000 scudi and so the family was in desperate need of money. In this hospital Michelangelo gained his first experience with medical and surgical practice. Even at such a young age, however, he distinguished himself as he himself narrates (in translation): 'In the interval of seven years of practice (at the hospital) I had the fortune among other cures, to cure a difficult case which proved very profitable for me primarily because my teacher Monsieur Lots, had refused the case'. Michelangelo's friends and some knights, encouraged him to go abroad and study Medicine and Surgery. These words remained in the dreaming mind of the young man. Notwithstanding the disapproval of his parents, Michelangelo left Malta to study in Florence, in the school of the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova in Tuscany. This school was renowned for its good professors who taught Anatomy and Surgery and it was one of the first to use cadavers for the dissection of the human body. From letters which Grima sent to friends such as the Gozitan Canon Agius die Soldanis, he was very happy with the professors and found a healthy academical environment in the school. In Florence, Grima became interested in the cultural and scientific fields besides Anatomy and Surgery and he became secretary of the Botanical Academy and of Natural History. He was also member of the Georgofili and Etruscan Academy, the Sacra Accademia Fiorentina and the 'Apatisti' of Florence. His dissertation entitled '*Sulla sensibilita' dei tendini*', was very

much liked by the Accademia degli Apatisti and was translated in French and published in Paris in 1760.

His dissertation, '*Del Nuovo Metodo di Cucire gl'Intestini*', was an original work in which he explained the results of experiments he carried out on suturing, by means of spiral stitching on the human body. This work was enough to place him among the pioneers of surgery. In 1756, Michelangelo Grima received his doctorate in Medicine and Philosophy at the University of Pisa and he remained as dissector in the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova. Once again he started experimenting on the suturing of the intestines and in later years (1760), he published another dissertation entitled '*Di un Nuovo e Sicuro Metodo di Cucire gl' Intestini*'.

Although Michelangelo Grima enjoyed prestige and good work possibilities in Florence, he had much higher hopes. However, he had one problem, namely, he was short of money. His parents used to send him some money in the first few years of his studies but they soon forgot him. He hoped to marry a rich lady who could help him cover the expenses but his attempts in this respect failed. At this point he turned to Grand Master Emmanuel Pinto de Fonseca and asked him to grant him a scholarship to be able to go to Paris. Michelangelo's request was accepted and after he received his warrant as surgeon from Florence, he left for Paris in 1759. He remained there for a year where he published his dissertation on intestinal suturing which impressed very much the surgeons of the University of that city. In 1760, he was appointed surgeon of the French Military Hospital since at that time the Seven Years War was being waged. This experience among the wounded soldiers, inspired him to write, '*Della Medicina Traumatica detta Vulnerraria*' (1773).

In the year 1763, Michelangelo Grima returned to Malta after about fourteen years of studies abroad. His family was very poor and lived on alms provided by the Sacra Infermeria. With the arrival of Michelangelo, Grand Master Pinto was encouraged to reorganize the Medical School and on 26th September 1763, Grima was made Chief Surgeon of the Holy Infirmary after being approved Doctor of Medicine in Mata and granted the license to practice his profession. He was also appointed Reader in Surgery, Superintendent of Surgery and nominated successor of Dr F Maggi who, although partially paralysed, remained in possession of the Chair of Anatomy and Surgery.

Encouraged by these nominations, Grima set his mind to

Table 2: Maltese teachers of Anatomy abroad

1740	Michelangelo Magri	in Florence
1748	Michelangelo Magri	in Messina
1773	Joseph Barth	in Vienna

For comparison purposes, note that the first lecturer in Anatomy established in London in 1572 and in Oxford in 1623

Table 3: Anatomical Theatres in Malta (1676 – 1968)

Date	Built by	Site	Remarks
1676	Grandmaster Cottoner	Cemetery adjoining Infermeria	Probably used as a lecture room only
1716	Grandmaster Zondadari	As above	Dissection commenced in this theatre in 1723
1794	Fra Abri-Descallar	Not far from above	This was an amphitheatre
1822	Sir Thomas Maitland	Courtyard of civil Hospital	
1942	N/A	Postmortem room, next to Argotti Gardens	
1960	N/A	Evans laboratory, Valletta	
1968	N/A	University Biomedical Section	

work. He founded the Practical School of Medico-Surgical Operations on Cadavers and ran it on the same basis as that of Florence. As he himself says in his book, *'Della Medicina Traumatica'*, he found great help from the secretary of the Common Treasury, Bali' Fra Silvio Vicentini. Grand Master Pinto also decided to build an Ateneum for the teaching of Arts and Sciences and to further increase the prestige of this establishment, he also brought famous professors from all Europe. These reforms proved very successful. Not only was the number of Maltese students increasing, but many foreign students were coming to Malta to study. As usual, Grima did not fail to improve his colleagues. After the death of the Protomedico, Dr Pietro Paolo Azzopardi in May of 1764, Drs Giorgio Imbert, Gio Domenico Biatio, Giuseppe Bigeni and Michelangelo Grima took his place.

In a couple of years Grima increased his prestige. He performed many operations including lithotomies, mastectomies, removal of fistulas, cancers and cataracts. One operation involved the removal of a foetus from the uterus, to preserve the mother's life. Besides being successful in surgical operations, Grima was also a good teacher. In order to save time on dictation during a lecture, Grima wrote books on Anatomy for the use of his students. He also used to suggest reading for the following lesson and so his students would attend prepared for the subject. He believed that in this way, only a year was needed for students to complete the whole course of Anatomy. He believed much in the utility of dissections and made sure that every theoretical lecture was followed by a practical dissection on cadavers. In summer dissections were not performed probably because in those times there were no

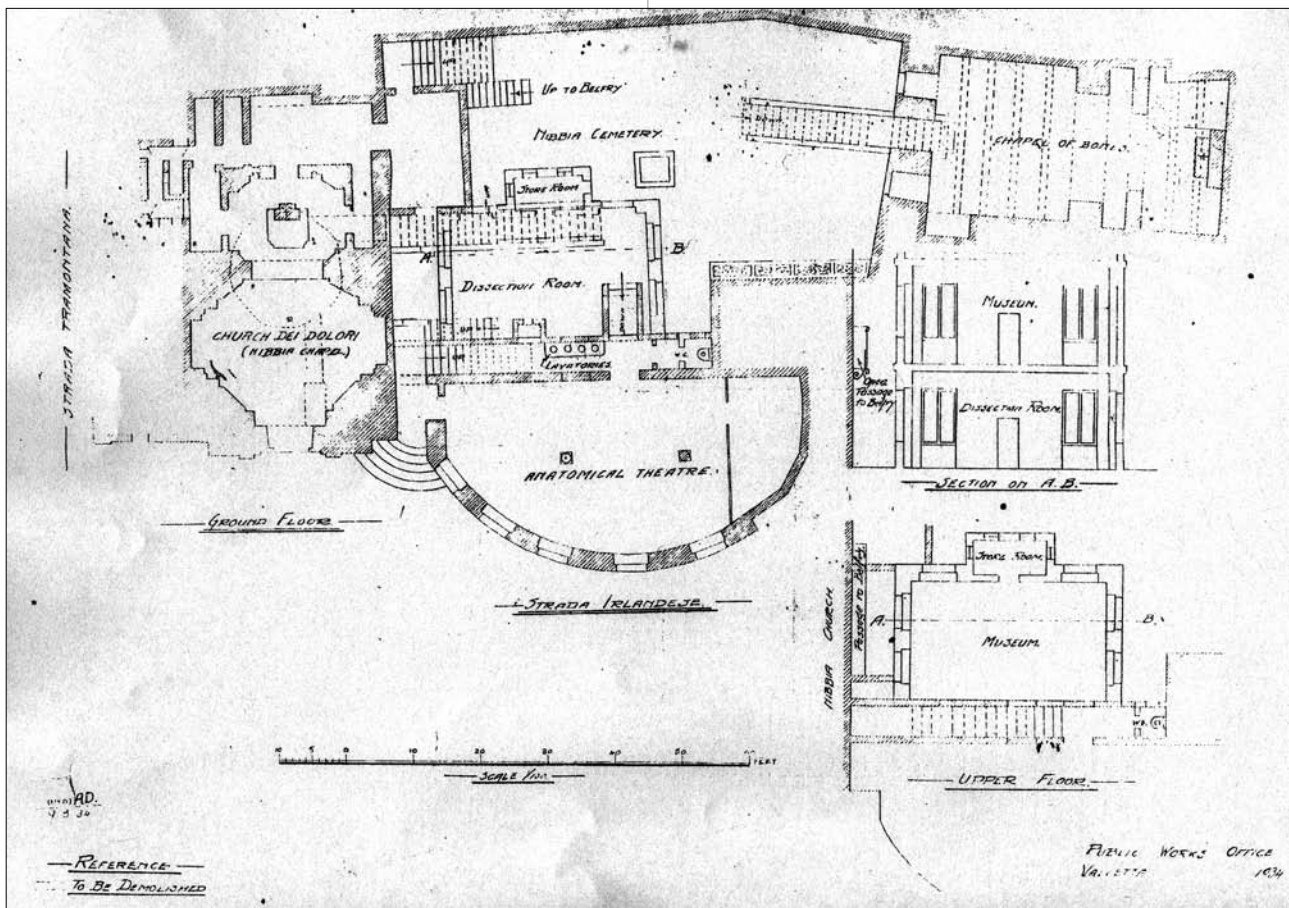


Figure 1: Plan showing proposed additional accommodation in the Anatomical Theatre (1934)

freezers to preserve the cadavers and these would stink in the hot summer days. This problem was remedied when in 1766, the hospital received a donation of nineteen anatomical models in coloured wax and a wax model of the human body from a certain Anthony Mayer who was a Surgeon Major of a Swiss regiment stationed in Sicily. In recognition of his providential donation, Antonio Mayer was honoured with the half cross of the Order of St John. Grima also introduced operative surgery as part of final examinations by which a student could obtain his license to operate. A student by the name of Paolo Zammit, had spent 'many years to learn the practice of a surgeon was not accepted since he first had to perform other exams on cadavers to prove his ability in operations and stand for a practical exam'. Besides theory, the exam included operations on cadavers in front of the Protomedici.

Grima's manner of teaching traumatic surgery was original. He would fire a number of pistol shots from different angles on the cadaver and then he would order his students to extract the bullets and fragments of bone embedded in the wound. Grima had gained much experience in this field since he had served as surgeon in the French Military forces. He also claimed that the *'Spedali Militari il nostro della Sacra Religione Gerosolimitana in Malta vien ripetuto il famoso ed insigne al par di ogni altro, si per la sua ampiezza e boun'ordine, e caritativa munificenza, si per la quantita' delle differenti specie di malattie, e particolarmente in Ferite d'armi da fuoco'*. Hence the importance he gave to traumatic surgery. Grima was also given the responsibility to examine people who died of an unknown cause and he was therefore also the pioneer of Autopsy in Malta.

We are now in the period when a movement against the Jesuits was taking place in Europe and this also spread to Malta. The Jesuits had established themselves in Malta since 1602 and they had taken in their hands the education of students and the Maltese appreciated their work. However the anti-Jesuit movement also pervaded Malta and the Company of the Society of Jesus was declared illegal by Grand Master Pinto in 1768. In the following year Pinto founded the University in the same building used by the Jesuits. In 1771, the first Constitutions for the Studies of the University, were issued. These also included rules concerning the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery. The Faculty of Medicine, which was previously annexed to the hospital, was transferred to the University. The rules regarding anatomy and surgery read: *I 'Il soggetto da Noi destinato per queste due facolta', premesso un discorso generale sul corpo umano, dovra' insegnarle ai Giovani con tal chiarezza e precisione che ne imparino I veri principi e teorie. II: Ogni sabato poi ne' mesi d'inverno dovra' condurre I suoi scolari allol Spedial Grande, e far loro vedere pubblicamente le preparazioni anatomiche, con ragionar egli, or far ragionar da piu' esperti de' suoi allievi sopra di esse, ed alle occasione di grandi operazioni chirurgiche, dovra' farveli assistere sotto pena di privazione delle sedi necessarie e chi vi mancasse senza motivo replicatamente'*.

On the 29th May 1771, Grand Master Pinto nominated two

persons as Masters of the Medical Art. Dr Giorgio Lucano was to teach Botany while Dr Michelangelo Grima was in charge of the teaching of anatomy and of performing dissections on cadavers. These two illustrious physicians were also given a place in the Collegio Medico which was set up in the same year. This Board had the responsibility of performing experiments as well as discussing results obtained by students. The subjects studied in the Academical Course of Medicine were Anatomy, Chemistry, Botany, Surgery and Medicine. The course lasted five years. After two years the student obtained a Bachelorship, after four years a Licenciata and a Doctorate at the end of the fifth year.

Grand Master Pinto died in January 1773 and he was succeeded by Bali' Francesco Ximenes de Texada. It is well known that in their last years as masters of our islands, the Order of St John was degenerating both economically and morally. The Jesuit Society was quite powerful and economically well off while the Order was not able to keep up with the costs of education. Michealangelo Grima was not liked by Grand Master Ximenes and in 1773 the former was not any more considered as 'Principoe dell'Accademia dei Medici'. Dr Lucano was awarded this post. The doctors of the Hospital, as well as the members of the Consiglio Medico, were not at all in favour of this appointment and the following words show clearly the discontent which arose: *'Perche il Gran Maestro aveva decretato al Dottor Medico lucano come Principe dell'Accademia questo fece fracasso ed intendeva che dovessero tutti I Medicin prestargli omaggio, e traovarsi tutti di persenza all sua Accademia: ricorsero tutti medici con un memoriale al Grand Maestro; pro opportune rimedio decreto' Santissime Eminenza che non si facessero piu accademie sin nuovo ordine'*.

In the same year, Dr Giorgio Lucano was made Head of the Scuola della fondazione Cottoner while Grima was in Pisa because of health problems. Lucano wrote short studies on the anatomy and physiology of the female reproductive system, on the function of muscles and nerve cells and the canal of the spinal medulla. Michelangelo Grima was suspended from his appointment until 1775 when Grand Master Ximenes was replaced by Grand Master de Rohan. In this year other regulations were issued. These include:

1. *Incomincernao annualmente gli studi secondo la consuetudine fino adesso praticata, vale a dire nel di 19 Ottobre e termineranno nella fine di Giugno.*
2. *Conformante a quanto si e' usato fino dai tempi in cui e' stato eretta la Fondazione Cottoner si' fara' giornalmente sessione nella Sacra Infermeria eccetto nei giorni Festivi nei Giovedi; ed in quelli mercoledi' tutti nei quail vi sara' Accademia medica di cui il fiferito lettore nella Cattedra Cottoner sara' come nel passato Direttolre noto, avendo ansi in sua consegna la Biblioteca del Dottor Zammit lasciata al Sagro Spedale con questa condizione.*
3. *La sudetta lezione incomincera' all ore tre dopo pranzo, e durera' un'ora in cui successivamente sphighera' la Fisiologia, La patologia, La Semiotica, L'Igene, e la*

Terapeutic relativamente alla Chirurgia.

- 4. Il professore nominato dalla nuova Fondazione, fara' le sue lezioni nelli giorni, e nell ore esposte nel Memoriale del Fondatore vale a dire dalli dieci di mattina fino alle undici, nelle qual restera' incaricato di dimostrare sul cadavere, o colle preparazioni tutte il corso dell' Anatomia metodicamente ed a questo effetto gli saranno consegnati tutti gli instrumenti ed utensili anatomici vetivamente fatti del Comun Tesoro. Finito poi che avra' ditto corso incominciera' quello delle operazioni chirurgiche, le qual parimente saranno fatte sul cadavere, ed in dello corso sara' anche compresa la descrizione non solo delli strumenti, ma anche delle machine chirurgiche, e delle fasciature, terminando col tratto dell' Arte Ostetricia.*

These regulations were approved and signed by Dr Giorgio Imbert, Portomedico.

In 1775, Bali' Fra Clemente Ressegnier established a foundation for the teaching of surgery. Although this was another improvement which showed the importance which was being given to surgery, Michelangelo Grima thought that two schools of surgery for a few students were too much. Grand Master De Rohan, however, recognized this school and Bali' also deposited 2000 scudi in the Treasury for the purpose. Michelangelo Grima also asked De Rohan to be reinstated in the post of Dottore of Anatomy which had been removed from him by Grand Master Ximenes. Michelangelo continued to serve the Order as surgeon for thirty-four years. In 1797, thus occupying this post for thirty-four years. In 1781 he published the first part of 'Istituzioni d'Anatomia' and he terminated the second part in 1784, although this second part was never published. Michelangelo Grima died in 1798.

In 1794, the Priore of Catalogna, Bali' Fra Nicolo' Atri-Descallar, raised the sum of 2500 scudi to set up an amphitheatre of Anatomy very near to the 'Cimitero della Religione' (see annexed plan), with a professor to give lessons and to perform practical sessions and to buy the necessary instruments. Bali' Fra' Nicolo' also sent Giovanni Andreotti to study anatomy and surgery. This anatomical amphitheatre was later annexed to the Foundation established by Cottoner. In 1941 German bombing damaged the Infermeria and the Nobbia Chapel, The Chapel of Bones and the Anatomical Theatre were destroyed.

The successor of Michelangelo Grima, Surgeon Aurelio Badat, was the Principal Surgeon of the Women's Hospital. Badat began his career in Malta in 1757 when he became barber-surgeon of the Order's navy. After some time in this post, he spent ten years in Paris to study surgery and when he returned to Malta he was appointed Senior Surgeon of the Naval Squadron. In 1789 he was appointed the Principal Surgeon of the Women's Hospital. In 1797 he was honoured with the title of Doctor of Medicine with which he could occupy the Chair of Anatomy and Surgery. However Badat's enjoyment of this post was short-lived since in 1798 the French expelled the Order of St John from Malta. The Malta University was abolished by a

decree of Napoleon Bonaparte on June 1798 and replaced by a Central School with seven professors to teach mechanics, mathematics, astronomy, navigation, physics, chemistry and oriental languages. Although the plan for the teaching of anatomy, medicine and midwifery at the Holy Infirmery was set up, this was never put into practice and the Infirmery, which was before used for teaching medical students, was converted into a Military Hospital for Napoleon's troops. The French government established a botanical garden and a Natural History museum showing some interest in scientific subjects but nevertheless, no professor was appointed to teach scientific subjects. The French occupation of Malta was a military one and in those days Napoleon was planning to conquer Egypt to stop the British trade with the Orient. Therefore during the two years of French occupation, no Medical or Anatomical studies took place.

Fortunately for our educational system, the British took possession of our islands in 1800 and the French were expelled from Malta. The first Civil Commissioner under British rule, Sir Alexander Ball, re-established the University on the 6th November 1800. The Faculty of Medicine was reinstated and Badat was reconfirmed in his post which he occupied until 1813 when he was incapable of carrying out his duties due to old age. The Male Civil Hospital, which replaced the Holy Infirmery became a teaching hospital and in November 1800 Dr Badat was appointed Reader and Demonstrator in Anatomy, Surgery and Operative Surgery. In 1818, when Sir Thomas Maitland was Governor of Malta, the Medical Committee was set up and examinations for Medical Students passed under its control as it still is today.

When in 1813 Dr Badat gave up his post, there was no one to succeed him as professor of Anatomy and Surgery. By this date, however, lectures in these subjects were already being given privately. In fact, in 1810, Dr Agostino Naudi had started giving lessons in Anatomy in the cemetery of the Civil Hospital. Naudi is said to have discovered the middle meningeal nerve. In 1813 he stopped lecturing because of the outburst of plague but a year later he resumed his lectures and also taught botany, physiology, pathology and therapeutics. Dr Naudi was also renowned in Italy where he was also invited to occupy the chair of Medicine at the University of Naples. Dr Gavino Portelli was another private tutor who in 1822 started giving lectures in anatomy. At this time (1822 – 1823), an anatomical theatre was built in the courtyard of the Civil Hospital at the time when the Governor of Malta was Sir Thomas Maitland. In 1824, the Chair of Anatomy and Surgery was re-established and Dr Portelli was appointed Professor of Anatomy and Surgery.

Dr Portelli was succeeded by Charles Galland who occupied the chair from 1839 to 1858. He was an eye and abdominal surgeon. In 1858 the chair of Anatomy was Separated from that of Surgery and Salvatore Pisani was the first to qualify from the United Kingdom, at Edinburgh University in 1853. He was Chief Government Medical Officer and wrote a very important work on Cholera Epidemic in Malta.

Between 1876 and 1894, Dr Hamilton Stilon occupied the

Chair of Anatomy and in the latter year he was succeeded by Carmel Sammut who at the time was also occupying the chair of Pathology. When Sammut retired in 1920, the Chair of Anatomy was separated from that of Pathology and Dr Ruggier Busuttill was appointed to the Chair of Anatomy. Until this date Anatomy was taught on a systematic basis for example, the skeletal system, the blood vascular system, the muscular system, the neural system, the respiratory system etc. Today students of anatomy are taught the regional approach whereby one studies parts of the body as a whole, including muscles, vessels and nerves. This latter approach was introduced in Malta by Dr Briffa. He also introduced the teaching of embryology.

In 1954, Dr Victor Griffiths held the Chair of Anatomy for the following fifteen years. He was also Consultant Surgeon in Government Service. Professor Griffiths studied Anatomy at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London. He established the Anatomy Department. According to Pace, he was the first to introduce into his teaching, the correlation of structure with function of the human body. After the Second World War dissections were carried out in a small room at the back of the Argotti Gardens, near the Central Hospital. The Department of Anatomy then moved to Evans Laboratory where it remained up to 1868. The Department as well as the theatre, are today part of the University buildings.

In the past, the occupant of the Chair of Anatomy and Surgery decided the way in which students were to be examined. University records give us an idea of the way students were examined from 1833 onwards. From this latter date until about 1882, the Anatomy examination was divided into three parts. A thesis on Descriptive Anatomy (often combined with Organic

Chemistry) was to be presented by first year students while one on obstetrical Anatomy and Physiology and another one on Normal Histology were to be prepared by second year students. The candidates drew by lot the title of their thesis, which they had to write in six hours. They had then to appear before a Council made up of ten individuals and subjected to an oral examination which lasted between thirty and forty-five minutes. The students would be asked to sit for the examination at a later time, only if they would have satisfied the examiners. In 1882, the system of written papers was introduced, in conjunction with an oral and practical examination in dissection.

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Editorial Note

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