

BOOK REVIEWS

BONELLI Luigi, *Saggi del Folklore dell'isola di Malta*, (con prefazione di G. Pitre). Palermo, con tipi del 'Giornale di Sicilia', 1895.

[In 1954 Dr. W. Schlums, of Leipzig (now of Hildesheim), favoured the Editor, J. Cassar-Pullicino, with the following translation of H. Stumme's review of Bonelli's work which appeared in *Zeitschrift für Afrikanische und Oceanische Sprachen* II, p. 139 (Berlin, 1896, Dietrich Reimer).

After commenting on de Castries: *Les Gnomes de Sidi Abd er-Rahman el-Medjedoub*, Stumme refers to Bonelli's *Saggi*.]

"The little pamphlet by Dr. Bonelli brings us most welcome samples of most genuine Maltese folklore under the following headings: I and II: *Canzoni, ritornelli, motti, indovinelli*; III: *Voci Infantili*; IV: *Fiabe e leggende*; V: *Voci Infantili, Facezie di Gahan*; VI: *Grida di venditori, locuzioni storiche o superstiziose; usi e superstizioni; maldicenze paesane*.

We know products of Maltese writers in plenty; the publication of Dr. Bonelli, however, provides us with the first real examples of the genuine tone of the 'folk' of Malta. The *Voci infantili*, especially, bring new lexical material in plenty. It is to be regretted that the *Fiabe e Leggende* and the *Facezie di Gahan* are only given in Italian translation. The Street and Children's Songs which are found under heading I remind us vividly of the Tunisian ones given above (by de Castries); however the frequent invocations of Holy Mary, of St. Lawrence and of other saints show us distinctly that we are dealing with Christian Arabs. As a sample of Maltese "Nursery Poetry" we will quote here a fairy tale which is "cumulative" and partially rhymed:

Darba kien hawn sultan	Il-ward gewwa l-qasrija;
Habat tintu mat-tigan;	Il-qasrija trid l-ilma,
It-tigan irid il-bajd,	L-ilma go l-bir;
Il-bajd ghand it-tigiega;	Il-bir irid il-qannata,
It-tigiega trid in-nuhhala,	Il-qannata trid il-habel;
In-nuhhala ghand il-furnar;	Il-habel tal-istoppa,
Il-furnar irid il-flus,	Il-qattusa tkakki
Il-flus ghand l-istampier;	U inti timbokka.
L-istampier irid il-ward,	

Dr. Bonelli's collection is not voluminous — which, however, is not meant to be a reproach. But we are sure that lots of such material can still be collected in Malta. If one or the other of our countrymen on his way to East Africa in order to make collections in Vulgar Arabic or Negro dialects stops at Malta he should continue Bonelli's work and likewise oblige all Arabists and folklorists."

H. STUMME.

~~MALTESE METEOROLOGICAL AND AGRICULTURAL PROVERBS, by J. Aquilina. Offprint from the "Journal of Maltese Studies", Vol. 1, No. 1. Malta University Press, 1961. pp. 80.~~

~~In this masterly monograph Professor Aquilina brings together the vast corpus of Maltese husbandry and weather lore enshrined in 418 proverbs — an impressive list which "is the first of the kind collected from various authentic sources and from the living~~