

Books Received

Church-State Relations in late-eighteenth-century Malta: Gio.

Nicolo` Muscat (1735-1803)

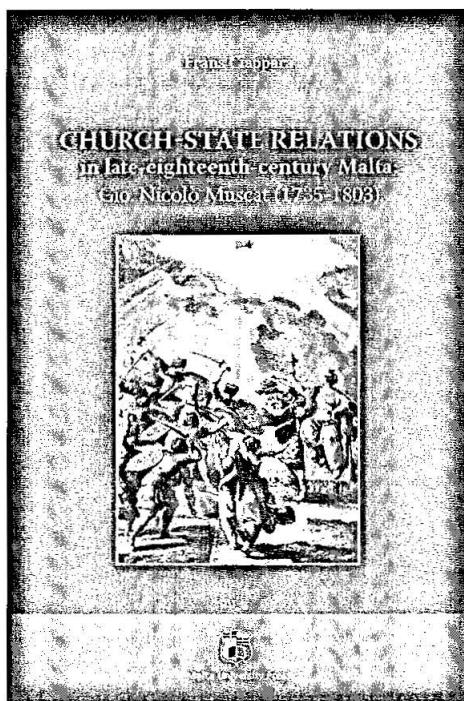
By Frans Ciappara

Published by Malta University Press, 2018, pp.xxi + 286,

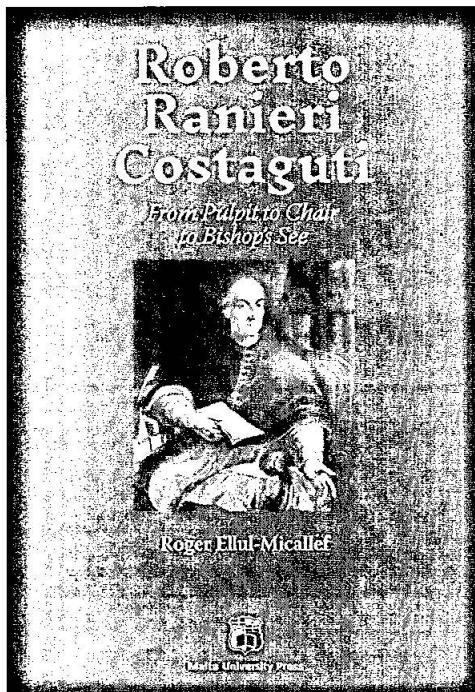
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‘This visionary, passionate in his hatreds, who with his savage comments and rigid character rarely blended prudence with courage, and whose mind was so soewly swept by the winds of controversy, would be proved right in embracing the cuse of the separation between Church and State and distinguishing canon from civil law. His ideas gained ascendancy after his death; they were destined to survive him and become visions in the soul of future generations. The credit they deserved was long overdue. The Erasmian seeds of his ideas which he expressed during the struggle were sown in the hearts of his compatriots. They fell neither beside the path, so that all the birds came and ate them up nor on rocky land and among briers but where the soil was good, and these yielded a harvest. The idea of an omnipotent Church had been challenged and, once challenged it could never recover the unconscious security of the past. The Church’s stand was without promise.

Muscat, one of the noisest, most active, most influential and



hated of all government ministers, was fiercely independent and built no bridges with his rivals. Brash and enterprising, he has the merit of having indicated with a ruthless and an intimidating clarity where the Church had overstepped its bounds and the way how to attack its encroachments. He realized that the centrifugal tendencies of the clergy could only be curbed if they were subordinated to the authoritative direction of a powerful state with the will to carry out an active policy. He bore no malice for the past but looked ahead to a time when his idea would be vindicated. He served as an intellectual guide to his followers, giving the necessary clarity and order to his thoughts. His transient victories cost him dearly but he lived in a period when the new had not yet quite arrived and the old not yet quite disappeared.' *From the author's conclusion.*



Roberto Ranieri Costaguti

By Roger Ellul Micallef

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The book deals with the life and times of Roberto Ranieri Costaguti (1732-1818) the first Rector of the University of Malta and later Bishop of Sansepolcro. The latter Tuscan Borgo was to be Costaguti's final resting place. This multifaceted personality was born in Livorno, when Tuscany was still an independent state.

Mgr. Costaguti was one of the most gifted homilists of his time. His reputation among his contemporaries, as a talented and erudite preacher, attracted many invitations to preach from bishops and cardinals all over Italy. His fame as an orator reached the courts of Empress Maria Theresa at Vienna, the House of Savoy at Turin and that of the Serenissima, the Republic of Venice. Costaguti had also

been repeatedly requested by Grandmaster Pinto to preach in Malta. He must have impressed the Grandmaster because the latter had no hesitation in appointing him, in 1769, Rector of his newly founded University. His stay in Malta as Rector was a brief but fruitful one. Costaguti drew up the Constitution of the University as well as the Rules regulating the College whose students were expected to seek entrance to the University. Besides, the new Rector was also responsible for the recruitment of the academic staff needed to fill the various teaching positions in all faculties except the medical one. He thus played a pivotal role in shaping Malta's educational institutions. Five years after his return to Italy, following the termination of his appointment as Rector, Roberto Costaguti was consecrated Bishop of Sansepolcro in 1778.

'This Tuscan bishop later witnessed the Italian campaigns of the French Revolutionary Wars (1792-1802). He learnt of the arrest of Pope Pius VI, who died in exile in France in 1799. His successor, Pius VII suffered a similar fate after he had excommunicated Napoleon for having annexed the Papal States to France. Costaguti, who appears to have successfully navigated between Scylla and Charybdis, during the French interregnum, frequently stood his ground and even refused to accept the *Legion d'Honneur*, the highest French Order of Merit, when this was offered to him by the French Emperor.

During his life, Roberto Costaguti seemed equally at home with fellow bishops, cardinals and monarchs, as well as with the poorer members of his diocese. He did not fail to remember in his will his struggling parishioners who led a hand to mouth existence. He was often faced with a dilemma, between what was dictated by his conscience and his expected obedience to civil authorities. At one point, he did appear to harbour some apprehension about the role and temporal power of the Pope. In the end, however, his allegiance of mind and heart to the Magesterium of the Catholic Church was put beyond doubt.

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The editors prefer that manuscripts be submitted in electronic form as an e-mail attachment sent to the Journal's address together with a 150-word abstract. The entire text of all manuscripts, including footnotes and headings, must be prepared in double-spaced typescript with generous margins to allow for copyediting. Footnotes must be numbered consecutively at the end of each page.

Spellings: English not US – ise, centre, honour.

Quotations: single inverted commas in all instances.

f. (folio), ff. (folios).

Dates: 21 December 1612; 1660s; 1608-9; 1690-1702.

Capitalisation kept to a minimum except in titles: Captain John, Bishop Pace.

Books: Jeremy Black, *European Warfare, 1660-1815*. (London: Routledge, 2003), 29.

Articles: Clive Burgess, *London Parishioners in Times of Change: St Andrew Hubbard, Eastcheap, c. 1450-1570*. In 'The Journal of Ecclesiastical History' 53, no. 1 (2012), 38-63.

Chapters in books: Frans Ciappara, *The Maltese Catholic Enlightenment*. In Ulrich L. Lehner and Michael Printy, eds., *A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 251-95. Subsequent citations in short-title form: Black, *European Warfare*, 76.

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