

## The Medieval Collegiate Church of Gozo

In the Christian Church, a collegiate church is one where the daily office of worship is maintained by a college of canons, a secular, non-monastic community of clergy organized as a self-governing corporate body. Unlike a cathedral, it is not the seat of a bishop and has no diocesan responsibilities. Collegiate churches were often supported by extensive lands held by the church, or by tithe income from appropriated benefices. In Western Christianity, in the early medieval period, many new church foundations, before the development of the parish system, were staffed by groups of secular priests living a communal collegial life and serving an extensive territory. In the Byzantine Church one encounters similar structures but with certain differences.

In 2005, jointly with the late George Aquilina OFM, I published a hitherto unknown Vatican document of 1463 that referred to the Matrix Church of Gozo as a *collegiata*. This papal brief was addressed: “Dilectis filiis capitulo dicte Ecclesie Collegiate.”<sup>1</sup> The significance of this document is that already in the fifteenth century, a good one and a half centuries before the Gozitan Matrix Church was elevated to the status of a collegiate in 1623, it had been endowed with a chapter of canons that came together at fixed times of the day to recite the liturgical hours in common. This information was completely new, so that few took notice of it or took it very seriously. Mgr Vincent Borg, former Professor of Church History at the University, in his monumental *Melita Sacra*,<sup>2</sup> sceptically dismissed the discovery as being a single unbuttressed sporadic occurrence not to be given much weight in the absence of other corroborative sources. Since 2005, the desired corroboration has been forthcoming in various guises. Following a

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<sup>1</sup> George Aquilina and Stanley Fiorini, eds., *Documentary Sources of Maltese History, Pt. 4: Documents at the Vatican, no. 2: Archivio Segreto Vaticano: Cancelleria Apostolica and Camera Apostolica and Related Sources at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* (Malta: University Press, 2005), doc. 199. A reference, such as this, to volumes in this series will, hereafter, be denoted by *DSMH* 4/2.

<sup>2</sup> Vincent Borg, *Melita Sacra* (Malta: PEG/Gutenberg, 2009-2015), 1:102-3, 134.

lead in Pirro,<sup>3</sup> an entry in the *Protonotaro* volume 209 at Palermo's *Archivio di Stato*, the document here reproduced in appendix doc.1, yields the important information that the Viceroy Johan de la Nuça, on 20 February 1506 - not 1509, as in Pirro - collated Don Angelo Rigano, a canon of Palermo's Palatine Chapel Chapter, to the *juspatronatus regium* called *Tar-Rihan* - corrupted to *Tancixan*, in Pirro - on Gozo, founded in the "Ecclesia Collegiata sub vocabulo Sancte Marie Insule Gaudisii."<sup>4</sup> One may be inclined to conclude that the tragic events of 1551 were the reason for the general amnesia about this important characteristic of Gozo's main church. But other post-1551 references for its collegiate status have survived. Bishop Dominicus Cubelles on 12 October 1553 deemed it fit to dispense people from the payment of the census due to "la Collegiata del Gozo per li guasti che l'armata turchesca abbia fatti nelli beni."<sup>5</sup> In a sense, the compassionate pastor, in allowing the faithful to forget about their financial obligations towards their collegiate, was unwittingly encouraging them to forget about the *Collegiata* itself!

The case of Gozo was certainly not an isolated case viewed in the wider Sicilian context. There were a number of collegiate churches in Sicily which were not cathedral churches, notably among them the *Capella Palatina* of Palermo. There was, however, another reminder of the existence of the chapter of priests who, before 1551, recited the liturgical hours in common in the Matrix Church. This post-1551 reminder was nothing more than the set of fourteen choir stalls - seven on either side of the chancel - which survived the devastation and were recorded in the church inventory of 15 December 1569 attached to Dusina's 1575 visitation report: "Item, lo choro consistente in sedi sette per banda." Further to this, the inventory lists a "scannello del choro" and "doi banki che servano nel choro."<sup>6</sup> Other independent pointers towards the existence of a chapter of canons in Gozo are (i) another document of 1472 from Palermo's *Real Cancelleria* consisting of the collation of the Sicilian Cleric Geronimu di Farahone to the *juspatronatus regium* on Gozo of *Santa Maria di la Saccaya* in which the previous incumbent is described as "Don Ffranciscu Chappisa **canonicu** lu quali e multu decrepitu et infirmu";<sup>7</sup> and (ii) the witness, Notary Jacobus Saliva, in a lawsuit in the Bishop's Court in 1526, where he asserts that

<sup>3</sup> Rocco Pirro, *Sicilia Sacra* (Palermo: Coppola, 1733), 2:928.

<sup>4</sup> It is surprising that Borg (1:113, n.13), citing the very same note in Pirro (2:928) opts to omit all mention of the *Collegiata*, so clearly declared.

<sup>5</sup> Museum of the Cathedral Archives, Mdina (MCM), ACM Misc. 55, fol. 41, 42 (12.x.1553).

<sup>6</sup> *DSMH* 4/1:349, fol. 420. This volume will, hereafter, be referred to as *Dusina*.

<sup>7</sup> *DSMH* 2/3, doc. 171 (18.xi.1472).

he had obtained the information he was relating “essendu ipsu testi jacono et quasi campando comu clerico patricando cum li **canonichi** antiqui dila terra et insula dilu Gozu.”<sup>8</sup>

One can ask: Who were the *antiqui canonichi* that were ensconced in the fourteen stalls? One can get an approximate answer to this question if we consider the famous *Rollo de Mello* of 1436,<sup>9</sup> which is a catalogue of the Maltese clergy (excluding Gozitans) in that year and of the prebends and benefices (*animagia, jurapatronatus*) to which each was collated. In this document a clear distinction is made in the titles given to the holders of canonical prebends, referred to as *donni*, and “lesser” priests, simply called *presbyteri*. Luttrell<sup>10</sup> has no hesitation in identifying the *donni* with the canons even if two exceptional cases arise.<sup>11</sup> This clear differentiating demarcation by title appears to have been adopted in local documentation throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, but the distinction became increasingly blurred after 1500 so that, by Dusina’s time, the title *donnus* had come to be used indiscriminately for both canons and other ordained ecclesiastics.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the same differentiation by title appears to have been in use also in Gozo. It has already been noted how the Gozitan *Canonicu* Ffranciscu Chappisa is called *Don*. An earlier exemplar is the will of Nucius Chamire of Gozo, dated November 1431, recently unearthed (and still uncatalogued) at the Notarial Archives, Valletta. The witnesses to this will were: *Donnus* Matheus Briffa, *Donnus* Ramundus Mannara, *Presbiter* Henricus de Bisconis, *Presbiter* Petrus Tillirixi, *Clericus* Petrus de Sansono and other laymen including Matheus Brunetta who later became *Donnus Vicarius Foraneus* for Gozo. One of the beneficiaries in the will was *Presbyter* Pinus Calimera, later to become *Donnus*.

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<sup>8</sup> MCM CEM AO 7B, #59, fol. 471v.

<sup>9</sup> There are various copies of this pivotal document: (i) NLM Libr. MS. 721, fol. 2-4v; (ii) Gio. Francesco Abela, *Descrittione di Malta isola nel mare siciliano* (Malta: Bonacota, 1647), 313-316; (iii) Borg, 1:743-748; (iv) Joseph Busuttil and Stanley Fiorini, “The Rollo de Mello (1436) and the Will of Don Bernardus Yaner (1442),” in *Melitensium Amor: Festschrift in Honour of Dun Ġwann Azzopardi*, ed. Toni Cortis et al. (Malta: Gutenberg, 2002), 57-72.

<sup>10</sup> Anthony Luttrell, “Le origini della parrocchia a Malta,” in *The Making of Christian Malta* (Ashgate: Variorum, 2002), chap. 18:1194.

<sup>11</sup> These two exceptions - Parish Priests *Donnus Franciscus Sillatus* and *Donnus Blasius* - should occasion no difficulty in this interpretation. In all four surviving versions of the *Rollo*, all of which are clear copies of a lost original, these two names have been entered erroneously among the *prebendati* rather than, in their proper place, following them as required by precedence considerations, so that they are mistakenly given the “higher” title together with the rest; this title they did not deserve as mere *presbyteri*.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Dusina*, 480 listing members of the Cathedral Chapter and other priests, all described as *donni*.

If we, therefore, consider the titles of members of the clergy in pre-1551 documentation - such as those found in the *Registrum Fundationum Beneficiorum Insulae Gaudisii* (1435-1545)<sup>13</sup> - we are bound to be able to identify the canons of the Gozitan *Collegiata* as those carrying the title *donnus*. In this exercise, one has to be careful in choosing an appropriate date beyond which the investigation is not to be pursued in order to avoid contamination of data. The year 1551 is already too generous as appears from a *tabularium* of 1545 that lists all ecclesiastics who were serving in the Matrix Church in that year.<sup>14</sup> Their number by far exceeds the magic number of fourteen and still, most of them are referred to as *donni*. It appears that, to be on the safe side, our working hypothesis should be restricted to data from the fifteenth century. In the compilation of this information one is tempted to make use also of other sources, notably the *Giuliana de' Benefizi del Gozo*<sup>15</sup> which makes several references to pre-1500 documentation. This important collection, however, being compiled in the seventeenth century, when the title *donnus* was being indiscriminately used, does not take enough care in the use of this subtle distinction. A couple of examples should suffice to convince us that this source should be used very sparingly and discarded except when the data is confirmed by earlier original pre-1500 sources. For instance, in the collation of the *juspatronatus Ta' Germin* in 1520, the *Giuliana* (fol. 232) gives the new beneficiary as “**Don** Angelo Urdob de Oppido Gaudisii per morte di **Don** Marco [Urdob],” whereas the original letter of appointment<sup>16</sup> speaks of “**Discreto Clerico** Angelo Urdob and condam **Domini Presbiteri** Marci Urdob ultimi detentoris.”<sup>17</sup>

Basing ourselves on original pre-1500 documentation, on criteria as described, we can compile the following list, ordered chronologically by year of first occurrence, of Gozitan *donni* giving the earliest and latest dates for which they were active, references being provided only for those years not cited in *RFBIG*:

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<sup>13</sup> This is published as *DSMH* 5/1. Henceforth, this volume is referred to as *RFBIG*.

<sup>14</sup> MCM CEM RA36, fol. 237-239<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Franciscan Provincial Archives OFM, Valletta.

<sup>16</sup> Archbishop's Archives, Floriana (AAF) Beneficia (?) 5 #12 (transcribed by Mgr Joseph Busuttill).

<sup>17</sup> One encounters a few cases in which a cleric is also given the title of *donnus*. This is interpreted that the trainee for the priesthood, even before ordination, is earmarked for a canonry. Among these are *Clericus Donnus Cerbonius [de Platamone]* (*RFBIG*, doc. 1 [1545]); *Clericus Donnus Paulus Jurubutino* (*ibid.*, doc. 42 [1465]) and *Donpnus Clericus Petrus de Mengabim* [=Benjamin] (*DSMH* II/4, doc. 90 [1479]).

## Catalogue of Gozitan *Donni*: 1424-1500

Don Angelus Parnisi, senior (1424-*ca.*1449);<sup>18</sup> Don Raymundus Mannara (1431-1459);<sup>19</sup> Don Matheus Briffa (1431-1442);<sup>20</sup> Don Pinus Calimera (1440); Don Nicholaus de Guarrerio (1446-1487);<sup>21</sup> Don Andreas de Tellerixio (1449-1524);<sup>22</sup> Don Henricus de Friderico (1449);<sup>23</sup> Don Antonius Apap (1449-1510);<sup>24</sup> Don Angelus Parnisi, junior (1452-1486);<sup>25</sup> Don Georgius Gualtaruni (1452); Don Petrus Tellerixi (1452-1488);<sup>26</sup> Don Franciscus Chappisa (1453-1472);<sup>27</sup> Don Pinus de Sillato (1453-1486);<sup>28</sup> Don Petrus Sansone (1453-1505);<sup>29</sup> Don Johannes de Beniamin (1461); Don Andreas Catalano (1463); Don Georgius Refalo (1465-1505);<sup>30</sup> Don Paulus Jurubutino (1465-1510);<sup>31</sup> Don Matheus Brunetta, senior (1465-1493);<sup>32</sup> Don Pinus Bonnici (1468-1474);<sup>33</sup> Don Henricus de Bisconis (1468-1494);<sup>34</sup> Don Andreas Bonnici (1474-1484); Don Angelus Garraffa (1474-1510); Don Angelus Xelluki (1475-1499);<sup>35</sup> Don Henricus de Federico (1479);<sup>36</sup> Don Antonius Machnuc (1486);<sup>37</sup> Don Antonius de Caxario (1487-1490);<sup>38</sup> Don Ugolinus Mamux (1488-1498);<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> MCM CEM AO2, fol. 1, 4 (*die XX<sup>o</sup> Februarii secunde indicionis secundo preterite*, that is, 1424).

<sup>19</sup> Will of Nucius Chamire, cited *supra*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> MCM CEM AO3, fol. 324<sup>rv</sup>; *Giuliana* 3, fol. 210<sup>v</sup>; *DSMH* 1/1, doc. 310.

<sup>22</sup> MCM CEM AO2, fol. 1.

<sup>23</sup> MCM CEM AO2, fol. 8.

<sup>24</sup> MCM CEM AO2, fol. 14.

<sup>25</sup> MCM CEM AO4, fol. 238<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Giovan. Luca Barberi, *Beneficia Ecclesiastica*, ed. Illuminato Peri (Palermo: Manfredi, 1963), 2:235.

<sup>27</sup> MCM CEM AO3, fol. 345<sup>v</sup>. *DSMH* 2/3, doc. 172.

<sup>28</sup> MCM CEM AO4, fol. 243<sup>rv</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Borg, 1:140.

<sup>30</sup> *Giuliana*, fol. 210<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> *Giuliana*, fol. 225.

<sup>32</sup> Godfrey Wettinger, "Concubinage among the Clergy of Malta and Gozo *ca.* 1420-1550," *Journal of the Faculty of Arts* 6, no.4 (1977):172.

<sup>33</sup> MCM CEM AO3, fol. 317.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*; *Giuliana*, fol. 73<sup>v</sup>; MCM CEM AO4, fol. 232b.

<sup>35</sup> *Giuliana*, fol. 207.

<sup>36</sup> *DSMH* 2/4, doc. 90.

<sup>37</sup> MCM CEM AO4, fol. 238<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> *DSMH* 1/1, doc. 272; *DSMH* 2/4, doc. 90; Borg, 1:103.

<sup>39</sup> *DSMH* 1/1, doc. 339; *DSMH* 2/4, docs. 124, 146; *Giuliana*, fol. 1<sup>v</sup>.

Don Joannes de Naso (1489-1553);<sup>40</sup> Don Masius Grecu (1496);<sup>41</sup> Don Lanceas Hapap (1497-1510); Don Johannes Balistrera (1498).

From this list one can readily check the number of *donni* in any given year. Thus for instance, between 1453 and 1459 there were the following nine canons: Raymundus Mannara, Nicolaus de Guarrerio, Andreas Tellerixi, Antonius Apap, Angelus Parnisi junior, Petrus Tellerixi, Franciscus Chappisa, Pinus Sillato and Petrus Sansone. Very probably, the paucity of documentation is to blame for not finding the remaining five canons that filled completely the fourteen stalls. The full complement can be deduced for the years 1474-78, 1480-84 and 1486. In almost every year the number of canons does not exceed fourteen, but for 1479 there appear fifteen names. A variety of reasons can be adduced for this excess. One may be inaccuracy of description, and another reason, the prevalent custom at the time of referring to the same person by different appellatives like surname, nickname or place of origin. Although it is not clear how exactly this could have interfered with our analysis, the practice is well documented. We have encountered Don Andreas Jurubutino alias Sanson (1540-1547), Don Franciscus Barberi alias Cavallino (1544-1558) and Don Raymundus Mannara (1431-1459) elsewhere referred to as Navarra, his place of origin.<sup>42</sup> The same can be said of the appellatives of place of origin Catalano and Urdub<sup>43</sup> which, very probably, hide their real surnames, in much the same way that the “surnames” Chappisa (*çapsa*), Machanuc (*mahnuq*) and Xelluki (*xellugi*), which must be nicknames, also do.

The Vatican document of 1463 is a brief of Pope Pius II addressed to Andreas Catalano, “Canonico prebendato Collegiate Ecclesie Beate Marie Terre Gaudisii Melivetane diocesis.” His Holiness asserts that, since the right of conferring all dignities in the principal collegiate churches that became vacant belonged to the Holy See, he was collating Catalano to the tithes prebend of the said collegiate when this had become vacant on the demise of Raymundus Navarra its last incumbent.<sup>44</sup> Navarra is encountered in 1444, described as “Presbiter Raymundus Mannara de Gaudisio Canonico Melivetano,” in the company of

<sup>40</sup> MCM CEM RA1, fol. 15<sup>rv</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> *DSMH* 1/2, doc. 390.

<sup>42</sup> Mannara (as in Canon Raymundus Mannara de Gaudisio in *DSMH* 4/2, doc. 171 [1444]) is the same as Magnara, Mañara, a Spanish surname; cf. *DSMH* 3/2, doc. 50. Canon Raymundus Navarra (*DSMH* 4/2, doc. 199 [1463]) is then interpreted as Raymundus Mañara who came from Navarre. Cp. the scribal usage Cannaves = Cañaves. Although not a priest, we have the confirming example of *Johannes Navarra alias Ortis* (*DSMH* 1/2, doc. 254 [1496]).

<sup>43</sup> For Urdub/Ordob/Gordube = Cordoba, cf. Godfrey Wettinger, “The place-names and the personal nomenclature of Gozo: 1372-1600,” *Oriental Studies* (1980): 177.

<sup>44</sup> *MH* 4/2, doc. 199.

“Presbiter Albanus de Franco, Canonico Melivetano,” being granted licence by the Vatican to draw up their last will.<sup>45</sup> Both De Franco and Mannara are described as “canonici Melivetani,” but whereas De Franco appears among the *donni* of 1436, Mannara does not, when as seen, he is so described in 1431. This means that Mannara was a Canon of the Gozitan Collegiate, of the Diocese of Malta, but not of the Cathedral of Malta as asserted by Mgr Borg.<sup>46</sup> This finds confirmation from the 1459 tithes record, discovered by Mgr Borg, wherein Presbiter Raymundus Mannara (corrupted as Manatus) appears heading the list of Gozitan clergy liable to the payment of tithes to the Holy See in the “Manifestationes fructuum beneficiorum ecclesiasticorum Regni Sicilie ultra farum per decreta apostolica solvenda,” declaring an income of four *uncie*.<sup>47</sup>

One might be tempted to conclude that what constituted the canonry enjoyed by Mannara/Navarra, and by Catalano after him, in the Gozo Collegiate was not the tithe prebend, which was in the gift of His Holiness to bestow, since, in the case of Catalano, this was given to someone who was already described as a canon of the collegiate at the time of collation in 1463. But this description can be interpreted that Catalano was already enjoying some other canonical prebend at the collegiate when he was “promoted” by His Holiness in 1463 to the tithes prebend which had become vacant by the death of Mannara/Navarra. One needs to look into the question of what constituted the canonry enjoyed by Mannara and Catalano. Worth noting is the fact that in 1545 the Gozitan tithes prebend was benefitting Don Nicolaus Castelletta, Archpriest of the Matrix Church who, on its account, had the obligation of celebrating Mass there on Saturdays *in aurora* and on Wednesdays *in die*.<sup>48</sup>

It is recalled that, whereas the Gozitan Collegiate shared with the Malta Cathedral an equal number - fourteen - of canons, they differed in that Gozo had only one dignitary compared to the four at the Cathedral - the Archdeacon, the Dean, the Treasurer and the Precentor - all of whom, except for the Precentor were endowed with a tithes prebend. It is also worth noting that Malta’s Deanship was a *juspatronatus regium*. For some as yet unexplainable reason, tithes were collected on certain designated fields but not on others, even contiguous ones. Malta’s Cathedral holds full records of which fields and what was due on them

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., doc. 171. This document shows, incidentally, that the association of the title *donnus* with canons does not hold for Vatican documentation. De Franco was a canon of Malta’s cathedral chapter who, in 1436, held the prebend of *Bir Twil* (Abela, 314)

<sup>46</sup> Borg, 1:130.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 1:762, 832.

<sup>48</sup> MCM CEM RA36, fol. 238, 239<sup>v</sup>.

going back to 1522,<sup>49</sup> by contrast with Gozo's Collegiate for which none survive. One does, occasionally, come across the odd notarial reference that describes a field in Gozo as being burthened with tithes to the Matrix Church when there is transfer of ownership or emphyteutical lease. Thus, for example, one finds in the acts of Notary Thomas Gauci a testamentary bequest of a vineyard in 1588 which recognizes this onus: "Uno vineale in hac insula Gaudisij in contrata Dachlet Corrot appellatum di Hayn Galie ... subjectum *Iuri decime Matricis Ecclesie* huius insule in uno modio et dimidio frumenti."<sup>50</sup> Mifsud further notes how not even the property bequeathed by Machnuc to the *Matrice* was exempt from this duty of payment of tithes to the Gozitan dignitary in 1606 and 1614.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, as late as 1688, when an agreement was drawn up between the Archpriest Magri of the *Matrice* and the parish priests of the newly-erected parishes *Sancte Marie dela Cala* (that is Nadur), *Sancte Margarite ta Sannat*, *Sancte Marie Virtutum del Zebbug* and *Sancti Antonii della Caccia* (that is, Xaghra), Magri, while conceding first-fruits and other sacramental dues to the new pastors, reserved for himself all immobile property within these territories together with the right to all tithes.<sup>52</sup> Further information comes from Bishop Gargallo's synodal report of 1591 wherein the form of payment due for tithes is specified "in frumento, ordeo, incensus, pecunia, cera et oleo."<sup>53</sup>

In the case of Mannara/Navarra and Catalano, Borg is of the opinion that the Gozitan tithes probably constituted the parish prebend of the Matrix Church,<sup>54</sup> an assertion that is corroborated by what is known for later parish priests, starting with Castelletta. Furthermore, the *Rollo de Mello's* description of the revenues of the four Cathedral dignitaries, apart from all other *animagia* and *beneficia* they enjoyed, specifies for the Precentor (who did not enjoy a tithes prebend), the *prebenda Sancte Catherine* but no similar prebend is mentioned in the case of the other three, so that, the tithes prebend for these must have constituted their main source of revenue.

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<sup>49</sup> MCM ACM Prebende 6 (Decanali, 1522); 5 (Decanali, 1536); 11 (Tesoreriali, 1541); 3 (Arcidecanali, 1546); 7 (Decanali, 1601); 8 (Decanali, 1648); 12 (Tesoreriali, 1648), not to mention a valuable register of decanal tithes defaulters starting *ca.* 1428 (MCM CEM Quaderni Diversi "A").

<sup>50</sup> Notarial Archives, Valletta (NAV), Not. T. Gauci R287/14 (15.iii.1588), fol. 181<sup>v</sup>-182.

<sup>51</sup> Alfredo Mifsud, "Sulle nostre decime," *La Diocesi* 1 (1916-17): 169.

<sup>52</sup> NAV, Not. G.B. Dorbies MS. 792/10 n.p. *sub data* 13.i.1688: *Accordium*. Text reproduced in *RFBIG*, xx-xxi.

<sup>53</sup> *Constitutiones Synodales Ecclesiae Melevitanae promulgata in Synodo Diocesana 1591*, fol. 48 (copy in AAF) and eighteenth-century defective copy in NLM Lib. ms. 6, fol. 72<sup>v</sup>-73<sup>v</sup>. Text reproduced in *RFBIG*, xix-xx.

<sup>54</sup> Borg, 1:134.



One asks, more generally: What were the prebends that supported the canons of the Gozitan Collegiate? What was the landed property that was the source of this income? There were several *animagia/jurapatronatus* that are listed in *RFBIG* that must have constituted part of this income, but the origin of these does not antedate 1435 when it is known that the Collegiate was already in existence well before that year. We must dig more deeply into the past for an answer. To tackle this important question it pays to consider the parallel information from the *Rollo de Mello* which makes a clear distinction between *beneficia* and *animagia*. Mgr Borg, who has looked very closely into these matters, gives the following synthesis based on the juridical and historical roots of the terms:<sup>55</sup> Whereas the term “*animagium* referred to those instances when an ecclesiastical living enjoyed the right of patronage (*juspatronatus*), *beneficium* meant that conferment of the living in question was exclusively in the gift of the Ecclesiastical Authorities.” It would seem that we should be focussing on the *beneficia* in looking for an answer for the grounding of the Gozitan Collegiate. Faced with this task, we are fortunate to have available a snapshot view, dated 16 October 1545, of the obligations of all ecclesiastics to be performed at the Matrix Church in that year. It is entitled *Tabularium Missarum in Matrice et Parrochialibus ecclesiis atque cappellis Terre Gaultitanae juxta pias fundatorum voluntates celebrandarum per R.D. Josephum Manduca J.U.D. Canonicum ... ordinatum*.<sup>56</sup> Concentrating on the obligations in the Matrix Church, we can weed out from these those related to the four *cappelle* erected in this church by noble families in 1497 and later. These obligations come under seven weekly headings, day by day from Sunday to Saturday, which immediately strike the reader that there is a one-to-one correspondence between the *aurora* mass of each matched with a *beneficium* whereas all the *missae in die* (with exactly one exception) are associated with *animagia*. The names of the incumbents concerned and the corresponding *beneficia* are as follows:

<b>fol.</b>	<b><i>Beneficiatus</i></b>	<b><i>Beneficium</i></b>	<b><i>Die</i></b>
237	Don Simon Ferriolo	<i>Dilo Episcopo</i>	<i>Dominico</i>
237 <sup>v</sup>	Clericus Stephanus Zammit	<i>Di Gherduf</i>	<i>Lune</i>
	V.D. Antonius Mannara	<i>Dilo Episcopo</i>	<i>Martis</i>
238	R.D. Simon Ferriolo	<i>Dilo Episcopo</i>	<i>Mercurii</i>
	R.D. Nicolaus Castelletta	<i>Dila Decima</i>	<i>Mercurii</i> <sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:739-40.

<sup>56</sup> MCM CEM RA36, fol. 237-241<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> This is the only entry with a *missa in die*, not *in aurora*. The need for the exception arises from the fact that, in a seven-day week, there were eight masses to be celebrated for the five *beneficia*, a number that cannot be perfectly matched with the seven *aurora* masses in a week.

238 <sup>v</sup>	D. Leonardus de Cace	<i>Tal Cale</i>	<i>Jovis</i>
239	D. Nicolaus Zammit	<i>Tal Casis</i>	<i>Veneris</i>
239 <sup>v</sup>	D. Nicolaus Castelletta	<i>Dila Decima</i>	<i>Sabbati</i>

One readily notes that none of these five benefices - *Tal-Isqof*, *Tad-Dieċmi*, *Ta' Għar Gerduf*, *Tal-Qala* and *Tal-Qassis* - occurs in *RFBIG*, so that they must date from amongst the earliest benefices of Gozo and more likely to be related with the foundation of the canonries. The *Beneficium dila Decima* among them tends to confirm this. One is still at a loss, however, about the other nine canonries. It is entirely possible that not all fourteen were established from the very beginning and that their number increased gradually to fourteen by the mid-fifteenth century with the later canonries being founded by *animagia*. This is certainly the case with the *juspatronatus regium Tar-Rihan* benefitting Don Nicolaus Castelletta and the *animagium Bita Odelen*, the only one specifically related to the choir and the Divine Office.

Starting with the latter first, *Ta' Ghodlien*, as the correct Maltese name for it is,<sup>58</sup> was a *juspatronatus regium* benefitting Don Petrus Tellerixi until his death when, on 27 July 1489, Viceroy Fernando d'Acuña, nominated Don Gulinus Mamuxi of Gozo as his successor.<sup>59</sup> It is recorded as having its obligations being performed then in the Rabat Cemetery Church of St John the Evangelist when it benefitted Don Johannes Rapa in 1545.<sup>60</sup> By 1575, this church was in ruins (probably through the 1551 devastation) when Mgr Dusina desecrated it and transferred all its obligations to the Matrix Church, including, very significantly, "to serve the Matrix Church particularly during the recitation of the Divine Office,"<sup>61</sup> "ratione dicti beneficii deservire choro Ecclesiae parochialis juxta servitium ordinandum ad partem."<sup>62</sup> This can be interpreted that the chapter was, somehow, still functioning in 1575, which is gainsaid by Don Laurentius de Apapis who, replying to the first question put to him in his interrogation by Dusina (p. 197) as *Vicarius Foraneus* - "si curam habet chori?" - replied: "In quanto al servizio dello choro di chiesa io non me ne impaccio, ne tocca a me, perche non sonno, se non un semplice parrochiano, et non si fa servitio in choro in questo loco" (p. 231). But being a *juspatronatus regium* is not sufficient reason for qualifying as a candidate for a chantry. The association with the

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Godfrey Wettinger, *Place-names of the Maltese Islands: ca. 1300-1800* (Malta: PEG, 2000).

<sup>59</sup> *DSMH* 2/4, doc. 146; Barberi, 2:235.

<sup>60</sup> MCM CEM RA36, fol. 241.

<sup>61</sup> Borg, 1:346.

<sup>62</sup> *Dusina*, fol. 113.

Matrix Church is late and, by the same token, we would have had to consider the *Saqqajja animagium* whose obligations are clearly related to the Annunciation Church,<sup>63</sup> not the Matrix.

The other foundation in the said Collegiate which is of interest is the “beneficium de jurepatronatu regio vocato *Tar-Riħan* in ecclesia collegiata sub vocabulo Sancte Marie Insule Gaudisii” which, according to the document of 20 February 1506 (cf. appendix, doc. I) was being bestowed on the Presbiter Angelus Rigano, Canon of Palermo’s Palatine Chapel, on its vacation by the demise of Don Nicolaus Falzon, Canon of Malta’s Cathedral Chapter. This collation is not noted among Barberi’s *beneficia*.<sup>64</sup>

In 1575 Donnus Antonius Attard, Parish Priest of the Matrix Church, declared before Dusina that, further to the parish prebend (for which read the “tithes prebend”), he also held “un altro beneficio semplice unito alla parrocchia appellato *Tarahan*” which he had acquired three years previously on its resignation by Don Leonardus de Agatiis (alias de Cachi), his uncle. He further states that tied to the simple benefice he had to say two masses a week, on Mondays and Tuesdays, on the main altar.<sup>65</sup> In 1545, the Parish Priest, Don Nicolaus Castelletta, was certainly fulfilling this obligation on Mondays with a mass *in die* on account of the *animagium Tar-Riħan*.<sup>66</sup>

Now, the parish priests of the Matrix Church are listed as follows:<sup>67</sup> Raymundus Navarra (+1463); Andreas Catalano (1463); Petrus Guerrerio (<1506); Paulus Giburtino (1506-+1510); Xicleni???: Antonius Mangion (1529-1531); Nicolaus Castelletti (1531-1551); Martius Inguanez (1552); Leonardus de Agatiis (1553-1569); Antonius Attard (1569-1603); and the list of rectors of *Tar-Riħan* can be likewise reconstructed as follows:<sup>68</sup> Nicolaus Falzon (1491-1506); Angelus Rigano (1506-1526); Nicolaus Castelletta (1526-1551); Antonius Curmi (1553); Joseph Manduca (1558); Leonardus de Agatiis (1565); Antonius Attard (1579).

From this data one can deduce: (i) that prior to Castelletta’s tenure, the benefice *Tar-Riħan* was associated with a canonry other than that of the parish

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<sup>63</sup> Stanley Fiorini, “Sibilla d’Aragona and the Foundation of the *Saqqajja* Benefice on Gozo,” *Melita Historica* 12, no. 4 (1999): 367-372.

<sup>64</sup> In fact, slightly before this collation, on 2 January 1506, this benefice had been granted to the Cleric Petrus Falzon by Vicar General Don Amator Zammit, together with the other *animagia* of *Wied tal-Qassis* and *Tal-Wilġa* on Gozo, and *Tal-Ħuttafa* and another at *Mtarfa* on Malta: NAV, Not. Consalvo Canchur R140/2, fol. 180.

<sup>65</sup> *Dusina*, fol. 225<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>66</sup> MCM CEM RA36, fol. 237<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> Borg 1:339; 2:569.

<sup>68</sup> *Infra*, appendix, doc. 1; Borg, 1: *passim*; 2:571.

priest, who held the tithes prebend; (ii) that certain canonries were associated with *animagia*, not with *beneficia* (as can be deduced from the *Tar-Riħan* document); and (iii) that starting with Castelletta, a canon began to be collated to more than one prebend - the *Decima* and *Tar-Riħan* - meaning that the prebends structure, if it really existed at all, had begun to disintegrate by 1545.

In view of this, if one is still interested in identifying the remaining eight chantries and their incumbents, then one must look for them in the following set of *animagia* listed in the *Tabularium* of 1545, cited above, excluding always the *beneficia* and obligations related to the four chapels. As the full complement of fourteen canons has been shown to have been accounted for by 1500, one can exclude also from this list all *animagia* that were founded after 1500; the year of foundation, when known, is given in parentheses [...].<sup>69</sup>

What remains can be grouped in clusters around their beneficiaries, noting that it was very common for any beneficiary to be collated to several *beneficia* and *animagia* to increase his income cumulatively.

Don Nicolaus Castelletti: *A[nimagogium] di Riħan* (<1491); *A. Antonii dili Nasi Elehyun* no. 1 (1465); *A. Ta Gudle* (1516); *A. di S. Catherina in contrata Cabese* (1479); *A. dili Navarri in contrata Marzalfurni ...*;

Don Laurentius Mannara: *A. Petri de Federico in contrata S. Theodori* (1523);

Don Johannes Rapa: *A. di Cortin Errin* (1432, 1453); *A. dili Nasi vocatum Elehyun* no. 2 (1465); *A. Gued il Charab in contrata Cortin* [1501]; *A. Michaelis Cadumi appellatum Tal Contagna* (1446); *A. Ruggeri Carbuni appellatum Ta Curtin alias Ta Debbus, delli Parascandali* (1458); *A. Ta Dibegi* (1419); *A. Ta Ganga* (1510);

Don Antonius Mathei Santoro: *A. Jaymucii Calimera in contrata Hammar* (1475); *A. Pini Bonnichi in contrata Zebugi* (<1474); *A. Ta Germin in contrata Gued el Melach* (1502);

Don Johannes de Naso: *A. dili Nasi vocatum Elehyun* no. 3 (1465); *A. di Zebugi* (1435); *A. dili Nasi in contrata Curtin* (1465);

Don Franciscus de Vetero: *A. ta Riendi* (= ? *Erricudi*) (1539); *A. Guillelmi Bengibino in contrata S. Dominice Ta Xilendi* (1442);

Don Johannes Vella: *A. Ta Merzuc in contrata Marsalforn* (c. 1420); *A. Ta Kirx alias Ta Sepe* (ca. 1480);

Don Orlandus Balestrera: *A. Ancione de Brunetta appellatum Ta Xucla* (1515);

Don Leonardus Dallo: *A. Pauli Dallo appellatum Tal Hueyne ...*; *A. de Antona de Manuele appellatum Ta Cadus* (1514); *A. condam Andreotte Dallo super fructibus vinee in contrata Ta Chide* (1535);

<sup>69</sup> The sources are *RFBIG* and Borg, unless otherwise stated.

- Don Johannes Pontremoli: *A. Roderici Pontremoli* (1533);  
 Don Laurentius Caxaro [Melitensis]: *A. appellatum Ta Churicha [=? Sciriba] di Suria* (1445);  
 Don Johannes de Anastasio: *A. appellatum Tamfassino di Callimera* (1506);  
 Clericus Michael Farvella [Melitensis]: *A. di Callimera in contrata Marzalfurno* (1442);  
 Clericus Johannes Lucas Ferriolo [Melitensis]: *A. tal Curtin alias di Gued il Arab* (ca.1420);  
 Don Andreas Sanson [alias Jurubutino]: *A. de Theobaldo* (1489);  
 Diaconus Johannes Callimera [Melitensis]: *A. Bartholi Calimera in contrata Gued el Melach appellatum Sancte Sophie* (1440);  
 Don Laurentius Hapap: *A. di Augusta in contrata Curtin* (1461);  
 Don Rodericus Miglares: *A. di Antonella Saliva appellatum di Rafficano in contrata Xec Targe* (1534);  
 Don Matheus de Buffis: *A. Ta Sibach* (1479);  
 Don Lanceas Hapap: *A. condam D. Antonii Apap appellatum Di Gued el Melach* (1510).

Given that a full complement of fourteen *donni* was established by 1474, from this list we need to exclude those *animagia* that were founded after that year. The ones that remain are: the three *animagia* into which *Tal-Eghjun dili Nasi* (1465) was split after the demise of Don Paulus Jurubutino;<sup>70</sup> the *animagium Qortin Herrin dili Vagnoli* (1432, 1453)<sup>71</sup> and *Ta' Dbiegi dili Vagnoli* (1419);<sup>72</sup> *animagium Tal-Qortin dili Nasi* (1465)<sup>73</sup> *Michaelis Cadumi* (1446),<sup>74</sup> *Ta' Merzuq in contrata Marsalforn* (ca.1420);<sup>75</sup> *Rogerii Carbuni* (1458);<sup>76</sup> *Pini Bonnici* (<1474);<sup>77</sup> *animagia* (Nucii de Episcopo) *Ta' Dbiegi* and *Taž-Žebbuq* (1435);<sup>78</sup> *Guglielmi Bongibin di S. Dominica tax-Xlendi* (1442);<sup>79</sup> *animagium*

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<sup>70</sup> *RFBIG*, doc. 42.

<sup>71</sup> *RFBIG*, docs. 38, 93.

<sup>72</sup> Borg, 1:319; 2:547 [M14.25].

<sup>73</sup> Borg, 1:364; 2:574 [G14.29].

<sup>74</sup> *RFBIG*, doc. 35.

<sup>75</sup> Borg (1:349; 2:570 [G14.02]) identifies this *animagium* with that of *Għoxx in-Nabla [dili Vaccari] sive Qolla ta' Merzuq*, founded by Francesco Vaccaro of Gozo who was prominently active in Gozo between 1403 and 1441.

<sup>76</sup> *RFBIG*, doc. 41.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, doc. 46.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, doc. 33; Borg, 1:354-355; 2:570 [GU.14]

<sup>79</sup> *RFBIG*, doc. 34.

*Ta' Sciriba(?) di Suria* (1445);<sup>80</sup> *Dili Calimeri at Marsalforn* (1442);<sup>81</sup> *Tal-Qortin at Wied il-Gharab* (c.1420);<sup>82</sup> *Bertoli Calimera Ta' Santa Sofija Wied il-Mielab* (1440);<sup>83</sup> and *Tal-Qortin di Augusta* (1461).<sup>84</sup>

For want of fuller documentation, one concludes that these fourteen *animagia* together with the five *beneficia* discussed above and *Tar-Rihan* constitute a short list of a score of chantries from which the prebends for the fourteen canonries must have been taken.

### The Origin of the *Collegiata*

In view of the established data, one cannot agree with Mgr Bezzina when he opines that the Matrix Church was elevated to collegiate status in 1445,<sup>85</sup> as twenty years before that year there is already mention of *donni* or canons of the Gozitan chapter. In searching for the roots of the Gozitan collegiate one cannot ignore the possibility of an eastern rite connection, given the early date for such a foundation. To place this argument in its historical context, it is recalled that when Roger II invaded *Melitegaudos* in 1127 he discovered a Christian community around its bishop which he ensconced in former mosques and endowed with livings for its priests to intercede before God for the monarch.<sup>86</sup> This information, together with the established existence of a *Protopapàs Máltes* - Nicolaos husband of Milas (+1230)<sup>87</sup> - grounds our conviction that the Church in these islands was Greek (Orthodox) for full five centuries after 750 A.D. The Latinization process sets in soon afterwards reaching a climax of impetus during the Angevin interlude

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., doc. 53.

<sup>81</sup> Borg, 1:357; 2:572 [G14.18]; *Giuliana*, #72, fol. 210-212.

<sup>82</sup> Borg, 1:350; 2:570 [G14.04]. The foundation of this *animagium* is attributed to Michael de Bernardo who, after 1404, moved from Gozo to Malta (*DSMH* 2/2, docs. 69, 299).

<sup>83</sup> *RFBIG*, doc. 51.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., doc. 43.

<sup>85</sup> Joseph Bezzina, "Il-Matrici ta' Santa Marija kienet kolleġġjata lejn is-sena 1445," *L-Ghid tal-Assunta*, 40 (2005): 6-9.

<sup>86</sup> Joseph Busuttil, Stanley Fiorini, and Horatio C.R. Vella, *Tristia ex Melitogaudo: Lament in Greek Verse of a XIIth-century Exile on Gozo* (Malta: Best Print, 2010): 166-167. This royal support for the Gozitan clergy finds an echo in a document of 1375 whereby the Augustinian friar Guillelmus de Marino was granted twenty-five gold *uncie* of Gozitan money (to be paid out of the Gozitan *Secretia* funds) in return for prayers for King Frederick IV's predecessors: *DSMH* 2/1, doc. 149.

<sup>87</sup> Stanley Fiorini, "The Triple Strand of the Liturgical Tradition of the Church in Malta: Byzantine, Roman, Gallican Rites," *Melita Theologica* 63, no.2 (2013): 5-7. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, "Byzantina Melitensia," *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università degli Studi di Milano* 63, no.3 (sett.-dic. 2010): 337-338.

(1268-1284) with the establishment of a Latin enclave in the *Castrum Maris* which, subsequently, moved to Mdina Cathedral (being physically constructed in 1299)<sup>88</sup> and its chapter, evident from 1244 onwards.<sup>89</sup> The presence around 1300 of four witnesses to the copy of *Tristia* - the Greeks Notary Bartholomaios, son of the priest Joannes Falcon, and the Deacon Philippos Gautes (Gauci), and the two Latin priests, Odo and Jacobus<sup>90</sup> - constitutes an important milestone in the Latinization process of the existing Greek Church. Worth noting also how the earliest troglodytic churches, dedicated to Greek saints, are to be found in their majority in Gozo and the north of Malta: Sancta Dominica (Kyriake) at *Xlendi*, St Pancratius in the limits of *Għargħur*, St Peter (and St Paul) at *Tat-Tarġa*, *Naxxar*, and St Nicholas and the Blessed Virgin at *Mellieħa*, to which can be added unnamed caves bearing Greek crosses in *Mistra* valley.<sup>91</sup> Not fitting into this pattern are *Tal-Minsija* which, before its dedication to St Leonard, carried the cult images of Sts Basil and Athanasius,<sup>92</sup> and the important *Tad-Dejr* Basilica at *Rabat*, partly troglodytic and partly constructed above ground, which probably represented later developments. To these one adds built churches of St Basil at *Mqabba* and San Mikiel is-Sanċir (formerly dedicated to St Kyriakos / Ćir) at *Rabat* and at *Bubaqra*, and St Helen at *Ta' Ćieda*.<sup>93</sup>

In view of the dearth of local documentation one must perforce look for parallels in neighbouring Sicily and South Italy in order to understand these developments. If we look at the organizational ecclesiastical structure of Byzantine dioceses, such as those in Calabria, some interesting parallels begin to emerge. The Calabrian situation has been studied by Luigi Branco who has the following to report:<sup>94</sup>

Nella città episcopale, subito dopo il vescovo appare un ... Protopapa, cioè primo prete. Al Protopapa seguiva un'altra dignità ecclesiastica, il Secondo, con nome greco deúteros, che i Latini chiamarono 'deutereo'; era un vice del Protopapa. ... Vicino al protopapa e al deutereo funzionava nella chiesa vescovile, un *gruppo di sacerdoti che formavano un collegio corrispondente, più o meno, ai canonici della*

<sup>88</sup> Henri Bresc, "Malta dopo il Vespro Siciliano," *Melita Historica* 6, no.3 (1974): 318.

<sup>89</sup> Stanley Fiorini, "Church Music and Musicians in Late Medieval Malta," *Melita Historica* 10, no.1 (1988): 1-11.

<sup>90</sup> Busuttil, Fiorini, Vella, *Tristia*, xvi.

<sup>91</sup> Eugene Paul Theuma, *San Paul il-Baħar: A Guide* (Malta: Dormax, 2003): 54 and plate 9.

<sup>92</sup> AAF *Visitatio Pastoralis* 33 (Alpheran de Bussan, 1736-1740): 528.

<sup>93</sup> Busuttil, Fiorini, Vella, *Tristia*, lxxxv-xc.

<sup>94</sup> Luigi Branco, "Ricordi bizantini in un dialetto della Basilicata - Sant'Angelo," accessed October 10, 2010, <http://www.basilicata.cc/artistolucani/branco/01preme.htm>, chap. 2. Grateful thanks to Professor E.A. Mallia for bringing this work to our attention.

*chiesa latina*; ... così, in ogni paese si aveva il protopapa, il deutereo e sacerdoti semplici. Da notare ancora, che in ogni città o paese i Bizantini avevano un *solo battistero*; non si può pensare, quindi, a un'organizzazione parrocchiale come quella odierna.

In the Latin Church the situation at the time is seen to have been essentially not very different, as portrayed in the following synthesis:<sup>95</sup>

Nel secolo IX si sente già parlare di archipresbiteri, come dei preposti alle parrocchie primarie dove s'impartirà il battesimo, contrapposti ai rettori, a capo dei minores tituli o cappelle che potevano celebrare le cerimonie sacre e confessare, *ma non battezzare*, spesso le fonti parlano di baptismales ecclesie cum capellis suis. Queste cappelle diverranno poi alla loro volta parrocchie sottoposte a patronato. Nelle chiese primarie c'era in molti casi un *collegio di preti* (collegiate plebane). Ma l'istituto delle chiese figlie, il cui rettore sarebbe stato nominato dal vescovo dietro presentazione del rettore della chiesa madre o matrice, fu regolato in modo generale assai più tardi da Alessandro III (1159-1181).

The two characteristics of the Matrix Church - the college of priests and uniqueness of tenure of right to baptize - are evident in both traditions, in general, and possessed by the Gozitan Matrix, in particular. For the Gozitan Church, the uniqueness of the baptistry is recorded as late as 1575, as noted by Borg: "Baptism was the exclusive right of the *Matrice's* Parish Priest."<sup>96</sup>

In what, then, do the two structures differ? The answer seems to be found in the right of patronage of the various entities, the parish priests in the *cappelle* and the canonries. In the Byzantine Church these appear to have been the prerogative of the parishioners. In the Byzantine Church, "many of the laity," argues Angold, "preferred the intimacies of a private chapel or a family monastery, which lent themselves to private devotions," and "all kinds of churches passed into private ownership, including the Catholic Churches, as parish churches were called."<sup>97</sup> Already by the seventh century, it had become clear that in the Byzantine Church clerical appointments achieved through patronage were the principal cause for the growth in number of the clergy.<sup>98</sup>

Angold illustrates this situation by a case that appeared before Demetrius Chomatianos, Metropolitan of Naupaktos (1217-1235). Vlach shepherds

<sup>95</sup> *Enciclopedia Italiana*, (Roma: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1950), 26:404.

<sup>96</sup> Borg, 1:339.

<sup>97</sup> Michael Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni: 1081-1261* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), 7, 16.

<sup>98</sup> John Philip Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1987), 56.



had built a church at their expense and the local bishop appointed a priest to officiate. When the village was granted to a monastery, where the villagers were ordered to worship, they stopped paying the *kanonikon* to the bishop, which constituted therefore the bone of contention. The bishop who sued the villagers recalled another incident, whereby a predecessor of his had built a parish church, but the local *archon* had promptly built another, but directly subject to the Patriarch of Constantinople, deliberately to exclude episcopal authority. Chomatianos decided that the local bishop's authority was not ruled out. He still had a responsibility to supervise the marriages contracted within his diocese and, equally, parishioners had a duty to make their yearly offerings to the bishop. These cases reveal the competition there was for control over parish churches between local bishops, on the one hand, and monasteries and (lay) *archontes*, on the other.<sup>99</sup>

The foundation by lay persons of livings for their clergy with specific onus of the recitation of the hours is also known even from early times. In 1031, for instance, the heirs of Joannes Sangare bequeathed two *tareni* worth of lands to the monastery of San Nicola near the River Lao, in Calabria, in order that the deceased of the family be remembered by the monks during the recitation of the liturgical office.<sup>100</sup> The Greek documents published by Salvatore Cusa provide a number of such bequests by Greek lay persons in Sicily. A document of the second half of the twelfth century speaks of a house being left by a certain Marcus for the spiritual services of the Church of St George dei Crat ...,<sup>101</sup> and another donation, *causa mortis* of 1193, relates to Nicolaos, son of Leo Clidà, who bequeathed a vineyard to Protopapàs Joannes of Messina.<sup>102</sup> Much more specific is the grant of 1194 by Stephanos, acting *secretus*, to the Monastery of Sancta Maria de Gructa of Palermo, of a vineyard containing 700 vines in the *Zebuge* district in support of the church liturgy, especially the singing of the seven hymns, “*psállēin kai apodidein en autō tō hagīō Theō kai tē achrántō theotókō tous heptà hymnous.*”<sup>103</sup> This is a clear reference to the seven hours - matins (and lauds), prime, terce, sext, none, vespers and compline - which the monks recited in common throughout the day and night.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Angold, 248.

<sup>100</sup> André Guillou, “Sulle sponde del Lao nell XI secolo: Inchiesta di microgeografia bizantina,” *Rivista Storica Italiana* 79, no.2 (1967): 486, citing Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Vat. Lat. 13,489 #14.

<sup>101</sup> Salvatore Cusa, *I diplomî greci ed arabi di Sicilia* (Palermo: Lao, 1868), 98.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 675.

<sup>104</sup> Rooted in the Judaic tradition - “Seven times a day I praise You ...” (Psalm 119: 164 NRSV)

On the whole subject of the origin of collegiate churches and cathedral chapters in the Latin West, with particular reference to Sicily, the reader is referred to Mgr Borg's synthesis.<sup>105</sup> By the ninth century the ecclesiastical incomes of each diocese had stabilized to a formation of a tripartition whereby a third was reserved for the bishop (the *mensa episcopalis*), a third formed the *mensa canonicorum* which catered for all the needs of the chapter canons and the clergy, and a third was due to the monarch as patron of the ecclesiastical entities. As the original system of common life among canons began to disintegrate, each was given his own share of the *mensa canonicorum*, leading to the introduction of the benefice system with a fixed prebend being assigned to each member of the chapter.<sup>106</sup> In the endowment of churches in Norman times, donations were never made to individual chapters, but these were directed to the principal church or its bishop in whose gift it was to grant canonries and other benefices. Exceptions to this rule were concessions made by the higher papal authority or those dignities reserved for the monarch by way of keeping a check and asserting his hold.<sup>107</sup> This appears to be the position of Malta's Cathedral Chapter all of whose canonries are in the gift of the Ordinary except for the deanship whose right of patronage belongs to the monarch.<sup>108</sup> The incomes for these prebends have been often supplemented by concessions made by the faithful in the form of *animagia* for many of which the right of patronage - *juspatronatus* - was reserved by their founders and their descendants, as is evident from the *Rollo de Mello*.

Against this background, the Gozitan *collegiata* is seen to exhibit a number of interesting features. It embraced only one dignitary-cum-prebendary - the parish priest of the Matrix Church who held the tithes prebend - certainly not a unique feature if we consider the Palermitan *Capella Palatina*.<sup>109</sup> The fact that the principal income for this dignity came from tithes suggests that we are here

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- the canonical hours of the Christian liturgy are recorded already during the second and third centuries by the Church Fathers Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Tertullian who wrote of the practice of morning and evening prayer, and the prayers of terce, sext and none. Furthermore, Egeria, the pilgrim to the Holy Land (ca. 381-384) likewise recorded the chanting of psalms and antiphons, both by night or in the morning, as well as those throughout the day, at the sixth hour and the ninth hour, or at *lucernare*. The practice is standardized by the time of St John of Damascus (ca. 676-749), as in the *Jerusalem Typicon* (Dikran Y. Hadidian, "The Background and Origin of the Christian Hours of Prayer," *Theological Studies* 25 (1964): 59-69).

<sup>105</sup> Borg, 1:177 ff.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 179-180.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

dealing with a Norman foundation,<sup>110</sup> confirmed by considerations of the size of the chapter - fourteen stalls in the choir - in line with other chapters of similar composition, in Sicilian dioceses, established by them in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries. Thus, the chapter of Malta itself and that of Cefalù, in 1191, each had fourteen canons and the other Sicilian chapters had similar numbers.<sup>111</sup> As for Malta, the monarch reserved for himself the right of patronage to one of the constituent benefices, that of *Ta' Rihan*, whereas His Holiness, on at least one occasion, reserved for himself the right of appointing an incumbent of the tithes prebend. But, apart from this single prebend, all other livings were based on *jurapatronatus* of lay persons which is more in keeping with an Eastern Church set-up.<sup>112</sup>

By way of a working hypothesis it is being put forward that the collegiate status of the Matrix Church, and indeed of the Gozitan parish network,<sup>113</sup> both look to the island's Byzantine past for their roots. The collegiate foundation, in particular, came under the influence of the Latin Church in Angevin times,<sup>114</sup> which accounts for the "interference" of the monarch and the papacy in its running, but continued to be inspired by its Byzantine roots. It is significant that a number of the Gozitan *animagia* that contributed towards the maintenance of the *collegiata* canonries continued to come from Greek families, right down to the fifteenth century, notably the Calimera family, the brothers Don Jacobo,

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<sup>110</sup> This is the opinion of Abela (*Descrittione*, 261-2) - and he may well be correct - but the whole matter of the Church of Malta's tithes awaits a thorough investigation. It is relevant to point out that, in Medieval Eastern Christianity, tithing was not very popular. A constitution of 1 July 472 of Emperors Anthemius and Leo I [*Codex Justiniani* 1.11.8] is cited to show that the faithful are expected to make voluntary contributions and forbids compulsion: Walter Emil Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Decline of the Roman Empire* (Princeton: University Press, 1968): 61, n.7.

<sup>111</sup> Borg, 1:177-194.

<sup>112</sup> Already by the seventh century it had become clear that, in the Byzantine Church, clerical appointments achieved through patronage were the principal cause for the growth in number of the clergy: John Philip Thomas, *Private Religious Foundation in the Byzantine Empire* (Washington: Dumbarton Oakes, 1987), 56.

<sup>113</sup> Stanley Fiorini, *Tristia ex Melitogaudo Revisited: Objections, Clarifications, Confirmations* (Malta: Best Print, 2010), 18-22.

<sup>114</sup> It may not be irrelevant to point out that, in 1299, Pope Boniface VIII sent Cardinal Bishop Gerardus of Sabina as an apostolic legate to the Kingdom of Sicily and the neighbouring islands, specifically including Malta, in order to bring stability to the Church in the region in the wake of the war and subsequent peace treaty between Anjou, Aragon and Sicily (*DSMH* 4/2, doc. 41). Among the several papal instructions to his legate, one finds (Ep. XXXIX) an authorization to collate clerics to prebends and benefices in existing collegiate churches.

Gentile (husband of Barsilona) and Nicolachi, father of Bertolo.<sup>115</sup> Among these, the *juspatronatus Ta' Santa Sofija at Wied il-Mielah*, founded by Bertolo Calimera in 1440, and that of *Ta' Tewnit* alias *Ta' Axac* alias *Delli Calimera* at *Il-Qolla ta' Merzuq, Marsalforn*, founded by Don Pino (Giacomo) in 1442.<sup>116</sup> The Calimera family and other families of Greek extraction, such as the Anastasi, Raspullo, Bonnici, Tillirixi, De Episcopo and the De Apapis, continued to endow the church even later.<sup>117</sup>

## APPENDIX

### Document I

Archivio di Stato, Palermo. Protonotaro 209, fol. 63<sup>v</sup>-64.

Palermo, 20 February 1506, Ind. VIII.

Following the death of Don Nicolaus Falzon, the last incumbent of the royal *juspatronatus* called *Tar-Rihan*, founded in the Collegiate Church of Santa Marija of Gozo, Don Angelus Rigano,<sup>(a)</sup> a Canon of the Royal Palace Chapel in Palermo, is collated to the benefice to the exclusion of all others.<sup>(b)</sup>

Pro Presbitero Angelo Rigano.

Ferdinandus etc.

Vicerex etc.

Venerabili Presbitero Angelo Rigano Canonico Sacri Regii Palatii Panhormi oratori regio devoto salutem.

Vacante in presenciarum in manibus Regie Curie beneficio de jure patronatus regio vocato Tarrixan in Ecclesia Collegiata sub vocabulo Sancte Marie Insule Gaudisii obitu condam Donni Nicolai Falzuni ultimi beneficiarii et possessoris, et volentes Nos pro Divini cultus intueri et regio servicio [f. 64] de aliquo probo et benemerito viro providere ne beneficium ipsum rectore careant (*sic*), confidentes itaque de vestris fide, integritate, suficiencia et virtute, de quibus apud Nos fidedignorum relatu comendamini testimonio, tenore presencium, de nostri certa sciencia et deliberate, vobis eidem Presbitero Angelo beneficium ipsum prememoratum, cum omnibus et singulis <quibus> juribus et pertinenciis, prerogativis, immunitatibus et exempcionibus prout alii beneficiarii predecessores vestri soliti sunt habere et consueverunt, committimus

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<sup>115</sup> Cf. Calimera family tree in *Giuliana*, fol. 212.

<sup>116</sup> *RFBIG*, doc. 51; Borg, G.14.15, G.14.18.

<sup>117</sup> *RFBIG*, docs. 9, 11, 12, 13, 33, 39, 46, 47, 52, 53, 56, 63, 65, 69.

et fiducialiter comendamus ita quod ab inceptis vos dictus Presbiter Angelus et nemo alius sitis et esse debeatis beneficiarius in dicto beneficio, habeatisque et consequamini omnes fructus, redditus et introitus ex eo prout ceteri beneficiarii consequi et habere soliti fuerunt, prestito prius per vos vel procuratorem vestrum corporali juramento de servandis capitulis, constitutionibus et ordinationibus dicte Ecclesie prout solitum est fieri. Quocirca per presentes requirimus et actente hortamur Reverendum Vicarium Generalem Episcopatus Melivetan. aliasque ecclesiasticas personas in dicta Insula Gaudisii constitutas, laycis vero dicimus et expresse mandamus quatenus vos vel procuratorem vestrum predictum in possessionem beneficii predicti ponant et inmittant, positumque et inmissum manuteneant, tueantur et defendant et de juribus, lucris, introitibus et redditibus dicto beneficio spectantibus et pertinentibus respondeant et faciant per quos deceat responderi et caveant a secus agendo si gratiam regiam eis chara est. In cuius rei testimonium presentes fieri iussimus magno regio sigillo a tergo roboratum.

Datum Panormi XX Februarii VIII<sup>e</sup> indictionis 1506.

Johan de la Nuza

Dominus Vicerex mandavit mihi Juliano Castellano, cum bene stat per Ludovicum et visum per Thesaurarium.

(a) Borg (2:571), citing a secondary source, gives this incumbent as Don Angelus Pisano, dates him to 1500 and misses out his predecessor, Don Nicolaus Falzon. Even under Rigano (*ibid.*, 453), this information is omitted.

(b) Effectively, the Cleric Petrus Falzon had already been collated to this *animagium* a mere seven weeks previously (*cf.* n.64, *supra*).

## Document II

Archivio di Stato, Palermo. Real Cancelleria 282, fol. 277<sup>r-v</sup>.<sup>(a)</sup>

Palermo, 8 January 1526, Indiction XIV.

The Viceroy, the Count of Monteleone, presents the Cleric Nicolaus Castelletta as rector of the juspatronatus regium and simple benefice called *Tar-Rihan*, on Gozo.

Beneficium Arichan in Insula Gaudisii pro Clerico Nicolao de Callicta (*sic*).

Carolus etc.

Vicerex etc.

Venerabili Clerico Nicolao de Callicta (*sic*) regio f[ideli] d[ilecto] s[alutem].

Cum in presenciarum in manibus regie curie vacaverit et vacet beneficium simplex nominatum Arrichan in Insula Gaudisii existens ob renunciacionem de illo factam in manibus nostris per Reverendum Donnum Angelum Rigana Canonicum Panhormitanum et Melivetanum dicti beneficii, ultimi possessoris, quod beneficium fuit ac est Diocesi Melivitana ac de jure et regio patronatu, et ne beneficium ipsum divinis officiis divinis (*sic*) et receptore careat, volentes Nos, pro servicio Omnipotentis Dei et dicte ecclesie seu beneficii de aliquo fidedigno rectore providere etiam dictum beneficium fuerit et sit de jure regio patronatu, cuius collatio, electio et presentatio spectavit et spectat ad Sacram Regiam et Catholicam Magestatem nostri Imperatoris et Regis, confisi admodum de vestris fide, virtute et legalitate, tenore presencium de certa nostra sciencia deliberate et consulto, auctoritate regia qua fungimur, vobis prefato clerico Nicolao de Castillictis, beneficium predictum dictum Richan ipsius Insule Gaudisii et Diocesi Melivitana ad regium et nostrum beneplacitum fiducialiter comendamus, ita quod durante dicto regio et nostro beneplacito, sitis et esse debeatis rector et beneficiarius ipsius beneficii et consequamini fructus, redditus et proventus ad dictum beneficium spectantes et pertinentes. Quo circa Reverendo in Christo Patrem Episcopum Melivitanum et eius Generalem Vicarium, Capitulum et alias personas ecclesiasticas dicte Insule et Terre Gaudisii et Diocesis totius Melivitane requirimus et actente hortamur, Spectabilibus vero, Magnificis et Nobilibus eiusdem regni Magistro Justiciario eiusque in officio regio locumtenenti, Judicibus hujus regie curie et Magistris Racionalibus, Thesaurario et Conservatori regii patrimonii, Advocatoque et procuratoribus fiscalibus, ceterisque universis et singulis officialibus dicte Terre et Insule Gaudisii, quatenus, dum regio et nostro processerit beneplacito, vos prefatum Venerabilem Nicolaum de Castillicta in rectorem et beneficalem dicti beneficii dicti de Richan Terre et Insule Gaudisii diocesis predictae [f. 277<sup>v</sup>] Melivitane, teneant, reputent, honorificent atque tractent, tenerique, tractari et reputari per quos decet faciant et quam primum nomine regie curie in possessionem dicti beneficii et omnium reddituum ipsius ponant et inmittant, positumque et inmissum manuteneant et defendant viriliter contra cunctos, respondententes vobis et responderi facientes de introytibus, fructibus et proventibus ac juribus et emolumentis dicto beneficio debitis, spectantibus et pertinentibus, nec secus agant aut fieri permittant et racione aliqua sive causa pro quanto ipsi spirituales ac de Sacro Consilio gratiam Sue Cesaree Majestatis caram habent, alii vero si penam florenorum mille regio fisco applicandam cupiunt evitare. In cuius rey testimonium presentes fieri jussimus magno regio sigillo a tergo collocatas.

Data Pa[normi] die VIII<sup>o</sup> Januarii XIII<sup>o</sup> indicionis 1526.

El Conte de Monteleone.

Dominus Vicerex mandavit mihi Joanni Sollima locumtenenti et magistro notario in officio Prothonotarii et viderunt eam Thesaurarius et cum bene stat Andreas Barbagallus pro f[isci] p[atrono].

<sup>(a)</sup> Abela (*Descrittione*, 358) cites the same document from another copy in the *Protonotaro* series of the same archives, fol.179.

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