

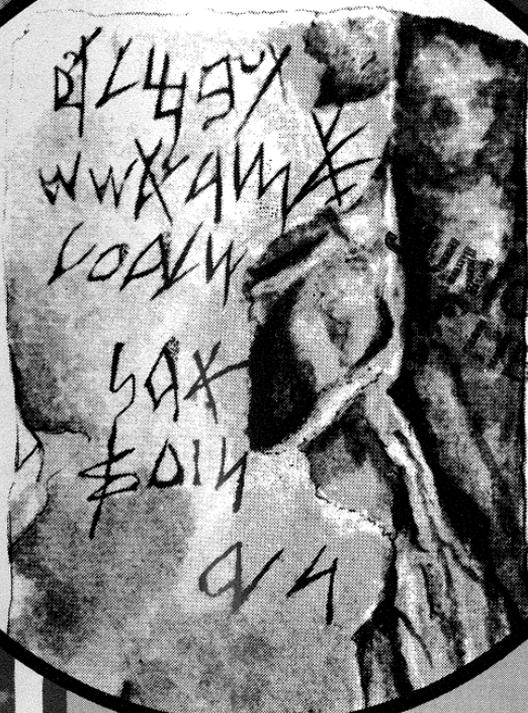
HYPHEN

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An Outline of Irish Political History

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Cover picture: Sketch of a Phoenician inscription found in Rabat in 1816. (See pp. 248-249).

THE MALTESE ECONOMY SINCE 1960

Lino Briguglio

THE purpose of this paper is to give a brief account of the most important changes in the Maltese economy between 1960 and 1984. It will be shown that during this period, major structural changes have taken place and these were mostly related to the expansion of the manufacturing sector and the phasing out of the British forces bases in Malta. It will be shown also the Maltese Gross Domestic Product and other important macro-economic variables have followed a cyclical pattern of change.

Development Planning in Malta – A Brief Outline

Until the fifties, the livelihood of the Maltese people depended to a very large extent on revenues derived from the servicing of the British military, naval and air force establishments.¹ In some ways this was to Malta's advantage, because it enabled the Maltese people to improve their standard of living and to enhance the quality of the labour force via the acquisition of industrial and clerical skills.

The major drawback was of course that the Maltese economic structure was grossly unbalanced, with excessive reliance on a source of income and employment tied to the defence needs of a foreign country. The growing awareness that Malta's strategic importance in the British defence requirements was due to decline sooner or later, led to attempts by successive Maltese governments to create new forms of economic activity.

During the second half of the fifties, it was obvious that changes in the British defence policies were going to result in massive rundowns of the British presence in Malta and the need was felt to implement a coordinated development plan to diversify Malta's economy.

The first development plan for Malta, covering the years 1959 to 1964 was based on a Lm29 million contribution by the British government. The

1. This had been considered to be a major weakness in the Maltese economy. On this question see for example the Report of the Royal Commission (1912) para. 74. See also Balogh and Seers (1955) para. 22–41 and Bowen Jones et al. (1959), chapters 5 and 6.

plan had full employment as its major objective, and for this reason assigned a leading role to industrial production, including ship repair,² and to tourism. Because of the smallness of the local market, industrial development was to be geared largely to the export market. The plan acknowledged that Malta's industrialization required overseas investment and knowhow, and this in turn called for a system of investment inducements,³ the provision of adequate infrastructural facilities and a suitable legal framework.

The performance of the Maltese economy during the first plan period was not very encouraging. There was a measure of success in attracting new industries, in developing infrastructural facilities and in laying out the foundations of a tourist industry, but the growth objectives were not met. The economy could not expand enough to take the slack created by the rundown of the British defence establishments.⁴ By 1964 an atmosphere of pessimism prevailed, particularly following the report of a United Nations Mission in Malta⁵ which suggested that emigration would have to be stepped up, per capita income would have to fall, and that Malta's absorptive capacity could not expand further.

The second five year plan, launched in 1964 – the year of Malta's independence from Britain⁶ – had as an overriding objective the containment of the adverse effects associated with the rundown of the British military services. The future looked bleak at the time, and it was expected that emigration and unemployment were to remain at very high levels, and the number of gainfully unemployed was to decrease.

The strategy adopted in the second 5 year plan was by and large similar to that of the first, relying heavily on the performance of export oriented industries, on tourism and on agricultural development. However population

2. The highest priority as regards investment was assigned to the conversion of the Naval dockyard into a commercial ship repair yard. See para. 10 of the plan.
3. See Busuttil (1970) for a discussion on the incentive scheme associated with the industrial policy of the plan.
4. Refer to "The Next Five Years – Statement on Defence 1962", which spelled out the British defence policies. These changes adversely affected not only those employed with the British defence establishments, but also those whose livelihood depended on spending by British servicemen and their families in Malta.
5. The Stolper Report (1964) was the document containing the findings and proposals of a United Nations mission sent to Malta at the request of the Government, to study the economic problems of Malta and to help in the formation of a second five year plan.
6. Malta has had an eventful constitutional history under British rule which commenced in 1802. See Cremona (1964) and Blouet (1967).

policy was given more importance, and emigration was singled out as a tool of policy in this respect.⁷ The objective was not to achieve growth, but just to keep the economy going during a period of transition from dependence on British expenditure to reliance on export earnings.

The actual outcome did not however bear out these dismal projections, since by 1969, output per capita and employment had expanded rapidly, and emigration and unemployment were much lower than had been envisaged. This was indeed remarkable, considering that in 1967 there was an unforeseen setback due to a second rundown of the British services.⁸

The rapid expansion of the construction industry, brought about by an increased demand for public housing, private dwellings and hotels, played an important role in the unexpected economic recovery after 1964. The construction industry generated its own employment, and that of related industries, particularly quarrying. Considerable expansion was also registered in the manufacturing sector largely owing to the fact that the policy of attracting export oriented industries started to bear fruit. The tourist industry also experienced expansion following a programme of hotel building and a sustained advertising campaign.

The third development plan for the Maltese Islands, covering the years 1969–1974, broadly speaking pursued the same objectives and adopted the same strategies as the previous ones, namely the promotion of full employment via industrial and touristic development. The plan also laid stress on the benefits of joining the European Economic Community⁹ as a result of reduced tariffs and quota restrictions on Maltese exports to Western Europe. The plan was however abandoned, when in 1971 there was a change of government.

During the sixties, the Nationalist government did not, as a matter of

7. The Stolper report, which formed the basis of the second development plan considered emigration to be indispensable for improving living standards and reducing unemployment. Such a position was also taken in the Woods Report (1946), and the Schuster Report (1950).
8. As a result of the 1967 rundown of the British forces stationed in Malta an Anglo-Maltese joint mission, headed by Lord Robens, was appointed to report on how the Malta's industrial base could be strengthened to absorb additional jobs. The Robens Report (1967) amounted to a revision of the second development plan.
9. The EEC association agreement came into effect in April 1971. To all intents and purposes, this agreement amounted to a preferential trade agreement favouring Malta. The agreement was to be effective for a period of five years, with provisions for extension, the ultimate aim being the formation of a customs union between Malta and the EEC. See Apap Bologna (1977) and Causon (1972).

policy, involve itself directly in the productive sector of the economy, limiting its intervention to a backing role. The Labour government, elected in 1971, on the other hand made it manifestly clear that it was not going to adopt a passive stance, and placed greater emphasis than its predecessor on participating in directly productive activities, even in areas which were previously regarded as the domain of the private sector. A new plan was drawn up for the years 1973–1979 based on this philosophy. The plan, like its predecessors, was geared to industrial, agricultural and touristic growth and development, but much more emphasis was laid on the relationship between Malta's political and economic objectives.¹⁰

The seven year period covered by the plan coincided with a new agreement with Britain, whereby the British government bound itself to make annual rental payment of about Lm14 million a year up to March 1979, by which date the British military presence in Malta was to be completely phased out. The Labour government revised the E.E.C. agreement entered into by the previous government, arguing that the arrangement was not to Malta's favour,¹¹ and introduced a new package of investment incentives, arguing that the previous package relied too much on financial gifts and therefore tended to attract "lame ducks".

The targets set by the fourth plan regarding aggregate employment and output were reached. However the manufacturing sector, which was given a very important role in the plan, did not absorb as much labour as was forecast, and to offset this shortfall, the government had to resort to employment in labour corps.¹² On the other hand, the market services sector, particularly tourism, performed much better than was envisaged. As planned, the British services sector was completely phased out by 1979.

The fifth development plan for the Maltese Islands covered the years 1980 to 1985. The major economic objectives of the plan were twofold, namely full-employment and a healthy balance of payments. Like its predecessors, the plan acknowledged that economic growth must be largely

10. During the seventies the labour government pursued a policy of what it called active neutrality, involving a commitment to non-alignment, and the dismantling of superpower affiliations. The agreement with Britain in 1972, providing for a phased withdrawal of British forces, and the development plan launched after this agreement, were described as forming part of this political objective.
11. The labour government's views on this question are expressed in the 1973–1979 Development Plan pp. 11–12, and the 1980–1985 Development Plan pp. 72–75.
12. The number of persons engaged in the labour corps averaged around 4,000 between 1972 and 1974.

export-led. As in the fourth plan, political objectives were given considerable importance, and the overall aim of the plan was to increase self-reliance, and the strengthening of the Maltese economy was seen as a safeguard against Malta's erosion of self-reliance. The plan also emphasised the need to restructure the economy so as to reduce the excessive dependence on the clothing industry and on tourism, on the need to boost productivity and competitiveness via technological advance. After the experiences of the seventies, the need to curb inflation was also stressed.

The overall targets set by the fifth plan, especially those related to employment, output and foreign trade have not been met. In particular the labour force and gainfully employed figures in 1985 were widely off the mark set by the plan. The reasons for this were various, and probably related to the international recession, to Malta's overvalued domestic currency, and to Malta's inability to attract enough foreign productive investment. The attempts to restructure the economy by and large also failed, because by 1985 Malta still depended to a large extent on the clothing industry, and the contraction of the relative importance of the tourist industry occurred as a result of lack of demand and not as a result of a diversification policy.

A General Overview of the Development Strategy

Although Malta had different governments since 1960, the basic objective of successive plans was essentially the same, namely that of making Malta a viable economic unit, which by its own efforts would provide jobs for those who sought them. To achieve this objective, measures were taken to diversify the economy away from defence bases towards industrial production, tourism and agriculture. Since Malta's internal market was and still is very small, industrial expansion had to be sustained via increase reliance on the export market, and therefore the importance of competitiveness for attaining the plan objectives, was always stressed. All plans insisted on the need for adaptation of attitudes and of methods of production to the changing structure of the Maltese economy.

The major differences between the planning approaches of the Nationalist and Labour administration were related to the role of the state in directly productive activities¹³ and to the role of emigration in reducing unemployment.¹⁴

13. See the 1980–1985 Development Plan, pp. 60–61.

14. Unlike the position held by Stolper, Balogh and Seers (1955) considered emigration to be a waste of skills and this line of thought has, by and large, been that held by the labour government during the seventies.

The planning process in Malta has been beset by a series of difficulties not of Malta's own making. These included the successive and sometimes unexpected decreases in the British defence expenditure during the sixties, the international energy crisis and unprecedented inflationary pressures during the seventies, and the international recession during the early eighties. The planning exercise has however achieved a satisfactory measure of success, as evidenced by the growth of the number of the gainfully occupied, the expansion of the manufacturing sector, the rise in national income and the decreased reliance on British military expenditure. Whether self-reliance – a major objective in all development plans – has been achieved is a matter of debate. It remains to be seen whether Malta can completely fend for itself without direct financial aid from foreign governments.

Structural Changes in the Maltese Economy

This section examines briefly how the structure of the Maltese economy changed in terms of output and employment. The data used are annual observations from officially published statistics.¹⁵ The period covered is 1960 to 1984. This twenty-five year period is divided into five equal sub-periods, which broadly correspond to different time-spans during which the development plans were operative. These sub-divisions also happen to approximately coincide with the pattern of fluctuations of some important labour market variables.

Table 1

GDP at Factor Cost, Employment and Unemployment in 1960 and at the end of each sub-period.

	1960	1964	1969	1974	1979	1984
GDP (Lm Million)	43.5	43.5	70.8	118.6	293.7	421.4
Employment (persons)	88690	86530	100460	102310	119262	111314
Unemployed (persons)	3772	7645	3813	6285	3294	10448
Labour Force (persons)	92462	94175	104273	108595	12256	121762
Unemployment Rate (%)	4.1	8.1	3.7	5.8	2.7	8.6

Sources: National Accounts and Annual Abstract of Statistics.

Table 1 gives the actual magnitudes of the Maltese Gross Domestic Product, of employment and of unemployment in 1960 and at the end of

15. The data were obtained from various issues of the National Accounts of the Maltese Islands, and the Annual Abstract of Statistics.

each of the five sub-periods under consideration.

The figures in table 1 do not adequately describe the changes that have occurred during the past twenty-five years, and they are mainly useful as reference for the growth rates to be presented below. However a look at the employment statistics given in this table would indicate that the last years of the sixties and of the seventies were characterized by high employment levels and low unemployment rates.

The actual rates of change of these aggregate variables are given in table 2.

Table 2

Annual Rates of Change (per cent) of GDP, Employment and Unemployment Rates. Averages for five-yearly sub-periods.

	1960-64	1965-69	1970-74	1975-79	1980-84
GDP in real terms.	-1.1	8.2	6.9	11.8	1.3
Employment (Persons).	-0.8	3.2	0.2*	2.4	-1.9
Employment (Manhours).	-0.8	2.5	-1.0	0.7	-1.9
Unemployment Rate.	19.7	-22.0	9.5	-10.9	25.3

* shows that the estimate was not different from zero at the 95 per cent level of statistical significance.

The first row of table 2 gives the percentage rates of growth of GDP, measured in real terms¹⁶ so as to remove the effect of price changes. It can be seen that the only period of contraction as far as GDP is concerned was the 1960-1964 sub-period, which as noted earlier was characterized by a severe rundown of the British Military expenditure. The decline of GDP during this sub-period would have been much greater had it not been for the rapid increase in investment between 1960 and 1964 as part of the

16. The term "real" here means that the current money value of the variable, whose rate of change is being estimated, was deflated by an appropriate price index in order to remove changes due to prices alone. The deflators used were obtained from Waldorf (1969) for the years 1960-1966 and for the "National Accounts. . . ." for the other years. The rate of change of the variables were estimated by applying the Ordinary Least Squares method of regression to the equation $Y = e^{rt}$ where Y is the variable in question and r is its rate of change. The statistical significance of the estimated rate of change was determined on the basis of the "t" distribution.

development strategy.

It can be seen from the second and third rows of table 2 that this period was also characterized by a decline in employment and a very rapid increase in unemployment rates. The increases in the rate of unemployment would have been much higher had emigration not been resorted to.

The 1970–1974 sub-period cannot be, strictly speaking, described as a period of contraction, since GDP continued to grow at an average of 6.9 per cent per annum, but there was a decline in the rate of growth compared with the 8.6 per cent of the previous sub-period. One reason for this slow-down in the rate of increase could have been that investment in construction had decreased between 1970 and 1974.¹⁷

Of interest is that, although between 1970 and 1974 GDP tended to grow, the number of persons employed did not grow significantly, and had employment not been artificially created by the government in labour corps, the number of persons employed would have possibly decreased.

Of interest is that employment measured in manhours has decreased during the 1970–1974 sub-period. Manhours are measured by multiplying the number of persons employed by the number of average yearly hours worked. During the 25-year period under consideration, average hours of work tended to decrease from about 47 hours per week in 1960 to 40 hours per week in 1977. The fact that between 1970 and 1974 employment in manhours decreased suggests that had working hours not been reduced during this sub-period, employment of persons would have possibly decreased.

During this sub-period the rate of unemployment (and of emigration) tended to increase, again reflecting the relatively bad performance of the economy during this sub-period.

The 1980–1984 sub-period is perhaps the worst one as far as employment is concerned. The rate of growth of GDP averaged about 3 per cent per annum. Employment decreased at a very rapid rate – the fastest decline when all sub-periods are considered. Unemployment, on the other hand increased at a very fast rate, and had the number of people willing to work not decreased, the unemployment figures would have been much higher.¹⁸

17. Construction expenditure in Malta was much lower during the first half of the seventies than during the second half of the sixties.

18. The labour force decreased from 123,651 in 1980 to 121,762 in 1984. This was probably partly caused by members of the working age population opting out of the labour force due to the reduced chance of finding a job.

The other sub-periods, namely 1965–69 and 1975–79 were characterized by fast growth rates of GDP and employment, and by fast decreases in the rate of unemployment. The most rapid increase in GDP occurred between 1975 and 1979 and the fastest increase in employment occurred between 1965 and 1969. Probably the most important factors which accounted for the good performance of the Maltese economy during these sub-periods, were the construction boom during the second half of the sixties, and the tourist boom of the seventies, both of which have given rise to expenditures with relatively high multiplier effects.¹⁹

The information in table 2 therefore suggests that the Maltese economy experienced a cyclical pattern of growth, with downswings during the early sixties, the early seventies and the early eighties and upswings during the second half of the sixties and of the seventies.

The Composition of Gross Domestic Product

The pattern of change shown in table 2 have been accompanied by changes

Table 3
Net Output of Broad Economic Sectors as a Percentage of GDP at Factor Cost. Averages for 1960–1984 and for five-yearly sub-periods.

	1960–64	1965–69	1970–74	1975–79	1980–84	1960–84
Manufacturing and Drydocks	16.5	20.8	24.3	32.7	30.5	24.9
Construction and Quarrying	4.4	4.4	4.2	2.9	5.0	4.2
Market Services	33.6	33.3	30.4	30.9	34.3	32.5
Agriculture and Fishing	7.3	7.2	7.2	5.3	4.1	6.2
Public Admin. and Enterprise	17.8	19.8	21.8	19.8	18.7	19.6
British Forces	15.0	9.5	6.3	2.3	—	6.7
Property Income	5.4	5.0	5.8	6.1	7.4	7.4

Source: National Accounts.

19. Construction expenditure in Malta tends to have a high multiplier effect mostly because it has a relatively low import content, and tends to generate employment in a number of other industries, notably quarrying, woodwork and non-metallic minerals. Tourist expenditure also tends to have a high multiplier effect due to relatively low import content, and tends to generate employment throughout the services sector. On the question of multipliers in the Maltese economy, see Briguglio (1987), Metwally (1977) and Waldorf (1969).

in the composition of GDP. Table 3 presents data on the contribution of major sectors during the sub-periods under consideration.

It can be seen from table 3 that the fastest growing sector was manufacturing, which accounted for just 17 per cent in the early sixties, and increased to about 33 per cent during the late seventies. There was a small decline in the percentage share of this sector during the first half of the eighties. A further breakdown of this sector would indicate that the manufacturing itself experienced structural changes during the past twenty-five years, with the textile, clothing and machinery industries expanding their relative shares.

The British military establishments on the other hand, reduced their share of GDP from an average of 15 per cent in the early sixties to zero during the eighties. As already explained this was in line with the development strategy adopted in the Maltese development plans.

The changes in the shares of other sectors were not as dramatic as those pertaining to manufacturing and the British bases. Construction and

Table 4

Employment by Broad Economic Sectors and by Sex as a Percentage of Total Gainful Employment. Averages for 1960–1984 and for five-yearly sub-periods.

	1960–64	1965–69	1970–74	1975–79	1980–84	1960–84
Manufacturing and Drydocks	18.2	21.3	27.0	31.3	31.8	25.9
Construction and Quarrying	8.6	10.7	8.0	4.2	5.8	7.5
Market Services	28.4	29.8	30.4	30.8	32.7	30.3
Agriculture and Fishing	8.9	7.3	6.3	6.4	6.4	7.1
Public Admin. and Enterprise	19.6	20.6	22.9	25.2	24.6	22.5
British Forces	16.2	10.3	5.3	2.1	–	6.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Male	81.8	79.6	76.0	74.0	75.0	77.3
Female	18.2	20.4	24.0	26.0	25.0	22.7

Source: Annual Abstract of Statistics.

quarrying have contributed an average of 4.2 per cent, market services²⁰ an average of 32.5 per cent and the government sector an average of 19.6 per cent of GDP. The share of agriculture and fishing has averaged around 6.2 per cent but has tended to decrease during the 25-year period.

It should be recalled here that these are average changes, and do not adequately describe year to year fluctuations of these shares.

Table 4 shows the changing pattern of the distribution of employment in different sectors, brought about by changes in the structure of GDP.

In general, the changes in employment reflected the changes in the shares of GDP. For example, the increasing share of the manufacturing output has increased employment in manufacturing from just over 18 per cent of the gainfully occupied in the first half of the sixties to about 32 per cent in the eighties.

Another finding presented in table 4 is that female employment as a percentage of total gainful employment has increased from just over 18 per cent in the first half of the sixties to about 26 per cent in the second half of the seventies. The percentage has decreased slightly during the eighties, reflecting the fact that most of the jobs lost since 1981 related to female employment.

With respect to female employment, this has tended to increase at a faster rate than male employment between 1960 and 1980. The bulk of the increases in female employment occurred in the manufacturing sector, mostly in the clothing, textile and electrical machinery industries.

The Composition of Total Final Expenditure

The changes in the composition of GDP have been accompanied also by changes in the composition of locally produced and imported resources in the total final expenditure. Total final expenditure is the total amount of money spent on consumption, investment and exports of goods and services produced by Maltese firms. During the past 25 years, about 41.6 per cent of total final expenditure was local value added, and this constituted Malta's GDP, whereas the remaining 58.4 per cent was imported.

However, the share of imports, when measured at constant prices, have tended to increase during the sixties and to decline during the seventies and eighties. In the sixties about 46 per cent of total final expenditure was imported, and about 54 per cent were locally produced. During the eighties, the percentage of imported resources amounted to about 36 per cent and

20. Market services here include wholesale and retail trades, banking insurance and real estate, transport, communications and personal and other services.

the remaining 64 per cent was local value added. This is confirmed in table 5 below which gives the rates of change of imports and of total final expenditure, and shows that the former tended to grow at a faster rate than the latter during the sixties, and at a slower rate than the latter during the seventies and the eighties. This tendency has of course been brought about by the policy of import substitution and import controls which have been resorted to with increased intensity since the seventies.

The composition of total final expenditure has also changed in terms of the expenditures which constitute it. As already noted, there are three main expenditures, namely consumption, investment and exports. Throughout the period of this study, private consumption expenditure has averaged around 40 per cent of total final expenditure measured in real terms. The remaining 60 per cent of total final expenditure consisted of an average of 9 per cent on public current expenditure, an average of 16 per cent on gross public and private investment and an average of 35 per cent on exports of goods and services.

In general these components of total final expenditure tended to increase rapidly during the second half of the sixties and of the seventies, and to

Table 5

Annual Rates of Change (Per cent) of Total Final Expenditure and its Components Measured in Real Terms Averages for Five-Yearly Sub-Periods.

	1960-64	1965-69	1970-74	1975-79	1980-84
Private Consumption	1.9	10.2	3.3	8.2	2.7
Government Consumption	-0.2*	5.1	1.5	8.2	2.3
Construction Investment	-4.0*	16.2	-7.9	12.4	11.6
Machinery Investment	12.4	19.4	-11.8	2.4*	8.9
Exports Goods and Services	-3.2	8.7	10.9	11.4	-6.6
Total Final Expenditure	0.6*	10.2	4.1	9.7	-0.5
Imports Goods and Services	2.7	12.5	0.6*	6.6	-3.7

* shows that the estimate was not different from zero at the 95 per cent level of statistical significance.

increase slowly during the other sub-periods. The only sub-period where total final expenditure has tended to decline was between 1980 and 1984, mostly as a result of a decline in exports of goods and services. The estimated rates of change of total final expenditure are given in table 5.

Table 5 shows that in some instances, certain expenditures actually decreased. For example, exports have tended to decline in real terms between 1960 and 1964 and between 1980 and 1984, whereas investment has tended to decrease between 1970 and 1974.

The Maltese Balance of Payments

The balance of payments gives a picture of Malta's transactions with the rest of the world. It is usually divided into three parts, namely the current account, the capital account and official financing account. The current account shows the balance between exports and imports of merchandise (called the Trade Gap), the balance between exports and imports of services, the inflows and outflows of foreign exchange resulting from foreign investments, and the inflows and outflows of foreign exchange resulting from private and governmental transfers.

Table 6 gives a summary of the main balances in the current account during the period of our study. Briefly, Malta has always experienced a relatively large deficit in its merchandise trade, as shown by the trade gap in the table, and a positive, but smaller surplus in its services trade. Thus the resource gap (the balance between exports of goods and services) was negative during all sub-periods.²¹

The bulk of merchandise exports consisted of clothing and textiles, and in recent years electrical machinery has had a major share also. As regards services, the most important sources were expenditures connected with the British forces bases during the sixties, but with the development of the tourist and manufacturing industries, foreign travel and transportation have accounted for a large proportion of foreign exchange inflows from exported services.

The deficits which Malta experienced on trade in goods and services tended to be partially offset by investment income from abroad, the net

21. The deficit in the resource balance would have been wiped out had import prices not risen at a faster rate than export prices during the past years. For example, in 1984, exports measured at constant 1973 prices amounted to about Lm150 million whereas imports, also measured at 1973 prices amounted to about Lm145.

inflows from which are given in table 6.

Table 6
Some Statistics Pertaining to the Maltese Balance of Payments Averages for
Five-Yearly Sub-Periods.
Lm Million

	1960-64	1965-69	1970-74	1975-79	1980-84
Merchandise Trade (Trade Gap)	-22.9	-27.1	-42.9	-61.4	-116.5
Services Trade	16.6	13.3	15.9	37.8	62.2
Merchandise + Services (Resource Gap)	-6.3	-13.8	-27.0	-23.6	-54.3
Net Investment Income From Abroad	3.7	5.2	8.6	17.1	41.4
Transfers (grants and remittances)	4.2	11.2	24.6	30.6	28.8
Balance on Current A/C (Surplus)	2.8	2.6	6.1	24.1	16.1
Balance on Capital A/C (Surplus)	-1.9	3.7	8.8	18.0	18.6
Average Yearly Increase of Official External Reserves	0.9	6.3	14.9	42.1	34.7
Total Official External Reserves at the End of Sub-period	27.7	59.5	134.2	344.7	518.3

Source: National Accounts of the Maltese Islands.

Another source of foreign exchange on current account are transfers which consist of remittances and pensions to households and foreign exchange grants to the Maltese government. Considering all these inflows and outflows of foreign exchange, the overall balance on Current Account was generally a surplus, as shown in table 6.²²

The capital account of the balance of payments consists of inflows and outflows of foreign exchange for investment purposes. Excluding foreign exchange outflows of the Monetary Authorities (the Central Bank), except for the first sub-period, the capital account has tended to be in surplus,

22. Since 1960, a balance of payments deficit on current account was registered during all year with the exception of 1964, 1969 and 1983.

indicating that on average capital inflows from abroad have tended to offset capital outflows to foreign countries. It should be noted here that capital inflows include government loans from other governments and institutions, but the outflows do not include those of the Monetary Authorities.

If we add the net surpluses of foreign exchange from the current account to the net surplus in the capital account we obtain the total net surplus in the balance of payments. This surplus represents a residual which is computed after all foreign exchange transactions have been considered, with the exception of foreign exchange outflows of the Monetary Authorities.

During any one year, this residual constitutes the net additions of foreign exchange and in practice it approximately amounts to the additions of official external reserves of the Monetary Authorities for that year. It can be seen from table 6 that foreign reserves held by the Monetary Authorities have tended to grow rapidly during the seventies. It should be noted in this context that the size of this residual depends to a large extent on the restrictions imposed by exchange control legislation which limit the private sector's freedom of holding foreign exchange and on import controls, which constrain the private sector's freedom to buy foreign goods and services. As is well known, during the seventies and the eighties, the labour administration has imposed strict foreign exchange controls (according to the 1972 Act) and strict import controls, by means of licencing.

It can be concluded from table 6 therefore that Malta has in general enjoyed an overall surplus of foreign exchange inflows. A closer look at the balance of payments statistics would indicate that, in many years, this surplus would not have been possible without official transfers (grants) and borrowing from abroad by the government. This notwithstanding, Malta's external debt is not excessive by international standards. On the other hand, Malta's official external reserves are rather high when compared with those of other countries.²³

Major Problems of the Maltese Economy

An important conclusion that emerges from this study is that attempts by

23. The Maltese Official External reserves for 1984 amounted to about 16 months worth of imports. This is much more than the amount kept by most countries (see International Financial Statistics, IMF.)

Of interest in this respect is that during the sixties, when official foreign reserves were being accumulated at a slow rate, investment in machinery increased at a very rapid rate. On the other hand, during the seventies, when the accumulation of official foreign reserves was proceeding at a very fast rate, investment in machinery increased at a relatively slow rate.

successive Maltese governments to expand local production and phase out the traditional dependence on British military expenditure were by and large successful.

As was noted, this has resulted, amongst other things, in the expansion of an export oriented manufacturing sector and a relatively large tourist industry. During the process of expansion and diversification, a process of import substitution was taking place, and local production has increased its share at the expense of imports in the total available resources.

However, there were and there still are problems inherent in the Maltese economy. One disturbing feature of the Maltese economy is its size. It is very small, and it has to rely on exports to produce on a sufficiently large scale, and on imports to make up for its lack of natural resources. The smallness of Malta's economy, therefore, renders it completely exposed to what happens abroad. This is why the international recession during the early eighties has had a major impact on the Maltese economy.²⁴

Another weakness of the Maltese economy is that import requirements tend to be too high particularly in export oriented industries. This reflects the low degree of inter-industry dependence.²⁵ The result of this has been chronic deficits in Malta's trade gap, as indicated above. The severity of this problem would be reduced if inter-industry linkages are improved by for example, setting up enterprises which provide inputs for others. This would give rise to an increase in the share of Malta's value added in total available resources.

An area of concern is that an excessively high percentage of exported goods consist of textiles and clothing, and that exported goods in general are almost exclusively directed towards the EEC particularly to the United Kingdom and West Germany. It would seem that the dangers of putting too many eggs in one basket is at present being taken very seriously and efforts are being made to diversify the structure and direction of Malta's exports.²⁶

24. Malta is one of the most "open" economies in the world. For example in 1979 exports of goods and services amounted to about 99 per cent of GDP at factor cost and the Imports of Goods and Services to about 105 per cent of GDP at factor cost (i.e. the total final expenditure consisted of 51 per cent imports and 49 per cent GDP). This is a high percentage when compared to other countries. See World Bank Report.
25. Metwally (1977) analysing the input-output matrix for the Maltese economy, concluded that the total intermediate output is less than one third of Malta's input requirements (op. cit., p. 16). Malta's export oriented industries are characterised by a low degree of linkages, and this gives rise to a high import content, and relatively low multiplier effects.
26. See for example the 1980-1985 development plan p. 66, p. 109 and p. 121.

Tourism has had an important beneficial effect in terms of foreign exchange earnings and employment, but excessive reliance on tourism present a danger in that the tourist industry tends to be quite volatile, depending as it does on the whims and fancies of foreign travellers and the successes or failures of competing tourist resorts.²⁷

As regards foreign trade in general, the major recurrent problem is the maintenance of competitiveness vis-à-vis foreign countries. As is well known, a policy of tying the Maltese lira to relatively strong foreign currencies was adopted during the seventies and first half of the eighties. The effect of such a policy on Malta's competitiveness has been the subject of serious empirical research, which in general indicated that the high value of the Maltese lira during the eighties has done more harm than good to the Maltese economy.²⁸

As for the future, the most pressing problem would seem to be that of maintaining and possibly increasing the degree of self-reliance that has been achieved in the past. The developments during the past 25 years, discussed in this study, would seem to indicate that Malta, though poorly endowed as far as natural resources are concerned, and faced with the additional problem of a small domestic market, has shown itself capable of expanding with increased reliance on its own initiatives.

27. Malta has suffered from the volatile nature of the tourist industry. For example the lifting of the £50 stg. limit on British tourists outside the sterling area in the early seventies, had an adverse effect on Malta's tourist inflows. Similarly the political climate in Spain, the performance of the British economy, and political attitudes of the British press towards Malta have all had important impacts on Maltese incoming tourism.

28. See Scicluna (1984).

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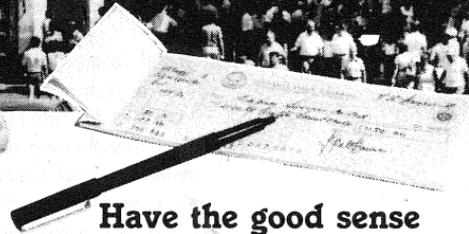
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A BACKDROP TO HEANEY: AN OUTLINE OF IRISH POLITICAL HISTORY

Charles Caruana Carabez

WHenever an author is to be studied in some depth, an understanding of his formative influences is always important, and must necessarily be obtained before the poetry is actually evaluated. It would be, to take a somewhat extreme example, quite difficult to obtain a proper response to Chaucer's poetry unless the medieval mind and the medieval world are first understood.

With a poet like Seamus Heaney who uses English as his linguistic vehicle, but whose subjects, expression, and feelings are Irish, it becomes essential to understand his received culture and the mentality generated by his ethnic origin. That which may, for convenience, be called his 'Irishness', has to be comprehended if his poems are, in many cases, to make any sense at all. The problem is by no means simple, for there are, in fact, two Irelands, and Heaney is very much the product of each one separately as he is of the rift that lies between them, of the centuries-old antagonisms that have riven Ireland asunder.

It is the present intention to provide a simplified and somewhat selective outline of Irish political history, and since Anglo-Irish strife has been a dominant feature and a shaping force of Irish history, all events prior to its origin shall be ignored; similarly literary influences, which may be traced back to Druidic times, may be tackled in a separate paper.

The Catholic religion, for good or ill, has for centuries been at the centre of Irish history. St Patrick had Christianized the Irish by AD 450 and the Irish Church grew and developed to such an extent that it became quite independent of Rome; the matter was regarded with some seriousness by Rome, and it took a high-level convocation (the Synod of Whitby) to settle the differences. The Irish monasteries became centres of learning, and Irish missionaries assumed, quite successfully, the difficult task of converting the dour Scots.

Ironically, it was the head of the Church of Rome who sowed the seeds of a tragic division eight hundred years ago. For the first and only time, the head of the Roman Church was an Englishman, Nicholas Breakspear.

He assumed the name of Adrian IV, and his papacy lasted from 1154 to 1159; for the present intentions, his most significant act was the formal proclamation of Henry II of England as the Lord of Ireland. The excuse for this stratagem (for so it must be considered) was that the Irish were ignorant of true Christian doctrine and needed the religious tutelage of the Catholic Henry. Henry had always desired an expansion of his rule and it is clear that in his proclamation Adrian was acceding to 'his' king's request. No other Pope would probably have considered, much less sanctioned, such a request, since it was patently clear that the Irish Church was one of the best organized in the Northern world.

To Henry, of course, 'religious tutelage' was of no consequence. He regarded Ireland as a political acquisition, an extension of his power. The Irish realized this and were unwilling to submit to such an imposition. Henry sent the Earl of Pembroke, known as Richard Strongbow, to take possession in his name, but, some time after he had actually done so, Richard married an Irish princess, the daughter of the King of Leinster, and, upon the death of her father, proclaimed himself King of Ireland.

Henry re-instated himself as the sole Lord of Ireland by means of an armed expedition led by himself, and the claims of all successive English kings to Ireland were based on this settlement.

After quelling Pembroke's rebellion, Henry parcelled out the land among various Anglo-Norman barons, little knowing that they would present the next threat. The descendants of these Normans allied themselves with the Irish and attempted to secede from England and establish an independent Irish Crown. Their opposition gradually waned until it was confined to Dublin and its immediate surroundings, which became known as 'The Pale'. Dublin was to retain for centuries its characteristic as a centre of opposition to the British presence.

The turbulent reign of Henry VIII, so full of dramatic contrasts, could hardly have failed to influence Irish history. Henry felt that stricter control over Ireland could be exercised gradually, perhaps painlessly and imperceptibly, by a system of colonization, but he was only moderately successful in this since Irish soil was less fertile than the English one and did not constitute an incentive to farmers. Henry showed great tact and diplomacy when he accepted in all districts (except the Pale) the application of Irish law in lieu of the English one. The beneficial effects of this were nullified, however, when he dissolved all the monasteries by force and attempted violently to suppress Catholicism. He sowed the seeds of dissent that would germinate into open rebellion during the reign of Elizabeth I, his daughter.

Rather than giving way, Elizabeth displayed her typical temper when she countered by imposing the Anglican Faith on Ireland.

Quite predictably, this had the effect of making the Irish more staunchly Catholic, because it is often the case that imposition awakens the human tendency to perversity. It should be pointed out, moreover, that by then Catholicism and Protestantism had achieved a degraded political significance; they became identifiers of political allegiance. The relatively new element of a different Faith made the Irish hate the English not only as invaders but also as heretics, and, conversely, the English had exchanged their previous scorn of the Irish for an actual detestation, since Ireland came to represent, on England's very doorstep, all that the hated but distant Spain stood for.

During the reigns of the early Stuarts things noticeably worsened. Any Irish landlord who demonstrated disaffection had his lands confiscated by the Crown. A policy of colonization was again put into effect, this time by Scottish farmers, who were more willing than their English counterparts since Scottish soil is difficult.

From this period onward Ireland became a country of constant, almost uninterrupted, rebellion. In 1641 a great rebellion broke out against the Earl of Strafford's rule, and many thousands of Protestants perished. In 1649 the Civil War in England had come to its bloody end with the execution of Charles I, and Cromwell could now devote his stern attention to Ireland. His New Model Army had finished its task in England and was sent to quell the French-aided rebellion in the sister island, where Charles II had sought refuge and had been hailed and recognized as King. The New Model Army crushed the rebellion with some ease and great cruelty.

The Irish were up in arms again in 1688, and again they were crushed, this time in 1690, by John Churchill, the Earl of Marlborough, in the Battle of the Boyne. The Irish leader, Sarsfield, escaped to France, where he founded the famous Irish Brigades. After 1690 the infamous 'Penal Code' was enforced; this was a blanket name for a number of vindictive anti-Catholic laws. This caused much disaffection, as did the fact that most of the landowners resided in England (some of 'them' were actually commercial companies!) and therefore managed their estates by means of representatives who were often insensitive and brutal. Trade restrictions imposed by the British Crown certainly increased their rancour.

The establishment of the American nation as an independent political entity had an ambiguous effect on Irish affairs. When, in 1782, the British troops on Irish soil were sent to fight in the War of American Independence, Ireland was left unguarded even whilst a French invasion was being

feared. The Irish rallied to the national cause, and Protestant and Catholic joined together under the leadership of Henry Grattan; the formidable force thus created deterred the French, gave an evanescent vision of unity to the Irish, and demonstrated to themselves their potential. Possibly to restore the compliment, England withdrew the Trade Restrictions. In spite of this, there was again rebellion by 1798, and the Irish Catholics were soundly beaten at the Battles of New Ross and Vinegar Hill.

England rode the unbroken Irish horse precariously. Neither colonization nor repressive legislation nor even brute force had broken the determination of the Irish Catholics to achieve or retain what they considered to be their rights. By 1800 William Pitt, the British Prime Minister, had come to believe that an Act of Union between England and Ireland could end the anarchy. Pitt actually managed to achieve this, and in 1801 the Act of Union was passed, and became law, but it cost Pitt the premiership. In his dealings with the Irish, he had pledged his word that the Union would be accompanied by a Catholic emancipation. George III refused to include this in the Act, and Pitt had no possibility of retaining his position.

It was, in fact, twenty-eight years later, in 1829, that Catholics were allowed to sit in the House of Commons.

Ireland's woes were by no means over, however. In 1846, after a number of failed potato crops, a great famine struck the population. Thousands died and thousands emigrated, and Irish agriculture had to evolve. Yet the potato crop failure was only the most dramatic and obvious of Ireland's ills. If America, through the War of Independence, had unknowingly given Ireland a temporary sense of unity, it was, in the nineteenth century, to pose a grave threat to the Island because of its growing agricultural strength. Serious competition was being offered in the corn market and, when Britain adopted Free Trade, Ireland's loss of protection in the wheat market made it actually impossible to compete with America. These two economic factors, together with the potato famine, forced Irish agriculture to change from tillage to pasturage. This metamorphosis was not completed before 1914, and this fact shows the magnitude of the problem and underlines the essential hardiness and resilience of the Irish, in their ability to face turbulent change.

Gladstone, the British Prime Minister, tried twice, in 1886 and 1893, to pass Home Rule Bills for Ireland, but was unsuccessful. He believed that only through Home Rule could the growing wave of unrest be quelled. Charles Parnell, the Irish Leader, organized and consolidated the Irish Home Rule Party and this caused 'The Irish Question' to dominate affairs at Westminster for several years. It was at this time that an intense national

feeling caused a revival of the Irish National tongue, Gaelic, with the result that thousands of adults started to learning, for the first time in their lives, their native language.

Although considerable social and economic reforms took place around the turn of the century, the intense nationalistic passions then current could hardly be appeased by anything short of Home Rule, and indeed this was finally granted by the Liberal Party under Lord Asquith in 1914. Royal Assent was given, but the actual operation of the Act was suspended because of the outbreak of the First World War. Although many Irishmen volunteered and fought for Great Britain and indeed the Irish Parliamentary Party, led by John Redmond, assisted the British cause, bitterness remained intense between the two countries. In 1916, in Dublin, an organization known as *Sinn Fein* (lit. 'We Ourselves') raised an armed rebellion which came to be known as 'The Easter Rising'. Fifteen *Sinn Fein* leaders were executed, but this, as usual, endowed them with the aura of martyrdom, and made *Sinn Fein* more popular. As a result, political influence slipped from the Parliamentary Party's hands to the *Sinn Fein*, especially after John Redmond's death.

In December 1918, the Irish representatives who had been returned in the general election constituted a parliament in Dublin, called the *Dáil Eirann*, and affirmed the independence of the country. Certain factions of the *Sinn Fein* were not satisfied with this, however, and started a bitter guerilla war against the forces of the Crown. Three years later this struggle came to an end by a truce. It was also in 1921 that the six counties of North Eastern Ireland established a separate Parliament. On 6 December 1921, a treaty was signed and dominion status was accepted for the other 26 counties; the *Saorstát Eirann*, or Irish Free State, was thus established. The partitioning of a single island into two separate states with conflicting ideologies, aspirations, and religious denominations had become a political reality. Antagonism now had identifiable geographical locations, and Ireland became as neat a theatre of strife as a boxing ring, with the two pugilists facing each other from their corners. It would be tempting to think that this partitioning was an application of the British policy of *divide et impera* (divide and rule) but it is probably more accurate to consider it as a sign of failure on the part of Britain to anglicize the Irish or subdue them, as an acceptance of the fact that the majority of the Irish had a clearly-defined and understood concept of national identity. By conceding a separate Parliament of the Northern Counties, England had, however, conserved her interests.

The *Finn Gael*, or Pro-Treaty Party, remained in government until

February 1932, when the *Fianna Fail*, or Republican Party, led by Eamonn de Valéra secured a majority. De Valéra's dream was the achievement of a complete independence, and the jettisoning of dominion status, which was considered humiliating. In 1937 De Valéra announced the adoption of a new constitution which declared Ireland a sovereign and independent state, a republic. In 1939, when at least a continental war seemed unavoidable, the Republic of Ireland declared itself neutral, thereby possibly scandalizing British sentiment. Many British people felt that this was an act of betrayal in time of need, and in fact there were several rumours, throughout the war, which cast doubts on Ireland's strict observance of its neutral status. Some rumours may have had an element of truth, since an Irishman by the name of William Joyce (more popularly known as 'Lord Haw-Haw') was executed for broadcasting morale-sapping propaganda from Nazi Germany. British mistrust of the Irish is also portrayed in contemporary fiction, and a somewhat recent 'best-seller' by Jack Higgins, called *The Eagle Has Landed*, portrays an Irishman acting as a Nazi secret agent who prepares the way for a squad of German parachutists sent clandestinely to Britain in order to assassinate Churchill. The prevailing mentality made it all a plausible myth.

The average Republican's aversion of the Northern Unionists has, since 1913, found violent expression in the I.R.A., short for Irish Republican Army. The I.R.A., which in fact does not form part of the Republic's armed forces and is a clandestine, or underground force, aims at the extension of the Republic to the Northern Counties, and has tried to achieve this by means of terror-bombing campaigns in Northern Ireland and Britain. The northern counties had shown their loyalty to Britain during the Second World War by joining the Commonwealth forces, and indeed many of the leading military figures, such as Alanbrooke, Alexander, and Auchinleck, came from Ulster.

By means of its terrorist attacks the I.R.A. has tried to ensure that the northern counties find it hard to settle down and prosper. Conversely, the northern Protestants have not been lagging in violent reactions. When, in 1965, the Northern Irish and Republican premiers met in Belfast (N.I.) for the first time, Protestant militants led by the Reverend Ian Paisley caused several disturbances. The 1960s were, in fact, marked by constant clashes in Northern Ireland between militant Protestants and Catholics campaigning for Civil Rights. British troops were called into Northern Ireland in 1969 and Bernadette Devlin, a Civil Rights leader, was imprisoned in that same year. Perhaps as a sign of good-will, the British managed to disband the feared and hated B-Special Volunteer Constabulary, which was largely

Protestant, but rioting and street-fighting took place intermittently in 1970. 1971 was even worse, with the I.R.A. increasing its terrorist activity and with several deaths in riots. The murder of three young British soldiers in a public house caused a political storm which resulted in a change of premiership.

An escalation of violence in 1972 brought about the prorogation of the Parliament of Northern Ireland and an Act was passed on 30 March 1972, by which Westminster transferred all legislative and executive powers to a Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. In 1974 the idea of setting up an Assembly which would involve the Republic as well was promoted by the British Labour Party. The Council was established in January, but in the February U.K. General Elections, eleven out of twelve seats were won by candidates opposed to the Northern Ireland Executive; the Executive in fact resigned in May 1974, and direct rule was resumed. It should be pointed out that 'direct rule' means that Northern Ireland was again governed by the British Secretary of State. From here on we have been witnesses of the bloody struggle: we have read about the events, and we have even seen some of them on the television screen.

Some of these events are fresh and almost indelible in the sense of shock they generated, such as the Earl Mountbatten of Burma's assassination in 1979, or the bomb explosions in Hyde Park and Regent's Park on 20 July 1982 which killed eleven and injured fifty.

Northern Ireland remains the bone of contention. It is, to-day, a cauldron of conflicting and generally irreconcilable sentiments; whilst the Republic is more homogeneously Catholic, the six northern Irish counties retain the ancient mosaic of hatreds and passions. It is as if all the traditional violence of Irish history has concentrated and coagulated in the North, the last toe-hold of British presence.

Irish History is, unfortunately, a chronicle of blood. A mere head-count of all those who died in riots, who fell to assassination squads or who were blown to bits since the end of the war would simply sicken compiler and reader. If history were a holy thing, Ireland would be one of its chalices.

It would have been beyond the present intentions to go into greater detail, or to evaluate minutiae, important though they are. It is hoped that the tracing of an ancient strife, an ancient suffering, and an ancient dream may help in the understanding of the poetry of such an important contemporary as Seamus Heaney, Irishman.

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THE EXAMINED LIFE

Louis J. Scerri

FOR over a thousand years, Greek civilization spread its influence over the entire Mediterranean basin. Even after the collapse of the Roman Empire, its last manifestation, Hellenistic values were eventually to re-emerge in the states of Europe which looked back to Greece as the source of their classical standards, by which to assess themselves and their achievements.

In many respects this civilization was unique. In almost two thousand years, from its origins in c.1300 BC to its final collapse in AD 558, it was to spread to all of the Mediterranean and most of Europe's lands: Greek artifacts were to turn up, for example, even in Sweden and parts of Russia. It was to show remarkable powers of evolution which were to enable it to expand beyond its original cradle, an exception among the classical civilizations. Again while other civilizations did not outlive the demise of the religions with which they were virtually coterminous, Hellenism would successfully see its dominant religion change from a native paganism to Christianity, a form of re-interpreted Judaism. This change would establish Christianity as the first world religion. It would encourage new values that were destined to last. Unlike the great valley civilizations, it would seek to colonize, not to conquer, new lands. It was a civilization that looked outwards beyond its shores, not satisfied with a limited vision under some local despot, benevolent or otherwise. Its heritage is, however, more stupendous than its existence: the world we inhabit has been, to all intents and purposes, shaped by it.

The remains, visible and invisible, still inspire awe and respect. The buildings the Greeks erected, and which we mostly know through ruins, are universally acknowledged as the finest proportioned man has ever been able to design. Their paintings gone forever, Greek sculpture is incomparably the most perfect man has produced, even though all we have left are mostly broken, defaced or eroded remnants. Homer and Pindar have left us with the finest epics and odes respectively; the handful of Greek plays still extant are second to none; and even in prose, always a late manifestation of a particular literature, only the Bible can compare with Plato. Historiography rather than the writings of annals would find an unexcelled master in Thucydides. In all these fields the Greeks set standards for all later

exponents, who would consciously analyse Greek 'products' in a search for the rules of perfection.

More remarkable still is the Greek achievement in the intellectual realm. They invented the study, and the language, of mathematics, science, and philosophy. They thought deeply about the nature of the world and man's place in the universe without any undue deference to orthodox beliefs. They were ready to question all aspects of man's existence in a search for the real and the lasting. If civilization is the control of mentality and of the environment by reason, then the greatest single Greek achievement was to lie in the liberation of man from the tyrannies of a blind, unreasoning superstition and therefore to make life a rational experience.

Yet it would be quite wrong to presume that all this arose spontaneously out of a vacuum. Egyptian and Mesopotamian roots can clearly be discerned. Greek civilization was also 'indebted' to Mycenaean culture that had immediately preceded it; to the Phoenicians whose alphabet it borrowed and transformed; and to the Greek language that unified the various people and gave them a sense of identity that went beyond the mere belonging to a circumscribed city-state.

Even its spread all over the Mediterranean basin was not fortuitous or haphazard. By 500 BC, maritime technology had made possible coast-hugging voyages that had reached an apex with the Phoenician circumnavigation of the African continent. The Mediterranean is a homogeneous geographical region sharing a fairly uniform climate, flora and fauna that makes migration within the region not a radically uprooting experience.

Movement of people between one region and another was often rendered inevitable due to the pressure exerted by a growing population. With the exception of the very fertile deltas of the Nile, the Po and the Rhone, the thin coastal strips to which man has been traditionally restricted cannot withstand intensive, agricultural cultivation, particularly with the badly-distributed pattern of rainfall.

Trade, or the desire to control or benefit from trade routes, also led to the movement of peoples. The Phoenicians, in particular, had established a number of trading centres in key sites, though they had never any real large-scale colonizing ambitions. Between 750 and 550 BC, both demographic pressure and economic considerations led the Greeks to migrate in organized fashion to the northern Aegean, the Ionian regions, southern Italy, and Sicily, where major overseas colonies were established.

Though they were later to regard 776 BC, the traditional date of the first Olympic games, as the year which marked their origin, the Greek people had actually arrived on the Mediterranean shores around 2000 BC.

By classical times, the Greeks, though, seem to have wilfully forgotten all about their primitive forebears and it was only the pioneering excavations of Henrich Schliemann that brought these people out of oblivion. It was Schliemann who first named this past 'Mycenean'.

The Myceneans were a warlike people, owing allegiance to kings and warlike aristocrats, who finally destroyed themselves in internecine wars. Perhaps these past events were to leave their imprint on the Greek mind, indeed, mutual suspicion and dislike would sour relationships between individual states and would ultimately contribute to the dismemberment of the 'Greek ideal'.

The Mycenean collapse ushered the Dark Age (1100–800 BC); still, the general unsettledness ironically helped to spread the Greek peoples to the islands of the Aegean and to Asia Minor as some survivors opted to flee the mainland in the first migratory wave.

The Dark Age was also marked by a gradual recovery of the Greeks, socially and politically. It was during this time that the polis originated. At first clusters of habitations round a fortified hill known as acropolis, the poleis of the Dark Age were to develop in various forms. The common denominator was the removal of the individual kings and the broadening of the councils of government, but exclusive to the 'citizens' of a particular 'state'. Such an esoteric organization naturally tended to strengthen further the Greek sense of independence, or even aloofness, of one state from another. Only the threat of a foreign menace would momentarily weld the Greek states together, but such a union would invariably dissolve with the departing invader. Even so there were always some states who preferred an alliance with the invader than with their 'brother' Greeks!

All in all there were about 200 city states, though firm historical details are available only about a few. These states could vary dramatically in size and also had different systems of government. In general there was a marked development from the monarchies (*monos*, Greek for 'one'; *arkho*, 'rule') of the pre-Homeric age to aristocracies (*aristos*, Gk for 'best'; *kratos*, 'power') to tyrants (a dictatorship by an individual that does not necessarily carry the modern pejorative connotation) to oligarchies (*oligoi*, Gk for 'the few') to democracies (*demos*, Gk for 'the people') and constitutional governments. At times the whole system disintegrated and it seemed there was no rule at all, or anarchy (*an*, Gk for 'without').

Athens is the outstanding example of this development. By the beginning of the sixth century, pressure from a growing population resulted in an anti-aristocratic movement that led to Solon's reforms that added the new rich to the ruling class. The age of the tyrants that followed came to an

end in 510 BC and gave way to a period of experimentation that eventually provided Athens with the most democratic government in Greece, with inbuilt mechanisms that guarded against domination by any single faction.

On the other hand, conservative Sparta stubbornly resisted change. Lycurgus, her lawgiver, forbade the writing down of the city state's laws which youths were expected to learn by heart. Such a system would clearly work in favour of the *status quo*, an arrangement that satisfied the small ruling class which, however, remained in constant fear of the helots, the serf-like workers who greatly outnumbered the free citizens. Because of this gnawing concern, Sparta never cherished the idea of having her army far away from home for too long.

And yet these two states were to save the Greek ideal, twice within ten years. Under the leadership of Athens, the Persians were beaten at Marathon (490 BC) and at Salamis (480 BC). These victories saved the incipient western values even before they could actually bloom. A Persian victory would have meant the imposition of an autocratic form of government where lives and fortunes depended on the whims of an absolute ruler, accountable to no one. The Greek victory made possible the assertion of the ordinary individual — an individual proud of his qualities, not too afraid to ask questions in a search for the Truth that underlies all existence.

The flush of the victory over the Persians brought about 'the greatest achievement in civilization ever seen' and the removal of the eastern threat enabled the Greek values to spread from its geographic cradle.

And yet, this outstanding show of unity was doomed, as in a Greek tragedy. Within ninety years the two leading states would both end up beaten and destroyed.

Athens was the first victim. Proud of her success, she organized the Delian League which she ran more as an empire than as a confederation. The Delian funds were high-handedly appropriated for 'safekeeping', thereby raising the suspicion and the ire of the other states who found a ready ally in Sparta.

In the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC), Sparta even turned to the hated Persians for help, promising them suzerainty over the Greek states in the Asian mainland. The eventual Spartan victory, however, brought it the same unpopularity and distrust. In 371 BC, the superb Spartan army was defeated by the Thebans at Leuctra.

The net result of this fratricidal blood-letting was the sapping of Greek strength, facilitating the ultimate victory of Philip II of Macedon. In 338 BC, in the battle of Chaeronea, the Macedonians established their hegemony over the rest of the Greeks.

During the course of these bloody events, Greek civilization came to its full bloom, reaching unique heights in historiography, art and architecture, drama, and philosophy, setting standards to all future times.

Herodotus and Thucydides would originate and reach the apex of the writing of history. The former would record and celebrate what he saw as the victory of Greek simplicity over Persian wealth and luxury. Thucydides would write down and analyse the fall of the old, noble, and simple values to ambition and the blind lust for power. His *History of the Peloponnesian War* is the first history to disavow divine interference in human affairs and to see war as just a manifestation of human nature: man's fate lay solely in his hands.

The Delian funds in Athenian coffers enabled Pericles to initiate a vast programme of monumental buildings and statues to honour Athena, the city's patron, and to show the city's pre-eminence in a highly visible manner.

The Parthenon is merely the most outstanding of the sophisticated planning and great skill necessary for such achievements. In their search for permanent beauty, the artists depicted action in a balanced and restrained manner, capturing thereby the dignity and the promise of human beings.

Drama had originated as part of religious festivals. In Athens the state officials would choose the plays to be produced and the wealthy citizens were expected to provide the financial means. In spite of the official sanction, Greek playwrights could, and did, write on topical and controversial themes, often holding up public figures to ridicule in their comedies.

In their tragedies, Aeschylus (525–456 BC), Sophocles (496–406 BC), and Euripides (c. 480–406 BC) treated themes that are still relevant: the rights of the individual, the role of the individual in society, and the nature of good and evil. Euripides, in particular, would relegate the gods to the background, making the human soul the battleground of strong passions and reason, with tragedy being the result of the hero's 'flawed character'.

On the other hand, the comedians preferred to criticize political affairs and leading politicians in coarse and bawd representations. Aristophanes (445–386 BC) is a particularly sharp and devastating critic who, to Athens' credit, was officially accepted and encouraged.

Greek art was the result of the citizens' love towards their polis. Its practical functions were to better the lives of the citizens and to improve the quality of life in the state.

The greatest Greek contribution, however, lies in philosophy. Other peoples had speculated about man and his universe through myths and epics; the Greeks were the first to treat this question in rational terms. Reason was the most important human faculty if the world were to be made under-

standable. The unexamined life, Plato would conclude, is not worth living.

The first philosophers were basically scientists who, through observation, were concerned with discovering those laws which they felt the universe had to observe. Anaximander would, through abstract thinking, arrive at an idea that resembled Darwin's Theory of the Evolution of the Species. Demosthenes would put forward the theory of a universe made up of invisible, indestructible atoms.

In the classical period the Sophists would insist that everything could be the subject of inquiry and analysis, advancing the view that nothing is absolute and that therefore everything is relative. Naturally such a view raised the suspicion of many a traditionalist citizen, a position that would directly contribute to the execution of Socrates (c. 470–399 BC). Though not strictly a Sophist, Socrates pioneered the method of investigation where a general topic could be narrowed to its essentials by continuous, linked questions.

Plato (427–347 BC), Socrates' student, actually wrote down his thoughts and theories and held that the mind enables man to perceive those eternal forms, the only 'reality', of which the matter perceived by the senses is only an imperfect copy. *The Republic* is the application of the theory of forms to politics and puts forward the idea of philosopher-rulers administering the state for the common good. In *The Laws* a more totalitarian solution as to the ideal government of a state is put forward.

Aristotle (384–322 BC), Plato's student, extended the search for truth to all aspects of human endeavour, stressing moderation in all things. He literally created whole new areas of study in his quest to learn everything about everything. The universe and humanity, he believed, could be explained by a simple synthesis of all learning.

Alexander, the son of Philip II of Macedon, known to later ages as Alexander the Great, would effectively spread Hellenic learning farther than anybody could have imagined. Alexander (336–323 BC) actually changed the political face of the known world. His eastern conquests made unlikely another Persian challenge to 'western' ideals which filtered as far east as India.

Alexander's conquests were not merely shallow military victories. He travelled in the company of philosophers, poets, scientists, and historians. The 'over 70 cities' he founded were permanent outposts of Greek values, as were the at least 250 colonies that were established in the East in the century after his death. Hellenism therefore became the common bond among the East, the Greek peninsula, and the western Mediterranean, bringing about the cross-fertilization of ideas.

The world as shaped by Alexander provided a common cultural background and a broad commercial network of no mean proportions.

The greatest contribution of Hellenism was to science. Aristarchos of Samos (c. 310–230 BC) thought out a heliocentric universe based on the observations of his naked eye, though his theories did not prove strong enough to supplant Aristotle's geocentric system that would persist for another 1800 years. Archimedes of Syracuse (c. 287–212 BC), the greatest Hellenistic thinker, made significant contributions in mathematics, mechanics, and hydrostatics. Eratosthenes of Cyrene (285–c. 204 BC) was the first to measure accurately the actual size of the earth which, he concluded, was of spherical shape. Theophrastus (c. 372–288 BC) originated the scientific study of botany.

Philosophy ceased to be the exclusive province of the leisured classes; philosophers became more numerous and new schools of thought emerged. The Cynics, of whom Diogenes (c. 412–323 BC) is the best known, preached the joys of a simple life, rejecting the lures of materialism. The Cynics inspired Epicurus (340–270 BC) for whom the principal good of human life lies in the absence of pain; for the Epicureans, knowledge could be obtained only through the senses, such knowledge being more reliable than that brought about by the fear of the gods or of death. The Stoics, the most popular of them all and the ones who were to capture the mind of Rome, stressed the importance of a virtuous life and helped to pass on to Rome the concept of a universal state governed by natural laws.

It was this essential unity – an empire of common thought – that the Romans would find a fertile soil for their expansion. Through military strength, Rome would first subject the western Mediterranean, then the Hellenistic East. By 146 BC Rome stood unchallenged with the former proud Greek states and kingdoms, mere provinces of a new order with its capital in central Italy.

IL-MALTI

Kopji tas-snin mgħoddija għall-bejgħ

Prezz: Numru wieħed – 25ċ

Numru Speċjali – 50ċ

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| 1939: Marzu; Settembru | 1964: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru |
| 1944: Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru | 1965: Marzu; Ġunju; Sett./Diċ. (flimkien) |
| 1945: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru | 1966: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru |
| 1946: Marzu; Settembru; Diċembru | 1967: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru |
| 1947: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru | 1968: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru |
| 1948: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru | 1969: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru |
| 1949: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru | 1970: Marzu; Ġunju; Sett./Diċ. (flimkien) |
| 1950: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru | 1971: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru |
| 1951: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru | 1972: Marzu/Ġunju (<i>Numru Speċjali N. Cremona</i>) Settembru; Diċembru |
| 1952: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru | 1973: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru |
| 1953: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru | 1974: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru |
| 1954: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru | 1975: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru |
| 1955: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru | 1976: Marzu; Ġunju |
| 1956: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru | 1977: Marzu; Ġunju; Sett./Diċ. (flimkien) |
| 1957: Marzu; Ġunju; Sett./Diċ. (flimkien) | 1978: Marzu; Ġunju; Sett./Diċ. (flimkien) |
| 1958: Marzu; Ġunju; Sett./Diċ. (flimkien) | 1979: Marzu; Ġunju; Sett./Diċ. (flimkien) |
| 1959: Marzu; Ġunju; Sett./Diċ. (flimkien) | 1980: Jannar/Diċembru (<i>numru wieħed biss</i>) |
| 1960: Marzu; Ġunju; Sett./Diċ. (flimkien) | 1981: Jannar/Diċembru (<i>Numru Speċjali Ġ. Galea</i>) |
| 1961: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru | 1984: Jannar/Ġunju (<i>Numru Speċjali – Żieda mat-Tagħrif</i>) |
| 1962: Marzu; Ġunju; Settembru; Diċembru | |
| 1963: Marzu; Ġunju (<i>Numru Speċjali R. Briffa</i>); Sett./Diċ. (flimkien) | |

Ibghat għall-kopja meħtieġa flimkien ma' ċekk għall-ammont ta' flus li jiswew il-kopji lis-Sur Pawlu Mifsud (Tel: 440733), 24, Triq il-Linja tal-Ferrovija l-Qadima, B'Kara.

Contiguità e Continuità Culturale e Linguistica fra Sicilia e Malta in Età Prearaba¹

Anthony Bonanno

Neolitico

PER il Neolitico e per l'Età del Rame non abbiamo alcuna testimonianza per poter determinare il linguaggio parlato dall'uomo preistorico né in Sicilia né a Malta.²

Quello che di certo si può dire è che già da allora la lingua parlata a Malta doveva essere molto vicina, se non identica, a quella parlata in alcune zone della Sicilia. Sappiamo con certezza che i primi gruppi umani che s'insediarono a Malta all'inizio del Neolitico, cioè verso gli inizi del quinto millennio a.C. erano degli agricoltori che provenivano dal lembo sudorientale della isola maggiore. La stretta corrispondenza fra la ceramica impressa dello stile di Ghar Dalam, cioè della prima fase della preistoria maltese, e quella di Stentinello è una prova abbastanza convincente.³

1. Relazione fatta durante il Convegno su *Sicilia-Malta: Contiguità e Continuità Linguistica e Culturale*, Catania-Siracusa, 3-5 maggio 1985. L'inversione dell'ordine delle parole nel titolo di questa relazione rispetto a quello del tema del Convegno è voluta, in quanto nella maggior parte dei casi le deduzioni di natura linguistica che si faranno qui appresso si basano sugli indizi di contiguità e continuità culturale fra i due paesi.
2. Questo non vuol dire che non si possano fare tentativi di ricostruzione di lingue preistoriche. Basti pensare al frutto che ha dato la ricerca della lingua madre delle parlate indoeuropee. Simili ricerche, mi comunica l'amico Giovanni Mangion, si stanno conducendo da Domenico Silvestri, presso l'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli, intese alla ricostruzione della situazione linguistica nel Mediterraneo centrale in epoca protostorica e antica.
3. J. D. Evans, *Malta* (Londra 1959) pp. 45, 53-4; *id.*, *The Prehistoric Antiquities of the Maltese Islands, a Survey* (Londra 1972) pp. 19-20, 208-9; D. H. Trump, 'Contatti siculo-maltesi prima dell'età del Bronzo', *Kokalos* 22-23 (1976-1977) pp. 23-4. Studi più recenti hanno individuato correlazioni fra lo stile di Ghar Dalam e quello del Kronio (Sciacca): S. Tinè, 'Lo stile del Kronio in Sicilia, lo stile di Ghar Dalam a Malta e la successione del neolitico nelle due isole', *Atti della XIII Riunione Scientifica dell'Istituto Italiano di Preistoria e Protostoria* (1971) pp. 75ff.; R. Magi, 'Gli scavi nelle stufe di San Calogero sul Monte Kronio (Sciacca) e i rapporti fra Sicilia e Malta durante il Neolitico', *Kokalos* 22-23 (1976-1977) pp. 510-8.

Il limite superiore di questo sguardo storico è fissato dalla prima presenza dell'uomo a Malta documentabile dall'archeologia che non ne conserva tracce oltre il Neolitico mentre in Sicilia si estenderebbe fino al Paleolitico.

Non siamo nemmeno in posizione di applicare modelli di sviluppo linguistico alla situazione maltese o a quella siciliana perché, per l'appunto, tali modelli non sono ancora disponibili per la semplice ragione che mancano i documenti più rudimentali per la ricostruzione linguistica dei popoli preistorici; mancano i testi nonché le iscrizioni. Ciononostante, benché ci siano indizi di una evoluzione prevalentemente isolana della cultura neolitica maltese per il millennio seguente (cioè il quinto millennio a.C.) e, di conseguenza, la lingua di questi primi abitatori di Malta potesse evolversi in isolamento e indipendentemente dall'altra isola materna, questo distacco era pur limitato in quanto i contatti con la Sicilia e con la vicina isola di Lipari continuarono ininterrotti durante tutte le tre fasi del Neolitico maltese.⁴ L'ossidiana continuò a raggiungere Malta da Lipari probabilmente per via indiretta, attraverso la Sicilia orientale.⁵ I vari stili che caratterizzano tutt' e tre le fasi di questo periodo trovano risposdenze abbastanza vicine in quelli contemporanei della stessa area della Sicilia e della più lontana Lipari.⁶ Queste costituiscono innegabili testimonianze di influssi culturali fra l'arcipelago maltese e l'isola maggiore da cui trassero origine gli antenati degli abitatori neolitici. Continuità di contatti culturali e commerciali, dunque, avrebbero potuto rafforzare anche la continuità del legame linguistico.

Età dei Templi

La magnifica Civiltà dei Templi⁷ fiorì a Malta durante un periodo di circa un millennio e mezzo (c. 4000–2500 a.C.) che venne denominato dal Trump 'Età del Rame',⁸ ma che preferiamo nominare 'Età dei Templi'⁹ in quanto

4. D. H. Trump, *Skorba* (Londra 1966) pp. 20–35; *id.*, *The Prehistory of the Mediterranean* (Londra 1980) pp. 86–7.
5. L'altra sorgente di ossidiana per Malta era Pantelleria: J. R. Cann e Colin Renfrew, 'The characterization of obsidian and its application to the Mediterranean region', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 30 (1964) p. 111; Evans, *Prehistoric Antiquities*, pp. 209, 210, 211.
6. Vedi Trump, *Skorba*, pp. 24, 28, 34; *id.*, *Contatti siculo-maltesi*, pp. 25–6; Evans, *Prehistoric Antiquities*, pp. 208–11.
7. L'esposizione più esauriente sulla civiltà templare maltese resta ancora quella di Evans, *Malta*, tradotta in italiano come, *I Segreti dell'Antica Malta* (Milano 1961). Ma nella lettura del testo bisogna tenere conto delle revisioni cronologiche e delle nuove datazioni per la preistoria europea e per quella del Mediterraneo centro-occidentale in contrapposizione alle datazioni delle civiltà protostoriche del bacino orientale. Le datazioni citate qui appresso sono, difatti, quelle proposte dalle ricerche preistoriche più recenti.
8. Trump, *Skorba*, pp. 20–1.
9. A. Bonanno, 'A Socio-economic Approach to Maltese Prehistory. The Temple Builders', *Malta. Studies of its Heritage and History* (Malta 1986) pp. 17, 21–24. Vedi anche

manca tutt'oggi ogni traccia dell'uso e della conoscenza del rame da parte di questa cultura anche se, come vedremo più avanti, essa fiorì contemporaneamente alle culture siciliane dell'Eneolitico con le quali mantenne dei rapporti.¹⁰

La prima fase di questo periodo, la fase di Żebbuġ, viene considerata come l'inizio di una nuova cultura a Malta, completamente distinta da quella dell'ultima fase del Neolitico (Skorba Rossa) e da essa separata da un netto *hiatus* culturale.¹¹ La provenienza di questa nuova immigrazione è ancora piuttosto oscura, ma alcune affinità stilistiche della ceramica della fase di Żebbuġ con quella della cultura di San Cono-Piano Notaro della Sicilia meridionale, nonché lo stretto parallelismo con materiale proveniente da Trefontane (Paternò) e Paliké (Mineo) nella stessa area ci inducono a cercare le origini della stessa ondata d'immigrazione nella vicina Sicilia.¹²

Per l'Età dei Templi l'isolamento in cui ebbe la sua evoluzione e fioritura questa splendida civiltà megalitica è ancora più pronunciato di quello dell'età precedente.¹³ Basti pensare alla totale assenza nelle terre circvicine di monumenti megalitici corrispondenti tipologicamente e cronologicamente a quelli maltesi.¹⁴ I contatti culturali dovevano essere minimi perché i frammenti ceramici sicuramente importati dall'estero si contano sulle dita.¹⁵ D'altra parte, però, le materie prime per gli strumenti da taglio (l'ossidiana e la selce) continuano a provenire dalle stesse sorgenti – un tipo particolare di selce, per esempio, che appare per la prima volta nella fase di Saffieni e diventa molto diffuso nella seguente fase di Tarxien, è stato ricondotto a giacimenti di selce dei Monti Iblei presso Siracusa.¹⁶ Nel

M. Ridley, *The Megalithic Art of the Maltese Islands* (Christchurch, Hampshire, 1971) p. 8, che preferisce i termini Medio e Tardo Neolitico; B. Blouet, *The Story of Malta* (Londra 1972) pp. 28–35, adopera il termine 'Temple Culture' (Cultura dei Templi).

10. Vedi Trump, *Skorba*, p. 21. Lo stesso autore adesso manifesta maggiori riserve e sembra preferire fare a meno di tali termini di natura tecnologica (comunicazione personale e Trump, *Prehistory, passim*). Per l'Eneolitico della Sicilia vedi S. Tusa, *La Sicilia nella Preistoria*, (Palermo 1983) pp. 189–261.
11. Anche questa distinzione è dovuta ai risultati conseguiti dal Trump durante la sua esplorazione del sito di Skorba. Questa 'rottura' fra le due fasi è stata messa in dubbio, soprattutto dal Blouet, *Story of Malta*, pp. 28–30.
12. J. D. Evans, 'The prehistoric culture-sequence in the Maltese archipelago', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 19 (1953) p. 79; *id.*, *Prehistoric Antiquities*, pp. 212–4; Trump, *Contatti siculo-maltesi*, pp. 24–5.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 32; Colin Renfrew, *Before Civilization* (Londra 1973) pp. 147–55.
14. Trump, *Contatti siculo-maltesi*, p. 31.
15. *Id.*, *Skorba*, pp. 44–6; *id.*, *Contatti siculo-maltesi*, pp. 27–9; L. Bernabò-Brea, 'Eolie, Sicilia e Malta nell'Età del Bronzo', *Kokalos* 22–23 (1976–1977) pp. 85–6.
16. Trump, *Skorba*, p. 42; *id.*, *Contatti siculo-maltesi*, p. 27.

contempo non abbiamo nessuna notizia dei prodotti esportati dai maltesi, ammesso che ci fossero.¹⁷

Per conseguenza, anche se in origine la lingua parlata dagli iniziatori della Cultura dei Templi dovette per necessità essere quella corrente nell'area da dove essi partirono per incominciare una nuova vita nelle isole maltesi (cioè, come abbiamo accennato, quella della cultura San Cono-Piano Notaro della Sicilia meridionale) non siamo in grado di determinare quali impatti culturali abbiano subito i costruttori dei templi che li avrebbero indotti a varcare la soglia per questa singolare via di sviluppo culturale: se questi impatti siano provenuti dall'estero, da un centro non ancora identificabile, o se siano da attribuire ad un fenomeno culturale del tutto locale.¹⁸ Nel primo caso ci si aspetta anche qualche influsso linguistico estraneo, nel secondo caso un attaccamento conservatore e evolutivo alla lingua originale.

Età del Bronzo

L'Età del Bronzo, sia per Malta che per la Sicilia, ci presenta una situazione assai diversa da quella prevalente nell'età neolitica e in quella eneolitica per il semplice fatto che essa si sviluppa contemporaneamente con le grandi civiltà protostoriche dell'oriente — quella egizia e quella mesopotamica prima, e più tardi quella minoico-micenea — le quali ci forniscono per la prima volta documenti scritti (e cioè linguistici) e che esercitano influssi, diretti e indiretti, sulle culture coeve delle isole a sud della penisola italiana. Al contrario delle età precedenti le vestigia archeologiche di questa riflettono molto più da vicino gli sviluppi nelle terre vicine.

Benché i contatti culturali fra la Sicilia e il mondo minoico si stiano forse emergendo solo adesso dalla sfera mitologica-legendaria in quella storico-archeologica,¹⁹ e benché l'influsso dallo stesso mondo minoico sulla civiltà templare maltese sia stato escluso dai parametri cronologici forniti dal radiocarbonio e dalla dendrocronologia,²⁰ i contatti commerciali

17. *Id.*, *Skorba*, p. 46; *Id.*, *Contatti siculo-maltesi*, p. 29.

18. Per influssi stranieri si dichiarano, anche dopo la comparsa delle date C¹⁴, L. Bernabò-Brea, 'Malta and the Mediterranean', *Antiquity* 34 (1960) pp. 132ff.; *id.*, *Eolie, Sicilia e Malta*, p. 70; E. MacKie, *The Megalith Builders* (Oxford 1977) pp. 146-54. La posizione a favore di una evoluzione locale è stata presa da Evans nel 1959, *Malta*, pp. 84-95, e sostenuta da Trump, *Skorba*, p. 51; *id.*, *Malta, An Archaeological Guide* (Londra 1972) pp. 24-31; *id.*, *Prehistory*, pp. 87-8; Renfrew, *Before Civilization*, pp. 161-82.

19. L. Bernabò-Brea, 'Leggenda e archeologia nella protostoria siciliana', *Kokalos*, 10-11 (1964-1965) pp. 1-33; M. Finley, *Storia della Sicilia Antica* (Bari 1970) pp. 24-25; Tusa, *Sicilia*, pp. 286-373.

20. Vedi soprattutto Colin Renfrew, 'Malta and the calibrated radiocarbon chronology', *Antiquity* 46 (1972) pp. 141-4; *id.*, *Before Civilization*, pp. 147-66.

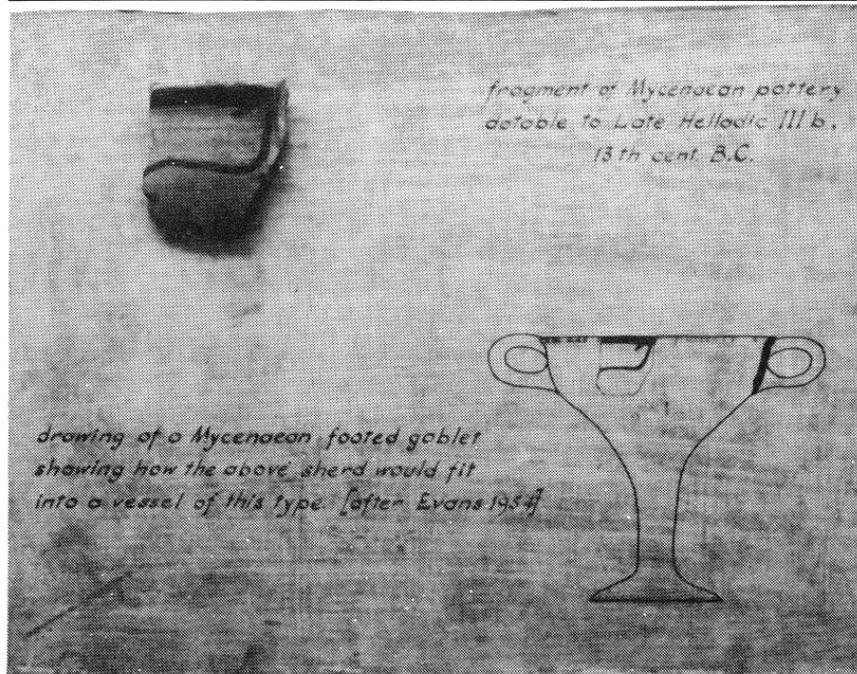
e culturali con la civiltà micenea in età posteriore (fra il secolo XVI e il secolo XII a.C.) sono archeologicamente documentabili. Per la Sicilia basti pensare alla frequente, direi intensa, presenza di reperti micenei, e altri di ispirazione micenea, nelle culture di Castelluccio e di Thapsos (e in quella di Capo Graziano a Lipari).²¹

A Malta l'Età del Bronzo si presenta scandita in tre ondate migratorie diverse con pochissima continuità dall'una all'altra. L'ondata del popolo di Borg in-Nadur sembra aver seguito quella del popolo della Necropoli di Tarxien con tracce di sovrapposizione su questa, mentre l'ultima migrazione, quella della gente di Bahrija, con manifestazioni tipiche dell'Età del Ferro, s'insediò in una sola località dell'isola lasciandone il resto agli insediamenti della cultura di Borg in-Nadur già presenti.²² Queste ultime culture, quelle di Bahrija e di Borg in-Nadur, dovettero formare le popolazioni indigene con cui vennero in contatto i primi colonizzatori fenici.

L'origine delle tre ondate migratorie dell'ultima età preistorica maltese è diversa. Affinità strette fra le forme principali della ceramica della Necropoli di Tarxien e quella della produzione fittile di Capo Graziano a Lipari hanno indotto lo Evans a definire cugine le due culture escludendo, per ragioni di diversità sotto certi altri aspetti, la discendenza diretta di una dall'altra ovvero da uno stesso ceppo culturale. Evans ha rintracciato anche paralleli con materiali siciliani da diverse località come Serrafferlicchio, Manfria-Zichilino e le caverne di Barriera. Altre manifestazioni, soprattutto architettoniche (come le 'cairns' e i 'dolmens'), estendono le possibilità di origine di questa gente verso la Puglia mentre, in ultima analisi, la cultura di Tarxien Cemetery assieme a quella di Capo Graziano trovano affinità nel Medio-Elladico della Grecia;²³ dunque la possibilità di influssi linguistici egei su ambedue le culture affini.

Il popolo di Borg in-Nadur sembra, ancora una volta, derivare la sua dimora antecedente dalla Sicilia dove si riscontra materiale ceramico affine,

21. S. Tinè e L. Vagnetti, *I Micenei in Italia* (Fasano 1967) *passim*; E. Procelli, 'Il complesso tombale di contrada Paolina e il problema dei rapporti tra Sicilia e Malta nella prima età del Bronzo', *Bollettino d'Arte* 9 (Gen-Marzo 1981) pp. 83-110; Tusa, *Sicilia*, soprattutto a pp. 367-73, 400-25.
22. Evans, *Malta*, pp. 168-88; *id.*, *Prehistoric Antiquities*, pp. 224-8; Trump, *Skorba*, pp. 43-4; *id.*, *Contatti siculo-maltesi*, pp. 23-32.
23. J. D. Evans, 'The 'Dolmens' of Malta and the origins of the Tarxien Cemetery Culture', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 22 (1956) pp. 85-101; *id.*, *Prehistoric Antiquities*, p. 224; Tusa, *Sicilia*, pp. 360-73.



Frammento di coppa micenea (secolo XIII a.C.) da Borg in-Nadur e disegno di ricostruzione della stessa.

in particolare a Serrafferlicchio e a S. Angelo Muxaro.²⁴ Traffico commerciale in senso inverso a quello consueto sembra documentato da vasi del tipo di Borg in-Nadur in orizzonti siciliani della cultura di Thapsos.²⁵ Bernabò-Brea ha proposto addirittura un insediamento maltese sull'isola di Ognina presso Siracusa.²⁶ Il contatto più diretto col mondo miceneo è testimoniato da un'importazione di una coppa micenea del periodo Tardo-Elladico IIIb (secolo XIII a.C.).²⁷ L'identificazione dell'omerica Ogygia

24. Evans, *Prehistoric Antiquities*, p. 226.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 226; D. Trump, 'The later prehistory of Malta', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 27 (1961) p. 261.

26. L. Bernabò-Brea, 'Abitato neolitico e insediamento maltese dell'età del Bronzo nell'isola di Ognina, (Siracusa) e i rapporti fra la Sicilia e Malta dal XVI al XIII sec. a.C.', *Kokalos* 12 (1966) pp. 40-69; *id.*, *Eolie, Sicilia e Malta*, pp. 667-82, 92-9.

27. W. Taylour, *Mycenaean Pottery in Italy and Adjacent Areas*, (Cambridge 1938) pp. 79-80; Evans, *Malta*, p. 180; *id.*, *Prehistoric Antiquities*, pp. 17, 227. Un secondo frammento miceneo è stato identificato tra il materiale preistorico proveniente da Tas-Silg: F. Mallia, 'The prehistoric material', *Missione Archeologica Italiana a Malta 1965* (Roma 1966) p. 50.

con Malta da parte di Callimaco²⁸ e il riferimento ad un'insediamento greco nella stessa isola al tempo della guerra di Troia nel poema *Alexandra* di Licofrone²⁹ potrebbero forse essere reminiscenze lontane di un rapporto più stretto di quanto risulta documentato dall'archeologia, tra le isole maltesi e il mondo miceneo.³⁰

La ceramica di derivazione straniera della fase di Bahrija trova riscontri nel geometrico apulo da Coppa Navigata, Torre Castelluccia e altri siti affini e nelle culture delle tombe a fossa in Calabria, e pertanto si pensa che la gente di Bahrija provenisse da quelle regioni al di là della Sicilia.³¹ Data la esile presenza di questa cultura, il panorama culturale – forse anche quello linguistico – dell'Età del Bronzo maltese si presenta prevalentemente parallelo a quello della Sicilia orientale.

Età Fenicio-Punica

Questo modello cambia con l'arrivo a Malta e in Sicilia dei primi popoli prettamente storici. Malta inizia la sua storia rinunciando al suo ormai millenario legame culturale e linguistico con la Sicilia orientale quando, verso la metà dell'ottavo secolo a.C., l'isola maggiore viene colonizzata dai Greci e dai Fenici. Al detto di Tucidide i Fenici si erano insediati in tutta la Sicilia molto prima, ma con l'ondata colonizzatrice dei Greci essi si trovarono accantonati nel lembo occidentale dell'isola.³² Malta comincia ad essere abitata dai Fenici nello stesso periodo (circa 725 a.C.)³³ e da

28. R. R. Pfeiffer (ed.) *Callimachus* (Oxford 1949, ristampato 1965) pp. 355–6, fram. 470; J. Busuttill, 'The isle of Calypso-Gozo?', *Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Royal University of Malta* VI, 2 (1975) pp. 218–20; G. D'Ippolito, 'Malta nell'«Odissea»?', Considerazioni sulla geografia omerica', *Kokalos* 22–23 (1976–1977) pp. 400–19.
29. Lycophron, *Alexandra*, 1027–1033; A. Bonanno, 'Lycophron and Malta', *Miscellanea in Onore di Eugenio Manni* (Roma 1979) pp. 273–6.
30. Per la discussione della documentazione scritta e quella archeologica vedi A. Bonanno, 'The tradition of an ancient Greek colony in Malta', *Hyphen* IV, 1 (Malta 1983) pp. 1–17.
31. Evans, *Prehistoric Antiquities*, pp. 227–8.
32. La presenza fenicia nel resto della Sicilia anteriormente all'arrivo dei Greci non ha trovato conferma nei reperti archeologici: V. Tusa, 'Sicilia', *L'Espansione Fenicia nel Mediterraneo* (Roma 1971) pp. 175–91; S. Moscati, *Tra Cartagine e Roma* (Milano 1971) pp. 50–58; *id.*, *I Cartaginesi in Italia* (Milano 1977) pp. 25–30.
33. I primi reperti riferibili a questa datazione provengono soprattutto da tombe; *Report on the Working of the Museum Department 1926–27*, p. 8; J. B. Baldacchino e T. J. Dunbabin, 'Rock tomb at Ghajn Qajjet, near Rabat, Malta', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 31 (1953) pp. 32–41; W. Culican, 'Aspects of Phoenician settlement in the West Mediterranean', *Abr-Nahrain* 1 (1960) pp. 36–55.

allora fino alla conquista romana del 218 a.C. essa rimane con la Sicilia occidentale nell'ambito politico, culturale e linguistico fenicio-punico.³⁴

Da uno sguardo alla carta geografica del bacino centrale del Mediterraneo risulta subito ovvio che Malta è fuori dalle rotte commerciali marittime fra la Sicilia fenicio-punica e le altre colonie occidentali ma è situata idealmente come punto d'approdo nella rotta diretta fra Fenicia e Cartagine. È molto probabile che inizialmente ai Fenici Malta servisse meramente come scalo conveniente su questo lungo viaggio fino a quando non si presentassero minacce dal versante greco della Sicilia. Sembra che i Fenici (ovverosia i Cartaginesi) sentissero il bisogno di rafforzare la loro presenza sull'arcipelago dopo la fondazione, benché effimera, di una colonia greca presso il Cinipe nella Siritide da parte dello spartano Dorieo.³⁵ Più tardi, in seguito al prosperare delle colonie della Tripolitania (Lepcis, Sabratha e Oea) Malta venne rivestita di un ulteriore valore strategico nella linea marittima fra la Tripolitania e la Sicilia punica.

Non si è in grado di stabilire la rapidità dell'acculturamento della popolazione indigena da parte dei nuovi arrivati. I corredi funerari delle tombe databili ai primi secoli della presenza fenicia a Malta si presentano completamente privi di materiali che in qualche modo possano attestare una sopravvivenza, pur esigua, delle culture dell'Età del Bronzo.³⁶ Il che suggerirebbe l'assoluto sopravvento della cultura fenicia su quelle preistoriche. D'altro canto, non è escluso che esse abbiano continuato a coesistere senza fondersi l'una nell'altra. Purtroppo l'archeologia non ha ancora gettato luce su questo problema. Solo a Tas-Silġ si sono trovati indizi di un periodo di convivenza.³⁷ Anche dal punto di vista linguistico mancano ancora gli epigrafi che possono illuminarci sull'assimilazione della lingua dei nuovi colonizzatori. È del sesto secolo in poi, cioè al periodo punico, che si datano le iscrizioni in lingua punica.³⁸

I dati archeologici, inoltre, ci presentano una cultura fenicia con uno sviluppo alquanto diverso da quello che prevale nelle altre colonie occidentali, compresa Cartagine che dal sesto secolo in poi viene ad assumere

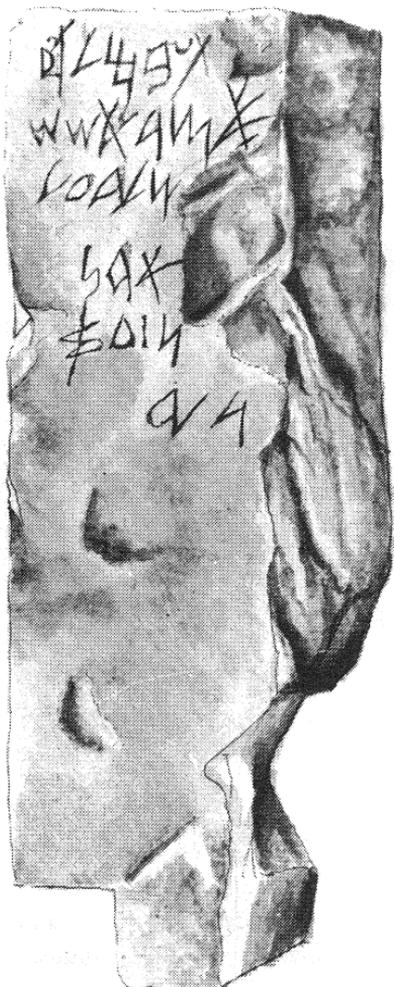
34. La tradizione di un periodo di dominazione greca a Malta prima della conquista romana non è sostenibile: vedi Bonanno, *Tradition*, pp. 1-17.

35. F. P. Rizzo, 'Malta e la Sicilia in età romana: aspetti di storia politica e costituzionale', *Kokalos* 22-23 (1976-1977) pp. 176-7.

36. Vedi bibliografia a nota 33.

37. *Missione Archeologica Italiana a Malta 1966* (Roma 1967) pp. 116-7, 126-7; A. Ciasca, 'Malta', *L'Espansione Fenicia nel Mediterraneo* (Roma 1971) pp. 64-6, 72-3.

38. M. G. Guzzo Amadasi, *Le Iscrizioni Fenicie e Puniche delle Colonie in Occidente* (Roma 1967) pp. 15-52.



Disegno di una iscrizione trovata nel 1816
assieme ad un'altra presso la chiesa della
Madonna della Virtù, Rabat.

l'egemonia dell'*epikrateia* fenicia in Occidente. A Malta mancano le stele funerarie che si trovano abbondanti a Mozia, a Cartagine, e nei centri sardi. A Malta non è ancora affiorato il *tofet* benché due iscrizioni testimonino il sacrificio infantile (il *molk*) e la sostituzione della vittima umana con un agnello (il *molk omor*).³⁹ Uno studio comparato delle iscrizioni maltesi con quelle della Sicilia gioverebbe a gettare ulteriore luce sullo sviluppo linguistico delle due aree.⁴⁰ Potrebbe, per esempio, confermare l'accan-

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 19–23; G. Garbini, 'Note di epigrafia punica III', *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 43 (1968) pp. 5–11. Per altre notevoli differenze soprattutto nel repertorio ceramico vedi Ciasca, *Malta*, pp. 69–71.

40. Si ricordi, oltre alle iscrizioni pubblicate da Guzzo Amadasi, un amuleto con iscrizione su papiro di recente rinvenimento: T. C. Gouder e B. Rocco, 'Un talismano bronzeo da Malta contenente un nastro di papiro con iscrizione fenicia', *Studi Magrebini* 7 (1975) pp. 1–18.

tura punica databili fino al primo secolo a.C.,⁴³ nonché, apparentemente, dal passo intorno al naufragio di S. Paolo a Malta negli Atti degli Apostoli.⁴⁴ Dall'altro lato osserviamo una progressiva filtrazione dell'elemento culturale e linguistico greco proveniente dalla Sicilia ormai anche essa dominata tutta da Roma. Questa *facies* greca è testimoniata dall'introduzione della leggenda greca *Melitaion* o *Melitas* sulle monete di conio maltese⁴⁵ e da alcune iscrizioni in greco databili ai primi secoli della dominazione romana.⁴⁶

Sembra che il processo di latinizzazione della popolazione maltese sia stato estremamente lento e può darsi che non sia mai stato portato a termine. I maltesi del ceto inferiore non parlavano latino nel 60 d.C. da quanto ci risulta dal passo sopraccitato sulla venuta di S. Paolo. Le prime iscrizioni latine fatte incidere a nome del popolo di Melite e di quello di Gaulos sono databili sí al periodo augusteo, altre al periodo giulio-claudio, ed altre ancora al secondo e terzo secolo d.C.⁴⁷ ma è difficile dire se esse rispecchino solo il livello ufficiale, al massimo quello dell'alto ceto romanizzato della società maltese, ovvero la lingua e cultura di tutta la popolazione delle isole.⁴⁸ Oltre a queste iscrizioni di carattere ufficiale non ci è tramandata nessuna di natura privata oltre a quella in greco di Hermolaos (II secolo d.C.) che viene dichiarato specificatamente di origine pergamena.⁴⁹ Per altre iscrizioni funerarie dobbiamo attendere quelle delle catacombe.

Oltre a un paio di parole la cui origine etimologica è ancora incerta, sembra che non ci siano sopravvivenze del Latino nella lingua e nella toponomastica che sono documentabili solo dal quindicesimo secolo in

43. Guzzo Amadasi, *Iscrizioni*, pp. 15–52.

44. *Act. Apost.*, XXVIII 2. Vedi anche Rizzo, *Malta e Sicilia*, pp. 193–4; A. Bonanno, 'Malta in the third century', *The Roman West in the Third Century, Contributions from Archaeology and History* (Oxford 1981) p. 509.

45. E la leggenda *Gauliton* in quella del conio gozitano: E. Coleiro, 'Ricerche numismatiche', *Missione Archeologica Italiana a Malta 1964* (Roma 1965) pp. 117–27; *id.* 'Maltese coins of the Roman period', *Numismatic Chronicle* 7^a serie, 11 (1971) pp. 67–91; *id.*, 'Rapporti di Malta con la Sicilia nell'età repubblicana: testimonianze numismatiche e letterarie', *Kokalos* 22–23 (1976–1977) pp. 381–4.

46. *I.G.*, XIV, 953 e 600.

47. *C.I.L.* X, 7494–5, 7501–9, 8318.

48. Conclusioni sull'ufficialità o meno di queste iscrizioni avrebbero anche ripercussioni su un aspetto culturale molto suscettibile, quello religioso, sul quale la storiografia maltese non si è sempre espressa con rigore scientifico e passionato.

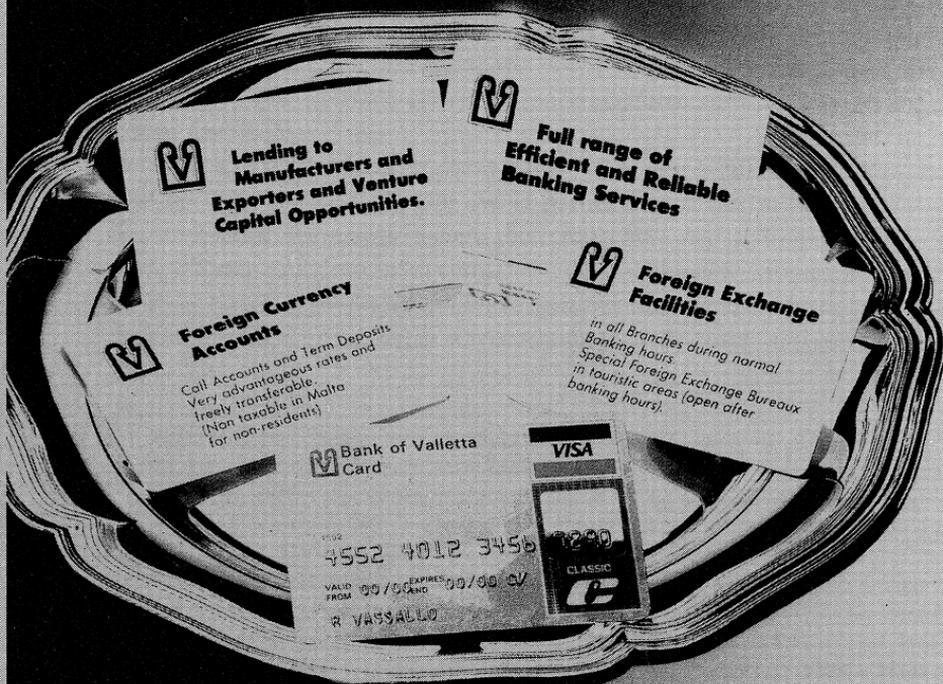
49. E. Coleiro, 'A Greek inscription found in Malta', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 77 (1957) pp. 312–3.

poi.⁵⁰ Alcuni elementi greci in uso anche odierno,⁵¹ invece, si fanno risalire al periodo successivo, cioè all'età bizantina che a Malta si dovrebbe fare incominciare, con quella della Sicilia, all'inizio del sesto secolo.⁵² Al periodo bizantino appartengono una serie di iscrizioni funerarie latine, ma soprattutto greche, incise o dipinte sulle pareti degli ipogei paleocristiani ed ebrei sparsi in tutta l'isola ma con una concentrazione notevole attorno alla città antica di Melite (odierna Mdina/Rabat). Anche qui, negli ipogei, troviamo risponderne con la vicina Sicilia, specialmente con la tipologia delle catacombe siracusane.⁵³ Solo alcune delle iscrizioni qui richiamate sono state pubblicate⁵⁴ mentre siamo convinti che uno studio comparato di esse e di quelle siciliane contemporanee confermerebbe gli stretti legami fra le due isole.

Nel 870 d.C. Malta fu presa dagli Arabi. Fu sigillato così il comune destino delle nostre isole che aveva perdurato già per millenni e doveva durare ancora, forse sotto aspetti più circoscritti, per molti altri secoli. Ma con gli Arabi entriamo in un campo che per molti motivi, soprattutto perché di quel periodo sono documentabili sopravvivenze linguistiche di gran lunga molto più tangibili, cederei doverosamente il discorso agli specialisti in materia.

50. P. P. Saydon, 'The pre-Arabic Latin element in Maltese toponymy', *Orbis* V, 1 (1956) pp. 191-7; *id.*, *Die Ortsnamen der Maltesischen Inseln* (Napoli 1967). Cfr. J. Aquilina, *Papers in Maltese Linguistics* (Malta 1970) pp. 8-9. La derivazione greca dei toponimi *Malta* e *Ghawdex* è stata confermata da J. Busuttil, *Kokalos* 14-15 (1968-1969) pp. 180-5; *id.*, 'Gaudos', *Orbis* XX, 2 (Dec. 1971) pp. 503-6.
51. Molto probabilmente di derivazione greca, certamente non-araba ci sembra il toponimo maltese *latmija* o *latnija* che occorre spesso in associazione con cave di pietra antiche, e che è documentato anche in Sicilia. Per il toponimo vedi Saydon, *Ortsnamen*, s.v. *latmija*. Per altre possibili derivazioni greche vedi la lista delle parole in uso sacro a Malta nel XVII secolo in D. Magri, *Hierolexici sive sacri dictionarii editio octava* (Venezia 1788) II, p. 27 e sotto le voci ivi indicate. Vedi anche J. Busuttil, 'Marsa', *Orbis* XXI, 2 (Dic. 1972) pp. 520-2.
52. T. S. Brown, 'Byzantine Malta: a discussion of the sources', *Medieval Malta: Studies on Malta before the Knights* (ed. A. Luttrell) (Londra 1975) pp. 71-86.
53. M. Buhagiar, 'The Maltese catacombs - characteristics and general considerations', *Proceedings of History Week 1983* (Malta 1984) pp. 1-26.
54. Alcune pubblicate da E. Becker, *Malta Sotterranea: Studien zur alt-christlichen und jüdischen Sepulkralkunst* (Strassburg 1913) e A. Ferrua, 'Le catacombe di Malta', *Civiltà Cattolica* 2381 (1949) pp. 505-15. Altre sono state studiate da Joyce Reynolds e M. Buhagiar e attendono una adeguata pubblicazione: Buhagiar, *Maltese Catacombs*, pp. 23-5.

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