The Malta Historical Society fully endorses the current proposal to rebuild the historic clock tower that once graced the main square of Birgu. Such a project would heal yet another architectural scar, the result of the heavy bombardments Malta endured on many of her historic towns during the Second World War.

Even though such an initiative may now appear as belated and perhaps, to a few individuals, as anachronistic since the restoration of this tower would be taking place after more than 60 years, the Malta Historical Society strongly believes it is a valid project.

It is precisely because so many decades have passed that the Malta Historical Society insists that the government should not waste any more time but go ahead and give its blessing to such similar projects as those undertaken in the last war, since the Gardjola was completely destroyed and had to be rebuilt after the end of hostilities. So, why was a similar initiative not taken with Birgu’s clock tower?

The clock tower has its historic significance. Like the tower in Pisa, Birgu was a city of towers. It was dominated by a number of elongated buildings consisting of church steeples and secular edifices. However, many of these towers have been lost. Two of Birgu’s most important landmarks were the clock tower and the belfry of the church of the Annunciation. Reconstructing the Birgu Clock Tower would help the city re-acquire some of its lost skyline.

Furthermore, for Malta, this tower represented the introduction of modern work precepts that are associated with the emergence of modern cities in Renaissance Italy. Life in this enclosed urban area, as had happened in the emerging towns and cities of 15th century Italy, started being regulated by the mechanics of a clock placed on a secular edifice.

The Malta Historical Society urges the government and the authorities concerned, as well as those who have Malta’s historical heritage at heart, to work hand in hand to rebuild this historic tower by also ensuring that the surviving artefacts from the old clock tower (wherever possible) are used and incorporated in the restored structure. However, the Malta Historical Society wants to stress that the Birgu Clock Tower should be rebuilt in the same place and have exactly the same proportions it had prior to the Second World War. Any changes, even the smallest modification, to the original plan would make the rebuilding of this clock a fake exercise.

One hopes that Malta too will soon witness, as is happening in other historic cities such as Valmontone in Lazio, Italy, its demolition day, where edifices built in great haste after the war are pulled down and replaced by replicas of the original buildings destroyed.

Simon Mercieca
PRO Malta Historical Society

FROM DR S. MERCIECA Ph.D.

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YOU DRIVE
YOU LOSE

Choose a leader to drive you home.
BE SAFE, STAY ALIVE.
Don’t Drink and Drive.