

THE INFLUENCE OF ITALIAN MANNERISM UPON MALTESE ARCHITECTURE

BY

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For many years the style of architecture, which developed in the early years of the 15th century in Florence and was closely allied to movements in the other arts based upon a reinterpretation of classical philosophy and aesthetic theories, was believed to be one consistent style right up to the emergence of eclecticism in the latter half of the 18th century. Fitting a theory of architectural development whose promoters believed applicable to all ages, the Renaissance was seen as a style which in its early years showed all the signs of the freshness of youth; by the 16th century in Rome it reached the peak of its maturity; and subsequently lapsed into a decadent old age. The writers believed that those who strove to design works of architecture in this last period had similar aims to the architects of the Early Renaissance, but, due to the overpowering effects of natural evolution, effects which the writers believed to influence all human progress, they were unable to achieve the sparkle of Quattrocento architecture, nor the studied perfection of the High Renaissance.

A typical quotation from Fergusson(1) will illustrate this approach to art history. "Iuvara and Vanvitelli, men with as little feeling for Art as can well be imagined, but whose good fortune it was to live in an age when the art was at its lowest ebb — so low that their productions were universally admired by their contemporaries, and were consequently everywhere employed". Another author, referring to 17th century architecture in Italy, boldly complained that "by such freaks and caprices almost every building of the era... is more or less disfigured".(2)

To later historians the overall classification of this period seemed inadequate, and some made steps to subdivide it into a number of styles, each one being characterised by different aims. In the last years of the Nineteenth century, Wolfflin, Schmarsow and Riegl, working in Central Europe, discovered the significance of the Baroque style in art. The re-classification of the styles of architecture in Italy under Renaissance and Baroque became generally accepted in Europe. It was felt that the Renaissance artists aimed at a balance or perfect poise, whilst the Baroque architects, fired by the enthusiasm of the Counter-Reformation, produced an art which was dynamic and moving. It was as though the same grammar had produced two languages: the Roman architectural orders were the same in each case, but the way in which they were used was in two opposite directions. The

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(1) FERGUSSON, James, *History of the Modern Styles of Architecture*, London, 1862, p. 127.

(2) ANDERSON, William J., *Architecture of the Renaissance in Italy*, London, 1898, p. 162.

Renaissance flourished in the 15th and 16th centuries, and the Baroque in the 17th and 18th centuries(3).

Donato Bramante and his followers, working in Rome from about 1500 onwards, designed buildings in which all the proportions were adjusted to create a perfect equilibrium. Nothing jarred — all was peaceful and serene. The little Tempietto in the courtyard of S. Pietro in Montorio, Rome, designed by Bramante about 1502, epitomises the qualities of the High Renaissance. The building is circular, a shape considered to be most perfect in its balance by both Ancient and Renaissance theorists(4), the proportions of the order were made to conform to those used by the Romans and propounded by Vitruvius(5), and all the parts of the building were so carefully related to the whole so that "nothing could be added or taken away"(6) without damaging the poise of the design.

The forceful approach of the Baroque architects was first apparent in the Gesù church in Rome which was completed in the year 1575, a revelation to the Italians. Here the militant policy of the new spirit in the Church, drawn up at the Council of Trent(7), was put into practice. Clearly the aims of the architects are here quite different from those of Bramante. Equilibrium is intentionally broken down, and the eye is irresistably drawn to the main door of the church because the facade is stepped forward in a number of planes towards the centre. Inside the church the eye is drawn down the nave by the line of the barrel vaulted ceiling and the powerful entablature, until it finally rests on the magnificent high altar. This is an architecture of movement — a dynamic architecture very different in conception from the work of the High Renaissance.

Seventy years separate the building of these two churches and a further change in architectural approach occurred in those seventy years. An unsettled period occurs, dating from about the time of the Sack of Rome in 1527 and going on until a new direction in architectural thought is again established in the Baroque period. Its existence was first pointed out in the 20's of this century by several art historians working in Germany(8).

This period has been called Mannerism(9), and its characteristics are equally clear. In painting the artists revolted against the balanced compositions and colouring of Raphael and introduced disturbing contortions and frenzied congestions into their pictures. The excessive elongation of Pontormo's figures are

(3) Various other classifications have been made, but these need not detain us here, for they have no bearing on this case. The Academic and the Neo-Classical Schools ran concurrently with the Baroque in Rome; and the Quattrocento Style, with a strong Gothic flavour, preceded the Early Renaissance.

(4) ALBERTI, Leon Battista, *Il Re Aedificatoria*, Rome, 1484. SERLIO *Architettura*, Venice, 1537. PALLADIO, *I Quattro Libri di Architettura*, Vicenza, 1570.

(5) VITRUVIUS, *De Architectura*.

(6) ALBERTI, op. cit.

(7) BORROMEO, St Charles, *Instructions on Ecclesiastical Buildings*. Translated by G. J. Wigley, London, 1857.

(8) DVORAK (1920), PINDER (c. 1924), FRIEDLAENDER (1925), PEVSNER (1925).

(9) Taken from "de Maniera", a term used by VASARI, *Vite*, Tom. 9. ed. Siena, 1793, describing the style of Francesco de' Salviati.

typical illustrations of this style; and similar trends are discernible in sculpture, Benvenuto Cellini being one well-known sculptor to practice them.

To gain the maximum effect from shock one needs a placid period to precede the application of the shock tactics. We who have been subjected to a continuous breaking down of artistic standards for a century and a half, have become numbed, so that the most glaring architectural irregularities pass unnoticed. But after the balance of the High Renaissance, the artists felt that Bramante had said the last word in that direction, and they reacted by bringing irregularities and small incongruities into their designs, so that what had been logical and composed became illogical and disturbing⁽¹⁰⁾.

How then did these various Italian styles affect Malta? Because of its nearness to Sicily and the mainland of Italy, Malta has always been influenced by Italian art. The Norman invasion and the subsequent occupation by European forces brought strong Siculo-Norman and Siculo-Aragonese influences to the island, which were the predominating styles of the period before the arrival of the Knights⁽¹¹⁾. During the years immediately preceding their arrival very little building was being done in Malta, and of that, even less remains with us today. By 1530 the High Renaissance had become the prevailing style in Rome, but already the seeds of Mannerism were producing plants in Italy. Between 1521 and 1526 Michelangelo built the Ricetto of the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence. On its façade there are a number of wall planes none of which appears to be the main wall surface, and inside both the scale and the incongruity of some of the details are disturbing. It is impossible to say just how much of Mannerist art is in the first place due to Michelangelo. He was regarded as a giant in his own day and his peculiarities were assiduously copied. It was enough for him to set a fashion; others followed. Baldassare Peruzzi's masonry facade of the Palazzo Massimi delle Colonne, Rome (1535), has a paper like quality; Sanmicheli's Palazzo Bevilacqua (1530) at Verona has a quite incomprehensible rhythm of column and window head; Michelangelo reintroduced his scale shattering tactics on the apse of St. Peters (1547-51); and his student Vasari created a long powerful vista down the courtyard of the Uffizi at Florence (1550-74), only to make it meaningless by resolving it onto an insignificant pierced screen which opens onto a flat view of the turbid Arno. There are many other examples of Mannerist architecture and one could quote the courtyard of the Pitti Palace in Florence (1558-70) and Pirro Ligorio's Casino for Pius IV (1560-61) in the garden of the Vatican. In fact, it would be no exaggeration to say that Mannerism affects nearly all the major works of architecture in Italy at this time.

In Malta the buildings erected before the siege of 1565 are unpretentious. The demand for housing and the imminent fear of invasion, left the Knights and the Maltese architects with little opportunity to study current developments in architec-

(10) Examples of this treatment in architecture are given by PEVSNER N., *Architecture of Mannerism* in "The Mint", London, 1946., BLUNT Anthony, *Mannerism in Architecture* in "Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects", March, 1940., and WITTKOWER R., *Michelangelo's Biblioteca Laurenziana*, in "Art Bulletin", Vol. 16, 1934.

(11) See WARD PERKINS, *Mediaeval and Early Renaissance Architecture in Malta* in "Antiquaries Journal", Vol. XXII, 1942.

ture. The plans follow a traditional pattern, the facades are plain, and if the proportions of the doors and windows do show some appreciation for Renaissance proportion, the "fat" Melitan mouldings are not derivative.

It was only with the successful outcome of the siege and the foundation of the new city of Valletta, that a serious study of Italian architecture was once more undertaken. The two outstanding characters in this sphere at that time were Francesco Laparelli, the Italian engineer, and Gerolamo Cassar, the Maltese architect. Laparelli's work was preparatory, for he left the island before he had an opportunity to erect many buildings. However, we know that he designed and built stores, windmills, and at least one house, though the actual buildings are no longer known to us. There can be no doubt but that he influenced Cassar, for he was the senior partner for several years in a close collaboration. It may be that Cassar drew his love of rusticated quoins from Laparelli who certainly used them on his house(12). But Cassar learned more than this. He acquired a competent mastery of the use of the architectural orders which he applied when he wished, a knowledge which would seem to come from an actual study of Italian buildings(13). It is this competence in Renaissance detailing, plus his repeated use of Mannerist motives, which brings me to the conclusion that he studied in Rome for a while during the Mannerist period. He was about fifty years old when he was given the splendid opportunity of building the seven new Auberges, the Magisterial Palace and the Conventual Church, as well as numerous other churches and palaces; and it is interesting to reflect that many of the Italian masters turned to Mannerism in their late middle age, including Michelangelo, Palladio, and Vignola.

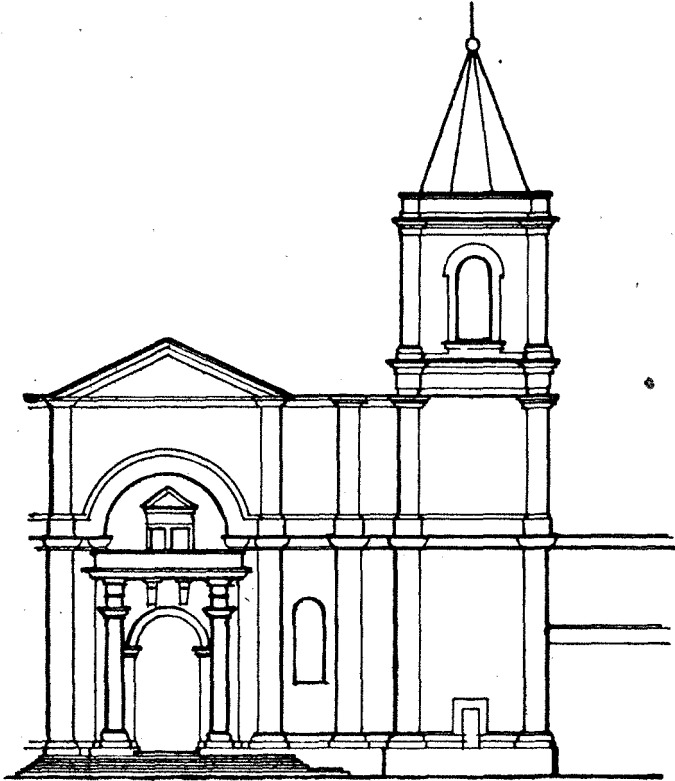
The influence of Italian Mannerism is evident in all Cassar's architecture; the massive scale of his giant quoins, out of all proportion to their sustaining task — the almost cruel contrast between the slender elongated coupled columns of the main portal and the squat bulbous Doric drums of the interior of the Augustinian church at Rabat — the mezzanine windows of the Auberge de Provence which cut into the architrave (which is unusually thin) and the frieze, forcing these mouldings up over the line of the window(14), and above, the entablature of the superimposed order is left unsupported at the two ends where it abuts the rusticated quoins — the picture-frame windows on the mezzanine of the Auberge d'Italie — and the use of only a part of a Doric entablature to complete the roof line of the Auberge d'Aragon, where the frieze is greatly reduced in size and the triglyphs omitted. The architrave is similarly omitted, but hanging guttae have been placed ten feet apart along the length of the entablature although above them there are no triglyphs(15).

(12) And perhaps Bartolomeo Genga gave him ideas. Genga used very heavily rusticated columns on the Ducal Palace at Pesaro.

(13) Both WARD PERKINS, *op. cit.* and TENCAJOLI, *Artisti Maltesi a Roma*, p. 2. suggest that Cassar studied in Italy, but give no supporting evidence. However, since writing this article I have received positive proof from Dr. E. Sammut who has favoured me with a copy of Cassar's passport made out for him to visit Rome and other places in Italy in order to study the Architecture. The passport is dated April, 1569. A.O.M. *Liber Bullarum*, vol. 432, fol. 253.

(14) Something similar to this was done by Palladio on the Loggia del Capitano & Palazzo Valmarana at Vicenza. *Quattro Libri Lib. II. 17.*

Undoubtedly the Conventual Church of St John was Gerolamo Cassar's most important design, and, as might be expected, the facade of that church is the most Mannerist of all his compositions. If we first analyse the centre section of the main facade, the portion lying between the two towers, it will be noticed that Cassar has introduced an apparently haphazard rhythm of the spaces between the pilasters where the width of the outer intercolumniation is not related to either the



Conventual Church of St John. Part of the West Front.

second or the centre intercolumniation. In the great central arch, the outer part of the arch moulding is a curved continuation of the base of the first floor pilasters, whilst the inner portion is a continuation of the capitals of the ground floor order; thus, what appear two distinct storeys of pilasters on the sides of the arches, become one cohesive moulding in the centre. This is a double function of two attached mouldings which are at the same time both separated and attached.

There are two tall niches with semi-circular arches, one on each side of the main door, with their arches raised above the apex of the door opening, so that

(15) The detached and isolated guttae were used by Baldassare Peruzzi on the courtyard elevations of the Palazzo Massimi delle Colonne, Rome (1530+). This is an indication of Cassar's careful study of contemporary architecture in Rome: I know of no other place where this motive occurs,

the main door, which should appear magnificent, is apparently reduced in size. In normal Renaissance buildings, each order of columns is surmounted with a full entablature, made up of an architrave, a frieze and a cornice, but Cassar's ground floor entablature is replaced by a continuous band of masonry, repeating at each side the mouldings of the capital of the ground floor pilasters. He does the same thing to the first floor order, but to show that he is fully conversant with the more usual practice, he does incorporate a full entablature on the first floor of the towers. Then in true Mannerist form he again omits it on the top floor.

The main portal itself has two Tuscan columns, one on each side of the door. Each has an entablature over it, but this, instead of spanning the width between the columns and giving support to the balcony, runs back into the wall of the church leaving the balcony precariously held upon a thin cornice moulding. Cassar has here created weakness where strength was expected.

Finally, the balcony windows show a lack of clear articulation similar to the arch over the main portal. Their inner arched mouldings rest uncomfortably upon two pilasters, leaving no room for the outer portion of the arched mouldings which overspill and have to be held up by little projecting corbels.

It might be possible to suggest that these irregularities are due to Cassar's late approach to Italian architecture. If we suppose that for most of his life he was confronted with the naive Early Melitan buildings of the pre-siege period, and only studied Italian work late in life; either by tuition from Laparelli, or from actual research in Italy, then it could be said that those irregularities were due to his lack of true comprehension of Renaissance architecture. Early Renaissance architecture in England is a case in point, where garbled interpretations of Italian designs give, at first sight, the appearance of Mannerism: but the work in England is not Mannerist because there is no intentional lack of logic, nor are the incongruous motives introduced as shock tactics as they were in Italy. However, this cannot be true in Cassar's case. As we know, he could design a full entablature when he chose, and his columns and pilasters on the facade of the Auberge de Provence are quite competent even if the details are a trifle crude. It can then only be assumed that these compositions were studied and intentional, and as such, from Cassar's point of view they were therefore Mannerist.

It is equally true that so far as Malta in general is concerned, they are not really Mannerist, for the strict aesthetic standards of the mainland had not been established on the island in the years before Cassar's work. The incongruities would, for the most part, have passed unnoticed alongside the older buildings. Perhaps it was for this very reason that Cassar exaggerated his Mannerism, because subconsciously he realised this lack of standards against which he could pit his genius, or because he had not the artistic traditions of the Italian architects of the 16th century.

There seems to be only one building which was not designed by him having a strongly Mannerist facade. This is the Church of St Ursula in Valletta(16). The architectural orders on the facade are applied on three planes. The first has coupled pilasters for the lower order supporting a pilaster capped by a small

(16) The architect of this church, built in 1583, is unknown. Cassar may have furnished the design for it.

pyramid of stone, and alongside, another free pilaster throwing off a short length of raking cornice. The second plane, a quarter pilaster set back from the face of the first plane, supports a superimposed quarter pilaster. A third plane is set back and consists of the capital mouldings of the superimposed orders, and the cornice and cap mouldings of the raking cornice are applied to the ashlar face of the church facade. The normal function of different planes on a facade is to create a climax, but this facade, by the indecision of the supporting members, destroys the climax at birth. In addition, the upper order has no entablature; the upper pilasters each stand upon separate pedestals, the lower ones stand upon a combined pedestal.

By the beginning of the 17th century, when Baroque architecture was gathering momentum in Italy, and spreading with the expansion of the Jesuit Order across the lower half of Europe and over the oceans to the new colonies, Malta had an architectural recession. The Auberges and the Magisterial Palace were practically complete for the time being, and most of the building was switched to the large group of new parish churches — Qormi, Cospicua, and Zebbug at the end of the previous century, and then Birkirkara, Attard, Naxxar, Gudja, Gargur, and the important alterations to Zebbug. Many were erected at this time.

Instead of a logical development from Mannerism to the clearly defined policy of the Baroque, (like that which had occurred in Italy), the Maltese churches of this period tended to return to a form of Renaissance architecture which had a strong Spanish flavour. Attard Parish Church (1613) is undoubtedly the finest creation in this new style.

The true Baroque style had to wait a hundred years; from the time of Cassar's Mannerism until Lorenzo Gafa's return from a visit to his brother in Rome. The greatest genius of Maltese architecture, Gafà brought with him a knowledge and an ability to build the great monuments of Maltese Baroque.

REVIEWS

EDGAR ERSKINE HUME: Medical Work of the Knights Hospitallers of Saint John of Jerusalem. Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1940. pp. xxii, 371.

Innumerable books have been written about the Order of the Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem, but curiously enough very little has been published with particular reference to the main object for which that Order was originally founded, i.e. the care of the sick. Any contribution to the literature of this important subject is welcomed, so long as it is carried out in a scientific manner. This book satisfies a long felt want.

Colonel Hume was well qualified to undertake this work. He was a distinguished Officer in the Medical Corps of the United States Army and saw much active service during the First World War. After that war he was engaged on relief work in Central Europe and spent some years on the Adriatic seaboard, where he became acquainted with the various branches and activities of the Sovereign Order in Rome. He became interested in the history of the Order, and was given facilities to search in the archives in Rome and in Malta. He gained the confidence of the Grand Council of the Order and in 1937 he was appointed by the Grand Master as Delegate of the Order to the International Congress of Military Medicine in Bucharest.

This book contains much material which is not, strictly speaking, descriptive of the medical work of the Knights. Apparently the author did not think it fit to separate the medical from the general activities of the Knights. His method is to describe the progress of the Order from its birth, and to emphasize its medical aspects. He dwells at great length on the description of the hospitals, and the rules and regulations governing their administration; he gives biographical notes on some of the outstanding doctors and administrators of the hospitals, but gives very little information about methods of treatment, clinical or surgical practice and precautionary measures.

The description of the Knights' hospital in Rhodes is interesting and informative because that hospital is much less known than the one established later in Malta; however, the hospital in Rhodes was not open only for the treatment of patients, like the one in Malta. Originally it was a Xenodochium and as such it provided care and treatment for the sick, gave shelter to the weary pilgrim and offered refuge to the maimed and the crippled.

In the book mention is made of a pathological condition which affects the hands and feet. The malady is sometimes known as St. John's disease, **Morbus Sancti Johannis**, and used to be considered as a form of epilepsy. The author does not feel inclined to identify the disease as epilepsy, and he is quite right; most probably the condition was due to some form of avitaminosis which one would expect to find amongst poor pilgrims and destitute persons.

Some information is also given about the Public Health measures which the Order adopted in Rhodes and in Malta. The author mentions the "**Domini Sanitatis**" in relation with the creation of a Health Commission in Rhodes, but he does not make it clear that the commission created by Grand Master d'Aubusson (1503-1512) constituted a department of health in the true sense of the word and its Officers were called the "**Domini Sanitatis**". (1)

The author likewise mentions regulations governing the burial of the dead, but he seems to be unaware of the fact that in 1780 the Grand Master had asked the **Société Royale de Médecine** of Paris to appoint a commission to study the question of inconvenience arising from the burials in parish churches in Malta. A very famous French doctor, Vicq D'Azyr, whose name is still met with in text books on anatomy, signed the report of the commission, which was published in 1781 and makes very interesting reading.

Reference is also made to the "Order's medical men on the galleys of the fleet". One would have liked the author to expand more fully on this important aspect of maritime health, but admittedly there are few sources from which to draw as regards sanitation on board the galleys of the Knights. The fate of the slaves chained to the rowing benches must have been pitiful and brutal according to modern ideas.

The book is divided into three sections or periods of which the last one is perhaps the

(1) FEDELI: *L'Ordine di Malta e le Scienze Mediche* Imprimé au depens de la Religion, Malte, 1781.

best as it deals very profusely with the work of mercy undertaken by the Order after its expulsion from Malta. It may be stated that following the loss of its territorial possession, the Order concentrated on the main scope for which it was originally founded, and rapidly expanded its hospital and nursing services. The author gives a detailed account of the organizations run by the Order for the benefit of suffering humanity in the various countries where Branches, Grand Priories and Associations have been established. The hospitaller activities of the Order assumed great importance during wars, disasters and epidemics; in peaceful years, too, the Knights Hospitallers never slackened in their efforts to benefit humankind; they have established clinics, out-patient departments, homes for the sick and medical schools.

It is interesting to read that the hospital built by the Order at Tantur in Jerusalem in 1873 was erected on the site which once had been granted to the Knights Hospitallers by King Baldwin of Jerusalem in 1110. One also reads with pleasure that a section of that hospital was reserved for the care and treatment of poor and undernourished babies, and it must have proved of great value in combating infant morbidity and mortality, so high in Palestine during the last century.

A great effort was made by the Order during the First World War. There were several groups of Knights at work, and soldiers on both sides were succoured. It is estimated that no less than 800,000 sick and wounded men were cared for by the several branches of the Hospitallers. The author describes in detail the various organizations of the Knights in belligerent countries and gives figures and estimates to show the good work performed. He also records the fact that Mussolini in 1923 had entrusted the Sovereign Order in Rome with the distribution of nearly 2,000,000 dollars for the assistance of refugees from Asia Minor. This was an event of international importance, but the author, perhaps intentionally, does not dwell on its political implications.

One of the main enterprises by the Order in modern times was the establishment in Ethiopia of a Leprosarium comprising a leper colony, a hospital and an institute for the study of leprosy. The author enlarges on the origin, planning and construction of the institution which, after a promising start, ended miserably with the end of Italian rule in Ethiopia.

The author brings his narrative to the beginning of the Second World War and finishes his work with a chapter on the Venerable Order of St. John in England, mentioning the medical work undertaken by the English Order in Jerusalem and giving information on the St. John's Ambulance Brigade and Association, which are connected with the Order and which gave sterling service during the last World War.

The book is well written and makes interesting reading; although it purports to describe the medical work of the Order, it is free from technical discussions, and appeals both to the professional and the lay reader. Perhaps the historical data in the book is more profuse than the mere medical material, but this fact widens the scope of the work and makes it more universally read. It is evident that when the author undertook his work he did not have in mind to produce a book of this size, but his research was so fruitful that he felt reluctant to discard material of general interest. In a letter which the author sent to me from Washington on the 10th April 1939 he wrote "the volume grew to greater length than I had anticipated, being now well over 300 pages."

The author deserves credit for the pains taken to collect information from widespread sources; his references are various and comprehensive, they indicate the thoroughness of his endeavours to consult original records and to obtain information from various sources, but there are one or two books on the subject which must have escaped his attention, and as they may be useful to students, their mention would not be out of place here. They are:—

1. "**L'Ordine di Malta e Le Scienze Mediche**" by Professor C. Fedeli — Pisa, Francesco Mariotti, 1913. p. 40.
2. **Rapport Sur Plusieurs Questions Proposées à la Société Royale de Médecine, par M l'Ambassadeur de la Religion, e de part de Son Altesse Eminentissime Monseigneur le Grand Maître**". Imprimé au depens de la Religion, Malte, 1781. This report was also translated into Italian by Giovanni Vivencio and published in Palermo, Reale Stamperia, 1782.
3. "**Associazione Dir. Cav. Italiani del Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta pel Servizio Sanitario in Guerra**" (pamphlet). Roma, Fratelli Zampini, 1898.

JACQUES GODECHOT: Histoire de Malte. (Collection "Que sais-je?", No. 509) Paris. Presses universitaires de France, 1952, pp. 128. Price 120 Frs.

We have already published a review of this interesting book on the History of Malta in *Scientia*, XVIII (1952), pp. 46-48. Though we have praised it we did so not without some criticisms. The Rt. Hon. Count H. C. de Zeininge, Knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, has also published a review of the same work in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique suisse*, 1952, pp. 149-150, in which he says of the author of the book: "L'auteur, professeur à la Faculté des lettres de Toulouse, est avant tout un spécialiste de l'histoire de la Révolution française et, comme beaucoup de ses compatriotes, trop enclin à regarder tous les événements et toutes les institutions sous l'angle révolutionnaire et français."

We have stated that in this book 'history is not merely narrated for its own sake: the writer sees in the various historical facts problems created by historical circumstances and out of these problems he builds a doctrine. This is seen particularly in Chap. XI in which he speaks of the economic problem, the demographic problem, the language problem, the political problem.' We summarise hereunder one of these problems, namely the language question.

The language question is fully, though concisely, explained in a special paragraph (pp. 100-103) up to 1903, when it was turned into a political argument. The language question strictly speaking is concerned with the usage and the legal status of Maltese, English and Italian in the Maltese Islands. What does the writer of this book think of the Maltese Language?

On page 11 he simply says: "Ajoutons-y la langue, d'origine sémitique dont les consonances rauques évoquent l'Afrique du Nord". On p. 16 the question of the Maltese Language is taken up more directly: "Peut-on penser que l'actuelle langue maltaise, qui est, nous l'avons dit une langue sémitique, dérive du phénicien?" The answer to this question is simply political: the English in order to suppress the Italian feelings of the Maltese try to persuade them that the Maltese language is of Phoenician origin: and the Italians who, particularly during the epoch of Fascism, developed an active propaganda in favour of Malta being Italian, deny the Phoenician origin of Maltese which is merely Arabic: at the beginning there was one single race in Malta and in Italy and it was only in the IXth and Xth centuries that the Arabic language was imposed on the Maltese. The writer, on p. 27, deplors the fact that a scientific question has been thus misconstrued on mere political grounds. Leaving this aspect of the problem he discusses the problem not of course from a philological point of view, but from the historical angle. It is astonishing, he remarks, that the Arabic occupation of Malta, which does not exceed four hundred years, has left such a profound trace in the toponomy and language, when over one thousand years of preponderant Roman domination hardly left any vestiges of the domain!

He is, therefore, definitely inclined to the doctrine of the Phoenician origin and brings forth other arguments to prove his contention. In the first place he quotes the Acts of the Apostles where St. Luke calls the Maltese "barbarians", namely people who did not speak either Latin or Greek. At that time there could be no question of Arabic, but only of Punic or Phoenician. The appearance of Arabic in the Maltese can easily be explained by the fact that the Maltese people being very few in number, the Arabic-Berber immigration could easily make itself felt soon after the Islamic domination of the Island. The Italians who later chose to live in Malta were easily assimilated by the Maltese.

On p. 33 the writer mentions again but very briefly the language question: "L'italien est devenu la langue du commerce; bientôt il remplace le latin dans l'administration et la justice. Les classes cultivées se piquent de parler italien tandis que le maltais est relégué à l'état de patois".

As we have already stated, the language question is treated at certain length on pp. 100-103: the people of Malta speak a dialect of Semitic origin, but the more cultured classes employ Italian, a language which since the middle ages has substituted Latin in the administration and justice. In the XVIII century French (of which some expressions are still current in the Maltese dialect) became wide-spread in the island. When in 1800, the English established themselves in Malta, they did not change the situation: their official journal, substituting the *Journal de Malte*, the first printed journal of the island, published by the French in 1708, was entirely in Italian, and it remained so up to 1816, when it became bilingual: its title became *Gazzetta del Governo*. In 1838 the Statute of the University acknowledges Italian as the cultural language of the Maltese and it was considered as essential for admission to Secondary and higher education. English being required for corresponding with the British authorities, civil servants had to know it and it was the official language for the Forces, and, since 1840, even if composed exclusively of Maltese. But the language question did not really arise before 1860.

The language question in Malta is similar to that of many other countries, like Belgium, Catalonia and others. It is strictly bound up with the progress of democracy and primary education. In 1860 primary education was being given liberally to all classes; the difficulty was which language was going to be selected as the medium of instruction. At that time many Maltese were of the opinion that the medium should be Maltese. And which other language was going to be taught besides? "Il faut reconnaître, que dans les classes populaires, l'étude de l'italien ne semblait pas très utile. Les Maltais en général étaient appelés à fréquenter des fonctionnaires, des militaires, des commerçants anglais, combien au contraire auraient affaire à des italiens?" Casolani in 1867 opined that the Italian language should be replaced by English, and Maltese should be the medium of instruction in the primary schools. These same views were included in the Keenan report. But those who favoured Italian fought strenuously for the preservation of that language. Between 1850 and 1860 Malta was flooded with Italian refugees who founded literary and political circles and published papers of their own and contributed to Maltese papers such as the *Mediterraneo* and the *Corriere Maltese*; these events had great bearing on the language question and strengthened the knowledge of Italian among the Maltese. After the unification of Italy many of the foreign refugees went back to Italy; but others came, expelled by the new rulers, who like their predecessors sustained the cause of Italian in Malta. In 1880 Fortunato Mizzi founded his political party which introduced in its programme the retention of Italian. The language question became a political matter.

The Professor of Toulouse does not go any further. Though the Maltese language, in a History of Malta, is not the principal object of the historian, it has been given in this work an important place, though never treated from the angle of philology. One may not agree with the writer, whose conclusions are logically drawn from the historical point he had in view.

Professor S. M. Zarb, O.P.

GATT, Gużè: Nuqqas ta' Kotba ta' Malta fil-Biblijoteka: Kalendarji u Almanakki. In "Il-Berqa", January 7 and 8, 1953.

This informative article was prompted by a correspondence appearing in *Il-Berqa* of the 24th December, 1952. The writer is well known for his various writings on local historical topics and he treads the byways of Maltese history with an assurance bred of long familiarity with the subject matter of his research.

In the present article he traces the development of Maltese calendars and almanacs from the days of the Order of St. John. As the story unfolds the reader is presented with material at once fascinating and rich in detail. With the introduction of the printing press in 1642 the importation of almanacs was prohibited, ostensibly with the object of encouraging the local printer Pompeo del Fiore. After a few years, however, the press closed down and it was not re-established before 1756. Meanwhile the restriction was removed and foreign almanacs once more flowed into the island under a system of State monopoly whereby the Order gave the sole and exclusive right to sell almanacs to certain individuals who held this privilege at the pleasure of the Grand Master. For the use of the Clergy there were the calendars known as "Ordo", printed in Latin, while the almanacs were in Italian. The writer refers to an almanac in French purporting to have been printed in Malta in 1741 and shows how this is evidently a false imprint as the printing press was only re-introduced in 1756. With the re-introduction of the printing press in 1756 these publications, which used to be printed in Italy, or, more rarely, in France, began to be printed locally at the Government Press. The first "Ordo" appeared on the 29th August, 1756, 250 copies being printed for the use of the Clergy in St. John's. This was followed on the 16th September by the more popular kind of almanac known as "Lunario". During the French Occupation two almanacs, for 1799 and 1800 respectively, were published, besides a *Calendario Perpetuo della Repubblica Francese col confronto dei giorni secondo il sistema del Martirologio Romano*, of which one copy is known to exist in the private collection of Dr. Joseph Galea. Following the expulsion of the French the printing of almanacs in Italian was resumed in 1801, and this continued to appear up to and immediately following the introduction of the freedom of the Press in 1838. The first almanac in English appeared in 1844 under the title *Muir's Almanack for 1844*, followed in 1849 by the *Calendarju tal-Bidui* — the first almanac in Maltese.

By far the best part of Mr. Gatt's article is his account of calendars and almanacs issued in Maltese. From the material he collected it is possible to set out a list of such calendars from 1849 to 1923:—

Years	Title
1849-1850	Calendarju tal-Bidui (In Maltese and in Italian)
1861-1871	L'Almanacc Malti
1866	Pronostcu Universali tal Gran Pescatore ta Chiaravalle (translated)
1870	Il-Bidui
1870-1872	L'Anterna — Almanacc Malti
1873-1922	Il Habib Malti
1876	Don Basilio — Almanacc Profeticu
1887-1888	San Paul
1888-1890	Il Calendarju Nisrani ghall'usu ta li nsara
1890	Strina Maltija ghall 1890
1890-1898	Various almanacs issued under saints' names by Messrs. Giov. Muscat.
1891	Mannarinu — Almanacc ta' Malta
1897	Il Habib ta' Malta — Almanacc
1898-	Il-Pronostku Malti — Almanakk ta' Malta u Ghawdex
1900-1901	February issues of "Kari mill'Annali tal Propagazzjoni tal Fidi"
1900	Il Habib tal Maltin
1900-1907	Il Profeta Habib tal Maltin
1902	Il Habib Almanacc Nisrani
1903	Il Habib tal Poplu Malti
1904	Pio X — Almanakk ta' Malta u Ghawdex
1908-	San Gusepp — Almanakk Malti
1909	Il Habib tal Maltin
1914	Bin il Habib Malti and L'Almanacc il Gdid
1915	Il Habib tal Poplu and Il Pronostcu ta' Malta
1916	Il Calendarju ghal Parrocca tal Hamrun
1917-1921	L'Almanakk tal "Malta Taghna"
1919	L'Almanacc tal Paci and Il Veru Almanacc Malti u Ghawdex
1923	San Paul — Almanacc ta l'Istitut tal Missjoni

For each of the above almanacs Mr. Gatt gives information regarding printer and publisher, when available.

It is a pity that Mr. Gatt could not bring the list up to date. However, one feels grateful to the writer for having opened up such a fresh and original field of research.

J. C. P.

FIORINI, J., The History of Maltese Dentistry. Malta, Giov. Muscat, 1953. pp.30.

This pamphlet contains useful information on the rapid development of the dental profession in Malta within the last thirty years or so. The survey is well written and portrays the progress achieved in lifting the practice of dentistry from a state of quackery to one of dignity and respectability. Details of the first qualified dentists, mostly British, who practiced in Malta in the first decades of the present century are given. Much of this progress, as one gathers from the pamphlet, has been due to the personality and initiative of Professor E. Lapira, the actual Dean of the newly established Faculty of Dental Surgery at the Royal University of Malta.

The title of this pamphlet is ambitious as in effect the survey is limited to the present century. Dentistry is a comparatively new science, but research in this hitherto unexplored field is bound to yield a rich harvest. By way of illustration the following note, recording the name of a Maltese practitioner in the 18th century, is here given. It is taken from I. S. Mifsud's ms. journal preserved at the Royal Malta Library (Ms. 20, p. 35) where we read that in December 1733 "in questo mese capitò in Malta un cavadenti maltese che da tenera età era partito dalla patria di nome Gio Batta Grimaldi Francolino..."

J. C. P.

MORRIS, T. O.: The Water Supply Resources of Malta. Government of Malta, 1952. xiv, 125p. 15 tables. 15 plates.

This is the text of the report submitted to the Government of Malta by Mr. T. O. Morris, M.B.E., D.Sc., F.G.S., M.M.G.I. Its publication has been awaited for a long time and it is a good thing that this competent survey is now available in print.

The author states (p. 2) that "the need for organised municipal supplies has arisen only during the last four centuries, since Malta became a strategic base of first class importance, and the change commenced from a relatively static, predominantly rural population, to one predominantly urban and increasingly rapid in numbers".

Part II of this report, which takes up 43 pages, is devoted to "A Critical review of Water Supply Developments in Malta 1610-1945". This extremely important section is followed by other chapters on "The Water Cycle in Malta" (pp. 45-61), "The Development and Conservation of the Main Sea Level Water Table" (pp. 62-75), "The Development and Conservation of the Upper Coralline Areas" (pp. 112-114), "The Present Position of Irrigation Supplies and the Prospects of Deep Boring" (pp. 115-120). A final note (pp. 124-125) is devoted to the prospects of improving the water supply of Gozo. The two-page bibliography (pp. 122-123) gives a useful list of papers consulted.

The report is of topical interest. The present water supply problem amply justifies the author's statement (p. 1) that "a full reconciliation of the present trends of supply and demand threatens to become, within a comparatively short span of years, as much a political and social problem as an engineering one". Of special interest to the historian is Part II where so much material, some of which in the form of unpublished official reports, is here brought together and summarised for the first time. The statistical tables and the plates form an added useful feature of this report.

J. C. P.

SHORTER BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

SAYDON, P. P.: Bibliographical Aids to the study of Maltese. In "Journal of Near Eastern Studies", 1953. Vol. XII, No. 1, pp. 20-30; No. 2, pp. 124-133.

This handlist of books dealing with the Maltese language is intended "to give a comprehensive view of all the material available for the study of the language as well as to help the foreign student of comparative Semitic philology and Arabic dialects in the evaluation of his sources". The list includes all books and articles that are likely to be found in foreign libraries, with the exception of those which have no importance. It is enriched with evaluations under the three headings (a) dictionaries, (b) grammars, and (c) language criticism. The author is well equipped for his task and the result is a masterly and authoritative guide which fills a long-felt need for the bibliographical approach to Maltese studies.

The "Journal of Near Eastern Studies" is available for perusal at the Royal University of Malta Library.

J. C. P.

ZAMMIT, George, Prelate who made History: Tribute to a Maltese Diplomat. In "Times of Malta", September, 3, 1952.

This is a short essay on Mgr. Salvatore Imbroli (1590-1650). The writer traces the ancestry of this Maltese diplomat, outlines his career as Ambassador and gives a list of the most important writings by this prelate.

CREMONA, A.: Ganni Vassallo — Tifkira. In "Ghawdex", April 25, 1948.

In this commemorative speech delivered on the occasion of the unveiling of a tablet in Gozo, Mr. Cremona pays tribute to the pioneering work of Ganni Vassallo — Maltese grammarian and philologist. The address is based on personal recollections and is rich in historical and bibliographical details connected with the progress and development of Maltese linguistic studies in the past fifty years.

CREMONA, A.: Id-Djar tal-Isqfijiet t'Ghawdex. In "Ghawdex", January 4, 1948.

Mr. Cremona writes an informative article, based on the original deeds, on the residences used by the Bishops of Gozo since 1864.

J. C. P.

KENNEDY, L.: Nelson's Band of Brothers, London, Odhams, 1951. 352 p.

This book is of special interest to students of Maltese history and particularly to those interested in the early years of British occupation. The book contains biographical material on Saumarez, Ball, Troubridge, Hoste, and other personalities associated with that period of political upheaval in Maltese history. The work is based on original and published sources which are listed in the bibliography at the end.

J. G.