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GIROLAMO MANDUCA
AND GIAN FRANCESCO ABELA:
TRADITION AND INVENTION
IN MALTESE HISTORIOGRAPHY *

The historian of medieval Malta faces an overwhelming poverty of the sources for the period before about 1400. The surviving texts and documents, the toponyms and topography, the numismatic and archaeological evidence provide a meagre and uncertain picture. Furthermore the outlines of the story have been distorted by a number of false traditions which are strongly rooted both in the existing historiography and in popular lore, and which often involve matters of national sentiment, religious dogma or political dispute. Whether the Maltese are "European" or "African" and whether Maltese Christianity has a continuous history have, for example, long been questions affecting the identity of the Maltese people. In seeking to pose these problems in meaningful terms, to evaluate the available evidence and to eliminate unscientific solutions, the historian must naturally reject what seems to lack any basis in fact or probability. Ideally, he should investigate each tradition, and if it never appears before a late date or when it demonstrably originates in a misunderstanding or a deliberate invention, then it should normally be abandoned; otherwise its repetition as a "tradition" contributes to the perpetuation of the myth.

Such problems arise in all countries, and the historian should always distinguish various types of tradition. Certain legends seem to derive from a fascination with place-names and the universal temptation to explain or misinterpret them in a sense pleasing to popular sentiment. Many stories of pirates, caves, kidnappings, saintly interventions and suchlike simply repeat themes and details found throughout the Mediterranean world and even in ancient literature (1). However inaccurate historically, such traditions sometimes have

* A version of this paper was read at the British Council, Valletta, in May 1977. It develops certain notions already sketched out in A. Luttrell, "Approaches to Medieval Malta," in *Medieval Malta: Studies on Malta before the Knights*, ed. A. Luttrell, London 1975. It attempts no systematic or thorough treatment and it ignores many topics, notably on the classical side; nor does it trace the perpetuation of myths and legends in the post-1647 literature. I am most grateful to Mgr. Vincent Borg, Fr. John Azzopardi, Dr. Anthony Bonanno and Mr. Mario Buhagiar for their very considerable help.

1. Such popular legends have been studied in a number of works by J. Cassar Pullicino; see, in particular, his "Norman Legends in Malta," in *Medieval Malta*.

a genuine place in popular folklore and may even contain elements which reflect real historical events. Other legends may be scholarly inventions which have been disguised as traditions and subsequently fed back into the popular consciousness (2). It is often hard to distinguish between genuine and bogus traditions and it is essential, therefore, to study the origins of every tradition and the possible motives for its invention.

Since comparatively little was published on Maltese history before the work of Gian Francesco Abela, only certain legends can be traced back beyond his time. Justly known as the "Father of Maltese History," Abela is undoubtedly the most notable of Maltese historians. His *Della Descrittione di Malta Isola nel Mare Siciliano con le sue antichità, ed altre notizie*, which appeared in 1647, was one of the first books ever printed in Malta and it was certainly the first published history of the island. It was a major achievement which has determined the subsequent course of Maltese historiography. Thanks to its extraordinary prestige, it has thoroughly misled generations of historians of Malta, yet the *Descrittione* is a monument from which the modern demolition of many of Abela's theories and naïvetés should never detract (3). Since many legends are first found in Abela's history, it is important to study his contemporaries and his sources, and to discover how far Abela deliberately presented particular inventions as traditions, to what extent such misrepresentations were of Abela's own personal invention, and whether there was a group which was consciously, or even unintentionally, fabricating a particular interpretation of Maltese history. Some answers to these problems lie in Abela's *Descrittione*; in the manuscript autographs of that book and the changes made in it, a difficult matter to investigate since Abela's erasures were so heavily made that they often obscured his original wording (4); in the notes and extracts copied into his historical notebook (5); and in an analysis of his sources and scholarly contacts. Unfortunately Abela's correspondence, which in 1764 was in the hands of his kinsman

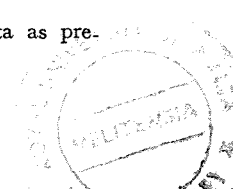
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2. "Falsifications" may have been made with good intentions or as a result of genuine confusions; they are not normally of the same order as deliberate forgeries of the type invented by the eighteenth-century Maltese cleric Giuseppe Vella.
 3. Details of Abela's career and interests, and of the various editions of his book, are given in *Gian Francesco Abela: Essays in his Honour by Members of the "Malta Historical Society"...*, Malta 1961, a most useful collection. The shrewd, though somewhat partial, appreciation in N. Dennis, *An Essay on Malta*, London 1972, gives Abela new dimension. For biographical references and details of Mss. concerning other scholars, see especially I. S. Mifsud, *Biblioteca Maltese*, Malta 1764, and R. Mifsud Bonnici, *Dizzjunarju Bijo-Bibliografiku Nazzjonali*, Malta 1960.
 4. Valletta, National Library of Malta, Biblioteca Ms. 255; Ms. 256 contains an earlier rough draft of the *Descrittione*. Apparently neither Ms. has ever attracted scholarly attention; an ultra-violet lamp should make Abela's erasures more legible.
 5. Valletta Ms. 140; this Ms. has been utilized by Dr. Godfrey Wettinger, but it seems never to have been publicly identified as belonging to Abela.

the Abbot Giuseppe Giacomo Testaferrata dei Marchesi di San Vincenzo Ferrer (6), has since been lost.

Born in 1582 into a good Maltese family, Abela entered the Order of St. John as a cleric and travelled in Italy where he secured a doctorate in law at Bologna. He served as a diplomat and administrator in Malta and on missions abroad, acquiring such prestige that in 1626 he was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the Order, an office which gave him a special concern with various Maltese archives; his history was published some twenty years later, and he died in 1655. Abela not only produced the first continuous narrative story of Malta's past but he assembled many of the sources for it in his notebook and correspondence, and in his famous collection or *museo* of natural history and antiquities. The modern historian seeking to revise Abela's views can almost always profit from a careful reflection upon the *Descrittione*, in which so much of the fundamental documentation has already been sought out and used. Abela was concerned with place-names and language, with folklore, archaeology and topography. He seems to have been the first to mention Malta's "cart-ruts", which he connected with the transportation of stone from quarries (7). He combed the classical sources, investigated the catacombs (8), founded the notarial archives (9), studied St. Paul and the Maltese "saints", and catalogued bishops, churches, notable families and public officials. In an age when specialization was not essential to erudition, it was quite possible for a single mind to dominate a multiplicity of fields of study on an island as small as Malta, though Abela was no naturalist and readily accepted many scientific fables which now appear comic or even ludicrous (10). Abela was a cleric, a lawyer and a bureaucrat who headed the chancery of an Order devoted as its principal *raison d'être* to the struggle with Islam. On occasion he twisted the evidence in order to suggest that Malta had always been essentially Christian and European, yet he was also a patriot concerned to establish the identity of the Maltese people and of its Semitic speech.

Abela had a naturally patrician, establishment view of affairs. Some of his

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6. Mifsud, *op.cit.*, p.255 note (a). I. S. Mifsud's manuscripts show that he also had access to other papers and transcripts of Abela's: see A. Luttrell, "The Earliest Documents Transcribed in the Cathedral Archives, Mdina: 1316-1372," in *Archives of the Cathedral of Malta Misc.* 32A: 1313-1529, ed. J. Azzopardi, Malta 1977, pp. 39-41, 44-45.
 7. Abela, *op.cit.*, p.55.
 8. It is to be hoped that Mgr. Vincent Borg will develop his interesting suggestions as to the influence on Abela of his contemporary Antonio Bosio, the Maltese author of *Roma Sotterranea*, who was cited in Abela, *op.cit.*, p.348.
 9. According to Mifsud, *op.cit.*, p.245 note (a). The bulls of 11 July, 1640 founding the public notarial archive and appointing the first archivist are in Valletta, National Library of Malta, Archives of the Order of St. John, cod. 469, f.260-261; they do not mention Abela.
 10. See Dennis, *op.cit.*, pp. 3-9; G. Lanfranco, "The Natural History of Malta as presented by Abela in 1647", in *Abela: Essays*.



Maltese contemporaries, men such as Salvatore Imbroli and Carlo Michalief, wrote on the Knights rather than about Malta itself (11); others were interested in religious themes. There was, however, at least one author who opposed the foreign governors in the name of an oppressed Maltese people. Between 1633 and 1636 Filippo Borg, a somewhat bizarre and rebellious ex-schoolmaster who on various occasions acted as Vicar-General of the Maltese diocese, wrote a *relazione* which presented the Knights and their government in a hostile light; this was not so much history as "a political diatribe full of not very reliable historical parallels" (12), but it did reflect a popular or class interpretation of history. Filippo Borg had some slight knowledge of the late-medieval privileges, but his other sources were open to question, one item deriving from his own grandmother: *questo volgarmente ho sentito dire da mia Nanna materna* (13).

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Even the greatest historians require revision, and Abela's *Descrittione* has inevitably attracted damaging criticisms in modern times. He repeatedly used documents concerning Melitene in Armenia, Meleda in the Adriatic and Mileto in Calabria to advance theories about *Melita*, that is Malta; for example, he claimed as Maltese a Benedictine monastery which had been founded on Meleda in 1130. Abela's picture of Malta in the Norman period was a scientific disaster, almost everything of significance that he said about it being demonstrably inaccurate. He could think only in terms of a Maltese "race", Christian and indigenous, which survived in a state of captivity under the rule of a minority of foreign Muslims. The result was that he presented a completely bogus picture of a "Norman" Malta reconquered, rebuilt and recolonized from Sicily by Norman rulers who, as he supposed, imported into Malta the institutions of the Latin West and its church (14). Abela derived some of these errors from earlier writers, notably the Sicilians Tommaso Fazello and Rocco Pirri; in particular, he added further confusions to Pirri's inaccurate list of Bishops of Malta, using the evidence in a most unscientific manner (15). Abela shared the contemporary taste for dubious etymological dabbling with place-names. He held that the Christians who supposedly remained under Muslim rule were confined to certain places such as *Wied ir-Rum* or "Valley of the Christians" and the quarter of Mdina near the *Beb el Grekin* or "Greeks' Gate". He also reported

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11. Cf. G. Mangion, "La letteratura barocca a Malta (con testi inediti)", *Journal of the Faculty of Arts: Royal University of Malta*, IV no.4, 1971, p.269 *et passim*.
 12. G. Wettinger, "Early Maltese Popular Attitudes to the Government of the Order of St. John", *Melita Historica*, VI no. 3, 1974, p.270; this article publishes the complete text of Borg's *relazione*.
 13. *Ibid.*, p.273.
 14. Cf. Luttrell, in *Medieval Malta*, pp.29-34.
 15. B. Fiorini, "Il Comm. Abela e la Cronologia Episcopale di Malta", in *Abela: Essays*; see further Luttrell, in *Medieval Malta*, p.29, 33 and n.189, 61-62.

another "tradition", again based on a presumably bogus etymology, that the place known as *Għajn Klieb*, or "Dogs' Fountain", derived its name from the defeat of a supposed Muslim revolt, which he placed in 1127, in which the Christians vanquished the Muslims, crying *ghall-klieb* — "at the dogs" (16). Such dubious traditions may sometimes have been produced by the unconscious workings of popular folklore misinterpreting local place-names, but others were more probably the fruit of antiquarian theorizing which subsequently crept back into popular legend.

The autograph of the *Descrittione* gives some idea of how Abela composed his work, improving his Italian style or altering words to give different shades of meaning. Abela's treatment of the problem of Christian survival under Muslim rule illustrates this process. He had assembled various pieces of evidence, for example the place-names such as *Beb el Grekin* and certain Maltese liturgical terms apparently Byzantine in origin, which supposedly demonstrated the survival of Christian Greeks on Muslim Malta. Abela wrote, therefore, of the *poueri greci Christiani* who had remained under the Muslims; this phrase he then changed to *poueri Maltesi Christiani*, though on a later page he retained the idea that the *Maltesi Christiani* were the surviving descendants of the *antichi fedeli Greci*. These survivors he identified, unjustifiably, with the Christians whom the chronicler Gaufridus Malaterra described as greeting Count Roger singing *Kyrie eleyson*. Abela was constitutionally unable to accept that the only Christians Roger found on Malta were slaves, the *captivi Christiani* of Malaterra, so he adopted the traditional notion that there had been other Christians who survived not as slaves but in *cattiuità*. Abela was well aware that the only available contemporary source never referred to Christians who were not slaves: *Non fà il Malaterra memoria alcuna de gl'altri Christiani, che non essendo schiavi rimaneuano nell'Isola*. So he argued that Malaterra was so accustomed to the indigenous Christians in Sicily that he did not feel it necessary to mention their survival on Malta. Admitting that he was not following Malaterra, whom he criticised on a number of points, Abela stated that he was guided not only by other modern authors who had, he felt sure, seen *altri antichi manuscritti del Regno* but also by the traditions of the ancients, the *approuate traditioni hauute da nostri Maggiori*. However, the author was apparently unhappy about the whole section concerning the Normans, for it was much altered, two or three folios seemingly being inserted into the autograph presumably after being rewritten; and even the new folios were also much amended (17). Malaterra's

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16. Cf. Cassar Pullicino, in *Medieval Malta*, where he admirably exposes the workings of popular folk-consciousness.
17. Valletta Ms. 255, f.181-186v, and Abela, *op.cit.*, pp.259-267; there is considerable confusion in the Ms., where f.183 and f.184 were clearly inserted later. The whole Ms. requires detailed study. At this point Abela also made heavy changes to his original version of the "tradition" of the Muslim attack at *Għajn Klieb*.

captivi Christiani were quite clearly non-indigenous Maltese, yet Abela's insistence that there were other "Christian Maltese" established, though it did not originate, the notion that both "Christianity" and a "Maltese people" had survived under Muslim rule. These were key emendations affecting the whole interpretation of Maltese history and allowing Abela to propagate a myth which cannot be proved but is still frequently repeated (18). Some of the changes in his autograph were presumably made at the final stage of the work when, after years of study and reflection, the manuscript version had been written out. In this instance the propagandist triumphed over the historian; Abela did quote what the chronicler said, but he altered the story none the less.

As Abela himself observed, he could find only limited information for the three centuries before 1090. Much of this came from the work of the Spaniard Luis del Mármol Caravajal. According to Abela, Mármol referred to a Muslim conquest of Pantelleria, Malta and Gozo, and to the building of fortresses on them in 828; to a Byzantine attack on Malta which gathered great spoil and destroyed the *castello* in 874; and to repairs made to the *castello* in 951 or 952 by "Abdalla, son of Moahedin of Kairouan", repairs which followed a Byzantine assault on Malta and Pantelleria and which preceded Muslim attacks on Sicily and Southern Italy. This was partly inaccurate; Mármol's passage concerning the Muslim campaign of 874 made no reference whatsoever to Malta, and it seems to have been merely an assumption that the repairs of 951 or 952 were to damages caused in 874 (19). Abela seems also to have assumed that the repairs were to the *castrum maris* in the Grand Harbour, claiming that this castle and the *castello* on Gozo were built by the Muslims, and that the round towers still to be seen in his time at the top of the *castrum maris* were constructed in typically Muslim style and form (20). Round towers are apparently visible in some, but only some, of the frescoes, paintings and engravings of the castle done by Matteo Perez d'Aleccio after the siege of 1565 (21), and they must have been destroyed or built over during the reconstructions of Carlos de Grunenbergh around 1690. Abela may have been correct in supposing that they were Muslim work, though the *castrum maris* is not explicitly mentioned

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18. Cf. Luttrell and Cassar Pullicino, in *Medieval Malta*, pp.29-31 and 98-99.
 19. Abela, *op.cit.*, pp.254-257; Luys del Mármol Caravajal, *Descripción general de Affrica*, I, Granada 1573, f.108v, 128; Mármol spent many years in North Africa but it seems impossible to identify his sources. For the known sources, which provide a different story, see T. Brown, "Byzantine Malta: a Discussion of the Sources", in *Medieval Malta*, pp. 82-85.
 20. Abela, *op.cit.*, pp. 256, 263.
 21. [National Maritime Museum], *The Maritime Siege of Malta 1565*, London [1965], pp.14-15; *The True Depiction of the Investment... by Matteo Perez d'Aleccio*, ed. D. Calnan — G. Testaferrata Abela, Malta 1965, foglio VI; I. Lochhead — T. Barling, *The Siege of Malta 1565*, London 1970, p.39.

before about 1241 (22). Abela cited, through a Greek text in the monastery of San Salvatore in Messina which had been published in 1638 in a Latin version by Rocco Pirri (23), the story of a Bishop of Malta, identified by Pirri — without real justification — as a certain Manas; this Bishop was in prison at Palermo in 878, some eight years after the Muslim conquest of Malta in about 870. Since Abela accepted Mármol's date of 828 for the Muslim conquest, he naturally saw the story of the Bishop as further evidence, to add to that of the *antichissima tradizione*, of the place-names and of the supposed Muslim fortifications, that Christianity survived in Malta long after the Muslim invasion (24). Abela also thought that the crosses which many Maltese of his own time tattooed on themselves were a relic of a period when such crosses were used to distinguish Christians from Muslims. Furthermore he noted a number of Maltese liturgical terms of Greek origin, arguing that they showed that Maltese Christianity had survived from Byzantine times (25). Most of these assumptions or theories are open to doubt or disproof; none of them is demonstrably correct.

Abela's treatment of Muslim Malta was not without importance. Jean Quintin in 1533 had likened the Maltese language to Punic, noting that the Maltese understood a few Punic words which occur in a Plautus comedy, but he made no mention whatsoever of Malta's Muslim centuries (26). In a *relazione* on Malta written in 1574 the Apostolic Visitor Pietro Dusina merely stated that after the Romans, the island *Venne poi in potere di Serracini* (27), while the volume on the Knights published by Giacomo Bosio in 1602 described Muslim Malta in just four words: *fù occupata da' Saracini* (28). Malta produced a number of Arabic and Semitic scholars during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (29). In 1632 the Maltese Domenico Magri even translated part of Idrisi's twelfth-

22. Luttrell, in *Medieval Malta*, p. 58. The Muslims may have moved the port from Marsa to Birgu, since no Muslim coins were found in the 1768 Marsa excavations and the latest coins which were found there cannot be dated later than 829: C. Barbaro, *Degli avanzi d'alcuni antichissimi edifizj, scoperti in Malta l'anno 1768*, Malta 1794, pp.39-41.

23. R. Pirri, *Notitiae siciliensium ecclesiarum*, II part 2, 1st ed: Palermo [1641], p.590; text in II part 1, 1st ed: pp.144-151.

24. Abela, *op.cit.*, pp.256, 301-302, where he also quotes from a Latin translation made by Iosafat Atzale; cf. B. Lavagnini, "Siracusa occupata dagli Arabi e l'epistola di Teodosio Monaco", *Byzantion*, XXIX-XXX, 1959-1960. The text was also known to the Jesuit Octavio Caetano.

25. Abela, *op.cit.*, pp. 265-266.

26. J. Quintinus, *Insulae Melitae Descriptio*, Lyons 1536, p. A3v: [Mr. H. Vella, who is preparing an edition of Quintin, kindly provided advice on a number of points].

27. Text in A. Vella, "La Missione di Pietro Dusina a Malta nel 1574", *Melita Historica*, V no.2, 1969, p.182.

28. G. Bosio, *Dell'Istoria della Sacra Religione et ill.ma Militia di San Giovanni Hierosolimitano*, III, 1st ed: Rome 1602, p. 91.

29. On one such scholar, Leonardo Abela, who was a kinsman of Gian Francesco, see A. Petrucci, "Abela, Leonardo", in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, I, Rome 1960, p.46, and, in great detail, J. Gruppetta, *Leonard Abel*, unpublished thesis: University of Malta 1969.

century geographical work but, curiously enough, Abela made no reference to this though he actually had Magri's translation from the Arabic of the passage concerning Malta (30). In 1637 the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide at Rome founded a school of Arabic in Malta (31), and Magri himself was residing in the Jesuit college at Malta as preacher in *lingua arabica* in 1641 and 1642 (32). Abela copied the Arabic alphabet into his notebook (33), and in discussing St. Paul at Malta he printed an Arabic version of the relevant passage from the Acts in Roman characters alongside a Latin translation of the same passage, both these having been sent to him by Domenico Magri (34). Abela's book evidently contained the first Arabic ever printed in Malta. Little or nothing concerning the Muslim period had been published before the *Descrittione* appeared in 1647, so that it was Abela's very real achievement to have broken the conspiracy of silence by "inventing" a whole chapter, however erroneous in detail and interpretation, devoted to Muslim Malta.

Abela clearly had reference, directly or indirectly, to a surprisingly wide range of printed sources. A loose leaf in the autograph of the *Descrittione* shows him writing to Rome for an excerpt from a classical work (35). The Benedictine Costantino Gaetano provided Abela with a passage from the martyrology of Pulsano which served for the invention of a twelfth-century Benedictine monastery on Malta (36). Copied into his notebook were references and extracts from the Sicilians Francesco Maurolico, Tommaso Fazello and Rocco Pirri, from the great Cardinal Baronius, the Neapolitan Angelo di Costanzo, the Aragonese Jerónimo Zurita and numerous others. Many published books were cited in the *Descrittione* itself. From Palermo documents came from the royal registers, from the *Capibrevi* of Gian Luca Barberi, and from Leonardo Biasini who in 1644 copied a whole series of texts of chancery documents which were presumably seen by Abela, who was often able to give precise folio references to the royal registers. Abela had materials from the Benedictine archives at Catania, from the Baron Inguanez in Malta, from the privileges and archives of Mdina, from the notarial registers, and from the archives of the Knights whose Chancery

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30. This translation, done in Rome in 1632, was published posthumously by F. Tardia, in *Opusculi di Autori Siciliani*, VIII, Palermo 1764; Magri sent the excerpt to Abela on 29 April, 1642, and it was recopied by Agius de Soldanis in Valletta Ms. 142E, f.33. On Magri, see Mangion, *op.cit.*, pp.272-275.
 31. A. Cremona, "L'Antica Fondazione della Scuola di Lingua Araba in Malta", *Melita Historica*, I no. 2, 1952, pp. 87-93.
 32. Rome, Archives of the Society of Jesus, Sicula 156, f.106, 145v: [references kindly provided by Mgr. Vincent Borg].
 33. Valletta Ms. 140, f.17v; on the language question, *infra*, pp. 126-127.
 34. Abela, *op.cit.*, pp.225-230; the study of this transcription, possibly made by Magri himself, might throw light on the history of Maltese orthography, especially if it were compared to Abela's forms for Maltese place-names.
 35. Valletta Ms. 255, at f.154v-155.
 36. Cf. Luttrell, in *Medieval Malta*, pp. 33-34.

he commanded (37). He copied parchments now lost (38), and he collected inscriptions and coins (39). The list of his sources could in fact be extended very considerably, especially on the classical side.

Abela knew the published works of his predecessors who had written on Malta itself. He copied into his notebook parts of Jean Quintin's *Descriptio* (40) and he naturally had access to Giacomo Bosio's great history of the Hospitallers. Furthermore, Abela received materials from a considerable variety of friends and correspondents (41). He presumably knew the Maltese Franciscan Filippo Cagliola who had historical interests (42), and he met people like the learned Jesuit Athanasius Kircher who came to Malta in 1637 and left in February 1638, grumbling of the shortage of books — the *peniuria dei libri* — but carrying away precious manuscripts to Rome (43). In 1637 Abela accompanied Kircher's companion, the great scholar Lukas Holste or Holstenius, to see the island's antiquities (44). On the question of Maltese liturgical terms Abela cited the Maltese cleric Domenico Magri's *Notitia de' Vocaboli Ecclesiastici* published in 1644 (45). On 14 March 1638 he wrote to Magri asking for an Italian translation of a passage from a Syriac or Levantine author named "Gabriele" who mentioned a colony or family which many centuries earlier had migrated to Malta. Magri sent back a story about a *Gabriele Eben el Chlahay... Re de Gibeyl montelibano* who supposedly went to Malta with his followers shortly after the Council of Nicaea of 325 (46). This may have been the starting point of one of the many theories concerning Oriental immigrations and influences in Malta (47). From this mass

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37. Luttrell, in *Archives of the Cathedral*, pp. 35-45, 49-50.
 38. Eg. Valletta Ms. 140, f.39v; text in A. Luttrell, "The Augustinians at Malta: 1413", *Analecta Augustiniana*, XXXVIII, 1975, p.301. Other examples in Ms. 140, f.38v-39.
 39. Cf. A. Luttrell, "The Discovery and Survival of Byzantine Coins in Malta", [forthcoming]. For a "Maltese" coin apparently "invented" by Abela, see T. Gouder, "Baal Hammon in the Iconography of the Ancient Bronze Coinage of Malta", *Scientia* [Malta], XXXVI no.3, 1973, p.130 n.65.
 40. Valletta, Ms. 140, f.6-9v.
 41. According to R. Bonnici Cali, "Gian Francesco Abela: the Father of Maltese Historians and Antiquarians" [addenda], *Scientia* [Malta], XXI, 1955, p. 148 (without documentation), correspondents included Fr. Paolo Grimaldi, Fr. Mariano Perello, Fr. Ernesto Ferdinando Libero and Guillaume Choul of France. For correspondence with Giorgio Gualtieri (1621) and Vincenzo Mirabella (1615), see Valletta Ms. 142 E, f.31, 35-36.
 42. His unpublished Ms. on the Maltese Franciscans is, however, lost; cf. B. Fiorini, "Father Philip Cagliola, O.M. Conv...", *Scientia* [Malta], XI, 1945, p.122.
 43. V. Borg, *Fabio Chigi: Apostolic Delegate in Malta, 1634-1639*, Vatican 1967, pp.312/3 n.2, 351-352. See A. Kircher, *Mundus Subterraneus*, 1st ed: Amsterdam 1665, pt. II, pp. 97-98; cf. A. Luttrell, "Case rupestri a Malta", *Notiziario di Archeologia Medievale*, Dicembre 1974, pp.2-3.
 44. Abela, *op.cit.*, p. 67; cf. R. Almagià, *L'opera geografica di Luca Holstenio*, Vatican 1942, p. 21 and n.2.
 45. Abela, *op.cit.*, p.265.
 46. Valletta, Ms. 142 E, f.31v.
 47. Cf. Luttrell, in *Medieval Malta*, pp. 23-24.

of information Abela constructed his great story of Malta, some of it correctly founded on written texts, some of it erroneous or even invented, some of it admittedly based on traditions; and these traditions had often originated in Malta itself.

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In the case of Malta's most deeply-rooted tradition, the cult of St. Paul, there is some evidence that it was alive before the Muslim conquest of 870 (48). Whether or not the tradition survived through the Muslim centuries (49), St. Paul became the patron saint of Christianized Malta, and the cathedral was dedicated to him by 1299 at the latest (50). This Pauline devotion was noted in 1533 by Jean Quintin who mentioned the chapel in St. Paul's Bay, where the wreck was supposed to have occurred, and St. Paul's grotto at Rabat, the stone of which was held to cure serpent's venom; Quintin also recalled the passage from the *Acts of the Apostles* stating that the Maltese had believed that Paul was God — *quem quondam natio illa Deum credidit* (51). In 1549 Matteo Surdu, Archpriest of Malta and curate of the Rabat grotto church, petitioned the bishop's vicar complaining that the church there was in ruins and that the cult had been abandoned, despite the ancient tradition that Paul had preached there and that its stone cured snake bites. Surdu claimed that there had once been a plenary indulgence for visitors and that people used to come from outside Malta to die and be buried there: *ex universo orbe Nobilissimi viri consulto in hanc Insulam confluebant ea gratia ut post mortem in eo cimiterio sepelirentur quam rem multa monumenta qui in illo exstant clare testantur*. The place had been abandoned by the Maltese themselves for over a century: *multos ab hinc annos populus Melitensis ita neglexit ut ab annis amplius centum nemo exterus hoc in cimiterio ipsius sancti Pauli sepeliri curavit* (52). The miraculous stone was mentioned in a book published at Venice in 1554 (53), and by 1571 written

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48. This conclusion is suggested by the purely archaeological aspects of the evidence presented in M. Cagiano de Azevedo, *Testimonianze archeologiche della tradizione paolina a Malta*, Rome 1966; there is no evidence that the tradition stretched back continuously to St. Paul.
49. The plan of San Pawl Milqi and the conclusions in M. Cagiano de Azevedo, "Medieval Buildings Excavated at Tas-Silg and San Pawl Milqi in Malta," in *Medieval Malta*, pp. 93-95 and fig.4, apparently require revision; the publication of a final report on these excavations is an urgent *desideratum*.
50. Details and references in Luttrell, in *Medieval Malta*, p.20 n.124; cf. in general, J. Cassar Pullicino, "Pauline Traditions in Malta", *Scientia* [Malta], X, 1944.
51. Quintinus, *op.cit.*, pp. Clv-C2v; cf. *dicebant eum esse Deum* (*Acts*, xxviii.6). Quintin's phrase was wrongly quoted in Luttrell, in *Medieval Malta*, p.69, as referring to the Maltese in Quintin's own time.
52. Mdina, Cathedral Archives, CEM, Acta Originalia 464, f.103 [kindly located by the Archivist Fr. John Azzopardi]; partial text in *Risposta del sacerdote Giovanni Gatt Said alla dissertazione anticritica del Rmo. Canco. Dr. Vincenzo Paolo Galea sulla primitiva chiesa vescovile in Malta*, Malta 1868, pp.52/3 note (b).
53. A. Stilon, "Alcuni nostri amuleti", *Archivum Melitense*, VII no. 3, 1926, p.103 *et passim*.

certificates were being issued to accompany pieces of it so that the clergy presumably profited in terms of prestige, alms and interest, though there is no evidence that the rock itself was actually sold (54). Traditions concerning the Rabat grotto were retailed by innumerable subsequent writers. In 1558 the Sicilian Tommaso Fazello repeated the story and other points already made by Quintin (55), and in 1608 four aged clerics gave evidence concerning the grotto and its foreign visitors; *ho sempre inteso per tradizioni dei nostri antichi Maltesi*, said one of them while describing the allegedly ancient and noble graves there (56).

An early legend was that of a Melivetan Council, attended by 214 bishops including St. Augustine and a Sylvanus Bishop of Malta, who were supposed to have met in Malta. This was recorded in 1533, as a tradition, by Jean Quintin who was, however, more interested in ancient than in medieval Malta (57). Another early witness was the Apostolic Visitor Pietro Dusina, a foreigner whose visitation report of 1575 included some of the tales which were told him as he toured the island (58). Dusina naturally heard of the grotto and miraculous rock at Rabat; that Mellieha had been abandoned when the inhabitants moved inland to escape pirates; that the annual procession to Zeitun celebrated the wrecking of a Turkish fleet near Malta; and that the round rock-cut church of the Visitation near Mosta had been consecrated by seven bishops wrecked on the island. He also mentioned the chapel in St. Paul's Bay and the church of St. Paul *tal binchichir* later known as San Pawl Milqi (59). Giacomo Bosio, whose description of Malta was published in 1602, owed much to Jean Quintin but added further details. Thus, repeating the view of Quintin and others, he gave it as an "ancient tradition of the elders" that the Melivetan Council met in Malta, and that evidence of this could be seen in the crypt at Mellieha which the bishops were supposed to have consecrated; on the other hand, he also quoted from Baronius and others who rejected the story. Bosio recounted, obviously without conviction, the popular belief that a statue of St. Agatha placed on the walls of Mdina following a vision by a nun had miraculously defeated the Turks there in 1551

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54. G. Zammit Maempel, "The Magical Properties of Rock from St. Paul's Grotto, Malta", *Studies in Speleology*, III, 1976.
 55. T. Fazello, *De Rebus Siculis Decades Duae*, 1st ed: Palermo 1558, pp 10-12.
 56. Partial text in G. Gatt Said, *La Grotta di San Paolo a Malta: considerazioni archeologico-critiche*, Malta 1863, pp.67-69.
 57. Quintinus, *op.cit.*, p.Blv: cf. V. Borg, "Tradizioni e documenti storici", in *Missione Archeologica Italiana a Malta: Rapporto preliminare della Campagna* 1963, Rome 1964, pp. 43-44.
 58. Cf. J. Cassar Pullicino, "Malta in 1575: Social Aspects of an Apostolic Visit", *Melita Historica*, II no. 1, 1956.
 59. Valletta, Archiepiscopal Curia, Visitatio Dusina (1575) Copy C, f.22v, 75v, 162v-163; Dusina makes no mention of *San Giovanni tà Chereb* by that name, or of Publius' supposed villa there. Abela, *op.cit.*, p.373, reproduced the seven bishops story verbatim in Dusina's Latin and without comment.

(60). The historian and geographer Philipp Clüver, who published a comparatively lengthy description of Malta in 1619, concentrated on classical, biblical and geographical matters, giving numerous wordy quotations from many Greek and Latin authors, including Procopius, Arator and Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, though he also knew the modern works of Quintin and Fazello (61). Clüver held that the *barbaroi* who met St. Paul were Punic settlers but that modern Maltese was a form of Arabic, and he mentioned St. Paul's Bay, St. Paul's cathedral, St. Paul's grotto and its miraculous rock (62). In general, however, his Maltese section was based on the ancient writers rather than on local information or traditions.

The development of the Pauline cult was described by Abela who recorded the consecration in 1575 and the completion in 1578 of the new parish church of St. Paul at Rabat, adding that many bones had been found in the cemetery there in 1640 and retailing the story, with references to Rocco Pirri and Girolamo Manduca, about the indulgences and the noble pilgrims who came to the cemetery. He described the propagation of the cult of St. Paul between about 1607 and 1620 by Juan de Venaguas of Cordoba who had established himself as a hermit at Rabat: relics and papal indulgences were secured and elaborate new festas inaugurated; a house was built for a college of priests annexed to the grotto; a chapel was dedicated to St. Publius, the *protos* of Malta whose father had been cured by St. Paul on Malta; and a new church was erected at St. Paul's Bay in 1610 to celebrate the shipwreck (63). It was a time of enthusiasm for the cults of Paul and Publius, and of a proliferation of foundations, indulgences, dedications, processions and other manifestations of "Counter-Reformation" religiosity, developments probably encouraged by improvements in the education of the clergy, a few of whom went to study abroad. Churches and priests, sometimes in rivalry with other churches and dignitaries, may have had interests in the propagation of these cults, and the elaboration of a religious, and especially of a Pauline personality, for the Maltese people possibly reflected a largely unconscious "proto-nationalistic" reaction to political domination by the Knights (64).

60. Bosio. *op.cit.*, III, pp.92-93, 300.

61. P. Cluverus, *Sicilia Antiqua cum minoribus insulis ei adjacentibus*, Leyden 1619, pp. 425-448.

62. *Ibid.*, pp.440-443.

63. Abela, *op. cit.*, pp.26,345-355. In 1627 Abela himself placed in a Valletta church a stone recording St. Trophimus, who had supposedly been wrecked on Malta with St. Paul: text *ibid.*, p.239. Further details concerning these early seventeenth-century developments and various disputes which accompanied them are given in Gatt Said, *op.cit.*, and in Pelagio Maria di Zebbug, *Componimento storico, o sia notizie sacro-profane di San Publio*, Malta 1776. Venaguas is being studied by Fr. John Azzopardi.

64. Cf. A. Luttrell, "The Christianization of Malta", *Malta Year Book* 1977, Malta 1977, pp. 416-419; the emphasis on the invention of cults somewhat unbalances this

Much concerned with Paul and Publius was the *Relazione della nuova e grandissima diuotione introdotta nella Sta. Grotta di San Paolo Nell'Isola di Malta Con una breue raccolta delle cose notande et antichità di detta Isola* written by the Maltese galley-surgeon Marcantonio Axak apparently in 1610 (65). This contained brief introductory classical allusions and remarks on the ancient temples and other remains; a few inaccurate scraps of late-medieval history (66); a very early description, possibly the earliest to survive, of the Maltese catacombs; (67) lists of deserted *casali* mentioning *li vestigij de loro case rouinate* and attributing their abandonment to the fear of corsairs (68); and various other fables and "traditions of the ancients". On the Rabat grotto, Marcantonio Axak gave considerable detail concerning miracles, indulgences, feasts and fireworks or *mortaletti*, together with the stories of pilgrims who had once visited Rabat to secure the miraculous stone, of the miracle of St. Paul's preaching being heard in Gozo and the cross erected to commemorate it, and of St. Paul defending Malta against the infidel. He referred to the Madonnas painted by St. Luke, and to the grotto at Mellieha and its crosses; he also gave the story of St. Augustine and the supposed meeting there of the Melivetan Council, though he knew that Baronius and others held that it had met in Africa (69). These were the "traditional" traditions found in Dusina or Bosio but now cast within the new

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- brief article, even if it advances a point of relevance to an understanding of Maltese historiography. The movement may even have constituted a dimly intended atonement for the islanders' Muslim past, of which their language was a perpetual reminder. The propagation of Maltese cults, many of them clearly derived from Sicily, deserves further study, but the extensive literature cannot be surveyed here.
65. Modern copies in Valletta Mss. 515, 631; in Mdina, Cathedral Archives, Misc. 262, and another (unclassified); and in the Archives of the Collegiate Chapter of St. Paul's, Rabat, Opuscula Varia. On the author, Mifsud, *op.cit.*, pp. 116-119. The date 1623 at the front seems to be that of the dedication. Ms. 515, f.8; Mdina Misc. 262, f.181; and Mdina (unclassified), f.25-26, all refer to the founding of the Wignacourt Tower at St. Paul's Bay *mentre scrivo il presente discorso* as dating to 10 February, 1601, but the tower, which was still to be built at the time of writing, actually dated to 1610; 10 February, 1601 is the date of Wignacourt's election. Ms. 631, f.7v, confusingly changed the date to 1501 and the building to St. Paul's Chapel. Axak refers to the St. Publius chapel at Rabat as built *ultimamente ai 21 di Genaro dell'anno 1610* (Ms. 515, f.15v); to various indulgences and relics (f.13-16) which date from ca. 1608 to 1611 (cf. Abela, *op.cit.*, pp. 350, 352-353); to Venaguas coming to Malta *dodici anni in circa sono* (f.12v), that is just before 1600 (according to Fr. John Azzopardi, correcting Abela, *op.cit.*, p.348, who gives around 1607); and to Venaguas visiting the pope *Due anni già sono* (f.12v), that is probably in or around 1607. The work seems to date to 1610 or soon after.
 66. Valletta Ms. 515, f.5, stating that Malta was "pawned" to Manfredi Chiaramonte in 1300 (*sic*) and to Gonsalvo de Monroy in 1427.
 67. Valletta Ms. 515, f.5v-6.
 68. Valletta Ms. 515, f.6-6v, 12; these points are cited (from Ms. 631) in G. Wettinger, "The Lost Villages and Hamlets of Malta", in *Medieval Malta*, pp.181, 191-192. The effects of piracy on the Maltese economy and settlement patterns are difficult, if not impossible, to analyze.
 69. Valletta Ms. 515, f.9v-15v.

devotional context. In some ways Axak's tract was in the tradition of Quintin. It demonstrated a straightforward, descriptive brand of religiosity. It contained much that was also in the writings of the contemporary Jesuit circle, but it did not seem to depend directly upon them; in particular it did not repeat the "tradition" newly reported by Girolamo Manduca in 1608 which placed Publius' villa on Wardija Hill, even though Axak knew of the church and the ruins there and mentioned them à propos of deserted *casali*:

Un'altro [casale] ui era uicino alla Punta delle Cale di S. Paolo chiamato Rahal ta Wardia, oue li uestigij non solamente si scoprono dalle Case, ma anco ui sono al presente tre Chiese una col Titolo di S. Giouanne, altra di S. Simone, e la terza di San Nicolau... (70)

In a different class, more clearly inventive but not necessarily less genuinely traditional, was a curious collection of fables, some of them conceivably rooted in fact, which Abela had from a Catalan Knight Fr. Joan Alentorn, who had been Captain of Birkirkara. Abela's notes on these stories, which cannot be dated with precision, included unlikely traditions about various classical temples and the division of the island between Christians, Muslims and Jews, as well as the old story of the abandonment of *casali* on account of pirates (71).

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The developments of the following decades cannot be established with precision because various writings are not accurately datable, while it is in many cases uncertain exactly who spoke or corresponded with whom, and which scholars had access to which of their contemporaries' manuscripts or publications; there may, furthermore, have been other authors and writings of which there is now no trace. Philipp Clüver, working in the North before 1619, had received little local information from Malta. The Jesuit Cornelius van den Steen *alias* Cornelio à Lapide writing at Rome just before 1626 had access to a good deal of material, apparently through his fellow-Jesuit Girolamo Manduca, none of whose works is dated. Jesuit schools and scholars were an important element in this historiographical milieu, and it was to the Jesuits that Abela, by special dispensation, bequeathed his beloved museum (72). The Sicilian Jesuit Octavio Caetano, who died in 1620, had corresponded with Manduca and his writings were cited by Cornelio à Lapide and Rocco Pirri with reference to Maltese matters. Caetano, whose work must have been available in manuscript since it was only published posthumously in 1707, knew of the church, the fountain and the ruins on the hill near St. Paul's Bay; of the Rabat grotto with its cross and

70. Valletta Ms. 515, f.6v; cf. texts *infra* pp. 131-132; like Manduca in 1608, Axak mentioned St. John Chrysostomus: Ms. 515, f.9.

71. Valletta Ms. 140, f.40-40v (text *infra*, pp. 130-131); the Jewish aspects of this account are being studied in detail by Dr. Godfrey Wettinger.

72. This bequest was resented by the Knights: Borg, *Chigi*, pp. 102-103.

its magic rock; and of the miracle of 1470 when St. Paul saved Mdina from 18,000 Moors (73). Mario Pace, the first Maltese Jesuit, entered the Society of Jesus in 1595 and lived much in Sicily, dying in 1643; he published a history of Caltagirone and other works (74). The Spanish Jesuit scholar Sebastiano Salelles apparently spent some forty years in Malta and he was interested in Maltese ecclesiastical history (75).

Girolamo Manduca was born in Mdina in 1574. In 1590 he was studying in Rome, and later he taught at Messina and elsewhere in Sicily. Manduca wrote a number of theological treatises, including one on Publius; he died at Siracusa in 1643 (76). Between 1610 and 1643 he was only once, in 1635, recorded as being in residence in the Jesuit college at Malta (77). None of his writings was ever published but they were available in Sicily and presumably in Rome, and they were quite frequently copied (78). Manduca's works, and notably a *Relazione, O sian Tradizioni avute dalli Antichi circa le cose dell'isola di Malta ...* (79), contained early versions of many historical traditions which Manduca claimed to have collected. He cited certain documents and he occasionally mentioned work in various archives, but he also referred frequently to elderly hearsay, to the *memorie degl'antichi*, to the traditions of *molti vecchi* or even to *il miracolo, che contano i Vecchioni per tradizioni, e non sanno distinguere il tempo* (80). Even tradition could contradict itself and Manduca himself wrote of St. Paul's promise that Malta would never be taken by the infidel:

perche di ciò ce ne traditione, como appresso dirò un'altra profesia in contrario, che solevano dire li Antichi (81).

Manduca stated that it was a "tradition" of the inhabitants, already followed by Tommaso Fazello, that St. Paul landed in St. Paul's Bay where there was

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73. O. Cajetano, *Isogage ad Historiam Sacram Siculam*, 1st posthumous ed: Palermo 1707, pp. 152-156.
 74. Mifsud, *op.cit.*, pp. 161-166.
 75. Borg, *Chigi*, pp.469 n.4, 471-472; Mifsud, *op.cit.*, p.2. S. Salelles, *De Materiis Tribunalium S. Inquisitionis...*, I, Rome 1651, pp.42-48, contains a detailed disquisition on the early Bishops of Malta, but it was published later than Pirri, Manduca and Abela, and seems to lean heavily upon them.
 76. Mifsud, *op.cit.*, pp. 212-215; M. Pace, *L'Antichità di Caltagirone Città Gratissima della Sicilia*, Naples 1631.
 77. Rome, Archives of the Society of Jesus, Sicula 155, f.237: [information kindly provided by Mgr. Vincent Borg].
 78. Copies of the Publius treatise are in Valletta, Mss. 25, 165, 644, 1244, 1415; Mdina, Cathedral Archives, Misc. 265. The preface to these copies explains how it was supposedly lost and then discovered among the papers of Octavio Caetano. On the Mss. in Palermo, see Valletta Ms. 25, f.2; Ms. 1244, f.3v-4v; Mifsud, *op.cit.*, p. 214. A complete study of these and of other works by Manduca is needed.
 79. Late copies in Valletta Ms. 25, f. 177-208; Ms. 165, f.95-110; Ms. 2, f.526-562 (apparently incomplete and with considerable variations in wording); Ms. 644 (copied in 1901).
 80. Eg. Valletta Ms. 25, f.180, 185, 189.
 81. Valletta Ms. 25, f. 191.

a church which had been built in ancient times and was restored several hundred years before Manduca's time by certain Maltese *gentiluomini* whose arms were on it. Abela reported that the arms on the church before its rebuilding in 1610 were those of the Bordino and Inguanez families, which were not settled in Malta before about 1400 (82). Manduca wrote of the supposed villa of Publius on the slopes of Wardija hill above St. Paul's Bay where there were ruins and the church of *San Giovanni t̃a Chereb* (83). Excavations in search of treasure which accompanied the building of an oratory there in about 1600 uncovered a "stone baptismal font" which was in fact probably an olive-crusher (84). Manduca also wrote of ancient remains — *si è trovato uestigio di belle fabbriche antiche, e da alcuni anchè monete* — around Salina Bay. He did not know the age of the harbour there; he reported that some said — *alcuni dicono* — that it had been inhabited three or four centuries earlier when the *corso* was supposed to have been introduced into Malta with the consequent ruination of the old town of Mdina, though others blamed this decline on the coming of the Order of St. John to Malta in 1530. Manduca cited the fifteenth-century pirate Michele da Malta mentioned by Giacomo Bosio; he also said that Salina was a port for vessels sailing to Sicily, and that the *libro de' Privileggi* showed that two hundred years earlier the Viceroy had given permission for the rebuilding of the tower at Salina, the "port" of Burmurrad. He then confused this issue with a reference to Maltese pirates taken from Cicero, finally deciding that the biblical incident of St. Paul and the snake probably did not — despite the *tradizioni*, which again contradicted one another — take place at Mosta. He described St. Paul's grotto at Rabat and the many chapels in the cemetery there, retailing Matteo Surdu's document of 1549 which he claimed he had himself found in the Episcopal archives. He talked of the miraculous rock at Rabat, of a stone or table on which St. Paul had slept and which was stolen by foreigners at night, and of a stone cross there commemorating the story that Paul's preaching could be heard in Gozo.

For the post-Roman period Manduca mentioned a visit to Malta by the Byzantine general Belisarius, for which he cited the historian Procopius. He derived two false Bishops of Malta, Acatius in 451 and Constantius in 502, from the acts of Oecumenical Councils. From the published letters of Pope Gregory I, one of which he copied in full, Manduca secured information concerning Bishops Lucillus and Traianus which he wrongly interpreted as showing that there was more than one monastery in Malta before 599 and that the line of Bishops

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82. Abela, *op.cit.*, p.26. On the Bordino, *ibid.*, p. 465; on the Inguanez, Anon., *Memoirs of the Family of Inguanez*, Malta 1888. In fact, Fazello, *op.cit.*, p.11, argued from the name, not from the "tradition."
83. A *clausura* in the *contrata* of *guardia sancti pauli maris* was called *tal chireibet di gar lizirac* in 1543: Wettinger, in *Medieval Malta*, p. 216.
84. Texts *infra*, pp. 131-132; cf. G. Marchi, "Ricerche storiche negli archivi di Malta", in *Missione...* 1964, pp. 24-25.

stretched back to Publius in 60 AD. Manduca also had the story of the Bishop of Malta in prison in Palermo, identifying him as Manas, as also did Pirri. Manduca had little interest in Muslim Malta, but he needed to explain the continuity of his Pauline traditions. He believed that there were Bishops of Malta in the Muslim period, and he even went so far as to claim that from the time of St. Paul there were no apostacies on Malta even in Muslim times: *ne in tempo che stette occupata da Mori, famiglia alcuna abbia apostatato*. Manduca mentioned the seven crosses and the painting of a Virgin with a Greek inscription in the Salina catacomb, considering them as possibly the work of Greek bishops accompanying Belisarius or even of St. Paul himself, and he repeated that the ruined parish church at Mellieħa, also said to have been consecrated by seven bishops, was held to have been the meeting-place of the Melivetan Council. As usual, this last point was explicitly reported as a tradition together with the information that it could not be true, Manduca presumably knowing that Baronius had shown that the Council had met in Africa. Manduca also claimed that the Bishop of Malta had subscribed the foundation bull of the Order of St. John in 1113, though the signature on the document, which was in the archives of the Knights, was actually that of the Bishop of Mileto (85).

Manduca was both confused and frank about his ignorance concerning the coming of various kings to Malta:

Delli Re venuti in Malta per cacciar i Mori al detto del Fazello Roggerio fu il primo appresso ci è stato il Re Martino, e non so il quando, ne trovo scritte, se no per il detto d'un dottore morto, il quale di ciò ne hauea trovate non so dove.

The undocumented gossip of a "dead doctor" represented an extreme instance of hearsay evidence. Martin's rule was at the end of the fourteenth century, and he never visited Malta. Count Roger was supposed to have endowed the Bishop of Malta with lands in Malta and in Sicily, while Alfonso V was thought to have lodged in the Gatto-Inguanez palace in Mdina. Manduca reported *alcuni uecchi* as saying that in Angevin times Malta was accustomed to arm the fantastic total of thirty *galeotte*, or at another time sixty brigantines, which made annual corsair attacks on the African coasts. He also told of a Muslim attack of about 1470 when Malta was sacked by 18,000 Moors who burnt all the *casali* and "all the olives" on the island. The old people had a tradition — *Contano i Vecchioni per tradizioni* — that Mdina was saved by the miraculous appearance of St. Paul and St. Agatha and many other saints, after the women inside the city had made cheese from their own milk within the space of three

85. Valletta Ms. 25, f.14-15, 22-25, 30-33, 180-187, 192-193; the text is much garbled—see also Ms. 2, f.530-532. On the Bishop of Mileto, Luttrell, in *Medieval Malta*, p.33 n.189; on Manas, *supra*, p.111. Cf. C. Baronius, *Martyrologium Romanum*, Venice 1611, pp.312-313.

days and had bombarded the Moors with it in order to convince them that the defenders were well supplied; thereafter the Maltese vowed to make an annual procession to Zejtun on the day of St. Gregory (86). Many elements of these myths were to be found in folk-tales and legends about sieges in Sicily and other parts of the Mediterranean which stretched back into classical literature (87). Abela noted that the Zejtun procession was variously held by Cornelio à Lapide and others to have originated in 1429 or 1470, but he preferred the theory of Rocco Pirri that it began with the plague of 1519. The procession seems in fact to have originated in 1543 as a gesture by Bishop Cubelles in support of the pope's attempts to bring peace and unity to the church (88). Manduca had other stories about saintly hermits, including traditions concerning the hermit Corrado which had allegedly been reported by Leonardo Abela (89), about the great hole at Maqluba, the bell in the cathedral (90), and so on.

Much of what Manduca wrote was also to be found in the biblical commentary published in 1627 by his learned fellow-Jesuit Cornelio à Lapide, who lived in Rome from 1616 until his death in 1637. In his discussion of St. Paul at Malta this author used ancient and medieval sources including Arator, Beđe and Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, but he also had access to local Maltese traditions. He wrote of St. Paul's Bay, of the Rabat grotto, of St. Paul's preaching being heard in Gozo, of the miraculous rock, the noble foreigners who came to be buried at Rabat, the papal indulgences, the stone cross and so forth. On the Rabat grotto and cemetery his "traditions" were similar to those of the aged clerics who gave testimony in 1608. He gave the stories of St. Paul saving Malta from 18,000 Moors in 1470, of St. Agatha's marble statue frightening the infidels there, of St. Luke's three paintings of the Virgin, of the font at Wardija, and of the Maltese never abandoning their faith even under Muslim rule. Cornelio à Lapide did cite Octavio Caetano and Philipp Clüver, some of whose views he criticized, but he also stated explicitly that all this information had reached him either verbally at Rome or had been sent there by Jesuits from Malta:

Haec omnia de Melita mihi Romae constanter viua voce afirmarunt, et scripto consignarunt nostri Patres Melitenses, viri graves et eruditi, ... (91)

86. Valletta Ms. 25, f.33, 185, 188-191, 194.

87. J. Cassar Pullicino, "Il-Leggenda tal-Maltin assedjati fl-Imdina", *Lehen il-Malti*, XLV, 1976.

88. Abela, *op.cit.*, p.366; for later views and inventions, see E. B. Vella, *Storja taż-Zejtun u Marsaxlokk*, Malta 1927, pp.119-129; for the 1543 initiative, see M. Fsadni, *Id-Dumnikani fir-Rabat u jil-Birgu sa l-1620*, Malta 1974, pp.258-259: [Mr. Mario Buhagiar kindly drew attention to this episode].

89. Texts in Marchi, *op.cit.*, pp.26-27, 34-37.

90. Valletta Ms. 25, f.195, 199.

91. Cornelius à Lapide, *Commentaria in Acta Apostolorum*, 1st ed: Lyons 1627, pp. 349-359; the *imprimatur* was given in 1626. Marchi, *op.cit.*, p.25, writes as if Cornelio

There was a considerable community of Jesuits at Malta by 1626. Girolamo Manduca had earlier been one of them and most, though not all, of Cornelio's information was also in Manduca's treatises; other details presumably reached Rome *viva voce*. Further materials could have been received from a third party, possibly another Jesuit who, like Octavio Caetano, was in touch with Manduca. Manduca never cited Cornelio, and his treatises consistently gave more local Maltese detail than Cornelio, who can scarcely have been Manduca's source. Probably, Manduca was the origin of Cornelio's information; and, whatever happened, these matters were clearly worked out within a predominantly Jesuit circle in which a group of scholars were mutually borrowing from and influencing each other (92).

Cornelio's information and its wording did not always follow that of Manduca. His descriptions were usually much more summary. He gave only slight detail about the Rabat grotto with no mention of Matteo Surdu's letter, which Manduca himself had found, or of other intimate detail. He omitted much local colour contained in Manduca's story of the 1470 siege, making no reference to the human cheese or the Zeitun procession, though he did mention the intervention of St. George who did not figure in Manduca's account. On the key question of Muslim predominance, Manduca wrote of St. Paul:

che dalla sua uenuta in qua non si è mai saputo, che questa Isola abbi mancato dalla fede Catolica, nè nel tempo, che stette occupata da Mori (93).

Cornelio followed this rather closely:

...quòd Melita à tempore S. Pauli huc usque; nunquam defecerit à fide à S. Paulo accepta, etiamsi Mauri eam occuparint tenuerintque per centenos et ampliùs annos.

So did Abela:

dal tempo di S. Paolo in qua, che la conuertì al Signore, e vi piantò la Santa Fede di Christo, questa non sia in alcun tempo venuta meno, ne giamai mancata (94).

Manduca described the supposed villa of Publius at Wardija in a letter to Octavio Caetano written in 1608. He had been to St. Paul's Bay and collected hitherto unreported Pauline traditions from the local inhabitants. One concerned a stone slab from which St. Paul was believed to have eaten and which had

himself visited Malta, which seems unlikely. Abela, *op.cit.*, p. 366, was well aware of the opposite: *il Padre Carnelio à Lapide scriva per detto e relatione d'altri, ...*

92. Also at Malta in 1616 was the Jesuit Melchior Inchofer, who wrote on a variety of theological, scientific and historical subjects.

93. Valletta Ms. 25, f.187; Ms. 2, f.538, added the words *famiglia alcuna abbia apostatato*.

94. Cornelius à Lapide, *op.cit.*, p. 349; Abela, *op.cit.*, p. 241.

fallen into the sea. The other “tradition”, that Publius’ villa was near the church of *San Giovanni ta’ Chereb* — that is “of the ruins” — on Wardija Hill, implied some knowledge of the Bible and must have been rather recently revised if not invented, since it depended in part on an excavation of circa 1600; Manduca also added a reference to St. John Chrysostomus. The letter was tacked onto the end of one version of Manduca’s *Tradizioni*. Its contents reappeared, in more scholarly Latin form and with the information about the font, in his treatise on Publius. This story was repeated by Octavio Caetano, and then by Cornelio à Lapide, from whom it was taken almost verbatim by Rocco Pirri. Cornelio à Lapide incorporated elements found in both of Manduca’s accounts into his standard biblical commentary published at Leyden in 1627, again reducing Manduca’s texts to essentials but adding certain details not given in either of them; he rendered the Maltese *tal Chereb* as *Telcheres* (95). In the autograph manuscript of his book, Abela’s original intention was to publish the Greek version of the description in the Acts of Paul’s visit to Malta together with a Latin translation from the Greek made by Clüver; he made only the briefest reference to Publius’ villa and passed rapidly to the question of the *barbaroi* mentioned by St. Luke, on which point he gave a quotation from Clüver. In the published book, however, he printed the text of the Acts taken from the Latin Vulgate, and this was followed by an Arabic version of the same passage given in Latin characters and placed alongside a Latin translation of the Arabic, both the Arabic and the translation being supplied by Domenico Magri. In the book Abela gave a map of St. Paul’s Bay showing an unlabelled building situated on Wardija Hill. He did not explicitly state where he thought the villa was, but in the middle of the sentence concerning the *barbaroi* which ended with the quotation from Clüver, Abela or — alternatively — an incompetent printer inserted the following passage: *in quanto poi alla vicinità della villa di Publio e de’ vestigi di lei, dice il nostro P. Manduca. “Villa, Hospitale...”* There then followed one sentence of Manduca on Publius’ villa which began *Villam Hospitale*. This fragment from Manduca was followed by the rest of the original sentence about the *barbaroi*. As a result, the passage does not make sense and the reader cannot tell where Abela thought the ruins were or where Manduca had said they were, since the relevant sentences from Manduca were somehow omitted (96). Manduca, Caetano, Cornelio, Pirri and Abela all apparently accepted the story in vogue at least since 1608 that Publius’ villa was on Wardija, but Abela may have had his doubts. The present church on the site of an earlier

95. Texts *infra*, pp. 131-132; Pirri, *op.cit.*, II pt.2, p.587. The story of *San Giovanni ta’ Chereb* was not known to Dusina in 1575: *supra*, p. 115 n.59.

96. Valletta Ms. 255, f.157-160; Abela, *op.cit.*, pp.225-231. The sentence from Manduca (*Villam hospitalem ... prospectum maris*) is given *infra*, p. 132. Abela also used the work of the Jesuit T. Massutio, *Paulus Apostolus sive Vita Sancti Pauli Apostoli*, Lyons 1633, pp.633-640, but Massutio’s references to Pauline matters on Malta clearly derived from Clüver, whom he cited, and from others, whom he did not cite.

church also dedicated to St. Paul at San Pawl Milqi had apparently not yet been built, nor had it yet received the name of Milqi, "the Welcomed", though the new Pauline "tradition" there may have been in the process of "invention" by the time Abela wrote (97).

The Sicilian historian Rocco Pirri included much that was also in Manduca, especially concerning Paul and Publius, the Rabat grotto, the alleged early Bishops of Malta and St. Paul's delivery of Mdina in 1470. Pirri took a good deal of this material from Cornelio à Lapide. He cited directly from Manduca concerning Publius, and he also used Quintin, Bosio and Clüver (98). Pirri had visited Malta in 1611 to settle a dispute between the Bishop and the Inquisitor, and he took back from Rabat to Palermo a piece of miraculous rock (99); he could also have taken legends and "traditions". Probably he was also in touch with Manduca. Pirri's section on the Maltese church appeared in 1641, while Manduca lived for years in Sicily where his manuscripts were presumably available long before his death in 1643 (100). There were apparently exchanges of information not explicitly documented in the available texts, and it is not yet clear whether it was Manduca, Pirri, Abela or someone else who first studied Malta's Bishops.

Abela's attitude to such traditions varied. He cited Dusina, sometimes in such a way as to imply doubt as to the value of the tradition (101). Sensibly he did not repeat in his *Descrittione* the fables of Commendatore Alentorn, even though he had copied them into his notebook. Abela naturally wrote at length on St. Paul in Malta, citing among others Rocco Pirri and Cornelio à Lapide, both of whom had information from Manduca; for example, he cited them both as saying that the Mellieha Virgin had been painted by St. Luke. Abela accepted the conclusion that the Melivetan Council met in Africa, but he also cited Bosio

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97. Abela, *op.cit.*, pp.26, 354, shows that Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt rebuilt the church of St. Paul *a mare* at Bugibba in 1610, before which it carried the arms of Inguanez and Bordinò; Manduca, in Valletta Ms. 25, f.180, gave the arms to the Mazzara and Casanova families. M. Cagianò de Azevedo, "Gli scavi della Campagna 1964", in *Missione ...1964*, p. 184, and *Testimonianze*, pp.17-18, showed that the old church at San Pawl Milqi was still there in 1616; he then mistakenly applied Abela's evidence about St. Paul *a mare* to San Pawl Milqi, concluding that the latter was built between 1616 and Wignacourt's death in 1622. It was presumably rebuilt after 1647, when Abela's book was published. The 1616 visitation showed that the church was then called *tal bintichi*: Valletta, Archiepiscopal Curia, Visitatio Cagliariens (1615/6) f.372v (text in Marchi, *op.cit.*, pp.30-31). A later copy of the 1616 visitation which gave *tal Milchi* is clearly corrupted: Mdina, Cathedral Archives, Misc. 181, f.150 (text in Marchi *op.cit.*, pp. 29-30). The name Milqi did appear in 1673 in the form *tal Milechi*: Visitatio Astiria (1671/4), f.272 (text in Marchi, *op.cit.*, p.31). Correct Luttrell, in *Medieval Malta*, p. 20 n.124, and in *Malta Year Book 1977*, p.420, where the name Milqi is wrongly dated to 1616.
98. Pirri, *op.cit.*, II pt.2, pp. 586-592.
99. Pirri, *op.cit.*, II pt. 2, pp.587, 614.
100. *Supra*, p. 119 n.78.
101. *Eg. supra*, p. 115 n. 59.

to the effect that it was a "tradition of the ancients" that it took place in Malta, evidence of this being visible in the Mellieha crypt where the bishops had supposedly consecrated the painting of a Virgin which had a Greek inscription (102). He referred to Manduca's works quite frequently (103). A brief note survives to record various *Notizie avute dal Commendatore Abela parlando col P. Girolamo Manduca sopra le cose di Malta* (104), while in 1764 I. S. Mifsud referred to *il P. Manduca amicissimo del Commendatore Fr. Gio: Francesco Abela, al quale trasmetteva le notizie concernenti l'Istoria intrapresa d'illustrare l'Isola di Malta* (105). Abela had the information on various Bishops of Malta, much of it incorrect, found in Manduca and Pirri; he too mistakenly accepted evidence for the existence of at least one monastery in Malta in about 600, though he rejected Manduca's claim that it had been there before that (106). Abela refrained from repeating a good deal else that was in Manduca but was clearly unreliable, and this is particularly noticeable in his treatment of the Muslim period. On the other hand he tended to cite opinions of foreign experts such as Cornelio à Lapede or Pirri when he probably knew that they were repeating information provided by Manduca.

Abela, unlike Manduca, sensibly ignored many fables deriving from fantasitizing old men, from lost documents, dead doctors and the like. Yet Abela was significantly influenced by Manduca. In particular, he copied into his notebook a passage from Manduca containing the theory that Maltese was not Punic but a local form of Arabic heavily and increasingly influenced by Italian loan-words. In the *Descrittione* Abela translated Manduca's script, in places word for word, occasionally changing the sense a little and taking from Manduca the idea that with the Muslim conquest of Sicily the Maltese ruling class had fled to Constantinople leaving the poorer populace in Malta where they naturally had to learn the Arabic language of their new rulers; that Roger the Norman had granted the town to the "Maltese" who had been in the country; and that it was thought — *creditur* — that Roger had given "more noble estates", presumably fiefs, to some twenty or thirty Sicilian *milites*. Abela qualified the story about Roger's *soldati* with the phrase *com'è antichissima traditione*, thus turning Manduca's hearsay into an ancient tradition, and he elaborated the whole passage, especially by adding illustrations drawn from personal and place-names. Yet Abela's basic theory of the language, the now generally accepted interpretation that it was not a Punic tongue but a local variation of Arabic which was "left by the Saracens", was definitely taken directly from Girolamo Manduca (107). Earlier, it

102. Abela, *op.cit.*, pp. 221-242, 371.

103. Eg. Abela, *op.cit.*, pp.230, 240, 242, 298, 346, 389.

104. Valletta Ms. 23, f.344v-345v.

105. Mifsud, *op.cit.*, p.215, citing a letter from Abela's correspondence.

106. Abela, *op.cit.*, 387-389.

107. Manduca's text from Abela's notebook is printed *infra*, p.129; cf. Abela, *op.cit.*, pp.257-259. See also J. Cassar Pullicino, "G.F. Abela and the Maltese Language", in *Abela: Essays*.

had been foreigners like Quintin who thought that Maltese was a form of Punic. As the Maltese themselves began to study Arabic, they naturally came to realize its affinities with their own language, while the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher, who visited Malta in 1637, was clear that the Maltese spoke pure Arabic: *lingua Arabica pura sine ulla Italicae linguae alteriusve mixtura, utuntur* (108).

* * *

Some of Manduca's material was reported under the heading of "traditions", but he took no great care to distinguish between fact and fiction, tradition and invention, just as some later writers, faced with the demolition of certain myths, simply repeated them as "traditions". More balanced were the views of Abela, who often ignored or qualified Manduca's wilder claims. None the less, Abela too was a man of his times. It is easy to point scathingly to his credulous belief in giants, divine interventions and other fairy tales (109), or to his naïve idea that late-medieval inscriptions in Gothic script or late-medieval Gothic buildings in Mdina reflected the presence of Goths in sixth-century Malta (110). In some cases, as in his anachronistic but understandable belief that there was a Maltese "nobility" in the fourteenth century (111), Abela reflected the prejudices of his time. In other matters he seriously confused subsequent generations, as for example by his clumsy publication and interpretation of a list of ecclesiastical incomes of 1436 which has bedevilled the history of the Maltese "parish" (112).

Abela was not without his critics. In the eighteenth century Agius de Soldanis was to maintain, as Jean Quintin had already proposed in 1533, that the Maltese language was Punic in origin; but on this issue Abela was fundamentally correct. Others, who felt their interests threatened, were prepared to reject Abela's views, at least on points of detail. Thus in 1744 when the Knights needed to prove that the King of Sicily did not enjoy rights of ecclesiastical visitation in Malta, it was argued that, as Rocco Pirri had himself admitted, no known document supported Pirri's claim, which Abela had followed, that Roger the Norman had endowed the Maltese Church in 1090. In 1754 the Knights also argued, again against Abela's view, that in 1090 Malta had been reduced merely to tributary status under the rule of its Muslim governor and was not truly conquered until 1127, from which it was held to follow that the bull of 1098, on which the claims of the Sicilian Crown were based, was not applicable to Malta (113).

108. Kircher, *op.cit.*, pt. II, p. 98.

109. Cf. Dennis, *op.cit.*, pp. 3-25.

110. Abela, *op.cit.*, pp. 247-248.

111. Luttrell, in *Archives of the Cathedral*, pp. 49-50.

112. Cf. Luttrell, in *Medieval Malta*, p. 63 n.345.

113. Mdina, Cathedral Archives, ACM, Misc. 98, f.120v-121 (1744), and Misc. 96, f.125-127 (1754) [references kindly provided by Miss Censina Spiteri]; cf. Abela, *op.cit.*, pp. 261-262, 266-267, and A. Vella, "I Normanni a Malta," *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi sulla Sicilia Normanna*, Palermo 1973, pp. 501-505.

The history of Christian Malta has been revised considerably since Abela wrote. Catacombs and inscriptions certainly attest some early form of Christian presence at one point or another in Roman times (114) but there is no reputable evidence for a Bishop of Malta before 553, while stories of visiting Bishops and Oecumenical Councils derive from grottoes with so-called "consecration" crosses which prove little, since they are not datable. It cannot be shown that Christianity survived during the Muslim period or that it was reintroduced in any significant way before the thirteenth century; Roger the Norman in 1090 brought no institutional or religious changes to Malta and Gozo (115). The islands were Christianized and Latinized after about 1200, and thereafter religious fervour became increasingly strong. In particular the long-established veneration for St. Paul and the newly-introduced devotion to St. Publius were being propagated actively in Abela's time, with the consequent development or invention of various traditions some of which have permeated Maltese historiography and folklore ever since.

Abela himself was a most distinguished scholar. Normally observant, logical and meticulous, he was an antiquarian in the best humanist tradition. In Italy he would have been the worthy author of a standard local history, but in Malta local history is also national history and it was Abela who invented a history of Malta; such was the essential achievement of his *Descrittione*. That great act of creation naturally involved the manufacture or adoption of a series of myths, and an effective way of perpetrating tendentious "inventions" was to disguise them as "ancient traditions". The creation and evolution of historical mythologies, which are themselves destined to be replaced by more modern or by more scientific interpretations, is an essential part of the unending historiographical process. Abela worked within the social and intellectual milieu of his times, under the influence of its clerical, patrician and Europeanist prejudices, and it is difficult to establish to what extent particular "inventions" were deliberately created and how far they were, in some sense, the unconscious product of the society in which they were received. Just occasionally there is something which seems close to deliberate falsification. In certain instances, Abela adopted pre-existing "traditions" or repeated the views of his predecessors or contemporaries. In other cases, it seems impossible to trace precisely how or through whom a particular notion originated and developed in the stages before it was published by Abela. A number of ideas had previously been written down, either as facts or as traditions, by Girolamo Manduca. Both Manduca and Abela moved within an antiquarian and predominantly Jesuit circle in which historical views were being elaborated, yet in the end it was Abela who assembled, completed, refined and published the first and greatest history of Malta.

114. V. Borg, "Une île et ses hypogées de l'ère des premiers chrétiens: Malte", *Les Dossiers de l'Archéologie*, XIX, 1976.

115. Cf. Luttrell, in *Malta Year Book* 1977.

APPENDIX I (116)

De uernaculo Sermone Melitensium

ex Hieronimo Manduca Societatis Jesu

Melitensium lingua communis est uniuersae Africae, Aegypto, Syriae totique Orienti, eiusque usus ad Indiam usque porrigitur; eadem enim est cum Arabica; tamen quod in omni idioma solet accidere pro diuersarum Prouinciarum usu, diuersae sunt etiam pronuntiandi leges, nonnullaque etiam uocabula suis nationibus patria sunt, ac propria, non communia uniuersis; praecipue uero ubi finitimorum consuetudine uernaculus sermo peregrinarum uocum admixtione corruptus efficitur; Id quod melitensibus accidit, qui post recuperatam à Rogerio Siciliam, ac Melitam è Saracenis ob uicinitatem Italiae, ac Siciliae, a quibus res eorum pendere ceperunt, intermisso Africae, unde uenerat, commercio, non solum pure loqui desierunt, sed etiam scribere; Nam in foro non nisi Italico ac Latino Sermone ad Annis quingentis, et supra res agantur, et melitensibus sermo suus exolescit in dies, ut suspicari possit aliquando penitus desitutum, cum tot uerba Italici sermonis interloquendum etiam idiotae ingerant. Quod autem maurum sermonem incolae retinuerint non item Sicilienses, quibus adhuc tamen multa supersunt Maurorum uocabula, causa est multiplex. Nam, et Rogerius Italicum exercitum in Siciliam traiecit, quem deinde per prouinciae urbes ueluti in Colonias distribuit, acceptis in coniugium siculis feminis Christianis, et Sicilia uicinior erat Italiae, et eius incolae multi (quales sunt in Attica, et Peloponneso hodie greci,) conseruare potuerint aliqua ex parte Sermone; etiamsi oportuisset Mauricum Sermone, propter Dominorum consuetudinem tenuisse; In Melita uero, cognito aduentu Maurorum in Sicilia, nobiles ac diuites fugam in Bizantium occuparunt. Hinc idiotae qui remanserunt linguam eius temporis retinere nequieuerunt cum eis opus esset Dominorum linguam ediscere. Ac Rogerius Mauris eiectis oppidum Melitensibus, qui in uillis erant concessit, paucisque militibus uiginti, aut triginta circiter creditur praedia quaedam nobiliora concessisse, qui exinde hanc Insulam incoluerunt; ex quibus error eorum conuincitur; qui Cartaginensem antiquam eandem uolunt fuisse cum hac melitensi; Nam uetus illa Cartaginensis pridem extincta est in omnibus Africae partibus, et hodiernam Arabicam Saraceni ex Syria, Egipto, et Arabia secum detulerunt in Africam; Hoc enim Victrices nationes proprium habent, ut una cum imperio suum Sermone extendant ac prorogent:—

Concerning the Vernacular Speech of the Maltese

By Jeronimo Manduca of the Society of Jesus

The language of the Maltese is the same as that of all Africa, Egypt, Syria and the whole Orient, and its use extends as far as India; indeed it is the same as Arabic. However, as happens with every language through its use in different provinces, there are various rules of pronunciation while some words are not common everywhere but are native and peculiar to their own countries. This occurs above all where the vernacular tongue becomes corrupted by the usage of neighbouring lands through the addition of foreign words. This is what happened to the Maltese who, after Sicily and Malta had



been recovered by Roger from the Saracens, lost not only the purity of their speech but also the practice of writing it; this was on account of the closeness of Italy and Sicily, on which their affairs came to depend, while they lost their commerce with Africa, which was where their speech came from. For in court they have transacted business only in Italian and Latin for five hundred years and more; so the Maltese are losing their own tongue, and it can be expected that one day they will lose it completely since even the unlettered are using so many Italian words in their speech. But why the Sicilian inhabitants did not likewise retain their Moorish tongue, although they do still keep many Moorish words, has a complicated reason. This is that Roger brought into Sicily an Italian army which he then distributed among the towns of the provinces as if in colonies. These men married Christian Sicilian women; and Sicily was closer to Italy and many of its inhabitants (as is now the case of the Greeks in Attica and the Peloponnesus) had been able to preserve some part of their own speech, even though it would have suited them to have taken to the Moorish tongue on account of its being the language of their rulers. In Malta, however, the nobles and the rich, hearing that the Moors had come to Sicily, took flight to Constantinople. The ordinary people who remained here were unable to retain the language they spoke, since they had to learn the speech of their rulers. Roger, having expelled the Moors, granted the town to the Maltese who lived out in the country, and he is believed to have granted certain more noble estates to a few knights, about twenty or thirty, who thereafter lived on this island. So that those who think that Maltese is the same as ancient Carthaginian are wrong, since the old Carthaginian has long been extinguished in every part of Africa and the Saracens have now brought modern Arabic with them out of Syria, Egypt and Arabia into Africa. For victorious nations have this prerogative, that they extend and propagate their speech along with their empire.

APPENDIX II (117)

Per traditione intesa dal Sr. Comd: fr: Gio. Alentorn Caualiere
 Catelano che era stato Capitano nella Capitania di Bercharara — mi
 disse le seguenti cose:—

Che uicino al Casale Zurrico era un Tempio di Diana.

Che a Marsa Scirocco era il tempio di Apollo doue andauano ad adorare tutti quilli che dal leuante a quist'Isola arriuauano.

Che uicino nostra Donna dell'HHalia era il Tempio d'Hercole et esserui insino a hoggi li uistigij:— li quali tempij si disfecero doppo che l'Isola riceuette la Santa fede Cattolica.

L'Isola di Malta per traditione intesa dal detto Sr. Comre: disse
 esser stata diuisa in un certo tempo, in tre parti, et habitationi
 cioè di Giudei Mori, et Christiani li quali tre Nationi occupano li
 luoghj dell'Isola nel modo Sequente.

li Giudei erano Governati da un di loro detto il Maggior Sauio et
 Possedeuano.

117. From Abela's notebook: Valletta Ms. 140, f.40-40v. The text awaits complete study and is not here annotated in detail; on the toponyms, see Wettinger, in *Medieval Malta*.

Dalla Mellechha insino al Casal Tartarni, e Naxaro.

Includeuanse le Grotte di Bengemma.

La Colea. Casal Tragu, el Chalhha tal hhabid. Casal Pizza.

El Hued el hhasel doue si uede la Capelluccia di san Paolo.

Torre di falco, la Pranja che era Pheudo delli Zurribas Sigri.

Catelani, Salamone, Exilida In tutti quisti luoghi erano all'ora habitationi.

li Christiani tenevano per Capo e Soltan et occupavano.

La Città Notabile detta Medina. Il Castello. Torre delli molini li cui uestigij aparesco sotto Capuccini il Casal Dingli, Casal Milleri Casal Manin; Casal Berchercara benche ancor hoggi litigano sopra l'essere primi Christiani con la Cappella del Naxaro sotto la Inuocatione di Santa Maria, el hhaguisa, e Bercarcara Santa elena l'Antica; li quali Doi Casali non erano all'ora doue son adesso ma più uerso il mare, et per l'inuasioni de Corsari furono più indentro ritirati. Casal Attard, Casal lia, Casal Balzan, Casal Bordi la Mosta, Challeya, Casal Man, Casal Gargur, Zebug, Siggeo, Crendi, Casal leu, Zorricco, Macluba, Bubachra:—

Li Mori habitauano la parte che guarda uerso Leuante, et erano Signoreggiati dal Mule:—

Cas: Safi, Corcop, Lucha, Cormi, Gudia, Hhaxac, Bescalin, Zabar, Giuan, Besbut, Tarxen, farrug.

Altri luoghi et Casali che qui non sono descritti ciascun di loro Sarà incluso nella parte più uicina di quiste tre diuisioni:—

APPENDIX III

The Priority of Girolamo Manduca

The probable chronology of Manduca's works suggested above and apparently illustrated in the four extracts given below is merely hypothetical. It is not based on research in the Jesuit archives and libraries of Rome and Sicily; nor on an intensive study of the internal evidence of Manduca's manuscripts; nor on any close comparison of the ideas and phrases contained in Manduca's works with those of others. Furthermore it is almost impossible to take account of the exchange of ideas through conversation, correspondence and unpublished manuscripts. Pirri and Abela cited Manduca, and Cornelio à Lapide seems to have done so, but it is quite possible that Manduca had, to give just one example, received ideas from Abela well over twenty years before Abela's *Descriptione* appeared in 1647. It seems as if Manduca's *Relazione* was written before 1608, after which his letter of May 1608 was tacked onto it, while his treatise on Publius was perhaps written between 1608 and 1626 when Cornelio à Lapide's commentary received its *impri-matur*. These problems await further investigation.

Girolamo Manduca, *Relazione, O sia Tradizioni*: (118)

Epistola eiusdem Authoris ad P. Octauium Cajetanum Melitae Scripta septimo Idus Maij 1608. Con l'occasione, che questi giorni fui à visitare la Chiesa di S. Paolo della Marina doue si ruppe la Naue, che portò S. Paolo in Malta intesi due tradizionj di nuouo

118. Valletta Ms. 25, f.203-204; the version in Ms. 165, f.109, varies the wording slightly (eg. *tal chereb*), and is headed *P. Hieronomi Manduca. Epistola ad P. Octavium Caetanum data Melitae die 9. Mensis Maij anni 1608.*

da quella Gente che abita nei Casali uicini quali per non auerle saputo prima, nè forse da altri sono state ancor significate a V.R. hò creduto sodisfare al pio desiderio di V.R. con significargliele. Vna è che nel luogo, douè oggi è una Chiesa piccola detta "di S. Giovanni tà Chereb" cioè delle rouine, perche quiui ci sono uestigia d'abitazione antica l'Apostolo abbi battesato la gente della Naue, che in sua Compagnia uenne e si conuertì per li miracoli dell'Apostolo; il che più mi pare probabile per auermi pochi mesi prima incontrato in San Crisostomo nell'Omel, 53. sopra li atti Apostolici, che questo stesso significa della conuersione di cinquanta Soldati etc: l'altra quella de Maltesi, il loco è alto di sito, e alquanto lontano dal Mare, cioè per un miglio in circa ed è uerisimile che per esser quel contorno loco di uigne quiui fusse il miracolo della uipera...

Octavio Caetano (before 1620): (119)

Interius, M. fermè P. à littore, ecclesia est D. Joannis *Talchereb*, hoc est *ruinarum*, quarum illic antiqua vestigia spectantur: hoc loco incolarum traditio est, Apostolum Paulum nauas omnes, vectoresque eadem cum ipso navi, in sinum illum tempestate ejecit baptizasse: quos ab Apostolo ad fidem conversos, D. Joannes Chrysostomus docet:...

Girolamo Manduca, *Historia Sancti Publij*: (120)

Villam hospitalem S. Publij uicinam rupibus Dithalassis, quibus Actorum cap: 27. uers. 41. Nauis Pauli quassata Maris tempestate stetit impacta, donec solueretur à fluctibus, fuisse in cliuo ad Orientem, ac septentriones obuersam, obstatat rudem ingentia, et maximi aedificij ruinae supra prospectum maris. Constat ea esse Publani Palatij uestigia ex proximo Oratorio D. Joannis Baptistae cui nomen est à ruinis. In eo Sacello Pagorum uicinia constanter affirmat comitatum nauticum S. Pauli miro modo e tempestate maris elapsum aquis Baptismi initiatum fuisse. Dum Oratorium illud instaureretur spe inueniendae pecuniae circa annum Domini 1600 repertus est fons Baptismalis Lapidus ibi defossus: cum uicinis spatij nulla extent domicilia, nec Domorum ruinae, et Oratorium adeò angustum Parochiae functionibus idoneum non fuerit, ut propterea credibile sit sacellum illud coniunctum fuisse Villae Publanae, de primo Baptismo Naufragorum, ut asserunt Melitenses cohonestatum.

Commodè ad confirmandum huius rei veritatem Sanctus Johannes Chrysostomus...

Cornelio à Lapide (1627): (121)

...quòd apud eos 276. nauigationis & naufragij sui socios baptizarit. Milliari vno à portu in quo exscendit Paulus, etiamnum visuntur variae ruinae antiquarum fabricarum, in quibus extat Sacellum indigitatum nomine *s. Ionnias Baptistae Telcheres*, id est, *inter ruinas*: vbi S. Paulum 276. iam dictos baptizasse, communis plurium vicinorum pagorum traditio est. Huius rei indicium est, quòd ante paucos annos cùm Sacellum hoc instaureretur, sub terra inuentus sit fons baptismalis è duro lapide. Iuxta Sacellum extant anguli & parietes longi magnique affabrè incisi & elaborati, vbi putatur fuisse villa & domus S. Publij.

119. Cajetano, *op.cit.*, p. 153; he died in 1620.

120. Valletta Ms. 25, f.17; Marchi, *op.cit.*, p. 33, publishes this passage from the inaccurate Ms. 644 (copied in 1901).

121. Cornelius à Lapide, *op.cit.*, p. 349.