

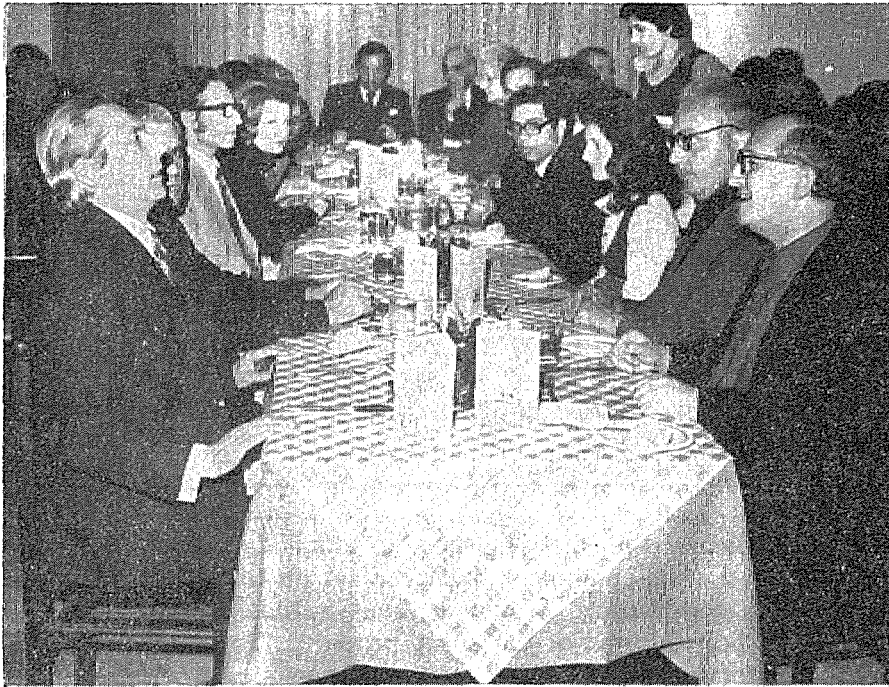
THE MALTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

by

the Hon. Secretary

The year 1975 marks the 25th anniversary of the *Malta Historical Society — Soċjeta Storika ta' Malta*. For this reason the Committee of the Society has sought to celebrate the occasion by holding some special activities. Two particular events were the holding of an Anniversary Dinner and the setting up of an Exhibition of Melitensia 1900-1975.

The Anniversary Dinner was held at the Fortizza Restaurant, S'iemra, on the 15th March 1975. Many members and their guests attended. The guests of honour were the Hon. Minister of Education and Culture, Dr. Joseph Cassar, and Mrs. Cassar. The members were addressed by Mgr. Prof. A. Bonnici, President and founder of the M.H.S., who recalled how the Society was founded in 1950 and expressed the desire that it should continue to flourish and increase its activities. The Hon. Minister of Education also addressed the participants after the dinner. He remarked



that the Government appreciates the work that is being done by the Society in the cultural field. Quoting Cicero, he pointed out that History should be considered as an important subject by any nation for it helps us remember the past, it shows the truth and it serves as a teacher for life.

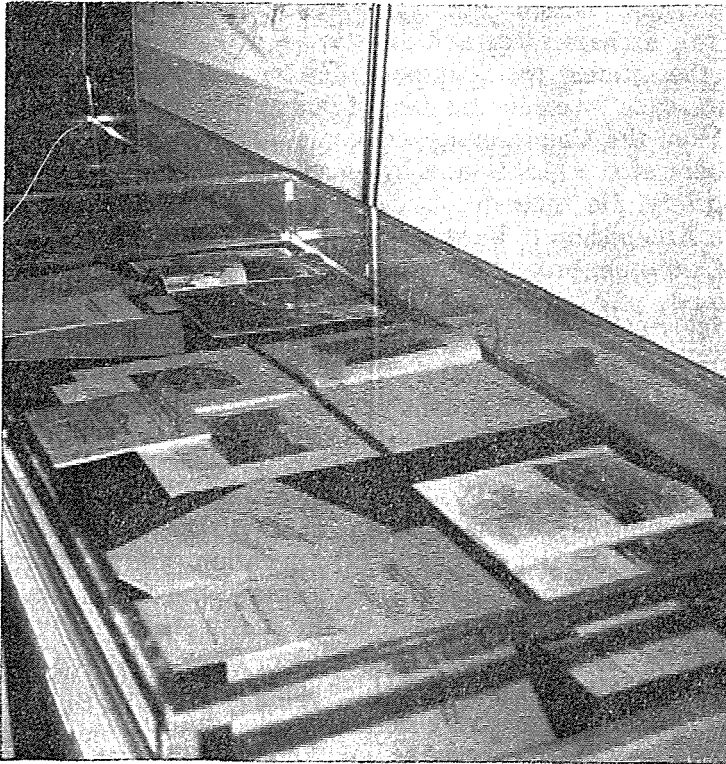
The "Melitensia 1900-1975" Exhibition was mounted in St John's Annexe, Valletta, and it proved to be quite a success. It was the first exhibition of printed books and articles on the History of the Maltese Islands. The Exhibition was officially declared open on the 3rd June 1975 by the Hon. the Chief Justice, Prof. J.J. Cremona, President of the Courts of Justice and Judge of the European Court of Human Rights, and blessed by His Grace the Archbishop, Mgr. M. Gonzi.



In welcoming the distinguished guests, Mgr. Prof. A. Bonnici, explained that a sub-committee had been set up to organize the Exhibition. Various contributors provided about a thousand items not all of which could be exhibited in the space provided. The works had to deal with the history of Malta and consisted of books and periodicals which were published between 1900-1975. These were divided into various sections including: Journals containing articles of historical interest, Bibliography and Methodology, General History, Prehistory and Ancient

History, Middle Ages, The Great Siege, Political and Civil History, Social and Economic History, Religious and Ecclesiastical History, History of Art and Architecture, Literary and Linguistic History, The Second World War, Towns and Villages.

In order to show continuity in historical research, a special section was reserved for Maltese Historiography. Here pioneer works were shown. In another section all the volumes so far published of *Melita Historica* were presented.



Mgr. Bonnici concluded his introductory speech by thanking the various contributors and helpers and by inviting His Hon. the Chief Justice to declare the Exhibition open.

The Hon. the Chief Justice noted that twenty five years ago Mgr. Bonnici had made an appeal to the general public to revive the Historical and Scientific Society of Malta or to set up a new historical organization

which would be able to continue to encourage the study of Maltese history. This led to the setting up of the Malta Historical Society.

The Successive Committees that were set up did their best to fulfil the aims of the Society as outlined by its pioneers. During these 25 years the Society's activities included conferences and seminars, the cataloguing of certain archives and publications, the publishing of bibliographical indexes, and the encouragement to further the study of our nation's history. The greatest achievement is the publication of *Me'ta Historica*, the first number of which was published in 1952. In its various numbers so far published, various studies — religious and political, folkloristic and natural, archeological and artistic — are included. The Exhibition indicates the interest which is being felt among Maltese and foreigners in order to reach an understanding of our nation's history.

The Hon. the Chief Justice concluded his speech by congratulating the members of the M.H.S. and by encouraging them to follow the aims of the Society. He then declared the Exhibition open and invited His Grace the Archbishop to bless it.

The Exhibition proved to be a great success. The organizing committee was made of Mgr. Prof. A. Bonnici, President, Can. V. Borg, Dr. A. Ganado, Mr. Ch. Galea Scannura and Dr. J. Mangion, secretary. The main contributors to the Exhibition were the R.U.M. Library, Dr. A. Ganado, Dr. F. Damato, Prof. Ġużè Galea, Mgr. Prof. Bonnici, Mr. Ch. Galea Scannura, Rev. Prof. A.P. Vella, the Pope John XXIII Memorial Library, Dr G. Bonello, Dr. J. Mangion, Rev. Can. V. Borg, Dr. E. Sammut, Dr. H. Ganado, Mr. G. Saliba, Dr. G. Wettinger and Mr. M. Ellul.

The Committee of the Society also wishes to thank the Rev. Cathedral Chapter, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Public Works, the R.U.M. Library, the Royal Ma'ta Library and the Cathedral Museum of Mdina, the Malta Allied Newspapers Ltd. and the Phoenicia Hotel, Prof. Ġużè Galea, Chev. Emvin Cremona, Dr. E. Sammut and Mr. G. Lanfranco for their various help and assistance.

A Catalogue of the Exhibition, compiled by Dr. J. Mangion, was subsequently published. It updates well-known bibliographical works and should certainly contribute towards a better awareness of Maltese history.