

# THE GOZO SEMINARY PAPERS IN THE MALTESE JESUIT PROVINCE ARCHIVES

Introductory notes by **Salv. Mallia**.

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The Gozo Seminary was founded in 1866, two years after the erection of the Gozo Diocese. The contract signed between the Jesuit Provincial, Padre Fontana, and the Bishop, Mgr. M. Buttigieg, stipulated that the Jesuits were to provide a Rector and professors of dogmatic and moral theology, philosophy, Latin, Italian and English. The Fathers were allowed complete freedom in the running of the Seminary and in their work among the laity. The Seminary would have attached to it a boarding school in order to provide enough funds and the Bishop himself would contribute £250 annually.

The building offered the Jesuits had been erected as a hospital in 1783 but it had been out of use since 1838. During the tenure by the Jesuits many changes and additions were made.

The Gozo Seminary was a unique institution for it provided an education for students of all ages, from boys of eight to students of theology. Depending on their age the students belonged to one of three "camerate". There were the boarders who resided at the Seminary for ten months of the year and were allowed to go home on five special days; the day-boarders who had their midday meals at the Seminary; and the day-students who attended only the classes. The student population included many clerics some of them of a tender age.

During the 1860s there were no colleges in Malta. This meant that many Maltese students entered the Gozo Seminary to study under the Jesuits. But when other colleges opened in the following decades, especially St. Ignatius' College in St. Julians run by the English Jesuits, the number of Maltese students dwindled. Luckily their place was taken by Sicilian students at a time when Sicilian Jesuits were prohibited from opening colleges in Sicily. But in the 1880s the Jesuits opened two colleges, one at Messina and another in Acireale, and this time the number of Sicilian students diminished. To offset this loss the Jesuits in Gozo adapted their course of studies to that in Malta and succeeded in attracting a number of Maltese students.

The financial situation was at no time very happy. But the fees paid by Maltese students which were always higher than those paid by the Gozitan students, together with the salaries paid to the military chaplains and the

Jesuits teaching in Government schools were usually adequate. This situation, however, was one that the Jesuits never seriously tried to remedy and it led to a great conflict in 1905 when Fr Manwel Magri tried to set the finances of the Seminary on a more solid footing by raising the fees paid by Gozitans. He seems to have been right, but may have been too hasty. Anyway, he was thwarted by a group of Gozitan parents, and for the sake of peace he was obliged to give in.

Another source of conflict was the interference by members of the Cathedral Chapter whose limited outlook would have hampered the administration of the Seminary. The clash reached its climax in 1903 shortly before the Diocesan Synod. But it too was smoothed over.

The Jesuits' first duty was towards their students. To these they imparted not only instruction, but gave them the best spiritual formation they could. Besides encouraging all and sundry to frequent the sacraments, the Jesuits also set up the Sodality of Our Lady and the Apostleship of Prayer, which flourished among the more devout students. One of the Fathers was regularly assigned to take spiritual care of the Catholic British soldiers quartered at Fort Chambray at Mgarr. The military chaplain celebrated Sunday Mass, gave religious instruction to children and catechumens, visited families and the sick. The few Maltese Fathers attached to the Gozo Seminary would teach catechism, preach sermons, and hear confessions in the parishes. Retreats for clergy and laity at San Calcedonio (now known as Manresa Retreat House) at Victoria were another form of apostolate.

The Seminary had also attached to it a meteorological observatory founded in 1882, which published its data in the *Stonyhurst Observatory Bulletin* and later in the *Malta Daily Chronicle*.

In 1909 the Jesuits ceded the Seminary to the diocesan clergy. The most important reason for this was the need to staff properly S. Aloysius' College which had recently been opened to take the place of St. Ignatius' College which had closed down two years before.

During the 43 years the Gozo Seminary was run by the Jesuits more than 800 students were educated there. Of these about 100 were ordained priests. There were also many religious vocations, including some 20 Jesuits. Lawyers, judges, magistrates, University professors got their schooling at the Seminary. Among its most distinguished alumni were Mgr. Ambrose Agius, OSB, Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines, Mgr. Joseph Pace, Bishop of Gozo, Chief Justices Sir Arturo Mercieca and Sir Luigi Camilleri, and historian Sir Hannibal Scicluna.



## INS./ GOZO SEMINARY

1 Liber Ius continens ordinationes perpetuas et temporaneas a Generalibus missas et Ordinationes Provincialis perpetuas et temporaneas.

7 and 48 pages of mss.

First part contains copies of letters of Fr General dated 1861, 1867 and 1822; and two printed letters 1890; a letter of Rev. Fr. General L. Martin to Fr. Alberto Amico, S.J., Rector of Gozo Seminary, 15 Dec 1896.

Second part contains copies of 41 'ordinationes' of various Provincials, 1888-1898, and seven original Circulars, 1867 & 1899-1901.

2 Liber Memorialium continens Visitationes Collegii.

58 pages of mss. of recommendations made by Fr Provincials after their official 'visitations' to the Gozo Seminary, 1868-1907.

3 Liber 3us, 4us continens responsa Generalium Provinciae propriae vel omnibus data et Resolutiones casuum difficiliorum necnon nomina eorum qui vota emittunt et eorum qui ad ordines promoventur.

4 pages and loose-leaf of 'responsa' (1883-1899); another page and a half titled "postulata ad notitiam et directionem ex alienis provinciis" (1886); then follow listings of ordained to minor orders (1873-1894), ordained to the priesthood (1868-1899), of those who made Last Vows in Gozo Seminary and at B'Kara, and of those who made First Vows.

4 Libro di Consulte domestiche in questo Seminario Vescovile del Gozo dal giorno 6 November 1866. The last, 10 July 1909.

5A & B A. Diario del Seminario Vescovile del Gozo dal Settembre 1866 a Febbraio 1869 (inclusive). Primo Quaderno.

B. Diario del Seminario Vescovile del Gozo da Febbraio 1869 ad Agosto 1872 (inclusive). Secondo Quaderno.

The first two booklets of the day to day happenings of the Gozo Seminary covering the years 1866 to 1872. In all probability other booklets continuing the 'diary' have been lost.

6 Historia et Litterae Annuae Seminarii Convictus Gaudisiensis ab anno sui ortus 1866 ad annos sequentes.

122 pages of mss. Pp. 1-34 contain a summary of the Litterae Annuae "quae in Provinciae tabulario asservantur" pro-

bably made by the Scholastic Antonius Parisi and covering January 1890-mid 1892.

Pp. 37-122 contain extracts from, or the complete *Litterae Annuae* 1866-1907. "Anno Scolastico 1907-08" is described in what is probably a draft in Italian, on 12 detached pages. Also detached are 9 pages giving the reasons why the Seminary ought to be abandoned.

The years 1905-1906 are duplicated on separate pages.

7A & B A. Consuetudinario del Seminario Vescovile di Gozo.

43 pages of mss. followed by time-tables and a loose-leaf *Tabula Horarum*.

B. Solenne distribuzione di premi nel Seminario-Convitto del Gozo il giorno 13 luglio 1884.

Printed brochure "da conservarsi perchè vi sono in fine le leggi della Premiazione." The cover has impressed on it three clear impressions of the seal of the College. The arms (presumably) of the college are missing on page 3.

8 Raccolta di Avvisi che si leggono in refettoria in varie occasioni. 1889.

9 & 10 9. Avvisi settimanali per la Comunità dei Nostri letti nel Refettorio dal 26 Gennaio 1896 al 15 Giugno 1901.

10. \_\_\_\_\_ dal Giugno 1901 al 28 Luglio 1907.

11 Seminario-Convitto di Gozo. Consuetudinario per la Comunità e per gli Alunni.

45 pages of mss. followed by time-tables.

Seems to be a later customs book than INS/GOZO SEM. 7A

12 Seminario Vescovile di Gozo. Registro degli alunni ascritti all'Apostolato della Preghiera; resoconti delle Feste, Adunanze in onore dell Ssmo Cuor di Gesu e della Beata M. Alacoque. 1886-1902.

163 pages of mss. in a register (Index Rerum) with alphabetically arranged pages.

The mss. lists officials of the Apostleship of Prayer (p. A-F2, 1887/88—1900; inserted pages after G, 1901/02—1903/04), a listing of 447 “ascritti all’Arciconfraternita di Roma” (p. F3-G2) and the minutes of the meetings of ‘i dodici apostoli della Camerata dell SS. Cuore di Gesù’ (P-Z, apparently 1886-1893; and H-N, Seguito dei rendiconti, 1893/94 - 1902).

Appended to the mss. are copies of an act of consecration to the S. Heart.

13 Pro memoria del ministro.

Folder described as ‘pro memoria del ministro’ and containing:-

- a) an exercise book listing textbooks and their prices: “prezzi di libri vendibili”;
- b) a listing of textbooks for various classes;
- c) “orario per le vacanze del S. Natale”;
- d) the programme of a “saggio scolastico”;
- e) the programme of an “accademia in omaggio al R.P.R. Giuseppe Grech, S.J....”
- f) copy of ‘Inno al Ssmo Cuore di Gesù...’ 1900.

14 Informazioni sulla capacita intellettuale e sul profitto negli studi degli stud. del Seminario di Gozo, Candidati per gli Ordini.

12 pages of mss. of an exercise book listing about 95 candidates for Holy Orders and their abilities, or lack of them. One batch covers the years 1897/98; another 1902/03.

15 [Lists of students in various classes 1902/03-1908/09]

16 Catalogo degli alunni del Seminario-Convitto del Gozo, 1868 - 1892/93.

Register of students indicating name, date of birth, name of father or guardian, date of entry, division, level of study address and observations.

The first page of the register contains the time-table for

the year 1868. Loose leaves at back of register: a time-table for Sunday, a listing of students (1878/79) by provenance (Gozo, Malta, Sicily) and a ticket requesting the loan of a book from Fr. Mielak (sic).

- 17 Pensioni e rimborsi degli allievi del Seminario-Convitto di Gozo, 1 ottobre 1905 [-9 luglio 1909]

- 18 Corrispondenza della Procura di Provincia: anno corrente (i.e. 1907/1908)

A series of letters (copies?) mostly dealing with mass intentions.

- 19 Seminario-Convitto di Gozo: Registro degli Associati alla Santa Infanzia, 1896 - 1902.

A list of 278 names together with another list of 62 names on a separate sheet.

- 20A & B A. Libro di controllo per le compre a credito dall'anno 1901-1902 all'anno...

Noted 'M. Angelo Galea': contains only 21 used chits dated 1902 and one dated 1904.

- B. Libro di controllo per le compre a credito dall'anno 1901-1902 all'anno 1903.

Noted 'Faenza': contains 41 used chits.

- 21 Biblioteca Circolante Prov[inciae] Sic[ulae] S.J.: Catalogo.

A listing by author and title of 940 books. The catalogue also contains the books listed by a progressive accession number and an "indice degli autori contenuti in questo catalogo secondo le materie e gli argomenti delle opere loro che qui si ritrovano".

Also 'appendice prima nella scansia centrale in alto — seconda divisione' and 'Appendice 2 da scansia n.3, la divisione in alto'.

- 22 Catalogo dei libri del Can.co Formosa (20 settembre 1885)

- 23 Histoire naturelle.

Handwritten notes of natural history, in French.