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INTRODUCTION

The second issue of this Journal has been made possible by the new contributors whom we thank for their collaboration. The publication of this Journal encroaches on our limited time in an understaffed University which, though the oldest in the British Commonwealth overseas, has never been sufficiently endowed or financed to enable the members of the Teaching Staff to devote more time to extra-curricular activities. Economic life is getting harder everywhere. It is getting more ruthlessly hard also in our country where the demands for a higher standard of living and a sense of greater economic security come from many quarters, all equally loud and insistent. The editors of this journal, no doubt like their colleagues in other countries, believe not only in a higher standard of living worthy of the European Christian traditions of their homeland, but also in a higher standard of thinking and feeling. We have provided this medium of publication for our colleagues and scholars, both Maltese and non-Maltese who do not belong to this Institution, precisely to provide a medium which will find space for their contributions on any Art subject provided the standard is satisfactory.

Through this Journal we have created a number of contacts with other Universities with which we have established exchange of publications. The response was satisfactory and we are glad that this Journal has enabled us not only to introduce our Faculty to other Art Faculties abroad, but also to know more about other universities which, enjoying, unlike the University of Malta, greater financial advantages, fulfil an essential mission in their societies and the world of learning.

We intend to widen our contacts with British and non-British Universities as much as possible.

THE EDITORS

OUR NEW CONTRIBUTORS

Aquilina, J., *see* vol. I, No. 1.

Cassar Pullicino, J., *see* vol. I, No. 1.

Cavaliero, Roderick, former master at St Edward's College and Additional Lecturer in Economic and Social History of Europe. This year is in the service of the British Council.

Coleiro, Most Rev.^o Mgr E., *see* vol. I, No. 1.

Cremona, A., author of the Standard Grammar of the Maltese Language, poet and playwright, Assistant Editor of *Il-Malti*, Examiner in Maltese at the Royal University of Malta.

Di Pietro, A., Professor of Italian in the Royal University of Malta.

Fiorentini, Bianca, a graduate of the University of Bologna. Examiner in Economics and Sociology in the Royal University of Malta.

Galea, His Lordship Mgr E., Bishop of Tralles and formerly Professor of Canon Law in the Royal University of Malta.

Sultana, Donald E., *see* vol. I, No. 1.

MODERN ENGLISH POETRY*

By J. AQUILINA

It is the fashion to-day to speak of the crisis of this and the crisis of that; but the ominous word, I am afraid, indicates a fear at the back of our mind that is by no means imaginary. It indicates an alarming turning point in our civilization, our sense of insecurity. There is also a crisis in Poetry and that is precisely the title of the book on the subject by Professor V. de Sola da Pinto. Fewer men and women read poetry to-day not only in England but also in other countries. The problem has become so acute, the poet has been so alarmed by his growing isolation, that he has decided to study the position carefully and do something about it. Last year M. Pierre-Louis Flouquet, the editor of *Journal des Poètes* convened a meeting of 150 poets in Belgium, under the chairmanship of M. Jean Cassou. The poets representing forty nations were asked to study and provide answers for the following questions:

Comment faire pénétrer plus avant la Poésie dans le peuple?

Ne doit-on pas souhaiter une critique poétique plus technique?

Mr. W.G. Bebbington in the preface to his anthology *Introducing Modern Poetry*, compiled with the express purpose of showing that not 'all modern poetry is occult and incomprehensible', writes with the experience of a headmaster that English boys and girls are leaving the secondary schools thinking that poetry is the moribund hobby of antiquarians; and as a citizen', he continued, 'I also know that most adults have the same idea'. 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' is still the *pièce de résistance* of a party, and the only contemporary verse that seems to be widely known and appreciated is the dance-tune 'lyric' and the music-hall 'monologue'.

As you see, to speak of a crisis in Poetry is by no means to indulge in hyperboles in order to underline the decline of poetic literature. Poetry is moribund. Those who, years ago, anticipated its slow death because of the increasing pressure of the sciences and technology now rub their hands self-complacently and tell us 'I told you so in good time. Poetry in this mechanistic age has no chance.' When I was still an undergraduate, I wrote an essay in Italian to show that, though poetry might suffer many a setback, it would not be killed outright; that sooner or later there would

* Lecture delivered in the British Institute of Valletta, in 1953.

be a come-back. That to-day is still my opinion – poetry as one of the graces of civilization cannot go completely out of fashion though publication may become so difficult, as it has become in our times, that verse will have to be published in slim books or even in typescript for private circulation.

That is the unhappy position to-day. These are the sad facts that we have to face. But we must push our inquiry into the present conditions further if we wish really to find why English Poetry, one of the greatest glories of the British people, greater indeed than their perishable empire, has been losing the support of the British public. As I have already pointed out, this lack of support is by no means British only; it is French, Italian, German; it is, briefly, international; as epidemic as the plague in the Dark Ages. Therefore, in discussing the reasons for this disturbing decline we have to dig deep into the soil of contemporary civilization till we reach the roots of the trouble, for all serious diseases attack the roots first.

What is Modern Poetry and what does it set out to achieve? Modern is by no means a synonym of 'contemporary', mind you. The value of the word is more 'formal' than 'chronological'. Lascelles Abercrombie, Hilaire Belloc, Laurence Binyon, Edmund Blunden, Walter de la Mare and others are contemporary but not modern in the sense that Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Auden, Stephen Spender and others are 'modern'. Let me explain myself, When I say that poets like Walter de la Mare and the rest of the list I have read are not 'modern', I do not mean that these poets are old in the sense that they have nothing new to say to us, their contemporaries, that was not said by their predecessors, and that the moderns on the other hand are the heralds of the New Message. What I want to say is that the moderns are those poets, who, by virtue of their verse-technique, largely of an experimental nature, and the subject-matter or the approach to it, have broken away from old rules.

Who are the modern poets, the men that have broken away from tradition? If you think of the poetic movement as a planetary system, you will have to place T.S. Eliot right in the centre as the sun, and the other known minor poets as the stars revolving around this centre and in time breaking away from it to form, in their turn, a poetic planetary system of their own. Such are H.W. Auden, William Empson, Stephen Spender, Louis MacNiece, Cecil Day Lewis, and Dylan Thomas. There are other minor stars in the constellation.

T.S. Eliot who hailed Ezra Pound as *il miglior fabbro* is the veteran of the movement. He is now sixty-five years old while the oldest of the moderns, Cecil Day Lewis is forty-nine years old and the youngest Dylan

is thirty-nine years old. When T.S. Eliot wrote his 'Prufrock - and other Observations' - new poetic shock tactics at that time - in 1911 Cecil Day Lewis was seven years old, W.H. Auden a four year old baby and Dylan Thomas still *in mente Dei*.

T.S. Eliot is easily the pontiff of the Moderns, though we must admit he was more so before he anchored his beliefs in High Anglicanism that younger left-wing poets of the aggressive thirties did not approve. But loyalty to the master has never failed completely, nor it is likely to do so because the poetic stature of T.S. Eliot is a tower of strength in the precarious fortress of Modern Poetry. That his poetry remains remote from the general public is a misfortune that not even genius can help, for genius accepts the vision and prophet-like it interprets it in human language. Mark you, I have already expressed my admiration for the pontiff of the Moderns not without a cautionary 'but'. T.S. Eliot has always been, and will always be, the poet of the select few and the fact that, like the prophets of the Old Testament, he has in his own time several exegetes expounding and commenting his poetry to make it intelligible is already proof enough that though T.S. Eliot stands on top of a tower, he stands so far above the heads of the crowds of men and women down the streets below that he can never be their poet in time of happiness or distress. T.S. Eliot has given England great poetry that will affect literary coteries but not the people. In other words, T.S. Eliot's poetry is difficult poetry - difficult because it is so personal; because so much is private property, so much is occult and so little can be communicated clearly enough. But ... O, yes, the critic will say 'communication, poetic communication need not, indeed should not, be so spread out all on the surface that it leaves nothing to the imagination'. And he will remind me of what the French poet Mallarmé wrote on the subject: 'To name an object', says Mallarmé, 'is to do away with three quarters of that delight in a poem which consists in unravelling it bit by bit. It must be suggestive; poetry must always remain a riddle'. I could not agree more - poetry is not a dish you can serve hot on a plate for your guests. I agree but - again there is a 'but' - I do not agree that poetry should be 'a riddle'. Poetry should suggest more than state; and good poetry does so according to the suggestive force, the associative range of the inspired poet (mark the word *inspired*), but to say that it should be like a conundrum or enigma expressly intended to be puzzling or mysterious, calling for the emergency assistance of obliging contemporary critics to puzzle out the poet's riddles is sheer heresy. And that I am afraid explains why modern poetry has lost its public, if it ever had one apart from the members of the coteries and the intellectual admirers. We all like riddles - like not only to puzzle out other people's riddles

but to turn our own life into a riddle. That way lies the barbed wire which cuts off the poets from the reader, especially the modern reader with little time to spare and, alas, with little will to support not only a theological faith, but also a poetic faith that clothes itself in laboured phrases and strained, erratic imagery.

Puzzling out obscure poetry may be good fun for the intellectual critic who is willing to exercise not only his critical acumen but also his own imagination. Professor J. Isaacs in his book *The Background of Modern Poetry* tells a delightful little anecdote. 'To remember', he says, 'Mr J.L. Richard's strange analysis of *A Cooking Egg*, telling the author about it, and particularly of the view that 'the red-eyed scavengers' creeping from Kentish Town and Golders Green were Mr Eliot's favourite rats, this time with red eyes and Mr Eliot assured me, with his hand on his heart, that he never looked a rat in the eyes'.

You see, how the imaginative critic contributes to the stock of the poet's fluid imagery his orgy of extravagant conceits. To defend himself, he may say that whether the image was actually intended by the poet or not, if it was suggested by the associative context even inadvertently, its explanation is legitimate because its existence, though unintended, was 'embryonic'. The contention is that the poet not only creates but he also suggests and what he suggests grows in the imagination of the reader who has his own association of ideas. The poet's suggestion may be compared to a seed that grows into a many branched tree in the reader's imagination. There is something in this, I agree, but this is no defence of arbitrary commentaries on the poetic output of deliberately obscure poets.

I remember an English colleague of mine who has since made a name as a classical scholar in England reading my poem 'The Canto of Snakes' with unusual interest. In this poem I used the Bull as a symbol of insatiable Lust—Sex the merciless taskmaster that drives men and women in the vicious circle of the tremendous unresolved conflict between morality and biology. He asked me to explain to him what I really meant to convey by the Animal-Symbol, and I was amused to hear references to the phallic virtues of the Bull unintended by me but, I must admit, not unsuitable to the context.

I admit a legitimate freedom of interpretation to the imaginative critic who is freer to exercise his imagination when the poet is dead, but I cannot help feeling that there is much verbal bluff, intellectual perversity, in some of the commentaries that are published from time to time to explain the 'imaginary obscurity' of the poet. The learned critic provides the key, though what he providee is indeed the key to his own imagination stirred by the poet's vision. T.S. Eliot must have been agreeably and disagreeably

surprised by the commentaries of some of his devoted critics.

In my younger days, in the early thirties of the century when I was still an undergraduate, 'futurism' was the vogue, at least in Maltese literary circles. Ungaretti had his student devotees and two of these, prematurely dead, would recognize no poet other than Ungaretti. I was on the side of the poet with a message, even if he was a traditionalist, and I tried to convince them that our hero-worship is often a servile acceptance of the arbitrary judgement of the critics of the day. On another occasion, I tried a harmless stratagem. I studied Ungaretti's verse technique, wrote a poem in his style and claiming the authorship of one of Ungaretti's own poems I attributed to him the imitation poem I had composed. Then I asked my friends what on-earth could make them think that Ungaretti's poem was more than a trifle, once I could imitate his style so easily. There was a general laugh. 'But my dear friend' retorted one of them, 'read Ungaretti's poem properly and note the beauty of the imagery, the compressed ideas, the associations and the unusual vocabulary. How dare you say that you can imitate his poem? Yours is so thin by comparison. It is no more than a bauble! That was my little triumph. My professor of Italian, the late Dr V. Laurenza, was amused; only he who knew Italian literature better than myself and my friends, while praising the imitation, said that a more careful reader of Ungaretti would not have been so easily deceived. Anyhow, I felt I proved to my friends that poetry is more than technique, and that if it is nothing more it is uninspired verse, and that we praised Ungaretti and the advanced moderns not because we really understood them, but because that was the literary fashion of the time. I still think that is as true today as it was then. The cult of obscurity has received support from intellectual critics not unwilling to use their own imagination, but it has never appealed to the general reader.

I cannot help feeling that the obscurity of some of the modern poets is deliberate. Now deliberate obscurity puts off the reader who reads poetry because he expects something in return for his effort — the communication of a pleasant feeling, a message, comfort in distress, beauty amidst ugliness, faith amidst so much rejection, dignity amidst so much indignity; an interpretation of his inner self, the hard struggle that takes place in the inner world of Thought and Feeling. But if instead of all this, or something like it, instead of a recognizable communication he is presented with jumbles of hard words, nouns and adjectives strung together haphazard in the unusual or unnatural way in order merely to surprise him by what one might describe as 'shock tactics', the disappointed reader will put down the book of verse and employ his time more profitably. And that

I am afraid is what many potential poetry readers are doing — they are seeking other outlets, and when they feel like reading good poetry they go back to the immortals who have written imperishable poetry which, being above all fashion and as high up as the Tower of Man's aspiring soul, will always find an echo in the hearts of the younger and older generations.

I am a lover of poetry; but one who finds little human value in the contemporary poetic output remarkable mainly for daring new verse technique, new rhythms, new poetic experiments. I am one of those who without despising some of the best contemporary poets find more understanding and comprehension amongst the older bards. And is it not strange, after all, that a poet who lived four hundred or six hundred years ago should still please more than a contemporary? In Dante's and Chaucer's time the poet was his own critic and there were no professional critics to tell him how to write or not to write. There were great classics to follow and to learn from. That was the time when poets obeyed their genius which instinctively finds its own suitable medium and, being men of higher principles (most principles have been debunked in our Atomic Age¹), they responded to higher levels of inspiration.

I must not give an impression that I am no admirer of T.S. Eliot or that I do not rate him as high as he deserves. Let me tell you that I admire this Anglo-American, Anglo-Catholic poet and appreciate his invaluable contribution to English imagery and rhythm. What I regret is that other poets not immediately inspired like him carried his technique to an extreme that is often self-defeating and sometimes outrageous as most un-inspired imitations are.

What makes modern poetry rather, and sometimes very difficult? To answer this question properly, we have to bear in mind that one of the more important achievements of modern poetry is the creation of new rhythms and new images — images most unorthodox when compared with those of the classical and Romantic poets. An image, 'is an imitation, rough imitation, of the external form of an object, or an interpretation of a concept in visual or auditory form'. Ponder this definition which is by no means perfect, and you will note that there are therefore two terms of reference in an image — the object or concept on the one hand, and its representation on the other. These two terms of reference are brought and linked together by a logical nexus. When I compare the face of my beloved to the sun, or her lips to a rose, you will judge the image good or bad in proportion to its visual representation, the link between the object compared and the symbol. Now if this nexus is not logical — if it is strained, far-fetched, or hackneyed — the image falls flat or becomes unrecognizable.

Most modern poetry is difficult precisely because it employs unlinked images. The attempt to extend the frontiers of the Poetic Image is praiseworthy – poets are explorers and the inspired phrase ceases to be so when it is continuously employed as a matter of verbal habit. The war on stereotyped images, phrases, hackneyed comparisons has enriched the English vocabulary. Modern poets have not only revitalized the overworked vocabulary of the English Muse, they have also enriched it with new rhythms. Free verse supported by well-balanced rhythms has dug up long-buried treasures of the English Muse. That is all very well. But extremes meet and verse that is too free is 'Loose Verse' and images that are far-fetched or strained to breaking point are 'empty conceits' – ill-strung beads that do not make a rosary.

A significant contribution that the Moderns have made to Poetry is their liberation of the poetic vocabulary from the hackneyed words and overworked phrases and the incorporation of hard, commonplace words into the poetic vocabulary. But again extremes meet. Human language pushed beyond certain frontiers – poetic frontiers in our case – becomes gibberish or just commonplace prose. Alas, modern poetry abounds in both!

I shall now give you examples of the verbal and formal technique used by modern poets. The examples are mainly from T.S. Eliot and in the case of this poet, the master mind of the movement, they are not intended as criticism of his poetry but as illustrations of a technique so often abused by inferior poets. I give you examples of orthodox imagery which may be surprisingly pleasant even when you feel it has somehow leaped over the boundaries of reality and unorthodox imagery that is unconvincing.

In 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' we find the following animal-image of Fog, an image, which I confess I like very much.

After telling us that: 'In the room the women come and go talking of Michaelangelo', the poet writes that:

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
 The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes
 Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
 Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
 Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
 Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
 And seeing that it was a soft October night,
 Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

The comparison of fog to the body of a Beast lying heavily on the houses surprises us by its unexpected appropriateness, so surprisingly evident

yet never thought of before. Having accepted the Animal-image of fog, the description of animal movements enforces the image and its poetic effect in an apt context. Note in the passage the 'colloquial tone', the repetitions, and verse-freedom, with which we shall deal later on. 'A Cooking Egg', on the other hand contains images which, lacking the element of 'pleasant surprise,' lack poetic cogency. Here are the last nine lines:

But where is the penny world I bought
To eat with Pipit behind the screen?
The red-eyed scavengers are creeping
From Kentish Town and Golder's Green;

Where are the eagles and the trumpets?

Buried beneath some snow-deep Alps.
Over buttered scones and crumpets
Weeping, weeping multitudes
Droop in a hundred A.B.C's.

No wonder Dr Richards mistook 'the red-eyed scavengers' for T.S. Eliot's favourite mice!

In the lines I have quoted apart from the fifth and sixth, there is no recognizable poetry, no compelling imagery, no intelligible message. Verbally, I think that not a few lines of this poem qualify as examples of 'sheer gibberish'.

I give you another example of obscure verse by Dylan Thomas, the first twelve lines of his poem 'Then was my Neophyte'. Unravel the pretentious puzzle, if you can!:

When was my neophyte,
Child in white blood bent on its knees
Under the bell of rocks,
Ducked in the twelve, disciple seas
The winder of the water-clocks
Calls a green day and night.
My sea hermaphrodite,
Snail of man in His ship of fires
That burn the bitten-decks,
Knew all His horrible desires
The climber of the water sex
Calls the green rock of light.

I agree there are flashes of a powerful imagination, but they are all

sparks flying crazily about, not one beam strong and straight enough to pierce the darkness.

In the passage from the Song of Prufrock, I called your attention to the 'colloquial tone'. This is a feature of much modern poetic diction. Wordsworth tried Common Man's speech avoiding naturally his strong language that does not frighten the hard-boiled modern poet, and failed. The moderns have used Common Man's speech with varying success. T.S. Eliot has used it too, and the effect sometimes is palatable, and sometimes not quite so.

Here are examples of modern colloquial diction. The following is a passage from T.S. Eliot 'A Game of Chess'.

'My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
 'Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.
 'What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
 'I never know what you are thinking. Think;

I think we are in rats' alley
 Where the dead men lost their bones.

'What is that noise?
 The wind under the door
 'What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?'
 Nothing again nothing.

I wouldn't condemn this style at all, because it derives its strength from the context. Note how the second part contextualises the colloquial tone of the first part. The two parts together create an atmosphere. 'I think we are in rats' alley' carries with it a cold breeze from the world of fear. The image is well minted. It creates an atmosphere and that is one of the functions of a certain type of poetry—the mental type of poetry, the introspective type of poetry that probes deep into unexplored corners of the human psyche and receives pleasant and unpleasant shocks from the discoveries which it makes there below, deep down under the skin.

Gone for good is the poetic language of the dreamy Romantics. It has been replaced by the unpoetic vocabulary of everyday life which, when employed with discretion, carries with it the native poetry of the people's own soul, but down are the barriers that keep Prose and Verse apart formally and substantially.

Here are some examples of poetic language that Coleridge, Shelley and Keats would have rejected straightaway: the passage is from the "Triumphal

March, that has also some beautiful passages:

We can wait with our stools and sausages.
 What comes first? Can you see? Tell us. It is
 5,800,000 rifles and carbines,
 102,000 machine-guns,
 28,000 trench mortars,
 53,000 field and heavy guns.
 I cannot tell how many projectiles, mines and fuses
 13,000 aeroplanes,
 24,000 aeroplane engines,
 50,000 ammunition waggons,
 now 55,000 army waggons,
 11,000 field kitchens,
 1,150 field bakeries.

This 'atmosphere' passage is part of a series of more poetic statements, and the intention is, no doubt, to debunk a myth or a convention by heightening the prosaic effect of the drabber side of stark reality, the halo of which is effectively and not less realistically introduced thus:

Stone, bronze, stone, steel, oakleaves, horses' heels
 Over the paving.
 And the flags, And the trumpets, And so many eagles.
 How many? Count them. And such a press of people.
 We hardly knew ourselves that day, or knew the City.

Other similar passages could be easily culled from the poems of minor poets, passages as prosaic and even more incomprehensible and altogether unredeemed by the argument of a suitable 'atmosphere' context.

When I called your attention to Eliot's free verse you surely noticed, even from the few examples that I gave you, first that he uses also, though less frequently, the traditional measures of the older poets to express a subject-matter which is, however, completely modern, and that his free verse has a discipline of its own, a discipline of scansion which though determined by no fixed, unalterable laws, exercises its control not less effectively and sometimes even more so than the fixed measures of modern poetry, playing on new rhythms and undertones which extended the auditory field already broadened by his predecessors, among those the most distinguished being Fr Gerald Manley Hopkins S. J. who employed sprung rhythms with surprising effect. That is the supreme merit of T. S.

Eliot and of some of the younger modern poets – they have enlarged the auditory and visual field of English poetry. Even their failures have not been without their use. They have given something to the language, made the English poetic idiom more flexible and driven the roots of vision deeper down into the flesh and blood of man caught between the hidden forces of his own humanity and the world he has to live in. And as Man's soul is obscure, so has the poetry of the modern poet been obscure and inevitably experimental.

I feel I must pay this tribute to the modern poets because the tribute is indeed deserved, and I do not wish to give the impression that my attitude to their poetry is negative or unresponsive. I condemn the perverse experiment that would, if possible, cut off modern poetry from its historical sources, which like plenteous rivers flow down the centuries winding about the confluent directions. But T.S. Eliot, unlike some of the modern daring, though less able, modern poets, does not despise tradition. He is the president of the Virgil Society that wishes to preserve the Latin Christian tradition of the West and is also a cultured admirer of Dante Alighieri.

So far I have quoted passages from his Collected Poems to illustrate his poetic technique in so far as it is characteristic of modern poetry. I am now going to quote another passage for its sheer beauty which more than justifies his technical experiments along the untrammelled road of free verse – a disciplined freedom that gives longer breath to Verse, wider girth to the body of Poetry and a rich instrument to play upon to the twentieth century. I could quote numerous such passages from *The Waste Land* and *The Quartet*, and his verse plays such as *Reunion* and *Cocktail Party*.

But I must limit the selection to a passage from Poem V in *Ash Wednesday*. Hear the deep counterpointed music and note the suggestive imagery, the content of which is suitably intellectual.

If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent
 If the unheard, unspoken
 Word is unspoken, unheard;
 Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,
 The Word without a word, the Word within
 The world and for the world;
 And the light shone in darkness and
 Against the World the unstilled world still whirled
 About the centre of the silent Word.

O my people, what have I done unto thee.

Where shall the word be found, where will the word
 Resound? Not here, there is not enough silence
 Not on the sea or on the islands, not
 On the mainland, in the desert or the rain land,
 For those who walk in darkness
 Both in the day and in the night time
 The right time and the right place are not here
 No place of grace for those who avoid the face
 No time to rejoice for those who walk among noise and deny the voice

Will the veiled sister pray for
 Those who walk in darkness, who choose thee and oppose thee,
 Those who are torn on the horn between season and season, time and
 time, between
 Hour and hour, word and word, power and power, those who wait
 In darkness? Will the veiled sister pray
 For the children at the gate
 Who will go away and cannot pray:
 Pray for those who choose and oppose

O my people, what have I done unto thee.

Will the veiled sister between the slender
 Yew trees pray for those who offend her
 And are terrified and cannot surrender
 And affirm before the world and deny between the rocks
 In the last desert between the last blue rocks
 The desert in the garden the garden in the desert
 Of drouth, spitting from the mouth the withered apple-seed

O my people.

I do not expect you to understand more than I have. Like most of T.S. Eliot's verse, this passage is obscure in parts but you cannot miss the rhythm of the lines — it is largely counterpoint, mind you.

I promised you a lecture on English modern poets and I have spoken more about T.S. Eliot than about any of the modern group. That is so. But to tackle all the best modern poets would be more than I could possibly do, and I have instead dealt with the master of the movement whose style, if not his ideas, have been imitated, sometimes also assimilated and re-directed, by his devoted followers.

The qualities of style and diction that I have noted in the poetry of T.S. Eliot are shared to a varying degree by the younger poets that followed

his poetic school. This does not mean that there is nothing individual in Dylan Thomas, Auden, MacNiece, Day Lewis and a few others. These poets have their own individual approach to poetic idiom, but they share the formal idiosyncrasies of the new literary style. In these, and other modern poets, you notice obscurities, deliberate irrelevancies, repetitions for emphasis and atmosphere, colloquialism, and musical phrases within the unrestricted rush of free verse, the subject-matter being mainly subjective, the flowering of an introspective mind at war with itself and its environment. Those interested in modern English poetry will learn more about it if they will read the poet's own work. There is much that you will reject; much that will not evoke the slightest response from you; much will irritate you; but those of you who love poetic experiments will find much that is new and fresh in verbal imagery and musical phraseology, the musical undertones of rich counterpoint, provided you have a trained ear and are prepared to cudgel your brains not a little in order to squeeze some meaning out of the many jumbles of bold and very often strained images.

We now go back to the beginning of this lecture — the decline of interest in poetry and poets, a decline of which even the poets themselves are painfully aware. Modern English poetry is so difficult and so obscure that the average reader no longer thinks of it as a source of diversion for himself in his hour of depression or of strength in his hour of doubt. It is for him too cerebral an exercise, too much like a difficult cross-word puzzle, too heavy an entertainment, or shall we say most unentertaining entertainment. Hence poetry has ceased to sell, and publishers do not willingly publish books of Verse at their own expense except for those whose reputation is already established.

The average reader, if he reads poetry at all, reads the classics, and more intelligible poets like Walter de la Mare, and Yeats. Is the new technique standing in the way of great poetry? That is a sensible question that some one might ask at this stage. There is nothing wrong with technique. What is wrong is the adventitious obscurity and the morbid, almost schizophrenic interest in the underworld of the human soul and its pathetic 'jargon'. We want more sanity, more cheerfulness and more faith — more ideals to live and die for.

Great Poetry is the product of great times and those times are great that rest on Faith and Dignity, as on two unshakeable pillars. Our mechanized age has left us little of the faith that inspired Dante, Milton and Thompson, little of the dignity that fired the imagination of Shakespeare and the Greek dramatists, little of the nobility of that philosophy which considered this world as a stepping stone to a better one and Man as a

child of God. There are echoes but oh how faint! Indeed how faintly Dylan Thomas's statement in the preface to his collected Poems published recently by Dent that 'his poems with all their crudities doubts and confusions are written for the love of man in the praise of God', echoes Milton's prayer to God in Book I of 'Paradise Lost'.

what in me is dark
 Illumine, what is low raise and support;
 That, to the height of this great argument,
 I may assert Eternal Providence,
 And justify the ways of God to men.

The inauspicious times have certainly dwarfed the contemporary poetic stature not only in England but also in other parts of the world.

Gone are the times of the great poetic geniuses. Gone are the Giants. The world awaits impatiently the second Renaissance, but this re-birth will come only when men and women recapture the lost faith and the lost dignity. Economic man is a failure.

What is the present strength of Modern poetry? Is it on the increase or is it on the decline?

Here is a brief estimate by an anonymous reviewer of the Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas in the 'Times Literary Supplement' of Nov. 28th (1952): 'Twenty years ago', says the reviewer, 'English poetry seemed to be on the threshold of some momentous success. Yeats had performed his astonishing feat of rejuvenation and taken his place past gainsaying among the great poets of England. Mr Eliot had moved from 'The Waste Land' to 'Ash Wednesday', and his influence on the young writers was already having exciting results. Much was looked for from the new left-wing poets. The elect who read Mr Day Lewis's 'A Hope for Poetry', and then Michael Roberts's 'Faber Book of Modern Verse' in 1936, felt they were assisting at the christening of a child from whom a great deal might be expected. To-day the position is very different, and some say that the child born then has already come to a premature death. We have been enriched immensely by Yeats's last poems and by 'The Four Quartets' (which seem likely to stand as Mr Eliot's greatest achievement). But Yeats is dead, Mr Eliot gives no sign of writing but plays, and Mr Ezra Pound, to whose explorations modern poets owe so much, is confined in an American asylum. The young poets of the early thirties still enjoy considerable celebrity, and produce slim volumes of verse at intervals; but no one awaits these with the excitement that attended their early poems. Their bluff has been called -- only it was the reading public that bluffed itself and the elephant in the moon is revealed as a mouse in the telescope'.

That is the estimate of Modern English poetry in a review otherwise flattering to Dylan Thomas.

Is there no hope for Poetry? Has the Muse so damned herself that she will never expiate her Sin? The hope of poetry, like the hope of Christianity, is the hope of Civilization itself. We are often told that 'time marches on' and so it does; but we are not as often reminded that 'time marches also backwards'.

This dreadful age of machines shall outlive its purpose one day, when there will be a return to a more worthwhile age of Culture and Faith. Then time marching backwards may, before it resumes its forward march, as many wish it will, recapture and revitalize the living Muse that inspired immortal poetry.

STORIA E POESIA

By ANTONIO DI PIETRO

La storia della critica d'arte in generale e di quella letteraria in particolare si è svolta in Italia in quest'ultimo mezzo secolo, come tutti sanno, sotto il segno di Benedetto Croce. La sua infaticabile attività di filosofo dell'arte e di critico, che dura ininterrotta dalla fine dell'Ottocento alla sua morte recente, per circa sessant'anni, resta infatti il punto di riferimento più sicuro per chiunque voglia studiare i vari atteggiamenti della critica contemporanea italiana. Non è qui il luogo per un riepilogo anche sommario della sua fecondissima attività, né dell'immensa e varia fortuna ch'essa ha trovato in Italia e in Europa e in tutto il mondo occidentale. Basterà qui solo velocemente accennare alla parabola essenziale da essa percorsa per quel tanto che può servire d'avvio al nostro discorso.

È stato concordemente osservato che il Croce, partito, all'inizio del secolo, alla difesa dell'autonomia dell'arte, in nome dei suoi peculiari valori espressivi e formali, dopo aver riportato una clamorosa vittoria contro il filologismo imperante e dopo aver quella vittoria consolidato, dando al suo metodo critico il fondamento teoretico della filosofia dei «distinti», negli ultimi decenni della sua vita (condotto dall'approfondimento del suo pensiero a trasportare sempre più la sua attenzione sulla parte che la personalità del poeta ha nella concreta opera d'arte) finì per avvicinarsi gradualmente ad una considerazione via via più positiva di quegli elementi morali, psicologici, culturali e genericamente umani che: nel fervore della prima polemica aveva bruscamente respinto nell'opaco mondo della «non poesia». Finì, cioè, insistendo sempre più sull'inscindibile circolarità dello spirito e sempre meno sulle sue distinzioni, per riaccostare la poesia alla comune vita degli uomini, da cui sembrava averla divelta per un eccessivo desiderio di chiarificazione: così che il suo ultimo messaggio può essere oggi raccolto quasi come una esortazione alla storia, in cui il primitivo rigore della filosofia dei «distinti» si illanguidisce, tanto da apparire solo un ricordo e un residuo del suo giovanile «radicalismo», della sua giovanile battaglia, cioè, contro le grossolane confusioni del positivismo.

Non interessa qui a noi stabilire quanto questa evoluzione del Croce è stata sollecitata dalle obiezioni mosse al suo iniziale atteggiamento troppo rigidamente discriminatorio, e quanto al precisarsi di quelle obiezioni giovò il Croce stesso con l'assidua difesa del suo metodo; né

importa definire quanto sia compatibile con le sue mai del tutto abbandonate premesse teoretiche il suo invito alla storia. Importa a noi notare soltanto che la curva tracciata nella sua lunga opera dal Croce, appunto perché frutto di un pensiero in continuo sviluppo e alimentato da un colloquio mai interrotto con seguaci e avversari, coincide sostanzialmente con le linee evolutive di tutta la critica italiana più attiva: la quale, dopo essersi liberata, seguendo l'esempio crociano, dall'indiscriminato filologismo positivisticò ed essersi riacostata con più fine sensibilità ai testi di poesia, tende ora sempre più a raccogliere intorno a quei testi la vita della cultura, e in genere della storia, da cui essi trassero occasione e nutrimento. E importa anche notare che una curva non diverse segna, più o meno sincronicamente, la varia opera dei filologi e dei linguisti non solo italiani ma anche europei, i quali, parte per influsso del Croce e parte seguendo un proprio autonomo cammino, dopo aver scoperto e bandito il valore creativo della parola poetica contro il determinismo naturalistico delle scuole positivistiche, si preoccupano oggi in misura sempre maggiore dei rapporti che intercorrono tra quella parola e la continuità storica degli istituti linguistici. Ed importa infine, soprattutto, constatare che se è vero che a questa rinnovato interesse per i nessi intercorrenti fra l'opere di poesia e la storia, che accomuna oggi gli studiosi d'arte delle più diverse provenienze, non è affatto estraneo il Croce, è altrettanto vero che esso è venuto assumendo in questi ultimi anni un carattere sempre più spiccatamente anticrociano: di cui è segno inequivocabile, in Italia, il tanto spesso predicato «ritorno al De Sanctis», che, bandito all'inizio al Gentile, sottintende ovviamente una interpretazione dell'insegnamento del grande critico irpino diversa da quella, intesa a sottolineare la sua polemica anticontenutistica, che per mezzo secolo circa ne ha dato il Croce.

Tutto quanto finora si è detto è noto a chiunque abbia qualche dimestichezza con la coltura italiana contemporanea, e se ne è fatto ora cenno solo per fornire la premessa e il conforto di un'ovvia constatazione a quanto ci preme di più. A sottolineare cioè che questo universale ritorno alla storia ora rilevato è oggi ancora in realtà un generico orientamento e un gusto diffuso, piuttosto che un nuovo metodo concordemente accettato o capace, almeno, di fornire il chiaro punto d'incontro di un linguaggio comune.

Finita, infatti o almeno attenuatasi, negli studi critici, quella che è stata chiamata la dittatura crociana, e tramontata insieme, in ogni sede, quella filosofica idealistica, che ha fornito per decenni il terreno d'incontro, o di scontro, d'ogni colloquio culturale in Italia, il discorso della critica d'arte si sviluppa oggi da noi, non diversamente da quanto accade

altrove, in una molteplicità di direzioni a cui non basta a dare coerenza la comunanza di una aspirazione, che è, in verità, ancora incerta. Incertezza che mi sembra trovi la sua origine prima nella indifferenza o nella diffidenza generalmente dimostrate dagli odierni critici per ogni sistemazione teorica che giustifichi su un piano universale la loro fatica: sia che ad essa ci si dedichi, senza porsi troppe domande, come a un lavoro sufficiente a se stesso, sia che si lasci ad altre discipline, ritenute per tradizione più specificamente filosofiche, il compito di fornire alla critica, dal di fuori, il fondamento che essa non è in grado di darsi; sia che, in reazione a certi troppo insistiti schematismi, si asserisca che all'operazione critica nuocciano più che giovare delle rigide premesse teoriche. Questa indifferenza o diffidenza (che è troppe volte segno soltanto di scarsa tensione speculativa e morale) impedisce infatti di comprendere appieno come l'attività critica del Croce non sia in nessun modo accettabile dai suoi presupposti metodologici e filosofici; e impedisce di conseguenza di dare al superamento del crocianesimo, da più parti auspicato o dichiarato, un significato preciso, fondato su un chiaro bilancio di quanto dell'insegnamento crociano e idealistico in genere si può concordemente ritenere ancora vitale, e capace di generare nuova vita, e di quanto invece va ormai decisamente riposto nelle urne della storia. E la mancanza di un tal bilancio fa sì che le odierne indagini critiche procedano quasi tutte sui binari, spesso fra loro interferenti, di ibridi eclettismi, in cui disordinatamente, volta a volta, del Croce si accettano premesse o conclusioni, inserendole in un discorso critico che, staccato da un compiuto organismo di pensiero, capace di assimilarle e inverarle, se le trascina dietro come pesanti detriti che continuamente ne deviano o impediscono il coerente sviluppo. E la denuncia più evidente dell'asserita situazione di incertezza e di confusione è appunto nell'approssimazione dei termini critici correntemente usati, che troppo spesso cela salti arbitrari fra sistemi di pensiero eterogenei e insanabili contraddizioni.

Di queste contraddizioni, fonte il più delle volte nei critici meno insensibili ai problemi universali di un mal celato disagio, sarebbe facile stendere un lungo e documentato elenco; e possibile anche sarebbe distinguere quelle che si annidano nello stesso pensiero del Croce e quelle di cui il Croce è affatto incolpevole: ci basterà qui ricordare rapidamente solo quelle più rilevanti, da cui quasi sempre tutte le altre derivano.

Va rilevato innanzi tutto che non soltanto da parte di quei critici che tuttora si mantengono fedeli al pensiero crociano e cercano solo timidamente di adeguarlo alle nuove istanze; ma anche da parte di quegli studiosi che più decisamente proclamano la presente condizione di crisi, e

denunciano l'attuale impossibilità di giungere a una concorde definizione della poesia, e predicano la necessità di un'indagine critica interamente libera da qualsiasi preconcepita premessa teorica, si accetta come postulato indiscusso l'assioma crociano della autonomia dell'arte, e si dimentica come quella autonomia derivi appunto da una particolare definizione dell'arte ed abbia senso solo nell'interno di quella filosofia dei «distinti» che pur si dichiara decaduta; e che essa, fuori di quella filosofia, lungi dall'essere una verità definitivamente raggiunta, è l'oggetto di un problema sempre aperto, la cui soluzione varia col variare dei rapporti che si istituiscono tra le diverse attività dello spirito; o, per dir meglio (e uscire da una terminologia idealistica bisognosa tutta di revisione), fra le varie attività umane. Anche da parte dei suddetti ~~studiosi~~ non si comprende a sufficienza cioè che l'autonomia, come comunemente è intesa, è dell'arte una qualifica crociana, che va prima di ogni altra verificata, e che non può quindi essere assunta come premessa dogmatica di un'indagine veramente nuova e veramente critica, ma può essere solo, semmai, di quell'indagine un'eventuale conclusione; e una conclusione che, ove vi si giunga per la nuova via avrà necessariamente delle connotazioni anch'esse nuove e diverse, e dalla passiva accettazione di una autonomia dell'arte quale è stata proposta (e non sempre allo stesso modo) dal Croce, deriva, per inevitabile conseguenza, la sopravvivenza, anche nel linguaggio dei suddetti studiosi, di tutta una serie di termini, e quindi di concetti e di miti, che, propri della speculazione crociana e idealistica e già li spesso a disagio, fuori del loro posto finiscono per suonare anacronistici e ambigui, se non addirittura privi di reale significato; e finiscono soprattutto per contraddire a quella indagine storica interamente spregiudicata prima proposta, o, nella migliore ipotesi, per creare accanto a quello storico un discorso diverso ed estraneo.

Di questa natura è il persistente mito del «nucleo poetico», che, in quanto «nucleo» monadisticamente immobile, alla evoluzione storica si sottrae, e si sottrae quindi alla ricerca storica; e, in quanto «poetico», presuppone un qualche mezzo con cui si possa individuare e qualificare per tale; un mezzo che deve ovviamente essere indipendente dalle categorie del giudizio storico, e che non può essere altra cosa in realtà da quel solipsistico e, in definitiva, istintivo giudizio di gusto, che è il residuo romantico-positivistico che vizia già la distinzione crociana di poesia e non poesia; e a verificare e correggere ed eventualmente a negare il quale sorge appunto l'indagine storica.

E di questa natura è la fede tanto frequentemente professata nella bellezza eterna e assoluta e nella universalità della poesia, che del giudizio di gusto è il mistico presupposto, e che, nei critici meno controllati, si

manifesta talvolta così tetragona e candida da stupire, in un mondo, come quello della nostra moderna cultura, così angosciosamente problematico e così spoglio di supreme certezze.

E ancora di questa natura è, soprattutto, la troppo diffusa noncuranza per i dati reali della cronologia nello studio dei poeti e della poesia, in omaggio a quella «cronologia ideale», di schietto conio idealistico, che dal mito del «nucleo poetico» e dall'incontrollabile giudizio di gusto può essere soltanto autorizzata; e che mi sembra d'ogni confusione la fonte più scoperta ed insieme più dannosa. La più scoperta, perché è fin troppo semplice osservare che una cronologia «ideale», per essere tale, deve presupporre una idea che la generi e la giustifichi; la quale, ove si riconosca la presente crisi di idee universali sopra tutto negli studi estetici, non può, in pratica, non essere mutuata, più o meno esplicitamente, da vecchi schemi ideologici, o non essere risultato di frettolose ed informi contaminazioni. E' la più dannosa perché profondamente diseducativa: in quanto incoraggia, nei giovani, e non solo nei giovani, il malcostume delle facili improvvisazioni ed impedisce fin dalle origini il formarsi di una seria mentalità critica e storica: giacché è troppo evidente che non può nascere nessuna operazione critica se non dallo strenuo impegno di interpretare senza incontrollati preconcetti i dati offerti alla intelligenza dalla realtà; né può sussistere nessuna interpretazione storica, qualunque ne sia l'idea informatrice, alla quale sia lecito ignorare o trascurare impunemente proprio il dato del tempo, su cui la realtà della storia si fonda senza di cui e anzi essa non sarebbe neppure concepibile.

Se però troppi critici, anche fra quelli che si professano non crociani e fautori di un nuovo storicismo, ancora mostrano, sopra tutto nel loro pratico operare, di dimenticare o di non apprezzare le considerazioni finora fatte, sempre più cresce, in Italia come fuori, il numero degli studiosi che, consapevoli della profondità della crisi attraversata oggi dalla nostra cultura e della necessità quindi di cominciare daccapo, attuano ed auspicano una critica tutta aderente ai dati filologicamente accertabili, rinunciando, almeno per il momento, a quella valutazione definitiva della poesia che tenta i più e che essi coerentemente riconoscono oggi impossibile, o prematura, per la carenza di valide categorie di giudizio. Sono in gran parte studiosi giunti alla critica per le vie della filologia e della linguistica, che nella critica portano il rigore storico proprio di quelle discipline tanto a lungo neglette dai crociani; ma che tuttavia, non ignari dell'insegnamento del Croce, in quel rigore di antica tradizione positivista immettono una sensibilità per i valori spirituali e formali della poesia ai Maestri di fine Ottocento ignota. E fra questi studiosi sopra tutto degni di nota a me sembrano quelli che l'indagine filologica portano fin

nell'intimo della personalità del poeta e nel cuore dell'opera d'arte, mediante lo studio delle varianti d'autore ordinate secondo una rigorosa cronologia: che è il mezzo migliore, ritengo, per dissolvere le statiche astrazioni del «nucleo poetico» e dello bellezza «eterna ed assoluta», e reimmergere concretamente il poeta e la poesia nel flusso della storia; e per trovare insieme nel metro del tempo, che solo può segnare la novità espressiva nell'interno di uno scrittore come nell'interno di una determinata civiltà letteraria, una misura oggettiva che argini le indisciplinate reazioni del gusto.

Anche questi ultimi studiosi tuttavia che recisamente respingono la «critica giudiziaria» e «teologica» in uso presso i crociani e fermano il loro esame alla fenomenologia storica del fatto artistico, non sono ancora del tutto liberi da prevenzioni e abiti mentali di derivazione crociana, che ne impacciano i movimenti e tolgono loro la possibilità di trarre decisamente dalle premesse tutte le logiche conclusioni. Il rispetto per la poesia appreso dal Croce, che permette loro infatti un'indagine stilistica di una finezza sconosciuta ai vecchi filologi, li induce anche a segregarla dal corso delle quotidiane passioni dell'autore studiato, per quell'aristocratico disprezzo verso ogni forma di psicologismo e di contenutismo, che se pur dallo stesso Croce sempre più spesso condannato, è tuttavia l'eredità più resistente e diffusa della crociana autonomia dell'arte. E non è quella di minor peso: perché fa sì che lo *hiatus* fra l'iperuranico mondo della poesia e il mobile mondo della storia, colmato con la dissoluzione del «nucleo poetico» nella dinamica elaborazione del testo, si ripresenti spesso, sotto altra forma, a separare la fatica dell'artista dalla vicenda dell'uomo. Uno *hiatus* che è rivelato non solo dalla difficoltà mostrata di solito da questi critici a sollevarsi dalla ricerca analitica e particolare alla sintesi, e dal frequente ingiustificato riemergere nel loro discorso di consuetudini e termini schietamente crociani: ma anche, e più, dalle esitazioni che essi mostrano nell'enunciazione stessa del loro metodo, dove restano indecisi fra la difesa dell'indagine storica come utile aiuto alla lettura di poesia e la proclamazione che essa è l'unico punto di partenza dell'intelligenza critica: tra il considerare, cioè, la novità espressiva, ripetibile attraverso il confronto filologico, una delle spie più indicative della poesia, e il ritenerla invece il fondamento insostituibile della sua scoperta. Laddove a me sembra che solo scegliendo decisamente la seconda ipotesi e sviluppandolo fino alle sue estreme conseguenze sia possibile uscire, oggi, dall'insolubile circolo vizioso storia-poesia, per avviarsi, iniziando il cammino veramente da capo e proseguendolo coerentemente per un'unica strada, ad una conoscenza nuova, e nostra, della poesia.

E, perché questa possibilità concretamente si dia, occorre innanzi tutto a me pare, capovolgere il processo di consueto seguito nelle indagini di critica letteraria e, in genere, artistica: occorre cioè accostarsi ad un'opera di poesia affatto sgombri non solo dall'ombra degli *idola* crociani dianzi denunciati e dalla suggestione di qualsiasi altra pressistente definizione o teoresi dell'arte, ma sgombri altresì da ogni preoccupazione derivante dalle specifiche qualità poetiche di quell'opera, considerando che esse, ammesso che siano realmente reperibili, non possono logicamente avere, per chi voglia con assoluto rigore procedere, alcun rilievo, anzi alcun significato plausibile, fino a quando non emergano dagli sviluppi, necessariamente imprevedibili (se preconetti non vogliono essere) della indagine stessa. E occorre quindi, una volta che si sia respinta ogni aprioristica discriminazione dell'opera presa in esame, avvicinarsi ad essa con l'unico aiuto dei comuni parametri storici usati per capire qualsiasi segno lasciato dagli uomini sopra la terra e sorretti dall'unica fede ragionevolmente accettabile: di riuscire a distinguerla poi, per precisazioni e approfondimenti successivi, dagli innumerevoli altri segni umani.

Sembra a me necessario, in altre parole, se si vuol davvero rifiutare sin dall'inizio ogni infido soccorso «teologico», far valere preliminarmente per un autore o un'opera di poesia (o, meglio, tali considerati o supposti) soltanto quelle leggi che sono universalmente ritenute valide per comprendere gli uomini tutti e le loro più diverse operazioni. E prima di ogni altra (sembra a me fin troppo naturale) proprio quella che di solito è più misconosciuta o trascurata: la legge del tempo cioè che, senza dubbi e senza eccezioni possibili, è alla radice di ogni condizione e quindi di ogni azione umana: perché ogni uomo deve necessariamente nascere e morire; e, fra la nascita e la morte, durare e svilupparsi, attimo per attimo in una successione di momenti che non è data ignorare o interrompere o invertire, né a lui, che la porta in sé come il ritmo stesso della sua vita, né a chi quella sua vita voglia pienamente intendere. Soltanto il rispetto scrupoloso di questa legge consentirà infatti di dissipare le astrazioni di un'ipotetica e insussistente umanità (quell'iperuranica «umanità» che si usa contrapporre, o sovrapporre, a un'altrettanto iperuranica «poesia») e di scrutare nella sua realtà l'intima dialettica di una qualunque personalità umana, e consentirà di comprendere perciò le ragioni e la natura delle varie opere in cui essa si estrinseca: e non solo, certo, sul piano della biologia e dell'istinto, soggetto all'ineluttabile nesso della causalità, ma anche, e non meno, sul piano dello spirito, che contro le catene delle cause meccaniche quotidianamente lotta, e della lotta, ogni giorno diversa, serba memoria. Quelle memoria (senza la quale verrebbe meno la storia di ogni uomo e di tutti) che, componendo in sé coerentemente gli

eventi e gli atti passati, se pur non determina, senza dubbio condiziona, in maniera che non può poi arbitrariamente essere mutata, la volontà o la intenzioni degli atti presenti e futuri.

Volontà e intenzioni ho detto, usando deliberatamente due termini consueti al linguaggio dei filologi: per sottolineare appunto come, se si conviene su quanto finora si è detto, la filologia non possa essere considerata uno dei tanti sussidi, ma il non surrogabile punto di partenza (e empirico e logico) di ogni esame critico; e per sottolineare insieme, e soprattutto, come la ricerca della volontà e dell'intenzione di un autore di opere letterarie o artistiche non si possa, proprio perciò, distinguere preliminarmente da ogni altra analoga ricerca riguardante l'autore di qualsiasi atto umano. Se infatti si vorrà avanzare con disciplina nel graduale processo di accostamento a un uomo, presunto poeta, ma che tocca a noi criticamente accertare se tale sia, sarà necessario pregiudizialmente chiedersi se fra i vari suoi atti a noi noti quelli estrinsecatisi mediante le parole scritte abbiano davvero un peso preminente, o tale almeno da giustificare il nostro particolare interesse: e questo peso (se non vorremo contraddittoriamente fare appello a quelle aprioristiche categorie che abbiamo appena rifiutate) potremo solo misurarlo in base all'incidenza che quegli atti hanno avuto su tutta la realtà: in base al contributo cioè che essi hanno apportato al continuo processo di innovazione in cui consiste la storia, inscindibile, di ciascuno e di tutti. Soltanto quindi in un secondo momento, se e quando ci saremo resi conto, con i comuni strumenti di accertamento storico, che questo contributo è particolarmente cospicuo nelle sue opere letterarie, sarà evidentemente non solo opportuno ma necessario e naturale orientare la nostra ricerca in maniera prevalente su quelle opere appunto; e ci sarà perciò stesso consentito di giungere, senza salti gratuiti, ad una prima distinzione, pienamente legittima anche se affatto empirica e provvisoria: fra gli altri uomini che con mezzi diversi hanno operato o operano sulla realtà e quello che potremo definire (almeno per uno degli aspetti più significativi della sua attività) uomo di lettere o, più semplicemente, «letterato». E soltanto allora la *volontà* o *l'intenzione* da noi cercata nelle sue opere acquisterà un più ristretto e specifico significato filologica: senza che questo significato valga ad annullare l'altro più ampio che lo contiene; quello cioè genericamente umano e, in definitiva, psicologico. Il che vuol dire che se l'innovazione linguistica o letteraria costituirà d'ora innanzi (e non potrà non costituire) il punto di maggiore interesse del critico, non per questo dovrà mai perdere la sua essenziale natura di espressione di una personalità integra e totale, se non la si vorrà staccare dalle radici da cui trae origine e costante alimento, e non si vorrà quindi estinguere in essa la sua stessa

vita espressiva.

Che è il rischio appunto che più frequentemente si corre da parte di quei critici, che, pur disponendo i testi poetici, o ritenuti tali, nella loro naturale successione temporale, per difenderli dal paventato pericolo di contaminazioni psicologiche, li isolano in uno sperimentale vuoto pneumatico: nel quale la personalità dell'autore resta soffocata o boccheggia; e la stessa misura del tempo rischia di deformarsi, aderendo alla prospettiva fittizia di parole sottratte allo spazio vitale in cui solo respirano e risuonano, e in cui solo è possibile cogliere l'entità vera della loro forza innovatrice. Con la conseguenza, a mio parere, gravissima che, per il timore di turbare la loro indagine con elementi *a priori* ritenuti estranei, essi precludono alla loro fatica filologica ogni possibilità di divenire, da sussidio o introduzione alla critica, critica essa stessa. La individuazione di una novità espressiva si arresterà infatti, inevitabilmente, nel loro caso, alla indicazione più o meno particolareggiata di una novità meramente linguistica o stilistica; e la «storia di poesia» a cui essi tendono, e che dalla «storia tutta» non può prescindere se storia vuol essere (secondo lo stesso ammonimento del Croce), naufragherà in un elenco, ordinato secondo una cronologia ad essa sostanzialmente estrinseca, di locuzioni e di stilemi e di temi, tutti egualmente astratti, perché tutti egualmente svuotati o impoveriti del loro concreto movente umano e quindi del loro umano valore. E quando la stessa tecnica filologica imporrà, quasi brutalmente, una scelta dettata da un giudizio di valore appunto, come nel caso dell'edizione di poeti la cui *ultima volontà* non sembra coincidere con loro espressione più valida, a ben poco servirà quell'elenco; e quei critici, dopo aver individuato la novità espressiva sul piano filologico e semantico, non potranno che arrestarsi perplessi di fronte alla possibilità di individuarla sul piano più propriamente estetico, mancando loro ogni mezzo sicuro, nell'ambito del discorso storico, per passare dall'un piano all'altro: così che, messi alle strette, dovranno o coerentemente, rinunciare a qualsiasi scelta, o, incoerentemente, abbandonare i loro strumenti filologici, e correre, indifesi, la deprecata avventura dell'immediato diudizio di gusto.

Solo a colui infatti che, fisso l'occhio ai dati linguistici e stilistici, non tema di affondare lo sguardo nell'oscura *humus* in cui si nascondono le loro radici, nel cuore umano cioè, sarà concesso di riconoscere in essi i segni di quei sentimenti che accomunano e differenziano tutti gli uomini, e a cui solo competono quegli attributi che, estranei alla pura filologia, sono, da sempre, incontestato appannaggio della poesia: quali la sincerità, la libertà, la moralità, la verità, la bellezza e così via. E solo a lui sarà soprattutto concesso di restituire quegli attributi alla parola umana,

non gettandoveli sopra in un affastellato fascio di aggettivi, ma traendoli dal suo senso stesso, nell'ordine dettato dalla logica interiore che da sentimento l'ha fatta parola. Perché chi, dopo aver rilevato con i consueti strumenti filologici una novità espressiva, vi si ponga di fronte come a un oggetto da misurare dall'esterno, con un atto ulteriore e diverso, ricorrendo ai metri di quei tradizionali attributi della poesia, non potrà che perdersi nella scelta di uno di quei metri, di per sé eterogenei, o nel vano tentativo di conciliarli astrattamente fra loro; mentre chi, messo da parte qualsiasi metro precostruito, e diverso a seconda del costruttore, si preoccupi semplicemente di scoprire le ragioni dell'apparire di quella novità, avrà l'opportunità, a me sembra, di trovare lungo il cammino che dal segno scritto conduce all'anima, di cui è segno, tutti quegli attributi, e così strettamente congiunti e complementari fra di loro, da poter essere considerati altrettanti sinonimi della presenza dell'anima, appunto, nella sua espressione.

Una novità espressiva (e ogni espressione è in qualche misura nuova) è infatti, innanzi tutto, la testimonianza di un uomo che si esprime; e si esprime in maniera differente ~~da quella~~ di qualsiasi altro proprio perché, in quanto individuo unico e inconfondibile, è da qualsiasi altro differente. Qualora si accetti questa come una verità pacifica, o almeno come un'ipotesi sufficientemente probabile per servire di base alla nostra indagine, qualora si convenga cioè che ogni novità espressiva, non diversamente da qualunque altra novità che compaia sulla terra per opera dello uomo, può essere legittimamente considerata l'estrinsecazione (più o meno perspicua ora non importa) dell'intrinseca originalità di un concreto individuo umano, si potrà abbastanza agevolmente, a me sembra, procedere oltre, senza sbandamenti, verso una sempre più compiuta motivazione o qualificazione dell'espressione presa a considerare, seguendo il filo dell'interiore dialettica che ha condotto un determinato uomo a rivelare, esprimendosi proprio così come si è espresso, la sua sostanziale originalità; e si potrà, procedendo, via via constatare altresì come i motivi umani di cui è costituita quella dialettica abbiamo nomi che si addicono tutti alla qualità comunemente attribuite alla poesia.

E spero basti un rapidissimo cenno esemplificativo, quale solo è consentito in un così sommario discorso. Concessa che si sia l'essenziale *originalità* o *novità*, di ciascun individuo, e quindi dell'espressione in cui egli si rivela, non ci si può sottrarre, a me pare, ad una serie di riflessioni, che dalla premessa direttamente discendono, e ne sono anzi la logica enucleazione. Un individuo, che, diverso da tutti gli altri, si esprima, in un certo momento, appunto quale è, compie ovviamente un atto di *sincerità*. Ma, per compierlo, è inevitabile ch'egli si ribelli alla invadenza

delle espressioni altrui che, proprio perché sue non sono, possono solo nascondere e falsarlo: è inevitabile cioè che quel suo atto di sincerità sia, implicitamente, un atto di *libertà*. Se però veramente sincero e libero è quel suo atto non può non essere perciò stesso, per lui che compie, un atto di *moralità*; e, per il semplice fatto che con esso egli dichiara veramente la sua interiore realtà, non può non essere altresì un'affermazione (o un atto) di *verità*. Ma appunto perché quest'affermazione non può, senza negarsi, tradire l'intima realtà che afferma, essa è anche la manifestazione di una interiore *necessità*: la necessità dell'anima, che sincera e libera e morale e veritiera può essere solo a patto d'essere se stessa. E se esprimersi conformemente alla realtà che si vuole esprimere è necessario, quando quest'atto necessario abbia, contro ogni ostacolo, raggiunto il suo compimento, non può non raggiungere contemporaneamente quella rasserenante e insieme esaltante sensazione di vittoria che non si distingue, parrebbe, dalla gioia catartica della *bellezza*. La quale, a sua volta, non sembra nascere da altro che dalla raggiunta *armonia* fra il bisogno di esprimersi e il suo concreto attuarsi nel mondo.

La serie delle riflessioni ora fuggevolmente suggerite (solo, ripeto, a mo' d'esempio, e come traccia di una possibile adeguata meditazione che qui non trova luogo) potrebbe certo continuare; così come si potrebbe, forse, mutare l'ordine con cui quelle accennate sono state provvisoriamente messe insieme, dopo un più attento esame delle loro reciproche implicazioni. Ma non questo, adesso, a noi interessa. Interessa soltanto invece riaffermare che tutte le qualità dianzi elencate, e le altre eventualmente elencabili, come inerenti ad una espressione veramente nuova (e cioè autentica), non hanno alcun senso concreto, e creano perciò non pochi pseudoproblemi, se non sono costantemente riferite all'individuo che si esprime, e (quel che non va mai dimenticato) nell'atto in cui si esprime. E non hanno quindi altra misura legittima se non quella dell'individuo stesso, colto nella storica concretezza degli atti con cui egli volta per volta si estrinseca e si realizza, in una continuità di tempo che li lega indissolubilmente l'uno all'altro; e li lega altresì al mondo, in cui, appunto, egli, momento per momento, si attua. Il che induce a concludere che la dimensione storica, indubbiamente necessaria e costatare una novità espressiva, non è meno necessaria a valutare la reale entità di quella novità: a valutare cioè la misura di quelle qualità, che ad essa appartengono, non (come si è cercato di dimostrare) perché siano ad essa dall'esterno conferite, ma perché sono intrinseci attributi della sua natura. E a concludere quindi che la ricerca storica o filologica, quando non sia astrattamente intesa, nonché indispensabile avvio d'ogni operazione critica, è la sostanza stessa di quell'unico e omogeneo processo di

individuazione in cui consiste tutto il compito della critica. Che è difatti, per unanime seppur generico riconoscimento, un compito essenzialmente storico: quale del resto è, e non può non essere, quello di ogni indagine che verta su qualsiasi opera umana, considerata non nella sua oggettiva strumentalità (che compete alle scienze applicate), ma nelle spirituali ragioni della sua genesi e del suo umano significato.

E non mi sembra che possa annullare queste conclusioni l'obiezione che questo punto di solito insorge impaziente: che allora non rimane più alcuna distinzione sostanziale fra le poesia e le altre opere dell'uomo, e fra la critica letteraria o artistica e la storia. Perché (a prescindere dal fatto che è inutile e illogico postulare o invocare delle distinzioni che non si è in grado di giustificare) a una siffatta obiezione si può ormai, credo, tranquillamente rispondere che in realtà è proprio così, né potrebbe essere altrimenti, se per distinzione sostanziale si intende un'astratta e inflessibile discriminazione sul piano dell'umanità e della storia, dato che ogni atto umano è, allo stesso titolo, espressione di un uomo nel mondo, e presenta perciò necessariamente gli stessi fondamentali problemi. Ma così non è se ci si pone concretamente sul piano dei mezzi di cui ogni uomo si serve per esprimersi, dove, come si è già accennato, una distinzione è senza dubbio possibile e necessaria. E non è, quest'ultima, una distinzione di poco conto, se non ci fermeremo all'ovvia constatazione preliminare della diversità materiale degli strumenti usati, ma, proseguendo la nostra indagine, cercheremo in essi i segni delle intenzioni e della volontà con cui l'uomo li ha scelti e usati e piegati ai suoi fini. Chè allora, assorbiti nel cerchio della dialettica spirituale (e cioè storica) che li muove, quegli strumenti perderanno la loro indifferente oggettività, per differenziarsi ulteriormente secondo le varie funzioni ad essi assegnate, fino a divenire una cosa sola con le concrete forme dell'azione, sempre l'una dall'altra diversa, con cui l'uomo entra in rapporto col mondo e vi si radica e ne prende possesso. E allora lo studio dei mezzi non potrà non identificarsi con lo studio dell'uomo, di cui sono, appunto, mezzi; e ogni distinzione che riusciremo ad operare osservandoli sarà un passo verso una più chiara conoscenza dell'individualità dell'uomo, che d'ogni differenza in essi reperibile è la causa prima.

Sarà anzi proprio lo studio dell'uomo colto nell'assiduo travaglio con cui tenta di asservire a sé i mezzi offertigli della realtà circostante che ci permetterà di rompere l'astratta fissità della persona per immergerla nella realtà universale appunto, per legare cioè dinamicamente, momento per momento, il ritmo della sua storia individuale a quella del mondo. E sarà ancora l'attenta e puntuale osservazione di quel suo travaglio, in cui si realizza tutto il suo umano destino, a consentirci di convertire

gradualmente l'iniziale distinzione di fatto, dei mezzi oggettivamente diversi da lui usati, nella distinzione di valore dell'impegno con cui li usa: a consentirci cioè, nel nostro caso specifico, di passare, senza astratti funambolismi, della preliminare distinzione, che diremo orizzontale, fra le parola e gli altri mezzi di espressione umana, all'ulteriore distinzione, verticale, fra quelle parole che appaiono più tese e trasformate dall'urgere della forza nuova di un individuo che per mezzo loro si esprime, ed esprimendosi nella sua novità umana collabora all'opera creatrice della storia, e quelle invece che di questa forza serbano minima, o nessuna, traccia.

Ulteriore distinzione, che è pur l'ultima cui possa e debba giungere la critica. La quale dunque, se non si respinge tutto quanto si è detto, non sembra irraggiungibile per la via di un'indagine rigorosamente ed esclusivamente storica. Sembra a me anzi che fra le vie battute sia questa la più sicura e rettilinea, perchè, restituendo, meglio di ogni altra, alla poesia tutto il suo valore umano (e soddisfacendo così quell'urgente istanza storica da cui ha preso le mosse questo discorso), le restituisce insieme, e di conseguenza, più coerentemente di ogni altra, il suo significato più antico e più vero, che è quello di *creazione*.

-ERE AND -ERUNT ENDINGS IN ST JEROME'S EPISTLES AND LIVES OF THE HERMITS*

By E. COLEIRO

The careful composition of most of the Epistles and the Lives of the Hermits of St Jerome is conspicuous in the choice between the *-ere* and *-erunt* endings of the third person plural of the Perfect. The extant Epistles are 154 in number and the Lives of the Hermits are three in number: that of Paul written in 374 or 375, that of Hilarion in 390, and that of Malchus written in 391.

IN THE CLAUSULA

In many cases the choice is determined by the exigences of the clausula, both final, at the end of the sentence, and inner, at the end of a separate colon or *membrum*, when the *-ere* and *-erunt* verb is not the last word in either case. In such a case the *-ere* is mostly used to form the basic element of the clausula, the last \check{e} being the inner vowel of the cretic, — — —. Thus:

-ere in final clausula: *restituēre lācrimāe* (11.4; a dichoreus with the last syllable of the cretic resolved into two short ones, or a fourth paeon, a favourite of Aristotle); *appāruere dāpēs* (H.7; cretic-spondee); *fuere pās-tōres* (M.5).

Other places: 14.3.2; 14.5.3; 22.19.6; 45.3.2; 45.4.1; 60.16.3; 64.8.2; 65.14.6; 84.11.4; 112.10.5; 112.17.3; 127.9.2.

-ere needed in inner clausula: *vicere cum saeculo, / quae* (7.6.1); *aedificaverē turrēm, / tunc* (21.8.2); *habuere vitā, / quae* (119.5.10); *sumpsere principium: / quorum* (P.1); *resiluere nāviculae, / et* (H.41).

Other examples: 1.9.1; 2,2; 3.2.1; 9.3; 22.29.4; 52.2.2; 54.4.2; 64.16.3; 65.14.2; 71.5.1; 78.8.3; 84.4.3; 84.11.3; 108.2.3; 112.14.5; 119.9.3; 120.1.4; 120.1.14; 122.3.15; 125.14.1; 125.16.1; 127.13.1; 130.12.2; 130.17.2; 133.2.1; 133.8.1; P.9; H.42.

* The quotations from *The Letters* are according to the Vienna *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Vols. 54 and 55, and are made by reference to the number of the letter, the paragraph and the section; the section only is given in letters of one paragraph. Quotations from the *Lives* are made by reference to Mignes, P.L. XXIII, P = *Vita Pauli*, H = *Vita Hilarionis*, M = *Vita Malchi*.

-erunt needed for inner clausula: in the following six cases only: *appel-laverunt mulieres* (120.5.3); *prophetaverunt prophetae* (120.9.19); *adoraverunt figuras* (121.10.15); *oderunt suos* (125.6.2); *acceperunt cibos* (H.14); *nuntiaverunt patrem* (H.17).

IN NON-CLAUSULA CASES

Clausula considerations apart, Jerome's use of *-ere* and *-erunt* is predominantly Tacitean. As in Tacitus (cf. R.H. Martin, '*-ere* and *-erunt* in Tacitus' in *Classical Review*, April 1946), at the end of the sentence he by far prefers *-erunt*; in a medial position he very often uses *-erunt* with a Present Perfect meaning and *-ere* as an Aorist. Only in the less carefully written letters is *-erunt* recurrently found with an aoristic meaning in a medial position.

In a considerable number of cases *-erunt* with an aoristic meaning is preferred in a medial position to avoid hiatus with the initial vowel of the following word. In a few instances it is used as a variety form, along with *-ere* in the same sentence.

(a) At the end of the sentence:

-erunt: *cecinerunt* (52.3.6); *praeterierunt* (130.19.5); *pependerunt* (H.40). Other places: 1.9.2; 18A.2.2; 18A.7.2; 22.38.1; 54.1.2; 112.7.8; 112.16.3; 119.9.3; 120.1.15; 120.10.4; 121.5.6; 122.1.16; 123.15.4; 125.8.1; 125.16.1; H.1; H.20; H.28.

-ere at the end of the sentence is used only four times: 8.2; 130.6.3; P.8; H.23.

(b) Medial position:

(i) *-ere* with an aoristic meaning:

in quibus olim fuere regna non modica (60.16.4); *nunquam dormire, nunquam mortui sunt* (119.7.11); *obviam processere* (H.25); and 58.5.3; 77.5.2; 77.11.3; 84.1.1; 123.14.5; 129.7.3; 130.4.4; 130.6.3; 130.12.2; 141.14.3; H.1; H.25.

One will note the recurrence in Epp. 77 and 130 which are very rhetorical in style and where a distinction of this kind is therefore to be expected.

-erunt with an aoristic meaning:

Although the instances listed hereunder are more numerous than those in the preceding list for *-ere*, it will be noticed that they are mostly taken from expository and theological letters. Epp. 120 and 121 are written with hardly any eye for style at all:

a) From expository and theological letters: 18A.2.3; 120.1.4; 120.1.15;

120.8.4; 120.9.4; 120.9.11; 120.10.4; 121.1.8; 121.5.4; 121.7.5; 121.8.13; 121.10.5 (4 times); 121.10.15; 121.11.3; 129.1.1; 129.4.2.

b) From other letters and the Lives: 125.8.1; 130.14.5; 147.2.2; 147.10.1 (twice); P.2; P.16; H.12.

-erunt with a present perfect meaning:

in quibus per tanta iam saecula tantorum ingenium sudaverunt (27.13); *qui vivunt et habent testimonium fidei et necdum receperunt promissionem Dei* (119.10.1); and 6.1.1; 17.2.2; 17.3.2; 18A.1.2; 22.6.1 (twice); 22.41.4; 26.4.1. 28.2.1; 40.5; 42.3; 45.2.3; 45.4.1; 52.3.2; 112.11.2; 112.13.1; 112.13.3; 112.20.1; 119.10.1 (three times); 119.10.2; 112.22.3; 120.8.3; 120.10.4; 120.10.13; 121.1.6; 121.2.5; 121.2.6; 121.2.7; 121.2.11; 121.4.4. 121.4.7; 121.10.20; 121.11.6; 121.11.15; 122.1.5; 123.13.2; 123.17.2; 124.15.1; 125.4; 127.2.3; 127.12.1; 128.5.1; 130.6.7; 130.7.10; 130.8.3; 130.14.6; 130.19.6; 133.3.2; 133.14.4; 138.1; 140.7.3; 140.10.1; 140.11.1; 140.16.1; 141.16.4; 141.18.2; 147.3.6; 147.6.2.

(ii) Variety choice:

-erunt is used with an aoristic meaning for variety, *-ere* being used in the same sentence:

aedificaverę turrem, tunc dogmata superbias conflixerunt volentes curiositate non licita in ipsius caeli alta penetrare (21.8.2); *superbiam humilitate vicerunt, tantique fuere meriti, ut captivi victoribus imperarent* (79.2.5); *ad cadaver beati senis substiterunt, adulantibusque caudis circa pedes eius accubuerę* (P.16); *quem postquam patres videre perterriti (erant enim mirae magnitudinis) nuntiaverunt patri* (H.17).

Other places: P.11 (*libaverunt -- transegere*); H.42 (*transiere -- coeperunt*); 123.12.1; 130.14.5.

(iii) Avoidance of hiatus:

This is especially the case when the *-erunt* verb terminates an inner colon and the first word of the next colon begins with a vowel; an *-ere* would have tended to be elided thus weakening the pause necessary between the two cola:

quod sibi praestiterunt, / apud quos erat cruda rusticitas (8.2); *esse coeperunt, / et omnes* (H.24); 7.1.2; 52.3.5; 120.8.10; 121.5.7; 147.3.2; H.22; M.6;

and, not at the end of the colon:

receperunt eum (121.5.7); *fuęrunt animalia* (123.8.2); *venerunt ad eum* (H.26); *venerunt itaque* (H.44); 18A.6.4; 22.11.3; 22.32.2; 120.10.15; 121.10.15; 140.6.2; 147.10.1.

LAPURDIUM SACRA PEREGRINATIO

By E. GALEA

Sic datur optatam tandem contingere metam.
 O quanto ferimur nostrae Genitricis amore!
 Scamno verba facit quamquam moderator ab alto,
 at tamen intentos oculos in Virginis unum
 laetantes vultum, hac donati sorte, tenemus.
 Hic sibi nam sedem caeli Regina sacravit
 qua se praeberet terrena luce tuendam
 et materna daret sanctae mandata puellae!
 Qualibus interea rapiantur pectore flammis,
 sum iam non olim, sed nunc spectare videmur
 haec fieri coram, lacrymae testantur abortae.

Primae post noctis tacitam optatamque quietem
 En ad sacratam rursus procumbimus aram,
 Hostia dum divina sacro renovatur in antro.
 Ardentes Domini nos corpore vescimur ipsi
 et simul aegroti, quorum, mirabile visu,
 aequior omnino laetusque relucet in ore
 subridente animus, quamquam tam saepe dolore
 torquentur, lecto ut vix possit membra movere.

His sua tum vero a sociis ad limina vectis,
 nos alio trahimur grato maestoque labore.
 Non longe a templo mons est, quem frondea silva
 vestit; strata manu via lente serpit eundo,
 qua septem et septem pulcherrima signa profantur
 quanta crucem amplexus tulerit Servator acerba
 ad mortem pergens ut nostra nefanda piaret.
 Singula lustramus, rite de more precantes,
 aptis accendit verbis dum corda sacerdos:
 nos neque sol radiis, via nec perlonga fatigat.

Haud vero aegroti sua ducunt tempora tectis.
 Fons est illimis fluxit qui Virginis olim
 iussu, nunc parvo regitur trahiturque meatu

ternos inque lacus lymphas effundere gaudet,
 Hic quos languor habet merguntur: tendere palmas
 auxilioque vocare Deum pia turba vicissim,
 si velit optata miseris donare salute,
 Quot lacrymae tersae! deleti et corde dolores!
 Quam saepe ablutis iam desperata redivit
 membrorum integritas aegris medicamine nullo!

En oculos nostros nova iam spectacula poscunt.
 Undique collectam iuvenumque virumque videmus
 Virginis ante specum turbam, quae, plurima, sensim
 ordine progreditur sacris comitata ministris.
 Extremus aurato Praesul sub tegmine fulgens
 gestat velatum panis sub imagine Christum.
 Carmina promentes incedunt, arboribusque
 summis perque tubas, quas vis electrica pulsat,
 in totum dulcis diffunditur aethera cantus.
 Indeque per medios aegros transire Redemptor,
 implorare omnes certam et sperare salutem.
 Solatur cunctos magno conspectus amore
 Iesus: depellit dirum his de corpore morbum,
 pluribus illustrat caelesti lumine mentem,
 edocet et cunctos melius perferre dolorem.

Resque diem nobis vere spectanda coronat.
 Primae densantur liquida cum nocte tenebrae,
 millia multa ferunt hominum funalia dextra,
 Virginis dum extollit vox omnis consona laudes
 chartaque ventorum flammam defendit ab ira,
 igneus ut fluuius clivosque viasque pererrat.
 Area stipatos ante aedem denique sacram
 excipit atque fidem laeto modulamine pandunt.

Extinctis alii facibus, se ad tecta reducant,
 et certant alii vasto succedere templo,
 unde tegunt circum dum spissae cuncta tenebrae,
 omnia dumque silent, praeterquam murmure flumen,
 purpureum iubar et blandi modulamina cantus
 thuris et undantes foribus funduntur odores.
 Hic flexis genibus vigilem perducere noctem
 dulce est, ac Iesu, qui spectans adstat in ara,

divinas laudes grates et solvere dignas,
culpas dum nostras fletu detergimus atras.
Ipseque dat veniam votis curasque serenat.

Hac detur *Matris* nos semper in urbe morari
et propiore Deo, placida requiescere pace!
At iucunda dies nobis vix quarta propinquat
cum revocare gradum solitosque subire labores
iam nos pacta iubent cunctantes duxque sacerdos.

Dicturique vale, tristes, ad limina *Matris*
colligimur tandem sub rupe, danusque cavernae
arctos amplexus, libamus et oscula grati.
Haud siccis oculis taciti divellimur inde.

Longe haec hora foret cunctis moestissima nobis
ni blande spectans *Virgo* solatia ferret
nos maiora docens habituros gaudia caelo.

THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF MALTESE.*

By A. CREMONA

The earliest literary records of the Maltese Language do not go further back than the beginning of the sixteenth century. The first attempt to write Maltese was made in the drafting of Maltese sermons of which some handwritten specimens exist in the Royal Malta Library. The first Maltese Grammar was written and published at Rome in 1750 by Canon G. Fco. Agius Sultana (better known by his latinized surname De Soldanis), who was the first Librarian of the Malta Library. His works comprise another grammar, a dictionary which is still in script, and a collection of proverbs which have been published in the *Malta Letteraria*, vol. III, 1928, by Dr G. Curmi.

One of the earliest attempts to write Maltese verse, according to De Soldanis, was during the Grandmastership of Nicola Cottoner (1660-80) when Dr Gio. Francesco Bonamico, a naturalist, wrote, in honour of the Grandmaster, an ode on the Maypole Festival followed by a Latin and French version. The cause of Maltese not having been used as a written language earlier is due to (a) lack of popular education coupled with the absence of any democratic Government. In mediaeval times the people were unrepresented in the local Government until 1428 and, even then, representation was not truly popular; (b) the discouragement of publications of local interest until the freedom of the press in 1838; (c) the usage, prevalent since the Aragonese period up to 1813, of all forensic documents, laws, notarial deeds and correspondence being written exclusively in Latin or in Siculo-Italian, and afterwards in Italian and English.

Although, as we are assured by De Soldanis and by Mifsud in his *Biblioteca Maltese* (1764), there were several Maltese Grammars and Dictionaries, written by local and foreign savants who lived before the seventeenth century, yet up to the year 1838 there is no traceable record to show that any serious attempt was ever made to introduce the reading or writing of Maltese in schools.

In 1825 a school for teaching language was established in connection with the University by the good services of the Right Honourable Hookham Frere (Chairman of the University General Council) and the veteran Michel

* A paper read at an Academic Meeting of the *Gbaqda tal-Kittieba tal-Malti* in the Library of the Royal University of Malta on the 14th May 1949 on the occasion of its Silver Jubilee when Mr John Pudney, English writer, was invited to attend and read a paper on the 'Difficulties of the Writer in the Modern World'.

Antonio Vassalli, the author of a Maltese Grammar (in Latin), was appointed as Teacher. In 1827 Vassalli published a new Maltese Grammar written in Italian, containing the series of lectures that he had delivered in the University. His two grammars embody the fundamental principles of the soundest orthography which, with some variations in the alphabetical symbols, was afterwards followed by the best Maltese scholars. Since the publication of Vassalli's grammar (Italian edition), several Maltese grammars and reading books have been produced written in various systems with the object of introducing them in schools or for adoption in literary publications. All these systems, some of them appearing temporarily, died away after a very short life, — all of them being out of touch with the scholastic method then prevailing.

Francis Vella's Grammar in English was the second attempt after Vassalli's to introduce a system which was thought to be more compatible with popular educational usage. Some efforts were made at the same epoch to write Maltese with Arabic characters and, although the plan was favourably commented by the Rev. Schlienz in his 'Views on the improvements of the Maltese Language and its use for the purpose of education' (1838), the attempt proved very unpopular and was bound to fail among people with a European education.

The freedom of the Press in 1838 brought to life a number of newspapers including one under the editorship of George Percy Badger and James Richardson. Subsequently the number of vernacular papers steadily grew until, with the advent of a constitutional Government, they outnumbered those published in the cultural and official foreign language.

The several alphabets that, one after another, were tried since the earliest attempts to write Maltese, were a serious stumbling block in the way of progress.

In 1843 the *Accademia Filologica Maltese* proposed an alphabet which was sanctioned as the standard one for schools in 1850. But some scholars showed a preference for the adoption of an alphabet and a system which, grammatically, was more compatible with the semitic morphology of the Maltese language. In this particular, some prominent members of the *Società Medica* stood for a scientific transliteration by phonetic symbols. As an instance, Professor Stefano Zerafa's phonetic alphabet was sanctioned and adopted by the *Società Medica* and the *Società Economico-Agraria* in the period 1840-45. This and similar alphabets, as that of the *Xirka Xemìa* (1882), never achieved a very wide popularity, their appreciation being confined to the upholders of the respective systems.

In the meantime a sort of semi-phonetic alphabet without diacritics was devised by Canon Fortunato Panzavecchia, Director of Primary Schools,

and adopted in his Grammar and also in his Bible Histories used in schools during the period 1845-50. The *Accademia Filologica's* system of orthography prevailed in the Primary Schools up to 1883 when Maltese Reading Books in the *Xirka Xemja's* system were introduced in the four classes (1882). It must be admitted that the *Accademia's* system, which had its organ *Il-Malti* containing instructive articles in Maltese and Italian, had up to the end of the nineteenth century been the model text of Maltese spelling most generally adopted by writers of whom a typical exponent was Gio. Antonio Vassallo, Professor of Italian Literature in the University, a lyrical Maltese poet of note, but a bad grammarian.

In view of the huge output of Maltese publications, much of it ungrammatically written, some of the better known writers, in 1894, formed a committee for the control of the Maltese spelling. The outcome of the labours of this committee was Vassallo's *Il-Muġġieħ tal-Chitba Maltija* (1901), being a new key for Maltese spelling. Its alphabet varies slightly from the *Academid's* but the system of word-building was based on a sounder grammatical basis. The school text-books used under the written system from 1899 to 1912 and the Government publications from that period up to 1934 were written in accordance with this system as the then recognized standard one. Maltese having been used in schools only as a medium for *viva-voce* instruction, Maltese text-books were taboo for a period of about twenty years.

As there was no uniformity in spelling up to the early period of the twentieth century among writers when Maltese literature was steadily increasing, a Society of Maltese Writers (*Għaqda tal-Kittieba tal-Malti*) was set up in 1921. Its *Tagħrif fuq il-Kitba Maltija*, drawn up by a Commission of specialists and published in 1924, embodies the principles of its phonetic alphabet by using letters most familiar to Maltese readers and a system of spelling based on the soundest rules of Maltese phonetics and morphology. The system was first adopted in *Il-Malti*, the official organ of the society.

Following the amendments in the Malta Constitution Letters Patent (1921) regarding the teaching of language in schools, Maltese was re-established in schools in 1932, whilst notices of general popular interest appeared in the Government Gazette since 1927 with a Maltese version also.

Further amendments in the Malta Letters Patent in 1934 afforded a most lucky opportunity for the *Għaqda's* system of Maltese spelling to be introduced by the Government in schools, in the Courts and officially in the Government Departments.

Since 1934 Maltese has risen to new life and had its status re-established

on a firmer basis from an administrative and educational point of view by its introduction into legal and notarial acts, in school text-books and in the University where, at the same time, a Chair of Maltese Literature and Comparative Philology was established, — an epoch-making era has opened for Maltese as a National Language. The shadow of an old threatening political phantom, which once tended to destroy the *Għaqda's* activities and Maltese as a literary official language, seems to have been definitely cleared away by a new policy which originated in the Labour political movements after the first great war, — a new policy which had revolutionized the economical, bureaucratic and educational status of the Maltese people, whereby their native Tongue was radically affected.

Since that historical change in the history of the Maltese language, the *Għaqda's* system has strengthened its vitality and ensured its life.

So far the *Għaqda's* system, which has now been thriving for over a quarter of a century, has been lucky enough to have outlived all other systems numbering about thirty-two. Barely one year before the introduction of Maltese as a scholastic language, I had concluded my series of articles on the literary evolution of Maltese in the *Journal of the Malta Literary Society* by stating that 'if Maltese were really to be kept within such a limited area (that is, within the enclosure of a literary society or in a narrow sphere of literary publications) I am afraid that we shall be still very far from the real end, that there is still the danger of Maltese meeting disastrously with the same conditions which, during the last century, made it the most unsettled language in the world'.

The end has now been attained and the Government policy now prevailing is aiding in its consolidation.

Responsible Government, however, will agree that the healthy condition of a standardized official system mainly depends on the maintenance of its fundamental principle and that the *Għaqda's* activities in this respect should not be hampered by outside prejudices which rather than improving may destroy the system.

This is in the interest of the welfare of Maltese as a vital characteristic of the political freedom of the Islanders.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE AND AN AMERICAN NAVAL HERO IN MALTA

By DONALD E. SULTANA

It is not to be expected that in the early nineteenth century, only a short time after the American Revolution, the English in general should have had kindly feelings or words for their kinsmen in the United States. However, there was a notable exception in the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge than whom, according to his son Hartley, 'the Americans, as a nation, had no better friend in England; he contemplated their growth with interest, and prophesied highly of their destiny'. In his table talk he not only regretted the anti-American articles in some of the leading reviews on the ground that the Yankees were very sensitive to criticism, especially from the English, but he also warmed eloquently to 'the august conception' of 'the possible destiny of the United States of America as a nation of a hundred millions of freemen — stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific — living under the laws of Alfred and speaking the language of Shakespeare and Milton': a prophecy which, in our own day, has come a long way towards fulfilment (indeed it has been fulfilled almost twice over in respect of population) even if it is hardly true that the language of Shakespeare and Milton is the standard guide of Congress oratory or of White House conferences (least of all of Texan yokels), and even if the laws of Alfred (or, for that matter, his code of morals) are not quite indistinguishable from the practices current in Trade Unions on the other side of the Atlantic.

Coleridge's interest in the then young republic had started in the ardent flush of youth when, spurred by his fellow-poet Southey and by the democratic ideas of the French Revolution, he had for a while poured all the verbal, as opposed to physical, energy, of which his enthusiastic nature was capable, on 'an experiment with a dozen families in the wilds of America'. This had been the scheme to establish a colony — 'pantisocracy', as its authors had called it — on the banks of the Susquehanna: a proposal which, like many others of his of earlier and later dates, had indeed 'gone west' but in the opposite sense to that originally contemplated!

The most damaging consequence of this otherwise harmless experiment had been the unhappiness he had permanently brought upon himself by marrying a woman of 'incompatible temper' as his demographic contribution

to the projected colony on the Susquehanna. Several years after this personal tragedy and only a few months before his decision to separate from Sarah Coleridge, he had fallen in with two Americans on his way back to England from Malta. The first had been the well-known painter, Washington Allston, with whom he had become acquainted in Rome and to whom he had directed letters bearing the address of the celebrated Café Greco in Via Condotti, the haunt of artists and writers. Long after this meeting, when their acquaintance had ripened into warm friendship, he described Allston in his table talk as 'a man of genius, and the best painter yet produced by America'. To him we are indebted for two of the best-known portraits of the poet, one of which, perhaps the better-known of the two, is in the National Portrait Gallery in London while the other is in the Houghton Library of Harvard University. The latter is in an unfinished state, the reason for this being that Coleridge had to flee from Rome to avoid arrest.

When he left Malta in September 1805, his intention had been to travel to England overland via northern Italy and Germany but he had only gone as far as Rome when this route had been made impossible for him by the troops of Napoleon. It was then that he had met another American, namely, Captain Derkheim, who had given him passage from Leghorn in the *Gosport*. At first he had had ample reason to be grateful to Darkheim for having looked after him like a nurse throughout a prolonged and distressful sea voyage, but on landing in England he had experienced a sharp change of feeling when he had learned that the captain had sailed away without living up to his promise of making delivery of the precious books and the few mementoes which he had brought with him from Malta. These had included 'five bottles of Ottar of White Roses, which were presented to me by the Minister of the Dey of Tunis, as a mark of acknowledgement for my having pleaded for the Dey in the Court of Admiralty at Malta'. He had intended to present them to his wife but his earnest remonstrances had elicited no reply except the intelligence that the captain had been courting a woman, at which he had truefully concluded that the attar of roses had become an instrument of amorous diplomacy.

Neither Allston nor Derkheim could compare in adventure and fame with a fellow-countryman of theirs with whom Coleridge had made friends in Malta soon after his arrival in 1804. This had been the naval officer Stephen Decatur who had become a hero overnight as the result of an intrepid action in the harbour of Tripoli during the American War against the Barbary States. In view of the present-day emergence of the United States as the leading naval power in the Mediterranean, it is pertinent to observe that the first incursion of that country into this area took place

more than one hundred and fifty years ago when the newly formed republic sent a squadron of warships to put a stop to the piratical activities of Tripoli and Algiers. This action had provided further proof that the Order of St John as established in Malta had become obsolete since it had not only abdicated its military function by surrendering the island to Buonaparte, but had also had its naval function, namely, the protection of Christian vessels against the Moslems, taken over by the great powers, as was soon to be seen when Lord Exmouth's fleet delivered the *coup de grace* to the commercial depredations of the Arabs and to the system of tribute which the Christian powers had sanctioned.

The first of several American squadrons had put in at Malta in 1803 with Decatur on board one of the vessels as first lieutenant. Here he had been involved in an incident which had had a fatal outcome. According to his biographer, he had accompanied a friend of his, a midshipman named Bainbridge, to the theatre (presumably *Il Teatro Manoel* in Valletta) and there the latter was made a target for sneering remarks from some British officers who had set near them. After further provocation in the lobby Bainbridge had knocked down one of the offenders who had promptly delivered a challenge to a duel. The challenger, so runs the story, had been a professional duellist whereas Bainbridge had been no more than an inexperienced boy. He had, however, accepted the challenge but Decatur as his second had intervened to save him from certain death: 'as the friend of the challenged party, he selected pistols for weapons, fixed the distance at four yards, and the word to be given, 'Take aim', and to fire at the word 'Fire'. The second of the challenger objected to these terms, and proposed ten paces. He said to Decatur, 'This looks like murder, Sir'. Decatur replied, 'No Sir; this looks like death, but not like murder. Your friend is a professed duellist; mine is wholly inexperienced. I am no duellist, but I am acquainted with the use of the pistol. If you insist upon ten paces, I will fight your friend at that distance'. The Englishman replied, 'We have no quarrel with you, Sir.' Decatur refusing to consent to any modification of his terms, unless he was substituted for Joseph Bainbridge, the parties met upon footing. Decatur gave the word, 'Take aim', and kept their pistols extended until he observed the hand of the Englishman to become unsteady. He then gave the word, 'Fire', Bainbridge's ball passed through his adversary's hat. The Englishman, sure of his man at ten paces, missed Bainbridge entirely. Decatur now informed young Bainbridge, that he could not save his life unless he fired low. It was the business of the Englishman, who had given the first offence wholly without provocation, to offer atonement; but no such offer was made. The combatants were again placed face to face, the word given as before, and the Englishman

fell mortally wounded below the eye.' (It is surprising that up to now this incident seems to have escaped the notice of Hollywood which has spread to the remotest corners of the earth celluloid American heroes who always carry off the prizes: gold, cups, ships, forts, women and all!) Seriously, however, this incident had threatened to issue in diplomatic complications because the English officer who had been killed had turned out to be the secretary of the Governor, Sir Alexander Ball, who had promptly demanded the persons of Bainbridge and Decatur for trial in the local court. The American squadron, however, had sailed away and the two young officers had been sent home. (Shades of Formosa!)

The biographer of Decatur would have his readers believe that in the following year (1804) Coleridge had obtained his post as secretary to Ball as a result of the vacancy which had been caused by the death of Bainbridge's challenger. Of course, this is untrue. Coleridge had succeeded no dead man but had merely acted as substitute for Chapman who had gone to Asia Minor. It is a fact, however, that only a few months after this incident, even before Coleridge had actually been appointed public secretary, Decatur had made the second of his three appearances in the Mediterranean, this time in his first command, although he was only twenty-four years old, and had apparently been received as *persona grata* in Malta, which, with Sicily, had been used as a supply and repair base by the American squadrons. He had become friendly enough with Coleridge to confess to him his opposition to the expansion on which his country had embarked in the beginning of the nineteenth century and which had culminated only a year before in the so-called Louisiana Purchase by which America had acquired from Napoleon a vast territory five times the size of continental France and now comprising a very large part of the southern and western states. This fact of history nowadays tends to be forgotten: that in the nineteenth century it was not only the British, the French and the Dutch who were 'imperialists' in the sense of expansionists, but also the Americans; only there was this difference: the so-called 'colonial powers' expanded *oversea* whereas the original American union of thirteen states became a colossal continental federation of forty-eight states by expanding (and for the same commercial reasons which had prompted the Europeans to expand) *overland*, over territory, to be exact, belonging to Indians, Frenchmen and Spaniards.

Decatur had seen a danger to national unity in this rapid expansion and had 'deplored the occupation of Louisiana by the United States, and wished that province had been possessed by England'. This opinion was subsequently adduced by Coleridge on more than one occasion in support of his general principle — obviously based on a historical interpretation —

that 'a Nation, to be great, ought to be compressed in its increment by nations more civilized than itself – as Greece by Persia; and Rome by Etruria, the Italian states, and Carthage'. Therefore, according to Coleridge, Decatur had not only dissented from the southern expansion which had become a *fait accompli* but had also declared that it would have been a mistake if his country had attempted to annex Canada in a northern expansion. In disclosing these opinions Decatur had given an impression of himself which is not altogether consistent with the implications of the toast which he gave when he had become a national hero and by which he is still remembered even by non-Americans: 'Our country!', so ran his toast, 'In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong!'

Since Coleridge had believed that 'language, religion, laws, government, blood – identity in these makes men of one country', he had naturally focused his expectations on that part of America called New England where 'there is ten times as much, English blood and spirit as in Virginia, the Carolinas, etc.'. He had been firmly of the opinion – and what Decatur had expressed had not shaken him in this; rather, it had strengthened him – that there could never be 'any thorough national fusion of the Northern and Southern States'. He predicted in fact that 'the Union will be shaken almost to dislocation whenever a very serious question between the states arises. The American Union has no *centre*, and it is impossible now to make one. The more they extend their borders into the Indians' land, the weaker will the national cohesion be. But I look upon the states as splendid masses to be used, by and by, in the composition of two or three great governments'. It may nowadays be urged that history has belied this prophecy, but apparently there were many on both sides of the Atlantic who would have subscribed to it when it was uttered; indeed it came near to fulfilment, not many years after, in the Civil War which broke out between the North and the South, which, it must be admitted, in certain respects are even more different from each other than northern and southern Italy. (A striking instance of this division was seen only a short time ago in the House of Representatives in the vote on the civil rights bill which affects the south where the negroes are numerous. The Congressmen did not vote according to party, Republican or Democrat, but according to geography, north or south. All the southern representatives, whether Republican or Democrat, voted to a man against the bill whereas all the northerners, with a few exceptions, voted for it.)

Coleridge had been led to believe from 'translations of twenty, at least, mercantile letters in the Court of Admiralty' in Malta that the Egyptians had been desperately longing for the English to replace the French and

the Turks who had been their rulers. Decatur had confirmed this belief through a letter from Cairo on the 13th December 1804, which apparently is the only surviving record of their correspondence. In it he had explained that he had passed off as an Englishman in Alexandria, Rosetta, Cairo and in the villages of the Nile and that 'wherever we entered or wherever we halted, we were surrounded by the wretched inhabitants; and stunned with their benedictions and prayers for blessings on us. "Will the English come? Are they coming? God grant the English may come! we have no commerce — we have no money — we have no bread! When will the English arrive?"... The reason the inhabitants of this country give for preferring the English to the French, whether true or false, is as natural as it is simple, and as influential as natural. "The English", say they, "pay for everything — the French pay for nothing, and take everything." They do not like this kind of deliverers'. This intelligence had been echoed soon after by Coleridge himself in a letter which he had written to Southey from Malta. In it, after having deplored the attitude of 'our miserable diplomatists (who) affect now to despise, now to consider as a misfortune, our language and institutions in America', he had asserted that 'the universal cry there (in Egypt) is English, English, if we can! but *Hats* at all events! (*Hats* means Europeans in contradiction to *Turbans*.)

The effect of Decatur's letter on Coleridge's thinking had been to make him take pride in his own country, not in any chauvinistic sense (he had recognised at the same time, for instance, that the slave trade, which had not then been abolished, 'is a dreadful crime, an English iniquity, and to sanction its continuance under full conviction and parliamentary confession of its injustice and inhumanity, is, if possible, still blacker guilt') but in gratitude for the stable constitution, freedom and security which the citizens of his country, compared with those of others, had enjoyed. In short, he had restrained, if not altogether shed, the radical and reforming zeal of his youth and his sojourn in Malta had continued the process towards a more conservative position in politics and religion which had begun when he had reacted against the excesses of the French Revolution.

Soon after Decatur had written from Cairo the Americans had made peace with Tripoli and he had returned home in September 1805. This had also been the date of Coleridge's departure from Malta. Only one month before — when he had tired of the island and of his work — he had written to his wife: 'I had lately a fine opening in America which I was much inclined to accept.' He had not indicated, however, whether this had had any connection with Decatur. He had merely added that he had turned it down because of his knowledge of Wordsworth's aversion to America'. The

Wordsworths and Coleridges had been living together in the Lake District and their intention had been to continue doing so, even if in another part of the country, after his return to England. In actual fact the intention came to nought principally for two reasons: Coleridge's determination to separate from his wife and the change in his health and character which, to Dorothy Wordsworth's horror, opium, which he had been taking in Malta, had effected.

THE AFFAIR OF OSTROG
AN EPISODE IN MALTO-POLISH RELATIONS
IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

By RODERICK CAVALIERO

In the days of the mediaeval Catholicity of Europe, the Order of Knights Hospitaller of St John of Jerusalem held lands in countries outside the narrower compass to which it was reduced by the Reformation, but by 1700 the Tongue of England was defunct, and the Priory of Dacia, which had included commanderies in Denmark, Sweden and Norway, had disappeared. In the Tongue of Germany, the Priory of Brandenburg had turned Lutheran and the Priory of Poland dwindled away. In that last century however, whose boundaries had expanded and contracted with such bewildering rapidity in the turbulent years following the union with the kingdom of Lithuania in 1569, two commanderies remained: Posen and Stolowitz, the second in the *jus-patronatus* of the Radziwill family. The Commanders took their seats in the Chapter of the Priory of Bohemia. Other commanderies, once part of Poland, had been absorbed into the dominions of her neighbours or lost to the Turks; alone these two remained, a poor incentive to the nobility of that enormous and fiercely Catholic nation to enrol themselves in the Order of St John. But within twenty years of the Order's expulsion from Malta and Poland's final partition, the Knights Hospitaller were once more to turn to that leviathan country as a recruiting ground. The cause of this nearly two centuries' delay was a celebrated law-suit, known to both the Maltese and Polish Chancelleries as *The Affair of Ostrog*.

It began, years before, in 1609. In that year Prince Janus Ostrog, owner of extensive territories in Volhynia, a province in the south-east of Poland, to-day part of Russia, applied to the Polish Diet for permission to dispose of the succession of his lands as an entity, either to his own or to his brother-in-law's male heirs succeeding, but in the event of their surcease, to an heir whom he should be allowed to specify¹. The Diet,

¹ Archives of the Order in Malta (AOM) 268. Lib. Conc. Stat. 21 May 1728.

AOM 270. Lib. Conc. Stat. 24 May 1754.

Lettres sur la Négociation de l'Affaire de Malthe en Pologne: écrites par un habitant de Warsowie à son ami à Londres. (London, 1775) 10 April 1773.

which alone could grant an ordinance for such a thing, agreed, and though he did not specify this ultimate heir at the time, it registered an ordinance to this effect. The sixth clause of his disposition stated, when it came to be made, that this heir should be a Knight of Malta, to be chosen from among existing Polish Knights by the majority vote of all the ecclesiastical and secular nobles in the Diet. This Knight of Malta should be in possession of the lands until his death or translation, and should be replaced by another. The only proviso was that the estates of Ostrog should provide three hundred foot and three hundred horse on the occasion of a war with Turkey for service in the Polish Army.

In 1672, the event Prince Janus had provided for occurred. The line of male heirs died out. In accordance with the will, Prince Jerome Lubomirski, Grand Marshall of Poland and a Knight of Malta, became the Ordinat or possessor of the lands. Lubomirski had become a Knight in his early youth and later obtained a Papal dispensation to be married, so that on his death his widow continued to administer the Duchy until 1701, when she too died. The Grand Master in Malta, Ramon Perellos, conceded the Duchy to a Polish Knight, Samuel Proski, on condition that he secured the nomination from the two noble estates of the Diet². The lands were, however, too rich a legacy for the greedy claimants to execute the sixth clause of Janus's will: with the support of the Saxon court, Prince Sanguszko moved in, with the dubious claim that his wife was the sole surviving heir to the family of Janus's brother-in-law, disregarding the explicit instructions in the Constitution that succession would not be possible through the female line³.

To strengthen his claim, his mother was a Lubomirski; in Poland inter-family relations were the determinant factor of politics. The Sanguszkos had the support of the Court and would not be dislodged. For nine years the Order, baffled by the distance and the complexity of Polish affairs, was unable to press the matter of its claim, but in 1710, on the death of Proski, the Grand Master charged another Polish Knight, the Chevalier Dombrowski, to maintain the Order's stand⁴. Dombrowski seemed the ideal man; he was the first gentleman of the Queen's entourage, but Perellos did not know that her King, Stanislas Leczynski, was now a fugitive with the Swedish army. In 1711, a Jacobite Scotsman who had been received into the Tongue of Italy as a Knight of Grace, James George Gordon, arrived in Malta with a message from Leczynski; it advised the Grand Master to come to some arrangement with the holdere of Ostrog and to

² AOM 1471. G.M. Perellos to Bailiff Sacchetti, Ambassador in Rome, 28 July 1710.

³ AOM 270. Loc. cit.

⁴ AOM 1330. Bailiff Sacchetti to G.M. Perellos 10 June, 11 Nov. 1719:

accept some financial compensation⁵. Perellos, unwilling to resign a claim of such importance to his Order, which was beginning to feel the pinch of financial stringency owing to the new burden on the Treasury of a squadron of line ships, merely instructed successive Knights to keep their eyes on the Duchy and to be ready to raise the matter again if the internal affairs of the Republic ever became stable.

In 1719, however, the Ostrog claims found a powerful backer in a member of the Czartoryski family. Prince Augustus, a Knight of Malta in the German Tongue, professed in 1699, promised the Grand Master that he would bring the matter up at the next Diet to be convened in 1729⁶. Grand Master de Vilhena at the same time found an opportunity to ingratiate himself with Augustus II, the Saxon King of Poland, when he received his bastard, the Prince of Teschen, as an honoured guest – the young man had come to Malta to do his Caravans as a Knight of the Tongue of Italy – and decorated him on departure with the Grand Cross⁷. But the support of Augustus, the Family and the Papal Nuncio in Warsaw was still not enough to dislodge the Sanguszkos. The matter was deferred from the 1720 Diet to the next; all that had been achieved was an order from the King that a full inventory of the lands should be taken and lodged in the Treasury⁸. In 1722, Czartoryski tried again without success; the combination of Sanguszko and his fellow magnates, who stood to benefit from a project of the *de facto* holder to partition the lands, was too powerful. But the championship of Augustus Czartoryski was a cardinal achievement. With the assistance of a huge fortune, brought to him by the wife he was encouraged, by dispensation, to marry, he was to dominate the political scene for thirty-five years; as a Knight of Malta he was considered the proper claimant of the Duchy of Ostrog; inevitably he would use the Maltese claim as a lever of political control.

The aims of the 'Family' were, shortly, the regeneration of Poland through their own power; the chaotic state of the Republic's affairs was due to a chronic rivalry between the big family combinations and to the uncertainty of the succession. From 1725 onwards, the succession problem assumed in the mind of Augustus II a greater importance than his

⁵ AOM 266. Lib. Conc. Stat. 29 Jan. 1711. Memoire from Stanislas Rex. Received and entered on Aug. 26.

⁶ AOM 1481. G.M. Zondadari to Chev. Dombrowski, Warsaw. 15 May 1720

AOM 1480. G.M. Zondadari to King of Poland. 11 Oct. 1719.

AOM 1331. Sacchetti to Zondadari. 14 Sept. 1720.

AOM 1331. Clement XI to Augustus II (enclosed). 7 Sept. 1720.

⁷ AOM 1486. G.M. Vilhena to Augustus II 8 Aug. 1726; 28 March, 21 Aug. 1728. Teschen had been in Malta for two years.

⁸ AOM 268. Lib. Conc. Stat. 21 May 1728.

earlier plans for political absolutism, from which alone reform could come. With Stanilas Leczynski the French King's father-in-law, an anti-Saxon party looked to France for support, and its leading family was the Potocki. Against this powerful dynasty – whose revenues alone exceeded the annual army budget by four million zloties – the Czartoryskis were bound to range, and the other great families too tended to make some sort of alignment with one side or the other. Strong in support of the Potocki were the Sanguszko and Radziwill families, while the Lubomirskis sat on the fence though tied by family connections to the head of the Sanguszkos, illegitimate holder of the lands of Ostrog. For the next thirty years the Czartoryskis and the Potockis manoeuvred, one to obtain the control of the army, the other to retain what had always been considered their personal domain. As a hetman's baton, the rank of Commander in Chief of the armies in the field, could only be bestowed by a regularly constituted Diet, the Potockis saw to it that the business of every Diet never even reached the election of a President. In this way the claims of the Order of St John were never heard.

In 1753, however, the affairs of Ostrog once more came into prominence. The heir to the Sanguszko decided to renounce the world and end his days in a Convent. In the publicity that attended this decision it was discovered that he had distributed various portions of the Duchy of Ostrog to client and friendly families⁹. The distribution had been largely in favour of the Lubomirskis, the family of his mother; one estate had gone besides to a Potocki, another to a Sapieha. Of the eleven partitions, the second largest, worth 100,000 Polish florins in rents, was made over to Augustus Czartoryski, in an attempt, no doubt, to silence his persistent nagging. The revenues of the entire Ostrog ordination were estimated at close on 300,000 Polish florins – but they were probably more¹⁰.

These dispositions were at once contested by the magnates who had not benefitted under the disposition and who claimed that they were impossible without the consent of the Diet. Hetman Branicki, supreme commander of the royal armies, asked Sanguszko to reconsider his action, since the six hundred men that the Duchy was obliged to contribute to the army, albeit of poor quality hitherto, would not be forthcoming under

⁹ Lettres sur la Négociation citées. I. 10 April 1773. AOM Lib. Conc. Stat. 18 Mar. 1754. Letter from Papal Nuncio, Warsaw to Cardinal Secretary of State, Rome.

¹⁰ AOM 270. Lib. Conc. Stat. 14 Dec. 1754. Grand Prior Kollówrath to G.M. Pinto. The full annual value of the lands is never accurately given. The highest figure was 9 million Polish florins, the lowest 100,000. The latter figure represented the value of its rents in 1623. Ibid. 22 June 1754. Relation of Venerable Commissioners. The figure was based on the will of Janus of Ostrog.

the new disposition¹¹. Sanguszko replied that the alternative to his decision was a reversion of the lands to the Order of St John who, being under no obligations to the Republic, would use the revenues for their own purposes. If the lands once passed *in spiritualia*, he said, the Republic would have no claim on them; it was better to dispose of the lands to subjects of the Republic who would, he felt certain, find the six hundred men¹².

The quarrel, newly opened, could only be settled in the Diet, and as no solution to the problem had ever been found there it was unlikely that Branicki's circular to the Senators, calling upon them to champion the Order's claims, would do more than make the situation worse. In this he stated that a single holder, under obligations, would not only field the men but also solve a long standing cause for litigation. Acting upon what he conceived to be his duty, he established a military occupation of the Duchy.

It was at this stage that a proposal first made in 1710 was again raised¹³. It was that the Order should establish, in Poland, a Priory of six or eight Commanderies which would at once provide the men, open the Order to the great families of the State and, perhaps, if the present holders were admitted as the first Commanders, solve the present dispute amicably¹⁴. As soon as Branicki had moved in, the Grand Prior of Bohemia, Emmanuel von Kollowrath, was despatched to Warsaw to see what he could do. He arrived to find the Diet broken up by the Czartoryskis¹⁵. The uproar over the whole business, the actions of both Janus Sanguszko and Hetman Branicki, had proved so bitter that Czartoryski's share of the Ostrog Duchy was in danger. He had consented to the partition in an attempt to disrupt the nobility and to secure a portion at least for the Order; now even that seemed in danger. King Augustus III intervened and appointed a commission of five to examine the situation; this was to draw its expenses from the lands of the Duchy and pay Sanguszko an annual sum of 100,000 florins¹⁶. Kollowrath found that the Czartoryskis, because of their pro-Russian leanings, had lost the ear of the King and were inclined to dispute the commission's legality, and he feared they might form a

¹¹Ibid. Enclosure in report of Papal Nuncio. Letter from Branicki to Sanguszko. 9 Dec. 1753.

¹²Loc. cit. Sanguszko to Branicki, undated.

¹³AOM 1471. Sacchetti to Perellos 28 July 1710.

¹⁴AOM 270. Lib. Conc. Stat. 24 May 1754. Proposal of Committee set up by G. M. Pinto to examine the report of Papal Nuncio.

¹⁵Ibid. 13 Mar. 1755. Letter from Kollowrath to Pinto 14 Dec. 1754.

¹⁶The Commissioners were to draw 100,000 florins p.a. from the lands to cover their expenses, so the Duchy was probably valued at over 100,000 florins p.a.

Confederation against it. As principal beneficiaries under Sanguszko's disposition, Kollowrath thought that they were unlikely to champion the Order's claim with any great heat. In that, the Grand Prior did the family an injustice. The Czartoryskis were playing for higher stakes than mere possession of the lands of Ostrog. Prince Augustus, aware that the future stability of Poland depended on the good will of the neighbouring powers, preferred rather to court Russian support than Prussian. He hoped to break the Saxon hold on the Kingdom and to obtain, with Russian support, the election of a Polish king on the death of Augustus III. The Potocki were already scheming for a French claimant, the Prince de Conti, Grand Prior of France and a Knight of Malta, but not for that likely to be particularly vehement in the interests of the Order, and the agreement he had made with Sanguszko to divide the Duchy among the Lubomirskis, who were the holder's principal creditors, and the Potocki had been an attempt to divide the aristocratic opponents to the aims of the Family.

The prompt action of Branicki was no altruistic move on behalf of the Order — he had recently gone over to the Saxon party and intended to spike the Czartoryski guns. The group of lesser magnates, including the Radziwills, who controlled the Commandery of Stolowitz, had been won over to the Saxon cause, and the King's commissioners were all members of the anti-Russian group. Kollowrath attributed greed to Branicki himself, who posing as a patriot also had his eye on controlling the revenues of those vast lands himself.

The Grand Prior, designated Minister Plenipotentiary by Pinto, caused some surprise in Warsaw where he requested an audience with the King as an ambassador of the power who had been least consulted during the whole wrangle. His lavish equipage, which the Treasury had allowed him in order to create a good impression, astonished the Poles who had heard and seen little of the Order of St John before. He found the temper of the Court, however, xenophobically suspicious of the Knights; they were suspected of wanting to insert foreigners into key positions in the land. He was forced to admit that the Knights who had hitherto been professed from Poland had cut little figure in the state, but his own impressive appearance did something to break down their suspicions, and he was able to reassure the Senators that the Knights would not form an *imperium in imperio* but would be loyal subjects of their monarch; though one tenth of their landed revenues were sent to Malta, the rest would be spent inside the country. He had to counter another objection: the Order as a religious foundation was forbidden under the law of *mainmorte* of 1726 to inherit lands. He was able to show that this was not so, that the Knights were not strictly a religious order, and that in other countries an involved

judicial arrangement had exempted them from payment of all dues levied on ecclesiastical foundations. Even if they were subject to the law, which he denied, their claim was anterior to the law. He assured them that under Janus of Ostrog's will, the Diet would nominate the Commander, and thus instead of losing the entire revenue as they would were the Knights a religious foundation, where the State had no control of nominations, nine tenths of it would remain in the hands of a Pole.

Finally he argued the case of a Priory with some subtlety. The alternative was that the whole Duchy might fall into the hands of an overmighty subject; instead, the Catholic nobility would be able to form an integral part, a Priory, perhaps a Tongue, in the most celebrated aristocratic and chivalric order in Europe. He circulated his arguments in a report to the Ambassadors of all the foreign powers, and a thousand copies were printed for distribution in Warsaw itself. The immediate result, as Kollowrath saw it, was a flattering interest among the aristocratic Bishops and the greater nobles in the Cross of the Order which they wanted to wear. He was not taken in. He had summed up the situation in Poland and found 'an anarchy that calls itself a Republic, and a country where the laws have no rigour either against magnates who abuse them or against corruption'. Still, in order to build up a 'Maltese' party, it might be desirable to award a lavish sprinkling of Crosses of Devotion, *honoris causa*, on important people¹⁷.

More important, however, was another result of this impasse. The Czartoryskis, aware that they were temporarily outvoted, took off Stanislas Poniatowski, himself a Sapiaha and concerned in the succession to a part of Ostrog, and introduced him to the Czarina Catherine II. The results of this move were to be Poniatowski's later return to the Polish throne as Catherine's cast-off lover rewarded with a crown, and as the first effective Polish king since Sobieski. In Malta meanwhile the Czartoryskis were no longer confidently looked upon as the prop of the Order's claim; Kollowrath offered to remain in Warsaw and even to follow the King to Dresden at his own expense, in his own words there to entertain with a good table 'which will keep the Nuncios of the Princes Palatine sweet, for with them more is achieved with a glass of wine than with reason'.

Despite the despatch of five specially worked gold Crosses of Devotion to five Polish bishops, nothing was achieved¹⁸. Kollowrath could not

¹⁷Kollowrath was personally approached by twelve notables and asked to recommend them for an award of the Cross of Devotion.

¹⁸The Prince Bishops of Varmia, Cracow and Livonia and the Bishops Count Zaluski and Padocki.

support the expense indefinitely and the Treasury could not afford to subsidise him¹⁹. All they could hope for was that now Sanguszko's illegal hold had been broken, the holding royal commission could not last for ever. Unfortunately the internal affairs of the country grew no more stable and for seventeen years nothing more was heard of the Duchy of Ostrog in Malta. But with the settlement of the first Partition in 1722, the Sacred Council determined to see what it could do, not with Poland herself, but with her neighbours. The Knight chosen for this diplomatic Odyssey was a Veronese, the Chevalier Michael Sagramoso, one of the finest products of the century²⁰. Sagramoso before being entrusted with this mission was already a much-travelled man, and known in most European courts as a scholarly dilettante of great charm and common-sense. He was born in Verona in 1720 and his mother was a Hanoverian. After a disappointing youth he was finally professed a Knight of Malta in 1738, 'a resolute measure taken by Mentor to drag his Telemachus from the confines of Origina', and sent straight to the island to do his Caravans. As a Knight of Malta, Sagramoso was to find happiness, and a challenge to his latent faculties as a diplomat. He was one of the few Knights who had actually lived in Turkey, attached to the French Embassy at Constantinople; while in Germany, visiting his mother's family, he received an offer from Frederick the Great to join his recently founded academy as one of the ten young nobles who were to be trained for diplomacy in the first European forcing house for foreign office officials. In Sweden, he made the acquaintance of Linnaeus, whose avid and enthusiastic disciple he became, always sending the great botanist specimens that he found on his travels. In 1748 he visited St Petersburg, where the fame of his charming manners, wide interests, cultured conversation and exquisite tact ensured a flattering welcome from the Empress Elizabeth, who put a carriage at his disposal and permitted him to visit the naval arsenals at Kronstadt and the military academy at St Petersburg. Elizabeth, anxious to make a good impression with Europeans, and especially Europeans so well connected, treated him as if he were an ambassador and sent him away with twenty sticks of rhubarb, then a rare and valuable remedy against liver complaints. This early visit to the Russian capital in part governed the choice of Sagramoso for his new task; but his high standing with Frederick II was as important. For Frederick on his return from Russia had offered him a ministry. Sagramoso however wished to refuse any post that might tie him down; he wished to be his own master for the improvement of his mind and with four companions he took up residence on the shores of Lake

¹⁹AOM 1513. Pinto to Kollowrath. 23 July 1756.

²⁰AOM 273. Lib. Conc. Stat. 23 July 1773.

Geneva, indulging in botanical and mineral quests for his friend Linnaeus, and discussing the problems of the world with the others. But he was at heart a Knight Errant; he left Switzerland for a visit to the Saxon court at Dresden and Warsaw, then for the Elector of Hanover's kingdom across the channel, where at Windsor, George II made him a Gentleman of the Bedchamber. In England, as a good Knight Hospitaller, he inspected the ships and dockyards, and was impressed by the agricultural revolution, then in full swing. He became, in common with many eighteenth century Italians, a fervent Anglophil, and it was said in London that the best passport a visitor could have in England was a recommendation from the Chevalier Sagramoso. In Vienna in 1754, he was received by Kaunitz and Maria Theresa, with whom he discussed the affairs of the Order, and by both of them he was entreated to accept a diplomatic post in the Austrian diplomatic service. It was hardly surprising therefore that at the comparatively early age of forty Pinto appointed him Receiver of the Order in Venice. Here, between his official residence in the city and his personal house at Poiano, he became one of the patrons of intellectual society, the friend of Tiepolo and Goldoni, as well as an experimental farmer on English models, and founder member of the first agricultural academy in Italy at Verona. Then the call came; he was summoned to Malta and sent on a Europeanwide mission to plead the case of the Order of Malta via the ambassadors of all those European powers accredited at Warsaw before the Diet and the Court of Poland²¹.

He made his way to Warsaw by way of London, Vienna and Berlin, engaging the sovereigns there to instruct their ambassadors at the Polish Court to lend their support to his mission. Always glad to bedevil Polish politics, both Joseph II and Frederick agreed; but Sagramoso had then to go on to St Petersburg, where Elizabeth's niece-in-law ruled as the Empress Catherine II. He had met Catherine before in 1748, when he had brought her confidential letters from her brother, the Duke of Anhalt-Zerbst; now he was able to secure her all-important championship for the claim of his Order. Catherine's interest in Malta was now three years old, and she had many reasons for wishing to make herself agreeable to the Knights.

Sagramoso's arrival in Warsaw coincided with letters announcing the death of Pinto²²; the Polish government, embarrassed by his powerful friends, declined to recognise the validity of his status. Accordingly it was not until May, 1773, that Sagramoso was able to present his credentials. In the meantime he built up his party, which included one important

²¹Aurelio Bertola: *Vita di Michele Sagramoso*, (Paris, 1793) pp. 1-143.

²²Lettres sur la Négociation. IV. 3 July 1773.

accession from the ranks of the hitherto unfriendly, the Marshall of the Confederation of Lithuania, a Radziwill, who begged to be allowed to become a Knight. He also approached the Marshall of the Confederation of the Crown, Prince Adam Poninski, one of the possessors of Ostrog lands by the disposition of Janus Sanguszko, with a view to persuading him to set up a commandery from his part of the spoils²³. With his foreign support he was at last able to convince Stanislas Poniatowski, now King of Poland, that justice demanded a Delegation to examine the pretensions of the Order²⁴. The Delegation appointed a Commission and a Diet was convened for September 15th²⁵. However, familiar delaying tactics were employed to delay the meeting of the Commission²⁶.

When at last it was permitted to meet on January 19th, 1774, Sagramoso was able to announce the preliminary foundation of one commandery on the Ostrog estates in the possession of Poninski. This was to be held in the family in perpetuity for his male heirs; either members of the family would possess it as Knights of Malta, or they would have the right of nomination. The value of the estate was 300,000 Polish florins, bringing in an annual revenue of 15,000; the first Knight was to be the Prince himself, who was decorated with the Cross of Devotion and dispensed from the usual vow of celibacy²⁷. Sagramoso hoped the example would be followed; he had given up any hopes that the Order might gain complete control of the estates, but such a solution would satisfy both the possessors, giving them a nominal control, and the Order, bringing in at least the annual tenth to Malta by way of Responions. The response, however, was not immediate. The Delegates still prevaricated, hoping that the Diet, when it met, would dismiss the Order's case, and in face of this Sagramoso produced his trump card. He told them that the Grand Master had empowered him to offer the Order's pretensions to the Prussian minister. Though Frederick the Great had renounced all claims on the Republic in the Treaty that had concluded the first partition in 1772, he had not renounced the rights he could acquire through his brother, Prince Ferdinand, Prior of Brandenburg, who though a heretic was accepted in Malta

²³Op. cit. V. 30 August 1773.

²⁴Op. cit. VI. 20 Oct. 1773.

²⁵AOM 273. Lib. Conc. Stat. 23 July 1773.

²⁶Lettres etc. VII 28 Dec. 1773. All the members appointed to the Commission were related to the holders of the lands, and so not disinterested. Sagramoso, in order to appear conciliatory, did not ask the three ministers to exclude them, but he was delayed by the contention of Prince Lubomirski, Palatine of Kiovic and principal possessor, that they should decide whether the other possessors had claims on the same estate as the one he claimed.

²⁷AOM 273. Lib. Conc. Stat. 11 Aug. 1774. The final agreement was signed on 22 May 1774.

as a member of the Order. 'That which is denied to my modest and pacific overtures', he warned them, 'will be then given over to the authority of force.'²⁸

The opposition crumbled. Unwilling to make the Ostrog issue an international one, in which they might retain no interest, the holders of the lands agreed with Sagramoso to found a Priory with six commanderies; 120,000 florins a year were to be assigned by them as a fund from which to support the Commanders. The first holders were to be dispensed from the obligations of celibacy, but their successors had to keep the rules of the Order, and all holders had to show proofs of nobility to the second generation from both sides, both male and female²⁹. In addition to this Priory, eight other families founded commanderies, retaining the *jus-patronatus*³⁰. When the final papers were signed, their total endowment amounted to 1,440,000 florins, with an annual revenue of 87,000.

Financially this was more than Sagramoso had ever dared to hope for when negotiations began. From the Priory the Order could expect annual responsions of 24,000 florins, from the Commanderies of *jus-patronatus* 8,200. At least now there would be sixteen Knights in the country, while the problem of the regiment of soldiers was to be solved by a special foundation of 300,000 florins to be used for its maintenance.

Sagramoso estimated that in 1774 the full value of the estates of Ostrog was 9,000,000 florins a year: he had managed to rescue a bare 120,000, together with a quittance payment of 5,000 gold ducats from the possessors. In return for this paltry but valuable sum, he signed a formal renunciation of the Order's claims upon the whole estate. The Poles had driven a hard bargain and the Knights had to be content with it. But much at least had been achieved by Sagramoso's gentle insistence on the prestige that Poland was bound to gain from an establishment of Knights: 'It is not by money that he makes his creatures', wrote an admiring witness, 'but he induces them to value a black ribbon with a little cross. Indeed I admire the Knight who finds it possible to satisfy the greed and vanity of those people whom he needs at virtually no cost to his Order.'³¹ The Poles, whose national pride was too easily dissipated in empty shows, found a convenient way out of tedious litigation in which the three neighbouring powers threatened to intervene, and honour was satisfied all round³².

²⁸ *Vita di Sagramoso*, p. 152; Speech of St. to Delegates; related in full. Also Lettres etc. XIII, 15 Dec. 1774.

²⁹ AOM 273. Lib. Conc. Stat. 31 Jan. 1776. The Constitutions were signed by Sagramoso on 17 Dec. 1774.

³⁰ The Commandery of Prince Poninski was one of them.

³¹ Lettres etc. XII, 24 Oct. 1774.

³² The Priory's foundation was eventually ratified in the Polish Diet on 18 Oct.

The significance for Poland of this arrangement was by now minimal. Interest had shifted from the Duchy of Ostrog, and it is significant that in no place in the new constitution are the Czartoryskis mentioned. To the Poles, the interference of the foreign ministers was one more irritating indignity, and the Priory was far from being a satisfactory foundation. Polish Knights were less eager to pay their dues to Malta than they were to wear the eight pointed Cross. Four thousand florins of the quittance fee were never paid. The receipts from the Order's financial agent in Warsaw show a spasmodic and insufficient series of payments. Indeed the whole foundation had a flimsy and tenuous look about it, as if doomed to die young³³.

The most important aspect of these negotiations was, however, the rapport struck between the Order and the court of St Petersburg. With a Russian minister in Valletta and, in 1775, Sagramoso in Russia on a journey of thanks to the Czarina, this new diplomatic involvement was to have important consequences. Catherine begged Sagramoso to remain at her court as the Maltese minister, but his health which was none too good demanded a warmer climate. He was also tired: it was 'impossible to relate in a simple narrative, the interminable correspondence with nearly every court of Europe, the infinite strange, not to say incredible, stratagems with which I was constrained to sustain the most bitter and obstinate litigation, accompanied by the most tortuous legal methods, and at the same time confronted by political intrigues at once extremely arduous and intricate to unravel'. He deserved a rest³⁴.

But the troubles of Priory were only beginning. It was a puling infant

1776, not without protest. The Prior was Adam Poninski and the six Commanders: Prince Francis Sulkowski, Prince Casimir Sapieha, Prince Calixtus Poninski, Count Simeon Casimir Szollowski, Count Mielzynski and Count Luba. The Jus-Patronats were founded by Adam Poninski, Casimir de Plater, Chev. Adalbert Schamosty-Szamowski, Prince Augustus Sulkowski, the Podoszki family, Count Michael de Lopott, Count Joseph-Vincent Plater and the Count of Huslen.

³³AOM 1620. Letters to Receiver of Order in Poland. The Banker Tepper was made responsible for the collection of the various dues, and so difficult did the task become, and so unpopular did he become with his insistent but hopeless demands, that he begged to be relieved; the Grand Master was able to persuade him to stay by making him a Donat of the Order. The last of the Jus-Patronats was founded and all arrangements made by 1775. By as early as 1779 the Priory was in arrears. In 1781 Tepper had reduced them to one year, but nothing further was received from him until 1786 when 108,000 florins arrived in Venice, arrears up to 1784. In Dec., 1788 the last recorded receipt mentions 585 florins arriving in Venice of 48,000 duc. The receipts scarcely covered the expenses incurred in establishing the Order's claim on the lands — all it had gained was a membership of dilatory Polish Knights, amounting, with the honorary crosses awarded, to 22.

³⁴AOM 273. Lib. Conc. Stat. 19 May 1778. Relation of Sagramoso.

beset by ailments: the project of admitting the Polish Priory into the German Tongue was balked by the earnest opposition of the whole chapter and of the Bailiff of Brandenburg, Ferdinand Hompesch, the future Grand Master. They refused to allow Knights who were obliged to show only eight quarterings to belong to a Tongue which had to show sixteen³⁵. Then various Knights tried to get the dispensations of celibacy to apply to their children³⁶. The Prior and his Receiver quarrelled, and the latter sent back to Malta an extremely unflattering picture of the Prior. 'The dissipation in which Frater Poninski lives, and the chaos into which his particular affairs have got, deprive him of any leisure to carry out his duties as Grand-Prior.... It would seem important that the Grand Council of Malta should enlighten him (upon his dependence on the Grand Master), and explain to him the dangers to which he will be exposed if he continues to neglect his duties as he has been.'³⁷

The most serious deficiency was the reluctance of the new Knights to pay their Responsions, and when the Bailiff Stecki, ex-Commander of Posen, died, his family refused to disgorge his spoils³⁸. But the state of the whole country was reflected in miniature in this unhappy little foundation. 'The new establishments in Poland', wrote the Count de Borch to de Rohan, 'are the work of Your Highness and are capable of immortalizing you in the eyes of the Order, who, in this new colony, will recognize for ever the wisdom and zeal of its august head. But you know, Monseigneur, what sort of people these Poles are to-day, full of good will, but feeble by themselves; they cannot guarantee any establishment among themselves unless a foreign power goes surety for its solidity. Russia, more than any other of the neighbouring powers, is in a position to furnish this support. Render, Monseigneur, this nation favourable to the Order by working on the arm that directs it.'³⁹

³⁵AOM 1530. De Rohan to Count Colloredo, Grand Prior of Hungary. 19 Aug. 1776, AOM 1366. De Breteuil, Ambassador in Rome to De Rohan, 1 July 1777.

³⁶The Platers wished to resign their commanderies to their infant children and yet to remain within the Order as Knights. Poninski, though not a professed Knight because of his married status, wanted in the absence of a professed Knight to decorate his own two sons and a nephew with the Cross of Malta. AOM 1240. De Rohan to Adam Poninski, Warsaw, 15 Oct. 1777.

³⁷AOM 1242. Francis Sulkowski to De Rohan. 14 Dec. 1778.

³⁸AOM 1532. De Rohan to Papal Nuncio, Warsaw, 9 Sept. 1780. De Rohan to Bailiff de Brillane, Ambassador in Rome. 23 Sept. 1780. Further correspondence on same subject to Sagramoso in Naples, 17 Mar. 1781. AOM 1533.

³⁹AOM 1240. De Borch to De Rohan, 22 Aug. 1779. Borch was trying to obtain the Cross of Devotion for Zacchary Czernichev, Governor General of White Russia and one of the principal ministers at the court of Catherine II. Borch wanted to use the Governor's influence to recover some sequestered lands belonging to his family.

De Rohan took the hint. In 1783 the Polish Priory was admitted into the Anglo-Bavarian Tongue and acquired the status of a Tongue in addition. The Elector of Bavaria and George III were quite content to see the Tongue become the Anglo-Bavaro-Polish Tongue, and Mgr Ghigiotti, the Polish King's private secretary, convinced Poninski that the arrangement was a good one⁴⁰. But these artificial injections were of no avail, the Polish infant died at length, not from internal weakness, but from suffocation. In 1793 the Second Partition swallowed up Volhynia and with it the Duchy of Ostrog. Poninski's commandery vanished into Russia and in the confused state of Polish affairs before her extinction in 1795, all possibility of controlling the Priory was out of the question. It had long ceased to pay its dues. The straitened finances of Malta after the Convention's decree confiscating all her lands in France made it desperately necessary to scrape together every penny that was due to her. The time had come to see what could be gained from wooing the Czarina. The way to St Petersburg was now open and was to lead to the curious anomaly five years later of an Imperial Grand Master in the person of Catherine's son, the Czar Paul I.

⁴⁰AOM 1582. De Rohan to Sagramoso. 5 July 1783. 14 Sept. 1783. 6 Dec. 1783.

THE RE-OPENING OF THE UNIVERSITY IN 1800

By J. CASSAR PULLICINO

With the rising of the Maltese against the French on the 2nd September, 1798, Napoleon's plans for the reform of higher education in Malta were indefinitely postponed and later had to be abandoned altogether. On the 18th June Bonaparte had decreed that the University was to be replaced by a Central School, to which the Malta Library, the Cabinet of Antiquities and the Observatory were to be attached, together with a Natural History Museum and a Botanical Garden covering thirty acres. The School was to have eight chairs, viz. (1) Arithmetic and Stereotomy, (2) Algebra and Stereotomy, (3) Geometry and Astronomy, (4) Mechanics and Physics, (5) Chemistry, (6) Oriental Languages, (7) Navigation and (8) a Librarian entrusted with the Geography course. In addition, courses in Anatomy, Medicine and Midwifery were to be held at the Hospital.

Napoleon thus aimed at shifting the bias of studies in Malta to the science and technical subjects. To implement his reforms he wrote on the same date to the Directory in Paris asking them to select from the *École Polytechnique* three students to teach in Malta. One of them was to teach Arithmetic and Descriptive Geography, another Algebra and the third Mechanics and Physics. For the sons of the well-to-do his scheme was to select, from among the richest Maltese families, sixty youths between the ages of nine and fourteen, and send them to Paris to be educated in the colleges of the Republic¹.

These plans of educational reform receded into the background when the Maltese took up arms and successfully besieged Valletta, with its French garrison under General Vaubois, and its civilian population, which soon created formidable problems for the French Authorities. For two years while the Blockade lasted, all teaching at the University was suspended, but with the capitulation of the French on the 5th September, 1800 it was possible to start thinking again of re-opening the University. True, long before the capitulation, John Alexander Ball had already turned his attention to the need of re-starting education in the country outside Valletta and on the 5th June, 1800 he had appointed Canon F.S. Caruana, one of the leaders of the Maltese, Inspector General and Director of Sciences and Arts.

¹ SCICLUNA, Hannibal P., *Actes et Documents pour servir a l'Histoire de l'Occupation Française de Malte pendant les années 1798-1800*. Malta, 1923, pp. 7, 99, 151.

A copy of this letter of appointment is incorporated in the official *Acta Academiae Melitensis ab anno 1798 usque ad Ann. [1809] Preside ac Rectore Revmo. Canonico D. Xaverio Caruana* preserved in the Archives of the Royal University of Malta. As far as is known, this document has escaped the attention of historians². In view of its importance as a first step leading to the resumption of educational facilities in Malta under the British Protectorate, the letter is reproduced here in the original:

Il Capo di Malta e Gozo

Avendo non solo per informazioni avute da diverse onesti persone, ma anche per averlo Noi stessi osservato, conosciuto appieno il grande spirito e particolari talenti che avete Voi, Canonico D. Saverio Caruana, non solo per le Scienze ma anche per dirigere le ma....., volendo far ciò conoscere a questa fedele popolazione, e nel tempo stesso farne sentire a quest'Isola i possibili vantaggi. In vigor di queste Lettere patenti vi creamo Ispettore Generale e Direttore delle Scienze tutte, e di tutte le Arti, accordandovi le necessarie autorità per potere esercitare tale carica, volendo che dalla unica vostra direzione dipendano tutte le funzioni, operazioni ed esercizi pubblici che riguardano le Scienze tutte e tutte le Arti.

Dato in S. Antonio, nostra Residenza, il 5 giugno, 1800.

Sottoscritto ALESSANDRO GIOVANNI BALL

It is doubtful whether Caruana had any chance of exercising his office with visible results between June and September, 1800. One thing, however, is certain. Ball had a very good opinion of Caruana and he believed that Caruana's learning and good will marked him out as the ideal person to assume the direction of the reinstated University of Studies and Academy. We know from another MS in the University Archives, entitled *Acta Academiae Melitensis 1800-1832*, that it was precisely these qualities

² Most of the contents of the MS are incorporated in the more comprehensive *Acta Academiae Melitensis 1800-1832*, mentioned later on in this article. The earlier manuscript includes a brief survey of events between 1798 and 1800 which is missing from the 1800-1832 *Acta*. Unfortunately this part of the MS has been extensively damaged by bookworms and is quite illegible in parts. This might explain why the above document escaped the attention of the late Sir Temi Zammit, who makes no reference to it in his oration *L'Università di Malta: origine e sviluppo* (1913).

that led Ball to appoint Caruana Inspector General and Director. Small wonder, therefore, that on the 28th October, 1800 Canon Caruana received, in addition, the appointment of Rector of the University. The following is a translation of his letter of appointment³:

The Governor of Malta and Gozo

It being Our wish to give you, Canon Dr Saverio Caruana, a further proof of Our recognition of your merits and of the valuable services rendered by you to your Country during the peasant insurrection, at great personal risk and sacrifice, and it being also Our wish to benefit this Island by employing your abilities, being well assured of your talents and energy and good will, We create and appoint you Rector, Head and Director of the University and of Studies of this Island and also of the College of Jesus, granting to you all the honour and emoluments, appertaining thereto, and charging you with all the burthens and duties annexed to this office.

Given at the Palace — Valletta,

This 28th day of October in the year 1800,

(Sd) JOHN ALEXANDER BALL

In this letter the words 'a further proof of Our recognition of your merits' gain added significance if they are read in conjunction with Caruana's previous appointment as Inspector General.

Caruana's first care as Rector was to find suitable persons to fill the several Chairs. After various discussions with Ball the University was re-opened on the 6th November, 1800 with the following Teaching Staff:

³In the *Acta* we read that Ball '*cognito Revmi. D. Xaverii Caruana Stae. Cathedralis Ecclesiae Canonici in Scientiis omnibus mirifice exculto ingenio, perspectaque illius ad disciplinas artesque fovendas ardentissima voluntate (cuius rei causa Artium omnium Scientiarumque Inspectorem generalem ac Praesidem jamdudum creaverat) ipsum Studiorum Universitatis Rectorem, praesidem et Caput constituit...*'

The translation of the appointment given here follows that published as Document II in the historical introduction to the Royal University of Malta Calendar, 1956. The only change is in the actual designation of Caruana's office which is given as *Rector of the University of Studies of this Island* but which should more accurately be rendered *Rector, Head and Director of the University and of Studies of this Island*.

CLASS	SUBJECT	TEACHER	HONORARIUM
I	Italian & Latin	D. (Rev.) Vincenzo Pisani	150 scudi ⁴
II	Italian & Latin	D. Paolo Busuttìl	150 scudi
III	Italian & Latin	D. Michel Angelo Farrugia	150 scudi
IV	Italian & Latin	D. Pietro Mallia	150 scudi
V	Humanities & Rhetoric	D. Silvestro Cutajar	200 scudi
VI	Logic & Metaphysics	D. Salvatore Montebello	200 scudi
VII	Mathematics & Physics	Dr Carlo Azzopardi	200 scudi
VIII	Civil Law	Comm. Fr Antonio Micallef	200 scudi
IX	Canon Law	D. Filippo Pullicino	200 scudi
X	Dogmatic Theology	Fra Bonaventura Chircop	200 scudi
XI	Moral Theology	Fra Vincenzo Thei	200 scudi
XII	Medicine	Dr Ludovico Abeja	200 scudi
XIII	Handwriting & Arithmetic	Vincenzo Allegrini	150 scudi
XIV	Drawing	Michele Busuttìl	200 scudi

In addition to the above, the *Prefetto del Corridore* received 100 *scudi* a year; the Porter, who was responsible for the cleanliness of the place and was expected to keep one or two cats, received 120 *scudi*, while 30 *scudi* went to an attendant in charge of the University clock. The Under-Secretary received 106 *Scudi* and 120 *scudi* went to the Sacristan of the Church of the College of Jesus. At first there was no Secretary, but soon after the re-opening of the University Caruana appointed Rev. Francesco Agius, of Valletta, 'a man conspicuous for his learning and for his probity of manners', to fill the post of Secretary 'for the better ordering of University studies'.

The Rector was responsible for the management of the University building, which included the Church annexed to it as far as temporal matters were concerned, and he could authorise expenditure connected with teaching and maintenance. As Rector he was not entitled to receive any salary, but as Director of Sciences and Arts he was in receipt of 350 *scudi*

⁴The *skud* (*scudo*), which is the equivalent of 1/8 in English money, is still used in agricultural and fishing transactions, but has long since been replaced by £ s d in salary calculations.

The salaries given above are higher than those approved in respect of the same Chairs in 1773, when Ximenes effected drastic economies and reduced the number of Chairs to nine. In 1773 the Lecturers in Theology, Philosophy, Mathematics, Rhetoric and Humanities received 180 *Scudi* each, the Grammar teacher received 120 *scudi*, while two teachers in the lower forms received 90 *scudi* each. Vide R.M.L. Arch. Mss 577, f. 210-220.

annually for the upkeep of a *calesse* which Government was bound to provide him with for carrying out his manifold duties.

Personal emoluments thus amounted to 3,026 *scudi* annually (approximately £252). It seems that even in those days the financial position of the University was so precarious that Government accepted the obligation to make good any balance of expenditure that the University Accountant, (*l'Economista dell'Università*) could not meet out of University funds.

The programme of studies followed more or less the main lines laid down by Costaguti's *Constitutioni* approved by Pinto in 1771⁵. Holy Scripture, Ecclesiastical History and Building Construction, however, were not included in the 1800 curriculum, possibly due to the lack of suitable teachers in Malta. Surgery was likewise left out of the syllabus, but it is possible that the School of Anatomy and Surgery established by Grand Master Cotoner in 1674 continued to function unofficially at the Hospital during this period until a Chair of Surgery was set up in 1824⁶.

Caruana introduced the study of Drawing, which presumably included Painting as later on in the same *Acta* the Drawing Class is referred to as *Schola Pictoriae*. Caruana's interest in the Arts dated from his younger days, when he had set up two weaving looms, at Zebbug and at Rabat, which produced various specimens of fine artistic workmanship. The

⁵ LAURENZA, V., *Il Primo Rettore e i primi Statuti dell'Università di Malta*, 1934, p. 17.

⁶ The first Professor of Surgery and Anatomy under British Rule was Gavino Patrizio Portelli. The University Calendar gives his period of office as 1824-38. This is evidently incorrect, because Portelli's appointment as Professor of Surgery and Anatomy was gazetted on the 28th November, 1822. Vide *Proclamations, Minutes and other Official Notices* published by the Government of the Island of Malta ... 1821-22, p. 63.

In the same Government Notice we read that the Lieutenant Governor had accepted Caruana's resignation from the office of Rector of the University. Caruana had requested permission to resign 'in consequence of the additional duties now entrusted to him as Archdeacon of this Diocese'. The Rev. Fra Girolamo Inglott, whose appointment as Professor of Philosophy appeared in the same Notice, was nominated to act as Rector 'for the present until further orders'.

Maitland immediately set up a Committee of five to report on University studies. For two years this Committee also managed the day-to-day affairs of the University. In or about March, 1824 Giovanni Andreotti, Antonio Muscat and Michele Borg, who had been in practice for some time, graduated in Medicine *Apollinea laurea donati fuere*. Portelli, who had not received his doctorate when he was appointed Professor of Surgery in 1822, took his degree in May, 1824. Vide *Acta Academica Melitensia* 1800-32, anno 1824.

The late Professor P.P. Debono, to whom I owe this information and who was making a special study of Medical studies in Malta, interprets this as a tacit recognition of the studies previously carried on unofficially at the School of Anatomy, at the same time marking the official incorporation of the School in the system of University teaching.

School of Painting opened in 1800 and proved such a success that in 1803 a second Teacher, Giorgio Busutil, of Valletta, had to be appointed owing to the ever-increasing number of students. The impetus which Caruana gave as Rector to the study of the Arts was later extended to Sculpture and Architecture resulting in the formation of a fine school of local artists who flourished in the first half of the nineteenth Century⁷.

The system of studies re-organized by Caruana resembled closely the set-up of the educational organization introduced by Costaguti in 1771⁸. The University establishment in 1800 provided also for a measure of elementary instruction and for secondary education. The first four classes were devoted to the teaching of Italian and Latin at elementary and secondary school level. Lessons took up four hours a day. In Class I reading and writing in the two languages were taught; in Class II pupils were introduced to declension of nouns, conjugation of verbs and the rudiments of grammar. Grammar and translation of easy books from Latin into Italian formed the syllabus of Class III, while in Class IV Grammar was continued, more difficult translations into Italian were attempted, together with some translation from Italian into Latin.

University studies proper started in Class V. Classes V to VII formed a sort of Preparatory Course consisting of Humanities and Rhetoric, Logic and Metaphysics, Mathematics and Physics, leading to higher studies in Laws, Theology and Medicine in Classes VIII to XII. Handwriting and Drawing formed a sort of Fine Arts Course in Classes XIII and XIV.

On the 5th November 1800 the newly appointed Professors called on the

⁷ BONNICI CALI, R., *Monsignor Francis Xavier Caruana: Maecenas of Fine Arts*, in *Scientia*, vol. xiv (1948) No. 1, pp.33-41.

⁸ LAURENZA, V., *op. cit.* pp. 12-17. In 1773 Grand Master Ximenes ordered that teachers and lecturers were to be Maltese and he reduced the number of Chairs to nine, viz:

<i>Teologia Scolastica</i>	Lettore Fra Francesco Bonnici, O.F.M. Conv.
<i>Teologia Morale</i>	Lettore Fra Francesco Sammut, Agost.
<i>Filosofia</i>	Lettore Don Giuseppe Xerri, della Valletta
<i>Matematica</i>	Lettore Dr Fisico Carlo Azzupardo
<i>Rettorica ed Umanità</i>	Chierico Samuele Caruana
<i>Grammatica</i>	Maestro D. Giuseppe Cachia, della Senglea
<i>Leggere, Scrivere e prime regole della Grammatica</i>	Maestro Fra Maurizio Livreri, Cappellano d'Obbedienza
<i>Ben Scrivere ed Aritmetica</i>	Maestro Fra Matteo Gili, Cappellano d'Obbedienza

Apart from these economic measures Ximenes retained more or less the basic set-up worked out by Costaguti. Besides the schools for higher studies these were the *Scuole delle Umane Lettere*, the *Scuola della Grammatica*, the *Scuola del Conteggio* and the *Scuola Infima*. For details governing the teaching, the time-tables and the administration of these schools vide R.M.L. Arch. Ms 577, f. 210-220.

Rector at his home to thank him for their appointments. Caruana received them most kindly and they all proceeded to the Palace of the Archbishop, Mgr Vincenzo Labini, who then administered to them the oath of office in accordance with the custom of the land.

On the following day Professors, students and members of the better educated classes assembled in the University Hall, where the Augustinian Fr Vincenzo Thei delivered a solemn oration for the success of the new studies, this oration was received with great applause. The Governor Ball, honoured the occasion with his presence.

Lectures started a week later. On the 13th November, 1800 after the solemn intonation of the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* in the University Church, each Professor went to his classroom, mounted the rostrum and gave a public lecture.

The above details in the *Acta* concerning the ceremonial followed on such occasions form a connecting link between the earlier practice under the Knights and that followed on similar occasions nowadays. Some modifications or omissions are noticeable. New teachers no longer take their oath of office at the hands of the Archbishop, except those in the Faculty of Theology.

The inaugural lecture now forms part of the Opening Day Ceremony in the University Church, and is not delivered, as in 1800, in the University Hall seven days before the Opening Day. As Chancellor the Governor still presides at official ceremonies in the Church of the University.

SOME ASPECTS OF ECONOMICS IN THE LIGHT OF PRESENT INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

By BIANCA FIORENTINI

Of all sciences, the three most discussed in the world to-day are nuclear physics, economics and sociology. Indeed, over the radio and in almost all newspapers we find quite a good number of economic and social problems that are becoming daily more and more complicated owing to an ever-increasing population as well as to specialization of labour, technical improvement and, last but not least, 'atomic' progress.

Needs are numberless, and unfortunately man finds great difficulty in restraining his material wants within reasonable bounds, and so he finds himself tempted to act in the economic sphere seeking for an ever-increasing self-comfort regardless of the rights of his fellowmen.

It is hardly necessary to add that most people do not even understand the real meaning of such very important problems as Economic Rent, Power of Money, Wages, Monetary Inflation, Foreign Exchanges, etc. and often they do not care to learn anything about them. They seem interested only in the very problems in which they believe themselves to be directly concerned and try to explain them in accordance with their own interests and selfish appetites.

Economic and social problems are not a product of recent times, and it would be a deplorable mistake to think so. They have existed since the very creation of man as many rights, possessed by man by virtue of his human nature, are antecedent to the existence of the State. Gigantic technical progress and the 'atomic era' have only increased them in such a way that they become not merely local or national problems but definitely world problems. And what a vast improvement since the degrading days of slavery on which the social life of the ancient world was built!

As history teaches us, most wars, even in ancient times, were caused by economic problems. The immortal poem of Homer would certainly never have appeared, and we would have known nothing about Helen's wonderful beauty, had not economic reasons induced the Greek princes to make war upon rich Troy.

It is not even possible to ascertain whether the last two world wars were caused by the deep transformation of all economic structure that has been taking place since the first years of the century, or whether the

last two wars themselves marked the same transformation in economic and social problems. One thing, however, is clear: the enormous improvement in the quantity and quality of production owing to the gigantic technical means that are now at our disposal (let us not forget the wonderful changes in industry as a result of the progress registered in the atomic field). This improvement has radically changed factory structure in all its branches, and most especially all social problems connected with it, and many unforeseen problems have risen which were unthought of some years ago.

No wonder, then, if to-day economic and social problems have become so enormously important, so colossal and so evident as to make anxious all rulers who sincerely care for the welfare and happiness and freedom of the peoples, as well as for a fair distribution of wealth though, of course, there have always been rich and poor people and, no doubt, there always will be. Even the Pope has given His advice many times on many social problems, always exhorting peoples to work for that peace which fills the heart joined in friendship with God.

But, strangely enough, there are rulers who promise heaven on earth through the destruction of the natural rights, dignity and individuality of the human person. All the mechanical workings of paper theories and plans for further wealth which is to them synonymous with human happiness, seem more suitable for improvement in the life of the lower animals than in the life of men gifted with personal intelligence. Every man wants, above all, to be free in the use of his human faculties and not to be treated as part of a legal system. By the gift of intelligence man can investigate nature and understand truth, and by the gift of free will he has the power to direct his own conduct. It is precisely because of this fact of human personality and dignity that all forms of totalitarianism must be condemned. History shows that totalitarian states nurse within themselves the seeds of their own destruction.

There is still to-day a large number of social reformers who see the need for government intervention and control in every branch of production and preach a policy of reform. They forget there are moral laws that circumscribe economic, political and social activity, and if Economic Individualism may lead to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, the unlimited supremacy of the State over the individual leads to the denial of human rights and freedom, dignity and happiness. Government intervention would certainly not be the true road to a more efficient production since only the motive of profit and well regulated private enterprise remain the greatest stimulants to invention, efficiency, progress and increased production. Where private enterprise is abolished, there is need

for a whole army of paid officials employed simply to watch the others working! And with the disappearance of private enterprise, thrift, variety and progress will disappear, too. The duty of the State is to stimulate and watch industry and not to usurp the rights, nor to perform the duties, of the individual.

The right to private property must remain, but the responsibilities of ownership must be recognised; labour has its rights but it must have its duties: it has the right to a family living wage as well as to all those social facilities concerning its welfare; it has, however, the duty to work conscientiously for its masters. It is necessary to add that all the material prosperity of a country is involved in the national economy and not merely in the well-being of certain industries or classes of people, be they owners or workers. For instance, to lower or raise wages to the private advantages of only one class in the community and with no consideration of the common good leads, of course, to struggles and is an act definitely contrary to social and economic welfare.

Through the study of psychology, history and the observation of facts, Economic Science examines the needs of man, how best the goods to meet them can be produced and distributed for consumption, and the human conduct in their production and distribution, but it does not teach us the morality of any particular action. Economic Science, then, has nothing in common with the laws laid down for political reasons by rulers of states, and this explains the violent opposition nursed by a great number of persons to the laws of Economics.

But as social life becomes more complex, the Government tends to play an ever-increasing part in the life of the individuals and it would be foolish to deny that in a modern industrialized state and in the exceptional conditions of the world to-day, the State has wider rights than in normal times. So there is need for a fresh social start and for principles different from those which guide the economy of the countries.

Deeply connected with all economic and social problems, especially in the 'atomic era', are international relations. The bonds of solidarity which lead families to unite into townships, and townships to group themselves into states, and states to form an international community have been formed progressively according to circumstances in order to promote international co-operation and to achieve peace and security through a combination of interests. No country to-day can afford to ignore international problems and co-operation — so close the interdependence of people is — unless it is prepared to adapt itself to a very low standard of living. Indeed, nations are so closely connected in their daily lives that the peace and prosperity of any one of them is bound up with that of all.

Economic and social problems, therefore, cannot be solved by single countries.

Experience teaches us that the forces engaged in the production of goods are still unable to find a common basis of agreement within single countries in the general economic sphere, in accordance with the most useful principle of co-ordination in view of the highest efficiency. This is not an abstract principle; it is a general law of nature, daily practised and found true, not only in the limited economic sphere, but also in the most complicated productive form of societies. The improvement of human communities depends upon the inevitable process showing a tendency to co-operation, and on the will and possibility to develop co-ordination in the world. The history of all social progress is the result of this laborious process of civilization that stimulates individuals and peoples towards a co-ordination of their intellectual and material activities more and more in the world sphere.

It must, however, be admitted that it is quite impossible to reach a perfect co-ordination in every branch of economic activity, nor is it possible to have such a co-ordination in economy as a whole. Indeed, no perfect balance is possible either in human life or in the economic and social life. Man must aim at reducing to a minimum all possible future obstacles to attain maximum efficiency in satisfying his basic needs. Even in this case, it would still be absurd to pretend that all perturbations in economic life should disappear. Co-operation will help man in guiding industry to those sectors where it is most needed; this, of course, will only limit the crisis that may result from a new industrial revolution.

In accordance with the political and juridical aspects, the agricultural and industrial production, and the moral attitude of each country, co-operation may assume different forms. What is essential is the effort towards co-ordination of all factors of production and the need for the organization of each industry in order to discover the facts upon which production is to be based. Good effects will be manifest after the international community, in order to form a collective entity, has undertaken to bring about its improvement through the co-ordination of all economic forces which are at present not yet put to use. The most efficient use of any of them will depend upon the means of the others. The world economic structure is to-day made up of particular unities still in formation having a surplus, or a deficiency, of one or more factors of production. This surplus, or deficiency, renders fruitless a part of the complementary factors of production, and as a result there are great residues of unused economic activity and often the destruction of wealth itself.

Different attitudes towards production in different states are positive

factors of co-operation, which otherwise would be seriously handicapped, and perhaps rendered impossible, if there were uniformity of productive factors. History teaches us that some countries are economically stronger than others, simply because they can provide for the needs of the population, thanks to the multiple regional resources and thanks even more to intense and more complex economic exchanges. By its unequal distribution of capacities and resources, the order of nature has clearly shown its desire to bring about an active system of exchanges among states which are profitable to all.

The most useful employment of the labour forces in production is one of the most important problems to be taken into consideration, since a common good is achieved through the division of labour with the consequent possibility of cheaper goods and a higher standard of living for all. There will always be, however, some unemployed, either on account of personal disability, or seasonal occupation, or on account of occasional nationalization in some industries. We must not forget that labour availability can be realized even in a country with a fully employed population: it is, then, an 'economic' availability. This means that masses of people may be employed in other capacities better than their own to the common advantage.

A serious difficulty arises, of course, in deciding what should be paid for making goods and how many of them should be made. The first point is economically very important because, unless it is seriously taken into consideration, stocks will accumulate and unemployment will result. The wrong distribution of purchasing power leads, in fact, to unsalable surplus products and consequently to unemployment.

The chronic evil is not so much over-production as a wrong distribution of the world's goods largely due to insufficient purchasing power. Co-operation is necessary because the prosperity of a country cannot be conceived in isolation from that of other countries and, internationally, the prosperity of the community of nations is measured by an equitable distribution of wealth. It would be utopian, however, to suggest that the incomes of people should be equalized for it is necessary to realize that creatures have different talents and should, therefore, have different rewards.

In the past, too, states were obliged to seek some means of collaboration. Much was effected in the cultural sphere; little, however, is recorded in the economic, and still less in the political field. Even before World War I the pressing need for a precise organization of states was felt and it was found still more necessary after the terrible catastrophe. The League of Nations, set up by treaties in 1919, was nevertheless, not

completely able to ensure the respect for the rights of nations.

Here it is worth noting that many international problems remain unsolved for States are inclined to withdraw behind the walls of their sovereignty and to erect artificial economic barriers, exchange control, blocked accounts etc. in the attempt to isolate themselves, suspiciously watching one another. Still, nations form to-day parts of one great economic unity. This is not a transitory necessity; it is the result of market integration. International market is to-day what some decades ago was a national market, that is, the meeting of regional markets brought about by technical and social forces. In this way, but in less time, the same forces are operating with a far more intense rhythm under the impetus of improvements and inventions. A greater co-operation than in the past is needed so that single countries may be economically integrated while at the same time their political autonomy is safeguarded.

In practice inter-states relations are extremely complex: obstacles are obvious and numerous. Different states have different problems to solve: native traditions, customs and ways of living, political prejudice and diffidence. Military collaboration, International authority and, especially, natural rights and sovereignty raise numerous difficulties, too. Some of them have been overcome by progressive forms. International arbitration, for instance, attacks the principle of national sovereignty in order to conciliate it with the necessity for the interdependence of markets. It becomes, therefore, more urgent to study the different traditions and ways of living of the different peoples, so that, through practical experience, clear ideas may be formed of how to improve the machinery of international co-operation without prejudice to the natural interests of the different peoples.

The complex political situation in Europe, to-day more than ever before, calls for some form of collaboration among European countries in an effort to limit, and possibly solve, economic and political problems. The field of co-operation in Europe is big indeed when we take into account the future problems connected with a close co-operation in the cultural, social, economic, military and political spheres. The United States of Europe will be the outcome of such a co-operation among all European countries.

The idea of a Confederation of the States of Europe has for long been strong in noble minds. Even Dante cherished such an idea. And in 1845 Gioberti observed: 'Europe is in a wide sense what Italy is in a limited one, that is, a group of many states that are in need of a reciprocal union (without, however, losing the individuality) of which they possess the seeds' .

No doubt the co-ordination in production and the free exchange of capital, labour (not excluding experts) and goods among the member-states will greatly contribute to the economic development of Europe. This will help to induce the investment of additional capital and, consequently, it will favour a higher employment and an increased demand for consumption goods. What is most necessary is the need that capital and labour be used in the more productive economic fields where it is possible to reduce human monetary costs. Mistakes and discordance must be rectified; all waste of energy and capital must be removed and a proper adjustment of the various commercial policies must be negotiated in a spirit of equity and justice.

Serious production difficulties, nowadays, are due principally to tariff policy, exchange control, trade customs and variations in transport charges. There are also different effects on costs that depend upon different quantities of goods produced. Among the member-states a harmonious division of labour must be established in order to place the resources of each member at the disposal of the others. The exchange of raw materials, labour and services must not be weakened by political motives. It must aim only at the attainment of the greatest utility in the economic field. The same criterion is to be followed in the case of the other factors of production. Capital direction should be free from political fetters to attain economic purposes. The complete mobility of instrumental goods will only improve through a custom policy knowing no barriers. In fact, a close solidarity and the mutual assistance of the member-states demand that the barriers placed to the free circulation of the factors of production should be removed or, in certain circumstances, reduced to a minimum.

Through the exchange and inter-communication of material and spiritual wealth there will be a real progress, still more effective and fruitful among the member-states of the Federal Union. For a state would disturb a stable order if it aimed at the right to use its national heritage only for its own convenience, by leaving its natural resources undeveloped or refusing to place them at the disposal of the other member-states. Mass production may have more or less immediate repercussions on this or that country and lead to a beneficial and efficient equilibrium of single member countries.

The possibility of putting into practice the new economic arrangement must take place gradually in view of an improvement in the social life of the community, and special studies must precede every action in order to bring about, in conformity with its spirit, the modifications rendered necessary by new circumstances. A transitory period should, therefore, be limited only to the compliance with the useful bonds of the complementary

factors.

An increased industrial power and a reduction of production costs, owing to a more rational arrangement, will offer the Common European Market the possibility of finding the outlets for its surplus industrial production in undeveloped countries. In this respect, African and South American markets are to be taken into special consideration. At the same time, European countries will be able to supply themselves with the raw materials indispensable to their industries. A fair co-operation will then be attained that will assure both the progress of European industries and the start in the development of backward countries that will be able to reach gradually a level of existence more in conformity with the modern technical process of material development. There will be, of course, hard problems to overcome – political, economic and financial – but they will face a strong economic organization, that is, the Common European Market resulting from the co-ordination and co-operation of all economic forces of the European States. A well-organized Common European Market will be the best inducement for an economic and political world co-operation, because not even a strong European market is expected to develop fully its possibilities without co-operating with the wider world market.

Order and peace demand every effort in order to attain a just equilibrium of the commercial exchanges and a fair division of the market among the member-states. Therefore, even without widening this study to that integral co-ordination of economic forces to which present and future events will induce the union of the peoples of Europe, a common action will have to face tasks – public works, for instance – somewhat out of the ordinary, implying certain criteria about co-ordination, to which rules of the rigid interests of industry may not apply.

The first steps for a co-operation among European states have been already successfully overcome, though at the beginning the agreement had to be restricted to a limited number of European countries owing either to political reasons that debar admission to many states, or to the refusal of others, as Great Britain.

In order that strong and lasting results may be achieved, there is need for a far greater mutual integration that cannot, of course, be immediately reached. Still, under an ever-increasing pressure of economic, social and political reasons, a new European conscience is in formation to-day.

So that the legitimate interests of the member-states may be more equitably harmonized, all purposes will have to be attained by degrees. This task demands patience and, especially, continuity. Everybody is quite aware of the complex nature of European states and of the great obstacles standing at present in the way of such a co-operation owing to an enor-

mous variety of situations and circumstances. Once the economic welfare of all is to be safeguarded, it is necessary that the intricate relations between states be studied as one problem on a national scale of just objective values. In order to prevent the unity of the Confederation from being broken up, any move which may appear directed against any one state must be carefully avoided. In laying down the principles which must govern collective life and mutual relations of the member-states, it is necessary to take into account, as far as possible, the actual form and most pressing needs of each state, as well as to provide for its security, taking all the measures of self-preservation and defence that are required to safeguard its physical and moral integrity.

The necessity of governing the European community by treaties and pacts is clear at the present moment. A political and economic unit, made up of several nationalities, must respect the rights of national groups to pursue their own culture, to preserve their own tongue, to enjoy the same rights. These rights cannot be denied. Though in certain circumstances the governing body of the community may advise and even oblige one or more member-states to make certain sacrifices, it can never, on its own behalf, allow any of them to jeopardise the rights of the others. Nevertheless there are limits. When the good of the community requires it, every effort must be done in order to persuade countries to make the opportune concessions.

A juridical organization setting down in written agreements the mutual rights and duties of the member-states will be indispensable. But as peoples themselves are more insistent upon their social needs being met than on any set of constitutional rights being declared, it is necessary first to proceed to meeting the specific social and political needs as they arise instead of elaborating institutional formalities. The juridical constitution of the European Confederation will then accompany and not precede economic co-operation. Contractual laws will gradually replace customary laws. In fact, in all juridical institutions it is better to look forward to events and to a sufficient practical experience that will provide the right suggestions. What is then necessary is to promote this experience directed to renew the economic apparatus in accordance with the new needs. New facts and new experience will converge from different sources by degrees, together with the co-operation among the member-states.

Justice demands that the contracting countries should share equitably the advantages and burdens; for nothing else but security against disorder and injustice will procure for each state the most efficacious means of contributing towards the common weal. A real spirit of good will and understanding should inspire the transactions among the member-states.

Moral principles are unchangeable, since they are based on the very nature of man; but needs change in accordance with the varying contingencies in the life of men and communities.

The work already done, especially during these last months, goes a long way in inspiring confidence in the Common European Market and strong hopes in a healthy economic future of the organization.

International life is dynamic and, therefore, calls for a stability which can include revision: the age of formal declaration of rights is being superseded by a pressure for social changes. Experience teaches us that the law which governs the relationships among nations is improved by the gradual substitution of rational and just rules for the imperfect ones long sanctioned by customs and tradition, even if the new law is set up on the ruins of the old, violently destroyed for not meeting spontaneously the needs for a constantly progressing social life.

In the tumult of passions that agitate the world in which we live, in order to lead the masses to a better appreciation of the necessities of international life, a strong, clear, educational effort is necessary for which certain categories of citizens will be more responsible, and therefore ready to prevent many unfortunate conflicts from taking place.

Teachers have a very important task to fulfil in this respect. For it is certainly their duty to teach their pupils those virtues which will make them good citizens; but they are equally bound to teach them the duties resulting from a closer co-operation among the people. And those who have undertaken the difficult task of guiding public opinion must abandon all false prejudices and hostilities between classes and point out the benefits of concord and peace as well as social order and morality. Without social order there can be no stable prosperity, without morality there can be no true order.

In the immense struggle that lies ahead, man must first reorganize society and renovate its spirit because, if it is true that production is a prior activity in time, for man must work before he eats, thought must precede ordered action far more than manual labour in the scale of human activities. If material force is indispensable to authority, the same force is subordinate to the end of society which derives itself from reason.

In the policy of the states and in the life of the nations, economic problems should not usurp, as unfortunately they often do, the position that belongs to the forces of the spirit in the amelioration of human society. No legislation will ever be able to ensure a world wide prosperity unless technical reforms are accompanied by moral renovation.