Journal of the Faculty of Arts

THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

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Editor: Professor J. Aquilina
Asst: Editor: Mr. D.L. Farley-Hills

All enquiries should be addressed to the Editor:
c/o The Royal University of Malta,
St. Paul's Street,
Valletta,
MALTA.

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JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS

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EDITORIAL

THE description of our only institution of higher learning as the Royal University of Malta sounds more ornamentally insular than really regal. But if our university were to be known instead as the University of Mediterranean Studies, our institution of higher learning would become immediately a focal point of European civilisation. Our university, like Malta, can be much greater than what it has been so far. It can expand and spread out. But before it can do so, it has to pool all its cultural and academic resources in order to produce the basis of a Mediterranean culture and civilisation. In other words, it is time we did justice to our national heritage without which no university can claim to have a distinctive character of its own.

Most of the eight departments in the Faculty of Arts are common to other universities. Therefore, as far as these departments go, no matter how individually good they may be, being common to all other universities, they confer no national character on our Alma Mater. Of these eight departments the two exceptions are the department of Maltese and that of History, but the latter only in so far it covers accumulation and assessment of new Maltese historical knowledge. These Chairs to which should be added a Chair of Maltese Archaeology, are Malta's contribution to linguistic and historical learning. But even these two departments, however useful and contributory they may be, can reach complete academic fulfilment only when they are integrated with the general background of a European, largely Mediterranean, civilisation. As Malta is situated at the centre of an Euro-African civilisation, no other university is more favourably situated for the pursuit of Mediterranean Studies. The next academic year will see the beginning of a foundation course of Mediterranean studies common to several degree courses. At the moment, we have not yet got all the tools in hand, but in time we shall have them. A foundation course of Mediterranean studies as a common background to

several degree courses must remain at an experimental stage for some years. But as we shall leam from our mistakes and as we shall acquire more tools and leam how to handle them, we shall also overcome the difficulties of our new undertaking. We can confidently look forward to a foundation course of Mediterranean studies which will enlarge the scope and research contribution of our university in the academic world. To make such a foundation course of Mediterranean studies possible and worthwhile also at the higher levels, the Council of the University will have to provide the necessary facilities creating the right atmosphere for research, the publication of departmental work and encourage scholarship without which no member of the teaching staff can do more than rehash trite facts which have ceased to be significant because other corrective facts have overshadowed their original importance. Academic scholarship must be compared not to a stagnant pool but to a fast moving stream which joins many a water source to the rich ocean. We cannot impress the world of leaming at home and abroad by big words only. We have to record academic progress in terms of academic deeds which, in the world of learning, are the products of scientific research all the time on the go actively enriching its fields of enquiry with new assessment.

THE ARAB CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE IN THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

By ISSA I. NAOURI

BRIEF HISTORICAL NOTE

THE modern history of Jordan began with the arrival of Emir Abdullah Ibn Al-Hussein in the country, in 1921. Till then Jordan was a vast territory, mostly arid deserts, and thinly populated. Yet Emir Abdullah succeeded, in a short time, in establishing there a constitutional and democratic institution, and in eliminating the Beduin raids. He built an army that was considered to be one of the strongest armies of the area, for its discipline and high military qualities.

In 1946 a treaty was concluded between Jordan and Great Britain by which Jordan became a Kingdom, and King Abdullah mounted the throne, Until 1948 the population of Jordan – then called Transjordan – was only about four hundred thousand. The Palestine calamity arose in that year because of the foreign invasion that established there the state of Israel, leaving without support one million Arab refugees. These were expropriated of their houses, their orange groves and their fertile soil.

The Jordanian army – that counted then about 4,000 soldiers only – participated in the Palestine war in 1948 and succeeded in maintaining a big part of the territory. This part was united with Transjordan in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. This unity was proclaimed on April 24th, 1950. Thus Palestinians and Transjordanians were fraternized in one loyalty, without any sort of difference in rights and obligations. With this unity the population of Jordan has increased to about two millions, now, a great part of which are refugees.

In 1951 King Abdullah died in Jerusalem, and in 1953 King Hussein Ibn Talal mounted the throne. Assuming the power at eighteen years of age, he has shown that he is an intrepid pilot of a small ship perturbed by various waves, holding the rudder with great skill, and always guiding the ship safely and surely to a secure harbour.

THE LITERARY MOVEMENT

Now, speaking about contemporary literature in Jordan we, naturally, refer to that of both Banks, Western and Eastern, of which Jordan is composed nowadays.

The modern literary movement began in the Eastern Bank together with the arrival of Emir Abdullah, in 1921. He was accompanied, among others, by a group of well known writers and poets from various Arab countries, especially from Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. The Emir himself was a distinguished poet and prose-writer; and his court poetry and literary discussions were vivacious. Then, as teaching and printing progressed rapidly and widely, literature spread rapidly as well, and new names appeared in the reviving movement.

On the Western Bank – Palestine – the literary movement started a few years before. The foreign missions, and particularly the Russian teachers' training school at Nazareth, and the English secondary school at Jerusalem, and also the close relations with the great Arab centres of culture: Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, had a direct influence on the intellectual orientation of the country. The literary movement began to give its first fruits a little before the first world war (1914-18). In that period the leaders and pioneers of the cultural movement, in general, and the literary movement in particular, were mostly young men, graduates of 'Al-Azhar' of Egypt, and other graduates of schools of the foreign Christian missions in Palestine.

Thus the religious influence, together with the influence of European culture, and the rising of the spirit of nationalism, all simultaneously accompanied the first steps of the Jordanian literature of the twentieth century.

The intellectual maturity, not only of Jordan but of the whole Arab territory of the Middle-East, found a great stimulus in the Ottoman constitution of 1908. After long centuries of depression and terrorism, the constitution came to open the doors of the Arab countries to a new light, and to free patriotic and liberal aspirations. These were, till then, proceeding secretly among the young Arab men of the Turkish army, and of the Arab countries that were ruled by the Ottomans.

Syria (that included then Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan) was the centre of the Arab liberal movement nourished to maturity by poets, prose writers, public speakers and joumalists. These were enthusiastic to attain independence for the Arab countries. Palestine and Transjordan participated, rather with blood than with letters, in the liberal movement. They offered victims to the prisons and gallows of the Turkish commander, Jamal Pasha (called 'the blood-shedder'). Because of his tyranny the great Arab revolution exploded in 1916. The revolution was lead by King Hussein Ibn Ali, of Hijaz, and his sons, Feisal, Abdullah, Ali and Zeid. It began in Hijaz and soon it spread in every part of Syria and Iraq. Supported by the British and French allies, the revolution ended the Turkish domination that had lasted for four centuries. Soon after that the

Arabs started a longer and harder struggle against the allies themselves.

In fact, the British and French divided the Arab countries between them: the French took Syria and Lebanon, and the British took Transjordan, Palestine and Iraq. This foreign domination took place from 1918 to 1946 in Syria and Lebanon; and to 1948 in Palestine, while Jordan and England concluded, as we mentioned before, a treaty between them in 1946. The Treaty was ended, once and for all, in 1956 by King Hussein.

In such a sanguine and tragic atmosphere Jordanian literature was born and grew up; it is almost a literature of resistance and of continuous struggle for freedom and independence, in both sides of the country.

It is true that our lyric poets, like all the other poets of the world, have written poems of love and of the beauty of women and nature; yet all of them have contributed to the struggle: the eldest among them fought against the Ottomans; the less old against the British, and the younger generations have contributed and are still contributing to the resistance against the invaders who erected their state along the Palestinian sea-shore, under the name of 'Israel'. There can be no other motive more important than this to which the actual literature in Jordan can tend. It is a question of life or death, and of a lost national dignity that must be regained at any price.

To the struggle, poets and prose-writers have participated, not only with nice words, but some of them have carried machine-guns and gave their life generously. Among others we mention the poet Abdul-Rahim Mahmoud, who died on the battle-field near Nazareth in 1948, at the age of thirty-five. He had fought since 1936; and in that time, while he was on the hills with the gun in his hand, he wrote a poem entitled 'The Martyr', the verses of which are still read in the schools of Jordan. Here is a part of it:

On my hand I hold my soul
ready to throw it down into the abyss of death –
A man should live with honour and dignity
if not, he should gloriously die.
A noble soul has two aims:
Either to die, or to reach glory.

What is life? I would not live
unless I am feared and my homeland is safe,
so that, when I speak, the world listens to me
and my speach loudly echoes among all peoples.

I clearly see my death
Yet I go fast towards it.
To sacrifice myself for the defence of my rights

and of my home, is all that I desire.

For that, I feel happy
to hear the clash of swords,
and delighted
to see the blood-shed
and to watch the corpses
spread over the hills
torn to pieces between
the sharp teeth of the ferocious beasts.
Honestly, this is the most glorious death
and the most desirable end of a man.

* * * * * *

Such was the furious spirit when the British were still ruling in Palestine, and such was the poetic expression of the national fury. The hard political struggle has reflected its cruel shadow on the whole life of the Jordanians, including their literature. This continued to tend to realism: distress and wretchedness have always found their expression in Jordanian poetry and narrative. The same Abdul-Rahim Mahmoud, in a poem entitled 'Elegy for a Porter', commiserates a poor porter who was found, dead in the street, in Haifa, with a rope and basket beside him.

Here is how he expresses his sorrow:

You lived as a stranger among the people
and as a stranger you have died.
By nature, men are always cruel
and among them a wretched man
can never find a place.
Had you tortured them with your rope
they would have wept for you
and torn to pieces their clothes for sorrow.
Or had you fed them from your basket
a thousand speakers
would have now praised you,
and considered your basket
sublime and immaculate.
But you are only a porter
of no interest for them,
and of you they fear no harm.
Your loaf of bread was always wet
with pure sweat and tears.
You have never done violence to anyone

but violence has always been done to you,
and always you were
deprived of everything.
And now, as you are dead,
no one weeps
and no heart feels sorry for you.

* * * * * *

Although there are different styles and tendencies, realism is the basis on which the Jordanian literature stands. Because of the circumstances, it is an engaged literature, that aims to realize justice and human rights.

The refugees, who are the wanderers under every sky, look for justice, and a return to their homeland as the most essential aims. Their great calamity lives in their hearts and before their eyes. All Jordanian poets and prose-writers have written much about it. Here is a part of a poem of Abu Salma, from his book of verses *The Vagabond*:

Brother! You are my companion on every road;
Come; carry your wounds
and let us proceed together.
We have made sanguine passes
that grew in the soil, the most tender grass.
If we do not get burnt,
how could the light
illuminate the universe
and guide the others safely?
The free blood that brought us together
is the same blood that immortalized
the most splendid pages of history.

* * * * * *

Let us proceed: you hand in mine,
on the way of life,
and tell me now,
who else would defend our homeland
and answer its appeal
if we will not do that ourselves?
Look at the orphans
with their eyes inflated with tears;
look at the virgins falling down like comets,
and the old men tired of the years
but more tired and pained

with distress and calamity.
They are the victims of injustice;
did you know them?
They are my parents and friends
till Etemity.

* * * * * *

Oh my beloved Palestine!
How can we meet again?
will my eyes one day be able
to see again the most sacred land,
and see my heart there,
on the sea-shore,
spreading once more its virgin dreams
while, there, the brown girl
amuses herself
and gives light
to her lovers' eyes?!

* * * * * *

Oh, you who weep!
What use can tears have now
since you have become
a wanderer with every blowing wind?
Brother! We havn't lost
The immortal homeland,
but it remains for ever
deep and unforgettable in our hearts.

* * * * * * * *

Jordanian literature in general, and not only the poetry, has the same tendencies, the same furious spirit and the same fervent style.

Mrs. Asma Toubi, in her book of essays entitled *Talks from the heart,* writes under the title of 'A feast of refugees':

'Today is a feast... In a poor room nearby, there is a family of six persons, representing three generations, an old couple, a young couple and two children, a girl eight years of age, and a boy four years old.'

'The youngest goes out to play, but he soon comes back crying. He wants a ring-shaped cake and a coloured egg, like all the other children who go along the streets munching a cake and eggs. The eight year old girl is silent; but some minutes before she was looking pain-

fully at her torn shoes. She says nothing, because it seems that, although she is young, she understands that her parents have no money, and that it is useless to ask them for a new pair of shoes... But the cake... and the eggs?!

'The young mother turns away her face to hide the tears in her eyes. She thinks of all what she has read in books and magazines about the misfortune of mankind... Suddenly an idea comes to her mind as a heavenly support... Oh! What if she sold her own hair?! Would it be easy to find a buyer, in this big and clamorous city, who may wish to buy such kind of pearls?!'

Asma Toubi goes on completing the picture of the poor family on that feast day; and then concludes:

'Was that really a feast?!
'Well! It was probably the feast of
distress... or perhaps a new kind of feast was inverted...
It was the feast of wretchedness, or of lost hope!'

. . . . . .

Also Jordanian narrators have always found themselves compelled to go back to the same source, however hard they tried to look for other subjects for their novels and short stories. It is absolutely impossible for them not to live the tragic reality of their people deeply.

The narrative works of Najati Sidki, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, Samira Azzam, Najwa Ka'war, Mahmoud Irani and all the others, represent Jordanian society, with all its characteristics and pecularities; with the torn tents of the refugees under the sun and hail, the borders, the invaded fertile soil lying there in sight, the precious orange groves left to the invaders. We also find in it the life of the city and that of the village, innocent loves and false loves, simplicity and ingenuousness besides cunning and wickedness, humour besides sorrow and pain.

To this Jordanian narrative is fairly applicable what the Italian writer Luigi Capuana wrote to define the naturalism of Giovanni Verga: 'Verga, when the idea comes to his mind to put his villagers into an artistic form, is never limited to gathering some generalities, but he circumscribes his land. For him it is not sufficient that those characters of his are Italians – an Italian villager is an abstraction – he goes much beyond that He wants them to be Sicilians... He needs them to be exactly from a determined province, a determined city, of a very small piece of land as large as the palm of his hand. Only then he stops'.

Here, with a very light touch, we can easily modify the definition of Capuana by using the words 'Arab – Arabs' in lieu of 'Italian – Italians',

'Jordan' instead of 'Sicily' and 'Jordanian author' instead of 'Verga', so that the definition becomes right and precise.

Not being able to discuss all the works of the Jordanian narrators, in this brief paper I shall confine myself to giving an example from my own works; that is my novel entitled 'The House Beyond the Borders', published in Beirut in 1959. It is a novel that represents the Palestinian calamity. It shows a small happy Palestinian family at Jaffa. The family consists of four persons, the father, the mother and two children. They have their own little house and beautiful garden, and they are lucky to have good neighbours, a family of three persons', the father, the mother and the young daughter 'Faiza', who is very dear to the two children. They play together at home or on the beach, and they go to school together in her father's car every day.

Years pass easily and happily; then suddenly the war explodes, and life becomes more horrible every day. The young Faiza is injured and sent to the hospital; the father of the two children is bombed at the doorstep of his house, and the children and their mother are forced to leave Jaffa by sea to Beirut, carrying nothing with them.

The two children grew up together in the hope of going back home one day. One of them goes back secretly to Jaffa, and there he is killed by the Jews who live in his old house. His mother and brother, in Beirut, are informed of his death. This gives them one more reason to live with the memories of their old house, and of the two beloved persons who have been killed there. They are always haunted by the memories of their small house on top of the hill, in Jaffa, where the father was killed at the doorstep, and the son was assassinated at the gate. They also remember the young Faiza and her good-hearted parents who are left behind. Days cannot lessen their love of their old house, nor weaken their hope of going back to it one day.

. . . . . .

I also wish to give another example from the works of Mahmoud Irani, author of the following volumes, *The beginning of a course* (1936), *Among the people* (1955), *What a little price!* (1936) and *When will the night be over?* (1964). The first one of these four books contains short stories and some essays, the other three are collections of short stories. They represent Jordanian life and society after 1948. In some of them, and especially in the following two stories: 'The good earth' and 'Out from Paradise', Irani describes the good Palestinian soil, the orange orchards that perfumed the sea-shore, the splendid sun on the shining gold of the oranges, the perfumes of the lemon trees in bloom, the good people who, with their precious sweat, grew all good things in the fertile soil. That

good earth was once a Paradise; but the day came when the brave good cultivators were forced to leave it in a very tragic way.

In the rest of his short stories, Irani is of realistic tendencies, like all the other Jordanian short-story-writers. The characters and events of his works are inspired by Jordanian life.

. . . . . .

The Jordanian writers are well informed of the various literary movements of the West. Most of them know English or French, or both; some others know Italian, German, Spanish or Russian as well. Through these foreign languages they read the foreign literatures, and translate various literary works into their Arabic language. The most renowned translator of European culture into Arabic was Adel Zuaiter – who died in Nablus-Jordan, in 1957. He translated from French 38 volumes of the greatest works of famous European authors; among others we might mention the names of: Rousseau, Renan, Voltaire, Ludwig, Demingham, Le Bon, Anatole France and many others.

Ancient and modern literatures of East and West, as well as all schools of art of many periods, are well known to Jordanian writers, and they are much discussed by the press and in books. Some Jordanian authors write directly in a European language; like Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, author of an English novel, entitled 'Hunters in a narrow street' published in England; and Soraya Malhas, author of a book of English verses entitled (Prisoners of the time) published in Beirut-Lebanon.

. . . . . .

Among the various schools of art, even hermetism and symbolism have some partisans among the Jordanian poets. The verses of Salma Khadra Jiayyousi and Fadwa Tookan are also hermetic. Yet, surely, the following poem of Salma Jiayyousi, entitled 'Dedication', is not hermetic (This poem is published in her book of verses, entitled *Return from the dreaming fountain*):

A friend presented to me a pen.
I joyfully exclaimed:
'The first thing I shall write with it
will be a sweet letter to mamma,
expressing to her
my deepest love and eagerness'.
I forgot for an instant,
for a wink,
that you, mother,
are beneath the earth
and can never read it!

Nor hermetic or abstract is the following poem by Fadwa Tookan, entitled 'Existence', from her book of verses entitled *Alone with the days*:

On earth I was a vagabond question
the answer of which was lost
in the dense darkness.
But you were my new light
that destiny has made to come up
from the heart of the darkness;
and as the stars
went round twice
I was illuminated by
your incomparable rays.
Soon darkness disappeared
and, trembling with joy,
I found in my hand
my lost reply.

. . . . . .

Oh, you! you, the near but extremely far!
Don't think any more of the twilight:
Warm is your spirit!
The world is yours and mine:
for us... the two poets
who, in spite of the great distance,
are united in one existence only!

. . . . . .

In her three books of verses, Fadwa Tookan sang poems of her love and sorrow. In the first book *Alone with the days* she also wrote poems on the pains of others, the distresses of her homeland, the sublimity of the human soul, and contemplations of loneliness; while in the last two volumes *I found her* and *Give us Love* Fadwa was but a lost and desolated heart of a woman.

On the other hand, Salma Jayyousi, in her only book of verses *Return from the Dreaming Fountain*, published in Beirut in 1960, writes verses of love, patriotism, and of the calamity of her people.

Other well known poets are Husni Zeid al Keilani, author of *Visions and Songs*, published in Amman in 1946; and Mahmoud el Hout, author of *The Arab Mythology, Arab Epics* and *Unfaithful Flames*. From the latter we quote the following poem entitled 'Autumn of a heart':

You have always smiled to me,
why are you now so sad?

Why do you complain?
you applauded me in previous times
and both of us flew over joyful days
and filled the world with happy love.

How did you get so soon to autumn
while you are still in the smiling spring?
How did the sweet palpitations
and vigorous youth so soon disappear,

O my heart?
This cloud, I cannot guess
how long it may remain.
Do you think it will soon move,
Or we shall die in the flowers' age
and never reach to realize
our sweet desires?

Don't think of fear
and trembling hope,
but let us sprinkle the garden of love
with subsequent rain-like kisses,

O my heart!

. . . . . .

Husni Zeid praised the farmer and glorified his labour in one of his most beautiful poems entitled 'The farmer':

The nightingale, in her nest, awakes you
O nobleman, the noblest of all men.
You go on digging the soil carefully
like a monk reading his book of prayers.

On the world's treasures
you walk on exhausted,
yet the others look at you with envy.

If people do not smile to you
the green herbs will happily;
Look how they lay around your feet
so nice, smiling and so sweet.

From your poor and humble hut
You raise high the great palaces of the others
satisfied, nevertheless, with your poor profit.

You farmer,
are our most precious treasure,

for all our wealth and joy
are the sweet and lovely fruits
of your endless sacrifices.

The most renowned dead Jordanian poets were: Ibrahim Tookan and Mustafa Wahbi Tell. The first died in Jerusalem in 1943, and the other in Amman in 1949. Tookan was considered 'the great poet of Palestine', while Tell was considered 'the great poet of Transjordan'. As a matter of fact, Tookan was the poet who, more vigorously than anyone else, expressed the patriotic feelings, and the enthusiasm for struggle of the Palestinians during the period of their resistance against the British occupation. He was the real and the most significant voice of that period in Palestine. His verses were like fuel for the resistance. He glorified the struggle and the martyrdom for freedom and independence. Here are few lines from one of his poems:

My heart is dedicated to my country
not to a party, nor to a leader.
My tongue is also like my heart,
both are tied together intimately.
Whether I am happy or unhappy,
my aim is but to serve my nation.

On the other hand, Tell was the real and the most significant voice of the people of Transjordan; that is to say that, in his sarcastic poetry, the Transjordanians found their own lament and poverty, their own environment and popular dialect. Mustafa Wahbi has adopted popular and everyday spoken terms in his verses. These are full of humour and melancholy. A big part of his verses were inspired by wine and gipsies, and also by the intimate friendships with poor and inactive people. 'Vagabonds – he said in one of his poems – are my fellows; and you would never have blamed me if you had known how much good they have done to me!'

The verses of Tell have an incomparable style, not only in Arab literature, but also in other literatures of other nations, and of all times. They are distinguished by their spirit of absolute liberty: linguistic, artistic, political, social, patriotic and religious liberty. Notwithstanding the high administrative functions Tell occupied in the government, his most favourite and most intimate friends were the gipsies and the humble fellows of Transjordanian society. He liked to drink a toast with them and to attend the dances of the gipsy women.

Here is how Tell thinks of gipsy life:

In the poor tents of the gipsies
my life would never be vainly lost

and God's forgivness would never be
annoyed with my ever-changing manners.
The gipsy chief would not refuse
to toast with me in cognac at 'Ka'war's' bar.
In the gipsy tents there are no
cowardly men or women,
nor are there slaves who try
to disguise themselves to be free.
There are no criminals
with hands stained by innocent blood;
nor are there revengers or avengers.
There, there are no judges
whose judgements are ruthless,
and more burning than furnaces.
All are equal gipsies
and there is no difference, whatsoever,
between one and another.

. . . . . .

Tell deeply loved Transjordan, and deeply hated everything that was revealed to him as 'strange', and that did not belong to the good poor people to whom he belonged.

Here is how he expresses, in his typical style, his own thoughts of a hypothetical Paradise that is not Transjordanian. In these verses, we find some sort of a map showing the various cities, villages, pastures and water springs of the country:

Sheik Abboud says that
at the gate of Paradise
there is a door-keeper named (Rudwan).
This never tasted a drop of water
from (Rahub)
nor had he
any acquaintancies at (Gilaad)
or any relative at (Sheehan).
He never sat
in the shadows of (Ajloun)
nor had he been a shepherd of lambs
on the hills of (Salt);
He never listened in the beautiful mornings
to our lovely birds
that fill the (Ghor) with joyful songs;

He never experienced love at (Wadi Ash-Shita)
nor had he procured Gazelles at (Huson);
and, worse than all,
He can never be a Jordanian!

* * * * *

Oh, Sheik!
If that is really your Paradise
take it away!
It isn't the one we want;
and say openly with me;
'O, heavenly Paradise!
May you not be
our eternal dwelling'.

Now there is one thing more to add; that is the female contribution to Jordanian literature. As a matter of fact there should be no difference between male and female literature; this would be really an absurd idea. Yet, it would be interesting to underline that, among the small people of Jordan, there are five women who are among the most renowned poets and prose-writers of the entire Arab World.

Fadwa Tookan and Salma Jayyousi are two famous poetesses; both are much discussed in the press; Soraya Malhas is a poetess of abstraction. She also writes short stories, novels and essays. Asma Toubi is a prose writer highly esteemed, and much discussed by the Arab press. She wrote and translated from English three books entitled: *Talks from the heart, The lost son* and *The world consists of tales*. Samira Azzam is one of the outstanding Arab short-story-writers. She wrote four books of short stories: *Small things, The big shadow, Other short stories* and *The man and the Watch*. She also translated from English five novels of Bernard Shaw, Pearl Buck and others. Samira is the most significant writer of stories related to female affairs and feelings.

VALUE THEORY BEFORE MARX

by SALVINO BUSUTTIL

ANY economic theory of value is divided into two parts: the notion of value, and its determination. Since the latter normally depends on the former, our investigation will be directed principally to the notion of economic value in the period preceding Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* and *Capital*.

Before the Classical labour theory of value, we have no complete system of economic value. Naturally, the notion of value existed from very early times, for common-sense always expressed an estimate of the utility of goods both as satisfying personal needs and for purposes of exchange. As history evolved and as exchange increased, however, economic value began to acquire a growing importance.[1]

The first important contribution to value theory is to be found in Scholastic philosophy, notably in St. Thomas Aquinas. While the Mercantilists were later to consider value from the aspect of man's activity in exchange, Aquinas went deeper. Like Marx, he took nothing for granted, and tackled the problem of value from its very roots: the consideration of man as its producer, inasmuch as man is a producer of commodities. St. Thomas was mostly interested in the study of the activities of the small independent producer of his day, and precisely in the problem of profit.

Aquinas wanted to know what exactly constituted a just price. He established that the seller's remuneration should be proportionate to the effort and outlay involved in the production of the commodity. The basis of value was therefore an objective estimate of the cost involved, taking into consideration not only the labour required, but also the material cost of the commodity itself as represented through raw materials, the cost of transport etc. In the self-sufficient communities of Aquinas' time, such an approach to the problem of value was sufficient and functional; for ultimately the equilibrium between cost and profit was to be established by a mutual estimate of the commodity's value between the seller and the buyer.

Already, however, in late Medieval times, a new type of seller was entering the market: the professional merchant, bent on obtaining the highest profit possible. Aquinas recalls, in this respect, Aristotle's dis-

[1] For a full survey, cf. H.R. Sewall: *The Theory of Value before Adam Smith*, Publications of the American Economic Association, 3rd Series, Vol. II, n. 3.

tinction between that kind of activity where one thing is exchanged for another, or *natural* exchange, and that other activity where exchange is expressly made for profit. This second activity is regarded as dishonourable by Aquinas, unless it is directed to a worthy end, such as helping the needy or supporting one's family; or unless before reselling it the merchant has modified it, thus increasing its *natural* value,[2] i.e. the notion of *value added.*

St. Thomas' notion of the just price was eventually forgotten, as the market developed and unconsciously determined its price. But his basic notions of economics are still topical. He considers that the ultimate end of economic value is directed to the total welfare of man, and is therefore a foremost partisan of the view that welfare economics and pure economics cannot be really separated.[3] Man's labour, he says, is not primarily intended to increase productivity, nor can it be used principally to that end. Consequently, in his view the marginal product could never become the only measure of wages. He holds that man's labour is first of all directed towards acquiring a living.[4] And this finality should determine the notion of the value to be attributed to labour. The wage to be paid out to the labourer is not to be assessed in the same way as one determines the value of a commodity.[5] His wage cannot be a subsistence wage, but a living wage; in Aquinas' mind, no wage would be in accordance with the demands of justice – his ultimate criterion – if it is not adequate to the vital needs of the worker and his family.[6]

[2] Cf. Ibid., p. 18. See also A.E. Monroe: *Early Economic Thought,* pp. 62-4; and Meek, R.L., *Studies in the Labour Theory of Value,* pp. 122 ff.

[3] 'Finis ultimus oeconomiae est totum bene vivere secundum domesticam conversationem'. St. Thomas Aquinas: *Summa Theologica,* 2, 2ae, q. 50, a. 5.

[4] 'Labor manualis ordinatur primo et principaliter ad victum quaerendum'. St. Thomas Aquinas, op. cit., 2, 2ae, 2. 187, a.3. This compares favourably with Adam Smith who writes: 'A man must always live by his work and his wages must at least be sufficient to maintain him. They must even upon most occasions be somewhat more, otherwise it would be impossible for him to bring up a family, and the race of such workmen could not last beyond the first generation'. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations,* I, p. 75.

[5] 'Id enim merces dicitur quod alicui recompensatur pro retributione operis vel laboris, quasi quoddam pretium ipsius. Unde sicut reddere iustum pretium pro re accepta ab aliquo est actus iustitiae, ita etiam recompensare mercedem qoeris vel laboris est actus iustitiae. Iustitia autem aequalitas quaedam est'. St. Thomas Aquinas, op. cit., 1. 2ae, q. 144, a. 1.

For an interesting discussion on St. Thomas' views on wages, cf. Cirillo, R., 'St. Thomas Aquinas and the Theory of Wages' in *Melita Theologica,* V.V., n. 2. (1952).

[6] 'Secundum quod labor manualis ordinatur ad victum quaerendum, cadit sub necessitate praecepti, prout est necessarium ad talem finem'. Aquinas, op. cit., 2, 2, ae, q. 187, a. 3.

Aquinas' view of labour bears, therefore, some kinship to Marx's notion of labour-power as the source of value, though the former is limited to a consideration of the just price and the just wage. Another interesting parallelism may be found in Aquinas' view on private property, inasmuch as property is to be used for the common good of all. Though in this view man has a right to private property, yet this right is not absolute. For justice demands that when necessity arises this private property should be used to alleviate the lot of the needy. And when a man's private property has reached a reasonable measure, such that it provides security for himself and his family, the *superfluous* should go to the benefit of the less privileged.[7]

Because of this insistence on objectivity in economics, the Angelic Doctor's lasting legacy to future value theories lay in his viewpoint of equilibrium between cost of production and selling price: an objective notion of value of which traces already existed in Aristotle, and which Marx was duly to consider.[8]

With the expansion of trade and commerce, it became increasingly difficult to reckon value on a basis of a just price. With the rise of Mercantilism, a new notion of value emerged: the *conventional* price. An element of subjectivity was thus introduced into value theory, though still related to the objective notion of the just price. The partisans of the conventional price approach held that a price was just if the purchaser was willing to pay it to the seller. The idea of marginal utility was still far off; and so this conventional price represented the value a particular person attributed to a commodity because of its special utility to him, a form of esteem value. As a result, value theory in early Mercantilism was subjective, paving the way for a greater accent on the subjective laws of value rather than on the objective costs of the commodity.

During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries several writers jotted down their comments on the expansion of trade; and though no one of them developed a theory of value, yet one may discern three principal notions of value current at that period.[9]

Value in its *natural* aspect was usually considered as identical with

[7] '. . . . aliud vero quod competit homini circa res exteriores et usus ipsarum; et quantum ad hoc non debet homo habere res exteriores uti proprias, sed ut communes, ut scilicet de facili eas communicet in necessitate aliorum'. Ibid., 2, 2ae, q. 66, a. 2.

[8] Cf. Marx, Karl, *Capital,* I, pp. 28-8. According to Marx, Aristotle was unable to analyse further his study of exchange because he lacked any concept of value, due to 'the peculiar conditions of the society in which he lived'.

[9] I have here followed Meek's exposition. Cf. Meek, op. cit., pp. 15ff.

the actual market-price of a commodity.[10] Secondly, *value* was determined by supply and demand.[11] Thirdly, commodities had an intrinsic quality, distinct from the market price, namely utility: the commodity's *intrinsic value.* Barbon, in his *Discourse of Trade* published in 1690, summarises the value relationship between utility and market price in this way:

'The value of all wares, arriveth from their use; and the Deamess and Cheapness of them, from their Plenty and Scarcity'.[12]

Barbon's economic ideas as well as those of his contemporaries were largely influenced by the merchants for whom economic value represented the commodity's market price which, of course, was influenced by utility through demand. Such an approach to value theory was possible because in the early Mercantilist period the means of production were still in the hands of direct producers; so that at this time there could be no talk of the exploitation of the labourer. If anything, it was the consumer who was exploited.

Meanwhile industrial capitalism was expanding particularly in England. Side by side with the idea of the market price in determining value, the old idea of the objectivity of value began to reappear. The producers were prone to consider the value of their products based on the costs of production. John Cary in 1719 distinguished between the *real* value of the commodity as representing the cost of production and its price, the latter being ultimately determined by the subjective influence of demand.[13]

As trade expanded, the necessity of labour-power increased. At the same time, manufacturers were marketing cheaper goods than the indivi-

[10] 'The Price of Wares is the present Value... The Market is the best judge of Value; for by the Councourse of Buyers and Sellers, the Quantity of Wares, and the Occasion for them are best known: Things are just worth so much, as they can be sold for, according to the Old Rule, Valent Quantum Vendi Potest'. Nicholas Barbon: *A Discourse of Trade,* published in 1690. Cf. the edition by J.H. Hollander, pp. 13-16.

[11] 'The Price of Wares is the present Value, and ariseth by computing the occasions or use for them, with the Quantity to save that Occasion... It is impossible for the Merchant when he has Bought his Goods, to know what he shall sell them for. The Value of them depends upon the Difference betwixt the Occasion and the Quantity tho' that be the Chiefest of the Merchants care to observe, yet it Depends upon so many Circumstances, that it's impossible to know it. Therefore if the plenty of the Goods, has brought down the Price, the Merchant layeth them up, till the Quantity is consumed, and the Price riseth'. Ibid., p. 39.

[12] Ibid. p. 41.

[13] Cary held that manufactured goods 'yield a price, not only according to the true value of the Materials and Labour, but an Overplus according to the Necessity and Humour of Buyers'. John Cary: *An Essay towards Regulating the Trade and Employing the Poor in this Kingdom.* 2nd ed., 1719, pp. 11-12.

dual producer; and gradually the latter had to give up his private production and turn over to the big producer as a paid labourer. Unconsciously a price began to be fixed on labour, and the transition from the Mercantilist theory towards the Classical value theory began to take a definite form. Labour-power was now looked upon as a great source of value in creating commodities and this brought about a revolution in economic thought. The productive force of the nation coincided with the amount of available labour-power, so that human labour began to be considered the principal element in the costs of production.

In the seventeenth century, however, we still have no labour theory of value beyond general statements about the importance of labour in determining costs. John Locke, writing in 1691, believed that concrete labour, as distinct from the Abstract Labour of the Marxian theory, was mostly responsible in determining the utility of a commodity. 'For it is labour', he writes, 'that puts the difference of value on everything... of the produce of the earth useful to the life of man, nine-tenths are the effect of labour'.[14]

Most of the economists of the period were more or less of the same opinion, and their works reveal a change of focus from exchange to production. But, as Meek has rightly noted,[15] the economics of the period in speaking of labour as the *source of value* referred to the fact that exchange value arising out of the cost of the wages, adds to the *natural* cost of the commodity by increasing its intrinsic utility. As in the Middle Ages economic thought was directed to the concept of the just price, so late Mercantilist and early Classical thought was directed to the notion of the natural price.

In the course of the rise of industrial capitalism in the eighteenth century, economists began to recognise that a new form of income had emerged: profit on capital. Previously, profit had generally been considered as

[14] John Locke: 'Of Civil Government', Bk. II, Ch. V, in *Works* ed. 1768, p. 234. Marx, commenting on Locke's concept of labour, writes: 'Labour bestows on objects almost their whole value ('value' is here equivalent to use value, and labour is taken as concrete labour, not as a quantum; but the measuring of exchange value by labour is in reality based on the fact that labour creates use value). The remainder of use value which cannot be resolved into labour is the gift of nature and hence in its essence common property. What Locke therefore seeks to prove is not the contrary, namely that property can be acquired in other ways than by labour, but how, in spite of the common property provided by nature, individual property has been created by individual labour. One limit to property is therefore the limit of personal labour; the other limit is that a man does not accumulate more things than he can use'. Marx: *Theories of Surplus Value*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1954, 27-8.

[15] Cf. Meek, op. cit., pp. 23-4.

accruing from buying things cheap and selling them dear. In industrial capitalism, profits appeared as income derived from the use of capital in employing labour. This was a major event in world history, destined to culminate in modern monopoly capitalism. Never before had man considered economy as based principally on profit from accrued capital. The change of outlook altered the whole course of economic history.

Sir William Petty, to whom Marx dedicated the first chapter of *Theories of Surplus Value,* had considered profit as rent, the rent of money being usury.[16] It is in Sir Dudley North that, as Marx points out,[17] we have the first idea of profit derived from money as a pure form of capital or the idea of *stock.* Interest, North held in 1691, is rent from stock, just as normal rent is for land.[18] Marx notes that rent at this period was considered the original form of surplus-value.[19] As a matter of fact, North pointed out the important difference between hoarded money, as dead capital, and capital proper; the latter producing rent *either in Land at Farm, Money at Interest, or Goods in Trade*[20] gives rise to surplus value, in Marx's interpretation, as *self-expanding* value.[21] Eight years later, a similar view was expressed by John Bellers who held further that *Money neither increaseth, nor is useful, but when it's parted with.*[22]

Some years later, a distinction was introduced between interest derived from land or from money deposited at interest, and capital used for industrial investment. The former was considered by Massie, in 1750, as a passive form of capital giving rise only to an ordinary rate of interest, so that in any economy where *landed interest* was predominant, the rate of

[16] 'But before we talk too much of Rents, we should endeavour to explain the mysterious nature of them, with reference as well to Money, the rent of which we call Usury; as to that of Lands and Houses aforementioned'. Sir William Petty: *Treatise of Taxes and Contributions,* London 1679, p. 23 (First published 1662).

[17] 'A definite conception of *stock* or capital, or rather of money as a pure form of capital, in so far as it is not means of circulation, appears for the first time in his (i.e. North's – A.'s Note) writings'. Marx, op. cit., p. 26.

[18] But as the Landed Man letts his Land, so these still Lett their stock; this latter is call'd Interest, but is only Rent for Stock, as the Other is for Land'. Sir Dudley North: *Discourses upon Trade, etc,* London, 1691, p. 4.

[19] Marx, op. cit., p. 31, footnote.

[20] 'No man is richer for having his Estate all in Money, Plate &c., lying by him, but on the contrary, he is for that reason the poorer. That man is richest, whose Estate is in a growing condition, either in Land at Farm, Money at Interest, or Goods in Trade'. North, op. cit., p. 11.

[21] *Capital,* Marx comments, 'is self-expanding value, while in the formation of a hoard the aim is the crystallised form of exchange value as such'. Marx, op. cit., p. 32.

[22] John Bellers: *Essays about the Poor, Manufacturers, Trade Plantations and Immorality etc.* London, 1699, p. 13. Quoted by Marx in op. cit., p. 32, footnote.

interest tended to increase.[23] On the other hand, when money was invested in industry, the *lust for gain (that) entirely dominates the merchant*[24] led to a profit over and above the ordinary rate of interest.

Another important advance concerned the differentiation of profit from wages. As paid labour began to be used more and more in industry, the producer-labourer relationship resulted in a new notion of *surplus value*. In early capitalism, however, the employers were normally newly risen from the class of individual producers; and hence they tended to regard their net profit from the whole transaction not in the sense accorded to it in modern economics, but as a sort of wages due to them for their initiative. This mentality subsisted even in later years when the employer only advanced the capital for commercial enterprise; for then the capitalist looked at his profit as the *wages of superintendence*. It fell to Smith to explain, in due time, the difference in principle between the wages of labour and the returns of capital, or profit as profit which for Marx is nothing else but surplus value.[25] Smith showed that profit could no longer be identified with wages, as Cantillon and Hutcheson had held. Nor could it be, as Sir James Steuart had postulated, a *profit upon alienation*[26] *arising out of the fact that the price of the goods is greater than their real value.*[27]

NATURAL PRICE IN CLASSICAL ECONOMICS

Due to this accent on the price of commodities, the development of value theory in Classical economics became dependent on the notion of *natural price*. The preliminary approach to this Classical concept may be found in Sir William Petty, who distinguished between natural price, which for Marx connotes value,[28] and the *political price* or *the true Price Current*.[29] Cantillon distinguished between the commodity's market price and its *intrinsic* value; the latter is made up of the *value of the land* and the *value of the labour* used to produce it. He points out that normally

[23] 'In a State, therefore, where there is nothing but a landed interest, the borrowers must be very numerous, and the rate of interest must hold proportion to it'. Massie: *An Essay on the governing causes of the natural rate of interest; wherein the sentiments of Sir William Petty and Mr. Locke, on that head, are considered.* London, 1750 (published anonymously). Cf. Marx, op. cit., p. 35.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Cf. Ibid., p. 40.

[26] Sir James Steuart: *Principles of Political Economy*, I, London 1805, p. 244. (Edited by his son, General Sir James Steuart).

[27] Marx, op. cit., p. 41.

[28] 'By natural price he means in fact *value*'. Ibid., p. 15.

[29] Cf. Petty, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

market prices tend to an equilibrium with the cost of production, or that they tend to an optimum; for, he writes, 'in well-organised Societies the Market Price of Articles whose consumption is tolerably constant and uniform do not vary much from the intrinsic value'.[30]

Cantillon, however, does not include profit on capital as forming part of *intrinsic* value, though, as Meek notes he approaches the *natural* equilibrium price in which profit at the normal rate is included.[31] The notion of profit as a kind of income on its own representing a surplus of profit to the entrepreneur when all, including the *wages of management* or *superintendence* have been paid, has not yet fully emerged. In other words, the formal notion of surplus value is still absent, though Marx in his comments on the economists who preceded Smith conveys the impression of trying to make them talk in terms of surplus value. The inescapable fact is that for some time the entrepreneur of industrial capitalism was considered more a superior sort of independent labourer than an entity wholly distinct from the labourer, and he was therefore viewed from a widely different standpoint than in later times. The Medieval concept of man's labour being directed to procuring his living was deeply embedded in men's minds, and not only lay at the roots of the doctrines of these earlier economists but, formed part of the foundations of Marx's economic edifice.

Harris, writing in 1757, held that the intrinsic value of commodities is not determined by utility but by the cost of production as represented by the land, labour and skill required to produce them.[32] His attitude brings us a step closer than Cantillon to Classical thought; but his description of demand as increasing or lowering price without affecting the cost of production is still somewhat primitive.[33] A certain dualism is apparent in his work between *Prime cost* and *the proportion of buyers to sellers* which appear as virtually equal co-determinants of the *natural price.*[34]

[30] Cantillon: *Essai sur la Nature du Commerce en General,* Royal Economic Society edition, pp. 29-31.

[31] Cf. Meek, op. cit., pp. 28-9.

[32] 'Things in general are valued, not according to their real uses in supplying the necessities of man; but rather in proportion to the land, labour and skill that are requisite to produce them: it is according to this proportion nearly, that things or commodities are exchanged one for another; and it is by the said scale, that the intrinsic values of most things are chiefly estimates'. Harris: *An Essay upon Money and Coins',* 1757, p. 5.

[33] 'A quicker or slower demand for a particular commodity will frequently raise or lower its price, though no alteration hath happened in its intrinsic value or prime cost'. Ibid.

[34] Cf. Meek, op. cit., p. 30.

William Temple moved nearer to the Classical theory of Value by including profit at the normal rate as a constituent of value, together with the value of the land and of the labour necessary for the commodity's production.[35] Temple's inclusion of this profit which he calls *brokerage* influenced the Classical econimists in concluding that natural price was not arbitrarily fixed, but had to be stipulated in accordance with given principles. They later worked out that the natural price of commodities in the competitive market resulted from *prime costs* and *natural* rate profit. It was then possible to describe the actual market price as that *Price Current* tending towards the natural price, which became for Smith *as it were the central price to which the prices of all commodities are continually gravitating.*[36]

Cost of Labour in Classical Thought

Two main reasons may be advanced to explain the transition from the simple *cost of production* theory of value of the earlier economists to the labour theory formulated by Classical economists.

In the first place, the Classical economists in trying to probe into the workings of economy in all its aspects, could not forego the study of the cost of production from its very basis. A superficial attitude in this regard had been possible up to the early eighteenth century, when a cost of production theory sufficed to determine the average prices of a small economy, just as *supply and demand* value theory had sufficed in Mercantilism, when the balance of exchange was the heart of the matter. Hand in hand with the expansion of production in the nascent era of industrial capitalism, there arose a new and deeper economic outlook. The main question no longer was: how is the natural price determined?; the inquiry now shifted to the very foundation of wealth. A start from scratch, one may say.

What mattered most of all to the new economist was not the basis of exchange as such, nor the determination of the natural price, but what

[35] 'I can most clearly perceive that the value of all commodities or the price, is a compound of the value of the land necessary to raise them, the value of the labour exerted in producing and manufacturing them, and of the value of the brokerage which provides and circulates them'. Temple: *A Select Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts on Commerce,* 1859, p. 522.

[36] Adam Smith, op. cit., I, p. 64. For Smith, the actual price of a commodity 'is regulated by the proportion between the quantity which is actually brought to market, and the demand of those who are willing to pay the natural price of the commodity, or the whole value of the rent, labour, and profit, which must be paid in order to bring it thither'. Ibid., pp. 62-3. The influence of Temple's thought, as represented in note 35 on the above extract from Smith, is apparent.

constituted, first of all, the cost of production. The question of *intrinsic value* was, for the moment, laid aside, and minds centred on revealing the objective source of value. A spirit of scientific objectivity was in the air, with the result that little or no scientific attention was paid to psychological factors. Classical economists were intent on making economics rank as much as possible as an exact science, probably influenced by the general spirit of the period. Moreover, the phenomenal rise of capitalism had to have an objective basis, as indeed it has; and the Classicals wanted to delineate this basis with almost mathematical precision.

In the second place, the fantastic profits made by capitalists could not be explained as *superior wages;* but as a net profit over and above that, namely as *surplus.* Furthermore, economists could not bring themselves to consider this profit as forming part of the costs in the process of exchange, but as formally born in exchange itself. Consequently, Classical economists for whom profit was a major source of capital, tried to find a new principle of value, such that the quantitative difference in value between input and output could be objectively explained. The more introspective among them began to look to the production scene, and to give greater weight to the role of labour there. More important still, they began to conclude that the difference in profits between the capitalists and the earlier merchants had something to do with cooperative effort in factory labour, and learned that, up to a point, the law of increasing returns was profiting the capitalist.

Petty first put forward a sketchy idea of labour time as measuring value and therefore of labour as its determinant. Marx rightly interprets Petty as saying that the value of labour is determined by the necessary means of subsistence.[37] And indeed this celebrated passage, written in 1679, is remarkably close to Marx's own notion of surplus labour:

> 'For then the law that appoints such Wages were ill made, but which would allow the Labourer but just wherewithal to Live; for if you allow double, then he works but half so much as he could have done, and otherwise would; which is a loss to the Publick of the fruit of so much labour.'[38]

The accent in Petty is, however, more on the quantity than on the quality of labour; for, like his contemporaries, he considered labour as the

[37] Marx interprets Petty in this way: 'The value of labour is therefore determined by the necessary means of subsistence. The worker is impelled to produce value and to perform surplus labour only by the fact that he is forced to use the whole of the labour power within his capacity in order to get for himself just as much as he needs to live'. Marx, op. cit., p. 16.

[38] Petty, op. cit., p. 64.

source of wealth not in the Marxian sense of Abstract Social Labour, but in the concrete sense of the law of increasing returns. Hence his surplus labour does not arise from the social division of labour, as Marx was later to suggest, but from the actual division of labour in the factory. It was this latter view which was eventually taken up by Classical economists in formulating their labour theory.[39] Like the Physiocrats, Petty held that the true form of surplus value resulted not only from the excess of the amount of labour applied beyond the necessary labour but also, Marx explains, as the excess of the surplus labour of the producer himself over his wage and the replacement of his capital.[40] Rent resolves itself into surplus labour; for if the value of the corn yielded by a field is determined by the labour time taken to produce it (or, for Marx, *contained in it*), and the rent is equal to the total product minus the wages and the seeds (as constituents of the costs of production), rent becomes equal to the surplus product in which the surplus labour is materialised. For Petty, then, *rent* includes profit, since it is equal to the total surplus value, and the value of land is capitalised rent.[41]

In his *Treatise,* Petty seems to be labouring at the reconciliation between the expenditure of labour as the source of exchange value[42] and the difference between the actual market price or the *true Price Currant* and the *natural price.* Obviously, the market price represented more than the wages of labour because it included that amount of the *value of land* represented in it. Petty being, as we have seen, more concerned with the quantitative aspect (and so viewing the difficulty from the standpoint of division of labour in manufacture) tries to go round it by establishing the *value of land* quantitatively. He holds that this is a sum of yearly rentals. To determine it, Petty uses the English computation to determine the normal tenure of usufruct, namely twenty-one years. The amount of a twenty-one year usufruct becomes the value of the land.

Naturally, from the labour theory standpoint, this is no solution. As long as land is considered, in some way or other, a determinant of value, value theory is still tainted with the idea of *cost of production.* Petty and his immediate successors had a glimpse of the labour theory, but land acted as a stumbling-block to further elaboration. It was only when an over-all idea of labour was introduced into the notion of value that a mature labour theory could be developed.

[39] For a detailed treatment of this important distinction, cf. Meek, op. cit., pp. 37 ff.

[40] Cf. Marx, op. cit., p. 17. See Also Petty, op. cit., pp. 23-4.

[41] Cf. Marx, op. cit., pp. 17-19.

[42] Cf. Petty, op. cit., pp. 31, 66.

Till the Glasgow Lectures of the 1760's, however, constant attention was paid by economists of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries to this problem. Thus Turgot in France in his *Réflexions sûr la Formation et la Distribution des Rechesses* of 1766 gave a developed form of the Physiocratic doctrine vis-a-vis labour.[43] The agricultural worker is considered as the real producer and so the real creator of surplus value.[44] Here, in a way, the value of the land is incorporated into the product. This form of labour is the *natural basis* and necessary condition for the independent functioning of all other forms of labour.[45] Turgot considered this agricultural labour as constituting two kinds of labour: that labour necessary for the husbandman's own subsistence; and the labour used beyond that as producing a surplus to pay wages to his workers in exchange for their labour. The employees of the husbandman, on the other-hand, in buying the produce of the husbandman return to him exactly what they have received from him. In this case, the husbandman is not selling above the value of the product, as would be the case in the *surplus value* of Mercantile economy. Surplus value is here realized precisely in circulation, for the husbandman in the very act of selling his *surplus* product at its own value, is selling surplus-value. Naturally, the husbandman can do this because he has not bought what he sells. The very abundance of the natural product which, Turgot notes, 'nature accords him as a pure gift'[46] is used to buy labour-power, increasing his surplus-labour and his surplus-value.

Prior to the *Wealth of Nations,* the most advanced form of the Labour theory is contained in an anonymous pamphlet which appeared in London about 1739, entitled *Some Thoughts in the Interest of Money in General, and particularly in the Publick Funds, &c.*[47] Utility is here considered as

[43] Cf. Turgot: *Reflexions sur la formation et la Distribution des Richesses,* I, Ed. Daire, Paris, 1844.

[44] As Marx notes, the same idea occurs in Quesnay who in his 'Analyse du Tableau Economique' wrote of 'the productive class (agricultural workers), the class of land-owners and the sterile class, or all citizens who are occupied with tasks and labour other than agriculture'. (See *Physiocrates etc. I,* Ed., Daire, Paris 1846, p. 58; as quoted by Marx, in op. cit., p. 58).

[45] Marx, ibid.

[46] Turgot, op. cit., p. 11. Turgot adds: 'He (i.e. the husbandman – A's Note) is therefore the sole source of the riches, which, by their circulation, sanimate all the labours of the society; because he is the only one whose labour produces over and above the wages of the labour'. (As quoted by Marx in op. cit., p. 59).

[47] Marx, who quotes the pamphlet in *Capital,* among other places, writes: 'This remarkable anonymous work, written in the last century, bears no date. It is clear, however, from internal evidence, that it appeared in the reign of George II, about 1739, pr. 1740'. Cap. I, p. 6. footnotes.

the true and real value – a remarkable advance in thought which shows that the pamphlet's author was closer to modern economic thought than any of his predecessors or contemporaries. Contrary to Marxian doctrine, he held that real value is not exchange but use value.[48] A commodity's exchange value is considered as being *regulated by the Quantity of Labour necessarily required, and commonly taken in producing them,*[49] which to all intents and purposes hardly seems different from Marx's *socially-necessary labour.* Moreover, the anonymous author insists that a commodity which has use value can usually possess exchange value only if labour is bestowed on it.[50] It would seem, therefore, that he recognised utility as the real source of value, and labour time socially-necessary as its determinant. In this view, too, exchange value could only be produced through labour, and so utility appears to be the source of *abstract* or *intrinsic* value, while economic value remained in the realm of labour.

This unknown writer also establishes that principle by which things can only be exchanged on the basis of the quantity of labour contained in them,[51] ultimately determined, as has been said, by the labour time socially-necessary for the labourer's maintenance.[52] His influence on Adam

[48] 'The true and real value of the Necessaries of Life, is in Proportion to that Part which they contribute to the Maintenance of Manking'. *Some Thoughts on the Interest of Money in general, and particularly in the Publick Funds, &c.*, London, p. 36.

[49] Ibid. Curiously enough, Meek says nothing about this essential difference between the anonymous author and Marx. I cannot help noting that, in this respect, the unknown author admirably anticipates modern utility theory; and in combining subjective and objective factors may well have been a better economist than Marx. Marx writes: 'We see then that that which determines the magnitude of the value of any article is the amount of labour socially necessary, or the labour-time socially-necessary for its production'. Cap. I, p. 6. It is at this point that Marx refers us to the footnote quoted in note 47.

[50] 'Water is as necessary for Life as Bread or Wine; but the Hand of God has poured out that upon Mankind in such Plenty, that every Man may have enough of that without any Trouble, so that generally 'tis of no Price; but when and where any Labour must be used, to apply it to particular Persons, there the Labour in making the Application must be paid for, tho' the Water be not: And on that Account, at some Times and in some Places, a Ton of Water may be as dear as a Ton of Wine'. *Some Thoughts &c.*, p. 37. Compare with Marx: 'A use value, or useful article, therefore, has value only because human labour in the abstract has been embodied or materialised in it'. Cap. I, p. 5.

[51] 'In the more ancient Times, when Commerce was carried on merely by bartering one Commodity for another, I apprehend no other Rule could be made Use of in exchanging one Thing for another, but the Quantity of Labour severally employed in producing them'. *Some Thoughts &c.*, p. 39.

[52] 'One Man has employed himself a Week in providing this necessary of Life, and for his Pains deserves just as much as will Maintain him for a Week; and he that

Smith was considerable;[53] and it is on the Glasgow lecturer that we now focus our attention.

THE LABOUR THEORY IN ADAM SMITH

In the 1750's Adam Smith was the holder of the Moral Philosophy Chair at Glasgow University. Thanks to a student's notes,[54] we can have an idea of Smith's thought at Glasgow before the *Wealth of Nations*.

Accumulation of capital plays a minor part in these *Lectures*, and so the notion of the natural rate of profit, in relation to the quantity of stock employed by the capitalist, is absent. Consequently the Smith of the Glasgow lectures does not approach the problem of value in the same way as the Smith of the *Wealth of Nations*. He looked at economic value from the viewpoint of price. To him *natural price* was the central or average market price of a commodity. He then set out to see what constituted natural price and how the market price tended to equal the central price. Unlike Cantillon, Smith did not consider the commodity's natural price as being related to the actual price of the labour employed to produce it, but to the natural price of labour.

This relation, however, was not equivalence. Smith rather understood it as a psychological relationship in the sense that the price of the commodity was to be sufficiently high to yield to the worker (understood in the *Lectures* as a direct producer),[55] after the cost of producing the commodity had been paid, a *profit* at least equivalent to the natural price of his labour, namely that amount of money *sufficient to maintain him during the time of labour, to defray the expenses of education, and to compensate the risk of not living long enough, and of not succeeding in the business.*[56] The value of labour is here regarded in a way as the *socially-*

gives him some other in exchange cannot make a better Estimate of what is a proper Equivalent than by computing what cost him just as much Labour and Time; which in Effect is no more than exchanging one Man's labour in one Thing for a Time certain; for another Man's Labour in another Thing for the like Time'. Ibid.

[53] Compare the above extract with the following from Adam Smith: 'In that early and rude state of society which precedes both the accumulation of stock and the appropriation of land, the proportion between the quantities of labour necessary for acquiring different objects, seems to be the only circumstance which can afford any rule for exchanging them for one another'. Smith, op. cit., p. 52.

[54] A student took down notes in 1763 of Smith's lectures on *Justice, Police, Revenue and Arms*. It was over a century later that these notes came to light, and Edwin Cannan published them in 1896.

[55] Smith, in these *Lectures* seems to be considering that stage of production still mainly made up of several independent direct producers. Cf. Meek, op. cit., pp. 4-9.

[56] Adam Smith: *Lectures*, Cannan ed., p. 176.

necessary labour.

But it is not taken as a general constituent of economic value. The emphasis is on market price, which Smith determines through the demand for the commodity, its supply in relation to the demand, and through the solvency of the would-be consumers. It will be seen that this earlier Smith accentuates more the role of effective demand in determining the actual price than the later Smith. As a result, economics seems to him to be motivated by the individual producer's desire to obtain the highest *profit* for his own labour on the market, or in getting the best market price. It was only when he had tackled the problem of value more directly that he argued that the dynamism of an expanding industrial economy is powered by the individual capitalist's desire to obtain the highest possible rate of profit on his capital.

One may validly say, then, that when Smith speaks here of labour as the measure of value,[57] he does not understand it as being a constituent of value but rather as the quantitative measure related to the market price.[58]

While Smith was lecturing at Glasgow, society was changing. Large-scale production was giving birth to a new economic system where the individual producer was gradually being absorbed by the entrepreneur. The two years spent in Europe, 1764-66[59] enabled Smith to contrast industrially underdeveloped France with the highly industrialized Glasgow of his return, and to draw the relevant conclusions. A new approach to economic problems was necessary and the *Wealth of Nations* came to be written.

Smith's arguments on value in this momentous work result from his doctrine of the division of labour in society. Probably influenced by his

[57] 'We have shown what rendered money the measure of value, but it is to be observed that labour, not money, is the true measure of value'. Ibid., p. 190.

[58] Cf. Meek, op. cit., p. 51.

[59] There has been a lot of discussion over the extent of Physiocratic thought on Smith. Professor Scott in *Adam Smith as Student and Professor,* (pp. 118-8 and 319-20) claims that prior to going to France in 1764, Smith had already drawn up a draft of his theory; but I agree with Meek's contention that this is not likely, for the *Lectures* reveal a different outlook, especially in the discussion on natural price. Cf. Meek, op. cit., pp. 55-6. Marx, a thorough student of the Physiocratic System (cf. *Theories of Surplus Value,* pp. 46-57), held that Smith's considerable dependence on the Physiocrats accounts for contradictions in his thought. 'Adam Smith', he writes, 'is very heavily infected with the corruptions of the Physiocrats, and often whole statements run through his writings which belong to the Physiocrats and are in complete contradiction with the views specifically elaborated by himself. This is so, for example, in the treatment of land rent, etc'. Marx, op. cit., p. 108. Marx also claims that 'Adam Smith has not established a single new proposition relating to division of labour'. Cap. I, p. 341, footnote.

predecessors, he starts by virtually considering that the division of labour in society and in manufacture are objectively identical,[60] though in the earlier chapters he concentrates on the former. Pointing out the worker's right to live by his labour, Smith states that with the appropriation of the land and the accumulation of stock, the whole production of labour ceased to be directed to the producer himself.[61] Labour therefore became a commodity.

Smith defines commodities in exchange as those quantities of labour which a man produces beyond his needs,[62] a phenomenon which follows division of labour. Commodities in exchange become, to use Marxian language, bearers of exchange value. Smith shows how this exchange is rooted in the social relationship between men, in the sense that several workers contribute to the manufacture of a product. Men are in need of each other, and society affords, through exchange, the possibility of mutual satisfaction of needs.[63] But he insists on relative utility of goods as a considerable factor in exchange, and though he regards the product objectively as constituted of several *social labours,* yet in the earlier part of the *Wealth of Nations,* he seems to consider utility as ultimately giving exchange value to the commodity – not so much the utility of the product in satisfying a need, or its *use value,* but the utility of its exchange value because of the profit it enables its seller to make.[64]

[60] Thus in Chapter I, Smith says: 'The affects of the division of labour, in the general business of society, will be more easily understood, by considering in what manner it operates in some particular manufactures'. (Smith, op. cit., p. 5). He then goes on to show the divisions of labour in manufacture, and applied them to society. Marx writes: 'Now it is quite possible to imagine, with Adam Smith, that the difference between the above social division of labour and the division in manufacture, is merely subjective... But what is it that forms the bond between the independent labours of the cattle-breeder, the tanner, and the shoemaker? It is the fact that their respective products are commodities'. Marx, op. cit., pp. 347-8.

[61] 'But this original state of things in which the labourer enjoyed the whole produce of his own labour, could not last beyond the first introduction of the appropriation of land and the accumulation of stock'. Smith, op. cit., p. 72.

[62] 'Every workman has a great quantity of his own work, to dispose of beyond what he himself has occasion for; and every other workman being exactly in the same situation, he is enabled to exchange a great quantity of his own goods for a great quantity, or, what comes to the same thing, for the price of a great quantity of theirs'. Smith, op. cit., p. 13.

[63] 'Whosoever offers to another a bargain of any kind, proposes to do this: Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of'. Ibid., p. 16.

[64] 'It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we

In Chapter Five, the attitude changes, and Smith considers that a man may be said to be rich or poor in proportion to the quantity of that labour which he can command or purchase. He concludes that the value of a commodity in exchange, as against that of a product destined for the producer's own consumption, is equal to the quantity of labour which that commodity enables him to purchase. 'Labour, therefore', Smith argues, 'is the real measure of the exchangeable value of all commodities'.[65]

But here Smith seems to be in the throes of contradiction. Labour appears to be the constituent of value, but not its measure, so that there is one criterion for input and another for output. Marx pointed out this in *The Critique of Political Economy*,[66] where he speaks of the confusion in Smith's thought between the determination of the value of commodities by the quantity of labour required for their production, and the quantity of commodities required to buy a definite quantity of human labour.[67]

And so while considering labour as the *real measure* of value, Smith does not understand it as a quantitative measure, but as its constituent.[68] The measure of value cannot be ascertained in production, but in exchange. It is precisely due to this fact that I am inclined to think that, unconsciously perhaps, Smith was a partisan of utility; and that it was his mental confusion between utility and labour that led him to introduce a dichotomy in value theory. He seemed to have realized that labour, for all its influence on the price of commodities, could only be a qualitative element and that what ultimately caused prices to fluctuate in the market

expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity, but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities, but of their advantages'. Ibid. It seems to me that Meek carries his point too far when he argues that Smith is here regarding labour as the *cause* of value because of its social character. This interpretation may not be faulty if applied to parts of Smith's writings, but I believe that its application to this early part of the *Wealth of Nations* is misleading. Cf. Meek, op. cit., p. 62.

[65] Smith, op. cit., pp. 32-3.

[66] Marx: Crit., p. 68.

[67] Cf. Marx: *Theories of Surplus Value*, p. 108. Marx adds: 'Here he makes the *exchange value* of labour the measure for the value of commodities ... The value of labour, or rather of labour-power, changes, like that of any other commodity, and in no way differs specifically from the value of other commodities. Here value is made the measuring rod and the basis for the explanation of value – so we have *cercle vicieux*, a vicious circle'.

[68] Meek explains it in this way: 'According to his way of looking at it, a commodity acquired value because, *but not necessarily to the extent that*, it was a product of social labour. In order to find out how the extent of its value was regulated, Smith believed, one must first find out how its value ought properly to be *measured*. And the measure of value, in Smith's opinion, could not be ascertained by looking at the conditions of its production'. Meek, op. cit., p. 63.

was effective demand.[69] The actual measure of value, Smith holds, is obtained by the actual *power of purchasing other goods* on the market. This *real measure* being established, one could then proceed to see how it is determined. For Smith, as has been said, the latter works on a different basis.

As Marx was to do later, Smith began his investigation into accumulation through a study of commodities and their exchange, starting, as he did, from the division of labour in society. The producers confront each other as possessors, sellers or buyers, of commodities. Labour as a commodity, is also exchanged. But to Smith the capital-labour relationship was not based in proportion to the quantity of labour represented in exchange between those two commodities, wages and labour. Consequently, labour time could not become the immanent measure which regulated the exchange of commodities. Ricardo was to point out that Smith should have shown that in the capital-labour relationship *quantity of labour* and *value of labour* were no longer identical, so that the value of commodities, though determined by the labour-time contained in them, was no longer determined by the value of labour.[70]

I find myself agreeing with Meek that Smith's concept of the *real measure* of value was an abstract category, and hence could not be applied to concrete economic value.[71] Smith was first and foremost a philosopher and his study of accumulation was made through the eyes of one seeking more than just the proximate cause of things. This may account, in part at least, for the divergence between the abstract *real measure* of labour and the quantitative measure of value as the quantity of wage-labour which could be obtained in the market through the returns from the sale of commodities. Smith's position thus offers, an interesting parallel to Marx's own kind of dichotomy, precisely, I believe, because Marx was principally, like Smith, a philosopher.

It may be contended that Smith's ultimate aim was to establish general

[69] Cf. Smith, op. cit., pp. 61ff. Note especially this part: 'Such fluctuations affect both the value and the rate, either of wages or of profit, according as the market happens to be either overstocked or understocked with commodities or with labour with work done, or with work to be done'. (op. cit., p. 65). Smith insists that the value of labour does not affect the market price; indeed, he takes labour as a *measure* of value because it does not change. Cf. op. cit., pp. 36 and 66.

[70] Marx comments: 'He (i.e. Adam Smith – A's Note) should on the contrary, as Ricardo rightly pointed out, have concluded that the expression *quantity of labour* and *value of labour* are then no longer identical, and therefore the relative value of commodities, although determined by the labour time contained in them, is not determined by the value of labour', as the latter expression was only correct so long as it remained identical with the first'. Marx, op. cit., p. 111.

[71] Cf. Meek, op. cit., pp. 64-5.

principles underlying accumulation in general, and not only under capitalism. Two principles, in particular, deserve special attention. One enunciates that whenever a society is characterized by a division of labour, *the value of any commodity (therefore) to the person who possesses it, and who means not to use or consume it, himself, but to exchange it for other commodities, is equal to the quantity of labour which it enables him to purchase or command.*[72] The second states that the real price of a commodity, as distinct from its *real value* is the labour involved in it; its *real value* to him is twofold – in relation to the *toil and trouble* which the commodity has saved him; and, secondly, in relation to what he might get if he were to resell it.[73]

In a general abstract sense, then, labour was considered by Smith as the real basis of value.[74] All commodities participate of this Absolute, in much the same way as contingent beings are considered in metaphysics as participating in Absolute Being.[75] Labour being the Absolute, Smith believes that in it he has found the final cause of the *Wealth of Nations.*[76]

Precisely because of this philosophical outlook, Smith is interested in showing that labour, like any Absolute, is immune to change. Gold and silver vary in value, depending *always upon the fertility of barrenness of the mines,*[77] and so that quantity of value which they can command varies

[72] Smith, op. cit., p. 32.

[73] 'The real price of everything, what every thing really costs to the man who wants to acquire it, is the toil and trouble of acquiring it. What every thing is really worth to the man who has acquired it and who wants to dispose of it, or exchange it for something else, is the toil and trouble which it can save to himself, and which it can impose upon other people'. Ibid, p. 33. Meek's interpretation of this disputed passage, distinguish between what a thing *costs* and what it is *worth* is, I believe quite plausible. Cf. Meek, op. cit., p. 67, footnote 2.

[74] 'What is bought with money, or with goods, is purchased by labour, as much as what we acquired by the toil of our own body. That money or those goods, indeed, save us this toil'. Smith, ibid., p. 33.

[75] 'They (i.e. those goods – A.'s Note) contain the value of a certain quantity of labour which we exchange for what is supposed at the time to contain the value of an equal quantity'. Ibid.

[76] 'Labour was the first price, the original purchase-money that was paid for all things. It was not by gold or by silver, but by labour, that all the wealth of the world was originally purchased; and its value, to those who possess it, and who want to exchange it for some new productions, is precisely equal to the quantity of labour which it can enable them to purchase or command'. Ibid.

[77] 'Gold and silver, however, like every other commodity, vary in their value; are sometimes cheaper and sometimes dearer, sometimes of easier and sometimes of more difficult purchase. The quantity of labour which any particular quantity of them can purchase or command, or the quantity of other goods which it will exchange for, depends always upon the fertility or barrenness of the mines which happen to be known about the time when such exchanges are made'. Ibid., p. 35.

in like measure. It is not the qualitative value of the labour that varies, therefore, and changes the price of commodities; for equal quantities of labour are always of the same value to the labourer.[78] Labour as a changeless value becomes for Smith the *ultimate and real standard* as well as the *real price of all commodities.*[79]

How then is value regulated in practice? Smith recognised in several parts of his work that the amount of labour which a commodity could purchase or command varied in relation to the amount of labour required to produce it.[80] But to put this criterion on a workable basis, it had to be shown, first of all, that the quantity of commandable labour, and the quantity of embodied labour were exactly equal. Smith believed that such a perfect equation could only be verified in that pre-capitalist society where the labourer was the direct producer of his own work. In this case, the proportion between the quantities of labour necessary for acquiring different objects would be the only basis of exchange.[81]

[78] 'Equal quantities of labour, at all times and places, may be said to be of equal value to the labourer. In his ordinary state of health, strength, and spirits; in the ordinary degree of his skill and dexterity, he must always lay down the same portion of his case, his liberty, and his happiness. The price which he pays must always be the same, whatever may be the quantity of goods which he receives in turn for it, of these, indeed, it may sometimes purchase a greater and sometimes a smaller quantity; but it is their value which varies, not that of the labour which purchases them'. Ibid., p. 36.

This passage confirms strikingly Smith's philosophical trend. Marx, of course, looked at labour from this viewpoint also; but while Smith placed his notion of labour as a general background principle, Marx brought his notion of Abstract Social Labour to play its role in the quantitive measurement of value. As a matter of fact, Marx believes that Smith in these passages is mixing up *the labour of others* and *the product of this labour* and therefore does not realize that commodities, being products of socially-determined labour, are not absolute, but subject to change. Marx is naturally arguing from the dialectical standpoint viewing change in the social super-structure through changes in the mode of production.

Marx insists that Smith's equating *labour* with the *product of labour* gives rise to the confusion between the determination of the value of commodities by the quantity of labour contained in them, and their determination by the *value of labour,* namely by the quantity of living labour which they can supply. Cf. Marx. op. cit., pp. 114-5.

[79] 'Labour alone, therefore, never varying its own value, is alone, the ultimate and real standard by which the value of all commodities can at all times and places be estimated and compared. It is their real price; money is their nominal price only'. Smith, op. cit., p. 36. Marx considers the above conclusion to be false, arising from the preceding *false* premises. Cf. Marx, op. cit., p. 115.

[80] On page 35 of the *Wealth of Nations,* he writes: 'As it cost less labour to bring those metals from the mine to the market, so, when they were brought thither, they could purchase or command less labour'.

[81] 'In that early and rude state of society which precedes both the accumulation

Under capitalist accumulation, the returns from the commodity's sale could no longer be proportionate to the *commandable labour,* but had to include a measure of extra profit for the entrepreneur. Consequently, the quantity of labour embodied in the commodity could not be the only determinant of exchange value. 'An additional quantity, it is evident', Smith concluded, 'must be due for the profits of the stock which advanced the wages and furnished the materials of that labour'.[82] Value, therefore, in modern society was to be measured in practical economics in terms of a level-equilibrium between wages, profit and rent, which Smith considered the three original sources of exchange value.

Use value, of course, received its due study. Smith's concept is rather different from the normal meaning of the basic utility of any commodity which makes it possible to become a repository of exchange value. He understood utility in an abstract manner, relating it to the normal needs of a person.[83] This view is not elaborated in his works. But I strongly suspect – with due apologies to Meek[84] – that if Smith had insisted more on the determinants of price from the demand-end, his thinking would have been clearer, and his value theory more homogenous. It is true that Smith insisted that the level of the natural price was independent of fluctuations in demand. One must, however, remember that Smith himself applied the regulation of value to demand as determining the market price. And if his *labour* value is abstract, some other measure of value must be used in practice.

Wages, profit and rent were, for Smith, the sources of exchange value, but in the last resort, they do not stand by themselves, but are related to commodities and to their exchange. It seems to me that while it is true

of stock and the appropriation of land, the proportion between the quantities of labour necessary for acquiring different objects seems to be the only circumstances which can afford any rule for exchanging them for one another'. Ibid. p. 52.

[82] Ibid., pp. 54-5. Smith states that under capitalist accumulation 'the whole produce of labour does not always belong to the labourer. He must in most cases share it with the owner of the stock which employs him. Neither is the quantity of labour commonly employed in acquiring or producing any commodity, the only circumstance which can regulate the quantity which it ought commonly to purchase, command or exchange for'. Ibid., p. 54.

[83] 'The word *value,* it is to be observed, has two different meanings, and sometimes expresses the utility of some particular object, and sometimes the power of purchasing other goods, which the possession of that object conveys. The one may be called *value in use,* the other *value in exchange.* The things which have the greatest value in use have frequently little or no value in exchange; and, on the contrary, those which have the greatest value in exchange have frequently little or no value in use'. Ibid., p. 31.

[84] Cf. Meek, op. cit., pp. 72-4.

that theoretically Smith envisages the natural price, as the monetary expression of value, independent of demand, yet this is not borne out when he applies his theory. His insistence on the role of labour in determining the natural price is, undoubtedly, praiseworthy in that it tends to give the labourer his due. But I believe Smith himself realized that in the everyday world of economics, he had ultimately to consider demand. Naturally, his theory of value as constituted by labour need not be weakened by this insistence on the natural price – but such a value would be, perhaps, more that of Dr. Smith the Moral Philosopher than of Smith the Economist. Nor does this mean that Smith rejected a labour theory of value; but though he meant to establish it as a cost of production theory (and though he did in fact place invariable labour as the absolute value), yet in the practical estimation of value, he gave way to demand.

His influence on Marx, as well as on Ricardo, lay in that he insisted on labour as the real measure of value; and that in precapitalist society value was measured by the labour contained in commodities, due to the equilibrium between embodied labour and commandable labour. His failure to provide a workable value-principle was itself a stimulus for further research.

VALUE IN RICARDO

Ricardo first talks of value in his pamphlet on *The High Price of Bullion* published in 1810. In the course of his discussion on the depreciation of the paper currency, he says that, as in all commodities, there is an intrinsic value in gold and silver which arises out of their scarcity, the amount of labour used to obtain them, and the value of the capital employed in the mines to produce them.[85] Ricardo holds, in this pamphlet, that it is the quality of a measure of value to be invariable, and so neither gold nor silver fully qualify for the post. But they are the next best, since their value remains, at least for short periods, unchangeable.[86]

[85] 'Gold and silver, like other commodities, have an intrinsic value, which is not arbitrary, but is dependent on their scarcity, the quantity of labour bestowed in procuring them, and the value of the capital employed in the mines which produce them'. Ricardo: 'The High Price of Bullion' in *Works*, III, p. 52.

[86] 'A measure of value should itself be invariable; but this is not the case with either gold or silver, they being subject to fluctuations as well as other commodities. Experience has indeed taught us, that though the variations in the *value* of gold or silver may be considerable on a comparison of distant periods, yet for short spaces of time their value is tolerably fixed. It is this property among their other excellencies, which fits them better than any other commodity for the uses of money. Either gold or silver may, therefore, in the point of view in which we are considering them, be called a measure of value'. Ibid., p. 65.

At this early period, Ricardo was still very much a follower of Smith, especially in the latter's consideration of value as an absolute. The passage quoted in note 86 above reveals that Ricardo accepted Smith's idea of the invariability of a measure of value; and that like him he suffered from the discrepance between value as constituted and value as measured. Like him, too, he was concerned to rule out subjective elements, such as utility, in determining the essence of value.[87] During these years, Ricardo was more interested in the problem of distributional shares; it was through painstaking work in an effort to solve it that he found value-theory a godsend.

Ricardo's first major enterprise was his elaboration of the theory of profit. In his *Essay on Profits,* Ricardo explains in the first place that when the price of corn and the wages of labour remain stationary, the law of diminishing returns comes into operation on the land, as capital accumulates and population increases. Agricultural profit then declines and since Ricardo considered, like Smith, agriculture as controlling the profits of other trades, this would entail a decline in the general rate of profit on capital. When, in the second case, the price of corn and the wages of labour are no longer stationary, the effect of the progress of wealth on prices is a general rise in the price of raw produce and wages – while other commodities retain their original price – and a lowering of the general rate of profit consequent upon the rise in wages.[88]

Moreover, Ricardo in his *Essay* related the value of a commodity to the difficulty or facility of its production. The exchange value of the commodity rises in proportion to the increase of difficulties met in producing it – a principle which Smith had implicitly accepted in the *Wealth of Nations.*[89]

[87] 'I like the distinction which Adam Smith makes between value in use and value in exchange. According to that opinion, utility is not the measure of value'. Ricardo: 'Notes on Bentham', in *Works,* III, p. 284.

[88] 'The sole effect... of the progress of wealth on prices independently of all improvements, either in agriculture or manufactures, appears to be to raise the price of raw produce and of labour, leaving all other commodities at their original prices, and to lower general profits, in consequence of the general rise of wages'. Ibid. IV, p. 20.

[89] Smith is discussing the invariability of labour as the real measure of value, stated: 'At all times and places, that is dear which it is difficult to come at, or which it costs much labour to acquire; and that cheap which is to be had easily, or with very little labour'. Smith: *Wealth of Nations',* I, p. 36.

Ricardo writes: 'The exchangeable value of all commodities rises as the difficulties of their production increase. If then new difficulties occur in the production of corn, from more labour being necessary, whilst no more labour is required to produce gold, silver, cloth, linen, &c., the exchangeable value of corn will necessarily rise, as compared with those things... Wherever competition

It helped Ricardo to cast off his idea of agricultural profits regulating the profits of all other trades, and to assume that accumulation and diminishing returns influence profits through their effect on the general level of wages.[90]

Ricardo clearly rejected utility as a measure of value in his *Proposals for an Economical and Secure Currency.* Here too he distinguished, as Smith had done before him, between price and value. But this was really spadework for the *Principles.*[91]

The opening *Principle* enunciates that the value of a commodity depends on the relative quantity of labour necessary for its production, and not on the greater or less compensation which is paid for that labour.[92] He follows up Smith's distinction between use- and exchange-value, insisting, however, that utility is absolutely essential for exchange-value.[93] At the outset, he confesses that his law of value would apply only to those commodities which could be produced by human labour and which are produced competitively.[94] Goods, the demand for which is related to their scarcity, would be exceptions to this law.

Before proceeding to this law of value, Ricardo critizes Smith's own contribution to the subject. As was to be expected, he taxed Smith for establishing two measures of value. He criticized the dichotomy by which

can have its full effect, and the production of the commodity be not limited by nature, as in the case with some wines, the difficulty or facility of their production will ultimately regulate their exchangeable value'. op. cit., IV, pp. 19-20.

[90] 'In all countries, and all times, profits depend on the quantity of labour requisite to provide necessaries for the labourers, on that land or with that capital which yields no rent'. Ibid., I, p. 126.

[91] *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation,* was published in 1817.

[92] 'The value of a commodity, or the quantity of any other commodity for which it will exchange, depends on the relative quantity of labour which is necessary for its production, and not on the greater or less compensation which is paid for that labour'. Ibid., I, p. 11.

This is the section heading of the first chapter of the *Principles.* It is not found, however, in the first edition of 1817, but appears in both 2nd (1819) and 3rd (1821) editions.

[93] 'Utility... is not the measure of exchangeable value, although it is absolutely essential to it'. Ibid.

Meek rightly notes that 'Ricardo's conclusions that utility is essential to exchange value is based on a definition of utility which relates it to the capacity of a commodity to contribute in some way to our *gratification.* His rejection of utility as *the measure of exchangeable value,* however, is based on Smith's paragraph which impliedly relates utility to a scale of *normal need*'. Meek, op. cit., p. 97, footnote 4. Cf. Ricardo: *Principles,* Chap. XX.

[94] He regards these commodities as those that 'can be increased in quantity by the execution of human industry, and on the production of which competition operates without restraint'. Ricardo: *Works,* I, p. 12.

the value of output was reckoned according to the amount of *commandable labour* and that of the input according to the amount of labour required to produce it. He was against Smith's assumption of *commandable labour* as an invariable measure of value, since labour is itself subject to fluctuations. The value of labour would then be as variable as the market itself; and not only in itself as a commodity, but also in its constituents, for market changes vary the price of foods and other necessities which the worker buys through his wages.[95]

Ricardo states that Smith, while appreciating the quantity of labour necessary for acquiring objects as a measure of value, yet limits its application to that early stage of society when men were direct producers;[96] 'as if', Ricardo adds, 'when profits and rent were to be paid, they would have some influence on the relative value of commodities, independent of the mere quantity of labour that was necessary to their production'.[97] It was up to him to show that the distribution of the national income did not affect the value of the commodity.[98] One may note at this stage that Ricardo was not clear about *relative value.* At one place, he considers it as exchange value determinied by labour time;[99] and in another place, as the variation of value between two commodities, or *comparative value.*[100] Bailey criticised him harshly for this confusion[101] and Marx followed suit.[102]

[95] 'Is not the value of labour equally variable; being not only affected, as all other things are, by the proportion between the supply and demand, which uniformly varies with every change in the condition of the community, but also by the varying price of food and other necessareis, on which the wages of labour are expended?' Ibid., p. 15.

[96] Cf. Smith, op. cit., I, p. 52.

[97] Ricardo, op. cit., VII, p. 377.

[98] 'It is of importance, therefore, to determine how far the effects which are avowedly produced on the exchangeable value of commodities, by the comparative quantity of labour bestowed on their production, are modified or altered by the accumulation of capital and the payment of rent'. Ibid., I, p. 23, footnote.

[99] 'It is the comparative quantity of commodities which labour will produce that determines their present or past relative value'. Ricardo, *Principles,* p. 9.

Marx interprets this rightly as follows: '*Relative value* hear means nothing other than exchange value determined by labour time'. Marx, op. cit., p. 203.

[100] Marx refers us to this example: 'Two commodities vary in relative value, and we wish to know in which the variation has really taken place'. Marx, Ibid.

[101] Cf. Bailey: *A Critical Dissertation on the Nature, Measures and Causes of Value: chiefly in reference to the writings of Mr. Ricardo and his followers.* London, 1825.

[102] Marx explains in detail differences in Ricardo's terminology, especially about *absolute value,* and concludes that Ricardo *very often loses sight of this* real *or absolute value* and keeps in mind only *relative* or comparative value. Cf. Marx, op. cit., pp. 208-210.

Principally, however, Ricardo regarded relative labour in the first sense, which was the foundation of his inquiry. He wanted to see how far this foundation could be applied to the returns of the capitalist, from profits, and of the landowners from rent. His analysis led him to conclude that Smith was wrong in stating that commodities tended to rise in price when wages are increased, with the consequent fall in the rate of profit. A change in the proportion of the distribution of income in the form of profits and wages, would leave the relative value of commodities, including money, unaltered.[103]

He concluded, moreover, that a decrease in the rate of profit, consequent upon a rise in wages, would bring about an absolute fall in the price of those commodities in the production of which fixed capital had in any way been employed. Rises in wages and falls in profit not affecting prices, the law of value which Smith had limited to primitive society was therefore proved applicable to modern production. It could be applied just as it had been postulated by Smith. The labour theory, Ricardo triumphantly emphasizes, was a scientific measure of value. A theory of distribution of income could be fully worked on it.

In the third edition of the *Principles* Ricardo added some comments on the invariability of value.[104] He believes that invariability of value could only dwell in a commodity which always required the same exact quantity of labour to produce it; 'of such a commodity', he states, 'we have no knowledge, and consequently are unable to fix on any standard of value'.[105] He agrees with Malthus, in this edition, that he had been incorrect in excluding a rise in *all* commodities after a rise in wages. Malthus had shown[106] that there existed a class of commodities, for the production of which little or no fixed capital had been employed, and which brought in quick returns. The price of this class of commodities would rise with the rise in wages. Between this class and that other class for the production of which a large amount of fixed capital had been used, and the returns from which were slow, there was a small borderline class, Malthus had

[103] Ricardo believed he was in this way superceding Smith, who had held that a change in the price of corn would lead to a variation of the price of other commodities.

[104] It is true that at certain moments, Ricardo was not quite satisfied with his theory, expressing these doubts in his well known letter to McCulloch (Cf. *Works*, VIII, pp. 191-7). But apart from this, there seems to be no foundation for the belief that Ricardo eventually rejected his theory. Mr. Sraffa in his introduction to the *Principles* states: 'The theory of edition 3 appears to be the same, in essence and in emphasis, as that of edition 1'. *Works*, I, p. xxxviii.

[105] Ibid., I, p. 17, footnote.

[106] Cf. Malthus: *Principles*. (1820).

stated in which the rise or fall in wages is exactly compensated by a fall or rise in profits.

Ricardo agreed with Malthus' main contention, and the idea of the borderline class led him to investigate the possibilities it afforded for his invariable measure of value. If this *measure* required not only the same quantity of labour at all times to produce it, but also that it be produced on the border between the extremes of high and low *proportions* and *durabilities* of capital, the invariable measure would have, in practice, a a greater degree of stability.[107]

However, he still held fast to the idea that in a rise in wages, the price of most commodities would not alter, and that the cause of variation in commodities was mainly the amount of labour necessary to produce them.[108] He pointed out again that no measure of value can be perfectly invariable, for even if a measure could be found requiring always the same quantity of labour to produce it, it would still be affected by the different proportions of fixed capital which might be necessary to produce it. Again, differences in the durabilities of the capital used in production could affect its invariable standard. In practice, one had to choose a commodity lying in the mean between these extremes, and Ricardo fell for gold.

Ricardo turned again to the problem of relative value, but considered under a second aspect, in his papers on *Absolute Value and Exchangeable Value*. As has been just said, he had wanted to find the nearest possible measure for absolute value. Such a measure unaffected, to the greatest extent possible in practice, by changes in wages would be the best obtainable instrument. Any commodity's *real* value would be measured in terms of it, for the accompanying accidents of wages would be established in absolute terms of reference: the quantity of embodied labour contained in each.

It would seem, then, that Ricardo regarded labour as the real measure of value, and his insistence on this central tenet intrigued Marx to deeper elaboration. The latter was to attempt to solve many of Ricardo's difficulties by substituting labour-power instead of labour as the source of value. Marx felt sure that if Ricardo had made this essential distinction, he would have reached the same conclusions of *Capital*.[109]

[107] Cf. Ricardo, op. cit. VIII, pp. 191-3. See Meek op. cit., pp. 108-9.

[108] Cf. Ricardo, op. cit., I, p. 36.

[109] Marx writes: 'He (i.e. Ricardo – A.'s Note) should have spoken of labour power instead of speaking of labour. Had he done so, however, capital would also have been revealed as the material conditions of labour confronting the labourer as a power that had become independent of him. And capital would at once have

Ricardo hardly says anything about the social character of labour. But I believe his efforts in finding an invariable measure of value in embodied labour account for a large share of Marx's research in the field. Ricardo had begun with Smith, but had superceded his position by postulating that the determination of value by labour-time was the scientific approach to a study of capitalist accumulation. His theory of value was much more integrated than Smith's, giving the labour theory its first scientific formulation. It has its shortcomings; as Marx observed, its mistakes are due to the fact that often intermediate links are skimmed over, and that Ricardo tries to establish through a direct approach that economic categories are consistent with one another.[110]

Still, it was a notable advance. It was left to Marx to carry the theory to its last consequences, integrating it in his dialectical materialism in the marriage-feast of Theory and Praxis.

TRANSITION TO MARX

When Ricardo died in 1823, few economists were still toying with the idea that human labour formed part of the economic value of commodities. Six years later, Samuel Read spoke of *the almost universal rejection of labour as the standard.*[111] Torrens and Bailey, among others, criticized Ricardo's concept of absolute value. Malthus and his followers, as well as those of Lauderdale, strongly objected to Ricardo's contention that supply and demand did not concern value. Moreover, a rising group of

been revealed as a *definite social relationship'*. Marx: *Theories of Surplus Value, p.*302.

Ricardo's intellectual closeness to Marx in regarding labour as the criterion of economic value is perhaps best expressed in this passage:

'I may be asked what I mean by the work value, and by what criterion I would judge whether a commodity had or had not changed its value. I answer, I know no other criterion of a thing being dear or cheap but by the sacrifices of labour made to obtain it...

'That the greater or less quantity of labour worked up in commodities can be the only cause of their alteration in value is completely made out as soon as we are agreed that all the commodities are the produce of labour and would have no value but for the labour expended upon them'. Ricardo: *Works,* IV, p.397.

[110] 'Both the historical justification for this mode of procedure – its scientific necessity in the history of economics – and at the same time its scientific inadequacy, can be seen at the first glance. It is an inadequacy which not only shows itself (from a formal standpoint) in the mode of presentation, but leads to erroneous results, because it skips necessary intermediate links and tries to establish *direct* proof of the consistency of economic categories with each other'. Marx, op. cit., pp.201-2.

[111] Samuel Read: '*An Inquiry into the Natural Grounds of Right etc.* (1829), p.viii, footnote.

economists was working on utility as a new measure of value, and the possibilities this field opened up left the labour theory in abeyance, till its renaissance at the hands of Marx.

Objections which have now become classical were raised, not without success, against Ricardo. Reference was made to commodities which were repositories of economic value without any human labour being expended on them. Again, the value of many commodities increased in proportion to the years they were left untouched by human hand – as, for example, old-vintage wine, a problem which had put Ricardo himself at bay.[112]

The labour theory drew on it greater unpopularity, one may say, because of its political connections. Radical Socialists of the period, especially after the repeal of the Combination Laws in 1824, had found it convenient to speak of labour as the source of economic value. Conservative reaction was immediately forthcoming, and the doctrine was regarded as a potential danger to the good order of society.[113]

Those economists who had a wider outlook could not fail to consider the effects of such a value-theory in the long-run. Carried to its logical consequences, it could uproot society. Which, of course, was precisely what Marx meant to do.

[112] Cf. Ricardo, op. cit., IX, pp. 330-1.

[113] John Cazenove wrote in 1832: 'That labour is the sole source of wealth seems to be a doctrine as dangerous as it is false, as it unhappily affords a handle to those who would represent all property as belonging to the working classes, and the share which is received by others as a robbery or fraud upon *them.* Cazenove: *Outlines of Political Economy,* p. 22, footnote. Cf. Meek, op. cit., pp. 124ff.

THE PROMISE

My soul went into the wilderness to cry
Where none could see her tears, to groan and moan
Like a wing-shot Eagle, dying in despair,
Eyes dim with stabs of pain and growing haze,
Blotting the fiery vision of all the things
He loved and sought in life. Despair is dumb.
She now feels like a straw flailed by the wind
Sees no more His light, but a thousand shapes
Of vicious snakes, temptations of all sorts,
The world turned to a handful of grey ashes
Surrendering to the Enemy without hope.
In such a miserable state of fallen pride,
The wing-hurt Eagle shuts his weary eyes
To die alone and see no more the world
He loved to soar above on steel-borne wings,
Till, suddenly, a wind from the Paralytic Lake
Stirred the stagnant waters in the Pool
Of High Despair. An Angel from God's court
Drew with a sword of fire a cleansing Flame
Shaped like a mighty cross with the hanging body
Of Jesus asking God forgive his enemies.
My soul, beholding the shrunken face of Jesus
Austere, unsmiling and profoundly sad,
Burst into tears: 'Let me not perish!'
She sobbed, 'Spare those I love the pain and shame
of degradation. God, forgive once more –
Another chance for another trial of strength.
Right now I make this promise in all solemnity:
Never to let the Foul Snake drag me down,
To stand eternal sentinel by Your Cross.
I call your Mother witness to this pledge.
So help me, Mary, keep it all my life;
Refuge of sinners, hold me to my promise
Now and forever in life and after death.
Your hands will mend my broken wings and raise
my drooping spirit from dark despair.

Custodian Angel, invisible friend,
Be you no less my witness to this pledge
And you, St. Joseph, whose holy name I bear:

* * *

My soul is sad, but she no longer cries
Nor moans nor groans, a prey to vile despair.
She knows, *that is her Faith, that loving God*
will heal the wounds and mend the broken wings
And rouse the drooping spirit for a new flight,
the one true final flight into His Arms.
Behold the Hound of Heaven at the door;
Remove the rusted bolts, let Him come in
To take sovereign possession of my will,
And make of me a Kingdom of True Love.

LONDON, 2.vii.1966 J. AQUILINA

SOUL'S ANGUISH

'Tis frightening to feel emptied heart and mind
Of God, to be an animal, alone
With tortured conscience gnawed at like a bone,
The world a mocker, cynical and unkind.
If God is in me, why am I so blind
That I see not His face but writhe and groan
Like one whose chest is crushed by heavy stone,
Hating himself, and sick in heart and mind?

Yet how I yearned unheared for God to fill
The shattered spaces in my emptied soul
With all the loving presence of the Cross!
Do not desert me, Jesus; Come back to kill
The filthy Snake, the Robber Snake, that stole
My Youth and Manhood – Avenge the loss!

And yet 'tis strange, and very strange indeed
I always loved God in my foolish way;
Stopped to chat with Him during the busy day
And during sleepless nights; prayed for His lead,
Telling Him how I wanted to be freed
From Satan's heavy chains of Sin which weigh
On my free will filling me with dismay:
Sin in God's Garden is the killing weed.

Come, Jesus, save me from the grave again;
Enter into my body with your glory.
I am unworthy, but Your Word can heal
The many wounds that kill me with dull pain.
The moment has now come; repeat the story
of Lazarus! Yes Lord, remove Death's seal.

O God, how can so many live and die
Without You and Your Son, doubt your Divinity,
Reducing the absolute and Infinity
To a pseudo-metaphysical verbal lie?
I need You in my mind; I need You nigh
And far, through Time and through Eternity;
I need You for a Meaning and Serenity;
I need You down on earth and when I fly[1];

I need You here, everywhere, at home, in town;
I need You undivided, Perfect Whole:
I need the Holy Ghost to shape my mind.
I need You most when Satan drags me down,
Extinguishing Your lamp to hide the Goal,
Then torture me with cruelty most refined.

J. AQUILINA

[1] Written on the 10th July 1966, while flying back home from London.

THE 'UBI SUNT' THEME AND 'SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT'

by J.S. RYAN

ALTHOUGH the central meaning of this romance is the testing of a Christian Knight, its rich fabric contains much material from contemporary and traditional literature, as well as from folklore. It is the intention of this note to draw attention to the possible presence in the whole of an elegiac strand which is suggested unobtrusively.

In the poem Gawain is first shown on the level of Courtly Love, to be

þat fyne fader of nurture (l. 919)[1]

and, as a Christian

Carande for his costes (l. 750)

(i.e. religious observances). He is also capable finally of a perfect confession,[2] as Bertilak points out,

þou art confessed so clene, beknown of þy mysses,
And hatȝ þe penaunce apert.. (ll. 2391-2)

And yet he is only one knight, albeit the paragon of the Court, and that body may still have imperfections, despite the testing of Gawain on the three levels or on the three sets of values, the rules of the pastime or courtly game, the rules of 'courtoisie' and the rules of the moral law, based on the Catholic faith.

It is possible to detect in the poem a certain note of doubt as to the present moral quality of the court and the behaviour of Gawain does not really dispel this. The suggestion of mutability, a falling off from an earlier ideal, is contained in a number of questions, and, occasionally, answers, which make use of the 'ubi sunt' formula, so favoured by mediaeval writers.

The initial question which is interesting in this context is that put by the Green Knight upon his entrance:

þe fyrst word þat he warp, 'Wher is', he sayd,
'þe gouernour of þis gyng?' (ll. 224-5).

Although an answer comes later (ll. 252, ff.), there is a distinct pause,

[1] All quotations are from the edition of the poem by J.R.R. Tolkien and E.V. Gordon (O.U.P.), 1925, etc.

[2] Burrow, John: 'The Two Confession Scenes in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*', *Modern Philology*, Vol. LVII, No. 2, Nov. 1959, pp. 73-79.

enabling us to reflect that Arthur is indeed *sumquat childgered* (l. 86). After the king has offered the stranger 'fair sports' (*pure laykeȝ*, l. 262) or even 'actual combat' (*batayl bare*, l. 277), these altematives are rejected since

Hit arn aboute on þis bench bot berdleȝ chylder (l. 280).

There then follows the offer of what will be *in þis court a Crystemas gomen* (l. 283), a challenge (ll. 291-300), which is not accepted at first. This prompts a scornful comment which implies that the Court has fallen on evil days:

'What, is þis Arþureȝ hous', quoþ hapel þenne,
'þat al þe rous rennes of þurȝ ryalmes so mony?
Where is now your sourquydrye and your conquestes,
Your gryndellayk and your greme, and your grete wordes?
Now is þe reuel and þe renoun of þe Rounde Table
Ouerwalt wyth a worde of on wyȝes speche,
For al dares for drede withoute dynt schewed!' (ll. 309-315).

In the body of the poem Gawain himself is tested on the several levels mentioned above. When at the trysting place he flinches before the first blow, the Green Knight's remarks have some reference beyond his adversary's recoiling:

'þou art not Gawayn', quoþ þe gome, 'þat is so goud halden,
þat neuer arȝed for no here by hyllë ne be vale,
And now þou fles for ferde er þou fele harmeȝ!
Such cowardies of þat knyȝt cowþe I neuer here. (ll. 2270-2273)

He also suggests that this behaviour is cavilling (*kauelacion*, l. 2275), a word which unfortunately reminds us of the courtier's rebuke of Arthur's quixotic acceptance of challenges – *cauelaciounȝ on Crystmasse gomneȝ* (l. 683).

Later Bertilak explains the use he had made of his wife

I sende hir to asay þe (l. 2362);

and subsequently adds that Morgan la Faye had sent him to try them all:

Ho wayned me vpon þis wyse to your wynne halle
For to assay þe surquidré, ȝif hit soth were
þat rennes of þe grete renoun of þe Rounde Table; (ll. 2456-58).

Assay catches up *asay* in l. 2362, and *surquidré* echoes *sourquydrye* of l. 311.

Taken together, these several quotations from the full text show a testing of Gawain, who is not found wanting on any serious moral issue, and a questioning of the present stature of the Round Table. While the

Court is not specifically condemned, its nature is questioned at l. 224 and ll. 310, ff., and a number of the verbal echoes suggest an implicit querying of its present nature and whether all the members could measure up to Gawain.

There was some particular stress on the 'Ubi sunt' theme in the West Midlands or South-West,[3] as is evidenced by the *Sayings of St. Bernard* (M.S. Harley 2253, lines 121-44) *A Luue Ron,* by 'Frater Thomas de Hales', *Of Clene Maydenhod* and the *Debate between the Body and the Soul* (also M.S. Harley 2253). It is not far-fetched to discern some use of the theme in this West Midland poem, also. Although there is no specific parallel for the interpretation of what is essentially a pair of rhetorical questions (l. 309, ff.) as a lament, the several passages, taken together, do suggest that the poet is implying a moral censure on King and court for all their light-heartedness.

As a token of their regard for Gawain

> *Vche burne of þe broþerhede, a bauderyk, schulde haue,*
> *A bende abelef hym about of a bryȝt grene, . .* (ll. 2516-17).

But this is worn and it is frankly trivial alongside the following:

> *Now þat bere þe croun of þorne,*
> *He bryng vus to his blysse!* (ll. 2529-30).

In so many ways the Knights are shown to be attracted to outward show, while the King rejoices in foolish quibbles and oaths. Every act of Gawain's is a condemnation of the formal behaviour of the Court which is never particularly concerned with the inner religious meaning of chivalry.

[3] See (1) Brook, G.L. (Ed.): *The Harley Lyrics – The Middle English Lyrics of Ms. Harley, 2253,* (1956), p. 15.

(2) Wells, J.E. *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400,* (1916), pp. 389-90.

POETI MALTESI VIVENTI

Di G. CURMI

IV. MARY MEYLAK

HO INCONTRATO Mary Meylak soltanto due volte in vita mia, e ambedue le volte parecchi anni fa nell'Isola di Gozo: la prima volta per ragioni d'ufficio durante certi esami, e la seconda volta sulla soglia dell'Hotel ove ero alloggiato. La seconda volta essa era accompagnata da sua madre, e me la presentò. Parlammo un po' del più e del meno, poi sua madre ad un tratto mi disse: 'Abbiamo a casa tanti spilli d'oro e di brillanti, e tanti anelli di valore e tante collane bellissime, e mia figlia non ne vuol mettere mai nulla'. Ricordo bene che lì per lì non seppi cosa dire e non le dissi nulla, ma le rispondo ora da queste pagine: 'Gli ornamenti, i monili, i fronzoli, le cose che luccicano e che brillano, sua figlia le mette nelle sue poesie'.

Senza volerlo, ho ritratto le poesie di Mary Meylak.

Dirò subito che la Meylak non raggiunge mai altezze liriche eccezionali, ma nella poesia *Monumento a Mananni Meylak* (Monument Mananni Meylak), ha due versi stupendi. Dice che sua madre, se si fosse data allo scrivere, avrebbe scritto cose bellissime; invece essa

scelse mio padre e volle me cullare
invece di comporre poesie.

In *Garanzia di felicita* (Plegg-il-Hena), 1945 – la sua prima raccolta di versi – c'è una lirica, molto vivace e molto pittoresca, la quale, secondo me, è la migliore cosa che abbia scritto la Meylak. E intitolata *Balcone coi fiori* (Galleria bil-Ward), che traduco nella sua interezza:

Paradiso entro un ditale
o un canestro pien di rose,
drappo dolce tutto fiori
giù pendente fino a terra.
E damasco luccicante,
o un bel fuoco artificiale,
o un miscuglio di bei luci
che dà gioia e buon odore.

Pianta tutta insetti e fiori,
che d'ognuno l'occhio attira,
pur se indugi tu a guardare
non ti stanchi a guardar mai.
Chioma verde e penzolante,
testa piena di coccarde,
fiocchi rossi, azzurri, gialli,
di velluto, o seta o carta.

In *Villa Meylak* (1947), fantastica costruzione d'una sua villa ideale, essa canta ogni sorta d'alberi e di fiori, ed ogni sorta d'animali e d'insetti: dal frassino all'ulivo, dalla palma alle canne, dalla vite al carrubo, dalle felci ai limoni, ecc., ecc...; e gigli, dalie, margherite, viole, rose, ortensie, ecc., ecc...; buoi, cavalli, scimmie, seprenti, ecc., ecc... e pavoni, api, ragni, topi, lucertole, scarafaggi, mosche, zanzare, farfalle, grilli ecc., ecc...; non che tutti i membri della sua famiglia, tra cui il padre, il quale, come Churchill

Un sigaro tenere in mano amava.

Neanche manca, ad un certo punto, il cestino per rifiuti.

In tutta questa baraonda d'alberi, di fiori, d'animali e di insetti d'ogni specie, tra una pioggia continua di rime, essa trova a volte una nota giusta e una idea genuina. Cantando i pavoni, ad esempio, dopo aver detto che essi si vestono di gala tutto l'anno, e sembrano una processione in pompa magna di principi, prelati, cardinali e arcivescovi, cosi conclude:

Scolte paion con quell'elmo
dal mattino fino a sera,
e mi sembrano le teste
degli agenti del Gestapo.

E cantando la mosca, cosi conclude:

Chi mai ti canta a Malta?
Cantata, ecco, t'ho io!

La Meylak riesce assai bene nelle piccole scene campestri, nei piccoli quadri di natura, come in questo paesaggio illuminato dalla luna, e intitolato *Nella luce lunare* (F'Dawl ta' Qamar):

Luce lunar che fa vedere un ago,
come stanotte non splendette mai.
Che lampada è salita sulla Villa,
con questa bella luna tutta argento!

E che tetto notturno il cuore incanta,
oh bellezza che esprimer non si può!
Splendi, luna, e la man che t'ha creata,
quella man che vedere non si può.

Calma, quiete, incantamento, amore:
tra le foglie ci sogguardi.
Come la luna, niente sotto gli alberi
ha mai il cuore mio conquistato!
Che lenzuolo d'argento ha ricoperto
questi villaggi e queste alture!
Come, o luna, di te contenti sono
i grilli e gli usignuoli!

e come in questo altro quadretto *In un giorno sereno* (F'Jum Bnazzi), benchè non si possa poi molto bene capire come negli ultimi due versi compariscano le nuvole in tanta serenità d'azzurro, e tra le nuvole un uccellino:

Ciel glauco, cielo azzurro:
sembra, sopra il giardino,
disteso, come un tetto,
della Madonna il velo.

Sembra il sole una regina[1]
in sua piena potenza,
abbellisce il creato,
e dà vigore e forza.

E sale sù in alto,
arranca in quello spazio,
al villaggio sorride,
coll'oro suo lo veste.

E per il suo splendore
neppur si può guardarlo!
C'è tra le nubi un punto:
è forse un uccellino.

In questo volume, *Villa Meylak,* nella breve lirica *Il mio cuore* (Qalbi), in mezzo a tanta accesa fantasia e a tanta inesuaribile immaginazione, ci sono due versi semplici che commuovono. Dice la Poetessa, parlando del suo cuore:

L'unico cuore al mondo
che mai non desiò niente.

[1] In maltese, *ix-xemx* (il sole), è femminile.

In *Album,* (1948), la Meylak dedica innanzi tutto un sonetto a ciascuno dei ventotto Granmaestri che regnarono su Malta, e poi canta la sua isola, il Gozo, colle sue città, coi suoi sobborghi, coi suoi villaggi, colle sue chiese e colla sua gente. Con questa quartina chiude la lirica *Le mura* (Is-Sur):

Il tempo che ti rode
nel sonno del riposo,
ti forgia, lungo i secoli,
la gloria che ti spetta.

La Meylak ha una fantasia esuberante, davvero inesauribile. Già in una breve lirica di *Villa Meylak* intitolata *La mia mente* (Moħħi) essa aveva detto:

Nel mio pensier visioni
senza mai tregua passano,
ma troppo è il lapis pigro
per inseguirle e lento.

ed ora:

Per dirvi cosa sto che vi stupisce,
non mento, io no, credetemi
se vi dirò che col pensier cammino
molto più che coi piedi.

così comincia il suo racconto in versi, intitolato *Un giro misterioso* (Dawra Misterjusa), 1947, e dopo aver detto che i Continenti e gli Oceani per lei sono un nulla, continua:

In mondi vado non ancor scoperti,
vado dove mi piace,
s'apron le porte chiuse ove io arrivo,
vie trovo non poche.

Ultimamente – essa ci confida – compì un giro attorno al mondo coll'express della sua fantasia. In questo suo meraviglioso viaggio essa innanzi tutto s'inconttò col sole, che, tra l'altro, le dice:

Per riposar, sulle poltrone siediti
delle nubi – son soffici;
e aspetta che le stelle compariscano,
le grandi e le piccine.

Poi il sole scende, e, rimasta sola al buio, la Poetessa comincia ad avere

paura; ma viene il Vento e la invita a fare un giro nello spazio:

...Io sarò il cavallo,
la nube la vettura.

Degli otto cocchieri offertile – che sono i venti – essa sceglie il Maestrale, il vento più impetuoso e forte. E incomincia la sua corsa pei cieli. Ma siccome la vettura – la nube – non ha il fanale acceso, essa viene fermata da un poliziotto del traffico aereo: una nuvola nera. Per accendere il fanale, il cocchiere invoca il fulmine, che è il fiammifero del cielo. E la Poetessa continua su questo tono per circa altre quattrocento quartine.

Mary Meylak eccelle nelle poesiuole per i piccoli. Ha, infatti, una raccolta di versi intitolata appunto *Canti per i ragazzi* (Għana għat-Tfal), dove troviamo delle brevi poesie, a volte davvero azzeccate. Ne traduco una intitolata *Zolfanello* (Sufarina). Però ci sono dei guai, perchè in maltese *sufarina* è femminile, e in italiano tanto fiammifero quanto zolfanello sono di genere maschile. Dunque devo chiedere una licenza poetica eccezionale, o di adoperare la parola maltese *sufarina,* o di cambiare in genere femminile zolfanello, e dire *zolfanella.* Anche se domandassi quest'ultima licenza, non chiederei del resto gran che, perchè, oggi, il cambiamento dei sessi è di moda. Preferisco però tenermi a *sufarina,* sperando che la parola maltese entri nel vocabolario italiano.

Sufarina donna piccola,
figli n'ha cinquantadue,
li tiene essa entro una scatola,
tutti lì, sempre a dormire.

Tutti sono essi di legno,
non son, no, di carne e d'ossa,
hanno tutti il corpo bianco
ma la testa nera nera.

Che li tocchino i piccini
non vuol essa: solo i grandi;
sufarina lor die' l'ordine
di bruciar tutti i bambini.

Vorrei aggiungere che più d'una volta, nelle strade e sugli autobus, ho sentito ragazzi, e anche uomini maturi, cantarellare, sorridendo, la prima quartina di questa poesiuola.

Il Professore Aquilina in *Musa Maltese* dà questo giudizio su Mary Meylak: «Per la varietà delle poesie su diversi argomenti fantastici Mary

Meylak occupa uno dei primi posti. Ha immagini originali».

Che Mary Meylak sia una grande poetessa non direi; ma, oltre alla facilità del verso e alla felicità della rima, ha un merito eccezionale, che è un glorioso primato: è l'unica poetessa maltese.

26 settembre 1962

THE LETTERS OF PHALARIS TO THE MALTESE

By Rev. J. Busuttil

In 1427 Francesco Filelfo, the celebrated Italian humanist, brought with him from Constantinople, where he had been living since 1419 acting as secretary to the Consul-general of the Venetians, among other Greek manuscripts covering the whole area of Greek literature, also one containing the collection of the Letters of Phalaris.[1]

The 148 letters which make up this collection may be divided into two classes: one class comprising letters addressed to private citizens, the other those written to whole communities. Among the latter there are two addressed to the Melitaioi (τοις Μελιταιοις) and the same people are referred to in a third letter sent to the inhabitants of Segesta (τοισ 'Εγεσταιοις).[2]

These letters are known as the letters of Phalaris because their author claims to be the tyrant of the Sicilian city of Akragas, modern Girgenti.[3]

Who was Phalaris, the tyrant of Akragas?

Fewer names were more widely spread in antiquity than that of Phalaris. Pindar, Aristotle, Polybius, Diodorus Siculus mention him. Cicero has many references to him scattered in his different works; while Propertius, Ovid, Silius Italicus and Claudian make allusions to his activities in their poetic writings. Very little, however, is really known of him. He became tyrant of Akragas within a remarkably short time after the foundation of the city.

He was born perhaps on the Dorian island of Astypalaea near Cnidus, or perhaps at Akragas itself,[4] the son of a certain Laodamas. Whilst most of the Siceliot tyrants, according to Aristotle, belong to that class who were damagogues prior to their being tyrants, Phalaris was one of those

[1] Cf. Tudeer, *The Epistles of Phalaris*, Helsinki, 1931, p. 114.

[2] Cf. R. Herscher, *Epistolographi Graeci*, Amsterdam 1965, pp. 419-420 and pp. 432, 442.

[3] Cf. Herscher, op.cit. p. 409: ἐγω γὰρ ὡσπερ ἐμαυτὸν οἶδα Φαλαριν Λεωδαμαντος υἱον 'Αστυπαλαιέα τὸ γένος, πατριδος ἀπεστερημένου, τυραννον 'Ακραγαντίνων.

[4] Cf. Letter to Likinus, *Epistolographi Graeci*, p. 409; Freeman, Hist. of Sicily Oxford 1891, Vol. 1, p. 64; E.H. Banbury, Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology, Vol. III, p. 234-236, London 1849.

who rose to power through offices of honour (ἐκ τῶν τιμων) and Polyean informs us that he was the treasurer (ὁ τελωνης) of the city.[5]

Akragas (Latin Agrigentum, modern Girgenti) was founded by the neighbouring city of Gela in 580 B.C. In 570 it was still without a wall and without a temple. Phalaris, as a leading man of the city, was entrusted with the building of the temple of Zeus Polieus on the height (Modern San Gerlando), and with the 200 talents at his disposal he not only laid in a store of wood, stones, and iron, he also bought slaves and hired mercenaries for his own purposes, among whom there were many prisoners of war (δεσμωται). Whilst the foundations of the temple were being dug, Phalaris declared that thieves had stolen the wood and other supplies ready for the building, and asked the people for permission to be allowed to surround the Acropolis with a wall. When the wall was built and the Acropolis was ready to be used as a fortress, he freed his slaves and armed them and the mercenaries with axes. On the feast of the Thesmophoria, in honour of Demeter, he and his followers attacked the worshippers and, after a bloodbath, he became the undisputed master of Akragas.

Under his rule Agrigentum seems to have attained considerable external prosperity. His influence reached to the northern coast of the island where the people of Himera elected him general with absolute power. He conducted wars against the native Sicans, and succeeded in extending his territory eastwards to Econmus and Phalarium. He is said also to have conquered Leontini (modern Lentini). Suidas asserts that he ruled the whole of Sicily (Σικελίας ὅλης τυραννησας).

Phalaris was tyrant of Akragas for sixteen years – from 570 to 554 B.C.[6] The story is told that once he saw a single hawk chasing a flight of doves. He turned to his companions and told them of the cowardice of the many who allowed themselves to fly before one whom, if only they had courage enough they might overcome.[7] He was at last overthrown apparently by a combination of the noble families, headed by the rich and distinguished Telemachus the ancestor of Theron, another tyrant of Akragas, and was burned along with his mother and friends in the brazen bull. According to another story he was thrown into the sea. A decree was carried that no one was thereafter allowed to wear a blue dress, as blue had been the tyrant's livery.

[5] Arist. Pol. 5,8; 1310, G28; Polyaen, V. 1,1.
[6] For a discussion of this date Cf. Holm, *Geschichte Siciliens im Altertum*, Leipzig, 1870, Vol. 1, p. 149f; Freeman, op. cit. p. 64; Pauly-Wissowa's article on Phalaris.
[7] Diod. Sic. IX, 30, 1.

In the history of Sicily his importance lies in the fact that he was the first tyrant who, by extending his influence over a large part of the island, deterred the Phoenicians from taking hold of the whole island.[8] In the history of Agrigentum, he was responsible for the sudden power and glory of the city.[9] Finally the growth of a tyranny so soon after the foundation of a city is remarkable.[10]

Ancient writers, however, saw in Phalaris a prototype of the ferocious and beastly tyrant. Pindar (522-443) speaks in terms which already prove that his reputation as a barbarous tyrant was then already fully established, and all subsequent writers allude to him in terms of similar import.[11] Cicero says of him: '*crudelissimus omnium tyrannorum*' and in another passage, taken from Heraclides Ponticus, Cicero writes how Phalaris's mother dreamt that her son had dedicated some images of the gods in his house among them a statue of Hermes holding a patera in his hand. Out of this patera the gods were pouring out blood on the earth; the blood was bubbling up and filling the whole house, '*Quod matris somnium*', Concludes Cicero, '*inmanis filii crudelitas comprobavit*'[12]

Phalaris is said to have thrown men into boiling cauldrons and vessels filled with fire, and that he had the habit of eating sucklings. But it was mostly on account of the brazen bull that his name became a household name for cruelty. Without the bull, as Freeman avers, Phalaris would be no more than a hundred obscure tyrants in other Greek cities.[13] This is the account Polybius gives of the bull (XII, 25): There was a brazen bull which Phalaris made in Agrigentum, and in it he shut up his victims; afterwards, having lighted a fire beneath it, he used to take such terrible revenge on his subjects that, as the brass grew red and the men inside perished roasted and scorched, when they screamed in the extremity of their agony, the sound, when it reached the ears of those present resembled, owing to the way the thing was constructed, the roaring of the bull. Diodorus Siculus gives a shorter account of the same story: 'The Carthaginians', he writes, 'occupied the hill Ecnomus, which people say had been a garrison (Φρουριον) of Phalaris; in this place it is said the tyrant had set up a brazen bull which has become famous and which served as a punishment for those people that were tortured inside it, by having a fire applied beneath the monster. For this reason the place as well is called

[8] Cf. Bayet, *Sicile Grecque*, Paris, 1930, p. 13.
[9] Cf. A. Schenk Graf v Stauffenberg, *Trinakria*, Oldenburg, 1963.
[10] Cf. Freeman, op. cit. p. 66.
[11] Pyth. 1, 85.
[12] Verr. 4, 33; De Div. 1, 23.
[13] Op. cit. p. 64f.

Ecnomus after the outrage perpetrated against those unfortunate ones'.[14]

The inventor (πλαστης) of this monster was a certain Perilaus of Athens, who is said to have been the first 'to groan inside the instrument of his creation'.[15] According to Diodorus Siculus, when Akragas was sacked by the Carthaginians, Himilcar robbed Τὰ ἱερά and took the plunder together with the bull of Phalaris to Carthage, from where it was taken away by Scipio and given back to the Agrigentines after the Third Punic War.[16]

It is difficult, in view of the evidence at our disposal, to accept Pareti's sweeping judgement that *le notizie stesse sul famoso strumento di tortura in forma di toro cavo di bronzo, sono del tutto inaccettabili*[17] Pindar is the first Greek who mentions the brazen bull in connection with Phalaris. Pindar was born about 522 B.C. that is, thirty-two years after the downfall of Phalaris, and hence he could have heard the story about the bull from eye-witnesses. Furthermore, if it is true, as Polybius and Diodorus Siculus allege, that the bull was removed from the city of Agrigentum in 406, when the Carthaginians invaded the city, then Pindar could have seen the monster with his own eyes.[18]

Bayet in his *Sicile Grecque* seems to suggest that the brazen bull was nothing else but the Phoenician Moloch which Phalaris introduced in the city of Akragas. Bayet writes that Phalaris was unpopular *peut-être aussi pour avoir introduit dans la ville le culte de Moloch le Taureau.*[19] There are two points which seem to lend support to this view. In the first place the city of Agrigentum was founded by the people of Gela, and Gela, in its turn, was a Rhodian colony. The people of Rhodes worshipped Zeus Atabyrius, who was none other than the Phoenician Baal: when misfortune threatened Rhodes the brazen bulls in his temple bellowed. The throwing of people into vessels filled with fire and the eating of sucklings on the part of Phalaris fit well into the same story.[20] Secondly, according to Diodorus Siculus when the Carthaginians sacked Agrigentum in 406, Himilcar took the statues and paintings together with the bull of Phalaris to Carthage. Now the word Diodorus uses to express the booty Himilcar succeeded in carrying away is ἀναθηματα, which means objects intended as offerings to the gods. Hence the bull might have had some connection

[14] XIX, 108. I.
[15] Cf. Claudian, In Eutropium, 1,163; Propertius, 2,25,11; Ovid, Tristia, 3, 11, 51; 153; Ibis, 435; Silius Italicus, XiV, 212.
[16] XIII, 90,2.
[17] Sicilia antica, Palumbo, 1945, p. 108.
[18] Pyth. 1,85.
[19] Op. cit. p. 13.
[20] Ency. Brit., 1885, Vol. 18, p. 730.

with the Phoenician religion.[21]

From what we have said, it follows that Phalaris, the ancient tyrant of Akragas, is the reputed author of the Letters of Phalaris. Two of these letters are addressed to the Melitaioi, and the same Melitaioi are referred to in a third one. Who were the Melitaioi?

The ending -aios, an extended form of the Indo-European -yo, is normally used in Greek as a designation of a person according to his native town or country. So Ἀθηναιος is an inhabitant of Athens, Σιφναιος is a native of Siphnos. Likewise Melitaios designates an inhabitant of Μελιτη on the analogy of – δικαιος – δικη.[22]

There were at least five Melite known to the Greeks:

(a) The island of Malta, first mentioned by Scylax in 335 B.C.;

(b) The island of Mljet or Meleda in the Adriatic;

(c) The island of Samothrace, modern Samothraki, in the northern part of the Aegean;

(d) A lake dividing Acarnania (Camia) from Aetolia;

(e) The Athenian deme.

The designation Melitaioi was never applied to the inhabitants of the island of Samothrace, which, according to Strabo (X, 472) was called Melite in ancient times. The people living by the lake which separates Acarnania from Aetolia were never known as Melitaioi. The demotai or the people living in the Athenian deme of Melite were called Melitei (Meliteus), according to Stephanus Byzantinus.[23] That leaves us with Malta and Mljet or Meleda.

Appian, who lived in the time of Trajan and Hadrain, refers to the inhabitants of Meleda as Μελιτηνοι; and Ptolemy, the Geographer, a contemporary of Appian, cales Meleda, Μελιτινη.[24]

[21] XIII, 90,2.

[22] Cf. H. Champion, *Traité de Grammaire comparée des Langues Classiques, Paris* 1953, p. 391; C.D. Buck, *Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin,* Chicago, 1948, pp. 318, 347.

[23] ἐκ τῶν ἐθνικῶν Graz, 1925, 436: ὁ δημότης Μελιτευς.

[24] Appian III, 16; Ptolemy, 1, 319.

Stephanus Byzantinus, who lived four centuries after Appian and Ptolemy, writes in his Τῶνεθνικῶν : Μελιτη νησος μεταξυ Ἠπειρου καρ Ἰταλιας, ὅθεν τὰ κυνιδια Μελιταια θασιν ὁ οἰκητωρ Μελιταιος Εστι και πολις ἀπολκιος καρχηδονιων 'Melite', an island (lying) between the mainland (of Greece) and Italy; the Melitaean dogs are called after it; the inhabitants are called Meletaioi, there is also a city, a colony of the Carthaginians'. After the word Ἰταλιας (Italy) some manuscripts have ἐστι και ἀλλ' ἡ πλησιον Ειικελιας ; 'there is another (island) (called Melite) near Sicily'. This seems to make better sense. For surely Stepjanus would not mention a city without mentioning the island on which it stood. Furthermore, he would be at variance also

By elimination, therefore, the designation Melitaioi refers only to the inhabitants of Malta.

Then there is positive proof that the inhabitants of Malta were called Melitaioi by the Greeks. Strabo writing about Malta says: Μελιτη, ὅθεν τὰ κυνιδια ἃ καλουσι Μελιταια; Maltese coins bear the words τῶν Μελιταιων (of the Melitaioi), and in all the Greek inscriptions the inhabitants of our island are called Melitaioi.[25]

We have then established who the alleged sender of these letters is and the people to whom these letters were sent. In plainer language: Phalaris sent two letters to the Maltese and alluded to them in a third one.

The 148 letters of Phalaris, which were brought by Filelfo from Constantinople were first translated into Latin by Francesco Accolti of Arezzo in 1470. The original Greek text was published in Venice in 1498; it was then corrected and re-edited by Van Lennep and Valkenaer in 1717 in Groningen, which was in turn published with corrections by Schaefer in Leipzig in 1823. R. Herscher published the letters in Paris in 1873 together with other Greek letters of other authors under the title of 'Epistolographi Graeci'. Herscher's work has been reprinted in Amsterdam last year.

The translation from the original Greek has been based on Herscher's text which is derived from two manuscripts found in the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris.

There is the translation:

TO THE PEOPLE OF SEGESTA.

Stop giving asylum to refugees who are escaping from my country; for neither by fair nor by just means has anybody succeeded in overthrowing Phalaris. You would be aware that what I am saying is right if you were to consider what happened to the Melitaioi and the inhabitants of Leontini: I was partly responsible for the independence of the Melitaioi and for the enslavement of the Leontines: the latter because they sank a trireme of Mine, the former because they wanted to save it when it was sinking.[26]

with Strabo, according to whom, the Melitaean dogs were so called after Malta: So the reading which is reasonable to accept would be: 'Melite, an island (lying) between the mainland (of Greece) and Italy; there is another island near Sicily the Melitaean dogs are called after it and a city, a colony of the Carthaginians'.

[25] Strabo (69-20) 230, 32; Cf. Kaibal, Inscr. Gr. No. 953; Mayr, Malta im Altertum, 1909, p. 23: *Die Einwobner werden zuerst auf einer maltesischen Inschrift enstammt, als* Μελιταιοι bezeicheet; Ebert, Σικελιων Konisberg, 1830, p. 77.

[26] Cf. R. Herscher, *Epistolographi Graeci,* Amsterdam 1965, p. 419-420.

TO THE MELITAIOI ·

The members of your delegation have succeeded in persuading me to give you money on loan, though, for the moment, I cannot dispose of large sums on account of the recurrent expenditure on my wars. But there is no need for excuse where friends are concerned, as they say. Please, do not do as most people do who while they make the most lavish use of compliments when they are borrowing money use the most unpleasant words when they are asked to pay it back, thereby showing their unfairness and ingratitude. For he who receives money should consider those that have lent it to him, and until he has restored it, he should treat his creditors alike and discharge his debts, irrespective of whether his creditor is honest or mean. For it is only fair that one should return the money to one's creditor, be he just or otherwise. To be sure Melitaioi, I remain one and same individual both when I lend money and when I demand it back; whilst those, on the contrary, who borrow money alter their attitude with the time like chameleons, which, as the saying goes, change their colour when they change their habitat: when they get the money they call their creditor a 'benefactor' and a 'god', but when they are asked to return it they stigmatize him as a 'tyrant' and a 'blackguard'.

I am well aware of this fact too that it is far better for a creditor not to be paid back by a private individual than by a city. For if he is cheated of his money by a private person, he merely makes one new enemy, and a weak one at that, whilst if he is cheated by a city his losses are not any smaller and on top of that he makes many enemies – not just one. Of course I would not harbour any suspicion that you could do any such thing: I give you the money without these misgivings: I know that on other occasions you have not forgotten (your creditors) and that as regards contracts you are very fair and besides all the rest you are completely aware of this truth: it is rather the many that are in a position to injure one individual than one individual to injure the many. For it is unlikely for one person to treat many people with contempt; it is more reasonable for many to look down upon a single individual.[27]

TO THE MELITAIOI

I have dismissed your representative, Melitaioi, not because I do not appreciate the tokens of your esteem which he carried back still sealed up, but your conduct is not complimentary to me in any way. You perhaps, thought that others think I am such a man as you yourselves wish me to look like; but I am perfectly aware that I have the reputation of a wicked man among the others, and that even if you consider me a decent fellow,

[27] Cf. Herscher, op. cit. p. 432.

I am unable to extend thereupon this reputation to the others; it is far more likely that I would harm you in the slanderous eyes of them; because unless you yourselves were wicked as I am (people would say) you would not have praised the most wicked of men. Therefore you would be unjustly considered wicked, and I in no way more respectable, and so I thought I should not accept them.[28]

Are these letters authentic? Is Phalaris the real author of these letters?

The first Greek writer who quotes parts of these letters (38,67,72) is Stobaeus – the compiler of a series of extracts from Greek authors, who lived in the latter half of the fifth century or in the beginning of the sixth A.D. Photius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, writing in the ninth century (820, 5-891), refers to these Letters in one of his Epistles (207). The author of one of the great Greek Lexicons, Suidas (second half of the tenth century) writes that Phalaris ἐγραψεν ἐπιστολας πανυ θαυμασιας. John Tzetzes (twelfth cent.), the voluminous Byzantine writer, includes many a large extract out of them.

We have already said that Filelfo introduced these Letters to Italy in 1427. Poliziano (1454-1494), the Italian poet and scholar, attributes them not to Phalaris but to Lucian, the Greek essay-writer of the second century A.D. Menagius (1613-1692) doubts the Phalarian authorship of these Letters. In 1695, the Hon. Charles Boyle, published at Oxford Φαλαριδος 'Ακραγαντινων τυραννου 'επιστολαι. Bentley wrote a 'Dissertation on Phalaris' in 1697 to prove that these Letters are forgeries and a second work in 1699 in answer to Boyles' defence of 1698.

Bently proved his case on the grounds that:

(1) There are glaring anachronisms in these Letters:

(a) The city of Phintias is referred to in the Letter to Enna; but the city was founded 300 years after the death of Phalaris when the Romans were at war with Pyrrhus;

(b) Letter XV mentions the inhabitants of Tauromenium (Taormina) which was built after the neighbouring city of Naxos had been destroyed in 403, 150 years after Phalaris's downfall;

(c) There are quotations from Herodotus (484 B.C.) and allusions to tragedies and comedies; there are sentiments and expressions derived from later writers like Democritus and Callimachus.[29]

(2) The Dorian dialect was generally written and spoken in Sicily, especially at Syracuse and Agrigentum. The language of the Letters is not only Attic, but New Attic, the current language of the learned in

[28] Ibid, p. 442.

[29] Cf. Bentley, *On the Epistles of Phalaris*, ed. by W. Wagner, Covent Garden, 1883, p. 92.

the latter ages of the Roman Empire.[30]

(3) Sicilian talents are mentioned without specification, but there were many different kinds of Sicilian Talents.[31]

(4) Some of the subject-matter is absurd: Himera and Catane go to war for the ashes of Stesichorus.[32]

After the crushing exposure of these letters at the hands of Bentley, all the scholars hold that the Letters are not authentic.

Why were these Letters written at all?

Rhetorical culture left a profound impression on all the manifestations of the Hellenistic spirit. Hellenistic culture was first and foremost rhetorical. The teachers of rhetoric, the σοφισται or ρητορες would ask of their students to work out exercises on imaginary speeches called μελεται (declamationes, in Latin). These exercises were of two main varieties; (a) *controversial* (ὑποθεσεις δικανικαι, controversiae) in which the students of rhetoric would plead for or against a clearly defined case as laid down by the law; or (b) *deliberative* (συμβουλευτικον γενος, suasoriae), in which the students would discuss subjects from a political or historical view-point taken from an imaginary historical of mythological background: Solon, for instance, would be imagined asking for the repeal of his laws after Pisistratus had adopted a bodyguard; or it might be the Athenian people discussing whether they should send reniforcements to Nikias during the Sicilian expedition. When Roman education was completely hellenized Roman students would discuss whether Hannibal should have invaded Italy by sea instead of by land.

These Letters seem to have been rhetorical exercises of the deliberative type. They are written in Attic, 'the learned dialect of the Sophists, in which all their μελεται or exercises were composed, in which they affected to excel each other, even to pedentry and soloecism.[32]' The author of these Letters employs the usual rhetorical tricks: the proof by contrast and the refutation of the contrary opinion, the illustration by analogy, the illustration by anecdotes, the quotations from old authors in support of his contentions.[33]

Therefore, probably, these Letters were written to serve as models for students of rhetoric, or as an intellectual pastime: the author showed how cleverly he could take on Phalaris's side. It was never his idea to deceive nor was it his fault if others were taken in completely.

[30] Ibid, p. 461.

[31] Cf. Bentley, idid.

[32] Cf. Bentley, op. cit., p. 325.

[33] Cf. Marrou, *The History of Education in Antiquity*, Sarbonne, 1956, p. 202-203. op. cit. p. 202, 203.

In later ages of Greek literature there arose a different tradition concerning Phalaris. Phalaris, according to this tradition, is represented not as a beastly tyrant but as a man of a naturally mild and humane disposition and only forced into acts of severity by the pressure of circumstances and the machinations of his enemies. This tradition represents him also as an admirer of literature and philosophy and a patron of men of letters. In two 'declamations' attributed to Lucian, Phalaris is represented in this light. These Letters fit in perfectly with this tradition: he is shown as a humane individual interested in his wife and children, as a generous, mild and just person.

As Stobaeus is the first author who mentions the Letters and quotes from them they must have been written either in the first half of the fifth century or earlier.

To conclude: the Epistles of Phalaris were probably written by a sophist as an exercise in rhetoric before the first half of the fifth century A.D.[34]

The author of these letters could have had materials now lost. While a spurious document is of no value for the points it seeks to establish, it may be of value for incidental points. Therefore also these Letters could accidently preserve some scrap of truth.[35]

Do these Letters throw any light on Maltese history?

Throughout ancient times the island of Malta kept the closest ties with Sicily, politically, socially and economically. In Roman times Malta was one with Sicily, with which it had been once joined also geographically.[36] This fact is well brought out by the German historian Holm who, in his Geschichte Siciliens im Altertum, writes: *Endlich haben wir noch einen Augenblick bei der Maltesischen Inselgruppe zu verweilen die,... im Altertum wie im Mittelalter stets in politischer Verbindung mit demselben gestanden hat und auch unter der Herrschaft des Johanniterordens noch immer die engsten Beziehungen zu Sicilien bewahrte.*[37] The Letters of Phalaris confirm this well-known situation: the Melitaioi are addressed as any other city in Sicily, in a language other Sicilian cities could understand, in a manner familiar to the same Sicilians. The Melitaioi could receive money on loan from another Sicilian city. In reality Malta was considered, at one time, at any rate, a Sicilian city. This is the first general impression one gets on reading the Letters to the Melitaioi and it is a true impression in that it is in accordance with all the available

[34] Cf. Pace, *Sicilia Antica,* Roma, 1949, Vo. III, p. 154.
[35] Cf. Freeman, op. cit. p. 77.
[36] Bernabo Brea, *Sicily before the Greeks, London, 1957, p. 25.*
[37] Holm, op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 42.

evidence.

The second general impression is that Malta was on very good terms with Phalaris. The Malitaioi help Phalaris in recovering a trireme, they send him tokens of goodwill; and Phalaris, in his turn, is ready to help the Melitaioi by giving them money on loan and by praising them.[38] Whether these relations ever existed it is very hard to establish. It is possible, not to say probable, that the Maltese needed money to run the island and for their projects. It is possible too that they asked Phalaris to help them.

Now, going over the Letters in detail one can establish some more facts.

In the Letter to the people of Segesta Phalaris is said to have been partly responsible (παραιτιος) for the independence of the island because the Melitaioi wanted to save a sinking trireme.

We can infer from Thucydides that Malta was in the hands of the Phoenicians at least until 735 B.C. Thucydides in fact says: 'There were also Phoenicians living all round Sicily. The Phoenicians occupied the headlands and small islands off the coast. But when the Hellenes began to come in by sea in great numbers, the Phoenicians abandoned most of their settlements... The first Hellenes to arrive were Chalcidians from Euboea... They founded Naxos (735).'[39] In the fourth century Malta was in the hands of the Carthaginians. Scylax, writing in 335 B.C. says in his Periplus: εἰσι νησοι τρεις μικραι κατα τουτο ὑπὸ καρχηδονιων οἰκουμεναὶ Μελιτη πολις καὶ λιμην.[40] At some date Malta was independent as the bronze inscription found in Rome in the seventeenth century attests. Malta in fact had its own Senate (συγκλητος) its own magistrates (ἀρχοντες) and its popular assemblies. According to Dr. Caruana this bronze inscription is of the sixth century B.C. However that may be, this Epistle of Phalaris to the people of Segesta confirms the historical fact that Malta was once independent. Whether Phalaris had any part in granting the Maltese their liberty (ἐλευθερια) cannot be proved.[41] If Dr. Caruana's contention is correct, in that case Phalaris might have played a part in helping the Maltese to get rid of their Phoenician overlords.[42]

[38] Real-Enc. Vol. XVI: *Moglicherweise bezieht sich der Inhalt der fingerten Phalarisbriefe... habe in guten Beziehungen zu Malta gestanden und der Melitaern die Freibeit verschafft, auf diese Zeiten und Vorgange.*

[39] Thuc. Bk. VI, Chap. 1.

[40] Scylax, K. Muller, *Geographi Graeci Minores,* Vol. 1, Hildesheim, 1965.

[41] In the same letter the author says that Phalaris reduced the people of Leontini to slavery. It is well known that Phalaris beseiged Leontini and conquered it. Cf. Mayr. op. cit. p. 82.

Abela in his *Malta Illustrata* quotes these letters of Phalaris to prove that the Greeks settled in Malta. Abela never knew these letters were not authentic, and that therefore they cannot be taken as proof of one theory or other.[43]

In the first letter to the Melitaioi the author mentions three facts:

(a) The Maltese persuaded Phalaris to give them money on loan;

(b) Malta was a πολις, or city; the author, as a matter of fact, says; 'I am well aware of this fact too that it is far better for a creditor not to be paid by a private individual than by a city';

(c) Phalaris praises the Maltese for their honesty.

As far as the first and third points go, we have no means of proving or or disproving them. It is possible, not to say probable, that the ancient inhabitants of our island needed sums of money to carry out their public projects. Malta was in no way wealthier then it is now.

As regards the second point, i.e. that Malta was a πολις, it is interesting to observe that ancient writers stress the fact that Melite was not merely the name of our island but also of a city in the island:

Skylax says: Μελιτη, πολις και λιμην.

Cicero, in the Verrines (2,21,46), writes: insula est Melita, iudices, satis lato a Sicilia mari periculosoque distincta, in qua *est eodem nomine oppidum*'.

Ptolemy (2nd cent.) writes: μελιτη νησος, ἐν ἡ Μελιτη πολις

Stephanus Byzantinus (6th cent.) says: καὶ ἐστι πολις, ἀποικος καρχηδονιων. Hence the letter to the Melitaioi confirms this historical fact.

We have already said that the Maltese were once before not merely αὐτονομοι but ἐλευθεροι; and we have said too that this fact is known from a Greek inscription, which, according to Dr. Caruana is of the 6th century. If Dr. Caruana is right, then one can say that in the 6th century the πολις Melite had also a Greek form of government. For according to the inscription the Maltese had an επιεερτοτος two Αρχοντες a συγκλητος I am reproducing here the translation of this inscription by Mgr. Brès (Malta antica illustrata p. 195):

Per pubblica ospitalità e benevolenza verso Demetrio figlio di Diodoto Siracusano e i suoi discendenti, essendo sommo sacerdote Iceta figlio d'Iceta arconti Daereo e Crateto.

Parve espediente al Senato e popolo maltese giacchè Demetrio figlio di Diodoto Siracusano dimostrossi in ogni tempo nostro ben affetto e ai pub-

[42] Cf. Bres, *Malta antica illustrata*, Roma, 1816; Dr. Caruana Rapporto 1882, p.126 127.

[43] Abela, *Malta Illustrata*, 1647, p. 164.

blici nostri interessi ed a ciascun dei cittadini fu sovente cagione di vantaggio.

Con felice auspicio abbiamo deliberato che sia Demetrio figlio di Diodoto Siracusano un ospite e un benemerito del popolo maltese e i suoi discendenti a cagione di sua virtù e della benevolenza che mostrò mai sempre verso il nostro popolo e che questo decreto di ospitalità sia scritto in due tavole di bronzo a diasene una a Demetrio figlio di Diodoto Siracusano.

In the second letter to the Maltese Phalaris is alleged to have dismissed the representative of the Melitaioi and rejected their tokens of goodwill. Here again the facts cannot be confirmed or discounted.

By way of conclusion we have to say that the Letters of Phalaris are spurious being probably written by a Sophist as an exercise in rhetoric. Their author, however, has made use of certain documents and left some incidentally true facts.

The importance of these letters does not lie in the new light they throw on Maltese history, with one possible exception, but in confirming historical events well attested elsewhere. They confirm the fact that Malta was once independent at one stage of her ancient history and the fact that there was a πολις called Melita on our island. The new fact that emerges from these letters is that the ancient Maltese may have possibly forged ties of friendship with the powerful tyrant of Akragas. Finally, these letters show once more how close Malta was to Sicily in the economic, social and political fields.

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MALTA E L'UNITÀ MEDITERRANEA

di GIOVANNI ALLIATA DI MONTEREALE

IL 13 giugno del 1951 nei saloni del Grand Hotel, Villa Igiea di Palermo sotto la presidenza onoraria dell'onorevole Vittorio Emmanuele Orlando e quella effettiva di chi scrive, si concludevano i lavori del Primo Congresso Internazionale di Studi Mediterranei. Oltre 60 studiosi di 15 paesi approvavano all'unanimità la istituzione dell'Accademia Internazionale

L'Assemblea considerato che «alla fondamentale comunione dei motivi culturali e degli impulsi spirituali dei popoli mediterranei corrisponde una esigenza di più stretta unità» formulava il voto che l'Accademia del Mediterraneo dovesse porre fra i suoi compiti fondamentali quelli di «promuovere concrete intese fra gli studiosi dei paesi mediterranei, affinché nella loro attività culturale mantengano viva la coscienza della fonda mentale comunanza di civiltà in modo, da rendere sempre più cordiali, concordi nei fini ed efficienti i rapporti fra i popoli mediterranei».

Nel Maggio del 1953, nella stessa sede, si riuniva il Secondo Congresso Internazionale di Studi e Scambi Mediterranei, sotto gli auspici del Ministero degli Affari Esteri d'Italia, e con la partecipazione di delegazioni ufficiali dei seguenti paesi: Egitto, Francia, Giordania, Grecia, Iraq, Italia, Libano, Libia, San Marino, Santa Sede, Siria, Spagna, Turchia, e Yemen. Erano presenti osservatori dell'Arabia Saudita, Austria, Gran Bretagna, Germania, Iran, Pakistan, e Stati Uniti.

Al Convegno, organizzato dalla Regione Siciliana e dal Centro di Cooperazione Mediterranea, partecipavano oltre all'Accademia del Mediterraneo numerosi enti e istituti, tra i quali ricorderemo: l'Unesco, l'Istituto Internazionale per il Diritto Privato, l'Università di Atene, l'Accademia dei Lincei, il Pontificio Istituto di Studi Orientali, l'Istituto Storico Germanico e la Reale Accademia d'Egitto. Nella seduta plenaria di chiusura su proposta dei Delegati della Spagna e della Giordania, le Delegazioni ufficiali dei vari paesi tributavano all'Accademia del Mediterraneo un'indimenticabile omaggio approvando la seguente mozione: «Le 2me Congres International des Etufes et des Echanges Mediterraneennes, en consideration des mérites acquis par l'Accademie Internationale de la Méditerranée – qui dé x 1951 à levé a Palerme le drapeau ideal de la collaboration mediterraneenne – salue dans l'Accademie ñeme une des plus hautes expressions de la culture mediterraneenne».

Nel 1954 in Roma l'Accademia organizzava un Convegno Internazionale di Studi sul Mar Nero (Sala Capizucchi) ed un Convegno Internazionale di

Studi sui zapporti fra Cattolicesimo ed Islam; Nell'anno seguente a San Remo un Convegno Internazionale su «Arte, Cultura e Turismo nel Mediterraneo.» Nel 1956 la Camera dei Deputati Italiana approvava un'Ordine del Giorno, presentato dallo scrivente, auspicando «concrete intese fra i paesi mediterranei affinché attraverso trattati economici ed accordi politici venga rafforzata la cooperazione già in atto sul piano della cultura» ed auspicando altresi «l'intesa europea possa trovare in una più ampia intesa eurafricana la sua naturale evoluzione», e che vengono instaurati «vincoli operanti di solidarietà mediterranea fra le nazioni latine e quelle arabe».

Nel 1957, nella Sala della Protometeca in Campidoglio a Roma, si riuniva la quinta sessione ordinaria dell'Accademia, discutendo i temi «unità mediterranea – mercato comune ed eurafrica»; Nel corso dello stesso anno l'Accademia si riuniva nei Saloni dell'Unesco a Parigi, discutendo sul tema «Les grandes voyages qui relierent les mediterraneens d'orient et d'occident».

Nel 1958 l'Accademia poneva all'Ordine del Giorno dei suoi lavori il tema: «Formazione della civiltà delle nazioni rivierasche del bacino mediterraneo Eurafricano e di quelli d'America e d'Asia». Nel corso dello stesso anno nasceva in Mexico City, per iniziattiva di chi scrive, una Accademia del Mediterraneo americano che riunisce nel suo seno le più eminenti personalità della cultura messicana e dei paesi rivierasche del Mar dei Caraibi e del Mar delle Antille.

Nel 1959 nel Congresso di Erice vinivano dibattuti temi artistici ed economici e lanciato un manifesto agli artisti di tutto il mondo affinché «superino le limitate e decadenti forme che trovano nell'esistenzialismo la loro condanna» Nel 1962 a Roma, nella Biblioteca Vallicelliana ed a Castel Sant'Angelo, veniva celebrato il primo millenario del Sacro Romano Impero. Alla sessione di studi storici faceva seguito alcuni mesi dopo una sessione di studi economici in Palermo. Il Congresso nelle sue due sessioni ottenne l'alto patronato del Presidente della Repubblica Italiana.

Fin qui in una brevissima sintesi alcune notizie riguardanti l'Accademia del Mediterraneo, che annovera oggi circa 600 Accademici tra Onorari, Titolari, Ordinari e Corrispondenti, anche se più che un'universitas bonorum essa vuole essere – soltanto una universitas personarum. Fra le personalità che han fatto parte dell'Accademia del Mediterraneo ricorderemo Enrico de Nicola – Capo dello Stato e Presidente del Senato in Italia Alcide de Gasperi, Khalil Mardam Bey – Presidente dell'Accademia Reale di Damasco. Tra gli Accademici viventi ci limiteremo a ricordare: Gaetano Martino – gia Presidente dell'Assemblea Europea, Antonio de Oliviera Salazar – Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri del Portogallo, James Torres Bodet – gia Direttore Generale dell'Unesco, e Ministro de-

gli Esteri del Messico, Ugo Papi – Rettore dell'Università di Roma, Ishta Qureshi – gia Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione del Pakistan, Christos Stattef – gia Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri In Bulgaria, Mahmoud Muntasser – gia Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri in Libia, e Fra Ernesto Paterno Castello – gia Luogotenente di Gran Maestro del Sovrano Ordine di Malta.

Gli unanimi consensi che, nel mondo dell'alta cultura, l'Accademia, dalla sua fondazione ad oggi, ha sempre raccolto sono la dimostrazione la più evidente dell'attualità degli ideali mediterranei unitari da essa propugnati. Per alcuni anni l'Accademia ha dovuto marcare il passo in attesa che si rimarginassero le ferite ancora aperte delle guerre d'indipendenza condotte dal Marocco, della Tunisia, e dall'Algeria contro il colonialismo francese; ma oggi nel momento in cui tra la Francia e gli Stati Arabi del Mediterraneo occidentale si é instaurata una promettente collaborazione; oggi, che un eminente statista arabo, quale é Habib Bourghiba, invoca la normalizzazione dei rapporti fra Israele ed i Paesi della Lega Araba, il terreno é ormai sgombro dalle contingenti divisioni che esistevano tra alcuni popoli mediterranei fino ad alcuni anni or sono e l'Accademia del Mediterraneo é pronta a riprendere la sua attività nel campo degli alti studi storici e filosofici, economici e politici, per apportare un ulteriore contributo alla Grande Causa del progresso umano e della Pace fra i populi. Noi sogniamo sempre più vaste operanti intese tra le nazioni europee e quelle africane, tra le nazioni latine e quelle musulmane, e Malta é appunto il naturale punto d'incontro ove possono darsi convegno gli studiosi d'Africa e d'Europa, Latini e Musulmani, provenienti dall'Argentina e dall'Indonesia, dalla Scandinavia o dal Sud Africa.

Sono i grandi pensatori e filosofi mediterranei coloro ai quali il mondo deve la formazione della civiltà e delle cultura occidentale: soltanto una civiltà mediterranea, rinnovata e derivante dell'integrazione delle forze spirituali e delle disponabilità materiali dei paesi mediterranei, potrà fare ancora una volta prevalere nel mondo i valori dello spirito e della cultura posti al servizio dell'intera umanità. La posizione geografica di Malta, la sua trimillenaria storia, l'indipendenza recentemente acquistata, la sua antica e gloriosa università, la sua cultura latina, i suoi costumi anglosassoni, la sua lingua parlata che può essere facilmente intesa nel mondo arabo, sono i più valevoli titoli che l'Arcipelago può rivendicare onde divenire nel prossimo Futuro il 'crossway' della cultura mediterranea occidentale.

Verrà Malta fare valere questi suoi indiscutibili titoli? E questo il quesito che, nella mia qualità di Presidente dell'Accademia Internazionale del Mediterraneo, ho l'onore di porre oggi da queste colonne agli esponenti della Cultura Maltese.

RESURRECTION

I am going into the garden; come with me,
Come! Let us bear witness to the miracle
Of Resurrection. It is Spring again,
The time when the dead leave their graves,
Put off their crumbled, earth-soiled shrouds
To put on instead their finery again.
The cherry plum that was a criss-cross skeleton
Of bare wood is now a frosted dream;
Its many branches studded with gems of Alpine white
That are new blossoms piercing through hard wood
Followed by tiny leaves like emerald notches.
The orange and the peach trees, all fruit trees
Are waking from their Winter's frozen sleep.
This is the Resurrection of all the dead.
Some live, some die but all the dead awake.
The crocuses lie blasted by the wind,
But the grape hyacinths in alternate rows
Stand by them like blue turrets, amethysts,
Blowing their bugles loud for Eastertide.
The hard-baked crust of trodden soil is knifed
By the tall and pointed blades of straight gladioli
Red tulips that are chalices for the sun.
The anemones and montbretias join the choir
Of sweet ranunculi and fragrant hyacinths
Listen! Can you not hear? The shrouds are bursting.
The gaping soil is like a bleeding womb:
The hour of nature's childbirth, long travail.
Let us pick up a handful of green soil
And listen closely for the movement there.
A clod of soil carries a universe of life.
Let's offer it to God for a thanksgiving;
For out of it His bounty re-creates
Motion and Colour, Fragrance and gentle Poise.
This soil, red soil like human blood, is flesh,
A mother's yearning womb, the bursting foetus
Of lives unborn breaking their ligaments.
This is the day of Resurrection; we are moving

In God's laboratory, the chemistry of soil,
Resurrection day for trees, for grass and flesh,
For irises, daffodils and cherry plums
And fragrant orange trees, the flesh and bones
Of all the dead; for Lazarus, Donna Laura
And her lover Petrarch and his Canzoniere,
Donna Beatrice and the Vita Nova
Of her worshipper Dante Alighieri.
All flesh, all grass returns to dust,
But all dust returns to life.
As we say Amen to Life,
And say Amen to Death
Through the succession of Season and Years
We say Amen also to the Resurrection
Of all dead Grass and Flesh.

16th March, 1967.

J. AQUILINA

OUR NEW CONTRIBUTORS

Aquilina, J., *see* vol. II, No. 3.

Busuttil, Joseph, is Lecturer of Classics at the Royal University of Malta. Fr. Busuttil received his academic education first at the Royal University of Malta where he obtained his B.A.(Hons.) in 1950 and his Lic.D. in 1960 and then at King's College, University of London, where he took this Doctorate in Classics in 1964.

Busuttil, Salvino, *see* vol. III, No. 1

Curmi, G., *see* vol. II, No. 3.

Naouri, Issa I., Born 1918 (15 Kms from Amman) Jordan. Did his higher studies at the Latin Patriarchal Seminary of Jerusalem. Taught Arabic Language and Literature for about twenty years in various private schools on both banks of Jordan. Proprietor and Editor of *Al-Qalam Al-Jadid* (1952-1953). An employee of the Ministry of Education in Amman since 1954. Now Head of the Public Relations, Divisions and Secretary of the Arabisation and Translation Committee at the same Ministry. Author of twenty books of poetry, short stories, novels, biographies, literary criticism and school textbooks; has translated poetry, novels and short stories from Italian and English into Arabic. Lectured in Arabic, Italian and English on Arabic and Italian culture in Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Italy, Russia, Hungary, Tunis, Libya and Lebanon; gave a large number of radio talks from Jerusalem, Amman, Damascus, Beirut, Cairo, Kwait, London, Tunis, Tripoli, Benghazi, Rome, Voice of America, M.E.B. Station in Cyprus and Moscow. Represented Jordan at (a) The Arab Writers' Second Conference, in Syria, 1956; (b) The Arab Writers' Fourth Conference, in Kwait, 1958; (c) the International Conference on the contemporary Arabic Literature, in Rome, 1961; (d) The 31st Anniversary of 'Abu-Al-Qasem Ash-Shabbi', in Tunis, 1966; (e) The Third Congress for Arabic and Islamic Studies in Ravello (Italy), 1966; Was decorated three times by (a) The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1963; (b) The President of the Italian Republic, 1964; (c) The President of the Tunisian Republic, 1966.

Ryan, J.S., Sometime Senior Lecturer in English, University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales. Educated at universities of Otago, New Zealand, and Oxford. On faculty of Nottingham and New England. Supervisor in (Mediaeval) English Literature, Peterhouse, Cambridge, 1965. Member of the International Council for Onomastic Sciences, 1963-, and the International Council for Dialectology, 1965-. Author of an Icelandic Bibliography, 1958; articles on Old English religion; many papers on 19th and 20th century regional English. Had edited volumes of the minor writings of Dickens and Trollope, and published widely on the interactions of myth platonism and romance since Coleridge.