Chevalier Antonio Schembri
(1813 - 1872)
Father of Maltese Ornithology

by Joseph M. Attard

Antonio Schembri was born in Valetta on the 19th April, 1813 (1) of Gian Battista and Rosa Maria, née Monteverde, on the day when the Maltese brig 'San Nilo' departed from Marsamxett Harbour, leaving behind it a plague epidemic which raged for over a year and claimed nearly 3,000 victims. Following this epidemic Antonio's father was appointed Captain of the Quarantine Port where he made a name in this appointment both in Malta and abroad after a long career in the Venetian and Austrian Navy. (2) A brother of Antonio, Gian Battista was a lawyer, (3) A step-brother, another Gian Battista was the first professor of Midwifery in our University and is remembered for the first Caesarean operation to be performed on a woman living in Malta; (4) a step-sister Agnese was an active member of the Historical and Scientific Society (5) during the early part of this century and in her will she left a library for the teaching of music from which our children are still benefiting. This shows that Antonio and his brothers and sister were given a good and sound education.

At the age of 20 Antonio Schembri married Concetta, daughter of Francesco Zammitt of Floriana, a wealthy merchant known as 'Collo'. They had no children and this was perhaps a great tragedy for the Schembri family as well as another for us because all Schembri's letters and papers were either destroyed or lost. Only one book which used to belong to Schembri's vast library was traced, (6) These are either interred by Schembri or embodied with his stamp, but nothing personal could be found which could throw more light on his important connections both here and overseas. Fortunately, Schembri published quite a number of poems, books, lectures and studies on different subjects (7) most of which can be found in the Royal Malta Library. These were all written in Italian, as it was customary at that time to write in this language. An exhibition at this work has been set up by the Malta Ornithological Society at the Royal Malta Library to mark the first centenary of his death.

It is clear that Schembri was greatly influenced in his ornithological studies by Charles Bonaparte, Prince of Canino and Guy of Caprarola's brother Louis. After Charles Bonaparte returned to France from America where he published some important ornithological studies, he established himself in Italy and became prominent. In 1822 Schembri started his own section of the Società Reale della Fauna Italiana and published some of the only articles on this important work which form the
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was founded and besides encouraging the study of all medical aspects, also gave
special importance to the study of Natural History. (9) In 1840 Antonio
Schembri was accepted as an honorary member of the Societa Medica and
in 1844 this Society entrusted him with acting as secretary amongst forty
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Together with Capt. Swan of the 2nd Batt., 22nd Regiment, D., A. Com-
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In his contribution to the study of Maltese history, Schembri is also
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Besides these many activities Schembri was in 1849 appointed Consul
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Schembri protested strongly against this decision (25) and some of the local papers gave him strong backing whilst some others stood by the Governor’s decision. ‘Il Mediterraneo’ of the 23rd April 1856 wrote these ironic remarks, “We have no bias either for, or against Mr. Schembri as an individual. We will not even quarrel with him for having imitated Sir Robert Peel, and established free trade between our readers, completely alters our ideas of it to the

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So far we have seen in brief the varied and chequered career of Antonio Schembri without entering into great detail. Let us now give a quick glance at his earliest works which cover his studies on ornithology and entomology. For some time Schembri interested himself in the Maltese diptera of which he slowly built a fine collection. He donated part of it to the Museum of Naples from whence some of the specimens were afterwards moved and conserved in the Museum of Monaco. (27).

The collection which was kept by Schembri has disappeared, probably destroyed through decay and neglect. Writing in 1894 the Maltese naturalist Alfredo Caruana Gatto had this to say about early entomological collections. “We regret that we have no records of these collections which have so much valuable time and labour spent upon them, and this chiefly owing to the carelessness of those in whose charge some of our older ones, such as those of Mamo, Schembri and Giulia were placed and suffered them to decay and waste away.” (28) Although we have lost this collection, the

only note written by Schembri on the Hymenoptera has survived. It is called ‘Descrizioni d’un nuovi specie d’Insettoro Maltese, “Leucopis Costae” che si trova nel me di giugno e luglio in Malta.” This earliest known note on Maltese Entomology was sent by Schembri to Mons. Pierrot and after being translated into French, it was published in the Annales de la Société Entomologique de France. (29)

Schembri also built up a collection of stuffed birds some of which were prepared for him by Nicola Ardoino. This was mentioned by Hugh Strickland in his paper ‘Report on the progress and Present State of Ornithology’. (30) The latest information we find about this collection was given in 1933 when the Maltese Naturalist Giuseppe Despot wrote as follows about it: “Quella collezione di Oleri Schembri a San Giorgio a Mare, il rimanente della quale, fu venduta pochi anni fa.” (The part of Schembri’s collection at St. George’s Bay, was sold a few years ago). (31)

The greatest contribution of Schembri is beyond any doubt his three publications on Ornithology namely the “Catalogo Ortognitico del Gruppo di Malta”; the “Quadro Geographiche Ortognitico ossia Quadro Comparativo delle Ortognitico di Malta, Sicilia, Roma, Toscana, Liguria, Nizza e la Provincia di Gard”, and the “Vocabolario dei sinonimi Classici Dell’Ornitoligia Europea.” The “Catalogo Ortognitico” is the most important for us because it is the first work on the birds of Malta wherein Schembri describes 230 species of birds. This publication greatly helped later ornithologists who based their studies on this work and extended their knowledge on the birds of Malta on the foundations laid down by Schembri. In the inaugural lecture of the Society of Archaeology, History and Natural Sciences which took place on 6th January, 1856, Dr. Leith Adams spoke of this in these words, “The Avi-fauna, first illustrated by the able memoir of Mr. Antonio Schembri, aided by the Prince of Musignano, (32) has been since greatly extended through the almost exhaustive labour of Mr. Charles A. Wright, who with great accuracy has recorded upwards of 260 species…” Soon after the “Catalogo Ortognitico” was published, Hugh Strickland commented, “The Island of Malta possesses an able ornithologist in Sgr. Schembri, who has published a ‘Catalogo Ortognitico’, a highly useful volume… This forms almost the first work on zoology ever printed in the island of Malta and this shows that even in the most insulated localities an active naturalist will always find abundant occupation.”

Besides giving the status of our breeding species and those of the winter and summer residents, Schembri recorded many migratory birds, some of them rare visitors. To most of these birds, he gave a Maltese name and in the compilation of this Maltese nomenclature he collected some of the names from local game-sellers, bird-shooters and bird-trappers. It is interesting to note that although most contemporary ornithologists and even those coming much later, studied birds through the barrels of the gun, Schembri made his studies on his own observations either in the field or on the skins.
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or live birds which he acquired from shooters and trappers. He also recorded interesting information given to him by reliable persons like Dr. G.C. Grech Delicata, Dr. C. Pisani of the Gozo Hospital, and the taxidermist Baldassare Ellul. This is how he describes the robin, “In Valletta the robin is often seen on the chimney-tops and on the flag-poles of consular buildings, on which it perches to render more pleasant and beautiful the days of autumn and winter, from where one can hear its melodious song.” (34) On two captive birds he commented, “In July 1834, I had two cream-coloured coursers caught alive at Mosta which remained alive for some time. I fed them on raw meat, insects and bread soaked in water. They were domesticated in such a manner that when I approached them, they used to come running to me, expecting to be fed.” (34). Of a malmed black-headed gull he gave the following description, “I have one which was shot in the wing in December 1840. From this time till now, it is still with me alive.” (35).

In his description of the golden oriole, we find that after he examined the ovary of some females, he discovered that the eggs were in such an advanced state, that he came to the conclusion that these birds would have laid in three or four days' time. He therefore concluded that once this species is left unmolested by the shooters, it may breed in our climate. (36).

To understand Schembri’s attitude on the conservation of our sedentary and breeding species, one has to bring to mind that the protection movement in Europe had not yet started in 1843, but notwithstanding this, he stated, “Our sedentary and breeding species are also limited to very few species, because besides the many natural disadvantages one has to take into consideration the persecution of the many shooters that roam our countryside during all seasons.” (39). Schembri also gave the following message to future students of our birds, “I will also be pleased if this work of mine besides succeeding to be of some usefulness to the science of ornithology, will also serve to stimulate someone interested in this study, who can make it more complete and bring it up-to-date.” (39).

In his ornithological studies, Schembri made use of old as well as contemporary literature, amongst which he refers to that of C. Linnaeus, G. White, C.J. Temminck, Buffon J. Gould, L. Benoit, C. Ranzani, G. Cara, and above all C. Bonaparte. When he was attending the VII Congress of Italian Scientists in Naples Schembri met the Italian ornithologist, Filippo di Filippi, when the latter brought to his attention the work of H. Schegel by means of which Schembri brought his list of classical ornithological synonyms more up-to-date.

In his three ornithological publications, Schembri refers to the storm petrel “Hydrobates pelagicus” (then known as “Thalassidroma pelagica”) as a newly discovered species. Schembri found out that the coloration of the tail feathers of the Filfla birds were black with white at the base while the description by previous authorities was as a completely black tail. He even gave it a new name “Thalassidroma melitensis (Schembri).” (39)

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In 1843, Schembri also published the “Quadro Geografico-Onnitologico” which is a comparative study of the birds of Malta, Sicily, Rome, Tuscany, Liguria, Nice and the Department of Gard in France. In this work, he was inspired by the “Specchio Comparativo della Ornithologia di Roma e Fila­delfia” (37) and the “Geographical and Comparative List of the Birds of Europe and North America”, (1838) of Charles Bonaparte. This work of Schembri is perhaps one of the first known publications of this type which covered the ornithology of a number of different places in Southern Europe.

On the other hand, the “Vocabolario dei Sinonimi Classici” was written as a work of reference for the student of ornithology. At that time there was no standard scientific nomenclature and this was the cause of confusion in every branch of natural history. Not until much later did the creation of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature bring things to an accurate standard and any such arising problem to a quick and internationally recognised solution. In this work, Schembri collected all available scientific names given so far to each individual species, keeping as a basic nomenclature that used by Charles Bonaparte in his “Catalogo Metodo degli Uccelli Europei.” This compilation was then felt as a necessity as is seen in the comments of H. Strickland when he wrote about his undertaking in preparing “a complete Synonymy of all known species of birds with full references to all the works where they are figured or described.” “This undertaking”, he commented, “requires considerable labour and much careful comparison of specific character, as exhibited both in nature and in books but there is probably no department of natural history in which, from the multiplication of normal species and the wide dispersion of materials, such an analysis of the whole subject is more wanted than in ornithology.” (42).
or live birds which he acquired from shooters and trappers. He also recorded interesting information given to him by reliable persons like Dr. G.C. Grech Delicata, Dr. C. Pisani of the Gozo Hospital and the taxidermist Baldassare Ellul. This is how he describes the robin, "In Valletta the robin is often seen on the chimney-tops and on the flag-poles of consular buildings, on which it perches to render more pleasant and beautiful the days of autumn and winter, from where one can hear its melodious song." (34) On two captive birds he commented, "In July 1834, I had two cream-coloured coursers caught alive at Mosta which remained alive for some time. I fed them on raw meat, insects and bread soaked in water. They were domesticated in such a manner that when I approached them, they used to come running to me, expecting to be fed." (34) Of a malnourished black-headed gull he gave the following description, "I have one which was shot in the wing in December 1840. From this time till now, it is still with me alive." (35).

In his description of the golden oriole, we find that after he examined the ovary of some females, he discovered that the eggs were in such an advanced state, that he came to the conclusion that these birds would have laid in three or four days' time. He therefore concluded that once this species is left unmolested by the shooters, it may breed in our climate. (36).

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If today, the ornithological works of Schembri are regarded as things of the past, his contribution in relation to his time, is regarded beyond any doubt as a great effort in the progress of both Maltese and European ornithology.

After the last publication of the "Vocabulario" in 1846, Schembri apparently gave up ornithology and absorbed himself in his profession as a merchant (43), in his consular duties, in the many activities connected with different local societies and in his many publications covering various subjects. Probably the political agitation and the wars on the Italian Peninsula affected the connection with his naturalist friends on the Continent, especially when Charles Bonaparte had to leave Italy in 1849 as a consequence of the failure of the revolution in Venice and after he took an active part in politics and declared himself in favour of the independence of Italy.

After a very active life Antonio Schembri died on the 7th. December, 1872, in his home at No. 56 Merchant Street, Valletta. His death was announced in all local newspapers and journals by long and deserved appreciations. Charles Wright, a friend and colleague ornithologist of Schembri and editor of The Malta Times announced his death in this paper as follows, "...Indeed, many are the friends who mourn over his departure, and all lovers of natural science cannot but lament the loss they have sustained. As an author he was best known by a work on Ornithology which gained for him a European reputation. He was a member of several scientific Societies and for many years President of the Societa Economico-Agraria, for which he worked hard and well......" (44). The Corriere Mercantile Maltese described him in these terms, "The much lamented Chev. Antonio Schembri enjoyed amongst his other merits, the distinction of being the founder of Maltese Ornithology as evinced by competent authorities. Meriting to be specially remembered are his studies and works, all exhibiting a talent to patient and methodical research, in this branch of natural science." (45).

The body of Antonio Schembri was buried in the crypt of the parish church of Ghaxaq in a plain tomb, according to his wishes. His funeral was attended by many of his friends, members of the Societa Economico-Agraria, by all consuls representing foreign countries in Malta, by members of the Council of Government, the Clerk of the Council, a representative of the Naval Commander-in-Chief and by members of the Nobility and Judiciary. After a century of oblivion his activities, merits and contributions are being put again on paper and his name cut in marble. The Malta Ornithological Society has erected a marble plaque at Bosketto Gardens which was unveiled on the 14th., January, 1973, by H.E. Sir Anthony Mamo, Governor General of Malta and Patron of our Society. This inscription reads in Maltese:—
If today, the ornithological works of Schembri are regarded as things of the past, his contribution in relation to his time, is regarded beyond any doubt as a great effort in the progress of both Maltese and European ornithology.

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APPENDIX A

PUBLISHED WORKS BY ANTONIO SCHEMBRI

ORNITHOLOGY

Catalogo Ornitologico del Gruppo di Malta
Quadro Geografico-Ornitologico essia Quadro Comparativo
delle Ornitolgie di Malta, Sicilia, Roma, Toscana, Ligure
Nizza, e la Provincia di Gard.
Vocabolario dei Sinonimi Classici dell'Ornitologia Europea
(Estratto dai nuovi annali delle Scienze Naturali di Bologna)

ENTOMOLOGY

Descrizione d'una Nuova Specie d'Imenottero Maltese
'Leucopis costae' che si trova nel mese di giugno e
luglio in Malta tradotta in francese dal Sig. Pietro
pubblicato negli 'Annales de la Societé Entomologique

AGRICULTURE

Memoria sulla Coltivazione del Riso a Secco
Rendiconto dei Lavori Scientifico-Pratici fatti dalla
Societa Economico Agraria dal 12 aprile 1844 al
5 dicembre 1845
Calendario dell'Agricoltore per l'anno 1849
scritto dai Signori C. Camilleri, G. Gauci-Azzopardi,
G.C Grech Delicata P. Pullicino e A. Schembri
Detto — per l'anno 1850
Sulla Coltivazione della Sulla l'Erbu Bruca in Malta —
Pubblicata negli Atti della Reale Accademia dei
Georgofili di Firenze. voi XXX, 1852
Various Articles which appeared on the Gazzetta Agraria
Maltese under the initials A., S., A.S. or his full name
Sulla Coltivazione degli Asparagi

ECONOMICS

Sul Debito della Massa Frumentaria e Progetto Economico
per Esteringuarlo scritto e presentato al Governo di Sua
Maestà Britannica
Mr. J.M. Attard, President M.O.S. addressing the guests at the unveiling ceremony. Sitting in the front row (from left) The Hon. Minister of Commerce, Industry, Agriculture and Tourism, Mr. P. Xuereb; H.E. Sir A.J. Mamo, Governor General of Malta; Mr. Judge A. Montanaro Ganci; President of the Agrarian Society and Mr. O. Vella, Acting Director of Agriculture.

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Catalogo Ornitologico del Gruppo di Malta
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Vocabolario dei Sinonimi Classici dell'Ornitologia Europea
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Malta 1843
Malta 1843
Bologna 1846

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Descrizione d'una Nuova Specie di Insetto Maltese
"Leucopis costae" che si trova nel mese di giugno e luglio in Malta tradotta in francese dal Sig. Pierr et
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Florence 1852
Malta 1855
Malta 1855 - 1856
Malta 1852

ECONOMICS

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Malta 1851
Sul Debito della Massa Frumentaria (Supplemento)<br>Sui Contratti di Locazione e di Enfiteusi delle Terre<br>Posizione Geografica-Politica Commerciale del Gruppo<br>di Malta Avanti e Dopo l'anno 1870<br>Brevi Cenni Sulla Questione Monetari in Malta

EMIGRATION

Osservazioni Statistiche sulla Proposta Emigrazione<br>del Gruppo di Malta<br>Sulla Emigrazione<br>Osservazioni Critiche agli Articoli sulla Emigrazione del Gruppo<br>di Malta pubblicati nell'anno 1866 dal 'Malta Observer'<br>Considerazioni Generali sulle Emigrazioni per Ragione<br>Politiche etc.

SHIPPING

Osservazioni Statistiche sulle Pirogavi in Malta etc.<br>Primo, Secondo, Terzo e Quarto Trimestre degli Anni<br>1868 al 1866

CRITICAL STUDY

Le Istituzioni di Pubblica Beneficenza in Malta ed<br>i Giornali Maltesi

BIOGRAPHIES

Biografia del Principe di Canino<br>Biographie du Prince Charles Bonaparte, Prince de Canino etc.,<br>fils de Lucien; traduit de l'italien par Jules Paulet.<br>Beaune, Blendeau, Deprissieur Imprimeur<br>(Libraire 1844 in 8vo. Page 23).<br>Selva di Autori e Traduttori Maltesi

HISTORY

Il Memorabile Asedio di Malta nell'Anno 1565 descritto<br>da Guglielmo Fracott (sic) nella Storia del Regno di Filippo II<br>Re di Spagna

UNPUBLISHED REPORTS PREPARED FOR THE SOCIETÀ<br>ECONOMICO AGRARIA

Rapporto per indicare il modo di provvedere alla irrigazione<br>di giardini e ortaggi.<br>Rapporto sulla 'Bohemia Nivea'.

APPENDIX B

SOCIETIES, INSTITUTIONS, and COMMISSIONS in which<br>ANTONIO SCHEMBRI PARTICIPATED

MALTESE SOCIETIES

Societa Filologica Maltese — Active Member — 1840 — (18...?)<br>Società Medica d’Incoraggiamento di Malta — Honorary Member — 1840 — 1870<br>Società Economico-Agraria del Gruppo di Malta — Secretary — 1844 — 1855<br>President — 1855 — 1872<br>Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce — Committee Member — 1852 — 1857
Chamber of Commerce — Secretary — 1854 — 1855<br>Casino Maltese — Member — 1852 — 1872<br>Society of Archaeology, History and Natural Sciences — Committee Member<br>— 1866 — 1868<br>Società Gozzitana d’Incoraggiamento — Active and Honorary Member — 1871 — 1872<br>Società di S. Vincenzo di Paola — Member — (18...?)-1872.<br>Casino Maltese (1852 — 1872)

CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF FOREIGN INSTITUTIONS BY 1846

Gabinetto di Scienze Naturali di Siracusa.<br>Gabinetto di Scienze Naturali di Gibilterra.<br>Accademia Gioenia di Catania<br>Accademia di Scienze e Lettere di Palermo<br>Gabinetto de' Zelanti di Aci Reale<br>Reale Peloritana di Messina<br>Aspiranti Naturalisti di Napoli<br>Reale Accademia dei Georgofili di Firenze<br>National Institute of Washington
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Reale Peloritana di Messina  
Aspiranti Naturalisti di Napoli  
Reale Accademia dei Georgofili di Firenze  
National Institute of Washington
GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONS

Board for Visitors of Corradino Prison — Member — 1854 - 1857
Malta Public Library Committee — Member — 1855 - 1856
Commission of Charity — Member — 1856 - 1872
Consuls for the Commercial Courts — Member — 1857 - 1863

N.B. A. Schembri served also on many sub-committees of the 'Societa' Economico — Agraria

REFERENCES + NOTES

(1) Records of Births, St. Dominic's Parish, Valletta., Register (1811 — 1817) p. 169.
(3) Records of Deaths, St. Dominic's Parish, Valletta; Register (1859 — 1867) entry of 22nd October, 1860.
(4) Dr. P. Cassar, op. cit., p. 538.
(6) The "Iconografia della Fauna Italiana" by Charles Bonaparte is in the possession of Dr. A. Cachia Zammit M.D. M.P. who is related to A. Schembri's wife.
(7) Vide Appendix A.
(8) Archivum Melitense, Vol. VIII, No. 4, August 1928, p. 128.
(10) Gazetta Agraria Maltese, Anno I, 1st May, 1855, No. 2, p. 17.
(11) Gazetta Agraria Maltese, Anno I, 2nd July 1855, Suppl. al No. 3, p. 76.
(12) Antonio's father served from 1859 to 1861 as President of the Chamber of Commerce.
(13) Malta Blue Books, 1852 — 1872. Section "Boards", vide Appendix B.
(14) Manuscript No. 588 Royal Malta Library., Register of Proceedings of Monthly and General Meetings of the Society of Archaeological, Historical and Natural Sciences".
(15) This work was translated into Maltese by Ganni Vassallo and printed in 1903 by order of the Governor.
(16) Vide Appendix B.
(17) Prince Charles Bonaparte was the President of the Italian Scientists and he presided over the VII Congress in Naples.
(18) Vide Appendix A.
(19) The appointment was signed by King Leopold I on 1st July 1849; approved by Queen Victoria and the British Foreign Minister, Lord Palmerston on 8th November, 1849 and published in the Malta Government Gazette on 14th December, 1849.
(20) The Malta Times — 14th December, 1872.
(21) The Malta Government Gazette, 14th April, 1856.
(23) The Oath taken by Antonio Schembri on his appointment as consul for Belgium was the following:
"I, Antonio Schembri swear to fulfil with fidelity and in all its parts the commission that has been granted to me according to the instructions and the orders that have been given me and shall be given to me from time to time and to avail with all my power to bring forward the interests of Navigation and Belgian Commerce.
(25) Il Portafoglio Maltese, 26th April, 1856., p. 3.
(26) Schembri owned Comino Island on emphytueic basis (vide Schembri's will by Notary Giuseppe Metropoli — 4th July 1872, Notarial Archives, Reg. No. 64/943) where he kept a farm and carried out many agricultural experiments which he then reported upon to the Societa Economica Agraria.
(29) Vide Appendix A.
(31) G. Despott., "Ornitologia delle Isole Maltesi." Rivista Italiana dell'Ornitologia; Anno II; serie II 1932, Milano p. 9.
(32) Charles Bonaparte, besides being the Prince of Canino was also the Prince of Musignano.
(33) Cat. Ornlt. del Gruppo di Malta, — Malta 1843 p. 43.
(34) Ibid. p. 87.
(35) Ibid. p. 124.
(36) Ibid. p. 34.
(37) Ibid. p. 8.
(38) Ibid. p. 8.
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Board for Visitors of Corradino Prison — Member — 1854 - 1857
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(10) Gazetta Agraria Maltese., Anno I, 1st May, 1855, No. 2, p. 17
(11) Gazetta Agraria Maltese., Anno I, 2nd July 1855., Suppl. a No. 3., p. 78
(12) Antonio’s father served from 1859 to 1861 as President of the Chamber of Commerce.
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(15) This work was translated into Maltese by Ganni Vassallo and printed in 1903 by order of the Governor.
(16) Vide Appendix B.
(17) Prince Charles Bonaparte was the President of the Italian Scientists and he presided over the VII Congress in Naples.
(18) Vide Appendix A.
(19) The appointment was signed by King Leopold I on 1st July 1849;

approved by Queen Victoria and the British Foreign Minister, Lord Palmerston on 8th November, 1849 and published in the Malta Government Gazette on 14th December, 1849.
(20) The Malta Times — 14th December, 1872.
(21) The Malta Government Gazette, 14th April, 1856
(22) Gazetta Agraria Maltese., Anno I, 18th July, 1855., No. 4., p. 202
(23) The Oath taken by Antonio Schembri on his appointment as consul for Belgium, was the following:—
I, Antonio Schembri swear to fulfill with fidelity and in all its parts the commission has been granted to me according to the instructions and the orders that have been given me and shall be given to me from time to time and to avail with all my power to bring forward the interests of Navigation and Belgian Commerce.
(25) Il Portafoglio Maltese, 26th April, 1856., p. 3.
(26) Schembri owned Comino Island on emphytieptic basis (vide Schembri’s will by Notary Giuseppe Metropol, — 4th July 1872, Notarial Archives, Reg. No. 64/943) where he kept a farm and carried out many agricultural experiments which he then reported upon to the Societa Economica Agraria.
(29) Vide Appendix A.
(30) 'Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science,' London 1844.
(32) Charles Bonaparte, besides being the Prince of Canino was also the Prince of Musignano.
(33) Cat. Orn. del Gruppo di Malta, — Malta 1843 p. 43.
(34) Ibid. p. 87.
(35) Ibid. p. 124.
(36) Ibid. p. 34.
(37) Ibid. p. 8.
(38) Ibid. p. 8.
(39) Cat. Orn. pp. 117, 118, 119., Vocabolario....., p. 491
Quadro ........., p. 27
(43) Between 1850 and 1854, Antonio's father together with other partners built up a fleet of cargo sailing vessels:— the barques "Schembri"—260 tonnage, "Osiris"—425 tonnage, "Castor"—265 tonnage, "Saint John"—545 tonnage.
(44) The Malta Times., 14th December, 1872.
(45) Il Corriere Mercantile Maltese., 11th December, 1872.

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BIRD PRESERVATION

The idea of an international organisation for the protection of birds originated from Dr. T. Gilbert Pearson, President of the National Association of Audubon Societies, U.S.A. In 1922 he made an extensive tour of Europe, met many ornithologists and spoke at meetings of national societies for the protection of birds in various countries. During the course of his visit he found that little was known of bird protection in America, and indeed bird protectors in Europe had little knowledge of what was going on in other countries. Dr. Pearson summed up the situation as follows: "How many people in the United States and Canada know what the Germans or the Dutch or the Japanese are doing to save their birds; or what methods they are employing in the undertakings? Surely there is much we can learn from each other. Why not effect an international organisation which, among other things, will further stimulate interest in bird protection by the interchange of publications and by occasional conventions where representatives of different countries can meet in council? Also there are a number of problems that are distinctly international such as oil pollution of the high seas and the export and import of birds or their feathers."

Dr. Pearson concluded his tour in England and at midday on June 22nd 1922 he invited a group of people to meet in London for the purpose of discussing the advisability of forming an international Committee for the Protection of Wild Birds. Those present included Viscount Grey of Fallodon and Dr. Percy Lowe of Great Britain, Dr. P.G. van Tienhoven and Dr. A. Hurdet of Holland and Jean Delacour from France. As a result of this meeting, the International Committee for Bird Preservation was founded with Dr. Pearson as President.

The main framework and strength of the ICBP is its National Sections which act as a focus for national opinion and information and as a channel for cooperation in international matters. The constitution of the section varies a good deal, some of them being composed of the full number of twelve organisations allowed under the Bye-laws and including scientific, sporting, agricultural and other interests, in addition to conservationists; in some there are only a few, or even one, organisation. Some National Sections are officially supported by their Governments but the ICBP as a whole is a non-governmental and entirely independent body.

For a number of years the organisation of the work of the Committee and the funds to carry this out were mainly undertaken by the President, Dr. Gilbert Pearson, but the activities grew so rapidly, especially in Europe,