

Journal of
THE MALTA PHILATELIC SOCIETY

THE MEDICAL HISTORY OF MALTA
Carmel Lino Cutajar

The **JB** Catalogue of Malta Stamps and Postal History

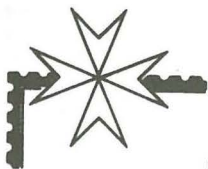


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**JOURNAL OF THE
MALTA PHILATELIC SOCIETY**

THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE IN MALTA

A Philatelic Ramble

Prof. Carmel Lino Cutajar

**Former Director and Head of the Department of Surgery
St. Luke's Hospital and Malta Medical School**

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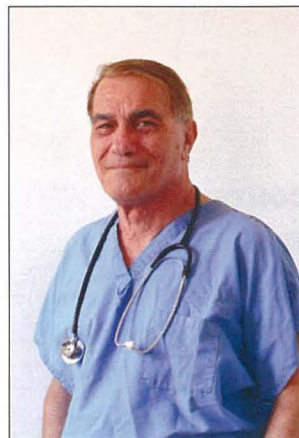
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Carmel (Lino) Cutajar



He graduated as a medical doctor from the University of Malta in 1964, following which he proceeded to London to continue his training in surgery which included two years of full time research in vascular surgery and urology. He was admitted to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (FRCS) in 1968 and of England (1971) following which he returned to Malta to take a position in the department of surgery at St. Luke's Hospital.

In 1977, in the wake of the ongoing medico-political turmoil, he left Malta with his family to start a new assignment as a consultant specialist in urology in an American hospital group in Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi. In 1984 he was appointed consultant surgeon and urologist at St. Luke's Hospital Malta and was entrusted with the opening of the first dedicated urology specialty in that hospital. In 1991 he became Director of Surgery and Professor and Head of the academic department of Surgery at the medical school. In this capacity he was pivotal in the advancement of surgery and its specialties. He has been very active in the European surgical scene occupying long-term positions on the boards of the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer, the European Board of Urology and the European Society of Surgery of which he was a founder member and its President in 2005.

Professor Cutajar is also very active in the local social scene. He has been President of the Malta Red Cross Society, Rotary Club Malta and the Catenian Association and is a Knight of the Order of St John.

His hobbies include reading, listening to classical music and philately, focusing particularly on the history of art and that of medicine. He has lectured and written on the medical history of Malta which he has also reproduced in a philatelic format.

Chev. Dr. A. Bonnici MD, MA(Melit) FRPSL, KM, UOM
President & Journal Editor

The Medical History of Malta

Introduction

This work is based on a lecture on the medical history of Malta which I gave earlier this year (2016) at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta. When Dr. Alfred Bonnici asked me to contribute an article on this subject, with a philatelic format, to be published in the Journal of the Malta Philatelic Society of which he is President, and which this year is celebrating its 50th anniversary, I felt honoured to do so, but also rather concerned whether I would find enough philatelic material to illustrate this work. However when I browsed through my vast collection of stamps relating to the history of medicine in general (which has been my hobby for many years) I was pleasantly surprised how much excellent medical philatelic material has been offered by the local Malta Post. Most of these stamps are of the highest visual and artistic quality which I felt would enhance this article. Where no philatelic material was available I have used relevant historical illustrations.

The recorded history of medicine in the Maltese islands is essentially tied to the advent of the Order of St John of Jerusalem during whose tenure the practice of medicine reached great heights. Before then there are few or no records of the health status of the local population. And yet there were hundreds of people living on these islands. I have ventured some theories as to what could have been the medical status in those distant times. I have also emphasised that the practice of medicine in the Maltese islands cannot be considered parochially but in the ambit of a much wider European influence and I have given some examples to illustrate this fact.

Stamp collecting is educational like no other hobby. It teaches geography, history, art and graphics, among others. It is therapy for everyone – old and young. It is a pity that our young people are so absorbed by electronic devices that this hobby, like the reading of books, has suffered considerably. However there is still hope and stamp collecting still has more adherents than any other pastime hobby. One need not necessarily be a philatelic specialist although this is in itself a highly challenging hobby. There are hundreds of themes one can focus on, ranging from birds and butterflies to outer space. Hopefully this contribution on the medical history of Malta might stimulate others to start their own thematic collection.

Carmel Lino Cutajar

(the stamp references refer to the "J.B. Catalogue of Malta Stamps and Postal History" published by the Sliema Stamp shop).

THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE IN MALTA

Situated in the middle of the Mediterranean sea, 100 Km south of Sicily, Malta has inherited diverse cultures, mainly from mainland Europe including those of medicine and health,



Primitive and Ancient Medicine

Although the Maltese islands have been inhabited for thousands of years there is no written documentation about primitive medicine except perhaps for circumstantial evidence from ancient archeological remains.

The ancient temples (Hagar Qim, Ggantija, the Hypogeum and others) must have been centres of worship, but could also have functioned as centres of healing where priests interpreted the dreams of the faithful and managed their ailments accordingly.



Ancient temples. L/R Tarxien (1967, JB 371), Ggantija (1983, JB 679), Mgar (1991, JB 862)

Often the only way to have the possibility of a cure was through belief in the power of the oracle and the interpretation of dreams. This may have been the motive behind the iconic neolithic Temple figure: **'The Sleeping Lady'**, an artistic masterpiece found in the Hal Salfieni temple. It has been suggested that she may represent the rite of incubation, when a worshiper sleeps in a sanctuary in the hope of receiving a cure by divine intervention.

Another iconic figure is the remarkable **'Fat Lady'** found in the Hagar Qim temple. Several interpretations have been suggested: she may be the Goddess of Fertility or perhaps just representing genetic obesity. Possibly she may represent 'Mother Earth' worshiped by the faithful who also sought cure for their ailments.

Iconic Neolithic figures

'Sleeping Lady'
(1965, JB 310);



'Fat Lady' (1974, JB 497)

ROMAN PERIOD

No scientific evidence is available for the hundreds of years that Malta was under Phoenician and Roman rule. The Romans, who ruled Malta from 218 BC to 535 AD, owed much of their medicine to the Greeks. The dominant figure was the Greek Galen who settled in Rome and whose authority on medical treatment remained entrenched for two thousand years.

The first medical doctor, in Roman times, who is known to have visited Malta was the evangelist St Luke, author of the third Gospel and the Act of the Apostles, who in AD 60 was shipwrecked with St. Paul in Malta. He described at least two conditions on the islands: snake bites and dysentery.

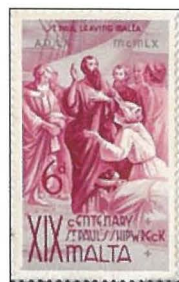
St. Paul himself was not a doctor but is reputed to have caused several miraculous healing sessions in the three months he was stranded on the island. Such was his reputation that people sought to obtain powdered rock from the cave he lived in at Rabat. This magico-therapeutic powdered rock was referred to as “*Terra Sigillata Melitensis*” and is known to have been extensively used in folk medicine for centuries.



*Malta: Roman remains 1965
JB 312*



*St. Luke with St. Luke's Hospital in the background.
1964. JB 299*



*St. Paul preaching outside his grotto in Rabat. 1960.
JB 277*

ARAB RULE

The Arabs ruled Malta in the Middle Ages, often referred to as the “Dark Ages”. Maybe this epoch was “dark” for Western culture but this was a golden era for Muslim heritage, driven by men of culture and invention in various fields.

It is therefore strange that there are no records of how medicine was practiced in Malta during the 250 years of Arab governance. Most likely it followed the same path as that of the Western

Caliphate based in Cordoba in Spain.

Before the arrival of the Order of St John in Malta the main hospital was Santo Spirito in Rabat which was opened in 1433. It remained operative as a hospital for four centuries. It was closed in 1967 to accommodate the National Archive Museum.



Santo Spirito Hospital

ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM

The most notable impact on Maltese medical history occurred in the 16th century when the islands were occupied by the knights of the Order of St. John in 1530.

The Order, which had originated at the time of the Crusades was primarily a hospitaller society but eventually assumed a militant role in the defense of Christendom against the powerful Ottoman Empire.

The Order defended the islands during the momentous Great Siege of 1565, which lasted three gruesome months, against the overwhelming forces of the Ottomans of Suleiman the Magnificent.

After the siege the Knights decided to build a new fortified city, Valletta, named after their heroic Grandmaster, Jean de Vallette.

One of the earliest buildings of the new city was a new hospital, known as the *Sacra Infermeria*, which would be a focus of the highest medical practice for the next 250 years.



Military Order of Malta. 1999. JB 1049-52. 6c. Grandmaster L'Isle Adam entering Mdina in 1530 to formally take possession for the Order of St. John. **16c.** Grandmaster De Vallette in the Great siege of 1565 in which he successfully defended the island against the invading Turkish armada of Suleiman the Magnificent.

SACRA INFERMERIA

The *Sacra Infermeria*, one of the earliest buildings of the new city Valletta, in time became one of the finest hospitals in Europe and raised the profile of Maltese medical care to the highest peak of European health care. It became an established centre for the removal of eye cataracts and urinary bladder stones. People came from abroad to be treated or to be trained in these specialties. There were separate wards for medical and surgical patients. It had a bed complement of some 560 beds which could be increased in an emergency. The layout was planned to accommodate patients with different needs.

Unlike most other hospitals in Europe each patient had his own bed and was served by the Knights with silver plate to ensure hygiene. The Grand Master himself often took his turn to serve the patients, "*our lords the sick*".



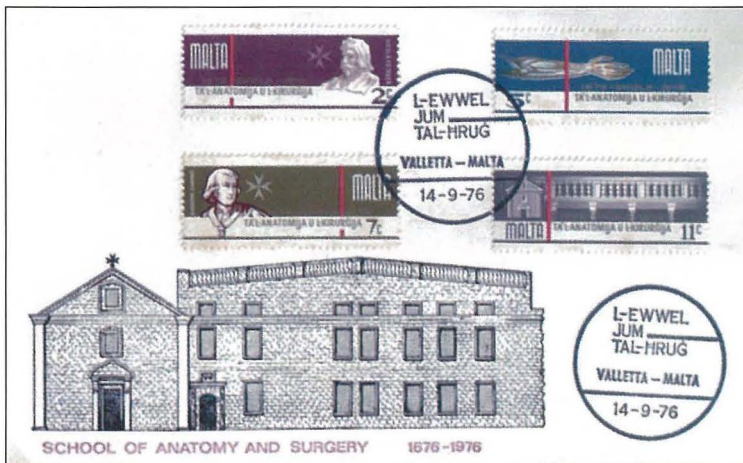
*Sacra Infermeria Malta 1964.
JB 300*



*Grandmaster Cottonner
administering the sick. Malta
1964. JB 298.*

SCHOOL OF ANATOMY AND SURGERY (1676)

In 1676 Grandmaster Nicholas Cottonner introduced formal medical education by setting up a School of Anatomy and Surgery which further contributed to raise the medical profile of the island and is considered the foundation of the present Maltese Medical School. Dr. Fra Giuseppe Zammit was the first director.



*300 anniversary
School of Anatomy
and Surgery. Malta
1976. JB 539-542.
(2c) Grandmaster
Cottonner. (7c)
Dr. Fra Giuseppe
Zammit (first
director). (11c)
Sacra Infermeria.
(5c) Human
anatomy.*

COLLEGIUM MELITENSE & UNIVERSITY (1769)

On 22nd November 1769 Grandmaster Pinto formally established a University within the *Collegium Melitense*, originally founded by the Jesuits in 1592 before their expulsion from Malta.



G.M. Pinto. Malta 1969.

COLLEGIO MEDICO (1771)

One of the first faculties to be established in the new university was the *Collegio Medico* on 25 May 1771 with the celebrated surgeon Michelangelo Grima as the Principe dell'Accademia as well as Professor of Anatomy and Surgery.



JB 540, 1976



MALTESE MEDICAL HOSPITALLER PIONEERS

FRA DR. GIUSEPPE ZAMMIT

Priest, Physician and Knight. The first teacher and director of the new school of Anatomy and Surgery set up by G.M. Nicholas Cottoner in 1676.



*Fra Giuseppe Zammit. Malta
1976, JB 541*

GABRIELE HENIN (1696-1754)

Considered to be the **“Father of Anatomy”** in Malta. Born in Valletta he was sent to Florence by the Order to complete his studies. Appointed to the chair of Anatomy and Surgery at the Sacra Infermeria in 1724. He also practiced surgery being a very adept ophthalmic surgeon, as well as removal of bladder stones and at trepanning the skull.

*Gabriele Henin. Copy of painting by Antoine Favray
(Museum of fine Arts, Malta)*

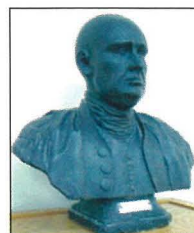


MICHEL ANGELO GRIMA (1731-1798)

A towering luminary in the history of Maltese surgery.

Born in Valletta, he studied at the Sacra Infermeria and abroad: Pisa, Florence and Paris. He joined the French army and specialised in war trauma. He was appointed **Chief Surgeon at the Sacra Infermeria** by G. M. Pinto in 1763 and Principe dell'Accademia dei Medici.

He wrote extensively on human anatomy and surgery. His fame spread throughout Europe particularly in the field of trauma and the removal of urinary bladder stones.



*Michel Angelo
Grima*

GIUSEPPE BARTH (1745-1818)

Born in Valletta he studied anatomy and surgery at the Sacra Infermeria under Michel Angelo Grima. He continued his studies in Rome where he specialised in ophthalmology. Eventually he arrived in Vienna where he quickly came to favour in the court of Empress Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II. In 1773 he was appointed the **first ever Professor of Anatomy and Ophthalmology at the Vienna Medical School** and Imperial Councillor and Oculist to His Majesty. He taught extensively and opened an anatomical museum and library. He never returned to Malta and died in Vienna in 1818.



*Giuseppe Barth
Malta 1974, JB
493*

THE LAZARETTO AND MAIL DISINFECTION

By the early 16th century the growth in trade in Malta brought a regular risk from contagious diseases from North Africa and the East. Sanitary regulations were introduced in 1524.

In 1728 a new quarantine hospital, the Lazaretto, was opened for the accommodation of incoming travellers until they were certified free of disease, usually after a month's sojourn there. Many writers have recorded their experience in this setting, among them the 19th century English novelist William Thackeray.

Moreover letters were disinfected with the lazaretto's red wax seal. Disinfection of letters continued during various pandemics until 1911 and again in 1929 during a plague epidemic in Tunis



*William Thackeray with
Lazaretto in background.
Malta 1990, JB 830*



1843. Letter from Alexandria to Malta where it was disinfected. Note the parallel disinfection slits and the black circle "Purife Au Lazarette Malte".

MEDICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES.

The latter part of the 19th century and early 20th century, during the British occupation of the islands, coincided with exciting developments in European medicine and health care which would impact on the local medical scene.

Spread of infections was always a cause of concern for the health authorities in Malta which was an important port of call. Despite several precautions, including quarantine at the Lazaretto, many epidemics are recorded in the 19th century: the plague (1813), smallpox (1830), cholera (1837 and again in 1850) and diphtheria (1859). Enteritis, tuberculosis, leprosy and venereal disease were rampant.

Considerable progress was being made at this time to identify the cause of many infectious diseases. Many brilliant medical scientists contributed to the elucidation of the cause and spread of infectious diseases. Many were the recipients of the early Nobel Prize. Maltese medicine benefitted greatly from these discoveries.

Pioneers in the fight against infectious diseases.



ROBERT KOCH German. Discovered the microbe causing tuberculosis. Nobel Prize 1905



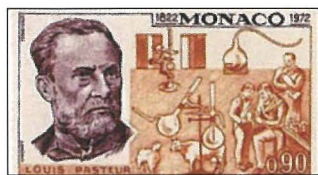
SIR RONALD ROSS (right). British. Showed that malaria is transmitted by the *Anopheles* mosquito. Nobel Prize 1902



GERHARD HANSEN. Belgian. In 1873 he discovered the microbe causing leprosy



DAVID BRUCE 1887 discovered the microbe and **TEMI ZAMMIT** (Maltese) 1905 the mode of transmission of brucellosis



LOUIS PASTEUR. French. Initiated the "Germ Theory" of disease. He developed a novel technique of sterilization ('Pasteurisation').



IGNAZ SEMMELWEISS. Hungarian. Pioneered the control of puerperal sepsis.



JOSEPH LISTER. British. Promoted carbolic antiseptics in surgery

SIR THEMISTOCLES ('TEMI') ZAMMIT

(1864 – 1935)



Temi Zammit has a special niche in the history of local and international medicine for his work on brucellosis (also known as ‘undulant’ or ‘Malta’ or ‘Mediterranean’ fever) which was rampant in Malta and other Mediterranean countries. It was the cause of considerable morbidity and mortality among the local population and more significantly the hundreds of non-immune British soldiers stationed on the island.

Following on the work of **David Bruce** who discovered the causative microbe of the disease (named after him) Zammit successfully demonstrated the carrier of these microbes as being the ubiquitous goat. The disease was transmitted by drinking infected goats’ milk. With the advent of pasteurisation of milk the disease has virtually disappeared from the Maltese islands.

His contribution to medicine would alone have been enough to immortalise Temi Zammit as a scientist but he also made a big name for himself as an archaeologist, linguist and writer of Maltese.



1915: MALTA TURNS INTO THE “NURSE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN”



In April 1915, thousands of young men of the Allied Forces stormed the beaches of the Gallipoli peninsula. The battle, known as the GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN, was a disaster for the Allies who suffered huge casualties. Thousands of troops were brought to Malta for treatment and accommodated in the *Sacra Infermeria* and various other hospitals, some of which are shown in the commemorative issue below. For this reason the island earned the nickname:

“NURSE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN”



*MALTA POST 2014.
Commemorative
issue 'Nurse of the
Mediterranean' showing
hospitals which
accommodated thousands
of wounded soldiers: Bighi
Hospital (€0.10), Floriana
Hospital (€0.59); Hospital
ship HMHS Rewa (€2.00).
Inset: Sacra Infermeria,
Malta 1964.*

Medical Developments after the Second World War

During the Second World War the medical services of the Maltese islands were very stretched and primarily geared to treating war casualties. The main public hospital was the Central Hospital in Floriana with 253 bed capacity. With the cessation of hostilities there was a new organisational impetus to upgrade the medical facilities. St. Luke's Hospital, whose foundation stone had been laid in 1930, was now opened as a fully functional hospital. The Central hospital was closed in 1954 and was made the headquarters of the Malta Police Force, but Bighi Hospital remained operative till 1970 as a naval and military hospital. A paediatric hospital (Karen Grech) was opened in the grounds of St. Luke's Hospital. The King George V Hospital passed into the hands of the local government and renamed Sir Paul Boffa Hospital, catering mainly for cancer cases and dermatology. A General Hospital was also opened in Gozo. Mental health patients were accommodated at Mount Carmel Hospital and the elderly at St. Vincent de Paule.



Central Hospital, Floriana



St Luke's Hospital; Guardamangia

A number of private hospitals were also opened, namely St. Catherine, Zammit Clap (Blue Sisters) and St. Philip hospital, all of which subsequently closed, while St. James Hospital and Da Vinci Hospital are still functioning. A number of other clinics are also operative.

The medical services were coordinated by the Department of Health which has a long and proud history of management. The hospital services expanded both in the medical field and especially in the surgical sphere. Sub-specialities were introduced, lead by an excellent team of medical practitioners, mostly trained in the U.K. Private Practice also progressed and organised on the most modern and accepted medical norms. Unfortunately this momentum was arrested during a negative decade (1977-87) when, due to a bitter and controversial medico-political confrontation between the Government and the doctors, the vast majority of local specialists left country. Most of them returned with a change of government in 1987.

CONTEMPORARY MEDICINE

At the turn of the century Maltese medicine was well placed to face the developments which were occurring in all aspects of medicine. Both general medicine and surgery had expanded with the development of many subspecialties, including, among others, cardio-vascular, organ transplantation and minimally invasive and laparoscopic surgery. Medical practitioners continue to be very well qualified and have contributed immensely to the upholding of excellent standards in the Maltese medical scenario. A state-of-the-art hospital, the *Mater Dei Hospital*, was opened in 2007 and the *Sir Anthony Mamo Oncology Centre* in 2014. The hospital caters for advanced procedures including intensive care.

The Medical School has continued to progress. Much of the specialist training, which formerly had to be undertaken abroad, can now be carried out locally. Many foreign students are coming to be trained in Malta. However locally trained physicians still feel the need to expand their horizons by spending time training in advanced foreign centres. Research is being encouraged. Comparable advances have been made in the ancillary specialities like nursing, pharmacy, laboratory, radiology and other departments.



Mater Dei Hospital and Sir Anthony Mamo Oncology Centre, Malta

MALTESE OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

Malta has had a number of internationally renowned ophthalmologists. Three have been honoured on stamps.

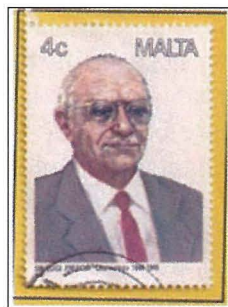
GIUSEPPE BARTH (1745 – 1818)

He studied anatomy and surgery at the *Sacra Infermeria*. He specialised in ophthalmology in Rome and proceeded to Vienna where he was appointed court ophthalmologist at the Imperial Court of Empress Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II. He was appointed as the first Professor of Ophthalmology in the Vienna Medical School.



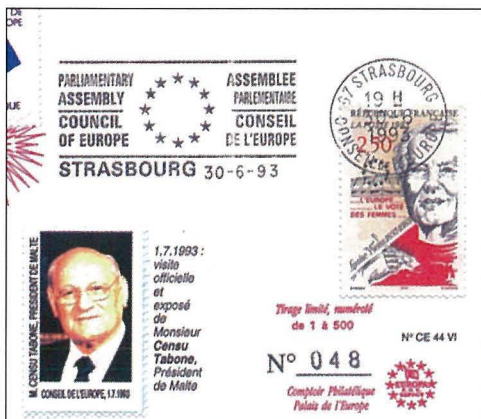
SIR LUIGI PREZIOSI (1888 – 1965)

He graduated in medicine in 1910. He specialised in ophthalmology in England where he obtained a diploma from Oxford in 1920. He became known internationally for his work in the treatment of glaucoma. In 1924 he was appointed Professor of Ophthalmology at the Royal University of Malta. He was also involved in local politics.



VINCENT (CENSU) TABONE (1913–2012)

He was born in Victoria, Gozo. Qualified MD in 1937. He specialised in ophthalmology in U.K. where he obtained specialist diplomas from Oxford and the Royal College of Surgeons of England. He made great contributions to the treatment of trachoma both locally and as a consultant to WHO. In 1954 he formed the Medical Officers Union. He had a long career in politics and was eventually honoured by elevation to President of Malta. He was the first recipient of the Gold Medal of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh for life long achievements.



DENTISTRY IN THE MALTESE ISLANDS

Malta can boast of a highly professional dentistry service.

The **Dental Association of Malta** was founded in 1944 with **Prof. E. Lapira** as its first president until 1961. It celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1994 with a commemorative philatelic issue.

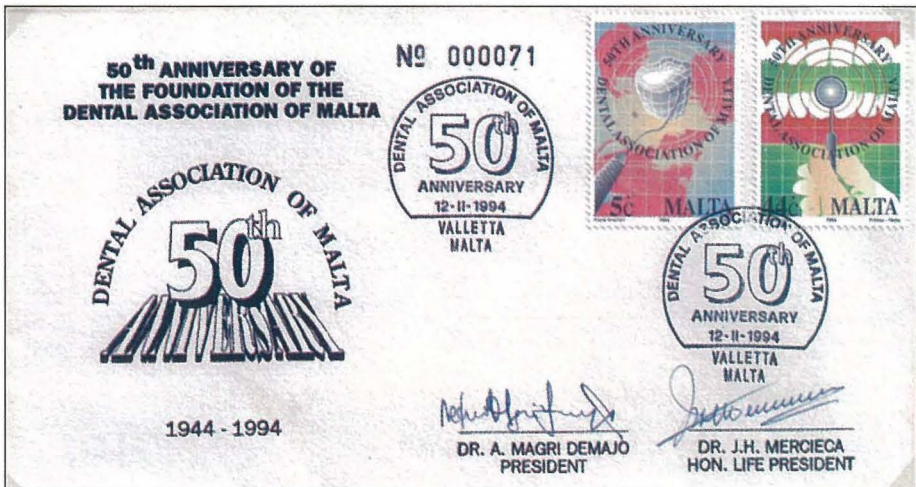


*Prof Egidio Lapira
Malta 2005. JB 1388*



*Dr. John Mercieca (1912-2003)
President Malta Dental &
Philatelic Societies*

In 1961 **Dr. John Mercieca** was elected president and remained in this office and as Honorary Life President until his demise in 2003. He was also a dedicated philatelist and a Founder Member of the Malta Philatelic Society (1966) of which he was President between 1972-2003.



50th anniversary of the Dental Association of Malta (1994). Dr. John Mercieca (signature) was a life- long President of both the Dental and Philatelic Societies of Malta

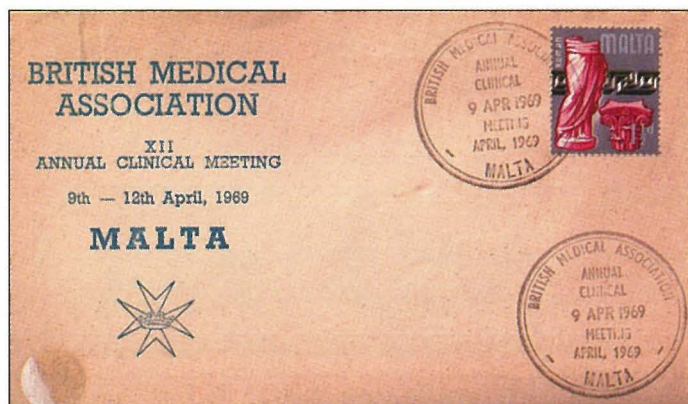
MALTA HOSTS MEDICAL CONFERENCES (1)



1964: 14TH April.
ANTI-BRUCELLOSIS
CONFERENCE

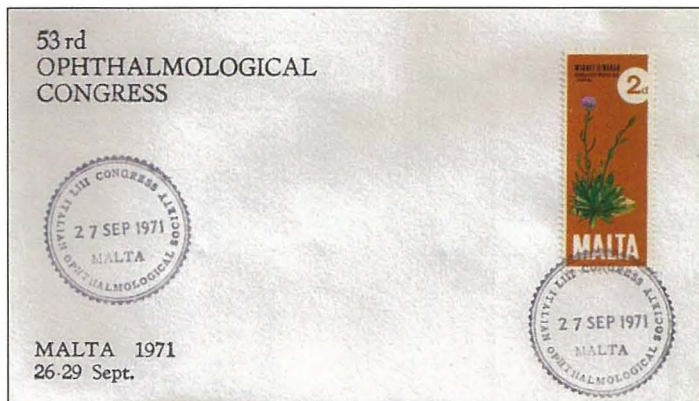


1964: 5th September.
FIRST EUROPEAN
CONGRESS
OF CATHOLIC
DOCTORS



1969: 9-12 April,
BRITISH MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION. XII
ANNUAL MEETING

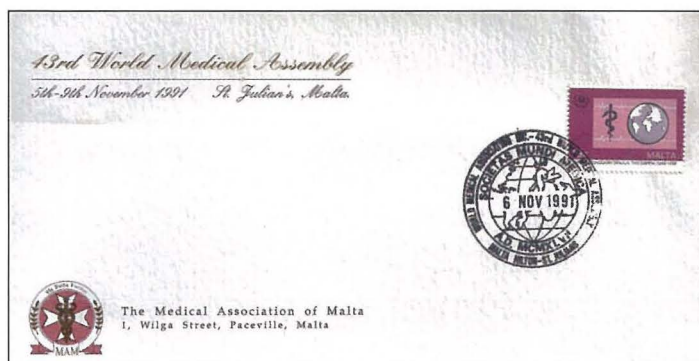
MALTA HOSTS MEDICAL CONFERENCES (2)



1971: 26-29
September. 53rd
OPHTHALMOLOGICAL
CONGRESS



1986: 5-6 April.
INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON
DRUGS



1991: 5-9th November.
43rd WORLD
MEDICAL ASSEMBLY

**50th ANNIVERSARY OF
THE FOUNDATION OF THE
DENTAL ASSOCIATION OF MALTA**



№ 000071



DR. J.H. MERDIECA
HON. LIFE PRESIDENT

Louis Pasteur
(1822-95)



EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF SURGERY
MEETING • MALTA • 11-13 NOVEMBER 2004

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(Belgium)
Secretary-General



MALTA HOSTS MEDICAL CONFERENCES (4) MALTESE MEDICAL SCHOOL CONFERENCES

Since 1989 the Medical School, University of Malta, has organised a tri-annual medical conference. Essentially this is the show piece of the Medical School with the participation of various local and foreign specialists and research workers. The Malta Post Office has responded by offering hand stamps on many of these occasions.



FIRST MALTESE MEDICAL SCHOOL CONFERENCE 15 – 16 December 1989

Dr. L. Cutajar MD, FRCS (Eng), FRCS (Ed).
Villa Maruska,
High Ridge,
St. Andrews.

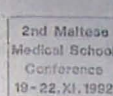


THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

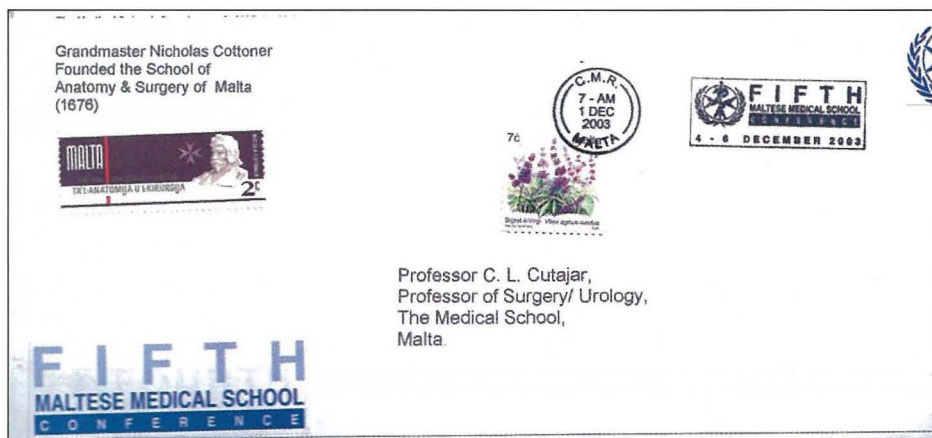
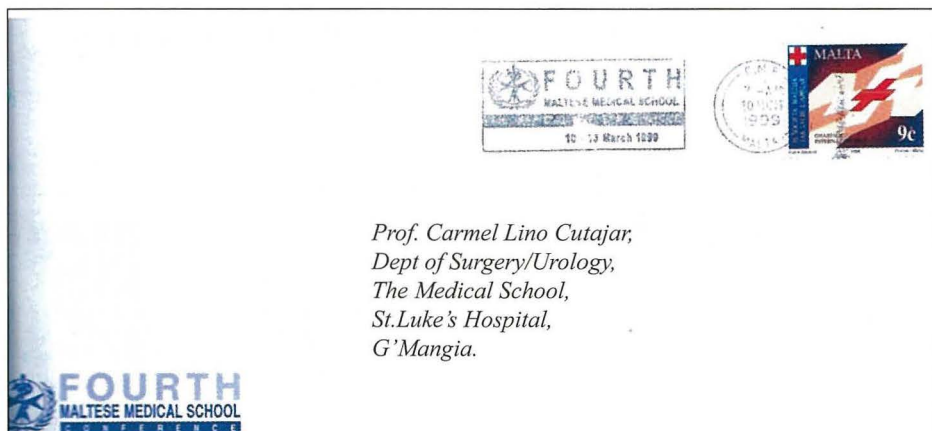
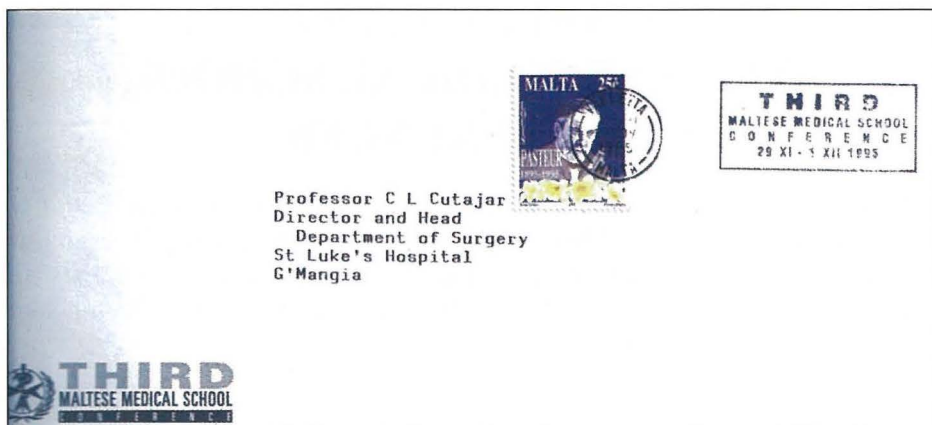


Second Maltese Medical School Conference

Professor CL Cutajar
Villa Maruska
High Ridge, St Andrews
Malta



MEDICAL SCHOOL CONFERENCES



REFERENCES (1)

MALTA STAMPS WITH MEDICAL INTEREST (Ref: JB Catalogue)

PREHISTORY:

Neolithic Temples: JB 371 (2d, 1967); JB 679 (8c, 1983); JB 862 (1c, 1991)

Hypogeum: JB 159 (KG V, 5/-, 1928); JB 188/a; 211/a (KG VI, 1 1/2d, 1938-53); JB 609 (2c5, 1980)

"Sleeping Lady": JB 310 (1/2d, 1965)

"Fat Lady": JB 497 (1c3, 1974); JB 972 (20c, 1996)

Neolithic Figures: JB 970-73 (1996)

Aesculapius: JB 298-300 (emblem, 1964); JB 788 (emblem 19c, 1988)

ROMAN:

St. Paul: *def issues:* Q. Victoria (JB 21, 73, 74); KGV (JB 141, 160, 177) KG VI (JB 199, 222); QE 2 (JB 261); XIX cent of shipwreck, 1960 (JB 277). Paul throws snake in fire.

St. Luke: First Euch. Congress Catholic doctors, 1964. (JB 299).

HOSPITALLER ORDER OF ST. JOHN. (1530-1798)

Blessed Gerald JB 417 (1970)

De L'Isle Adam JB 190/a (1938, def); JB 213/a (1948)

Sacra Infermeria JB 300 (1964); JB 542 (1976); JB 419 (1970).

School of Anatomy & Surgery JB 539-542 (1976)

Nicholas Cottoner JB 259 (1956); JB 298 (1964); JB 539 (1976).

Collegium Melitense, University: JB 404 (1969); JB 891-2 (1992).

Pharmacy items: JB 419 (1970).

BRITISH ERA: WORLD WAR 1

W.W. 1, Nurse of the Mediterranean: JB (Nov. 2014); JB (Apr 2015)

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Brucellosis: Bruce/Zammit. JB 296-7 (1964); JB 917 (1994).

Heart: JB 447-9 (1972).

Disabled: JB 631-2 (1981).

Elderly: JB 905=-6 (1993).

MEDICAL PERSONALITIES

Giuseppe Barth: JB 493 (1974).

John Borg: JB 495 (1974).

David Bruce: JB 296 (1964).

Egidio Lapira: JB 1388 (1994).

Louis Pasteur: JB 944 (1995).

Luigi Preziosi JB 778 (1988).

Giuseppe Zammit JB 541 (1976).

Themistocles Zammit JB 296 (1964); JB 917 (1994).

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ASSOCIATIONS

F.A.O.: JB 395-7 (1968); JB 949 (1995).

Lions International: JB 893-4 (1993).

Red Cross International JB 292-3 (1963). JB 786-788 (1988);

Rotary International JB (2005).

U.N.I.C.E.F. JB 969 (1996).

World Health Organisation JB 487 (1973); JB 788 (1998).

LOCAL PHILANTROPIC ASSOCIATIONS

Dental Association of Malta: JB 915-6 (1994).

Malta Lions JB 893-4 (1993).

Malta Red Cross JB 292-3 (1963); JB 786-788 (1988); JB 920 (1994).

Rotary Malta: JB (2005). **MMDNA** JB 943 (1995).

MALTA HOSTS MEDICAL CONFERENCES

(Special handstamp cancellations)

Anti-Brucellosis Congress (1964);

First European Congress of Catholic Doctors (1964);

BMA XII Annual Meeting (1969);

53rd Italian Ophthalmological Congress (1971);

International Conference on Drugs (1986);

3rd World Medical Assembly (1991);

European Society of surgery Meeting (2004);

Maltese Medical School Conferences First 1989; Second 1992; Third 1995; Fourth 1999; Fifth 2003)

**Every member should try and enrol a new member.
Please remit your membership dues for 2017 immediately
to Mr. J. Cardona,**

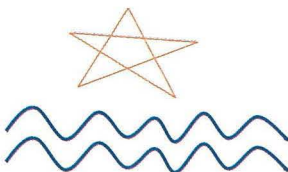
56, Triq Santa Marija, Tarxien, TXN 1703, Malta.

because of increase in production costs
and postage membership dues are as follows:

Local Members	(Adults)	Eur 10.00
	(Junior Members)	Eur 3.00
Overseas Members	Australia	Aud 40.00
	Canada	Cad 30.00
	Euro Countries	Eur 20.00
	South Africa	US\$ 31.00
	U.K.	GBP 15.00
	U.S.A.	US\$ 21.00

The Christmas Star and the Malta Emblem Stamp

by
David A. Pardo¹



Follow Your Star

On the 3rd November, 1964 the era of the Christmas stamp in Malta began with the issuance of the 2d, 4d, and 8d nativity scene designed by the great artist E. V. Cremona.



Like the British, the Maltese have regularly issued stamps depicting the traditional Christmas scene. But is the scene correct? In particular, were there three magi, who were they and was the Star of Bethlehem really a star?

Over the centuries academic egos the size of hot air balloons, lured with the promise of promotion, fame and mountains of cold cash, have wrestled with the identity of the star. It is a comet, an occultation, a nova, a supernova, a this, a that—even aliens. Each time these egos have popped. Sophisticated astronomy has not explained exactly how the child was located and the historical discrepancy



behind the Roman tax of 6 AD and the dates of Herod's reign. In addition, confusion has befuddled some of them in contradictory attempts to show the star was an astrological event. The religious establishment, on the other hand, clothed in pious platitudes and ritual hocus pocus, has given up—it's a miracle!

We have to do better, assuming Matthew's account is not a fiction. Let's now go in search of the star as depicted in the unwatermarked 6c+2c Malta 2001 Christmas stamp. Let's use commonsense and some simple arithmetic. We will come to the conclusion that with at least 83 1/3rd percent certainty the child was born sometime between February 19 and March 20, 7 BC with a greater probability in March of that year. So we can get the exact date of birth within +/- 10 days and we can also provide a prediction which is a must for any kind of science. That prediction is depicted in the Malta emblem stamp.

Let's start with a little philosophy. Social science, as taught and practiced, is deterministic. That is why it is called "science". We can then suppose that the universe and all its creatures are governed as one – which means that the celestial movements and human interaction are related. The ancient Babylonian religion of astrology, we can surmise, contains some merits, albeit only statistical. The star of Bethlehem may then be an astrological event. Genesis 1:14 does not deny the validity of astrology.

All are agreed that our best guess is that the magi came from Babylonia and thus were familiar with astrology. Our first clue then can be found in the Babylonian almanac tablets of 7 BC where the triple Jupiter-Saturn conjunction in Pisces, not a literal star, is discussed. We know the tablet was not written in the previous year since the conjunction, occurring about every 854 years, is non-periodic, in other words, unpredictable in a geocentric universe. This astrological event started on the evening of May 27, reached its second stationary point (i. e. in biblical language "it stood") in October and finished in December of 7 BC. Just as we eagerly watch movies in the evenings today, so the magi must have closely watched this event, the difference being that Hollywood is a man-made contrivance as opposed to the more interesting phenomena of Nature. We do not know how many magi there were who came to Jerusalem to ask where the child was born. There must have been at least two, but not necessarily the three in philatelic tradition. We can try to zero in on the identity of this cast of characters by specifying some markers:

- (1) By Hellenistic standards the magi were competent astrologers, astronomers, and mathematicians who probably lived in close proximity to each other. They knew about precession and probably had access to data as accurate as or more accurate than that of Hipparchus.
- (2) The prevalent religious belief in Babylonia at the time had integrated Babylonian astrology into Zoroastrian tenets. The magi were expecting a

messianic figure to inaugurate the Piscean age. The mother would then be a Virgo, not a literal virgin, while the son would be born in Pisces. Logic dictates that the magi were looking for a rare Piscean astrological event, not the Saturnalian holiday of December 25.

- (3) The magi were familiar with Jewish prophecy and may have lived close to a Jewish community. It is possible that their home was located close to where the almanac tablets were originally discovered.
- (4) Some or all of the magi were aristocrats for three reasons. First, they needed leisure and funds to complete the experiment to locate and honor the child. Second, that “Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him” implied that the magi were no ordinary characters. Third, it is generally believed that the Parthians who ruled Babylonia at the time had a poll tax for the working class. Nobility knew about demographics, the importance of which will become evident later in this paper.

We learn from the Gospels that the Christmas “star” appeared between 8 BC when Augustus decreed a universal tax and the spring of 4 BC when Herod died. There is no evidence whatsoever that an Augustan tax occurred in 6, 5, or 4 BC. Furthermore, there is no evidence, numismatic or otherwise, that Herod lived past his generally accepted date of death. St. Luke, undoubtedly, set the stage for the registration in 7 BC, if it ever occurred, by linking it to the Augustan decree to highlight the fact that something wonderful and of global significance was about to happen in a world such as ours.² Since the two events were chronologically close to each other, St. Luke merged the two events. Why 7 BC?

Augustus wanted to prepare Herod’s client kingdom for incorporation as a procuratorial province of Syria in 6 AD. With such a complicated personal situation in Herod’s family, with many Jews asking for provincial status, with all the inevitable competing claims for Herod’s throne, the emperor must have asked himself the question: what was going to happen in Judea after Herod, a “Third World” strongman and a puppet of the Romans, died? Augustus was leaving the “Syrian option” open, anticipating events with his usual tact and brilliance. If the Romans were preparing a census for Syria starting September 1, 6 AD, the most appropriate time for them to determine the ages of those over twelve in Herod’s kingdom would be 7 BC. We know that all men from fourteen to sixty five and all women from twelve to sixty were obliged to pay a tributum capitis in the Syrian province. The age counted from the date of declaration. Hence, a baby girl declared at the 7 BC registration would pay the poll tax in 6 AD. The client kingdom, like the rest of Syria, would be on a twelve year cycle.

By instituting this 7 BC registration, the Romans prevented the Jews from

lying or not registering for the 6 AD tax. Augustus had secretly played on the fact that Jewish property rights and prestige were determined by genealogies. Why not require the Jews in Palestine to register at their ancestral city, not at the usual place of residence? After all, Herod wanted to redeem himself in the eyes of the Jews for earlier burning the Temple genealogies. Frankly, all the Jews had been duped. Is it any wonder then that the Romans considered Augustus the son of Apollo?

St. Matthew also gives us a clue as to when the registration took place. He states that Herod inquired when the Christmas “star” first appeared and then ordered the slaughter of the “innocents” based on the date of that appearance. Since there is no evidence whatsoever of a poll tax in Herod’s kingdom on the May 27th evening, the window of registration must have closed at that time or shortly thereafter. Late February or early March would then be well within the realm of possibility for the beginning of the registration. And it is logical that Mary, now in her late pregnancy, must have been forced to journey to Bethlehem at the beginning of the registration period, not at its end.

Now that we have engineered a working hypothesis for the approximate dating of the nativity, what about the Christmas “star” that appeared only to the magi, not to the clueless Jerusalem religio-academic establishment? Once the magi learnt of Micah’s prophecy that the child would be born in Bethlehem the search was simple. Bethlehem’s size was like a Malta in the international community. Current estimates of the farming town’s population run around a thousand people with an annual birthrate of about 4 percent. Many children did not last past their first birthday so we use 3 percent or so in our calculations. The magi were looking for a mother who was a Virgo and a first born and only son who was a Pisces. The chance for this combination is $1/12$ times $1/12$ times $1/2$, under the common assumption that there is statistical independence in signs, no twins (twins would be a rarity), and twelve signs. In other words, the probability of finding this combination in a typical population is $1/288$. For purposes of conservatism and arithmetic ease, let’s say the population was 1,440 so that 43.2 children were born in Bethlehem that year.³ This makes sense since the slaughter of the “innocents” is only recorded by St. Matthew. The number of baby boys murdered in cold blood must have been small otherwise the crime would have caught the attention of the Roman historian Josephus among others. The bottom line then indicates that the probability of finding no child in Bethlehem who met the requirements in the given year was $1 - 43.2/288$ or $17/20$. No wonder the magi were overjoyed at the sight of the mother and child. The chance of finding two children that met the requirements was roughly $9/400$. There was no mistake. The magi found what they were looking for. The search probably ended in October at the second stationary point of the triple Jupiter-Saturn conjunction when the “star stood over the house”. From the first stationary point in May the magi could have predicted the rest of the triple occurrence.

How much credence can we place in this explanation? The magi must have thought that the dawning of an astrological age is accompanied by a major turning point in religious development. Effectively, there is a music of the spheres in that the inauguration of a new age is marked by a religious figure whose birth sign coincides with the sign or opposite sign of that age. Furthermore, one of the religious figure's parents or children has the astrologically opposite sign. The age of Taurus, the A, the ox, the "sacred cow" opposing the scorpion, started around 4,400 BC possibly contemporaneous with the invention of the ox-drawn cart. (Bishop Ussher tells us that the world, Mesopotamian civilization perhaps, began in 4004 BC.) We know that an important development, the formation of the Jews, occurred c. 2,100 BC. From biblical chronology the patriarch Abraham could have been born in c. 2,168 BC, assuming that the construction of the first Temple began in 967 BC and that recorded years in the Bible are not just half-years. The exodus would have taken place in 1,446 BC with Joshua's crossing of the Jordan around 1,405 BC. Ideally, what must be shown through the bible, Jewish folklore, or tradition is that *Abraham was a Libra and his son Isaac was an Aries or vice versa*. It is well known in rabbinical circles that Isaac was born on Nisan 15 at Passover, an extremely probable Aries. *There is then a 1/6 probability that this event date could have occurred accidentally*. Abraham's birthdate is problematic, although circumstantial evidence would support a Libra birthday.⁴ The 83 1/3rd percent explanatory power of the theory is then at a minimum.

So, by extrapolation, the theory gives us the following astrological ages with the corresponding birth signs of the religious protagonists. These are displayed in table 1. The probability of any one of these events is 1/12 times 1/6 or 1/72 (i.e. 0.0139).

Table 1
Sign Configurations with Associated Probabilities

Sign Pair	Beginning Date of Age	Probability	Joint Probability
LIBRA/ARIES	2200-2000 BC	.0139	.0139
VIRGO/PISCES	100 BC-100 AD	.0139	.0002
LEO/AQUARIUS	2000 -2200 AD	.0139	.0000
CANCER/CAPRICORN	4000-4300 AD	.0139	.0000

No evidence, archaeological or otherwise, has yet been found confirming a Taurus/Scorpio combination. Also, we can only speculate on the Cancer/Capricorn figures. My own preference is that one of them is an artist, perhaps a Pan, someone like the hero of A. J. Cronin's *A Thing of Beauty*. I harbor two reasons. First, I surmise that he counterbalances the pedestrianism of prevailing scientific procedure.

Second, in classical mythology, Pan is married to Eupheme and has a son named Crotus the Sagittarian. Gemini/Sagittarius follows Cancer/Capricorn.

One prediction of the theory is that in the foreseeable future there will be another major religious innovation inaugurated by a person whose astrological sign is Leo the Lion, a symbol of the Sun, with an immediate family member, preferably father or son, as an Aquarius. This would suggest that the Christmas event is not a theological singularity, in line with originally intended passages in the Old Testament. It becomes more apparent if Leo the Lion is born on the 9th/10th of Av in the Jewish calendar as foretold in Second Temple Judaism. A lifelong celibate, he could suffer the psychiatric consequences of a traumatic catharsis induced by a subconscious conflict (a Maltese cross?), consequences intimated in the messianic texts. As a result, he may carry a new set of religious rules.⁵ Just as the Virgo's youth is intertwined with the secret of the resurrection via Joseph of Arimathea, so these rules may be intertwined with the accomplishments of the Aquarian.⁶ With 1967 marking an all-important year in Jewish history, could the Malta-inspired "common heritage of mankind" concept embedded in the modern Law of the Sea convention be involved? After all, Maltese stamps commemorating the 20th anniversary of the U. N. resolution of the sea bed were issued in December, 1987. The rules under this legal concept could propagate peacefully during the remainder of the *Pax Americana* and then could lay the Aquarian foundation for the future civilization(s) encompassing the solar system.

Figure 1 symbolically depicts the prediction of the Leo/Aquarius combination. The stamp shows the emblem of the republic of Malta issued in January of 1976



Figure 1: The January 28th, 1976 Definitive Emblem Stamp

with watermark 7 and designed again by E. V. Cremona. Here we see the golden sun shining over a tranquil sea. What's with the empty Maltese daisa departing from the shore? The boat with the painted eyes could represent the Maltese version of the *Castor and Pollux* (the “star” and the “scepter”, if you will) christened in the allegory and real life story of Acts 28.⁷ A new world religion is born. The boat is empty because any and all can sail in it. Recall that, after the shipwreck of the *Big Fish* Christianity on the island, St. Paul takes this boat bound for Italy and sails deathlessly into the port of Puteoli finally to reside at the Three Taverns, symbol of the Cancer/Capricorn age.

A few years ago, when in Malta, I casually asked Professor Salvino Busuttil, then Director of the Foundation for International Studies, where the emblem originated. He told me that Mr. Dom Mintoff as Prime Minister liked the picture after he won the general election in 1971. The emblem lasted in popularity until 1987 when there was a change in government. Ironically, little did Mr. Mintoff know that the design might have larger implications...

So, in conclusion, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year—next March!

Footnotes:

1. This paper is based on the following journal article: David A. Pardo, “A Statistical Solution to the Star of Bethlehem Problem”, <http://cura.free.fr/xx/20pardo.html>
2. The word ἀπογραφομαι (apographomai) means to register or record, not tax. Hence, the general sense is that there was an enrollment prior to taxation or the beginning of a census made before its completion by Quirinius in 6 AD.
3. The wise men went directly to Bethlehem since the child could have left with his mother after the “tax”. That there was considerable demographic movement during the “tax” was not a concern, however. A woman during late, albeit perhaps here unwanted, pregnancy does not travel. Hence, the wise men could use the demographics of Bethlehem prior to or after the “tax” in any of their calculations.
4. The time of year of Abraham's birth month is narrowed down to either Nisan or Tishri if one considers the controversy in the Talmud Bavli (Rosh Hashana 10b-11a) between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua (1st-2nd C. Yavneh).
5. For a suggested set of new religious rules and their order of importance see David A. Pardo, “A Statistical identity for the Teacher of Righteousness in the Dead Sea Scrolls”, http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/dss_pardo.pdf
6. For the story of Easter, see David A. Pardo, “Was the Virgo really a Virgo?”, <http://cura.free.fr/xxx/27pardo3.html>
7. For the outline of the allegory in Acts 28 see David A. Pardo, “The 1919 10/- Shipwreck and the Sign of Jonah”, Journal of the Malta Philatelic Society, vol. 44/3, 2015, p. 31-32

Printed Matter Wrappers of Malta

by

Dr John K. Courtis FRPSL
(acapjajc@friends.cityu.edu.hk)

The post office postal stationery wrappers of Malta were of three types: the 1885 ½d green QV, the 1902 or 1903 ½d green KEVII and the more elusive 1913 ½d green KGV. The author has maintained a database of used copies of worldwide post office postal stationery wrappers that have been listed for sale on the internet site eBay. These have been hand-collected daily since September 2003 and the database has approximately 48,000 different images worldwide. Of these, 108 copies are of the post office wrappers of Malta: 84 copies of the QV issue, 16 copies of the KEVII issue and eight copies of the KGV issue. Specimen overprinted copies exist of each of these issues.

There are no recorded cases of post office postal stationery wrappers with additional private printing. The post office wrappers of Malta ceased after the 1913 KGV issue. A story about the wrappers of Malta would be incomplete without an understanding of those that showed the addition of private printing. Further insights may be gained by looking at non post office wrappers used for mailing printed matter.

Another database developed by the author since March 2006 is used non-post office wrappers. During the past decade this database stands at almost 6,000 images of worldwide printed matter wrappers. Of these there are 11 from Malta, and some of these are discussed and illustrated here. More specifically, this paper examines postally used wrappers of Malta that are of a private or commercial nature that have not been purchased at a post office.

The Times

Founded on 7 August 1935 by Lady and Lord Strickland and daughter Mabel, *The Times of Malta*, was initially an English language supplement to *Il Progress*. It became a weekly and then a daily newspaper. *The Times of Malta* is the oldest daily newspaper still in existence in Malta. The history of *The Times of Malta* is linked with its publishing house, Allied Newspapers Limited. This institution has a history going back to the 1920s, when it pioneered journalism and the printing industry in Malta. It started with the publication by Gerald Strickland of Malta's first evening newspaper in Maltese, *Il-Progress*. This was a four-page daily with its own printing offices.

On 6 August 1960, the 25th anniversary of *The Times of Malta*, Mabel Strickland wrote that while originally a party paper it had become a national newspaper. It won

a reputation for objective reporting while upholding its own strongly held editorial opinion. The newspaper never missed an issue even when political arsonists burned the building down on October 15, 1979. That date came to be known as “Black Monday”. In the face of serious danger, the editor and his staff had to abandon the building. Printing of the following day’s paper continued at another printing press.

The wrapper shown as Illustration 1 has the masthead *THE TIMES* and the George Cross. The George Cross was added to the masthead on 18 April 1942 three days after it was bestowed on the people of Malta by the Queen and it has featured there for 70 years. The return address in the event of non-delivery is shown as P.O. Box 328, Valetta, Malta.

The meter franking has a double-ring VALETTA 12 VIII 89 MALTA and a stamp-like indicium =020 above a boxed P.B. [Pitney Bowes], Maltese Cross and boxed meter number. The international postage rate for printed papers from 28 March 1951 was 2d for the first weight step and 1d per additional step. While addressee details of the wrapper cannot be read except for the typewritten M. A. Attard, the .02 payment on the meter implies an overseas usage. It is also possible that copies of this newspaper may have been mailed to subscribers within Malta.

Illustration 1: The Times newspaper

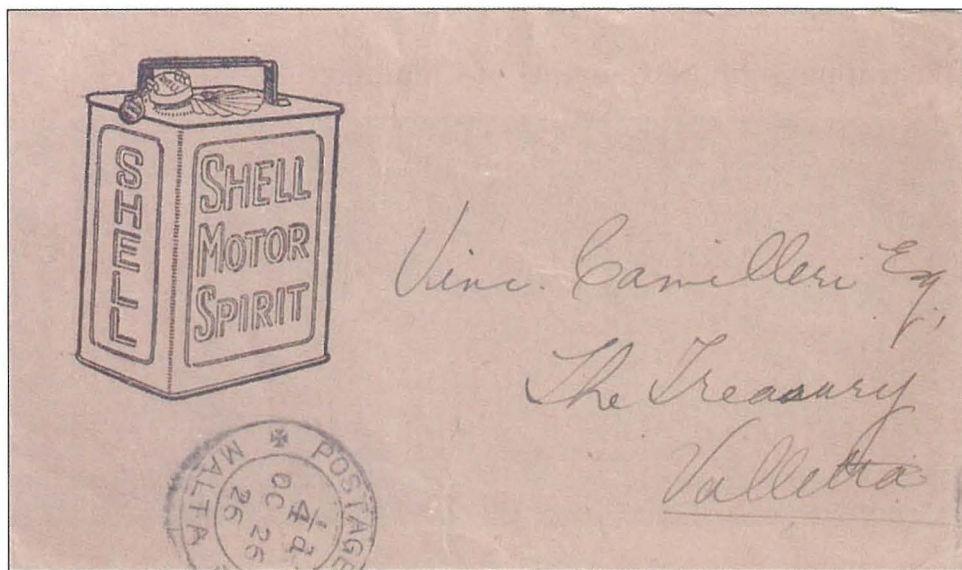


Shell Motor Spirit

An attractive wrapper used 26 October 1926 with a 'Shell' container drawing is shown as Illustration 2. At that time the can was green and the writing was in yellow. In 1914 Messrs. Degiorgio and Azzopardi were appointed as managing agents for the Asiatic Petroleum Co. Ltd. (now the Royal Dutch Shell Group) and made responsible for the distribution of all Shell products in Malta. A large storage bulk oil installation was opened in 1921 in Birzebuggia with a combined storage capacity of 6½ million gallons of fuel oil. In 1924 the first lorries were used to replace slow-moving horse drawn carts. The postmark year on the wrapper is 1926, so the history underlying the wrapper stops at this point. Shell went on to bituminize the roads and build the runways for the Air Ministry and store Malta's commercial oil stocks. Milestones in the history Shell Co. (Malta) Ltd. can be found at www.asl-shell.com/about-us/history.

The double-ring black postmark reads POSTAGE PAID ¼d OC 26 26 MALTA. In 1926 the internal rate for printed papers was ¼d for the 1st 2 oz. The wrapper is addressed locally to Mr. Vinc. Camilleri, the Treasury, Valletta. What was contained within the wrapper addressed to the Treasury?

Illustration 2: Shell Motor Spirit



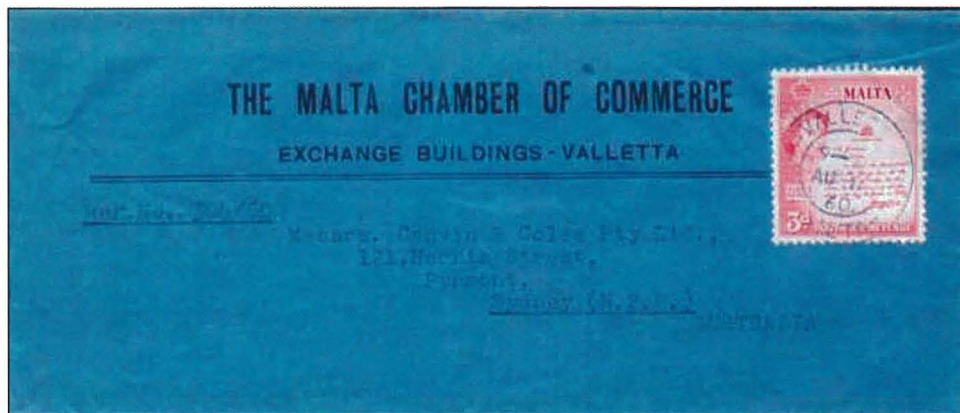
There is a second ¼d postage paid wrapper in the database addressed to Birchircara but without sender details. The double-ring postmark reads POSTAGE PAID ¼d FE 24 26 MALTA.

Malta Chamber of Commerce

The Malta Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise was established as a voluntary constituted body and officially recognized in 1848. It was established on the private law status model, independent from government or the public sector, with voluntary membership. In 1848, the Governor of the island, Sir Richard More O’Ferrall, took a keen interest in commerce. It was due to his strong desire to make Malta a spearhead of British trade in the Mediterranean that the re-organization of the commercial community arose and the Malta Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise was born. The Chamber was represented by nomination in the various Councils of Government. The first self-governing Constitution in 1921 gave the Chamber the right to elect two senators. In 1857, the Exchange Buildings that were constructed on its present site in Republic Street, Valletta were inaugurated. The Chamber celebrated its 160th Anniversary in 2008.

The wide blue paper wrapper is headed THE MALTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE in sans-serif upper casing. The address is EXCHANGE BUILDINGS – VALLETTA above double underlining. A socked-on-the-nose double circle cancellation VALLETTE AU 1 60 MALTA cancels a 1956 3d rose red King’s Scroll (Sc252). The 3d paid the 2nd weight scale in 1956 of between 2 oz. and 4 oz. The wrapper is addressed to Canvin & Coles Pty. Ltd., 121 Harris St., Pyrmont, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

Illustration 3: Malta Chamber of Commerce

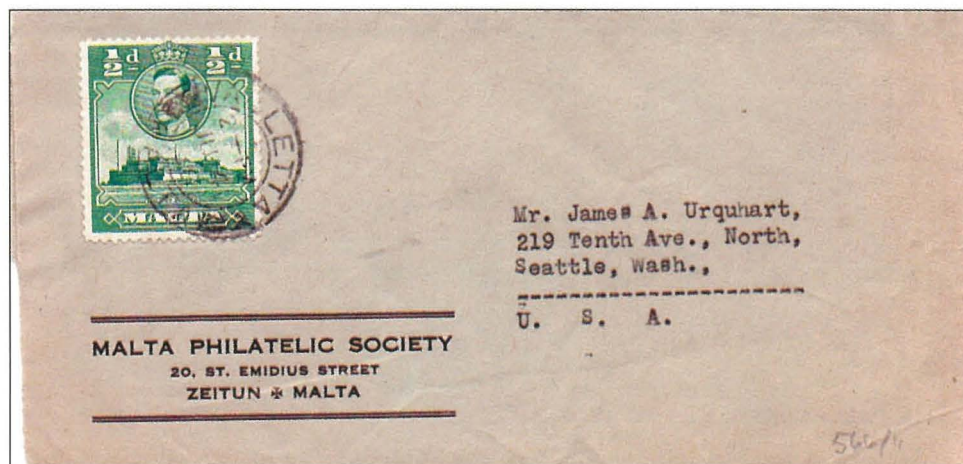


Malta Philatelic Society

The Malta Philatelic Society is a not-for-profit-organization set up on 7th March 1966. It specifically promotes the specialized study of the stamps, postal history and related areas of Malta.

The wrapper shows MALTA PHILATELIC SOCIETY and street address, Zeiton, Malta between two double lines. The 1938 ½d green Fort St. Angelo stamp (Sc192) is positioned on the left upper corner in contrast to UPU regulations that specify that normally the position of the stamp is to be on the upper right corner. The international printed papers rate in 1938 was ½d per 2 oz. The stamp is cancelled with a double-ring VALLETTA 2-PM JU 14 38 MALTA. The wrapper is addressed to Mr. James A. Urquhart, Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.

Illustration 4: Malta Philatelic Society



Official O.H.M.S.

Strictly speaking, the item shown as Illustration 5 is more in the nature of a lettersheet; printed wording can be seen on the reverse. It is included in this survey of printed matter material for the record. Headed O.H.M.S. ON POSTAL SERVICE it is from the PHILATELIC BUREAU G.P.O. MALTA and addressed to Corporal Watts. There is a RAF adhesive paper form 1674 pasted beneath with address details in pen to RAF Stanbridge, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. The form is cancelled with an arrival date stamp RAF POST 23 OC 69 BERKS. The lettersheet is cancelled from VALLETTA 11.30AM 23 AUG 1969 MALTA and boxed slogan Winter in//MALTA. The item was sent AIR MAIL; a red transit cancel is R.A.F. POST OFFICE TOBRUK B.F.P.O. 56 [British Field Post Office, Libya]. (There is an extant airmail cover sent from the Philatelic Bureau Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea to the same recipient and forwarded to him at Stanbridge).

At first glance there appears to be a two-month discrepancy between the Valletta mailing date of 23 August 1969 and the arrival date in Stanbridge 23 October 1969.

The mailing clerk has recorded 23-10-69 with initials so the Valletta data stamp is likely to have the incorrect slug for the month.

On 1 September 1969 the Libyan Army staged a successful coup against the administration of King Idris of the sovereign state of the United Kingdom of Libya. In early December it was announced in London that Britain had agreed to withdraw all British Forces from Libya by 31 March 1970. The RAF organized the withdrawal by sea and the last ship left Tobruk on 28 March 1970 and sailed for Cyprus (www.historicalrfa.org/archived).

Illustration 5: Philatelic Bureau G.P.O. Malta (O.H.M.S.)fitt



There is a second lettersheet from the same sender to the same recipient in Stanbridge dated VALETTA 6 JUN 1969 and boxed slogan COUNCIL OF EUROPE// 20TH ANNIVERSARY, arriving Field Post Office 1051 17 JUN 69. The Form 1674 is dated 23/6/69.

The Key Klub

A four-line handstamp on the wrapper's reverse reads: ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO// THE KEY KLUB INC.// KINGSWAY// VALLETTA, MALTA. There is no information about the Key Klub, Malta from Internet searching. However, an airmail cover dated 13 JU 1950 confirms its existence and address: Original European Exchange, Columbia Building, Kingsway, Valletta, Malta, Europe.

The wrapper shown as Illustration 6 is addressed to Den Haag, Holland and has 2d postage stamps – a horizontal strip of four 1938 1 farthing brown Valletta Harbour + 1943 1d green Verdala Palace (Sc191,193A). The 2d postage indicates the 2nd weight step of between 2oz and 4 oz. Postage is cancelled with three strikes of a double-ring VALLETTA OCT 25 44? MALTA.

Illustration 6: The Key Klub Inc.



High Value Stamps

There is no identification of the sender of the wrapper shown as Illustration 7. The address is a company in Fittingswerk, Mettmann, Germany. The wrapper has paid postage of 2/8. The stamps are the 1948 2d rose-red Victoria and Citadel, Gozo with black SELF-GOVERNMENT 1947 on diagonal reading down (Sc212) + horizontal pair of 3d blue St. John's Co-Cathedral all with carmine SELF-GOVERNMENT 1947 on diagonal reading down (Sc214) + 1951 horizontal pair of 1/- slate-black Madonna and Child (Sc234) cancelled with two strikes of double-ring PRINCE OF WALES RD 7.15AM 22 MR 52 SLIEMA MALTA. The 2/8 postage paid needs explanation.

Illustration 7: Use of High Value Stamps to Germany



Unsolicited Gift WITH CARE

A brown paper wrapper shown as Illustration 8 has been used to send an “unsolicited gift” in green manuscript and “gift under \$10” in blue manuscript both written on the white label with borders of small black squares. WITH CARE in red appears within the rectangle at the top of the address label. There are two ‘By Air Mail’ etiquettes. The wrapper is addressed to Larchmont, New York. USA. The total postage paid was 3/9+ comprising three in the set of QEII Coronation issue: a 1956 3d rose red Kings Scroll + 1/- purple Mdina Gate + 2/6 copper brown Monument of Nicolas Cottoner (Sc252,256,259). There is a stamp missing in the upper right region its absence noticeable because of the partial postmark.

The auxiliary marking is a purple rectangular handstamp reading PASSED FREE// U.S. CUSTOMS// NEW YORK. The stamps are cancelled with four strikes of double-ring VALLETTA DE 10 56 MALTA. The airmail parcel rate for 1956 is needed to explain the postage.

Illustration 8: Unsolicited Gift – With Care



Conclusion

The printed matter non-post office wrappers of Malta include an example of the newspaper *The Times*. There could be examples of at least 20 other newspapers that have been published in Malta. The illustrated Shell wrapper suggests a role played

by that company in the development of Malta's road and air infrastructure. The Malta Chamber of Commerce and the Philatelic Bureau played their roles too in the development of commerce and philatelic awareness, while high-value stamps used to pay a high weight step and a home-made wrapper to send a gift overseas reveal aspects of commercial and social activity. The set of items analyzed and illustrated add more to our knowledge of the role of the postal service in disseminating knowledge, commercial opportunities and social contact.

Acknowledgement

I thank Allan Gory for reading and commenting on an earlier draft. His comments helped to make the paper more robust.



Postal Diary

24th November 2015 – 22nd December 2015

Compiled by
John V. De Battista

26th November

Today MaltaPost announced the issue of a miniature sheet on the 27th November to commemorate the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) Malta 2015 meeting. The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 independent countries which collectively have a total population of 2.2 billion. The association came together in 1949 after the decolonisation of the British Empire.



The face value of the single stamp in the miniature sheet, which features the CHOGM Malta 2015 logo against a background of flags of the Commonwealth nations, is of €3.00. Malta will be hosting CHOGM for the second time in ten years. The theme for the meeting, the opening ceremony of which will be presided by HRH Queen Elizabeth II, is ‘Adding Global Value’, a theme which encourages the Commonwealth’s governments together with civil society to think about what unites the members and what they can achieve together.

The miniature sheet was designed in-house by Sean Cini. Its overall measurement is 84.0mm x 84.0mm. The miniature sheets were printed in offset by Printex Ltd. on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper, with the stamp measuring 35.0mm x 35.0mm and having a comb perforation of 13.75 x 13.75. The print run consists of 20,000 individually numbered sheets.

MaltaPost prepared an occasion postmark to cancel the stamps on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 14/2015). The single-ring handstamp was inscribed “* MALTAPOST * ----- - MALTA” bordering the ring, and “CHOGM/Malta 2015/JUM IL-ĦRUĠ/27-11-15” in straight lines below an outline image of the CHOGM 2015 logo in the centre. The MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau featured the issue in Stamp Bulletin No. 342.

3rd December

MaltaPost informed the public that the Sub Post Office at Midas, 34, Triq ix-Xatt, Marsaskala MSK 2113 will be closed for business on Monday 7th December 2015. The public was advised that it may avail itself of postal services provided from the

following alternative Postal Outlets:

Żabbar Post Office - Ċentru Ċiviku, Triq il-Kunvent,
Żabbar ZBR 1351

Żejtun Post Office - 37, Triq San Luċjan, Żejtun ZTN 1834

In the second Media Communication issued today, MaltaPost also announced that for the occasion of the opening of the Christmas related events in Gozo, a commemorative postmark will be used on Saturday 5th December at the Għarb Post Office. The double-ring handstamp was inscribed “* MALTAPOST * GħARB, GOZO - MALTA 05-12-15” in the outer ring, and “MILIED F’GħAWDEX” in the inner ring, above a stylized outline rendition of the Holy Family.



4th December

Pursuant to the Malta Financial Services Authority Listing Rules, MaltaPost issued the following Company Announcement in respect to the CA - 2015 Preliminary Statement of Annual Results:

QUOTE

The Board of Directors of MaltaPost p.l.c. (the Company) has approved the attached Preliminary Statement of annual results as extracted from the Company’s Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 2015 that were audited by PwC and approved by the Board of Directors on 4 December 2015. The Board resolved that these audited Financial Statements be submitted for approval of the shareholders at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting scheduled for 15 January 2016.

The Board of Directors further resolved to recommend for the approval of the Annual General Meeting:

1. The payment of final ordinary net dividend of Euro 0.04 per nominal Euro 0.25 share.
2. The option to shareholders of receiving the dividend either in cash or by the issue of new shares. The Attribution Price, at which the number of new shares to be issued will be determined, has been established at Euro 1.80 per nominal Euro 0.25 share.

Shareholders on the Company’s share register at the Central Securities Depository of the Malta Stock Exchange, as at close of business on the 16 December 2015 will receive notice of the Annual General Meeting together with the Financial Statements for the financial year ended 30 September 2015.

The final dividend, if approved at the Annual General Meeting, will be paid on 12 February 2016 to shareholders on the Company’s share register at the Central

Securities Depository of the Malta Stock Exchange as at close of business on 16 December 2015.

UNQUOTE

The announcement bore the signature of Company Secretary Graham A. Fairclough.

With regards to a review of performance, the following synopsis (which could be found attached to the Company Announcement) was extracted by MaltaPost from its audited Financial Statements for the financial year ended 30th September 2015. The Financial Statements, which were prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1995, were audited by PwC and approved by the Directors on 4th December 2015.

Review of performance:

“For the financial year ended 30 September 2015, MaltaPost registered profit before taxation of €3.38m as compared to €2.74m last year, representing an increase of 23.6%. Earnings per share stood at €0.06c (2014: €0.05).

- Turnover increased by 8.4% to €25.71m (2014: €23.72m). This growth is mainly attributed to increase in volume of international mail services, registered mail and the parcel and packets activity. Revenue from ancillary services also registered a healthy increase.
- Expenses rose by 6.2% to €22.50m (2014: €21.19m) mainly as a result of higher cross-border charges and inflationary pressures on cost.
- Cost to income ratio stood at 87.5% (2014: 89.3%).
- Total assets increased by 14.1% to €35.13m (2014: €30.78m).
- Shareholders’ funds rose by 11.9% to €20.39m (2014: €18.22m).”

Of particular interest to philatelists, in its outlook at the company’s future MaltaPost remarked that “the decline in traditional letter mail threatens the economics of the universal service provision. To fulfil such obligations in a commercially viable manner without compromising on service levels, we encourage a regulatory model that effectively supports the future sustainability of the Universal Service.”

9th December

MaltaPost today announced that this year, once again it is present in the heart of Valletta precisely in front of the law courts, with a special “Santa Post Office”. This temporary Post Office which takes the form of a wooden, alpine log cabin will be present at this location between the 7th and 24th December. Families are invited to enter and take a photo with Santa Claus, which will be printed instantly and given to visitors to take home.

In addition, MaltaPost also informed that specific Post Offices in Birkirkara, Mosta, Paola and San Ġwann will be opened for extended hours during the festive season.

18th December

MaltaPost p.l.c. informed the general public that, by agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, the Parcel Office at the MaltaPost Head Office in Marsa will be open between 08.00 and 16.00 on the 24th and 31st December 2015 with the last collection of mail from all letter boxes being effected at 13.00.

In another Media Communication, it also informed the public that by agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, the St. Julians Post Office will open between 08.30 and 13.00 on the 24th and 31st December.

In the third Media Communication issued on this day, MaltaPost informed the general public that by agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, all Post offices will be closed, and there will be no collection or delivery of mail on Saturday 26th December 2015 and 2nd January 2016.

Normal service will be resumed on Monday 28th December 2015 and 4th January 2016 respectively.

The final Media Communication announced that MaltaPost has opened a new Post Office in SmartCity Malta in Kalkara. This Post Office is located in the heart of SmartCity Malta and will be offering its services to businesses operating within Smart City and also to the residents in Xgħajra and Kalkara.

All postal services will be available at this Post Office together with local and international money transfers, as well as a selection of high quality stationery. Besides this, the Post Office will be offering specific products to businesses which include scanning, binding and photocopy services.

The Post Office is located in SmartCity Malta, Building SCM 01 Level G, Ricasoli, Kalkara and is open from Monday to Friday between 8.30am - 1.00pm and 1.30pm - 4.15pm. A new public letter box has been installed close to the entrance of Block 1 and mail will be collected after 7.00pm between Monday and Friday and after 3.00pm on Saturdays.

22nd December

It was announced that on 23rd December, MaltaPost will launch the Year Pack, containing all the stamp sets, in mint condition, that were issued this year. The 2015 Year Pack is presented in an attractive folder and includes technical details related to all issues.



Security printers since 1971,
producing stamps for Maltapost and the
Vatican Philatelic Bureau, amongst others.

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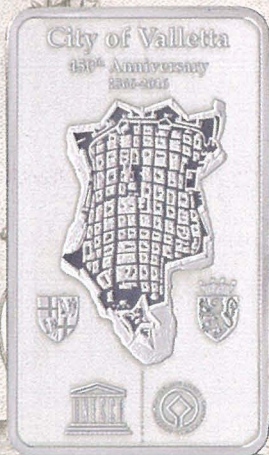


Silver Issue Commemorating 450th Anniversary of the City of Valletta 1566 - 2016

Lombard Bank Malta p.l.c. is issuing a limited edition silver ingot to commemorate the 450th Anniversary of the City of Valletta. The ingot is struck in 999.0 Fine Silver being practically the purest possible level of silver content. Each ingot is individually numbered and the issue is limited to a maximum of 2,000 pieces.

Technical details:

Design:	As per images below
Weight:	100 grams
Composition:	999.0 Fine Silver
Dimensions:	35mm x 60mm x 4.53mm
Condition:	Brilliant Uncirculated (Proof-like)
Issue limit:	2,000 individually numbered
Packing:	Boxed + Certificate of Authenticity
Price (VAT included):	€1110.00



Obverse



(actual size)

Reverse



City of Valletta
inscribed on the World
Heritage List in 1980

Ingot's may be purchased from any of our branches.
For online ordering: www.maltacoins.com



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THE GRANDMASTERS COLLECTION

1530 - 1798

A new collection of silver foil stamps

Price:
€398
inc. VAT



This collection is limited to 650 sets

A set of 28 stamps depicting Grandmasters of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta on silver foil each bearing a face value of €14.15 and may be used for postage.

This limited edition collection includes:

- 28 silver foil stamps each in its own acrylic capsule;
- The Grandmasters stamp set issued in 2014;
- an additional silver foil image of an antique map of the Maltese Islands;
- a magnifying glass;
- special publication giving a profile of each grandmaster.



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