

# ROBERT CARUANA DINGLI (1882-1940), A MALTESE ARTIST

Petra Caruana Dingli

*'È un poeta soprattutto'* - Vincenzo Bonello

Robert Caruana Dingli's life was devoted to art, both as artist and teacher. His oeuvre is accomplished and somehow restless, revealing a sensitive, sometimes subversive and always curious, distinctive eye.

His artistic achievements, and considerable influence on the twentieth-century Maltese art scene, are still being explored and evaluated. His former students became some of the most successful Maltese artists of this period, such as Giuseppe Arcidiacono, Esprit Barthet, Vincent Apap, Willie Apap, Anton Inglott, Emvin Cremona, Josef Kalleya, Ugo Carbonaro, George Borg, Victor Diacono and George Preca.

Robert's approach to art was disciplined and meticulous, 'a continuous search for better expression through improved technique. He often worked for a long time on a work and kept improving upon it, year after year, like a typical perfectionist'.<sup>1</sup> Robert's letters to the art critic and curator Vincenzo Bonello (1891-1969), only recently discovered by his son Giovanni Bonello, confirm his deep interest in technique, especially colour, and his eagerness to learn from the great masters of painting and to continually improve his own skills as an artist.

Robert was remembered 'as a man who preferred a reserved and calm life to the social adventurousness of, say, his elder brother Edward<sup>2</sup> [...] Robert hardly ever attended social occasions. He



A signed photograph of the artist given to the late Agostino Camilleri, a sculptor and close Gozitan friend of the artist.  
(Courtesy of Aaron Attard-Hili)



was always painting, continuously busy on some watercolour or oil painting. Locked in his studio for hours on end, irrespective of whether it was day or night, smoking one cigarette after another, he kept up his incessant search for the ultimate artistic expression'.<sup>3</sup>

Robert met friends at the Café Internazionale near the law courts in Valletta, also visiting the stationery or *cartoleria* close to Café Premier, owned by the father of the artist Josef Kalleya, to buy paper and paintbrushes.<sup>4</sup> Giuseppe Arcidiacono recalled meeting Robert at Café Premier and Café Regina, together with other students. Esprit Barthelet remembered him at the Central Café located under the arches in Queen's Square in Valletta. Meeting people and chatting in Valletta cafés was clearly something that Robert enjoyed.

His students at the School of Art in Valletta called him '*is-Sur Robert*' or '*il-Prof*', with the humorous nickname '*il-Konċeput*' (the conceived one) due to the amusing way that he emphasized this word during morning prayers. They must have giggled as, before starting lessons, he would recite, '*... li kien konċeput mill-Ispirtu s-Santu, twieled minn Marija Vergni...*'

Taking a step or two back into the family history, Robert's great-grandfather Giuseppe Caruana Dingli (1765–1801) was the last *Direttore della Dogana*, or comptroller of customs, under the Order of St John in Malta.

After the Order was compelled to leave Malta in 1798, some Maltese continued to secretly conspire for their return. Giuseppe Caruana Dingli was one of them. The Knights had accumulated serious debts in Malta and Giuseppe was also one of Grand Master Hompesch's creditors.<sup>5</sup>

In March 1798 the British Captain Alexander Ball was informed that Giuseppe held letters from Hompesch, 'urging him to increase his activities for the Order's return to Malta with the help, if need be, of Austria'. Ball ordered his arrest, detaining him for thirteen days on board HMS *Alexander*, where Giuseppe fell seriously ill. He was imprisoned in the Comino Tower, almost died there and was taken to Gozo. He regained enough strength to flee to Sicily, but died in Messina in 1801, aged thirty-six years old.<sup>6</sup>

A set of five letters from Ferdinand von Hompesch, written to Giuseppe during his exile in Messina, document the former Grand Master's gratitude towards Giuseppe and his intention to repay his debts.<sup>7</sup>

Giuseppe was born on November 12, 1765, to Francesco Caruana and Giovanna née Dingli. He married Antonia Farrugia in Valletta on June 13, 1791, and they had four sons, Francesco, Luigi, Paolo and Ferdinand. Three of them, Luigi,<sup>8</sup> Francesco and Ferdinand, studied law, while Francesco also became a priest. Ferdinand and Luigi later took legal action to try to retrieve

*from top:*

Giuseppe Caruana Dingli, Robert's great-grandfather;

Ferdinand Caruana Dingli and Antonia Caruana Dingli née Borg, Robert's grandparents;

Raphael Caruana Dingli and Marta Caruana Dingli née Garroni, Robert's parents;

Robert and his wife Carmela née Aquilina;

Robert and Carmela's children: Ugo, Ellen c.1940, George c.1935, Mario c.1935 and John (from a painting by the artist himself).



some of the funds that their father had lent to Hompesch, who had died in Montpellier in France in 1805 without repaying his debts.<sup>9</sup>

Ferdinand, who was Robert's grandfather, was born on January 12, 1798, only a few months before Grand Master Hompesch left Malta. He was named after the Grand Master, and his baptismal records state that Hompesch was his '*promurator*', while his '*patrium*' was Comm. Fra Joseph Alexander de Foicon.<sup>10</sup>

Ferdinand married relatively late, at forty-one years of age, on July 16, 1839. The ceremony was officiated by his brother Francesco, and one of the witnesses was Dr Adrian Dingli, then only twenty-one years old and who was presumably his law student at the university. Ferdinand's wife, Antonia Borg,<sup>11</sup> was eighteen years his junior, and they had five children: Marianna, Salvatore, Francesco, Maria Rosaria and Raphael. Marianna did not marry,<sup>12</sup> Salvatore studied law, Francesco became a notary, and Maria Rosaria married Agostino Cassar Torreggiani, a prominent mill owner. Raphael joined the civil service and later the army, and was the father of the painters Edward and Robert.<sup>13</sup>

Ferdinand graduated in law at the University of Malta on August 3, 1824. He spent three years in Tuscany, Italy, from 1828–30, also visiting Trapani in Sicily.<sup>14</sup> In Livorno he associated with Giuseppe Pulis Montebello, a successful Maltese merchant who was residing there, as Ferdinand's friend Orazio Abela was married to his daughter. Pulis Montebello was part of the Comitato Generale Maltese of 1836 led by Camillo Sceberras and Giorgio Mitrovich, which advocated a free press in Malta. Ferdinand also formed part of this movement, which led to the lifting of the ban on printing in 1839.<sup>15</sup>

Like Montebello Pulis, Ferdinand gave testimony in 1837 to the Royal Commissioners John Austin and George Cornwall Lewis on the state of affairs of Malta, where he 'stressed that an Industrial School and a Library were badly needed within the local academe and remarked that tertiary education should be free to encourage talented students who could not afford to pay a fee'.<sup>16</sup>

In 1835 Ferdinand was appointed *Professore del Diritto Civile* at the University of Malta. He published works on legal subjects including a translation from Latin into Italian of the work of the renowned professor Giovanni Carmignani from Pisa, whom he had met in Tuscany.<sup>17</sup> He was an honorary member of the Società Medica d'Incoraggiamento Maltese founded in 1837 by Giancarlo Grech Delicata.<sup>18</sup>

The Società Medica had close links to L'Associazione Patriottica Maltese founded in 1849, whose members held openly pro-Italianate sympathies and were largely from the professional middle classes. In view of the imprisonment and exile of his father by Sir Alexander Ball, and the British refusal to honour the Order's debts, one could hazard a guess that Ferdinand might not have been enamoured of the British presence in Malta.

Ferdinand had a keen interest in the importance of agriculture and was also a member of the Società Economico-Agraria del Gruppo di Malta, which aimed to improve agriculture in Malta and had been formed in 1844 on the initiative of the Società Medica. Giuseppe Pulis Montebello was also active in this group, and the two men remained close as Pulis Montebello appointed Ferdinand as the executor of his last will.<sup>19</sup>

Ferdinand lived at 30 Strada Tesoreria (Treasury Street) in Valletta. He retired from his university



post due to failing health in late 1869, and was succeeded by the Sicilian professor Nicolò Crescimanno,<sup>20</sup> who paid tribute to Ferdinand at his inaugural address on October 1, 1870.<sup>21</sup>

Ferdinand died aged seventy-two at 12 Strada Reale (Main Street) in St Julian's on July 31, 1870, where he may have been spending the summer.<sup>22</sup> In 1880 his son Raphael was registered at Strada Tesoreria, but by 1882, when Robert was born, Raphael and his wife Marta were living at 31 Strada Regina (Queen Street) in Valletta, just above Porta Reale (Main Gate).<sup>23</sup>

When Robert was born, on December 8, 1882, his father Raphael worked in the civil service, joining the King's Own Malta Militia Regiment a few years later, reaching the rank of Major. His mother Marta Garrone was born in Rabat, Gozo. He was their fourth child, born when Marta was thirty-eight years old, and baptized at Porto Salvo church in Valletta as Robert Ferdinand Garnet. Robert's older siblings were Antonia ('Nina'), Edward ('Dwardu') and Maria. After Robert another daughter, Elena, was born, however she died when she was ten years old.<sup>24</sup>

Robert and Edward were not the first artists in the family. The son of Dr Luigi Caruana Dingli, Ferdinand's brother, was also an accomplished painter.<sup>25</sup> Like Robert's father Raphael, he was called Raffaele, so it is easy to mistake the two. Raffaele was linked to the popular Neapolitan painter in Malta, Girolamo Gianni, who for a time rented his property at 6 Strada Fianco (Ordnance Street).<sup>26</sup> Raffaele painted mainly marine and animal subjects, and still lifes. He designed a chiselled oil lamp for the Mosta church, as well as a gold-embroidered *baldakkin* and some large banners of the Confraternities.<sup>27</sup>

Robert and Edward studied art under Giuseppe Cali at the Lyceum.<sup>28</sup> Cali was appointed Teacher of Drawing at the Lyceum in around 1894, replacing Joseph Calleja. He also taught art at Collegio Flores in Valletta and gave private tuition.<sup>29</sup> Assuming that Robert attended the Lyceum in his late teenage years, he must have been Cali's student in around 1900. An article on Cali by V.M. Pellegrini includes a photograph of Cali with his students, with a caption pointing to Robert as his '*predilett*' – his favourite pupil.<sup>30</sup> The source of this caption is however unclear. It is unlikely that Robert was Cali's '*predilett*' as it was actually Edward who was close to Cali and carried forward his artistic influence.

As his first job, Robert was briefly employed at the General Post Office, but he soon gave that up. He continued developing his skills as an artist and in 1907 he drew a series of caricatures of prominent personalities, including postmaster general Thomas Vella; Major Henry Alexander Balbi of the Royal Malta Artillery; Alexander Gollcher; the current and former Rectors of the University, Professor Enrico Magri and Napoleone Tagliaferro (see pages 132-133); and his brother Edward in military uniform. Robert also drew caricatures of himself wearing huge shoes (see page vii).

Robert created designs and illustrations for Mgr Salvatore Laspina's *Outlines of Maltese History* and E.B. Vella's *Ġabra ta' Ward*, used as school texts, and for *The Melita Reader*. He was commissioned by the *London Opinion*, edited by A. Moreton Mandeville, to draw a series of cartoons which appeared in March, September and October 1908, and also had his work published in *Punch* and *Tatler*. In January 1908 *Tatler* included a successful cartoon of a young boy, with the caption: 'Small boy: Boo-hoo! I ain't done nothink, sir. I-I won't do it again'. A young street urchin, who is obviously guilty, is being led away by a policeman.<sup>31</sup>



*above:*

A postcard by Geo Fürst which shows the Caruana Dingli house in Strada Regina (Queen Street), Valletta. Queen Street, in the vicinity of Kingsgate, no longer exists.

*opposite:*

The Caruana Dingli house in Strada Regina, painted by Robert, watercolour, 31 x 22.5cm, signed.  
(Private Collection, Malta / Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis)









*left:*

An illustration from E.B. Vella's *Ġabra ta' Ward*, Book One, page 64. The figure on the left is the artist himself.

(Courtesy of Aaron Attard-Hili)

*right:*

An illustration from E.B. Vella's *Ġabra ta' Ward*, Book Two. The boy in the baker boy cap is a recurring character.

*opposite:*

Front cover, designed by Robert Caruana Dingli, of the first issue of *La Bibliotechina Dei Ragazzi: Fiabe e Leggende Maltesi*, of which over 60 issues were published in the 1930s. The cover is unsigned, however it bears Caruana Dingli's stylistic imprint. His young student Willie Apap produced the inside illustrations, and the text was by Arnaldo Fabriani as 'Aldo Farini'. The magazine was written in Italian and aimed to promote Maltese, as opposed to Anglo-Saxon, culture. Caruana Dingli's student Maria Inglott recalled that when he took his classes on outdoor excursions in the late 1930s, with war approaching, they were sometimes followed by plain-clothes policemen due to the pro-Italian sympathies of some of the group. (Courtesy of the National Library of Malta)



# BIBLIOTECHINA DEI RAGAZZI

## LE AVVENTURE DI GIAHAN

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1



FIABE  
LEGGENDE MALTESI

No. 1 - 30



Thirteen years later, Robert used the same caption in a cartoon of Sir Gerald Strickland, in the *Malta Punch* in 1921. Here the caption reads: 'I have done nothing, I won't do it again?!', with Strickland kneeling in a supplicating position, a spiked truncheon under his arm and a large halo over his head (see page 151).

The art critic Dominic Cutajar noted that Robert's contributions to British newspapers 'betray an adeptness for English wit as well as for that nation's gift for telling understatement – all of which is usually well beyond the temperamental capabilities of a Southerner'.<sup>32</sup>

On January 21, 1908 a group of Maltese artists founded the Malta Art Amateur Association (MAAA). Their first meeting was held at 70 Strada Levante (West Street) in Valletta, the residence of Robert's brother Edward, who was 'the prime mover' of the society.<sup>33</sup> The president was Major Henry Alexander Balbi, Edward's fellow officer in the Royal Malta Artillery. The collective exhibitions organized by the MAAA in the following years provided Robert and other artists with many opportunities to show their work, and Robert continued to participate in them right until the 1930s.

Robert now moved out of the family home in Valletta to New Street, Sliema, corner with Howard Street. He continued to reside at various addresses in Sliema for the rest of his life, apart from short stays in London and Gozo.

In 1911 Robert was engaged as a commercial artist by Gilbert Whithead & Co. in London,<sup>34</sup> working on advertisements. He received support from London Art Printers to further his studies and followed evening courses in art. One of Robert's well-known commissions in London was the creation of a large copy of the famous

'Bubbles' poster advertising Pears soap, based on a painting by the Pre-Raphaelite painter John Everett Millais.

Robert returned to Malta in 1913.<sup>35</sup> In London he had shared lodgings with the artist Ramiro Cali and some others. Ramiro was the son of Giuseppe Cali, Robert's former tutor. In one of his letters from London two years later, Robert harshly criticized the Carmelite monks for having engaged Ramiro to paint the *cupola* of their church, describing this as a 'sacrilege'. Robert's son Mario later studied art under Ramiro.

In 1910 Giuseppe Cali entered into a close family connection with the Caruana Dinglis, as his daughter Margaret married Antonio Cassar Torreggiani, Robert's first cousin.<sup>36</sup> Antonio's mother Maria Rosaria was the sister of Raphael Caruana Dingli. Antonio and Margaret's house in Valletta was attacked and ransacked on June 7, 1919, during the famous Sette Giugno bread riots, as the Cassar Torreggiani family were among the leading mill owners in Malta.

In his letters to Vincenzo Bonello in 1914–15, Robert harshly criticized Cali, and Vincenzo appears to have shared his views. In his review of the MAAA exhibition of 1913, Vincenzo already reveals a negative stance towards Cali, criticizing him for not supporting the exhibition: 'One notes, of course, the absence of Cali, who contents himself with exhibiting his admirable wares in shop windows, in the public street, in any shop whatsoever, perhaps even among photographs, rather than encouraging institutions which among other things also open their doors, as well as to him, to his colleagues on this island'.<sup>37</sup>

Tension between Robert and Vincenzo on the one hand, and the Cali artists on the other, may have



filtered down over the years. Forty-five years after Robert's death, Rafael Bonnici Calì, grandson of Giuseppe Calì's brother Lorenzo, criticizes Robert as 'lacking invention'. He notes that his favourite teacher was the British painter Solomon Joseph Solomon (1860–1927), 'completely forgetting' Calì, and remarks that Robert was 'assisted by the critic Vincenzo Bonello whose writings were dominating the Maltese art scene at that time'.

Bonnici Calì states that Ramiro Calì was later one of the contenders for the posts at the new School of Art in 1926, but that these were instead given to Vincenzo, Robert and Antonio Micallef, implying that politics and strong lobbying were involved. He suggests that Ramiro and Gianni Vella only 'got a piece of the government cake' in 1928 when Ramiro was appointed to teach art at the Lyceum and Vella taught art in government schools and at the Reformatory.<sup>38</sup>

Fiorentino and Grasso hold that, 'except for a few isolated instances, such as the portrait of Dr Enrico Mizzi, Robert Caruana Dingli was hardly ever to betray any stylistic lineage directly traceable to Giuseppe Calì, his first master at the Lyceum'.<sup>39</sup> They quote Bonnici Calì as stating that Robert 'shrugged off any noticeable influence from [Calì], possibly even disowning any direct source of his artistic upbringing in Malta. For this reason, it appears that Calì was somewhat tepid in his relationship with him, in contrast to the mutual esteem that existed between the former and Edward Caruana Dingli'.<sup>40</sup>

Dominic Cutajar notes:

in spite of their early dependence on the art of Calì and [Lazzaro] Pisani, the cultural environment must have imposed the resolution of this issue in favour of Romanticism. In the case

of the Caruana-Dingli brothers, the wider compass of their travels helped them to escape to some degree the asphyxiating grip of local traditional taste. While the first-hand artistic experience of Calì and Pisani was limited to the southern half of newly united Italy, the Caruana Dinglis travelled fairly extensively.<sup>41</sup>

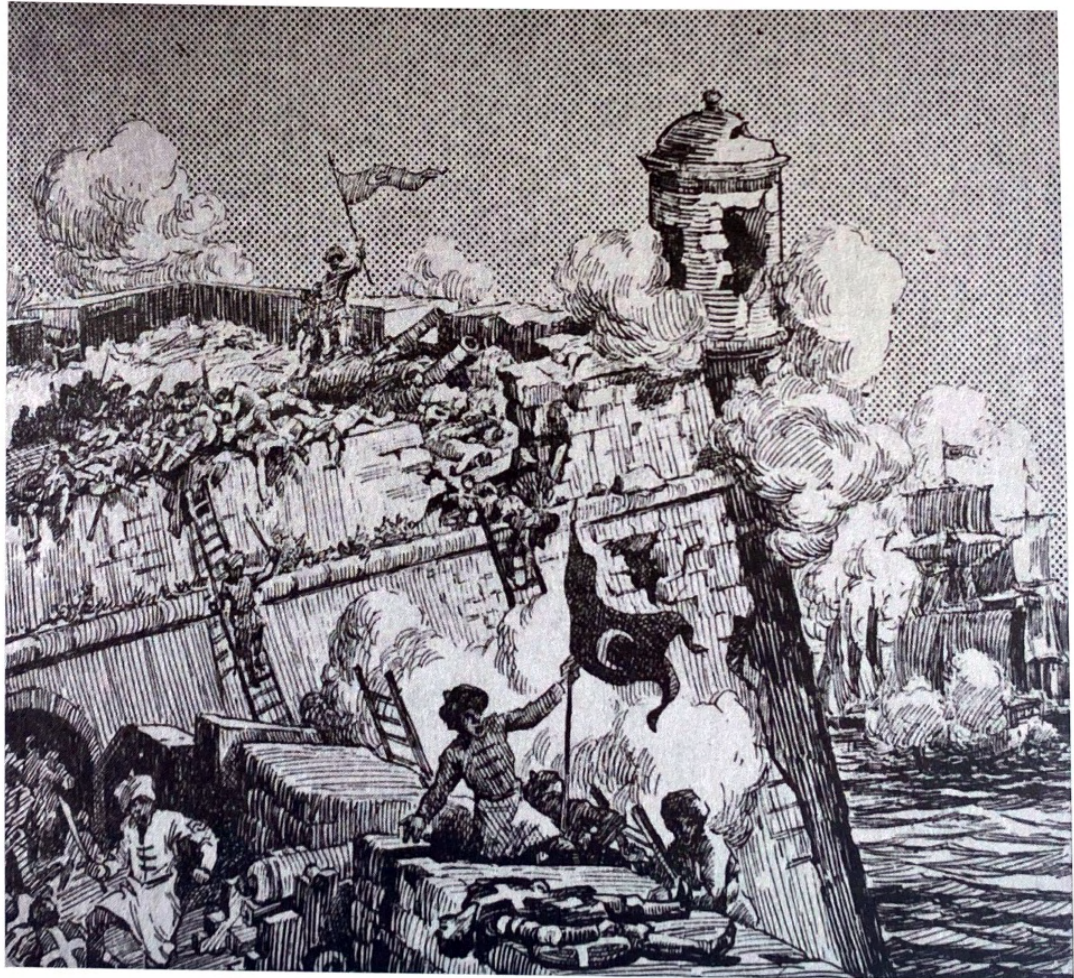
In his private letters, Robert mentions Calì's friendship with Edward and one reason for his antipathy towards Calì at that time could have been misunderstandings between the two brothers. At the same time, Robert asks Vincenzo to send him a photograph of Edward in his uniform, which suggests that he was missing him. He was concerned by the news that Edward had separated from his wife Charlotte.

Robert was evidently upset by a recent quarrel as he constantly asks about Edward, begging Vincenzo to send news of him: 'I should like to hear news of Duardu too because after all a brother is always a brother & I really have forgotten & forgiven all!! In fact I feel as if I had never had a quarrel at all with him - !'

In another letter Robert is pleased to hear that Edward had praised two of his paintings, but then he immediately worries whether Edward was being sarcastic. He was afraid of him thinking he was ridiculous or 'interpreting everything wrongly'. Speculating on the true relationship between the two brothers would be wading into deep waters, as it was surely very personal, emotional and complicated.

Back in Malta in 1913, Robert taught art privately.<sup>42</sup> The previous year he had exhibited at the MAAA event held at Strada Mezzodì (South Street) in Valletta. Vincenzo Bonello, whose father Giovanni





Illustrations by Robert in Rev. Salvatore Laspina's *Outlines of Maltese History*. Clockwise from top: 'Monroy's Wife in Prison'; 'Bernardo, a Heroic Spanish Soldier'; 'The Fall of St. Elmo'.





Illustration by Robert in Laspina's  
*Outlines of Maltese History*: 'The French  
Commander Masson thrown from the  
Balcony'.



Bonello (1858–1920) was a painter linked to Girolamo Gianni,<sup>43</sup> also exhibited some works at the same exhibition, as did the photographer Ellis, the sculptor Sciortino and his uncle the painter Lazzaro Pisani, and Edward Caruana Dingli. Contemporary reviews show that public comparisons between the artistic output of the two Caruana Dingli brothers, now aged twenty and twenty-seven years old, had commenced and this was to continue throughout their lives.<sup>44</sup>

In 1915 Robert formed part of the National Committee for the statue of Christ the King, marking the International Eucharistic Congress of that same year. Other members included Vincenzo Bonello and the sculptor Antonio Sciortino (who executed the statue in bronze), Lazzaro Pisani, Edward Caruana Dingli, the artist Gianni Vella and Dr Enrico Mizzi. A photograph of this committee shows Robert standing next to Vincenzo Bonello (see page 5).<sup>45</sup>

Antonio Sciortino (1879–1947) was close friends with Robert. When Sciortino later asked him for his opinion on his new Great Siege sculpture, Robert replied that he liked its triangular composition, with angles extending from the central headpiece at the top, to the feet of the two other figures on either side at the bottom.<sup>46</sup>

Robert participated in the sixth MAAA exhibition in April 1914. His works were exhibited in the entrance hall together with works by Gianni Vella. Once again his work was favourably reviewed, this time by his friend Vincenzo Bonello, who commented on Robert's work as follows:

... Robert Caruana Dingli who, for the past two years, we have been pointing out to the public to admire for his most original and congenial style and who one day, hopefully not

too distant, will raise our prestige on the continent, continues to express himself magnificently. Above all, he is a poet [...] Robert C. Dingli has now found his way and those who follow artistic efforts and know something about the many 'isms'... can, perhaps, understand what it means to find a style that is personal, pleasing, and far from insincere. And finding a style, a technique, is not even everything; the difficult thing is not to be static or slip into conventions, which reflects weakness and are a mechanical substitute for independence and originality. It is only an artist of strong character who infuses his canvas with his own personality without creating a stereotype. Robert C. Dingli can be recognised in every part of his paintings.<sup>47</sup>

A month later, Robert travelled back to London to sell a painting which he had recently bought from Canon Carmelo Bologna for £19. Robert was convinced that it was by Rembrandt or his school. A court case was instituted and lost by Canon Bologna about the sale of this picture, in which Vincenzo Bonello also testified. The Appeals judgement confirms that Vincenzo's testimony was crucial to the verdict.<sup>48</sup>

Robert wrote an essay, 'Notes on a picture by R.', giving a detailed explanation of why the picture should be attributed to Rembrandt. It is written in English and quotes the work of Dr W. Bode and G. Clausen's Royal Academy lectures on painting, which indicate that it is likely to have been written during or shortly after his trip to England in 1914–15.

Robert wrote a series of personal letters to Vincenzo from London. Only Robert's side of



**Small Boy: Boo-hoo! I ain't done nothink, sir. I-I won't do it again**

A cartoon in *Tatler*, London, 8 January 1908.





Robert in his studio.  
(Courtesy of John and Alaine Baker)





Robert in his studio.  
(Courtesy of John and Alaine Baker)







the correspondence has survived. Their mutual respect and understanding was shaped by a shared passion for art. Robert's private letters to 'Censu', as he affectionately called his friend, reveal aspects of his character, his emotions, his likes and dislikes. They offer intriguing insights into his views on art and artists, and into his own practice as a painter in early twentieth-century Malta.

In these letters, Robert was upset to hear from Vincenzo that Giuseppe Cali was spreading the rumour that Robert's painting was not a Rembrandt. This might also partly explain his negativity towards Cali at this period.

During his stay in London at the outbreak of the First World War, Robert spent his time visiting museums, attending lectures on art, and discussing, studying and reading about painting. Above all, he painted, experimenting with ideas and techniques which he encountered in museums and at lectures, and to which he responded fully, both intellectually and emotionally, as expressed in his personal letters to Vincenzo.

Robert was now in his early thirties, a young man passionately convinced that he wanted to dedicate his life completely to art. He went to London hoping fervently, and somewhat naively, to sell the antique painting that he had recently acquired, for a sum that would enable him to retire to the countryside in Malta. He wrote to Vincenzo that he dreamed of living in a beautiful, quiet place where

they could devote themselves to art together and shut out all mundane concerns.

His plan to sell the picture did not work out, partly due to the unfortunate timing of the start of the Great War, or perhaps because he failed to grasp opportunities or establish the right contacts. He returned to Malta and his path took quite a different course to the carefree life that he had yearned for. Within a year he was married and soon became responsible for a young and growing family, with the usual domestic worries and bills to pay.

Robert had plenty of time and opportunity to visit the art galleries and museums of London, to attend art lectures, and to borrow art books from the well-stocked London libraries. He wondered whether he should try to find some work in advertising.

The art critic Dominic Cutajar noted that Robert had absorbed considerable British influence during his years in London.<sup>49</sup> Robert's colleague at the School of Art, the artist Carmelo Mangion, was also of the opinion that he was particularly influenced by English art.<sup>50</sup>

Robert's letters reveal his taste in art. One of his great favourites was the painter Corot, whose works he described as 'glorious'. He writes to Vincenzo that touching Corot's pictures would be greater than putting a finger in holy water, and that he is spending hours looking at his work,

*clockwise from top:*

Robert working on an enlargement of *A Child's World* (later commonly referred to as 'Bubbles') by Sir John Everett Millais for Pears Soap, in London.

A reproduction featuring a corner of the artist's studio at St Ignatius Junction in Sliema, during his time at the Government School of Art. A self-portrait by Robert can be seen at the top left-hand corner.

Edward and Robert Caruana Dingli with some of their students from the Government School of Art.

learning from the way he achieves his sky effects, especially the depth and luminous quality of the darker greens and black in his work.

Robert was not keen on contemporary art, noting that he could not really understand it and would not be proud to paint pictures like that, 'their difficulty is to paint so badly there I think is the merit – portraits of ladies face emerald green & orange lips & banana hats! I really can't see where is the merit'.

In London Robert was busy working on several new landscapes. He was always intensely interested in colour, and it was recalled by those who knew him that he was:

constantly in search of new colour shades and a typical preoccupation of his was the blending of various colours for the desired shades. He used to select the colour in his paintings according to planned colour schemes so that each work obeyed a chromatic sequence without interruptions or abrupt contrasts. He used this technique when painting mountains or rocks, which were among his favourite subjects, precisely because in the shifting from one hue to another he could better produce the various textures of harsh surfaces.<sup>51</sup>

On the sea journey back from London, one of the German Kaiser's submarines had surfaced in the

vicinity of the ship which Robert was travelling on, terrifying him and the rest of the passengers.<sup>52</sup> Soon after his return to Malta, Robert attended a dinner in honour of Antonio Sciortino, organized by the '*Artisti, Amatori e Cultori di Belle Arti*', and held at the Hotel d'Angleterre on July 24, 1915. The guests included Robert's brother Edward, Vincenzo Bonello, Augustus Bartolo, Enrico Mizzi, Ugo Mifsud and other prominent members of the professional classes.<sup>53</sup>

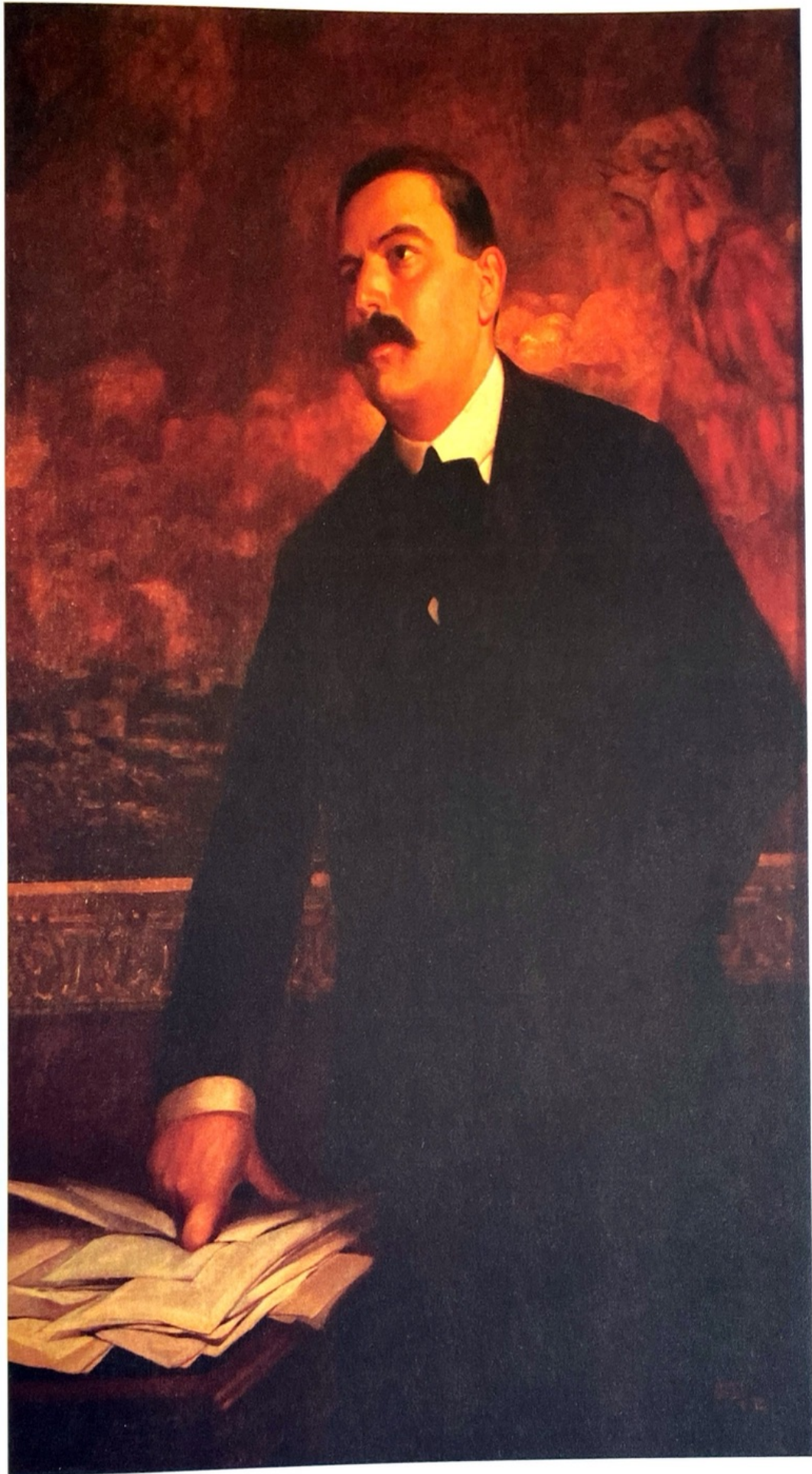
A year later, on October 24, 1916, Robert married Carmela Aquilina at the Church of Our Lady of Graces in High Street, Sliema. She was seventeen years his junior, and the wedding reception was held at her family home at 5, Capua Street, Sliema.<sup>54</sup> The train-bearers were Robert's niece Helen (Nelly), then ten years old, and Carmela's younger sister Ġużeppa. Carmela was the third eldest of ten siblings.<sup>55</sup>

The couple moved to Candilli House in Stella Maris Street in Sliema, where Robert had a studio upstairs. Robert always chose the top floor for his studios, in order to gain as much natural light as possible. Carmela often modelled for his paintings, and prepared his canvases for him, stretching them on wooden frames. His niece Nelly also once modelled for Robert in his studio, for a painting of a saint.<sup>56</sup>

Robert's mother Marta died on April 18, 1917, and later that year Robert and Carmela's first child

Robert Caruana Dingli, *Portrait of Dr Enrico Mizzi LL.D.*, oil on canvas, 129 x 95cm. An inscription on the frame reads: A "LA GIOVINE MALTA" / QUESTA EFFIGIE DEL SUO PRESIDENTE / ENRICO MIZZI / CHE DEL CIRCOLO PATRIOTTICAMENTE OPEROSO / IMPERSONÒ LA FIEREZZA E L'ARDORE / ROBERTO C. DINGLI / INTERPRETANDO IL DESIDERIO DEI SOCI / DIPINSE E DONÒ / VII MAGGIO MCMXX. (The Fortunato & Enrico Mizzi Foundation, Malta / Photo courtesy of Prevarti)









Two bronze sculptures by Robert of his own hands, that were converted into door knockers by his son Mario.



Ugo was born. Robert's father Raphael died the following year on December 31, 1918 at seventy-three years of age. Robert loved his parents dearly as is clear from his private letters, in which he was constantly asking after them and his older sister Nina and her children.

Robert's most famous achievement in 1918 was an Orientalist frieze, commissioned by the Colombos Cigarette Company. The theme was chosen as the tobacco company was associated with Egypt. This work originally hung in the Colombos shop in Kingsway, Valletta, and is now in a café at the Strand in Sliema. He was awarded a gold medal by the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce for this achievement. The judging committee noted that, 'this work reflects some of the latest tendencies in European decorative art. We would mention specifically the name of Brangwyn, whose influence here has been put to such excellent and yet entirely personal use by Mr R.C. Dingli'.<sup>57</sup> Robert was certainly familiar with the work of Brangwyn, as evidenced in his letters of 1915 to Vincenzo.

The Colombos frieze is a continuation of the advertising work at which Robert had already tried his hand in London in 1913. The judging committee noted that:

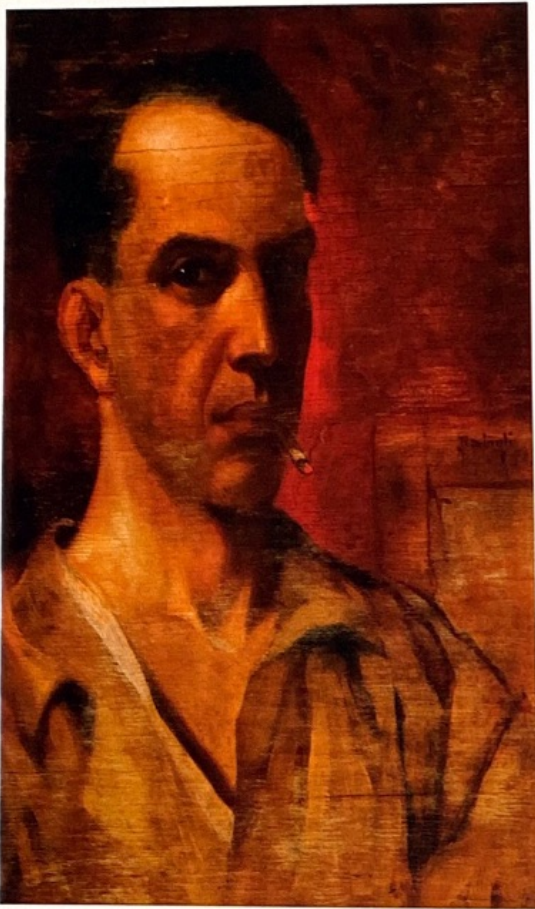
it seems to us that Mr R.C. Dingli has here, beyond any shadow of doubt, established his claim to be an artist in the truest sense of the word and, perhaps, as a decorator he finds his truest expression. Undoubtedly his work compares well with the best of its kind to be found in England and the Continent. The Firm of Colombos is to be congratulated in introducing into Malta a form of art which is believed to be the logical outcome of the great work of the past.

Another well-known piece of commercial art of the period is the Farsons' bottle label of 1929, created for its Pale Ale, which depicts the god Neptune. Apart from the original painting, this image also appeared as a line drawing in newspaper adverts in the late 1920s and 30s. To date it was unclear whether this advert was the work of Robert or his brother Edward. A Christmas card issued by Farsons in 1989 stated that the artist was Robert, while elsewhere it is said to have been by Edward.<sup>58</sup> However a label for Cisk beer is clearly signed by Robert, which may settle the matter.

In 1919 Robert and Carmela's daughter Helen was born, and in the early 1920s the young family moved to Gozo, together with Carmela's sister Ġużeppa. Robert was commissioned to carry out work for Gozitan churches, and also taught art at the Seminary. They lived in Archbishop Pietro Pace Street in Rabat. Their next child was born there and named George after the parish saint.<sup>59</sup>

Robert's mother Marta Garrone was born in Gozo, so he had Gozitan relatives. His friends in Gozo included the sculptor Wistin Camilleri, who used a sketch of St George by Robert to create a statue of the saint. Robert also knew Judge Luigi Camilleri who lived in the same street, Mr Bondì who was a family friend, and Sir Arturo Mercieca who asked Robert to paint a frieze for his children's nursery. Robert did not charge for the frieze, as Mercieca had also not charged him any professional fees for legal advice.<sup>60</sup>

At Munxar church Robert featured his self-portrait as a soul in purgatory (see page 322), as well as Carmela's face in one of the figures looking up at him. He painted commissions for Ta' Pinu Sanctuary, which was still under construction, and the churches of St George at Rabat, Fontana, Xagħra, Munxar, Għasri and Żebbuġ. From Gozo



*from left:*

Robert Caruana Dingli, *Self-portrait with Cigarette*,  
oil on board, 51 x 38cm.

(Courtesy of Mr & Mrs G. Glanville / Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis)

Robert Caruana Dingli, *Self-portrait as an Artist*,  
oil on canvas, 74 x 56cm.

(Private Collection, Malta)



he wrote another series of letters to his good friend Vincenzo Bonello, which have also survived.

The Gozo episode ended on a sour note as Robert hot-headedly slashed one of his paintings at Ta' Pinu with a palette knife following a disagreement with the priests concerning payment. He reused this canvas for a view of the Grand Harbour which was sent to Malta House in London, and refused to do any more work for the church authorities. He was later privately commissioned to paint an image of St Paul. The owner informed him that the painting was gaining miraculous powers, and Robert found this very amusing.<sup>61</sup>

Robert was asked to a private meeting to discuss the quarrel at Ta' Pinu with the young bishop of Gozo, Michael Gonzi, but soon he and Carmela returned to Malta, packing their possessions and furniture onto a rented *luzzu* boat.<sup>62</sup> They then lived at Mrabat Street, in Prince of Wales Road, and at 'Edison House' in St Ignatius Junction, all in Sliema.

Robert received the silver medal in the Malta Preliminary Show for the British Empire Exhibition held in 1924, and the following year he participated in another collective exhibition organized by the MAAA.<sup>63</sup>

Following the granting of the 1921 Constitution, national elections were held in Malta.<sup>64</sup> Political parties were divided along pro-British and pro-Italian lines. Robert published political satire in *Malta Punch* and his drawings display an antipathy for the Constitutional Party, especially Sir Gerald Strickland and Augustus Bartolo. Robert's sympathies lay with the Partito Democratico Nazionale, and one of his most successful portraits is of its pro-Italian leader Dr Enrico ('Nerik') Mizzi.<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, his brother Edward was a pro-British Stricklandian, and their first cousin

Antonio Cassar Torreggiani once even came to physical blows with Enrico Mizzi in Valletta in 1920.<sup>66</sup>

Monsignor Francesco Ferris was appointed Minister for Public Instruction in 1921. Ferris promoted the establishing of a school of art, however this was only taken forward by the next Minister, Monsignor Enrico Dandria, under the Partito Nazionale led by lawyers Ugo Mifsud and Enrico Mizzi. The School of Art opened at 'Tessi School' in Valletta in 1926, with lessons held in the evenings from 4.30 to 7.30pm.

Competitive examinations for posts at the School of Art were announced in the Government Gazette in July 1925. Robert applied and Antonio Sciortino, then Director of the British Academy in Rome, acted as one of the examiners together with two Italian professors in Rome, Secondo Chiardola and Cipriano E. Oppo.<sup>67</sup>

On February 17, 1926, Robert was appointed as Teacher of Drawing.<sup>68</sup> Antonio Micallef was appointed to teach modelling and Vincenzo Bonello taught history of art. Secondo Chiardola joined as Teacher of Ceramics, and Robert also became Acting Director of the school. He continued to work and teach at the school, while also caring for his growing family. His eldest son Ugo was first educated by the Freres brothers at Villa Schinas in Sliema, and then at the Umberto Primo Lyceum in Valletta. His third son, Mario, was born in 1927.

Robert liked painting rocks and mountains and emphasized that a good painting should be able to capture the 'massive weight' of the mountains.<sup>69</sup> On this point, Robert may have been influenced by a lecture he had heard in London in 1914, delivered in front of the picture *Regent's Park* by Crome, in which the lecturer discussed colour and 'weight'.

He also liked painting trees. Robert would memorize the 'textures and forms of various trees, leaves, branches, and trunks until he could draw or paint specific types of trees in detail from memory, with particular preference for the birch tree'. He was also fascinated by sails, and:

often, with the help of a camera, he recorded the different riggings of sail-powered boats and ships entering harbour. The problem was that none of them had their sails unfurled. When he was told that no boat enters harbour with its sails unfurled, he stopped insisting that there was no sail in sight. His persistence and perseverance were rewarded when, in Pietà creek, he once located a vessel in full sail; they had been stretched out to dry after a rainy day. At last he could see the various shades and textures of sails for his paintings.<sup>70</sup>

On the subject of imitation, in his letters Robert riles against 'photographic' paintings, also criticizing his brother Edward for his 'photographic-like pictures'. When Helene Buhagiar, an art correspondent in the Maltese press and secretary of the MAAA, wondered how he had managed to paint the North Pole, he retorted that although he had never met Christ in person he still painted him. The conversation has survived in the family memory as follows - Helen: '*Ma kontx naf, Rob, li mort in-North Pole*'. Robert: '*Jien qatt ma ltqajt mal-Padre Etern, imma xbajt inpingih*'.<sup>71</sup>

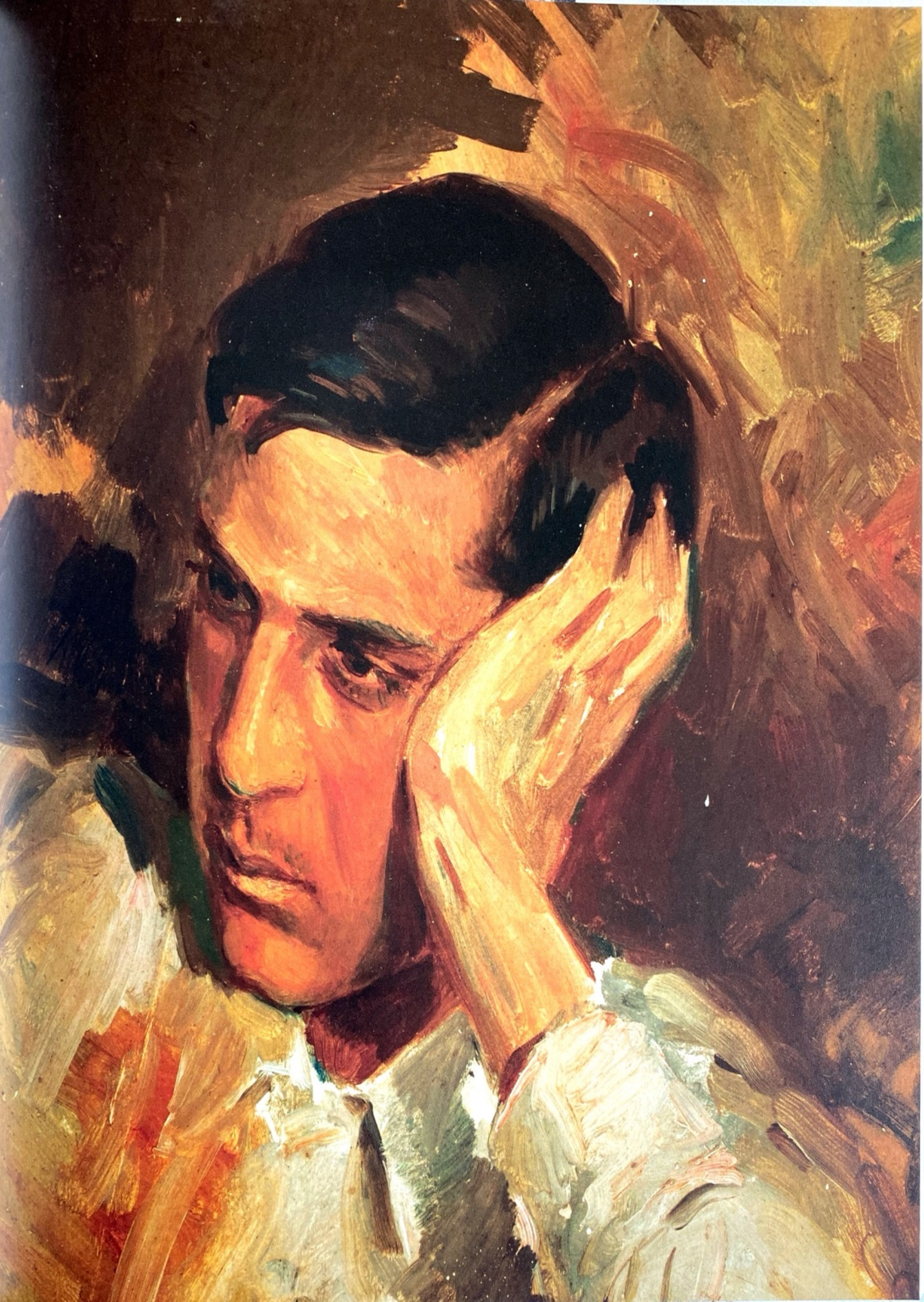
Robert shared his misgivings about portraits resembling photographs with his friend Vincenzo. In a review of 1914, Vincenzo praised some of Edward's portraits for not just being cold photographs with some colour added, but having been 'filtered' through the mind of the artist: 'they are not a cold photographic enlargement, tinted with colour, but the image filtered through the mind of the artist and affixed on the canvas'.<sup>72</sup>

In his letters Robert quotes from *The Art of Landscape Painting in Oil Colour* by Alfred William East on the use of photography and imitation, and tells Vincenzo: 'Duardu should read these remarks so that he will learn that art is not by imitation of nature only - photography is altogether out of question'. Robert's doubts about the use of photography in painting were of course not absolute, and he himself also made some use of a camera for his work.<sup>73</sup> His friend Paul Agius Catania D'Amico (1898-1978) also took photographs for him.<sup>74</sup>

In London Robert wanted to photograph a beautiful landscape for Vincenzo but was afraid that it would lose 'the value of its shadow'. Vincenzo commented on photography in a review of Robert's work in 1918: 'Photography has, perhaps, ended the era of the great portrait painters. Portraits are commissioned requesting not more than a resemblance. This is quickly outlined by the sensitive hand and mechanical methods enable this to be transferred to the canvas'.<sup>75</sup>

Robert Caruana Dingli, *Self-portrait in Deep Thought*,  
oil on board, 26 x 24cm.  
(Courtesy of Debbie Caruana Dingli / Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis)







# GISK BEER



NO BLOOMIN JOKE  
ITS

**CISK**

Dingli

PRINTED AT THE BREWERY.

**You'll take no risk  
if you keep on CISK.**



A major problem for Robert erupted when Edward was appointed Teacher of Painting and Visiting Supervisor of the School of Art on November 18, 1929. The following year, Edward was promoted Director and Teacher of Painting and of Technical Design at the school, instead of Robert who was still Acting Director.<sup>76</sup> Edward was fifty-five years old at this point, and Robert was forty-eight.

The party in power was now the Constitutional Party, led by Strickland. Sir Augustus Bartolo was Minister for Education and had nominated Edward for the post. Edward painted a portrait of Bartolo in 1930.<sup>77</sup> Robert had been Acting Director of the school for four years and was extremely upset that Edward had been appointed over his head. Bartolo is not likely to have been particularly endeared towards Robert, who had drawn harsh satirical cartoons of him for the newspapers, particularly in 1921–22. In his cartoons for *The Malta Punch*, a short-lived newspaper, Robert depicted Bartolo in the clothes of a primitive savage wearing a toilet paper roll on a chain around his neck, as a Scottish highlander, and holding a bag of coins with £30,000 written on it (see pages 139, 147, 144). In the cartoon where he is dressed as a savage, Bartolo stands at a vanity table looking into a mirror in the shape of a large coin.

This is a play on Bartolo's interest in money and his ownership of the pro-British newspaper *The Malta Chronicle*. After the 1919 bread riots, Bartolo

had requested £30,000 from the government as damages for the attack on his printing press, but he only received £9000, still considered far too generous by his critics.<sup>78</sup> One of Robert's cartoons is captioned '*Il-veru salib ta' Malta*' with the words '*Il-marda chronica*' tied around Bartolo's neck.

In *The Malta Punch*, Robert depicts Sir Gerald Strickland holding a truncheon under his arm (see page 151). His party was nicknamed the '*Partit tal-lembuga*' (party of the truncheon) as Strickland had authorized the use of truncheons<sup>79</sup> by the Police.<sup>80</sup> In another cartoon the Labour Party politician Pier Frendo is depicted as a very small man holding an incense burner with Strickland towering above him. This alludes to Strickland having called him 'the little advocate', and *Malta Punch* calls him Pierino the altar-boy.<sup>81</sup>

In his resignation letter from the School of Art years later, Edward requested a pension stating that he was discriminated against politically when Robert was appointed in 1926. The comparison between the two posts does not quite hold as Edward did not compete in the public examination through which Robert had been selected. Edward claimed that Francesco Ferris had promised him a post at the new art school, also asking him to design the furniture and the syllabus, but he was later ignored by Enrico Dandria who wanted to appoint an Italian professor. As this professor failed to come to Malta, the post was left vacant with Robert in the role of Acting Director.<sup>82</sup>

An advertisement for Cisk beer by Robert Caruana Dingli in the early 1930s features a mischievous boy. The same figure appears on the front cover of the children's magazine *La Bibliotechina Dei Ragazzi: Fiabe e Leggende Maltesi* (see page 53).  
(Courtesy of the Farsons Collection / Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis)



A beer advertisement for Farsons by Robert Caruana Dingli.  
(Courtesy of Debbie Caruana Dingli / Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis)





An advertisement for Cisk beer by Robert Caruana Dingli.  
(Courtesy of the Farsons Collection / Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis)





**CANADIAN PACIFIC**



R.M.S. "EMPRESS OF BRITAIN" and  
"EMPRESS OF IRELAND."  
14,500 TONS: 15,000 H.P.

**EMPRESSES OF THE ATLANTIC.**  
HOLD ALL RECORDS  
BETWEEN LIVERPOOL AND CANADA  
IN DIRECT CONNECTION WITH  
CANADIAN PACIFIC EXPRESS TRAINS  
TO ALL PARTS OF CANADA.

EMIGRANTS MET AT LIVERPOOL BY CANADIAN PACIFIC  
OFFICIALS, AND CARRIED THROUGH TO DESTINATION  
ON CANADIAN PACIFIC TICKETS. SPECIAL CARE TAKEN  
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ARCHER BAKER, European Manager.  
GEO. M.L. BROWN, General Traffic Agent. H. S. CARMICHAEL, General Passenger Agent. H. D. ANNABLE, General Freight Agent.



from top:  
1938 Malta Carnival posters.  
(Courtesy of Belgravia Auction Gallery)

An example (on the front cover) of Robert's advertising work.  
(Private Collection, Malta)



Edward's letter confirms that Robert held pro-Italian leanings and sympathized with Enrico Mizzi, while Edward supported Strickland and the Constitutional Party. Their student Maria Ingloft recalled that when Robert took his classes on outdoor excursions, with war approaching, they were sometimes followed by plain-clothes policemen due to the pro-Italian sympathies of some of Robert's group.<sup>83</sup>

In this fraternal rivalry at the Government School of Art, the Maltese context at the time is relevant, as very limited opportunities existed for an artist to make a living. Teaching posts were not well paid, but they did provide a steady income. Robert struggled to make ends meet for his young and growing family, and while Edward had more commercial success he must have had his financial challenges. This is set into perspective by the financial situation of their former master, Giuseppe Cali who, in spite of his good reputation and popularity, was the subject of a caricature on his 'desperate position to sell his work in order to provide a decent living for his family' and whose 'teaching activities served mainly to alleviate his financial status'.<sup>84</sup>

As quoted in Fiorentino and Grasso (1991), Rafel Bonnici Cali said:

The plight of local artists during Cali's time was a continuous struggle for survival which often reduced them to poverty. They deserved a better treatment from both the government and the general public. On his part, Cali did not manage, albeit long years of arduous work, to buy a house for the family he loved so much. Eventually he died like a pauper, assisted only by his daughter Stella who remained a spinster. While her sisters were lucky to have rich husbands (though

her brothers lived less comfortably), she found no one to support her, and spent her last years at the Apap Institute for poor ladies.<sup>85</sup>

The cut-throat competition between artists emerges in the rivalry between Cali and the Italian artist Attilio Palombi to obtain a commission for the church of the Franciscan Conventuals. They had already signed a contract with Palombi, yet Cali managed to persuade the Franciscans to give the job to him instead. According to Fiorentino and Grasso:

he managed to sway the Friars' sympathy towards him, helped in no small way by the influence exercised by Fr Guido Micallef. The undermined Palombi was thus unceremoniously left out in the cold and reasonably enough he took the Friars to court, winning the case for damages. All along Cali remained unperturbed, simply satisfied with the outcome that had secured for him the commission.<sup>86</sup>

According to former students, both Caruana Dingli brothers insisted on realism and did not like experimental concepts, with Robert calling Futurism 'the art of the incompetent'.<sup>87</sup> Their students were well prepared for the conservative academic style and preferences of the Regia Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome, where several continued their studies afterwards. Edward Sammut, a contemporary of Robert's students, noted that his art was 'nineteenth-century' in some aspects.<sup>88</sup>

Esprit Barthet recalled that Robert believed in a strict academic training in art as the strong foundation necessary to achieve a high standard, although he was less strict than Edward.<sup>89</sup> The syllabus at the School of Art was spread over

a period of six to eight years. In the first year, Robert taught the laws of perspective, including 'copying directly from exercises set by the teacher on the blackboard'. The second year focused on drawing still-life arrangements, emphasizing 'the dimensional relationship between objects'. In the third year students began watercolour, and the fourth year continued with chalk figures, still life and further exercises 'in the art of controlled drawing'.<sup>90</sup>

In the fifth year they were under Edward Caruana Dingli, 'and here for six months they were taught the art of drawing with charcoal and chalk', moving on to 'monochromatic experiments'. The sixth year focused on various media, including oils, with portrait painting and modelling 'aimed towards achieving a third dimensional element in painting'. After six years, some students stayed on to specialize in their preferred branch of art.<sup>91</sup>

Esprit Barthet and other students learnt to look at art 'from a strictly professional viewpoint', recalling that 'work was hard. The emphasis lay on discipline and it could be said that the development of experimental concepts was not feasible. The Caruana Dingli brothers would accept nothing that was based on plastic criteria'.<sup>92</sup> In 1989 Barthet still admired how Robert obtained an effect of transparency in his paintings through a complicated *velatura* technique where layers of paint were applied to the canvas until the right colour and effect was obtained.<sup>93</sup>

Maria Inglott, formerly Pitré, recalled 'painting the face of a boy as pale as she saw it during the life class. While Robert commented that it was true to life, Edward passed negative remarks because of the paleness of the face. Although [she] insisted that this was her precise intention, Edward imposed his ideas and even took up brush and paint to redden the boy's complexion'. On another occasion, she was painting a portrait of 'a lady with a very white complexion and who wore a purple hat during the sitting. [She] painted the lady in a natural light while Edward insisted on artificial light. Consequently the portrait was left unfinished'.<sup>94</sup>

Both family and students recall Robert's sense of humour, which also emerges in his letters to Vincenzo Bonello. Maria Inglott related an incident at the School of Art when he drew a caricature of his student Emmanuel Attard Cassar, depicting him as a wading bird known as a '*xifa*' (avocet) to everyone's pleasure, including the student. He frequently spent time at Valletta coffee shops with his students. Robert invited them to take part in a collective exhibition with him, which was held at the Grand Studio in Republic Street, corner with St John Street in Valletta, in around 1935.<sup>95</sup>

Fiorentino suggests that Edward had more of an impact with the public 'thanks to a more extrovert character expressed through a painterly insistence on glowing colours which are less in keeping with the hallmark of draughtsmanship in

Details from a frieze painted for a Colombos Ltd establishment in Valletta, oil on canvas, 46 x 1380cm. (Courtesy of Tony's Bar, Sliema)







R. Caruana Dingli

19/4/1940

AGV assd

James

Parlatriggias

Marta

Luigi Mier

---

Vincenzo  
Esprit  
Giorgio Pucca

(Attard) Janas

Ida R. Camilleri

St. Mercedes

J. Mercieca

Uroa futajar

Alf. Mercieca

Luca Sammut

Marcelle Denaro

George Borg

(Rev) P. T. D'Org. C.F. (St. Albert's Central School)

And. Micallef

Vincenzo Papp

R. J. Askel

Walter Bonutt

Cassia Dreffiaies

Giuseppe Mouscat



Robert's style'.<sup>96</sup> He also notes that:

Edward attained greater popularity in his time than Robert himself, and though luck might have had its fair share in this, a possible greater driving force on the part of Edward might also have played its part as well. I am making out this point because essentially there is not much to differentiate in the standards of production between the two brothers. Only a valid assessment by some art historian specially interested in the way Maltese art developed between the Wars can place the two artists in their right perspective.<sup>97</sup>

Robert's work includes a number of fine etchings. He was introduced to this art form by the artist Carmelo Mangion, who taught etching at the School of Art.<sup>98</sup> He was sometimes also assisted by Frank Portelli with his etching work.<sup>99</sup>

Robert's student, the artist Josef Kalleya, said:

I always admired him as a great Maltese artist, from whose maturity and artistic experience Malta still benefits. When I was still at the School of Art, he wanted me to paint from a plaster model (instead of from life), just the head of the statue 'Discobolo'. When I took it home, as Robert had liked it I stuck on some board behind glass, framed it and called it 'St Dominic'. I exhibited it in Malta and also in London: it is still

in my studio and when I look at it I remember Robert.<sup>100</sup>

According to Esprit Barthet:

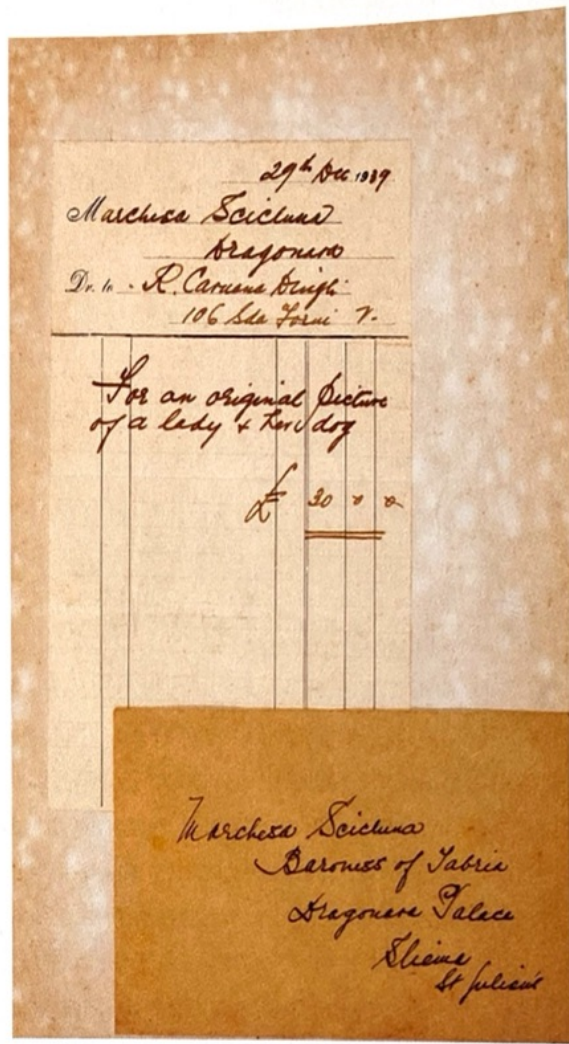
a particular brand of watercolours was distributed with great parsimony to students at the school. Unless the colour tube was completely empty, it was not replaced. Each student had an old Oxo metal box in which he kept his colour tubes, each of which cost five and a half pence. The school provided free paper. There was, however, a nominal fee of two shillings six pence.<sup>101</sup>

Barthet described Robert's studio as being on the top floor of the School of Art, while Maria Inglott said that Robert's art class was held on the first floor of the building with oil painting being taught on the second floor, and that his lecture room was next door to the one used by Vincenzo Bonello.<sup>102</sup> His student Willie Apap painted a portrait of Robert in 1935.

Giuseppe Arcidiacono was also a student, and remembered an outdoor lesson in Valletta given by Robert at the Banjjiet ta' San Rokku (the St Roque Baths), opposite Ta' Xbiex. Robert liked Arcidiacono's watercolour that day, particularly his handling of black in the picture. His encouragement pushed Arcidiacono to later choose watercolour as his favourite medium. Robert also persuaded him to draw landscapes rather than human figures. He particularly

A list of signatures of people who attended Robert's funeral.  
(Courtesy of Bertha Caruana Dingli)





from left:

Robert Caruana Dingli, *A Lady and her Dog* (unfinished; was commissioned by Marchesa Scicluna and is said to feature an ancestress), oil on canvas, 130 x 93cm.

A handwritten invoice for the painting mentioned above.

(Courtesy of Petra and Gordon Caruana Dingli / Photos: Peter Bartolo Parnis)

remembered Robert also liking his use of black in a watercolour painting of an ink-pot during a still-life class, and the clarity with which Robert explained the technique of washes for obtaining different shades of the same colour. He noted that as a teacher Robert had provided him with 'the solid technical background on which he could develop his artistic qualities'.<sup>103</sup>

Adrian Stivala interviewed Arcidiacono in 1989, and noted that he was 'just concluding a watercolour of St. John's Co-cathedral in Valletta depicted against a black background where the dark colour is treated in the same manner commented upon by Robert over fifty years earlier. Such was the influence of Robert Caruana Dingli on the generation of artists which he taught from 1929 onwards'.

Vincenzo Bonello's review of Robert's 'Colombos' frieze emphasized the importance of technique and the Old Masters, and seems wholly convergent with Robert's views. In his letters from London, Robert misses enjoying long walks along the seafront in Pietà with Vincenzo, discussing art. One could imagine that these are the kind of conversations they might have had on their walks. Vincenzo writes:

Technique, in spite of what is said, can never rise to a form of art that is a means in itself and all is well. This is why stylistic finesse and technical bravura fade away over time. And it is also true that while many masterpieces are hardly ever technically perfect, many works which are technically perfect are hardly ever masterpieces.

Yet it is also true that without the method it is difficult to reach the goal. And that if Titian and Giorgione, Rembrandt and Tintoretto had not had solid technical knowledge, today

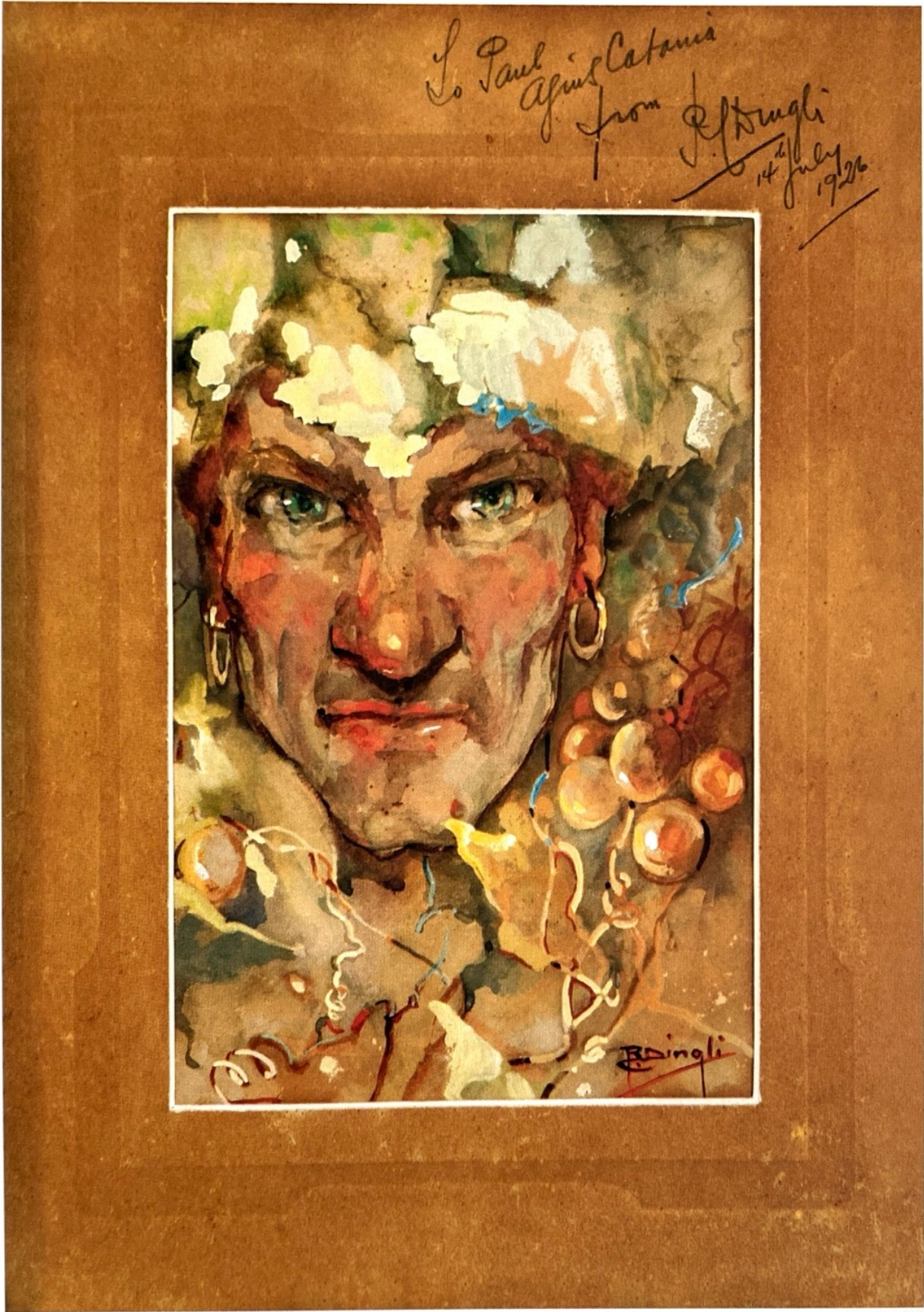
we would not admire their precious canvases and their names would not be so great, they would not occupy the space of Titans [...] But why do older canvases seem younger? Why is the colour of old canvases more fresh, glazed, eternal?

Some might believe that old masters used materials whose secrets have been lost to us... as though alchemy ever sustained art! In five long, patient, and persevering years of study of the old masters, Robert Caruana Dingli has found that which for many is the philosopher's stone, or the secret – a secret which reveals itself to those who earnestly approach the greatness of the old masters – the depth, aura, luminosity within the shadows, the glazes of the light, the true quality – in each subject represented and present in every square inch of old canvas.<sup>104</sup>

During the last ten years of his life, Robert lived in St Dominic Street in Sliema, corner with Prince of Wales Road. In 1936 he presented his 'Rembrandt' picture on loan to the Museum of Art, where Vincenzo Bonello was now Curator of Works of Art. In the Government Gazette, Vincenzo described it as 'a portrait of *Dragut* ascribed to Rembrandt'.<sup>105</sup> The Museums Department offered to buy the painting in exchange for property, but Robert once again refused to sell and hung on to his treasured picture.

In August 1937 Robert held a solo exhibition at the Valletta studio of his friend, the photographer Richard Ellis. A review of this exhibition, signed by 'A.' (*amico* ?), expressed views closely resembling those of Vincenzo in other writings, emphasizing the poetic qualities of Robert's works and the importance of solid technical skills which withstand the test of time. The similarities of thought and





Robert Caruana Dingli, *Bacchus*, 14 July 1926,  
watercolour, 19.5 x 15cm.  
(Courtesy of Mr & Mrs G. Glanville / Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis)





Robert Caruana Dingli, *Paul Agius Catania D'Amico*,  
ink and wash, 24.5 x 10.5cm.  
(Courtesy of Mr & Mrs G. Glanville / Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis)



language in his review of 1919, suggest that this piece is by the same author.<sup>106</sup>

Robert and Carmela were devastated when their five-year-old son John died of meningitis in 1939, and Robert's health was now also deteriorating. He was a very heavy smoker, and several of his paintings depict him with a cigarette, and he probably also had tuberculosis. He visited Moudon in the Swiss Alps to try and improve his condition, and some of his paintings of the mountains stem from these visits. He also visited Catania for medical advice about his lungs.

He retired from the School of Art in 1939, very soon after war broke out in September. His last painting was commissioned by Marchesa Scicluna, to whom Robert sent an invoice for £30 on December 29, 1939.<sup>107</sup> The painting is of a lady and her dog, and it seems unfinished. His strength was fading. Robert's painting of a quayside scene at the Grand Harbour was exhibited in the Malta Court at the Imperial Institute, later the Commonwealth Institute in Kensington, London, in 1939.<sup>108</sup>

Robert died on February 18, 1940. His funeral was held the following day and he was buried in the family grave at the Addolorata Cemetery in Paola. His funeral was attended by Enrico Mizzi as well as some of his former students, including Esprit Barthet and Vincent Apap.<sup>109</sup> One of his favourite students, Anton Inglott, was studying in Rome

at the time, and wrote a letter of condolence to Edward. Vincent Apap was Robert's successor at the School of Art, and was appointed as Teacher of Drawing in May 1940. Apap later became head of the school following Edward's retirement in 1947.<sup>110</sup>

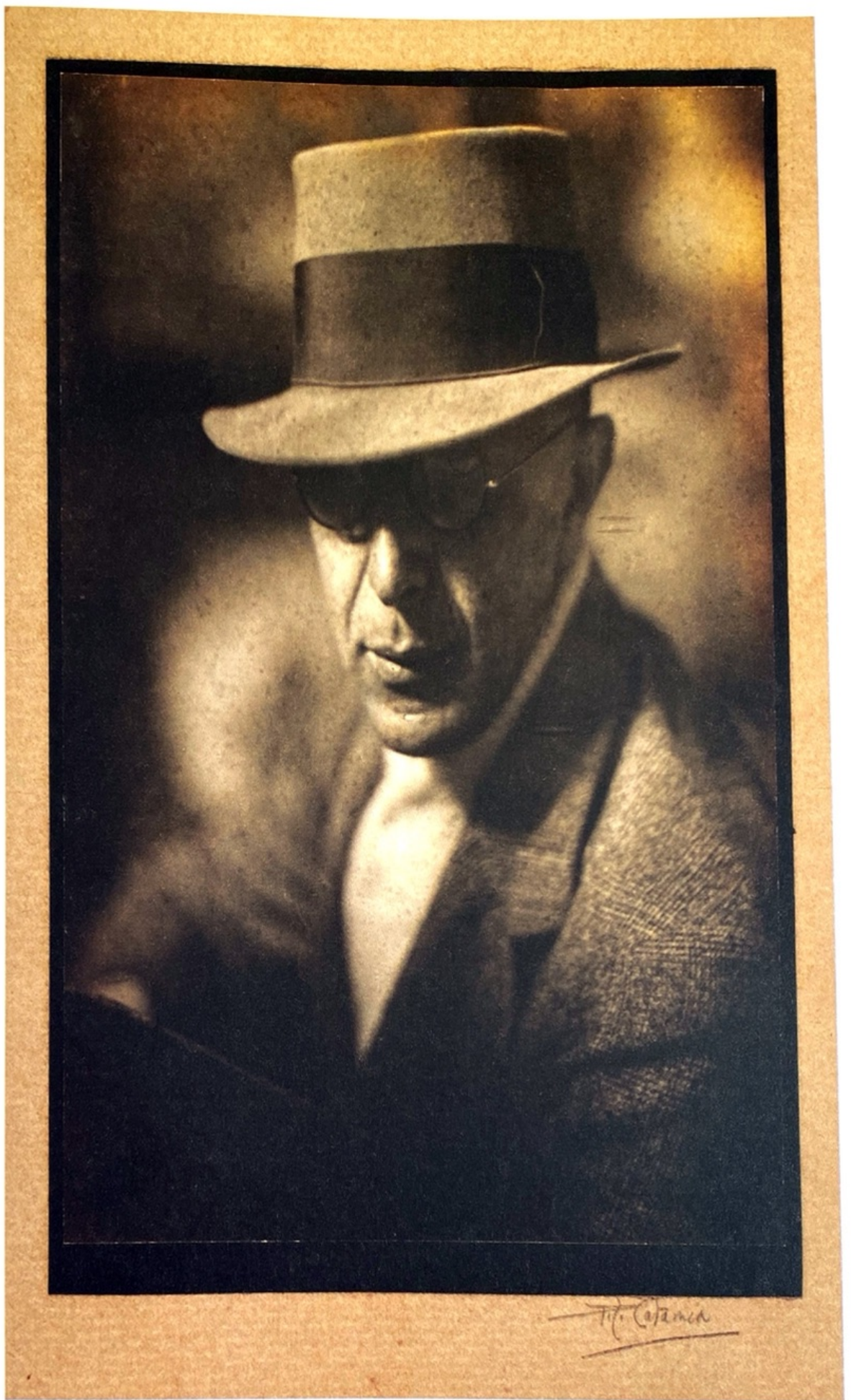
Robert's wife Carmela died twenty years later, on April 18, 1961, at sixty-two years of age. Soon after Robert's death she had faced more grief when her daughter Ellen died in 1943 aged only twenty-four; however Carmela was outlived by her three sons Ugo, George and Mario.

A commemorative exhibition of Robert's work was held at the Museum of Fine Arts in 1980 on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. A bust of Robert by the sculptor George Borg was donated to the National Museum of Fine Arts by Robert's son Mario in 1973.

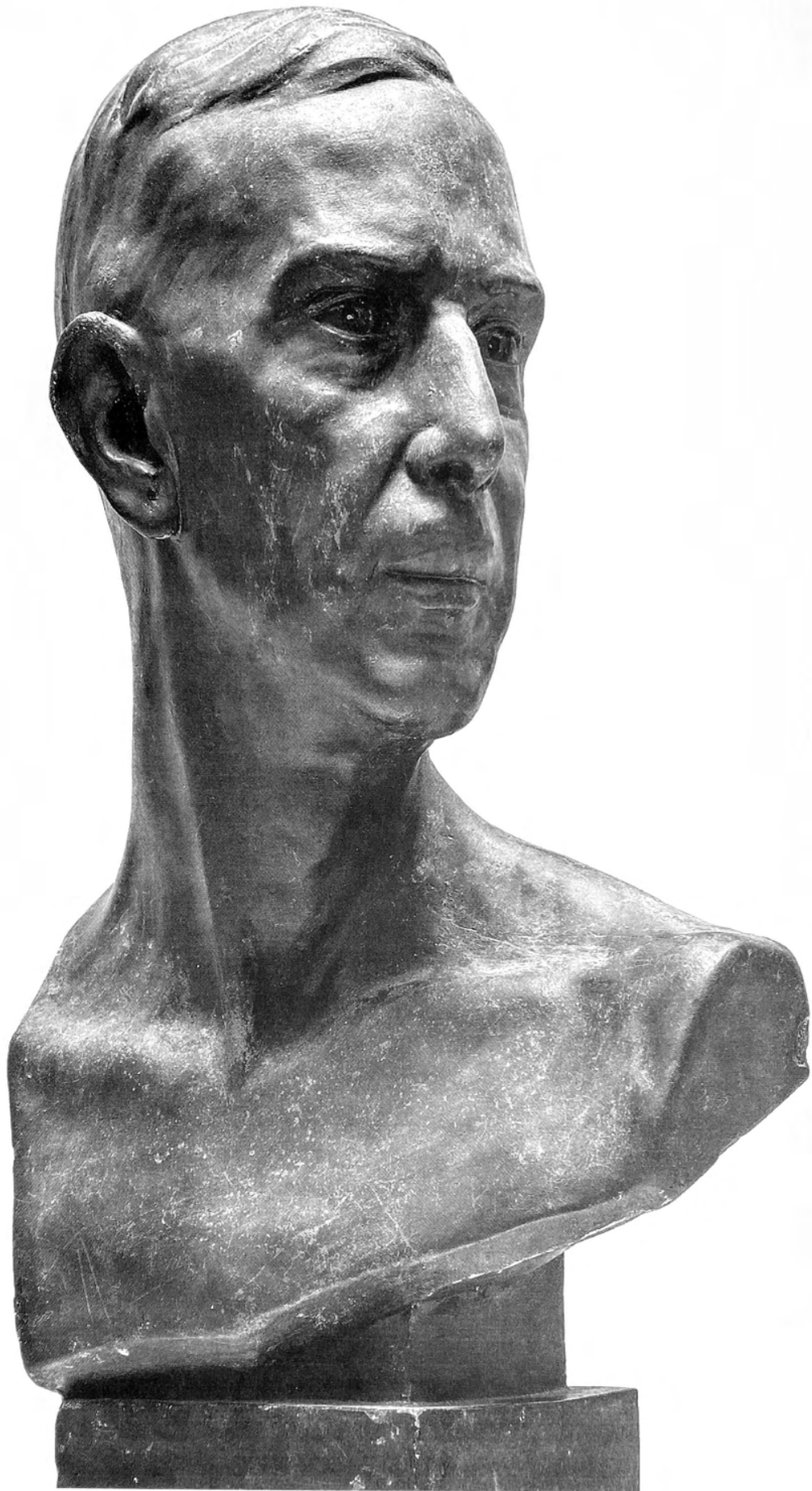
Among the endearing oddities of Robert's character, it was recalled that he was a keen lotto player, consulting books and people, such as a mathematician from Qormi, in search of the elusive formula for a winning combination. He used cabalistics, numerical pyramids and other complex methods, and when he occasionally won a sum, he would buy odd treats for the family, returning home with an enormous ham or an entire sackful of melons.

Robert was good friends with Antonio Micallef, Teacher of Modelling. Once they managed to win

A photograph of Robert taken by his friend Paul Agius Catania D'Amico, (Courtesy of Mr & Mrs G. Glanville / Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis)







a small sum with a secret number which Antonio had thought of, and celebrated with a bottle of champagne.<sup>111</sup> The etchings teacher, Carmelo Mangion, recalled that he once gave him a lotto number and Robert warned him he would cut his head off if he did not win. The next day, as a joke Robert was waiting for him with a penknife in his hand.<sup>112</sup>

Robert would flick his index finger against the knuckles of his left hand, producing a clicking sound, and liked to hum tunes by Fred Astaire. He had a pet greyhound, and his student Pitre recalled that he was very fond of his wife and sometimes hired a car for her to get to Valletta more comfortably.<sup>113</sup> According to Robert's friend, the archivist and historian Joseph Galea, the Italian poet Leopardi was a favourite author.<sup>114</sup>

On spiritual matters, Robert's letters mention a mysterious helping 'Hand', guiding the spirit of all humanity. Besides books on art, Robert liked philosophy and occult sciences. He read *The New Thought*, a monthly subscription which included

a piece by William Walker Atkinson called 'The Unseen Hand'. He sent this to Vincenzo from London, explaining that it had influenced his life. He created a bronze sculpture of two hands, using his own hands as a model, which was converted into two unusual door knockers by his son Mario.

The work and influence of Robert Caruana Dingli on the twentieth-century art scene in Malta is still being discovered and assessed. For many years he was completely overshadowed by the significant accomplishments and success of his older brother Edward. Fiorentino also suggests that Robert's 'diffused engagement in different genres could partly have been responsible for the relatively mild recognition which is normally reserved for him in Maltese art of this century'.<sup>115</sup>

The publication of his letters by Giovanni Bonello, together with this brief résumé of his interests, family, career, achievements, as well as an evaluation of his artistic oeuvre, may begin to redress this gap and open pathways into further study of this artist.

George Borg, *Portrait of Robert Caruana Dingli*, 1928,  
46 x 31 x 20cm.  
(National Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta – MUŻA /  
Courtesy of Heritage Malta / Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis)



## NOTES

- 1 Mario Caruana Dingli and Adrian Stivala, 'The Life and Works of Robert Caruana Dingli' (1990), unpublished work. I am grateful to Dr Adrian Stivala for generously providing access to his interviews and notes to assist in the preparation of this paper.
- 2 The painter Edward Caruana Dingli (1876–1950). See *Edward Caruana Dingli (1876–1950): Portraits, Views and Folkloristic Scenes* (Malta: Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2010).
- 3 Adrian Stivala – interview with Helen (Nelly) Vella, daughter of Robert's sister Nina, 1989.
- 4 Note from Josef Kalleya to Adrian Stivala, 7 June 1989.
- 5 Arturo Mercieca, 'L'ultimo Gran Maestro in Malta e I suoi Creditori', in *Archivum Melitense* (April 1940), 205-211.
- 6 Carmel Testa, *The French in Malta 1798-1800* (Malta: Midsea Books, 1997), 524.
- 7 Arturo Mercieca, 'Il Gran Maestro Hompesch e Giuseppe Caruana Dingli', in V.M. Pellegrini (ed.), *La Crociata* (2 February 1950), 45-51. The final letter from Hompesch was addressed to Giuseppe's widow Antonia.
- 8 Luigi Caruana Dingli published a tract outlining the events of the plague which ravaged Malta in 1813. N[ational] L[ibrary] of M[alta], Libr. Ms. 1162, *Notizie intorno al Morbo contagioso accaduto l'anno 1813 - In quest'Isola di Malta*, 1-131. See Raymond Mangion, 'Professors who Taught International Law within the Faculty of Laws, University of Malta', in Norman A. Martínez Gutiérrez (ed.), *Serving the Rule of International Law: Essays in Honour of Professor David Joseph Attard*, Vol. 1 (Malta: Mare Nostrum Publications, 2009), 58 fn 21.
- 9 Mercieca, op. cit. (1940), 211. Also see Mangion, op. cit. (2009), 34; and Testa, op. cit. (1997), 169 fn 41. Also see J.M. Wismayer, 'Hompesch's Creditors', in *Sunday Times of Malta* (27 March 1988), 18. For a list of the creditors, including Giuseppe Caruana Dingli, and the amounts owed, see Archives of Malta 1066.
- 10 Mangion, op. cit. (2009), 33. A *promurator* was a 'promoter' or 'sponsor', a role similar to godfather. I am grateful to Ray Mangion for this clarification.
- 11 Antonia Caruana Dingli née Borg died on December 7, 1894, aged 78.
- 12 Marianna Caruana Dingli died aged 91 years in Strada Tesoreria, Valletta. Mangion, op. cit. (2009), 59 fn 32.
- 13 Mangion, op. cit. (2009), 59 fn 32.
- 14 Ibid, 34.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Mangion, op. cit. (2009), 35-36.
- 18 Paul Cassar, *Medical History of Malta* (Malta, 1964), 542.
- 19 Albert Ganado, 'A Nineteenth-Century Merchant, Writer and Politician: Giuseppe Pulis Montebello' in *Melita Historica*, Vol. XVI No. 1 (2012).
- 20 Mangion, op. cit. (2009), 36-39. To add to the mix, the Sicilian Professor and former Judge Nicolò Crescimanno was my paternal great-great-great-grandfather. One of his sons was the painter Nicola F. Crescimanno (Crino) who was linked to the Neapolitan painter Girolamo Gianni. See Giovanni Bonello, *Girolamo Gianni in Malta* (Malta: Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 1994), and fn 30 and fn 43 infra.
- 21 *Discorso inaugurale pronunziato nella Chiesa della R. Università di Malta al 1. Ottobre 1870 dal Professore di Diritto Cav. Nicolò Criscimanno LL.D.* (Tipografia di E. Laferla, Malta).
- 22 Mangion, op. cit. (2009), 36.
- 23 Voters Lists, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890.
- 24 Elena Caruana Dingli died on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 1896.
- 25 *Malta* (26 June 1897).
- 26 See fn 20 supra and fn 43 infra.
- 27 Mario J. Caruana Dingli, *Caruana-Dingli Artists* (Malta: Progress Press, 1989), 13.
- 28 'La Classe di Disegno nel Liceo', in *Malta* (5 April 1913), 2.
- 29 Emmanuel Fiorentino and Louis A. Grasso, *Giuseppe Cali 1846–1930* (Malta: Said Publications, 1991), 48, 63.
- 30 V.M. Pellegrini, 'Nies kbar li għamli gieħ lil Malta (4) – Giuseppe Cali (1846–1930)', in *Leħen is-Sewwa* (28 February 1981), 7. The caption states: '*Ritratt mehud għall-habta tas-sena 1910, ta' Giuseppe Cali mall-allievi tieghu, fosthom (fuq il-lemin tieghu), il-predilett tieghu Robert Caruana Dingli*'. Robert was 28 years old in 1910 and would not have been a Lyceum student. Fiorentino and Grasso (1991, p.158) identify the same student as Edward and date the photograph to c.1905, however he would have been 30 years old in 1905.
- 31 *Daily Malta Chronicle* (17 January 1908).
- 32 Caruana Dingli and Stivala, op. cit. (1990). Unpublished essay by Dominic Cutajar.
- 33 *Daily Malta Chronicle* (23 January 1908).
- 34 Caruana Dingli and Stivala, op. cit. (1990). Letter of reference from Wilfred J. Whithead.
- 35 George Glanville, 'Noti Biografici' in Exhibition Catalogue of commemorative exhibition of

- Robert Caruana Dingli's work held at the National Museum of Fine Arts in 1980 on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death.
- 36 Fiorentino and Grasso, op. cit. (1991), 119.
- 37 Vincenzo Bonello, 'La V Esposizione degli "Amatori d'Arte"', in *Malta* (30 May 1913), 2. My translation.
- 38 Rafel Bonnici Cali, 'Artisti li niftakru (55) – Robert Caruana Dingli (1882–1840) – pittur', in *Lehen is-Sewwa* (23 November 1985), 8.
- 39 Fiorentino and Grasso, op. cit. (1991), 159.
- 40 Ibid., 159; 159 fn 12. The authors state that this opinion was expressed to them by Chev. Rafel Bonnici Cali (interview on 8 April 1990) 'who, moreover, complains that Robert Caruana Dingli's initial training by Cali has not been given due prominence in previous writings'.
- 41 Caruana Dingli and Stivala, op. cit. (1990). See also Petra Bianchi, 'From Don Basilio to Le Tre Rome: Giuseppe Cali's Risorgimento', in *Sunday Times of Malta* (16 February 1997), 39.
- 42 Vincenzo Bonello, 'La VI Esposizione degli Amatori d'Arte', *Malta* (1 May 1914), 2.
- 43 G. Bonello, op. cit. (1994). See fn 20 & fn 26 supra.
- 44 See W.W.N., 'Malta Art Exhibition', in *Daily Malta Chronicle* (6 March 1912), 7, and Ġuzè Muscat Azzopardi writing as 'Fra Meliton' in *Il-Ħabib* (14 March 1912), 1-2.
- 45 John Azzopardi, 'In-Nutar Francesco Catania (1872–1960)', in *Lehen is-Sewwa* (6 July 1985), 8.
- 46 Caruana Dingli and Stivala, op. cit. (1990), 43.
- 47 V. Bonello, op. cit. (1914), 2. My translation.
- 48 Records of Appeal No. 703 of 1915.
- 49 Caruana Dingli and Stivala, op. cit. (1990).
- 50 Adrian Stivala – interview with Carmelo Mangion 12 May 1989.
- 51 Caruana Dingli and Stivala, op. cit. (1990).
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 The guest list printed on the menu for this dinner includes: *Avv. G. Adami, Avv. P.P. Azzopardi, Maggiore H.A. Balbi, Nobile Prof. R. Barbaro di S. Giorgio, Avv. A. Bartolo B.A., V. Bonello, Notaro S. Borg Oliver, Avv. F.N. Butigieg, Pittore Cav. E. Caruana Dingli, Pittore R. Caruana Dingli, Notaro F. Catania, Architetto A. Drago, G.A. Ellul, R. Fiores, Negoziante, L. Falzon, Avv. G. Galea B.A., Prof. Dott. G.S. Galizia M.R.C.S. L.R.C.P., Colonello Medico Prof. L. Manche, Avv. A. Mercieca B.A., Avv. E. Mizzi, Avv. U. Mifsud B.A., Tenente R. Mizzi, Avv. C. Mallia B.A., Avv. F. Mallia, Giudice Comm. Dott. G. Pullicino, Avv. F. Pullicino B.A., Nobile C. dei Conti Sant, G. Samut Tagliaferro, Tenente U. Sammut, Avv. E. Scicluna, Not. Cav. F. Schembri Zarb, Ing. Architetto Cav. A. Vassallo C.E. F.R.I.B.A, Pittore G. Vella and Cav. G. Muscat Azzopardi P.L..*
- 54 Glanville, op. cit. (1980).
- 55 Carmela's parents were Giovanni Aquilina and Evelyn née Mifsud. Giovanni was a ship chandler and the family originally lived in Old Mint Street, Valletta. Conversation with Marcelle Mallia, daughter of Carmela's sister Lina, August 2015.
- 56 Adrian Stivala – interview with Helen (Nelly) Vella, 1989.
- 57 Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, 'Notes on the Decorative Work of Mr R.C. Dingli at the Establishment of Colombos Ltd, by O.F. Hutchinson, Alex Tortell & F.M. Caruana', 19 October 1916.
- 58 Edward Sammut, *The Saga of Simonds Farsons Cisk* (Malta: Farsons, 1988), 30.
- 59 Adrian Stivala – interview with Carmela's sister, Ġużepa Aquilina, 17 November 1989.
- 60 Adrian Stivala – interview with Helen (Nelly) Vella, 1989.
- 61 Caruana Dingli and Stivala, op. cit. (1990).
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 A. Fabriani, 'La XIII Esposizione d'Arte a Malta', in *Melita*, Vol. V (1925), 132-133.
- 64 Albert Giglio, *Malta: Analysis and Consequences of Elections 1921–2003* (Malta: Studio Editions, 2007), 12.
- 65 Family memory recalls that Edward Caruana Dingli particularly liked this painting and had stopped Robert in the street to congratulate him on it.
- 66 Henry Frendo, *Party Politics in a Fortress Colony: The Maltese Experience* (Malta: Midsea Books, 1979), 184.
- 67 Nadine Debattista Briffa, 'The Artist as Director of the Malta Government School of Art', in *Edward Caruana Dingli (1876–1950): Portraits, Views and Folkloristic Scenes* (Malta: Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2010), 73.
- 68 *Malta Government Gazette*, No. 67 (25 February 1926).
- 69 Caruana Dingli and Stivala, op. cit. (1990).
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 V. Bonello, op. cit. (1914). My translation.
- 73 Caroline Tonna, 'The Impact of Photography on Edward and Robert Caruana Dingli', in *Treasures of Malta*, Vol. XXI No. 1 (Christmas 2014), 71-77.
- 74 Conversation with Marcelle Mallia, August 2015. After Robert's death, Paul Agius Catania D'Amico provided Carmela with an apartment in St Margaret Street, Sliema, where she lived until her death in 1961.
- 75 Vincenzo Bonello, 'Una Nuova Opera d'Arte di Roberto Caruana Dingli – Il Ritratto Colombos',



- in *La Voce del Popolo – l'Organo del Comitato Patriottico* (5 July 1918). My translation.
- 76 Debattista Briffa, op. cit. (2010), 74.
- 77 'Exhibition Catalogue' section, *Edward Caruana Dingli (1876–1950) Portraits, Views and Folkloristic Scenes* (2010), 140.
- 78 See Dominic Fenech, *Responsibility and Power in Inter-War Malta. Book One: Endemic Democracy (1919–1930)*, 39; and Frenedo, op. cit. (1979), 192.
- 79 Herbert Ganado, *Rajt Malta Tinbidel*, translated and adapted by Michael Frenedo in *My Century* (Malta: Be Communications, 2005), Vol. 2, 36-37.
- 80 Political party nicknames in the 1921 elections were 'mostly derived from the badges of their respective parties. The Nationalists became known as *Tal-Maduma* from the square brick-like shape of their badge; the Constitutionals, who had a circular badge, were dubbed *Tal-Buttuna* (Of the Button) and the Labour Party sobriquet was *Tal-Mazza* (Of the mace, mallet). The Constitutionals were also known as *Tal-Lembuba* (Of the Truncheon) – an allusion to the fact that Lord Strickland, their leader, had authorized the Police to use their truncheons'. Ġuzè Cassar Pullicino, 'Social Aspects of Maltese Nicknames', *Scientia*, Vol. XX No. 2 (April-June 1956), 93.
- 81 *Malta Punch* (December 1921), 7.
- 82 Edward Caruana Dingli to the Secretary to the Government, 21 December 1946, private collection. Quoted in Debattista Briffa, op. cit. (2010), 74.
- 83 Caruana Dingli and Stivala, op. cit. (1990).
- 84 Fiorentino and Grasso, op. cit. (1991), 159.
- 85 Ibid., 157.
- 86 Ibid., 73.
- 87 Mario Azzopardi, *Barthet* (Valletta: Klabb Kotba Maltin, 1973), 24. See also Debattista Briffa, op. cit. (2010), 77.
- 88 Edoardo Sammut, *Profili di Artisti Maltesi* (Malta: Lux Press, 1937), 49. Sammut writes about Giuseppe Arcidiacono: '*Sebbene in alcuni dei suoi lavori più giovanili si possono facilmente scorgere l'insegnamento del maestro Roberto Caruana Dingli, che, come è naturale, per molti rispetti è ottocentista*'. Sammut notes that Robert was the '*primo maestro*' of the painter George Preca.
- 89 Caruana Dingli and Stivala, op. cit. (1990).
- 90 M. Azzopardi, op. cit. (1973), 15-16.
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 Ibid., 16, 24.
- 93 Adrian Stivala – interview with Esprit Barthet, 15 November 1989.
- 94 Caruana Dingli and Stivala, op. cit. (1990).
- 95 Adrian Stivala – interview with Esprit Barthet, 1989. Artists and teachers Tusé Busuttil and Carmelo Mangion also participated in this event.
- 96 Emmanuel Fiorentino, 'Robert Caruana-Dingli (1882–1940)', in *Sunday Times of Malta* (18 February 1990), 21.
- 97 Emmanuel Fiorentino, 'Robert Caruana Dingli commemorated', in *Sunday Times of Malta* (21 December 1980), 23.
- 98 Adrian Stivala – interview with Carmelo Mangion, 12 May 1989.
- 99 Anastasia Anastasi, *Robert Caruana-Dingli (1882–1940): A Critical Analysis of his Works*, unpublished BA (Hons) Dissertation, University of Malta, (1999), 35.
- 100 Note from Josef Kalleya to Adrian Stivala, 7 June 1989. My translation.
- 101 Caruana Dingli and Stivala, op. cit. (1990).
- 102 Ibid.
- 103 Adrian Stivala – interview with Giuseppe Arcidiacono, 31 January 1989.
- 104 V. Bonello, op. cit. (1918). My translation.
- 105 'Picture on loan', in *Malta Government Gazette*, xvii (29 May 1936).
- 106 'La Mostra Pittorica di Rob. Caruana Dingli', in *Malta* (5 August 1937), 2. My translation.
- 107 The invoice is addressed to 'Marchesa Scicluna, Baroness of Tabria, Dragonara Palace, Sliema, St Julian's' and is from 'R. Caruana Dingli, 106 Sda Forni', private collection.
- 108 *Sunday Times of Malta* (20 August 1939), 3; and (27 August 1939), 3.
- 109 A surviving list of signatures of some attendees at the funeral includes A.G. Vassallo, J. Xuereb, V. Parlato Trigona, J. Busuttil, Enrico Mizzi, Enrico Frenedo, Esprit Barthet, George Preca, C. Attard Cassar, Ida M. Camilleri, W. Mercieca, J. Mercieca, Hilda Cutajar, Alfred Mercieca, Lucia Sammut, Marcelle Denaro, George Borg, (Rev.) E.T. Borg C.F. (St Albert's Central School), Ant. Micallef, Vincent Apap, R. Castillo, C. Cassar Torreggiani, Giuseppe Muscat (Private Collection).
- 110 Joseph Paul Cassar, *L'Arti Moderna* (Malta: Pubblikazzjonijiet Indipendenza, 2000), 10; and Vincent Apap, 'Government School of Art', unpublished paper.
- 111 Caruana Dingli and Stivala, op. cit. (1990).
- 112 Adrian Stivala – interview with Carmelo Mangion, 12 May 1989.
- 113 Caruana Dingli and Stivala, op. cit. (1990).
- 114 Adrian Stivala – interview with Joseph Galea, 5 May 1989.
- 115 Fiorentino, op. cit. (1990), 21.

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