

Ta' Braxia Cemetery

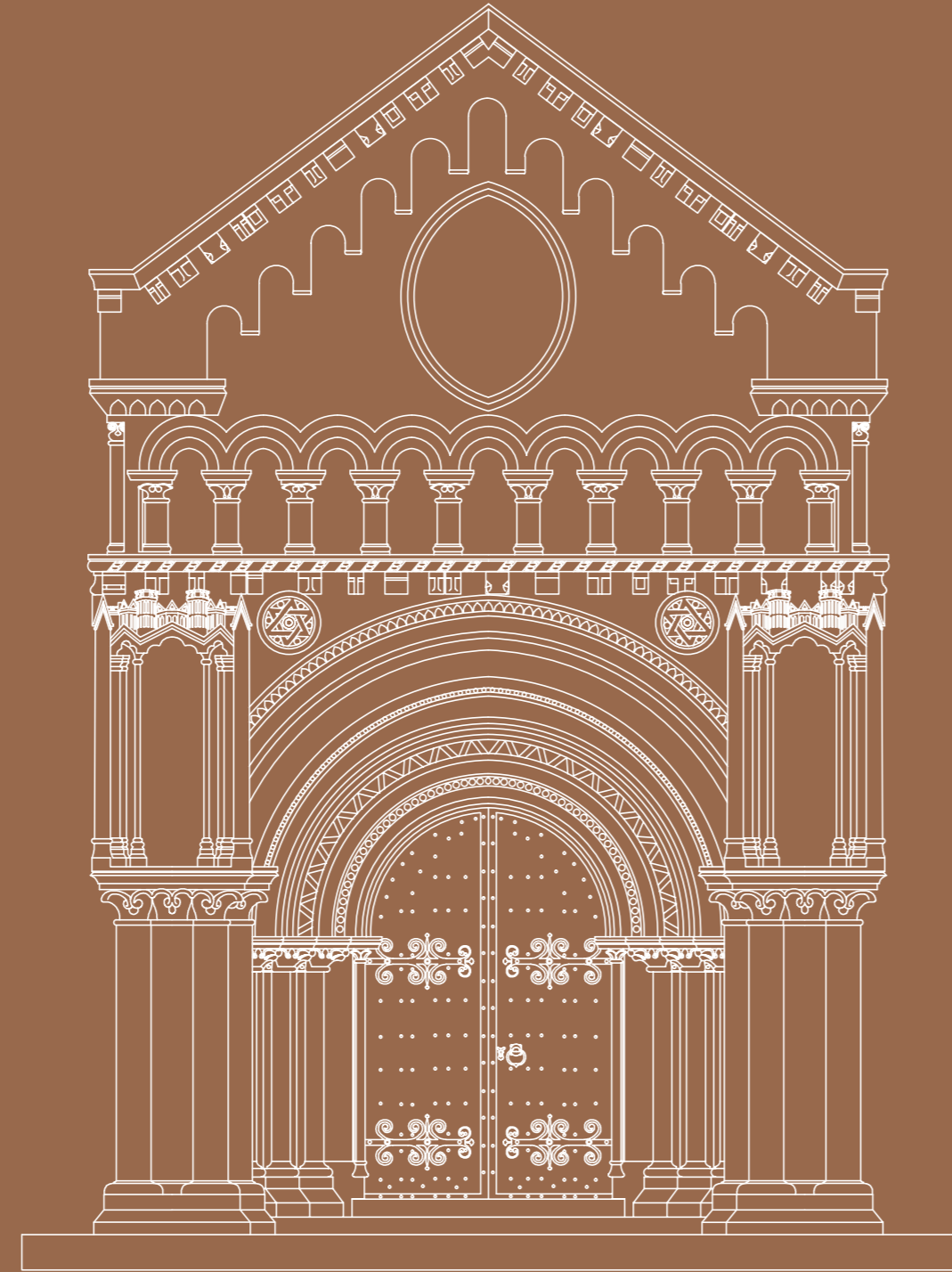


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Ta' Braxia Cemetery

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The Ta' Braxia cemetery at Pietà was designed and planned by the Maltese architect Emanuele Luigi Galizia (1830–1907), at the time, still in his mid-twenties. It is, for all intents and purposes, the first extra-mural cemetery to be established in Malta. This book narrates the challenging religio-political context that prevailed during the mid-nineteenth century and the steadfast determination of the British colonial government, then headed by Governor Sir William Reid, to implement this project for the 'formation of a cemetery at Ta' Braxia for all denominations without distinction of creed', even when faced by opposition from conservative Catholic quarters. It traces the foundation of the cemetery from its establishment in 1855–1857, to its physical expansion around 1880. It also considers the distinctive qualities and characteristics of a garden-cemetery and the diverse typology and rich iconographical symbolism of the various funerary monuments at Ta' Braxia. The last section deals with the origins and history of the Lady Rachel Hamilton Gordon chapel (1893–94) which is the main architectural icon of the cemetery.

Besides the main analytical text, the book includes several transcripts of original archival documents and contemporary newspaper reports, a comprehensive photographic documentation of the cemetery complex in its present state and a specially-commissioned selection of architectural drawings comprising a general plan of the cemetery and plans, elevations, and sections of the memorial chapel.

As James Morris wrote in a special issue of *The Architectural Review* dedicated to Malta (July 1969) 'in Ta' Braxia cemetery, the British presence still seems alive, and touches us more closely than any plume or gonfalon of dead grandee, aloof upon the floor of the Co-Cathedral'.

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Preface

‘Churchyards and cemeteries are scenes not only calculated to improve the morals and the taste, and by their botanical riches to cultivate the intellect, but they serve as *historical records*.’

John Claudius Loudon, *On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries and of the Improvement of Churchyards* (London, 1843).

Ta’ Braxia Cemetery, designed and planned by the Maltese architect Emanuele Luigi Galizia (1830–1907) when still in his mid-twenties is, for all intents and purposes, the first extra-mural cemetery to be established locally (fig. 1). This book narrates the challenging religio-political context that prevailed during the mid-nineteenth century and the steadfast determination of the British colonial government, then headed by Governor Sir William Reid, to implement this project even when faced by opposition from certain conservative Catholic quarters. It considers the distinctive qualities and characteristics of a garden-cemetery and the diverse typology and rich iconographical symbolism of various funerary monuments at Ta’ Braxia. The last section deals with the origins and history of the private Lady Hamilton Gordon chapel which is the most iconic architectural element within the cemetery.

Previous writings on this subject are relatively few and sparse. Alan Keighley’s *Ta’ Braxia Cemetery; A Visitor’s Guide*, published by *Din l-Art Helwa* in 2000, is a useful source of information which focuses mainly on the various personalities buried therein. A more in-depth study is the unpublished masters’ degree dissertation by Janica Buhagiar entitled ‘Ta’ Braxia Protestant Cemetery, 1857–1900: A case study in Funerary Art & Architecture’, submitted to the History of Art department at the University of Malta in 2013. Buhagiar’s research work is a seminal source of information and remains an invaluable base-line study



Fig. 1. Postcard entitled ‘MALTA – Braksia [sic] Cemetery’, Vincenzo Galea di Antonio. c.1900

for all researchers in this field. The primary research for this book focused mainly on the perusal of archival sources at the National Archives Malta (NAM) at Santo Spirito, Rabat and also on reviewing contemporary reports in the local newspapers available in microfiche format at the National Library Malta (NLM), Valletta. The cemetery itself, with its several funerary stone monuments provided us with the most tangible source whereby to observe at first-hand and interpret the rich iconographical symbolism of each individual burial site.

During our research we have incurred several debts. We are grateful to the Reverend Canon Simon Godfrey, chancellor of St Paul’s Pro-Cathedral, Valletta for accepting to write the foreword to this book and to Prof. Mario Buhagiar for his erudite exposition on burial practices in Malta, particularly during the early-British colonial period leading up to the establishment of Ta’ Braxia as the first extra-mural cemetery on the island.

The Department of Health provided us with unlimited access to the cemetery and the chapel. The personnel of the National Archives Malta and the National Library Malta, were always helpful and supportive. Mr Ian Ellis kindly allowed us to reproduce a number of original photographs from the Richard Ellis Archives. The meticulously detailed architectural drawings of the Lady Hamilton Gordon chapel were produced by Leon Gauci and Etienne Spiteri, both architecture students within the Faculty of the Built Environment. A final word of thanks goes to Louis J. Scerri who copy-edited the text and the staff at Best Print, particularly the directors Mario and Mary Rose Abela, and Noel Falzon for their infinite patience and effort in ensuring excellence in the final design layout and presentation of this book.

In recent years, the Art and Art History department within the Faculty of Arts, University of Malta, has been organizing, on an annual basis, symposia and public lectures related to the visual culture of death in Malta. One of the main thematic areas under study has been that of funerary architecture in Malta during the nineteenth century. Following closely upon the publication of Conrad Thake's *The Ottoman Muslim Cemetery in Malta*, this work considers the merits of another important cemetery complex of the same period. Our main objective remains that of increasing public awareness as to the origins, history, and beauty of Ta' Braxia Cemetery – to be preserved and cherished for present and future generations to come.

Conrad Thake
Janica Buhagiar

Foreword

In our own time the ecumenical endeavours and interreligious dialogue that have characterized the twenty-first century seem far distant from the controversies that surrounded the ‘formation of a cemetery at Ta’ Braxia for all denominations without distinction of creed’. This book discusses the origins and historical formation the Ta’ Braxia Cemetery, and the symbolism and style of its landscape, architecture, and funerary monuments. Indeed it has much to say about the British attitude to life and death, showing the interface between the ‘here and now’ and the hopes and aspirations of the departed played out both in the plain and the exotic.

It is not possible to pass Ta’ Braxia Cemetery without a sense of nostalgia and longing, seeing at its heart one of Malta’s architectural gems. In this two-hundredth anniversary year of his birth, John Loughborough Pearson’s chapel dedicated to Lady Hamilton Gordon stands not only in her memory but as a lasting sign of Anglo-Maltese relations (fig. 2). Pearson’s most impressive ‘House of God’ is arguably Truro Cathedral set in the charming yet rugged Cornish landscape. It dominates the town and speaks volumes about the nineteenth-century confidence of the Church of England. However, the Ta’ Braxia chapel, petite, intimate, and other-worldly serves to remind us of Pearson’s remarkable architectural agility. His contribution to the built heritage of Great Britain spanned nearly six decades and embraced a broad spectrum of architectural styles. Not for him the placid legacy of the Victorians, the well-proportioned mullioned windows, and the modest gables but rather the consanguinity of medieval flights of fantasy often found in the Byzantine style. His son Frank, who designed churches in the Mediterranean, could well have assisted his father in the design of the chapel and left the endeavour in the more than capable hands of Emanuele Luigi Galizia who had established himself as a fine designer of necropolises as well as municipal and domestic buildings.

In those far distant days, when the local Roman Catholic Church brooked no competition for eternity, believers of other denominations and faiths were consigned to the margins of ‘Heavenly Society’. At Ta’ Braxia they were given a fitting environment commemorating their often extraordinary contribution to life in the Southern Mediterranean and further afield; for them their place of rest was to prove a rather more Romantic destiny than their forebears. When the Right Reverend Charles Waldegrave Sandford, Anglican bishop of Gibraltar, dedicated the chapel in December 1894, those present would easily identify ‘the vaulted interior, the double aisles with their proliferation of shafts and vaulting ribs, and the contrast between the brightly lit central space and the dark aisles as typical of Pearson’. Although his architectural output was extensive and was an acknowledgement of his more than confident style in design, Pearson himself was reticent and naturally reserved. His ambition for the Ta’ Braxia chapel was to pierce the veil of the commonplace and to create a glimpse of The Divine for those who had hitherto been excluded by denominational and interreligious feuding.

The authors, Prof. Conrad Thake and Ms Janica Buhagiar, have given us an impressive profile of the lives and livelihoods of the many who shaped Malta following the doctrinaire impositions of the knights of St John. The British period, following their departure, sowed the seeds of a more liberal understanding of man’s destiny outside the confines of particular and narrow religious sentiment. The Empire itself embraced people of all races and religions under a Queen whose confidants were drawn from far-flung outposts of the Empire and whose own spirituality was influenced by less conventional maxims.

In his article on ‘The British in Malta’, the renowned author and traveller James Morris in describing the new cemetery says that, ‘All in all, for the best evocation of the whole Imperial story, for a proper taste of it



Fig. 2. View of Lady Hamilton Gordon Chapel, Ta' Braxia, c.1900
(Location: divisions 13, and 14 in front of the chapel)
(Photo: Courtesy of the Richard Ellis Archive – Malta)

pathos, splendour and guts, one must not visit a fort or a rampart at all, nor even a Cathedral but rather potter for half an hour through the Protestant cemetery of Ta' Braxia outside the walls of Valletta where the imperialists were buried ... This is the stuff of Empire. In Ta' Braxia Cemetery the British presence still feels alive and touches us more closely than any plume or gonfalon of dead grandee, aloof upon the floor of the Co-Cathedral.'

For a long time, this Elysian Field and its charms was denied even the most persistent visitor who wished to pay their respects to friends or relations because of the depredations of war and neglect. However, in 2000 *Din l-Art Helwa*, in conjunction with the Department of Health, set up a restoration committee to renovate and improve the appearance of the cemetery. In 2001, 'The Friends of Ta' Braxia' was set up and immediately assumed the responsibility for the maintenance and restoration of the whole site. It is entirely due to the individual members of the Friends who have worked tirelessly and voluntarily that once again Maltese and expatriate residents have access to this remarkable collection of historical monuments and tombs and are able to discover and pray in the quiet contemplative environment envisaged by Pearson.

I am delighted to have been asked to write this introduction as the spokesperson for those who follow the Anglican Way in Malta. In the last decade the Anglican and the Roman Catholic denominations have grown ever closer together in pursuit of our joint pilgrimage as the 'Church Militant' on earth. We understand what unites us and what we must do to abandon those things that divide us. It is for the 'Church Triumphant', those who have gone before us, some of whom are buried in Ta' Braxia to help us through their prayers to comprehend their legacy. It is through their ever-lasting inheritance that we should endeavour to share that Faith and accept each other in a more enlightened era of cooperation and harmony.

The Reverend Canon Simon Godfrey, SSC
Chancellor of St Paul's Pro-Cathedral Valletta



CHRISTIANITY
THE GREAT
THE GREAT

JOHN L. GORDON
WHO DIED BY FEVER
JAN. 30, 1865, WHILE ON
DUTY AS A MEMBER OF THE
CONFEDERATE ARMY
AGED 42 YEARS AND A
GREATLY LOVED AND DEARLY
REMEMBERED ONE
ALONE TO THE LORD
OCT. 10, 1895

W. ALFRED J. CUMMINGS
WHO FELL ASLEEP IN JESUS
ON SEPTEMBER 21, 1890
AGED 49 YEARS
CARRIED BY HIS DEARLY
LOVED ONES
PLATE FOR THE DEAR

WILLIAM J. LINDSEY
OF THE CONFEDERATE ARMY
DIED AT THE BATTLE OF
GETTYSBURG, PA., JULY 3, 1863
AGED 31 YEARS

DEAR HENRY YATES
DIED AT
WILD WINDHAM, N.H.
OCT. 10, 1895

‘All in all, for the best evocation of the whole imperial story, for a proper taste of its pathos, splendour and guts, one must not visit a fort or a rampart at all, nor even a cathedral, but rather potter for half an hour through the Protestant cemetery of Ta’ Braxia, outside the walls of Valletta, where the imperialists were buried. It is a gentle, weedy place, knocked about in air raids and supervised by pines, and in it you will find all the classic phrases of the imperial epitaph, as it is inscribed on slabs and obelisks across the world – “Fell from Aloft” ... “Died at Sea about 70 Miles from this Island”... “Expired on his Way Home from India”... “Died of the Cholera Fever”... “Erected by his Fellow-Officers in token of their Melancholy Esteem”. Here lies in incongruous proximity William Paynter of St Ives, Mate of the Barque *Adam*, and Thomas Acland Fortescue Esquire, Captain of HMS *Phoebe*; and here too is little Minnie, four and half years old, daughter of an evangelical Battery Sergeant-Major – “I’M GONE TO JESUS! WILL YOU COME!”

This is the stuff of Empire. In Ta’ Braxia Cemetery, the British presence still seems alive, and touches us more closely than any plume or gonfalon of dead grandee, aloof upon the floor of the Co-Cathedral (fig. 3).’

James Morris, “The British in Malta” in ‘MALTA – Past, Present and Future’, special issue of *The Architectural Review*, volume CXLVI, number 869, July 1969, 17–22

Fig. 3. Ta’ Braxia Cemetery, Pietà
(Location: division 13)

Introduction

The Ta' Braxia Cemetery: A Comment on its Background and an Art Historical Appreciation

The concept of extramural planned cemeteries is an often overlooked by-product of the Protestant Reformation and its stigmatization of alleged deviant Catholic theology on the dead and, consequentially, on burial-rites and practices.¹ Luther's doctrinal agenda that salvation was by faith alone and the necessity of separating the dead from the living, adopted and elaborated-upon by Calvin, Zwingli, and other reformers, made burial in consecrated ground irrelevant. It made no difference if one was buried in a church/churchyard or in an open field. Nonetheless, in spite of their loss of a theological basis, church-burial-rituals survived as a recalcitrant contrary practice.² Catholic teaching on Purgatory and the obligation of the living to suffrage, through prayer and sacrifice, the dead purging themselves in its unquenchable flames, was as a foreseeable reaction intensified by Counter Reformation eschatology. It is this theology-impregnated background with its socio-anthropological ramifications that provides a meaningful context to the objections of the Maltese Roman Catholic establishment to the British colonial government's calculated policy for extra-mural burials.

The earliest Reformation outside-town cemetery was, appropriately enough, built in Germany in 1526 in Hesse-Cassel (present-day Kassel) which was soon to develop into a centre of Calvinist Protestantism. Geneva, Switzerland, followed suit in 1536, but the first monumentally-planned cemetery was laid out in far-away India in 1626 by English Protestants in the Indian port city of Surat (former Suryapur) where the East India Company had a prosperous economic base. It was also in India, more than a century later, in 1767, that a significant planning breakthrough was made, in Calcutta, with the inauguration of the Park Street Cemetery, the largest Christian burial-ground outside Europe. With its street-lined avenues and classically-inspired tombs, the cemetery provided a prototype that

was adopted in other parts of the Empire, the Malta Ta' Braxia included.

The Calcutta Park Street Cemetery also anticipated the Neo-Classical preoccupations of the Age of Enlightenment which in France found their most eloquent (but unfulfilled) expression in the projects of Jean-Charles Delafosse (1734–91) and (more remarkably) in the megalomaniac, but geometrically simple, designs of Étienne-Louis Boullée (1728–99).³ In spite of the fact that, for reasons of public hygiene, burials inside the city precincts of Paris were forbidden in the 1780s, no official action was taken until 1795 when a disused gypsum quarry at Montmartre, which the Revolution had used as a mass grave started being used as a public cemetery. Popularly known as the Cimetière de Grande Camères,⁴ it was inaugurated on 1 January 1825. Meanwhile, in 1804, Napoleon entrusted the Neo-Classical architect Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart (1739–1813) with the planning of a municipal cemetery on a hill outside the boundaries of the city on the site of the former Jesuit house residence of the confessor of Louis XIV, Père François de la Chaise (1624–1709). The *jardin anglais* layout of the cemetery, later named Père Lachaise, was very influential and provided the essential prototype for the garden cemetery concept that achieved popularity in Europe and the USA. Ta' Braxia was Malta's pioneering example.

Burials in Malta, until the coming of the British at the turn of the nineteenth century, had always been within, or in the close proximity of churches. In 1575, the Apostolic Delegate Mgr Pietro Dusina, impelled by missionary zeal for the observance of Counter Reformation precepts, had specifically instructed the construction of stone-lined tombs (*tumbas concameratas*) that would better preserve in the living, the memory of the dead in Purgatory. Burial plots distant from churches, and in the open countryside were

only permissible for stillborn and unbaptized children (*Ċimiterji tat-Torba*) and for plague and cholera victims (*Ċimiterji tal-Infetti*). Muslims and Jews also had extra-mural cemeteries but Protestant heretics and lapsed Catholics were considered unworthy of decent burial and their interment was unregulated.

Things started to change in 1800 when Malta became a protectorate and subsequent crown colony of Protestant England. The British administrative establishment and resident community and, more especially, the massive presence of naval and military personnel, generated a pressing demand for decent burial sites. The ravelins and bastions of the formidable Grand Harbour fortifications offered a solution that was exploited with persevering diligence. Sir Ralph Abercrombie (1754–1801), commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean expedition against the French in Egypt, who died in action in the Battle of Alexandria in March 1801, was brought to Malta for burial in a ravelin at St Elmo.⁵ He was followed, in 1809, by Admiral Sir Alexander John Ball (1757–1809), one of the leaders of the Maltese uprising against the French occupation and first civil commissioner, who was buried in a vault in the same ravelin.⁶ Sir Thomas Maitland, first governor and commander-in-chief of Malta and the Ionian Islands (1813–24) was laid to rest in the upper tier of St Peter and St Paul Bastion (now Upper Barracca Garden) beneath a plain white marble ledger stone replaced in 1863 by a more befitting Neo-Gothic hard-stone sarcophagus.⁷ His successor, Francis Rawdon-Hastings, 1st Marquis of Hastings (1824–26) rests on St John's Bastion, overlooking Marsmxtt Harbour, in an elegantly simplified Greek temple that serves as a canopy for the idealized white marble portrait statue of the governor, languorously reclining on a Roman couch. The dowager marchioness commissioned the statue in London from the Neo-Classical sculptor John Graham Lough (1796–1876) who enjoyed a good reputation for funerary monuments. His signature is boldly chiselled on the base.⁸ It was produced in London where Lough had established himself in 1824, but the canopy, in Maltese hard limestone, was locally produced. The architect is unknown.

The Marquis of Hastings' successor as governor general, Sir Frederick Cavendish Ponsonby (1826–36),

a hero of the Battle of Waterloo, did not die in Malta, but his memory was perpetuated, a few metres away, by a sensitively built, 21.64-metre-high Tuscan Doric column on a four-sided Classical pedestal raised on three steps, erected by public subscription,⁹ in 1838, on St Andrew Bastion. The columnar monument, topped by a Grecian urn, rose high above the Valletta skyline as a proudly assertive landmark, but it was struck by lightning in January 1864 and subsequently demolished. Only the pedestal, removed to the adjacent St Michael Bastion, survives. The architect is again unknown but the sophistication of the design, known through contemporary working drawings,¹⁰ suggest the invention of an artist of note. Lough is, once more, a conjectural possibility.

During his incumbency, Ponsonby had to make arrangements for the funeral and worthy commemoration of his nephew, Captain Robert Cavendish Spencer, who died on his ship *The Madagascar*, on 4 November 1830, aged 30, while in quarantine in Malta. He was buried on St Michael Bastion in a simple sarcophagus with an inscribed white-marble lid. A worthier tribute, funded by the officers and seamen who had served under him, was an obelisk, built of Maltese hard limestone, inaugurated on 14 June 1831, on Corradino Heights commanding the entrance to the inner reaches of the Grand Harbour.¹¹ Fear that its prominence posed a threat to national security, it was dismantled in 1893 and rebuilt outside the Floriana fortifications where it is a prominent landmark on the way to Valletta, a short walking distance from Ta' Braxia. It was designed by Giorgio Pullicino (1779–1851) and is his only certainly attributed work.

One gets the feeling that the early British administration restricted the inner fortifications of Valletta for the sepulchres and memorials of the illustrious dead thought worthy of a distinct honour by the Empire. Since such burials were independent arrangements, a specifically designed open-air pantheon was not on the agenda. The need for funeral and burial arrangements for the ever-growing numbers of lesser mortals presented, on the other hand, a pressing reality that required immediate action. The outer defences of the city, still largely uninhabited, presented an opportunity



Fig. 4. Msida Bastion Cemetery, Floriana



Fig. 5. Richard Titus Lankesheer monument, Msida Bastion Cemetery

for extra mural (or quasi extra mural) cemeteries, and work on them started with feverish speed. Perhaps, because of its safe distance from Catholic harassment, the preferred site was the St Philip Bastion area, high above Msida Creek, in the inner reaches of Marsamxett Harbour. A main communal cemetery (Msida Bastion Cemetery) was laid out on the parapet of the bastion together with satellite graveyards for the Greek Orthodox community and the unfortunate who died in quarantine or in the recurrent cholera epidemics. These minor cemeteries were neglected and vandalized and finally wiped away by development in the second half of the twentieth century. Our knowledge of them and their headstones is largely dependent on the manuscript notes, compiled after the devastation of the Second World War, by Harry Benjamin Formosa (1910–86).¹² The Greek Orthodox Cemetery was the most interesting and contained a large elegantly inscribed white-marble ledger stone which marked the tomb of Lady Catherine Hankey (d.1833), wife of the leading colonial civil servant, Sir Frederick Hankey. It was still in a good state of preservation in 1957,¹³ but had fallen into a state of disrepair in 1988 when I published an appeal for its restoration and the protection of the few other surviving tombstones.¹⁴

The Msida Bastion Cemetery has been more fortunate. *Din l-Art Helwa* took it in trust in 1988

and, following an intensive restoration campaign, it is now a well-groomed Garden of Rest (fig. 4).¹⁵ Before that happened, it knew a similar sad history. In 1930 Charles G. Zammit (1911–2006) carried out, at the request of the government, a meticulous survey and noted neglect, monuments in a bad state of repair, and defaced epitaphs.¹⁶ No action was taken and the cemetery was later damaged by the blitz of the Second World War and by vandals. Grave-robbers rummaged it for marble carvings and ornamental reliefs which found their way to private collections and antique dealers. The cemetery has noteworthy Neo-Classical monuments that served as prototypes to Ta' Braxia and the Addolorata cemeteries for which it was an antecedent. Among the notables buried in it were the diplomat and author Sir John Hookham Frere (1769–1846); Sir Waller Rodwell Wright (1775–1826), President of the Malta Appeals Court (1814–26), diplomat, and poet; Richard Titus Lankesheer (d. 1841) initial architect of the St Paul Anglican Cathedral (fig. 5); and the revered 'Father of the Maltese Language' Mikiel Anton Vassalli (1764–1829) who was refused Catholic burial because of his Anglican affiliations.

The life-span of the Msida Bastion Cemetery lingered on until the 1880s but by 1850 it was already bursting at the seams and the need for a new, more spacious, burial ground had become acute. The acceleration of



Fig. 6. Lieutenant-Colonel William Reid (1791–1858), Governor of Malta 1851–58
(Print from *Illustrated London News*, 1851.)



Fig. 7. Portrait photograph of architect Emanuele Luigi Galizia, c. 1860s
(Photo: Courtesy of Mr Francis Galea Naudi)

naval and military presence made its building a matter of prime practical and hygienic concern. Sir Richard More O’Ferrall (1847–51), Malta’s only Catholic governor had, for presumably religious reasons, dragged his feet, but his successor, Sir William Reid (1851–58), had no such scruples and his determination was consolidated by the arrival, for medical care of sick and wounded soldiers from the Crimean War (1853–56), several of whom died in Malta (fig. 6). Reid was both efficient and erudite. A veteran of the Siege of Badajoz (1812), he achieved great repute for diplomatic skills and had served as governor of Bermuda, Barbados, and the Windward Islands in the Antilles. More significantly, he was commanding officer of the Royal Engineers at Woolwich and his informed interest in architecture and the arts left a decisive mark on the Maltese urban scene. Important works undertaken during his tenure of office included, the reconstruction of the Valletta Main Gate (Porta Reale) and the enlargement of the Floriana St Anne Gate (Porta Sant’Anna), both in 1853, and a year later, the building of Valletta Exchange Building (the Bourse) and the construction under the Upper Barracca of the Fort Lascaris complex. Ta’ Braxia Cemetery

was inaugurated in 1857. Reid had conceived it as a ‘place where persons of all religious creeds may be interred’,¹⁷ but this found opposition from the Roman Catholic establishment and nationalist anti-colonial political parties.

The exclusion of the clergy from the Council of Government and reluctance to designate Roman Catholicism as the dominant religion in the penal code, soured Reid’s relations with the powerful Catholic establishment. This added fuel to the already pervasive agitation against Ta’ Braxia Cemetery. Anti-British Nationalistic political propaganda vociferously expressed its forebodings of a looming official graveyard policy that would negatively affect Catholic burials. Matters were, in addition, aggravated by the adjacent late-sixteenth-century church of the Virgin of Sorrows (*Tal-Pietà*) where pilgrims offered suffrage for the victims of the 1592–93 plague epidemic.¹⁸ This gave the site the extra stigma of profanation. Under such inauspicious circumstances, the logical thing would have been to entrust the design and building of the cemetery to a Protestant royal engineer. The most likely candidate was the superintendent of public works, William Lamb Arrowsmith, the architect, in 1849, of the Corradino Civil Prisons¹⁹ but, in a probable act of deliberate defiance, Reid instead chose a Maltese Roman Catholic architect, Emanuele Luigi Galizia (1830–1907). This caused both bitterness and bewilderment. Galizia, in spite of his precocious talent, and good connections, was only 25 years old and still an assistant *perito* in the Land Revenue Department (fig. 7).

Emanuele Luigi Galizia had a meteoric but well-earned rise in the ranks of the government building services culminating in the top post of Superintendent of Public Works (1880–88). He was unquestionably Malta’s most prolifically versatile and artistically gifted architect of the nineteenth century and his buildings, with their well-informed synthesis of Neo-Classical and Romantic preoccupations, deserve better recognition in the international nineteenth-century built heritage. Ta’ Braxia Cemetery established his reputation as a leading architect. Begun in 1855, it was designed on a Neo-Classical orthogonal grid-

iron plan conditioned by Brongniart's *jardin anglais* Père-Lachaise layout. The tree-lined pathways, symmetrically aligned alongside an axial central avenue with a central scenic fountain dominated by a Grecian urn on a decorative pedestal, introduced Malta to the picturesque and sublime landscape architecture of the Age of Romanticism. Its stylistic idiosyncrasies were a bold statement against the prevalent Baroque anachronism of contemporary buildings. It was, in this way, a main contributory factor to a change in aesthetic orientation that Galizia superbly realized in his later Addolorata Cemetery.

Additions and alterations intermittently carried out until 1887, distorted the planar order of the original design. The irony is that the cemetery's dominant and artistically most exciting feature was reserved for the last major intervention which started in the 1880s. This is the Lady Hamilton Gordon memorial chapel which has an erudite Early Gothic revivalist sophistication (Neo-Romanesque may, arguably, describe it better) and a noble simple elegance of form which, coupled with an excellent workmanship and an attention to detail that would have made William Morris proud, makes it an artistic landmark (fig. 8). The chapel was built in 1893–94 by Arthur Charles Hamilton Gordon, 1st Baron Stanmore (1829–1912), a great colonial administrator and friend and advisor to Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, in remembrance of his wife Lady Rachel Emily who died during a stop-over in Malta on their way back to England, at the end of his governorship of Ceylon. She was buried at Ta' Braxia on 28 January 1889. The chapel he built for her was an assertive statement of his eminence in Imperial power politics and this was driven home by commissioning its design from John Loughborough Pearson (1817–97), one of the most acclaimed architects of Victorian England, whose churches, especially those of the 1870s and 1880s, have been described 'among the finest of their day not only in England but in Europe'.²⁰ Pearson was especially influenced by the simplicity of early French Gothic.²¹ The simplicity of the plan of the Hamilton Gordon Chapel with its sharp contours, undisturbed profiles, and emphasis on the vertical are the essential hallmarks of his late style.

The early funerary monuments are of the Msida Bastion typology, a tradition that they later pass on to the Addolorata Cemetery. The Grecian urn, the truncated obelisk and fluted column, the classical sarcophagus, the draped pedestal, and the inverted torch, are the most common and share company with variegated crosses and Christian symbolic motifs. The Knight Hospitallers' eight-pointed cross makes one unexpected but very prominent presence,²² but all the other crosses are of the standard typology. English taste

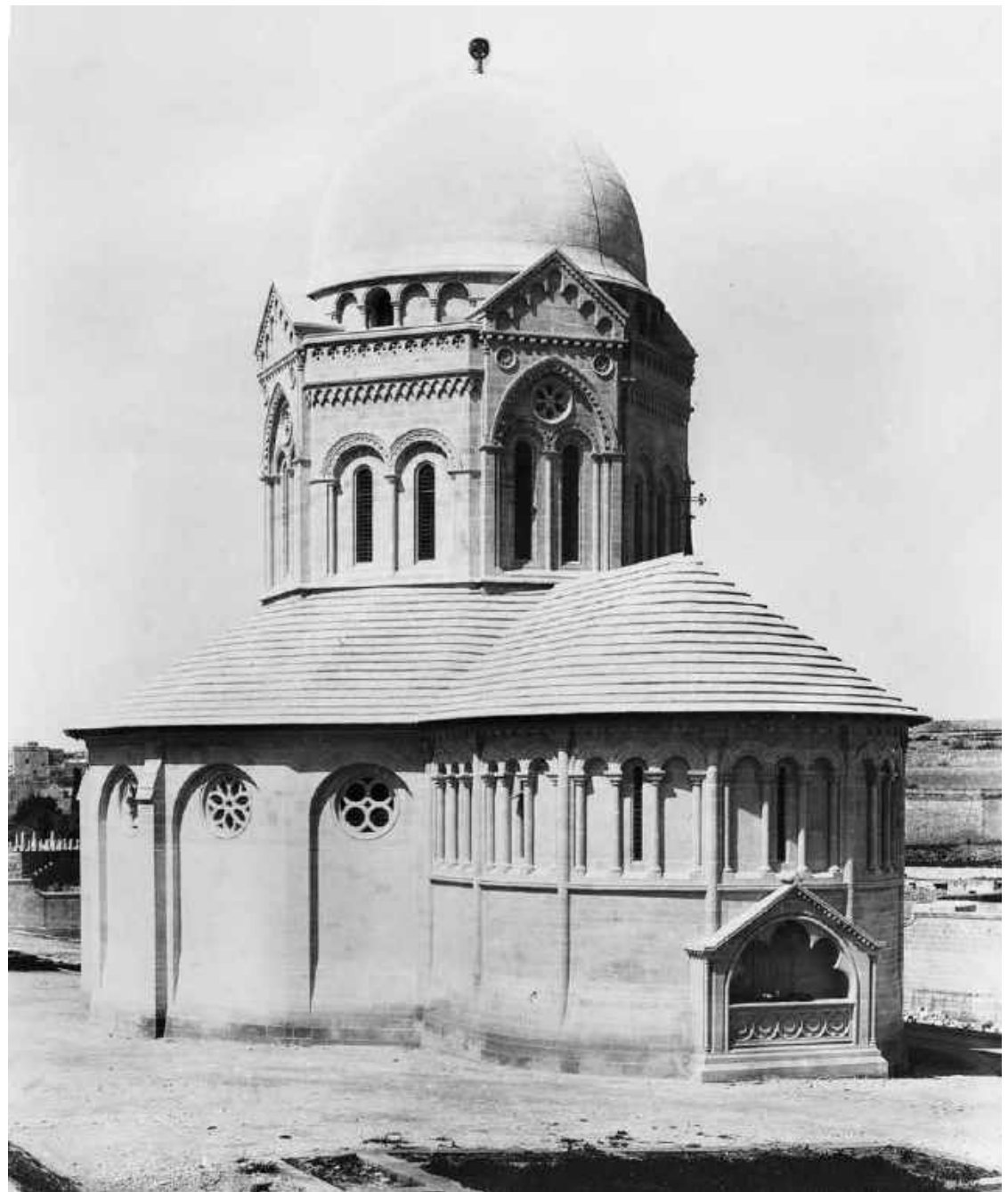


Fig. 8. Lady Hamilton Gordon memorial chapel, Ta' Braxia, photographer Richard Ellis
(Photo: National Portrait Gallery, London)



Fig. 9. Detail of Adelaide Wise monument, Ta' Braxia



Fig.10. Sketch of Olof Fredrik Gollcher monument signed Egidio Pozzi, Milan
(Courtesy: Chief Draftsman Collection, Works Department, Floriana)

and preference is, as expected, pervasive but there is also notable Italian influence such as in the ornate cross with an infill of luscious passion flowers and a Crown of Thorns motif on the tomb (1886) of Annabella, daughter of Robert Henderson of Leghorn (Livorno) and Glasgow. This is, however, more apparent on tombs with statues of putti and angels. The most poignant, and artistically remarkable, is the tender cherub in the blissful repose of sleep on the sarcophagus lid of the four-year-old Adelaide Wise (1871) (fig. 9). To a later date (1893) is the naturalistically crisp standing angel showering flowers on the tomb of Dominic Pangiris, a possible Anglophile Greek Orthodox from the British protectorate of the Ionian Islands (1814–64) who had taken up residence and died in Malta (fig. 103).

More eloquently imposing and artistically superior is the monument to the Swedish shipping magnate Olof Fredrik Gollcher (1829–89) (fig. 106). Composed of a bronze portrait bust set upon a tall fluted column, draped in bronze funerary wreaths, which rises from a high podium against which, in an agony of sorrow, reclines the life-size portrait statue of the bereaved widow, the monument is typical of the melodramatic grandiloquence that is so typical of Italian nineteenth-century funerary sculpture. It is the work of the still largely unstudied Milanese sculptor Egidio Pozzi (active during the second half of the nineteenth century) who submitted a surviving preliminary sketch and boldly signed the monument (fig. 10). Pozzi had risen to prominence with his design for the Ossuary and Monument to the Fallen in the Cemetery of Montebello, Lombardy, dedicated to the victims of the Milanese uprising against Austrian rule of 20 May 1859. There is a closer affinity to the Gollcher monument in his 1880 portrait of Lord Byron which earned him a measure of international acclaim. The monument is fortunately in a good state of preservation. The same, regrettably cannot be said of the monument dating to 1871 of the wealthy ship-chandler William Stephen Eynaud which was severely damaged by the blitz of the Second World War (fig. 65). A tentative reconstruction suggests an urn-bearing tall white-marble fluted column, with naturalistic foliated decorated pedestal articulated by two open urns. The substantial remains are of exquisite

design and demonstrate a high level of workmanship. What is more intriguing is that the Eynaud family commissioned the monument from an American atelier. This is confirmed by the boldly chiselled label – *Draddy Bros / fecit / New York, USA* (fig. 37). The workshop was owned and managed by the Irish-American John G. Draddy (c.1833–1904), who was first recorded in 1859 with works in Cincinnati but later established himself in New York where he produced various works for St Patrick’s Cathedral. His best-known work is the monument in Brooklyn to the Irish poet and songwriter Thomas Moore (1779–1853). The mechanics of the Eynaud commission with its logistical challenges and transportation to Malta still have to be researched.

Monuments and memorials at Ta’ Braxia required the approval of a committee of management that deliberated and approved designs, sculptors, and craftsmen. It is unfortunate that, with the exception of the Pozzi working sketch for the Gollcher monument, all design-drawings have been lost or mislaid. The great majority of funerary monuments are, for this reason, anonymous works that vary greatly in artistic quality and level of execution. Only a handful are inscribed with the name of the artist or the firm that produced them. Worthy of mention is the J. Darmanin and Sons Marble Works of Strada Levante, Valletta, staffed by the brothers, Carlo, Giovanni, and Gerolamo, which produced and signed, in 1858, two simple headstones with a low relief of a dove with an olive twig.²³ The Darmanin brothers were gifted artisans who are now attracting international attention for their *pietre dure* tables.²⁴ They sadly gave up marble works for *papier mâché* processional statues which earned them popular acclaim but are of negligible artistic interest. Francesco Psaila Vallone of Birkirkara also signed a plain headstone of no artistic interest. It is the only work by him that I have knowledge of and I am unaware of information about him and his activity. Of greater interest is the highly skilled but unstudied stone carver A. Penza of Strada Santa Lucia, Valletta, who exported works to the London market.²⁵ He produced and signed the ornate, grass-roots Baroque sarcophagus of Mary Ann Smith (1871) (fig.92). The ‘Britishness’ of the headstones makes it likely that, at least some, were produced in the United Kingdom and shipped to

Malta, but the only secure instance is the one bearing the signature *J. McFarlane Dundee*, on the tomb of Augustus Pirnie of Dundee, who died in 1881 (fig. 98).

The success of Ta’ Braxia and tacit admiration for its architecture and landscaping mitigated opposition to extra-mural burials but Church approval to a public cemetery was conditional to Roman Catholic exclusivity and, equally important, to the presence therein, of a dominant, clergy-administered, church where daily masses would be offered for the suffrage of the dead. The church’s presence would make the place holy ground with a resident priest with permanent and easily accessible living quarters.²⁶ A scathing sanitary report on the health dangers of continued burials in long overcrowded harbour city churches, clinched the agreement on the matter with government acceding to the Church’s demands. Brushing aside pockets of recalcitrant resistance, the new governor, Sir John Gaspard Le Marchant (1858–64) pushed on with the project and a large-scale Catholic cemetery, dedicated with cunning political intuition to the Virgin of Sorrows (Santa Maria Addolorata) was laid out on Tal-Ħorr Hill, outside Paola, and completed in 1872. An official Government Ordinance (Ordinance II, 1869) had meanwhile forbidden church burials in Valletta, Birgu, I-Isla, Bormla, and Floriana.²⁷

Galizia was the natural choice for an architect. Building on the Ta’ Braxia experience, he produced an inspired design project that has the essential elements of great architecture. The purity, geometry, and volumetric clarity of the built forms blend with imperceptive harmony with the natural ruggedness of the terraced site achieving a dramatic climax in the cemetery church in the English Neo-Gothic style of which he had achieved an absolute command. The influence of Ruskin and William Morris is a prevalent characteristic. It is, however, in the happy marriage between the clean Neo-Classical planar simplicity of the layout and the bucolic Romanticism of the carefully-crafted landscape that the cemetery finds its greatest asset. Ta’ Braxia had been an important point of departure and had provided him with the essential experience for the great Addolorata project.

Mario Buhagiar, FSA

Notes

- ¹ C.M. Koslofsky, *The Reformation of the Dead. Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany 1400–1700* (New York and London, 2000), 5–18.
- ² E. Duffy, *The Stripping of Altars. Tradition and Religion in England c.1400–1500* (New Harvard and London, 1992), 577.
- ³ R.A. Etlin, *The Architecture of Death: Transformation of the Cemetery in Eighteenth Century Paris* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1984).
- ⁴ ‘Cemetery of the Great Quarries’
- ⁵ In 1871 his remains were transferred to a traverse in bastion later named after him.
- ⁶ In 1871 his remains were similarly transferred to a traverse in bastion later named after him.
- ⁷ R. Cassar, ‘Public Monuments in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Malta – An Art Historical Appreciation’, BA Hons. thesis in History of Art presented in the Art Unit, University of Malta, March 1999, 70–1.
- ⁸ On John Graham Lough who benefited from a thorough study of the Elgin Marbles: J.S.R. Boase, ‘John Graham Lough - A Transitional Sculptor’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 23, July–December 1960, 277–90.
- ⁹ *Malta Government Gazette*, 2 May 1838, 171.
- ¹⁰ Chief Draughtsman’s Office, Department of Resources and Infrastructure (former Public Works Department), Roll 6A, ff. 3–4.
- ¹¹ *Malta Government Gazette*, 22 June 1831.
- ¹² Harry Benjamin Formosa was a prominent pharmacist but his informed interest was on British personalities and other foreigners who died and were buried in Malta about whom he compiled an unpublished biographical dictionary. The Malta University Library has one of his manuscripts: 9MS. 262–5. The others are in private collection.
- ¹³ H.B. Formosa in an interview with Laurence Grech, *The Sunday Times of Malta*, 1 May 1966.
- ¹⁴ M. Buhagiar, ‘Restoring the Msida Bastion cemetery’, *The Times of Malta*, 16 March 1988.
- ¹⁵ A.N. Walsh, *The Msida Garden of Rest. A Visitor’s Guide* (Malta, 1995).
- ¹⁶ National Museum of Archaeology, Valletta, ‘Charles George Zammit, Notebook MS on the Msida Bastion Cemetery with measured drawings, free-hand sketches and photographic data’. The manuscript is indispensable for the study of the funerary architecture of Early British Malta and of far greater significance than the abbreviated published report.
- ¹⁷ National Archives Malta, Gov. 1.3.8. ref. 443. Letter dated 5 March 1855 from Governor Reid to Lord Panmure.
- ¹⁸ V. Borg, *Marian Devotions in the Islands of St Paul 1600–1800* (Malta, 1953), 106, 108–9.
- ¹⁹ E. Vella, *Storja ta’ Hal Tarxien u Raħal Ġdid (Pawla)* (Malta, 1932), 263.
- ²⁰ J. Fleming, H. Honour, and N. Pevsner, *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture*, 5th ed. (Great Britain and USA, 1998), 429.
- ²¹ Roger Dixon and Stefan Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, 3rd ed. (London, 1988), 23, 218–21.
- ²² On the tomb of Alan Kerr who died at Malta on 30 May 1878, aged 22.
- ²³ For the tombs of the sailors of HMS *Centurion*, John Luke and Evan Evans.
- ²⁴ K. Hay, ‘Mosaic Marble Tables by Darmanin & Sons of Malta’, *Furniture History*, Vol. xlvii (2010).
- ²⁵ Information kindly shared by Dr Mark Sagona.
- ²⁶ Mario Borg, ‘The Artistic Relevance of the Santa Maria Addolorata Cemetery, Malta 1870–1940’, unpublished Masters’ thesis presented in the Art Unit, Faculty of Arts, University of Malta, 2001, Vol. 1, 12–21.
- ²⁷ P. Cassar, *Medical History of Malta* (London, 1964), 342.

Ta' Braxia Cemetery

Its Origins and Historical Formation

The introduction of extra-mural cemeteries in Malta was a highly controversial issue in the mid-nineteenth century. The local Roman Catholic Church was vehemently opposed to the principal of establishing burial grounds outside the confines of the local parishes and even more so to the principle of multi-faith internment. Plague cemeteries were built outside the urban areas but these were many-a-times neglected and had fallen into a state of disrepair.

British servicemen had previously been buried in the Quarantine Harbour cemeteries contained in small pockets of land that straddled the stretch of the Floriana fortifications overlooking the inner reaches of Marsamxett Harbour (fig. 11). Rev. George Percy Badger provides us with an account of his visit to the Protestant burial grounds in 1838:¹

A gate which bounds the precincts of the Poor Asylum leads down to this repose of the dead. Two extensive enclosures have already been filled up with the mortality of English residents, and a third [Msida Bastion Cemetery], opened about ten years ago, is rapidly occupying its space with the bones of our countrymen. This latter is planted with flowers and trees, and contains many sumptuous monuments, the only seniority which the noble can now boast over the base, or the rich over the poor. Here repose many who sought in a foreign country a more genial climate for diseased nature, but whose destiny it was to be borne by strangers to their long home. Here they rest as quiet as in the sepulchre of their fathers, and will sleep on blended with other dust, until the resurrection morn.

... The dilapidated tombs, the crumbling urns, and weather-worn inscriptions, in the more ancient burial-



Fig. 11. View of Quarantine Cemetery overlooking Marsamxett Harbour, c.1900

(Photo: Courtesy of the Richard Ellis Archive – Malta)

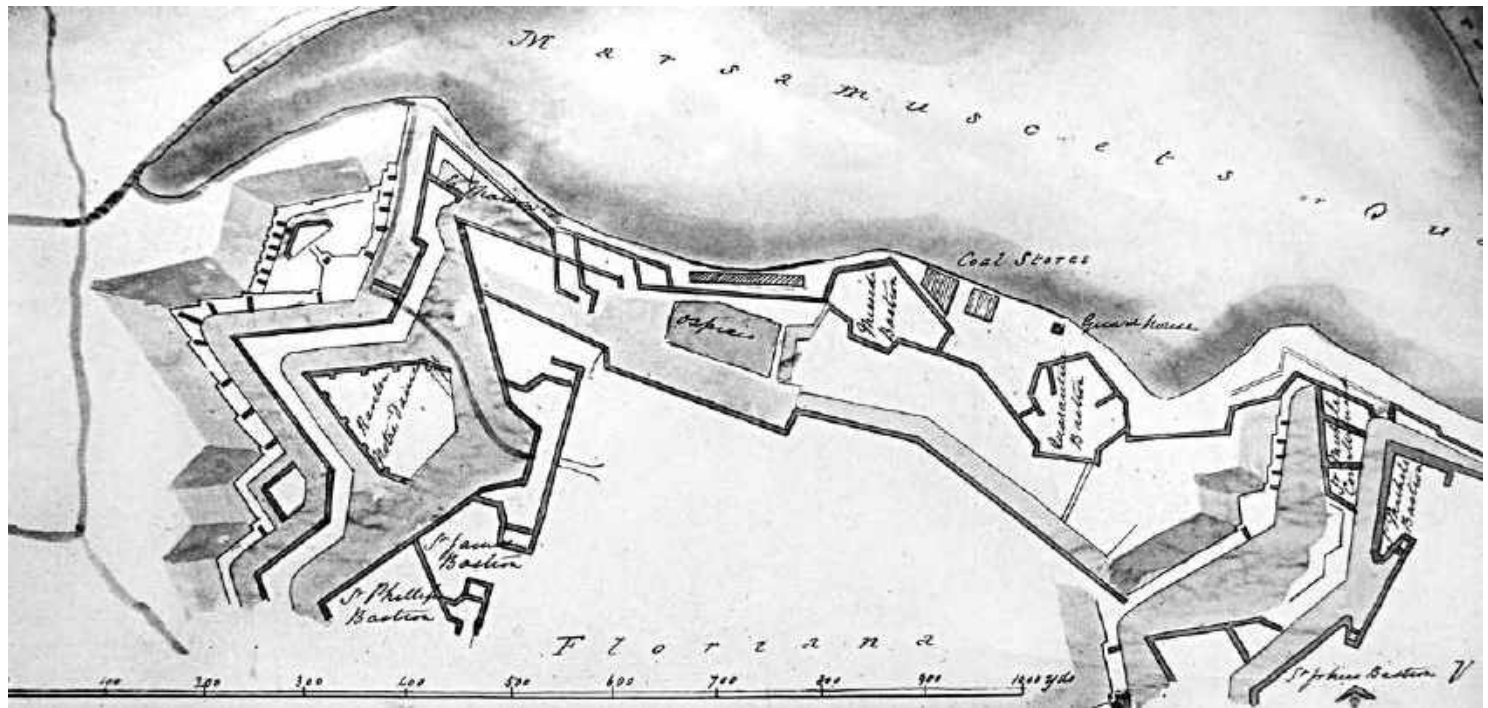


Fig. 12. Detail of plan showing location of Msida Bastion and Quarantine Bastion, Floriana
(Photo: Courtesy of National Library Malta)

grounds, prove what faithless remembrancers these are of recording to posterity our real excellencies; – what a poor substitute for a set of memorable actions is polished alabaster or the mimicry of sculptured marble. The only way of immortalizing our characters, a way equally open to the meanest and most exalted fortune, is to live as not to fear to die.

The principal cemetery and the only one that has physically survived is the Msida Bastion cemetery; the Quarantine Cemetery, the Cholera Cemetery, and the Greek Orthodox Cemetery were in a neglected state; following the Second World War, a considerable amount of war debris from Valletta and Floriana was unceremoniously dumped on these burial grounds (fig. 12). The ultimate death-knell was the construction, in the mid-to-late 1960s, of the Excelsior Hotel that physically obliterated these cemeteries. It was the source of great controversy and one of the first battles of a then nascent heritage conservation movement. Fortunately, the Msida Bastion cemetery, which had been severely damaged by the Second World War bombing and was in a state of dereliction for several

years, was eventually saved by the valiant efforts of *Din l-Art Helwa*, through the painstaking work of its volunteers and restored it to its former glory.

By the 1850s, the limited physical size of the Msida Bastion Cemetery and others in the vicinity could no longer accommodate more graves. In March 1855, Governor William Reid wrote to Lord Panmure stating that given that the Msida Bastion Cemetery was overcrowded, there was a pressing need to establish a new and more extensive burial site:

The Protestant burial place which is on the fortifications being more eroded with graves, it has become necessary to appropriate some other spot as a cemetery where persons of all religious creeds may be interred. I have therefore allocated a piece of ground belonging to the Government of Malta and outside of the fortifications for this purpose but which requires to be enclosed and properly laid out.²

As a follow-up Reid requested the sum of £100 from the fund reserved for Special Services which was under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State.³

In his letter Reid made a case that the land ownership and jurisdiction of the new cemetery should reside exclusively with the government so as to ensure that no disputes would arise in the eventuality that land was allocated to specific religious denominations. The new cemetery was therefore conceived as a multi-faith cemetery, although in practice it was intended mainly for those adhering to the Protestant faith and other religious denominations who could not be buried in Catholic cemeteries.

The site selected for the new Ta' Braxia Cemetery was on barren government-owned land in Pietà, just outside the Portes des Bombes, Floriana.⁴ Its close physical proximity to Valletta and the Three Cities ensured that it was readily accessible. It soon became the island's principal garrison cemetery and the most important burial site for British servicemen during the second half of the nineteenth century. Adjoining the site were two other small cemeteries – the Plague and Jewish Cemeteries – that straddled the old San Giuseppe road that connected Porte des Bombes to Marsa.

Trials and Tribulations

Besides the Msida Bastion Cemetery, the Ta' Braxia Cemetery was one of the first cemeteries in Malta to espouse concepts and ideals closely associated with those of the Romantic movement. The re-discovery of nature as a prime and eternal source of beauty, combined with the concept of the garden-cemetery, provided an alternative to the perceived impurities associated with intra-mural burials. The model of an extra-mural cemetery with burial grounds attractively planned as a naturalistic garden setting was actively promoted as the way forward. However, the acceptance of the principle of extra-mural internment by the local Catholic Church was not readily forthcoming. The custom of burying the deceased in church crypts was still widespread in local towns and villages.

The establishment of modern cemeteries was greatly conditioned by the provisions of the Napoleonic code, specifically the imperial decree of the 23rd Prairial, Year XII (12 June 1804) which prohibited burials in

churches, convents, and cemeteries within city walls. The decree codified much of contemporary burial practices for Paris and beyond and served as a model for the modern extra-mural cemeteries in Europe. The decree stipulated that bodies could not be buried on top of one another and each person was guaranteed a plot for eternity. A coffin was mandatory and everyone had the right to erect a tombstone over a loved one's grave. The decree stipulated the types of burials as well as the permitted types of monuments. At times, economic realities would curtail some of the universal equality entrenched in Napoleon's decree. Spatial constraints made necessary the retrenching of graves for those who could not afford to buy plots in perpetuity. Public health considerations were the main factor in the promotion of extra-mural internment and this debate would also be reflected in commentaries published in local newspapers.⁵

The Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris which was opened in 1804 was the first garden necropolis of its kind, stretching over some 118 acres into the then hilly suburbs on the former garden estate of Louis XIV's confessor. Other similar garden city cemeteries soon followed. A visitor to Glasgow's necropolis which opened in 1832 noted its rows of 'elegant and costly monument' and referred to it as a 'silent but significant city of the dead'.⁶ In Malta, Ta' Braxia Cemetery was the first attempt to establish a Christian extra-mural cemetery at a time when the local custom of burials in local churches and adjoining parish cemeteries still persisted.⁷

The diffident antagonism that existed between the Protestant colonial rulers and their Catholic subjects was tempered by the diplomatic political acumen exercised by the colonial administration, keen on avoiding any form of religious confrontation, perceived or otherwise. The Ta' Braxia Cemetery project was a delicate one from a religio-political viewpoint. The local newspapers *Il Portafoglio Maltese* and *L'Ordine*, both closely aligned to the local Church, lost no opportunity to criticize the project. The former journal cast doubts on 'the urgent need to construct convenient cemeteries outside the city walls and urban fabric' pointing out that 'this cannot be done without expense; however, there is a shortage of

funds'.⁸ *L'Ordine* was even more direct and scathing in its criticism as it objected 'to the construction of a new cemetery of a new type in Malta, a mixed cemetery for all religious creeds' and criticized the fact that 'plans were drawn up, the site was chosen, a committee was appointed, even works have commenced without it having been approved by Council' and that 'the site was selected without consulting the representatives of the people'.⁹ The main objection of *L'Ordine* was that Ta' Braxia was to be 'open to all religions for the purpose of internment'. This is somewhat misleading, as in practice those buried at Ta' Braxia belonged to Christian denominations – Muslims and Jews had their own designated cemeteries. The Roman Catholic Church did not permit its faithful to be buried in mixed-rites burial grounds with other Christian denominations. *L'Ordine* also felt aggrieved that the local ecclesiastical authorities were totally excluded from the management committee that was appointed to oversee the construction and eventual management of Ta' Braxia.

A response to *L'Ordine's* criticism was immediately forthcoming from the pro-government paper, *The Malta Times, Naval & Military Gazette*:

We cannot understand why the *Ordine* will persist in finding a cause of offense of the comment now constructing – building up a wall against which to knock his head. Can it be for the purpose of exciting religious animosities? He takes great pains in telling us that Roman Catholics cannot be buried in this Cemetery. Who said they could or were to be buried there? We may next hear of the Jews, the Schismatic Greeks, and the Mahometans crying out that an outrage is being committed because the Government must know that they cannot be buried promiscuously. Would not the *Ordine* be the first to ridicule such an outcry and ask 'Who intends that you should?'

We cannot discover that the Government have taken any one step which could lead to the belief that the Roman Catholics were to make use of the Cemetery. We have been informed that His Excellency wished it to be a general Cemetery, rather with the view

of keeping it under the control of the Government, instead of giving it over to any one denomination; and to avoid the necessity of having to provide separate grounds for Civilians and the Military.¹⁰

The opposition to Ta' Braxia Cemetery was supposedly based on the pretext of an objection to the formation of an extra-mural cemetery. However, there had already been a trend in this direction. There were already historical precedents of extra-mural cemeteries, such as that of the Jews and various plague cemeteries. By the mid-nineteenth century there were various social and administrative reforms relating to sanitation and public health issues. An extra-mural cemetery had already been proposed during the time of Governor Richard O'Ferrall (1847–51). In 1851 Governor Reid had brought with him to Malta copies of a report prepared by an English parliament's commission and its views on the inconveniences relating to burials in urban areas.¹¹ The implementation of this new cemetery reform was an integral part of a holistic sanitation strategy for the island. The local press was not particularly adverse to the concept of extra-mural cemeteries but did refer to the fact that 'popular prejudices would have to be overcome before the project could gain favour'.¹² Basically *L'Ordine's* criticism of the Ta' Braxia Cemetery project was more concerned with the fact that a new non-Catholic cemetery was being established and that this could potentially make inroads in challenging the pre-eminence of the Catholic Church in Malta. One has to bear in mind that, soon after Ta' Braxia was completed, the local ecclesiastical authorities tacitly informed the colonial government that they were no longer objecting to extra-mural burials and this was followed, soon after, with the establishment of the Addolorata cemetery on Tal-Ħorr hill.

L'Ordine's other objection, namely that representatives of the Catholic Church had been specifically excluded from the committee, was countered by the colonial government's statement that

nothing can be more clearly proven that the Roman Catholics are not intended to participate in this

Cemetery, than the composition of the Committee, which consists first, – of the Collector of Land Revenue who is the chairman, *ex officio* this indicates that the Cemetery is Government property and as such must be administered by the Land Revenue Department; next there is the Chaplain of Government to represent the Church of England and then the Senior Chaplain of the Forces for the Military; next the Scotch Minister on the part of the Free Church of Scotland, and generally of all Dissenters from the Church of England; and lastly, there is a civilian to look after the lay interests of the Civil Community.¹³

The statement in the pro-government *The Malta Times, Naval & Military Gazette* made it explicitly clear that, although the new cemetery was essentially a Protestant burial ground, it was not under the jurisdiction of any ecclesiastical denomination but was directly under the control of the government. This avoided any sectarian-based disputes that may have arisen in the future. The government adopted a stance based on a purely secular outlook and that was intended to resolve in the most pragmatic manner ‘a pressing necessity on the part of the Protestant community’, that is the provision of burial grounds for British servicemen and their families.¹⁴ Furthermore, it appealed to the writers of *L’Ordine* not to persist on this issue as ‘otherwise it would be construed as fomenting ill-feelings motivated by sinister motives; motives the scope of which is reserved of “peace and good will amongst men”.’¹⁵

Emanuele Luigi Galizia – Architect of the New Cemetery

The planning and design of the new cemetery was entrusted to the Maltese architect Emanuele Luigi Galizia, who was then only 25 years of age and was in the employment of the Public Works Department. At that time Galizia was assistant government *perito* with the Land Revenue Department.¹⁶ During the construction of Ta’ Braxia, he would be promoted to the position of government *perito*. *L’Ordine* had also been critical of the fact that the supervision of the work on the new cemetery was overseen by a

specially appointed committee to the exclusion of the Public Works Department.¹⁷ *L’Ordine*’s criticism can be interpreted as an indirect reference to the fact that the project was entrusted to a relatively inexperienced architect with the Land Revenue Department. The decision to appoint a special committee to oversee the works, and in the process by-pass the Public Works Department, had been taken as the then superintendent of public works, William Lamb Arrowsmith was suspended and undergoing disciplinary procedures for having allegedly colluded with a private contractor in the award of a public tender.¹⁸

Galizia, besides being a talented young architect, harboured pro-British sentiments and was well-connected (fig. 13). He enjoyed the personal trust of his direct superior Giuseppe Montanaro (1789–1864) in his capacity as the collector of land revenue who



Fig. 13. Architect Emanuele Luigi Galizia (1830–1907) in ceremonial uniform as superintendent of public works between 1880 and 1888
(Photograph by J.Mallia & Co., The Grand Studio, Valletta.)

was also the ex officio chairman of the committee in charge of works on Ta' Braxia. Galizia would go on to enjoy a distinguished career with the government and would later serve as Superintendent of Public Works (1880–88). His involvement with Ta' Braxia was his first foray in cemetery design and funerary architecture. Subsequently he would also be responsible for the Addolorata Cemetery (1862–69) and the Ottoman Muslim Cemetery in Marsa (1873–74).

Ta' Braxia Cemetery was planned and constructed in a number of phases from its inception in 1855 up to its final extension in 1889. Galizia's plan was based on an orthogonal grid-iron plan layout with a symmetrical disposition with the entrance portal aligned along the main central axis. Initially there were only two walled-in enclosures interconnected via an internal dividing wall. Pedestrian pathways served as dividing elements for the various sectors containing graves and burial vaults. A fountain, composed of a classical urn atop a stone pedestal set within a shallow water basin, was placed within the second enclosure along the main pathway.

In 1855, works started in earnest with the construction of the boundary wall as the detailed plans of the new cemetery were presented to the Commanding Royal Engineer. This was necessary as clearance had to be sought from the military authorities to ensure that the cemetery as planned would not compromise the efficacy of the fortifications and defensive lines in the vicinity.¹⁹ Reid had instructed the secretary of state to withdraw £100 from the sum reserved for special services to finance works at Ta' Braxia. As works progressed, a request was made for a further allocation of £50 from the same fund which request was acceded to on 19 November 1855.²⁰ Upon completion of the cemetery, an additional sum of £50 was requested 'to defray the expense of making a side entrance to the keeper's residence, to erect a forcing pump, and to meet other expenses incidental to the opening of the cemetery'.²¹

The Anglican Bishop of Gibraltar, Rev. G. Tomlinson (1794–1863), who was also representing the Protestant community in Malta wrote to the Chief Secretary to Government, Sir Victor Houlton to request confirmation as to 'whether the Government has taken the necessary

steps to secure the possession or perpetual use of the portion of the ground for the Protestant Community'.²² On 9 October 1857 a management committee composed mainly of British clergymen was announced, together with the official cemetery regulations which stated that

The Cemetery of Ta' Braxia is open to all religions for the purpose of internment.²³ Their recognized ministers may officiate at funerals, and when within the cemetery employ the ceremonies and wear the vestments enjoined by their religion. Portions of the ground may be assigned to particular persuasions, divided by pathways.

It was decreed that equal status was to be accorded to all creeds and religions and that all burials were to be subjected to the same tariffs. The committee formulated a set of 'Rules and Regulations' for burials which included detailed tables relating to the charges covering the cost of preparing graves and vaults, the erection of headstones and monuments, the installation of railings around a grave, and the issuing of certificates.

The cemetery was officially consecrated at the end of October 1857 by Bishop Tomlinson. The first person to be buried was Thomas Coakley, a lieutenant and adjutant of the 21st Fusiliers, aged 20 years 6 months, with his burial taking place on 31 October 1857. No mention of the cemetery's official inauguration was made in the local press.

Ta' Braxia Cemetery – Its Location and Size

The location of Ta' Braxia Cemetery on land outside Porte de Bombes leading to Pietà Creek was deemed to be ideal as it was located close to Valletta. The site is indicated as open barren land in the *Plan of the Harbours and Fortifications of Valetta* drawn up by Captain W.H. Smyth in 1823 (fig. 14). Smyth indicated the presence of the Plague Cemetery and the former Ottoman Muslim Cemetery situated just off the Hornwork fortifications of Floriana and the presence of a few tombs. It appears that the area was originally used as unconsecrated burial grounds both during the time of the Order and in the early

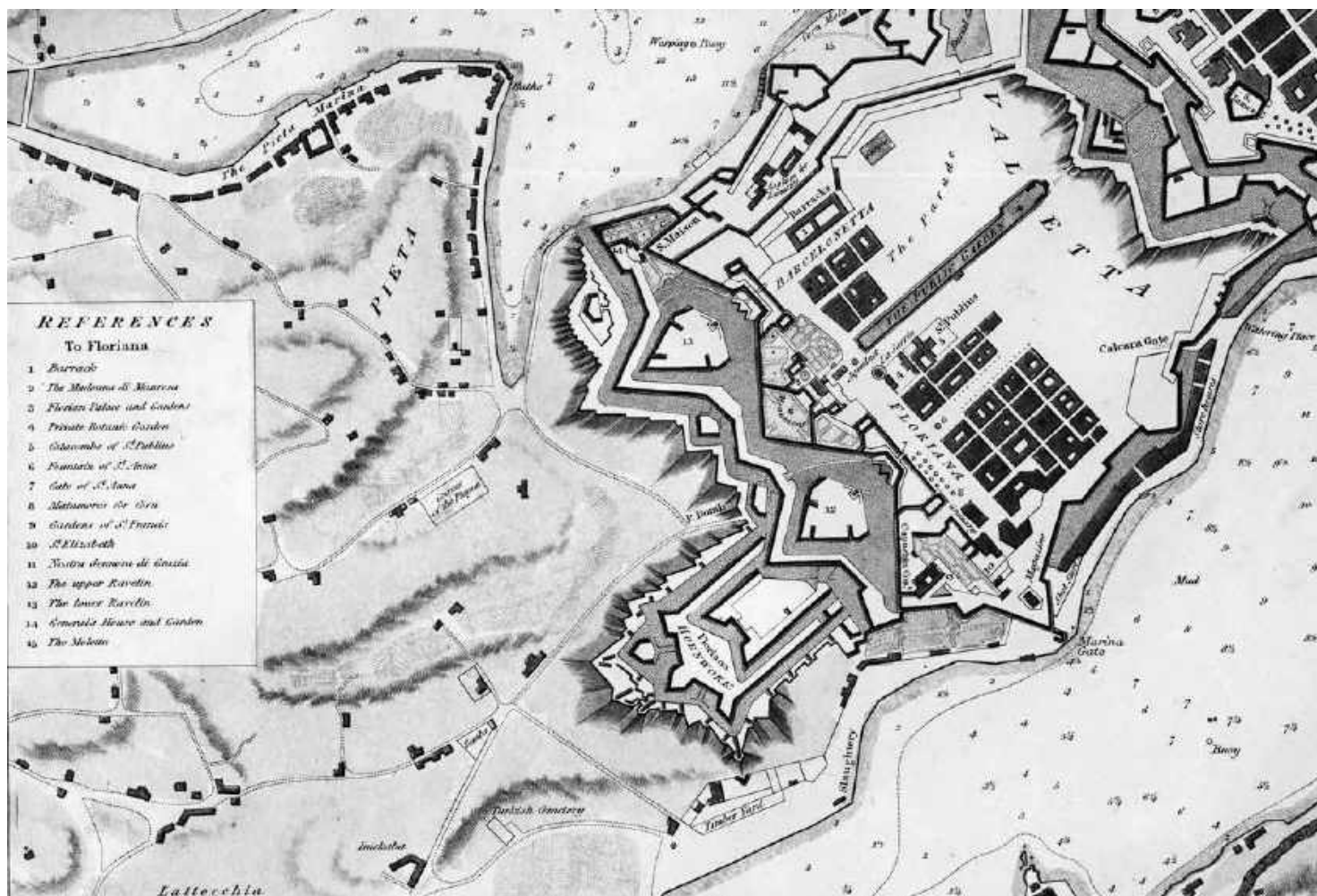


Fig. 14. Detail of map entitled *Plan of the Harbours and Fortifications of Valetta*, by Captain W.H. Smyth, 1823

British period. There were already small cemeteries in the area, along San Giuseppe road extending from Portes de Bombes to Marsa. In fact, Ta' Braxia was built adjoining a small Jewish cemetery that had been established in 1831 by the Jewish financier Sir Moses Montefiore.

A prime consideration in the selection of the site was that it was strategically located and easily accessible from Valletta and its residential suburbs. By the mid-nineteenth century, the British colonial authorities had embarked upon a series of ambitious infrastructural projects comprising new roads and improvements to existing ones, besides investing in an extensive network of water and drainage systems that was intended to radically improve the state of public hygiene. The establishment of a new extra-mural cemetery far removed from the dense residential areas

was fully compatible with these initiatives.

Ta' Braxia became the first true necropolis, a 'city of the dead', to be established in Malta. It anticipated by a few years the Addolorata Cemetery which would be considerably larger in terms of physical scale. The integration of a landscape specifically reserved for the dead within the context of the larger settlement patterns was an innovation that reflected new social and religio-political considerations. Local population growth and a greater awareness of public health considerations had been determining factors in the establishment of extra-mural cemeteries. The British colonial authorities had succeeded in spite of opposition of some conservative quarters motivated by thinly-veiled sentiments of religious intolerance.

Ta' Braxia Cemetery – Alterations, Additions, and Extensions

Galizia designed a symmetrical and orthogonal grid-iron plan based on a main central axis that connected the main entrance gate to two internal gateways along its path. Paths act as divisions to the various sections of the vaults. It was originally conceived to have a tripartite division with three distinct spatial compartments: the first being from Divisions A to F,

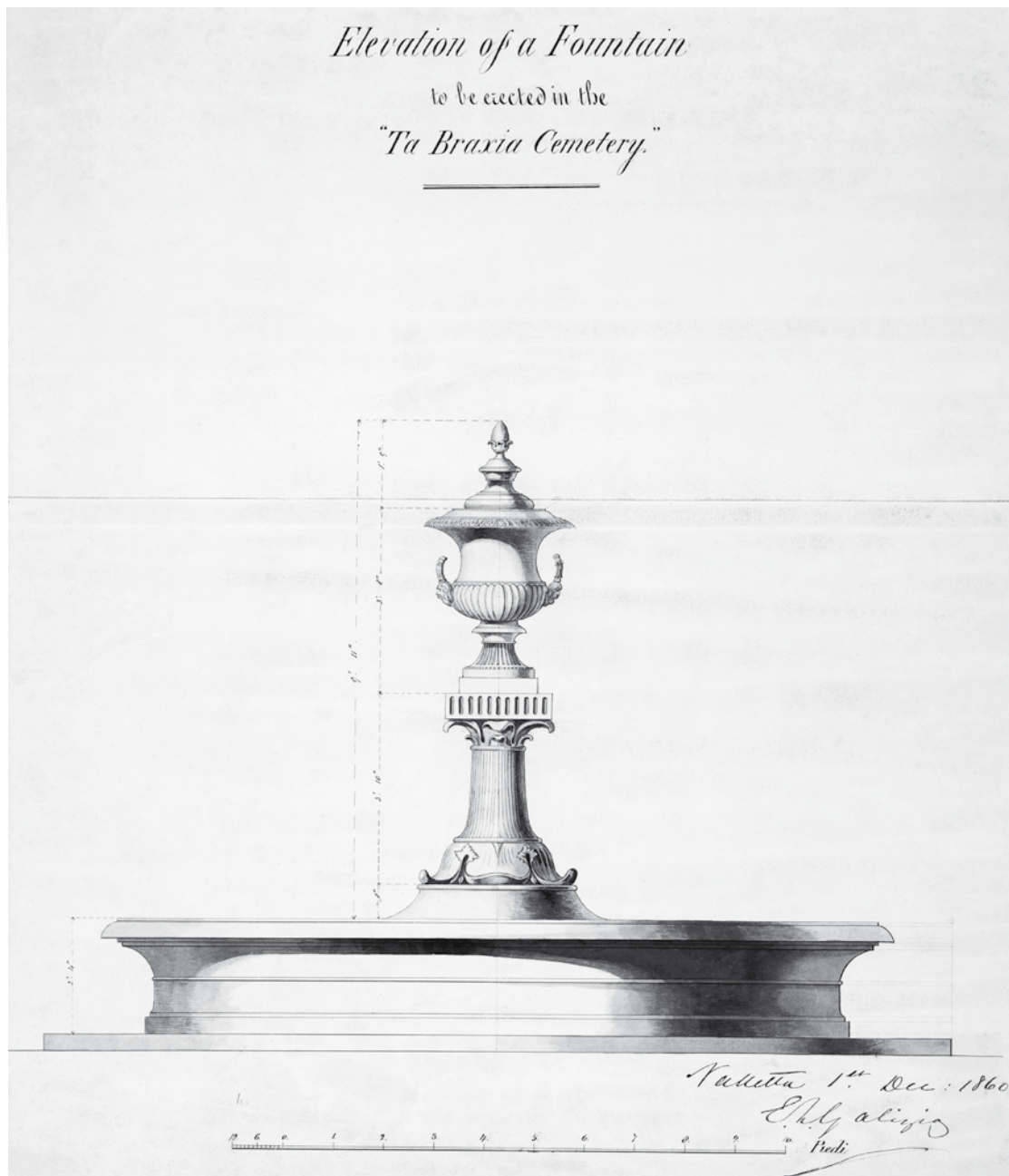


Fig. 15. Drawing entitled, Elevation of a Fountain to be erected in the “Ta’ Braxia Cemetery”, signed by E.L. Galizia and dated 1st December 1860
(Courtesy: Chief Draftsman Collection, Works Department, Floriana)

the second from Divisions G to Q, and the third one with Divisions R to Z. Each compartment is accessed through a wide opening flanked on each side by stone piers capped with decorative finials.

Along the mid-point of the axis within the second compartment is an elaborate fountain set within a shallow stone basin. A design of the fountain, signed by Galizia and dated 1 December 1860,²⁴ depicts a classical stone urn supported on a decorative pedestal set at the centre of the shallow basin (fig. 15). Over the years the stonework has badly eroded and the finer sculptural details have been unfortunately lost. The archival records also make reference to another fountain dating to 30 July 1887. The contractor for this fountain was Andrea Azzopardi.

Galizia had provided designs for the pillars with one variant being surmounted by a neo-classical vase and the other one by a cross (fig. 16). The latter variation was selected, although today the piers are no longer capped by crosses. The uppermost part of the tapered piers have a stone carving featuring a winged hour-glass set within a circular insert, a motif very similar to that of Père-Lachaise Cemetery’s main gate. *The Regulations for the ‘Ta’ Braxia Cemetery’* as per Article No. 78 of the Police Code stipulated various requirements pertaining to such aspects as the standard size of the stone blocks to be used, the dimensions of the pilasters, the capping stones, and the individual graves.²⁵ It also specified the materials that were to be used in the foundations and the kerb stones along the pathways. All work was subject to the approval of the surveyor whilst any variations were subject to the approval of the committee. The regulations also mentioned how portions of the cemetery’s grounds were to be assigned to particular religious creeds and divided by pathways. This specific regulation was never adhered to in practice.

Other structures within the new cemetery included the keeper’s lodge that was constructed immediately to the left of the main entrance. An architectural drawing of the quarters dated 26 September 1863 delineates it as a one-storey building with four rusticated pilasters dividing the façade into three bays with the central one capped by a classical triangular pediment.²⁶ In

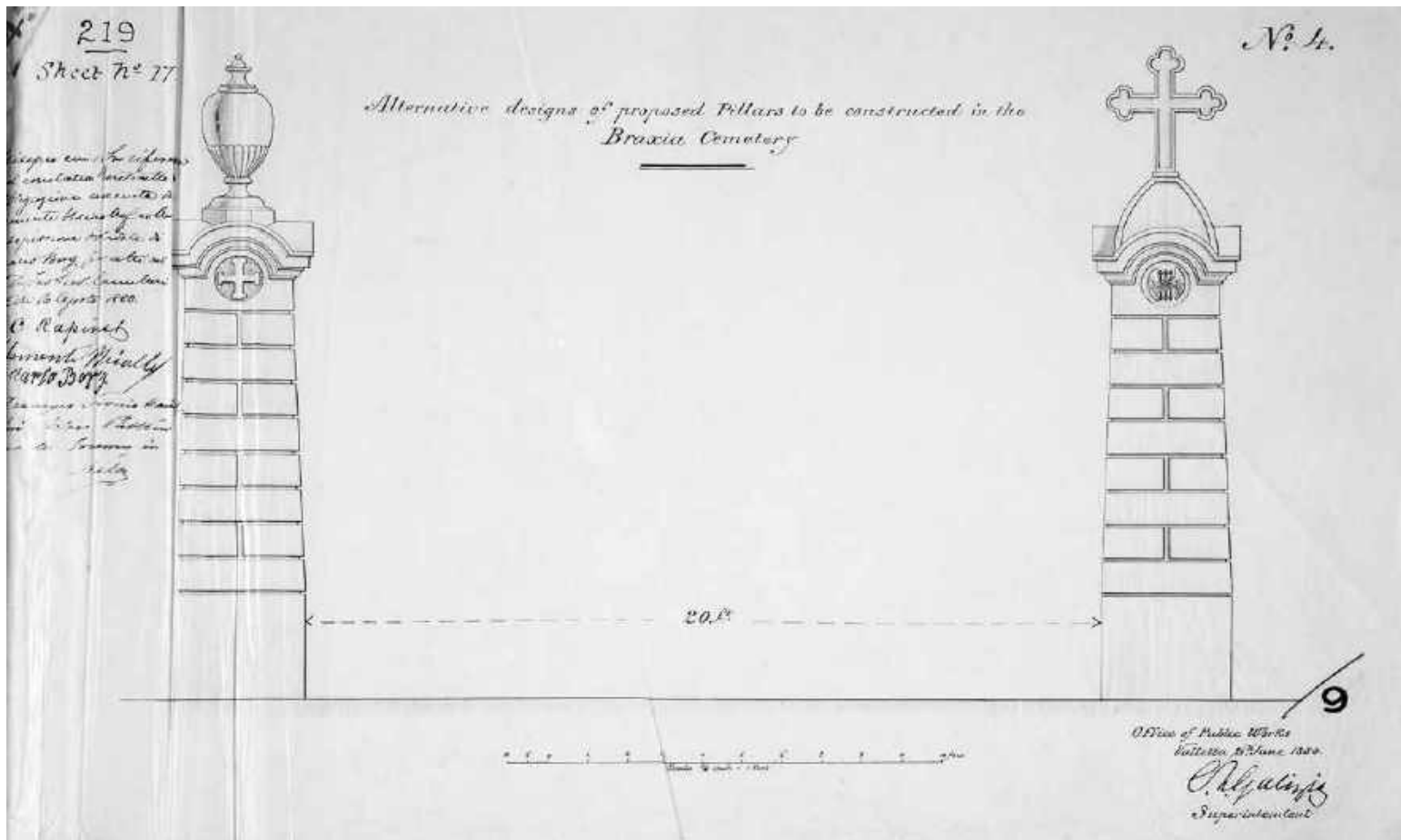


Fig. 16. Drawing entitled, Alternative designs of proposed Pillars to be constructed in the “Ta’ Braxia Cemetery”, signed by E.L. Galizia and dated 26th June 1880

(Courtesy: Chief Draftsman Collection, Works Department, Floriana)

September 1887 the modest quarters were extended by an additional floor that was constructed by the building contractor Salvatore Ebejer (fig. 17). Adjoining the side of the keeper’s quarters is an open water reservoir or pond enclosed within a stone surround and a decorative stone-carving of a lion’s head as a gargoyle set within the rear wall. In keeping with the tradition of garden cemeteries, the element of water is a potent symbolic metaphor for renewal and regeneration.

Over the years, Ta’ Braxia underwent various physical expansions. In 1862 the adjoining *Croce della Marsa* road had to be altered and widened and this impinged upon an existing Catholic cemetery which had to be deconsecrated and temporarily relocated close to the plague cemetery.²⁷ The reconfiguration of the road permitted the expansion of Ta’ Braxia Cemetery. A major extension of the cemetery in the direction

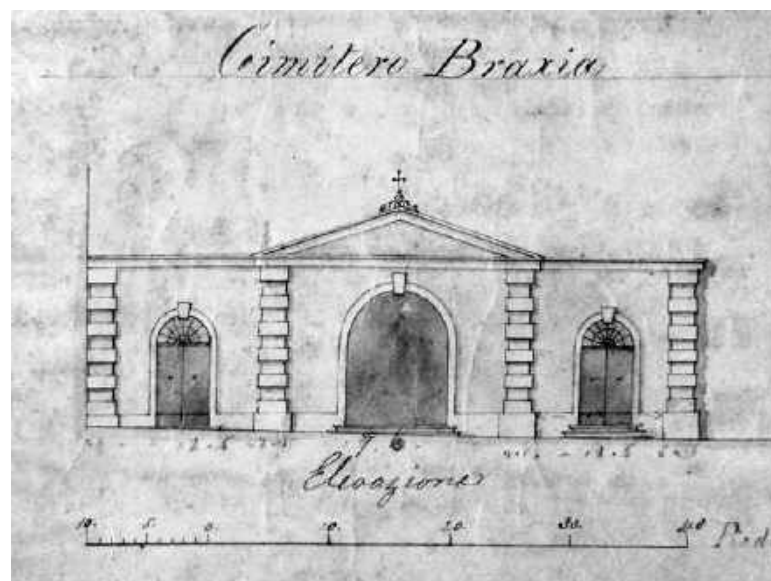


Fig. 17. Drawing entitled *Pianta ed Elevazione dell’Apartamento da fabricarsi nel nuovo Cimitero Braxia*, signed by E.L. Galizia (Courtesy: Chief Draftsman Collection, Works Department, Floriana)

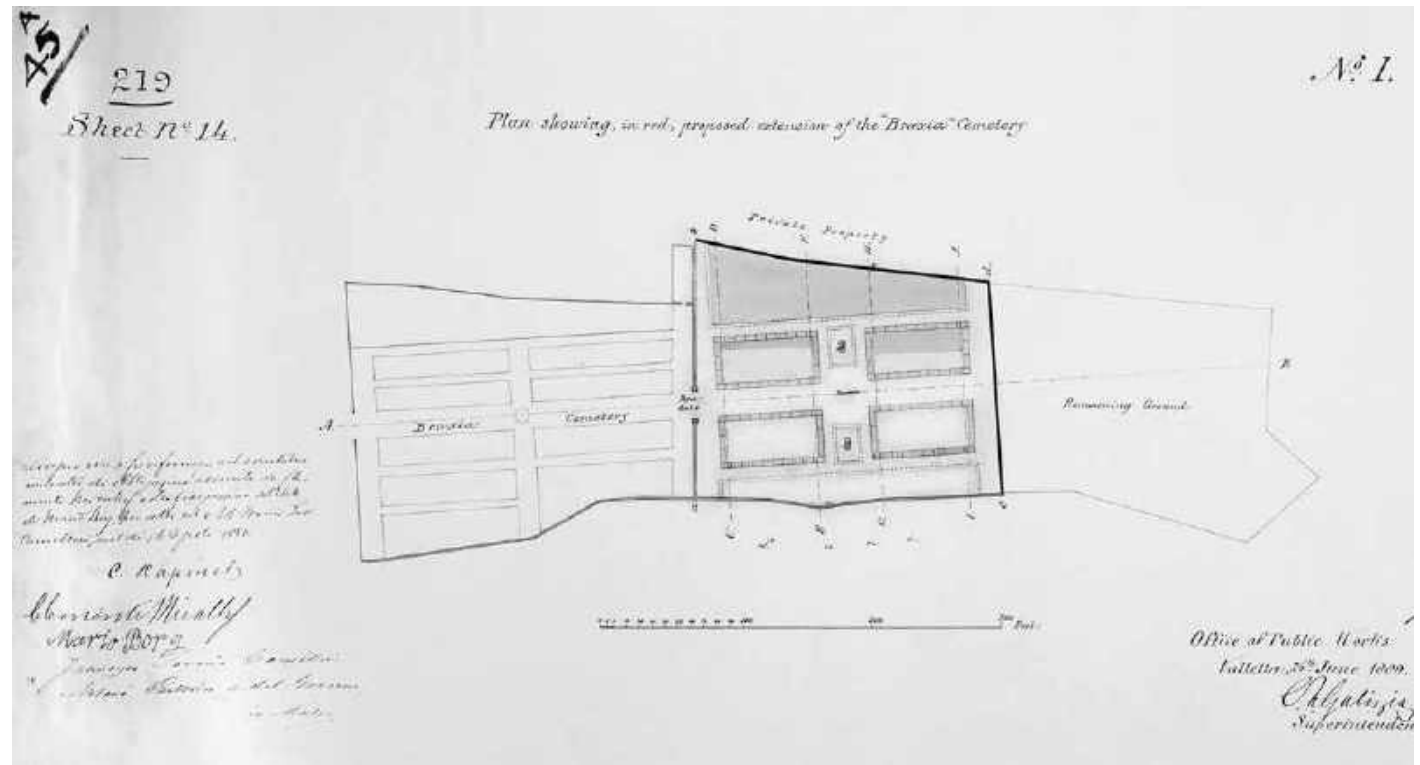


Fig. 18. Drawing entitled 'Plan showing, in red, proposed extension of the "Braxia Cemetery"' signed by E.L. Galizia and dated 26th June 1880
(Courtesy: Chief Draftsman Collection, Works Department, Floriana)

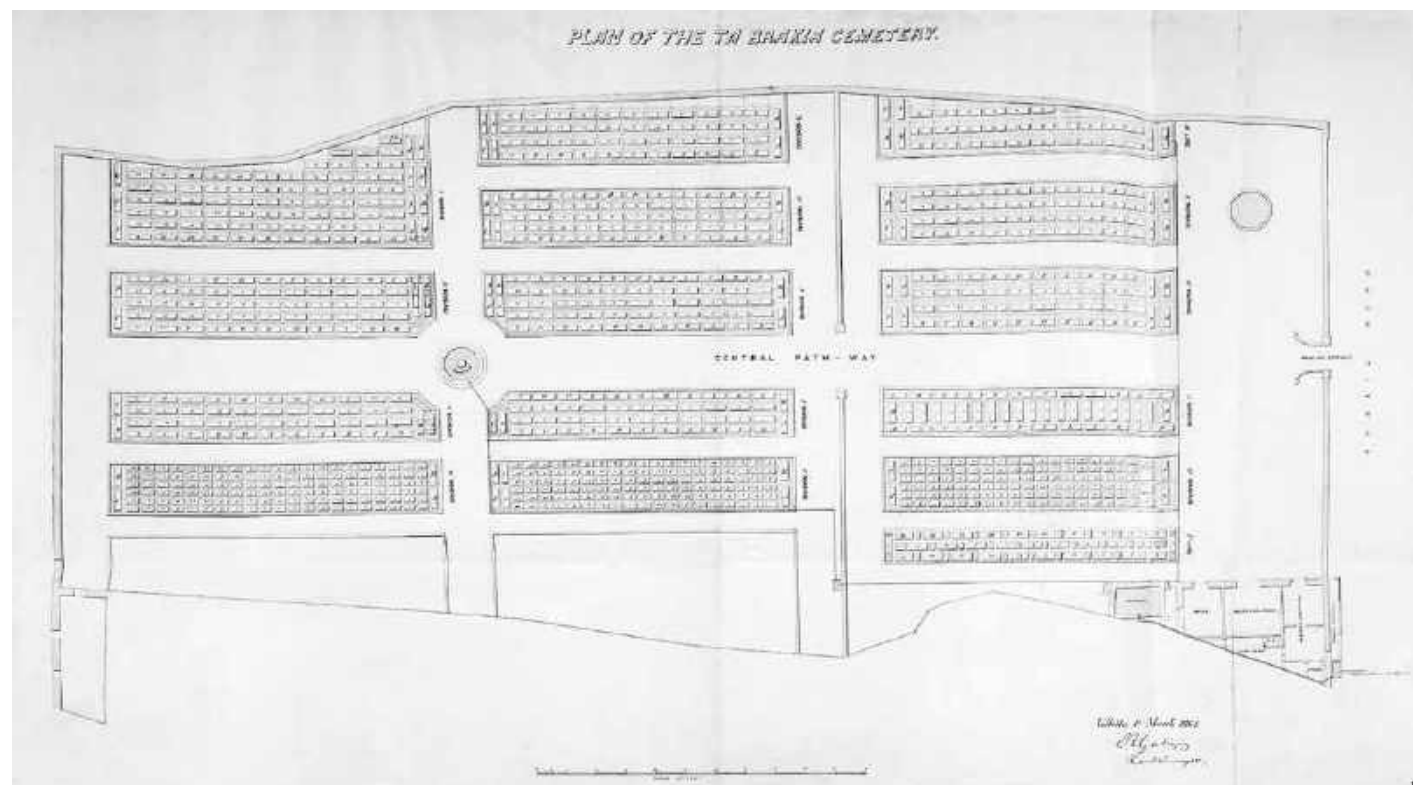


Fig. 19. Drawing entitled 'Plan of the Ta Braxia Cemetery', signed by E.L. Galizia and dated 1st March 1862
(Courtesy: Chief Draftsman Collection, Works Department, Floriana)

of Tad-Duluri church was implemented in 1879–80. No mention of this major extension was made in the local press – the religio-political climate had shifted considerably from that prevailing at the time when the cemetery was founded. By this time the local Roman Catholic community had its own extra-mural cemetery at Addolorata and the various funerary monuments that were erected there reflected a similar artistic sensibility to those at Ta’ Braxia. Basically, the level of religious intolerance and diffidence had subsided considerably over the years and the extension of Ta’ Braxia did not elicit any dissent.

Galizia had prepared detailed cost estimates for the extension of the cemetery. The total estimated cost was set at £478, with the main expense being that of raising the ground to the level of the existing cemetery as this entailed the movement of an estimated 1,200 cubic yards of material. Other estimates were made for the construction of the partition walls, to separate the remaining land from private property, as well as that of two pillars and a considerable number of kerbstones. In February 1879, Galizia forwarded to Rev. M. Hardy a plan of the proposed extension of the cemetery and an estimate of the works (fig. 18 & 19).²⁸ He referred to an early plan that had been submitted to Archdeacon Cleugh five years earlier stating that ‘the pathways in the new plan have been reduced in number in order to obtain a longer extent of ground for common graves and a length of about 15 feet having been added to the proposed former extension’. Galizia concluded his letter by stating that ‘should it be deemed advisable to a future time to construct purchased graves and appropriate a portion of the ground for infants, a plot of ground of the common graves might easily be put to that effect’.²⁹

In a drawing dated 1880, the architect provided designs of two decorative stone pillars capped by finials for a new entrance gate. There is no contemporary plan of the entire cemetery complex as extended in 1880, but in the Chief Draughtsman Collection, Office of Public Works, there is a plan, dated 31 May 1889 and signed by Prof. G.C. Schinas, then superintendent of public works, which delineates an ‘extension of Braxia Cemetery handed to the Committee of Braxia Cemetery management’ on land with one of its sides flanking

Via Principessa Melita (fig. 20).³⁰ The plan is very informative as it relates the extent and boundaries of Ta’ Braxia Cemetery to its surrounding context, including the Old Jewish Cemetery, private lands, the Duluri church property, the plague cemeteries, and various military cemeteries accessible from Strada Doluri. The 1880 extension was to be the last major intervention within the cemetery with the notable exception of the construction of the Lady Hamilton Gordon chapel which was constructed in 1893–94.

An interesting peripheral side-note is an entry citing a letter dated November 1899 from the superintendent of public works to Joseph Cesare di Tajjar, informing the latter that a portion of the double wall that separated Ta’ Braxia from the Old Jewish Cemetery was in a precarious structural state and that it was deemed absolutely necessary to rebuild it to avoid substantial damages to both cemeteries.³¹ Cesare di Tajjar was requested to contribute the sum of £5.15s., that being half the expense

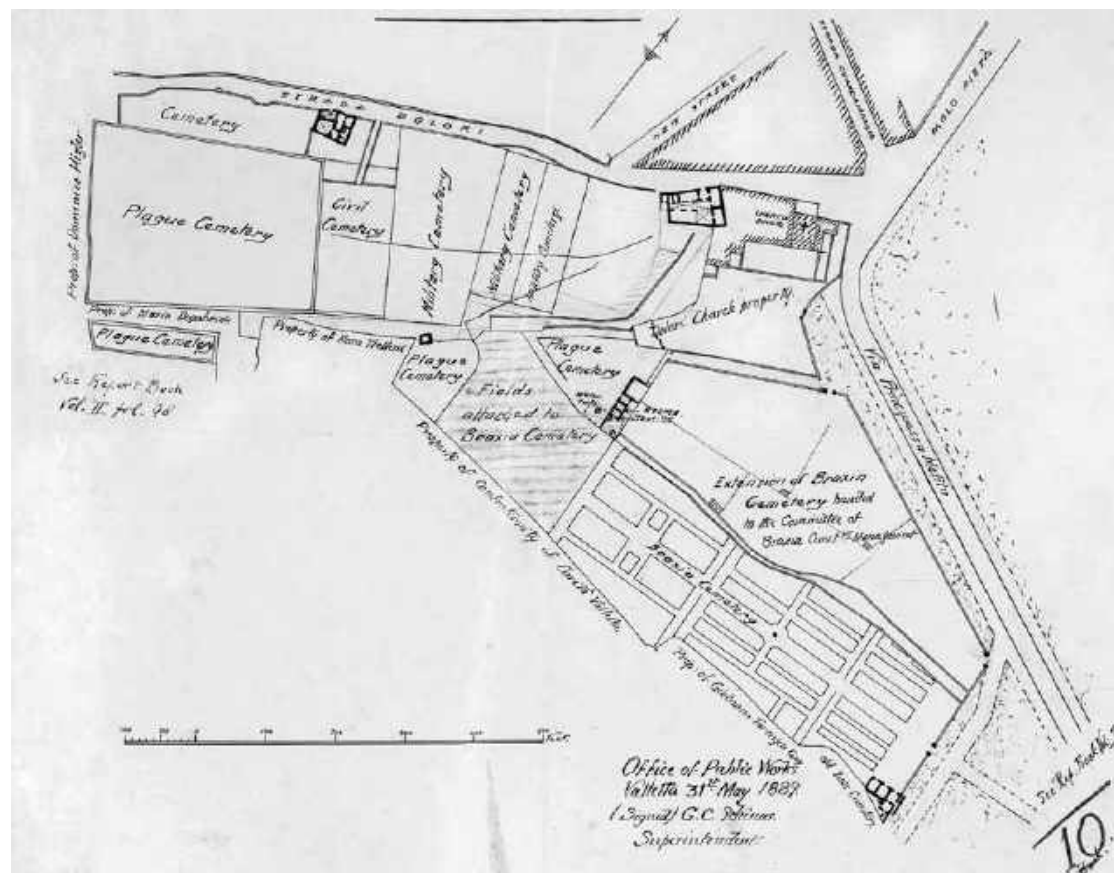


Fig. 20. Map showing location of The Plague Cemetery, the Civil Cemetery, the Military Cemetery, the Duluri church and its environs, Ta’ Braxia Cemetery and the old Jewish Cemetery. Plan signed by G.C.Schinas, superintendent of public works and dated 31st May 1889 (Courtesy: Chief Draftsman Collection, Works Department, Floriana)

required for the remedial works. He was bluntly warned that, in the absence of the receipt of due payment within five days, legal action would be undertaken.

Ta' Braxia Cemetery – Romanticism and the Garden Cemetery Movement

‘A garden cemetery, and monumental decoration afford the most convincing token of a nation’s progress in civilization and the arts, which are its result.’

‘A garden cemetery is the sworn foe to preternatural fear and superstition.’

‘A garden cemetery and monumental decoration, are not only beneficial to public morals, to the improvement of manners, but are likewise calculated to extend virtuous and generous feelings.’

John Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis: with Osbervations (sic) on Ancient and Modern Tombs and Sepulture* (Glasgow, 1831).

Ta' Braxia Cemetery, following the earlier Msida Bastion Cemetery, was one of the first cemeteries in Malta to introduce romantic concepts in the representation of death. Neo-Classicism and Romanticism had radically different conceptions of death to that of the baroque era. Whereas the baroque visual culture of death was animated by the iconography of morbid, animated skeletons, as the architectural historian James Stevens Curl has observed, the ‘horrors of decay and eerie graveyards were already being substituted by a gentle melancholy and mystery. Death became civilized and the cemetery transformed into a place of peace and meditation.’³² Ta' Braxia Cemetery was to be planted with trees and archival documents refer to the extensive pathways that



Fig. 21. View of central pathway and fountain, Ta' Braxia, Richard Ellis photograph, c.1900
(Photo: Courtesy of the Richard Ellis Archive – Malta)



Fig. 22. View of fountain, Ta' Braxia, Richard Ellis photograph, c.1900
(Photo: Courtesy of the Richard Ellis Archive – Malta)

were to be covered with cobble stones (fig. 21 & 22). The vision encapsulated within was that of the typical English garden cemetery with overtones of the mythical Arcadia, where the metaphysical and tangible physical qualities converge.

Galizia's orthogonal plan was uncompromisingly rational and was primarily intended to resolve utilitarian objectives. Over time as various sepulchral monuments were erected and the landscaping became mature, the original severity of the cemetery was tempered by the romantic spirit. British colonial rule also witnessed the creation of various landscaped gardens. In particular, Sir Alexander Ball (1757–1809), in his capacity as civil commissioner of Malta, had established a number of walled-in gardens and promoted the importation of various species of trees and plants to the island. The line of fortifications that surrounded the Grand Harbour and Marsamxett was tempered with the insertion of public gardens, garden cemeteries, and various Neo-Classical monuments. These physical landmarks set within the bastions also served to convey the new spirit of the time, synonymous with that of British colonial rule in Malta.

Galizia's design of Ta' Braxia with its strict geometric formality is more indebted to Italian and French precedents rather than the organic English Picturesque cemeteries that relied on projecting a more informal and naturalistic appearance. At Ta' Braxia, the different spatial compartments and axial pathways serve to impose a sense of visual clarity and order. The external cemetery walls serve to clearly define the physical boundaries between the necropolis and the city of the living beyond its walls. The realms of the living and the dead are not allowed to merge ambiguously into one another. Ta' Braxia as a garden cemetery was intended as a place of mourning and meditation and for keeping the dead alive through memory. In the words of John Claudius Loudon (1783–1843), 'Churchyards and cemeteries are scenes not only calculated to improve the morals and the taste, and by their botanical riches to cultivate the intellect, but they serve as *historical records*.'³³ It was a moral undertaking to create historical records and in the process memorialize those buried within the cemetery.

Since the cemetery was open to various religious denominations, the funerary monuments are a reflection of the multi-culturalism that permeated Maltese society during the second half of the nineteenth century. The monuments are interpreted within a variety of artistic styles ranging from the eclectic, Gothic Revival, or Neo-Classicism, at time even integrating symbols from Egyptian, classical antiquity, and medieval times. Funerary monuments are also an indicator of the deceased's age, social class, and status. Sheer physical size and the degree of decoration and ornamentation lavished upon the monument attested to the deceased's social standing. Ta' Braxia Cemetery was predominantly a Protestant cemetery that was intended mainly, but not exclusively, for the British community in Malta. There are also members of other ethnic groups who are buried at Ta' Braxia, including Russian refugees from the Bolshevik revolution, those who professed the Greek Orthodox faith, and also a few members of Indian immigrant families who had settled permanently in Malta. However, the prevailing ethos of the cemetery is still fundamentally that of a British Protestant cemetery. Most of the monuments adhered to the styles found in Victorian-era cemeteries. Although the majority of those buried belonged to the Church of England, there were others who were members of other Protestant denominations such as Presbyterians, Methodists, and High Anglicans.³⁴ The rich diversity in terms of the typology of funerary monuments and their iconography and symbolism will be explored in the next chapter.

Notes

- ¹ George Percy Badger, *Description of Malta and Gozo* (Malta, 1838), 202–3. A revised edition was published by G. Muir in 1858.
- ² National Archives Malta (NAM), Gov. 1.3.8, ref. 443. Letter to Lord Panmure K.T. from Governor Reid, dated 5 March 1855.
- ³ NAM, CSG 04/26, 3 January 1854 – 31 July 1858, No. 2984, 418–19, 450.
- ⁴ There are no extensive publications on Ta' Braxia Cemetery. The most important research studies on the cemetery are: Janica Buhagiar, 'Ta' Braxia Protestant Cemetery, 1857–1900: A case study in Funerary Art & Architecture', unpublished MA dissertation, Department of History of Art, Faculty of Arts, University of Malta, 2013; Conrad Thake, 'Ta' Braxia Cemetery: An Architectural Appraisal', *Treasures of Malta*, Vol. XVII, No. 3 (2011), 10–17; Alan Keighley, *Ta' Braxia Cemetery: A Visitor's Guide*, new edition (Malta, 2010).
- ⁵ *The Malta Times & United Services Gazette*, 5 and 12 January 1865 featured articles stressing Malta's need to improve public health and sanitation issues.
- ⁶ Colin Dickey, 'Necropolis' in issue entitled 'The City', *Laphams Quarterly*, Vol. iii, No. 4, Fall 2010. www.laphamsquarterly.org/city/necropolis accessed on 1 May 2017. Ronnie Scott, *Death by Design: The True Story of the Glasgow Necropolis* (Glasgow, 2005).
- ⁷ The only extra-mural cemeteries that existed in Malta were plague cemeteries, Muslim, and Jewish cemeteries
- ⁸ *Il Portafoglio Maltese*, 6 January 1855.
- ⁹ *L'Ordine*, 9 November 1855.
- ¹⁰ *The Malta Times, Naval & Military Gazette*, No. 665, 13 November 1855.
- ¹¹ *L'Ordine*, 23 November 1855.
- ¹² *Il Portafoglio Maltese*, 17 October 1857.
- ¹³ *The Malta Times, Naval & Military Gazette*, No. 665, 13 November 1855.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 667, 27 November 1855.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ For an account of Emanuele Luigi Galizia's architectural career, Conrad Thake, 'Emanuele Luigi Galizia (1830–1907) Architect of the Romantic Movement', *Treasures of Malta* (Summer 2000), Vol. VI, No. 3, 37–42.
- ¹⁷ *L'Ordine*, 23 November 1855.
- ¹⁸ William Lamb Arrowsmith (1821–86) had been recommended for the post of superintendent of public works in August 1841. His appointment was highly controversial as well-qualified Maltese candidates were overlooked for the post in favour of Arrowsmith who was then based in Britain. Cardew (OAG) to Russell, 20 August 1841, CO. 158/120, Public Records Office, Kew, London cited in Godfrey A. Pirotta, *The Maltese Public Service 1800–1940: The Administrative Politics of a Micro-State*, Malta, 1996, 172–3. He served as 'superintendent of works' from 1841 to 1855. While Ta' Braxia Cemetery was being constructed, Arrowsmith was suspended from his post after it transpired that he had been illicitly involved in the tendering for the establishment of a gas system in Valletta. Michael Ellul, *Maltese-English Dictionary of Architecture and Building in Malta* (Malta, 2009), 6.
Arrowsmith was first married to Annie Esther Arrowsmith and had five children all born in Malta: Caroline Annie, Blanche Isabel Harriet, Horace Reginald, Blanche Mabel, and Alice Harriet. Following the death of his first wife in 1858, he remarried Elizabeth Harris. After his post in Malta, he returned to London and, later on his career, it appears that he was referred to as a doctor although his credentials as a physician are in dispute. In 1885, aged 64 years, he migrated to the United States where he purchased an extensive plantation house with some 160 acres of land known as Goodwood in Florida. He died on 2 April 1886, just a few months after acquiring his new estate. He was survived by his second wife.
- ¹⁹ Letter dated 30 June 1855 and addressed to the Chairman of the Committee for the management of Ta' Braxia Cemetery, CSG 04–26, No. 2984, NAM.
- ²⁰ NAM, GOV 1.3.8, Ref. 4368, 9 October 1855; GOV 2.1.52, Ref. 799, no. 28, 19 November 1855.
- ²¹ NAM, GOV 1.3.9, Ref. 4764, 4 November 1857.
- ²² NAM, CSG 04–28, No. 4732, 13 June 1857.
- ²³ The governor appointed the following members to serve on the committee for the Braxia Cemetery; The Hon. Giuseppe Montanaro as chairman, the Hon. Joseph R.H. Collings, MD, the Rev. John Cleugh, Rev. H. Hare, and Rev. George Wisely. Montanaro (1789–1864) was comptroller of contracts for civil supply and purveyor of charities, a member of the board of commissioners of charity, cashier of the treasury and collector of land revenue; Collings was inspector of charitable institutions (1849–58) and an official member of the Council of Government in 1857; Hare was chaplain of the Forces; Cleugh was chaplain to government since 1825 and commissioner of the house of industry in 1840; while Wisely was minister of the Presbyterian Church in connection with the Free Church of Scotland. The official announcement was reported in *Il Portafoglio Maltese*, 10 October 1857.
- ²⁴ Drawing entitled 'Elevation of a Fountain to be erected in the "Ta' Braxia Cemetery"', signed E.L. Galizia, Valletta, 1 December 1860. Chief Draughtsman Collection, Public Works Department, Ta' Braxia Drawings Folder. The second fountain was constructed by the contractor Andrea Azzopardi. It was 1.03 metres high with 0.30 metre being depressed in the ground. Pozzolana mortar was used throughout and the same

mix was used to render both the fountain and the basin. The total cost of the fountain amounted to £28. 04s. 4³/₄d. National Library Malta (NLM), Libr. 610, Vol. 1, 60r, cited in Buhagiar, 53.

²⁵ The capping stones had the following dimensions: 2x4x8 inches and were to be laid using a pozzolana-based mortar. Graves were to be 7 feet long, 2 feet 6 inches wide, and 6 feet deep. In the absence of solid rock foundation, it was stipulated that a solid masonry bedding comprising a course of stone blocks 1 foot 6 inches wide was to be laid. If the soil was very loose, the new bedding material would be placed upon a layer of stone chippings, 1 foot in depth. Kerb stones were to be 3 inches thick, 9 inches high, and 2 feet 6 inches in length. NLM, Libr. 610, Vol. 1, f.22.

²⁶ The drawings at the Chief Draughtsman Collection, Ta' Braxia Cemetery folder, comprise an elevation of the one-storey building and a plan dated 26 September 1863 that cites the master mason responsible for the works being Giuseppe Zammit. On 12 September 1887, the building contractor Salvatore Ebejer was engaged to extend the building to its present state. Works were completed within a month from commencement. Ibid., 60r.

²⁷ NAM, CSG 04/33, Nos. 6365 and 6441.

²⁸ NLM, Libr. 610, Vol. 3, 1877–81, 74v; letter dated 21 February 1879 from E.L. Galizia to Rev. M. Hardy.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Giorgio Constantino Schinas (1834–94) served as superintendent of public works from 1888 to his death in 1894. Schinas had studied science at the University of Pavia. In 1863 he graduated in civil engineering with a doctorate from the Reale Scuola d'Applicazione degli Ingegneri, in Turin. In 1879 he was granted the warrant to practise as an architect and land surveyor. Schinas, together with the British engineer Capt. T.J. Tressider, was instrumental in the establishment of a modern water distribution and sewage system in the Maltese islands. The Schinas reservoirs in Luqa were named in 1895 in memory of his outstanding contribution; this was followed by the drainage pumping station in Gzira.

In 1879, Schinas had accompanied E.L. Galizia on a special assignment by the colonial government to visit Cyprus and draw up a detailed report on a proposal that was intended to establish a community of Maltese farmers on the island. Although a detailed report was submitted to the Chief Secretary to Government Sir Victor Houlton, the scheme was never implemented. Besides his contributions relating to civil and municipal engineering, Schinas was also a lecturer in Physics at the University of Malta. He was also involved in the design of the parish church of St Cajetan in Hamrun, where he experimented with a combination of French Classical

and Neo-Gothic motifs. Refer to obituary, the Hon. Georgio [sic] Constantino Schinas, DSC, 1834–1894, Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers, Vol. 119, Issue 1895, 409–10.

³¹ NAM, PW Vol. 349: 1897–1900, 'External Letters Superintendent of Public Works to Non-Government Bodies or Private Individuals', f. 332.

³² James Stevens Curl, *Death and Architecture* (Thrupp, Stroud, 2002), 105.

³³ John Claudius Loudon, 'Principles of Landscape-Gardening applied to Public Cemeteries', *The Gardener's Magazine*, 1843.

³⁴ Buhagiar, 79.



Fig. 23. The 100th (Prince of Wales's Royal Canadian) Regiment of Foot monument, Ta' Braxia
(Location: division A)

Funerary Monuments and Tombstones

Typologies and Symbolism

The Question of Style

Ta' Braxia Cemetery is distinguished from other local cemeteries by the form of its landscape, architecture, and funerary monuments. Its sepulchral monuments, although not as imposing in terms of physical size, are similar in style and form to other monuments found in cemeteries in Glasgow, London, Milan and Paris, where major artists and architects executed their work and exerted considerable artistic influence. Its monuments were influenced by various genres that were then popular in Western Europe. Neo-Classicism and Classical Revival styles were highly popular and widely diffused in Europe's historic cemeteries from the Cimiterio Monumentale in Milan, to the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris, Highgate Cemetery in London and the Necropolis in Glasgow, amongst various others. Ta' Braxia, although considerably smaller in scale and sited on an island at the peripheral edge of Europe was not immune to these artistic movements. British colonial rule had also ushered in alternative artistic and architectural concepts which would challenge the pre-eminence, albeit outdated Baroque art forms that persisted locally. Following closely upon the Msida Bastion Cemetery, the majority of funerary monuments at Ta' Braxia embraced Neo-Classicism and Classical Revival styles. The most common funeral symbols were those of urns, wreaths and broken columns, as well as tombs reminiscent of classical antiquity (fig. 23). However, there were also other variations based on revival of historicist styles.

The Egyptian-revival style is manifested at Ta' Braxia in the frequent use of obelisks, pyramid-shaped monuments, and the imposing columns set at the cemetery's main entrance. Egyptian architecture is often associated with pagan symbolism and, as a result, very sparse Egyptian motifs were adopted within the artistic iconography of Christian cemeteries. However, nineteenth-century society associated obelisks with

memorialization and a sense of timelessness. In some cases religious symbols were also integrated within the obelisk's design as can be seen in Ta' Braxia. Other funerary monuments in the cemetery bear definite Egyptian-revival influences, especially in the obelisk-inspired designs.

Gothic Revivalism is also strongly present at Ta' Braxia. It was perceived as the appropriate Christian-inspired antidote to the pagan associations of Egyptian-revival styles. Gothic revivalism is recognizable through the adoption of Gothic-inspired architectural elements integrated within funerary monuments, such as Gothic-style lacing, tracery, and various forms of pointed arches. Ta' Braxia exemplifies how the Gothic Revival style offered a viable alternative to Neo-Classicism. Representations of female figures embracing partially-draped urns were the subject of criticism from conservative quarters, as were also busts and memorial statues. Naked figures, including putti, which had Christian connotations, were also condemned, while the revival of Greek and Egyptian styles was castigated by some mid-nineteenth-century writers. Any monument or memorial plaque devoid of explicit Christian symbolism was perceived as a heathen allegory.

However, not all the funerary architecture at Ta' Braxia can be clearly categorized, for artists frequently blended together different styles which often resulted in hybrid funerary artworks. By the end of the nineteenth century, eclecticism was perceived as a statement of 'open-mindedness' which contemporary intellectuals sought to achieve.¹ These art styles are manifested in the various types and forms of tombs. There are only three examples of the sarcophagus tomb in Ta' Braxia. The sarcophagus is a burial container and is one of the oldest Roman-era funerary monuments with the earliest descriptions of it dating to Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79). In its most basic form, the sarcophagus contained the body yet, unlike the coffin or casket, a sarcophagus was

intended to last for ever. Furthermore, the sarcophagus represents the end of material life, making it not only a practical funerary piece but also one imbued with symbolism. The sarcophagus tomb is derivative from the sarcophagus of classical antiquity. It has no legs or representations thereof to support itself; instead it rests on a tapered or rounded base. The simplest type of sarcophagus tomb is the chest tomb which takes the form of a large trunk with the visual effect being derived from the ornaments incised on the exterior of the actual tomb itself rather than by any applied ornamentation.

Other variations of the tombs in Ta' Braxia include the hip tomb. In its simplest form, the 'hip tomb' is a 'rectangular box with a two- or four-sided hip roof applied to the top'.² Sometimes only the slanting sides are used, making it appear like a house without sides. Some tombs also resemble diamond-shaped coffin forms with a cross on top. Other unique variations include the cross-shaped tomb. The form and decoration of the sarcophagus makes it a distinctive artefact that projects affluence and social status. A pedestal tomb is physically elevated from the ground, symbolically alluding to the detachment of the tomb from the secular realm to the divine. Figures and other symbols, such as urns, obelisks, and family crests often adorn this type of tomb. Flanking columns symbolize the balanced tension of opposing forces, the eternal stability and the space between them being symbolic of the entrance to eternity.³

Even human figures had a symbolic dimension in nineteenth-century funerary art. Representations of women adorning family graves were not always intended to be portraits of specific individuals. Some were idealized and symbolic figures. Female nudes were 'linked to a long tradition of Western art in which the naked female figure was used in both secular and Christian settings to represent a wide range of motifs. Ta' Braxia Cemetery permitted the British community in Malta to freely manifest its distinct cultural expression which differed from that of the local population. The funerary monuments at Ta' Braxia commemorate members primarily of the British community in Malta, reflecting their social standing. Grieving female nudes were symbols often incorporated in funerary art as seen

in other various cemeteries in Britain and the Continent. The lack of such funerary symbols at Ta' Braxia was not due to the local Catholic Church forbidding them on grounds of indecency. When the local Church decided not to avail itself of Ta' Braxia, the cemetery became reserved almost exclusively for Protestants and other Christian denominations. The cemetery reflected their ideas, values, and specific genres of artistic expression and symbolism.⁴

Although Ta' Braxia's Cemetery regulations stated that each design had to be formally approved by a committee, this group was mainly composed of non-Catholic members who followed the same procedures and funerary protocols as in other cemeteries in England and its colonies.⁵ Ta' Braxia Cemetery's design already broke away from the local Roman Catholic aesthetics and included non-traditional Catholic funerary symbols, such as the urn and the downward torch, amongst others.

Since Ta' Braxia was reserved for the British community it was more likely a matter of choice as to which symbols were to be incorporated within the funerary monument. The only female figure at Ta' Braxia is an allegorical representation of Hope which is depicted as a robed-figure with long hair, clasping the Bible close to her chest with her right arm, and with her left arm extended in space. Under her arm lies the anchor, the symbol of Hope.⁶ This is not an innovative allegory and forms part of a well-established, artistic tradition. Yet, despite the rigid gender roles and the traditional modes of representation as in the allegory of Hope, there is the first evident sign of what is today perceived as the modern and independent woman. During the nineteenth century, the widow was often depicted life-sized and executed with intricate figurative details giving the sculpture a greater physical presence. This could be interpreted as a reflection of how women were perceived at that time, seeking during this male-dominated Victorian-era some form of individual recognition and emancipation.

The prevalence of a grieving widow is a common theme in funerary art as for example, in the Olof Fredrik Gollcher monument at Ta' Braxia. Contemporary men were depicted and portrayed differently than women.



Fig. 24. Celtic cross on pedestal, C.H. Horsfall monument, 1903
(Location: division 13)

‘Men are not bearers of sorrow,’ such a role is delegated to women and in many cultures they are the designated grievers not men.⁷ In Ta’ Braxia, male portrait busts are promoted as figures of ‘substance and clearly intended to be portraits of the deceased, no doubt idealized in gaze and feature, but their individual personalities emphasized’.⁸ Furthermore, male figure busts are often perched high upon elevated pedestals to project a more imposing impression reflecting their social status. The male figure was still regarded as natural leader in society and the sculptors employed contrasting and specific artistic styles to reinforce contemporary gender stereotypes. In various cemeteries, weeping female figures are always idealized and, unlike their male counterparts, they seem to lack the semblance of an individual persona. The weeping woman is a symbol of sorrow and symbols have to be consistent in expressing a constant message.

Symbols and Modes of Representation

The Cross

The most prominent religious symbol at Ta’ Braxia is obviously the Christian cross. Its iconography and symbolism have remained relatively unchanged through the centuries. Christian symbols were at times assimilated with non-religious symbols such as obelisks with their pagan connotations. There are some stylistic variations of the cross but essentially its symbolic representation is unaltered. At Ta’ Braxia Cemetery there are three basic types and variations of the cross – the Templar cross, the Latin cross, and the Celtic cross (fig. 24). The Latin cross comes in other variations as the Botonnée-Fleury cross and the Templar cross. The Botonnée-Fleury has three knobs at the end of each arm, giving it its distinctive decorative appeal similar to a trefoil, making a reference to the Holy Trinity. A more in-depth analysis of the Botonnée-Fleury cross’s ends says that they represent the merging of the ‘cardinal points of space’.⁹ In the case of the Templar cross, it merges the ‘forces disposed around a circumference’.¹⁰

The Urn

The origins of urns can be traced to ancient Greece where they were used as receptacles for oil in funerary rituals or to accommodate the ashes of the cremated. Although human interment became a more common practice than cremation, the urn continued to be closely associated with death. With the advent of Romanticism, the urn as a funerary object replaced the death-skull with its more morbid overtones. The urn’s symbolic function is primarily that of commemorating death and as a receptacle of one’s mortal remains – the inevitable process whereby ‘all flesh would perish together. And man would return to dust.’¹¹ Some urns at Ta’ Braxia are partially covered with extended pieces of drapery. The English Romantic poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley described death as ‘the veil which those who live call life; they sleep and it is lifted’, making the drapery symbolic of the veil between earth and heaven.¹²

The partially-draped urn symbolizes the soul that has departed the shrouded body for its journey into the afterlife (fig. 25). Symbolically, it also represents the final realm tenuously suspended between life and death; the final curtain call when the end beckons. The shroud-draped urn also has a legal history dating to the seventeenth century when the English parliament passed an act declaring that all corpses had to be wrapped in a woolen shroud.¹³ Although in antiquity urns often contained ashes, nineteenth-century ones seldom did. Just as in the case of the sarcophagus, urns were purely symbolic and surmounted columns or tombs, emulating classical markers and stele that were decorated with vases or urns atop columns or obelisks.¹⁴

The Pyramid, the Obelisk, and the Broken Column

For the ancient Egyptians, death was the beginning of life and subsequently, their architecture reflected this central belief. Obelisks and pyramids belong to the sun cult and are ‘essentially monoliths decorated with incised hieroglyphs’.¹⁵ Their forms were later adopted and assimilated in funerary architecture and art forms in the Western world. In late-sixteenth century Rome during the pontificate of Pope Sixtus V, the practice was adopted of marking the intersection of major roads in the city centre with obelisks, suitably topped with a Christian cross to symbolically purge them of their pagan attributes. During the eighteenth century following upon Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Egyptian revivalism started to make inroads in funerary architecture. Forms inspired by the mastaba and pyramids were adopted in the design of cenotaphs and tombs.¹⁶

At the Msida Bastion Cemetery one encounters the first use of pyramid-motifs in funerary architecture and which are also to be found at Ta’ Braxia. Epitaphs and other decorations were placed on the pyramid’s face. The obelisk’s shape symbolizes the sun-ray and has the same function and meaning as the column. Similar to the cross, the obelisk represents the world axis, an upward affirmation as it reaches to the heavens.¹⁷ The obelisk is linked to the broken column (fig. 26); the latter has the same symbolic attributes as the obelisk but the broken column represents mortality and, more



Fig. 25. Christiana and John Robinson monument, 1890
(Location: division C)



Fig. 26. Thomas Blayds Molyneux monument
(Location: division D)

specifically, a life cut short. It is a symbol closely related to the tree, like the ritual construction of the megalithic stone or menhir, and also projects the idea of the vertebral column, a kind of *axis mundi* that may be equated with the world axis.

Owing to its clear visual and symbolic aspect, the broken column is one of the more common funerary symbols in Ta' Braxia. The monument of Admiral Hans Georg Friboe Garde, master of the corvette *Fyen* of the Royal Danish Navy, takes the form of a robust granite column depicted as a broken ship's mast. The symbolism of the broken mast evokes the message of a life spent at sea abruptly cut short.

The Flame and the Inverted Torch

The torch and fire are both symbols of purification and allegorical representations of truth and hope making them potent funerary symbols.¹⁸ The torch can be represented in two variations. The most common is the inverted torch with the flame burning which while symbolizing death also suggests that the soul (fire) survives in the next realm (fig. 27). The other version is an upside-down torch with the flame extinguished signifying the definitive termination of life. Unlike symbols with multiple symbolic interpretations, the inverted torch is a purely funerary symbol and is highly unlikely to be found anywhere but within a cemetery. In funerary art, the eternal flame usually represents immortal vigilance. Many-a-times it adorns the pillars of cemeteries' main gates. These connotations also stem from the Greeks who represented 'the spirit as a gust of incandescent air'.¹⁹ Within a Christian context, flames could also represent intense religious fervour and devotion. Martyrdom is also associated with flames, since various saints, such as Joan of Arc and Lawrence, were martyred within the context of flames of fire.

Flora

Flora is evocative of the romantic preoccupation with the relationship between man and nature. 'Function and academism gave away to a flourishing abundance of sculptured floral and foliated forms evoking an interest in



Fig. 27. Inverted torch with burning flame motif, Anna Mitchell monument, 1873
(Location: division O)

naturalistic representations.'²⁰ Inspiration from the natural world is not only represented by particular plants and their meaning but also in the vertical form of many tombstones that mimics the patterns of a tree growing upwards and



Fig. 28. Wreath with flowers and acanthus leaves, Montagu monument, 1863
(Location: division B)



Fig. 29. Three poppies tied with a bow motif, Robinson monument, 1870
(Location: division C)



Fig. 30. Wreath with narcissus buds, Mary Ann Large monument, 1881
(Location: division Q)

expressing the force of life. Naturalism also has a dual nature; first and foremost it has a strong and nostalgic link with the past, far removed from urbanization and industry, while it also highlights the future, the power of nature which will eventually reclaim the earth.

Plants and flowers have been associated with the remembrances of the dead since antiquity. In western culture, flowers are associated with spirituality; Aristotle once even having claimed that flowers had a soul. The symbolic value of flowers lies within their essence, colour, and form. Both the Greeks and the Romans placed flowers on corpses as they were being carried to funeral pyres or graves; the flowers represented the brevity of life and inevitability of death.²¹ The symbolism of floral motifs in funerary monuments can be traced to classical antiquity but with the spread of Christianity these symbols retained their spiritual and symbolic dimension (fig. 28).

During the Victorian era, floral motifs became even more popular, coinciding as they did with the advent of the garden cemetery. In fact, floral motifs are very prevalent at the Ta' Braxia. Indeed they were also used earlier at the Msida Bastion Cemetery, particularly in the ornamentation of chest tombs. The Victorians attributed various Christian symbols and attributes to specific types of flowers. Every type of flower conveyed a specific associative meaning. For example, the poppy symbolized eternal sleep, a romantic term which looked upon death and sleep as intrinsic elements in the natural cycle of human life (fig. 29). Sleep could be interpreted as an incomplete state of death and it foreshadowed the permanent state of eternal death. In his poem, *Death and his Brother Sleep ('Morphine')*, the German Romantic poet Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) describes the transition from sleep to death aided by the poppy's scent:

... how soft then and loving his smile, how blessed his glance!

Then, it might well have been that his wreath
of white poppies gently touched my forehead, at times,
and drove the pain from my mind with its strange scent.

Since the poppy is a narcotic, it was associated with sleep and death, as well as with the Greek god Hypnos, the personification of sleep. One of the monuments at the Msida Bastion Cemetery depicts a winged Hypnos dressed in classical attire holding a wreath and poppies as he writes down the name of the deceased. Christianity attributed the poppy to the passion of Christ owing to its red colour.²² Poppies are usually represented in the form of pods, rather than blossoms, to highlight the fragility of life or a life cut short. The narcissus, a word derived from the Greek 'sleep, numbness' also has similar symbolic connotations as the poppy but in Christianity the narcissus symbolizes the 'triumph of divine love and sacrifice' (fig. 30).²³ The thistle, which features in the Bible in Genesis 3:18.²⁴ And thus, is associated with earthly sorrow and suffering, making it an appropriate funerary symbol. Moreover, its thorny quality has a connection with Christ's crown of thorns and His Passion.²⁵ The pansy is a symbol of remembrance and specifically relates to thoughts of the loved one. Its name is derived from the French word *pensée* meaning 'thought'.²⁶ Thus the flower also became a symbol of free-thinkers who based their philosophy on the scientific method, a movement which flourished in the nineteenth century.

The rose and the clover also have dual symbolic meanings. Christians were reluctant to adopt the rose and imbue it with religious meaning for they associated the flower with decadence. However, the rose was eventually adopted, becoming the symbol of purity and the beauty that awaited one in paradise.²⁷ The Christian interpretation of the clover as the symbol of the Trinity stems from its three leaves. However, its pre-Christian meaning is that of 'vitality because of its abundant growth' and is often found in Celtic art.²⁸

The Virgin Mary is often associated with such flowers as the lily of the valley and the iris to highlight her purity and beauty. All lilies, especially the lily of the valley, are manifested in funerary art because the

lily is one of the first flowers that blooms in spring and thus symbolizes resurrection.²⁹ Another lily which appears in funerary art is the Madonna Lily which also represents purity and chastity. With its rather plain petals, it also represents the casting away of material wealth so as to attain a higher and spiritual state of being. The iris sometimes replaces the lily in some artworks because its reference to the sword makes it a symbol of the sorrows of the Virgin in scenes of the Passion of Christ.³⁰

Christ, like the Virgin, is also represented by certain flowers; the daisy was used to symbolize his innocence as a child. The passion flower is symbolic of Christ's 'passion, redemption, and crucifixion'.³¹ This connection is created owing to the flower's physiognomy; its thorns are reminiscent of Christ's crown of thorns, his innocence in its white colour, the flower's three stigmas representative of the three nails that pierced the hands and the feet, its tattered nectary indicative of his ragged clothing, the five stamens symbolize his five wounds, while the flower's tendrils represent the whips.

Fauna

Like flowers, animals are also represented in funerary monuments. Historically, animals have adorned family crests and emblems of specific organizations while animal symbolism is also closely linked with totemism and animal worship. Just as with floral symbolism, some animal funerary symbols, such as the lamb or fish, have clear Christian connections; others have a more obscure meaning.

Doves

At Ta' Braxia, there are only a few examples of animal symbols, the most common being the dove. Since the Neolithic period, it has been believed that winged animals carry cosmic meaning. In mythology, birds are often symbols of the spirit. In particular, they are portrayed as messengers to the gods and as bearers of the souls of the dead to the other world. In fact, that is how angels ultimately gained their wings because



Fig. 31. Doves with Latin cross motif, Maude Kimm monument, 1894
(Location: division AA)



Fig. 32. Low-relief depicting pelican feeding its young, Hamilton monument
(Location: division PP)

many religions believe that heaven is the abode of the gods. Doves are gentle creatures and owing to their white feathers they are often associated with innocence. Christianity often depicts the Holy Spirit as a dove ascending to heaven (fig. 31). Doves were so commonly used that, in different positions, they represented different meanings. For instance, an ascending dove represents the soul of the departed being transported to heaven, while a descending dove assures a safe passage of the soul from heaven. A dead dove symbolizes a life cut prematurely short while a dove holding an olive branch symbolizes divine peace.

Although the pelican is the most common Christian funerary symbol after the dove, there is only one example at Ta' Braxia (fig. 32). The symbolic attributes of the pelican are derived from the erroneous belief that the pelican feeds their young from a self-inflicted wound. In reality the pelican feeds its young from its pouch. The belief that the pelican sustained its young with its own blood, although counter to all scientific evidence, over time came to symbolize self-sacrifice. The pelican's self-sacrificial feeding was symbolic of Christ's sacrifice on the cross with the 'pelican in piety' being adopted as a symbol of the Eucharist.³² Although pelicans represent such a fundamental Christian concept, they are not a popular symbol at Ta' Braxia, whereas in foreign Christian cemeteries they are often perched next to and atop crosses.³³

The Ouroboros

The snake has perhaps one of the most ambivalent and multi-faceted natures. On nineteenth-century tombstones, snakes are usually depicted biting their tail as a symbol of immortality.³⁴ Although in a Christian context it had negative associative attributes, in early Western cultures the serpent was associated with wisdom and secrets, owing to its sinuous shape and movements. In fact, many chthonic deities, such as Hecate and Artemis, hold snakes in their hands as symbols of ancient wisdom but Genesis transformed the snake into the embodiment of evil. The snake biting its own tail has a connection with the wheel, expressed in the Gnostic symbol of the Ouroboros, a serpent



Fig. 33. Ouroboros motif, Robinson monument, 1870
(Location: division C)

biting its own tail, being half-light and half-darkness (fig. 33).³⁵ Furthermore, its circular shape denotes infinity and completeness and also relates to the cosmic sense. Like the Ouroboros, the scythe also represents the beginning as the end. The Ouroboros and the scythe are in fact related and are sometimes found on the same funerary monument. Although it might seem contradictory to represent the beginning and the end together, these symbols are related to the infinite cycle of nature's endless circle of creation and destruction.³⁶

The inclusion of the symbol of the Ouroboros demonstrates the interest of nineteenth-century society in the new philosophies and the occult. The Ourbouros was already present at the Msida Bastion Cemetery and it also appears at Ta' Braxia. The Ouroboros represents immortality, rejuvenation, and eternity and the fact that every end has a new beginning, parallel to the Christian idea of resurrection.

The Winged Hourglass

It is pretty obvious that a cemetery should contain a significant number of symbols of mortality although depicting the immediate cause of death in a funerary monument is a twentieth-century attitude. However, even in the nineteenth century there were exceptions that

record the particular event that led to a person's demise. Romanticism had transformed the image and action of death; in fact, the depiction of skulls is conspicuously absent at Ta' Braxia for they go against the contemporary zeitgeist. As a general rule, the older the tombstone, the more literal are its symbols of mortality, such as the skull. Instead there is the hourglass, a symbol denoting the inversion of the relations between the 'Upper and Lower Worlds' (fig. 34). It is also associated with Saturn, which destroys all its creations, whether they are beings or ideas. Since the hourglass is a measurement of time, it represents how time eventually destroys all life owing to its relentlessness. This is similar to the idea conveyed in the cemetery that everything that is man-made is eventually destroyed by time. The hourglass is a common symbol carried by the Grim Reaper, best portrayed in baroque funerary monuments. Together with the Grim Reaper's scythe, which cuts and devours life, time is the ultimate symbol which counts down a person's life. The architect Galizia selected this symbol to adorn the second pair of gateways as a metaphor of the swift and inevitable demise of man.

Before the nineteenth century, mortality symbolism was much more common-place, where 'projectiles such as arrows, lances, swords and bladed instruments, like the axe and the scythe, can be grouped [as] "weapons



Fig. 34. Winged hourglass, Robinson monument, 1870
(Location: division C)

of death” ... and present a person’s association with the military’.³⁷ Therefore, the instrument which led to death was often graphically projected on the tombstone. Military weapons, such as cannon, are such instruments but by the late nineteenth century they did not refer to the instrument of the person’s passing away. Mortality symbols indicate military service, especially at Ta’ Braxia where many of those buried there would have served in the British army. In the cemetery there are many symbols of military accoutrements such as cannon, anchors, and armorial shields that represent military service. Flags representing loyalty and liberty are often depicted on military gravestones. The shield symbolizes strength and courage. Swords symbolize military service; when the sword is at the base of the gravestone it might indicate infantry, while crossed swords represent a life lost in battle or person of high rank. Anchors in this case do not have any specific Christian connotations but indicate members of the Royal Navy. The cannon and the rifle indicate military service. When found on the base of the stone, the cannon usually refers to artillery. The helmet refers to the military rank of the deceased, but in funerary art it also can symbolize the virtue of faith. Most stone balls in a cemetery are purely decorative but cannonballs adorn some of the veterans’ graves.

In some cases, military rank is explicitly displayed by incorporating actual replicas of the deceased’s medals of service and valour.³⁸

Military funerary monuments were designed with heraldic devices interpreted in the classical orders surmounted by pediments or obelisks. Ta’ Braxia’s military monuments do not celebrate victory or praise war like exaggerated Roman imperial designs, Prussian victory columns, or Napoleonic triumphal arches since Victorian times demanded respect of the fallen by proper burial and commemoration. Flamboyant Neo-Gothic designs were not favourably considered for military monuments; instead, a formal and elegant Neo-Classical design was preferred. Decoration was restrained and usually limited to laurel leaves, military shields, and attire. These monuments can either be dedicated to an individual person, as in the case of the captain of HMS *Phoebe* who was commemorated by a large stone anchor, or as an entire regiment as in the HMS *Gibraltar* monument which commemorates the loss of life of 14 servicemen.³⁹ These military typologies at Ta’ Braxia are similar to the ones manifested at the Msida Bastion Cemetery where upright cannon support the square plinth which depicts wreaths, crossed swords, and crossed flags on each side.

Funerary Monuments for Children

Infant graves are steps of angels, where
Earth's brightest gems of innocence repose.
John Clare (1793–1864), *Graves of Infants*

From the burial records of Ta' Braxia Cemetery Management Committee it transpires that between 1857 and 1900, 1,785 infants were buried at cemetery.⁴⁰ Although most of the infant graves are located in division U, they are not limited to just one specific sector within the cemetery. Although Ta' Braxia's funerary monuments allowed space for individualized and varied monuments, there were some styles and forms which were symbolically more appropriate to commemorate children.

Children's graves are decorated with putti and young angels that reflect a contemporary social custom. It was considered 'particularly appropriate for children to mourn other children'.⁴¹ Angels on children's graves are symbolically represented to accompany them to heaven instead of their earth-bound mother or other close family members. Romanticism influenced purism to replace the classical genius with putti. The genius was transformed into an angel of guidance accompanying the child on the journey to paradise.⁴² In an age when the world was becoming more secular in its outlook, children's graves were spared the notions that positivism shed on the afterlife, allowing funerary monuments to be adorned with angels or putti holding crosses. Although secularism and science were radically challenging religion, children's graves were still handled with more sensitivity. It was felt that it was more consolatory to think that a child passed from consciousness to sleep and then to death, highlighting the notion of describing Death as the 'brother of Sleep'. As a result, infants were often depicted as sleeping putti, like the ones at Ta' Braxia.

At Ta' Braxia there is one funerary monument which once showed a dressed child standing next to a cross. However, the stone figure is so badly eroded that it is difficult to ascertain if it depicted a realist portrait of a child. The eroded monument has an illegible epitaph and the only discernible words are 'Captain Johnson'.



Fig. 35. Johnson monument, 1897
(Location: division AA)

Presumably the monument commemorated Johnson's infant child (fig. 35). An early-twentieth-century postcard of Ta' Braxia Cemetery shows the Johnson monument with an angel holding a rose in its right hand and a flower wreath in its left hand, and standing next to a Celtic cross.⁴³ Although this limestone monument is severely eroded, the postcard image showed that the grave adhered to the Romantic typology where childhood innocence was preserved in the genteel imagery projected by the angel.

A unique funerary monument is that of Adelaide F. Wise, the daughter of Staff Commander of the Royal Navy E. Wise, who died on 30 September 1871, aged four years (figs. 89, 90). On the chest tomb there is representation of a sleeping angel whose head rests on a cushion while holding a Christian cross with its left hand. The small winged-angel can be identified as a putto or cherub, representative of love gods, cupids or *amorini*. Putti and cherubs are often found adorning children's graves, with their symbolic attributes of angelic innocence, beauty, and the physiognomy of the deceased child. The putto is depicted naked, asleep on a cushion with tassels, highlighting the child's vulnerability. The sleeping angel at Ta' Braxia not only demonstrates remarkable craftsmanship and naturalism but has also a long history of symbolism. There is the immediate connection to a sleeping child, as well as the understanding that the putto is guarding and accompanying the child's soul. Typical of the Romantic spirit, death is represented as a state of perpetual sleep – a painless and peaceful venture symbolized by the putto clasping in its delicate hand a small cross, denoting adherence to the Christian faith.

Whereas this monument has acquired a weathered patina over time, others have deteriorated and eroded beyond recognition. The untimely death of an infant is a tragic and a traumatic event for the surviving parents. One cannot but be moved by the sad plight of Lieutenant Tressider of the Royal Engineers who experienced the great misfortune of burying his three young daughters, Ethel, Gertrude Amy, and Rosina at Ta' Braxia.⁴⁴ No funerary monument irrespective of its artistic merit could ever have healed his emotional wounds.

Freemasonry

A funerary monument could also be executed without explicit symbolic references to death. Certain objects and their symbolic attributes could be integrated within the monument which were expressive of earthly success and achievement. Freemasonry (or the Craft) provided a range of stylized artistic expressions which were different from the figurative sculptures of other movements. Freemasonry explored physical and metaphysical life in a different manner from Christianity. Typical of nineteenth-century society which was interested in other philosophies and cultures, Ta' Braxia was the ideal place where Freemasonry's distinct symbols and beliefs could be expressed and integrated within funerary monuments. The artist would in his design introduce specific references to the fraternity. It is relevant to note that Freemasonry interprets death as another stage and form of life and is believed to be the entrance to a better and eternal world. Therefore, Freemasons view death as an initiation rite.⁴⁵ Freemasonry considers architecture as the *ars artium*, the art of arts, because Freemasons are indebted to its origin and present organization. The Craft relates to the construction of public architecture and, principally, sacred ones. In fact, much of their symbolism is derived from classical architecture and drafting tools.⁴⁶

Masonic funerary monuments are not grouped in any particular section at Ta' Braxia Cemetery. Although Masons incorporate the Craft's symbols in their funerary monuments, not all the monuments mention the name of the Masonic lodge to which the member belonged to. Freemasonry is a 'science of morality veiled in allegory and represented by symbols ... it is a science engaged in a search for divine truth. Truth is the unity of God and the immortality of the soul.'⁴⁷ This fraternity began in the seventeenth century and it is a form of deism with a strong belief in a Creator God who is called 'The Great Architect of the Universe'.⁴⁸ In Britain, Masonic lodges were widely disseminated and were associated with royalty, the aristocracy, and high social rank.⁴⁹ As a result, Masonic monuments were erected at the Msida Bastion Cemetery and are also to be found at Ta' Braxia. These monuments

openly depict Masonic symbols crafted with great skill and detail on gravestones.

Freemasonry has always made extensive use of a wide range of symbols, including the mason's instruments, such as the gavel, the square, and the compass. These are the tools of free-born men which are used in art and science. Such symbols made it easier to understand the principles of the Craft. They strive to teach beauty, wisdom, strength, and the 'consonance between design and deed'.⁵⁰ The Fraternity appropriated symbols from various forms of metaphysical thought, created new symbols, and gave a new meaning to other symbols.⁵¹ Just like military rank, Freemasons applied various symbols which represent their three basic degrees. There are indeed parallels with Christianity, yet Freemasons did not concern themselves about how God was perceived like other religions. The Christian connection was revived in the seventeenth century when Protestantism was widely diffused and the Bible became more widely read. Some esoteric aspects as narrated in the Bible were adopted within the philosophy of the Freemasons.⁵² For example, the narrative of Solomon's Temple is recited from a mathematical and philosophical point of view. This interest is evident as some of the symbols demonstrate a clear lineage to Solomon's Temple.

Masonic symbols appear on both headstones and tombs. The monuments usually have just one symbol, usually the 'Square and Compass' or, not so frequently, may contain a number of Masonic symbols. Another symbol is the 'All-seeing Eye' or the 'All-seeing Eye of God' which represents the Great Architect of the Universe.⁵³ The 'Eye of God' enclosed in a triangle represents the Holy Trinity. The Creator Deity or the Supreme Being is central to Masonic thought and some representation of the Deity appears in most Masonic artworks. Traditionally, Freemasons associate the pentagram with Pythagoreans for whom the pentagram was a symbol of health and knowledge. The hexagram or the six-pointed star inscribed within a circle represents the divine mind. One of the many symbols for the Creator Deity is the 'triangle, an eye, the letter G, and the Hebrew name of God. The Deity can be represented by any combination of these symbols.'⁵⁴

The Deity perceived the Universe as holistic, which is symbolized by the Blazing Star or the All-Seeing-Eye. Masonic signs elicit symbolic meanings, such as 'the triangle within circle' which represents the 'ternary in the universe; the spiritual principle within totality', and the pentagram, representing the 'sensory, anthropomorphic principle'.⁵⁵

The monument commemorating A.W. Perham, a member of the P.M. Union of Malta Lodge, is composed of a triad of stone columns supporting a thick square slab on which was placed a granite cube on one side of which was engraved a triangle in which was inscribed the pentagram, another Masonic symbol (fig. 85). On another side is inscribed a mallet and hammer (fig. 86). Unlike Catholic cemeteries, where Masonic symbols are conspicuously absent, at Ta' Braxia there are several monuments that openly display symbols that explicitly refer to past Masonic affiliations.

Another elaborate Masonic monument is that of Patrick John Curran, late Sergeant 2nd Battalion Connaught Rangers and husband of Georgina Curran, who died aged 25 years on 1 December 1891. The



Fig. 36. Detail of masonic symbols from Patrick John Curran monument, 1891
(Location: division R)

monument provides intricate symbolic representations of Masonic philosophy, such as Jacob's ladder emerging from an open book inscribed with the 'Square and Compass' and flanked by an Ionic and Corinthian columns (fig. 36). The ladder which appears frequently in religious and antique esoteric texts has become a paradigm of spiritual ascent and reaching God. In the Masonic context, the ladder 'leads from the ground floor to the Temple to the heavenly realms'.⁵⁶ The headstone also displays 'the Three Great Lights: the book of scripture with the Square and Compass on top of it. The Written Word is the physical expression of the unwritten Eternal Word. The Square, in this context, symbolizes the human Soul, created perfect, or square. The Compasses represent the animating Spirit of the Soul, or the spirit opposed to the psyche. This aspect is represented by the Fire Triangle, which is the triangle with the apex pointing upward. The Compasses are placed on the Written Word to touch the two sides of that Triangle.'⁵⁷ The point where the two compasses intersect, symbolizes unity and the principle of creation, while their parallel sides represent another form of duality also highlighted in the columns. English Freemasonry understands this duality as 'Moses, the prophet and Solomon, the law-giver.'⁵⁸

The Ionic and the other Corinthian columns are meant to represent the columns of the Temple of

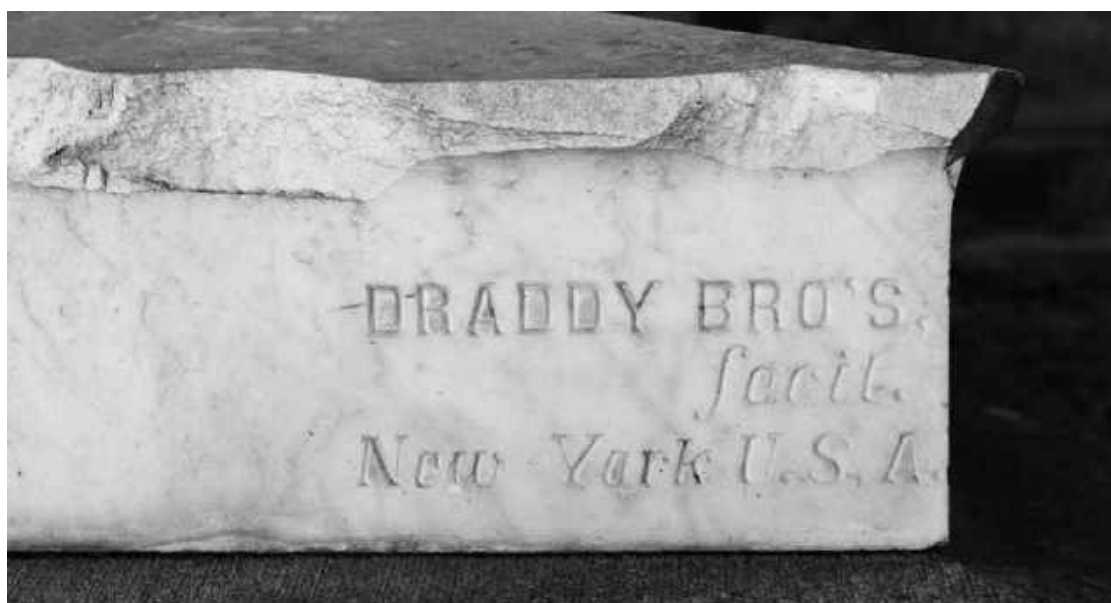


Fig. 37. Detail of artist's signature incised in marble, Eynaud monument, 1871
(Location: division A)

Solomon. The Old Testament (1 Kings 7:13) tells how a skilled worker cased two bronze columns for the temple's vestibule. The pillar at the south was referred to as Jakin while the pillar of the north was called Boaz.⁵⁹ According to Masonic legend, the columns or pillars represent ancient knowledge before the Flood as well as the entry to spiritual work. The Rule is also a measure of time and the number 24 is symbolic of a day or a complete cycle of time.⁶⁰ The Masonic symbols of the compass and the T-square represent movement towards perfection and a balance between the spiritual and the physical. The compass, which is the instrument used to draw circles, represents the spirit. The ruler, which is part of a square, represents the physical. As in military funerary monuments, Freemasonry's collective ideology represents the individual not in isolation but within the hierarchical context of an organization. Masonic monuments overladen with distinctive symbols commemorate the memory of the deceased as a member of a lodge, a social manifestation of British colonial rule in Malta.

Sculptors and Designers of Funerary Monuments

According to the official Ta' Braxia regulations, all monuments were to be subject to the approval of the management committee. It was stipulated that a drawing depicting the form and the dimensions of the proposed monument, together with a cost estimate, were to be submitted to the office of the committee for its approval. However, only one design entry by Cav. Egidio Pozzi for the Gollcher monument could be traced in the public records.⁶¹ The drawings of the various monuments appear to have been dispersed and lost. These drawings would have been very useful in identifying the designers of the monuments as very few of them are signed. The few monuments that are inscribed with a signature range from very distinctive to simple designs. The inscriptions bear the names of the sculptors and their provenance: Fran. Psaila Vallone Birchircara; the Darmanin brothers of S^{DA} Levante, Valletta; A. Penza of Strada Lucia, Valletta; Underwood of Baker Str., London; J. M^c Farlane of Dundee, Scotland; and the Draddy brothers of New York City (fig. 37).

The Eynaud Monument

William Stephen Eynaud (1813–71) was a local ship chandler whose close commercial connections with the United States can be attested in the provenance of his funerary monument (fig. 38). The choice of the Draddy brothers from New York to design and produce this distinctive and imposing funerary monument is indicative of the affluence and prestigious social standing of the Eynaud family who commissioned it. John G. Draddy and his brother James were originally from County Cork, Ireland who migrated to New York City, where they established their studio and workshop. John Draddy (1838–1905) was particularly well-known for his church altars, having sculpted the pulpit and saint's statues for the St Bernard chapel in St Patrick's Cathedral, Manhattan, New York.⁶²

The Eynaud monument had sustained physical damage during the Second World War. The monument is composed of two different elements. An elaborate

pedestal surmounted by a decorative vase is set upon a low marble plinth, with the surname EYNAUD rendered in high relief on the central block. Flanking it on each side are low marble slabs terminating with a spiral volute motif. The second element is a solitary marble pilaster with its upper part covered by fluted drapery and at the lower level, the monogram 'WSE' is inscribed within a closed laurel wreath. The craftsmanship is of the highest level and a testament to the refined technical skills on the part of the sculptors, particularly in their interpretation of the fluting simulating the folds of drapery and the representation of flora and decorative urns. It is still not clear how the design of the original monument could possibly have varied from its present configuration.

The Smith Monument

Another funerary monument displaying a high level of craftsmanship is the Smith sarcophagus, dating to 1871,



Fig. 38. William Stephen Eynaud monument, by Draddy Bros, New York, 1871
(Location: division A)



Fig. 39. Mary Ann Smith monument, A. Penza, 1871
(Location: division N)



Fig. 40. John Luke monument, Darmanin, S^{DA}. Levante, 1858

(Location: division E)



Fig. 41. Evan Evans monument, Darmanin, S^{DA}. Levante, 1858

(Location: division E)

inscribed and signed A. Penza of Strada Lucia, Valletta (fig. 39). It is one of the most ornate and decorative monument at Ta' Braxia with stone carvings of intricate floral decoration. The acanthus plant motif is dominant in this monument as it starts from the bottom enveloping the sarcophagus feet, spreads at the lower corners, and re-appears at the top of the sarcophagus lid. The three epitaphs on the side of the sarcophagus are framed by symmetrical cartouches. This anthemion is based on the floral design where acanthus foliage branches out and frames the tomb's four sides. The design of the sarcophagus design emulates French designs produced by André-Charles Boulle (1642–1732) which designs were well disseminated in the eighteenth century. Boulle's furniture designs, published in the early nineteenth century in the volume *Nouveaux Deisseries de Meubles et Ouvrages de Bronze et de Marqueterie*, are characterized by explicit decorative opulence similar to the Smith sarcophagus.⁶³

The Luke and Evans Monuments

Two plain gravestones mark the graves of John Luke and Evan Evans, two seamen who died in 1858 while serving on the HMS *Centurion* (fig. 40 & 41).⁶⁴ Discreetly engraved within the lower part of the gravestone are the words 'J. Darmanin S^{DA} Levante', referring to the Darmanin workshop located in East Street, Valletta. The two identical gravestones are simple with round-top headstones decorated at the top by the word 'Sacred' and a dove bearing an olive branch. The reputation of the Darmanin family in the realm of marble works was very well-established and by far surpasses the bland nature of these headstones. The Darmanins were responsible for many of the ledger stones at the Mdina cathedral and had participated in the London exhibition of 1851 and the Paris exhibitions of 1854, 1862, and 1867, where their intricate marble table-tops were singled out for acclaim and received awards.⁶⁵ The Ta' Braxia headstones were far less challenging both technically and artistically. It is unclear whether the gravestones were the product of the gifted sculptor Carlo Darmanin (1825–1909) or his brother Giovanni (1816–1908).

Notes

- ¹ Sandra Berresford, *Italian Memorial Sculpture 1820–1940: A Legacy of Love* (London, 2006), 19.
- ² Douglas Keister, *Stories in Stone: The Complete Guide to Cemetery Symbolism* (Utah, 2004), 33.
- ³ William Stewart, *Dictionary of Images and Symbols in Counselling* (London, 1998), 1067.
- ⁴ Eventually, even the Roman Catholic Santa Maria Addolorata cemetery allowed such funerary symbols to be incorporated.
- ⁵ According to the Ta Braxia' Cemetery Regulations under the Article No. 78 of the Police Code, Joseph R.H. Collings, MD was inspector of charitable institutions (1849–58), an official member of the Council of Government in 1857 and a member of the board of the Commissioners of Charity in 1851. Rev. H. Hare, MA was chaplain of the Forces in 1857, while Rev. John Cleugh, MA was chaplain to government since 1825 and commissioner of the House of Industry in 1830. Rev. George Wisely, MA was minister of the Presbyterian Church in connection with the Free Church of Scotland. Between 1848 and 1857, the Hon. Giuseppe Montanaro (1789–1864) was comptroller of contracts for civil supply and purveyor of charities, member of the board of the Commissioners of Charity and cashier of treasury and collector of land revenue.
- ⁶ The anchor also serves as a symbol for, or be used as a tribute to, St Nicholas, the patron saint of seamen. The anchor serves as a weight to keep the ship from moving from a specific spot making it a symbol of stability, steadiness, and a strong foundation. From its earliest conception, the anchor was a great importance in navigation. Christians adopted the anchor as a symbol of salvation, hope, and stability in a future existence. During the second and third centuries, the anchor occurs frequently in the epitaphs of the catacombs, particularly in the most ancient parts of the cemeteries of Sts Priscilla and Domitilla. Like the anchor, Christ grants stability and safety to all who believe in Him. In Hebrews 6:19–20, there is the connection between the idea of hope and the symbol of the anchor. The writers say that we have 'Hope' set before us 'as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm.' The anchor thus gained higher and religious significance to a familiar emblem. J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (New York, 2002), 9.
- ⁷ David J. Robinson, *Saving Graces* (New York, 1999), 118.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Cirlot, 69.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Bible, Job 34:15.
- ¹² Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*, Act 3, Scene 3.
- ¹³ Douglas Keister, *Stories in Stone: The Complete Guide to Cemetery Symbolism* (Utah, 2004), 33.
- ¹⁴ James Stevens Curl, *Death and Architecture* (Thrupp, Stroud, 2002), 25.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 12.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ William Stewart, *Dictionary of Images and Symbols in Counselling* (London, 1998), 106–7.
- ¹⁸ Cirlot, 344.
- ¹⁹ Within the context of the Christian faith, flames have an association with hell. Until fairly recent times, the Roman Catholic Church banned cremation because Romans used to mock Christians by burning them alive so as to prevent them from being resurrected. Cirlot, 108.
- ²⁰ Mario Borg, 'The Addolorata Cemetery: A study of a select number of funerary chapels of the later 19th and early 20th century', unpublished MA dissertation, Department of History of Art, Faculty of Arts, University of Malta, 1988, 109.
- ²¹ Cirlot, 110, 41.
- ²² The poppy's red colour has also a secular role since it is symbolizes the remembrance and the sacrifice of World War I soldiers, notably those who perished in the poppy fields of Flanders. Keister, 53.
- ²³ Keister, 53.
- ²⁴ 'Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field', Genesis 3:18.
- ²⁵ Keister, 91.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ The Virgin Mary is sometimes referred to as the 'rose without thorns' since she was conceived without original sin. So, the rose does have a connection with the female. In Victorian-era cemeteries the rose frequently adorns the graves of women, *ibid.*, 54.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 45, 46.
- ²⁹ In the Bible it is explained how the lily evokes innocence, chastity, purity as well as 'God's will and grace', as in Matthew 6:28 – 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin' *Ibid.*, 48, 49.
- ³⁰ The role of the goddess Iris was connected with the spiritual; Iris guided the souls of women into the afterlife.
- ³¹ Keister, 52.
- ³² Dora Ware and Maureen Strafford, *An Illustrated Dictionary of Ornament* (New York, 1974), 165.
- ³³ Cirlot, 252.
- ³⁴ Keister, 90.
- ³⁵ Gnosticism predates Christianity going back to the traditions of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Greece. Their tradition represented inner and secret wisdom. Their main belief is secret knowledge ultimately comes through a 'conscious evolution of oneself toward the noble idea; divine being'; Tau Malachi, *Living Gnosis: A Practical Guide to Gnostic Christianity* (Woodbury, MN, 2005), 2–3.
- ³⁶ Cirlot, 281.
- ³⁷ Keister, 127.

³⁸ The epitaph describes that the medals are for the siege and capture of Ghuznee; the bronze star for the battle of Maharajpur; and the medal and clasps for the Sutlej campaign in 1846, including the battles of Buddiwal, Aliwal, and Sobraon.

³⁹ Edward Bampton, Signalman, died 29 June 1865, aged 23 years; Henry Cardale, Lieutenant, Royal Navy, died 2 Dec. 1865, aged 30 years; Thomas Collins, Captain, Mizen Top, died 9 Jan. 1864, aged 23 years; Thomas David, Seaman, died 9 Nov. 1865, aged 21 years; Philip Duckworth, Ord. Seaman, died 22 Dec. 1865, aged 21 years; J. Frederick Dupree, born in England, buried 12 Oct. 1864, aged 20 years; Frederick W. Hedditch, Ord. Seaman, died 28 Nov. 1863, aged 18 years;

George Saunders, born in Ireland, 2nd Captain Fore Top, died in an accident 11 Oct. 1864, aged 27 years; William Serjeant, born in England, Seaman, buried 9 Nov. 1866, aged 32 years; Frederick Slade, born in Plymouth, Ord. Seaman, died 11 Nov. 1864, aged 20 years; Charles Tilly, born in Sussex, Seaman, buried 10 Nov. 1866, aged 21 years; James Waller, Able Seaman, drowned on 26 Aug. 1864, aged 26 years; Frank Weller, Ord. Seaman, died 27 Oct. 1863, aged 19 years; and Henry Wooley, born in England, Seaman, buried 13 Dec. 1865, aged 23 years.

⁴⁰ Infants range from stillborn to 12 year-olds. The first infant to be buried in the cemetery was 2 year-old Tullia Pio who was



Fig. 42. Ta' Braxia Cemetery

- buried on 26 November 1857. One of the infants' graves is also to be found in the oldest part of the cemetery in Division A, that of Francis Ernest Montagu, aged 19 months old, son of Lieutenant Colonel Laffan, RE, who was buried on 24 July 1863.
- ⁴¹ The popular typology of the little angel or putto in prayer was first seen in Luigi Pampaloni's Prayer, 1827. This typology is common till this day owing to unauthorized copying in the past. Beresford, 145, 148.
- ⁴² Cupid or Eros is also often depicted as a young angel; the Romans believed Eros was a male guardian spirit who supposedly accompanied the soul throughout life and even in the underworld. This belief continued with the early Christians who attributed this figure the role of guardianship and accompaniment to the afterlife. James R. Lewis & Evelyn Dorothy Oliver, *Angels, A-Z* (Canton, MI, 1995), 113.
- ⁴³ Postcard dates to circa 1920s and was printed by Vincenzo Galea di Antonio – Malta.
- ⁴⁴ Rosina Tressider, aged 10 months, born in Malta, was buried on 17 October 1879; Gertrude Amy Tressider, aged 4 years 6 months, born in Malta, was buried on 29 November 1879; , aged 9 months, born in Malta, was buried on 30 August 1881. Lieutenant T.J. Tressider, RE together with G.C. Schinas, Ph.D. was instrumental in the planning and implementation of a comprehensive public sewer system for Valletta, Floriana, and the Three Cities. [website.lineone.net/~stephaniebidmead/tabraxia.htm](http://www.lineone.net/~stephaniebidmead/tabraxia.htm)
- ⁴⁵ Albert Mackey, *Mackey's Symbolism of freemasonry: its science, philosophy, legends, myths & symbols* (Chicago, 1921), 334.
- ⁴⁶ The classical orders of the Doric and Ionic are used in preference to the Tuscan and Composite orders; *ibid.*, 321.
- ⁴⁷ Mackey, 334.
- ⁴⁸ Sangeet Duchane, *Freemasonry* (UK, 2007), 8. Although the teachings are based on Moses', Zerurbabel's, and Solomon's principles and the higher degrees have a Christian character, Freemasonry predates Christianity and should not be considered a Christian craft. The inclusion of Christian symbols in Freemasonry is a result of natural circumstances; Mackey, 330.
- ⁴⁹ Alexander Pope, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Sir Walter Scott were some of the distinguished British Masons. Duchane, 54.
- ⁵⁰ A.J. Agius, *The Genesis of Freemasonry in Malta 1730–1843* (Malta, 1993), 4.
- ⁵¹ Duchane, 93.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 42.
- ⁵³ James Stevens Curl, *The Art and Architecture of Freemasonry: An Introductory Study* (London, 1991).
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.
- ⁵⁵ Cirlot, 124.
- ⁵⁶ The source of the Masonic connection between the ladder and the moral virtues can be traced in Jacob's ladder as seen in Genesis 28:11–19. Duchane, 126.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 128.
- ⁵⁹ 1 Kings 7:21 – 'He erected the pillars at the portico of the temple. The pillar to the south he named Jakin and the one to the north Boaz.'
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*,
- ⁶¹ NAM, PW Volume 349: 1897–1900, External Letters Superintendent of Public Works to Non-Government Bodies or Private Individuals, f. 308. The sketch for the Gollcher monument was signed by Cavaliere Egidio Pozzi, Milano and approved by the Committee of Ta' Braxia Cemetery, bearing the signature of G. Schinas, president, 2 October 1889.
- ⁶² The Draddy brothers were prolific in the production of funerary monuments with several monuments at the Cavalry Cemetery in Queens, New York and the Civil War Soldiers' monument at Green-Wood cemetery. The bronze bust of the Irish poet Thomas Moore (1779–1852) at Prospect Park, Queens, New York is also their work. Refer to Ronald H. Bayour and Timothy J. Meagher (eds.), *The New York Irish* (Baltimore, 1996); Jeffrey Weidman, *Artists in Ohio, 1787–1900: A Biographical Dictionary* (Kent, Ohio, 2000).
- ⁶³ André-Charles Boulle, *Nouveaux Deiseins de Meubles et Ouvrages de Bronze et de Marqueterie* (Paris, 1707).
- ⁶⁴ Evan Evans, Seaman, aged 23 years 6 months, died 22 March 1858. He died after falling from the main topsail yard on HMS *Centurion*. John Luke, serving as a seaman with HMS *Centurion*, aged 21 years, died 18 July 1858, whilst bathing in the sea. Keighley, 4.
- ⁶⁵ Mark Cassar, 'The Inlaid Marble Ledger Stones of Mdina Cathedral', unpublished BA (Hons.) dissertation, History of Art, University of Malta, 2012, 36–8.



The Lady Hamilton Gordon Memorial Chapel

The most distinctive architectural landmark at Ta' Braxia Cemetery is the memorial chapel that was commissioned by Arthur Hamilton Gordon (1829–1912), 1st Baron Stanmore, in honour of his wife Lady Rachel Emily Hamilton Gordon (fig. 43). Arthur Hamilton Gordon was a Liberal party politician who had a distinguished career as a diplomat and colonial administrator (fig. 44).¹ It was towards the end of his tenure as governor of Ceylon when travelling back to Britain, during a transit stop in Malta, that his wife Lady Rachel became too ill to continue travelling and died soon after (fig. 45). She was buried at Ta' Braxia Cemetery on 28 January 1889.

Upon his return to Britain, Baron Hamilton Gordon commissioned one of Britain's most eminent architects, John Loughborough Pearson (1817–97) to design a small memorial church to be built at Ta' Braxia in memory of his late wife (fig. 46).² Pearson was a notable late Victorian architect and a leading figure in the nineteenth-century Gothic Revival movement. He embraced a rigorous historicist approach to design that became more progressive and inventive in his middle years.³ When entrusted with this commission, Pearson was 76 years of age and in the twilight years of a long and distinguished architectural career with a reputation forged almost exclusively on several churches and cathedrals that he designed in the neo-gothic style. Pearson's work spans nearly six decades and historians of Victorian ecclesiastical architecture have described his buildings as demonstrating 'a very high degree of competence and of quiet assurance'.⁴ It is highly improbable that Pearson personally visited Malta considering his advanced age and the relatively minor scale of the project. It is assumed that the design was prepared in his busy London architectural office and that detailed plans were then dispatched to Malta. It would be reasonable to assume that an experienced clerk of works would then have been appointed to ensure that Pearson's plans were followed to the letter.

The new chapel lies within the last extension of the cemetery beyond a low and continuous battered retaining wall that demarcates the transition between the old cemetery and the later expansion situated at a lower level. The foundation stone for the new chapel was laid on Monday 29 May 1893 in a ceremony attended, amongst others, by the British governor and the chairman of the committee of management of Ta' Braxia Cemetery (fig. 47).⁵ Construction works must have proceeded at a brisk pace as the memorial chapel was completed within an 18-month period. The chapel was blessed by the Anglican bishop of Gibraltar on 13 December 1894 in a ceremony attended by Lord Stanmore's nephew, Captain George Hamilton Gordon. Contemporary reports on this ceremony lamented the 'very unpropitious weather, which prevented a large attendance of people'.⁶

Anthony Quiney, author of John Loughborough Pearson's seminal architectural monograph described the chapel as follows:

In the first years of the 1890s he designed another chapel quite unlike any other before. It was for the Protestant cemetery of Ta Braxia at Floriana, just outside Valetta, Malta and completed by 1896 [sic] for Lord Stanmore as a memorial to his wife, her tomb being placed under a canopy on the outside of the apse. The chapel is sixteen-sided; around a central dome on an octagonal drum are double aisles, eight cylindrical piers separating the inner one from the octagonal centre, the piers being doubled between the aisles except for the bays opening into the west entrance and the apsidal chancel. The details of the chapel, like its plans, are Italian Romanesque even Byzantine. The vaulted interior, the double aisles with their proliferation of shafts and vaulting ribs, and the contrast between their brightly lit central space and the dark aisles are all typical of Pearson.⁷

Fig. 43. Lady Hamilton Gordon memorial chapel, Ta' Braxia, designed by architect John Loughborough Pearson, 1893–94



Fig. 44. Arthur Hamilton Gordon (1829–1912), 1st Baron Stanmore. photo c.1870–1880 (Photo: donated by Robertson Wenthworth de Miklouho-Maclay to the New South Wales State Library, Australia in 1971)



Fig. 45. Portrait of Rachel Emily Shaw Levefre, later married and known as Lady Rachel Hamilton Gordon (1829–89) (Photo: Courtesy of The National Trust for Scotland, Haddo House, Aberdeenshire, Scotland)

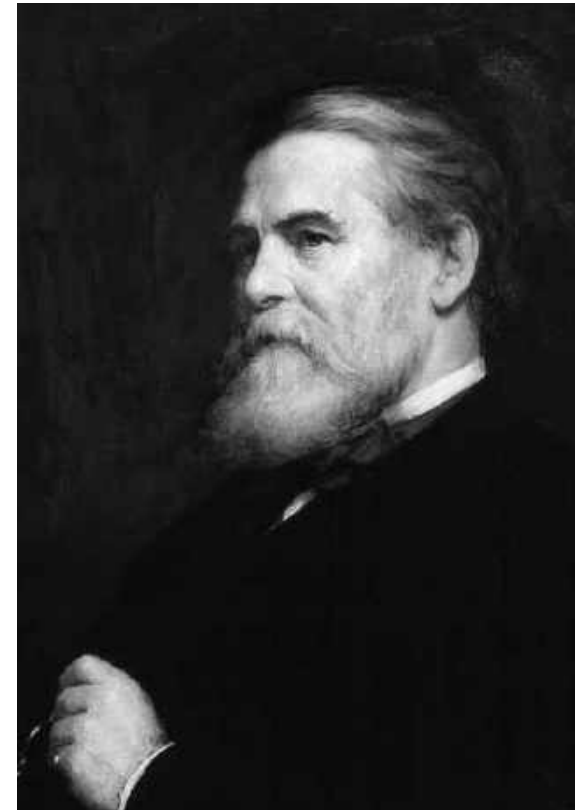


Fig. 46. Portrait of architect John Loughborough Pearson (1817–97), by painter Walter William Oules (Photo: Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London)

Quiney also suggests that the architect's son Frank Pearson 'played some part in the design of the chapel'.⁸ The Ta' Braxia church predates Frank Pearson's Romanesque-style churches in Madrid and Cap d'Antibes, although Quiney is of the opinion that 'despite its unusual plan and style, his father's hand is strongly evident'. Clearly, the elder Pearson placed great emphasis on the importance of form and structure, with decoration being deemed of secondary importance. The Hamilton Gordon chapel was symbolically conceived as a mausoleum, as an autonomous building constructed as a monument enclosing the interment space of the deceased. Although mausolea have been in existence since classical antiquity, during the nineteenth century there was a revival of such typologies in funerary architecture. The chapel's location at Ta' Braxia in an area which was relatively open and not constrained by the presence of imposing funerary monuments,

permitted the architect to pursue a design of a free-standing building that could be appreciated from multiple viewpoints and that created an architectural landmark which was of the appropriate physical scale in relation to its surroundings.

In contrast to the vast majority of his churches which were expressed in a Neo-Gothic style, the local chapel is a *mélange* of Neo-Romanesque architectural elements combined with Byzantine revival overtones. With reference to the Ta' Braxia chapel, Sarah Longair stated that 'this design is one of the few examples for which Pearson used a dome form and it shows inspiration from Byzantine sources, a particular fashionable style during the 1890s'.⁹ The chapel is built to a centralized plan inspired by the Byzantine church of San Vitale at Ravenna. Both the Hamilton Gordon chapel and San Vitale have an octagonal domed-hall surrounded by a vaulted ambulatory. The central space

supports an octagonal drum with an egg-shaped dome that rises vertically high above the vaulted ambulatory. A rather ponderous gabled porch is affixed to the main entrance portal. The chapel's exterior is replete with elaborate and decorative stone sculpture – a diverse range of geometric stone carvings are set within the circular windows around the chapel's external walls, the triforium or blind arcaded gallery typical of English Gothic churches, and medieval-style bifora windows set within ornate hood mouldings.

In stark contrast the interiors of many of J.L. Pearson's churches are dominated by their stone or brick vaults and the clear lines and surfaces of the

structure. His Ta' Braxia chapel is no exception. The interior elevation of the main central space has a tripartite division comprising a series of pointed arches supported on circular stone columns, a continuous blind triforium gallery, and clerestory windows which permit natural light to flood the interior (fig. 48). Around the central core beyond the ring of the rather massive stone columns is an ambulatory roofed over at a lower height by simple quadripartite ribs vaults carried on shafts that go right down to the ground level. In this case, the High Victorian attributes of solidity, horizontality, and variety of materials are abandoned in favour of elegance, multiplication of thin shafts along the walls,



Fig. 47. Ceremony for the laying of the foundation stone of Lady Hamilton Gordon chapel held on 29 May 1893

(Photo: Courtesy of the Richard Ellis Archive – Malta)



Fig. 48. Interior view of
Lady Hamilton
Gordon chapel,
Ta' Braxia

and the elegant pointed ribs converging towards the roof.¹⁰ The effect is further accentuated by a series of slim lancet windows at the clerestory level. Pearson very rarely employed diagonally placed buttresses and did not advocate architectural elements that were battered or tapered. The overall emphasis was on the vertical dimension, not on the horizontal or on the gradual building up of masses.

Architectural Decoration and Symbolism

The main entrance to the chapel takes the form of a gabled porch and incorporates a number of Italian Romanesque features with Byzantine influences (fig. 49). The miniature blind-arcading below the classical triangular pediment wraps around the sides of the porch. The portal is composed of a large semi-circular arch supported on short Romanesque-style columns. Along the side jambs of the main entrance are projecting stone tabernacles which were possibly intended to host figurative sculptures which never saw the light of day. What is particularly intriguing are the stone carvings depicting a number of decorative castles set amidst a fortified citadel. Arthur Hamilton Gordon was created as 1st Baron Stanmore in 1893, a few months after the laying of the foundation stone of the memorial chapel for his wife Lady Rachel.

Adorning the chapel's entrance porch and its sides are various stone carvings of castles (fig. 50 & 51). There are two types of designs for the castles which are then repeated near the chapel's door. One design depicts a walled city while the other shows two watch towers amongst other buildings. It must have been important for Lord Stanmore to highlight his title in the funerary chapel. The castles could be metaphorical references to Hamilton Gordon's royalist blood line and the no longer existent medieval Aberdeen castle. The castle designs may also refer to the crest of Aberdeen. Lord Stanmore's father George was the 4th Earl of Aberdeen; the city's crest depicts three castles. Alternatively, the castles may symbolize actual Scottish castles in Aberdeenshire linked to the Hamilton Gordons, such as Fyvie castle. The latter had housed the Gordon family and other members of the Scottish royalty. Arthur's



Fig. 49. Portico of the Lady Hamilton Gordon chapel, Ta' Braxia

forebear William Gordon, the 2nd Earl of Aberdeen had bought the castle in 1733 and bequeathed it to his nephew William Gordon, Arthur's great-uncle.¹¹ Fyvie castle has five towers which according to legend



Fig. 50. Stone-carving of Scottish baronial castles adorning niche, part of entrance portal to chapel

were built by the five families who owned the castle throughout the centuries.¹² One could postulate that Lord Stanmore, while overseeing the design of the chapel, could well have suggested the incorporation of references to Scottish baronial castles as a reference to his personal social standing and newly-acquired peerage.

Along the external perimeter of the chapel there are a series of high-level circular openings set within recessed blind arches. Each of the circular windows is adorned with middle-pointed tracery each to a different geometric and curvilinear design (figs. 52–55). There seems to be no specific theme or symbolism in the different window patterns. The shapes are all varied, some composed of graphics, reminiscent of the geometric Gothic-style shapes while others were inspired by naturalistic forms.¹³ One particular window has a six-pointed star of David, possibly alluding to Arthur Hamilton Gordon's religious faith (fig. 56).



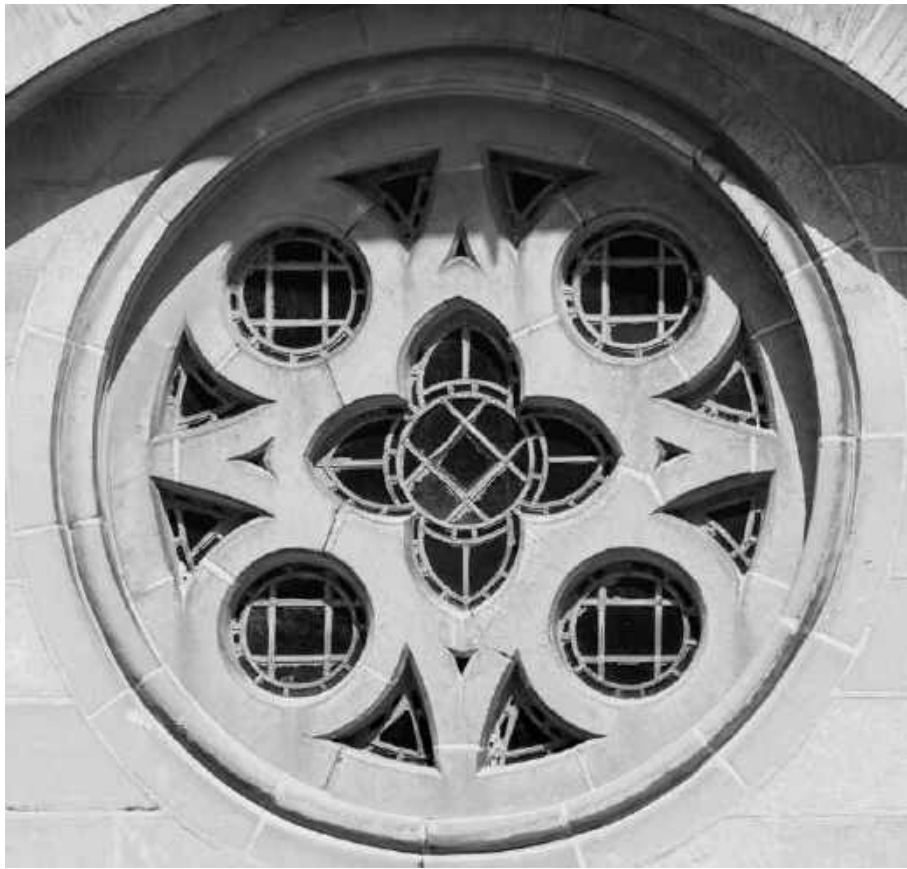
Fig. 51. Tabernacle-like niche adjoining entrance portal to chapel

Lady Hamilton Gordon's Sepulchral Tomb

On the chapel's exterior is the sepulchral tomb of Lady Hamilton Gordon (fig. 57). It is set within a gracious gothic-style stone tabernacle attached to the external walls of the apsidal chancel with its distinctive shallow conical roof. Over the tomb is affixed a bronze plaque bearing the following inscription in Latin:

HOC SACELLUM
 IN PIAM UXORIS SUAE MEMORIAM
 EXTRUENDUM CURAVIT ARTURUS GORDON
 BARO DE STANMORE PRIMO CREATUS
 QUI NATUS A.D. V KAL. DEC. A.S. MDCCCXXIX
 OBIIT A.D. III KAL. FEB. A.S. MCMXII.¹⁴

This plaque appears to be a later addition and is strangely more self-laudatory with only a fleeting reference to the Baron's wife to whom the chapel was dedicated. It could well be that there was another similar plaque with direct references to Lady Gordon which



Figs. 52-55. Circular windows with inset middle-pointed tracery to different geometric and curvilinear designs. Windows are set within blank arcaded exterior wall of chapel

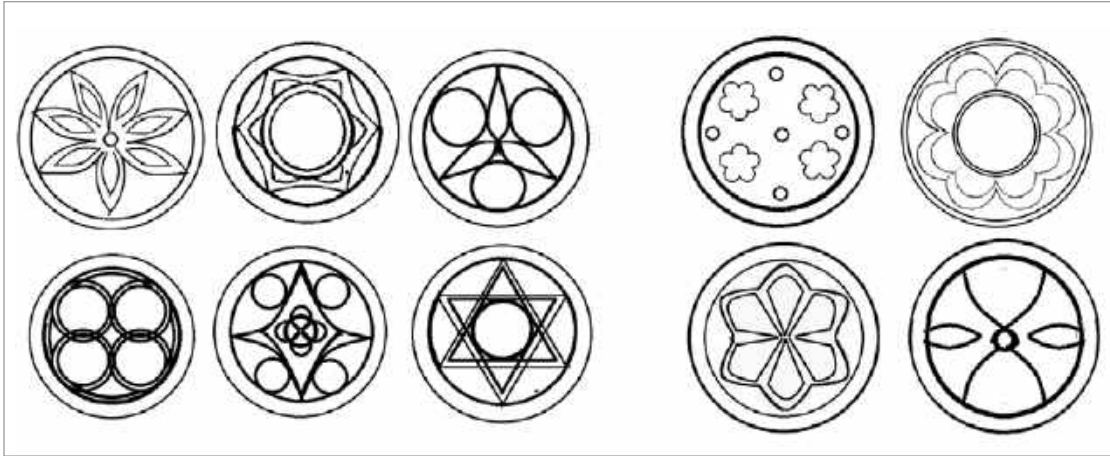


Fig. 56. Various geometric patterns for window tracery infills
(Drawing: Courtesy of Janica Buhagiar)

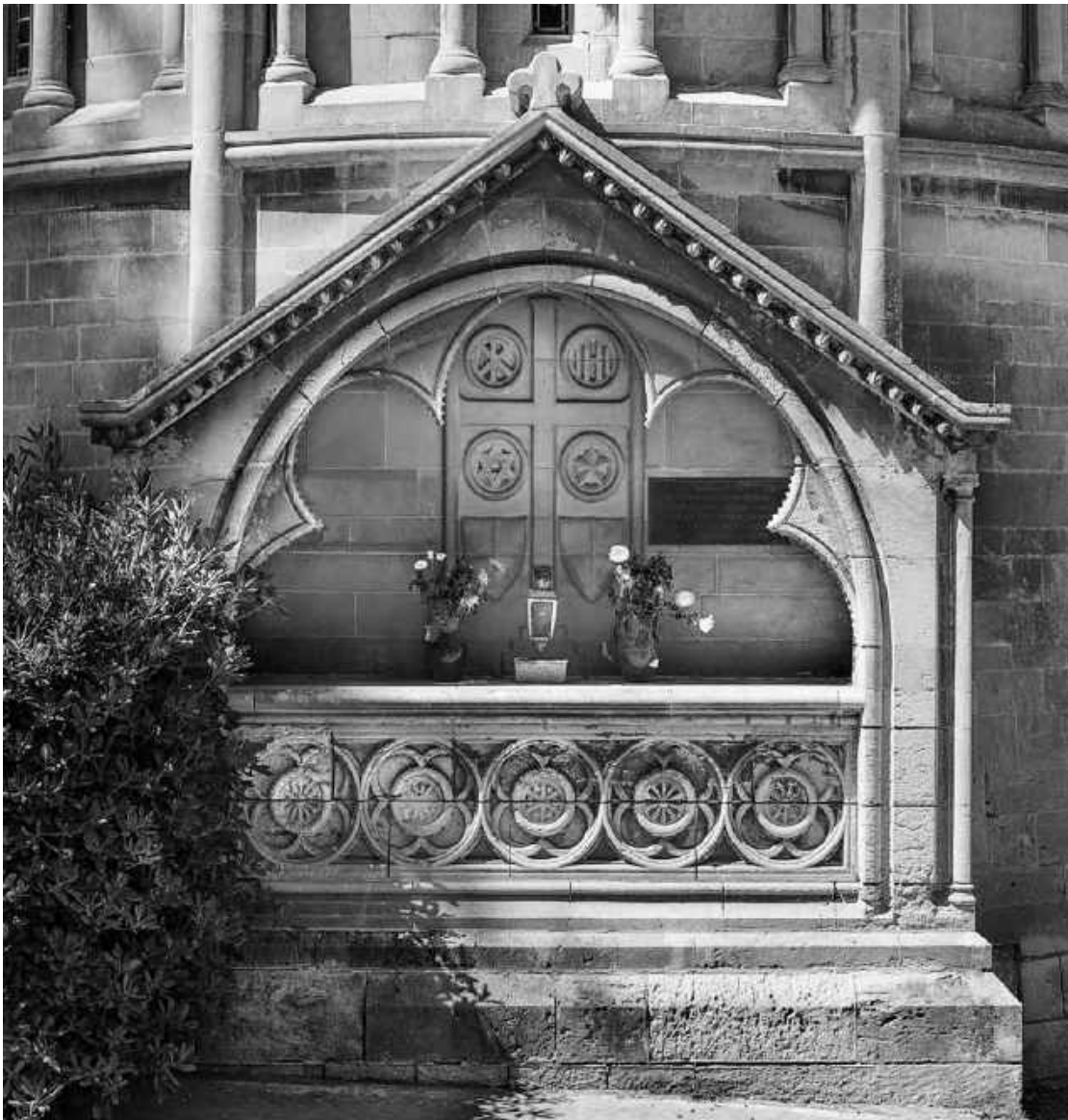


Fig. 57. External sepulchral monument of Lady Rachel Hamilton Gordon

has over the years gone astray. The tomb is designed in the form of an altar with a low-relief design of a Latin cross surrounded by various Christian symbols including the Chi-Rho symbol above the Star of David and a five-pointed mullet.¹⁵ At the bottom of the cross are two quarter-divided escutcheons – although these have no direct specific reference to the Hamilton Gordon family crest. Crests carved in sepulchral tombs are akin to royal banners which are probably another indication of Lord Stanmore's title and aristocratic lineage. The front of the altar table is decorated with five quatrefoil designs that have the Christian symbolic attributes of the four evangelists, a popular representation in neo-gothic architecture.

The Ta' Braxia chapel deserves wider recognition as does the architect who hardly features in the annals of Maltese architectural history. As the late architect John Phillips stated,

in order to understand fully the work of any architect, it is essential not only to be acquainted with his buildings and the religious and social background of the times in which he worked but also his personality and character. Pearson's natural reserve and reticence make any character study difficult for he shrank from publicity and, for many years, would not even allow the publication of his works in the architectural press: neither did he write books or deliver lectures.¹⁶

It is recorded that when Pearson was designing Truro Cathedral, he is said to have confessed to a friend that he aspired to build a church that would bring people to their knees. In a similar vein, the Ta' Braxia chapel was conceived as a place of worship where the serene and coherent space would be conducive to contemplation and an exaltation of the spiritual dimension.

Notes

¹ Arthur Hamilton Gordon served as lieutenant-governor of New Brunswick, Canada (1861–66) and governor of Trinidad (1866–70), Mauritius (1871–74), Fiji (1875–80), New Zealand (1880–82), and Ceylon (1883–90). He was created 1st Baron Stanmore of Great Stanmore, Middlesex on 21 August 1893. He entered the House of Lords and played an active role until his death on 30 January 1912 at the age of 82. For further information on his life, C.W. Newbury, *Patronage and Politics in the Victorian Empire: The Personal Governance of Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon (Lord Stanmore)* (New York, 2010).

Rachel Emily Hamilton Gordon (née Shaw Lefevre) (1829–89) was the first-born daughter of Sir John George Shaw Lefevre and Rachel Emily Wright. On 20 September 1865, aged 36, she married Arthur Hamilton Gordon at St Martin-in-the-Fields church, London. The couple had two children: George Arthur, an artist and sculptor who later became the 2nd Baron Stanmore, and Rachel Nevill. Lady Hamilton Gordon died in Malta on 26 January 1889. During her illness in Malta, she resided at the Imperial Hotel, Sliema. www.craftspage.co.uk

² John Loughborough Pearson (1817–97) was born on 5 July 1817, the son of William Pearson, a water-colourist and etcher, in Durham; he was apprenticed as a 14-year old to Ignatius Bonomi in Durham, so beginning a lifetime's career in architecture, in particular Church architecture. He moved to London and, after gaining more experience, opened his own practice in 1843. His first major work in the capital was the church of Holy Trinity, Vauxhall. As his reputation grew, so did his workload. Other churches in the London area included St Augustine's, Kilburn (1871), St John's, Red Lion Square (1874), St Michael's, Croydon (1880), and St John's, Norwood (1881). Cathedrals also came within his influence and he carried out work for Rochester, Bristol, Peterborough, Lincoln cathedrals, as well as Westminster Abbey. His greatest architectural work was the design and building of Truro cathedral, Cornwall in 1880. He designed St John's cathedral for Brisbane, Australia, in 1888, but construction was delayed and the first phase did not take place until 1906–10, which was after his death. Apart from Church architecture, he was in demand by wealthy patrons to design stately homes. Pearson died on 11 December 1897 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

The standard monograph on J.L. Pearson is Anthony Quiney, *John Loughborough Pearson* (London, 1979). Also, refer to article by David Lloyd in *Seven Victorian Architects*, ed. Jane Fawcett (London, 1976).

³ Quiney, 3, cited in Sarah Longair, *Cracks in the Dome: Fractured Histories of Empire in the Zanzibar Museum, 1897–1964* (New York, 2015), 73.

⁴ Roger Dixon and Stefan Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture*, second edition (London, 1985), 218–21.

⁵ The chief secretary to government, Gerald Strickland, by means of a letter informed the chairman of the Committee of Management of Ta' Braxia Cemetery that H.E. the Governor proposed the ceremony for the laying of the foundation stone to be held on 29 May 1893 at 6.00 p.m. NAM, PW 252, Letters Received 1893–1895.

⁶ University of Malta, Special Collections, MS 263/3, Harry Formosa Papers – Burial Sites and Cemeteries in Malta, 369.

⁷ Anthony Quiney, *John Loughborough Pearson* (London, 1979), 212, 216.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 216.

⁹ Longair, 73. Furthermore, between 1853 and 1859, Pearson travelled on the European continent and he recorded his visits to various architectural site and monuments by means of sketches and diary notes. His visits to the Palatine chapel at Aachen and the basilica of San Vitale at Ravenna could potentially have inspired him to adopt the Byzantine revival style for the Ta' Braxia chapel.

¹⁰ Roger Dixon and Stefan Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture*, second edition (London, 1985), 218–21.

¹¹ Christopher Hartley, *Fyvie Castle* (Edinburgh, 1988), 32–3. Fyvie Castle lies in the village of Fyvie, near Turriff in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. The earliest parts of the castle date from the 13th century. Fyvie was the site of an open-air court held by Robert the Bruce, and Charles I lived there as a child. Following the Battle of Otterburn in 1390, it ceased to be a royal stronghold and instead fell into the possession of five successive families – Preston, Meldrum, Seton, Gordon, and Leith. According to legend, each family added a new tower.

¹² Buhagiar, Janica, 'Ta' Braxia Protestant Cemetery, 1857-1900: A case study in Funerary Art & Architecture', unpublished MA dissertation, Department of History of Art, Faculty of Arts, University of Malta, 2013, 185–6.

¹³ Juan Eduardo Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (New York, 2002), 123, 233, 310. Also Buhagiar, 182–4.


¹⁴ Translation of the Latin text of the inscription:
'Arthur Gordon created Baron of Stanmore took care to have this grave made in pious memory of his wife. He was born on 27 November of the year of salvation 1829 and died on 30 January of the year of Salvation 1912.'

Notes: Dates are according to the Roman Calendar so that the 5th day before the Kalends of December is equivalent to 27 November and the 3rd day before the Kalends of February is equivalent to 30 January. Also, A.S. stands for *Anno Salutis*, the Year of Salvation.

We are indebted to Mgr John Azzopardi for translating the original text and for the explanatory notes.

¹⁵ Buhagiar, 176–7.

¹⁶ <http://btcp.org.uk/who-we-are/st-stephens/the-architect-his-life/>



MARK WELLS ORDN. SEAMAN
DIED OCT 27TH 1863. AGED 19 YEARS
FREDERICK W. HEDDITCH ORDN. SEAMAN
DIED NOV 28TH 1865. AGED 18 YEARS
C.E.O. SAUNDERS 2ND CAPT. OF THE FORT TOP
KILLED BY ACCIDENT OCT 11TH 1864. AGED 27 YEARS
FREDERICK DUPREE ORDN. SEAMAN
KILLED BY ACCIDENT OCT 11TH 1864. AGED 20 YEARS
THOMAS COLLINS CAPT. MINE TOP
DIED JAN 9TH 1864. AGED 23 YEARS
JAMES WALLER ABLE SEAMAN
DROWNED AUG 26TH 1864. AGED 26 YR
FREDERICK SLADE ORDN. SEAMAN
DIED NOV 11TH 1864. AGED 20 YR

THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED BY THE OFFICERS
AND SEAMEN OF H.M. S. GIBRALTAR

State of Conservation and Restoration

During British colonial times Ta' Braxia Cemetery was administered by a specially appointed management committee. Today, the cemetery is the property of the Maltese government and is administered by the Department of Health. In 2000, *Din l-Art Helwa*, in partnership with the Department of Health, undertook to actively participate in the restoration and maintenance of the cemetery and its monuments. A year later, the 'Friends of Ta' Braxia', a volunteer group within *Din l-Art Helwa*, was founded with its mission statement being 'to promote further research, identify family connections, help fund continued restoration and the maintenance of monuments'. In recent years, these volunteers have contributed in a significant manner to the general upkeep of the cemetery and the restoration of its various historic funerary monuments.¹

During the Second World War, Ta' Braxia had sustained certain physical damage. In particular, two specific areas were badly affected by three enemy bombs – some of the older monuments situated near the main entrance gate in front of the caretaker's lodge were severely damaged, as was also the lower southernmost sector of the cemetery reserved for the graves of the Greek Orthodox community.² The bomb blasts and shrapnel left their marks on various funerary monuments and gravestones. In the post-war period, the cemetery suffered from dereliction and neglect with several damaged graves and monuments requiring restoration. Since then, the state of the cemetery's conservation has improved considerably, thanks to the sterling work undertaken by the 'Friends of Ta' Braxia'. However, human and financial resources are limited and certain badly deteriorated funerary monuments still await professional restoration. In addition to this, there are other physical elements to be attended to, such as the boundary walls, the low retaining walls and

pathways, the fountains, and the parts of the timber roof of the memorial chapel which exhibit worrisome signs of decay. It is of paramount importance that this decline be brought to the attention of the authorities and also public awareness raised, in the hope that the decay is halted and that remedial action undertaken.

One of the major factors contributing to the deterioration of stone monuments are the emissions emanating from vehicles along the busy adjoining thoroughfare. Natural elements have also played their part and infrequent gale-force winds have on one occasion even dislodged an Aleppo pine tree, causing considerable physical damage to a number of gravestones and monuments and obstructing one of the pathways. One can only respond by means of mitigating measures to address external forces that one usually has little or no control over. Although restoration is desirable, particularly when the level of decay is so severe that we risk losing irretrievably part of our heritage, the ethos of the cemetery as a necropolis should be retained and safeguarded. As Ronnie Scott, a founder member of the 'Friends of Glasgow Necropolis' and author of a guide to the Glasgow cemetery, stated 'not that I want every stone restored to pristine condition, buffed and polished and glinting in the sun, every grave surround put back and fingers, wings and toes glued back on fallen angels. The Necropolis is all about death and decay, and if we airbrush that out and create a museum of architecture and sculpture we are denying these two great constants in life.'³ This sentiment is equally applicable to Ta' Braxia.

Besides architecture there is a rich selection of flora and fauna. The types of trees at Ta' Braxia includes cedars, Aleppo pines, palms, olives, almonds, pomegranates, and Judas trees, besides various shrubs

Fig. 58. HMS *Gibraltar* monument, 1865
(Location: division I)

such as pittosporum, bougainvillea and lantana. Trees, shrubs, and vegetation are widespread throughout the entire cemetery, entailing considerable efforts in its general upkeep.⁴ Soft landscaping is an integral part of the scenography of what constitutes a garden cemetery.

With cultural tourism on the rise, there is an unique opportunity to promote Ta' Braxia Cemetery as a alternative offering to Malta's mainstream heritage attractions. Although there is a common (and myopic) perception that Ta' Braxia as a mere manifestation of British colonial heritage and Protestantism, it is actually an integral part of our common cultural heritage. Ta' Braxia, like other Victorian cemeteries, was designed to make the living experience particular emotions, to promote certain distinguished personalities and their families, and to provoke certain philosophical and religious thoughts. Through our appreciation of it, it enriches our understanding of our colonial past.

Notes

- ¹ Alan Keighley, *Ta' Braxia Cemetery; A Visitor's Guide* (Malta, 2000).
- ² Andy Welsh, 'The Ta' Braxia Cemetery Project', *Vigilo: Din l-Art Helwa*, No. 18 (October 2000), 8–9 .
- ³ Ronnie Scott, *Death by Design: The True Story of the Glasgow Necropolis* (Glasgow, 2005), xv–xvi.
- ⁴ A.N. Welsh, C.A. Gatt, 'Remembering the dead at Ta' Braxia Cemetery', *The Malta Independent*, 1 November 2015.

Photographs



Fig. 59. View of the tree-lined avenue Via Principessa Melita and the newly-constructed Lady Hamilton Gordon Chapel, Ta' Braxia Cemetery in the background, c.1900
(Photo: Courtesy of the Richard Ellis Archive – Malta)



Fig. 60. Ta' Braxia Cemetery



Fig. 61. A view of the internal cemetery walls with central opening flanked by rusticated stone pilasters adorned with finials



Fig. 62. Stone water reservoir with lion-head gargoyle framed within arch-moulding



Fig. 63. View of fountain with decorative urn on pedestal



Fig. 64. Decorative stone-carvings on side of internal wall divider



WILLIAM STEPHEN EYNAUD

MAY 1818.
DIED
DECEMBER 25.

BURYED AS A YOUNG OF A.S.T.
BY HIS WIFE
AMELIA.

EYNAUD



Fig. 66. Eynaud monument, detail of decorative urn adorned with floral garlands



Fig. 67. Eynaud monument, detail from obelisk - a circular wreath depicting narcissus buds tied at the bottom by a ribbon and surmounted by a lily

Fig. 65. Eynaud monument, by Draddy Bros, New York, 1871
(Location: division A)

ALFRED WATERFIELD
DIED 1880

AGE TO THE MEMORY
OF
CATHERINE
SCHOOL MISTRESS
THE BELOVED WIFE OF
M. J. ROWAN
OF THE SERG. 10. 8. 1874
DIED 18 SEP 18 2
AGED 30 YEARS
WOULD PREFER TO BE
MY LIFE I REMAIN IN DEATH
THEY FATHER STILL ILL 1874

Fig. 68. Catherine Rowan monument, 1872
(Location: division N)



Figs. 69-71. Catherine Rowan monument, decorative stone
carvings adorning sides of the Latin cross base, 1872
(Location: division N)



Fig. 72. Thomas Dyke Acland Fortescue monument, 1865
(Location: division A)



Fig. 73. Alice Jane Robertson monument,
1864
(Location: division A)



Fig. 74. Robertson monument, detail
(Location: division A)



Fig. 75. The 100th (Prince of Wales's Royal Canadian) Regiment of Foot monument, Ta' Braxia
(Location: division A)



Fig. 76. Thomas Hewitt Barry monument,
1864
(Location: division B)



Fig. 77. Francis Ernest Montagu monument, 1863
(Location: division B)

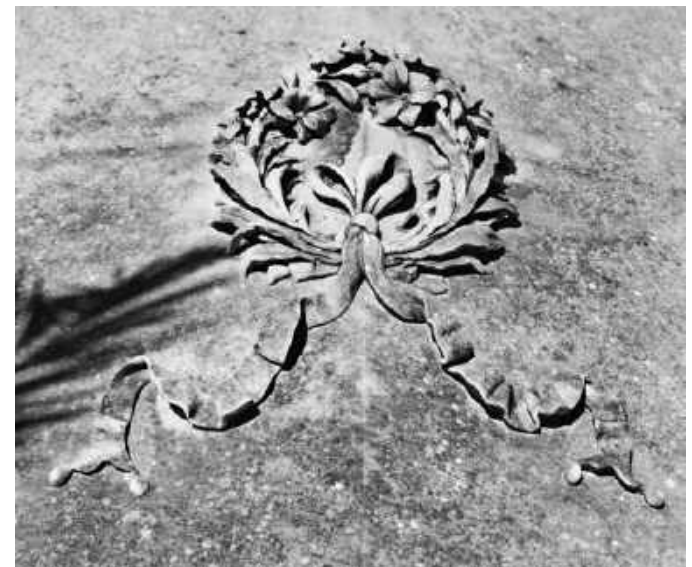


Fig. 78. Montagu monument, detail of floral wreath



Fig. 79. Eynaud monument
(Location: division B)



Fig. 80. James Richard
Colnett
monument, 1859
(Location: division B)

Fig. 81. Simon Rose
monument, 1879
(Location: division D)

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF

SIMON ROSE

BORN AT BORNHOCK

10 June 1797

DIED AT VALLETTA

21 March 1857

Had adopted residence for
nearly sixty years

*I trust that my Redeemer
breatheth upon I shall
see his angels*



Fig. 82. Christiana and John Robinson monument,
1870
(Location: division C)



Fig. 83. Robinson monument, detail of carving with winged hourglass motif set in classical pediment



Fig. 84. Robinson monument, detail of base pedestal adorned with classical drapery

Fig. 85. Alfred William Perham monument, 1879
(Location: division I)



Figs. 86, 87. Perham monument, details of Masonic symbols carved in low relief on stone block





Fig. 88. William Rotherham monument with the Robert Mackenzie monument in the background, 1891 (Location: Division I)



Fig. 89. Adelaide F.S. Wise monument, 1871
(Location: division K)



Fig. 90. Wise monument, detail, stone carving of sleeping cherub claspng cross



Fig. 91. Anna Mitchell monument, 1873
(Location: division O)

Fig. 92. Mary Ann Smith monument,
A.Penza, 1871
(Location: division N)



SACRED
TO THE MEMORY
OF MARY ANN
DAUGHTER OF JAMES AND MARY ANN SMITH
BORN 1845
DIED 1861



GENERAL SIR JOHN MOORE BAYNES,
COLONEL OF THE 54th FOOT REGIMENT
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE 17th SEPTEMBER
1809 AGED 74.
THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED IN REMEMBRANCE
OF HIS COURAGE AND AFFECTIONAL MARRIAGE
BY HIS SURVIVED AND EDUOWING WIDOW,
ELIZABETH BAYNES.
'NOT LOSE BUT COME BEFORE
WE LIVE FOR AGAM ARMO'
'WE LIVE FOR JESUS KING'
JAN 21 1744 MARRIED
ELIZABETH BAYNES
WHO DIED ON THE 20th AUGUST 1809
AGED 65.

Fig. 93. General Arthur Simcoe Baynes
monument, 1875
(Location: division PP)



Fig. 94. John Buchanan monument, 1876
(Location: division Q)





Fig. 96. The Industrialists' monument, detail of stone carvings



Fig. 97. The Industrialists' monument, detail depicting knight's helmet with visor, surmounting armourial crest amidst stone carvings depicting ivy leaves and Caduceus staff

Fig. 95. The Industrialists' monument
(Location: division G)



Fig. 98. Augustus Pirnie monument, J. Mc Farlane, Dundee, 1881
(Location: division Q)



Fig. 99. Elizabeth Frances Dalby monument, 1876
(Location: division O)



Fig. 100. Olof Frederick Gollcher monument, 1962
(Location: division T)



Fig. 101. Sarah Elizabeth Stephen monument, 1860
(Location: division D)



Fig. 102. Patrick John Curran
monument, 1891
(Location: division R)

Fig. 103. Dominic Pangiris
monument, 1923
(Location: division R)



IN A
LOVING MEMORY
OF
DOMINGO PANGRIS



Fig. 104. Infants' graves section of cemetery
(Location: divisions V, W, X)



Fig. 105. Grace S.S. "Tottie" M^cDowall
monument, 1886
(Location: division T)



Fig. 106. Olof Fredrik Gollcher monument,
1889, Egidio Pozzi, Milan
(Location: division U)



Fig. 107. Gollcher monument, detail of
bronze bust of Olof Fredrik
Gollcher



Fig. 108. Gollcher monument, detail of
bronze floral wreaths at base of
monument



Fig. 109. Gollcher monument, detail of bronze figure
of grieving widow



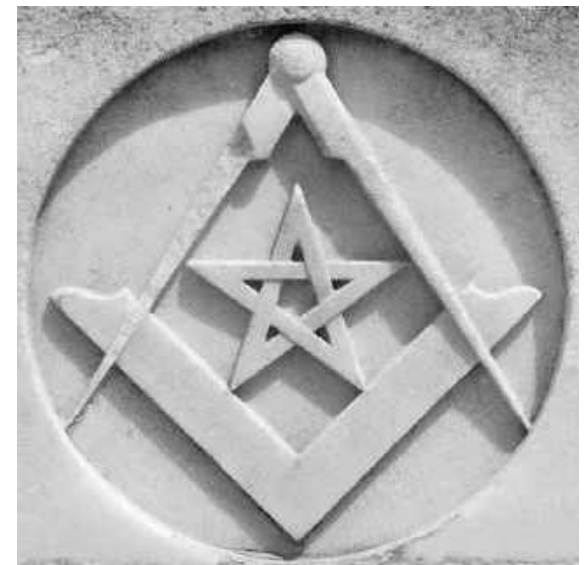
Fig. 110. John L. Gordon Paterson monument, 1905, Underwood, Baker Str., London
(Location: division 13)



Fig. 111. Paterson monument, low-relief sculpture on tombstone



Fig. 112. Colonel Marmaduke Ramsay monument, 1893
(Location: division ZA)



Figs. 113–115. Ramsay monument, details of low-relief carvings of Masonic symbols



Fig. 116. Frederick Scott Douglas monument,
1947
(Location: division 7)



Fig. 117. Lady Hamilton Gordon chapel with the Douglas monument in the foreground

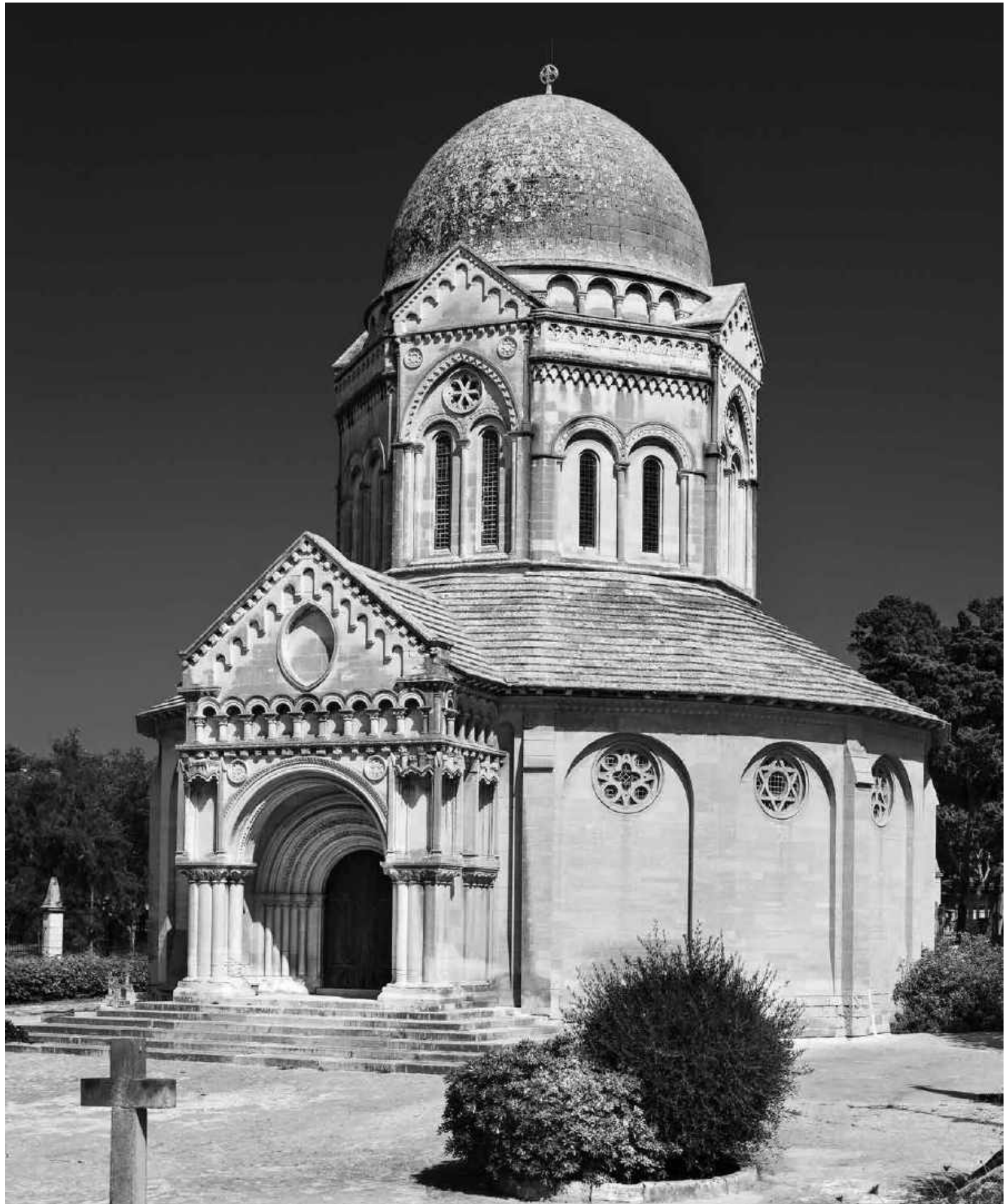


Fig. 118. Lady Hamilton
Gordon chapel,
Ta' Braxia



Fig. 119. Exterior view of Byzantine-style dome, Lady Hamilton Gordon chapel, Ta' Braxia



Fig. 120. Internal view of dome





Fig. 121. Internal view of dome and crossing

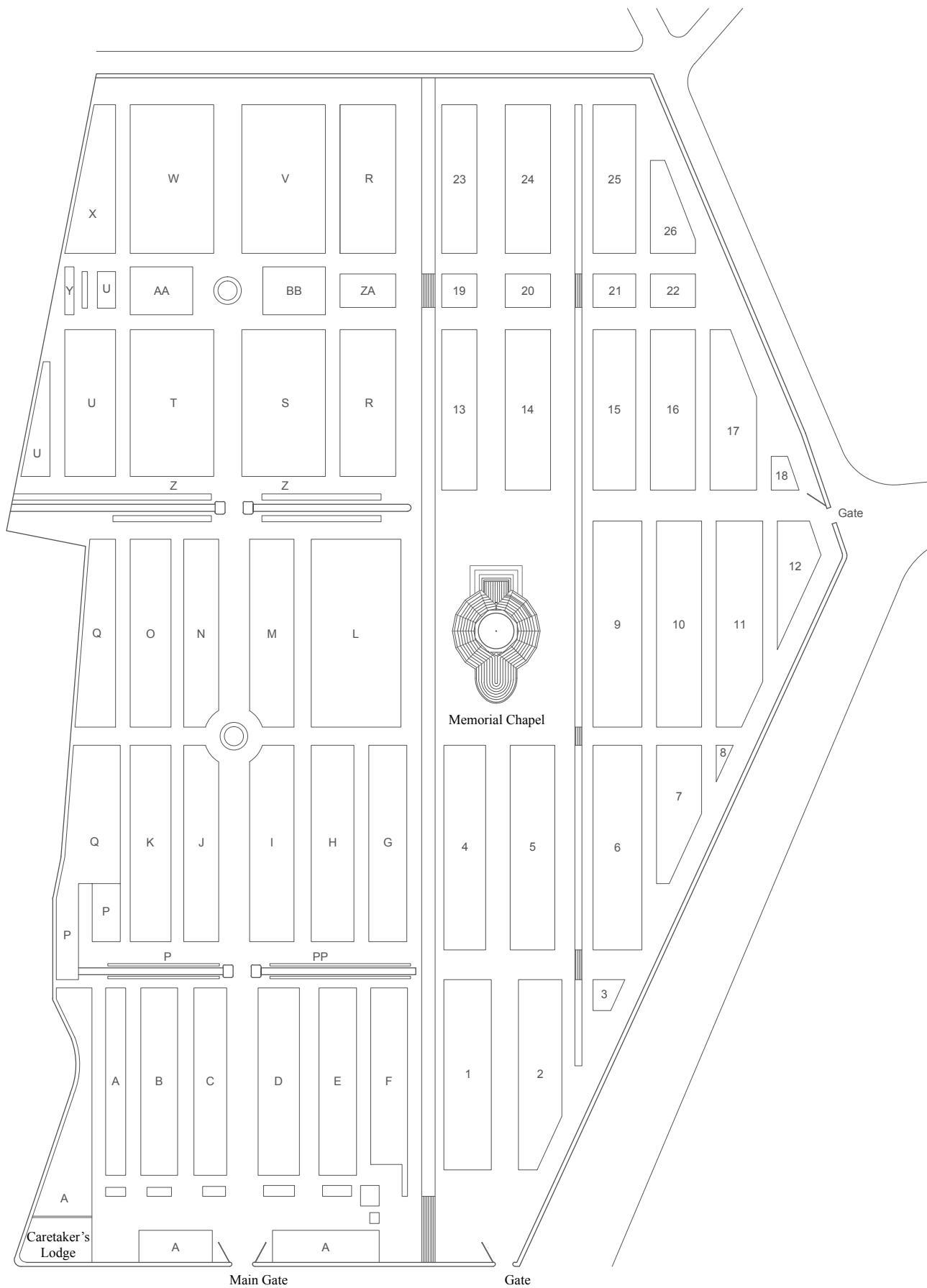


Fig. 122. Vaulting of ambulatory

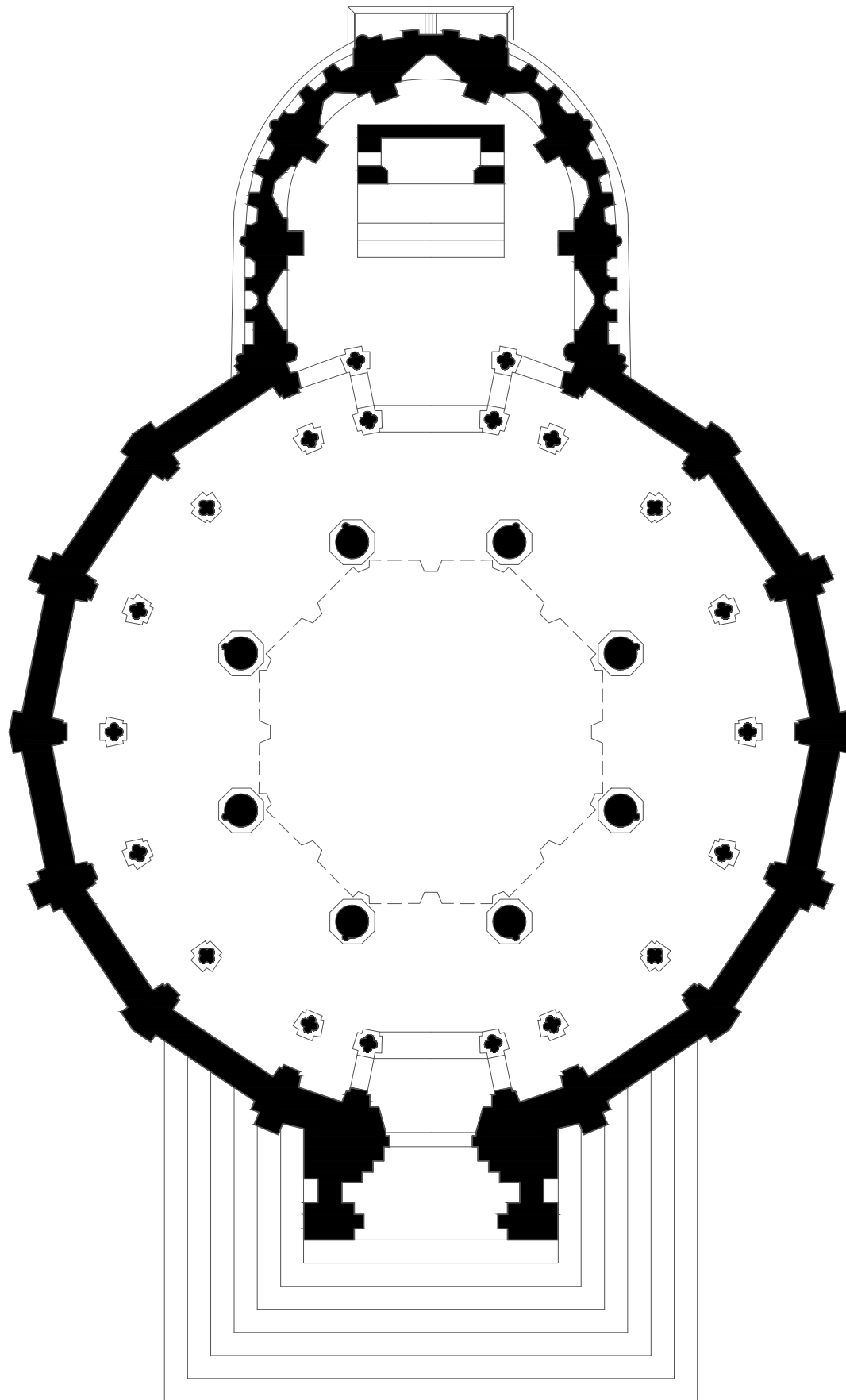


Fig. 123. Vaulting of ambulatory

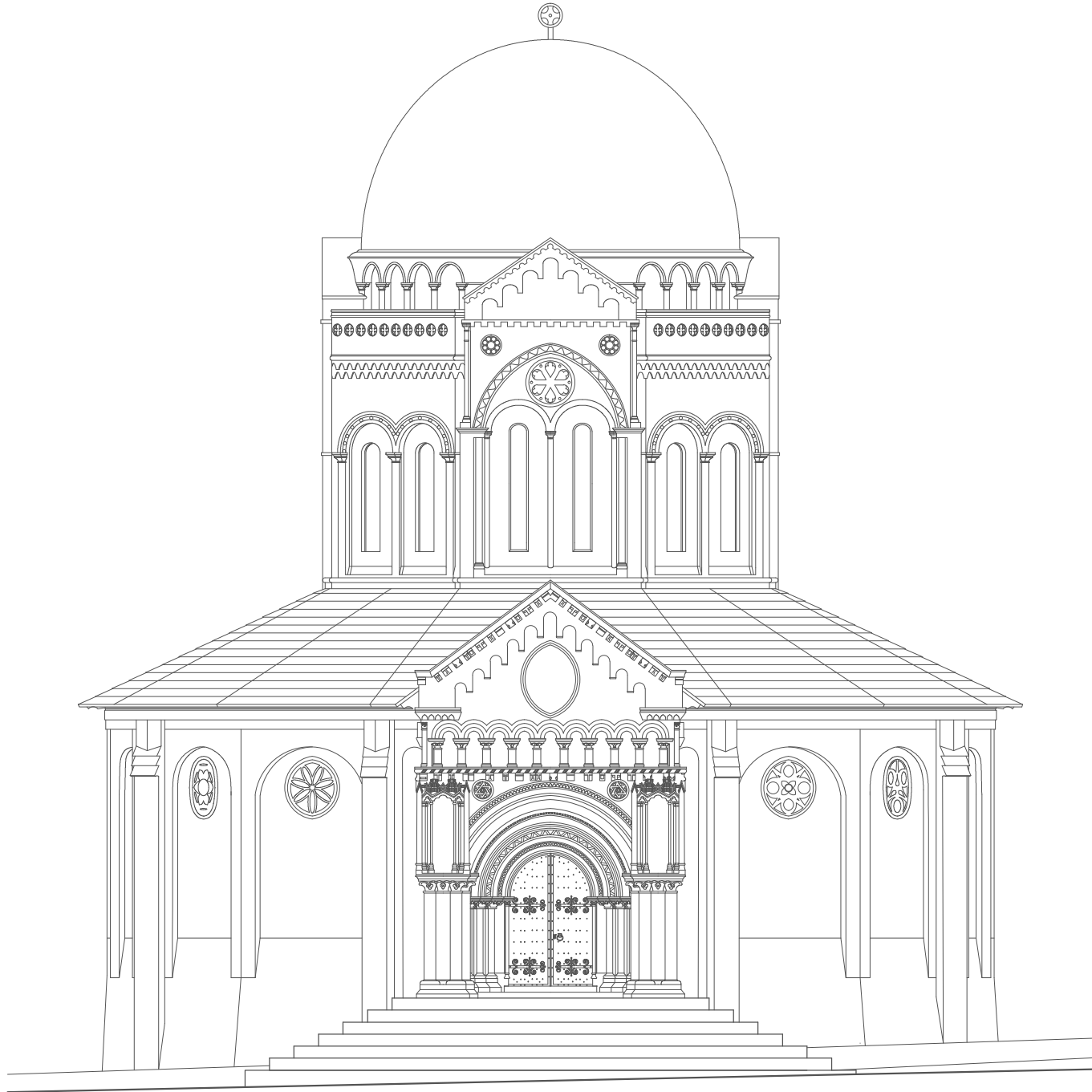
Drawings



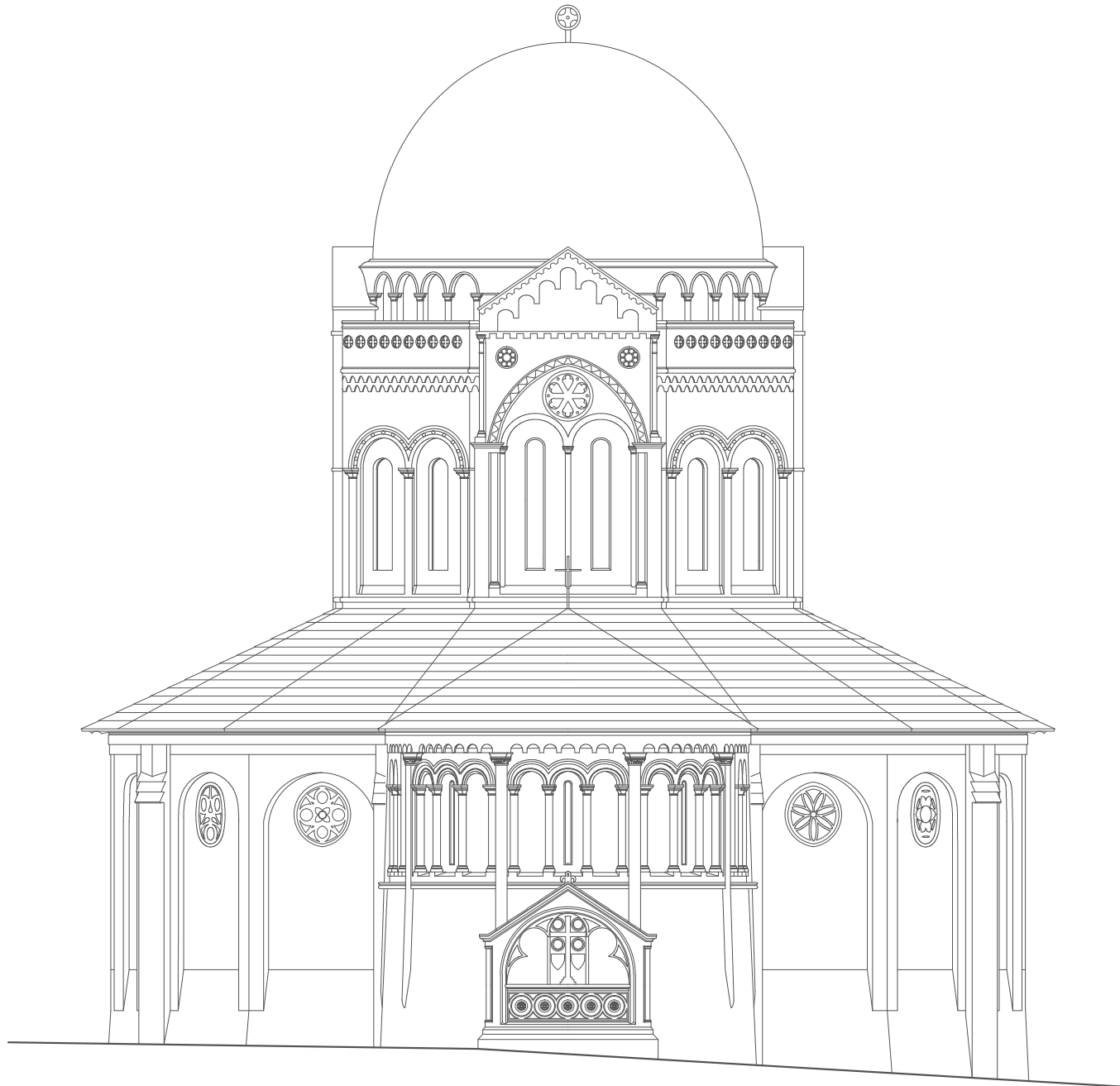
GENERAL PLAN – TA' BRAXIA CEMETERY



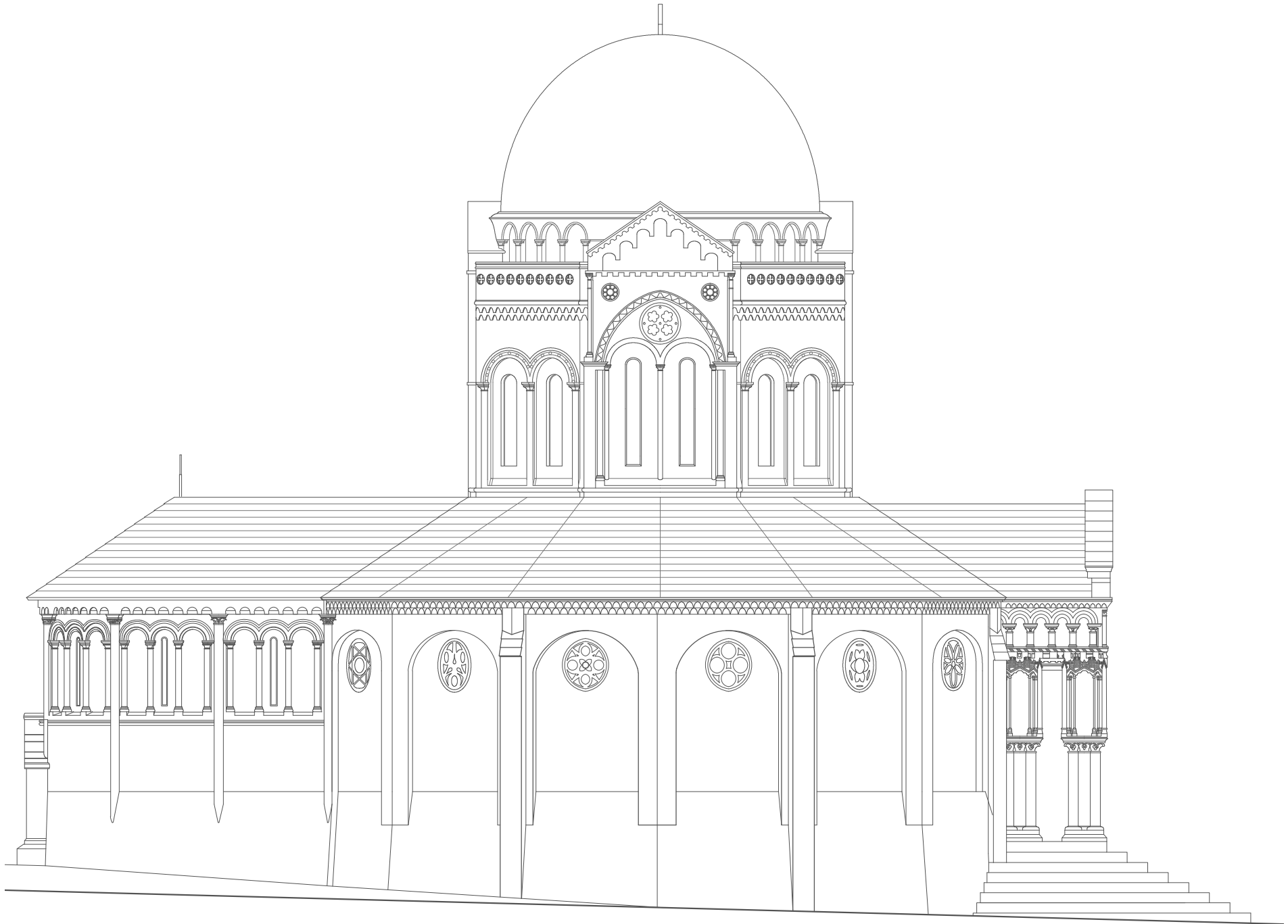
LADY HAMILTON GORDON CHAPEL
PLAN



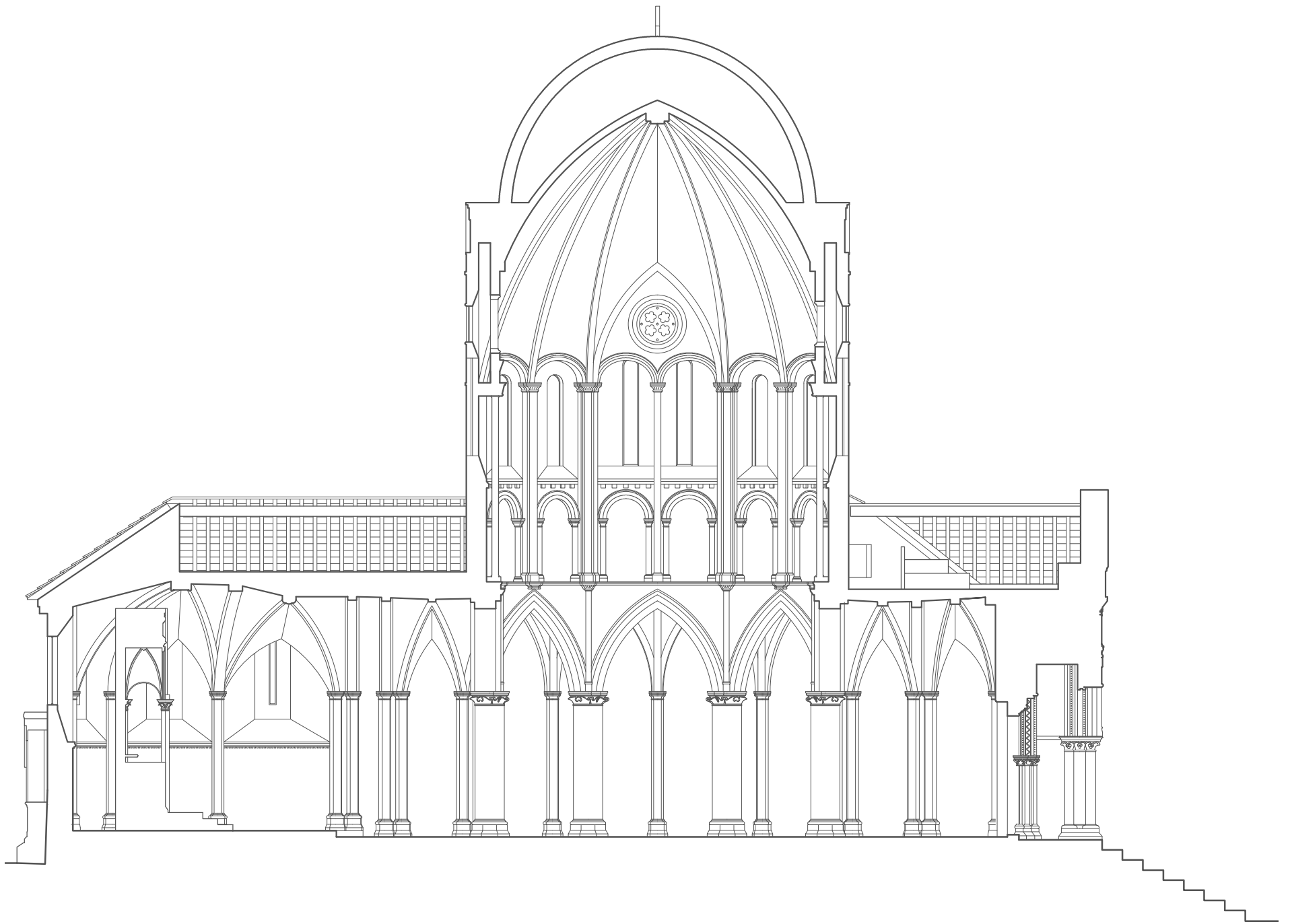
FRONT ELEVATION



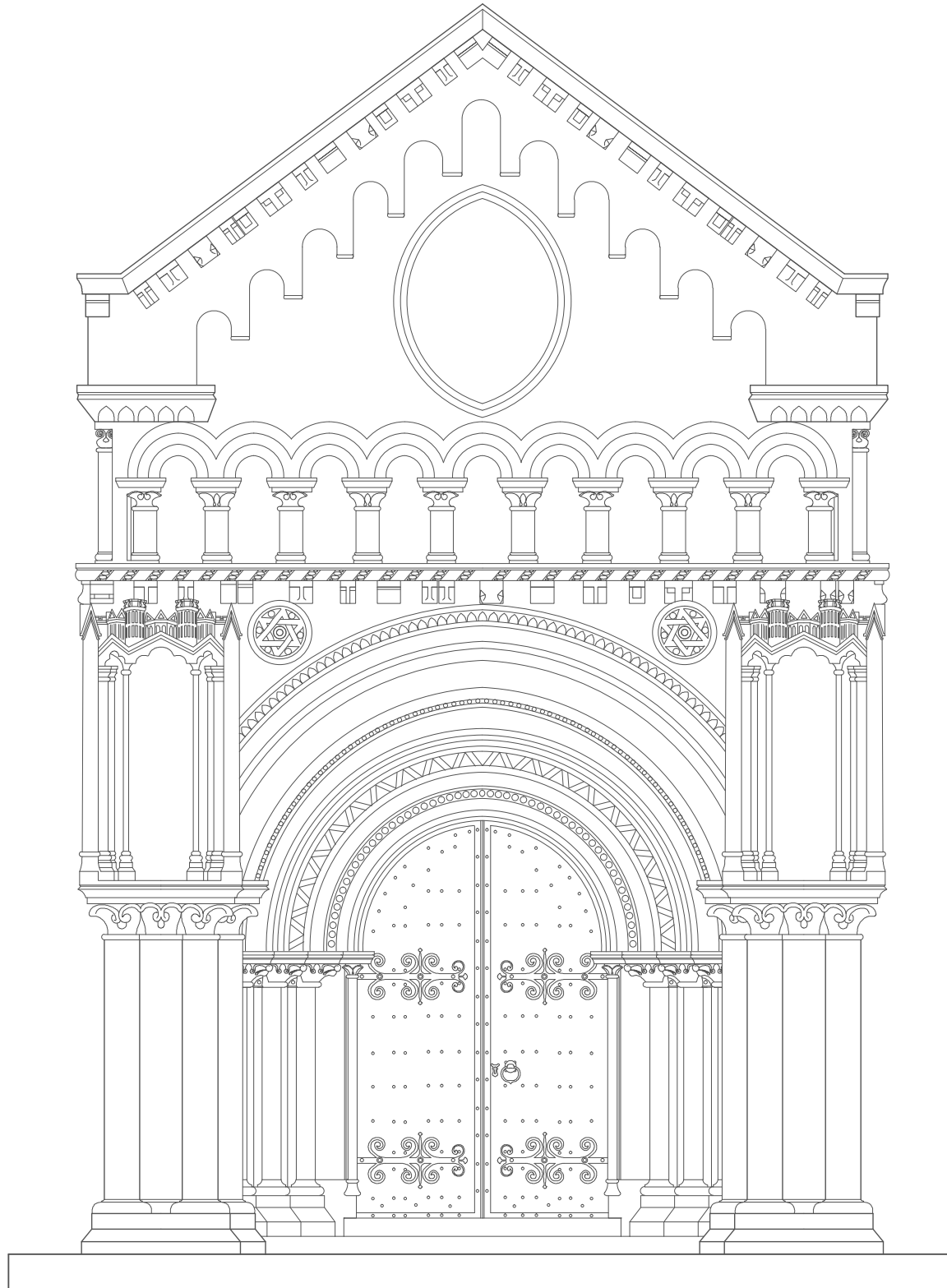
BACK ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION



LONGITUDINAL SECTION



DETAIL OF MAIN ENTRANCE PORTAL

Documents

Letters from Chief Secretary to Government, Henry Lushington to The President of the Committee for the Management of Ta' Braxia Cemetery

The President of the Committee
for the Management of the Cemetery
at Ta' Braxia

May 2, 1855

no. 2778

Sir,

With reference to my letter 2733 of the 17th instant in which I signified to you the pleasure of His Excellency, that you should be ex Officio the President of the Committee for the management of the New Cemetery, have no the honour to state for the information of the Committee, that the Secretary of State has by a Despatch dated 21 March no. 26, sanctioned an appropriation from special services under His Lordship's direction of the sum not exceeding £100 for the formation of a Cemetery at Ta' Braxia for all denominations without distinction of creed.

(signed), H. Lushington
Chief Secretary to Government

National Archives Malta, CSG 04/26, 3 January 1854–31 July 1858, no. 2984, pp. 418–419.

The Chairman of the Committee
for the Management of the Cemetery
at Ta' Braxia,

May 16, 1855

Sir,

In answer to your letter of the 12th instant, I am directed by the Governor to state for the Information of the Committee for the management of the New Cemetery at ta' Braxia, that H.E. is pleased to authorize the expenditure of the Cemetery being carried out under the direction of the Committee subject to the approval of the Governor, the President acting as Accountant but that for reasons already explained H.E. does not think it desirable to propose that the interments of the Military should be commuted by an annual payment on the part of the Military Authorities.

(signed), H. Lushington
Chief Secretary to Government

National Archives Malta, CSG 04/26, 3 January 1854–31 July 1858, no. 2845, p. 450.

The Chairman of the Committee
for the Management of the Cemetery
at Ta' Braxia

June 30, 1855

Sir,

I am directed by the Governor to acquaint you that the Military Authorities will not object to the wall of the Cemetery at Ta' Braxia being built in the manner suggested in the Resolution which accompanied your letter of the 2nd Inst. on the understanding that the wall shall not exceed 15 inches in thickness

2. The original plans have been retained by the Commanding Royal Engineers.

(signed), H. Lushington
Chief Secretary to Government

National Archives Malta, CSG 04/26, 3 January 1854–31 July 1858, no. 2984, p. 500.

Letter from Acting Chief Secretary to Government, P.C. Legh to The Chairman of the Committee of the Ta' Braxia Cemetery

The Chairman of the
Committee of the Ta' Braxia Cemetery

July 7th, 1857

Sir,

I am directed by the Governor to enclose a printed copy of the regulations for the Braxia Cemetery, submitted in your letter of 28th April last, with a few alterations which His Excellency has thought proper to make, and I am to request that the regulations when signed by the Committee may be returned to me for the formal approval of His Excellency.

(signed), P.C. Legh
Acting Chief Secretary to Government

National Archives Malta, CSG 04/28, 3 January 1857–29 April 1858, no. 4791, p. 182.

Letter from Acting Chief Secretary to Government, P.C.Legh to The Chairman of the Committee of the Ta' Braxia Cemetery

The Chairman of the
Committee of the Ta' Braxia Cemetery

July 9th, 1857

Sir,

In answer to your letter of the 8th instant, I am directed by the Governor to transmit herewith, copy of the approved regulations for the Cemetery of Ta' Braxia.

2. The forms can prepared at the Gov[ernment]'s Printing Office on your supplying the requisite quantity of paper for one year's demand.

(signed), P.C. Legh
Acting Chief Secretary to Government

National Archives Malta, CSG 04/28, 3 January 1857–29 April 1858, no. 4793, pp. 182–183.

Regulations for the 'Ta Braxia' Cemetery,
Under Article No. 78 of the Police Code

National Archives Malta, CSG 04/28, 3 January 1857–29 April 1858, no. 4793, pp. 183–186.

Letter from Chief Secretary to Government, Victor Houlton to The Chairman of the Committee of the Ta' Braxia Cemetery

The Chairman of the
Committee of the Ta' Braxia Cemetery

26th November 1857

Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 30th ultimo, I am directed by the Governor to acquaint you that His Excellency has authorized the Cashier to pay the sum of £15 as grant to the Ta' Braxia Cemetery.

(signed), Victor Houlton
Chief Secretary to Government

National Archives Malta, CSG 04/28, 3 January 1857–29 April 1858, no. 5101.

Letters from Chief Secretary to Government, to The Vicar General Can. Filippo Amato

The Very Reverend
Canon Filippo Amato LLD
Vicar General

No. 6365

24 July 1861

Sir,

With reference to Sir Victor Houlton's letter dated the 12th instant, respecting the occupation of some Church property for the alterations necessary to be made in the road called "*Della Croce della Marsa*", I am directed by H.E. the Governor to state, for the information of His Grace and Archbishop Bishop of Malta, that notwithstanding every endeavor to carry out the alterations, without touching the cemetery placed between that road and the *San Giuseppe* road it has been found indispensable to remove the rooms attached to that cemetery and looking towards *Portes de Bombes* and to occupy a portion of the Cemetery adjoining the former road, in the manner shewn in the accompanying plan, in order to avoid the serious inconveniences which might arise from an abrupt turning for carriages coming into that road from Valletta or Floriana.

With a view to obviate that difficulty arrangements are proposed for the purchase of a piece of ground adjoining the Cemetery, on the side of the Giuseppe road, for depositing the remains of human bodies and the earth now existing in the spot proposed to be occupied by the road, and other rooms as convenient as those above alluded to will at the same time be constructed in any part of the cemetery that may be deemed most suitable.

National Archives Malta, CSG 04/33, 25 June 1861–30 April 1862, no. 6365, pp. 75–76.

Local Newspapers

Il Portafoglio Maltese

Original text in Italian

6 Gennaio, 1855

Insisterano anche sulla necessità urgente delle erezione di convenienti cimiteri fuori delle mura della città e dell'abitato; questo non si potrà fare senza spese; e intanto i denari mancano e la cassa si vuota.

Translation in English

6 January 1855

They insist on the urgent need to construct convenient cemeteries outside the city walls and urban fabric; this cannot be done without expense; however, there is a shortage of finance

L'Ordine – Giornale Politico-Religioso

Original text in Italian

9 Novembre 1855

Il Nuovo Cimiterio – Noi abbiamo denunziato la scorsa settimana un fatto assai grave. Trattasi d'innalzare un nuovo cimiterio di nuovo genere in Malta, un cimiterio promiscuo per tutti, i culti indistintamente; fu formato il piano, fu scelto lo spazio, fu nominato un comitato di direzione, son anche intrapresi i lavori; e ciò alla sordina, e al insaputa del publico. Si sta erogando una somma a tale oggetto, senza esser stata votata dal Consiglio; fu scelto il sito senza consultare il voto dei rappresentanti del popolazione.

Il *Malta Times* ci risponde: la somma è erogata dalle 1000 lire che il governatore ha a sua disposizione per *servizj speciali*, e che può applicare da sè sotto la sansione del segretario di stato; che quanto alla scelta dello spazio il governatore ha fatto a meno del voto del consiglio per far presto, e per evitare le lungherie che si son sperimentate quando s'è trattato di scegliere il locale per il nuovo manicomio, che i cimiteri civili e militari sono pieni zeppi, e nuovi luoghi d'inumazione erano necessari.

Translation in English

9 November 1855

The New Cemetery – last week we have criticized a worrisome fact. It relates to the construction of a new cemetery of a new type in Malta, a mixed cemetery for all religious creeds; the plans were drawn up, the site was chosen, a committee was appointed, even works have commenced without public awareness. A sum of money is being assigned without it having been approved by Council; the site was selected without consulting the representatives of the people.

The Malta Times has responded: the sum assigned was of £1000 that the governor has at his disposition from the *special services* fund and that are authorised by secretary to the government; as regards the selection of the site, the governor has done without the vote of the Council to expedite matters and to avoid delays as when the case was to select a site for the new lunatic asylum, that the civil and military cemeteries are all totally full and new burial sites are required.

13th November 1855

We cannot understand why the *Ordine* will persist in finding a cause of offense of the comment now constructing – building up a wall against which to knock his head. Can it be for the purpose of exciting religious animosities? He takes great pains in telling us, that Roman Catholics cannot be buried in this Cemetery. Who said they could or were to be buried there? We may next hear of the Jews, the Schismatic Greeks and the Mahometans crying out that an outrage is being committed because the Government must know that they cannot be buried promiscuously. Would not the *Ordine* be the first to, ridicule such an outcry, and ask “Who intends that you should?”

We cannot discover that the Government have taken any one step which could lead to the belief that the Roman Catholics were to make use of the Cemetery. We have been informed that His Excellency wished it to be a general Cemetery, rather with the view of keeping it under the control of the Government, instead of giving it over to any one denomination; and to avoid the necessity of having to proof separate grounds for Civilians and the Military.

Nothing can be more clearly prove that the Roman Catholics are not intended to participate in this Cemetery, than the composition of the Committee, which consists first, – of the Collector of Land Revenue who is the chairman, *ex officio* this indicates that the Cemetery is Government property and as such must be administered by the Land Revenue Department; next there is the Chaplain of Government to represent the Church of England and then the Senior Chaplain of the Forces for the Military; next the Scotch Minister on the part of the Free Church of Scotland, and generally of all Dissenters from the Church of England; and lastly, there is a civilian to look after the lay interests of the Civil Community.

The *Ordine* may rest assured that no insult was ever intended to the Roman Catholics by this Cemetery. It is evidently a measure taken to meet a pressing necessity on part of the Protestant community and should the *Ordine* return to this question, again we shall have no alternative but to suppose him influenced by sinister motives; motives the scope of which is reserved of “peace and good will amongst men”.

Original text in Italian

23 Novembre 1855

Il Nuovo Cimiterio – e il *Malta Times* ritorna sempre sulla questione dei cimiteri. Questa volta il nostro contemporaneo anglicano parla autorevolmente, e in un tono tale, che pare il *Moniteur* francese, quando dà le sue francese mentite ufficiali. La questione sta nel vedere, chi conosce meglio la verità dei fatti, se noi o il *Times*...

Il questione dei cimiteri non è così nuova in Malta, come generalmente si crede. Ai tempi del governo del Signor O'Ferrall, alcuni fogli locali avevano suggerito la convenienza di edificare decenti cimiteri fuori delle mura della città, ove potessero essere seppelliti i corpi esanimi di uomini di ogni classe della società. Si sperava in tal modo, poter abolire gradatamente il costume di inumare i cadaveri entro le chiese e i luoghi chiusi nell'abitato. Questo è in oggi l'uso da tutti i paesi non solo protestanti, ma anche cattolici, compresa la stessa Roma, ove è assolutamente vietato di dar sepoltura entro i recinti della città – e ciò venne suggerito da ragioni igieniche, siccome è comprovato, che le esalazioni dei corpi in putrefazione è pregiudizievole alla pubblica salute. Soggiungiamo di più che questo era anche l'uso dei primi cristiani, come è comprovati dalla storia.

Venuto Sir W. Reid in Malta, questo governatore aveva portati da Inghilterra, alcune copie del rapporto di un comitato del parlamento, il quale conchiudeva contro l'usanza di seppellire nell'abitato, e suggeriva la spedianza dei cimiteri fuori delle mura. Noi fummo favoriti di una copia del detto rapporto. Sembra che il nuovo capo del governo avesse tentato in allora di promuovere la

Translation in English

23 November 1855

The New Cemetery – and the *Malta Times* refers to the subject of cemeteries. This time our Anglican counterparts talk with authority, as in a similar tone to the French *Moniteur* when it issues its French official statements. The issue lies in establishing who knows better the truth of the matter, us or the *Times*

The issue of the cemeteries is not a new one locally, as is generally believed. During the time of Governor Mr O'Ferrall, some local newspapers had suggested the building of decent cemeteries outside the city walls, where burials can take place of all human of every social class. One had hoped that in this manner, one could gradually eradicate the custom of burying the dead in churches and built-up areas. This is the custom in many places, not only Protestant, but even Catholic, including Rome, where it is absolutely forbidden to have burials within the city walls – and this has been motivated by public sanitation, as it has been proven that contamination of corpses in putrefication is detrimental to public health. May we also add, that this was also the traditional custom dating from the period of the early Christians.

Sir W. Reid as governor to Malta had obtained with him from England, copies of a parliamentary committee report, that concludes against the practice of burials within the urban fabric, and suggests the establishment of cemeteries outside the city walls. We have a copy of the said report. It appears that the new governor,

misura, con domandare il suggerimento di persone competenti nella materia, ma per alcuni ostacoli incontrati, il progetto fu abbandonato. Ecco che oggi alla insaputa di tutti, il governo crea un comitato che agisce nelle tenebre durante le vacanze del Consiglio; senza la partecipazione dell'autorità ecclesiastica per il modo con cui il nuovo cimiterio deve essere eretto, causa il voto del Consiglio, per la scelta del sito più conveniente all'uso, e senza la ingerenza del dipartimento dei lavori-pubblici per la esecuzione dell'opera. Ecco come andarono le cose, per informazione speciale del *Malta Times*...

Possiamo però osservare con sicurezza, in contraddizione a ciò che disse il *Times* che fu sempre idea del governo di costruire un cimiterio non solo per i protestanti civili e militari, ma anche per i cattolici, e ci spiace dire al nostro contemporaneo, che i reverendi sui amici le hanno molto male informato.

Il governo sul soggetto ha battuto un cattivo sentiero. Che necessità vi era in primo luogo di mettere un cimiterio presso l'altro? – Noi non la vediamo. Il governo se avesse udito il parere di persone che meglio di tutto lo potevano informare, cioè rappresentanti della popolazione, e l'ecclesiastica autorità, avrebbe avuto quei suggerimenti che sarebbero più conformi al bisogno, ed ai sentimenti religiosi del pubblico. Avrebbe conosciuto il governo, che un cimiterio cattolico deve essere segregato da qualunque altro, e formante corpo per sé, perocchè altrimenti non potrebbe essere consecrato dai riti religiosi, e l'avversione generale contro le sepolture extra murali non sarebbe superata.

is trying to promote the idea, by asking the suggestions of persons competent in the subject matter, but due to some obstacles that were encountered, the project was abandoned. Herewith, today away from public knowledge, the government appoints a committee that acts during the holiday period of the Council; without the participation of the ecclesiastical authorities as to the type of new cemetery that would be built, without the support of the Council, for the selection of the site and the absence of the public works department in its implementation. This is how in effect things have unfolded for the special attention of the *Malta Times*...

However, we can observe with certainty, in contradiction to what is stated in the *Times* that it was always the idea of the government to construct a cemetery not only for Protestant civilians or army personnel but also for Catholics, and we regret to tell our counterpart, that his reverend friends have been badly misinformed

On this subject the government has set along a bad pathway. What need was there in the first place to place a cemetery next to another one? – We do not see it. Had the government heeded the advice of persons who were well informed, that is the representatives of the people and the ecclesiastical authorities, would have accepted those suggestions that would have conformed with the religious feelings of the public. The government would have realized that a Catholic Cemetery has to be segregated from any other, and have its own form as otherwise it would not be possible to consecrate it with the religious rites and the general resistance towards extra-mural burials would not be overcome.

27th November 1855

The *Ordine* of Friday last returns to the question of the Cemetery, to which we have been led to allude in several of our later numbers.

We fully believe that the assertion of our contemporary that Sir William Reid in the early part of his administration, did project an external mural cemetery. We also believe that he met with great obstacles in the way of religious prejudices and that he abandoned as the *Ordine* asserts. Thus far the *Ordine* is undoubtedly correct, but from the point whence he undertakes for our special information to show that course of events he commences to flounder into a quagmire of prejudices and incorrect assertions. Believing that we are equally well informed with the *Ordine*, we will merely state that after abandoning the plan of a cemetery, we know that His Excellency projected Cemeteries for the Roman Catholics alone, that he sought the advice of the clergy, that a plan was formed embracing all requirements enumerated by the *Ordine* and that an estimate of the cost was made. Here our information ceased as to positive facts; we believe that this plan is in abeyance and that it was retarded by the illness or by the inert opposition of the late Collector of Land Revenue; we mean Sir V. Casolani, then whom no man knew better how to impede a project to which he was averse, whilst he made it appear that he was zealously carrying out the design. The long illness of Sir Vincent and the interregnum in the Land Revenue Department have been probable causes of no ultimate steps being taken with regard to the purely Roman Catholic cemeteries, but we believe the plan is only deferred not abandoned and that the Council will have to give their advice, and vote the necessary funds for the undertaking.

Whilst for the causes above mentioned the Roman Catholic cemeteries were not undertaken, a demand was made upon Government both by the Protestant Chaplain to Government and by the Military authorities for new burial grounds. The demand was urgent and could not be refused. It was upon this requisition made in April last for fresh burial-grounds that the present Committee was formed that an application was made to the Secretary of State for £100 (not £1000) to be assigned for this purpose and that the work was commenced under the direction of the Committee. The fact is the new Cemetery is essentially a Protestant burial-ground, but instead of being under the jurisdiction of any ecclesiastical authority it is retained under the control of the Government, obviating thereby all the sectarian disputes and ensuring a salutary supervision with the view to public health. This view of the case refutes the accusation of an offence of religion and explains why the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical authority was not consulted. But the *Ordine* has two other counts of indictment, namely for confiding supervision of the work to the committee to the exclusion of the Public Works Department and for not taking advice of the Council.

We will say a few words on each. The position in which the Superintendent of Public Works has brought himself, probably caused by the majority of the Committee to decline having any personal communication with him* to avoid which they undertook a charge which involved considerable trouble. It was not for the Government to solicit gentlemen to assume duties and then to render those duties disagreeable. We cannot see that the Governor could well have pursued any other course especially knowing that the public interest would not suffer hereby.

On the council question, our opinion is that the *Ordine* is much too exacting; he would reduce the Governor to be a mere tool of the Council and deprive him of every independent executive faculty. Her Majesty, in granting her Maltese subjects a voice in the administration of their own affairs, never intended her delegates should become a mere cipher. Such presumption would be purely ridiculous did it not envision a grasping after domination, which must render the Imperial Government cautious in extending privileges to people so ready to abuse them. We cannot but think that it would be wiser in the *Ordine* to be less exacting and less domineering.

While on this subject we must be allowed to say that there exists on the part of some of our local contemporaries a growing propensity to treat subjects in a cautious and party spirit and among the comments recently addressed to ourselves we can trace evidences of a desire to make the press a vehicle of discussions which we consider entirely besides the limits of its proper and legitimate sphere. We shall at all times be among the foremost to advocate the right as we believe in the advantages of free and full discussion; but we must remember there is a point at which liberty degenerates into licentiousness and the newspaper loses its dignity and usefulness. The proper objection of the journalist should be to disseminate information in an honest, truthful and charitable spirit. It cannot be its purpose to sow the seed of dissension or awaken a bitterness of party much less of religious differences. Our lot has been cast in a narrow field. It unfortunately happens there exists amongst a variety of views and opinions. We are thrown by necessity much together, and our happiness is therefore more dependent on the existence of a correct social tone. Our object then should be to aim rather at raising our value as organs of public intelligence by the exhibition of our example among ourselves of general forbearance, than purchase a partisan popularity by lending ourselves to the prepossessions and objects of party whatever may be its nature. We hope we can estimate good-natured criticism at its proper value. We doubtless oftentimes lay ourselves open to legitimate censure. We have no wish to avoid discussion, when it may lead to any beneficial result, but we emphatically object to that reckless tone assumed by the *Ordine* which defeats its object of arriving at a proper understanding of the points in question.

Our contemporary the *Ordine* allows himself however to exceed the common bounds of propriety and border upon asperity in speaking of the erection of a military chapel for the use of troops in the garrison. Upon the right of Protestants to erect places of public worship in a British possession, we will not enter not attempt to persuade the *Ordine* that such right cannot be contended. It is unfortunate that upon such subjects there is no hope of advancing any arguments however mildly without provoking our contemporary to an assertion almost to the exclusion of the exercise of public worship by any other denomination of Christians than that of which is the worship in Malta, we are not likely to bring the *Ordine* to our sense of public right and therefore we will not waste further words on the matter.

*To show that the Members of the Committee were not singularly fastidious in the sentiment, we may state that the majority of the Members of the Garrison Library were unwilling to associate with Mr Arrowsmith and upon an intimation to this effect being made to him, he thought proper to withdraw his name.

Original text in Italian

16 Ottobre 1857

Cimiteri – Due anni addietro, noi avevamo rivelato a publico, che il governo aveva il progetto di edificare fuori Porta Bombe un cimitero promiscuo per i culti indistintamente. Avevamo attaccato lo stesso governo, per aver risoluto la esecuzione di un piano di tanta importanza senza consultare il Consiglio, er avere speso una frazione dei pubblici denari senza domandare l'assenso di aclunio nell'isola, ed avvertiamo a tempo vergine che qualunque progetto di simile natura era sbagliato perchè opposto di canoni della chiesa ed ai sentimenti della popolazione. Il governo fece il sordo alle nostre parole, il cimtero fu costruito ed ultimamente venne solennemente benedetto dal vescovo protestant di Gibilterra il Dr Tomlinson. Pochi giorni dopo il governo pubblicò una notificazione annunziante la nomina di un comitato composto di tre reverendi protestanti e di due impiegati civili. Si direbbe naturalmente che non tratterebbesi di altrochedi un cimitero protestante, visto il modo con cui è composto il comitato, e la precedente benedizione del vescovo anglicano. Ma no: la notificazione con chiude come segue:

Il cimiterio è destinato a seppellimento dei cadaveri d'individui appartenenti a qualsiasi credenza religiosa.

In breve il governo pretende creare un cimitero promiscuo e commune, sotto la direzione e la Sopraintendenza della comunità protestante.

... La via seguita in questa occasione del governo è quella stessa che farà allontanare la popolzaione dell'isola dal parteggiare per

Translation in English

16 October 1857

Cemeteries – two years ago we had brought to public attention that government had a project to build a cemetery for all creeds on land just outside Porte des Bombes. We had criticised the same government, for having pursued such an important project without having consulted the Council, and for having spent public money without seeking the consent of any one of us, and we had warned some time ago that such a project was ill-advised as it ran counter to the canon of the church and the sentiments of the population. Government did not take into account our views, the cemetery was constructed and was consecrated by the Protestant Bishop of Gibraltar, Dr Tomlinson. A few days after, government published a notice announcing the appointment of a committee composed of three Protesant ministers and two civil servants. One can surmise that it is nothing less than a Protestant cemetery, given the manner by which the committee was composed and its formal consecration by the Anglican bishop. But no, the official announcement states as follows:

The cemetery is open for the internment of all the deceased irrespective of their faith.

In brief the government created a multi-faith cemetery, under the administration and supervision of a Protestant community.

... The strategy followed in this case by government is one that will alienate the population of this island and render them

la desiderata e da noi sempre sostenuta misura
della inumazione in decenti cimiteri fuori
dell'abitato.

cynical to the need, always supported by us,
that is of providing decent extra-mural
cemeteries.

Il Portafoglio Maltese

Original text in Italian

Translation in English

10 Ottobre 1857

10th October 1857

Notificazione di Governo
Sua eccellenza il governatore si è
compiacuto di nominare i seguenti
individui a formare il comitato di
direzione del cimitero ta' Braxia

Government Notice
His Excellency the Governor
is pleased to appoint the
following individuals to the committee
for the management of ta' Braxia Cemetery

L'Onorabile G. Montanro, esq. – *Presidente*
L'Onorabile J.B.H. Collings, esq.
Il reverendo John Cleugh
Il reverendo H. Hare
Il reverendo G. Wisely

The Hon. G. Montanaro, Chairman
The Hon. J.B.H Collings, esq.
Rev. John Cleugh
Rev. H. Hare
Rev. G. Wisely

Il cimitero e destinato al seppellimento dei
cadaveri d'individui appartenenti a qualsiasi
credenza religiosa.

The cemetery is intended for the
purpose of internment of individuals
of all religious creeds.

Copie dei regolamenti si possono ottonere
ricorendo al comitato.

Copies of the regulations may be obtained
on application to the committee.

Per commando
La Valetta dal palazzo

By command
Valletta, Governor's palace

Victor Houlton

Victor Houlton

9 Ottobre, 1857

9th October 1857

Original text in Italian

17 Ottobre, 1857

Sono ormai molto anni , da che chi governava la passata amministrazione del Sig. O'Ferrall che noi fummo i primi a suggerire qualche spediente, onde far prevadere nel nostro paese la misura del sepellimento dei cadaveri fuori le mura, e fuori dei recinti dell'abitato. La base da cui partiva il nostro suggerimento era di crattere puramente igienico; essa veniva appoggiata dalla storia di tutti i paesi, e convalidata dalla testimonianza dei più illuminati cultori della scienza salutare. Sapevamo che una innovazione di tanta importanza non poteva introdursi tutto d'un tratto, ma a grado a grado, perocchè bisognava urtare molti pregiudizj popolari, bisognava rimouere qualunque sinistro sospetto dalla mente di color che non avevano presente dinanzi agli occhi che cosa fosse un decente cimitero, bisognava conquistare a favore della nuova misura l'opinione del clero, e bisognava finalmente conciliare ciò che è dovuto alla chiesa ed alle convinzioni religiose del popolo, con ciò che interessa lo stato sanitario del paese, e le attribuzioni del governo come custode della pubblica salute. A meno di tutte queste condizioni, pareva e pare sempre a noi impossibile di giungere a quel risultamento, a cui dopo tante lotte sono pervenuti gli stati più illuminati e le nazioni più incivilite del continente europeo.

Non ci occorre anzi tutto ripetere ciò che dicemmo altre volte, che l'aria già malsana delle popolati città, per l'altezza delle abitazioni, il difetto di libera ventilazione, e la convivenza di molto migliaia di persone entro spazi ristretti e chiusi da fortificazioni, non aveva bisogno di essere resa più insalubre ancora per i miasmi pestiferi che

Translation in English

17 October, 1857

It is now several years, since the the past administration of Mr O'Ferrall, that we were the first to suggest, the introduction in our country of regulations pertaining to the burial of the dead outside the city walls and the residential areas. The rationale behind our recommendation was on sanitary grounds; it was historically endorsed by all countries and supported by the most eminent personalities in public health. We knew that the introduction of such an important measure could not be introduced immediately, but gradually, because it would arise popular prejudices, it is necessary to dispel any unfounded suspicions to those who do not know what a decent cemetery is about, it is necessary to garner support of the clergy in endorsing the idea and finally to reconcile those matters relating to the church and the religious convictions of the people with interest of the public health of the country, and the government as the custodian of public health. Unless one observed these obligations it appears that it would be impossible to attain such a state which after various disputes, the more enlightened and civilized countries have managed to attain.

One does not need to repeat what has been been stated in the past, that the unhealthy air of the densely populated towns, due to the height of the buildings, the lack of natural ventilation and the concentration of several thousands of persons in restricted spaces enclosed by fortifications, one should not

esalano dai cadaveri. Ogni corpo in putrefazione tramanda un gaz micidiale che ammorba necessariamente la salute delle persone viventi, gaz che tende e trapassa a per le tombe meglio chiuse e suggellate, come di leggieri si può osservare di notte tempo nei cimeteri aperti.

Maggiore è poi il pregiudizio che la salute pubblica soffre dalle sepolture che use sotto le volte di templi sotterranei, frequentati da grande numero di persone, perocchè la per difetto di continua ed aperta ventilazione le esalazioni dei cadaveri entro l'ambiente del tempio si confondono coi respiri delle persone viventi. Nella prevalenza delle epidemie si ebbe campo di sperimentare la perniciosa influenza che il sistema del seppellimento entro l'abitato e nei luoghi chiusi esercitata sulla disposizione del morbo a prender piede ed a propagarsi.

Questa verità fu sentita in tutti i paesi ove si volle da senno prestar ascolto ai suggerimenti igienici, ed ove si fu disposti a sacrificare le popolari predilezioni ed il buttoa vecchie ed inveterate abitudini al vero interesse pubblico. Noi ci troviamo ancora sul proposito nello stesso Stato in cui era l'Europa un secolo addietro. Allora, il sistema di seppellire nelle città ed entro le chiesa era generale; si teneva come un degradamento il far riposare le ceneri di un parente o di un amico in un cimitero fuori della città. Si aggiungeva a tutto questo il pregiudizio religioso, non ostante che la chiesa reputasse sempre i cimiteri come luoghi sacri, e li benedicesse con solenne rito. Le anime pie credevano in buona fede che sepolto un cadavere in un cimitero lo spirito del defunto non godesse di quella pienezza di suffragj, a cui sarebbero tributati quando il corpo fosse sepolto in chiesa. Questi non erano che pregiudizj, benchè in quei tempi non si osavano chiamare con questo nome.

make the lack of public hygiene even worse. Every corpse in a state of decomposition emits a deadly gas which makes a living person sick, gases that manage to pass through the unsealed joints of the tombs, as one can observe at night in certain open cemeteries.

Even more so due to prejudice that public health suffers from the burials within the underground vaults of the church, attended by a large number of persons, with the danger of the inhalation of toxic gases emanating from the corpses in the church which mix with the respiration of the living. In most plague outbreaks one of causes is the adverse effect that burials within residential areas and closed spaces, have in the transmission of the disease and how it propagates itself.

This truth was recognized in all countries, they were willing to respond to suggestions regarding hygiene; and to redevelop dense residential quarters and demolish old and inadequate structures in the public interest. We find ourselves in the same situation that Europe was a century ago. Then, the practice of burials in the city and within the church was widespread; it was like a dishonour to have the remains of a relative or a friend interred in a cemetery outside the city. To all of this one can add the religious prejudice, that even though the church considers cemeteries as sacred spaces and that are consecrated with solemn rites. The pious belief in good faith that once the corpse is buried in a cemetery, the soul of the deceased does not enjoy the full extent of redemption, as when the body has been buried in the church. These were nothing else but superstitions, even though in those times, they would not dare to refer to them as such.

A selection of biographical profiles of persons buried at Ta' Braxia Cemetery

The list is not a comprehensive inventory of all those buried at Ta' Braxia but only a limited representative selection intended to highlight the rich diversity of personalities there. These include British nationals serving in the Royal Navy and British Army, clergymen, merchant seamen, British residents in Malta, members of Masonic Lodges in Malta, travellers, etc. Although the majority of those buried at Ta' Braxia were British, there were other nationalities including Americans, Greeks professing the Greek Orthodox faith, Russians who settled in Malta in the aftermath of the Russian revolution of 1917, other European nationals, and even a few Maltese citizens.

One of the main sources for the compilation of this list is Alan Keighley's *Ta' Braxia Cemetery – A Visitor's Guide* (Malta, 2010). Keighley estimates that, since the cemetery opened in 1857 until 2010, there were 4,550 burials. Another very comprehensive source is the online 'Malta Family History' – Ta' Braxia Cemetery which provides a list of all burials in the cemetery from 1857 to 2000. Refer to website. lineone.net/~stephaniebidmead/tabraxia.htm

British nationals

Henry Mayo Bateman (1887–1970)

Born in Sutton Forrest, New South Wales, Australia of English parents. He studied at the Westminster School of Art and Goldsmiths College. By the 1930s, he had established himself as one of England's leading cartoonists. His cartoons were published in leading magazines such as *The Tatler*, *The Strand*, and *Punch*. He retired to Gozo and indulged in his passion for painting watercolours of local landscapes. He died in Gozo on 14 February 1970, aged 83 years.

Frederick Blackley (1812-1887)

Born in Canterbury, Kent on 4 April 1812. Around 1840 he opened a baker's and confectioner's shop

at 21, Kingsway, Valletta which outlet became very popular. In 1907, he constructed a new and large bakery in Pietà. The confectionary business expanded and became very successful. He died on 29 December 1887, aged 75 years.

Lady Fanny Janet Blunt (1839–1926)

Born in Constantinople in 1839 and grew in the Middle East. She married John Blunt then vice-consul at Uskab, Albania. The Blunts retired to Malta in 1902 and were active in social circles. She died in her Floriana residence aged 87 years and was buried on 25 May 1926.

Sir John Elijah Blunt (1831–1916)

Born in Adrianople, the son of Charles Blunt. From 1850 he worked in the consular service, mainly in the Mediterranean region. During the Crimean War, he was secretary to Lord Lucan. He was present at the battles of the Alma, Balaklava, and Inkerman, and was awarded the Crimean Medal. After the war, he held numerous diplomatic posts representing HM Government in Turkey, Greece, and Bulgaria; for short terms he also served as the consul for France, Germany, and Belgium in Greece and Turkey. His last official post was in Boston from 1899 to 1902. He was buried on 19 June 1916, aged 86 years.

Robert John Chalmers (1939–1958)

Born in Malta, the son of Dr William Ian Chalmers and his wife Margaret. Educated in Malta and Scotland. In June 1958, he volunteered to do his national service in Scotland and joined the Black Watch Regiment. On 22 October 1958 he boarded a flight to Naples en route to Malta. Whilst over the town of Nettuno, the Viscount Aircraft was hit by an Italian fighter jet and crashed, killing all aboard. He was buried with full military honours on 29 October 1958.

William Ian Chalmers (1912-1959)

Born in Malta. Doctor. Buried on 14 January 1959, aged 47 years.

Alfred James Christian (1858–1909)

Born in Southsea, on 13 May 1858. A banker by profession. Close relatives of the Christian family also to be found in the Msida Bastion Cemetery. Died on 30 March 1909, aged 50 years.

Reverend John Cleugh (1792–1881)

Born in London in 1793, the son of John Cleugh, a merchant. He studied at Cambridge University at Caius then Trinity Hall. Following his ordination in London on 25 May 1823, he was appointed chaplain to the government in Malta. During this time services were held in an improvised chapel within the Governor's Palace in Valletta. After the completion and consecration of St Paul's Pro-Cathedral in November 1844, he continued serving the local Anglican community until his retirement in 1877. In 1839, he married Elizabeth Frances Bayley and they resided in Archbishop Street, Valletta. He died on 25 March 1881, aged 89 years. His widow continued to live in Malta until her death on 27 December 1905, aged 90 years. Rev. Cleugh's monument was damaged by blast from enemy bombs.

Thomas Coakley (1837–1857)

Lieutenant and adjutant, the 21st Fusiliers who died in Malta on 30 October 1857, aged 20 years and 6 months. He served at the siege and capture of Sevastopol and in the expedition to Kinburn. His grave was restored by his sister Mary Rebecca Fox, in April 1893. His is the first burial recorded to have taken place at Ta' Braxia.

Patrick John Curran (1866–1891)

A colour sergeant with the 2nd Battalion the Connaught Rangers. He died on 11 December 1891, aged 25 years. He was survived by his widow Georgina née Quinn.

Patrick Grant (1862–1867)

Born 27 January 1862, the youngest son of the British Governor, Sir Patrick Grant. He died 11 September 1867, aged 5 years 8 months.

Captain Andrew Moynihan, VC (1831–1867)

Born in Wakefield on 8 September 1831. After leaving school, he worked in two textile mills before joining the Army. He was commissioned into the 8th (The King's) Regiment in 1857, and became captain in 1863, when he transferred to Malta together with his wife and two daughters. He was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest gallantry honour that can be awarded to any member of the British Army, for rescuing an injured officer in open grounds and under heavy enemy fire during the attack on Redan on 18 June 1855. He died on 19 May 1867, aged 37, from undulant Malta fever after drinking unpasteurized goat's milk.

His son, Berkeley George Andrew, was born 2 October 1865 while the family was living at St George's Bay. He later became an eminent medical specialist and served for some time as the president of the Royal College of Surgeons. He was later appointed Lord Moynihan of Leeds.

John L. Gordon Paterson (1887–1905)

A midshipman serving on board *HMS Bacchante*, he died from typhoid fever on 20 January 1905, aged 18 years 6 months. The marble gravestone is distinguished for its sculptural representations of Admiralty uniform ranging from naval officer's hat, ceremonial sword in scabbard, and belt with fasteners, all displayed on drapery with creases and folds.

Alfred Perham (1840–1879)

Master of the Union of Malta Lodge No. 407. A hotel proprietor, he died on 6 October 1879, aged 39. His monument was commissioned by the brethren of the Masonic lodges 407 E.C and 387 I.C.

Bridgeford M. Pirie, FRIBA (1876–1941)

Born in Aberdeen on 28 June 1876, architect and son of the eminent Scottish architect John Bridgeford Pirie. He left Aberdeen around 1905 and joined the Royal Engineers in Malta. He designed his own residence at 81, Guardamangia Hill, Pietà; Connaught House, Floriana; the King George V Merchant Seamen's Memorial Hospital in Floriana; and St Oswald military chapel in Mtarfa. In 1925 he was elected Fellow of the

Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). He died on 24 May 1941, aged 64 years.

Richard Cornwall Legh (1819–1875)

Auditor General. Died on 10 January 1876, aged 56 years.

Colonel Marmaduke Ramsay (1837–1893)

Born in Bolougne, France on 10 March 1837, son of Sir Alexander Ramsay and his wife Elizabeth nee Maule. He joined the Indian Army and served in the Bengal Staff Corps. During his stay in India he married Anna Maria Innes on 14 April 1858. He arrived in Malta in 1886 from India where he served as the District Grand Master for the Punjab. He was installed as District Grand Master in Malta on 8 February 1888. He died on 23 January 1893, aged 55 years.

Simon Rose (1798–1879)

A leading Scottish merchant and a long-time resident of Malta. A benefactor of St Andrew's Scots church, Valletta. He died on 2 March 1879, aged 81 years.

Right Reverend George Tomlinson (1794–1863)

He was appointed the first bishop of Gibraltar when the Holy Trinity Church was bestowed cathedral status on 6 November 1842. He was educated at St John's College, Cambridge where he obtained his first degree in 1823 and a master's degree in 1826. On 21 November 1848, he married Louisa Stuart, daughter of Sir Patrick Stuart, a former governor of Malta. She died in 1850 and he remarried Eleanor Jane Fraser a few years later. Tomlinson was an amateur Egyptologist and made several visits to Egypt. He died on 6 February 1863, aged 68 years.

Ethel Tressider (1880–1881)

Born in Malta. Daughter of Lieutenant Tressider, Royal Engineers, died on 30 August 1881, aged 9 months.

Gertrude Amy Tressider (1873–1879)

Born in Malta. Daughter of Lieutenant Tressider, Royal Engineers, died on 29 November 1879, aged 4 years 6 months.

Rosina Tressider (1879–1879)

Born in Malta. Daughter of Lieutenant Tressider, Royal Engineers, died 17 October 1879, aged 10 months.

Henry Twelves (1858–1931)

An established wine and spirit merchant, he died on 13 December 1931, aged 73 years. His wife, Annie Sophie Twelves, died on 17 February 1933, aged 74 years.

Jessie Tod Wisely (1827–1910)

The wife of Rev. George Wisely, D.D., a Scottish minister who arrived in Malta in 1854 and who served as Presbyterian chaplain until 1896. He was also a prominent member of the Cemetery Committee, first on the Committee of the old Msida cemetery and, after 1856, on that of Ta' Braxia Cemetery. The couple lived in Malta for 55 years during which time they raised a family of four boys. Wisely's greatest achievement was the financing and constructing St Andrew's Scots Church in Valletta, designed by Giuseppe Bonavia and completed in 1857.

Jessie Wisely died in Malta on 28 January 1910, aged 83 years. After his wife's death, Wisely moved back to England where he died at Orpington, Kent in May 1917, aged 91 years. He was buried at Kirkyard of St Machar's cathedral, Aberdeen. Although he is not buried at Ta' Braxia, the Cemetery Management Committee commemorated his memory with a tablet on the east wall. The plaque was severely damaged during the Second World War.

Persons professing the Greek Orthodox faith

George M. Colombos (1885–1956)

A manufacturer of cigarette and tobacco merchant, he died on 4 August 1956, aged 71 years.

Costantino Colombos (1889–1958)

Younger brother of the above and affectionately known as *il-Pike*, a well-known personality in Valletta. He died on 18 December 1958, aged 69 years, and is buried in the same grave as his brother.

Irene Colombos (1887–1960)

Sister of the above-mentioned George and Costantino. She died on 11 February 1960 and was survived by her sisters Maria, Angelica, and Euterpe, and her niece Cynthia, wife of Lt. Comm. Smith.

John Dacoutros (1870–1955)

A wine merchant of Greek nationality who settled in Malta, he died at his residence in Valletta on 3 October 1955, aged 85 years. He was survived by his sons, Peter, Anthony, and George; his daughters, Maggie, Mary, Marcezina, wife of Dr Giovanni Felice, and Lilly Borg Costanzi; his grandchildren and other relatives in Malta and Greece.

Paul Iatroudakis (1854–1935)

One of the earliest and most respected members of the Greek community in Malta, he died on 16 August 1935, aged 81 years. He was survived by his widow and two sons, Emanuel Iatroudakis, consul for Greece in Malta, and George Iatroudakis, resident in Athens.

Helen Iatroudakis (1910-1930)

Daughter of the above-mentioned Paul Iatroudakis. She died, aged 20 years, in Attard on 13 December 1930 and was survived by her parents and her two brothers.

Rev. Christostomos Kanakis (1874–1923)

Born in Constantinople. Archbishop. He died 12 May 1923, aged 49 years.

Rev. Ananias Kardamakias (1887–1929)

Born in Crete, he served on the Salonika front as chaplain to the Second Greek Army Division during the First World War; he also served as chaplain of the Greek Orthodox Church in Malta. He died on 23 March 1929, aged 42 years, in Blye's hospital, Paola.

Giovanni di Nicolò Papaffy (1792-1886)

A Greek merchant and philanthropist. Born in Salonika. In 1810, he settled in Malta together with his parents. Fluent in English and Italian, he served as a broker to the local colonial government in the importation of wheat and accumulated considerable wealth. He

was appointed purveyor of the British Army during the Crimean War with the responsibility of procuring supplies to the troops, although by 1840 he had retired from business. During the later years of his life, he resided in a large house known as the Point de Vue, Rabat and later at No. 94, Via Boschetto, Rabat where he died on 16 February 1886, aged 94 years.

Eustratio Petrococchino (1809–1892)

Born in Scio. A Greek merchant. Buried 18 November 1892, aged 83 years.

Eustratio Petrococchino (1852–1933)

Born in Malta. Merchant. Buried 14 November 1933, aged 81 years.

Eustratius Lukas Petrococchino (1884–1961)

Born in Alexandria, Egypt on 11 October 1884, he came to Malta in 1900 at the age of 16. He entered government service as a clerk in the customs department. During his service with the government which lasted 46 years, he was officer in charge of estimates in the chief secretary's office; private secretary to the Hon. Joseph Howard, first prime minister of Malta under the self-government constitution of 1921; clerk of the Legislative Assembly; principal elector officer and collector of customs. He was awarded the CBE in 1941; in 1949 he retired on pension after an extension of service at the age of 65 years, whereupon he embarked on private business with Frosted Food Federation Ltd. and Malta Millers Association. He died on 26 August 1961, aged 76 years.

Ariadne Polychroniades (1841–1910)

Née Petrococchino, died on 3 June 1910, aged 69 years.

Joseph Pontiakakis (1888–1919)

Born in Crete. A Greek Orthodox priest, serving in Malta. He died on 15 January 1919, aged 31 years.

Maj. Stephen Samut Tagliaferro (1888-1957)

Born in Vittoriosa on 10 February 1888, younger son of Alfredo Samut and Carolina née Tagliaferro; educated at the Lyceum and entered the civil services on 16 July

1906; he was commissioned in the KOMRM and with the outbreak of war in 1914 he served in charge of the Maltese labour battalions in Cyprus and Salonika; he retired with the honorary rank of major when the corps was disbanded in 1920. On 29 June 1929, he married Milla Gorlitschenko, a Russian émigré born in Odessa. He converted to the Greek Orthodox faith. He had two children, Lina b. 4 January 1930 and Stephen b. 18 February 1932. He died, aged 69 years, at his residence in Hughes Hallet Str., Sliema on 15 March 1957.

John Sclivagnotis (1858–1954)

An established tobacco merchant and cigarette manufacturer, he died at his residence in Sliema on 8 February 1954, aged 95 years. He was survived by his son George, his daughters Lily and Marianthe Chliapas of Patras, Greece; his grandchildren George, Kimon, and Marguerite, and other relatives in Malta and Greece.

George Sclivagnotis (1893–1960)

He died on 22 February 1960, aged 67 years. He was survived by his sisters Lily and Marianthe, his nephews George and Kimon, and his niece Margarita.

Giovanni Sorotto (1884–1929)

A prominent member of the local Greek community in Malta where he resided for 50 years and worked as a merchant and shipping agent. He died in his residence in Valletta on 7 October 1929, aged 81 years; he was survived by his widow, his son Spiridione Sorotto, and a daughter.

Russian nationals

Boris Edwards (1860–1924)

Born in Odessa on 27 May 1860, the son of an English merchant, Boris Edwards, and Sofia Kirinkoff. Between 1876 and 1881, he attended the Odessa drawing school and, later, the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in St Petersburg but had to leave ‘because of his fragile health’. He returned to Odessa at the end of 1882. In 1889, he served an apprenticeship at the Barbadian foundry in Paris where he pursued studies in bronze

sculpture. Back in Russia he taught at Odessa schools for over ten years.

His first marriage was to Princess Tatyana Uktomskaya. His second wife was Rosa Reisz. Some of his main sculptural works include a statue of Catherine II and founder of Odessa (1908), another statue of Catherine II in Ekatevinodar (1907), and bronze busts of Pushkin (1904) and Gogol (1909), both in Kharkov.

Following the Bolshevik revolution in 1919, Edwards arrived in Malta in April 1919 where he resided until his death. Whilst in Malta in the early 1920s he participated with his works in exhibitions held in Valletta by the Malta Amateur Art Association as ‘Boris, Edwards, Academician, Russia’. Well-known in Maltese art circles, he was responsible together with the Maltese painter Gianni Vella, for the *Sette Giugno* monument at the Santa Maria Addolorata Cemetery that was inaugurated on 8 June 1925, the sixth anniversary of the riots. Edwards died on 12 February 1924, aged 64 years. He was survived by his second wife Rosa Reisz and Anastasia (Asya), daughter of his deceased sister Lidia.

Vladimir Nicholas Peter Nasenbuch (1862–1922)

Born in Russia, a merchant seaman, Russian officer from the ship S.S. *Raetoria*, died on 3 March 1922, aged 58 years.

Omerzo (1869–1918)

Born in Kharkov, Russia, captain of the S.S. *Nickolai II*, buried on 23 May 1918, aged 49 years.

Princess Catherine Poutiatine (1875–1934)

Born in Odessa, Russia on 3 June 1875, the wife of Prince Michael Poutiatine, she died on 25 March 1934, aged 59 years.

Prince Michael Poutiatine (1870–1936)

Born in St Petersburg on 21 May 1870, he died on 14 May 1936.

Princess Olga Tholl Poutiatine (1881–1967)

The widow of the former Russian Prince Paul Poutiatine, ci-devant colonel of the chevalier garde and ecuyer de la

cour imperiale de Russie; daughter of the late Admiral Paul Zelinoy, and the Countess Tholl; died at the Blue Sisters Hospital on 14 April 1967. She was survived by her daughter Princess Nathalie Poutiatine-Tabone. Her grave and that of Maj. S. Sammut Tagliaferro at the new Greek Orthodox section are the only ones with an English inscription.

Princess Nathalie Poutiatine-Tabone (1903–1984)

Daughter of Prince Paul and Princess Olga Poutiatine. Following the Bolshevik Revolution in the spring of 1919, the Red Army threatened Odessa and the Poutiatine family had to leave the city, first to Costanza in Romania, then to Constantinople, and then to Malta. Following two years in Malta she travelled to Paris and studied pianoforte at the Conservatoire de Paris. She also joined the professional course of classical ballet which she attended for seven years as a pupil of several celebrated Russian ballet teachers. In 1927 she married Edgar Tabone in Rome. In 1939 she established a professional ballet academy, which she continued to personally direct until 1981. The building incorporated her residence which she continued to enjoy for many years. For many years, the building in Sliema was known as the ‘Tanya Bayona Princess Poutiatine Academy of Ballet’. As stated by Tanya Bayona, ‘Princess Poutiatine indeed changed and revolutionized the attitude towards theatrical dancing. Dancing to her was a noble art, which is indeed today greatly loved and appreciated on our island.’ In 1934, she performed ‘The Dying Swan’ at the Royal Opera House. She gave numerous performances in aid of the Russian refugees. She died on 21 January 1984 at her residence Otrada in Sliema, which was part of the academy that she had established.

Konstantin Adamovich Voensky De Brésé (1860–1928)

Born in St Petersburg on 14 December 1860. A famous Russian military historian, who left an interesting historical account of his time: four pocket books of diaries preserved at the National Library of Malta. Voensky was a man of varied attainments: a prominent linguist, a diplomat, and a military historian

of international repute, well-known for his publications on the Napoleonic period. In 1912 he was responsible for another important historical project connected with the official celebration of the centenary of the Great Patriotic War of 1812. He worked under Emperor Nicholas II himself and his brother, the Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich and was officially recognized as the Russian historiographer of the 1812 war. He died in 1928 aged 68 years and is buried at division 25, site 22. The burial tombstone in Russia and English states ‘Constantin Adamovich Voensky de Brésé, Soldier, Diplomat, and Historian. Chamberlain to H.I.M. the Czar of Russia, 1860–1928’.

Other nationals

William Stephen Eynaud (1813–1871)

Born in Malta in 1813. Prosperous merchant with strong commercial links to the United States of America. Died on 24 December 1871, aged 59 years. His wife Amelia commissioned an imposing white marble funerary monument from New York City.

Ernest G. Geoghegan (1869–1935)

Born on 18 February 1869 in Dublin, merchant. He came to Malta from Chicago, USA, around 1895 to assist his father with the management of the Lion Brewery. He died in Malta on 5 February 1935, aged 66.

Olof Fredrik Gollcher (1829–1889)

Born in Gothenburg, Sweden on 2 November 1829. Upon his arrival in Malta in 1850, he established the business of O.F. Gollcher & Sons, shipping agents, and which soon became one of the leading shipping companies on the island. He married Vincenza Bruno on 2 August 1853. He was appointed consul by Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands. He died on 15 February 1889. His funerary monument comprises his bronze bust atop a marble column and a full-figure bronze sculpture of his widow grieving at the foot of the monument.

Olof Frederick Gollcher (1889–1962)

Born in Valletta, 17 March 1889. An artist, scholar, philanthropist, and a keen collector of *objets d’art* and

historical items. In 1938, he married Teresa Lucia née Prior. Recipient of several honours, including the OBE. He purchased Palazzo Falson in Mdina. His intention was that his house would be preserved with its contents as a museum for the cultural enrichment of the nation and with this aim set up a foundation bearing his name to execute his wish. He died on 23 July 1962.

Indian nationals

Roopwanti Balani (1929–1988)

Born in India, buried on 27 November 1988, aged 59 years.

David Barjagarar (1837–1860)

Born in Kurdistan, a student at St Julian's Protestant College; buried on 9 July 1860, aged 23 years.

Bagibai Chatlani (1914–1989)

Born in India; buried on 22 May 1989, aged 75 years.

Kalawanti Chatlani (1932–1991)

Born in Pakistan; buried on 4 January 1991, aged 58 years.

Mithram Chatlani (1900–1965)

Born in India; buried on 8 March 1965, aged 64 years.

Golados Khushom Mohnani (1920–1967)

Born in India; merchant, buried on 26 January 1967, aged 57 years.

Naraindas Tahilram Mohnani (1900–1973)

Born in India; merchant, buried on 28 November 1973, aged 73 years.

Khiantani Tikamadas (1914–1969)

Born in India; merchant, buried on 5 November 1969, aged 55 years.

Haribal T. Vaswani (1900–1972)

Born in India; wife and mother, buried on 4 April 1941, aged 72 years.

Ramchand Vaswani (1881-1941)

Born in Hyderabad, India; merchant, buried on 17 May 1941, aged 60 years.

Maltese nationals

Giuseppe Borg (1819–1865)

Born in Malta; a Mason, buried on 5 September 1865, aged 46 years.

Lorenzo Buhagiar

Born in Malta; buried on 1 June 1865.

Giuseppe Camenzuli

Born in Malta; buried on 5 September 1865.

Carmela Debono (1820–1870)

Born in Malta; a pauper, buried on 25 December 1870, aged 50 years.

Ruggero Debono (1856–1895)

Born in Malta; a messman, buried on 25 September 1895, aged 39 years.

Josef Kalleya (1898–1998)

Born in Malta on 27 March 1898; artist, sculptor, considered to be one of Malta's pioneers in the birth of modern art in Malta in the 20th century. In 1934 he travelled to Rome to study at the Accademia di Belle Arti. He had a marked distaste for the conventional and his art is imbued with a yearning for the sacred and the spiritual. In his clay modelling he developed a distinctive technique of *sgraffito* consisting of shallow incisions in low relief, even his paintings are simple linear compositions, the strokes retaining their graffitic character. He died in 1998, aged 100 years.

Grabiell Vassalli (1814–1863)

Born in Marseille; eldest son of Mikiel Anton Vassalli, returned to Malta with his father in 1820. He spent some time in Tripoli where he married Grazia Portelli. He died on 31 July 1863, aged 49 years.

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