

*Ne immemores simus.*

Ad S. Filumenam V. M.

(Hymnus)

Quos tibi sedes Fidei, parensque  
Roma persolvit, Filumena, honores;  
Nostra nec sacris Melite recusat  
Reddere votis.

Virgo, quae martyr generosa palmas  
Mille pro Christo moriens tulisti,  
Excipe alternis tua mira laudes  
Gesta canentâm.

O nimis chara, o nimiumque amata  
Aureum lumen, decus angelorum,  
Incluta aeternae, Filumena Martyr,  
Filia lucis!

Quanta jam sanguis tuus ille mira!  
Quanta patrarunt simulacra et ossa!  
Insonat quivis ubicumque plenus  
Angulus orbis!

Gratiis auges famulos, piisque  
Multa tu clemens bona contulisti,  
At reis vindex scelerum dedisti  
Solvere poenas.

Quid ferox in te potuit tyrannus?  
Respuit nequam: rabidus ferocit:  
Angeli illaeram subito a cruenta  
Morte tuentur.

Plumbeae caedunt scuticae, flagellat  
Scorpio, cuspis lacerat: sagittis  
Icta agens nondum tria lustra victrix  
Sidera scandis.

Sit decus Patri, Genito, sacroque  
Flamini, sit laus Triadi beatae,  
Quae tuum claris, Filumena, nomen  
Addidit astris.

JOSEPH ZAMMIT  
(BRIGHELLA)

## Malta in Classical Literature

by

CAN. EDWARD COLEIRO, D.D., BL. CAN., B.A.

It is nothing new that our beloved island has never furnished any great theme to Latin and Greek Literature. So it is not the purpose of this paper to search into the pages of Roman and Greek literary history with any eye for great poetry or verse. On the contrary, the few extracts we are reviewing are mere quotations, as far as literary value goes. Still they have some interest in as much as they throw some light on the historical darkness of our islands in those remote times. It is with the purpose of gathering such stray beams of light, that we are writing of spreading them out and analysing them by means of the prism of literary and historical criticism which should be guided solely by the search for the genuine truth.

It is well known in how many ways literature reflects the historical, cultural, social circumstance that envelope and permeate the life of a nation. What appears to be a stray remark, many times, is of the highest value in terms of such historical and social significance. That is what we mean to keep in view in our analysis of these passages. They are taken from works which are well known to literary history. But not all of them seem to have attracted the attention of our historians.

### I.—Malta in Latin Literature.

I. The first mention of the island of Malta in Latin Literature occurs in a short passage in the *Bellum Poenicum* of Gnaeus Naevius. It runs thus:

*Tránsit Mélitam  
exercítus Románus insulam intégram  
urít populátus vástat rêm hostium concinnat.*

In English: The Roman army crossed the whole island of Malta, burning, laying waste, devastating, wrecking disaster on the enemy.

The passage, for us a mere fragment is taken from a quotation by Nonius (p. 90,30) in his *De Compendium Doctrina*, and must refer to the first Punic war. Born about the year 274 B.C. and dead in 201 B.C. Naevius covered in his epic poem only the first Punic war which ended in 242, the second beginning in 218. Many historians have found on this passage their assertion that the island was occupied by Rome in the first Punic war.