

REVIEWS

BURRIDGE, W., Seeking the Site of St. Paul's Shipwreck. Malta, Progress Press, 1952, pp. 51.

CUTAJAR, LURET, Fejn Nizel Malta San Pawl. Offprint from "Lehen Is-Sewwa" of 7. 2. 53. Hamrun, Dar ta' San Guzepp, 1953, pp. 14.

The controversy over the place of St. Paul's Shipwreck has been going on since the Xth Century, when the Emperor Constantine Proflrogenito in his *De Administrando Imperio* (c. 36) for the first time maintained that the **Melita** mentioned in the **Acts** of St. Luke was Meleda, an island in the Adriatic. In the 18th century the controversy flared up with great intensity, culminating in Count G.A. Ciantar's review of preceding writers on this subject entitled *Critica de' Critici Moderni che dall'anno 1730 infino al 1760 scrissero sulla controversia del Naufragio di S. Paolo Apostolo* (Venezia, 1773). Other writers turned their attention to the subject in the 19th Century, among them the historian Mons. O. Bres and Capt. Smith, who published his *Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul* in 1848.

In the present century the controversy has reached a new phase. In the past the point at issue was Malta vs. Meleda as the island of St. Paul's Shipwreck. Now that the mass of evidence points to Malta as the island mentioned by St. Luke, the attention of writers has been directed to seek the actual site of the Shipwreck in Malta. Since 1823 various sites have been claimed as marking the place of the Shipwreck, chief among these being St. Paul's Islet, Qawra Point, the white shelving rocks near the Harbour Bar Restaurant, a spot 500 yards inland from the Gzejjer Channel, etc.

The writers of the two pamphlets under review have some features in common. Both were critical of accepted tradition, and both set out to see for themselves what things actually look like during a Gale at St. Paul's Bay. Besides, both writers were very much concerned to find the **place where two seas meet** (topon dithalasson) mentioned by St. Luke. But there the similarity ends. Dr. Burridge's investigations land him at Mellieha Beach while Mr. Cutajar ends at **Tal-Ghasselin** with a plausible and hitherto unsuspected philological argument. Dr. Burridge gives more prominence to the argument from sea soundings and tries to clinch his argument by reference to old maps of Malta extant at the Royal Malta Library which show a lake of many acres on the land side of the Maria portion of Mellieha Beach. Dr. Burridge at times indulges in some chit chat which fails to impress and completely discards the evidence of living tradition. The argument that "the existence of two bays named after St. George should be accepted as the evidence that an equally important event in the life of St. George is to be associated with these other bays" fails to convince for the simple reason that, unlike St. Paul's Bay, the two bays named after St. George have no tradition at all connecting them with the life of the Saint. Dr. Burridge also dismisses completely the force of tradition behind other place names centring on St. Paul's Bay, e.g. **Il-Pwales, St. Pawl Milqghi, Ghajn Razul**, etc. He is definitely on surer ground when he accumulates various facts from sea soundings and old maps and succeeds in presenting a theory that is at once challenging and attractive.

Mr. Cutajar bases his arguments mainly on philological grounds. His theory is easy and attractive. **Dithalasson** (two seas) fits nicely into the Maltese dual pattern and becomes **Thalassanejn**, dropping the Greek prefix **di** in the process. According to Mr. Cutajar the "two seas" are in effect "two currents", with which compare Dr. Burridge's conclusion that they are "two masses or bodies of water", one on each side of the strip of Mellieha Beach at the Maria end.

Both writers have made a praiseworthy effort to solve this still-vexed question, and their work is a welcome addition to Pauline literature in Malta.

J.C.P.

COOPER, Capt. (S), N.T.P., Malta: The Story of Manoel Island. 1952, pp. 37.

This interesting pamphlet is based on books and records existing in the Royal Malta Library, supplemented by the author's own study of the Fort itself as it now is. It is mainly intended for naval officers and ratings serving in this naval establishment but its coverage and treatment should also interest local students of Maltese history.

A brief historical account of the rule of the Knights of St. John is followed by a chapter on Fort Manoel which contains, *inter alia*, interesting information on the fort as it was in 1733. The chapter on Fort Manoel in British Army occupation shows the fort as a place of

minor importance between 1814 and 1914, as indeed it remained until, in the 1939-45 War, it fulfilled the double role of mounting anti-aircraft batteries and accommodating naval personnel. This chapter is based on research into military archives consisting of information in official reports and General Orders. The Chapter on Manoel Island in World War II is of documentary value as it is based on first hand information supplied by commanding officers in charge of submarine operations during and immediately following the Second World War.

A supplementary leaflet, issued separately by H.M.S. Phoenicia, deals with **The Base Supply Organisation in Malta — Past and Present.**

This is a timely publication, not only because Manoel Island has played an important part in Maltese History through the ages, but also because we are apt to miss the actuality of current events which make history. And it is precisely as a record of contemporary military and naval events that this booklet will prove invaluable to future historians. Other aspects of the history of Manoel Island — its role as a Lazaretto and related subjects such as fumigation of correspondence reaching Malta from infected countries, no less than its associations with prominent literary personalities such as Scott and Byron, — call for deeper study and will amply repay careful research. The various "Cabrei" preserved at the Royal Malta Library, especially, are bound to yield other interesting data on Manoel Island.

J. C. P.

J. GALEA, The Epidemic of Poliomyelitis in Malta during 1950-51: Notes and Observations.

Extract from "The Journal of the Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygiene" London, June 1953.

The writer's aim in collecting these observations was "to encourage local talent so that we might be able to contribute our share in the fight for victory over this dreaded disease". These words, coming as they do from the Chief Government Medical Officer of these Islands, show the extent to which epidemics of this nature engage the attention of persons responsible for the health of the nation. Indeed, ever since the first major epidemic of poliomyelitis in 1942-43, one can trace the trend of this disease in the annual reports of the Medical and Health Department. At the same time the public has become fully aware of the consequences of this crippling disease. Hence the importance of studying such epidemics from a socio-medical viewpoint.

The present study contains various statistical data and concludes with the hopeful news that Sir Russell Brain, President of the Royal College of Physicians, stated in London that "it has become possible to cultivate a virus which may enable us to develop a vaccine which will give protection against the disease".

Editorial comments on Dr. Galea's survey of this outbreak appeared in **The Medical Officer** of the 18th July, 1953.

J. C. P.

VALLETTA, A., A Century of Butterfly Hunting in Malta. In "The Link", No. 10, Candlemas, 1953. pp. 4-7.

This is an interest study by an enthusiastic student of the Fauna-Lepidoptera of Malta. One half of the article is taken up with useful bibliographical information which traces in narrative form the study of the subject as far back as 1843. For the convenience of students the material is here condensed in list form:

WARING, G. In **Letters of a Naturalist from Malta and Sicily.** 1843.

GULIA, G. **Corso elementare di entomologia maltese.** 1858.

THALLACK, W. **Malta under the Phoenicians, Knights and English.** 1861.

GODWIN, Rev. G. **Geology, Botany and Natural History of the Maltese Islands.** 1882.

FRASER, In **Nature** of 2nd January, 1890.

CARUANA GATTO, A., In **Bollettino del Naturalista**, (Siena) Anno XI, fasc. 5, 1891.

MATTHEW, G. F., **Notes on Lepidoptera from the Mediterranean.** In **Entomologist**, 1898, 31, pp. 77-84.

FLETCHER, T., Bairbridge: **A Preliminary List of the Lepidoptera of Malta.** In **Entomologist**, 1904, 37, pp. 315-319.

ANDRES, Von Adolf: **Verzeichnis der wahred meiner Kriegs. Gefangenschaft von mir auf Malta gesammelten Lepidoptera, Hemiptera und Coleoptera.** In **Entomologische Rundschau**, 33 Jahrgang No. 9, 1916.

CARUANA GATTO, A., **Di alcune specie di farfalle erratiche catturate o osservate in Malta.** In **Archivum Melitense**, Vol. VI, No. 4, 1925.

BORG, Paul., **The Lepidoptera of the Maltese Islands.** 1832.

BORG, Prof. John., **Our Insect Visitors.** In **Archivum Melitense**, Vol. X, No. 4, 1939.

DELUCCA, C., **Casual Immigrant Rhopalocera in Malta.** In **Entomologist**, Vol. 83: 64.

Mr. Valletta has himself contributed to the study of the subject the following articles in local and foreign periodicals:—

Taghrif fuq il-friefet tal-passa. In *Il-Bidwi*, March, 1945. **Il-friefet u l-pjanti.** In *Il-Bidwi*, June, 1945. **Butterfly Find.** In *Times of Malta*, March 23rd, 1948. **Lepidoptera in Malta.** In *Times of Malta*, August 30th, 1948. **Syntarucus telicanus Lang. (lep. Lycaenidae) in Malta.** In *Entomologist* 81: 100, 1948. **Polygonia egea Cram. (Lep. Nymphalidae) in Malta.** *Loc. cit.*; 81: 151, 1948. **Gegenes pumilio Hoffn. (Lep. Hesperidae) in Malta.** *Loc. cit.* 82: 190, 1949. **Rare Butterfly — Danaus Chrysippus Lin, Var alcippus Cram. (Lep. Danaidae) in Sunday Times of Malta,** April 13th, 1952.

J. C. P.

PENZA, C., Argotti Botanic Gardens. In "Times of Malta", 23 and 26 November, 1951.

The first part of this interesting article outlines the history of the Botanic Gardens, first started in the ditch at St. Elmo by Dr. Joseph Zammit in 1675, and subsequently transferred to Floriana in 1800. The second part deals with the training of apprentices in the art of gardening but includes also information on the publication of the **Index Seminum**, first compiled and published by Rev. Carolus Hyacinthus in 1805, and subsequently republished on various other occasions. We also find a list of Directors and Curators of the Gardens. The article is interspersed with interesting out-of-the-way information, e.g. during Dr. Lucano's directorship (1771) "the **Oxalis Cernua Thumb**, its English name "Wood Sorrell" and the Maltese "Haxixa Ingliza" or "Qares" were introduced to Malta from the Cape of Good Hope". The list of Directors compiled by the writer, who was Curator from 1919 till 1952, is given hereunder:

Dr. Josephus Zammit (1676-1740); Dr. G. Lucano (1771); Father Carolus Hyacinthus (1805-1824); Dr. C. A. Naudi (1824-1829); Dr. S. Zerafa (1829-1889); Dr. G. C. Delicata (1859-1880); Dr. G. Gulia (1880-1889); Dr. F. Debono (1890-1919); Dr. E. Meli (1919-1921); Dr. J. Borg (1921-1933); Dr. S. L. Vella (1934-).

J.C.P.

SOCIETY AND OTHER NEWS

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

February 12, 1954 — The seventeenth general meeting of the Society was held in the Old Library of the Royal University of Malta at 5.30 p.m., the President, Mgr. A. Bonnici, in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous five meetings having been read and confirmed, the Chairman read his report on the work of the Society during 1953. The Treasurer also gave his report on the Society's finances during the year.

The election of the Committee for 1954 was then held. Mgr. A. Bonnici was confirmed as President by acclamation. The following members were elected: Dr. J. Galea, Prof. W. Ganado, Mr. E. R. Leopardi, Mr. J. Cassar Pullicino, Dr. A. Ganado, Prof. Can. E. Coleiro, Fr. A. Vella, O.P., and Chev. Vzo. Bonello.

The meeting was adjourned *sine die*.

April 7, 1954 — The eighteenth general meeting of the Society took place in the Aula Magna of the Royal University of Malta at 5.15 p.m., the President, Mgr. A. Bonnici, in the Chair.

Mgr. Prof. A. Bonnici, D.D., B.A., B.L.Can., H.E.L., read a paper on **The Oath Question in Malta in the first half of the Nineteenth Century**".

June 2, 1954 — The nineteenth general meeting of the Society was held in the Old Library of the Royal University of Malta at 5.30 p.m., the President, Mgr. A. Bonnici, in the Chair.

Professor Harrison Smith, Ph.D. (Georgetown), Visiting Fulbright Lecturer in History, gave a lecture on **Some Facilities for Research about British Malta in United States and Continental Libraries**".

The meeting adjourned *sine die*.