

The building was repaired and given an improved appearance in 1844, and was adorned with stucco and enlarged to have eight more boxes making them 67 in number divided into tiers; however, in 1861, it was given by the Government on perpetual lease to Dr. Salvatore Mifsud and Anacleto Conti for an annual ground rent of £235, (15) and in 1862 the directum dominium was sold to Emmanuele Scicluna for £7,833.6.8. (16)

After the opening of the Royal Opera House in 1866, the Manoel Theatre fell on evil days, and it is said, was converted into a dormitory for beggars who paid 1d. per night, but when the Royal Opera House was burnt in 1873, the beggars were turned out and grand opera once more held here pending the reconstruction of the Royal Opera House. The impressario at this period was E. Zimelli.

In 1889 the theatre became the property of Carmelo Arpa, a chemist, and later was acquired by the Gollcher family who spent a considerable sum of money in re-decorating it in 1906-7, under the direction of the architect Gustavo Soler. During these modifications the parterre boxes were removed. In 1956 it was requisitioned by the Malta Government and has since been redecorated and modernised.

(15) Records of Notary Luigi Vella of 6 May 1861.

(16) Records of Notary Luigi Vella of 9 September, 1862.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

P. CASSAR, *The Maltese Corsairs and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem*, Reprinted from "The Catholic Historical Review", Vol. XLVI, No. 2, July 1960 (U.S.A.) pp. 137-156.

In this masterly study Dr. P. Cassar traces the progress of Maltese piracy from the period of Arab domination in the 9th Century to the setting up of the Court of Oyer and Terminer by the British in October, 1815. The important role of privateering activities in the economic life of Malta since the Middle Ages is aptly stressed. The author gives the names of various Maltese sea-captains. One of them, the 15th Century Michele da Malta, is the subject of an unpublished study by Professor L. Butler who has been carrying out research in the Maltese Archives for several years.

Dr. Cassar's study follows right upon two articles in last year's "Melita Historica" on similar or related topics, i.e. R. Cavaliero's *The Decline of the Maltese Corso in the 18th Century*, and G. Wettinger's *Coron Captives in Malta*. Cavaliero's article deals more fully with Maltese piracy in the 18th Century in its international diplomatic setting; Cassar's covers the pre-Order period as well, and the organisation and control of privateering in Malta are perhaps better explained. The two studies, however, are complementary, and should in fact be read as two aspects of the same subject.

Dr. Cassar uses his sources well, and there is little one should add beyond expressing the hope that he will give us more scholarly articles like the one under review.

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- (34) 1868 CLEGHORN, H. "Notes on the Botany and Agriculture of Malta and Sicily." (Trans. Bot. Soc. Vol. X. 3).
- (35) 1870 MEDLYCOTT, W. in H. Seddal's "Malta Past and Present".
- (36) 1870 ADAMS, Lieth, "Notes of a Naturalist in the Nile Valley and Malta".
- (37) 1874 CARMEL, Prof., (International Congress)
- (38) 1891 HENSLOW, Rev. "Natural History of Malta" In *Medit. Natur.* Vol. I.
- (39) 1892 CARUANA GATTO, Cont. Alfr., "The Fungus Melitensis" In *Medit. Natur.* Vol. I.
- (40) 1896 FIORI, Adr., "Flora Analitica d'Italia", Vol. I.
- (41) 1900 BALLOU, Matur. M., "The Story of Malta".
- (42) 1910 BORG, Dr. John, "Remains of the Prehistoric Flora of Malta" in *Arch. Melit.* Vol. I.
- (43) 1914 GULIA, Giovanni, "Un'Occhiata all'Isoletta di Gozo" in *Guida Generale di Malta e Gozo.*
- (44) 1915 SOMMIER-CARUANA GATTO, "Flora Melitensis Nova"
- (45) 1924 *Dizjunarju Enciklopediku*, p. 4259.
- (46) 1925 *Storja ta' Malta u Ghawdex*, Edit. Tankr. Borg.
- (47) 1927 PENZA, Carm., in *Diz. Encik.*, p. 5980.
- (48) 1927 BORG, Prof. John, "Descriptive Flora of the Maltese Islands".
- (49) 1931 DESPOTT, Gius., in *Diz. Encik.*, P. 10960.
- (50) 1933 ZAMMIT, C.R., "Il Fungu ta' Malta" In *Melita Agricola*, Vol. I.
- (51) 1936 FARRUGIA, Rev. Gius. "Ghawdex bil-Grajja Tieghu" (Trans. from De Soldanis Ms. of 1746).
- (52) 1937 GATT, J. E. H., "A Guide to Gozo" (also from deSoldanis).
- (53) 1940 PENZA, Carm., "Il-Fungu ta' Malta" in *Lehen il-Malti* No. 190-110.
- (54) 1947 CASSAR PULLICINO, J., "Folk Medicine in Malta", in "Introduction to Maltese Folklore".
- (55) 1958 BEZZINA, C., "Hagret il-General", a Broadcast talk for Gozo (Jan. 19th).
- (56) 1958 LANFRANCO, G. G., "Pjanta Storika" Broadcast talk on 26th March.
- (57) 1960 Il-Gebbla tal-General u l-Gherq Sinjur (Dept of Information Fact Sheet No. 3/60).

#### RECENT PUBLICATIONS (cont. from page 4)

E. SAMMUT, *The Monuments of Mdina: The Ancient Capital of Malta and its Treasures*. Malta, Progress Press, 1960. pp.46.

Dr. Sammut's latest publication is a welcome addition to his series of pamphlets on Malta's artistic heritage. As its sub-title implies, *The Monuments of Mdina* is something more than a guidebook to the ancient capital of Malta. The palaces, churches and paintings are briefly described and evaluated as to their artistic merit, and the old capital itself is presented against the wider canvas of Maltese events from prehistoric times.

A lot of reading and personal observation has gone into the making of this booklet, but the facts are clearly presented, in a style devoid of all pedantry. The chapters on the Cathedral Museum and the Norman Houses show the author at his best. The booklet contains 19 illustrations. The lists of Grand Masters and of Bishops since 1530, given as Appendices, add to the usefulness of this publication.

Dr. Sammut is known to have carried out deep researches in the History of Art in Malta and one hopes that he will find time to publish the fruits of this research and thus make a more lasting contribution to the subject.

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## NOTES

1. At the top of the letter and written obviously in a different hand from the text of the letter itself appears the date: 3 Novemb., 1567, Malta, and also the following:  

“Le grand Maistre Jean de Valette mande au Duc d’Anjou que le Turc veut revenir devant Malte et le prie dassister leur d. Religion envers leurs Majestez pour avoir du secours”

I am grateful to Miss D.B. Edmonds, Curator of the collections at Clerkenwell, for courtesies extended to me while I was carrying on research in London.
2. “Monseigneur” refers to the King’s brother, the Duke of Anjou, who became king of France in 1574 and ruled until 1589.
3. The reference here is to King Charles IX of France (1560-1574) and his mother, the famous Catherine de’ Medici.
4. The request for aid arrived at a most unpropitious time, for a civil war between Catholics and Huguenots had broken out in France in September.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS (continued from page 70)

- A. LUTTRELL, *Interessi fiorentini nell’economia e nella politica dei Cavalieri Ospedalieri di Rodi nel Trecento*. In “Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa: Lettere, Storia e Filosofia” — Serie II, Vol. XXVIII (1959), Fasc. III-IV, pp. 317-326.

This study deals with an insufficiently explored aspect of the Order’s economic history. It is based, as Mr. Luttrell says in a footnote, on the documents of the Order preserved in Malta. This specialised topic, i.e. the influence of Florentine and other bankers on the Order’s policy and activities in the 14th Century, is well handled by the author and there is a wealth of bibliographical references for those interested in the wider aspects of the subject. Two important related problems, which the author mentions in his last footnote, remain unanswered, and Mr. Luttrell suggests that, rather than in the Malta Archives, their solution has to be sought in Florentine sources.

Mr. Luttrell, who contributes an interesting study on *The Venetians at Medieval Malta* in the present issue of “Melita Historica”, has published various articles on the Order of St. John in the 14th Century. As they are not easy to trace, the following titles are given here as an addition to the known bibliography of the Order, i.e. *Actividades económicas de los Hospitalarios de Rodas en el Mediterraneo occidental durante el siglo XIV*, in ‘Actas del VI Congreso de la Historia de la Corona de Aragón’ (Barcelona, 1960); *Venice and the Knights Hospitallers of Rhodes in the Fourteenth Century*, in “Papers of the British School at Rome” XXVI (1958), pp. 198-201; *A Fourteenth Century List of the Barons of Achaea (1377?)*, in “Byzantinische Zeitschrift”, LI, (1958).

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bably continued to make occasional visits to Malta, but they had no serious interest there (24).

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- (24) Although material exists, it has not been possible to carry the story beyond about 1430. Venetian relations with Aragon had declined by 1448 to a state of war (VALENTINI in *ASM*, xii, 108), and Mr. E. R. LEOPARDI reports that he has found no reference to Venetian residents or merchants at Malta in the documents of the *Universitas* (circa 1450-1500) examined by him. Special thanks are due both to him and to Professor FRANCESCO GIUNTA for his valuable help at Palermo.
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### RECENT PUBLICATIONS (continued from page 73)

GALEA, Joseph, *The French Occupation of Malta: a study in bibliography*. Geneve, Librairie Droz. 1959. 30 p. (Cahier de Compesieres No. 2).

This list of 144 items useful for the study "of the last phase of the Order of St. John, the French Occupation of Malta, and the cession of the Maltese Islands to Great Britain" fills a long-felt need and provides an important bibliographical tool.

The author had already given a list of publications on the French Occupation of Malta, scattered through the pages of his *Il-Hakma Franciża f'Malta* (1948). The present list, however, is more comprehensive in scope and contains far more entries than the original one. All publications mentioned in *Il-Hakma Franciża f'Malta* are included here, with the exception of the anonymous *Lettre de M. Le Commandeur de T. a M. Depute a l'Assemblée Nationale sur l'Ordre de Malte*, s.l., 1790.

Ten of the items included in Galea's bibliography were listed in 1805 in Boisgelin's Supplement to the Catalogue of works written on Malta under the heading *Pamphlets published on Malta during the Assembly of "Les Etats Generaux"*... ("Ancient and Modern Malta," London, Vol. 1, pp. xlii-xlviii). A reference to Boisgelin's pioneer effort in the same field would not have been out of place in this bibliography.

The list is carefully drawn up in accordance with the rules of bibliography. Students of Maltese History should feel grateful to Mr. Galea, who has produced a really valuable instrument of research.

J.C.P.