

ST. PAUL

FAITH AND ICONOGRAPHY

Representations in Art in Malta: Late Medieval to the present

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St Paul in Art in Gozo c.1300-1950: a critical study

MARK SAGONA

Introduction

For many centuries, at least since the Late Middle Ages, when Malta was re-Christianised, the Maltese have staunchly believed that the Apostle of the Gentiles was delivered to their islands through divine intervention and converted the inhabitants to Christianity, thus initiating an uninterrupted community of Christians. St Paul, therefore, became the patron saint of Malta and the Maltese called him their 'father'. However, it has been amply and clearly pointed out that the present state of our knowledge does not permit an authentication of these alleged events. In fact, there is no historic, archaeological or documentary evidence to attest to the presence of a Christian community in Malta before the late fourth century¹, while the narrative, in the Acts of the Apostles, of the shipwreck of the saint in 60 AD and its association with Malta has been immersed in controversy for many centuries².

The first mention of the Pauline cult in Malta dates to 1299, when Mdina Cathedral is first recorded as dedicated to the saint³. The tradition became so strongly interwoven with religious pride and national sentiment, that many myths and legends associated with the shipwreck of St Paul and the establishment of Christianity in Malta became accepted as a matter of fact. The tradition became central and indispensable to the Christian faith in Malta and was therefore treated as a sacred issue.

This was already the state of affairs in the very early years of the presence of the Order of St John in Malta. In 1536, the secretary of Grand Master Philippe Villiers de L'Isle Adam, Jean Quintin d'Autun, recorded that the natives believed strongly that St Paul had been in Malta as much as St Peter had been in Rome⁴. The presence of the Order on Malta heightened the interest in the Pauline cult since the Knights had much to gain in promoting a tradition which added considerably to their prestige. In the seventeenth century, however, fresh enthusiasm was injected into the Pauline tradition with the published writings of men like Gian Francesco Abela (1582-1655) and Girolamo Manduca (1573-1643), both priests who had vested interests in the diffusion of the cult which promoted Malta's fame as an invincible fortress of Christianity. The many myths about the saint's events during his stay in Malta were greatly reinforced during this period⁵.

Gozo also featured in this golden legend of St Paul. Manduca narrates how the natives of Gozo miraculously heard the voice of the apostle when he was preaching



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outside the walls of Malta's ancient city⁶. This was another myth that was widely believed, even though the Acts of the Apostles do not mention Gozo in any way. In his important account of Gozo, the eighteenth century priest and historian Gian Pietro Agius de Soldanis, starts his second volume with the story of St Paul on Malta. As expected, he gives great emphasis to the Gozitan episode and talks about the legend of the voice that was heard from the small inlet of Mgarr ix-Xini, close to Xewkija⁷. The event was, in fact, commemorated at Xewkija in an eighteenth century latin inscription with the words: 'AUDIERUNT · CREDIDERUNT · CUSTODIERUNT'⁸, that today survives in the so-called Museum of Sculpture annexed to the parish church. In the most fantastic of manners, De Soldanis continues to elaborate on Gozo's link with the saint, and he also states that eventually St Paul entered Gozo in Marsalforn and the church there was originally built by the early Christians in Gozo to commemorate the event⁹.

Obviously, the Pauline cult and tradition are solidly reflected in the art of the Maltese Islands, which for many years was primarily religious. From the 13th century onwards, St Paul starts featuring conspicuously in art being produced to decorate the sacred spaces that started to be built. The fervent and intense faith in the above-mentioned events proved to be a very strong source of inspiration for the many artists who have treated Pauline subjects. And, of course, besides the Maltese dimension, St Paul remains one of the most formidable saints of the existence of Christianity. It is, therefore, only natural that his cult has fired the imagination of many artists throughout the last two millennia of artistic endeavour.

For obvious reasons, the largest amount of depictions of St Paul in the Maltese Islands is found on Malta, but a considerable number are also found on Gozo¹⁰. One has to keep in mind that although Gozo is usually treated as part of Malta, its island status brought about considerably different realities and contexts. For the present discourse, it is perhaps pertinent to point out that Gozo had different celestial protectors from Malta. In fact, Gozo revered St George as its patron saint, while the cult of St Ursula as co-protectress of the island was added early in the seventeenth century¹¹. This could also explain the considerable lack of early depictions of St Paul, who was more closely associated with Malta.

This short study attempts to analyse critically the artistic merits of the present known works on Gozo depicting St Paul, from the earliest possible representation in the thirteenth century to the mid twentieth century, by discussing them within a changing art-historical context. Gozo was, for many years a cultural backwater, but as the centuries progressed, artistic patronage became generally better informed¹², even though the quality of works fluctuated. This paper highlights, in a chronological manner, the most important representations that depict a varied thematic content relating to various episodes in the life of the saint, in particular events central to the Pauline cult in Malta. Particularly relevant to the iconography of the saint are the themes related to Publius, the presumed 'prince' of the island who allegedly became the first bishop of Malta¹³, who also features in various works.

Early Representations

Possibly, the earliest extant representation of St Paul on Gozo is found in a much weathered limestone relief of two male saints, today housed at the Gozo Museum of Archaeology in the Gran Castello. There is no certainty regarding the actual identity of the saints, but the names of Peter and Paul have been suggested. This relief was allegedly found in the Xlendi Bay area in the early 20th century and could have belonged to a countryside church in the vicinities¹⁴. The imagery conforms to Siculo-Romanesque sources and probably dates to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century¹⁵. Given the lack of artistic repertory from this period, this is one of the island's most important artefacts of a religious nature.

Apart from this example, no representations of the saint seem to have survived until the depiction of the saint in the so-

called Santa Maria Retable¹⁶. However, today Gozo boasts of an important example of Italian late 15th century art. The origins of the commission, however, have nothing to do with Gozo. This is the white marble holy water stoup that is preserved in the sacristy of the parish church of the Visitation at Għarb. On its centre, the stoup shows the small effigy of the standing and haloed Paul, sword in hand. This sculptural work was not produced for this church but arrived in Gozo only in the early 18th century as a gift from the Mdina Cathedral Chapter to the newly-erected Gozitan parish church, where it was used as a baptismal font¹⁷. This work is therefore also noteworthy for the religious role it performed during its two centuries in use at Mdina.

The commission of the stoup is very well documented in the archives of Mdina Cathedral. It was acquired in Palermo in 1474 and was installed in the old cathedral soon after¹⁸. It is one of the most artistically significant works in the Maltese Islands from this period since it is associated with the workshop of Domenico Gagini (c.1430-1492) who was instrumental in the establishment of Renaissance ideals in Sicily, after having worked in various Italian cities including Florence where he also came under the influence of the great Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446) and Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455). It is therefore not by coincidence that his style betrays strong classicizing influences, here manifested in the elegance of the mouldings and the simplicity of the standing saint, the majesty of whom is still visible despite the wearing away of details.

The earliest securely identifiable image of St Paul to survive in Gozo only dates to the mid sixteenth century. This representation formed part of the retable of the old church of the Assumption in the Castello, and is today housed in the Gozo Cathedral Museum¹⁹. The present components of the retable may have belonged to three different altarpieces that at some point were assembled together. Peter and Paul on the volets flank the panel of the *Virgin and Child* in the lowest register out of three. The style is decidedly provincial and reflects the sad state of affairs in Gozo after the tragic events of the Siege of 1551. The artist, who has been identified with the Master of the Bir Miftuħ altarpiece²⁰, is largely ignorant of the contemporary sophistications of Mannerist art on the continent and shows only a diluted knowledge of the school of Antonello da Messina in Sicily. St Paul, sword and book in his hands, although betraying some knowledge of Renaissance art, is still a rather stiff, hieratic figure and the artist has problems in resolving the knee that is slightly raised to support the book in Paul's right hand. He stands in a landscape dotted with dwellings that continues throughout the other panels.

The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

With the intensification of the Pauline cult in the 17th century, the representations of the saint increased considerably in number. Many churches around Malta, if not dedicated to the saint, contain altars dedicated to him. Not the same situation was apparently present in Gozo, and according to present dedications and surviving representations it does not seem that the saint's cult was much popular before the seventeenth century. It is interesting to note, for example, that while no major church in Gozo was dedicated to St Paul, only one church features among the list of over one hundred churches that had once dotted the Gozitan countryside mentioned by Agius de Soldanis were dedicated to St Paul²¹. With the establishment of the parish at Nadur in 1688, dedicated to the martyrdom of SS Peter and Paul, the cult to St Paul obviously received a fresh impetus, but the dedication was not the shipwreck.

It appears that one of the oldest altars dedicated to the saint on Gozo is that in the parish church of St George at Rabat. It is also among the most artistically noteworthy. The altar should have been at the centre of a particularly strong devotion since, judging from the artistic quality of the altarpiece, reredos and fine marble altar, good amounts of money were spent.

The altarpiece, showing the *Immaculate Conception with St Paul*, is a work by Stefano Erardi (1630-1716) and was painted around 1699²². Erardi was one of Malta's leading native 17th century artists, who, although bred in a Late Mannerist idiom, his art matured significantly after the advent of Mattia Preti (1613-99) in Malta in the 1660's²³. In fact, the kneeling figure of the saint is very well conceived and is reminiscent of Preti. This representation is actually a re-interpretation of the artist's own impressive lunette of the *Apotheosis of St Paul* in the choir of the parish church of St Paul outside the walls in Rabat, Malta, produced in 1678-79²⁴. In the Gozo work, Paul looks up, but not quite, at a vision of the Immaculate Conception who is not very satisfactorily composed. A glimpse of the shipwreck in the dark background immediately anchors the work to its Maltese context. 2

In the parish church at Għarb, there is a painting, representing the *Assumption with SS Paul and Ignatius of Loyola*, which hangs in a late nineteenth century frame²⁵ above the left entrance. Hanging high up on the wall, it seems to have fallen into oblivion but this is a painting of high artistic quality that merits further investigation. The canvas is the work of an artist who came under the influence of Preti. Unfortunately nothing is presently known about the work and it is not mentioned in chroniclers like De Soldanis or Achille Ferris, therefore its provenance is currently impossible to establish, but it was probably originally an altarpiece. The work is captivating for its dynamic composition, good draughtsmanship and dramatic plasticity. The latter is the result of a strong light coming from the right. St Paul creates a direct link with the faithful as he points towards the Virgin with an upraised hand. The painting mingles the iconography of the Assumption with that of the Immaculate Conception through the inclusion of the crescent moon and the sarcophagus, barely seen between the kneeling saints. The Virgin is an elegantly twisted figure that seems to point towards a considerably skilled artist. However, given the entire lack of documentation, its attribution currently remains elusive. Certainly this is among Gozo's best works of the period which should be better known. 1

The great impact of Mattia Preti, known as Il Cavalier Calabrese, is much more obvious in the titular altarpiece of Nadur parish church, depicting *SS Peter and Paul on their way to Martyrdom* that must date to the early years of the eighteenth century when it was described as recently manufactured in a 1716 report²⁶. After the death of Preti, his influence lasted through the members of his *bottega* who had various sketches and cartoons by the artist at their disposal, and also through other followers who emulated his style. The Nadur work, in fact, comes very close to an autograph lunette of the same subject in the chapel of St Peter in the Jesuit church in Valletta²⁷. The Nadur painting is a good work but it lacks the sophistication and immediacy of an autograph production. The anonymous artist, however, had sufficient skill to create a dramatic and quite effective painting. Paul is shown in the characteristic physiognomical type established by Preti. 3

Not all artist were equally sophisticated and could respond with the same strength. A rather provincial artist is the author of an altarpiece, now in the vestry of the Sannat parish church showing the *Assumption with SS Paul and Felix of Cantalice*. The painting should have been produced for the newly erected parish church in the early eighteenth century. The golden background comes from Preti but otherwise there is little to remind one of the great artist. It is, nonetheless, interesting for its charm and iconography.

As the eighteenth century developed and Preti's hold on local art diminished, Malta nurtured a local Baroque school that was inspired by new currents in Italian cities like Rome and Naples. The two main artists in the early eighteenth century were Gio Nicola Buhagiar (1698-1752) and Enrico Regnaud (1692-1764). They were both extremely prolific, but Regnaud was less gifted. For the newly constructed Għarb parish church, Regnaud produced no less than four altarpieces one of which is important to our subject. It depicts *SS Paul and Ignatius of Loyola adoring the Holy Name of Jesus*. 4 Ignatius kneels on the right, while Paul, standing on the left, turns towards the spectator whilst pointing towards the Name

of Jesus in the centre of the painting in an outburst of light surrounded by cherub heads. Regnaud was a generally dry artist, but he could be occasionally rather charming as demonstrated by the face of the seated angel holding the cartouche between the two saints. This is not among his most inspiring works, but is a typical product.

The same two saints feature in another, probably later, altarpiece that belonged to the old parish church of Xewkija, which survives in the collection of the same church. In this work, however, Paul and Ignatius, on a bank of rocks, flank a vision of the Immaculate Conception who appears in the upper part of the canvas. St Paul is not interested in the celestial vision and he gives his back to the Virgin. This curious detail can be explained because the anonymous artist copied the figure directly from a probable Francesco Zahra (1710-73) painting, dated 1757, in the church of St Roque in Valletta²⁸. This enables the establishment of a very approximate date to the Gozo painting, since, while the date in the Valletta work establishes a *terminus post quem*, a *terminus ante quem* is established in 1760, when the painting is mentioned in the Pastoral Visitation Report of that year²⁹. The work is, however, of limited artistic quality. Apart from the good rendering of St Paul, in fact, the other elements in the canvas are rather pedestrian.

Another eighteenth century artist whose activity needs to be better charted is the priest Carlo Zimech from Żebbuġ, Malta who in 1749 transferred himself to Gozo for health reasons and made Nadur his new home. Zimech has never been seriously studied but he was much more prolific than one usually assumes and there are various unknown works in Gozo that seem to betray his hand. For his adopted parish church he produced a number of works, including the choir laterals depicting *The Crucifixion of St Peter* and *The Beheading of St Paul*. According to our present knowledge, Zimech was an eclectic and fluctuating artist who could reach considerably sophisticated levels³⁰. The Nadur canvases were certainly ambitious works but the artist failed to create works of real artistic validity. In fact, they are both fragmented and their quality is rather poor, although they do contain pleasing passages. *The Beheading of St Paul*, which includes the narrative of the miracle of the three fountains, brings together well-studied figures, such as the mother and child on the right, with incoherency in the proportion of the background figures, highlighting the substantial difficulty that the artist-priest had in composing his works.

A higher level of sophistication is witnessed in the set of anonymous twelve easel paintings depicting the *Apostles*, including a *St Paul* that grace the vestry of the Cathedral Church in the Castello. These were bequeathed to this church around 1750 by the Grand Prior of the Order of St John Fra Albino Menville³¹. The date of bequest does not necessarily coincide with the date of execution, and, in fact, the rather tenebrist idiom which the paintings invariably employ may point to an earlier date. Some of the half-length representations seem to reflect an artist of considerable artistic capacities, but there is also a possibility that he was using already-established prototypes, either through paintings or engravings. The *St Paul* is one of the best representations in the set, depicted as a voluminous figure set in a dynamic pose with a large sword in hand.

The last depiction of the saint in the eighteenth century is probably that in the titular altarpiece of the *Assumption* at the Gozo Cathedral by Michele Busuttill (1762-1831). Busuttill became Malta's foremost artist at the turn of the nineteenth century, even though he was a decidedly limited artist. Nonetheless, the Gozo Cathedral painting is certainly his best work, iconographically and compositionally inspired by Annibale Carracci's (1560-1609) famous interpretation of the subject at the Cerasi Chapel in S Maria del Popolo in Rome. Paul is seen on the left hand side flanking the open sarcophagus with his head turned towards the Virgin that is being carried by angels to the heavens. His sword, together with Peter's keys, is placed in the foreground. The commission dates to 1791 when the Cathedral Chapter decided to substitute the old retable with this new work³². Unfortunately, Busuttill's painting does not indicate any of the new and exciting stirrings of Neo-Classicism that the artist should have been familiar with in Rome during his sojourn at the

Accademia di San Luca. Most of his works in Malta, in fact, continue to draw on the Maltese Baroque eighteenth century tradition.

Two paintings, representing *The Consecration of Publius* and *Peter's Boat*, in the collection of the Nadur parish church, come from a very close source to Michele Busuttil. None of them is artistically exciting. They are reputedly the work of his painter-son Clemente (1810-83) who, together with his older brother Luigi (1801-78), established themselves on Gozo. However, the works are not documented and the attribution should be treated with caution³³. The *Consecration of Publius*, in particular, is strongly reminiscent of Michele's known works. The hovering symbol-carrying putto³⁴ and the type of heavy, deeply-creased drapery folds seem, in fact, to betray Michele's hand. The best passage in this painting is the head of Paul, which shows considerably skilful facial modelling, but otherwise it is a disappointing work. If the altarpiece of the *Calling of St Andrew* at Fontana parish church is indeed Clemente's work³⁵, then the Nadur canvases are very unlikely to be by Clemente's hand.

The Nineteenth Century

From the 1820's, Maltese art was dominated by the tenets of the Nazarenes and the Purists. These two artistic movements, stemming from Johann Friedrich Overbeck (1789-1869) and Tommaso Minardi (1787-1871) respectively, were generated primarily in Rome. Through the many Maltese artists who studied in Rome throughout the century, their ideals were imported to Malta and established as models. Minardi, in particular, was almost raised to legendary status. Chaste iconography, cool colours and insistence on line and purity of concept, became established hallmarks in Maltese art but were so repeated that they led to a dead end. Among the artists who followed Minardi's ideas, one finds Ignazio Carlo Cortis (1826-98) and Giuseppe Bonnici (1834-1900), who were both commissioned works for Gozo.

Cortis was certainly the better artist but he has, unfortunately, been much underestimated. His *oeuvre*, is, in fact, in dire need of a reappraisal. Although his artistic quality fluctuated, he could reach considerably high peaks in his career with works that are both refined and monumental. Cortis became a much devoted follower of Minardi and he based himself in Rome, returning temporarily to Malta to execute several important commissions. In Gozo, Cortis was responsible for the fresco decoration of the vault and apse over the choir of the Gozo Cathedral (started 1888), a fine scheme that was unfortunately destroyed in the early twentieth century. Before that important commission, however, he had received other assignments among which a small but fine altarpiece of *St Paul* for Kerċem parish church where it is still preserved *in situ*. The painting is well documented and was executed in Rome in 1868 for the sum of 260 *scudi*¹⁷. Paul is a nobly conceived and monumental figure, depicted with a raised right hand as he boldly grasps a large sword with the other, while waves batter the wreck of the ship in the background. The drapery folds are slightly reminiscent of Melchiorre Cafà's (1636-67) famous seventeenth century prototype at St Paul's Shipwreck Church, Valletta of c.1659.

The superiority of Cortis to most of his contemporaries is amply manifested when one compares the Kerċem canvas with Giuseppe Bonnici's 1879 titular altarpiece for the church dedicated to the saint in Marsalforn Bay. Bonnici, who hailed from Senglea was particularly prolific³⁷. His works are diligently and charmingly painted and precisely drawn but never reach high artistic standards. His works are easily identified through their blonde palette and figures that invariably stand frozen with emotionless faces. All these elements are evident in the Marsalforn altarpiece. The artist chooses the dramatic moment when Paul shakes off the viper into the crackling fire to the great amazement of his companions, but Bonnici's diluted Purist disposition drains off all the energy that one usually expects in such work. The painting remains a testimony to an outdated art that will soon be forced to change under the rising star of Giuseppe Cali (1846-1930).



In 1859, the Italian Giovanni Gallucci (1815-after 1882), a limited artist, somehow managed to acquire the prestigious commission of the re-decoration of the Mdina Cathedral dome³⁸. Subsequently his services became quite requested, especially in Gozo. Many of these works like those at Għarb, Xagħra and Xewkija parish churches were destroyed. Among the survivors there are four canvases of the Evangelists at Sannat parish church. The altarpiece of *St Paul*, produced around 1880, seems to share the same idiosyncracies of the Evangelists, and, moreover, of the other altarpieces in the nave. The matter, however, requires further verification. Paul is depicted against a stormy landscape, and the viper is unusually depicted in the course of being consumed by the flames.

1900-1950

Maltese art at the turn of the twentieth century was dominated by two artists: Giuseppe Cali and Lazzaro Pisani (1854-1932). They had risen to prominence from the 1880's onwards, working primarily for the Church. Cali³⁹, an Italian born in Malta and trained in Naples, was a virtuoso and painted with speed and ease; Pisani was an academic, trained in Rome, and worked carefully and slowly. He did not, however, possess Cali's directness and inventive fantasy, and his quality fluctuated. Gozo benefited considerably from the brush of both artists.



Cali is the author of two canvases depicting the saint in the churches of Gozo. Both are late works. A full standing representation is a pendant work flanking the titular altarpiece in the Christ the Nazarene church at Xagħra, while a small oval sottoquadro is found beneath the titular in the old parish church at Għajnsielem. The latter was actually donated by the artist himself, as attested by an inscription on the back of the canvas⁴⁰, probably in gratitude for the various commissions that this church bestowed on him⁴¹ in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Xagħra painting should date from around 1910, when the new church in the outskirts of the village was blessed. St Paul is shown standing within an architectural setting, pointing towards a heavy book which he is lifting with his left hand. Although Cali was by now an old artist there is still considerable vibrancy in his works.



In the opening years of the century, Lazzaro Pisani also received numerous commissions. Before he was awarded the important commission of the decoration of the entire ceiling of Nadur parish church, on which he worked from 1913 onwards, Pisani also produced a number of paintings for the parish church of Fontana, just outside Rabat. A very interesting *Beheading of St Paul* was painted in 1906⁴². It is well painted and the muted palette makes the work considerably attractive. Pisani's most lasting contribution was, however, the above-mentioned Nadur commission showing scenes from the *Lives of SS Peter and Paul*, a work he was entrusted with after winning a competition for an altarpiece of *St Anthony of Padua* in 1910.

After the new dome to the designs of Francesco Saverio Sciortino (1875-1958) was completed in 1913, Pisani dedicated himself to the project⁴³. The dome was unveiled in 1915 and he subsequently continued to work on the choir, transepts, nave and side chapels. One of the dome segments represents a kneeling St Paul while another shows angels carrying some of Paul's attributes. The dome is the best element in the whole church, and the artist's invention, as amply manifested in the relative *bozzetti* in pencil and oil in the collection of the same church, is here rather strong. St Paul features in three of the main paintings on the ceiling that depict *Christ Entrusting SS Peter and Paul with their Evangelical Mission*, *St Paul Elevated to the Third Heaven*, and *St Paul Preaching in Rome*. These works are marred by inconsistencies, especially in those areas where Pisani tried to create a *sotto in su* element. Perhaps the most charming, original and unusual depictions in the Nadur ceiling are the monochrome representations that flank the windows in the choir and transepts. That in the choir includes a portrait medallion of the saint that is held above a depiction of the basilica of S Paolo fuori le Mura in Rome. The scheme was terminated in 1922 when Pisani painted on the apse above the organ balcony, *SS Peter and Paul as Lords of the World*. Its fresh bozzetto survives in the parish collection.

As soon as Francesco Saverio Sciortino completed the Nadur dome, he emigrated to Canada. He only returned to his native island in 1939, remaining in Malta until 1954⁴⁴. During this period he produced various other works for the Nadur parish church⁴⁵. It was apparently at this time that various low reliefs, statuettes or other plaster models made their way to various private homes at Nadur. Some of these were recently presented to the parish collection, and include a low relief inspired by the Pretian titular altarpiece signed and dated 1946 at the back. There is another impressive plaster cast of a head of a bearded man reputedly, held to be St Paul, which also belonged to the artist, but not necessarily by his hand⁴⁶. Sciortino was one of Malta's greatest sculptors whose works should be regarded on a par with those of his younger and more famous brother Antonio (1879-1947).

In the opening years of the twentieth century, the Italian artistic presence in Malta that was established in the late nineteenth century was consolidated. The artist Attilio Palombi was summoned to Malta to decorate the ceiling of St Paul's Shipwreck church in Valletta in the very early years of the century⁴⁷. Palombi was not an exceptional artist but he could reach rather happy moments. The quality of the Valletta ceiling fluctuates greatly but there are some smaller works that contain considerable force and skill. Among the finest works he produced during his Maltese sojourn one finds the two pendant canvases of *SS Peter and Paul* at St George's parish church, Rabat⁴⁸. The *St Paul*, painted in 1906, is a monumentally and straightforwardly conceived work that evokes certain grandeur imbued with naturalism⁴⁹.

Another Italian artist who came to Malta in the first decade of the twentieth century was Virginio Monti (1852-1942). Monti belonged to that generation of eclectic artists who were very fashionable in Rome and worked assiduously for the Church. Among his important Roman commissions, there are the *quadri riportati* on the nave of S Andrea della Valle. In Malta, Monti was first engaged in the fresco decoration of the ceiling of the Basilica of St Helen, Birkirkara, which is a significant work on various levels⁵⁰. In the 1920's he received the commission for the decoration of the ceiling of Xaghra Basilica, but save for the dome and pendentives, his work there is much diluted and derivative, especially when compared to the Birkirkara works. After the main decoration was completed he also decorated the domes of the side chapels. The *Conversion of St Paul* is depicted directly on the wall of the chapel dome dedicated to the saint. As with other passages at Xaghra, the ageing Monti used a prototype of the same subject for his composition. In fact, he based his idea on Vincenzo Camuccini's (1771-1844) painting at the Basilica of S Paolo fuori le Mura in Rome. A fresh and dramatic bozzetto for this work is known and is preserved in a private collection in Gozo⁵¹.



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In the 1920's, one of the pioneering artists in the development of Maltese 20th century art Robert Caruana Dingli (1882-1940) - settled for a number of years in Gozo⁵². The reason for this move does not seem to have been ever precisely explained, since the island did not offer much scope for an artist of the calibre of Robert. Moreover, in Gozo, Caruana Dingli was offered to produce works which were not really within his artistic grasp, since he was not an artist sufficiently suited for the religious sphere. Nonetheless, his paintings for the sister island are rather numerous and range from altarpieces to vault paintings. Some of the works, in particular the altarpieces with a Marian theme that he produced for Ta' Pinu Sanctuary, are important because they betray a more Modern approach and a changing artistic ethos a far cry from what was actually accepted in most ecclesiastical circles. However, when he came to produce one of his largest paintings in this sphere the titular altarpiece for the new church dedicated to St Paul's Shipwreck at Munxar it seems that the artist was shackled to model his St Paul according to Melchiorre Cafà's example. This choice seems to have disoriented the artist considerably and the painting suffers from a crowded composition and a juxtaposition of incompatible elements and ideas.

With the gradual retirement of Giuseppe Cali, his son Ramiro Raffaele (1882-1945) started acquiring a number of commissions⁵³. His father's great reputation certainly stood him in good stead. Ramiro did not possess his father's virtuosic character and anatomical mastery but he could, at times, reach levels of considerable artistic quality. On Gozo, the quality of his works fluctuates. The best work is certainly the *Virgin of the Rosary* at the Fontana parish church. Apart from this canvas, there are several with a Pauline theme. These include *The Miracle of the Viper* on one of the side altars at the Xagħra parish church, which he produced in 1915⁵⁴ and for which he received £15⁵⁵. This is quite a satisfying work in which St Paul has just shaken off the deadly viper into the fire. This accounts for the agitated folds of his cloak. The artist therefore selects a particular moment as a Roman soldier and a fellow prisoner kneel in awe and amazement. The latter is well modelled and is actually the focal point of the composition. Flashes of his father's *verismo* are seen in the burning logs in the foreground. From 1926 onwards⁵⁶, for the newly built parish church at Għasri, Ramiro also produced a number of canvases that include two altarpieces and the choir laterals. On the right transept, flanking the altarpiece of the *Virgin of the Rosary* by Gianni Vella (1885-1977), there are two pendant works by the artist including a *St Paul adoring the Virgin*. This is a small, yet pleasant work in which the artist brings together good composition, striking tonal qualities and careful draughtsmanship.

8

Late in life, the artist was also commissioned by Monsignor Spiridione Gauci, the first rector of the newly-built church at Munxar, to paint the choir lateral canvases, representing *The Consecration of Publius* and *The Healing of Publius' Father*. The paintings were put in place in February 1940, as attested by a written pencil note on

the stretcher of one of the paintings⁵⁷. They are both disappointing works and show an artist in great decline, also due to health deterioration. The invention is dry and many figures are, unfortunately, awkwardly posed. Their *bozzetti*, which survive in a private collection in Gozo, are much better conceived. Originally, the commission was intended for Giuseppe Briffa (1901-87), an artist of great capabilities and at the time at the start of his career. It is indeed a great pity that the project, dated 1930, never progressed more than the invention stage, as attested by two sketches that survive in a Gozo private collection⁵⁸. The reasons for the abortion of the Briffa commission are not presently known.

Another local artist who became very prolific and much sought after from the early twentieth century onwards was Gianni Vella, for a time Palombi's apprentice. Vella eventually moved to Rome and had also been in Paris where he also saw Impressionist art at the source. Vella was a brilliant easel painter, showing eloquent flashes of Art Nouveau and Impressionism, but many of his ecclesiastical works are rather poor and derivative. Many of his works can be admired in the churches of Gozo. His first important commission came in 1914, when he started to work on the vault decoration of the Gozo Cathedral⁵⁹. The tremendous fluctuations in the artist's quality are immediately detected through a comparison between the first and last passages that he completed⁶⁰. St Paul is painted twice: as a half length figure in the roundel above the right window in the choir and as a full-figure in the entrance apse. Later on in his career, Vella also produced the entire decoration of the Qala parish church, including the side domes and some of the altarpieces. That for the chapel of St Paul, as one enters the church from the left façade entrance, was produced in the 1940's⁶¹ and the altarpiece was produced at the same time, in 1943⁶², when it substituted an earlier work by an obscure artist who signed his works C. Mangion, and which survives in the sacristy⁶³. Buttigieg says that this Mangion lived in Mgarr, Gozo and was a lawyer⁶⁴. Vella's new altarpiece, however, was not original and is actually a copy of a canvas by his master Attilio Palombi that was sent from Rome in 1891, today in the Convent of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition at Paola⁶⁵. Whether Vella was requested to produce a copy of Palombi's work is not known⁶⁶, but there are various other examples which attest to Vella plagiarising other artist's works.

Even when Malta was producing its own accomplished artists, the Italian artistic presence on the island did not abate. The obsession that anything Italian was better than the Maltese product continued. Giovanni Battista Conti (1878-1971), author of various works in Roman churches⁶⁷, was brought to Malta to paint the dome of the church of the Annunciation at Vittoriosa on the eve of World War II⁶⁸. Conti was a decidedly retardateur artist but he was an excellent draughtsman and his better compositions could create very pleasing effects. Soon after the ending of war hostilities, Conti was engaged on another larger commission, this time in Gozo: the decoration of the whole ceiling of the parish church of St George in Victoria that kicked off in the 1940's. Within the whole complex which highlights both the capabilities and limitations of this artist who put great emphasis on draughtsmanship and exactitude, St Paul appears two times. On the choir apse representing *St George in Glory*, Paul is represented standing prominently on a bank of clouds on the right, engaged in conversation with Peter, who is seated. This passage is among the most interesting and captivating in the whole composition. The other Paul that Conti depicted is featured in the apse of the left transept, as one of the saints who appeared on the bastions of Mdina together with SS George and Agatha in the siege of 1429. Paul is represented with sword in hand on a charging horse.

The first real move towards a modern artistic sensibility in Maltese sacred art is seen in the works of Emvin Cremona (1919-87), himself one of Malta's greatest Modern Art pioneers in the twentieth century⁶⁹. Gozo has a particular place in Cremona's development as a church painter since it was the hill-top parish church of Żebbuġ that first received works by the artist as early as 1945⁷⁰. Soon after, in 1948, Cremona signed the transept altarpiece of the *Shipwreck of St Paul*, a donation of the Dimech family. This, however, was the second version of the altarpiece, since his first work was deemed

too modern and was, therefore, rejected. The exact present whereabouts of the original altarpiece are not known, but the artist had donated the painting to a Maltese priest who had a mission in Africa⁷¹. A burly and frontal St Paul takes centrestage in the present painting, surrounded by soldiers and natives. The painting is full of signs of things to come, but this is a youthful work and the subsequent sophistication is yet to arrive. It remains, however, a very important statement and a clear indication of the artist's ambitions. It is unfortunate that many of the artist's ideas were not picked up in many projects of ecclesiastical decoration of the late twentieth century.

Conclusion

The works of art discussed in this short study span a period of around seven hundred years. They were produced at a time when the Christian faith mattered greatly for the Maltese community. Besides their religious dimension, however, these artistic creations are pertinent specimens of a rich artistic patrimony that is surprising in such a small island community, even though the artistic level was not necessarily always high. In fact, as the Pauline cult was deeply rooted in the collective imagination of the people, the effigy of Paul the Apostle was also represented in works of a more popular and common nature. These included limestone statues on church parvises, church interiors, and street niches, wooden and papier-mâché statuettes for altar gradines, small clay devotional statuettes in domestic settings, processional statues, besides various representations on liturgical *objets d'art* and items of church furniture. Many of these are scantily documented and therefore they elude a proper investigation. However, they largely follow Cafà's prototype. Within this popular vein, it is therefore fitting to conclude with a mention of the Munxar 1933 titular statue of *St Paul* by Agostino Camilleri (1885-1979) and the earlier representation of the saint together with his companion Peter in the Nadur titular statue, produced in France by the firm *Galard et fils* in 1882. Both examples reflect the popularity that their manufacturers achieved in their respective historical time-frames in Gozo.

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¹ Mario Buhagiar, 'St Paul's Shipwreck and Early Christianity in Malta', in John Azzopardi (ed.), *The Cult of St Paul in the Christian Churches and in the Maltese Tradition*, Malta 2006, pp.155-60.

² Discussed in detail in Mario Buhagiar, 'The St Paul Shipwreck Controversy: An Assessment of the Source Material', in Keith Sciberras (ed.), *Proceedings of History Week 1993*, Malta 1997, pp.181-213.

³ *Ibid.*, p.186.

⁴ Buhagiar 2006, p.156.

⁵ Buhagiar 1993.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.204.

⁷ Gian Pietro Agius de Soldanis, *Il Gozo Antico e Moderno, Sacro e Profano*, [*Għawdex bil-Ġrajja Tiegħu*] (Maltese translation by Ġuzeppi Farrugia), 1936, Vol.II, pp.2-8. After recounting the Gozo episode, De Soldanis attacks a 1730 treatise, published in Venice, written by the Benedictine abbot Ignazio Georgi, in which the latter contested and discarded the claims of Malta as the site of St Paul's shipwreck in favour of the island of Meleda on the Adriatic coast. Details in Buhagiar 1993, pp.187-188.

⁸ Joseph Bezzina, *Xewkija: The First Village of Gozo*, Malta 2004, p.59.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ The depictions of St Paul on Malta have been the subject of a recent undergraduate study: Sarah M. Borg, *The Iconography of St Paul in Maltese Paintings*, unpublished B.A.(Hons.) dissertation, University of Malta 2008. Several works in Gozo are unfortunately not mentioned.

- ¹¹ The cult of St Ursula in Gozo started in 1614, when the bust with the relics of the saint was donated to the Assumption church in the Castello by the Governor of Gozo, the Castilian Knight Fra Eugenio Ramirez Maldonato. Details in Mario Buhagiar, 'Works of art in the Gozo Citadel: an art historical appreciation', in *Melita Historica*, No.14, 2004, p.101.
- ¹² On artistic patronage in Gozo, see Paul Muscat, *Religious Art in Gozo (1500-1899): A Study of the Patronage Patterns and the Mechanics of Ecclesiastical Commissions*, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Malta 2008.
- ¹³ Apparently the cult of St Publius did not exist in Malta before the seventeenth century and was greatly fanned up in the eighteenth century in the writings of Padre Pelagio and A.A. Caruana. Details in Buhagiar 1993.
- ¹⁴ Details in Mario Buhagiar, 'Paintings in Gozo A Concise Analytical History', in Charles Cini (ed.), *Gozo The Roots of an Island*, Malta 1990, p.84.
- ¹⁵ Verbal communication with Professor Mario Buhagiar, 5th January 2009.
- ¹⁶ *Infra*.
- ¹⁷ Details in Mario Buhagiar, Stanley Fiorini, *Mdina The Cathedral City of Malta*, Malta 1996, Vol. I, p.175. The stoup was dismantled after the 1693 earthquake and was used as a makeshift baptismal font at the Carmelite church at Mdina which functioned as a cathedral until the new building was completed. The person behind the donation was probably Canon Francesco Mangion who had been a major benefactor of the new Gharb parish church that was being erected during this period.
- ¹⁸ Mario Buhagiar, *The Late Medieval Art and Architecture of the Maltese Islands*, Malta 2005, pp.232-235.
- ¹⁹ Discussed in Mario Buhagiar 2004, p.96.
- ²⁰ The Bir Miftuh altarpiece at Gudja also includes SS Peter and Paul.
- ²¹ This church had been built on lands belonging to the Cathedral of Malta in a location that is not given by the author. The other two standing churches in De Soldanis' times dedicated to St Paul were the one in Marsalforn and that in the Angevin Cemetery next to the Augustinian Priory in Rabat. De Soldanis 1936, pp.63-64;116.
- ²² Bernadine Scicluna, *A Stylistic Analysis of Stefano and Alessio Erardi's paintings*, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Malta 1997, p.102.
- ²³ Preti is discussed in Keith Sciberras, *L-Arti Barokka f'Malta*, Malta 2003, pp.43-58.
- ²⁴ Bernadine Scicluna 1997, p.224. The same face of St Paul appears in a St Jude Thaddeus in the collection of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Valletta. See Plates 32 and 33.
- ²⁵ There are six identical frames hanging in the nave and transepts, containing different paintings. For a discussion of the frames see Mark Sagona, *The Designs of Abram Gatt, Francesco Saverio Sciortino, Emanuele Buhagiar and Giuseppe Galea for the churches of Gozo*, unpublished B.A.(Hons.) dissertation, University of Malta 1999. There are six identical frames hanging in the church.
- ²⁶ Details in Buhagiar 1990, p.96.
- ²⁷ Published in Erminia Corace (ed.), *Mattia Preti*, Rome 1989, p.109.
- ²⁸ The painting is wrongly published as attributed to Antoine Favray in Stanley Farrugia Randon (ed.), *St Paul: his Life, the Shipwreck Tradition and Culture in Malta and Elsewhere*, Malta 2000, p.113. However, such passages in the painting, like the scroll carrying putto should leave no doubt about the paternity of the work. I would like to thank Sarah Borg for making this reference available.
- ²⁹ Bezzina 2004, p.70.
- ³⁰ Among his better works there is the titular altarpiece of the *Nativity of the Virgin* at Xaghra parish church. Recent stylistic investigation which was done under my supervision has established Zimech as the author of the work. See Daphne M. Caruana, *The Xaghra Parish Church: Art and Architecture*, unpublished B.A. (Hons.) dissertation, University of Malta 2007, pp.22-27, footnote 94.
- ³¹ Joseph Bezzina, *The Gozo Cathedral and the Cathedral Museum: History and Guide*, Gaultana 18, Malta 1999, p.41. The paintings are discussed in Paul Muscat, *A Catalogue of Works of Art in the Cathedral of Gozo and its Museum*, unpublished B.A.(Hons.) dissertation, University of Malta 2005, pp.69-70.
- ³² The painting is discussed in Mario Buhagiar 2004, and Paul Muscat 2005, pp.62-66.
- ³³ Alexander Bonnici, *In-Nadur: Grajjiet Kollegġjata u Bażilika Mxebilkin fil-Ħajja Soċjali ta' Ghawdex*, Malta 1988, Vol.II, p.66. Bonnici publishes the two paintings under Clemente's name without any documentary justification.
- ³⁴ This has to be compared to Michele's titular altarpiece of the old parish church, Ghajnsielem (1819).
- ³⁵ Buhagiar 1990, p.110.
- ³⁶ Muscat 2008, pp.121-122.
- ³⁷ Nadine Briffa, *Giuseppe Bonnici: A Critical Appreciation and an Annotated Gazetteer of his works and an appendix on Aristide Bonnici*, unpublished B.A.(Hons.) dissertation, University of Malta 2002, p.67.
- ³⁸ For Gallucci and the Mdina dome commission: Antonio Espinosa Rodriguez, 'The Painting of the Cathedral Dome at Mdina: A Case Study on Ecclesiastical Artistic Patronage in Malta in the 19th and early 20th century', in Joseph F. Grima (ed.), *Proceedings of History Week 1986*, Malta 1986, pp.39-68.
- ³⁹ On this artist see Emmanuel Fiorentino and Louis A. Grasso, *Giuseppe Cali (1846-1930)*, Malta 1991.
- ⁴⁰ Verified by the author in November 2005.
- ⁴¹ There are, in all, eight works by the artist.
- ⁴² For Lazzaro Pisani, see Keith Sciberras, *Lazzaro Pisani as an Ecclesiastical Artist*, unpublished B.Ed.(Hons.) dissertation, University of Malta 1992, and Lino Borg, *The Maria Rosa Pisani Bequest*, Malta 2008.

- ⁴³ For the story of the Nadur dome, see Dumink Camilleri, *75 Anniversarju tal-Koppla tan-Nadur*, Malta 1990.
- ⁴⁴ Mark Sagona, *Francesco Saverio Sciortino: 50 Sena minn Mewtu (1958-2008)*, unpublished public lecture delivered at the 12th May Band Club, Żebbuġ, Malta, 21st November 2008.
- ⁴⁵ Discussed in Mark Sagona 1999.
- ⁴⁶ This belonged to the late Can. Anton Borg and was given to him by Sciortino himself. According to one of Can. Borg's relatives, Can. Borg always stated that this was a portrayal of the saint. The modelling of the face, is, however, distinctly different from the artist's known works and seems to exclude an autograph work.
- ⁴⁷ The first works at St Paul's were completed in 1902. Details in Christian Attard, *An Italian Artistic Presence in 19th and 20th century Malta 1850-1960*, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Malta 1999.
- ⁴⁸ It is not a surprise that the Żejtun painter Toussaint Busuttill considered them as his best works. Recounted in Attard 1999, p.132.
- ⁴⁹ The *St Paul* is signed and dated. An inscription in the upper part of the painting states that it was paid by Joseph Grech and his sons George and Franco. The paintings substituted two late 17th century statues of the saints that today adorn the façade of Fontana parish church. The statues were removed as part of the remodelling exercise undertaken in the choir and transepts at St George's parish church under the supervision of Mgr Giuseppe Farrugia (1852-1925) known as *tal-Vers*.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.145-151.
- ⁵¹ Published in Daphne M. Caruana 2007, Plates 39 (a), 39 (b).
- ⁵² Details in Anastasia Anastasi, *Robert Caruana Dingli*, unpublished B.A.(Hons.) dissertation, University of Malta 1999.
- ⁵³ The oeuvre of the artist is discussed in Davida Flores, *Ramiro Raffaele Cali: a Critical Appreciation and a Gazetteer of his Paintings*, unpublished B.A.(Hons.) dissertation, University of Malta 2002.
- ⁵⁴ The painting is signed and dated. Caruana 2007, pp.55-56.
- ⁵⁵ Flores 2002, p.34.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.42-44.
- ⁵⁷ The inscription reads: "*Questi quadri sono stati collocati il dì 6 Febbrajo (sic) 1940 Mons Spiridione Gauci*". The inscription was detected during a recent cleaning and varnishing exercise by artist Joseph Sagona.
- ⁵⁸ See Nicoline Sagona, 'The works of Giuseppe Briffa in the Churches of Gozo', in *Treasures of Malta*, No.41, Easter 2008, Vol.XIV, no.2, p.15.
- ⁵⁹ Details in Paul Muscat 2005, pp.84-91.
- ⁶⁰ The artist started from the choir area. The last to be produced was the apse above the main portal, which is of a considerably poor quality.
- ⁶¹ Anton Buttigieg, *Il-Knisja tal-Qala*, Malta 1990, pp.78-79. The decoration is made up of angels in the dome and four seated saints connected with St Paul in the pendentives.
- ⁶² The signed painting is inscribed: "LORETUS XUEREB DONAVIT 1943".
- ⁶³ This Mangion should not be confused with the Maltese Modern Art pioneer Carmenu Mangion (1905-97). The painting is published with a wrong date in Sarah M. Borg 2008, see chronological gazetteer.
- ⁶⁴ Buttigieg 1990, p.43. Another work by this unknown artist is a portrait in the sacristy of the Augustinian Priory in Victoria, Gozo.
- ⁶⁵ Attard 1999, pp.115-116. Originally the painting was in the convent of the same nuns at Sliema. Sarah M. Borg 2008 wrongly attributes the Qala painting to Palombi, see Plate 57. Another similar work by Gianni Vella is also found at Gżira parish church, also wrongly attributed to Palombi by Sarah M. Borg 2008, Plate 56.
- ⁶⁶ This is unlikely since Palombi's original was little known.
- ⁶⁷ His works in Rome include paintings in the churches of S Giuseppe al Trionfale and S Maria in Campitelli.
- ⁶⁸ Details in Mikiel Fsadni, *Id-Dumnikani Maltin fi Żmien il-Gwerra*, Malta 1977.
- ⁶⁹ Mark Sagona, 'Emvin Cremona (1919-87) and the Rise of Modern Sensibilities in Maltese Sacred Art', in *Treasures of Malta*, No.42, Summer 2008, Vol.XIV, no.3, pp.17-25.
- ⁷⁰ These are the choir paintings of the *Annunciation* and the *Visitation of the Virgin*.
- ⁷¹ Verbal communication with Anna Cremona, the artist's daughter, 15th January 2009. Anna recalls her mother recounting how the painting was taken to Gozo in a truck but was not liked. The artist rolled up the painting and eventually donated the work to the African mission of this priest. Unfortunately no more details are presently known about this work.

St Paul and the island of Gozo

Fr. Geoffrey George Attard

After the celebration of the year 2000 commemorating the birth of Jesus, Pope Benedict XVI called for the celebration of the second millennium of the birth of Christ's greatest apostle, Paul of Tarsus. The Pontiff's call was received with gladness not only by members of the Catholic Church scattered around the globe but by the many other Christian churches and denominations who recognise in the apostle Paul the first preacher of Christ's Gospel away from Palestine.

Paul; apostle of the Gentiles

In the Acts of the Apostles Paul's companion Luke provides a vivid narration of Paul's missionary work and the beginnings of the Church. Among other important issues, he narrates the shipwreck that St Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles experienced with his men on his journey to the eternal city where he was to be martyred. According to tradition he spent three months on the island of Malta; an ancient tradition holds that he may have also visited the island of Gozo. Although there is no documentation to prove such a thesis, it is quite probable that he did visit the island during such a relatively long period.

St Paul on Gozo

Scholars argue that if Paul was ready to face great troubles to preach the name of the Saviour in Asia Minor and Greece so much so that he may have even visited Spain, he surely would not have found it a problem to visit a small island a few miles north west of Malta; after all he did proceed to Sicily on his way to Rome. Both Gozitan historian Can. Gian Piet Agius de Soldanis in his *Il Gozo Antico e Moderno Sacro e Profano* and Gozitan genius Mgr. Giuseppe Farrugia in his *San Paolo Apostolo e Padre dei Gozitani* (1915) did present almost as a fact the visit of Paul to the legendary island of Calypso. Farrugia, who was also Dean of Gozo's Cathedral Chapter and secretary to Bishop Pietru Pace wrote his book to defend the apostolicity of the Christian faith on the island of Gozo; a Benedictine monk known as Fra Giorgi of Meleda had written a book to state that St Paul converted only the people of Malta but not those of Gozo and Mgr. Farrugia felt that this thesis had to be disproved. After all Giorgi was contradicting what A. Lapide had written.

The voice of St Paul

It is believed that while Paul was preaching in Imdina, his voice was heard on the island. A statue of the Apostle Paul was erected by the people of Xewkija just behind their parish church to immortalise this tradition. The people of ta' Sannat, another ancient village of Gozo, also erected a statue in honour of Saint Paul in



The Statue erected at the back of Xewkija Parish Church



The Sannat Statue found on the main door of Palina Palace at Ta' Ċenċ

1688 when their village was given the status of a parish sustaining the tradition that the voice of the apostle was heard from the area known as Ta' Ċenċ. This event was documented by Capuchin Pelagio Mifsud Piscopo of Haż-Żebbuġ, Malta. Maltese poet Gann Frangisk Bonamico is also quoted by De Soldanis as one of those local writers who immortalised from a literary point-of-view St Paul's visit to Malta and the acceptance and embracing of the Christian faith by the people of both Malta and Gozo; his poem is quoted in his footnotes as *In Gaudia melit*. Besides there is a strong tradition which says that the Apostle Paul entered the harbour of Marsalforn and preached the Gospel to the people who lived there; as a reminder a church was built in his honour which is still dedicated to him. The present church in Marsalforn stands on the same site; in the seventeenth century Governor Cheltres of Gozo built a new church there. The Pauline cult was further established in Gozo with the erection of a new parish dedicated to him in Munxar in 1957.



Giuseppe Bonnici,
The Shipwreck of St Paul, 1879,
Titular Altarpiece,
Church of St Paul, Marsalforn



St Paul's Church, Marsalforn

CATALOGUE OF EXHIBITS



ATTRIBUTED TO THE MASTER OF THE BIR MIFTUH ALTARPIECE, *St. Paul*, mid 16th century, Panel from the Santa Maria Retable, Gozo Cathedral Museum, Victoria



UNKNOWN 17TH CENTURY MASTER, *St. Paul*, late 17th cent., Gozo Cathedral Vestry

Paintings



CARLO IGNATIO CORTIS (1826-98), *St Paul*, 1868, Kercem Parish Church



FOLLOWER OF FRANCESCO ZAHRA,
*The Immaculate Conception with SS Paul
and Ignatius of Loyola*, c.1760, Xewkija
Parish Church Collection



ATTRIBUTED TO CLEMENTE BUSUTTIL (1810-
83), *The Consecration of Publius*, First half of the 19th
century, Nadur Parish Church Collection



UNKNOWN BRITISH
PAINTER, *St. Paul Preaching*,
Late 19th Cent., Private
Collection.



UNKNOWN SICILIAN PAINTER, *The Shipwreck of St Paul*,
Late 19th cent., Copy after titular altarpiece of St. Paul's
Shipwreck Parish Church, Valletta by Matteo Perez d'Aleccio
(1547-1616).



UNKNOWN MALTESE
PAINTER, *St Paul*, Early 19th
century, Capuchins Friary,
Victoria.



UNKNOWN SICILIAN PAINTER, *The Shipwreck of St. Paul*,
Late 19th cent., Copy after titular altarpiece of St. Paul's Parish
Church, Rabat, Malta by Stefano Erardi (1630-1716).

Paintings



MARIO CAFFARO RORE (1910-2001), *St Paul on Malta*, 1993, Private Collection



MARIO CAFFARO RORE, *Martyrdom of St. Paul*, c.1995, Private Collection.



MARIO CAFFARO RORE, *The Shipwreck of St Paul*, 1999, St. George's Basilica Collection, Victoria.



GIUSEPPE CALÌ (1846-1930), *St. Paul*, c.1914, Old parish church of the Virgin of Loreto, Ghajnsielem.



TOUSSAINT BUSUTTIL (1912-94), *St Paul*, c.1940, Mr Joe Camilleri Collection.



WILLIE APAP (1918-70), *The Shipwreck of St Paul*, 1960, Apostolic Nuntiature, Tal-Virtu', Rabat, Malta.



ESPRIT BARTHET (1919-99), *St Paul*, c.1960, Private Collection.



GEORGE FENECH (b.1926), *St. Paul in Malta*, 1997 Private Collection

Paintings



JOSEPH SAGONA (b.1942), *St Paul*,
2008, Private Collection



MARK SAGONA (b.1976), *St Paul*, 2009,
Private Collection



AUSTIN CAMILLERI (b.1972), *St Paul*, 2002,
Private Collection.



JOHN GRIMA (b.1967), *St Paul*, 2009,
Private Collection.



LAZZARO PISANI (1854-1932), *St Paul in Glory*, Bozzetto for dome decoration at Nadur Parish Church, c.1913, Nadur Parish Church Collection



LAZZARO PISANI, *Angels Carrying the Attributes of St Paul*, Bozzetto for dome decoration at Nadur Parish Church, c.1913, Nadur Parish Church Collection



LAZZARO PISANI, *SS Peter and Paul as Lords of the World*, Bozzetto for Nadur Parish Church, c.1922, Nadur Parish Church Collection



G. CEFAIL (active late 19th cent.), *The Consecration of Publius*, 1886, Bozzetto for Street Decoration for St Paul's Feast, Valletta, Private Collection.



PAUL CAMILLERI CAUCHI (b.1940), *St Paul*, 2008, Private Collection.



PAUL CAMILLERI CAUCHI, *The Shipwreck of St Paul*, 1987, Bozzetto for Naxxar Parish Church.



PAUL CAMILLERI CAUCHI, *The Consecration of Publius*, 1989, Bozzetto for Naxxar Parish Church



GIANNI VELLA (1885-1977), *The Beheading of St Paul*, Bozzetto for Competition held for the decoration of St Paul's Church, Rabat, Malta, Private Collection.



RAMIRO RAFFAELE CALÌ (1882-1945), *St Paul Healing Publius' Father*, c.1940, Private Collection.



JOSEPH SAGONA (b.1942), *Design for Statue Predella with the Shipwreck of St Paul*, 1985, Scaled Design for Titular Statue Predella at Munxar Parish Church, Private Collection.



ALESSANDRO ALGARDI, 1598-1654),
The Beheading of St. Paul, 1680, Wignacourt
Museum, Rabat, Malta (Previously on Altar
of St Paul's Grotto).



SICULO-ROMANESQUE SCHOOL, *Two
Male Saints*, c.1300, Gozo Museum of
Archaeology, Cittadella (Heritage Malta).



WORKSHOP OF DOMENICO GAGINI (1430-92), *Holy Water Stoup*,
1474, Parish Church of the Visitation of the Virgin, Għarb (originally
produced in Palermo for Mdina Cathedral).

Sculptures & Statues



CARLO DARMANIN (1825-1909), *St. Paul*, c.1880, Sannat Parish Church (statuette for main altar gradine)



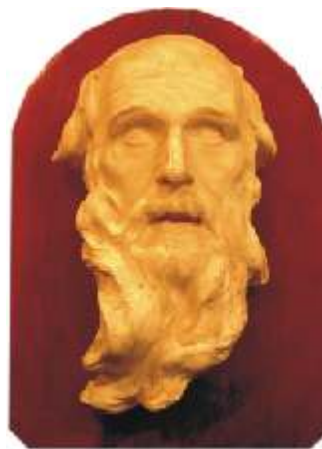
POPULAR MALTESE, *St Paul*, 1897, Private Collection (Inspired by Melchiorre Cafa's c.1659 prototype).



GIOVANNI SPITERI SACCO (1907-96), *St Paul*, c.1950, Private Collection (preparatory model).



FRANCESCO SAVERIO SCIORTINO (1875-1958), *SS Peter and Paul*, 1946, Nadur Parish Church



ATTRIBUTED TO FRANCESCO SAVERIO SCIORTINO, *Head of St Paul*, c.1945?, Nadur Parish Church



MARIORICK MIFSUD (b.1972),
St Paul, 2008, Private Collection
(one of a set of five sculptures for
Saint Mary the Assumption
Church, Victoria, Australia).



MICHAEL CAMILLERI CAUCHI
(b.1951), *St Paul*, 2004, (statue used
for street decoration of Munxar
village feast).



LAWRENCE ATTARD
(b.1965), *St Paul*, 1988,
Bozzetto for statue on
Sannat Parish Church
Parvis, Sannat Parish
Church Collection.



ALFRED CAMILLERI CAUCHI
(b.1943), *Study for Head of St Paul*,
c.2000, Private Collection.



Lithographs and Engravings

The Shipwreck of St. Paul. Engraving by Joseph Bonett, 1798, Malta after Giuseppe Frezza, 1709, Rome, from title- page of “Synodus Diocesana” (Cocco Palmieri, 1703). Stephen Degiorgio Collection.

French map showing shipwreck site of St.Paul in Malta. (from a French book dated 1730) Stephen Degiorgio Collection.

St. Paul. An engraving signed H B (Hans Behald) from an English publication of the early eighteenth century. Mro. Joseph Vella Collection.

St. Paul. An engraving from an English publication of the early eighteenth century. Mro Joseph Vella Collection.

The Shipwreck of St. Paul. Litograph by W.H. Mc. Farlane, from the painting by De Loutherbrough, published in Edinburgh. 19th cent. Mro. Joseph Vella Collection.

The Shipwreck of St. Paul. Litograph from painting by De Loutherbrough published in 19th cent. England. Mro. Joseph Vella Collection.

The Shipwreck of St. Paul. After Merian, Mattheus the Elder. From a French publication *L' Histoire du Vieux du Nouveau Testament.* Nicolas Fontaine Ed.1670. Mro Joseph Vella Collection.

The Shipwreck of St. Paul. After Merian, Mattheus the Elder. From a French publication *L' Histoire du Vieux du Nouveau Testament.* Nicolas Fontaine Ed.1699. Mro Joseph Vella Collection.

The Shipwreck of St. Paul. F.Lix. Litograph from an English publication of the Nineteenth Century. Mro. Joseph Vella Collection.

The Shipwreck of St. Paul. Hand-coloured Woodcut Miniature. 17th Cent. Mro. Joseph Vella Collection.

The Shipwreck of St. Paul. Engraving after painting from the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, London. 19th Cent. Mro. Joseph Vella Collection.

The Shipwreck of St. Paul. Engraving by Klauber Cath. Eighteenth Century. Mro. Joseph Vella Collection.

St Paul, Engraving, Private Collection..... Paul Curmi

Tavola della Cala tal-Puales, ove si dimostra il luogo in cui si ruppe la nave, e fece naufragio l'Apostolo.

Della Descrizione di Malta

Fra Gio Francesco Abela 1647

Engraving showing St Paul's ship aground

Malta Illustrata Libr I & II

Fra Gio Francesco Abela Giovanni Antonio Ciantar

1772

Ex duo quae Melitam Illustrant, Pia Sidera : Paulus hanc docuit, Rexit Publius, Ambo Fovent (engraving showing *St Paul's Consecration of Publius*)

Malta Illustrata Libr III & IV

Fra Giofrancesco Abela Giovannantonio Ciantar

1780

Discorso Apologetico

Del Canonico Gio Pietro Agius de Soldanis

Venezia 1758

Monografia Critica della Grotta di San Paolo nel subborgo di Melita, L'Antica Capitale di Malta,

1896

Mgr Decano Giuseppe Farrugia, *S. Paolo Apostolo Apostolo e Padre dei Gozitani*, Malta 1915.

Fra Ruperto a S. Gaspare, *Divus Paulus Apostolus e Melita Illyricana*, Vol.I, Venice 1739 [Confutation of the 1730 publication by the Benedictine Abbot Ignazii Georgii in which it was stated that St Paul was shipwrecked on the Adriatic island of Meleda and not on Malta], (Wignacourt Museum).

Fra Ruperto a S. Gaspare, *Divus Paulus Apostolus e Melita Illyricana*, Vol.II, Venice 1739.

Padre Pelagio, *Componimento Storico o sia notizie sacro-profane di San Pubblio Principe, Vescovo, e Martire Maltese*, Malta 1776 (Wignacourt Museum).

Giovanni Antonio Ciantar, *Critica de' Critici Moderni*, Venice 1763 [Confutation of those 18th century authors who questioned the Shipwreck of St Paul as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles].



Publications