

In 1934 the late Professor Vincenzo Laurenza, learned author and researcher in Maltese history, procured the transcription of the Angevin documents relative to Malta in the Royal Archives of Naples. These he published in the historical series of the *Archivio Storico di Malta*, *Malta nei documenti Angioini del R. Archivio di Napoli, Roma 1935*. We are indeed very lucky to possess this transcription because the Archives of Naples have been destroyed by the Germans in the last war before quitting that City.

The battle of Benevento in 1266, having decided the fortunes of Northern Italy, Charles I of Anjou became king of Sicily and Puglia, establishing his court at Naples. He thus supplanted the Suabian dynasty, imposing, as he hoped, the House of Anjou for all times. He was the first to remove the capital of the State from the island of Sicily to the mainland.

The Maltese archipelago (1) followed the destiny of Sicily.

Little is known as to the state of Malta in those remote days, beyond the fact that, during the turbulent times which ensued after the expulsion of the Arabs from Sicily (2) it had been the custom to bestow Malta in feudal tenure on various royal favourites.

The part taken by Malta in the vicissitudes of the

(1) Malta, Ghawdex and Kemmuna, are situated almost in the centre of the Mediterranean, 62 miles SSW of Sicily, and 197 miles N of Africa. They were inhabited during the Neolithic period, then they passed successively to the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Goths, and Saracens, and passed to the rule of Sicily until 1530.

(2) SOLMI, *La Politica Mediterranea del Regno Normanno-Svevo*, Roma 1935.

kingdom at the time of Frederick II, the Hohenstaufen, is evinced from the fact that Henry Piscator, count of Malta, commanded various naval expeditions. As a courtier as well as grand admiral, he appears, also, to have taken part in the politics of the kingdom. (3)

The Angevin domination over Malta lasted a short seventeen years: a period agitated and stormy with the intermezzo of Conrad's expedition and its grave consequences in Sicily. During this time it is more than possible that the Sicilian government found it expedient to modify the system of laws governing the feudal tenure of Malta.

This would have been necessary because of the many abuses which had crept into the administration and which intensified when the Angevins succeeded the Suabians.

Charles, suspicious of, antagonistic to the Sicilians, gave preference to the Maltese in the distribution of the higher ecclesiastical positions and, later, also for the Maltese bishopric.

It is also well known that Charles, in conformity with the wishes of the chancery of the Holy See, was anxious to secure the sympathy of the islanders and to make Malta a stronghold against Aragonese pretensions which were beginning to arise in various parts of the kingdom. (4)

The wars the Suabians had prosecuted against the church had naturally called a halt to commercial activity, both internal and in North Africa. Malta suffered equally with Sicily in this matter. (5)

During the revolt against the tyranny of Frederick II, Malta joined the insurgents under the leadership of local priors. In like manner, Nicoloso, son of count Henry, unable to secure his rights as feudal lord of Malta, sought assistance from the Genoese. And although Manfred had confirmed

(3) COHN, *Geschichte des sizilischen Flotte unter der Regierung Friedrichs II*, Breslau 1926.

(4) STAMER — *Bruckstücke mittelalterlichen Enqueten aus Unteritalien*, Berlin 1933.

(5) COHN, *L'Età degli Hohenstaufen in Sicilia*, Catania 1932.

Nicoloso in his fief as heir of his father (6)" . . . renovat et confirmat privilegia indulta patri suo ac concedit . . . ." of the praesidium, he could not take possession and consequently Malta was ruled by the castellan. Shortly afterwards, Nicoloso was deprived of the fief and returned to Sicily. (7)

The wars of 1267 between the supporters of Charles and those who had backed the Suabian pretensions, had severe repercussions in Malta because of Conrad Capece who contemplated an invasion of Sicily from Tunis. He would, obviously, have liked to have had the use of Malta as a base and, indeed, had offered the islands to the Pisans in return for the assistance of their navy, should his invasion prove successful. He actually signed a parchment conveying the Maltese islands to the Pisans on the 14th of June 1267.

The strategic and commercial importance of the Maltese archipelago, lying as it does in the heart of the Mediterranean, was, of course, obvious to the Pisans. Frederick because of this, had attached great importance too. (8)

By the King's orders in 1270, a certain Bertrand Real was asked to proceed to Malta "... in quibus constituit eum dominus Rex magistrum, castellanum, capitaneum, vicarium et rectorem . . ." (9) The various positions bestowed on him evince that the Angevin administration had never succeeded to divide or delineate the various jurisdictions in the island.

As castellan, Real had jurisdiction all over shipping based on Maltese harbours, subject to the orders of the Sicilian government. For instance, the castellan of Malta

(6) CAPASSO, *Historia Diplomatica Regni Siciliae*, Napoli 1874. doc. 265. p. 132.

(7) Naples' Archives, Regesta Angioina, 10, c. 81. For the dates of the documents vide DURBIEU, *Les Archives Angevines de Naples*, Naples 1886.

(8) COHN, W., *L'Età degli Hohenstaufen* . . . p. 361/364 and KANTAROWICZ, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite*, Berlin 1931.

(9) Reg. Ang. 6, c. 97.

and Ghawdex were instructed, in August 1280, to give assistance to the galleys of Nicefao Commeno and to resist those of Paleologus. They had also the orders to capture and seize those ships whenever possible. The account for this is because Charles of Anjou favoured Commeno. (10)

In other words the castellan was responsible for the defence of the Maltese islands.

This representative of the Royal authority also exercised the power to receive homage as if he were the feudal lord. All inhabitants, in fact, other than clerics, had to swear allegiance to the new regime. It is recorded that the 'curia', in considering the poverty of the people and the scarcity of notaries, exempted the inhabitants, later, of the local rates and taxes. (11)

Not only the clergy, but members of the laity, were in continual conflict with the royal representative over the alleged infringement of their rights and over oppressive action by royal officials. The following instruction to Bertrand Real, doubtless provoked by the complaints of the islanders, is recorded: "... ut permittat homines insularum Malte et Gaudisii tenere et possidere pro certo annuo censu, in quolibet anno nostro curie persolvendo . . ." (12)

Quarrels ensued between the civil and ecclesiastical courts as to relative jurisdiction. A protest by the Chapter of the Cathedral church of Malta, voicing the complaints of the archdeacon and the local vicar against the civil court, "... in praeiudicium ecclesiasticae libertatis . . ." (13) and also "... in contemptu ecclesiae . . ." is duly recorded.

Real's authority to intervene in spiritual cases normally triable only by the archdeacon or the bishop's vicar, tends to prove that many years ago civil and ecclesiastical court often availed itself of secular help.

(10) MINIERI-RICCIÒ, *Il Regno di Carlo I d'Angiò*, in *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 1878. p. 355.

(11) Reg. Ang. 6, c. 99A, dated August 7th, 1270.

(12) *ibidem*, 10, c. 99B, dated May 23rd, 1271.

(13) *ibidem*, 6, c. 97B, dated August 2nd, 1270.

Notwithstanding the royal intervention, taxation showed no signs of diminution. Many even thought of emigrating. Eventually the 'Universitá' presented a petition to the King of which he took cognizance "... ex parte universorum hominum Malte et Gaudisii ..." and intimated the suspension "a praedictis molestationibus." (14)

The Maltese have not always resisted the violation of their rights by constitutional means. Sometimes they broke into contumacy which finally provoked action under Sicilian law. The *justitiere*, in fact, was compelled to take immediate action "... quod ipsos ad celerem et integram solutionem ipsarum collectarum et subventionum generalium, omni coercione qua expedit, compellatis ...". (15)

There is only one indication, of a later date, October 31st, 1282, which gives some light on the matter: the substitution of a certain Gerardo Florentini. The nomination of his successor is communicated to the judiciary representation of both 'Universitá': "... Scriptum est prelati ecclesiarum, baiulo, iudicibus et universis hominibus insularum Malte et Gaudisii ..." (16) The inconvenience of centralising various powers in the hands of one person were, at one time, quite evident. On March 20th, 1273, a Roberto Cafario, apparently a Maltese, was nominated "magistrum insularum Malte et Gaudisii" and chamberlain of the demanial rents. Bertrand Real was consequently recalled to the custody of the castles of the islands in the capacity of captain, especially with regard to certain jurisdictions, such as sanctions against delinquents "juxta qualitatem criminis et prout postulat ordo juris ...". In addition to the local militia, which was responsible only for home defence, about 150 foreign troops were maintained "propter incursus Januensium et aliorum nostrorum hostium".

The expenses incurred by the castellan, etc. were borne

(14) *ibidem*, 15, c. 83B, dated November 7th, 1272.

(15) *ibidem*, 9, c. 123, dated June 25th, 1276.

(16) *ibidem*, 39, c. 139, dated October 31st, 1282, from Capua, vide also Minieri-Riccio—*Saggio di Codice Diplomatico*, Napoli 1878.

by the praesidium, and also by the various donations of the towers. (17) The administration of the funds of the 'Universitá' and of the 'curia' were absolutely separate.

From June 1274 Ghawdex had its own castellan, a certain Armando Serventis, who took possession "cum omnibus armis et guarnimentis" from Real, by ordinance dated June 12th, 1274. (18) It is not certain whether Serventis' appointment was prior or subsequent to the sack of Ghawdex by a Genoese squadron under Lanfranco Pignatoro. (19) Probably the above quoted ordinance was issued after the raid: the squadron sailed from Genoa after the 18th of May, sacked Trapani, setting fire to all the ships in that harbour, then sailed for Ghawdex without interference from the Sicilian fleet. (20)

About this time, Bertrand Real was removed from the castellany of Malta, being replaced by Matteo de Podio. Real left, with a suite of fifty persons "servientibus gallicis bonis, fidelibus, et bene munitis quos secum in custodia morari volumus ...". (21)

In 1279, a vacancy in the office of procurator having occurred through the death of Matteo de Nigro, "civis Panormitanus", (22) the vicar of Sicily was authorised to fill the vacancy. The document gives details of the qualifications for the post.

Before assuming office the procurators had to present themselves to the chief justice of Sicily for the usual oath of allegiance. At the handing-over ceremony, new and retiring incumbents had to agree an inventory, in quadruplicate, recording minutely the quantity of ammunition

(17) Reg. Ang. 15, c. 160, dated "XX marcii prime indie." from Capua.

(18) *ibidem*, 14, c. 278 A.

(19) *Annali Genovesi*, ed. Belgrano Imperiale, s.d., IV, p. 168.

(20) COHN, *Storia della Flotta Siciliana sotto il Governo di Carlo I d'Angiò*, in *Archivio Storico della Sicilia Orientale*, 1931.

(21) Reg. Ang. 14, c. 278.

(22) *ibidem*, 30, c. 43.

available, of victuals and other stores, of the servants, and also the annual balance of the praesidium. (23)

The last Angevin procurator was Dionigi de Barba, who had succeeded Gerardo on the last day of October 1282. His nomination was duly communicated to the representatives of Malta and Ghawdex as well as to the castellan Matteo de Podio, to whom he had to present his credentials. De Barba was also made responsible for supplying the towers "pro anno uno, vel ad minus usque ad tempus novae recollectionis secundum formam de muniendis castris . . .". (24)

This nomination was made just as the curtain was about to fall on the Angevin regime. Within a day or so, actually in Maltese water, the Angevin fleet suffered their major defeat. A few days later, Ruggero Lauria disembarked at Marsamxett and was hailed as the saviour of Malta. Thereupon the Aragonese and Sicilian insurgents in Malta, fell on the remaining French, including those captured in the galleys of Provence, and put them to death with every refinement of cruelty. (25).

The revolutionary movement known as the 'Sicilian Vespers' broke out in Palermo. The Maltese joined in the insurrection. Early documents testify the recognition by the *commune* of the *nuova signoria* dating back to December 9th, 1282. (26) Dionigi de Barba was the first to change colours, and as a reward he was appointed chief justice of the islands by Peter III. But the Maltese were afraid at first, to show open adherence to the Aragonese movement, especially when they witnessed that the 'castrum maris', the actual Birgu, commonly held to be impregnable, kept steadily to the Angevins, and also when the ships of the count of Provence were blockading the Maltese coasts. The Maltese consequently demanded help from the new lord, and on January

(23) *ibidem*, 41, cc. 101, 102, decree dated from Orvieto, April 15th, 1281.

(24) *ibidem*, 39 c. 139.

(25) COHN, *Storia della Flotta*, op. cit.

(26) SILVESTRI, *De Rebus regni Siciliae*, Palermo 1882, p. 214, doc. CCLI.

27th, 1283, he sent an apology for having failed to forward a relieving force. He also hastened to confirm the privileges granted to the Maltese by his predecessors, the Suabians, and consented willingly to forward grain from Sicily (27). It appears, also, that the 'Università' had sent delegates to represent the fears and necessities of the islanders.

The re-absorption of Malta into the 'demanio' pronounced about three months before the revolution, was probably a political gesture by the Aragonese against the Angevins. The reason for the absorption seems to lie in the strategic position of Malta in relation to Sicily, because the document is rather specific: "actento eciam quod insule ipse nostre Sicilie sunt vicine, ob quam vicinitatem non decet eas a nostro demanio et dominio separari" (28).

Malta, in itself, constituted a guarantee of security, for the future Siculo-Aragonese reign, just as it was during the Norman-Swabian rule.

A remonstrance by the merchants of Malta against the 'justiciere' who had failed to protect their interests, provoked a rebuke from King Peter who exhorted de Barba to take strong action against the rebels "universis hominibus insularum ipsarum, ut te puniendis excessibus ipsis ac in executione tui officii assistant, pro parte curie nostre, auxilio, consilio, et favore....." (29).

A merchant hailing from Genoa, Comandano, had petitioned the King directly for protection. After some time there was an appeal by the 'Università' for cooperation, intended to guarantee public order and protect the representatives of the royal power.

The 'castrum maris', mentioned already, remained in favour of the Angevins. De Podio, the castellan, thought of surrender only when he discovered that no possible help could reach him by sea. And without reiterating his sworn faith to his King, he started negotiations. The acts of King

(27) *ibidem*, doc. CCCCXXX, p. 316.

(28) *ibidem*, doc. CCCCLX, p. 442.

(29) *ibidem*, doc. CCCCLXVIII, p. 436.

Peter, dated February 2nd., 1283, evince the determination of the castellan to remain loyal; guaranteeing the life of those in the praesidium shut up "in stabilimento castris de Malta" (30), and respecting whatever contracts are made through this medium. In order to strengthen the hand of Cambrilli, King Peter, in announcing the impending arrival of his delegate, adjured both soldiers and civilians "existentes nunc in stabilimento castris de Malte.....et universis aliis probis hominibus ac universitati Malte et Gaudissii, fidelibus nostris....." (31) to keep steadily to their loyalty.

Matteo de Podio, besieged in Birgu, resisted to the last, thus showing that he was loyal and valorous. Until November 21st, 1284, the Angevin officials were still furnishing munition and victuals to their supporters in Malta (32). This also shows that the faith of the Angevin castellan did not falter even after the disaster to the Angevin fleet on June 5th, 1284. De Podio decided to surrender only when the death of King Charles had ruined all hopes of a re-conquest of Sicily.

(30) *ibidem*, doc. CCCCLXXI, p. 438.

(31) *ibidem*, doc. CCCCLXX, p. 437.

(32) Reg. Ang. 48, c. 175.

## SEPTUAGESIMA AND QUADRAGESIMA

### A Liturgical Essay

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(Continued from pages 131-137)

(c) In recent years one of the best books on Liturgy, which contains many details about the various liturgical problems, is that of Mgr. Mario Righetti, *Storia Liturgica*, in four volumes, the last of which is not yet published. The second volume, published in 1946, seems to contain the greater collection of documents related to our subject (10). We try to resume as briefly as possible what seems to be the present common knowledge about the origin and meaning of Septuagesima and Quadragesima.

Mgr. Righetti under the title of "La Quaresima" comprehends the liturgical time which goes from Septuagesima Sunday down to Holy Saturday which he divides into three sections: the first deals with the three Sundays of Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima; the second treats of Quadragesima from its beginning down to Palm Sunday; and the third explains the Holy Week.

1. *The three weeks before Lent.* This liturgical observance is found both in the Latin and in the Greek Church: the three weeks are named Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima; which names seem to go back to the time of their institution, though it may seem rather strange, because they do not mean the seventieth, the sixtieth and the fiftieth day, but the ninth, the eighth and the seventh week before Easter Sunday. But as mediaeval writers were fond of round numbers, it is easily explained

(10) The works quoted are: VACANDARD, *Carême*, in *Dict. d'Archéol. et de Liturgie*; THURSTON, *Lent and Holy Week*, London 1914; SCHUSTER, *Liber Sacramentorum*, Torino 1920; C. CALLEWAERT, *La durée et le caractère du Carême ancien*, in *Sacris erudiri*, Aldenburg 1940.