

THE HOSPITAL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT RABAT, MALTA, AND ITS LATIN INSCRIPTIONS: A REVIEW

Horatio Caesar Roger Vella

Professor of Malta's University
Maltos universiteto profesorius

The town of Rabat, formerly part of Melita of Roman times, has a building dedicated to the Holy Spirit, in the Maltese language, “ta’ Santu Spirtu”, which formerly was used as a hospital, but today as part of the National Archives. This hospital was run by the Grand Master of Malta, who as a Prince of the Crown of Spain and the two Sicilies, governed Malta and Gozo and the eight Languages of the Knights of St. John, formerly of Jerusalem and Rhodes, then of Malta. It is for this reason that Grand Master Anton Manuel de Vilhena (1722–1736) is mentioned in inscription I of this corpus discussed in this paper, Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt (1601–1622) in inscription III, Antoine de Paule (1623–1636) in IV, Gregorio Carafa (1680–1690) in V, and Martino de Redin (1657–1660) in VIII.

The Holy Spirit Hospital served many purposes through different times. It was probably built in the thirteenth century, but it was certainly functioning already under the name of St. Francis by 1372 and run by the adjacent monastery of the Order of Franciscans Conventual. Its income depended on estates in Malta and Gozo¹. Gan Frangisku Abela,

¹ S. Fiorini (1989), 3 *et passim*.

writing his history of Malta in 1647, quotes l’Abbate Pirri regarding the origins of both the hospital and its adjacent monastery as follows:

Divi Francisci Fratres Conventuales ante annum 1370 sua habuere domicilia in Suburbio Rabato iuxta antiquissimam domum Hospitalem, sub eodem nomine Sancti Francisci, cuius Rectoriam uti de Iure patronatus, Rex Fridericus Tertius, fratri Nicolao Papallae Panormitano Franciscano (fuit is deinde Episcopus Melitae), concessit per litteras 4. Decembris anno 1370 in registro Cancellariae fol. 192².

I translate the above document as follows:

The Conventual Brothers of Saint Francis, before the year 1370, had their abode in the Suburb of Rabat next to a very ancient Hospital building, under the same name of Saint Francis, whose Rectory King Frederick III conceded to Brother Nicola Papalla, of Palermo, a Franciscan (he was later the Bishop of Malta) to use as a right of ownership, through a letter (dated) the 4th December, in the year 1370, (as seen) in the Register of the Chancellery, f. 192.

² G.F. Abela (1647), 391–392.

The Holy Spirit Hospital served both as a hospital for the sick poor, but also as a home for the same. By 1467 it was already named after the Holy Spirit and run by the Università, the Municipality of Mdina, the adjacent citadel and old capital town of Malta. By 1517 it was receiving unwanted children through a rotating window still existing on the outside wall. In 1688, its church dedicated to the Holy Spirit was rebuilt by Grand Master Gregorio Carafa, mentioned in inscription V.³ By 1883 it had become a hospital of convalescence, until the beginning of the 20th century, when it stopped functioning as a hospital after 600 years of service.⁴ Since it was built the first time, the hospital was restored in the 17th century and late in the 20th century.

About five years ago, some writers celebrated the scholarly achievements of Mons. John Azzopardi, formerly Curator of the Cathedral Archives and Museum. As one of the articles, we encounter in this Festschrift a presentation of eight Latin inscriptions by Joseph Amodio, with an Italian translation and a commentary⁵. Six of these inscriptions are still found at the Holy Spirit Archives, that is, two at the Entrance Hall, one at the Hall in

front of the Chapel, and three in the Chapel. The other two (IV and VIII) were formerly in the same building, but now they can be read only in reported versions⁶.

These eight inscriptions cover the years from 1613 to 1737. They talk of the benefactors (I, VI, VII), the enlargement of the hospital (I, VIII), of the administrators of the Università and, therefore, of the hospital (II, III, V, VIII), the procurators of the hospital (II, III, V, VIII), the restoration of the hospital (III, V), the Grand Masters (III, IV, V, VIII), and Magistrates of the City (VI, VII). One of this inscriptions (IV) is a poem in two elegiac couplets.

The purpose of this article is threefold: to produce a correct version of the transcription of these inscriptions, to re-produce the Italian version which has been appended under each inscription at Santu Spirtu, and to make improvements on both the original transcription and on the Italian version through a new English version. It is hoped that this article serves not only as a pedagogical exercise, but also as an alternative service to the visitors of this historic building and as an interest to the international community.

³ A. Ferris (1866), 16.

⁴ Ch. Savona-Ventura (1999), 29.

⁵ J. Amodio (2002), 163–178.

⁶ Example, *Archives of the Cathedral Museum, Misc.*, Ms. 81, f. 82.

I

(Entrance Hall, left, facing main door)

My transcription and comments:

D[EO] O[PTIMO] M[AXIMO]
 SVB AVSPICIIS SERENISSI <MI> PRINCIPIS
 <FRATRIS> D[OMINI] ANTONII M <AN> OEL DE VILHENA,
 FELICITER REGNANTIS,
 ANTIQVVM XENODOCHIVM REGIVM

BENEFACITORVM XP[IST]IANA PIETAS,
<DIL> ATATIS VISCERIBVS,
<AD> PLVRES IN <FIRMAS> SVSCIPIENDAS
<NOVA> HAC AVLA AMPLIAVIT.

- 1.2: SERENISSI <MI> for SERENISSIMI in the Amodio text, the bracketed being corrupt text.
1.3: M <AN> OEL for MANOEL, the bracketed being corrupt text.
1.6: XP[IST]IANA for <CHRISTIANA>.
1.7: <DIL> ATATIS for DILATATIS, the bracketed being corrupt text.
1.8: <AD> for AD, being corrupt text.
 IN <FIRMAS> for INFIRMAS, the bracketed being corrupt text.
1.9: <NOVA> for NOVA, being corrupt text.

The original translation:

Dio Ottimo Massimo.
Sotto gli auspici del Serenissimo Principe,
Fratello Don Antonio Manoel de Vilhena,
regnante felicemente.
La cristiana devozione dei benefattori
del vetusto (e) regio ospedale,
fece ampliare questa nuova sala
per le più inferme che devono procreare,
mentre le viscere sono dilatate.

My comments on the Italian translation:

- 1.5: ANTIQVVM XENODOCHIVM REGIVM are in fact in the accusative case, object of AMPLIAVIT in 1.9, and not in the genitive (cf. “*del vetusto (e) regio ospedale*”). Furthermore, the “e” is quite out of place, since it was not the hospital that was ancient and royal, but the royal hospital that was ancient.
1.7: DILATATIS VISCERIBVS: This ablative absolute construction is in the past tense, and not in the present (“*mentre le viscere sono dilatate*”). Furthermore, VISCERIBVS is used here metaphorically to mean “property”, as Cicero used it in his letter to his brother Quintus (1.3.7: *cum tu de visceribus tuis et fili tui satisfactorus sis*), and not literally as “viscere”.
1.8: AD PLVRES INFIRMAS SVSCIPIENDAS is a purpose clause expressed here by the gerundive governed by AD. As such, there is no case for obligation here (“*che devono procreare*”). INFIRMAS is an adjective used as a substantive with “people” understood. Its comparative degree would be *infirmiores*, and not PLVRES INFIRMAS, which therefore should be rendered as “more sick people” in the sense of greater number, and not “*per le più inferme*”, which in Italian is the superlative degree of comparison. *Suscipere* means “to accept”, and not “to procreate” (“*procreare*”).

1.9: NOVA HAC AVLA is in the ablative case used here as means, and not in the accusative serving as an object (cf. “*fece ampliare questa nuova sala*”). Instead, the object is ANTIQVVM XENODOCHIVM REGIVM in 1.5 above.

AMPLIAVIT does not mean “*fece ampliare*”, but simply AMPLIAVIT, that is, “enlarged”.

My translation:

To God, Supreme, Almighty.
Under the auspices of the Most Serene Prince
Brother Lord Anton Manuel De Vilhena,
happily reigning,
the Christian piety of benefactors,
to the utmost of their resources,
has enlarged, by means of this hall,
the ancient Royal Hospital
for the acceptance of more sick people.

II

(Entrance Hall, right, facing main door)

My transcription and comments:

MD <C> CXXVII
ILLVSTRISISSIMI MAGISTRATVS REGIMINE EXISTEN[TIBV]S
<P> ETRO MONPALAO, SAC[RI] ROM[ANI] IMPERII EQVIT<E> TORNE[ARIO],
FERDINANDO CASTELLETTI, FEVDI MARSÆ BARON<E>,
BARTHOLOM <A> EO FIOT <T>, V[TRIVSQVE] I[VRIS] D[OCTORE],
AC IO[ANN]E BAP[TIS]TA AGIVS, POPV[LARI],
PROC[VRATO]RE R[EVERENDO] FR[ATRE] IOSEPH ANT[ONI]O GRIMALDI.

1.1: MD <C> CXXVII, the bracketed being corrupt text.

1.2: [NOSTRI]: there is absolutely no reason why this word should be supplied before ILLVSTRISISSIMI. Furthermore, the author of the quoted article knows well that [] brackets have been used in his article only to open up the abbreviations.

ILLVSTRISISSIMI in place of ILLVSTRIS[I]MI, where the I in brackets is clearly visible.

REGIMINE in place of REGIMEN.

EXISTEN[TIBV]S in place of EXISTEN[S], the bracketed S being clearly visible. For the interpretation of EXISTEN[TIBV]S, see III, 3 and V, 6.

1.3: <P> ETRO for [P]ETRO, where the bracketed P has not been abbreviated, but chopped off.

MONPALAO in place of MOMPALAO.

SAC[RI] ROM[ANI] in place of SAC[RO] ROM[ANO].

EQVIT <E> in place of EQVITE, the bracketed being corrupt text.

TORNE[ARIO] in place of TORN[EARIO], where the E is partially visible.

1.4: <D[OMINO]> before FERDINANDO. There is no reason why this title has been added here to the inscription. After all, none of the others bear it, while only GRIMALDI has a title, that of REVERENDO.

BARON <E> in place of B[ARONE], only the E being corrupt text. No abbreviation is meant here.

1.5: BARTHOLOM <A> EO in place of BARTHOLOMEO.

FIOT <T> in place of FIOT[T], where the bracketed T was not abbreviated, but simply left out.

V[TRIVSQVE] I[VRIS] D[OCTORE] in place of [IVRIS] [VTRIVSQVE] [DOCTORE]. The inscription clearly gives V.I.D., and not I.V.D. as suggested (see mistake in III, 4 and 5, and V, 7). The author of the article bracketed all the three words completely.

1.6: IO[ANN]E in place of IO[ANN]ES, where the final S is clearly not there. Furthermore, it makes no sense to have this name in the nominative case, unlike the rest of the list.

1.7: PROC[VRATO]RE in place of PROC[VRATORE], where the final RE is clearly given in the inscription. Furthermore, the comma after PROCVRATORE was quite unnecessary, since it was Grimaldi that was Procurator. In fact, there is a title appended to each name: MOMPALAO – EQVITE, CASTELLETTI – BARONE, FIOTT – DOCTORE, AGIVS – POPVLARI, and GRIMALDI – PROCVRATORE.

ANT[ONI]O in place of ANT[ONIVS], where the final O is clearly given. As said in 1.6 above, it makes no sense to have also this name in the nominative case.

GRIMALDI in place of GRIMAL[DI], where the final DI is clearly given in the inscription.

The original translation:

1727.

La direzione della nostra Illustrissima Magistratura era nelle mani di:
Pietro Mompalao, Cavaliere Torneante del Sacro Romano Impero,
Don Ferdinando Castelletti, Barone del Feudo della Marsa,
Bartolomeo Fiott, Dottore in entrambe le Leggi,
ed il Cittadino Giovanni Battista Agius;
Procuratore, il Reverendo Fratello Giuseppe Antonio Grimaldi.

My comments on the Italian translation:

1.2: EXISTENTIBVS is a participle agreeing with five men listed inside the inscription, all in the ablative case, forming the ablative construction. Indeed, the whole inscription is in the ablative absolute construction. REGIMINE is also in the ablative case, but of position. The author of the article changed it to REGIMEN, supposed subject of the verb “to be” (“La direzione ... era nelle mani di:”). Furthermore, he failed to account for his EXISTENS.

1.3: SAC[RI] ROM[ANI] IMPERII. The author shows that this is in the genitive case in his translation (“del Sacro Romano Impero”), but not in his transcription (SAC[RO] ROM[ANO] IMPERII).

1.4 <D[OMINO]>. The exclusion of this title has been discussed above. Nevertheless, one must comment on the author's inability to decide on whether D. stands for DON (see inscription I, 1.3), or for DOMINVS, which also appears in III, 2 and 4, and V, 2 and 10. In any case, DOMINVS here does not mean "Don".

1.6: POPV[LARI] may be "a citizen"; but since all these mentioned were citizens, why call him only "a citizen"? For this reason, I believe that *popularis* here rather means "a commoner" as distinguished from other people of the elite class. See also V, 8.

My translation:

1727

Present in the administration of (this) most distinguished Magistracy are
Pietru Monpalao, a Knight-Lancer of the Sacred Roman Empire,
Ferdinandu Castelletti, Baron of the Feud of Marsa,
Bartilmew Fiott, Doctor in both Laws,
and Gwanni Battista Agius, a commoner,
the Procurator (being) Reverend Brother Guzeppi Antonju Grimaldi.

III

(Hall in front of Chapel, top of the door leading to the Entrance Hall)

My transcription and comments:

D[EO] O[PTIMO] M[AXIMO]
ILL[VSTRISSI]MO ET R[EVERENDISSI]MO D[OMI]NO F[RAT]RE ALOFIO DE
WIGNACOVRT, D[OMI]NANTE,
EXISTEN[TIBVS] IVRATIS MICHAEL⁷ CASSAR, IO[ANNE] PAVLO MIZZI,
V[TRIVSQVE] I[VVIS] D[OCTORE] LAZZARO HAGIVS, DO[MI]NO PETRO DE
BONONIA,
ANTONIVS CASSAR, V[TRIVSQVE] I[VVIS] D[OCTOR], PROCVRATOR, IN HA[N]C
REDVXIT FORMAM. MDCXIII⁸.

1.2 ILL[VSTRISSI]MO in place of ILLVSTRISSIMO.

R[EVERENDISSI]MO in place of REVERENDISSIMO.

D[OMI]NO in place of DOMINO. See comments on II, 4.

F[RAT]RE in place of FRATRE.

D[OMI]NANTE in place of DOMINANTE.

1.3: MICHAEL in place of MICHAELE, even if the inscription has the latter.

IO[ANNE] in place of IOANNE.

EXISTEN[TIBVS]. See II, 2.

⁷ MICHAELE *Ins. Mon. et Amodio*

⁸ 1613 *Ins. Mon.*

EXISTEN[TIBVS] IVRATIS MICHAELE CASSAR, IO[ANNE] PAVLO MIZZI, as they appear in the inscription, in place of EXISTEN[TIBVS] IVRATIS / MICHAELE CASSAR, / IOANNE PAVLO MIZZI I[VRIS] V[TRIVSQVE] D[OCTORE]. CASSAR and MIZZI were therefore IVRATIS, while according to the line-order of the inscription, it was HAGIVS in the next line who was Doctor of both Laws instead.

l.4: V[TRIVSQVE] I[VRIS] D[OCTORE] in place of I[VRIS] V[TRIVSQVE] D[OCTORE]. See mistake also in II, 5 and next line, and in V, 7.

HAGIVS in place of AGIVS.

DO[MINO] in place of DOMINO. See comments on II, 4.

V[TRIVSQVE] I[VRIS] D[OCTORE] LAZZARO HAGIVS, DO[MI]NO PETRO DE BONONIA in place of LAZZARO AGIVS, / DOMINO PETRO DE BONONIA.

l.5: V[TRIVSQVE] I[VRIS] D[OCTOR] in place of I[VRIS] V[TRIVSQVE] D[OCTOR]. See comments on II, 5.

HA[N]C in place of HAC. For the accusative case of this demonstrative adjective, see the author's own translation ("*in questa forma*", in presumably interpreted here as the English "into"). For HA[N]C REDVXIT FORMAM, see OV. M. 15.380-381: ... *lambendo mater in artus / fingit et in formam, quantam capit ipse, reducit*.

MDCXIII. The inscription reads 1613. One either transcribes as in the original, 1613 in this case, or suggest, by some form of indication distinguished from [] or <> brackets or through an apparatus criticus what should have been used in the first place.

The original translation:

A Dio Ottimo Massimo.
Antonio Cassar, Dottore in entrambe le Leggi, Procuratore,
nel 1613, ridusse (questa sala) in questa forma,
mentre comandava
l'Illustrissimo e Reverendissimo Signore Fratello
Alofio de Wignacourt,
e mentre erano Giurati Michele Cassar,
Giovanni Paolo Mizzi, Dottore in entrambe le Leggi,
Lazzaro Agius, e il Signor Pietro di Bologna.

My translation:

To God, Supreme and Almighty.
During the reign of
the Most Distinguished and Most Reverend Lord Brother Alof De Wignacourt,
while Jurats were Mikiel Cassar, Gwanni Pawlu Mizzi,
Lazzru Agius, Doctor of both Laws, Mr. Pietru Di Bologna,
Antonju Cassar, Doctor of both Laws, Procurator, reduced (this place) into this shape.
1613.

IV

(Archives of the Cathedral Museum Ms. Misc. 81, f.82)

My transcription and comments:

- - / - u u / - // - / - u u / - u u / - u
MAIORVM PIETAS CORPVS MIHI STRVXERAT OLIM;
- u u / - - / - // - u u / - u u / u
HVNC ANIMAE PAVLAE ME DECORAVIT AMOR;
- u u / - - / - // - / - u u / - u u / - u
CVNCTA FAVENT; PICTVS PRAEBET NOVA GAVDIA PAVO,
- - / - - / - // - u u / - u u / -
ET VICTVM SPICAE LVMEN AD⁹ ASTRA FERVNT.

MDCXXIV

1.4: AD in place of ET, for which see comment on the translation below.

The original translation:

La devozione degli antenati aveva creato, una volta, il mio corpo,
l'amore per l'anima del Paola ornò me stesso;
tutti favoriscono, il pavone ornato offre tutte le nuove gioie,
e la luce oscurata della Spiga e le stelle (ne) portano.
1624.

My comments on the Italian translation:

1.1: MIHI is not here a possessive dative (“*il mio corpo*”), but simply an indirect object.

1.2: HVNC in Latin is not an emphatic adjective (“*me stesso*”), but demonstrative.

PAVLAE here refers to Fra Antoine de Paule, who became Grand Master of Malta on the 10th March, 1623. In fact, this inscription once was found beneath the coat-of-arms of Grand Master De Paule.

1.3: CVNCTA is in the neuter gender, and not in the masculine (“*tutti*”). Also, the context here favours it to be interpreted as the object, and not as the subject (“*tutti favoriscono*”).

NOVA GAVDIA: There is nothing in the second part of this verse to indicate the adjective “*tutte*”.

1.4: FERVNT is not used here intransitively (“*ne portano*”), but transitively with LVMEN as the only object. ASTRA should be governed by AD (as used by various authors like Vergil (VERG. E. 5.52: *Daphnim ad astra feremus*: ...), the direction following FERVNT. “*e la luce ... e le stelle ne portano*” simply do not make sense.

⁹ ET Amodio.

My translation:

The love of my ancestors had once provided me with a body;
the love for the person of De Paule honoured this person of mine;
they favour everything; the coloured peacock (the rainbow) provides new joys,
and they carry the subdued light of (the constellation) Spica to the heavens.

1624

V

(Chapel, at the back, centre)

My transcription and comments:

D[EO] O[PTIMO] M[AXIMO]
SVB AVSPICIIS SER[ENISSIMI] PRINCIPIS F[RATRIS] D[OMINI] GREGORII CARAFA,
S[ACRAE] R[ELIGIONIS] H[IEROSOLYMITANAE] MAGNI MAG[IST]RI
EMINENTIS[SIMI],
TEMPLVM HOC, S[ANCTO] SPIRITVI DICATVM,
VETVSTATE PAENE¹⁰ COLLABESCE[N]S, IN SPECIOSIORE[M] FORMA[M]
REDACTV[M EST],
EXISTENTIBVS D[OMINIS] IVRATIS
ISIDORO CV[M]BI, CALCERANO MO[N]PALAO APAP, IGNATIO GALIA,
V[TRIVSQVE] I[VRIS] D[OCTORIBVS],
ET IO[ANN]E LVCA PACE, POPVLARI,
AC PROC[VRATORE] HOSP[ITA]LIS PR[A]E[DICTO] CALCERANO,
ANNO D[OMI]NI MDCLXXXVIII.

1.2: SER[ENISSIMI] in place of SERENISSIMI.

D[OMINI] in place of D[ON]. See comments on II, 4.

1.3: MAG[IST]RI in place of MAGISTRI.

EMINENTIS[SIMI] in place of EMINENTISSIMI.

1.5: COLLABESCE[N]S in place of COLLABESCENS.

SPECIOSIORE[M] in place of SPECIOSIOREM.

FORMA[M] in place of FORMAM.

REDACTV[M EST] in place of REDACTVM. In this inscription, the only main verb is REDACTV[M], with [EST] understood. For IN SPECIOSIOREM FORMAM REDACTVM EST, see CIC. Or. 3.10: *Quicquid est igitur de quo ratione et via disputetur, id est ad ultimam sui generis **formam speciemque redigendum**.*

1.6: D[OMINIS] in place of D[OCTORIBVS], which cannot be since D[OCTORIBVS] appears below in the inscription.

¹⁰ PENE *Ins. Mon.*

1.7: CV[M]BI in place of CVMBO.

MO[N]PALAO in place of MOMPALAO.

V[TRIVSQVE] I[VRIS] D[OCTORIBVS] in place of I[VRIS] V[TRIVSQVE] D[OCTORE].

The inscription clearly gives V.I.D.D., where D.D. indicates the presence of the plural. See comments also on II, 5.

1.8: IO[ANN]E LVCA PACE in place of [VINCENZO ABELA]. The name of PACE is clearly given, and one does not understand why the name has been changed into ABELA. In any case, VINCENZO is Italian, VINCENTIO is Latin.

1.9: PROC[VRATORE] in place of PROCVRATORE.

HOSP[ITA]LIS in place of HOSPITALIS.

PR[A]E[FECTO] in place of PRAEFECTO.

1.10: D[OMI]NI in place of DOMINI. See comments on II, 4.

The original translation:

A Dio Ottimo Massimo.

Sotto gli auspici del Serenissimo Principe Fratello Don Gregorio Carafa,

Eminentissimo Gran Maestro della Sacra Religione Gerosolimitana,

questo Tempio, dedicato al Santo Spirito,

quasi vacillante per vecchiezza,

fu ridotto in forma più bella,

mentre erano Giurati i Dottori

Isidor Cumbo,

Calcerano Mompalao Apap,

Ignazio Galea, Dottore in entrambe le Leggi,

e il Cittadino Vincenzo Abela

e Procuratore dell'Ospedale, il Prefetto Calcerano,

nell'anno del Signore, 1688.

My comments on the Italian translation:

1.6: For the wrong translation and interpretation of "Dottori", see relevant note above.

1.7: For the wrong translation and interpretation of "Dottore", see relevant note above.

1.8: For the proper interpretation of POPVLARI, see comment in II, 6.

My translation:

To God, Supreme and Greatest.

Under the auspices of the Most Serene Prince Brother Lord Gregorio Carafa,

Most Eminent Grand Master of Sacred Religion of Jerusalem,

this temple, dedicated to the Holy Spirit,

almost collapsing with old age, has been restored

in the year of the Lord 1688

into a more beautiful shape

when their Lordship the Jurats were

Sidor Cumbo, Kalceranu Mompalao Apap, Nazju Galea, Doctors of both Laws,
and Gwanni Luqa Pace, a commoner,
and the above-mentioned Kalceranu, procurator of the hospital.

VI

(Chapel, at the back, left side facing the altar)

My transcription and comments:

ACCIPITE, LECTORES,
CHRISTIANAE PIETATIS EXEMPLVM:
EXC[ELLE]N[TISSIMV]S DOCT[OR] D[OMI]NVS FRANCISCVS XAVERIVS AGIOS,
MEDICAE ARTIS APPRIME GNARVS,
BONA,
QVAE NON FORTVNAE PRAEMIVM, SED MERITORVM PRETIV[M]¹¹
DICES,
PVBLICAE PAVPERVM SALVTI LEGAVIT MORIENS
<ANTE DIEM> IX KAL[ENDAS] FEBRVARIAS¹², MDCCXXXVI.
O PISSIMVM CARITATIS¹³ OPVS!
QVI VIVENS OMNI STVDIO AC DILIGENTIA PAVPERES MEDERI NOVIT,
HIS MORIENS SINGVLARI PIETATE PROFICERE¹⁴ VOLVIT.
TANTI HAVD IMMEMOR BENEFICII,
HVIVS CIVIT[ATIS] NOTABILIS ILL[VSTRISSI]MVS MAGISTRATVS
IN GRATI VECTIGAL ANIMI
HVNC LAPIDEM
P[OSVIT]
ANNO D[OMI]NI MDCCXXXVII.

l.3: EXC[ELLE]N[TISSIMU]S for EX[CELLENTISSIMVS].

D[OMI]NUS for DOMINVS.

l.14: ILL[VSTRISSI]MVS for ILLVSTRISSIMVS.

l.18: D[OMI]NI for DOMINI.

The original translation:

Apprendete, o lettori,
l'esempio della cristiana piet :
l'Eccellentissimo Dottore Signore Francesco Saverio Agius
assai esperto della scienza medica,

¹¹ PRAETIU[M] *Ins. Mon.*

¹² IX KAL FEBRVARIII *Ins. Mon.*

¹³ CHARITATIS *Ins. Mon.*

¹⁴ PROEICERE *Ins. Mon.*, PROFICERE *Amodio*

lasciò per testamento, il 24 gennaio, 1736, mentre moriva,
alla commune salute dei poveri,
i beni,
che tu dirai (essere) non premio della fortuna, ma ricompensa dei meriti.
O devotissima opera di carità,
che, mentre era in vita seppe curare con grande amore et operosità i poveri,
da morto, volle giovare ad essi con straordinaria pietà.
Non immemore di così tanti benefici,
l'Illustrissimo Magistrato di questa Città Notabile
pose,
nell'anno del Signore 1737,
di grato animo, come tributo,
questa lapide.

My comments on the Italian translation:

l.11: OMNI does not mean “grande”, but “all”.

l.13: BENEFICII is in the singular, and should not have been rendered as “benefici”.

l.15: VECTIGAL is governed by IN, and GRATI ANIMI is the genitive after VECTIGAL.

However, confer the author's translation, “di grato animo, come tributo”.

My translation:

Take, o readers,
(this) example of Christian piety:
the Most Excellent Doctor Master Frangisku Saverju Agius,
exceedingly expert in the medical art,
bequeathed his goods for the benefit of the public health of the poor
– (those) you will say
which were not the reward of luck, but the prize of his merits –
as he was dying on the 24th January, 1736.
O most pious act of charity!
He who in his lifetime learned to heal the poor with all zeal and diligence,
wanted in his deathbed to be serviceable to them with remarkable piety.
Not unmindful of so great a benefice,
the Most Distinguished Magistrate of this City of Notabilis
laid
this inscription
as a contribution of gratitude
in the year of the Lord 1737.

VII

(Chapel, at the back, right side facing the altar)

My transcription and comments:

QVISQVIS ADES, VIATOR,
AEMVLARE SI DIVES, VENERARE SI PAVPER,
INSIGNEM AC SVMPTVOSAM LIBERALITATEM
EMERITISS[IMI] VIRI IACOB¹⁵, S[ACRAE] TH[ELOGIAE] A[RTISQVE] MED[ICAE]
D[OCTO]RIS,
EIVSQVE CONIVGIS,
VIVAE GAVCI, HONESTISSIMAE FEMINAE¹⁶,
QVI NON SVAE TANTVM POSTERITATI,
SED PATRIAE ETIAM COMMODIS,
CONSVLENTES,
MAGNAM EX SVIS BONIS PARTEM
HVIC PVBLICO CARITATIS¹⁷ HOSPITIO,
SECRETA LICET PIETATE,
NVLLA SVI NOMINIS INSCRIPTIONE
DEVOVERE.
ILLVSTRISSIMVS TAMEN MAGISTRATVS,
NE INGRATO SILENTIO SVRRIPVISSE POTIVS QVAM ACCEPISSE
MEMORABILE MVNVS VIDEATVR,
PRAETER FEBRVA QVOTANNIS
SOLVENDA,
LOQVENTEM HVNC ETIAM LAPIDEM
GRATISSIMI TESTEM ANIMI
CONSTITVIT <ANTE DIEM> VII¹⁸ IDVS MARTIAS, MDCCXVII¹⁹,
PER ACT[A] NOT[ARII] IGNATII DEBONO.

1.4: EMERITISS[IMI] for EMERENTISSIMI.

A[RTISQVE] MED[ICAE] D[OCTO]RIS for ARTIVM ET MEDICINAE DOCTORIS.

For the correct interpretation of ARTE MED[ICAE], see 6.4 above.

1.20: HV[N]C FOR HVNC.

1.23: NOT[ARII] for NOT[ARIS].

¹⁵ IACOBI *Ins. Mon. et Amodio*

¹⁶ FAEMINAE *Ins. Mon. et Amodio*

¹⁷ CHARITATIS *Ins. Mon. et Amodio*

¹⁸ SEP[TEM] *Ins. Mon.*

¹⁹ 1717 *Ins. Mon.*

The original translation:

O viandante, chiunque tu sia, stai qui
ad emulare se (sei) ricco, ad adorare umilmente se (sei) povero,
la distinta e dispendiosa liberalità
del molto insigne personaggio Giacomo
Dottore in Sacra Teologia, nelle Arti e in Medicina,
e di sua moglie,
Viva Gauci, donna molto onesta,
i quali,
decidendo di offrire non tanto ai loro posterì,
ma pure a vantaggio della patria,
grande parte dei loro beni
a questo pubblico Ospizio di Carità,
nonostante che i loro nomi, con segreta devozione,
non venissero apposti.
Tuttavia, l'Illustrissimo Magistrato
affinchè non sembrasse, con lo sgradito silenzio, di aver tolto,
piuttosto che aver ricevuto un dono degno di essere menzionato,
oltre a feste da farsi ogni anno,
fece collocare l'8 marzo, 1717,
secondo gli atti del Notaio Ignazio Debono,
di gratissimo animo,
anche questa lapide, testimone parlante.

My comments on the Italian translation:

1.1: ADES means “to be present”, and not “to be” (“chiunque tu sia”). Also, there is no case here for the subjunctive mood.

1.2: AEMVLARE and VENERARE are in the imperative mood; hence one cannot accept such versions as “stai qui ad emulare ... ad adorare umilmente. VENEROR does not mean “adorare umilmente”, but “to pay respect to”.

1.4: EMERITISSIMI means “most deserving”, and not “molto insigne”.

1.6: HONESTISSIMAE does not mean “most onesta”, but “most respectable”.

1.9: CONSVLENTES does not mean “decidendo”, but “thinking of”. The addition of “di offrire” is quite unnecessary here.

1.12: LICET here does not introduce a clause, as is evident in Amodio's loose translation, “nonostante che il loro nomi, con segreta devozione, non venissero apposti”, but simply a noun in the ablative case. The phrase NVLLA ... INSCRIPTIONE is an ablative absolute construction with FACTA understood. The word INSCRIPTIONE has been left out in the translation.

1.16: SILENTIO is not in the ablative, where it would normally be governed by CVM, but in the dative.

1.18–19: FEBRVA ... SOLVENDA do not mean “feste da farsi”, but “rites of purification to fulfil”.

1.21: GRATISSIMI ... ANIMI are partitive genitive of TESTEM and, as such, cannot be rendered as “di gratissimo animo” in isolation.

1.22: <ANTE DIEM> VII IDVS does not bring us to “1’8 marzo”, but to the 9th March instead.

My translation:

Whoever you are here present, o traveller,
if you are rich, emulate, if you are poor, pay respect to
a distinguished and sumptuous generosity
of Gakbu, a much deserving man,
Doctor of Sacred Theology and the Medical Art,
and of his wife,
Viva Gauci, a most respectable woman,
who, thinking not only of their posterity,
but also of the good of their country,
promised
a great part of their estate
to this public hospital of charity,
no inscription (having been made to mention) their name,
only through their secret piety.
The most distinguished Magistrate, however,
lest he appear to have taken away secretly this memorable gift to an ungrateful silence
rather than to have accepted it,
apart from prayers of purification to be rendered every year,
set up even this inscription
as a testifying witness to a most grateful heart
on the 9th of March, 1717,
as according to the Acts of Notary Nazju Debono.

VIII

(Archives of the Cathedral Museum, Ms. Misc. 81, f.82)

My transcription:

FR[ATER] MARTINVS DE REDIN,
S[ANCTAE] DOMVS HOSP[ITA]LIS HIEROSOLYMITANAE
M[AGNVS] MAGISTER,
AVLAM HANC,
PRO RECEPTANDIS AEGROTIS MVLIERIB[VS],
COSMAE ERIGI, AC DIV OPTATO FINI PERDVCI,
MANDAVIT
EXISTENTIBVS IVRATIS

LAVRENTIO CASSAR,
DIDACO CASSAR,
ISIDORO CVMBO ET
PETRO PAVLO FALSONE²⁰,
HOSPITALIS VERO EODEM DE CVMBO <PROCVRATORE> QVI,
EMI[NENTISSIMI] MANDATIS PARENS,
FIERI CVRAVIT ANNO MDCLIX.

The original translation:

Fratello Martino de Redin,
Gran Maestro del Sacro Ospedale Gerosolimitano,
ordinò di essere eretta questa sala,
tramite l'intercessione di San Cosma,
per ricoverare le donne ammalate,
e di protrarsi lungamente fino alla fine, secondo il desiderio,
mentre erano Giurati
Lorenzo Cassar,
Didaco Cassar,
Isidoro Cumbo, e
Pietro Paolo Falzon;
invero quel medesimo de Cumbo dell'Ospedale,
qui, nell'anno 1659, obbediente ai comandi dell'Eminentissimo,
curò che venisse fatta [questa iscrizione].

My comments on the Italian translation:

1.2: DOMVS has been left out in the translation.

HOSP[ITA]LIS for HOSPITALIS.

1.6: COSMAE is dative of dedication, and not genitive as in “tramite l'intercessione di San Cosma”.

PERDVCI means “to be guided”, and not “protrarsi”.

1.13: EODEM DE CVMBO is in the ablative governed by DE, and not a continuation of the ablative absolute construction. Hence, one cannot have “quel medesimo de Cumbo” as some other person in the list, but the same Cumbo family from which Pietru Pawlu Falzon originated.

My translation:

Brother Martino De Redin,
Grandmaster
of the Holy Hospital House of Jerusalem,
ordered
this hall (dedicated to Saint) Cosmas

²⁰ <FALZON> *Amodio*

to be founded and to be managed for a long time for the desired purpose
of hospitalising sick women,
when the Jurats were
Lawrenz Cassar,
Didaku Cassar,
Sidor Cumbo and
Pietru Pawlu Falzon,
indeed (the Procurator) of the Hospital, of the same Cumbo (family), who,
in obedience to the orders of his Most Eminent (Grandmaster),
saw to the setting up (of this inscription) in the year 1659.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Abela, G.F. 1647. *Della descrizione di Malta, isola nel mare siciliano con le sue antichità, et altre notizie libri quattro*. Malta, Paolo Bonacota.

Amodio, J. 2002. *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum nell'Ospedale medievale di Santo Spirito, Rabat*. In T. Cortis et al. eds., *Melitensium amor – festschrift in honour of Dun Gwann Azzopardi*, 163–178. Malta, Gutenberg.

Archives of the Cathedral Museum, Miscellanea, Ms.81, f.82.

Cassar, P. 1964. *Medical history of Malta*. London.

Ferris, A. 1866. *Descrizione storica delle chiese di Malta e Gozo*. Malta.

Fiorini, S. 1962. "Il Convento di S. Francesco in Rabat (Malta) dei frati minori conventuali", *Melita historica* 3.3, 1–41.

Fiorini, S. 1989. *Santo Spirito Hospital at Rabat (Malta): the early years to 1575*. Malta.

Savona-Ventura, Ch. 1999. *L-istorja tal-Medicina fil-gżejjer Maltin*. In M.J. Schiavone and Ch. Briffa eds., *Sensiela Kullana Kulturali* Vol. 2, Pietà, Malta, Pubblikazzjonijiet Indipendenza.

LOTYNIŠKI ĮRAŠAI RABATO ŠV. DVASIOS LIGONINĖJE: NAUJAS ŽVILGSNIS

Horatio Caesar Roger Vella

Santrauka

Šv. Dvasios ligoninė (taip pavadinta 15 a.) Rabate buvo pastatyta 13 amžiuje ir funkcionavo iki 20 amžiaus pradžios. Dabar šiose restauruotose patalpose įsikūręs Maltos Nacionalinis archyvas. Darbų metu buvo atidengti ir restauruoti lotyniški 1613–1737 metų įrašai (6 yra pastate, 2 jau yra išnykę ir išlikę tik nuorašuose), kuriuose įamžinti ligoninės mecenatai, administratoriai, ligoninėje atliekami statybos darbai,

Maltos ordino Didieji magistras ir šalies valdytojai. Vienas iš įrašų sukurtas eleginiais distichais. 2002 m., minint ankstesnio Archyvo kuratoriaus John Azzopardi jubiliejų, šie įrašai buvo publikuoti Josepha Ammodio: pateikta jų transkripcija, vertimas į italų kalbą ir komentarai. Spausdinamo straipsnio autoriaus nuomone, tiek J. Ammodio atlikta transkripcija, tiek vertimas turėtų būti tikslinami. Tai ir yra šio straipsnio tikslas.

Gauta 2007-09-25

Priimta publikuoti 2007-12-06

Autoriaus adresas:

Klasikinės filologijos ir archeologijos katedra

Maltos universitetas,

MSD 06 Msida, Malta

El. paštas: horatio.vella@um.edu.mt