

with Malta. After the death of Martí the Younger in 1409 the *universitates* of Malta and Gozo sent an embassy to Martí the Elder which presented their complaints but emphasized their attachment to the crown. When Martí the Elder died in 1410 without an evident heir, the regency in Sicily was disputed between Queen Bianca, the widow of Martí the Younger, and Bernat Cabrera, the Grand Justiciar, who secured control of Gozo and threatened Malta. However, Francesco Gatto held Malta as Captain for Queen Bianca, and on 24 June 1411 she gave him permission to reduce Gozo to obedience *per la inclita casa di Aragona*.⁵⁸ The Maltese recognized the new King of Aragon and Sicily, Fernando de Antequera, who was elected at Caspe in 1412, and the articles they sent to their king in 1416 looked back to the time of Martí, when Malta was *reducta a la sou naturali signuri, zo esti a la sacra casa di Aragona*.⁵⁹ The new dynasty, with its very different Italian and Mediterranean ambitions, brought Malta and Gozo much more closely into contact with the Aragonese Crown, whose policies were a decisive factor in the fortunes of the islands in the fifteenth century. It was really only after 1412 that Catalan and Aragonese influences became strong at Malta.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Text of 1409 and other details in VALENTINI, vii. 419-428; viii. 73-79.

⁵⁹ Text in S. GIAMBRUNO - L. GENUARDI, *Capitoli inediti delle città demaniali di Sicilia* (Palermo, 1918), 366-367.

⁶⁰ According at least to the evidence available. Without much more detailed work it is impossible to tell whether settlers with Spanish names come directly from Spain or belonged to families long established in Sicily. For example the *Jaymucio Catalano* who held lands in Gozo before 1372 may have been a Sicilian and not (as VALENTINI, xiii. 13 note 44, claimed) a 'prova della espansione catalana in queste isole'. The conclusions of this preliminary sketch may well be modified by further research, especially among the sources in Spain which have often remained unknown, even when in print, to students of Maltese history.

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CHOICE

*It cannot be seen
But if you ever want to experience it
All you need is closing your eyes
As firmly as you possibly can
And then you'll see nothing
But you will get to know better
What it is really like
If with closed eyes you move
To the end of the landing
And take the step forward.*

*Then opening your eyes wont keep you
From rolling all the way down
Where darkness will grow darkness
As you roll down
For your choice
You have made it.*

BERNARD MALLIA, S.J.

MASSIVE

*Put on hard massiveness
Massive Massaccio
Knit bushy eyebrows
And you'll be Moses like
Do not relax I promise
I wont hit you
For you have made your mind
No condescension
To human words*

*I only have to stand back
Throwing my head one side
And - when I like - the other
Serene and serious
Just connoisseurship
Your classic art.*

HEYTHROP

BERNARD MALLIA, S.J.

FABLE

*I know a true fable
Which happens still
Too often
Of how a man just vanished
In a whirlpool
While no one passing by could realize
Only that man could see
For it was he rawled
Without shovel and pick
Pneumatic drill
Or oil rig
Silently.*

*His heart began to sink
Deeper over the brink
The whirlpool drawing him on
To make deeper still
The centre of the vortex
That he once started rawling with his eyes
To make it wide enough
To swallow him
Unnoticed.*

*Of those who passed him by unwitting
Some had already started
Others were far ahead
Making their whirlpool to size
Enough to suck them in
Separately
Singly.*

BERNARD MALLIA, S.J.

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