

SIXTEENTH-CENTURY PLANS OF VALLETTA

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Because of its length and the large number of accompanying illustrations, this paper is being published on its own.

In his talk during History Week Dr Ganado stressed that in 1565 there was in Italy a record production of maps representing the Great Siege, with over fifty more maps produced in Rome and Venice. In the following year, map producers turned their attention to the planning of the new city of Valletta, founded on 28 March 1566. Antonio Lafreri in Rome and Paolo Forlani in Venice published various states of the plan of Valletta, based on the original plans drawn by the architect Francesco Laparelli. The speaker highlighted the differences which distinguished the various states of the printed plans.

In 1566 a plan of Fort St Elmo and the peninsula of Sceberras (on which Valletta was built) was published in Rome by the Palombis from Novara. Three states of this plan are known, extant in only one or two exemplars.

Further plans of Laparelli's perimeter walls of Valletta were issued in 1567 and the subsequent years by Forlani and Domenico Zenoi, but the harbour plan which appeared in 1572 in Braun and Hogenberg's atlas of the cities of the world depicted a plan of the city projected before Laparelli came on the scene.

Ten years later Matteo Perez d'Aleccio published, in an album of the siege maps of Malta, a beautifully-engraved bird's-eye view of Valletta; the *modello* in oil of this view is preserved at the Greenwich National Maritime Museum. D'Aleccio's plan served as a model for Daniel Speckle's *Architectura* and the plan in the Statutes of Grand Master Hugues Loubenx de Verdalle.

Dr Ganado remarked that this intensive production of plans on a single theme, about thirty in all, reflected the importance attached in sixteenth-century Europe to the new city of Valletta. He concluded his talk by describing the manuscript plans of Valletta he had come across while carrying out his research on the subject of his talk.