Maurice Agius-Vadala

GIOVANNI MYRITI (1536—1590?) — HIS LIFE AND WORK

The first description of Malta, ever to be published by a Maltese-born citizen, seems to be that by Giovanni Myriti which, though, in part, paraphrasing Quintino (1) translated reads as follows:

"There is also Melite, now Malta, much celebrated for the shipwreck and landing of St. Paul, my own most dear mother-country, which was conceded as a place of residence to the noble Knights of Jerusalem on the 11th day of October, in the year of Our Lord 1530, by the Emperor Charles, on the pleading of the Grand Master Philip Villiers L'Islacadnam, but having wholly changed this condition, they dedicate themselves to the sea and continue to defend the island against the Turks' attack with great glory.

It is here to be noted that the temples of Juno and of Hercules are not islands, as some supposed, but are places in the island of Malta itself. Indeed the huge remains of the temple of Hercules, three thousand paces and more in circumference, are to be found in that part of the Island, which by the nature of its location, is called, in the inhabitant's own language, the 'Southern Port'. So also the ruins of the temple of Juno, are to be found spread about midway between the Castle and the town, amongst many measures of land, whilst the foundations and substructure of the temple itself occupy a good part of the port itself, which fact, therefore, I have made known, in order that nothing, which may be necessary to the knowledge of students of such things, need to be sought with difficulty elsewhere."

This description appeared on page 89 of a book published in Ingolstadt in 1590 from the printing-press of Wolfgang Eder, written by Giovanni Myriti who declared himself to be Maltese-born: Melitensem. It may, therefore, be the first book ever to have been published by a Maltese author.

Although it has been listed by most Maltese historians such as G.F. Abela (2), Count Ciantar (3), Ignazio Saverio Mifsud (4), Antonio Schembri (5),

1. J. Quintin d'Autun, Insulae Melitae Descriptio, Lyons 1536
2. G.F. Abela, Descrittione di Malta, Malta 1647, p.560
3. G.A. Ciantar, Malta Illegitera, vol. 2, Malta 1780, p.316
4. I.B. Mifsud, Biblioteca Maltese, Malta 1764, pp.35-40
5. A. Schembri, Selva di Autori e Traduttori Maltesi le di cui opere sono state pubblicate dalle stampe in Malta ad ulteriore, sistemata per ordine alfabetico e completata da Ant. Schembri, Malta 1855

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The correct, full title of the book is:

Opusculum/ Geographi-/ Cum Rarum / Teti/-us eius Negativi Ratio/ nes, Mira / Industria et Brevisubl / complete.ac, iam nonus ex diversorum Libri/ arcatura, / summa cura ac diligentiss collectum et publicatum, per/ Ioannem Myritium Meli / tenaes, Ordinis/ Hospitali Sancti Ioannis, Hierosolymitani, Cum/ praedictorum Alle / mannii Monasterij, ac/ eorum Ratioperfectam/ / Ingentiatrii/ Ex officina Typographic Wolfgangi Ederi/ Anno/ M.D. LXXXV. (15)

This book, which is 136 pages long, and all written in an elegant Latin, is printed in a sharp, cursive type and measures, approximately, 22 x 20cm. It has a foreword, also in Latin, by the author himself, followed by a dedication (again by the author) to his patron and immediate superior, Fra Philip Riedesel of Kamberg (16), Commander of Ealinghen and Frankfort and quesator in the priory of Germany, on behalf of the Order of St John, and whose coat-of-arms are shown opposite the introduction.

The first part of the book is entitled Pars Prima Opusculi De Principiis Astronomiae et Geographiae and is sixty pages long. The rubric at the top of the pages of the booklet, however, gives a rather erroneously abridged title, namely: Prima Pars de Principiis Astronomiae. This is in fact misleading, because, of the twenty-four chapters which make up this part, only six really deal with astronomy, whilst the other eighteen chapters all deal with Geography.

This first part of Myrit's work is, essentially, a series of short explanations, intended for pre-University students: ... quibus adolescentes uti poterunt ad exercendum doctrinam ... (p. 54). This is confirmed in another part of the book wherein it is clearly stated that the book is intended for the ... studiose juvenes ... (p. 42).

By this book it was intended to give students, first of all, a general idea of the Universe, naturally according to the Aristotelian theory of the Earth in a central position. This explanation is then followed by the various divisions and sub-divisions of the Earth's surface, and of the Universe. From them, Myriti...
goes on to deal with certain problems of geography, for which, without in any way ever entering into long or abstruse theoretical proofs, he nevertheless offered practical solutions. Today rather than Geography, we would call this part: Instructions in Map-Making and Map-Reading.

For the most part, this section of the book, has been superseded and rendered obsolete by later discoveries. But when it was published in 1590, it could be considered as a summary of contemporary geographical knowledge.

In the light of modern knowledge, it would be easy to disparage the geocentric theory of astronomy as followed by Myriti in this book. One must, however, bear in mind that for many centuries, this same theory served to interpret successfully the phenomena of the heavens and guided the labours of many competent astronomers, from Ptolemy (17) to Tycho Brache (18), so that the positions of the Sun, Moon and Planets, at any future time, could and were predicted, and both solar and lunar eclipses were foretold with a considerable degree of accuracy, using always the geocentric theory.

A point which further increases the interest which Myriti's work well deserves, is its early date of publication in correlation with the standard of education in Malta. It would indeed appear to me that if books of this standard were being written for our young, and could find a market, then the prevalent standard of education could not have been as low as many local authors, even educationalists, have hitherto been claiming (19). Indeed, it has been claimed that the first Maltese textbook, entitled Institutione per aiutare li giovinetti nell'acquisto della grammatica con ogni facilità, written by a certain Giuseppe Nelt'acquisto delta grammatica con ogni facilità, appeared only in 1646. Myriti's book, which is after all a scientific illustration of the text, and allowing the student himself to rotate or otherwise move the diagram and so enabling him better to understand the problem being explained. Myriti seems to have adopted and adapted these volvelles from his contemporary Petrus Apianus (1495—1552) (20) a German cartographer who also appears to have applied these moveable illustrations to astronomical diagrams. Five volvelles are given in Myriti's book.

Against page 61, and separating Part I from Part II, we have Myriti's World Map, 41 x 32 cm in size. It is unsigned but we have no doubt that it is his own work or, at least, that it is based on his inspiration as, significantly, the border around it is garnished by myrtle leaves, after his surname which seems to have been derived from this plant, the myrtaceae. The same leaves also appear on Myriti's coat-of-arms (p. 150) and round his portrait (p. 134).

In the 16th century there was, in any case, no constant practice on this point and as many maps were signed by their authors, as were left unsigned.

Myriti's World Map has been considered to be of such historical worth and scientific interest as to merit inclusion in the famous Facsimile Atlas of Ancient Maps ed. by A. Nordskjöld, the renowned geographer and arctic explorer (1832—1901) (21).

The map has no expression of scale although actually the representative fraction is calculated to be about 1:138,000,000: nor has it any statement of projection which is however the Bordinate, Oval or Elliptical projection (22).

Contrary to medieval cartographers, who often placed East (the direction of Jerusalem) at the top of their maps, Myriti placed North at the top of his map, following the introduction of the magnetic compass. This was also the convention followed by Ptolemy, Mercator (23) Hortelius (24) and many others.

The Arab geographers, however, often placed South at the top.

Giovanni Myriti's map represents a definite step forward in the evolution of cartography and in it we in fact see the complete absence of the medieval

17. Ptolemy (=Ptolemaeus, Claudius) died A.D. 147 ( ), Egyptian geographer, astronomer and mapmaker.
18. Tycho Brache (1546—1601) a renowned Danish astronomer and a maker of celestial and terrestrial globes. Many scholars and cartographers went to study under him, amongst them W.J. Blaeu of the Netherlands. He was succeeded in his trade by his son Philippus (1531-89).
19. Nils Adolf Erik Nordenskjöld (1832—1901) one of the leading Arctic experts and explorers of his time. Author of Facsimile-Atlas to the Early History of Cartography... Stockholm 1889, with which the modern historical study of cartography can be said to have begun.
20. Benedetto Bordone (1460-1531 or 39) Venetian mapmaker and cartographer. In 1508 he completed a World Map, for which he was paid in 1528 in Venice.
21. Nils Adolf Erik Nordenskjöld (1832—1901) one of the leading Arctic experts and explorers of his time. Author of Facsimile-Atlas to the Early History of Cartography... Stockholm 1889, with which the modern historical study of cartography can be said to have begun.
22. Benedetto Bordone (1460-1531 or 39) Venetian mapmaker and cartographer. In 1508 he completed a World Map, for which he was paid in 1528 in Venice.
23. Gerhard Mercator ( = Gerard Kremer), the Younger, born in Kupelmonde in East Flanders (1512-94), renowned instrument-maker and cartographer. His well known atlas was not completed and published until 1595, i.e. after his death. His business was carried on by his sons.
24. Abraham Ortelius (1528-98), Dutch mapmaker, cartographer and cosmographer. Publisher in Antwerp of first atlas with the title Theatrum orbis terrarum, the first edition of which appeared in 1570.
portolan. The loxodromes, the rhumb lines and the colourful wind/compass roses have also all disappeared completely.

So also in the depiction of the parallels and the meridians, he has reached the final stages and, instead of intersecting each other at right angles, they all intersect at varying angles according to the projection chosen which in this case, was (as we have seen) the Oval one. The Oval projection was similarly chosen by Abraham Ortelius, the great (perhaps the greatest) cartographer whom, we think, Myriti was using as a model.

In the depiction of the land masses, the continents of Africa and of South America, are quite faithfully drawn out and show that Myriti was quite aware of Vasco da Gama’s (25) and Diaz’ (26) voyages around Africa in 1487 and 1499 respectively.

Nevertheless, Myriti refuses to accept the separation of Asia from North America, and of North America from Greenland. To him they are all India extra Ganges, that is ‘India beyond the Ganges’. This is not at all surprising. In fact we find Giacomo Gastaldi (27), in conjunction with Paolo de Forlani, producing an otherwise superlative World Map (28), published by Giov. Francesco Camocio (29), in Venice, as late as 1560, showing Asia and America well and properly joined together! In justice to Myriti we must point out that the separation of Asia from America, and the acceptance of the Americas as a separate continent, with all that that implies (from the ethnological, zoological being able to win ecclesiastical approval for a book meant for the education serious theological questions which Myriti would have had to surmount before able to win ecclesiastical approval for a book meant for the education of Catholic youth. Gherard Mercator (1512—1594) himself, for not believing that Asia and North America were joint together, very nearly got burned at the stake, having been accused of Lutheran heresies.

Myriti’s World Map gives us no less than fifty-seven place-names or toponyms. This is indeed surprising considering the limitations imposed by the medium (wood-cut) used; as well as those arising from the projection used, that of the Oval or Bordone-type which is generous in the middle, but very restricted in the extremities; and, of course, the obvious limitations arising out of the size of the map itself which, as we have seen, is only 41 x 33cm. In this format it was technically impossible to include more place-names, especially at the map’s extremities.

Finally, before going on to discuss other aspects of Myriti’s book, one must point out that he is rather retrograde in his map for retaining the traditional sixteen winged cherubs, representing the demi-gods of winds. This tradition may originally have developed from the manuscript prototypes of Ptolemy’s World Maps and, in fact, the earliest known example (13th century), from the Vatopedi Monastery of Mount Athos, shows several such cherubic demigods. But by 1590 they had, of course, been abandoned by most cartographers.

In the same way, Myriti shows us, at both sides of his World Map, what are known as climata. These were a way of dividing the Earth into zones but they had nothing to do with the weather of any particular zone; rather they were related to the length of the longest day in that particular zone. Ptolemy himself, had already advocated their relegation to the margins of the maps and, by the 16th century, all reputable cartographers had definitely rejected the climata and had already started dividing the World just into longitude and latitude, as indeed was done by Mercator in 1560 and Ortelius in 1570. Myriti used both systems and showed both the climata as well as the longitudes and latitudes.

Summing up, we can say that Myriti’s World Map has, on the one hand retained both the medieval winged cherubs representing the Winds, as well as the climata dividing the World’s zones, but on the other hand has quite abolished the loxodromes, the rhumb lines and the compass-rose of medieval portolans in favour of the more scientific parallels of latitude and the meridians of longitude. In this way it truly represents a transitional stage between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance cultures of which scarcely any other exemplar exists amongst Maltese documents. If not for any other reason, for this at least, it deserves better study and appreciation.

The second part of Myriti’s book is made up of twenty-two chapters, covering sixty-five pages. The rubric at the top of these pages describes the contents as secunda pars de orbis descriptione which is self-explanatory. Of course, being in itself already a summary of many works, it is very difficult to make yet a further summary of it. Myriti appears to have followed the method originated by Strabo and adopted by Sebastian Münster (1489—1552) (30),

25. Vasco da Gama (1469-1524), Portuguese navigator. In the history of exploration, his name remains linked with the opening of the first maritime route round the Cape of Good Hope to India which robbed Venice of its centuries-old monopoly in the spice and silk trade with Asia.

26. Bartholomeu Dias de Novais (fl.1481—1500), Portuguese explorer and navigator, discoverer of the Cape of Good Hope.

27. Giacomo Gastaldi (c. 1500-c. 1565), Piedmontese cartographer and mapmaker, who worked in Venice; cosmographer of the Venetian Republic. Produced numerous maps of which some were included in the Lamiati Atlases.

28. Paolo de Forlani (active 1560-9), engraver and mapmaker of Verona; worked for D. Bertelli, Camocio and others. Published maps himself, such as Gastaldi’s oval World map.

29. Gian Francesco Camocio, Italian Cartographer and mapmaker (active 1558—1578), famous for his Isolario; published Gastaldi’s oval World map in 1569 and 1581. Also assembled atlases of the “Laberii” type.

30. Sebastian Münster (1489—1552), cartographer, theologian and Swiss mapmaker. Author
his contemporary and leading geographer. Invariably, when describing a country, they first of all studied the etymology of that country’s name. Then came its frontiers and its divisions, followed by its topography (i.e., its mountains, its rivers, its flora and its fauna), its customs and methods of government, its commerce and trade, its towns, its sovereigns, its leading personages and, finally, its so-called ‘marvels’. This arrangement may at times appear dry and stereotyped, but nevertheless it represented the first beginnings of a scientific method and is very typical of Renaissance encyclopedism.

In the course of these regional descriptions, Myriti quotes as sources mostly classical authors mainly Herodotus (31), Pline the Elder (32), Gaius Julius Solinus (33) and Strabo (34), besides many others, to a total of a hundred and twenty. This of course means that he must have had a well-stocked library at his disposal. For his description of the Americas he consulted and quoted the works of his contemporary Petrus Martyr of Angliae (1459—1526) (35). Myriti’s sources for the East are not so good. Marco Polo (1254—1324) is quoted three times and is the only authority mentioned for the Far East (36).

...
Venetia per Francesco Marcolini MDLVII. As the compiler of the relevant article in the Encyclopædia Trecanii says:

"...la autenticità di tale relazione fu da tempo messa in dubbio, anzi lo straordinario viaggio era da più relegato fra le invenzioni: anche la carta annessa alla relazione è un falso."

But even Abraham Ortelius (1527—1598) had been taken in by this hoax and included the Zeno brothers as sources for his famous Theatrum Orbis Terrarum. In the space available it is absolutely impossible to give any extracts from these descriptions of the World's parts, as then known, notwithstanding their obvious interest. I have, therefore, had to limit myself just to the description of Malta with which I have started my paper.

When I say, however, that by quoting from no less than a hundred and twenty classical and modern sources; by indicating at least seventeen contemporary explorers/conquistadores and geographers with the particular sphere of activity of each; by describing a hundred and sixty different countries and their inhabitants, their customs, their habits, habitats and religions; by listing more than 1200 toponyms and identifying the exact country-source of some eighty or more natural commodities and resources available in his days; by enumerating some twenty contemporary heads of state (both civilized and uncivilized) and outlining their respective forms of government; by recording all this, Myriti's work constitutes an interesting body of knowledge by any standard. It follows that, even though it is only a small textbook, with no pretensions to originality in any way, it nevertheless is a work which Malta, its mother country, simply cannot afford to ignore any longer, the more so because Malta with which I have started my paper.

His parents, according to Ign. Saverio Mifsud (Bibliotheca Maltese, p. 57) were of Rhodian birth, and followed the Order, in its several peregrinations, and with it finally came to Malta and here established themselves permanently. They may have had noble blood in their veins, although Mifsud is very careful in his choice of words. In fact, he speaks of the Myritis as having been one of the riguardevoli Famiglie Rodiote who followed the Order to Malta. His language becomes even more flowery but more ambivalent when he states:

"Una di quelle fedelissime, e seguaci famiglie fo la MIRITI, dalla quale, come da nobile germoglio, riconosce i suoi natali il nostro Giovanni."

It is, however, worth recording, for whatever it is worth, that John Ritter, Advocate in both Laws and Myriti's friend, wrote:

"Here is enshrined the great and noble Giovanni?"

Abela informs us, that Myriti died in Ratisbon, in his Commandery there, without, however, mentioning the exact year. This is believed to have been around 1590 but confirmation is still sought. We know nothing about his childhood and little about his youth. Abela (p. 560) tells us he was a Doctorate in Laws, besides also becoming very proficient in Literature. But Myriti's love was especially dedicated to the science of mathematics which he loved above all without, however, forgetting his sacerdotal duties for which he was also much admired.

For all these merits, and for special services (which Mifsud only alludes to but does not particularize) rendered to the Order of St. John, Myriti was accepted as a Conventual Chaplain in the Langue of Germany and, to reward him for the above referred to services, he was appointed to the Commandery of Ratisbon to which was also attached the country estate of Altmtlhmester.

The exact date of this appointment is not known, but from the valuable
contributions of Dr G. Neckermann we know that by 1561 he was already in possession of the said Commandery (39).

Given Myriti's interest in Geography, we may venture to conjecture that his choice of Ratisbon was a very natural and logical one. In fact, at this particular moment, Germany had succeeded Italy as a centre for the study of Geography. It had assumed a peculiarly leading position in the study of the science of cartography and its contributions to the advancement of geographical science had been both extensive and valuable, out-distancing the contributions of Geography. It had assumed a peculiarly leading position in the study of the science of cartography and its contributions to the advancement of geographical science had been both extensive and valuable, out-distancing the contributions of Geography.

In the early 16th century there, therefore, ensued in Germany — helped by the Emperor Maximilian and Charles V and encouraged by such merchant- princes as Prickeleymer and Peutinger — a school of mathematical geography from which there then developed spherical trigonometry, astronomical tables, calculations for establishing latitudes and longitudes, construction of globes and new projections and much more besides.

In the face of this situation, Myriti simply had no other choice and he, therefore, opted for the vacancy of the Commandery of Ratisbon. Whilst performing his duties in this Commandery, he also found time to register as a student in the University of Fribourg im Breisgau (40), and to study there Mathematics under Erasmus Oswald Schreckenfuchs and Henricus Loritus Gla-reanus (41), as well as Greek and Latin letters under Johannes Hartungus (42).

In 1561, Myriti was faced with this situation and he, apparently, decided to take the matter seriously in hand by restoring the buildings, leaving an inscription dated 1568 to commemorate the event, this inscription, reproduced by Abela, is no longer to be seen on the site itself today.

Between 1562 — 1568, during the six long years of restoration, Myriti could not visit Malta to report on his activities. He was, therefore, made the target of three threatening letters from Grand Master La Valette himself, all three complaining about his silence and absence (44). Finally, presumably, after the restoration was ended, on the 18th June 1568, he was given permission to return to Ratisbon (habuit licentiam eundi ad dictum Commandentium). This implies that he had come to Malta, made his full report, got the Order’s full approval and blessings, and was reconfirmed in his Commandery and allowed to return there (45).

The Commanderies of the Order, of which that of Ratisbon appears to have been a typical example, were, usually, complex, multi-faceted agricultural investments, self-supporting and living on the income of rents, tithes, ground rents or census, interests, etc., the greater part of which used to be paid in kind. A part of this income went to the Order in Malta as responsions; another part went to pay the saying of masses, preaching of sermons, teaching and other pastoral work in the various churches of the Commandery, whilst the remainder, if any, was for the upkeep and reward of the Commander. This was the theoretical aspect in good times, but in bad harvests, during agricultural calamities, or in times of War, all this went awry.

This is exactly what seems to have happened in Bavaria with first the Peasants' Uprising, then the Schmalkalde Wars and, finally, the Lutheran upheaval! This meant that there were no harvests in kind coming in, and no liquid cash left, with which Myriti could pay for his repairs and restoration works. Myriti, therefore, had no alternative but that of pledging parts of his liquid cash left, with which Myriti could pay for his repairs and restoration works. Myriti, therefore, had no alternative but that of pledging parts of his liquid cash left, with which Myriti could pay for his repairs and restoration works. Myriti, therefore, had no alternative but that of pledging parts of his liquid cash left, with which Myriti could pay for his repairs and restoration works. Myriti, therefore, had no alternative but that of pledging parts of his liquid cash left, with which Myriti could pay for his repairs and restoration works. Myriti, therefore, had no alternative but that of pledging parts of his liquid cash left, with which Myriti could pay for his repairs and restoration works. Myriti, therefore, had no alternative but that of pledging parts of his liquid cash left, with which Myriti could pay for his repairs and restoration works.

50 all three being eminent professors, scientists and authors of several works.

The Commandery of Ratisbon and its so-called membrum or dependency at Altmühlmünster were both very ancient foundations. In fact the first Command of Ratisbon, one Perenger by name (43), had been appointed in 1276, but the earlier history of the attached church of St Leonard is hidden in antiquity. So also the country estate of Altmühlmünster, with its attached church, had first been given to the Knight Templars in 1158, and after this Order’s fall from grace in 1311, it had been passed on to the Knights of St John. This of course means that both were already very venerable buildings, well over 300 to 400 years in age, and so constantly in need of repair.

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Commandery in order to raise money. It was never a case of disposing permanently of the Commandery, or of parts of same, as is implied by the word alienatio to which with he was accused, but only that of temporarily pledging parts of his Commandery. Of course whilst so pledged Myriti temporarily lost possession and control of such parts, and this is where his troubles arose.

In 1568, Myriti had apparently pawned the weaker unit, that is the church of St Leonard in Ratisbon, for the sum of 1500R (=Reichsthaler?) to a Bavarian nobleman by the name of Wolf Christoph von Taufkirchen; with the proceeds Myriti was then able to repair and reconstruct the more important item, that is the estate, convent and church at Altmtlhlmtlnster (46). Indeed, he seems to have simply renewed an old pledge as the documents speak of den alten versus (47) and was merely repeating an old procedure, already previously used, to carry out recurring repairs by former Commandators; Johannes Weyner in 1450 and Marcus Gebhardt in 1541 (47a). This solution was always reversible whenever funds had again become available.

The procedure adopted was a practical one, though it may have constituted an administratively irregularity. Also it may not have been strictly in accordance with the founders' intentions. Nevertheless it seems to have been condoned by the Order since Myriti was allowed to return to his Commandery after his visit to Malta in 1569.

Unfortunately, the security-holder, or pledgee, came to die, and his heirs were alleged to have sold the property to third parties (48), who appear to have been very active Lutherans. Probably what was sold were the rights arising from the mortgage, as we do not think, that the property itself could be legally sold without the Order's consent.

With these new security-holders, Lutheran services seem to have been conducted in the Commandery's church itself. Here hell broke loose! What had been an administrative irregularity, developed into a full scale international incident involving Cardinal Bobba as the Order's Protector (49) — and the one who started off the trouble in the first place — then the Vatican, the Order itself and its Grand Prior in Germany, Fra Philippus Flach (50). His Grace Wilhelm V, the Pious-Count Palatine of the Rhine and Duke of Upper Bavaria, his brother the Archbishop of Ratisbon and the autonomy and privileges of the Imperial city of Ratisbon and, of course our own, poor Rev. Giovanni Myriti.

The discovery, in the German High State Archives, of a box-file (Kaston Schwarz No. 12875) full of documents pertaining to Myriti's case is, of course, throwing much light on it. Unfortunately, the decipherement, transcription and translation of these documents is taking longer than had been anticipated and we can as yet only give the rough picture as outlined above, which may of course be changed when the translation of the whole of the documents has been completed (51).

To solve the painful problem, the Duke said that two alternatives were possible. Under the first, the Diocese of Ratisbon was prepared to take over possession of home, church and belongings at Ratisbon, and would hold them, but only as security for the 1500R. (implying that it would advance the 1500R, and pay off the Lutherans, against eventual refund by the Order in due course); under the second alternative, the Diocese was prepared to acquire the immovables by outright purchase if the Lutheran contract could be revoked (52).

Rather than choose either of the alternatives offered by the Duke, the Order seems to have chosen a third possibility, that of retaining the Commandery but at the price of imprisoning, condemning and finally dismissing Myriti from his post and so making him the scapegoat, and then appointing a successor to him in the person of Fra Johann Weigant, Canon of Moosburg, who undertook to pay the moneys due (2000 golden escudos, according to the Order's records, 1500R, according to the Duke's computations) (53). Myriti seems to have attempted to contest this nomination and in A.O.M., Ms. 2199 (f.122) mention is made of a commissione criminale contro il Sce. te. Fra Gio-

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46. Bavarian High State Archives, Kaston Schwarz 12875, Doc. 9 (formerly Kaston Schwarz 413/87).
47. Ibid., Doc. 4.
47a. See N.M.L., A.O.M., Arch. No. 45, f.130v and Arch., No 6340, f.90.
48. Ibid., Doc. 1.
49. N.M.L., A.O.M., no. 94, f.111 (30/4/1576); no 436, f.213 (31/4/1576); vol. 96 (442), f.116 (7/9/1584); vol. 96 (442), f.166v (10/9/1584); vol. 445, f.229 (16/3/1589).
51. See N.M.L., A.O.M., Arch. No. 45, f.130v and Arch., No 6340, f.90.
52. Bavarian High State Archives, Kaston Schwarz 12875, Doc. 9.
vanni Meriti per la mala amministrazione della detta Comenda, e alienazione de' Beni della medesima. Del 1590. Unfortunately the proceedings and findings of this Commission of Inquiry have not been found.

The situation, as we know it today, is, therefore, still one of considerable conflict. On the one hand, we have the Order's records accusing Myriti of maladministration, but on the other hand, we have our national historian, Giovanni Francesco Abela, a mere forty-three years after the events, whilst he was still administering the Vice-Chancellorship of the Order, ignoring the accusations brought by the Order against Myriti and indeed flatly contradicting them and praising Myriti's administration (54).

By 1592, Weigant had taken full possession of the church and Commandery of Ratisbon. The church was subsequently reconsecrated by Bishop Wolfgang von Housen during the tenure of his office (1600-1613).

APPENDIX

Myriti's description of Malta in its original latin text

Est et Melite nunc Malta D. Pauli naufragio et appulse percelebris, patria mea dulcisima. Hanc post amissam Rhodon, intercedente Philippo de Villars, Lislamo Magistro Magno, ab Imperatore Carolo ad inhabitandum concessa est auratis Hierosolymitanae militiae equitibus, anno Domini 1530. 4 nonas Octobris, ne prorsus mutata condiione mari exuerenur, quam adhuc contra Turcarum impetus, cum ingerit auxilium gloria.

Notandum autem hoc in loco Junonis templum & Herculis non esse insulas, ut qui busdam videtur, sed loca Melitae insulae, quorum adhuc Herculanum templi immensae religiisae patenti circuitu in passus termille et ultra, in eo insulae angulo quern ab argumento loci, patria lingua Euriportum nominant. Sic et Junonis templi ruina sparsa medio feri loco inter oppidum et castelium apparat in multa lugaera, fundamentis et substructionibus templi bonam portas eius partim occupatis, quod ideo indicus, ne, cum quid, harum rerum studiis sciti fuerit necessarium, aliunde sit mendicandum.

54. Abela, op.cit.
Myriti's map of the world (See pp. 39-54)