The Arab-Christian pact

• Geoffrey Wettigter’s piece (The Sunday Times, March 21) should be read in the context of the thesis in Tristes et Mélito- gay by the late Dr. René Gogorza. One of the themes that emerged was the dhimma pact put forward in the book is unacceptable because it would reduce one of the parties to something else.

In the same vein, this referred to the deal made between the free Muslims occupying Malta in 1949 and the Christians (gabitha) when confronted by a Syriac attack. But Prof. Wettigter is contradicting himself, unless he has changed his mind since 1989.

The pact mentioned in the book, abrogated in 1127, was a pact between Christians in Gozo and the Muslims. Twenty years ago he wrote in The Sunday Times, November 19, 1999: "The slaves were understandably Muslims, seen at the time that they were the fools that they were and at the hands of the invaders that the latter had been successful.”

Paradoxically, for one to posit that “in view of all this, it is probable that the gabiha of 1949 mentioned by al-Qazimi in his well-known passage actually refers to the descendants of the Gabitha, the Christian inhabitants of the island, who presumably earned the trust of the Muslim conquerors, either by their skill at warfare or by their presence that they were in concert with the other Christian states to recover the island; this Christian treatment meted out to them.

By 1196, the humiliation status of gabitha, they had, not surprisingly, become completely assimilated in culture, language and religion to their conquerors.”

But, as noted by Anthony Las- torga, in The Chronicle of Christian Malta (2002), had the slaves of 1055 been descendants of the people that influenced they would probably have remained on the island with the Christians; so that the men would have had no pressing need to marry the free Christians.

The logical conclusion is that the pact, “between Christians and Muslims”, abrogated in 1127, could: 1) not have been the deal “between free Muslims and ‘Muslim slaves’ drawn up in 1053”.

But let us consider what the abrogation, in 1127, of the deal could not have been the thing that he vaguely contemplated in 1089.

If not 1127, then the latter concerned giving the slaves of that year freedom, equality with their masters, and women, which they would have entered for fabricated 74 years.

Now, in 1127, their descend- dants, three generations later, would be able to breach the “deal”, what precisely would they be renouncing?

The deal was actually something of the distant past and would not concern the Muslim ex-slaves in the least, I honestly do not see how this “falling into place” in all this theorizing.

Coming next to the other rele- vant documents, Prof. Wettig- ter’s letter relating to the ambiguity of the pact of old from 1127, the Christian com- munity that was still bound by it, it seems that several persons who “had departed from the pact of old (and), could not have been one implanted by the Normans on Gozo after 1091.

Such a community would have been free and in no need to strike a new deal, so the “deal” only suffered by the Normans to remain on the island to make the pact.

If it preceded 1091, then the deal could not be a real deal but one by this pact would have been a non-serious group’ under the influence of the other’s rights. The pact would then clash with what was said above and with the information in Maltonal concerning all Christian slaves on Malta being for- eigners.

This would be contradictory, that is, unless Malta and Gozo were treated differently, which is not as Prof. Wettigter would have us believe, and not least, prominently in Daphne Caruana Galizia’s blog after one of the Labour MPs, Chris Mossop and Kar- men Vella, against me following statements I was directed to make by high-ranking officials in my party a week before the 2008 gen- eral election. This is one of the many labell cases which are to be settled by a blue-ribbon panel set up by myself and one of the two major parties, an agreement Dr. Sapiano is surely aware of.

No wrong in lunch

with magistrate

• Georg Sapiano (The Sunday Times, April 1) for a superb lunch to meet with Magistrate Cassandro Serrera, implying that I made a decision in a case I am a defen- dent in and I am being heard.

He makes a reference to “people at the top openly scratching” (sic).

I can categorically deny ever having gone out to lunch with Dr. Serrera or Dr. Sapiano. Dr. Sapiano is prob- ably referring to a lunch I attended to celebrate the birthday of a mutual acquaintance in which Magistrate Serrera Herrera was seated at the same table as I was together with about 18 other friends.

The dominating feature was the presence of Dr. Sapiano and Ker- men Vella, against me following statements I was directed to make by high-ranking officials in my party a week before the 2008 general election. This is one of the many labelled cases which are to be settled by a blue-ribbon panel set up by myself and one of the two major parties, an agreement Dr. Sapiano is surely aware of.

Let the professionals do their job

• I refer to your front-page article last Sunday concerning the right of the police to ‘stop and search’ and the need for justification. I suggest that this development is part of a growing mistrust in mind, the marriage is null.

Another factor that is peculiar is the nature of the agreement between the then Apostolic Nuncio, Mgr Pierre Labaissière, and the local police force whereby couples have to sign, and be bound, a document that they had to go through the local church authority were they even to think of getting a separation. Such an attitude goes against the indissolubility of marriage.

These are only some of the grievances that cannot be explained in several ways. The maladministration of one individual (or even a single case) are enough to give an entire profession a bad name and more often than not, it is hurting the professional class.

While those who have suffered abuses deserve to be heard and to have their complaints investigated, I would like to put things in greater perspective.

This document and estimates we can explain in several ways. The indissolubility of marriage is only one of the reasons that could be settled by magistrates and not the police as we are being. However, the police force, police officers and others, all these people have chosen their professions because of an innate desire to serve or help others; and, believe me, they are not looking for a considerable drop in public esteem.

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