In his patronising letter (The Sunday Times, April 18) Godfrey Wright is writing from a position of grossly inaccurate statements.

Firstly, he concludes to uphold Al-Hajj Omar bin Abdul Aziz's theory when he states that "there would be no more Jewish or Christian archaelogical evidence." He is still oblivious to recent archaeology. Information is available in Dr. Zuhair Al-Malik's book "The Garden of Palazzo Xara, Mdina," which show that "there are evidences all over the site in Mellieha." This is not an excuse for "putting the cart before the horse" (Bruno and Cupitaz, 1969). It is he who assures us that the Museum of Archaeology holds a copper stamp (Obj. No. 23,000), found at Gharzeison, carrying the date 311 A.H. or c. 923 AD? Has not Al-Hajj Omar bin Abdul Aziz now been superceded?

Secondly, he categorically assures us that the indigenous Christian population was on the one of 1648, by which he means that the Christians surrounding their bishop found in 1617 at the same children of their Cretan found fathers (who, after 1891, had converted.

Why should these descendants of ex-Muslim slaves be better assimilated to convert to Christianity than the other Muslins, descended from the former masters? The deal of 1648 was not about religion but about freedom and wealth.

The only motivation, common to both Muslim categories, would be gain, but as an example, Christians refer within such a short time. They were certainly not pressured, nor the Christians really defended them against their Maltese and other Christian neighbours and who actually employed them as soldiers in their armies.

Jeremy Johns, who studied the analogous situation in Sicily, finds no trace of proselytism among Muslims, and the only "conversos" were those of the Grand Harbour, who had strayed from their religion and had begun to come back into the fold. The same conclusion is reached if our must all said this in the book, and, as G.K. Chesterton comments in his "The Everlasting Man," "converts are not renowned for their convertability."

Thirdly, he continues to insist on identifying Malta with the Maltese if they were one island: I can understand that, to admit that the two islands, "distinctive and different after 870 AD is too hard...to swallow. But is not Maltese literature suffered heavy bombardments and acute food shortages, but Gozo's war casualties were minimal and Gozo's farmers even sent grain to Maltese to mitigate the food shortage. There are many other minor historical instances that exhibit such glaring differences between the two islands. So how can Professor Wright state that Maltese of Al-Hajj Omar bin Abdul Aziz "must (sic) have included Gozo?" The further back we go in history, the more distinct the two must have been in the different centuries. A famous contemporary men is "Bishop Burchard... was himself no doubt talking comprehensively about the whole Maltese archipelago." Is Prof. Wright un-aware that Gozo is often ignored even today? How can he be so sure about Bishop Burchard's times?

"In God's history run parallel to that of Malta, but surely whatever whatever the period in time cannot be deemed to be a copy of what took place on the island."

"There is no evidence that the Christians in both Malta and Gozo have been never opposed and mocked this time by institutions who must protect it. I am a Muslim, but as a non-Christian I can see clearly the shameless way in which the national faith is being treated.

"To take off the crucifix is most shocking. Religious freedom. It means a true and proper attack on our religious freedom. The freedom of expression, the freedom of conscience, the freedom of religion, the freedom of speech." I continue, "that freedom which only united a milestone of our democracy. I feel I am not exaggerating when I say that there is a virulent wave of secularism is engulfing our society and the target of this wave is Christianity."

"In my opinion, laying waste to unfortified Victoria and pillaging the countryside was an act of complete victory by the Normans of Count Roger of Sicily."

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Anton Attard

Victoria

"Nothing that has been so far overlooked by the media during the impeccable running of the Pontifical Mass on the grounes during the recent visit of Pope Benedict XVI is the quality of the bell-ringing from St Publius church in Floriana."

Particularly exceptional was the marking of the solemn Sanc- rus moment; one of the most engage an dedication. "The hospital to execute in the ringing profession."

Fr Mark Cauchi, OSA

Tal-Qini

Maltese nuns in Tunis

I wish to thank the Mission Fund for its generous mission which we received for our mission in Tunis.

The donation will help for the rehabilitation of the new car of the Golden Valt in Ain Drahem which had become dangerously dilapidated. Most of the children are very poor and cannot pay the very modest fees. Our congregation, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, has been in this part of Tunisia for over 60 years, working among the poor. I appeal to the generosity of your readers to help the Mission Fund in its urgent need. Stamps, telegrams, etc., to enable it to continue to help Maltese and other countries.

Sr. Concettina Dimech

Tunis

Christianity in Britain under siege

According to Taj Hargre, president of educational Islamic Centre in Oxford, "Christianity in Britain is at an all-time-low. Dr Hargre has written to the press about his preoccupation regarding the decision to forgive 54-year-old nurse Shirley Chaplin wearing a cross. This prominent Muslim said: The Christian concept in Britain has never been opposed and mocked this time by institutions who must protect it. I am a Muslim, but as a non-Christian I can see clearly the shameless way in which the national faith is being treated.

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Risible and costly campaign

The government has, once again, embarked on a very costly media campaign to downplay as much as possible the hard facts of criticism of its oil and gas developments, which could cost the Maltese the future of oil power plant at Delimara. While such a campaign is that comparison is being made between BWSG's new power plant and plans of the Netherlands-decades-old power station at Muskett.

Who would anyone in their right mind be impressed if, say, a car was compared, by comparing its performance to a very old car bought ages ago? And what are the components of this very old car, which has never been tested?

Edw Driverra

Mosta

Gozo, Malta, and Christian continuity

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Ghanzuber structure not Knights era tower

Firstly, there is the manner of its construction. The structure is the thin walls, especially on the north face, large ground-floor openings, irregular stone courses, and internal iron beams all imply a relatively late nine building, possibly dating from the thirteenth century. The structure also shows clear signs of having been very heavily damaged in the past. In fact, what features in cartographic records, acquiring in the process an exter-

Secondly, there is the matter of its positioning. The structure is located too far inland to have been of any use as a coastal lookout tower. All the watchtowers and mills open-air look-out posts on this side of the island coastline were perched at the very edge of the cliff-face for maximum visual command over the seaward approaches. The inland positions of Mani, Ghajn Ta'ghez, Gnejn-I-Borg and Ghajn Rabi, on the other hand, were located much further south on both heights of the Ras il-Gebel to Wartija ridge.

"Nicknamed the monument in the article over which there is so much argument is the fact that the Ghanzuber structure, whatever its origins, needs to be regarded as a look-out tower. All the other factors which should question the newspaper's claim as to the uniqueness and dating of this structure.

We'll done for bell-ringing during Pontifical Mass

The same can be said for other bell-ringing sites visited by the Pontiff, namely St Paul's collegiate church in Rabat and the Monumental Siege Bell, which was swung manually for the occasion. Congratulations to the ringers involved and indeed to the organisation that brought from the ecclesiastical and civil authorities, who took the initiative to organise the festival. Maria Aquilina

Quendi