

The Map of Johannes Quintinus Haeduus and its Derivatives

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Abstract: *The first known map of the Maltese islands was drawn in the latter part of the fifteenth century, but the first printed map was that published in 1536 in Lyons by Johannes Quintinus. Being rather primitive, it did not serve as a model for other maps beyond the 16th century. However, as it was important in the time frame of Maltese cartography, it was reproduced by other cartographers, namely, in Frankfurt in 1600, in 1725 in Leiden, and around 1800 as a loose sheet probably in Malta. Of the 16th-century Malta maps, those by Antonio Lafreri (1551) and Matteo Perez d'Aleccio (1582) remained the basic maps for the next two centuries.*

Keywords: *Johannes Quintinus, Maltese cartography, Malta maps, Antonio Lafreri, Matteo Perez d'Aleccio, Maltese islands.*

The first known separate map of the Maltese islands was drawn by an anonymous cartographer in the late 15th century. It is a manuscript sketch inserted in a codex of maps of Cristoforo Buondelmonti (c.1385–post 1430), probably in the 1470s.¹ The first printed map, on the other hand, was drawn by Abbé Jean Quentin, rendered in Latin as Johannes Quintinus. His father Philibert was chancellor of Autun in the French province of Burgundy, and his mother was Philiberta Laborault. Jean was born on 20 January 1500; he died on 9 April 1561 and was buried in the choir of St Jean de Latran in Paris, a church that no longer exists.²

Quintinus was a prolific writer and his works include treatises on geographical themes, and he was well versed in cosmography.³ In Malta he wrote the first detailed description of Malta entitled *Insvlae Melitae Descriptio Ex Commentariis Rerum Qvotidianarvm*. It is dated 20 January 1533, on his thirty-third birthday, but it was published in Lyons in 1536.

¹ This map was reproduced for the first time in A. Ganado, *Valletta Città Nuova. A map history (1566–1600)*, Malta, 2003, p. 467, and described on pp. 13–14.

² For biographical data on Quintinus, see H.C.R. Vella, *The earliest description of Malta (Lyon 1536) by Jean Quintin d'Autun*, Malta, 1980. See also J. Zammit Ciantar, *A Benedictine's notes on seventeenth-century Malta*, Malta, 1998.

The church of Saint-Jean-de-Latran was demolished in various stages in the 19th century (see L. De La Brière, *Souvenirs et vestiges de L'Ordre de Malte subsistant encore a Paris*, Evreux, 1891, p. 17).

³ An important work was *Tractatus de ventis, et nautica buxula ventorum indice*, published in Paris in 1540.

The Quintinus Original Map

It is somewhat surprising that those authors who wrote about Quintinus' description gave little or no importance to the map. Edward Romeo Leopardi dedicated a short paragraph to what the map contained, but he did not realize that it was the first separate printed representation of the Maltese islands.⁴ Horace Vella, on the other hand, makes no reference to the map's contents, although, like Leopardi, he reproduced the map in his book.⁵ In both instances, however, the lower part of the map was severely cropped, bringing about the omission of the place names Morea, Italia, and Sicilia.

The renowned geographer Roberto Almagià was almost certainly the first author to evaluate the map, but unfortunately he reproduced a photo of the Quintinus map that appeared in 1600, probably assuming that the 1600 edition had reproduced the same original map of 1536.⁶ This, however, was not the case.

The woodcut map published in the booklet by Quintinus is unsigned and it has no imprint. It measures 140 x 195mm and it is printed on the verso of the second leaf, facing the first page of the descriptive text. It is quite reasonable to assume that the map was made by Quintinus himself, especially in view of his competence on nautical instruments. It is what one might call a primitive map, based perhaps on a nautical chart,⁷ but fairly accurate in depicting the island's main characteristics. Apart from the Maltese group of islands, it shows parts of the North African coast, of Sicily, of Italy, and of Morea (Greece). The sea distances are greatly reduced, but meant to indicate Malta's position in relation to those places. Malta is round-shaped, *kreisformig* as Ruge calls it.⁸ The circular shape was later followed by several others, including Giacomo Gastaldi (1551?), an anonymous map entitled *Isola Di Malta* (1551?), Henric Petri (1561 – better known as the Münster map), and the 1565 siege maps of the Palombis, thus bringing about a distortion of the north-western parts of Malta, making Mellieħa and Marfa barely recognizable. Most other cartographers followed the more accurate pattern of the Antonio Lafreri map of 1551, which makes the island fish-shaped.

⁴E.R. Leopardi, 'The first printed description of Malta, Lyon 1536', in *Scientia*, XV, 2, Malta, 1949, pp. 54, 57–8 (pp. 5, 9–10 in the reprinted offprint).

⁵Vella, op. cit., p. iv.

⁶R. Almagià, *Monumenta Italiae Cartographica*, Florence, 1929, Tav. XXV.

⁷Ibid., p. 23.

W. Ruge, 'Aelteres Kartographisches Material in deutschen Bibliotheken', in *K. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Nachrichten. Philologisch historische Klasse*, I (1904), 1–69; II (1906), 1–39; III (1911), 35–166.

⁸The Marsa estate, which comprised a large walled-in garden protected by towers and through which a stream flowed, appears as a prominent feature on most maps published right up to 1565, the year of the Great Siege, when it was used as the Turkish Command Headquarters (see A. Ganado and M. Agius-Vadalà, *A Study in depth of 143 maps representing the Great Siege of Malta of 1565*, Malta, 1994, I, p. 51).

The Quintinus map [see page 119 *infra*] has no title. The main island is named *MELITA* (the Latin version), while the smaller islands are in Italian, namely, *GOZO* and *COMINO*, all in capital letters, like *TRIPOLI*, *MOREA*, *ITALIA*, and *SICILIA* (with the 'S' written in reverse). *CIVITAS* (Mdina) and *MARSA HORTUS* (8) are also in Latin capital letters, while the other place names are in cursive in the Italian language: *c. santangelo*, *s. paulus*, *C. mesurato* (in Libya), *C. passero* (in Sicily), *C. Spartinento* (in Italy), namely, Capo Spartivento at the tip of Calabria. There are no other place names. The islets of Filfla and Cominotto are shown, but unnamed, same as for the Castello in Gozo and several villages, of which one can easily identify the Borgo, Żabbar, Żejtun, Siġġiewi, Żebbuġ, Rabat, and Hal Tartarni. Churches are shown on St Elmo Point of Mount Sceberras, Santa Maria point (Sliema), towards the south-east in the direction of the parishes of Bir Miftuh and St Gregory (Żejtun), and at St Paul's Bay.

Other features include the gallows on Gallows Point (Ricasoli), a windmill and probably a lime-kiln on Isola (Senglea), and a spring at Marsa. Six harbours and landing places on Malta are indicated by dotting. The flag of the Knights Hospitallers is flying from Fort St Angelo, on Tripoli, and on a galleon navigating between Malta and Sicily, representing the vital sea communication between the two islands. The sea is rendered by short straight or wavy lines, while sea monsters and vignettes of shipping complete the picture.

The map is orientated with the south-west at the head, as the convention that north should always be shown at the top only started in the eighteenth century. There is no compass rose, but eight wind directions are given. North is represented by the conventional arrowhead, and east by the cross. The others are marked by the first letter in capital G, S, O, L, P, and M for *Gregale*, *Scirocco*, *Ostro*, *Libeccio*, *Ponente*, and *Maestrale* respectively. No graduation is given, but in the descriptive text Quintinus gave the longitude and latitude of Mdina as 38° 45' and 38° 40' respectively, after Ptolemy and the ancient geographers. No scale is given, but it appears to be about 1:200,000.⁹

There are in Malta three copies of the booklet by Quintinus. One is at the Gozo Public Library, a second one is at the Wignacourt Museum at Rabat, while the third one is in the collection of the present writer.¹⁰

⁹For a detailed description of the Quintinus map of 1536, see M. Agius-Vadalà and A. Ganado, 'The pre-siege maps of Malta 1536–1563', in *Investment Finance Bank Limited, Annual Report and Accounts 30th September 1986*, Malta, 1986, map no. 1. See also the short note in R. Mason and P. Willis, *Maps of Malta in the Museum and Library of the Order of St John. A short catalogue*, London, 1989, p. 7.

¹⁰The copy at the Wignacourt Museum belonged to Notary Francesco Catania (1872–1960) who bequeathed it to the Rabat parish church. He was a keen collector of Melitensia and he had bought the Quintinus booklet from a German antiquarian after the First World War. The present writer bought his copy in October 1967 from Bottega Apulja of Mario Somma, Bari. Somma had acquired the booklet as part of a large collection bought from a place in the province of Messina in Sicily.

Another copy was offered for sale in October 1976 by the Antiquariat of Dr Helmut Tenner of Heidelberg.

A facsimile of the booklet in a limited edition of 500 numbered copies was printed on Ingres paper by Abbey Printers of Valletta and issued by the National Library of Malta in 1991.

In the sixteenth century the work of Quintinus was published by various authors in the original Latin or in an Italian translation,¹¹ but without the map. It was only in 1600 that his description was published in Germany with a map of Malta copied from Quintinus himself in the following book: *Italiae Illustratae seu rerum, urbiumque Italicarum scriptores varii, notae meliores*, Francoforti, in Bibliopolio Cambieriano. The map in this volume is of the same size as the original Quintinus. It measures 140 x 192mm, and it is a copperplate engraving instead of a woodcut. The shipping is slightly different, and the sea area is dotted without any wavy lines. The place names are identical except that the ‘S’ of *Sicilia* is not reversed, while *C. Spartinento* is misspelt *C. Spartinemo* [see page 120 *infra*].

The map from the same copperplate appeared once more in the 1605 German edition of the same book entitled: *Italiae Illustratae, seu chorographiae regionem Italiae florentiss. orbis partis, ingeniorum parentis, scriptores varij*, Francofurti, in officina Andreae Cambieri.¹²

Between 1723 and 1725 Pieter van der Aa (1659–1733)¹³ published in Leiden in 15 volumes the *Thesaurus antiquitatum et historiarum nobilissarum insularum, Siciliae, Sardiniae, Corsicae aliarumque adjacentium*. The first volume contains a map of Malta and a large bird’s-eye view of Valletta in Philip Cluver’s history of Sicily. But volume fifteen, published in 1725, contains, in addition to the Latin translation of Gian Francesco Abela’s *Malta Illustrata*, the following title: *Quintini Haedui descriptio Insulae Melitae. Ex auctoris commentariis rerum quotidianarum. Ad Sophum. Accessit Caelii Secundi Curionis De bello Melitensi historia...* The description of Quintinus takes up only pages 2–8 of this section of the folio volume. Facing page 2 there is the map of Quintinus, newly engraved, entitled *Insulae / MELITA & GOZO*. This is the first time the map carries a proper title, inscribed at the bottom centre, beneath the decorative frame surrounding the map.

The map of van der Aa is a faithful copy of the map published in 1600. It measures 135 x 190mm, enlarged to 175 x 208mm by the frame and its base. At the top right corner of the frame *Pag. I.* is inscribed. Even the shipping and the sea

¹¹ Vella has listed various editions, both in Latin and Italian, of Quintinus’ description by different authors (op. cit., pp. 8–9). However, apart from what will be stated further on in this article, there are a few other editions, including a 1542 edition of *Opus historiarum* . . . published in Leiden, a 1560 edition published in Paris in 1560 by Christiano Wechelio, and the Ulloa edition of 1569.

¹² The map is placed between pages with the text numbered columns 1507–1508 and 1509–1510 in the book.

¹³ Although his surname is reproduced in more ways than one, he is usually referred to in cartographic literature as ‘van der Aa’ (*Tooley’s Dictionary of Mapmakers, A–D* (Vol. I), ed. J. French, 1999 (revised edition), p. 1. R.V. Tooley, *Maps and map-makers*, London, 1962, p. 35. See also the various books on the history of cartography, including Bagrow-Skelton, Karrow, Moreland, and Bannister, *Imago Mundi, The Map Collector*, etc., etc. In both vol. 1 and 15 of the *Thesaurus*, he signed PETRVS VANDER Aa.

monster are exactly the same as those on the map of 1600, but the sea is rendered by short dashes instead of dots. The engraving is printed on a large sheet 385mm high.

In 1729 van der Aa published in Leiden his prestigious *La galerie agréable du monde* in 66 parts containing about 3,000 plates. It is said to have been printed in an edition of 100 copies only. Various maps of Malta are to be found in parts 38 and 62. There are in all in part 38 nine maps on eight plates, numbers 34 to 41, of Maltese interest. On page 5 of the volume a *Table des Figures* was printed. It listed the nine Malta maps with their respective numbers, mentioning in some cases the authors from whose works the maps were derived.¹⁴ The maps themselves have no numbers printed on them, but some copies examined by the present writer have the number written in ink according to the list given on page 5.

One of the Malta maps published in part 38 is the Quintinus map printed from the same copperplate that was used in 1725 for the *Thesaurus* of Graevius. In the list on page 5, the reference to this map is given as *Malte par Hedui*, meaning Quintinus. The only amendment to the plate was the erasure of *Pag. 1.* at the top right corner which referred to the paging of the 1725 publication. This time the sheet on which the map [see page 121 *infra*] is printed is 365mm high and it appears on the left half of a double sheet watermarked with a fleur-de-lis and VI in Roman numerals. On the right half of the double sheet the map of St Paul's shipwreck at St Paul's Bay is reproduced, which map had been copied for the *Thesaurus* by van der Aa from Abela's history mentioned above. Even here the only change was the erasure of *TAB. IX.* and *Pag. 174.* which were inscribed at the top right corner of the plate when it was published in the *Thesaurus*. The double sheet in the *Galerie* is marked 41 in ink¹⁵ which corresponds to the number of plate 41 listed on page 5 of the volume.

The fourth and last reproduction of the Quintinus map [see page 122 *infra*] was made by an anonymous engraver. It is of rather poor quality, compared especially to the fine engraving produced by van der Aa. It is undated, but the present writer has a strong suspicion that it was made in Malta by Sebastiano Ittar around 1800 or later. It measures 128 x 175mm.

This map was not based on the original Quintinus but on the reissue of 1600. The names of the Maltese islands, the three places to the north of Malta, and Tripoli remain the same. However, the names of the headlands are omitted. In regard to Malta *MARSA HORTVS* is present, but the place names indicating Mdina, St Paul's

¹⁴For the full list and detailed description of the Dutch maps, see A. Ganado, 'The Maltese Islands in Flemish cartography', in *Mappae Antiquae – Liber Amicorum Günter Schilder*, eds. P. van Gestel-van het Schip, Peter van der Krogt, The Hague, 2007, pp. 117–46.

¹⁵In vol. 38 of the *Galerie* copy at the Library of Congress in Washington the *Table des Figures* on page 5 gives the plate numbers from 34 to 41 as stated above, but the plates themselves are numbered in pencil from 25 to 32.

Bay, and Fort St Angelo have been left out. The features shown are substantially the same as those of 1600, although some differences may be noted. The bridge at Marsa shown in 1600 and repeated by van der Aa has been eliminated, while the 'island' off St George's Bay and the church on Sliema point have not been reproduced. On Senglea there is only a windmill but no lime-kiln, and a sort of circular ditch (?) has been depicted on Gallows Point. The Order's flag is shown above Fort St Angelo,¹⁶ but not on the large vessel in the Sicilian channel where it has been substituted by a star. The sea monster is no longer there. Although this map was based on the 1600 map, it gives the impression that there has been a slight attempt at updating.

The impact of the Quintinus map was limited to the sixteenth century. It was only after its publication that map-making became more scientific and sophisticated. For the basic maps of that century one has to turn to Antonio Lafreri and Matteo Perez d'Aleccio. Their influence on the making of maps of the Maltese islands was still strongly felt in the two subsequent centuries.

¹⁶ Although the French army under Napoleon invaded Malta in 1798, the island still belonged to the Order and formed part of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies until the Treaty of Paris of 1814.



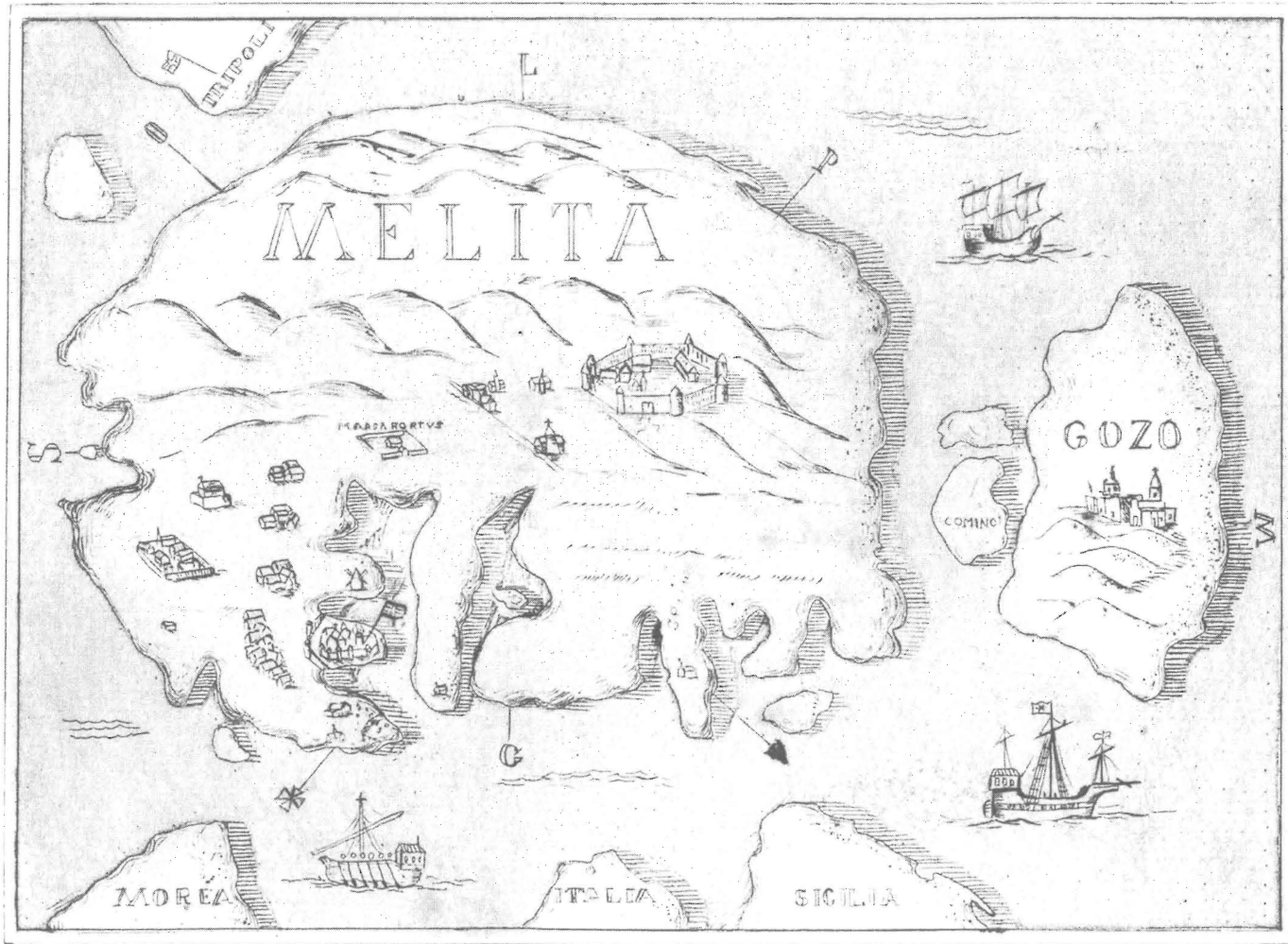
Map 1: The wood-cut map by Johannes Quintinus drawn in 1533 and published in Lyons in 1536



Map
2: The
copper-
engraved
Quintinus
map
published
in
Frankfurt
in 1600 in
*Italiae
Illustratae*



Map 3: The Quintinus map published in Leiden by Pieter van der Aa in two major works, first in 1725 and then in 1729



Map 4: An anonymous Quintinus map with slight updating, probably published in Malta around 1800, ascribed to Sebastiano Ittar