REACTIONS TO *TRISTIA EX MELITOGAUDO*: A RESPONSE

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Abstract. *This paper considers a number of reactions to and reviews of the editio princeps of a long poem recently published with the title Tristia ex Melitogaudo: Lament in Greek Verse of a XIIth-century Exile on Gozo. The editors clarify a number of points and answer objections raised by various authors.*

Keywords*: Malta, Normans, Arabs, Byzantine, Christianity, Exile.*

Marc Lauxtermann is to be commended for his very erudite paper 'Tomi, Mljet, Malta. Critical Notes on a Twelfth-Century Southern Italian Poem of Exile' (Lauxtermann 2014), in which he comments on our publication of the *editio princeps* of the poem by an Italo-Greek exile on *Melitogaudos*, which we entitled *Tristia ex Melitogaudo: lament in Greek verse of a XIIth-century exile on Gozo* (Busuttil, Fiorini, Vella 2010). We should like to comment on some of the points raised in Lauxtermann's paper and in related publications. At this stage we refrain from going into the problem of the authorship of the manuscript.

Further to the very interesting connexions Lauxtermann sees with other Byzantine sources, it is appreciated that he soundly chastizes "the regrettable tendency in recent scholarship to assume that factual references found in poetry are by definition fictional". The attitude 'It is all a literary ploy ... it is all make believe' has been an accusation levelled at our work more than once.[1] On a less positive note, however, let it be said at the outset that we have it from Lauxtermann's own mouth that he has not consulted the original in Madrid as we both have. In his n. 6 (p. 156) he admits that 'the ms. **allegedly** reads', and in n. 71 (p. 168), that 'the ms. is **apparently** difficult to read here' (our emphasis). Some of his comments can, therefore, only be taken with a pinch of salt; in particular and by way of illustration, his comment in n. 10 (p. 156) on whether the scholiast can be identified with the author. His arguments are (i) that *'ἀπέρμαι* is not Greek' (f. 108ᵛᵐ not f. 21ᵛ). We note here that ἀπαείρω is poetic form of ἀπαίρω (depart) whose passive is ἀπῆρμαι; the MS. actually reads ἀπέρμαι, a scribal error, one of the 'too many mistakes in the Greek'

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[1] Wettinger 2011, 384. C. Dalli, "Malta and Gozo under the two Rogers: 1090/91-1154", paper read at a public Theological Event (University of Malta) on 15 December 2010. Y. Vella, "Wettinger has been vindicated; but why do historians still disagree?" *Malta Today [Comments]* (7 July 2015) 6-9, at 8.

noted by Lauxtermann himself (p. 160); (ii) on f. 21^{vm} (not f. 108^r) Lauxtermann decides to change an indirect statement, expressed by ὡς ὅτι, to a direct statement to suit his purposes. In the indirect statement βούλομαι refers to the person writing the poem. Although, admittedly, in other marginal entries ἐνθάδε φησί can have as subject either the 'text' (e. g., ff. 7, 8, 8^v, 10, 12^v, 13^v, 14, etc.) or 'the poet', explicitly referred to, at times, in the third person – ἐνθάδε φησὶ ὁ ποιητής (e. g. ff. 7^v, 9, 14^v, etc.) – yet, the two instances cited remain clear references to him in the first person, perhaps an unintentional *lapsus calami*, that gives him away. We reaffirm that the scholia were written by the poet. In agreement with Lauxtermann (p. 160), that 'the manuscript is definitely not an autograph', we conclude that it is a copy incorporating both the text and the scholia. This brings us to

1 The dating of the manuscript

The dating that we suggested is that it was produced in *ca*. 1300. Experts in palaeography have fairly wide-ranging opinions on the matter, extending from Kurysheva and Filippov (2011, 278), who are inclined to consider the possibility of it being the original autograph of the second half of the 12th century, to Garcia (1982, 143), who opts for the turn of the 13th century, to Lucà (2014, 160)[2], who locates it in the first half of the 13th century, down to De Andrés and Iriarte, who place it in the 13th and 14th centuries respectively.

The dating of the scholiast's intervention is important. In view of the above, he could theoretically be located anywhere

from the second half of the 12th century (if identified with the poet), or at the time when the present copy was produced (if identified with the editor-scribe of the poem), or anywhere in between these dates (if he is the editor of some intervening lost copy of the poem).

2 The Poet's Place of Exile

The author of the Greek poem refers to the islands of Malta and Gozo in three different ways, twice as *Μάλτα* (f. 35v.15m and f. 54.7m),[3] twice as *Μελίτη* (f. 85.10, f. 85v.3) and as *Μελιτογαύδῳ* in f. 84.6, which is rendered *Μελιτηγαύδῳ* in f. 84v.9m and in f. 85v.12m. In both instances when he opts for the Arabic version, *Μάλτα*, instead of his native Greek, *Μελίτη*, he does so advisedly and deliberately to emphasize the association of his loathed place of exile with Barbary, the country of the hated Agarenes, the Saracens:

(i) τοῖς τόποις Βαρβαρίας (f. 35v.15) δηλονότι εἰς τὴν Μάλταν (f. 35v.15m);

(ii) τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶν εἰς τὴν Μάλταν νῆσον εἰς Βαρβαρίαν ὅπου ὑπάρχει εἰς πατρίδα τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν (f. 54.7m).

It is clear that *Μάλτα* is used here in the general sense of the Maltese archipelago, viewed from far-away Sicily.[4]

On the other hand, *Μελίτη* is used in both instances with reference to the islanders, inhabitants of the place of St Paul's shipwreck:

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[2] We are indebted to Santo Lucà, who kindly provided us with a copy of this important publication.

[3] Here and throughout, the terminal 'm' refers to the marginal scholia.

[4] By way of comparison, note how various authors refer to Roger II's taking of Mahdiya as the 'taking of Africa': *Rex Roggerius cepit Africam*; bibliographical details in Casper 1999, 389, n. 283.

(i) *οἱ συναχθέντες τόπῳ νήσου Μελίτης* (f. 85.9-10);

(ii) *οἱ γοῦν ἔποικοι τῆς Μελίτης* (f. 85v.3).

It is seen that here again the poet deliberately chooses the exact word that fits the context, in view of and with respect to the text in *Acts* 28: 1, *ἐπέγνωμεν ὅτι Μελίτη ἡ νῆσος καλεῖται.*

But our erudite poet, well versed in Latin and Greek literature, was well aware of other variants of the name for the Maltese Islands. In particular, he knew that the same shipwreck narrative in the apocryphal 5th century *Acts of Sts. Peter and Paul* twice refers to the island as *Γαυδομελέτη,* expressly stressing that the island in question was that particular *Μελίτη* associated with *Γαῦδος,* not to be confused with some other place, such as *Μέλετα* (modern Mljet) off the Dalmatian coast.[5] However, the poet, who chooses his words very carefully, avoids *Γαυδομελέτη* and opts to coin a variant, *Μελιτηγαῦδος,* which is a *hapax legomenon* in Byzantine toponymy. There must be a very strong reason for this deviation. One asks: Could the poet have changed the name to accommodate some rule of prosody? What comes to mind is that the second syllable of each foot must be long and the beginning verse f.84.6 with *Μελι / τογαύ / δω* would certainly solve the problem presented by *Γαυδο / μελί / τη,* but this would be too drastic an expedient when he could have adopted the more natural form *Γαυδω / μελί / τη,* which is also attested (Busuttil 1969, 17, n. 12). What he has just called *Μελίτη* (f. 85.9; f. 85v.3) he now decides to call *Μελιτηγαῦδος* (f. 85v.12m) – not *Γαυδομελίτη* – when referring to Publius' father: *τὸν πατέρα τοῦ Ποπλίου τοῦ δεσπότου τῆς Μελιτηγαύδου.*

The poet uses this composite name once (in the poem's text) when describing Roger II's attack[6] on the island – *ἔξαρχος ... Μελιτογαύδῳ ... ἔπλευσε* – (f. 84.3,6,7) and twice (in the marginal scholia) to emphasize, firstly, that his place of exile was the same as the fortified place (just mentioned) attacked by Roger II – *ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ Μελιτηγαύδῳ* (f. 84v.9m) – and, soon afterwards, as the same place of exile (that is, shipwreck) of the Apostle Paul – *τὸν πατέρα τοῦ Ποπλίου τοῦ δεσπότου τῆς Μελιτηγαύδου* (f. 85v.12m).[7]

The meaning of this unique place-name is debated by Lauxtermann and other commentators (Brincat 2012; Dalli 2006, 80; Frendo 2013-14). Among authors who considered this problem, Dalli's cynical attitude in systematically questioning the identification of this place-name with the Maltese archipelago is best ignored (Dalli 2006, 80), but Lauxtermann, Brincat and Frendo raise genuine objections that need to be considered. In particular, Brincat makes the valid point that if *Γαυδομελέτη* is to be identified with *Μελίτη* of the *Acts,* then so must be *Μελιτηγαῦδος,* which in the poem (at f. 85v.12m) also refers to *Acts* 28:1. Here, one must keep in mind the sequence in which the poet (and scholiast) use the toponym. *Μελιτογαῦδος* first appears in the text of the poem as the place attacked by Roger II. It appears next soon afterwards in the margin (explaining the soliloquy of the poem's text) as the place of exile of the poet, explained in the scholion as identical with the island of the for-

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5 An interpretation favored by Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (Moravcsik 1949, 36:16-18).

6 We contend that the attacker was Count Roger II, contrary to Lauxtermann's opting for George of Antioch; this point is discussed *infra*, §3.

7 In this excerpt there must be understood *νήσου* before *Μελιτηγαύδου* and, likewise, in the preceding.

tification attacked by Roger II. Soon afterwards, Paul's shipwreck, which could be viewed as his exile, is discussed and here the poet sees a parallel with his own exile. It is only natural that in this sequence, one of quick succession, the same name is adopted to link all three places – Roger's attack, the poet's place of exile and Paul's shipwreck, all three interrelated – by use of the selfsame toponym, even if in this there is some latitude and licence of expression. The choice of name is governed by the first exigency: Roger's attack.

Theoretically, there are three possible interpretations of a composite toponym typified by our *Μελιτηγαῦδος*: (i) it could mean *Μελίτη* and *Γαῦδος*, meaning Malta and Gozo (that is, the Maltese archipelago), which we may call the copulative type; (ii) it could mean *Γαῦδος* associated with *Μελίτη*, which can be termed the forward determinative type; (iii) it could mean *Μελίτη* associated with *Γαῦδος*, which may be called the reverse determinative type. In order to sort out this riddle, parallels are to be sought, ideally, in the realm of toponyms, in which admittedly, these examples are rather sparse. *Μελιτηγαῦδος* itself is well-nigh unique, and *Γαυδομελίτη* is attested only three times.[8]

Following Frendo (2013-14, 191, n. 31), there are some examples of composite toponyms that can be cited: *Ἠπειροθεσσαλία*,[9] the Greek provinces of Epirus and Thessaly, illustrating the (i) copulative type; *Περσοαρμενία*, as in Theophanes (31, 10), meaning 'that part of Armenia under Persian control', illus-

trating the (ii) forward determinative type. The (iii) backward determinative case is best illustrated by *Σαμοθράκη*, that is, the Island of *Samos* off *Thrace*, so called in order to distinguish it from *Samos* in *Cephallenia*, formerly *Same*, the name for both the island and the town.[10]

Both Lauxtermann and Frendo (2013-14, 193) have recourse to Sanskrit in order to interpret composite place-names – *samāsāh* – such as *Μελιτηγαῦδος*, wherein the copulative case, where both elements are equally important, is referred to as *dvandva*, according to which *Μελιτογαῦδος* or *Μελιτηγαῦδος* would mean 'Malta and Gozo'. The other case, where there exists a relationship between the two elements, the compound is referred to as *karmadhāraya tatpuruṣa*. It is understood that in such a compound, the proper names of places in Sanskrit, the second element indicates the locality concerned, being the more important element in the compound. In our case, *Μελιτογαῦδος* or *Μελιτηγαῦδος* would mean 'Gozo of Malta' or 'Gozo next to Malta'. On this point, we have consulted Professor Michael and Ms. Maria Zammit of the University of Malta,[11] who comment that, as in Greek, Sanskrit compound toponyms are few and far between. They did, however, supply various examples of quasi-compound toponyms which are all of the genitive *tatpuruṣa* type, including *Hastināpura* (City of the Elephants) [M/W 1296/1], *Madhepura* (City of Madhu) [M/W 780/1] and *Śṛiṅgvepur/Śṛiṅgapura* (City of the Horn) [M/W 1087/2].[12] This they corroborate by

[8] Twice in *Acta Petri et Pauli (ἀπὸ Γαυδομελέτης)* and once in the *Breviarium* of Nicephorus (*πρὸς τὴν νῆσον τὴν Γαυδομελέτην)*; (Busuttil 1968, 17, 19).

[9] Citing Jannaris 1897, 310 §1156.

[10] Cf. Herodotus 6.47 (*Σαμοθρήκεν*). Satyrus Biogr., Fragmenta, 22a, p. 165 line 2 (*Σαμοθράκης*).

[11] Whom we should like to thank for their assistance and on whom we rely for these comments.

[12] Citing M/W = M. Monier-Williams (1974).

a larger corpus of compound nouns like *devapatih* (lord [*patih*] of the gods [*deva*]) [M 146-7], *devamandira* (dwelling [*mandira*] of the gods) [M 153], *Mūrtikāra* (sculptor [*kāra*] of images [*mūrti*]) [M 154], *parṇaśālā* (leaf-hut; *parṇa* = leaf, *śālā* = hut) [M 154], *doṣarahita* (devoid of error; *doṣa* = error, *rahita* = separated) [M 154], and *Jalāśaya* (Lake; *jala* = water, *āśaya* = abode) [M 155],[13] all of which, again, are genitive *tatpuruṣa* compounds, by contrast with *dvandva* compounds, which are rather rare.

Lauxtermann thinks otherwise. He dismisses the possibility of a forward determinative type, opting for a *dvandva* compound, "Since,", he decrees, "most if not all compounded toponyms in Medieval Greek are *dvandva* compounds"; he backs this assertion by citing exactly one example – *Παροναξία* (Paros-and-Naxos) – without giving any references for it. Lauxtermann is not even consistent with himself. Having decided that *Μελιτηγαῦδος* means Malta-and-Gozo, he arbitrarily chooses Malta as the place of exile, for, with his back to the wall, he could not possibly opt for both islands which happen to lie 6 km apart and whose fortified towns – Mdina and the Gozo acropolis – are 30 km. apart. Lauxtermann claims that in 1127, Roger (or in his interpretation, George of Antioch, on which we will comment later) took both Malta and Gozo. Yet, in the poem's description, there is only mention of the siege of one fortified place. This is specifically identified by the poet as *Μελιτογαῦδος*. Is this Malta or Gozo? It cannot be both. It is recalled that in a similar situation, thirty-six years earlier, Roger I's dealing with Mdina and the Gozo cita-

del is treated by his chronicler Malaterra in two distinct paragraphs, where, according to Simone da Lentini, writing in 1358, the conquest of Gozo was quite different from that of Malta insofar as the Gozitans *si arrinderu a lu Conti pacificamenti, senza dapnu* (Luttrell 1975, n. 175).

Considering next the approach of Frendo, in view of the relative dearth of parallel examples from the realm of toponymy, aiming at refuting the identification of *Μελιτηγαῦδος* with Gozo, he turns to citing Greek nouns, like *ἀκανθόχοιρος* and *ἱπποπόταμος*. What has not been said is that even for composite nouns, as in Sanskrit, the copulative set is by far the sparsest, consisting as it does of compounds whose elements are equally important and are simply juxtaposed – thus, they bear no syntactic relation to each other; of these, *γλυκύπικρος, μυροπισσόκηρος* are a couple of other examples (Pontani 1965, 288). Of Frendo's examples, *ἀκανθόχοιρος* ("hedgehog") is, perhaps, the more interesting as he shows that the reverse – *χοιράκανθος* – means exactly the same. But again, a single swallow does not make a summer. Yet, mainly on the basis of this example, Frendo, like Lauxtermann, opts to identify *Μελιτογαῦδος* with Malta. What we said for Lauxtermann is, therefore, also applicable for Frendo. Fortunately, Frendo himself supplies an alternative lead which strikes much nearer the mark: *Ἑλληνογαλάται* (Diodorus Siculus 5.32) who were those Celtic people (originating in Gaul) that settled in Phrygia – Greek Celts. Like these, one can also cite the *Λιβυφοίνικες* (Polybius 3.33), or Carthaginians, who were those Phoenicians who settled in Libya – Libyan Phoenicians – and the Syrophoenician in

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[13] Citing M = Maurer 2009.

Mark 7:26.[14] Even if the corresponding toponym is not actually attested, one can naturally posit (as Frendo himself does) the use of *Ἑλληνογαλατία, Λιβυφοινικία* and *Συροφοινικία* to match *Γαυδομελέτε* (of the *Acts of Peter and Paul*) and our *Μελιτηγαῦδος*.

There exists, furthermore, as in Sanskrit, an intermediary copious corpus of Greek semi-toponymic compounds that can be cited, all of which support the forward determinative type. A few of these are *Χερσόνησος, Κωνσταντινούπολις, Ἑλιόπολις, Ἑλλήσποντος, Νεάπολις, Θερμόπυλαι* etc.[15] Why go for the most abstruse when the more natural presents itself on a plate? It must also be said that none of the critics of our interpretation actually cite the most compelling obvious forward determinative exemplar, *Γαυδομελέτε* of the *Acts of Sts Peter and Paul* itself, which, by reference to *Acts* 18:1, quoted above, is in undoubted correspondence with *Μελίτη* and, in order to exclude all confusion with any other *Μελίτη*, is linked with *Γαῦδος*! Based on this model, we have interpreted *Μελιτηγαῦδος* as Gozo (of Malta), following the lead given by Tsolakis (1973). Nor are we alone in following his lead. Reviewers like Kurysheva and Filippov (2011), Kardelis (2010), Fiaccadori (2010), Borchardt (2010), Vella-Bonavita (2010), and even the highly critical Zagklas (2012) all have no further comment to add to our interpretation.

In his appraisal of the poem, Lauxtermann, naturally, focuses his attention on his area of expertise – Byzantine literature. Our motivation, however, was very different. Here we have a potentially very significant new source of information about a very dark period of Maltese history. The top priority for us was to extract the truth behind the brief extract relating to Roger's attack on *Μελιτογαῦδος*. Most of the rest of the poem is, in fact, quite irrelevant for our purpose. This "additional" text can and will be the subject of interest of further research, such as what Lauxtermann has already laudably produced.[16] It must be said in this connection that our resources in Malta are very limited – certainly no match to what Lauxtermann has at his disposal at Oxford University[17] – so that we feel that there was very little consideration on his part for the task we undertook in producing an *editio princeps* of a very difficult text. No scholarly study of such a text had ever been tackled, and much less issues pertaining to it had ever been solved. Later editions, which we welcome, will be able to build on our initial tentative effort, using it as a starting platform on which to construct higher edifices. But Lauxtermann's criticism was not only directed at our bypassing his pet territory. He also attacked our conclusions, mainly on philological grounds. If a researcher is honestly searching for the truth, he cannot put on his blinkers and ignore the totality of evidence, focusing only on a couple of aspects with total disregard – in our case,

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[14] The term *Syrophoenician* expresses the nationality of the woman as being Phoenician but not pertaining to the Jewish population of the region of Tyre; hence a Canaanite (gentile) of Phoenicia: Harrington 1997, 612.

[15] Of these one can cite at least some 180 other examples.

[16] Cf., for instance, Vella 2012, 209-244; idem 2016; Blomqvist 2016; Harrison 2016.

[17] If the best that is available on the island are copies like Giuseppe Del Re's *Cronisti* of 1845-68, or Gyula Moravczik's *De Administrando* of 1949, and not their most recent versions, then we have to make do with these.

of the historical realities, based on other sources, in which the poem is set.

The tone of Lauxtermann's paper is set by his radical re-reading of our translation of the passage relating to the attack on Μελιτογαῦδος and the consequent discussion of the Bishop and his Christian community among the Moslem inhabitants. First, our interpretation diverges as to the nature of the attack.

3 Who led the attack, and against whom was it directed?

We believe that the attack was put together by Count Roger II, who led it on Μελιτογαῦδος – contrary to Lauxtermann, who opts for Roger's vizier, George of Antioch. Lauxtermann, repeating Fiaccadori (2010, 340),[18] declaredly does so because the attacker is referred to as ἔξαρχος ἀρχόντων ὅλων when it is known that the vizier assumed the title of ἄρχων τῶν ἀρχόντων. For historical correctness, it must be noted that this title was only assumed after the establishment of the kingdom in 1130 (Takayama 1993, 67), whereas the attack on Μελιτογαῦδος took place before that, in 1127 (infra).

Referring to the passage in question, the verse "Did not the great leader of the admirals himself open the troublesome gates of the foreign, godless Agarenes?" (f. 83v.13-15) must be read with reference to the following verse and sequel (f. 83v.16-17): "Do you not even know, Sir, how,

while the sceptre was not yet raised, ... the most resplendent leader of all the leaders, ... sailed to Melitogaudos ...?" "The most resplendent leader of all the leaders" can only be Roger II, who throughout the poem is consistently referred to as light-bearing (ff. 2.10, 25.10, 26.17 et passim). There is no contradiction in calling Roger 'leader of the admirals' and 'leader of all the leaders', since George of Antioch, ἄρχων τῶν ἀρχόντων, was his subject and inferior to him. George of Antioch was indeed at the apex of the pyramidal power hierarchy, but he was always subject to the King: "head of the general council" (f. 2.7), but still "deputy of the ruler" (f. 2.8). Besides, although it is readily admitted that Roger's usual practice was to entrust his naval enterprises to his admirals, e.g., the attacks on Mahdiya in 1123, on Amalfi in 1131 and on North Africa in the 1140s (Casper 1999, 43 et seq.; Curtis 1912, 155), it appears that Roger conducted this particular attack on Μελιτογαῦδος in person,[19] possibly in view of the Mahdiya fiasco of 1123, under George of Antioch's own command. This is clearly Charles Stanton's assessment: "Roger acted himself in 1127 by taking Malta" (Stanton 2011, 75).

But there are other objections: If the passage refers to George of Antioch, then this is the only place in the whole poem where George is referred to in 3rd pers. (cf. ff. 2; 9.2; 10v.3; 12.17; 15.16; 17.1; 19.13; 21v.9; 22.15; 22v etc.). Lauxtermann (p. 1) is in agreement with us that the poem is addressed to George of Antioch, whom the poet consistently addresses in the second person. There is also the fact

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[18] It must be said that Fiaccadori's assessment of our contribution (2010, 340) is based only on our preliminary announcement (in 2006), which was written before we had the opportunity to consult the original manuscript and before the final publication *Tristia ex Melitogaudo*, which corrected a number of errors in our 2006 paper. Furthermore, f.83v was not included in our 2006 paper.

[19] Alexander Telesinus, in: Del Re 1845-68, ii, 91: [Anno 1127] *invaserat enim et alias insulas, quarum una Malta vocabatur*.

that this incident of 1127 is documented elsewhere. In his interpretation of Telesinus, Amari sees the attack as happening against the backdrop of and in retaliation for piratical activities against Patti, Catania and Syracuse by the Moslems (Amari 1986, iii, 395). This is also Houben's reading of the events, who further identifies Pantelleria and Malta as the bases from which the pirates operated (Houben 2007, 41; Stanton 2011, 75; Metcalfe 2011, 132). These attacks took place in July 1127, so that the attack on the islands – including Malta – took place precisely in that month, when Roger's campaign was suddenly interrupted by the news of the death in Salerno of his nephew William, the Duke of Puglia, which we know from other sources to have happened on 20 July 1127. Telesinus' account is very clear when he stated that it was Roger (!) himself who with seven galleons sailed directly to Salerno to claim for himself what the Duke of Puglia had left behind him.

Having said this, the two positions can still be reconciled if both Roger II and George of Antioch led the expedition.

4 The Bishop and his Christian Community in Malta

Even if we were to admit with Lauxtermann that *Μελιτογαῦδος* refers to Malta (which we do not), we certainly disagree with him in his interpretation of the Bishop and the Christian community. Lauxtermann would have it that George of Antioch (*sic*) did not find a Bishop and his community on *Μελιτογαῦδος*, but that he implanted them there himself! Did they, by any chance, accompany his "small naval expedition of spear-bearing archer-infantry"? (f. 84.4-5) Would George burden his "charge with

his light brigade" with an ecclesiastical community on the off chance that his expedition, this time (unlike Mahdiya, four years before), would be so successful? Is Admiral George of Antioch known to have established any churches anywhere else in the wake of a successful campaign?

One would have to deduce from Lauxtermann's argument that the Church of Malta was non-existent and that, in particular, there were no bishops of Malta prior to 1127, for, according to him, it was Roger, or (even worse) George of Antioch who established them. But this flies in the face of other historical evidence. Just as the Byzantine Church, through its *Notitia Episcopatuum X*, recognized the existing see of *Melítē* as a suffragan of the metropolitan of Syracuse in *ca*. 1200 (cf. *Nicolaos Protopapas Maltes, infra*), so also it affirmed the same *ca*. 1100 by its *Notitia III* (Brown 1975, 80-81). Likewise, after the Norman conquest of Sicily, the Church of Rome began staking its claim to that See, still *in partibus infidelium*, by appointing its own Latin bishops. Of these, before 1127, we have evidence of Joannes in 1113 and Rainaldus in 1121, whose existence, albeit not on the island,[20] would still have been well known to Count Roger as they would have been nominated by himself by virtue of the Normans' agreement with the papacy.[21]

But Lauxtermann's interpretation is refuted also on philological grounds. The verb *δείκνυμι* (f. 84.15) in the active voice, as it is used here, can only mean one of the following: "bring to light, show forth";

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[20] For Joannes, cf. Fiorini 2010, 12-16; and for Rainaldus, cf. Borg 2008, 25.

[21] On the monarch's right of presentation of the bishops of Sicily – their *juspatronatus regium* – cf. Borg 2008, 21-24; Aquilina, Fiorini 2005, xxxvi-xxxvii.

"portray, represent, render"; "show, point out, point towards"; "make known, explain"; "prove"; and in rare usages "inform against"; "display, exhibit"; "offer, proffer" (Liddell and Scott 1996). In short, it means "to show". It clearly does not mean "selected", and should not have been used as such unless the intention was to alter the sense according to a pre-conceived idea, as Lauxtermann did. Now that the agenda has been determined, the sense was further aggravated by him taking *τοῦ τόπου*, clearly in the genitive case, to be in the dative ("for this place"), a mistake which a person with even a little knowledge of Greek, but with no ulterior motive, avoids doing. The most natural translation of *τοῦ τόπου οἰκήτορας* is precisely "inhabitants of the place". For "(selected settlers) for the place", you would have needed a dative or perhaps, even better, a prepositional phrase, like *εἰς τὸν τόπον*. This means that the Christian community had been on the island all along, and this is precisely the reason to ground our contention for continuity of Christianity, at least on the island of Gozo.

Then there is the key word *πατρόθεν* for which Lauxtermann (fn. 77) prefers a complicated interpretation, according to which the word contains a veiled reference to the orthodox denunciation of *filioque*. Syntactically, his interpretation necessitates *πατρόθεν* to be construed with the nominal phrase *Τριάδα Θείαν*. Even if it is not totally impossible to construe an adverb like *πατρόθεν* with a substantive or a nominal phrase, it is not a solution that recommends itself if there is a more natural explanation readily available. This is precisely the case here: the word immediately preceding *πατρόθεν* is *προσκυνοῦντας*,

with which the adverb becomes a natural modifier, both syntactically and semantically: the worship of the Holy Trinity was performed by the (formerly hiding) Christians of the island as part of a heritage acquired 'from their fathers'.

Our assertion is confirmed if we consider the context in which this whole passage is set. If we return to the opening phrase of this passage (f. 83.13 *et seq.*), it is seen that the poet's argument is the natural development of Joshua's narrative (ff. 82v.1 *et seq.*) which concludes with a comparison of Roger's inspired achievements for his new kingdom and its people. Particular emphasis is made on "redeeming the gathering of this **concealed** people (f. 83.3), ... they who were judged by even being condemned to the cross and by means of other punishments decided by [their] law (f. 83,10-11)". Is this not a reaffirmation of the "bringing to the light" of the suppressed Christian community of *Μελιτογαῦδος* (f. 84.14-15)?

We reiterate that the members of this Church had been existing in suppression under the Moslems, whom they had hated (ff. 84.11,17; 84v.2). Incidentally, one can ask: By whom were Mohammed and his *mouddibi* hated, if (according to Lauxtermann) there had been no Christians on the island? Would Lauxtermann suggest that they were hated by the Moslems themselves? One can also ask: Could this Christian community have been implanted by Roger I in 1090? If this were the case, then such a community would have been free and not found in bondage and in suppressed conditions by his son Roger II. If it antedated 1090, then this community belonged to the Greek-rite Byzantine Church as can now be in-

dependently confirmed from Fiaccadori's important discovery of the existence of Malta's Πρωτοπαπάς Nicolaos and of his wife Milo, who had died in 1230 and in 1229 respectively (Fiaccadori 1996, lviii-lvix; Eleuteri 1993, 3-13; Fiaccadori and Scarola 2001, 268-70; Fiaccadori 2010). We find no difficulty in postulating that the ἐπίσκοπος (overseer) found by Roger II was in fact a πρωτοπαπάς, as it is known that during the 11th-13th centuries Constantinople was appointing a πρωτοπαπάς or an *archipresbyter* instead of a bishop in some of its dioceses (Fiorini 2013, 7 n. 11). It need hardly be stressed that the title of πρωτοπαπάς implies the existence of a Greek hierarchy, a Greek Christian community and a parochial structure.[22] In view of the Normans' brief from Pope Nicolaus II in 1059, binding them to return the lost churches in the occupied territories to Latin Rome, the establishment of a new Greek Church in the Maltese Islands would not have made sense (Herde 1973; Girgensohn 1973). This conclusion has the logical corollary that the Church discovered by Roger II was a Greek Church, as it had been since before the Arab takeover. The special role of Gozo in this saga is highlighted in the important report of *c*. 1241 by Giliberto Abbate to Frederick II, which shows that, in contrast with the Maltese population, which had a 59% majority of Moslems, the exact opposite was true for Gozo, where the Christians were a 54% majority.[23] Many facts point towards the survival of the Greek Church in these islands, which is not without parallels both in Sicily and in the Maghreb (Bresc et Nef 1998, 134-156; Martin 2007, 105-123; Talbi 1990, 313-351; Bresc 1998). Let it suffice here to recall how no less than 95% of all church dedications belonged to the saints of the pre-Islamic period as late as 1575 and that a considerable number of the saints' date of celebration coincided with that of the Byzantine calendar.[24]

One last comment concerns Brincat's justified remark that "if the poet were imprisoned in Gozo and if Gozo had more Christians than Moslems, and the former were free to practise their religion since 1127, [why] should the poet have felt so threatened by the latter" (Brincat 2010, 114). It is recalled that the poet, writing in *ca*. 1140, was living on the island some thirteen years after Roger's intervention and the bringing out into the open of a Christian community together with its "πρωτοπαπάς". A useful parallel can be drawn with how Roger treated Mahdiya after its conquest in 1148. Casper remarks:[25]

"*L'amministrazione continuava a essere nelle mani degli Arabi, perché era Ruggero a nominarne i funzionari ... Inoltre, Ruggero seppe salvaguardare gli interessi dei Cristiani che, come sembra, vivevano in numero considerevole in Africa. Egli fece tornare il loro arcivescovo, che si era dovuto recare a Roma per la consacrazione.*"

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[22] It has already been noted elsewhere that the structure of the medieval parishes of Gozo is altogether different from that of Malta. By contrast with Malta's rural system, with sacramental churches not necessarily located in inhabited centres, the four Gozo parishes are all nestling together in the restricted urban centre of Rabat, much like what happened later in 1530, when the Greeks from Rhodes, accompanying the knights of St John, were assigned four different parishes in the narrow confines of Birgu (Fiorini 2010, 18-22).

[23] Stanley Fiorini. Giliberto Abbate's Report and Serfdom in the Maltese Islands. *Melita Historica* (2016) (forthcoming).

[24] For full details, cf. Busuttil, Fiorini, Vella 2010, lxx-xcv.

[25] Casper 1999, 389, and n. 287. Recall that the African Church was Roman, not Byzantine.

Yet, from the sparse documentation available, one can deduce that some retaliation by Christians against their former masters and oppressors was in evidence, judging by the fact that the Maltese and Gozitans (specifically mentioned) were pardoned by Queen Constance and her four-year-old son Frederick in 1198, a fiscal penalty that had been imposed on them by her late father Roger II for the murder of a Muslim inhabitant. Roger's policy emerges clearly. He wanted law and order in his domains without favoring one party at the expense of the other. This is consistent with Roger's policy in other 'African' lands and particularly in the way he treated the city of Tripoli in 1146. Having laid siege and taken it in June of that year, he installed a garrison consisting of both Moslems and Christians, leaving the top administrative posts in the hands of the locals, the Arab Abu Yahya ibn Matruh of the tribe of Tamim as Governor (*wali*) and the Berber Abu al-Hajjaj Yusuf ibn Zayri as *qadi*, not allowing the Christian Captain to counter-say any of the orders of these (Amari 1986, 4, 417; Casper 1999, 385).

This is surely what happened also in 'African' *Μελιτογαῦδος*. The Arabo-Berbers continued to rule even after 1127 and while the poet was exiled there. As late as 1241, the islands were still being run *aliis moribus* than what was happening in Sicily. It was only during the last years of Frederick II that the Moslems (not Arabs and Berbers) were ejected from the island.

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DAR KARTĄ APIE *TRISTIA EX MELITOGAUDO*: ARGUMENTAI DISKUSIJAI

Stanley Fiorini and Horatio C. R. Vella

S a n t r a u k a

Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjami poleminiai klausimai, kuriuos vis dar kelia pirmasis poemos, pavadintos *Tristia ex Melitogaudo: Lament in Greek Verse of a XIIth-century Exile on Gozo*, leidimas (Busuttil, Joseph, Stanley Fiorini & Horatio Caesar Roger Vella, eds. 2010. *Tristia ex Melitogaudo: lament in Greek verse of a XIIth-century exile on Gozo*. Malta: Best Print). Remdamiesi istorine bei filologine teksto analize leidėjai pagrindžia savo poziciją kai kuriais kritiniais klausimais ir atsako į M. D. Lauxtermanno straipsnyje (Lauxtermann, Marc D. 2014. Tomi, Mljet, Malta. Critical Notes on a Twelfth-Century Southern Italian Poem of Exile. *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 64, 155–176) pateikiamus kritinius argumentus.

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