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MACULANI, GALILEO AND MILITARY ENGINEERING IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MALTA

In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, it was a common practice throughout Europe to engage particularly outstanding Italian military engineers for the design of fortifications, and Malta was no exception. These engineers were leading exponents of the discipline and many prominent ones were members either of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) or the Order of Preachers (the Dominicans). There is a far broader corpus of literature on the Jesuits than the Dominicans.

Denis De Luca wrote a comprehensive book on the Jesuits and the design of fortifications, a work based on his PhD at the University of Liverpool [1]. De Luca also edited, with a critical study, a treatise by the Dominican friar Tomaso Maria Napoli (1659-1725) [2]. He acknowledged the limited knowledge on the contribution of the Dominicans, compared to the Jesuits, to the art and ethics of war on land and at sea [3], “an area of research still untapped” [4, p. 291].

The string of fortifications in Bormla, Malta, known as

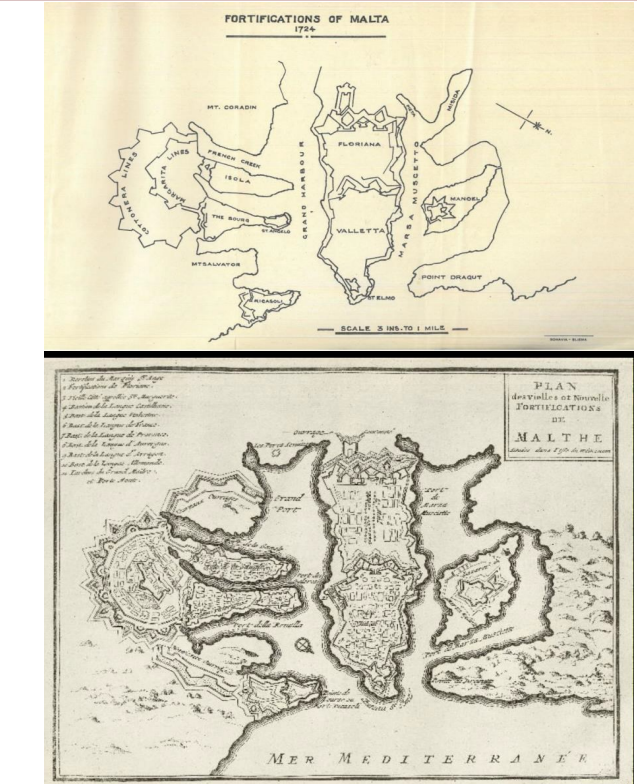


Figure 1. The defences of the Grand Harbour: (top) plan of the fortifications of Malta as in 1724 [5], and (bottom) map by Nicolas de Fer, c. 1702

Santa Margherita Lines was erected in two phases - in the seventeenth (1638 to 1645) and in the eighteenth centuries (1715 to 1736) - the latter as part of the substantial Cottonera Lines designed to shield the land front ramparts of Birgu and Isla. The plani-

metric profile of the maritime fortifications of central Malta produced by Crocker in 1920 [5] illustrate the approximate correctness of the map produced by Nicolas de Fer (1646-1720) in circa 1702.

[...more at](#)

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RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE AND YOUTH VIOLENT EXTREMISM AMONG YOUNG ARAB STUDENTS IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH RELIGIOUS DE-RADICALIZATION

Abstract: The study examines the effect of religion, religious devotion, observance and compliance on violent extremism among young Arab students. Findings showed a significant impact of religion type, religious observance, religious devotion and religious compliance on youth violent extremism ($F = 204.133$, $\alpha = 0.00$). Results showed a uniquely significant contribution of religion type ($t = -21.893$, $\alpha = 0.00$), religious observance ($t = 7.232$, $\alpha = 0.00$), and religious devotion ($t = 10.088$, $\alpha = 0.00$), except for religious compliance ($t = -1.566$, $\alpha = 0.00$), on youth violent extremism. Significant differences were found in each violent extremism dimension attributed to religion type, religious observance, devotion and compliance. Muslims who identify as Sunni scored highly on the scale of violent extremism across all dimensions, followed by Muslims who identify as Shiites and Christians. Extremist violence and religion are often linked. Except for very weak compliance, as a person's level of religious observance, devotion and compliance increases, their violent extremism also increases. Finally, females were significantly higher than males on the violent extremist scale. The study's implications call attention to including religion in youth's formal and informal education and recruitment to prevent the spread of violent extremism and terrorism, especially in high schools and colleges. They involve religious actors and those who practice religion in the fight against violent extremism. Reforming religion education is needed to prevent violent extremism.

WORLD SPIRIT FROM THE STANDPOINT OF MODERN INFORMATION THEORY

Abstract: Based on the latest achievements of Neuroscience and the interpretation of information as a dialectical category paired with the category of matter, it is shown that the contradiction between materialism and idealism can be removed. In particular, it is shown that Hegel's views on the World (Absolute) Spirit allow for a consistent rational interpretation based on evidence that the Universe as a whole is an analogue of a neural network. This issue is confirmed by the results of modern theoretical Astrophysics. It is shown that the essence of complex systems of any nature is also revealed through an analogy with neural networks, and the key factor here is the ability of such systems to process information. This ability, in turn, leads to the emergence of mechanisms of evolution that are fundamentally different from those described by Darwin's theory. A fairly complex system acquires the ability to develop and even self-develop due to factors of a purely informational nature. In the limiting case, such an approach leads to a rational interpretation of Hegel's ideas about the self-development of the World Spirit. The potential socio-economic significance of the proposed concept is discussed.

THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

Abstract: In this paper, we aim to show the role of religion in contemporary society. Despite strong trends towards secularisation, religion can contribute values to social life that state institutions are unable to provide. These values can offer criteria helpful in discussions of important ethical issues affecting society as a whole, and also promote the building of a civic community. There is also a positive relationship between religious commitment and civic activity. This article is interdisciplinary. We attempt to present some contemporary social and theological concepts that demonstrate the possible ways the religious dimension may exist in modern life, as well as in the intercourse between political institutions and religious communities. The values contributed by various religions in the public sphere may prove extremely useful for the preservation of social stability, especially in the context of contemporary threats to people's security (wars, migrations, climate change, etc.).

CHRISTIAN AND SECULAR CULTURE IN THE LIGHT OF (POST)-CONCILIAR ECCLESIOLOGY THEIR UNITY IN DIFFERENCE

Abstract: The doctrine of the Second Vatican Council not only changed the Church's understanding of culture, but also changed its attitude towards the world around it. (Post)-Vatican II theology pointed to culture as the vehicle of these contacts. The point of this submission, therefore, is to demonstrate that the becoming of the Church in all its stages of formation leads to a dialogical encounter with environments that are outside the Church. Moreover. This process of ecclesio-genesis leads, on the one hand, to a necessary critique of the internal ecclesial environment, its purification and enrichment, and on the other: it strengthens secular culture and points it to spiritual and transcendent dimensions, thus influencing the integral development of the whole world, and not only in the dimension of spirituality.

UPBRINGING TRADITIONS OF EASTERN ORTHODOXY IN THE CREATIVE HERITAGE OF SAINT DEMETRIUS OF ROSTOV (D.S. TUPTALO)

Abstract: The paper presents a study of Eastern Orthodox upbringing traditions in the creative heritage of the renowned churchman, preacher and educator Demetrius of Rostov. The materials investigated include the literary works by Demetrius and the existing culturological and historical papers on his life. The study characterizes the origins of the homiletic works by Demetrius and analyses his pedagogical and educational preaching activity. The authors conclude that Demetrius was one of the first to pave the way for nurturing the spiritual world of man in the traditions of Eastern Orthodox pedagogy.



ANTHROPOCENE AND ECONOMY OF SALVATION THEOLOGICAL RELEVANCE OF A GEOLOGICAL CONCEPT

Abstract: Concepts such as hominization, noosphere, and culture enable us to describe a new planetary situation characterized by intense human activity. The term ‘Anthropocene’, originally coined by geologists, is particularly useful to approach this phenomenon within planetary history. By availing ourselves of the term ‘Anthropocene’, therefore, we strive to point out the great alterations brought about by human activity on various planetary systems. It is our goal to bring together the terms ‘Anthropocene’ and ‘economy/history of salvation’, traditionally put forward by biblically rooted Theology. In other words, we will explore the possibilities, which the Anthropocene may hold, from a theological perspective.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF RAIL FUNERAL CARS

Abstract: The paper describes an interesting episode in railway history. In the second half of the 19th century, largest cities in the world had to handle the problem of overcrowding their existing cemeteries, in many cases of medieval origin. The decision to dedicate new burial grounds far away from the cities granted enough capacity, however triggered the problem of accessibility, which was solved by using railway or streetcars. The paper also deals with the motivations behind and reasons for the appearance, details of construction, equipment and decoration of those cars, as well as describing differences in operational principles. Sections are illustrated with historic photographs and drawings. Important threads of the work refer to models of funeral ceremonies, bond between practical and spiritual realms as well as auxiliary role of transport for specific religious ceremonies. The paper ends with results and summary, containing thoughts on the role of rail funeral cars and their modern counterparts.

MACULANI, GALILEO AND MILITARY ENGINEERING IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MALTA

Abstract: It was a common practice in the seventeenth century to engage reputed military engineers for the design of fortifications. Malta, at the time ruled by the Hospitaller Order of Saint John, is a case in point. Besides having its engineer in residence, the Order requested and secured the services of the best in Europe to consult notably on planned and on going military engineering works. One such personality was Vincenzo Maculani da Firenzuola, a member of the Order of Preachers, military engineer and Commissary-General of the Inquisition at Galileo’s 1633 trial. Based on historical literature, this article addresses Maculani’s engagement in Malta and challenges references to him, and to Galileo, in the literature on the military engineering history of Malta. The paper concludes by exposing the bias, which existed until recently in such literature, the outstanding piece being published by a member of the same order of Maculani in the 1950s.

THE COUNTER-REFORMATION AND THE FAÇADE OF A GOTHIC CATHEDRAL THE DICTATION OF BISHOP LUIS DE TENA IN TORTOSA (1616-1622)

Abstract: The facade of the Gothic cathedral of Tortosa was built in the seventeenth century according to the project of Martin Abaria (1621-1625) and chronologically coinciding with that of Maderno in Sant’ Andrea della Valle. The layout is based on the architectural order of Serlio and Vignola. The iconographic program follows the dictation of the bishop Luis de Tena, expert in biblical studies, and it is he who induces the directives of the Council of Trent of Carlo Borromeo. The repositioning of the project has allowed its comparison with the façade executed, through the data obtained with the Terrestrial Laser Scanner (TLS), determining a common metric will of the number 100 of the *De civitate Dei* Augustine of Hippo, in the first body, both in the project, as in the execution of the façade. There is a metrological will for a Marian connection between the façade presided by the enthroned Virgin and the medieval 100 of the keystone of the presbytery with its Coronation.