

Case study of the parish church of zejtun

Education



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What Led the Community to Construct the Parish Church of Zejtun?

Prior to the present parish church of Zejtun, there was what is now called the *Old Parish Church of Zejtun*, or more normally known as the *Church of Saint Gregory*, a name gained due to the presence of a statue of Pope Saint Gregory the Great situated near to the church. The inside information referring to the building of this church is unknown, but several architectural parts of the church indicate that parts of it were built in the 15th century while others have been constructed in the undermentioned century. By the terminal of the 17th century and the early old ages of the 18th century, the population of Zejtun has seen considerable growth. This growth resulted in the so parish church of Zejtun to go non fit for intent, therefore serious ideas started to be made about the demand of a church which could function a turning population.

The primary event that set on paths the thought of the building of a new parish church started all due to a ground that the so baronial 1s of the community strived to go good known. Therefore, with the want of going known and besides to be remembered for centuries, it was Gregorio Bonici who signed a contract which showed that a land known as *tal-Chasira* was to be donated to the church to function as the site to raise what would go the new parish church of Zejtun. This contract can be said to hold been a really generous one, as the donated site, which besides had the advantage of being in the Centre of Zejtun, could non merely be the topographic point for a new monumental church, but it besides had the infinite for a vestry, an oratory, and besides a broad church square. To reaffirm the importance that

helpers gave towards their privation to be remembered during these ages, in the instance of the parish church of Aejtun, apart from Gregorio Bonici there was before besides another citizen whom donated land to the church, but this land was considered as non being a preferred one due to the constraints it held and besides because of its distance off from the Centre of the town, which was truly of import at that clip since it had to function for the whole community at a clip in which there was no dependable manner of transit. Besides, the Testaferrata household, the inheritors of Gregorio Bonici, owned an communion table in the chief crypt of the church. But for baron Bonici this was non his last contribution, he wanted to be certain that this undertaking moved swimmingly and reached its' phase of completion, therefore he continued to shoot money towards the funding of the undertaking up to a upper limit of 30 old ages after he and his married woman had died, as is found written in his secret will.

The first measure to do this undertaking materialise saw its induction by the design of the celebrated designer Lorenzo Gafa' . This can be seen in the trial study of Cocco Palmier of 1693, naming Lorenzo Gafa' as the interior decorator of the program of the new church and which by that clip he had already started working on the eastern side of the church. Almost nil can be said sing the old ages that followed, as the consequence of research that has been made in this respect is that there are no studies on what was go oning and the advancement of the undertaking. Another of import point which leaves a nothingness when it comes to discoursing about the primary phases of building, an point which most likely has been lost, is the original set of programs of Lorenzo Gafa' What has besides seldom been given adequate

importance, is that several old ages have passed from when the undertaking started until it was wholly finished to the current signifier it is today.

Throughout these old ages, the leading of this undertaking has been transferred from one individual to another, and with such alteration that already by itself brings a alteration in the manner the undertaking director thinks and plants, there is besides the factor of what became stylish and aesthetically more preferable at the clip of a certain building stage. When such factors are given equal importance in a published literature, so one can get down to do comparings sing the architectural designs and cosmetic inside informations that came out at different periods and under different undertaking directors.

To give a farther different position, this paper will be laid out as if one doing a circuit around the parish church of Zejtun, of which foremost the outside will be discussed and so the focal point will turn about the inside of the church.

Outside

As stated already earlier, the parish church of Zejtun has the signifier of a Latin-cross, it is a church which has a size which is well bigger than those churches which have been antecedently built. One might believe that this thought of edifice in the signifier of a Latin-cross was due to the influences brought to us by the Knights of St. John. This is true, but there was besides an thought which emmerged from one of the most of import oecumenic council of the Roman Catholic Church, the Council of Trent. Although the council didn't give instructions on the manner in which a church had to be built, it gave a form in which the chief altar-space had to be flanked by

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transepts which were normally made externally seeable. When discoursing about the parish church of Zejtun, one can debate about whether the church still holds a true typology of a Latin-cross or non, and this is chiefly due to the ulterior add-ons of the oratory edifice and besides the side isles which made the outside of the church look wholly different so it was intended to be by Lorenzo Gafa.

Facade

A characteristic which is frequently recognized since the facade, is the proportion between the breadth and the tallness, in which the horizontality is greater than the breadth with a entire ratio of 1. 51: 1, composed of seven bays divided vertically in two equal parts (while excepting the bell towers and the frontispiece) . The verticalness gained through the usage of Doric pilasters on the lower grade and the Ionic pilasters straight above, which reach along the whole facade making the already celebrated seven bays, is lessened with the presence of uninterrupted entablature, therefore beef uping the already strong horizontality feature. It should be noted though that if we excluded the late extension of the sides, the facade would hold most likely consisted of merely the in-between three bays, therefore the sense of horizontality would hold been wholly non present with a tallness to width ratio wholly the antonym from the current bing facade. All three doors of the facade along with the two statue niches above the little side doors have a triangular pediment, while the stained glass window above the chief door has an arched pediment, besides it can be said that the frontispiece has a broken arched pediment. The frontispiece is made of a marble tabature written in the twelvemonth 1720, and it serves to mark the dedication of this

church towards Saint Catherine of Alexandria. This frontispiece stands in the center of two statues, stand foring Saint Peter and Saint Paul, in which at first were the lone statues decorating the facade of the Zejtun Parish Church. It was around the eightiess that the facade was besides ornamented with two other statues in the niches straight above the little side doors, allegorically portraying religion (' *Fede* ') and hope (' *Speranza* ') .

Side-aisles

It was around 1779 that the side-aisles of the Zejtun Parish church were constructed, therefore traveling from the initial three in-between bays, to the current bing seven bays facade. At the clip during the 18 century, it was a known factor that churches wanted to portray a genuinely greater dominant visual aspect over the surrounding, therefore the easiest manner this could be gained, since besides the site permitted for such undertaking particularly in the instance of the parish church of Zejtun, was the add-on of the side-aisles. The proposal for such undertaking wasn't granted permission based on the thought that the church wanted to tag farther monumental laterality, but the issue of serious demand of sidelong support support was brought forward based on the fright that there was the possibility that the nave could fall in. This was the idea of Giuseppe Bonnici together with a figure of designers. Although this big extension was certainly non wholly needed to merely reenforce the nave supports, when the factors of ; viability, need for enlargement due to the turning community and besides the aesthetically pleasing visual aspect this undertaking could hold provided, were taken into consideration, the permission was to the full granted. This extension of the side-aisles brought with it several alterations, such as the little domes on the

sides, which have the map of allowing visible radiation into the church along with the several stained glass Windowss on the sides of the nave. Besides there was the building of an arched buttress screen. This undertaking has normally been understood that it had been completed on the 3 of May 1779 due to the fact that one can happen this day of the month engraved on one of the winging buttresses, which most likely was the last flying buttress to be built.

Bell Towers

What remains to be discussed when it comes to the west side of the church are the bell towers. It must be understood that even as said before, ab initio the facade of the parish church of Zejtun was wholly different due to the fact that merely the nave was existing, though this doesn't mean that there were no bell towers. When looking at the thickness of the transept walls, at their internal handbill walls it is noticed that these could hold been what remains of the bell towers that existed at the transepts.

The architectural thought of making two bell oarsmans on the frontage was non really popular in the early seventeenth-century churches and Gafa's subsequently church designs, but the Maltese were made to alter their head as this characteristic of a two-towered western frontage was implemented to the Mdina Cathedral.

The ground for which the location of the bell towers of the parish church of Zejtun was changed to the current place, is seen to be a forceful one, and the chief cause was due to the bad province in which the bell towers had ended. It is said that the component which air current forces from the north-

west way. The figure of bells which have been placed in these bell towers goes up to fourteen, crossing merely over three hundred old ages. Today, the bell tower on the right houses the five to the full working bells, four of which have been produced in 2005, while another (' *Antonia* ') was founded in 1947 and still has a good tonal sound, all of which have been done by the British company John Taylor.

Dome

Although it has been said that the bell towers have been severely affected by the air current, up to the point of necessitating Reconstruction, on the contrary, at that clip the dome was still to the full structurally stable and didn't demand to be changed or restored. But the current dome of the Parish Church of Zejtun isn't the original one which was designed by Lorenzo Gafa, alternatively, the old lantern-less dome had to be dismantled and rebuilt, based on the design of Joseph Zahra. It was in early 20 century that the original dome was deemed to be structurally non safe, and was therefore dismantled, with Zahra's design taking over. Though the dome has been reconstructed (while wholly non following Lorenzo Gafa's design) , the original dome membranophone has been kept. It can be easy noticed that the current dome design followed no geometrical order so as to do it a incorporate component together with the Lorenzo's dome membranophone. The diameter of the dome has been recorded to be approximately 11. 61m, merely about 0. 04m less than the dome of the Mdina Cathedral.

External Ornamentation

Apart from the two rock sculptures stand foring allegorical figures of Faith and Hope which have already been discussed, one can happen another <https://assignbuster.com/case-study-of-the-parish-church-of-zejtun/>

exclusion made to figurative sculptural ornament. On the North and south frontages of the church one can happen bull-like antefixa. These figures, although they are H₂O spouts which have been modified, can be compared to the well-known “ tongue-masks” , which are figures that are created so as to assist in maintaining off evil liquors. These type of “ tongue-masks” , with broad and convex eyes and a level and widened nose have become widely popular in Malta during the stay of the Order of Saint John. During the early 19 century this sculptural tradition, together with its symbolic significance, started to lose its popularity within the Maltese community.

Interior

Upon come ining into the parish church of Zejtun, one can recognize the big proportions of the inside. When compared to churches organize the primary coevals, it can be said that the proportions of the parish church of Zejtun are of significant difference and the nave can be considered as a good illustration. The nave normally had an country which covered a p which was twice every bit long as it was broad, but in the instance of Zejtun’s church, the measuring ratio is 1: 2. 46, giving a stronger eastern impulse when standing on the interior. A greater nave tallness and internal light was obtained due to the attack adopted for the roofing system, which was introduced into the Maltese community by Francesco Buonamici. What can besides be noticed about the nave of the parish church of Zejtun is that it has a feature of continuity. This characteristic is present due to the Attic pilasters that follow the same perpendicular lines as those created by the elephantine pilasters at the nave degree, making a strong signifier of integrity between the lower and upper portion of the church.

During the clip in which the side-aisles were non constructed, the arches that open from the nave, integrated communion tables in them. These communion tables were subsequently moved backwards due to the extension of the side-aisles. All the side-aisles communion tables are composed in the same manner, built all in a niche-like composing, with the sidelong sides of these ' niches' decorated with pictures. One interesting characteristic is that they are placed within the thickness of the side-aisles' walls, a characteristic which makes the side-altars different from the communion tables at the transepts and those of the choir.

Some characteristics are common for all the communion tables of the church, even the chief communion table. All the communion tables are elevated by two stairss, keeping a symbolic significance that one must look or make upwards, doing the perceiver spiritually feel that there is a force which is much greater than him. Besides all communion tables have their ain, or portion between them, a cupola, in which instance the side-aisle's communion tables have one cupola each, which is the same as those of the choir and the transepts, but of a smaller graduated table and which are less adorned. Eleven of the communion tables have a pleasing signifier of architectural and sculptural model, of which can be in some manner considered as being of a Baroque manner, although the communion tables of the choir and the transepts are a bit over-elaborated to be wholly considered as of the Baroque manner.

Decision

In decision, it can be said that when one Tours about and inside the parish church of Zejtun dedicated to Saint Catherine of Alexandria, one is touring a <https://assignbuster.com/case-study-of-the-parish-church-of-zejtun/>

church of which throughout its building has fallen in the custodies of several interior decorators, most of which have influenced the concluding signifier of the church. The different custodies, and the old ages taken for the completion, have resulted in the building of a monumental edifice, a edifice of which certainly can break function as the new religious meeting topographic point for the community of Zejtun, and a memorial which the local community thinks that is the edifice which genuinely honours its dedication to Saint Catherine of Alexandria.