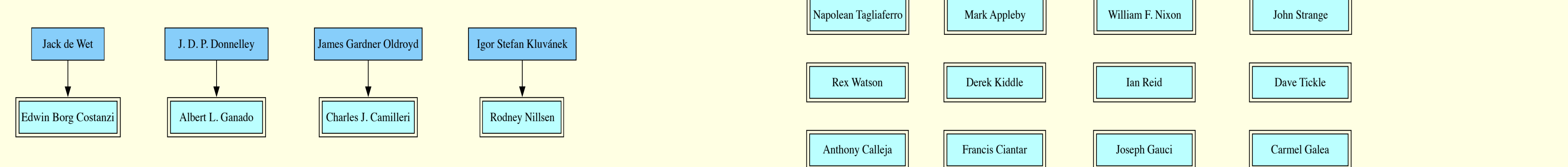
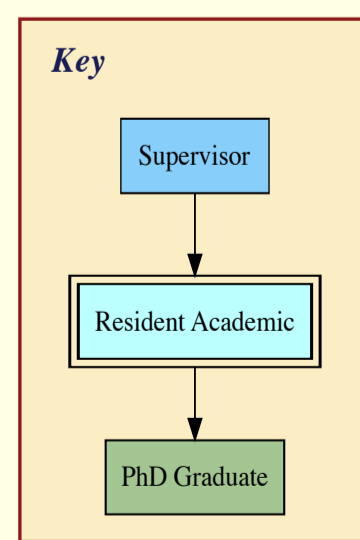
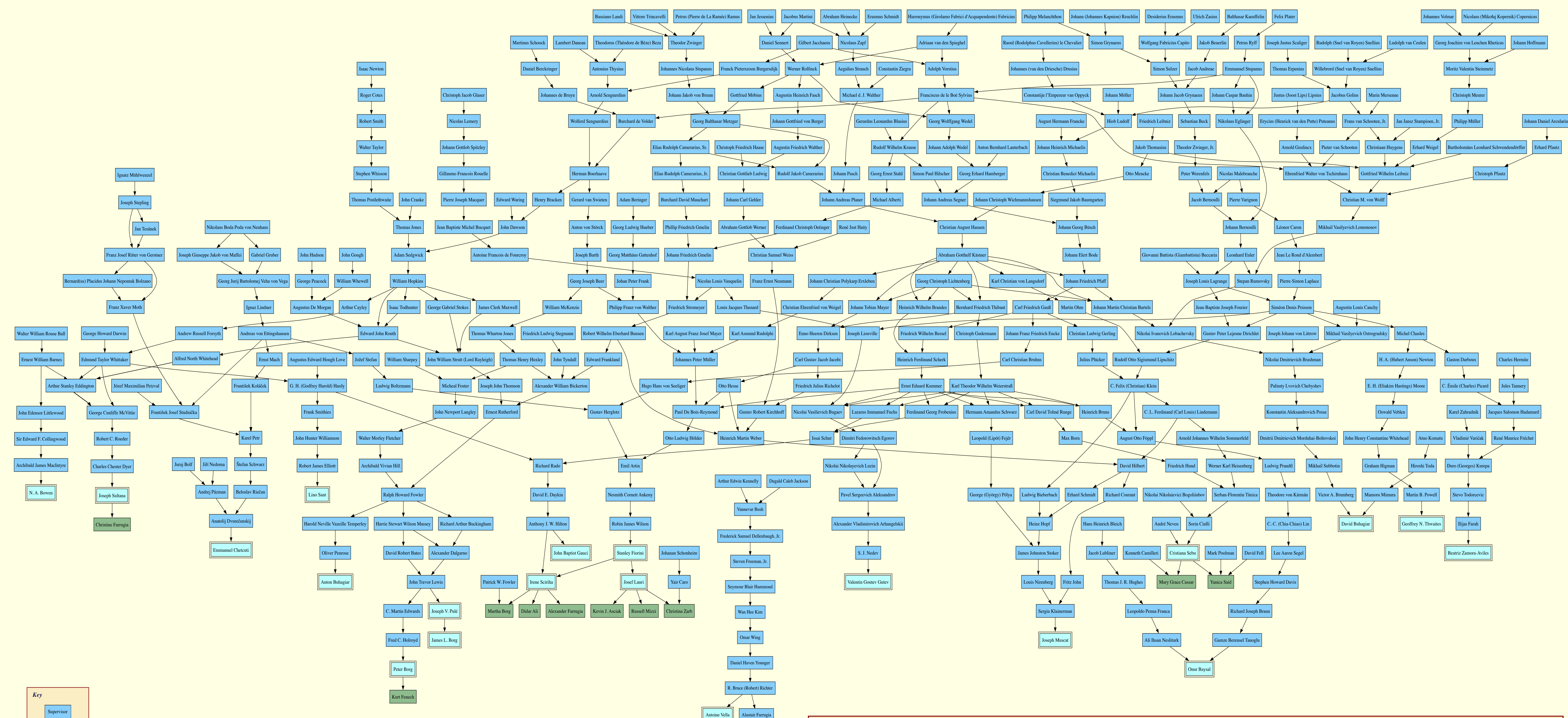


Genealogy of the Department of Mathematics

Tracing the mathematical ancestry of academics past and present...



Historical Perspectives

by *Adriana Balduccio and Xandra Mifsud*

Mathematics at the University of Malta has a vast history, evolving from being taught as a tool for other sciences into a rich discipline studied for its own sake. Throughout the years, various individuals have contributed to shaping the mathematical scene in Malta. The very first scientific paper published as part of the Faculty of Arts, then known as the Faculty of Literature and Science, was on transcendental functions, a popular mathematics topic at the time. The author of this paper, Napoleon Tagliaro, was an outstanding polymath, contributing to several disciplines including Mathematics, Archaeology, the Natural Sciences and the Maltese Language. Tagliaro went on to divide the Faculty of Arts into two areas of study: the Arts and the Sciences.

The Faculty of Science as we know it today came from a further split by the next rector Edoardo Magro, who subdivided the Sciences into three faculties: the faculties of Science, Engineering and Architecture. During this period, from the first Faculty Board of Science in 1915, Professor William F. Nixon held the position of Chair of Mathematics. He was succeeded by Professor Mark Appleby in 1936, who wrote a text-book while teaching at the Royal University of Malta, "Elementary Statistics: A text-book for engineers", which was published by the Cambridge University Press. Records show that Appleby was a member of the Association for Symbolic Logic (the council of which at the time included members such as A. Church, A. M. Turing, H. B. Curry and A. Turing) at Cambridge, from which he also obtained an M.A. in Mathematics. Appleby was succeeded by Professor Edwin J. Borg Costanzi, a Rhodes scholar who returned from Malta after having graduated First Class from Oxford. He held this post until 1963, when eventually he became Rector Magnificus of the university. During his rectorship, the University provided various new courses involving mathematics.

Another member of the mathematical community at the Royal University of Malta at this time was Professor Neville A. Bowen. Bowen completed his doctoral studies on Tauberian theorems at King's College (Aberdeen), under the supervision of Archibald J. Macintyre, and subsequently found his way to Malta. While a member of the Royal University of Malta, Bowen continued his work with his supervisor from Aberdeen, publishing a paper titled 'Entire Functions Related to the Dirichlet Divisor Problem', appearing in 'Proceedings of Symposia in Pure Mathematics: Entire Functions and Related Parts of Analysis' (1966) published by the American Mathematical Society. Around this time, the mathematics department was also joined by the lecturer John Strange, as evidenced by a classroom note titled 'A Generalization of Morley's Theorem' appeared in The American Mathematical Monthly, published in 1974.

Throughout the years, the mathematics department has grown and changed under different leadership. The role of head of department was held by many, with Bowen eventually serving as head until eventually being succeeded by Joseph V. Palé (who would eventually emigrate to Ireland, where James L. Borg did his doctoral studies under his supervision). Others who have held the role of head of department include Charles J. Camilleri, Stanley Fiorini, Anton Buhagiar, and more recently, David Buhagiar and Joseph Muscat.

- ### Further Reading
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 - [3] Edward Duca and Charles V. Sammut (2015), "100 reasons to science", THINK Magazine, 14, 15-17.
 - [4] Stanley Fiorini (2009), "Our history", Department of Mathematics, University of Malta. Available at: <https://www.um.edu.mt/science/maths/aboutus/ourhistory/>, accessed on 09/09/2024.
 - [5] Xandra Mifsud (2019), "Stanley Fiorini: Mathematician & historian", Part 1. Available at: https://xmf11.github.io/resources/sf_interview_part_1.pdf, accessed on 09/09/2024.
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 - [7] John Strange (1974), "A generalization of Morley's theorem", The American Mathematical Monthly, 81 (1), 61-63.
 - [8] Rex Watson (2021), "Golden anniversary: Reminiscences of arriving at Homerton one half-century ago", RSMA Newsletter (Homerton College, Cambridge), September 2021, 23.
 - [9] "List of officers and members of the Association for Symbolic Logic", The Journal of Symbolic Logic 8 (4), 1943, 152-56.

This poster reflects the composition of the Department of Mathematics at the University of Malta over the years, up to September 2024.

Information for this poster has been collected from the Mathematics Genealogy Project (Department of Mathematics, North Dakota State University), augmented with any missing entries established by the author with the help of many first-hand accounts from different members of staff.

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All efforts have been made to ensure the correctness of the information included. For any errors, updates, or missing individuals, please e-mail: xmf0001@um.edu.mt

Xandra Mifsud (Msida, 2024)