

# MELITENSIA

THE MALTA STUDY CENTER AT THE HILL MUSEUM & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY

Fall 2012/Winter 2013

*The Latin word Melitensia denotes "things pertaining to Malta," and it is most frequently used in the world of rare books and manuscripts to describe written collections of the history and culture of the island of Malta.*

*This newsletter reports the activities of the Malta Study Center, and features information about the history of the Knights of Malta and the history and culture of the country of Malta itself.*

*We welcome your comments and your communication about others who might share an interest in this core program of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library.*

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*Top: Joseph S. Micallef, Archbishop Mikiel Gonzi, Fr. John Azzopardi, and Dr. Julian Plante after the agreement to microfilm the Mdina Cathedral Museum Archives.*

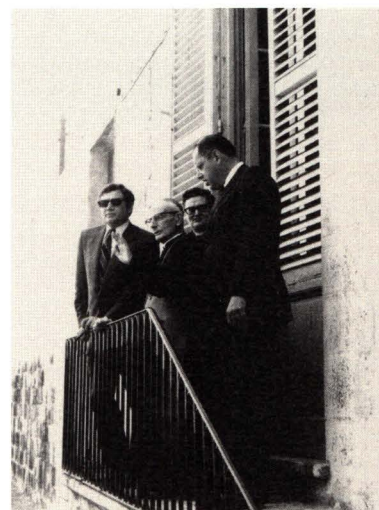
*Bottom: Archival materials in the Cathedral Museum awaiting microfilming.*

## 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Malta Study Center: Part I

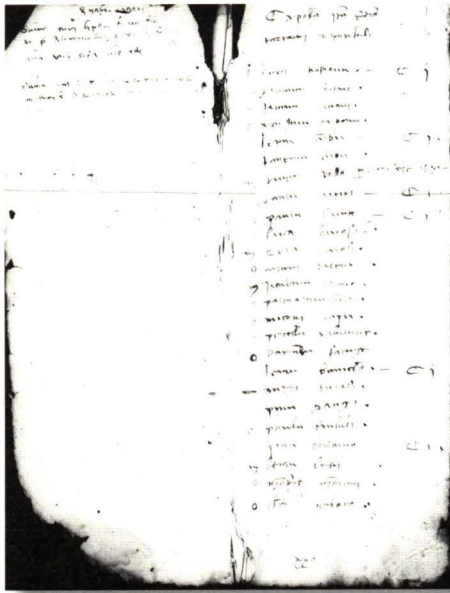
The Malta Study Center has the largest collection of Maltese archival materials in microfilm and digital format in the world. They include such diverse and rich materials as the Archives of the Knights of Malta, the Roman Inquisition in Malta, musical scores from baroque compositions composed and performed in Malta, local parish records, and innumerable letters, records of tribunals, inventories, and registers. The Center dedicates its resources to maintaining a library collection that supports research into these varied materials, and to encourage preservation of the originals in Malta itself.

The first question visitors ask is usually "Why Malta?" The second is usually "why here in Minnesota?" The answers to those questions entwine the history of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library with the longer and richer history of Malta. And anyone familiar with Malta knows how tangled things can get. . . .

The Maltese archipelago has a long history of human habitation, evidenced by such treasures as the Temples and the Hypogeum. Its written history, however, begins much later. Its medieval records are scant, especially compared with other important Mediterranean maritime locations like Barcelona, Sicily, and Venice. The bulk of the historical archival materials in Malta date from between 1530 and 1798, when the Knights of the Hospital ruled the islands. The Knights of the Hospital, also known as the Knights of Malta, located their central archives (which dated back to 1110) on the island. They also maintained government records as rulers of the island. The Order made several efforts to establish a library on the island, and the building was finally completed in 1776. This library would house collections of books that had belonged to the estates of the Knights. The Order, however, had to leave its books and archives behind when Napoleon Bonaparte took the island from them in 1798.

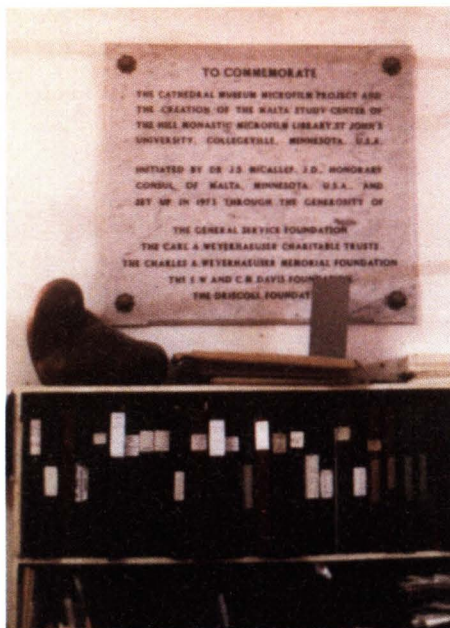


*Continued on page 2*



Above: ACM Misc. 437, Quaderno 4, f. 1, listing the members of the militia of Mdina in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Published by Godfrey Wettinger, "The Militia List of 1419-1420," *Melita Historica*, 1969.

Below: Plaque, formerly in the curator's office of the Mdina Cathedral Museum, commemorating the Microfilm Project and the creation of the Malta Study Center, 1973.



After the Knights left Malta in 1798, the island became part of the British Empire. It endured intensive bombing by the Italians and the Germans during World War II, and the German submarine blockade deprived its people of food, clothing, fuel, and medicines. Many Maltese emigrated to Britain, Australia, and the United States in the decades following the end of hostilities. Malta became independent from Britain in 1964. Under Prime Minister Dom Mintoff (1971-1984), the government focused on jobs and housing, and historical preservation was not a national priority.

Meanwhile, in Collegeville, the monks of Saint John's Abbey responded to the destruction of books and manuscripts during World War II by establishing what they initially called the Monastic Microfilm Library at Saint John's University. By 1973 its field directors had successfully microfilmed over 30,000 manuscripts in Austria. But the physical work of preservation was only the most visible part of the job. Director Julian Plante researched libraries and collected tips to locate manuscript collections in need of rescue before they were lost. He then secured the financing and obtained the necessary permissions so that the actual microfilming of the manuscripts could take place.

Malta's turbulent 20<sup>th</sup>-century history made it a good candidate for a preservation site. Its historical archives were still recovering from the extensive damage the island suffered during World War II. Its location in the Mediterranean, halfway between

Sicily and Libya, placed the island in a potential geopolitical cauldron. Julian Plante approached Joseph S. Micallef, the Honorary Consul of Malta in Minnesota, to obtain permissions and funding to work with the medieval and renaissance manuscript collections of the National Library of Malta. Plante's initial reports identified nine manuscripts in the National Library that pre-dated the year 1500, so he extended the definition of "renaissance" up to the year 1600.

The two men had funds in hand and a preliminary agreement with the government of Malta in 1971; however, when they traveled to Malta in 1972, they found a new government headed by Dom Mintoff. The new government officials seemed to deliberately misunderstand the nature and the scope of the project. Therefore, Micallef and Plante investigated alternate microfilm sites and received a warm welcome at the Cathedral Museum and Archives of Mdina. They signed an agreement with the Cathedral Chapter of Mdina in 1973. The Curator of the Cathedral Museum and Archives, (then) Father John Azzopardi, became the field director of the Malta project. He served in this capacity until 1989, energetically convincing other church archives and private collectors to have their holdings microfilmed by the Center.

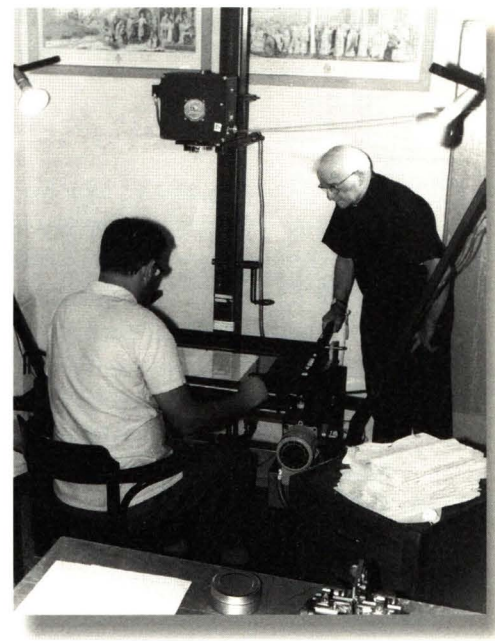
Then, in 1989, the political situation had changed sufficiently for the Malta Study Center to begin microfilming at the National Library. But instead of the pre-1600 manuscripts, the project would photograph the Archives

of the Knights of Malta, the Treasury Series A and B, and part of the Universita before it ended in 1999. By then, the Malta Study Center had microfilmed 22,114 archival registers, documents, and other items dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> through the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, encompassing the history of the Knights until 1798 and the history of Malta through the first years of the French occupation.

2013 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the microfilm project in Malta. The microfilms made it possible to organize

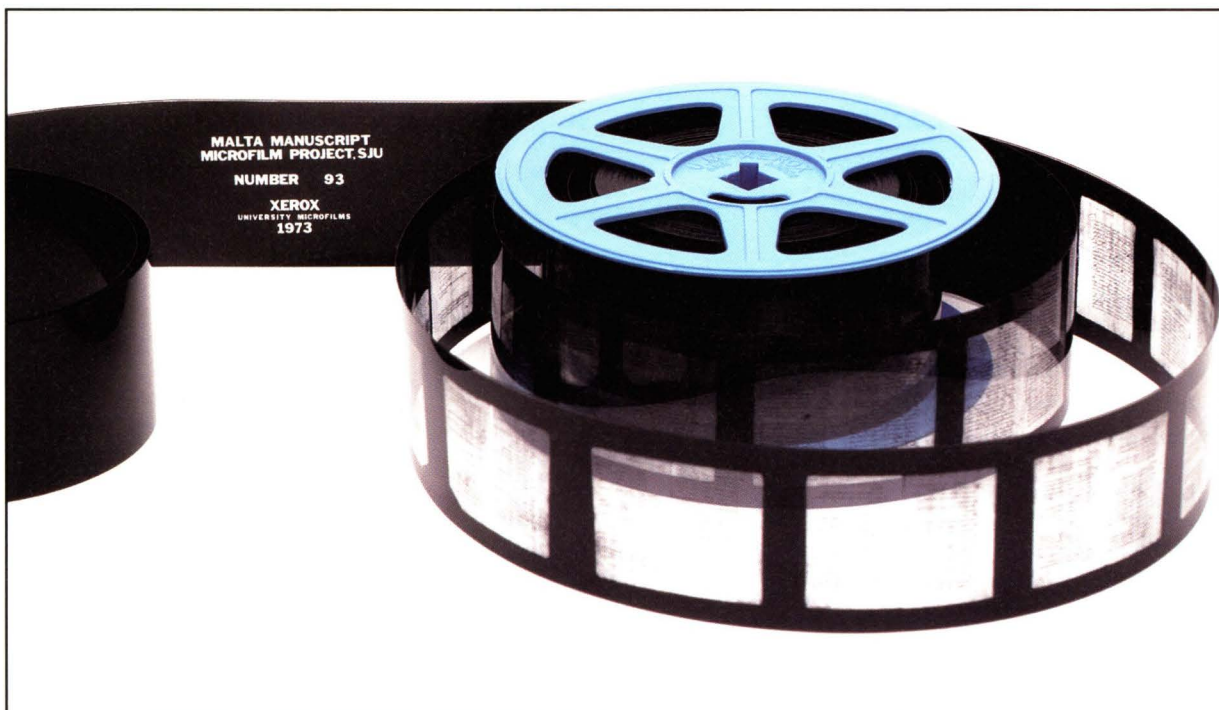
collections, classify their contents, and make them more accessible to users in Malta and throughout the world. Today, the Archdiocese of Malta has scanned the microfilms of its archives and has made them available free online to researchers. Malta and the Malta Study Center have both come a long way. But the story isn't over yet, and it will be continued in the next issue of *Melitensia*.

Next issue: "21<sup>st</sup>-Century Preservation of Malta's Archives"



Above: HMML's field director, Fr. Oliver Kapsner, OSB, trains a Maltese microfilmer.

Below: A reel of microfilm shot in 1973: Malta Series I, 93, CEM Acta originalia, vol. 91 (1606), docs 41-69.



## Outline of the Malta Study Center Preservation Projects

### Mdina Cathedral Museum

#### Microfilm Project

*Dates:* 1973–1989

*Numbers:* 8,229 books, manuscripts, and archival materials dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century from ecclesiastical institutions and private collections in Malta and Gozo.

*Highlights:* The Archives of the Inquisition, the parish archives, and the musical archives.

### The Archives of the Knights of Malta

*Dates:* 1989–1999

*Numbers:* 6,500 archival folders, documents, and registers dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century until 1798.

*Highlights:* The history of the Knights from their origins in Jerusalem, their tenure on the island of Rhodes between 1310 and 1522, and their rule over the island of Malta until 1798.

### The Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Rome, Magistral Palace Library

*Dates:* 2005–Today

*Numbers so far:* 429 manuscripts, documents, and archival items.

*Highlights:* Descriptions of the Order's European properties, the minutes of the meetings of the Sovereign Council after 1798, diplomatic correspondence, patents of nobility, and manuscripts.

### National Archives of Malta, The Magna Curia Castellania

*Dates:* 2007–Today

*Numbers so far:* 1,411 volumes of Acta, covering the cases that appeared before the tribunal period between 1543 and 1798.

*Highlights:* The largest secular tribunal the Knights held on Malta, with jurisdiction over civil and criminal cases.



Above: The newly-renovated statue of Queen Victoria wearing a gown of Maltese lace, outside the newly-renovated façade of the Bibliotheca. Today the National Library of Malta, the Bibliotheca was completed in 1796 and was the last major public building that the Knights constructed in Valletta.

### The Notarial Archives of Malta

*Dates:* 2010–Today

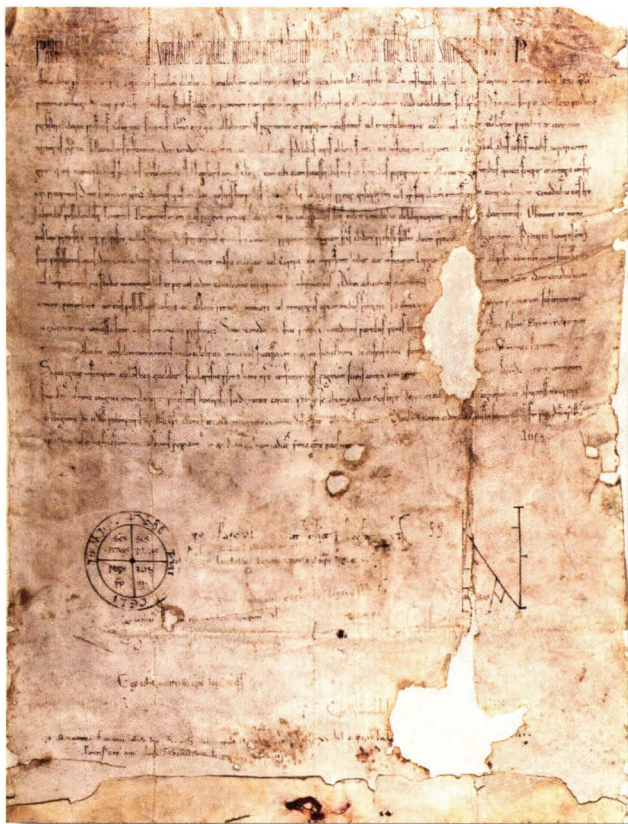
*Numbers so far:* 131 registers

*Highlights:* In 2011 the Center signed an agreement with the Notary to the Government and the Notarial Archives Council to digitize 1,335 of the oldest registers, dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Visit [www.hmml.org](http://www.hmml.org) for a full listing of the Center's holdings.

## Section 1, Original Documents

The original bull of Paschal II that recognized the Order of the Hospital in 1113 is part of Section 1 of the Archives of the Order of Malta in the National Library of Malta. This section, called “Original Documents,” contains some of the oldest and the most important documents in the Order’s archives. These include individual charters and papal bulls from the first two centuries of the Order’s existence in the Latin East, Charles V’s imperial bull conferring the island of Malta upon the knights, and original letters from European sovereigns to the Grand Masters of the Order dating until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Other items in Section 1 are copies of original documents, dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are even materials about the incorporation of Templar properties into the Order of the Hospital after the Templars were suppressed in 1312.



Above: Original papal bull of Paschal II, *Pie postulatio voluntatis*, sent to Gerard and the Hospital in Jerusalem. Dated February 15, 1113. Image courtesy of The National Library of Malta.

It is amazing that the oldest items in Section 1 survived the Order’s defeats and subsequent relocations. When Acre, the last Crusader city on the mainland, fell in 1291, the Hospitallers relocated to the island of Cyprus. There they remained until they finished the conquest of the island of Rhodes in 1310. The archives contain relatively few items from this period, although record-keeping resumed on Rhodes in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The Order lost Rhodes in 1522, and received Malta from the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, in 1530. They brought their archives from Rhodes to Malta, where they remained when Napoleon ejected the Order in 1798. The Order’s charters, bulls, and documents for the years up to 1311 are published in Joseph Delaville le Roulx, *Cartulaire général de l’Ordre des Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem* (1100-1310), 4 vols (Paris, 1894-1906). Delaville’s collection includes materials from the archives of the Order’s European priories in addition to the materials currently in Malta.

Below is an outline of Section 1. A full listing is available online at [www.hmml.org/centers/malta10/knights/sect1/sect1\\_index.html](http://www.hmml.org/centers/malta10/knights/sect1/sect1_index.html).

- 275 original charters on parchment recording donations of land in the Latin East to the Order, dating between 1107 and 1259.
- 485 original papal bulls on parchment issued to the Order of the Hospital between 1110 and 1765.
- 265 original magistral bulls on parchment, issued by the Masters of the Order, and other business of the Order between 1169 and 1555.
- 11 original 16<sup>th</sup>-century Royal Charters on parchment, from Henry VIII of England, Philip II of Spain and Mary of England, Ferdinand II, Holy Roman Emperor, and others.
- 28 miscellaneous items, including documents about the European Priors, foundations established by the Grand Masters, account books, and correspondence.

## Malta Study Center Plans Seminars to Mark SMOM's 900<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

February 15, 2013, is the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pascal II's bull *Pie postulatio voluntatis* that confirmed the establishment of a hospital near the Church of St. John the Baptist in Jerusalem and placed it under the protection of the papacy. This bull permitted the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem to become an international order dedicated to the service of the sick. The Malta Study Center of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library plans to commemorate this anniversary by sponsoring scholarly panels at the International Medieval Congress at Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo, Michigan) on the historical development of the Rule and Statutes of the Order. This will be combined with a day-long seminar at the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library in Collegetown, Minnesota, where the participants will discuss future possibilities for long-distance collaborative projects researching Hospitaller history. The papers from these gatherings will be published, along with other contributions connected to the theme.

The organizers are Dr. Theresa Vann (the Joseph S. Micallef Curator of the Malta Study Center), Dr. Helen Nicholson of Cardiff University, and Dr. Jochen Burgdorf of California State University, Fullerton.

The dates of the International Medieval Congress are May 9–12, 2013. The Collegetown Seminar will take place before the Congress, May 6–7, 2013.

### *Seminar:*

#### **The Nine-Hundredth Anniversary of the Order of the Hospital: Hospitaller Rules and Statutes**

### *Participants:*

- Jochen Burgdorf, California State University, Fullerton: "William of St. Stephen's 'Saterian' (1296): Reflections on a Hospitaller Legal Treatise."
- Jyri Hasecker, Seminar für Mittlere und Neuere Kirchengeschichte, WWU Münster (Germany): "From Housing the Pilgrim to Nursing the Sick: A Change in the Order's Notion of Hospitality in the Middle Ages (12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> c.)"
- Theresa Vann, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library: "Issues of Textual Authority: Additions, Emendations, and Glosses on the Statutes of the Order of the Hospital."
- Philip Handyside, Cardiff University: "Living up to an Ideal: The Hospitallers in *L'Estoire de Eracles*."
- Christie Majoros, Cardiff University: "The Function of Hospitaller Houses in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales."
- Helen Nicholson, Cardiff University: "Interpreting the Regulations: the Hospitallers' Interpretations of the Rule and Statutes in England and Wales."

## The Friends of the Malta Study Center

The Friends of the Malta Study Center met at Saint John's University September 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> for their annual meeting. The Friends is an advisory committee that reports to the HMML Board. It is chaired by the Center's Founder Emeritus, Joseph S. Micallef, Honorary Consul of Malta in Minnesota, who is the recipient of Malta's Medal of Honor of the Order of Merit and the Ellis Island Medal. The Friends' responsibilities include developing ideas for expanding, improving, and promoting the Center; advising the curator on program policy and implementation; serving as advocates for the Center and its mission; and planning for the future of the Center. The members, or as we prefer to say, the Friends, have a particularly close interest in preserving the archives and manuscripts that tell the history of Malta and its Knights. The Friends help the Center fulfill the vision enunciated during the successful endowment drive that received matching funds from the National Endowment of the Humanities.



The Friends will be closely involved in two major programs that the Center is planning for 2013: the HMML Millennium Club trip to Malta in June (see [www.hmml.org](http://www.hmml.org) for itinerary) and at least one event to commemorate the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the papal bull establishing the Order of the Hospital.

Above, from left to right: Robert Weyerhaeuser; Joseph Micallef, KM (Chair); Nicky Carpenter, DM; Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB; Robert Shafer, KM; Theresa Vann; Frà Elie de Comminges, KM; Lucy Jones; Steven Kennedy, KM. Absent: Fr. Eric Hollas, OSB; Dr. Phillip Farrugia Random, KM; Erin Lonergan.

## Curator's Activities

Dr. Theresa Vann presented a paper entitled "Incidents of Piracy at Hospitaller Rhodes," at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Mediterranean Studies Association Congress, hosted by Juraj Dobrila University in Pula, Croatia, on June 1, 2012. She was part of the panel "Piracy in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean World," organized by Kathryn Reyerson of the University of Minnesota. Emily Sohmer Tai, Queensborough Community College, was also on the panel.

Vann also presented a paper, "Toledo on the Eve of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212)," at the 47<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan, on May 11, 2012.

In September Vann and Wayne Torborg, HMML's Director of Digital Imaging, represented HMML at UNESCO's international conference "The Memory of the World in the Digital Age: Digitization and Preservation" in Vancouver, Canada. More than 500 attendees from 110 countries met to discuss the main issues affecting the preservation of digital documentary heritage, and to develop strategies to protect digital assets. Torborg and Vann presented HMML's transition to digital technology and implementation of low-cost digitization strategies as a model for resource-poor institutions seeking to preserve their cultural assets. Their paper will be included in the proceedings of the conference, which will be available at the UNESCO website at [www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/events/calendar-of-events/events-websites/the-memory-of-the-world-in-the-digital-age-digitization-and-preservation/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/events/calendar-of-events/events-websites/the-memory-of-the-world-in-the-digital-age-digitization-and-preservation/).

On November 14, 2012, Vann gave a talk entitled "History, Pseudo-History, and Myth: The Origins of the Order of the Hospital" as part of the HMML Public Lecture Series held throughout the year on the Saint John's campus. A recorded video of the talk can be found in the "DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU" at [digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/hmml\\_lectures/6/](http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/hmml_lectures/6/).

Keep up on the Malta Study Center's news and events as well as the curator's musings by "liking" the official Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/HMML.MSC](http://www.facebook.com/HMML.MSC) and by visiting the Melitensia blog at [melitensia.blogspot.com](http://melitensia.blogspot.com).



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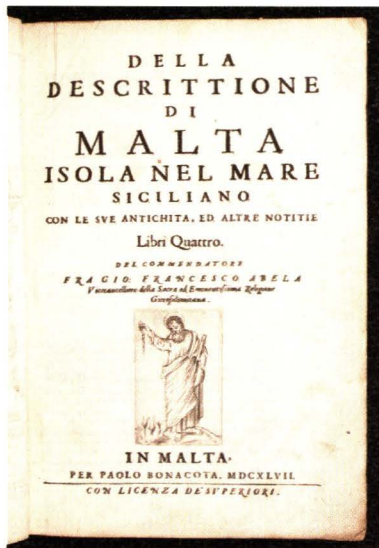


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Fall 2012/Winter 2013

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Left: Title page of Frà Giovanni Francesco Abela, *Della Descriptione di Malta* (Malta, 1647). One of the first books printed in Malta, it is also one of the first printed books to describe the history and the appearance of the island for a European readership.

### FRIENDS OF THE MALTA STUDY CENTER

*The Friends of the Malta Study Center is an advisory group that meets annually and establishes mission and vision, provides oversight in financial matters, and ensures that the organization has the financial resources it needs to do its work.*

**Nicky B. Carpenter, DM**  
 Wayzata, MN

**Frà Elie de Comminges, KM**  
 Maragertville, NY

**Dr. Philip Farugia Random, KM**  
 Valletta, Malta

**Fr. Eric Hollas, OSB**  
 Collegeville, MN

**Lucy R. Jones**  
 Wayzata, MN

**Erin Lonergan\***  
 Cold Spring, MN

**Steven Kennedy, KM\***  
 Medina, MN

**Joseph S. Micallef, KM**  
 Committee Chair  
 Saint Paul, MN

**Robert Shafer, KM**  
 New York, NY

**Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB\***  
 Collegeville, MN

**Theresa M. Vann\***  
 Sauk Rapids, MN

**Robert Weyerhaeuser**  
 Kingston, MA

\*Ex-officio members