

MELITENSIA

Fall 2016

A Newsletter of the Malta Study Center





THE MALTA STUDY CENTER *at the* HILL MUSEUM & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY

Dear Melitensians,

When one mentions the word “island,” a place of isolation and remoteness frequently comes to mind. One rarely thinks of islands as places of openness, exchange, and movement; islands are, in our imagination, geographic areas where interactions between peoples and cultures do not take place. Indeed, the word “insular” carries with it the meaning of ignorance, inwardness, or being uninterested in outside cultures, travel or international trade and commerce.

Anyone who has stepped on the islands of Malta and Gozo know that this understanding of islands is far from the truth. The Maltese islands and their peoples exhibit a level of open cultural exchange familiar to those who have traveled the Mediterranean, showing a degree of acculturation with their Mediterranean neighbors that has become, over time, something uniquely Maltese.

Over the last year, the Malta Study Center has experienced this unique aspect of Maltese culture. Our work with the Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti at the Casa Rocca Piccola in Valletta is uncovering Malta’s rich trading history in the Mediterranean, as the de Piro family sought opportunities for education in Italy and France, while trading with Spain, Portugal, the Levant and North Africa. Here in the United States, the Center has recently digitized the collection of the Maltese immigrant Carol Saliba, who amassed an important archive of Maltese manuscripts detailing the history of Malta and its international connections during the 18th and early 19th centuries. In both instances, we see the importance of Malta’s connection to the Mediterranean world and beyond.

It has been a successful year at the Center. We express our thanks to our founder, Mr. Joseph S. Micallef, KMOB, UOM, the Friends of the Malta Study Center, and the North American Associations of the Order of Malta for their support of the Center’s mission to preserve Maltese culture.

Sincerely,

Daniel K. Gullo
Joseph S. Micallef Curator of the Malta Study Center



MELITENSIA

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Above: Studio for the Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti Private Libraries and Archives Project in Valletta, Malta.

On the cover: “The Resurrection.” Choral Book of Bishop Martin Royas. Manuscript, 16th century. Cathedral Museum, Mdina, Malta. MS 5, fol. 1r.

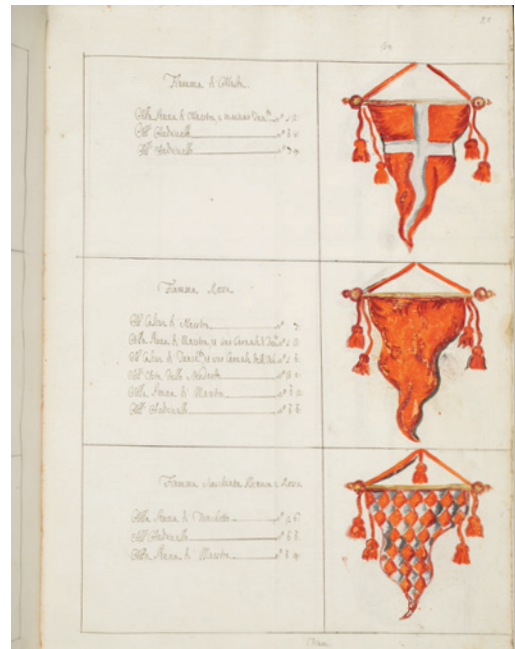
Where We're Working: The Catholic University of America, Rare Books and Special Collections

The Malta Study Center has completed the digitization of 90 manuscripts and rare Melitensia located at the Catholic University of America (CUA) Rare Books and Special Collections in Washington, D.C. Digitization of the collection began on September 29, 2016, led by Daniel Gullo, and Wayne Torborg, director of digital collections at HMML, with the help of Lenore Rouse, curator of rare books and special collections at CUA.

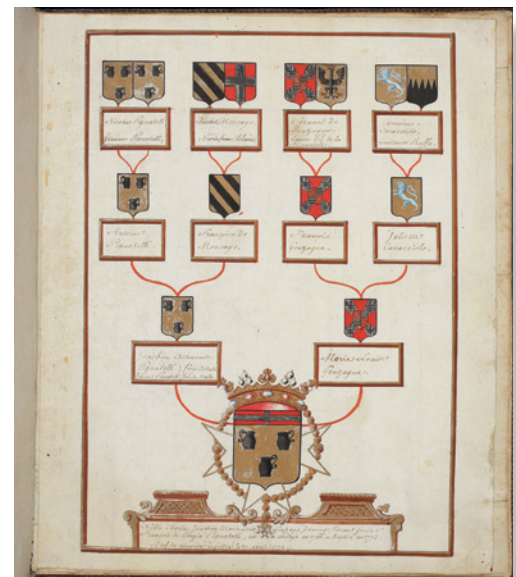
The Malta Collection at CUA consists of two major gifts devoted to the Order of Malta. The Foster Stearns gift, the older and larger of the two, was donated by Foster W. Stearns (1881-1956), a member of the United States House of Representatives, Privy Chamberlain of Sword and Cape to Pope Pius XI, and a Knight of Malta. Donated in 1955, the collection spans over 800 years of the Order's history, consisting of over 281 rare books and manuscripts. The collection is particularly strong in early printed editions, particularly with regard to the Great Siege of 1565, the Siege of Rhodes of 1522, and early modern histories of the Order of Malta, such as the 1581 general history of the Order written by Heinrich Pantaleon. The collection was originally cataloged by Fr. Oliver L. Kapsner, OSB, HMML's first executive director.

The second gift, the Carol Saliba collection, was donated by Carol Saliba's son, Dr. N. Alex Saliba, in 1999. Carol Saliba was a native of Malta and a Commander of the St. John Ambulance Brigade of Malta. An avid collector of Melitensia, his important collection of letters and documents details the history of the Order of Malta during the 18th and 19th centuries, including several important documents penned by Grand Master Tommasi. The collection details the Order's attempt to seize the island of Lampedusa, in addition to conversations with the King of Sweden to acquire the island of Gotland after the Order's expulsion from Malta by the French in 1798.

The entire collection is currently available in vHMML Reading Room, www.vhmmml.org, with additional cataloging to be completed in 2017 with the help of Ms. Valeria Vanesio, doctoral candidate of the Sapienza University of Rome.



“Flag signal book and naval regulations of the Order of Malta.” Manuscript, 18th century. Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America, Rare Books and Special Collections, Malta Folio CR 4725.N32 A2 1704, fol. 22r.



“Proof of nobility for Charles Joachim Marie Louis Gonzagua Domingo Vincens Ferrere François Borgia Pignatelli.” Manuscript, 1788. Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America, Rare Books and Special Collections, Malta CR 4729.P63, fol. 1r.

Revisiting the Cathedral Archives Digitization Project

In 2015 and 2016, the Malta Study Center and Cathedral Archives in Mdina agreed to digitize parts of the rich archival materials that were not microfilmed during the initial Malta preservation projects begun in the 1970s. Although the project focused initially on overlooked volumes of the Archives of the Inquisition of Malta, the primary goal remained digitizing the bulls and briefs found in the collection. This collection of parchment and paper broadsides date from the 15th to the 20th century, and include documents from the period of Aragonese rule over Malta (1282-1530), the period of the Knights of Malta (1530-1798), the French occupation and British colonial rule (1798-1800 and 1800-1964 respectively). Bulls and briefs issued by the Papacy and bishops of Malta account for the majority of the documents within the collection. However, the collection is also rich in records from the Grand Masters of the Order of Malta, the Inquisitors of Malta, and other notable cardinals and bishops from Europe and the Mediterranean.

Three primary challenges confronted the digitization project. The collection remained largely uncatalogued, even lacking a complete inventory. With the help of



Brief of Archbishop Ottaviano Carafa, 1664. Mdina, Cathedral Archives. Parchment 134.

Dun Gwann Azzopardi and Mario Gauci, archivist and assistant archivist, and Sara Ramírez Calatayud, metadata cataloguer for the Malta Study Center, nearly 500 documents were inventoried and given field metadata, including measuring the parchment and paper, identifying the date and language, and when possible the authority behind the document and the location of issue. Digitization of certain parchments posed a singular problem due to size, since several of the papal bulls measure as much as 75 cm in width. A special camera was purchased to capture the fine writing on the large surface, while a special table and lighting system were installed to properly hold the documents during digitization. In order to help stabilize the collection, the Center also purchased materials to better store the items after digitization. Ms. Ramírez used acid-free paper to separate the documents, and limit the transfer of iron gall ink corrosion from one document to the other.

The project was made possible by a grant from the Rahr Foundation.



Bull of Pope Pius XI, 1925. Mdina, Cathedral Archives. Parchment 183.

1565 Great Siege Exhibition Travels to the James Ford Bell Library, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

The James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities hosted the Malta Study Center's traveling exhibition, *Knights, Memory, and the Siege of 1565: An Exhibition on the 450th Anniversary of the Great Siege of Malta* from June 1, 2016 through August 19, 2016. The exhibition featured more than 30 original rare books, maps and manuscripts narrating the history of the conflict between the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem and the Ottoman Turks from the 1480 Siege of Rhodes, through the Great Siege of Malta in 1565.

Included in the exhibition are letters from the Grand Masters of the Order of Malta, the earliest printed histories of the Great Siege of 1565, and two fifteenth-century printed histories of the 1480 Siege of Rhodes. Items on display come from the James Ford Bell Library

and the Special Collections and Rare Books collection at the University of Minnesota and the Malta Study Center Collection.

Joseph S. Micallef, KMOB, UOM, Honorary-Consul General of St. Paul/Minneapolis and founder of the Malta Study Center, hosted an elegant evening reception for members of the Order of Malta and members of the European diplomatic community. The well-attended reception included introductory remarks by Dr. William Zammit, chair of the Department of Library and Information Sciences at the University of Malta. Dr. Zammit discussed the important role of the printing press in disseminating information about the Siege and establishing the Order's reputation as defenders of Christendom.



Above: Photograph of rare books on display at the James Ford Bell Library during the Great Siege exhibition.



Above: Dr. William Zammit opening the Great Siege exhibition at the James Ford Bell Library.

Below, left to right: Dr. Daniel K. Gullo, Mr. Joseph S. Micallef, KMOB, UOM, and Dr. William Zammit.

Meet Cláudia Garradas, MSC's Site Director in Malta

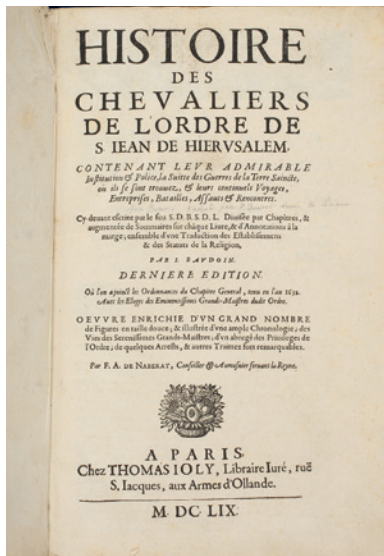
Since 2016, Ms. Cláudia Garradas has served as the site director for the Malta Study Center at the Casa Rocca Piccola in Valletta, guiding the digitization project of the Archivum de Piro in collaboration with the Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti. Ms. Garradas was born in Mozambique, before moving to Portugal. She completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in art history (1998), a two-year extended specialization in art history (2000) and her Master's degree in museum studies in (2007), all at the University of Porto. She has held the position of assistant curator and head curator at the Fine Art Museum of the University of Porto before moving to Malta in 2013.

Ms. Garradas was hired to help organize the archival and manuscript collections at the Casa Rocca Piccola, and to oversee the collection of field metadata to be used in the HMML Reading Room, HMML's online digital catalog. "The opportunity to work with these collections gave me firsthand knowledge about the importance of preserving archives, their value for the knowledge and cultural history," noted Ms. Garradas. "Documents are more than paper or writings; for me they always have some kind of intrinsic artistic touch and in this particular archive I found documents with beautiful watermarks, different types of seals and handwritings." Ms. Garradas will continue working in Malta over the next year to help coordinate and manage future digitization work in Malta.



Ms. Cláudia Garradas.
Photography by Stephen Busuttill.

New Rare Book and Manuscript Acquisitions



Giacomo Bosio, *Histoire des chevaliers de l'Ordre de S. Jean de Hierusalem*. Paris: Thomas Ioly, 1659.

Bosio, Giacomo. *Histoire des chevaliers de l'Ordre de S. Jean de Hierusalem contenant leur admirable institution & police*. Paris: Thomas Joly, 1653.

Courbou, Abbé de. *Exposition des droits de l'Ordre de S. Jean de Jerusalem relativement aux impositions et subsides*. 1787?

Fratra, Giovanni. *La Malteide poema*. Venetia: appresso Marc'Antonio Zaltieri, 1596.

*Suite de la relation de M. le Bailli de *** Gand Croix de l'Ordre de Malte; avec M. le Chevalier de ****. 1787?

Wallhausen, Jean-Jacques de. *Art de chevalerie*. Frankfurt: Paul Jacques, 1616.

Privilèges des chevaliers de l'Ordre de St Jean de Jérusalem dit de Malte, accordés par les souverains des P-B & confirmés par [...] Charles VI.

Requête présentée à sa majesté impériale et catholique en son Conseil privé; concernant l'ordre de Malte [...]. Sur laquelle est porté le décret de [...] Marie Élisabeth [...] du 4 May 1729.

News and Events from the Center

***The Bembo* of Venice: Merchants, Diplomats, and a Knight of Malta Exhibition at the James Ford Bell Library**

The University of Minnesota James Ford Bell Library featured materials from the Malta Study Center and Saint John's Rare Book collections at HMML in the exhibition, *The Bembo* of Venice: Merchants, Diplomats, and a Knight of Malta. The exhibit featured the Bembo family, a noble merchant family that produced statesmen, diplomats, and princes of the Catholic Church. Correspondence discussing 15th-century trade in both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, books written by Pietro Bembo, a scholar, cardinal, and Knight of Malta, and a travel narrative by Ambrosio Bembo, a 17th-century member of the family, were on display. The exhibition took place from September 12, 2016 through January 13, 2017. As part of the exhibition, the Bell Library hosted a reception and guest lecture on October 27 where Dr. Daniel Gullo presented *A Knight of the Italian Renaissance: Pietro Bembo and the Order of Malta*, discussing the relationship between Pietro Bembo and the Order of Malta.

Right: Pietro Bembo, Le prose de m. Pietro Bembo, nelle quali si ragiona della volgar lingua, scritte al cardinal de Medici (1556). Malta Study Center Collection.



Curator Presents at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

On October 14, 2016, Dr. Gullo was invited to speak as part of the Conversations in Culture Lecture Series in Washington, D.C. His lecture, "Saving Libraries during a Time of War: The Hill Museum and Manuscript Library's Race to Preserve Manuscripts Threatened by War and Cultural Trafficking," featured stories and images describing HMML's manuscript preservation work in Malta and around the world. The lecture was hosted by the Library of Congress European Division, in partnership with the Embassy of the Republic of Malta, Embassy of Italy, Italian Cultural Institute and European Union National Institutes for Culture. The Conversations in Cultures Lecture Series is sponsored by the delegation of the European Union to the United States, with the goal of expanding intercultural knowledge and cooperation.

The Friends of the Malta Study Center Annual Meeting

The Friends of the Malta Study Center held their annual meeting at Saint John's University on September 25 and 26, 2016. The chair of the Friends of the Malta Study Center, Joseph S. Micallef, KMOB, UOM, welcomed guests to discuss the success of the Center's initiatives over the last year. Agenda items included deliberations about current preservation activities in Malta, as well as plans for expanding the Center's activities to manuscript repositories in Malta previously overlooked during microfilming in the 1970s and 1980s. The meeting included an exhibition of recent acquisitions to the Malta Study Center's rare book and manuscript collection at HMML. Members agreed that further efforts to increase the local manuscript and rare book collection to further research on the digitization projects and exhibitions at HMML and around the country.



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Friends of The Malta Study Center

The Friends of the Malta Study Center is an advisory group that meets annually to support the mission and vision of the MSC. The Friends provide oversight in financial matters and ensure that the organization has the resources it needs to fulfill its cultural preservation mission.

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