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.

The Grand Priors of Aquitaine of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, 1317-1796

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[Excerpts from an article published on the Malta Study Center website. The complete text, with images, is at http://www.hmni.org/centers/malta/publications/GPQaquitaine2.htm]

Some years ago, I wondered if there were reliable lists of the names and dates of the Grand Priors of the various Langues of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Some of these Grand Priors appear to be historically well documented in an admirable fashion; but other national Grand Priors were scarcely ever listed and their dates and succession seem to be no closer to being clarified in any of the sources I then consulted. For example, the Conde de Campo Bello (1931) gives a list of the Priors of Crato (Portugal) which, unfortunately, provides neither dates nor other data about their careers, families or heraldry. Still, Campo Bello is to be commended for his efforts to preserve the names and succession of these Grand Priors. Since his time, apart from the good efforts of Dailliez (1977), there have been few published efforts to clarify the situation for Portugal.

Lists of names and dates by themselves, of course, are pretty dry things, giving none of the color or personality of human lives nor the challenges faced by the individuals named or by the Order to which they belonged. I wanted to know which families these Grand Priors came from, the kind of career they had within the Order and, possibly, within their realms, their armorial ensigns and the ranks and honors within the Order they attained. Recently, the Grand Priories of Rome and the National Association of Spain of the SMOM have published lists of the names and dates of various Grand Priors. Lists of the Grand Priors of Austria-Bohemia and Germany are also available and appear fairly reliable.

As an enthusiastic heraldist, one of my interests was to identify the many shields carved on the Dodecanese islands and in various Priories elsewhere, which seem likely to pertain to Grand Priors or other dignitaries of the Order. Some of these arms have been identified, but many remain obscure or unidentified. Many surviving commanderies have heraldic remains, which testify to those Priors or Commanders who improved buildings or had new structures erected. So, a list of the Grand Priors and knowledge of their arms might yet prove useful for identifying architectural remains or other objets d'art. It would also illuminate the social relationships among families within the Order in different periods as well as the social strata of the knights, who often made brilliant careers within the Order or their realms, though coming from
relatively modest backgrounds. I set out to discover, where possible, the names, dates, arms and various details of the careers of the Priors of the Order, as well as seal and heraldic information, grounded in its records and critical scholarly sources. This was because the literature on the Order is of uneven quality. Some works reached the highest historical standards, but others were much more popular and scarcely reached a respectable standard of scholarship.

For some reason, I was drawn especially to the Grand Priors of France, perhaps because France played such a significant role within the long history of the Order. France had three Grand Priors: France (including Champagne and Aquitaine), Auvergne and Saint Gilles (including Toulouse). Some of these Grand Priors had scholarly works written about them. But many Grand Priors, such as that of Auvergne, appeared regrettably not to have had much serious attention paid to the succession of its Grand Priors, nor to their arms, dates or careers within the Order. Others, such as the Grand Priory of France, had several conflicting lists: those found in R. Borricand (1968), D. Jacquemin’s Gallia Christiana (1744) and Manner (1987); while yet others had, as far as my researches were then able to go, no lists whatsoever (e.g. Aquitaine and Champagne). The Grand Priory of St. Gilles and the Priory of Toulouse, which covered most of meridional France and formed some of the earliest properties granted to the Order in Christendom, were relatively well-ordered and documented (see J. Raybaud, Histoire des Grand Prieurs et du Prieuré de St. Gilles, Tomes I and II, 1904 and M.A. du Bourg, Histoire du Grand Prieuré de Toulouse, 1883) And so my attention turned to the Grand Priory of France (with Aquitaine and Champagne) first. Auvergne, despite the work of L. Niepe (Le Grand Prieuré d’Auvergne, 1883), requires greater study and research to give a less confusing list, though the main outlines seemed more or less clear.

I have now amassed, with able help from Comte Girard Michel de Pierredon and others, what I believe are relatively reliable lists for these three Priors from their foundations to their collapse in the eighteenth century. Here I present for consideration just the list for the Priory of Aquitaine. I am under no illusions as to its satisfactoriness. It cannot yet be called definitive, though I believe it is accurate based on several checks and balances, of which more below.

Sometimes, in the list below, there are only approximate dates of tenure, because I did not have access to the records of the Order after 1600. Sometimes the arms blazoned are probable rather than certain or the tinctures are unknown because all that remains is a seal and those armorial sources available to me do not record the tinctures (though they may exist in more specialized sources). Where possible, I have consulted various medieval French armorials to find the most probable families involved. I have cited them as probable when I have done so. There are drawings of the arms following the enumeration of the Grand Priors found in the text. I have standardized the shield shapes into the so-called French style of shield for convenience (usual from the fifteenth century) and tried to follow French heraldic style in the depictions of charges and shields.

A mere name of a prior and his dates does not reveal much of his personality, or career within the history of the Order, so where possible, I have tried to provide this information and his genealogical connection to gentry, titled or bourgeois families. This gives us some idea of the prior’s connections within the Order and within his national and regional milieux. Eventually, it may permit a more complete prosopological analysis of their roles within the Order and connections with other French notables in, for example, the various Orders of Chivalry.

It would be most unfair to publish the list as though it were the product of my efforts. In the world of scholarship, cooperation with recognized scholars is essential. I have been greatly assisted by Prof. Anthony Luttrell’s astute comments and by the most helpful researches of Dr. Jürgen Sarnowsky, with both of whom I have had some correspondence, though they ought not to be held responsible for any of the possible errors of interpretation I may have made. Doubtless the most helpful, indeed the most prolonged cooperation, has been with Comte Géraud Michel de Pierredon, who took the time and trouble to correspond with me and, where necessary, to discuss the names, families and dates of various Grand Priors. I thank him here for all his seasoned assistance. Any mistakes that remain are not the responsibility of these fine scholars but are my own.

Late in my researches, I came across a list of the Grand Priors of Aquitaine in H. Beauchet-Filleau and Charles de Chergé, Dictionnaire Historique et Généalogique des Familles du Poitou (2nd ed. H. Beauchet-Filleau et Paul Beauchet-Filleau) Tome I (1891), Tome II (1895), Tome III (1905) (Poitiers, Société Française d’Imprimerie et de Librairie), II, pp. 780–791. Not surprisingly, it differs in minor ways from that given here. However, it was a confirmation of the majority of the Grand Priors
and hence a welcome and independent check on the accuracy of my
researches.

The Priory (or Grand Priory as it is sometimes called) of Aquitaine was
founded in 1317, under Pope John
XXII. This re-organization of the
Grand Priory of France permitted a better extension of both the hospital
and crusading work of the Order in
Outremer and France. It was likely
undertaken in response to the dra-
matic fate of the Templars and the
passing of Templar properties to the
Hospital, though this acquisition
actually took years to accomplish. It
is therefore probable that the first
Grand Prior had few of the ameni-
ties which later became associated
with the Grand Priory.

Abbreviations:
Capt=Captain
Cmd=Commander
Com Tres=Common Treasury
d=daughter
dtd=dated
GP=Grand Prior
GM=Grand Master
Hosp=Hospitaller
LGM=Lieutenant Grand Master
LGp=Lieutenant Grand Prior
L’Tres=Lieutenant Treasurer
L’Hosp=Lieutenant Hospitaller
Marshall
Proc=Procurator
r=received
s=son
Sgr=Seigneur
Tres=Treasurer

Prior:

1. Pierre de Mail, GP 1317.
2. Guillaume de Mail, GP 1330-40:
   His seal has a shield with a cross
   recerclée, dated 1344.
3. Ferrer de Fougerolles, Mars 1330-
   1335, GP Champagne 1335-1337, GP
   Aquitaine 1337-1340, then GP
   Champagne again 1340. It is possi-
   ble that he was from the
   Fouquesolles family of the Boulogne
   area and bore: Argent, three cinque-
   foils Gules.
4. Jean de Nanteuil, GP 1349-59,
   LGP France, he also appears to have
   been "amiral de la Mer (after 1350),
   Conseiller du Roi, Capt. de la
   Rochelle, de Xaintonge", d.1356
   whereupon Charles V of France
   sent to Jean Duson, Lieutenant of
   the Priory of France in 1358, 64
   Marcus d’argent and 1,000 Écus for
   GP Guillaume de Mail, a fragment
   of a seal with shield charged with
   two bars wavy, upheld by a Savage
   man, within a Gothic rose design.
5. Robert de Saint Ricquin (or Saint
   Ricquier), Cmd de Beauvais-sur-
   Martin, GP 1366-7, Cmd de Ballan
   1375: Not much evidence about this
   GP.
6. Renault de Nanteuil, GP 1368-
   86: His seal shows a shield with
   barry wavy within a bordure, penché, with
   the helmet crested with a represen-
   tation of St. Michael the Archangel,
   dtd. 1351.
7. Girard de Fougerolles, Cmd de
   Chalon 1374, de Beaune 1385, GP
   1386-9, Hosp. 8.viii.1389-
   1391. (see no. 3 above).
8. Philibert de Naillac, from a family
   of Berry, Général des Galères
   1394, GP 1390-1396, he fought with
   other French nobles against Sultan
   Bajazet at Nicopolis in 1396, where
   those supporting Sigismond of
   Luxembourg, king of Hungary, were
   utterly routed, but unlike them he
   escaped capture, GM 6.v.1396-
   vi.1421; he purchased the Morea
   from its despot, Thomas Paleologos,
   but lost Smyrna to Tamerlane in
   1401: Azure, two lions passant in
   pale Or.
9. Girard de Fougerolles, Cmd de la
   Romagne 1390, GP again 1396-
   1408. (see 3 above)
10. Aymé d'Oiselay
   (d'Oiselet,d'Oyselas), Cmd. de la
   Romagne, GP 4.vii.1408-1421: Gules,
   a bend vairée Or.
11. Jean de Vivonne, possibly the
   2nd son of Guillaume, Sgr. de la
   Tour-Chabot and his wife,
   Catherine de Sainte-Flaive, GP
   7.v.1421-3 ii.1429: Ermine, a chief
   Gules.
12. Philibert de Laigue, Cmd de
   Blison 1411, GP 8.vii.1433-7 vi.1452.
   The family of Laigue (Berry) bore:
   Chequy Argent and Gules.
13. François du Bois, GP 7.vi.1452-
   1458, from the du Bois de
   Saint-Mandé of Poitou. Or, three
   roundels Sable.
14. Bertrand de Cluis (or de Cluix),
   of a family of Berry, GP 1464-
   1466; then GP of France 1467
   (q.v.): Argent, a lion rampant Azure,
   armed and langued Gules. Possibly
   he was related to Jean de Cluis,
   bishop of Tulle ca. 1426-1444.
15. Jean de Francières, of an old
   family of Oise, Ile-de-France, he
   served in the Convent at Rhodes
   before becoming Cmd of Choisy-le-
   Temple, Bailli of Morea 9.vi.1464-
   25.v.i.1470; GP 17.vii.1469-
   24.xi.1479, d. 1488. He composed
   toward the end of his life a treatise
   on falconry based on Italian and
   Syrian sources at the request of
   Jacques Du Fou, Grand Veneur of
   France. His arms are: Argent, a bend
   Sable.
16. Charles de Norroy (Noray or
   Nouroy), Commissarius sanitatis at
   Rhodes 15.xi.1473, Bailli of Morea
   12.i.1476-23.xii.1479, Tres
   16.vii.1465-30.xi.1466 and again
   23.i.1476-12.i.1479, Hosp.
   23.xii.1479-3.xii.1483, GP 3.xii.1483-
   22.x.1499: From a family of Berry
   which bore: Argent, issuant from a
   fess Gules, a demi-lion issuant rham-
21. Jean de Nuchêze, r 1523, 4th s of Guillaume IV de Nuchêze, Sgr de Baudimont, de Francs, de Brain, Chincé et de Battresse (who served in the armies of Charles VII and Louis XI of France, d. ca. 1505) and Catherine, d of Louis des Francs et Baudimont and his wife Bartholomée de Tove. Cmde de Balan and Auditor of France 17iii.1548. Tres Gen 26.i.1549, Bailli of Morea 10.vi.1557, resigns Tres, Boncourt and Bailli of Morea to become GP 2.xii.1559—d. 1562: Gules, nine spur rows of five rays Argent, 3, 3 and 3. Supporters: Two lions. Crest: A lion passant guardant proper.


25. Robert de Chazé, r 1555, of a family of Brittany, originally of Anjou, Cmd de Nantes and de La Lande de Verché, GP ca. 1594: Gules, a lion rampant Or; but P. Potier de Courcy blazons this family's arms as: Gules, six eaglets Argent 3, 2 and 1, under the name Chassé as does Vertot. The real problem is that GP de la Rama was still actively litigating in 9.ii.1593 and the next GP mentioned in the Catalogue is Georges Regnier de Guerchy, elected only six months later. De Chazé is not mentioned as elected in the Catalogue between these dates, so it seems unlikely that he ever was Grand Prior.


27. Bertrand Pelloquin de la Plesse, Cmde de Montgauger 15—. Hosp 6.ii.1587, GP France 10.x.1591, but exchanges priorie of France with Georges Regnier de Guerchy, GP Aquitaine 1.xii.1599: Gules, a tower Argent, masoned Sable, port open of the field, a chief of Religion.

29. Simon Cheminée de Boisbenest, of a Breton family of Nantes, r 1570, L’Tres and Infirmany 23.vi.1595, Hosp 12.i.1601, Bailly de Morea 16.iii.1601, GP ca. 1613-1616: Argent, a lion passant guardant Azure, crowned Or; on a chief Gules, three lions’ faces in profile Argent, crowned and langued Or.
30. Jean-Jacques Gaillarbois de Marconville, diocese of Rouen, Normandy, r 15—, Cmd de Boncourt 1554, L’Hosp and Castellan of Malta 27.xii.1574, Hosp 20.v.1577, Tres Gen 30.iv.1576, Cmd de Sommereux 1608, GP ca. 1619-1640: Argent, six annulets 3, 2 and 1 Sable. Jean Baptiste Rietsp and Gourdon de Genouillac give “tourteaux de sable”, i.e. pellets. G. Demay describes seals of members of this family whose arms did bear annulets and not “tourteaux”. J. Roman also gives annulets. H. Beauchet-Filleau also confirms the annulets.
32. Jacques Rouxel de Médavy, of an illustrious family of Normandy, r 1595, Cmd de Colours 1639, Bailly de Morea 1627, GP ca. 1644-1647, perhaps Jacques III, comte de Grancey and de Médavy, who first entered the Religion, but left it to embrace the career of arms, becoming Maréchal de France and Gov of Thionville in 1651 and a Chevalier des Ordres du Roi 1661 and d. 20.xi.1680: Argent, three roosters Gules, membered, beaked and crested Or.
33. Pierre Fouquerand de la Noue, family of Bas-Poitou. He was 3rd s of Nicholas Fouquerand, Ecuyer and Sgr de la Noue and Marie Thomasset, d of Jean Thomasset, Sgr de la Treuillière and his wife Louise Prévost. r 1596, Cmd de Beauvais, GP ca. 1642-1663: Argent, three porc-épics, 2 and 1 Sable.
34. Gilbert de Vieilbourg, 3rd s of Jean de Vieilbourg and Jeanne de Fontenay. His nephew, René de Vieilbourg, had the lands of Myennes erected into a Marquisate in 1661. r 1607, Cmd de Mont de Soissons 1650, Cmd de Sommereux 1675, GP 1663-1675; Capt de Galère “Santa Maria” 28.iv.1617; as GP he had the seat of the Priory moved from Saint Georges les Baillargeaux to Poitiers ca.1668: Azure, a fess Argent charged on the dexter with a “T” (or a Tau cross) and on the sinister with a mullet both.
35. Gabriel de Dauvet des Maretz, 3rd s of Gaspard Dauvet, Chevalier, Comte and Sgr des Maretz, de Bernueil, Fraucourt, Gouverneur of Beauvais, Cons D’Etat, Ambassador to England 1614, and his wife Elisabeth, d of Nicolas Brulant, Sgr and Chevalier de Sillery, Chancelier of France; r 14.v.1609, Capt de Galère “San Pietro” 20.xii.1655, Cmd d’Albarterre 1660, Cmd de Saint-Étienne de Renneville 1680, GP ca. 1676-1691: Bendy of six Gules and Argent, the second bend charged with a lion rampant Sable.
36. Étienne Texier d’Hautefeuille, le “bailli d’Hautefeuille”, Capitaine de la Compagnie Écossaise dans le Gendarmerie, r 1632 or 1636, GC, Bailly 1669, Ambassador of the Order to France 1671, Cmd de Villedieu La Montagne et des Roches 1676, Cmd de la Croix en Brie 1684, GP 23.xi.1691-3.v.1703, Governor and Capt of the Town and Castle of the Abbey of Mont St.-Michel, Normandy (i.e. Abbé commendataire): Gules, a greyhound courant Argent, collared Or, with a crescent of the last in chief and a chief of Religion.
37. Gabriel du Chastellet, 3rd s of Laurent du Chastellet, Chevalier, Sgr de Fresnières, Levigni and le Taullette, Gentilhomme ordinaire du Chambre du Roi Louis XIII and his wife Catherine Fauyer, d of Jacques Fauyer, Conseiller du Roi, Baron de Merry, Sgr de Mondevigne and his wife Marie Charlet (of a family of Artois); r 1643, Cmd de La Braqe 1683, Cmd de Saint-Étienne de Renneville 1700, GP ca. 1703-708: Gules, a fess Argent, between three castles with conical towers all Or, crenellated and masoned Sable. His seal describes him as Cmd de La Braqe, dtr 4.vii.1685. The shield has a coronet and is surrounded by a ribbon and cross of the Order, with the Grand Cross of the Order behind the shield.
38. Gabriel Thibault de la Carte, from a family of Anjou, r in GP Aquitaine 20.iv.1649, probably a relative of François Thibault, Sgr de la Carte et de la Chaouinière, near Niort, Poitou; Cmd des Épeaux et Loudon 1709-1721, GP ca. 1708-1723: Azure, a tower crenellated Argent, masoned Sable.
39. Antoine Théodore Godet de Soudé, of a family from the Diocese of Chalons in Champagne, r 1662, Cmd of Metz, Capt. de Galère “San Paulo” 7.xii.1685, GP 1723-1729: Azure, a chevron Argent between three inverted pine cones, 2 and 1, Or.
41. Armand Foucault de Saint Germain de Beaupré, b. 6.ix.1680, 2nd s of Louis Foucault, Sgr et Marquis de Saint Germain de Beaupré, Comte de Dun-le
Palleteau, Gov de la Marche 1674. Mestre de Camp de Regt. de Cavalerie and his wife Hélène Ferrand, d and heiress of Pierre de Ferrand, Sgr de Janory, Cons de Paris and his wife Hélène Gillot; Cmd de Fiefes 1740, d’Abbéville 1746, de Beauvoir 1747, GP ca. 1754-d.14.x.1767; Azure, semé de fleurs de lys sans nombre d’Or.

42. Paul de Vion de Gaillon, 2nd s of Jean de Vion, Chevalier, Sgr de Gaillon and d’Huanville, and his wife, Marie-Françoise du Mesnil-Jourdain, d of François Chevalier, Sgr de Bercagny and his wife Marie de Cavoisin; b. 11.vi.1687, r 1701, Cmd de Villedieu-Les-Baillleul 1747, de Colours 1754, de Fiefes 1764, GP 1767-1770, d. 24.v.1770: Gules, three eagles displayed Argent, beaked and armed Or.

43. Jean-Charles Guy de la Rué Bois Roger Rupierre, r 1706, Cmd de Saint-Étienne de Renneville 1767, GP 1770: Argent, three leaves of Rhue, 2 and 1, Vert, (possibly quartering de Rupierre: Paly of eight Or and Azure), r 25.iv.1706.


45. Louis Joseph des Écossais de Chantilly, 2nd s of Michel-Séraphin des Écossais, Sgr de Chantilly et d’Armilly, l’Ile Oger, Sarigny, etc., Capt des Vaissaux du Roi (d. 3.v.1736) and his wife, Louise-Elisabeth de Laval-Montmorency, d of Gabriel de Laval-Montmorency, comte de Laval and Renée-Barbe de la Forterie. Called “le Bailli des Écossais”, he had been a Brigadier of the Infantry in 1758 and Maréchal de Camp in 1761, and later a LG, GP 1787-1792, d. 1796: Argent, three cinquefoils, 2 and 1, Gules, buttoned Argent. Count’s coronet and two lions as supporters.

NEW OF THE CENTER

New Look for Malta Study Center website

Visitors to the Malta Study Center will find it has a new look, one that combines the format of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library website with design elements from Melitensia. The new website has direct links in its banner for the user to order reproductions and search the interactive online catalogue, plus a side menu to navigate within the Malta Study Center pages.

The new design improves access to Vivarium, HMML’s portal to its digital collections. In the past year the Malta Study Center has begun using Vivarium to provide samples of manuscripts for researchers and digitized rare books from its own collection.

Dvds from the Priory of Rome

The first digitized manuscripts from the Magistral Palace Library of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta have arrived in Collegeville. Sample images of the first and last seven folios of each manuscript are available in Vivarium (http://www.hmml.org/vivarium/). Type ‘SMOM’ into the keyword search field for all the images; type the shelfmark from below for single manuscripts. The same images, with catalogue information, are accessible through the online catalogue at http://www.hmml.org/scholars/catalogue_search.asp.

Titles of new manuscripts from the Priory of Rome

• MS 144, Libro de segnali de vascelli di Malta (Book of signals for the Order’s vessels). French; Italian. 30 ff. 18th century.
• Cabreo 36, Cabreo della venerabile commenda di Ponte Corvo, Fondi e Gaudea fatto rinovare dall’illustissimo Signore Comandatore F. D. Fabrizio Franzoni Patrizio Napolitano (Land survey of the commandary of San Giovanni a Gaudo di Ponte Corvo, Fondi e Gaeta). Compiled by the notary Nicolas Camposelli della Rocca. Latin. 636 ff. 18th century (1739).
• Cassetta 1, Notizia della Sacra Infermeria e della carica deli commissari delle povere inferme (Regulation of the Casetta delle incurabili). Italian. 52 ff. 18th century.
• Cassetta 2, (History of the Casetta delle incurabili). Latin. Italian. 48 ff. 18th century (?).
• Cassetta 1743, (Historical notes of the Casetta delle incurabili). Italian. 4 ff. 18th century (?).

Printed works: (Entire volume available)

images of the first and last folios are available on line through the manu-
script catalogue (go to http://www.hmml.org/scholars/cata-
logue/catalogue_search.asp, go to the “Series” field in the search form, 
and select “AP [Archivia Parocialia] Naxxar” from the drop-down 
menu). These images are for identi-
fication purposes only; they are not 
suitable for reproduction. Copies 
require the consent of the Parish 
Archives of Naxxar.

Naxxar, one of the oldest parishes 
on the island of Malta, was in exis-
tence as early as 1400. HMML 
microfilmed 21 registers, which date back to 1546. Recently the parish 
archives were moved to new rooms 
with improved facilities for rese-cearchers.

THE MALTA STUDY CENTER 
contains over 13,000 micro-
films of archival material 
from the island of Malta. 
Every issue of Melitensia 
will briefly highlight one 
collection from the 
archives.

SECTION II – THE ARCHIVES 
OF THE HOSPITAL

The earliest rule of the Order of the 
Hospital, attributed to Master 
Raymond du Puy (1120–1160), 
directed that the sick poor should be 
treated “as if he were a Lord.” The 
care of the sick remained at the 
heart of the Order’s mission, and, 
despite the Order’s military respon-
sibilities in the east, the Central 
Convent always maintained a hospi-
tal for the sick and poor. There is 
documentary and archeological evi-
dence for the Order’s hospitals in 
Jerusalem, Rhodes, and Malta, 
although the central archives of the 
Order only preserves the records of 
the Sacra Infermeria, the Order’s 
hospital in Valletta.

When Charles V gave the Order the 
island of Malta in 1530, the Knights 
at first settled in the castle sur-
rrounded by the village of Birgu on 
the Great Harbor. But after the 
Ottoman siege of Malta in 1565, the 
Knights constructed a new city, 
Valletta, on a peninsula jutting into 
the Great Harbor. There they built 
the Sacra Infermeria, a massive 
structure that combined many of the 
Order’s charitable foundations, 
including a military hospital, a 
foundling hospital, and a magdalene. 
It had separate wards for men and 
women, the insane, sufferers from 
venereal disease, and it distinguished 
between medical and surgical cases. 
The Sacra Infermeria even had its 
own pharmacy. The Knights estab-
lished a formal medical school for 
the Sacra Infermeria in 1675, and 
created a faculty for the study of 
medicine in the University of Malta 
in 1771. The library and archives of 
these institutions remained on the 
island when Napoleon expelled the 
Knights in 1798.

Section II of the archives of the 
Order’s Hospital in Valletta in the 
National Library of Malta comprises 
fifty-six volumes, dating from 1590 
until 1798. The researcher might 
hope to find a treasure trove con-
taining a wealth of information 
about the hospital’s operations, early
modern medical practices, diet, and expenses. He or she would be disappointed. Six volumes of the archive contain information about the administration of the hospital; thirty-eight volumes register the wills of patients of the Sacra Infermeria between 1590 and 1798.

The Sacra Infermeria had its own printed Rule, a small nineteen-page book printed in Rome in 1725 (AOM 1713). The Rule contains information about the staff of the Infermeria, its inventory of silver and tapestry, and its physical layout. The archives also contain a contemporary handwritten copy of the published Rule, annotated and updated by its owner (AOM 1714). The archives also contain the rule of the Congregation of the Holy Trinity (AOM 1713a), a separate confraternity organized to provide charitable contributions to the Sacra Infermeria and to ensure their proper distribution. Upon entry into this brotherhood, the members paid one quarter of their income to the Congregation; subsequently, they paid annually one-eighth of their income. In return they received from the brotherhood a funeral mass upon their death and remembrance masses afterwards.

The scribes and notaries of the Sacra Infermeria recorded the patients’ testaments. Thirty-eight surviving volumes (AOM 1720-1758) contain the names and wills of those who died in the Sacra Infermeria. The inhabitants of the hospital included members of the Order, Maltese men, women and children, and foreign visitors and sailors. The registers of testaments and mortality provide considerable information about the inhabitants of the Sacra Infermeria: the names, gender, occupation, knightly status, and origin of the deceased. By the eighteenth century, the registers included information about the burial of the deceased and an inventory of his or her possessions.

J. Mizzi catalogued Section 11, Catalogue of the records of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in the Royal Malta Library (University of Malta: Msida, 1969). His printed catalogue contains the names of the patients whose wills are registered in the archives; unfortunately, it lacks an index.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Publications Received

Monographs

Carlos Barquero Goñi, La orden de San Juan de Jerusalén en Navarra Siglos XIV y XV ([Spain]: Fundación Fuentes Dutor, [2004]). Gift of the author.


Offprints


Bulletins and Newsletters

Friends of the National Archives

Bank of Valletta
NEH Challenge Grant

Readers of Melitensia have received a letter from Father Columba Stewart, director of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, announcing that it reached the second benchmark set by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in a Challenge Grant to raise $2.5 million for the endowment of the Malta Study Center. As part of a four-year fundraising drive launched in August 2003, the NEH provides a $1 match for every $4 raised by HMML for the Malta Study Center. When the NEH awarded the grant, it set fundraising benchmarks that must be met in order to receive the match. The endowment will fund a curatorial position, acquisitions, programming, and preservation of manuscripts and documents related to Malta.

The Malta Study Center is the only place in the world where researchers can investigate over 18,000 microfilmed documents from Maltese archives. It exists today because a small number of dedicated people believed that the archives of Malta and the Knights of Malta were of major historical significance and must be preserved. Because of their generosity, the Malta Study Center can boast a solid record of achievements:

• Microfilm preservation of the Archives of the Knights of Malta
• Microfilm preservation of major Maltese historical collections, including the archives of the Maltese Inquisition
• Creation of an electronic finding aid, the on-line Malta Study Center
• Initiation of new preservation work at the Priory of Rome

The evaluators of the NEH Challenge Grants recognized the international significance of the Malta Study Center and the long-term planning underlying the grant application when they awarded the grant. We are pleased to be halfway to our goal by successfully raising $900,000 that the NEH matched with $225,000. However, the most difficult part of the challenge lies ahead: $600,000 by July 31, 2006, and the final benchmark of $450,000 by July 31, 2007.

Neither the endowment drive nor our work in Malta is complete. There are still on Malta important historical archives that are in danger. They are kept in ancient buildings that lack climate control or fire prevention; their contents are unknown and inaccessible. With your help, the Center can successfully complete its endowment drive within two years.

The endowment will fund:
• Future preservation work on Malta
• Improved electronic access to the collection
• Collection development

But all depends on our success in meeting the NEH Challenge in 2006 and 2007. We cannot get there without your help.

THE MALTA STUDY CENTER

Your generosity is key to the success of the HMML’s mission to preserve, to study and to teach.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Director’s Circle.........................$2,500 & Above
Millennium Club.........................$1,000+
Sponsor .........................................$500+
Contributor ..............................$150+
Member .................................$65 & Above
Student .........................................$30

Name ...........................................
Address ........................................
E-mail ...........................................

I understand my gift may be used to match the NEH Challenge Grant.

Credit Card Information

Please charge my gift to:
☐ Mastercard   ☐ Visa
☐ Discover    ☐ American Express

Name on card: ____________
Account #: __________________
Expiration date: __________

Please return this form with your gift along with any address corrections to:
The Malta Study Center, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, P.O. Box 7300, Collegeville, MN 56321

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MELITENSIA