

# MELITENSIA

Spring 2016

*A Newsletter of the Malta Study Center*

*f. Am. Gouffrens*    *ομι δεπλουκος ουδεν εωρακην κεικον*

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Joānis hierosolymitani magri



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

Dear Melitensians,

Often in the streets of Valletta and Mdina one wanders past historic façades and imposing doors, adorned with dolphins and other brass decorations. The stately doors of these private residences often guard the most unique treasures of Malta: family archives and libraries that date back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. These private libraries contain some of the richest historical material in Malta. Thanks to a new partnership with the Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti (FPM) to digitize the collection discussed in our newsletter, the Malta Study Center (MSC) will begin a new period of digital preservation that will open up unique materials for study, helping us better understand the rich cultural and social history of the island.



Our new venture with the FPM follows on the completion the digitization project at the Cathedral Archives in Mdina, which began in the summer of 2015. This project, in partnership with Monsignor Dun Gwann Azzopardi, successfully digitized over 300 early modern parchments and 50 valuable manuscript fragments. Several medieval manuscripts, previously microfilmed in black and white, were digitized in color due to their historical importance to medieval manuscript culture. We also digitized several volumes that did not form part of the original microfilm project in the 1970s and 1980s, including the important Royas antiphonals and several volumes of the Archives of the Inquisition in Malta.

This new year brings several guests from Malta to the MSC. In May, we had the pleasure of hosting Mr. Michael Lowell, CEO of the FPM and the MSC's founder, Mr. Joseph S. Micallef, KMOB. In July, Dr. William Zammit of the University of Malta will visit the MSC, and participate in the launch of our new online platform to view and search manuscripts, vHMML Reading Room. Our doors are always open, so do visit us at Saint John's University.

Sincerely,

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

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*Above:* Ms. Cláudia Garradas, Site Director of the MSC, preparing manuscripts for digitization for the Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti Project.

*On the cover:* "Coat of Arms of Grand Master L'Isle Adam." *Stabilimenta militum Sacri Ordinis diui Joannis hiersolymitani: una cum bulla ipsis concessa a Summo Pontifice Claemente VII. Salamanca: Per Joannem Lunte, 1534. Rome, Magistral Archives and Library, RES MAL 030 STA 1534.*

## MELITENSIA

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Wayne Torborg, imaging  
Sandra Herzog / Blue Moon Design, graphic design  
Spectrum Marketing Services, printer  
Set in Adobe Garamond Pro typeface

# Where We're Working: The Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, Valletta

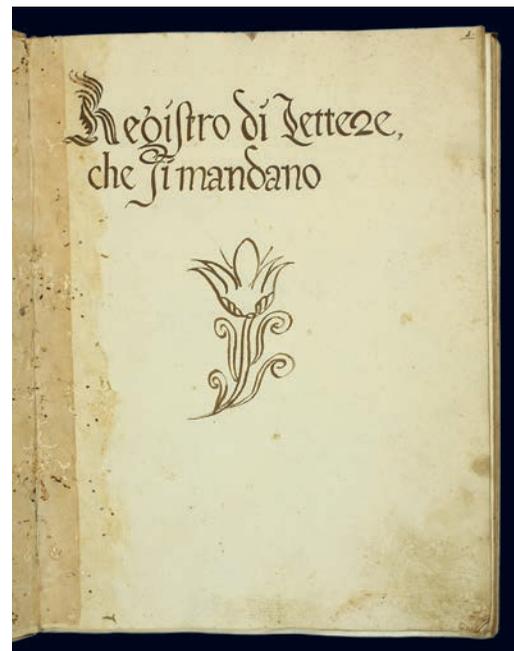
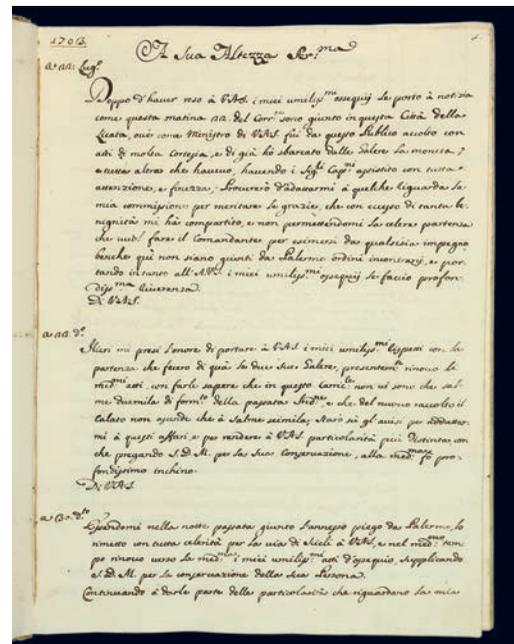
The Malta Study Center signed a new partnership agreement with the Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti (FPM) to begin digitizing private pre-1800s manuscript collections in Malta. The FPM is a private, non-profit heritage organization in Malta with the aim of spreading awareness of the island's extensive history locally and internationally, through museums, exhibitions and publications. The partnership between the MSC and the FPM brings a new phase to the FPM's important cultural work with private collectors, with the enduring result of increasing knowledge of the island's local and international history.

Previously, the MSC had microfilmed a few select manuscripts from private collections during the 1970s and 1980s under the direction of the indefatigable Monsignor Dun Gwann Azzopardi. However, this is the MSC's first attempt to systematically catalog and digitize the extensive and valuable cultural resources found in private collections in Malta. Digitization began in February 2016 and will last at least three years. While HMML staff coordinates the project, local Maltese technicians — trained by HMML — are conducting the work, with the help and expertise of the FPM's staff and curators. The detailed digitizing and metadata work carried out by HMML and the FPM will enable scholars to access the rich data through HMML's online resource for the viewing, searching, and study of manuscripts, [HMML Reading Room](#).

Our ongoing work with local Maltese scholars will increase our knowledge of the documents and Malta's history. Most of the records date from the late 16<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup> century and are of significant benefit for Mediterranean scholars, Maltese historians and academics. The MSC is especially thankful for Michael Lowell's and Joseph Grioli's leadership at the FPM, and their willingness to help us with this unique digitization and cataloging project.

*Above:* Valletta, Archivum de Piro, AdeP MS 131, fol. 1r.

*Below:* Valletta, Archivum de Piro, AdeP MS 80, fol. 1r.



## Revisiting the Palazzo Falson Historic House Museum

In August 2015, the Malta Study Center completed the digitization of the manuscripts, archives and rare “Melitensia” located at the Palazzo Falson Historic House Museum in Mdina, including the important historic documents and family archives of Captain Olof Frederick Gollcher. The project included the digitization of more than 30 works from the Palazzo Falson Museum Collection, nearly 100 rare books and manuscripts from the Palazzo Falson Library, and more than 60 boxes from the Olof Frederick Gollcher Archives (OFGA). Due to the framing of several objects in the museum, the MSC photographers created a special on-site studio to properly digitize the documents through the glass covering the rare parchments.

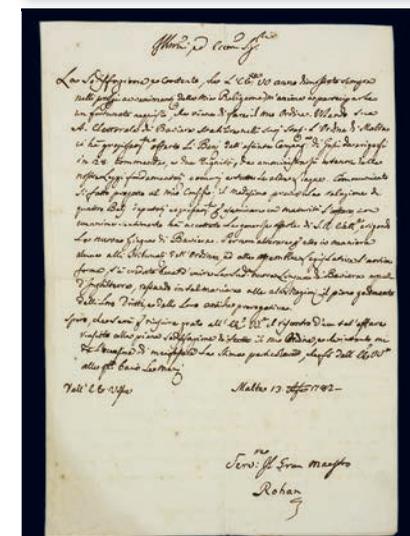
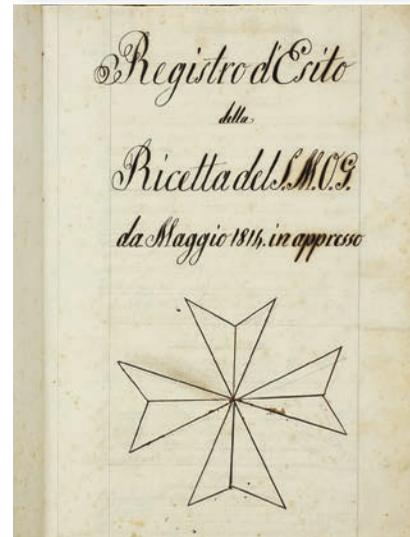
As part of the digitization project, the MSC also created an online digital catalog for more than 3,000 books and documents located in the Palazzo Falson Library. Previously, the library catalog was accessible only through a local aging MS Access database compiled by Ellen Beunderman and Francesca Balzan over several years. Using technology developed by Google and AwesomeTable open source software, Dr. Gullo converted the data, and migrated the entire collection to the new platform, creating a free, open access portal to search the library’s collection now located on the Palazzo Falson’s webpage ([www.palazzofalson.com](http://www.palazzofalson.com)). The new online catalog provided the first-ever means by which local and international scholars could research the library’s holdings. A similar venture will be completed for the OFGA Archives in 2016-2017.

The digitization project was funded in part by a grant from the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation, whose philanthropic work has provided substantial support for the humanities, arts, and research libraries.

*Above:* “Tractatus de poenitentia induas partes distributus quarum unam.” 17<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript on paper. Mdina, Palazzo Falson Historic House Museum, E-9, 3928, fol. 1r.

*Center:* “Registro d’Esito della Ricetta del S. M. O. G. da Maggio 1814” 19<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript on paper. Mdina, Palazzo Falson Historic House Museum, C-67, 2163. fol. 1r.

*Below:* “Letter of Grand Master Emmanuel de Rohan-Polduc to Pope Pius VI (13 August 1782).” 18<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript on paper. Mdina, Palazzo Falson Historic House Museum, A-10, 3867A, fol. 1r.



## *Charles Farrugia, National Archivist of Malta, Visits Washington, D.C.*

The Malta Study Center was pleased to bring Mr. Charles Farrugia, National Archivist of Malta, to the United States for a discussion about the importance of archives for our knowledge of Maltese history and the role of archives as a repository of public memory. Mr. Farrugia delivered his address, “Archives: Common Heritage Transcending Boundaries,” in Washington, D.C. on December 10, 2015. The event was sponsored by the MSC, the European Union, the Embassy of Malta, and the National Archives of Malta, as part of the Conversations in Culture Series organized by the Delegation of the European Union to the United States.

Mr. Farrugia discussed the depth of the collections at the National Archives for both Maltese and international history. New media and geo-political and demographic



*Above: Mr. Charles Farrugia delivering his lecture at the Delegation of the European Union to the United States.*



*Above, left to right: Mr. Charles Farrugia, Mr. Joseph S. Micallef, KMOB, Dr. Patricia Borg, Dr. Daniel K. Gullo.*

*Below, left to right: Mr. Ed Luzine, KM, Mr. Charles Farrugia, and Mr. Joseph S. Micallef, KMOB*

shifts in societies have challenged the traditional approach of managing the archives' collections. Multi-national collaborative projects, such as EUROPEANA and the Archive Portal Europe, emphasize the power of archives to transcend concepts of time, nationality, geographical and religious barriers. But Mr. Farrugia noted that because Malta is the smallest country in the European Union, its archivists have faced difficulties in the creation and organization of archives in light of these new multi-national projects.

The event also featured a presentation by Dr. Gullo on the relationship of the MSC to state archives, since, as a non-profit, non-state actor, the MSC has increased flexibility in forming international partnerships for the preservation of cultural heritage. It allows the MSC to gather scattered collections into one location to benefit scholars researching the history of Malta and the Order of Malta.

## *Dr. Eric Dursteller, HMML's Nicky B. Carpenter Fellow*

Renowned Mediterranean scholar Dr. Eric Dursteller of Brigham Young University was awarded the Nicky B. Carpenter Fellowship in Manuscript Studies at HMML. He conducted research using the Malta Study Center's microfilm and digitized collection of the Archives of the Inquisition of Malta. Dr. Dursteller's work focuses on language and communication in the early modern Mediterranean. Rather than concentrating solely on men, his research studies the ways in which women navigated the multilingual Mediterranean, and how questions of gender contribute to the understanding of the sea's linguistic ecology. "The records of the Maltese Inquisition are richer than those found in Venice (where I have previously worked) in terms of the linguistic questions I am pursuing," noted Dr. Dursteller. "This is not surprising. Because of its location at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, Malta was a magnet for people from across the region, was the capital of Christian piracy and one of the Mediterranean's largest markets of Muslim slaves. The result was that a much more diverse cast of characters from all across the region came together within the borders of these small islands." His fellowship residency at HMML occurred during the spring and summer of 2016.



*Dr. Eric Dursteller  
Photography by Wayne Torborg*

## *A Profile of Sara Ramírez Calatayud, metadata cataloger*

Over the last year, Sara Ramírez Calatayud has served as the metadata cataloger for the MSC at the National Archives of Malta and Cathedral Archives in Mdina. Ms. Ramírez was born in Castellón, Spain, and completed her Bachelor's of Arts degree in art history in 2009 and her Master's of Arts degree in cultural heritage in 2010 at the Universitat de València, with continued post-graduate work in documentary information at the Universitat Jaume I. She was awarded the Leonardo da Vinci internship at the National Archives of Malta in 2015. Ms. Ramírez was hired by the MSC to process the metadata for the major and minor collections digitized by the MSC at the National Archives, including the Epoca Gallica and Magna Curia Castellaniae collections. She later organized and completed the metadata cataloging of the parchments, manuscripts, and fragments at the Cathedral Archives in Mdina. "The most interesting part of the work for me involved working with the antiphonals at the Cathedral Museum," noted Ms. Ramírez. "Their illuminated initials and calligraphy are truly precious. At the National Archives, I was always surprised by the amount of Arabic, Greek, and Spanish texts I found, and it was always exciting to work with the old parchments." Ms. Ramírez will continue working in Malta over the next year, and has begun short courses on paleography and metadata.



*Sara Catalayud Ramírez at the  
Cathedral Archives, Mdina  
Photograph courtesy of Mario Gauci.*

## News and Events from the MSC

### Great Siege of Malta Exhibition Opens at the James Ford Bell Library

The James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities will be hosting the MSC's traveling exhibition *Knights, Memory, and the Siege of 1565: An Exhibition on the 450th Anniversary of the Great Siege of Malta*. The exhibition features over twenty original rare books 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. Items on display come from the James Ford Bell Library, the Special Collections and Rare Books collection at the University of Minnesota, and the MSC Collection at the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML). *Knights, Memory, and the Siege of 1565* originally opened at the HMML in September 2015 and included rare books from the Malta Collection at the Catholic University of America. The current exhibition includes several new works from the Bell Library and the MSC's collection not displayed in the original exhibition in 2015. The exhibition will run from June 1, 2016 through August 19, 2016.



“L'assalto per mare e terra all'isola di s. Michele a di XV di Iulio.” Anton Francesco Lucini, *Disegni della guerra, assedio et assalti data dall'armata turchesa all'isola di Malta l'anno MDLXV. Sotto il governo di Fr. Gio. Parisotto di Valletta Gran Maestro* (Rome: Nicolò Allegri, 1631). Image from the Magistral Archives and Library, shelf mark F-MAL-130-2-DIS.

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### Curator Joins the Board of the Mediterranean Seminar

Drs. Sharon Kinoshita and Brian Catlos welcomed Dr. Gullo to the board of the Mediterranean Seminar. The Mediterranean Seminar is an international consortium of scholars and universities dedicated to the study of the Mediterranean as a region, with an emphasis on the pre- and early modern periods and includes over 500 scholars and institutions worldwide. The MSC will be hosting the Mediterranean Seminar's fall workshop on November 11-12, 2016, focused on the themes of “Magic, Medicine, and Technology in the Mediterranean.” The two-day workshop will be conducted in conjunction with the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities' Center for Medieval Studies, Center for Early Modern History, the Consortium for the Study of the Pre-Modern World, and the Mediterranean Studies Research Collaborative.

### MSC Supports The Rose Ensemble's “Christmas in Baroque Malta”

The MSC provided curatorial support for The Rose Ensemble's winter musical performance, “A Christmas in Baroque Malta,” which was performed throughout Minnesota in December 2015. Guest artists included Charles Weaver (theorbo) and Paula Fagerberg (Baroque harp), who joined the Ensemble for a rare program of 17<sup>th</sup>-century works from Maltese archival music sources. The Rose Ensemble's performance also presented the world premiere of Minnesota composer Timothy Takach's “Il-presepju tal-Milied” (“The Christmas Cradle”). Takach's work detailed the story of the Nativity, reflecting the mystery of Jesus' birth in a modern folk melody.



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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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