

MELITENSIA

Spring 2020

A Newsletter of the Malta Study Center



HILL MUSEUM & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY



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

Dear Melitensians,

During the Plague of 1813 in Malta, the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel held an extraordinary meeting on May 4 in Valletta to discuss the calamitous situation on the island. As a confraternal organization that ministered to the poor, the members decided to reach into their holdings and provide additional alms from its pious foundations to relieve the suffering caused by the plague. The alms, which extended into 1814, testify to how people undergoing a common tragedy can come together to care for one another by extending the hand of friendship and community.

The records of the Plague of 1813 came to our knowledge while the staff of the Malta Study Center were digitizing the archive of the archconfraternity during the lockdown caused by the global pandemic of COVID-19. Working in a secure and private studio, our photographers and our site director in Malta managed to digitize all 106 volumes of the archconfraternity's archive, keeping our promise to preserve the hand-written heritage of Malta. The archival records emphasize the importance of our work and remind us of the value of preserving these records as historic witnesses to our shared human suffering and to our shared humanity.

Support of our preservation mission from partners and Friends of the Malta Study Center has been as strong in the present circumstances as it has been throughout our near fifty-year history. During these five decades, we have acted, made new friends, helped others, and provided opportunities while creating a lasting cultural resource that has benefited a generation in the past, our generation, and generations to come. We will continue our mission.

Sincerely,

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



Above: Cláudia Garradas, Site Director of the Malta Study Center, at the Cathedral Archives in Mdina.

On the cover: "Coat of arms of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel." Archives of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Valletta, MS 74, fol. 1r. HMML project number ACMC 00030.

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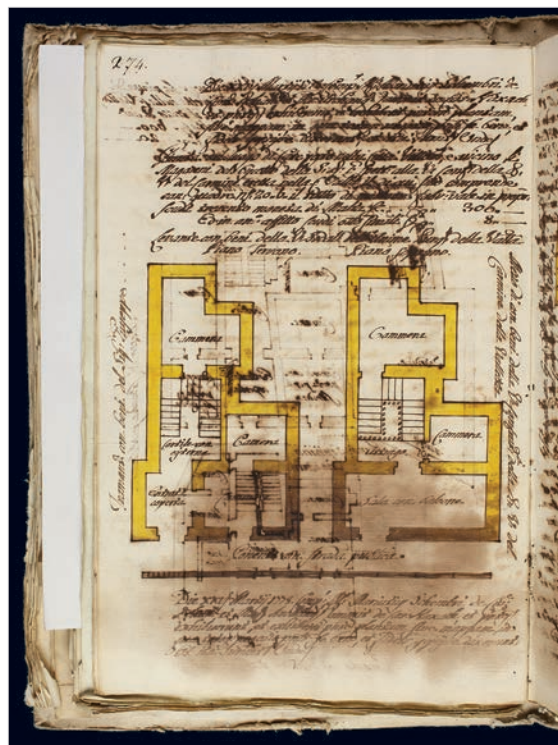
Where We're Working: Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Valletta, Malta

HMML's Malta Study Center signed an agreement with the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Valletta, Malta, in 2019 to digitize the archconfraternity's pre-1815 archives. In 1621, a group led by Cesare Passalacqua, a scribe of the Treasury of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, petitioned Fray Salvatore Vinci, Provincial of the Carmelite Order, to establish a new confraternity affiliated with the Carmelite Order in Valletta. By February 1622, the *confraters*, as members were known, had received their official approval, and held their first procession in the city.

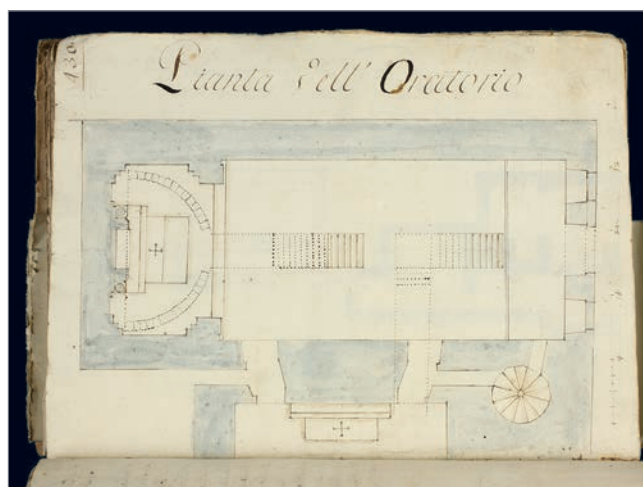
Records within the archive reveal the many activities of the archconfraternity. These activities included charitable relief to the poor, the establishment of foundations supporting the dowries of poor women, and memorial masses for its members. The archconfraternity also actively financed public devotional works, whether used in festal processions or for the embellishment of their chapel and parish church. The archive includes several important volumes recording the establishment of pious foundations that funded the charitable works of its members, many of which were created by women as *consorsors*. These foundations provide an important window into the religious history of women, devotion, and property, and how these women used their property to foster devotional practices within the church.

106 volumes from the archive of the Archconfraternity of our Lady of Mount Carmel were digitized in 2020 as part of the Center's goal to digitize the major confraternal organizations in Valletta. It is the third major confraternal archive digitized by the Center and will contribute to our knowledge of lay Catholic organizations in Malta. Previous projects included the 498 volumes at the Archconfraternity of the Holy Rosary digitized in 2018, and the 279 volumes of the Confraternity of Our Lady of Charity digitized in 2018-2019

Right: "Plan of the oratory of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel." Archives of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Valletta, MS 23, fol. 223r. HMML project number ACMC 00008.



Above: "Plan of property of the heirs of Damiano Grech, 1772." Archives of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Valletta, MS 18, fol. 140r. HMML project number ACMC 00003.



Revisiting the Art Collections at MUŻA - Mużew Nazzjonali tal-Arti

In 2017, the Malta Study Center digitized over 1500 individual objects at MUŻA - Mużew Nazzjonali tal-Arti, including 1119 works of art. Cataloging began with digitization, but was temporarily suspended when the collection moved to its new home, the Auberge d'Italie, in Valletta. With the move completed, we have resumed cataloging these works with Heritage Malta, allowing us to better understand the variety of subjects and artists included in this important collection.

One pleasant discovery has been identifying six prints by Francesco Bartolozzi (1728-1815). Bartolozzi was born in Florence, where he studied art before moving to Venice and opened his own workshop after six years working with Joseph Wagner (1706-1780). Bartolozzi moved to England in 1764, having been persuaded by the prospect of better commissions and the chance to be the king's engraver. He began engraving concert tickets using the works of his lifelong friend Giovanni Battista Cipriani (1727-1785), as can be seen in "Orpheus Standing in a Cave and Playing the Lyre [1785-1786]". His workshop later became renowned for the interpretation or reproduction of old master and contemporary works.



Above: Francesco Bartolozzi, "Antony and Cleopatra [1794]." Inventory number: 32247-48. HMML Project number HMZA 00185.



Above: Francesco Bartolozzi, "Orpheus standing in a cave and playing the lyre [1785-1786]." Inventory number: 32239-40. HMML Project number HMZA 00168.

Although he was not the inventor of stipple engraving (crayon manner), Bartolozzi played a crucial role in the development of the technique that created images through delicate networks of dots rather than lines. One can see the stipple technique in the 1792 engraving "Legs" (HMZA 00177). He also became an expert in aquatint, a form of etching that uses acid to create sunken areas on the printing plate to create tones rather than lines. His mastery of aquatint is found in the 1794 etching "Antony and Cleopatra." Bartolozzi's studio became increasingly popular among fine-arts students from all over Europe, including Francisco Vieira (1765-1805), with whom he published the *Elements of Drawing* in 1799 (HMZA 00139) to instruct young artists.

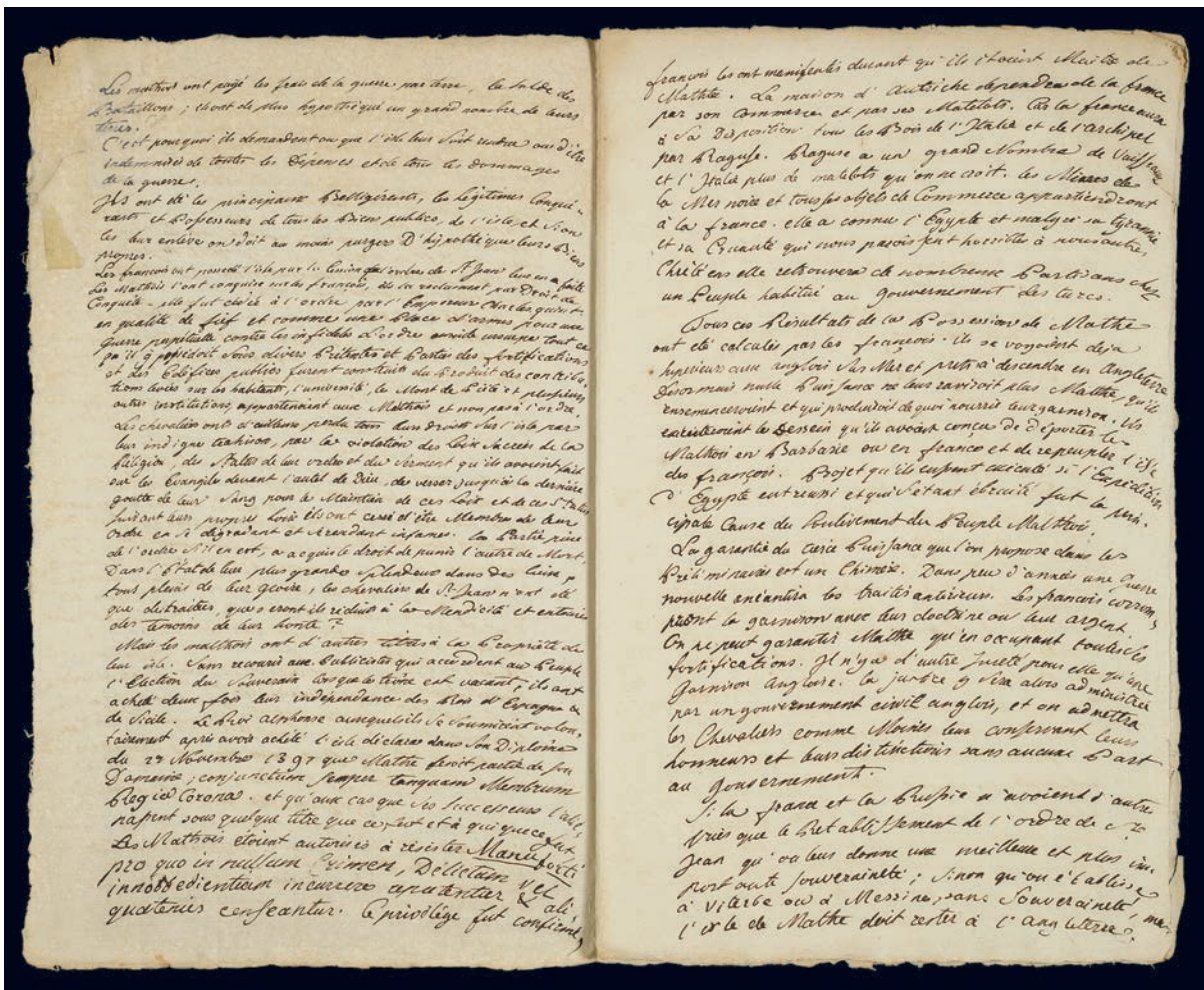
- Cláudia Garradas

Manuscript Acquired by the Malta Study Center

This year the Malta Study Center acquired an important manuscript about the history of the Maltese people and their struggle for independence from the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem after the Order's expulsion from the island in 1798 by French Revolutionary forces led by Napoléon Bonaparte (1769-1821). The “Humbles représentations des députés des isles de Malthe et du Goze aux pieds du throne de S.M. le roi du Royaume uni de la Grande Bretagne et d’Irlande” is a French translation of a petition to King George III (1738-1820) written by deputies of the pro-British faction from Malta and Gozo. The deputies rejected the idea that the Maltese islands should be returned to the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem after the Maltese, British, and Sicilian forces had defeated the French and expelled them from the island in 1800.

The Maltese delegation strongly objected to the negotiations being finalized during the proceedings of the Treaty of Amiens (1802) that called for the Maltese islands and its people to be returned to the Order of Saint John. Napoléon Bonaparte ironically argued that the islands should be returned to the Order's sovereignty, since he sought to remove Malta as a strategic base for British forces. Bonaparte also believed that he could maintain influence over the island, given that the Order was dominated by knights from the three French *langues*, many of whom served in the French navy before and after the revolution.

The acquisition of this manuscript forms part of the international digitization project, *France and Malta in the Age of Revolution, 1775-1815*, funded by a grant from the Cherbec Advancement Foundation.



Above: “Humbles représentations des députés des isles de Malthe et du Goze aux pieds du throne de S.M. le roi du Royaume uni de la Grande Bretagne et d’Irlande, 1801 October 22 [1801-1812],” fol. 2v-3r. Gullo French and Mediterranean Collection, Malta Study Center, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, HMML project number 00503.

Director Presents at the Minnesota Center for Book Arts

As part of series “The Destruction of the Book” organized by the Minnesota Center for Book Arts and the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Dr. Daniel Gullo presented the paper “Malta, Slavery & Archives: The Legacy of Human Trafficking in Early Modern Documents” on February 20 in Minneapolis, MN. The paper looked at the role of Maltese archives as repositories of the history of human trafficking in the Mediterranean and discussed the Center’s efforts to digitize these archives. The presentation focused on the Archives of the Confraternity of Charity and the Archives of the Archconfraternity of the Holy Rosary, describing the confraternities’ efforts to redeem Maltese slaves from across the Mediterranean. At the event, Dr. Gullo exhibited several manuscripts and early printed books from the Center’s collection that document the history of slavery in Malta during the eighteenth century.

Right: Dr. Daniel Gullo discussing his lecture at the Minnesota Center for Book Arts, Minneapolis, Minnesota.



New Acquisitions of the Malta Study Center

Balaguer i Perelló, Jacint. *Metrico panegirico a la festiva demonstracion, que la muy noble, y leal ciudad de Palma, ha consagrado à su patricio el eminentissimo señor Fray Don Raymundo Dezpuig en su creacion de Gran Maestre de Malta, y Principe de Gotzo, y Rodas*. Mallorca: Pedro Antonio Capò, 1737.

Lista de los caballeros de justicia, frey capellanes conventuales de justicia, y frey sirvientes de armas recibidos en la veneranda lengua de Aragon, Cataluña, y Navarra. Malta: 1796.

Barbosa, Valerio Alexandrino. *Nova relação, e verdadeira noticia do grande combate, que tiverão dois galeoens de Biscaya, que vinhão das Indias de Hespanha, com huma armada de mouros, sendo cômandados pelo Capitão D. Francisco Trivinho, cavalleiro professo da Ordem de S. João*. Lisbon: Domingos Rodrigues, 1754.

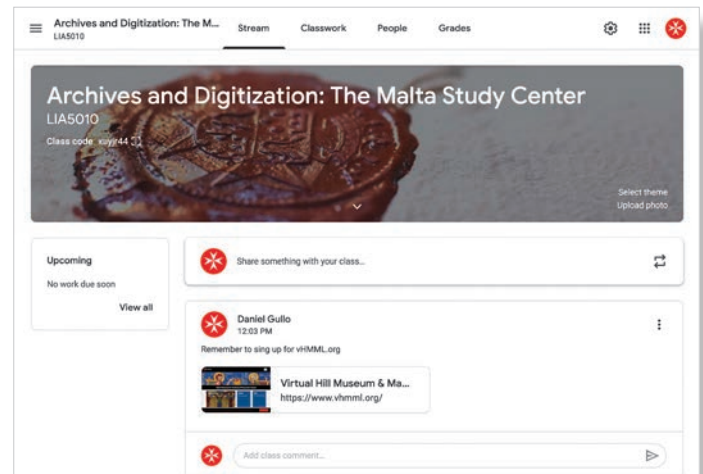
Nova, e verdadeira noticia da famosa acção, e inçlyta victoria, que o famigerado capitão da galeota do Graõ Mestre de Malta. Lisbon: Inácio Nogueira Xisto, 1765.



Above: *Nova, e verdadeira noticia da famosa acção, e inçlyta victoria, que o famigerado capitão da galeota do Graõ Mestre de Malta*. Lisbon: Inácio Nogueira Xisto, 1765.

Director and Archivist Offer Course at the University of Malta

During the spring semester, Dr. Daniel Gullo and Dr. Valeria Vanesio taught the online course LIA5010 “Archives and Digitization: The Malta Study Center” for the Department Library Information and Archive Science at the University of Malta. This graduate course surveyed the 48-year history of the Malta Study Center and discussed its organization, operations, and methodology used for the digital preservation of Maltese handwritten culture. Students learned about the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library’s cataloging and digital humanities projects, including an advanced introduction to the design and use of vHMML.org. Dr. Vanesio also provided two sessions on the history of the Archives of the Order of Malta dedicated to the procedures for proofs of admission into the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem and land surveys conducted by the *Langue* of Italy.



Above: Landing page for the online course LIA5010 “Archives and Digitization: The Malta Study Center” at the University of Malta.

Archivist Lectures in Malta and Rome

On March 30, Dr. Valeria Vanesio provided an online guest lecture for the seminar “Europe in Early Modern Times c.1450 -c.1789” organized by Dr. Emanuel Buttigieg at the University of Malta. Her lecture offered students an overview of the history of archives in early modern Europe, with a particular focus on Malta and Italy. On May 4, Dr. Vanesio was invited to speak as an online guest lecturer at Sapienza University in Rome for the graduate seminar on Italian Archives organized by Dr. Eleonora Lattanzi and Dr. Francesca Nemore. Her presentation, “Memorie dormienti, archivi dispersi e identità spezzate: Il caso dell’Ordine di San Giovanni [Dormant Memories: Dispersed Archives and Fragmented Identities, the Case of the Order of Saint John]” described the research methodology used to understand the archival dispersion and reconstruction of the archives of the Order of Saint John. Special attention was devoted to name authority files to link records in online databases, such as vHMML Reading Room.

Director Presents at Queen’s University, Ontario

Dr. Daniel Gullo presented the lecture “Understanding Manuscript Databases: vHMML Reading Room and Mediterranean Manuscript Studies” at Queen’s University, Ontario on January 21. The lecture discussed vHMML Reading Room and vHMML Museum, the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library’s online databases for its digital and microfilm manuscript and art collections. Students were introduced to vHMML.org and were offered insights into how to use the database to facilitate their studies. Dr. Gullo also explained the use of the Mirador viewer and the importance of IIIF technology to compare manuscripts and art from multiple online collections within a single web interface. The lecture concluded with a discussion of the Mediterranean collections preserved by the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library and the ongoing work digitally preserving endangered libraries and archives in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.



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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 Center. 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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