

MELITENSIA

Spring 2017

A Newsletter of the Malta Study Center



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

Dear Melitensians,

Over the last six months, HMML's Malta Study Center has seen several firsts in its history. For the first time, the Center shared manuscripts from its own rare book and special collections on an international stage with our participation in the exhibition "Malta-Land of Sea" at the BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels. I want to extend my thanks to BOZAR, Arts Council Malta, Heritage Malta, and Dr. Sandro Debono for providing the Center with this opportunity to share these treasures, and helping us complete our contribution to the international exhibition honoring Malta's presidency of the European Union.



We also partnered with the Mediterranean Seminar and several organizations at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities to bring a two-day seminar to the Saint John's University campus. The seminar highlighted the increasing importance that HMML and the Center have in promoting research and developing scholarship as part of our overall mission to preserve manuscript culture through digital photography.

In Fall 2016, we saw the launching of vHMML Reading Room at vhmml.org. This online platform for the study and research of manuscript culture currently contains over 2000 digitized manuscripts preserved by the Center. We are continuing to add manuscripts and update their data in vHMML Reading Room each month, so please register to experience the wonderful collection.

I want to express my continued thanks to Joseph S. Micallef, founder and longtime friend to the Malta Study Center and HMML, the Friends of the Malta Study Center, and the United States Associations of the Order of Malta for their support, and to all of our Maltese colleagues and partner libraries and archives promoting the preservation of Maltese manuscript culture and history.

Sincerely,

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

Above: Investigating the Archives of the Confraternity of Charity in Valletta, Malta.

On the cover: "Inventory of the Treasures of the Conventual Church of Saint John, Valletta." Cathedral Archives, Mdina, ACM 150. 18th century manuscript on paper.

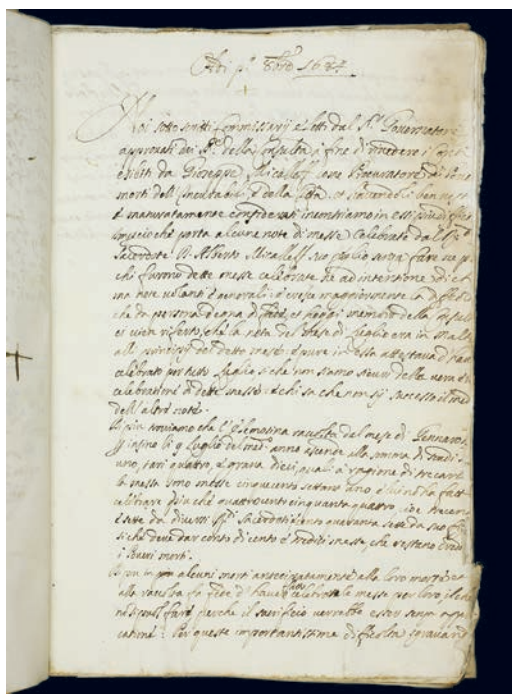
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Dr. Daniel K. Gullo, editor and contributing writer
Elizabeth Reisinger, contributing editor
Erin Lonergan, contributing editor
Wayne Torborg, imaging
Rebecca Backes, graphic design
Spectrum Marketing Services, printer
Set in Adobe Garamond Pro typeface

Where We're Working: The Confraternity of Charity, Valletta, Malta

HMML's Malta Study Center has signed an agreement with the Confraternity of Charity in Valletta, Malta, to digitize the Confraternity's pre-1815 archives and manuscripts. The Confraternity of Charity was founded in 1610, and is associated with the Church of Saint Paul in Valletta. Members of the Confraternity engage in ministry to the poor and support the local parish and Maltese community. By 1611, the papacy associated the Confraternity with the Archconfraternity of Saint Jerome of Charity in Rome, from which time local members began endowing the organization to fulfill its mandate to carry out charitable works modeled on the lives of the Apostles.

Records within the archives detail the many ministries and activities of the Confraternity. Activities included local ministry to the poor; financial support for those who could not bury their dead; the ransoming of impoverished Christian slaves through contacts in Tripoli and Tunis; the care of lands and endowments to support charity; and the construction of oratories and art works of Catholic devotion during the later Baroque period.



The Confraternity of Charity's archives is divided into several sections, containing over 300 volumes from the 17th through the 20th centuries. HMML's Malta Study Center microfilmed 20 manuscripts from the collection during the 1970s as part of the original Malta Manuscript Microfilm Project led by the indefatigable Dun Gwann Azzopardi of the Cathedral Archives of Mdina.

Digitizing the archives will contribute to the knowledge of confraternal organizations in Malta, and will be an important collection to compare with the Archive of the Archconfraternity of the Holy Rosary. The Archive of the Archconfraternity of the Holy Rosary will be digitized in 2018 as part of the digitization project conducted in partnership with the Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti and the Archivum de Piro at the Casa Rocca Piccola.

Top: Armoire of the Archives of the Confraternity of Charity at Saint Paul Church, Valletta, Malta.

Left: Archives of the Confraternity of Charity, Poveri Morti Fonds, MS 1. Fol. 1r. HMML Project Number KKM 0001. 17th century manuscript on paper.

Seminar on Magic, Medicine and Technology in the Mediterranean at HMML

HMML's Malta Study Center, in conjunction with The Mediterranean Seminar, Mediterranean Studies Research Collaborative, Center for Medieval Studies, Center for Early Modern History, and Consortium for the Study of the Premodern World at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, held a two-day seminar at HMML on the campus of Saint John's University on November 11-12, 2016.

The topic of the seminar, "Magic, Medicine, and Technology in the Mediterranean," brought together leading scholars of Mediterranean Studies from across the world to workshop papers and engage in roundtable discussions. Friday's presentations featured the work of Christopher Braun, Noam Sienna, and Dr. Oumelbanine Zhiri discussing the role of magic, fortune telling, and military technology.

The plenary address was delivered by Dr. Monica Green of Arizona State University, whose presentation discussed new theories about the importance of medical text transmission and translation at the Abbey of Montecassino and the legacy of Constantine Africanus.

Saturday's roundtable discussions featured the research of ten scholars on the history of magic, medicine, and dissimulation in the Mediterranean, including topics ranging from the transmission of medical works, surgery, and medical recipes to the role of magic within minority communities and the Inquisition.

A temporary exhibition on "Magic, Medicine, and Technology" was organized by HMML curators and highlighted the rare books and manuscripts of the collection related to the seminar's papers.

Top: Dr. Daniel K. Gullo introducing Dr. Monica Green in HMML's Wallin Classroom.

Middle: Temporary exhibition on "Magic, Medicine, and Technology" at HMML.

Bottom: Drs. Brian Catlos and Sharon Kinoshita (center), co-founders of the Mediterranean Seminar speaking with participants Drs. Kiril Petkov (left) and Robert Morrison (right).



Exhibition Malta-Land of Sea at BOZAR Centre of Fine Arts, Brussels

Malta, as a central island in the Mediterranean, has been a crossroads of many civilizations over the centuries. A new international exhibition at the BOZAR Centre of Fine Arts in Brussels featured materials from HMML's Malta Study Center and reflects the cultural diversity that is the foundation of the Maltese identity. The exhibition, "Malta – land of sea," was organized by BOZAR in collaboration with Heritage Malta and Arts Council Malta.

HMML's Malta Study Center provided three manuscripts for the exhibition. The first was an 18th century captain's report of a Spanish and Maltese squadron patrolling off the coast of Tunisia. The second object was an 18th century ship's log from the French Frigate L'Iris, captained by a Knight of Malta. The log details a mission to Algeria and how L'Iris escorted a convoy from France to Malta in 1789. The third manuscript includes a 17th century report on the need to re-fortify the walls of Fort Saint Elmo in Valletta by the Order of Malta's chief engineer Mederico Blondel.

The exhibition commemorated the 50th anniversary of Malta's original proposal for the United Nation's Convention of the Law of the Sea, and was open between February 17 and May 28, 2017. Objects included were loans from over twenty museums, cultural heritage



"Journal de la Compagnie de la frégate L'Iris." Malta MS 3. HMML Project Number HMML 00244. 18th century manuscript on paper.

institutions and non-governmental organizations in Malta and abroad.

Works on display included maps, archeological artifacts, paintings, maps, historic arms and weapons, geological finds, models and contemporary art. One of the star items on display, loaned by the Palazzo Pitti in Florence, was Caravaggio's *Knight of Malta* painted during the artist's brief stay on the island between 1607 and 1608 and recently restored. An unusual display, perfectly integrated within the exhibition, was a refugee compass recently used in one of the dangerous Mediterranean crossings.



Mederico Blondel, "Discorso intorno al supplemento del recinto della città Valletta." Malta MS 6. HMML Project Number HMML 00241. 17th century manuscript on paper.

Besides HMML's Malta Study Center, other institutions participating in this exhibition include the Mdina Cathedral Museum, The Victor Pasmore Foundation and Art Gallery, The Notarial Archives, Palazzo Falson Historic House Museum, the National Library, Casa Rocca Piccola and the non-governmental organization MOAS. Two Maltese parish churches, Gudja Parish Church and St Paul's Collegiate Parish Church (Rabat) have also loaned works. International lenders include the Louvre, the Fondazione Renzo Piano (Genoa) and Palazzo Pitti in Florence, Italy.

Valeria Vanesio, Heckman Scholar at HMML

Ms. Valeria Vanesio visited HMML's Malta Study Center in April 2017. Coming from the town of Maglie (Apulia, Italy), she studied Archival and Library Science in Lecce. She completed her master of arts in Archival Sciences at the Sapienza University of Rome, focusing on the Archives of the Order of Malta, where she continues studies towards her doctoral degree.



*Ms. Valeria Vanesio.
Photograph by Wayne Torborg.*

Ms. Vanesio has also completed two years of specialization in paleography, diplomatic and archival science at the Archivio di Stato of Rome, and additional course work at the School of the Archivio Segreto Vaticano. Her dissertation research attempts to reconstruct the archival practices used by central government and peripheral Italian Priors of the Order of Malta between the 16th and 19th century, with particular emphasis on proofs of nobility and genealogical trees and their procedures. "The most interesting part of my work right now is to discover and illuminate the ancient archives that disappeared over the centuries and to virtually reconstruct them using technology," said Ms. Vanesio during her stay at HMML. "My research at the Malta Study Center was marked by incredible discoveries. The documents preserved in Palazzo Falson and in Catholic University of Washington, now on vHMML, are the most important evidence of the archival dispersion during the 19th and 20th centuries: a big part of these sources was bought on the antique market, in particular from Naples, and became part of private collections. Thanks to these case studies, I can reconstruct the ancient archival connections between the same sources now scattered in different places of the world."

Ms. Vanesio will be finishing her dissertation in the fall of 2017, and defending her thesis in 2018.

Devon Lee, Student Intern at the Notarial Archives, Valletta

In January 2017, Ms. Devon Lee conducted a three-week volunteer internship at the Notarial Archives in Valletta, sponsored by Drs. Joan Abela and Theresa Zammit Lupi of the Notarial Archives Resource Council, and supported by HMML's Malta Study Center. Ms. Lee comes from La Crosse, Wisconsin, and recently graduated from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities with a bachelor of arts majoring in art history and fine arts, with a minor in Medieval studies. Her coursework involved significant studies in chemistry, given her interest in conservation and conservation science. Ms. Lee became interested in Malta during her studies at HMML's week-long Minnesota Manuscript Research Laboratory workshop in 2016, which included conversation about the important preservation work and unique challenges Malta's climate poses for paper conservation.

"I have always been interested in art and art history, but I found in the last few years that I wanted to approach these subjects from a scientific and more analytical standpoint," noted Ms. Lee after her return from Malta. "I found the experience of working at the Notarial Archives of Malta very valuable. The preservation of the documents belonging to the Archives is an endeavor which began relatively recently, so in addition to working alongside highly qualified and talented conservators, I was able to learn about the process of establishing a conservation practice. I had a fair amount of independence at the Archives, which was a welcome experience for me. I learned and observed many practices for cleaning, flattening, and mending paper and parchment, all of which I will use frequently in my career."



Ms. Devon Lee at the Notarial Archives in Valletta.

Having completed her degree, Ms. Lee will be starting work this fall, and will apply to art conservation graduate programs in 2018.

HMML's Malta Study Center Participates in International Museum Day

HMML's Malta Study Center helped organize local exhibitions in Malta to celebrate International Museum Day on May 18, 2017. This year's theme focused on "Museums and Contested Histories: Saying the Unspeakable in Museums." One joint exhibition took place at the Palazzo Falson Historic House Museum, featuring the work "Ivsti Lipsi PoliorceticΩn sive de machinis tormentis" by Justus Lipsius, published in 1605. The book was owned by Giovanni Uterlusci, who was condemned for heresy in 1666. His small library located in the Via della Croce entered the papal collection, whence it was donated to the Biblioteca Alessandrina at Sapienza University in Rome on March 19, 1667. Sometime in the late 18th century it was sold from the library as a duplicate, and made its way into Olof Frederick Gollcher's Library. The second exhibit was located at the Casa Rocca Piccola's Archivum de Piro, an invoice for the medical treatment of a Muslim slave dated November 16, 1726. Baron Giovanni Pio de Piro (1673-1752) paid 4 scudi for the care of the baron's Muslim slave Mustafa Osmon, who had fallen ill and required twelve days of treatment in the slave prison's infirmary in Valletta. This care demonstrated the slave's value as property and reinforced the patriarchal structure of the master-slave relationship.



Exhibit for the "Receipt for the Medical Care of a Slave." Archivum de Piro. Box 13. Bundle 7. Item 2, dated 16 November 1726.

Curator Presents at the National Workshop on Christian Unity

On May 3, Dr. Gullo was invited to speak as part of the National Workshop on Christian Unity held in Minneapolis, Minnesota focusing on HMML's mission and its relationship to Interfaith Dialogue. Dr. Gullo's presentation, "Preserving the Christian Heritage in the Middle East," provided an introduction and overview of the efforts of HMML to save handwritten culture in the Middle East and beyond. The presentation featured stories and images describing HMML's manuscript preservation work around the world. The National Workshop on Christian Unity was organized after Vatican II to equip local leadership for the tasks of ecumenical ministry and dialogue, including interfaith understanding to overcome divisions and celebrate unity.

HMML's Malta Study Center Sponsors Sessions at the Renaissance Society of America Conference

HMML's Malta Study Center sponsored three sessions at the Renaissance Society of America's annual conference held March 30 to April 1 2017, in Chicago, Illinois. The first session focused on "Captivity and Culture: Relation between Europe and the Arab Countries in the Early Modern Period," featuring presentations by Drs. Oumelbanine N. Zhiri, Daniel Hershenzon, and Eric Dursteller. The second session, "Trading Freedom for Liberty: Redefining Rights, Sovereignty, and Identity in Early Modern Europe," featured papers by Dr. Susan Longfield Karr, Dr. Kathleen Davis, and Ms. Elisa Jones. The final session was devoted to a roundtable discussion on "Active Learning about Early Modern Periods: Engaging Students' Imaginations to Deepen their Understanding" including presentations by Drs. Susan Hrach, Adriana Grimaldi, Elise Lonich Ryan, Valerie Taylor, and Daniel Gullo.



The Malta Study Center
Hill Museum & Manuscript Library
Saint John's University
2835 Abbey Plaza | PO Box 7300
Collegeville, MN 56321-7300
www.hmml.org/malta-study-center.html

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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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Valletta, Malta

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Joseph S. Micallef KMOB, UOM
Committee Chair
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Fra' Thomas Mulligan KJ
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