



# MELITENSIA

THE MALTA STUDY CENTER AT THE HILL MONASTIC MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY

FALL AND WINTER 2000-2001

*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 Monastic Manuscript Library.*

*With gratitude the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library acknowledges a generous grant from the Grotto Foundation of St. Paul, MN. Their support for the programs of the Malta Study Center has made possible the inauguration of Melitensia.*

## Welcome

*Welcome to the inaugural issue of Melitensia, the newsletter of the Malta Study Center at the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library. 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.*

## The Malta Study Center at the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library

Among the preservation projects undertaken by the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, none compares in longevity and productivity to HMML's efforts to preserve the archival and manuscript collections housed in the island nation of Malta. Since 1973 HMML has worked to microfilm not only the vast archive of the Knights of Malta, but it has also helped to preserve a range of other archives that together comprise an invaluable resource for historical research.

HMML's work in Malta was made possible through the efforts of Mr. Joseph S. Micallef, the Honorary Consul General of Malta in Minnesota. His initial introduction and championing of the project secured the governmental and ecclesiastical authorization necessary for its commencement. In turn, this led to HMML's very productive relationships

with the staffs of the National Library in Valletta and the Cathedral Museum and Library in Mdina.

The resources which HMML has sought to preserve in Malta have a significance based not only on their intrinsic cultural value, but also on their uniqueness as historic artifacts. The Archives of the Knights of Malta, housed in the National Library of Malta, have few peers as an unbroken record that extends from the early twelfth century through 1798. They detail the activities of the Knights of Malta, founded initially as the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, with the mission of caring for sick pilgrims in Jerusalem. In the ensuing centuries the Order relocated, first to the island of Rhodes, and then in the sixteenth century to the island of Malta, situated between Sicily and the coast of North Africa. Here the Knights assumed the name by which they have since been known, and they governed the island until Napoleon displaced them in 1798. However, though the Knights no longer play the leading role they once did in Malta, the architectural creations of the Knights still shape the Maltese landscape. These structures, as well as the abundant archives, witness to an organization that drew its membership from throughout Europe.

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*Detail from a 12th-century  
charter, Archives of the  
Knights of Malta.*

The Cathedral Library and Museum in Mdina likewise contain materials of inestimable value for historians. Here are housed the archives of the Roman Inquisition in Malta — one of the few extant and complete archives of that organization in Europe. Here too are

the church archives which detail hundreds of years of local history. Taken together, all of these collections allow for the study of the intersection of a major international organization — the Knights of Malta — with an island whose geography made it a cultural crossroad in the Mediterranean world.

The significance of these collections led to the establishment of the Malta Study Center at the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library. From its inception the Center has sought to promote research into these materials; and today, through the guidance of its curator, Dr. Theresa Vann, it serves scholars throughout North America and Europe.

Research at the Malta Study Center reflects the wide-ranging character of both the archives as well as of the secondary research collections contained in the Center. In its emphasis on the history of the Knights of Malta as well as the history and culture of Malta, the Center sustains scholarly research into the history of the medieval military orders; the history of medicine, commerce, warfare and shipping; music; as well as the social history of the Knights of Malta and the island of Malta.

As the Malta Study Center at HMML looks to the future, it will continue the work of preservation and the development of the collections that make it a unique cultural resource in North America. The Center also seeks to augment its service

to international scholarship through its efforts to catalog and organize the collections, and it hopes to be a cultural resource for all those who would better understand the history and culture of Malta as well as the Knights of Malta.

### Library to Host Ambassador, Honor Overseer

Ambassador George Saliba, envoy of the Republic of Malta to the United States, will pay an official visit to HMML on September 30th as part of Malta Day in Minnesota. Held annually to mark the independence of Malta as an island nation, this is the first time that HMML has hosted the event. “For over twenty-five years we have worked in close cooperation with libraries in Malta,” noted HMML director Eric Hollas. “We are thrilled to have this event take place at the Library, and we are especially privileged to have Ambassador Saliba as our guest.”

The Malta Day celebration will also see the dedication of “The Joseph S. Micallef Curator” at HMML. Named for the long-standing Honorary Consul General of Malta in Minnesota and Board member at HMML, The Joseph S. Micallef Curator directs the collections and research activities of the Malta Study Center at the Library. At its meeting of February 21, 2000, the Board of Overseers voted to honor Micallef with the first named curatorship at the Library. “It’s a singularly appropriate action for an individual who has done so much for the Library through so many years,” said Nicky Carpenter, Chair of the Board. “We are grateful for all Joe has done to foster the Malta Study Center and its curator — he has been key to the success of this unique cultural enterprise,” she continued.

## Malta Study Center Lecture Series

*The Interior Life of the Military Orders of Medieval Spain* is the title of a lecture to be delivered by Professor Joseph F. O'Callaghan of Fordham University. As the second speaker of the Malta Study Center Lecture Series, Professor O'Callaghan will present on October 23rd, 2000, at 8pm in Quad 264 on the campus of Saint John's University. The lecture is free and open to the public.

Professor O'Callaghan is best-known for his masterly work, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Cornell University Press, 1975), which is still the best single-volume history of Spain in the Middle Ages. His most recent book is *Alfonso X and the Cantigas de Santa María: A Poetic Biography* (E. J. Brill, 1998). Perhaps his greatest contribution to scholarship has been his pioneering studies of the Spanish military order of Calatrava and other, affiliated Iberian religious military orders.

Professor James Powell of Syracuse University delivered the inaugural Malta Study Center Lecture on October 28, 1999. *Crusading: 1099-1999* outlined the current status of research on religious fanaticism and the crusades and how modern preconceptions adversely affect historical research. Professor Powell is well-known for his work on canon law and the crusades. His most recent publications include *Innocent III: Vicar of Christ or Lord of the World?* (Catholic University of America Press, 1994); and *Albertanus of Brescia: The Pursuit of Happiness in the Early Thirteenth Century* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992). In 1987 he won the John Gilmary Shea Prize from the American Catholic Historical Association for his book, *Anatomy of a Crusade, 1213-1221* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986). The full text of Professor Powell's Malta Lecture is available online at [hmml.org/centers/malta/Lecture](http://hmml.org/centers/malta/Lecture).

## Curator Delivers Research

Dr. Theresa M. Vann, curator of the Malta Study Center, presented a paper entitled *John Kay, the 'Dread Turk,' and the 1480 Siege of Rhodes*. Her paper was delivered in September at a conference on the Military Orders: History and Heritage, sponsored by the London Centre for the Study of the Crusades. The work draws on her research in translating and editing the historical accounts of the Ottoman siege of the island of Rhodes.

### SPECIAL EVENT

#### THE SECOND MALTA STUDY CENTER LECTURE

### *The Interior Life of the Military Orders of Medieval Spain*

Professor Joseph F. O'Callaghan

Fordham University

October 23rd, 2000, at 8pm

Quad 264 on the campus of Saint John's University

The lecture is free and open to the public



*Map drawn after the Great Siege of Malta (1565), showing the fortifications of the Great Harbor and the construction of the new city of Valletta. Georg Braun & Fran Hogenberg, mapmakers, ca. 1600.*

## The Website of the Malta Study Center

Websites have become integral to the work of many libraries and cultural institutions, and that is certainly the case both for HMML as well as for the Malta Study Center. Because the Center strives to provide information to clientele that is dispersed throughout North America, Europe and Malta, the Center's website has become an increasingly valuable and valued vehicle of communication. Today the Center's website provides a vast amount of information about the history of Malta and the Knights of Malta, and about the resources of the Malta Study Center itself.

The utility of the Center's website was underscored recently with plaudits awarded by StudyWeb, an Internet site for educational resources for students and teachers. Since 1996 StudyWeb has reviewed and assessed the educational content of websites, and it cited the Center's website "as one of the best educational resources on the web."

StudyWeb has now featured the website under History: European History: Malta [see StudyWeb.com].

## Online Exhibit

The theme of the 1999 Hill Monastic Manuscript Library's Fall Medieval Festival was *Mapping the Millennium: A Thousand Years of Maps from the Collections of the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library*. Among the items presented, the exhibit featured a display of five rare maps of Malta from the collection of the Malta Study Center. These five maps, dating from the 16th through 19th centuries, clearly showed how the Knights of Malta developed and settled the island of Malta during the period of their administration. (Although the exhibit is over, the maps can still be viewed at [hmml.org/centers/malta/map%20exhibit/maps](http://hmml.org/centers/malta/map%20exhibit/maps)).

## Center Publishes Online Music Catalogue

The Malta Study Center recently announced the publication of its first online catalogue: Franco Bruni, *Catalogue of Music Manuscripts — Cathedral Museum, Mdina, Malta (M-MDca Mus. Ms. 1-584)*. The catalogue represents the second volume of Dr. Bruni's three-volume doctoral thesis, entitled *La Cappella Musicale della Cattedrale di Malta nel diciassettesimo e diciottesimo secolo* (The Music Chapel of the Cathedral of Malta in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries), which he presented at the "Union Formation et Recherche — Musique et Musicologie" of the Sorbonne University, Paris, in May 1998. Dr. Bruni's catalogue focuses on the music played in the Cathedral of Mdina's chapel during those centuries, with a particular focus on the composers Benigno Zerafa and Francesco Azopardi. (The catalogue may be viewed at [hmml.org/centers/malta/cathedral/music/Index](http://hmml.org/centers/malta/cathedral/music/Index)).

## The Knights of Malta: Proofs of Nobility Online

The most recent addition to the website is a catalogue of Section 15 of the Archives of the Knights of Malta, the Proofs of Nobility. Each knight had to present proof of nobility as part of the application for entry into the order. In the instance of Section 15, the proofs were presented by French, Italian, Spanish, and some German knights during the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. ([hmml.org/centers/malta/knights/sect15](http://hmml.org/centers/malta/knights/sect15)). Note that the genealogies are not available over the web, but interested researchers may order microfilms of the records.

[www.hmml.org](http://www.hmml.org)

*Since 1996 StudyWeb has reviewed and assessed the educational content of websites, and it cited the Center's website "as one of the best educational resources on the web."*

*StudyWeb has now featured the website under History: European History: Malta [see StudyWeb.com].*

## Recent Acquisitions

- Jerzy Baranowski, et al., *Zakon Maltanski w Polsce*. Warsaw, 2000.
- Michael Ellul, *History on Marble: A corpus of inscriptions in the presidential palaces in Valletta, San Anton and Verdala Malta*. Malta, 1998.
- Thalia Gouma-Peterson, ed. *Anna Komnene and her Times*. New York, 2000.
- Nicholas de Piro. *The Temple of the Knights of Malta*. Malta, 1999.
- Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Documents Armeniens; Historiens Grecs; Historiens Orientaux; Croisades Lois*. Paris, 1841-1876. 15 volumes.
- Török József and Legeza László. *Máltaiak*. Budapest, 1999.
- Nicholas Vatin. *Sultan Djem. Un prince ottoman dans l'Europe du Xve siècle d'après deux sources contemporaines: Vâki `ât-i Sultân Cem, Oeuvres de Guillaume Caoursin*. Ankara, 1997.

## Gifts Received

- Robert I. Burns and Paul E. Chevedden, "The Finest Castle in the World," *History Today* 49 (November 1999): 10-20. Gift of the authors.
- Nicholas Coureas and Christopher Schabel, eds. *The Cartulary of the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom of Nicosia*. (Nicosia, 1997). Gift of Catherine Christensen, Berea College.
- Kasper Elm, "L'Ordre des Chanoines Reguliers du Saint-Sepulchre de Jerusalem," *Helvetica Sacra* 4 (n.d.). Gift of the author.
- Kaspar Elm, "Die Spiritualität der geistlichen Ritterorden des Mittelalters," in "*Militia Christi*" e *Crociata nei secoli XI-XIII* (Milan, 1992), pp. 477-518. Offprint. Gift of the author.
- Amnon Linder. "Deus venerunt gentes: Psalm: 78 (79) in the Liturgical Commemoration of the Destruction of Latin Jerusalem," *Bar-Ilan Studies in History 4: Medieval Studies in Honour of Avrom Saltman* (n.d.) 145-171. Offprint. Gift of the author.
- Amnon Linder, "The Loss of Christian Jerusalem in Late Medieval Liturgy," *Jewish Art* 23-24 (1997/98): 165-178. Offprint. Gift of the author.
- Helen Nicholson. "Women on the Third Crusade," *Journal of Medieval History* 23 (1997): 335-349. Offprint. Gift of the author.
- Andrei Pippidi. "Aperçu sur les rapports des Roumains avec les Ordres de Chevalerie," *Radu Manolescu* (1996): 104-114. Offprint. Gift of the author.

## You Can Help Our Mission

As a privately endowed, independent research library and cultural center, HMML depends on the support of library patrons to maintain and advance the Malta Study Center. We invite your support of our work to preserve the legacy of the Maltese archives by making a gift to the Malta Study Center Annual Fund, by establishing or augmenting a memorial book fund, or through direct capital gifts to the Center. Your investment will ensure the development of a growing network of financial support for the programs and activities of the Malta Study Center. In addition to a cash gift, planned gifts involving securities, trusts or real property offer you the opportunity to establish a lasting endowment in support of the Malta Study Center. At the same time you will enhance your own financial well-being through distinct tax advantages. For more information about gifting options that are most convenient or appropriate for you, please contact the HMML Development Office at (320) 363-2095.



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