

MELITENSIA

Spring 2019

A Newsletter of the Malta Study Center

9

FAMIGLIA GISULFO

Francesco Antonio
GISULFO, e
Platamone
Pretendente

Teresa
GISULFO, e Platamone
Principessa
del Melagno
al presente
Marchesa Cedronio

Giuseppe
GISULFO Attuale
Duca d' Ollada
spolo l' Ill. D. Rosalia
Lucchese e Bosco
de Principi di Cam-
po franco al
1717~

Francesco
GISULFO
Duca d' Ollada
spolo l' Ill. D. Habel-
la Platamone
al
1687~

Giuseppe
GISULFO Capitano
di Giustizia di Pa-
termo al 1688~
Capitano della Guar-
dia Elemana, Duca d'
Ollada al 1688~
spolo
D. Alechona Colnax
go ~

Placido
ter
Placido Agostino
GISULFO
spolo di
D. Alessandra Maria
Galletti, e Spatafora
al
1621~

Francesco
GISULFO
Vescovo di Gela
Presidente, e Gene-
ral Capitano del Re-
gno di Sicilia
al
1656~

Paolo
GISULFO
Spolo di D. Aleo-
nora Olorio
mori
al
1635~

Agostino
GISULFO Nobile
Genovese Presiden-
te del Real Patrimo-
nio, Vicario Gene-
rale Reggente eletto
l'anno 1630 spolo di
D. Laura Spatafora
vivea al 1639.
e mori al
1635.

Dis. Desino per la Cattedrale 1550
V. R. Gio. Maria de Andrea Cont.
G. R. Gio. Maria de Andrea Cont.



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

Dear Melitensians,

I am often asked whether or not the Malta Study Center has its own rare book and manuscript collection given that the Center's primary mission remains the digitization of the endangered manuscript heritage of Malta and the Order of Malta. I am always happy to reply that the acquisition of rare Melitensia has been part of the Center's history since its foundation in 1973.

Our acquisition policy is an important part of our long-term preservation mission. These works, both manuscript and printed, help us catalog items in collections photographed by HMML and allow us to participate in international exhibitions. By acquiring rare documents, we can preserve them in our collection and make them accessible to the public for study. Over the next few issues we will be highlighting some of these recent, notable acquisitions as related to our mission to preserve the cultural heritage of the Knights of Malta and the Maltese people.

In January, we released our first major digital humanities project, helping create the next generation of online finding aids dedicated to our microfilm and digital preservation projects. The Malta Parish Archives Project, discussed in this issue, resulted from an international collaboration that involved Dun Gwann Azzopardi and Mario Gauci of the Cathedral Archives, Fr. Nicholas Doublet of the Archives of the Archdiocese of Malta, the Malta Study Center, and Michael Buhagiar of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Divine Grace Museum and Archive. I want to thank all of you for helping us realize this project.

Sincerely,

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



*Above: Stephen Busuttill of Image Consulting
Malta at the National Archives of Malta, Mdina.*

*On the cover: Genealogical tree of the Gisulfo family, 1750. Palazzo Falson
Historic House Museum, Mdina. HMML project number PFM 00019.*

MELITENSIA

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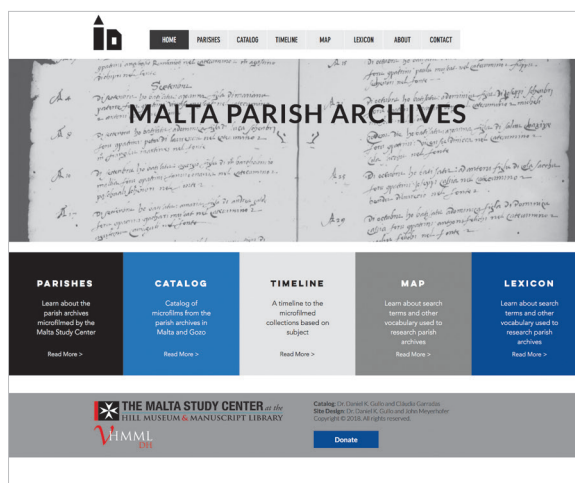
Wayne Torborg, imaging

Spectrum Marketing Services, printer

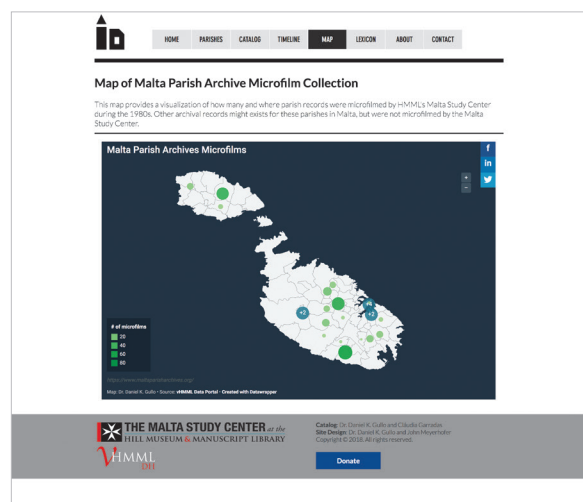
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Malta Parish Archives Website Published Online

In January, the Malta Study Center launched the Malta Parish Archives website, a free online finding aid and digital resource for the parish archives from Malta and Gozo microfilmed by the Center during the 1980s. The website was designed to aid the novice and advanced researcher, particularly those interested in Maltese genealogy and local parish history. It contains a variety of features that facilitates a user's ability to find, study, and view those microfilms that have been scanned and made available in vHMML Reading Room. People who use the site will find a lexicon helping describe the contents of parish archives in addition to a timeline showing which parish records were microfilmed by the dates of the records.



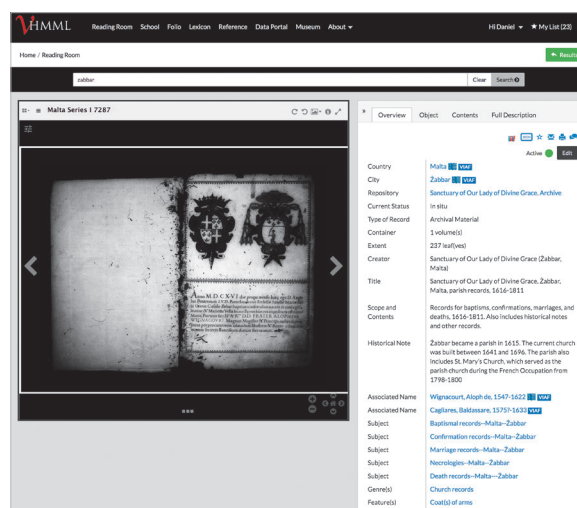
Above: Malta Parish Archives home page.



Above: Map of parish archives microfilmed by the Malta Study Center.

The Malta Parish Archives Project was developed using metadata harvested from vHMML Data Portal, which allows scholars to collect and analyze data from vHMML Reading Room for digital humanities projects. The Malta Parish Archives Project is part of HMML Digital Humanities, or vHMML DH, a website that provides researchers with tools for studying manuscripts.

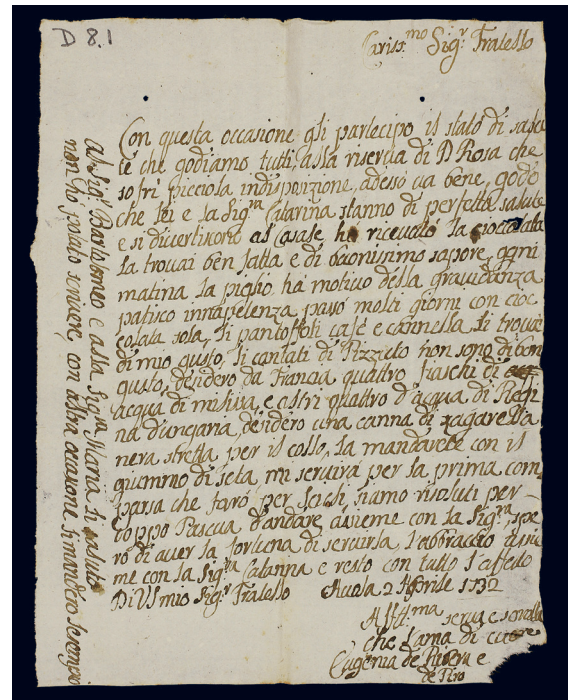
Right: vHMML Reading Room displaying a record from the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Divine Grace Archive, Żabbar.



Revisiting the Archivum de Piro, Casa Rocca Piccola, Valletta, Malta

The Archivum de Piro is found in the palazzo of the Casa Rocca Piccola in Valletta, Malta. The collection contains items from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, including account books, wills, legal documents, and correspondence mainly issued by Giovanni Pio de Piro (1673-1752), first Baron of Budach and first Marquis de Piro. Gio Pio, as he is often called, held important positions in the administration of the Order of Malta and local government. His marriage to the wealthy Anna Antonia Gurgion, whose father was *maestro di sala* at the Magistral Palace, only increased his influence within the city.

The Marquis de Piro was heavily involved in the affairs of the island, including being named *segreto* of Malta, Gozo and Comino with administrative powers over the Order of Malta's financial dealings in the islands. An example of this power can be seen in the account book *Esito fatto dal segreto Barone de Piro dal primo maggio 1721 per tutto ottobre 1721* (below), which describes the archipelago's expenses related to the Order's properties that he administered.



Above: Letter from Eugenia de Piro to Vincenzo de Piro, 1732 April 2. Archivum de Piro, Box D bundle 8. HMML project number FPMPL1 00054 008.

As a private archive, the collection contains documents with personal details about the family's history. Letters from Gio Pio's sons and other relatives fill the collection narrating their lives as the family expanded its influence in Malta, Italy, and France. For example, a 1732 letter (above) written by Eugenia de Piro to her brother Vincenzo informs him about the family's health and thanks him for the gifts that he had sent to her.

In 2017, the Malta Study Center completed the digitization of the pre-1815 records of the Archivum de Piro in partnership with the Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti and the de Piro family.

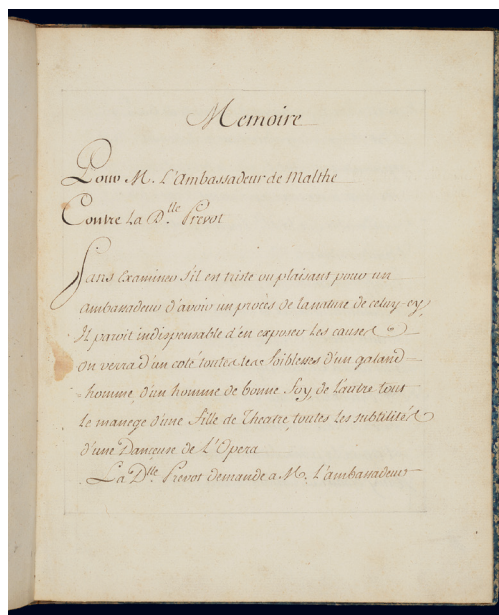
- Dr. Valeria Vanesio

Gozo	
Peso della Paffa	1.
Peso di Hamu	4.
Peso di S. Giorgio	7.
Peso di S. Maria Solana	10.
Terre di Leno	12.
Terre di Maria Maria Maria	14.
Terre di Maria Maria	16.
Terre di Maria Maria	18.
Terre di Maria Maria	20.
Terre di Maria Maria	22.
Comino	
Salario del Capo Masaro et Oglis gl'Alfondo	24.
Salario del Capo S. Maria	25. 26.
Spesa di S. Maria e Cera	27.
Spesa di S. Maria	28.
Spesa di S. Maria	29.
Spesa di S. Maria	30.
Spesa di S. Maria	31.
Spesa di S. Maria	32.

Left: Account book of the *Segreto* Giovanni Pio de Piro, 1721. Archivum de Piro, ms 97. HMML project number FPMPL1 00097.

Manuscript Acquired by the Malta Study Center

The Malta Study Center has acquired an important manuscript that helps us understand the power and privilege of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem in France during the eighteenth century. The *Mémoire pour Monseigneur l'ambassadeur de Malthe contre la damoiselle Prevot* was written by Fra' Jean Jean-Jacques de Mesmes (1675-1741) as slander against the dancer, Mademoiselle Françoise Prévost (1680-1741). Originally published in 1726, the *Mémoire* was intended to shame Fra' de Mesmes' lover, Mademoiselle Prévost, whom he accused of cheating on him with a younger man. The *Mémoire* contains de Mesmes' complaint and Prévost's response, where she noted that the Knight of Malta had failed to pay an annuity and deliver a promised loan of 6000 *livres*. For de Mesmes, the *Mémoire* had the opposite effect, as the Parisian aristocracy mocked him for his relationship with the dancer contrary to his religious vows. Prévost, on the other hand, took her case to court where she won and received the money owed to her.



Above: Mesmes, Jean Jean-Jacques de. “Mémoire pour Monseigneur l'ambassadeur de Malthe contre la damoiselle Prevot [ca. 1726].” Hill Museum & Manuscript Library. Collegeville, MN. HMML project number HMML 00459.



Above: Raoux, Jean. *Mademoiselle Prévost as a Bacchante* [ca. 1723]. Musée des Beaux-Arts de Tours. #1872-1-1. Public domain Wikimedia Commons.

Fra' Jean Jean-Jacques de Mesmes entered the Order of Malta as a minor in 1676. He was the son of Jean-Jacques de Mesmes (1630-1688), *Président à mortier* of the Parliament of Paris, and Marguerite Bertrand de la Bazinière. His brother, Jean-Antoine de Mesmes (1661-1723), *Premier président* of the Parliament of Paris, helped secure Fra' de Mesmes' position as ambassador of the Order of Malta to France in 1715.

Françoise Prévost was one of the most celebrated ballerinas of the eighteenth century. She was born in 1680 to humble origins in Paris. Prévost debuted in Ballet des Saisons in 1695 and at the Académie d'Opera in 1699 in the ballet *Atys*. In 1708, she introduced pantomime to the final scene of *Les Horaces*, bringing popular technique to Pierre Corneille's (1606-1684) ballet. Her career was immortalized with her solo ballet *Les Caractères de la danse* choreographed to the music of Jean Ferry Rebel (1666-1747). She was the teacher of Marie Camargo (1710-1770) and Marie Sallé (1707-1756), retiring as *première danseuse* in 1730.

Site Director Interviewed on University of Malta Campus Radio

Cláudia Garradas, Site Director of the Malta Study Center, appeared on the radio program “*Jum fil-ħajja ta’* (A day in the life of)” hosted by Dr. Emanuel Buttigieg, Senior Lecturer at the University of Malta, and Liam Gauci, Curator of the Malta Maritime Museum. Ms. Garradas discussed a day in the life of the noble household of the de Piro family in eighteenth-century Valletta. Her conversation touched on the rise of the de Piro family, and how their extensive contacts in Europe and relationship with the Order of Malta secured their family’s business ties and wealth in Sicily, Rome, and France. Her discussion was based on records she reviewed as part of the preparation for the digitization of the family’s archive, a joint venture carried out by the Malta Study Center, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti and the de Piro family at the Casa Rocca Piccola between 2015 and 2017.

Right: Cláudia Garradas, Site Director of the Malta Study Center, reviewing manuscripts at the National Archives of Malta Legal Section in Mdina.



Center’s Archivist Presents at Sapienza University

In January, Dr. Valeria Vanesio, Archivist of the Malta Study Center, and Dr. Valentina Burgassi of the Sorbonne, presented the talk “*L’Albergia della Lingua d’Italia a Malta. L’avventurosa storia di un palazzo e delle sue carte, (secoli XVI-XIX)*” at Sapienza University, Rome. Drs. Vanesio and Burgassi discussed how the Auberge of Italy, the residence of the Italian Knights, came to define Valletta’s urban context as a convent-city.

As the home of the Assembly of the Knights from the *langue* of Italy, the auberge served as a center for the Italian Knights’ administrative activities in Malta and Italy, holding its own archive detailing their dealings within the Order of Malta and the *langue*. As a Renaissance palazzo, the auberge stood as a symbol of the Italian Knights’ cultural and religious power on the island, serving as both a residence for the professed Knights and as the official center of power of the *langue* in Malta.

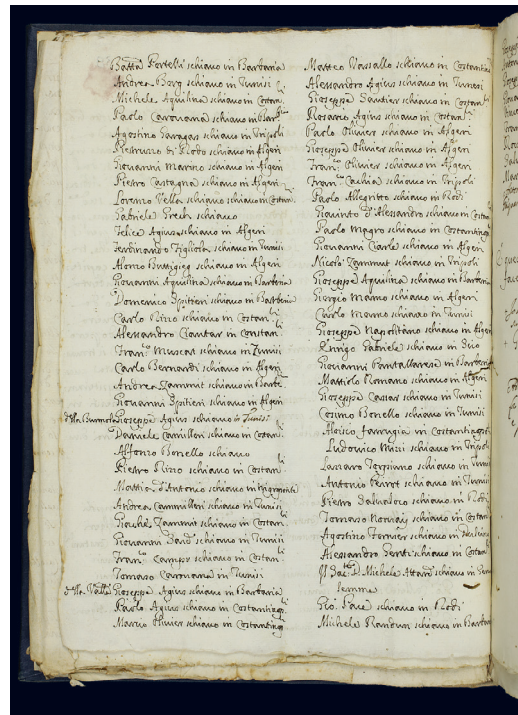
Right: Dr. Valeria Vanesio, Archivist of the Malta Study Center (left) and Dr. Valentina Burgassi (right) at Sapienza University, Rome.



Center's Curator Presents at the Grolier Club in New York City

On June 18, 2019, the American Association of the Order of Malta hosted Dr. Daniel Gullo at the Grolier Club in New York City, where he presented on the recent digitization work of the Archives of the Confraternity of Charity in Valletta, a project funded by the Achelis and Bodman Foundation. Dr. Gullo's talk, "Breaking Chains, Redeeming Captives: The Order of Malta and the Confraternity of Charity" discussed how the Confraternity of Charity worked within the legal structures established by larger European and North African powers through its willingness to recognize their legal documents, care for them in their archive, and carry out the confraternity's activities within an established Mediterranean legal network in order to redeem Maltese slaves. The event included a reception following the discussion, where members of the American Association learned about the Center's ongoing work and its mission to preserve the manuscript and archival heritage of Malta and the Order of Malta.

Right: "List of Maltese Slaves, 1722 September 6." Archives of the Confraternity of Charity, Valletta, Legato di Napoli, vol. 27, fol. 38v. HMML project number KKM 00055.



Malta Study Center Sponsors Session at the Renaissance Society of America Conference

The Malta Study Center sponsored a session at the Renaissance Society of America's annual conference held in Toronto, Canada, March 17–19, 2019. The session focused on the history of eighteenth-century slavery and redemption in the early modern Mediterranean. The panelists included Dr. Oumelbanine Zhiri, University of California San Diego, who presented a paper "Ahmad ibn al-Qâdi in Malta," and Dr. Daniel Gullo who delivered the paper, "The Confraternity of Charity and the Redemption of Maltese Slaves in the Mediterranean." The session was organized by Dr. Eric Dursteler of Brigham Young University and chaired by Dr. Daniel Hershenzon of the University of Connecticut.

Workshop at the Mediterranean Seminar, Captivity and Ransom in the Mediterranean

Dr. Gullo participated in the workshop panel, "How did Gender and Captivity Shape each Other in the Premodern Mediterranean?" at the spring meeting of the Mediterranean Seminar held at Brown University on May 4–5, 2019. Dr. Gullo's intervention discussed the problems of masculinity, gender, and slavery for members of the Order of Malta after the 1565 Great Siege of Malta. His paper analyzed the increasing importance of gendered notions of violence and the emasculation of the Turk and North African Muslim within the engravings and woodcuts of the statutes of the Order of Malta. He discussed how these engravings created concepts of masculine identity and hierarchy within the Order as it emerged from the devastation of the Great Siege to reestablish its membership under the authority of the Grand Master.



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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 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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