

Melitensia Resources Overseas: Two Case-Studies

Lillian Sciberras*

Abstract

The building of a large corpus of data concerning Maltese elections between 1921 and 2009, contained in John C. Lane's Maltadata.com site, and the wide-ranging research on the Maltese-Australian emigrant story undertaken by Barry York are studied as two separate instances considered as important overseas information resource clusters concerning Malta. The author acknowledges the invaluable collaboration of the informants for the content of this paper.

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Formerly Head of Library, Information and Archive Studies, Centre for Communication Technology (now Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences), University of Malta. Now retired, she sits on the National Archives and Malta Libraries Councils and the University of Malta LIS Board of Studies.

Introduction

What follows are two studies of Melitensia research and information-building activity carried out in diverse ways, for different purposes, utilizing differing methodologies, in two continents.

The first concerns Prof. John C. Lane's determined efforts, spanning over thirty years, striving to compile and add value to electoral data for all the national, local and European Parliament elections and referenda held in Malta since 1921. The decades of activity have resulted in Maltadata.com. The content of this website, rich in varied datasets and detailed tabulations, is an unparalleled information resource that the country would do well to consider adopting and maintaining, taking the cue from Lane's own promptings.

The second case-study has to do with the diverse ways in which the Maltese emigrant connection to Australia has been assiduously researched, studied, and documented by Dr Barry York, a Maltese-Australian who has contributed significantly to recording the intimate relationship between the two countries.

Both studies, based on the interview as a research method, had originally been undertaken in the year 2000 as part of a chapter in a PhD thesis entitled *Melitensia: Information resource and national memory* (University of London, 2001). The two valued informants are owed my deepest gratitude for their favourable disposition and availability both during the initial interviews conducted in the year 2000, and for enthusiastically agreeing to collaborate once again by updating the information right up to April 2012.

John C. Lane's Maltadata.com WWW site

John C. Lane was for several years on the teaching staff of the State University of New York at Buffalo, as Professor of Political Science. He has partially utilized his retirement by continuing to work on the study and analysis of Maltese political elections as a practical laboratory for the operations of the Single Transferable Vote system (STV), an activity begun as a research project back in 1976, while on sabbatical leave in Malta. His initial visit was followed by numerous others over the years.

With the increasing availability of personal computers, the considerable mass of data collected by him over time was transferred into coded form for facilitating statistical analysis. The data on Maltese elections were thus for the first time organized in an advantageous way as useful information, hitherto unavailable to researchers. Lane's mining efforts have produced what is effectively a valuable information resource for Malta, and in 1990 the data were issued by him and made available to interested libraries there on disk. Their bibliographic descriptions constitute the earliest discrete entries for electronic files in the *Malta National Bibliography*¹. The coded data were also deposited with the Lijphart Elections Archive at the University of California at San Diego and with the Archive of the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan from where users could freely download material using ftp, the file transfer protocol.

The arrival of the World Wide Web since those pioneering days has enabled the possibility of browsing the data in plain-text and, in the second half of the 1990s, he took the initiative of assembling and compiling the Maltadata.com site (<http://www.maltadata.com>), taking advantage of the flexibility afforded by HTML. This has opened up access to the greatest number of users possible. At the time of this current writing (Spring 2012) all the elections held between 1921 and 2009 are covered. The venture thus currently involves no less than "3870 candidacies in general elections and 4125 candidacies in local council elections" (Lane, 2012 February 26).

What follows is an account of the findings concerning the site as a Melitensia information resource, knitted in with relevant background information and reflection. The findings themselves were initially obtained from answers to my questions, given by John Lane on 15 November 2000 to an e-mail questionnaire sent to him on 10 November 2000. Unless otherwise stated, all subsequent references for quoted material in this section are to answers to this interview questionnaire. In seeking to obtain more current information, however, the reporting has been supplemented, where needed, by updates solicited from him and received on 26th February 2012. In each such case, the date reference is given as necessary.

Lane's own background is that of political science with an interest centred on the STV system and its workings. Not knowing Maltese, he occasionally relies on the intervention of Maltese research assistants for materials available only in the language, and for hard to trace documents. Lane is both highly skilled in statistical analysis and remarkably computer literate. He early on taught himself HTML and WWW site construction skills as part of the process of developing the Maltadata.com site. Retirement has enabled him to continue to devote time to Malta-related research and to developing the site.

Maltadata.com is a case of Melitensia by default. The original *raison d'être* of the research underlying the site having been specifically the study of STV as an electoral system in practice. Malta and Ireland appear to be the only two countries which have used the system consistently for national elections (as opposed to states or individual legislatures within larger jurisdictions) over a long stretch of years². The site represents the organized data assembled by Lane in what may be likened to a social science laboratory dedicated to a specific and rarely used electoral system as practised in one country. The site also eventually grew to accommodate a number of studies, largely emanating from the original database, on Maltese politics, especially ones by the compiler himself.

The Internet, and particularly the World Wide Web, arrived in time to transfer all the material collected in electronic form onto it. The compiler's main considerations in this regard were the obvious advantages the medium has over print for the specific type of material collected, stored and manipulated over time. A print alternative would have been too costly to produce and maintain, and the ease and speed of updating and accessing, together with the much lower financial outlay required, were combinations which resulted in a natural home for the project on the Web. One of his own expectations of use resulting from a Web presence has met with unqualified success: "That there would be an audience larger than a classroom and larger than the readers of political science journals for the kind of materials I had collected and analyzed" (Lane, 2000, November 15).

The site's users appear to be varied in both nationality and scope, although the raw logs of usage provide only limited information due to their inability to trace the personal identity of users, and only at times their country of origin. The information available, however, indicates "... users from many different countries, with Malta, the U.S., the UK and Australia at the top of the list. I would guess that they make up a mix of people with either a personal or a scholarly interest in how Malta votes". In the February 2012 update referred to above, he adds another interest category – that of people interested or involved in electoral reform in their own countries, and continues "... STV is often invoked by reformers as a desirable alternative. In addition, to judge from some queries I received, graduate students engaged in a thesis or dissertation project that involves electoral systems."

The expected natural interest from Malta in the site is evidently supplemented by enquiry from at least three other countries all having relatively large overseas Maltese populations, this possibly being the principal reason for accessing it. Although impossible to gauge, part of the interest from Australia and the United States may, however, be attributed to interest in STV itself since the system is used in the former for electing a number of Australian jurisdictions including the Senate, and in the latter for local elections in Cambridge, Massachusetts (Lane, 2000, p. 220).

Although the compiler confesses that he rarely checks statistics of web site use, it appears that around 900 Megabytes a month are accessed on the site itself. Use appears to be double that amount in years when elections are held. There is no further information regarding the use (whether simply consulted, printed, or downloaded) to which the accessed files are then put.

Ironically, though not surprisingly, the core element within the site is the one used least. The core is made up of the full-length database which is itself the basis of all the other information. Such paucity is understandable since the empirical, analytical and quantitative research which the coded form of the data enables makes it, by its very nature, restricted to very few individuals specializing in STV studies. Prof. Michael Gallagher in Ireland is identified as one such engaged in that field of enquiry, whereas none appear to be conducting this kind of research in Malta itself.

Lane here gives an idea of the scope and detail contained in the core dataset: "It covers each of the several thousand candidacies separately, tallying for each candidacy the number of votes on each separate count that was required. For general elections alone a total of 3305 distinct counts were required. The dataset also provides for each candidate information on his/her party affiliation, number of times having been a candidate, and a few other details."

Traffic statistics indicate that popular sections of the site are ones which enable the retrieval of information on individual persons such as candidates for parliamentary or local council elections. Other sections described as enjoying above average use are: ones covering women candidates, possibly, according to him, in connection with the writing of term papers; that covering local council elections; and the one detailing procedures and legalities of conducting elections in Malta. Because of the inherent nature of the content of these sections it may be safe to assume that all three suggest principal use from Malta itself. Some photographs taken during election time and placed on the site appear to be popular with visitors, obviously ones feeling the need for a graphic element in a largely numerical and textual environment. Lane confesses that his own expectations of use were never clear since he was embarking, with the Web, on a voyage in uncharted waters, where the experiences of the past could not provide much guidance. His expectation regarding size of audience, quoted above, has, however, been clearly met.

The compiler now considers the site as a mature and complete one, although additional material may find its way to it following future national and local elections. There is also the possibility of adding short analytical studies and the occasional scholarly analysis and interpretation which, however, he acknowledges to be in short supply. The site's maturity status in early 2012 was composed of "258 data files in Excel format, 307 text files and 94 graphic files" (Lane, 2012 February 26), the whole totaling 62 Megabytes.

Considering the impressive user log statistics and a standing invitation to supply comments and suggestions, the compiler complains that "... the lack of feedback has been remarkable; it's a use-it-and-leave-it pattern of patronage". Appreciative mail is received occasionally but suggestions for improvement, solicited by Lane himself have, it seems, never provided the desired response. This absence may perhaps be connected with the nature of the medium where the fast-paced anonymity of the browse-and-use-and-leave pattern is not necessarily conducive to the more patient examination and dialogue pattern of traditional materials. A "book review" type of evaluation and commentary, however, would appear to be more than justified for this and other important electronic resources in Maltese scholarly vehicles, and it may be a matter of time for such awareness and practice to take hold.

The principal efforts connected with building and with maintaining the contents in electronic form preceded the Web period itself. This was a period of over two years and it included the compilation of data going back to 1921, plus the construction of tables, lists, and analyses which were themselves the by-product of the compiler's research projects. All this

was input into machine-readable form. When the Web itself came on the scene, this involved for Lane several hundred hours of learning and hand-coding the HTML and completing the construction of the site.

Now that the site is “complete” and has greatly matured not much appears to be required in terms of maintenance in between elections, although when the occasional error is spotted it is corrected. Updating the occasional article is also intermittently attempted, and the odd analytical study may be written and added during such periods. Retirement enables Lane to devote such little maintenance time to the site as is required. In terms of cost the domain name registration and Web hosting which he describes as “fairly trivial” do not appear to present notable financial difficulties. The experience of Maltadata.com illustrates the ease with which, once compiled, even relatively massive amounts of data such as those found on this site can be corrected, updated, and maintained, and undoubtedly highlights the suitability of the online medium for precisely such undertakings.

Asked what raw informational materials he needs to maintain the currency of the site the compiler replied that these are essentially the electoral results, which form the basis of the collected data, published in the *Malta Government Gazette*, and the occasional official publication such as texts of statutes which are themselves published in the Gazette. Whereas the use of personal contacts in Malta to forward materials was previously emphasized since items such as the Gazette were only available in the U.S. in Washington, D.C., presumably in the Library of Congress or in the Maltese embassy, the Gazette (and consequently the results data) is now available on the Department of Information’s website (<http://www.doi.gov.mt/default.asp>). The progress being registered in electronic government in Malta has, of late, meant that the even texts of individual pieces of legislation have become available on the Justice Services website (<http://justiceservices.gov.mt/lom.aspx?pageid=24>).

Lane’s informants are occasionally called upon to assist with divining the separate identity of individuals (such as election candidates) with identical names. Such cases are far from uncommon in Malta and name authority listing for authors is, for instance, an essential though sometimes overlooked function in cataloguing practice in Maltese libraries.

Questioned about resources utilized for his project Lane found that the University Library and the Informa Current Affairs Research Agency provided runs of the Gazette (his main source) for past years. Moreover, he found both to be “marvelously accommodating”. Material such as past electoral programs was provided by both main political parties and the National Library. Of these he states that they “proved to be quite helpful, although each of them had only a disappointingly incomplete collection of their own”. The National Library of Malta is known to have a complete run of the Gazette since the first issue in 1813 (Sapienza, 1977, item 347) and for this item Lane may very well have preferred the services of the two libraries mentioned by him. Yet, his answer betrays a number of deficiencies regarding the observance of legal deposit, the systematic and comprehensive collection of the national imprint, and the consequent storage and availability of national memory materials, not to mention the delivery of services, in the National Library, the country’s foremost repository for documentary memory.

Regarding lacunae in the provision of Maltese informational documents, however, libraries in general appear to have been both helpful and obliging to him, and certainly not the source of irritation that other bureaucratic services have evidently been: “The problems are mainly with government departments and not with the libraries. The latter will not always have all the information one wants; but they know and make public what they have and they are helpful to their patrons.” Information-critical offices such as those of the Electoral Commission, the Department of Information and that for Local Councils were described as a “constant source of frustration”. The Electoral Office, for instance, appears not to be able consistently to provide data one would reasonably expect them to make available, such as those concerning numbers of women voters, or the ages of nominated candidates. Such

absence of data at the source naturally creates limitations at the more refined information and knowledge-building levels which Lane assembles on the site he attentively maintains. Other frustrations concern the availability in only one official language (Maltese) of important documents which would otherwise have “formed an integral and significant part of the Web site” such as the 1995 report of the Gonzi Commission on Electoral Reform.

The main problems encountered in the Maltadata.com endeavour are to do with the physical distance between Lane’s home in upstate New York and the country which is the focus of his research and study. His not being Maltese is perceived by him as a disadvantage in the sense that it impedes him from obtaining necessary information he might otherwise be able to get by pressurizing reluctant bureaucrats directly or through the offices of a local politician who would be in a position to exert pressure on his behalf. The Electoral Commission, for instance, insisted with Lane that they did not have basic information such as the birth dates of election candidates (information supplied by candidates on their nomination papers); yet such information was carried in published articles by a Maltese researcher in *The Times [Malta]*. Unhelpfully, the researcher in question failed to acknowledge Lane’s enquiries regarding the data, in a similar vein as the local bureaucracy, which have repeatedly been uncooperative even to Maltese assistants who he recruited specifically to assist him in gathering information.

Regarding additional uses to which the site can be put Lane believes that the data gathered there may be useful in a classroom situation. This specific use in Malta is, however, hindered by the absence at the University of both a Department of Political Science and of a course about Maltese elections. Although acknowledged use of the data by authors is permitted, none so far have approached him for such use.

The availability and extraordinary growth of the Internet in Malta has made a great difference to Prof. Lane regarding his ability to keep in touch and speedily ask for and obtain both information through e-mail and the increasing availability of materials through the Web. The access to legislation via the Malta Government website and of election-related news items via the sites of individual English-language newspapers has meant immediate access to sources. Moreover, “... online discussion groups with Maltese members often provide new insights on how politics in Malta is played and viewed.”

Asked whether he thinks the site is sufficiently well known Lane finds such a question hard for him to assess. Having had it linked from the main sites specializing in “electoral matters worldwide”, and appearing on all the main search engines, has made the site “knowable”, particularly if search terms such as “Maltese elections” or “Single transferable vote” are used to locate it. From his own experience he states that “From purely anecdotal evidence, I know that a number of Maltese politicians and journalists are aware of the site”. Reliance on the site for scholarly research has been acknowledged by a number of Maltese authors including ones such as Anton Buhagiar, Josef Lauri and Herman Schiavone.

The future of Maltadata.com, to which Lane acknowledges having given thought more than once, remains uncertain, since it is the single-handed construction of a dedicated person, now in his eighties, and not of an institution which could assure a future to the venture. Although general and local elections are covered up to 2009, he concedes that “Nothing has been added since and nothing will” (Lane, 2012 February 26).

An alternative he envisages is to pass the work on to a successor who would be able to combine the qualities he himself possesses - a knowledge of Maltese elections and of quantitative and statistical data; the ability to sustain a time-commitment over several years without remuneration; and the commitment to retain a non-partisan spirit in the undertaking. He admits that “... there is not a large pool of people to draw on, I fear, at least among my circle of acquaintances”. The solution may be for the initiative to be taken up as a research project by a national institution such as the university or, indeed, the National Archives, if sufficient resources and resolve are committed. What Lane sees as the most promising

solution “was offered in 2010 by James Borg and Josef Lauri of the [University of Malta’s] Mathematics Department. They were advocating use of a University server and were quite enthusiastic about continuing a Maltese elections database” (Lane, 2012 February 26).

Another option he has mooted is to commit the contents onto disk, and to deposit copies in a number of libraries with the hope that even in the future they will still be accessible and able to be read³.

1. The data, version 3 of the database, were issued on floppy disks in both summary and extended form, each one in Lotus 1-2-3 and ASCII formats. Totalling 8 disks they appear in the Malta National Bibliography for 1992 under the title *Maltese elections* as 5 separate items numbered 92-102, 92-103, 92-104, 92-105, and 92-106.
2. The system has been in continuous use since the 1921 elections, following the proposal of the Maltese National Assembly for proportional representation as a method for choosing the legislature, and the Colonial Office’s decision to introduce STV in spite of it being still untried for elections at a national level.
3. Prof. Lane’s concerns for the site’s long-term maintenance were communicated to several individuals, including, *inter alia*, to the present author in an e-mail communication as long ago as January 2001.

Lane, J.C. (1992). [Electronic files on Maltese elections]. In *Malta national bibliography 1992*. Valletta: National Library of Malta, p. 17.

Lane, J.C. (1999, March 24). *Sources and acknowledgements*. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.maltadata.com/sources.htm>.

Lane, J.C. (2000). A survey of elections in Malta. In C.C. Vella, (Ed.), *The Maltese Islands on the move: A mosaic of contributions marking Malta’s entry into the 21st century* (pp. 207-222). Valletta: Central Office of Statistics.

Lane, J.C. (2000, November 15). *Interview conducted by e-mail with Prof. John C. Lane... compiler of the WWW site Maltadata.com ... regarding the site as an information resource of Melitensia*. In: Sciberras, L. (2001). *Melitensia: information resource and national memory*. Ph.D. thesis (London University), pp. 387-393 as Appendix IIIb to thesis.

Lane, J.C. (2012, February 26). *Comments in Word file attached to e-mail sent to author*.

Sapienza, A. F. (1977). *A checklist of Maltese periodicals and newspapers in the National Library of Malta (formerly Royal Malta Library) and the University of Malta Library*. Msida : Malta University Press.

Barry York and Melitensia in Australia

Australia, an immense and sparsely-populated territory in the southern hemisphere, 12,000 miles away from the Mediterranean Sea, was destined to become home to the largest overseas Maltese community in history. Attard (1994) justifiably claims that “In strict geographical terms the very distant land of Australia should have been the last place to attract Maltese migrants” (p. 261). Although there were Maltese among the early nineteenth century

convicts to Australia, Maltese migration and settlement there only became significant after World War II when a severe run-down of the British defence infrastructure on the island resulted in thousands of dismissals from the military establishments and the dockyards. Following the war and the installation of self-government in 1947 the administration considered mass emigration to be a necessary safety-valve, and proceeded to create a department of emigration to assist would-be migrants financially and logistically.

While several thousands made their way to Canada, the UK, and the USA, the largest numbers headed for Australia which provided passage assistance to Maltese immigrants as of 1948. By 1986, less than forty years later, over 110,000 Australians “said they had a Maltese ancestry” (York, 1992). Undoubtedly the Maltese impact on Australian society has been primarily an economic one, particularly in terms of labour supply, York nevertheless makes the point that:

The full extent of the Maltese contribution to Australia, however, has been camouflaged by the popular stereotype of the Maltese as manual labourers. That there is a scholastic side to the Maltese contribution is proven by this survey of holdings in the National Library of Australia. Maltese-Australians ... have contributed to the building of a ‘clever country’ in a wide range of fields. (p. 1).

Barry York is a professional researcher who has, since 2006, held the position of historian at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House in Canberra. He worked for several years at the Oral History Section of the National Library of Australia, also in Canberra. He has a thorough knowledge of both the Maltese-Australian story and of the migrant community, and has researched and written widely about the subject. His replies to an e-mail questionnaire, dated November 20, 2000, form the basis of the findings obtained through this enquiry. A summary of his replies and relevant commentary are reported below, and unless otherwise stated all subsequent references for quoted material in this section are to that document.

The family of Barry’s father, born Loreto Meilak, originally hailed from the island of Gozo, although Loreto himself was born in Malta in the town of Sliema. Stationed with the Royal Air Force in London in the years following World War II, Loreto changed the family name to York several years before Barry himself was born. Barry York earned a PhD in history from the University of New South Wales, and has published, amongst others, *Empire and race: The Maltese in Australia, 1881-1949* in 1990; *Building the clever country: Maltese-Australian authors in the National Library of Australia*, referenced below, in 1992; *Maltese in Australia: Wanderings through the Maltese-Australian story from convict times to the present* in 1998; and also in 1998 produced a double-audio CD/cassette entitled *Maltese voices down under: Memories of Malta and Gozo and the voyage to Australia*, spanning the years 1916 to 1958, published by Victoria University of Technology. He has a vast experience of recording oral histories, and has held various positions including ones of research fellow at the Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies of the Australian National University in Canberra, where he founded the Maltese-Australian Studies series, and at the Europe-Australia Institute, Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne.

There is no question for him that the predominant repository for Melitensia in Australia is the National Library (NLA) in Canberra, which holds significant material on both Malta and the Maltese-Australian connection. The ‘Malta’ holdings in the NLA’s online catalogue, available at <http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/>, summarized in Table 1 below confirms a strong interest in Melitensia.

Table 1: NLA Catalogue Search under terms ‘Malta’ and ‘Maltese’ by Format

Document Format	Malta	Maltese
Book	1,203	433
Microform	188	34
Journal	125	32
Picture	92	22
Audio	48	142
Map	36	8
Manuscript	25	10
Newspaper	19	13
Music	8	5
Subscribed database*	260	39
Material digitized by the NLA	47	48
Total	2,051	786

Source:

[http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Search/Home?lookfor=Malta&type=all&limit\[\]=&submit=Find](http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Search/Home?lookfor=Malta&type=all&limit[]=&submit=Find) searching for Malta and Maltese by format, queried by the author on 26 April 2012.

*Malta-related documents (usually British official documents relating to Malta) obtained through online database subscription.

It is worth noting that there will undoubtedly be a certain amount of document overlap between the two search terms used, and a small amount of what would inevitably be false drops for netted items such as Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*, and subject terms such as ‘Maltese Dog’. The catalogue is also a functional aid to research in that it additionally provides the extent of documents and bibliographic details of each under various ways of access to holdings such as language used, decade of publication, publisher name, place of publication, series, occupation of author, in addition to the more traditionally familiar author and subject headings. Listed also are links to those items that are available as full-text resources.

While there appears to be no stated acquisitions policy for obtaining Maltese materials the NLA clearly adopts criteria consistent with its warrant to mirror the country’s “... reality of cultural and ethnic diversity ...”. Apart from the normal patterns adopted for acquiring materials from non-Australian sources the NLA has availed itself over a number of years of Barry York’s links with the Maltese-Australian community whose leaders he attempted to sensitize to regular deposit of publications. What does get deposited, in fact, may not have ever reached the NLA had it not been for such prodding though, as he willingly acknowledges: “... I have not been very successful and most of the internal type of Maltese community publications - newsletters, etc. - do not end up in the ANL or any other Australian library....”.

Considering this grey type of literature and the attendant ‘grey’ deposit pattern, one can envisage a future when sources amassed by private persons, or ones accumulated in unofficial communal archives of ethnic groups such as the Maltese, gain notable value for being unique and possibly comprehensive collections unrepresented, or only insufficiently so, in the holdings of the Australian National Library. Such raw material may become, with time,

invaluable for linking together the story of all those groups making up the evolving Australian nation.

York has undertaken pioneering bibliographical compilation with regard to Maltese-Australians and his *Building the clever country* (1992), is the prime example of the kind of listing that highlights Melitensia in that country. His is probably the only bibliographical work of this type that has so far been undertaken. In fact, he sees a need for a further compilation concerning second generation Maltese-Australians. When committed to print, such compilations naturally require updating and enhancement, and, as has been shown with John Lane's undertaking, the Web could very well become the ideal vehicle for this kind of undertaking. The combination of such Web-based bibliographies with the online catalogues of the NLA and of other relevant collections would thus provide an effective tool for collocating Melitensia-based research in Australia, Malta, or, indeed, anywhere else.

In an exercise aiming to find out how Maltese-Australians (both first- and continuing-generations) have continued to contribute knowledge through publishing "which sampled holdings by Maltese-Australians in the National Library of Australia as a way of indicating the extent of change since 1990" (York, 2012, March 22), he has undertaken an extrapolation assignment where he selected three frequently occurring Maltese surnames (Attard, Camilleri and Vella). He then followed up the publication activity for each to gain an insight into numbers and areas of interest. He admits that there is an inbuilt bias against any women authors who change surname on marriage, admitting that there is no way he can identify such persons. Tables 2 to 5 summarise his findings.

Table 2: Comparative Search of NLA Catalogue for Three Maltese Surnames, 1992-2012

1992	No. of Works	2012	No. of Works
Attard 8 individual authors	11	Attard 16 individual authors	37
Camilleri 11 individual authors	30	Camilleri 23 individual authors	64
Vella 9 individual authors	18	Vella 17 individual authors	62

Source: York, B. (2012, March 22). Update of 1992 publication, Building the Clever Country, contained in Word file attached to e-mail sent to author.

Table 3: Publishing Categories by Surname, 1992-2012 – Attard

Category	No. of Works
Engineering (all by same author)	14
Oral history recordings	4
History	3
Poetry	3
Folk music recordings	3
Finance	2
Irrigation	2
Care; Fiction; Law; Memoir; Politics; Social Work	1 of each

Source: York, B. (2012, March 22). Update of 1992 publication, Building the Clever Country, contained in Word file attached to e-mail sent to author.

Table 4: Publishing Categories by Surname, 1992-2012 – Camilleri

Category	No. of Works
Foreign policy (mostly by the same author)	22
Book illustration	6
History	6
Social work	5
Oral history interviews	4
Music	3
Folk music recordings	3
Family history	3
Vocational guidance	2
Toxicology	2
Anthropology; Art; Emergency management; Fiction; Metaphysics; Plants; Transport policy	1 of each

Source: York, B. (2012, March 22). Update of 1992 publication, Building the Clever Country, contained in Word file attached to e-mail sent to author.

Table 5: Publishing Categories by Surname, 1992-2012 – Vella

Category	No. of Works
Music (mostly by the same person)	23
Humour (mostly by the same person)	16
Art	5
Law	4
Oral history interviews	3
Fiction	2
Water management	2
Human rights	2
Probits	2
Mathematics	2
Accounting; Alpaca farming; Auctioneering; Fishing; Horticulture	1 of each

Source: York, B. (2012, March 22). Update of 1992 publication, Building the Clever Country, contained in Word file attached to e-mail sent to author.

He concludes the update exercise by observing what he sees as a:

Huge increase in intellectual contributions of Maltese-Australians through publishing in a much wider range of categories over the past 20 years. This also reflects the great expansion in publishing provided by the new technologies, something that obviously applies across the nationalities and ethnicities. It additionally mirrors the fact that so many more Maltese-Australians have succeeded in higher education, again revealing the general situation in Australian society across all people. (York, 2012, March 22).

Apart from the NLA there exist other important collections on that continent. Of these, the most noteworthy is in the State Library of Victoria (SLV) which:

... actively pursued the collection of primary source materials from the Maltese community of Melbourne and the La Trobe Valley in 1991 in preparation for a series of exhibitions about various ethnic groups in Victoria. The result is an “ethnic archive” of rich, original, materials relating to the Maltese of Victoria The archive of Maltese-Australian pictorial material is particularly impressive. Many of the images are on-line.

The SLV online catalogue available at <http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/> represents another rich source for accessing records and, through its pictures catalogue is a unique source for accessing and viewing digitized images of the Maltese-Australian story.

Although there are no known research centres exclusively focusing on Malta or on some aspect of Maltese Studies, there exists activity which affords highlighting nonetheless. The location of Victoria University of Technology (VUT) in the Maltese community’s heartland of the western suburbs of Melbourne has helped the

university to develop an interest, described by York as “very strong”, in the Maltese. Coupled with the fact that there exists at that university a number of “senior academics” with an interest in the Maltese, VUT may be seen as a centre where the Maltese-Australian connection has been actively pursued. This appears to be very much dependent on the presence of interested academics, and York contrasts the situation at VUT with Sydney where a strong Maltese community there has not attracted the same attention: “The latter point explains, perhaps, why the University of Western Sydney, also in the heart of Maltese territory, has not shown much research interest in the Maltese”.

Cuts in funding immigration and multicultural research projects in 1996 resulted in the demise of a number of university centres. An important survivor up to June 2012 was located in Canberra under the name of Centre for Immigration & Multicultural Studies (CIMS) of the Australian National University. There Dr York, during his term as research fellow between 1992 and 1996, instituted the *Maltese-Australian Studies Series* which had originally attracted Maltese government funding. The series was followed up by the *Maltese-Australian Studies new series*, and copies of publications from both were regularly sent to libraries in Malta.

The fact that mass immigration from Malta ceased in the 1970s has meant that the comparatively small Maltese-Australian community is no longer being inflated with further immigration, and this naturally has consequences for sustained research interest. Australia has, moreover, shifted its focus of attention on the Asia-Pacific zone rather than Europe, and York stated that: “I count my blessings that VUT is showing a solid interest in the Maltese”.

It is noteworthy that in both case-studies surveyed in this paper the importance of purposeful individuals appears to have been crucial to the spawning of initiatives, even though the motivation was demonstrably different in the two cases. The significance, indeed, the essential nature, of the individual as a catalyst in such projects, is evidently familiar to York:

... institutional work on the Maltese in Australia seems to depend on the instigation of individuals with a Maltese connection, most notably myself. I’m quite sure that neither CIMS nor the ANL would have become involved with the Maltese had I not personally been close to both institutions.

Oral history recordings have been a particularly prolific form of documentary heritage that has taken root in the Maltese-Australian community. An outstanding pioneer in this regard is Mark Caruana, a one-time University of Malta Library employee, who had emigrated to Australia in the early 1970s, and since built a career there in social welfare. He had collaborated with a prominent Maltese in Sydney, the late George Griffiths, and started on his recording ventures around 1976. Since then hundreds of migrants have left their memories on his tapes. He has additionally undertaken the building of collections of old photographs and other materials. York describes Mark Caruana’s lead as inspiring and acknowledges that he owes

a lot to Mark, in terms of early example and encouragement in this area The challenge in collections such as Mark's, and other community initiatives, is that the material needs to be (1) preserved professionally, (2) made easily accessible and (3) used in practical ways.

York himself possesses a "substantial" private collection consisting mostly of oral histories which he had recorded before he started similar work for the NLA. His collection also includes pictorial items gleaned from various Maltese communities throughout Australia early in the 1980s. Professional initiatives in this sphere at the national level have been centred at the Australian National Library which for a decade or so from 1988 utilized the services of Dr York who started for the NLA the Maltese-Australian Folklife and Social History Project. As of December 2000 the project had accumulated around a hundred 'Maltese' interviews as part of its Oral History Collection. Towards 1996 the project was widened to also include recordings of the uniquely Maltese form of folk music known as *Għana*. Some of these documents have been deposited in Malta itself, York having obtained the NLA's permission to present a small number of its recordings to the National Library of Malta. The issue of long-term preservation of this kind of material is undoubtedly one which remains a major area of concern to libraries and archives involved with its storage, an issue now coincidentally being addressed also within Malta. York makes the point that:

.... the ANL is the only major library in Australia to devote resources to preservation/archiving of the tapes recently the ANL entered the digital era and has decided to install a mass storage system. Suffice to say that, one hundred, two hundred, three hundred, years from now, people will be able to listen to the words of Maltese migrants in C20th Australia. And, perhaps, the ANL in Canberra will be the only place where one will be able to hear authentic għana!

Dr York does not see a market of significant size in Australia for publications, in any medium, originating in Malta, describing the market as "probably saturated", though in 2012 he adds that there may be needs for replenishing stock within the market. First generation families would typically already own two or three pictorial books about the Maltese Islands, whereas the appeal for non-print materials such as television documentaries has already been well-served by Australian television, with SBS, the special broadcasting services channel, delivering several major documentaries about Malta and the Maltese-Australians since the late 1980s. He believes that many families would have video-taped or purchased the documentaries.

York's own books on the migrant story to that country sold well, with all copies produced practically exhausted, and he reasonably concludes that that "... is quite good, given that books on the Maltese do not attract mainstream publishers". The print-runs for the two main titles, *The Maltese in Australia*, and *Empire and race* were 2,500 and 2,000, whereas for the "smaller works", i.e. research papers and bibliographies, the run varied between 100 and 800 copies. These figures might well

be considered to be a good performance in the small Maltese market, which, by comparison, might still consider any potential additional sales in Australia as not entirely insignificant. York estimated the overall market "... in the year 2000, at something between 800 and 2,000 purchasers of Malta-related publications". In the year 2000 he saw the market as being composed of three segments, with the first generation of Malta-born migrants composing the first one. The second segment was made up of the children of the first group (second generation Maltese-Australians); whereas the small third segment was perceived as being made up of Australians of differing backgrounds having an interest in Malta. Whether this scenario still applies in 2012 he concedes that he finds it difficult to speculate about.

The future performance of the market, with the maturing second and third generation, is an unknown factor. It may be that when and if these generations become curious and inquiring about their forbears' origins and background this will be for a time somehow reflected in the market for publications. With this in mind the budding Maltese online bookstores may yet discover it to be worthwhile publicizing their services in Australia and, indeed, in other traditional places of emigration. York, however, makes a point about multiculturalism which, understandably, has a bearing on the whole issue: "Second and third generation Maltese culture in Australia is diluted by the trend to marriage outside the Maltese community and by the appeal of Hollywood-based United States culture". This notwithstanding he does feel that his own historical works are popular with the second generation who feel the pull of learning about the early years in Australia of their parents, though he is quick to add that he seriously doubts there would be further interest in another book on the same topic of the history of Maltese migration and settlement. He adds in 2012 that he thinks that books (both historical and fictional) that narrate the stories of individual migrants and families are likely to find greater appeal. He furthermore conceded that "The Maltese in Australia aren't a bookish community and the basic market for books/videos, etc. ... have been satisfactorily met", though he thinks this might have changed over the past decade as the second and third generations have matured.

In 1998, while working for the Victoria University of Technology, he produced a twin audio-CD/cassette titled *Maltese voices down under* which contains selections from oral history interviews and Maltese guitar and mandolin music recorded in the western suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney. The experiment which he describes as "... a really good, professional, product" returned mixed results in that it was both well received and highly popular, and that it failed to sell. His suspicion is that the product was bought in a few instances and was simply lent out and copied throughout the community bypassing regular purchase in most cases, a state of affairs that he states does not make him unhappy, as the main thing to him is to have the product used and appreciated.

Asked about Maltese electronic documents on the Web, and uses of such material there, he said in 2000 that such documents are very well known and used essentially by the second generation and by the small community of Malta-born university-educated professionals, describing the first generation as not computer literate. In 2012, however, increased Internet penetration has altered this scenario with wider access and use.

Dr York is not optimistic regarding the future for much that has been reported above. He regrets that none of the younger generation has so far been persuaded to take up the oral history research, whereas the NLA has itself officially wound up the Maltese-Australian Folklife and Social History Project. The only Maltese who have been recorded since were

... justified in terms of their prominence in Australian society ... (Eg, Monica Attard, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's correspondent in Moscow) [sic] Paul Zammit, former member of Federal Parliament, Terry Muscat, National Secretary of the Australian Workers' Union).

York ended the interview with a general point about the period of mass migration, which, after all, is the period which principally established the connection between the two countries. He found on research visits to Malta in 1985 and 1995 that this is a period which many prefer to forget, with feelings ranging from ambivalence to an embarrassed kind of hostility. Admittedly, the decades following the Second World War, which witnessed the harsh urgency for Malta to dispatch its sons and daughters to the other end of the earth, brought sorrow and sacrifice to hundreds of families even if with hindsight, and taking the long-term view, they grant that it was ultimately the right decision that has resulted in a better life, both for those in Malta as for those in Australia. The whole matter could very well in itself provide a valid topic for an entirely different focus of research.

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