Celebrating the legacy of Cyril and Methodius

Apostles of Culture and Education

hosted by
The President of Malta
and Mr Preca

San Anton Palace, Attard
13 – 14 May 2016
Foreword by
The President of Malta

H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca

The diplomatic relations between Malta and Bulgaria have been characterised by a history of mutual and reciprocal respect and cooperation, a respect which was founded and consolidated by our predecessors.

It is within this context that I took the opportunity to join the Bulgarian Community residing in Malta in celebrating the legacy of Cyril and Methodius. This occasion serves to bring together all Bulgarians, irrespective of the country of residence, and is important as it commemorates the very foundation of the Glagolitic alphabet, the first alphabet to be used for the Slavonic manuscripts.

Cyril and Methodius, two founders of the Slavic literary culture, had a vision with a mission; its transmission we are celebrating today. Their vision conceived over eleven centuries ago, grew with time and now forms part of contemporary civilisation.

The foundation of the alphabet is fundamental to any word formation, indeed to any language. Their project matured along history and today about a third of a billion of the population of our planet use a language based on an alphabet recalling their efforts.

Remaining at this level of importance, does not make justice to the effective mission of these brothers. Their contribution is more deep rooted. They struggled for the Slavs to be ‘tolerated’ in a Christian world. Their message was relevant at their time and equally valid today. They called for unity in diversity ... based on peace and brotherly relations. The significance of this mission is still relevant today. Thus, I invite you to think about the collective memory of the works of these brothers who had landed a name to several educational and cultural institutions in Bulgaria and other parts of the globe and, since last October, the name of the Bulgarian Sunday School in Malta.

I do hope that the success of this year’s events will encourage the convening of similar ones in the years to come.
Memories . . .

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A selection of official photographs
“Il-priorità ewlenija ta’ din il-Presidenza se jkunu t-tfal.”

“The main priority of this Presidency will be children.”

H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca
(Statement during the courtesy call of His Grace Mario Grech, Bishop of Gozo, 14 April 2014)

“Jiena nemmen li huwa mportanti li t-tfal naghtuhom l-ispjazju fejn ikollhom l-opportunita’ biex jikellimu fuq l-aspirazzjonijiet taghhom - li huwa, fuq kollox, dritt taghhom.”

“I believe that it is important that children are given space whereby they have the opportunity to speak out about their aspirations – which is, after all, their right.”

H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca
(Statement during visit of St Catherine’s High School in Pembroke, 17 May 2016)
“The aim of my [school] visits is to create a safe and child-friendly space for dialogue, whereby children are engaged to speak about what makes them happy.”


“Every people must integrate the message revealed into its own culture and express its saving truth in its own language.”

Pope Benedict XVI (Saints Cyril and Methodius, General Audience, 17 June 2009)
“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

Henry Ford

“[Jien] niddedika ammont ta’ ħin sostanzjali fejn it-tfal jitkellmu b’mod liberu.”

“[I] dedicate a substantial amount of time during which children are allowed to speak in a free manner.”

H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca
(Statement during visit of St Catherine’s High School in Pembroke, Malta, 17 May 2016)
'The wellbeing of children is something which must go beyond academic discourse, and become tangibly translated into the everyday lives of our children.'


"By prioritising the wellbeing of every child, we send a strong message that the wellbeing of all children is an essential factor in the sustainable wellbeing of our communities, our society, and our nation."

H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca (Speech at the inauguration of the newly-refurbished outdoor play area of the Playmobil FunPark, 21 June 2016)
“It is when we harness the true meaning of the value of love, that we can then be able to harness other values such as the value of solidarity.”

H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca
(Statement when presiding over a prize-giving ceremony of a competition organized by the Central Bank of Malta in collaboration with the Malta Community Chest Fund, 12 April, 2016)

“By exercising their own charism, Cyril and Methodius made a decisive contribution to the building of Europe not only in Christian religious communion but also to its civil and cultural union.”

Pope John Paul II
(Slavorum Apostoli, 2 June 1985)
“. . . ‘The President’s Secret Garden’ has created a community of learning that prioritises critical reflection. It combines an awareness of environmental sustainability and education for peace, within a pedagogy rooted in relationship-building.”

H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca
(Council of Europe Conference for the launch of its new Strategy on Children’s Rights 2016-2021, Sofia, Bulgaria, 5-6 April 2016)

“Involving children to visualize the value of love is a great statement.”

H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca
(Statement when presiding over a prize-giving ceremony of a competition organized by the Central Bank of Malta in collaboration with the Malta Community Chest Fund, 12 April, 2016)
“Striving for the dignity, equality and participation of children is vital if we are to achieve a peaceful transformation of our world, and the realisation of human wellbeing for children across Europe, and for future generations.”

H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca
(Council of Europe Conference for the launch of its new Strategy on Children’s Rights 2016-2021, Sofia, Bulgaria, 5-6 April 2016)

With the staff of the Bulgarian Sunday School Cyril and Methodius, Malta: from left to right: Valcho Stoychev Valchev (Director), Asenka Bogdanova-Manova (Teacher, Junior classes), Yordanka Chakarova (Teacher, Senior classes), Gergana Kostova (Teacher, First, Second and Third Grades) and Lidia Kortova (Teacher, First, Second and Third Grades)
With tenor Mro Boiko and Mrs Zvetanov

With soprano Dr Andriana Yordanova
With pianist
Mro Dott. John Galea

With Prof.
and Mrs Andrei Bojadžiev
During the courtesy call by H.E. Marin Raykov, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Bulgaria to Malta

With H.E. Marin Rakov and Mrs Raykova
During the courtesy call by Dr Borislav Boyanov, the Honorary Consul of Malta to the Republic of Bulgaria

Dr Borislav Boyanov, on his behalf and on behalf of his family, presented a prestigious icon of Sveta Bogoroditsa (translated, Holy Mother of God) produced by Studio Dimchovsky, to H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca
During the inauguration of the fine art exhibition by Bulgarian artists; from left to right: Mrs Raykova, President Emeritus of Malta H.E. Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, the Ambassador of Malta to Bulgaria H.E. Prof. Lino Bianco, the Ambassador of Bulgaria to Malta H.E. Marin Raykov, Ms Yasenka Ivanova, Mr Milen Ivanov, the Ambassador of Malta to the Czech Republic H.E. Prof. Godfrey Pirotta and Mrs Pirotta

Participants in the fine art exhibition; from left to right: Daniela Guevska, Elena Toncheva, Joeaby Vassallo (curator), Anelia Guteva and Vania Goshe
The programme
The feast of Cyril and Methodius was hosted by H.E. Marie-Louise Colerio Preca, the President of Malta, at her official Presidential Residence at San Anton. It was not only the first time that it was celebrated in Malta at such a Stately level but it is the first time ever that a non-Bulgarian Head of State marked this occasion at the stately residence. All the distinguished Bulgarian guests who flew over for the event were lodged at the official residence of The President.

The programme was on two-days: 13 and 14 May, 2016. The first day was characterised by a lecture on Cyril and Methodius and the unity of Europe delivered by Andrei Bojadziev, an academic from the Faculty of Slavic Studies, Sofia University ‘St Kliment Ohridski’. It was held in the Russian chapel which is located within the Palace. A concert was held in the evening at the music room. Taking part were the legendary tenor Mro Boiko Zvetanov and soprano Andriana Yordanova, a Bulgarian-born soprano from Varna who, since 2002, made Malta her second home. They were accompanied by John Galea, the head of the music studies department at the University of Malta. The selected pieces were Bulgarian, Maltese and Italian, the first being an aria from Lud Gydia by Parashkev Hadjiev. After the concert, a fine art exhibition of Bulgarian artists residing in Malta was inaugurated. The artists taking part were, in alphabetical order, Daniela Guevskka, Vania Goshe, Anelia Guteva and Elena Toncheva. The exhibition, which had as a theme the relation of Malta with the sea, was curated by Joeaby Vassallo. Also, exhibited was an 1845 edition of Khristodul Kostovich Sichan-Nikolov (1808–89) textbook Bulgarian Arithmetic written in old Church Bulgarian language. This astonishing publication was made available by Valentin Gutev, a
Bulgarian professor of mathematics at the University of Malta. These events were well attended by distinguished guests. Also present for all the events was Mr Edgar Preca, the spouse of H.E. Madam President, President Emeritus of Malta H.E. Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici and members of the diplomatic corps including the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Bulgaria to Malta resident in Rome H.E. Marin Raykov, who flew over to Malta for the celebrations.

The following morning was characterised by a teaching session of the Bulgarian Sunday School at the ‘Secret Garden,’ one of the gardens of the Presidential residence. Bulgarian parents actively participated by bringing over their children for the event. Furthermore, each Bulgarian kid brought over a Maltese friend. The school, an initiative of the Bulgarian community in Malta, is funded by the Bulgarian Government. It was realized following the intervention of Malta’s Ambassador to Bulgaria and Romania H.E. Prof. Lino Bianco. Named after Cyril and Methodius, the school was set up and started operating in October 2016. It is directed by Valcho Stoychev Valchev and includes the following as members of the teaching staff: Asenka Bogdanova-Manova, Yordanka Chakarova, Gergana Kostova and Lidia Kortova. H.E. The President joined the session and she was presented with various artworks prepared by the children. The event came to an end with a brief speech of H.E. Raykov.

H.E. Madam President had separate courtesy calls with H.E. and Mrs Raykov and Dr and Mrs Borislav Boyanov, the Honorary Consul of Malta to Bulgaria for the past sixteen years, and his family. During their call, Dr Boyanov presented a prestigious icon of Sveta Bogoroditsa (translated Holy Mother of God) to H.E. The President. The icon was produced in 2014 by the reputed Bulgarian Studio Dimchovsky. This is the first time that a Bulgarian icon found its place in the rich stately palaces of Malta. It will be publicly exhibited in next year’s celebrations marking the feast of Cyril and Methodius.

H.E. The President also received Prof. Andrei and Mrs Bojadžiev, Mro Boiko and Mrs Zvetanov, Soprano Dr Andriana Yordanova and Mro Dott. John Galea, pianist and head of the music studies department at the University of Malta.

The Bulgarian National Radio had sent journalist Rosiza Kavaldjieva to cover the events.

*The image of the icon of Cyril and Methodius included in this section is the work of Studio Dimchovsky.*
Celebrating friendship

A teaching session of the Bulgarian Sunday School
Cyril and Methodius, Malta
Diplomatic relations between Malta and Bulgaria have been developing rapidly, especially in the spheres of education. There is a deep desire on both sides to support stronger cooperation in the domains of schooling and culture; the development of a Bulgarian Sunday School in Malta is another important milestone in this direction.

The Bulgarian Sunday School in Malta, named after Cyril and Methodius, started functioning as from October 2015. It is funded by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science. Bulgaria has a long standing tradition for supporting schools for Bulgarian communities abroad which offer classes in Bulgarian language, literature, history and traditional culture over the weekends.

The Bulgarian Maltese Cultural Association (BMCA), first registered on 3 April 2007, had desired to set up such an educational institution in Malta. Bulgarian children had neither the opportunity to develop their literacy skills in their native language nor learn Bulgarian history and culture.

The setting up and running of a Bulgarian Sunday School in Malta was discussed at length in a meeting held in March 2015 with H.E. Marin Raykov soon after his presentation of credentials as Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to Malta. The meeting, which was attended by Valcho Valchev and Stefan Konchev as the President and the Secretary of BMCA respectively, was a response to the request by His Excellency to meet with the Bulgarian community. It was organised by Dr Giannella de Marco, the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Bulgaria to Malta.

Various meetings were also held with Malta’s Ambassador to Bulgaria H.E. Lino Bianco, who was instrumental in making the Bulgarian Sunday School opening its doors in October 2016. His pragmatic, goal-oriented approach made this vision become a reality.

As part of the celebration marking the feast of Cyril and Methodius, the school held its Saturday morning...
teaching session at the ‘Secret Garden’ within the precincts of the official residence of The President of Malta. Various lessons were held ranging from singing traditional songs to drawing Cyrillic and Glagolitic letters to the production of artworks. H.E. The President joined in for most of the session. She was welcomed by the Bulgarian universal, traditional school hymn *Cyril and Methodius* sung by the students (reproduced overleaf). Students representing each of the First, Second and Third Grades had presented her with an artwork of their respective class. Her Excellency informed the students that these works will form part of *The President’s Treasures* held at the Secret Garden.

In the spirit of addressing the variety and the educational needs of one of the larger minority communities in Malta to contribute to the overall processes of integration and better quality of life for the students involved and the general community at large, each Bulgarian student brought with him/her a Maltese schoolmate.
The Bulgarian School Hymn

Cyril and Methodius hymn was written by Stoyan Mihaylovski (1856-1927) in April 1882 and was published in 1892 in the magazine Мисъл (No. IX-X). The official translation into English was undertaken by Evgenia Pancheva and is printed in a collection at New Bulgarian University.¹

Върви, народе възродени,
kъм светла бъднина върви,
с книжовността, таз сила нова,
съдбините си ти поднови!

March ahead, o revived people,
To your future march ahead,
Forge your destiny of glory,
By the might of letters led!

Върви към мощната Просвета!
В световните борби върви,
от длъжност неизменно воден -
и Бог ще те благослови!

March to powerful knowledge!
Let your duty be your guide!
Join the host of other peoples,
God is always by your side!

Напред! Науката е слънце,
което във душите грей!
Напред! Народността не пада там,
дето знаньето живей!

Go! For like the sun is knowledge,
On the soul it sheds its rays!
Go! A people shall not perish
When true learning lights its days!

Безвестен беше ти, безславен!...
О, влез в Историята веч,
духовно покори страните,
които завладя със меч!...

Once unknown and obscure,
Take your place in History,
Let your spirit rule the countries,
You subdued in victory! ...

Тъй солунските двама братя
насърчаваха дедите ни ...
О, минало незабравимо,
о, пресвещени старини!

Thus the two brothers encouraged
Our people long ago ...
Oh you memorable old times,
Oh you sacred days of yore!

България остана вярна
на достославний тоз завет -
в тържествуване и в страданье
извърши подвизи безчет ...

Bulgaria has ever followed
This most worthy testament,
And accomplished deeds of glory
In triumph and predicament ...

Да, родината ни години
пресветли преживя, в беда
неописуема изпадна,
но върши дългът се всекида!

Бе време, писмеността наша
кога обходи целий мир;
за все световната просвета
тя бе неизчерпаем вир;

бе и тъжовно робско време ... 
Тогаз Балканский храбър син 
навеждаше лице под гнета 
на отоманский властелин ...

Но винаги духът народен; 
подпорка търсеше у вас, 
о, мъдреци!... През десет века 
все жив остана вашей глас!

О, вий, които цяло племе 
извлякохте из мъртвина, 
народен гений възкресихте - 
заспал в глубока тъмнина;

подвижници за права вярна, 
сеятели на правда, мир, 
apостоли високославни, 
звезди върху Славянски мир, 

бъдете преблагословени, 
о вий, Методий и Кирил, 
отци на българското знанье, 
творци на наший говор мил!

Нека името ви да живее 
във всенародната любов, 
речта ви мощна нек се помни 
в Славянството во век веков!

For it had its time of power, 
Then it grievously declined, 
Yet unhesitantly followed 
What was once to it assigned!

There were times when our letters 
Spread quickly far and wide; 
And they nourished human learning 
With the wisdom which they hide;

Next came sad and slavish years ... 
When the proud Balkan son 
Had to bow under the yoke 
Of the ruthless Ottoman ...

But the spirit of the people; 
Always sought support in you, 
Sages! After a millennium 
Your voice still rings strong and true!

Oh you saviours of a nation 
In the darkest days of doom, 
You revivers of its spirit 
Sleeping in the deepest gloom;

Oh you champions of true faith, 
Enemies of strife and lies, 
You apostles God-inspired, 
Bright stars in the Slavic skies,

You saints Cyril and Methodius, 
You be blessed thrice above, 
Fathers of Bulgarian learning, 
Makers of the tongue we love!

People will repeat for ever 
Your two names in every clime, 
And the Slavs preserve your mighty 
Speeches to the end of time!
**Slavonic and Bulgarian Culture and Education**

Water colours, acrylic and collage on stretched canvas, 30 x 40cm, 2016

Bulgarian Sunday School *Cyril and Methodius*, Malta

First Grade, group work

An open book showing the first two letters of the Cyrillic alphabet, traditional roses in the Bulgarian national colours, wheat representing the strive for knowledge, the seeds of learning and the idea of good harvest in education. The blue background symbolizes the sky as well as a virtual window open for knowledge and education. This drawing includes old glagolitic letters, recalling the work of Cyril and Methodius.
Ss Cyril and Methodius and the Cyrillic script
Water colours and acrylic on stretched canvas, 30 x 40cm, 2016
Bulgarian Sunday School Cyril and Methodius, Malta
Second Grade, group work

The brothers are holding the Cyrillic script.
Bulgarian nation … through symbols
Water colours, acrylic and application on stretched canvas, 30 x 40cm, 2016

Bulgarian Sunday School Cyril and Methodius, Malta
Third Grade, group work

With the Bulgarian national flag at the background, the map of the country is shown as a puzzle; views of places of interest synonymous with Bulgaria are included together with the traditional rose and Martenitsa. ‘Bulgaria’ is written in Cyrillic in the national colours of the country.
A night of operatic music

A concert by Bulgarian opera singers
Programme

Parashkev Hadjiev
“Ей сега ще дойде мої” (Any moment he will come) - aria of Zornitsa from Lud Gydia

Jules Massenet
“Ah! Tout est bien fini - O souverain, ô juge, ô père” - aria of Rodrigue from Le Cid

Carmelo Pace
“Nixtieq li kieku kon ghasfur...”

Giuseppe Verdi
“La mia letizia infondere” - aria of Oronte from I Lombardi

Dobri Hristov
“Девойце” (Hey, Lass!) (Grozdana)

Parashkev Hadjiev

John Galea
“Ave, Maria”

Giuseppe Verdi
“Gia nella notte densa ...” - duet of Desdemona and Otello from Otello

Léo Delibes
“Les filles de Cadix”

Giacomo Puccini
“Nessun dorma” - aria of Calaf from Turandot
This opera is set in a Bulgarian village during the Ottoman yoke. Iliya, a rebec-player and shepherd fell in love with Zornitsa, the daughter of Radan, a rich Bulgarian villager. The father disapproved but Iliya was determined to fight for his love. Radan was furious on seeing his daughter in Iliya’s arms. Infuriated, he sent Zornitsa home and threatened Iliya to expel him from the village. Radan threatens his daughter to marry her off to a Turk rather than a Bulgarian commoner. Radan’s threat to complain to the Kadi, the local judge, did not prevent Iliya who, through his music, drove the villagers wild all dancing merrily.

Osman Bey, a janissary, came to the village and slept at Radan’s home. Noting his admiration of Zornitsa’s beauty, Radan offered her for marriage. She boldly stated to Osman that she is in love with another man. Osman decided to ban Iliya from the village. The case reached the Kadi who, following Iliya’s witness which was corroborated by the villagers, requested him to play. The music was so moving that all, including the Kadi himself, started dancing. The Kadi acquits him. Osman arrives and requests Iliya to be tied and taken away from the village. Osman notices an amulet around Iliya’s neck identical to his. He referred it to the village priest to decipher it. Slav, Iliya’s elder brother who was part of the blood tax, is Osman. Zornitsa arrives and pleads to marry Osman if he releases Iliya. To her surprise, he agrees that she marries Iliya. Osman is happy to be re-united with his family; Radan is compelled to bless Zornitsa’s marriage to which all the villagers are invited.

Based on
The son of Todor Hadjiev, a conductor and an early champion of Bulgarian opera, Parashkev Hadjiev (1912 - 1992) was a lead Bulgarian composer of the later part of the century with 26 works to his name. Composed in 1959, Lud Gydia is his masterpiece.

Any moment he will come! My sorrow, my pain
How can I confess to him, how can I confess to him, miserable me?
Oh, God, you who watch from high above,
do not punish me so hard,
to suffer all my life,
to suffer all my life.

To mourn my first love, to mourn
my first love till my last breath.

You gave me my soul to love and suffer,
like all the young love and suffer.

Or poor me, am I mistaken, that I fell in love with all my soul,

that I love the handsome Iliya, Iliya,
he is a farmhand shepherd, he is nurtured with song in his heart.

Oh, God, you, who watch from high above, do not punish me so hard - to love and suffer all my life!
Девойче (Hey, Lassie!)

Song | Composed by Dobri Hristov
Lyric by Tsanko Tserkovsky

Девойче, девойче!
Дей гиди, пъстро пиле усойче! (x2)
Сив сокол се в небе вие, бекяр туджар, сив сокола,
в небе вие – в сърце бие, ах, в сърце бие.
жал за тебе, душо блага! (x2)
Сама наклони се към мене,
сама подслони се до мене.

Бекярче, бекярче,
дей гиди, рудо агне сугарче! (x2)
Аз ще стана яребица,
сив сокола ще преваря,
ще се скрия във горица,
ах, във горица.
Варай оттук, лудо-младо, (x2)
варай, заминавай из пътя,
сама да остана – не ща те!

Девойче, девойче, дей гиди, ало цвете шибойче,
Дей гиди, ало цвете шибойче!
Аз ще стана гъста гора,
буйни гранки ще разперя,
ще закрия ясна зора, ах ясна зора.
Жал за тебе, душо блага,
жал за тебе, душо блага,
сама ще подхвъркнеш към мене,
сама ще се вмъкнеш във мене!
Hey, lassie, hey lessie!
You mothley-feathered bird of the forest! (2)
In the blue sky soars a falcon, a grey falcon,
a brave young man, aiming he is at your young heart! (x2)
Sorry for you, my poor lassie, sorry for you, my poor lassie,
come now yourself,
surrender your charms, come now yourself fall into my arms!

Hey, young man, hey, young man,
ah, you soft-woolled suckling baby-lamb! (x2)
I will turn into a swift bird,
the grey falcon I will outfly
and will hide into the thick woods,
ah, into the woods.
Go away, you madcap young man, (x2)
fare thee well and go your way, won’t you,
leave me alone, I do not want you!

Hey, lassie, hey, lassie,
ah, you flame-coloured flower in the grass!
I will turn into a forest,
my leafy branches will I spread
and will screen off the shining sun,
ah, the shining sun!
Sorry for you, my poor lassie, (x2)
fleeing yourself you will be to me,
nestling yourself you will be in me!

A leading Bulgarian composer of the early part of the 20th century, Dobri Hristov (1875 – 1941) wrote choral music, church music and orchestral music. A pioneer in developing Bulgarian music culture, a task which he worked on following his studies at the Prague Conservatory, at the time under the directorship of Antonín Dvořák.
Гроздано, моме (Grozdana)

Song | Music by Parashkev Hadjiev

Гроздано, моме Гроздано,
свада на сите ергени,
знайш ли девойка в махлата,
девойка като за мене?

Юначе, море, юначе,
скоро е чума въртяла,
та не остала девойка,
като за тебе, юначе.

Гроздано, моме, Гроздано,
я никни, моме, над менци,
която мома там видиш,
она ке биде за мене! Юх!
Grozdana, maiden Grozdana,
you, cause of discord to all lads,
do you know now in the village
a lassie for me to suit me?

Listen you young man and hear,
the plague has been here araging,
it spared no lassie, no lassie,
now there is no lassie to suit you.

Grozdana, maiden Grozdana,
you bow now over the water,
which ever lassie you see there,
she will well suit me, well suit me! Hey!
Boiko Zvetanov

Tenor

Heralded as “The inheritor of Pavarotti’s Throne” by music critic Silvia Rietz at the Classic Openair in Solothurn, Switzerland, Boiko Zvetanov was first called to the National Opera in Sofia after he completed his music and singing at the Bulgarian Academy of Music. At the National Opera, he sang several roles ranging from The Duke in Rigoletto, Foresto in Verdi’s Attila, Lindoro in Rossini’s L’Italiana in Algeri, Fernando in La Favoritta by Donizetti, Pollione in Bellini’s Norma and Radames in Verdi’s Aida.

Since 1991 he has been a member of the Zurich Opera House where he has performed most of the standard tenor repertory. He has performed over sixty leading roles which includes Rodolfo in La Boheme, Alvaro in La Forza del Destino, Gustavo in Un Ballo in Maschera, Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly, Maurizio in Adriana Lecouvreur, Canio in Pagliacci, Luiggi in Il Tabarro, Lenski in Eugen Onegin, Grigori in Boris Godunov as well as the specific roles of Arnoldo in William Tell, Gualtiero in Il Pirata, Argirio in Rossini’s Tancredi.
He performed also in Verdi’s *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Munich and Lille, Manrico in *Il Trovatore* in Hamburg and Edinburgh, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Valencia and December 2000 and Calaf in *Turandot* and Enzo in *La Gioconda* in Tokyo. The role of Calaf was Zvetanov’s U.S. debut at Tulsa Opera in 2000. Other theaters where Zvetanov performed include Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Semperoper in Dresden, the Opera de Paris Bastille and at the Liceu in Barcelona. He also performed in the opera houses of Athens (Megaron Hall), Barcelona, Berlin, Bologna, Brasilia, Brussels, Catania, Copenhagen, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Genova, Hamburg, Hannover, Karlsruhe, Les Palmas, Messina, Mexico, Moscow, Oslo, Salzburg, Stockholm, Tokyo, Valencia, Verona, Vienna, Wiesbaden, and Malta.

Zvetanov performed with Renato Bruson, Gena Dimitrova, Placido Domingo, Mirella Freni, Nikolay Gyaurov, Leo Nucci, Ruggero Raimondi, Samuel Ramey, Katia Ricciarelli, and with Jose Carreras with whom, in 1999, shared the title of Wolf-Ferrari’s Sly. He has worked under some of the world’s leading opera conductors which includes Riccardo Chailly, Bruno Bartoletti, Lamberto Gardelli, Marcello Viotti, Ralf Weikert, Carlo Franci, Nicola Rescigno, Nello Santi, Zubin Mehta, Nicholas Rescigno, Paolo Carignan, Franz Welser-Möst, and recently, with Maurizio Arena.

Based on
Andriana Yordanova

Soprano

Andriana Yordanova is a Bulgarian-born soprano from Varna who, since 2002, made Malta her second home, the country where she met her mentor the Maltese soprano Juliette Bisazza Zanni. After graduating in 1992 with a masters in Russian Language and Literature from the Sofia University “St Kliment Ohridski”, she enrolled in the Vocal Faculty of National Academy of Music “Prof. Pancho Vladigerov” where she graduated with a masters in music pedagogy under the guidance of Professor Ilka Popova. In 2016, she completed her Ph.D. at the same institution which focused on Malta-Bulgaria music relations.

In 1997, through scholarships, she studied at the European Opera Centre in Manchester under the direction of Kent Nagano, Marta Lantieri, Kostas Paskalis, and Renata Scotto and, at the Academia d’Arte e Cultura Boris Christoff in Rome, under the Italian mezzo-soprano Gianella Borelli. On returning to Bulgaria, she received the special prize from Ghena Dimitrova for contemporary aria at the International Singing Competition ‘Hristo Brambarov’ in Sofia. Whilst still reading for her masters, she made her debut with the role of Musetta in La Bohème of Puccini at the State Opera House in Bourgas under the baton of the Bulgarian conductor Ivan Vulpe. Her repertoire includes a vast range of Italian, French, German and Russian operas and operettas, baroque music, Lieder and Twentieth century composers.
Besides given performances in her home country, she sang in Germany, Switzerland, Russia, Italy, Austria, Egypt, Turkey and Malta.

At the State Opera House in Varna she performed the roles of Sylva Varescu in *The Princess of Czardas* of Imre Kálmán and of Fiordiligi in Mozart’s *Cosi fan tutte*. She also sang the role of Anna in *Nabucco*, Tebaldo and Voce del Cielo in *Don Carlo* at the International Varna Summer Music Festival held by Varna State Opera House Varna. In 2002 she made her debut as another Puccinian heroine - Mimi from *La Bohème* - under the baton of the Italian conductor Luciano Di Martino at State Opera House Stara Zagora. Her repertoire includes Safi in *Gypsy Baron*, Anna Glavary in *The Merry Widow*, Nedda in *Pagliacci*, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Zemfira in *Aleko*, Tosca in *Tosca*, Vitellia in *La Clemenzi di Tito*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, and Violetta Valery in *La Traviata*.

She currently teaches voice technique at Johann Strauss School of Music. She is the director of the opera studio Atélier Lyrique. As one of the founding members of the European Foundation for Culture, she is involved in the Malta International Music Festival since its first edition, an annual event promoting culture as well as young gifted musicians in Malta and overseas. She set on a number of adjudicating panels, the next scheduled for July 2016 in Vienna.

Based on
John Galea

Pianist

After obtaining the Fellowship of Trinity College London and the Licentiate of the Royal School of Music (London) in pianoforte performance, John Galea studied music composition at Durham University (UK) under with James Ellis and John Gardner. He pursued his post-graduate studies in musicology at the Università degli Studi di Pavia (Italy) and in contemporary composition under Charles Camilleri (Malta) and Franco Donatoni (Italy). His compositions have been performed in Malta, Greece, France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany and the United Kingdom. He set on several adjudicating panels, the next scheduled is for July 2016 in Palermo.

Since 1978, John Galea has been a regular guest conductor of the Manoel Theatre Orchestra. During 1998-2000 he was appointed Principal Conductor of the National Orchestra of Malta. Since then he has appeared regularly as guest conductor with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra. As musical director of Opera Studio in Malta (1990-93) he collaborated with Professor Blagovesta Dobreva in realising various operatic productions at the Manoel Theatre. He has been instrumental in introducing children’s opera at the Manoel Theatre, conducting the Royal Academy Ensemble (London) in John Gardner’s Bel and the Dragon. Furthermore, since 1979, he has been the musical director of the Chorus Urbanus. Under his baton, the choir was engaged in
tours of Italy, Switzerland, UK, Bulgaria, Hungary, Austria, Greece and France.

During 1999, Galea was commissioned to prepare a performing and critical edition of Nicolò Isouard’s *Messa Leggiera*. This work was recorded on the Mega Music label and launched on CD, meeting wide critical acclaim. This was followed by his symphonic poem *Ġgantija*, featuring the Sofia Symphony Orchestra and the Chorus Urbanus under his direction. During May 2003, he conducted the Kurgan Symphony Orchestra, Chorus Urbanus and Mirabitur Choir in the production of the musical Chess held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta. Also, as from 2003, he was appointed conductor of the King’s Own Philharmonic Society (Malta). Since 2014, he has been appointed as the artistic and musical director of the Paulus Foundation.

Another work by Galea is the oratorio *Il-Qalb ta’ Kristu* and its Italian version *Il Cuore di Cristo*, recorded at the Bulgarian National Radio Studios. EMI Publishing Milano published the work recorded during March 2005 on a double CD featuring the Sofia Collegium Symphony Orchestra and Chorus Urbanus. During May 2006, Galea’s compositions alongside other Maltese works, were published on a CD entitled Unleash Your Senses, released on the Savina Creations label. Another work, the *Missa In Fractione Panis*, written to mark the 25th anniversary of the ordination of H.E. Mgr Mario Grech, Bishop of Gozo, was premiered in June 2009 at the Gozo Cathedral and was eventually chosen by the Vatican’s Liturgical Commission to be performed during Pope Benedict’s official visit to Malta in April 2010 which was screened by RAI 1 and SAT 2000.

Since 2009, Galea is the head of the Music Studies Department at the University of Malta where he lectures composition and musicology. He also lectured in Catania, Trapani, Venezia and Firenze. In the coming year he will be lecturing at Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

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Based on:
1. http://www.um.edu.mt/performingarts/music/staff
Water, water, everywhere . . .

A fine-art exhibition by Bulgarian artists in Malta
Water, water, everywhere . . .

“Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.”

Samuel Taylor Coleridge  
(The Rime of the Ancient Mariner)

Coleridge, one of the founders of the British Romantic Literature, had resided at San Anton Palace just less than two centuries ago. His post in Malta at the time was of Secretary to the first British Civil Chief Commissioner of Malta. He had summed up his experience of his stay in Malta as such: “I live when in the country, which I am nine days out of ten, at the Palace of San Antonio. If living in lofty and splendid rooms be a pleasure, I have it”. San Anton Palace is the official residence of the President of the Republic. Together with its gardens, it dates back to the early part of the seventeenth century when it was a country-residence of the Grand Masters of the Order of St. John and used as such until their departure. It was known at the time as Villa Sainte Antoine after Grand Master Antoine de Paule’s patron saint, Anthony of Padua.

The Palace which charmed Coleridge is the venue for the collection of this fine art exhibition by four Bulgarian artists who made Malta their second home. This event is hosted by H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca at her official residence as the President of Malta. The exhibition is being held as part of the activities to officially commemorate for the first time in Malta the brothers Cyril and Methodius, the apostles to the Slavs credited with devising the Glagolitic alphabet, the predecessor of the Cyrillic alphabet.

The theme of this exhibition is “Water, water, everywhere”, a phrase borrowed from the seminal poem The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, written and published few years prior Coleridge’s arrival in Malta. The sea is the theme which runs through all the paintings. It is
the element which strikes any visitor to Malta whose journey to reach his/her destination is to cross over the Mediterranean Sea. The artists are no exception. As *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* narrates a story, each exhibited work provides a narrative expressed not in poetic verse but through ‘painterly’ artistic technique. Each has its own mood, inspired by either the physical or metaphysical dimensions of seascapes as perceived from Malta’s coastline.

The elegant, harmonious evolution to Malta’s geocultural environs evokes peace, serenity and tranquility. Such is expressed through Elena Toncheva’s *Impression*, a monochromatic painting of the silhouette of Valletta as it grows out of the sea, a quintessential romantic representation of Malta and the Mediterranean.

On the other end of the emotion spectrum, Daniela Guevska’s *Mechanical Giraffes* portrays the contemporary industrial use of the sea: the Freeport. The towering container-lifting cranes seem like Jurassic creatures along the shore of the unpredictable timeless beast, the sea.

The quasi-supernatural qualities of this beast are portrayed in the air-powered boat race off Sliema shore by Anelia Guteva who portrays wind as the medium for the mariner’s art in her classical representation entitled *Rough Race*.

A locality which provided a context for Vania Goshe’s *Marsaxlokk* even if entitled differently, the setting is easily recognised by the spiritual beacon of the village, the parish church. The focus of her painting is the Maltese ‘luzzu’, the traditional fishing boat, a sturdy vessel that provided a transport bridge with mainland Europe and Africa.

As the poem relates the experience of the mariner, the narrator, so does the fine art of these Bulgarians who came over to their second
One recalls the words of the writer and diplomat Richard Francis Burton, the co-founder of the Anthropological Society of London, that “little islands are all large prisons; one cannot look at the sea without wishing for the wings of a swallow.”

For these Bulgarian artists, Malta is a haven not a prison; a haven accessed through aeronautic engineered birds ... which have nests on the island. Their pieces recount a narrative about Malta; we, Maltese, appreciate it because it is a narrative about our homeland and we appreciate our homeland more because of such narratives ... which the Bulgarians opted to share with us through this collection of fine art, a poem about our sea ... on canvas.

“For to reach a port we must set sail –
Sail, not tie at anchor –
Sail, not drift.”

Franklin Roosevelt
(Fireside chat, April 14, 1938)

Notes

1. Coleridge had first arrived in Malta in May 1804, mainly to free himself from opium addiction. Soon he was appointed under-secretary and later as a temporary Public Secretary, effectively the second in command to the head of the government at the time, namely the post of the Civil Commissioner. For a recent account of Malta at the time, see Hough, B., Davis, H. (2007) Coleridge’s Malta. Coleridge Bulletin, 29, pp. 81-95.


3. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (originally The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere) was written in 1797–98. It was published later on in the year in the edition of Lyrical Ballads. Coleridge made a number of modifications, often replacing archaic words. Coleridge makes use of a number of narrative techniques which includes personification and repetition, techniques which he made use to convey the sense of, say, peril and the supernatural.


5. This is the concluding statement of the Fireside chat (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=15628). Fireside chats were a series of 30 addresses by the U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt between 1933 and 1944. They were aired in the evening on radio.
The subject of Malta in art is often considered rhetoric and kitsch by the Maltese; being our country, we are used to most of the views and subjects one might represent in art. However it has always been fascinating for me to understand how foreigners look at our country. Would a foreigner look at certain locations in Malta the way we do? The way I do? What is the perception of a place from a fresh pair of eyes? And on the basis of what are foreigners making their judgements?

Understanding one’s home country from a fresh pair of eyes delivers a new sense of appreciation of what is common to locals and the realisation of overseen or underappreciated aspects. The curation of this exhibition was based on such thinking. On viewing the artists’ work I could see what really stands out in our country and what views we do not appreciate as much.

Vania Goshe’s Marsaxlokk and Elena Toncheva’s Impression put forward to the viewer the essential elements of what defines Malta: the luzzu and church dominated skylines, the sun and the sea. It is all there, Malta in a nutshell or rather on two canvasses.

On the other hand both Daniela Guevska’s Mechanical Giraffes and Anelia Guteva’s Rough Race present scenes which are not as familiar in “postcard” art. Mechanical Giraffes crops out part of our island which we tend to put aside: the industrial aspect found at the Freeport in Birżebbuġa. Rough Race depicts a scene which, objectively, could be placed anywhere, but is in fact a scene which can be commonly observed in winter from Sliema.

In all the four pieces a common theme runs throughout underwhich all the works consolidate: the sea. Malta is characterised by its very own geographical nature, that of an island, surrounded by water. We cannot escape such a fact. However, is this theme predominant because of the omni presence of the sea in Malta or because the artists’ first home was not affected by the sea or other bodies of water?

Joeaby Vassallo
Curator
This rendition represents a typical summer scene in Marsaxlokk. Out of all the places in Malta, this village is a personal favourite of Goshe, having a “special atmosphere, which I can’t stop painting.” The adopted technique is that of impasto, giving the work a rough and particular style which she describes as abstract realism.

Vania Goshe was born in 1976 in Bulgaria. She graduated from the New Bulgarian University, Sofia, in cinema, television and advertising. During this period she pursued her artistic interest in drawing and painting. She worked as a videographer in television and as cameraperson for international film companies.

Her artistic vision is to offer her viewers a chance to escape the bleak realities of life, lift their spirits and instil a sense of optimism. This is achieved by accentuating the positive through harmonious and colourful compositions. She finds inspiration in many aspects of Maltese life and culture through its rich traditions and various activities. The effect of the sun on the Maltese landscape came as an unexpected revelation to her; having grown up in the extremes of a continental climate; living in Malta has given her work a new dimension.
Marsaxlokk
Oil on stretched canvas, 50 x 40cm, 2015
Daniela Guevska

Through this experimental piece, Guevska addresses her personal experiences. She describes the sea as an unpredictable beast. In this work, Daniela is portraying the towering cranes over the calm ‘beast’ at Birżebbuġa which may erupt at any moment.

Daniela Guevska is a visual artist and art educator based in Malta. In Bulgaria, she studied applied and fine arts parallel with pedagogy, and theology. She received a scholarship for a Summer Tutorial in Wheaton College, Wheton IL USA, where she expand her entrepreneurial skills and encountered new ways on how to apply the use of visual arts for corporate training and community outreach.

In 2014 she has conducted community art projects for children and in 2015 she delivered an art workshop with dyslexic young people and an art project with St Patrick School, Sliema, sponsored by BOV Joseph Calleja Foundation.

In her art, she focuses on classical methods of drawing, using an alternative approach to combine the applied and fine arts.

She has held a number of solo exhibitions in Malta including the participation of the 2015 Mdina International Art Biennale and in the Mediterranean Donkey for peace.
Mechanical Giraffes
Acrylic on stretched canvas, 45 x 38cm, 2016
Anelia Guteva

*Rough Race*

The artwork depicts a boat race as seen from the shores of Sliema. Aesthetically the painting forms part of a series entitled *Rough Sea*. The aim is to capture and immortalise the short lived and ever changing charm of the moment. The fast motion and translucency of water poses a great challenge in depicting its beauty on a still and two-dimensional platform. Furthermore the painting illustrates human’s relation with the vast and powerful nature.

Anelia Guteva was born in Bulgaria in 1986. She showed interest in art at a very young age and during her adolescence she was fuelled with inspiration during her travels with the family to Japan, South Africa and Malta where she is currently based. These rich cultural experiences have helped her grow both on a personal and artistic level. Guteva is specialised in painting, illustration, as well as traditional 2D frame-by-frame animation. For her Masters research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, in South Africa, she focused on eastern European traditional and experimental animation as a fine art tradition. Alongside her studies Anelia has undertaken various commissions for portrait paintings. To date, she has completed three short animated films using digital as well as traditional painting stop-motion techniques.
Rough Race
Acrylic on canvas, 40.5 x 29.5cm, 2016
Elena Toncheva

Impression

“Impression” is a monochromatic seascape painting intended to explore the possibilities of using only one colour. The painting represents a sunrise in Malta and is executed in the wet-in-wet technique. Short, broad but controlled repetitive brush strokes were used to achieve the resulting harmonious patterns, creating form and space with only one colour; white was also added to help create a tonal contrast. The final result was intended to evoke peace and tranquillity, demonstrating the importance of tone.

Elena Toncheva is a Bulgarian artist based in Malta. In 1985 she graduated with a Master’s degree in engineering from the University of Mining and Geology, Sofia, and later worked for a number of years in scientific research in the capital.

In 2003, while living outside Paris, she started painting using oils as her first medium. In 2005 Toncheva moved to Malta where she further developed her skills in drawing and painting under the tuition of Anton Grech, Philip Agius and Matthew Cassar.

In 2008 she joined the Society of Arts and participates annually in its collective exhibitions. In 2012 Elena worked on a joint exhibition and in 2016 she was one of the artists representing Malta in two Maltese-Japanese exhibitions.
Impression
Oil on stretched canvas, 46 x 38cm, 2010
Cyril and Methodius and the Unity of Europe

A lecture delivered by Andrei Bojadžiev
Cyril and Methodius and the Unity of Europe

Andrei Bojadžiev

Today we are recalling two people who are known throughout the Slavic world. The memory of Cyril and Methodius, however, is especially precious to all Europeans. In my talk I will share some thoughts why I think the legacy of the two brothers is still alive today and why it is so important for all of us, Europeans, to remember their life-work and their deeds.

The Brothers

Life

Cyril (birth name Constantine) and Methodius (birth name Michael) were born in Thessalonica into the family of a well-to-do Byzantine administrator. Their father, Leon, was Druangarios (head) of the Byzantine Roman Thema of Thessalonica. Cyril, born c. 826, was the youngest of the seven brothers in the family. Methodius was about ten years his senior. The countryside around Thessalonica was at that time predominantly Slavic, and it is reasonable to assume that the brothers grew up bilingual, including a native knowledge of the local Bulgarian dialect of Slavic. According to some sources, their mother has been Slavic. As befitting their family’s position, they were well educated.

At a young age, the brothers lost their father and they were raised under the protection of their uncle Theoctistos, a powerful official in the Byzantine government responsible for postal services and the diplomatic relations of the empire (Gr. logothetēs tou dromou). Theoctistos at this time was entrusted, along with the regent Bardas, for initiating a far-reaching educational program within the Empire which culminated in the establishment of the University of Magnaura.

From an early age, Cyril showed an exceptional aptitude and passion for learning, a trait which, later in
life, was to earn him the epithet of philosopher.

In his Vita (Life) one reads:

“When the child was seven, it had a dream and told its father and mother about it: ‘The strategist had gathered together all the girls in our city and told me: Choose which one of them you want for your wife and assistant, equal to you in age. I looked at all of them and examined them and I saw one, more beautiful than all the others, with a beautiful face and adorned with many gold jewels and pearls and all splendour. Her name was Sophia, which means Wisdom. I chose that one.”

The education of Cyril, begun in Thessalonica, continued in Constantinople at the University of Magnaura under the tutelage of two of the most distinguished scholars of the time, Leo the Mathematician (c. 790 – after 869) and Photius (c. 820 – 891), the future ecumenical patriarch (858–867 and 878–886). Cyril occupied the position of the librarian to the patriarch at the Cathedral of St Sofia. Around the year 850, he accepted a chair of philosophy at the University of Magnaura. This post is not surprising. His extraordinary achievements were recognized and appreciated in the capital; they earned him the personal protection of the highest government officials.

Methodius’ early career is less documented. We know that he embarked initially upon government service, accepting an appointment as archon (ruler) of a Slavic archonate (administrative unit). The location of this Slavic district is a matter of conjecture. It could be Methodius’ native region of Thessalonica, or some of the many Slavic provinces left over from the Slavic conquest of the Balkans two centuries earlier. At any rate, it seems that Methodius’ knowledge of Slavic was at least partly responsible for his selection. Methodius spent some twelve years in his post, but at around 855, tired of administrative career, he decided to don the monastic garb:

“He saw much disorderly tumult in this life and exchanged the desire of earthly darkness for heavenly thought. He did not wish to trouble his noble soul with transient matters. And finding the right moment, he gave up the governorship. And having gone to Olympus where holy fathers live, he had himself tonsured and clothed in black habit.”

Missionary Work

In or around 856, probably as a consequence of political upheavals in the capital, Cyril relinquished his teaching post in Constantinople and joined Methodius in the monastery on Mount Olympus, in Bithynia, just across the Bosphorus. However, the two brothers were not destined
to dwell long in the tranquillity of monastic life. Within three years of Cyril’s arrival at Mount Olympus, they embarked on an arduous foreign mission to the Khazars which took them across the Black Sea and overland to the shores of the Caspian. Emperor Michael III called upon Cyril to head the envoy to the Khazars “to preach and answers for the Holy Trinity … for no one else is capable of doing this properly” (Vita Constantinii 8). When Cyril agreed to undertake this mission, Methodius volunteered to accompany his younger brother.

On the way to the Khazars they reached Crimea in 860 and spent the winter in the Greek colony of Kherzon (Khersones) on the southwest shore of the peninsula at the outskirts of Sevastopol. During his short stay there, Cyril is credited to have displayed uncommon linguistic gifts. Preparing himself for the forthcoming meeting with the Khazars, he learned Hebrew, translated a Hebrew grammar and taught himself to understand Samaritan scriptures.

Cyril’s most important achievement during his stay in Kherson was the recovery of the holy relics of St Clement, the third bishop of Rome (88-101?), who was believed to have died a martyr’s death in the Crimea. Part of relics accompanied the brothers on their future mission to Moravia and was deposited by them in the basilica of St Clement in Rome, the church in which Cyril was to be buried in 869.

Prince Rostislav’s diplomatic appeal for Slavic-speaking missionaries arrived in Constantinople around 860. It was carefully worded so as not to offend the sensibilities of the Bavarian clergy. It cited the presence in Moravia of missionaries from many lands, including Byzantium, and the resulting conclusion:

“We have prospered through God’s grace, and many Christian teachers have come down to us from among the Italians, Greeks, and Germans, teaching us in various ways. But we Slavs are simple people, and have none to instruct us in the truth and explicate it. Therefore, Good Lord, send us such a man who would teach us the whole truth” (Vita Methodii 5).

It also contained a request for missionaries willing to teach the Gospel in the vernacular rather than in Latin, a practice that was common in the Eastern churches (Armenian, Coptic, Syriac) but totally unprecedented in the West.

“Though our people have rejected paganism and observe Christian law, we do not have a teacher who would explain to us in our language the true Christian faith so that other countries which look to us might emulate us” (Vita Constantinii 14).
The accomplishments of the two brothers in Khazaria and the well-known linguistic skills of Cyril made them the choice for missionary work in Moravia. It was soon to be vindicated:

“And, following his old habit, the Philosopher went and gave himself up to prayer together with his other disciples. And God, who hearkens to the prayers of his servants, soon appeared to him. And he immediately devised letters and began to write the words of the Gospel: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’ and so on” (Vita Constantini 14).

The selection of the beginning of the Gospel of John for the Cyril’s first translation into Slavic is, of course, not accidental. On the one hand, it points to the linguistic and inspirational nature of his efforts. On the other, it reflects the order of his translating endeavour, for the first item on the mission’s agenda was to provide the Moravians “with all the Scriptures which were considered necessary for church service” (Italian Legend 7).

One such liturgical book is the evangeliary or the Sunday Gospel, in which Gospel texts are arranged for reading on Sunday and church holidays. The fact is that Byzantine evangeliaries always begin with the first words of John.

The language of the first translations prepared by Cyril and Methodius reflected the peculiarities of the dialect of Bulgarian Slavs of their native Thessalonica. At this time however, the linguistic differences among various Slavic dialects were minor. It is therefore thus comprehensible that the Slavic translations executed by the brothers are easily intelligible in Moravia.

The Moravian mission generated intense missionary efforts and complex diplomatic manoeuvres which for a quarter of a century drags the Slavs into the very midst of European politics. Its history falls into two periods, the first associated with the name of Cyril, the second with that of Methodius.

In Moravia, the reception of the two brothers was less then cordial. Franko-Bavarian clergy defended their prerogatives vigorously and attacked the brothers for transgressing against the custom, hallowed in the Western Church, of glorifying God in three languages only, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. After forty months of work the brothers left Moravia. The brothers’ first stop was Mosaburg (Slavic Blatograd), the capital of Pannonia on Lake Balaton. The Pannonian Prince Kocel welcomed the brothers with honours and “taking a great liking to the Slavic letters, learned them himself and supplied some fifty students to study them” (Vita Constantini 15). As a result of
Kocel’s support, the brothers were able to accomplish more during their seven-month stay than during their much longer stay in Moravia.

Stopping in Venice, the brothers engaged in a disputate on the propriety of using Slavic in divine worship. Advancing by than familiar arguments, the church authorities gathered there clamp down on Cyril “like ravens upon a falcon” insisting that Hebrew, Greek, and Latin were the only languages in which “it was appropriate to praise God in the Scriptures”.

Cyril’s lengthy condemnation of “trilingual” or “Pilatian heresy” (referring to the Pilate’s order to use Greek, Latin and Hebrew for the inscription on the cross of the Lord’s Passion, Luke 23:38) takes up most of Chapter 16 of the Vita Constantini. His rebuttal, leaning frequently on the authority of the Scriptures, ends with the words of the apostle Paul: “And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:11).

From Venice, the brothers proceeded to Rome, summoned there by Pope Hadrian II to answer charges levied against them by the Bavarian clergy. The initial stage of the brothers’ stay in Rome was taken up with deposition of the relics of St Clement and their ordination by Bishops Formosus and Gauderich. The Pope accepted and blessed a set of Slavic scriptures and had them deposited in the Church of St Mary of the Manger (Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore) while permitting Slavic services to be celebrated in a number of Roman churches. Also, the papal bibliothecarius Athanasius gave ample proof of his personal friendship for the brothers. He translated Cyril’s Discourse on the Discovery and Translation of the Relics of St Clement into Latin and in his correspondence. This led to Cyril being admired at the time as a writer.

Methodius work following Cyril’s demise

In Rome, he took his monastic vows and it was at this stage that he assumed his name Cyril. He died in Rome on February 14, 869, at the age of forty-two. On his deathbed, he pleaded with his older brother:

“We have been harnessed together ploughing the same furrow. Now, ending my days, I have fallen in the field. Although you have a great love for the mountain [the monastery], do not for sake of the mountain abandon your teaching, for it offers a surer way to salvation” (Vita Methodii 7).

Obeying Cyril’s admonition, Methodius resolved to go back to
missionary activities. To strengthen Methodius’ hand, Hadrian II decided to invoke an administrative precedent dating back before the Hunnic and Avarian invasions. In those days Pannonia, as part of Illiricum, was under ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Rome and was governed by a bishop whose episcopal see was in Sirmium, on the Sava. Now, Hadrian II raised Sirmium to the rank of an archbishopric and consecrated Methodius as its first incumbent, with authority over all Pannonia and, possibly Moravia as well. In his answer to the Kocel’s request for Methodius he wrote: “I send him not only to you alone but to all the Slavic lands” (Vita Methodii 8). In 870 Methodius returned to Pannonia for good and bore with him an introductory letter (Gloria in exelsis) from Hadrian to the Princes Rastislav, Svatopulk, and Kocel which referred Rome’s ecclesiastical right in Central Europe. The Bavarian clergy noted that what commenced as a small-scale Byzantine adventure was turning into a powerful instrument of papal diplomacy and an excuse to reduce their ecclesiastic dominion. Methodius warned Bavarian foes not to covet the old boundaries “lest you spill your brains wishing to smash an iron mountain with your heads” (Vita Methodii 9).

The Bavarians, however, had the might of the East Frankish Army on their side. A successful military campaign against Moravia in 870 led by Carloman, the governor of the Bavarian East Mark and son of Louis the German, the King of Bavaria, resulted in replacing Prince Rastislav by his pro-Bavarian nephew Svatopluk. Rostislav was blinded and imprisoned. Methodius himself was captured, tried, and imprisoned for nearly three years in a monastery in Swabia. Following his release, Methodius returned to Moravia in 874 to resume his pastoral duties. The Slavic mission allowed to continue its work, but Methodius’ insistence on celebrating the mass in Slavic was met with a rebuke from Pope John VIII. However, he granted Methodius the permission to continue preaching in Slavic. A year later Methodius succeeded in convincing the Pope to obtain a ratification as Archbishop of Pannonia. The papal bull, Industriae tuae, addressed to Svatopluk, demonstrates the Pope’s confidence in Methodius and in his favorable attitude to use of Slavic in church service. In one of his letters to Svatopluk, one reads: “… for the sake of greater reverence, in all the churches of your land, the Gospel be read in Latin and then in Slavic translation into hearing of people who do not understand Latin” (Papal correspondence, 73).

All changed after the demise of Methodius in 885. Pope Stephen V (885–891) confirmed his predecessor’s permission to preach in Slavic but was staunch in his
interdiction of use of Slavic in the divine liturgy. In September 885, five months after Methodius’ death, the new Pope sent the following instructions to Prince Svatopluk (Quia te zelo):

*The divine offices, the sacred mysteries and rites of the mass, which Methodius dared to celebrate in the language of the Slavs, ... let no one from now on presume to do; we forbid it ... except that for edification of simple and unlearned people*” (Papal correspondence, 77).

As one can note, the Moravian mission had a delicate task of navigating the narrow straits between openly hostile attitude of the Bavarian clergy and generally supportive, though not altogether consistent, attitude of Holy See. It is tribute to Methodius’ determination that despite these difficulties and diversions, the mission managed to make the last decade of his life its most productive period. It was during this period when Methodius, together with his followers, translated all the biblical texts except for the Maccabees. He further translated the nomocanon, other books of the holy fathers as Patericon, and a collection of edifying narratives from the life of monks and hermits.

The death of Methodius marked the beginning of the end of the mission. Wiching, the Bavarian Bishop of Nitra, with the aid of Pope Stephen V, interdicted the assumption of pastoral duties of Gorazd, whom Methodius had designated as his successor. The leading figures of the mission were imprisoned, tried, and expelled from Moravia, while some two hundred younger priests and deacons were sold by Bavarians to Jewish slave merchants.

The teaching of Methodius, however, did not came to naught. At least three of his disciples, Clement, Naum, and Angelarius, succeeded in building a raft and travel down the Danube to Belgrade, which at that time was a Bulgarian frontier town. They reached Pliska, where they were cordially received by the Bulgarian Khan Boris (852-889) who needed experienced Slavic missionaries to complete the Christianization of the country.

Prince Symeon (ninth century) understood the challenge of Byzantine Greek cultural hegemony. He made use of the weapons forged in Great Moravia during the Cyril-Methodian mission and employed them against his Byzantine opponents. At the same time, Symeon and his collaborators, some of whom had been educated in Constantinople, assimilated into Slavonic Byzantine cultural works which they had considered as significant.
Slavic writing and language in the European cultural heritage

Background

The first Slavic writing system invented by Cyril was undoubtedly the Glagolitic alphabet, or Glagolitsa, derived from the term glagol meaning word. This alphabet was already developed by the two brothers prior their arrival in Moravia. Within two decades, they and their followers developed a rich literature.

The traces of Glagolitic writing in Central Europe are the first evidence that the Glagolitsa is the alphabet which Cyril devised before the Moravian mission. The other proofs are:

1. Glagolitsa is an original alphabetic system. Letter shapes, their structure and their succession show that their inventor knew different writing systems and various languages;

2. The Glagolitic alphabet reflects sound features, which could be traced to the Tracian, Rodopi and East Macedonian dialects. Such dialects were the Slavic dialects in neighborhood of Thessalonica, and

3. According to the evidence from the Treatise “On letters” from the monk Chrabŭr, the first Slavic alphabet consisted of 38 letters. The list of these letters could be reconstructed only on the basis of Glagolitic structure.

The Glagolitic alphabet was built on a thoughtful linguistic and symbolic principles. The first and last symbol are crosses. At the beginning of the order follows the sequence similar to the Greek alphabet with the letters for voiced consonants (b, v, g, d, ż, dz, z). Some of these letters do not exist in the Greek, but Cyril succeeded in placing them in the most suitable locations. After these letters, those for the unvoiced consonants followed. In the first place are the letters for sounds which are common with the Greek ones, and then the letters for sounds which are missing in Greek. In this manner, Cyril integrated the letters for Slavic sounds in the structure of the Greek order, and extended the idea of the scripts based on Greek writing. Some scholars say that Glagolitsa follows the Greek way of thinking about writing (Schriftdenken). This was Cyril’s idea of how to make the alphabet understandable by people who know alphabetic systems based on Greek.

In Bulgaria, the brothers developed a new alphabet based on the Glagolitic script and allegedly called it Cyrillic (Cyrillica) in honor of their master, St Cyril. Later Bulgarian clergymen,
scholars, and missionaries spread this alphabet to other Slavic nations such as Russia and Serbia.

This second Slavic alphabet is similar to the Glagolitic in its structure but completely different in form. It resembles Greek writing with some extensions for the Slavic sounds most of which came from Glagolitic. The order of the letters with few exceptions follows the order of the Glagolitsa. The names of the letters are the same, too. The most striking difference with the exception of letter forms was that in Cyrillica expression of digits followed by the Greek letters unlike Glagolitsa, where every letter meant a number as well.

Both alphabets co-existed on the Balkans for a long time. The medieval Bulgarian man-of-letters used to read Glagolitic letters at least till late Middle Ages; in Croatia there is evidence of usage of Glagolitsa in northern part of Adriatic, up to the twentieth century. In East Slavic lands, Glagolitsa was also known, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was also used in cryptographic writings.

In the earliest medieval sources there is no distinction between Glagolitic and Cyrillic. The names of these two alphabets were handed from later times. In the old sources one can only read Slavic letters, or Slavic writings. Nowadays, the Cyrillic alphabet is used by about 300 million people in 12 countries in Eastern Europe and in Northern and Central Asia. With Bulgaria’s accession to the European Union in 2007, the Cyrillic became the EU’s third official script, after the Latin and Greek alphabets.

Medieval Slavic language and the equality of all languages

The second great contribution of the Thessalonian brothers to the European heritage was the idea that God should be glorified in understandable human language. During the dispute in Venice about the right to use Slavic language in liturgy Cyril claimed, “You only recognize three languages in which God may be glorified [Hebrew, Greek, and Latin]. But David sang, ‘Praise the Lord, all nations, praise the Lord all peoples (Ps 116/117:1).’ And the Gospel of St Matthew (28:18) says, ‘Go and teach all nations....’”, followed by the famous sentences: “Do not fall from God rain equally to all? Isn’t the sun shines for all of us? Do not all breathe the air in the same way?”

The idea that every nation should glorify God in its own language is part of Byzantine politics of the time. However, the consequences of this politics had enormous consequences for the Slavic culture as the precious gift from Cyril and Methodius. One can compare their...
translations of Biblical works into vernacular Slavic with the work of Martin Luther publication of New Testament in 1522, just less than half a millennium after the achievement of the two brothers. Furthermore, the translation of the sacred books carried out by Cyril and Methodius together with their pupils, conferred a capacity and cultural dignity upon the Old Slavonic liturgical language. This language became for many centuries not only the ecclesiastical but also the official and literary language of the more educated classes of several Slavic nations. Up to the present day, this is the language used in the Byzantine liturgy of the Slavic Eastern Churches, both Catholic and Orthodox, in Eastern and South Eastern Europe, as well as in various countries of Western Europe.

The Making of the new language in 9th century

The way the new written language has been established was unique. Succeeding in this task meant establishing a completely new written language in Europe in ninth century, a mammoth task to say the least. It was developed rich enough to be used together with the well-known, rich in nuances and with a long written tradition languages like Greek and Latin. To translate the complicated philosophical and theological treatises, to give the exact meaning and definitions of words, it was necessary to develop a system of translation techniques from Greek or Latin into Slavic. Furthermore, it was essential to decipher the complex system of abstract concepts and terms into this new written language. How was this task accomplished? I will focus briefly on several approaches.

1. Enriching new meanings to existing vernacular words,
2. Borrowing foreign words, and
3. Developing new words.

*Enriching new meanings to existing vernacular words*

For example the word for education previously had just a concrete meaning of light. Many words have changed its use in Christian spirit, like words for sky (nebe) with the meaning of heaven, father (otec), compared with the Latin pater.

*Borrowing foreign words*

A large part of the Old Bulgarian writings is translated from Greek church literature and texts from the Byzantine writers. Several words and Christian concepts are of Greek origin or Hebrew and Latin borrowed through Greek, such as the words for angel, devil and apostle. Of Hebrew origin are Beelzebub (or Beelzebul), Pascha (from Pesach, Passover), halleluiah. From Latin are borrowings like Papež (Pope) and oplat (oblatus - someone who
has been offered). Part of these Latin words were introduced during the mission of Cyril and Methodius among the Western Slavs. In these times, for more than 20 years, the Slavic writings had been developed close to the Latin spoken church culture.

**Developing new words**

Most often foreign words have been avoided by creating new words. Few people today know that many of the words that are in usage nowadays were coined in the days of Cyril and Methodius and their followers during the earliest period of Slavic writing. Such words are благодаря ‘thanks’, безсмертне ‘immortality’, лицемер ‘hypocrite’, невъзможно ‘impossible’, милосърдие ‘mercy’, and недоумение ‘perplexity’. Particularly interesting is the translation of some of the scientific terms into Old Bulgarian. In the Treatise “On Letters” of Hrabūr one finds along with Greek words like *grammar*, *rhetorics*, *philosophy*, Slavic newly-coined expressions like звездочтение (astronomy, literally ‘stars counting’) or двугласна (diphtong, literally ‘double vowel’).

This concept was very powerful. Created on the basis of dialects, this new written language was easily understood and accessible to the Slavic population. This way the new literary language became one of the most gleaming and remarkable phenomena in medieval European culture.

**The Work of Cyril and Methodius and the Bulgarians**

Cyril and Methodius are worshiped throughout the Slavic world and in many church communities. But why for Bulgarians this feast is so special? There are of course four blatant reasons:

1. The first written Slavic language was based on the dialects of Bulgarian Slavs who lived around Thessalonica;

2. The structure of the first Slavic alphabet, Glagolitsa, has its roots in such dialects;

3. The Moravian mission continued in medieval Bulgaria. Here the language has been further enriched and plenty of new translations and original works had appeared. This literary production had been then transmitted in Medieval Rus and Serbia; and

4. The second alphabet, Cyrillica, was compiled in the lands of Medieval Bulgarian State around the end of ninth or the beginning of tenth century.
Other reasons can be put forward. Bulgarian history is full of events that date back to the days of Cyril and Methodius. One could include the following:

1. In thirteenth and fourteenth century, liturgical books in Bulgaria were corrected according to the earliest translations and edited in the spirit of old models;

2. In the seventeenth century, a language reform was carried out in a series of books. The written language of Cyril and Methodius was very archaic and in places incomprehensible. Therefore, guided by the same principles postulated by the oldest Slavic translations and original texts, the language was updated which replaced obsolete words and grammatical constructions with others which are understandable; and

3. In eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the influence of Russian literature and language in Bulgaria is noted. Words that have been adopted in the eleventh century by the Eastern Slavs were re-introduced in Bulgaria. Disputes commenced about the nature of literary language, spelling and grammar similar to what happened in ninth/tenth century in Pliska, Preslav and Ohrid.

That’s why the words of Monk Hrabůr, in his treatise “On letters”, is valid today to any Bulgarian pupil:

“... if you ask a Slavic primary school pupil: “Who created your letters for you or translated your books” – everyone will know. And they will answer you: “Saint Constantine the Philosopher, called Cyril. He created our letters and translated our books, and Methodius his brother.” And if you ask: “At what time?” they will know and will say: “It was in the time of Michael the Greek Emporer, and the Boris the Bulgarian Prince, and Rastislav the Moravian Prince, and Kocel the Prince of Balaton (Pannonia), in the year 863.”

That is why Bulgarians are turning back to the work of Cyril and Methodius and began to celebrate their feast also outside the churches.

Today, for many of us this feast is of prime national importance.
Tolerance and Unity

But even if one is not interested in Slavs, their language and/or writing, what is the most important thing to remember about Cyril and Methodius? These two brothers succeeded in creating a spiritual bridge between the Eastern and Western traditions. This meeting in truth and love is a practical example for a sound foundation of understanding which can lead to tolerance, a point which Lino Bianco, Malta’s ambassador to Bulgaria and Romania had brought up during one of our encounters when we were formulating this lecture. A recent weekly newspaper published in Sofia some weeks quoted his opinion:

"This is the beauty of this alliance, the diversity of cultures, traditions and languages is a great wealth of our Continent. It strongly reminds me of the motto adopted in the year 2000 by European Union - “Unity in diversity”, a Balkan concept still relevant to today’s reality. ... Spirit has no physical dimension! And spiritually we, Maltese, and you, Bulgarians, belong to unique nations, with all respect to any other Member States of the European Union” (Животът днес, 19-25 April, 2016).

The unity is not in words but in deeds. That is why it is easy to understand why Pope John Paul II in his encyclical Egregiae virtutis (For unprecedented ignity), dated December 1980, declared Cyril and Methodius together with Benedict of Nursia “heavenly patrons throughout Europe.” This act is not incidental. All the three have a reputation of being messengers of peace, the makers of unity, and the masters of civilization. Five years later, in other of his encyclicals, Slavorum apostoli, he concludes:

“By exercising their own charism, Cyril and Methodius made a decisive contribution to the building of Europe not only in Christian religious communion but also to its civil and cultural union. Not even today does there exist any other way of overcoming tensions and repairing the divisions and antagonisms both in Europe: and in the world which threaten to cause a frightful destruction of lives and values. Being Christians in our day means being builders of communion in the Church and in society. This calls for openness to others, mutual understanding, and readiness to cooperate through the generous exchange of cultural and spiritual resources.”
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Andrei Bojadžiev

Lecturer

Andrei Bojadžiev is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Slavic Studies, Sofia University ‘St Kliment Ohridski.’ His fields of specialisation are Slavic historical linguistics, Cyrillic and Glagolitic palaeography, mark-up technologies, digital humanities, and electronic publishing.

He graduated with a B.A. and M.A. degree in Russian and Bulgarian philology from the University of Sofia. He completed his Ph.D. in 1996 under the academic supervision of Prof. Rumjana Pavlova focusing of early Bulgarian Cyrillic alphabet in the old Russian written monuments of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries. He majored in Slavic paleography and codicology from the same university, in mark-up languages and technologies from the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and in the preservation of cultural heritage from the Central European University, Budapest.

Bojadžiev held lecturing posts on Bulgarian Language and Culture at the Bulgaricum, University of Saarland, Saarbrücken, Germany (2004–2006) and at the Slavic Institute, University of Cologne, Germany (2010–2012). Currently, he lectures and holds seminars in Old Bulgarian, History of Bulgarian language, Slavic paleography for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Also at postgraduate level, he lectures and holds seminars in the fields of digital humanities and mark-up languages, and historical Slavic lexicology.

His research interests are in Slavic and Bulgarian historical linguistics, Cyrillic and Glagolitic paleography, history of Bulgarian culture, and digital humanities.
Selected Publications:

Books


Articles


ОПИСАНИЕ РОДОЛЮБИВЫХ И ПРО-ЛЯЮЩИХ БОЛГАРСКОГО ПРО-СВѢЩѢНѢА СПОМОЩѢСТВѢОАТЕЛѢѢ.

ВѢ БѢСѢРОѢѢ.

Высокопреподобнѣйший Архимандритъ Игнатий Бистрицкаго Монастыря Г. Г. Г.
Вр.; Игнатий Мстиславович;
Г. Христофоръ Мстиславович;
— Г. Хаджи Тончо Христовъ;
— Г. Хаджи Ангеловъ за Свищовскаго оцѣнива;
— Петра Петровичъ;
— Безименъ;
— И. Г. Пиперовъ за Свищовскаго оцѣнива;
— Константинъ Панагіотъ за Свиш.;
— Мано Иванъ за школата Свиш.;
— Ангелъ Хаджи Пантелей за Свиш.;
— Димитрий Минковъ за Свиш.;
— Ангелъ Хаджи Пантелей за Свиш.;
— Димитрий Хаджи Д. С.
— Василъ Василевичъ за Свиш.;
— Василъ Даниловичъ за Свиш.;
— Хаджи Нойко Боня
Bulgarian Arithmetic

An exhibit of a book published in 1845
Bulgaria has been in the Eastern Orthodox community a century longer than Russia. Boris I, King of the Bulgarians, was baptized in 865 and brought his people to the faith five years later. But Bulgarians were deprived of their sense of national and religious identity during almost half a millennium under Ottoman domination, which commenced in 1393 and lasted until 1878 with the end of the Russo-Turkish war. The reason was not only the brutalities of Ottoman yoke, more oppressive here than elsewhere in the Balkans. It was also that the sultans in Istanbul disregarded the Orthodox tradition of autonomous churches, and placed all Orthodox Christians within the empire under the authority of a Greek patriarch in Istanbul.

National Revival and the Funding of Bulgarian Schools

The national revival started with the work of Saint Paisius of Hilendar who opposed Greek domination of Bulgaria’s culture and religion. His work *Istoriya Slavyanobolgarskaya* (translated *History of the Slav-Bulgarians*), appeared in 1762, is considered as his greatest work and one of the main pieces of Bulgarian literature. He interpreted Bulgarian medieval history with the goal of reviving the spirit of his nation. His successor, Saint Sophronius of Vratsa, started the struggle for an independent Bulgarian church. The first nationwide movement was for enlightenment. Educated Bulgarians started to finance the building of Bulgarian schools. In spite of Ottoman resistance, Bulgarians founded their own schools and started publishing textbooks. The first Bulgarian secular school, the Aprilov National High School, was founded in Gabrovo in 1835 with the aid of Vasil Aprilov and Nikolay Palauzov. The school, still operating today, returned to its historic building in 1992. At present, it is one of the most prestigious high schools in Bulgaria.
History of this particular copy

Arithmetic was a popular genre of textbooks during the era of the Bulgarian National Revival in the nineteenth century. Bulgarian Arithmetic was the fourth such text published in this period, written in old Church Bulgarian language. The author, Khristodul Kostovich Sichan-Nikolov (1808–89), was a monk, teacher, writer, and publicist, he often assisted in his scholarly pursuits by the writer, educator, and priest Neofit Rilski. Before writing his own text, Sichan-Nikolov had been the editor of the first arithmetic text published in Bulgarian, Khristaki Pavlovich’s 1833 Arithmetic, or the Study of Numbers.

Neofit Georgiev Sokolski, commonly known in Gabrovo as Hadji pop Neofit (‘Hadji’ signifies that he went for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and ‘pop’ implies that he was a priest) completed his education in 1850 in Gabrovo at the school of Khristodul Kostovich. He was appointed a teacher at the same school in 1854. As per the personal inscription, this copy of this arithmetic textbook was sold/handed by him to one of the relatives of Valentin Gutev (namely Ivan Koljov from Bekrii, Gabrovo) in March 28, 1861. Gutev had discovered this book in the house of his paternal grandfather.

Valentin Gutev

Following his completion of his Ph.D. at the Faculty of Mathematics, Sofia University ‘St Kliment Ohridski,’ Sofia, Valentin Gutev took a lecturing post at the same Faculty which lasted over a decade. After being a postdoctoral fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, he moved to the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa in 2000. In 2013 he came over to Malta as professor at the Department of Mathematics, University of Malta. He is also a Senior Research Associate II degree in Geometry and Topology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.
Diplomatic relations between Malta and Bulgaria date back to 10 September 1971 and, since then, both countries have engendered strong political and economic relations which were further enhanced through an array of bilateral agreements signed over the years covering different areas of cooperation and through mutual EU membership. As member states of the European Union, the relations between the two counties went beyond bilateral and multilateral exchanges to the spirit of solidarity. Over the years a sizeable community of Bulgarian nationals developed in Malta, they live, work and send their children to local schools.

After 1971, the government adopted a broader perspective to foreign policy by establishing political and economical links with the Eastern Bloc; a shift from close cooperation with the Britain and other NATO countries to other countries including members forming part of the Warsaw Pact. This took place not just at governmental level. Malta opened up to new foreign influences and professional advice in football. The relations between Malta and Bulgaria and the strengthening the economic, cultural, educational and commercial between the two countries were always on the agenda. One ought to mention, in addition to sports, music. Bulgarian classical singers and teachers had significantly contributed to the cultural milieu of Malta of the 1970s and 1980s.

The international recession of 2008-09 did not impinge on Bulgaria’s exports to Malta which increased by more than 14 times over a span of 6 years, from €1.8 million in 2009 to €12.4 million in 2015. Tourism figures had almost doubled between 2004 and 2007. Travelling to and from Malta to Bulgaria is on the increase mainly due to low-cost airline fares. Trips are becoming popular with Maltese; in 2015, the number of Maltese travelling to Bulgaria increased by 1,039 or 25% to 5,318 from the previous year. The support and assistance between both countries within the EU framework was further strengthened through bilateral consultations. To this end,
the Parliamentary Secretary for EU Funds and the 2017 Presidency Hon. Ian Borg, had an official visit to Bulgaria in May 2015.

For the initiative of the Council of Europe, The President of Malta H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca had travelled to Sofia in April 2016, to address the conference to launch the Strategy for the Rights of the Child.

Malta welcomes the positive response expressed by President of Bulgaria, H.E. Rosen Plevneliev, during his meeting with Malta’s Ambassador to Bulgaria and Romania H.E. Lino Bianco in December 2014, to engage in the President’s Foundation for Social Well-Being initiated by the President of Malta and looks forward to communicating further on the social initiatives due to be taken in connection with this Foundation in the near future.

To consolidate and establish new links in the spheres of culture and education, Ambassador Bianco identified and works with a number of Bulgarian nationals living in Malta, most notably Professor Milena Dobreva, a Bulgarian academic at the University of Malta.

Following a suggestion by Bulgarian Maltese Cultural Association, he facilitated the establishment of the Bulgarian Sunday School Cyril and Methodius funded by the Bulgarian Ministry for Education. This school, which started functioning in October 2015, will be accepting Maltese candidates as from October 2016. Furthermore, on the 14-15 May 2015, The President of Malta hosted, for the first time ever, the celebration of the feast of Cyril and Methodius at her official presidential residence at Attard.

Over the years, the diplomatic relations were reinforced through the exchange of several state visits which included the ones to Bulgaria by the late Presidents of the Malta Agatha Barbara and Guido de Marco.
and, more recently by President of the Republic of Bulgaria H.E. Georgi Parvanov in October 2009 and the return state visit by President of Malta H.E. George Abela in May 2011.\textsuperscript{5} Economy, commerce and education were highlighted during the meeting of the President De Marco with the President of Bulgaria H.E. Petar Stoyanov, held in Sofia in March 2001. The said meeting also noted that there was room for increase in trade, tourism and investment.\textsuperscript{6} During this visit the Minister of Education Louis Galea, who was accompanying the President, had signed a co-operation agreement with the Bulgarian counterpart with respect to health care and medical science.\textsuperscript{7} During the state visit of H.E. Parvanov in October 2009, the President of Malta H.E. George Abela had discussed bilateral and EU relations. Following its accession as member state of the European Union, Malta had supported Bulgaria’s accession and will support its application to join Schengen area and the eurozone.\textsuperscript{8} This was reiterated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Tonio Borg during the signing of the cooperation agreement between the two countries on matters of foreign policy.\textsuperscript{9} President Parvanov was accompanied by high ranking officials including the Bulgarian ambassador to Malta H.E. Atanas Mladenov.\textsuperscript{10} The mutual respect between the two countries lead Bulgaria to grant the honour ‘Stara Planina’ to President Barbara in 1983\textsuperscript{11} and to President De Marco in 2001.\textsuperscript{12} The latter bestowed the Bulgarian counterpart President Stoyanov with the honour ‘Companion of Honour with collar of the National Order of Merit’.\textsuperscript{13} During a courtesy visit by the Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria H.E. Marin Raykov, the former interim Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, the Speaker of the House of Representatives Hon. Anglu
Farrugia reiterated the political ties between the two countries.\textsuperscript{14}

In addition to having non-resident ambassadors, Malta and Bulgaria have honorary consuls in the respective countries: Dr Borislav Boyanov is the Honorary Consul of Malta in Bulgaria whilst Dr Giannella De Marco, the daughter of the late President De Marco, is the Honorary Consul of Bulgaria in Malta.

\textit{All the historical photos in this section, except for the one of H.E. The President of Malta Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca with H.E. The President of Bulgaria Rosen Asenov Plevneliev, are being reproduced by the courtesy of the Department of Information, Government of Malta.}

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