

AN UNKNOWN PHILATELIC JOURNAL AND UNKNOWN PHILATELIC SOCIETIES

Albert Ganado

An unknown nineteenth-century philatelic journal, with past philatelic societies and philatelic jottings was published by Alfred Muscat of 270 Strada Reale, Valletta. It was named *The Melita Philatelic Chronicle and Advertiser*. The first number of the first year was dated 1st January 1898, while the last number '12' of the second year was dated 1st December 1899.

It is not listed in Sapienza's checklist of Maltese periodicals which means there is no copy at the National Library or the University of Malta Library.¹ It was printed by Zefrino Micallef at 68c Strada Reale.² Besides the title, the journal also sported a logo composed of two shields with the British and Maltese flags with the motto *Urbis et Orbis* inside a scroll underneath which indicated that the publisher wanted the journal to be international. The shields are tied with a ribbon at the top centre.

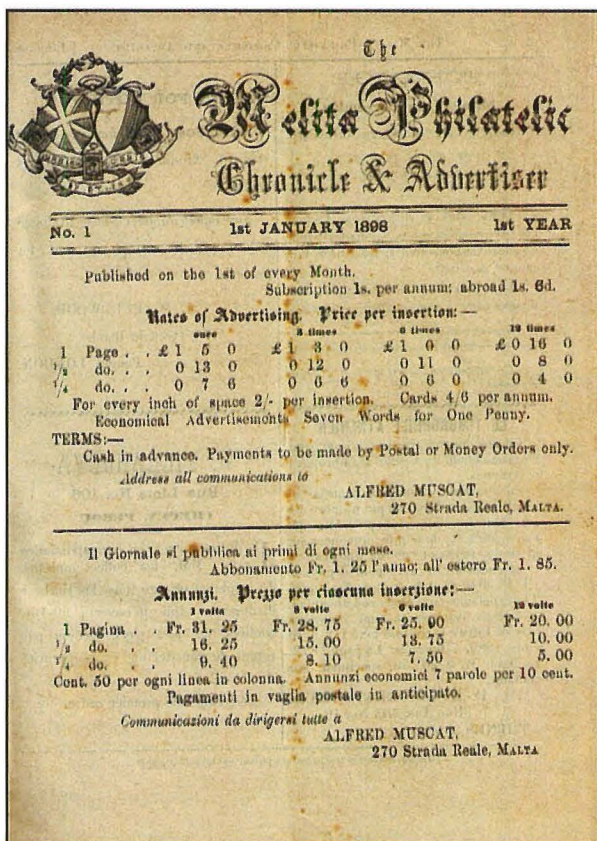


Fig. 1 The first issue of *The Melita Philatelic Chronicle and Advertiser*, 1st January 1898. Albert Ganado Melitensia Collection

¹ Anthony F. Sapienza, *A checklist of Maltese periodicals and newspapers in the National Library of Malta and the University of Malta Library*, Malta 1977.

² The Tipografia Zeferino Micallef was founded in 1860 at 6, Strada Teatro, Valletta (*Il Compagno per tutti 1888 (Advert)*).

Three Malta stamps, the one penny stamp, the Malta half-penny stamp and the Malta two-penny stamp link the composition together.

From a cutting present in the first number of the journal in my collection, it appears that 1898 was the twentieth anniversary of the Philatelic Society (Malta). It was preceded by an unofficial Stamp Circle whose members used to meet at the bar of the Anglo-Maltese Club where the business of selling, buying and the exchange of stamps was carried out over a cup of tea.

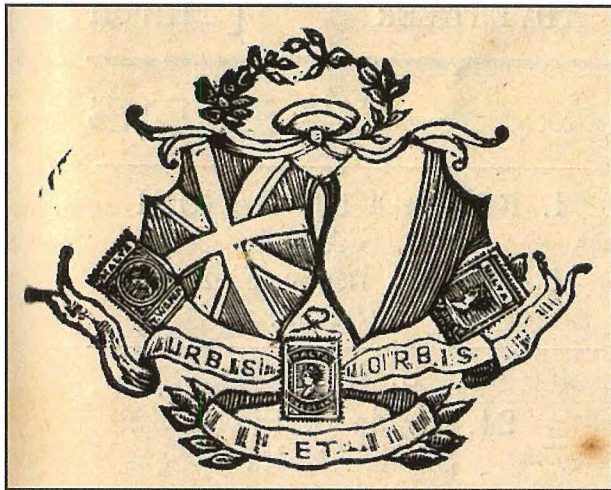


Fig. 2 The logo of the Journal

There is no clue what happened to this Association but it was perhaps the forerunner of the Philatelic Society (Malta). The Malta Philatelic Society, whose Rules were published on page 9 of the issue of the Journal dated 1st May, 1899. The President was Lt. Col. L. Manché M.D.,³ while the Hon. Secretary was Mr Edmund Rizzo. The members were shareholders. The seat of the Society was at 134D, Strada Brittanica, Valletta. Mr G. Bugeja was the Treasurer. At a Committee Meeting held on 8th August 1899 the balance sheet for the quarter ending 30th June was read and approved. Mr C. J. Micallef and Mr A. E. Calleja acted respectively for the Treasurer and Secretary during their absence from the island.

The 11th sitting of the Committee took place on the 29th October 1899 under the Presidency of Lt. Col. Manché. Present also were Mr C. J. Micallef, Asst. Hon. Treasurer, Dr Naudi, Mr Miller, Mr A. Muscat and Mr W. R. Gatt, Acting Hon. Secretary. Following the resignation of Mr Rizzo and Mr Calleja, Dr Robert Naudi LL.D. became Hon. Sec. and Mr W. R. Gatt Assist. Hon. Sec.

The following were elected as members: Mr Piani (France), Mr Nannoni (France), Mr Baxter (Scotland), Mr Moses (Bombay), Mr Daskalkis (Greece), Mr Munn (Canada), Mr J. Fenech and Major Clarkson (both Malta), Mr J. C. Darmanin (Malta).

³ Lt. Col. Lorenzo Manché M.D. was born on 25 November 1846. He was commissioned Surgeon of the Royal Malta Fencible Artillery on 27 February 1875; Surgeon Major 27 February 1887; Surgeon Lt. Col. Royal Malta Artillery 27 February 1895. Retired 25 November 1901. Died 16 February, 1921.

Apart from the members of the Malta Philatelic Society, there were various philatelists, including G. DePiro D'Arnico P.M.R., W. Micallef Eynaud, J. C. Darmanin, the Stamp Dealers, E. Busuttill Naudi & Co. and others. In the issue of 1st September 1898 there was a note that was indeed desirable that the gentle sex in Malta should follow the example of young Ladies abroad to become philatelists.

For some reason the Malta Philatelic Society ceased to function in 1901. The *Malta Stamp Society* was formed in its stead but Dr Manché felt the need to write a signed note in the *Daily Malta Chronicle* of 20 April 1901 saying that the new society was in no way connected with the former Malta Philatelic Society or with himself as its Honorary President.⁴

Alfred Muscat's Journal travelled far and wide. It had agents in Great Britain, Canada, the United States, Peru, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Sweden, Florence, Turin, and Catania and it fostered an exchange of philatelic papers with various countries in Europe and America.

The Journal also gave information on errors in watermarks, specimen stamps and the half penny 1/2d yellow. Among other items a very interesting advertisement appeared on 1 December 1899, no. 12 of the Journal. It read as follows: FOR SALE. The late Chev. F. d'Ancona's magnificent stamp collection containing 13,000 stamps all in first rate condition and guaranteed genuine. Valued £3,000 sterling. Apply to Mr Alfred d'Ancona⁵ No. 27 Str. Zaccaria, N. 14 Str. S. Ursula, Valletta – Malta. An astounding collection.

The present-day Malta Philatelic Society was created *ex novo* on the initiative of the Dutch philatelist, Louis Frank on 7 March 1966 with the title 'The Philatelic

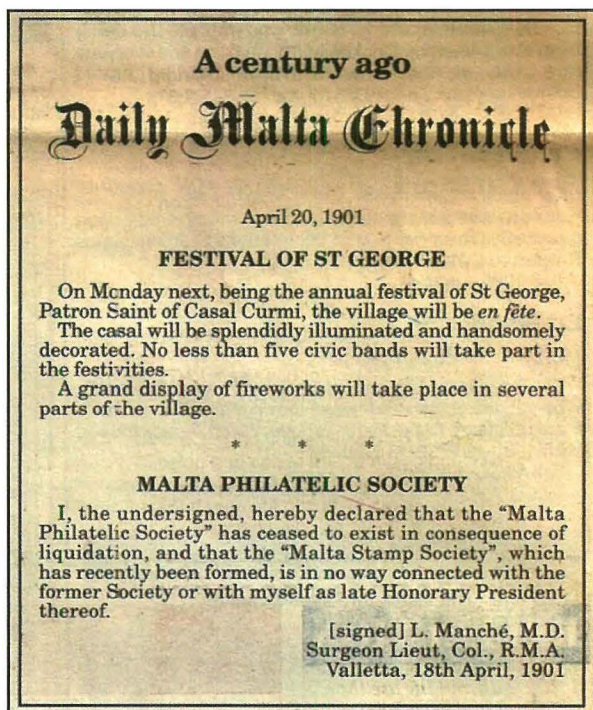



Fig. 3 Note in the *Daily Malta Chronicle* of 20 April 1901

⁴ I thank Louis Borg Manché for bringing this note to my notice.

⁵ In the 1880s Chev. D'Ancona was a Shipping Agent.



The
Malta Philatelic
Chronicle & Advertiser
OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE MALTA PHILATELIC SOCIETY

No. 121st DECEMBER 18992nd YEAR

— FOR SALE —

The late Chev: F. d'Ancona's magnificent stamp collection containing 13,000 stamps all in first rate condition and guaranteed genuine.
VALUED £3,000.

Apply to
M^r ALFRED d'ANCONA
N. 27 Str. Zaccaria, N. 14 Str. S. Ursola,
Valetta-Malta
or to the Publisher of this Paper.

ERRORS
5s. MALTA

Recently issued with letters of watermark reversed.
 Sent POST FREE to any part of the world on receipt of Postal or Money Order
 for 1/-
ALFRED MUSCAT,
 270, Strada Reale,
 Valletta—Malta.

Fig. 4 The advert showing the astounding collection of stamps of Chev. F. d'Ancona

Society of Malta'. Its first newsletter appeared in autumn 1966. I was the Honorary Secretary of the Society for twenty years.⁶

A comprehensive history of philately in Malta has still to be written.

⁶ See *Albert Ganado Hajja mhux tas-soltu* edited by Austin Sammut, Sergio Grech, Joseph Schirò, Malta 2020, p.155 et seq.