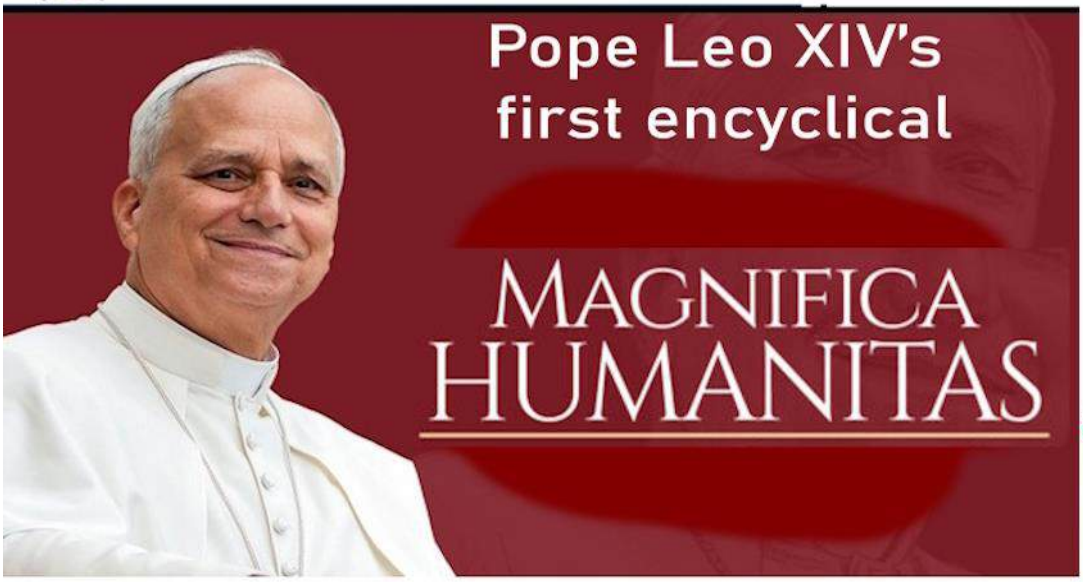
THE MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER



Journal for Maltese Living Abroad

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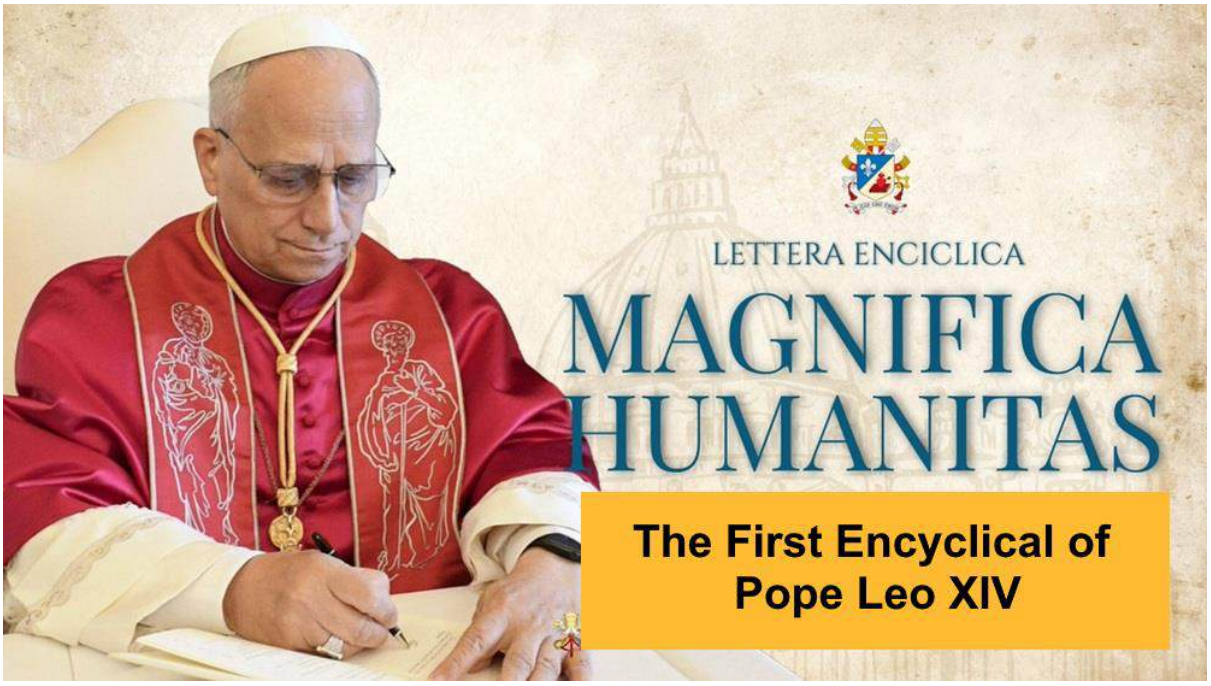
STOP STATELESSNESS IN MALTA

IL-KAROZZIN

75th ANNIVERSARY
1951 - 2026
George Cross Falcons
Community Centre

CRINGILA - NSW
AUSTRALIA



Fr. Lonnie Borg mssp – Victoria Australia

Pope Leo XIV has published his first encyclical, Magnifica Humanitas, a document that focuses on the ethical and social challenges of artificial intelligence. In it, the Pope warns that the rapid development of AI could threaten human dignity if it is not regulated responsibly and transparently.

“Humanity, created by God in all its greatness, today faces a crucial choice: either to build a new Tower of Babel or to build the city where God and man will dwell together.”

With these words, Pope Leo XIV opens his first encyclical, which deals with th protection of humanity in the age of Artificial Intelligence.

The Pope signed the encyclical on May 15, the day that marked the 135th anniversary of the promulgation of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical Rerum Novarum. Pope Leo XIV continued to build on the teachings of Leo XIII by writing a social encyclical that addresses one of the contemporary challenges – artificial intelligence.

Divided into five chapters, Magnifica humanitas asserts that technology is not an antagonistic force for humanity and is not inherently evil. However, the Pope says that technology is never neutral because it embodies the characteristics of those who build, finance, regulate and use it.

Therefore, Pope Leo XIV appeals for humans to work for the common good and to ultimately remain human. This is done, the Pope says, by embracing a courageous and responsible mentality for communion, so that the world may recognize the human heart as the place in which God wishes to dwell.

The Pope speaks about the protection of human dignity and says that certain ideologies and interests diminish humanity and lead to a person being measured by how much he achieves or produces. He maintains that the fundamental dignity of every person is neither achieved nor needs to be justified.

In his writings, the Pope maintains that technology should not be in the hands of a few people because if this happens, the gap between people will widen. He reiterates that social justice requires ensuring that fair access to opportunities for all is protected, especially for the vulnerable. He speaks of the need to combat hatred and disinformation and that the use of

technology does not only look at profit but also protects the dignity of each person and the common good of all.
The Pope also addresses the Church and says that in order for justice to be achieved, it is necessary to cleanse ecclesial relationships and structures of things that lead to
inequality, lack of transparency and abuse of power. He notes how artificial intelligence can imitate people but lacks moral conscience and empathy or emotional and
spiritual feelings. He states that technology can alleviate human suffering and open up new possibilities, but says that it should not deny the essence of humanity, which is
"our capacity for relationship and for love".
Therefore, he urged that there be clarity about responsibilities and accountability in every development. He called for an ethical code for artificial intelligence.
He also spoke about the environmental impact of new technologies that should not be ignored, because, he explained, these technologies require a large amount of
energy and therefore affect creation and the environment.
He calls for transparency in the way content is selected and for the protection of personal data. Here, the Pope writes that the Church must also be a model of transparent and honest communication, especially in cases of injustice and
abuse. He also emphasizes the importance of protecting the dignity of work and that workplaces design systems that are centered on the person and not just on work performance.
He explained that while artificial intelligence promises to increase productivity by taking over monotonous tasks, machines are often putting pressure on workers to keep up
with their speed. Therefore, the Pope says that while technology can save people from repetitive or painful work, it should not lead to unemployment in order to reduce costs
and increase profits.
Finally, in his first encyclical, Pope Leo XIV invites people to live this technological era in the light of the Gospel and says that in the age of artificial intelligence, one can bear witness to the greatness of humanity in which God dwell

I was reflecting recently on the SSPX (Society of Saint Pius X) ordaining bishops against the direct wishes of the Pope.
I was also reflecting on the Donatist heresy.
The Donatists considered themselves ***"the pure"***, the authentic Christians. They held that only saints, and not sinners, were true Christians. They believed that only those who had endured the persecutions were the true Church, and that the Church's sacraments were invalid if administered by those they considered unworthy.
St Augustine spent a great deal of time combating the Donatists while also encouraging the faithful to become saints. Jesus reached out to sinners and to lepers, both physical and spiritual. He came for sinners who needed a "doctor". Sadly, there are those who cling to traditionalism rather than embracing the authentic Tradition of the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit.
The unity of the Church around Peter is very important, as Jesus himself intended.
Breaking away from the mainstream Church with a group of like-minded people is detrimental to the unity of the Church and can leave that group more vulnerable to being misled.
"Father, may they be one as you and I are one."

HAPPY RETIREMENT FR TARCISIO MICALLEF MSSP – THE SOLE CHAPLAIN FOR THE CATHOLIC MALTESE COMMUNITY IN NSW TO RETIRE

Fr Tarcisio Micallef MSSP celebrated his final Holy Mass at the La Valette Chapel with the La Valette community on Saturday, 4 July 2026. Following the Mass, he attended a dinner at the hall to connect with members and friends. Fr. Micallef is the only priest serving as a chaplain for the Maltese community in Sydney, NSW, at the MSSP Mons Depiro's House in East Sydney. He was ordained a priest in Malta on 11 March 1967 and arrived in Australia to serve on 26 January 1978. Initially, he served the Maltese community in Perth for two years before moving to Melbourne, where he dedicated 18 years of service. He was recalled from Perth, Western Australia, after the tragic passing of Fr. George Xerri on 4 August 1980 and again following the death of Fr. Honoratus Galea on 30 April 1982.

On 23 March 1998, he was assigned to serve the Maltese community in Sydney. Fr Micallef has held the position of Provincial of the MSSP in Australia for three terms. The Maltese community expresses its gratitude to Fr. Micallef for his spiritual guidance and support over the years. He is recognized within the community as a patient and gentle individual, known for his compassion and understanding.

Father is a very approachable and friendly person and he consistently approached challenges with calmness and confidence. Fr. Micallef also played a key role in the construction of the Maltese Community Centre in Parkville, Victoria, with the help of a building committee from the Executive of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria.

The missionary society of St. Paul established in 1910 by Mgr Giuseppe DePiro, has set up several houses not only in Australia but also in various parts of the world, including Peru, Pakistan, Canada, and the Philippines.

The editor and readers extend their heartfelt gratitude and thank him for his unwavering service to our cherished Maltese community, wishing him health, peace, and happiness in his retirement. May we ask – who is going to replace Fr. Micallef and what is happening to the Sydney house and chapel?

am writing to introduce **Folk Underground**, a new live cultural experience designed to give international visitors an authentic insight into Malta's rich cultural heritage.

Taking place in the atmospheric underground vaults of **Sala San Duminku** in Valletta, Folk Underground invites audiences to experience Malta's traditional **għana**, storytelling, and virtuoso acoustic guitar through intimate performances by some of the island's leading folk musicians.

Many students come to Malta to improve their English, study, or participate in professional training programmes, yet often leave having experienced only a small part of the island's unique culture. Folk Underground offers a memorable opportunity to discover a side of Malta that cannot be found in guidebooks or typical tourist attractions.

The experience lasts approximately **45 minutes** and is ideal as an evening cultural activity. **Every Wednesday, weekly Performance Times** 19:00 – 19:45 ***or*** 20:15 – 21:00.

We would be delighted to collaborate with your institution by offering this experience to your students and visitors. We are also happy to discuss **group bookings,** we can also arrange a **meet-and-greet with the musicians**, providing students with the opportunity to learn more about Malta's folk traditions, the history of għana, and the importance of preserving the island's living cultural heritage. This creates an engaging educational experience that complements classroom learning while offering students a genuine connection to local culture.

Tickets may be booked directly online via: https://www.showshappening.com/folk-underground/folk-underground

Thank you for your time and consideration. We hope to welcome your students beneath the streets of Valletta to experience one of Malta's most treasured living traditions.

Warm regards, Marcon Borg Caruana **Project Manager**

MEET THE MUSICIANS

The musicians of Folk Underground are a collective of friends, musicians and cultural custodians dedicated to the performance of *għana*, Malta's traditional form of sung oral poetry. United by a shared passion for this unique vocal tradition, the group brings together seasoned practitioners and new voices to explore the many expressions of *għana* — from narrative ballads to improvised duels and playful, satirical verse. Drawing on deep respect for the tradition, they offer performances that remain true to the roots while making the form accessible and compelling for contemporary audiences, locally and internationally. Their repertoire revives timeworn stanzas and timeless melodies, breathing new life into them through modern harmonies, inventive arrangements, and new interpretation. With virtuosic guitar accompaniment and captivating vocal interplay, The aim is to present the vocal tradition not as a relic, but as a living contemporary expression — one that continues to evolve, inspire, and resonate.

MIKIEL CUMBO

MARIELE ZAMMIT

GEORGE AQUILINA

KAROL AQUILINA

MARIELE ZAMMIT comes from a family deeply rooted in music, with both her mother and grandfather being musicians. This rich musical heritage fostered in her a profound appreciation for Malta's distinctive vocal tradition. In 2018, under the guidance of Mikiel Cumbo l-Iżgej, she was introduced to the traditional high-pitched singing style. Since then, Mariele has dedicated herself to exploring the expressive qualities of this vocal tradition, expanding its possibilities through contemporary and interdisciplinary contexts. Her unique voice, shaped by both tradition and innovation, has established her as one of Malta's most sought-after vocal artists on the island, captivating audiences and breathing new life into Malta's rich musical heritage.

MIKIEL CUMBO, affectionately known as L-Iżgej, is Malta's foremost exponent of *La Bormliża*, a rare and technically demanding folk singing tradition known for its soaring, high-pitched vocal style. Introduced to *għana* at an early age, he went on to become one of the tradition's leading practitioners and most dedicated custodians. Through his mentorship of emerging singers, Mikiel continues to ensure the preservation and future of this unique Maltese vocal heritage.

GEORGE AQUILINA The Aquilina family has long been rooted in Malta's folk music traditions. George Aquilina learned from his father, the late Carmelo Aquilina Nofsillejl, a celebrated guitarist who accompanied renowned guitarists, including Karmenu Cardona It-Tapp. Inspired by this legacy, George dedicated himself to mastering Maltese guitar playing, a passion he has passed on to his son, Karol. Together, they continue the family's commitment to preserving Malta's musical heritage.

KAROL AQUILINA Following in his father's footsteps, Karol Aquilina is a young guitarist with a deep passion for the Maltese guitar, classical guitar, and flamenco. His musical education began under the guidance of his father, George Aquilina, alongside formal studies in classical guitar and music theory. Inspired by Malta's *għana* tradition and traditional guitar styles, Karol has immersed himself in the distinctive style inherited from his grandfather, the renowned Carmelo Nofsillejl. Through years of family mentorship, he has developed a mastery of its intricate techniques while continuing to expand his knowledge of music. At just 17 years of age, he has already established himself as one of Malta's most promising young musicians and a leading exponent of traditional Maltese folk guitar

Last Saturday evening, approximately 450 individuals convened to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the dynamic George Cross Falcons Community Centre.

Throughout the past seventy years, the Club has served as the focal point for community and cultural activities within the Illawarra's Maltese community. Currently, it hosts a men's shed, CWA activities, the Illawarra Pipe Band, and various other initiatives.

Every Monday, club members and individuals from several other ethnic communities are provided with a nutritious meal, which includes drinks, a raffle, bingo, and a singalong. Additionally, other significant Maltese national events are organized, such as Sette Giogno, ANZAC Day, Regatta, Christmas in July, and the Feast of Our Lady Queen of Victories.

We extend our gratitude to the President, Mr. Louis Parnis, along with his committee, volunteers, and all those who have contributed over the past 75 years!

The club was established in June 1951 when a collective of Maltese immigrants agreed to contribute one shilling each week to purchase flowers for the decoration of the multi-purpose hall in Warrawong, where a priest from Port Kembla would come to celebrate Mass on Sunday mornings. The club addressed the social, cultural, and spiritual needs of Maltese families. The efforts of Fr. Victor Bonello contributed to the growth of the parish, and the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus travelled from Mackay, Qld, to Warrawong to establish a Catholic school and a convent.

They provided spiritual support, and the Maltese community of the Illawarra district reciprocated with their assistance. Under the leadership of prominent figures such as George Bartolo and Lorry Pavia, the group became organized and affiliated with the George Cross League of Sydney, later evolving into the Maltese Guild and subsequently changing its name to the George Cross Falcons Club.

The group acquired a parcel of land on Lake Avenue, Cringila, where they constructed a clubhouse. Over the years, the club committees made significant efforts to engage younger members of the Maltese community by organizing sporting activities. The George Cross Falcons Club even operated a football team, although it disbanded after a few years. They also hosted Miss Quest pageants.

The clubhouse was later expanded to facilitate the playing of bocci, a game that proved to be a popular attraction and outlasted football, although these activities received only temporary support. Today this Centre is one of the most vibrant clubs in the State of New South Wales.

LUCERO by Alma Flamenca - SUN 26 JUL 2026

Join Alma Flamenca Dance School as they light up the stage for an uplifting 2026 Flamenco Showcase that will have you shouting Olé! LUCERO brings together all of the amazing dance, song and percussion students of Alma Flamenca including their award-winning Dance Company, Compañía Alma Flamenca. Our school will be joined by director, Roshanne Wijeyeratne, singer, percussionist and dance soloist along with our lead percussionist, Roger González, and our sensational guitar maestro from Melbourne, Kieren Ray, for one spectacular performance at the beautiful Brighton Performing Arts Theatre!

*Seating is Reserved so get your best seats early!
*Beer, Wine, Chips & Soft Drinks available at the bar pre/intermission/post- show.
*Bar opens at 5:15PM Theatre door opens at 5:45PM
Come and feel the inspiration of Flamenco! We hope to see you there!
Sunday 26 July 2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM (UTC+09:30)
Location Brighton Performing Arts Centre 305 Brighton Rd, North Brighton SA 5048
Contact Details https//www. trybooking.com/events/landing/1581033

BONNIE LEE GALEA ADELAIDE

bonnieleegalea@gmail.com

I am above a beginner and below an intermediate dancer. And excited to performing later this month with our whole school, of all different levels butyou will experience some seriously professional dancers, singers and musicians too. In case you may want to come along…it is on and called LUCERO, 6pm on Sun 26 July at Brighton Performing Arts Theatre.

https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1581033

Also our jazz trio will be playing MONTHLY on a Friday at LENOX AVENUE – ADELAIDE in the city. Watch out for the upcoming dates. THIS FRIDAY 10 JULY, Al Valodze will be joining us on guitar. THANKYOU if you popped along to Gin and Jazz last night at Plant 4, it was another great night! See you soon! - BONNIE

Ernest Ferrante ·

VILLA MONDELLO – ONE OF MARSASKALA'S HIDDEN TREASURES

💚Many people pass by Villa Mondello every day, but few know the fascinating history behind this beautiful landmark.

Built in 1935, Villa Mondello was inspired by the elegant villas of Mondello, Sicily, giving it its distinctive architectural style. At the time, it was one of the finest residences in Marsaskala, showcasing the beauty of Maltese limestone craftsmanship.

Over the years, the villa became much more than a private home. It served as Marsaskala's village school, where many of the locality's older residents spent their childhood learning and making lifelong memories.

Another charming piece of local history is that a traditional vegetable seller once sold fresh produce from beneath the grand staircase, with a horse and cart becoming a familiar sight outside the villa. It was a place full of life and community spirit.

Today, although the building shows the effects of time, Villa Mondello remains one of the most iconic historic buildings in Marsaskala. Its elegant façade, grand staircase and ornate balconies remind us of the village's rich heritage and the importance of preserving it for future generations.

Imagine if this magnificent villa could once again be restored to its former glory—a jewel that would make every resident of Marsaskala proud.

ASHES IN THE SQUARE: THE MARTYRDOM OF THOMASO PETIT IN MALTA

In the autumn of 1546, the main square of Birgu, Malta, became the stage for an act of chilling brutality. Thomaso Petit, a man believed to be of French origin, was bound to a stake surrounded by firewood. As the flames were lit, his life was violently extinguished under the watchful, approving eyes of religious authorities. His crime? He was a leading member of a group of reformers who dared to read the scriptures, discuss biblical truths, and question the established religious hierarchy. Petit did not recant. Sources from the era note that he faced his executioners with unyielding conviction, choosing a painful death rather than bowing to a system that had systematically corrupted the message of Christ.

The execution of Thomaso Petit stands as a stark exposure of institutionalised cruelty. To put a human being to death over theological differences is a completely evil, ungodly behaviour. It is a grotesque inversion of the gospel of peace and love preached by Jesus of Nazareth. Instead of showing the loving-kindness expected of true shepherds, the religious authorities of 15th-century Malta chose to enforce conformity through terror and blood.

The Catholic Church cannot absolve itself of direct and indirect involvement in this atrocity. While historical apologists often attempt to shift the blame onto civil authorities—noting that the church technically "relaxed" heretics to the secular arm for punishment—this is a semantic shield that fools no one. The Inquisition tribunal, operating under the authority of Bishop Domenico Cubelles, was the sole entity that investigated, interrogated, and condemned Petit. The church created the legal mechanism, supplied the theological justification, and handed down the guilty verdict, knowing exactly what the physical consequence would be.

If one were to dismiss the historical atrocities committed or sanctioned by the Catholic Church as merely products of a distant era would be a flawed argument. This perspective overlooks a critical point: such actions would have been entirely unthinkable to the Apostles and the earliest disciples of Jesus. These first-century Christians upheld a completely different standard, living long before the church was institutionalised under Roman imperial authority.

When we look at the historical and biblical record, the evidence in favour of the early Christians is overwhelming. They strictly followed Jesus' command to remain no part of the world and to practice absolute non-violence (John 17:16). This extended directly to military service, which early believers widely rejected because it conflicted with the command to love one's enemies and the prohibition against taking human life. Church fathers like Tertullian famously questioned how a Christian could serve in the army when Jesus had disarmed Peter, stating that the Lord, "in disarming Peter, unbelted every soldier." Similarly, Hippolytus of Rome recorded in early church guidelines that a soldier wishing to join the faith must refuse to kill, even if commanded, and a Christian must not volunteer for the military under pain of rejection. The Roman historian Pliny the Younger, writing to Emperor Trajan in the early second century, investigated Christian meetings and reported a similar dedication to harmlessness, noting that their only pledge was a moral one: an oath binding them to high Christian morals.

When false accusations were levelled against the early Christians by political enemies, no legitimate accusation of treason, violence, or criminal behaviour could ever be sustained. They consistently paid their taxes and respected secular authorities, just as the Apostle Paul directed in Romans 13:1, 7. They never raised a sword, let alone lit a pyre, to defend or spread their faith.

Jesus provided a clear spiritual litmus test to identify those who carry out acts of religious violence. In exposing the religious leaders of his day who sought to kill him, Jesus stated:

"You are from your father, the Devil, and you wish to do the desires of your father. That one was a murderer when he began, and he did not stand fast in the truth, because truth is not in him." — John 8:44

By identifying the Devil as the original murderer, Jesus made it clear that any religious organisation utilising murder, torture, and execution to eliminate dissent is doing the works of the Devil, not God. There is a vast, unmistakable difference between the fruits of God's holy spirit—which include love, peace, patience, and mildness (Galatians 5:22, 23)—and the murderous fruits of false religion.

The tragedy of Thomaso Petit in 1546 is the ultimate manifestation of historical corruption. It serves as a powerful reminder that when an institution trades the peaceful teachings of Christ for the coercive tools of political power, it ceases to represent God and instead reflects the image of the one who was a murderer from the beginning.

Primary Historical References for Thomaso Petit's Execution

The trial and execution of Thomaso Petit are documented across historical studies detailing the birth of Protestant movements and the operations of the Roman Inquisition in Malta.
The primary historical accounts and references for his trial and martyrdom include:
The Records of the Maltese Inquisition: The formal accusations brought against Petit and his fellow reformers in 1545 are preserved in the historical records of the Inquisition tribunal. Operating under the ecclesiastical authority of Bishop Domenico Cubelles, the tribunal officially condemned Petit on November 5, 1546, leading to his execution in Birgu's main square.

Anne Marie

Can you recognise any of these chaps? ·

Hello, I'm posting this photo which I found in my dad's collection, would anyone recognise any of the young men in it? The man in the back row, second from the left is my father. The photo was unclear, so I had it restored. The photo was taken in Fremantle 28/06/1950. The background is one of the heritage dock buildings. This group of young men were most probably travelling on the SS Ocean Triumph. If you can help identifying these young men please get in touch with me on maltesejourna;@gmail/com

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IL-HUGGIEGA TA' SAN GWANN

Il-festa ta' San Ġwann il-Battista, iċċelebrata fl-24 ta' Ġunju, kienet tiġi ċċelebrata bil-kbir fil-perjodu li fih l-Ordni tal-Kavallieri ta' San Ġwann kienu Malta mill-1530 sa tarf is-seklu 18.
Tradizzjoni marbuta ma' din il-festa kienet tinvolvi l-ħruq ta' ħġejjeġ kbar f'postijiet pubbliċi u mill-fortifikazzjonijiet.
Lejlet il-festa, il-Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna ħasbet li terġa tagħti l-ħajja lil din it-tradizzjoni bil-ħruq ta' ħuġġieġa fis-Saluting Battery tal-Barrakka ta' Fuq fil-Belt.
Il-ħuġġieġa tqabbdet mis-Sindku tal-Belt, Alexei Dingli, u wara kif kien isir fi żmien l-Ordni ġew sparati l-kanuni.
Il-Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna qed tippjana li s-sena d-dieħla taħraq ħġejjeġ minn diversi postijiet li huma taħt il-ħarsien tagħha u b'hekk iżżomm ħajja din it-tradizzjoni.

THE LAUDATE PUERI CHOIR AT THE VICTORIA INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

o: Albert G Storace

The Laudate Pueri choir, directed by Fr George J. Frendo, is one of the leading choirs in the Maltese Islands. This year, they have plenty of reasons to celebrate because the choir was founded in 1976, in Victoria, Gozo.

As part of this 50th anniversary, the choir featured in this year's Victoria International Arts Festival. In 1997 the VIAF was founded by a renowned composer from Gozo: Joseph Vella, and it was launched in 1998.

The choir has a close relationship with this festival. It is a choir dedicated very deeply to the singing of sacred choral music and from its inception has been associated with the basilica of St George where every Sunday at 11.00, the Liturgy of the Mass.

A very important point is that Laudate Pueri has always championed the intricate but beautiful polyphonic sacred music of the Renaissance period. As a member of the erstwhile Chorus Melitensis, we sang a motet or two by Palestrina and de Victoria (never easy work), as well as some music by Lassus, but just sporadically.

On the other hand, the pioneering Laudate Pueri has consistently and uniquely persevered in its pursuit of excellence in the field ever since its founding. It has also been able to field the first all-female choir (SSAA) in the whole archipelago.

It goes without saying that the third concert of the current VIAF's 29th edition was held at the basilica of St George where they sing every Sunday morning. The full line-up of singers is balanced, very disciplined, and that produces excellent results. Choristers come and go, and very few of the original ones are still singing...well, some could have moved on, but membership remains stable as does commitment.

IL-BAQRA TAL-FUĦĦAR?

Tradizzjonijiet marbutin mal-Imnarja

Ritratt: Il-Miklem

L-Imnarja hija waħda mill-eqdem u l-aktar festi tradizzjonali ta' Malta, b'għeruq li jmorru lura sekli sħaħ. Għalkemm illum hija magħrufa l-aktar għall-festa fil-Buskett, il-fenek u l-mużika folkloristika, l-istorja tagħha hija ferm aktar rikka u tirrifletti aspetti reliġjużi, soċjali, agrikoli u kulturali tal-ħajja Maltija.

Il-"Baqra" tal-fuħħar

Tradizzjoni li llum kważi sparixxiet hija l-użu ta' reċipjent tal-fuħħar magħruf bħala l-Baqra. Dan kien kontenitur magħluq miż-żewġ naħat li fih kienu jitqiegħdu biċċiet tal-fenek, patata u ingredjenti oħra biex isir l-istuffat.

L-għatu kien jiġi ssiġillat b'taħlita ta' dqiq u ilma, biex il-borma tibqa' magħluqa waqt il-vjaġġ fuq il-karrettun sal-Buskett. Hemmhekk kienet titħaffer ħofra, jitqabbad in-nar, u meta l-fjammi kienu jikkalmaw, il-Baqra kienet titqiegħed fuq il-faħam, tintrefa' bit-trab u titħalla ssajjar bil-mod għal sagħtejn jew tlieta. Sa nofsinhar, l-ikel kien ikun lest.

Din it-tradizzjoni turi kemm il-kultura materjali Maltija kienet marbuta mill-qrib mal-ikel u mal-mod kif il-familji kienu jiċċelebraw flimkien.

B'differenza mill-Karnival, li kien jiġbed lin-nies tal-irħula lejn l-inħawi tal-Port il-Kbir, speċjalment il-Belt Valletta, l-Imnarja kienet tagħmel l-oppost. F'din il-festa, in-nies mill-Port il-Kbir kienu jitilgħu lejn l-irħula, b'mod partikolari lejn l-Imdina u l-Buskett.

Fil-qalba tagħha, l-Imnarja hija festa reliġjuża ddedikata lil San Pietru u San Pawl, b'ċelebrazzjonijiet li jsiru fl-Imdina. Madankollu, matul iż-żmien, il-Buskett sar il-post ewlieni fejn in-nies kienu jinġabru biex jiċċelebraw flimkien.

Ir-regoli tal-festa

Fi żmien il-Kavallieri kienu jinħarġu avviżi uffiċjali (legal notices) li jistabbilixxu x'kien permess u x'kien projbit waqt il-festa. Peress li ħafna mill-popolazzjoni ma kinitx taf taqra u tikteb, dawn l-avviżi kienu jinqraw pubblikament minn min kien jaf jaqra, sabiex il-messaġġ jasal għand kulħadd. Dawn ir-regolamenti kienu jinkludu wkoll il-mod kif kellhom isiru l-attivitajiet popolari, fosthom it-tlielaq tal-annimali, filwaqt li kienet tingħata importanza biex ma ssir ebda moħqrija tal-annimali.

It-tlielaq tradizzjonali

Waħda mill-aktar attrazzjonijiet mistennija kienet it-tlielaq taż-żwiemel, il-ħmir u l-bgħula. Ir-rebbieħa kienu jingħataw il-Palju, tradizzjoni li tirrifletti l-influwenza Taljana u Spanjola fuq il-kultura Maltija, fejn il-bandieri u l-istendardi kienu simbolu tar-rebħa u tal-unur.

Biex l-annimali jiġru aktar malajr kienu jintużaw ċerti għodod, iżda l-użu tagħhom kien regolat. Kienu jinqalgħu wkoll tilwim u inċidenti waqt it-tlielaq, u għalhekk maż-żmien komplew jiddaħħlu aktar regoli biex jinżamm l-ordni, qal Buttigieg.

L-Imnarja ssir ukoll wirja agrikola

F'nofs is-seklu dsatax, l-Imnarja bdiet tieħu dimensjoni ġdida. Bis-saħħa tas-Soċjetà Agrarja, li kienet twaqqfet ftit snin qabel, bdew jiġu organizzati wirjiet ta' prodotti agrikoli Maltin u ta' annimali mrobbija mir-raħħala u l-bdiewa Maltin u Għawdxin.

Dawn il-wirjiet servew biex juru l-ħidma u l-ħiliet tal-biedja lokali, iżda kellhom ukoll aspett edukattiv u xjentifiku. Is-Soċjetà Agrarja kienet tintroduċi wkoll prodotti u pjanti ġodda, fosthom ħxejjex li jifilħu temperaturi għoljin u jeħtieġu inqas ilma. Fl-istess żmien bdew jintwerew ukoll għodod agrikoli moderni u anke invenzjonijiet ta' Maltin, li kienu juru l-iżvilupp teknoloġiku tal-epoka.

Il-fenek, l-inbid u l-qubbajt

L-Imnarja ilha marbuta mal-fenek, tant li dan sar sinonimu mal-festa. Flimkien mat-tisjir tal-fenek kien ikun hemm ukoll abbundanza ta' nbid u ħelu tradizzjonali bħall-qubbajt, li kien jinbiegħ fil-biċċa l-kbira tal-festi Maltin.

Buttigieg semma element interessanti li llum kważi ntesa, t-tuffieħ ta' Belludja. Dan kien jintuża biex iżejnu l-annimali waqt il-festa u, wara, kien jitqassam biex jittiekel, partikolarment fost dawk li ma kellhomx il-mezzi biex jixtru ħafna ikel. Dan juri kif l-ikel kellu wkoll funzjoni soċjali, mhux biss gastronomika.

Pastizzi u torti: ikel prattiku għall-festa

Aspett ieħor li ħafna drabi jintesa huwa l-użu tal-pastizzi u tat-torti. Dawn kienu soluzzjoni prattika għal dawk li kienu jqattgħu l-ġurnata kollha fil-Buskett, peress li setgħu jinġarru

faċilment mingħajr il-ħtieġa li jerġgħu jissaħħnu jew jissajru fil-post. Barra minn hekk, ma kinux jeħtieġu ħafna għodda biex jiġu servuti, u għalhekk kienu ideali għal piknik tradizzjonali.

Tradizzjoni li tibqa' tevolvi

l-Imnarja tibqa' waħda mill-aktar festi sinifikanti fil-kalendarju kulturali Malti. Matul is-sekli nbidlet u adattat ruħha għaż-żminijiet, iżda baqgħet iżżomm ħafna mill-elementi li jagħmluha unika.

Ii-kultura hija xi ħaġa ħajja, u dak li jgħodd illum mhux bilfors kien jgħodd dak iż-żmien." Din il-fraži tfakkarna li t-tradizzjonijiet ma jibqgħux statiċi, iżda jevolvu flimkien mas-soċjetà li toħloqhom u tgħixhom.

Christmas in July is a popular mid-winter celebration embraced by many Maltese Australians as a way to enjoy traditional, hearty, and cozy Christmas festivities during the chilly southern hemisphere winter.

Because Australia's official Christmas in December falls in the middle of summer, many cultural groups use July as a second festive opportunity. Across the country, community organizations—such as the St. Helena Maltese/Australia Social Club—host special winter feasts. These events typically feature:

- **Hearty Feasts:** Steaming roast dinners, baked pasta, and traditional Maltese sweets (like *qagħaq tal-għasel* or honey rings).
- **Festive Atmosphere:** Roaring fireplaces and winter styling.
- **Community Gatherings:** Social events that bring together the older generations and the broader Maltese diaspora.
- **Festive Markets:** Major outdoor celebrations pop up nationwide, such as the Christmas in July - Sydney - The Rocks festival. Running from 10–19 July, it brings snow machines, authentic wooden chalets, melted raclette cheese, and steaming mulled wine to the cobblestone streets.
- **Getaways and Dinners:** Regions with colder weather, such as the Blue Mountains and the Yarra Valley, are hotspots for "Yulefest." Local hotels and restaurants offer traditional Christmas dinners with all the trimmings.
- **Workplace & Social Parties:** Friends, families, and offices host mid-year gatherings, where the unofficial date of July 25th serves as a fun excuse to exchange gifts, wear ugly Christmas jumpers, and pull bonbons.

A stateless person becoming Maltese...

How can a stateless person become a Maltese national? Keep in mind that a stateless person might not be in a position to marry a Maltese national...since marriage is dependent on legal residence! The Maltese Citizenship Act says that a stateless person born in Malta may apply for naturalisation after five years' residence subject to other eligibility requirements. Furthermore, a stateless person with a parent who is a Maltese national may naturalise after three years' ordinary residence provided certain conditions are met. Apart from that, Malta provides very limited protection for stateless people, lacks any mechanism to identify and determine statelessness, and no stateless protection status.

We urge the Government to establish in law a statelessness determination procedure and protection status, under the authority of the Office of the Refugee Commissioner. This would need to be in line with UNHCR Guidance and fulfill the rights enshrined to stateless persons under the 1954 Convention. These include the granting of a residence permit, right to work, study and facilitated naturalisation.

Furthermore, Malta is still not party to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The 1954 Convention is designed to ensure stateless people enjoy a minimum set of human rights. With the 1961 Convention, the aim is really to prevent statelessness and to reduce it over time.

We encourage the Government to acceded to the 1961 Convention as there are only some safeguards in Maltese law as for prevention of statelessness.

In the Maltese Citizenship Act, there is a non-automatic provision for children born stateless in Malta. They can acquire citizenship after five years' residence. However, there are no reports of this provision ever having been used.

Also, the Citizenship Act deems foundlings to be Maltese from birth. Yet, the provision states "*until his right to any other citizenship is established*". Unfortunately, this wording does not preclude from possible statelessness later on. It is only in adoption cases that safeguards against statelessness are provided in law and policy.

Another provision of the Act allows for Maltese nationality to be automatically conferred to children born when parents are Maltese citizens. The concern here lies in the discriminatory limitations in the Act. Indeed, in the case of unmarried parents, a child born in Malta on or after 1st August 1989 shall only automatically become Maltese if the mother is a Maltese citizen. There is an obviously risk of statelessness if only the father is Maltese.

We urge the Government to consider amending the law so that all children born on its territory who would otherwise be stateless acquire nationality at birth, regardless of the status of the parents. Also, we would like to emphasise on the need to address discrimination in the acquisition of nationality and practical barriers to birth registration by amending the law in line with the 2011 European Court of Human Rights judgement and implementing national campaigns and promotion activities on birth registration.

Horse-drawn carriages in Malta, locally known as the *Karozzin*, are traditional, canopy-roofed carriages dating back to the mid-19th century. They are primarily found as a scenic tourist attraction in the historic streets of Valletta and the fortified city of Mdina.
Capacity: Up to 5 people can ride in a single carriage (including the driver).
Cost: Rates generally start around €35 for a shorter tour and go up to €80+ depending on the length and route. **Duration:** Under Maltese law, a standard journey cannot last longer than 45 minutes to ensure horse welfare. **Summer Animal Welfare Rules:**
To protect the horses, legislation enforces a midday suspension between 1:00 PM and 4:00 PM during the hot summer months, during which time carriages are not allowed to operate. [1, 2]
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MALTESE SONG – CEKLEM, CEKLEM KAROZZIN

(Music Joe Tanti/Lyrics George Stevens)
It-turisti ghaddejin f'karozzin kollha mbissmin
mit-triqat, pjazzez Maltin, jitpaxxew b'dehriet sbejhin.
Il-kuccier ferhan se jtir bit-taghbija barranin
waqt li l-qanpiena jdoqq xxxx noti helwin

Chorus
Ceklem ceklem karozzin
Minn got-toroq imserrpin
Uri l-hajja taghna l-Maltin
Ceklem ceklem karozzin
Minn got-toroq imserrpin
Uri l-hajja taghna l-Maltin

U ghad-daqq tal-karozzin u s-sinjali tal-kuccier
wisa' jaghmlu n-nies fit-triq,
wicchom b'ferh jilma bid-deher.
Dan hu l-wirt taghna l-Maltin u bih ahna mkabbrin
Waqt li l-qanpiena jdoqq .... noti helwin.
Chorus
Ceklem ceklem karozzin ... (x2)

A HISTORY OF THE MALTESE FTIRA

Ernest Ferrante

The ftira is one of Malta's most iconic culinary treasures—a traditional, flat, sourdough bread known for its ring shape, crisp crust, and light, airy interior. More than just a staple food, its history is deeply intertwined with the island's social evolution, communal lifestyle, and Mediterranean identity. From its humble origins as a baker's temperature gauge to its modern status as a piece of world heritage, the story of the ftira reflects the very story of Malta.

Communal Ovens and Practical Origins

The origins of the ftira stretch back centuries, rooted in the ancient bread-making traditions of the Mediterranean. The word ftira itself is believed to be linked to the Arabic root f-t-r, which relates to breaking a fast or a flat, unleavened bread. This linguistic link highlights the historical Arab influence on the Maltese islands between the 9th and 13th centuries.

Historically, private ovens were a luxury few Maltese households possessed. Instead, village life centred around the communal wood-fired oven (il-forn tal-baħar). Families would mix and knead their own dough at home, then carry it to the village baker to be baked.

The ftira actually owes its unique flat shape to a highly practical baking necessity. Because it was flat and featured a signature hole in the centre, it baked much faster than the large, heavy loaves of traditional Maltese bread (il-ħobż tal-Malti). Bakers would slide a ftira into the oven first to test the heat of the wood fire. If it was cooked perfectly, the oven was ready for the main batch of bread.

The Fuel of the Working Class

Because it was quick to bake, inexpensive, and incredibly filling, the ftira rapidly became the ultimate food for Malta's working class. It was the daily fuel for farmers working the fields, fishermen heading out to sea, and labourers at the dockyards.

Before starting their gruelling shifts, workers would stop by the local bakery to pick up a fresh, warm ftira. The bread's sturdy crust and porous, airy interior made it the perfect vessel for absorbing olive oil and holding whatever modest, seasonal ingredients were available.

The Anatomy of Ftira Biż-Żejt

While the bread itself is a masterpiece of texture, the classic way it is served—known as ftira biż-żejt (ftira with oil)—is equally steeped in history. The traditional fillings reflect Malta's geographical position and a historical reliance on ingredients that could withstand the intense Mediterranean summer heat without spoiling.

Kunserva and Olive Oil: The essential foundation. Rich, sweet tomato paste (kunserva) and local olive oil are rubbed generously into the crust and crumb.

Canned Tuna or Anchovies: A natural addition for an island nation with deep maritime connections.

Kappar and Żebbuġ: Tangy capers and briny olives, both staples of the Maltese pantry, added sharp flavour.

Ġbejniet: Traditional sheep or goat milk cheeselets, often cured with pepper, providing a rich texture.

Pickled Vegetables: Items like pickled green peppers (bżar aħdar) or piccalilli offered a crisp, acidic contrast to the oil.

Gozo's Unique Culinary Variant

While mainland Malta treats the ftira predominantly as a sandwich, the sister island of Gozo developed its own distinct version. The Gozitan ftira (ftira Għawdxija) resembles an open-faced pie or a rustic pizza. Baked directly on the stone floor of a wood-fired oven, it typically features a thin, crisp dough base topped with very thinly sliced potatoes, onions, capers, anchovies or tuna, and fresh local ġbejna.

From Village Bakery to Global Heritage

For generations, the ftira remained a humble local secret, passed down through families and master bakers. However, as modern fast food options expanded in the late 20th century, a cultural movement grew within Malta to protect, preserve, and celebrate the island's traditional culinary arts.

This dedication culminated in international recognition. In December 2020, "Il-Ftira, culinary art and culture of flattened sourdough bread in Malta" was officially inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Alfred Sant's novel Snow on Comino released in English

Snow on Comino, the English translation of Silġ fuq Kemmuna by Alfred Sant, is being published and made available to readers for the first time in English

Snow on Comino, the English translation of Silġ fuq Kemmuna by Alfred Sant, is being published and made available to readers for the first time in English.

Originally written between 1970 and 1973 and first published in 1982, the novel is widely considered one of the defining works of modern Maltese fiction. The new edition, released under the Quinque label, marks the first time the work has been fully made available to English-speaking audiences.

Set in Malta during a period of rapid social and cultural transformation, Snow on Comino follows a group of young adults navigating ambition, relationships, and uncertainty as traditional structures give way to modern pressures. The narrative is noted for its sharp dialogue and psychological depth, offering a portrait of a generation caught between continuity and change.

Central to the novel is the symbolic image of snow falling on Comino—an improbable event that reflects the emotional and cultural dislocation experienced by its characters.

Critics have long regarded Silġ fuq Kemmuna as a bold and ambitious contribution to Maltese literary development, credited with helping to expand the scope of contemporary Maltese fiction. The new translation is expected to broaden its readership and contribute to growing international interest in Malta's literary heritage.

Snow on Comino is now available in leading bookstores.

A PHONE CALL TO HEAVEN –

THE JOKE OF THE MONTH

An American decided to write a book about famous churches around the world. So he bought a plane ticket and took a trip to Orlando, thinking that he would start by working his way across the USA from South to North.

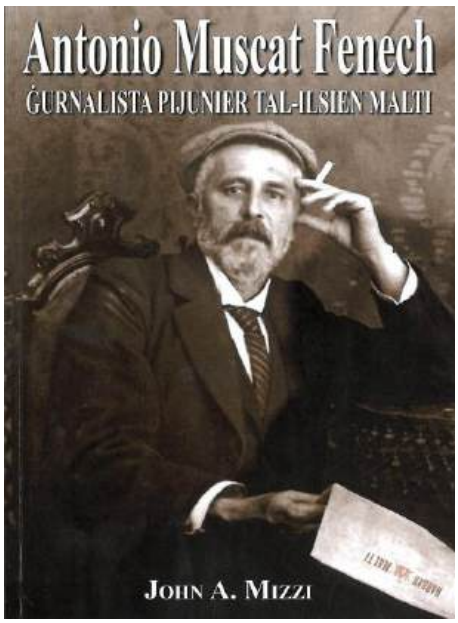
On his first day he was inside a church taking photographs, when he noticed a golden telephone with a sign that read '$10,000 per call'. The American, being intrigued, asked a priest who was strolling by, what the telephone was used for. The priest replied that it was a direct line to heaven and that for $10,000 you could talk to God. The American thanked the priest and went along his way. Next stop was in Atlanta .

There, at a very large cathedral, he saw the same looking golden telephone with the same sign under it. He wondered if this was the same kind of telephone he saw in Orlando and he asked a nearby nun what its purpose was. She told him that it was a direct line to heaven and that for $10,000 he could talk to God. 'O.K., thank you,' said the American. He then travelled all across America , Europe, England, Japan , New Zealand and Malta.

In every church he saw the same looking golden telephone, with the same '$US10,000 per call' sign under it.

The American decided to travel to Australia to see if Australians had the same phone. He arrived at Adelaide in Australia and again, in the first church he entered, there was the same looking golden telephone, but this time the sign under it read, '90 cents per call.'

The American was surprised, so he asked the priest about the sign. 'Father, I've travelled all over the world and I've seen this same golden telephone in many churches. I'm told that it is a direct line to Heaven, but in all of them, the price was $10,000 per call. Why is it so cheap here?' The priest smiled and answered, **'You're in Australia now, son – This is Heaven, so it's a local call'**



Antonio Muscat Fenech

Gurnalista Pijunier tal-Ilsien Malti

Naħseb li fl-ebda pajjiż tad-dinja n-nies ma jinsew lil dawk li jkunu ħadmu għall-ġid u l-kobor ta' lsien art twelidhom daqskemm ninsew malajr aħna. Bħalissa għandi quddiem għajnejja l-figura simpatika tal-Kavallier Muscat Fenech li ħadem b'ħiltu u b'għaqlu kollu għat-tixrid tal-ilsien Malti. Dana huwa għajb għalina u jmissu għalhekk isir xi ħaġa biex l-isem ta' Muscat Fenech u x-xogħlijiet diversi tiegħu jkunu iktar magħrufa minn kulħadd. Jistħoqqlu jitqies fost il-pijunieri tal-Malti... F'ġieħ il-ħaqq u s-sewwa ma nistgħux, u m'għandniex, ninsewhom nies kbar bħal dawn.

Wieħed mill-ewlenin ħbieb tal-Malti li ħadmu biex iwaqqfu l-ilsien Malti fuq sisien sodi b'kitba msejsa fuq regoli stabbiliti ta' ortografija u grammatika kien Ninu Muscat Fenech. Dan kien il-bidu tal-qawmien tal-ilsien tagħna, il-bidu tal-kitba bil-Malti.

Qarabagħli Mimli: A classic stuffed vegetable dish utilizing round marrows (zucchini). The stuffing often blends minced meat, onions, herbs, and local sheep cheese, reflecting historical Moorish culinary traditions.

The culinary practice behind qarabagħli mimli (stuffed round marrows) traces its roots directly back to the Arab period in Malta, which lasted from 870 to 1091 CE. During this era, Arab rulers introduced new agricultural techniques, irrigation systems, and a variety of crops to the Maltese islands. The linguistic and cultural legacy of this period heavily shaped the dish:The Name: The word qarabagħli originates directly from the Arabic qarʿ baghlī (قرع بغلي), which translates literally to "mule's gourd." The word mimli is also of Arabic descent, meaning "stuffed" or "filled."

Maltese Kusksu: A hearty vegetable and broad bean soup that features small couscous-like pasta, pointing directly to the introduction of couscous from the Arab world.

Given its close resemblance to couscous, it is likely that kusksu originated during Malta's Arab occupation. However, documentary evidence relating to this period is scarce. A reliable source dating back to the 18th century makes reference to peppercorn-like shaped pasta, suggesting that kusksu pasta was a staple in the Maltese diet.