

A gift for future generations

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Heritage Malta chairman Mario Tabone speaking yesterday on the significance of the Maltese maps collection, one of which was displayed during the signing of the agreement. Photo: Chris Sant Fournier.

The most recent contribution to Malta's cultural heritage, and an acquisition by Heritage Malta, comes in the form of an impressive and extensive collection of maps which has been amassed over a span of 55 years by lawyer and historian Albert Ganado.

The acquisition was formalised with the signing of an agreement yesterday at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Valletta, between Dr Ganado and the government.

Through the agreement, the collection was transferred to the government in return for a house, which was public property, in which several generations of the Ganado family have been living since 1861.

Negotiations for the acquisition had been under way for the past five years. The initial idea was to lend the map collection to the government but procedures proved to be very complicated and, on a suggestion by his wife, Dr Ganado decided to propose what yesterday's agreement endorsed. The suggestion was welcomed and the deal was approved during a parliamentary sitting on July 14.

The precious collection consists of 431 printed maps and 19 rare manuscript maps made between 1507 and 1899. A considerable number of maps were made before 1570 - that is prior to the

publication of the first standard Atlas - and feature representations of the Great Siege of 1565 and plans of Valletta, for example. Many of the maps were printed as single sheets while others are unique to the Ganado collection.

Heritage Malta chairman Mario Tabone remarked that this was one of the most important acquisitions since the Antonio Sciortino Bequest of 1947.

The collection of maps will be housed at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Valletta. They will not be put on permanent display but will only be exhibited during specific events and exhibitions. Dr Tabone said the maps will be made accessible to the public and will therefore help those who wish to study and research the subject as well as provide additional insight into Maltese cartography.
