

The Heraldry of the Nobility and Gentry of Gozo

- From Medieval Times until the Onset of British Rule

Part 2

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In Part 1 of this article, I gave a general account of the nobility and gentry in and of Gozo from the time of the rule of the Maltese Islands by the Aragonese kings of Sicily up until the onset of British rule. In this Part, I am giving an account of some titles granted by the knights which are/were either based in Gozo or based in Malta, but granted to Gozitans. The one exception is the Maltese Barony of Djar-il-Bniet owing to its strong “Gozitan connection”.

Fiefs

A fief (Latin: feudum) was the central element of feudalism. It consisted of heritable property granted by the Sovereign to a vassal who held it in fealty in return for allegiance and (often) military service. Fiefs were revenue-producing lands held in tenure at the pleasure of the Sovereign. The holder of a fief usually also held a title of nobility based on that fief. Under the rule of the Order,

most of the noble fiefs were only nominally held by individuals. The revenues from the lands in question were paid into the treasury.

Fiefs situated in the island of Gozo are shown in Fig. 1.

The Premier Title of the Maltese Islands

Special mention must be made of the title of Baron of Djar-il-Bniet. The Miles Cicco Gatto, crushed an uprising in Gozo against the House of Aragon and was granted the fief of Djar-il-Bniet near Dingli in Malta by King Ludovico on 4 January 1350. It is one of the two surviving titles created by the Kings of Sicily and Malta and is the premier extant Maltese title. Gatto's Arms together with an artist's impression of his foray into Gozo which earned him the title are shown in Figures 2 and 3. In Figure 3 note the Cittadella in the background. The picture is taken from Book 4 in the bibliography below.

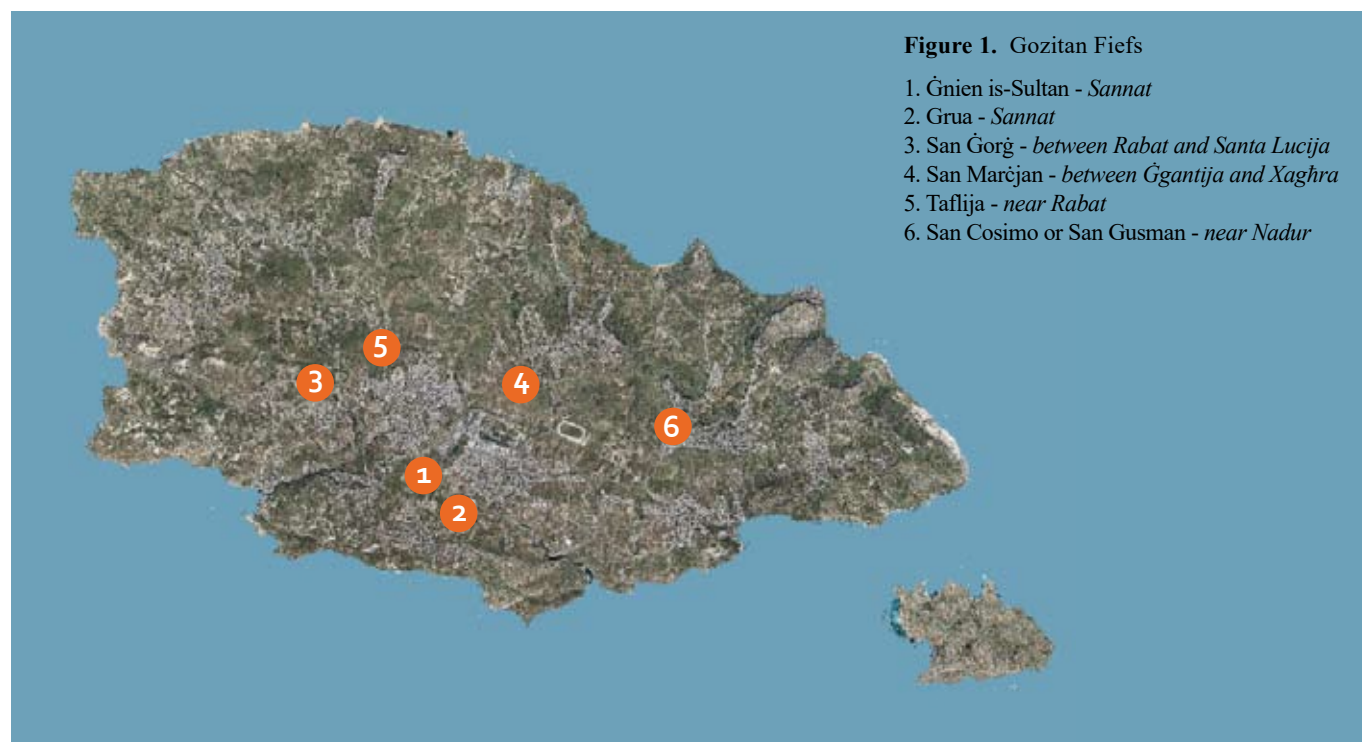


Figure 1. Gozitan Fiefs

1. Ġnien is-Sultan - *Sannat*
2. Grua - *Sannat*
3. San Ġorġ - *between Rabat and Santa Lucija*
4. San Marċjan - *between Ġgantija and Xagħra*
5. Taflija - *near Rabat*
6. San Cosimo or San Gusman - *near Nadur*

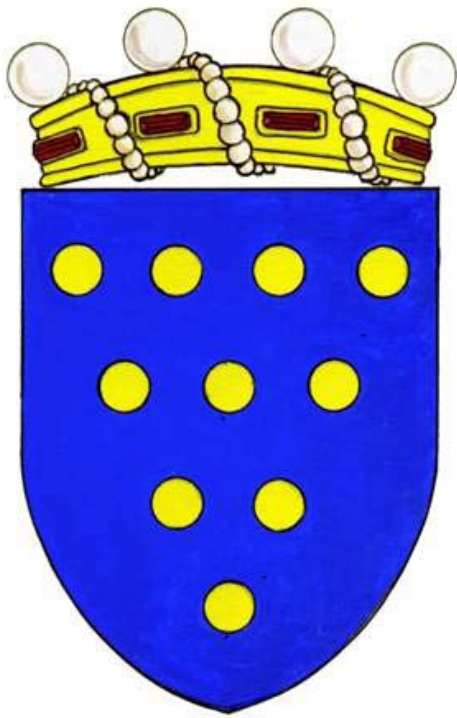


Figure 2. Gatto Baron of Djar-il-Bniet.



Figure 3. Cicco Gatto in Gozo.



Figure 4. Galea Feriol, Barons of San Marciano.

Titles Based in Gozo or Granted to Gozitans

Baron of San Marciano (San Marèjan): Granted to Diego Antonio Galea Feriol by Grandmaster Manoel de Vilhena on 14 June 1726. Don Pietro Galie, a soldier from the Kingdom of Aragon, settled in Malta c. 1370 and married Imperia di Peralta. Their descendant Giacomo Galea, who married Marietta Viani in 1617, settled in Gozo establishing the line. The Milite Matteo Feriol of Spain married Donna Caterina Falca, in 1482. One of their descendant lines eventually settled in Gozo. Diego Feriol was a Jurat in Gozo, 1626. Michele Feriol was a Jurat in Gozo, 1664-66, and 1669. The Arms of the 1st Baron are shown in Figure 4.

Marquis of St George (San Ġorġ): Granted to Dr Carlo Antonio Barbaro JUD, by Grandmaster de Rohan on 6 September 1778. There were no Gozitan connections of the Barbaro family that I can work out, but his son married Aloisea Crispo (Crespi) to form the Crispo-Barbaro family. Her grandfather, Gio. Andrea Crispo (Crespi)

was a Jurat of Gozo in 1635. Aloisea's ancestor, Gio. Crisostomo Crispo was the natural son of Lorenza daughter of Michele Crispo who claimed descent from the Sovereign Dukes of Naxos. The escutcheon of the Barbaro family is shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5. Barbaro family escutcheon.

Baron Gauci: Granted to: Francesco Gauci, a native Gozitan and Jurat in Gozo. It was granted, as a non-hereditary title, by Grandmaster de Rohan on 23 December 1781. Baron Gauci was later Capitano della Verga of Malta (1799-1800) – appointed by Sir Alexander Ball during the anti-French uprising. The Gauci family was very prominent in Gozo, and members of that family occupied the post of Jurat several times. The Gaucis intermarried with the Apaps, another prominent family in Gozo. The Arms of Baron Gauci are shown in Figure 6. This title is now extinct.



Figure 6. Baron Gauci family Arms.

Marquis of Taflia (Taflija)-1st Creation: Granted to Giovanni Battista Mompalao a Jurat in Malta, as a non-hereditary title by Grandmaster de Rohan on 25 October 1783. Mompalao is an old Gozitan family. Calcerano Mompalao was a Jurat in Gozo, 1538, Capitano della verga and Tesoriere of Gozo, 1542. A relative, Alessandro Mompalao Cuzkeri, was created Baron of Frigenuini in Malta, 1737. Cuzkeri was another old Gozitan family. This title is now extinct. The escutcheon of the Mompalao family are shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Mompalao family escutcheon.

Marquis of Taflia (Taflija)-2nd Creation: Granted to Saverio Alessi, Jurat for Valletta and Notabile and later Secreto to Grandmaster von Hompesch (1797-98), member of the Maltese Chamber of Commerce and Lieutenant of Militia. The title was granted by Grandmaster de Rohan on 13 November 1790. The Alessi family had no Gozitan connections. The Arms of Alessi, Marquises of Taflia are shown in Figure 8.



Figure 8. Alessi family Arms.

Count of Ghajn Tuffieha: Granted to Ferdinando Teuma Castelletti, Jurat of Notabile by Grandmaster de Rohan on 7 January 1792. Ferdinando was a Gozitan by descent. Both the Teuma and Castelletti families were long-established in Gozo. In 1576, Franco Teuma, married Marietta Meilak at the Matrice in Gozo and from him descended Dr Pietro Paolo Teuma JUD, married in 1640 to Giustina Castelletti. Ferdinando was their grandson. The



Figure 9. Teuma Castelletti family Arms

Arms of Teuma Castelletti, Counts of Ghajn Tuffieħa are shown in Figure 9.

Marquis of Ġnien-is-Sultan: Granted to Filippo Apap – a native Gozitan, Jurat and later a Deputy in Malta by Grandmaster de Rohan on 1 December 1792. Apap was an old landed Gozitan family. The Arms of the 1st Marquis Apap are shown in Figure 10.

Baron of San Cosimo (San Guzman): Granted to; Dr Ugolino Calleja JUD, Jurat of Notabile and Valletta by Grandmaster de Rohan on 27 November 1792. I could find no definite Gozitan connections for Baron Calleja. This title is now extinct. The Arms of Baron Calleja are shown in Figure 11.

Count of Meimun: Granted to Saverio Marchesi, a great philanthropist and benefactor of the arts, as a non-hereditary title, by Grandmaster de Rohan on 8 March 1794. Saverio's father, Giuseppe Marchesi was a Jurat in Gozo, 1745 – 1748. His wife, Serafina Marmieri of Rome, was a very wealthy heiress. Giuseppe's grandfather, also called Giuseppe, was married in Gozo (1667), to Cleria Metallo who was related to the Attard family, another very prominent Gozitan family. This title is now extinct. The Arms of Count Marchesi are shown in Figure 12.

Baron of Grua (Gruwa): Granted to Saverio Carbott Testaferrata Ghaxaq, Jurat in Malta, by Grandmaster de Rohan on 30 December 1794. Maestro Giovanni Carbott migrated to Malta from the Kingdom of Naples and married in 1559 Grazia Psinga, a descendant of the Bocchio family.



Figure 10. The Arms of the 1st Marquis Apap.



Figure 11. The Arms of Baron Calleja.



Figure 12. The Arms of Count Marchesi.

Ghaxaq (Asciaq, Axac) was another prominent Gozitan family. Salvatore and Tommaso Carabott were Jurats in Gozo during the XVIII century. The escutcheon of the Carbott family is shown in Figure 13.

Lord (Signore) of La Recona: Granted to Aloisio Montagnes, Capitano d'Armi of Gozo 1527 – 1531 by Grandmaster Philippe Villiers de l'Isle Adam, on 31st. March 1531, shortly after the Order took possession of the Maltese Islands. The escutcheon of the Montagnes family is shown in Figure 14. This title is now extinct.



Figure 13. Carbott family escutcheon.



Figure 14. Montagnes family escutcheon.

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