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Editorial:

Unemployment and Tourism in Gozo

The double-deficit that Gozo suffers from being a small island dependent on a bigger sister island has long been emphasised. Economic issues have plagued Gozo from time immemorial, and have resulted in an unstable population which has tended to find employment beyond its shores. The migration rate from Gozo has been much more pronounced than that which applies to Malta as a whole, and many of those who remained have travelled daily to Malta to get their daily bread.

It is not surprising, therefore, to read in a recent article in *The Times* (24th June 2009) that Gozo has a higher unemployment rate than Malta as a whole. While the unemployment rate is not necessarily alarming, and would be taken as a gift by most countries around the world, it is nonetheless worrying that there has been an upward trend in unemployment rates in the past year.

The Parliamentary Secretary Dr Chris Said, who hails from Nadur, blames the loss of jobs in the manufacturing sector as contributing significantly to this trend. No doubt, the major global economic meltdown that has occurred over the past couple of years has had a significant impact, with a reduction in the number of tourists coming to Malta and Gozo this year.

More significant perhaps is the differential distribution of unemployment throughout the island. The highest unemployment rates were in Zebbug (4.7%) and Nadur (2.7%) with the lowest unemployment rates present in Ghasri (0.7%). Similar discrepancies were to be found

in Malta itself, with highest unemployment being in Cospicua (4.7%) and lowest in Lija (0.7%). Lack of an adequate education has been adduced to explain these discrepancies in Malta, but they hardly explain the situation in Gozo.

Depending on a tourist industry as it does, unemployment shows marked seasonality. It is therefore important to encourage tourism that can be sustained throughout the year, including establishing government-related services, encouraging niche areas like financial services, diving and agri-tourism. At a time when cruising the Mediterranean is becoming more and more popular, it is also of interest to see that some companies have put Gozo on the agenda as a separate port of call.

Gozo can never be an economically viable independent entity, and will always depend on the bigger island for support. However, issues affecting unemployment in Gozo are distinct from those in Malta, and in particular are unlikely to be greatly affected by more emphasis on education. It is also important that Gozo does not put all its eggs in one basket and be so overwhelmingly dependent on tourism for its existence. It is said that on the Amalfi coast, one of the most sought-after tourist attraction centres in the world, the local population is employed for about seven months of the year with the rest of the time being dependent on government hand-outs for their existence. We do not particularly wish that scenario on anyone.

Maurice Cauchi



Religious Art in Gozo (1500-1900): A Study on Patronage Patterns

PAUL MUSCAT

Introduction

The artistic scene in Gozo is dominated largely by religious art. The miniature size of Gozo and its often impoverished community of farmers and fisherman left no scope for private commissions. Throughout the past centuries the Maltese islands displayed a religious character which had been germinating as early as prehistoric times. The church in Gozo was the focal point of every village and the centre around which the life of every rural community revolved. Everything was divided and determined by the religious ceremonies and church festivities. There was a great belief in life after death and many villagers who owned property felt the obligation to remember their parish in their wills. Thus, artistic patronage in Gozo was mostly confined for religious practice and devotions, the most popular being dedicated to the Madonna venerated under various titles.

The commissioning of a painting or a statue served not only as mere decoration but inspired devotees for a proper veneration of the saint. The strong religious devotion is in fact strongly reflected in several valuable works of art which adorn several churches around Gozo. These works were the result of diverse forms of patronage patterns including church, clergy, knights, nobility, and sometimes even from lower classes of society often of collective type.

First References to Religious Art

Unfortunately, few works survived from the Byzantine (A.D. c.535-c.870)¹ and Muslim (A.D. c.870-c.1249) and late medieval period in Gozo.² However, a work of some importance survived from the turbulent years of the Late Middle Ages. This is a limestone relief representing two standing male saints, possibly Peter

and Paul which is presently exhibited in the Folklore Museum in the Gozo Citadel. (Buhagiar, 1990:84) The relief is executed in Byzantine idiom carrying a Latin inscription (SA[ncti]) in the left corner which could have contained the names of the two saints. Similar paintings executed in the style of the relief of the two Saints could have existed in the early post-Muslim churches of Gozo. Unfortunately none such works have survived. The first few documented references to paintings in Gozo date however, to the early sixteenth century. An example of such paintings was found in the chapel of the Saviour, in the old *Matrice* Church which was entirely frescoed with religious images including a Golgotha scene in the apse. (Buhagiar, 1995:116) These murals survived until around 1746.

Other murals in Gozo were found in countryside churches including a scene of the Assumption painted on an apse in a church at Ġhajj Xejba, (Bezzina, 1983:224) while other saints and icons were executed inside the church of St. Barbara at Tal-Gruwa found in the limits of Sannat (Bezzina, 1989:75). These were not the only churches to own paintings. Other churches must have had altar paintings painted in the tempera on wood. Like Malta, paintings and *objets d'art* in Gozo were most probably donated by local gentry and other people of some financial means who left sums of money in their will binding their heirs to commission a work of art and for the celebration of masses and for candles to be burnt on their graves. Sadly, surviving Gozitan wills contain little information on *icone* and other works of art (Buhagiar, 1990:85; Wettinger, 1976:108-115).

Funding by the Church and Clergy

The church was the only place in Gozo which offered space for artistic patronage. Church funds were often provided by the proceeds of the *Veneranda*

¹ An example of refined artistic taste from the Roman period includes a beautiful headless draped statue presently found in the Gozo Archaeological Museum. For more information on the Byzantine period see Buhagiar (2005).

² In 1091 the Maltese islands were conquered by Roger de Hautville, Count of Sicily. During the late Middle Ages, Gozo like Malta was also ruled by the Normans, the Suabians, the Angevins and the Aragonese.

Lampada.³ An example of such patronage are two companion canvases showing St. Publius and St. Agatha, painted by Enrico Regnaud (1692-1764) and Gio Nicola Buhagiar (1698-1752) respectively in 1729 (Sciberras, 2003:99-104). These paintings originally flanked the titular altarpiece of “The Assumption of the Virgin” in the choir of the *Matrice* (Muscat, 2008:103-105). They were then replaced by two others showing the same theme by Tommaso Madiona in c.1853. Presently, Regnaud’s and Buhagiar’s works are to be found in the Gozo Cathedral Museum.

There are a considerable number of documented donations by individual ecclesiastics who were ready to finance a work of art. Such donations were made by priests, as well as by high members of the clergy. It is sometimes difficult to pinpoint the real reason for the actual act of donation. The seventeenth century saw an increase in patronage by the church. This contrasts with the former century which offers little evidence of artistic patronage. This was due to several corsair attacks which subsequently left no scope for artistic patronage.

Two notable artistic donations during the seventeenth century were made by Bishop Baldassare Cagliares (1615-1635). One of the donated altarpieces shows the “Flight into Egypt” (Figure 1) which is a work lacking documented evidence. The pastoral visitation report of 1755 by Bishop Paolo Alpheran de Bussan, (Buhagiar, 1990:90; A.A.M, *Visitatio Alpheran de Bussan 1755*, f. 476v) attributes it to Filippo Paladini (c.1544-1616) who was a late mannerist artist active mainly in Malta and Sicily (Buhagiar, 1988:55-59). Presently the painting is exhibited in the Gozo Cathedral museum. It shows a night scene with St. Joseph pulling behind him the donkey which carries on its back the Virgin and Child. The work is remarkable for its realistic execution and great attention to detail which seems to be a work of a northern artist, thus the attribution to Filippo Palladini must be reconsidered (Buhagiar, 1995:118).

The other altarpiece was donated to a small wayside chapel in Qala showing the Immaculate Conception.



Figure 1. Attr. Filippo Paladini, “The Flight into Egypt,” Gozo Cathedral Museum

During his first year of administration in 1615, Cagliares made a pastoral visit to Gozo, however, it appears that the altarpiece was donated to Qala chapel in 1630 (A.E.G, *Visitatio Cagliares 1630*, f. 34v). Before the donation of this altarpiece the chapel was dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin. According to Agius De Soldanis, Cagliares purposely donated the altarpiece of the Immaculate Conception in order to avoid a clash with the other feast of the Assumption celebrated by the *Matrice* (Farrugia, 1999:Vol. II:119-120). The painting which still adorns the altar of the sanctuary church was wrongly attributed by Agius de Soldanis to the Counter Reformation artist, Federico Barocci (c.1535-1612), (Farrugia, 1999: Vol. II:120) however, the soft rendering and the religious sentimentality are similar to his works, and it could possibly be a product of his *bottega* (Buhagiar, 1995:118). The canvas is almost entirely dominated by the figure of the Virgin with the half length figure of God who appears from a radiant glow from the upper left hand side of the canvas carried by winged heads of cherubs.

Another significant work dates to 1644 commissioned by a Maltese priest Nicola Mangion, holder of a lucrative late medieval benefice of the church of the Annunciation, at Wied il-Lunzjata (Ferres, 1866:563; N.L.M, Ms. Bibl. 1123, f. 24; A.E.G, *Visitatio Cagliares 1630*, f. 25v.). This work shows “The Annunciation of the Virgin” painted by Fra Lucas Garnier who was active during the

³ The procurator of the church is also known as the procurator of the *Veneranda Lampada* which literally means the Holy Lamp. In fact the procurator’s main task was to provide oil or candles for the sanctuary lamp which was daily lit in front of the Holy Sacrament. He was the procurator for the embellishment of the church, therefore, he was involved in the commissioning of various works of art from silver *objets d’art* to altarpieces and statues. The procurator was also responsible to collect funds from the villagers, in fact, during the harvesting season, the procurator went door to door to collect cotton, grain and barely, in order to sell it.

mid seventeenth century. Fra Lucas Garnier's style betrays a Flemish background; however, he was probably French and lived in Malta (Buhagiar, 1988:79). Another donation came in 1680 from Bishop Michele Molina (1678-1682) who is held to have commissioned Mattia Preti (1613-1699) to execute the titular altarpiece of "St. John the Baptist in the Wilderness" (Figure 2) for Xewkija parish church (Borg, 1978:2; Falzon, 2005:60-61). Meanwhile, in 1682 Molina was summoned to the See of Lerida in Catalunya, Spain. According to tradition he took Preti's altarpiece with him and in return commissioned Gioacchino Loretta (1637-c.1712), who was Preti's assistant, to execute a new altarpiece showing the same theme (Buhagiar, 1995:120). However, no reliable documentation has been unearthed so far to sustain this tradition and the probability is that Molina donated only one altarpiece, that is, the one painted by Gioacchino Loretta which presently adorns Xewkija's sculpture museum.

There were instances where an ecclesiastical commission was instilled by a votive motif, in thanksgiving for being saved from a terrible plague epidemic or other natural catastrophes. In fact, the titular painting of "The Virgin of Graces" found in the Capuchin's priory, Rabat, is reputed to have been commissioned as an *ex-voto* in thanksgiving for the lives spared by the earthquake of 1693. It is held that the altarpiece was commissioned by the Chapter of the *Matrice* (Bezzina, 1983: 238)⁴ to Stefano Erardi (1630-1716) (Sciberras, 2003:69-71; Scicluna, 1997). It seems that the Chapter of the *Matrice* was quite informed as regards artistic patronage. In fact, Erardi was an important Maltese artist during the second half of the seventeenth century.

The eighteenth century experienced an increase in patronage from the church. By this period several parishes were established and consequently the building of new churches offered ample space for artistic commissions.⁵ A notable donation came in 1763 from Giacomo Galea, the archpriest of St.

George's church, Rabat. Galea donated two side laterals painted by Francesco Zahra (1710-1773) who was the most important artist of the period (Ferres, 1866:554-555; Montanaro, 1986). These paintings which can be still admired in the choir of St. George's church show "The Beheading of St. George" and "St. George before Diocletian". Both works are typical of the Baroque idiom, characterized by a sense of drama, with figures painted with expressive gestures.

Among several eighteenth century patrons, Can. Benedetto Stellini (c. 1728-1800) stands out. This munificent patron donated three huge canvases executed by Michele Busutil (1762-1831) to the *Matrice* church in a time span of just two years. The



Figure 2. Gioacchino Loretta, "St. John the Baptist in the Wilderness," Xewkija Sculpture Museum

⁴ Bezzina refers to Agius de Soldanis's manuscript in respect of the altarpiece's donation by the Chapter of the *Matrice*. However, de Soldanis makes no reference as regards its donation by the Chapter of the *Matrice*. The N.L.M, Ms. Bibl. 1123, f. 25 states that Erardi's altarpiece was commissioned by the Gozo *Universitas*. However, according to Agius de Soldanis, the Gozo *Universitas* was responsible only for contributing funds for rebuilding the church of the Virgin of Graces see; N.A.G, ZM 0101, p. 741

⁵ It was not until the second half of the seventeenth century that parishes started to be established outside the limits of Rabat. The first parish to be established was that of the village Xewkija in 1678 followed by; Gharb in 1679, and Nadur, Sannat, Xaghra and Żebbuġ in 1688.

most remarkable amongst the three donated canvases is surely the titular painting which represents “The Assumption of the Virgin” (Figure 3) executed in 1791. Possibly, Can. Stellini commissioned this huge painting to Michele Busuttill (1762-1831) after consultation with Francesco Saverio Cassar, the archpriest of the *Matrice* (Buhagiar, 1995:124). This painting replaced the old seven-piece retable which is now in the Cathedral Museum (Bezzina, 1999:37). During the time of this commission, Michele Busuttill was still fresh from his academic studies in Rome and this painting was largely admired and earned him such a great reputation that the archpriest Francesco Saverio Cassar in 1793 commissioned him to paint the huge choir laterals which were also paid by Can. Benedetto Stellini (Attard Tabone, 1991:8). These lateral paintings show the “Nativity of the Virgin” and the “Immaculate Conception.” They are also immensely large, however, their state of preservation is very poor. The dark films of old varnish make them very difficult to appraise their artistic value. However, they seem to be works of less artistic merit when compared with the titular painting.



Figure 3. Michele Busuttill, “The Assumption of the Virgin,” *Matrice*, Gozo Cathedral

Patronage by the church persisted also throughout the nineteenth century. It was a period of economic fluctuations and of several epidemics which affected the production of artistic patronage. However, an important donation came from the parish priest of the village of Sannat, Salvatore Grech (1779-1810), who commissioned two companion canvases from Rocco Buhagiar (1725-1805), who was Malta’s most prestigious artist, following the death of Francesco Zahra (Buhagiar, 1995:123; Sciberras, 2003:143). These huge canvases represent “The Beheading of St. Margaret” and “St. Margaret Experiencing the Visitation of the Holy Spirit.” Buhagiar executed these canvases at an old age which restricted him from showing his competence.⁶ These works are important because they are the last known works by Buhagiar (Buhagiar, 1995:123).

As already discussed above, religious works of art were not just mere decorations. They were sometimes a driving force to inflame a particular devotion. This is in fact sustained by a notable bequest made by Bishop Antonio Grech Delicata (1823-1876) who in 1873 donated the painting known as “The Virgin of Salus Infirmorum” (Good Health) (Figure 4) to Qala Parish Church executed by the Italian Pietro Gagliardi (1809-1890). (Buttigieg, 1971:16) In fact, the parish registers dated to 1881 show the payment for a hundred scapulars and a hundred small picture prints of the “Virgin of Salus Infirmorum” for the distribution among the devotees.⁷ The donated painting is a copy of an original medieval painting found in the church of St. Maria in Gianicolo in Rome. (Attard, 1999:43) Through his works, Gagliardi left considerable influence on Maltese artists particularly, Giuseppe Cali (1846-1930) and Lazzaro Pisani (1854-1932) without ever visiting Malta (Attard, 1999:36).

Internal commissions by the church came also from confraternities and procurators who were responsible for one of the several side altars carrying diverse dedications towards a particular saint. They were responsible from their altar’s embellishment. Funds were provided by the members of the confraternity, and also through legacies and donations by the villagers. One such

⁶ On the “Beheading” there is an inscription which records the donation. It reads: “*Ex dona Rev[erend]i Par[roch]hi Sal[vator]is Grech – 1801*”. Moreover, both paintings carry the coat of arms of the donor.

⁷ Q.P.A, *Esito Diverso*, f. 3r: “...pagate per costo di cento scapolari e cento stampe di Salus Infirmorum...4:7:...”



Figure 4. Pietro Gagliardi, “The Virgin of Salus Infirmorum,” Qala Parish Church

example is the titular statue of “The Immaculate Conception” found in St. Francis Priory Church, Rabat. The statue was sculpted in wood by Salvatore Psaila (1798-1871) in 1838 (Muscat, 2008:118-120). It is remarkable for Psaila’s ability in the rendering of the drapery folds.

Patronage by the church was not only reserved to individual ecclesiastics alone but there is also some limited evidence of collective patronage by the clergy. An example comes from the *Matrice* Church when the Sodality of Priests commissioned the altarpiece of “St. Philip Neri” to Tommaso Madiona (1804-1864) in 1846 (Muscat, 2008:69). It was established on 23rd February 1689, and was a sort of mutual help society for Gozitan priests (Bezzina, 1999:26). This altarpiece received great admiration and praise from contemporary critics who described it as a masterpiece (Espinosa Rodriguez, 1997:74; *L’Ordine* 24/7/1852; 31/7/1852). However, this painting is marked by some weak drawing and frigid composition. The canvas is divided into two tiers; in the upper part there is the scene of “The Nativity” and in the lower part the representation of “St. Philip in Ecstasy” (Muscat, 2008:162-164).

Patronage by the Knights

In Gozo, most of the surviving examples of patronage by the Knights are provided by its Governors. However, there is also some limited evidence of patronage by the reigning Grand Masters. There are various commissions by the Knights dating between the late sixteenth century and the late eighteenth centuries. The earliest evidence of such patronage dates to the 1580s. The first examples of their patronage was, however, not so much exciting in terms of artistic quality. One of the first possible indications of patronage from the Knights in Gozo is evident by two coat of arms of Grand Master Hugues de Loubenx Verdalle (1582-1595) found on a late Mannerist painting of limited artistic interest showing “The Meditations of St. Augustine” (Figure 5). The painting of the “Meditations of St. Augustine” is an oil on canvas presently found in the Augustinian Priory, Rabat. It is traditionally reputed to have belonged to the church of “Santa Maria ta` Gajdorù” in the vicinities of Ramla Bay which was deconsecrated in 1657 (Buhagiar, 1995:116). The coat of arms which seems to be original, does not carry a cardinal’s hat, therefore this indicates that the



Figure 5. Unknown 16th Century, “The Meditations of St. Augustine,” St. Augustine Priory, Rabat, Gozo

painting was executed before Verdalle was ordained cardinal in 1588. Therefore, it must have been painted between 1582 and 1588. However, even though the painting seems to have been donated by the reigning Grand Master it is not a work of outstanding artistic quality. On the contrary it is rather a work of a mediocre artist, probably of Sicilian or South Italian extraction (Buhagiar, 1995:117).

In 1622, the Governor of Gozo, Fra Richard de Nini Claret (1618-1622), donated an altar painting showing “The Nativity of the Virgin” to the church known as Ta` Savina, in Rabat (Buhagiar, 1995:118). The reason behind its donation is recorded in the inscription found at the lower right hand side of the painting.⁸ The inscription says that the temple dedicated to the Virgin Mary was erected during the time of the death of Grand Master Aloff de Wignacourt and the election of his successor Ludovico Vasconcellos (1622-1623). For this occasion, Fra Richard de Nini Claret who Governed Gozo for four years, donated the altarpiece as a gift to the newly erected church in 1622. The painting of “The Nativity of the Virgin” is of mediocre artistic merit painted in a late mannerist idiom. Its main significance lies in the depiction of the Castello in the background which makes the painting a work of documentary importance because it shows the modifications carried out on the fortifications of the *Castello* a few years before.

Another Governor of Gozo, Francesco Salinas donated the altarpiece representing “The Virgin of Soledad” (or of Sorrows) to the old *Matrice* Church in 1647 (Buhagiar, 1995:118). In 1644, Bishop Balaguer had requested the renewal of the altarpiece dedicated to “The Nativity” inside the old *Matrice* Church. However, nothing was done until 1647 when the Governor, who was a great devotee of the Virgin of Soledad, made a suggestion to replace the old altarpiece by a painting of “The Virgin of Soledad” that he had brought from Castille (Buhagiar, 1995:118). Throughout the years, the painting acquired great cultic devotion and was transferred to the new *Matrice* Church on its having been finished in 1711. It was installed in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament until it was replaced by



Figure 6. Preti and his Bottega, “St. George and the Dragon,” St. George Parish Church, Rabat Gozo

a copy executed by Francesco Zahra in the middle of the eighteenth century. Salinas` painting was subsequently placed in a street shrine from where it disappeared in the 1950’s (Buhagiar, 1995:119).

Donations by Governors of Gozo persisted also during the second half of the seventeenth century. This is evident by the donation of a canvas executed by Stefano Erardi showing “St. Zita and St. James” donated by the Governor of Gozo, the Castillian, Ludovico Xedler y Gamez (1665-1666/1667-1670/1673-1676) (Muscat, 2008:177). Stefano Erardi’s altarpiece was originally donated to the Priory church of St. Francis found in Rabat.⁹ Presently the altarpiece forms part of the exhibits of the Gozo Cathedral Museum. This painting represents St. Zita, the patroness of domestic servants and probably the apostle St. James the elder painted as a pilgrim who meets St. Zita by a well on which the words “*SANTA SITA / ORA PRONOBIS*”

⁸ “*Feliciter deficiente e vita ser(enissimi)o I(llustrissi)mo Fr. Alophio De Wignacourt se prostere succedenti Ill(ustrissi)mo Fr. Ludovico Vasconcellos Magno Magistro Insularum Melitae et Gauli Principe Edificatum Est Templum BMW in cuius Laudem et honorem ab Dom(inus) I(llustrissi)mo D(ominus) FR(ater) Riccardo Nini De Claret Qui Nunc Insulam Gauli Sedulo Gubernamivit Per Quadriennium haec imago dicata fuit – MDC. XXII Me(Nsis) (9) (Novem) Bris I(ndictone)s.*”

⁹ Verbal communication with Mr. Joseph Sagona.

are inscribed. This altarpiece is quite interesting and indicates that the Governor was well informed about the Maltese artistic scene for Stefano Erardi was a very popular artist during the second half of the seventeenth century.

The first truly remarkable donation by the Knights for the Gozitan churches came from the Governor of Gozo, Fra Don Francesco De Corduba (1676 – 1678) when in 1678 donated to St. George's church, Rabat, the titular altarpiece of "St. George and the Dragon" (Figure 6) executed by Mattia Preti and his *bottega* (Spike, 1989:50; A.E.G, *Visitatio Molina* 1678, f. 65v-66r). It was the period when the terrible plague epidemic which struck over the island of Malta between 1675 and 1676 faded away. This donation was purely a manifestation of devotion; in fact, De Corduba was so much devoted towards the saint that when the church was rebuilt he used to carry stone slabs and sacks of mason's sand as an example for those who saw him (Farrugia, 1999: Vol. II:58). The canvas which dominates the chancel of St. George's parish church shows the saint as a warrior, victorious over the dragon.¹⁰

However, despite these commissions by some Grand Masters and Governors, when compared with Malta, Gozo still did not benefit much from the Knights' patronage. During the eighteenth century there was a remarkable decline of patronage from the Knights. This is noticeable not only in Gozitan churches but also in the Conventual church, Valletta, Malta. In fact, during this period the Order was not prolific as regards artistic import, only few notable examples are found in the Conventual church dating between 1730 and 1775 (Sciberras, 2004:31). This lack of artistic patronage was the result of the Order's financial difficulties (Sciberras, 2004:31). This was due to the Grand Masters' lavish spending in various projects for defensive purposes, public works and personal commodities and warfare. In fact, Grand Master Pinto (1741-1773) alone left a debt of nearly two million *scudi* (Sire, 1994:221).

Patronage by the Nobility

Only few examples of donations and commissions of works of art by the nobility and gentry exist.

This was probably due to the fact that most leading families did not reside permanently in Gozo, but had main residences in Malta since it was safer and more secure (Montalto, 1979:127). The most notable families having connection with Gozo were Giovanni Castelletti, Giovanni Gourgion and Marchese Lorenzo Antonio Cassar Desain (1852-1884). The first known donation by a member of the Gozitan nobility was by Giovanni Castelletti of a painting showing "St. Catherine of Alexandria." It is dated to 1623 as inscribed in the lower part of the canvas. However, this date puts in doubt its actual donation by Castelletti since he died in the first half of the sixteenth century.¹¹ This painting is reputed to have been venerated in his private chapel dedicated to St. Catherine of Alexandria which was found in the old *Matrice* church (Buhagiar, 1995:92; Wettinger, 1975:9). Presently, this painting is exhibited in the Gozo Cathedral Museum. It is a work of an unknown mediocre late Mannerist artist. It has a portrait insertion at the lower left area which shows a man with his hands clasped in prayer. An inscription identifies this man as Giovanni Castelletti who assists a vision of a lavishly dressed St. Catherine of Alexandria.

Giovanni Gourgion was the most important benefactor in late seventeenth century Gozo. He donated several altarpieces and *objets d'art* for diverse Gozitan churches. Some of the works donated by this munificent patron are of notable artistic merit, namely, the altarpiece of "The Virgin of Mercy with All Souls in Purgatory" (Figure 7) donated for St. George's Parish Church, Rabat. It was executed by Mattia Preti and his *bottega* (Buhagiar, 1995:120). This painting includes two full-length portraits at the bottom corners of the canvas of the donor and his wife pouring water from a pitcher to succour the suffering souls who emerge from the blazing fires of purgatory. The upper tier of the canvas is dominated by the Virgin and child supported over a cushioning cloud carried by several *putti*. The painting carries two dates; that of 1687 and 1688. These dates presumably refer to the commission and completion of the work (Buhagiar, 1990:95). This painting is almost entirely the work of Preti's *bottega*. This was normal *bottega* practice

¹⁰ The figure of St. George is almost an exact replica of a "St. Michael the Archangel" that Preti painted in an altarpiece of "The Virgin of the Angels" for the church of San Domenico in Taverna. Apparently, De Corduba donated another altarpiece to St. Augustine Priory church, Rabat. This is evident by De Corduba's coat of arms which emblazons the altarpiece of "The Virgin of Charity with St. Roch and St. Dominic." This painting is of unknown authorship and date and its work is of lesser artistic merit.

¹¹ The epigraph seen on his monument says that the monument was already installed in his chapel in 1544.

where apprentices worked from preparatory sketches prepared by the master. Some years later, in 1690, Gourgion donated another altarpiece by Preti and his *bottega*. This was the titular altarpiece of the Augustinian Priory church situated in Rabat which represents “St. Augustine with St. John the Baptist and St. William of Aquitaine” (Buhagiar, 1995:120,122). The hands of the assistants can be easily detected such as in the figure of John the Baptist who is painted in a stiff and rigid position directing the spectator’s attention towards the seated figure of St. Augustine.

After Giovanni Gourgion very little documented evidence exists of artistic patronage by nobility and gentry during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, this should not exclude the possibility of such type of patronage patterns. An interesting example dates to 1876, when the Marchese Chev. Lorenzo Antonio Cassar Desain donated an altarpiece to the old parish church of Ghajnsielem. This altarpiece shows the representation of “St. Anthony of Padova with the



Figure 7. Preti and his Bottega, “The Virgin of Mercy with Souls in Purgatory,” St. George Parish Church, Rabat, Gozo

Child Jesus” however, its authorship is unknown. It is traditionally attributed to Giuseppe Cali, however, there is no documentation to sustain its authorship.

Patronage by Middle and Lower Classes

Patronage by Middle and Lower Classes was more frequent when compared with the nobility. Patronage by Lower Classes was more in the form of collective contributions since no ordinary workman was able to finance an entire commission on his own. Patronage of Middle Class origin sometimes produced interesting works of art. In 1642, a certain Giorgio Muscat from Hal Luqa, Malta, donated an altarpiece showing “The Virgin of Mercy with Souls in Purgatory” (Buhagiar, 1995:122). Muscat nicknamed as ‘*il-Bennicc*’ was a merchant of cotton (Vella, 1995:95). Through the founding and donation of this altarpiece, Muscat was responsible for the initiation of the veneration of “The Virgin of Divine Grace” (Figure 8) in St. George’s church (A.E.G, *Visitatio Balaguer, 1654, vol. III, ff. 8r-v; Bezzina, 1965:20*). The artist is unknown, however, stylistically the execution points to the late Mannerist artist Filippino Dingli who was active during the first half of the seventeenth century (Buhagiar, 1995:122). The bottom centre of the canvas is emblazoned by the family coat of arms and an inscription which reads; “*GEORIVS MVSCAT MELITENSIS DE CASALI LUCA ANNO DOMINI 1642*” which records the donation.

Two bequests worth mentioning date to the first half of the eighteenth century donated by Horatio Gilestri and a Giurato, Basilio Grima. The former was a Maltese who resided in Gozo in the vicinities of the Virgin of Mercy chapel (*tal-Hniena*) in Xewkija. The altarpiece which represents “The Virgin of Mercy with St. Bartholomew” was donated to the mentioned chapel in 1735 and was painted by Gian Nicola Buhagiar who was one of the leading Maltese artists during the first half of the eighteenth century (Borg, 1978:11,88). Grima’s bequest is however, of less artistic merit. This painting was donated to St. George’s church, Rabat in 1739 (Bezzina, 1965:9-10). The authorship is unknown, however, it has strong stylistic affinities to Enrico Regnaud (Buhagiar, 1995:126; Sciberras, 2003:99-104). It was previously venerated on the altar dedicated to the Holy Trinity found in the right aisle next to the

transept.¹² Presently, it is preserved in the storeroom of St. George's church. The painting shows the Holy Trinity and the Virgin in the upper tier while the lower tier is occupied by Sts. Omobono, Basil and Andrew.

Another interesting example of Middle Class patronage comes from the small village of Kercem. In 1854, Rosa Camilleri donated the titular altarpiece showing "St. Gregory Interceding with the Virgin for the Plague-Stricken" painted by Salvatore Busuttill (1798-1854) (Scicluna, 1970). It was executed in Rome against the fee of 300 *scudi*.¹³ This altarpiece is one of the finest nineteenth century paintings in Malta (Buhagiar, 1990:110). It commemorates the victims of the plague which struck over the village of Xaghra in 1813-14 leaving more than a hundred victims (Scicluna, 1965; Cassar, 1964:175-187). This painting is very important since it is Busuttill's only work found in the Gozitan and Maltese churches.

The nineteenth century saw an intensification of collective patronage by the villagers. However, patronage by individual patrons persisted throughout the century. The last decades of the nineteenth century were dominated by the works of Giuseppe Cali (1846-1930). Gozo also benefited from his works some of which were the result of humble patronage. These include the titular altarpiece of "St. Lawrence" donated by a certain merchant Lorenzo Camenzuli to the Saint's church in 1889 (S.L.P.A, *Ms. Chronicon ed Inventario Parr. Salv. Portelli (1933-34)*, p. 3). Meanwhile, another three paintings by Cali were donated in 1891. One of them was donated by a short lived foundation better known as "Conservatorio Vincenzo Bugeja", established by Bugeja himself. He was a banker and financier. Bugeja donated the sum of £1000 to be divided amongst several parishes around Malta and Gozo and had to be realized in a work of art, executed either in silver, marble or as an oil painting (*Risorgimento*, 19/9/1890; Bonnici, 2002; *Risorgimento* 9/9/1890; *Risorgimento*, 12/9/1890). The best known work in Gozo funded through Bugeja's legacy is Cali's altarpiece of "The Crucifixion" which was donated to Zebbug Parish

Church. Meanwhile, the other two were donated by a certain Michele Mercieca and Michelangelo Borg. These paintings show "The Virgin of the Rosary" and "St. Michael the Archangel" donated to Ghajnsielem's old Parish church and St. Lawrence Parish Church respectively. Mercieca was most probably a boat owner (*padrone*) as evident by his marble tomb stone which is dominated by a representation of an anchor. Whereas, Borg was an emigrant in Boghari (S.L.P.A, *Ms. Chronicon ed Inventario Parr. Salv. Portelli (1933-34)*, p. 3). Two other emigrants living in North Africa, Giuseppe and Saverio Sultana, provided the necessary expenses for the realization of the two lateral paintings both executed by Giuseppe Cali in 1894 (Refalo Rapa, 1969:33). Giuseppe and Saverio were brothers who before leaving to North Africa resided in Xaghra (*Id-Devot ta` Marija*, no. 12, November 1894:18). The paintings represent "The Immaculate Conception" and "The Presentation of the Virgin" both executed in a delicate decorative charm.



Figure 8. Circle of Filippino Dingli, "The Virgin of Mercy with Souls in Purgatory," St. George Parish Church, Rabat

¹² It was then replaced by the present altarpiece of "The Holy Trinity together with the Sacred Family" painted by Giuseppe Cali in 1905.

¹³ K.P.A, Ms. Dun G. Cachia 15/5/1875, [unpaginated]: "*Quadro dei Titolari la B.M.V del Soccorso, e San Gregorio Papa Magno posto sull'altare Maggiore fatto a spese della fundatrice Rosa Camilleri a Roma dal Pittore Sigr; Salvatore Busuttill Gozitano nell'anno 1854 col Prezzo di scudi 300.*" I would like to thank Fr. Karm Borg for handing me this documentation.

The island's limited resources and its seclusion were sometimes of a detriment to artistic patronage patterns. However, despite all the drawbacks a small island possess, Gozo owns notable works of art and succeeded in attracting some of the most important Maltese artists of the period. Nonetheless, whatever the advantages and disadvantages of Gozo as an island, the study and understanding of its patronage patterns and the mechanics of ecclesiastical commissions is essential for a proper evaluation and understanding of the Gozitan artistic scene.

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Alfons Maria Hili - A Gozitan Patriot

GEOFFREY G. ATTARD

Introduction

Gozo, though a tiny island and sometimes featureless on maps of the Mediterranean, still has its own heroes and patriots. One such man was Mgr. Alfons Maria Hili of Victoria. What follows is a biographical note that may help readers become more familiar with a man who loved Gozo and the town of Victoria, and who spent his life being of service to his community.

Background

Alfons Maria Hili was born in Rabat, Gozo on the 19th of January 1865, the son of Ġorġ and Agata neé Grech. He was baptised at St George's Parish Church by the then Curate Canon Francesco Mercieca. Three of his brothers became priests: Dun Ġużepp who was to become the first parish priest of the newly-erected parish of Fontana, Mgr.



Alfons Maria Hili

Carmelo who died in December 1955 and Fra Ġorġ, who was a member of the Capuchin Order. Alfons did his primary and secondary school studies in Victoria and then proceeded to the Gozo Seminary in Victoria. Gozo had become a separate diocese just a year before he was born. He was ordained a priest on the 3rd April 1888 in the Seminary Chapel. The Bishop of Gozo Mgr. Ġwann M. Camilleri OSA chose him as his private chaplain. He became Rector of the Ta' Pinu Sanctuary in 1894. He also served as the fourteenth rector of the Diocesan Seminary from 1910 to 1914 and he had the formation of the future priests very much to his heart. Dun Alfons, as he was popularly known, became renowned throughout the Maltese Islands when the Gozitan seer Karmni Grima confided to him that the Blessed Virgin Mary had spoken to her from the chapel of Ta' Pinu; it was he who determined the actual date on which Our Lady had spoken to Karmni Grima.

An Illustrious Prelate

On the 21st of February 1899 he was chosen to become Canon Lector of the Gozo Cathedral Chapter. He was installed on the 11th of March of that same year. Bishop Camilleri called him to become Professor of Sacred Scripture and Canon Law at the Seminary. On the death of Mgr. Salv Grech, Dun Alfons became effective Canon of the Cathedral Church. Pope Benedict XV honoured him with the title of Domestic Prelate of His Holiness.

Parish Priest

The Bishop of Gozo appointed Dun Alfons parish priest of the Cathedral Chapter and St George's Parish in Victoria in 1917. It was a custom that since the Matrice and St George's formed one single parish, the new parish priest would be solemnly installed in both churches. So Dun Alfons was solemnly installed at the Cathedral Church on the 25th of January 1918 and at St George's on the 27th

of January. During his tenure as parish priest of Victoria, Dun Alfons became known for his kind-heartedness and generosity with the people of Rabat. He favoured the poor and the lowly. Those who knew him would say that both Dun Alfons and other members of his family died in poverty because of the financial help that they constantly gave to the poor of Victoria. This was testified by a friend of the family, Mgr. Ġużeppi Debrincat known locally as *L-Angolin* who was actually part of the Hili household.

The Political Scene

Dun Alfons even entered politics – something that clerics were allowed to do in those times. In the 1921 election, Dun Alfons was elected member of the Legislative Assembly; he won a seat in the interests of the Partito Democratico Nazionalista led by Dr. Enrico Mizzi, also of Gozitan provenance. It was due to his hard work that a ferry service was established between Marfa in Malta and Mgarr, Gozo.

Hili the Benefactor

Dun Alfons' main dream in life was to embellish the parish church of St George in Rabat and put it in a class of its own. Aided by Mgr. Francesco Portelli and his brother Ġużepp, Mgr. Hili entered into an ambitious project; the buildings of the naves for St George's parish church. He actually paid 200 pounds from his own money to see the naves built. He also left the sum of 400 pounds for the building of the dome of the same church. From the money he earned through his participation in the political arena, he paid for the embroidered velvet vestments of the church which were manufactured in Lyons, France.

Dun Alfons forked out his own money for the manufacturing of twenty-four Roman style chasubles, seven capes and three tunics (worn by deacons). From Malta he bought a *baldacchino* which is used for the procession of the *Quaranta Ore* annually. It was also during his time as parish priest that the church was embellished with a canopy which used to be hung on the main altar of the church (*Tużzell*) and which was later on sold to the Parish of St. Peter in Chains in Birżebbuġa;

this ornamental object was manufactured in Rabat, Malta in 1922. It was also on Dun Alfons' personal initiative that St George's Church was enriched with a set of bells, one of which is actually called "Alfonsa" after him. These bells were manufactured by the Baricozzi Company of Milan. In 1930 he asked Mgr. Giuseppe Giardini-Vella, a composer of Sicilian descent who had settled in Gozo, to write a hymn in honour of St George, patron saint of the island. The hymn was actually composed and sung for the first time in 1931.

Mgr. Alfons M. Hili died on the 31st December 1943 while still in office.

A Fitting Tribute

Dun Alfons' work and activities were to be given due recognition. Mgr. Joseph Farrugia, parish priest of St George's and successor of Dun Alfons himself, undertook the project of erecting a bust in honour of the illustrious prelate. On the 13th of January 1996, the President of the Republic of Malta Dr. Ugo Mifsud Bonnici unveiled the monument at St George's Basilica in the presence of the collegiate chapter of the very same parish of which he was pastor, spiritual father and benefactor. A memorial stone also hangs on the wall of the house in which he lived in Library Street, Victoria. Dun Alfons will always be remembered as a genuine Gozitan patriot who put the needs of his own people before his very own thus earning the love and respect of his fellow Gozitans.

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The Gozo Airfield – Eisenhower’s Recollections

RODERICK PACE

Introduction

In 1961, sixteen years after the end of World War II, in a speech delivered in Washington, D.C., US President Dwight D. Eisenhower vividly recorded Gozo and the construction of the Xewkija airfield during the war.

The Xewkija airfield was constructed in support of the Anglo-American invasion of Sicily. A similar airfield, and for the same purpose, was constructed on the island of Pantelleria after it was taken by the Americans.

Speaking at the Statler Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C., on the occasion of the Annual Hoover Medal award dinner, sponsored by four leading US engineering societies, President Eisenhower recalled that since Malta had run out of space, Gozo was the only place where the Americans could build an additional airfield close to the new theatre of war that was soon to be opened up by the invasion of Sicily.

Indeed, as we read in Charles Bezzina’s brief but detailed account, the most comprehensive treatment so far of this event, the construction of the airfield was completed on the 20 June 1943 and “Operation Husky,” as the invasion of Sicily was code-named, started on the night of 9 July (Bezzina, 2004).

Eisenhower’s Speech

The extract from Eisenhower’s speech, delivered on 10 January 1961 and reproduced below, shows how the building of the Gozo airfield left a lasting impression on him:

“There are one or two incidents that General Marshall¹ did not mention. I am not going to go too deeply into statistics, but there is a story – a true one – that I thought always was interesting. The American engineers equipped with the kind of mechanisms such as he mentioned, went over to Malta; and there was a British air officer, General Park, a very competent and gallant man, who knew



Aerial photograph of the Gozo Airfield as of June 20, 1943. Photo: C. Bezzina

¹ In this extract, it is not clear whether Eisenhower is referring to Brig. Gen. Samuel L. A. Marshall or Gen. George C. Marshall, but the other references are clear namely to Gen. Alfred M. Gruenther and Air Vice Marshal Sir Keith Rodney Park.



American soldiers guarding the Gozo Airfield - July 1943. Photo: From Bezzina, C.

that the Americans needed a new fighter field close by. The only spot that was possible to use was an island and I think it was named Gozo, but if I am wrong General Gruenther will tell me after we leave this meeting. But anyway it was nothing but a mountain. And the British having long ago given up with their hand tools on building this field, said to the engineer colonel visiting for the evening, “How long would it take you to get this field ready?” And the British thought, at least, that anything under a year, if you could do it at all, would be all right. And this man took a look and said, “Oh, 12 to 14 days.” And the British officer was so astonished, and really so insulted in a sense, he said, “When can you start? Well,” he said, “let’s see what headquarters will give me.” And he cabled back to Africa – he was over in Sicily – and it happened that all this equipment was in a harbor in Philippeville and ready to go, so it went right over. From the time the equipment reached there, 13 days later, our first fighter flew on and off the field. And General Park made a special flight to me and said, “I take

back everything about American bragging; it’s all true” (Woolley & Peters, 2009).

A Lasting Impression

In his speech, Eisenhower did not mention only Gozo. He referred to a number of other feats performed by American engineers in support of the war effort. Eisenhower had obviously not been to Gozo, which he described as “nothing but a mountain”. This shows that he must have been briefed of the island’s physical topography and terrain and that it was hilly. The unnamed American officer who Eisenhower refers to as an “engineer colonel” was of course Major Baron Le Colt (Bezzina, 2004:16). He could not have cabled back to Africa (Eisenhower’s Headquarters) from Sicily as Eisenhower claimed, for Sicily was still in enemy hands. This does not diminish from Eisenhower’s account, recounted some eighteen years after the completion of the airfield. It is obvious that although he was relying on memory the Gozo airfield had left a lasting impression on him. Again, this in itself is quite remarkable for a man who had led the Allied War effort in the west,



Lt. Col. Fred M. Dean's Spitfire Vb at the Gozo Airfield - June 1943. Photo: Bezzina, C.

whose military career encompassed such a vast area and so many events of the war and who had led America as its president between 1953 and 1961. Somewhere in Eisenhower's memory, his "hard disc", tiny Gozo lingered on notwithstanding the brain's tendency to select, sift, retain and discard information without a specific command from us.

As we find in Bezzina's account, the Xewkija airfield, consisting of two runways, remained in use up to the 6 August 1943. By then, all the military units stationed there had been relocated to Sicily and the fields on which the runways had been built, were slowly returned to their original owners with compensation.² Only the Gourgion tower was never rebuilt. Mention also needs to be made in this context of the Gozitans' role in this wartime endeavour. They provided the bulk of the manual labour which was also crucial together with the heavy equipment brought over by the Americans, for the speedy construction of the runways. In this they had to overcome their mortal fears that the airfield could also transform their relatively peaceful island into a military target. Fortunately, this did not happen.

Little is known on how daily events actually unfolded in the Xewkija airfield during the hectic

days of the invasion of Sicily and its short life span. Further research could perhaps unearth reports and anecdotes which could throw more light on life in this short-lived military base such is the one involving first Lieutenant Edward Fardella, a Spitfire pilot, 308 Squadron, USAAF, who collided with the wreck of a Spitfire on one of the Gozo runways, in July 1943, killing Leading Aircraftsman Ernie Nuttall and Leading Aircraftsman Jim Taylor of 3231 RAF Servicing Commando Unit.

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² American records show that between the 13-14 July 1943, the 307th and 308th Fighter Squadrons, 31st Fighter Group, had already transferred with Spitfires from Gozo to Ponte Olivo, Sicily. This was made possible by the rapidity with which enemy airfields were being captured in Sicily. See, *COMBAT CHRONOLOGY US ARMY AIR FORCES MEDITERRANEAN - 1943, PART 2* at <http://www.milhist.net/usaaf/mto43b.html> (accessed 30.08.2009)

A Pictorial Archive waiting to be Discovered

AARON ATTARD-HILI LL.D.

Introduction

The recent publications by *Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti* of photograph collections, inspired me to put pen to paper about a pictorial archive which has remained undisclosed up to this day. The archive which contains mostly different formats of negative plates has been organised into a number of categories according to the subject. They mostly cover a span of forty years from the beginning of the 1950s till the late 1990s.

The pictorial archive features photos of Gozo which show the island in its pristine state. Some of them recorded the earliest stages of development of some of the projects being undertaken at the time, bringing into contrast the metamorphosis of the Gozitan landscape. The man behind these

pictures is the Xagħra born, Joseph Camilleri, a teacher by profession.

The unfolding archive of Camilleri, makes him one of the most prolific photographers of the early middle of the 20th century. A lot of what Camilleri photographed no longer exists. It is merely a record of what once was. Instinctively he was following the art of photography in the footsteps of his predecessors, the brothers Michael and Angelo Farrugia (*Tal-Badiku*), both natives of Xagħra.

The first sounds of camera clicking in my life were always associated with church events in Xagħra during my childhood. It was a familiar image to see a flash with every click. Later on I got to know that the sounds and flashes came from Camilleri's camera.



Xagħra ridge with unspoilt slopes leading to Ramla bay with the hard stone pathway clearly visible. 1955.



A mule drawn cart with a farmer riding on its shaft passing by a dovotional niche. Xaghra, 1970.

Camilleri's Young Days

Camilleri, a friendly, energetic person, hails from a family of school teachers. His young days were instantly characterised with his interest and curiosity about anything which came across his way. His father, Vincent, and his paternal uncle, Francis, the latter the headmaster of the village school and founder of the Xaghra Victory band, were dedicated teachers and keen at practical things. It was through the former's coincidental personal contact with the Maltese renowned photographer, Paul Cassar, which encouraged Camilleri to delve into the art of photography towards the middle of the 1940s.

Encounter with Paul Cassar

Cassar's image was familiar with Camilleri when the former used to turn up at Vincent Camilleri's home to take professional photos of a number of individuals from Xaghra during Cassar's stay in Gozo as a refugee in Ghajnsielem. Vincent used to keep a record of the bookings for Cassar for whoever wished to have a picture taken. On the other hand Cassar endeavoured to keep his

photography business alive as he had a large family of eleven children to feed.

Following the cessation of the war, Cassar packed his photographic equipment and returned to Malta with his family and opened a studio in Birkirkara. Notwithstanding his departure from Gozo, Cassar kept in contact with Vincent Camilleri to the extent that the latter would take pictures of clients at home and send them to Cassar's studio for printing.

Vincent's son, Joseph, became very interested in photography. On noticing Joseph's keen interest in the art of photography, Cassar insisted on instructing him in the process of photography printing which he did in 1952.

From then on Joseph Camilleri became "trigger happy" not of sport guns but of the photographic camera. He bought his first photo camera ZEISS IKON SUPER IKONTA using 120 roll film. He started to roam around his native village corners and beyond. At the end of the day, Camilleri would return home and lock himself in his dark room to develop his photos.

Camilleri's Photography

On establishing his matrimonial home in 1959 in Racecourse Street, Xagħra, one of the front rooms was converted into a studio by day with a drop down curtain as a backdrop. This followed the trend particularly in small towns, where a visit to the photographer's studio was traditionally an obligatory accompaniment to certain solemn moments in life, in particular weddings, first holy communion and confirmation. It is difficult to pick out just one example from this exhaustive repetitive genre, the only aim of which was to please the client. One recognises Camilleri's work because it bears his trade name at the back and sometimes embossed at the lower end of the photo: "Victory photo studio, Xagħra – Gozo" and "Photo J. Camilleri, Xagħra – Gozo."

On one occasion Camilleri's zest for photography landed him in trouble. On 6th September, 1959, while taking photos at the Xagħra square in connection with the village festa, he was arrested

by the police and his photo camera confiscated. The incident revolved around some disturbances among a group of people at the village square. However, Camilleri was soon released and had his camera returned to him still loaded with the film.

His trade was in popular demand to the extent that Camilleri bought a number of photographic cameras. One of his cameras was of the large-format plate encased in wood with bellows. It produced a large sheet of film with big negatives that gave very high-quality images. This was followed by a series of reflex cameras. These were unobtrusive and quiet – ideal for his spontaneous shots. Because of popular demand Camilleri ventured into the movie picture by purchasing a movie camera std.8 in 1961. Using this camera, he succeeded to register a number of events in Gozo including the natural disaster caused by a severe storm at Mgarr on 12th December, 1967, the reels of which movie were shown on air through the national Maltese television station.



The threshing of hay with the old mechanical wooden encased machinery. Next to Manresa House, Victoria. C.1960



The great storm which wrought havoc on the Maltese Islands on 12 December, 1967. Mġarr harbour

Camilleri accumulated a great repertoire of picture documents over the span of forty years. His home archive contains a wide array of subjects, including picture groups, religious events, street life as well as documentary and candid pictures. Rumaging through Camilleri's pictorial archive of important events, I stumbled upon quaint everyday situations which form part of the traditional and cultural ways of the place where the pictures were shot. Although Camilleri was mostly commissioned to shoot special occasions, he nevertheless took the initiative to register pictorially many daily occurrences. He realised that the success of a candid photo largely depended on his creative input and upon his critical eye. It is a striking composition, a humouristic element or an unusual subject which renders the pictures very interesting.

It was through years of experience and success in the field of photography which made Camilleri a fine photographer particularly in black and white pictures. Some of his works have a number of elements which make them striking to the eye of the viewer. Much of the appeal of Camilleri's photography comes from the knowledge that

the style of the photo is determined by the photographer himself. While style is a very personal element in a fine art photo, Camilleri was often influenced by the traditions and changing landscape developments he experienced during his lifetime. His photos showed subjects which were usually ignored.

Documentary Photography

Camilleri's own work has also resulted in a series of images which can be labelled as



The laying of stone foundations at Tal-Hamri housing estate, Xewkija. C.1975



The commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Our Lady's apparition at Lourdes at the open air chapel beneath the Lourdes church at Mġarr. 1958.

documentary photography. Such subjects present accurate records of past events.

Coupled to the genre of photography, Camilleri's archive boasts of a number of short movies. Out of his own initiative, Camilleri shot movies of a number of events which occurred in Gozo. He surmised that such movie records would serve as a pictorial document for future

generations. In fact on watching Camilleri's movies one would be surprised by the intensive shots of particular situations at different stages of the reel. Scenery, streetscapes, landscapes, buildings and human activity start to unfold before one's eyes. Persons from all walks of life, since gone, come to life. Unfortunately some of these are now beyond recognition if not utterly destroyed.

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Gozo During the Second World War - a Glimpse

CHARLES BEZZINA

Introduction

The part played by Gozo during the war was somewhat different from that of Malta. Gozo, though subject to the same rules and regulations of wartime Malta, was not a military objective and it was only in early 1942 that Gozo became an enemy target. Yet Gozitans feared the enemy especially in 1942 since the island was defenceless and had nothing to fight with. Therefore certain exigencies that were introduced in Malta from the outbreak of the hostilities with Italy, became in force in Gozo only after the Luftwaffe intensified the attacks on the island in 1942. Thus in Gozo public shelter digging and construction did not start before March 1941, the Demolition and Clearance was not established until February 1942 and the Home Guard only came into being by mid-1941. The Air Raid Precautions



Building damaged by bombs in Mithna Street, Rabat, Gozo - 24.12.1941. Photo: C. Bezzina

squad was not set up in Gozo during the war and British soldiers, who started to visit Gozo in March 1941, were only stationed in Gozo primary schools or other private buildings just for short periods, to relax and also for their military exercises and parades to boost the local morale. It was only in mid-1943 that, because of the temporary Gozo Airfield, some defence precautions were taken to guard against any air attacks.

From the outbreak of the war with Italy in June 1940 up to mid-December 1941, Italian and German planes just passed over Gozo and occasionally dropped bombs only to lighten their load and turn back as fast as they could. Thus Gozo as a small and defenceless island never endured the harsh bombing that took place incessantly on Malta. Yet Gozo, owing to the war, was never an 'open country' but it still had its tragedies and its problems.

Air Attacks on Gozo

From June 1940 to mid-December 1941 the bombs which were dropped on Gozo either exploded in fields or fell into the sea thus causing little damage. The first series of bombs were dropped at Dahlet Qorrot in Nadur on 21 June 1940 at 2.07 am, fifty-year old Joseph Mizzi was slightly injured while he was out rabbit hunting by night. Up to mid-December 1941 very few Gozitans were injured and the blast of the bombs caused only little damage to their homes. Between the night of the 27 and 28 May 1941, an enemy plane observing some light, dropped a series of bombs in Ta' Ghammar, Għasri. Several houses in the vicinity of the fields were damaged by the blast but there were no casualties.

The first serious attack came on the night between the 23 and 24 December 1941. During that night about twelve bombs fell on the outskirts of Victoria. One house in Windmill Street was destroyed while another suffered heavy damage. 22-year old Carmela Borg died in the debris while her mother



Partially demolished buildings in Grunju Street, Nadur, Gozo - 03.01.1942. Photo: C. Bezzina

was injured. Carmela Borg was the first Gozitan victim to die in Gozo. It was a sad Christmas with no church bells ringing and with people celebrating it in the blackout and curfew conditions. Nor was the new year a happy one.

On 3 January 1942 at 4.15 am, another twelve bombs were dropped on Nadur. Old Windmill Street, Grunju Street, Saint John Street and other streets in the vicinity were hit. Several houses in these streets were either demolished or badly damaged. Several persons were seriously injured and the 21-month old Carmel Gatt and the 32-year old John Mejlak lost their lives under the debris. A heavier attack took place on Nadur on 15 January 1942 at 4.45 pm when twelve bombs were dropped along Racecourse Street, Telegraph Street and Church Street. Thirteen-year old Rita Galea, 8-year old Joseph Muscat and 42-year old Francis Cutajar lost their lives in this attack. It was a bad start for the year 1942 in Gozo, and it had barely started. On 23 January at 3.45 pm about nine bombs were dropped in Saint Catherine Street, St Joseph Street, Soil Street and other minor streets in Xewkija. Although

no one died, a few persons were injured and some houses were badly damaged. Yet the worst attack in January 1942 took place on 29 January at about 7.15 am in Hamri Street, Għajnsielem. The house of the family Grech was destroyed and from under the ruins of the house the bodies of 49-year old Carmela Grech, 14-year old John Grech, 7-year old Angela Grech, 16-year old Agnes Grech and 17-year old Amalia Grech were pulled out. Other members of the family were seriously injured and taken to hospital. Laurence Grech, the father, only survived because at that time he was in church. It was a dramatic sad event that shocked Gozo. January 1942 ended with Gozitan morale rather low and with enemy attacks becoming frequent against a defenceless island.

On 10 February 1942 about nine bombs were dropped in Xagħra. Both Bullara Street and January Street were hit and some persons were injured, but 72-year old Carmelo Attard and his 70-year old wife Marianna died in their demolished house in Bullara Street. On 12 April 1942, at 12.30 pm, Xagħra was again the enemy target. Both Marsalforn Street and Racecourse Street were hit by several bombs. 17-

year old Carmel Azzopardi died instantly as he was hit by shrapnel while his 48-year old father died of injuries in hospital 11 days later. The air-raid attacks by the Luftwaffe increased drastically. Gozo too was becoming an enemy target. The Gozitans, afraid of the proposed invasion by the Axis, could do nothing except submit themselves to hard wartime conditions. Victoria was subject to an air attack on 6 May and on 8 May 1942. In the former machine-gun attack, 41-year old Toni Saliba, a bus driver, was killed and several other persons injured in Savina Square. In the latter attack no one died, but about 50 sheep and goats that were grazing in Marsalforn Valley and on Gelmus Hill were killed instantly.

On 28 July 1942 at about 10.30 pm a German plane passing over the west of Gozo, dropped some bombs over Gharb. The village cemetery was hit as well as some houses in the vicinity and a few persons were injured. As a result of serious injuries, 50-year old Michael Angelo Mizzi died in Victoria hospital on 4 August. At mid-night between 5 and 6 August 1942, some incendiary bombs were dropped on the small village of Saint Laurence. Consequently

28-year old Nazzarena Attard died in hospital on 7 August and 25-year old Carmela Farrugia, her 35-year old sister Maria together with their 66-year old mother Josephine lost their lives during that night.

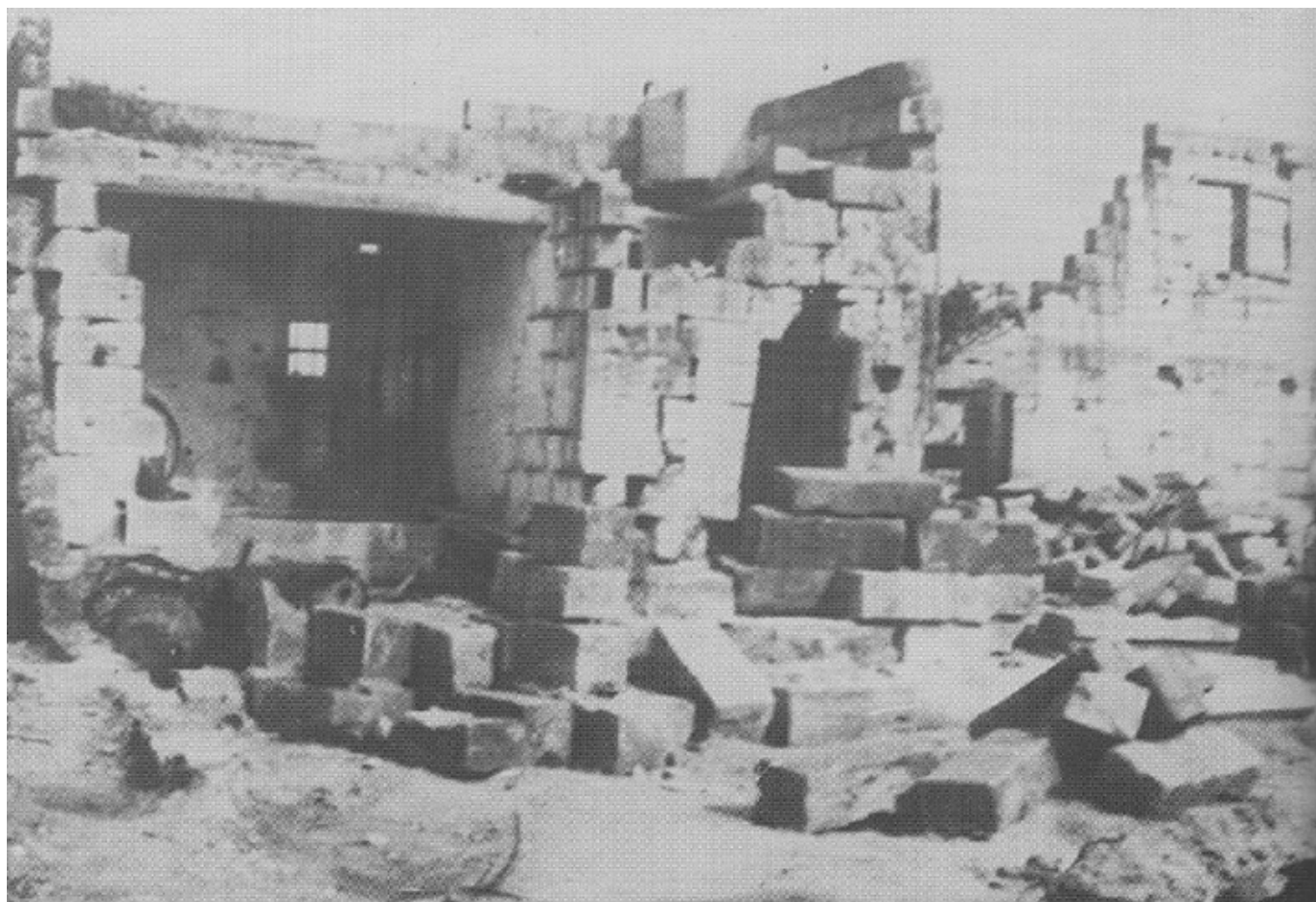
Yet the worst attack that ever took place on Gozo was on Saturday 10 October 1942 on the village of Ta' Sannat. At about 10.15 am, two German bombers flew over Gozo and when chased by British fighters, they released two big bombs on built up areas. Sixteen houses were totally demolished and about 60 houses partly demolished. The Demolition and Clearance, which was set up in Gozo in February 1942, did its best to extract the dead from under the debris. The school and the police station were also badly hit and about 70 persons were injured. Eighteen persons died as a consequence of this attack.

Maltese Refugees

Since Gozo was less of a target than Malta, a total of about 5000 Maltese refugees sought shelter in Gozo. The late Frank Bezzina (1925-1996) author of the book "Il-Qilla tal-Gwerra fuq Ghawdex



Houses damaged by bombs in Saguna Street, Sannat, Gozo - 10.10.1942. Photo: C. Bezzina



Bomb damaged house in Race Course Street, Nadur, Gozo - 15.01.1942. Photo: C. Bezzina

1940-1943” recalls the sense of unity and solidarity between Maltese and Gozitans. Of outstanding interest is his account of the summer of 1941, when during the evening, Maltese refugees in Gozo would go to It-Tokk Square, Victoria to socialise. Maltese and Gozitan youths would play football matches together and organise theatrical shows at Don Bosco Oratory.

Marsalforn took the semblance of the Sliema promenade with Maltese and Gozitans interacting together. Maltese teachers who sought refuge in Gozo began to teach in Gozitan schools, while many Maltese students in Gozo began to attend schools with the Gozitans. Consequently the number of students in schools increased considerably. Some Maltese teachers were also appointed Assistant Protection Officers while some had an important role to play within the Protection Office and as Special Constables. With the effort of Emanuel Bianco, a Maltese refugee who was transferred to Gozo as a hospital compounder, the first MUSEUM for boys was opened in Victoria on 23 April 1941. On Christmas Eve of that year, the first procession of Jesus Christ took place and the young Anton

Zammit Gabarretta, a Maltese boy who was a refugee with his family, preached the first sermon. Mro. Vincenzo Bugeja who was a refugee in Xaghra, also left a patrimony of Music to the same village and Mr Tony Scott and Mr Joseph Orlando Smith gave an outstanding contribution to Gozitan farmers, especially during the Wheat Collection in June and July 1942. Moreover, Gozo prospered economically because wealthy Maltese, who brought every penny with them, spent it in Gozo. With the influx of Maltese in Gozo, some individuals who sympathised with the Italians, also sought refuge or better still escaped to Gozo. Thus a nucleus of pro-Italian Maltese lived in Gozo, especially in Victoria, Marsalforn and Nadur. They socialised with other Gozitans who shared the same views they did.

Difficult Times

In general, life in Gozo was difficult and Gozitans had of course the duty to observe during the war the light restriction orders (blackout), the curfew, the air-raid signals and other war regulations. About 600 Gozitans were conscripted and were taken as soldiers to Malta to different destinations. To look



A house damaged by bombs in Race Course Street, Sannat, Gozo - 12.04.1942. Photo: C. Bezzina

after the defence of the island the Coast Police was set up in Gozo on 10 August 1940, with Reserve Police Constables situated around the island with the duty of observation. Precautions were also taken so that the Special Constables could enforce the curfew and blackout regulations while cars and bus transport were controlled due to lack of petrol. The strait between the islands was also a problem. With mines floating in the sea and with air-raid attacks continuously attacking boats plying between the islands, transport between the islands was often suspended. At the peak of the war Gozitans had to make considerable sacrifices and suffered scarcity especially in June and July 1942 when the rations became irregular and Malta was on the verge of surrendering. In summer 1942 Gozitans had to queue up under the hot sun to get the poor quality food of the Victory Kitchens.

The Black Market

As a consequence of all this the black-market grew steadily during the war, especially in mid-1942 when the scarcity of goods was severely felt. Most Gozitans who needed essential supplies had to pay dearly for something which before the war they could

acquire a few pennies. Thus the price of eggs, flour, sugar, milk and other goods increased alarmingly. Although the Government warned people against the black-market, its growth continued. Many Gozitans considered the black-market trading as the only way to acquire, even at a high cost, these essential goods. Thus Gozitans and many Maltese refugees in general did not protest about the high prices of commodities and only worried as to where to get such goods. Moreover there was a general reluctance to report infringements even though people felt that they were being robbed. Consequently the police never gained control of the situation.

Conclusion

During the Second World War, about 150 Gozitans lost their lives in one way or another. Many civilians died under the debris after bomb attacks on their houses while many others died as soldiers while on duty. The majority of Gozitans were lost at sea when the ship on which they were serving was sunk either by U-boats, mines or by air raid attacks. One Gozitan person died in a concentration camp. In addition, as a consequence of the war, many Gozitans were injured for life.

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Enhancing the Gran Castello's Unique Selling Proposition

GODWIN VELLA

Introduction

The intrinsic value and outstanding potential of the Gran Castello are undisputed. A staggering 80.9% out of 1052 interviewees taking part in a comprehensive Tourism Locality Survey focusing on the town of Victoria (Malta Tourism Authority, 2004) confirmed that a visit to the imposing and strategically located Castello is a must for every self-respecting visitor to the island, while 16.8% of the same representative sample identified it as the most iconic resource¹ in Gozo. An equally significant finding emerges from the periodic tourism surveys undertaken by the National Statistics Office (National Statistics Office, 2003) whereby it has been established that between 50

to 60% of all inbound tourists² to Malta cross over to the sister island during their stay. This translates into some 600,000 international visitors, to this must be added several thousands of residents on mainland Malta who frequent Gozo as a holiday destination. Evidently, many of these international and domestic tourists make their way up to the lofty Castello, being the most dominating monument in central Gozo and a clearly visible feature from the greater part of the island and from several promontories along northwest Malta.

Going back to the aforementioned Tourism Locality Survey, a notable proportion of respondents called for more practical information about the site and for a holistic and comprehensive interpretation



Aerial view of the Gran Castello: the water reservoir in caption is sandwiched between the buildings along Castle Hill Street and St. Michael's Bastion.

¹ The other most remembered attractions are greenery vis-à-vis mainland Malta (14.8%), tranquillity (13.5%), landscape and scenery (11.5%), local people (11.4%), churches (10.4%) and Ġgantija Temples (7%).

² International visitors who spend at least one night in a collective or private accommodation in the country visited.

provision. Having served as Manager Gozo Area Office within Heritage Malta from 2004 to 2008, I can vouch for this critical shortcoming. Many a time, I was approached by disoriented and puzzled visitors trying to make their way to the respective museums, amenities and viewpoints or looking for some information on the Castello's millennial story. As things stand, unaccompanied visitors who do not plan out their excursion in detail and arm themselves with a decent guidebook or a related guiding and interpretation aide, risk missing out much of what Gozo's most extensive and multifaceted heritage asset has to offer.

Restoration and Rehabilitation

Over the past fifty years the Gran Castello underwent an extensive restoration and

rehabilitation programme, and attracted five complimentary museums,³ two exhibition and educational facilities,⁴ and a host of associated visitor amenities. Nonetheless, it still lacks a visitor centre that encourages visitors to discover and experience the uniqueness of the site, and which offers a thorough introduction to the site, sustaining a range of different services. This said, the main problem is where to locate such a facility and whether an existing building could be utilised as against constructing a new edifice. As illustrated by corresponding developments at other popular sites in the Maltese Islands and beyond, a new purposely built visitor centre within the immediate and sensitive environs of a significant site, no matter how well designed, will hardly blend in happily. Likewise the adoption of existing buildings has the advantage of being historically



A late 1920's internal view of the reservoirs suggesting a likely reinstatement of the roofing slabs. Photo: Joseph Cremona died 24.I.1950 – © John Cremona

³ Namely four Museums/Sites run by Heritage Malta (Archaeology, Folklore, Nature and Old Prison) and the Cathedral Museum. Besides, the Non-Governmental Organisation Wirt Għawdex is planning to open up on a regular basis the old polverista at St. John's demi-bastion and adjacent battery, silos and World War II shelters.

⁴ The former Crafts Centre and Sentinella Base have been redesigned as the Cittadella Centre for Culture and the Arts, while Heritage Malta's Gozo Area Office and adjacent Nature Museum host modest exhibition, conference and educational facilities.



The reservoir's outer wall along Castle Hill Street: the creation of a suitable entrance would not require large-scale works. Photo: Kenneth Cassar

and visually acceptable but presents challenging, if not insurmountable, layout and accessibility constraints. Ultimately, however, it is the nature of the information and accompanying facilities and not the kind of building that transforms premises into a visitor centre or not.

Late Nineteenth Century Water Reservoirs

It is hereby being suggested that two capacious, underutilised⁵ and adjoining late nineteenth century water reservoirs abutting onto St. Michael's Bastion be adapted to serve as a visitor centre. This proposal takes into consideration the configuration of the Castello, the availability of covered and open spaces within its footprint, and the relevant planning regulations whereby the development of heritage tourism through imaginative and contextual upgrading of existing buildings is encouraged⁶.

Sunk into the ditch's void and spanning the entire front of the mighty bastion, these reservoirs stand at the very top of Castle Hill Street, next to the narrow flight of steps winding up to the early 16th century entrance⁷ and adjacent 1956 breach through the curtain wall. The joint footprint of the reservoirs' vast interior measures 550m² approximately, appreciably larger than the added up floor area of the Cathedral's nave, presbytery and choir. The roof is constructed on spatially and symmetrically laid out stone pillars surmounted by a two-tiered succession of arches, and the resultant covered space is thereby capable of accommodating a versatile set up and a voluminous visitor flow. It overlooks the gently sloping counterscarp by circa two metres but stands almost eight metres above the floor of the adjoining ditch. No large scale structural interventions are required to facilitate access in and out. Indeed, all it takes

⁵ During 2003 the Department for Projects and Development within the Ministry for Gozo installed some equipment to irrigate the soft areas outside the Castello and to replenish the water reservoir at Villa Rundle. Should this proposal be implemented, such equipment could easily be transferred to the smaller water reservoir underneath the commemorative obelisk.

⁶ Gozo and Comino Local Plan

⁷ The façade of the early 16th century gate was remodeled in 1904.

is the perforation of an entry point along Castle Hill Street, an internal link through the reservoirs' dividing wall, and an exit point into the ditch, at the foot of the towering bastion spur. An added bonus of such flow is the inclusion of the same ditch within an exhaustive trail of the Castello.

At present, visitors roam on the ramparts, enjoy the inspiring views of the greater part of Gozo, northwest Malta and on clear days Mount Etna in Sicily, but are not directed to appreciate the imposing defensive ensemble under their feet, let alone the interesting archaeological features along the underlying cliff face. As a matter of fact, the ditch needs to be looked at as an integral part of the Gran Castello, as a strategic extension of the amenities incorporated within the proposed visitor centre proper, and as planned during the early years of the twentieth century a potential opportunity to craft another tasteful green lung in the heart of sprawling Victoria (Pisani, 1968:7). Visitors can



The surviving ditch along the awe-inspiring bastioned ensemble needs to be looked at as an integral part of the Gran Castello. Photo: Kenneth Cassar

eventually make their way up to the main entrance of the Castello through a conveniently placed sally-port at the back of St. Michael's bastion.

Along with several other heritage enthusiasts, I have been dreaming about this scheme for a period of time. On being recently invited to share my views on the enhancement and management of the Castello with the multi-disciplinary team of experts currently compiling the eagerly awaited Master Plan.⁸ I grasped the opportunity to put it forward. The present write-up is not an attempt to claim a title on this proposal should the powers that be ever decide to adopt and implement it, but to invite everyone interested in the valorisation and sustainable enjoyment of Gozo and its cultural resources to participate in a constructive discussion on how to enhance the Gran Castello's unique selling proposition. In full knowledge that any sound decision on the appropriate use of our cultural resources rests on a good understanding of their significance, what follows is a brief historical note on the reservoir mentioned above and associated water management facilities within the Castello.

A Water-Management Master Plan

A pressing hurdle faced by the inhabitants of Rabat (namely the Castello and underlying historic core) was the laborious transportation of fresh water supplies all the way up from the Gran Fontana⁹ whenever their domestic reservoirs fell short from being replenished by annual rainfall or got contaminated (Bezzina, 1985:76). Indeed, during the 19th century the British Colonial Government invested substantial sums of money to service the then expanding Rabat settlement with reliable fresh water supplies as part of an extensive works programme to improve the islanders' overall quality of life (Vella, 2007) The first decisive steps in this regard seem to have been spearheaded by the cholera outbreak of 1837, when 366 inhabitants perished.¹⁰ Cholera is a bacterial disease that is usually spread through contaminated water, and the supply of good quality water must have been viewed as an effective mitigation measure against repeated outbursts.

⁸ The overall objective of the Master Plan is to establish a basis for the formulation and adoption of a long term policy framework – one which recognises the Cittadella as an extremely valuable asset and which provides the guidelines necessary for this asset to be managed effectively and in a sustainable manner with the final aim of safeguarding its historical aspect yet at the same time promoting and developing its cultural, social and economic life.

⁹ NLM, Lib. Ms. 142, Vol. VI, Fol. 177.

The most abundant fresh water spring¹¹ that could be feasibly channelled to Rabat by gravitational force was located at Għar Ilma, circa two kilometres to its west. Flowing at the foot of a south-facing Upper Coralline cliff-face, the Għar Ilma spring stands 140 metres above sea-level and some 40 metres higher than Rabat's historic core. Its average yield hovered around 7000 gallons per day during the rainy season and 2000 gallons per day in the dry summer months (Gatt, 1934:142). Works commenced on 24th September 1839 and involved the construction of a gently sloping tunnel skirting past Santa Luċija and Qasam San Ġorġ until reaching the evocative string of elegant arches aligning Għarb Road. Water was successfully conveyed to a fountain in Savina Square on 6th September 1843 (Gauci, 1966:38). By 1859, the arches carrying the aqueduct suffered serious damages during a severe storm and were

eventually subjected to large scale repairs, (Government of Malta, 1857:47) a 100 metres long stretch of the original clay pipes was replaced by more resistant iron tubes, (Government of Malta, 1859:157) while other neighbourhoods of Rabat became serviced with flowing water (Government of Malta, 1858:147). Likewise, a 420-ton water-reservoir and two fountains were projected in August 1866,¹² whereas a 150-ton tank was being built as from June 1867.¹³

A major upgrade was successively taken in hand in February 1877, almost nine years after the uprooting of the Gran Castello from the War Department properties list.¹⁴ The cultivated and gently sloping terraced fields along the Castello's main front¹⁵ became earmarked for the erection of three reservoirs with a combined capacity of 6000 tonnes, namely a smaller reservoir underneath the monumental obelisk and the aforementioned



View of the 1840's water-collection gallery and settling-vats at Għar Ilma. Photo: Anthony Cauchi

¹⁰ (NLM, Libr. Ms 1271, f.5)

¹¹ Rainwater seeps through the porous Upper Coralline and Greensand layers. On reaching the underlying Blue Clay it is prevented from seeping further downwards and emerges sideways in the form of fresh water springs. The larger the Upper Coralline/Greensand cap the more abundant the fresh water flow.

¹² "Constructing a water reservoir of the capacity of 420 tons, and two fountains, and laying down channels, to increase the water supply in Rabato Gozo", Blue Book 1866 Fol. 51. Even though the quoted entry does not make any reference to the exact whereabouts, this tank seems to be located next to the Gran Castello ravelin.

¹³ "Constructing a water tank of the capacity of 150 tons at Rabato of Gozo", Blue Book 1867, Fol. 51.

adjoining tanks along St. Michael's Bastion. Besides, a second pipeline from the Ghajn Luqin spring at Xagħra was channelled across Marsalforn valley into the former early 17th century grain silos within the Castello, thereby supplementing Rabat with a further 3000 gallons of fresh water in winter and 600 gallons in summer (Gatt, 1934:142). Other improvements included the erection of a fountain along Racecourse Street for the benefit of beasts of burden. Listed 1877 projects absorbed a total investment of £3162.18.2 and required four years to complete.¹⁶ By 1934, the Castello's system of service tanks was feeding Rabat, Kerċem, Għarb, San Lawrenz and Għasri (Gatt, 1934:144). The water reservoirs inside the ditch were eventually phased out of service during the late 20th century, whereas the former grain silos remained in use as service tanks up to March 2004.¹⁷

Crafting an Engaging Experience

The Cittadella Master Plan presents a golden opportunity to evaluate the proposed reuse of the water reservoir referred to above as a visitor centre and the incorporation of the adjoining ditch within a broader vision for the Gran Castello. If this proposal is ever adopted, it is to be constantly borne in mind that a visitor centre is not a substitute for experiencing the Grand Castello itself, which is endowed with a charm and an atmosphere that cannot be captured artificially. Visitor centres are meant to awaken curiosity rather than satisfying it. Unless restrained by some kind of risk for the resource or the visitors, the interpretation of the respective buildings, features and panoramic views is to be provided in situ, with sight of what is interpreted. Likewise, a visitor centre entails the provision of various amenities that add to the visitor's experience. The context of interpretation is as important as the interpretation itself (Uzzel, 1996:15). If the interpretation is excellent but other facilities such as accessibility and sanitary facilities are poor, the prevailing image of the place will most likely take a negative tinge. Good presentation will not compensate for poor facilities,

but good facilities surely enhance presentation.

The Cittadella Master Plan presents an excellent opportunity to forge a strategic plan of action for the Gran Castello. It is up to us all to perform as a mature team, play skilful tackles and net a much deserved winning goal in favour of Gozo's most imposing cultural resource! If we truly believe in our potential, the Gran Castello will inevitably evolve into a remarkable cultural experience that will in turn play a definitive role in promoting Gozo as a distinct, more eco-friendly and engaging leisure destination.

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Godwin Vella heads the Ethnography Unit within Heritage Malta.

¹⁴ The Gran Castello was formally handed over to Civil Government on 1st April 1868.

¹⁵ The Castello's ditch was rented to local farmers for agricultural purposes. National Archives of Malta, Public Works Department 1814-1921, Bundle PW 580, Item No. K, Fols. 161 – 167.

¹⁶ "Effecting works of excavation in search of water, Gozo; converting a part of the ditch of the Gran Castello in Rabato into tanks of the capacity of 6000 tons; and cost of iron pipes for conveying water from Xagħra to Rabato", Blue Books 1878 Fols. H2/3, 1879 Fols. H2/3, 1880 Fols. H4/5, 1881 Fols. H2/3.

¹⁷ Verbal communication with Mr. Lorry Saliba., Water Services Corporation – Gozo Office.

Maltese for *Counterscarp*¹

JOSEPH BEZZINA

Dun Karm Psaila in his important *Dizzjunarju Ingliz–Malti* (Valletta 1947) translates the English word *counterscarp* as *kontraskarpa* (p.274). The counterscarp is the outer wall of a ditch surrounding the fortifications.

The word is repeated by Erin Serracino-Inglott in *Il-Miklem Malti* (vol. V, Valletta 1978, p.163) as well as by Professor Joseph Aquilina in his *Maltese–English Dictionary* (vol. I, Valletta 1987, p.684).

The word *counterscarp* originated as *contrescarpe* in French military treatises in the late sixteenth century and was simultaneously

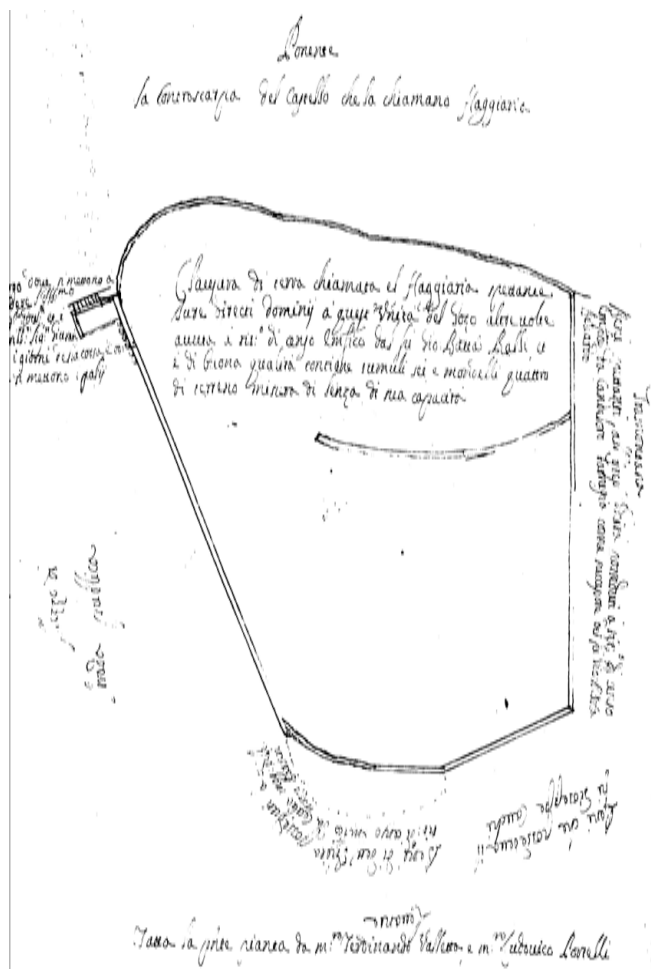
translated in Italian works as *contrescarpa*, from which the Maltese word. Unknown to the compilers of these dictionaries, it did not take long for the Gozitans, and possibly also the Maltese, to find an appropriate Semitic word for the Romance *contrescarpa*.

A document of 1730, preserved at the NAG • the National Archives Gozo Section (NAG, UNIVERSITAS GAUDISII, *Acta et Negotia*, 12 (1730-32) 56r) cannot be clearer as regards the Maltese translation of *counterscarp*. In giving the description of a *clausura* or piece of land, it states that its western section bordered on “la contrascarpa del Castello che la chiamano *Haggarija*.”

The *Haggarija* of the Gozo Citadel is still in place obstructed by the buildings bordering *It-Telgħa tal-Belt*, *Pjazza Indipendenza*, *Triq ir-Repubblika*, and *Triq Ta' Wara s-Sur*.

Aquilina in his *Maltese-English* dictionary (vol. I, Valletta 1987, p.477) rightly describes *il-Haggarija* as a place-name in Rabat-Gozo. Up to the 1930s, the street going up to the Citadel from *Triq Sant'Orsla* was in fact known as *Triq il-Haggarija*. The British rather naively, and wrongly, translated it into *Castle Street* and it became *Triq il-Kastell*.

The Maltese language is richer than many think! The Victoria Council should put right this wrong and save a place-name.



Plan of the *clausura* bordering *il-Haggarija* – reproduced by kind permission of the NAG.

Joseph Bezzina is Head of Department Church History at the University of Malta.

¹ This note fulfills a promise made to the readers of *The Times* (9 Oct 2009: 10).

Recent Activities at the University of Malta - Gozo Campus

JOSEPH CALLEJA

The Summer Activity

The central courtyard of the University of Malta - Gozo Campus was again the venue for its annual summer activity. The event took place on Friday 28 August 2009. An audience of about two hundred persons attended the event.

The activity aimed to pay tribute to Composer Charles Camilleri in an evening of music and song chosen from his wide and varied repertoire. Mro. Camilleri, who died in January 2009, left an incredibly rich legacy of strikingly beautiful and evocative music. The programme included a number of Camilleri's more popular works, featuring some of the songs he wrote for Professor Joe Friggieri's lyrical ballads.

The activity was introduced by Professor Friggieri. The programme started with 'Suite 1 – Dedicated to Charles Camilleri' composed by Mariella Cassar and conducted by Mro. Joseph Debrincat. Sopranos Pamela Agius and Marouska Attard accompanied on the piano by Mro. Stephen Attard interpreted a number of Camilleri's popular songs with lyrics by Joe Friggieri. 'Tibet' was performed on the clarinet by Godfrey Mifsud and Michael Pirota, while Vince Fabri and Corazon Mizzi interpreted a number of Camilleri's songs during the final part of the programme.

Among the guests were His Excellency Mr Anton Tabone, Acting President of Malta, the Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, Professor Lino Briguglio, Director of the Campus and Mrs Doris Camilleri, widow of Mro. Camilleri. The annual activity organised by the University Gozo Centre has become a popular event for many Gozitan and Maltese patrons as well as for tourists.

Record Number of Courses Offered at the University Gozo Campus

In October the University of Malta opened a record number of courses at its campus in Gozo. The courses are:

- Diploma in Commerce (2 courses)
- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Criminology
- Bachelor of Commerce (2 courses)
- Master of Arts in Islands and Small States Studies (2 courses)
- Master of Arts in Hospitaller Studies
- Master in Translation
- Master in Business Administration (Executive)

The course leading to the Master of Arts in Hospitaller Studies, being held for the first time in Gozo, is being offered entirely through the video conference system, where the lectures are being held at the main campus



The summer activity: tribute to Mro Charles Camilleri

in Msida and Gozitan students attend the lecture at the Gozo Campus. The Master in Translation and the Master in Business Administration (Executive) are also being run for the first time in Gozo.

One of the courses leading to the Diploma in Commerce is being part-financed by the European Union European Social Fund under the Operational Programme II- Cohesion Policy 2007 – 2013. Thirty three students are attending this course.

Graduation of University Gozo Campus Students

Eighty eight students who completed courses at the University of Malta - Gozo Campus received their certificates during the recent graduation ceremonies. The courses completed were those leading to Masters of Arts in Islands and Small States Studies (6 students), Diploma in Commerce (14 students) and Diploma in Facilitating Inclusive Education (68 students.)

The students who graduated in Masters in Islands and Small States Studies are: Mario Camilleri, Maryrose Cini, Liliana Curmi, Selma Gatt, Robert Xerri, and Vicky Xuereb.



The Gozitan graduates in MA (ISSS), with Professor Lino Briguglio, Director of the University of Malta - Gozo Campus

The students who graduated in the Diploma in Commerce are: Rodianne Agius, John Attard, Angelo Buttigieg, Sheryl Buttigieg, Antonella Cutajar, Jonathan Debono, Yosef Magro, Nathalie Muscat, John Pace, Carmela Saliba, Christopher Sciortino, Vincent Scicluna, Marquita Theuma and Marvin Zammit.

The students who graduated in the Diploma in Facilitating Inclusive Education are: Mary Anne

Agius, Bernardette Apap, Anna Attard, Elena Attard, Marie Claire Attard, Richard Attard, Rose Marie Attard, Anabelle Axiaq, Joseph Bajada, Marie Georgette Bajada, Mary Rose Bajada, Elaine Bonello, Alison Borg, John Bugeja, Marie Bugeja, Genevieve Buttigieg, Irene Buttigieg, Loretta Buttigieg, Stephanie Calleja, Josephine Camilleri, Maria Stella Caruana, Isabelle Cassar, Catherine Cauchi, Edel Cauchi, Therry Ciangura, Dorianne Cini, Charmaine Cordina, Maria Cordina, Alison Marie Curmi, Natasha Farrugia, Jolene Formosa, Josephine Formosa, Lisa Marie Galea, Maria Gauci, Frances Grech, Jennifer Grech, Joseph Eric Grech, Deborah Grima, Maria Grima, Sonia Hili, Angelique Mercieca, Joanne Mercieca Pace, Johnny Mizzi, Liliana Mizzi, Maria Mizzi, Maria Roberta Muscat, Suzanne Muscat, Sonya Pace, Leanne Piscopo, Mary Louise Piscopo, Alison Portelli, Erika Rapa, Annabel Said, Maria Assunta Said, Francis Saliba, Joanne Sciberras, Carmen Scicluna, Lorraine Sultana, Natasha Sultana, Nicole Sultana, Antoinette Tabone, Christian Tabone, Mary Rose Teuma, Josephine Anna Thewma, Sue Ellen Vella, Charlene Xuereb, Vicky Ann Xuereb and Marthese Zammit.

Works at the Gozo Campus

Two new lecture rooms are planned to be built at the University Gozo Campus to accommodate the increasing number of students following University courses in Gozo.

Moreover, additional space is being allocated to the Climate Change and Atmospheric Pollution Research Programme which is located within the University Gozo Campus. The Programme is currently expanding considerably.

A completely new set of instrumentation to Global Atmospheric Watch standard is being installed at the Giordan Lighthouse and at the UGC to accommodate five persons and a new maintenance laboratory. The new facilities, including the instrumentation, are being supported by the European Regional Development Fund.

Joseph Calleja is Administrator of the University of Malta - Gozo Campus.



The Gozo Observer is published twice a year by the University of Malta - Gozo Campus. It contains articles relating to all aspects of life in Gozo, including culture, education, business, arts and literature. Those wishing to submit articles for inclusion in the Gozo Observer should contact the Editor of the magazine (contact details below).

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