

# TOURISM IN GOZO

POLICIES, PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS



Edited by

**Lino Briguglio**

Proceedings of the seminar "Tourism in Gozo"  
held at Hotel Ta' Ċenċ, Gozo, on 28 January 1994.  
Organised by the University of Malta Gozo Centre  
in collaboration with  
the Ministry for Gozo and Löwenbräu Malta Ltd.

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# CONTENTS

## **Preface**

Lino Briguglio ..... v

## **Introduction**

Peter Serracino Inglott ..... 1

## **The Gozo Ministry and Tourism Development in Gozo**

Anton Tabone ..... 3

## **The National Tourism Organisation and Tourism in Gozo**

Michael Soler ..... 9

## **A Profile of the Foreign Visitor to Gozo**

Leslie Vella ..... 13

## **Gozo as an Off-Season Tourist Destination**

Graziella Pullicino ..... 27

## **The Economic Impact of International Tourism on the Gozitan Economy**

Lino Briguglio ..... 39

## **The Environmental Impact of Tourism in Gozo**

Patrick Schembri ..... 50

## **The Impact of Tourism on the Gozitan Archaeological Heritage**

Anthony Bonanno ..... 57

## **Cultural Tourism Development in Gozo: Lessons from Malta**

Jeremy Boissevain ..... 65

## **The Golden Hordes on the Isle of Calypso**

Joseph Inguanez ..... 73

## **Tourism Development in Gozo - A Sustainable Approach**

Anthony Ellul ..... 79

## **Proposals by Four Gozo Hoteliers**

Paolo Bartolozzi ..... 90

Victor J. Borg ..... 92

Joseph P. Portelli ..... 94

Sammy Rapa ..... 97

## **Epilogue**

Paul Debattista ..... 99

**Short Bio-notes about the Contributors** ..... 101



*The opening session of the seminar "Tourism in Gozo" during which the papers included in this book were presented. From left to right: Professor Lino Briguglio, The Hon. Anton Tabone, Dr. Paul Debattistà and Professor Peter Serracino Inglott.*

## **Preface**

Tourism related activities generate considerable income and employment in the economy of the Maltese Islands. They are also important sources of foreign exchange earnings. At the same time, such activities create man-induced pressures on the environment, which may have irreversible repercussions in the long run. They may also have a negative impact on the social relations and cultures of the host countries.

The purpose of this book is to present, in one volume, a number of papers on tourism related policies and on the various impacts of tourism on the island of Gozo. The papers were originally presented during a seminar "Tourism in Gozo", which was held at Hotel Ta' Ċenċ, Gozo on January 28, 1994. The seminar was organised by the Gozo Centre of the University of Malta, with the collaboration of the Ministry for Gozo. It was sponsored by Löwenbräu Malta Ltd.

The book is introduced by Prof. Peter Serracino Inglott, Rector of the University of Malta and concluded by Dr. Paul Debattista, General Manager of Löwenbräu. They both explain why their institutions supported the organisation of the seminar on tourism in Gozo.

During the seminar, eleven papers on different aspects of tourism, were presented, and these are all included in the book. The first two papers deal with tourism policies. The Hon. Anton Tabone, Minister for Gozo, describes the role of his Ministry in tourism development in Gozo. Mr. Michael Soler, chairman of the National Tourism Organisation of Malta, explains the policy of his organisation with regard to Gozo.

The next two papers deal with the special characteristics of the Gozitan tourist. Mr. Leslie Vella, who is the Research and Planning Manager at the National Tourism Organisation of Malta, gives a profile of the foreign visitor to Gozo, whereas Ms. Graziella Pullicino, who is a research executive at METCO, writes about off-season tourism in Gozo.

The next five papers were written by University scholars, and deal

## *Preface*

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with different tourism impacts. The editor of this book covers the economic impact, Professor Patrick Schembri discusses the environmental impact, Professor Jeremy Boissevain and Dr. Joseph Inguanez write on the cultural and social impact, and Professor Anthony Bonanno assesses the archaeological impact. These five papers are followed by a study authored by Mr. Anthony Ellul, who is project planner at the Malta Government Department of Tourism. Mr. Ellul's paper deals with sustainable tourism development, and touches upon all the impacts discussed in the previous five papers.

The book is concluded by short presentations by four Gozitan hoteliers, who are Mr. Paolo Bartolozzi, Mr. Victor J. Borg, Mr. Joseph P. Portelli and Mr. Sammy Rapa. These presentations represent the views of practitioners in the tourist industry in Gozo, and contain proposals aimed at enhancing Gozo as a tourist destination.

I would like to thank Professor Peter Serracino Inglott, Rector of the University of Malta, for his support in the organisation of the seminar and the publication of this book. Thanks are also due to the Hon. Anton Tabone, Minister for Gozo, for his interest and help in activities organised by the University Gozo Centre and to Mr. Paul Debattista, General Manager of Löwenbräu Malta Ltd., who sponsored the seminar, and who took an active part in its proceedings.

I would also like to acknowledge the support for the seminar and for this publication, extended by Professor Salvino Busuttil, Director-General of the Foundation for International Studies.

This publication also benefited from financial assistance by the management of five hotels in Gozo, namely Andar Hotel, Calypso Hotel, Mġarr Hotel, Ta' Ċenċ Hotel and Cornucopia Hotel.

I am very grateful to Mrs. Maryrose Vella, whose assistance in the preparations for the seminar and in the editing and production of this book was vital.

Finally, I would like to thank the authors of the papers, for their contribution to the seminar and to this book.

**Lino Briguglio**

# **Introduction**

**Peter Serracino Inglott**

*Rector, University of Malta*

In this introduction, I shall briefly explain why the Gozo Centre was set up, and discuss how the objectives of the Centre relate to the theme of this book.

The aim of the Gozo Centre is not only to organise University courses in Gozo so that, as much as possible, those Gozitans who find it very difficult to attend University courses in Malta, are given an opportunity to study at University level in Gozo. The Centre also aims at creating, in Gozo, a total University presence, with its three dimensions, namely teaching, research and cultural development.

I was never in agreement with Cardinal Newman, who held that the function of a University is only to teach, and that research should be left to Academies. But I agree with the Cardinal's German opponents, who held that teaching cannot attain a satisfactory level, unless fertilised by research.

On the other hand, I agree with Cardinal Newman that the main objective of a University is to provide an environment conducive to reflection, where students can cut themselves off from the routine of daily life, and with suitable means, are enabled to meditate in depth and liberate their imagination.

In this regard, Gozo has a number of advantages when compared to the island of Malta. Those same features which attract quality tourists to Gozo, are also favourable to certain aspects of university life. A quality tourist is probably a person who wishes to explore a culture which is different from his own, and to mix with people with a different philosophy and a different way of life from his own. However, he would not probably be able to do so, unless he is helped



by others to understand and explore the symbols and ceremonies, the work and the play of the host country. In this regard, the presence of a University Centre in Gozo, could be conducive even to attracting quality tourists to Gozo.

For this reason, the University Gozo Centre aims to organise not only teaching courses, but also research activity and communication of research findings. This was in fact the purpose of the seminar "Tourism in Gozo", during which the papers included in this book were presented and discussed. Meetings of this type need not focus only on Gozitan affairs. Discussion on any topic during a meeting held in Gozo, could be enriched by the fact that it takes place within a Gozitan environment. When the Centre is further developed, and has its own premises, it will be possible also to hold international meetings, under the auspices of the University or the Foundation for International Studies of the University.

The third dimension of a University, namely contributing to culture, is also conducive to development. In this regard the fact that Malta has a University is something desirable, not only because it offers teaching, research and cultural facilities in Malta, permitting the Maltese to obtain them without having to go abroad, but also because it creates a store of expertise which the country can use in all spheres of life. The University Gozo Centre is also a means of facilitating the provision of these facilities, first and foremost for the Gozitans themselves, and also for foreigners, including tourists.

Most probably the provision of teaching courses will remain the main objective of the Gozo Centre. I hope that such courses will take various forms, including summer courses, which would attract foreigners to the island of Gozo.

I have no doubt that this book, to which a number of University members have contributed, will make an important contribution to the literature on tourism in Gozo, and will shed light on a subject which is becoming increasingly important in Malta and Gozo. I also trust that this publication will help Gozitans to look at themselves through the eyes of others. This is always a useful exercise in a University environment.

# **The Ministry for Gozo and Tourism in Gozo**

**Anton Tabone**

*Minister for Gozo*

When I was delivering the opening speech of a Seminar on "Tourism in Gozo - What Future?" organised by the Centre for Social Research of the Social Action Movement, held at this same hotel on the 9 June 1989, I said that the conference was a proof that Gozo was no longer the backwater of the Maltese Islands and that the island was moving forward at a good and sustained pace. I said that in a couple of years Gozo had captured the attention of developers, planners and environmentalists and that everyone had come to recognise the potential of Gozo in tourism. The island could therefore look forward to a prosperous future.

It can be said that these last five years have been pleasant in retrospect, as Gozo has achieved a high level of development. Tourism has certainly been one of the main contributory factors to the prosperity that is today being enjoyed by the people of Gozo.

For Gozo, tourism is undoubtedly a very important sector of the economy and its evolution has a special interest for the island. However, tourism is not a specific sector in itself and many other fields of action like transport, culture, environment and utility services are involved in its management and development. In fact, my Ministry has been implementing an interdisciplinary and integrated plan in line with the belief expounded in the Tourism Master Plan that "Gozo offers the country (Malta) its main opportunity to create a quality resort and attract a higher spending and different type of tourist".

I shall not be giving an exhaustive list of initiatives and actions taken, but it is important to mention the main policy measures and support structures that were developed during these last years, the

results thereof achieved to date and what other measures still have to be taken.

## **MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURAL WORKS**

Improved transportation access to Gozo was one of my Ministry's main direct strategic objectives in the tourism sector. In fact increased berthing facilities at Mgarr, additions to the ferry fleet, an increased and extended ferry schedule and the introduction of a helicopter service - which is to be further improved - all helped to make Gozo more easily accessible to the visitor.

The island's road network has been considerably upgraded; the number of coaches has been substantially increased, landscaping works have been undertaken all over the island; telecommunications services have been completely modernised; the electricity supply has been rendered more reliable and stable; the sewage system has been extended practically to all the localities and it has also been extensively improved.

In spite of all the improvements made in the sewerage network, however, the system remains an old one and action is therefore now being taken to implement a Master Plan for the island whereby two of the three outfalls that discharge into the sea will be eliminated, a purification plant will be built and raw liquid waste will no longer be piped into the sea - which is and will remain one of the island's main tourist attractions.

As for solid waste, measures are being actively taken to set up a transfer station as a sustainable means of domestic and industrial waste management in Gozo. In this way, the inconveniences caused by the refuse dump at Xaghra in between two of the major tourist resorts on the island will be done away with.

Unfortunately, demand for water last summer outstripped supply, which had therefore to be better managed and controlled. This substantial increase in demand for water which is the result of a flourishing tourist industry and of a big leap in the quality of life of



*Improved transportation access to Gozo is one of the Gozo Ministry's main direct strategic objectives in the tourism sector.*

the local people necessitates tapping new sources of supply. A cost-benefit analysis has in fact been carried out to establish the best means of additional supplies. The study is being considered and a decision should be taken before long.

### **FACILITIES**

The Tourism Master Plan says that "Gozo will be more expensive in the future than Malta and will attract tourists looking for facilities rather than night life."

In this regard it has been the accepted official policy to promote the regular upgrading of existing accommodation, to assess continuously the potential viability of new higher-notches accommodation provision and to encourage the setting up of high-quality restaurants. The outcome of this policy has been successful. So much so that

there are, in Gozo alone, 594 beds in 5 star and 4 star hotels, 40 in First Class Guesthouses, 207 in Class A1 and Class A Farmhouses and Villas with pool, 154 other beds in the same categories as farmhouses and villas but without pool, 254 in Class A1 and Class A holiday apartments, bringing the total of licensed high-quality beds in Gozo to 1249. I would remark here that tourist accommodation in farmhouses also gives the Gozitan product a distinct feature from that of Malta. It goes to show that the rural aspect of Gozo, which is certainly considerably less urbanised than Malta, is being properly tapped. In Comino, there is a 4 star hotel with 280 beds which is also being upgraded. As for high quality restaurants, there are 806 covers in the top two categories of catering establishments.

Tourist facilities, however, are not restricted to beds and covers. Aware of the lack of adequate facilities on the island, the Ministry for Gozo had undertaken in earnest the setting up of a Yacht Marina at Mgarr where today there are 92 serviced berths on floating pontoons.

I must also mention the building of the Gozo Sports Complex which, in its four years of existence, has been the venue of international activities and has also provided visiting tourists with a facility of a very high standard where they can exercise their favourite sport.

## ATTRACTIONS

The Gozo Ministry has also embarked on an extensive programme of rehabilitation, protection and preservation of important historical and heritage sites, monuments and buildings which abound all over the island. It would be inappropriate to list all such works and measures. However, the Ċittadella certainly deserves a cursory mention. Ongoing restoration works, cleaning of large volumes of debris and other material, floodlighting, extension of the opening hours of Museums, opening of a crafts centre, of craft workshops, of refreshment outlets to service visitors, and interpretative facilities are all part of a comprehensive programme to make the Ċittadella an attractive heritage site.

It is often rightly said that the high quality of Gozo's natural environment constitutes the island's main asset in tourism. However, the characteristics of its people, their local culture and way of life, the traditions, their food, their arts and crafts are no less attractive. Thus it is another strategic objective of my Ministry to preserve, promote and develop the island's distinctiveness and identity by encouraging and helping in all possible ways the actors in all those spheres. Here again, it would be boring to give an exhaustive list of projects, programmes and initiatives.

But it would be amiss not to make a reference to the School of Arts, the School of Drama, the School of Music, the School of Building and the Centre for Tourism Studies which were all opened these last years and which contribute to the conservation and strengthening of local traditional talents. In this regard, I should also mention the assistance given by my Ministry over the years for the holding of arts and crafts fairs and exhibitions, concerts and lyric operas, folkshows and theatrical plays, feasts and festivals.

All these fall within the Ministry's operational strategy to retain the island's identity and characteristics by promoting the local heritage. At the same time they provide entertainment and attractions to tourists, complementing in no small way the attractions of the island's natural environment.

In Gozo, we are fortunate to have perceived in time the importance of the environment on our own quality of life and on tourism. Gozitans are proud that they still have the opportunity to offer the people from the great consumer societies their island's unspoilt environment and the possibility of being alone in the sole company of nature.

In fact, this is one of the great joys of tourists in Gozo and it has become very common to see foreign visitors strolling along our coast, cliffs, ridges, valleys and fields. It is therefore one of my Ministry's aims to create a network of parkways and coastal and inland rights of ways for footpaths. These will give tourists a better opportunity to explore and enjoy the marvels of Gozo which make it truly irresistible.

## MARKETING

All the above having been said, no doubt should be left that we must now promote the image of Gozo as an island of excellence in standards and quality.

Quoting again from the Tourism Master Plan "Gozo should continue to be marketed as a separate destination within the Maltese Islands". This would help to bring Gozo to the fore but would also give the Maltese Islands a larger dimension. Gozo, it is often claimed, is Malta's opportunity in tourism and should therefore be placed in the forefront in the drive for quality. As such, as the Master Plan itself recommends: "Gozo marketing and promotion should be carried out using different advertisement, newspapers and journals than Malta's campaigns". This should be the best strategy to maximise returns for the benefit of Gozo in particular and of Malta in general. It has to be clearly understood that in tourism, Gozo is Malta's best asset and the proper development of that asset is of great benefit to the national good.

Regrettably, however, a distinct marketing campaign for Gozo is not being implemented as one would expect and wish. Promotion and marketing remain in the hands of the National Tourism Organisation in Malta and there is very small input, if any, from the industry on the island.

It seems that the best promotion of Gozo are the day-trippers who, on coming to Gozo, realise that a visit to Malta is not complete without a stay in Gozo.

This however does not absolve the National Tourism Organisation of its duties to give Gozo the promotion it needs and deserves. A local Organisation within the national one will certainly be of great help to the latter and of great benefit to Gozo. Working together, under the principle of subsidiarity, ensures a prosperous future for Gozo and its people.

# **NTOM Policy on Tourism in Gozo**

**Michael Soler**

*Chairman, National Tourism Organisation, Malta*

The National Tourism Organisation does not have a specific marketing plan for Gozo. Part of the reason for this is geography and awareness - not Gozo's, but the location of our archipelago.

Although we have made tremendous progress in creating market awareness of our islands in Europe and in North America, the fact remains that many people still do not know where the Maltese islands are.

On a visit to England, not so long ago, I told someone I came from Malta. "Isn't it next to Hong Kong?" he asked. He was referring to Macao.

The point is that in our major source markets there is still ignorance of the whereabouts of our destination. Consequently, we feel it would be detrimental to our national tourism interests to market our islands separately.

Having said that, however, Gozo - together with Comino - is an essential part of our national tourism offer.

We all know what Gozo can offer to the tourist - and not only in natural beauty but also for leisure, history, culture and its very own traditions.

And we certainly do stress these unique selling propositions in our international advertisement campaigns and promotional literature.

Unlike Malta, Gozo is - and is perceived abroad as being - greener,



more rural and generally more laid-back. Malta is 20 per cent built-up and has a much higher population density than Gozo.

For several years now we have highlighted these differences between the islands in our promotional material, and we sell Gozo differently from Malta. This positioning has worked.

Tangible ways in which we at the NTOM promote the island include a Gozo-only brochure, a Gozo poster and we always mention the island in the Organisation's printed material.

Additionally, at the major international trade shows abroad such as ITB in Berlin and the World Travel Market in London - we allocate a part of our national stand to Gozo and Gozitan-based companies.

When the NTOM hosts visiting journalists, television crews and agents on either familiarisation or inspection tours, a trip to Gozo is always included in their itinerary.

We have recently taken up the habit of having press groups based in Gozo and organising a day visit to Malta. Moreover, the NTOM actively supports foreign-based Gozo-only specialist tour operators.

As you can see, Gozo is definitely promoted internationally, but as a unique part of the overall Malta product.

Tourism as we all know has both positive and negative effects on our national economy, the infrastructure and the environment. I don't intend to dwell on either the economic or infrastructural aspects of tourism - I trust we are all aware of these.

As for the environment, no one can deny that Malta has been 'altered', not to say damaged. The recent spate of mindless defacing of our archaeological and historical monuments does not help, but it does make us more conscious of the fact that our heritage, our principal attraction, requires more protection.

Fortunately several of the problems that Malta suffers from have not spilled over to Gozo. The channel that separates our two islands



*Gozo - an island of scenic beauty*

has been an effective barrier for the more unpleasant and negative aspects.

This natural barrier has other plus points as well. It has allowed Gozo to develop at its own pace and with the development of Malta in hindsight. Everyone who comes here agrees the island is more pleasant than Malta. It is indeed an island of calm and relaxation, just as the NTOM's brochure says.

It is this difference, this uniqueness, coupled with its charm, that we must preserve for Gozo's tourism industry to be a success.

One must also bear in mind that most of our visitors come from the large urban conglomerations of Europe, and yearn for the atmosphere and lifestyle Gozo can provide. Let's keep it that way.

But that is not to say tourism should not be developed further here in Gozo. It should, but with forethought and imagination.

Essentially we must continue to flatten the seasonal tourist flow curve from Malta to Gozo. In the peak summer months there are no problems in the number of excursionists who come here for the day, although overcrowding and bottlenecks do occur. However, during the winter and shoulder months the numbers drop quite dramatically. Therefore we must entice more people to visit Gozo at these times of year.

This can be done by further marketing the island as a quality, eco-friendly destination.

With the increasing interest in green tourism, the off-season attractions are plentiful. Besides the archaeological and historical sites Gozo has its villages and countryside to offer. And without huge capitalisation costs, outdoor activities that do not damage the environment can be developed – for instance, rambling, mountain-biking, horse riding and four-wheel drive safaris on clearly defined tracks. Gozo can offer adventure and a return to the outdoor life.

Coincidentally, most of these activities appeal to the more upscale visitor and not to the Ds and Es of this world. They are also perfect for attracting incentive trips to the island, along with conferences.

At the end of the day the future of tourism to Gozo rests on our ability to preserve the agro/fishing community and the control of overpowering volume of travellers in peak season particularly day trippers.

The emphasis should be not to count those whom we manage to reach, but to continue to develop an offer which will satisfy those who really count.

NTOM will therefore not focus to sell Gozo more but rather to sell Gozo in the right way in the interest of the sustainability of the tourism industry in Gozo.

# **A Profile of the Foreign Visitor to Gozo**

**Leslie Vella**

*Research and Planning Manager, NTOM*

The island of Gozo is a special component of the tourism product of the Maltese islands, in that it presents a unique and unspoilt product, which is sufficiently different from what countries neighbouring Malta can offer. Due to the constraints posed by isolation and small size, Gozo has managed to retain a lot of what Malta has lost to touristic, industrial and domestic housing development.

Because of its appeal and its proximity to Malta, which attracts in excess of one million tourists per annum, Gozo attracts a substantial volume of visitors and tourists, both Maltese and foreign throughout the year.

Foreigners constitute a sizeable share of traveller inflow to Gozo and travel to the island either as tourists on a Gozo only holiday or as part of a two centre holiday with Malta, or as day trippers on organised tours from Malta.

## **STATISTICS**

Unfortunately, most tourism statistics for the Maltese islands only provide data on a national basis, with the result that regional data is almost non-existent at an official level. This makes it very difficult when it comes to quantifying the importance of tourism within a specific area such as Gozo.

Nevertheless, a destination like Gozo needs to be in possession of a variety of data to enable serious planning to take place. It is very difficult to attempt planning for the future when the present frame-

work is very fragmented and almost non-existent.

Notwithstanding these problems, some information is available, particularly as a result of on going and other ad hoc research carried out by the National Tourism Organisation and the Department of Tourism.

### **FOCUS**

This paper will focus specifically on the international traveller to Gozo placing a special emphasis on the international tourist - that is, the foreign traveller who spends at least one overnight stay on the island.

At this point, however, it is important to depart from the premise that the data which will be presented is merely indicative, particularly that data concerning volumes. It is meant to present a broad framework rather than facts which are to be taken verbatim.

What is the source of the data? During 1993, the National Tourism Organisation carried out seven sample surveys of foreign travellers to Malta. These surveys were targeted at the major nationality groups. Two waves of respondents were sampled during off-peak months and summer months in order to account for seasonal variations.

Using the data generated from these surveys as a base, this paper will attempt to create a profile of the foreign tourist to Gozo.

### **THE SUPPLY SIDE**

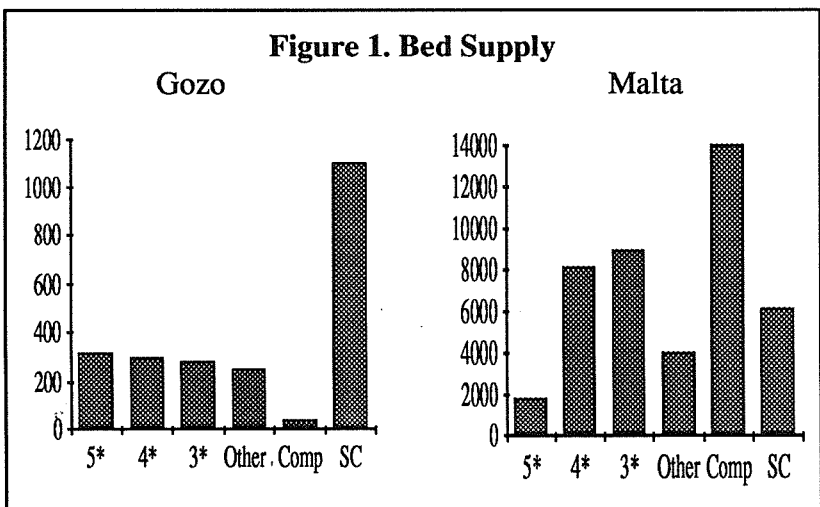
Prior to this, however, it would be appropriate to discuss the nature of present day tourism supply and demand on the island. On the supply side, data supplied by the Hotels and Catering Establishments Board (Figure 1) indicates that there are 2,250 licensed beds on Gozo. One half of these beds are in hotel-type accommodation and one half are in self-catering accommodation. This is however, only the tip of the iceberg.

It is a well known fact that there is a much bigger amount of plant in the form of unlicensed apartments which is used for tourism purposes: be it international or domestic tourism. Most unlicensed accommodation is presumably utilised by domestic tourism originating from Malta; however there definitely remains a sizeable quantity of beds which are utilised by foreign tourists and which are unlicensed.

Given this scenario, the accommodation sector in Gozo is distinctly different from that for the whole of Malta. It is evident that self-catering accommodation plays a very important role, and accounts for at least 50% and probably even up to 80% of the total bedstock accessible to foreign tourists. In the case of Malta, self-catering, although traditionally a very important component of the accommodation sector, has now declined in importance, and hosts less than 40% of nights stayed.

On the hotel front there is also a substantial variation from the Malta product. Almost three out of every ten hotel beds on Gozo are in 5 star hotels while another one in four beds are in 4 star hotels. This means that half the hotel bedstock in Gozo is in quality accommodation.

3 star hotels, which form a substantial component of the Maltese



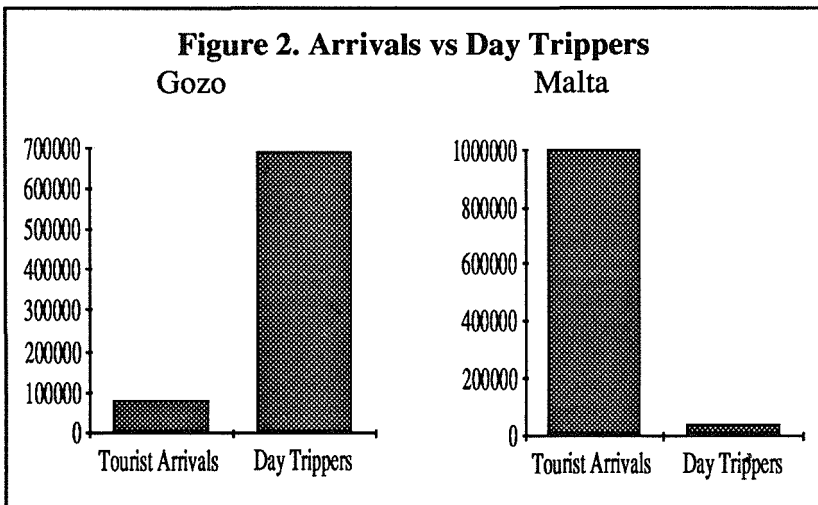
accommodation sector, account for 24% of Gozitan hotel bedstock. On the other hand, tourist complexes are almost non-existent on Gozo, whereas on Malta they supply 14,000 beds or 38% of hotel bedstock.

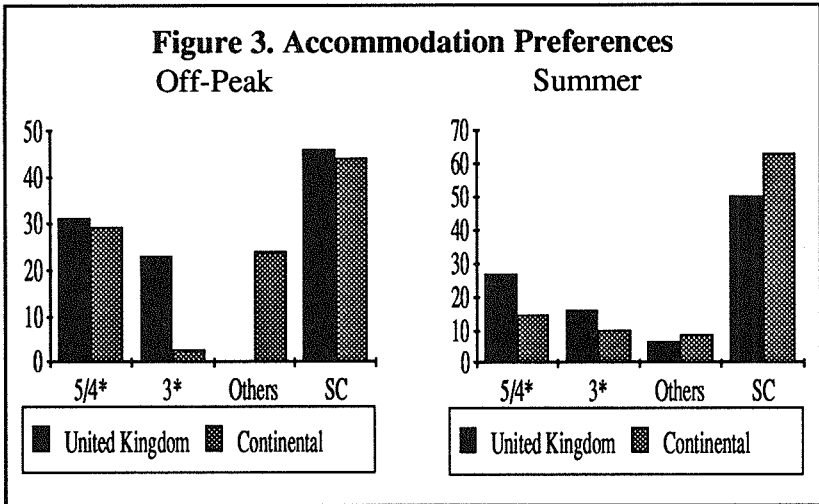
### THE DEMAND SIDE

After this brief glance at the supply side a few estimates of foreign traveller demand will follow. On the basis of the research it emerges that up to 690,000 of the one million tourists who stay in Malta go for an excursion to Gozo in the form of a day trip (Figure 2).

This makes Gozo a much bigger excursionist destination than Malta. The vast majority of excursionists in Malta which number around 50,000 annually are cruise passengers who undertake a sightseeing tour of the island. In the case of Gozo, however, the large base of tourists already holidaying in Malta is instrumental in leading to such a high number of excursionists. Gozo has a very efficient system which is aimed at catering for day trippers although the island does tend to become overcrowded at peak times particularly when a large number of Maltese also make a crossing to the island.

Beside these day trippers, Gozo also attracts bona fide tourists who spend at least one overnight stay on the island. An accurate esti-





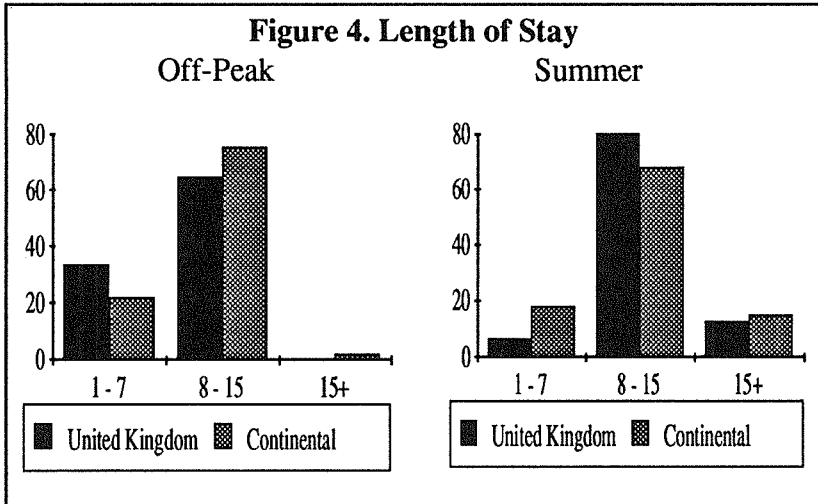
mate of the number of tourists staying on Gozo is hard to come by. However, indications from the surveys suggest a figure of foreign tourists in the region of 80,000 per annum, equivalent to 7.5% of total tourist arrivals to the Maltese Islands. The seasonality of tourism to Gozo follows that of Malta very closely with the exception of the four winter months of November to February where there is much less tourism due to the risk of isolation carried by the possibility of bad weather affecting ferry crossings.

The summer months account for a substantial portion of Gozitan tourism, but there is also a respectable volume of spring and autumn tourism both from the United Kingdom and the European continent.

### **SURVEY RESULTS**

*Accommodation Preferences.* Figure 3 shows a breakdown of the accommodation preferences of tourists staying in Gozo broken down by the main nationality groups and season. There is a reasonable quantity of good quality accommodation users amongst British tourists all year round and Continental off-peak tourists - in the case of continental summer tourists the share is substantially lower. Self-





catering accommodation including complexes, is more popular during the summer than during off-peak months for both British and Continental tourists to Gozo. The share of medium quality hotel accommodation hovers between 20% and 30% in all cases.

*Length of Stay.* Figure 4 supplies some indications about the length of stay characteristics of tourists holidaying in Gozo. In the case of stays of up to seven days, off-peak tourists, both British and Continental, tend to have a higher tendency for this shorter holiday. There are suggestions however that fewer British summer tourists to Gozo opt for this sort of arrangement.

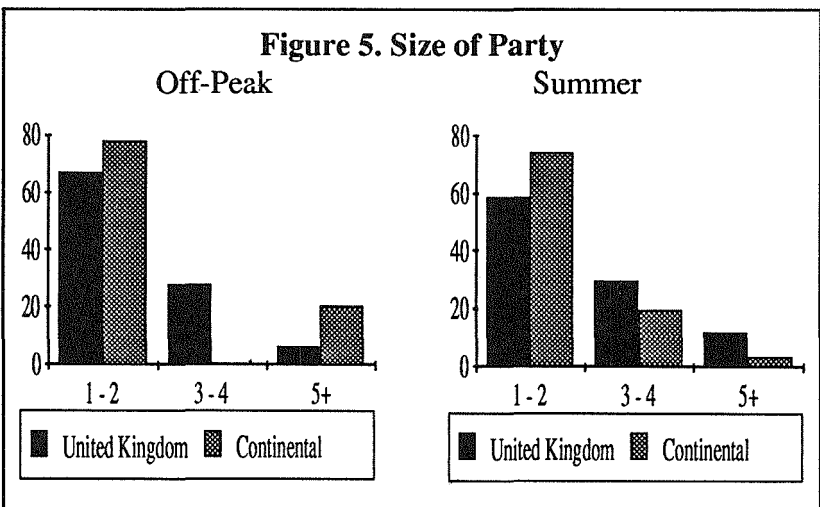
The bulk of Gozo's tourists opt for a holiday of between 8 and 15 days duration, as is evident for the British and Continental data for both time periods. Finally, whereas off-peak travellers of all nationalities do not tend to stay for more than 15 days, there is a substantial segment of summer travellers - around one in every six to be precise - that stay in excess of a fortnight.

*Size of Party.* Figure 5 gives information on the size of party characteristics of the Gozo tourist. Around one half of British off-peak and summer tourists holiday in Gozo as couples, while around seven out of ten continental off-peak and summer tourists to Gozo travel

as couples. Families composed of three to four persons account for 30% of British off-peak and summer tourists to Gozo. Around 20% of continental summer tourists belong to this grouping, while there is a negligible amount of continental off-peak family travel to the island. Groups of more than five people account for between 5% and 12% of British year-round and Continental summer Gozo tourists, but there is evidence to suggest a stronger share of continental off-peak group business that could be as high as 22% of continental traffic during this time of the year.

*Travel Arrangements.* The travel arrangements made by tourists travelling to a destination are a very good indication of the type of travellers that the destination attracts. Data relating to this area is presented in Figure 6. In the case of continental tourists there seems to be a ratio of one independent traveller for every three who organised their Gozo holiday through a travel agent. A similar ratio applies to the British summer tourist to Gozo. However, up to one half of British off-peak travellers to Gozo may be independent travellers making their own arrangements. This might be linked to repeat business by experienced tourists, an aspect which is examined in detail in Figure 7.

As in the case of Malta, continental off-peak tourists are mostly on their first visit to the destination. The continental summer visitor

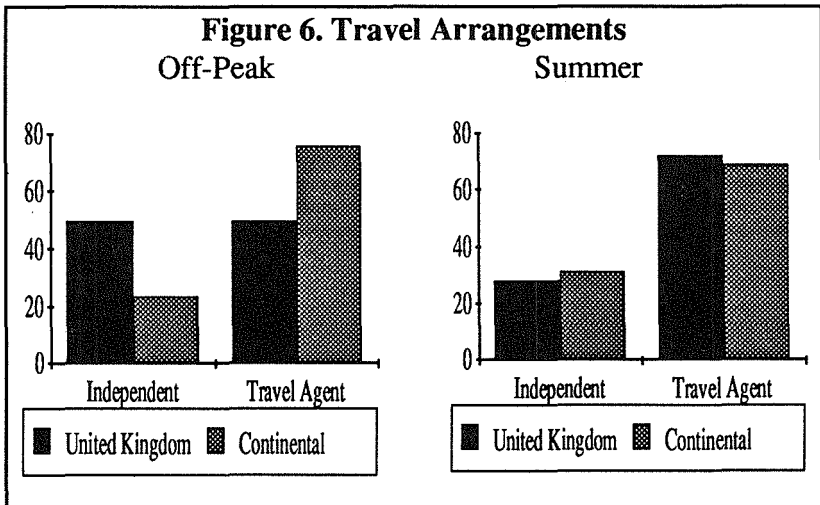


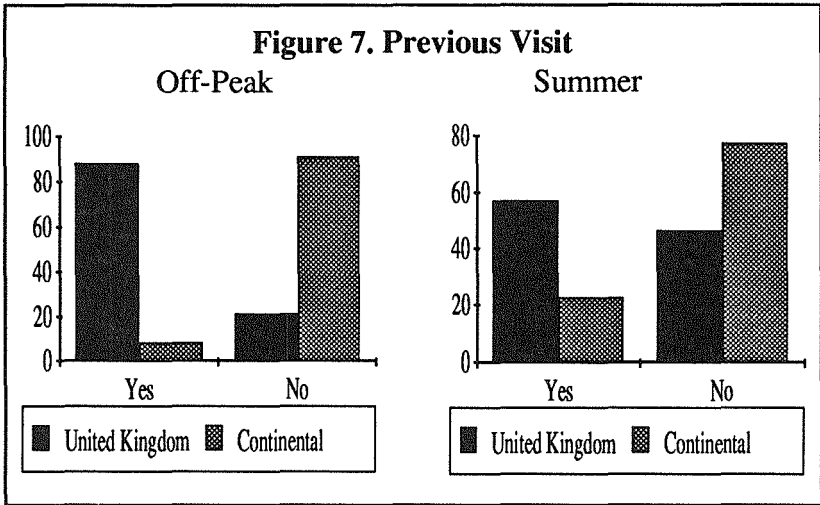
is still predominantly a first-time visitor to Gozo although almost one in four continental summer tourists claim to have been to the island on a previous occasion.

As is to be expected, there is a higher level of British repeat business with 80% of British off-peak visitors having already been to Gozo before:- 44% of them between twice and four times and a further 28% five times or more! Well over one half of British summer tourists to Gozo are repeat visitors but 44% are on their first holiday on the island.

*Main Annual Holiday.* Figure 8 gives information on whether the Gozo holiday was respondent's main annual holiday or a secondary holiday. In the case of both British and Continental visitors, the summer trip to Gozo was the main annual holiday for around 90% of travellers. In the off-peak period, however, a substantial 39% of continental tourists to Gozo and 33% of British tourists to Gozo were having a vacation which was not their main annual holiday. This is a very clear indication of the quality of tourist that the destination attracts because it is a very particular type of client who can afford to travel for a second or third time during the year.

*Purpose of Visit.* The purpose of the visit to Gozo is examined in the data presented in Figure 9. Most tourists go to Gozo for holiday

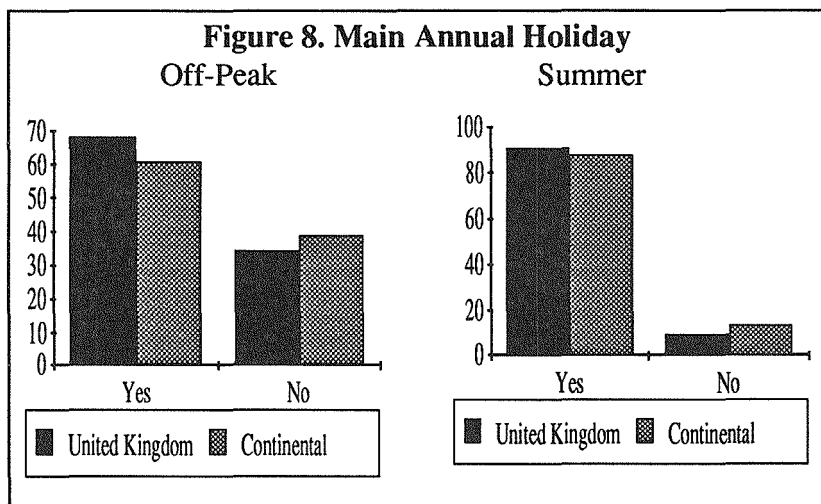




purposes, while very few go on business trips. There is a reasonable amount of British year round VFR traffic (visiting friends and relatives) which also exists to a certain extent with continental summer tourists. A few continental summer tourists claim that their Gozo holiday is for study purposes. In the case of continental off-peak travellers to the island, however, this segment may account for as much as 18% of total visitor inflow.

*Motivation and Influence.* The research also sought to obtain details on the motivational aspects of travellers to Gozo. Table 1 (see appendix) gives details on the reasons given by British and Continental summer visitors holidaying in Gozo. The agreeable climate emerges as the strongest reason together with the novelty of the destination. The effect of a previous visit is more strongly identified by British summer visitors than by continentals, but recommendation by friends and relatives is listed by the continentals but not the British summer tourists.

Table 2 (see appendix) supplies the same data for off-peak tourists to Gozo. Climate and novelty remain the main reasons for British off-peak visitors. The effect of a previous visit is also identified as an important reason by British off-peak travellers to Gozo, while the importance attached to the island's history and culture suggests a more discerning type of traveller. In the case of continental



off-peak travellers it is possibly surprising to note that the main reason for visiting Gozo is the fact that English is spoken – although one may link this with the high number of study related trips mentioned earlier. Recommendation by friends and relatives remains important with continental off-peak travellers as well as Gozo's history and culture which was not identified by continental summer travellers. The novelty of the destination and its agreeable climate, although listed, do not feature highly in continental off-peak Gozo travellers' list of reasons for opting to holiday on the island.

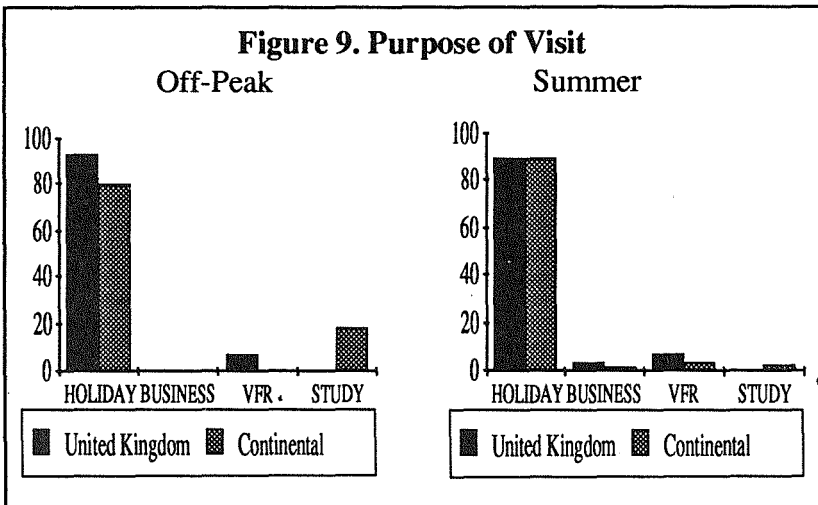
While these last two sets of data discussed the reasons given by survey respondents as to why they had selected Gozo as their holiday destination, a further question attempted to uncover the means which actually led them to think about Gozo as a destination worth visiting.

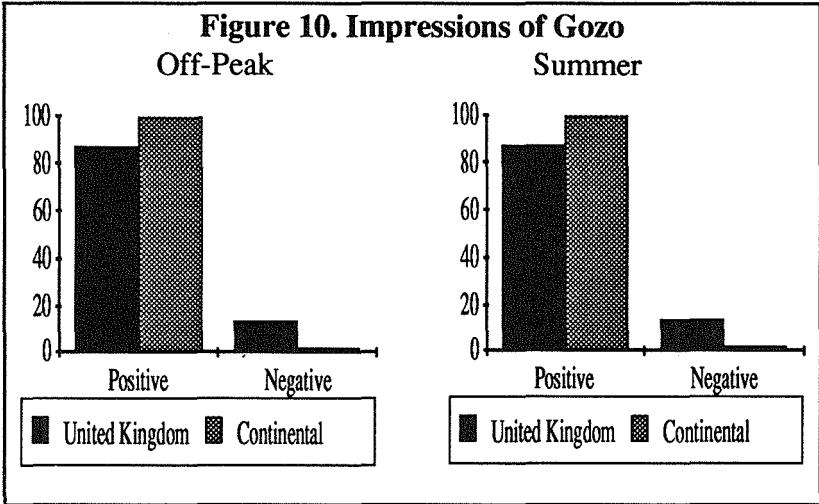
Table 3 (see appendix) supplies data about the means that influenced the choice of Gozo for British and Continental summer visitors. The most important media identified by the two distinct groups are recommendation by friends and relatives and tour operator brochures. Travel agent recommendation is also listed as having been instrumental in selecting Gozo. Travel guides are identified by both groups although much more strongly by the continentals, who also

give a vote of confidence to the tourist office literature on the island.

Table 4 (see appendix) supplies the same data for British and Continental off-peak travellers. In the case of the British, recommendation and tour-operator brochures are the main factors that influence the choice of Gozo. For the continental off-peak traveller recommendation by friends and relatives is a very important influencing factor but it is very interesting that tour guides influence one-fifth of continental off-peak tourists to the island: these are people who have decided to visit Gozo specifically on reading a travel guide. Tour-operator brochures, and to a lesser extent advertising, were also identified by continental off-peak tourists as being influential in their choice of Gozo.

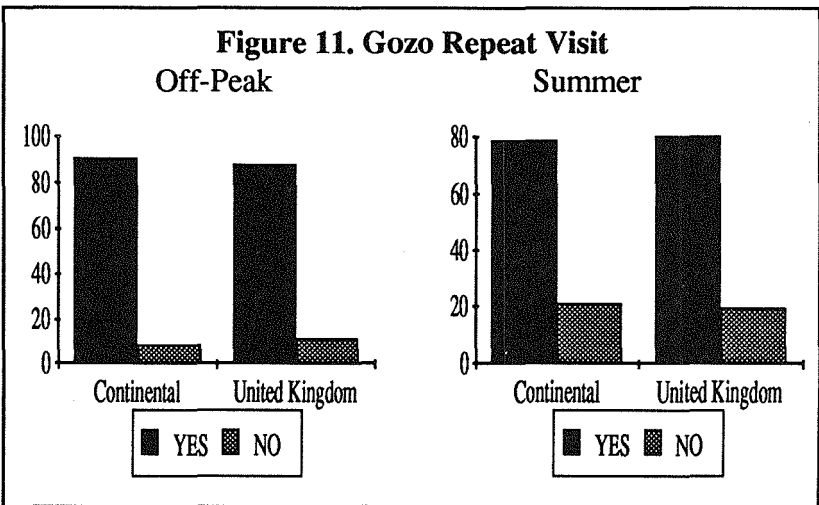
The information that has just been presented indicates very clearly one very important point: the power of recommendation. The research has shown very clearly that recommendation by friends and relatives was one of the main reasons that influenced the decision to holiday in Gozo. It therefore follows that Gozo needs to continuously keep generating satisfied travellers so that the destination will continue to benefit from such important word of mouth promotion. Indicators obtained from research are encouraging and sug-

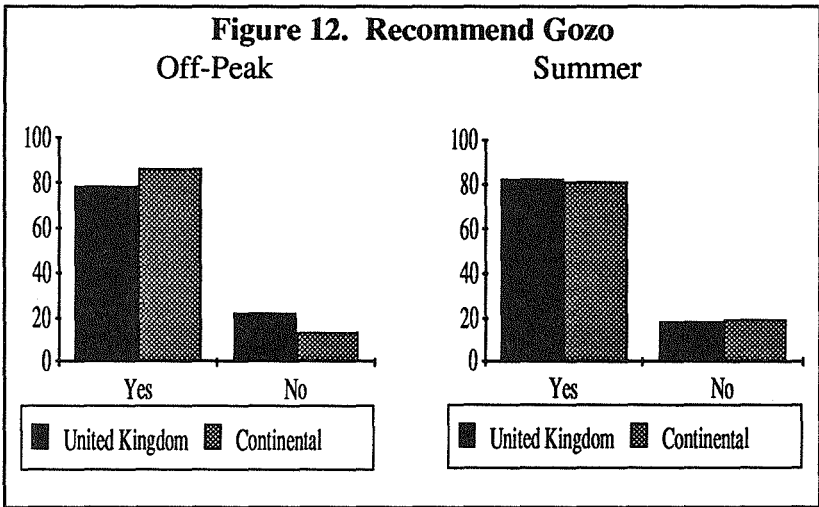




gest that the destination continues to live up to foreign visitors' expectations.

*Impressions of Gozo.* Figure 10 shows what survey respondents' general impression of Gozo was, and it is evident that the destination has a very positive image with well over 75% of those who visit it for holiday purposes. The level of satisfaction tends to be higher with summer visitors in relation to off-peak visitors.





*Repeat Business.* Figure 11 examines the potential of repeat business and once again one encounters a situation where the vast majority of foreigners on holiday in Gozo are willing to come back again – even the continentals who usually tend to want to visit new places rather than indulge in repeat business.

*Recommendation of Gozo.* With such satisfied customers it is natural to assume that current foreign visitors to Gozo would be willing to recommend the destination to their friends and relatives. As evident in Figure 12 well over 80% would be willing to undertake this sort of lip service on behalf of Gozo.

## CONCLUSION

This brings this presentation to an end. Once again it is worth remembering that this document proposes to create only a crude framework on the basis of which more detailed studies of the Gozitan tourist industry may eventually be carried out. The one fact that has definitely emerged is that Gozo does indeed have a thriving tourist industry that has the potential to continue generating additional revenue to the island's economy.

In spite of this optimism, however, some very serious consideration need to be given, prior to engaging in any form of future expansion-



ist development. The tourist who is fascinated by today's Gozo is the same tourist who was fascinated by Malta thirty years ago – a Malta which he perhaps spurns today due to excessive development and human activity.

Today's sophisticated international tourist has an almost infinite range of travel options available, and will quickly and undoubtedly abandon a destination that becomes spoilt for the sake of excessive tourism development. Gozo is a gem that should be preserved primarily for its inhabitants and also for the countless multitudes of future foreign travellers who will continue to be enchanted by its unique beauty which, as Edward Lear put it over a hundred years ago, is such that there are no words to describe it.

## APPENDIX

### Reasons for Choosing Gozo

Table 1

<i>United Kingdom - Summer</i>	
Agreeable climate	46%
A new place to go	41%
Previous visit	35%
Local hospitality	26%
English is spoken	22%
Value for money	17%

<i>Continental - Summer</i>	
Agreeable climate	42%
Something new	42%
Recommended by friends/relatives	23%
Value for money	22%
Previous visit	19%

Table 2

<i>United Kingdom - Off-peak</i>	
Agreeable climate	47%
A new place to go	35%
Previous visit	29%
History/culture	29%
English is spoken	24%
Recommended by friends/relatives	24%

<i>Continental - Off-peak</i>	
English is spoken	66%
Recommended by friends/relatives	56%
History/culture	50%
Something new	40%
Agreeable climate	32%
Value for money	21%

### Factors that Influence Choice of Gozo

Table 3

<i>United Kingdom - Off-peak</i>	
Recommended by friends/relatives	37.2%
Tour-operator brochure	32.6%
Recommended by travel agent	11.6%
TV programme	07.0%
Travel guide	07.0%

<i>Continental Summer visitor</i>	
Recommended by friends/relatives	52.8%
Tour-operator brochure	34.1%
Travel guide	30.8%
Recommended by travel agent	11.9%
Tourist office information	11.5%

Table 4

<i>United Kingdom - Off-peak</i>	
Recommended by friends/relatives	100.0%
Tour-operator brochure	45.5%

<i>Continental off-peak visitor</i>	
Recommended by friends/relative	59.6%
Tour guide	20.2%
Tour-operator brochure	18.8%
Advertising	13.8%

# Gozo as an Off-Season Tourist Destination

**Graziella Pullicino**

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to give an evaluation of the attitudes of tourists who visit Gozo during the off-season period, which for the purpose of this study is defined as the November to March period. It is government policy to spread as much as possible the inflow of tourists to Malta throughout the whole year, and the analysis of off-season tourism is therefore important. The paper is based on a survey, which was carried out by the present author and Ms. A. M. Zammit.<sup>1</sup>

Not much information is available on off-season tourism in the Maltese islands, and the survey was intended to fill this gap. The survey focused on Gozo because this island would seem to have a very good potential for attracting tourists in the winter and autumn months.

Two groups of tourists were identified, namely Maltese and international. The respondents, chosen randomly, were asked to fill in a questionnaire (see appendix). The number of Maltese tourists who filled the questionnaire was 120, while the number of international tourists was 141. It is not easy to estimate what these numbers represent in terms of percentage of the total, because the number of off-season tourists to Gozo is not known with an acceptable degree of precision.

The analysis carried out in this paper describes the results of the two types of tourists and ends with some recommendations.

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1. The survey results were submitted as a dissertation in partial fulfilment of the BA (Hons) degree in Management at the University of Malta, in September 1993.

## **MALTESE TOURISTS**

The 120 Maltese respondents consisted of 65 males and 55 females. Out of these 57% were single and 43% were married. The largest group, just under 40% came from the Sliema and St. Julians area. Their ages ranged from 12 years to 82 years, with a very wide distribution, practically representing all age groups in this range, with around 62% of the respondents being under 30, around 16% between 30 and 40 and around 22% over 40. Three respondents were over 70 years old.

The response to question 5, which related to educational levels, showed that a considerable percentage of Maltese off-season tourists to Gozo had a high level of education, with 40% having tertiary level education. Another indication of this tendency was that the response to question 6 indicated that many visitors (around 35%) had an occupation which required higher education.

Almost all Maltese tourists to Gozo had visited Gozo before, with around 17% stating that they had visited Gozo more than six times before during the November - March period. Three fourths of the respondents said that they visited Gozo for a holiday, and serenity was identified as a main attraction.

In response to question 10, which related to duration of stay, Maltese tourists indicated that only around 7% were staying for more than 7 nights. The majority, around 68%, were staying for a period of between 1 and 3 nights. The preferred accommodation for Maltese tourists appeared to be apartments, since 61% of the respondents stayed in such accommodation. 16% stayed in hotels or complexes. The remaining 23% stayed in farmhouses, with friends and (around 3%) on yachts.

An interesting finding was that 60% of the respondents used their own car as a means of transport and 13% used hired cars. Only 6% used public transport.

The response for question 14 was quite surprising. This question related to whether or not respondents would consider spending their

honeymoon in Gozo. 60% of the respondents said that they would not. The reasons given for not wanting to spend one's honeymoon in Gozo were: (1) entertainment opportunities are very limited (2) there is not enough anonymity (3) Gozo is too close to Malta (4) the island is too small.

The following table summarises the response to question 17, where respondents were asked to rate various facilities:

**Table 1**  
**Facilities and Conditions in Gozo**

---

	Very Good	Good	Not so good	Do not know
Restaurants	60%	25%	10%	5%
Entertainment	13%	40%	35%	12%
Heritage	48%	44%	2%	6%
Roads	42%	40%	12%	6%
Public transport	2%	17%	47%	34%
Sea connection	29%	45%	9%	17%
Sports facilities	13%	21%	20%	46%
Cleanliness	51%	38%	7%	4%

---

It can be seen from Table 1 that public transport was not considered as adequate by a large proportion of the respondents. Sports facilities and entertainment were also considered by many as not so good.

The large percentage of "do not know" answers of Table 1 with regard to certain facilities may partially represent non-users of the facility.

### **INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS**

The international tourists' questionnaire was filled in by 71 male and 70 females. Most of these (around 62%) were married. The age distribution was markedly different from that of the Maltese tourists,



*The cultural heritage of Gozo is an important attraction for off-season tourists.*

with 11% under 30 years of age, 23% between 30 and 40, and 66% over 40. It appears therefore that the international tourist population in the off-season period in Gozo tends to be older than the Maltese one.

The nationalities of respondents were various. The highest percentage of tourists were Germans, followed by the British and Dutch. Other nationalities included French, Italian and Greek.

The response to question 5 indicated that the occupational profile of international tourists in Gozo in the off-season period was probably of a higher level than the average tourist visiting the Maltese islands. As regards length of stay, around 57% of the respondents stayed for a period of 4 to 7 nights, and 25% stayed for a period of 8 to 14 nights. Around 6% stayed for a longer period, with the highest stay being 56 nights.

For most of the respondents, this was the first-ever visit to Gozo. However, around 32% had visited Gozo previously. It is of interest

that around 41% of the respondents were visiting Gozo only, whereas the remaining 59% were visiting Malta and Gozo.

As regards question 10, which related to transport from Malta, the percentage of international tourists who used the helicopter service (11%) was higher than the percentage of Maltese tourists who used this service (4%).

When responding to the question on accommodation, 78% of the respondents said that they stayed in hotels and complexes, whereas only 18% said that they stayed in apartments. This again is a markedly different preference from that of the Maltese tourists, since the majority of the latter group preferred to stay in apartments.

The international tourists were asked to indicate what motivated them to visit Gozo and Table 2 shows the results.

**Table 2**  
**Motivation for Visiting Gozo**

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Diving	20%
Rich cultural heritage	17%
Promotion by agencies	11%
Good climate	9%
Leisure	8%
Tranquillity	6%
Business	5%
Place never visited before	4%
Archaeology	4%
Walking holiday	3%
Other	13%

---

The table shows that diving is a very popular sport for off-season tourism in Gozo. Other attractions are the rich cultural heritage of the island. Promotion was also selected as a major reason for coming to Gozo. Of interest in this regard is that 95% of the respondents said that their motivation for visiting Gozo had been fulfilled.

The attitudes of international tourists towards accommodation in Gozo were varied as shown in Table 3. The table shows that around 9% of the tourists were not satisfied with the accommodation in Gozo.

**Table 3**  
**Rating of Accommodation in Gozo**

Very good	38%
Good	45%
Not so good	9%
Do not know	8%

Specific facilities in Gozo were also analysed. The attitudes of the respondents are shown in the following table.

**Table 4**  
**Rating of Accommodation and Facilities in Gozo**

	Very Good	Good	Not so good	Do not know
Restaurants	28%	58%	9%	5%
Entertainment	11%	19%	29%	41%
Cultural heritage	23%	33%	20%	24%
Roads	4%	26%	62%	8%
Public transport	8%	33%	23%	36%
Sea/air connection	17%	45%	24%	14%
Sports	4%	26%	23%	47%
Leisure	7%	28%	24%	41%
Tourist centres	4%	48%	11%	37%
Natural environment	21%	58%	8%	13%

It can be seen from Table 4 that public transport and entertainment featured amongst the facilities which are not favourably looked upon by international tourists. Restaurants, on the other hand, received

a good response. It is of interest that roads were not generally unfavourably looked upon by Maltese tourists, whereas in the case of international tourists road were given a very bad mark.

As in the case of Table 1, the large percentage of 'do not know' answers of Table 4 with regard to certain facilities, may partially represent non-users of the facility.

Regarding the question as to whether or not respondents would return to Gozo, 79% of the respondents answered that they would.

### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY RESPONDENTS**

A number of respondents commented on specific improvements that could be introduced in Gozo. The following are some of them.

#### *Bird-shooting*

The shooting and trapping of birds all over the island, all the year round is another major problem in Gozo. Almost all foreign tourists that have commented about this were of the opinion that better bird protection laws are called for.

#### *Tree Planting*

Many tourists remarked that an increase in the number of trees planted would make the island more attractive to tourists as well as to the residents.

#### *Pathways*

Another proposal is to develop clearly defined pathways for people who enjoy walking, around the coast, over the hills, and on roads between villages, without damaging and disturbing farmlands, .

#### *Local Councils*

Local councils have an important role in tourist areas by seeing to



local needs, in response to tourist expectations. Such councils can be instrumental in bringing about improvements of roads, cleanliness, security and water supply.

### *Entertainment*

Most tourists have commented about the opening and closing times of bars, restaurants and other places of entertainment. This is a very important point to note if the strategy is to promote tourism in the off-season period.

### *Non-Smoking Areas*

The introduction of a non-smoking campaign in certain restaurants was considered desirable by quite a large percentage of tourists.

### *Transport*

Although transportation in Gozo has improved considerably over the years, there is much room for improvement. Long waiting times are not appreciated by anyone. The introduction of an express bus service between Valletta and Ċirkewwa by the Public Transport Authority was proposed.

### *Deep Sea Excavation*

An interesting proposal related to the sea-bed around the island, which drops quite sharply to considerable depths, well beyond the range of divers using compressed air. It would be very beneficial to attract vessels, which specialise in deep sea intervention, to conduct some archaeological investigations just as the "Triton" did in April of 1993. The excavations themselves and the exhibits would add to the cultural attractions of Gozo.

## **CONCLUSION**

The responses to the questionnaire by Maltese and international tourists to Gozo were quite revealing. They showed, amongst other

things, that the majority of international off-season tourists do not visit Gozo as a sole destination. However, a good percentage of them do so.

The age distribution of the international off-season tourist to Gozo would seem to indicate that it is biased towards the older age category, and this should be catered for in the provision of facilities in Gozo. An important feature of Gozo is its relative tranquillity, and this is an important asset as far as the older tourist is concerned.

The survey showed also that there was a degree of dissatisfaction with a number of facilities in Gozo, notably entertainment, public transport and roads.

It appears therefore, that the attraction of off-peak tourism to Gozo should be based on upgrading facilities, without damaging the image of tranquillity that Gozo at present enjoys. This may not be an easy task, since the two objectives may be contradictory. Suitable trade-offs would therefore have to be sought.

The best long term strategy for attracting off-season tourists to Gozo would seem to be one of product differentiation, product upgrading and target marketing. Gozo is to be positioned as a unique, accessible and unspoilt land, with its own easy and quiet way of life and hospitable people, where professionals, business executives and others would go for a holiday to get away from their hectic life by living the real "Gozo Experience".

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TOURISTS FROM MALTA

(Please Tick  where applicable)

1. WHAT TOWN OR VILLAGE DO YOU LIVE IN?
2. SEX:                    MALE                     FEMALE
3. STATUS:                SINGLE                                    MARRIED                  
                              SEPARATED                                WIDOWED
4. AGE: \_\_\_\_\_
5. LEVEL OF EDUCATION:  
    PRIMARY                  
    SECONDARY                
    TECHNICAL                
    TERTIARY
6. OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_
7. HAVE YOU BEEN TO GOZO BEFORE? YES  NO
8. IF YES, HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT GOZO BETWEEN NOVEMBER AND MARCH?  
    1-5 TIMES YEARLY              
    6-10 TIMES YEARLY             
    OVER 10 TIMES YEARLY
9. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR VISIT TO GOZO?  
(Please tick as many as applicable)  
    HOLIDAY WITH FRIENDS                        FRIENDLY GOZITANS                  
    PEACE AND QUIET                                WORK                                  
    ENTERTAINMENT                                HONEYMOON                          
    ATMOSPHERE                                    SPORTS
10. WHAT IS THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF YOUR VISIT?  
    1-3 NIGHTS                      
    4-7 NIGHTS                      
    OVER 7 NIGHTS
11. ACCOMMODATION USED:  
    HOTEL                                        COMPLEX                      
    APARTMENT                                    FRIENDS                      
    FARMHOUSE                                    OWN HOUSE                  
    OTHER (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
12. MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM GOZO:  
    FERRY                                        HELICOPTER                  
    HOVERMARINE                                    OTHER (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
13. TRANSPORTATION USED WHILE IN GOZO?  
    HIRED CAR                                    OWN CAR                      
    PUBLIC TRANSPORT                                OTHER (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
14. WOULD YOU SPEND YOUR HONEYMOON IN GOZO? YES  NO
15. IF NO, PLEASE STATE WHY: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Gozo as an Off-Season Tourist Destination*

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16. PLEASE TICK ONLY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

- GOZO SHOULD BE DEVELOPED FURTHER IN ORDER TO ATTRACT MORE TOURISTS [ ]
- GOZO SHOULD BE DEVELOPED, HOWEVER WITHOUT SPOILING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT [ ]
- GOZO SHOULD BE PRESERVED AND PORTRAYED TO THE TOURIST AS A PLACE OF CALM AND RELAXATION [ ]

17. HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE FOLLOWING FACILITIES IN GOZO?

	VERY GOOD	GOOD	NOT SO GOOD	DO NOT KNOW
RESTAURANTS	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
ENTERTAINMENT	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
HERITAGE	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
ROADS	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
SEA/CONNECTION	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
SPORTS FACILITIES	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
CLEANLINESS	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

18. WHERE DID YOU TAKE YOUR TWO MOST RECENT HOLIDAY OUTSIDE MALTA AND GOZO?

19. PLEASE ADD ANY FURTHER COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE REGARDING YOUR HOLIDAY IN GOZO:

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### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS

(Please tick [ ] where applicable)

2. SEX:                    MALE            [ ]                    FEMALE            [ ]
3. STATUS:                SINGLE            [ ]                    MARRIED            [ ]
3. AGE: \_\_\_\_\_
4. NATIONALITY: \_\_\_\_\_
6. OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_
6. PLEASE INDICATE YOUR LENGTH OF STAY IN GOZO:        \_\_\_\_\_ NIGHTS
7. HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY VISITED GOZO?        \_\_\_\_\_ TIMES
8. ARE YOU SPENDING YOUR HOLIDAY IN GOZO ONLY?        YES [ ]    NO [ ]
9. HOW ARE YOU TRAVELLING?
- ON YOUR OWN [ ]
  - WITH FRIENDS [ ]
  - WITH FAMILY [ ]
  - WITH BUSINESS ASSOCIATES [ ]
  - WITH AN ORGANIZATION [ ]
  - ON A PACKAGE TOUR [ ]
  - OTHER (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. HAVE YOU COME TO GOZO FROM MALTA BY:

- FERRY   
HELICOPTER   
HOVERMARINE   
OTHER (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

11. WHAT TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION ARE YOU STAYING IN?

- HOTEL   
COMPLEX   
APARTMENT   
FRIENDS   
FARMHOUSE   
OTHER (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

12. WHAT HAS MOTIVATED YOU TO VISIT GOZO?

13. HAS THIS MOTIVATION BEEN FULFILLED? YES  NO

14. HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE FOLLOWING FACILITIES IN GOZO?

	VERY GOOD	GOOD	NOT SO GOOD	DON'T KNOW
ACCOMMODATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FACILITIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RESTAURANTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HERITAGE ROADS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SEA/AIR CONNECTION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SPORTS FACILITIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LEISURE FACILITIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TOURIST CENTRES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ENVIRONMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU EXPECT TO SPEND ON THE FOLLOWING DURING YOUR STAY IN GOZO?

ACCOMMODATION \_\_\_\_\_  
OTHER EXPENSES \_\_\_\_\_

16. WOULD YOU RETURN TO GOZO? YES  NO

17. IF YES, WOULD YOU PREFER TO SEE ANY PARTICULAR CHANGES/ DEVELOPMENTS BY THE TIME OF YOUR NEXT VISIT?

18. IF NO, PLEASE STATE WHY. \_\_\_\_\_

19. WHERE DID YOU TAKE YOUR TWO MOST RECENT HOLIDAYS OUTSIDE YOUR COUNTRY? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

20. PLEASE ADD ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU MIGHT HAVE REGARDING YOUR HOLIDAY IN GOZO:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# **The Economic Impact of International Tourism on the Gozitan Economy**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The economic impact of international tourism on the Gozitan economy has never been properly measured. We know from observation of economic activity in Gozo that tourist expenditure generates considerable income and employment in the island, but we do not have the data to quantify it properly. This paper attempts to shed some light on this question.

Following this introductory section, we shall give a few basic statistics on tourist inflows in the Maltese Islands, with a view of placing Gozitan tourist inflows within this aggregate.

Section 3 describes the methodology commonly used to measure the economic impact of tourism, and describes the few studies that have focused on the Maltese economy.

Section 4 briefly describes a few multiplier studies applied to Maltese tourism, and utilises the results of one of these studies to produce rough approximations of the impact of tourism expenditure on the Gozitan economy. Section 5 concludes the study.

## **2. TOURISM IN THE MALTESE ISLANDS**

A discussion on the economic impact of tourism has to be based on a very clear distinction between the term "tourist industry" and the

term "tourist expenditure".

The tourist industry covers hotels and other establishments which operate mostly in tourism. In the Maltese Islands, this industry is not a very large one when considered in isolation. In recent years it contributed around 7% to the Maltese GDP. However, this industry has considerable direct, indirect and induced effects on the economy, as will be shown in this study.

Tourist expenditure covers expenditures on products of the tourist industry and on products of other industries, such as banking, wearing apparel and others. In recent years tourist expenditures (including transportation) probably accounted for around 20% of GDP during the eighties and early nineties. It also accounted for around 25% of total foreign exchange receipts from trade in goods and services. It is therefore a major source of foreign exchange inflows.

The number of incoming tourists in 1992 (the most recent year for which we have complete data) was around 1 million. Just over 50% of these came from the UK. Most of the remaining 50% came from Germany, France and Italy in that order. Most tourists come to Malta during the summer and "shoulder" months to enjoy the sea and the sun. The average duration of stay per tourist in 1992 was just under 12 days. The total tourist expenditure during the same year was Lm181 million.

#### *International Tourism in Gozo*

As is well known, Gozo is a small island, forming part of the Maltese archipelago. It has a population of 26,800, and a land area of just 67 km<sup>2</sup>, giving rise to a population density of around 400 persons per km<sup>2</sup>.

The precise amount of international tourists visiting Gozo is not known, but in 1993, it probably amounted to around 100,000. This figure was arrived at by the present author after conducting interviews with a number of Gozitan hoteliers and owners of self-catering establishments, and consulting with research officials of the NTOM for the plausibility of this estimate. From the same inter-

views, it appears that the average stay per international tourist in Gozo was approximately 11 days in 1993.

This excludes all Maltese tourists and all non-Maltese day trippers (called visitors to be distinguished from tourists). Expenditure by Maltese visitors to Gozo is of course an important source of income for Gozitans, including those employed with Gozo Channel. However, we shall not discuss the impact of expenditure by Maltese tourists and visitors in this paper.

From a sample survey carried out by the NTOM, an average of 65% of all international tourists visiting Malta in 1993, also visited Gozo on a day trip, which means that in that year just under 600,000 tourist crossed over to Gozo. This is slightly higher than the number of tourist (blue) tickets, sold by Gozo Channel during that year, which amounted to just under half a million. The discrepancy may be attributed to statistical error in the NTOM sample survey and to the fact that many tourists crossed over to Gozo by helicopter.

In this study we shall assume that the number of tourists and visitors amounted to 500,000, on the grounds that the Gozo Ferry blue ticket-sales can be considered as almost a headcount of non-Maltese travellers. Reducing the 100,000 or so who visited Gozo as tourists, the number of day-trippers would be around 400,000.

#### *Gozo as a Tourist Destination*

Gozo has its own particular characterises, which make it, in many ways, different from the island of Malta as a tourist destination. It is greener, cleaner and quieter than the island of Malta. It also offers a somewhat more "up-market" product. The island has a number of varied and important attractions, including quaint beaches, unique neolithic temples and a rich historical heritage.

As is the case with mainland Malta, in Gozo British tourists account for the highest share of tourist arrivals. Gozo does not feature as a separate destination in British mass tourism brochures, such as Thomson, Airtours and Owners Abroad, which dominate the British market. However, the island features in the so-called specialist



tour operator-brochures, which often have Maltese ownership. These include Multitours, Aquasun, Holiday Malta, Gozo Holidays and Transair. The last two specialise on Gozo.

These specialist operators account for around 30% of the market for the Maltese Islands, often operating in close collaboration with Air Malta. The share of specialist operators in Gozitan tourism is much higher than that for the Maltese islands as a whole.

Another important tourism segment in Gozo is the German market, which like the British one, is also tour operator oriented, but much smaller.

Italian and French tourists also account for an important share of the Gozitan market, generally travelling on an individual basis. Their share of the market is much smaller than the British one.

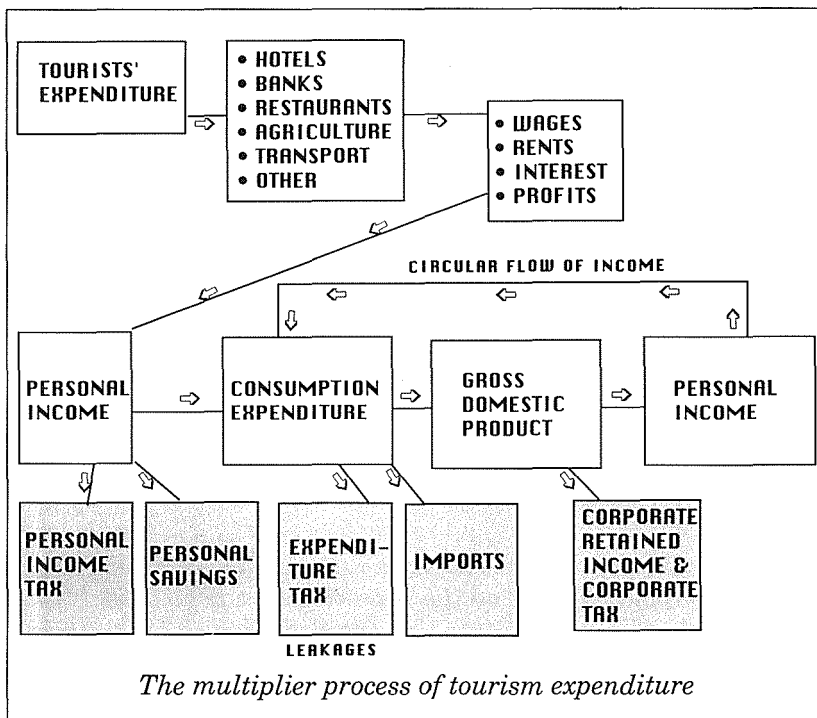
### **3. TOURISTS' EXPENDITURE AND THE MULTIPLIER**

The tourism multiplier process takes place because a proportion of tourist expenditure is received as income by Maltese and Gozitan residents, who again spend the non-taxed and non-saved portion of this income on consumption. That part of consumption expenditure which is not spent on imported goods and services from abroad, is received by residents, who again re-spend part of it, with the non-imported content going to Maltese and Gozitan residents.

This gives rise to new rounds of spending and re-spending, and therefore to further increases in the income of residents.

Briefly, therefore, a tourism multiplier model would estimate the proportion of tourists' expenditure that goes on value-added generated in Malta, after excluding imports, and the proportion of income from value-added that, through consumption expenditure, generates further income to residents.

In such a model, imports, savings and taxation are called leakages, which have to be reduced at every round of spending.



*Studies on the Multiplier Effect of Tourism in Malta*

A few models of this type have been constructed for incoming tourism to the Maltese islands. Waldorf (1969) provided estimates through a simple Keynesian expenditure model, which was too aggregative to produce meaningful results. A more recent study is that by Howarth and Howarth (1989). This study had a number of shortcomings, the most important of which was that the results on tourism data were collected from other European and Mediterranean countries.

A very useful study is the report by P.A. Cambridge Consultants, authored by Tarling and Rhodes (1990). The report presents survey-data on the Maltese value-added content of tourist expenditures, including transportation.

**Table 1**  
**Tourism Multipliers in Malta**

Multiplier Effects on:	Injection		Weighted Average
	Tourist Consumption	Air/Sea Transport	
Gross Domestic Product	1.039	0.436	0.872
Disp. Personal Income	0.673	0.329	0.574
Corporate Retained Income	0.061	0.030	0.052
Taxes (Income and Expend.)	0.298	0.010	0.215
Imports	0.572	0.521	0.561

Source: Briguglio (1992).

Finally a study by the present author (Briguglio, 1992) utilises an input-output model based on the Leontif-inversion method. It combines and simultaneously estimates, the direct, indirect and induced income effect of tourist expenditure.

*Estimates of Tourism Multipliers for the Maltese Economy*

In a model constructed in Briguglio (1992), the multiplier effect of tourism was calculated on a number of economic aggregates. The results are summarised in Table 1. The table shows that the multiplier effect on GDP associated with tourism expenditure is much higher than the multiplier effect associated with transport - the reason being that tourist transport expenditure has a much higher import content than tourist consumption expenditure.

The tourist weighted multiplier (ie. consumption and transport taken together) indicates that for every Lm100 spent by tourists, the Maltese GDP grows by Lm87.2, corporate retained income increases by Lm5.2, disposable personal income by Lm57.4, taxes by Lm21.5 and imports by Lm56.1.

The above results are based on the assumption that government

expenditure is independently determined. It can be argued that government expenditure is not strictly speaking exogenous, because it depends on taxation, which is induced within the system. If government expenditure is endogenized, the multiplier impact would be somewhat greater.

Investment is also assumed exogenous. This is a plausible assumption for the short run. However, a given increase in GDP, which gives rise to an increase in retained profits in any one year, may generate investment expenditure in following years. The above multiplier estimates do not take into account this lagged induced investment effect, since the model assumes that the multiplier process would be completed in one year.

The present author (Briguglio, 1992) also calculated what are known as sectoral multipliers, which trace the impact of tourist expenditure on the various economic sectors. This approach, based on input-output analysis, is very useful because it sheds light on the degree to which sectors depend on each other, and gives an indication regarding the extent of the linkages.

The input-output multipliers produced by the present author show that tourism income multipliers are relatively high, but not the highest, when compared to the other industries in the Maltese economy. Final demand for public services, construction, agriculture and furniture have higher multiplier coefficients than tourism expenditure. In other words, a Lm100 spent, for example, on construction has a higher impact on GDP than a Lm100 spent by tourists. However, tourist expenditure, according to the same study, has higher multiplier coefficients than expenditure on clothing and electrical machinery, which are the most important types of merchandise exported from Malta. In fact, the multiplier effect associated with tourism was approximately one and a half times that associated with clothing and two times as much that associated with machinery.

The input-output multipliers also show that tourist expenditure has had an impact on other sectors, with the highest impacts being on Personal Service, Public Services, Food, Agriculture, Electricity, Beverages, Tobacco and Clothing in that order.

#### **4. EXPENDITURE BY TOURISTS IN GOZO**

The impact of international tourism on the Gozitan economy is likely to be very large, since it generates income and employment not only in hotels, but also in many other sectors, including agriculture and fishing, retail trade, printing, transport services and banking.

As stated, data on tourist expenditure in Gozo does not exist, and the only way one can calculate the impact of such expenditure on the Gozitan economy is by making rough approximations – which are nothing more than educated guesses.

It was stated above that as a rough approximation around 100,000 international tourists and around 400,000 non-Maltese day-trippers visited Gozo in 1993. It is not easy to translate this into expenditure. In the absence of knowledge as to whether or not the average tourist in Gozo spends more or less than the average tourist in Malta, we shall assume that each tourist in Gozo spends approximately Lm200, which is the approximate average expenditure in 1993 for the Maltese islands as a whole. As an approximation for 1993, therefore, total expenditure by international tourists, amounted to Lm20 million.

As to the non-Maltese day trippers, we can propose a rough approximation by excluding the hotel component from Lm200 and dividing the result by the average number of days stayed per tourist.

On the basis of calculations carried out by the present author, this would amount to around Lm6 per day tripper, excluding the ferry ticket. Assuming that the number of foreign day trippers amounted to 400,000, the total expenditure would be approximately Lm2.4 million. The total expenditure by international tourists and visitors would, under these assumptions, amount to Lm 22.4 million.

In addition to tourist personal expenditure, one should include the income that is derived by Gozitans through the operation of the Gozo Ferries. Given that 500,000 foreigners crossed the Gozo Channel in 1993, an expenditure of Lm0.8 million is a plausible estimate.



*Day trippers and tourists to Gozo generate considerable income and employment in the island*

All this expenditure has multiplier effect, which we have discussed in a previous section.

On the basis of the approximations just discussed and on the multiplier estimates described above, one can make some tentative conclusions, including:

1. An expenditure of Lm22.4 million by international tourists and visitors, may have generated an income of around Lm23 million in the Gozitan economy, after reducing the import content, and after including all the rounds of spending and re-spending.
2. An expenditure of Lm0.8 million on Gozo channel crossing by foreigners generated additional income to the Gozitans. It is not possible to calculate the multiplier effect of such expenditure with any degree of precision, for a number of reasons, the most important of which being that not all incomes of the Gozo Channel accrues to the Gozitan people, and we do not have information on the import content of running the Gozo Ferries. However, assum-

ing that the wage content earned by Gozitans is 30% of final sales, the multiplier effect arising from wage rates may be in the region of 0.4. This means that around Lm320,000 could be the value added generated in Gozo, via the wage component. This figure has however to be considered as a tentative one, and should be interpreted with great caution.

3. According to the input-output multiplier for the Maltese islands, described above, tourism expenditure has a relatively high multiplier impact when compared to other exports such as textile and clothing and machinery. The reason for this is that tourist expenditure generates considerable demand in almost all industries, but most of all in market services (including the tourist industry itself, retail and wholesale trades, transport and communications and banking), agriculture, food, beverages, tobacco and the clothing industries.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study focused on the impact of tourism expenditure on the Gozitan economy, with reference to multiplier models. The rough estimations produced in this study would seem to indicate that the direct impact of tourist expenditure (excluding sea and air transport) is in the region of Lm23 million.

It should be emphasised again that because of data limitations, this estimate should only be considered as very rough approximations, and therefore it should be interpreted with great caution.

In spite of its limitations, the study may have served two main purposes.

Firstly it contains a discussion on the impact of tourist expenditure and its multiplier effect on the economy of the island. This type of analysis is important if we are to assess the relative importance of tourism in the Gozitan economy.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the study has emphasised the need for improving the quality of Gozitan tourism data. As things

stand at the moment, tourist expenditure statistics, even for the Maltese Islands as a whole, are not easily adaptable for calculating the multiplier effect. They are too aggregative, and researchers do not find it easy to calculate the import content and the value added that such an expenditure generates in the Maltese islands. This shortcoming is even more pronounced for the Gozitan economy, since data on tourist inflows and on tourist expenditure in Gozo is not collected on a systematic basis.

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# The Environmental Impact of Tourism in Gozo

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## INTRODUCTION

Gozo is marketed as the "island where time stood still" and as a place of "calm and relaxation". Its main attraction lies in its rural character, typical of the Maltese Islands before the advent of mass tourism. Gozo is less urbanized than Malta, has more countryside not given over to agriculture, and, because of its geological and topographical structure, has more water resources and is consequently more verdant than Malta. To these must be added the slow pace of life, the peaceful atmosphere and the friendly people, a significant proportion of whom are still engaged in traditional trades and crafts. It is these which make Gozo an attractive destination for both foreign and local tourists.

Gozo's main asset is thus its environment; it is also its main problem in terms of tourism. Almost by definition, a place of relaxation which exists in a temporal backwater must be remote, visited by few people, and must be insulated from the myriad elements which make modern living stressful. The problem lies in the fact that although the greater the number of tourists, the greater the income generated, the greater also is the degradation of that asset which attracted them in the first place – the environment.

The disease afflicting the Gozitan environment is a familiar one:

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lack of appreciation of its importance and lack of understanding of how it functions; the symptoms are many.

### **LAND-USE PATTERNS**

One of the most obvious is a change in land-use patterns, characterised by an increase in the area of built-up land at the expense of agricultural land (Meli, 1993) and wilderness (Schembri and Lanfranco, 1993). This is a result of numerous factors, including an ever-increasing local population, a rising standard of living, and a massive increase in the number of tourists visiting the islands. Coastal areas have suffered more than any other part of the islands due to tourism (Anderson and Schembri, 1989), as the islands have traditionally been marketed for their sunny climate and clean seas.

In Gozo, the effect of this development has been to replace natural landscapes by anthropic ones and agricultural landscapes by urban ones, in the process losing that which is unique to Gozo and substituting it by what is common to any holiday resort in the Mediterranean. Historic town centres and village cores have been invaded by incongruous architectural elements; traditional styles, materials and patterns have been replaced by modern ones, which are often alien to our culture. Buildings obliterate the existing habitat, not only under their footprint, but also in a wider area surrounding the development due to disturbance, dust, dumping, transport of soil and infrastructural works, including access roads.

Development in Gozo has been less intense than in Malta; however, the latter has had an indirect effect on the former as it has driven Maltese residents and entrepreneurs to seek 'greener pastures' in the relatively untouched sister island.

### **QUARRYING**

Quarrying activity has increased to keep pace with the demand for raw material for building. This has a huge impact which is more or



*Xlendi, Gozo: touristic development intruding on the natural and rural landscape*

less permanent in some cases. Softstone quarrying is less destructive than hardstone quarrying since softstone quarries are often sited in agricultural areas and quarries can potentially be reclaimed back to agriculture once operations cease (Malta Structure Plan, 1991a). Hardstone quarries on the other hand are very destructive in terms of landscape and habitats, since most Coralline Limestone is found in wilderness areas and the original habitat cannot be reinstated, once destroyed. Also, many hardstone quarries are coastal and are irreversibly changing the physiognomy of the coast (for example, on the Northeast coast, close to Qala).

As with built-up areas, the impacts of quarrying are not limited to the quarried area itself but spread beyond it, due to dust, noise and take out of additional land used for dumping of quarry waste and storage of products. Perhaps one of the saddest indirect impacts of quarrying in Gozo is that the quarrying activity in the Qawra/Dwejra area has probably ruined any chances we might once have had to have this unique area accepted as a Natural World Heritage Site in terms of the World Heritage Convention (Schembri, 1991).

## **POWER AND WATER REQUIREMENTS**

The larger the population, the greater its power requirements. Tourism adds to this problem: modern tourists demand heating in winter and air-conditioning in summer. Water is an even more important issue since there are already problems with producing and distributing an adequate supply for the resident population (Malta Structure Plan, 1991b).

Although no studies exist, it is reasonable to assume that the per capita water consumption of the average tourist who comes from countries with an abundant water supply is greater than that of the average Maltese who is conscious of the need for conservation of this valuable resource.

Additionally, an increased demand for water places a heavy demand on the power supply since more than half of domestic water is produced by desalination of sea water using reverse osmosis, which is a power-hungry process (Riolo, 1987; Riolo and Cassar, 1992).

Impacts associated with power generation include atmospheric pollution by gases and particulate matter, and the problem of disposing of coal ash. Gozo does not suffer from the environmental impacts associated with power generation since the Islands' two power stations are both situated in the southern part of the island of Malta; however, Gozo does suffer the inconvenience of unreliable and uneven supply due to deficiencies in the distribution system.

## **WASTE**

Waste generated by the local and tourist population needs to be disposed of. This presents a serious problem as the Maltese Islands lack suitable landfill sites. The only official dump in Gozo (at Il-Qortin tax-Xaghra, limits of Xaghra) has a large environmental impact, especially since it is situated close to two prime tourist areas (Marsalforn Bay to the West and Ramla to the East). Impacts include: the take-out of land, air pollution due to burning rubbish, noxious fumes, pests, as well as the aesthetic aspect.

One solution being explored in Malta – recycling – is a controversial issue in the case of Gozo: the cost of constructing a recycling plant in Gozo is prohibitively expensive at present, while transporting waste to Malta to be processed has met with a lot of resistance from the residents of Marsascula, where the Islands' only recycling plant is situated.

Illicit dumping, especially of building waste, is also prevalent in Gozo. Valleys (for example, Wied Ilma) and the coast (for example, on the northern coast from Pinu Point to Xwieni Bay; Anderson and Schembri, 1989) seem to be those areas to suffer most from this activity. Both are amongst the most important habitats on Gozo, apart from being key features of the landscape.

### **SEWAGE**

Sewage is another problem since it is discharged untreated into the sea. Because of the oligotrophic nature of the sea round the Maltese islands, the impact from nutrients in the sewage is low; however, the same cannot be said for other substances discharged in sewage and for pathogens; in any case, there is the 'image' problem since the main discharge point (at Ras il-Hobz on the southern coast) is close to an important tourist locality (Mgarr ix-Xini), and no tourist likes to swim in close proximity of a sewage outfall, even if reassured that it is perfectly safe. The solution is to introduce sewage treatment, and a plant for Gozo is in the planning stage (COWIconsult, 1992). Such a plant would have the additional benefit of providing reclaimed water for agriculture and thus putting a stop to the practice which some farmers have of (illegally) rupturing the sewage main in order to irrigate their fields with the sewage which spills out!

### **DESTRUCTION OF HABITATS**

It is the natural environment which has suffered most due to development, mainly through destruction of habitats and disturbance, leading to a decrease in wildlife, both in terms of number of species

as well as population size: some previously common species have now become rare, while others have disappeared entirely or are on the verge of doing so (Schembri and Lanfranco, 1993). Perhaps the most badly affected habitat in the Maltese Islands, and certainly in the case of Gozo, are sand-dunes. Those at Ramla l-Hamra are the only ones remaining in the Maltese Islands where a more or less complete dune habitat still exists. Even these are now fast degrading due to trampling by people, vehicles, camping, kiosks, and beach cleaning. One species, the Marram Grass (*Ammophila australis*), an important sand-binder, has already become extinct from the Maltese Islands (Lanfranco, 1989), perhaps explaining why a recent violent storm was able to devastate a large part of the remaining dunes at Ramla.

## CONCLUSION

Clearly, tourism in Gozo is not sustainable, in the sense that it alters and degrades the environment in which it exists. To attain sustainability, the optimal strategy would be to concentrate on attracting a small number of very high-yield tourists, that is, to make up for reduced quantity by better quality, a suggestion already made by the consultants commissioned to draw up a tourism master-plan for the Maltese Islands (Horwath and Horwath, 1989).

Unfortunately, tourism in Gozo has not developed according to any strategic plan, but rather, as with most things in the Maltese Islands, in a piecemeal manner, driven by the short term aim of making a profit while the going is good, rather than the longer term objective of sustainability.

In the free market economy which operates locally, limiting tourism now and sacrificing quantity for quality, is difficult. To achieve this, requires a strict regulatory regime. All the necessary legislation, and the institutional mechanisms for implementing such a regime now exist in Malta. The principal instruments are the Environment Protection Act, 1991 and the Department for the Protection of the Environment on one hand, and of the Development Planning Act, 1991 and the Planning Authority which it establishes, on the other.

The question is, are we disciplined enough and far sighted enough to submit to such a regulatory regime?

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# The Impact of Tourism on the Gozitan Archaeological Heritage

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## PREVIOUS CONTRIBUTIONS ON SUBJECT

The impact of tourism on the archaeological and artistic heritage of the Maltese islands in general was discussed in a paper delivered at the *European Workshop on Cultural Tourism in Mediterranean Islands* held in Malta in October 1988 under the aegis of the Division for Higher Education and Research of the Council of Europe and the University of Malta in collaboration with the Mediterranean Institute of the Foundation for International Studies. The paper was published in *The Sunday Times* of Malta the following month (Bonanno and Buhagiar 1988).

In 1990 another Council of Europe workshop, entitled *Archaeological Parks and Cultural Tourism*, was organised in collaboration with the Foundation for International Studies and the Mediterranean Institute of the University of Malta. The theme of that workshop was in many ways related to that of the present paper, in particular in its fundamental objective, on which the present author, as academic adviser in the organisation, insisted, namely, the preservation, presentation and *mise en valeur* of archaeological sites. As the title clearly suggests, however, the workshop dealt with this problem from one particular angle: the interrelationship and mutual impact between the archaeological sites (archaeological parks, to be precise) and cultural tourism. The proceedings of that workshop remained unpublished, but one may refer to a paper by the present author read during a Council of Europe Workshop in Coimbra, Portugal, the following month (Bonanno 1992) in which, very briefly,



stock was taken of the major topics and points of discussion raised in the Malta workshop. Much of what follows reflects the contents and spirit of these two contributions, but with reference to Gozo.

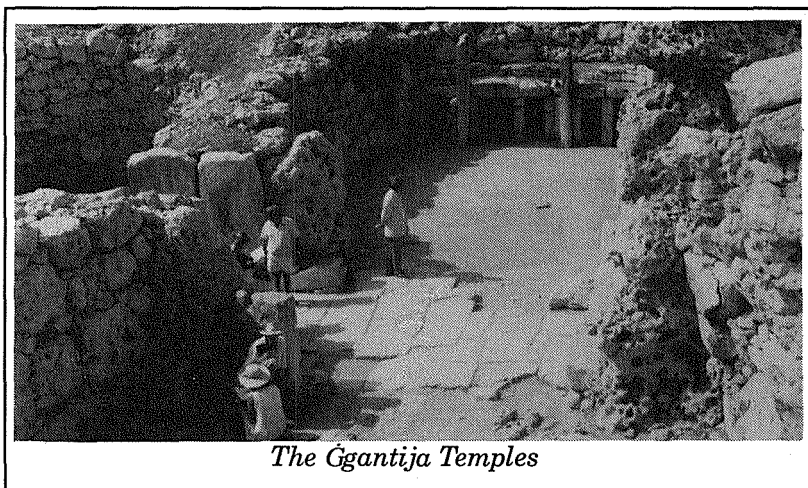
### **GENERAL IMPACT**

Tourism, like all the other industries, requires an infrastructural set-up, which generates development (such as hotels, desalination plants, roads, cable and pipe ducts, etc.) that is by its very nature deleterious to both the natural and archaeological heritage. It is very probable that we have never reflected enough to realize that a considerable proportion of Gozo's archaeological heritage is still unexplored. It is still hidden, jealously protected by a thin blanket of soil, waiting to be uncovered methodically and scientifically by the patient trowel of the archaeologist.

With all the urban development taking place around us, we could easily lose it, or most of it, without even knowing. Who would have guessed, some twelve years ago, that the urban extension then planned for Xaghra, would have destroyed what eventually turned out to be an archaeological site of the greatest importance for the history of human culture on these islands? Modern development is extremely destructive of archaeological deposits; it makes a clean sweep of anything above rock surface that comes in the way of the bulldozer and other earth-moving machinery. Tourism development, therefore, will continue to contribute its share in this destructive process unless we set up the proper monitoring structures to inspect every hole that is dug, every earth-moving operation, especially in sensitive areas like Xaghra and Rabat, not to mention the Cittadella itself.

On the other hand, I regret to say that, in spite of all the earth disturbance that has taken place over the last thirty years for the implementation of touristic projects, I do not know of a single archaeological discovery in Gozo that was made as a result of this extensive development.

On the positive side, there is very little doubt that it was tourism,



*The Ġgantija Temples*

in particular the upmarket one, that has opened the local population's eyes to the immense value of the island's irreplaceable archaeological heritage, not only as an economic resource but also as a source of national pride and identity.

### *Ġgantija*

The emphasis in the recent past on mass tourism, however, has also had its toll on Gozo's visible archaeological heritage. The site which has suffered most from this influx of tourists is the most frequented one, the Ġgantija temples. Hordes of visitors, not always sufficiently motivated ones, were - and still are - herded in quick succession through and around the temples, often trampling on vulnerable surfaces. The occasional graffiti could not be prevented.

The situation is now under much greater control. A wooden floor has been laid to protect the original stone and *torba* ones, and access is only allowed to the central passages, the rest being cordoned off. In this respect, Gozo has played a pioneering role compared with the sister island. It is only recently that Tarxien has seen a similar wooden floor laid on.

Besides, a project for the creation of an archaeological park for

Ġgantija is currently in hand, even if this megalithic complex has always been better landscaped than its Maltese counterparts.

Mention should also be made of a research programme currently being undertaken jointly between the Dipartimento di Storia dell'Architettura e di Restauro delle Strutture Architettoniche of the University of Florence and the Museums Department. This involves a thorough analysis of the processes of deterioration in the fabric of the Ġgantija building in order to propose effective and scientifically supported conservation methods (Cassar *et al.* 1989; Tampone *et al.* 1993). This project would probably not have materialised had the Ġgantija temples not achieved world fame as a tourist attraction. Conversely, the project has also benefitted, and will further benefit, tourists by identifying the unstable and dangerous sections of the building, making them more secure for visitors.

#### *The Gozo Citadel*

Practically all foreign visitors to Gozo pay a visit to the Citadel, which can be considered an extensive archaeological site, given the ruinous state of most of its buildings. I do not have any reason to believe any damage to this site has been caused by tourism, unless one judges the present level of commercialisation of some of its buildings as already beyond the accepted limit. I do not think this is the case, but the new building at the corner between Fosse Street and Melito Street, originally intended as some sort of catering establishment, should never have been allowed to be built. Again, we probably owe it to the touristic phenomenon that most of the restoration of old buildings in the Citadel was undertaken.

#### *The Brochtorff Circle*

Another site which has hardly started to be affected by tourism is the Brochtorff Circle which is currently being excavated by a joint team from the universities of Bristol, Cambridge and Malta and the Museums Department. We have only had the odd group of tourists, mostly German, visiting during every season of excavation; but I foresee pressures, in my view justified, to make the site accessible to the general public, including the tourist.

For the sake of those who have never heard about it, the site consisted originally of a system of underground natural caves utilised as a collective cemetery during the Maltese Temple period (c. 4000-2500 B.C.). The cave system was bounded by a circular wall of large standing stones with a monumental entrance (Malone et al. 1993). It is turning out to be one of the most important sources of information on mortuary ritual among prehistoric societies, not only for Gozo but also for the rest of the Mediterranean.

Right now, however, it presents itself as a huge gaping hole in the ground with only a few surviving features to break the bright yellow monochromy of the local limestone. For this reason, I would have seen little potential in the site as a tourist attraction. Nevertheless, when, on the occasion of the Council of Europe Workshop on *Archaeological Parks* mentioned above, I asked Dr Peter Addyman, the Director of the Yorvick Centre of the city of York (which is recognised by all as a financially, as well as educationally, successful enterprise) whether he saw any possibility for such a drab and unwieldy site to be converted into a touristically attractive feature, I was surprised to find him quite enthusiastic with regard to its potential. The implicit proviso was, naturally, that a substantial financial outlay was required as an initial investment to make it viable.

Since, however, it has been decided by all the parties involved in the research project to limit the excavation to its present extent, for practical as well as scientific reasons, it is strongly recommended that the site be left in its present, albeit uninspiring, state and to take all the measures to protect it from natural degradation and human manipulation of any sort. If funds are available, on the other hand, enough information has been recorded during the excavation to make possible the physical reconstruction of a copy of the original complex somewhere else, following the Lascaux cave example.

#### *Ta' Ċenċ*

The venue of this very seminar is the object of a polemic on the advisability or otherwise of developing such a large section of Gozo's unspoilt habitat, such as the Ta' Ċenċ property, for tourism pur-

poses. This is certainly not the right time and place to go into the whole saga of the polemic. I shall limit myself to say that, following the strong reaction from several environment and heritage conscious quarters, both local and international, the development project proposed some 3-4 years ago has been dropped. The Ta' Ċenċ area has since been earmarked as a "national park" in the Structure Plan and intensive discussions have been taking place, and are still in progress, between the owners of the land and the Planning Directorate of the Planning Authority to produce what I gather to be a limited, 'sustainable' touristic development combined with a "heritage park". Limiting myself to my field of competence, I believe that a happy compromise can be reached which could be beneficial to both the archaeological heritage of Gozo and a truly upmarket touristic development. Provided it is handled properly, judiciously and sensitively, a tourism infrastructure requirement might bring about the first proper heritage park of the Maltese islands.

Lately, while doing some survey work on archaeological sites in Gozo, I noticed evidence of manifestly unauthorised digging in various archaeological sites. As I am not in a position to establish the identity of the perpetrator or perpetrators of this illegal exploration, I can only hope that this is not the work of some over-enthusiastic 'special interest' tourists. This is certainly not the kind of culturally motivated tourist we would wish to host.

## COMPUTER VISUALISATION

Finally, I would like to share with you some reflections on the current, state of the art developments taking place as a result of collaboration between scientists and archaeologists in their endeavour to solve problems connected with tourists and visitors in general. I have just returned from a seminar held in Bristol on *Computer Visualisation of Archaeological Evidence*. My participation in that seminar, as well as that of Mr Kevin Vella, Research Assistant in the Department of Computer Studies at our University, was made possible by the Maltese branch of the British Council, and is the outcome of a joint research project between the Universities of Malta and Bristol concerning the computer visualisation of the Ġgantija

temples and the Brochtorff Circle. Work on the project started last summer when a team from the University of East London conducted the preliminary on-site surveying and photogrammetry that will eventually enter into the specialised computer programme.

We have noted the deterioration of archaeological monuments from the intensive influx of visitors, who happen to be mostly tourists. We have even singled out the Ġgantija temples as one of the foremost victims of this threat. It is now firmly believed that this threat can be mitigated by making it possible to experience the archaeological monument without physically entering it. The system is intended to be interactive, thus allowing the user full discretion in deciding which way to move and what to explore visually. It is not difficult to foresee the enormous advantages such a system would provide in releasing most of, if not all, the pressure on at least the more sensitive parts of the archaeological monument.

There are as yet technological difficulties to be overcome, mostly connected with photo-realistic imagery and the use of parallel processing systems, but that is what scientific research is all about. There are, however, other difficulties of a more practical nature. In the first place, I am not sure how many tourists, especially the more seriously motivated ones, would content themselves with a computer experience, however realistic, instead of the real one. Once the decision to close a monument, or parts of it, has been taken for conservation reasons, however, there would probably be no better substitute than an interactive computer visualisation experience.

The second difficulty I foresee is intrinsic to the system itself. Being interactive it is limited to a single user at a time, and the cost of a system within the foreseeable future might be prohibitive for practical purposes. In view of this, the system could be extended to the big screen with, possibly and preferably, additional sound effects, producing experiences of recreating the past similar to those of recent cinema productions - such as *Jurassic Park* - or television ones - such as the *Quark* series on the human body broadcast by RAI. The main difference would be that the interactive factor is extended to the group undergoing the 'experience'. In which case one would be achieving a simulated conducted tour with the 'joystick' in the

hands of the group guide.

I would like to end my contribution with an appeal to the tourism industry, in particular the private sector, not only to manage itself in such a way as not to damage the archaeological heritage, but to be positively involved in the most proper management of this national resource by means of financial sponsorships of projects intended to develop and protect our archaeological heritage. By means of the present activity Löwenbräu is setting an example.

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# Cultural Tourism Development in Gozo: Lessons from Malta

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Throughout the Western World cultural tourism is increasing. In contrast to sun, sea and sand tourists, cultural tourists are interested in monuments, natural environment and customs that are different from those with which they are familiar.

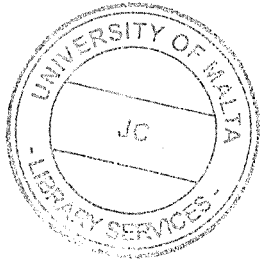
This trend is also reflected in Malta and Gozo. Compared to tourists in 1991, summer visitors in 1993 were more interested in cultural events, village *festas*, light entertainment, water sports and sea cruises (See Table 1).

**Table 1. Use Made of Maltese Tourist Products/Facilities:  
Percentage Change 1991-1993**

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	<i>Increase %</i>
Cultural Events	31
Village <i>Festas</i>	22
Tourist Information Office	17
Water Sports	15
Car Hire	14
Light Entertainment	14
Sea Cruises	13
Diving	88

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Source: Boissevain 1993

Gozo has always been a destination for cultural tourists. In 1993 roughly 700,000 foreigners and some 400,000 Maltese visited the



island.<sup>1</sup> Most were day trippers, but increasing numbers of foreign holiday makers were spending more time on Gozo. Thus the total visitor traffic to Gozo exceeds that to Malta. Because of the overall growth of cultural tourism, the proportion of tourists visiting Gozo in future will probably grow faster than the rate of increase for the Maltese islands as a whole. This means that it is important to look more closely at the impact of cultural tourists. Is cultural tourism sustainable?

### **SUSTAINABILITY AND TOURISM**

Economic and social development must be able to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (cf Bruntland 1987). In short, it must be sustainable. Tourism development should therefore also aim for sustainability. By sustainable tourism is meant tourism that respects the culture and the physical and human environment of the host society, benefits locals and involves them in decision making. In short:

If tourism is to be truly beneficial to all concerned – owners of the industry, employees, tourists and 'hosts' – and sustainable in the long-term, it must be ensured that the resources are not over-consumed, that natural and human environments are protected, that tourism is integrated with other activities, that it provides real benefits to the local communities – often the bases of the tourism enterprise – that local people are involved and included in tourism planning and implementation, and that cultures and peoples are respected (Eber 1992, p. 2).

Whereas seaside tourists are content to remain in settlements by the sea, the growing stream of cultural tourists wish to explore local culture. This often brings them into private, backstage areas where they impinge on local customs and lives. Cultural tourists, it would seem, appear to pose more of a threat to sustainability than

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1. Estimates kindly supplied by Tony Ellul of the Secretariat for Tourism and Leslie Vella of NTOM.

seaside tourists. But is this so? Does cultural tourism endanger the possibility of sustainable tourism?

## **CULTURAL TOURISM AND MDINA**

We recently carried out research on the impact of cultural tourism on Mdina, Malta (Boissevain, 1993 and Boissevain and Sammut, 1994). In 1993 some 750,000 tourists visited the town. Mdina has some characteristics in common with the combination of Victoria and your Cittadella as the object of the attention of hundreds of thousands of day trippers who spend from 20 minutes to an hour or so there sightseeing and shopping. Hence I thought it would be informative to share some of our findings with you. Perhaps you will find some parallels.

We found that the constant exposure to growing numbers of tourists and the effects this has on their lives and surroundings is creating a more negative attitude to tourism among a growing segment of Mdina's residents. Increasingly they feel that they are being asked to sacrifice their privacy and the tranquillity of their small, intimate town for the national good, without receiving any compensation from either government or tour operators.

Many complain that tourists constantly peer and sometimes even sneak, uninvited, into their houses; that they leave a mess behind; that they block the narrow roads when residents try to drive home; that they are often indecently dressed; and that encroaching commercial interests are changing the character of the town.

Mdina's residents are beginning to have enough of tourists. While all those we spoke to were proud that their town was so popular, they felt alienated by the behaviour of the public and the government's neglect of such basic problems as street lighting and policing.

These feelings are exacerbated when the town becomes the venue for special events – such as weddings, exhibitions, concerts, theatre productions and, particularly, re-invented historical pageants such

as the Mdina '93 festival. Such events attract large, mostly local, crowds, in addition to the daily hordes of tourists.

The Mdina '93 festival in some senses was an experiment that may well serve as a model to be repeated in other historical venues. It was an extravaganza that included flower displays, historical re-enactment, animated guided tours, museum exhibitions, folkloric skits, street theatre, puppet shows and a programme of evening concerts. The festival took place from nine in the morning until midnight and lasted a week. The tours and skits were repeated up to ten times daily. The festival attracted tens of thousands of visitors, most of whom were Maltese.

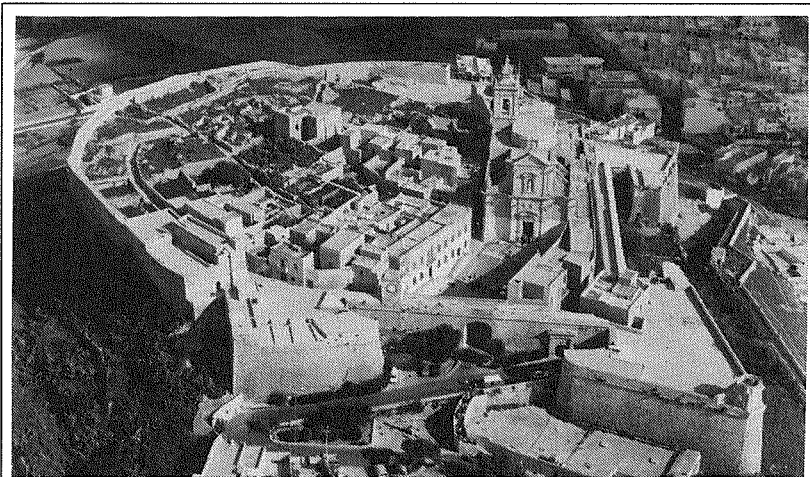
Mdina residents were obviously affected by the events. Two-thirds considered that their needs had not been taken into consideration. They complained of lack of secured parking, noise, crowding, dirt, rudeness and invasion of privacy. At times they felt imprisoned by the crowds. There was a general feeling that they had sacrificed a great deal, but had received nothing in return. One woman summed up the attitude in an emotional outburst:

We are used as carpets! ... The residents have a right to live. We want to live. When we air our views, outsiders tell us that Mdina is not ours but it belongs to the Maltese population. But we live here! We have a right to our city, *pajjiżna*.

Our conclusion was that at present tourism in Mdina is not sustainable and can not become sustainable unless measures are taken.

## ANOTHER LOOK AT CULTURAL TOURISM

Mdina is perhaps an extreme case of the impact of cultural tourism: less than 300 inhabitants of a small, non-commercial walled town invaded by well over 750,000 curious foreign visitors a year. But roughly as many visit the Cittadella annually, in addition to the hordes of Maltese trippers. Furthermore, plans are being mooted to develop other walled cities in Malta as tourist attractions. We might, therefore, reflect on what can be learned from the Mdina experience.



*An aerial view of the Cittadella*

Our research suggests that there are at least four negative structural characteristics of cultural tourism.

The first is the loss of privacy as tourists in search of other cultures cross thresholds and boundaries (sometimes, but not always, hidden) to penetrate authentic backstage areas. Other anthropologists have recently reported tourists invading domestic back regions. Such episodes will multiply as cultural tourism is marketed to the masses.

The second is the destruction by excessive tourist attention of the culture visitors come to examine. It does this by transforming natives into entrepreneurs, by destroying traditional tranquillity and physical environment, and by pricing the local population out of the area, thus transforming the attraction into a museum. This is occurring in the historical centres of Prague and Weimar. "Sustaining the resource base on which tourism depends must be the central focus of... sustainable tourism" (McKercher 1993, p.131).

The third is the hostility locals develop to tourism when they realize that they are being exploited: by a government so dependent on tourism that it commoditizes their way of life, customs and immediate surroundings; by tour operators who push them about to ac-

commodate their clients; by tourists who, partly through ignorance, flout local mores and prevent residents from going about their daily business if it disturbs their image of authenticity.

The fourth is the difficulty of charging admission fees to view towns and nature, so that some form of compensation can be given to those most directly affected. While a local authority can sell tickets to enter museums, theme parks and nature reserves, it does not charge tourists fees to wander about the old towns, quaint villages or countryside that also form part of the national heritage.

There is a fifth negative characteristic of cultural tourism. This is the arrogant, denigrating attitude of some visitors who derive satisfaction from looking down on others, from feeling that they and their own customs are vastly superior. In time, when the host community becomes aware of this attitude, it generates hostility.

This is not an imaginary scenario. I once overheard a Dutchman remark to his partner as they watched the Naxxar Good Friday procession leaving the church, "What a heathen event!"

Maltese sometimes also gave themselves airs when they went to Gozo. The hostility this created was sometimes startling. The 21 Gozitan VI Form Lyceum students who helped me with my research in 1978 all disliked Maltese trippers. This is what one wrote about them:

"They rate themselves as first class tourists, let alone they bring their lunch along with them. It is disgusting what they leave behind... pieces of bread floating on the sea, empty bottles and cans everywhere. They make the place their own and leave no space for anyone. There is also much reckless driving .... They behave badly because they think they are superior to the Gozitans. They ... play their radios and cassettes in full volume, shout and laugh with mouths wide open. They show absolutely no sign of any respect and education to the people of their sister island. They make fun of everything and everybody" (Boissevain 1979, p. 87).

At the Ta' Ċenc seminar "Tourism in Gozo" I was assured that the

behaviour and attitudes of Maltese trippers have changed since then. I hope so, but only further research can show if this is the case.

## **TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL TOURISM**

Can anything be done to further sustainable cultural tourism to Gozo and to avoid or correct situations like those described for Mdina? We believe it can.

To make a beginning, we recommend the following:

1. In future the organization of special tourist festivals held in local communities should include official representatives of the residents in the preliminary stages of decision making. If residents are adequately informed months prior to the events, they will get accustomed to them. Views and comments of the residents should be taken seriously.
2. A method must be developed to fund the restoration of private buildings in areas of particular interest to tourists. All visitors to Mdina or the Cittadella and local and foreign visitors to festivals such as Mdina '93, could be charged a modest entrance fee (for example, a 10c fee would annually earn Mdina and the Cittadella Lm75,000 each, while 25c would yield Lm187,500; nationals could be exempted upon presentation of an I.D. Card). This 'contribution' could be collected at the entrance and would serve to build a 'Restoration Fund'. Mdina and the Cittadella are part of our history. Building repair is costly and it is unfair to expect residents at their own expense to restore the towns for the enjoyment of tourists and all of Malta. Maltese and foreigners could thus work together towards the upkeep of Mdina and the Cittadella. Local Councils could administer the funds. Such entrance fees are increasingly being collected abroad. For example, Cambridge colleges, traditionally open to the public, have now begun to charge tourists to enter the grounds.
3. Tourist authorities and local communities should see that a cultural awareness campaign is carried out. Volunteers, workers, visitors and commercial tourist guides must be made aware that the built-up areas visited are inhabited. Residents have a right to their normal daily lives. Outsiders visiting are the guests of

- the community and they should behave as such. The media and brochures should be used to bring home the message that minimal interference with the daily lives of the residents would be greatly appreciated. As part of this campaign, a leaflet setting out the local do's and don'ts of decent dress and respect for privacy should be distributed to all tourists *en route* or upon arrival.
4. Periodic studies should be made of the 'use' made of such localities and residents' attitudes to signal and resolve problems. These should be conducted by trained researchers. The problems that loom are too complex to be understood and resolved on the basis of casual surveys.
  5. The Ministry of Tourism should immediately take steps to attempt to resolve residents' complaints in localities heavily frequented by tourists.
  6. Lastly, and most obviously, Local Councils, together with the Ministry of Tourism and the Planning Authority, must swiftly decide upon the long-term policy for the sustainable touristic and commercial development of communities favoured by tourists.

This policy should be based on proper planning and social and physical environmental impact studies. Until this policy is in place, no further commercial permits should be issued and all enterprises operating without proper permits should be closed.

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# **The Golden Hordes on the Isle of Calypso: If the Myth Fails**

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"Reliable sources close to the Ministry of Tourism say that during a Cabinet meeting held earlier this month, at which the Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism was present, it was decided that a call for international tenders is to be issued for specialist contractors interested in Malta's most ambitious engineering project. This project involves the moving of the Ġgantija megalithic temples from their original site in Xagħra to it-Tokk, in Victoria. Contemporaneously, an international competition is also being held for the best design for the restructuring of it-Tokk, including the demolition of some buildings surrounding this square".

This report comes from an imaginary edition of an equally imaginary newspaper. However, as I was reading this extract during the seminar "Tourism in Gozo" I noticed the different reactions on the faces of the audience. Some smiled taking it for a stupid and false report, others expressed consternation at the presumed scoop. The significance of this element of disbelief will become obvious as I proceed with this paper.

Popular tradition has identified Gozo as the mythological isle of Calypso - thus making Ulysses the best known reluctant tourist on the island. This popular imagination fits very well with the idea that Gozo is an excellent destination where cultural tourism can develop. Culture - together with ecology - is an obvious, and perhaps the only, tourist asset of Gozo. Thus without much ado, let me start with a brief sketch of what, in my view, constitutes cultural tourism.



Tourism has always been characterised by a search for what can be called "the other". Pilgrimages, which are one of the first forms of cultural tourism, were always marked by an explicit search for what sociologists of religion refer to as the "totally other", among whose attributes Rudolf Otto mentions *fascinans et tremendum*. This "other" is supposed to be authentic, distinct from the commonplace, and removed as far as possible from everyday experience. This is achieved through "symbols", both material and non-material. The tourist adventure is symbolically akin to an escathological Passover, an experience of what Kenelm Burridge calls "new heaven and new earth". It is no coincidence that David Lodge has entitled one of his novels, which essentially deals with a tourist experience in Hawaii, *Paradise News* (Lodge, 1991). Thus, in my view, the object of cultural tourism includes not only those elements of culture - consisting of both material and non-material symbols - which are the product of human activity, but also human activity itself. All this necessarily bears the mark of space and time. Most of us must have seen many tourists appreciating Gozo lace, an appreciation shown by taking the lace on their hand, feeling it, analysing it and comparing it with lace produced in their own or other countries. Similarly, we have also seen tourists gazing, taking photographs and video-taping old Gozitan women sitting on low stools at their doorstep holding a pillow on their knees manipulating the small lace-producing bobbins. Garry Hogg (1967) depicts this aspect of cultural tourism in one stroke: "Among its [Gozo's] many attractions are *the pillow-lace makers*" [Italics mine]. While the former experience can be exported (for examples in international craft exhibitions), the latter cannot.

In their search for these experiences, tourists crowd at historical sites, monuments, museums, festivals and celebrations, both secular and religious. Their touch of the foot of St. Peter's statue in the Vatican Basilica and their pose for a photograph against the walls of the Ġgantija temples are an expression of their wish to identify themselves with these material symbols. Their participation - quite often as close onlookers - in the Gozitan village *fešta*, expresses their desire is to be at one with the non-material symbol.

Tourists want also to have a feel of how people in other countries

live and die. The best expression of this can perhaps be found in agro-tourism. Agro-tourists are genuine anthropiles.

The importance attached to the symbolic experiences can be detected primarily from the behaviour patterns exhibited by tourists. It is, however, epitomised in souvenirs and postcards, which acquire the value of a relic rather than simply a memento.

This is as far as the tourist gaze is concerned (Urry,1990). However, if we consider what I will call "the locals' gaze", the presence of tourists in these symbolic environments threatens to destroy the latter's attraction. Symbols should not only be seen but read, and very often the tourist can only see but not read. Being foreigners, they are counted among the uninitiated. Consequently, quite often, tourists only get a restricted, or even thwarted, meaning of the symbol or the symbolic expression. It is here that the ambivalent character of cultural tourism lies. What for the locals is a celebration, for the tourists often becomes a show. The size of tourist audience sometimes outnumbers the congregation. After a period of time this will change the meaning of the ritual for the congregation itself. What MacCannel refers to as "staged authenticity" will often be the result.

In modern tourism one can also identify another important change: the tour has become a guided-tour. This entails the introduction of an element of brokerage and an important culture-broker, namely the tourist guide. This brokerage tends to commoditise culture, and the financial beneficiaries of this process are not the locals but the brokers. Guiding tourists has in fact become a licensed gainful occupation. If one analyses the financial contribution of tourists to local *festas*, one finds that it is practically non-existent and from my research in San Pawl il-Bahar and Dingli, I can say that locals do not expect it.

Another aspect of the ambivalence of cultural tourism can be detected in the fact that it can be at the same time both functional and dysfunctional. It is functional because it makes locals aware of their historical and anthropological heritage. It also provides an income which, at least partially, contributes in financial terms for the con-



".. They work with almost unbelievable speed, their deft fingers flicerking like lizards' tails over their pillow so that their multiform bobbins tinkle like miniature castanets". Hogg, (1967) p. 199.

servation of all forms of symbolic culture.

It is dysfunctional because the presence of the golden hordes is harmful to the monuments. Tourists set in motion social and economic forces which bring about what the Italians would call *omologazione*, - which, for lack of a better term I will call "levelling" of the local culture. In the process, specific cultural traits are either lost or positively destroyed.

What about the Island of Calypso? For centuries, Gozo was isolated and less populated than Malta. In terms of cultural tourism, this was, and is, a blessing in disguise. I am not one of those who say that Gozo is interesting because it is quaint. I think it charming because it is neither superior nor inferior but different. The mythological name of Calypso metaphorically represents "the other" which the modern tourist seeks most. What tourist literature calls the four-S's of tourism - sun, sand, sea and sex are found in abundance in many other tourist destinations which range from the Bahamas, to the mile-long beach in Queensland, Australia, from Tunisia to the Riviera Romagnola, in Italy.

What is peculiar to Gozo is the warmth and industriousness of its people, its rhythm of life, its silent yet living spaces, its countryside sparsely dotted with people earning their living, the total absence of heavy industry, the festive celebrations, its history carved in megalithic temples, the delightful village churches and narrow winding streets of Rabat and other villages. The sensation which all this produces in the tourist is an experience which a foreign friend of mine who has lived in various metropolis around the globe, expressed while we were having dinner at Xaghra square: "This is heaven!"

The odyssey of the contemporary tourist is directed towards destinations as mythical as the isle of Calypso. In my view, the economic destiny of Gozo stands and falls with its myth. The Director of the London Office of the National Organisation of Tourism was recently reported as having stated that NTOM's "marketing programme is to show that our islands offer not just sun and beaches" in my view these beaches should not be promoted because they are too small and already overcrowded - "but also an infinite variety and richness for the discerning traveller interested in history and antiquity, the arts and religion." (*The Times*, 26 January 1994).

This programme is however being threatened in a twofold manner. One threat comes from the fact that the tourist is being given the economic role of a customer. And as the saying goes the customer is always right! It is both socially and sociologically possible to redefine the role of tourist. If we don't want to become a nation of workers relegated to do the menial jobs, we should define our role as host and that of the tourists as guests. This would strengthen our cultural identity which in turn would make us culturally more "attractive" to tourists. The "levelling" of culture to a least common factor can in this manner be averted.

Another threat is being posed by some of the proposed hotel development in Gozo. The hotel which has hosted the seminar "Tourism in Gozo" can, in my view, pride itself as the most successful five-star hotel in both Malta and Gozo. No one can argue that this is because "Ta' Ċenċ" is an international name in the tourist industry such as Hilton International, the Sheraton or the Hyatt and so on. Its strength rests on its distinctive characteristics, namely, its size,

its architecture and its location, rather than on its connection with an international hotel chain. The *genius loci* has been carefully respected by its structure. I am referring to Hotel Ta' Ċenċ for two reasons. First, I think that it should be considered as an icon representing the manner in which tourism in Gozo should continue to develop: small in size and strong in identity. Both qualities are essential. Secondly, the name of "Ta' Ċenċ" has recently been associated with a proposed growth, in a literal and metaphorical sense, which would have harmed both the original enterprise, the ecology of the site and the tourist industry in Gozo.

Any further increase in the number of hotel accommodation in Gozo risks the danger of more crowding by tourists and Maltese residents. This will have an adverse effect on the island's way of life. Large number of tourists in an island the size of Gozo is definitely dysfunctional. It has been proved that small is beautiful. The Structure Plan's guidelines for the safeguard of the coastline and valleys should be scrupulously adhered to. Any huge project in any sector of the Gozitan economy should be examined under a microscope. Otherwise future generations will look back in anger on the perpetrators of the destruction of the Calypsonian myth and repeat with the Romans "*Quod non fecerunt barbari, fecit ....*" and I will leave it to future generations to name him or them!"

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# **Tourism Development in Gozo: A Sustainable Approach**

**Anthony Ellul**

*Project Planner, Department of Tourism*

## **INTRODUCTION**

One of the most common words used is the word tourism. It seems that the word tourism is often used as a justification for various improvements. We need to improve the roads because of tourism, a cleaner environment because of tourism, an improved public transport service because of tourism, and one can go on to mention other examples. However, if various individuals are asked to define tourism to see what they mean when using the term, many would come out with different answers and some probably conflicting.

## **TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

When talking about tourism it is important to understand what we are talking about. The United Nations' definition of tourism is the following:

The sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction of tourists, business suppliers, host governments and host communities in the process of attracting and hosting these tourists and other visitors.

Thus tourism is not only hotels and restaurants, it is not only airports and roads. These are just part of a whole system which includes other elements such as transportation, attractions, service facilities, information/promotion, the host population and the tourists themselves. These elements interact continually with each other and with other external factors, and coordination between these

elements is important to ensure a positive travel experience. This is what is usually referred to as the *Tourism System*. This is not the place to go into further detail on the subject but I feel it is important to point this out to show that the development of tourism is a much more complex issue than many think it is.

The other term which I wish to explain is the term Sustainable. Again this is another term frequently being used to direct the future course of any development. Sustainable development has been defined as:

development that meets the needs of the present community without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

It therefore takes a long term approach towards development and ensures that the natural and cultural resources are not depleted and degraded, thus depriving the future inhabitants of their benefits, and secondly, destroying that which has attracted visitors in the first place. Sustainable development does not stop development but seeks measures that would integrate development with environment and cultural protection. In fact the main pillars of sustainable development are the following:

- *Ecological sustainability* - which ensures that development is compatible with the maintenance of essential ecological processes, biological diversity and biological resources
- *Social and cultural sustainability* - which ensures that development increases people's control over their own lives, is compatible with the culture and values of people affected by it, and maintains and strengthens community identity.
- *Economic sustainability* - which ensures that development is economically efficient and that resources are managed so that they can support future generations:

## PLANNING FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

At present Gozo has a bed capacity of 2268 beds which is only 5.2% of the total bed capacity available on the Maltese Islands. The increase in beds projected up to 1997 in Gozo is of 436 and this will



*The role of Gozo in the Tourism Plan is to offer an alternative experience to the tourist within the overall Maltese tourism product. Gozo is more tranquil than Malta.*

increase slightly the share of beds in Gozo to 5.4%. Around 30 % of the beds available in Gozo will be in the 4 and 5 Star hotel accommodation.

The Structure Plan states that "the general strategy is to encourage economic development, constrain further urbanisation and give much greater importance to conservation and the quality of the environment....." With reference to the further development of tourist facilities, the Plan provides for the development of a national park with an emphasis on nature and a multi-ownership tourism hotel at Ta' Ċenċ, the expansion of tourist facilities and accommodation at Marsalforn, Xlendi and Mgarr and at other sites subject to further studies. But the plan also states that any further development of tourist accommodation should be confined to the conversion of property in favoured positions in existing built-up areas.



This is the role the Tourism Master Plan consultants saw that Gozo should play:

Gozo offers the country (Maltese Islands) its main opportunity to create a quality resort and attract a high spending and different type of tourist ..... The role of Gozo in the Tourism Plan is to offer an alternative experience to the tourist within the overall Maltese tourism product. Gozo is more tranquil than Malta and it now has the opportunity to develop as a complimentary destination. The development of Gozo should not be rushed.

I think no one disagrees that the goal for tourism development in Gozo should be to develop a high quality product that would attract a higher socio-economic tourist who would expect a quality travel experience. Thus planning for tourism should aim at achieving this goal. I would like to point out at this stage that while tourism to Malta is primarily International Tourism, on the other hand tourism to Gozo is of two types – Domestic (Maltese crossing over to Gozo for a day trip or a longer stay) and International (Foreign tourists crossing to Gozo for a day trip or longer stay). In my analysis I will not distinguish between the two, however I wish to point out that a study on the contribution to and impacts of tourism, both domestic and international, on Gozo needs to be carried out. For example, although statistics show how many tourists stay in the Gozitan hotels and complexes, there is no data about those staying in holiday flats, farmhouses and villas. This and other information is important particularly when planning for tourism development in Gozo.

Before proceeding further I wish to refer to two research studies carried out by the Department of Tourism. The first was a study carried out in 1991 on tourists staying in Gozo and day-trippers. The second was a sociological study to assess the attitudes of the local community towards tourism. The first study was carried out during the summer months and therefore the respondents were summer tourists. Some important results are that:

- 64.7% stated that they spent their entire holiday in Gozo.
- 70% had made their own travel arrangements

The main types of accommodation used by the respondents were as follows:

Apartments	43.2%
Friends/relatives	8.3%
Villas and farmhouses	9.5%
Own property	2.9%
Hotel accommodation	24.6%

This shows that there is a high percentage of tourists staying in self-catering accommodation as against serviced accommodation. This can be confirmed by NTOM's Visitor Profile surveys carried out last year.

- Respondents thought that Gozo needed more entertainment during the summer, whilst respondents had positive comments on the quality of the environment.
- Gozo's character is the main feature that attracts visitors in the first place. 14.9% stated so. For 11.6% the island was recommended to them, probably by satisfied previous visitors.

From the day-trippers survey, 71.9% visited the island on a tour, 20% used their own transport, whilst 5.7% used public transport.

The main sites visited during the day tour include the Citadel (221), Ġgantija (190), Ta' Pinu (148), Crafts Village (156) and Gozo Heritage (148). The number of respondents was 256.

The main positive and negative comments made regarding the day trip were the following:

<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
Friendly atmosphere	Building Activity
Cleanliness	Public Transport
Tranquillity	Tours are rushed
Not so commercialised	

The second survey sought to assess the attitude of the local community towards tourism. About 9% of the respondents were Gozitans and I will briefly present the results.

- 95.8% like the presence of tourists and think that tourism is a very important sector, primarily because of economic benefits.

- 77.1% feel a sense of satisfaction when meeting with tourists, whilst 62.5% stated that they relate very well with tourists and 31.3% relate well.
- All respondents think that the number of tourists during the low and shoulder months should increase, whilst 93.8% think that the number of tourists in the summer months should increase.
- 79.2% feel that the islands should be attracting more high spending tourists, whilst 35.4% think that the present tourists spend a lot and behave rather well. 56.3% think that tourists do not spend much but behave well.
- Most of the respondents think that tourism has had a good effect on the local culture, archaeological sites, entertainment, local cooking, recreational pursuits, traditional customs and local crafts. On the other hand most respondents think tourism has had a bad effect on public decency. Family cohesion and morality are not influenced much by tourism.

A high percentage of the Gozitan respondents think that tourism brings economic growth, more leisure facilities, more cultural activities, a stronger national identity and more infrastructural investments.

Whilst 14.6% stated that there is tourism development in their locality, 54.2% stated that there is none. 31.3 % said that their locality can take more development and the same percentage wished there was more tourism development. 10.4% think the present situation is ideal whilst 16.7% do not wish more development. Notwithstanding this, there is a relatively high disapproval towards certain tourist facilities as the table below indicates.

	Strongly Approve	Approve	Indifferent	Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove
Hotel	29.2%	6.3%	4.2%	18.8%	41.7%
Bar	20.8%	2.1%	2.1%	25.0%	50.0%
Restaurant	20.8%	2.1%	8.3%	22.9%	45.8%
Disco	4.2%	4.2%	0.0%	16.7%	75.0%
Souvenir Shop	35.4%	25.0%	22.9%	6.3%	10.4%

On the other hand respondents stated that tourism development creates negative impacts on various facilities, particularly the infrastructure, as the two tables in the appendix show. There seems to be some contradiction in wanting more development but at the same time disapproving of certain facilities.

### **A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH**

Tourism to Gozo should develop within a framework of sustainable development. Tourism is not the only sector of economic activity in Gozo. There are other important sectors, such as industry and agriculture. These sectors too have a role to play in the economic development of the island and these too create pressures on the scarce resources available, particularly infrastructure, finance, land and human resources. What is termed as the Integrated Planning approach is important to ensure the sustainable development of Gozo in the future. Through this interactive planning process there will be a careful monitoring of Gozo's development. At the national level, this type of planning would be concerned with tourism development policies and how these could be integrated into the development policies of other sectors and vice versa.

The integrated approach to tourism development also ensures that all the various demand and supply factors of tourism are coordinated to achieve a concerted approach to developing the tourist product. It will also integrate tourism into the overall development policies and plans of the island. It is important to establish the role tourism should play in the development of the island. The integrated planning approach ensures that the infrastructure, as well as resources, particularly human resources, can meet the demands from the various development sectors. Unplanned development can bring a shortage or over supply of certain resources. This may reflect negatively on the tourist product.

Another important aspect which needs to be given greater importance is the Carrying Capacity issue.

The carrying capacity with regards to tourism is that level beyond which visitor satisfaction starts to drop

and which will bring unacceptable changes and impacts to both the host community and the cultural and natural resources.

It is difficult to set this threshold level and say that Gozo cannot take more visitors beyond a certain number. However, it is important that through scientific research aimed at assessing visitor satisfaction, community attitudes towards tourism development and measuring impacts on the various resources, one can monitor the consequences of increased development and immediately sense whether visitor satisfaction is decreasing and the host community's tolerance limits have been exceeded. There is also a physical carrying capacity and this will depend on the infrastructure available and its limitations, particularly supply of water and electricity. It is important to identify the limitations of Gozo space is one, so that from the start a level of development can be set.

From the surveys carried out by NTOM an average 65% of tourists to the Maltese Islands visit Gozo on a day trip. Therefore in 1993 the number of excursionists to Gozo could be estimated at around 689,000 or an average of 1887 per day. In the summer months, daily excursionists to Gozo can exceed the 2000 figure. Working on the 1992 figures, the number of tourists to Gozo (i.e. those staying at least one night in Gozo) is estimated to be around 60,000, and this is a conservative figure. In the peak summer months this may mean that around 1800 tourists stay in Gozo each day, and around 2000 excursionists visit the island each day.

The Carrying Capacity can vary from one season to another and depends on tourists' behavioural patterns, facility design and management, the dynamic character of the environment and the changing attitudes of the community. Through careful management and planning of tourism flows the island can increase its carrying capacity. Capacity cannot be used as an absolute limit but as a means to identify critical thresholds which need attention and by doing so remove obstacles where possible and apply controls.

Sustainable Development of Tourism is achieved through an Asset-Led Approach rather than a demand or market-led approach. Tour-

ism in the Maltese Islands has developed very much on the latter approach, increasing facilities to meet the continual demand for more beds during the seventies. The Market-Led approach examines the needs of the customers and tries to satisfy those needs in a profitable manner. In tourism this does not work. The Asset-Led approach to tourism development first examines the destination's assets and resources available and then seeks to develop tourist market segments that are attracted by such resources. This means that tourism development stems from the destination's product offer rather than from an emphasis on promotion. This approach will ensure the appropriate use of and not the degradation of the resource. In this way there can be no Product-Market mismatch.

The comments received from tourists with regards to Gozo is that it is still a relatively unspoilt island and it has to remain so. Tourism will not survive in the long-term if Gozo caters for both the mass tourist as well as the 'quality tourist'. Going for mass tourism will destroy the environmental quality and character of the island. This means that accommodation projects should be of a restricted size and would attract niche markets rather than depend heavily on the large mass tourism tour operators.

Day tripper activity in Gozo needs a more managed and planned approach. Day tours usually follow the same pattern and visit the same localities, resulting in too many visitors at the same place at the same time. This is creating various impacts. Visitors will not be achieving the desired experience from the visit whilst the resource succumbs to pressures as a consequence of this crowding effect on site. The industry needs to collaborate more in this respect and create a varied programme and pattern of tours. A *laissez-faire* attitude not only damages the resource but also denies visitors the quality experience expected.

Tourism development needs to be seen from a different angle. Rather than a means to achieve economic stability immediately, tourism should be an activity that seeks to protect the social character and the environmental resources of the island. Unfortunately, tourism is still seen solely as an economic activity. This is a mentality that needs to change. Tourism development is a gradual process and needs

to adapt itself to external influences which very often are not under the control of the tourism bodies. It has to support the needs of the local community which has to live with the tourist development. This must not compete with the local community for the scarce resources. On the other hand it should enhance total community life. Through this partnership tourism can develop with minimal opposition from the residents. Tourism cannot be given a cosmetic approach, but rather, requires a deep community-wide integration of every facet.

### CONCLUSION

Gozo still has the potential for further development of its tourism industry. However, it is important for this growth to follow a planned approach to development. It is important that tourism relates with other sectors of development and vice-versa, to avoid pressures on the infrastructure and a situation where sectors compete for the scarce resources. Development should be sensitive to the environment and contribute to minimising environmental problems by, for example, treating sewage at source, reducing solid waste and using recycled materials whilst respecting the character of the island and its inhabitants. This can only be achieved by adopting a sustainable approach to tourism development ensuring the survival of the resource in the long term.

**APPENDIX**

**Tourism Impacts in the Summer Months**

Facility	Positive	Indifferent	Negative	Cannot say
Electricity	2.1%	12.5%	85.4%	
Water	2.1%	10.4%	87.5%	
Road traffic	4.2%	43.8%	47.9%	4.2%
Sea traffic	41.7%	25.0%	29.2%	4.2%
Air traffic	58.3%	3.3%	6.3%	2.1%
Parking space	4.2%	35.4%	58.3%	2.1%
Crowding	37.5%	33.3%	29.2%	
Cleanliness	12.5%	75.0%	12.5%	
Level of noise	8.3%	75.0%	16.7%	
Quality of air	6.3%	50.0%	43.8%	
Leisure facilities	89.6%	6.3%	2.1%	2.1%
Restaurants	91.7%	6.3%		2.1%
Tranquillity	12.5%	64.6%	22.9%	
Shopping	33.3%	62.5%	4.2%	
Level of prices	2.1%	72.9%	25.0%	
Beaches	43.8%	18.8%	37.5%	
Public transport	22.9%	35.4%	41.7%	
Public gardens	43.8%	54.2%	2.1%	
Cost of living		81.3%	16.7%	2.1%

**Tourism Impacts in the Winter Months**

Facility	Positive	Indifferent	Negative	Cannot say
Electricity		47.9%	35.4%	16.7%
Water		43.8%	37.5%	18.8%
Road traffic	4.2%	60.4%	16.7%	18.8%
Sea traffic	22.9%	56.3%	2.1%	18.8%
Air traffic	33.3%	47.9%		18.8%
Parking space	2.1%	68.8%	10.4%	18.8%
Crowding	25.0%	54.2%	2.1%	18.8%
Cleanliness	4.2%	75%	2.1%	18.8%
Level of noise	8.3%	70.8%	2.1%	18.8%
Quality of air	2.1%	41.7%	35.4%	20.8%
Leisure facilities	75.0%	2.1%	2.1%	20.8%
Restaurants	79.2%			20.8%
Tranquillity	39.6%	39.6%		20.8%
Shopping	4.2%	75.0%		20.8%
Level of prices	2.1%	62.5%	14.6%	20.8%
Public transport	16.7%	56.3%	8.3%	18.8%
Public gardens	43.8%	37.5%		18.8%
Cost of living		66.7%	14.6%	18.8%



# **Proposals by Four Gozitan Hoteliers**

**PAOLO BARTOLOZZI**

*General Manager, Ta' Cenc Hotel, Gozo*

Since my arrival in this island, which is one of the most, if not the most, beautiful in the Mediterranean, I have been facing a variety of problems. Some are common to hoteliers all over the world but three of them are peculiar to this island. These are:

- handling agents;
- coordination of tourist activities;
- training of local labour and foreign labour.

## *Handling Agents*

Tour operator market represents a significant percentage of our sales. Unfortunately most of the tour operators are represented by handling agents in Malta who deal with the ground handling and the relationship with the final user. The flourishing of these companies stems from the reluctance of the individual hotels to invest heavily in marketing. The handling agent, on the other hand, is one further intermediary between the supplier of the service and the utilizer, generating further cost. Needless to say, such agents are there to sell Malta and then Gozo, since their income depends on the number of accommodated clients and Malta has 95% of the available beds. Obviously, during the shoulder or lean months, very little business is generated in Gozo, since the hotels in Malta are utilised first.

It is therefore imperative that Gozitan handlers be encouraged and helped. Subsidies in many business activities are available in these islands, but none are extended to tourist operations.

The advantages of having Gozitan handlers would include (a) reduction of handling costs (b) better service for the final user who

will have the tour operator representative always available (at the moment this is possible only for some tourist operators who actually pay one representative during the summer months but the services are not all year round) and (c) better penetration of Gozo on the tourist market, not as an appendix of Malta (d) better planning of day tours and trips.

One should not exclude the possibility of such a handler being a company formed with the actual participation of the hoteliers, the transport rental companies, restaurants, catering operations, and possibly the Government tourist office.

The integration between public service and private companies can lead to economies of scale in marketing, better planning of tourist strategies on an island-wide basis, and participation (lobbying) in government decisions concerning tourist activities.

#### *Coordination of Tourist Activities*

Tourist activities in Gozo need to be coordinated with regard to:

- opening period policies
- transport policies
- marketing policies
- general enhancement of the Island.

Gozo is a small island, and no individual company has the size and the financial power to perform, in an effective way, real penetration on the international market. The problem is especially severe during the shoulder and lean months.

Various attempts have been made to create an organisation capable of projecting the island of Gozo as a unique product, to enable it to enter in the very large convention and incentive market, characteristic of the Autumn and Winter months. The size, quality of products and location are factors that potentially make Gozo an ideal conference site, especially in Autumn and Winter.

The problem to overcome is a cultural one, and has nothing to do with competition. Division between people, families and compa-

nies is having a negative impact on the market and is giving rise to a loss of business. An objective and neutral organisation, such as the Ministry for Gozo, should be instrumental in the creation of a platform where operators can discuss, negotiate, but especially solve problems associated with divisions for the benefit of everybody involved in the trade.

#### *Training of Local and Foreign Labour*

Hotel Ta' Cenc has been investing heavily in training of staff, both on practical and conceptual skills. Such training is mandatory because the amount of qualified staff coming out from tourism schools is insufficient for the needs of the Island. We are therefore forced to employ people from other economic sectors.

Help from the government is needed in this regard, at least by financing the social cost of these trainees. Also, because of the lack of trained staff, ease of obtaining short-term work permits for foreign staff would be very beneficial to the industry.

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### **VICTOR J. BORG**

*Chairman and Managing Director*

*V. J. Borg Enterprises*

The hotel industry in Gozo is quite secure, both from the investor's point of view and also career-wise for those who opt to work in hotels. As a matter of fact, Gozo is sold mostly by word of mouth recommendations and this is borne out by the comparatively low rate of complaints which Gozitan hoteliers receive from their clients, a relatively high percentage of whom are repeat visitors.

#### *Upgrading of Facilities*

Over the past twenty years, tourist facilities – hotels, apartments, restaurants, car-hire, diving centres and others – have increased and upgraded and this has been possible through the development in the infrastructure carried out by the public administration.

Now that the infrastructure has been strengthened one would like to see the upgrading of places of attraction on the fringes like Ghajn Barrani, Wied il-Ghasri, the Panoramic Road, Hondoq ir-Rummien and Ramla Bay.

#### *Winter and Special Interest Tourism*

Two important, and sometimes overlapping, types of tourists to consider in the case of Gozo are winter tourism and special interest tourism. In this regard I would like to see a Conference Centre purposely built by the government to attract conference tourism. I am sure that the success of the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Malta could be repeated in Gozo. This type of project would require public sector support, since the investment outlay involved would be too hefty for an individual business organisation.

The attraction of winter tourism also calls for the construction of a golf course. Portugal and Madeira have registered successes in this regard, on the strength of the golfing facilities they offer.

#### *Human Resources*

Young students should be encouraged to undertake studies leading to careers in the tourism industry. Special emphasis should be laid on the technical aspect, especially in the maintenance of electronic equipment, an area where local entrepreneurs are still very much dependent on expertise from the mainland.

More incentives should also be given to students of the Institute of Tourism Studies and the training of multilingual hotel managers would also enhance the quality of the service we can offer.

#### *Bureaucracy*

It is difficult to understand why, to have a hotel licensed, one has to take a long and seemingly endless bureaucratic route entailing a long list of different permits. This problem should be looked into and possibly simplified. With catering outlets mushrooming all over Gozo, some form of control should be introduced if standards of

service are to be kept high, but bureaucracy should be kept to a minimum.

### *The Future*

We all have to strive to keep the prosperous situation prevailing on a steady course. If the tourism industry in Gozo loses its impetus, it would become difficult to halt a downward slide in which we shall all be losers.

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## **JOSEPH P. PORTELLI**

*Director, John Portelli Group of Companies*

One of the major problems facing the Gozitan tourist industry is seasonality. In this brief presentation, I shall dwell mostly on this issue.

It is the policy of the National Tourism Organisation of Malta to reduce the dependence of tourism on the traditional sun and sea holiday. In this respect, we must admit that Gozo drags far behind Malta in its facilities that can help attract visitors in the shoulder and lean months.

### *Air and Sea Transport to and from Gozo*

Through initiatives by the Gozo Ministry, many projects and improvements in the island have taken place. The helicopter service, to mention but one that has had a great success, has given us Gozitan hoteliers the opportunity to show that for a good cause we are able to unite and back wholeheartedly and financially a project that can be beneficial to our island. However, there is still room for improvement. The proposed new helicopter terminal must be of the same category as that of the Malta International Airport. It should be made possible for passengers to check in or clear their luggage in Gozo without having to handle it in Malta. The common rated system used in Switzerland should be introduced for destination Gozo,

meaning that passengers taking an international flight to or from Malta with an ongoing connection to or from Gozo pay exactly the same fare as if the departure point or final destination was Malta. With this system implemented, the helicopter fare would be paid by the international airline carrying the passenger to or from Malta. This will obviously be also highly beneficial to Gozo residents.

On the Malta/Gozo ferries, suitable trolleys should be provided for passengers carrying luggage from one end of the boat to the other.

### *Intelligent Development*

Every effort should be made to protect Gozo's natural beauty, but this must not be at the expense of intelligent development which is vital for our island. One should never forget that when God made man, He did not expect him to remain undressed. Like the human body, we can make Gozo look more beautiful by decently dressing it with the love and care it deserves. We have to bear in mind that in the Mediterranean alone, we face very tough competition from destinations well developed and prepared for the same tourism we are after. We need more seaside hotels and serviced beaches, which I am sure will also be appreciated by the local people.

### *Tourism Organisation*

Like many other tourist resorts, even smaller than Gozo, all over Europe, our island needs its own Gozo Tourism Organisation operating as part of the National Tourist Organisation of Malta, but with full responsibility to represent and market the island of Gozo both in Malta and overseas.

The participation of hoteliers and other business people involved in tourism is of great importance for the success of this organisation.

I am sure that, as already shown in the case of the helicopter service, Gozo hoteliers and others in the tourist industry will not hesitate to back such an organisation.

Tour operators featuring Gozo must have their representative based

in Gozo, directly or through their handling agent in Malta. With the elimination of the extra costs presently involved for the visitor to arrive in Gozo, the handling agent in Malta should then find no difference between handling a visitor arriving in Malta or in Gozo.

#### *Facilities and Attractions*

A Conference and Incentives brochure should be produced, featuring the conference facilities that hotels and other organisations can offer, the theatres, the Gozo Sports Complex and other facilities.

With the increase of interest in Gozo from hiking and cycling groups, bicycle and pedestrian lanes should be provided on main roads. Footpaths in the country should be improved with direction signs indicating distances.

Gozo's beautiful theatres should be encouraged, with more financial assistance, to stage more operas and other live shows and festivals. A calendar of events, possibly covering the period from November to May, should feature at least two events monthly, preferably once weekly. This will not only give more opportunity for Gozitan drama enthusiasts to pursue their interest, but will also offer additional cultural attractions to tourists.

A Gozo Discovery Bus Service should be introduced throughout the year, which I am sure, the Gozo Bus Association will find very profitable. The route should have signed pick-up points close to hotels and tourist attractions with frequency of service changing according to season. The passenger, having bought a daily, weekly or monthly pass will be able to board and leave the bus at any pick-up point just by showing his pass.

Gozo can benefit from the 110,000 senior tourists that visit Malta between November and March, not only through the Theatre Calendar, the also through other functions jointly organised by hotels, with the guests in one hotel having the possibility of going to another hotel on a particular day for a particular function. This sharing, or, if you prefer, interchange, will go a long way in filling idle time and giving our guests a true taste of Gozo.

### *Up-market Facilities*

If we wish Gozo to really become an up-market destination we must offer certain up-market facilities, such as a golf course and an underwater park, which are too costly for any one private business to take up on its own. Most hotels have themselves provided many facilities which in many European resorts are provided by the public authorities, because on their own they are not financially feasible. Gozitan hotels have taken the responsibility and the risks that go with it, to build and provide facilities such as tennis courts, squash courts, gymnasiums and so on.

Many operators in the tourist business in Gozo aspire to move up-market. Rightly so. We are still in time to do this. I am sure that with a goodwill and dedication, from both the public and the private sectors, we will succeed in improving our product to the desired level.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, Gozo could be transformed into a more interesting place all year round attracting more visitors in all seasons. The suggestions put forward in this presentation are aimed at making Gozo a better place, not only for tourists, but, first and foremost for ourselves living on this beautiful island.

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## **SAMMY RAPA**

*General Manager, Mgarr Hotel*

In this presentation, I shall list a number of proposals aimed at making Gozo a better tourist destination.

The new high class hotels in Gozo have exposed certain problem areas, the main one being human resources. It is difficult to find trained personnel ready to take on the jobs offered in the hotel industry. This despite the existence of catering schools both in Malta and Gozo. In my opinion a review of the programmes presently offered is called for, so as to ensure that the education system in



Malta and Gozo caters more efficiently and effectively for the requirements of the tourist industry.

### *Upgrading of Facilities*

In the process of upgrading facilities - largely through the efforts of the Ministry for Gozo - the now established air link joining the two islands has set the sights high. Even so, there is room for further improvement in the services being offered both in Gozo and at the Malta International Airport.

Another area where improvements are desired to further upgrading of facilities in Gozo is in the leisure area. A casino and a golf course would go a long way to attract high class tourism.

### *Human Resources*

Although Gozo is being advertised as an up-market destination, day trippers who come to Gozo are being offered restaurant meals at ridiculous rates. This type of tourism certainly leaves a negative impact on the product. With the higher class tourist, the high influx of this type of day tourism from the mainland does not go down well.

### *Good Service is Essential*

One clear message which seems to have come out of the seminar on "Tourism in Gozo" is that the best advertising is by word of mouth. In other words personal recommendation is a very effective form of promotion - and for this to happen good service is essential.

### *Conclusion*

During the past years Gozo has made great strides forward in all aspects including tourism. In contrast with the hotel situation about twenty years back, when Gozo had just one hotel, today we have a range of hotels of all classes. This is due to the potential that Gozo now offers the investor, mostly through the upgraded infrastructure and the good qualities of the Gozitan work-force.

# Epilogue

**Paul Debattista**

*General Manager, Löwenbräu Malta*

It is a great honour to me and the company which I represent to have played an important role in staging the seminar on Tourism in Gozo, during which the papers contained in this book were presented.

The Gozo seminar was the first major activity that Löwenbräu has organised with organisations in the public sector. We sincerely hope that our collaboration with the University of Malta and the Ministry for Gozo will promote scholarship and practical improvements in our society.

This effort is only the beginning of much wider cooperation in the future. In fact we intend to make this seminar an annual event. Every year, a topic of general interest will be chosen, and scholars, practitioners and others interested in the subject will be invited to participate.

This is not just a public relations exercise but it is the Company's belief that private business should have a social role. This participation by Löwenbräu Malta Ltd reflects the Company's commitment to contribute to the well-being and further development of the community of which we form part.

This year we have chosen tourism as the subject of the seminar, because this sector is a very important one in the economy of the Maltese islands. Last year more than one million visitors came to our shores. Earnings from tourism form a large proportion of the country's foreign exchange earnings from trade. Tourism also creates considerable employment in Malta and Gozo.

Parallel with tourism development, the country's infrastructure has

been improved and upgraded. This is an on-going process which is of prime importance for the provision of a good quality tourism product. Inevitably, this development has had a major impact on the environment, which is an area that has to be considered when analysing the effect of tourism on a particular country.

Another aspect of tourism which we need to look into is its impact on our social and cultural heritage.

The idea of the organisers in holding this seminar was to bring together scholars, policy makers, managers and others involved in the tourism sector, to share ideas and to inform themselves on the economic, environmental, social and cultural aspects of tourism in Gozo. We strongly believe that this cross-fertilisation of ideas is beneficial to the tourism sector itself and to the people who operate in it.

I would like to thank the Minister for Gozo, the Hon. Dr. Anton Tabone and Professor Lino Briguglio of the Gozo Centre of the University of Malta, for their continued backing and for their enthusiasm in making the seminar possible, and in producing this book with the proceedings of the seminar.

I hope that the papers included in this book do not only make interesting reading to scholars and practitioners involved in tourism but also contribute to the promotion of sustainable tourism.

## THE CONTRIBUTORS

**Mr Paolo Bartolozzi**, born in Milan, Italy, is General Manager of Hotel Ta' Ċenc . He has a University Degree in Hotel Management from the Scuola Internazionale di Scienze Turistiche, Rome. He has worked in various hotels in Italy including Hotel Elite, Hotel Canada and Hotel Valadier, Rome, as front desk Sales Manager. He also worked as financial controller with an IBM agency. He was appointed General Manager at Hotel Ta' Ċenc in 1993 after finishing a three-year period as Assistant General Manager of Hotel Leon d'Oro in Verona.

**Professor Jeremy Boissevain** is Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam. After obtaining his B.A.(Haverford, USA) in 1952, he directed the CARE programmes in the Philippines, Japan, India and Malta. In 1962 he was granted a Ph.D. in Social Anthropology by the London School of Economics and Political Science. He subsequently lectured at the Universities of Montreal and Sussex and has held visiting appointments at the Universities of Sussex, New York (Stony Brook), Columbia, Massachusetts (Amherst), and Malta. His research has focused on power relations, immigrant adjustment, ritual change and, currently, the impact of tourism.

**Professor Anthony Bonanno** studied and graduated at the University of Malta, the University of Palermo and at the Institute of Archaeology, London University. He has taught Archaeology and Classics at the University of Malta since 1971. He is now Professor of Archaeology and Head of Department of Classics and Archaeology at the same University. He has authored various publications on Roman Art and Maltese Archaeology.

**Mr Victor J. Borg** has a long experience in the tourist industry. He started in 1969 with the Gozo Garage, Car Hire and Handling Agents. Since then he has occupied various top posts in tourism business. He sat on various boards during the past three years, including the Hotels and Catering Establishments Board, the National Tourist Organisation, the Gozo Tourist Association and currently the Gozo Channel Co. Ltd. He is also founder-member and shareholder of the Malta-Gozo Helicopter Service. The UK *Financial Times* described Mr. V. J. Borg as a "Tourist industry on his own".

**Professor Lino Briguglio** directs the Gozo Centre of the University of Malta and the Islands and Small States Institute at the Foundation for International Studies. He lectures at the University of Malta and acts as consultant on island affairs to international organisations. He studied at the University of Malta, the University of Oxford and the University of Exeter, UK, where he obtained a doctorate in Economics. He has published a large number of scientific papers and authored several books on topics related to Economics.

**Dr Paul Debattista** is General Manager of Löwenbräu Malta Ltd. After obtaining his doctorate in Industrial Chemistry, he worked for two years at the Malta Development Corporation. He then joined Marsovin Ltd. where he occupied the post of Production Manager for over 8 years. During the same period he was a visiting lecturer at the University of Malta. He formed part of the project Management team which was responsible for the setting up of the brewery up to its opening.

**Mr Anthony Ellul** has for the last five years been Project Planner in the Product Development Section of the Secretariat for Tourism. He graduated from the University of Malta in Business Management. His work experience relates to tourism planning and management and he is also responsible for the setting up of the first archaeological park at Hagar Qim. As part of his work he has carried out various research studies on aspects of the tourist product. One study examined the profiles and activities of summer tourists staying in Gozo and day-trippers to Gozo.

## *The Contributors*

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**Rev. Dr Joe Inguanez** is Head of the Department of Sociology at the University of Malta. He studied Philosophy and Theology at the University of Malta. Dr Inguanez holds the degrees of Licentiate in Social Studies from the Gregorian University in Rome and a Ph.D. from Goldsmith's College, University of London. In 1993 he was instrumental in organising the Gallup Social Surveys' project on European Values in Malta. He is a member of the Board of the Faculty of Arts, Council member of the Mediterranean Sociology of Tourism Association, member of the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism, and also a member of the Sociology of Tourism Group of the International Sociological Association. Dr. Inguanez has published papers in various scientific journals.

**Mr Joseph P. Portelli** is Director of John Portelli Group of Companies. He studied Management at the then M.C.A.S.T. and later acquired a Diploma in Hotel Management at the Swiss International Centre of Glion. He underwent Hotel Management practical training in International Hotels in Switzerland and Holland. Having spent most of his career in the Maltese Islands he also managed hotels and restaurants in Italy, France and Australia.

**Ms Graziella Pullicino** is currently employed with the Malta Export Trade Corporation as an executive in the Research, Trade and Information Division. She graduated Bachelor of Commerce in 1992 and B.A. (Hons) Business Management in 1993. Since 1989, she has been actively involved in AIESEC and in this capacity, she has attended and also organised various seminars, exhibitions and cultural tours both locally and overseas. She was also involved in conducting research on tourism in 1991 with the Institute of Tourism Studies.

**Mr Sammy Rapa** is General Manager of L-Imgarr Hotel. He had his secondary education at the Gozo Lyceum. He attended courses at the Catering School of Stresa, Italy. He has worked in the Tourist Industry for the last 26 years and has held various posts in different hotels, including those of Food and Beverage Manager and Assistant General Manager at Hotel Ta' Cenc.

**Rev. Professor Peter Serracino Inglott**, Rector of the University of Malta, was educated in Malta, Paris, Milan and Oxford, where he was a Rhodes scholar and was awarded the Chancellor's Prize for English Prose. He is a visiting lecturer at the University of Paris II (Sorbonne-Pantheon); a member of the Planning Council of the International Ocean Institute and sits on the editorial boards of several international journals. He is also chairman of the Malta Council for Science and Technology. Professor Serracino Inglott is the author of several books and numerous articles on Maltese art and culture.

**Professor Patrick J. Schembri** studied at the University of Malta from where he graduated B.Sc. in Chemistry and Biology in 1975 and M.Sc. in Biology in 1977. In 1980 he obtained the Ph.D. degree in Zoology from the University of Glasgow, Scotland. He has held fellowships at the University of Otago, New Zealand, the University of Delaware, USA, and at the University of Durham, England. He is currently a Professor in the Department of Biology of the University of Malta. His present research is mainly on aspects of Ecology of the Maltese Islands, including human impact on the Island's ecosystems. He is the author of a large number of scientific papers, reports, conference papers, book chapters and books.

**The Hon. Anton Tabone** is Minister for Gozo. He was a member of the Gozo Civic Council from 1966 to 1973 and chaired many committees of the Council. He has successfully contested all national elections in the interests of the Nationalist Party since 1966 and represented Gozo in the National Parliament ever since. For fourteen years he was the Party spokesman first on Agriculture and Fisheries and then for Gozo Affairs. Mr. Tabone has represented the Maltese government in many international meetings.

**Mr Leslie Vella** is currently Research and Planning Manager at the National Tourist Organisation Malta (NTOM). He joined the NTOM as a Research Assistant until he graduated B.A. (Hons) Business Management from the University of Malta in 1988. In 1988 he took up the post of Assistant Director at the NTOM's Office in London until 1991.

## **TOURISM IN GOZO**

### **POLICIES, PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS**

Tourism related activities generate considerable income and employment in the economy of the Maltese Islands. They are also important sources of foreign exchange earnings. At the same time, such activities create man-induced pressures on the environment, which may have irreversible repercussions in the long run. They may also have a negative impact on the social relations and the cultures of the host countries.

The purpose of this book is to present, in one volume, a number of papers on tourism related policies and on the various impacts of tourism on the island of Gozo. The papers were originally presented during a seminar "Tourism in Gozo", which was held at Hotel Ta' Ċenċ on January 28, 1994.

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