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# OZO OBSERVER

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## **The Gozo Observer**

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**Front Cover Photo:** Courtesy of Joseph Calleja.



# Editorial:

## Habits leading to Tragedies

For a while in September, Gozo, and the whole of Malta, was immersed in the aftermath of a tragedy that killed 6 people, destroyed a family, and sent shock waves all over the island. The explosion of the fireworks factory was one tragedy in a continuing saga of events which seem to recur at regular intervals over the years.

The annual celebration of a village festa is by all accounts the acme of events in the community. All parishioners look forward to this one week-end in summer which seems to have become a competition as to who can outdo others in the amount of fireworks display that they can put up. For many, the festa is the fireworks. One could see hundreds of people stationing themselves in prominent positions on the outskirts, well away from the centre of the village with its teeming crowds, to be in a better position to appreciate the fireworks.

What is also an interesting phenomenon is the fact that this age-old festa tradition, unlike most other traditions,

is gathering strength from decade to decade, so that by all accounts, the energy and money spent on this one aspect of the festa has been upgraded out of all proportions to other aspects, compared to a couple of decades ago.

What makes fire works so attractive? There is something in the human psyche which is excited by the sight of a good fire. In colder climes, warmth and well-being were closely linked with a good hearth with a roaring fire. Bon fires are always crowd-pleasers. Any good display of fireworks is sure to bring an audience. Add to these some loud crackers, and the enjoyment is complete.

There is no sign that these primordial delectations are likely to diminish or go away soon. The only hope is to ensure that there is better education, and training of those involved, as well much better supervision of sites where such hazardous activities are carried out.

*Maurice Cauchi*



Fireworks at the Xaghra Village Festa. Photo: <http://www.flickr.com/photos>

# The Defense of Gozo at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century

GODWIN VELLA

## Introduction

The perennial state of maximum alert that stifled everyday life in sixteenth century Gozo abated considerably during the course of the seventeenth century, but the overwhelmingly harsh environment and recurrent hostile exchanges between Christians and Muslims spearheaded the Order of St. John to remain on guard and to upkeep and enhance on a continuous basis the intricate network of defensive systems and structures guarding the Maltese Islands. Whenever opportune, resident and visiting experts in the art of fortifications and defence strategies were roped in to review the prevailing state of affairs and to identify feasible measures to meliorate it as best as possible with the limited human and financial resources available. To this effect, in May 1701 the Commissioners of War travelled to Gozo to assess the island's capability to resist and fight back potential enemy incursions and produced a concise but enlightening report entitled *Deliberazione dei Venerandi Commissarj delle Fortificationi dopo la visita da loro fatta nell' Isola dell Gozo espongo in questa lo stato della medesima tanto circa la gente, ch'altro che puo occorrere per la difeza et Sotto li 18 Maggio 1701* as a followup (NLM, AOM 6552, Fol. 30).

Hailing from the Order's Commission of Fortifications and from as much languages (NLM, AOM 1016, Fol. 2), the four Commissioners of War vetted requests from third parties to develop or alter properties in the immediate environs of ramparts and drew up ad hoc technical reports on specific works like the one on the old fortified town of Notabile compiled by the same team of commissioners a few months earlier (NLM, AOM 1016, Fol. 471). The then Commission of War was made up of seasoned and knowledgeable members, namely the Prior of Messina, the Bailiffs of Morea and Lesse respectively, and the lieutenant of the Grand Bailiff of Guttenberg. For instance, the Prior of Messina Fra Octavious Tancredi served as

Governor of Gozo during 1671 and 1672, and was eventually appointed extraordinary ambassador of the Order to France (Agius De Soldanis, 1745: Bk. I, Sec. 6.2).

## Life in Gozo in the Eighteenth Century

Life in Gozo at the turn of the eighteenth century revolved around centrally-located Rabat, the island's hub since late prehistory (Vella, 2005: 8-13), and six casals or country parishes established between 1678 and 1688.<sup>1</sup> As early as the sixteenth century, the Castello was already being progressively depopulated (Vella, 2008: 63-9), thereby explaining the report's mention of the poor state of repair of the domestic units therein. Animal husbandry, crop cultivation and related cottage industries proved to be the leading economic pursuits. Gozo was commonly perceived by mainland Malta as a genuine, reliable and abundant source of fresh foodstuffs as reaffirmed in the conclusion of the report in question, but a substantial section of the population treaded along the poverty line. Had it not been for the sourcing of a notable corpus of loans to finance an ingenuous scheme for the importation of cereals in bulk, food shortage would have taken the centre stage during winter. (NLM, Lib. Ms 142, Vol. VI, Fol. 189.)

Another critical shortcoming that impinged heavily on the Gozitans' disheartening quality of life was the absence of health facilities for men as betrayed by the suggestion of the Commissioners of War to set up an infirmary. Notwithstanding the presence of the Hospitallier Order of St John for over 170 years, ill and wounded man who needed hospitalization were obliged to face a treacherous trip to the Sacra Infermeria at Valletta. The hospital for men under the title of St. John the Baptist and St. Anthony of Padua was completed in 1729 following a generous bequest by two pious brothers, Rev. Giovanni Maria and Rev Gregorio Camilleri (Cassar, 1964: 90). Somehow, though, the people of Gozo still managed

<sup>1</sup> These are Xewkija (1678), Gharb (1679), and Sannat, Xaghra, Nadur and Żebbuġ (1688).

to gather enough energy and resources to erect and embellish monumental churches in honour of their patron saints. At the turn of the eighteenth century, the then recently reconstructed parish church of St. George the Martyr was being adorned with significant art commissions, whereas the nearby matrice was being built anew. Likewise, Rabat's historic core experienced a major regeneration boom (Vella, 2007: 64-5).

Security and defence were a shared responsibility. The Order financed the erection and maintenance of the main fortifications, namely the Castello and the two large coast-watch towers at Mgarr and Marsalforn respectively, salaried the full-time defenders deployed therein and supplied the required artillery, weapons and ammunitions for the defence of Gozo (NLM, Lib. Ms. 142, Vol. VI, Fols. 193-194). On its part the University or regional government erected a further four coast-watch towers between 1650 and 1670,<sup>2</sup> and covered the personal emoluments of the full time castilians, bombardiers and related staff manning the same towers and the honoraria of the militia corps' officials. Practically all able-bodied men, or almost one fifth of the total population count, were enrolled in one of the respective companies making up the militia force. Besides joining forces to defend their homeland in the eventuality of enemy incursions, the main task of the militia consisted in the manning of the respective guard stations within the Castello, listed coast-watch towers and several coast-watch stations each night, namely from one hour after sunset till sunrise (NLM, Lib. Ms. 142, Vol. VI, Fol. 184).

The report in question does not list said stations, but we are informed from other eighteenth century sources that these amounted to eleven. Evidently, the greater number of look-out posts was located on the northern side of the island, in particular the easily accessible coves.<sup>3</sup> According to Agius De Soldanis these stations were established following a visit to Gozo by Grand Master Alof De Wignacourt in 1622 (Agius De Soldanis, 1745: Bk. I, Sec. 6.2).

The report in question was originally complemented by three appendices, namely "Artillery, Weapons and

Ammunitions", "Water Cisterns within Castello" and "Ruined Dwellings within Castello" respectively. Unfortunately, the first is missing, whereas the second survives in part. The surviving sections (i.e. third and part of second) are not being reproduced or discussed further in this contribution due to the prevailing space constraints. The following is a free translation of the aforementioned Commissioners of War report dated 18th May 1701, which seems to have been triggered by the threat of an imminent Turkish assault (NLM, Lib. Ms. 142, Vol. VI, Fol. 174).

### *Eminent Master*

*Having crossed over to the Island of Gozo to fulfil the brief assigned to us by Your Eminency and by the Venerable Council, we assembled all 1063 persons enrolled in the respective companies making up the militia force, namely:*

*A squadron of 64 horsemen under the guidance of the Governor's Lieutenant with the assistance of a standard-bearer, two flag-bearers and two turcopoliers. Each horseman is armed with a pike, a sword, and in some instances a carbine and a terzetto.*

*A sergeant in charge of nine soldiers salaried by the Order to man the principal Castle of the Island. A company of 76 hand-picked musketeers from the respective militia companies with the specific aim of defending the same Castello and facilitating related military operations therein.*

*A regiment of 434 reasonably disciplined soldiers subdivided in four squadrons under the command of a corresponding number of assistant sergeants and corporals. Each soldier is equipped with a sword, a musket, a bandolier, and an accompanying forcina.*

*A troop of 479 persons engaged in the manning of the guard stations at the Castello, coast-watch towers and related maritime and inland sites. Each guard is armed with a pike, a sword, and in some instances firearms.*

<sup>2</sup> The respective towers built by University are ambiguously omitted from this report. These are Xlendi (1650), Dwejra (1652), Mgarr ix-Xini (1661) and Dahlet Qorrot (1670) respectively.

<sup>3</sup> The island of Gozo is basically a block tilted to the northeast whereby the Lower Coralline along the northern coast is below sea level, whereas in the south it rises up to 120 metres above sea level. Except for the narrow bays of Xlendi, Dwejra and Wied il-Ghasri, the shore around the western half of Gozo consists of sheer cliffs.





*Prospettiva del Gran Castello Del Gozo come si vede dalla parte del Mezzogiorno* by L. Batolo (1745). Note the two arch-openings perforating the outer walls of the sentry box on the tip of St. Michael's bastion. (NLM, Lib. Ms. 145.)

The Gozitans are great sling users. During the general assembly, we had the opportunity to witness one of them hit a target placed at the sentry box on the tip of St. Michael's bastion from the underlying square in front of the militia's headquarters at Rabat, a task that is hardly attainable with a musket considering the notable distance.<sup>4</sup> To this effect, it seems highly opportune to hold frequent training sessions in the art of sling handling and introduce some form of prize with the aim of encouraging them further to fine-tune their skill and reap great profits in favour of the island's overall defence strategy.

Comprehensively, the listed companies make up a significant and well-matched militia force, but stand to gain from a bigger team of officials and professional soldiers that can offer effective training and lead by example should it become necessary to defend themselves and their country and to fight back enemy incursions.

As regards artillery, related military equipment and ammunition, the attached inventory compiled

by Commissioner of Artillery is hereby confirmed fair and reasonable.<sup>5</sup>

Adequate supplies of biscotto, oil and vinegar must be kept at the Castello to sustain effective routine maintenance of the respective firearms.

It is considered opportune to set up an appropriately equipped infirmary.

Coal supplies for the preparation of food.

A consignment of scantlings to erect a timber fence along the parapet of the covered way and wherever else required.

A total of 64 water cisterns are known to exist within the Castello. Twenty-eight contain relevant supplies as listed in the attached annex compiled by the superintendent of works Master Gio Barbarba with the assistance of the Knight Vergoni. It is pertinent to craft a plan of action regarding the transport of water to replenish the respective cisterns without

<sup>4</sup> The perched sentry box at the tip of St. Michael's bastion and present day it-Tokk were critical for the defense of Gozo. The former was guarded day and night by the professional soldiers deployed at the Castello, whereas the latter served as meeting place for the militia during emergencies, hence the name "It-Tokk".

<sup>5</sup> This included substantial quantities of construction tools which would have come very handy in the eventuality of urgent war damage.

disrupting the harvesting and threshing of wheat and the eventual storage of the resultant hay sheaves. During the month of April 1673 a total of 9334 barrels of water were transported to the Castello, whereby each farmer who owned a beast of burden was obliged to undertake nine trips per beast. At this time of year, though, since the farming community is busy harvesting and securing wheat and fodder, should there arise an urgent need to replenish the cisterns within the Castello due to the threat of an imminent enemy incursion, one can engage the services of the available 60 or so couriers who operate between the Castello and Mġarr harbour against the payment of a reasonable fee.

The Castello is deemed aptly fortified to resist potential enemy offences. One is to keep in mind, though, its disproportional small size and lack of covered spaces to host the entire population of 5916 inhabitants, namely 2924 men and 2991 woman, and to store ammunition. To this effect, all houses in ruins as per attached Annex should be replaced by new dwellings and accompanying stores without further delay. Generally speaking, the ramparts are in a fair state of repair, but the face and parapet wall of the battery underneath St. John's Cavalier need attention, whereas the interface between the glacis and abutting covered way is to be backfilled to hide again the parapet wall.<sup>6</sup> A corresponding

gunpowder magazine to the one on St. John's Cavalier must be erected on top of St. Martin's. Gunpowder is to be prevented from getting damp or worse still from coming into contact with accidental fire, thereby posing a threat to the Castello itself.

Following an inspection of Rabat with the assistance of the Governor and his Lieutenant we have come to the conclusion that should there ever be the need to shelter the Gozitan people and their livestock therein to protect them from hostile incursions, it would be possible to offer effective protection by organising the available militia forces in four squadrons and deploy them at Portareale, next to the Franciscan and Augustinian Friaries and at Santa Savina Square respectively. Furthermore, all dry-rubble walls in the immediate neighbourhood of Rabat are to be demolished to expose enemy approach, a trench is to be formed around the town's circumference, while the respective street openings along the same confines are to be barricaded to hinder enemy movement.<sup>7</sup> The Castello offers additional protection and doubles up as a last retreat position.

It is hereby recommended also to reinforce the garrison at Garzes Tower with a view of launching counter attacks in the countryside. The Gozitans know their land very well and stand a good chance

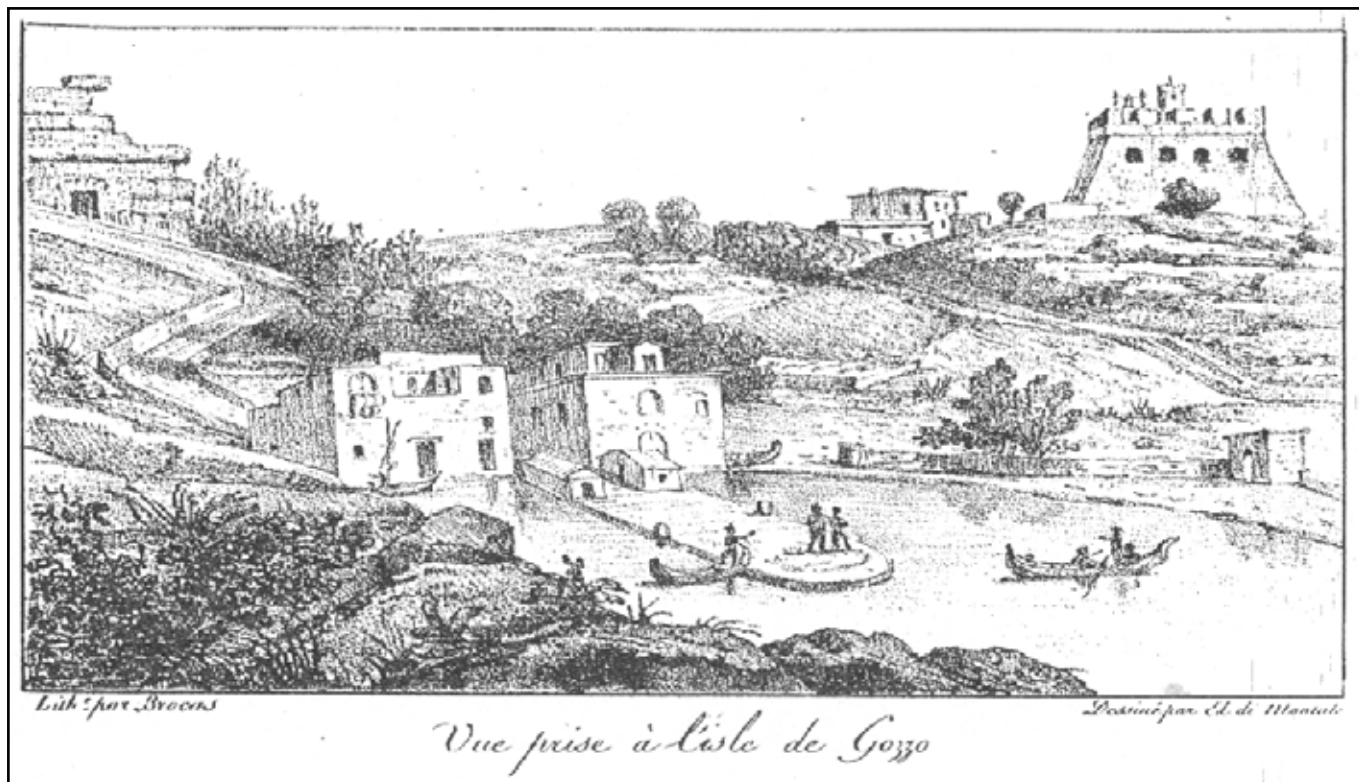


Early 18th century view of Rabat's Historic Core and overlying Gran Castello. The Augustinian and Franciscan Conventuals' convents stand on the left hand side while Portareale occupies the right hand tip of Rabat's Historic Core. NLM, Archives of the Treasury of the Order, B 290.

<sup>6</sup> Part of the Castello's counterscarp were already deemed in a poor state of repair in 1692 NLM, AOM. 1016, Fol. 109

<sup>7</sup> Remains of an ancient defensive enclosure were nonetheless still extant around Rabat's historic core. (Vella, 2010: 24-32).





Early 1820's view of Torri Garzes from Mgarr Harbour. It was eventually demolished in 1848

*of disrupting the intent of the enemy by obstructing the transport of ammunitions and food supplies. Evidently, such scheme would assume more effectiveness if numerous groups of valorous men are deployed in corresponding strongholds and other strategically-sited posts.*

*If Gozo becomes faced by a potential enemy invasion every civilian who is not enrolled in the militia together with the entire livestock population must be diligently transferred to Malta, whereas a supplementary defence force with proven experience in the handling of firearms should be deployed on the island.<sup>8</sup>*

*Overlooking Marsalforn Bay, the tower at Ghajn Damma stands on the extreme tip of the promontory.<sup>9</sup> The respective timber apertures were replaced recently, but the stability of the massive construction lies in jeopardy. The sheer-cut perimeter of the Upper Coralline and Greensand plateau is appreciably friable and unsteady due to the erosion*

*of the steep Blue Clay slopes underneath and risks imminent collapse.<sup>10</sup> As a way of protecting the guards on duty during the day and at night from certain death should both cliff and tower give way, it seems highly sensible to demolish the existing tower and to erect a new coastal fortification on the shallow promontory that lies between Marsalforn Bay and Sta. Maria point, which will in turn prove to be far more effective in preventing enemy landings.<sup>11</sup>*

*Further to the aforementioned proposal to craft new dwellings and storage facilities within the Castello, it is deemed opportune to bring over to Malta an accredited foreign engineer with extensive experience in defensive and offensive warfare and civil architecture.*

*To speed up the suggested regeneration of the urban core within the Castello, the Grand Master and the Bishop should instruct their subjects, namely seculars and clerics respectively, who own ruined*

<sup>8</sup> This contingency measure was a standing practice. The same Prior of Messina and former Governor of Gozo Octavious Tancredi headed a similar task force in Gozo a few years later. (Agius De Soldanis, 1745: Vol I, Sec 6.2)

<sup>9</sup> The strategic importance of site for the defense of the Maltese Islands was singled out by Giovanni Rinaldini Anconitano in 1599. (Vella, 2006: 5-10).

<sup>10</sup> The tower collapsed in 1717. Parts of its foundations are still preserved in situ.

<sup>11</sup> Two batteries were eventually erected at Santa Marija Point during 1715-16.



properties therein to declare their interests within a period of eight days. Successively, if said owners are not willing to finance the redevelopment of their properties, the Order may acquire it at the going market rate.<sup>12</sup>

*The capital investment directed towards the construction of the new dwellings and warehouses may in turn generate a good return provided that some warehouses are rented out for the storage of food supplies, while the respective dwellings are made to host the officers deployed by the Order in Gozo. Besides, the shelf life of ammunition and related military supplies will be lengthened due to better storage conditions.*

*Being greatly indebted, the people of Gozo lack the drive to defend effectively their island should there ever arise the need. Your Eminency may therefore consider the possibility of alleviating this crushing burden via a well-thought out subsidy scheme.*

*It must be constantly borne in mind that on a yearly basis the Island of Gozo supplies Malta with some 7000 salme<sup>13</sup> of wheat and cereals, substantial amounts of livestock, poultry, eggs, cheese, and game birds, besides producing the equivalent of circa 70,000 scudi in cotton. We trust in the wise judgement of Your Eminency and of the Venerable Council to assign adequate resources to meet the security needs of the devout and trustworthy Gozitans who are hereby imploring protection and assistance.*

## Conclusion

Fortunately, the anticipated Turkish invasion did not materialise. All cisterns within the Castello were, nonetheless, topped to the brim as a contingency measure (NLM, Lib. Ms. 142, Vol. VI, Fol. 174). Besides, the battery at the foot of St. John's cavalier and the parapet wall along the counterscarp of the ditch were repaired (NLM, Lib. Ms. 142, Vol. VI, Fol. 194), while a gunpowder magazine was erected on top of St. Martin's Cavalier as advised by the Commissioners of War (NLM, Lib. Ms. 142, Vol. VI, Fol. 172). As to coastal defences, a spree of offensive works was eventually crafted during the

following decades. Eleven batteries, five redoubts, four entrenchments (Samut Tagliaferro, 1993: 202), fourteen fougasses (Spiteri, 1999: 13), and two underwater seawalls (Samut Tagliaferro, 1993: 216-7) were completed during the first half of the eighteenth century, whereas the encircling ramparts at Fort Chambray were in place by the early 1760's (Samut Tagliaferro, 1993: 257-294). The first-generation coast watch tower at Ghajn Damma was abandoned in 1716 and eventually replaced by a new commanding stronghold in 1720.

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<sup>12</sup> An analogous advice was put forward by Mederico Blondel in 1693. (NLM, AOM 1016, Fols. 195-200).

<sup>13</sup> A salma (maltese *modd*) is equivalent to 290.9 litres.

# Gaudos

HORATIO CAESAR ROGER VELLA

## Abstract

*Gaudos* was originally and still is the name of a very small island south-west of Crete. It was itself confused with Calypso's Island of *Ogygia* when at the very beginning it was called "*Ogylia*". This island was subsequently named as "*Caudus*" or "*Caudi*", as well as "*Claudus*", "*Clauda*" and even "*Claudia*", commonly called also "*Gozo*" by the sixteenth century. The confusion of *Gaudos* near Crete with *Gaulos* near Malta, south of Sicily, arose from Strabo in the first century A.D., together with the confusion of our *Melite* with another *Melite* in the Adriatic Sea. The result of all this is that the classical name of our Gozo remains *Gaulos*, while its present names of Ghawdex and Gozo are derived from *Gaudos* of Crete.

In Classical literature the name of *Gaudos* is referred to a small island on the south-western side of Crete. The editor of *Stadiasmus* adds that the present name of the island of *Gaudos* near Crete is *Gaudapula* (Müller, 1965: n. on Stad. 328), though a modern atlas still refers to the island of *Gavdhos*. It is half the size of our island of Gozo, roughly at 24° longitude and 35° latitude (1° southern than our Gozo), and less than 30 miles from Crete.



The small island of Gavdhos (bottom left) lies to the south-west of Crete.

Photo: Earth Sciences and Image Analysis Laboratory, NASA Johnson Space Centre. <http://www.wkistler.de>

## The Etymology of Gaudos

In neither the Greek *Liddle* and *Scott Lexicon* nor in the Latin *Lewis* and *Short* one do we encounter the term *Gaudos* or *Gaudus*. Furthermore, no Greek word comes anywhere close to the root of GAUD.

## Gaulos confused with Gaudos

The name of *Gaudos* has also been given by mistake to *Gaulos*, the sister-island of Malta. It is to be observed here that we have, since medieval times, lost the name of *Gaulos*, but have retained both a Semitic transliteration of *Gaudos*, that is, Ghawdex, and its nickname or a contortion of it, that of Gozo. Indeed, the original pronunciation of Ghawdex was slightly different from what it is today. The ancient Maltese used to pronounce the "gh" with a hard guttural sound, much as some of the inhabitants of Gharb in Gozo still pronounce the name of their village. For this reason, those who transcribed the name of Gharb up to the previous century wrote *Garbo*, and not *Arbo*.<sup>1</sup> This ancient pronunciation of "gh" was close to the Greek pronunciation of "g". Secondly, the diphthong of "au" is common to the two names, with the difference that today, since Byzantine times, the pronunciation of "au" in Greek is no longer "au", but "av" as in *Gavdhos*; thirdly, the change of vowel from "o" to "e", from *Gaudos* to Ghawdex, and the affinity of "s" to "x" in the two words are explained by dialectical changes. Thus, in Maltese, we have the word *ħobż* pronounced as *ħebż* by some people from Żabbar and other places, while the pronunciation of "s" in Maltese is often met as "x" in other Semitic dialects of the same words.

Another interesting derivative of the name of *Gaudos* = Ghawdex is the surname of Gauci. Indeed, a man from Gozo is said to be "Ghawdxi", which is exactly what the surname implies. This

<sup>1</sup> In the same way, parish priests wrote Ghargħur as *Gregorio*, not because, as it is often said, that Ghargħur pronounced as "Gargur" is derived from *Girgor*, but, on the contrary, because *Gregorio*, like *Garbo*, was the Italianization for Ghargħur pronounced then as "Gargur".



surname is very old indeed, and is already found in Gozo by the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This is known from the recently published long poem written in Greek in Gozo by a Sicilian exile in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, whose 13<sup>th</sup>-century copy we translated was authenticated by one, among others, with the name of Gaoutis (Busuttill-Fiorini-Vella, 2010: xxvii, xciii, xcvi and 304, n.50v. supra). This Gozitan resident, judging from his role of deaconship, must have belonged to the Greek Orthodox rite, even almost three centuries since Count Roger and his son, Roger II, introduced the return of the local Church to Latin rite.

### The Ancient References to Gaudos

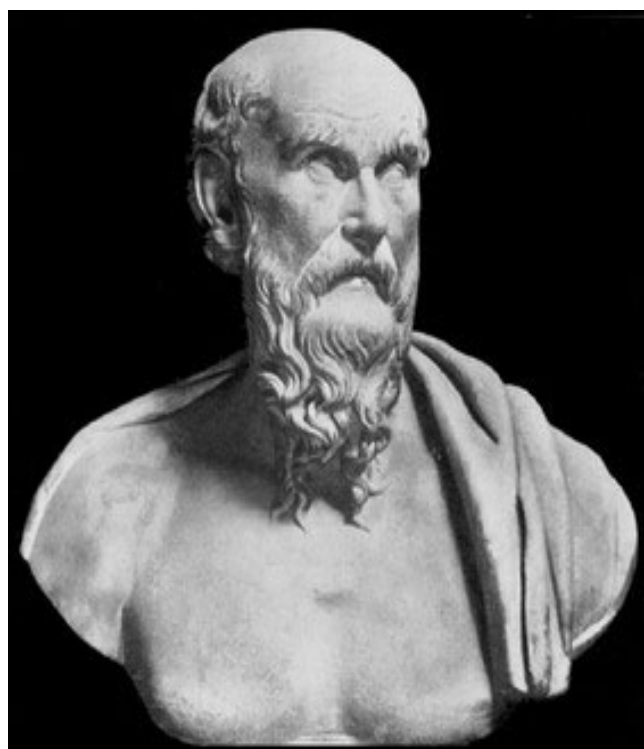
This island of Gaudos near Crete bore a number of names throughout the years. Hesiod, the writer of the *Works and days* and of the *Theogony*, was the first classical author to refer to it indirectly as *Ogylie*, known to the Attic dialect as “*Ogylia*”, when he mentioned its surrounding waters by the term of “*Ogyliou pontou*”, that is, “of the Ogylian Sea”. In a fragment of his, Hesiod relates how one abstained from sending a messenger to speak on his behalf with Helen of Sparta, but instead he himself travelled across the sea past *Ogylia* to find her.<sup>2</sup>

The Alexandrian editor of Homer’s *Odyssey* also refers to this island as “*Ogylia*”, after Hesiod. He was referring to its confusion with another island of a similar name, that of “*Ogygia*”, an error created by a certain Antimachus.<sup>3</sup> This scholiast distinguishes between the two islands, saying that *Ogygia* was situated in the West, while *Ogylia* by Crete. The reference to *Ogygia* to the West needs to be explained by the fact that for the Greeks the West was the region of the setting sun beyond their mainland (Achaea and the Peloponnesus), that is, Italy, otherwise also called “*Hesperia*”, and the Ionian Sea, the site of *Ogygia*.<sup>4</sup> Luckily for our identification of *Ogylia* with the island near Crete, Homer’s scholiast further identifies *Ogylia* with *Caudi*.<sup>5</sup> This identification of *Ogylia* with *Caudi*

was again to be confirmed in the 10th century A.D. by the lexicographer Suidas.<sup>6</sup>

Another important Alexandrine scholar and poet, Callimachus, Chief Librarian of Alexandria and promoter of original style of writing from that of Classical times, further advances the identification of this island by the western coast of Crete, that is, *Ogylia*, *Caudi*, *Caudus* and *Caudo* with yet another name, that is, *Gaudos*.<sup>7</sup> But in doing so, Callimachus called *Gaudos* “the island of Calypso”, as Antimachus had done when he confused this island’s other name of *Ogylia* with *Ogygia*.

Just as in Alexandrine times Homer’s scholiast corrects Antimachus, so also in Roman times, in the first years of the Christian era, Apollodorus, who wrote in Greek on several interpretations of Greek mythology, corrected Callimachus in propagating this confusion of islands, now, however, called



Hesiod the writer was the first classical author to indirectly refer to the island of *Gaudos* near Crete as *Ogylie*.  
Photo: <http://www.thegreekkeysociety.com>

<sup>2</sup> HES. *Fr.* 204.58-62.

<sup>3</sup> Other late Classical writers repeat this confusion of *Ogygia* with *Ogylia sive Caudi sive Caudos*, as, for example, the anonymous author of the *Etymologicum Gudianum* (s.v. “*Cytheria*”), who says that in that island of *Caudos* was a temple dedicated to Aphrodite. In the same statement, he wrongly identifies the island with that of Calypso.

<sup>4</sup> Apollonius of Rhodes, also of Alexandrine times, identifies Calypso’s island with *Nymphaea*, and so *Ogygia* is to be identified with it (A.R. 4.572-575). Similarly, some centuries later in Byzantine times, Procopius once more identifies the island of Calypso with one of the three *Othoni* islands in the same Ionian Sea, not far from Corfu (PROCOP. 8.22.18-21).

<sup>5</sup> SCH. HOM. *Od.* 1.85.

<sup>6</sup> SUID. s.v. “*Caudo*”.

<sup>7</sup> CALL. *Fr.* 470 and *Fr.* 13.

*Gaudos* and *Ogygia* respectively.<sup>8</sup> Our quotation of Apollodorus' correction of Callimachus comes through Apollodorus' contemporary in Rome by the name of Strabo, who wrote also in Greek on geographical matters. Despite his awareness of the confusion of the two islands from centuries earlier, Strabo yet further advances the confusion by shifting, perhaps for the first time, this same island of *Gaudos* to our archipelago in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea.

In his description of the sea south of Sicily, Strabo gives the distance, albeit inaccurate, of our two islands from Pachynus, close to Cape Passaro, calling the two islands as "*Melite*" and "*Gaudos*".<sup>9</sup> Strabo yet commits one more mistake when he says that in this island of *Melite* were bred small dogs called "*Melitaeans*". This island of *Melite* he had in mind, breeding these dogs, was clearly referred to by ancient scholars themselves as that island in the Ionian Sea, not far from *Ogygia* of Homer's *Odyssey*, the *Nymphaea* of Apollonius of Rhodes, which island of *Melite* once was also the object of controversy when it was referred to as the site of St Paul's shipwreck (Vella, 2002: 120). However, an extensive discussion of this *Melite* in the Ionian Sea and its breeding of dogs has already been carried out some years ago (Vella, 1995b: 11-15; Vella, 2002: 130-137), and does not need to be repeated here.

In his transposition of *Melite* and *Gaudos* from the Ionian Sea and Cretan waters respectively to the sea south of Sicily, Strabo may have been misled by three factors.

In the first place, the second paragraph of the fragment of Callimachus<sup>10</sup> Strabo preserved for us has a lacuna which may or may not have contributed to Strabo's mistake. That paragraph starts with the statement, "He (Apollodorus) censures also those who clearly mention Sicily". Then comes the lacuna, after which Strabo refers to the mistake of Callimachus according to Apollodorus when he said that *Gaudos* was the island of Calypso. If we admit the connection between the first part and the second part around the lacuna, then Strabo would be

simply passing on the tradition already existing in Alexandrian times that *Gaudos* had been confused with our *Gaulos*.<sup>11</sup> If we do not admit the connection, then the reference of *Gaudos* to our island of Gozo was made by Strabo for the first time here.

In the second place, Strabo may have been misled both by the name of *Melite* in the Ionian Sea and by its vicinity to *Ogygia* which, as we have seen, Apollonius of Rhodes called "*Nymphaea*", and which some writers confused with *Ogylia*, that is *Caudos* or *Gaudos* near Crete. Thus, the coupling of the islands of *Melite* and *Ogygia* in the Ionian Sea, the transposition of *Ogygia* to *Gaudos* near Crete, and the yet further transposition of *Gaudos* to *Gaulos* adjacent to another *Melite* probably misled Strabo to call *Gaulos* as "*Gaudos*", which names, furthermore, are different from each other by only one letter.

In the third place, we know that both *Gaudos* near Crete and *Gaulos* near Malta were once Phoenician settlements. In our quotation of the anonymous



Strabo transposed *Melite* and *Gaudos* from the Ionian Sea and Cretan waters respectively to the sea south of Sicily. Photo: <http://www.odysseus-unbound.org>

<sup>8</sup> CALL. Fr. 13.

<sup>9</sup> STR. Geog. 6.2.11.

<sup>10</sup> CALL. Fr. 13.

<sup>11</sup> A discussion on the name of *Gaulos* was also carried out some years ago by Vella, 1995a: 16-18, 1995b: 5, 9-10, and 2002: 145-147.



writer of the *Etymologicum Gudianum*, we learn that in that island there was a temple dedicated to Aphrodite. That this goddess was venerated both by the Greeks and by the Phoenicians as Aphrodite / Ashtarte does not necessarily prove a point. But when one considers that this island's city was called "*Phoenicia*", then one would be justified to admit of an assimilation of Ashtarte with Aphrodite by the Greeks when the Phoenicians moved away from Cretan *Gaudos*.

Without contributing to the confusion of Cretan *Gaudos* with *Ogygia* or *Gaulos*, two Roman writers confirm the location of *Gaudos* close to Crete. Mela, a geographer, includes *Gaudos* in a list of islands close to Crete.<sup>12</sup> These other islands were *Astypalaea*, *Naumachus*, *Zephyre* and *Chryse*. Pliny, a Roman scientist and encyclopaedist, places *Gaudos* close to *Chrysa sive Chryse* opposite to *Hierapytna*.<sup>13</sup>

But before these two Roman writers, we have yet another name for the Cretan *Gaudos*, this time also from Alexandrine times. Both the geographer Ptolemy and the historian Hierocles produce a statement, repeating each other verbatim, saying that the island's name was *Claudus*, thus adding in the name the letter "l".<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, they also say that this island had a city with the same name of the island, that is, *Claudus*. That a small island bore the same name as its chief city was common in classical antiquity, as can be seen also in the capital cities of *Melite* and *Gaulos* called after their own islands.

A variant of the name of *Claudus* is found as *Clauda* in the account of the voyage of St Paul from Palestine to Rome given in Greek by St Luke, the Evangelist.<sup>15</sup> This account further confirms the vicinity of *Gaudos* to Crete. Another variant is found as *Claudia* in the unknown writer of *Stadiasmus sive Periplus Mari Magni*.<sup>16</sup> Here the writer says that this island had a city and a harbour.

In medieval times, Gozo came to be referred to as *Gaudos* of *Melite*, either as *Melitogaudos* or

as *Melitegaudos*. Similarly, Malta was at the same time referred to as *Melite* of *Gaudos*, that is, *Gaudomelite*. The compound name for Malta and Gozo had been created by Byzantine scholars to distinguish these islands from *Melite* in the Adriatic Sea and *Gaudos* near Crete. The name of *Melitegaudos* appears in a marginal note written by the scholiast (the poet himself) of the already mentioned 12<sup>th</sup>-century Greek poem in f.84v. (Busuttil-Fiorini-Vella, 2010: xxii). However, the term *Gaudomelite* had existed much earlier than medieval times. In fact, its first occurrence is found in a 5<sup>th</sup>-century apocryphal *Acts of Peter and Paul* where the narrative refers to St Paul's shipwreck in Malta,<sup>17</sup> while a second occurrence goes back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century in the *Historiae Syntomos* by Patriarch Nicephorus<sup>18</sup> (Busuttil-Fiorini-Vella, 2010: xxiii).

From the sixteenth century we have two important sources that confirm the confusion of the Cretan *Gaudos* with our *Gaulos*. Jean Quintin wrote what



The geographer Ptolemy who produced a statement saying that the island's name was *Claudus*.  
Photo: [http://www.wvu.edu/depts/skywise/a101\\_historical-figures.html](http://www.wvu.edu/depts/skywise/a101_historical-figures.html)

<sup>12</sup> MELA 2.7.13.

<sup>13</sup> PLIN. *Nat.* 4.12.61.

<sup>14</sup> PTOL. *Geog.* s.v. "*Claudos*"; HIEROCL. *HIST.* s.v. "*Claudos*".

<sup>15</sup> N.T. *Act. Ap.* 27.16.

<sup>16</sup> *Stad.* 328.

<sup>17</sup> *Patrologiae* 161, 929-932.

<sup>18</sup> Nicephorus, H.S., in Busuttil, J. (1969), 17-18. I thank Prof. Stanley Fiorini for the availability of the last two quotations.



The first page of what is considered as the first publication about Malta and Gozo written by Jean Quintin d'Autun, *Insulae Melitae Descriptio*, published in Lyons in 1536.

is considered to be the earliest description of Malta in Latin in 1533, and published it in Lyons in 1536. The first English translation and the first annotated edition of this description appeared in 1980 (Vella ed., 1980). In this description, Jean Quintin, who correctly refers to the island of Gozo as *Gaulos*, and not *Gaudos*, discusses, among other things, the Pauline tradition and starts with St Paul's voyage after St Luke, repeating the name of *Clauda*, but adding the important remark that during his times Cretan *Gaudos* was commonly called "Gozo", exactly as we call our *Gaulos* today erroneously in the English version, for "Gozo" is not English or foreign to "*Ghawdex*", but etymologically related to it. By the sixteenth century, therefore, two islands were both called "Gozo", *Gaudos* near Crete and *Gaulos* / *Gaudos* near Malta. This is confirmed by a map also from the sixteenth century, quite similar to the first map of Malta and Gozo as it appeared the first edition of Jean Quintin, where the island of Gozo is given two names: *Gozo* and *Claudus*

(Anon., 1581: 349; Pantaleone, 1581: 210). This last reference to the names of *Gozo* and *Claudus* attributed to *Gaulos* in the sixteenth century further confirms the unfortunate transposition of names from one island to the other for several centuries. Here one must add that, some years before these two sources, yet another transposition from *Gaudos* to *Gaulos* with a freer variant of *Clauda* came through a fifteenth-century translation of Ptolemy by Pietro della Torre when he called Malta's Gozo as "*Glaucanis*" (della Torre, 1499: s.v. "*Glaucanis*").

Finally, yet another derivative from the name of *Gaudos*, but referring to Gozo of Malta, still persists by tradition of mistake within the confines of the Gozitan Curia and Diocese. As late as today, the adjective used in Latin for "Gozitan" is sometimes given as *Gaudisiensis* instead of *Gaulitanus*. Such name appears, for example, in the last Latin edition of the Gozitan Ordo, a directory for the use of liturgical feasts within the Diocese of Gozo (Anon., 1978).

## Conclusion

*Gaudos* was originally and still is the name of a very small island south-west of Crete. It was itself confused with Calypso's Island of *Ogygia* when at the very beginning it was called "*Ogygia*". This island was subsequently named as "*Caudus*" or "*Caudi*", as well as "*Claudus*", "*Clauda*" and even "*Claudia*", commonly called also "*Gozo*" by the sixteenth century. The confusion of *Gaudos* near Crete with *Gaulos* near Malta, south of Sicily, arose from Strabo in the first century A.D., together with the confusion of our *Melite* with another *Melite* in the Adriatic Sea. The result of all this is that the classical name of our Gozo remains *Gaulos*, while its present names of *Ghawdex* and Gozo are derived from *Gaudos* of Crete.



## Sources<sup>1</sup>

Busuttill, Fiorini, Vella eds. (2010), 98-99 (50v. *supra*, marg.):  
‘Εγ[ὼ] διάκονος Φί[λι]ππος Γαούτης μ[α]ρ[τυρῶ] και  
στέ[ργω].

I, Deacon Philippos Gautēs, witness and concur.

HES. *Fr.* 204.58-62:

οὐδέ τινα μνηστῆρα μετάγγελον ἄλλον ἔπεμψεν,  
ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς σὺν νηὶ πολυκλῆϊδι μελαίνῃ  
βῆ ὑπὲρ Ὀγυλίου πόντου διὰ κύμα κελαινὸν  
Τυνδαρέου ποτὶ δῶμα δαΐφρονος, ὄφρα ἴδοιτο  
Ἀργεῖην Ἑλένεν, ...

He did not even send another noble messenger, but went himself  
on a fast black ship, on a rough swell across the Ogylian Sea to  
the house of the wise Tyndareus to see the Argive Helen.

Sch. Hom. *Od.* 1.85:

Ὀγυγίην ἐν τῇ κατὰ Ἀντίμαχον Ὀγυλίην γράφεται. Διαφέρουσι  
δὲ οἱ τόποι. Τὴν μὲν γὰρ Ὀγυγίαν ἐντὸς εἶναι πρὸς ἐσπέραν. Τὴν  
δὲ Ὀγυλίαν κατὰ Κρήτην Ἡσίοδος φησι κεῖσθαι.

Ogygie; meanwhile it is written according to Antimachus as  
“Ogylie”. But the places differ one from the other. For Hesiod  
says that Ogygia, on the one hand, exists within towards the  
West, and that Ogylia, on the other hand, lies near Crete.

Et. Gud. s.v. “Cytheria”:

Διὸ καὶ σκοτίας Ἀφροδίτης ἐν Φαιστῷ ἱερὸν εἶναι φασιν. ἐν  
δὲ Καύδῳ καὶ Καλυψοῦς ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτης ἱερὸν.

And for this reason they say that at Phaestus there is a temple  
dedicated to the black Aphrodite. And at Caudus and (the  
island) of Calypso there is a temple of Aphrodite.

SUID. s.v. “Caudo”:

νῆσος πλησίον Κρήτης ἐνθα μεγίστοι ὄναγροι γίνονται.  
An island near Crete where very big donkeys are born.

CALL. *Fr.* 13:

Ἀπολλόδορος δὲ ἐπιτιμᾷ Καλλιμάχῳ, συνηγορῶν τοῖς περὶ  
τὸν Ἑραστοσθένη, διότι, καίπερ γραμματικὸς ὢν, παρὰ τὴν  
Ὀμηρικὴν ὑπόθεσιν καὶ τὸν ἐξωκεανισμὸν τῶν τόπων, περὶ  
οὓς τὴν πλάνην φράζει, Γαῦδον καὶ Κόρκυραν ὀνομάζει.  
ἐπιτιμᾷ δὲ καὶ τοῖς μὲν ἄλλοις συγγνώμην εἶναι, Καλλιμάχῳ  
δὲ μὴ πάνυ, μεταποιομένῳ γε γραμματικῆς ὅς τὴν μὲν Γαῦδον  
Καλυψοῦς νῆσόν φησι, τὴν δὲ Κόρκυραν Σχερίαν.

But Apollodorus censures Callimachus, while he agrees  
with the followers of Eratosthenes because, although he is a  
grammarian, against the Homeric idea and the localization of  
the places, about which he speaks clearly, mentions Gaudos  
and Corcyra. And he censures even the others who have the  
same opinion, and Callimachus in particular when he changes  
from what is established, he who says that Gaudos is the island  
of Calypso, and that Corcyra is Scheria.

CALL. *Fr.* 470:

- a. Γαῦδος
- b. ὀλίγην νησίδα Καλυψοῦς.
- a. Gaudos;

b. A small island of Calypso.

STR. *Geog.* 6.2.11:

πρόκειται δὲ τοῦ Παχύνου Μελίτη, ὅθεν τὰ κυνίδια, ἃ καλοῦσι  
Μελιταῖα, καὶ Γαῦδος, ὁδοῦκοντα καὶ ὀκτὼ μίλια τῆς ἄκρας  
ἀμφοτέραι διέχουσαι.

And away from Pachynus lie Melite, from where come the  
small dogs, which they call “Melitaeon”, and Gaudos, both  
distant from the promontory by 88 miles.

A.R. 4.566-575:

αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ’ ἐπὶ τῇσι παρὰ Κέρκυραν ἵκοντο,  
ἐνθα Ποσειδάων Ἀσωπίδα νάσσατο κούρην,  
ἠύκομον Κέρκυραν, ἐκὰς Φλειουντίδος αἴης,  
ἀρπάξας ὑπ’ ἔρωτι μελαινομένην δέ μιν ἄνδρες  
ναυτίλοι ἐκ πόντοιο καλαινῇ πάντοθεν ὕλη  
δερκόμενοι, Κέρκυραν ἐπικλείουσι Μέλαιναν·  
τῇ δ’ ἐπὶ καὶ Μελίτην, λιαρῶ περιγηθεῖς οὖρῳ,  
αἰπεινὴν τε Κερωσσόν, ὕπερθε δὲ πολλὸν ἐούσαν  
Νυμφαίην παράμειβον, ἵνα κρείουσα Καλυψώ  
Ἀτλαντὶς ναίεσκε. ...

For then, following those, they came to Cercyra, where  
Poseidon made to settle the girl Asopis, the beautifully-haired  
Cercyra, away from the land of Phlius, having stolen her urged  
by love; and sailors from the sea, looking at it darkened from  
every side by a dark forest, call it “Black Cercyra”; and then,  
pleased with a warm breeze, they passed even Melite, and  
lofty Cerossus, and Nymphaea, being much distant from them,  
where Mistress Calypso, daughter of Atlas, used to live.

PROCOP. 8.22.18-21:

οὗτος δὲ ὁ στόλος ἄχρι ἐς τὴν Φαιάκων χώραν, ἡ νῦν  
Κέρκυρα ἐπικαλεῖται, οὐδὲν ἄχαρι ἐργάζεσθαι ἔσχε. νῆσον  
γὰρ οὐδεμίαν ἐν τῷδε τῷ διάπλῳ οἰκουμένην ξυμβαίνει εἶναι  
ἐκ τοῦ κατὰ τὴν Χάρυβδιν πορθμοῦ μέχρι ἐς τὴν Κέρκυραν  
ὥστε πολλάκις ἐγὼ ἐνταῦθα γενόμενος διηπορούμην ὅπῃ ποτὲ  
ἄρα τῆς Καλυψοῦς ἡ νῆσος εἴη. ταύτης γὰρ τῆς θαλάσσης  
οὐδαμῇ νῆσον τεθέσθαι, ὅτι μὴ τρεῖς, οὐ πολλῶ ἄποθεν τῆς  
Φαιακίδος, ἀλλ’ ὅσον ἀπὸ σταδίων τριακοσίων, ἀγχιστά πη  
ἀλλήλων οὖσας, βραχείας κομιδῇ καὶ οὐδὲ ἀνθρώπων οἰκία  
ἐχοῦσας οὔτε ζῶων οὔτε ἄλλων τὸ παράπαν οὐδέν. Ὡθονοὶ δὲ  
καλοῦνται τανῦν αἱ νῆσοι αὗται. καὶ φαίη ἂν τις τὴν Καλυψὼ  
ἐνταῦθα γενέσθαι, καὶ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ τὸν Ὀδυσσεῶ γῆς Φαιακίδος  
ὄντα οὐ πολλῶ ἄποθεν ἢ σχεδία, ὥς φησιν Ὀμηρος, ἢ ἄλλῳ  
τῷ τρόπῳ νεὼς τινος χωρὶς ἐνθένδε διαπορθμεύσασθαι.

This expedition as far as the country of the Phaeacians, which  
now is called “Cercyra”, offered nothing unpleasant to toil  
at. For it happens that there is no inhabited island in this  
journey from the straits of Charybdis as far as Cercyra, with  
the result that I, having often been there, wondered where  
ever was indeed the island of Calypso. For I have nowhere  
seen an island of this sea, except for three, not far away from  
Phaeacia, but about 300 stades distant, being very close to  
each other, quite small and not even having habitations of  
men or of animals or of other things whatever. Today these  
islands are called “Othoni”. And one would say that Calypso  
was here, and that from here Odysseus, being not far away  
from the land of Phaeacia, crossed from here either on a raft,  
as Homer says, or in another manner without any boat.

<sup>1</sup>These sources have been translated by the present author in the order as they appear in this article.

MELA 2.7.13:

*Juxta (Cretam) est Astypalaea, Naumachos, Zephyre, Chryse, Gaudos ...*

Next to Crete is Astypalaea, Naumachus, Zephyre, Chryse, Gaudos ...

PLIN. *Nat.* 4.12.61:

*Reliquae circa eam ante Peloponnesum duae Corycoe, totidem Mylae, et latere septentrionali dextra Cretam habenti contra Cydoneam Leuce et duae Budroe, contra Matium Dia, contra Itanum promunturium Onysia, Leuce, contra Hierapytnam Chrysa, Gaudos.*

The rest (of the islands) around it (Crete), opposite the Peloponnesus, are the two (islands of) Coryci, and an equal number of (islands of) Mylae; and on the northern side, with Crete on the right-hand side, opposite Cydonea are Leuce and the two (islands of) Budri; opposite Matius (is) Dia; opposite the promontory of Itanus (are) Onysia, Leuce; opposite Hierapytna (are) Chrysa, Gaudos.

PTOL. *Geog. s.v.* "Claudos"; HIEROCL. *HIST. s.v.* "Claudos":

νησος, ἐν ᾗ πόλις Κλαῦδη.

An island, in which there is a city (called) "Claude".

N.T. *Act. Ap.* 27.16:

νησιον δέ τι ὑποδραμόντες καλούμενον Κλαῦδα ἰσχύσαμεν μόλις περικρατεῖς γενέσθαι τῆς σκάφης, ...

Having run a bit South of a small island called "Clauda", we were hardly able to maintain the control of the boat.

*Stad.* 328:

ἀπὸ δὲ Κλαυδίας εἰς Φοίνικα στάδιοι τ'. ἔχει πόλιν καὶ λιμένα.

And from Claudia to Phoenix there are 19 stades. It has a city and a harbour.

Busuttil, Fiorini, Vella eds. (2010), 166-167 (84v.7, marg.):

[ἐνθαῖδε] φησι πῶς ὁ ποιητὴς ἐξω[ρί]σθη ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ Μελιτηγαῦδω.

Here he says how the poet was banished in Melitegaudos itself.

*Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae* (53.5)

Εἰσὶ δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ νῆσοι ἐπικοινωνοῦντες αὐταῖς· Κόρσυρα, Ταυριαννίς, Ἀστυπάλεια, Κῶος, Λαμπαδοῦσα, Γαλάτη, Χίος, Κνίδος, Γαῦδος, Γόρσυνα, Λέσβος, Νίσυρος, Μελίτη, Κρήτη, Τένεδος, Μεγίστη, Κέρκινα, Γαυλορήτη, Ἴμβρος, Κύπρος, Μῆνιξ, Θήρα, Ἰάσος, Σαρδανίς, Κάρπαθος, Σάμος.

And there are in common with them even these islands: Corsyra, Tauriannis, Astypalaea, Coos, Lampadusa, Galate, Chios, Cnidos, Gaudos, Gorsyna, Lesbos, Nisyros, Melite, Crete, Tenedos, Megiste, Cercina, Gaulorete, Imbros, Cypros, Menix, Thera, Iasos, Sardanias, Carpathos, Samos.

*Patrologiae* 161, 929-932:

1 ἐγένετο μετὰ τὸ ἐξελεῖν τὸν ἅγιον Παῦλον ἀπὸ

Γαυδομελέτης τῆς νήσου ἐλθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ Ἰταλίαν ...  
It came to pass that Saint Paul, after he left from the island of Gaudomelete, came to Italy ... .

2. δεξάμενος δὲ ὁ Παῦλος τοὺς δύο ἄνδρας τοὺς ἀπεσταλμένους μετὰ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς μηνὶ Μάϊῳ εἰκάδι, πρόθυμος ἐγένετο καὶ ἠὲ χαρίστησεν τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ δεσπότη ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. ἀποπλεύσας δὲ ἀπὸ Γαυδομελέτης οὐκ ἔτι ἦλθεν διὰ Ἀφρικῆς ἐπὶ τὰ μέρη Ἰταλίας, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ Σικελίαν ἀνέδραμεν, ἕως οὗ ἦλθεν ἐν Συρακούσῃ τῇ πόλει ... .

And Paul, having received the two men, sent with the letter on the 20th day of the month of May, became eager and thanked our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. And having sailed away from Gaudomelete, he still did not come to the parts of Italy through Africa, but we made a course up to Sicily until he came to the city of Syracuse ... .

Nicephorus, H.S., in Busuttil, J. (1969), 17-18:

ἐν ᾧ δὲ διέτριβεν ἐκεῖσε, ἀγγέλλεται αὐτῷ ὡς ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ Ἀταλάρικος καὶ Θεόδωρος ὁ τὴν ἀξίαν μάγιστρος, Θεοδώρου δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως ἀδελφοῦ υἱός, σὺν ἄλλοις τισὶν ἐπιβουλεύειν αὐτῷ ἡμελλον. καὶ τοῖς μηνύσασιν πεισθεὶς τούτων τὰς ῥίνας καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ἐξέτεμε, καὶ Ἀταλάρικον μὲν εἰς τὴν νῆσον τὴν λεγομένην Πρίγκιπον ἐξόριστον ἐξέπεμπε, Θεόδωρον δὲ πρὸς τὴν νῆσον τὴν Γαυδομελέτην προσαγορευομένην, ἐπιτρέψας τῷ ἐκεῖσε δουκί, ἥνικα πρὸς αὐτὸν καταλάβοι. καὶ τὸν ἕτερον τῶν ποδῶν ἀφελέσθαι. κατὰ ταῦτα δὲ καὶ τοὺς συγγόντας αὐτοῖς τὰ τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς ἐτιμωρήσατο.

In the time he spent there, it was announced to him that his son, Atalarichus, and Theodorus, the real teacher, and the son of the brother of King Theodorus, were about to contrive revenge against him along with others. And having been persuaded by those who disclosed (the matter), he cut off the noses and hands of these men, and he sent off Atalarichus, on the one hand, to the island called "Principus" in exile, and Theodorus, on the other hand, to the island called "Gaudomelete", having referred the matter to the leader whenever he would come up with him, and to set free the other of the rest. And in the same manner he even revenged on those who shared their feelings with them regarding the matters of the conspiracy.

Vella ed. (1980), 42:

*Paulus (inquiunt) Cretam deserens e Claudae (Ptolemaeo Claudus est, Plinio Gaudos, vulgo nunc Gozo) medio inter Occidentem et Meridiem portu, ...*

Paul (they say), leaving Crete from (the island) of Clauda (to Ptolemy it is Claudus, to Pliny (it is) Gaudos, today (it is) commonly (called) "Gozo"), half way between the West and the South ... .

Anon (1581) in Vella (2002), 150:

*Claudus, Goze.*

Claudus, Gozo.

Della Torre, 1499: s.v. "Glaucanis":

*Insula et civitas. 36 (1/3) 34 (2/3).*

Island and city. 36 (1/3) 34 (2.3).



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# Gozitan Christmas Lore and Traditions

ANTON F. ATTARD

## *Pasturi* for Sale

During the month of November in the shops of Rabat, Gozo there appeared for sale many kinds of small and interesting *pasturi*. The word *pasturi* is derived from Italian *pastori* which means shepherds. The Maltese *pasturi* were very small statuettes made by local Gozitan craftsmen which represented the shepherds and people of Bethlehem at the time of Christ's birth.

These *pasturi* were made of local clay brought from a hillock known as La Veċċa (meaning 'the old hill') near the small village of Ghasri. The clay was dug out of the ground just after the first heavy rains. The craftsmen had special moulds to make the basic bodies of the statues and then they would add the hands and the feet to represent different characters in various poses. Some of the craftsmen would model their *pasturi* with their hands and a small instrument like a knife. These *pasturi* were then hand painted according to two traditions: either the local tradition which represented the folk costumes of local people at the time the statues were made or the Holy Land tradition which represented the folk costumes worn by the shepherds and the people of Palestine at the time of Christ. These *pasturi* were painted with lime colours (*żebgħa tal-ġir*) and when dry they were painted with shellac (*bil-lakka*) or with wax to make them shine.



Wenzu Farrugia making his *pasturi*  
Photo: <http://www.stgeorge.org.mt>

In Gozo there were several craftsmen who practiced this local tradition. Among the best known were Thomas Żahra known as Majsi, Gori, Joseph Meilak known as Ġużepp tal-Belt (Joseph of the Citadel), Joseph Pace (Suxxipjat), Lorenzo Farrugia (ta' Garawelli), Michelangelo Camilleri (Ġanġu) and his wife Mary Josephine, her father Michelangelo Bajada (ta' Lalajja), Toni Agius (tal-Brejbx), Ignaizio Cauchi (ta' l-Argentier), Wistin Camilleri (Gozo's well know statue maker), and others. Michelangelo Camilleri (Ġanġu) was also very good at making wax Baby Jesus figures in pink colour.

These *pasturi* were sold at a very low price: a farthing each, or a half penny but not more than two pence. People coming to Rabat from the villages on Sunday used to take sets of *pasturi* back with them according to their needs or to meet the demands of their little children who were crib enthusiasts. Besides the *pasturi* one could also find small earthenware lamps (*msiebaħ*) to lighten up the crib. These earthenware lamps could be bought from the open market at Savina Square.

## The Making of the Crib

During the Novena children used to prepare the crib (*il-presepju*) for Christmas. In Gozo the crib used to be made from hard stones gathered from the rocky cliffs around the hilltops. The hills of Gozo have slanting clayey sides but rocky caps covering the flat tops. These two upper geological layers are made of greensand and upper coralline limestone. The lower part of the strata is highly fragmented giving rise to small hard stones of strange but beautiful shapes. Both children and adults would select the best and most beautiful examples to build their cribs.

The colour of these stones varies around yellowish grey. Gozitan children were quite choosy and very good at building small cribs with these stones. Those who could not go to the hills made use of the remains of burnt up charcoal known locally as *gagazza*. Sometimes the natural hard stones are





Quartz formation in the rocks around the Maltese Islands. Such rocks would be chosen and used to build cribs.  
Photo: <http://www.marz-kreations.com>

also called *gagazza* but the real *gagazza* is black. From the greensand hills they used to gather yellowish sand known as *rina* (from arena meaning sand) to make the small fields of the crib. For trees they used to pick wild thyme plants (*sagħtar*) from the flat hilltops or from some rocky surface or garigue known locally as *xagħra* or *qortin*. This practice is no longer allowed since wild thyme has become a protected species. For small shrubs they used to pick a small Mediterranean heath plant known locally as *leħjet ix-xiħ*, (old man's beard). These tiny plants grow on the stones of rubble walls and also on the thick trunks of palm trees but only on the side facing north.

### Placing the *Pasturi*

When the crib was ready, it was time to set the *pasturi* in their right places to represent the Christmas story as told in the Gospels and according to tradition which came down to us from the Apocryphal New Testament books. The *pasturi* consisted of different characters. There were different kinds of shepherds; some carrying a lamb, others carrying some wood, others walking with a staff, the sleeping shepherd (*ir-rieqed*), the climber (*ix-xabbati* or *xabbatur*) climbing on the crib to get a better view, the companion (*ix-xrik*) and even the astonished shepherd (*il-mistagħgeb* or *l-ghageb tal-preseppju*) standing right in the middle of the crib in a familiar posture. The astonished shepherd was so marveled by the beauty of Baby Jesus that he became a Christmas legend and a crib without him is not complete. There were also angels and *putti* (a putto is just the head of an angel

and two wings) hanging over the crib to remind us of the angels who gave the news to the shepherds on the first Christmas night. Small white sheep were scattered all over the area and inside the crib just behind the manger there were the ox and the donkey warming up Baby Jesus with their warm breath as suggested by an Apocryphal Gospel. Joseph and Mary stood on each side of the holy manger. The figure of Baby Jesus was made of pinkish wax. On the top of the crib they used to put the star of Bethlehem and coming from afar the three wise men or *slaten magi* on their camels. Other elaborate cribs used to contain many other characters or objects taken from the ordinary life surrounding Gozitan people; women carrying different objects on their heads, people working in the fields, windmills and other buildings, and someone playing the Gozitan traditional bagpipe.

### Christmas Carols

Once the crib was ready the children would enjoy themselves gazing at the unusual beauty and romance of the story of the birth of Jesus, every now and then singing the old traditional song or carol:

<i>Ninni la tibkix iżjed,</i>	Sleep and cry no more,
<i>Ninni Ġesù Bambin.</i>	Sleep, Baby Jesus.
<i>Hallih għalina l-biki</i>	Leave the crying for us
<i>Għax aħna midinbin.</i>	Because we are sinners.

### Folk Games at Christmas Time

There were no cars in the streets of Gozo a hundred years ago. Children could play as much as they



Placing the *pasturi* in the crib.  
Photo: <http://www.preseppjuma.org>

wanted in the middle of the streets. The streets were the children's theatre where they could play all sorts of games all the year round.

Some games were seasonal and Christmas time was an ideal period of time for special games. Hazelnuts (*ġellewż*), known in Gozo as Christmas almonds (*lewż tal-Milied*), were imported from abroad in large quantities and children eagerly acquired as many as possible. With hazelnuts the children could play all sorts of games; Castles (*Kastelli*), made of four hazelnuts, three on the ground and one on top, Slanting Plank (*Żurżieqa*); Hitting the Penny or the Shilling (*Nolqtu s-Sold*); Nine Holes or Five Holes (*Kuklu ta' b'Disgħa* or *Kuklu ta' b'Ħamsa*) and many other games which at other times of the year the children would play with marbles (Attard, 1969).

Other games were played with coins, especially with the old British coins which were withdrawn from circulation following decimalization in 1972. Women and young girls preferred to play the tectotum or little top with four sides marked with different letters showing wins or losses: T = *Tutto*, win all; M = *Mezzo*, win one half; N = *Niente*, win nothing; P = *Paga*, pay another share.

Getting the ring-cake was another folk game played mostly in the village of Xagħra. A honey ring-cake used to be hung by a thread from a high branch of a carob tree. Teenagers would compete with each other to get hold of the ring-cake with their mouths only. He who got hold of the ring-cake with his mouth would win the game and eat the ring-cake.

### Christmas Food and Desserts

Christmas was a time when people prepared special lunches and dinners and typical sweet desserts served only at this time of the year. Poultry, bred on Gozo's farmsteads, was popular at Christmas. A typical delicacy for this time of the year was the *imboljuta* which consists of peeled chestnuts boiled and cooked in hot chocolate flavoured with fragmented orange peel. Honey ring cakes (*qagħaq tal-ġhasel*) are also associated with this festive season. Similar ring cakes (*qagħaq tal-qastanija*) are filled with honey and flour flavoured with spices.

On Christmas Eve housewives were kept busy preparing pastry to make another special kind of

ring cake known as *qagħaq tal-kavatelli* which is a small ring cake covered or smeared with honey.

### Christmas Time and Weather Lore

The word *Milied* in Maltese is a mimated noun from the verb *wiled* meaning to give birth, so *Milied* means birthday, the birthday of Christ which is celebrated on this day. The feast of Christmas, commemorating the birth of Christ, took the place of the ancient pagan festival of the birth of the Sun and it falls very close to the winter solstice. The Maltese proverb states that until Christmas we neither have cool windy weather nor biting cold (*Sal-Milied la bard u lanqas ksieħ*). Another Gozitan proverb warns us that in the period between the feast of the Immaculate Conception (*Tal-Qala*, the feast celebrated in Qala) and Christmas we should take off the plough from its furrow and put the bird-shooting gun on its pegs, meaning that we should neither plough the fields nor go for bird shooting during this period (*Bejn tal-Qala u l-Milied, erfa' l-mohriet minn ħalq il-wied u qiegħed xkubettitek fuq l-utied*). The vigil of Christmas Day was a vigil of obligation and Catholics until some time ago were expected to fast, otherwise they would die like dogs: *Min ma jsumx lejlet il-Milied imut bħall-klieb*.

The type of weather we have on Christmas Day gives an indication of what kind of weather we shall be having around Easter: *Milied fuq il-bejt, l-Għid taht il-bejt*; *Milied taht il-bejt, l-Għid fuq il-bejt*, meaning; Christmas on the roof (fine weather on Christmas Day) Easter under the roof (a stormy Easter) and vice versa.



Traditional honey ring-cake (*qagħaq tal-ġhasel*).  
Photo: <http://maltesebakes.com>



## Christmas and the Weather Calendar

The twelve days preceding Christmas were considered as a type of calendar forecasting the weather of each corresponding month of the coming year. Starting from December 13th (St. Lucy's Feast), the weather of each day, carefully observed throughout the day, is believed to be the same as that of the corresponding month. So the weather of the 13th December is said to correspond to that of the month of January, the 14th December to February and so on. These are called *l-Irwiegel*, meaning the rules, plural form for *riegla* or *regola*, rule observation of the weather should be carried out from morning till night in terms of wind, rain, clouds and sunny periods.

## Christmas Day and the Weather Stars

'Weather Stars' or 'Stars of Stormy Weather' (*stilet tal-maltemp*) are special feast days that fall between September and January. The original number of weather stars was said to have been seven and were the days which corresponded to those dedicated to the seven female virgin saints and which fell on days just preceding Christmas Day. These were: St. Rose of Viterbo (9<sup>th</sup> September), St. Theresa of Avila (15<sup>th</sup> October), St. Ursula (21<sup>st</sup> October), St. Cecilia (22<sup>nd</sup> November), St. Catherine of Alexandria (25<sup>th</sup> November), St. Barbara (4<sup>th</sup> December) and St. Lucy (13<sup>th</sup> December). Our forebearers expected



The weather stars finish by Candlemas, the day when Jesus was presented at the Temple.  
Photo: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hans\\_Holbein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hans_Holbein)

rainy weather on these feast days. Later on the idea was extended to more feast days to include, for example, Michaelmas on 29<sup>th</sup> September, Our Lady of the Pillar on 10<sup>th</sup> October, St. Raphael the Archangel on 24<sup>th</sup> October and the Immaculate Conception on 8<sup>th</sup> December. In time the whole list of the weather stars was changed to include further feast days before and after Christmas, while some of the original feast days were discarded altogether. By Candlemas (February 2<sup>nd</sup>) the weather stars are gone: *Il-Kandlora, stilli fora*.

## The Phantom of Christmas Night

Tradition has it that Christ was born at midnight on Christmas night and our ancestors believed that it was unlucky to be born at the same time as Christ. The unfortunate fellow who happened to be born at that time was said to change into a phantom, called a *gawgaw* or *qawqaw*, on each Christmas night of his life. It was believed that he would leave his bed and go out carrying a large agricultural implement called a harrow (*xatba*) with much noise and toil between midnight and four o'clock the next morning when the first church bell would ring. He would then return to his bed very much exhausted. Some believed that only the spirit became a *gawgaw*, but others were quite sure that both body and spirit became a *gawgaw* because wives would not find their husbands in bed between midnight and four o'clock on Christmas night. The only remedy for these unfortunate fellows to avoid becoming a *gawgaw* was to remain awake counting the holes in a sieve between midnight and four o'clock the next morning!

## Gawgaw and Mlejka

Another tradition says that a *gawgaw*'s wife was called *mlejka* meaning 'a small queen', a phantom queen who visited homes on New Year's Eve. If she found a fragrance of flowers and the good smell of food being cooked, then she would bring good luck to that house during the coming year, if not bad luck would fall on that household.

Another old tradition states that if when going out a *gawgaw* found the ground wet and dipped his moustaches into the wet drops of the night, then it meant that winter was over; if not then winter was still coming.

## ***Il-Fizzju* or the Christmas Religious Service**

A hundred years ago the Christmas church service known as *l-Uffizzju* or *il-Fizzju* was held only at the Cathedral Church situated within the fortifications of the ancient Citadel. Crowds of people from all the villages in Gozo would gather at Rabat on Christmas Eve accompanied by men playing traditional instruments. Some of them would go round the town to view the Christmas cribs on show at different houses. Many others used to gather on Castle Hill on the stairs leading to the old town of Gozo. There they waited until it was time for the service. In the meantime they played all sorts of games and listened to the bagpipe and tambourine players entertaining the crowd. When in church, women would stay in the central part or the main aisle of the church, while men stayed under the naves on both sides of the main aisle. Some of the young men would not hesitate to throw hazelnuts at pretty young girls who might have happened to be within their reach.

### **After the Service and Midnight Mass**

After the church service and the midnight mass it was customary for Gozitan men to find their way to one of the shops in St. Joseph Street in Rabat to order a hot plate of baked macaroni. After the long Christmas fast the macaroni must have tasted most delicious and it was washed down with a glass or two of local homemade wine. The women used to go straight home to prepare the Christmas lunch.

### **On Christmas Day**

Early in the morning on Christmas Day children used to wake up to see what gifts they had received from Baby Jesus during the night. They used to go out noisily into the streets to play together and show each other what gifts they had received. There were no gifts for naughty boys but instead a piece of black charcoal which, much to their astonishment, was made of a sweet substance. When people met each other on Christmas morning they would wish each other *il-Milied it-Tajjeb* (Merry Christmas) and friends would meet in wine shops to have a drink together. It was customary in Gozo to have all the extended family gathered together at the parents' home for lunch on Christmas Day. Christmas time was always the ideal time for reunions.

## **Christmas Legends**

Following are some legends that are still told in Gozo.

### ***Baby Jesus and the goat***

It is said that Baby Jesus was a puer senes, that is, he could speak even when he was still a newborn baby. In fact we find in the Infancy Gospel of the High Priest Joseph Caiphas that Jesus spoke even when he was still in the cradle and said to his mother: Mary, I am Jesus the Son of God, the word which thou didst bring forth according to the declaration of the Angel Gabriel to thee, and my father hath sent me for the salvation of the world. (Infancy: I, 2-3). The legend of the goat and Baby Jesus says that a goat followed the shepherds and went into the cave where Jesus was born but while the sheep behaved themselves very well and kept quiet, the noisy goat went in front of Baby Jesus who was sound asleep and uttered such a loud bleat that it woke up Jesus who started crying. One version of the legend says that when the goat turned round to go away, Jesus took hold of her tail and pulled it up. So the goat's tail remained in an upward position ever since. Another version of the same legend says that Jesus spoke and cursed the goat and told her that from that day onward her milk will be half water. That is why the goat's milk is very light and contains very little cream when compared to the milk of the sheep or the cow.

### ***The Holy Family and the fig tree***

When the wise men did not return to Herod who lived in Jerusalem, the king Judea was furious and sent his soldiers to look for Baby Jesus. They went to Bethlehem and there, according to the Gospels, they killed all the babies of two years of age or under. The Holy Family was already on their way to Egypt when Herod's soldiers nearly overtook them and caught them. There was nowhere to hide except for a large fig tree which grew in a field on the way. The fig tree was very high so Mary asked the tree, "O kind tree, that gives us such delicious fruit, please hide us from the soldiers' eyes!" The fig tree immediately bent down and all its branches touched the ground. Several spiders quickly wove cobwebs all around. Then, Herod's



soldiers arrived.

"They must be hiding under that fig tree!" said one of the soldiers.

"Don't be stupid!" said the captain. "Can't you see that all the branches are covered with cobwebs? How could they hide there without tearing down the cobwebs?"

So Herod's soldiers turned round and went to look for them in another direction.

### *The wheat that grew overnight*

Our ancestors recount the legend of the Holy Family, the peasant and Herod's soldiers. A peasant was sowing his wheat when the Holy Family passed by. "What are you doing, my friend?" asked Joseph.

"I am sowing wheat," replied the peasant.

"Well!" said Joseph, "Come again tomorrow to harvest the crop!"

"How can that be?" said the peasant.

"Yes, believe me," reiterated Joseph with some emphasis, "Come again and harvest everything tomorrow."

Even though the peasant was very skeptical about what Joseph had told him, he did go to his field the following day with his sickle to see if by some strange coincidence his wheat had really grown up and ripened and was ready for harvesting. When he arrived at his field he found, to his amazement, that his crop was fully grown and ready for harvesting.

While he was working Herod's soldiers passed by. They were looking for the Holy Family to take Baby Jesus away and kill him. They stopped and asked the peasant whether he had seen a man and a woman with a child.

"Yes," replied the peasant.

"When was that?" asked the soldiers.

"Well," replied peasant, "when I was sowing this wheat."

"Oh! That must have been a very long time ago!" said the captain.

And they turned back and went to Herod empty handed.

### *Mary and the date palm tree*

The road to Egypt was very long. One day the Holy Family had nothing to eat when on the roadside

they saw a palm tree laden with ripe dates. Mary was hungry and asked the tree to be kind enough to give her some dates. The palm tree bent down and lowered its bunches of dates so that the Holy Mother could eat as much as she wanted.

When Mary tasted the dates they were so sweet and delicious that she exclaimed: "Oh! What sweet and delicious fruit!"

Since then, on the stone inside each date is a small 'o'.

### *Mary spills milk on the thistle leaves*

On the road to Egypt the Holy Family met some shepherds who gave some milk to Mary for Baby Jesus. Now it happened that she accidentally spilt some of this milk on a thistle plant which grew in that place. Immediately, the leaves of that thistle plant became variegated, that is they have a white line along the midrib. In Gozo it is called ix-xewk tal-halib tal-Madonna, meaning the thistle on which Mary spilt the milk.

### *The Holy Family passed from Gozo*

It is said that the Holy Family even came to Gozo and passed from Wied il-Ghasri. Until about forty years ago, on a rock face on the way to Wied il-Ghasri., people from the village of Ghasri could show you the footprints of the child Jesus, Joseph and Mary and that of the devil who was said to have followed them and left his footprint as a big, deep hole just a few paces away.

People and children going for a swim at Wied il-Ghasri would stop to measure their feet by stepping in any one of these footprints, except in the devil's which was too huge for any human foot. Unfortunately these 'footprints' were destroyed when the road was covered with concrete.

### *The Man who became a gawgaw*

Once there were two friends. One of them was born at midnight on Christmas night. So he was condemned to become a *gawgaw* every Christmas night.

One Christmas night his friend went out after midnight. Now the first friend was already turned into a *gawgaw* in the shape of a snake, and was roaming about in the streets. Soon he came across

his friend who was out on an errand and went to greet him in his shape as a snake. His friend did not recognize him, and thinking that he was a real serpent, started throwing stones at him and hitting him hard many times.

On the day following Christmas the man who was a *gawgaw* woke up all bruised and injured. His friend went to see him.

“Oh dear!” said his friend, “if only I were with you I would have defended you!”

“Defend me!” said his friend angrily, “Are you joking? It was you who threw so many stones at me when I came to greet you as a snake last night. Have you forgotten that on Chrisman night I change into a *gawgaw*?”

### Two Christmas Legacies from World War Two

When World War Two broke out in 1939 thousands of Maltese of Gozitan descent and others, living in the harbour area, airport and military airfields, fled as refugees to Gozo. Gozo’s population swelled up to unusual proportions and Gozitan housing and social problems increased immeasurably. However Gozo’s economy was still mainly based on agriculture and when compared to Malta, food supply here was far more plentiful and Gozitans and refugees alike fared better than their compatriots living on the Mother Island.

The war refugees also brought with them to Gozo two Christmas customs which were hitherto unknown in Gozo. The first custom was the sermon by a small boy dressed as an altar boy on Christmas Eve or at the Midnight Mass. Another Christmas custom was introduced by a certain Mr. Bianco who was a member of the Christian Doctrine Society, known as M.U.S.E.U.M., founded by Saint George Preca. This custom consisted of a procession by lay people on the eve of Christmas with the figure of Baby Jesus in a manger. The procession would stop at each of the squares of Victoria where a small sermon or a dialogue about the Christmas story took place. The procession started and ended at it-Tokk, the Main Square of Victoria and finally a sermon was delivered by a small boy dressed as an altar boy. Since then both the Christmas Eve Sermon and the Christmas Eve Procession have spread to all the parishes of Gozo.

### Modern Christmas Customs

Nowadays in Gozo we see many Christmas customs which were unknown one hundred years ago. In the first place the Christmas Service and the Midnight Mass spread to all the other parish churches of Gozo. The earliest foreign custom that was introduced here may be the sending of Christmas greetings through the post by means of Christmas cards. After World War II Gozo saw the first Christmas tree. As a matter of fact the first public one was inaugurated at it-Tokk, now Independence Square, for Christmas 1956, on the initiative of the Commissioner for Gozo, Major. J. Castillo, E.D.

In the late nineteen fifties Gozo’s electricity system was changed. The two small generators which provided Gozo with electricity were closed down and electric power was brought over from Malta by a submarine cable. This enhanced greatly the electricity supply in Gozo. In the following years electricity was extended to all the remote villages of Gozo. Gozitan houses became better lighted and Christmas trees, Christmas stars and home decorations, street decorations and crib competitions became newly established traditions.

The village of San Lawrenz saw the creation of an annual Christmas Eve pageant and Gozo saw the setting up of a society of crib enthusiasts (*Għaqda Hbieb tal-Preseppju*) to promote and propagate the tradition of crib making in Gozo. The playing of recorded music, carol singing, Christmas dinner dances in halls and nightclubs are all



Sermon being delivered by a young Gozitan boy at Marsalforn during the midnight mass service on Christmas Eve.  
Photo: <http://www.thechoirconcert.com/>





Modern day street lighting in Victoria, Gozo.  
Photo: <http://scagozo.com/>

imported elements of Gozitan modern Christmas entertainment.

Gifts being presented to children on Christmas Eve became more and more elaborate, sophisticated and expensive. Such gifts evolved from simple tin toys in the early 50's to modern computers and electronic games today. Father Christmas is often seen strolling in Gozo's street delivering Christmas gifts and collecting money for charitable institutions. Cribbs in Gozo are now being filled with imported pasturi which, though look more perfectly and elaborately made, more beautiful and last longer, do not have that charm and fascination of the traditional clay pasturi of Gozo's old craftsmen, now, sad to say, all dead and gone. Luckily, they have been replaced by a few modern dedicated craftsmen who still make pasturi and teach children how to make them.

Modern Gozitans today live a busy and a hurried life. On Christmas Day public transport is temporarily suspended so that the transport workers can enjoy Christmas lunch with their families. Cooking a large turkey for Christmas lunch has also become a common imported Christmas custom.

Some modern critics say that modern Christmas in Gozo is a Christmas without Christ. However, we should never feel so pessimistic about this matter.

In Gozo Christ is still present wherever one turns his face and the Society of Crib Enthusiasts is working hard to make sure that Christ stays with us not only at Christmas but all the year round.

Anton F. Attard B.A. is a Gozitan writer, translator, folklorist and poet. He is a prolific writer for the local press, and for radio and television on cultural subjects. His main topics are usually Gozitan affairs, folklore and history. He translates foreign folktales and ancient apocryphal writings from various languages into Maltese. As a poet he usually writes both lyrics and other poetry for special occasions and commemorations. He also contributes regularly to Poetry on Gozo with poems relating mostly to old Gozitan folk traditions and customs. Anton F. Attard has also several publications to his credit.

# Marirož Gatt: a late nineteenth century renowned Gozitan midwife

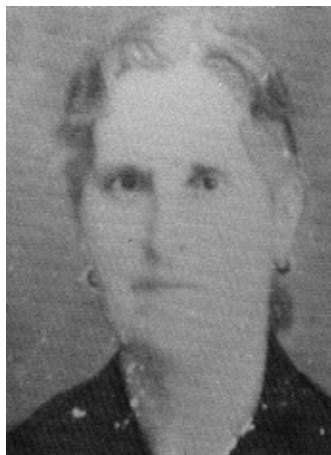
GEOFFREY G. ATTARD

## Introduction

The Gozitan women at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century may have not been at the centre of attention of many. They certainly led an ordinary life either working in their homes or otherwise serving their community by helping out their husbands in the fields or in the little grocers or shops that spotted the Gozitan town and villages. Midwifery would have been one of the various services offered by a handful of women who would have conceived of their work more as a service rather than a profession.

## Family Background

Marirož Scicluna of Victoria would have been no exception. Born in 1873 into the family of Ġianna Xuereb and Ġużeppi Scicluna in the area of San Ġorġ tal-Ħaġar at the very heart of Gozo's town, (Mizzi, 2007: 3-39) Marirož was baptised at St George's Parish Church by Archpriest Mgr. Felic Refalo on the 21st March 1873 and named Maria Rosa, Josepha, Annunziata.<sup>1</sup> Marirož grew up in Rabat, Gozo. She married Ġorġ Gatt of Victoria, son of Felic and Josepha Caruana on the 5th of September 1893 at St George's Parish in Rabat.<sup>2</sup> Four children came of the marriage; Adelina who married Ġużeppi Attard (ta' Kuncetta) a carpenter from Victoria, Anastasia who married Ġorġ Tabone (ta' Gerit) who had no issue, Ġużeppa



Marirož Gatt

who married Neriku Mizzi of Vittoriosa (Malta) and Tarċis, who became a priest and later a canon of the Gozo Cathedral. Dun Tarċis, as he was affectionately known, was for many years the master of ceremonies (ċerimonier) for Bishop Mgr. Ġużeppi Pace. He also served as spiritual director to the Leone Band of Victoria and it was through his work and enthusiasm that the statue of the Assumption manufactured by the Francesco Rosa Company of Rome in 1897 was donated to the Cathedral Parish and thus became the titular statue of the Matrice Church. Dun Tarċis' remains were lately transported to the Cathedral Church and were interred in the chapel where his beloved statue of Santa Marija is permanently revered.

## Descendants

By a twist of luck or coincidence whatever one might want to call it, Marirož happens to be the great-aunt of Archbishop Emeritus Ġużeppi Mercieca (a sister to his maternal grandmother), the great-grandmother of Gozitan singer Adelina Attard, local writer Joe M. Attard and Rev. Dr. Fabio Attard SDB and the great-great-grandmother of Gozitan-born news-readers Nathaniel Attard (NET TV) and Melissa Vella (Super 1) and painter Mark Sagona. She also happens to be my great-great grandmother.

## Death

Marirož died on the 3rd of December 1952; she was buried at the Santa Marija Cemetery of Victoria. The memory of Marirož "ta' Qaraboċċu" as she was simply known by all, will continue to be cherished by various Gozitan folk for many years to come.

## Reference

Mizzi, P. (2007). "Marirož il-Majjistra," *Il-Ħajja f'Għawdex*, 3-39. Gozo: Gozo Diocese.

Fr. Geoffrey G. Attard was ordained for the diocese of Gozo in June 2004. He graduated M.Th. in Ecclesiastical History from the University of Edinburgh in November 2005 and he graduated M. Lit. in Practical Theology from the University of St Andrews.

<sup>1</sup> *Liber Baptizmorum* Vol 11, St George's Basilica, Victoria

<sup>2</sup> *Liber Matrimoniorum*. Vol V, St George's Basilica, Victoria

# Migration from Gozo: 1870 -72

MARK CARUANA

During most of the 19th century, migration from Malta was largely to North Africa.

By 1870, formal recording of passport applications and renewals became available in a bound ledger format and these can be consulted and obtained (for a small fee) at the Malta National Archives at Rabat, Malta. The ledger contains the day, month and year of issue of passport, name and surname of the applicant, name of applicant's father, age place of birth and residency of applicant, as well as the occupation and destination of applicant.

In this study, passport applications for the years 1870 to 1872 were analysed. Unfortunately, ledgers for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January to 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1870, as well as the period June to December 1872, are non-existent, so that the 1870 to 1872 period is incomplete by around 10 months. Moreover, for the subsequent years 1873 to 1886 passport application records are also missing.

During the period of 1870 to 1872, a total of 3,005 passports were issued. The majority of the applicants were Maltese by birth or by descent. Of these, 311 applicants were born in the Maltese Diaspora, namely Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Gibraltar, the Greek Islands and Turkey. One applicant was born in the West Indies where several Maltese had emigrated as a result of the failed scheme which encouraged Maltese migration to Grenada in the mid-nineteenth century (1839 to 1841).

## Migration from Gozo

During this time (1870 to 1872), a total of 277 persons from Gozo applied for a passport. This represents nine percent of the total number of applicants. Twenty-one Gozitans stated their destination to be Italy or Sicily. These are not included in the table as their purpose was most likely to have been for study, for health reasons or as a holiday.

There were no passport applicants from Qala, Kerċem, Ghasri, Munxar, San Lawrenz or Fontana.

However these may have been recorded as Gozo (not stated) or with other parishes (e.g. Fontana and Kerċem could have been included under Rabat.

Birthplace	Number of passport applicants
Xaghra	73
Nadur	65
Rabat	49
Gozo (not stated)	41
Sannat	21
Gharb	16
Xewkija	9
Għajnsielem	2
Żebbuġ	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>277</b>

**Table 1:** Birthplace of persons applying for passports, 1870-72

As shown in Table 1, allowing for the fact that the birthplace of a considerable number, around fifteen percent, was not stated, most of the Gozo-born applicants gave their birth-place as Xaghra, Nadur and Rabat.

The ages of these persons ranged from sixteen years to fifty seven years. There were twenty five females (nine per cent) included in these applications, all wives joining husbands, except for one who was a widow and was accompanied by her son.

The majority of applicants were born and resided in Gozo while forty one were Gozo-born but lived in towns and villages in Malta, mainly in Valletta and the Harbour side area.

## Destination

As shown in Table 2, the most common destination was Algeria (82 percent). Some were specific as to which locality in Algeria they were going, namely Bone (97), Philippeville (59) and Algiers (7).

None went to the Barbary States (Tripoli and Benghazi). Those who stated Turkey were destined for Constantinople.



Birthplace	Destination
Xaghra	Algeria (71), Egypt (1), Tunisia (1)
Nadur	Algeria (55), Tunisia (7), France (1), Gibraltar (1), Odessa (1)
Gozo (not stated)	Algeria (22), Egypt (6), Tunisia (6), Turkey (5), Gibraltar (1), Corfu (1)
Rabat	Algeria (43), Egypt (2), Gibraltar (2), Marseille (1), Tunisia (1)
Sannat	Algeria (21)
Gharb	Algeria (14), Egypt (1), Tunis (1)
Xewkija	Algeria (8), Greece (1)
Għajnsielem	Algeria (1), Turkey/Gibraltar (1)
Żebbuġ	Egypt (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>277</b>

**Table 1:** Birthplace of persons and destinations, 1870-72

## Conclusion

At the April 2010 Convention in Malta, I became increasingly aware of the frustration of many Maltese from Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt (in particular) of their desperate need to find out more details of their ancestry. They needed to find out their ancestral place of birth in Malta, in order to obtain a baptismal certificate, confirm



Maltese migrants arriving in Australia in 1949.

their Maltese ancestral origins and be eligible for Maltese citizenship. Hopefully this database may be able to assist.

For a copy of the passport application, however, one needs to make contact with the Malta National Archives on-line at [customer-care.archives@gov.mt](mailto:customer-care.archives@gov.mt) or through their website: [www.nationalarchives.gov.mt](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.mt).

Further details, including information about individual migrant movements and Gozo migrants' database may be obtained from Mark Caruana ([caruanamark@optusnet.com.au](mailto:caruanamark@optusnet.com.au))

Mark Caruana is migration researcher, Sydney. Email: [caruanamark@optusnet.com.au](mailto:caruanamark@optusnet.com.au)

# Master of Arts in Islands and Small States

JOE AZZOPARDI

## Introduction

I graduated with a Bachelors of Commerce degree from the University of Malta in 1991 and subsequently obtained the B.A. (Hons.) in Business Management in 1992. In March 1994 I was appointed as executive secretary to the Xaghra Local Council, a position I still occupy to this very day.

In the summer of 2008 I decided to apply for the Masters in Islands and Small States which was being offered at the Gozo Campus of the University of Malta. This course covers many important subjects relevant to islands and small states like Malta including environmental planning and management, microeconomic and macroeconomic issues, environmental concerns, ecological issues and also international and European environmental law. The lectures are conducted in such a way that participation by the students is allowed and even encouraged.

## The First Year

During our first semester the main topic was environmental planning and management. It included discussions on environmental policy,

geographic information systems, management of environmental resources, environmental management systems and spatial planning (including also territorial cohesion). This semester ended with an interesting field trip to Victoria, Gozo where the groups of students had to analyse various issues related to spatial planning.

We turned our attention to economic issues during the second semester of the first year, both from a microeconomic and macroeconomic perspective. The important concepts of demand and supply, costs of factors of production and competition law and monopolies and perfect competition were discussed in depth. Other issues included the effects of inflation and unemployment on economies with special reference to islands and small states, international trade, the labour market and also the multiplier effect. At the end of the semester, students were grouped to prepare various presentations regarding the vulnerability and resilience building of the economies of islands.

## Dissertation Proposal

At the end of my first year I was required to submit a dissertation proposal. After much thought and



Azure Window - Taken on the field trip to Dwejra. Photo: Joe Azzopardi

consultations with my lecturers, including the Director of the Gozo Campus Prof. Lino Briguglio, I decided on the title: The efficiency and effectiveness of local government in small European states, which is very much related to my professional career. The states which I am researching are Slovenia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Cyprus, Luxembourg and of course Malta. In fact local government, in all these countries except Malta, has been functioning for many years now. In our case local councils are still evolving after their enactment in 1993 and are presently undergoing a reform which will hopefully benefit the services they offer to their citizens. The research will analyse the various theories regarding effective and efficient operation of local government. To assess the efficiency and effectiveness of local government I have prepared a questionnaire analysing the various services offered. This has been sent to more than 30 local governments around the countries mentioned above according to their size including those administering less than 5000 residents and those administering around 20,000 residents.

The research will analyse their ability to operate and whether it is feasible for them to pool their resources in various areas. These include street cleaning, road maintenance, waste management including refuse collection, complaint handling, local enforcement systems and also the organisation of cultural activities. Besides their relations with their residents, these local governments are being questioned if they could provide a better service if their localities were much larger (in the case of small councils) or much smaller (in the case of large councils). Another important question in this research is their ability to access E.U. Funds for their activities. The mayors of the localities have also been asked to add further comments about the operation of local governments.



Fungus Rock - Taken on the field trip to Dwejra. Photo: Joe Azzopardi

At this point I would like to mention the very useful credit on research and methodology held during the summer between the first and second year. The techniques taught during this credit, regarding both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, were essential for the research and data collection purposes needed for our dissertations.

## The Second Year

During the first semester of the second year, our focus was turned on environmental concerns for sustainable development in islands and small states. These included climate change, integrated coastal zone management, nature conservation, water and waste management, various spatial planning systems, agriculture and fisheries, air and marine pollution, managing mineral and energy resources, land use, transport, effects of natural disasters, communication and sustainable tourism. The semester rounded up with a very interesting field trip to water and waste treatment plants in Gozo.

During the final semester we analysed environmental law and environmental diplomacy and also covered the ecology and bio-geography of islands. The legal aspect included history and basics of environmental law and policy, international law addressing climate change, protection and conservation of wildlife, effects of European Union enlargement on environmental law, E.U. treaties, international conventions and cultural heritage. The ecological part introduced us to a number of ecological and biological concepts and their application to islands and small states considering that these are known as natural laboratories. The semester was concluded with an interesting field trip to Dwejra.

## Conclusion

I wish to thank all our lecturers, the Gozo Campus staff including its Director and also my fellow students for the interesting experience during these past two years. I certainly recommend this post-graduate degree to all those interested in both environmental and economic issues especially in their application to islands and small states.

Joe Azzopardi possesses a Master of Arts Degree in Islands and Small States Studies.



# The Wistin Camilleri School of Fine Arts

JOE ATTARD

## Introduction

The Wistin Camilleri School of Fine Arts caters for approximately one thousand participants a year. There are 65 courses available at the school, spread over eight different sectors, these being: fine art, art for juniors, crafts for juniors, art and design, crafts, art for persons with special needs, design and craft techniques for secondary school students of around fourteen and fifteen years of age and also trade courses for clients of the Employment and Training Corporation. Because of the wide range of courses, participants from different backgrounds and of vastly different age groups enrol at the school.

Courses for participants with special needs are held in a specially equipped hall fitted with ramps, appropriate furniture and the required sanitary facilities. As part of the conjunction

project which is being conducted by the school in cooperation with the Ninu Cremona Lyceum Complex, students from the latter attend design and craft courses at the school to increase their academic abilities. As from February of this year, courses in woodwork, welding, metal works and stained glass were offered to ETC clients following agreements between the school, the corporation and the Ministry for Gozo.

## School Improvements

Formerly part of the Ghajnsielem primary school, today the School of Fine Arts is a separate and independent institution. It has embarked on a thorough embellishment of the whole premises. The already existent classrooms were upgraded with the purchase of new tools, necessary equipment and the latest software for the computers. New tables and chairs were



Paintings on display in the new block of the school.

also purchased to complete the upgrade. The kilns housed in the pottery workshop are now also being used as a drying unit where the heat emitted is utilized by fiberglass, spray painting and moulding activities which ordinarily need a heat source to complete the procedure. An air-compression chamber has also been added.

A very ambitious goal, which has been attained, related to the extension of the premises and establishment of an incubation room. This was made possible by the support received by the Ministry for Gozo, which financed the project through EU Funds. On the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008, the Prime Minister officially inaugurated the project.

Five new large workshops have been set up on the first floor for the creation of art works by students attending classes in pottery, glass, metal, silver and goldsmith and wood and stone carving. The school's administration offices have also been transferred to the new block with the ones formerly utilized now being used to house the school's archive. A large conference hall has also

been constructed. Recently a projection system has been installed and the hall has been furnished with furniture made in the school's workshops by various students and teachers. Different entities can benefit from the facilities of this conference hall. In fact the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) and Staff Development Organisation (SDO) have already led a series of courses utilizing this Hall.

A new exhibition hall offers a unique opportunity for those who wish to display their work. A papier-mâché exhibition, an art exhibition set up by the special needs students' class, a Christmas exhibition displaying Christmas related exhibits, an international lace exhibition set up by the Artofil Lace School in Belgium, an Easter exhibition and a lace exhibition as part of the Leonardo Da Vinci Lace Project are a few of the most recent exhibitions which have made use of this location. The school also aims to promote Gozo as an 'Island of Culture' through participation in foreign exhibitions such as the ones which were set up in Spain, Portugal, Italy and most recently in Belgium.



The exterior of the new school of art.



An exhibition being held in the new exhibition hall.

## Recent Activities

Recently the school hosted the International European Lace Conference. The event was part of the mobility activities incurred in the project, 'Lace – wealth for the rich, blessing for the poor', through the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. Gozo was represented by the school alongside Belgium, Italy, Germany, Spain and Slovenia, the other partners in the project. The project will be focusing on the design and pattern making of local lace by Computer-aided Design (CAD), a colour code system used in Europe but which is still new to the Maltese Islands.

School participants are encouraged to use recycled and biodegradable material for the production of artifacts. Our school was selected by the Training Centre for Waste and Water Management (BEW), Germany, to convey the Blended Learning Environmental Science (BLES) program for ECO Science in Gozo. BLES adopts the concept of eco-science regarding biodegradable material. The aim of this project is to create and evaluate a training level which is uniform in every European country. The final result expected to be achieved is that all participants in every partner country have the same knowledge and awareness about

the contest of handling and managing organic waste fraction.

Another project, which participants of the Mechanical Clock Restoration course have been enthusiastically working on, is the restoration of Kerċem's parish church clock. The clock was dismantled and brought to the school for restoration by the same students under the supervision of the teacher leading the course. All the existing original parts are being restored. Only those parts which are missing or too extensively damaged for restoration are being replaced.

The school seeks to follow contemporary art by offering participants a vast range of possible techniques in design through art. In crafts we seek to maintain local tradition while reviving those which by the passing of time have faded away. The School works hard to keep its motto alive: *Crafts create beauty, Art defines it.*

Joe Attard is Head of the Wistin Camilleri School of Fine Arts.



# A Multicultural Annual Conference in Gozo

NANCY MATHES

## Introduction

For the last couple of years, the Malta University Gozo Campus has played host to an annual multidisciplinary conference staged by the American-based International Journal of Arts and Sciences (IJAS). The conference is held during Carnival week, allowing the delegates to relax in a jovial atmosphere at the end of each conference day.

Over one hundred delegates attend each time. Last February they hailed from over 25 countries ranging from Asia to the Middle East.

The next conference will be held from 6-10 March 2011. This will be one of several IJAS conferences that are offered annually in cities across Europe and North America. The series has three primary aims.

The first aim is to provide opportunities for academics from a range of disciplines and countries to share their research both through the conference podium and IJAS' double-blind refereed publications. All IJAS conferences are inter- and multi-disciplinary.

The second aim is to provide opportunities for academics to receive informal in-depth feedback through discussions and to enable them to establish contact with professionals in other countries and institutions. Complimentary bus tours running in parallel with the conference provide an informal setting for discussing different points of view. In an increasingly networked world of internet and satellite conferences, there is no substitute for personal interaction—what Edward R. Murrow calls “the last three feet of communication.” It is individuals, not data streams, who must ultimately build the connections that in turn create lasting international research partnerships.



The Gozo Campus courtyard unites all delegates between simultaneous conference sessions.



Professor Tracy Heavner (University of South Alabama) charms the 2009 Gozo delegates with his flute in the campus' courtyard.

The third aim of the series is to introduce academics to locations that are suitable for study abroad programs and which may meet their students' educational needs. IJAS draws its inspiration from the Fulbright Program, an integral part of the United States' foreign educational relations, where face-to-face exchanges have proven to be the single most effective means of engaging international publics while broadening dialogue between academics and institutions.

## Origins

The IJAS concept originated a few years ago in the tiny town of Gottenheim, in Southwest Germany, that played host to American students who would visit each May as part of their study abroad programme in international marketing. Setting up base in Gottenheim, the students would set out on daily programmes to major international tourist attractions spanning from Basel to Heidelberg. And yet, each night, they would return to the comforts of the old tavern and guesthouses in Gottenheim.

Following a meeting between the town's mayor, Volker Kieber, and IJAS representatives, it was decided to use the town and its pristine

surroundings for an academic conference. This would promote Gottenheim's potential for course abroad programs among international faculty.

This was a win-win situation. IJAS and its international faculty would be welcomed in Gottenheim for their exchange of academic research while Gottenheim would get the opportunity to showcase its potential as a base for international universities who want a safe and lovely location for their traveling students. IJAS' professors would serve as ambassadors by first experiencing what this location could offer.

Eventually, this concept extended to other international locations including Gozo at the invitation of the University of Malta's Dr. Joseph Azzopardi who in return accepted IJAS' request that he coordinates the Gozo conference. He saw in it an opportunity to promote the University's good name and Gozo's potential as a conference destination. The Gozo campus Director, Professor Lino Briguglio, was extremely supportive while the campus representatives Administrative Officer Joseph Calleja and Executive Officer Marvin Grech left no stone unturned, portraying the campus as a hallmark of academic excellence and Gozitan hospitality.

Such team effort and organizational spirit leave a positive impression on the delegates as can be seen from their unequivocal comments about the Gozo experience.

Everything was well planned, the company was congenial, and last but not least the tours were very interesting. I enjoyed every single moment of it.

*Dr. L. Filiz Ozbas  
Cyprus International University*

The Malta conference was lovely and I would especially like to note the outstanding contribution of Joe [Azzopardi] from the University of Malta for his patience and personal care taken with each participant.

*Dr. Marilyn Steinbach  
Université de Sherbrooke, Canada*

[We] would like to thank you for the highly organised and very interesting conference in



It's all smiles at the best paper awards session.

Gozo. For us it was a wonderful experience and a good opportunity to meet with other colleagues in several academic fields. Thank you and we hope we will meet again.

*Dr. George Girlesteanu,  
University of Craiova, Romania*

Gozo's people were very kind and friendly. I had very pleasant and peaceful time in Gozo, and hope to visit Gozo again with my family.

*Dr. Seong-Min Yoon  
Pusan National University, S. Korea*

Congratulations on brilliant planning and organising. We had a great time.

*Ms. Etain Casey  
London Metropolitan University, UK*

I would like to thank the Augustinian Convent [for letting] me stay in this wonderful place. The atmosphere was simple and sincere. I enjoyed it a lot.

*Dr. Siuhing Ling  
HKCCCU Logos Academy, Hong Kong*

Everybody was so friendly and gave me a lot of academic advice, and the conference and its educational tours provided a pleasant experience for me. I would like to attend an IJAS conference again in the future.

*Dr. Yuko Kato  
Jin-ai University, Japan*

It was a fantastic conference! Very well organised, supervised with dedication by Joseph [Azzopardi], interesting papers over a wide range of topics, friendly participants, and a gorgeous setting.

*Dr. Elizabeth Christopher  
Macquarie University, Australia*

The conference includes a parallel cultural programme with free bus tours around Gozo and Malta during conference week. The conference starts with an informal group walk from Victoria to Xlendi Bay on a Sunday afternoon, following which the conference officially opens the following day with the research presentations. The Sunday walk breaks the ice and allows the delegates to get to know each other while surrounded by the lush valley that joins Gozo's centre to Xlendi. Once in Xlendi, the beer flows and trust takes over.

### **Organisational Philosophy**

IJAS believes that it would defy logic to treat conference venues as isolated academic silos when they may also double up as potential venues for study abroad programmes. As a result, IJAS promotes each conference as inseparable from its geographical location, history and culture. The organisation strives to find sponsors in each conference's geographical area that offer generous hospitality and tourism packages in parallel with the conference. IJAS promotes its delegates' potential to the sponsors. Many graduate students



and professors who attend academic conferences have a lifelong career in academia in front of them. As a result, each delegate has the potential to multiply the number of future visitors to a conference's wider geographical area. "We have memories so that we might have roses in December," wrote Scottish novelist James Barrie.

In an era of globalisation and multicultural sensitivity, study abroad programmes are mushrooming all over the academic world. They would grow even further if academics had more time and resources to visit worldwide destinations to prepare future study abroad programmes for their students. Academic conferences offer the perfect opportunity to blend in presentations with organised visits to locations that would make excellent venues for study abroad programmes. Andy Warhol's traditional fifteen minutes of fame, on the podium, stretch into days of academic interaction and discovery.

Besides, it is unrealistic to expect most professors to congregate within the four walls of a conference hall for three or four consecutive days. This is why conferences in non-tourist venues draw very few academics. Academics want an excellent conference plus something more and non-tourist venues lack this "something more." IJAS provides the "something more" through sponsored bus tours which bring academics together as the motorcoaches expose them to the majestic scenery outside. Within the confined bus space the academics talk. They have to since they can't



The short Dwejra tour on a choppy sea was an exhilarating experience for most delegates.



Dr Joe Azzopardi, coordinator of the conference.

stare forever. They talk about their teaching, their research, and what concerns them in academia. These tours are more conducive to the sharing of professional research than the on-site conferences themselves. The more delegates get to know each other in the informal setting of the bus tours, the more they seek to listen to each other's thoughts and ideas on and off the conference premises. The more they realize they are birds of a feather, thanks to informal communication in relaxed settings, the more they flock together and share what binds them together, including their thirst for collaborative research. Social psychologists tell us that when strangers congregate they seek to talk about some common thread. The common thread at IJAS' conferences is academia.

Without the opportunity to interact and share one's research and ideas, what is the point of attending an academic conference? There is no shortage of academic papers on the internet and at the libraries within our universities. One doesn't need a conference to access academic research. Printed academic papers allow the reader to digest carefully instead of chasing a speaker racing against the clock.

At the same time, not every faculty member is interested in an educational tour and this is why IJAS offers its delegates a free choice about what to do, whether to stay on the conference premises or join a bus tour at some point. It even gives a choice to delegates to attend and register for one day only. Several University of Malta professors

cross over from the main campus to present their research in Xewkija each year and a number of them take advantage of the one-day registration. Academia consists of various segments. IJAS seeks to offer different packages for different segments.

For conference delegates, location matters. Nonetheless, there is no best location for a conference. Different academics prefer different geographical locations. Instead of pursuing economies of scale and hosting an annual mega-conference in a mega-city, IJAS hosts smaller conferences in different geographical locations. The academic from a small, sleepy town may yearn for a visit to 24-hour Las Vegas; the one from a landlocked state or country may aspire for coastal Gozo; and the one from a major city may wonder what life is like in a tiny German village. Life is a thousand journeys sustained by curiosity. As an educational institution that promotes study abroad programs, IJAS' global vision is not about reducing the world into one geographical location but about offering a richly arrayed menu of far-flung neighborhoods, cultures and customs to sophisticated academics.

## Future

Following the outpouring appreciation by the delegates who attended the Gozo conference, IJAS asked Dr. Azzopardi whether the Gozo Campus could provide organizational support for other IJAS' conferences within the European Union. Seeking to replicate the islands' hospitality and identity for another conference elsewhere in Europe, Dr. Azzopardi recommended the Knights of Malta's facilities in Prague. Like Malta, Prague overflows with historical monuments and ancient buildings. And the Knights of Malta's imprint is indelible.

After an exchange of communications with Prague, and on-site visits, another "Malta" conference will be hosted in Prague from 21-24 June 2011. This refereed four-day conference will be staged inside a palace steeped in history, amidst the baroque architecture of the historical Mala Strana quarter, meters away from Charles Bridge. The conference will again seek to replicate the Gozo experience, bringing together international academics, including professors and graduate students, to present research in



The lecturing never stops. An Egyptian professor gets her point across during a group photo outside Calypso's cave.





Xwejni's hewn rocks got a winter chill during the afternoon tour.

their respective fields. It will also introduce them to the Czech Republic as an affordable and unique location for study abroad programmes. The official programme for the event states that "The International Journal of Arts & Sciences in collaboration with the University of Malta's Gozo Campus is hosting its first conference in Prague, at the joint premises of the Knights of Malta and the Anglo-American University."

The active participation of the Gozo Campus in IJAS' European operations has allowed IJAS to broaden its conference circuit. For the 2010/2011 academic year, IJAS' conferences will span from North America's Las Vegas, Orlando, Toronto and Harvard, to Europe's Freiburg, Rome, Provence and Bad Hofgastein. And Gozo and Prague.

Nancy Mathes is an editorial consultant at the International Journal of Arts & Sciences. Prior to joining IJAS, she worked as a communications specialist for Lehman Brothers Holdings.



# Recent Activities at the University of Malta - Gozo Campus

JOSEPH CALLEJA

## The Summer Activity

This year's summer social activity of the University Gozo Campus consisted of an evening with the Versatile Brass ensemble under the direction of Mro. Paul Borg. The central courtyard of the Gozo Campus provided once more an excellent venue for this activity. The event took place on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2010. An audience of about two hundred attended the event.

The ensemble provided a very entertaining collection of popular music, full of real verve, including *Hard to Say I'm Sorry*, *Misty*, *Fever*, *Fly to the Moon*, *Sway*, *Girl from Ipanema*, *Embraceable You* as well as a Latin medley. The

rendition of *New York, New York* was greeted with a long bout of applause, leading the ensemble to offer an encore, again greeted with cheers and applause.

Among the guests were His Grace Bishop of Gozo, Mons. Mario Grech, His Excellency Mr Anton Tabone, Professor Lino Briguglio, Director of the Campus and Member of Parliament Hon Frederick Azzopardi, and Mr Simon Sammut, who was representing the Rector of the University of Malta.

The annual activity organised by the Gozo Campus has become a popular event for many Gozitans and Maltese as well as for foreign residents in the Maltese Islands.



The Versatile Brass ensemble during their performance at the summer activity.

## Courses Offered at the University Gozo Campus

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

- Diploma in Commerce
- Bachelor of Commerce
- Master of Arts in Islands and Small States Studies

The courses leading to the Bachelor of Commerce is being part-financed by the European Social Fund under the Operational Programme II - Cohesion Policy 2007 – 2013. Twenty eight students are attending this course.

### Graduation of University Gozo Campus Students

Thirty nine students who completed courses at the University of Malta - Gozo Campus received their certificates during the recent graduation ceremonies. The courses completed were those leading to Masters of Arts in Islands and Small States Studies (1 student), Masters in History (3 students), Bachelor of Commerce (8 students), and two course in Diploma in Commerce (27 students).

The student who graduated in Masters in Islands and Small States Studies is Joseph Azzopardi.



Joseph Azzopardi (right) together with the Maltese graduates of the MA in ISSS

George Borg, Vicky Grech and Pauline Vella graduated in Masters in History.

The students who graduated in the Bachelor of Commerce are: Georgianne Azzopardi, Karmenu Azzopardi, Mary Bajada, Sue-Ellen Bugeja, Dennis Cini, Maria Mifsud, Joseph Mizzi and John Vella.

The students who graduated in the Diploma in Commerce are: John Attard, Marlene Azzopardi, Geoffrey Bajada, John Bajada, Michael Buttigieg, Miriam Cassar, Marvic Cini, Stephen Cini, Annabel Cordina, Louis Cordina, Pauline Cutajar, Rachel Dingli, Aaron Galea, Josephine Mercieca, Frank Micallef, Mirabella Micallef, George Mizzi, Philip Sammut, Angele Scicluna, Clare Sultana, Nicole Sultana, Raymond Tabone, Claudia Terribile, Martin Vella, Marnette Xerri, Frances Zammit and Johnny Zerafa.



The graduates in Diploma in Commerce with Professor Lino Briguglio, Director of the University Gozo Campus.

### Seminar on the Maltese Economy

On 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> November the Malta University Holding Company in collaboration with the University Gozo Campus organised a seminar entitled 'The Maltese Economy – Structure, Performance and Future Prospects following the Global Financial Crisis'. The programme, that was spread over two days, consisted of lectures on different aspects of the main theme, and each lecture was followed by a discussion. The main speakers of the seminar were Prof Lino Briguglio and Dr Gordon Cordina.

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





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