

GOZO OBSERVER

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The Gozo Observer

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Editorial: Public Library

There is no doubt that the setting up of the Gozo Branch of the University of Malta has proved to be a boon to higher education in Gozo. Many who had previously missed out, now had an opportunity to catch up and participate and obtain a diploma or a degree, or at least take part in one of the many courses offered there.

On the other hand, it is a pity to see a great institution, like the Public library being neglected. In spite of the efforts of the curators there, and in spite of the not inconsiderable improvements that have occurred over recent years, including the facilities provided with computerisation, a brief visit to the library is sufficient to see that lack of space has become an emergency situation.

One notices the piles of books accumulating in offices and in corridors. Workers seem to be drowning among books and papers reminding one of Dickensian working conditions. How can one possibly work in such an environment?

The laws of the land stipulate that a copy of every book published in Malta must be donated to the public library. That means that several hundred new books are delivered to the library every year to be coded and suitably displayed. Lack of sufficient space for this makes a mockery of such legislation – they might just as well be left unpacked, in boxes,

in some underground storage facility. One would have thought that a government that legislates for the accumulation of books, is also under an obligation to provide the space for their care and adequate display.

Housed in the same building in Vajringa Street we find the Archives. This represents a veritable treasure of information which any Gozitan should be proud of but hardly anyone actually knows about. It should provide a rich source of material for research-minded students, but how many actually make use of it?

Gozo, it must be admitted, is not rich in intellectual offerings. It is therefore the more urgent to treasure what we have, and to instil in our younger generation an interest in these issues. I would suggest that secondary school students might benefit from regular conducted tours of the library and archives. They might even be given assignments that would require some elementary research involving actual handling of books and documents, rather than just googling secondary data on computer.

I believe that educators as well as legislators should emphasize the value of such a heritage, and do everything in their power to ensure that it is utilised to best advantage.

Maurice Cauchi



The *Mahras* of Gozo Before 1530

STANLEY FIORINI

Introduction

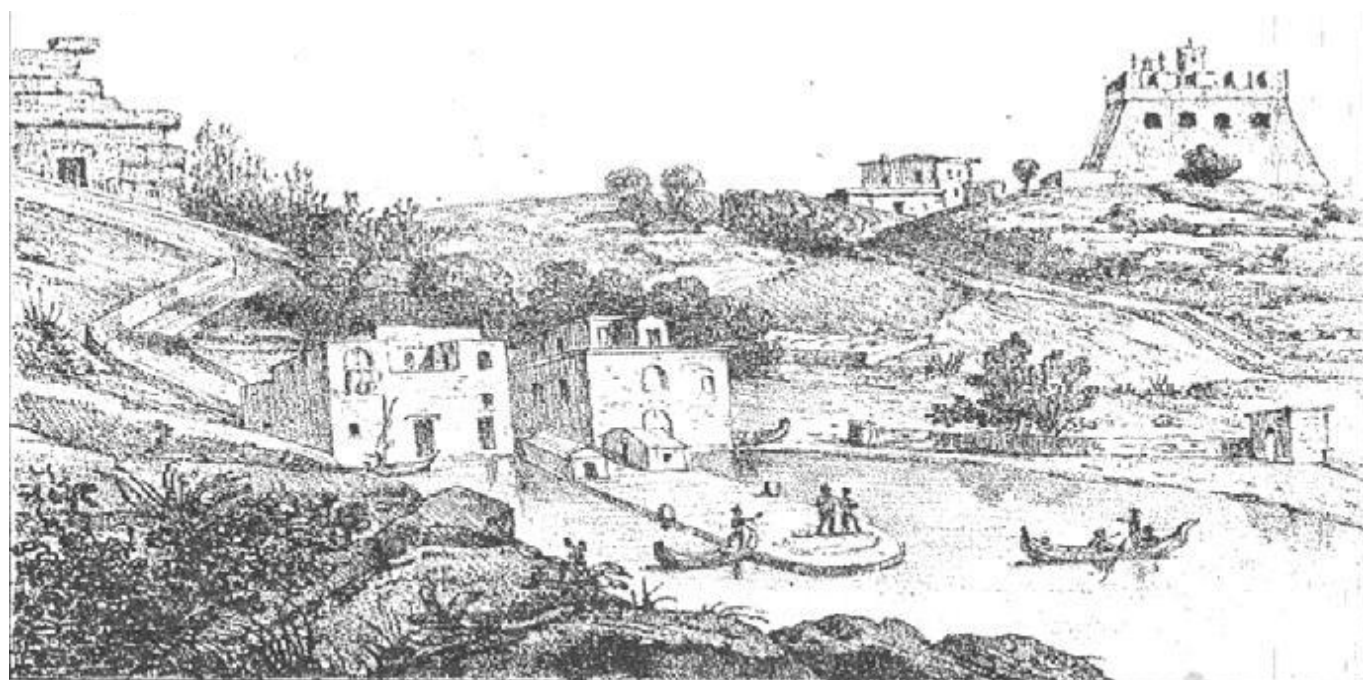
It appears that, in the Middle Ages, the defence of Gozo, like that of Malta, hinged on two important elements: (i) an early-warning system of coastal watch-out posts to give sufficient advance warning for the population to get inside the walls of the acropolis and (ii) a last-ditch defence of the main fortification that was the *Castrum* or *Castello* in the middle of the island, at whose feet nestled its Rabat, or suburb, comprising the entire population of Gozo.

Warning System of Coastal Watch-out Posts

It must be said that part of the early-warning network included also close collaboration between the two islands that helped each other in passing information on the presence of the enemy in these waters. Thus, it transpires from documents of the 1490s [*DSMH* II/4: 313, 437], that the Mdina bonfire-alarm, ignited on top of the *Torre Mastra* at the entrance to the city and for which the Jewish community was responsible, was not only

intended to relay information to Malta's coastal guards and villages, but was also intended to alert Gozo, probably via Mellieha. We also have copies of letters sent between the officials of Gozo and those of Malta concerning attacks by the enemy on Maltese shipping [*DSMH* III/1: 126 (28.x.1526)], as well as details of expenses incurred in sending couriers between the two islands when there were sightings of enemy activity around Comino and Mellieha [*Mandati* M36: 634 (1529); 710 (1530); M1: 116 (1520)].

The need to keep a constant guard on the coastline of the kingdom is first heard of in 1375 when King Frederick IV appointed Philippus de Marino to the post of organizing the coastal and city watch [*DSMH* II/1:150]. Admittedly this was in connexion with Malta but there is ample evidence that Gozo too had its own system. The general loss of pre-1551 sources for Gozo has, in fact, deprived us of precisely one all-important document that must have existed: Gozo's Militia List and Roster, analogous to the Maltese lists which are extant from 1417 [Wettinger 1969 and *idem* 1979].



L'île par Broccens

Vue prise à l'île de Gozo

Peinture par El de Mantoli

Early 1820's view of Torri Garzes from Mgarr Harbour.



The Comino Tower (Photo courtesy of <http://www.flickr.com>, Feb. 2012)

What evidence do we have, then, for Gozo's militia? A document from the Palermo Chancery of 25 October 1399 [DSMH II/1:281] blames the negligence in Malta and Gozo of keeping a tight coastal watch for the great damage suffered in these islands from Moorish incursions; as a consequence, the King took this responsibility away from individuals who had, hitherto, held the office and placed it squarely in the hands of the jurats of the respective *Universitates*. Again, a document of 2 October 1400 [DSMH II/2:2] shows how the Notary Bernardus de Theophilo began to be employed to help the Gozitan jurats every evening to draw up the list of names for the Gozitan coastal watch.¹ In 1402 *algozirius* Johannes de Sancta Columba was given the captaincy of both Malta and Gozo for five years with all rights on the islands' watch [DSMH II/2: 14-15].² In 1407 the Gozitans were exempted from all excise dues on the exportation of their mules to Sicily in exchange for horses needed for the defence of the island [DSMH II/2: 102]; Captain of Gozo, Peri di Ari, is known to have kept these horses in 1410 [DSMH II/2: 144]. In that year Queen Bianca warned the *vicesecretus* for Gozo that certain men who were bound to keep horses

for the defence of the island were being neglectful of their duty and enjoined him that he should be making an example of them: *ki vi dijati fari mustra di loru et rividiri si stannu apruntu di cavalli et di armi*; these should have all their subsidies stopped and the same given to more deserving and willing persons [DSMH II/3: 143]. Among these defaulters, Queen Bianca was referring to, there may have been the Catalan Guillelmus Cabanes who was living in Gozo and who, two years earlier, had been given six *uncie* annually to keep a horse for the island's defence [DSMH II/2: 117].

As for Malta, horses in Gozo played a vital roll in the smooth running of the coastal watch or *mahrās*, as it was known. Those who could more afford it, especially the fief-holders, were bound to keep horses for use in the defence of the island. The fief holders had it stipulated in their contract how to fulfil this military obligation in direct relation to the land they were given. Thus, for Gozo, Henricus de Osa was given the land called *Ta' San Kożma* in 1368 with the obligation of providing a soldier for each twenty *uncie* of produce from the land. Salvus Cadumi of

¹ The corresponding office in Malta was given, after the Monroy affair, to Franciscus de Allegritto in 1428 [DSMH II/3: 243, 376] and continued to be held by his descendants well into the XVIth century [DSMH II/4: 209].

² The Captains are known to have held these rights also in 1413-1416 [DSMH II/3: Docs. 151, 208, 215, 224].



Xlendi Tower. (Photo courtesy of <http://dinlarthelwa.org>)

Gozo was given the land called *Il-Qanfud ta' San Marċjan* for providing an *equus armatus*, a heavily armed horseman, for each twenty *uncie* of produce in 1398. Periconus de Bernardo of Gozo was given the *Tal-Majmuna* estate in the *Ranġisija* district of Gozo under the same conditions in the same year. And, in the following year, Antonius de la Barba was similarly given *Ta' Hamitu*. This was not any different from Malta where horses are also known to have been used by the *rividituri*, or overseer, for coordinating neighbouring watch-posts.

A tantalizing incident related to the watch, in which Gozo's *dolce vita* surfaces, is revealing [DSMH II/4: 91]: On 1 April 1488 Joannes Fsadni accused Antonius Platamone and accomplices that, by night, and while Fsadni was away on coastal watch duty, Platamone had entered his residence where his daughter Angela was in the company of a nun called Ylagia who was chaperoning the girl. Angela's relatives caught Platamone *in flagrante delictu* raping the girl etc.

The Maltese militia roster [Wettinger 1979] clearly locates the various look-out posts mainly along the northern coast of the island and, as we have shown elsewhere, these were consolidated during the time of the Knights, at times with the erection of coastal watch-towers. For lack of direct evidence for Gozo one can infer from the Maltese situation that the medieval posts were included in the string of posts known from the Knights' period. Abela [1645, 121-2], in whose day there were already in existence *Torre Garzes* and *Torre della Punta di Marsalforno*, both of which would have been key positions, lists besides *Wardija ta' Ras it-Tafal*, *Wardija ta' Ġebel Bin Giorgi* (later *ta' San Ġorġ*), *Wardija ta' Mwieġel il-Baħar*, and *Wardija ta' Rdum Ferdien*; *Wardija* being the local form of *Guardia*. Not mentioned by

Abela but appearing in earlier notarial documents is *Il-Wardija ta' Handaq ir-Rummien*. Other place-names with clear Arabic connotations of look-out are *Nadur* and *Qal[gh]a*, above *Hondoq*, which, together with *Nadur il-Kelb*, must have been look-out positions from very early times.

Defence of the *Castello*

The defence responsibilities of the Gozitans, like their Maltese counterparts, included also contributing certain unpaid days of work for the repair of the main fortifications of the island – the *Castello*. Like the Maltese, the Gozitans did not take lightly to this added burden of having to spend nights on the coast and days of unpaid work on the walls of the *castrum*. This *angara* or corvée work was viewed as a relic of the days of serfdom and was greatly resented by all. The *Capitula* presented to the Viceroy by the Gozitan jurat Cola de Algaria on 5 November 1443 [Giambruno/Genuardi 1918, Doc. IV, n. 5] make much of the Gozitans' burdens – *li dicti poviri angariati ali guardii di la terra et a la maramma dili mura et multi altri angarii in serviciu dila regia magestati*, echoing the Maltese protest *di liberari li popoli dila dicta terra dila angaria dili marammi quanto ancora dila angara dila guardia chamata lo maharas* [NLM Lib. MS. 670, f. 42v (1531)].

If most of this was, more or less known, we now have important additional information which comes in the form of a set of *Capitula* for Gozo, dated 16 January 1516, hitherto ignored, unearthed from the Palermo Chancery records. In these *capitula*, one complaint of the Gozitan *Universitas*' ambassador, Cola Calabachi, was that Gozitans craftily managed to slip out of their onus to do guard duty by going to extremes in order to get themselves elected to one of the municipal posts – jurats, judges, *acatapani*, notaries – for at least one year in order to be exempted from this duty for that year, which was the standard practice. Once they benefitted from that privilege, they then abusively extended the exemption thereafter. This, of course, in the long run created a great dearth of guards to choose from. Needless to say, the Viceroy acceded to Calabachi's request to stop this malpractice. In the process of presenting his case Calabachi, in the Vth *capitulum*, gives important details of how the Gozitan watch operated. He gratuitously informs us that:

- *ali mura*, that is, on the walls of the *Castello*, 21 guards and twelve *suprastanti* where required, whereas

- 39 guards were needed every night on the coastal watches together with four *rivedituri* on mules.

On the assumption that in Gozo, as in Malta, three men were posted to each coastal watch, one can deduce that there were no less than thirteen watch-posts, six more than the seven *Wardija* posts noted by Abela. These figures can be fruitfully compared with Malta's militia roster [Wettinger 1979]: The 21 guards *ali mura* on Gozo compare with the 30 at Mdina *ali mura*, – this makes sense as the perimeter of the *Castello* was roughly two-thirds that of Mdina – whereas the twelve *suprastanti* of Gozo are roughly a half of Mdina's *ala plaza* contingent – 25 on each day between Monday and Friday, and 26 on Saturdays and Sundays. Furthermore, the three

guards per watch-post on the coast, being the same as for Malta, together with four *rivedituri*, would give the total of 76 men per day, or 532 different able-bodied men doing night-watch on Gozo. To obtain an estimate of the total population for Gozo we need to compare these figures with those for Malta. The Maltese militia roster of 1417 gives 910 men, compared to the 1667 of the militia list of 1419-20, yields a Maltese population of some 8,000, using a multiplier of five. The 532 on Gozo's militia roster would then yield an estimate of 975 for a hypothetical Gozitan militia list, which, in turn, yields c. 4,875 for the total population. This figure compares very favourably with the round figure of 5,000 estimate mentioned by the Order's commissioners of 1524 (Boisgelin, 1804: ii, 17).

The Night Watch							
	# coastal posts	# men per night	<i>rivedituri</i>	<i>ali mura</i>	<i>ala plaza suprastanti</i>	total per night	grand total
Malta 1417	24	72	11	30	25	138	910
Gozo 1516	13	39	4	21	12	76	532

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Professor Stanley Fiorini, former Head of Mathematics at the University of Malta, has published several works on Malta's medieval history, notably the ten-volume *Documentary Sources of Maltese History*. He is now retired Professor Emeritus who, in recognition of his historical output, has been awarded by the same University a Senior Fellowship.

Under and On Canvas – Paul Camilleri-Cauchì

AARON ATTARD HILI

Introduction

Paul Camilleri-Cauchì was born in Victoria, Gozo on December 2 1940, the second out of six siblings of Wistin Camilleri and Francesca née Cauchi. His father, Wistin, was renowned for his prolific artistic career in sculpture, particularly as a statuarian, while his mother, Francesca, was an excellent dressmaker, besides being an avid music lover. His three brothers have all excelled in the artistic field: Alfred and Michael as sculptors and Mario as a gilder. His nephew, Austin Camilleri, the son of his younger sister Rina, is an established contemporary artist.

Childhood

It is not easy for Paul Camilleri-Cauchì to identify a particular moment in his early childhood when he started dabbling in art. “I always remember myself jotting and drawing lines on a piece of paper on our home dining table or at the workshop next to my father with a piece of paper and charcoal he used to hand me to sketch with. The workshop was



While in Rome in 1962 studying with Profs. Paolo Citraro.

next door to our residence at Ghajn Qatet Street in Victoria, so practically my childhood was spent mostly in my dad’s workshop.”

Camilleri-Cauchì’s early childhood lessons at the local primary school and the Gozo Seminary were complemented with the discovery of art as a true passion. No empty paper was spared the criss crossing of lines emanating from his furtive pencil. He was always inundated with requests from his class mates to draw figures or to do some decorations for them. “I found this very convenient because I would exchange such scribblings and designs for my undone homeworks!”.

Formal Training

The first tentative steps towards formal training in art were delivered by his father. More concrete steps were taken when Italian artist painter, Gianbattista Conti, arrived on the local artistic scene on being commissioned the pictorial decoration of Saint George’s Basilica’s vault in Gozo. “Conti used to give me instruction lessons in art at the Duke of Edinburgh hotel where he was sojourned during his stay in Gozo in those years.” Subsequently Camilleri-Cauchì also undertook lessons in art under a number of Maltese artists, including Joseph Briffa of Birkirkara, Joseph Caruana and Toussaint Busuttil, both of Żejtun.

In 1960 Camilleri-Cauchì graduated from the London School of Art. Eventually, during the next couple of years, he enrolled at the Pietro Vannucci Accademia di Belle Arti in Perugia. The artistic environment of Perugia and his familiarisation visits to the world-renowned museums and the number of art studios in Rome and Florence continued to imbue in him the zest to dedicate his life to art, a feat which at that point in time seemed rather unrealistic. Being in a foreign country, surrounded with works of art which he could previously only appreciate in books, proved to be an overwhelming experience for the young artist, who was already treating the mastering of colours and figure drawing as his areas of specialisation.



Wistin Camilleri flanked by his sons Alfred (left) and Paul (right).



At the studio working on the figure of Christ on a live model for the Floriana parish dome.

In Perugia Camilleri-Cauchì studied restoration under the tutorship of Professor Lanciotto Fumi, ceramics under Professor Edgardo Abbozzo and engravings under Professor Fr. Diego Donati. Two pivotal tutors were Professor Gerardo Dottori, a renowned futuristic and avantgarde painter, who taught Camilleri-Cauchì the mastering of colours and affresco painting, and Professor Adelmo Mirabelli, who taught the young artist anatomy studies.

While in Perugia, Camilleri-Cauchì joined forces with his classmates and set up painting exhibitions at the Palazzo Comunale. In 1962 he was selected as the most academically active student in a competition organised by the Pineta di Cugnana. Through such exhibitions he came in contact with a number of foreign artists. This allowed him to set up solo exhibitions, besides a number of other collective ones. "I still remember an exhibition I held between the months of July and August of 1963 with a Dutch artist and two Mexican sculptors. It was held in Perugia and officially opened by the Honorable Amintore Fanfani. The exhibition was described as one "di alta qualità."

The public appreciation towards Camilleri-Cauchì's art goes back to the years prior to his sojourn in Perugia. In 1957, at the tender age of seventeen years, he successfully exhibited a number of his works at a government sponsored exhibition in the entrance hall of the then Gozo Lyceum under the title 'Gozo, the life and the people.'

Artistic Career

On completing his art course and returning to Malta, Camilleri-Cauchì was enrolled with the Education Department as an Art Teacher. The post gave him the possibility to teach art in a number of schools all over Malta. It was through such academic contacts that he started to receive private commissions. Eventually he started being commissioned with paintings for parish churches, a development which compelled him to abandon his teaching career and start his professional career in art in the early 1970s.

On the academic aspect, Camilleri-Cauchì pushed the idea of establishing an art school in Gozo. This was publicly announced during a programme 'It-Tokk' as initiated by Paul Mizzi and Franco



Working on a private commission.

Masini with the active participation of Vincent Apap and Fr. Marius Zerafa in 1971. He was very conscious of the disadvantages he went through during his early years of the rudimentary art lessons he had to put up with at school. Hence he felt that a distinct and separate entity dedicated for art would greatly enhance the knowledge and art practice to all aspiring Gozitan students who wanted to further their studies in Gozo. However, almost two decades had to go by, for Camilleri-Cauchì's dream to come to fruition. In 1988 he was invited by the then Gozo minister to form part of the Gozo Cultural Committee and later to chair a four-member Art sub-committee. There he actively participated in drawing up a programme which led to the establishment of the Wistin Camilleri - Gozo School of Art at Ghajnsielem.

At the time, Camilleri-Cauchì even promulgated an artistic culture towards the history of Gozo. He put pressure for the completion of the monument to Reverend Louis Vella at Sabina which sculpture was completed but never put in place. He endeavoured to promote personalities who were

instrumental in some stages of Gozitan history by setting up public monuments to them.

Ecclesiastical commissions provided him with a sound foundation for his artistic career. "I realised that the authorities recognised my strong academic brush which could find the right place in such environs and be in harmony with the internal architectural idiom. This was further justified when I was commissioned to resume the pictorial project when the original artist failed to continue because of ill health. This was done on the recommendation of the artist himself especially in the case of the Hal Balzan and Floriana churches when the late Emvin Cremona was unable to continue due to ill health and hence it was left up to me to complete the former's unfinished pictorial decorations".

A number of churches, which were already endowed with partly decorated vaults, were encouraged to restart the pictorial projects when they realised that Camilleri-Cauchì's paint brush could match the style and tonality of the original masters. Church commissions allowed the artist

to roam into the realm of compositional art taking into consideration the different perspectives contained in the internal architecture idiom of the church. “Each and every church is unique and I always endeavoured to put my works in the spatial framework they occupy. These are splendid examples of the “*furia dei penelli*” that typify the manner, and display a fluid and generous handling of pain.”

Although his output seems oriented predominantly towards the execution of churches’ mural paintings, a group of easel paintings made for private patrons attest to the same artistic approach. These include portraits, landscapes, allegorical subjects and still life. Even public entities such as band clubs have his works embellishing the ceilings and walls of



The Transfiguration executed on a contemporary design.



On the way to Calvary: working on one of a set of six paintings for the Saint Paul’s Bay parish church in Malta.

the main halls. There exists a balance between the churches’ mural paintings and the private easel paintings, all executed with great creative energy and brilliant dynamism.

Camilleri-Cauchy insists that a lot of preparatory work is involved prior to the sketch stage on the canvas. Without distinction, whether for public enjoyment or private collection, each commission demands that patrons’ satisfaction should be a priority. Many sorts of ideas are exchanged between the patron and the artist who in turn is to transfer the final idea onto the canvas. This becomes more complicated when commissions are to contain symbolic meaning especially in the cases of ecclesiastical entities. However, Camilleri-Cauchy takes extra measures at the preparatory stage in order not to compromise the art and style. Notwithstanding such challenges the final result would make Camilleri-Cauchy’s effort to emerge with ease and triumphantly perpetuating his skills in the design, composition and the different hues of his palette colours.

Camilleri-Cauchy’s pieces of art can also be found in a number of foreign countries. They can be found in public and private collections. Some of them even form part of prestigious collections such as at the Vatican in Rome. “Notably I remember a particular event when a copy of the Our Lady of Ta’ Pinu was donated to Pope John Paul II in October 1985. Also during his visit to Gozo in 1990, a copy of the titular painting of the Gozo Cathedral was presented to the same Pope by the Cathedral Chapter.” Various images of Saint John Bosco as executed by Camilleri-Cauchy were also reproduced on the



On the scaffolding applying the finishing touches to the painting of the Hal Luqa parish dome.

annual publication cover of the Salesians' mondial organisation, *Strenna*, over a number of years.

Large works can be found at the Bova Marina cathedral in Reggio-Calabria dedicated to the Immaculate Conception and at the Cine Citta' basilica "Maria Ausiliatrice." A titular painting and three pieces were put up at churches of Saint Paul and Saint Domenic Savio at Marbusu' and

Malawi respectively in India while other paintings found their way crossing the South Atlantic towards Brasil mainly at the churches of the Immaculate Conception, Saint Joseph and at the cathedral in the districts of Londrina and Rolandia of Parana and Salvador, Bahia respectively. Further works are found at the Hola church in Kenja, Saint Clare parish church at Westmounth Avenue in Canada as well as at the Saint Eric cathedral church of Sweden and at Saint Joseph College in London.

Notwithstanding his intensive artistic activity in sacred art, one should not ignore another line of stylistic contemporary art. His contemporary works of art are more often made on commission for private collections. They are not large in size as his ecclesiastic ones. However, there exists consistency in both styles in that the tonality is emphasized with the same intensity affirming his brilliant manipulation of colours. "As my Umbrian professor, Dottori, used to tell me, I am a *colorista* and that the academy underlies the composition of each painting." Such examples can also be admired in ecclesiastic entities drawn and built on modern lines such as the Iklin parish church.



The Sacred Family: the titular painting of Iklin parish church.



The Gozo parishes' Patron Saints: a small cupola painting at the Gozo Cathedral church.

For Camilleri-Cauchì, the secret is simply to paint for the joy of it and not for the sake of ambition. "I am convinced that the foundation of art is joy. In the visual arts, like in other branches of art, the act of creation is joy. Certainly this creative joy is of a unique kind. If I have the impulse to try an abstract or to create a composition on the traditional and classical lines, I would give it a go. I would paint energetically throughout the day as I used to do during my training. After each execution I feel an immediate feeling of release that my original idea and schematic colours would have helped my intuitive mind to find an understanding between me, as an artist, and the audience at large. Just as an artist needs his art to complete his life, so, too, he needs an audience to see it. By giving definition, thought and feeling, the artist demands a response: once the work is finished, the need of communication exists."

Awards

Camilleri-Cauchì was knighted in 1968 in ORCB and in the SOSJ of Jerusalem in 1979 following his father's death. In acknowledgment for his artistic output and contribution towards art, he was listed

in "Contemporaries Who's Who" of the American Biographies International, and was awarded "Man of the Year 2004" from the Board of Directors. In June 2004 was awarded "Ġieħ il-Belt Victoria" by the then Mayor, Mrs. Vivienne Galea-Pace. In 2011 he was awarded "Ġieħ Ghawdex" by the Circolo Gozitano.

Dr. Aaron Attard-Hili is a lawyer by profession. He is a full time Judicial Assistant at the Gozo courts of law. He is also a researcher in local history and is a contributor of a number of articles of historical interest in local papers and publications.

The Art and Architecture of Twentieth Century Gozo

JASON JOE FARRUGIA

Introduction

In the course of the twentieth century, the small island of Gozo experienced major developments, both in the artistic and architectural fields. Extensive church patronage during the first half of the century and the rapid economic and industrial growth shortly after World War II, rendered the small island an enclave where interesting artistic and architectural experimentation took place. In addition to the ecclesiastical authorities, the local community and later the private sector, were also instrumental in bringing artists and architects to the island in an attempt to enrich it with painting, sculpture and imposing building projects. This paper, which summarises my Masters degree dissertation (Farrugia, 2009) aims to evaluate the art and architecture of twentieth century Gozo, keeping in mind the aspirations and the limitations of the community living on the small island.

Gozo at the Threshold of the Twentieth Century

Gozo's socio-economic, artistic and historical context must be studied within a wider perspective, considering the fact that most of the developments in Gozo were first experienced in Malta. Nineteenth century Maltese painting modified itself continuously, trying to capture the important developments occurring mostly in Rome. The Neo-classical, Purist and Nazarene attitudes were applied at large, but not all works reached the desired level. Gozo is fortunate to host some of the fine examples of the period. Michele Busuttil (1762-1831) was a leading figure yet the works of his son Salvatore (1798-1854) sometimes surpassed those of his master¹ as evidenced in the fine canvas of *St Gregory interceding with the Virgin for the Plague-Stricken* (1854), at the parish church of Kerċem. Meanwhile Giuseppe Hyzler (1793-1858), a chief promoter and contributor of the Nazarene artistic sensibility on the Maltese Islands, produced the

altarpiece of *St Ignatius of Loyola with the Virgin* (1833), at the Jesuit Retreat-House of the Virgin of Manresa in Gozo, which marks a culminating point in Maltese nineteenth century art history (Buhagiar, 1990[b]: 111). Apart from offering an important stylistic experience, this artistic landmark helps to identify the type of informed artistic patronage patterns present in Gozo during the period.

At the ebb of the nineteenth century the artistic situation was characterised by limited and low quality works including the purist paintings of Tommaso Madiona (1804-1864) and Antonio Falzon (1805-1865). A virtuoso Giuseppe Cali (1846-1930) soon began to be looked at as the healer of this artistic stagnation, especially because he was largely responsible for the ousting of the waning Nazarene and Purist academism. His artistic contribution together with the efforts of his Maltese contemporary, Lazzaro Pisani (1854-1932) revived the ailing situation of art in Malta in the second half of the nineteenth century.

From an architectural point of view, nineteenth century Gozo had little to offer. The Church of Our Lady of Lourdes at Mgarr (1888) by Emaunele Luigi Galizia (1830-1907) which stylistically followed the building of the Addolorata Cemetery Church (1861-1869) on Malta, was a major breakthrough in Gozitan architecture at that time.

Twentieth Century Church Architecture: Patronage Patterns and Traditional Church Building in Gozo

The widespread architectural activity in Gozo in the first half of the twentieth century was characterized by an inspiring church building programme, mainly derived from a deep-cultured religiosity which was fostered on the island. Small churches situated in remote areas were no longer suitable for a growing Gozitan population. The increase in the number of parishioners was brought to the attention of the

¹ Michele Busuttil's most important work in Gozo is the titular painting of the Assumption of the Virgin (1971) at the Gozo Cathedral.

ecclesiastical authorities who were quick to initiate new church building projects, in spite of great financial difficulties and regular work stoppage,

The traditional cruciform church plan, flanked by lateral domed chapels, remained the most common model throughout the modern period. In the choice of building material, the use of the local stone against concrete, persisted. Some of the most impressive building projects of the period included the enlargement of the Nadur Parish Church and the Ta' Pinu Church, the building of Ghajnsielem Parish Church and later the massive Rotunda Church at Xewkija. Local patrons and benefactors aspired for large buildings in order to emulate foreign structures. Religious pique, which had developed into a rivalry between parishes, also motivated such a grandiose architecture.

The renovation which took place on the old parish church of Nadur is remarkable. It was the architect Francesco Saverio Sciortino (1875-1958) himself who called for the preservation of the existing church, in spite of his criticism of the older structure. The architect eventually implemented his own idea, by transforming the old church into a 'Modern Renaissance' architectural masterpiece. The works by Sciortino instilled a sense of grandeur which



Francesco Saverio Sciortino - SS Peter and Paul Church, Nadur.

reflected the aspirations of the parish priest and his fast growing community (Thake-Hughes, 2005: 153).. The people not only wanted a larger church but a building which surpassed the architectural unevenness of some of the established neo-baroque churches in Malta and Gozo. The new components merged well with the former structure even though the two architectural ingredients pertained to different periods and styles.

Andrea Vassallo (1856-1928) adopted a similar concept to the Ta' Pinu church, where the old chapel became the eastern extension of the new church. The church attracted numerous benefactors and the project soon turned into a national cause. Its popularity is greatly indebted to the mystical experience of two peasants, Francesco Portelli and Carmela Grima, who claimed to have had revelations from the Virgin in a small rural church known by the name of Ta' Pinu in 1883. The new church was expected to exude a sense of spirituality and mysticism. Andrea Vassallo produced detailed plans around April 1919² and he was later assisted by his architect son Edwin A. Vassallo (1891-1941) who in the case of the Ta' Pinu church signed the plans himself. Based on a Latin shaped cross, Ta' Pinu Church was erected in one of the most idyllic Gozitan rural settings. The architect produced a harmonious building renowned for its finish and fine detailing. The revivalist architectural style adopted by Andrea Vassallo, who was at the time Malta's leading architect, was a natural choice since the architect had already been meticulously applying the Romantic (style) in earlier building examples.

The Ta' Pinu church has a marked resemblance to the stereotyped Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Tripoli (Buhagiar, 1989: 1545), in which both edifices pointed towards northern Italian Neo Lombardo-Romanesque examples. Even more significant was the architect's ability to balance the delicate relationship between architecture and decoration (Buhagiar, 1990: 43). The interior decorative programme was the work of the Gozitan artist Wistin Camilleri (1885-1975).

² All plans which were signed by the architect's son Edwin A. Vassallo were eventually published as a memento to the church's benefactors. Meanwhile, despite the fact that Edwin A. Vassallo is known to have been his father's assistant in his old age, he could not have taken supervision of works at Ta' Pinu Church after his father's death in 1928, since he was at the time a Government Minister. Personal meeting with Victor Vella-Muscat 21st January, 2008. Certainly he took over his father's practice on his death designing among others the parish church of Birżebbuġa. Verbal communication with Prof. M. Buhagiar, 16th July, 2009.

In 1921 works soon started on another massive church building in Ġhajnsielem. Prior to the 1950's the Ġhajnsielem parishioners had a relatively small church (Zerafa, 1989: 40). The new church plan was entrusted to Gozitan born architect Ugo Mallia (1887-1964). Efforts were made by the present author to unearth further light on the architect's life and architectural career, yet there were no crucial discoveries, possibly because of the architect's introvert personality.³

Mallia submitted a design for a Neo-Gothic church. The parish record book at Ġhajnsielem "*Liber Cronologico*" states that the new church should be an exact copy to that in Loreto (*Liber Cronologico*, G.H.P.A: 14). Yet when looked at closely, the Gothic style of the Ġhajnsielem church and that of the church of Loreto do not really correspond. Although mention was not made to the small Lourdes church at Mgarr, the latter was without doubt a clear reference to Mallia's project. The architect was the first among Maltese architects to make use of indigenous Maltese late medieval architectural idiosyncrasies in his buildings (Buhagiar, 1990 [a]: 44). It is disappointing to note that such characteristics employed by the architect at St Agatha Mother house in Rabat, Malta, are evidently missing at Ġhajnsielem. Based on a Latin cross, the Ġhajnsielem church has a buttressed main nave, while the exterior is characteristically pronounced with elongated forms giving a great sense of verticality to the church. The dramatic impression marked by the sheer scale of the interior is impressive and markedly different from the baroque interiors of other churches in Malta.

Not the same destiny was reserved for the old parish church of Xewkija. The local community was demanding the dismantling of the old church, which was of considerable artistic and architectural interest, after several attempts were made to enlarge it. Work on the new church started in November 1951 on plans drawn up by architect Ġużè Damato (1886-1963) who was at the time the most sought after architect for church building. Before Damato, Vincenzo Bonello (1891-1969) had submitted the first designs for the church in 1949 (Azzopardi, 2006: 96). For unknown reasons the plans drawn



Vincenzo Bonello, St John the Baptist Church, sketch front elevation, Xewkija.

up by Bonello, which in comparison to Damato's work should have been by far more interesting and original, were not chosen.

The church was designed to appeal to popular taste. In a letter sent by archpriest Dun Ġużepp Grech to his community, it was stated that the new church would be constructed with a rotunda design on a modified Baroque style according to the desires of the parishioners. It was thus evident that architect Damato had no other option but to commit himself to an already chosen design. Structure and size was perhaps the only great challenge, otherwise the Rotunda church adopted the same principles of Baldassare Longhena's (1598-1682) church of S. Maria della Salute in Venice.

Stylistic Considerations and Twentieth Century Art in the Churches of Gozo

During the twentieth century the Maltese scenario remained largely dominated by the local church. Gozitan ecclesiastics maintained a high profile

³ Apart from the new Ġhajnsielem parish church, Mallia also worked on the Sannat parish church cupola and the rebuilding of the Qala parish church western façade.



Lazzaro Pisani, *The Fall of Simon the Wizard*, Nadur Parish Church.

and their leading roles often resulted in a number of artistic commissions. Painters, sculptors and decorators were sought after and brought over from Malta and Italy to accomplish a number of tasks requested by ecclesiastics and patrons. The amount of work was outstanding and the fact that more than thirteen churches were decorated in a relatively short period of time, demonstrates the great aspiring attitude of local patrons, architects and artists.

Giuseppe Cali was the first to use a particular artistic language, yet at the same time respecting the desires of local church patrons. Indeed Cali brought a certain transformation and despite the fact that his works in Gozo lacked his early artistic impulsivity, they still left a deep impact. The powerful figure of St Andrew (1882), beautifully done in contrapposto, at the old parish church of Ghajnsielem, and the large apse painting of the Nativity of the Virgin at Xaghra parish church are some of the better works by Cali in Gozo.

Meanwhile, Lazzaro Pisani whose works reflect his classical training, was a valid competitor to Cali. Pisani strived to establish his own artistic identity even though his efforts were often overshadowed by the superior quality of Cali's work (Fiorentino, 1988: 265). Pisani's artistic debut in Gozo was quite successful. His entire ceiling decoration of the Nadur parish church is in fact recognized as his masterpiece. The different stages of St Peter and St Paul's lives are expressed in contrasting poses, complex compositions and skilful chromatic approach.

Despite having been trained by Giuseppe Cali, artists of the next generation who worked in Gozo, including Giuseppe Cali's son Ramiro Cali (1881-1945), Robert Caruana Dingli (1882-1940) and Gianni Vella (1885-1977) produced low quality works and of lesser merit (Buhagiar, 1990 [b]: 117-118). Robert Caruana Dingli was highly



Giuseppe Briffa, *The Baptism of St Augustine*, Augustinian Priory Church, Rabat.

sought after in Gozo and he could have filled the vacuum resulting from Cali's eventual retirement. Unfortunately however in a number of instances, Caruana Dingli's works for Gozo failed miserably. However, Caruana Dingli and Vella made the first serious attempts at introducing modern aesthetics in sacred art. It was a time when Art Nouveau and Impressionism were gaining significant esteem.

Cali's realismo and the emphasis on flatness and simplicity, replaced the hefty works which characterised nineteenth century painting. Giuseppe Briffa's (1901-1988) paintings went even further in this regard. Already in 1934 the artist established links with Gozo when he painted two important paintings which represented *The Baptism of St Augustine* and *St Augustine Giving the Rules to His Order*, for the Augustinian priory church in Rabat. Stylistically Briffa adopted simple forms while greater significance was given to brilliant colours. His uncomplicated and straight-forward work successfully merged the conflicting demands of members of the clergy. Briffa's works for Gozo are impressive both in their colourful execution and composition.

Emvin Cremona (1919-1987) had in the meantime built a reputation as a leading artist in the field of ecclesiastical art. The artist in fact showed an unparalleled artistic vigour and although sacred art was not his preferred genre, he managed to transmit his modernistic approach even in his religious paintings. His oeuvre embraces a number of works in Gozo, especially his brilliant canvases for the Ta' Pinu Sanctuary. Cremona's ecclesiastical work shows great affinity with the work of Anton Inglott, whose artistic development could have seriously challenged the Baroque tradition had he not died so young in 1945 (Cutajar, 1991: 74). Briffa and Cremona's rich contribution marked the first stirrings of modern art in Gozo, and they paved the way for subsequent developments in ecclesiastical art.

In spite of the great social changes brought about by World War II, patronage in Gozo during the second half of the twentieth century was still connected to the church. Hints of progress mostly within the secular sphere took place by emergent Maltese artists on mainland Malta. The artistic situation in Gozo of the 1960's was altogether different. Paul Camilleri



Emvin Cremona, *Annunciation*, Ta' Pinu Church, Għarb.

Cauchi (b.1940) had built a strong reputation and his works were to be found in practically every church in Gozo, while he enjoyed the full backing and the admiration of most ecclesiastics. Within an artistic historical context, his religious works fall into a melancholic nostalgia. What is interesting however is that his artistic idiosyncrasies corresponded to the common tastes of the local patrons and this explained his great popularity.

Meanwhile Austin Camilleri (b.1972), nephew of Paul Camilleri Cauchi, challenged what may be called the "artistic institutionalization" within ecclesiastical circles. His earliest modern stirrings had already been perceived in the *Via Crucis* (late 1990s) series which he produced for the Gozo Cathedral. His works are strikingly original and they do not betray any formal language. Camilleri's transformation of religious art into modern sacred imagery resulted in the impressive dome of the Santa Luċija church in Kerċem. Certainly the artist



Silvio Galimberti, *Death of St Joseph*, Fontana Parish Church.

wanted to break away from established schematic models.⁴

Italian Artists

During the twentieth century, Gozo also witnessed the work of Italian artists. As early as 1906, a set of two paintings by Attilio Palombi (1860-1913), representing St Peter and St Paul were inaugurated at the Collegiate Basilica of St George, Rabat. The set may not be the first, but from this date onwards a group of Italian artists were busy decorating prominent spaces in local churches. The presence

of Virginio Monti (1852-1942), Palombi and Gian Battista Conti (1878-1971) in Gozo, failed to enthuse, but their shared efforts had particular characteristics. Their chromatic schemes reveal a Purist attitude while their obvious stylization signifies an important break with old-fashioned styles which were highly popular during the period.

Sporadic instances have also shown an unparalleled stylistic formation such as Domenico Bruschi's (1840-1910) large ceiling canvas, *Allegory of the Church* (1880), for the main sacristy at the Gozo Cathedral. The painting posed some difficulties and it is not the best work by Bruschi, but it still remains an interesting work (Buhagiar, 2004: 108). His art has shown great interests in Liberty and Pre-Raphaelite styles and the mentioned painting also exhibits such stylistic characteristics.

Of interest is Silvio Galimberti's (b.1878-?) *Death of St Joseph* (1906), for the parish church of Fontana. The painting is his only work for Gozo and it is the most interesting sacred canvas within the context of twentieth century foreign art on the island.⁵ Galimberti's work shows an important understanding of contemporary stylistic developments and for that reason the work failed to please the local people. The several attempts which were made to replace it unfortunately reveal the vernacular tastes of the local community. The Italian artistic presence practically disappeared during the World War II. Mario Caffaro Rore (1910-2001) was probably the only Italian artist who kept a connection with the church and private entities in Gozo during the last decades of the twentieth century. The present author was indeed fortunate to have arrived at Ta' Pinu Church just minutes after the actual discovery of Mario Caffaro Rore's two large cartoon paintings, *The Visitation* and *The Nativity*, commissioned for the Ta' Pinu Sanctuary and which were later translated into mosaics.⁶

⁴ Notwithstanding the importance of this work, there should have been a better handling and more respect by all stakeholders in treating already existing work by artists before taking further initiatives. For the sake of documentation it is important to note that, the dome of St Lucy Church had been earlier decorated with guilt stucco by Joseph Sagona (2005: 50-51) in 1992. Unfortunately, the new painting scheme by Camilleri did not follow Sagona's plans and thus the previous decorative scheme was scraped and lost forever.

⁵ Silvio Galimberti presumably produced only two paintings for Maltese patrons. Besides the Fontana altarpiece, Galimberti produced a painting representing the *Sacred Heart* (1948) for the parish church of St Andrew, Hal Luqa. The painting is signed S. Galimberti at the lower right hand side. As Christian Attard (1999: 76-77) suggests, the Fontana painting must be a copy of another work by the artist himself in the chapel of Belgium at the Roman church of San Gioacchino in Prati, executed in 1903. The Gozitan altarpiece was paid for by the Gozitan Judge Giuseppe Cremona.

⁶ The discovery of the cartoons was made in June 2008, in the sacristy of the Ta' Pinu Sanctuary.

Sculpture

The sculptural scenario during the same period did not experience radical shifts. Contrary to what happened in painting, sculpture and decoration was, generally speaking, the work of Maltese and Gozitan artists. The occasional work of Italian sculptors and decorators did not leave significant impact. Yet sculptor and decorator Carlo Pisi (1897-1979) inspired a number of local church patrons and his works are found in prominent church places. His artistic oeuvre draws on the classical aesthetic. Other Italian figures, such as Pio Cellini (1863-1930), left an important contribution as far as the decorative arts are concerned.⁷

The great works of Antonio Sciortino (1879-1947) had already eliminated the excessive Baroque nuance by opting for less theatrical poses and applying a rather classical stylization. His artistic distinctiveness was embraced by his fellow students such as George Borg (1906-1983) and Vincent Apap (1909-2003). Yet within the Gozitan ecclesiastical context, the move towards a modernistic establishment was not yet possible. Wistin Camilleri was perhaps the leader in the religious sculptural field in Gozo and his works were very popular. His most significant work is the large decorative programme at Ta' Pinu Sanctuary (1936-1941) which achieves a harmonious relationship with the architectural idiosyncrasies of Andrea Vassallo's architecture.⁸ Among other works, Wistin's artistic career is largely represented by the production of village feast statuary. The legacy of Wistin Camilleri was kept strong by members of his family whose services were sought after by many patrons during the last three decades of the twentieth century. During this period, the church in Gozo started losing some of the earlier patronage establishments but the remaining work was mostly entrusted to Alfred Camilleri Cauchi (b.1943), brother of Paul Camilleri Cauchi and son of Wistin Camilleri. Alfred Camilleri Cauchi was the person who managed to satisfy the



Mario Caffaro Rore, *The Nativity*, Ta' Pinu Church, Gharb.

artistic tastes of the locals. Very much akin to his brother in painting, the artist's sculptural oeuvre, which is mostly religious, reflects his preference for the traditional and anachronistic styles. His compositions are often inflated by exaggerated poses and dramatic movements, highly reminiscent of Baroque models.

The occurrence of modern painting and sculpture in Gozitan churches appeared during the last decade of the twentieth century. Mention was already made to Austin Camilleri. The sculptures of Gozitan artist John Grima (b.1967) have presented an interesting modernistic ethos and this is especially recorded in his beautiful rendering of the bronze doors for St George Basilica in Victoria. The years which followed saw interesting developments in artistic styles; yet artists who were engaged in the ecclesiastical circles never reached full stylistic liberty in their sacred productions.

⁷ Pio Cellini was the foremost foreign decorator in Gozo and he designed and worked the stucco decoration at the Collegiate Basilica of Nadur and the silver pedestal for the titular statue of the Bambina at Xaghra, among other work. For a comprehensive study about the ecclesiastical decorative arts in the Maltese Islands see Sagona 1999 and Sagona 2003.

⁸ The author succeeded in documenting important volumes of bozzetti and too scale drawings of this decorative programme. Interesting is the fact that besides Wistin's bozzetti a number of other designs which are signed G.B exist. It is probable that Wistin Camilleri was aware of these designs and possibly also made use of them. Camilleri's designs share similar characteristics with those signed G.B. So far, no documentary evidence has been found confirming the identity of the artist who only signed his initials. One is tempted to attribute these designs to George Borg who was also working for the Ta' Pinu church during the same period.

Non-Ecclesiastical Architecture during the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

The birth of the Modern Movement in architecture was a logical step forward in the shaping up of a defined knowledge of what had been progressively taking place during the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.

Form and function became imperative in the development of modern rational architecture. Unlike the early modern idealistic architecture of the avant-garde works by Walter Adolph Gropius (1883-1969), Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969) and Le Corbusier's (1887-1965) early purist works, the earliest of modern architectural work in Malta was more likely influenced by the romanticised and to a certain extent anachronistic movement of *Art Nouveau* (1893-1914) which was crystallized in Malta by the sophisticated eclectic works of Andrea Vassallo, Giuseppe Psaila (1891-1960) and Gustavo R. Vincenti (1888-1974) (Thake, 2009: 16).

Gozo of the 1920's was still relatively a rural settlement and traces of such influences are hard to find. The situation changed completely after World War II and Gozo soon turned into an island of architectural experimentation. An intense building programme especially in the educational sector was started, and so was the beginning of the modern movement on the island. A major reorganization in the Maltese educational laws took place in 1946 and Ordinance No. II [1946]: *for making the Primary Education of Children Compulsory upon their Parents and Guardians* [which followed the British Education Act of 1944]; led to drastic changes in the setting up of educational programmes and in terms

of infrastructure (*Government Gazette*, 1/02/1946: Ordinance No. II).

At this point it is imperative to mention two chief contributors of post-war modernism in Britain, whose architectural influences reached Maltese soil. British architects Alison (1928-1993) and Peter Smithson (1923-2003) famously applied the post-purist Corbusian discourse in their so-called New Brutalist architecture. Their schools, houses and workplace projects captured the essence of their progressive architectural style, which sought to exploit the mass-produced materials and recalled the aesthetic purity of their masters. Hunstanton School in Norfolk (1954) was one such brilliant example which clearly explained their architectural manifesto.

Maltese architect Joseph Huntingford's (1926-1994) yearnings to establish a new identity coincided with or reflected the international artistic style which was at that time undergoing a major transformation. The work of the Smithson couple was a definite influence on Huntingford's modern schools in Gozo. The surge towards a contemporary modernist approach had been already propagated in post-war works by Joseph Borg Grech (b.1929), Joseph Spiteri (b.1934) and Renato La Ferla (b.1926). Their contribution was the first real breakthrough in architectural style in Malta.

Being assigned the post of architect in the Department of Public Works in Gozo between 1951 and 1961, Huntingford was given full architectural liberty. Some of his best examples today were unscrupulously tempered with or even destroyed. The Qala Primary School (1960) is the crowning example of Huntingford's architectural adventure and the project was considered a monument of International Style in Malta.⁹ The building was in fact unique in that, for once, on the Maltese Islands there was a real contemporary structure in line with the architectural advancements happening



Joseph Huntingford, *Qala Primary School*, Qala.

⁹ It is recorded that the new Qala school was pompously inaugurated so much so that HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh who was on a state visit in Malta was invited for the occasion which happened on the 27th of April, 1960 (Buttigieg, 1980: 14-18).



in Europe. Other school examples such as those of Ghajnsielem, Għarb and San Lawrenz clearly show Huntingford's modern architectural characteristics. The departure of Joseph Huntingford from Gozo's architectural scene meant that the island faced an architectural deficit.

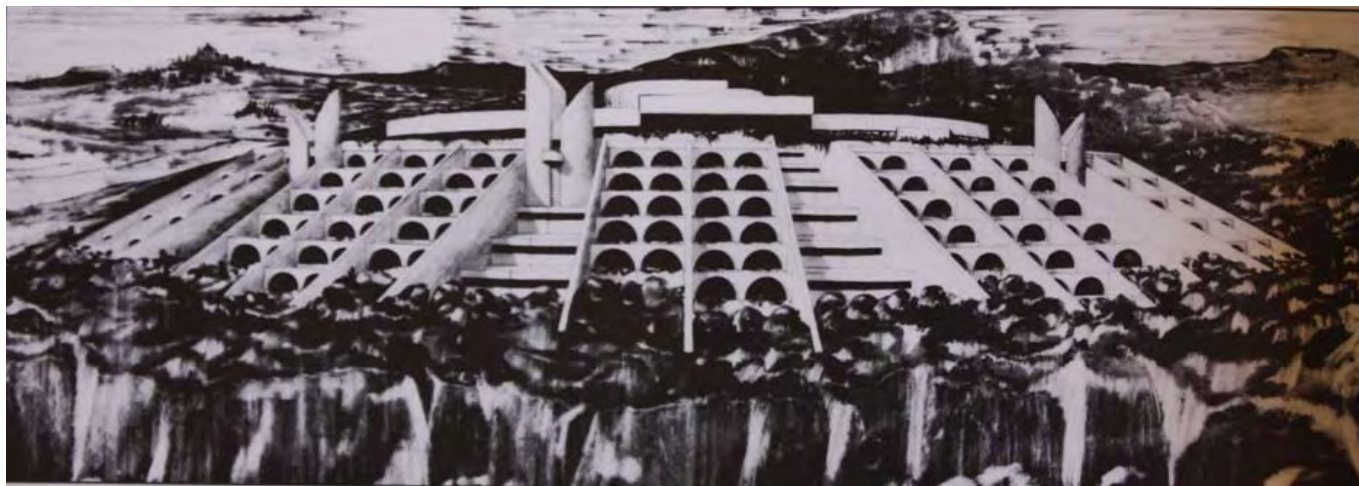
Meanwhile in 1967 Spanish architect in Rome, Julio Lafuente (b.1937) made a daring proposal for a hotel at Ta' Ċenċ, which was not actually built. Architecture during the period started to respond to an unprecedented increase in the tourism sector. The massive cliff-hanging hotel which would have included a series of man-made rock cuts, similar to marble cutting, in the stratum of Ta' Ċenċ cliffs, remained on the drawing-board. From a frontal view, the fourteen story building designed with such modern materials as concrete, iron and glass, seems literally appended to the cliff. Lafuente was inspired by the local traditional fishing industry, particularly by the fishing net known as 'nassa'. Although the building could have been an architectural attraction on its own, the nature of the project was not realistically feasible and its accomplishment could

have implied irreparable damages to this sensitive ecological site (Thake-Hughes, 2005: 191).

The European architectural situation of the 1970s and 1980s was characterized by the insurgence of two opposing movements: post-modernism and historicism. The concept of regionalism, involving the return to regional identities and closer to vernacular realities, was the latest preoccupation of European architecture. The competent use of modern sensibility blended with traditional Maltese typologies, crystallised in the work of Richard England (b.1937) who established himself as Malta's leading architect.¹⁰ Despite the fact that his contribution in Gozo remained mostly on paper, his influence still left an indelible mark. Villa Calypso (1966) at Ta' Ċenċ is presumably his earliest contribution in Gozo, yet the project remained a concept design since it never materialized. Richard England's choice fell on the organic and produced a building heavily inspired by the Maltese vernacular theme. Such architectural characteristics featured in design projects such as Hotel on Island of Gozo¹¹ (1980) and later in 1993 the proposed Hotel

¹⁰ Richard England's architectural manifesto can be summarized in the words of Charles Kneivitt (1984: 33): "In spite of its kaleidoscopic past and role as island fortress for centuries, Malta has a uniqueness which the architect wishes firstly to preserve but then to reinforce by reinterpreting the past through the medium of relevant contemporary Regionalism".

¹¹ [sic] The title should possibly read *Hotel on the Island of Gozo*.



Richard England, *Hotel on Island of Gozo*.

Xlendi. The latter clearly unveils the architectural philosophy of 'continuity within change.'

The vernacular aspect was widely practised later by architects Ray Demicoli (b.1952) and Edward Bencini in their prominent buildings of San Lawrenz Hotel (1992-1995) and L-Imgarr Hotel (late 1980's-1992) respectively. Established within the same decade, the two large five-star hotel buildings share common stylistic influences and they group, under one complete establishment, various architectural traditions which were used in typical Maltese house settlements. Unfortunately such interesting examples have been tempered with or even pulled down to make space for new building projects.

The last two decades of the twentieth century were also marked by an increasing cultural gap between the general public and the Maltese architects. With the sudden increase in private dwellings and the influx of returned migrants in the 1980s, Gozitan architecture was riddled by inconsistencies and mere copying. To satisfy the whims of the general public, architects themselves, resorted to a hotchpotch of styles which, however, generated a resurgence of stone decoration (Felice, 1990: 22).

The lack of artistic sensibility cannot be simply labelled as eclectic or post-modernist since none of the buildings really show a coherent application of styles within an inherent environment. The Classical and the Baroque influences regained momentum bringing to a halt a possible modern aesthetic that never really started in private residences in Gozo.

After the 1990s the need to preserve and re-adapt historic public and private buildings, architects

made considerable interventions yet kept the original buildings untouched by producing and inserting a modern structure within the fabric of the old buildings. Such an architectural movement of various stylistic nourishments has also prevailed on the island of Gozo. The Kenuna Tower at Nadur is one such fine example.

Modern and Contemporary Art in Gozo

The majority of the people in Gozo widely manifested their artistic opinions and from patronage patterns of the early twentieth century one can easily conclude that the representation of the sacred in art was held in high esteem and that it was the apex of artistic achievement. The situation however started to change gradually when it became evident that the aspirations of some Gozitan artists working in the second half of the twentieth century started to differ and move forward to a new artistic sensibility, which by this time had already reached its peak in major European cities.

The first real breakthrough to the introduction of a modern aesthetic in Malta was made by a group of local artists among whom Frank Portelli (1922-2004), Emvin Cremona, Esprit Barthet (1919-1999), Antoine Camilleri and later Gabriel Caruana (b.1929) and Toni Pace (1930-1989). These artists assimilated their ideas and modern concepts with the foundation of the so called Modern Art Circle (1952). They succeeded in weathering the negative reaction of the traditionalists. Malta's Independence geared up an important artistic activity with most artists freeing themselves of the severe institutionalization which had been established by the Church.

The situation in Gozo was slightly different since the transformation to a non-religious based aesthetic took more time to establish. The works of Joseph Calleja (b.1924), [who left for Canada in 1958 - a great loss for Gozo]; Victor Spiteri (b.1945), Joe Xuereb (b.1954) and later Austin Camilleri and John Grima, came as a big surprise considering that they all originated from Gozo and all genuinely felt an inspiring drive for the modern aesthetic.

It is very difficult to speak of a Gozitan artistic identity at this stage, since attracted by the beautiful character of the island, a handful of Maltese and foreign artists decided to set up their homes and studios on Gozo, thus contributing to the island's cultural and artistic activity. Evelyn Gibbs (1905-1991), Julian Trevelyan (1910-1988), Mary Fedden (b.1915), Barbara Huxley (b.1931) Bridget McCrum (b.1934) and later Maltese artists Pawl Carbonaro (b.1948) and Norbert Attard (b.1951) are a case in point.¹²

Returning to the works of Gozitan artists, Joseph Calleja's whimsical artistic exuberance found inspiration in the Surrealist works of Juan Miró (1893-1983) and others, an aspect which brought him fame to the extent that he enjoys great respect in Canada. As an artist, he showed great talent

especially with his energetic productions of Kinetic art; an inspiring idiom which found no grounds in the Maltese islands. In the 1970s, Calleja expressed his uniqueness as an artist when he had relentlessly transformed already established movements, such as Alexander Calder's (1898-1976) mobiles and Jean Tinguely's (1925-1991) machine works, in a new personal way which culminated in the artistic exuberance of his Kinetic art.

Sharing similar artistic impulsivity, Victor Spiteri is very much a solitary person who has been diligently working in his Għarb and Valletta studios. In practice, Spiteri is a painter and a sculptor, yet he has consistently proved to be an excellent ceramist. No particular movement can be traced in his creations as the artist believes that his work was a natural development reflecting different stages of his artistic career. On seeing Victor Spiteri's work one is captured by a deep feeling of contrasting moods which diversify his artistic language which mostly points to an innate turbulent experience. His abstract paintings are a soul journey through the local townscapes and landscapes and they claim to be calm yet agitated with a great sense of colour and movement. His ceramic works and his sculptures made of found objects are even more compelling and deserve special recognition within



Joseph Calleja, *Spring Reverly*, P.C.C (Photo published in *Toronto Star*, June 1991, featuring art dealer Walter

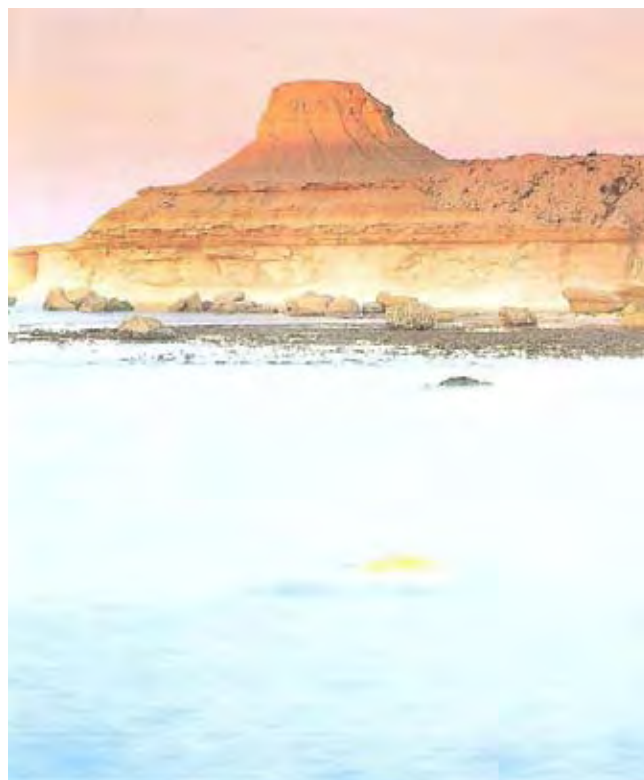
¹² In an interview with Richard England (3rd August, 2006), the architect mentions the importance of these foreign artists who brought a regeneration in the artistic spheres of Gozo. Prior to their arrival the island had a shortage of artists and they soon filled this important vacuum. Short biographies of some of the above foreign artists feature in De Piro, 2002.

the development stages of late twentieth century modern art works.

Meanwhile Joe Xuereb's artistic journey was at first humble and unassuming, possibly because his early mission was much more confined to an artisan approach rather than a real artistic life. Caught by the immediate beauty and voluptuous forms of the fertility goddess, the artist sought to make connections with his modern works and the earliest artistic forms of our ancestors. Embracing figures in an act of deep sensual and divine love; maternal love and affection; familial harmony and a series of introspective figures, make up some of his diverse compositions. Yet Joe Xuereb's uniqueness lies in his modern interpretation of Gozo's artistic myths and his perfectionist use of the local limestone, although sometimes it suggests a repetitive mood.

The aspect of authenticity is consumed with a high note in the works of Gozitan artists John Grima and Austin Camilleri. John Grima has wisely rediscovered Emvin Cremona and Frank Portelli's modern works, applying their stylistic peculiarities to his works - without letting himself into plagiarism - until he was finally carried away by his visibly personal modern artistic interpretation. His artistic impulsivity is later recorded in his translucent modern landscape and abstract works, which are considered an important breakthrough into the development of modern art in Gozo during the period. The very thin distinction among painting, sculpture and architecture becomes invisible as the artist merges the principles of these fundamental artistic practices into one coherent style. This is also attested by a number of sculptural monuments produced by the artist locally.

Austin Camilleri, the youngest of this generation of a family of Gozitan artists, has also been instrumental in the development of modern and contemporary art in Gozo at the end of the twentieth century. His art is constantly on the move, searching for new horizons in an art world which is significantly changing and proposing new idioms. Austin is a non-conformist who has been challenging the Gozitan society with his progressive unorthodox works since the early 1990s. The artist even rejected his earlier artistic



Austin Camilleri, *Stones, City Gate, Valletta; Dingli Cliffs; Delimara; Xwejni, Gozo.*

establishment and turned his art into complete abstraction. From 1993 -the year in which he introduced his abstracts in Gozo- onwards, Austin embarked on new projects which saw his artistic work wonder in uncompromising and unlimited directions.

Austin Camilleri was one of the first Maltese artists to pick the ephemeral language of Installation art, together with Raphael Vella (b.1967), Ray Pitre (b.1940), Norbert Attard and later Vince Briffa (b.1958) and Pierre Portelli (b.1961).¹³ Eventually in 1998 Camilleri put up the first solo installation exhibition *SacredAustin* which was held in the church of St James, Rabat, Gozo. The intention was provocative and yet it showed the artist's real artistic thoughts as he challenged the conservative socio-religious and cultural climate of Gozo. This exhibition was followed by another controversial open air exhibition *Stones* in 1999, which the artist set up around Malta and Gozo. His works have wielded a better understanding of the contemporary aesthetic, locally, so that even Gozo today enjoys the significant achievements of conceptual art.

¹³ In 1997 the *Robert Sammut Hall* welcomed an important exhibition called *Mediterranea* where artists such as Austin Camilleri, Raphael Vella, Ray Pitre and Norbert Attard exhibited the first series of installation art in Malta. Personal communication with the artist, 6th July, 2006.

Conclusion

This paper has described the major changes in artistic endeavours on the island of Gozo. It was shown that Gozitan art, particularly sacred art, was mostly conservative. However it still remains interesting and worthy of study, if for nothing else, because it reflects the cultural traits of the island. It was shown that in spite of such conservatism, a number of high quality works were produced.

This study gives a foretaste of a wider Gozitan reality in art and architecture which started in earnest during the last decades of the twentieth century, resulting in very interesting contemporary work. This indicates that Gozo is no longer isolated from the cultured and artistic developments occurring on Malta.

Although one cannot speak of a proper Gozitan identity, the diverse aspects of art and architecture which this study has described points to an emerging distinctiveness that can be admired in the works of Gozitan artists.

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The Monumental Church of Nadur

JOSEPH MUSCAT

Introduction

Nadur is one of the larger villages of Gozo. Yet up to mid-nineteenth century, its territory was more than double its present extent. It still included the bordering villages of Qala and Ghajnsielem with Mġarr Harbour. Even Comino, lying in the narrow channel that separates Malta from Gozo, was considered to be in the territory of Nadur.

Nature has been extremely generous to Nadur. The village stands on top of a magnificent plateau some 160 meters above sea level. The name itself recalls a centuries old tradition. It derives from the fact that, in olden times, sentries watched day and night in order that no vessel might dare invade our islands with hostile intentions. The coat of arms of Nadur is a sun rising from a blue sea on a gold field. As Nadur lies to the east of the island, the most beautiful aurora can be observed from its heights. It is also for this reason that Nadur can be called the village of the rising sun. Its motto is inspired by the toponym – *Vigilat*, that is Vigilant. Gozo and beyond can be observed and guarded from Nadur.

Erection of the Parish

Today, the main attraction of Nadur is undoubtedly its magnificent Basilica dedicated to the apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul. This wonderful monumental temple evokes to memory centuries of old historical facts.

Over 300 years ago, in 1688, the Bishop of Malta and Gozo Davide Cocco-Palmeri (1684 – 1711) created four new parishes for Gozo. One of them was that of Nadur. At that time, in the heart of the village there was no church that was big enough for parochial functions for over 500 inhabitants. The only church that still existed up to some years before, was that of St John the Baptist, in the area known as It-Tarġa tan-Nadur, on the outskirts of the village, when one goes down towards Victoria via the present Rabat Road, locally referred to as Triq Tax-Xhajma. By 1630, it was in a disastrous structural state, and it had to be closed down.

For some years, under the care of the first parish priest of Nadur, Bernard Haber (1689 – 1705), the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in the



A panoramic view of the village of Nadur from Xaghra side.

outskirts of Qala, but in the territory of Nadur, carried all parochial duties. Not later than 1695, a new parochial church, dedicated to the Princes of the Apostles was constructed, as decreed in the document of the erection of the parish, on top of the Nadur hill.

According to legend, a donkey, loaded with stones, owned by a holy man named Girgor Buttigieg, pointed out the site where the church was to be built, by stopping stubbornly on the highest top of the Nadur hill.

In truth however, the church's site was determined by a generous donation of the ground on which it stands by Grand Master Gregorio Carafa (1680 – 1690). In fact, the site was described by Bishop Cocco-Palmeri himself more than a year before the election of the first parish priest of Nadur.

A Monumental Church

The population of Nadur increased without any interruption. After less than a century since the decree of Bishop Cocco-Palmeri, it was more than three times as much. The first parochial church resulted to be too small for the residents of the parish of Nadur, with its territory extending to the present villages of Xewkija and Xaghra, nearly a third of the area of the eastern part of Gozo. In a period of poverty, Parish Priest Salvatore Galea



The Nadur Parish Church.

(1743 – 1778) engaged the Maltese architect Giuseppe Bonnici (1707 – 1779) a *Capomastro* of the Order, who was employed on various projects erected by the Knights of St. John, such as the Castellania in Valletta, the two fountains in Palace Square, Valletta, and his masterpiece, the Custom House in the Valletta Marina in the Grand Harbour, to prepare plans for the building of a new and much bigger church on the same site as the first one.

Bonnici was also involved in the re-modelling of the interior and the facade of the church of St Publius in Floriana, the churches of Saint Augustine, Santa Barbara and that known as





The interior of the church.

Ta' Leisse, all in Valletta, the church of the Immaculate Conception in Cospicua and the church of Saint Bartholomew in Tarxien. It is rumoured that Bonnici made use of a model of the church designed by Fra Giuseppe Grech, a lay Capuchin, who also designed the churches and convents, belonging to his Order, namely that of Santa Liberata in Kalkara, Malta, and that of Our Lady of Graces, on the outskirts of Victoria, Gozo, on the way to Marsalforn.

Construction on the church began on 28 September 1760. Its foundation stone was laid on 17 December of

that year. The master mason was Mikielangelo Pisano who unfortunately, died while the church was only half finished. This new church, built in the form of a Latin cross, unaisled and with a three-bay nave, the choir and two transepts, had a two-storeyed facade. Two belfry towers were attached to the arms of the transepts. Construction dragged on for forty-four years. It was blessed on 24 June 1804 by the next parish priest Francis Sapiano (1778 – 1812), and consecrated on 12 May 1867 by the Apostolic Administrator (1867) of the newly erected diocese of Gozo, Mgr Paolo Micallef.

Soon after, the church was granted the title of a Collegiate in 1894, Archpriest John Camilleri (1881 – 1910), planned for its enlargement. In 1882, the same archpriest had brought from Marseille in France, a beautiful titular statue made of papier-mache, by the firm Galard et Fils, that represents the patron saints of Nadur.

Archpriest Camilleri, with the help of his nephew Martin Camilleri who was to succeed him as archpriest, decided on enlarging the church to its present form, by the construction of the aisles, dome and facade, all designed by the Maltese architect Francesco Saverio Sciortino (1875 – 1958). This work was carried out between 1906 and 1914. The cross crowning the dome was placed



Enlargement of the church.



Maltese painter Lazzaro Pisani.

on 24 September 1913. The whole masonry work was finished in 1914. The harmony in style and proportion of the whole church hides the fact that it was designed in two separate parts. The Nadur church can be described as an architectural gem on the Italian Renaissance style on its exterior and splendid baroque in its interior.

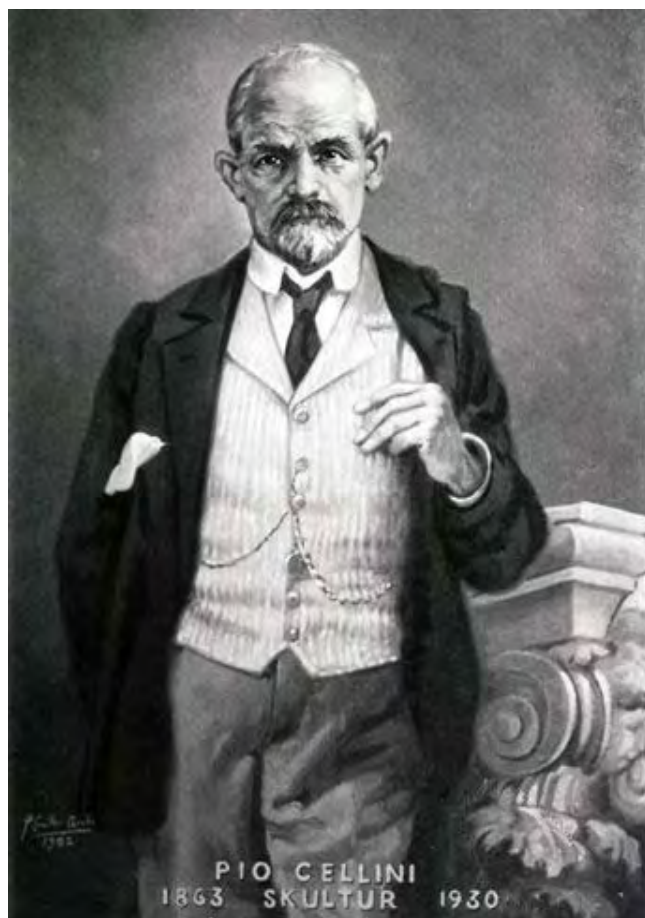
The Interior Decoration

The paintings of the main vault of the church, the choir, the two transepts, the four pendentives, the dome and in both side aisles are the work of the Maltese painter Lazzaro Pisani (1854 – 1932). They have as their theme a phrase from St. Paul's Apostle in the first letter to the Corinthians; *Spectalulum facti sumus mundo, angelis et hominibus* (1 Cor: 4,9). This phrase, selected by Archpriest Martin Camilleri (1910 – 1921), who was the mind behind the grandiose extension and decoration, is written in the frieze inside the dome and means: "We have become a spectacle to the universe, the angels and man alike". Inside the dome there are paintings and eight stained-glass windows in honour of the Apostles Peter and Paul.

The four pendentives represent the four continents, namely: Europe – shown in the figure of Emperor Constantine with the miraculous vision of the Cross; Asia – by St Francis Xavier baptizing a baby; Africa – by St Mark the Evangelist preaching to the natives and America – by Christopher Colombo showing the Cross to the pagans. The vault and both transepts are adorned with paintings depicting episodes that refer to the life of St. Peter and St. Paul. The apsidal cap of the organ at the rear represents the apostles Peter and Paul in their glory as judges of the Gentiles.

There are fifteen stained-glass windows – twelve of these represents the twelve apostles – in the nave, transepts and choir. These are flanked by paintings of popes, martyrs and doctors of the Church.

The architectural decorations and ornate sculpture are the work of the Roman sculptor and decorator Pio Cellini (1863 – 1930) who has other works of art in various churches in Malta, besides those in Rome, Spain and the United Kingdom.



Roman sculptor and decorator Pio Cellini.



Architect Francesco Saverio Sciortino (with Jacket) with on his right Archpriest Martin Camilleri with other priests and workers involved in the enlargement of Nadur Church.

The colour scheme of the interior of the church is pleasant and harmonious. The vault and pendentives above the main cornice are gilded and painted in such manner to be in tune with the lower parts. From the floor to the main cornice, the interior is encased in beautiful marble. This embellishment in the 1960's was done during the term of office of Archpriest Mgr Michael Portelli (1951 – 1982). Of the same period is the pulpit, designed by Oscar Testa, another beautiful work of art in marble, depicting the story of our salvation. In the lower section there are our first parents, Adam and Eve, who brought sin and death into the world. This is shown in the lifeless and leafless trunk of the tree. In the middle section there are the twelve apostles who preached the gospel. Finally, in its upper section, there is the resurrected Christ, victor over death and author of our salvation.

Altar Paintings

In the centre of the choir there is the titular painting showing the encounter of the Apostles

Peter and Paul in the Roman underground prison of Mamertino prior to their martyrdom. The author of this painting is unknown but we are assured that this belongs to the school of Mattia Preti. It has been attributed to Gio Paolo Chiesa, a pupil of Preti. The two large lateral paintings in the choir are the work of Don Carlo Zimech, a Maltese priest who hailed from Haż-Żebbuġ. Other painters who have altar pieces in the Nadur church are Don Francesco de Dominici, Rocco Buhagiar, Demetrio Farrugia, Gianni Vella and Giuseppe D'Arena, known as "Il Romano".

The main altar, in the centre of the presbytery is the work of the Maltese artist Emvin Cremona (1919 – 1987) representing the typology of the Eucharistic sacrifice. Around the altar there are four episodes from the Old Testament depicting different types of sacrifices. On the anterior of the altar are the marble figures of Abel and Cain and that of Abraham offering his son Isaac. On its posterior we find Noah after the deluge, offering his sacrifice and the High Priest Melchisedech offering bread and wine.

On an altar in the south transept, there is the ‘*corpo santo*’ (holy relic) of Saint Coronato Martyr. This relic, of an unknown victim of the harsh church persecutions in Rome, in the early years of the history of the church, was donated to the parish priest in 1763, and has since then been given a pride of place by being venerated on top of an altar, rather by being placed underneath it. The parish named this martyr the secondary patron of Nadur.

Throughout the years, the parish of Nadur received many titles, namely: a matrice or mother-church when the parish of Ghajnsielem (1855) and then Qala (1872) were dismembered from its territory. It became the seat of the third Collegiate of the Diocese of Gozo on 19 September 1894. Nine months earlier, on 19 December 1893 the parish priest was bestowed with the title of Archpriest. The parish church was granted the title of a minor Basilica on 26 June 1967.

Two distinguished personages, Michele Francesco Buttigieg (the first Bishop of the new diocese of Gozo) and Archpriest Saverio Cassar (head of a provisional government during the French occupation), were born in the territory of Nadur, and baptized in this parochial church.



Ceiling painting in the Nadur church.

Conclusion

“No history of Maltese architecture would be complete without an honourable mention of the parish church dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul of Nadur, Gozo”, wrote Leonard Mahoney in his book ‘5000 years of Architecture in Malta’.

The twenty-eight metre high dome rising harmoniously on the Gozo skyline plays a crucial part in the composition of our monumental church and catches the eye of local and foreign travellers being ferried between Malta and Gozo. The shape of the dome, a landmark for Gozo, was the first in our islands and paved the way for other architects to copy or imitate.

It is worth mentioning that an artistic photograph of the facade of our monumental church is exhibited at the Imperial Institute of London – a living witness to the many visitors from great and big nations that even in a small village on a tiny Mediterranean island called Gozo, one finds a monumental work of art that is as worthy as those find in places and cities more bigger and famous than Nadur.

This monumental church, built through the generosity and faith of our forefathers, is clearly no less the pride of the present day parishioners. May our patrons, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, from their celestial abode, shower on our parish abundance of heavenly grace to help us continue in our walk of faith as we have done for these last 324 years.

Joseph Muscat qualified as a Registered Mental Nurse in Shenley Hospital, Near Radlett, Hertfordshire, UK, in 1968. He also has a Diploma in Psychiatric Nursing from the University of Malta (1992). Before he retired, he was a Departmental Nursing Manager at the Gozo General Hospital. Presently he does voluntary work in the Nadur Parish Office.

Book: The Church of St Cecilia on the Island of Gozo

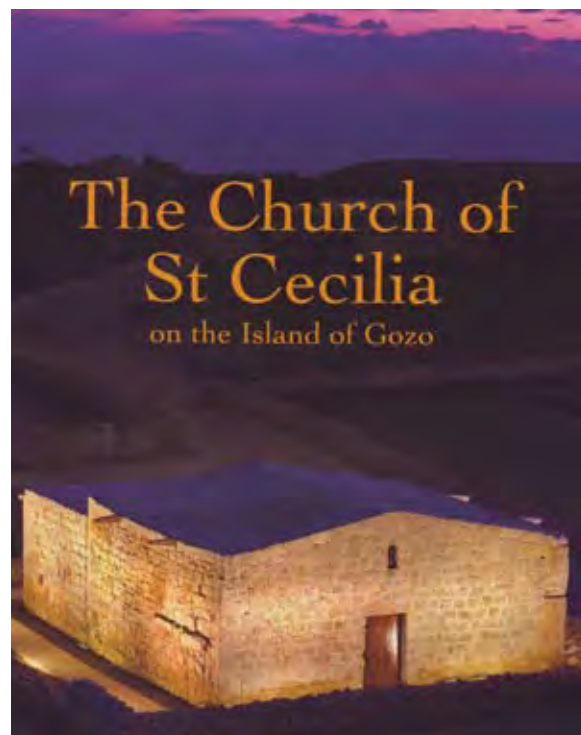
REVIEWED BY GEOFFREY G. ATTARD

David Mallia,
Photography & design by David Cilia,
Malta, Wirt Ghawdex Organization, 2012, pp. 56.

The Church of St Cecilia on the Island of Gozo is the name of a new publication issued by the Wirt Ghawdex Organization regarding the medieval chapel dedicated to the patron saint of musicians in the vicinity of the Gozo heliport. The book has been written by Dr. David Mallia, a Maltese architect residing in Gozo. Photographs have in their majority been taken by renowned Gozitan photographer Mr. David Cilia.

The book has definitely filled a void which has long been felt. It builds on primary sources such as Agius de Soldanis' *Il Gozo Antico-moderno e Sacro-Profano* as well as secondary sources such as Gorg Aquilina's and Stanley Fiorini's edited work on Mgr. Peter Dusina's Apostolic visit of 1575 published by the University of Malta. This book is definitely a must-read for those who have Melitensia or rather Gaultitana close to their heart. Published in paper-back A4 size, the book is both attractive and well-presented. Mallia, being both an architect and civil engineer of experience, has managed to blend together medieval history and architecture thus creating an interesting work of literature which will definitely go down well with both beginners and scholars. The approach taken by the author is holistic, leaving little unsaid about this historical place and a true gem of Gozo's heritage.

The publication can be broadly divided into three sections although these overlap and therefore it is not always easy to say where one ends and the next begins. The book opens with a chronological account of Gozo's past, both civil and ecclesiastical. Geographical aspects feature quite strongly in this part of the publication and the historical background relating to the figure of St Cecilia is an interesting bit of hagiography. A



comparative look at St Cecilia's church and other churches to be found on mainland Malta ensues, with ample references to scholarly studies by both foreign and local scholars. Last but not least, the very detailed study of both the interior and the exterior of the edifice accompanied by sumptuous photos and other sketches gives the publication both colour and value. The endnotes will prove invaluable to researchers and students of history, archaeology, architecture and other related studies.

In addition to the notes regarding restored sites managed by Wirt Ghawdex, I would have liked to see included a short paragraph containing information about the history of the organisation itself. There is no doubt that Wirt Ghawdex is fast becoming Gozo's foremost socio-historical organization, an entity which was sorely needed in the island of Gozo. With a preface by Wirt Ghawdex president, Mr. Francesco Masini, the book is another feather in the cap of this widely admired organization that is determined to restore and care for all that can be saved from Gozo's ancient and medieval heritage.

Peasant Costumes: Insights into Rural Life and Society

An Exhibition Review

KENNETH CASSAR

Peasant Costumes : Insights into Rural Life and Society is a very interesting exhibition at the Exhibition Hall within the Ministry for Gozo, St Francis Square, Victoria. Open till the end of July, it provides visitors with precious snippets of the ordinary, yet incorrupt hard working rural population whose toil and simple life made drastic inwards in literature and the arts, particularly in the 19th century.

Daily life in early modern Maltese history was very much dependent on economic traits. Following the arrival of the Order of St John, daily life in the Maltese Islands was very much dependent on maritime activity and agriculture. The Grand Harbour area was centred on maritime activity which was fuelled by trade, industry, strategic importance and wartime replenishment to generate years of relative prosperity. The rest of the archipelago remained heavily reliant on agriculture, a characteristic which was perhaps bolder in Gozo where insular restraints left a major imprint on economy and life. Daily life on the sister island adhered to the rhythmic cycle of agriculture up to the mid-twentieth century, thereby explaining its pronounced rural character. This is a distinctive hallmark which Heritage Malta is currently interpreting for this year's edition of the increasingly prestigious temporary annual exhibition put forward by the Ministry for Gozo for the *Lejlet Lapsi -Notte Gozitana* event, thus renewing a solid collaboration towards national identity and culture.

This rural character is predominantly illustrated through a display of popular costumes as interpreted in their right ethnographic and historical context. Like all other forms of art, costumes reflect the society which produced them. The Ethnography Section within Heritage Malta



Exhibition poster.

houses a very significant textile collection of over 1,000 artefacts ranging from the nobility's refined aesthetic values based on French and Italian taste, the ecclesiastical need to spare no expenses for its most important sermons, the layman's need to feel important and the peasant's aesthetic approach based on traditional methods and functionality. In this exhibition, the peasants' attire is given the limelight.

The exhibition is not just a show of folk dress. Heritage Malta is presenting an ethnographic experience through an interactive display which heightens and illustrates all the concepts put



One of the pictures on display at the exhibition.

forward. This costume display is complemented by interpretation provisions highlighting the historic dimension and other artefacts of ethnographic and artistic relevance including a selection of the traditional implements used for spinning, weaving and dying, engravings, lithographs, watercolours and oil paintings. There is also a singular recreation of a domestic scene to give a holistic insight into rural life and society.

Very remarkable and perhaps still understudied are the techniques and methods used in the production of clothes. Some of the attire was produced in-house or at least had a very intimate tie with the rural world. Thus the production methods and techniques within the exhibition do not merely go into *newl* and *bizzilla* production with complementary loom and bobbin exhibits but can also delve into aspects

of cotton production, weaving patterns and dying techniques. This will in turn be of great help in the truthful production of replicas and offer an illuminating and unprecedented guide to the various re-enacting entities and folk groups that colour most of the Islands' cultural events. Much of the research and efforts behind this exhibition will be a useful input at the Folklore Museum in the *Gran Castello* which is currently being redesigned.

The seven costume sets exhibited are, in their majority, authentic pieces which have been complemented by historically accurate replicas of popular attire which, although not necessary exclusive, are very intimately tied to the rural world. These include the *kabozza*, the *terħa* and *ħorġa*, the typical waistcoat, the *qorq*, the *geżwira*, *ċulqana* and to a certain extent the *ġhonnella*, among others. An added attraction can undoubtedly be offered by lace which although generally not clad by the peasants, formed an integral part of their output and income, especially in Gozo.

In creating historically accurate replicas to fill the very few lacunae within the national collection and complement the seven authentic sets which are here being exhibited, the organisers availed themselves of the precious knowledge of Alda Bugeja who formed part of the Exhibition Technical and Scientific team. It is thanks to the passion and hard work of people like Alda that the weaving tradition still lives on. With the knowledge she



Part of a collection of prints on display at the exhibition.

inherited from four generations of weavers she is committed to continue preserving this valuable craft which she teaches within the Directorate for Lifelong Learning of the Education Department, and thanks to which she has been recognised on both national and international level. Particular care and attention was taken in reproducing historically accurate fabrics in all their processes, from the selection of cotton, to its spinning, dying in naturally time-honoured dyes, weaving and sewing according to researched studies. Where possible, threads pertaining far back to Alda's grandmother were used so as to add authenticity to this display.

Artistic representation is another important interpretative tool for a better understanding of peasant dress and daily life. Of particular interest are depictions dating to the late 18th and 19th centuries where the mundane was increasingly assuming consideration and relevance as a main artistic and intellectual subject. Many a time dress assumed a significant role very much in demand by 19th century visitors who wanted a lasting memento of their visit to the Islands. It is in this light that one should value the various prints and watercolour albums – some of which still form part of our national collections particularly those at the National Library and the National Museum of Fine Arts, a representative sample of which features prominently in this exhibition. Artists like Jean Houel, Francesco Zimelli, Vincenzo Fenech, Pietro Paolo Caruana, Raffaele Caruana, Opizio

Guidotti, Michele Bellanti, Charles Frederick de Brocktorff, the Schranzes and Edward Caruana Dingli depicted a wide range of Maltese and Gozitan dress some of which directly refer to the rural world. Paintings, prints and watercolour representations offer an illuminating background to the artefacts on display.

This exhibition can also offer an opportunity to showcase the work which is currently being done towards a better appreciation and preservation of Heritage Malta's textile collection, the potential of which is increasingly being discovered. A re-evaluation and assessment project is being carried out with Heritage Malta's Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage. Among the main deliverables of this project are condition assessments of all the items in the collection, qualifying and quantifying which are the pieces that can be displayed and which are those that need treatment. In the process, the present inventory is being upgraded with technical details and improved photographic documentation and the most urgent pieces are being short listed for restoration. Storage is being improved with mounts that embellish the presentation and facilitate handling.

This is an important and much needed project that will help us understand the collection from conservational, artistic and historical perspectives. Not only will it improve storage and accessibility but it will also facilitate research towards a better understanding of the collection from a



Part of a collection of prints on display at the exhibition.

The Hon. Lawrence Gonzi,
Prime Minister at the
inauguration of the exhibition
held as part of the Lejlet
Lapsi - *Notte Gozitana* 2012
event.



conservational and art historical perspective. It is only through this direction that exhibitions, such as the one on offer, can be set up, and this section within this display can provide a stimulating behind the scenes.

Among the main deliverables of this display is the increasingly esteemed catalogue whereby the interwoven themes proposed above will be dealt with in deserving length by various contributors. Godwin Vella sets the context and highlights the relevance of cotton cultivation and wool harvesting in rural Gozo, Claire Bonavia delves into the manufacturing methods and techniques, while Kenneth Cassar and Nicoline Sagone focus on aspects of artistic representation. Sandro Debono highlights the role played by the Faldetta in crafting the representation of a national identity and textile conservators Claire Bonavia and Jeannette Huy provide us with interesting behind the scenes of an ongoing re-evaluation and assessment project of the national textile collection. This publication by Heritage Malta is surely a reference work for the subject. Accompanying this initiative is a welcoming set of print reproductions from authentic watercolours by Francesco Zimelli.

These watercolours are finely executed with delicate tones and elegant strong confident lines to capture graceful depictions of “Contadina in Abito di Nozze”, “Contadina Gozitana”, “Contadino dell’

Isola del Gozo”, “Bottegaro Maltese in abito di festa”, “Marinara di Speronara Maltese”, and are surely a must have for the avid collector and the subject’s enthusiast alike. Parallel to these initiatives are two intrinsically linked publications namely *Methods for Storing Historic Costumes and Accessories* and a pattern book for the reproduction of folk costumes. Those interested in acquiring copies of said publications can do so from the Exhibition Hall at the Minsitry for Gozo during exhibition days and from Heritage Malta’s Gozo Area Office (Tel. No. 2156 4188) at the Citadel and the Inquisitor’s Palace in Vittoriosa (Tel. No. 2166 3731).

This exhibition, open up till the end of July, is not merely a display of folkloristic attire, but in line with the previous efforts, it also presents a cultural highlight relating to the rural dimension of Gozo which for centuries served as the island’s main breadwinning activity.

Kenneth Cassar (b.1985), studied History of Art at the University of Malta where he graduated in 2006. He currently forms part of Heritage Malta’s Ethnographic Section as curator for Costumes and Textiles and teaches art at the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce.

The Scottish-Gozitan Connection

GEOFFREY G. ATTARD

Introduction

One of the countries with which Gozo has some connections is Scotland, the country north of England known among the peoples of the past as Alba or Caledonia, and called Scotia by the Romans. Although the bonds between our island and the Scottish country cannot be considered strong, there is definitely room for focus on this theme which may bring to light some valuable historical hints that might be of interest to the local reader.

A Common Motto

One of the first things that come to mind regarding any ties between Scotland and Gozo is certainly the Scottish motto which is identical with that flaunted on the coat-of-arms of the village of Xewkija. *Nemo me impune lascesit* translated into English as 'No one shall attack me with impunity' (Bezzina, 1988: 39) is the motto for both the country north of Hadrian's wall and the oldest village on the island of Gozo. The thistle features in the coat-of-arms of both places however different is their surface area. The thistle is actually the main feature of Xewkija's crest. At the same time, it not only features prominently in Scotland's coat-of-arms but it is also the name of the Most Noble Order of the Thistle, the highest order

of chivalry in Scotland and which has its seat in St Giles' Cathedral on the 'Royal Mile' in Edinburgh, Scotland's capital city. The first thing that the visitor to Edinburgh Castle is told is most probably the very motto referred to above, notwithstanding the fact that its Latin pronunciation would be very much influenced by English phonetics thus not making it easy for a Latin beginner to understand at all.

Gozitan Priests in Scotland

Two of Gozo's priests have been working in Scotland now for more than three decades. Father Loreto Tabone and Fr. Joe Portelli, both of Nadur, were both ordained on the 22nd of June 1974. Within a short time from their ordination, both priests found themselves in Scotland, the former accompanying the latter for a period of convalescence due to health reasons. Little did they know at that time that their short sojourn in Scotland would bring them to stay in the country for the greater part of their priestly life. Both priests have since become part of the archdiocese of Edinburgh and St Andrews. Both have served in various parishes, thus strengthening the bond between the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Catholic community in Gozo.

It is worth mentioning that Cardinal Keith Patrick O'Brien, archbishop of Edinburgh and St Andrews presided over the festivities of St Peter and St Paul in Nadur in 2004, and led the procession around the streets of the village.¹ Fr. Anthony George Caruana of Xaghra was actually ordained for the archdiocese of Edinburgh and St Andrews on the 29th of June 2010, Solemnity of St Peter and Paul, at St. Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh in the presence of various priests from the archdiocese of Edinburgh and the diocese of Gozo.² The late Cardinal Thomas Winning of Glasgow had twice visited the island of Gozo.



Emblem of the Most Noble Order of the Thistle.
[Source: http://www.european_heraldry.org]



Xewkija coat-of-arms.
[Source: <http://www.xewkija.gov.mt>]

¹ Times of Malta, (2004). "Scottish cardinal in Gozo for Nadur feast", June 27th, available at <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20040627/gozo/scottish-cardinal-in-gozo-for-nadur-feast.119234>, accessed on Friday 13th of January 2012.

² Gozo News.Com, (2010). "Gozitan priest ordained in Scotland", July 6th, available at <http://gozonews.com/13993/gozitan-priest-ordained-for-scottish-diocese-readers-letter/>, accessed on Saturday 14th January 2012.



Cardinal Keith Patrick O'Brien, archbishop of Edinburgh and St Andrews presided over the festivities of St Peter and St Paul in Nadur in 2004. [Source: <http://www.zimbio.com>]

A Scottish Name for the Gozo Hospital

Up to a few years ago, Gozo's General Hospital was known as the Craig General Hospital. It must have been called so after radiologist Edwin Craig (1912-1996) of Vittoriosa who was a member of the legislative assembly in the interests of the MLP between 1947 and 1951 (Schiavone, 2009: 607); the foundation stone of the hospital at tal-Ibraġġ was laid by Queen Elizabeth II on the 16th November 1967 (Gauci, 1969: 44). Though hailing from Birgu, 'Craig' is actually an ancient Scottish surname meaning 'crag' in the English language.³ The family must surely have had Scottish origins.

Scotland: A Place for Further Studies

Throughout the ages, Scotland has, slowly but firmly, become a popular place with students from various areas of study. It is in fact frequently chosen by many students from around the world as the ideal country for further studies. This has become possible due to the good reputation enjoyed mainly by the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and St Andrews. Maltese students of medicine, music and law have also chosen Scotland to specialise in their particular area of study. A case in point is that

of Jean Noël Attard from Victoria, who has been selected as a member of the EUYO for the fourth year running. He is now reading for a music degree at the Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland as an Ian Tomlin scholar, majoring in violin under the tuition of Francis Cummings.⁴

Gozo: Home to a Renowned Scottish Actor

A few years ago, well known Scottish comedian and actor Billy Connolly decided to choose Gozo as his second home.⁵ After having lived in Los Angeles for some time, he opted for a place in Gozo, presumably after falling in love with its quiet and laid-back environment. Billy Connolly is famous for his role in various movies among them the famous Mrs. Brown, in which he appears as Queen Victoria's Scottish servant John Brown.

For the last couple of years it has also become a tradition in the Parish of the Sacred Heart, Fontana for the parish priest to invite the Scottish community in Gozo to participate in one of the activities leading to the feast of St Andrew at the end of November, since St Andrew is both the co-patron saint of the village as well as the patron saint of Scotland.

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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 with a dissertation entitled "Climate Change and the Catholic Church" in 2008; he has recently published his dissertation in book form.

³ Wikipedia, (2012). "Craig (surname)", available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Craig_surname accessed on Friday 13th of January 2012.

⁴ Malta Council for Culture & the Arts, (undated). "Jean Noël Attard", available at <http://www.maltaculture.com/content.aspx?id=269115> accessed on Sunday 15th January 2012.

⁵ Gozo News.Com, (2006). "Billy Connolly to make Gozo his home", October 3rd, available at <http://gozonews.com/402/billy-connolly-to-make-gozo-his-home/>, accessed on Saturday 14th January 2012.

Recent Activities at the University of Malta - Gozo Campus

JOSEPH CALLEJA

Visit by the Hon. Chris Said, Minister for Justice, Dialogue and the Family.

On 3rd March 2012 the Hon. Chris Said paid a visit to the University Gozo Campus where he presented copies of the book entitled “The Gozo Civic Council: the Story of a Regional Government” to the library of the same Campus. The Hon. Said was accompanied by Mr Anton Tabone who is the chairman of the committee which organised the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Civic Council.



The Hon. Chris Said (centre) with Mr Anton Tabone presenting the book to Professor Lino Briguglio (left).

Public Lectures

During the month of April the University Gozo Campus organised two public lectures for which a number of gozitans participated. The first one was entitled ‘Musical Exodus: Remembering the Jewish Arab Mediterranean in North Africa and the Levant’ delivered by Dr Ruth Davis (University of Cambridge). The second lecture, entitled ‘Existentialism’ was given by Professor David E. Cooper, who was, until recently, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Durham.

The Gozo Lace Day - 2012

The Lace-Making Programme of the University Gozo Campus, organised for the sixteenth consecutive year the “Gozo Lace Day”. The

event, which was held on Sunday 22nd April 2012, consisted of a number of exhibitions and demonstrations of Gozo lace and talks on matters related to lace-making. Present for the event were the Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, Ms Consiglia Azzopardi, coordinator of the Lace Making Programme and Dr Joseph Azzopardi as the guest speaker.

In her introductory speech Consiglia Azzopardi gave an overview of the works and courses offered by the Lace-Making Programme at the Gozo Campus, while Dr Joseph Azzopardi delivered an interesting talk about the prospects for reviving Maltese Lace. In her speech the Hon. Giovanna Debono emphasised the importance of lace making as one of the unique characteristics of the Gozitan touristic product and how it forms an intrinsic part of the island’s traditions. Thus it still retains an economic as well as a historical value as part of Gozo’s unique cultural heritage. Minister Debono also praised the various initiatives taken at the University Gozo Campus and remarked that the collective effort of all those concerned are resulting in increased educational services on the island. The Minister then presented certificates to a number of students who attended courses offered by the Lace-Making Programme.



The Hon. Giovanna Debono presenting a certificate to a successful participant.

A large number of lace makers and friends attended the event which also included exhibitions of contemporary lace master-pieces and textile crafts, a competition and a raffle. There were a number of stands, one of which was mounted by the International Organisation of Needle and Bobbin Lace (OIDFA). A talk about the pattern of a Cape Collar was also delivered by Ms Consiglia Azzopardi.



One of the exhibits at the Lace Day - 2012.

Pro-Rector for Gozo

At the University of Malta Council meeting of 26 April 2012, Professor Joe Friggieri was appointed Pro-Rector for Gozo. The appointment is part of an overall plan to develop the Gozo Campus into a fully-fledged and vibrant campus of the University of Malta.



Professor Joe Friggieri

Joe Friggieri is Professor of Philosophy and elected member of Senate representing the academic staff of the Faculty of Arts. He holds doctorates from Milan and Oxford and is a leading poet, playwright and theatre director.

With the appointment of a Pro-Rector for Gozo, the post of Director of the Gozo Campus was abolished and the functions of the Board of the Campus were assumed by the pro-rectorate.

Installation of a Photovoltaic System

The installation of a photovoltaic system at the University Gozo Campus has been completed. One hundred and twenty photovoltaic panels have been installed on the main roof of the campus premises. The system, which costs €175,820 will contribute towards the reduction of 30 tonnes of CO₂ emissions at the Gozo Campus with consequent environmental benefits to society. The project was part financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the Cohesion Policy Programme 2007-2013.



Photovoltaic panels on the roof of the Gozo Campus.

Pilot initiative to hold examinations in Gozo

The University of Malta launched a pilot initiative for the June 2012 examination sessions, where a number of examinations, relating to courses held in Malta, were organised at the University Gozo Campus. Through this initiative, a number of Gozitan students following courses at the Msida campus were given the opportunity to sit for the end-of-semester exams in Gozo.

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



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

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