

THE **G**

# GOZO OBSERVER

No. 31, Winter 2015



# Contents

	<i>Page</i>
<b>Editorial: A Picture of Gozo</b>	2
<b>Gozo After the Siege of Malta: A study of the Acts of Notary Tomaso Gauci 1566-68</b> Mariana Grech	3
<b>Wied il-Mielah and Wied il-Ghasri as Attractions for Rural Tourism</b> Joanna Grima	12
<b>An Uncharacteristic Success</b> Miriam Muscat	19
<b>Fifty Years Ago – The Storm that took Gozo by Surprise</b> Geoffrey Attard	27
<b>Gozo Tourism: Figuring the Figures</b> Joe Muscat	30
<b>Ta' Sannat</b> Philip Vella	32
<b>Book Review: Imxi ftit passi mieghi: Għażla ta' Poeżiji 1973-2013</b> Geoffrey G. Attard	35
<b>Book Review : Il-Viżta Appostolika ta' Monsinjur Pietru Dusina f'Għawdex fis-Sena 1575</b> Maurice Cauchi	36
<b>Recent Activities at the University of Malta - Gozo Campus</b> Joseph Calleja	37

## The Gozo Observer

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

# Editorial:

## A Picture of Gozo

A recent publication (*Gozo in Figures 2012*: National Statistics Office, 2014), an update of a previous publication, presents interesting data relating to the situation in Gozo as well as a detailed picture of the changes that have taken place in the last five years. In summary, we find that since 2008:

- The population of Gozo has stabilised with a population of just over 31,000, and an average live births of just over 290 annually.
- The disposable household income in Gozo as a whole has increased by 17.6% up to €240 million, which is just under that of Malta.
- The average income has increased by 11.3% to €20,618. This is less than the average for Malta (€22,379). In other words, the average Gozitan earns 8.5% less than one working in Malta. There is considerable variation between the various regions in Malta, where, in some regions, the average earning can reach above €24,000.
- The employment rate in Gozo has increased by 11.6% which is higher than that in Malta where there was an increase of 9.6%. However, the female employment rate is still relatively low, (at 37.6%, which is not different from that of Malta).
- The number of tourists and hotel accommodation has increased by 11% (from 73,482 to 81,715 in 2013).
- The number of passengers on the Gozo Channel ferry has increased by 11.5% (from 3.9m in 2008 reaching 4.4m in 2013). Likewise the number of vehicles increased by 11.5% reaching 1.19m.
- There has been a consistent decrease in the number of livestock in Gozo, indicating a gradual de-ruralisation of the island.
- It is pleasing to note that the number of cultural events organised by the local councils in Gozo (96 in 2012) was higher than any other council, with the exception of the Southern Harbour region. Likewise, the expenditure on cultural events (€21,306) was higher than the average spent in Malta, and second only to that of the Southern Harbour region.
- The number of book loans from the Public libraries in Gozo was 106,222 in 2012 (compared to Malta 741,945). This translates to 3.8 books per person in Gozo which is double the figure for Malta (1.9 per person).

In general, one gets the impression that the overall picture in Gozo is not as bleak as has been painted in some quarters, and compares reasonably well with that in Malta, where some regions are doing better and some worse. One gets the impression also that a special effort is being made to encourage cultural activity, including book-reading, both of which areas seem to be more prominent in Gozo compared to most regions in Malta.

Other information deals with situations relating to the economy, employment, business activity, water and waste management, rural and urban statistics, pensions and others. This is a very useful summary of activity in Gozo, essential reading for anyone interested in assessing how Gozo is getting on.

*Maurice Cauchi*



# Gozo After the Siege of Malta: A study of the Acts of Notary Tomaso Gauci 1566-68

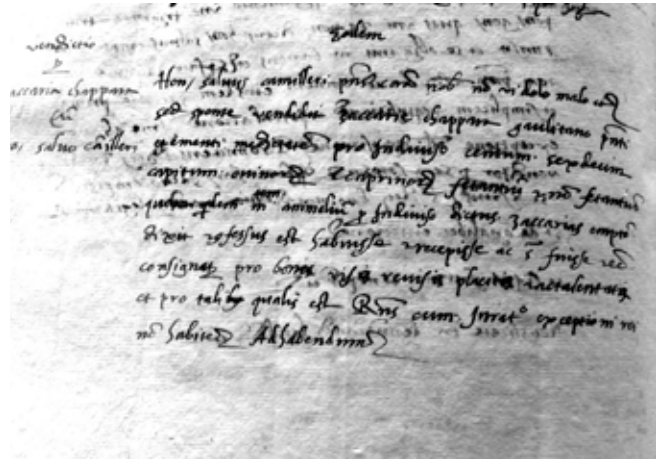
MARIANA GRECH

## Introduction

Following the ransacking of Gozo in July 1551 (Camilleri, 1996), life in Gozo was soon re-established, but it took time for things to settle down again and for life to return to its normal course.

As the island of Gozo was depopulated, the Maltese people started migrating to their sister island. A number of explanations were proposed as to what attracted the Maltese to the island of Gozo which was so vulnerable to attacks and which had just witnessed such a sacking. However it seems that the main attraction was the fact that they could easily acquire property in Gozo. This can be partly supported by the acts of Tomasso Gauci in contracts which are mostly related to agriculture such as the trade in animals. For example on 30

August 1567, Andrea Luchia, a Gozitan, sold three oxen, a cow, an ass and 27 head of cattle amounting to 32 *uncie* 24 *tareni* to Brancatio burg of *casali gregori* Malta *habitator huius terra et insule Gaudisii* (NAV R287/4, f.221v)<sup>1</sup>.



NAV R287/4, f.181v



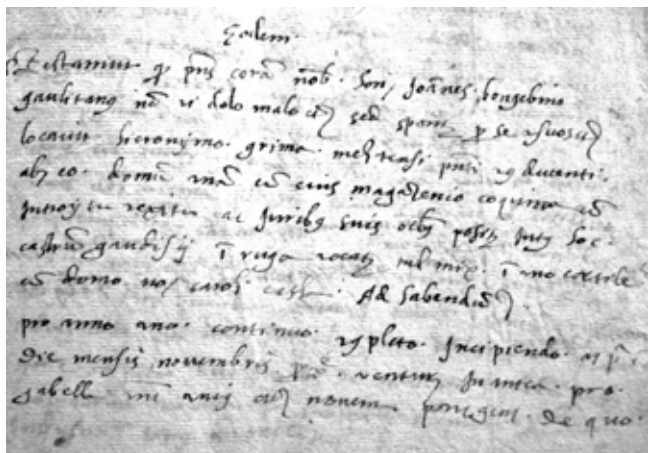
Manuscript R287: the acts of notary Tomaso Grech at the Notarial Archives Valletta.

<sup>1</sup> This reference and others of this type refer to the following where NAV is the Notarial Archives Valletta; R287 is the code which refers to the acts of notary Tomaso Gauci and /3 refers to the volume number; f refers to folio (or page) and r and v (Recto and Verso) refer to the front and back of a page or folio respectively.

## Leasing of Property

A very important attraction for Maltese farmers was the fact that there was ample land available for leasing in Gozo. There were a number of landowners who had vast estates of land which remained uncultivated and these provided the Maltese farmers with ample opportunity to obtain land from which they could make a better life for themselves. In the acts under review there are a number of examples with the lender being, in most cases, Gozitan. Some of them include, Joanne Grego, a Gozitan, who on 29 October 1566 leased to Dominico Tumne, a Maltese living in Gozo, one-fourth of a field on the Island of Gozo (NAV R287/4, f.41r). Another example is that of Guarino Plathamone who on 3 March 1568 leased to Laurentio Mifsud, a Maltese living in Gozo, a farm with its fields and cisterns in Gozo in *gued il melach* (Wied il-Mielah) for four years starting at the beginning of the following August (NAV R287/4, f.201r).

Apart from land there was also the leasing of houses and even sometimes animals. The leasing of houses was fairly common and these were sometimes leased with the lands surrounding them, and frequently with their store rooms. An example of this is a lease given by Joanne Bongebino who leased a house with its store room and kitchen in the Castle of Gozo to Hieronymo Grima, a Maltese. This lease was to be for the duration of one year starting the following November for the price of 1 *uncie* 9 *tareni* (NAV R287/4, f.26r).



NAV R287/4, f.26r

Apart from the Maltese, there seems to have been foreign people, especially from Sicily who

came to live on the Island of Gozo. In the records studied, a number of people described mostly as '*siculo habitator huius terre et Insule Gaudisii*' are found.

This interaction between the Gozitans, the native population of the island, the Maltese and foreigners who, for various reasons, decided to migrate to this small island, contributed to the initial phases of economic and social reconstruction of Gozo following the 1551 event.

## Gozitan Land-owners

The majority of the Gozitans who appear in the notarial acts under review are all linked to agriculture. Most of them even appear to be landowners. However, as one goes through the records of Notary Tomaso Gauci, it is clear that there were a number of people belonging to the same family who were involved in many transactions recorded by this notary. The majority of these people belong to the families of the upper class in Gozo and thus they had money and land with which to do business. These people were the first to be redeemed from slavery after the attack of 1551 and thus by 1566 they were actively participating in the economic activities which were being revitalised on the island.

All of them appear constantly in the acts under study but the most prominent family is the Plathamone. Persons like Guarino Plathamone, who appears frequently in the acts under review, was one of the jurats in the Gozitan council in 1575. Guarino Plathamone and Magnifico Antonino Plathamone are seen in many instances buying and selling such as when Guarino sold an ass *pili morelli* to Magnifico Antonino Deguyara for 4 *uncie* 24 *tareni* on 17 February 1557 (NAV R287/4, f.99r), or when Magnifico Antonino sold an ass and a mule *pili falbi* to Matheo Refalo for 3 *uncie* 6 *tareni* (NAV R287/4, f.57v [21.11.1566]).

There were also in Gozo people who acted as procurators for those still in captivity. Through these procurators, the people who were held captives could still hold on to their lands. An example of this is Martino Mule. It was actually his father, Marcus Mule, who was appointed by the Governor of Gozo to administer the possessions of

certain captives. However, Marcus Mule was taken prisoner himself and thus his son, Martino Mule, became the curator of his father taking on all of his responsibilities (NAV R287/4, f.49v).

### Agriculture as the Basis of the Economy

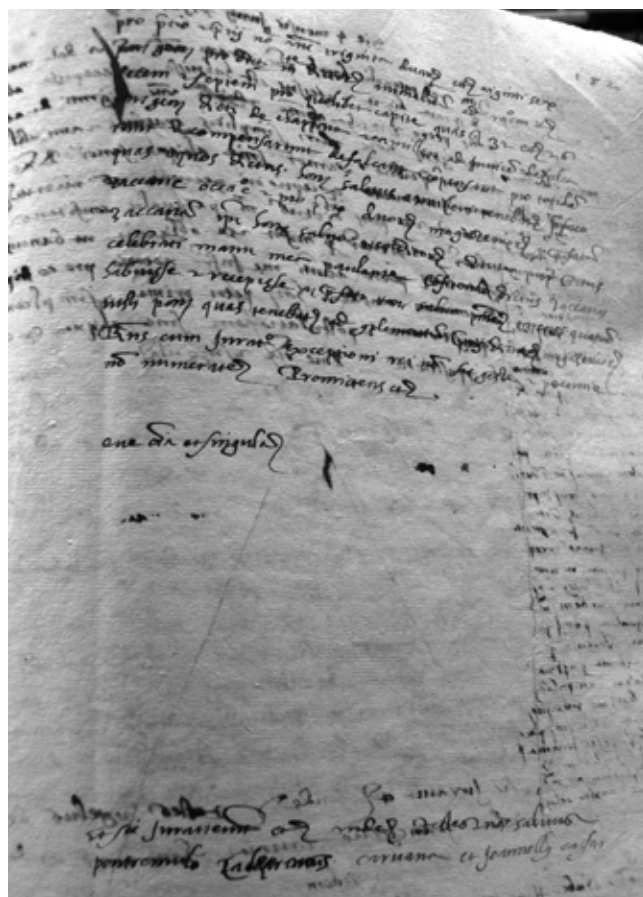
The economy of Gozo, like that of Malta, was mainly based on agriculture and the raising of livestock. However there were also other activities mostly related to the marine environment such as external trade, corsairing and fishing. Cotton and cumin were the main cash crops and their trading, as well as that of textiles, also played an important part in the economy of the islands. From the proceeds which resulted from the exportation of these products, the Maltese imported wheat and other necessities. Gozo also produced wheat, barley, legumes, fruit and wine and the practice of animal husbandry was widespread. Even though the population of Gozo lived in the Castle of Gozo there were farm buildings all along the countryside as well as vineyards and orchards (Wettinger, 1981). Additionally, with the arrival of the Knights of St. John, the practice of privateering flourished and also began to contribute towards the economy of Malta.

Cereals were the main source of the sustenance of a society in the sixteenth century. For small islands like Malta and Gozo this considerable demand for cereals could not be supplied by the local produce and thus the importation of these necessities was of vital importance. For the Maltese Islands the wheat was imported from Sicily (Wettinger, 1981). The agricultural related problems were due to the fact that the islands were small and the soil was of poor quality. These problems were intensified during the Siege of 1565 when thousands of Turks were stationed on mainland Malta. They had arrived before the grain harvest was completed and having looted and despoiled all that could be found, they left behind a catastrophe, as was their intention. The livestock was used to sustain the defenders or was captured by the Turks.

Having said this, when looking at the acts under study, one can see that the situation in Gozo was a bit different. Here the production seems to have continued in the years following the siege of 1565 and the records give quite a good

number of contracts which deal with the trade in cereals. Small transactions of less than 10 *salme* were most common. For example, Guglielmo la Russa sold 1 *salme* barley to Silvestro Zahra on 18 April 1567 for the price of 16 *tareni* payable on the Feast of St John the Baptist (NAV R287/4, f.149r). Guglielmo la Russa was involved in the bigger transactions. On 20 January 1568 he sold 40 *salme* barley to Leonardo Pachi of Zebug (Żebbuġ) Malta for 76 *uncie* 8 *tareni* at the price of 23 *tareni* per *salma* (NAV R287/4, f.117v).

Wheat is only mentioned a few times in these acts and one of the references is in a contract of debt between Joanne Haius and Antonius Danfansino, a Gozitan. In the contract Danfansino stated that he owed Haius 3 *uncie* 21 *tareni* in order to complete a payment for a certain quantity of barley and wheat (NAV R287/4, f.9r [18.09.1566]). After barley the most popular cereal is grain; *frumenti mixti* and *frumenti necti*. Most of the time, grain was sold in conjunction with barley such as when on 13 May 1568 Pasquale Grima sold to Mariano Fanchel of Rabbato (Rabat) Malta 2 *salme* barley and 1 *salme frumenti necti*; dried grain, for the price of 3 *uncie* (NAV R287/4, f.179v).



NAV R287/4, f.182r

As one can notice there were many Maltese people who were buying cereals in Gozo. This was presumably to feed the much larger population on Malta especially when keeping in mind the utter devastation of the agricultural lands left by the Turks following the events of 1565. Cereals were also used as a means of payment, in kind, for work. Augustino Circheppo agreed to work for Federico Caruana for one year against a payment of 5 *uncie* 3 *tareni*, and an amount of mixed wheat (NAV R287/4, f.8r [18.09.1566]). Cereals were also used to pay for leases and *gabella*, a farmhouse with its fields. This is the case of Dionisio Vella who was given a lease, in a *gabella* in Gozo by Magnificus Antonio Plathamone for two years starting on the previous 15 August against a payment of 4 *salme* barley and 1 *salma* grain per annum (NAV R287/4, f.142v [24.02.1568]).

### Animal Husbandary

In a world based on agriculture, animals and livestock were vital for survival. The beasts of burden were considered to be ‘bulky merchandise’ (Cassar, 1996: 17) and when sold, great attention was given to ensure an accurate description of their colour, sex and whether they were mules, donkeys, oxen or horses as this could reflect a difference in the price.

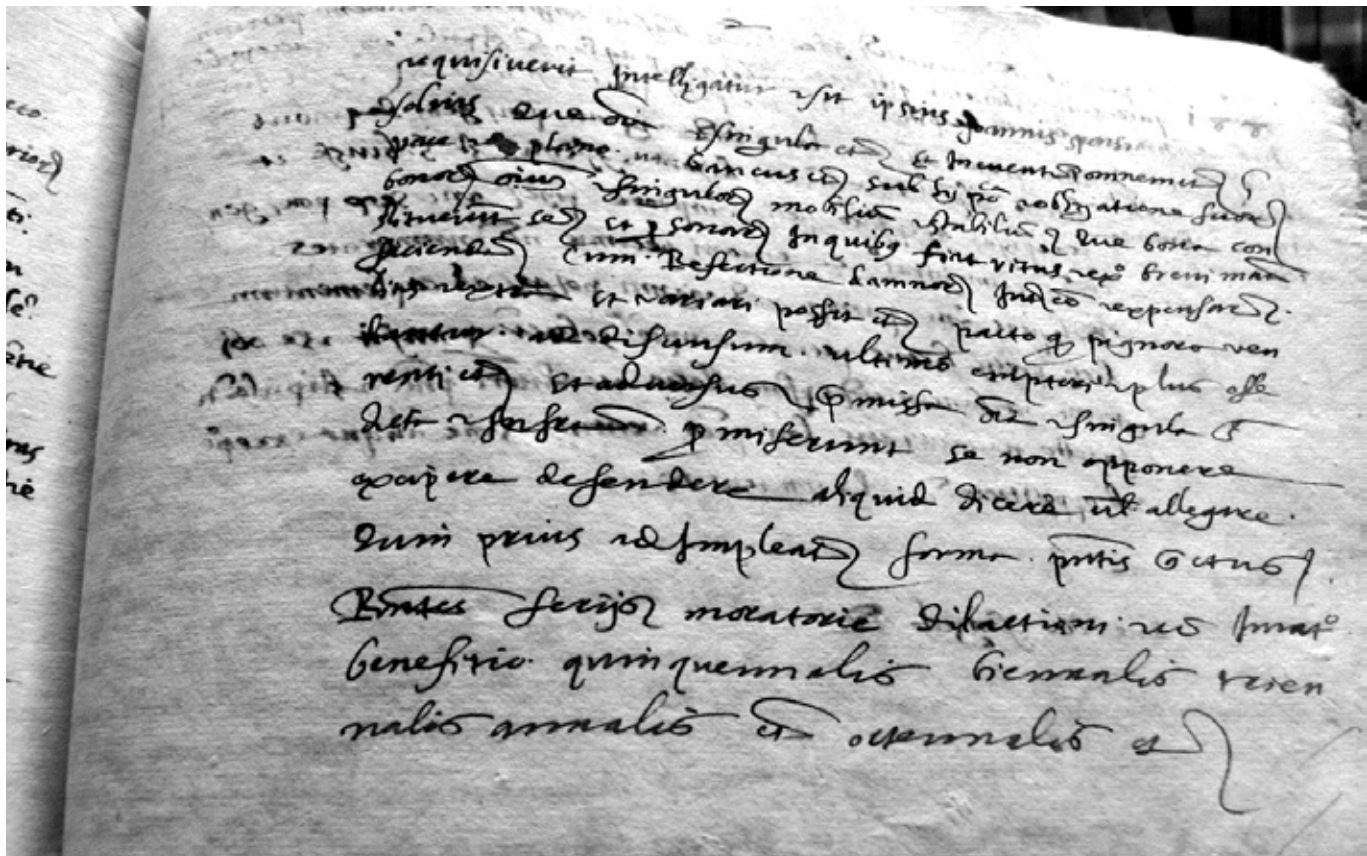
The ox seems to have been the main draught animal used for ploughing and ‘probably for treading the wheat out of the chaff in preparation for winnowing’ (Wettinger, 1982: 31). Horses were not as common and were mostly used for transportation. The highest price for a horse was fetched by one *pili sauri* sold by Raynelio Machnne to Pasquale Grima for the price of 9 *uncie* (NAV R287/4, f.131v [29.03.1567]) and another *pili rubei* bought by Joanne Cakie from Jacobo de Albano on 25 August 1568 also for 9 *uncie* (NAV R287/4, f.246v). The lowest price paid was for a horse *pili falbi* sold for 4 *uncie* 12 *tareni* by Joanne Grima, *Melitensis habitator huius terra et insule Gaudisii*, to Leonardo Vassallo, a Maltese living with Grima (NAV R287/4, f.69r [18.11.1567]). As for oxen the prices were very similar.

The donkey and its hybrid, the mule were “indispensable animals in production and transportation” (Dalli, 2005: 1) and have been,

since time immemorial, associated with such hard work. This is especially so in the smaller Mediterranean islands like Pantelleria, Malta and Gozo, where these animals were indispensable for farming. These smaller islands came to be “natural donkey sanctuaries” (Dalli, 2005: 2) where the donkey developed unique characteristics. Braudel (1995: 226) described the donkey as ‘the symbol of everyday life in the Mediterranean’. In Malta and Gozo idioms like *bħall-ħmar tas-sienja* and *jaħdem daqs baħħal* came to show both the hard work which donkeys and mules did everyday as well as the close relationship between the Maltese peasant and these beasts (Cassar, 1996: 13). Mules and donkeys were the commonest means of transport available and the Maltese donkey in particular was said to be so good that it did not need horse shoes. Mules were particularly in demand for driving the mills that ground the wheat and barley before the introduction of windmills. In Malta donkeys and mules were reared on a wide scale and managed to gain a very respectable reputation abroad, where they were exported, especially in Sicily.

In the records under review, the donkey and the mule occupy thirty percent of the whole animal occurrence. The donkeys were rather cheap especially when compared to oxen and horses. The highest price at which a donkey was sold is 6 *uncie*. This donkey *pili falbi* was sold by Vincentio Xuerib to Philipppo Fenec on 08 November 1566 (NAV R287/4, f.48r). The least expensive donkey was actually a she-ass *pili ferrantis* which Bendo Cumbo acquired from Mariano Micallef for 1 *uncie* 18 *tareni* (NAV R287/4, f.199v [31.07.1567]). For mules, the story is a bit different as their price tended to be quite high. The maximum amount fetched by a mule is that of 11 *uncie* 20 *tareni* in a contract drawn up on 18 June 1568. Blasio Chilia, a Maltese living in Gozo, sold a mule *pili castagni* to Petro Casha of Birkirkara (Birkirkara) for the mentioned price which was to be paid at Christmas (NAV R287/4, f.188r). Although the lowest price fetched by a mule is 5 *uncie*, only one other mule fetched a similar price as all the others were sold for more than 7 *uncie*.

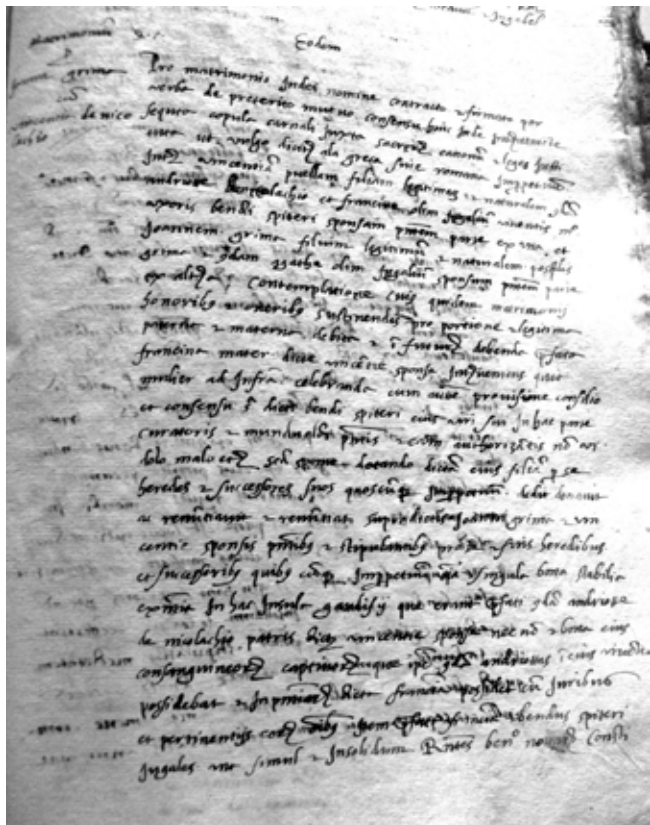
As can be expected from an agricultural community, the ownership of cattle was widespread, however according to Wettinger, some landowners together with notaries, lawyers, priests, and other better-



NAV R287/4, f.188r

off persons, had a pre-eminent status among the dealers in cattle (Wettinger, 1982: 36). Though not necessarily the case, Magnificus Antonio Plathamone is one person who features in two contracts of lease of quite large amounts of cattle. In the first instance he leased out 89 head of cattle to Federico Caruana. This lease was to be for one year starting on the following 15 August at the price of 6 *tareni per pecude* (NAV R287/4, f.56v [30.10.1567]). He also rented out 80 head of cattle this time to Joannello Spiteri for also one year starting on the following 15 August for the same price of 6 *tareni per pecude* payable in instalments of one-third (NAV R287/4, f.213v [27.07.1568]).

The importance of animals in the everyday life of the people of the sixteenth century is further emphasised when looking at the dowries. Apart from a number of other things such as property, the newlyweds were frequently given animals from their parents as well. Joanne Grima, son of Pasqualis Grima and the late Agathe, and Vincentia de Nicolachio, daughter of the late Andriotte de Nicolachio and Francine, were given a large number of animals, apart from other things, such as a house and two store houses in the Castle of Gozo. The animals given from the bride's parents



NAV R287/4, f.186r [11.06.1568]

included three bulls, two cows, a cow with its young, one she-ass with its young, one ass *pili ferrantis*, one ass *pili rubei*, two mules, five head of



cattle and one pig. They also got one bull *pili rubei aratorem*, and ten head of cattle, some of them pregnant (NAV R287/4, f.186r [11.06.1568]).

## Land Ownership

With agriculture being the basis of sixteenth century economy, the major occupation was that of farming followed by the landowners and fief-holders who looked down on the peasants, considering it degrading to work the lands, and thus relied on the income from their estates for their livelihood. Unlike their Sicilian counterparts, where the land was almost entirely owned by the king, the feudal classes and the Church, many peasants in Malta were landholders. The lands of the peasants were small and generally each peasant would not have more than three or four fields. However this still gave them a superior status to the Sicilian farmers (Wettinger, 1982: 7). This superiority was however, only in terms of landownership as most Maltese lands were of poor quality. The people who did not own land or in the case of Gozo in the 1560s, the Maltese who went to live on the island of Gozo, were able to lease lands from the proprietors. Larger properties were usually let out in smaller portions to farmers themselves. In the records under review this is evident. Sometimes the number of parts in which the field was divided was given in the acts such as in the leasing out of one-fourth of a field by Joanne Grego to Dominico Tune for two years (NAV R287/4, f.41r [29.10.1566]).

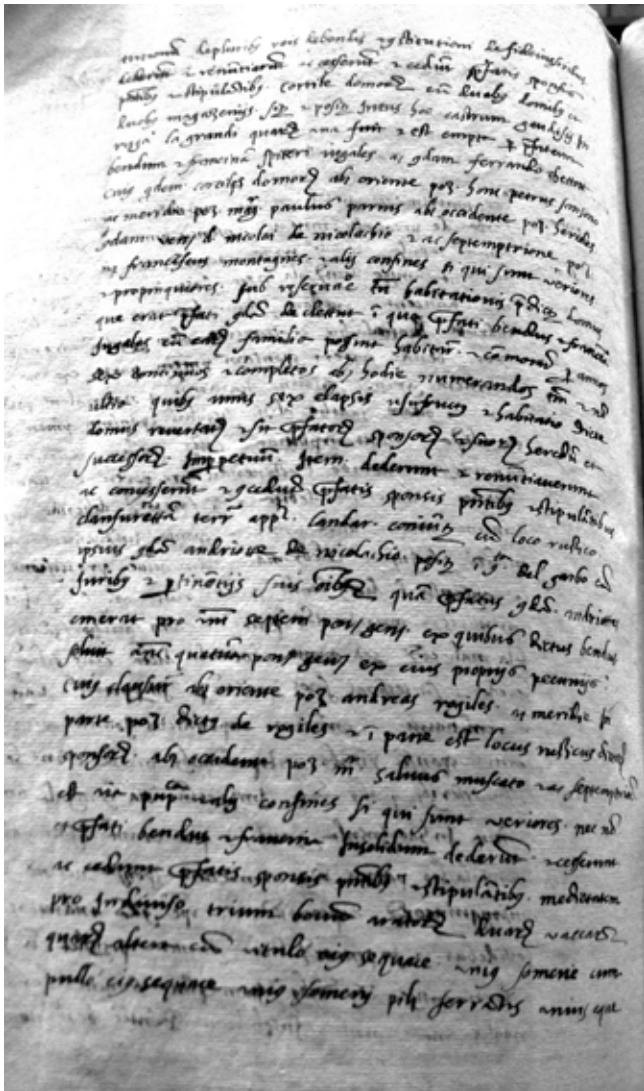
One can see transactions between the people who belonged to the more well-off families as well as between poorer families. Not only lands were leased out but also fountains, gardens, mills, and farmhouses. A case in point relates to Magnificus Matheo Falsono Secreto who on 19 October 1566 lent a fountain named *hainhabdum* (Għajn Habdun) to Dego de Joseppi for three years which started on the previous 15 August for 4 *uncie* per year (NAV R287/4, f.36r). The leasing of farmhouses, frequently with the surrounding lands, was a common occurrence as well. Such an instance is in a contract between Joanne Grima and Andreas Gatto. Grima leased out and gave in *gabella a locum rusticum* with its fields in Gozo in *ta samar* (Ta' Samar) for one year starting on

the day of the drawing up of the contract for the price of 3 *uncie* per year (NAV R287/4, f.242r [20.08.1568]), starting on the following 15 August. Greco was to pay 13 *salme* and 8 *tumini* of mixed grains per annum for this lease (NAV R287/4, f.204v [12.07.1568]).

## Hiring of People and Clothing

The hiring of people to work in the agricultural sector was also quite a common occurrence. Some people were hired for the harvesting period or else for a number of years with the pay usually being a mixture of money, cereals as well as food and clothing. Sometimes the wages were very low such as when Raynelio Machnne hired Gozimo de Amore on 18 February 1567 for the period of grain harvesting he agreed to pay him 12 *tareni* for the whole period (NAV R287/4, f.91r). However, there were better wages such as the hiring of Francisco Sammut, a Maltese, by Joanne Theobaldo, a Gozitan for three months starting on the day of the drawing up of the contract for the price of 16 *tareni* per month and the necessary drink (NAV R287/4, f.179r [30.06.1567]).

The acts under study contain few references to the sale of textiles and clothing between the local people. These acts describe clothing items which were decorated and which seemed to have pertained to the upper class of society who saw fashion as a sign of their social status. The transactions encountered are on a small scale usually with only one item sold. This is the case of a contract drawn up on 27 March 1567. Guarino de Plathamone sold to Josephus Rapa a women's mantle of common cloth, decorated with griffons and with a silver fastening for 6 *uncie* 16 *tareni* payable on the following 1 August (NAV R287/4, f.124v). Similarly, Jacobo Imbrogl of Gudie (Gudja) sold a dress of scarlet cloth decorated with five strips of black velvet and with decorated sleeves to Angelo Tabuni, of Siggiewi but living in Gozo, for 4 *uncie* (NAV R287/4, f.219r [28.08.1567]). The only exception is a contract of *debitum* in which Francisco Grima declares that he owes Joanne Sammut of Naxaro (Naxxar) 3 *uncie* 18 *tareni* for 12 *palme* of black coloured cloth (NAV R287/4, f.186r [17.07.1567]).



NAV R287/4, f.186v

## Corsairing Activities

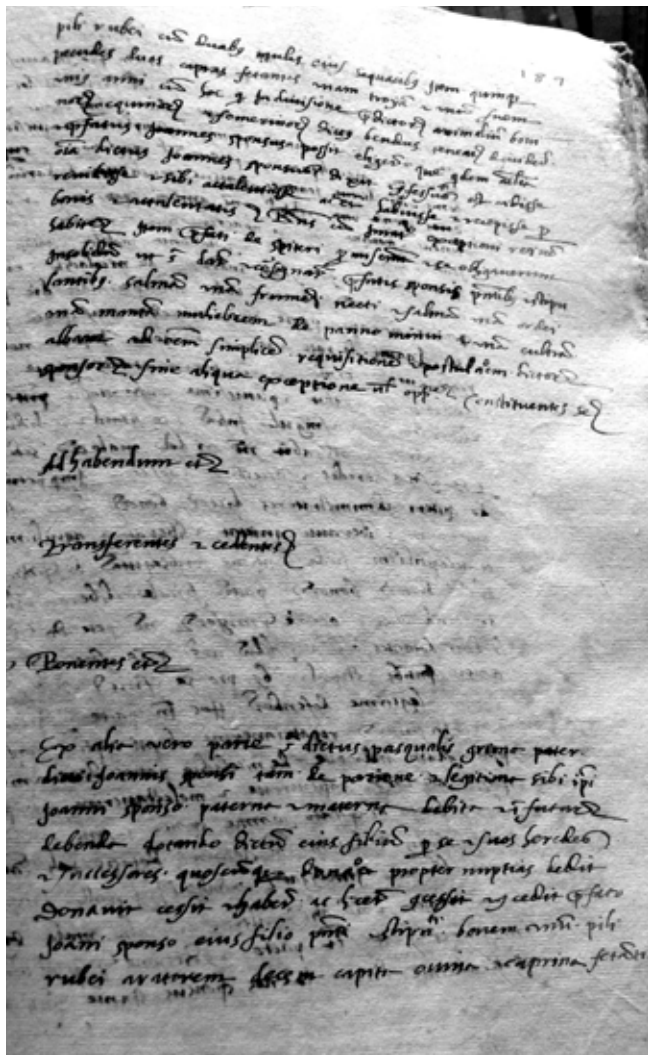
With the Maltese islands being surrounded by sea, there is no doubt that this body of water played a very important part in the life of the islanders. This is especially so with the arrival of the Knights of St John in Malta. During the sixteenth century, the Knights were involved, along with other Christian forces, in attacks directed at the Ottoman Empire as well as in the protection of Tripoli. The Knights had their galleys with characteristics that were ‘most suitable for the war of corsairs’ (Bono, 1993: 377). Thousands of Maltese people were employed on board these galleys and sailing ships of the Order with various kinds of duties (Bono, 1993: 384-5). Apart from working with the Order on the ships and in the dockyard, some Maltese had their own ships which they used both for trade as well as for corsairing purposes. The latter was done either through a formal declaration or by the

obtaining of letters of marque which authorised privateering expeditions in a private capacity (Bono, 1993: 388-389). Malta had a base for privateering expeditions and this attracted both Maltese and foreigners who practised the *corso* according to rules set out by the Order.

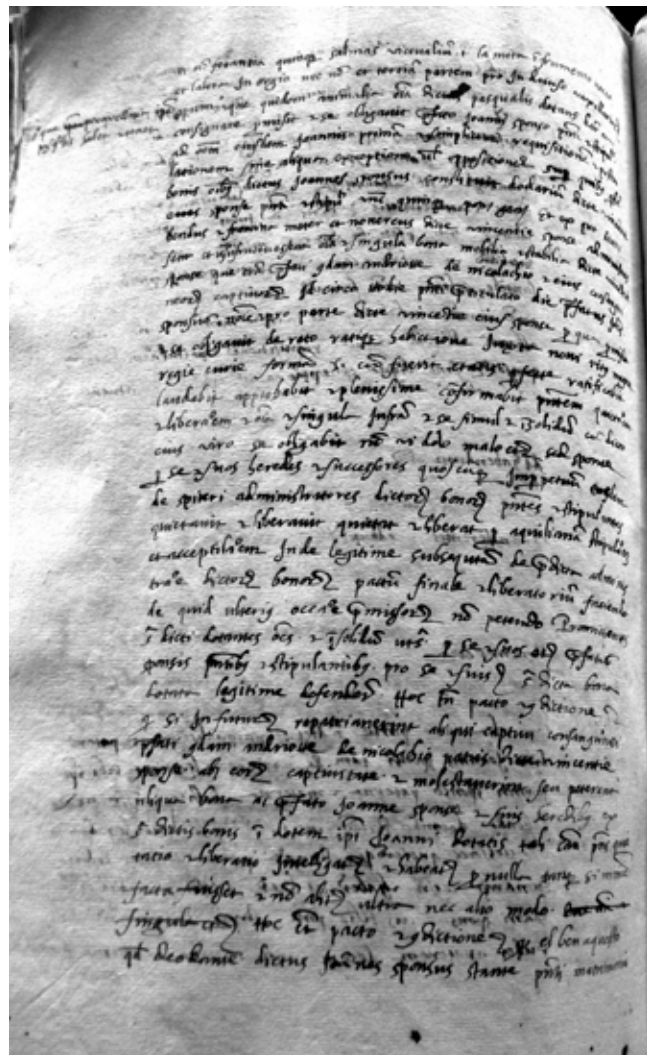
The records under review do not contain much reference to corsairing however there is an instance where a short narrative is available of what happened to Martin Mule who found himself the target of Muslim corsairing. In a contract drawn up on 20 July 1568, Johannes Haius, called *galtir*, of Gozo reported that a few days before, his partner Martin Mule had left the bay of Marsalfurn (Marsalforn) on a *fregata* named Santa Maria del Soccorso (del Securso) carrying fifteen hinnies of horses and asses, as well as two mules, for the Magnifico Antonio de Mazara, with the licence to export these animals. His final destination was to be Pozzallo but while they were on high sea, they met pirate galleys of the enemy. The patron of the ship escaped with the sailors on board the *scaffa* of the frigate leaving the frigate with the passengers on board in the bay of Cala di lo Corbo. However, the patron and the crew were captured by the enemy. The court of Gozo, thus, authorised Johannes Haius to act in order to recover the ship and redeem his partner who was held captive. In the contract, in front of notary Tomaso Gauci, Haius authorised Joannis Refalo as his procurator with full rights to go to Sicily and do whatever was necessary in order to try and recover the said ship and to liberate the said Martin Mule from captivity (NAV R287/4, f.208r).

## Sale of Ships

Another aspect of this seafaring side of the Maltese and Gozitans is seen in the sale of ships or shares in ships. One instance is the sale related to the previous contract. This is the sale of one-half of a frigate together with its *fragatina* armed with all the sails and furnishing needed to travel and which was at the time moored in the harbour of Malta by Johannes Haius to Martino Mule on 18 June 1568. This price was that of 103 gold *scudi* and 2 *tareni* which was to be paid in a year from the drawing up of the contract. The sale was done on the condition that whatever income was



NAV R287/4, f.187r



NAV R287/4, f.187v

made through the freight of the ship during this year was taken by Johannes while he was bound to safeguard the price to be paid by Martin Mule, the buyer (NAV R287/4, f.208r).

### Conclusion

Gozo in the mid-sixteenth century, as can be seen from the acts of notary Tomaso Gauci, was trying to rebuild itself from the devastation which fell upon it in 1551. Things moved slowly but steadily and almost fifteen years after this disastrous event one can see that the daily momentum was being restored.

The Gozitan society was one based on agriculture and land appears to have been the most important asset in such a society. One can see people from Malta, Gozo and Sicily mingling together and involving themselves in various contracts. The

population was divided between the landowning nobility and the peasants. However, unlike the rest of Europe, these were not cut off from each other and were frequently involved in the different kinds of transactions. The nobles were also involved in the importation of wheat from Sicily and in the corso which, when successful, yielded huge profits.

All this is known thanks to the notarial records which enable the historian to see beyond the general activities which took place on the island and help one focus on the lives of specific people in a particular place and time through the contract which they drew up in front of the notary. Furthermore, these records enable the researcher to see the basic procedures of contracts and also to discover certain unique events which happened in the lives of people during the sixteenth century in Gozo.

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# Wied il-Mielah and Wied il-Ghasri as Attractions for Rural Tourism<sup>1</sup>

JOANNA GRIMA

The valleys known as Wied il-Mielah and Wied il-Ghasri form part of Gozo's attractions associated with rural tourism, which is in turn associated with the island's cultural identity, lifestyle, traditional food and the natural environment.

## Rural Tourism in the Literature

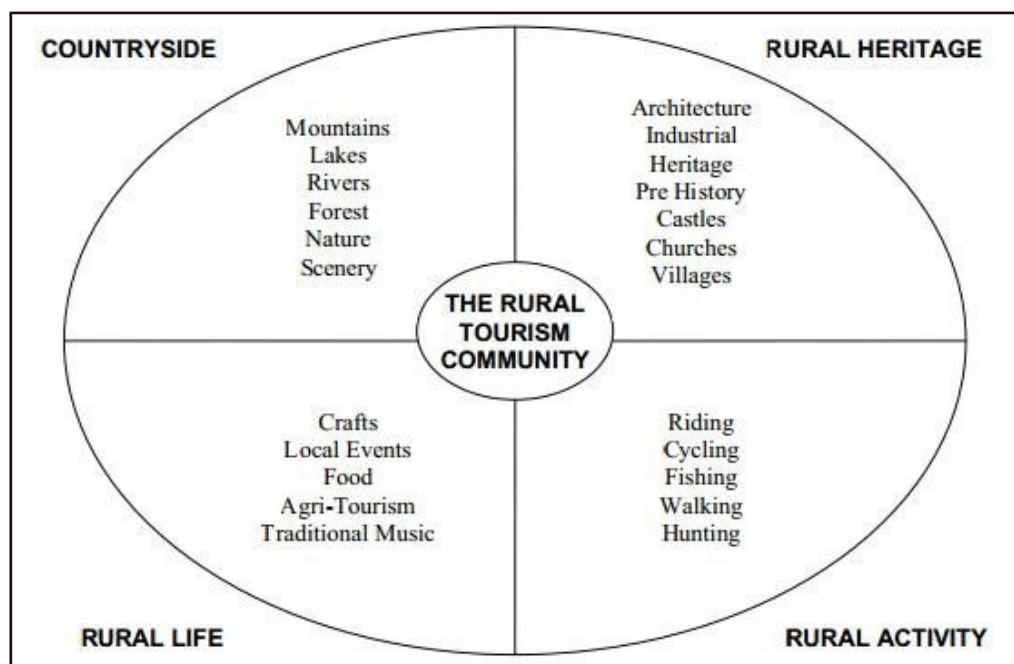
### *Defining rural tourism*

Rural tourism is defined by Lane (1994) as "tourism which takes place in the countryside". This definition is somewhat too simplistic and it raises a number of related questions such as the meaning of countryside and the activities associated with visiting the countryside.

A more elaborate definition of rural tourism is proposed by the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2005) as that which "... gives to the visitors a personalised contact, a taste of physical and human environment of countryside and as far as possible, allow them to participate in the activities, traditions and lifestyles of local people".

An alternative definition is given by Cabrini (2003), who segments rural tourism in five different perspectives, as can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure. 1: The Rural Tourism Concept (Source : Cabrini, L, WTO, 2003)



### *Activities in the countryside*

Thibal (1988) identified several activities that can be carried out in the countryside such as touring, water-related activities, aerial activities such as hot air ballooning and hand gliding, sporting activities, discovery type activities, cultural activities and health-related activities.

According to Whelan (1991), rural tourism can also be associated with other niche tourist activities including nature/agro-tourism, green tourism and ecotourism. Agro-tourism is often related to farm-based tourism, even though many other elements may relate to it such as museums, crafts and other cultural events. Green tourism, relates to tourism activities carried out in the countryside, where the tourists tend to be more inclined towards environmental awareness. Ecotourism is a type of nature tourism but emphasises the conservation of the environment and the awareness of the need for such conservation by the local communities.

<sup>1</sup> The research for this article was carried out as part of my dissertation for the Bachelor of Arts with honours in Tourism Studies degree at the University of Malta. The study used primary and secondary data. The primary data was obtained through different methods, mostly through semi-structured interviews with the various stake holders, including providers of services to tourists, the local councils and visitors of the valleys. Secondary data was obtained from published data sources (see references).

## *The concept of rurality*

The term countryside is defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 1994: 11) as: “Rural areas which comprise the people, land and other resources, in the open country and small settlements outside the immediate economic influence of major urban centres. Rural is a territorial or spatial concept. It is not restricted to any particular use of land, degree of economic health, or economic sector.”

Lane (1994) highlighted three main elements of rural tourism, which are the lower population density and relatively small size of settlements. Another characteristic relates to the traditional social structures, connected with the perception that rural areas represent what the urban areas have lost. If tourism is effectively managed it can be a major contributor for the upkeep of the traditional and cultural structures. Conversely, if not properly managed, tourism to rural areas can destroy



Wied il-Mielah.  
Photo courtesy of [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wied\\_il-Mielah\\_Window](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wied_il-Mielah_Window)

these traditional social structures (Sharpley and Sharpley, 1997). Therefore tourism development in traditional rural societies face different challenges and opportunities when compared to tourism in urban areas.

With regard to the rural areas in Malta, the National Rural Strategy Plan (RDP 2004-2006)<sup>2</sup> proposed the following definition:

1. A population density lower than 5000 persons per square kilometre
2. A minimum of 10% of the locality as agricultural land, and
3. A minimum 35% of the locality considered as outside development zone (ODZ)

When taking into consideration the above definition, one can conclude that 47 localities in the Maltese Islands can be considered as rural areas: 33 in Malta and 14 in Gozo. (Rural Development for Malta 2007-2013).

## *Benefits of rural tourism*

Rural tourism can generate economic benefits for the local residents, principally because it can create employment opportunities. In addition, such tourism can lead to economic diversification in the host territory due to increased demand for local produce and due to the various services required by tourists.

The social benefits of rural tourism include the instilment of greater appreciation of local produce, local crafts and local cultural assets.

There could also be environmental benefits which include the conservation and restoration of the physical environment and of old buildings (McAreavey & McDonagh, 2011).

There are however various economic concerns associated with rural tourism. These include the possibility of excessive reliance on part-time and seasonal employment opportunities, and the increased pressure on the infrastructure, including roads, and on public utilities, including water and electricity.

<sup>2</sup> Available at: < <https://secure2.gov.mt/MRRA-MA/file.aspx?f=15> > [Accessed on 15th February, 2013].

There are also social disadvantages, where this development might attract large crowds that may disturb the local way of life. There might also be changes in traditions and values because of the introduction of new ideas.

There may also be also environmental costs which arise as a result of the increase in pollution from cars and increased use of air conditioners and other devices which generate emissions.

It is therefore important for policy makers and tourism managers to maximise the benefits and minimise the disadvantages of rural tourism and this calls for the involvement of the main stake holders (McAreavey & McDonagh, 2011), including the local residents, the local councils, the business community and the government.

### **Rural Tourism in Malta and Gozo**

Due to the fact that the Maltese Islands are rather small with a high population density and have transitioned from an agrarian society to one based on industry and commercial services, a major transformation in the land-use patterns has occurred over time. The expansion of the urban settlements has led to several affects, including the creation of a metropolitan area surrounding the harbour regions, rapid rate of building developments in towns and villages often resulting in the reduction in green areas, with very high impacts on the physical environment and on the traditional landscape (Rural Development for Malta 2007-2013). The rural areas have, as a result, decreased their share of the Maltese landscape.

In spite of this, rural tourism in the Maltese Islands is considered as an important element in the tourist industry. This can be seen by the projects constantly being created by the Malta Tourism Authority to enhance the concept of rural tourism. The creation of the project ‘Malta Goes Rural – Sustaining Rural Tourism’,<sup>3</sup> indicates that



Wied il-Mielah window.  
Photo courtesy of [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wied\\_il-Mielah\\_Window](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wied_il-Mielah_Window)

the tourism authorities want to project Malta as not just a “sea and sun” destination. It is thought that villages in Malta and Gozo can give tourists the opportunity to experience the traditional patterns of the way of life of the Maltese and Gozitan people. One by-product of the attention being given to rural tourism is the upgrading of countryside walks both in Malta and Gozo. Some examples are the Dwejra Lines walk, the Baħrija walk, Ridge walk and in Gozo such as Ta` Ġurdan walk, Saltpan walk and Ramla walk. Moreover in order for the tourists to have a more enhanced experience, booklets illustrating walks such as the Saltpan Walk, Ta` Ġurdan Walk, Windmill Walk and others are available online at the portal of the Malta Tourism Authority.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The MaltaGoesRural project seeks to promote the Maltese rural heritage through the set up of walking trails and small scale infrastructural interventions with the main aim to improve accessibility in semi-rural, rural and natural areas. Targeted at the relational tourist and locals, the project activities seek to identify the pull factors that can strengthen the rural tourism product in Malta. Further information is available at: <http://www.mta.com.mt/page.aspx?id=294>.

<sup>4</sup> Available at: <http://www.mta.com.mt/index.aspx>.

The developing of rural tourism in Gozo is also supported by the Eco-Gozo campaign,<sup>5</sup> a project which has the objective that by the year 2020, Gozo will be developed into an eco-island, sustained by a loyal dedicated sustainable community. Several projects are associated with this campaign including the promotion of sustainable energy, construction of new gardens, reconstruction and rebuilding of rubble walls, the cleaning of valleys and the extension of forestation.

Rural tourism in the Maltese Islands was also given importance in the Tourism Policy Document for 2012-2016,<sup>6</sup> which aims to “develop a rural tourism policy which takes into account Gozo`s specificities and Gozo`s potential for this market”.

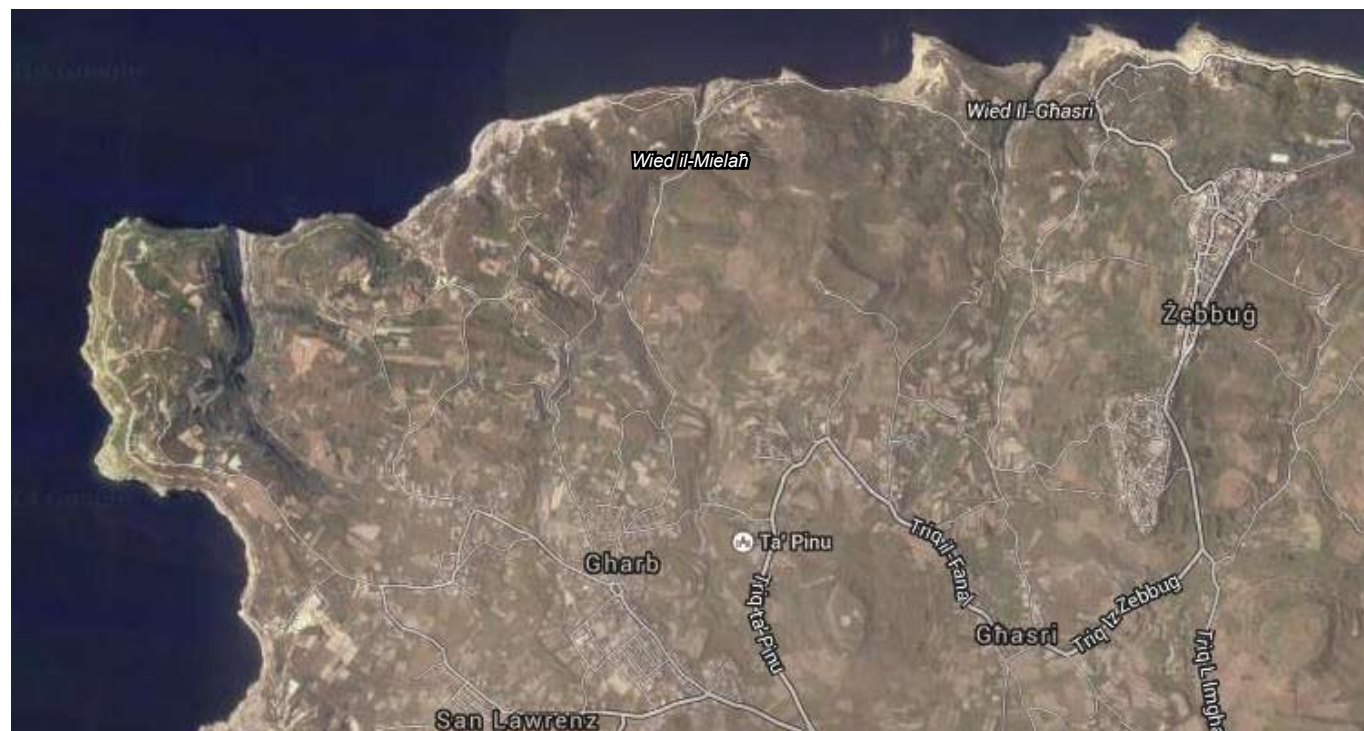
### The Valleys

Wied il-Mielah and Wied il-Ghasri have similar geomorphologic characteristics due to the fact that they are both narrow V-shaped valleys. Wied il-Ghasri starts from Ta` Dbiegi Hill, passes through Ghasri, Żebbug and Ta` Gurdan Hill. On the other hand Wied il-Mielah commences from the upland area of both Żebbug and Għammar.

Wied il-Mielah is over two kilometres long stretching to the coastal cliffs on the west areas of Gozo. It commences from beneath the Ta` Pinu Sanctuary. It is also one of the valleys of the eleven situated in the region of Għarb. This valley is located in a quiet and natural setting far from inhabited areas (Curmi, 2007). At the end of the valley one can find a large natural window.

The village of Għarb is part of a European Union project called European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN), which promotes sustainable tourism development. In the website<sup>7</sup> of the project entitled ‘Wied il-Mielah: Towards an ecologically and culturally sensitive, sustainable tourism’, Wied il-Mielah is described, and reference is made to the many rubble walls and to the flora and fauna to be found there. The website also refers to the restoration of the valley carried out by the local council thanks to the EU funding in an area that until recently was not seen as an important tourist attraction.

Over the years, mismanagement and lack of corrective measures at Wied il-Mielah have led to the degradation of this valley. Before the restoration, sewer mains ran through the valley and untreated



Wied il-Mielah and Wied il-Ghasri as seen on Google Maps (Available at: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Gozo,+Malta/> )

<sup>5</sup> Information about this campaign is available at: <http://www.ecogozo.com/>.

<sup>6</sup> Available at: <https://secure2.gov.mt/tsdu/tourismpolicy2012-2016>.

<sup>7</sup> <http://wiedilmelah.gharbnat.com/wiedilmelah2/background.html>.



sewage was released off the coast rendering this valley somewhat malodorous. In addition rubble walls were not taken care of and because of the rain and other pressures, these walls crumbled, leading to the loss of fertile soil and to the uglification of the place. The dams found in this valley were also degraded and lost their original purpose.

The main objective of this project was “Supporting Malta’s efforts to improve the tourist product on the Island of Gozo, by making it more competitive as a unique rural destination”. The rehabilitation and conservation of this Wied il-Mielah valley formed part of this project and consisted of two phases. The first phase was implemented by the aid of the EU funds under the Cohesion Policy for Malta in 2004-2006 and revolved around the environmental aspect of the valley. Such examples were the rebuilding of the rubble walls and also the clean-up of the valley.

In order to proceed to the second phase of this project, the Għarb Local Council managed to obtain additional EU funds. These funds, under the Cohesion Policy for Malta 2007-2013, covered 85% of the expenses for the entire project. In this phase initiatives were taken in order to turn this area into a site for sustainable tourism. Railing, security cameras powered by solar panels, signs, published material with regards to the heritage trail in Għarb, audio-visual equipment and also large observation binoculars were installed.

The other valley, known as Wied il-Ghasri, is very well known with divers due to the several underwater caves. Additionally the beach found at Wied il-Ghasri is the perfect location, for individuals searching for a quiet and relaxing swim. Another interesting element which is found at this beach is a cave with a drilled hole at its top. A windmill used to exist there to pump up sea water which was used to produce salt in the nearby salt pans. These salt pans give an added value to rural tourism in Gozo.

A legend states that the Holy Family passed through the area. On way of Wied il-Ghasri, there was a rock where the footprints of Jesus as a child, Joseph and Mary were said to exist. It was said also that the devil followed the Holy Family and left a big deep footprint a few steps away. On their way to the beach people and the children used to stop and measure their feet against the footprints of Jesus, Mary and

Joseph, but not against the devil’s because of the enormity of that footprint. These so called footprints of the Holy Family and of the devil can no longer be found due to road constructions (Attard, 2010). This legend and other legends which relate to the valley act as an added attribute to the experience of the tourists, giving a sense of mystery to this valley and thus creating another motive to visit the area.

## **Findings of the Research**

The main question of the research carried out by the present author was whether or not valleys contribute in attracting rural tourists to Gozo. For this purpose a survey was conducted with the respondents being eight private stake holders, 39 visitors to Wied il-Mielah (19 Maltese and 20 foreigners) and 39 visitors to Wied il-Ghasri (22 Maltese and 17 foreigners).

In response to the first question, all the respondents agreed that valleys contribute to rural tourism in Gozo, although these valleys are only a part, albeit an important one, of the many elements of rural tourism in Gozo.

The two questions that followed were intended to elicit information as to how the valleys are seen by the various stake holders and to assess whether these valleys are being promoted effectively. All the respondents recognised the potential of the valleys for the promotion of rural tourism in Gozo, although, unfortunately, in some instances a degree of mismanagement of the valleys was identified.

Promotion for Wied il-Mielah would seem to be adequate through the creation and publishing of brochures and also the effective direction signage leading to and within the valley. In the opinion of the respondents, Wied il-Ghasri could be promoted better, through, among other things, brochures about this valley.

## **Proposed Measures**

The study also put forward a number of recommendations relating to rural tourism in Gozo and to the two valleys in particular.

The main recommendation related to education of the local residents so as to foster a wider



understanding of the importance of rural tourism and of the two valleys under review. This could be done through the printing and distribution of brochures, television programmes and the use of social media.

Another recommendation related to the involvement of suppliers of services to tourists. It was recommended that there should be more consultation with such stake holders. Lack of consultation with the providers of tourism services can lead to lack of interest in decision-making and to lack of involvement by these stake holders.

It was also recommended that there should be training schemes for these stake holders in order to enable them to give the best experience possible to the rural tourists visiting Gozo. This could be done through short courses on rural tourism and the various ways in which to welcome rural tourists.

There should also be schemes and incentives involving farmers and other entrepreneurs who are interested in investing in rural tourism so that the niche tourist activities described above, in particular those identified by Whelan (1991), could be created.

Another recommendation related to destination branding, which is an important tool that can be used to attract rural tourists to Gozo. Gozo, branded as a rural destination, could help portray

a clear image of the island to potential visitors. Branding should be built on real attractions and facilities offered in the host territory.

The attractions to tourists visiting Gozo, would be enhanced if more country walks, with accompanying guidebooks were created. In addition farmers having a building in the countryside should be aided in order to create some type of facility offering local products to the tourists walking by. Due to the fact that planning restrictions exist in building facilities in green areas, the authorities could consider the benefits of such development in enhancing the rural experience in Gozo, given that such development is done in a sustainable manner.

An important recommendation related to the proper management of all the Gozitan valleys, including the further reconstruction of rubble walls so that fertile soil is preserved.

Destination signage should also be improved. Currently if one tries to enter Wied il-Mielah valley from Xwejini or from Żebbug one finds it difficult to arrive due to the lack of signage. Signage not only offers information about the direction but also acts as an advert for the place.

Likewise there should be more interpretation and information panels regarding the valleys, including the legends associated with such valleys.



Panoramic view of Wied il-Ghasri

Available at: <http://www.maltapanorama.com/portfolio/gozo-wied-il-ghasri-ref-pfm120173/>

## Conclusion

Gozo is an ideal destination for rural tourism and this is recognised by the Malta Tourism Authority and by the Ministry for Gozo through the Eco Gozo campaign.

Maintaining the natural characteristics of the rural areas in Gozo is very important as this is a niche area in Gozo, given that population density is much lower than it is in Malta and given that rural characteristics are to be found in most Gozitan localities. Rural tourism, involving traditional activities in the villages, the local gastronomy and all the accompanying cultural elements, if well organised, could constitute a major tourist attraction in Gozo. The valleys of Gozo are an important element in this regard.

As already argued, this requires involvement and collaboration by all the stake-holders involved. If these stake-holders benefit from rural tourism, more Gozitans will benefit either directly or indirectly, as tourism is an economic activity which has a high multiplier effect on the economy.

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# An Uncharacteristic Success

MIRIAM MUSCAT

In her unstinting endeavours to research, promote and revive the art of lacemaking in Gozo, Gozitan renowned lace expert and teacher Dr Consiglia Azzopardi, who is also the co-ordinator of the Lacemaking Programme at UGC, traced bobbin lacemaking in Malta to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, describing the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as ‘the glory days of lacemaking in Gozo’. This artisan trade contributed not so little towards the economic well-being of many large Gozitan families especially throughout the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For various reasons, interest in Maltese Lace declined in the post-war era. However, thanks to a number of initiatives amongst which



Paul Giordmaina - the man from Malta who learned lacemaking in Gozo.

the Lacemaking Programme at the UGC, the significance of lacemaking has in recent years been acknowledged as an important segment of our island’s artisan and artistic heritage that merits due attention in order that it may be conserved and preserved for future generations.

These initiatives have been supported by an encouraging number of students who have not only taken to their lace-making pillows to make doilies or lace borders, but have gone a step further into researching the subject.

## The Lacemaker from Malta

The weekly channel crossing, rain or shine, did not and still does not deter a number of students hailing from Malta, to follow the Lacemaking Programme at the Gozo Campus. One such student was Paul Giordmaina, 54 years old from Rabat Malta living in St Paul’s Bay. He says that lacemaking had always fascinated him from a very young age and that was why five years ago, after listening to an interview with Consiglia Azzopardi on a radio programme, Paul decided to apply for the course. Since then he has never looked back.

Of course he found it difficult at first, especially to master the technique involved in handling the bobbins, turning them the right way and the right number of times. However, the hardest hurdle was his over-eagerness to see the product finished, if possible overnight, due to his ingrained tendency to finish that which he starts. But this is far from being a prerogative of making lace. Obviously he was also discouraged on seeing more experienced workers, sitting next to him, agilely moving through the design while he could still not fathom from where to start and where to go. Nonetheless he persevered and after about six months he started to get his first rewards. He managed to get used to the stitches and techniques and during his first year he got through the samples of the



One of Paul's first impressive works - the two metre round tablecloth that cost him tears to part with.

different stitches and basic design drawings, as entailed by the requisites of the programme.

### **Paul's Most Significant Works**

In the summer recess he worked his first project – the border of a lace runner with simple stitches. From there he quickly passed on to other techniques characterising Gozo Lace such as the festuni and the Maltese cross. Paul describes the latter as an important emblem of Maltese lace and in fact he makes it a point to insert this authentic symbol in all the items he designs.

According to Dr Consiglia Azzopardi, arriving at this stage in this craft so prematurely was not an easy task, considering that before starting the course in Gozo Paul had never worked at bobbin lacemaking. He had tried his hands at *ganutell* some twelve years earlier, but, as he admits, he found lacemaking more challenging

and the end result more gratifying. Dr Azzopardi also emphasises that “every Saturday he would bring over from Malta not only the finished lace homework but also some season delicacies which he prided in cooking himself, to share with his classmates.”

Paul got through the three years of the programme under the constant guidance of his teacher and mentor. The theme chosen for Laceday 2010 was a pattern of a round tablecloth measuring about two metres in diameter based on an old pattern that knows its origins to the operations of ‘The House Industry’ (Casa Pia Industriale), promoted by Dun Giuseppe Diacono in Gozo more than 140 years ago. It presented the right challenge for Paul and, against his teacher's advice, he started to work on it in the summer holidays. But he was soon to find out that it was not an easy job. Paul had just finished his second year and the pattern included stitches and steps that still needed to

be covered during the third year of the course.

These various stitches also comprised a repetition of the Maltese Cross for a hundred times and several clusters of *moski*. Furthermore, the cutting and adding of bobbin pairs within the pattern were challenges in themselves for any lace worker, but most of all for a novice. In addition it also involved working six singular pieces of different designs that, when sewn together, would form the two-metre circular tablecloth which

any houseproud person would yearn to possess. Another remarkable feat was that of working the tablecloth in rayon silk. Working lace with such thread is an added hassle, because very quickly it unwinds and the bobbins keep spinning down to the floor instead of lying securely on the pillow!



Front of finished cape - different shades of silk thread worked with 280 pairs of bobbins.

It took Paul about seven months to finish the coveted tablecloth and in addition he still needed to work the pieces required by the course programme. This splendid tablecloth was first exhibited during Laceday of that year. He also presented it for the competition at 'Casa Rocca Piccola' and won a well merited first prize. Paul eventually sold the table cloth but he admits that he cried when he handed it over to the purchaser.

### Laceday at the UGC

'Laceday' organised on campus on an annual basis, is considered as an important day for the organisers and the participants of the Lacemaking Programme at UGC; it is an occasion for students to show their lace projects and portfolios. Every year a new design is prepared and working instructions are explained during a lecture. The theme chosen for the following year was a 'Cape-Collar', another design inspired by Diacono. This time the challenges were even greater because Paul tackled the 30cm wide pattern by working it in one piece using no less than 280 pairs of bobbins (five hundred and sixty bobbins in all!) Paul did not only accomplish this target in the dreaded rayon silk but he also used two colours, working the flowers in black over a beige ground. This inspiring work, earning him another merited prize in the annual lace event held at Casa Rocca



At the annual Laceday on Gozo Campus.

Piccola, is now permanently exhibited in a private lace museum at l-Ixtabi, in Għarb, Gozo.

Other works accomplished by Paul Giordmaina during the Certificate Course and based on his own designs include: two lampshades (with different designs on each side), a likeness of Żepp u Grezz, and a dress for an old wax figure of baby Jesus. Another achievement was the design and completion of a priest's alb, measuring 300cm x 40cm and made up of four intricately designed pieces including symbols, this time worked in linen thread. Such an intricate piece of lacework normally takes around twelve months to complete but Paul finished it in just under ten months. Obviously, together with the flounce, the alb required a set of matching cuffs and these were also finished in the stipulated time. Paul says he would do another one but admits he doesn't like repeating the same work, a fact which clearly reveals his creative and innovative nature.

### Paul's 'Dream Come True'

And, like any other artist, Paul dreams of lace. That is how one day he dreamt of creating a lace



Maltese icons Żepp u Grezz in lace.



Detail from the priest's alb designed and worked by Paul.

Christmas tree. A few months later he actually completed this work which represents his latest masterpiece – a lace Christmas tree, one metre high topped by an exquisitely designed 60cm angel. The appreciation of this unique work shown through the composition of the design, producing three-dimensional figures and shapes as well as the mixing of different coloured threads, can assuredly be better appreciated if one is more technically informed and instructed in this sphere.

Through this impressive technique, Paul's work gives life to a variety of Christmas icons such as a robin; a wrapped up present; a candle holder; Christmas crackers; an angel; a bell; holly leaves and berries; some of which can be spotted hung within their respective recesses. As if this hadn't been enough, Paul also inserted a four-sided crib, mounted on a stand within the domed tree. Each side represents a different nativity scene, including that with the three wise men and the waiting camels under a palm tree.

Another noteworthy feature on Paul's lace Christmas tree is the border running around the bottom of the tree-skirt; it consists of a row of green holly leaves interspersed with a myriad of red berries, which necessitated the threading and knotting of hundreds of little red glass beads!

The tree-top angel is a remarkable masterpiece in itself. In Paul's own words it contains a *terremot*



The Christmas tree in lace with its unique baubles.



The red beaded tree-skirt and green holly border.

*ta' moski* (a frightening number of *moski*). Working this type of stitch in the same design is greatly challenging since they need to be worked evenly along the pattern, so that they provide the appropriate effect in the end product. Gold inserts enrich this unique angel that constitutes a marvellous embellishment even on its own.







Front and back perspectives of the impressive angel - an artistic masterpiece in its own right.

Certainly more than one cherry on this wonderful iced cake, fruit of his imagination, which also lights up when the inserted lights are switched on. As one might say, Paul left no stone unturned in order to make his dream come true! Indeed fruit of hard work and determination.

Paul Giordmaina's Christmas tree was first exhibited at Malta Lace Day in October 2014. For its first Christmas, this unique work was also one of the exhibits included in the annual Christmas exhibition held at the Ministry for Gozo's Exhibition Hall.

It will definitely remain a treasured family jewel to be inherited by other Giordmaina generations. "This represents another milestone for me in this ongoing project that started a few years ago

thanks to the Lacemaking Programme offered at the University Gozo Campus. So I thank all those involved for having given me such an amazing opportunity."

### **Sharing Skills**

Throughout the duration of the three-year course Paul rarely missed crossing over to Gozo for his lessons. And even though he finished his course, he still often visits the Gozo Campus, especially when he has some news or a new project to share with the lacemaking group. In fact he admits that he would willingly repeat the course all over again. Undoubtedly this time it would not be so painstakingly hard for him to master the proper handling of the bobbins and adjusting the right thread!

“My biggest satisfaction does not only come from having learned to work Maltese lace but most of all from the fact that I have learned to design my own patterns. This course encouraged me to discover my talents for lacemaking. It definitely enhanced my skills in executing the various techniques with the bobbins but above all it helped me to discover my creativity and enabled me to effectively design my own works besides working those of others. My determination in accomplishing what I set my mind to has also been a fundamental element in this achievement” says Paul, with more than a glint of satisfaction emanating from his eyes.

Paul never hesitates to share his skills at lacemaking with others, even with those who sceptically claim that this is characteristically ‘a woman’s job’. Such comments do not affect his enthusiasm for this new-found interest at this stage of his life. On the other hand there are others who genuinely admire his skills and ask him for advice when they see him nimbly going through the scores of pairs of bobbins on his pillow. In fact he has become quite an attraction at the various shows in which he participates, and he admits that he feels proud of his works, especially when these compete very well with works of established and more experienced lacemakers in Malta and Gozo.

### **Paul’s advice**

Paul put forward some recommendations that certainly deserve to be aired, “The teaching of Lacemaking should be highly promoted because it would be a shameful pity for this important

aspect of our heritage to be left to die.

For me the Maltese Cross and *moski* represent true Maltese lace so they should constitute a fundamental element in the conservation of our inherited traditions. I wanted to be able to work the Maltese Cross from as early as my first lesson, but my teacher was right – I had to work my way up step by step until I could proudly master the technique, and that is how I faced my first challenge.

I don’t recall having seen, anywhere on the Maltese islands, a monument representing a lacemaker at work. Perhaps it would be more fitting for such a monument to be placed in a public spot on Gozo,” he ends up smilingly, perhaps already envisaging how this other dream could come true.

While congratulating Paul for his success, the UGC’s Lacemaking Programme may rightly claim that discovering exceptional students like Paul would surely augur well for the lacemaking industry in Malta. Primarily it would definitely facilitate the reinstatement and conservation of bobbin lacemaking as an important element of our islands’ heritage in the near future.

Miriam Muscat is a Library Assistant at the University Gozo Campus Library.

# Fifty Years Ago – The Storm that took Gozo by Surprise

GEOFFREY G. ATTARD

## Introduction

The year 1964 will continue to be remembered in Maltese history as the year in which the Maltese Islands were given their independence from Britain and became a sovereign nation, one of the many British colonies to have done so during the era of the so-called ‘dismantling’ of the empire. Ten years later Malta became a republic.

Less than a month before the granting of Maltese independence, the Maltese Islands experienced one of the harshest storms ever in its history. It was actually Gozo – the sister island – and the second largest of the Maltese archipelago which was struck in the worst of manners. The night between Wednesday the 26<sup>th</sup> and Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup> August is still fresh in the memory of many Gozitans who although in their sixties, seventies or eighties will never forget what they went

through on that weary night. An attentive look at the newspapers of Friday the 28<sup>th</sup> of August 1964 provides the reader or researcher with invaluable information about the course of events that took place on that dreadful night when Gozo was taken by surprise and the small island suffered up to a quarter of a million sterling worth of damage.

## The Media Coverage

The daily English newspaper *The Times of Malta* as well as *Il-Berqa* covered the event in their main pages and the event continued to attract attention even weeks after it happened. The researcher who goes through the succeeding issues of both newspapers in the early September issues will come across ample information about the horrible night of Wednesday the 26<sup>th</sup> of August. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of this sad event, it is worthwhile to look at the event as



The house in Kerċem where Luigi Vella lived at the time of the storm of 1964.

well as its repercussions on the people of Malta and Gozo with special attention to the inhabitants of Gozo since it was they who had to face the consequences. A Staff Reporter of *The Times of Malta* for the issue of Friday the 28<sup>th</sup> of August began his report by saying that ‘Wednesday/Thursday night was a terrifying experience for the Gozitans, when a heavy thunderstorm struck the islands. Torrential rain fell without respite from 10.30 p.m. on Wednesday to 4.30 a.m. on Thursday’.

Later on, the same reporter provides the readers with background information on the weather conditions in Europe when he writes: ‘Airline planes were delayed over three hours yesterday owing to storms for over parts of Europe. A night flight which was scheduled to arrive in Malta at 1.10 a.m. yesterday touched down one hour-and-a-half later’. What followed in the report gives

an inkling of the terrible weather conditions of that particular night: ‘It landed a passenger who was so terrified and shocked by the thunderstorm, which the plane had flown through, that oxygen had to be administered’. Although storms are characteristic in late August through September in the area where the Maltese Islands are situated, the storm at the end of August 1964 was of unique dimensions as these media reports clearly show.

### Impacts on Marsalforn and Xlendi

Marsalforn and Xlendi, both popular summer resorts for locals as well as for foreigners, were worst hit. Motor-cycles and vans in Marsalforn were swept out to sea due to the floods. *The Times of Malta* referred to Dr. J. Pace, popularly known as Ray Ritardo, a pop-singer, whose car was swept away at Marsalforn. The floor of a cafe known as Il-Began caved in. This particular place was very popular among the Maltese who used to spend their summers at Marsalforn.

A Michelangelo Saliba who also resided at Marsalforn almost drowned together with his family had he not been helped by his neighbours. At Żebbuġ, a house was struck by lightning. Many trees were uprooted and seacraft on the slipway at Xlendi and Mġarr ix-Xini were swept out to sea.

I find it strange that Mgr Anton Gauci does not refer to the storm in his book *Pajjiżi Taħt l-Ingliżi* (1993) in which he provides a detailed outline of the history of Gozo for the past century and a half.



A plaque commemorating a new water collecting system put in place in Kerċem in memory of Luigi Vella who died as a result of the storm.

The main roads leading to Xlendi and Marsalforn were closed to the public due to the damage caused by the great amount of rainfall.

### **‘Il-Menuna’: A Life Lost at Sea**

The saddest event that took place during the storm was the death of Wigi Vella, an 82-year old man from Kerċem in Gozo. The man, who co-incidentally happens to be the paternal grandfather of Mgr Dr Joe Vella Gauci of Victoria, was swept away at sea from his house in Għajn Tuta Street. The house which was situated in a corner facing the Kerċem Primary School on one side and overlooking the valley that leads to both the Lunzjata and Xlendi valleys on the other, was severely damaged; in fact part of this house collapsed due to the downpour. It is believed that this happened at about 3.00 a.m. when the man was asleep. The police reckoned that he was swept out to sea even miles away from the coast because the body was missing for many days and was only found a relatively long time after.

*Il-Berqa* did not agree on the age of Wigi Vella; the Friday the 28<sup>th</sup> issue of this newspaper, written in Maltese, reported that Vella was 78 years old. It did report however that Wigi lived with his son who had advised his father to sleep on the first floor rather than on the ground floor, a piece of advice that was unfortunately not heeded.

*Il-Berqa* also reported that much of the street decorations for the Għajnsielem titular feast of Our Lady of Loreto was heavily damaged and that the arch in Apparition Square in the same village collapsed.

The big wall that had been built next to the Silver Jubilee Ground in order to create a parking space was

destroyed as was the wall at the Victoria Terminus in Main Gate Street known as *Taħt Putirjal*.

At Xlendi Bay, thirty Boy Scouts from England who were camping in the area, had to abandon the site without collecting their belongings; they found refuge in the Police Station of the locality. In the same locality the St Patrick’s Hotel suffered great damage.

Marjanu Vella, a local farmer lost one hundred chickens and fifty rabbits, according to *Il-Berqa* which gave prominence to the event by dedicating half of its front page to the storm and carried also a photo.

### **An Unforgettable Event**

The storm of August 1964, or the ‘maltempata li ħadet lill-Menuna’ as it is often still referred to by many a Gozitan until this very day, is history for most people. However it is still alive in the memory of those who experienced it. For the young generation it is an event that can only be experienced pictorially by photography.

The 1964 storm can easily be referred to as one of the main sad events of the last half a century, ‘the storm that took Gozo by surprise’.

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.

# Gozo Tourism: Figuring the Figures

JOE MUSCAT

## Introduction

The regular announcements of increases in commuters and vehicles on Gozo Channel ferries are to be considered as benefiting the Gozo Tourism industry. The number of 4,395,105 passengers ferried between the two islands during 2013 is also partly confirmed by a registered increase of 6% in Maltese resident arrivals in Gozitan Hotels, Aparthotels and Guesthouses during 2013. The absence of relative statistics precludes the establishment of any similar benefits with regards to the self-catering sector.

## Different Types of Passengers

In order to properly and objectively evaluate the effect of this traffic on the Gozitan tourist industry, the Gozo Channel figures have to be disaggregated in a way that distinguishes between the type of passengers that use the company's services. Figures available from other sources show that during the same year 843,630 tourists staying in Malta visited Gozo for a day trip. It is also known that 147,600 foreign tourists stayed for one night or more in an establishment

falling under one of the various types of holiday accommodation available on Gozo (this figure represents 9% of the total tourist arrivals in Malta during 2013). The number of day trippers together with that of the foreign tourists who visited Gozo, represent 1,982,460 total 'passenger crossings' for 2013. This figure is arrived at by multiplying the number of day trippers together with that of foreign tourists by two.

Who are the remaining 2,412,645 passengers who commuted between the two islands during the year under review? NSO statistics show that 38,646 Maltese residents crossed over to Gozo and stayed for one or more nights in Gozitan Hotels and/or Guesthouses. Then again, due to lack of statistical data, this figure does not include Maltese residents who stayed in self-catering accommodation on Gozo that comprises both apartments as well as the more requested farmhouses. This figure represents another 77,292 passenger crossings.

Recent data also shows that approximately 1,500 Gozitan workers commute between Gozo and Malta and vice versa on a daily basis. On the



Gozo Channel ferry crossing.

assumption that these workers cross over five days a week to Malta and back, it turns out that these represent another 780,000 annual passenger crossings.

Another sector includes around 1200 Gozitan students who during 2013 were following courses at the University of Malta, MCAST, and ITS. Although many of these do not commute on a daily basis, there are some who do so and others who cross over once or twice a week. On average, calculated on a 37 week basis, passenger crossings related to this sector could amount to about 177,600.

Cumulatively, commuters falling under the above mentioned sectors, comprising foreign day trippers, foreign and Maltese tourists who stayed in Hotels and Guesthouses, Gozitan workers and students add up to a total of 3,017,352 passengers or almost 68% of the total number of passengers ferried by Gozo Channel Company vessels during 2013.

On a sectorial basis, the percentage relative to those foreign tourists who spent one or more nights in Gozitan accommodation properties would work out to 295,200 passenger crossings, which together with the 77,292 passenger crossings of Maltese tourists add up to 8.4% of total crossings for that year. On the other hand, foreign day trippers accounted for 1,687,260 passenger crossings equivalent to 38% of total crossings.

### Other Commuters

It is presumed that the remaining 32% (1,377,753) of crossings, relate to the transport of merchandise by Gozitan and Maltese businesses together with Gozitans who commute between the islands for various purposes including health reasons, business, shopping, leisure and other needs, as well as Maltese residents who stayed on Gozo for more than one night in the self-catering accommodation establishments as well as Maltese residents who own their second property on Gozo. Given the existing published data, it is impossible to identify the number of passengers comprising each of these categories.

The latter category represents a trend that has been gaining ground in Gozo during recent years. It relates to an increasing number of Maltese residents who have purchased property in Gozo and frequently cross over to spend weekends on the smaller island. This is another segment that has definitely resulted in a substantial increase in the number of ferry passengers. It must be mentioned that even though these figures do not have a direct effect on the Gozitan tourist accommodation sector, it does positively affect the restaurants sector as well as the retail and other services sectors.

The table shows the percentage distribution of passengers crossing to and from Gozo, where the category “others” which amounts to 31.35%, comprises various categories of passengers as explained above.

Type of Visitors	Crossings	%
Stay-over foreign tourists	295,200	6.7%
Stay-over Maltese visitors	77,292	1.8%
Foreign day-tripper tourists	1,687,260	38.4%
Gozitan workers	780,600	17.7%
Students	177,000	4.0%
Others	1,377,753	31.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,395,105</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### Conclusion

The statistical data relating to the Gozo Channel crossings needs to be suitably disaggregated in order to assess the impact of these increases on the Gozitan tourism sector. One augurs that with the recent opening of a branch office of the National Statistics Office in Gozo, figures related to Gozo Channel passenger crossings may be more appropriately categorised thus enabling better interpretation of data. This information will be of major benefit to researchers and operators in the tourism sector, and in addition, will shed important light on the impact of tourism on the economic and social development of Gozo.

Joe Muscat is the CEO of the Gozo Tourism Association.



# Ta' Sannat

PHILIP VELLA

## Geography and Topography

Located in the southern region of Gozo, Ta' Sannat is a terraced village spread over an area spanning from the nearby village of Munxar to the small secluded bay of Mġarr ix-Xini. Coastal cliffs stretching from Ras in-Newwiela to Tal-Bardan form the southernmost limit not only of the village itself but also of the island of Gozo.

Mġarr ix-Xini and Sabbara valleys to the east of the village are host to a number of cultivable terraced fields. But more fields occupy areas previously exploited for their good globigerina stone, for which the Ta' Sannat quarries were much renowned before this activity shifted elsewhere. Until not so distant times, in fact, the Ta' Sannat globigerina stone provided the livelihood for the majority of the locals who toiled not only in quarries but also in lime-kilns which were also to be found in a relatively great number in the village.

## Earliest Inhabitants

It appears that, already in prehistoric times, the location looked attractive and suitable for settlement purposes to the extent that a prehistoric community established itself at Ta' Ċenċ where it also set up its own cultic centre in the heart of the plateau. Structural remains datable to the Mġarr phase



Coastal cliffs stretching from Ras in-Newwiela to Tal-Bardan form the southernmost limit not only of Sannat but also of the island of Gozo.

[Image courtesy of: [www.visitgozo.com](http://www.visitgozo.com) Accessed November 2014]

(3800-3600 B.C.) and known as Ta' l-Imramma still survive to this day as if to bear witness to these people's religious beliefs and their worship practices.

It appears that the same plateau remained in occupation throughout subsequent prehistoric phases as well. During the earliest stages of the Bronze Age (2400-700 B.C.) – precisely, during the Tarxien Cemetery phase (2400-1500 B.C.) – the Ta' Ċenċ plateau hosted what may have been burials under the form of what we know as 'dolmens'. Other forms of activity, whether during prehistoric times or in later periods, are evident by way of cart-ruts which can be seen scattered all over the plateau.



In Phoenician, Punic, and Roman times, agricultural activity around nearby Mġarr ix-Xini Valley thrived. Agricultural products, such as olives and grapes, were processed into commodities like

Mġarr ix-Xini lies to the east of Ta' Sannat. [Image courtesy of: <http://www.visitgozo.com/> Accessed November 2014]



Wied Sabbara.

[Image courtesy of Stanley Borg. Available at: <http://mt.worldmapz.com/> Accessed November 2014]

oil and wine which were then, much in demand, while any surplus may have possibly been exported too. The peasants or labourers tilling the terraced fields are likely to have lived in the same area where, to satisfy their religious needs, they also erected a small shrine at Għar ix-Xiħ overlooking Mġarr ix-Xini Bay, then serving also as a small harbour from where they could export their surplus products.

In recent years, this agricultural landscape and the associated shrine at Għar ix-Xiħ have been subjected to a detailed archaeological survey and study, involving excavations, which are already yielding interesting results, dating back human activity there as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. This survey, excavations, and study form part of Mġarr ix-Xini Valley Regional Park Project undertaken as a joint initiative by the Ta' Sannat and Xewkija local councils.

Ta' Sannat Parish Church of St Margaret.  
[Image courtesy of: [gozodiocese.org](http://gozodiocese.org)  
Accessed November 2014]



Other areas of the village of Ta' Sannat may have been likewise devoted to agricultural activity but quarrying might have constituted a stronger focus. Quarrying activity in Ta' Sannat, in fact, occurred in ancient times too and this particular activity or industry survived until relatively recent times (mid-20th century) when, due to modern developments in this sector, the quarries at Ta' Sannat could not accommodate these same developments and consequently had to close down.

### **On the Way to Becoming a Parish**

Not much is known about human occupation and activity in the area in later times. The village community is likely to have been relatively small while its occupations would be expected to have remained primarily agricultural and pastoral. To safeguard their agricultural produce, they erected purposely-built structures, two of which might have been the surviving towers Tal-Hofra near the village main square and Ta' Ġjammajr overlooking Tal-Gruwa. A few chapels characterised this typically Gozitan rural landscape and one of them – dedicated to St Margaret of Antioch (an early 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. martyr) – enjoyed enough devotion that it was to become the parish church when this locality was established as a parish on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1688, along with four other new parishes.

Having been elevated to the status of parish, the village had its own parish priest who initially resided in a fine town-house in one of the streets behind the church until he moved residence to the current one adjacent to the present church.



Panoramic view of Sannat.

[Image courtesy of: [http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sannat\\_\(Gozo\)](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sannat_(Gozo)) November 2014]

Until it reached its present form, the church underwent several structural alterations. The chapel of St Margaret was already in existence in 1615 but soon after it became a parish in 1688, it was considered to be too small and unsuitable to serve the spiritual needs of its increasing parish population. The chapel was consequently enlarged in 1718 and consecrated on 19<sup>th</sup> October 1755. Structural alterations were to be undertaken for a second time during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, bringing the church much into its present form. These alterations were concluded with the building of the dome in 1910.

### **Life and Fate of the Villagers**

Throughout the course of time, the inhabitants of Ta' Sannat shared, more or less, the same fate as the rest of the Gozitans. They suffered hardship in times of famine or shortage of employment opportunities and were not spared any plagues which hit the island from time to time such as the cholera epidemic of 1837 or that of 1865. Wars left their mark too. The village was in fact, to suffer most during World War II when it had the largest number of casualties in Gozo, particularly during a very severe attack it was subjected to on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 1942.

In post-war times, many of the village's younger generation villagers were compelled to seek job opportunities abroad, particularly in Australia, America and Canada in order to sustain their families whom they often left behind. Many of them prospered and were able to return back and re-settle here.

In recent decades the economic scenario has changed drastically. The previous quarrying industry in Ta' Sannat shifted elsewhere on the island while few relied any longer on agriculture for their living. New job opportunities had to be sought beyond the confines of the village.

Today, the village has its own local council with a mayor and four councilors elected from among the village population every three years. The council undertakes a good number of initiatives for the benefit of the village community. Recently, the council inaugurated new premises from where it could function and better carry out its administration and work at the service of the village community.

Philip Vella is the Mayor of Sannat.

# Book: Imxi ftit passi mieghi: Għażla ta' Poeżiji 1973-2013

Joe Axiaq

Melbourne: Published by Author, 2014, pp. 88.

REVIEWED BY GEOGGREY G. ATTARD

Joe Axiaq is one of the Maltese poets who has made a name for himself on the Australian continent where allegedly the Maltese community is more numerous than the population in the Maltese islands. *Imxi ftit passi mieghi* is the third anthology of poems by this poet born in Żebbuġ, Gozo in 1954. The previous two are *Bejn Vjaġġ u Ieħor* published in 1979 and *Irjiegħ* published in 1987.

Axiaq, who emigrated to Australia back in 1974, fell in love with the Maltese language when he was still a student. As soon as he arrived in Australia he involved himself in the main telecommunications company on the continent where he made a name for himself. He wrote many novels and poems most of which he read first on the redifusion and then on the radio. He also published many articles of a cultural and a historical nature. This latest anthology of his contains poems he composed between 1973 and 2013. As he wrote in the introduction of the book, the poems he published were chosen from many others which he wrote over the years. He divides the anthology into three sections which do not necessarily have a particular or distinct character but which are more or less autobiographical in inspiration.

The poet feels inspired by various themes and aspects from his own past life and from the activity that goes on around him. There is no doubt that nostalgia plays an important role in his poetry. Axiaq was born in Żebbuġ, a picturesque village of the island of Gozo overlooking the scenic bays of Xwejni and Marsalforn, which are extremely popular with the local people especially during the summer months. Żebbuġ in the late fifties and early sixties must have been quite primitive in character; it is still an enchanting locality to this very day and has grown in its popularity among the people of the sister island of Malta and also with foreigners who choose it as their second home. The poems vary so much in their themes that it is hardly possible to divide them according to subject. However the



autobiographical aspect is quite strong. At times he is also inspired by the cosmopolitan character of his second home which is the city of Melbourne. I admire the way he refers to his native Gozo and to his adopted country at the end of the introduction; he calls Gozo 'arti' literally translated to 'my land'; then he proceeds to call Australia 'pajjizi' which can be loosely translated to 'my country'. I wonder which of them would be considered the dearest by the poet but perhaps the art of poetry itself has taught the poet to avoid the comparative altogether. After all home is where one makes it, as the proverb goes.

The poet has kept himself abreast even with the latest changes in the writing of the Maltese language as decided by the Kunsill tal-Malti since I noticed various words which were faithful to the latest developments in Maltese orthography. In the world of the internet Australia is not as far away as it seems on a world-map and with this latest publication of his, Gozo-born poet Joe Axiaq immortalises once again his love for his native country, the land which imbued him with love for prose and poetry.

# Book: Il-Viżta Appostolika ta' Monsinjur Pietru Dusina f'Għawdex fis-Sena 1575

Translated into Maltese by Anton F. Attard  
Gozo: Published by Author, 2014, pp. 128.

REVIEWED BY MAURICE CAUCHI

Very little is known about the condition of Gozo after the Turks carried the vast majority of Gozitans into exile in Turkey in July 1551. It is therefore of considerable interest to be able to see what was going on in those days through the eyes of a visitor to the Island, a personage no less than the Apostolic Visitor, Mgr Pietro Dusina who arrived in these islands in July 1574. It is thanks to his report that we have available a wealth of information about not only the condition of the church, but also of the general, rather impoverished situation which affected both clergy and flock. All this information was available in various archives, but it is only now that it has been translated from Latin and made available to the public by Mr Anton F. Attard, B.A. This book, titled *Il-Viżta Appostolika ta' Monsinjur Pietru Dusina f'Għawdex fis-Sena 1575*, provides us with a wealth of information about the situation existing over four centuries ago.

The book is subdivided into four sections. The first section deals with the description of the state of the churches within the 'Kastell' itself. It is surprising to see the number of small churches that existed within that perimeter, most of which were found to be below standard and had to be condemned. On the other hand, the main church itself (dedicated to the Ascension of the Blessed Mary) was still in reasonable shape and had a considerable amount of *object d'art* and precious works of arts which somehow escaped the greed of the invading Turk.

The second section redeals with the various churches outside the *Cittadella*. This section gives us a wealth of information about the large number of chapels scattered around the island, a witness to the religiosity of the population and their need to visit these outlying churches. After the invasion, most of these chapels fell into disuse and had to be condemned. One striking characteristic was the absence of wooden doors to these chapels. Apparently, the severe lack of wood on the island made wooden doors a very collectable item, and these were among the first that went missing!

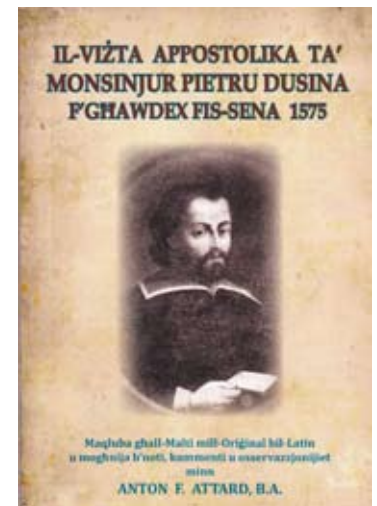
A third section gives us a glimpse of the interrogation process which the clergy has to go through to ensure that they had been adequately qualified to perform their work amongst their flock. What comes out very clear is the degree of ignorance and ill-preparedness of the

clergy, most of whom could hardly read and write. Poverty among them was of course rampant, seeing that their flock had all but disappeared following the Turkish invasion. Their grasp of their religion wasn't very more impressive – one of them (Fra Antonio Agius) even admitting that he was a heretic!

The final section gives us a glimpse at the inventory of the main church (now the Cathedral) inside the castle, emphasising that all was not lost to the invading Turk.

Of interest is the range of surnames which existed at the time which do not appear any more within the Gozitan community, eg: Chireno, Platamone, Infanatino, Deapapis, Deobaldo (Thobaldo). This book is valuable in that it makes it possible for the average reader to obtain information about aspects of life in the immediate aftermath of the decimation of the Gozitan population which took place in 1551. It confirms that the island had fallen into hard times when even doors from abandoned churches were filched to cook one's dinner.

This book should be read for its historical interest relating specifically to a period of history that has not been readily available to the general reader. As the author remarks, the number of persons capable of reading Latin is fast disappearing, and with it the ability to make sense of these important documents.



# Recent Activities at the University of Malta - Gozo Campus

JOSEPH CALLEJA

## Courses Offered at the University Gozo Campus

In October the University of Malta offered once again the course leading to the Diploma in Commerce. This course aims to introduce students to Economics, Management and Accountancy, Tourism Studies and Information Technology. It also prepares them for further studies leading to the Bachelor of Commerce degree.

Other courses running at the Gozo Campus are: Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Leadership, Diploma in Commerce, Bachelor of Commerce, and Diploma in Facilitating Inclusive Education.

Three other course are being offered via videoconferencing, namely the Master in Business Administration - Executive, Higher Diploma in Public Accounting and Finance and a Master of Science in Sustainable Energy.

The Gozo Campus is now equipped with four videoconferencing systems and these enable Gozitan students to follow the lectures directly from Gozo without the need to cross over to Malta.

In October a certificate course in 'Maltese Lace Making - Advanced Level' commenced. The course is offered by the Programme of Lace Making at the Gozo Campus. This course, which is spread over one academic year, enables the participants to learn the techniques of Maltese lace on a professional basis as well as the history of Maltese lace and the technical drawing of patterns required in the craft

Professor Joe Friggieri, Pro Rector for Gozo, delivered a series of lectures on basic philosophical problems as part of the programme offered by the University of the Third Age (U3E). Over fifty elderly people attended these lectures.



Professor Joe Friggieri delivering one of the U3E lectures at the University Gozo Campus.

## Examinations at the Gozo Campus

Once again almost all Gozitan students following courses at the Msida Campus were given the opportunity to sit for their Supplementary examinations directly in Gozo. Such examinations were held during September.

## Graduation of University Gozo Campus Students

During the recent graduation ceremonies held at the University of Malta, a number of Gozitan students graduated after having successfully completed courses at the University Gozo Campus.

Seven students obtained their B. A. degree, after following a five year course at the Gozo Campus. The graduates are Dorianne Borg, Natalina Debrincat, James Formosa, Alison Meilak, Laura Rapa, Andrew Said and Grace Vella. The subject

areas in which they graduated are Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology.

Seven other students graduated with a BA (Hons) in Criminology after following a five-year course. The graduates are Miriam Farrugia, Deborah Grech, Maria Grech, Noel Mercieca, Eve Mompalao, Joseph Xerri, and Mario Xiberras.

Charmaine Bigeni, Marybeth Cauchi, Joseph Debono, Micahel Vella and Aaron Zammit obtained their Diploma in Commerce after following a two-year course.

Fifteen Gozitans were awarded the University's certificate of proofreading in Maltese and the proofreading warrant from the National Council for the Maltese Language, after completing the first one-year part-time Maltese proofreading course held at the Gozo Campus.



The group of Philosophy students who followed the B.A. course at the University Gozo Campus between 2009 and 2014, with Professor Joe Friggieri, Pro-Rector for Gozo (Centre).



The graduates in B.A. (Hons.) in Criminology.



The graduates in Diploma in Commerce.





The group of students who were awarded the University's certificate of proofreading in Maltese and the proofreading warrant from the National Council for the Maltese Language.

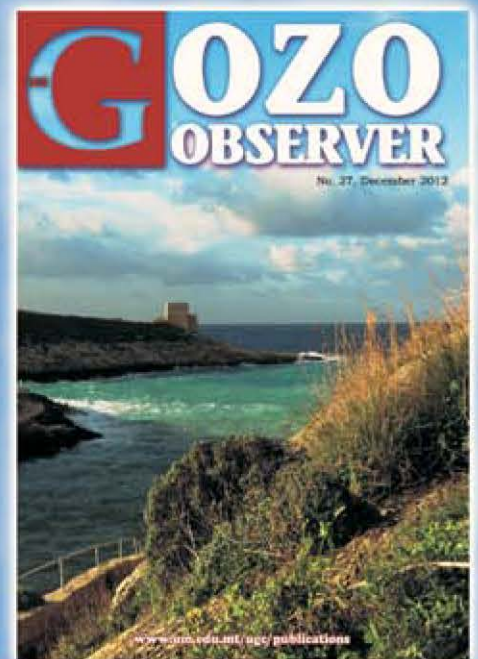
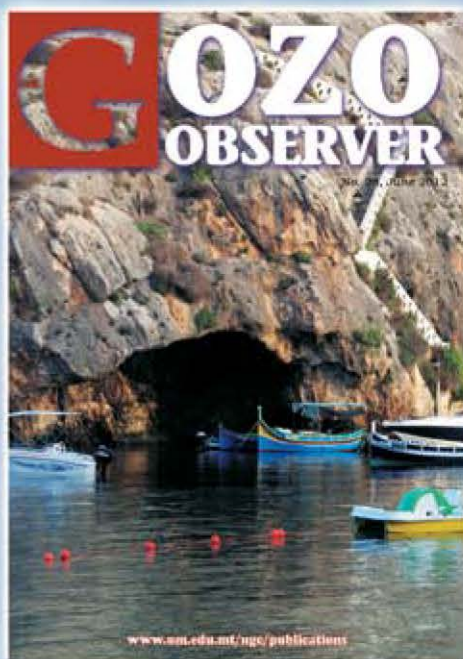


The olive grove "Ġnien il-Hena" at the University Gozo Campus.

## Garden Completion

The embellishment of the olive grove "Ġnien il-Hena", was completed this year with the planting of a number of olive trees and plants.

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



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