

OZO **OBSERVER**

No. 39, Winter 2019



www.um.edu.mt/ugc/publications

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial: The Jewel in the Crown	2
Adventure Tourism in Gozo Annemarie Camilleri	3
The 1948 Gozo Commission: Redesigning a Future Gabiella Cassar	12
The Invasion of Sicily: A Personal Experience of a Youth in Għasri Toni Calleja	16
Analysis of Rainfall Readings Data in Gozo Andrea Muscat	20
The Ciantar Family of Gozo: The Ghajnsielem-Xewkija Connection Geoffrey G. Attard	29
Book Review: The Maltese Cinderella and the Women's Storytelling Tradition Anton F. Attard	31
Book Review: Żebbuġ of Gozo. Its People, Inscriptions and History Geoffrey G. Attard	33
Recent Activities at the University of Malta – Gozo Campus Joseph Calleja	35

The Gozo Observer

The Journal of the University of Malta – Gozo Campus. Published two times a year in collaboration with the Ministry for Gozo.

Editorial Board:

Prof. Lino Briguglio, Mr Joseph Calleja,
Prof. Maurice N. Cauchi, Ms Caroline Camilleri Rolls

Editorial Office:

University of Malta - Gozo Campus,
Mgarr Road, Xewkija, XWK 9016, Gozo
Tel: (356) 21564559; Fax: (356) 21564550;
e-mail: ugc@um.edu.mt
Web: www.um.edu.mt/ugc

© University of Malta Gozo Campus and individual contributors 2019.

The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the University of Malta or the Ministry for Gozo.

The Gozo Observer is distributed without charge, upon request, to interested readers.

Front Cover Picture: Dwejra, Gozo.
Courtesy of Charlie Farrugia.

Editorial: The Jewel in the Crown

Since ancient times the *Ċittadella* has been a central focal point in Gozo, the place of government when, in Roman times, Gozo had equal status with Malta. Since then, it has always been considered as being of pivotal importance for religious practice, for shelter against piratical incursions, and more recently for the administration of justice. It has always occupied a vantage point for tourists to admire a unique bird's-eye view of the island not readily available from anywhere else.

One important development that has happened in the last decade is the refurbishing of the whole site to transform it from a grim and forbidding ancient structure into a welcoming venue worthy of a visit by the many hundreds of thousands visiting Gozo every year.

This refurbishment has not only transformed the fortifications into a pleasant walk meant to elicit the historical imagination as it illustrates Gozo history. These changes have been described as having provided 'a very imaginative use of space', as they 'encourage the visitor to delve deeper within the structure of the *Ċittadella*'.

In addition, it has provided impressive AV technology to highlight Gozo's history, including

a 360° *Ċittadella* Show. The result is that visitors are now flocking to admire these developments, and in the process access the other facilities provided, including the previously much neglected museums.

One is not surprised that this development has succeeded in obtaining several awards. It won the Visitor Attraction Award, and more recently, the 'Entertainment Venue of the Year Award' at the AV Awards ceremony in London.

It has now developed into an open-space area for artistic activities and festivals.

At one such recent festival organised by the Gozo Ministry, 'Lejl Imkebbes', some 10,000 people were given the opportunity to enjoy historical enactments and other live entertainment, in an environment lit by 30,000 candles, amid attractive floral designs.

There is no doubt that Gozo is leading the way in providing quality artistic activities, the result of hard work by talented individuals. May this trend continue.

Maurice Cauchi



Adventure Tourism in Gozo

ANNEMARIE CAMILLERI

Introduction

Tourism is a major economic pillar in Gozo. In fact, it makes up 50% of the island's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 20% of Gozitans work in the tourism industry (Gozo News, 2016). In 2016, more than half of the tourists who visited Malta also visited Gozo (nearly 1.2 million tourists out of nearly two million in Malta), most of whom on a day trip (84%) (Malta Tourism Authority Research Unit, 2017). Seasonality is still an issue in Gozo as the majority of overnight tourists stay in Gozo only during the summer months (51%) (Malta Tourism Authority Research Unit, 2017).

Therefore, rather than depending on tourists who mostly visit during the summer months, Gozo needs to attract tourists who are interested in niche tourism areas, such as adventure tourism. Niche tourism tends to have lower seasonality issues in comparison to sun and sea mass tourism (Novelli and Robinson, 2005). Figure 1 depicts different types of niche tourism. In the literature, there is no standard definition of adventure tourism. Most of the definitions revolve around the notion that adventure tourism offers authenticity and simplicity, a chance to connect with nature and oneself, an outlet to test physical limits and access to remote, wild and unexplored places.¹

This article is divided into six sections. The first section introduces the topic of this article, followed by a review of existing literature in Section 2. Section 3 discusses the research methodology used to obtain primary information, which is then discussed and analysed in Section 4. Section 5 summarises the key results and puts forward recommendations to develop adventure tourism sustainably in Gozo.

Adventure Tourism in Gozo

The National Tourism Policy (2015-2020) describes Gozo as a destination that is marketed in its own

right and having the potential to attract tourists for a number of reasons. It states that an analysis of urban and rural Gozo reveals its distinct characteristics which provide a special appeal to tourists. The Policy also mentions a number of niche tourism segments that have strong potential to increase demand in the low season (including activity holidays and sports tourism) but which need to be supported by all concerned parties in order to achieve the desired results (Ministry for Tourism, 2015).

An issue highlighted by the *National Tourism Policy* relates to the need to position Gozo clearly as a distinct destination. The policy suggests the formation of a strategy and specific action plans as well as the use of e-marketing methods that are in line with the socio-economic profile of the visitors that Gozo seeks to attract (Ministry for Tourism, 2015).

As seasonality is still an issue in Gozo, there is the need for diversification in tourism. Niche tourism, including adventure tourism, can help spread tourists to Gozo more evenly throughout the year. To date, there are a number of adventure activities which exist and take place in Gozo (refer to Figure 1 and Photos 1 - 6). Adventure tourism in Gozo is or can be an all year-round activity, as generally, the island enjoys pleasant weather all year round. The impact of adventure tourism activities on the local communities is considered highly positive, as it has an income and employment multiplier effect since it increases the economic activity (DATE Partnership, 2009). The National Tourism Policy 2015-2020 considers adventure tourism as one of the strong tourism niches that have a lot of potential for Gozo (Ministry for Tourism, 2015). Consequently, there are marketing initiatives by the Ministry for Gozo to support the specific tourism niche markets in Gozo (Ministry for Gozo, 2016).

However, despite its numerous benefits and opportunities, adventure tourism in Gozo also

¹ This definition is derived from various sources (Adventure Travel Trade Association and The George Washington University, 2016; Roberts, 2011; Buckley, 2006; Kane and Tucker, 2004; Swarbrooke et al., 2003).



Figure 1: Different types of niche tourism (Source: Novelli and Robinson, 2005: 9).



Photo 1: Climbing in Gozo. (Source: Visit Gozo, 2017).



Photo 2: Hiking in Gozo. (Source: Visit Gozo, 2017).

has its challenges. Firstly, there is a lack of policy documents concerning adventure (or activity) tourism in Gozo. The *National Tourism Policy* dedicated an entire chapter to Gozo as a distinct tourism destination (Ministry for Tourism, 2015). In this chapter, the importance and relevance of niche tourism is noted, however it falls short to indicate direction towards niche markets.

Secondly, there are gaps in the statistical data about Gozo's tourism industry. This makes it difficult to determine the areas of success and monitor the development of niche tourism in Gozo. This issue is even mentioned in the National Policy for Tourism (Ministry for Tourism, 2015).

Thirdly, there are also issues relating to adventure tourism and the natural environment (DATE Partnership, 2009). For example, adventure tourism can lead to a degradation of the natural environment when people who are hiking in the countryside trample on the flora and fauna and on the soil, which may lead to loss of soil (DATE Partnership, 2009). Moreover, the DATE Partnership (2009) also revealed that in Malta there is the issue of right to access 'private' fields when on a hike in rural areas.

Methodology

Research Rationale and Objectives

During the gathering of information through secondary sources (journal articles, books, online publications, websites, other dissertations, etc.), it became highly evident that there was a lack of research about adventure tourism in Gozo. Therefore, this study is aimed at trying to bridge the existing gap between the lack of research about the subject and the adventure tourism reality in Gozo.

Research Sampling of Analysis Documents

The study made use of purposeful sampling with the respondents being twelve professionals from the adventure tourism industry in Gozo in order to collect the right information about the subject.

To obtain primary data for this research study, twelve organisations operating in different adventure-related activities were interviewed. The organisations interviewed included: a dive centre; a climbing association; a horse-riding company; three water sports companies; a kayaking company; a quadbike company; a company specialising in soft adventure



Photo 3: Diving in Gozo.
(Source: Visit Gozo, 2017).



Photo 4: Biking in Gozo.
(Source: Visit Gozo, 2017).



Photo 5: Kayaking in Gozo.
(Source: Visit Gozo, 2017).

activities and another company specialising in hard adventure activities. Two authorities based in Gozo (a tourism association and tourism and economic development directorate) were also interviewed to get their point-of-view on the subject apart from that of the operators.

A qualitative approach was used in this study, to analyse and interpret the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the data gathered was done through a thematic analysis of the interviews conducted, in a professional, unbiased way in order to reflect the opinions of the interviewees.

Research Limitations

There were a number of limitations that were encountered during this study, both relating to obtaining secondary data sources as well as during the gathering of primary data. There were little to no statistics available about adventure tourism in Gozo. This may be because adventure tourism is relatively unexplored in the Maltese Islands, and so is not yet considered as a tourism niche within the local tourism industry. In addition, some interviews were done by email, hence the researcher could not probe for more in-depth information. Moreover, due to the small sample size for qualitative research, this study may not be representative of all operators related to adventure tourism in Gozo.

Analysis and Discussion of Results

The questionnaires used for the survey were intended to attain the following objectives:

1. To examine the extent to which adventure tourism can be developed (and promoted) as a tourism niche in Gozo;
2. To identify the types of adventure related products on offer in Gozo;
3. To identify and evaluate risks and issues pertaining to adventure tourism in Gozo;
4. To determine the social, economic and environmental impacts of adventure tourism on the local residents, the environment and the tourism industry in Gozo; and
5. To discuss future directions for adventure tourism in Gozo based on the response from the interviews

Objective 1

Adventure tourism entails a physical activity within a natural setting that has adventure in it, which is focused specifically on the enjoyment of nature, and that it has the ability to attract different people and keep them interested to come again due to its range of activities. Figure 2 represents a summary of the activities associated with adventure tourism by the interviewees.



Figure 2: Summary of the activities associated with adventure tourism by the interviewees.

Adventure tourism is considered very important for the respondents interviewed who considered it to have the potential to grow into a sufficient niche tourism market. This is mainly because it has the potential of attracting younger people to Gozo; differentiating Gozo from mainland Malta; mitigating seasonality; spreading the concentration of tourists across the Island; and increasing the variety of activities available in Gozo. Therefore, adventure tourism needs to be regulated by the concerned authorities in order to move forward in a sustainable manner. To do so, there is the need for a public-private collaboration.

Objective 2

Figure 3 shows the adventure-tourism-related activities that the interviewed respondents offer in Gozo, the majority of which are available all year round and are customised according to the clients' needs and wishes. The most popular activities are diving, hiking/trekking and water sports, and the summer months remain the most popular months with the customers of the organisations interviewed. The interviewed businesses do slow down in winter and those related to water sports have to close down due to weather and sea conditions.

Therefore, for adventure tourism to grow as a tourism niche market in Gozo, more adventure activities should be introduced. For example, skydiving in Gozo could be reintroduced. In the past, there used to be the possibility of skydiving from a helicopter, but this service, which used to generate an impressive amount of money, was stopped a few years ago.

Objective 3

During the interviews, two major risks and issues related to developing adventure tourism in Gozo came up. Firstly, there is the risk of investing a lot of money into something that does not attract enough people to make it self-sustainable. According to the literature, this risk is very minimal as the global adventure tourism's compound annual growth rate (CAGR) is expected to grow by 17.4% between 2017 and 2023 (Doshi and Das, 2018). Therefore, more promotional efforts of such activities in Gozo would ensure a higher success rate for Gozitan adventure tourism operators.

The second issue that came up is that presently, there is no policy that governs adventure tourism,

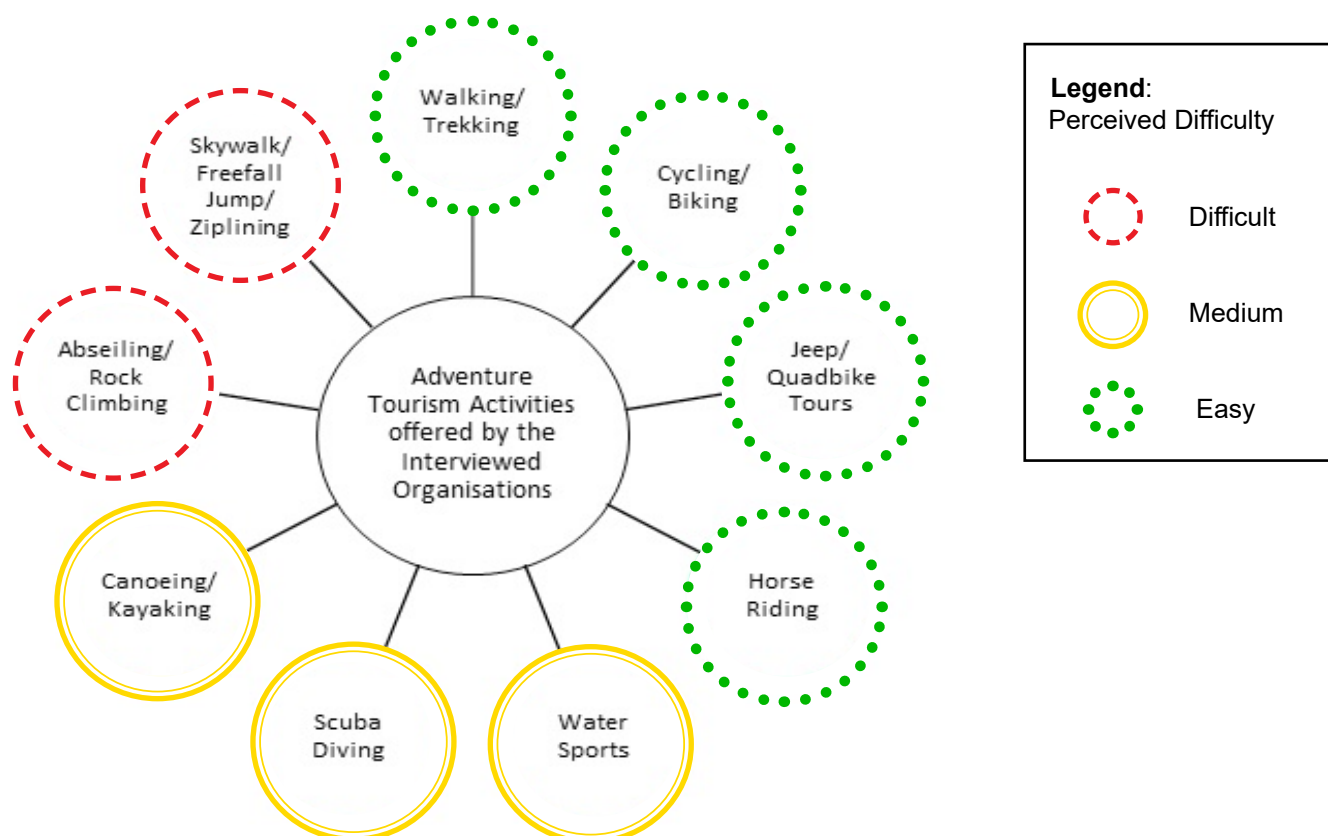


Figure 3: Adventure tourism activities offered by the interviewed organisations.

nor a risk management policy for each or any type of adventure tourism. Consequently, there are untrained and poorly-prepared companies operating which could risk lives and damage the reputation of the island as an adventure tourism destination.

Therefore, in order for adventure tourism in Gozo to move forward, there is the need for a legislative framework which defines, gives a vision and outlines how adventure tourism should be developed, while taking into consideration the risk factors and environmental impacts. However, despite there not being an official policy, which regulates risk management in adventure tourism, the majority (75%) of the organisations interviewed claimed that they made up their own risk management policy which meets or exceeds the standards abroad. This figure is similar to that resulting from the ATTA's (2017) study where it was revealed that only 71% of adventure tourism operators, globally, have documented safety and risk management plans.

Objective 4

This objective was split into three questions: one about the social impacts of adventure tourism on the local residents; another question about its impacts on the economy of Gozo; and the last one was about the possible impacts of adventure tourism on the environment.

Social Impacts

In general, the interviewees were in complete accord that the development of adventure tourism as a tourism niche would affect positively the local community. They stated that the adventure tourist does not want the locals to change, but they want to experience the island as it is. Moreover, the interviewees also mentioned that adventure tourism spread tourism towards rural areas which are not usually engaged in tourism activities, and hence, engage the local community.

Economic Impacts

The organisations interviewed agreed that the economic impact of adventure tourism would be mostly positive. Firstly, it will spread the number of tourists who come to different parts of Gozo and in different months. Secondly, the development

of adventure tourism as a tourism niche in Gozo would stimulate and create new economic activities. Thirdly, adventure tourism will help to disperse the economic benefits directly to the wider population, as adventure tourists tend to spend their money at smaller and local businesses rather than large companies.

The only drawback mentioned by one of the interviewees was that if someone dies doing an adventure activity in Gozo (for example diving), it could negatively affect the whole tourism industry in Gozo.

Environmental Impacts

Adventure tourism gives value to the countryside – it focuses specifically on the enjoyment of nature, especially with heightened senses. During the interviews, the majority of the organisations revealed that they organise clean up days to clean the environment on land, in the sea and on the seabed. Other organisations mentioned the importance they give to operating low-impact activities, that they do not pollute, make noise or leave a negative impact on the island during their adventure activities.

However, despite this, if not regulated or developed correctly, adventure tourism can have a negative impact on the natural environment. Activities such as climbing can damage the environment (due to drilling holes in the rocks and the bolts they use eventually start to rust). Hence, a guiding policy which considers the environmental issues as well, is doubtlessly required so that the negative impacts of adventure activities on the environment would be reduced.

Objective 5

To discuss the future directions for adventure tourism in Gozo, the interviewees were asked about the benefits of and the threats hindering the growth of adventure tourism. Apart from the aforementioned benefits, the interviewees mentioned that developing adventure tourism would attract higher spending tourists (and hence support the local economy) and give tourists, especially youths, more reasons to visit Gozo. Notwithstanding these benefits enhancing the further development of adventure tourism in Gozo, there are some threats that hinder its growth, such



Photo 6: Horse riding in Gozo. (Source: Visit Gozo, 2017).

as the conflict of traditional industries (fishing, agriculture, construction, hunting) vis-à-vis tourism; the overdevelopment of natural areas; and dangerous practices by existing companies that can damage the growth and reputation of this industry.

Currently, there are some opportunities offered by the Government of Malta (the Malta Tourism Authority and the Ministry for Gozo) and EU schemes that help the growth of adventure tourism in Gozo, however, all organisations interviewed insisted that more help is needed, especially from the regulatory aspect and financial help. The interviewees agreed that any type of adventure tourism that leaves no permanent scars on the landscapes should be developed and promoted. They insisted that it cannot be limited to only one type because tourists have different interests and then, only a limited number of locals would benefit from it.

Therefore, decisions need to be taken by the Tourism Authorities as to which direction Gozo's tourism

should take. The setting up of a team managed by MTA (Malta Tourism Authority) or GTA (Gozo Tourism Association) would certainly be beneficial in streamlining the growth of the tourism industry in Gozo. From the interviews, it became highly evident that most of the drive in this area is coming from independent organisations who are forced to battle against, rather than collaborate with, the authorities, especially to obtain permissions to operate.

Conclusion

It emerges from the interviews carried out in connection with this study that the development of adventure tourism is desirable but it requires investment in features that complement the natural, cultural and adventure assets for such niche tourism to grow and prosper. This in turn requires extensive stakeholder consultation and responsible policy development, as revealed during the interviews with some of the adventure tourism operators in Gozo.

The success of the sector depends on the creation

of innovative and compelling adventure products by the private sector.

Based on the information derived from the interviews, the following recommendations are being put forward:

- The Maltese tourism authorities, in consultation with the private sector should collaborate to come up with a policy regulating adventure tourism in Gozo and a plan for the sustainable development and growth of adventure tourism in Gozo;
- The further development of activities which have a strong potential for growth by the private sector, such as climbing, kayaking, rambling/ hiking, cycling and diving should be encouraged;
- New adventure activities in Gozo (such as skydiving and camping) should be introduced to increase the appeal of the island as an adventure tourism destination;
- The local adventure tourism operators could take advantage of funding and promotional schemes by the Malta Tourism Authority, the Ministry for Gozo and EU schemes;
- The Malta Tourism Authority (and other concerned authorities) should increase their marketing and promotional efforts regarding adventure tourism in Gozo.

References

- Adventure Travel Trade Association & The George Washington University. (2013). *Adventure Tourism Market Study 2013* (pp. 1-15). Adventure Travel Trade Association. Retrieved November 9, 2017, from <http://files.adventuretravel.biz/docs/research/adventure-tourism-market-study-2013-web.pdf>
- Adventure Travel Trade Association and The George Washington University. (2016). *Adventure Tourism Development Index: An Adventure Travel Scorecard*. Retrieved November 9, 2017, from <https://www.adventuretravel.biz/research/2016-adventure-tourism-development-index/>
- Adventure Travel Trade Association. (2017). *Adventure Travel Trends Snapshot March 2017*. Retrieved November 9, 2017, from <https://www.adventuretravel.biz/research/2017-adventure-travel-trends-snapshot/>
- Buckley, R. (2006). *Adventure Tourism*. Oxfordshire: CABI.
- DATE Partnership. (2009). *Comparative Study of Factors Influencing Activity Tourism in Europe*. Retrieved November 25, 2017, from www.activitytourism.net/comparatives.pdf
- Doshi, Y. and Das, D. (2018). *Adventure Tourism Market - Global Opportunity Analysis and Industry Forecast, 2017-2023*. Allied Market Research. Retrieved from <https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/adventure-tourism-market>
- Gozo News (2016). *Tourism amounts to around 50% of Gozo's GDP – Tourism Minister*. [online] Gozo News.com. Retrieved November 26, 2017, <http://gozonews.com/61008/tourism-amounts-to-around-50-of-gozos-gdp-tourism-minister/>
- Kane, M. and Tucker, H. (2004). *Adventure Tourism: The Freedom to play with reality*. Tourist Studies, Vol. 4 (3), pp. 217-234.
- Malta Tourism Authority Research Unit. (2017). *Tourism in Gozo 2016*. Retrieved November 24, 2017, from <http://www.mta.com.mt/loadfile.ashx?id=06e11dce-4a11-4a3e-9324-4debe24d26e1>
- Ministry for Gozo. (2016). *Supporting Marketing Initiatives for the Diving Sector in Gozo – 2016*. Retrieved November 26, 2017, from <https://mgoz.mt/en/pressreleases/Documents/March%202016/Marketing%20Opportunities%202016%20-%20Dive-Centres.pdf>
- Ministry for Tourism. (2015). *National Tourism Policy*. Retrieved November 25, 2017, from www.mhra.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/TOURISM-POLICY-2015-2020.pdf
- Novelli, M. and Robinson, M. (2005). "Niche Tourism: An Introduction." In Novelli, M. (Eds.), *Niche Tourism: Contemporary Issues, Trends and Cases* (pp. 1-11). London: Routledge.
- Roberts, C. (2011). "Sport and Adventure Tourism." In Robinson, P., Heitemann, S., and Dieke, P. *Research Themes for Tourism*. (pp. 146-159). Oxfordshire: CABI.
- Swarbrooke, J. et al. (2003). *Adventure Tourism: A New Frontier*. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Visit Gozo. (2017). *What to do in Gozo*. [online] visitgozo.com. Available at: <https://www.visitgozo.com/> [Accessed 27 Apr. 2018].

Annemarie Camilleri graduated B.A. (Hons.) in Tourism Studies from the University of Malta in December 2018.

The 1948 Gozo Commission: Redesigning a Future

GABRIELLA CASSAR

Introduction

The report of the 1948 Gozo Commission was the direct product of two leading events in post-Second World War Malta. First, there was the restoration of a responsible Government. This led to the re-emergence of political parties. Gozo did not shy off from creating its own distinctive political groupings; the Gozo Party and the Jones

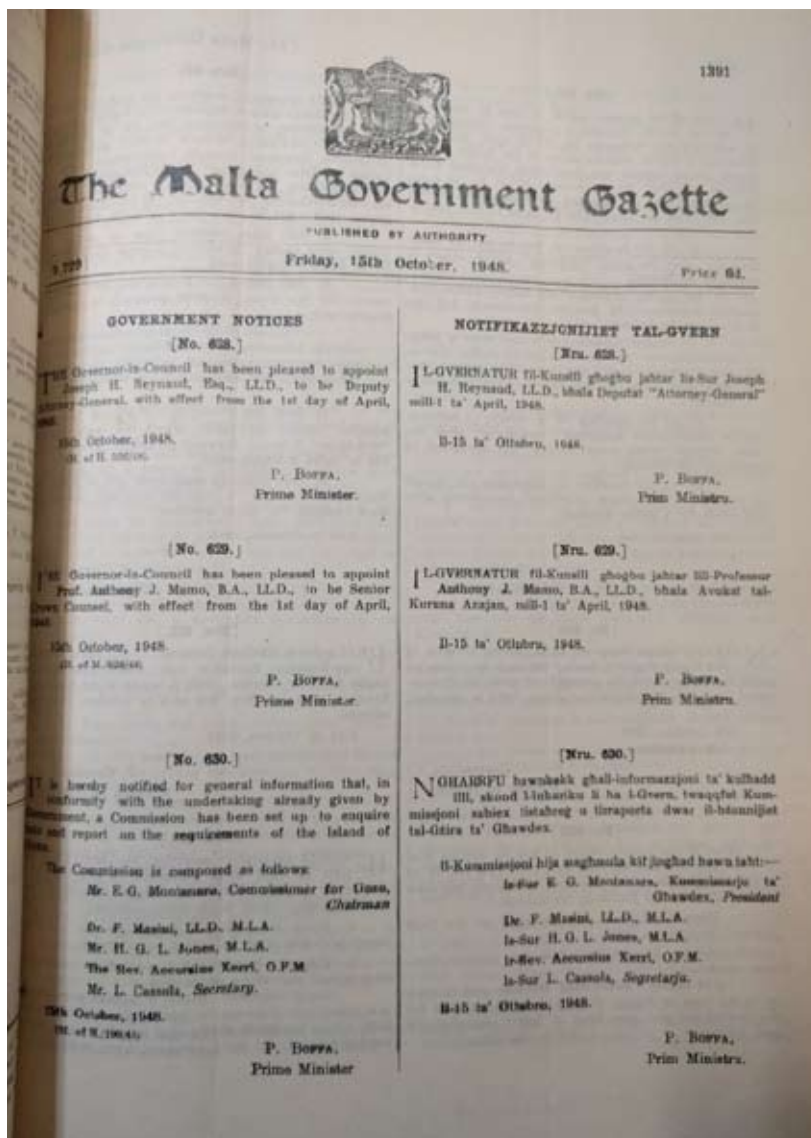
Party. These political formations were expressly formed to look after the needs of the Gozitans. They succeeded in getting five elected members in the Legislative Assembly (Bezzina, 1995, Pirota, 2001).

It was usual practice that before the elections, many politicians promised the Gozitans that they would take good care of Gozo and its needs but

instead, after the elections, the island would be put to one side (*Għawdex*, 2 July 1950). Hence, for this reason, this can be considered as an important milestone in Maltese (or rather Gozitan) politics, because for the first time ever in the 1947 elections, Gozo had two political parties whose political manifesto was focused solely on Gozo. Their aim was to have a say in the Legislative Assembly in order to spur the Government to recognise the Gozitan appeals. They started making their voice heard and putting pressure on the Government to act fast. In other words, both parties pledged to fight for a possible future vision of Gozo because after years of neglect, the Gozitans were demanding fast interventions.

Setting Up the Commission¹

The action came through the setting up of a Commission which had to report directly to Government. As a matter of fact, until this Commission was set up, it was well known that whenever a matter concerning the island of Gozo was put forward in the Legislative Assembly, the ministries generally responded with duly factual and arrogant negative answers (*Għawdex*, 25 September 1949).



Government Notice No. 630 - The recognition of the Gozo Commission. (Obtained from *Malta Government Gazette*, 15 October 1948, 1391.)

¹ Report of the Commission appointed by Government to inquire into and report on the requirements of the island of Gozo, 1948.



Mr Edgar G. Montanaro. (Obtained from Joseph Bezzina (1995), 8).



Mr Louis Cassola. (This photo was provided by the eldest son of Louis Cassola, Hector Cassola).

In truth, the setting up of a Commission succeeded in putting Gozo into the national spotlight.

The Commission was composed of five persons, the chairman (Mr Edgar G. Montanaro), the secretary (Mr Louis Cassola) and three members (Dr Francesco Masini, Mr Henry Jones and Rev Accursius Xerri). Following the setting up of the

Commission, one could argue that the voice of Gozo was no longer mute. For the first time, the needs of Gozo started to be actually debated in the Legislative Assembly as it appeared that the elected members were taking Gozitan issues rather seriously (Cassar 2017).

The Commission's Report

The detailed holistic report of the Commission undeniably, exposed years of negligence. The final report took almost a year to be compiled, creating public awareness about the leading problems which led to the island's backwardness. In fact, when the Commission started to gather evidence, it could not but report and expose what was considered to have been Gozo's poor infrastructure. This was considered as one of the reasons for Gozo's backwardness and for this reason, it was described in great detail. They also put forward suggestions which were all feasible and they were aimed to shift the island towards new horizons. Indeed, the report confirmed that Gozo needed serious attention because, the Government, both local and colonial, always treated Gozo as some sort of backwater (Pirota 2001).

The Bulletin described the work of the Commission as 'Monster Gozo Report' by virtue of the fact that it was 'a document of 419 pages, 70 of which constituted the Report proper, 29 title pages and inserts, and 320 pages of appendices' (*The Bulletin* 27 July 1949). In this context, Anton Tabone described the Gozo Commission as:

"... the first serious and exhaustive report that had been undertaken on Gozo's needs. It was a report which laid bare the sorry state of Gozo in the economic and social fields. It also proposed suitable remedies and made serious proposals for the necessary measures to bridge the gaping difference between the level of development prevailing" (Bezzina, 1995: 6).

Unfortunately, the work of the Commission and the prospects of the report recommendations got caught up in the political controversies of the time that had nothing to do with Gozo. However these political controversies were destined to affect Gozo. Due to the split within the Labour Party, the Government ended up in a minority position and needed support from the Opposition if it wanted

to continue governing. Those who defected from the Labour Party refused to support it. Since Prime Minister Boffa was in need of help from other political parties, the recommendations started to be considered in order to entice the representatives from Gozo to support him. To compound matters, this political split ended up shifting the attention from Gozo to local Maltese politics. Worse, it ended up politicising the working of the Commission (Bezzina, 1995; Cassar 2017; Pirota 2001).

Within this context it remained to be seen whether the Gozo Commission was successful or not. With the Islands being led by a minority Government, little attention could be devoted to the findings of the Commissions of Inquiry. For this reason, the Commission became ineffective and its findings lost all their impact. It was at this stage that it started to appear a tool in the hands of the Government to use it to divert attention from more serious matters. It could be convincingly concluded that political controversy in Malta worked against the interests of Gozo.

Due to the Labour split and because of the precarious economic and financial conditions, the Government was defeated. In such circumstances, little time was allotted to the Labour Government to consider the whole report in detail. Unfortunately most of the suggestions were shelved and in a sense, one could argue that the defeat of the Government was the dead-end of the Gozo Commission. This proved the argument that the Gozo Commission was actually an ineffective tool and hence on such account, it could be considered as having been unsuccessful.

The Report's Findings

Despite the fact that the Commission could have served as nothing but a convenient opt-out against all of Gozo's interests, the findings were still very valuable. To start with, the recommendations themselves could be considered as a benchmark of success. In the case of the Gozo Commission, it could be considered successful because it provided a clear picture of the situation of Gozo during the first half of the twentieth century. It was remarkably a flexible means to shoulder the task of raising awareness and identifying the needs of Gozo, as well as to address and give plausible suggestions to solve these same needs.



Dr Francesco Masini. (Obtained from Joseph Bezzina (1995), 8).

Undoubtedly, the Gozo Commission through its voluminous report managed to tackle every aspect of life and thus it managed to underline the social and political problems of public concern. Additionally, the Gozo Commission was able to uncover facts that were unknown to the Government. Besides, Commissions of Inquiry could also be seen as having been successful since its workings and its report helped to inform and educate the public. In point of fact, the public was a direct reference for the Commission in completing its duty as people were allowed to make submissions. Moreover, the fact that many witnesses were asked to appear in front of the commissioners, all persons of integrity, strengthened the Commission's conclusions.

Through its recommendations, one could assert that the Commission was able to re-design a new future specifically for Gozo's improvement. The report indeed could be seen as a step forward from the bleak situation that the island was thrown into immediately after the end of the Second World War. It was written with the utmost thoughtfulness in providing first-hand information about the island of Gozo in order to overcome problematic clichés that were attached to the island. Certainly,



Mr Henry Jones. (Obtained from Il-Partit ta' Jones, 16 October 1947).

it also instilled a sense of hope in the future as Gozitans strived for a better future for Gozo in the steps traced by their ancestors.

Conclusion

The report of the Commission tried to unveil the problems that characterised the backwardness of the island. Although it survived only as a paper document, the Commission could still be seen as the preliminary step for modern Gozo. The eagerness of the Gozitans did not vanish with the demise of the Gozo Commission as this paved the way for important developments that took place later on in the 20th century. Time allowed for the rise of new forces that safeguarded the interests of Gozo and promoted them (Cassar 2017), including the Gozo Civic Committee, the Gozo Civic Council, the Ministry for Gozo, and the Local Council (Bezzina 2005).



Rev. Accursius Xerri. (Obtained from NAG•PA/01/1806).

References

- Bezzina, J. (1995). *Francesco Masini – Founder of the Gozo Party*. Rabat: Gaulitana.
- Bezzina, J. (2005). *Gozo's government: the autonomy of an island through history*. Rabat: Gaulitana.
- Cassar, G. (2017). *The 1948 Gozo Commission: Redesigning a Future*. Msida: University of Malta.
- Ghawdex*. 25 September 1949.
- Ghawdex*. 2 July 1950.
- Malta Government Gazette. 15 October 1948.
- Pirotta, J.M. (2001). *Fortress Colony: The Final Act 1945-1964 – Vol III 1958-1961*. Valletta: Studia Editions.
1948. "Report of the Commission appointed by Government to inquire into and report on the requirements of the island of Gozo" NAG, ZM/01/103.
- The Bulletin*. 27 July 1949.

Ms Gabriella Cassar from Xewkija, graduated in B.A. (Hons) in History in 2017. She is currently doing a Masters course in Cultural Heritage Management at the University of Malta.

The Invasion of Sicily: Personal Experiences of a Young Man in Ghasri

INFORMATION COMPILED AND WRITTEN BY TONI CALLEJA¹

Introduction

The 10th July 2018 marked the 75th anniversary of the invasion of Sicily, which event represented a great relief for the inhabitants of the Maltese islands, since it was going to ward off the war from our country. The success of this massive, military operation was fundamental because, first and foremost, it was going to eliminate the apprehension connected with a possible invasion of Malta by the Nazi and Fascist forces. Success was also important

for the Mediterranean in order that it would become less dangerous and thus the Merchant Fleet would be able to deliver provisions in a regular manner, so as to alleviate the shortages that were a cause of starvation for the population.

In 1993, our fellow countryman, Francis Galea (known as Frenč ta' Marcell: 1926-2013), who was born and bred in Church Street, Ghasri, and who had emigrated to Australia, thought it fit to forward to the present author some material containing his



Aerodromes in Pantelleria, Sicily and Reggio Calabria from where the Italians and Germans used to take off for their air attacks on Malta.

¹ A version of this article (in Maltese) has appeared in the publication "*Il-Korpus*"- Issue No. 45 (2018) published by the Ghasri Parish. The article was translated into English by Miriam Muscat.



1943 - Anti-Aircraft Cannon Battery

memories and other experiences of Ghasri during World War II.² The following text is taken from a much longer article, which actually relates to the Invasion of Sicily by the Allied Forces. In order to give more structure to the writings as sent to the present author by Frenč and also to portray them in a wider historical perspective, the text is expanded by historical footnotes.

The Invasion of Sicily

When the Allied Forces managed to seize the whole coast of North Africa, they started to prepare for the invasion of Sicily. Thousands of troops and armaments arrived in Malta. The US forces decided to construct an aerodrome on Gozo³ from which they could fly their aeroplanes and for this they

chose a site in the limits of Xewkija. Many Gozitans said amongst themselves: “so the war is going to stretch for years if the Forces want to wait until they build an aerodrome!” It was also generally felt that there would be work for all Gozitans for a long time. Ships docked at Marsalforn, unloading a profusion of machinery, bulldozers, mechanical shovels, road-rollers, large trucks and other engines and machinery about which the locals had no idea least of all how and for which they were used. In less than three weeks the Allied Forces flew their aeroplanes from the new aerodrome.⁴

When the aerodrome was ready a number of enemy aeroplanes flew over it for surveillance. One day Frenč was asleep in a hut on the threshing floor in a field in front of his family’s house.

² Correspondence: Frenč (Francis) Galea to Toni Calleja [Letter no:112 – 01 Apr 1993] 17-19.

³ Those interested to learn more about the history of this aerodrome are kindly referred to : F. Bezzina, “Il-Mitjar ta’ Għawdex fl-Invażjoni ta’ Sqallija”, in *Il-Berqa* [21 Apr 1961] 3-4; L-Orizzont [18 Jun 1975] 7-8; and C. Bezzina, *The Gozo Airfield*, Malta 2008.

⁴ In 1948, Dwight E. Eisenhower (1890-1969), the 34th President of the United States of America, published a book entitled *Crusade in Europe*. The book, which is very interesting, is dedicated to the troops of all three services: the Army, the Air Force and the Navy of all Allied countries. Amongst other issues in this book, the President writes about the American aerodrome on Gozo. Eisenhower writes: “Following our success in winning Pantelleria we were quick to transfer a strong air force and in the meantime we strengthened our position by establishing a new site from where to fly airplanes on Gozo. The US President continues writing: “The building of an aerodrome on Gozo posed a great challenge and it could never be finished in time for the invasion of Sicily. Amongst other problems, and at such a critical moment, an American engineer, a specialist in the building of aerodromes visited Air Marshal Park, who was responsible of the Air Force in Malta. Air Marshal Park informed him about the difficulties encountered in Gozo and updated him on what had been done so far, following which he asked him how long he thought it would take to finish it. The American engineer replied: ‘Ten days’, which took Air Marshal Park, a very efficient and dynamic official, by surprise in a way that at first he thought it was a joke prompting him to ask: ‘When will you start?’ with the expert replying: ‘Just as my tools arrive – which will take many days’. Urgent messages were dispatched and thirteen days following the arrival of the first construction machinery in Gozo, the first fighter flew from the island”. Eisenhower admitted that for the accomplishment of this miracle, the engineers worked with all sorts of modern tools that were used in all types of big construction works in America, and which the British engineers never imagined that it would ever have been possible to bring to such a critical place situated at the forefront of war. The President went as far to write: “Thanks to this aerodrome we acquired a new base from where we could strengthen our attacks on Sicily”.



Gourgion Tower built by nobleman Giovanni Gourgion and inaugurated by Grandmaster Adrian De Wignacourt in 1690. On 16 June 1943, it started to be dismantled to make way for the New Aerodrome in Gozo.

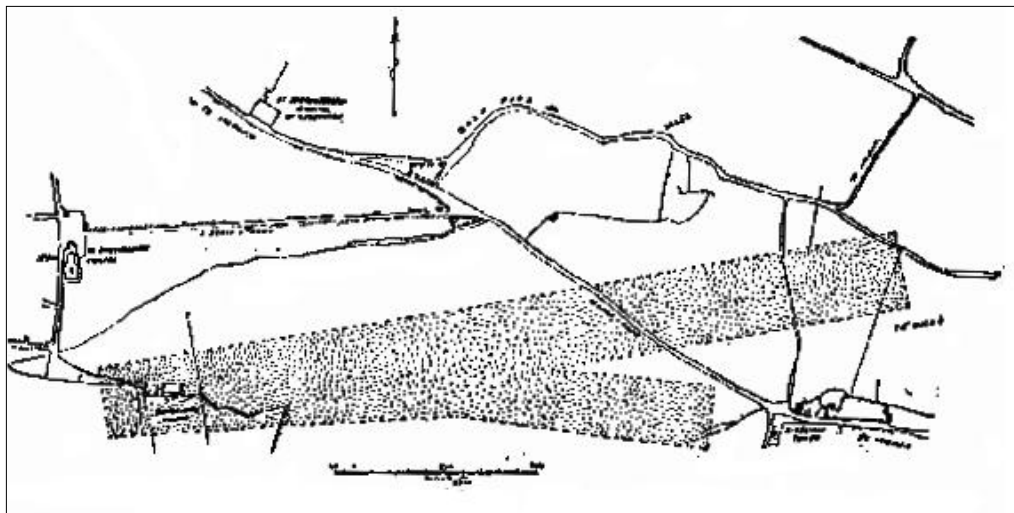
Ġorġ Portelli (il-Goga: 1914-1997) and Grezzju Sultana (ta' Ċirnienu: 1924-1996) who had their threshing floors a little distance from that of Frenċ, were going in for a nap and when they saw Frenċ sleeping they decided to play a prank on him by stacking up bales of wheat against the door of his hut. A short time later Frenċ heard loud bullet shots coming from the vicinity, which made him wake up immediately and run out from behind the wheat stacks to see what was happening. As Frenċ himself recounted, he witnessed a scene that forever remained in his memory. The searchlights surrounding the aerodrome in Xewkija were all directed in one whole circle towards the sky, with an enemy plane captured in their midst and all the small and big cannons firing upon it. On seeing that attack happening before his eyes, Frenċ started shouting for his parents so that they would wake up and also see that memorable scene, for themselves. George and Grezzju, from whose threshing floors this scene had apparently not been visible, started laughing because they thought Frenċ was calling his

father so he could help him out of the hut. This was the only time that an enemy plane was fired upon from the island of Gozo.

On the 10th July, 1943, precisely a year after the date which Hitler had set as the day of the invasion of Malta, the invasion of Sicily started. Frenċ recalls how he and his family were on their threshing floor, threshing wheat. Aeroplanes were flying from the new aerodrome, together with many others that took off from Malta, constantly flying low over their heads, such that the loud incessant noise was unbearable. The invasion was a huge success although it could not happen without the loss of many lives and armaments.⁵

Another experience which Frenċ remembered from the war days was when a few days after the attack on Sicily, he had gone for a swim at Wied l-Għasri. Notwithstanding various warnings not to touch anything which could be potentially dangerous, Frenċ had spotted a metal tin (not wider than a

⁵ In a symbolic gesture during the Invasion of Sicily that started from Malta on the 20th October, in Castille Square, Major General W.A. Oxley, C.B.E., M.C., A.D.C., Commander of the British troops in Malta, presented an Italian cannon to the Committee of the People of Valletta – the first Italian gun that had been seized during the battle of Sicily – donated by the 51st Highland Division, in commemoration of the fact that troops from that Division embarked from Malta to go on that offensive. On a brass plaque mounted on wood, the following words are inscribed: “To the people of Valletta from the 51st Highland Division. Source: *The first Italian gun captured in the Sicilian Campaign, July, 1943.*” (Presentation of an Italian Cannon to Malta, in Lehen is-Sewwa (23 October, 1943).



Gozo Airport June 1943 (Il-Berqa - 21st April 1961)

penny) which he managed to fish out of the water. Inside he had found a piece of paper with the name of someone called “James Pruitt” and the words “Somewhere at Sea”, together with an address in America written on it. Thinking this was intended as a last message by this person for his family, Frenč wrote a letter describing his find and posted it to the address written on the note. However, later Frenč regretted acting on impulse, since he never received a reply and with hindsight he reasoned that his letter might never have reached its destination, because, in those days, mail from and to Malta was censored.

The Surrender of Italy

The Allies continued their advancement in Italy, and when Mussolini realised that all was lost, he resigned and escaped, but did not manage to get too far because he was captured by a group of Italian Partisans who killed him. The same fate also fell on his companion, Clara Petacci, who was also captured alongside him.

On the 8th September, when Malta was celebrating the famous victory of the Great Siege of 1565, the long-awaited news of the surrender of Italy reached our shores. Two days later, Italian Admiral Dzara surrendered the Italian fleet to British Admiral Sir John Cunningham at Malta’s Grand Harbour.

All Maltese and Gozitans who served with the British Services were awarded medals and commendations. Amongst them there was also our fellow citizen Fr. Cherubin Sultana OFM Cap. (tač-Ċemperlin: 1901-1945). The present author is not aware as to why this commendation was bestowed upon Fr. Cherubin,

but it would be logical to think that it was for the friar’s ceaseless work as Chaplain of the Maltese hospitals. Fr. Cherubin followed the example of his relative, Rev. Can. Francis Mercieca (il-Pačikkan: 1805-1872), who was born and bred in the same house. At great risk to himself, Fr. Cherubin assisted the wounded and dying during World War II in the same manner as Fr. Francis before him had assisted the sick during the cholera epidemic, with much sacrifice and hazard for his health.

Conclusion

This is how Frenč brings his recollections to an end: “When the dangers of war had been warded off, the Gozitans rejoiced and organised great celebrations. The musical bands came out again to play in local streets, we rang our church bells, and we, the community of Ghasri, fulfilled the pledge we had made by participating in a pilgrimage to the Basilica of Our Lady of Patronage, where we thanked our Lord and the Virgin Mother for the immeasurable graces bestowed upon us.”

References

- Bezzina, F. (1962). *Il-Mitjar ta’ Ghawdex fl-Invażjoni ta’ Sqallija*, in Bezzina, C. (2008). *The Gozo Airfield*, Malta 2008.
- Eisenhower, D.E (1948). *Crusade in Europe*. US: Doubleday.

Toni Calleja is an avid researcher in local history.

Analysis of Rainfall Readings Data in Gozo

ANDREA MUSCAT

The purpose of this article is to analyse and discuss the change in rainfall patterns in Gozo over 26 years (from 1991 till 2017). The data was gathered by a weather station in Nadur, located roughly two kilometres away from the nearest coast of San Blas Bay and at a height of approximately 150 metres above sea level. The data used in this article is entirely secondary since it has been collected and processed by Mr Joseph Meilak

Total Annual Precipitation

The most common forms of local precipitation include rain, hail and dew. Total annual rainfall between 1991 and 2017 amounted to 530.7 mm, ranging from just a trace in July to almost 100 mm in December. With regard to the periodicity of the monthly precipitation, observations

show that the annual pattern of rainy winters is followed by dry and generally rainless summers, as shown in Figure 1. The month with the highest precipitation is December, amounting to an average of 95.2 mm, or 17.8 percent of the total annual precipitation.

The summer period barely comprises two percent of the total annual rainfall. Conversely, over half the total annual precipitation is recorded from October to December.

The Maltese Islands typically experience 72 days of rainfall, according to the data gathered from 1991 till 2017. Monthly variations range from zero in July to around 14 days in December, as shown in Figure 2. Rain days are days on which at least 0.1 mm of rainfall was measured.



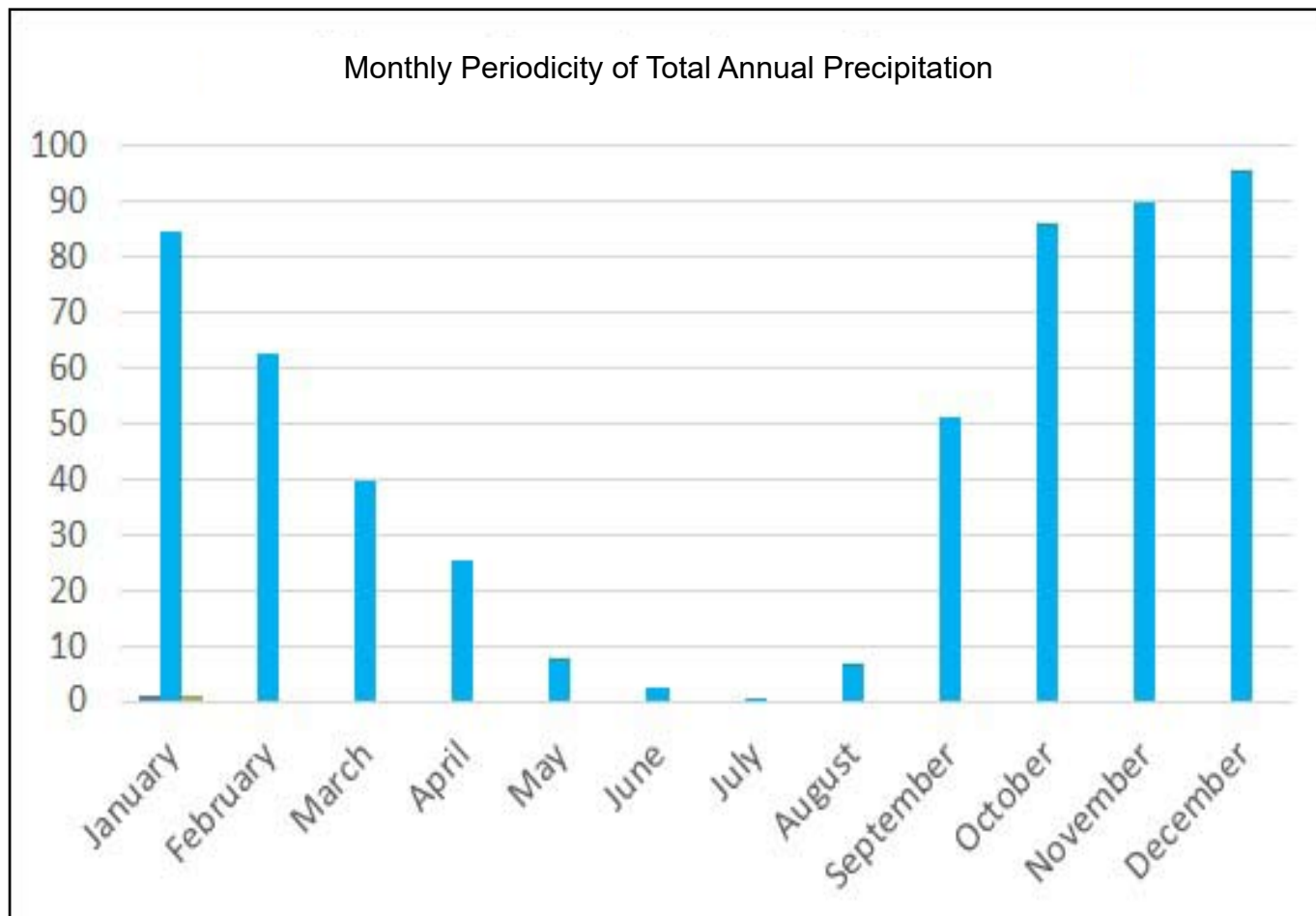


Figure 1: Monthly Periodicity of Total Annual Precipitation in mm.

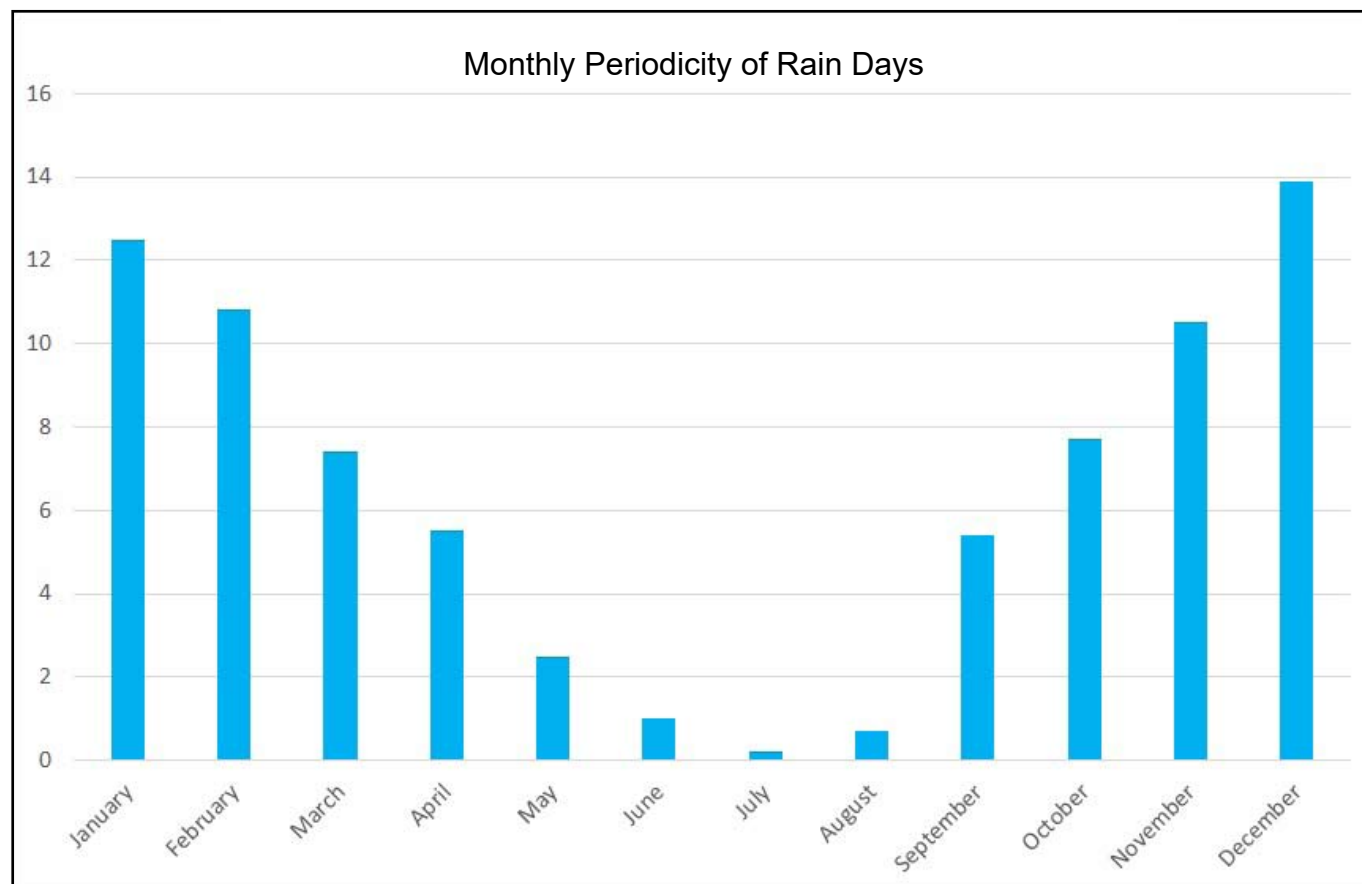


Figure 2: Monthly Periodicity of Rain Days.

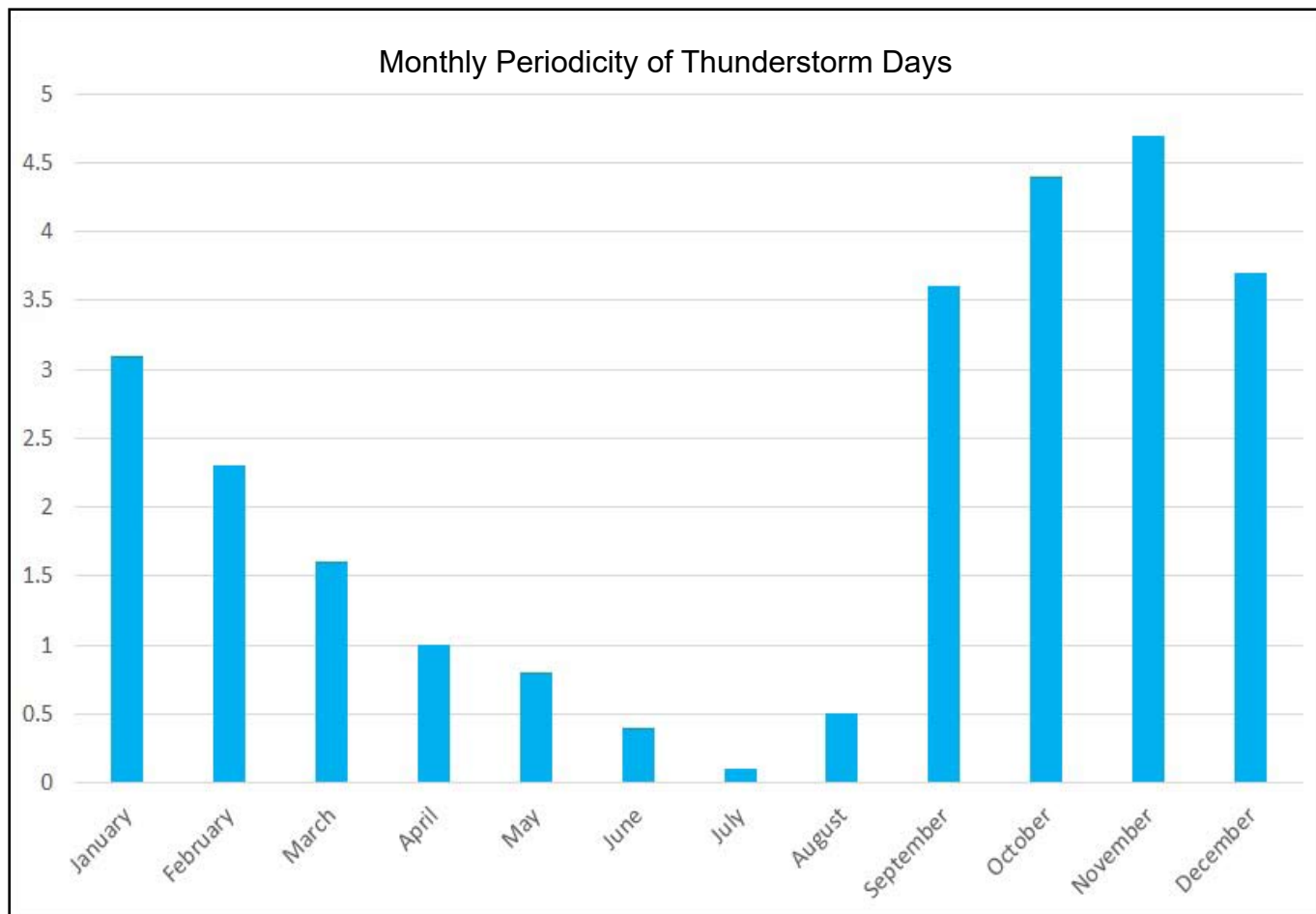


Figure 3: Monthly Periodicity of Thunderstorm Days.

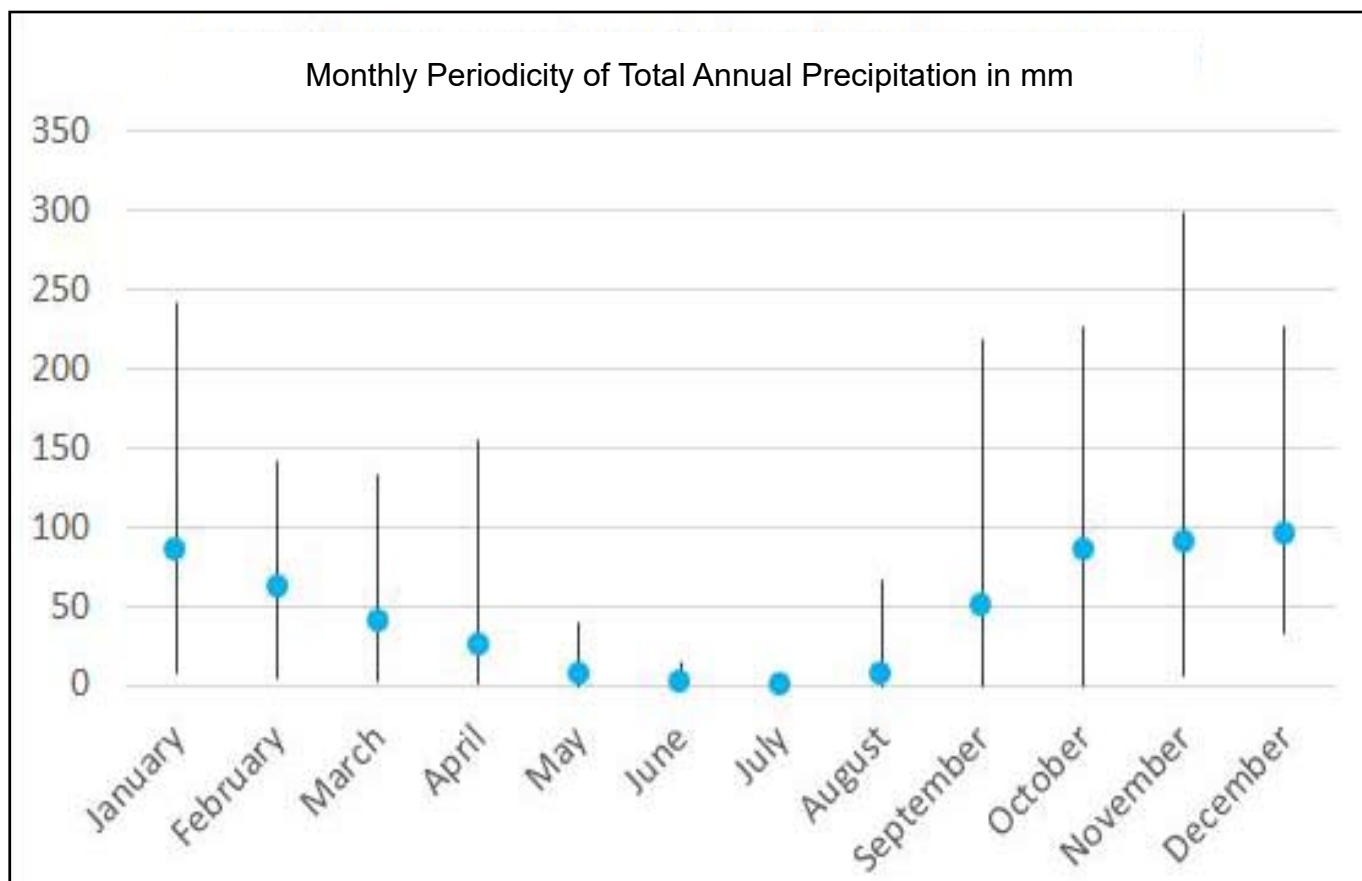


Figure 4: Monthly Periodicity of Total Annual Precipitation in mm.

In Gozo, the number of days with thunderstorms averaged 26 per year according to the data gathered from 1991 till 2017. November is normally the month with the highest frequency of thunderstorm days, as shown in Figure 3. In this analysis, thunderstorm days refer to those during which thunder has been heard.

Figure 4 shows that the highest precipitation variability throughout the year occurs in Autumn. This is attributed to the hit or miss of convective storms triggered by the movement of the continental air mass from the North African region over cooler areas in the Central Mediterranean. November has the greatest variability. The variability ranges from a minimum of 2.6 mm to a maximum of 297.0 mm.

Total 24 Hour Precipitation

The total amount of precipitation recorded in 24 hours, as shown in Figure 5, is a good indicator of the vigour and duration of storms. Undoubtedly, Autumn again shows the greatest variability. This is again attributed to the hit or miss of convective

storms triggered by the movement of the continental air mass from the North African region over cooler areas in the Central Mediterranean.

Annual Precipitation Trend

As can be seen in Figure 6, total annual precipitation has tended to decline during the period under consideration. 1995 was the wettest year, with almost 900 mm of precipitation being measured. On the other hand, 2015 was the driest year, with less than 300 mm of precipitation in total.

Seasonal Precipitation Trend

A quick glance at seasonal patterns in precipitation from 1991 till 2017, reveals that rainfall has undergone a distinct decline in the winter and spring months (Figures 7 and 8)

This contrasts with changes in the Summer and Autumn months (Figures 9 and 10), where the total precipitation has remained fairly unchanged over the years.

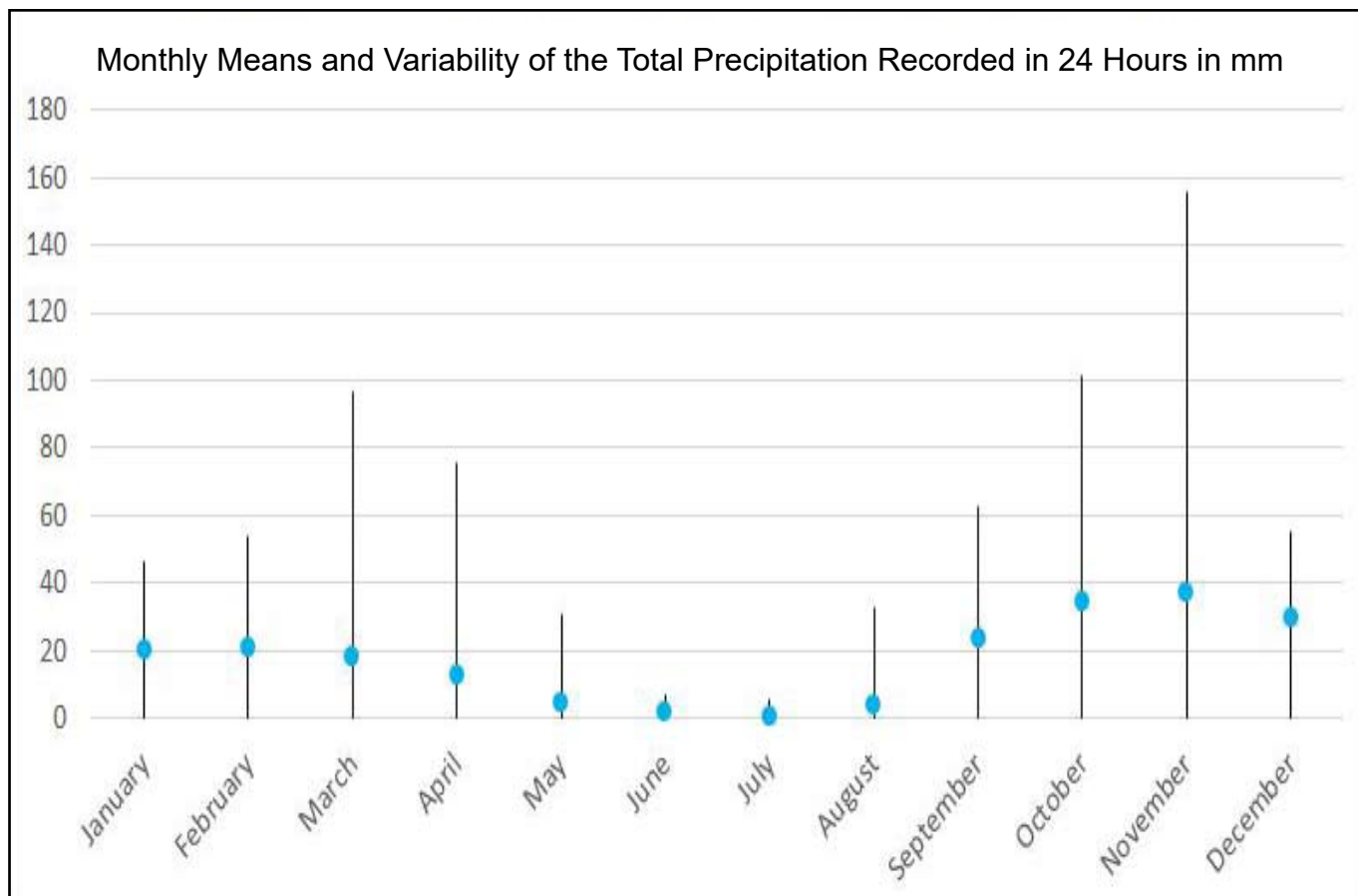


Figure 5: Monthly Means and Variability of the Total Precipitation Recorded in 24 Hours in mm.

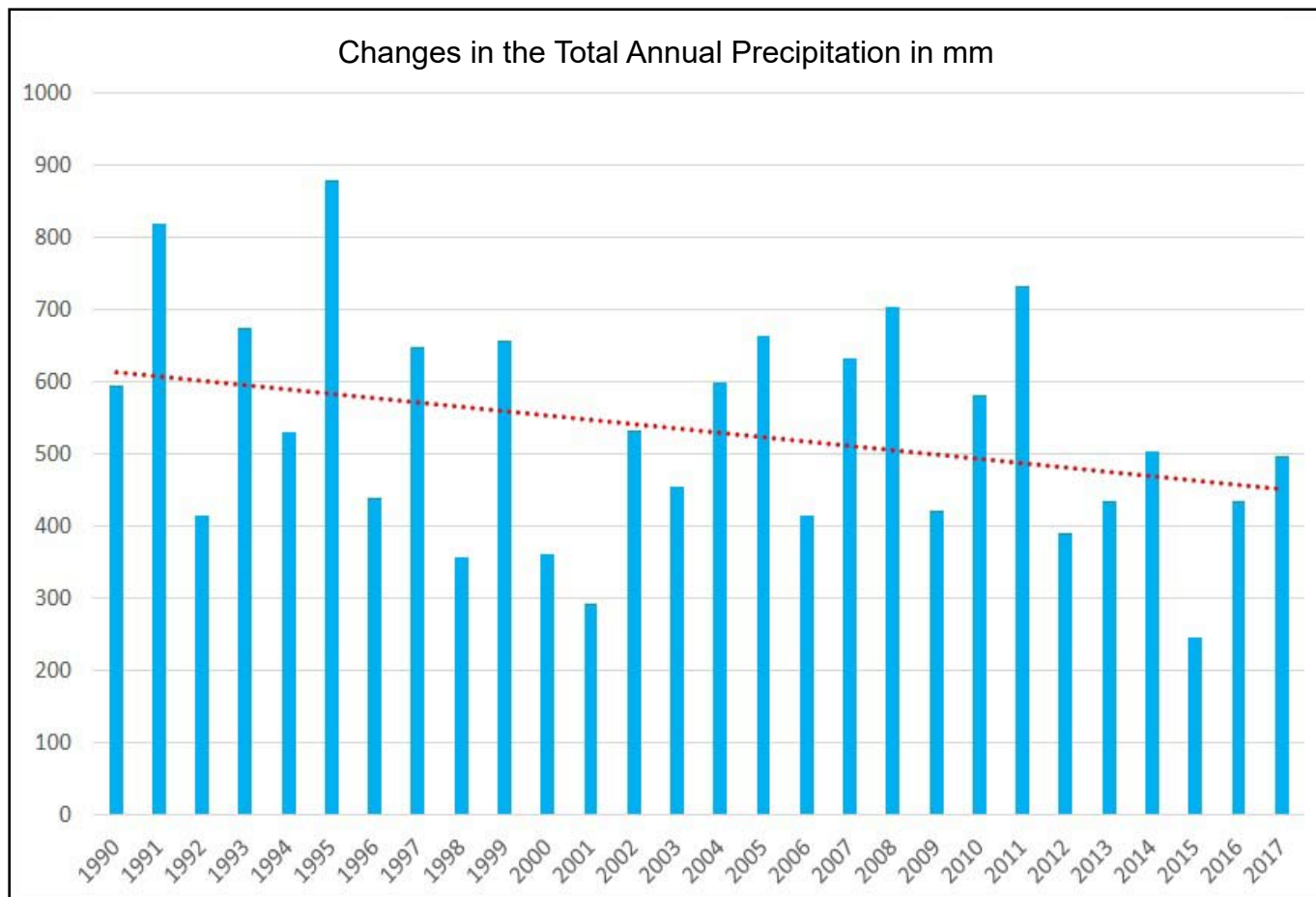


Figure 6: Changes in the Total Annual Precipitation in mm.

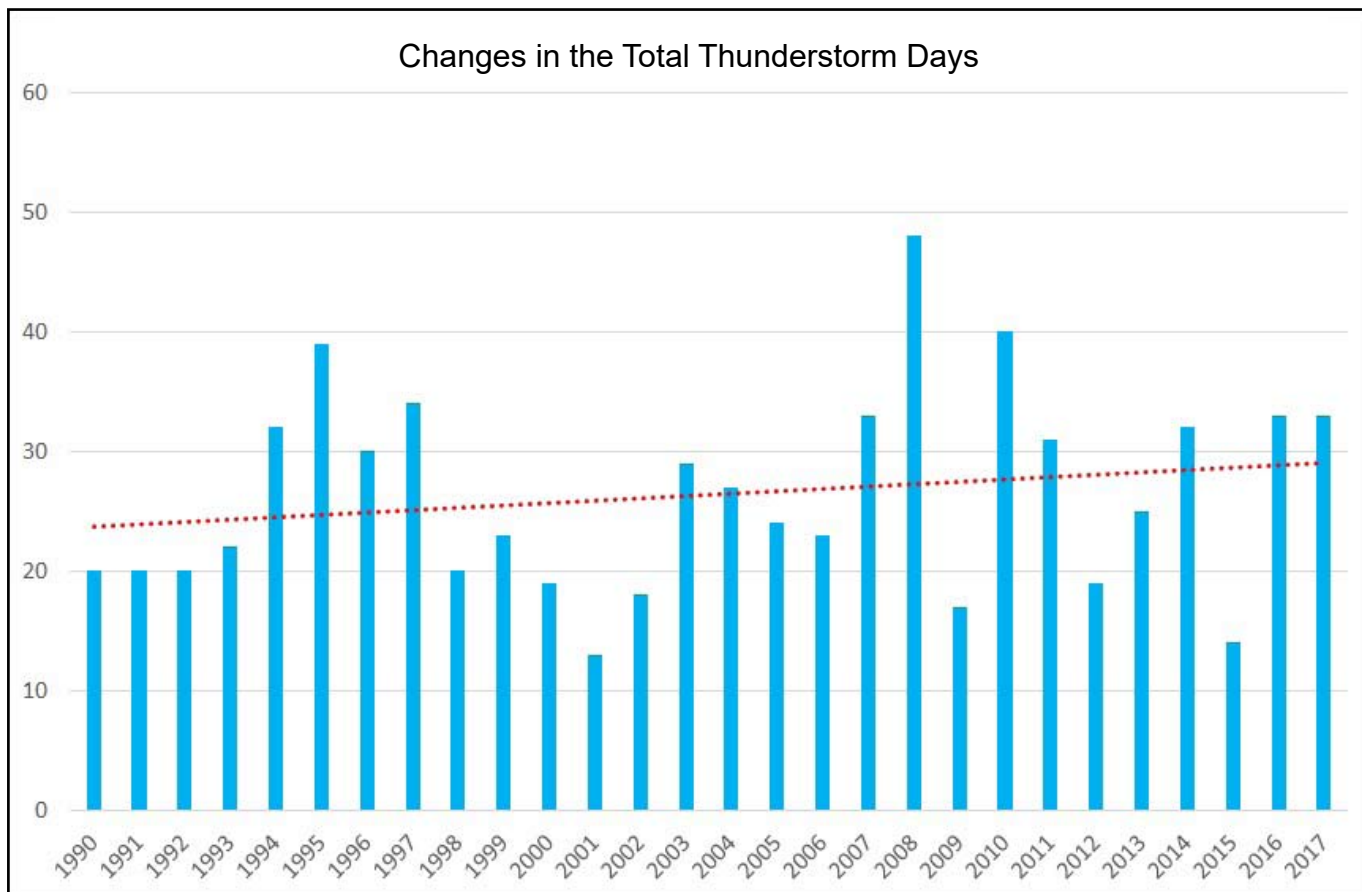


Figure 7: Changes in the Total Thunderstorm Days.

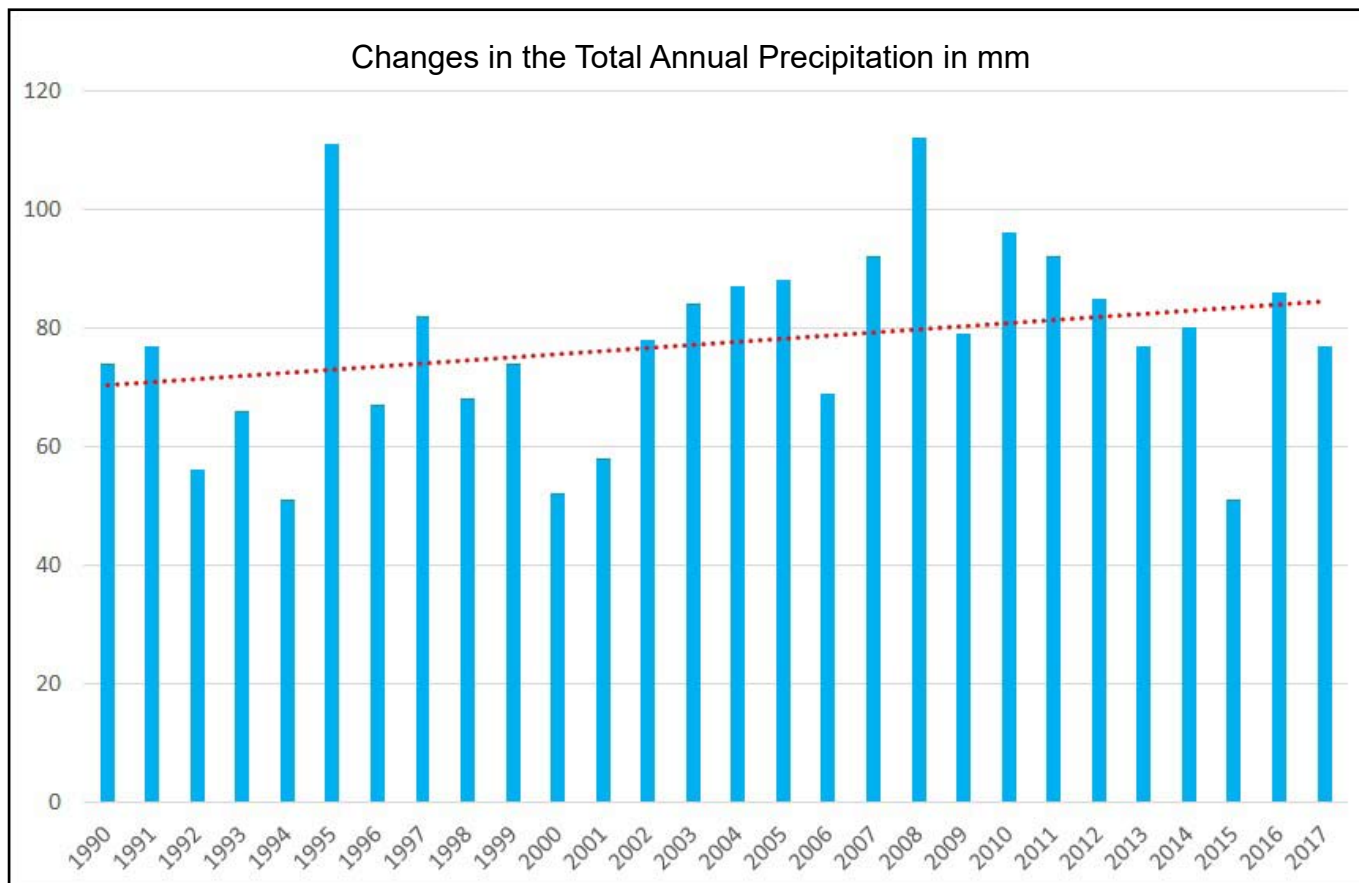


Figure 8: Changes in the Total Annual Precipitation in mm.

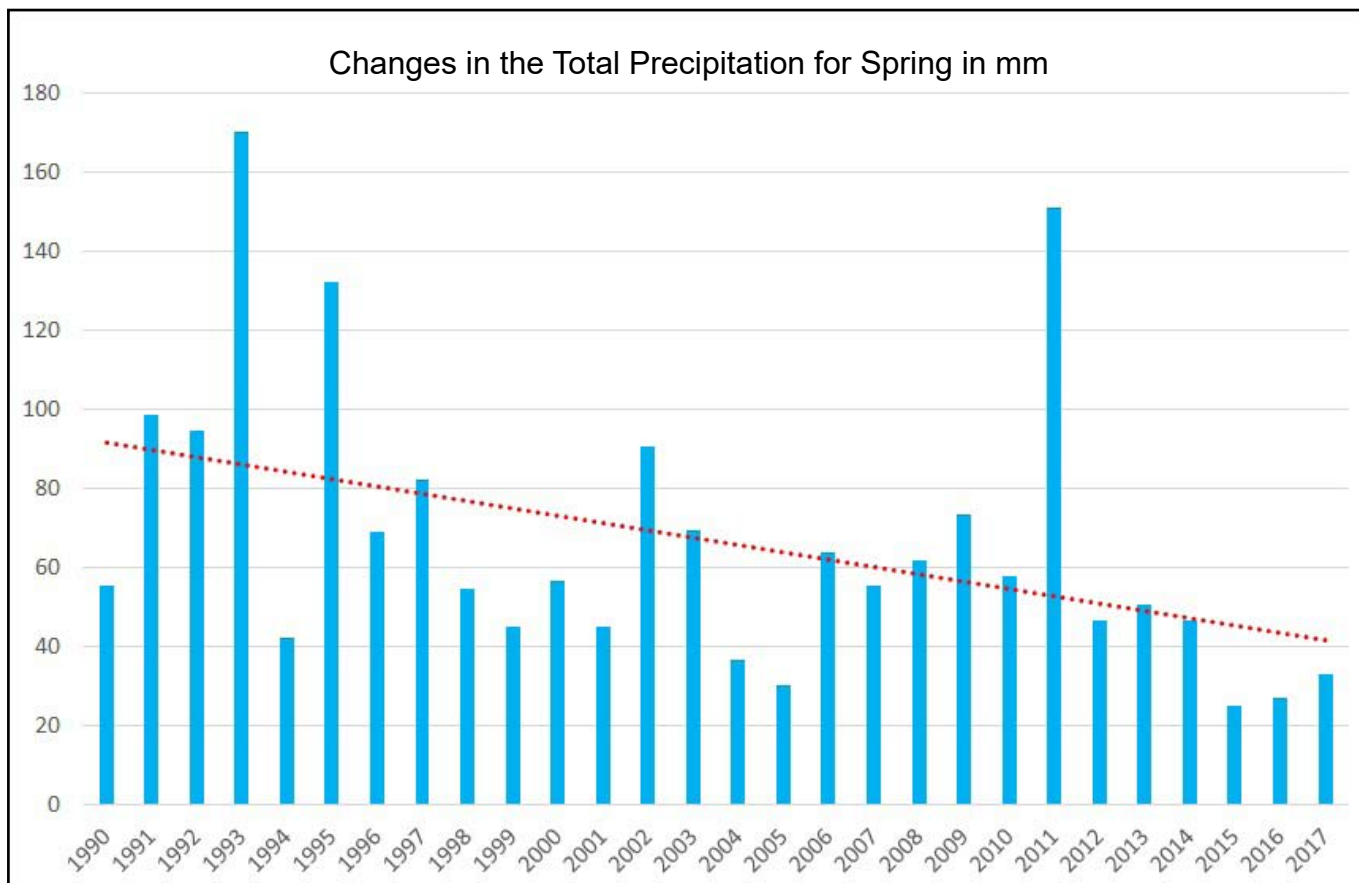


Figure 9: Changes in the Total Precipitation for Spring in mm.

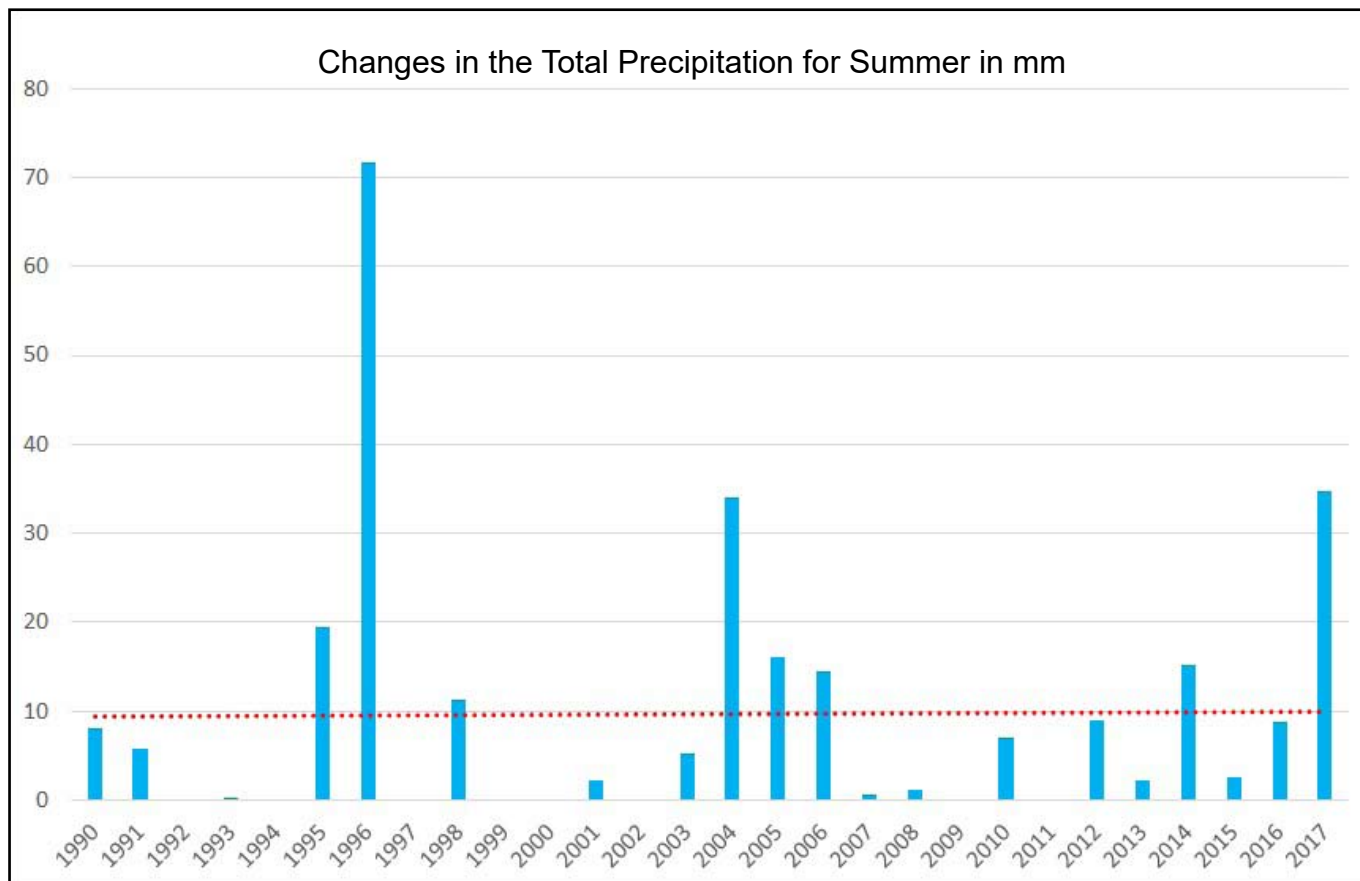


Figure 10: Changes in the Total Precipitation for Summer in mm.

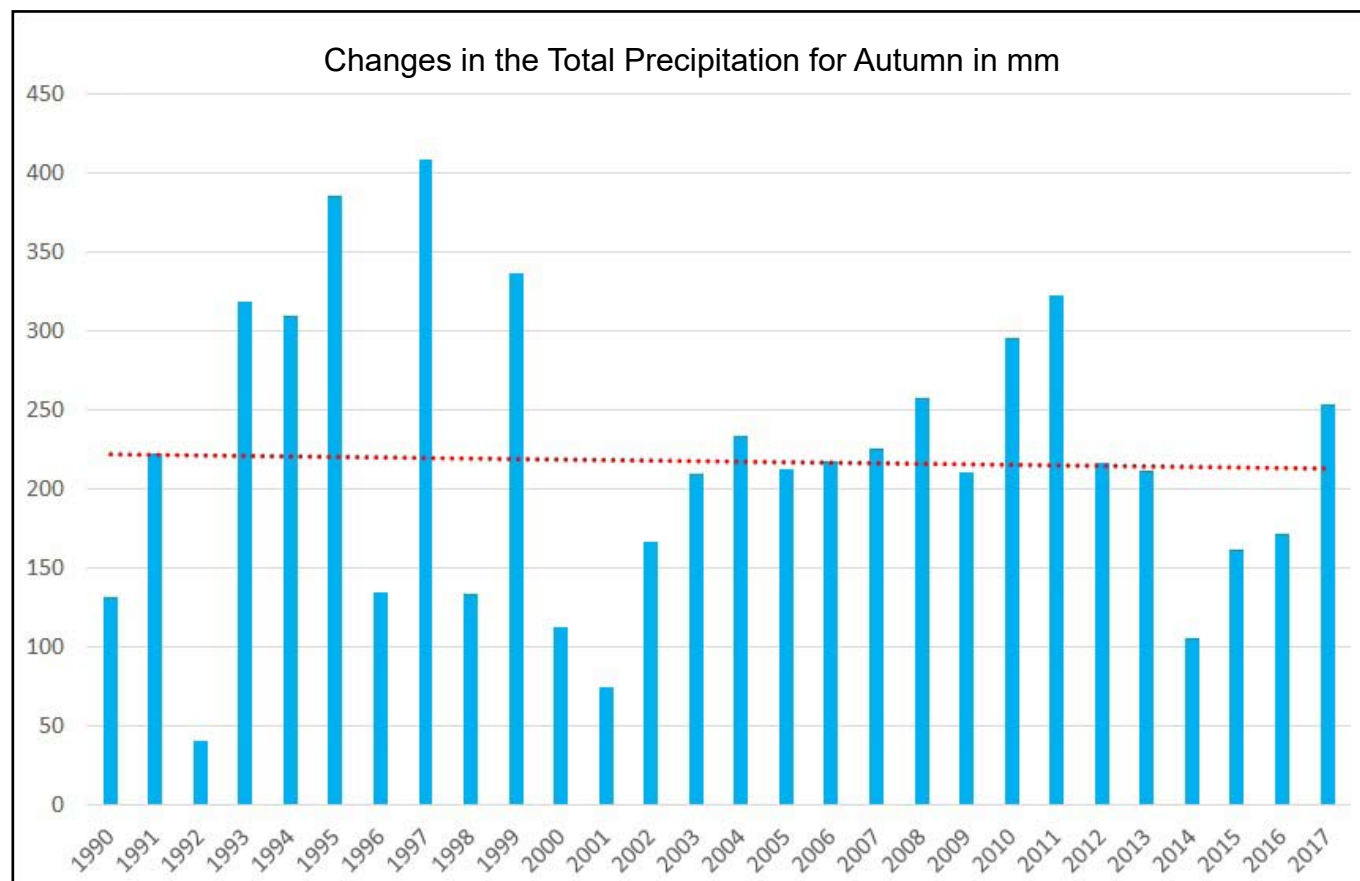


Figure 11: Changes in the Total Precipitation for Autumn in mm.

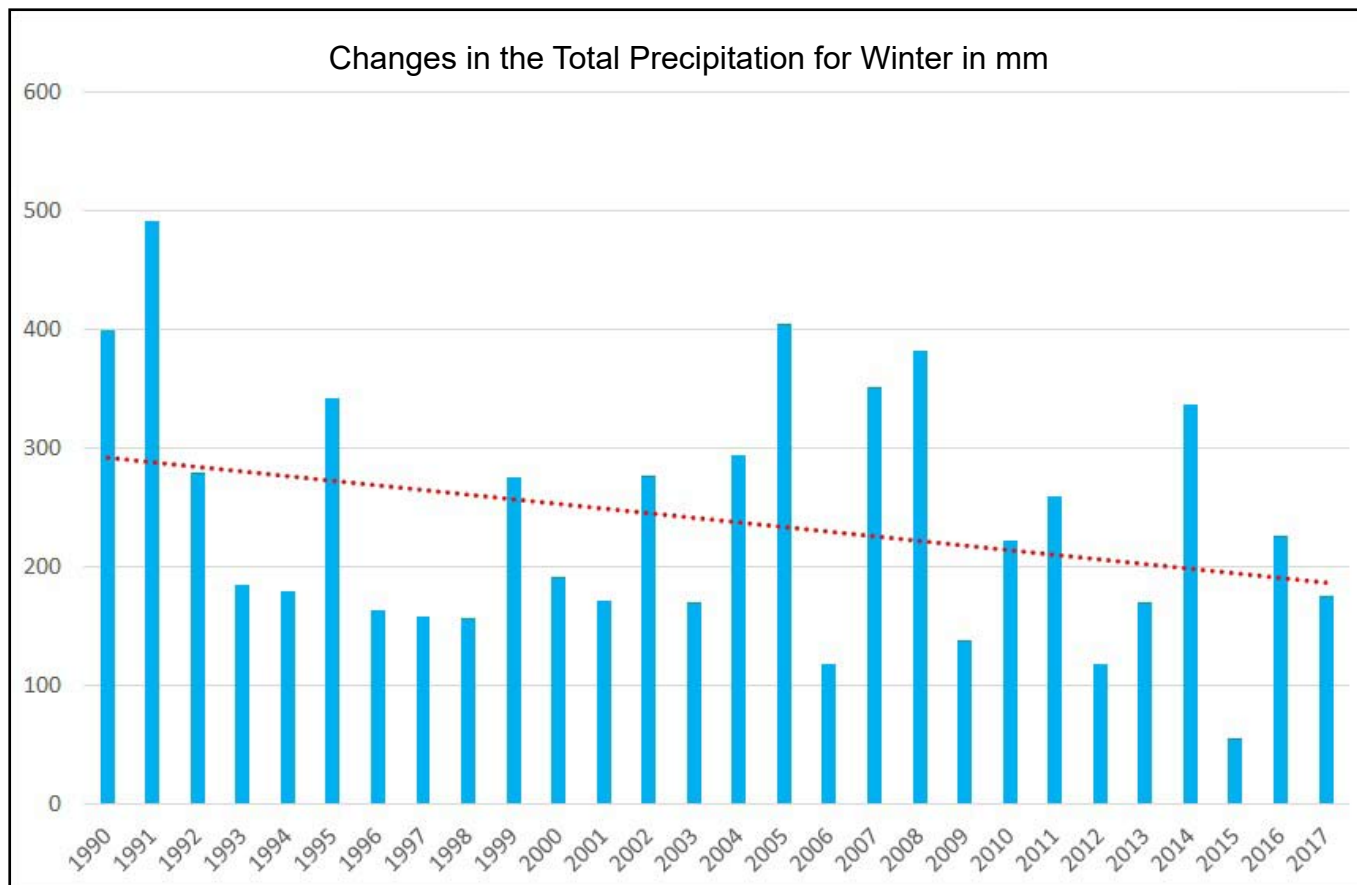


Figure 12: Changes in the Total Precipitation for Winter in mm.

Precipitation and Thunderstorm days

The regression lines for rain days and thunderstorm days, shown in Figure 11 and Figure 12 respectively, show that both tended to increase. In terms of thunderstorms, 2001 was the calmest, with just over ten thunderstorm days being registered. 2008 was the stormiest, with almost 50 thunderstorm days.

With regard to rain days, 1995 and 2008 were the wettest, with almost 120 rain days. In contrast, 2015 was the driest with just around 50 days.

From Figure 12 we note how days with precipitation were on the increase, even though total annual precipitation was on the decrease. It could be that the Mediterranean is becoming meteorologically more unstable, allowing for more days with rain. Being meteorologically more unstable does not necessarily imply that total precipitation will increase.

It could also be interpreted as a gradual increase in both the frequency and severity of exceptional

rainfall events. Moreover, this could also mean that spells of dry weather in between rainfall events tended to be longer. One reason for this is that rising temperatures intensify Earth's water cycle, increasing evaporation. Increased evaporation will result in more storms, but also contribute to drier dry spells in between rainfall events.

Evidence for an increased incidence of heavy convectional rainfall is provided by the fact that the number of thunderstorm days and the average annual maximum 24-hour rainfall have increased.

The overall result is that the shift to less rain in the winter and spring months will have the greatest impact and will exacerbate dryness.

Conclusion

The findings of this article were compared with a more in-depth study conducted by Galdies (2011) for the period 1997-2007. It appears that both articles express similar views about the trends in precipitation.

The analysis of data covering the period 1991-2017 uncovered a host of interesting trends. Overall, precipitation was found to have slowly but steadily decreased. The decrease in precipitation was found to be more pronounced in the winter and spring months. Meanwhile, the frequency and intensity of exceptional rainfall events was found to be increasing.

As with all studies, there is always room for improvement. This article would benefit with a further discussion relating to the type and validity of the instruments used and the quality of the data, especially that relating to total thunderstorm days. The study can be further improved by including data covering a longer period of time. Also there is the need to identify internal and external influences on precipitation more rigorously.

References

Galdies, C. (2011). *The Climate of Malta: Statistics, trends and analysis (1951-2010)*. Valletta, Malta: National Statistics Office.

Holton, J. R. (2004). *Introduction. An introduction to* Meilak, J. (1995). *The Climate and Weather of the Maltese Islands - an update*. Unpublished B.Ed. (Hons), University of Malta, Malta.

A graduate in B.Sc. (Hons) Earth Systems from the University of Malta, Andrea Muscat has been interested in meteorology from a very young age. He is the administrator of Maltese Islands Weather, a leading local weather service provider. Apart from meteorology, he has a keen interest in astronomy, photography and the natural world.

The Ciantar Family of Gozo: The Ghajnsielem-Xewkija Connection

GEOFFREY G. ATTARD

Introduction

The second half of the nineteenth century is most probably the most important part of the 1800's in the history of the island of Gozo. It was during this period that the social, political and religious life of the island flourished to some extent and Gozo attracted the national news on a more frequent, not to say, regular basis. Various events took place during the last decades of the century; in 1864 Gozo became an autonomous diocese. Then, in 1887, Queen Victoria bestowed the status of 'city' to the ancient town of Rabat and it began to bear her name. In the 1860's the first musical societies began to take form and in 1881, two musical bands in Victoria were formally baptised.

Ciantar: Its Gozitan Roots

According to Mario Cassar, Malta's foremost researcher on surnames and family names, 'Ciantar' was originally a Sicilian nickname which could have meant a professional jester. Later on it developed to become an occupational name referring to a singer (Cassar, 2003: 87). Delving deeper into the history of the surname, Abela mentions it under the name of Neygo

Ciantar in 1455 although a Federicus Ciantar was mentioned in the Militia list earlier on in 1419 (Cassar, 2003: 87). On the same note, the name of Count Giovanni Antonio Ciantar is often associated with Maltese History since it was he who wrote the renowned *Malta Illustrata* and published it between 1772 and 1780 establishing himself as one of Malta's early modern historians (Schiavone, 2009: 583).

When it comes to Gozo, we know from parish registers of a Ciantar in 1562 and the total of references to individuals with this surname counts up to six (Vella, 2010: 195). It makes sense to conclude that the first Maltese Ciantar to inhabit the island of Gozo must have settled in Ghajnsielem, the village nearest to Mgarr harbour that connected and still connects the small island with its sister island.

The Three Ciantar Clerics

The parish records of Xewkija, the first parish to be erected outside the walls of the medieval town of Rabat, refer to a Pietru Pawl Ciantar who was born on the 17th of June 1835, the son of Pawlu Ciantar and Francesca nee' Grech (Borg, 1978: 36). He was baptised in the Xewkija parish



From left to right – Archpriest Pietru Pawl Ciantar, his niece Francesca, and his nephews Dun Pawl and Dun Salv Ciantar.

church; his father Pawlu hailed from Rabat, Malta and he used to cross over to Gozo to check over some property that the family had in Għarb¹, the native village of his wife Francesca. Francesca's brother Dun Pawl Grech of Għarb, had served as parish priest of Xewkija from 1850 to 1854².

Pietru Pawl grew up in Xewkija but since Gozo was not yet a separate diocese and had no seminary of its own, he proceeded to the diocesan seminary of Mdina to study for the priesthood. He was ordained a priest by Bishop Gaetano Pace Forno, a Gozitan by birth, in 1858³, only six years before the establishment of the new Gozo diocese. He was then chosen to be parish priest of Għajnsielem on the 8th of May 1864. It is interesting to note here that today, the Ciantar surname has disappeared from Xewkija and is only extant in Gozo in the Għajnsielem locality among folk who are distantly related to Dun Pietru Pawl Ciantar.

Dun Pietru Pawl was an able administrator and a zealous shepherd of souls. It was during his time that Pope Leo XIII honoured the parish priest of Xewkija with the title of 'arċipriet' by the decree of the 10th of February 1893. In 1904, renowned archaeologist Manwel Magri SJ supervised archaeological research in Xewkija where he found, in a field owned by the Ciantar family, the foundations of a pagan temple (Borg, 1973: 13-14). In 1905 he built the oratory next to the church; this oratory had to be pulled down to make space for the new rotunda in the 1970s.

Two of Dun Pietru Pawl's nephews became priests; Dun Pawl, son of his brother Nikola, was ordained on the 24th May 1879 and his other nephew Dun Salv, son of his other brother Michelangelo, was ordained on the 4th of October 1879 (Attard, F.P. et al, 2014: 1-18). They both served as *kappillani* or chaplains for Bishop Giovanni Maria Camilleri OSA, bishop of Gozo⁴. Dun Pawl Ciantar also served as chaplain to the Lazaretto Hospital in Xewkija besides helping out in his own native parish.

Conclusion

The last person to carry the Ciantar surname in Xewkija was Francesca Ciantar, daughter of Nikola, who married Mikiel Zammit of Xewkija and thereby lost her maiden surname. Her one and only sister Marianna and her brothers Ġużepp, Ġanni, Salvu and of course Dun Pawl, remained unmarried. As stated, presently the Ciantar surname is only to be found in Għajnsielem, the picturesque village where Dun Pietru Pawl once served as parish priest for less than a year, before being chosen as the tenth parish priest of the Xewkija parish.

References

- Attard, F.P., Bezzina, J. and Xerri, J. (2014). *Ordinazzjonijiet ta' Qassisin Djoċesani Għawdxin (1864-2014)*. Gozo: Kurja tal-Isqof.
- Borg, S. (OSA). (1978). *Ix-Xewkija fi Ġrajjet il-Kappillani u l-Arċipriet Tagħha*. Malta: Progress Press.
- Borg, S. (OSA). (1973). *Ix-Xewkija tul iż-Żminijiet*. Gozo: Orphans Press.
- Cassar, M. (2003). *The Surnames of the Maltese Island. An Etymological Dictionary*. Malta: BDL.
- Schiavone, M. J. (ed) (2009). *Dictionary of Maltese Biographies*. (Volume 1). Malta: PIN.
- Vella, H.C.R. (2010). *The Earliest Church Register in Gozo 1554-1628*. Malta: Print Right Limited.

Geoffrey G. Attard was ordained priest 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.

¹ This information was passed on to me by my maternal grandfather Ġużeppi Zammit (1913-1994), maternal grandson of Nikola Ciantar, brother of Dun Pietru Pawl.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ This information was passed on to the author by his relative Fr Serafin Borg OSA of Xewkija.

Book Review: The Maltese Cinderella and the Women's Storytelling Tradition

Veronica Veen

Malta: Veronica Emma Veen (2017); 240 pages

REVIEWED BY THE LATE ANTON F. ATTARD (written in 2018)

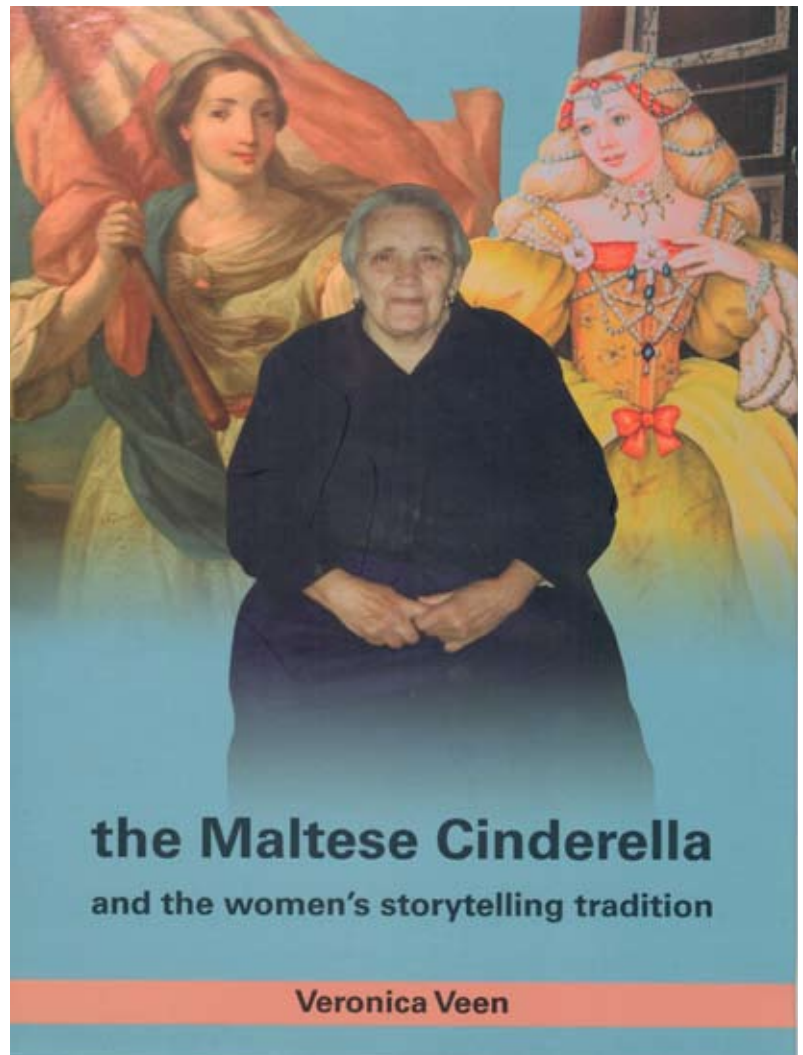
It is almost thirty years ago that I met Dr Veronica Veen, the Dutch cultural anthropologist and art historian/archaeologist. It is illustrative of her open-minded approach as a scholar that she immediately sought the cooperation and dialogue with local expertise.

At the time, the late 1980's and early 1990's, she was absorbed by an extensive fieldwork project revolving around the storytelling tradition on Gozo. The corpus of stories about a strong, bean-eating giantess who had reputedly brought the Stone of Qala up to its present location, had her special interest, since the connection between this place-bound tale with its many variants and Gozo's rich prehistoric past might be established: a stone-carrying giantess as a folkloristic remains of a goddess-culture that built megalithic temples.

In 1994 Dr Veen produced an English version of a book in which the results of her anthropological fieldwork were laid down. This book, titled *Female Images of Malta*, was a pioneering effort in the sense that she had recorded the numerous variants of the giantess-story and a fair number of others in a scrupulously precise and literal manner, in order to retain the oral character of the performances. She also paid more than the usual attention to the setting and the social context of storytelling.

A Spectacular Find

In the wake of her research, in 1992 she managed, through trusted mediators, to trace an old female storyteller on Gozo, named Marija, who maintained a repertoire of numerous folkstories and even fairy tales. The key piece among these stories was a long



fairytale about *Il-Germudija*, the Sooty One, that instantly proved to be a fascinating variant of the internationally well-known and wide-spread tale of Cinderella.

Only after many years, meanwhile having published a book on the Dutch neolithic Funnel Beaker Culture and preparing more publications, she was in the position to carry on with elaborating on the earlier discovery. Meanwhile Marija had passed away at a very respectable age, a considerable loss for the Maltese heritage of orally delivered folklore. Fortunately Dr Veen found the support and cooperation of Gianna, the niece of Marija,

who proved to be in possession of an admirable memory. Many more stories, stemming from her favourite auntie, could follow in this way.

With great transparency, as she has always preferred to work, Dr Veen has conceived her new book *The Maltese Cinderella and the Women's Storytelling tradition* as a testimony of 'work in process' to recall and reconstruct as much as possible of this great fairytale and the rest of Marija's legacy. In this publication, with many entertaining and even hilarious moments, the role of Gianna, her informant, proved to be truly instrumental. Many details about women's life in the old days the stories refer to, have been added, embedding them in a sound, socio-cultural context. The book features some thirty stories in total and is generously illustrated with photographs by the author, attractive old fairytale prints and drawings by her husband. Note also that this book mainly deals with women's stories, that is stories told by and about women, according to the compact definition by Dr Veen.

Far From a Common Cinderella

In the more theoretical parts of her book, Dr Veen demonstrates that *Il-Germudija* is everything except a common Cinderella, as can be seen from the exciting, carefully annotated text, directly derived from the telling session with Marija. The protagonist, in all her work, is even deviant from the mostly colourful heroines in the other (only) three Cinderella variants that were known in Malta so far, featuring in stories collected by the folklorists Bertha Ilg, Hans Stumme and Manwel Magri, all around 1900.

And there is a very substantial difference with the internationally more popular and famous variants derived from the *Cendrillon* by Charles Perrault (1694), with the famous glass slipper and the helpful fairy godmother. Like in the later German variant *Aschenputtel* published by the Grimm brothers (1812, 1819 and 1857) the heroine is a pitiful and dependent human being, terrorised by nasty stepsisters and an evil stepmother. Dr Veen brilliantly, in my opinion, argues that in the Maltese variants it is not the 'stepmother-problem' that 'reigns' the story (*Il-Germudija* is not even a daughter, but a maid!), but the threatening

domination by a daughter-in-law, entering a fixed matriliney, which is more in line with Maltese socio-historical reality. This is cultural-anthropological research of the highest level, explaining most of the typical deviations in the Maltese variants, of which *Il-Germudija* is by far the most radical.

In another theoretical part of the book the newly-found fairytale is thoroughly analysed from several points of view. Dr Veen demonstrates that the story teller managed to polish and concentrate the story into a superb structure consisting of triads on several levels, with the use of all kinds of motifs (for instance core motifs and the more invisible overarching motifs) that enabled her to create an intricate, layered symbolism. Her telling style is both vigorous and efficient. The characterisation of the energetic and brave servant girl, and of her almost timid lover (not at all a Prince, but simply the son of the house) is of an impressive psychological refinement. Additionally, the possible 'messages' of the fairytale, certainly of an emancipatory and egalitarian kind, and at the time also clearly somewhat subversive, are discussed.

The very important and readable fourth part of Dr Veen's book features a true treasure of stories, all of them with instructive introductions and references. We are finally able to read in English the three 'historical' Maltese Cinderella variants, originally written down in German and Maltese. Two of them (those collected by Ilg and Stumme, *Ċiklemfusa* and *Germuda-Żermuda*) also have far from docile protagonists. Then follow five related stories, among which Magri's magnificent *The Nether World*, and *Betta Pilusa*, told before 1870 to the gifted early feminist collector Laura Gonzenbach in Sicily. Altogether influences from Italy, especially from the early *Pentamerone* by Basile (1634) appear to have worked much stronger in Malta than Perrault and Grimm, another shift in the existing overall picture Veronica Veen presents us with.

This richly-illustrated book, that contains more than 240 pages, can be regarded as a true tribute to the female storyteller. The author was very lucky to find the world's greatest specialist in fairytales, professor Jack Zipes, willing to write an interesting (and admiring) foreword.

Żebbuġ of Gozo. Its People, Inscriptions and History

Horatio Caesar Roger Vella

Gozo, Malta: Żebbuġ Local Council (2018); 624 pages.

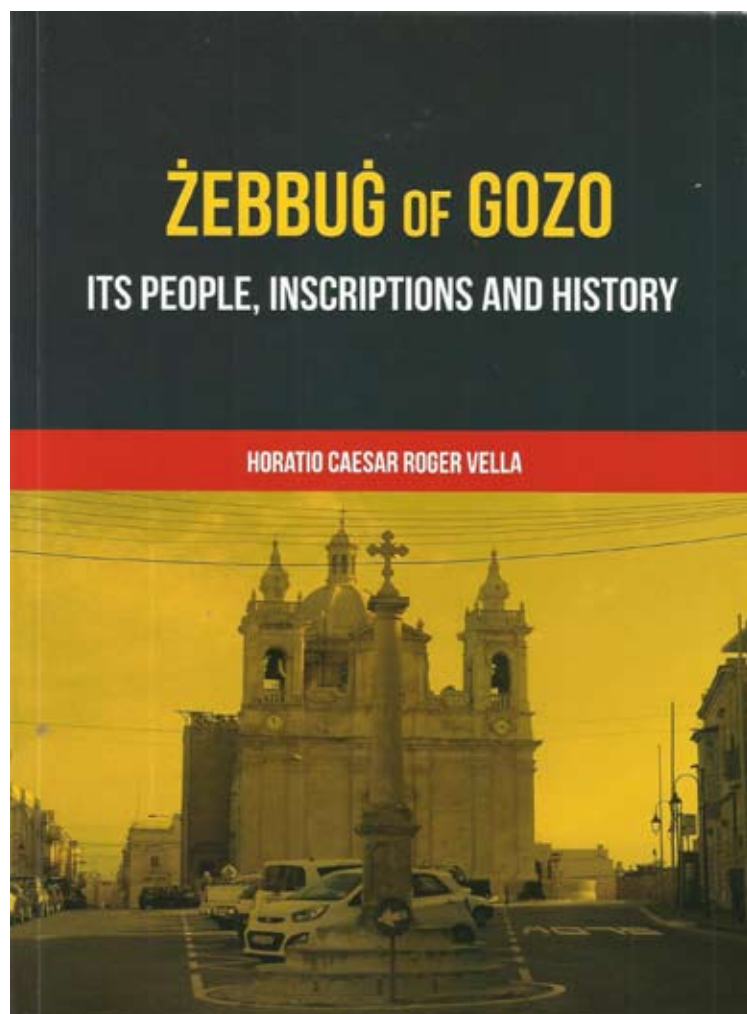
REVIEWED BY GEOFFREY G. ATTARD

Żebbuġ of Gozo. Its People, Inscriptions and History is a monumental work that covers the history of the village of Żebbuġ in the northwest of Gozo from the pre-historic era to the present day and age. It is different from the other works by classical scholar Professor Horatio C. R. Vella; this time we have in our hands a publication that is the result of a love-affair, a love-affair that began about a decade ago when the author and his family bought a flat at the end of Ġħajn Mhelhel Street, the street that leads to Xwejni, Qbajjar and Marsalforn. This does not render the publication any less academic; the author has been working on the book for more than a decade and he is presenting us with a *fait-accompli*; the book is the ultimate authority on the subject and brings together a great amount of information of

geological, archaeological, geographical, linguistic (related to toponymy), demographic, ecclesiastical, historical, literary, cultural and logistical importance about the locality of Żebbuġ.

An encyclopaedia of all that is related to the northernmost village of Gozo would be the best term to apply to this publication, since there is hardly anything related to the village that is not to be found in the book. As a classical scholar, Professor Vella is in the best of positions to provide us with a detailed translation of all the epigraphic slabs that are to be found in the locality of Żebbuġ. In fact, one of the chapters of the book is dedicated to all the inscriptions that one can find within the village; the majority of them are in Latin since they are of ecclesiastical provenance but others are in our native Maltese language. The author provides us with the original text together with an adjacent translation into English making it easier for the reader to understand.

Genealogy is a science that has attracted more interest of late especially among those Maltese and Gozitan emigrants who return to Gozo to settle and stay. Parish priests may receive the odd email asking for family information that is then used by the caller to organise his or her own family tree. Professor Vella worked on hundreds of genealogical trees. Being a descendant of the Manuelli family – a family with close connections to Gozo and Żebbuġ – Vella must have felt a personal interest in the subject as he drew the various genealogies that run from 1405 up to 1935. Through these family trees, Dr Vella manages to show the familial connections between many priests who stemmed from Żebbuġ throughout the ages as well as the various familiar ties existing between families of the village itself. With the intricate details of the hundreds of individuals, both members of the clergy as well as lay



members of the community, Professor Vella has created a history of the people. His publication is not a guide-book for the clergy or elite of the village, it is very much a history of the common folk. He leaves no stone unturned to provide us with information about the baptism, marriage and burial of the many Żebbuġin who feature in his sumptuous publication. Being both an ecclesiastical historian and a researcher with a wide experience, having even carried archival work on primary sources in different places all over Europe and beyond, Professor Vella backs his text with ample references and the endnotes at the end of his long historical introduction speak for themselves. Vella also read the late Mgr Andrea Vella's *Iż-Żebbuġ u l-Ġrajja Tiegħu* (1960's) as well as Rev. Joseph Vella's *Iż-Żebbuġ. Ir-Raħal ta' Santa Marija* (1989).

An index at the end of a book makes it easier to access and renders the publication richer. Professor Vella's publication contains a detailed index; it must have taken the author a great deal of time to

work out the index with references to the names of the various people named and the pages on which they feature. The appendices at the end of the book provide us with the texts of the various pastoral visits that the bishops of Malta and Gozo made on the island which until 1864 was still part of the archdiocese of Malta.

I would argue that appendix 35 is unique in the fact that it enlists the many family nicknames of the village which are still extant unto this day up to the point that people refer to each other using them in their everyday communication.

In Żebbuġ, nicknames carry an important role since some surnames, such as Cini, are extremely common and it is only by nickname that one may be able to distinguish between one family and another. The nicknames are enlisted according to the streets where the people carrying the particular nickname reside.

Errata Corrige

With reference to the article 'A Protest Letter from Gozo During the Birth of Press Freedom in Malta' by Joseph Galea in *The Gozo Observer* Issue 38 page 3, the References on page 10 should have read as follows:

Badger, G. P. (1839). Trial of Mr J. Richardson for an Alleged Libel Against the Roman Catholic Religion. Malta: Church Mission Press.

Bonello, G. (2013). "Appalling Poverty in Malta in the early 19th Century," *Times of Malta*, June 23. [<https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20130623/life/features/Appalling-poverty-in-Malta-in-the-early-19th-century.475512> - accessed 31 March 2018].

Busuttil, S. (1965). "Malta's Economy in the 19th Century," *Journal of the Faculty of Arts*, No. 3: 1-22. Malta: University of Malta.

Clare, A. G. (1981). "Features of an Island Economy: Malta 1800-1914", *Hyphen*, Vol. 2 No. 6: 235-255. Msida: The Upper Lyceum.

Colonial Office Dispatch number 159/12 of 1 April 1835 (National Archives Rabat.

Malta Government Gazette, 26 October 1836 (Number 1348) pages 361-364

Mangion, F. (2015). "Recalling a brave sincere patriot forgotten by Malta," *Times of Malta*, March 8.

Mitrovich, G. (1836). *The Cause of the People of Malta*. London: Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange.

Remarks on the Third Report of the Irish Poor Inquiry Commissioners, &c. (London, 1837, 8vo; also printed in vol. li. of the 'Parliamentary Papers' for 1837, pp. 253-290).

Report of the Royal Commission into the Affairs of Malta, London 1839.

Ross, J. (1888). *Three Generations of English Women, Memoirs and Correspondence*, Vol. 2: 123. London: John Murray.

Staines, P. (2015). *Essays on Governing Malta (1813-1835)*. Malta: PEG.

The Harlequin. 6th December 1837 pagini 167-168. Malta: Filippo Izzo.

Recent Activities at the University of Malta - Gozo Campus

JOSEPH CALLEJA

Courses at the Gozo Campus

In October 2018, three new courses opened at the University Gozo Campus. The Faculty for Social Wellbeing, for the second time, offered the 5-year course leading to the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Criminology. This multidisciplinary course covers various areas of study related to crime, such as policing, corrections, forensics, terrorism, psychology, psychiatry, cybercrime criminal investigations, and others.

The Faculty of Education opened a three-year top-up course leading to the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Facilitating Inclusive Education. This course aims to build professional skills required by Learning Support Educators to assist and support the teacher in the general classroom.

The Islands and Small States Institute once again opened a course leading to the Diploma in Lace Studies. This two-year course covers a variety of topics related to lace making, including its history, its business aspects and various technical methods utilised in this practice. Six students are attending.

In November 2018, the Institute for Tourism, Travel and Culture at the University of Malta, with the support of other entities, offered, for the first time, a programme of studies aimed for all those working in the tourism sector in Gozo. The course, 'It-Turiżmu f'Għawdex', consisted of two study units, which aim to introduce participants to the concepts of tourism, hospitality, vacationing and how they are nuanced by the specificities of islandness and smallness. The course was sponsored by the Ministry for Gozo, enabling participants to attend free of charge. It is also being supported by the Gozo Tourism Association (GTA).

In February 2019, the Faculty of Education opened another course, this time leading to a Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching of Maltese as a Foreign Language. This programme, which is spread over three years, is intended for qualified teachers who would like to enhance their professional training. Lectures are being offered at the Gozo Campus via video-conferencing facilities.

Other courses running at the Gozo Campus during this academic year are those leading to the Diploma in Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the Diploma in Facilitating Inclusive Education, Bachelor of Psychology (Hons), the Bachelor of Commerce, the Executive Master of Business Administration, and a Masters in Educational Leadership and Management.

A total of 102 students are at present attending courses at the Gozo Campus.

University of the Third Age

The University of the Third Age in Gozo also started the current academic year at the Gozo Campus. This year's curriculum includes various informative sessions regarding different subjects. Prof Joe Friggieri delivered a number of lectures on philosophical aspects of Maltese





The four proofreaders (from left) Josmarie Buttigieg, Antonella Grima, Kylie Grech and Stanley Portelli (far right), after the graduation ceremony. Also visible Prof Manwel Mifsud (fourth from left), Dr Olvin Vella (fifth from left) and Mr Thomas Pace (sixth from left).

proverbs, while Mr Anthony Caruana gave a series of eight sessions on understanding works of art. In February, Rev. Dr Joseph Bezzina, initiated another series of lectures on the history of Gozo.

Graduations

In December 2018, four Gozitans were awarded the University's Certificate of Proofreading in Maltese (MQF 5) and the Proofreading Warrant, after completing the one-year course in proofreading Maltese at the University Gozo Campus. The Awards were presented by the National Council for the Maltese Language. The four Gozitan proofreaders had attended the fourth course held in Gozo between February 2017 and January 2018.

During the graduation ceremonies held at the University of Malta in November and December, two students were awarded the Postgraduate Certificate in the Teaching of Ethics in Schools.

Both graduants have successfully completed the course at the University Gozo Campus, through the video-conferencing system.

Examinations

The Gozo Campus once more contributed in the organisation of the end-of-semester examinations for Gozitan students. During the January/February 2019 session of examinations, around 620 examinations were held, partly at the Examination Centre in Victoria and partly at the University Gozo Campus in Xewkija.

The majority of Gozitan students following courses at the University of Malta are opting to sit for their written exams in Gozo.

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



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

The Gozo Observer is distributed without charge, upon request, to interested readers. Current and past issues of the magazine can be obtained, subject to availability, from:

The Editor, Gozo Observer, University of Malta - Gozo Campus, Mgarr Road, Xewkija, Gozo. Tel: +356 21564359, Fax: +356 21564350, E-mail: ugo@um.edu.mt

