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Editorial:
Preserving our Heritage

There is no doubt that Gozo is being catapulted into Europe, and expectations are high that this will be followed by considerable benefits to the island. Among these are the tangible economic benefits to business with, hopefully, diffusion of profits into the pockets of the average citizen.

Equally important are developments which lead to a betterment of our environment and way of life. Among recently announced changes we find two proposals which are bound to enhance our environment and promote wider appreciation of the heritage of which we are mere custodians.

The first of these is no doubt the declaration of the Dwejra region as part of world heritage. Not only is this an area of exceptional geographical beauty, but it also harbours in its tiny confines a collection of flora and fauna unique to the islands, and to the world. A seminar held in June 1999 emphasised the uniqueness of this part of Gozo which, a generation ago, was hardly thought of as more than a place for swimming restricted to the inhabitants of Gharb and San Lawrenz. As part of world heritage, and as a result of the EU funds made available for this purpose, this particular spot will be enhanced and publicised world-wide. This has been made possible through injection of EU funds for the purpose.

Another piece of good news, long awaited for particularly by those living in Xaghra and Marsalforn is the closure of the rubbish dump which has been such an eyesore (and a nose-sore), as well as a health-risk, again with the assistance of EU funds. With the projected rehabilitation of this area, there is no doubt that it could be changed from a neglected dump into an attractive belle-vedere.

There is still, however, a stark contrast between the efforts of the Government at national and European level to bring Gozo up to the mark, and the lackadaisical approach by the average Gozitan citizen to these challenges. There is still a great deal to be done to convince one and all that it is essential to aspire to European standards in all walks of life. We are still witnessing rusting refrigerators used as improvised dividing walls in fields, while the ubiquitous discarded plastic drip-system tubing decorating every niche of our valleys. We see rubble accumulating outside every building site, and buildings boarded up for years because work on them was suspended. Above all, at this time of the year, we are shamed within the international arena by an increasing number of hunters who find release of their primitive instincts in killing every bird of passage, to which the word “protected” is just a fatally misleading epithet.

There should be a continuing campaign to inform the public of what it means to upgrade standards. While the closure of a smelly waste dump is essential, it is equally important to ensure that separation of waste should start at the home. It is unlikely that provision of several large containers at a single point in a village will induce the average householder to start separating garbage into different containers, and much more effort should be placed on educating the public on the need for this to be done.

There is also a need to instil into the public the need for discipline, whether it is for parking, smoking in public, or respect for the rights of others. Above all, there should be a continuing effort to inform the public about the relevance of our heritage, not only that of archaeological or historical importance, but also about the physical and natural environment which is so often taken for granted and abused.
The Gozo Cathedral Public Library

ANTON FARRUGIA*

The Gozo Cathedral Public Library has been functional for the last 23 years. It was founded in the ’70s, when the then Archdeacon of the Gozo Cathedral, Mgr. Paul Cauchi (1896-1980) donated all his books (more than 3000) to the Gozo Cathedral which marked the beginning of this library. This fact is confirmed by the inscriptions found on several of the said books.

On the insistence of Rev. Fr. Tony Mercieca, a priest doing pastoral work in Miami, USA, the then Archpriest of the Gozo Cathedral parish Mgr. Carmelo Scicluna collected hundreds of other books from several parishioners and added them to the books donated by Mgr. Cauchi. Thus the library started to build up gradually with the acquisition of about two thousand books per year. Needless to say, the Most Reverend Chapter of the Gozo Cathedral approved this initiative and gave its wholehearted blessing to this worthy cause. Another factor that affected this decision was the resolution taken by the Gozo Pastoral Congress held in 1975 that stated: “In every parish a library be established, furnished with interesting books and other publications with which all parishioners, especially youths can enhance their culture”.

From 1979 to this day, the Cathedral Library went through several phases leading to its present situation. The library was growing day by day, and on 7th August 1987, Bishop Nicholas Cauchi inaugurated a larger hall, some 50 metres from Independence Square (it-Tokk), Victoria, from where the library continued operating up to 1999. During the previous year, the Gozo Cathedral Parish forked out the sum of about Lm70,000 to buy new and larger premises for the library. On 8th August 1999, the library had completed its transfer to the new premises at Qasam San Gorg, also in Victoria.

The Honourable Speaker of the Maltese parliament, Mr. Anton Tabone inaugurated the new premises which were blessed by the Vicar General, Mgr. John Bosco Gauci who is also the archdeacon of the Gozo Cathedral Chapter.

The main benefactor of the library is Rev. Fr. Anthony Mercieca of Florida, USA. During the past 23 years he sent many thousands of books on all subjects under the sun. A fair estimate would be that Fr. Tony has donated about 70% of all the 103,000 books that the library possesses at the moment of writing this article. When the University Gozo Centre opened its doors in our island, an urgent message was mailed to Father Tony to concentrate on sending tertiary academic books. Fr. Tony complied beyond our expectation.

During these 23 years, the main librarian working full time in the library was Mr. Anton Farrugia assisted by a staff of ten helpers. All personnel working in the library do so voluntarily without any pecuniary remuneration whatsoever. In 1996, as an appreciation for the sterling work done by the librarian and this staff, the medal “Gieħ il-Parroċċa” was presented to the librarian to honour all the staff.

*Mr. Anton Farrugia is a former student at the University Gozo Centre and is currently librarian at the Gozo Cathedral Library.

(Continued on page 7)
A Brief Outline of the Geophysical Properties of the Island of Gozo

GEORGE SAID*

Introduction

The geo-morphology of Gozo is one of its environmental assets. Through the span of time, geo-morphological processes generated different landforms that today embellish the island with its scenic beauty and rural character. Various geo-morphological processes have produced a varied surface landscape and coastline, restricted in accessibility where it controls the inhabitants’ lifestyle and their living.

The Stratigraphy

The origins of the Maltese archipelago can be traced to shallow marine carbonate sediments, superimposed phases of strike slip faulting and rifting and geo-morphological scars triggered by different climatic processes and complex tectonic repercussion of the advancing of the African and Eurasian plates towards each other.1 This group of limestone islands rest on the Malta-Hyblean platform, which is a wide shelf bridge that connects the Ragusa platform of southern Sicily and the Tripolitana platform of northern Libya.2

The Maltese stratum comprises hard massive sometimes-reefal tectonically competent coralline limestone, ductile fine-grained biomicrites and plastic marls and clays of tectonically incompetent behaviour.3 These sedimentary beds belong to the geologically recent mid-Tertiary period. The sediments settled in shallow marine waters and their deposition occurred in stages with five main geological strata, which differ in composition and structural resistance (Refer to Figure 1).

The circulation of ocean currents acting in the past geological times affected the deposition of this sedimentary succession. The way the stratification is presented on the limestone exposure gives an indication of the deposition, which had occurred during the formation period of that particular limestone band. Parallel layers indicate that deposition of that sediment bed probably took place where the activity of the waves and ocean currents was at a minimum. The exposed Tertiary section is divided into the following five rock units, which can be seen exposed on the islands.

Lower Coralline Limestone

The Lower Coralline Limestone is the oldest exposed formation in the Maltese Islands, which dates back to the Upper Oligocene period (38-24 million years BP). It is mainly exposed in the forms of sheer cliffs sections which show up to 140 meters near Xlendi in Gozo and somewhat less along the Maltese coastline between Fomm Ir-Riḥ and Bengasia Point.

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3 Reuther, 1984
**Globigerina Limestone**
Above this geological stratum, lies the Globigerina limestone formation which was deposited in the Lower-Middle Miocene epoch, 24 to 15 million years BP. This rock is the largest outcrop in the Maltese Islands and its formation in Gozo is well exposed in the valley gorges and in the western part of the island. This is a fine grained sedimentary bed is further sub-divided into three members, the Lower, Middle and the Upper Globigerina members.

**Blue Clay**
The Blue Clay formation dates back to the Mid-Upper Miocene epoch, Serravilian to Early Tortonian era i.e. 14 to 9 million years BP. Outcrops occur throughout the whole island of Gozo. The formation is an extremely soft rock, which weathers away easily and translates itself to 45º slopes and taluses that tend to slide further downhill over the underlying Globigerina Limestone formation. Blue Clay is non-permeable and rain water slides down to the valley systems.

**Greensand**
The Upper Miocene epoch, early Tortonian era, i.e., 9 to 7 million years BP, saw the deposition of the Greensand formation. Such stratification is composed of variable thickness of bioclastic, glauconitic limestones which are poorly cemented. Weathering leads to the release of iron oxides form the breakdown of the glauconite and imparts an orange brown colour to the formation. Maximum thickness of this geological member is at the Gelmus hill in Gozo where it attains a maximum of 11 metres.

**Upper Coralline limestone**
Next in sequence, is the Upper Coralline Limestone formation which also dates back to the Upper Miocene epoch but with a specific reference to the late Tortonian to early Messinian era i.e. 7 to 4 million years BP. This formation is similar in many ways to the Lower Coralline Limestone formation especially in colour and coralline algal content. It is a durable stratum frequently weathering into steep bound cliffs translating into well-developed karst topography. Outcrops occur an all the islands of the Maltese archipelago most often in the form of mesas. Thickness of this geological band ranges from 4 to 30 m, as various mesas do not have uniform thickness.

**Quaternary Deposits**
Another deposition feature in the Maltese Islands are Quaternary deposits. They occur as cavern and fissure infillings and valley inffills. Deposits consists of alluvial fan deposits, caliche soil profiles and calcreted breccias all of which are stained red by iron oxidation. Some of these are found inside the Qawra doline in Gozo, in Comino and along vadose sections in Dingli in Malta. Dunes and raised beach deposits like those at Ramla in Gozo also belong to the Quaternary deposition processes. All these variety of deposits took place during the Late Pleistocene to Holocene era i.e. 1.5 million to 6,000 years BP.

**Tectonics**
Tectonic activity has distinct importance in shaping the islands. The fracture pattern of the islands has been created by tectonic processes governed by convergent to lateral motions taking place between the European and African plates. Most tectonic movements have been strike slip or extensional in the form of rifting. Two different rift systems, differing in age and trends control the tectonic setting in the Maltese Islands. The island of Gozo is characterised by a gentle regional 4º dip to the north east, producing 120 meter high cliff sides on the west coast of the island.

Tectonic differences are registered in Malta and Gozo. This is due to the presence of the synclinal deformation on the western Malta and Gozo which probably aided the land between the Victoria lines and Qala faults to be densely segmented by rifting processes into horsts and grabens, including the submerged Comino channel areas and the emerged Comino island group. (Refer to Figure 2)
Such activity caused a complex density of faults to be formed in the south of Gozo with a special reference to the south east tip of the island where a feather faulting structure zone is present. It can be observed that from the geographical distribution of faults on the island of Gozo indicate that the island is a tectonic grip. This leads to the exposure of all bands of all the geological strata on diverse scales to be eroded to the extent of forming different surface landforms due to the various geomorphological processes. The mesa rounded hilly topography accompanied by various valley systems and coastal formations are the results of tectonic presentation aided by various scales of sub-aerial and marine processes due to different climates which were acting in the latest phase of the formation of the Mediterranean Sea. (Refer to Photo 1)

**Geomorphology**

The central and eastern sections of the Island of Gozo exhibit a younger erosion surface than that of Malta. The west is dissected and the Upper Coralline Limestone is left exposed above the 45° Blue Clay slopes. It is probable that up to 130 m of the upper surface has been active enough to be removed by erosion, which has been active enough to prevent thick accumulations of soil, leaving instead bare limestone pavements on the more exposed locations. This has a direct effect on the drainage patterns on the island. The most striking aspect of the drainage patterns is the dominance of channels draining north eastwards over those draining to the south and south west. (Refer to Photos 2&3)

Such occurrence is also due to the shoulder up arching of the Pantelleria rift system, which has created high land on the western Malta and eastern Gozo and drowned the fluvial valleys of eastern Malta. However, shallow linear channels occur on the fault scarps of the horst and graben structures of Malta and south east Gozo. Tilting has made the drainage pattern of the islands highly asymmetrical, yet former marine and continental erosion surfaces can be detected. They occur mostly on the western part of Gozo, where the surface is progressively more dissected towards the west. Current sea level, in relation to recent and inactive past tectonics processes has led to the drowning of the rias, grabens, dolines and shore platforms.
The geology and geomorphology of the Maltese Islands are quite young in age, common phenomena in most islands. They are also lithogically uncomplicated, have a simple climate, heavily dependent on external controls and are areas of reduced landform scale. These physical assets have conditioned the set-up of agricultural activity, the distribution of settlement patterns and the economy as a whole of the Maltese Archipelago.

Conclusions

Photo 3: Hanging valley in the North West of Gozo where erosion was not powerful enough to cut the valley down to sea level because of the small catchment area

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A word of thanks goes to the Honorable Minister for Gozo, Mrs. Giovanna Debono, who for the past few years contributed an annual donation of Lm300-500 to meet some of the inherent expenses incurred in the running of the library. Another word of thanks also goes to the Honourable Speaker of Parliament, who weekly, almost without fail, sends to the library all, or almost all, copies of the Malta Government publications.

(Continued from page 3)

Many educational courses have been organised by the library during these 23 years. The number of student enrolments, especially, university students, has been growing at a steady rate. This, as already mentioned, is due to the fact that the library now specialises in books related to tertiary education such as philosophy, theology, sociology, psychology, archaeology, art and architecture, computer science and technology, and the physical sciences.

The Gozo Cathedral Public Library is open from Monday to Friday, from 5.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. The library is kept closed on Sundays, public holidays, and for the five days preceding the feast of Santa Marija in August. The librarian appreciates donations of books and financial help for the continual upgrading of the library. Those who would like to volunteer may contact the librarian on one of these telephone numbers: 21554101; Fax: 21564572; E-mail: gozocathedral@maltanet.net.
Five Bells from the Knights’ Ferreria at the Gozo Cathedral

JOSEPH BEZZINA*

The Cathedral belfry that dominates the Gozo Citadel now house a set of five new bells which were produced by John Taylor Bellfounders Limited of Loughborough, Leicestershire, United Kingdom, the largest bell-foundry in the world. They replace five other bells, the earliest of which has pealed from the belfry for the past three hundred and sixty four years.

Bells and Social Routine

Bells of all sizes have been used throughout the world for signalling – tolling the hours, marking significant points of ritual, calling to worship, announcing events, rejoicing, warning, and mourning.

From medieval times to the early twentieth century, the division of the day and the night in Gozo and Malta depended entirely on church bells. This was due to the fact that in Gozo there was only one public clock, situated within the Citadel, and the number of clocks in households was negligible.

It was the church bells that proclaimed a succession of prayers and services from morning to evening at recognized hours. It was customary to refer to the hours of the day in relation to the striking of the church bells. At four in the morning, the Pater Noster bell announced day-break and summoned the people to mass and, later on, to proceed to earn their daily bread. Tat-Tmienja, at eight in the morning, invited them for a short prayer. Tal-Borom, literally ‘of the pots’, at eleven in the morning, marked the time for the rekindling of fires and the preparation of meals. Ta’ Nofs inhar, at noon, marked midday. Tat-Tlieta, at three in the afternoon on Fridays, reminded the hour of the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. The Ave Mariaja bell was rung an hour before sunset and, an hour later, the Ta’ l-Imwiet bell, invited the faithful to pray for the departed brethren.

Special ringing called people to worship. A succession of twenty or so chimes by a single bell invited the people to mass. A mota, (plural moti), or the ringing of more than one bell successively and concurrently marked the celebration of a feast day or the beginning of a special ceremony in church. A very special ceremony was announced by the ringing of three successive moti several minutes long on each quarter of the hour preceding the beginning of the ceremony.

Bells were also rung to announce events. The election of a bishop or a grandmaster was proclaimed by the pealing of all church bells. They were also rung to open the city gate, to announce the approach of advancing armies, or the imminence of a storm. Death is always announced by the parish bell; the slow tone of a funeral bell was part of daily life.

Bells imparted the social routine in towns and villages and, for this reason, everyone, since early childhood, was taught how to translate the ringing into a precise message.

Bells from the Knights’ Ferreria

The foundation of the church that is presently the Cathedral goes back to medieval times. A document from 1299 hints that a church within the castle or citadel of Gozo was functioning as a parish church. A century later this church began to be referred to as the Matrice of Santa Marija, the mother church dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

On Sunday, 13 February 1575, the church received a very important person. Pietro Dusina, who a few weeks earlier had been designated as apostolic visitor to Malta and Gozo by Pope Gregory XIII, made his formal visit to the Matrice. From the report of this distinguished visitor (Visitatio Apostolica [1575] 419v), it is known that the Matrice church had three bells in 1575. It was the only church in...
Gozo to have bells. Yet none of these three bells has survived.

In the 1630s, the Matrice’s authorities decided to acquire two more bells to add to the three already hanging in the belfry. The order was placed with the Ferreria or Foundry of the Knights of Saint John, the rulers of Malta since 1530. The Ferreria was situated just inside the city gate, Valletta, occupying the block between the present Ordinance Street and South Street. It was demolished late in the nineteenth century to make way for the palace that took its name from the foundry, Palazzo Ferreria.

The Ferreria was established to meet the military needs of the Order, especially guns and related tackle. Bells were only a side-product of the Ferreria and were cast upon request by church authorities. The truth is that, according to Kenneth Cauchi, who kindly provided the technical information for this write-up, the founders at the Ferreria were not bell-founders, but simply master artisans of their craft. These founders did produce a number of good toned bells, but they lacked the expertise to complement the tones of the various bells that they produced. When bells did match, it was probably just a matter of coincidence.

The Two Smallest Bells

The two new bells of the Matrice have been traced by Robert Cassar, an expert in the field, to Vincenzo Sardo, the master founder of the Ferreria, who definitely cast the two slightly larger bells at the Mdina Cathedral. The latter, produced six years earlier in 1633, are still in place. The Gozo bells were ready in 1639 and were blessed by Bishop Michael Balaguer at Saint Francis Church, Valletta, the church next door to the Ferreria.

The smallest, known in fact as iz-Zghira, has a diameter of 735 mm. Around its top rim, it carries the inscription ‘VIVENTES VOCO ET QVE PERIERE GEMO’ – I call the living, and weep for the dead. It has an embossment of the Blessed Virgin Mary, an incised coat-of-arms of Bishop Balaguer, and the inscription ‘CONSACRATA’, on one side; and an embossment of the Holy Family and the date ‘1639’, on the opposite side.

The slightly larger bell, lately called by the not so graceful name of l-Imġelġla, - the cracked (bell) - has a diameter of 840 mm. It also carries an inscription: ‘DAEMONES EXPELLO, TEMPESTATESQUE SERENO, 1639’ (I have the power to expel devils, and to calm tempests). This inscription is quite common on medieval bells of Europe, but a rarity in the Maltese islands. It has an embossment of the Immaculate Conception, an incised coat-of-arms of Bishop Balaguer, and the inscription ‘CONSACRATA’, on one side; and, like the other, an embossment of the Holy Family and the date ‘1639’, on the opposite side.

These bells, probably slightly larger than the three earlier bells, have a very sharp hum tone. All five bells were lowered from the belfry in 1693, soon after the 1 January earthquake that caused considerable structural damage to the medieval church. In the following years, the old Matrice was demolished and the foundation stone of a much larger church was laid on 21 September 1697.

The new church, built on a design by the famous Maltese architect Lorenzo Gafà, was officially opened on 14 August 1711. The church was provided with a handsome well-proportioned campanile attached to its north-east side. The five bells were raised inside the new belfry and they pealed for hours and hours on 11 October 1716, when Bishop Giacomo Cañaves, in a twenty-four-hour-long ceremony, solemnly dedicated the new Matrice to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven and Saint Ursula.

Two Larger Bells

The new massive belfry required two larger and better bells. They were ready in 1739, exactly one hundred years after the founding of the first two. They were again produced by the Ferreria of the Knights by the master founder Aloysius Bouchet. They were blessed in front of Saint Francis Church, Valletta, by
Bishop Alpheran de Bussan on 5 December 1739. When they were raised into the Matrice belfry, they probably took the place of the two small bells mentioned in 1575.

The third largest bell has a diameter of 1245 mm. It is named *Ursula et Barbara*, but was commonly referred to as *tal-Quddies* (‘of the mass’), since it was mainly used to announce the time of mass. It has an embossment of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on one side; the date ‘ANNO DOMINI 1738’ and the coat-of-arms of Bishop Alpheran, on the other side. This indicates that the bell had been cast the year before and brought to Gozo with the other bell.

The largest bell, known in fact as *il-Kbira*, has a diameter of 1472 mm and is named *Maria Assumpta*. It has an embossment of the Blessed Virgin Mary with the Child Jesus surrounded by putti, on one side; the date ‘ANNO DOMINI 1739’ as well as the coat-of-arms of Bishop Alpheran, on the other side. A flat moulding band spans the entire circumference of the soundbow, and further up, a set of three raised thin wires, span across the waist – a characteristic typical on all bells produced by master founder Aloysius Bouchet.

**The Fifth Bell**

In 1791, still another bell was founded for the Matrice. It is the work of the brothers Francesco and Gioacchino Trigance, master founders of the Knights’ Ferreria. It was popularly known as *il-Čdida*, (the new one). It has a diameter of 1295 mm and is thus the second largest of the five. It is also the finest bell in both tone and in the founding work.

The bell was paid for by the Sodality of Saint Philip Neri for Priests founded within the same Matrice. It has an embossment of Saint Philip Neri on one side; and, on the other side, another embossment of the Blessed Virgin Mary with Baby Jesus, an inscription recording the benefactors and date, ‘EXPENSIS SODALITATIS PRESBITERORUM FACTA ANNO DNI 1791’, and beneath, the name of the founders, ‘FRATRES TRIGANCE FECERUNT’.

(Continued on page 13)
The development of the ecclesiastical decorative arts in the Maltese Islands is one of those fields of artistic practice, which, so far, had not yet received any scholarly and academic attention. As a result, the story of church decoration in the Maltese Islands, albeit of utmost importance in the holistic understanding of artistic endeavour in Malta, has been almost totally ignored. Over the ages, since the re-Christianisation of the Maltese Islands in the thirteenth century, church decoration has proved to be one of the keystones of art in Malta. Together with painting, sculpture, and architecture, the decorative arts played a seminal role in the embellishment of the numerous places of worship that dot the islands.

Many items of church furniture dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth century show that important works were present before the advent of the Knights Hospitallers. The latter gave a new impetus to church decoration and during the eighteenth century, in particular, artistic activity in this field thrived. This drive for church decoration was once more in full force in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when many churches underwent substantial physical alterations and a large amount of church furniture and liturgical objets d’art were commissioned to embellish the sacred spaces. This period was extremely fertile in this production. It is impressive that in a small place like Malta, a large amount of artists and craftsmen designed and produced works of a considerable artistic quality. This production takes a higher dimension when one takes into account the hardship that was, at times, present.

My Master’s degree thesis has aimed to partially fill a void that has been for long overdue. It is a continuation on my undergraduate research which had discussed the most important designers of church furniture and decoration in Gozo in the first half of the twentieth century. This study focuses on the oeuvre of Emanuele Buhagiar who was one of Malta’s most important designers of church furniture and liturgical objets d’art.

Born in Vittoriosa in 1876, Emanuele Buhagiar received his artistic training entirely in Malta. The painters Lazzaro Pisani (1854-1932) and Giuseppe Bonnici (1835-1900), together with the sculptors Aristide Bonnici (1851-1888) and Vincenzo Cardona (active late nineteenth/early twentieth century) were among his mentors. Emanuele Buhagiar embarked on his artistic career at a very early age and his first documented works date before his marriage in 1898 to Ersilia Calì, the niece of the influential painter Giuseppe Calì (1846-1930). During his long artistic life, he invented and produced numerous works. His first bottega was situated in Vittoriosa but in 1906 he left his native city for good and subsequently put up residence and workshop in Tarxien and Paola. By the time of his death in 1962, almost every church in Malta had commissioned one or more works by the artist.

Numerous works, including all types of church decoration and furniture, were produced by a large number of designers. Inevitably, the large number of designers obviously meant that artistic quality fluctuated. Emanuele Buhagiar’s works, together with those of his artistic rival Abram Gatt (1863-1944), single themselves out for their invention and artistic quality. A
comparison between Buhagiar’s output and that of other important artists working in this field shows that he was one of the most prolific artists of his time. Buhagiar was also the last significant exponent of the wood intarsia technique, which had come down from generation to generation since the time of the Knights.

The present study, besides evaluating the contribution of Emanuele Buhagiar in an art-historical and critical sense, discusses his oeuvre in conjunction with other designers working during his time. Particular importance is given to Buhagiar’s relationship with Abram Gatt. Buhagiar realised several works on designs by Gatt, becoming influenced from the style of the latter. The thesis also evaluates Buhagiar’s works of art in the light of the peculiar and unique Maltese context at the turn of the twentieth century, such as the dominating role of religion and the celebration of the village festa. The feasts of the patron saints and secondary saints started to be celebrated on a larger scale and, as a result, people were keener to commission new works of art for the embellishment of the church on the great annual occasion. Research has shown that Buhagiar was especially popular in the southern districts of the island, where he kept his workshop. In fact, during the festa days, some churches, such as the parish churches of Gudja and Qrendi, are veritable museums of works by the artist. The thesis also presents some of the new material which was unearthed on various artists, designers and craftsmen active in Malta at the time, and whose opus is still relatively obscure.

Throughout his life, Buhagiar designed a whole array of items including antependia, sanctuary lamps, candlesticks, pedestals, reliquaries, monstrance thrones, missal covers, altar cruets, thuribles, altar canopies, processional crosses and lanterns. The majority were generally sculpted in wood and later water-gilt. In the case that the objet d’art would have been destined to be manufactured in silver, the artist nonetheless produced a full-scale wooden modello. A typical example is the silver antependium which adorns the high altar of the Tarxien Parish Church during the titular feast of the village.

Buhagiar also produced designs which were produced in embroidery such as sacred vestments, tabernacle covers, altar-cloths and processional banners. His set of pontifical vestments for the parish church at Luqa are artistically the most important of their kind in twentieth century Malta. Other important contributions in this field include the tabernacle cover for the high altar at Safi Parish Church and the altar cloth on the altar of the Virgin of the Rosary at Tarxien Parish Church.

Buhagiar’s stylistic timbre is characterised by the Maltese love for the baroque idiom and draws on the ornate and profuse style which appears in various works of the eighteenth century. In the typical eclectic fashion of the period, the principal baroque syntax is sprinkled with other stylistic influences. Among these influences, there are Gothic revival elements and other ornamental vocabulary which was in popular usage in late nineteenth century England. Many of his works, such as the massive altar canopy at the Zejtun Parish Church [Plate 1], show an authentic love for decoration and a constant quest for originality. On Gozo, his most representative work is the organ balcony at St George’s Basilica in Victoria.

Buhagiar’s popularity is intimately linked with the various predelle for titular statues, which he produced for many churches in Malta, such as those for Gudja, Zabbar, Dingli and Attard [Plate 2] parish churches. He became much sought after for this kind of work and during his career he produced no less than twelve statue predelle.
These are very rich in artistic and sculptural content, and also employ high quality craftsmanship. The Buhagiar predella generally makes use of different types of wood together with fine wood-inlaid and ebony panels. These create a wonderful play of chromatic values, texture and contrasts. His first work in this genre, the predella for the titular statue of the Immaculate Conception at Cospicua Parish Church, set the standards in this item of church furniture for the following decades in Malta.

Plate 2  Emanuele Buhagiar, Predella for Titular Statue, 1925, Parish Church of the Assumption, Attard.

This thesis has brought to light many works of art by Emanuele Buhagiar for the first time. Painstaking research, conducted in church archives and in private collections on a span of three years, has unearthed a very considerable number of designs which the artist produced in preparation for his commissions. These were usually produced in pen and wash, but pencil and charcoal also recur. The fact that the major part of these designs are signed and dated, have enabled the construction of the artist’s chronological oeuvre, which is very difficult to ascertain where the decorative arts are concerned.

This post-graduate study has thrown substantial new light on this little known artist, filling a lacuna in the study of the ecclesiastical decorative arts in the Maltese Islands at the turn of the twentieth century. It has also contributed towards the full and holistic understanding of the exciting story of Maltese Art in general. However, it has also clearly shown the extensive amount of academic research that remains to be done so that the full story of church decoration in Malta and Gozo is woven into a one, coherent whole.

A Set of Five New Bells

These five bells rang their most important mota on Friday afternoon, 23 September 1864, when news reached Gozo that on 16 September, Pope Pius IX had established Gozo and Comino as a separate diocese and declared the old Matrice the Cathedral of the new diocese. These were rung for the last time at twelve noon on Pentecost Sunday, 8 June 2003. On 5 and 13 July 2003, they were lowered down from the Cathedral belfry for the last time.

The five new bells reached Gozo from Leicestershire on 31 July 2003 and were blessed by Bishop Nikol Cauchi of Gozo in a solemn ceremony held at Pjazza Savina, Rabat, on 2 August. The bells are named, from the smallest to the largest, Aloysia, Pavla, Josepha-Francisca, Ursula, and Maria Assumpta. Their weight ranges from the 310 kg of the smallest to the 4275 kg of the largest, and their diameter from 800 mm to 1955 mm.

Each bell is decorated with a set of ornate canons bearing six cherubs, and a garland of English roses round the waist. The titular effigy of the Assumption and an inscription recording their blessing is embossed upon the largest bell, whilst Saint Ursula and Pope Pius IX are embossed on the second largest.

Conclusion

The five old bells from the Knights’ Ferreria, after a much needed rehabilitation, have been hung as a tourist attraction within the arched recess in front of the entry to the Cathedral crypt in Triq Bieb l-Imdina. They will continue to be rung on very special occasions to announce far and wide a message of good tidings.
The “Social Care” Course at the University Gozo Centre

VICTOR GALEA*

The First Two Courses

A Certificate Level Course in Social Care was offered at the Gozo Centre in 1997–98. Forty-seven students applied for this course and twenty-seven completed all study units and were awarded a certificate by the Gozo Centre.

This course proved popular enough and was offered for the second time during the following academic year 1998–99. Twenty-three students registered for this course and fifteen successfully completed the course and were awarded with a certificate of completion.

The Third Course

After these two certificate courses in Social Care, the need was felt for further specialisation in the social care field and a Certificate Course in Day Care and Residential Work was offered between the years 2001 – 03. The course was open for twenty-five applicants. This course consisted of 16 credits through 5 study-units and was divided in three different levels: Introductory level, Intermediate level and Advanced level. Of the twenty-five applicants, fourteen completed all the three levels as well as a practical study unit and a long essay. They were awarded a certificate signed by the Head, Department of Social Policy and Social Work during a purposeful ceremony on the 19th of December 2003.

The Introductory Course for Day Care and Residential Workers consisted of two credits. This study unit developed the knowledge, understanding, practical skills and values for employment or further study in the caring services. The course was very practical and developed the experience and knowledge that agencies in the caring field usually look for. By the end of this course the students were able to demonstrate personal and interpersonal qualities and skills required for caring in relation to the needs of the service users. Students were able to understand the importance of the role of the care/volunteer as a front worker. They also gained a solid knowledge and ability to recognise the needs of service users.

The Intermediate Level

The Intermediate Course for Day Care and Residential Workers consisted of another two credits and it continued to develop further the knowledge, understanding, practical skills and values that students acquired in the Introductory Level. By the end of the intermediate Level, students were able to value basic principles of social care, acquired knowledge and aptitude to recognise the sociological and psychological needs of service users, evaluated their personal contribution in the role of a day care/residential/voluntary work, as well as affirmed their role of the day care/residential worker or volunteer in a caring agency.

The Advanced Level

The Advanced level Course for Day care and Residential Workers consisted of three credits and continued to help students gain more knowledge and skills to work in a team and in understanding group dynamics. Besides, students acquired knowledge and aptitude on personality and the different client groups. They learned to address the service user from a systemic approach and gained insight to legal aspects. Skills in behaviour and risk management were also part of the curricula. Finally students were able to evaluate their personal contribution in creating equal opportunities in the role of a day care/residential worker.

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A Practical Approach

The Certificate Course in Day Care and Residential Work demanded students to undergo a practical study unit which was worth four credits. Students were required to spend a minimum amount of 100 hours in a Day Care or Residential setting approved by the Board of Studies, as well as keep a Project-Journal related to the field placement. Workshops and tutorials were offered along. The general aim and objective of the practical placement was to give an opportunity for students to practice and evaluate the skills taught along the course and implement social care theories into practice by involving themselves within an organisation as an effective volunteer/care worker. Students performed their practicum within various settings amongst which were day-care and residential homes for the elderly, persons with mental disability, children and young persons, refugees, battered wives, substance abusers and homeless amongst others.

Research Work

The final requirement for the students to be awarded a certificate of completion required students to write a long essay under tutorial supervision. The exercise provided the students with an opportunity to examine in depth a selected area and to understand better the relationship between theory, research and practice. It required from the student a sustained effort to identify an area of investigation, review the literature, analyse and compare concepts theories and perspectives, weigh and assess evidence and draw the final conclusion on the subject. The results of the long essays of the Day-Care and Residential Work are now available for public use at the Gozo Centre library.

The Final Assessment

The course was offered by the Department of Social Policy and Social Work of the University of Malta in collaboration with the University of Malta Gozo Centre and the Ministry for Gozo. Spread over four semesters, the final grade was based on the 16 study-unit assessments and a final examination.

The course was very beneficial for Gozo because it provided tuition and training in a very important aspect of life in Gozo, namely Day Care and Residential Work.

The performance of the students was very satisfactory. During the presentation of certificates the students were asked to make a presentation about their work, and it clearly emerged that the students not only availed themselves of the tuition and training given but also contributed by producing very original and useful work themselves.
Activities at the University Gozo Centre – 2003
JOSEPH CALLEJA*

Degree/Diploma/Certificate Courses Completed in 2003

The graduates who followed the BA course offered at the University Gozo Centre between 1998 and 2003 with Professor Lino Brigulio, Director of the Centre, just after the conferment of the degree, in November 2003

- The BA (General) Course came to an end in June 2003. Twenty-two students completed the course successfully. These students were conferred with their degree in November at the University of Malta.
- The Bachelor of Commerce Course came to an end in June. Five students completed the course successfully and were conferred with their degree in November at the University of Malta.
- Two students who were following the Masters of Education Course completed the course successfully and in November they were conferred with their degree at the University of Malta.
- The Certificate course in Education for Learning Support Facilitators also came to an end in June. Thirty-three students completed the course with success and in November they were awarded with their certificate.
- The Certificate course in Day Care and Residential Work came to an end in June. This course was offered by the University Gozo Centre in collaboration with the Social Work and Social Administration Unit of the University of Malta. Fourteen students completed the course with success.
- The 3-year Certificate Course in Lace Making also came to an end with 13 students.

Degree/Diploma/Certificate Courses Commenced in 2003

- A 5-year course leading to the degree in Bachelor of Commerce commenced in October with 12 students.
- A 3-year course leading to a Masters Degree in Islands and Small States Studies commenced in October with 14 students.
- A 1-year course leading to a Certificate in Lace Studies commenced with 13 students.
- A Certificate Course in Lace Making started in November with 8 students.

Short Courses offered during 2003

The short courses offered at the University Gozo Centre during 2003 were:
- Communication Skills co-ordinated by Ms Ruth Falzon. (18 participants)
- Coping with Negative Emotions, co-ordinated by Mr Laner Cassar. (13 participants)

*Joseph Calleja is the administrator of the University Gozo Centre
• Basis of Medicine, co-ordinated by Prof Maurice Cauchi. (10 participants)
• Word-processing and Spreadsheets, co-ordinated by Mr Frank Tabone. (8 participants)
• Internet and Website Creation, co-ordinated by Mr Saviour Formosa. (10 participants)
• SAGE – Tha Accounting Package, co-ordinated by Mr Ivan Grixti (22 participants)
• Principles of Industrial Hydraulics, co-ordinated by Mr Frank Fenech (17 participants)
• The Challenges of Today’s Families, co-ordinated by Mr Laner Cassar (8 participants)
• Applied Business Statistics, co-ordinated by Mr Gordon Cordina (18 participants)
• Power Electronics, co-ordinated by Mr Frank Fenech. (10 participants)
• Photoshop, co-ordinated by Dr Djorke Vukelic. (12 participants)
• Computer for Senior Citizens, co-ordinated by Mr Frank Tabone. (23 participants)
• Environmental Studies, co-ordinated by Mr George Said, (10 participants)
• Systems of Knowledge, co-ordinated by Mr Louis Scerri (28 participants)

Seminars/Public Lectures

A number of seminars/public lectures were held at the Centre. These included:

• 1st February 2003 – A one day seminar entitled “Understanding Dyslexia” was held by Ms Margaret Naudi Griffiths and Ms Ann Jenkins (29 participants)
• February, March and April – Series of Public lectures entitled “Gozo Past and Present” were held at the Ministry for Gozo.
• 5th April 2003 – A one day seminar entitled “Understanding Dyslexia” was held (34 participants)
• 4th October 2003 – A one day seminar entitled “The Mediterranean Sea: How it Works and Lives” was held. (15 participants)

Activities

• On 4th May 2003, the Centre organised the Lace Day, in which speeches by the Hon. Giovanna Debono, Ms Consiglia Azzopardi, and Prof Maurice Cauchi were made. Rev. J. Manicaro gave a short lecture on the use of Lace in Religious Vestments. A number of items related to Lace Making were exhibited. In addition a number of stands were set up dealing with the International Organisation of Needle and Bobbin Lace. Certificates were presented to students. The exhibition was visited by a large number of Maltese and Gozitans, as well as tourists. The event was also visited by the ‘National Council of Women’.
• 20th August 2003 – The “Presentation of Certificate” event was held at the centre. The Hon. Giovanna Debono distributed certificates to 173 candidates who were eligible after they had followed courses at the Centre between December 2002 and July 2003.

(Continued on page 21)
International Workshop on Economic Vulnerability and Resilience of Small States

LINO BRIGUGLIO*

The University Gozo Centre hosted an International Workshop organized by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the University of Malta. The workshop held between 1 and 3 March 2004, was inaugurated by H.E. Jagdish Koonjul, the Chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) which represents forty states in the United Nations. The workshop focused on economic vulnerability and resilience building of small states.

Twenty-six experts from all Commonwealth regions participated in a workshop on economic vulnerability and resilience of small states held at the University Gozo Centre, Malta, between 1 and 3 March 2004. These included academics, practitioners, policy makers, and representatives of international and regional organizations. Participants included experts from the Caribbean, Pacific, Indian Ocean and Mediterranean region. Representatives of UNDP, UNCTAD, UNDESA, the Commonwealth Secretariat and other international organizations also attended.

This workshop took place in the context of preparations for the International Meeting for the review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The workshop discussed features of economic vulnerability of small states, particularly SIDS, and strategies for developing their resilience; and took account of the conclusion of the ad hoc expert group on Vulnerability Indices, which met in New York in December 1997, that “as a group, SIDS are more vulnerable than other groups of developing countries”. The participants also discussed trade as the main engine of growth and development.

During the inauguration session Dr Eliawony Kisanga, Director Economic Affairs of the Commonwealth Secretariat said that the collaboration between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the University of Malta is bearing fruit as witnessed by this very important workshop which has brought together experts from different parts of the world to discuss issues of great importance for small states. Professor Lino Briguglio who is the convener of the meeting stated that the University of Malta has been actively involved in research on islands and small states issues and has been instrumental in the development of the economic vulnerability index.

*Prof. Lino Briguglio is the Director of the University Gozo Centre
Participants noted that the regional preparatory meetings for the International Meeting, held in Samoa, Cape Verde and Trinidad and Tobago, confirmed that SIDS, as a group, face particular handicaps as a result of the economic, environmental and social vulnerability and the Interregional Preparatory Meeting of SIDS, held in Nassau, The Bahamas in January 2004, reconfirmed the economic vulnerability of SIDS and called for the development of an economic resilience index.

The participants also considered a number of issues that are of concern to small states, notably: the issue of graduation from least developed country (LDC) status of a number of SIDS; and the need for special and differentiated treatment and necessary policy space for small states, particularly SIDS, within the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Participants recognized the role that a focused conceptual framework on vulnerability and resilience building could play in addressing these concerns, as well as in strengthening national and regional policy approaches. They also recognized the need for participatory and collaborative schemes, involving all major stakeholders, to ensure the success of resilience strategies.

The participants reaffirmed that the inherent economic vulnerabilities of small states have been internationally recognized. Such vulnerability arises from exposure to adverse external shocks beyond their control, as well as structural handicaps, exacerbated by inter alia a high degree of openness, export concentration and high dependence on strategic imports, remoteness and high transport costs, susceptibility to natural disasters exacerbated by climate change and sea level rise. These conditions pose serious handicaps for the sustainable economic development of small states.

Background Information

The economic characteristics of small states are well documented, and include limited ability to exploit economies of scale; lack of natural resource endowments and high import content (especially of strategic imports such as food and fuel). Other characteristics relate to limitations of diversification possibilities and market thinness; limitations on the extent to which domestic competition policy can be applied; dependence on a narrow range of exports; inability to influence international prices; and in the case of island states, uncertainties of supply due to remoteness and insularity. Small size also creates problems associated with public administration, the most important of which is probably the small manpower resource base from which to draw experienced and efficient administrators.

Acknowledgments

Participants expressed their gratitude to the Government of Malta and the University of Malta for their kind hospitality and warm welcome and for creating congenial conditions for a successful meeting.

The participants also thanked the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and the Minister for Gozo for their contributions to the deliberations, and the support expressed by both ministers in promoting measures in favour of small states.

The participants requested the Government of Malta to submit these workshop conclusions to the Secretary General of the UN for circulation as an official document of the UN.
Book Review: Qala and its Sights

PAUL XUEREB


The 24th in the Gaulitana series written and edited by Rev. Dr Joseph Bezzina, this little book is also the fourth in a sub-series of short works about Gozo’s towns and villages.

It is well illustrated and includes a useful map of Qala, a small village that has grown considerably during the last couple of decades, though oddly enough it lacks a map of Gozo showing Qala’s geographical position. While it is not one of the best written numbers of this series and is structured rather loosely, it contains much useful information for both residents and casual visitors.

Qala is an attractive village even if its notable sights are very few. It has one relic, a menhir, of the island’s prehistory, that scholars often regard as the sole remaining sign of a megalithic structure built in the Temple period which produced Gozo’s most remarkable monument, the Ġgantija temples at Xaghra, though the cart ruts at is-Sidra may also be prehistoric.

The area now occupied by the village has not been inhabited for a long time and the earliest settlement was probably created in late medieval times. As late as 1667, the village’s population was just 65 living in 14 households, most of them farmers or farm-workers.

According to the 1995 census Qala’s population that year was 1,492 out of a total Gozitan population of just over 29,000. The name itself, Qala, refers not to the village but to the inlet in the coast below, Hondoq ir-Rummien, the word being a late Latin noun (cala) meaning inlet or creek.

So little material is available about the history of this quiet village, that much of Bezzina’s historical information is about the history of Gozo in general and not about Qala. Even during the 1939-45 war Qala was spared much suffering. Of the 11 Qalins who were killed most of them died while serving in the Merchant Navy.

Qala has not given Gozo a great number of distinguished personalities, but there is no biographical information about the few it has produced, such as Dr Anton Butigieg, author, lawyer and politician, who ended his career as President of the Republic of Malta, while another Anton Buttigieg made himself well known as an educator and writer on local topics and was also active at one time in local politics. Yet another Buttigieg, Mikiel Frangisk, became Gozo’s first bishop in 1864.
The best sections of the book are the ones describing churches and areas like Hondoq ir-Rummien or Ras il-Qala with its 18th century St Anthony Battery. Bezzina tells the simple tale of Kurraw (originally Corrado?) who at some time in the Middle Ages is said to have fled from his hermitage in Wied il-Ghasel, Mosta, to Comino, sailing miraculously on his cloak as it floated on the waves, and ended his days in a cave below the Sanctuary of the Immaculate Conception that overlooks the channel between Gozo and Comino. The tale of Kurraw and of the miracles he wrought is probably fictitious, but the visitor is still shown Kurraw’s cave that can be entered through an aperture in the floor of the Sanctuary.

The Sanctuary owes its first shape to the 16th century, but its façade and parvis were built in the 19th century. The main points of interest are the graffiti made by people as a sign of gratitude to the Virgin for help received, and the altar-piece attributed to the 16th century Italian artist Federico Barocci di Urbino, showing the Immaculate Conception. Though it lies on the village’s outskirts, this church is much frequented and not just by the people of Qala.

The parish church dedicated to St Joseph is much more recent. The foundation stone was laid in 1882 and the building began to be used as a parish church in 1889, but the bell-towers were built in the early years of the new century. The architect was an amateur, the parish priest of the time, Dun Guzepp Debono, and much of the actual building was carried out by village people for the love of it.

A section of the book is devoted to the village’s institutions, clubs and associations, and to its feast and other folkloristic attractions. Bezzina very sensibly gives telephone and fax numbers for readers seeking up-to-date information on the various activities and associations.

There are several attractive illustrations. It is a pity, however, that the definition of the picture showing a bird’s eye view of Qala is poor.

(Continued from page 17)

• 22nd August 2003 – ‘An Evening with Four Eurovision Singers’ was organised at the Centre with the participation of Ms Lynn Chircop, Ms Ira Losco, Ms Miriam Christine and Ms Claudette Pace. The event was compered by Mr Charles Saliba and was attended by a large audience.

• 14th November 2003 – Presentation of Certificates to students who successfully completed the Certificate Course in Education for Learning Support Facilitators.

Publications

• The 9th edition of “The Gozo Observer” was published in February.
Exhibition by Gozitan Artist Mark Sagona

JOSEPH CALLEJA

Young Gozitan Artist Mark Sagona, who also lectures at the University Gozo Centre, has recently put up his second personal exhibition of paintings. The exhibition, entitled ‘Recent Insights’ was held at the Banca Giuratale in Victoria, Gozo between the 24th January and the 8th February 2004. It brought together twenty-four paintings, all produced in 2003 and the majority of which were realised in oil on canvas. The exhibition was curated by Dr Joseph Paul Cassar, and inaugurated by the Minister for Gozo, the Hon. Giovanna Debono.

A full-colour exhibition catalogue was published for the occasion, containing a critical study by Dr Joseph Paul Cassar. Although the exhibition deals with landscape, Sagona uses this theme in a new and unusual way. The local or foreign experience offers the artist the initial idea, which is then filtered, elaborated and reinvented through the emphasis of colour and form. The use of strong chromatic values makes the paintings vibrate and the effects of light are enhanced through the use of translucent layers of pigment.

In the words of Dr Cassar, who lectures on Modern and Contemporary Art at the University of Malta: “The Gozitan landscape is the main focus of Mark Sagona’s second one-man exhibition. He does not only present its relevance to today’s world but does so with a sense of rich invention….. Sagona is essentially concerned with patterns, light, a sense of architectural structure, and all that contributes to his understanding and knowledge of place. The intensity of light beams that he invents serve as veils of colour, transparently laid over the scene through the application of thin glazes…. Mark Sagona’s artistic journey has come a long way with some interesting results. His art is changing gradually as he remains keen in exploring simultaneously new directions in his paintings.”

A cross-section of Mark Sagona’s works of art may be visited online on: www.marksagona.com. The website was inaugurated on the occasion of this exhibition. The artist is currently working on his third personal show, which will be held at St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity later on this year.

Shimmering Conglomeration, 2003, oil on canvas, 50 x 100 cm

Scorched Stones, 2003, oil on canvas, 60 x 80 cm