

# A Description of Gozo at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century

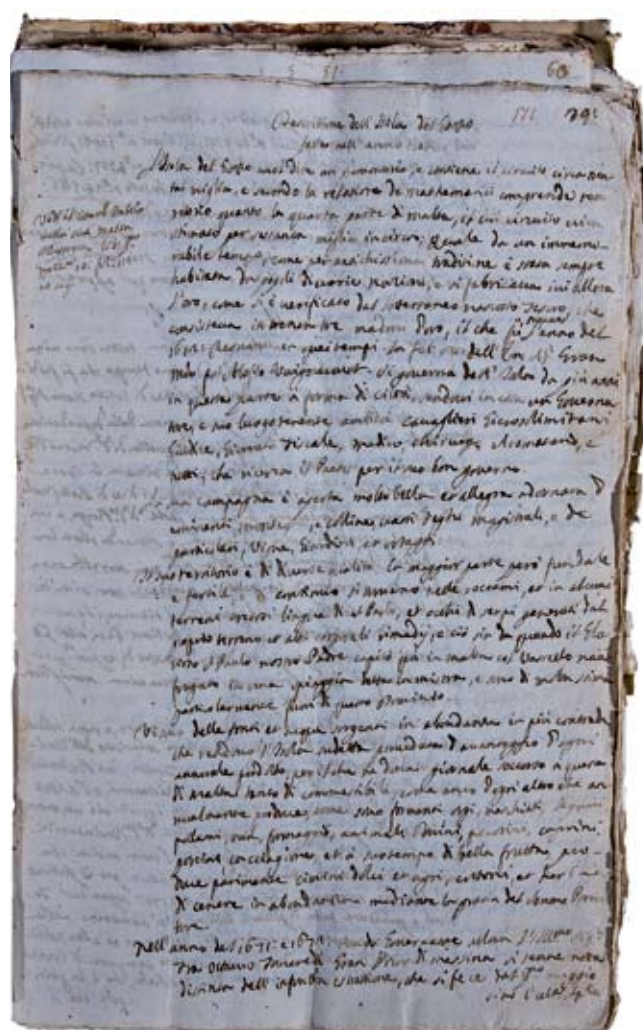
GODWIN VELLA

## Introduction

Giovanni Pietro Francesco Agius De Soldanis spared no effort to hoard historical writings of merit, particularly if related to his native island of Gozo. This labour of love was somewhat eased by his ever-growing reputation as an erudite ecclesiastic. Other learned personalities with common interests must have been keen to make his acquaintance and share their knowledge, including personal notes, with him. In the absence of realistic opportunities to publish such writings, the handover from one hoarder to another must have been deemed the safest way to ensure the preservation of their findings. Indeed, Agius De Soldanis' (d. 1770) bequest to the National Library includes six bound volumes, collectively referred to as *miscellanea inedita* or Library Manuscript 142, containing a number of writings on a variety of subjects by different authors including Antonio Bosio (d. 1629) and Giovanni Giuseppe Caxaro (d. 1742).

Caxaro's *Notizie de Gozo e Serie delle Giudici e Giurati in detta Isola da doppo la sopresa della medesima con le cose piu rimarcabili in tali tempi* is of particular note.<sup>1</sup> Compiled over a period of some four decades as a loose series of descriptions, occurrences and statistics, Caxaro penned a first description of Gozo in 1704, a revised version ten years later, a list of Judges and Jurors for the period 1560 to 1740, and a host of noteworthy happenings including the celebrations in honour of Gran Master's Marcantonio Zondadari in 1720. At some stage these writings ended up in the possession of Agius De Soldanis who made extensive use of the information contained therein in his celebrated

*Il Gozo Antico e Moderno, Sacro e Profano* (1746)<sup>2</sup> besides saving them for posterity by integrating them in said *miscellanea inedita* of Maltese history, which was added to the National Library Manuscript Collection during his tenure as Librarian during the 1760s.<sup>3</sup>



Caxaro's *Descrittione dell' Isola del Gozo fatta nell' anno 1704*.

<sup>1</sup> Library Manuscript 142, Vol. VI, Fol. 169 – 276.

<sup>2</sup> Agius De Soldanis' original manuscript (1746) is preserved at the National Library of Malta (Library Manuscript 145). This was eventually translated into Maltese by Mgr Ġużeppi Farrugia and published in 1936 (Vol 1) and in 1958 (Vol 2). An English edition by Fr Tony Mercieca was subsequently published in 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Baille Jean-Louis Guerin de Tencin appointed Agius De Soldanis as first librarian of the then newly set-up Libreria Publica in 1763. His remuneration comprised an apartment and a salary of six scudi per month (Depasquale 2006).

Entitled *Descrittione dell' Isola del Gozo fatta nell' anno 1704*, Caxaro's description is reputedly the earliest known comprehensive portrayal of the island region of Gozo with particular emphasis on its organisational setup. It has an overall length of 25 A4-size folios (171 to 195) written in fairly legible calligraphy. Some words, nonetheless, proved to be extremely difficult to decipher. These are marked by three dots in the free translation presented below, that is in turn preceded by a short biographical note on Caxaro and by an overview of the state of affairs in early modern Gozo.

### Giovanni Giuseppe Caxaro

Described as an old and distinguished Maltese and Gozitan family, (Abela, 1642: 470) the 'Caxaro', 'De Caxaro' or 'Caxar' lineage (Vella, 2010: 195) had a long lasting relation with the sister island. Some of its members qualified themselves as gaulitanus, as opposed to melitensis or siculus in mid-sixteenth century legal documents,<sup>4</sup> and took active participation in Gozo's political<sup>5</sup> and ecclesiastical<sup>6</sup> affairs during the same century. The family, which features repeatedly in the post-1551 Church records, (Vella, 2010: 57) owned extensive properties,<sup>7</sup> bequeathed various benefices to the local Church,<sup>8</sup> and secured a number of marriages with other affluent families.<sup>9</sup> The Caxaro heraldic emblem shows two pairs of silver bands separated by a gold band, all set on a blue background (Agius De Soldanis, 1746: Vol II, Ch 11).

According to Agius De Soldanis, Giovanni Giuseppe turned out to be the end line of the Caxaro's in Gozo. He served as Judge of Gozo from 1714 to 1720 and as Head Juror of the Gozo University during the years 1712, 1715-16 and 1719 respectively (Agius De Soldanis, 1746: Vol II, Ch 6). In 1720, Giovanni Giuseppe was promoted to the prestigious post of Judge and



The Caxaro heraldic emblem

Auditor of the Sea Consulate.<sup>10</sup> He died in Malta in 1742 (Agius De Soldanis, 1746: Vol II, Ch 11).

### A Harsh Insular Reality

Unlike Agius De Soldanis' *Il Gozo Antico-Moderno e Sacro-Profano*, Caxaro's *Descrittione dell' Isola del Gozo fatta nell' anno 1704* is not a tribute to the island's beauty and rich cultural legacy. Caxaro restrains his description to an overview of the island's governance, ecclesiastic organisation and the intermittent endeavours of its people to enhance their quality of life.

<sup>4</sup> One of 29 gaulitanus surnames encountered on Gozo in notarial and court records during the years 1557 – 1566, (Fiorini 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Angelo served as a University Juror during 1539, 1544, 1545 and 1548; Kola served as Juror in 1540, 1542 and 1543 and as Hakem during the three year term 1545-7; Pinu served as Juror in 1541; Saviour served as Juror in 1564 and 1565, Alfonso served as Juror in 1572; while Albano served as Juror during 1572 and 1576, (Agius De Soldanis Vol. 1, Sec. 6.2).

<sup>6</sup> Don Lorenzo, Don Andrea (eventually promoted to chapter member at the matrice), Don Brandon (acting also notary) and Fra Adeodato OESA were all active during the first half of the sixteenth century, (Fiorini 2006, pp xi - liii).

<sup>7</sup> These included Ngieret ta' Caxar at Rabat (Wettinger 2000, p 415), besides other fields as per subsequent footnote.

<sup>8</sup> Orlandus and Victoria bequeathed land to Santa Maria Savina in 1511, Isabella (nee Caxaro) founded an animagium at Is-Sined ta' Caxar – Marsalforn in 1537, while Angelo bestowed the benefice of Ta' Ribazza at Gelmus to the Matrice in 1556. (Fiorini 2006, pp xi - liii)

<sup>9</sup> These included the De Naso, who endowed the church in Gozo with several benefices, (Fiorini 2006, pp xi - liii).

<sup>10</sup> NLM, Libr. Ms. 142, Vol VI, Fol. 253.



Many Mediterranean Islands were lands of poverty during the early modern period (Braudel, 1992: 114). Besides depending on a friable ecology where any short-lived draught and related natural calamities lead to famine and poverty,<sup>11</sup> small and isolated islands like Gozo were often devastated by marauding incursions. Indeed, during the fifteenth century the Gozitans appealed several times to the Sicilian authorities to be exempted from import tax or for a grant of a quantity of wheat because of the frequent devastating Moorish invasions (Wettinger, 1990). This precarious situation degenerated even further following the arrival of the Knights of St John in 1530 due to the Ottoman ruthless efforts to rid themselves of the Knights of St John once and for all and to gain supremacy in the central Mediterranean. Prior to the catastrophic siege of 1551, Gozo was raided eight times (Fiorini, 1996), while other assaults are recorded from the second half of the sixteenth century.

It was only during the course of the seventeenth century that the island was gradually granted a breath of fresh air. The threat of Ottoman incursions became evermore infrequent while the remodelling of the obsolete Castello, the construction of six coast watch towers, and establishment of a complementing network of lookout posts rendered the island much safer, thereby facilitating the evolution of rural settlements and sustaining a steady population growth. Likewise, the time honoured settlement of Rabat experienced a regeneration boom whereas the Castello assumed a more pronounced military role (Vella, 2007). The Gozitans, nevertheless, upheld maximum alertness whereby an average of one out of six inhabitants was actively enrolled in the militia.

The agro-economy of Gozo revolved around animal husbandry,<sup>12</sup> orchard cultivation and a few cash crops. Wheat and barley, the inhabitants'



Map of Gozo and Comino from the manuscript volume entitled 'Il Gozo Antico e Moderno, Sacro e Profano' by Giovanni Pietro Francesco Agius De Soldanis (NLM, Lib. Ms 145)

<sup>11</sup> By their very nature, small islands are less ecologically variable than larger land masses in the same region and can support less species diversity. Extinction rates are therefore high, while natural adversities can wipe out entire populations, (Cherry).

<sup>12</sup> In 1716, Gozo's livestock population comprised 1478 cattle, 89 horses, 473 mules, 1072 donkeys, 1593 pigs, 3504 sheep and 870 goats. (NLM, Lib. Ms 142 Vol VI, fol 248).

staple food and a precious source of animal fodder, were widely grown, albeit failing to generate sufficient produce to feed the entire population. As a result, the Gozitans pooled their limited resources to supplement the island's food supplies through the introduction of a cost-effective and sustainable importation mechanism.

Within this harsh scenario, religion occupied a central role. Significantly, rural settlements were only listed as villages once promoted to the status of parish. Politics and religion merged seamlessly into one another. Popular religious manifestations like the annual devotional processions with the effigy of St Ursula were exploited by both church and state to consolidate their influence and authority on the people. Correspondingly, the poor Gozitans engaged themselves in pious processions and pilgrimages to invoke the Almighty or his vassals whenever faced with pressing communal threats like natural calamities and hostile incursions.

This interplay of fragility and resilience prevails throughout Caxaro's portrayal as shown below.

### A Description of Gozo (1704)

*Approximately one fourth the size of Malta, the promontory-like Island of Gozo has a circumference of thirty miles.<sup>13</sup> It has been inhabited since time immemorial<sup>14</sup> and was colonized by a succession of various peoples who flourished in gold production as betrayed by an underground treasure of thirty-three gold ingots discovered in 1612<sup>15</sup> during the tenure of Gran Master Alof de Wignacourt.<sup>16</sup> The Island is administered by a Governor and his Lieutenant (both Knights), a Judge, a team of Jurors, a doctor, a surgeon, an herbalist and other officials as necessitated by good governance.*

*Its landscape is particularly charming being adorned by eminent hills, extensive magistral estates, vineyards, gardens and orchards. The*

*quality of its soils varies, but is mostly deep and fertile. Valuable tongues of St Paul and serpents' eyes can be encountered in clayey deposits as a result of the miraculous intervention of the same Saint when shipwrecked in Malta.<sup>17</sup> Fresh water springs abound in various localities and account for Gozo's healthy mix of agricultural produce, most of which is exported to Malta on a daily basis.<sup>18</sup> This includes wheat, barley, vegetables, poultry, ... cheese, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, game, fruit, cumin, sesame seed ... and ash plant.*

*Governor Fra Octavio Tancredi kept a record of all exports from Gozo for the twelve month period commencing on 1 May 1671, namely 3373 turkey cocks, 14919 poultry, 1648 pigeons, 109 calves, 778 rams, 1111 sheep, 557 lambs, 557 goats, 213 cattle, and 1169 pigs.<sup>19</sup>*



Gozo boats alongside the quay in Grand Harbour. Painting by Edward Caruana Dingli.

<sup>13</sup> Gozo has a surface area of 67 km<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> The Maltese Islands were colonised from nearby Sicily during the late sixth millennium BC.

<sup>15</sup> A similar find was made at Zebbug in 1720, (Agius De Soldanis 1750, p 26).

<sup>16</sup> Grand Master Alof De Wignacourt ruled the Order from 1601 to 1622.

<sup>17</sup> According to popular belief, St. Paul converted into stone all poisonous snakes in the Maltese Islands. Their relics were available on the market. Serpents' tongues (actually fossilised shark teeth) were considered to be effective precautionary measures against poisoning (Zammit-Maempel p 391), while their eyes resemble precious stones and were worn encased in rings, (De Lucca 2004, p 32).

<sup>18</sup> Houel (Vol. IV, p 77) states that each day six or seven boats carried agricultural produce from Gozo to Malta.

<sup>19</sup> Fra Ottavio Tancredi served as Governor of Gozo in 1671 and 1672. His statistics are reproduced by Agius de Soldanis (Vol.I Ch.1, Sect.1).





1720's view of the Castello.

*Gozo is endowed with a centrally located castle and adjacent suburb, six watch towers and eleven guard stations along the coast, six villages or parishes, and numerous rural chapels as described hereafter.*

### ***The Castello***

*The Castello sits loftily on a rocky hill which like Mdina on mainland Malta, predates the Passion of the Lord.<sup>20</sup> It used to occupy a much more extensive footprint prior to the devastating siege of 1551. The main entrance or Porta Reale was located close to the cross roads that radiate out in the direction of the four winds,<sup>21</sup> while the encircling defensive walls survive in sections.<sup>22</sup> Its size was eventually reduced by the Order of St John<sup>23</sup> following the notable drop in the Island's population. The Castello's east, south and west facing fronts are secured by three imposing bastions and an underlying ditch,<sup>24</sup> while the northern perimeter is characterized by high cliffs as at Mdina.<sup>25</sup>*

*The Castello is manned by a sergeant and nine soldiers paid by the Order and a drummer paid by the Gozo University. It has two dominating cavaliers. The one on the eastern side is dedicated to St John, while that along the western front is named after St Martin. The latter abuts onto a spacious warehouse employed by the University to store food supplies.<sup>26</sup> Three well-provisioned gunpowder magazines are found, namely an older deposit along the passage leading down to the battery and two newer stores constructed in 1701 on top of said cavaliers. The greater part of the weapons and ammunitions are kept in the armoury. Day-to-day guardianship is provided by a station equipped with a bronze bell on each of the three bastions. That on St Michael's is central and is manned on a twenty-four hour basis, while the ones on St John's and St Martin's are activated after sunset.*

*The Castello encompasses three churches, of which the venerable matrix and collegiate church*

<sup>20</sup> The Castello hill seems to have evolved into a flourishing fortified settlement during the Borg in-Nadur Phase c 1500 – 700BC, (Vella 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Present day Republic Street's cross-roads where large masonry was unearthed in 1883 (Zammit, 1975)

<sup>22</sup> Apparently, these served as basis for the entrenchments thrown up around Rabat by the German engineer Johannes Person during the emergency of 1708, (Spiteri 2004).

<sup>23</sup> The ancient line of defences encircling Rabat's historic core seem to have been allowed to fall in disrepair during the course of the Middle Ages. Likewise, the walls of the Castello were somewhat reinforced. Eventually, the Order of St. John replaced part of said medieval enceinte with gun-powder fortifications.

<sup>24</sup> The Gran Castello's refortification project lasted around 24 years and looks to have been completed in 1623.

<sup>25</sup> Mdina's medieval Rabat-facing front was remodelled during the 1722-1733 period, (De Lucca 2003, pp 23 & 31).

<sup>26</sup> The present construction was accomplished in 1776 and is presently employed as Heritage Malta's Gozo Area Office.

dedicated to the assumption of Our Lady is the most important.<sup>27</sup> This church was founded by Count Roger and holds a non negligible annual income. It is administered by an Archpriest, who is also the first dignitary of the chapter, and by nine canons. An original core of nine canons was established by the benefice of the collegiate's founder Rainerio Macanuto,<sup>28</sup> while a tenth canon was successively instituted in 1678 following the profanation of several rural chapels.<sup>29</sup> Enrolled on the collegiate's pay roll are also four choir chaplains, a master of ceremonies, a deacon and a sub-deacon, an organist, two sextons, ... and four altar attendants.<sup>30</sup>

St Ursula enjoys particular devotion and the collegiate church treasures a reliquary in the form of a half-figured effigy.<sup>31</sup> Its feast day, which falls on the 21 October, is commemorated with a solemn procession and the firing of a grand salute. The latter is sponsored by the Order and entails the deployment of nine soldiers, eighty musketeers, three pieces of artillery and seven mortars. A repeat is enacted on the second Sunday of January when the reliquary of St Ursula is escorted to the church of Our Lady of Graces in fulfilment of a vow for the cessation of the 12 January 1693 earthquake.<sup>32</sup> St Ursula was invoked in other difficult situations, while the older folk confirm that no Turkish incursions took place following the reliquary's acquisition.

Being the matrix, collegiate and main church, both the Grand Master and the Bishop had a wooden throne therein. These were placed on the presbytery during the main festivities. The Grand

Master stood on the right hand or gospel side while the Bishop occupied the left hand or epistle side. These existed already by the time of Mgr Astria's<sup>33</sup> visit in June 1673, while during the visits of Mgr Molina<sup>34</sup> in 1679 and of the present Bishop<sup>35</sup> a canopy was set up on the left hand side of the presbytery. In 1692 the Grand Master's throne was replaced permanently by another canopy. As in the Malta Cathedral, a sung morning mass, vespers and the breviary are recited on a daily basis.



St Ursula's statue, believed to have originated as a figure-head of a galley.

<sup>27</sup> During the late Middle Ages said Matrix attracted the greater part of all property bequeaths and money grants in favour of the Church in Gozo, (Fiorini p xlviij).

<sup>28</sup> In actual fact, Macnuto's or Mahnuq's wealth was amalgamated to the Chapter's fund, (Agius De Soldanis Vol.II, Ch.3, Sec.4).

<sup>29</sup> The tenth canonicate of the matrix was funded from the income of 26 rural chapels., namely those of St Anastasia Virgin and Martyr at Ta' Dbiegi or Ta' Qabbieža, St. Andrew the Apostle at Żebbuġ, St. Anthony the Abbot at Ta' Dbiegi and at Għarb, St. Catherine of Alexandria at Ta' Dbiegi, St. Domenica at Xlendi Valley, St. Helen at tal-Eghżien and at Sannat, St. John the Baptist at Ta' Dbiegi, at Nadur and at Żebbuġ, St. Julian at Għarb and at Rabat, St. Leonard at Għammar, St. Lucija at Ta' Dbiegi, Our Saviour at Wied il-Mielah, the Assumption of Our Lady at Ghajn Xejba, at Ta' Giordan, at Għasri and at Sannat, St. Mary of the Lily, St Mary of the Snow at Rabat, St. Mary of the Cross at Sannat, St. Mary Magdalen at Ta' Kulkjat and at Dwejra, and St. Peter in Chains at Għarb, (Agius De Soldanis Vol II, pp 33-6).

<sup>30</sup> Altar attendants or acolytes were up to the Second Vatican Council (1962-5) the highest of the minor orders, having as duties the lighting of the altar-candles, carrying the candles in procession, assisting the subdeacon and deacon, and the ministering of water and wine to the priest at Mass.

<sup>31</sup> Believed to have originated as a figure-head of a galley, St. Ursula's statue was donated to the matrix in 1614 by the Castilian Knight Fra Eugenio Romirez-Maldonado, who served as Governor of Gozo in 1610-11, (Bezzina 1999, p 31).

<sup>32</sup> St. Ursula's annual procession to the chapel of Our Lady of Graces (eventually annexed to the Capuchin's Friary), along with two similar processions to St. George's Parish in thanksgiving for her protection on the occasion of the plague epidemic of 1814 and of the cholera outbreak of 1837 respectively, was suppressed in 1968, (Gauci p 32).

<sup>33</sup> Mgr Lorenzo Astria served as Bishop of Malta from 1668 to 1677.

<sup>34</sup> Mgr Michele Molina served as Bishop of Malta from 1677 to 1681.

<sup>35</sup> Mgr Davide Cocco Palmeri who served as Bishop of Malta from 1684 to 1711.

*A second church is dedicated to St John the Baptist and St Barbara.<sup>36</sup> The titular painting portrays also St Gerome. It is very old and commemorates the feast of both titular saints. The church of St Joseph,<sup>37</sup> where a feast in honour of its patron is celebrated on March 19, was erected by Bishop Cagliares.<sup>38</sup>*

*During the tenure of Governor Castelnovo<sup>39</sup> the Castello became adorned with a clock tower. The Governor's tribunal was reconstructed in 1667 by the University. All criminal and civil court cases and related acts from the year 1551 onwards are kept in an orderly fashion in its archive. Earlier documents were lost during the tragic assault that same year. The administration of the tribunal comprises the Governor, a Judge, a finance officer, a notary, a night captain and a number of assistants and servants.*

*As officer in charge of the defence and of the administration of the Island, the Governor's residence includes an armoury.<sup>40</sup> His office is preceded only by that of the Maritime Squadron's General within the ranks of the Order.*

*The Castello contains fifty-six inhabited dwellings a number of which are in a poor state of repair or threaten to collapse. Another seventeen houses are demolished and full of debris.<sup>41</sup> A total of sixty-eight capacious water cisterns are found, though five are broken. These play an important role in the eventuality of enemy incursions and were topped to the brim as a contingency measure during the alarm of a Turkish assault in 1701.*

*A Hebrew ghetto was located in the immediate neighbourhood of the belfry. The Jews are considered to be malicious, cursed and stout enemies of God.<sup>42</sup> Access to and from the ditch during defence emergencies is facilitated by an*

*underground tunnel.<sup>43</sup> 300 good soldiers, food supplies for a month and adequate ammunitions to fight back the besiegers would render the Castello impregnable provided that the ramparts and the damaged domestic units are duly repaired.<sup>44</sup>*

*Thirty-one iron and two bronze mounted artillery pieces of different calibres are deployed on the Castello's bastions, cavaliers and ravelin, while the Governor's armoury and related deposits contain:*

*383 muskets,  
10 rampart guns,  
155 bandoliers,  
101 pikes,  
616 partizans,  
a bronze mortar and pestle to prepare gunpowder,  
30 swords,  
99 spontoons with beechwood poles,  
5 pole-arms with elmwood poles,  
133 rotoli<sup>45</sup> lead pellets,  
597 rotoli lead for making shot,  
2123 rotoli fuse for the firing of explosive',  
50 rotoli natural tree resin and Greek tar ...,  
10 rotoli sulphur,  
53 rotoli ...,  
12 new lanterns,  
96 iron spades,  
36 iron shovels,  
13 pickaxes,  
47 stone-cutting hatchets,  
178 bronze grenades,  
53 firing mortars,  
60 crucibles for the melting of lead,  
3230 iron balls of various calibres,  
97 artillery rods,  
2 iron supports ...,  
223 powder cartridges,  
123 casks for water storage,  
161 wicker baskets,  
169 venetian planks,*

<sup>36</sup> St. Barbara is the patron saint of artillerymen and anyone who works with cannons and gunpowder.

<sup>37</sup> St. Joseph's chapel replaced an older chapel dedicated to St. Nicholas of Bari, (Bezzina 2000, p 34).

<sup>38</sup> Mgr Bathasar Cagliares served as Bishop of Malta from 1615 to 1633

<sup>39</sup> Fra Geronimo Galeano Castelnovo from Provence served as Governor of Gozo during 1639.

<sup>40</sup> Other weapons, ammunitions and tools were stored in a vaulted hall at the foot of St. John's Cavalier, (Spiteri 1999, p 115).

<sup>41</sup> The Castello experienced a progressive depopulation wave following the tragic siege of 1551, (Vella 2008).

<sup>42</sup> Caxaro's harsh words betray a long tradition of hostility vis-à-vis the Jewish Community. For instance in 1465 the town mayor of Gozo was accused of harassing the Jews, by imposing unjustified imprisonment in order to obtain payments to which he had no right. The Jewish Ghetto within the Castello looks to have been bought out by the Christians by the late 15th century, (Wettinger pp 24-7).

<sup>43</sup> St. Michael's bastion is linked with the underlying ditch via two sally ports.

<sup>44</sup> Contrary to Caxaro's assertion, all military engineers with the exception of Antonio Maurizio Valperga heavily criticised the Castello.

<sup>45</sup> A rotolo is equivalent to 800grms.



1610 planks,  
 46 wooden beams,  
 190 scantlings,  
 208 half scantlings,  
 500 iron grenades,  
 39 bullet moulds,  
 2 reams of paper for the manufacture of cartridges,  
 98 cane ...,  
 2 iron helmets,  
 12 ...,  
 10 rampart gun's stands,  
 60 sieves,  
 60 small brooms,  
 600 grenade pins,

Moreover, a bronze mortar to sound the alarm to the cavalry and other men of arms whenever required, and seven other bronze mortars for the firing of a salute on Christmas, Easter, Corpus Domini, St John the Baptist, the Assumption of Our Lady, St Ursula's votive processions, visits by the Order's dignitaries and on the occasion of the installation and departure of the Island's Governors. For the Castello to defend and accommodate the Island's 5934 inhabitants in the eventuality of an Ottoman assault those houses that are in ruins are to be reinstated and in some instances replaced by open spaces, two large warehouses for the storage of ammunition and food supplies are to be created, whereas its defences need reinforcement and upgrading. At night, all defence personnel must stay within the Castello as customary until 30 years ago.

Governors reside inside the Castello throughout the year while from May to St Martin's<sup>46</sup> their Lieutenants spend the night at Rabat to co-ordinate the coast guard stations. The Castello's security roster involves three soldiers at a time on watch for 24 hours. They are deployed at their base by day and at St Michael's sentry box at night, and are expected to assist the sergeant in command in controlling the other guard stations at St Martin's and St John's bastions. The master bombardier and his assistant are obliged to reside inside the Castello and be on constant call. The same applies for those bombardiers on duty at the

Castello between May and St Martin's. All other bombardiers residing on the Island, coastal towers' castellans and respective apprentices are equally expected to enter into action if alerted by mortar firing from the Castello.

**This article will be continued in a forthcoming edition of the Gozo Observer.**

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<sup>46</sup> St. Martin's feast falls on November 11 and is traditionally celebrated in Malta on the nearest Sunday.



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