Karmni Grima (k/a ta’ Pari: 1838-1922)
Genealogical History

INFORMATION COMPILRED BY TONI CALLEJA

Introduction

On the 2nd February 2018 the island of Gozo commemorated the 180th anniversary of the birth of Karmni Grima, who was known as being favoured with hearing our Lady’s voice coming out of the titular painting of the Assumption of our Lady venerated at the blessed chapel of Ta’ Pinu. The titular painting was executed by Maestro Bartolomeo Perugino of Valletta, in 1619. Geographically and historically, Ta’ Pinu, today a National Shrine, forms part of the hamlet of Ta’ Għammar. In the Acts of the Apostolic Visit of the year 1575 by the Most Reverend Monsignor Pietro Dusina, Apostolic Visitor delegated by Pope Gregory XIII, it is stated that: “The church, known as tal-Gentili (literally of the Gentiles) is found in the limits of Ghammar”. In one of the few poems published by Frenċ tal-Għarb (another local servant of God associated with Ta’ Pinu), he refers to Ta’ Pinu as:

“Din il-knisja ċkejkna
– Qalb ir raba’ ta’ Għammar
Li għażlet Santwarju Tagħha
– Fih turina grazzji kbar”. 2

(This little church
– amongst the fields of Ta’ Ghammar
That She chose as her Sanctuary
– In which She shows us great graces.)

Since Karmni Grima’s connection with the extraordinary events that happened at Ta’ Pinu in 1883 are treated in another article, the information contained herein intends to shed light upon the genealogy of her family. Genealogy comprises the collation of information that includes the family tree, the family’s lineage, the direct line of descendants (blood relatives), or rather the origins of the family in question.

Karmni Grima’s Family Tree

Grazzju Grima with (around 1699 +/-)
Lukrezja (unknown surname)

Tumas Grima with Għarb: 18 June 1719
Roża Gatt

Marija Mercieca with Għarb: 18 October 1745

Anonymous - Karmni Grima (Oil on Canvas).
Casa Rocca Piccola Collection

1 NAG, GM, 01/44, p. 82.
In the Giuliana Masini, the following note is inserted next to the registration of Karmni Grima’s death: “Lei era apparesa la B.V.M. detta ‘Ta’ Pinu’ e le aveva importo di propogare la sua devozione”. (The Blessed Virgin Mary known as ‘Ta’ Pinu’ appeared to her and She had asked her to spread Her devotion).

2 Poem by Frenċ Mercieca, better known as Frenċ tal-Għarb (Frenċ from Għarb) (1892-1967). This poem was printed in a flier without adding any title or his name to it. It was given out mainly amongst those who especially frequented the Marian devotion linked with Ghammar Hill. For those who are interested, the poem is printed in its entirety in: Bonnici, A. Frenċ tal-Għarb. Gozo, pg 55-56.
Karmni Grima

Karmni’s Family Nickname – ta’ Pari

Those who have written about Karmni Grima in connection with the extraordinary events of Ta’ Pinu, starting with Rev. Can. Theol. Giuseppe Farrugia in 1891 (Farrugia, G. 1891); Mgr. Can. Pawl Cauchi in 1935 (Cauchi, P. 1935); Loreto Vella in 1942 (Vella, L. 1942); Rev. Amante Buontempo in 1947 (Buontempo, A. 1947); and ending with Rev. Nikol G. Cauchi (later Bishop of Gozo) in 1964 (Cauchi, N. G. 1964), refrain from mentioning Karmni’s family nickname. Undoubtedly it is not that they weren’t aware of it!

As prevalent within Maltese and Gozitan societies in those days, Karmni’s family was more known by its nickname than by the surname. They were known as ta’ Pari (in dialect ta’ Pori), which nickname had been in use for many years as a distinctive of the Grima family, so much so that Pawlu Grima, Karmni’s paternal grandfather, who got married in 1776, had already been known by it.

Any relevant reference to the nickname was always that of ta’ Pari and never as tapari (make believe). Ta’ Pari is a masculine noun in the plural form with the particle ta’ indicating possession. As one may notice the meaning being given is that which, taken as prima facie, seems to be the most plausible; but this doesn’t mean that it is correct! In the old days, more than today, many people acquired their nickname through some sort of cute childish expression which they had pronounced in their childhood years. This type of nickname, and those composed of words of endearment that are spoken between close friends to strengthen their ties, are difficult to explain. Even if one were to be a renowned etymologist, since, very often, such words never make any linguistic or literary sense!

In court documents of the 19th century, the family name ta’ Pari features a number of times, always in relation to Karmni’s paternal side of the family (grandfather, father and uncles). In the Giuliana Masini case, the family name ta’ Pari is only found in four or five instances and always relating to Karmni’s family members only.

The family nickname ta’ Pari has not survived in the village of Gharb. The last villagers who were known by this name were Marinton and her brother Gużepp Grima, Karmni’s niece and nephew who lived in the same house as she did, in the limits known as tal-Fgura, where she was born and lived all her life. Prior to their demise, Marinton and Gużepp Grima, bequeathed the house as a donation to the Sanctuary of Ta’ Pinu in order that it could be converted into

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1 For example see: NAG, CG, 10/32 (1847) 7r; 10/39 (1850) 316r.
a museum. The Museum, commemorating Karmni Grima, which originally had only occupied part of the said house, was inaugurated and blessed by the Bishop of Gozo, His Lordship Mgr Ġużeppi Pace on the 2nd May 1965. Later, following the demise of Marinton Grima, which occurred on the 5th November 1974, the museum was extended throughout the entire house.

The Parents: Tumas Grima and Antonia Apap

The father, Tumas Grima was the son of Pawlu and Angelika nee Micallef, and was born in Gharb on the 11 December 1781. On the 28th November 1812 he married Grazzja Agius, also from Gharb. She was the daughter of Marcel and Rozia. At the time of their marriage Tumas was 31 years old whereas Grazzja was 56 and already a widow of the late Mario Formosa. As one might deduce, no children were born of this marriage. Grazzja did not have any children even from her first marriage, because even if she had been still young at 21, her husband Mario had himself been a widower and old. Grazzja died on the 22nd May 1825.

In the meantime Tumas did not think twice before tying the knot again as in less than a year, on the 13th May 1826, he married Antonia Apap at the Matrice of the Assumption. Antonia was the daughter of Gammarija and Marija nee Thewma, and was born in Rabat on the 24th September 1805. When she married Tumas Grima, she was 21 while he was 45, thus more than twice her age. This marriage was blessed with eight offspring whose names and details follow below.

On the 30th April 1860, Tumas and Antonia suffered the loss of their first child, 33 year old Marija, a

Bank Account held by Karmni Grima with the Government Savings Bank. NAG, GB, 01/21, p. 33

spinster. Not much is known on the condition which led Marija to her demise. From a research in the admission registers of the Gozo Hospital for five years, it doesn’t result that Marija was ever admitted as a patient. However, this loss gravely affected her mother Antonia in such a way that, in less than six months, her heart failed leading to her death on the 26th October 1860 at the age of 55. An old saying says: Meta tiġi iftħilha l-bieb (literally - when it arrives open the door for her), and in line with this, in less than nine months after their mother’s death, the Grima family also lost their father Tumas. He died on the 6th July 1861 at the age of 80 years.

The sons and daughters of Tumas Grima and Antonia Apap; Karmni’s siblings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Died</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maria, Angelica, Francesca</td>
<td>18 Mar 1827</td>
<td>30 Apr 1860</td>
<td>spinster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giuseppa, Angelica, Giovanna</td>
<td>09 Oct 1828</td>
<td>20 Oct 1898</td>
<td>spinster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giuseppe, M’ Angelo, Nicola</td>
<td>01 Jan 1831</td>
<td>05 May 1913</td>
<td>bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M’ Angelo, Paolo</td>
<td>09 Apr 1832</td>
<td>22 Dec 1918</td>
<td>bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giovanna, Guliana, Margherita</td>
<td>21 Feb 1834</td>
<td>24 Nov 1899</td>
<td>spinster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M' Angelo, Pubblio, Dionisio</td>
<td>12 Dec 1835</td>
<td>22 Sep 1899</td>
<td>married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmela, Grazia, Giuseppe</td>
<td>02 Feb 1838</td>
<td>25 May 1922</td>
<td>spinster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea, Aloysius, Vincenzo</td>
<td>30 Nov 1840</td>
<td>03 Dec 1840</td>
<td>baby</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


*Lehen is-Sewwa* (1965). (29 Apr) 2; (08 May) 5.

Vella L. (1942, *Il-Bażilika Ta’ Pinu, f’Lehen is-Sewwa* (18 Nov 1942) 3; (02 Dec 1942) 3; (10 Dec 1942) 3; (16 Dec 1942) 3; u (30 Dec 1942) 3.

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