

GOZO IN THE WORLD AND THE WORLD IN GOZO

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A thesis submitted by Raymond Xerri for a Ph.D from Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne, 2002 deals with "the cultural impact of migration and return migration on an island community". More specifically, it reviews in considerable detail the effect of migration on Gozo, from both positive and negative aspects. It explores the meaning and significance of migration and return migration between Gozo and Australia.

The thesis starts with a comprehensive discussion relating to aspects of Gozitan life, including chapters relating to Gozitan identity, cultural life in Gozo and linguistic peculiarities.

Another group of chapters describes life of Gozitan migrants in Melbourne's western suburbs where they tended to congregate, and the way that they transformed this foreign land into an image of Gozo, with their habit of hard work and importation of

cultural activities such as festas and other religious practices. It emphasises the role of religious life in the settlement process of Maltese migrants.

What this thesis lacks in empirical information is amply made for by a comprehensive description of life in Gozo, particularly in the author's home village of Qala, and the new home they re-made in one particular area of the world.

It also represents a milestone in Maltese-Australian relationships: this is the first Ph.D thesis by a Maltese person writing about a Maltese topic, to be undertaken entirely at a foreign University, namely, the Europe-The recent visit of Professor Jarlath Ronayne, the Vice-chancellor of this university, has served to continue to strengthen ties between the two universities, and to renew bilateral agreements first signed in 1989. It is hoped that more such bilateral exchanges will be encouraged through such agreements