Gozo in the world
and
the world in Gozo

The cultural impact of migration

and return migration

on an island community

Raymond C. Xerri

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CONTENTS

i

PART III THE WORLD IN GOZO

TABLES AND FIGURES

APPENDICES

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work, except where otherwise cited, and has not been submitted, in whole or in part, for any other academic award.

Raymond C. Xerri

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the meaning and significance of migration and return migration between the Maltese island of Gozo and the Australian city of Melbourne. The exploration begins in the Introduction with 'Lina', a Gozitan return migrant from Melbourne whose situation captures the dilemma of cultural 'hybridity'. Through Lina, the reader is introduced in turn to the concept of **crossings** into worlds beyond the familiar, a metaphor which is employed throughout the thesis. With her experience of crossings, Lina, it is suggested, is, like so many Gozitans, simultaneously 'home' and 'homeless'. As argued throughout the thesis, among Gozitan migrant and return migrant communities, diversity and difference coexist alongside similarity and unity, and should not be thought of as mutually exclusive. Similarly, it is argued that local and global must be understood as intermeshed—particularly in the processes of migration and return migration—if we are to understand the evolving Gozitan identity.

These themes are elaborated in the following three chapters, which explore the ways in which being 'Gozitan' are articulated, as well as the ways in which 'non-Gozitan' characteristics of life are negotiated. Chapter 1, 'Ferry Crossings', explores how Gozitans maintain essentialised representations of

their island and themselves in deliberate contrast to the neighbouring island of Malta and the Maltese.

Chapter 2, 'Gozitan Identity Under Construction', elaborates some of the theoretical difficulties and contradictions of such idealised self-representations. It engages with debates surrounding questions of identity formation in relation to Gozitan migrants to the western suburbs of Melbourne and return migrants back to Gozo. Borrowing such concepts as 'positionality', 'habitus', 'hidden transcripts' and 'reflexivity', the chapter establishes a conceptual and theoretical framework for approaching the notion of 'Gozitan identity'.

Chapter 3, 'Double Crossings: Positioned Ethnography and Writing Gozo', outlines the ethnographic method employed to research these issues. As the chapter describes, the writer's engagement with the topic—as 'outside' researcher and 'inside' Gozitan—was at times a problematic process. As its title suggests, the chapter sets the stage for ethnographically mapping the contours of Gozitan identity as they are affected by the crossings and double (return) crossings between Gozo and Melbourne.

The following four chapters focus on the crossings to Australia. They describe how the conditions of life in Melbourne's western suburbs and the

ways in which Gozitan migrants responded to them generated a set of socially-produced practices and perceptions—a 'habitus' in Bourdieu's terms—which continues to inform and form their sense of who they are and their place in the world.

Specifically, Chapter 4, 'The Land at the Edge of the World', describes how Gozitans transformatively created 'Gozo' in Melbourne as they settled in the municipality of Brimbank. As the chapter argues, perceived similarities between the western suburbs of Melbourne and the island of Gozo were refracted, in particular, through the prism of identification with the land.

Chapter 5 argues that just as land is central to the habitus of Gozitan identity, so too is work. 'Making Dreams Work' explores the importance of work—including recreational activities—for Gozitans, and contends that in the process of negotiating what it means to be Gozitan in Melbourne the work ethic is central.

Chapter 6 explores another central element underpinning Gozitan identity in Melbourne—religion. As 'Faith and Festa' argues, religious occasions enable individual Gozitans performatively to see themselves as part of the larger Gozitan 'nation'. In particular, festas and homage to the Madonna ta'

Pinu in Bacchus Marsh provide the performative spaces where Gozitan identity can be constituted as 'real'.

Chapter 7 shows how religion and the social life of Gozitans in Melbourne reach into other areas of their lives, in this case language. 'Linguistic Menus' argues that as the Gozitan language is publicly spoken, written and sung, 'Gozitaness' is re-presented and re-created. In the process Maltese dominance is publicly contested, as Gozitans by their language choice refuse to place themselves (or allow themselves to be placed) in a subordinate position within a central Maltese narrative.

The following three chapters explore how these various transformations wrought in Melbourne affect life back on Gozo in the context of return migration. Chapter 8, 'Bingo, Races and Bars', considers changes to recreational life in Gozo in the wake of return migration, and argues that what is emerging is a transnational Gozitan identity which implicitly contests central Maltese narratives of identity.

Chapter 9, 'Making Money', relates these changes to the recontextualising of work and the work ethic among Gozitan returnees from Melbourne. It argues that, as in other aspects of life, in the economic transformations which have

occurred in Gozo returned migrants from places such as Melbourne have featured prominently.

Finally, Chapter 10, 'Flags and Firecrackers', discusses the impact of return migration on religion and religious life in Gozo. Specifically, it focuses on the re-definition of the role of the Church in the lives of Gozitans as returnees loosen their dependence on the clergy and Church structures, introduce changes and additions to village festas, and bring new dimensions to the Ta' Pinu cult.

Interspersed in the text are three Pictorial Essays: three series of images which should be viewed as visual essays complementing the themes of the three sections of the thesis.

The themes come together in the Conclusion, which suggests that the Gozitan experience as outlined in the thesis represents the larger human condition. It reiterates how this study has provided insights into how Gozitan men, women and children have drawn from their store of cultural capital, including their essentialised conceptions of 'home' and their localised familiarity with the experience of 'crossings', to bring meaning and order to their lives. It suggests that, in not simply drawing from, but—as much of the material in the thesis attests—adapting, transforming and creating cultural

capital, migrants and return migrants have added significant new dimensions

to what it means to be 'Gozitan'.

INTRODUCTION

Lina[1] is a thirty year old Gozitan woman. She migrated to Australia with her family when she was eight years old. She was married to a Gozitan migrant in Melbourne, where her two children, a daughter and a son, were born. Five years later she and her husband, together with their young children, returned to Gozo, to live permanently. Lina had dreamt all her life of the day she could return to the island of her childhood and to a place that resonated with familiarity, warmth and a deep sense of belonging. Lina now works with her husband in the small family business that caters to tourists on the island during the tourist season. During the rest of the year she is a mother and a housewife taking care of her family and the family's home.

As life has settled into a predictable pattern, Lina misses her life in Melbourne and the freedom and the exciting things that life there could offer her. She speaks longingly of the many school friends that she left behind, as she recalls her childhood and youth on the other side of the world. Lina would like to continue her studies and training in art and design, which she had started when her first child was born, but there is little chance of that now. She says that she feels trapped between two vastly different and overlapping worlds. On the one hand, the world of Melbourne where she

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[1] All names used throughout this thesis are fictional and have been adopted in order to protect the privacy of the people concerned. This case is a composite of several interviews with Lina over an extended period in 1998 and 1999.

1

grew up, worked, studied and enjoyed a level of freedom that she no longer

feels she has. And, on the other, the world of Gozo, an island, steeped in

tradition and where life as a married woman is predictable and her place is

circumscribed by the demands of life to make ends meet and the communal

expectations related to her position in her island world. She weeps quietly as

she reflects on her predicament. She loves Gozo, she says, but she doesn't

feel that she fully belongs here. And reflecting on her life as a migrant in

Australia, with all the struggles, joys, uncertainties and longings to be 'home'

that that experience entailed, she wonders if she now belongs anywhere. She

describes herself as being what the local Gozitans refer to as 'an American'[2],

a cultural 'hybrid', a person who is both at 'home' and homeless.

As Lina's case illustrates, the desire to belong and to be 'anchored' in a

place, a culture, a 'community', is central to a sense of identity. And yet, as

her case also illustrates, for large numbers of the world's people who have

been displaced, either by choice or necessity, the theme of connection

between place and identity is a much more complex and problematic issue

(Castles and Miller 1993). Migration from as well as 'return migration' to

places of provenance, or origin, is fraught with its own set of challenges and

tensions that make a return 'home' an attractive but elusive goal. As this

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[2] The term 'an American' is applied to all those who have journeyed, migrated or lived anywhere outside of the Maltese Islands. It is an ambivalent term, full of connotations of somebody who is both an 'insider' and an 'outsider'. In short, it is a term that is applied to people who straddle the world of the island and the outside world, beyond the horizon.

thesis argues, a return 'home', as much as migration, suffers from the limitations of the ways in which it is conceptualised. The compartmentalised view, which separates the worlds of 'home' and places of (re)settlement, such as Australia, tends to ignore the continuing actions, journeys, culture contacts and the fluidity of relationships between people and communities. In a globalising world of fast transport and real time electronic communication technologies, the time and space separations that once imposed a 'tyranny' of distance need to be rethought in light of these changes.

Migration and 'return migration', like all journeyings, are what I call *crossings* into worlds beyond the familiar one(s) that one is born in, or has temporarily inhabited. Such crossings, in the form of migrations, journeys and movements, are tense and fluid projections into the beyond and the simultaneously beckoning and daunting possibilities that are contained in the destinations aimed at. As Lina found, migration and returning 'home' are dynamic, if ambivalent, journeys that contain all manner of possibilities and risks, in which social and cultural contexts and the exigencies of what de Certeau (1984) refers to as the tensions of 'everyday life' come together. Life in transition bespeaks of uneasy places, uncharted territories that are often left unspoken, unnamed and for which an adequate evocative vocabulary is really yet to emerge.

What Lina and many other similarly *positioned* people, to borrow Stuart Hall's term (1995), are discovering is that identity is increasingly 'anchored' in several, not easily reconcilable, places at once. That is, that no single social and cultural locale, or physical place, however rich and diverse it may be, can be the 'sufficient space' that can respond to the yearning for the wholeness of 'home'. As I argue in this thesis, in any given locale—social, cultural and economic—there is an excess that is produced through the experience of migration and cultural crossings, that cannot be fully accommodated within any extant culture. Questions of identity need to be rethought, as Hall (1995), Bhabha (1994) and others suggest, in other terms, different from the 'traditional' and fixed notions of socially and culturally self-contained places, geographically located or 'anchored', at different points on a given social, geographical or other conceptual map.

The metaphor of 'crossings' is used throughout this thesis. It is adapted here to serve as a fluid and transitive term in order to suggest that migrations and journeys, such as those undertaken by the Gozitans to Australia and 'home', are much more fluid and open than traditional studies about migration, which focus exclusively on post-migration resettlement, would suggest. It is my contention that migrations, like all life journeys, need to be thought of as disparate and diverse processes of negotiations whose outcomes are contingent. That is, the resulting consequences of particular crossings and

journeys, for the individuals and communities concerned, will depend on their actions and placement within a given field of social forces, which constitute the specific social and cultural context, at particular points in time.

This study is an inquiry into the question of identity formation among Gozitans who have journeyed to and settled in Australia, and some who, like Lina, have journeyed back and are now busy rebuilding their lives in the island of Gozo. The study raises questions about the ways in migration has been conceptualised in the past, in terms of clear-cut categories, such as fixed points of 'departure' and 'arrival', which are reflected in a substantial part of the available literature. As the discussion in the chapters that follow suggests, binary categorisations, such as 'us' and 'them', migrants and non-migrants, are difficult to sustain in the context of movements of people. The Gozitan experience of migration and return migration suggests that such altogether commonplace binary categorisations need to be rethought, in the present conditions of fast travel and communications in a rapidly globalising world.

My interest in Gozitan identity arose from my own experience of migration and return migration and my extensive contacts and involvement with people with similar experiences, both overseas and in Gozo. Like Lina, I found the experience of migration and return migration a much more complex issue than I had anticipated. As the study and discussion presented in this thesis

illustrates, a single and essentialised Gozitan identity was and remains, from my vantage point, more complex, varied and problematic than is commonly appreciated or admitted to in Gozitan discourses on migration and the changes taking place.

As argued in this thesis, migration experiences represent sets of life's trajectories, at given times and places, temporarily grounded and permanently open to the possibility of change. In this thesis, I have sought to provide a picture of the complex and dynamic set of trajectories of engagements, experiences and struggles, which collectively give form and substance to a diverse and evolving Gozitan identity. I have sought to reveal something of the dynamics of the interplay of a set of factors and practices that constitute what I call an evolving Gozitan identity. Contrary to outward appearances and assertions of a monolithic and fixed Gozitan identity, the view that emerges from the research presented in this thesis suggests that, behind the 'façade' of a monolithic identity, there are discourses that contest the official transcript (Scott 1990) of the definers of Gozitan identity.

As Lina's experience illustrates, Gozitan identity is framed by the tensions between the desire for continuity, stability and belonging and the pressures for change. And, as her case further illustrates, issues of gender, class and

ethnicity are integral to the dynamic processes of an evolving Gozitan identity and the myriad of issues and processes that constitute it.

The Gozitans, the subjects of this study, are migrants who have journeyed or migrated to Australia, to the western suburbs of Melbourne, as well as a large number of those have returned 'home', to the island of Gozo, one of the three inhabited islands that constitute the nation-state of Malta. Travel, migration and crossings to worlds beyond the sea are neither new nor, in terms of magnitude, unusual. Gozitans, like their Maltese fellow citizens, have a long history of journeying and migrating to other worlds beyond their shores, which stretches back to the earliest reaches of human history. Indeed, Gozitan history is replete with examples of experiences of migration, forced expulsion and invasions—a constant merging of the local and global—which have had a profound impact on the formation of Gozitan culture and identity.

As Lina's story suggests, there is a close nexus between past and present. Indeed, past and present are inextricably bound up together and need to be thought of together, without the zero point that their separate naming suggests. They are inseparable: past _and_ present. For Gozitans, both at 'home' and in the diaspora, Gozitan history, including their Australian migration and other diaspora experiences, forms a continuous and evolving part of their narrative. They draw on their experiences of journeying and on

their rich cultural traditions and history in order to make sense of who they are, across cultures and changing circumstances. In short, their identity and place in the modern context is informed and formed by these experiences and the meanings that are given to them.

As argued in this thesis, 'Gozitan identity' is variegated, deepened and enfolded by the diversity of experiences of the people that make up the 'community'. Indeed, Gozitan identity needs to be thought of not as one essentialised entity, which is 'fixed in the tablet of tradition' (Bhabha, 1994), but as a multiplicity of articulations of relationships and intensities, which are bound together by a common thread of over-riding unity across differences (Hall 1995). While a set of common historical, cultural and other experiences provides the broad framework that defines an over-arching Gozitan identity, vis-à-vis every other similarly construed identity, difference and diversity need to be thought of as integral and constitutive of these same processes. As argued in this study, diversity and difference coexist alongside similarity and unity and must be thought of together, as two sides of the same coin, or not at all.

Viewed from a certain vantage point, it is this complexity of internal power relations that provides the logic and dynamic that enables a collective Gozitan identity to retain both a specificity, as well as a porous flexibility for

adaptation and change, able to accommodate changing circumstances, across time and space. Agreeing with Stuart Hall (1995), Gozitan identity is always positioned in time and space, and is permanently in pursuit of completion in, and against, a changing set of circumstances. At the same time, as bell hooks (1995) reminds us, we must not forget that pursuits of collective interests, captured within a shared identity, must not obscure or silence the individual aspirations for wholeness, belonging and emancipation, within the complex web of social relations which constitute society. For people such as Lina, the experience of migration to Australia and 'return migration' to Gozo serves to remind us of the continuing struggles for emancipation by individuals and groups, such as women, in the 'interstitial spaces' (Bhabha 1994) of a deeply traditional society.

Issues of power also feature throughout this thesis. The Gozitan experience in Australia is framed by its migrant experience and as members of a largely working class ethnic community. Isolation and struggles for survival in a modern (post)industrial society are themes that feature prominently in their accounts, as do their shared social activities, which are aimed at maintaining a sense of community in conditions of rapid change that threaten the Gozitan community with fragmentation, assimilation and disintegration. In a similar, though different, context, the Gozitans who have returned 'home' face another set of challenges, which revolve around issues of (re)negotiating a

place for themselves in an island that has limited space, jobs and resources to support a large population, in conditions of change. Gozo, like the rest of Malta, is undergoing change, as part of the globalising processes that have drawn it increasingly closer into the complex international economic and cultural orbit—for example, as a popular tourist destination, on which much of its economy depends.

The metaphor of centre-margin neatly captures this situation, with the Gozitans in Australia viewed as the subjects of a centre-margin set of power relations. On the one hand, by virtue of their migrant and mainly working-class status, they occupy a space on the margin of Australian society, in terms of access to positions of power and decision-making. On the other, they are the furthest physical distance from Gozo, which continues to be a key point of cultural and social reference. Paradoxically, perhaps, as demonstrated in a variety of contexts dealt with in this thesis, Gozitans retain close links with their kin and the people of the villages whence they came, in spite of their physical distance from their island of provenance. Modern technologies, such as transport, phones and computer-based technologies, have helped 'shrink' the physical distance, to the extent that many Gozitans participate directly in the affairs of their families and communities. This participation informs their experience of 'Australia', frames the 'liminal'

social spaces (Bhabha 1994) available to them, in which they have sought to create a space for themselves in Australian society.

The 'return migrants' to Gozo, and Malta in general, as Lever-Tracy (1988) has persuasively argued, represent the exercise of an option that is available to other Gozitans, such as the (re)integration into a society that they are familiar with and whose history, culture and traditions, as well as kinship structures, they share. The skills and resources acquired in their journeyings, for example in Australia, provide a reservoir of culture capital that can enhance their status and standing in their communities of origin, in what Bourdieu (1991) refers to as the permanent competition for cultural and material resources in any given social setting.

At the same time, the evidence presented in this thesis questions the assumption of a fundamental distinction between migrants and those who remain in their places of origin. Such definitions ignore the many enduring links, and evolving cultural geographies, that continue to exist between people who share common histories, cultures and languages, as well as kinship, even as they attempt to adjust to the different social settings and changes that their positioned existence demands of them.

Cultural crossings, such as migration and 'return migration', which pervade modern Gozitan and Maltese history, represent specific measured strategies and tactical responses to concrete life circumstances, in pursuit of improved living conditions and securing needed and valued social and material resources. In this context, Gozitan migration to Australia and 'return migration' to Gozo might be viewed as part of a larger set of global processes, which have been integral to the modern era (cf. Castles 1988). The separation between the local and global, which might have existed at some point in the past, has now become blurred and deeply problematical. As Massey has rightly argued, it is extremely difficult to separate the 'local' from the 'global', because 'the global is everywhere and already, in one way or another, implicated in the local'. (1994:120). It is this increasingly complex and fluid social, cultural and economic intermeshing of the local and the global, which is exemplified in the processes of 'migration' and 'return migration', that led me to explore the emerging problematic of an evolving Gozitan identity. This also accounts for the somewhat ambiguous title that I have chosen for my thesis: 'Gozo in the world and the world in Gozo'.

As Lina's case indicates, the question of identity is related to the modern processes of disembedding, or uprooting, of people from relatively stable and traditional societies, such as village communities, and their participation in

global processes, through migration to the industrial centres of the world (Castles 1988). As Calhoun (1994) and others have argued, questions over identity are quintessentially modern, because of the break up or irrelevance of most previously established all-encompassing identity schemes, such as kinship, religious and village-based identities.

The debates over identity have shifted the ground from underneath essentialist conceptions of identity through the challenges by scholars who have demonstrated that identities are socially constructed (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Gellner 1995). And yet, although the social constructionist arguments are well grounded, the question of why essentialism holds sway over large populations around the world, including Gozitans, remains a problematic that requires further exploration. For ordinary Gozitans, such as migrants in Australia and those who have returned 'home', the belief and wide acceptance of a distinct Gozitan identity is essential for their survival in a world that threatens to obliterate them. As Lina's case illustrates, there is an explicit though largely unquestioned acceptance of a Gozitan identity, which she readily acknowledges even as she rejects its gendered restrictions and the dislocation that her experience of living in two overlapping worlds has brought about. Her experience in Australia and exposure to different cultural influences and possibilities for being, together with her current and past experiences and participation in Gozitan society, have rendered the belief in

a singular, totalised and monolithic Gozitan identity inherently unstable and open to question.

Paradoxically, the instability is literally inscribed in stone on the Gozitan landscape in the form of the many emblems of the countries that the return migrants had journeyed to. These represent not only powerful statements about the Gozitans' pride in their achievements, but are also a testament to the ongoing affinities that they retain with Australia and many other countries. One of the most powerful symbols of what I have called *crossings* that remains with me is a huge sandstone carving of the Australian coat-of-arms, with the family's coat of arms inserted between the kangaroo and emu, placed on top of a large and ornate house.

The melded coat-of-arms represents one set of negotiations of Gozitan identity. As illustrated throughout this thesis, many such negotiations have occurred, and are in the process of occurring, both on Gozo and in Melbourne. They represent articulation of what it means to be 'Gozitan', as well as coming to terms with 'non-Gozitan' characteristics of life. The discussion in the chapters that follow explores aspects of these negotiations and articulations of identity.

PART I

GOZO

CHAPTER ONE

FERRY CROSSINGS

'Nannu ,[1] I am not going to Malta, the sea is a bit rough', said Irene while

sitting on the livingroom sofa to watch 'Neighbours'[3] on NET Television.

'Rough sea!' said Ġużepp Buttigieg, Irene's grandfather, 'You are scared of

a thirty minute ferry ride to Ċirkewwa Malta? ... Imagine spending a month

and a half on the *Oriana* [4] to Australia. Five days of continuous treacherous

seas, until the captain gained control ... We prayed and prayed to the

Immaculate Conception, *il-Madonna Ta' Pinu,* [5] and Saint Joseph to get us to

Australia *f'biċċa waħda* [6](safe and sound).'

'That is rough sea,' Ġużepp yelled out, '... you young people have no guts.'

'I get dizzy and my stomach becomes upset', responded Irene, while

switching off the television. She sat and asked *Nannu* to continue, 'Tell me

more about your days'. Bedridden, sitting upright, he was ending his first

recital of the rosary for the day and he ordered Irene to check if her father,

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[3] Refers to the television soap series produced in Melbourne.

[4] One of the many ships operated by P&O Shipping Co. Ltd. which carried hundreds of Maltese and Gozitan migrants and return migrants to and from Australian ports.

[5] Is literary translated Our Lady of Ta' Pinu, Ta' Pinu referring to a popular Gozitan legend.

[6] A common expression in Gozo.

15

Joseph, had put up the flag and after a long cough uttered, 'It is the feast of the Immaculate Conception and don't you forget'. Irene puzzled, '*Nannu*, it does not make sense, putting up the Australian flag on the day of the feast of the Conception *Tuta'*,[7] shouted Irene.

With a determined effort, he responded, 'Listen *binti*,[8] I fed my family and built this house from working the sugarcane plantations of Queensland and later in Melbourne. Your father worked in Footscray and Australia is where you were born. Don't you ever forget that ... even though you could have gone to Malta today to get your Maltese citizenship'. Ġużepp continued, 'You do not know how lucky you are being able to hold both citizenships. If I knew I would get both in my days, even if I had to swim in these waters to Malta I would have made it there'. Sudden silence reigned until Irene replied forcefully, 'I cross over to work every day, *Nannu*. I will sort it out and please bugger off.'

The preceding exchange represents the crux of what this thesis is about. Irene crosses daily to work in Malta and her grandfather crosses on the *Oriana* to Australia. They are arguing about the same symbolic voyage away from

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[7] Gozitan word used in a number of villages for grandfather.

[8] Literally translates as 'my daughter.' However, in Gozitan conversation this word can be used for any female young person close to the person who is speaking.

Gozo yet they cannot seem to agree on any point. The metaphor of 'crossings' emerges. On one hand, there are the daily ferry crossings of thousands of Gozitan commuters to Malta, mainly for study, work and business purposes, and their return to Gozo in the evening. On the other hand, the crossings by ship of thousands of Gozitan migrants to Melbourne and their eventual return to Gozo.

To 'cross' implies to move between two land points, with a space in the middle. This space is the sea with all its storms. The land and sea figure in the minds of Gozitans; in many respects they both serve as metaphors for how Gozitans see themselves, and their differences from the Maltese. The somewhat idealised (and manichean) representation of the land Gozo as beautiful and good vis-à-vis neighbouring Malta is the prism through which the Gozitans make sense of their experiences of Maltese domination—but, as demonstrated throughout this thesis, it is also a prism which refracts that experience, leading to tension and contradiction when the idealised myth seems far removed from the more pragmatic demands of life.

This chapter provides a precursory description of the Gozitan relations of kinship, shared history, and connection with the land. The popular construction of Gozo and Gozitan identity is described and provides the point from which the current study of questions of Gozitan identity formation will

begin. As will become clear, the popularised myth of the 'Gozitan fisherman's pot' acts as a reference point for the affirmation of an essential Gozitan identity that is perceived as biologically based and distinct from Malta. The nativist fisherman's pot illustrates how Gozitans see themselves and their distinctive relationship with the land Gozo. The use of topographical nicknames which reinforce the strong connection with the land will also be sketched.

For members of the island community, the ferry crossing from Gozo to Malta starkly reinforces the unity of Gozo and its apparent difference from Malta. Ferry crossings are one of the fundamental differences between the life-styles of the Gozitans and the Maltese, and inevitably influence how Gozitans see themselves and how the Maltese see the Gozitans. After all, the Maltese do not need to wake-up early, catch boats, worry about time, spend two hours on bus trips, face the danger of rough seas, verbal abuse, discrimination and a lack of understanding.

As Irene protested to *Nannu*, crossing over to Malta is a daily test to the character of Gozitans. They are often confronted with the difficulties of verbal harassment, a lack of understanding of the Gozitan schedule and discrimination at the workplace or at University by many Maltese employers and lecturers. The number of Gozitans who are required to daily cross to

Malta has remained relatively constant, despite all the facilities promoted by the Central Government and the Local Councils[9] in the last decade. Furthermore, the time of leaving Gozo and reaching the destination in Malta by ferry has not changed much. It still takes at least two hours travelling from home in Gozo to the destination on Malta and another two hours back. The typical Gozitan schedule for a worker, student and businessmen having to cross to Malta is an experience in itself.

In the not-so-distant past, those who wanted to cross over to Malta took the first ferry, which left at about five in the morning. However, many preparations have to be made between the time a person awakens and the time he/she reaches the workplace, the lecture room, or the government office to obtain a service. Some wake-up and attend the 3.30 a.m. mass after which preparations start for the journey. Lunch is prepared and breakfast taken quickly. Most Gozitan commuters face constant worries about timing and whether enough time is left to either walk, catch the bus or drive to Mġarr Harbour to catch the ferry. Upon arriving in Mġarr, from where the ferry departs, one must quickly purchase a ticket and rush onto the boat to beat the crowds. The early morning ferries depart Gozo between five and six o'clock, a time when most Maltese remain fast asleep. Timing is not the only

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[9] Local Councils were reintroduced in Gozo in 1993.

concern; there are also the conditions at sea and the cold mornings. On most stormy days, the ferry service does not operate and this causes great inconvenience: Gozitans are unable to cross over to work, attend lectures and so on.

The ferry to Malta resembles a floating village square where discussions continue as on Gozo, until the boat docks at Malta. Silence returns aboard the boat as Gozitans prepare themselves mentally to face the day in Malta. Getting a seat on the limited number of buses forces Gozitans to start their struggle with a sprint to the bus. Whoever remains without a seat must wait about an hour for the next bus, or else remain standing in a bus for the whole journey, crammed and uncomfortable. The hour-long journey from the port of Ċirkewwa Harbour to Valletta (where all buses leave and converge) is another experience. The compact 1930s steel bus with rough seats and no air conditioning ensures the trip is an unforgettably novel experience for any foreigner. But for Gozitans it is a daily ordeal, compacted with the poor conditions of roads leading to Valletta ensuring that those still remaining half asleep become wide awake.

In addition to the ferry crossing and bus trip, all categories of Gozitan passengers—workers, students, businessmen and ordinary citizens—must face other hurdles. On Malta, Gozitans face a lack of understanding by the

Maltese about particular aspects of the Gozitan character. One aspect most Maltese find difficult to understand in the Gozitan character is why Gozitans are always in a hurry, always alert, often very suspicious and tending to filter every word said in any conversation. In general, Gozitans, though kind-hearted and hospitable, are rather abrupt in their manners (cf. Aquilina 1987:986). Many Maltese expressions exist about this situation, the most popular being: *Ha naghmel bhall-Ghawdxin*, 'I'll drink this and then leave (as the Gozitans do)'. This is a current idiom in Maltese when someone wants to say that he/she has only time to take a drink and then leave.

Like other minority groups, Gozitans often reflect on their identity. Usually structured in conversations among themselves is their expression of concerns about the difficulties they face on Malta. Small island communities like Gozo can be found all over the Mediterranean Sea and throughout the world. As the population does not exceed 30,000, the island is small enough for the people inhabiting it to know of just about everyone else. In fact, most Gozitans are blood-related, often finding their origin in a handful of families. To this extent I speak of the Gozitans as a 'community of affines'.

Gozo forms part of a compact archipelago. The fact that Malta, a larger and more densely populated island, exists alongside Gozo creates a pattern of thought perhaps different from other isolated island communities elsewhere.

The land serves as a metaphor for how Gozitans see themselves: a small island community living in the shadow (or on the margins) of a larger dominant island. The collective Gozitan consciousness thinks of the relationship between Gozo and Malta in manichean terms. The Gozitans define themselves against and opposite to the Maltese. For example, Malta is large, Gozo is small; Malta is impersonal and fragmented while Gozo is personal and communal. At its extreme, Gozo is good and Malta is bad. Like the identity politics of other minority groups, the Gozitans strategically essentialise themselves and the Maltese who dominate them.

The gritty and resilient characteristics of the idealised Gozitan identity are captured by Joseph Bezzina:

> Throughout the centuries, the Gozitan developed a strong and independent character, a conservative person with staunch, clear thoughts; a person who can think for himself, unaffected by what others think about him; a person who carefully deliberates every single action to determine its compatibility with one's interests and plans. With the passing of time the Gozitan became known as an able farmer, an honest and sought after emigrant, and a courageous, hard-working and diligent person.
>
> (Bezzina 1988:6)

The strong Gozitan character is usually contrasted with the weaker Maltese counterpart. The constant neglect by the authorities in Malta and economic hardship are usually cited by Gozitans as the two major reasons for the

difference between the identity of Gozitans and Maltese. But often more subterranean nativist explanations are cited which root Gozitan identity in the landscape of Gozo. To this extent, it is the landscape which most vividly affirms the manichean distinctions that are so important to Gozitan self-representation, distinctions reinforced by the daily ferry crossings which present the differing landscapes of Gozo and Malta.

The island inhabited by Gozitans is isolated and physically quite distinct from the rest of the Maltese archipelago. The very fact that Gozo is an island separated by 4.8 nautical miles of water from mainland Malta provides a certain degree of autonomy to both populations. This remains so, despite all the bridging work provided by the various modern means of communication. Over the centuries, being away from the centre of power meant that Gozitans had to create a functional and practical system to order their lives.

Gozo has an area of 67 square kilometres and Malta occupies a land mass of 245.7 square kilometres (Bezzina 1991:7). Gozo lies on a separate fault line from Malta, though still on the African plate. Although both islands share the same geology, a stark difference exists in the physical appearance. Malta has one major geological fault dividing the island; [10] it lies on a high plateau on

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[10]The Great Fault divides the island of Malta in half.

23

the west side and slides gradually down on the east side into the sea, resembling a huge sinking aircraft carrier. Gozo's physical appearance is different in that the entire island is *fertilis ab undis caput effero*—a fruitful land raising its head from the sea, as the motto of Gozo's emblem proclaims (Bezzina 1988:9). With the exception of a number of bays with difficult access, particularly the main port of Mġarr, all the island lies at least five to ten metres above sea level—unlike most of the eastern and southern areas of Malta. Gozo is a greener land mass in that it has a much higher clay content, is more fertile and has proportionally greater numbers of trees, vegetation and diverse species.

The state of Malta (which includes Gozo) with a total population of over 390,000 has the second highest population density in Europe, with 1,164.2 inhabitants per square kilometre (Eurostat 1999). Gozo, although a third the size of Malta, has less than 30,000 inhabitants. This has allowed the island to maintain its rural character and, more importantly, its well-preserved villages, separated from each other by low hills with terraced fields on the slopes. The three villages of Nadur,[11] Xagħra,[12] and Żebbuġ[13] are situated on

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[11]Nadur occupies the top of a flat-topped hill in the east Gozo, and is the largest village of the island.

[12]Xagħra, in the central north-east of the island, rises on a hill and was one of the earliest inhabited areas in prehistoric times.

[13]Żebbuġ in the north-west of Gozo lies on two hills joined by a ridge.

three hill tops. The other villages, Qala,[14] Għajnsielem,[15] Xewkija,[16] Ta'

Sannat,[17] Munxar,[18] Ta' Kerċem,[19] Fontana,[20] Għasri[21] and Għarb[22], surround

these hills, and at the centre lies the capital city of Gozo, Rabat, called

Victoria[23] since 1887. This well-organised and neat setting, where the capital

lies in the centre with the villages surrounding it, provides a sense of

manageability and self-containment in the minds of the islanders. In Gozo,

the villages consist of patches or clusters of dwellings surrounded by a larger

natural environment.

Gozo's beautiful natural environment has been well captured by Malta's

nature poet and second President of the Republic,[24] Anton Buttigieg (1912-

1983). In his autobiographical book (1981) *Mill-Album ta' Ħajti (From the*

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[14]Qala, the most eastern village of Gozo, has the largest number of bays.

[15]Għajnsielem, a valley village closest to the Port of Mġarr.

[16]Xewkija, lies in the exact centre of the island and is the first *contrada* (district) and later became Gozo's first *raħal* (village).

[17]Ta' Sannat lies in the south of Rabat.

[18]Munxar lies to the south of Gozo, neighbouring Ta' Sannat.

[19]Ta' Kerċem, lies to the south-west of Rabat overlooking the Lunzjata Valley.

[20]Fontana or *It-Triq ta' l-Għajn* (the way of the spring) is the only village joined to Rabat by dwellings.

[21]Għasri is the smallest village lying to the northwest of Gozo.

[22]Għarb, the westernmost village of Gozo.

[23]So named on June 10, 1887, on the occasion of the golden jubilee of Queen Victoria, Rabat was officially declared a town and its name changed to Victoria.

[24]Served as President of Malta between 1976 and 1981.

Album of My Life), Buttigieg portrays the first years of his life experience in Qala, a typical village of Gozo and one of the earliest settlements in the Maltese islands (Veen & van der Blom 1992:72). His collection of poems describes Gozitan places and scenes, and celebrates the personal intimacy with nature and simple lifestyle for which Gozitans are famous. He has captured the beauty of the Gozitan environment, especially in his poetry dedicated to the trees, valleys and plants which surrounded the village of Qala. In his later years, at the town of Hamrun in Malta and at the Presidential Palace, his youthful memories of Gozo and the life of Gozitans were identified by Buttigieg as the treasured years and memories of his life.

Gozitans have great respect for the natural environment of their island and consider the land an extension of their private homes and their village. Consequently, the Gozitans like to see themselves as more environmentally responsible than the Maltese. While Gozitans take meticulous care cleaning the land nearby their houses, in Malta the attitude can be different— 'beyond my sidewalk is not mine'—expressing a more limited concept of civic pride. Besides the high degree of pride, Gozitans have developed environmentally-friendly methods, for extracting water resources for example from their limited land by carving a series of consecutive wells alongside big fault lines.

Although Gozitans have very few resources, historically the distribution of their skills made the island self-sufficient. Agriculture, fisheries, quarrying, construction and traditional crafts were the backbone industries for Gozo before the late 1960s when the first manufacturing industries were established. Agriculture and fishing produced the food for Gozitans. Until a few decades ago, every village or group of villages was renowned for a particular sector or sectors of the economy, by specialising in the production of one or a number of products. The specialised crafts of the Xewkija people include the *nassi tas-sajd* (fisherman's pots) which remain an intricate work of art. Figure 1 indicates a completed Gozitan fisherman's pot.
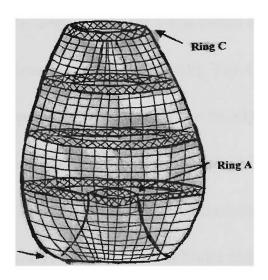

Figure 1 - *Nassa tas-Sajd Għawdxija* (Gozitan fisherman's pot)

The fisherman's pot is made up of dry reinforced individual bamboo pieces knitted together in pairs. Fishermen can still be seen at Xewkija and Mġarr Harbour constructing such pots, on side streets and near the *dghajjes tal-latini*[25] (Gozitan boats) on the shores.

The *nassi tas-sajd* may be viewed as a symbol of Gozo's family structure, reflecting Gozo's interwoven genealogical pattern after the 1551 Ottoman siege. As the following pages describe, the Gozitans have intermarried many times over and this interrelation resembles the making and structure of a typical *nassa tas-sajd Ghawdija*[26] (Gozitan fisherman's pot).

Prior to 1551, the population of Gozo numbered around 5000 people. Following the Ottoman siege, all except a few dozen old men were dragged into exile to Constantinople (Fiorini 1986:209). The Ottoman forces led by Sinan Pasha and Dragut Rais first attacked the largely defenceless Gozo in July 1551, then fourteen years later attacked Malta, and were finally defeated in the famous Great Siege of 1565. The few remaining men in Gozo along with the Gozitan survivors who had fled to Malta and Sicily, supplemented by the Maltese who settled in Gozo, formed the entire population of some 80

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[25] *Id-Dghajsa tal-Latini*, boat with lateen sails, formally the Gozo boat.

[26] This is a typical Gozitan fisherman's net used for centuries, even millennia, by the skilled Gozitan fishermen of Xewkija and Qala.

to 100 families. These families are represented in the construction of the Gozitan fisherman's pot by the 80 to 100 ties forming ring A. As the pot is constructed from ring A to ring base B and finally completed at ring C, it resembles the forming of the Gozitan family tree through time, where each knot represents a marriage in Gozo (starting at ring A in 1551 and ending in ring C in recent times). Ring A represents the families formed after the 1551 attack.

The Gozitan fisherman's pot remains a typical part of the Gozitan landscape in that it contiues to be used by fishermen. Here I use it symbolically, to highlight a fundamental difference between Gozitan self-representation and their contrasting representation of the Maltese.

As the net is constructed outward into a concave form (ring base B) the knitting outwards represents in genealogical terms the introduction of new blood and genes to the original Gozitan population. This introduction to the gene-pool ends by the early decades of the seventeenth century, which is represented on the pot as a gradual closure of the circle, upward to Ring C. This closure represents the intermarriages between families which, after four generations (or just over a century), are now blood-related. After this intake of hybrid blood, only negligible numbers of Maltese and foreigners married

Gozitans. This trend continues to the present day with the overwhelming majority of Gozitans marrying other Gozitans.

Gozitans like to highlight the dissimilarity of their genealogy to the case of Malta, where every colonial power ruling the island left a remaining population which contributed to a hybrid Maltese gene-pool. The isolation of Gozitans and their ability to maintain relative autonomy from the rulers in Malta led to over four centuries, or twenty-two generations, of intermarrying.[27] This resulted in a population of closely related people, represented by ring C of the fisherman's pot. Now nearly all persons on the island are consanguinely related. This genealogical history is translated into an essentialist assumption which posits a particular characteristic to the Gozitan that is biologically based. This assumption is translated to cultural politics whereby the identity of the Gozitan is clearly marked off from that of the Maltese on the basis of an essentialist/hybrid dichotomy. The fisherman's pot provides an important starting point from which Gozitans are able to define themselves as distinct from the Maltese and legitimate their nationalist political program to obtain a status of an island-region in the event of Malta becoming a member of the European Union.

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[27]Considering two decades as representing one generation, following the internationally accepted genealogy standard.

The Xerri-Buttigieg genealogy[28]—to which I belong—represents a model and pattern of development commonly found in the family trees of Gozitan surnames. The Xerri-Buttigieg families in Malta are an example of the new addition to the Gozitan nation during the 1570s. Xerri and Buttigieg are two relatively common surnames in Malta and Gozo. My surname Xerri is inherited from my father and Buttigieg is my mother's maiden surname. Genealogy and heraldry today attribute the origins of both to Malta, although Xerri can also be traced to the Catalan region of Spain and France. Buttigieg is originally a German surname, prior to the fourteenth century. The current project, in spreading out to families who are relatives on both sides, encompasses over 800 Gozitan families over four centuries (cf. R. Xerri 1995). The simple family tree of both the Xerri and Buttigieg families can be found in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 provides the list of marriages in both family trees (Xerri and Buttigieg) which are common to both trees since 1618, indicating the interrelatedness of the Xerri and Buttigieg families—and indeed most Gozitan families. This frequency of marriages in the family tree tightens the circle of the Gozitan fisherman's net as it gradually forms an upside down funnel shape (ring C).

The Xerri-Buttigieg genealogy is typical of the Maltese families who moved from Malta to re-populate Gozo after 1551. The way these two family trees

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[28]A collection of nearly 10,000 profiles of members of the Xerri-Buttigieg Family of Qala, held in Qala, Gozo, Malta.

grew over the centuries in Gozo resembles the construction of the Gozitan

fisherman's pot. This is the case with all the families who moved from Malta

to marry the surviving families in Gozo.[29] Such families assimilated quickly

in Gozo since the original Gozitans would have accepted them on their terms

only. As Stanley Fiorini remarked, this "original Gozitan community

emerges as a rather compact, closely-knit and closed group, very jealous of

its possessions and averse to the intrusion by Maltese outsiders into their

affairs ... Any penetration of Gozitan phalanx by Maltese was only achieved

via marriages" (Fiorini 1986:235). Over the centuries their surnames became

the typical Gozitan surnames; very few of the original (i.e. pre-1552) Gozitan

surnames still existed, and the 'new-comers' were given nicknames and their

coats of arms were 'Gozitanised'.

Fiorini lists surnames of Gozitan survivors of this siege, Gozitans who

sought refuge in Sicily, Tunis and Algiers, and Maltese who settled during

the following decades. The comparison between both sets of surnames

(before and after 1552) indicate that there was very little input of new

surnames, though a number of surnames existing prior to 1552 are today

extinct since no male was born to carry on the surname. The year 1552

proved to be a cornerstone in Gozitan history, which will be referred to

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[29]Zammit Haber, Frans, Genealogy Records of Gozitans kept at his residence in Xewkija, Gozo.

throughout this study in examining what are the characteristics of a Gozitan family and its particular identity in Gozo and, furthermore, how these characteristics have been affected by migration and return migration between Gozo and the suburbs of Melbourne in Australia.

A Gozitan searching for a marriage partner can be fairly confident of reliably knowing about their prospective spouse. This is because in Gozitan villages everybody knows everyone else, and they also know the reputation of the particular individual, family or *razza* (family tree). In the past, persons seeking a relationship in Gozo first made contact either at the annual village festa[30] or at *Lejliet tal-Ghana*—folklore music nights. The search for a compatible partner was often made difficult by the desire on the part of one to emigrate and start a new life or seek their fortune elsewhere while the other wanted to remain in Gozo. In this way, the pool of prospective marriage partners was limited.

Gozitans quite often opted to marry relatives: cousins, second and third cousins, even uncles and aunties (L. Xerri 1995). Until recently, this was the practice of most families. *Id-demm jigbed*—'blood relatives are attracted to each other'—remains a common Gozitan expression referring to marriages

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[30] A *festa* is an annual festival in honour of the village or city patron saint. Some villages as well as Rabat have more than one *festa*. The festa originates from fiesta organised in most of Spain and Italy, particularly Sicily.

between relatives and to when a child was born with birth defects as a result of close marriages. Some relatives married because they had known each other for years. Others married relatives to contain wealth in the family, and usually came from the same village or area. My grandparents on my father's side were first cousins, and both were second cousins with my grandmother on my mother's side. The only different bloodline was my mother's father. Yet others insisted on marrying a partner from the same locality because they were, in effect, enslaved to a strong parochial mentality.

Reflecting the Gozitans' relatively small circle of families, Gozo has just over one hundred surnames whilst Malta has over one thousand five hundred (cf. Gauci 1996). Surnames in Gozo are inherited from one generation to the next, unchanged expect for slight variations in spelling of a few surnames, such as Meilaq, Meilak, Mejlak, or Theuma, Teuma, Thewma, and Scerri, Xerri. Unlike Gozitans, Maltese have many more surnames that vary in spelling. Of the Gozitan surnames found in the Electoral Register and telephone directories, the 25 most common are: Vella, Attard, Grech, Camilleri, Portelli, Buttigieg, Sultana, Azzopardi, Galea, Spiteri, Grima, Borg, Mercieca, Farrugia, Cassar, Muscat, Zammit, Xuereb, Cauchi, Saliba, Mizzi, Xerri, Said, Formosa and Tabone. Among this list, only Vella existed prior to 1551; all the others are Maltese and only appear in Gozitan records after 1551.

Naming is important to the Gozitans and the varying landscapes and villages on Gozo have been given unique topographical nicknames (toponyms). This is another dimension which distinguishes the Gozitans from the Maltese. There are five types of toponyms in Gozo: *laqam tar-raħal* village toponym; *ż-żoni residenzjali,* residential zone toponyms, *inħawi,* area toponyms; *sinet raba',* a cluster of fields toponyms; and *qasam raba',* individual-field toponyms used in Gozo. In most parts of Malta, street names and social establishments have replaced these forms of toponyms, though some villages still use them.

Gozitans have given nicknames to their villages and to many localities in Malta as well. Some are well known; others are kept within closed circles. Residential zone toponyms are names given to areas where a cluster of houses or neighbourhoods exist. Area toponyms are names given to areas similar to residential zones, with one difference: area toponyms also consist of a cluster of field toponyms, called *sinet ir-raba'.* These area toponyms are made up in conversation by articulating residential zone and area toponyms to describe a particular place. Field toponyms are normally smaller in area than area toponyms and usually cover the rest of the village not referred to by the other toponyms. In the case of the village of Qala, with an area of just 4.2 square kilometres, over 70 cluster-field toponyms can be identified (starting

from the west to the east of the village). They are: Ta' Fuq is-Sur; Tal-Kaptan; Iż-Żewwieqa; Ta' Tonnin; Tal-Ħbula; Tal-Klin; Ta' Wied Biljun; Il-Qortin; Il-Wardija; Tat-Torri; Il-Hodba; Tal-Merħba; Ta' Kassja; Ta' Boffa; Id-Dar is-Safra; Ta' Grunju; Tas-Salib; Tal-Herep; L-Andar il-Qadim; Tal-Ġebla l-Wieqfa; Ta' Sufa; Ta' Semper; Tal-Lukkiet; Il-Bajjad; Tal-Mintuff; Tal-Ħalq; Ta' Ruba; Tal-Marġa; Tal-Qassis; Ta' Hondoq ir-Rummien; Tal-Għassa; Ta' Kordina; Tal-Blata; Tal-Maqjel; Il-Ġebla tal-Ħalfa; Il-Qortin; Ta' Berqa; Il-Qawra ta' Ċjotu; Ta' Nemes; Tal-Qasam; Ta' Dandalona; Tax-Xulliel; Iċ-Ċens; Ta' Gwidi; Il-Wileġ; Ta' Cassar (also, known as) Ta' Qassar; Andar ix-Xagħri; Ta' Gafan; Ta' Ċini; Il-Hanaq; Tal-Malvi; It-Taksis; Għajn Haġar; Ta' Daħlet Qorrot; Ta' Toċċ; Ta' Tawru; Ta' Ras il-Qala; Tas-Simar; Għajn id-Dar; Ta' Lambert; Il-Qortin Tal-Laċċa; In-Nigret; Ta' Ġerimija; Tal-Hanzira; Il-Hawlija; Tal-Ħbela; Tal-Blata; Il-Hejja and Tal-Għassa.

Most field toponyms carry the family tree nicknames or just family nicknames of the owners. Some still have nicknames given after the siege of 1551, such as *Ta' Dandalona*, from the surname Dandalona, and *Tal-Mintuff* derived from the surname Mintoff. In addition to the complexity described thus far, each field is also given the toponym of the owner. This last level of toponyms subdivides fields into even smaller parts and adds to the hundreds of toponyms, known only by a few farmers in each village.

VILLAGE-RELATED TOPONYMS

Village Toponyms	Residential Zone Toponyms	Area Toponyms

Cluster-Fields Toponyms	Individual Field Toponyms

Each village in Gozo has the same complex naming system which enables people, especially farmers, to identify and categorise any area of Gozo down to a few square metres. In Malta such categorisation has almost completely lost its social significance and is now largely confined to the maps of the Planning Authority and the records held at the archives of Notaries Public.

Gozitans, unlike the Maltese, discarded the nobility system of class structures and the toponyms of areas, cluster fields, fields and pieces of fields did not depict status or influence in Gozitan society after the French rule in Gozo. Gozitan society has never recognised the Maltese nobility, has exercised

37

certain autonomy and has always resisted such imposition from Malta's land tenure system which was based on titles of nobility or association. Land in Gozo was sold freely between farmers. However, the land still belonging to the Gozitan nobility prior to French rule or land that had a nickname associated with a noble title was generally sold to another noble family in Malta. Noble families that decided to relocate in Gozo after the 1551 siege lost their noble title since Gozitans did not recognise them as such. In Malta, noble titles were abolished in 1974.

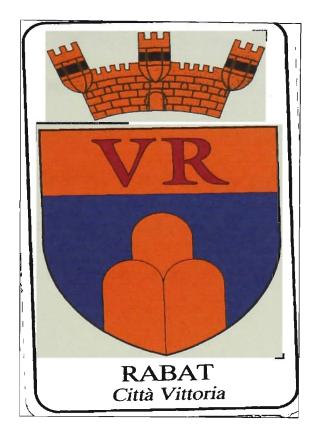**Figure 2 - Village of Qala Coat-of-arms**

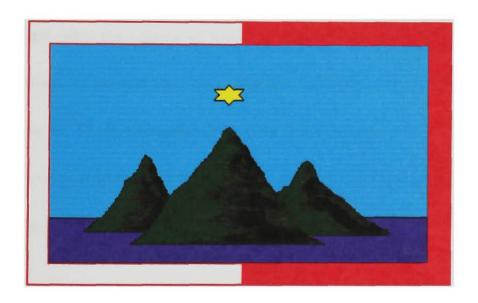**Figure 3 - City of Rabat (*Citta' Vittoria*) coat-of-arms**

Figure 4 - The Flag of Gozo

Each village in Gozo has its own coat-of-arms. In 1993 some of these coat-of-arms were slightly modified by the Central Government of Malta and later re-corrected by the re-introduced local councils in Gozo after their absence

for nearly two decades. Gozo also has its own flag, which is identical to the coat-of-arms. The land features as the means by which Gozitans represent themselves. Although not officially recognised by the Central Government, the Gozo flag can be seen flying on many homes during the village *festa*. The three hills and star symbol is used on many publications such as *il-Ħajja f'Għawdex* (Gozo Diocese journal), Gozitan newspapers in the past, places referring to Gozo and emblems sculptured on roof tops of homes, in churches and theatres.

These and other Gozitan 'national' symbols are integral to the self-representation of the Gozitans. In particular, they are held up to the Maltese and are often the subject of debate, especially when Gozitans and Maltese exchange comments on such symbols or other differences they may encounter. These exchanges degenerate from time to time to abusive verbal exchanges, even over relatively minor incidents. Gozitans, perhaps more than Maltese, are acutely aware of their difference.

The Gozitan awareness of difference and marginality vis-à-vis Malta is almost secretive and acts somewhat like an 'internal motivator' within the collective Gozitan consciousness. Gozitans do not express their pride by such means as public flag-raising or shouting in the village squares, but in

reserved ways—usually between Gozitans and with a certain language and cunningness, understood only by fellow Gozitans.

Gozitan pride often manifests itself during conversations between Gozitans about the Maltese. While there are many places and circumstances where such talk arises, it is the 30 minute ferry crossing from Gozo to Malta that consistently provides the site for renewing Gozitan pride and reinforcing their sense of difference from the Maltese identity. The hundreds of workers, students, businessmen and ordinary Gozitan men and women gather together on the boat space. They sit and converse about their work, studies, business and other matters. And the most common topic of discussion are the problems faced by Gozitans in dealing with the Maltese. Their conversations continually reinforce their sense that the Gozitan character is not understood by the Maltese, a sentiment captured in the popular Gozitan saying: *'Ma' jafux minn xiex nghaddu'* 'Maltese do not know and do not understand what Gozitans have to experience everyday'.

These ferry discussions perhaps find their origin in earlier family conversations, when children were subjected to their mothers complaining about daily confronting the *il-Maltin*, the Maltese. For Gozitans, the first ferry trip to Malta is a liminal experience, perhaps their day of 'national awakening'. Usually by the time of their first ferry crossing the young

41

Gozitan has experienced years of their parents, particularly the Gozitan mother, 'hammering into their brains' the value of Gozitan pride, discipline, hard work, cunning, the value of money and meeting '*il-maltempati tal-ħajja*', 'the challenges and storms of life'. For Gozitans the storms of life are not only dealing with the Maltese; but are often literally facing the storms while crossing the channel in the autumn and winter seasons.

In the face of Maltese 'storms'—metaphoric as well as literal—the affirmation of an unchanging shared culture and identity provides comfort and security. But, as the following chapter elaborates, the somewhat idealised representation of the land Gozo and the Gozitan people described in the preceding pages is fraught with theoretical difficulties, contradictions and problems.

CHAPTER TWO

GOZITAN IDENTITY UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Theorising culture and identity, as well as migration, is fraught with difficulties. The available literature is full of examples that testify to the complexity as well as to the essentially problematic nature of this vast and, in many ways, contested terrain (cf. Bottomley 1992; Castles 1988). This chapter explores the debates that surround questions of identity formation in relation to Gozitan migrants to Australia or, more specifically, the western suburbs of Melbourne, and those who have migrated back to Gozo. Though the Gozitans who have migrated back to Gozo and those who remain in Australia are in many ways different, they also share common ground, such as relations of kinship, a shared culture, language and history, including histories and experiences of journeying and displacement.

'Culture' and 'identity' are terms that appear throughout this thesis. In the literature on the subject, these terms are encountered as closely intertwined and inseparable. Indeed, identity is unthinkable outside of or divorced from a culture and cultural processes. As a concept, culture is ambiguous, and remains the subject of much scholarly and public debate. The term 'culture' has been the subject of a vast number of overlapping and different definitions

by the many writers on the subject. As used in this thesis, the term culture, which is borrowed from Raymond Williams' *Keywords* (1976) and *Culture* (1981), refers to 'a constitutive social process creating specific and different ways of life' (in Bottomley 1992:10-11). In agreement with Bottomley (1992), I would also add to that definition Stuart Hall's note that culture includes:

> ... *both* the meanings and values which arise among distinctive social groups and classes, on the basis of their given historical conditions and relationships, through which they handle and respond to the conditions of existence; *and* the lived traditions and practices through which those 'understandings' are expressed and in which they are embedded.
>
> (Quoted in Bottomley 1992:11)

One of the dangers that applies to a number of definitions of culture, such as those reflected in past anthropological research in 'foreign lands, and among foreign peoples and cultures' (Clifford and Marcus 1986), is that they tend to exoticise, objectify and reify cultures. Such definitions tend to solidify and fix boundaries around what are ongoing historical processes, open to change and innovation. Human histories are examples of ongoing cultural interaction, cultural exchanges and cultural change. The view that cultures can clash, suggests an ahistorical construction and solidification of evolving

cultural processes and practices. Such a view of culture is explicitly rejected in this study.

Bourdieu's useful notion of *habitus*, or 'history turned nature', derived from his studies into class-based universes, is a key concept that provides a rich mediating theoretical framework that helps account for the complex links between Gozitan migrants in Australia and elsewhere, those who return 'home', as well as those who never migrated from the island of Gozo. As Bourdieu (1986) has demonstrated, a 'sense of one's place' in the world is experienced as natural by those whose historical conditions have produced particular lifestyles and practices. Culturally based identities, in Stuart Hall's terms, are therefore always *positioned*, or *placed*, within social contexts, and in which 'the limits of necessity' help create another way of being, knowing and seeing. For a group of migrants, such as the Gozitans in Australia, the experiences of living and working in a modern society, largely in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations, their experiences of marginalisation and displacement, form an ongoing existential reality in which they continue to live and define themselves.

As an island people who have faced the extremes of 'the limits of necessity' within Gozo's shores, Gozitans are well aware of the existential realities at 'home', where centuries of colonial domination, invasion, hard work, limited

space, poverty, resistance and the daily struggles for survival have formed a central and ongoing theme. The work of the foremost Gozitan historian, Joseph Bezzina—who, following in the footsteps of Giovanni Pietro Francesco Agius de Suldana,[31] is compiling an encyclopaedia of Gozo, entitled *Gaulitana*—provides ample evidence of the existential realities and struggles in Gozo over an extended period of its history. His detailed documentation and analysis illustrates the immensely complex, and largely hitherto ignored, struggles of the Gozitans in their attempts to not only survive but to actively resist external domination and the inherent threats to their existence that they posed.

It is these existential conditions and the many ways in which Gozitans have responded to them that have generated a set of socially produced practices and perceptions, or a *habitus*, which continues to inform and form their sense of who they are and their sense of place in the world. Although Gozo shares much of the same history with its larger sister island, Malta, there are also significant differences that arise from Gozo's, at times, separate history as well as from the particular existential conditions that are specific to it. The claims of Gozitans for greater recognition of their identity and heritage and for greater attention to be paid to the specific issues they face, such as economic development and employment on the island of Gozo, by the

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[31] De Soldanis is also referred to as the father of Gozitan history.

national government in Valletta, constitute historically generated differences, grounded in conditions of necessity.

Such differences, arising from, and reinforced by, the daily experiences and perceptions of being located within a specific social and economic structure, can provide important bases from which Gozitans in Australia and those in Gozo, albeit differently in their respective contexts, can relativise their particular claims to legitimacy vis-à-vis the dominant cultures and established social assumptions. These voices, or specific enunciations of difference, which Scott (1995) refers to as 'hidden transcripts', speak of cultural differences on top of assumed similarities and unities, and insist on attention (cf. Hall 1995).

Migration to and from Gozo is a constant theme in the Gozitans' long history, and a practical response to the specific and frequently difficult existential life conditions on their island. Gozitans have been international migrants and voyagers crossing into other worlds for centuries, and have actively maintained and translated cultural practices that define who they are in new social settings. Their journeys and movements to worlds beyond their island have invariably been as part of the large Maltese migrant contingent, and Gozitans have rarely received attention as a group in their own right. The exception are the various writings and sound recordings of Barry York (cf.

1989, 1990, 1991, 1992), who has recorded and extensively documented the oral narratives and stories of the migration experiences in Australia of both Maltese and Gozitan migrants. From the Maltese and Gozitan end, Lawrence Attard's (1983, 1989, 1997) important series of publications on Maltese and Gozitan migration, *Man and Means*, has performed a similar task by documenting the stories of those who journeyed to Australia and elsewhere, as well as those who returned, nearly all after many years of struggle and toil in other countries.

On the issue of return migration to both Malta and Gozo, research into this area is also lacking. The exceptions are the studies by King and Strachan (1978), who studied the impact of return migration, specifically on Gozo, the study by Lever-Tracy (1988), who inquired into the causes of return migration from Australia to both Malta and Gozo, and the more recent study by Cauchi (1998). All are valuable and are the necessary starting points for the insights that they provide into some of the reasons for migration and return migration, as well as the impact of a large influx of returnees on the local communities, but they represent a far too limited number of studies into a very complex phenomenon, which calls for more research into the issues that these studies raise.

In theorising Gozitan identity, I have drawn on the emerging literature from a number of disciplines, such as cultural studies, women's studies, migration and diaspora studies. Researching at a time such as this, when previously all-encompassing grand narratives, such as objectivist and 'north-west Eurocentric'[32] theories, have been rendered unstable by the critiques of the formerly excluded—women, the formerly colonised and the displaced—is both daunting and exciting. It is daunting because there are no ready-made grand theories into which a study such as this would readily fit. Moreover, the expectation that research into the specific conditions of life confronting diverse groups of people needed to comply with institutionalised models of scholarship consistent with expectations of writing in the grand narrative 'traditions', has given way to experimentation and exploration. On the other hand, the theorising in the various disciplines, such as cultural studies and women's studies, have opened up new perspectives and ways of understanding and seeing, that make it possible to delve into a multitude of hitherto obscured areas of life.

As indicated above, Gozitan identity is an evolving entity whose 'existence' can only be understood as the product of their history within the contexts in

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[32] I use the term 'north-west Eurocentric' in order to limit the widely used and imprecise term Eurocentric, which is used by many writers who are critical of categorisations developed in a number of European countries that were implicated in 'European' colonialism. I simply wish to point out that not all Europeans shared in the colonial and imperial projects that were undertaken by former colonising states, such as Britain, France and the Netherlands. Indeed, in the case of Malta and Gozo, as in the case of other European countries, such as Cyprus, these countries were themselves subject to colonialism from the same European countries as were, for example, the peoples of Africa and Asia.

which it is produced. Such an identity represents transnational processes of negotiation and dialogue in which Gozitans everywhere, regardless of whether they reside in Australia or in Gozo or elsewhere, engage in a multitude of dialogues with people and institutions in the contexts in which they are located, as well as across them. Drawing on the writings of Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha and others, this study argues that Gozitan identity represents a multi-layered construction, a 'work in progress', made up and intersected by a variety of cultural elements and processes. That is, Gozitan identity is an articulation of practices.

Hall (1990) has suggested two ways of thinking about cultural identity, which are of relevance to this exploration of Gozitan identity. The first, which shares common ground with Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, entails defining cultural identity in terms of one shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self'. The second involves a view of cultural identity centred upon the notion of 'positionality.' Hall argues that cultural identities 'are not an essence but a positionality' (p. 226), which he defines as points of identification, which are made within the discourses of history and culture. Central to his notion of positionality is the understanding that what we say and write is always 'in context,' it comes 'from a particular place and time, from a history and culture which is specific' (p. 222). Hall's conceptual

framework is particularly relevant to the study of Gozitans and the cultural changes that they are subject to, at this time in their history.

Hall's notion of positionality suggests a flexibility and openness to new and emerging possibilities of being, responding and engaging with issues and challenges, in ever-changing social circumstances. His conception also has the advantage of placing people at centre stage—not as subjects but as active agents—in the processes of change. In this, he breaks with the monolithic conceptions of identity, as the term itself suggests, and proposes that multiple identities can simultaneously co-exist flexibly within a common and evolving umbrella. The notion of positionality also offers a way of linking positioned identities and identifications of Gozitans in Australia with those on Gozo. Such a conception is of particularly pressing relevance to an understanding of the experiences of returned migrants and their attempts to renegotiate a place for themselves in Gozo.

Using the experiences of identity formation amongst Caribbeans as an example, Hall argues that black Caribbean identities are 'framed' by two axes that are simultaneously operative: the axis of similarity and continuity; and the axis of difference and rupture (1990:226). Caribbean identities have

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[33] The term identity is derived from the Latin *idem*, or one. It is interesting that such a term continues to be used, despite the fact that such a monolithic notion has been shown to be problematic by a majority of contemporary writers and researchers on this issue.

always been thought of in terms of the dialogic relationship between these two axes; thus identity formation is characterised by a 'doubleness' between similarity and difference. Similarity exists within an 'imagined community' that provides a common 'African' identity and history (that of transportation, slavery and colonisation). Differences persist as Caribbeans position and reposition their cultural identities in relation to the various cultural 'presences' (European, African and American), which constitute the complexity of Caribbean identity (Hall 1990:230.) Rather than simply viewing Gozitans, with various life experiences, such as that of return migrants in Gozo, as a homogeneous community with a fixed identity, Hall's notion of 'doubleness' is particularly useful in the case of a diverse community whose sense of who they are is characterised by both similarity and difference.

According to Hall (1993), the capacity to live in and negotiate several 'worlds' at once is a defining characteristic of modernity. In the modern world, 'identity is always an open, complex, unfinished game—always under construction' (p. 362). Modern people of all sorts, and in changing conditions, increasingly have to negotiate their sense of identity across a number of complex 'borderlines' and 'have had ... as a condition of survival, to be members, simultaneously, of several, overlapping "imagined communities" (p. 359). Accordingly, identity draws from a number of

'worlds' and is based upon a recognition that every identity is 'placed, positioned, in a culture, a language, a history. Every statement comes from somewhere, from somebody in particular' (Hall 1986:46).

Hall calls this process of belonging to overlapping 'imagined communities' a 'politics of articulation', because the self is always a fiction formed at the points of intersection between stories of subjectivity and the narratives of history, as are the various categories of identification such as nation, gender and ethnic group. Thus multiple identifications are characteristic of modern life. Those thousands of Gozitans, 'who are now obliged to inhabit at least two identities, to speak at least two cultural languages, to negotiate and translate between them' (Hall 1993:362), are at the leading edge of the 'late-modern' experience.

A great deal has been written about the specific identities of various people and communities. Herzfeld's studies into Greek identity are of particular relevance with respect to Gozitan identity, which is characterised by a doubleness resulting from its history. In his work on Greece, Herzfeld provides critical insight into the nature of Greek culture, in particular, on the polarity between the European 'front' that Greeks display to foreigners and the 'oriental' aspects of their culture, which they acknowledge among themselves. This is the predicament of a culture which has been historically

assigned to the 'margins of Europe', of a people expected to play not only the role of the 'living ancestor' of Europe but to also function as a palpable reminder of the consequences of 'orientalization' (Herzfeld 1987). This insight is particularly relevant in the case of Gozo, a predominantly Maltese-speaking island with fourteen dialects, which has been marginalised in tangible and perhaps more fundamental ways.[34]

The Gozitan marginalisation is compounded by its physical isolation from Malta and the surrounding countries, as well as by the fact that Gozo has missed out on the industrial age and the developments that followed in its wake, for example, on the island of Malta. In many respects, Gozo continued to function as a society characterised by close-knit village communities, retaining a continuity with its past as a predominantly agricultural society. In recent decades, Gozo has been characterised by the growth of service industries, such as tourism, which cater for the large number of people who use the island as a holiday destination—in part for the vicarious experience of being on an island represented in the tourist literature as 'unchanging' and 'ageless' (cf. Adams 1994).

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[34] For discussion on the tensions that characterise the doubleness of Greek identity and the historical processes that have brought about this situation, see the discussion in Herzfeld (1987:73-74).

I have adaptively applied Herzfeld's argument to the Gozitan context in order to illustrate how specific conditions and circumstances give rise to the amalgamation of disparate and occasionally contradictory cultural elements to be linked together, which can co-exist side by side and can extend to a wide range of practices. Although circumstances, such as contradictory pressures, create the conditions for the suturing together of any number of diverse elements, I also wish to avoid the 'essentialist' determinism that this implies. As argued in this thesis, Gozitan identity is socially constructed in response to specific circumstances that demand, as a condition of survival, accommodation to new sets of social and cultural exigencies. I wish to suggest that Gozitans are not passive respondents to any specific field of social forces (Bourdieu 1986), but active participants in a dialectical process, which may or may not always be readily apparent. They engage with the issues that circumstances impose by assessing and determining, in line with their *habitus*, what is impossible, possible and probable. And they exercise judgement in the process by making choices from the field of options available to them. That is, there is the exercise of power in any given social field, and Gozitans seek to mitigate the extremes of the exercise of power, by negotiating the issues in ways that are deemed most appropriate and advantageous to their situation.

This is not to suggest that Gozitans do not employ essentialist arguments as they seek to claim recognition of their identity and cultural heritage. Claims based on a long history of separate development of a unique historically produced cultural heritage, as the discussion in this thesis illustrates, attest to the use of essentialist constructions and arguments in support of their claims. In a world where the past is used universally, for example by nation-states in order to legitimise their power and dominance, uses of essentialist arguments and narratives by the less powerful, or subordinate groups, represent strategies that contest the legitimacy of hegemonic claims. Gozitans use essentialist arguments because they are simply essential for their survival. As postcolonial critic Spivak (1987) has argued in relation to the Asian Subaltern Studies Group, essentialist arguments are used in order to blunt the claims of the powerful and to use the same strategies that they employ in defence of one's own rights. Not to contest the 'essentialist' terrain that the more powerful use, would leave the field open to such arguments being (mis)taken as valid.

Like their Greek and Caribbean counterparts as described by Herzfeld and Hall, the Gozitans are also engaged with their own set of social processes that arise out of the specific histories and life conditions that frame Gozitan culture and practices. 'Articulation' is used as an analytical and epistemological tool in the chapters that follow, in order to elucidate the

complex nature of the social processes of identity formation. The concept of doubleness and the apparent ability for people to flexibly 'suture' together a variety of cultural elements, including disparate, incongruous and contradictory practices, can appropriately be accounted for by this useful and generative concept.

Hall (1996) points out that the concept of 'articulation' can be understood in at least two ways. In its usual sense, articulation refers to ways of giving expression to experiences and narratives, which can take many different forms, such as speaking, singing, dancing and other public displays of personal and collective life. In another sense, using the analogy of an articulated vehicle, focusing on the point at which the metaphorical vehicle and trailer are attached, articulation can also indicate the linking together of two or more similar or disparate elements. With respect to culture, an infinite variety of cultural elements, including incommensurable, contradictory and incongruent elements, can be flexibly and, sometimes, temporarily sutured together in response to specific social conditions, such as belonging simultaneously to two imagined communities. For example, Gozitans living in Gozo readily display what is locally referred to as an *Amerikan hej* (American) front. This involves the display of wealth, such as grand villa style homes, names plaques and coats-of-arms on house facades, modes of dress, cars and other cultural elements, which have been brought by return

migrants or by global television from the worlds beyond. These displays, which are intended to represent tangible examples of modernity, sophistication, wealth and achievement, stand in stark contrast, with, for example, local 'traditional' displays, such as the older and more modest styles of houses.

The concept of articulation, in both senses that Hall (1986) identifies, also refers to a doubleness, because articulation involves an ongoing reflexive assessment of the place of self in and against a specific set of circumstances in which s/he is placed. This separation between where—culturally, socially and experientially speaking—a person is and the gulf that separates her/him from where s/he is, needs or might wish to be, insists on accommodation, as a condition of survival and continuity. Reflexive judgements about the desirability, appropriateness and value of specific cultural elements are integral to articulations. Again, to take the example of the new villa style houses being constructed in Gozo, these public displays of achievement and wealth are not intended, for example, for the benefit of foreigners, though this is not excluded as a possibility, but for one another. Agreeing with Bourdieu (1986), these displays form part of a larger and more complex discourse of enunciations in which the competition for social and cultural resources and culture capital features prominently. I shall return to this

complex set of issues in my discussion and analysis of the forms of articulations of Gozitan identity in the chapters that follow.

Yet, cultural articulations, such as the material wealth of the Gozitans, alongside the similarities and continuities, also announce something of the differences and ruptures that have marked and continue to mark the lives of a large proportion of the island's population. These public displays represent resources that affirm a pride in what the Gozitans have become, in spite of the forces arrayed against them by the constraints and hardships of life on the island and beyond it, in the lands they migrated to and in which they toiled, often for many years. In contrast with Herzfeld's study of Greeks acknowledging an Oriental identity, in subdued voices among themselves, Gozitans conspicuously display their acquired cultural and material resources. This represents not an act of agonistic reflexivity and soul-searching, but a strategy of cultural appropriations, which are used to legitimise their claims for recognition of their identity.

Gozitans have been the subject of negative perceptions as 'backward', 'rural' or 'underdeveloped', which are contained, for example, in numerous jokes and stories that the Maltese tell about Gozitans. In contrast with such views, the Gozitans themselves view their identity as something to be proud of. They display this pride (and defiance) in a variety of ways, the most striking

of which are the construction of modern and ostentatious styles of housing ·and the very public events, such as the many village festas and the visits each Wednesday to the Ta' Pinu Sanctuary by thousands of Gozitans. These displays, though fraught with incongruities, ambiguities and departures from past 'traditions', denote a complex set of relational dynamics that at their most basic level signal an openness to change, communality and solidarity, confidence to meet emerging challenges and to affirm a distinct Gozitan identity.

Drawing on performance studies, the Gozitans' very public display of who they are, what they have become, and explorations of new styles and ways of being, can be conceptualised as a process in which Gozitan identity is not only a matter of subjective thoughts and beliefs but is also the subject of public performance and testing. Indeed, the explicit claim of this thesis is that identity is expressed and structured through performances, in discrete actions and activities. Such performances (such as the festa, funeral gatherings, work and language practices) inform and help shape the choices that Gozitans make about the forms that their performances take. In Dening's (1996) terms, there is both *poetics* as well as *politics* in the public performances of identity which are discussed in this thesis.

The term 'tradition' is used throughout this thesis as a key marker in this discussion. Although most of what Gozitans do can be described, and is frequently explained and justified, in terms of traditional practices, which go back in time for generations, this does not mean that tradition—as it is frequently construed—is fixed and unchangeable. As Berman (1982), among others, has rightly pointed out, traditions have always been far from static and fixed. In the critical debates about modernity and its preceding epoch, one of the key issues that has been the subject of more recent criticism has been the very notion of durable and unchanging traditions, against which modernity has defined itself (Le Goff 1998). Rather, as Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) emphasise, traditions were always arenas of contestation in which innovation and change, as well as struggles for power and battles for control over issues, forms of ritual, content and representations, were part of the tradition-making process.

Historians of the origins, development and spread of the modern nation-state also argue that the creation of the post-independence nation has been made possible by active processes of simultaneous detraditionalisation and retraditionalisation (cf. Gellner 1983; Smith 1991). For ordinary Gozitans, on the island of Gozo, and as discussed in relation to those who live in their new 'home', in the western suburbs of Melbourne, Australia, claims based on traditions point to the use of a cultural resource for the purposes of asserting

their identity and relativising their claims to legitimacy. In Australia, Gozitans live in a complex society that is grappling with the problematic of balancing the legitimate claims of its culturally diverse population with the equally powerful forces that are arrayed against these claims (cf. Castles 1988; Marcus 1994; Jamrozik et al. 1995). At the same time, Australia is seeking to forge a new identity and place for itself in a world in which the nation-state remains a fundamental unit of international relations, despite the increasing dominance of global capital, fast travel and electronic communication technologies.

In the state of Malta, Gozitan assertions of identity could be said to be specific forms of resistance to processes of detraditionalisation and retraditionalisation, which are integral to the processes of nation-building, and the Maltese nation's struggles for survival in a world of competition for the favours of international capital. Assertions of identity, as Calhoun (1994:9-36) has suggested, are political pursuits for recognition and legitimacy (and sometimes power), as well as being, in a broader sense, resistances to imposed identities.

In his volume *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson (1983) provides a thorough analysis of the emergence and spread of nationalism. Anderson describes the nation-state as an 'imagined community' because, although its

members will never meet each other, they will all feel a strong sense of community, 'a deep, horizontal comradeship' (p. 7). Since its formation, one of the nation-state's central aims has been to produce a common culture in which local differences have been homogenised and strangers within the state boundaries have been assimilated. Because the history of the people of the Maltese islands have been subject to colonialism and foreign rule for hundreds of years, at times subject to the same governments and rules and at other times governed under different sets of rules, their histories and positionalities differ in both subtle and more observable ways. The histories and ways of life developed under the different social, cultural and political conditions in Malta and Gozo have also produced both cultural conjunctures and divergences. The idea of a common and fully overlapping culture in Malta and Gozo has never been fully accepted by the majority of Gozitans. If such a culture is to exist at all, it remains to be developed or, more accurately, constructed. It is these attempts to fashion a common and shared culture and a shared 'imagined community' that are, in part, at the heart of the tensions that comprise assertions of Gozitan identity and the politics of difference.

The pursuit of what is referred to, in the burgeoning literature on the subject, as 'identity politics' is a collective and public undertaking. The shift from identity politics to a politics of difference, in countries such as Australia, is a

tactical and strategic response to imposed or fixed identities, or the threats that may exist to collective culturally-based identities. This thesis argues that assertions of Gozitan identity in both Australia and Malta, though the contexts are in many ways very different, nevertheless share common elements, in so far as, despite the respective nations' commitments to respecting and promoting diversity, the intervention of larger and more powerful global and intra-societal processes may be producing culturally assimilatory and homogenising effects.

Australia's pursuit of increased opportunities for trade in a deregulated world marketplace of intense competition, for example, has been accompanied by an equally intense and profound change in national priorities. The change has been away from a politics of nation-building, whose central feature, as Michael Pusey (1991) has pointed out, was government responsibility for providing universal welfare safety nets and services, such as education, employment and health services, for all citizens, and towards privatisation. In large measure, many services that were previously provided by government have now been delegated to the private sector, and access to them is no longer a matter of right but subject to market forces, availability and the so-called user-pays principle.

Malta's largely successful attempts at developing appropriate structures and provisions for all citizens, following many centuries of domination by external powers and interests, have also exposed it to the many and complex issues that are part of the modern nation-building processes in a globalising world. The inherited legacy of underdevelopment and the practical problems of providing basic services and sufficient levels of employment opportunities for all citizens, despite the limited natural resources available to it, have involved the devotion of massive efforts and financial resources. But areas of underdevelopment and unemployment, in places such as Gozo, continue to persist (Baldacchino 1999, 2000). Strong family ties and the close-knit community life, for which Gozo is well known, have provided an important base for the island's economy. According to Baldacchino (ibid.), a key feature of the Gozitan economy are the small family businesses that cater to the growing tourist industry and visitors from Malta, which also provide for the needs of the island's population. Return migration, which includes investment of savings in buildings and businesses, gifts and donations and the application of trade skills gained overseas, including Australia, add to the island's economy, as well as to its complexity.

But this generalised picture masks the complexity of the changes that have taken and are taking place in Gozitan society, as a consequence of modern developments and the impact of the experience of migration by those who

have returned and (re)settled on the island. At this time, Gozo is subject to immense and urgent pressures for change under the twin, and contradictory, forces which are a source of considerable and unresolved tension. On the one hand, there are immense pressures to modernise, in order to be able to meet the present and future needs of a growing and increasingly literate and articulate population, which is no longer content to accept the structures and strictures of a deeply 'traditional' culture. And, on the other, there are pressures to maintain an ordered way of life that is distinctly Gozitan, in keeping with its 'traditions' and values and beliefs. The experience of migration and continuing exposure to other worlds, such as through media and contacts with people from many other countries holidaying on the island, tend to reinforce the presence and experience of other ways of being. This has produced additional social tensions, such as those between 'traditionalists' and those whose experiences and aspirations are not able to be met by, or accommodated within, the socially prescribed roles and positions.

The issue of 'home' and the experience of 'being away from home' form a central and inter-related theme throughout this thesis. The memories, imagery and experience of 'home' that many Gozitans who have settled in other countries carry around with them are of an unproblematic and untroubled place of warmth, acceptance, tranquillity and rest. 'Home' is the

site of their earliest memories, if not the quintessential site of primal experience of belonging and attachment. As Morley and Robins (1995) rightly point out, there are a set of almost sacral, mythical and enduring qualities and meanings that a distant 'home', in time and space, comes to assume in the memories and longings of many migrants, including Gozitans, who have settled elsewhere. The images of 'home' and the attachments to places and people, such as family and close kin, are intimately interconnected with their identity and their sense of who they are and their place in the world (York 1990). For those Gozitans who have settled in countries such as Australia, visits 'home', which usually include participation in family and kin group events, such as weddings, engagements and village festas, are part of the 'pilgrimages' that temporarily help ground their identity in a place, a community and culture, and away from a world which is increasingly defined by the experience of displacement and the tensions that are part of these intense processes.

The themes of modernity and living with the experience of social and cultural displacement and dislocation have been the focus in the writings of a number of modernist and post-modernist writers. Anthony Giddens (1990, 1991), for example, argues that the disembodying mechanisms of modernity, which have displaced social structures from their traditional settings, produce ontological insecurity, which have made reflexivity an ongoing condition

that applies throughout life. According to his analysis, self-monitoring and the concept of 'reflexivity,' by which he means the process whereby the formation of self-identity becomes a self-conscious project, become crucial aspects of modern existence. Giddens (1991) also argues that, as a consequence of modernity, preoccupation with trust and risk come to assume crucial importance in contemporary life.

The relationship between the local and the global and the consequences of this dialectic for the individual are themes that a number of writers have explored. Giddens (1990), for example, has argued that modernity is inherently globalizing and that globalisation is a consequence of the enlargement of modernity. He also emphasises the dramatic change in inter-relationship between self and society by drawing attention to the fact that for the first time in human history 'self' and 'society' are interrelated in a global milieu (Giddens 1991:32). Thus, Giddens (1991) argues that identity formation has two interconnected dimensions: extensionality and intentionality. The former refers to the impact of globalisation, and the latter to the act of self-monitoring that occurs on the local level. He also argues that late-modernity is an unprecedented time where 'the self has to be reflexively made' (p. 3).

Giddens' notion of reflexivity, which is related to the intensification of processes of community fragmentation, such as the break up of village and peasant communities that were brought about by the dramatic social changes of industrialisation in the modern era, is particularly important in the case of Gozitans. Given that the Gozitans have undergone displacement from traditional social structures that once provided clarity of identity, reflexivity is an integral part of the processes of determination of a sense of who they are and is implicated in the determinations and judgements they make about the many issues that impact on their lives. Giddens is right to point out that reflexivity, as a condition of being in the modern world, has been further intensified by the globalising influences and pressures, which enter into the formation of personal dispositions.

Giddens' systematic attempt to provide a conceptual vocabulary for thinking about the nature of the interconnections between the local and the global and the consequences for the individual of this dialectic, can be criticised for its rigidity in not permitting any space for differences that might exist between the world that he (Giddens) inhabits and writes from and those of the various people in other parts of the world. In the case of the Gozitans, including those who have remained on the island as well as the returning expatriates, there is a considerable variety, at least, in their exposure to global pressures that insist on reflexivity as a condition of everyday life.

The break up of village communities, which is accepted as an accomplished fact, needs to be questioned. For example, it is widely accepted that the age of industrialisation bypassed the island of Gozo (cf. Baldacchino 1999, 2000), and traditional life proceeded to develop along its own trajectory, despite the advent of massive migration to other countries and the large number of people who have returned. Many Gozitans, even though life circumstances have undergone major change, largely through the advent of migration and journeying to other parts of the world, continue to be members of small village communities, albeit now in the process of rapid restructuring and irreversible change. The point is that there is considerable variety in life circumstances and histories of different communities, as well as within them.

There are striking similarities between Ulrich Beck's (1992) conceptualisations and theorising of modernity and self-identity and Giddens' work. Both question the assumption that there is such an entity as the post-modern which succeeds the modern. Both speak of reflexive modernity in light of the changing social conditions and its consequences for the individual and their identities. Beck (1992) provides a broad-based approach to identity formation in late-industrial society and suggests that the first stage of modernity, having been built upon assumptions of 'risk management', is now being succeeded by the second phase: 'risk society'.

This second stage of modernity, he suggests, involves living with contingency in a more complex, changing and unpredictable world. Beck argues that for societies to really evolve within this context, individuals must reflexively construct their own biographies.

In his writing, Beck suggests that we are experiencing, not the end, but the beginning of 'new' modernity, beyond its classical industrial design. Beck's claims are disputed by 'post-modern' theorists, such as Lash (1993), who maintains that the conditions of 'risk society' or 'living with contingency' are not so much modern as post-modern. The view of the inevitability of contingency, according to Lash, is largely post-modern, and he criticises both Beck and Giddens for their positivism in their attempt to strictly place the predicament of the contemporary self within the framework of reflexive modernisation. When describing the limits of reflexivity, Lash (1993:4) argues that the concept of reflexivity is unable to cope with ambivalence and difference.

To the extent that Beck and Giddens are unable to place limits upon reflexive modernity as a conceptual framework for understanding identity formation, they are rightly accused of positivism. Their analyses are based upon a (north-west) Eurocentric understanding of modernity and as such are limited when applied to other contexts, particularly given that their framework fails

to adequately consider other key factors that impact upon the formation of identity, such as mass migration and post-colonialism. However, despite the limitations of Beck's and Gidden's theorising, my thesis's conceptual framework is informed by their analysis, in particular Beck's notion of individualisation, with the individual surviving within this time of reflexive modernity through the development of what he refers to as 'an ego-centred world view' (Beck 1992:135).

According to Beck, individualisation means that each person's biography is 'removed from given determinations and placed in his or her own hands' (Beck 1992:135), and is open to, and dependent on, the person's decisions, and everything revolves around the axis of one's personal ego and personal life. Individualisation, therefore, moves identity formation away from traditional social structures, such as family, neighbourhood and village. Beck is right to point out that individualisation is a major feature of the contemporary world, which is radically and permanently restructuring social life under the complex pressures generated by the dynamics of late capitalism. The intense processes of individualisation, in the overlapping and intersecting worlds—in the space between the local and the global—that Gozitans now inhabit, produce social effects, such as social tensions that arise out of the erosion of a sense of close-knit interdependent community

and relations of kinship, which threaten to displace Gozitans on their land—culturally, socially and economically.

Individualism and a sense of belonging to a larger community, in what I have referred to elsewhere in this thesis as a 'community of affines', have always coexisted in the Gozitan social environment. The changes taking place in the state of Malta, such as return migration and, especially, the 'egalitarian individualism' which is a central feature of modern nation-states, further threaten to erode and hasten the demise of this precarious balance. In many respects, the discourse of identity among Gozitans, and the many silences that punctuate it, can be construed as 'measured' or 'reflexively' developed responses to these pressures. Silences, as much as overt statements or public enunciations, indicate sites of unresolved tensions, ambivalences, uncertainties and contestations (Bottomley, 1992). For example, the claimed 'secretiveness' of the Gozitans, such as lack of full disclosure of income levels and other information to the Maltese state authorities, that Baldacchino (2000) 'reads' and refers to, could be indications of more complex, yet to be explored, issues.

Mass migration, crossings into and out of other worlds, and living with its consequences, forms a large and ever-present theme in Gozitan life. Struggles for survival on an island with a growing population, limited

employment opportunities and with virtually no natural resources of its own, made migration and journeying to other places a vital and urgent necessity. Gozitans who live in Gozo and those who have returned there as well as those who have established themselves elsewhere, such as in the western suburbs of Melbourne, Australia, carry with them the memories of the journeys that have marked them deeply and permanently altered their lives (cf. York 1991).

The stories of the journeys, the uprooting of many thousands of men, women and children and their separations from family and 'home', together with the hardships associated with establishing themselves in other places, form a vast and complex canvass of narratives that every Gozitan is part of. What is often forgotten is that the 'push' to migrate was not only driven by circumstances and ordinary people's struggle to survive, but it was also 'assisted' by the then Maltese administration, under British rule, who, after 1918, helped organise out-migration on a larger scale in order to, as Portelli (1959) blunty puts it, '*get rid of the surplus population* that threatened the stability of Malta and Gozo after the armistice' (p. 47 my emphasis). The stories of Maltese and Gozitan migrants and their experiences and journeyings have slowly begun to be related and told, largely thanks to the work of Barry York and the migrants themselves. These stories resound with human hopes, aspirations, as well as fear, sadness, uncertainty and heroic

endurance in new and unfamiliar circumstances. These experiences form part of the narratives of Gozitan culture and identity that bind Gozitans together despite the distances that, as a consequence of migration, now also separate them.

In broad terms, theorising migration has tended to be a largely one-sided affair, conditioned by geographic location. For example, migration has been theorised and documented either from the focus of the host society, such as Australia, or from that of the countries of migrants' origin. The volumes of studies, from either geographic end of the 'migration story', have contributed greatly to our deeper understanding of the experiences as well as the causes and consequences of migration, for people and the respective societies. However, such studies also have shortcomings, such as their inability to handle the transnational and international dimensions and the complex and continuing social and cultural links and relationships between people, such as Gozitans, located between 'home' and beyond the sea. This thesis is an attempt to describe the interconnections and the various processes that have made Gozitan identity a central issue in the changing and intersecting influences of the local and the global.

In order to explore the question of Gozitan identity, which is inextricably linked to their specific history and the social and cultural processes that are

part of their lives in a rapidly changing world, I have chosen to employ an ethnographic approach to researching these issues. I have elected to do so in order to explore at a 'ground level' the issues that give shape and form to a distinct Gozitan identity to people who live their lives both here and there and yet neither here nor there. In the following chapter, I take up the issues associated with my ethnographic approach and with the ways in which I engaged with the many, complex and sometimes uneasy and confusing issues that are part and parcel of being both 'outside' researcher and 'inside' Gozitan.

CHAPTER THREE

DOUBLE CROSSINGS: POSITIONED ETHNOGRAPHY AND WRITING GOZO

The questions I want to deal with in this thesis are framed by an awareness of my own standpoints. In the following pages I will explore my own 'crossings' through a discussion of my positionings as ethnographic researcher, male, native Gozitan and Maltese official. It has been pointed out to me that, read along the solipsist lines of (feminist) standpoint theory, my positioning—simultaneously being both 'insider' and 'outsider'—could, on the surface, be considered advantageous to the fieldwork enterprise: standpoint theorists would perhaps speak of me as possessing a 'double consciousness'. However, as will become clear, my 'double consciousness' also presents a range of ethical and personal dilemmas in fieldwork.

Surrounded by Gozitan kin and friends meant that I could not withdraw, hide or run away from the effects of my research. Furthermore, the common and shared positions between myself and the Gozitan informants did not always lead to common understandings. To this extent, the sense made of Gozitan identity, while guided by the insights of my own first-hand experience, is by no means representative of the entire Gozitan experience. I prefer to think of both myself and the informants as having multiple perspectives and have

attempted to place my stories and theirs in dialogue with each other to gain new insights into both my own and their lives (cf. Kirsch & Ritchie 1995:23). Perhaps this may be spoken of as 'bifocal research', or 'postmodern ethnography'.

Allow me to locate myself by beginning with my own story. My two brothers and I are first generation Gozitan-Americans, born in New York City. My sister was born in Malta in 1983. The eldest in a family of four, I was born in 1969 from Gozitan (Qala) parents who had migrated to seek employment in the United States. I lived in New York until I was eight years old, when my parents decided to return to Gozo permanently. During this eight-year period we visited Gozo in August 1971 for the special feast of St Joseph and the coronation of the St Joseph titular painting, for less than a month, and in August 1974 to see the Qala festa once again. In May 1977 I found myself living in Qala, my parents' village of origin. Qala and Manhattan are two different worlds, and nine years went by before I felt at home. That is when I emigrated back to New York City to continue my studies after primary and secondary education. The political situation in Malta was at its worst, at least from the perspective of people like my parents.

Once again in New York I sat for a Bachelor's Degree at Manhattan College while working, initially in the construction industry, then an elevator

operator, and finally as a paralegal co-ordinator. I spent the last semester of my junior year in the Albert-Ludwigs University in Freiburg, Germany where I specialised in European Union Law. In September 1990 I returned to Qala and continued my studies at the University of Malta, completing a Certificate, then a Diploma and finally a Master of Arts in Diplomatic Studies.

I became a Maltese national in 1991 and in 1994 I joined the Maltese Diplomatic Corps, after which I was posted to serve my adopted country at the Malta High Commission in Canberra, Australia, as First Secretary for a period of three years. This is where my interest in migration started. Coming from a migrant family and discovering over 100,000 immigration records at the High Commission provided the perfect setting to embark on a project. In 1996 I commenced researching. After two years of compiling listings I put together my first publication, *Directory of Ships and Aircraft carrying Maltese and Gozitans to Australia (1934-1964)*. I then began interviewing, observing and interacting with Gozitan research subjects in Australia and in Gozo.

My return to Gozo and the study I was undertaking was partly an attempt to come to terms with myself—my village, my working-class origins and return migrant background, and my current position as a member of an educated

elite. Gozo is the culture that I grew up in—even when displaced and resisted by me in the United States. I am also aware that the choice of return migration as an area of study has been exclusively determined by more 'rational' considerations. It is related to the fact that I am a product of a return migrant family and class and well aware of the great contributions such people made to the Gozitan community and with a 'spill over' effect in Malta. I felt that it was my duty to contribute to the knowledge of Gozitan society. Furthermore, a near total absence of studies on the area provided a great opportunity and an impetus for original research.

Before I went to the United States to study, and to Australia to commence my diplomatic career, I had stubbornly refused to attend any activities organised by the return migrant organisations in Gozo. However, it was after the three years in Australia, where I attended hundreds of such meetings and activities, that I became interested in return migration. When my father visited me in Australia, he treated my decision to study Gozitan return migration with surprise and disbelief, and perhaps with delight that I had 'finally changed'.

The point of these preceding comments is to show that I am well aware of the issue of my positionalities (or standpoints) and their influence on my study. Undoubtedly, there is no vantage point outside history and, as stated by Clifford and Marcus (1986), we all write 'fictions' and 'partial truths'.

Nevertheless, I would argue that some truths are less partial than others. I strove not to turn this study into a polemic. On the other hand, I do not deny an ethical disposition that places me on the side of the migrant and, later, the return migrant.

In researching and writing this thesis I have walked a fine line. The differences between Gozitan and Maltese—if only at the level of self-perception—are real. But as a career diplomat, a government employee, I have had to exercise care and discretion (even circumspection) in how I have dealt with these differences. Not that it is a matter of simply being dictated to by career prospects. As a person who identifies as both Maltese and Gozitan, I also choose to be careful and discrete in how I deal with the sensitive issue of difference, and the equally (if not more) sensitive issue of systemic denial of an identity.

Not since Agius de Soldanis's work (1746) have Gozitans had a document in their hands systematically dealing with their identity. It was de Soldanis who first called the island's inhabitants Gozitans and who wrote about Gozo's history. Over the centuries de Soldanis's writings have served as the basis for Gozitans speaking, writing and boasting about their island. But open discussion of separate Gozitan identity has remained a taboo subject, to be canvassed in the privacy of closed conversations.

There is a commonly-held perception in Malta that to speak openly about their Gozitan identity would spell disaster to a person working in the public sector, as I do. Such a person, it is felt, would be labelled a radical by the Maltese authorities, especially by the 'ruling families' who are popularly believed to run Malta and 'pull all the strings'. According to this view, Gozo is too important for Malta to 'lose', not only because many Maltese have significant property in the form of land and homes on the island, but also because, to a large extent, Gozo provides the leadership and ideas for the governance of the country.

In this context, there is a degree of apprehension among some Gozitans that the current project, or a future book, might raise substantially the tension between Gozitans and Maltese. At the same time, the migrants and return migrants who account for the majority of the Gozitan population are enthusiastic for a work that documents the history and the accomplishments of their generation both on Gozo and in the migrant countries of Australia, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France and elsewhere.

The current project takes on the postcolonial dimension of 'recovering the subject' by writing a counter-history, not unlike the project of the South Asian Subaltern Studies Group (cf. O'Hanlon 1988). For the Gozitans, it

signals one of the few times in their history that someone has publicly challenged Maltese hegemony by comprehensively writing about what makes a Gozitan a 'Gozitan' as distinct from the over-arching category of 'Maltese'. Some would anticipate the current project as a resource in their quest for a return to 'relative autonomy', or even independence. For others, this study is expected to ease the sense of frustration they feel towards the Maltese, in that someone has dared to reclaim Gozitan history after years of neglect by the central government and Maltese ignorance of Gozitan grievances.

For most of the 'ordinary' Gozitans who are the subjects of this study, their wish is to have a document that they can pass onto their children spelling-out *l-essenza tal-poplu Ghawdxi* (the essence of the Gozitan people). Many have expressed to me the frustration they continue to feel, despite the central government granting the establishment of the Ministry of Gozo for the administration of Gozo, with the loss of the autonomy enjoyed prior to British rule. The desire for autonomy similar in type to the autonomous region of Catalonia in Spain is the order of the day in Gozo, and a number of Gozitans have invested something of themselves in this thesis the hope that it will serve as the impetus to move just a simple Ministry of Gozo towards a more autonomous arrangement. Gozo, they point out, has a flag, an anthem, a

language (standard Gozitan with 12 dialects), an administrative capacity and know-how, a tax regime, and vast international contacts.

My research output will no doubt enjoin with the conversations of Gozitans and the Maltese, over which I will have limited control. While the overwhelming majority of Maltese will probably take note but not react to the current project, a number of my informants have voiced their concern that the 'elite' and the 'ruling class' will probably convene to discuss the matter in detail and most likely plot a course of action. I may be black-listed or respected, depending how my research is written, presented, marketed, the level of exposure and the actual support by Gozitans for the study. According to this view, widespread support by Gozitans may well mean that the ruling elite would act cautiously and would want to be seen not to worry and cause any particular alarm. A Machiavellian game would probably be played.

Perhaps there will be unexpected outcomes. Maltese authorities may well feel threatened by the potential for a resurrection of Gozitan 'nationalism' or separatist sentiment. The current project may well ignite debate in Maltese media outlets and in the streets and perhaps some incidents may arise—as happened in 1994 when the then Qala parish priest wrote a letter to the *In-Nazzjon* (*The Nation*) newspaper in Malta titled '*Ehlisna nitolbuk Mulej mill-Maltin*' ('God liberate us [Gozitans] from the Maltese'). The letter caused a

six month wave of debate on newspapers, radios, TV stations and on the streets, even between Maltese and Gozitan migrants in Australia and the United States.

From the outset, a study of Gozitan migration and return migration was full of exciting ethnographic possibilities. As already noted, there are scarcely any published writings concerning Gozitan migration. In addition, the Gozitan experience provided an excellent context to explore a gamut of issues related to identity and migration. Furthermore, gaining easy access to the community enabled me to explore a range of ethnographic approaches.

Ethnography appealed because of its capacity to draw out wider implications from very particular and focused case studies. Through the application of ethnographic methodologies—specifically, variations of participant observation—theorising from within the particularity of the everyday seemed possible. The ethnographic episodes have been mostly documented or recorded in Maltese and nearly all have had to be rendered into English for the purposes of understanding. The approach used in this study shares much in common with that decribed by Clifford Geertz. In his volume *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), Geertz describes a semiotic approach to culture and an interpretative approach to its study. Within the semiotic approach the basic task of theory building is to generalise within cases; thus

cultural theory is diagnostic and not predictive. The ethnographer seeks to interpret social discourse with the aim of gaining access to the conceptual world of the subjects. Geertz describes this as 'thick description'. The scope of 'thick description' is to draw large conclusions from small and densely textured facts, to search for meaning within the particular.

According to Geertz (1973), the ethnographer's practice is simple: 'he observes, he records, he analyses'. Important to this practice is guesswork: in cultural analysis the ethnographer is 'guessing meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses' (p. 21). Therefore, ethnographic writings are themselves interpretations, and in this sense they are always fictions: 'We begin with our own interpretations of what our informants are up to, or think they are up to, and then systematise those' (p. 15). Whilst Geertz's notion of 'thick description' helps to move the practice of ethnography away from 'realist' conceptions of identity that insist upon the objectivity of the ethnographer, Geertz still places the responsibility for interpretation solely upon the ethnographer. I have made use of 'thick description' in this study, but the central methods are guided by the conceptions of a 'postmodernist ethnography'.

The trend towards postmodern ethnographic research and writing emerged, according to Marcus (1992), during the 1980s and continues today.

Practitioners of postmodernist ethnography reject 'realism' as a reference frame for orientating ethnography and recognise that 'identity processes in [post]modernity concern a "homeless mind" that cannot be permanently resolved as coherent or as a stable formation in theory or in social life itself' (Marcus 1992:313). Marcus (1992:315) argues that for postmodernist ethnography to successfully evolve, 'this process of dispersed identity in many different places of differing character ... must be grasped.' Identity formation, according to this approach, must be viewed as a dispersed and complex process, simultaneously occurring on multiple sites and involving numerous discourses.

The conventional method of participant observation, based upon the notion that the object under study can present itself directly to the observer, is now regarded as problematic for the study of identity formations. Clifford (1986), for example, rejects the dominant picture of the anthropologist as the neutral observer studying the observed and then writing culture. Instead, he argues, the research and writing of culture is now 'bifocal' because the 'us/them' dichotomy, which characterised traditional ethnographic studies of 'the Other', no longer exists. The term 'bifocal' is used to describe how the identity of the ethnographer is likely to be related to that of any world he or she is studying because 'the multilocality of identity ... creates a mutuality of

implications for identity processes occurring in any ethnographic site'
(Marcus 1992:321).

A number of ethnographic studies that have experimented with postmodernist approaches toward the research and analysis of identity formation have been influential in shaping the methodology employed in this study. Marcus describes how 'the most venturesome (ethnographic) works ... are profoundly concerned with the shaping and transformation of identities' (1992:312). My key influence is the volume *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* by Clifford and Marcus (1986). Their study shows a renewed interest in topics such as ethnicity, nationality, globalism and colonialism. Following their cue, the current study aims to be an original contribution to knowledge through an ethnographic study of the processes of identity formation, change, transformation and adaption amongst the Gozitan migrants and subsequently return migrants.

To this point I have spoken of my various positionings in relation to Gozo and Malta, but I also need to address my gender positioning and the problem of gender crossings. After all, my choice to write about (represent) Gozitan women could be seen by feminist standpoint critics as unethical because I am male. However, as I found in the course of my ethnographic research, there were women who apparently trusted me enough to become key informants

and who even wanted to assist me actively with my research. Central to gaining the participation of Gozitan women were my family connections, more specifically the lasting memory of my grandmother on the island of Gozo.

My grandmother, Katerina Xerri, was a remarkable woman. She tirelessly cared for her family and neighbours. What is important here is that my grandmother's care was so special as to install a long-lasting appreciation, love and trust on the part of a number of families in our village, not only for her, but even for her descendants. The detail of the narratives of the women who were my informants was confirmed by older members of my own family (my father's great aunt Theresa Debono and his great uncle Joseph Buttigieg). In essence, my grandmother had won their love and respect by the way she distinguished herself with charitable deeds for her fellow villagers during the dark hours of World War Two—notwithstanding that she herself had to support a sizeable (though for the time average size) family. I, in turn, had the good fortune to be the beneficiary of the sense of obligation these women had to reciprocate by assisting my grandmother's family.

The village of Qala where my grandmother and the women of the 27 previous generations lived was, during World War Two, a small village of 1700 persons who worked a subsistence lifestyle based on farming, fishing

and hunting. Qala was quite distant from the Grand Harbour near the city of Valletta, the British naval centre of power during the War. Despite this, the population of Gozo and particularly the people of Qala and Ghajnsielem feared bombing for two reasons: Ghajnsielem hosted the Port of Imgarr and Qala was directly under the flight path of the German *Luftvaffe* (air force) toward the Grand Harbour. For this reason, the British authorities had installed a number of artillery points around Qala—heightening the local sense of exposure to danger.

The real or imagined fear of being hit by a bomb shell or machine gun fire deterred farmers, fishermen and hunters from pursuing their livelihood. My grandfather was one of the very few farmers who continued to work, though he had taken a number of measures to minimise the risk. Nearly every piece of land my grandfather owned was surrounded with a thick rubble wall to reduce the effect of strong winds on the crops and trees and to have a clear permanent divide of property. In every field he carved a cave-shaped shelter in a wall to camouflage himself in case of an air raid. My grandmother occasionally used to help my grandfather during harvest and was once hit by a German bullet in her ankle, a bullet that she carried all her life until she died at the age of 80.

The abundance of food (fruits and vegetables) produced allowed my grandmother to share her family fortunes with the families who had nothing. Apparently, my grandmother was a good chef and she cooked many tarts, bread, pies and other traditional foodstuffs most of the day. Two of her six children were big enough to give her a hand in handling the younger children so she was able to spend more time cooking.

Many children and parents used to knock on my grandmother's front door at 48 Hondoq Street Qala to ask for food. In the morning she looked out from the window and counted the persons waiting outside her house then cut the tarts, pies and bread into enough pieces to provide for all (if possible)—and a few left over besides for the people who would inevitably show up afterwards. She would appear at the door and give out the food. Most of the parents and children would be women—mothers or girls—since the fathers and the boys would be either at work or at war.

When I came to ask the older women of Qala to assist me in my research, some knew me, others did not. A number of the women who knew me did not mention anything about my grandmother's deeds until a later stage in the interviewing and conversation; but the ones that did not recognise in me my family's unique physical features asked me to which nickname or clan I belonged. I always answered *Tac-Caput* or *Tas-Six,* depending on which part

of the village the subject had grown up in. They would instantly smile and tell me the story of my grandmother, ending their narratives by saying, 'Sure I will help you out. How can I repay what your grandmother did to us during such difficult times ... she saved us from days of hunger, even starvation.'

My grandmother endowed me with a credibility that ensured the participation of women throughout the research. But it was my sister Pamela who often acted as a mediator between myself and the women I interviewed. Pamela, at 18 years of age, helped ease my contact with a number of female subjects who frequented our family restaurant.
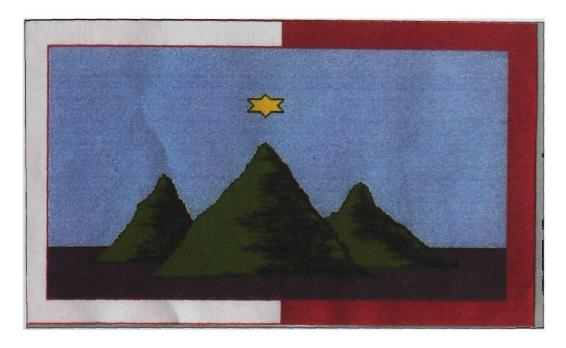
I spent hours with my sister explaining the process of interviewing subjects and the information I required from them. Once we set up the scene (that is, the place and time and proper circumstances) she would make the first move to talk to a potential female subject. The conversation would usually start about our family restaurant, pub and bocci club or pizzeria. Pamela would start the conversation and gradually shift the focus either on to the family members or our migrant past. This was my cue to step in and introduce myself and continue with the conversation by mentioning my research before excusing myself to work in another part of the restaurant. Pamela would then go on to point out how my studies required a number of female subjects.

If there was a verbal agreement, Pamela would call me over to set an appointment or straight away enter into a conversation/interview. On occasions, Pamela sat in on the interviews because I felt she was trusted more or her presence—her tacit support expressed through body language and facial expressions—helped the situation.

These gender crossings represent the broader metaphor of crossings introduced in Chapter One's narration of ferry crossings from Gozo to Malta. To 'cross' implies the move between two land points, with a space in the middle. This space is the sea with all its storms, and for members of the island community the ferry crossing from Gozo to Malta starkly reinforces the unity of Gozo and its apparent difference from Malta. But there are other 'bigger' crossings: the crossings by ship of thousands of Gozitan migrants to Melbourne and their eventual return to Gozo. The task throughout the rest of this study is to ethnographically map the contours of Gozitan identity: to identify the impact of crossings and double (return) crossings between Gozo and Australia. It is these existential conditions and the many ways in which Gozitans performatively responded to them that have generated a set of socially produced practices and perceptions, or a *habitus* (cf. Bourdieu 1986), which continues to inform and form their sense of who they are and their place in the world. As the next chapter highlights, the land is another important metaphor for how Gozitans see themselves.

IMAG(IN)ING GOZO

Pictorial Essay One

1.　*The Flag of Gozo.* Flies on poles of Gozitan homes particularly during festa time, though officially and legally it is not recognised by the central Maltese Government. The three hills and star, the symbol of Gozo for Gozitan and Maltese, is placed on top of the Maltese flag, depicted in the red and white background. The Coat-of-Arms of Gozo is a replica of the Flag of Gozo without the Maltese colours in the background.

2.　*The full coat of arms of the Xerri family in Gozo.* Coats-of-arms based on the family surname are used prominently on home facades and in homes. According to tradition, the Xerri coat-of-arms was granted the family in 1091AD (not 1090 as shown on the drawing) by the Count Roger of Norman.

Count Roger's Coat-of-arms, top right, is held by a Xerri ancestor seated on the emblem of Gozo (depicting the residency in Gozo). The Crown, top right, depicts Malta's capital city Mdina, where the coat-of-arms was granted by Count Roger. The bee and grasshopper, both insects found in Malta, are a heraldic representation of the family's motto, 'generous and secure'.
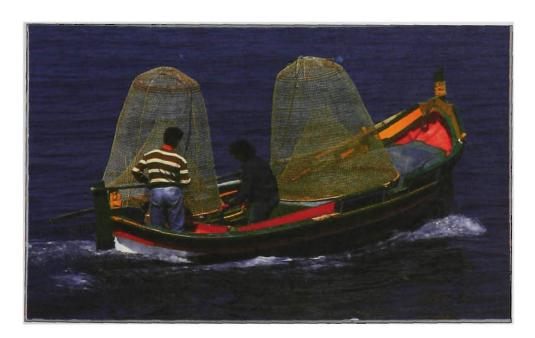
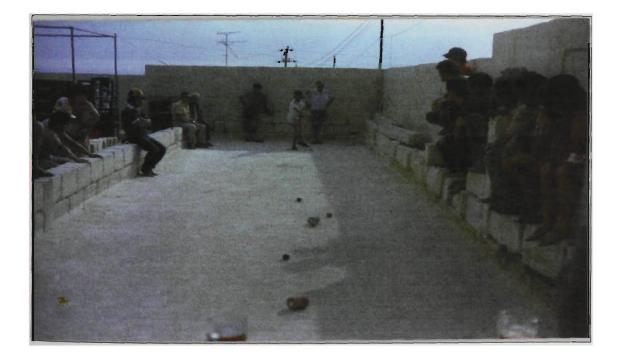3. *The Ġgantija Temples of Xagħra, Gozo.* Built around 3500BC, one of the oldest free-standing monument in the world. It is a symbol of Gozitan identity, history and pride.

4. *The Luzzu of Malta and Gozo carrying two nassi, fisherman's pots.* In different sizes, the Gozitan fisherman's pot is a symbol of Gozo, an essential tool for the sizeable fisherman population. Hand-made with dried sliced pieces of bamboo, abundantly grown in Gozo, intertwined and tightened by nylon rope (mainly by villagers from Xewkija, Qala and Għajnsielem).
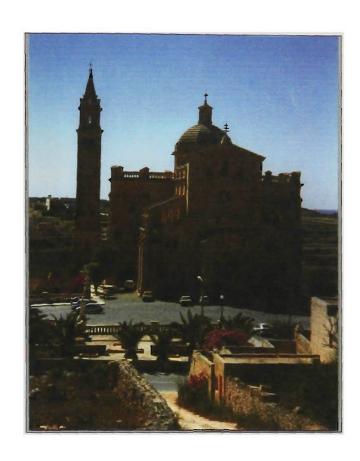
95

5. ***The continuous crossing of ferries between the islands of Gozo and Malta.*** Over 3 million passengers, Gozitans, Maltese and tourists, use this service, making the Gozo Channel Company the busiest transport carrier in the Maltese Islands. The 30,000 Gozitan population depends on this service for many essential needs—many Gozitans making the crossing daily.

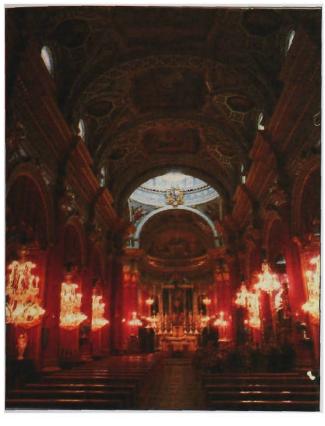6. ***Gozitan Boċċi.*** Gozitan Boċċi is unique to Gozo, with its own rules, protocol, method of playing and pitch size. Imitated from the French and Catalan Knights during the reign of the Sovereign Military Order of the Knights of St. John, it remains a popular ground sport in Gozo. Today, the Gozitan game can be found played in the Gozitan migrant communities of Melbourne, Sydney, New York, Toronto and London.

96

7. **The *National Sanctuary of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu in Gharb, Gozo.*** The sanctuary is the centre of Marian devotion in the Maltese Islands. The devotion has spread to Australia, Albania, Honduras and India. The shrine is visited by over a million tourists a year, and particularly by visiting Gozitan migrants and Gozitan return migrants.
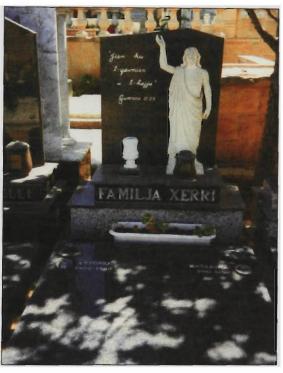

8. ***The Titular statue of St. Joseph held at the Qala Parish Church, in Qala, Gozo.*** Every parish in Gozo has one titular statue and this image is one of the most important and sacred items in village community life. These statues are paraded at an annual procession on *Festa* Day

9. *The Church of St. Joseph in Qala, fully-decorated at Festa Day*, which is celebrated the first Sunday of August of each year.

10. *The tomb of the Xerri Family at the Cemetery in Qala, Gozo.* A typical Gozitan tomb-stone. Made from granite and marble, such items represent a sizeable investment from a family's budget. This tomb was designed by a Gozitan return migrant from Melbourne.

PART II

GOZO IN THE WORLD

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LAND AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

Since the nineteenth century Gozitans have migrated to Australia and settled in and around Melbourne. The key question occupying their minds throughout the journey and upon arrival in Australia was whether Melbourne would be their permanent home. If not, would they return to Gozo? As the number of Gozitans increased (particularly in the 1950s) and a sizeable community formed, Melbourne did become home. This chapter establishes the way the Gozitans started transformatively to create Gozo in Melbourne as they settled in the City of Brimbank. A sense of continuity developed as Gozitans in Melbourne imitated aspects of life in Gozo. For example, the family ties remained very strong, and Gozitans kept their dialects and practised various traditions and recreational habits. But, even with the passage of years, they maintained a passion for their island. This chapter will also describe how and where Gozitans settled. Consideration will also be given to how settlement, mobility and/or returning influenced the formation of Gozitan identity in Australia—'the land at the edge of the world'.

Gozitans in Melbourne quickly realised that they were, physically, very far away from Gozo. *L-art fit-tarf tad-dinja*, literally 'the land at the edge of the world', expressed the Gozitan sense of the distance between Malta and

Australia. This expression must be understood in the light of a time when no passenger aircraft existed, and when stories of the hardships faced during the month-long journeys to and from Australia were counter-balanced by visions of endless Australian fields rich in soil. The word *art* in the preceding expression means 'land' in Maltese. However, in Gozo the word has a more profound meaning. *L-art* suggests 'rich land', of great abundance, where one could prosper. Today, Gozitans no longer refer to Australia by this expression, but by several other expressions, such as, *Għandi familja hemm*, 'I have family there (in Australia)', or *In-Natura timaraviljak ... l-Għasafar u l-ħdura*, 'Australia is blessed with nature ... the birds and greenery'. There are very few Gozitans who cannot claim to have relatives in Australia and this fact, along with the substantial improvement in the standard of living in both Gozo and Australia, accounts for the change in expression.

Rumours, word-of-mouth, stories and letters are all expressions that helped Gozitans decide whether to migrate to Melbourne or elsewhere. In order to establish what attracted so many Gozitans to settle in Melbourne, I administered questionnaires and interviews to three groups of respondents as detailed in Appendix 3: Gozitans who never migrated (Group A); Gozitan migrants in Melbourne (Group B); and Gozitan return migrants from Melbourne (Group C). The majority of the respondents were Gozitans who frequented the St Paul's Boċċi Club, West Sunshine in Melbourne and the

Gozitan return migrants who frequent the Xerri Il-Bukkett Boċċi Club in Qala, Gozo. Others were committee members from various Gozitan groups in Melbourne and in Gozo. In addition to completing a questionnaire, most of the respondents were also interviewed in semi-structured interviews employing open-ended questions. Each category was presented with a different structured questionnaire consisting of about twenty questions, some common to all three. Group A comprised eleven people who never migrated to Melbourne; a comparable number of Gozitan residents in Melbourne were selected for Group B; and eight Gozitan migrants who had returned from Melbourne to Gozo comprised Group C.

All three groups were asked the question: Why did so many Gozitans settle in Melbourne? Appendix 4 outlines the answers given by the respondents. The Gozitans who never migrated (Group A) responded by identifying two main reasons for Gozitan migration to Melbourne. Firstly, they thought that employment opportunities were the principal reason for Gozitan migration to Melbourne. Secondly, migrants were welcomed by their family members and relatives. These two factors—the availability of work and the relatives or friends a particular person had—were considered to outweigh the great distance and hardship of the journey and distance. Most had their ship and aircraft trip costs to Australia subsidised by the Crown, as can be seen in the thousands of pages of ship and aircraft manifests held today at the archives of

the Malta High Commission in Canberra and the Migration Division Office in Valletta.

Most Gozitan families, according to Group A respondents, welcomed their relatives into their homes with 'open arms' and were willing to keep them until they found work and were able to live on their own. In most cases, work was found for the new arrivals, even before they had migrated from Gozo. Gozitan migrants who settled permanently in Melbourne (Group B) responded differently to the same question, reversing the order of importance and placing the presence of family and friends in Melbourne before the availability of employment opportunities as the main reason for migrating and settling in Melbourne. Gozitan return migrants from Melbourne (Group C) indicated a similar response to Group A, that is, employment opportunities followed by a large presence of family and friends attracted them to Melbourne.

Respondents from all three groups related how individuals considering migration to Melbourne or elsewhere would eagerly await a return migrant and literally drag the return migrant to a wine bar for 'questioning.' Whether the answers were believed or not depended largely on how well the individual knew the return migrant. Accordingly, an individual contemplating migration would attempt to verify the story with others by

asking more than one return migrant about Melbourne. The individual might go a step further in the same conversation and ask the return migrant whether he could help him find a job or even sponsor him. In most cases the return migrant would agree to offer a place to sleep and to help find a job, normally where the return migrant had been working.

Sponsorship was a different story. Usually the prospective migrant would offer to work for the return migrant free-of-charge for a period of time in return for sponsorship. Some parents of prospective migrants offered a piece of land in Gozo or a supply of livestock, or some other form of agreed payment or compensation. These deals were largely confidential, and often involved only one other person, such as a parish priest, a public notary or an attorney. Normally, both the individuals and families respected and honoured in full their agreements.

The person eager to migrate typically looked for a group of friends or for *tal-qata'* (a gang or clan) who were migrating to Australia. This way the hurdles were fewer: *jaghmlu kuragg b'xulxin*, 'they can rely on each other for courage'. This situation applied particularly in the absence of an accompanying parent or grandparent, brother or sister, uncle or aunt. Until the mass movement to Australia of the 1950s, Gozitans migrated accompanied either by family member or in a group. This is evidenced in the

passport applications of the thousands of Gozitans in the period between the late nineteenth century through to the 1950s. During this period, migrants to Australia from Gozo mainly originated from the western villages of Għarb, Għasri, Żebbuġ, Ta' Għammar and San Lawrenz, and from Xagħra, Nadur and Qala in the east. Gradually, all the villages of Gozo contributed sons and daughters to the new Gozitan settlement in Melbourne. Since 1970, Gozitan migration to Melbourne has drawn more from the eastern side of the island, especially the villages of Xagħra, Nadur, Qala, Għajnsielem, and Xewkija.

Examples of *tal-qata'* groups are found in Appendix 6, where consecutive passport numbers issued on a particular day or on consecutive days by the Emigration Department in Malta point to the *tal-qata'* phenomenon. In 1915, passports 42 through 52, for example, represent a *tal-qata'* of ten young Għarb men who queued together to obtain a passport to migrate to Australia.

Table 1 lists these Gozitans, who applied for a passport in Valletta in 1915 nominating Australia as their destination.

PASS-PORT NO	DATE	NAME	RESIDENCE	PROFESSION
42	16-01-1915	Luigi Galea	Għarb	General Labourer
43	16-01-1915	Carmelo Galea	Għarb	General Labourer

44	16-01-1915	Luigi Galea	Għarb	General Labourer
45	16-01-1915	Giuseppe Mizzi	Għarb	General Labourer
46	16-01-1915	Francesco Caruana	Għarb	General Labourer
47	16-01-1915	Giuseppe Debrincat	Għarb	General Labourer
48	16-01-1915	Luigi Galea	San Lawrenz	General Labourer
49	16-01-1915	Francesco Mizzi	Għarb	General Labourer
50	16-01-1915	Salvatore Portelli	Għarb	General Labourer
51	16-01-1915	Michel-Angelo Cremona	Għarb	General Labourer
52	16-01-1915	Michel-Angelo Mercieca	Għarb	General Labourer

Table 1. 1915 Gozitan passport applications for Australia Nos. 42-52

(A comprehensive list of Gozitan applications for passports to Australia in 1915 is to be found at Appendix 6.)

Respondents reported how Gozitan applicants were usually the first in queue for passport applications. This was probably because Gozitans crossed on the first ferry to Malta and would arrive on the doorsteps of the Immigration Department's Office in Valletta an hour-or-so before the office opened. The Gozitans would stay in a group, as they usually did when in Malta—but of

usually fewer than a dozen to avoid police questioning.[35] The clusters of Gozitan applicants demonstrate the willingness to share information in such situations. The original Maltese passport applications held at the National Archives in Malta confirm that most Maltese applicants applied for passports individually, and only in cases of a family accompaniment did they apply in clusters.

All the applicants referred to above wrote down as their profession 'general labourer' or 'labourer'. They might indeed all have been general labourers, though it is also possible that they thought it safer to write 'general labourer' or 'labourer' on their application, in the hope of encompassing a wide range of job opportunities and thereby expanding their chances of going to Australia. The terms, 'general labourer' and 'labourer' are translations of very common expressions used at the time: *Naghmel li jigi ghall-idejja!*, *Inmid idi ghal kollox!*, and *Naghmel kollox!*, which all mean, 'I am willing to do anything' (any kind of work). Their profession might have been farming or a particular craft, but with the more general term they maximised their chances of migrating and then finding employment. Given their pattern of application, it is likely that they collectively agreed to write 'general labourer' at some point instead of their real profession.

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[35] Under Malta's law, the assembly of more than a dozen individuals near a government office without police permission was illegal.

This pattern can be seen in most of the Gozitan passport applications lodged prior to and after World War I through to the independence of Malta in 1964. But the category of 'general labourer' is not so common on Gozitan passport applicants to the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, where the majority of applicants indicated a wider variety of specific professions. In these cases, the majority of the listed skilled Gozitan applicants are from Rabat, the city of commerce in Gozo.

This points to another possibility: that Gozitans who nominated to go to the 'land at the edge of the world' (Australia) tended to be less formally qualified than those who opted for other more 'prestigious' destinations. It may also reflect literacy, with individuals who completed their own applications nominating a specific occupation, while those who depended on someone else filling out the form had to be content with the generic description 'general labourer'. Whatever the case (and it is likely that all these cases applied at one time or another), the result was that, among the Gozitans who migrated to Australia, there was more of what we might call a 'collective' consciousness or identity. This was to prove important in the creation of a sense of cultural continuity in Melbourne.

Migration from Gozo to Australia stopped completely from mid-1916 through to mid-1920 and again from 1940 to 1945. Migration of women, even as wives of migrant husbands, was a rarity before 1920, when Carmela Cauchi from Gharb (who stated 'lace making' as her profession) migrated to Australia. The years following the 1920s saw a gradual increase in the number of Gozitan female migrants to Australia. This number increased even more substantially after World War II. Most women wrote down 'housewife' as their profession, though in fact Gozitan women were very skilled in many areas, such as lace making, knitting, farming, and baking—just as their husbands who wrote down 'general labourer' were skilled in many practical areas.

Not all Gozitans travelled to Australia directly from Malta. Significant numbers of Gozitans migrated to Australia from England or Egypt, which were two common transit countries for passengers. Both the archives of the British and Egyptian High Commissions in Canberra have detailed large numbers of Maltese and Gozitan arrivals from their respective ports. Many settled for some time in England or Egypt and later migrated, becoming known among Gozitans as *L-Ghawdxin ta' Londra* and *L-Ghawdxin tal-Kajr*, 'the Gozitans of London' and 'the Gozitans of Cairo,' respectively. Other Gozitans settled in Algiers, Casablanca and Marseilles—and were nicknamed accordingly. When migrating to Australia they identified themselves as

Gozitans coming from one of the cities indicated. But not all Gozitan applicants listed in Appendix 6 ended up migrating to Australia: some went to England, the United States or Canada.

For those who did migrate to Australia, most ships on which they travelled docked in the ports of Melbourne and/or Sydney. The archives of the Malta High Commission in Canberra document numerous accounts by persons on board ships—often Roman Catholic priests or those with a high profession. They write about the conditions on the ships such as the meals, weather conditions and hygiene. The overwhelming majority of journeys lasted over one month (cf. Xerri 1997). Although no direct reference is made to Gozitan persons, on a number of occasions Gozitans occupying a particular quarter in the ship are referred to. Again, this indicates the separateness of Gozitans from the Maltese.

Upon arrival in Australia the migrants were greeted by relatives and immigration officials. For many, the first impressions of the port were somewhat different from Mġarr Harbour in Gozo; rather, the resemblance was to the docks of the Grand Harbour in Malta, an area where many Gozitans worked prior to migrating to Australia. Various respondents indicated how days would go by before they recovered from the journey and realised they were in another, different world. Commonly migrants explained

their physical and mental state upon arriving in Melbourne as *qisni wieħed fis-sakra*, 'I am like a drunk person'. Crucial questions arose in the minds of the migrants, such as: 'What next?'; 'Have I made a mistake coming here?'; 'Should I remain in Melbourne with my family and friends?'; or 'Should I go to another city or maybe to the bush?' Judging from the passport applications,[36] most Gozitans who settled in Melbourne decided to remain there and usually changed residence only once. The change of address normally took place when the new migrant found a job and was able to settle on his/her own by moving out of the household which had accommodated them upon arrival. Very few migrants moved to Sydney or to the bush after arriving in Melbourne.

There are various reasons for this pattern of settlement in Melbourne. Upon first impression, Melbourne confirmed for the Gozitan the organised set-up of the metropolitan area with which they were most familiar: the city of Valletta. The common saying was *It-triq bħal tal-Belt u kollox f'postu*, 'the streets are identical to the City (of Valletta) and everything is tidy'. But Melbourne also confirmed more distinctly Gozitan preconceptions of landscape. As my informants highlighted, in the minds of many new arrivals, Melbourne replaced Rabat and the outer western suburbs replaced the

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[36] Passport applications from 1965, when the Malta High Commission was established in Canberra, to the present are held at the Archives Section of the same office.

villages around Rabat. In the 1950s the outer western suburbs were just like villages: small clusters of dwellings surrounded by open grassland. To this day, Gozo is still in that state: villages separated by the fields and the natural environment. The major attraction of Melbourne for Gozitans was the village ambience and the seemingly endless agricultural land that 'cried out' to be worked.

The craft skills in these suburbs at the time were similar those in Gozo's villages: agriculture, fisheries, ironmongery, tailoring, tool-making and general unskilled labour. Although the weather is colder than in Gozo and the rainfall much higher, in summer the climate was practically the same and this meant that work practices and schedules required little change. The colder winter weather meant that more birds would be available for hunting in the marshes of Victoria, since hunting was and remains a popular pastime amongst Gozitan men. Warmer summers meant an abundance of fish, and fishing was also a popular pastime and a central source of food for Gozitans. These concepts were common wisdom brought by Gozitans to the 'land at the edge of the world'.

Many of the Gozitans with whom I have spoken at the St Paul's Boċċi Club, in West Sunshine, Melbourne, and the Xerri's Boċċi Club in Qala, nominated the land and its fauna as a key reason for living in Victoria. For example,

Karmenu Camilleri of West Sunshine takes every opportunity to go hunting for ducks in the Echuca area near the Victorian—New South Wales border. As he described, 'In winter I shoot more ducks than I used to shoot down other birds in Gozo'.

As explored in Chapter One and referred to throughout this thesis, the land figures in the minds of Gozitans, and in many respects it serves as a metaphor for how Gozitans see themselves, and their differences from the Maltese. Among the growing Gozitan population in Melbourne the western suburbs and the nearby Port Phillip Bay articulated with their idealised representation of the land Gozo and its coastline as beautiful and good vis-à-vis neighbouring Malta. Again, the land functioned as the prism through which the early Gozitan migrants made sense of their experiences. For them, as for the Gozitans in Melbourne today, being Gozitan in Melbourne is conceptualised in terms of connection with the land.

Perhaps this may be spoken of as a key element in the Gozitan *habitus*, the cultural formation of Gozitan identity in Melbourne. Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, or 'history turned nature', helps account for the complex links between Gozitan migrants in Melbourne and their connection with the land. As Bourdieu (1986) has demonstrated, a 'sense of one's place' in the world is experienced as natural by those whose historical conditions have produced

particular lifestyles and practices. In this case, using ostensibly nativist rhetoric, the Gozitans speak of themselves as naturally belonging on the land. For the Gozitan migrants in Australia, the idealised myth of homeland forms a continuing existential reality in which they continue to live and define themselves. The distinctive relationship with the land Gozo (embodied here in the outer western suburbs of Melbourne) acts as a reference point for the affirmation of an essential Gozitan identity.

Although not in the outer western suburbs, on the outskirts of Melbourne's Central Business District, the Queen Victoria Market resembled to the earlier arrivals the *monti* (market) of *Pjazza It-Tokk* or *Banca Giuratale* in Rabat, though on a much larger scale. Furthermore, 'Victoria' was already a familiar name since Rabat is also referred to as Victoria. Although English was the second language of Gozitans, they were not required to be highly fluent English speakers since they lived amongst a large Gozitan population. Most Gozitans settled in the municipality that is today known as the City of Brimbank (which includes the suburbs of Sunshine, West Sunshine, North Sunshine, St Albans, Altona, and Deer Park). The suburb of Footscray, which forms part of the City of Maribyrnong, was also home to many Gozitan wharf workers. A small number of Gozitans settled in the eastern

suburbs and various inner city areas.[37] Welfare assistance was provided by the local Gozitan and Maltese Roman Catholic priests as well as the Maltese Immigration attaché in the city of Melbourne.[38]

Gozitan arrivals considered the State of Victoria to be a place of fertile 'green' land. No doubt this confirmed their choice of Melbourne as the place to begin a new life. One informant Stifnu (Stephen) Xerri commented that, on a much smaller scale, Gozo's greenery can be compared to that of Victoria, and that the greenery was the attraction which convinced him to conclude 'I shall settle in Victoria'. Another important factor in the choice of Melbourne was the knowledge that the Maltese generally settled in the Sydney metropolitan area. This discouraged Gozitans from settling in Sydney, as evidenced in the relocation pattern of many Gozitans from the Sydney area to Melbourne, or to the quieter bush villages in New South Wales.[39] These topographic similarities with Gozo welcomed Gozitan migrants and made them feel at home in the new 'land on the edge of the world'.

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[37] Information gathered from the Passport Division and Pension Division of the Malta High Commission, Canberra, Australia.

[38] Information gathered from the archives of the Maltese Community Council, Parkville, Victoria, Australia.

[39] Cf. the passport applications of many Gozitans who arrived in Sydney and later moved to Melbourne.

Despite the similarities and sense of familiarity, Australia remained for the Gozitans the 'land at the edge of the world'. Indeed, going by the interviews of the migrants who left Gozo, most intended to return home with sufficient savings to build their own house and comfortably spend the rest of their lives in Gozo. A smaller number left Gozo with the intention of seeking their fortunes in Australia and remaining there. Safran (1991) describes the mythical constructions of 'homeland and return' as central among all diasporic communities. The Gozitan case concurs. It would seem that in Australia, the 'land at the edge of the world' far removed from Gozo, the illusion of Gozo as an unproblematic geographic location, a place of coherence and familiarity, was strengthened.

Many Gozitans in both groups interviewed spoke of a 'split existence'. A common expression used by most of the people interviewed was *ġismi hawn u moħħi hemm*, which equates with 'my body is here (in Melbourne) and my mind is there (in Gozo)'. The expression highlights one of the defining characteristics of (post)modernity: the capacity to live in and negotiate several 'worlds' at once. The triangular relationship of hostland—migrant—homeland features in their lives. The point is that Gozitans in Melbourne, like probably all migrants, long for the familiarity of their place of childhood and community, their homeland, while at the same time they are compelled to pursue self-advancement in Australia, their hostland.

Appendix 5 shows that while most Gozitans migrated to Melbourne with the intention of a temporary stay, after the years passed and other factors came into their lives, the stay became permanent. This was the case for most of the subjects interviewed in Group B (Gozitan migrants in Melbourne). Confirming the 'myth of return', in response to the question, 'When you migrated did you think it was permanent or a temporary move?' only three respondents (Victor Bonello, Maria Micallef and Jane Attard) stated that their migration to Melbourne was intended to be permanent. But most of those interviewed were compelled to change their plans. Initially they intended to work for anything between five and fifteen years, accumulating wealth before returning to Gozo. But factors such as single migrants finding partners and marrying, and children born and/or growing up in the Australian environment, left many unable to return. Instead, they visited Gozo for brief periods.

The financial and time costs make travel to Gozo difficult and infrequent. Often Gozitans in Melbourne visit Gozo to attend funerals of loved ones or marriages of relatives. These trips are usually unplanned for and short. From the sixty subjects observed and thirty interviewed, the majority visited Gozo for these two reasons. Holidays were the third reason, mostly being scheduled around the festa of their village of origin, during the summer

116

season in Gozo and winter in Melbourne. Others travel to Gozo around Christmas time.

The Gozitans who settled permanently in the western suburbs are officially classified by the Australian authorities according to country of birth, which is Malta. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of 1996 for the City of Brimbank indicates that there were 7,995 persons, or 5.36 percent of the population of Brimbank, who listed Malta as their country of birth. Although no official distinction was made between Maltese and Gozitans, the percentage of Gozitans can be roughly deduced from the passport applications of Gozitans held at the Malta High Commission. Upon this basis, one could safely conclude that between 75 and 80 percent of Brimbank's 7,995 'Maltese population' are of Gozitan origin. The suburbs of St Albans and Sunshine are home to the largest concentration of Gozitans in Brimbank, which, as Table 2 illustrates, is among Australia's most multicultural municipalities.

TABLE 2

BRIMBANK RESIDENTS' PLACE OF BIRTH

COUNTRY	1991 CENSUS	1996 CENSUS	PROPORTION (%) IN 1996
AUSTRALIA	75,208	78,924	52.92
YUGOSLAVIA*	10,381	----	----
MALTA	8,857	7,995	5.36
ITALY	4,995	4,714	3.16
MACEDONIA*	-----	3,923	2.63
UNITED KINGDOM	4,233	3,434	2.3
CROATIA*	----	3,378	2.26
PHILIPPINES	2,420	3,239	2.17
GREECE	2,985	2,975	1.99
POLAND	2,400	2,287	1.53
GERMANY	1,696	1,513	1
INDIA	1,066	1,435	0.96
EGYPT	917	966	0.65
CHILE	832	872	0.58
INDONESIA	380	748	0.5

LEBANON	620	732	0.49
SRI LANKA	433	717	0.48
NEW ZEALAND	476	691	0.46
CHINA (ex TAIWAN)	379	655	0.44
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO*	----	603	0.4
NETHERLANDS	347	396	0.27
FIJI	191	376	0.25
HONG KONG	205	368	0.25
MALAYSIA	106	326	0.22
IRELAND	207	272	0.18
HUNGARY	329	214	0.14
SINGAPORE	77	101	0.1
U.S.A	38	98	0.1
SOUTH AFRICA	169	98	0.1
VIETNAM	5,706	10,104	6.78
CANADA	28	41	0.01
Born elsewhere overseas	10,531	12,278	8.23

Not stated	-----	4,320	2.9
Overseas visitors	----	388	0.23
TOTAL	**136,172**	**149,131**	**100%**

* Macedonia, Croatia and Serbia/Montenegro as well as many smaller countries included in born elsewhere formed part of the former Yugoslavia in 1991. Due to this it's not possible to compare 1991 to 1996.

The official classifications make the Gozitans a statistically invisible community in Australia: a stateless minority subsumed under the category of the nation-state. Contrary to these official classifications, Malta is not considered by Gozitans in Gozo and Australia as their primary label for identification. Rather, Gozitans place great importance on their identity as *Għawdxin*, especially when in the midst of the Maltese community. Gozitans in Melbourne primarily identify themselves as *Għawdxi* (Gozitan male) or *Għawdxija* (Gozitan female) or *Għawdxin*, meaning 'I am Gozitan' or 'we are Gozitans', which in the Maltese language means something more profound than just 'inhabitants of Gozo'. It suggests the concept of the Gozitan nation, a 'national community', albeit without a recognised state.

120

Despite their pervasive history of travel and crossings, Gozitans do not travel much within Australia, preferring instead to remain in the one place where the 'national community' is based. Money saved for holidays is generally expended on a visit to Gozo. Those traveling within continental Australia are usually limited to visiting relatives and friends in the mainly metropolitan areas of Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Mackay. These visits are usually for the same reason as visits to Gozo, namely, to attend funerals, marriages and family occasions. Generally speaking, Gozitans in Melbourne are not considered to be mobile and tend to become very attached to the home and suburb they live in. This is evident from my observations and interviews conducted in Melbourne. Conversely, Gozitans and returnees in Gozo travel frequently within Gozo, several times a week to Malta, and very often to the continent for business and holidaying.[40]

Most Gozitans who have applied for a passport at the Malta High Commission in Canberra since 1965 have retained their Maltese citizenship. Often couples decide which one of them will become an Australian citizen and who will remain Maltese. This way the family will have access to both countries and mitigate their sense of homelessness. Since the 1989

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[40]Cf. 'Mobility Statistics', Central Office of Statistics, Valletta, Malta 1998.

amendments to Chapter Three[41] of the Constitution of Malta, many Gozitans

have opted to obtain dual citizenship. This legal attempt to resolve the

differences between the 'old' and the 'new' recalls their earlier endeavours to

emphasize the similarities between the western suburbs of Melbourne and the

island of Gozo.

As I have argued in this chapter, the similarities were so often refracted

through an identification with the land. However, it is not only land which

acts as a prism through which Gozitans see themselves. As elaborated in the

following chapter, what it means to be Gozitan in Melbourne is also closely

tied to perceptions about work (and recreation). Indeed, as argued throughout

this thesis in relation to land, work is also a fundamental reference point from

which all Gozitans living in Melbourne's western suburbs are compelled to

define themselves vis-à-vis their Maltese neighbours. Indeed, as the

following chapter suggests, one could even say that unless you are living the

work ethic you are betraying what it means to be Gozitan.

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[41] *Citizenship*, Chapter Three of the Constitution of Malta, Laws of Malta, Volume I, Valletta, Malta, 1996.

CHAPTER FIVE

MAKING DREAMS WORK

123

If land is central to the *habitus* of Gozitan identity, then so too is work: the land provides the means of working. This chapter explores the importance of work for Gozitans and contends that in the process of negotiating what it means to be Gozitan in Melbourne the work ethic is central to Gozitan identity. As argued in this chapter, the Gozitans look to an idealised work ethic as a means of emphasising their difference from the Maltese, and there is a general consensus that unless you are living the work ethic you are betraying what it means to be Gozitan. However, there is often a disjunction between idealised values and actual work practices. Here I am particularly concerned with how patterns of work have evolved in Melbourne and the strong connection between recreational activities and work. The discussion highlights the evolving inter-relationship of cultural continuity and change in relation to work and recreational activities.

From the outset, it is important to note the major reasons why so many Gozitans migrated to Australia during the 20th century. Firstly, the fact that the Maltese and Gozitans were British subjects opened new opportunities for migration to Australia. Secondly, family ties allowed the congregation of

thousands of Gozitan migrants in one area, mainly in the western suburbs of Melbourne. Thirdly, there was the important role of a number of personalities, such as Sir Gerald Strickland, in facilitating migration to Australia. Finally, many Gozitans migrated to places where manual work was abundant, primarily where the empire implemented major project works. Early twentieth century Australia was such a place.

In the years preceding World War Two the economic situation in Malta and Gozo was very precarious: unemployment reached record high levels and economic growth was virtually non-existent. Many Maltese and Gozitans migrated under very difficult conditions. The difficulties were emphasised in 1921 in the Maltese House of Representatives debate when Joseph Howard, the Chairman of Malta's Emigration Committee and Malta's first Prime Minister, stated that 'Emigration, at present, is taking place under such difficulties as would dishearten any others but those who are faced with starvation if they remain at home.' To make his point, Howard narrated an incident from Gozo:

> A countryman of Gozo recently came before me and piteously
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> appealed to be allowed to go to Australia where work awaited
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> him. He now works from early morning till after dark and even
>
> so, intermittently, for Gozo is but a small country and its

manhood far in excess of what the tilling of the land demands.

His earnings, when he works, come up to two shillings a day and

the price of the lace which his wife and daughters produce hardly

covers the cost of the raw material they require to work it.

(Joseph Howard, House of Representatives Debates 1921)

Howard's comment is to be understood in terms of the longstanding

perception of the distinctive work ethic of Gozitans, summed up many years

before by Captain Lewis Ritchie, C.V.O., *The Epic of Malta*:

The Gozitans have certain definite characteristics which set them

apart from the people of Malta themselves. They are a tougher,

less gay race, and they make excellent colonists and pioneers.

They have been called; 'The Scots of the Maltese people.

(1838: Cited in Bezzina 1985:)

Both Howard's statement and Ritchie's remarks about the Gozitans provide

background for understanding the role of work for Gozitans in Gozo in the

early twentieth century (cf. Bezzina 1985:4). Although eight decades have

passed since Howard made his comment and more than a century and a half

since Ritchie's portrayal of the Gozitans, their explanations for Gozitan

migration remain relevant. Work is a serious matter for Gozitans: as many informants put it, 'Work is the backbone for a strong and stable society'.

Joseph Howard's reference to 'wife and daughters' in his statement to the House of Representatives in 1921 accords with the profession declared by most women in their passport applications. 'Housewife' or 'lace maker' were the most common entries, though a review of all the listings of female Gozitan migrant passport applications to Australia between 1900 and 1945 indicates that a number of female profession entries were left blank. After World War Two there was a gradual increase in the number of women migrating to Australia and more diverse entries on passport applications. Besides the usual 'housewife' or 'lace maker', the occupations of baker, wool weaver, hat maker, tailor, basket maker, cleaner, clerk and secretary become frequent entries.

Ostensibly, for Gozitans work creates an ethic, a level of discipline and an ability to deal with sacrifice and the hard times in life. The phrase *ix-xghol hu s-salmura tal-ġisem*, 'work is what matures the human body, like the common eel keeps its environment healthy', is an expression that was used by various informants. Less emphasis is placed on recreation. However, many workers in the past, especially women, would sing traditional and spontaneous *ghana* folk songs while working to cheer themselves and their

work colleagues. Ritchie makes a clear distinction between the attitudes of Gozitans and Maltese toward work and recreation: 'They [Gozitans] are a tougher, less gay race ... '. Maltese are referred to by Gozitans as *xalaturi*, meaning 'Maltese know how to enjoy themselves, and they do so'.

Migration patterns after World War Two were quite different from earlier Gozitan experiences. After World War Two larger numbers of Gozitans migrated, including more women, more skilled labour and more professionals. The overwhelming majority of Gozitan migrants during this period originated from the villages in the east of Gozo. This trend continued until around 1975 when a reversal occurred, with the total number of Gozitans migrating amounting to about 50 persons annually to all destinations, and the number of return migrants (Maltese and Gozitans) gradually increasing throughout the following decade to an average of 1,100 annually. Even during the decade 1974 through to 1985 the Gozitan migrants were largely unskilled and skilled people.

Analysis of the Gozitan passport applications in 1915 (Appendix 6) shows that the majority of these 97 Gozitan migrants to Australia are male, originating from the villages in the western part of the island, and are declared manual workers. 'General labourers,' 'field labourers,' 'labourers,' 'farmers,' 'farm hand' or 'agriculture' all indicate that these men were

willing to work in any manual job available, since these job descriptions in Gozo and in Malta at the time meant just this. After reviewing hundreds of applications, it is clear that most were illiterate and consequently faced difficulties, especially in doing the dictation test (York 1993:5-142). A small number of these men—'barber', 'mason', 'tinsmith', 'butcher', 'coal heaver', 'stone picker', 'miller' and 'baker'—did declare that they were skilled.

Until three decades ago, Gozitans in Gozo lived in an agricultural society where the growing of fruit and vegetables, animal husbandry and the products of hunting and fishing were the main forms of work, followed by construction and craft industries. In recent times, public works, shops, factories and service industries have outstripped primary production as the main employer in an emerging industrial Gozo. But in the early 20th century, the Gozitan migrants in Melbourne left agricultural Gozo for an emerging industrial Melbourne, where the wharves, public works and the factories of the western suburbs offered the bulk of employment opportunities. Later, individual Gozitan entrepreneurs emerged—and in some cases flourished—in all sectors of the economy.

David Buttigieg of St. Albans, a Gozitan-Melburnian, product of parents from the Gozitan villages of Qala and Kerċem, occupies the position of Accountancy Consultant at one of Melbourne's top Accountancy firms.

Solicitor Mario Xerri, another Gozitan-Melburnian, has a very successful legal practice at West Sunshine and serves the Gozitan community in the surrounding suburbs. Another successful Gozitan in Melbourne is Emmanuel Camilleri, Executive Director and President of the St. Paul's Boċċi Club in West Sunshine. Darren Gauci, a first generation Gozitan-Melburnian, is one of the most talented horse riders in Australia.

The upwardly mobile path through economic development was quickened by a strong work ethnic as expressed in the phrase: *Ix-xogħol, salmura tal-ġisem,* 'work is what matures the human body, like the common eel keeps its environment healthy'. Gozitan wisdom has over the centuries, to varying degrees, shaped the attitudes of Gozitans towards the work activities which occupy most of their lives. From an early age, Gozitans are taught to wake-up early and get a 'head start' over the rest, by preparing for the coming day, while others, usually meaning the Maltese, remain asleep. *Ix-xogħol, salmura tal-ġisem,* expresses not only how Gozitans earn a living through work, but also how work builds and keeps the family together, builds the 'nation', and enables a person to be regarded as fully mature. Another common expression, *Mix-xejn, ma' jsir xejn,* 'Dreams are not fulfilled without hard work' or 'Dreams do not work unless you do', expresses the same ethic. This phrase was constantly repeated by informants at both the St. Paul's Boċċi Club in North Sunshine and at the Xerri Boċċi in Qala.

Maurice Cauchi, an eminent return migrant from Għarb, indicated how 'Gozitan migration to the western suburbs was a chain reaction because many settled working at the wharves and many brought their friends over'. Laurie Zammit, a return migrant living in Xewkija, described how 'The standard of living in Gozo was low and the western suburbs of Melbourne were attractive for me'. Angelo Buttigieg stated, 'Well, there were others who went also to Sydney. In my case, I already had my family settled in Footscray where it seems that there were adequate job opportunities'. Mariano Grima, a return migrant living in Xewkija, commented, 'Melbourne is the preferred migrant city for Gozitans because it has a lot in common with Gozo. Plenty of fellow Gozitans and you feel you are in Gozo ... in Sunshine'.

Various women described in interviews their earlier working roles. Mary Xerri, who joined her husband in Sunshine in the early 1960s, recalled her earlier experience: 'I stayed at home raising the children whilst my husband worked at the wharves ... I never sought employment outside my home'. Josephine Cassar also joined her husband, in St. Albans in the mid-1970s, and recalled: 'I raised my children and when they reached their teens I started to work as a cleaner at the Rosary Home of the Dominican Sisters of Malta in Keilor Downs'. Salvina Stellini of North Sunshine indicated how she 'stayed

at home all my life and never worked since I got sick after having my third child. I occasionally worked Gozo lace as a pastime and went for *tombla* ġbingoħ evenings'. Lucy Stellini's experience was common: 'I always worked at home and raised my two boys whilst Wistin went to work'. Others, like Adelina Attard, a single women from the Gozitan city of Victoria, had migrated specifically to work in Melbourne and Sydney, where, compared with Gozo, relatively great opportunities existed for women.

Maria Micallef, a housewife all her life, described the difficulty she experienced 'leaving my kids, although teenagers, and going to work at the Rosary Home'. Maria Zammit, a mother of four, worked all her life with her cousins in the family business at Pendle Hill, Sydney. Pauline Ziebell, a Gozitan married to an Australian of Polish descent, 'had no difficulty working a part-time job and I enjoy it a lot'. Jane Attard, an Executive Secretary in Melbourne City and Secretary of the Australia-Xewkija Association Incorporated, indicated, 'I still find plenty of time for my family despite my hectic schedule'. Mary Rose Buttigieg, a mother of two, started to work after her boy grew up, and 'now I have been working part-time in Kealba for eleven years'.

In most situations work activity is conducted with maximum efficiency in relation to the utilisation of available resources. The use of resources only

once and then disposing of them is considered unacceptable. *Hela*, wastage of resources, is considered a sin and whoever wastes earns from Gozitans the title of *ħali*, meaning 'a spendthrift'. Various expressions condemning wastefulness continue to dominate Gozitan life, such as: *Hala għal ħadd m'hu tajjeb*, 'extravagance does not do anybody any good', *mhux minn hawn ġej il-ħala*, 'this is only chickenfeed', that is, one must economise on other expenses, and *hemm silla l-ħlejjiet*, a saying used in Xagħra meaning 'there are great quantities of clover'. More expressions are used throughout Gozo to express this primary Gozitan principle. They stem from the Gozitan obsession with the maximum use of their limited resources, the saving of money and, ultimately, the protection of the land, sea and environment in general. Environmental protection is thus instilled in the minds of Gozitans, and extends to a range of situations at work, home and in society generally. This principle also contributes towards considerable use of public resources and safeguards against vandalism.

The principle of efficiency extends to another important characteristic, relating to the use of financial resources by Gozitans. The Maltese often describe Gozitans as *xħaħ*, meaning acquisitive and 'close-fisted,' or more pointedly, in a staunchly Roman Catholic society, as *Lhud* or Jews. Both terms refer to the apparent Gozitan disposition to earn and save money, generate wealth and have an overall higher level of savings power compared

to the Maltese. It reflects a pattern of behavior amongst Gozitans based upon discipline and concern for financial stability. This behaviour is demonstrated in the rigorous and somewhat inflexible workday schedule of farmers and fishermen.

In accord with the high value placed upon recycling and re-using resources, most Gozitans who migrated to Melbourne prior to World War Two and found employment in such occupations as ploughing, tilling and fruit picking regarded the techniques and processes used by their farmer/employer as wasteful. These methods, mostly of northern European origin, were not effective in the Victorian situation, according to ex-farmers like one of my informants, Ġużepp Buttigieg of Għajnsielem, who spent his initial years in the Melbourne area working with Irish and British settlers and landowners. According to Ġużepp; "They planted crops too spread out when their crop yield could have been double if not more ... some seeds were not adequately planted considering the winter cold and summer climates. As a consequence, crop loss was unnecessarily high. Trimming fruit trees was a monthly task not according to the size of the moon and weather. This brought early season crop losses."

Contrary to these northern European practices, many Gozitans practised the traditional Gozitan ploughing, planting and maintenance techniques used in

their home villages. These techniques were applied in their backyards and plots of land, where they cultivated every inch of space. Among the most common vegetables were: potatoes, onions, garlic, tomatoes, parsley, clover, lettuce, cauliflower, cucumber and other typical Mediterranean crops. With regard to fruit, they cultivated lemon, orange and mandarin as well as apples, pears and grapes.

They also cultivated prickly pear. As in Gozo, many Gozitans in Melbourne often could not afford or did not trust modern medicine, and resorted to traditional methods of treatment for injuries. Most Gozitans either brought over from Gozo or purchased locally a *tal-bajtra*, the prickly pear tree, to plant in their gardens. Prickly pears remain a very popular Gozitan fruit and its leaves, called *werqa t'Indja*, have some medicinal uses, including treatment for stings by wasps, bees and even spider bites.

Gozitan farmers in Melbourne followed *il-Kalendarju tal-Patri tal-Mim*, a calendar published by a Gozitan monk, Odorik Grima (1889-1964), from Qala, which acted as a guide to remind farmers when to plant, trim and harvest individual crops, fruit and vines. These Gozitan farmers in Melbourne literally turned this calendar upside down and adapted it to their Australian situation. Many farmers knew this calendar 'by heart', since it was

their 'corporate plan' for the year when still in Gozo. This method is still practised amongst the few remaining first generation farmers.

Another practice in agricultural circles was to follow *il-Rwiegel*, a system whereby the conditions of weather on Gozo during the twelve days before Christmas each year were held to determine the weather patterns for the following twelve months. In Melbourne, where the climate is somewhat similar to Gozo's, farmers observed *il-Rwiegel* in the month of June, usually between the 13th and the 24th, each year. The moon directed their operations by prescribing when to plant, trim and/or harvest crops, trees and vines. As informants in Gozo and Melbourne describe, this calendar system is still used by Gozitans in Gozo and in Melbourne when cultivating their backyard and/or properties in the bush.

As with many other groups, the cultivation of gardens is a passion of many Gozitans. Most Gozitan dwellings have a sizeable garden, unlike most of the houses of the Maltese. Gozitans' love for their garden might be compared to the attraction many Australians have to their own. As described in previous pages, the majority of Gozitans in Gozo and Melbourne would plant and grow vegetables and trees to render them produce. In particular, it was (and is) the Gozitan women in Melbourne who are highly dedicated to their gardens. The harvests of their garden are included proudly with their meals

and sometimes shared with their fellow Gozitan neighbours and friends. The sharing of such products can be made by inviting them for meals or by giving a part of the produce to others. This is a gesture of solidarity with their fellow Gozitans and often results in animated conversations relating to these products and their size compared with what they used to pick at harvest in Gozo, or the colour and taste of such products.

In Gozo these conversations are shared by whoever practises agriculture in the family; however in Melbourne, the ritual is reserved for the females of the family who normally engage in garden work. This has been observed in most families during my research. An interesting addition to this practice is the video recording of garden programmes on television, such as the popular *Burke's Backyard*. These tapes are often circulated amongst women and, in some cases, sent to Gozo for viewing by relatives and friends. This exchange of audiovisual technology is not only a source of conversation, but has also produced some of Gozo's most beautiful embellishment projects and gardens. This has been made possible primarily for two reasons: firstly, the similar climate to Melbourne, and, secondly, the importation of various plant and tree seeds and trimmings which has permitted more plant diversity, making possible 'Burke's Backyard' in Gozo.

Unlike agriculture, fishing has remained 'a man's business' and I have not yet met a Gozitan woman who practises this work in Gozo or in Melbourne. Fishing experienced a similar adaptation to agriculture. The early Gozitans in Melbourne went fishing for food and not for leisure, considering fish to be among the most nourishing foods, as well as being also free to catch. Initially, they fished from the shoreline around Altona and Werribee, which are the closest fishing areas to the western suburbs. Later, many purchased small fibreglass boats and began venturing into the same bayside areas for pleasure and to catch a 'meal or two'. Whilst the Gozitan fishermen in Gozo maintained their centuries-old schedules and wooden *kejjik* or *luzzu* (Gozo boats), Gozitan fishermen in Melbourne would fish after work, during weekends or holidays, the *kejjik* (*luzzu*) being replaced with the fibreglass boat.

The methods of catching fish have also changed. John Portelli, a senior member of the Gozitan community in Melbourne, migrated from Qala to Melbourne with three of his friends in 1927 and joined one of the Melbourne fishing fleets. He explained how the construction of the Gozitan fisherman's pot in Melbourne took place, since the design of the Gozitan fisherman's pot used in Gozo was not accepted by the fishing fleets operating from Port Philip Bay in Melbourne and Hobart in Tasmania. According to summarised comments of John Portelli, the Gozitan fisherman's pot is 'ancient' in design,

impractical for the commercial catches expected by the fleets to yield profits and too fragile for the Tasman Sea and the Southern Ocean. Nevertheless, he recounted how he continued to use the Gozitan pot when he went fishing on his own and with friends. But the pot was more like a rectangular shaped box which had a net lid. It was constructed similar to a wooden container box. The outline frame was made out of marine wood and the space in the frame was made of a thin wire net to entrap the catch. Fish were caught by keeping the lid open and dragging the pot through the water at a relatively high speed, with the lid closing when it was lifted from the sea.

As various informants described, the changes in design, technique and equipment used for catching fish brought about a different perspective to fishing amongst Gozitan fishermen in Melbourne. They adapted to the new situation with continued use of their traditional Gozitan fisherman's pot during recreational fishing, while at work they used the Melbourne version. Over the years recreational fishing gained an unprecedented popularity amongst the Gozitan male population in Melbourne, with many Western suburbs Gozitans fishing from the shores of Altona pier.

As they brought their fishing skills with them from Gozo, so too most Gozitans who migrated to Melbourne brought with them the craft knowledge they had mastered prior to leaving Gozo. Many crafts in Gozo were not

associated exclusively with either gender. For example, both males and females practised lace making, farming, shepherding flocks, knitting, gold and silver filigree and pottery. However, it was mostly male Gozitan migrants who utilised in public their crafts in Melbourne. Many women practised their knitting, gardening and sewing in the privacy of their homes. This 'public-private' utilisation of crafts gradually eroded and today both genders make use of their skills without any hesitation. Craft knowledge could be utilized in conjunction with employment in a particular trade, or during periods of unemployment.

By 1970, some Gozitans in Melbourne were highly specialised and sought-after gilders, taxidermists, restorers, carpenters and builders. Many have maintained the same designs, patterns, shapes and methods used in Gozo, while others have developed a distinctive new style. The skills of Gozitan craftpersons have contributed to the cultural development of the suburbs of the city of Brimbank. This may be spoken of as 'bringing Gozo to Melbourne'. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the interiors of the various Catholic churches that Gozitans frequent, as described in the following chapter.

Agriculture and fishing were not the only kinds of familiar work available to Gozitans in Melbourne. Some activities like hunting and trapping provided a

livelihood to many and were considered by Gozitans as both work and recreational activities. Bird and rabbit hunting and trapping are Gozitan male pastimes, which sometimes border upon the obsessional. The hunting of birds and rabbits continued in Melbourne as in Gozo—with the addition of ducks in Australia. In Gozo certain birds were hunted for food and later rendered by taxidermists into ornaments to be displayed inside houses, as I have often seen in the houses of informants in Gozo. Gozitans in Melbourne have maintained the tradition and many are active members of the numerous shooting and hunting clubs around Melbourne and throughout Victoria.

The practice of trapping birds and rabbits is so common in Gozo that today practically every uncultivated field or barren patch of land is transformed into a trapping site for birds or an area for hunting. The practice in Melbourne is confined to the backyards of Gozitan homes between the rows of gardens, with the citrus trees surrounding these bird traps acting as an attraction for birds. Most small birds caught—legally or illegally—are kept initially in small cages called *ġaġġa* until they are placed in a much bigger cage (often the size of a small room) to be cared for. Recreation is found in the activity of caring, feeding and raising a sizeable population of a particular species or a number of species. Notwithstanding their protected status, larger birds, such as wedge-tailed eagles, ducks of all kinds, the royal albatross, and pelicans, to name a few, usually end up stuffed and placed as decorations on

a piece of furniture where the weaponry is placed, or in a piece of furniture containing memorabilia on the achievements of the family. In some Gozitan homes in Melbourne I have observed cross-generational achievements displayed in one piece of furniture—often stuffed birds, trophies, plaques and University degrees, something which I have not seen in Gozo.

While agriculture, fishing, hunting and trapping remain central to the Gozitan lifestyle, in Gozo these activities have gradually become recreational pursuits for the many Gozitans who have been compelled to find work in the industrial areas around Malta's capital city. Over the centuries, many Gozitans sought work in Malta at Valletta's royal docks, now known as the Malta dry docks, Senglea, Vittoriosa, Hamrun and Marsa. Most of the employment related to the loading and unloading of goods to and from ships, the distribution of such goods, and work related to shipbuilding and repair. Some Gozitans were satisfied with the employment they had in the Grand Harbour area and settled there; others chose to migrate and find work elsewhere, including, especially, the wharf areas of Melbourne.

Known by Gozitans as *il-Wolf*, meaning the wharf, the Melbourne shoreline resembled, in the minds of various informants, the wharves of the Grand Harbour in Malta. Apparently the area provided better opportunities for Gozitans in Melbourne than their counterparts in Gozo, who faced limited

prospects at the ports of Mġarr in Gozo and the Grand Harbour in Malta. *Jiena nahdem il-wolf,* 'I work at the wharves', was a common expression among the Gozitans, and for many the wharves of Melbourne shared common ground with Malta and they adapted themselves well to the hardships and skills required for wharf work. Hardship was part of their lives, and most who worked on the Melbourne wharves had previously worked in the Grand Harbour wharves in Malta. Workers in wharves in both Malta and Melbourne are in relatively well paid jobs, and the majority in both locations belong to a strong trade union.[42] Both wharves share a turbulent industrial relations history and associate themselves to Labor parties: in Melbourne, the Australian Labor Party (ALP), and in Malta, the Malta Labor Party (MLP).

Apart from working on the wharves, Gozitans also found employment on major public works projects. In Gozo, public works projects were restricted to road building, stone wall separations between fields and streets, small water dams, water, drainage and electricity services, along with cleaning valleys and sewers. In Melbourne, besides the tasks previously done in Gozo, opportunities existed for public works on such facilities as motorways, flyovers, large dams, and in such jobs as slicing hills to construct roads,

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[42] In Australia it's the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) and in Malta its the General Workers Union (GWU).

142

bridges, railway lines and pipelines. Most manual work undertaken by Gozitans in such Melbourne projects was also done by emigrants from other countries. An example is the West Gate Bridge in Spotswood where numerous Gozitans worked on its construction. They worked in the most difficult parts of the project and some lost their lives in the bridge disaster of 1971.

Until 1970, Gozo had no factories and agriculture constituted the backbone of the economy. Gradually, the Xewkija Industrial Estate developed and began employing a growing share of the island's workers. In Melbourne, Gozitan migrants with industrial experience sought work in the industrial suburb of Footscray. Today, factories around Footscray—although increasingly part of Melbourne's industrial decline—still employ a large number of Gozitans, in firms such as Bradmill and Kinnears and various printing establishments. Anecdotal experiences recounted to me by various informants suggest that Gozitans, with their reputation as energetic and loyal workers, were preferred to the Maltese in this area. One informant, Leli (Emmanuel) Buttigieg from Qala, described his experiences in the Sunshine area, where he sought employment in the 1980s. Asked specifically by a number of poultry factory managers after he stated he was from Malta, 'Are you Maltese from Malta or are you from Gozo?', Leli felt that being from Gozo made his prospects much better.

Within the Gozitan community a good reputation is considered an essential attribute for a good Gozitan. A good reputation is synonymous with being a good worker. Indeed, work is the primary means of gaining social capital and standing within the community. This ethos is summed up in the expression, *Hu l-isem u intefa' l-baħar*, 'once you earn a good reputation you can rest'. The downside of this ethos is that those considered 'lazy' are marginalised within the community. This preoccupation with a good reputation creates problems, especially for younger members of the community who are long-term unemployed. Often their inability to find work is misunderstood as laziness and the individual, rather than the lack of employment opportunities, is blamed. Inter-generational conflicts arise when the older Gozitans admonish the younger ones.

The idealised value of work expressed in the phrase *Ix-xogħol is-salmura tal-ġisem*, 'work is what matures the human body, like the common eel keeps its environment healthy', is being interpreted quite differently by the younger generations of Gozitans. First generation Gozitan migrants in Melbourne usually put an emphasis on 'hard work', meaning long hours (usually a minimum of 12 hours). This has been translated by the next generation differently. A number of young informants argue that "life is not just work, work and more work." More important for Jane Calleja of Keilor Downs was

144

"how much quality time I spend with my family members ... life is too short to waste only on work." "I am not going to spend the best of my lifetime working my guts out and then one fine day when I am ready to retire, I get a heart attack and drop dead like many did, including uncle Mikiel (Michael)," said second-generation Gozitan-Melburnian Xandru Grima from Kealba.

The preoccupation with a good reputation has equipped Gozitans to perform well in Melbourne's small business sector. Most Gozitan small businesses are family operated. In the past, the selling of produce, fish and craft items were family businesses, usually headed by the adult male or female and assisted by the children. For example, my grandfather, Antonio Xerri (1909-1988), was a farmer who sold produce in the streets of Xewkija and Għajnsielem on a cart. His wife, Caterina Xerri (1910-1990), besides taking care of their six children, shepherded the goat and sheep herds from which she made *ġbejniet* (Gozitan cheese), and made lace to sell at Rabat shops and throughout Malta. The Xerri family business was diversified and included many products such as a variety of fruits. Many Gozitan migrants who previously had businesses operated along the same lines in Melbourne, and most ended up selling their produce at places such as the St. Albans Market. Many Gozitan families rent or own a section of the St. Albans Market, where one can find a full range of foods which are considered traditional Gozitan and Maltese foods. In Gozo other families have stores similar to small

corner shops in Melbourne, and in the evenings transform them into wine bars. In Melbourne, they move into the grocery store business, and instead of wine bars some Gozitans have managed pubs.

My interviews and observations indicate that a larger numbers of Gozitans in Gozo and in Melbourne now work in the service industries. Gozo has over the last decade nurtured a healthy service industry. In Melbourne, many Gozitan migrants started their own businesses after obtaining valuable experience from their new employment with a company in Malta or in Melbourne. According to my direct knowledge of businesses and services listed at the Trade Division of the Malta High Commission in Canberra, companies established and owned by Gozitans would seem to account for the majority of the large Maltese businesses in Victoria and New South Wales. Such companies are known as very efficient family businesses and usually do not need to advertise their services. This gradual evolution of business growth is identical to the pattern of evolution of most businesses in Gozo. Furthermore, as in Gozo, hard work, providing the best possible service, and word of mouth are considered by Gozitans to be the best forms of advertising.

While work and recreation patterns for Gozitans in Melbourne have changed over recent decades, the (idealised) values underpinning work and recreation

have tended to remain. The work ethic continues to dominate life for many Gozitans and ensures continuity with life on Gozo. Many Gozitans continue to look to work as means of dynamically representing themselves to one another and to outsiders. Importantly, the work ethic is held up as distinctly Gozitan and lacking among the Maltese, who are, in contrast, considered lazy and wasteful. However, the idealised value of hard work does not always match the reality of practice in Australia. Rather, there is an interplay of idealised Gozitan values and the shifts in actual practice. This applies to both Gozo and Melbourne. Nevertheless, the evidence presented in the preceding pages would support the claim that the disjunction is less pronounced for the Gozitans than for other migrant (and Australian-born) groups. The Gozitans are more able to invest their new activities with old meanings. As the following Chapter indicates, part of the reason for this continuity is the continuing central role of religion in the life of the Gozitans in Melbourne.

CHAPTER SIX

FAITH AND FESTA

In July 1998 I received a telephone call from Australia; it was my mother's cousin-in-law Paul Buttigieg calling from St. Albans in Melbourne. He had bad news. His wife had suddenly died without any forewarning. Distraught, Paul uttered, 'Ursola Buttigieg left us suddenly ... She was only 56, please tell all our relatives.' I was shocked, since I had seen her in seemingly good health only recently before visiting Gozo for some weeks. Fortunately, my stay in Gozo was about to end, so I could attend the funeral in Australia. On arriving at Melbourne Airport I was driven directly to the Tobin Brothers funeral complex in Sunshine. Walking into a crowded hall of Gozitan mourners, what was striking was the silence. It was a silence which captured, on the occasion, the solidarity, across the generations, of the village and outside-village community of Qala in Melbourne who had come to support Paul and to pay their respects to his deceased wife.

Leli Buttigieg, Ursola's brother-in-law, grabbed my hands and whispered, 'Grazzi talli gejt' ('Thanks for coming from Malta'). Some were saying the rosary while others quietly prayed. According to custom nearly all were dressed in black. As customary among Gozitans, all those present came forward to kiss the coffin while saying the *Requiem Aeternam* prayer to

farewell Ursola. The prayer consists of three sub-prayers: one Our Father, one Hail Mary and one Rest in Peace. Two women from Qala where sitting next to me and I overheard one say to the other, 'They did not bury her in Gozo!' But it was simply too expensive to transport and bury Paul's wife in Gozo. Instead they bought her eternal villa (burial space) in Keilor Downs.

The stewards placed the coffin in the hearse and a procession of cars drove to Keilor Downs Cemetery. Draped with flowers, the expensive coffin was decorated with a marble painted and gold washed cross. At the burial site the Maltese priest said a prayer in Maltese and the coffin was buried. Intense crying occurred while the coffin was lowered down into the ground. Most of the mourners paid their last respects to Ursola and then departed; a few who knew Ursola well consoled Paul at his St Albans house. I joined them. The gathering after the funeral was quiet and reflective. Paul cried as he listened to countless stories about his wife's life. As customary, no beverages were offered at this occasion. Unlike the revelry of wakes among Anglo-Australians, Gozitans regard feasting after a funeral as a gross disrespect for the deceased. The Gozitans who violate this tradition in Melbourne as in Gozo are rejected by the community, and neglected in future group conversations. A mourning period after the death of a family member and friend is an essential part of Gozitan culture. Women must wear black

clothing for a period of time afterwards and a prayer to the soul of the deceased is considered vital.

As the preceding episode suggests, it is overtly religious occasions, usually around death and birth, which bring Melbourne's Gozitans together. In this case, the funeral transcended all other obligations; everything was deferred in order to attend. As this chapter contends, religious occasions enable individual Gozitans to performatively see themselves as part of the larger Gozitan 'nation'. One could speak of religious spaces as stages or theatres where Gozitans perform by enacting rituals that connect them with their past in Gozo. More specifically, this chapter is concerned with the special place of Roman Catholicism in the transformation of Gozitan identity in Melbourne, through an analysis of the *festa*, transnational communications between Gozitans in Gozo and Australia, and the role of the *Madonna ta' Pinu* in Melbourne. As this thesis argues overall, Gozitan identity is constituted as 'real' through the performance of such rituals, and to this extent Gozo is constituted in the world, just as return rituals constitute the world in Gozo (as discussed in Chapter 9).

Gozitans are profoundly religious people, whose lives intersect with an array of associations, organisations and clubs, nearly all of which have a religious flavour. A large number of activities and rituals are organised by these

groups and they operate at a number of levels and in various settings. But they all serve similar purposes for the Gozitans in Gozo and in Melbourne. The Gozitans who settled in Melbourne left very complex social and religious structures in Gozo and over the years have consciously worked to re-construct similar structures in Melbourne. Over time, Gozitans settled in the vicinity of the Catholic churches in and around the western suburbs of Melbourne and helped build others with a distinctly Gozitan design. Many Gozitans gathered to form religious, social, sporting, cultural and musical groups, which in turn were linked with their Roman Catholic parent organisations in Gozo.

Both in Gozo and in Melbourne, Roman Catholicism dominates the lives of Gozitans. The Church, which finds its origins in the time of St Paul's shipwreck in Malta in 60 AD, has a pervasive presence in Gozo. The Church served as the island's de facto form of governance until the middle of the twentieth century. By governance I refer principally to the institution which Gozitans consider legitimate and to which they pledge their allegiance. Although its political influence has receded in recent years, many Gozitans still consider the Church as the most powerful institution and the Maltese central government as secondary. The Church in Gozo remains more influential than the central government. Apart from its many spiritual services, churches and chapels, numerous institutions and many land

holdings,[43] the Roman Catholic Church also has several primary schools, two secondary schools and a religious doctrine centre in each village—one for boys and one for girls. Besides this complex system, the Church, through the Bishop of Gozo and his administration, coordinates the work of the 15 parish priests, the clergy and their councils, the various committees within the parishes, the various religious orders and umbrella organisations such as the Legion of Mary and the Catholic Action Groups. Probably the most important of them all is the Museum where catechism is taught.

Gozitans who migrated to Melbourne looked to their religious traditions as a vital means through which to represent themselves to outsiders and to each other. Upon settling in and around the City of Brimbank they attempted to translate to the Melbourne setting what they considered the most important dimensions of Gozitan religious life. But, as will become clear, the ritual performance of these religious dimensions, while mirroring aspects of the past, involved innovation and transformation—the new context of performance, pointing not so much to cultural *translation* as to cultural *formation*. Approaching Gozitan identity in Melbourne as cultural formation rather than translation suggests a 'series of alignments and lived

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[43]Up to 1994 the Diocese of Malta owned 8 percent of the island; only a small percentage belonged to the Diocese of Gozo.

conjunctions' (cf. Gow 1999), which constitute the individual and collective

reality of *being* Gozitan in diaspora.

The Catholic churches in and around Melbourne's west provided a safe space

from which Gozitans were able to negotiate their settlement and their

collective identity. Most Gozitans joined the already established structures

and organisations of their local parish to practise their faith and organise

themselves. Table 3 lists most of the Gozitan organisations in Melbourne

today. The date of establishment indicates in effect the history of the

formation of 'Gozo' in Melbourne as Gozitan religious, social and sporting

traditions emerged.

TABLE 3

GOZITAN ORGANISATIONS IN MELBOURNE

ORGANISATION	EST.	SUBURB	MAIN FUNCTION(S)
Australian-Nadur Association Incorporated	1979	St. Albans	Social, Religious and Cultural
Australian-Qala Association Incorporated	1995	St. Albans	Social and Religious
Australian-Xewkija Association Incorporated	1981	St. Albans	Social and Religious

Deer Park Bocci Club		Deer Park	Sports and Social
Immaculate Conception Social Club Incorporated		Laverton	Religious and Social
Malta Gozo City of Brimbank Concert Band		North Melbourne	Band and Social
Malta Star of the Sea House Incorporated	1953	Altona	Welfare and Social
Maltese Bocci Club		Altona	Sports and Social
Maltese Own Band Philharmonic Society Incorporated		Footscray	Band and Social
Our Lady of Grace Association Incorporated		St. Albans	Religious and Social
Our Lady Ta' Pinu Maltese Community of Australia Incorporated		Bacchus Marsh	Religious, Social and Umbrella organisation
Santa Marija Assunta Association Incorporated		St. Albans	Religious and Social
St. Albans Melita Band Incorporated		St. Albans	Band and Social

St. George Maltese Association Incorporated	1981		Religious and Social
St. Lawrence LM Society		Broadmeadows	Religious and Social
St. Margaret Social Club Melbourne Australia Incorporated	1980	Sunshine	Social and Religious
St. Mary the Assumption Society		St. Albans	Religious and Social
St. Paul's Bočċi Maltese Club Incorporated		North Sunshine	Sports and Social
Sunshine George Cross Soccer Club Incorporated	1948	Sunshine	Sports and Social

Gozitans in Melbourne were involved in the construction, maintenance and decoration of the Roman Catholic churches found today throughout the City of Brimbank. These churches have a simpler style of architecture than the churches in Gozo. For example, most of the construction and interior design of St Paul's Church of Kealba and the interior decorations of churches where Maltese and Gozitans frequent have been the handiwork of Maltese and Gozitans (cf. Pictorial Essay Two).

Despite the external similarities, the Gozitan migrants faced striking differences between the Roman Catholic Church in Gozo and its Melbourne counterpart. In relation to the state and civil society, the Roman Catholic Church in Melbourne has much less power and influence than its Gozitan counterpart. In Melbourne and throughout Australia there is a clear separation of church and state, while in Gozo, despite their official separation, people consider the two synonymous. In Australia, the Roman Catholic Church is one among an array of denominations and religious persuasions. As various informants recalled, the pervasive secularism of life in Australia came as a shock to the new arrivals, even though the upper echelon of the administration of the church in Melbourne ostensibly is similar to that of Gozo.

However, the pyramidic administrative structure of the church in Melbourne remains very different from its counterpart in Gozo, which proved to be a challenge for earlier Gozitan migrants. There were no Catholic Action or Legion of Mary groups, no preparation for marriage and married couple groups, no Museum centres, and no *festas*, with the exception of a few Italian ones. Nevertheless, young Gozitans could participate in youth groups, become altar boys and sing in church choirs. But the services offered by the Roman Catholic Church in Melbourne were incomparable with the 'cradle to grave service' provided in Gozo. Perhaps in response to the void, various

welfare organisations were established, including the Malta Star of the Sea House and St Vincent de Paul. Gozitans also looked to the Salvation Army and the Smith Family for assistance. But the experience of going to welfare organisations was new to Gozitans in Melbourne, who in Gozo would have relied on the assistance given by other Gozitans.

The sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination and funerals rituals are celebrated in the same order, and very few differences exist in traditions. Some of the changes which have occurred amongst Gozitan migrants in Melbourne are also occurring in Gozo. In Baptism, traditionally the male child was normally given the name of his father's father—as demonstrated in Appendix 1 where my father's name is Joseph, his father's is Anthony, Anthony's father is Joseph, and so on, with the trend continuing for several generations back. But the naming of a son by his grandfather's name is a fading tradition both in Gozo and in Melbourne. Nowadays Gozitan parents in Gozo and in Melbourne are naming their children according to the fashion of the time. Although the names of saints remain popular, naming children after famous soccer players and actors is a growing trend. This is evident in the obituary notices of newspapers both in Malta and in Melbourne.

A tradition still practised by Gozitan parents in Melbourne is the choice of godparents. One godparent is from the father's side and the other from the mother's side. In the rare case of the child not having uncles and/or aunties, the child's parents would rely on close friends. The Cefai family in Lalor had four children who were all godfathered by Michael Cefai, the father's brother, who drove from Schofield, New South Wales for their baptism; while the children's mother had no relatives in Australia, so she resorted to a close Gozitan friend.

My observations indicate that, when it comes to marrying, Gozitans in Melbourne tend to look for a Gozitan person and it is uncommon for Gozitans to marry non-Gozitans. Typically, the few men who do not marry Gozitans are talked about negatively and referred to as '*Dak iż-żewweġ Maltija/barranija ... mur ara x'ghandha iżjed minn tfajla Ghawdxija! ... qiesu ma' kienx isib wahda!*': 'He married a Maltese/foreigner ... what, does he think she is better than a Gozitan (girl)? ... What was it, he gave up looking or they are not good enough for him?' The same expression is said about the Gozitan women who marry Maltese or foreigners. Unlike the Gozitans, the Maltese have inter-married more extensively with people from different nationalities and backgrounds, though mainly Mediterranean and Northern European. The difference is evidenced by the passport records of the Malta High Commission in Canberra which, since 1965, provide the

largest[44] sample possible, short of a census, as to the marriage patterns of both Gozitan and Maltese migrants.

According to the records at the Malta High Commission in London, which count nearly 38,000 individuals, the Maltese inter-marriage with English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, German and some Scandinavians is more apparent than in other records. A few Gozitans remain as migrants in the United Kingdom, a negligible number of whom marry British or the above-mentioned nationalities. This pattern is similar to the records existing in Washington and Toronto Consul General's Offices.

According to the 2000 Annual Report of the Curia of Gozo, the ratio of Gozitan priests per population in Gozo is the highest in the Roman Catholic world. By contrast, very few Gozitans in Melbourne choose the path of a priest, nun or monk. Perhaps the large numbers of altar boys and girls, gospel readers, special ministers to the Eucharist, collectors, ushers, helpers, cleaners and councillors compensate for the lack of ordinations. Compared with Gozo, there is little status to be gained from ordination in Australia, where the religious life is considered an oddity. In Gozo a newly ordained Roman Catholic priest is cheered through the main streets of the village and

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[44] It is the largest accurate sample in one building anywhere in the world, since the records that exist in the Malta High Commission in London are much more recent and the Gozo Passport Office only opened in 1990 with some 12,000 records.

greeted in the main square. But to non-Gozitans, such a ritual in any street of Melbourne would probably be considered a public nuisance. Nonetheless, Gozitans in Melbourne still celebrate such occasions, albeit in a more subdued manner than in Gozo.

Despite the limitations, Gozitans strive collectively to corporately celebrate their religious lives, and the most tangible expression of this in Melbourne is the *festa* (feast). Melbourne and Sydney are the only places outside of Gozo where Gozitan *festas* are organised by diaspora Gozitans. Table 4 indicates the various Gozitan *festas* celebrated in Melbourne.

TABLE 4

GOZITAN *FESTAS* CELEBRATED IN MELBOURNE

VILLAGE IN GOZO	VILLAGE PATRON SAINT(S)	FEAST CELEBRATED IN MELBOURNE PARISH CHURCH	SUBURB IN MELBOURNE
QALA	St. Joseph	St. Peter Chanel	Deer Park
	Immaculate Conception	St. Mary	Altona
NADUR	St. Peter and St. Paul	St. Bernadette	North Sunshine
	St. Coronado	Not Celebrated	Not Celebrated
GHSIELEM	Our Lady of Loreto	St. Mary	West Sunshine

XEWKIJA	St. John the Baptist	Holy Eucharist	St. Albans
XAGHRA	St. Mary Victories	St. Mary	West Melbourne
SANNAT	St. Margaret	St. Bernadette	North Sunshine
MUNXAR	St. Paul	St. Paul	West Sunshine
RABAT	St. Mary	St. Peter Chanel	Deer Park
	St. George	Sacred Heart	St. Albans
	Immaculate Conception	St. Mary	Altona
FONTANA	Sacred Heart	Sacred Heart	St. Albans
KERĊEM	Our Lady of Succour	Not Celebrated	Not Celebrated
	St. Gregory	Not Celebrated	Not Celebrated
SAN LAWRENZ	St. Lawrence		Coburg
ŻEBBUĠ	St. Mary	St. Peter Chanel	Deer Park
GHASRI	Corpus Christi	Holy Eucharist	St. Albans
GHARB	Visitation	Not Celebrated	Not Celebrated
TA' PINU SANCTUARY	Our Lady Ta' Pinu	Our Lady Ta' Pinu	Bacchus Marsh

The majority of *festas* occur within the parish churches of the City of Brimbank. On the first Sunday of August, for example, the Feast of St Joseph is celebrated both in Qala, Gozo, and in Deer Park, Melbourne. In Australia, the feast is organised by the committee of the Australia-Qala

Association based in the suburb of St Albans. The association has over one thousand members.

The Feast of St Joseph that I have observed starts with a mass at the St Peter Chanel Church in Deer Park, celebrated by a Gozitan priest chosen by the Australia–Qala committee. A notice is sent to all members of the Australia–Qala Association and the Maltese Diplomatic representatives in all states, and posted to all ethnic Maltese media outlets in Victoria and New South Wales. On the first Sunday, people living in Australia from the villages of Qala (Gozo) and Msida, Ghaxaq and a few other parishes in Malta, gather to participate.

The event at Deer Park was my first experience of a *festa* celebrated among Qala people outside of Gozo. Like an imaginary crossing over to Qala, the event mirrored elements of the 'real *festa*' back home on Gozo. But there were also differences. As I observed, the Deer Park *festa* commences with a period of silence accompanied with the congregation signing the cross. I noticed a marked difference, in that the mass is spoken in Qala dialect, unlike at home where the standard Gozitan or official Maltese language is used, depending on the celebrant. To this extent, the mass was an even more distinctly Qalan affair than at 'home'.

Prior to the liturgy, the framed image of St Joseph was placed on a piece of wood surrounded by four candles and carried shoulder high by youths—sons and daughters of committee members of the Australia–Qala Association. The image was carried from the sacristy to a position close to the main altar. The congregation vigorously clapped and tears welled in their eyes. They called out '*Viva San Ġużepp*' (Viva St Joseph).

The liturgy was read by Michael Buttigieg, who is the President of the Australia–Qala Association. He spoke in the Qala dialect. After the holy communion, a procession moved towards the St Peter Chanel main hall as the *festa* continued. The procession was led by flag bearers carrying the flags of Malta and Australia side-by-side. They were followed by the frame of St Joseph, and the members of the executive committee of the Australia–Qala Association. The crowd of over 300 walked behind them with the celebrant.

After entering the hall, the framed image of St Joseph was prominently placed on the stage for all to see. White and blue flags were distributed to those present and the local Gozitan brass band commenced playing. At that point the crowd went wild in dancing. The occasion was transformed from quiet solemness to noisy revelry. The joyous atmosphere was interrupted by a number of speeches from committee members. Like all festive occasions, the celebration was marked by collective eating. In this case, it was

a six course meal spread over the evening. The food was accompanied with wine and drinks also available in Gozo, like the soft drink Kinnie, and Hopleaf and Cisk Lager beers.

While the mass was open to all, tickets had to be purchased for the *festa* dinner dance. The cost for an entrance ticket ranges between AU$40-50 for adults and AU$15-20 for children. But for the Gozitan participants the money was not important, because, as they would point out, no price could be put on such a memorable experience.

The brass band played the *Innu lil San Ġużepp* (the Anthem to St Joseph), the *Innu lil Għawdex* (the Anthem to Gozo), the Maltese National Anthem and other *festa* related pieces. Visibly, the dancing was quite different from that which occurs in the Qala streets of Gozo. While in Gozo dancers dress in custom made costumes of navy blue and white colours, in Melbourne the participants were dressed in their best formal clothing, usually evening dress for women and suits for men.

The *festa* concluded at 1 am. After returning home, most participants would telephone their relatives in Qala before they would leave to enjoy the *festa* in the main square of the village. Others follow the Qala *festa* live on the internet or by radio transmission.

A *festa* in Gozo usually commences with a specially celebrated mass, in a series called *in-Novena*, which begins nine days prior to the actual *festa* day (which in the majority of cases is celebrated on a Sunday). The festas *Santa Marija*[45] (St Mary), *L-Imnarja*[46] (St Peter and Saint Paul), *il-Madonna tal-Vittorja*[47] (Our Lady of Victories), and the *festa* of the Immaculate Conception are celebrated on the official date assigned by the universal church, no matter which day of the week it is. *In-Novena* is not celebrated in the Melbourne *festas*, while other *festas* may be cancelled, depending on the number of volunteers available each year. On occasions, patrons of the *festa* in Melbourne organise group holiday visits to Gozo to coincide with their village *festa*, especially when an upcoming *festa* will mark a special occasion in the history of the parish, the church, the titular statue and/or the titular picture. This may result in fewer patrons left to organise the *festa* in Melbourne.

The novel way that Gozitans organise the *festa* in Melbourne is different and considered by many a poor imitation of the *festa* organised in Gozo. As

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[45]Celebrated on the 15th of August of each year, a tradition maintained for hundreds of years.

[46]Celebrated on the 29th of June of each year, also a tradition maintained since the reign of the Knights of St John in Malta (1530-1798).

[47]Celebrated on the 8th of September, also a tradition maintained since the reign of the Knights of St John in Malta (1530-1798).

various Gozitans in Melbourne commented, the *festa* is not 'a real *festa* like back home'. Perhaps this is why the Church hierarchy in Gozo appears not to approve of the *festas* organised in Melbourne: when I attempted to obtain the views of the Curie of Gozo on the *festas* organised in Melbourne, no official response was forthcoming.

The manner in which Gozitans' attempts in Melbourne are looked down upon highlights the predicaments of the diasporic condition faced by Gozitans in Melbourne. Because their *festas* are not performed *in situ*, in the sense of the actual physical place of their origin, they will always be considered a poor imitation. However, as this thesis contends in relation to Gozitan identity, the Gozitan *festas* performed in Melbourne are more about *transformation* than *translation*. They are not meant to be an imitation, but rather serve to provide a site from which Gozitans in Melbourne may performatively transform their marginal status and collectively enact their identity as central to their existence. In a novel way the *festas* in Melbourne are about creatively affirming identity and linking with life back home. The performance gives shape to collective Gozitan identity.

Viewed this way, the *festas* in Melbourne highlight how Gozitan identity is concretely expressed and thereby given substance in any place where Melbourne's Gozitans performatively enunciate it. Their experience is part

of the ever-growing deterritorialisation of homelands, cultures and origins, whereby the creation of homelands is not '*in situ*, but through memories of, and claims on, places that they [diasporic people groups] can or will no longer corporeally inhabit' (cf. Malkki 1992: 24). Melbourne's Gozitans, in the absence of a territorial base, are categorised and identified in reference to deterritorialisation: being uprooted and dwelling on foreign soil, being Gozitan takes on postmodernist meanings via performance.

In anthropological terms, the performance of *festas* is a traditional religious celebration. In principle, as suggested by the non-response of the Gozitan Church hierarchy, such an activity has a completely fixed format, but, like nearly all performances, the enactment of *festas* incorporates moments of spontaneous invention. In practice, as Richard Bauman (1984) suggests, nearly all performances lie somewhere between the two extremes of 'novelty' (spontaneous invention) and 'fixedness' (traditional rites). For sure, performances such as *festas* are judged according to their conformity to the conventions of their enactment back home in Gozo, but, additionally, the success of the performance is also measured by the element of spontaneous invention which makes the occasion novel (cf. Gow 1999: 91).

It is impossible for Gozitans to translate the *festa* from Gozo to Melbourne. Quite apart from the limitation of not being *in situ*, they simply do not have

the physical and human resources. For example, the final week before the *festa* in Gozo is packed with activities inside and outside the church. Nearly every village in Gozo dedicates a day within this week and calls it *Jum l-Emigranti*, Emigrants' Day, with village migrants travelling from Australia, the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom and elsewhere to join the *festa* in their village, gathering all together in church for a special mass in their honour.

During the mass and the band procession organised before or after this mass, the flags of Australia, the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom are joined and accompanied one on each side by the flag of the City of the Vatican and that of Malta. Each flag is held by a migrant representing the rest of the migrants present and the ones who could not be there. During the mass these flags are blessed, and are held at half mast or tilted toward the altar during the Consecration of the Eucharist. It is a great honour for the person to hold the flag and represent the hundreds, sometimes thousands, of fellow migrants from his/her village in the particular country he or she comes from. These flags lead a procession known as *Il-Marċ ta' l-Emigranti* ('the Emigrants' March'), accompanied by a local band through the main streets of the village and the new neighbourhoods settled by return migrants. This is often a time for the marching migrants to reflect and pledge to themselves that they will follow in the steps of their fellow return

migrants and one day go back home for good. Obviously, this day is not celebrated in Melbourne since there is no relevance for it.

While the festive Friday, Saturday and Sunday in Gozo are celebrated in a fixed, conventional way in every village, in Melbourne the Gozitan community are compelled to add creatively an Australian dimension. Many elements of the *festa* in Gozo, such as the spectacular ground and sky fireworks, or the several bands (local and hired from Malta), are impossible to have in Melbourne due to the excessive costs and Australian laws prohibiting such a quantity of fireworks. Although there are areas in the City of Brimbank where sky fireworks are permitted, local and state authorities prohibit fireworks on the ground and in the sky other than along certain stretches of the Yarra River. Furthermore, only three relevant bands exist in Melbourne: the St Albans Melita Band Incorporated, the Maltese Own Band Philharmonic Society and the Malta Gozo City of Brimbank Concert Band.

Another important element of the village *festa* in Gozo and in Melbourne is the titular statue, church and street decorations. Most village *festas* in Gozo have had a titular statue for over a century; however, few *festas* in Melbourne have a statue since such art is very expensive and is custom-made in European countries such as Malta, Spain, France and Italy.

Transportation costs for such statues is out of reach for many groups. Instead, groups use a copy of the village titular picture or a miniature statue as the main *festa* item of importance. During the village *festa* in Gozo the church is lavishly decorated inside and outside; so too are the squares and main streets through which the titular statue is carried on *festa* day. In contrast, the decorations are very limited during Melbourne's *festas*, since they have only emerged in recent decades compared with decorations in Gozitan villages dating back up to a hundred years. Most Church interior decorative items in Gozo, such as tapestry and wall cloth, date back to the 1800s, and some candle holders are two to three centuries old. In Melbourne such decorations are limited in number, and less expensive and elaborate. This change in use of decorations reflects the plain internal and external architecture of western suburbs churches.

Apart from the religious dimensions, the Gozitan *festas*, whether in Gozo or in Melbourne, fulfil other important social functions. In Gozo, the significance of *festas* varies according to different age groups. For children, it is a time when they get to play with their classmates outside school and Museum boundaries and are free to run around while eating and firing small fire crackers and the like. For the youth it is a time to gather with friends and walk around in the search of a boy or girlfriend. Many individuals meet their marriage partner at the village *festa*. Others are married during the weeks

prior to and after the *festa*. For many adults it is a time to release the build up of stress: they often join youths in the typical noisy and unique dancing during marches accompanied by band music. Alcohol consumption is very high and the bars around the main square are all packed, mainly with men socialising together. Women also meet but separately from the men. Some couples with young children opt to remain together and make it a family outing.

In Melbourne, the *festa* fulfils social functions as in Gozo and is the meeting place for many couples. Because the Gozitans are a marginal group in Australia the *festa* provides a time performatively to occupy the centre, albeit for a few days, to transcend the silence they face in mainstream Australian society. Gozitan migrants in Melbourne attending their *festa* keep in mind what is happening in their respective villages in Gozo. They will say to each other, 'Right now the titular statue is being carried out from the church', and 'At this moment the titular statue is now back in the church for another year', or 'The main fireworks display is on right now', and so on. These thoughts are a form of imaginary contact and renewal of the traditions among Gozitans in diaspora.

During the *festas* in Melbourne many Maltese who have the same patron saint in their respective villages and cities in Malta not only attend but also

help organise the activities. In the case of the *festa* of St Lawrence, activities are primarily organised by people from the City of Vittoriosa in Malta, assisted by the few Gozitans from the village of San Lawrenz (with the same patron saint).

As demonstrated by the *festas*, overtly religious occasions bring Melbourne's Gozitans together and enable individual Gozitans to performatively see themselves as part of the larger Gozitan 'nation', in which Roman Catholicism continues to inform identity formation and transformation. This religious dimension can also inform otherwise secular occasions, such as the celebration of Australia Day. In Malta and Gozo the *Xalata ta' San Martin* (the St Martin outing) is celebrated on 11th November. Gozitan migrants in Melbourne combined this gathering with the Australia Day holiday on the 26th January, when they depart early for Port Arlington to meet fellow Gozitans from around Victoria and other states. During this weekend most organise barbeques and picnics. In Gozo, at the *Xalata ta' San Martin,* some people brave the cold winter sea and swim at Gozo's beaches; in Melbourne most Gozitans swim at the nearby beaches to refresh themselves from the normally hot weather.

Nearly all Gozitan associations, organisations and clubs have a religious basis. The umbrella organisations of Our Lady Ta' Pinu Maltese Community

of Australia Incorporated and the Friends of Gozo (Australia) Incorporated[48] serve to unify the Gozitan community throughout Australia. They are transnational organisations with members in Gozo and Australia. All the organisations in Melbourne mentioned in Table 3 maintain close contacts with their parent organisations in Gozo. Besides regular correspondence, exchange of publications and memorabilia, and *festa* visits to Gozo, these parent organisations convey their news and activities to their fellow villagers by means of a parish publication, which periodically dedicates pages to the activities of the Melbourne organisation. News of the events and activities occurring in Australia are conveyed to the parish priest of the particular village or to the editor of the village periodical and published. The Australia–Qala Association, for example, is allocated several pages of the Qala periodical *Leħen il-Qala* to convey news during the *festa* period in August. The villages of Qala, Nadur, Xewkija, Xagħra, Rabat, Sannat, Kerċem, San Lawrenz and Żebbuġ all have at least one means of communicating with organisations in Australia.

Today, most villages in Gozo make use of a periodical magazine printed and produced by an editorial board composed of members from Melbourne and other migrant cities. For example, *Leħen il-Qala*, the 'Voice of Qala', is the

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[48]A Gozitan umbrella organisation in Sydney, not listed in Table 2.

Qala parish publication which has a distribution twice the size of the 1600 village population. The other copies are subscribed to by Qala migrants in Melbourne and elsewhere. An annual newsletter entitled, *Il-Katina*, the global Qala chain, is specifically addressed to Qala migrants. A recent development is Radio Qala 106.5, a village-based radio which produces and records programmes for migrants and accepts audio recordings from migrants which are transmitted to villages on Gozo.

Similar to Qala, the village of Nadur has its own parish publication, *Luminarja,* and parish radio, *Radju Luminarja;* Għajnsielem has the parish publication, *Għajnsielem;* Xewkija has *Gorgion,* a parish magazine; the village of Xagħra has the parish magazine *Ix-Xagħra* and the parish radio *Radju Bambina.* The town of Victoria has two parishes and each has a parish magazine: the parish of Saint Mary has *Il-Katidral* magazine, and the Saint George parish has *Il-Ġorġjan* magazine. The village of Munxar has its own parish publication, *Il-Munxar;* Sannat has *Is-Sannat;* the village of Kerċem has the parish magazine *Kerċem;* San Lawrenz has a publication, *San Lawrenz* and the village of Żebbuġ has *Iż-Żebbuġ* magazine. The frequency of these publications ranges from quarterly to annual.

In Melbourne, a number of Gozitan organisations have publications similar to their counterparts in Gozo. The Australia–Nadur Association Incorporated

publishes the *International Harvest Festival Mnarja* magazine just before the *festa* of Saints Peter and Paul, as happens in Nadur, Gozo. An annual newsletter from the Australian-Qala Association is published in the August/*Festa* issue of *Leħen il-Qala*, 'Qala's Voice' magazine in Qala, Gozo. Regular well-wishing letters are sent from the committee of the Australian-Qala Association to the people of Qala by e-mail and door-by-door delivery on several occasions. These one-page letters are distributed before the feast of Saint Joseph on 19th March and before the first Sunday of August; and before the feast of the Immaculate Conception on 8th December and before Christmas and the turn of the new year. In recent years the organisations representing the villages of Qala and Nadur in Melbourne have put across their message to their respective villages in Gozo. In Qala, Qala Radio, with a 2.4 square kilometre frequency range, is a community radio station that transmits daily throughout the village of Qala. It provides the opportunity for the Qala migrants in Melbourne and throughout Australia to produce radio programmes to be broadcast for all the villagers. During the Christmas, Easter and *festa* periods, the Australia–Qala Association invites Gozitans from all over Australia to submit a recorded programme which, after being edited, is sent for broadcasting to Qala Radio. These radio productions are produced by a sub-committee of the Australia–Qala Association Incorporated.

A very different approach was adopted by the committee of the Australia–Nadur Association Incorporated, whereby the committee established the Order of Saints Peter and Paul. This Order welcomes as paying members Gozitans, Maltese and Australians who wish to contribute some of their time, effort and financial resources to aid and enhance the Association and the village of Nadur. A typical example is the financing of *L-Imnarja* festival organised on 29th June each year. In both cases, Qala and Nadur migrants in Melbourne have adapted to their new circumstances where the old means of communications such as writing letters and calling over the telephone were not sufficient. The new approach has bridged these two village communities and transformed their identities while maintaining the centuries-old village rivalries. The introduction of new technologies in both Gozo and Melbourne has facilitated direct and indirect communication links between the two communities, who remain physically worlds apart.

Another recent development is the religious camp, a partnership between the Dioceses of Gozo and the Archdiocese of Melbourne. On the 18th June, 1997, Pope John Paul II blessed the foundation stone of the Our Lady of Ta' Pinu Shrine in Bacchus Marsh, near Melbourne, and on Saturday, 28th February, 1998, His Grace Archbishop George Pell blessed the replica of the original chapel in Gozo presently being built at Bacchus Marsh. According to the organising committee, an estimated 10,000 people attended the latter

ceremony. A direct satellite transmission was aired on emigrants' programmes in Malta throughout those weeks.

The shrine to Our Lady of Ta' Pinu, under construction on a hilltop on the outskirts of Bacchus Marsh, attracts many Gozitans, who make the pilgrimage at least once a year. Many others visit this statue of Our Lady on a pedestal to pray for a wish, such as a prayer for a cure from an illness, for a couple to have children, to pass examinations and the like, in return for which a secret promise is made.

On one occasion I joined the Spiteri family in their pilgrimage to Our Lady of Ta' Pinu Marian Complex at Bacchus Marsh, a replica of the Complex in Gozo. Travelling north from Deer Park we crossed onto the Western Highway and drove straight to Anthony's Cutting and through the Avenue of Honour. The drive from Deer Park to Bacchus Marsh was reminiscent of the drive from the City of Rabat (Victoria) in Gozo to Ta' Pinu in Gharb.

The similaries continued. As we approached the Avenue of Honour into Bacchus Marsh I could see the Ta' Pinu landmark dominating the skyline, just as the Ta' Pinu in Gozo dominates the skyline of the western part of the island. Approaching Anthony's Cutting we saw a huge marble cross that serves as a sign of the nearby complex, just as the huge cross on Għammar

Hill greets all approaching Ta' Pinu in Gozo. When we arrived a few hundred metres away from the complex a bold street sign was inscribed 'TA' PINU', with an arrow indicating the path to the complex. Rose Spiteri shouted, 'Look, Ta' Pinu!' with tears streaming down her face. 'The statues are being placed on pedestals' she exclaimed, referring to the life-size marble statues made in Vietnam representing the stations of the crosses, replacing the timber crosses of the *via crucis*.

Crossing back to Bacchus Marsh, Francis and Rose parked in the area similar to the parking in the main Ta' Pinu square in front of the Church in Gozo. 'The chapel is built and now the Sanctuary will be next ... it will cost millions of Australian dollars', Francis reflected. 'I recall the first mass celebrated at this site in 1993, said by Little ... Archbishop Frank Little. A year after that I remember the Minister of Gozo Anton Tabone's visit and Bishop Cauchi of Gozo in the following year. In 1996 the Archbishop Little of Melbourne blessed this huge cross already blessed by His Holiness Pope John Paul II'.

He continued, 'I remember at the time one of my daughters was on her death bed in Melbourne after a car accident. Rose and I were lost and there was nothing we could do for Lara except pray. We drove to Bacchus Marsh and literally threw ourselves onto the steps of the huge cross and cried for hours,

praying desperately to the Madonna Ta' Pinu to keep Lara with us.' As

Francis described it, the Madonna Ta' Pinu brought immediate peace to

them, and when they returned to the hospital Lara had experienced a

remarkable recovery and her coma had lifted. The medical team explained to

them that she had made an unexpected and unusual recovery. From that

point on they did not stop thanking the Madonna Ta' Pinu and made a

substantial financial contribution to the fund for the construction of the

Sanctuary. They purchased over 1000 images of Ta' Pinu to distribute

everywhere throughout Melbourne.

For Gozitans in Melbourne Ta' Pinu at Bacchus Marsh is not only an

expression of their Gozitan identity and heritage but a reaffirmation of their

religious faith and conviction. The site provides a performative space, a site

of affirmation, where Gozitan identity is ritually constituted as 'real', and to

this extent Gozo is constituted in the world. As outlined in this chapter, the

Gozitans in Melbourne have collectively maintained a strong religious

character and adapted their social lives to complement the new Australian

environment. The means of communications between the respective village

communities in Gozo and in Melbourne, and the level of participation by

Gozitans in their activities, have been maintained and extended. Migrants

had to adapt to the Melburnian environment: they changed and integrated.

However, at the same time, they maintained their identity as Gozitan,

expressed and structured through the village *festas*, Ta' Pinu Shrine at Bacchus Marsh, *ix-Xalata ta' San Martin*, and recently established soccer teams. As the following chapter elaborates, religion and the social life of Gozitans in Melbourne stretch into other areas of their lives, such as language, especially the many Gozitan dialects, and traditions.

CHAPTER SEVEN

LINGUISTIC MENUS

As the Gozitan language is publicly spoken, written and sung, a re-presentation and re-creation of 'Gozitaness' occurs amongst Melbourne's Gozitan population. Given the past experience in Malta, the present Gozitan cultural formation involves what was once private and marginal now being made public and central. As this chapter argues, such action constitutes a significant public challenge to the previously dominant Maltese centre and, in terms of the claims of this thesis, helps to shape and reposition what it means to be 'Gozitan', both at home and abroad.

As the title 'Linguistic Menus' suggests, Gozitans in Melbourne make choices regarding their language use. These choices constitute not only linguistic, but also political and cultural identifications. The choices occur within contexts that are both similar and dissimilar to the old context of life in Malta. Similar because, like past experiences in Malta, Gozitans in Australia are classified as Maltese speakers; dissimilar because, unlike in Malta, in terms of numbers the Gozitans in Melbourne find themselves the overwhelming majority. Indeed, Melbourne represents the largest branch of

Gozitan dialects outside of Gozo, and the new context offers a scope for active linguistic choice in both formal and informal settings.

Language is used as a means of contesting identities. Not only is language used as a means of imparting referential meaning, but, more specifically, it serves to identify the speaker and to place him or her in a particular relationship with the listener. As Gow (1999: 66-70) elaborates, language practices, by enunciating identity positionings, are signifying activities. By affirming the Gozitan language in the diasporic context, Gozitan-speakers signify a social certainty that negates what many Gozitans have experienced in the past as Maltese cultural imperialism. In choosing not to speak Maltese in certain contexts, Gozitans refuse to place themselves (or to allow themselves be placed) in the relationship of subject within the central Maltese narrative. Perhaps this could be spoken of as an inverting of the imperial dynamic.

In Chapter One I referred to the thousands of Gozitans who daily commute to Malta for work, study, business and to request government services. These commuters represent a small sample of the total Gozitan population in Gozo and were presented as an example of how differently Gozitans live compared with Maltese. Through this daily process, Gozitans must shift dialects many times and adapt to the situations in which they find themselves. Tracking

again the same schedule, Gozitans rise early in the morning and use the village dialect at home while preparing for the journey to Malta and in the presence of their villagers. Later they shift to 'standard Gozitan', a softer version of their village dialect, while speaking to other villagers in Gozo and on the ferry heading to Malta. Upon arrival in Malta they shift to the Maltese language.

Allow me to illustrate some of the contrasts between the Maltese language, 'standard Gozitan' and village dialects on Gozo. Villagers from Nadur, when using the standard Maltese words *żejt* (oil) and *bejt* (roof) would say *żajt* and *bajt* in Nadur dialect. However, when speaking to a group of Gozitans from a number of villages, they would switch to standard Gozitan and say *żeijt* and *beijt*. In the latter, the emphasis on the first vowels soften. The words *qmis* (shirt) and *il-Ħamis* (Thursday) are respectively said *qmas* and *il-Ħamajs* in the Munxar dialect. As in the case of the previous example, the Munxar villagers would soften their dialect in the presence of other Gozitans, and say *qmies* and *il-Ħamies*. Generally speaking, as Gozitans leave the ferry to board buses or drive through Malta they maintain their standard Gozitan as long as they remain in an exclusively Gozitan group. As soon as contact is made with Maltese people, Gozitans shift to formal Maltese even when they are in the majority. The words would now become *qmies* and *Il-Ħamis*.

Analysing and demarcating linguistic and cultural behaviour is difficult because it reduces complex actions to simple determinations. Aware of these limitations, I suggest that there are at least four analytical angles from which to view the sudden shift from standard Gozitan to Maltese when Gozitans are in the presence of Maltese. Firstly, Gozitans may be pragmatic and decide to shift to formal Maltese to avoid communication difficulties with the Maltese; secondly, Gozitans are a reserved people and, by keeping the dialects to themselves, they are excluding outsiders from understanding all that they communicate; thirdly, Gozitans generally want to be courteous to the Maltese and therefore switch to speaking Maltese to appear polite; and, fourthly, the shift to standard Maltese reflects an inferiority complex on the part of the Gozitans.

The fourth angle perhaps accords with Frantz Fanon's analysis of the colonial condition. As Fanon contends in relation to the Antillean subject, the colonial dynamic is based upon an unequal relationship in which the colonised are represented as inferior. Every colonised people '... finds itself face to face with the language of the civilising nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country' (Fanon 1967: 18). In relation to the Maltese encounter with Gozo, a similar dynamic is evident, although to a far less militant extent.

The dynamic of centre and margin operates, whereby the Gozitans are considered subaltern and backward. But such a binary approach is too facile and betrays the complexity of Gozitan/Maltese encounters. Diverging from Fanon's approach, I would argue that the apparent linguistic assimilation practised by Gozitans in the presence of the Maltese should be read as expressions of both victimhood and agency. Such an approach points to the 'doubleness' of Gozitan identity signalled in Chapter Two and the various 'positionalities' in which Gozitan's find themselves. Read this way, the apparent assimilation can be as much about resistance as conformity.

This way of comprehending the linguistic dynamics of Gozitans resonates with Herzfeld's studies into Greek identity (cf. Herzfeld 1987). Like Herzfeld, I speak of Gozitan identity as characterised by a doubleness resulting from its history. The doubleness is evident in the apparent polarity between the Maltese (and European) 'front' that Gozitans display to the Maltese and the 'oriental' aspects of their culture, which they acknowledge amongst themselves (cf. Herzfeld 1987).

The linguistic dynamics among the Gozitans illustrate how specific conditions give rise to the amalgamation of disparate and occasionally contradictory cultural elements to be linked together. As argued in this thesis, Gozitan identity is socially constructed in response to specific circumstances

that demand, as a condition of survival, accommodation to new sets of social and cultural circumstances.

The Gozitans are not passive respondents to any specific field of social forces, as Bourdieu would put it, but active participants in a dialectical process, which may or may not always be readily apparent. They engage with the issues that circumstances impose by assessing and determining, in line with their *habitus*, what is impossible, possible and probable. And linguistically they exercise judgement in the process by making choices from the field of options available to them. That is, there is the exercise of power in any given social field, and Gozitans negotiate the issues in ways that are deemed most advantageous to their situation (cf. Bourdieu 1986).

The 'doubleness' of Gozitan identity also implies that one can be Gozitan and Maltese—that the two are not mutually exclusively. In the same manner that diverse linguistic dynamics may co-exist, so too one can speak of being Gozitan and Maltese in the same breath without excluding one or the other. Gozitans know this 'intuitively', as it were: in their own way, and in the whole gamut of activities that constitute daily life, they have learnt to negotiate the poles of similarity and difference, to converge them into one.

Returning to the four analytical angles from which to view the sudden shift from standard Gozitan to Maltese when Gozitans are in the presence of the Maltese, I would argue that the Gozitans are above all else pragmatic and reserved. These dispositions, or *habitus* as Bourdieu would put it, are enacted in their linguistic dynamics. Understood this way, there is a strategic dimension, whereby Gozitans keep their dialects to themselves, and thereby exclude outsiders from understanding their means of communication.

Or perhaps we should say strategic dimensions to the linguistic practices of Gozitans. On Malta the Gozitan speaks formal Maltese except in the presence of Gozitans only. At times, in speaking formal Maltese to the Maltese, the accent changes, either in one or a few words or throughout the duration of the conversation. At these points, the Maltese listener realises he or she is speaking to a Gozitan. The standard Gozitan is used again toward the end of the day when Gozitans board the ferry back to Gozo. Upon arrival in Gozo, the village dialect is taken up again. In this way, a typical Gozitan commuter may shift dialects and accents about eight to ten times a day, and it is this constant shifting that distinguishes the polyglot Gozitans from the Maltese who speak formal Maltese all of the time.

A growing trend amongst the Maltese is to mix spoken Maltese with English and/or Italian. This behaviour is labelled by most Gozitans as *'tal-pepe'*

(sarcastically posh), which may be described as an 'inferiority complex' on the part of the Maltese towards their language and their culture in general. The trend is rejected by Gozitans, who generally speak other languages only when encountering foreigners.

The development toward broken English and/or Italian mixed with Maltese is not limited to the urban Maltese. I have observed hybrid language practices within the villages of Malta, where distinctive Maltese dialects have been traditionally spoken. Such villages in the north of Malta are Mellieha, Rabat, Dingli, Bahrija, Mosta and Safi, Ghaxaq and others in the south. The difference between the village dialects in Malta and in Gozo lies in the fact that in Gozo all villagers speak Gozitan dialect, whilst in Malta the diminished rural population and only a small proportion of the large urban population speak the village dialect.

Gozitan dialects are different from formal Maltese and Maltese village dialects. The Maltese often refer to Gozitan dialects as *Ghawdxi*, 'Gozitan language', *imghawweg*, 'twisted language', or *rahli*, 'villagers' language'. These labels are used by the Maltese in a derogatory way. Gozo has its own lexicon of words and hundreds of phrases and expressions not used in formal Maltese. Appendices 7, 8 and 9 offer just a representative sample of the

complexities of the Gozitan dialects, which have phonetic, lexical and idiomatic differences to Maltese.

A good example of the difference can be seen in the association of the letter **k** and **q**. The village of Xewkija and one-third of the city of Rabat (inhabitants around the Saint Francis Church) do not pronounce the letter **q**, and instead use **k**, whilst the rest of Gozo uses **q** and **k** as in formal Maltese. Therefore, villagers of Xewkija and the area indicated in Rabat refer to the village of Qala as **Kala**; *kattusa* not *qattusa* (cat), and *tieqa* is expressed as *tieka* (window). Another fundamental difference lies in the prefixes and suffixes used in Gozo and in Malta, as detailed in Linda Xerri's M.Ed. thesis, *Id-Djalett u l-Malti Standard: Hemm xi Problemi fit-Tagħlim* (1998).

A common example in Maltese is the use of the word *tadam* (tomatoes) and *tadama* (one tomato). In Gozitan the vowels change to *tadom* and *taduoma*. Most words listed in the appendices mentioned above also have village names attached to them, which indicate the village dialect to which they belong. Furthermore, there are different pronunciations of the same words in different villages, even in villages that are only small distances apart. In the village of Qala the formal Maltese word *bejt* (roof) is pronounced as *beit*, whilst in Nadur and Xagħra it is pronounced as *bait*, the same pronunciation as the word for 'eggs'.

Such differences in pronunciation of everyday words distinguish one dialect from another. This is how Gozitans instantly know from which village another Gozitan originates. Spoken language acts as an oral marker of locality and place. In contrast to the Gozitans, most Maltese cannot discern the difference in dialects. In general a Gozitan can instantly differentiate between a formal Maltese speaker, a Gozitan who speaks formal Maltese, and a Maltese villager. From the point of view of a Gozitan, this presents great advantages in dealing with the Maltese since they know that if the Maltese person is a villager who speaks a dialect, this person or group of people will be easier to communicate with.

This is because, generally speaking, Maltese villagers are more responsive to the Gozitans than the urban Maltese, who consider the Gozitans as lacking sophistication. The urban Maltese present social barriers to the Gozitans in the form of jokes about the fact that a person is Gozitan. Examples of Maltese debasement are: *Ġie l-Għawdxi*, 'the Gozitan has arrived', or, in the presence of other Maltese, *Araw x'tghidu quddiem l-Għawdxi*, 'be careful what you say in front of the Gozitan'. Gozitans are accustomed to such comments by the Maltese.

Gozitans in Gozo are very particular about language. They use their dialects or standard Gozitan in most situations and do not combine, as Maltese do, pure English and Italian words. This difference is also manifest amongst the Gozitan community in Melbourne. Gozitans in Melbourne are proud of their language and culture, since they use their dialects more than standard Gozitan in probably all situations, even in the presence of Maltese persons. The dynamic represents a public transformation, reflecting the demographic reality that in Melbourne the Maltese are the minority in a largely Gozitan-speaking population.

The linguistic dynamics assume particular local characteristics when Gozitans migrate to Melbourne. Like other migrant groups, the polyglot Gozitans move between languages as the new context transforms existing linguistic dynamics. The Gozitans who migrated to Melbourne have, firstly, maintained their village dialects and, secondly, created a standard Gozitan dialect comparable to the one in Gozo. However, the standard Gozitan in Melbourne is influenced by pronunciations brought by the Australian English language accent.

This is apparent in conversations where the returnees place an emphasis on a different part of the sentence compared with Gozitans or returnees from the United States and Canada. Apart from adding colloquial Australian words to

their conversations, the returnees often put an emphasis on the initial words of the sentence spoken in Maltese, whilst in Malta the emphasis would be in the middle or the last words of the same sentence. This is evident from the various interviews, conversations and observations I have made throughout the research process.

Isma' majt, inti ġej sa għand ix-Xerri biex nixorbu erba' flixkien Fosters wara ix-xogħol? 'Listen mate, you're coming to the Xerri's place (Xerri's il-Bukkett Pub) for a few Fosters after work?' The underlined words in the phrase indicate where a Gozitan return migrant from Melbourne would place the most emphasis while asking this question, whilst in Gozitan standard the emphasis is on the middle or latter part of the sentence. The colloquial Australian word 'mate' has entered not only the vocabulary of Gozitan return migrants from Australia but also from the United Kingdom, replacing the word *xbejn*, meaning 'part of my family or part of my flesh and blood'. The word *xbejn,* normally used in standard Gozitan, is rarely ever used in Malta and in conversation with Maltese. This word fits in perfectly with the interrelatedness of Gozitans mentioned in Chapter One, whereby the word *xbejn* describes a fundamental reality amongst Gozitans, that they share the same genetics, actually a very small pool of genes.

contained words which were spoken in Qala and Nadur dialect, respectively, combined with standard Gozitan and Australian English expressions. The most notable word was 'President'. Mr Buttigieg pronounced the word *il-President* (the President) as *il-Presidant*, with an emphasis on the double-underlined part of the word. This is the usual way this word is spoken in both Qala dialect and standard Gozitan. By contrast, Mr Portelli pronounced *il-Presedant*, with the different emphasis as spoken by the Nadur dialect. This is just one example of the many speeches made by Gozitans which I observed throughout my fieldwork activities in Melbourne's Brimbank Shire.

Unlike the Gozitans, who emphasise their village dialects, the Maltese in Melbourne use formal Maltese and English in a great part of their speeches. Whereas Gozitans particularly use words from their own local vocabularies, Maltese tend not to incorporate Maltese dialect. The linguistic dynamics of the Gozitans in Melbourne also differ from the Gozitans in Gozo. This highlights the linguistic shift that places Gozitan dialects in the centre and marginalises the spoken Maltese language. The Gozitans in Melbourne look to language as a means of self-representation and identification. It would appear that, unlike on Malta, the diasporic condition provides the context for Gozitans to proactively affirm the value of their many dialects in the presence of the Maltese.

It is difficult to determine exactly how many dialectics exist in Gozo; however, the agreed number among scholars is twelve.[49] It is worth noting that nearly every village in Gozo claims to have its own dialect, and throughout Gozo the dialects are spoken about one kilometre apart from each other. This situation has provided for many linguists from all over the world, especially from the Mediterranean region and continental Europe, a unique phenomenon to study. This is evident in the many publications of the late Ġuże' Aquilina, an internationally-renowned Gozitan (from Munxar) and a Professor of Maltese, who studied in great detail the dialects of Gozo and Malta. Other scholars have followed Aquilina's work, and his research has been recognised and utilised by foreign universities, which has arguably placed a Gozitan academic, and his life long study of the Gozitan and Maltese languages, at the forefront of linguistic studies in the Mediterranean.

A novel example of the way in which Gozitans in Melbourne are creatively using their own unique dialects was described to me by two young Gozitan computer programmers. The two are responsible for providing secret passwords to a large corporation in Melbourne. When interviewed by the author they stated that they used a set of words from their individual village

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[49] Appendices 7, 8 and 9 are the author's compilation of hundreds of Gozitan words and a few common Gozitan phrases found principally in Ġuże' (Joseph) Aquilina's authoritative dictionary, - words and phrases provided by Victor J. Galea of Rabat (Xagħra) Gozo, and in writings of Mikiel Anton Vassalli. It is hard to list all these words and phrases since they vary from one village to another and are used in different situations. In Appendix 9, under the column headed 'Meaning', some entries have village names in brackets indicating generally where these words are spoken.

dialects, which could be only known or guessed by about two thousand people worldwide.

This example points to the manner in which Melbourne's Gozitans are creatively transforming the marginal status of the Gozitan language to create a positive identification with Gozo in Melbourne. By affirming the Gozitan language in the diasporic context, Gozitan-speakers are demonstrating a social certainty that negates the past experience of Maltese cultural imperialism. As argued in this chapter, in choosing not to speak Maltese in certain contexts, Gozitans refuse to place themselves (or allow themselves to be placed) in the relationship of subject within the central Maltese narrative. How these transformations relate to life in the homeland Gozo is the subject of the following three chapters, which explore the contributions made by Gozitan return migrants from Melbourne to the 'Gozitan nation'.

GOZO-MELBOURNE CROSSINGS

PICTORIAL ESSAY TWO

1. ***Coat-of-Arms of the Australia-Qala Association.*** An expression of the connection between the State of Victoria in Australia and the village of Qala in Gozo, Malta. The upper part of the emblem depicts the flag of the State of Victoria and the lower part the coat-of-arms of Qala, with the motto at the bottom, "sheltering from storms." The Maltese Cross is placed on top of the emblem.

2.   *Executive committee of the Australian-Qala Association based in St. Albans, Melbourne, 1997.*

3.   *Home and part of garden of Michael Buttigieg, in St. Albans*. A typical home and garden of Gozitan family living in Melbourne.

4.   *The Gozitan garden in Melbourne.* For Gozitans everywhere their connection to the environment and nature is important. A Gozitan garden includes a mixture of a few decorative plants but it is mainly a productive vegetable and fruit garden. Michael Buttigieg's garden is a typical Gozitan garden, with patches of tomatoes, potatoes, cabbages, cauliflower, lettuce, garlic, onions, parsley and red peppers.

5. *St. Paul's Maltese Boċċi Club, West Sunshine, Melbourne.* The Gozitan boċċi game is the most popular ground sport amongst Gozitans in the western suburbs of Melbourne. This modern complex is visited by over 500 members daily.

6. *Our Lady of Ta' Pinu in Bacchus Marsh, Victoria.* The identical sign to that found in Gozo, pointing towards a replica of the Marian complex Our Lady of Ta' Pinu, which is visited by thousands of Gozitan and Maltese migrants from around Australia. A huge pedestal and statue of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu dominate the landscape of the Bacchus Marsh hill.

7.   ***Titular Stature of St.
        Joseph held at the
        premises of the
        Australia-Qala
        Association in
        Melbourne.*** Similar to
        Qala in Gozo, the AQA
        Committee is entrusted
        with the titular statue of
        St. Joseph for the Qala
        community in Australia.
        As in Qala, in Melbourne
        the titular statue is
        paraded indoors in the
        Church and in the hall
        where the *festa* is
        organised.

8.   ***Titular Statue of Our Lady of
        Victories held at the Kealba Church
        in Melbourne.*** One of the many
        examples of statues found in the
        western suburbs of Melbourne as in
        Gozo and Malta. This statue was
        made in Gozo and transported to
        Melbourne for the Gozitan
        community.

200

9. *Titular Painting of St. Paul's Church at Kealba, Melbourne.* Brought over from Munxar Gozo, it is one of many examples of Gozitan artistic productions in the western suburbs of Melbourne.

10. *Tomb of the Buttigieg Family at the Keilor Downs Cemetery in Keilor Downs, Melbourne.* A typical Gozitan tombstone made from granite, with fibreglass statues. The tomb was designed by a Gozitan migrant in Melbourne.

201

PART III

THE WORLD IN GOZO

CHAPTER EIGHT

BINGO, RACES AND BARS

Among the Maltese by far the highest rates of post-World War II emigration in general as well as the highest proportions going to Australia were from the small island of Gozo (Lever-Tracy 1988:79). Conversely, the highest rates of return migration are found among the Gozitans. The following three chapters address the impact of return migrants upon life in Gozo. The focus is upon the transnational dimensions of Gozitan identity: the processes through which Gozitan social life, in all its dimensions, crosses borders and transcends the nation-state boundary of Malta and Gozo.

In the context of return migration, this chapter examines the experiences of Gozitans who have returned to Gozo after migrating to Australia and highlights how the various transformations brought in Melbourne affect life on Gozo. As argued throughout this thesis, the impact of returnees upon the articulation of Gozitan identity can be discerned through the performative dimensions of everyday life: ranging from home decoration to media consumption on Gozo. Underlying the discussion in this and the following two chapters is the claim that returnees strengthen the transnational

dimension of being Gozitan on Gozo. In other words, collectively, the Gozitans may be spoken of as an emerging transnational community—where transnationalism refers to a set of social relations which span national borders.

Throughout the process of researching and writing this thesis I received different reactions from Gozitan return migrants to my question, 'Why did you decide to leave Melbourne and go back to Gozo?' Some referred to family reasons, others to the political situation, studying, lifestyle, or simply fulfilling their dream of returning to Gozo. The various responses during interviews, observations and listening to other conversations, indicate a diversity in patterns of thought, decision-making and timing of their return to Gozo. But nearly all highlighted the daily internal conflict of being away from home and the longing to return that they experienced while in Australia. Some emphasised how the topic of return dominated family discussions and featured in conversations between Gozitan migrants in Melbourne: "Well, my wife and I decided to settle our family in Gozo", explained Angelo Buttigieg, a first generation Gozitan-Melburnian born in Footscray. "Moreover, my wife who is a Gozitan and came to Melbourne with our first child in 1974 wanted to join her family back in Gozo. So we returned back to Gozo in November 1979." While interviewing Angelo and his wife Grace, I couldn't help but notice Grace's happy and smiling countenance

while her husband was explaining to me why they returned, in contrast to his dissatisfied expression suggesting that he was not completely content with the returning to Gozo. According to Adelina Attard, 'I returned because of my family; my family comes first, even though sometimes I regret the decision.' Adelina thinks often about re-migrating to Melbourne because, she explains, she misses the lifestyle and the lack of intrusion of neighbours in her life, unlike in Gozo where 'everyone knows everybody's secrets.'

As documented earlier in this thesis, among the Maltese, by far the highest rates of post-World War II migration in general, as well as the highest proportions going to Australia in particular, were from Gozo (Lever-Tracy 1988:79). But when it comes to return migration, no detailed records exist of the Maltese or Gozitan experiences. To attempt to deduce conclusions on Gozitan return migration, I have examined the statistics that are available at the archives of the Emigration Department in Valletta, Malta, and the passport archives of the Malta High Commission in Canberra. These sources shed some light on Gozitan return migration during the twentieth century.

My analysis of Gozitan return migration is also based upon two major studies, that of King and Strachan (1978) and Lever-Tracy (1988). Combining these sources with my two volumes (Xerri 1996 and 2000), one can estimate the figures of total return migration from Australia to Malta and

Gozo between 1934 through 1995 and, of specific relevance to the current discussion, deduce reliable figures on Gozitan return migration from Melbourne.

King's and Strachan's study (1978,1980) of the small village of Qala in eastern Gozo produced a three-stage model of the migration cycle, which may be summarized as follows. The cycle begins with young men departing overseas for about five years and then returning to marry. The couple would then re-migrate for 10 to 15 years. They then return permanently with their pre-teenage children to live on the income from invested savings, supplemented by some part-time fishing and farming; or else by establishing a business operated from home or land purchased or inherited. It should be noted that King and Strachan are referring principally to Gozitan returnees from the United States, Canada and England.

The migration cycle as described by King and Strachan is a planned venture into industrial labour in high wage destinations, aimed at accumulating savings and at an eventual withdrawal and return to independence or leisure in the place of origin (King & Strachan 1980). King's and Strachan's study correlates with other studies of post-war European migration to North America and Australia (cf. Lever-Tracy & Quinlan 1988). In the case of the Gozitans, the migration project is, by means of heroic hard labour and

sacrifices for a number of years, an attempt to accumulate the savings to establish or re-establish family independence and status on a secure and comfortable basis in the place of origin (Portes 1978).

The majority of Gozitans whom I interviewed throughout the research process confirmed the validity of this model. Most of the return migrants whom I interviewed were semi-retired persons and their families. For example, Augustine and Lucy Stellini are retired and, as Augustine put it, 'enjoying a comfortable life and living from savings held in Commonwealth Bank investments ... I retired at 45 years of age'. Professor Maurice Cauchi described how he (with his wife) returned to live in Gozo as a retiree but 'ended up so involved in book writing, chairing government boards and lecturing that it feels as if I never retired'. Laurie Zammit of Xewkija said, 'We as a family returned to Gozo when my father-in-law became ill and my wife wanted to return to Gozo before he died. After he died we decided to remain in Gozo and I became a clerk at the Ninu Cremona Boy's Lyceum.' Anglo Xuereb followed the pattern outlined by King and Strachan. As he described his situation, 'I migrated to Australia for three years, returned and got married. Then I went back to St Albans to work and raise my son and daughter until we returned to Gozo for good.' Angelo Buttigieg had a similar experience to Laurie Zammit: as he put it, 'I came back from Keilor a year after I migrated in fear of being drafted to the Vietnam War. Then I

went back to Melbourne in March 1968 and returned to Gozo in 1971 again. Then I got married at Qala and once again went to Australia for the third time in March 1974, and returned to Gozo for good in November 1975.' Mariano Grima of Xewkija, 'Returned several times, for the funerals of my parents and for a holiday once ... then I returned permanently to Gozo and retired.'

To date, the limitation with studies of returnees to isolated rural villages such as Qala is that they tend to predetermine a dualist model and findings which counterpose the modern, urban wage labour of the receiving country with the traditional, rural petty commodity production of the place of origin and return. Such a model does not always sit comfortably with the Gozitan experience. Although Gozo is a rural island, it has an industrial base in Xewkija and an expanding services sector as in larger countries. Similarly, a survey of Greek and Italian immigrants in Australia found that, although most had a village origin, a sizeable minority had worked in major cities of their homeland before emigrating and all but three had relatives living in such cities. Most visits home were not restricted to the village of origin (Lever-Tracy & Quinlan 1988: 36-37). The same can be said for many Gozitan migrants who worked in Malta or at the ports around the Grand Harbour cities prior to migrating to Melbourne.

Gozitan migrants return to Gozo willingly and, as expressed by my informants, often seek to abandon much of that which they experienced in Australia; but, as will become clear in the pages to follow, the intention does not usually translate into practice. As has been shown in other Mediterranean contexts (cf. Cerase 1974; King 1978), the returning migrants' behaviour tends to be socially rather than economically determined. The Gozitan migrant does not sacrifice between 15 and 20 years of his/her life working hard in Australia only to work hard upon return; rather his/her ideal is a life of leisure in the village of their birth (King and Strachan 1978:26).

The primary question facing Gozitan families who return to Gozo after numerous years in Melbourne is the location of resettlement. If the husband and wife were born in a particular village they tend to resettle in the same village. However, if both were born in different villages then usually the village where the wife was born takes precedence unless she does not have inherited land on which to build a house. Alternatively, the couple might purchase or be given a plot of land by their parents on which to build a house. A popular trend among others is to purchase old homes, restore them, and move in. "My parents have large patches of land in the countryside of Għasri, my native village," explained Mary Grace, "but the Planning Authority refuses to issue permits on the outskirts of the village, so we decided to build our house on a plot of land in Qala where my husband was

born. Anyway, Gozo is small and in five minutes you reach everywhere." Mary Grace's desire to have her own home superseded the parochial mentality and love for birthplace that defined earlier generations. Such decisions are becoming quite common and reflect another layer of potential intergenerational conflict and pressure as Gozitan society increasingly becomes more globalised.

The couples who decide to build their own house usually design them with one or more distinctive features in the architecture, appearance and ornaments. The architecture is quite similar to houses built by other Gozitans; however, the difference lies in the top part of the facade of the building where on a stone extension to the building on the roof a crest of Australia, or the United States of America, Canada or England, or the family coat of arms, is sculptured. Furthermore, another distinctive appearance are the names given by returnees to their houses such as: 'Australia the Beautiful', 'God Bless Australia', 'Melbourne', 'Sydney', 'Kangaroo Valley', 'Australia House', 'St Albans', 'Victoria', 'Sunshine'. Distinctive ornaments consist of supporters of stone ball esters on the facade and around the outside part of the house depicting a kangaroo or koala in the case of Gozitan return migrants from Australia, an American bold eagle in case of the United States of America, the Canadian maple leaf in the case of Canada, and a lion in the case of returnees from the United Kingdom.

Perhaps the most explicit sign of transnational allegiances among returnees is the juxtaposition of Gozitan symbols with the Australian flag atop their rooftops on Gozo. A flag pole is a common feature on almost every home in Gozo, and Gozitans who never migrated (or who have spent years in Gozo after migration) normally fly the flag of Gozo, the flags of Malta and/or the custom-made flag depicting the image or crest of the patron saint of the village where they live (or their village of origin). Flag flying in Gozo is a practice initiated by return migrants in the late-1960s. Of the various return migrants with whom I spoke, most said the practice of flying the Australian flag symbolised pride, and gratitude toward Australia for the opportunity it offered them. The opportunity consisted first in Australia receiving them, and second, in the overall employment opportunities offered to them in Australia at a time when Gozo presented limited opportunities for economic advancement. Augustine (Wistin) Stellini sums up the sentiment in the following words: 'I fly the Australian flag to thank Australia for what it did with me and my family'.

The transnational dimension extends beyond the flying of flags to the media—with Australian productions such as 'Neighbours', 'Home and Away' and other occasional programmes aired locally being among the most popular programmes in Gozo according to recent surveys of the Public

Broadcasting Authority of Malta.[50] Moreover, radio programmes organised by Josephine Zammit Cordina, like *Magazzin ta' l-Emigranti,* 'Magazine of Immigrants', and *il-Boomerang*, 'The Boomerang', are popular listening in Malta and Gozo. The latter two are aired on Radio Malta while other programmes are being transmitted to Australia on Radio Voice of the Mediterranean. Since 1998, the Malta Broadcasting Authority has transmitted a 30 minute television news bulletin in Australia on SBS Television every Sunday morning at 05.00 hours Melbourne time. Both media provide transnational means of communications which have brought Gozitans on both sides of the globe closer than ever before.

In addition to the impact of radio and television programmes and high frequency radio transmission, recreational activities in Gozo have also been affected directly by the activities of return migrants. Consider, for example the popular water sports of fishing and swimming. Returnees from Melbourne follow closely the Australian television productions of *Fish* and *International Fishing* on Maltese television stations. "Look, look what an idiot he is, throwing the fish he caught back into the sea ... How could he throw away a fish that could have made the best *aljotta* (fish soup)?" Alessio asked in disbelief. Alessio was referring to the practice of the star of

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[50] Cf. *The Public Broadcasting Authority Annual Report, 1997,* Gwardmangia, Malta, 1998.

International Fishing, who, after catching a fish, holds it in his hand and explains how the fish can be cooked before unhooking it and throwing it back into the water. Alessio and the other men around him watching the programme on the big screen at Xerri l-Bukkett's Pub may not have followed the example set, but the very exposure to such practices through new global media opens up new options and possibilities.

Many returnees have brought over their entire fishing equipment kit with them from Australia. The other sea related sport is swimming. The returnees, like the Gozitans who never migrated, spend hours and days at the many beaches of Gozo. What the returnees from Melbourne and other places introduced was the idea of camping for several nights, and picnics or barbeques at the beach. A formal protest organised in Malta in 1996 by a sizeable group of mainly return migrants resulted in the establishment of camping, barbeque and picnic sites around Gozo and Malta. Hondoq ir-Rummien is one such site in Gozo. The Gatts, a returnee family from Kerċem, look forward to spending days at the new barbeque area recently refurbished by the Qala Local Council at Hondoq ir-Rummien. "It's now become a way of life for us and for our Gozitan friends. We love the 'barbie' and sometimes go camping on the island of Comino for a few days; it reminds us of Melbourne," Sunta Gatt said happily. "It keeps the family together and the children under our eyes," another mother stated. The

blending of old and new was evident in grandmother Ursola's comment, "We all go to the 7 am mass, which has no sermon, pack and head to the beach ... I spend most of the time enjoying my grandchildren and finally we all gather together to recite the rosary next to beach." This represents a substantial departure from the past, when most Gozitans used to hear at least one mass daily. Today for many it's one quick mass without a sermon on Sundays. The same can be said for the rosary. Instead of three times a day at home or in Church, now it might be on the beach after a barbecue. In the past, social activities would largely have been confined to within the borders of the village; today, the Gatts and their friends will travel to a beach on the other side of Gozo or cross over to the island of Comino for camping. Leaving Gozo to cross over to Melbourne has taught them to be mobile in their recreational activities and to enjoy life in ways unthinkable in past.

Another area of recreational life affected by return migration—as well as by the demands of the tourist industry—is the pattern of drinking and socializing in bars. As described to me by various informants, the recreational activity which earlier returnees vividly remember is the late evening hours in wine bars drinking Gozitan wine and gossiping. These wine bars have been almost completely replaced by modern bars with a variety of drinks, spirits, liqueurs and beers from every corner of the world. These bars often belong to or are associated with a club or a particular recreational activity. There are soccer,

boċċi, band, theatre, shooting, political party, and others with bar facilities on their premises.

The Xerri Boċċi Club, Gozo's largest indoor boċċi club, provides an excellent example of the transnational influence. Unlike the previous generations of bars and clubs, the Xerri Boċċi Club is a complex consisting of an indoor boċċi pitch, where members from nearly all villages of Gozo play, and other sports facilities such as billiards, darts, card playing, and catering facilities consisting of a restaurant serving Gozitan and Maltese dishes and a pizzeria. The main bar has a satellite dish capable of tuning in to more than 150 television channels. Recently, slot machines along with big screen television have been introduced on the request of returnees from Melbourne and Sydney. The Xerri l-Bukkett establishment has evolved in the past two decades from a bar and one boċċi pitch to an innovative indoor boċċi complex, restaurant, pub and mini-entertainment centre.

The complex is a major sponsor of religious activities, such as the annual feasts of St. Joseph and Our Lady Immaculate Conception, and it advertises in a number of parish magazines Gozo diocesan publications. Nearly every month Ġużepp Agius, half Gozitan and half Maltese, visits this complex and others in Gozo to pray and urge the clients not to curse, which he denounces as a threat to Maltese and Gozitan culture. Every year the Qala parish priest

comes to the complex and blesses the place with holy water as a sign of clearance from evil, and says a few prayers with those present for wrongdoings and sins that might have been committed during the year. The proprietor Joseph Xerri (my father) happens to be a strong supporter of the Museum, the centre for religious teaching in Qala, and frequently makes generous donations towards fund-raising campaigns.

In Melbourne, the St. Paul's Boċċi Club in Sunshine also similarly evolved over the past two decades into more than just a boċċi venue for Gozitans, Maltese and other interested locals. From a bar and one-pitch club it now boasts three indoor international standard boċċi pitches, a takeaway outlet and slot machines, and it is the organiser of the annual St. Paul's feast in Sunshine. The foods served are typical Australian and Gozitan dishes. "Without Leli and his group" declared the parish priest, "the traditional feast of St. Paul would not be possible anymore. Leli sends groups of men and women to put up the *festa* decorations on Glangala Road and this huge parking area where traditional Gozitan games are placed during the *festa* week … He and his people are God sent."

The two complexes, Xerri l-Bukkett in Qala and St. Paul's in Melbourne, were founded about the same time and both are frequented mainly by Gozitans. Existing on opposite sides of the world, together they represent the

transnational character of cultural identity with which this thesis is concerned: from an Australian perspective St. Paul's brings Gozo to Sunshine; from a Gozitan perspective Xerri l-Bukkett brings places like Melbourne to Qala. The crossings and inter-crossings are fascinating, simultaneously embracing change and preserving identity.

Satellite television enables Gozitan returnees from Melbourne to watch and bet on the Melbourne Cup from Gozo while enjoy drinking the popular beers of Australia namely, Foster Lager and Victoria Bitter. In the Xerri Bočči Complex, these beers, both Melbourne-brewed and imported by a Gozitan returnee from Melbourne, rank third and fourth (after the local brands Hopleaf and Cisk Lager) in popularity. "Mate, every time I drink Forsters or VB I get a rush of emotions up my spine," declared Stephen, full of emotion. "I cannot explain it … like I want to cry when I remember the good days at St. Paul's Bočči Club. Don't take me wrong: I am happy here but I wish I was also there." Similarly, the Australian yeast extract Vegemite, and other similar products from Australia, are being imported to meet the demand of the Gozitan returnee population from Melbourne.

The tastes imbibed in Australia are not necessarily shared by locals and returnees from elsewhere. For example, returnees from the United States and Canada tend to drink Budweiser beer and eat hotdogs with ketchup and

mustard, which are not popular with returnees from Australia or the United Kingdom. But the Budweiser and hotdogs will still be enjoyed in typical Australian-fashion: with the family enjoying a beach barbecue after sunset on Gozo's (and Malta's) beaches. Like the ancient flames at the Gozitan temples lit to mark the presence of gods, the barbecues lit around the coast today mark the presence and the influence of returnees from places like Melbourne.

Gambling is popular amongst the Gozitan returnees from Melbourne, especially betting on the horses racing in the Melbourne Cup. Officially, gambling is illegal in Malta and Gozo outside the two approved casinos, but horse racing and betting are very common. Horse racing is conducted mainly by return migrants, the majority from Melbourne who tend to have a passion for horses. Many have brought horse saddles, clothing for horses and every imaginary accessory available in Australia to Gozo. "The whole family makes the preparations for a day at the Marsa racecourse. The day starts with an early mass; the ladies would prepare the food supply for us, we men would get our horse in order ready for the ferry crossing to Malta and to race at the Marsa … It's a family day out and a Gozitan *mus* spear in the heart of the Maltese competitors," according to Feliċ (Felix) from Xewkija. He continued, "Yah, sometimes the Monsignor grumbles on the pulpit not to spend too much money on gambling or one's hobby like me taking our horse to compete in Gozo or in Malta … [But] it's our relaxation as a family.

What is he talking about?" To enable time to be spent on leisure activities such as horse racing and gambling, for many Church-going has become limited to the shortest mass possible, normally once a week on Sunday. Despite (or perhaps because of) changes in attitude towards toward mass and the Church, the clergy organise activities, home visits and other activities to keep the populace interested and close to the faith. The blessing by a priest of the trophies and the horses at the beginning of the races, for instance, has become a widespread custom.

In the 1990s, Gozitan returnees from Melbourne helped build a large racetrack for horse racing in the middle of Gozo, which created a great controversy and raised environmental concerns. The development highlighted the apparent disregard for the natural environment amongst returnee members of the Gozo Horse Racing Association. From observations and discussions with the Gozo Horse Racing Association, it would seem that the membership principally consists of Melbourne return migrants. The racecourse is built to international size and is so big that it is the only distinguishable mark on the map of Gozo seen from a satellite photograph. Many returnees previously frequented the horse racing grounds of Flemington and other racetracks in Melbourne, and in Gozo they enjoy betting on the horse races. Other races are organised in many main streets of the villages during the week of the particular village *festa*. These new horse

races have added another ingredient to the *festa* besides filling further the *festa* itinerary on Sunday—*Festa* Day. Some clerics claim that the addition of the horse races and the discos well into the early hours of Monday morning are making *festas* more and more 'pagan'.

The same charge has been leveled at the predominantly female leisure game, *tombla*. Seemingly now popular with Gozitan women everywhere, *tombla*, or bingo, is played in most community centres throughout the city of Brimbank in Melbourne. In Gozo, returnees from Melbourne play *tombla* at nearly every parish centre and major club. Women and children spend between three and five hours at a time sitting sipping tea and coffee, crossing out numbers. In recent times, more and more men are attending the game with their wives. In contrast to other gatherings and activities, the men do not congregate together at their own bar, but normally sit with their wives and children. This practice, common enough in Melbourne, represents a recent change to Gozo and Malta.

As King and Strachan (1978: 26) observed, recreation and leisure feature prominently in the life choices of return migrants. In the kinds of new choices outlined in this chapter—such as preferred television and radio programmes, high frequency radio transmission, camping and barbeques, horse racing and bingo—Gozitans are redefining what it means to be

'Gozitan'. The redefinitions emphasise a transnational perspective, which, in effect, not only dilutes the distinctively insular characteristics of 'Gozitaness' analysed in the first section of this thesis, but also contests Malta-centric definitions of nationality and cultural identity. These socio-cultural shifts have been accompanied by an economic transformation which, as the following chapter describes, has been largely driven by transnational transactions.

CHAPTER 9

MAKING MONEY

Some Gozitans like to speak of return migrants conducting a 'peaceful revolution' on Gozo. Gozitan return migrants from Australia, the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, collectively, have generated massive economic change. From an overwhelmingly rural society prior to the 1970s, the Gozitan economy has become a fully-fledged services-oriented economy with distinct differences from the mainland economy. In this chapter I will explore aspects of this transformation with particular reference to the contribution to the Gozitan economy made by return migrants from Melbourne. In the following pages the focus is upon those Gozitan return migrants of working age and seeking employment before or upon arrival, not those who are retired. As argued throughout this thesis, the Gozitan experience is a transnational one, and the impact of return migration upon the economy highlights this—even if the transformations brought by returnees were often undervalued by the Maltese central government.

From the end of the Second World War to the mid-1970s very few Gozitan migrants returned to Gozo to live permanently or build a house there. The

overwhelming majority returned to Gozo to facilitate the migration of other family members, relatives and friends to their host countries. The few permanent returnees after the Second World War generally returned to the employment that they left before they migrated—usually as farmers, fishermen and seamen, diggers, and builders. Very little is known about the period 1945 through the sixties, for which it was difficult to find migrants to be interviewed (due in part to their fear that being interviewed and speaking out might incriminate them in some way or another for irregularities in their status in Australia at the time). Such persons have visited Australia officially on holiday and then lived illegally there for a number of years.

Very few farmers, fishermen and seamen returned to Gozo from Melbourne during this period. The farmers that did return came predominantly from the sugarcane fields of Mackay and Mossland in Queensland, with a negligible number coming from Melbourne. According to an interview conducted with Ġużepp Buttigieg of Għajnsielem, born in Qala, these returnees had negligible impact upon the farming practices of Gozitans since Gozitan techniques were superior and produced far better results than in Australia. Buttigieg stated that they used tools to chop the cane similar to the ones used in Gozo to chop hay and other crops. Once returnees returned to the fields they went back to the Gozitan cycle of *il-Rwiegel* and to *il-Kalendarju tal-Patri tal-Mim*.

The same can be said regarding fishing techniques. Fishing from land was quite similar; but sailing out to sea to fish in Australia was very different from the practices used by Gozitan fishermen in the Mediterranean. The most obvious difference was the craft used to sail in and catch fish. In Melbourne it was made of steel, while in Gozo *kejjik*, the Gozo boat, was always made of hard wood, often imported from the Middle East or Europe. The nets used in Melbourne were bigger in size and stronger since they used tougher materials than the palm leaves used in Gozo to construct a Gozitan fisherman's pot. The Gozitan fisherman's pot as reshaped by Gozitans in Melbourne (as described in Chapter Four) was different in that it was never introduced to Gozo by returnees from Melbourne.

From the wharves of Melbourne many of the returnees who continued to work found employment at Imġarr Harbour. During the sixties and seventies they found employment with fishermen and later with the Gozo Channel Company Limited, which operates the ferry trips between Gozo and Malta. Most of these returnees were attracted and attached to the sea at Mġarr Harbour, Marsalforn, Xlendi and Hondoq ir-Rummien Bays, the only places of employment related to the sea. Fibre-glass crafts for fishing and pleasure first appeared in the Mġarr Harbour in 1988 when a handful of return migrants from New York and Melbourne first imported a part fibre-glass,

part steel craft for fishing. The company, Platinum Craft Tal-Qalfat (Gozo), started its fibre-glass craft building in a small garage on Capuccins Street, Victoria. Over the last three decades Gozitan fishermen have experimented with new designs of fibre-glass crafts, designs which differ from the traditional wooden *Dghajsa tal-Latini*. The new designs included internationally approved safety designs, including designs from the shipyards of Altona and Williamstown in Melbourne. The result is a hybrid design comprising the shape of the traditional Gozo boat and contours similar to the 'Melbourne' design. The new industry has provided jobs for many newly returned migrants. Today over half of the sea crafts used by Gozitan fishermen are constructed from fibre-glass material based on these designs. Many craft are also manufactured for fishermen in the south of Malta.

From the mid-1970s everything began to change following the shift in Gozitan migration flow, with the number of returnees gradually increasing and beginning to catch up with the number of emigrants. By the mid-1980s the migration pattern had reversed as hundreds of Gozitan migrant families from Melbourne returned and settled in Gozo. The real 'u-turn' from migration to return migration occurred in 1988 when, for the first time in the twentieth century, there were more return migrants than migrants. 1988 was not a coincidence. The new Nationalist Government elected in 1987, after sixteen years of Socialist rule, introduced dual-citizenship legislation, re-

granting Maltese citizenship to thousands of Maltese (including Gozitan) migrants world-wide. Furthermore, the outlook for the national economy in Malta was very positive.

The decade following 1988 saw the largest increase in Gozitan population in over a century, from 23,000 to 27,00—accounted for mainly by return migrants—and the largest economic expansion in Gozitan history as measured by several key economic indicators. This period of tremendous socio-economic expansion ushered in changes to virtually every area of Gozitan society. Unemployment fell below the usual double digits for the first time, the construction industry boomed and household appliance outlets flourished. An additional 3 percent of land was used for construction, along with the existing 4 percent, mainly for housing to accommodate Gozitan return migrants. According to the Central Bank of Malta annual reports for the years 1987-2000 deposits, financial assets and reserves in Gozitan banks grew by over Lm400 million, ranking proportionally higher than deposits, financial assets and reserves in Maltese banks. After this boom decade, Gozo experienced a drop in return migration, down to an annual migration intake of less than fifty.

In this wave of returnees, labour was not only skilled but professional and highly specialised in areas of work related to mechanical and electrical

engineering, maintenance of home appliances, high-tech machinery, gilders, restorers and other highly specialised occupations. This expertise was the direct outcome of their exposure to an array of different industries found in Melbourne. This injection of skilled and highly specialised workers during the mid-1980s contributed significantly to an improvement in the living standards not only of the returnees but of all Gozitans.

This improvement was due in part to the direct injection of returnees' savings into the Gozitan economy, often in the form of the construction of large, occasionally ostentatious homes as a mark of the returnees' success. Whether it points to a sense of confidence and security on the part of returnees or whether the very need to make such a 'statement' signifies the opposite is debateable, but what is beyond conjecture is the visual physical impact on the Gozitan landscape, observable in every village. These statements are found in the most prominent places on the facades of return migrants' homes, in the form of large stone-carved symbols and coats-of-arms of Australia and other countries. They are expressed every time an address is written or a home spoken about, with references to the inscriptions carved on marble or granite (expensive stones): 'God Bless Australia,' 'St. Albans,' 'Southern Cross,' 'Koala Blue', and many other names. Flag raising on festa day provides another opportunity for such a statement, as shown in the conversation between Lina and her grandfather at the beginning of this thesis. These

statements are statements of work and imagination: the carvings, the sculptures, the name or phrase often referring to the country, city, suburb, place or symbol related to where employment was provided. From this perspective, the statements may be read as tribute to the country that provided the employment opportunity and a secure future when these migrants seemed to have no employment opportunity and no future in Gozo.

Gozitan return migrants from Melbourne reaffirmed and strengthened the work ethic explored in Chapter Five and articulated in the expression, *ix-xoghol salmura tal-ġisem*. Prior to leaving Gozo, the Gozitan migrants to Melbourne, as is the case of migrants to other places, trusted the injunction of their parents and ancestors that one can succeed in life only through hard work and a healthy system of savings and diligence. The migrants believed in this principle and wholeheartedly practised it. This is evidenced in the long working hours of most Gozitans who capitalised on the availability of paid overtime work. Leli Buttigieg from Qala migrated to Melbourne in 1980. Describing the employment situation in Melbourne, he stated to a crowd of young people from Qala how he "hopped from one factory to another in Footscray and Sunshine. If I had the slightest argument with my boss, I walked out the door to the next establishment and got employment instantly ... Today I must treasure what job I have, and work as much shifts as possible. If I am fired I would most likely remain unemployed for the rest of

my life." If anything, the work ethic intensified during their stay in Melbourne, where Gozitans were able to acquire valuable skills not found in Gozo which could earn them large sums of money.

The Gozitan return migrants from Melbourne and elsewhere brought with them specialised skills that were highly sought after in the changing economic climate. In Australia they had acquired superior methods for undertaking workplace tasks which unqualified but experienced Gozitans performed on Gozo. The Ta' Dbiegi Crafts Village in San Lawrenz Gozo is a good example. Louis and Catherine Formosa, who operate the Handmade Pottery and Ceramics establishment, are returnees from Melbourne who incorporated Australian features and designs into Gozitan pottery and ceramics. They manufacture many of the nameplates on Gozitan returnee homes that can be seen throughout Gozo, and export to Gozitan migrants living in Melbourne and other migrant destinations. Joe Azzopardi of Xewkija, who operates the Gold and Silver items shop, is also a returnee from Melbourne, where he acquired his skills through a course. Joe's case illustrates how returnees have returned to Gozo with a sense of confidence and, at times, even superiority over other Gozitans who had never migrated. This attitude is observable in various workplaces throughout Gozo, with returnees offering advice and assistance to other Gozitans.

The skilled returnees wielded influence on Gozo, especially in the area of workplace relations. The returnees would insist upon defending the rights of the worker. Prior to the 1990s most Gozitans in Melbourne worked in a range of industries in and around the City of Brimbank and at the Melbourne wharves. The majority of these industries are unionised. As recounted to me by numerous informants on Gozo, returnees from Melbourne and other migrant cities are considered outspoken toward their employers and are especially insistent upon workplace safety. Even those who become employers back in Gozo, such as Melbourne returnee Joseph Louis Meilak who operates his Stained Glass Studio in Nadur, insist on high standards of work safety. Joseph ensures that his workers, mainly family members, wear eye goggles to avoid eye injury and irritation, masks to avoid inhalation of lead vapour, and protective gloves to prevent burning and skin dryness. Similarly, employees stress the importance of using protective clothing and often initiate and promote safer methods of undertaking risky workplace tasks. My informants stressed that returnees would regularly highlight examples of workplace injuries to their fellow Gozitans or friends, and bring to the attention of employers and fellow workers Australia's tough workplace safety regulations. On the recommendation of many return migrants in Gozo, Gozitan industries such as Magro Brothers (Food) Ltd. and FXB (Furniture) Ltd., employing between them about 600 workers directly and 2000 indirectly, pursue the highest standards of worker safety, to the extent

that a number of ISO 9000 certificates have been acquired by Magro, the first in Maltese industry.

Any reputation for such militancy did not detract from the employability of return migrants from Melbourne, who tended to find employment as soon as they arrived in Gozo. Many of the migrants who returned during the 1970s and 1980s worked in small businesses or established their own enterprises in a similar field to their previous employment in Melbourne. Some examples are the Bonnici family, returnees from Melbourne, acting as agents of Coca-Cola at Sannat; Frances Vella, returnee from Rabat and now an inhabitant of Rabat, who has a hut at Ta' Dbieġi Crafts Village at San Lawrenz where she sells woollens, lace, T-shirts, souvenirs of Gozo, pottery and weaving products; and the artist Paul A. Stellini, Sydney-born and therefore technically not a returnee, now based at Għajnsielem, who teaches art and conducts exhibitions internationally.

Other returnees, especially during the late-1980s following the Labour Government's engagement of 8,000 new workers into the public service prior to the 1987 General Election, joined the public works sector on Gozo. Two informants, Salvu Grima and Adelina Attard, both Melbourne returnees, joined the public sector as Immigration Officer and Librarian, respectively. Salvu Grima is involved in assisting the re-settlement of return migrants to

Gozo. Salvu Grima's job is considered to be an important one in the eyes of most returnees since he is a key public servant in Gozo assigned by the central government to assist returnees' resettlement. He processes requests for opening businesses in Gozo and acquiring social security benefits, and direct returnees where to go for a particular services. Salvu recounts how his experience in Australia as a Welfare Officer with Parish House influenced greatly his attitude towards dealing with people. He does not become 'too friendly' but at the same time he does his utmost to assist returnee individuals and families. This attitude has introduced a different professional style to the public service dealings with Gozitan clients. According to Salvu, he is often looked at as 'strange' and and he has heard his approach described as the 'wrong attitude' At the same time, other Gozitan civil servants observe him positively and are aware of his success in gaining a reputation with his superiors and clients as a dependable civil servant, which have resulted in his gaining a number of promotions.

Most of the public servants who returned to Gozo utilised their technical skills to influence the way public works are conducted in Gozo and, in turn, Malta. The intake of returnees of 1986, for example, contributed substantially to the improvement in the standard of public works in Gozo. Roads were better constructed and supervised by returnees from Melbourne and elsewhere. Upon interviewing and discussing this matter with a number of

Works Department managers and supervisors I was struck by their expressions of desire to have roads as good as ones in Australia. These returnees studied and observed well how public works such as roads are constructed in Melbourne and, within the limited resources available, they set a much higher standard of road construction for Gozo, which was later followed in Malta.

This was followed by improvement in the industrial sector on Gozo throughout the 1990s, which became the envy of the Maltese. Australian returnees have often been at the forefront of initiatives. For example, the late Joe Tabone from Nadur, a return migrant from Melbourne, was the person who lobbied the Nationalist Government in 1987 to establish an office of the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) in the heart of Gozitan industry. Mr. Tabone's pleas were heard and the office was established with him being its first director. Through such initiatives all Gozitans, those who never migrated as well as return migrants such as himself, have benefited over the past decade and a half from new training opportunities and, perhaps more importantly, the existence of an organisation to liaise between the skilled return migrant and Gozitan industries. Of course, not only Australian returnees have been responsible for these improvements, and credit must also go to the substantial contribution of returnees from the United States of America, Canada and England, many of whom moved from the public sector

to new developments like the factories established in the Xewkija Industrial Estate, which offered a more attractive financial package to many returnees. At the same time, it is clear that the factories of Gozo were the industries which most benefited from the intake of Gozitan returnees from Melbourne. The many returnees who had worked in the industrial base of Melbourne had no difficulty being absorbed by these factories, where they were highly regarded as professional and technical workers. This was the outcome of meetings conducted between the factory managers and the Ministry of Gozo, where it was acknowledged that these returnees brought with them many skills, particularly different methods used in Melbourne factories.

These meetings between the Ministry of Gozo and the Gozitan factories gradually took the form of annual seminars, since 1988 organised by the Ministry and sponsored by the Bank of Valletta. Before this time, Gozo lacked such a forum for discussion and auditing of expertise. As a result of these seminars there was an acknowledgement of the urgent need to create many more new employment opportunities and to maximise efficiency in the deployment of Government resources in Gozo. From the outset seminar participants have included many return migrants, who have been active in suggesting changes to production methods and work practices. The late John M. Sultana, a returnee from Melbourne and a native of Għajnsielem, who returned to Gozo and established his own business, ICI-Paints, provides an

example of the kind of contribution made by return migrants. Mr Sultana had worked most of his working years in Melbourne, employed by the ICI Paints Company. In 1990, when the Public Works Department painted the first street signs on Gozo using normal paint, which lasted only a few weeks, Mr. Sultana recognised the opportunity and had imported a supply of paint that lasts up to five years at the faction of the cost. Today the Roads Department in Gozo uses the type of paint recommended by Mr Sultana, with significant savings to taxpayers' funds.

Some factories in the early years of the 1990s invested heavily in new capital, especially machinery and equipment, to remain competitive,[51] especially with their European counterparts and competitors. Often at the forefront of this change were Gozitan returnees, like David Borg, who recounted: "My lifelong friends John and Charlie and myself met our manager and explained to him that unless we adapted to the new realities of the market, and purchased new hi-tech equipment to improve the productivity of the operation, the company would whither. I used a list of companies John had jotted down on a flimsy piece of paper [when we had worked in a factory] in Melbourne, to supply our Gozitan manager with contact details of manufacturing companies in the United Kingdom and

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[51] Cf *Conference on Sustainable Development in Gozo - Through the 90s and Beyond*, Hotel Ta' Cenc, 20th November, 1992, Bank of Valletta in collaboration with the Ministry for Gozo, 1993.

Germany. Today, a few years later we at least have maintained our workforce count and are doing well." Returnees like John and David found work in factories in Gozo similar to the work they had done in Melbourne; others moved to Malta to work in similar factory positions there. When employment in these factories became scarce, many decided to open their own businesses and established services that were new for Gozo, in which the few who had the skills held a monopoly. Television, air-conditioning, refrigeration and electronic equipment repair services are just a few of such services brought over by returnees from Melbourne and elsewhere.

Tony Cefai of Qala, a return migrant from the United States, proudly displays the phrase '17 years experience in the USA' on his new business card. He established the first company in Gozo that sells, installs and repairs air conditioners. Tony Cefai Refrigeration Company is a pioneer in this field and today is the largest such company in Gozo, servicing most factories in the Xewkija Industrial Estate, all the Ministry for Gozo Offices and many households. Workers he has employed over the last decade have spent a few years working with Tony, before leaving and establishing similar businesses in Gozo and in Malta. His sister Carmen works with a Sydney-based electronics company from his business in Gozo providing alternative parts supplies. The newly established hifi and electronic equipment store in Gozo (whose owner did not want to be interviewed for this research) imports such

equipment from a Melbourne-based company were he worked for two decades, while his son manages this new business in Victoria, offering the full range of services—sales, installation and repairs.

Entrepreneurship and the services industries also saw a peaceful revolution conducted by returnees. Small business has been the backbone of every economy since the industrial revolution and Gozo is no exception. The making of *ġbejniet ta' Għawdex*, Gozitan cheese and wine, and the selling of fruit and vegetables in the streets are still common in Gozo—a van and the horn having replaced the traditional donkey, cart and call for people to come out of their homes to purchase their daily supplies—but over the last two decades, Gozo has seen a dramatic change in the way people buy their groceries and products. Returnees have introduced the home delivery service found in Melbourne and most of urban Australia, with groceries on wheels service, bakery and confectionery shops on wheels and even the hardware store on wheels. These new services greatly facilitated shopping and transactions for Gozitan housewives; and the new system of distribution and instant availability of products, often imported from Melbourne factories, has generated a lot of business. Services like that offered by the Melbourne returnee from Xewkija who circled Gozo selling eggs and poultry products for years until he died last year have changed consumer preferences and, in

the process, taken away business from fixed grocery stores, butchers and bakers.

Bakers, builders, plasterers, barbers, ironmongers, blacksmiths, carpenters and other professions nowadays use more modern equipment, much of which was brought from places such as Australia and introduced by returnees who opened businesses on their return to Gozo. Innovations included tool sets for diverse specialised jobs, furniture-making machines, testers for motor vehicles and specialised electronic equipment. For example, Melbourne-born Qala inhabitant Joseph Buttigieg—whose nickname is *Tal-Kangaroo*, of the kangaroo—is a specialist motor vehicle mechanic who imported from Australia equipment to identify problems in a motor vehicle without inspecting it visibly. Such machinery was not available in Gozo prior to the 1980s, and people from all over Gozo and Malta take their motor vehicles to Joseph Buttigieg for repair. Gradually, Gozitans who never migrated observed and copied Joseph and eventually opened such businesses. Mechanic Joe Vella, a returnee from Canada, is one such example. He worked with Joseph Buttigieg for a number of years before deciding to leave and establish his own auto-repair garage. The same can be said of Raymond Buttigieg, another returnee from Canada, who opened New Dolmen Car Hire company. Such returnees differed somewhat from Gozitans who never migrated in their preparedness to take more risks—a characteristic also

evident in their initial decision to migrate. These returnees often invested most, if not all, of their savings into their business ventures—something not traditionally done by Gozitans.

These new capitalist notions and practices introduced into Gozo have significantly changed the island and the islanders. Returnees from everywhere compete with each other in a much wider range of businesses, in the product quality and in service given to the customer. The proprietor of Xerri il-Bukkett Restaurant is a returnee from New York who competes with the Red Rose Restaurant (whose proprietor is a returnee from Melbourne). When Xerri l-Bukkett introduced a home delivery service and a courtesy car for clients, Red Rose, along with a number of other restaurants in Gozo, followed suit. Joseph Refalo of Xaghra, is a returnee from Melbourne, realising that Gozo had no freight delivery service to Malta and the rest of the world, established the Gozo Express Services Company, specialising in air and sea freight, and domestic courier service. Ostensibly small innovations have changed the way business is conducted between Malta and Gozo: every morning Joseph's son Julian drives the company truck full of packages to Malta, not only ensuring a faster and more reliable delivery service to clients in Malta and abroad but also generating new business. Gozo Channel Co. Ltd. now also offers a same day delivery service in competition with Gozo Express Services. As well as directly stimulating economic

activity, such developments also contribute to the impression of Gozo operating as a modern economy, which in turn further encourages economic development.

The 'peaceful revolution' on Gozo is not merely the result of returnees' skills and capitalist aptitudes. Massive economic change has also been the result of transnational hard currency transactions which have, over the last two decades, fuelled the Gozitan economy, and to a certain extent Malta's overall prosperity. However, the financial contribution by Gozitan return migrants to Malta's economy has always been underestimated by central government officials and not given the importance it deserves. In fact, no detailed statistics are kept by the Central Office of Statistics in Valletta concerning the inflow of financial gifts from migrants and the cash inflow on foreign reserves held by migrants in their respective countries. This argument has been supported by Cauchi (1999), who has established that total remittances received by Maltese and Gozitans living in Malta from migrant sources— personal remittance, gifts, dowries, inheritances and pensions—for the period 1954 to 1997 amount to Lm648,840,000, or AU$2.56 billion.

The inflow of pension funds, cash gifts and other items, and the savings placed in Australia and other banks which earn interest and end up in the Gozitan economy, cannot be fully accounted for and calculated, except for

239

savings of returnees in Maltese banks. Tax evasion is very common amongst

Maltese and Gozitans as becomes evident each year when the Maltese

Parliament debates Gozo's annual financial vote and tax contribution.[52]

Consider the example of a returnee family from Melbourne building a house

in Gozo. If the land is not given by the parents or inherited, it must be

purchased—since renting is very rare in Gozo and is generally not considered

an option. This represents a sizeable injection of funds from the total sum

saved from work in Melbourne and is not declared in tax returns. To this

there is the sum of money spent building and furnishing their home, which

ultimately underpins significant economic growth. The multiplier effect

scatters the income to many and, overall, lifts the standard of living of

Gozitans. On the national level this translates into an increase in Malta's

Gross National Product (GNP).[53] This has been the case for over forty years,

with the settling of thousands of returnee families not only from Melbourne

but from the other cities around the world.

While they might eventually conflate into the one Gross National Product,

substantial differences exist between the Maltese and Gozitan economies.

There is general agreement that it is both wrong and unfair to "lump

'metropolitan Maltese' and Gozitan indicators summarily into one and the

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[52]Cf. *The Malta Independent*, Saturday, 28 November, 1998.
[53]Cf. *The Economic Survey of Malta 1997*, Ministry for Economic Services, Valletta, Malta, 1998.

same melting pot, and then use this as the basis for a general, national commentary". This is the observation of Godfrey Baldacchino in his 2000 paper 'The socio-economic of Gozo: Profile and potential or, a little America in the Mediterranean?' in which he sought to establish specifically Gozitan economic characteristics. Baldacchino argues that prior to the 1970s Gozo's economy depended on agriculture and fisheries, a so-called primitive economy. The construction of the Xewkija Industrial Estate in the heart of Gozo initiated some economic diversification, with a small percentage of the Gozitan workforce finding employment in the new sector, which has remained the case up until today. By the mid-1970s fewer Gozitans decided to migrate and more Gozitans decided to return to Gozo. Baldacchino constantly refers to the differing attitude of Gozitans and Gozitan returnees towards the values surrounding the conduct of business. According to Baldacchino, Gozitans are higher risk takers, have a high proportion of self-employed and small enterprises than in Malta, and are less enamoured with unions. The business attitude of New York, London, Toronto, Sydney and Melbourne have converged in Gozo, re-created and evolved into a new Gozitan hybrid business environment which has transformed Gozo into 'a little America in the Mediterranean.'

As a result of the kinds of changes outlined above, the decade between 1988-98 saw Gozo change from a predominantly agricultural economy to a

predominantly services-oriented economy. During this period a number of important developments helped steer Gozo's economy away from the mainland economy. Over hundreds of years the 8-kilometre strait between the islands had encouraged a distinctive evolution of socio-economic and cultural patterns, and this process was further encouraged by the neglect of the Maltese State in more recent years. Such divisions are not uncommon in small island relations—cf. relations between Mauritius and Rodrigues, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, Fiji and Rotuma, Mayotte and the rest of the Comoros—a phenomenon referred to in the small-scale literature as the Tuvalu Effect[54] (Streeten 1993). In relation to Gozo, its distinctive evolution of socio-economic and cultural patterns intermeshed with and translated into a double endowment of insularity and marginality, as discussed elsewhere in this thesis. Such distinctiveness is best captured in interminable debates about 'the Gozitan identity' and the manner in which Maltese and Gozitans trade jokes, anecdotes, insults or truisms about each other[55].

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[54] In recognition of the dramatic secession of the 8,000 Ellice Islanders from the Gilbert Islanders when seeking independence from Britain. The former have their own sovereign state of Tuvalu; separate from the Gilbertese state of Kiribati. Formerly, they were both part of the Gilbert & Ellice Islands colony.

[55] Boswell (1994, p.134) for instance, comments on the proverbial shrewdness of the Gozitans. A common saying is *jaghmel bhall-Ghawdxin* (literally, to do just like the Gozitans), meaning for one to disappear very soon after one has obtained what one needs (Fenech, 1984 p.103).

During the year 2001 Gozo had the lowest unemployment rate in its history, with just 269 persons registering for unemployment according to the Central Office of Statistics (COS). These figures, together with statistics about the quality of life in Gozo, are only now being compiled and published by the COS. This exercise has commenced on the recommendation of EUROSTAT, the European Statistics Agency, in view of their need to calculate the wealth for all of Malta, including Gozo. The statistics being gathered are not simply the traditional ones detailing income or saving levels, but are statistics that reflect today's reality, such as: the number of cars, yachts, telephone lines, cable connections, satellite dishes, mobile phones, home ownership, land distribution, holidays taken per year, working hours, academic qualifications, migration levels, leisure space availability, and air, water, bathing and soil quality. The new European approach to gathering and analysing statistics is well underway and the first results should be published in April 2002. The comprehensiveness of the statistics will inevitably generate new debates about the relative position of Gozitans and Maltese and problematise previously taken-for-granted assumptions about disadvantage and Gozo's place in the nation as Malta heads towards membership of the European Union.

Recent polls confirm anecdotal evidence from letters to the editor, radio talkback and feedback from members of the *Fergħa Għawdxija tal-Moviment*

Iva Malta fl-Ewropa, the Gozo branch of the Yes for Europe Campaign (founded in October 1999), that most Gozitans are in favour of membership in the European Union. Notwithstanding this trend in favour of membership in the European Union, many Gozitans are publicly voicing their wish to have as a condition of Malta joining the EU that Gozo should have the status of an island region. Many desire a status similar to that which Gozo enjoyed during the four centuries prior to French and English rule, with new island-specific employment opportunities and greater local autonomy from Malta. Fundamentally, the debate is about the future of Gozo, and particularly its identity as an island 'nation'. The Gozitans of today, consisting of thousands of returnees from federated countries, such as Australia, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, have brought a new perspective to the debate in the light of their experience with and understanding of the need for employment mobility beyond the shores of Gozo—this time to the rest of Europe. From this perspective, a united Europe offers a promising future for themselves and for subsequent generations, based on the kind of employment mobility Gozitan returnees enjoyed between Gozo and Melbourne or Sydney, New York or Detroit, and London or Manchester. The fundamental difference is that continental Europe is much closer to Gozo than Australia, the United States or Canada.

The debate on Gozo is spearheaded by respected figures like Rev. Joseph Bezzina and Franco Masini from Victoria, through open for a, newspaper articles, radio and television. The demands on the central government and the Core Negotiating Group responsible for conducting negotiations with the European Commission are clear, and some Gozitans are willing to abstain from voting or to vote against Malta's membership of the European Union unless these demands are met in the upcoming referendum due in 2003 or 2004. In mid-January 2002 a seminar was organised by the Nationalist Party Gozo Branch entitled, *Gozo's goverance, past, present and future*. The fierce debate sent a clear message to the Prime Minister of Malta, who attended the seminar—Gozo wants more autonomy and the opportunity to secure its future an integral part of Europe. As the seminar made clear, employment opportunities and questions of identity are still intersecting priorities for Gozitans. The difference on this occasion was that, bolstered and emboldened by the 'global' perspective of return migrants from Melbourne and elsewhere, Gozitans spoke with a stronger and more determined voice.

The new voice reflects, as discussed in this chapter, the re-contextualising of the work ethic among Gozitan returnees to the extent that some Gozitans like to speak of return migrants having conducted a 'peaceful revolution' on Gozo. The chapter has outlined some of the dimensions of the economic change collectively generated by return migrants, which has resulted in a

services-oriented economy with distinct differences from the mainland economy. As argued in this chapter, the impact of return migration upon the economy highlights transnational processes, with profound implications for the future of the Maltese nation. As discussed in the following chapter, parallel processes of re-contextualisation have affected religious life on Gozo.

CHAPTER TEN

FLAGS AND FIRECRACKERS

Following the preceding discussion of the re-contextualising of the work
ethic among Gozitan returnees from Melbourne, attention will now be turned
to the re-defining of the role of the Church in the lives of returnees and, more
broadly, the impact of return migration on religion in Gozo. This chapter will
describe and analyse the transformations brought on Gozitan religious life by
return migrants from Melbourne. The issues covered in this chapter include
the lessening of religious ties, the changes and additions made to the village
festa in Gozo, and the strengthening of the Ta' Pinu cult amongst the Gozitan
return migrants from the western suburbs of Melbourne.

Chapter One of this thesis began with an ethnographic episode from Gozo
where bedridden Ġużepp Buttigieg and his granddaughter Irene engaged in a
heated exchange about a number of issues. Central to their exchange was
Irene's bemusement at Ġużepp's insistence upon putting up the Australian
flag on the day of the feast of the Conception. The episode serves as a neat
introduction to the subject of this chapter. Despite the generational
differences between Ġużepp and Irene, he attempts to convince his
granddaughter to take part in the ritual of flag raising on *festa* day. By all
accounts, having an Australian flag on your home in Gozo on any *festa* day

projects a sense of joy and respect toward Australia and this is what Gużepp wanted to instil in Irene.

In relation to the impact of return migrants on Gozo, King and Strachan (1978) generalise that the most significant shifts in attitude among return migrants are a lessening of the religious ties, which are considered foundational to 'traditional' Gozitan life. Corresponding with this apparent lessening is what they describe as 'an increased recognition of the importance of local and national politics'. They speculate about the reasons for this trend by arguing that they are a consequence of a break with the established way of life dominated by the Church on Gozo. Basically their argument is based upon a supposed urban/rural divide between the host country experience and the Gozitan experience. As they put it, this is tied to

> building a new life, albeit temporary and undoubtedly superficial in its understanding and involvement in the host society, in cities where most of the accepted mores and behaviour patterns of a close knit rural community have long been lost. Migrants come home willingly and seek to abandon much of that which they have experienced, but such is the nature of man ġsich that some of the attitudes and ideas are retained. These may be in a much diluted form but nevertheless result in different aspirations and

behaviour patterns from those who have never been abroad.

(King & Strachan 1978: 26)

As I have observed, King's and Strachan's comments fit well with the transformations among the religious lives of Gozitan return migrants from the western suburbs of Melbourne. But the generalising dimension of King's and Strachan's analysis is problematic because it reduces complex behaviour to simple determinants and, as I have observed among Gozitan returnees, people are not all the same and they negotiate the return experience in different ways.

In discussing religious transformations among returnees many questions immediately arise. For example, what constitutes a religious life? Is it the traditional relationship of a Gozitan person to the institutions and rituals of the Church in Gozo? Or is it the contemporary religious way of life practised by individual Gozitans? What is the difference between the two anyway? Furthermore, how is one to deduce what has been transformed or adapted by Gozitan returnees from the western suburbs of Melbourne? These questions are at the heart of the transformation of contemporary Gozitan identity.

Since the early 1980s significant social shifts in religious activities have occurred in Gozo, according to a recent survey conducted by the Signs of the

Times Foundation (Malta) and another by the Gozo curia. Daily mass attendance by Gozitans had become the practice of a mere two percent of the island population in the year 2000, compared with 98 percent claimed by Bishop Mikiel Gonzi during the decade of the 1960s. Nowadays, the majority of Gozitans attend mass either on Saturday evening or Sunday mornings and on religious *festas*. Of the fourteen parish churches in Gozo none provides the *quddiesa tal-kaċċaturi*, the 'Mass for the hunters,' performed at 3.30 a.m. or 4.00 a.m. and traditionally attended by many of the adult village population. The earliest mass is at 5.00 a.m. in a number of parishes, and the number of masses performed daily has been significantly reduced to three or four. One could perhaps attribute this to the reforms brought by the Vatican Council II whereby the emphasis has shifted from the rigid ceremonial ritual of the mass to community based and social-oriented activity. However, increasing numbers of Gozitans are attending fewer mass celebrations, adoration sessions to the Holy Sacrament, and less are referring to the Sacrament of Confession. Moreover, increasingly, couples are opting for Civil marriage rather than Catholic marriage and attending less rosary recitals in Church. These changes are highlighted in annual reports published by the Archdiocese and Diocese Curias of Malta and Gozo respectively.

While there is clear evidence of a changing Gozitan religious landscape, Gużepp Buttigieg and many of his older generation remain loyal to their traditional day-to-day religious practices. But, as various informants indicated to me, this cannot be said of all his generation or the younger ones. Mary Xerri, aged 80 years, who returned to Gozo after living in Sunshine, has dropped from daily mass to once on Sunday, and a single recital of the rosary instead of three daily. Other informants Augustine (Wistin), 57, and Lucy Stellini, 55, said they attended mass once a week (usually on Sundays) and recited the rosary 'once in a while'. As Lucy put it, 'Lately, since the rosary is recited on the RTK Radio Station at seven o'clock, whoever is at home will gather to recite it'. Another return migrant from Melbourne, Angelo Buttigieg, 36, occasionally attends mass on Sunday but does not recite the rosary anymore. As he explained, 'Shamefully, I do not find the time to recite it'. Angelo's comments indicate an ambiguity and tension, in that he wishes to participate in religious activities and values it, but lifestyle changes (or choices) prevent him from doing so.

The changes brought by migration and return migration have had an impact not only upon mass attendance but on the very religious institutions with which many Gozitans choose to identify. Summarising discussions I had with the Chancellor of the curia of Gozo, Rev. Salv Debrincat, produced the following startling statistics on transformation in Gozitan society. Although

the number of non-Roman Catholics is still below one percent of the population on Gozo, growing numbers of Gozitans are looking to other religious traditions. Gozitan return migrants from Australia, the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom identify with other traditions including the Jehovah Witnesses, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Anglican Church (Church of England). Furthermore, Islam, Judaism, the Black Mass and Buddhism are offering, to varying degrees, somewhat attractive alternatives to the island community of Gozitans. These faiths were mostly introduced to the island by returnees in the past two decades. According to Rev. Debincat, the fastest growing sect amongst the younger return migrant generation in Gozo is the Black Mass. The sect uses Roman Catholic Church sacred items such as stolen holy bread to sacrilege them, cast evil spells and claim to make contact with the devil with the sole purpose of destroying the Roman Catholic Church in Gozo.

Internal Gozitan Dioceses studies and reports (Diocese Annual Pastoral Reports 1999 and 2000) have found that this sect is led by a number of return migrants from Melbourne, New York and San Francisco. The Gozo District Police remain officially silent about the matter, but information was informally given to me by police informants who wish to remain anonymous. According to them, Gozitan returnees from Melbourne have undergone sect training in Australia. Although the details of their secret rituals are unknown,

252

the police indicate that on nearly every full moon a ceremony must be performed whereby a human skull is stolen from a grave in a cemetery and burned with the holy bread stolen by disguised holy bread recipients during a Catholic mass. A bonfire is constructed and a ritual is performed in the area to claim it as the devil's territory. New members are initiated into the cult annually in a secret ceremony held at the four corners of Gozo—at Qala and Gharb Points, near Marsalforn and Xlendi Bays—forming the sign of the cross over Gozo, depicting the gradual dominance of the sect over the island. Rumour has it that the police remain silent on the Black Mass because a number of people who occupy high positions on the island are members of the cult.

For many, the Black Mass phenomenon is puzzling because the cult is larger proportionally in Gozo than in Malta, and because of the deep-rooted tradition of Roman Catholicism on Gozo. The Constitution recognises the Roman Catholic Church as the official religion of the state, and practices that went against it in the past were effectively treated as crimes. This is despite the fact that the right to practise religion is protected by the Maltese Constitution and by the European Convention on Human Rights, of which Malta is a signatory. But the constitutional position and the power still exercised by the Church on Gozo point to what may be termed a 'feudal' religious perspective, in terms of which the distinction between the spiritual

and secular realms remains blurred and the ever-present saints maintain a constant vigil. In this environment, cultist behaviour shares characteristics with mainstream religious observance and may, indeed, be attractive to people loathe to accommodate their religious life to more secular times. Certainly, the police, intelligence and Church officials are monitoring the sect according to the Chancellor of the curia and former Police Commissioner and head of the Secret Service, George Grech. The general population on Gozo tends to blame returnees for introducing these practices. But the number of returnees involved is negligible when compared to the total number of returnees. The authorities, mainly the police force, do not arrest these individuals in fear of possible spiritual and/or physical danger inflicted on themselves or their family members. Also, there is a sense of fear amongst the people in decision-making positions that if these individuals are arrested and charged with a crime or contravention, more will follow these 'martyrs.'

The changes wrought by decreasing mass attendance and the growing influence of other religious traditions should not be misconstrued as meaning that the Roman Catholic Church has little influence amongst returnees on the island. On the contrary, the clergy remain very much respected by most Gozitan returnees from the western suburbs of Melbourne. This is evidenced by the hours priests spend in consultation giving guidance to the members of

the Church on a variety of personal problems. At the same time, an increasing number of Gozitans are referring to secular professionals such as marriage counsellors, psychologists, general medical practitioners, notaries, lawyers and politicians for guidance in the conduct of their lives. It would be fair to say that the traditional priest or parish priest as the font of all knowledge has become something of a relic.

The attitude toward the clergy has changed and so has the number of persons deciding to choose a religious life. According to the Curia of Gozitan Catholic Dioceses, over a period of two decades, from the hundreds of Gozitan return migrant families from Melbourne none has produced a seminarian. This situation came to light during an interview I conducted with the Bishop of Gozo. This, like the turning to secular authorities for guidance, is evidence of a diminution of traditional links with the Church. At the same time, the continuing respect for clergy and recourse to them for guidance on some aspects of personal life suggests that return Gozitans are still committed to the Church, but as an institution which, like schools and other agencies, has a discrete social role—rather than an all-encompassing role.

One of the continuing roles is tied to the *festa*. As Chapter Six documented, the *festa* remains the key religious occasion which enables individual Gozitans in Melbourne to performatively identify with the larger Gozitan

'nation'. On Gozo, despite the decline of mass attendance and reduced influence of the Catholic Church, the Gozitan *festa* remains the annual event most awaited by Gozitans. The external manifestations of this tradition are well known and comprehensively covered in Boissevain's (1965) monograph on the subject *Saints and Fireworks*. I shall here limit myself to an analysis of the transformations brought by Gozitan return migrants from the western suburbs of Melbourne. The adaptations made to the village *festa* by return migrants from the western suburbs of Melbourne are easily identifiable and limited to several specific activities and items.

Days before the weeklong *festa* celebrations, Gozitan return migrants from the western suburbs of Melbourne fly the Australian flag and, sometimes, the State of Victoria flag. For many Gozitan returnees flag raising creates a festive atmosphere: the flag is a decorative item in many respects devoid of the political connotations commonly associated with national flags. The flying flag brings colour which contrasts the limestone backdrop landscape of villages. It pays tribute to the country from where the particular household migrated and earned their living. Ġużepp Buttigieg's reaction to Irene's response included the above philosophy. The Australian flag, like the American, Canadian and British flags flying on return migrants' roofs, represent respect, thankfulness, gratitude and, importantly, dominance in Gozitan society.

Maltese law prohibits the flying of a foreign flag without an accompanying Maltese flag on private buildings or homes. But the law is seldom enforced, especially during the *festa* week. Many foreign tourists initially think that they have entered a diplomatic area, but that assumption is quickly discarded when they realise that a large number of flags from the same countries fly in the same area. Flag flying has become an entrenched tradition brought by Gozitan return migrants not only from Melbourne in the early 1970s, but also, as the national range of flags suggests, from the US, Canada and the UK. Another equally important addition to the *festa* landscape is *Jum l-Emigranti*, the Emigrants' Day.

During *festa* week in most Gozitan villages, one day is often dedicated to the migrants around the world who originate from that village—including the return migrants who moved back to live permanently in the village and/or those who are visiting to celebrate the *festa* with the rest of the villagers. A good example is the *festa* of Saint Joseph organised in the village of Qala each year during the week ending on the first Sunday in August. Since 1971, *Jum l-Emigranti* in Qala has always been celebrated on the Thursday before *festa* day (always a Sunday). *Jum l-Emigranti* is a day of activities dedicated to the migrants and return migrants. The morning is left free for migrants and return migrants to organise family activities that normally conclude in large

family gatherings for lunch and even traditional Australian barbecues in the home yard or by the sea. A short siesta is taken and at 4 p.m. preparations are underway for a solemn mass at the Parish Church dedicated to Saint Joseph. The Parish Priest celebrates the mass, accompanied by a migrant priest or priests from one of the migrant countries or the missionary countries, and a male migrant or return migrant holding the flag of the host country. In processional order these flags are: the Maltese flag and the flag of the Vatican City beside each other, then the Australian flag, the American, the Canadian and, finally, the British flag.

There is a large degree of symbolism involved in the protocol used in the flag positioning in Qala. According to Maltese Law, the Maltese flag should be carried first and on the right-hand of the procession or in the middle, then the flag of the Vatican City representing the migrant clergy and missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church from the village of Qala. The Australian flag is paraded next, since it was the first to fly in *l-Marċ ta' l-Emigranti* in 1971, then the American, and so on. During the mass collection, migrants and return migrants are expected to donate sums of money, not only to contribute to the general fund to pay for these festivities but also to compete with the other flags as to who gives most in their respective currency. Although statistics have not been recorded, anecdotal evidence suggests that at probably every *Jum l-Emigranti* collection in villages in eastern Gozo, the

American group contributes the highest amount in foreign currency. These offerings are counted and read out just before mass ends.

Mass readings and basic prayers are performed by migrants and return migrants. The participants from the Australian group have generally come from the western suburbs of Melbourne and occasionally a few from Sydney or elsewhere. It is worth noting the influence of the Australian accent on the basic prayers said during this mass, especially the emphasis placed on different parts of the sentence, often altering the very meaning of a phrase. Below are four basic prayers written in standard Gozitan, standard Maltese and English taken from the website

http://www.christusrex.org/www1/pater/JPN-malti-gozo.html

operated by an American organisation and with prayers provided by the Department of Church Studies at the University of Malta. This website provides information about the Roman Catholic Church in Malta and some common prayers. The single underlining in the text of these prayers represents the commonly accepted emphasis when a person is reading the text. On the other hand, the double underlining represents the emphasis made by migrants and return migrants reading the text during mass.

COMMON PRAYERS

Rudd is-Solub	*Rodd is-Salib*	*Sign of the Cross*
(Standard Gozitan Dialect)	(Standard Maltese)	(English)

Fl-isim tel-Missier, te'	*Fl-isem tal-Missier, ta'*	In the name of the Father
and		
l-Ibin, u te' l-Ispirtu s-Santo	*l-Iben, u ta' l-Ispirtu s-Santu*	of the Son and of the Holy
Ammin.	*Amen.*	Spirit. Amen.

∎∎

Il-Missirne	*Il-Missierna*	**Our Father**
(Standard Gozitan Dialect)	(Standard Maltese)	(English)

Missirne li Inti	*Missierna li Inti*	Our Father who Art
Fis-smewiet jitqeddis	*fis-smewwiet jitqaddes*	in heaven, holy be Thy
Ismik kejf fis-seme	*Ismek kif fis-sema*	name, thy kingdom come
Ekde fl-ort.	*Hekk fl-art.*	Thy will be done on earth...
Hubzna te' kiljum,	*Hobzna ta' kuljum*	Give us this day, our daily
Aghtina llum, ahfrilna	*aghtina llum, ahfrilna*	bread and forgive us for our
Min hu huti ghalina, la	*min hu hati ghalina, la*	trespasses and forgive those
Ddahhalniex fit-tigreb	*ddahhalniex fit-tigrib*	who trespass against us and
Izde ehlisne minn kull	*izda ehlisna minn kull*	lead us not into temptation

260

Deni. *Ammin*.	*deni. Amen.*	But deliver us from evil.

Amen

■■■

Is-Sliema	**Is-Sliema**	**Hail Mary**
(Standard Gozitan Dialect)	(Standard Maltese)	(English)

Slieme għalik *Marija,*	*Sliema għalik Marija,*	Hail Mary full of grace, the
Bil-grezzje mimlije	*bil-grazzja mimlija*	Lord be with you, blest
Imbierke inti fust in-nise,	*imbierka inti fost in-nisa,*	amongst women and the blest
Imbirik il-frutt tal-ġoff	*imbierek il-frott tal-ġuf*	thy womb Jesus.
Tiegħek Ġesu'.	*Tiegħek Ġesu'.*	

■■■

Il-Glurja	**Il-Glorja**	**Glory Be to the Father**
(Standard Gozitan Dialect)	(Standard Maltese)	(English)

Glurja lil Missier, l-Ibin, u	*Glorja lil Missier, l-Iben, u*	Glory to the Father, the Son,
l-Ispirtu s-Santu, kejf kien	*l-Ispirtu s-Santu, kif kien*	and the Holy Spirit as was in
mill-bidu, ussa u għale	*mill-bidu, u issa u għal*	the beginning as is and forever.
Dejjim. Ammin.	*dejjem. Amen.*	Amen.

261

Gozitans who have never migrated to Australia note this accent difference after listening to different versions of the same word. The difference in accent remains for years, if not permanently, with the return migrant from the western suburbs of Melbourne. Whenever Joe Mizzi, the President of the Qala Band *Ite Ad Joseph* and a return migrant from St Albans, makes a speech this accent is very much recognisable, even a decade after he left Australia. These changes in accent give rise to the creation of nicknames for such people by the Gozitans who never migrated. 'Qattusu' is a nickname of an Australian-Gozitan from St. Albans who happened to interpret the word *qattus*, 'cat' in Maltese, which was taken up in the manner of Australian slang by his group of friends, who kept calling him *qattusu* from then onwards. Victor Saliba of Xewkija acquired the nickname 'fairdinkim' after he used the Australian term more than once in each sentence on a public occasion.

The change in accent is also evident on the radio programmes transmitted from *Radju Leħen il-Qala 105.6 FM*, Voice of Qala Radio during *festa* day. Radio programmes are transmitted to Radio SBS in Melbourne received by Gozitan and Maltese listeners.

Over one hundred e-mails are received daily from the western suburbs of Melbourne during *festa* week in Gozo. Since it was established in 1999, more than ten thousand people have accessed the Qala parish website

www.gozodirect.com/qala. These e-mails originate mainly from second- and third-generation Gozitan-Australians. Similar letters are sent to the editor of *Leħen il-Qala* (Voice of Qala) magazine published three times annually with a special *festa* issue that includes a section written by members of the Australian-Qala Association (A.Q.A.) based in St Albans. The *festa* issue of *Leħen il-Qala* magazine usually lists the events of the past year and sends wishes to families. As described in Chapter Six, other Gozitan villages have similar magazines, local radio stations and websites.

Other changes brought by Gozitan return migrants from the western suburbs of Melbourne included the use of firecrackers at the *festa* marches in the early 1970s. Loads of firecrackers were purchased from Chinese stores in Footscray and transported from Melbourne to Gozo in individual passenger luggage for the *festa*. Although they were a security risk and illegal on passenger aircraft, they were packed in thin foil packages to avoid scanner detection. At the time the firecrackers were considered a new item, and any new item projects an image of dominance or being first, since they were not yet manufactured in Gozo or Malta. This practice has now ceased since firecrackers can easily be purchased in Gozo.

In a small-scale society such as Gozo, where great store is placed on ritual, such additions and changes can be significant. Another event which return

migrants from the western suburbs of Melbourne have significantly influenced is the *festa* of The Blessed Virgin Mary at Ta' Pinu Shrine celebrated in Gozo on 22nd June of every year. The year 2000 was also the 10th anniversary of Pope John Paul II's visit to the Chapel. In Gozo, Ta' Pinu is a sanctuary, which has established itself as the national shrine of Malta and its cult is gradually spreading into many countries around the world. As discussed in Chapter Six, Bacchus Marsh in Victoria is one of these places. Below, I explain how the Ta' Pinu Shrine started in Gozo and spread to Bacchus Marsh and the contribution of many Gozitan migrants and return migrants to creating the Gozitan cult. Today this cult is administered by mainly Gozitan migrants in the western suburbs of Melbourne and Gozitan return migrants from the same place.

Ta' Pinu was a chapel dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, popularly known after the family name of its founders, *ta' Ġentili*, which stood on the spot long before 1575. After 1615, through the efforts of *Pinu* Ġauci, hence its appellation Ta' Pinu, it was beautifully restored. In 1619, he donated the present altarpiece of *Santa Marija*, the Assumption, the work of Bartolommeo Amodeo Perugino. The chapel was one of the best kept on the island, as one report after another of the Pastoral Visits attests (Bezzina 1989:20). In 1663 it was apparently desecrated, but rebuilt a short

time later as devotees soon came to the rescue and it never again shared the fate of the majority of the other countryside chapels.

Until 1883, the Ta' Pinu was just another wayside chapel. On 22nd June that year, Karmni Grima, a peasant spinster from the neighbourhood received a mysterious call from the altarpiece: 'Recite three Hail Mary's in honour of the three days that my body rested in the tomb' (Bezzina 1994:33). The secret was not broken until two and a half years later, when a woman was miraculously cured after the Blessed Virgin Mary of Ta' Pinu had been invoked. By 1887 many pilgrimages to the spot were being organised. The Ecclesiastical Authorities, very cautious at first, apparently understood the Virgin Mary's message. Innumerable difficulties had to be overcome before the foundation stone of the new sanctuary was consecrated on 13th December 1931. The Assumption was crowned by a papal decree on 19th June 1935. On 26th May 1990, Pope John Paul II placed a halo of stars around the Virgin being assumed into heaven (Bezzina 1989:23). More historical information can be found on http//www.gozodiocese.org/sanctuary.

Besides this brief historical background to the Ta' Pinu shrine, mention must be made of the huge number of mementoes, many from Gozitan returnees from the western suburbs of Melbourne, permanently exhibited in the Ex-Voto. The Ex-Voto includes objects offered to the sanctuary as witness to

and thanksgiving by people who obtained special graces. Thousands of letters and notes form an impressive cover to the wall of the sacristy of the sanctuary. Rector Mgr. Benedict Camilleri, whom I have interviewed on several occasions during my research, has visited Australia many times to monitor a Marian Project administered by his office in Gozo.

The project can be traced back to 1945, when a picture of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu was sent to a church in Kensington, a suburb of Melbourne, and later to St Bernadette Church, a place of worship frequented by many Gozitans and Maltese in Sunshine. The picture of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu is also found in Cairns and Rockhampton in Queensland, and in Blacktown and Horseley Park in New South Wales. In 1991, a group of Gozitans and Maltese wished to commemorate the Feast of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu, held each year on 22nd June. They commissioned a copy of the miraculous image and asked Mgr. Benedict Camilleri to visit Melbourne with the picture. After visiting both Melbourne and Sydney, Mgr. Camilleri, together with various other people, began to consider the possibility of building an Australian shrine in honour of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu.

A search for a suitable site began, and in 1992 one was found above the valley of Bacchus Marsh, on the western outskirts of Melbourne. The required legal and ecclesiastical permissions were sought and granted. As

flagged in Chapter Six, the first mass was celebrated on the site in 1993. Archbishop Francis T. Little gave permission for mass to be said each first Saturday of the month. Road construction and tree planting in the area took place on a large scale in the following years. So far, a large cross similar to that on Ghammar Hill in front of Ta' Pinu's Sanctuary in Gozo has been erected on top of the hill at the Marian Centre. It is visible as soon as one approaches Anthony's Cutting along the Western Highway and Avenue of Honour into Bacchus Marsh. It dominates the skyline and stands as a landmark in the Bacchus Marsh region. In 1996, His Grace, the Archbishop of Melbourne, Francis T. Little, blessed the prominent cross and inserted a small bronze cross (already blessed by His Holiness, Pope John Paul II) in the base, as a witness of the Pope's solidarity with this project of Ta' Pinu Centre.

A monument to the Blessed Virgin has been built at the main entrance of this Marian Complex and dominates the whole area. Work on this monument started in 1994 and over 9000 bricks were laid. This 14-metre monument took three months to complete and was designed by Gozitan-Australian architect, David Grech. It is also serving as a gathering place with an arena for worshipping. The main altar is situated in front of the monument and it is used as a place of homage. The Bishop of Gozo blessed this monument during his visit to Melbourne in 1997. The chapel, a replica of Ta' Pinu's

original chapel, has already been built on top of a hill in Bacchus Marsh as the first stage in the building of the shrine. The foundation stone for this chapel was cut from the same quarry in Gozo as the old chapel and was blessed by the Holy Father in Rome in 1997. This chapel was blessed in 1998 by the Archbishop of Melbourne, His Grace George Pell, in the presence of about four thousand people from all over Australia. This was the largest gathering of Gozitans so far recorded outside of Gozo.

The Way of the Cross was erected in 1998 and was blessed by the Most Reverend Joe Grech, a Maltese Bishop, who is Vicar General of the western part of Melbourne. Life size statutes, similar to those on Ghammar Hill in Gozo, are being sculptured in Vietnam. They will eventually replace the provisional timber crosses and therefore replicate another part of the Ta' Pinu shrine in Melbourne. Presently, the main devotions at Bacchus Marsh include the Rosary recital and Mass celebration at 14.00hrs every first Saturday of the month and every Wednesday in the fifteen weeks prior to the feast of *Santa Marija*, The Assumption. Furthermore, in order for the tradition of Gozo's Ta' Pinu to be retained even in faraway Melbourne Australia, Ex-Votos have recently started being kept in the chapel.

Tunisia was probably the first foreign country where this devotion spread, due to numerous Gozitan and Maltese emigrants living there. An altar

dedicated to Our Lady of Ta' Pinu still stands in Agoulette Church in Tunis. One hospital and two churches are dedicated to Our Lady of Ta' Pinu in India: one church built by Fr. Ġiġi Camilleri, a Jesuit, and the other built by Fr. Joseph Vadayaparampil. An orphanage dedicated to Our Lady of Ta' Pinu was blessed by Vicar General Fr. Paul Dione in Barbacena, Brazil in November 1998. Gradually this Gozitan shrine is thus being shared with a growing number of peoples and countries around the world. However, significant to this study is the Marian Complex being built in Bacchus Marsh, Australia.

The Rector of the Marian Project, Mgr. Benedict Camilleri, issues regular updates and a newsletter on the project from time to time. Today a number of Gozitan return migrants from the western suburbs of Melbourne form part of the central committee of this Marian Complex and volunteers of the organisation. This Gozo-Melbourne connection is evidence of the deep-rooted ties between the two places—ties which are continuing to develop and to influence not only what it means to be Gozitan in Australia but also what it means to be Gozitan in Gozo. In Gozo, the Diocese of Gozo considers this as a challenging project between Gozitan and Maltese in Malta and Gozitans and Maltese in Australia.

As narrated in Chapter One, Ġużepp Buttigieg's prayer to Our Lady of Ta'

Pinu aboard the ship to Australia was not only relevant for him at the time,

but is relevant for this study today. Over the past century, the devotion to

Our Lady of Ta' Pinu has extended from one generation to the next, as

evidenced in the Ex-Votos and high church attendance. From a purely

Gozitan event and affair and sanctuary, it has become a national shrine with

international aspirations. More recently, it has become a bridge connecting

Gozitan migrants in the western suburbs of Melbourne with the Gozitans in

Gozo. In effect, the Ta' Pinu cult is not only an integral part of Gozitan

identity in Gozo and Australia, but a metaphor for the 'deterritorialisation'

which has been a feature of the politics of identity certainly since the Second

World War.

PICTORIAL ESSAY THREE

1.　　*Australia's Coat-of-arms.* "A tribute to a nation of great opportunities—Australia", according to the Sultana family of Nadur, Gozo. The Australian coat-of-arms has incorporated the Gozitan surname coat-of-arms.

2.　　*Typical house of a Gozitan return migrant from Melbourne.* The overwhelming majority of houses of Gozitan return migrants from Melbourne are above average-size.

3. *Migrant flags flying on festa day.* The flag complements the insignia on the façade of the house.

4. *Typical villa of a Gozitan return migrant from Melbourne.* Containing 35 rooms (average 27 rooms) and a huge back garden.

5. ***Migrants' March at the village festa.*** The flags of Malta and the Vatican lead flags representing return migrant countries, namely, Australia, the Unites States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom. The migrants visiting for the *festa* along with return migrants, mainly youth, dance their way to the tune of the local brass band.

6. ***The use of the paper cannon and coloured gas.*** An innovative way of creating a festive atmosphere by firing into the air with a specially engineered cannon invented by a migrant in Melbourne. The coloured gas released into the air was introduced by return migrants from Melbourne.

7. *Festa decorations designed and manufactured by Paul Mizzi, return migrant from Melbourne.*

8. ***Ex-votos from Melbourne.*** One of many ex-votos displayed in the sacristy of the Ta' Pinu Sanctuary in Gozo.

9. ***An Australian windmill in the Gozitan outback.*** An example of the importance and prominence given to Australia over other nations.

CONCLUSION

Fejn hemm wieħed minn uliedek	Where there is one of your sons
Jaħdem fl-ibgħad artijiet	Working in distant lands
Tixgħel kewba kollha dija	there is the bright star
Jiddi l-ġmiel tat-Tlett Għoljiet	Shining the beauty of the Three Hills

The last verse of Ġorġ Pisani's Anthem to Gozo provides an appropriate end to this thesis. The verse represents Gozitan migrants around the world. Gozitans in Melbourne would be identified by many as the brightest of the 'bright star' shining the beauty of the Three Hills. Although the furthest from Gozo they are numerically the most significant and, in terms of their impact on life on Gozo, culturally the most influential. Collectively, they illuminate an inescapable dimension of modern Gozitan identity, which I have attempted to represent in the preceding chapters.

In the Introduction, I wrote that migration and return migration, like all journeyings, 'are what I call *crossings* into worlds beyond the familiar one(s) that one is born in, or has temporarily inhabited'. In the journeying I have made in conceptualising, researching and writing this thesis I have crossed many times into unfamiliar worlds. Many times I have lost my bearings—many times my supervisors have had to set me on course—and I know that even at the end of this particular stage of the current journey much of the terrain I have glimpsed needs further exploration.

Like Lina, with whom this thesis began, I, like so many Gozitans, am a cultural 'hybrid'—a person who is simultaneously, and often uncomfortably, 'home' and 'homeless'. Like Lina, I share the desire and the need to belong, to be anchored in a place and a culture. But, also like Lina, I have discovered that returning 'home' is an elusive goal, incapable of being separated from all the other worlds that we occupy. Borrowing from Stuart Hall, I suggested at the outset that for people like Lina and me there is no one cultural or social locale or physical place which is sufficient to respond to the yearning for the wholeness of 'home'.

As this study has shown, 'home' remains an essentialised and idealised site for many Gozitans, whether in Melbourne, Gozo, or elsewhere, who daily confront the reality of profound and often rapid change in their life circumstances. In this respect, Gozitans are perhaps no different from people anywhere, at any time, intent on anchoring their lives. I used Lina's case to illustrate how Gozitan identity is framed by the tensions between the desire for continuity and belonging and the pressures for change. These pressures are part of the reality of contemporary life for many people around the globe. Just as Lina's story is the story of so many Gozitans, so too the situation of the latter represents part of the human condition.

Be that as it may, as I have tried to show in this thesis in the final analysis we are talking—I have been talking—about real men, women and children grappling with

life's problems as they arise. I have shown how Gozitan men, women and children have drawn from their store of cultural capital, including their essentialised conceptions of 'home' and their localised familiarity with the experience of 'crossings', to establish and maintain meaning and order in their lives. Not simply drawn from, but (as much of the material in this thesis attests) adapted, transformed and created cultural capital—so that what they have produced has informed and expanded what it means to be 'Gozitan'.

In this way, I hope that I have contributed in some small way to our understanding of the human dimensions of 'migration' and 'return migration'. I also hope that I have contributed to a greater recognition of the contribution of the Gozitan settlers in Melbourne to Australia's social, political, economic, linguistic and cultural life; as well as the contribution of the returnees to life on Gozo. The mounted trophies and crammed vegetable gardens in places like St Albans, and the Australian coat-of-arms and flags in places like Qala, are outward, physical signs of these contributions and of the bonds that have been forged by people at opposite ends of the globe.

The process continues. The horse racetrack in the middle of Gozo imitating Flemington Racetrack in Melbourne and the Madonna Ta' Pinu complex at Bacchus Marsh are still under construction. So too are the St Paul's Boċċi Club in the Melbourne suburb of Sunshine and the Xerri Boċċi Club in the Gozo village of Qala,

where new catering arrangements and multipurpose recreational facilities point beyond either Gozo or Australia to the influence of global ideas and processes.

As I have touched upon in this thesis, the global future presents new challenges to Gozitan identity, but it is also producing new responses. The Maltese islands have been ranked by the European statistics Agency EUROSTAT as one of the world's highest users of computers with internet connections, and local councils and parish offices within Gozitan villages are already producing their individual homepages. Homepages are now being posted by Gozitan firms. These homepages are regularly accessed by Gozitans in Melbourne and elsewhere around the world. The brave new world of cyberspace journeys and crossings might be new but, as this study of Gozo in the world and the world in Gozo has shown, the merging of the local and the global has long been a defining feature of Gozitan identity.

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APPENDIX 1

BASIC XERRI-BUTTIGIEG FAMILY TREE

AUTHOR'S GRANDFATHER'S FATHER IN BOLD

No.	MALE	MARRIAGE	PLACE	FEMALE
1	Raymond XERRI			
2	Joseph XERRI	26-06-1966	Qala	Margaret BUTTIGIEG
3	Antonio XERRI	1932	Qala	Caterina BUTTIGIEG
4	**Guissepe XERRI**	02-05-1905	Qala	Carmela BUTTIGIEG
5	Antonio XERRI	13-11-1878	Nadur	Caterina MERCIEQA
6	Guiseppe XERRI	07-08-1827	Nadur	Maria BUTTIGIEG
7	Antonio SCERRI	28-04-1798	Nadur	Maria VELLA
8	Mikieli SCERRI	29-01-1764	Nadur	Mattija SAID
9	Domenico XERRI	15-10-1705	Nadur	Margherita FARRUGIA
10	Ġamri XERRI	19-08-1665	Matrice	Nathalizia MERCIEQA
11	Salvu XERRI	10-10-1618	Matrice	Laurea REFALO
12	Domenico XERRI	?	?	Domenica

APPENDIX 2

XERRI-BUTTIGIEG MARRIAGES (1618-1753)			
Marriage between	**Date**	**Place**	**Appears in Genealogy**
Buttigieg Guzeppi -Cassar Angela	22-08-1753	Nadur	Four times
Bartolo Giovanni - Gakba Grima	14-10-1725	Nadur	Four times
Buttigieg Indrija - Xerri Spiranza	16-09-1725	Nadur	Four times
Mercieqa Maurizio-Camilleri Maria	25-08-1721	Nadur	Six times
Cassar Giovanni - Debono Lucrezia	24-02-1717	Nadur	Four times
Attard Alberti - Caruana Nathalizia	15-08-1711	Nadur	Five times
Meilac Guzeppi - Borg Madalena	17-06-1707	Nadur	Five times
Xerri Domenico - Farrugia Margherita	15-10-1705	Nadur	Seven times
Camilleri Pietru - Mifsud Anna	17-09-1698	Nadur	Five times
Tabone Mario - Said Alfonza	17-09-1698	Nadur	Four times
Mercieca Felic - Portelli Margherita	06-08-1693	Nadur	Six times
Grima Domenico - Mifsud Katerina	05-08-1690	Nadur	Nine times
Farrugia Alessandro - Psaila Domenica	25-07-1676	Matrice	Five times
Xerri Gamri - Mercieqa Nathalizia	19-08-1665	Matrice	Eight times
Psaila Guzeppi - Falzon Catarina	10-10-1649	Matrice	Six times
Xerri Salvu - Refalo Laurea	10-10-1618	Matrice	Five times

QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

GROUP A – GOZITANS WHO NEVER EMIGRATED

(1)   Is Gozo different from Malta? Are Gozitans different to Maltese?

(2)   What term are you comfortable with:

(i)   I am Gozitan/ We are Gozitans

(ii)   I am Maltese/ We are Maltese?

Why?

(3)   When did you first ever leave Gozo? Tell me about it …

(4)   How often do you go to Malta? Do you have Maltese relatives?

(5)   Why did so many Gozitans migrate?

(6)   Why did so many Gozitans settle in Melbourne?

(7)   Why didn't you migrate? Did you ever consider migrating? Do you have friends/relations who have returned?

(8)   How have return migrants changed? How are you influenced by them?

(9)   Can you easily recognise who has been an emigrant? How? Have they influenced life on Gozo? Do you think they fit in like everyone else?

(10)   Do you have relatives in Melbourne? In other places in Australia? Are they Gozitans? Do you keep in touch with them? How?

(11)   What do you think about the homes of return migrants? Their architecture? Their names? and flags flown?

(12)   What about your home?

(13)   Are return migrants from Melbourne, Australia still Gozitans or have they changed to someone else? Perhaps Australian or Gozitan-Australians?

(14)   Have they lost their dialect? Do they use foreign words and/or speak differently?

(15)   Has Gozo changed?

GROUP B – GOZITAN MIGRANTS IN MELBOURNE

(1)   Is Gozo different from Malta? Are Gozitans different to Maltese?

(2)   What term are you comfortable with:

(iii)   I am Gozitan/ We are Gozitans
(iv)   I am Maltese/ We are Maltese?

Why?

(3)   When did you first ever leave Gozo? Tell me about it …

(4)   How often did you go to Malta? Do you have Maltese relatives?

(5)   When did you leave Gozo? Why did you leave Gozo? What about others –
        your friends, fellow villagers and other Gozitans?

(6)   When you migrated did you think that it was permanent or a temporary move?

(7)   Why did so many Gozitans settle in Melbourne?

(8)   When you mix with other Maltese, are they Gozitans or Maltese?

(9)   Did you ever return to Gozo? When? Why? What about others? Had Gozo
        changed when you went back? How?

(10)   Would you want to return back permanently to Gozo? Do you think you will
        ever return permanently?

(11)   How have you changed since coming to Melbourne?

(12)   Was it easy for you to adjust to Melbourne?

(13)   Are you involved in community life in Melbourne? Were you active in Gozo?
        Which clubs do you associate with? Which *festa* do you attend? How different
        are they from the *festa* in Gozo?

(14)   Have you migrated to other countries? What are they like?

(15)   Have you lost your dialect? Do you use foreign words and/or speak
        differently?

(16)   Do you miss Gozo?

GROUP C – GOZITAN RETURN MIGRANTS FROM MELBOURNE

(1)   Is Gozo different from Malta? Are Gozitans different to Maltese?

(2)   What term are you comfortable with:

      (v)   I am Gozitan/ We are Gozitans

      (vi)   I am Maltese/ We are Maltese?

Why?

(3)   When did you first ever leave Gozo? Tell me about it …

(4)   How often do you go to Malta? Do you have Maltese relatives?

(5)   When did you leave Gozo? Why did you leave Gozo? What about others – your friends, fellow villagers and other Gozitans?

(6)   Why did so many Gozitans settle in Melbourne?

(7)   Did you ever return to Gozo before? When? Why? What about others?

(8)   When you mix with other Maltese, are they Gozitan or Maltese?

(9)   How do you think migration changed you? Are you still Gozitan or have you changed to someone else? Perhaps Australian or Gozitan-Australian? What about other people? Do you think you are typical of return migrants?

(10)   Why did you decide to leave Melbourne and go back to Gozo?

(11)   Was it easy for you to adjust to Gozo? (In what way was it difficult?)

(12)   When you were in Melbourne were you active in your community? Did you attend the *festa*? Social spots and activities? Did you return to live in your birth village? Or somewhere else? Do you still attend you village *festa*? Are you still loyal to your village patron saint? Social spots and activities?

(13)   What did you bring back with you?

(14)   Have you migrated to other countries? What are they like?

(15)   What do you think about the homes of return migrants? Their architecture? Their names? and flags flown?

(16)   What about your home?

(17)   Have you lost your dialect? Do you use foreign words and/or speak differently?

(18)   Has Gozo changed since you left?

(19)   Do you miss Melbourne? Why?

(20)   When you were in Melbourne did you miss Gozo?

APPENDIX 4

QUESTION: WHY DID SO MANY GOZITANS SETTLE IN MELBOURNE?

GROUP A – GOZITANS WHO NEVER MIGRATED	
SUBJECT	**ANSWER**
Ġuże' (Joseph) Aquilina	Why they settled in Melbourne particularly, I cannot say. Maybe you are in a better position to carry out an investigation. The reason is … my answer is … why did they emigrate to Australia? As a smaller number of emigrated to America and Canada. It's in search of a better job. Better job.
Effie Masini	I think the trend. I think you have to trace the pattern from when it started. Perhaps the first families who went there, settled quite well and family ties remained strong. Gozo was one large family. I think that the main reason … I think it was found to be the best place in that stage of migration to settle in Melbourne.
Maria Calleja	There is a quite large number in Melbourne. I think they like to go to a place where they would find their compatriots … that is my idea. I cannot tell you more. I am sure some streets are named after Gozitan things. I think Sydney is more *sinjorina* [posh]: I had some friends form Xaghra who lived in Sydney and they said it's a posh city.
Loreto Buttigieg	I do not know, but my brother Mosc' and his family have settled in St. Albans, and have been there for 40 years. He came twice and he liked it in Melbourne.
Eucharist Mizzi	Probably because there resides the biggest number of Maltese in the whole of Australia. Secondly, because the climate is close to ours.

Anton F. Attard	Maybe because there were better opportunities for work there. The more Gozitans settled in a place, the greater are the chances that other Gozitans and relatives follow suit.
George Attard	Because so many had relatives over there.
Carmen Grima	Since the first groups of Gozitans settled in Melbourne others went there, near their relatives.
Joseph Bezzina	I do not know.
George Attard	Most probably they found a secure job there and settled in Melbourne with their family.
Victor J Galea	Do not know.

GROUP B – GOZITAN MIGRANTS IN MELBOURNE

SUBJECT	ANSWER
Victor Bonnello	It depends on the work they are looking for and on the relatives who live in Melbourne. It depended also on those who have sponsored them to come to Australia.
Emmanuel Bonello	Not quite sure, seems to depend on relatives or family numbers.
Pauline Ziebell	Because of limited employment opportunities in Gozo.
Francis Spiteri	So many Gozitans settled in Melbourne because it was a very industrial state and to go to work you do not have to travel very far from home.
Maria Micallef	Not sure. Probably because most of them go where most of their relatives or friends live.
Maria Zammit	Because it's a beautiful city.
Pauline Farrugia	Gozitans settled in Melbourne because they got more relatives here than anywhere else.

297

Josephine Cassar	I think that Gozitans feel comfortable moving to Melbourne because there are so many others from the same country that it's almost a second Malta!
Salvina Stellini	My husband lived in Melbourne and I know a lot of people from Gozo who settled in Melbourne.
Joseph Stellini	Some people like it here, I had the *garanti* [sponsorship] made to Melbourne.
Jane Attard	Because in their backyards people talked about where they were going to stay and live. Also, migrants used to write back home about Australia and mentioned the good opportunities for work and that it was a safe place.
Sam Tabone	There was work and they came to stay near friends and relatives.
Mary Xerri	The stories that came back to us in Gozo always gave preference to Melbourne over the other Australian capital cities.
Peter Paul Portelli	I do now know. I think people settled here because they had relatives here. I do not think it is because of the weather. It's just that they had a choice, either Melbourne or Sydney, the industrial states at the time. Most chose Melbourne.
Coronato Curmi	Many Gozitans probably settled in Melbourne because of family and friends who were already here.
Michael Buttigieg	Had relatives in Melbourne, and the families and relatives helped each other to settle.

GROUP C – GOZITAN RETURN MIGRANTS FROM MELBOURNE

SUBJECT	ANSWER
Augustine (Wistin) Stellini	The ship stopped in Melbourne, I got a job and stayed there. About a fourth of Gozitans went off to Sydney. Family and work made me settle there.
Lucy Stellini	The ship stopped there and we had relatives waiting for us. Family ties kept us in Melbourne for quite some time before we went to Sydney. I think because it's another Gozo outside of Gozo.
Maurice Cauchi	Chain reaction – many settled on wharves and brought their friends.
Laurie Zammit	The standard of living in Gozo was low and Melbourne was attractive.
Angelo Xuereb	Because they found other Maltese and so a community was formed.
Angelo Buttigieg	Well there were others who went also to Sydney. In my case, I had already my family settled in Melbourne where it seems that there were adequate job opportunities.
Mariano Grima	Melbourne is the preferred migrant city for Gozitans because it has a lot in common with Gozo. Plenty of fellow Gozitans and you feel you are in Gozo … in Sunshine.
Adelina Attard	For job purposes.

APPENDIX 5

GROUP B – GOZITAN MIGRANTS IN MELBOURNE RESPONSES TO QUESTION: WHEN YOU MIGRATED DID YOU THINK THAT IT WAS PERMANENT OR A TEMPORARY MOVE?

SUBJECT	ANSWER
Victor Bonello	It was a permanent move.
Emmanuel Bonello	On paper it was written as temporary, a three year contract; the visa given was for an indefinite stay. Every three years I have renewed my stay and it seems to be coming a permanent stay.
Pauline Ziebell	I thought it would be a temporary move.
Francis Spiteri	When I migrated I thought it was going to be a temporary move.
Maria Micallef	Yes, I knew it was to be permanent because my husband and his family had been in Australia for a long time and I knew it will be hard for him to go back and live in Malta or Gozo.
Maria Zammit	Temporary.
Pauline Farrugia	I think that it was for a temporary move.
Josephine Cassar	No response.
Salvina Stellini	I did not know what was going to happen.
Joseph Stellini	I did not know what was going to happen.
Jane Attard	It was a permanent move for us.

300

Sam Tabone	We came for a temporary stay.
Mary Xerri	It was always considered a temporary move to accumulate savings and to then return back home.
Peter Paul Portelli	I thought it would be temporary but things changed. I met my wife and settled here.
Ċoronatu Curmi	When I left Gozo I thought it would be temporary but them I met my wife and settled here.
Michael Buttigieg	I thought I would stay for two years and return single and home sick, and I returned two years later to marry my wife and came to Australia.

APPENDIX 6

PASS-PORT NO	DATE	NAME	RESIDENCE	PROFESSION
42	16-01-1915	Luigi Galea	Għarb	General Labourer
43	16-01-1915	Carmelo Galea	Għarb	General Labourer
44	16-01-1915	Luigi Galea	Għarb	General Labourer
45	16-01-1915	Giuseppe Mizzi	Għarb	General Labourer
46	16-01-1915	Francesco Caruana	Għarb	General Labourer
47	16-01-1915	Giuseppe Debrincat	Għarb	General Labourer
48	16-01-1915	Luigi Galea	San Lawrenz	General Labourer
49	16-01-1915	Francesco Mizzi	Għarb	General Labourer
50	16-01-1915	Salvatore Portelli	Għarb	General Labourer
51	16-01-1915	Michel-Angelo Cremona	Għarb	General Labourer

52	16-01-1915	Michel-Angelo Mercieca	Għarb	General Labourer
80	29-01-1915	Giuseppe Grima	Għarb	Field Labourer
106	06-02-1915	Giuseppe Galea	Għarb	Field Labourer
107	06-02-1915	Giuseppe Frendo	Għarb	Field Labourer
108	06-02-1915	Lorenzo Camenzuli	Għarb	Field Labourer
119	11-02-1915	Salvatore Cassar	Għarb	Field Labourer
120	11-02-1915	Luigi Vella	Għarb	Field Labourer
121	11-02-1915	Fidele Cauchi	Għarb	Field Labourer
628	01-07-1915	Giovanni Haber	Xewkija	Field Labourer
633	01-07-1915	Giuseppe Custo'	Għarb	Labourer
634	28-06-1915	Francesco Cauchi	Għarb	Farmer
635	30-06-1915	Felice Portelli	Għarb	Labourer
636	28-06-1915	Felice Mizzi	Għarb	Farmer
637	28-06-1915	Lawrence Camenzuli	Għarb	Farmer
804	17-07-1915	Michelangelo Camilleri	Ta' Għammar	Field Labourer
928	29-07-1915	John Mary Xerri	Qala	Field Labourer
929	29-07-1915	Francis Buttigieg	Qala	Field Labourer

930	29-07-1915	Joseph (Michael) Camilleri	Qala	Field Labourer
931	29-07-1915	Francis Buttigieg	Qala	Field Labourer
932	29-07-1915	Joseph Borg	Qala	Field Labourer
950	30-07-1915	Felix Cutajar	Qala	Field Labourer
951	30-07-1915	John Xerri	Qala	Field Labourer
952	30-07-1915	Angelus Xerri	Qala	Field Labourer
955	30-07-1915	Joseph Camilleri	Għasri	Field Labourer
956	31-07-1915	Giuseppe Camilleri	Għarb	Farm Hand
957	30-07-1915	Carmelo Vincenzo Camilleri	Kerċem	Agriculture
958	30-07-1915	Paul Buhagiar	Kerċem	Labourer
959	30-07-1915	Saverio Grima	Kerċem	Labourer
961	30-07-1915	Lorenzo Stellini	Kerċem	Barber
962	30-07-1915	Giuseppe Grima	San Lawrenz	Labourer
963	30-07-1915	Lorenzo Gatt	Għarb	Mason
963a	30-07-1915	Luigi Salvatore Piscopo	Għarb	Agriculture
965	30-07-1915	Luigi Mizzi	San Lawrenz	Labourer
966	30-07-1915	Angelo Cauchi	Għarb	Labourer
967	30-07-1915	Giuseppe Camenzuli	Għarb	Labourer

968	30-07-1915	Pio Luigi Fiteni	San Lawrenz	Agriculture
969	30-07-1915	Francesco Mizzi	San Lawrenz	Barber
970	30-07-1915	Giuseppe Axiak	San Lawrenz	Agriculture
971	30-07-1915	Salvatore Cassar	Għarb	Labourer
972	30-07-1915	Giuseppe Francesco Cauchi	San Lawrenz	Labourer
973	30-07-1915	Lorenzo Grima	San Lawrenz	Labourer
974	30-07-1915	Giuseppe Axiak	Għarb	Labourer
975	30-07-1915	Antonio Camenzuli	Għarb	Barber
976	30-07-1915	Giuseppe M'angelo Cauchi	San Lawrenz	Labourer
977	30-07-1915	Camelo Mizzi	Għarb	Farm Hand
978	30-07-1915	Luigi Grima	San Lawrenz	Agriculture
979	30-07-1915	M'Angelo Francesco Agius	Għarb	Agriculture
980	31-07-1915	Peter Paul Cremona	Qala	Field Labourer
981	31-07-1915	Saviour Mifsud	Qala	Field Labourer
982	31-07-1915	Francesco Cauchi	San Lawrenz	Farm Hand

983	30-07-1915	Lorenzo Francesco Cauchi	San Lawrenz	Agriculture
1091	08-08-1915	Giuseppe Frendo	Għarb	Farm Hand
1096	08-08-1915	Carmelo Mercieca	Għarb	Farmer
1181	13-08-1915	Andrew Mizzi	Qala	Field Labourer
1145	14-08-1915	Giuseppe Camilleri	Nadur	Field Labourer
1160	16-08-1915	Francis Buttigieg	Qala	Field Labourer
1161	16-08-1915	Saviour Cutajar	Qala	Field Labourer
1162	16-08-1915	Salvatore Caruana	Għarb	Field Labourer
1167	16-08-1915	Carmelus Camilleri	Qala	Field Labourer
1173	16-08-1915	Giuseppe Micallef	Rabat	Field Labourer
1188	19-08-1915	Charles Borg	Nadur	Labourer
1189	19-08-1915	Bernard Borg	Nadur	Labourer
1204	20-08-1915	David Grech	Rabat	Tinsmith
1205	20-08-1915	Joseph Debattista	Rabat	Butcher
1236	19-08-1915	Carmelo Vella	Għarb	Farm Labourer
1237	17-08-1915	Francesco Cauchi	San Lawrenz	Farm Labourer
1247	24-08-1915	Luigi Camilleri	Ta' Għammar	Farm Labourer

1248	19-08-1915	Maurizio Cauchi	Rabat	Field Labourer
1294	25-08-1915	Giuseppe Zammit	Rabat	Coal Heaver
1295	25-08-1915	Carmelo Zammit	Rabat	Farm Hand
1554	01-10-1915	Agostino Caruana	Għarb	Field Labourer
1570	11-09-1915	Francesco Calleja	Xagħra	Stone Cutter
1572	24-08-1915	Luigi Mintuf	Żebbuġ	Agr. Labourer
1573	11-09-1915	Pietro Buttigieg	Marsalforn	Stone Picker
1590	08-10-1915	Grazio Galea	Żebbuġ	Labourer
1608	14-10-1915	Giuseppe Formosa	Kerċem	Farm Labourer
1627	25-08-1915	Lorenzo Mizzi	San Lawrenz	Agr. Labourer
1628	18-10-1915	Giuseppe Caruana	Żebbuġ	Agr. Labourer
1629	18-10-1915	Giuseppe Vella	Għarb	Agr. Labourer
1630	16-10-1915	Paolo Micallef	Kerċem	Husband
1668	22-08-1915	Antonio Cassar	Għarb	Miller
1669	22-08-1915	Giovanni Cassar	Għarb	Labourer
1670	18-08-1915	Giuseppe Mizzi	San Lawrenz	Farmer
1685	17-10-1915	Paolo Axiak	Żebbuġ	Labourer
1686	17-10-1915	Michele Axiak	Żebbuġ	Labourer

| 1789 | 08-11-1915 | Antonio Tabone | Rabat | Baker |
| 1800 | 11-11-1915 | Francis Grima | Xewkija | Stone Labourer |

APPENDI X 7

WORD/PHRASE	MEANING
Anġlbellu	the devil
Bajju	silly, blockhead
Bajju tal-Loċċa	an arrant ass
Loċċa	corrupt person
Bankunċin	almond biscuit
Qisu bagħra	a very ugly person
Barnuża	a sack within another sack with a hood worn by peasants when they are caught in a rainfall
Barrin	heaps of eight sheaves of clover left lying about in the field before being collected in one big heap
Basbrun/a or Basbrum/a	bass-broom (used mainly in Nadur)
Raba' Battal	fallow land
Bażil	in Żebbuġ: loom-woven fabrics of fine ornamental nature generally used for curtains, the threads of the warp being of cotton and those of the weft cotton or wood
(i)bbalkida	to be unsteady, move to and fro, oscillate
(i)bbummat	the word is used in the phase *ajru ibbummat*, referring to the sky when it is overcast, generally indicating a coming storm
Bejn kont	on account, on an average, eg. *ħallast Lm100 bejn kont,* "I paid Lm100 on account; *50 pied bejn kont,* 'on an average of 50 feet'
Belul	silly, simpleminded person (used mainly in Għarb)
Qattusa mberbxa	female cat with more than three patches of different colours

309

Qattusa berbexija	female cat with more than three patches of different colours (used in Xewkija)
Libsa mberbxa	dress made of speckled cloth
Berewend/u	tantrums, bad humour (used in Munxar)
Berritta / britta	cap
Bħal li kieku!	a polite refusal of a courtesy
Biġri	quickly
Bċieċ	plots of building sites (used in Qala)
Ibsa	name given to various types of rapacious birds (used in Xagħra)
Gijango	Jew's harp
Barrada tal-ħamiem	a kind of pigeon's earthenware bowl with three holes from which the pigeon drinks and another in the middle through which the bowl is filled with water
Berwen	to sing: dotterels (used in Rabat)
Bivitura/a	pigeon's drinking bowl
Blajjet	horizontal wooden boards of the framework of a door contiguous with the door lintel (used in Rabat)
Bleħien	composite
Bleħenija	simple-mindedness (used in Sannat)
Bomba taż-żokra	*beraq pront*, prompt flash petard formed of potash (in pyrotechnics)
Bomblu tal-gass	gas cylinder
Bonn(ijiet)	inguinal lymphadenopathy, swelling in the groin
Bont	stem, spear (of onion, tulip, asphodel)
Brik/a	lighter (used in Munxar)
Broxk/a ta' Għawdex	goat-root, yellow rest-harrow (ononis natrix)
Buddax/a	concubine (used in Munxar)
Buffunier/a	hen with whisker-like feathers round the head (used in Xagħra)
Bumbett/a	hurricane-lamp (used in Qala)

Bugħaż	mouth of a sea-port or harbour (used in Qala and Marsalforn)
Buraħb/a	black beetle (Blatta orentalis) (used in Xagħra)
Bużrunġu	big frog (used in Għasri)
Ċamura / Ċamur	the accumulated residue left after the polishing of newly-laid tiles
Pakketta ta' xkubetta	gun stick
Ċarru	plot; strip; long narrow piece of land (Qala and Xagħra)
Ċenpula	a dowdy woman (Sannat)
Ċim	tuft of clover (Għarb)
Ċinkwantin	small plank or block of stone on which, according to Victor Galea (Xagħra, Gozo), butchers cut meat
Ċinkwett/a	a general term for anything very small
Ċintorin/a	belt, girdle
Dħulija / Dħula	politeness, courtesy, gentleness of manners
Dawwar	to frame a picture, photo etc
Id-Dawwara	the circumference (Munxar)
Darfġin	unfattened pig (Rabat)
Deffa	the word occurs in the expression *kien fid-deffa*, 'he found himself facing or tackling the most difficult part of the work'
Deffun	ground pottery generally used as cement for roof surfaces
Deffen	to grind pottery (Zagħra)
Dejxa	a chatterbox; very talkative person (Għarb)
Delu	the funnel (of a grinding machine, as coffee-grinder, mill, etc.), millhopper (Żebbuġ, Għarb and Xagħra)
Dokot	to become pregnant (animal) (Qala)
Eġidd	ancestry, family

Espost / Sponut / Spost	generally means 'the exposition' of the Blessed Sacrament
Eżatt/a	to place the body of a boat exactly in the right place with one of its sides raised as high as the other by using a pair of compasses to prevent the boat getting warped
Faċċati	used by Victor Galea's mother in the sense of double-faced/two-fold
Faqa	overflow, overflowing of fields after heavy rainfall, when a field is flooded, green barley breaks and rots
Fallut/a	serious mistake affecting one's personal honour, indiscretion, error of judgement (Munxar)
Flaz	1. to become hypocritical 2. to become shrewd and suspicious
Fanfru / infanfru	pilot-fish
(t)Faqqam	to show off; to try to give an impression of one's superiority (of a vain person)
Foqqiegħ	bladder-campion (Silene inflata) (Xagħra)
Farfett (il-lejl)	figuratively a two-faced person who supports two different political parties naturally to curry favour with both (Qala)
Farinal	the funnel of a mill through which flow comes out
Ftira (Għawdxija)	name of a type of Gozitan *ftira* seasoned with anchovy, tomatoes and oil put in an opened unbaked loaf and baked in an oven
Fattar	*mara mfattra*, s stout woman of awkward figure
(a)Fattu	completely (Xagħra)
Felli (tas-safra)	crack of the skin of the heel
Felu (filwa)	foal, colt, young of an ass, young mule
Fenek tas-Salib	English rabbit
Fenek tal-Liebru	home-bred rabbit
Fera	to offer (a price)

Frajħa / frejħa	*glorja*, bell-ringing on the death of a baby
Fertel	1. to gesticulate with one's arms angrily; 2. to go into a bad spin; 3. to scurry (used at Għarb)
(t)Fertil	angry or nervous gesticulating with one's arms (Xagħra)
(i)Ffoxxl/a	to get hurt; to hurt; harm; damage (Munxar)
Fgura	a niche containing a picture of a small statue of Our Lady (Għarb)
Filfel ta' l-imnieħer	peppercorn ending with a turned point (Żebbuġ)
Frud (jew żwieġ)	he or she played 'odds and evens'
Firmar	to stand up to a threat
Fittex	to mate the goat / cow etc.
Fixkula	crazy person: one who makes a mess of everything
Fixhija / Fixkieħa	batten; spiking batten
Fizzju	1. the mass on Christmas Eve 2. dim. of *uffizzju in fizzju tal-brevjarju*, 'the breviary containing the Divine Office' (Xagħra)
Flaġellun	1. instruments of torture used for the flagellation of Christ 2. whip with many lashes carried before the statue of Christ tied to a column in a Good Friday procession
Il-Flieġu / Frieġu	the sea space between Marfa (in Malta) and Mġarr (in Gozo) which the Gozo ferry crosses
Il-Flieġu ta' Għawdex	the strait separating the island of Comino and Zala, Gozo
Fnad	to become deep
Forka sufra	a cork float with two hooks with fishing bait attached for catching blacktail
Formika	a disease which affects the hooves of mules and donkeys, causing them to limp (Xagħra)

Fotom	a morose and sulky person
Fraglu	friable or brittle stone, generally used of the upper coralline limestone
Frammażan/a	variety of a now extinct vine (Xagħra)
Fraxx/a / Fraxxna	the quantity of soft globigerina stone that one cuts off with a spade (Xagħra/Xewkija)
Fraxxu	the name of a stone softer than globigerina of which stone stoves were made
Frendew	word uttered by a boy taking part in a game of marbles when his marble runs right up to the wall to claim the right to play from the distance of a hand's span and an inch (as played in Rabat), or from the distance of an arm's length in (as played in Xagħra) which made playing easier for him; when this claim was not accepted the other players cried *Nu Frendew*
Friwill	freewheel (Xagħra)
Frawdita'	great distress; trouble
Frostun	a whip with a long cord attached to it with which children in Gozo strike swallows flying close to the road
Fula f'qargħa	once in a blue moon; very exceptional occurrence (Rabat)
Fula l-gejder (Xagħra and Munxar)	name of a children's game consisting in hiding a bean, in one fist or another, the other player guessing in which of the two fists it is hidden
Fula l-piċ	same (Żebbuġ)
Fuq	1. over above (as in Malta); 2. Żebbuġ, Xagħra and Nadur are high (on a hilltop) above the other villages
Il-Faqqani	the upper side of a quadrangular building stone

Furketta	pieces of rod used to raise vines from the ground to prevent the grapes from being burnt by the sun
Fus	axis, axle-tree, axle, spindle
Fustan	corduroy, fustian, local fabric woven on a loom with both the warp and the weft made of brownish cotton
Futa	piece of cloth used to wipe one's hands while working
Futrew	this word occurs only in certain idiomatic expressions, eg. 'how puffed up with conceit they are today'
Ġabra (maġbar)	great number; multitude; large crowd (Għajn Qatet, Rabat)
Miġbra	1. collection of money, during the sermon there is a collection (Munxar) 2. thrift (Xagħra)
Ġaqġaq	3. to sing (mistle thrush and whinchat) (Rabat and Kerċem)
Ġrada	large scratch with the skin stripped off
Ġardam	to eat skin, etc. (insect)
Ġarġri	having white spots (of pigeons, harriers, etc.) (Rabat and Qala)
Ġebel	describes fields that can be cultivated but are largely full of rocks lying between the upper part of a hill and the underlying clayey soil known as *is-sisien*
Ġeggeġ	to sing (Nadur)
(me) ġnen	to act or behave in crazy manner like someone who doesn't know what he is doing (Xagħra)
Ġera (biġri)	the imperative optative usage expressing eagerness o have one's wish fulfilled without delay (*iġri jiġi t-tifel mill-Awstralja*, 'I am so eager to see my son return from Australia')
Ġerzi/ Ġersi	cardigan (Żebbuġ)

Ġobon maħsul	peppered cheese
Ġbejna ta' Għawdex	Gozo cheese
Ġor/a / Ġieva/ig	to be beneficial to, do good to (Xagħra)
Ġurdn/i	grey, with fur resembling that of a mouse
Ġamblu tal-klamar	the young of the squid (Loligo vulgaris) so called because it swims backwards just as shrimps and prawns do (Marsalforn)
Gannaċ	to crochet (Qala)
Gangaskott/a	sheet cleat (Għajnsielem)
Garni Sqalli	arum, monk's cowl (Arum italicum); cuckoo pint; calf's food (A. Maculatum) (Xagħra)
Gażuż	1. soda water, carbonated drink, fizzy drink; 2. *Ġinġer* (ginger ale)
Gejder	name of a children's game consisting in hiding something, generally a bean, in one fist and the other player guessing in which of the two fists it is hidden (Munxar, Xagħra and Żebbuġ)
Gullu	this word occurs in *gullu xagħra*, a tuft of thick hair (Xewkija)
Ħa	the calling of sheep and goat by shepherd
Ħaba	To move forward on its buttocks by a child still unable to walk (Għarb)
Ħbit / ħbat	1. hitting; striking; 2. occurrence of some action
Ħobża	1. a person who cannot keep a secret (Rabat) 2. the ball-shaped lid of an alembic
Ħdurija / ħdur	1. greenness; 2. greenery, verdure, vegetation; 3. animosity, sourness, bitterness of feeling
Ħadded	to make hinges, etc. of a window
Ħafsi	full of pustules / pimples (Xagħra)

Ħajjem / Ħejjem	to treat someone with excessive fondness, to caress, to fondle
Ħajm / Ħejm	affection, niceness, sickly sweetness
Ħaliba/a	fig / fig-tree
Ħalq bla snien	an old toothless man who can't chew his food
Ħamiem baqbaqi	a kind of pigeon so called because it is always cooing (Munxar)
Ħamiem waqwaq	same (Xagħra)
Ħamiem tal-kukkuross	collared dove (*Streptophelia visoria*) (Qala)
Ħamiem ġarġri	a kind of small pigeon with black white spotted features (Qala)
Ħamiem tal-għonnella	a kind of pigeon with short, erect feathers all around its head and on its crop (qala)
Ħamiem tal-oħxon	a kind of pigeon of a larger body (Qala)
Ħamiem tal-kbir	same
Ħanaq / Ħonoq	extinct surname borne by a distinguished family in Gozo and Malta whose property in Gozo included all the area occupied by the villages of Ta' Sannat and Xewkija which became church property support financially the prebend of the Collegiate church in Gozo
(Bu) ħamsa	name of a children's game played with fine small stones (Xagħra)
Ħanut	office
Ħarxin	rugged, coarse (of surface, skin, material etc.); harsh, rough to the touch
Ħlielu	he made a profit (out of business, etc.)
Ħmar	cross-beam
Inklin / Klil	Rosemary (Rosmarinus officinalis)
Intan/a	to hide, to conceal oneself
Kaċċamendla	woodchat shrike (Lanius senator)
Kaħla	green sand whence (Xewkija)

Kalat/a	cart track, cart ruts (Qala)
(i)kkapulat	became pregnant (woman) (Qala)
Kav/a	to hollow out (Xagħra)
Klamarett	young squid
Kannak	to dig trenches round a tree
Konka	to dig trenches round a tree and between trees (as passages for water) (Qala)
Kuntrarjuż / Kuntraljuż	pig-headed, one who does the opposite of what he or she is told
Kuklu	children's game still very popular at Xagħra, played by boys and girls, consisting of five squares holes or nine squares dug in the ground wide and deep enough to contain a large marble
Kwaljarin / Kuljarin	the rectum (final section of large intestine) – term used by butchers
Kumpratur	one who buys eggs, fowls, etc. directly from the farmer or village peasant
Kuperċ / Kuljarin	hunter's cry used to attract quails
Lampravisa	suddenly, without previous notice (Munxar)
(Mi) Igħaq	gluttonous, very greedy for food and sweets (Xagħra)
Lasta ta' xkupa	a tall, skinny woman
Lewż tal-Milied	walnuts, the name given to walnuts by Gozitan children who use such walnuts given to them at Christmas to play with on Christmas day
Liema	black bream (Spondyliosomo cantharus)
Makubandat	ruined, dilapidated, in poor repair (Xewkija)
(T)mallat	to get dirty, to become soiled (Xagħra)
Marden	wood chat shrike (Lanuis senator) (Rabat)
Marmar	to fumble, to complain about something (Qala)
Maxxita	shepherd's needle

Maxingannimja	machine-gun (current during World War II in Gozo) (Qala)
Mazzettun	small arch from which hangs the damask/tapestry of a church of *festa* days and special occasions (Nadur)
Mergun	wooden top, spinning toy (Xewkija)
Meril ikħal	a kind of blue rock thrush which has a blue plumage and is found at Għarb
Mesrek	to move from one place to another (like the shuttle of a loom)
Meżmeż	to eat reluctantly like one suffering from lack of appetite (Qala and Xagħra)
Meċċeċ	to shine brightly: sand of the flame on a wick when it rises (Żebbuġ)
Mellusa	piece of bread with curd spread smoothly on it (Żebbuġ)
Minditta	revenge, generally used in this sense in Gozo
Mindittima	to curse; to utter revengeful curses against someone
Ministru	vice-rector of the Seminary
Minjur/a	artificial manure
Mirmis / Mirmes	this word is used in Gozo adverbially in the phrase *b'mirmes* in the negative sense of 'not at all' and 'by no means'
Mogħża / Megħża berbuxija	goat with spotted hair (Xewkija)
Megħża ċawċawwa	goat always on heat especially after a miscarriage
Megħża dumnikana	goat with long ears with their end turned in (Xewkija)
Megħża faċċola	goat with a white streak from her head down to her nose
Megħża faqma	goat having a jutting lower jaw
Megħża fartesa	hornless goat (Rabat)

Megħża ġarġrija	goat with hair of a mixture of white and black (Rabat)
Megħża bil-galletta	goat with hair having round spots of different colour (Xewkija)
Megħża garruwa/mondija	goat with short ears
Megħża kalzettiera	goat with the lower part of her feet white, looking like socks.
Megħża kewkbija	goat with a star-like spot on her forehead
Megħża lankenija	goat with brownish or yellow hair (the colour of nankeen cotton)
Megħża bil-maħta	goat with a white streak over her upper lip
Megħża maskarata	goat with a multi-coloured face
Megħża mberbxa	goat having patches of more than two colours either on her head or in other parts of her body (Xewkija)
Megħża mbeżżla	goat having udders with long nipples
Mota tal-borom	peal of bells of the church of St. George in Rabat, Gozo at eleven o'clock
Namurruz	keen on a hobby of something
Mentqa	a plot of land surrounded with a wall and cultivated separately
Neqqa	child's word for goat on its bleating
Neqneq	to bleat (goats) (Xagħra)
Newweliet	a two-pronged winnowing shovel, a kind of pitchfork (Xewkija)
Tinjik	showing lack of seriousness
Nigruwa	a variety of vines chiefly grown in Gozo
Nxufa	emaciation, thinness (of one's body), skinniness (Xagħra)
Nofslejjer	half a lira (fifty cents) (Sannat)
Għasar	1. afternoon 2. vespers 3. church prayers recited or sung in the afternoon

Għasfur tal-bejt / għammiel tal-bejt	Spanish sparrow
Għatmija	an underground reservoir under the house or inner ground which receives rain water form the terraces, having always four walls and four corners (Xagħra)
Għatx ivvangulat	very great thirst
Għażżielli	lively (Żebbuġ)
(l-)Għeneb jagħli	a ferment (wine) (Xagħra)
Għolitur	rising; going up (of prices)
(l-) Għorfa l-kbira	an upper room in a village house
Paħħ/u	jar (Nadur)
Pajx / pejx / pejxu	this word occurs in various children's games in Gozo and seems to mean 'cat', it occurs in the folk games mentioned by Attard in his book, *Logħob Folk*
Paladonna	dialect variation of *bella donna*, beautiful lady
Palj/u	also means, panicle (Xagħra)
Pampier tal-gallinetta	fish-name (Trigla lyra)
Parent	said of one walking with legs apart, v-shaped
Perċimpis	name of a fish like a young dog-fish (Marsalforn)
Piċ	children's game (*see gejder*)
Pinen	name of girl's game played with used pens (Rabat)
Pinnin/a / Pennina	holding back a chess-man from moving
Pipi / Pipu	Chicken
Pitnenniera	silly, foolish
Pixiena	very great danger (Żebbuġ and Rabat)
Pixx	generally repeated in quick succession to call a cat (Qala and Xagħra)
(mill-)Pjazza	Square; Gozitan newspaper published by the Nationalist Party Youth Movement in Gozo
Platt	also means, design in lace-making in the shape of a fan

Pon/I	pony (Rabat)
Ponija	a young woman of stunted growth
Pont merfugħ	Valencia with picot (Gozo lace design)
Prill	1. the rope turned on itself (Marsalforn) 2. stone pillar on which bird-catchers place a cage with a bird in it as a decoy to attract migrating birds (Rabat)
Prinkoli	a kind of design in lace-making (Qala)
Probandat	probation period (Rabat)
(ip)purkura	1. to procure, to get, to cause; 2. to endeavour (to), to succeed (in)
Psien/a	kind of yellow Spanish mustard (Xagħra): Kromba – colewart (Nadur and Qala) Spiena – broad-leaved Sisymbrium (Xagħra and Xewkija)
Punġien tal-majjal	the entrails of a pig
Puntilbuzz	centre punch
Puppu	a cry used in a children's game to warn the boy or girl playing the part of the cat that he may not catch him because he's visiting (Qala, Kerċem and Rabat)
Purkaċċ	a paper-tube attached to the head of a petard to join the first temp with the large fuse (fireworks) (Rabat and Sannat)
Pxitt	generally repeated in quick succession more commonly px, also repeatedly used when calling a cat (Qala and Xagħra)
Qab	a Jewish measure of capacity, about two litres (Qala, Rabat and Xagħra)
Qabbas	to kindle a fire using dry wood; to provide fuel (Għarb)
Qaċċija	unused version of Italian caccia for the village of Xagħra

Quddies/a tal-anġli	mass celebrated on the death or funeral of an infant (Qala and Xagħra)
Qamqam / qomqom	to grumble; to keep uttering grumping sounds expressing disgruntlement
Qambar	name of a spring in Gozo
Qannata tal-pitkali	a tin-container flat in front and round at the back with mouth narrower than the bottom in which the middleman kept their clients' money from the sale of their vegetables and fruits (Rabat)
Qanqla	querulous person, hard to please
Qallel	to develop a fleshing root attached to the roots of a broad bean plant: broomrape
Rbaba	a rustic musical instrument made of a reed attached to a hollow tin covered with lamb's skin
(Ir-)raqqad	one of the clay figurines in a sleeping position of a Christmas crib
Rquqija	stinginess (Xagħra)
Rsuli	means insolent remarks or comments made privately and reported to the person concerned
(I)rsajjel	a woman who enjoys passing on/reporting annoying remarks that one may make about someone else
'Repubblika ta' Għawdex'	'Republic of Gozo', an expression often said by Maltese and Gozitans describing the way Gozitans live and their relation to the central government in Malta
(M)rejjaħ	not pressed for time nor overburdened with work: at leisure
Rambal	to smooth or level the ground or threshing-floor with a roller
Rsolut	sporadic word occurring in the phrases 'only man/woman, no one else'

Rundivu	impetuous anger or bad temper of a person who feels offended or wronged (Munxar)
Sfur	yellowness (Sannat)
Saham / Seħem / Sehem	plough-beam; the L-shaped part of a plough which is fitted into a hole known as il-bejta in the wooden part holding the ploughshare (Xaghra)
(Is)sahan	to become red under the collar (Xaghra)
Sajjat / Sjat	to form pus, to suppurate: boil etc (Xaghra)
Tisjir	also means, vegetable soup
Sardun	two bands on either side of the *lampiera* wide about thirty meshes with thread thicker and meshes larger than the fishing-net with meshes very close to prevent young brogue slipping out
Sentikka	inquisitive woman, meddler, interfering busy body (woman) (Xaghra)
Sikktejn	ploughshare, coulter
Senneg	1. to rule lines; 2. to dig/plough straight rows for the sowing of melon seeds, beans, etc; 3. to swear by the cross roughly drawn by a knife on the ground generally in a fit of anger
Skadirjat (Xewkija) / skaġilat (Sannat)	very naughty, troublesome
Skaljett	the upper part of a seine net to which is attached a number of floating corks (Xewkija)
Skitterij/a	the damage, mess (Munxar)
Sklam/a	to be very red in the face as a result of long exposure to the sun (Xaghra)
Spiena	Bargeman's cabbage (Brassica rapa) (Kerċem and Rabat)
Spnar / sptan	quarryman's large iron nail-like wedge used for breaking up large blocks of stone (Qala)

Strettaġni	strictness
(Is-)supra	a sort of tip given to a shopkeeper by his customers who used his pack of cards for their games
Tajtan	relying on, expecting something from someone
Turax	deaf
Tbrekken	to become shrewd, cunning (Rabat)
(mu)Talgħ/a	ramp, steep slope leading to a field serving as a passage for animal drive carts
Mitlaq	fishing-line kept floating on the sea by means of a cork for catching blacktails and sarqus
Tarħa	humeral veil (Qala)
Test/a	head occurring in *raġel ta' testa*, an intelligent man possessing/showing skill in his head (Rabat)
Tħassil	threshing corn once more after the winnowing to reduce the chaff (Xagħra)
Tiekla	1. hope 2. confidence
Tiekel	to raise hopes (Sannat)
Tinti	backside (Qala)
Tnall/a	a small wine cork cask about half the larger cask (Xagħra)
Tortunett	crook (a detachable section of the tube of a horn to give a different basic key to the instrument)
Trabukkiera	small bird trap like *trabok* but not with enough space for a decoy (Qala and Xagħra)
Trampa	a deceitful action (Nadur and Munxar)
Troppu	excessively, too much (of an unreasonable price)
Tutu	name of a children's game so called at Sannat
Tuta	father (Qala)
Viċi-parrok/u	curate, assistant parish priest

Vloutin	pizzikarju (Xagħra) mergun (Xewkija) 1. cord with which children spin a peg top; 2. line which can have about six baited branches used when fishing from a sea rock to catch rainbow wrasses, ornate wrasses, sea perches and moray eels
Weġweġ / weżweż / veġveġ / vexvex	to sing: green finch; the green finch sings
Wikis	name of a children's game consisting in guessing in which of one's two hands a bean is hidden (Rabta)
Wittieq	a thin rod in a shuttle through which enters the quill/bobbin on which thread is wound
Wixx	(baby language) word addressed to a toddler to encourage it to stand up
Xbajja'	he was given a thorough beating
Xama' tal-konsum	candles made of bees wax structure
Xatba'	a large, somewhat slanted field of triangular shape (Xagħra)
Xewk talk-warda bajda	Arabian thistle (Żebbuġ)
Xewki	an inhabitant of Xewkija
(Riħ) xfert	unsteady wind
Xbieki	fisherman net (Qala and Xewkija)
Xibka tal-ħaxix	a rope net being a large net for straw packing; used also as a measure of weight for a pile of straw (Kerċem)
Xitabru	a troublesome man
Xkaffar	set of shelves (Kerċem and Qala)
Xpakkamuntanji	braggart
(i)xxaqqar	to enjoy fun, to be amused
Żavżava / żabbaba	rustic kettle-drum (musical instrument)
Żekżek	to sing

Żiemel baqri	horse, reddish with white spots (Rabat)
Żimbell	(person) object of ridicule
Żmieni	of advanced age, very old (person)
Żeninuż	describes a person that takes a long time to do something
(Mu)żrar	full of bits of stone
Żunnari	multi-coloured
Żvarja / żvarjun/a	to use improper language such as one ought to be ashamed of
Zamzam	to sing (Sannat)
Zannur	small deck at the prow of a Gozo boat or luzzu
Zeplet / Zepzep	to sing (Xewkija)
Zewwaq	to sing at the approach of other green finches to bird-trap or bird-catching net (Rabat)

APPENDIX 8

WORDS/PHRASES WITH DIFFERENT MEANING(S) OR USAGE IN GOZO

WORD/PHRASE	MEANING IN MALTA	MEANING IN GOZO
Abbonat	1. subscriber to a periodical; 2. of gentle manner, quiet; 3. precise and exact	1. subscriber to a periodical; 2. of gentle manner, quiet; 3. precise and exact; 4. *Abbonat l-arju*, means 'cloudy' (of weather when rains seems to be imminent – used in Rabat)
Akkwista	acquest, acquisition	*Ikkwista* – to acquire, obtain
Amman	used in a temporal sense to indicate a near future occurrence	soon after sunset (used in Żebbuġ)
Banda	side, quarter	1. side quarter 2. to broadcast, to publish news (Għarb)
Boton	litter	1. litter 2. crop at Dwerja in Gozo there is the last vine which produces three crops

Baxx	Low, not elevated in geographical position	1. low, not elevated in geographical position; 2. sit down, take a seat 3. Ibaxx (Xewkija) 4. Ibjax (Għarb, Xagħra and Rabat) 5. Ibxax (rest of Gozo)
Bejt	roof	1. roof 2. *Joqogħdu bejt ma' bejt*, means they live side-by-side
Benċel	to twirl or twist (thread) between forefinger and the thumb	Sardan, to carry a heavy baby
Beqqa	child's word for goat	sheep (also beqqi/beq)
Bettiħ / biltiħ / boltieħ	melon	1. melon 2. large testicles of a donkey
Bies	1. to kiss 2. name given to various types of rapacious birds	1. to kiss
Borġ	Heap	1. heap; 2. used in expressions such as: *Għandha disgħin (sena) borġ*, meaning 'she is ninety years of age'
Briku	no difference between one thing and the other	by unfair means, treacherously achieved
Bullara	wild pomegranate	Leprosy

Il-buq- tal-għajn	1. large hollow reed; 2. trumpet; 3. single-barrelled gun	eyelid (Munxar)
But	flat pocket	school satchel (Għarb)
Buttun / Bottun	bud of plants, rose-bud	*Btaten* – button of a wheel to which spokes are attached, hub (Xewkija)
Bużellieq	smooth blenny, Shanny (Blennius pholis), slippery	ladybirds (of the species Coccinellidae) (Xewkija)
Ċaftura / ċeftura	Pancake	a stout woman of awkward figure
Ċanga	rustic stone plank / such seat made of the trunk of a tree	the plank / a piece of the trunk of a tree on which the butcher cuts the meat in different weights (Xagħra)
Ċekċek	to tinkle, produce a succession of sounds (of glasses, coins striking together, etc.)	to sing: siskin
Ċinċilla	Chinchilla	*fenek ċinċilli* describes a rabbit the fur of which is marked with different colours (Qala and Xewkija)
Ċinkuwina	an old coin current at the time of the Order of St. John, and perhaps older still, worth five grains	the smallest amongst the Sardinian warblers known also as *it-tertuxa*, little stint (Rabat)

Ċint	parapet wall	1. parapet wall; 2. a succession of wind-driven clouds one following another on a stormy day
Ċiras/a and Ċerasa	cherry	1. cherry; 2. name of a game played with dark red beads
Ċlamp / Ċlampu	humidity or stickiness produced by the South East wind	1. same 2. blisters on the lips of goats produced when they eat thorns (Xagħra)
Dewwiema	1. weather-chock, vane 2. aero-motor	1. same; 2. same; 3. buttons with a thread passed through them which children whirl at great speed holding them with the forefingers of each hand bringing them closer or away from each other rhythmically, an action that is known as żigużajġ (zig-zag)

Dar	1. house, habitation, domicile; 2. young woman of loose habits ; 3. dragonfly; 4. pole used as a prolongation of the trunk of the plough	1. same; 2. same; 3. same; 4. same; 5. pieces of wood one placed on the other on the axle of the cart to raise the frame to keep it level in order to ease the burden for the beast
Denneb	to join, to put together	to counterbalance (Xagħra)
Entrata	entry, entrance to a building	1. a narrow pathway to some village houses such as one can still see in Żebbuġ; 2. narrow for an animal (donkey, horse, etc.) carrying a cart; so called because the load is carried on the back of the animal
Tfettaħ	to be opened, loosened, extended	to be vain, show off
Fotta	to cheat	not used in Gozo; where *Niek* is used instead

Funtana	fountain, spring, fount	1. same; 2. hollow reed with a clay bottom with a narrow hole in the middle charged with gunpowder used to start rotating a Catherine-wheel in fireworks
Ġibjun	in Malta it indicates a large underground cistern with an arched roof	in Gozo it indicates a large cistern (water reservoir) dug by the Government
Ġiżi	stocks, sea stocks, hoary stocks	Narcissus (short for the plural of *narċiż* (Xagħra and Għajnsielem)
Ġlus/i	jealous, envious	1. of delicate or poor appetite, fastidious; 2. jealous, envious
Ġnizz/a / Ġnizzla / Ġnizzra	heifer that has never calved (either because she has never been mated or because though mated, she remained barren)	young cow which has calved once or twice only
Ġost / Ġust	right or claim acquired through use	1. same; 2. right; 3. well-fitted: of a dress
Gallett/a / Galetta	round-shaped hard-baked biscuit	1. same; 2. *Noli galletta*, name of the children's game of hide and seek (Xewkija)

Gejxa	1. dressing gown; 2. overall worn by women to protect from soiling the clothes they are wearing while doing housework; 3. Japanese singing and dancing girl	1. same; 2. same; 3. same; 4. girl's hair-band
(T)ħannex	1. to abound in earthworms; 2. to play the gallant	1. same; 2. same; 3. to lie buried under the soil and remain there (of melons) (Xagħra)
Iggotta	to vomit, eject anything form one's stomach	to spit out
Koċċ	small quantity	large quantity
Konkos / konkrit	1. concrete, concrete block-making machine	1. same; 2. a cake made of cheese and beans
Maginett/a	1. camera; 2. hair clipper	1. same; 2. same; 3. small machine

Tmahmah	1. to enjoy turning something soft round one's nose like a pig wallowing in mud; 2. to move about gently	1. same; 2. same; 3. to eat large quantities (said of big eater)
Manikata	1. underhand intrigue; 2. a rural area in the neighbourhood of Mosta	1. same; 2. same; 3. an abrupt turning of a corner in a road (Xaghra)
Maskarun / Maskaruna	1. grotesque mask; 2. gargoyle	1. same ; 2. same ; 3. the middle stone (keystone) of an arch slightly jutting out and sculptured
Mazzuga	a kind of wooden hammer	1. same; 2. spiked club used by fisherman to kill big fish (Xlendi)
Mezza	1. wicker basket for fruit; 2. jack plane (wood work tool); 3. weight/measure of fruit, potato etc. of about 25 rotolos	1. same; 2. same; 3. same; 4. wicker basket qoffa (Gozitan basket) of a cylindrical shape for fruit, tomatoes, etc. (Nadur)

Miżerja		
	1. distress, misery;	1. same;
	2. stinginess;	2. same;
	3. of food of very bad quality;	3. same;
		4. same;
	4. pittance	5. wandering Jew (Xagħra)
(T)nabbar	to show off, make a show of oneself	1. same;
		2. to alight/settle on the branch of a tree (Xagħra)
Nemus	gnat, mosquito	1. same;
		2. small anchovy, white bait, silvery pont (Gadiculus argenteus)
Niek	to have a sexual affair	to damage someone's interests
Għabbar	to spray sulphur powder on vines to protect them from mildew	1. same;
		2. to break the soil and heap it up around a vine (Xagħra);
		3. to level/smooth the soil of a field in order to preserve its moisture
Għafen / Għafan	1. to become desiccated, dry;	1. same;
		2. same;
	2. to grow too densely together leaving no air or space in between causing damage to leaves	3. to grow more than normal for a good crop (wheat, corn) (Xagħra)
Għar	cave	1. cave ;
		2. war shelter

336

Palpabbli	palpable	1. same; 2. to touch as when one is buying fruits to choose the best
Parpar	to go or get away abruptly	1. same; 2. to coo (quails) (word used by bird-catches)
Partat	to exchange, to barter	1. same; 2. to become engaged to a girl for marriage purposes, and on this occasion the bride and groom exchange gifts
Pannat	to stick / sew badly	1. same; 2. to sew (Rabat and Xewkija); 3. to knit (Nadur and Qala)
Post/a	1. stall; 2. a large flat block of stone on which smaller blocks are placed	1. same; 2. same; 3. bird's nest (Xagħra) 4. bees' nest in a rubble wall (Xagħra)
Praga	Prague	1. same; 2. said of a person well-wrapped up as a protection against cold

Priż/a		
	1. prey; 2. price, acquisition, capture	1. same; 2. same; 3. anything floating on the surface of the sea such as a dead animal or a piece of wood, etc., under the shadow of which gathers a shoal of fish – fisherman's easy capture (Marsalforn)
Pupazz	1. puppet; 2. cuckold; a husband (in a general sense any person) of weak character	1. same; 2. same; 3. a snail of a size equal in length and breadth (Xagħra)
(N)qaleb	1. to be turned, overturned, capsized; 2. to be changed: character mentality	1. same; 2. same; 3. to change religion, faith; 4. to die, to kick the bucket
Qannic	cheese-hurdle; a square flat frame (wattle) made of reeds on which fresh cheese are put to dry	1. same; 2. a kind of hedge made of reeds around a garden to serve as a wind-break (Qala and Xagħra)
(Ta)qrid	causing abscesses on sole of one's foot, etc.	1. same; 2. repotting (plants) (Rabat)
Qxejra	a small husk	1. same; 2. dandruff (Xagħra)

Marden	1. spindle; 2. thread	1. same; 2. same; 3. the cob of a maize without grains (Qala)
Rikbien / Rkib / Rkub	Riding	1. same ; 2. the fall of one part of a bird's net-trap on the other part after it has been pulled to entrap a bird
Rukkell	thread bobbin or quill, bobbin of thread	1. same; 2. the vertebrae of the spine (Gozo and Mellieħa)
Mismit	1. scalded; 2. ill cooked (food); 3. showing a sense of guilt	1. same; 2. same; 3. same; 4. naughty
Issagħtar	1. to abound in thyme (fields); 2. to romp (of children)	1. same; 2. same; 3. to fail to grow to full size (vegetables) (Xagħra)
Silet	to unsheathe	1. same; 2. to give a thin-pointed shape to iron (blacksmith) a small plate
Skrejplina	crow bar	a piece of long iron ending in the shape of a chisel used for digging holes in the ground to fix poles on *festa* day

Tammas / Tammes	to curdle milk with rennet	1. same; 2. to wash clothes very badly (Xagħra)
Tenna	to repeat	1. same; 2. to take off some of the building-stone on a mule-driven cart when it reaches a steep ascent (hard climb) to lighten the load; when there were enough such stones left at the beginning of a road sloping upward for a cart load, they were collected and carried to their destination in a separate strip
Tenatur / Tanatur	tempter	1. same ; 2. a person that makes one lose one's patience ; one who leads others astray
Tilgħaq	craving for sweets	greasing somebody's palm
Tonn/a	a tunny fish	1. same; 2. very corpulent, awkward and frowzy woman
Xenaq	to produce a peculiar sound as a result of breathing in (said of a donkey)	to try and suppress one's laughter by breathing in (to have short outbursts of half suppressed laughter)

Żjieda	1. increase, a rise in pay 2. addition	1. same; 2. same; 3. in bee-keeping, a wide earthenware pipe c. 60 cm long added to a bee-hive to increase storage space

APPENDIX 9

THE GOZITAN DICTIONARY: SAME MEANING BUT DIFFERENT SPELLING

SPELLING IN MALTA	SPELLING IN GOZO	MEANING
Aloe	Alwa	aloe vera
Awriċċi	Awriġġi (Xagħra)	pieces of leather
Baħnan	Bħanan (Xagħra)	Simple-minded, silly, foolish
Bakatt/a	Pakketta	baton, conductor's baton for beating time
Baskul/a	Paskula	scale for weighing animal fodder
Birka	Borka	wild duck, mallard (Anas phatyryuchos)
Buċaqċaq	Buċaqq/ Buġaqġaq	Whinchat
Bukagħwieġ	Bugħawweġ	cramp, sudden involuntary contraction of muscles from chill
Ċejnblock	Ċamblokk	chain-block
Ċiċċarda	Ċikkarda	clicking vetch, bitter vetch, common vetch, plant producing seeds as fodder for oxen, sheep, pigs, etc
Ċnett/a	Ċinett (Żebbuġ)	1. round cap without a peak, skull cap 2. a sort of semi-circular ornamental design in stone running all along under the *kileb*
Ċuċ	Ċuċat/a and Ċuċija	something silly or stupid
Daqskieku	Bħalikieku	a polite refusal of a courtesy offer
Delgħa	Dliegħi	horizontal wooden strip

342

Demel	Demen	manure, dung
Deniċi / Dentiċi	Dnieċi	the Dentex (fish)
Dramm	Dramma	drum (of wheel of motorcar)
Debben	Debbel	to run away (like flies in flight)
Fajt	Fajd (Għarb)	mud, muddy pools
Farfett	Ferfett	butterfly, name given to Lepidoptera in general
	Ferfett aħdar (Xewkija)	bath white butterfly (Pontiadaplidice)
	Ferfett tal-busbus (Rabat)	swallow-trail butterfly (Lampides boeticus)
	Ferfett ta' Santa Marija (Rabat)	same
	Ferfett tal-Lira (San Lawrenz)	same
	Ferfett ta' San Ġwann (Kerċem, Rabat and Xewkija)	same
	Ferfett tar-Reġina (Munxar, Nadur and Xagħra)	same
	Ferfett tar-Rummien (Sannat)	same
	Ferfett tad-Dandjana (Għajnsielem)	same
Ferkun	Furkun	long wooden stick with which bakers stir coal in the oven; pitchfork for pitching hay
Ferla	Ferlija	1. giant fennel, ferule (Ferula communis) 2. ferula, ferule rod
Figgiele / Figgejla	Senduqa	winged pea, asparagus pea (Tertagonolobus purpureus)
Viżikant	Fiżikant	importunate (person), nuisance
Ganbomblu / Ġambublu	Ċirlambubu (Nadur)	1. rock thrush ; 2. fat little boy or man

Gazzaburell	**Riħ żonqri**	sudden high wind coming from the sea
Gigna	**Giegna / Giekna**	pusillanimous, coward, timid, one who lets others take advantage of him
Garwetta (Mġarr, Malta)	**Galwetta**	the old name of a loaf weighing between a quarter and half a rololo (20 to 40g)
Gorv/u	**Gurbun**	felloe, one of the wooden parts forming the outer circle of a wheel attached by spokes
Dremxul	**Gremxul**	common lizard (Podarcis muralis) of which many varieties are popularly distinguished (Qala)
Hawn	**Haw**	here in this place (Qala and Nadur)
Hinn	**Henna**	there, in that place
Ħakma	**Ħakma / Ħokma**	a handful, graspful (Qala)
Ħaxxem	**Ħaxken**	to have one's fingers caught (in a door, etc.)
Ħannewija	**Ħanneweja**	acanthus soft bear's breech (Acanthus mollis) (Rabat)
Ħalfa	**Fosdoq**	the crushed husks / skins of pressed grapes
Inġila / nġela	**Inġerina**	1. to begin to grow, to take shape 2. to grow in health after an illness
Keċiċu / Kaċiċlu	**Kaxaxlu**	good-for-nothing person; witless, short-witted person
Khaki / Kakir	**Kakin**	Khakin kind of cloth fabric of twilled cotton or wool used in British army since South Africa

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Khaki / Kakir	Kakin	Khakin kind of cloth fabric of twilled cotton or wool used in British army since South Africa

Kanopew	Kanupen	Canopy
Katletta / Kataletta	Ketlet (Xagħra)	to produce idle excuses in order to avoid doing something
Kaxmer	Każimir / kiċmer	cashmere / kersymere, a kind of soft wool of cashmere goat or an imitation of it
Lapes	Apis / Lapis	Pencil
Latmija	Latnija	1. a quarry ; 2. cistern, tank
Lebba	Leblieba / Lebleb	strong desire
Libsien/a	Lipsiena	broad-leaved Sisymbrium (Xagħra)
Liem	Lewliemi	scolding, reproachful
Linka	Inka	Ink
Makarrun / Makarun	Bankunċini	macaroon
Marrubja	Marrubija	horehound (Marrubium vulgare)
Meclaq / Menċaq	Mexlaq	to smack one's lips too much; to make a noise with one's lips when eating (Xagħra)
Mħemmx	Mħemmx	there is/are not (Nadur)
Mirla	Merla	brown wrasse (Labrusmerula)
Moffa	Ibboffa	to grow mouldy, to get musty
Narċis	Ranġis (Sannat); Ronġos (Xagħra, Għajnsielem and Nadur) ; Giżi (Rabat)	cream narcissus (Narcissus tazzetta)
Għeġbijiet	Għaġbien (Xagħra, Għajnsielem and Nadur)	1. wonder, marvel; 2. miracle; 3. of exceptional qualities
Għalleb	Għalleb	to emaciate, make lean
Offerta	Ferta (Qala and Xagħra)	1. offering, offer, proposal, donation; 2. obligation, offering, offertory

Pubbliku	Publiku / Puplku	the general public
Rampil	Rempel / Rampal	1. to hook up, to pick up something with hook / grapnel generally from a well (Xagħra); 2. to fish for squids by lowering and raising the octopus pot about the length of four or five arms outstretched
Rċipp / Rgipp	Terċip	a bunch of grapes produced after the first crop/late in the season (Xagħra)
Staljat/a	Staljota	1. task; 2. lesson consisting in part of a book which must be learned by heart; 3. lace work which must be finished within a fixed time
Suġizzjoni	Siġizzjoni / Sudizzjoni	awe, uneasy
Supplika / supilka	Sapolka	1. licence, licence of a grocer's shop 2. petition, supplication
Tengħuta	Tengħuda	spurge (Euphorbia alleppica)
Trakka / ittrakka	Intrakka	1. to go alongside, to dock; 2. to become too attached to someone
Travers	Dravers	transverse, oblique
Vajjell/a	Vejjilla	kind of cloth
Valiġġa	Valiġa' / Valiza	1. portmanteau, bag, valise suit case; 2. mail

Xorraf/a	Xurrafa	1. menola (Spicara maena maena) ; 2. excoriation ; 3. a small breach / gap
Xnien	Xniel	white clover (Trifolium nigrescens)
Żenżen	Żenżel	to trickle; to flow in a thin stream, such as oil out of the spout of a jug or blood from a wound
Żgajja	Żgarja	to reproach someone obliquely; to make remarks which cause annoyance (Xagħra)