

Karmni Grima (k/a ta' Pari: 1838-1922)

Genealogical History

INFORMATION COMPILED BY TONI CALLEJA

Introduction

On the 2nd February 2018 the island of Gozo commemorated the 180th anniversary of the birth of *Karmni Grima*, who was known as being favoured with hearing our Lady's voice coming out of the titular painting of the Assumption of our Lady venerated at the blessed chapel of *Ta' Pinu*.¹ The titular painting was executed by Maestro Bartolomeo Perugino of Valletta, in 1619. Geographically and historically, *Ta' Pinu*, today a National Shrine, forms part of the hamlet of *Ta' Għammar*. In the Acts of the Apostolic Visit of the year 1575 by the Most Reverend Monsignor Pietro Dusina, Apostolic Visitor delegated by Pope Gregory XIII, it is stated



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

that: "The church, known as *tal-Ġentili* (literally of the Gentiles) is found in the limits of *Għammar*". In one of the few poems published by *Frenċ tal-Għarb* (another local servant of God associated with *Ta' Pinu*), he refers to *Ta' Pinu* as:

"Din il-knisja ċkejnkna
– Qalb ir raba' ta' Għammar
Li għazlet Santwarju Tagħha
– Fih turina grazzji kbar".²

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

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

Karmni Grima's Family Tree

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

Tumas Grima
with Għarb: 18 June 1719
Roża Gatt

Wenzu Grima
with Għarb: 18 October 1745
Marija Mercieca

¹ NAG, GM, 01/44, p. 82.

In the *Giuliana Masini*, the following note is inserted next to the registration of *Karmni Grima's* death: "*Lei era apparesa la B.V.M. detta 'Ta' Pinu' e le aveva importo di propogare la sua devozione*". (*The Blessed Virgin Mary known as 'Ta' Pinu' appeared to her and She had asked her to spread Her devotion*).

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

Pawlu Grima
with Gharb: 5 October 1776
Angelika Micallef

Tumas Grima
with Gharb: 28 November 1812
Grazzja Agius
with at the Matrice: 13 May 1826
Antonja Apap

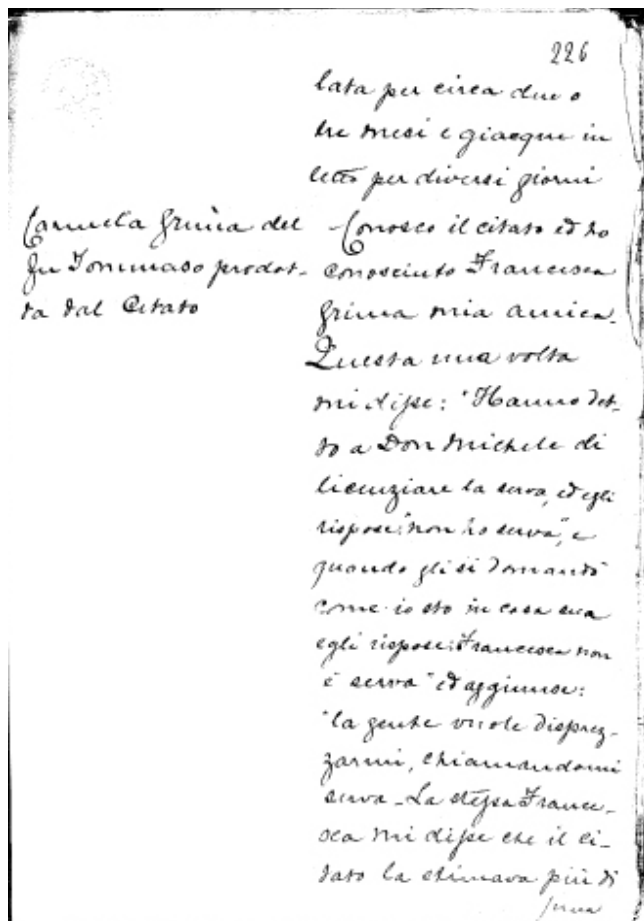
Karmni Grima

Karmni's Family Nickname – *ta' Pari*

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

As prevalent within Maltese and Gozitan societies in those days, Karmni's family was more known by its nickname than by the surname. They were known as *ta' Pari* (in dialect *ta' Pori*), which nickname had been in use for many years as a distinctive of the Grima family, so much so that Pawlu Grima, Karmni's paternal grandfather, who got married in 1776, had already been known by it.³

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



Transcription of evidence given in the Gozo Civil Court by Karmni Grima on the 20 November, 1889 during the Case: Heirs of Francesca Grima (Garbo) (*Gharb*) vs Sac. (Rev.) Don Michele Micallef (Garbo). NAG, CG, 04/336, f. 226r.

be a renowned etymologist, since, very often, such words never make any linguistic or literary sense!

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

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

³ For example see: NAG, CG, 10/32 (1847) 7r; 10/39 (1850) 316r.

a museum.⁴ The Museum, commemorating Karmni Grima, which originally had only occupied part of the said house, was inaugurated and blessed by the Bishop of Gozo, His Lordship Mgr Ġużeppi Pace on the 2nd May 1965. Later, following the demise of Marinton Grima, which occurred on the 5th November 1974, the museum was extended throughout the entire house.

The Parents: Tumas Grima and Antonia Apap

The father, Tumas Grima was the son of Pawlu and Angelika neè Micallef, and was born in Ġharb on the 11 December 1781. On the 28th November 1812 he married Grazzja Agius, also from Ġharb. She was the daughter of Marċell and Roża. At the time of their marriage Tumas was 31 years old whereas Grazzja was 56 and already a widow of the late Mario Formosa. As one might deduce, no children

were born of this marriage. Grazzja did not have any children even from her first marriage, because even if she had been still young at 21, her husband Mario had himself been a widower and old. Grazzja died on the 22nd May 1825.

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

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

DEPOSIT No. 32. TO BEARER.

(Pass Book issued to *Carmela Grima daughter of late Simmass of Ġarb to Paris*)

Date.	Deposit or Withdrawal.	Sums Deposited or Withdrawn.			Interest.			Manager's Signature.	Remarks.
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.		
1911 March 20	Deposit	50					7	<i>W. Chiswell</i>	Sifty pounds.
	Int. up to 31-3-11.			7					
April 8	Dep. out	50		7			5 1/2	<i>W. Chiswell</i>	
	Int. up to 31-3-12	99	19	5	150		2 18 9 1/2	<i>W. Chiswell</i>	
1912 May 28	Int. Withdrawn	2	19	3	152	19	3	<i>W. Chiswell</i>	
	Dep. up to 31-3-13	150					3	<i>W. Chiswell</i>	
1913 Dec 27	Withdrawal	3			153		2 4 5 1/2	<i>W. Chiswell</i>	
"	Int. up to date	150					5 1/2	<i>W. Chiswell</i>	
"	Withdrawal	2	4	11	152	4	11	<i>W. Chiswell</i>	
"	Withdrawal	152	4	11				<i>W. Chiswell</i>	

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

⁴ Busuttill J. (1962). Arkivju Nutarili Ghawdex. (17 Sep).

spinster. Not much is known on the condition which led Marija to her demise. From a research in the admission registers of the Gozo Hospital for five years, it doesn't result that Marija was ever admitted as a patient.⁵ However, this loss gravely affected her mother Antonia in such a way that, in less than six months, her heart failed leading to her death on the 26th October 1860 at the age of 55. An old saying says: *Meta tiġi ifthilha l-bieb* (literally - when it arrives open the door for her), and in line with this, in less than nine months after their mother's death, the Grima family also lost their father Tumas. He died on the 6th July 1861 at the age of 80 years.

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

	Names	Born	Died	Status
1	Maria, Angelica, Francesca	18 Mar 1827	30 Apr 1860	spinster
2	Giuseppa, Angelica, Giovanna	09 Oct 1828	20 Oct 1898	spinster
3	Giuseppe, M' Angelo, Nicola	01 Jan 1831	05 May 1913	bachelor
4	M' Angelo, Paolo	09 Apr 1832	22 Dec 1918	bachelor
5	Giovanna, Guliana, Margherita	21 Feb 1834	24 Nov 1899	spinster
6	M' Angelo, Pubblio, Dionisio	12 Dec 1835	22 Sep 1899	married
7	Carmela, Grazia, Giuzeppa	02 Feb 1838	25 May 1922	spinster
8	Andrea, Aloysius, Vincenzo	30 Nov 1840	03 Dec 1840	baby

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⁵ NAG, HI, 02/01 (Jan 1855 – Jul 1865).

⁶ In the publication *Id-Devot ta' Maria* (January 1919), p. 8, it is said that Pawlu died on the 20th and not on the 22nd as specified in the *Giuliana Masini*. The publication reads: "in the village of Għarb sustained by the Blessed Sacraments, PAWLU GRIMA died at the venerable age of 85. He was a truly exemplary man who always scrupulously carried out his Christian duties. Very amiable and always jovial he was loved by one and all. He always managed to live in the poverty of spirit, for which Jesus Christ promises the everlasting reign, and thus we strongly hope that he went to share the house of the Lord. We extend our sincere sympathies to his sister Karmni, she, who as is commonly known, was the recipient of the manifestation (the apparition) of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu."