

Historical Background

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*The Arch at the Sanctuary courtyard built in 1719
Above Right: Some of the Caves surrounding Mellieħa
Photos: Michael Cauchi*



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Mellieħa's history dates back to time immemorial. Because of its maritime position, sandy beaches, surrounding fertile valleys, hills and beautiful views all around Mellieħa, it has become a centre of attraction. It has always served as the northernmost station for travellers crossing over to Gozo.

The original inhabitants of Mellieħa were troglodytes, for they lived in the surrounding caves and they were also fishermen and animal breeders. In the late Middle Ages the few inhabitants were ruled by feudal lords to whom they had to pay rent for the lands that they worked. Being so near to the shallow beaches of Mellieħa Bay, the village was very vulnerable and often subject to attacks by corsairs and pirates who plundered the land and took the inhabitants into slavery. This situation forced the few inhabitants to leave Mellieħa for other parts in central Malta where

it was safer, and it was only towards the beginning of the 18th Century that the people returned to live permanently.

MELLIEħA THROUGH THE TIDE OF TIME



An extremely detailed narration of four centuries of indigenous and local history of Mellieħa. This publication in Maltese or English version is available from the Mellieħa Local Council who are also the publishers of this very interesting and beautiful book.