



Linking Malta's Literary Past to the Digital Present

ADDING MALTA'S NATIONAL BOOK PRIZE
WINNERS TO WIKIDATA

Enrique Tabone

Researcher & WIR

OUTLINE

- National Book Prize
- Data collection and entry on Wikidata
- Practical challenges
- Complexity of prize history
- Sourcing & Referencing
- Copyright & Licensing
- Queries
- Impact & Benefits



WIR with the National Book Council - Malta

Enrique Tabone - Researcher, Wikimedia Community Malta programme coordinator, Data storyteller, Digital Curation Lab - University of Salford

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Malta's National Book Prize

- Established in 1971
- Celebrates Maltese books
- Managed by the National Book Council - since 2001
- All books with Malta-issued ISBN are eligible for nomination

AIM

LINK LITERARY HISTORY TO DIGITAL KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM

Systematically capture the National Book Prize winners (since 1971) and integrate them into Wikidata, enhancing discoverability and enabling multilingual Wikipedia article creation.

Goal

Capture detailed data about prize winners
Disseminate this information on Wikidata
and related Wikimedia projects

Linked Open Data Matters

- **Connectivity:** By linking authors, works, publishers, awards, and years across time, LOD allows for semantic querying, mapping relationships that were previously invisible or isolated in stand-alone documents.
- **Discoverability:** LOD makes Malta's publishing history more accessible by researchers, educators, and cultural institutions. (especially because Maltese literature is underrepresented in mainstream academic and bibliographic systems)
- **Interoperability:** Structured data in Wikidata can be used across projects, bridging national and disciplinary boundaries.
- **Preservation through reuse:** Data that is open and structured is more likely to be cited, preserved, and reused over time.

How it started

30/09/2024, 13:36

L-Istorja Tal-Premju Nazzjonali Tal-Ktieb | Kunsill Nazzjonali Tal-Ktieb

Year	Books	Book title	Author	Publisher
SENA 1971: KOTBA 1970	O.M.	TITLU TAL-KTIEB	AWTUR	PUBBLIKATUR
	1	Fl-Arena	Anton Buttigieg	Union Press
	1	Drammi Vol. 2	Francis Ebejer	Francis Ebejer
SENA 1972: KOTBA1971	O.M.	TITLU TAL-KTIEB	AWTUR	PUBBLIKATUR
	1	L-Isqaq	Ġuże' Chetcuti	Klabb Kotba Maltin
	1	Nixxieġha, it-tieni gabra: Raġbi l-Gharib	Patri V. Sammut	A & C Aquilina
SENA 1973: KOTBA1972	O.M.	TITLU TAL-KTIEB	AWTUR	PUBBLIKATUR
	1	Wara Ibsen	Ġuże' Diacono	Melitensia Publications
	1	Tlikki Tlikki ma' Wenzu	Michael Spiteri (Kilin)	Klabb Kotba Maltin
SENA 1974: KOTBA1973	O.M.	TITLU TAL-KTIEB	AWTUR	PUBBLIKATUR
	1	Drammi Vol. 3	Francis Ebejer	Francis Ebejer
	1	Il-ħidma letterarja ta' Ninu Cremona	A.M. Previ	Klabb Kotba Maltin
SENA 1975: KOTBA 1974	O.M.	TITLU TAL-KTIEB	AWTUR	PUBBLIKATUR
	1	Aquilina u l-Malti	Ġuże' Cassar Pullicino	Klabb Kotba Maltin
	1	Il-Poeżiji Miġbura	Wallace Gulia	Lux Press

Initial Action Plan

- **Identify** and list all National Book Prize winners since 1971
- **Create** or **update** Wikidata items for authors (and works)
- **Confirming** VIAF, ISNI, and other authority control statements
- **Add** verifiable sources and references
- **Upload** relevant images and media files to Wikimedia Commons
- **Collaborate** with Maltese Wikipedia editors to create detailed articles

Data collection and entry on Wikidata

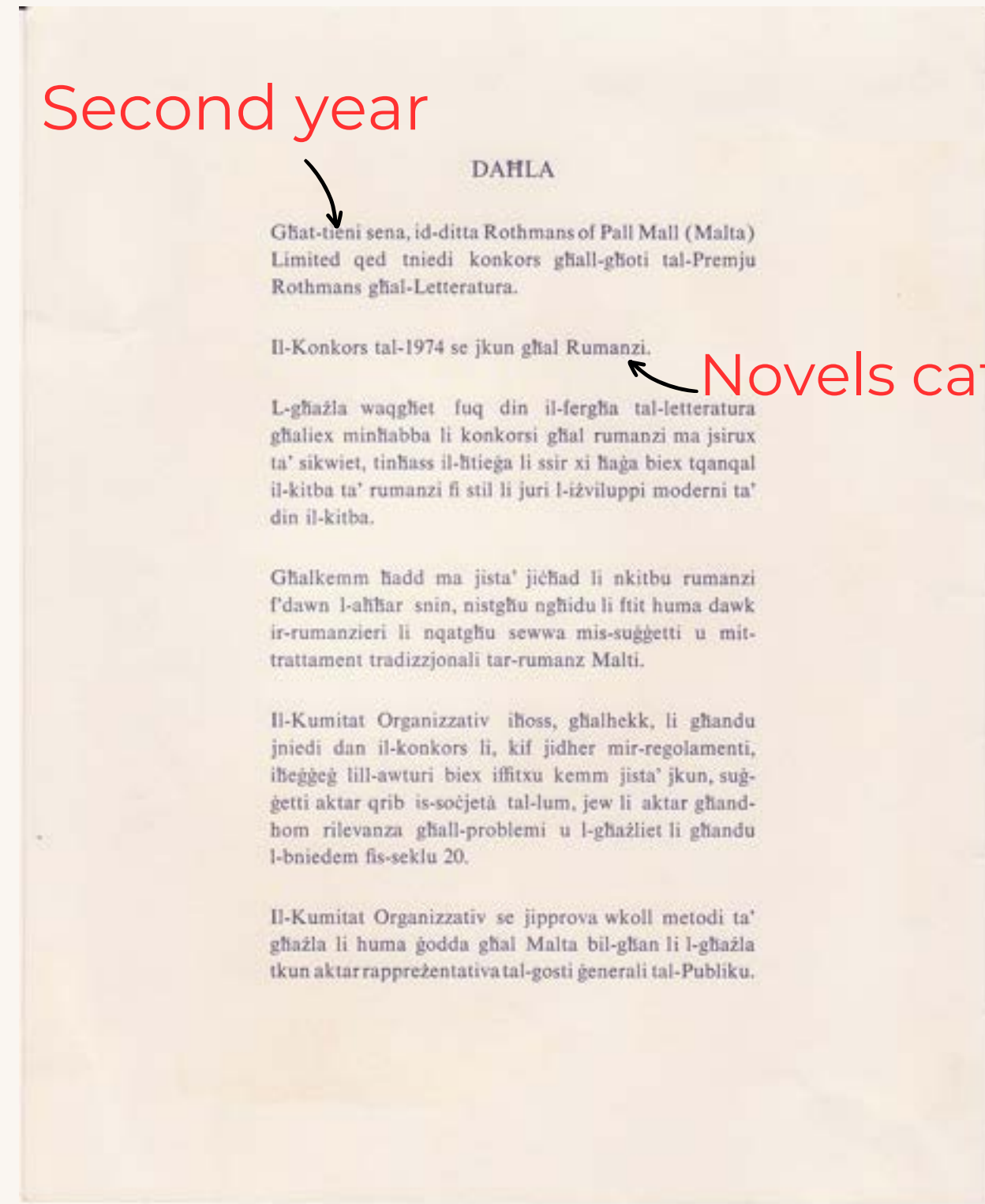
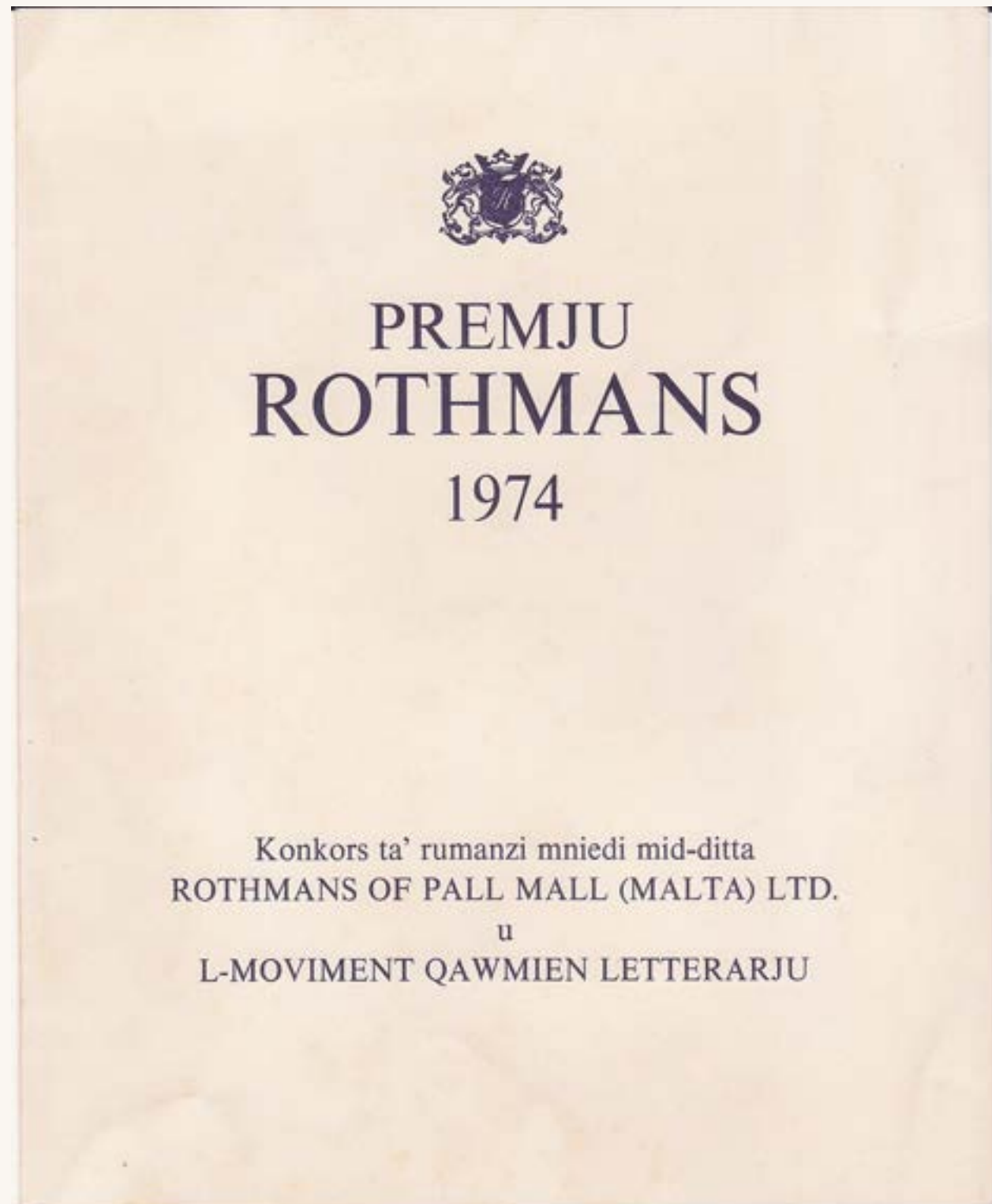
Practical Challenges

Practical Research Challenges

- **Incomplete** or scattered historical data
- Data **inaccuracy** and reliability
- **Gaps** in existing Wikidata entries for Maltese authors
- Secondary **sources scarce**, especially before 2010
- **Fragmented** information from government sources (missing context)
- Prize name **changes** over the years
- **Inconsistency** of the awarding body before 2001
- **Lack** of comprehensive historical records
- **No authoritative database** or record keeping for the NBP available

Name change

- A **Literary Prize** was first set up in 1971 by the Moviment Qawmien Letterarju
- **Rothmans Prize għal-Letteratura** around 1973
- Prize was not organized between 1983 and 1987 due to political instability
- The National Book Council was established by the Government of Malta in 2001
- Prize was officially rebranded as the **National Book Prize**



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Complexity of Prize History

Number of Awards by year

1995	1
1996	3
1997	4
1998	4
1999	10
2000	11
2001	14
2002	10
2003	13
2004	13
2005	14
2006	21
2007	23
2008	22

increase

increase



Complexity of Prize History

decrease

2012	24
2013	22
2014	8
2015	6
2016	10
2017	9
2018	8
2019	10
2020	10
2021	10
2022	10
2023	9
2024	7

From 2001 to 2013, 1st and 2nd prizes awarded, while after 2014 only 1st place awarded

Complexity of Prize History

- Frequent changes in competition rules and categories
- From 2001 to 2013, 1st and 2nd prizes awarded; after 2014 only 1st place
- New category “Premju Terramaxka” started in 2015
- Some information only retrievable via social media (e.g. Facebook)
- This information is still being researched for appropriate citation

Information fragmentation reflects the lack of official comprehensive records

Sourcing & Referencing

- Secondary sources scarce, requiring extensive online and offline research
- Newspaper articles inconsistent and hard to locate
- Resulting scarcity of references may impact Wikipedia article quality



1991 prize for best literary works

PRIZES amounting to Lm700 and gold, silver and bronze medals are being awarded this year for the best literary works published in Maltese in 1990.

The first prize is worth Lm400 and a gold medal; the second, Lm200 and a silver medal; and the third, Lm100 and a bronze medal.

The Ministry of Education is offering these prizes as public recognition of these works — novels, plays, poems or any other literary work that contributes to the enrichment of Maltese literature or the Maltese language.

The works should not be less than 48 pages of original text and a signed statement by the author should be handed in with the competing work stating that the work was his/her own, that it was original and was published in book form for the first time during 1990.

The prizes will not be awarded if, in the opinion of the Minister of Education, on the advice of the committee he is to appoint, the works are not up to the expected standard.

Six copies of each entry (which will not be returned to the competitor) should be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, Literary Prize 1991 (Attention: Mr. Ignatius Abela), Ministry of Education and the Interior, Beltissebħ by noon on Friday, June 28, 1991.

Images provided directly by Times of Malta

THE TIMES | Thursday, July 10, 2008

National



Property News out with The Sunday Times

The next issue of The Sunday Times will include the latest edition of Property News, the quarterly magazine published by Frank Salt Real Estate.

It will include a comprehensive listing of properties available on the Maltese islands, illustrated with colour photos, the estate agent said.

The magazine is also a useful guide for foreigners interested in buying property or taking up residence in these islands.

The 138th issue of Frank Salt Property News features a taste of what is available on the market, ranging from houses of character and farmhouses to the latest marina developments and high-rise buildings.

Apart from being distributed free with The Sunday Times, the magazine is made available to clients who call at the company's branch offices, at overseas exhibitions and through the company's overseas associates.

Gonzi hails protagonist of big PN victories

Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi paid tribute to outgoing Nationalist Party general secretary Joe Saliba saying he had succeeded in implementing reforms within the party at the same time that the PN won an election and built a new headquarters.

Mr Saliba was a protagonist in the

big victories achieved by the PN. Dr Gonzi said during a reception held to thank Mr Saliba for his work at the end of his term of office.

Present for the event was the newly-elected general secretary, outgoing Valletta mayor Paul Burg Olivier.

Kilin, the author who enriched Maltese literature, dies aged 90

Well-known author Mikol Spiteri passed away yesterday, a month before reaching his 91st birthday.

Born in Rabat in 1917 and known as Kilin since childhood, Mr Spiteri, who has seven children, 17 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren, published a string of books in Maltese, which included novels and poetry. He was fluent in six languages besides Maltese, including English and Spanish.



His best known work is *Piig l-Għajn ta' San Rastan*, a collection of childhood memories of the 1920s. He is also well-known for the book *Wayside Chapels Of Malta And Gozo*, which includes his own pen sketches of the chapels.

In December 2000, he was awarded the *Midagħġ-Quattr-Repubblika*. In 2002, he received the Premio Vicente Azopardo, given to Maltese people who distinguish themselves in promoting Maltese-Spanish culture and in 2006, he was honoured for useful contribution to literature and books.

In his book *Kif Għendek Wirtun* on the literary award for non-fiction prose in 2002. Last year, he was awarded the National Book Prize as the personality that contributed in an indispensable way to the world of books.

National Book Council chairman Gerg Mallia said yesterday that Kilin's contribution to Maltese was in the form of accessible books.

He gave the country literary books that contributed originality to literature and were written in a way that made them accessible to everyone. Kilin gave the impression of simplicity when his thoughts were very profound and his style lively.

Dr Mallia said he knew Kilin personally and could describe him as a very sensitive person who extremely and religiously loved his country. He had an eye for small things and noted such and every detail. He was also one of the best watercolour painters in the country and painted most of his book covers.

Alexander Schemas, the mayor of Maida, where Kilin used to live, described the late author as a humble, friendly and wise person. He was a loss not just for the people of Maida but for the whole country, he said.

Dr Schemas said that although Kilin had been living in Maida for some years, he never wanted to be referred to as a Misdjan but as a Rabat, his love for Rabat remained with him throughout his life.

Dr Schemas said that Kilin would be missed but his thoughts would continue to be shared through his books.

The Ministry of Education and Culture, the Nationalist Party, the Labour Party and Alternattiva Demokratika paid tribute to Kilin.

The Ministry of Education and Culture said that, apart from publishing various books with different themes and aimed at various strata of society, Kilin loved the Maltese language and insisted on its good use.

Kilin will be remembered for his writings. Minister Dolores Cristina said as she expressed solidarity with his family.

The PN said Kilin did not just get his message across through his writing but was also an author who considered how the Maltese language should be used. He raised awareness on the Maltese language and its importance to Maltese identity.

The MLP said the country had lost one of its best writers.

Throughout his life, Kilin touched the heart and minds of many and did his utmost to see Maltese being strengthened and used better.

AD said that, through his numerous works, Kilin contributed to the enrichment of Maltese culture, history and identity. "All Maltese and Gozians should be grateful to this prolific writer for his contribution towards our country's culture and literature," it said.

The National Book Council said Kilin gave a solid contribution to Maltese literature and the Maltese book scenario. Very often, he used to draw the Maltese people's attention to express themselves in good Maltese and, three years ago, he won the council's special prize for those who distinguished themselves in the world of books.

The council said Kilin was the author of several books that enriched Maltese literature with the environment and his faith being a common theme in his writings.

Kilin also had an excellent command of the Spanish language and enjoyed painting.

"The National Book Council salutes an author who, through his humility and simplicity, made our literature richer."

THE TIMES, FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2008

NEWS



Education Minister Louis Gadea presenting the Ramon Vassallo and Kilin awards yesterday.

Literary awards

Publishing by Fundazzjoni Fiduwalgħajja Malta received four awards from Education Minister Louis Gadea at a ceremony held at PWS Television House, Għorhamgħajja.

A total of 40 books published in 2007 and 41 in 2008 completed for this prestigious Literary Book Prize.

Dr Gennaro Bonafide, Minister of Education, Culture and Recreation, was awarded a prize in Category I (Books by Maltese authors in a language other than Maltese) and this book also won a prize for the best presentation in 2007. *Judith Bonafide's* Volume II, *Paginele and Fragmenti*, won the prize for the best presentation in 2007.

Another *Paginele* publication, *The Palace of the Grand Masters in Valletta*, edited by John Mawhood, head of publications was awarded a prize in Category II for the best presentation during 2007.



The ceremony was held at PWS Television House, Għorhamgħajja, where the Minister presented the awards to the authors and publishers of the winning books.

The Minister said that the awards were given to authors and publishers who had made a significant contribution to Maltese literature and culture through their books.

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THE TIMES, THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 1998

LOCAL AND FOREIGN NEWS

Central Bank report

Machinery sub-sector increases share in total sales

(Continued from page 1)

in manufacturing sector in the previous two years was virtually brought to a halt in 1998. The marginal fall that took place was entirely due to a reduction in employment in public sector firms, the bank said.

Employment in private manufacturing firms, on the other hand, rose marginally.

The shift of employment away from sectors such as transport equipment, textiles, clothing and footwear towards services with a higher value added content, especially the machinery sub-sector, continued however.

Giving a national breakdown of sales by manufacturing sub-sector, the Central Bank said that the machinery sub-sector substantially increased its share in total sales. As a result, although most other sub-sectors recorded a higher rate of growth in sales, their share in the total either declined or remained stable.

Two sub-sectors which saw a rapid growth in sales were food, beverage and tobacco and wood and furniture, both of which benefited substantially from exports.

The rise in sales in the former reflected higher prices, increased demand and growth in exports.

The rise in sales in the latter was a result of an increase in prices due to higher costs of raw materials and a rise in demand in volume.

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Conditional discharge for misappropriation

An executive with JH Danmair Company Limited has been conditionally discharged for a charge for misappropriation of funds.

The executive was charged with the misappropriation of funds from the company's accounts.

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Trial by jury: Verdict

(Continued from page 1)

if the jury was not carrying out its duty, the judge said. The jury was told that the defendant was charged with the misappropriation of funds from the company's accounts.

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procession in Valletta

The Archbishop will take part in the traditional Our Lady of Sorrows procession, starting from Mary of Jesus (Ta' Qudus) church in Valletta.

The procession, procession, with the statue of Our Lady,

Potato exports

The potato centre at Ta' Qali will be open from April 17 to 19 for the potato export competition.

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Lm10,000 haul

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Two new bills

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Conditionally discharged

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Australian farmers given a legal taste of cannabis

Belinda Goldsmith in Sydney

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Ambassador to Lebanon

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New computer package

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Unfit for swimming

The Department of Public Health said bathing areas along the coast should have been put up in the area.

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Virgin Storage Media

Floppy Disks 3.5"

Floppy Disks 3.5" colour

Computer tape reels

Data Cartridges

Trade Enquiries Welcome

Times of Malta is now available through Wikipedia Library

Images published on Wikimedia Commons by NBC under CC by SA

Copyright & Licensing

- NBC created a wikimedia account to upload images on Wikimedia Commons
- VRT clearance was provided by photographers contracted by NBC 2015-2024
- Pre-2014 images held by NBC are in non digital formats without photographer details
- NBC planning to release 2025 images under CC BY SA through direct agreement with contracted photographer

Considering notability...

- Identification of more notable authors based on number of wins
- Prioritizing article creation for prominent authors, especially in Maltese Wikipedia
- Notable for their career, example the President of Malta
- Other awards and merits

winnerLabel	winCount
Trevor Żahra	20
Clare Azzopardi	9
Immanuel Mifsud	9
Victor Fenech	8
Mario Azzopardi	7
Alfred Sant	6
Oliver Friggieri	6
Keith Sciberras	5

NBP number of wins <https://w.wiki/F8Ea>

3	Q wd:Q1931771	Midolja għall-Qadi tar-Repubblika
2	Q wd:Q1126192	European Union Prize for Literature
1	Q wd:Q109875416	The Literary Contest of Novels for Youth
1	Q wd:Q104776254	Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy
1	Q wd:Q63092020	honorary doctor of the China Foreign Affairs University
1	Q wd:Q33301544	Gianfranco Merli Award
1	Q wd:Q29017353	Order of Merit, 1st class

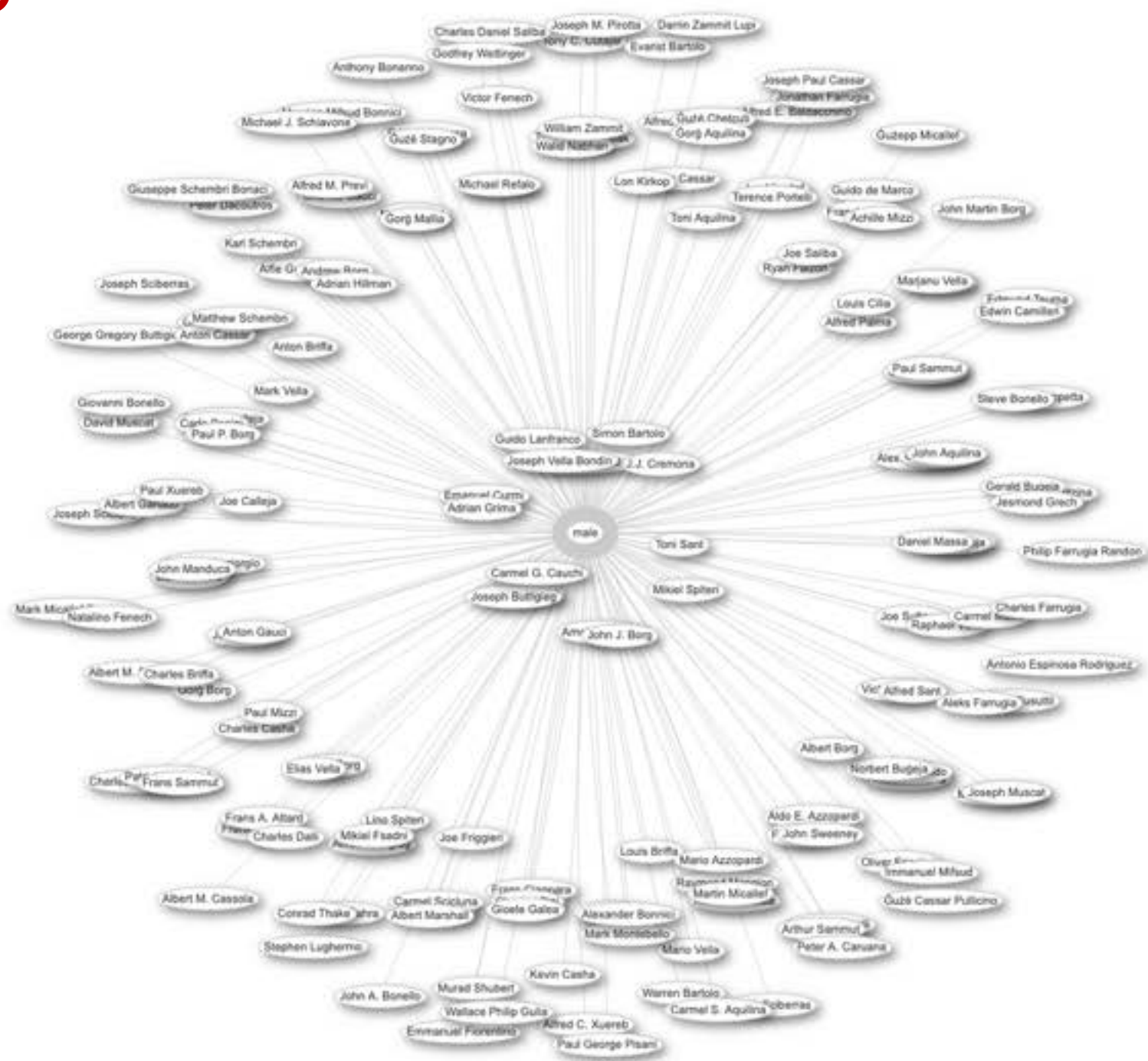
Other awards <https://w.wiki/F8TF>

Queries

By Year

year	winner	winnerLabel
1971	Q wd:Q250177	Anton Buttigieg
1971	Q wd:Q1397660	Francis Ebejer
1972	Q wd:Q133283061	Albert M. Sammut
1972	Q wd:Q18641867	Ġużè Chetcuti
1973	Q wd:Q19646816	Mikiel Spiteri
1973	Q wd:Q19646830	Ġużè Diacono
1974	Q wd:Q133282699	Alfred M. Previ
1974	Q wd:Q1397660	Francis Ebejer
1975	Q wd:Q117804327	Wallace Philip Gulia
1975	Q wd:Q19647119	Ġużè Cassar Pullicino
1976	Q wd:Q133282773	Albert M. Cassola
1976	Q wd:Q134113260	Ġorġ Scicluna
1976	Q wd:Q134113168	Ġużepp Micallef
1980	Q wd:Q133631390	Joe Sultana
1980	Q wd:Q6766184	Marjanu Vella
1981	Q wd:Q134113168	Ġużepp Micallef
1982	Q wd:Q133320835	Alfred Degabriele
1988	Q wd:Q134007690	Emma Camilleri
1988	Q wd:Q949560	Oliver Friggieri

By gender



count	gender	genderLabel
174	Q6581097	male
46	Q6581072	female

Copyright ©

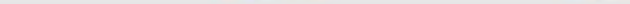
By Location



[https://w.wiki/E\\$P3](https://w.wiki/E$P3)

Topics of works by recipients

The bubble chart displays various topics of works by recipients. The central bubble is "Jesus Christ". Other prominent bubbles include "Catholic pries", "Franciscans", "Christian pray", "religious expe", "contemplative", "healing", "faith heal", "Sovereign", "library hi", "Giovanni P", "urban stud", "waveguide", "history of", "Allium cep", "kidney sto", "thulium", "performanc", "net neutra", "webcast", "internet a", "Open Web", "Pseudo.com", "Mary", "Mariology", "femininity", "motherhood", "Marian cul", "control", "surface plasm", "exorcist", "evangelist", "biblograp", "data curat", "Wikidata", "Enrique Ta", "Christian", "global pro", "social iss", "society", "interior c", "joy", "meaning of", "self-accep", "sin", "devil", "Franklin Furna", "Elias Vella".



Community & Educational Outreach

- Workshops conducted
- Collaboration Junior College lecturers and with Maltese language/litreature students
- Encouraging local community involvement and skill building
- Workshops planned for the yearly National Book Festival (November 2025)

Impact & Benefits

- Increased **global visibility** of Maltese literature and culture
- Creating **structured digital records**
- **Linked data** supports academic research and cultural projects
- Enhances **digital literacy** and **open knowledge** in Malta
- Builds a sustainable, **community-driven** knowledge base for future generations
- Opportunities for growth and **cultural preservation**
- **Collaboration** between Wikimedia Community Malta and National Book Council
- Overcoming challenges through **community engagement** and **training**

By uncovering and structuring the story of the National Book Prize through Wikidata and other Wikimedia platforms, we address several key needs:

- **Preservation of bibliographic heritage**
- **Academic relevance**
- **Equity and representation**
- **Openness and accessibility**

Linking Malta's Literary Past to the Digital Present

- Cultural visibility in international literary discourse
- Scholarly research on small-language literary systems
- The creation of new Wikipedia articles in Maltese and other languages
- Education initiatives in Malta that train students in digital humanities and open knowledge practices

This work ensures that Malta's literary contributions are not just remembered, but **connected, **accessible**, and **reusable**.**

What's next?

- Improve Wikipedia articles about the NBC and the NBP
- November Malta Book Festival - we will present the first findings
- Workshops on copyright and editathons
- Continue with community engagement
- Collaborative outreach and capacity-building
- Data about publishers
- Data about award-winning books

Turning scattered cultural records into discoverable, citable, and
usable open data.

Enabling the history of Maltese literature to be told more fully,
more accurately, and more widely.

Thanks for your attention!



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