

E

THE MUSEUM.

VALLETTA, 15th MAY, 1906.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit the annual report on the Museum for the year ended 31st March, 1906.

2. The Museum was opened to the public on Empire Day, the 24th May, 1905. In the absence, through indisposition, of His Excellency the Governor, the opening ceremony was performed by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, when the Curator read a paper giving a short history of the Museum from its origin, when the private collection of Br. John Francis Abela, Chaplain and Vice Chancellor of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, was formed, to the present day.

3. No very considerable additions to the collection were made during the year; but I am happy to record the fact that many private collectors have come forward to support the Museum.

4. The Rev. E. Magri, S.J. gave a statuette, found in Gozo, and three ectypes of Phoenician inscriptions from Malta, and obtained, from the Augustinian Fathers of Gozo, the loan of a bronze Egyptian Isis, found in Malta, and a large earthenware amphora with an Arabic inscription. Marquis Cassar Desain lent the *Sacred Cone* of the "Ggantija" megalithic temple of Gozo. The Franciscans (Minor Friars) of Valletta presented a fragment of a carved stone column existing in an old chapel of their church, and Father Lodovico Debono, who belongs to the same Community, gave two Egyptian ushabti figures.

His Honour,
The Lieutenant Governor
and Chief Secretary to Government.

E 2
Father Guardian of the Convent of S. Maria di Gesù (Minor Friars) of Rabat, gave a bronze bowl, stated to have been used by Grand Master L'Isle Adam when residing in that convent; while Mons. Can. L. Farrugia, D.D., and Dr. T. Francica gave a small earthenware aryballos, found in a tomb-cave at Malta, and a small Egyptian idol. Mr. Icilio Bianchi, sent some marble fragments from Carthage, and Dr. G. Messina, LL.D.; some earthenware articles and fragments found in a tomb-cave at Rabat. Certain documents concerning the erection of the monument to Sir Alexander Ball, raised in Malta in 1810, were presented by Mr. Henry Casolani. The Officer in charge of the Government Printing Office sent 32 blocks (vignettes, tail ends, etc.) used in the printing office of the Order of St. John, together with a set of old sketches drawn by one of the Knights; while the Hon. the Superintendent of Public Works sent a stone coat-of-arms of Grand Master de Verdala, found at Boschetto.

5. Several purchases were made by the Museum during the year, the most important being the following:—two gold and enamel crosses of the Knights of St. John; a set of official seals of the Consulate of the States of the Church in Malta; some Carthaginian pottery and pottery found in Malta; a marble inscription recording the election of Grand Master Raphael Cottoner (1660), a number of old Maltese maps and prints, and a complete set of furniture of a tomb-cave found at Ghain Qatet, Gozo.

6. Through the good offices of Father Magri, and the courtesy of the directors of the Louvre Museum, the Museum Committee have obtained an ectype of the Phœnician pillar with a bilingual inscription (No. 122, Corpus Inscriptionum Semit.) presented to Louis XVI of France by Grand Master De Rohan in 1780, and an ectype of the inscription C.I.S. 124; these were forwarded to Malta free of charge. Ectypes of local Phœnician inscriptions (C.I.S. 123 and 132) were also obtained.

7. During the year under review, several rock-tombs of the ordinary Punic type were met with in Malta and Gozo. Those found in Malta were inspected and surveyed by the Curator, and the tomb furniture was acquired for the Museum whenever it was possible to do so.

Excavations were made by Father Magri, on behalf of the Museum, among the ruins of a megalithic temple at Xenkja and a mansion at "Haggarija"; several relics were presented to the Museum by the owner of the site, Mr. Paul Pisani. Several tomb-caves were found, the more important ones being those at "Il Habel tal Bûr", Ghain Sielem, and those of "ta li-Brag", near "l'Abatija ta l'Iskof", Rabat. The foundations of an old house at "il Ghammieza" Rabat, were also discovered, and fragments of painted pottery (1500-1800 B.C.) obtained. The contents of the Ghain Sielem tomb-cave were presented to the Museum by the Rev. F. Cassar, while Mr. M. A. Galea gave some kitchen and scullery ware (Phœnician and Roman type) found at Haggarija.

8. An interesting discovery was made in the lands "Tal Bidni" on the eastern limits of Zabbar. Trial pits were sunk in a circular field which looked very much like an amphitheatre, and fragments of old pottery were found alongside the walls. When the central part of the field was excavated, bones and teeth of elephants and other animals were found in a semifossilized state, and in good state of preservation. These remains were given to the Museum by Mr. Filippo Farrugia, the owner of the field, who was good enough to give us all possible assistance and to allow us to dig up his property. An accurate study of this field will, I hope, be made in the near future.

E. 3

9. The Hassallieni necropolis at Casal Paola, which has now been completely excavated and surveyed, will be reported upon shortly. So far, it has not been possible to open the necropolis to the public, the lower parts being flooded with water which oozes through the rock in winter. It is also necessary to ventilate the hypogeum in order to keep the place dry. Visitors cannot be admitted until these two works have been carried out.

10. A set of tombs, met with under the public road, was added to the Catacombs of St. Paul at Rabat, and plans of the catacombs are being prepared.

11. The Museum of Rabat also received some attention during the year. Fragments of mosaic pavements, stucco, marble slabs etc., which lay about the building in heaps, have been arranged in proper frames; they are thus preserved from further decay and seen to better advantage. The mosaic pavement of the impluvium, which had been patched up with cement, is being repaired with proper materials found inside the building. The blotches of red cement which disfigured the pavement have now disappeared.

A plan of the remains of the Roman Villa has been placed in the Museum, giving visitors a good idea of the original building and its internal arrangements.

12. A marble capital from the palace of Bishop Cagliare; in the upper town of Gozo, and an ancient mill-stone from the lands "tal Hamrija", were sent to the Gozo Library.

13. The old shrine at the entrance of Notabile was repaired, the cost being defrayed from Museum funds. This shrine contained a picture of St. Paul, placed there towards the end of the 17th century in thanksgiving for the preservation of these islands from the effects of the earthquake of 1693. The shrine, which had been much neglected, had become an eyesore, the marble inscription being almost illegible.

14. Of six shafts of marble columns on the wharf of Mgar at Gozo, five were removed to the Malta, and one to the Gozo Museum. The shafts, which are of white marble and finely fluted, are stated to have formed part of a pagan temple in the acropolis of Gozo.

15. The following remains were discovered in Gozo by Father Magri:—

a). A "High Place" at Ix-Xaghra il Cbira, ta Cenè;

b). An elliptical structure between the site of the ancient Church of St. Anthony and the "Giants' Tower";

c). A "High Place" at Zebbug, called "Il Ggantija taz-Zebbug";

d). A large souterrain "at Gnièn Qassis," Xaghra;

e). "Santa Verna's" Temple at Ix-Xaghra ta Ghain Lukin;

f). Megalithic buildings near Tal-Hlewwah, at "Ta Qirchem" (Qirt-shem).

16. Since the Museum was opened, the number of visitors has been 3,805; of these, 650 were admitted on payment, while 3,155 came on Sundays and paid no entrance fee. It is to be hoped that the number of visitors will become greater when the Museum is better known to travellers.

17. In addition to the amount expended on personal emoluments, £ 136. 14. 4 were expended during the year in connection with the preservation and exploration of antiquities in Malta and Gozo, and £ 224. 5. 9 on the upkeep of the Museum and its exhibits.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

TEM. ZAMMIT,

Curator.
