

REPORTS  
ON THE WORKING OF  
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS  
DURING THE FINANCIAL YEAR  
**1907-8.**

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# E

## THE MUSEUM,

*Valletta, 25th May, 1908.*

Sir,

I have the honour to submit my report on this Department for the year ended 31st March, 1908.

2. By the death during the year of Mr. Antonio Emmanuele Caruana, the Committee of Management sustained the loss of one of its most deserving members. The deceased gentleman was well known for his historical and philological studies about the inhabitants of Malta and their language. His works "On the origin of the Maltese language" and "The vocabulary of the Maltese language" have shown him to be a thoughtful writer and a scrupulous inquirer into historical facts.

3. The collection of antiquities in the Museum was considerably increased this year, partly by donations and acquisitions, and partly by explorations made by the Department. The donations were many and came from different quarters, showing that the Museum is being appreciated by all classes of the community.

A fluted marble column, found at Porto Nuovo, was given by Mr. F. de'Conti Manduca; a clay Roman lamp, by Mr. T. Curmi, the Superintendent of Police; a portrait of D. Bartolomeo Caraffa, by Mons. Can. A. Mifsud D.D.; a fine glass cinerary urn from Tripoli, by Mr. G. P. Salomone; a few pieces of Greek pottery by Lady Drury; a photo and a stone from Egypt by Mons. Can. S. Grech, D.D.; a large stone coat-of-arms of Grand Master Caraffa by Mr. Salvatore Carabott; a brass plate by Mr. Nicola Cachia; the head of a clay statuette by Mr. Giuseppe Marmarà; a set of flint stones found in Devonshire, by Mrs. Munday; a set of reports of the Dartmoor exploration Committee and other publications by Mr. Rob. Burnard, F.S.A.; a set of brochures by the Rev. Canon A. F. Leynaud of Sousse; a copy of a plan of a small fort and a photo by Lieut. W. R. Gatt, R.M.A.; the head of a clay figure by Mr. F. Farrugia Gay; a small bronze mortar by Mr. A. Bartolo, and a set of translations of Phoenician inscriptions, the work of Mr. S. Calleja Senior of Algiers; a copy of the book on the Coins and Medals of the Knights of Malta by the Author, the Very Rev. Can. H. Calleja Schembri, D.D.; a plan and section of two Phoenician tombs were sent by the Chief

To His Honour,

The Lieutenant Governor

and Chief Secretary to Government.



Engineer,—the tombs were found by the Royal Engineers on the way between Puales and Ghain Tuffieha; seven pharmacy jars from the Gozo Hospital, by the Assistant Secretary to Government for Gozo; a set of Bandi by the Librarian; two marble coats of arms by the Hon. the Superintendent of Public Works.

4. The principal objects bought for the Museum are: a copper plate, an oil portrait of the architect Giovanni Barbara; an oil portrait of Philip Castagna as Governor of Gozo; a set of bronze weights with coat-of-arms of Grand Master De Rohan; a small gold cross of the Order; a set of old documents; five heads of marble statues; two plans of Valletta; four rare coins of the Order; a set of instruments for sighting guns; a lot Phoenician pottery; and a collection of lithographic views of Malta.

5. The finds made by the Department were also considerable. In September 1907 a necropolis on the east of the Tac-cghaki hill, near Rabat, was met with during the construction of three houses.

On this site 27 groups of tombs were met with. The type of these tombs was the ordinary Sidonian, consisting of a rectangular shaft, at the bottom and on the side of which, one or two chambers were excavated in the solid rock. The tombs measure, on an average, 7 feet long, 6 ft. wide by 3 feet high. The interior is very simple, the ceiling is slightly concave towards the sides, the walls more or less perpendicular and the flooring divided into two platforms by a one foot trench extending in the middle for about 5 feet with an average depth of 1 foot. The bodies are usually laid along these two platforms, one on each side, and around the bodies, jars, bottles, plates and other fictile ware and glass, bronze and ivory objects are placed. As the grave is generally used over again, no exact idea of the relative position of each object can be determined with certainty; during subsequent interments the old objects are displaced and possibly broken and other objects added. In these tombs cinerary urns were found alone or along with bodies that have been simply interred. Of the 27 tombs, the great majority were found open and rifled, not by archaeologists, but by the peasants themselves when the field was worked deeply. These tombs cut in the ground were, originally, on the surface, and the earth was thrown into them later on. It was therefore quite easy for the peasant to find them and, once found, a tomb is invariably opened, either for mere curiosity or for the sake of the shaft in which a tree is often planted. The pottery found is generally broken and the shaft filled up again with stones and earth. When these tombs are thus found open, little can be learned as to their contents; but by careful sifting of the soil, hundreds of small objects have been obtained, such as lamps, unguentaria, bronze needles, shells, mirrors, &c. The tombs themselves were surveyed and carefully planned. Of the 27 tombs, 15 consisted of a shaft and only one chamber and 13 had a shaft and two chambers one at each end. Seven of these tombs were fortunately found unviolated. At the mouth of some of the shafts large blocks of well squared stones were placed to make a regular opening, when the ground was not perfectly level.

6. It was interesting to observe in one case that the shaft was originally covered with a layer of concrete about 8 in. thick, with a superficial covering made of powdered pottery called *deffsu* in Maltese. This paste is still used in our days to make an impermeable layer on the surface of the roofs of the houses over which rain is collected. This raised platform, with neatly bevelled edges, covered the whole grave at one time, but unfortunately only 5 feet of it were intact, the tomb having been found open. It is quite possible that the majority of the Punic tombs were covered with this mound, which was at once pretty, effective for preserving the tomb and very cheap, as it could be made with materials always at hand. That this sort of covering was never noted before is not to be wondered at, as the mound, when broken, is easily lost in the soil. In the shafts of these tombs broken blocks of ornamented stones have been found, which in two cases looked very much like fragments of an altar. Many of the stones were ornamented by circles drilled by means of an instrument, possibly an auger.

No special ornamentation was observed in the tomb-caves themselves, except in one case, when, on the top of a small niche (10 in. by 6"), the head of a bull was found carved in the rock.



All the tomb-caves had a small central niche cut in the front wall, in which one or more Punic lamps were placed. This niche is sometimes large, and, instead of a lamp, a pretty clay cup on feet, very much like a modern chalice, is placed in it. No special orientation of the tomb-caves was noted, these were cut without apparent regularity as to direction and some of them cut each other at right angles.

7. A short account of the tombs found unviolated will not be without interest, as very few of them are found in a perfect state by the archaeologist. The workmen, when not properly guided, are always eager to enter a tomb and bring out its contents to show their zeal. In other cases, when the work is done by the tenant of the field, the tomb is cleared in a minute, and all the pottery smashed.

8. Tomb No. 4. This was a single chambered tomb, the shaft, 6 feet deep, was 6 feet 8 inches long and 2 feet 3 inches wide. There was only one chamber on the N.W. end of the shaft. The mouth of the cave was sealed by a large block of stone. The tomb-cave was 7 feet long, 5 feet wide, and 3 feet 6 inches high, with the ceiling slightly concave from side to side. A small triangular lamphole 5 inches long, 4 inches high and 4 inches deep was cut in the middle of the front wall ending in the line of the ceiling. It contained two bilichnis Punic lamps.

The floor of the tomb was divided in the middle by a trench, 1 ft. deep, 1 ft. wide and 5 feet long, full of soil. On the platforms thus left on each side were the remains of two skeletons. The dampness of the tomb rendered the bones very friable; these were covered with dust, which had been formed by the water finding its way between the covering slabs and the walls. No plastering was found around the slabs. The rock being here very friable, dust fell from it during the long number of years covering all objects for the depth of about one inch. Two whole skulls, however, could be distinctly made out, and fragments of another one were also recognised. The bones however were otherwise undisturbed.

Against the middle of the front wall stood a large amphora of reddish clay, empty; and to its right and left five cinerary clay urns full of calcined bones were disposed along the walls, each covered with a clay plate on which a Punic lamp was placed.

Placed near these urns and along the opposite wall, the following objects were found: four Punic lamps, eight round-bottomed clay bottles, five small clay cups, two clay unguentaria, three round-bodied flasks (aryballi), two of which somewhat flattened, and two clay flasks with ear and spout like a feeding bottle, similar to those found at Carthage and called *bezzola*, one black clay bottle, one clay chalice, one round jar and one clay cock on pedestal.

It was clear from the contents that the tomb had been opened over and over again to receive the remains of a body and the funerary fictiles. Three interments had taken place and three cinerary urns had been deposited.

Complete toleration of both modes of disposal of the dead surely prevailed at the time, as everything in the tomb lay undisturbed.

9. Tomb No. 10—A chamber existed at each end of the shaft which was 4 ft. deep 6 ft. 6 in. long, and 2 ft. wide. The direction of the shaft was N. S. Each chamber was sealed with a large stone slab.

Northern chamber—covering slab 3 in. thick, 3 ft. 2 in. long, and 1 ft. 7 in. wide. When this was removed, the chamber appeared undisturbed. It had, as the one previously described, a central trench 4 ft. 9 in. long, 11 in. deep, and 1 ft. 8 in. wide. Chamber 7 ft. long, 4 ft. 3 in. wide, 2 ft. 9 in. high. The triangular lamp-hole in the centre of the front wall (7 in. high, 6 in. wide, 3 in. deep) contained four Punic lamps of which one broken. On the left platform a skeleton (adult) was seen lying quite straight with head towards the entrance, arms



converging and hands meeting on the middle part of the body. A thin clayish deposit covered the contents. On the body a bronze needle was found about 3 in. long and a ring. The ribs and upper portion of the skeleton were reduced to fine dust, the other bones were brittle, but in situ. At the feet of the body 2 round-bodied bottles (aryballi) were laid.

On the right platform, at the further end of the room, were 4 clay cinerary urns full of well calcined bones, two standing and two upset, probably by the action of the water. Each cinerary urn was covered with a clay plate which carried a Punic lamp; one of them had two plates. One long clay scent bottle, one clay plate, two deep clay cups with ear, a fragment of a large jar and fragments of a clay lamp lay along this platform. On the soil that filled the central trench was a clay bottle and two plates. The soil here contained fragments of human bones and a vertebra was also found on the right platform. Probably the bones of a previous interment were cleared at a time before the tomb was used once more. In the dust a small heap made of the fragments of an egg-shell was found.

The southern chamber had no central trench. A body was found lying with head towards the entrance. Conditions of floor and walls the same as in the other chamber. The body lay to the left by itself with only one aryballus, a little away from the head.

On the right side of the tomb the following objects were standing or lying down: two clay cinerary urns, full of burnt human bones, each with its plate and lamp; three other clay plates, five Punic lamps, two clay bottles, three glass unguentaria, four aryballi, three saucers, one enochoc, one jar and fragments of a jar and glass vessels. Fragments of bones were found in the right further end of the chamber, showing that the tomb had been cleared of another body before being used once more.

10. Tomb No. 13. Two chambered; shaft 5 ft. deep, 6 ft. 6 in. long, 1 ft. 10 in. wide. Direction N.E. by S.W. Only the southern chamber was found sealed.

Tomb-cave of the same type as the above 6 ft. 9 in. long, 4 ft. 9 in. wide, and 2 ft. 6 in. high. Central trench 1 ft. wide, 10 in. deep, and 4 ft. 6 in. long.

On removing the covering slab the entrance was found encumbered with a large portion of another stone slab and with debris.

On the left a human adult skeleton was seen lying straight along the wall with the head on the side opposite to the entrance. The ribs were in a heap under the skull, as if the body was laid with the back and head supported against the wall.

An empty large reddish amphora (3 ft.) with tapering bottom was laid across the legs of the body. Two clay cinerary urns containing burnt human bones were lying along the front wall. The bottom of a broken cinerary urn containing burnt bones was found covered with a clay plate; two plates, one lamp, one aryballus and fragments of clay vessels were found strewn all over the floor. Ashes and bits of charcoal were also found lying about, probably spread by water. The lamphole contained two Punic lamps.

A small heap of bones proved to be the skeleton of a bird, a fighting cock surely, from the long and powerful spurs sticking out of the tibiae.

11. Tomb 17.—One chambered. Shaft 7 ft. 6 in. long, 2 ft. 2 in. wide, and 9 ft. deep; direction E.W. Tomb-cave on the western end of shaft sealed by a covering slab 1 foot thick, 3 ft. 9 in. long, and 1 ft. 9 in. wide.

The entrance was found encumbered with debris, the result of careless opening of the tomb on other occasions. The chamber, 6 ft. 9 in. long, 5 ft. wide, and 3 ft. 5 in. high, has the usual central trench 4 ft. 7 in. long, 1 ft. wide, and 1 ft. deep. A lamphole in the middle of the front wall, 1 ft. below the ceiling 10 in. long by 3 in. deep by 6 in. high, contains three Punic lamps and the fragments of a fourth one.



On the right platform the remains of a skeleton were found crumbled to dust, the feet facing the entrance. Near the knees was a small clay plate; beyond the feet a heap of fine clay unguentaria and one small plate were found embedded in mud. The whole floor of the chamber was muddy being at a lower level than the shaft and the covering slab not fitting tightly.

On the left platform human bones were lying in heaps as if several skeletons had been cleared out to make room for the last interment. The bones appear to belong to different epochs as some of them are completely mouldered, whilst others are quite sound.

One skeleton, the last one deposited, lies, practically untouched; it is simply pushed to one side and some old bones were thrown upon it. On one side of the tomb the bones of five different bodies could be made out.

Two clay cinerary urns with their plate and lamp were placed on the left platform.

Just near the entrance, on the left, a large amphora with tapering bottom lay on its side quite empty.

The other objects found in the tomb were: six clay plates, nine unguentaria, two bronze needles, four Punic lamps, three cups, one large plate, three round-bottomed bottles, two small enochæ. On the body lying by itself on the right, a bronze coin was found on the jawbone, as if the same had been placed in the mouth of the corpse.

The coin is in fairly good preservation. It is one of the well-known brass coins with the inscription "Melitaion" around a tripod; with the head of veiled female on the obverse. This coin, though of a pure Phœnician type, dates probably from the Roman occupation of these Islands, that is after 218 B.C.

12. Tomb No. 18. One chambered. Shaft 7 ft. long, 2 ft. wide and 14 ft. deep with a N.E., S.W. direction. Tomb-cave at its southern end; at the other end there is but a small recess about 2 ft. deep, found empty. The tomb-cave is of the ordinary type, without central trench, 6 ft. 6 in. long, 4 ft. 9 in. wide, and 3 ft. 4 in. high. The walls are not so well finished as in the other tombs. Triangular lamphole in the middle of the front wall with one Punic lamp. Floor muddy for having been periodically under water. Many of the clay objects in fact had so badly crumbled away by the action of the water that they could not be picked up.

The tomb looks as if it was used over and over again, and it is strewn with fragments of clay vessels and of rotten bones.

In the middle of the chamber the skeleton of an adult lies flat on the back undisturbed, with head away from the entrance. What is remarkable is, that the upper part of the skeleton is black and quite rotten, whilst the bones of the lower extremities are quite solid and well preserved.

Five bronze needles were found in the tomb; one of them on the middle part of the body. A plain brass ring was found with the bones of one of the hands. No coins and no glass were found.

Four clay cinerary urns and fragments of two others were found full of bone ashes: seven plates, nine clay unguentaria, two large jars, two small jars, two shells (murex) one lead shallow vessel 3 in. diameter, one clay chalice, one large plate, four deep saucers, three aryballi, one clay fire-holder (foculus) completed the furniture.

13. Tomb No. 19. Shaft with a N.E., S.W. direction, 6 ft. 4 in. long, 2 ft. wide and 4 ft. 10 in. deep. At its N.E. end was the tomb-cave and at the other end a small recess 2 ft. wide.

Tomb-cave sealed with a large block of stone made of two pieces fitting well together. The cave was not watertight. The floor of the chamber was consequently covered with fine white mud, much less abundant, however, than in the other tombs.



The skeletons in perfect preservation lay flat on the back, one on the right and the other on the left platform with limbs straight. The right body had a stone under the head. The left skeleton appeared to be that of a woman and had a small bronze mirror and a clay unguentarium by the right side, the other body was that of a male adult.

At the feet of the body on the right, one clay unguentarium, two aryballi and one clay bottle lay in a heap. At the back of the chamber was a cinerary urn with its lamp and plate, two aryballi, two jars, four plates, two lamps, one clay chalice; three lamps were in the triangular lamphole (8 in. high by 8 in. wide by 3 in. deep).

The tomb-cave was 6 ft. 8 in. long, 4 ft. 1 in. wide, and 2 ft. 7 in. high. The trench in the middle was 4 ft. 9 in. long, 9 in. wide, and 11 in. deep. It was full of soil and contained no objects.

From the appearance of the undisturbed furniture it was clear that the cinerary urn was deposited after the bodies. The urn was upset by the action of the water, most probably, and its plate falling on the neck of the body broke the bones which were already brittle.

Besides the mirror and the ficile vessels nothing else was found in the tomb, which was remarkably clean and undisturbed. Bits of wood-charcoal were found here and there probably carried by the water out of the cinerary urn.

The number of lamps in the lamphole corresponds to the number of bodies in the tomb, a fact which is often observed in our tombs.

14. At the other end of the shaft a small recess was also sealed by a stone slab. On the slab being removed, a number of clay vessels were found embedded for 3 in. in dust and ashes.

Two reddish clay cinerary urns were full of bone-ash; one of them contained, along with the ashes, a bronze mirror distorted by the action of the fire. One small conical amphora was strongly fixed to the wall with white mortar.

A cylindrical jar like an elongated flower-pot embedded in the dust was found mouth downwards and empty. There was a lamphole in this recess, but without lamps in it. Four lamps were found in the floor of the recess, one aryballus, three plates and one small round jar.

15. Besides the objects found in the unviolated tombs the following were obtained from the debris in the other caves: twenty-three aryballi, three large jars, nineteen small jars, thirty-three clay unguentaria, thirteen glass unguentaria, three cups, twenty-five plates, ninety-four Punic lamps, ten shells (*murex*), ten *Ostrea*, thirteen bronze needles, one bronze cup, sixteen cinerary urns, twenty-eight round bottomed bottles, two bronze coins, twelve saucers, one chalice, three bronze discs, one bronze plate, three red clay jars, one red jar with figures, two statuettes viz: one child on dolphin, one child on cock, one small faience figure, three tin rings of which two with scarab of blue faience with hieroglyphics, two bronze bracelets, four ivory pins, twenty brass coffin clamps (representing five coffins) and other minor objects.

This necropolis, from the type of the objects found in it, and especially from the coins, cannot be placed further than the first century A.D. or last century B.C.

The objects found are now exhibited in the Valletta Museum.

16. When the digging of this necropolis was nearly over, we found in the southern end of the plot of ground the entrance to what proved to be a catacomb of the Roman type.

From a central space, of which the entrance was broken, a flight of 10 steps cut in the rock led to two superposed tombs and another tomb with arcosolium opened on the left.



Another flight of steps at right angles to the first, led to another set of tombs provided with head rests and beautifully finished throughout.

The catacomb was found rifled and full of stones and soil. In the debris a stone slab was found with bevelled edges ornamented with circles drilled with an auger, one red Roman pagan lamp and fragments of clay slabs, cinerary urns, amphoræ, unguentaria, clay lamps, clay plates, a red clay vessel, a stone plum-bob and a shell (murex).

The catacomb was carefully surveyed and a plan and sections of the same can be seen in the Valletta Museum.

17. The attention of the curator was called in November 1907 to a tomb found at Sebbieh, north of the Bingemma hills.

The tomb was opened and surveyed on the 14th of November. It was cut in the surface of the rock. A shaft 3 ft. 2 by 4 ft. 2, 5 ft. 4 in. deep was full of red soil, which, when removed, showed a large stone slab covering the entrance of the tomb.

The tomb was practically circular with a diameter of about 5 ft. 8 in.; it was about 3 ft. deep at its highest point, the ceiling curving from the top of the entrance to the edge of the floor at the back.

The covering slab was not well fitting, and rain water carried with it red soil which filled the whole chamber. All the objects were found caked together by the red loam. The following objects were found: two skulls and fragments of two others, one large egg-shaped amphora, two enochœs, two Punic lamps, one deep cup, two clay plates, one round bottle, one large tin ring fragments of a small plate and an aryballus.

The pottery was more coarse than that found at Rabat, and the type of the tomb is much older than those found at Tac-Cghaki.

18. During September excavations were continued at Kligha on the slopes of the Bingemma hills.

Several rock-tombs were met with dug in the ground, some were broken as the stone in that site is very friable and two were found whole, but empty. In character, they resembled the Tac-cghaki tombs and consisted of a shaft with a tomb-cave at one end.

19. To the south of these tombs a depression in the ground was observed, and, in digging out the same, it was found that a few feet below the ground a small cave cut in the soft rock was used as a tomb. No covering slab closed the entrance, which was nearly as wide as the cave, and measured about 4 feet across. The cave was half full of red soil, carried in by the rain water, and so the objects found were badly caked together. A heap of bones was found, and from it were extracted five whole skulls and fragments of at least five others.

The following objects were obtained: A very large amphora with conical bottom. It contained human bones, one blue falence bead and a bronze coin, which on clearing proved to be a coin of Trajan (M. Ulpius Trajanus Decius Parthicus (98-117)). A smaller jar with tapering body, with neck and handle broken, contained fragments of human bones together with a small cup. A small enochœ; sixteen Punic lamps, and one of Roman type, sixteen ordinary aryballi and one with cylindrical body, five small and two large enochœs, two large mouthed jars, one long necked red jar, one fragment of a painted jar, fifteen clay cups, fifteen clay saucers, two plain cups, one deep red plate, five deep cups, seven deep cups with handles, two glass unguentaria and fragments of others, one glass cup, one glass bottle, one bronze needle, one iron hook of a spindle, and one large bronze nail were also safely extracted.



The shaft of the cave proved subsequently to be very large and irregular. It was 13 feet deep, and about 10 feet at its widest portion. It was full of a clayey grey soil, but nothing else was found in it. The coin of Trajan is a very clear one, and shows that the tomb was not very old. It is important to note that the objects found here do not differ materially from those found at Tac-caghki hill.

20. Two other tombs with collapsed roofs were found in November, and a few fictile objects were obtained from the marly soil which filled the cavities.

21. On the 13th January a very interesting tomb was opened close to the others above mentioned.

The shaft was practically cylindrical, measuring 5 ft. 3 in. by 4 ft. 6 in. and 6 ft. deep. On its northern side the shaft opened in an elliptical chamber, which measured 4 ft. 2 in. across and was 2 ft. 6 in. deep, and 2 ft. 3 in. at its highest point at the entrance.

The ceiling curved down to meet the floor at the back.

A large block of stone closed the entrance. It measured 2 ft. 10 in. by 2 ft. 4 in. by 6 in., and was carefully laid against the shaft, the space between stone and wall being filled with clay. The lower portion however was not so well sealed, and the red soil found its way in the chamber half filling the same.

The following objects were safely got out: three large globular cinerary urns, one of them red, containing burnt human bones, three plates which probably covered the jars, two plates smaller and deeper, one smaller jar with handle, three large aryballi, two large enoches, two large mouthed jars, one large mouthed jar (smaller), three large cups with ear, three Punic lamps and one bronze ring.

This tomb was undoubtedly older than the others so far met with in that locality.

22. More tombs were met with at Kligha in January of this year.

The rock in that locality is friable and consequently the walls are generally found broken.

One of the tombs was particularly interesting. It consisted of a shaft 6 ft. 4 in. deep, 2 ft. 3 in. wide, and 6 ft. 6 in. long. At one end of the shaft was a triangular niche 1 ft. 9 in. at the base and 3 ft. high. In it stood a red clay jar with conical bottom, quite empty. The tomb-cave, cut along the side of the shaft, was 2 ft. deep.

There was no covering slab, but the cave was full of marly soil.

On removing the soil, a body lying on its left side was discovered, closely embedded in the soil. This was the last body to be interred, for in front of it bones were closely packed together and three skulls were pressed against the wall.

In one of the corners of the cave, the following objects were found: one small red jar with cover, one plate, three small jugs, two fragments of a small plate and one fragment of a large urn.

The poor people who used this grave had very little pottery to spare and less space to put it in. It is very remarkable that, lacking space for the large amphora in the tomb, a small niche was cut for it in the soft wall.

23. From another tomb with collapsed roof the following objects were obtained: two egg-shaped large amphoræ found bottom upwards and empty, one cinerary urn of the late pattern



full of burnt bones (adult), one large mouthed jar with handle full of burnt bones, one small deep saucer, one small deep cup. Several fragments of pottery were also got from the debris among which the handle of a large amphora with potter's mark in three Phœnician letters.

Human bones were also found buried among the debris.

24. An interesting discovery was made this year on the south eastern coast of the Island, at the so called "Gzira ta San Tumas" to the south of Marsascala.

A catacomb of the Roman type was found, which does not differ from others of the kind so far met with. The interest is all in a Latin inscription cut on one of the jambs of an arcosolium. The lettering of the inscription looks considerably old, and the whole appears to be the work of early Christians.

The inscription runs thus: IN NOMINE DOMINI JESU CHRISTI SURGE ET AMBULA—DOMINE SALVUM ME FAC.—Copies and photographs of the inscription were made and are under examination.

The inscription is of exceptional interest, not only to ourselves, but to the whole Christian world.

A survey of the catacomb was made and plans and sections are exhibited at the Valletta Museum.

25. The Hal Saffieni hypogeum was so far cleaned during the year, that it was opened to the public in January.

With a view to abolishing a water tank which leaked into the hypogeum, and in order to carry further excavations towards the entrance of the same, two of the houses built over the hypogeum were bought by the Government. In consequence of the work already carried on, the dampness has considerably decreased and the exploration of the entrance was taken in hand.

26. Attention was also given to the remains of the Roman house at Rabat, known as the Roman Villa. The collection was further arranged, and a small guide book was published to help the visitor to study the exhibits.

27. During the year 1907-8, 5,000 persons visited the Museum, whereof 862 during week-days, on payment, and 4,138, on Sundays, free.

Besides personal emoluments, £ 507. 6. 3 were spent for the exploration and preservation of antiquities in these Islands, and £ 205. 19. 6 for the upkeep of the Museums and for the purchase of objects.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

TEM. ZAMMIT,

*Curator.*