

TARI REPORTS

ON THE WORKING OF

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

DURING THE FINANCIAL YEAR

1908-9.

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THE MUSEUM,

Valletta, 23rd June, 1909.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit the sixth Annual report, ending 31st March 1909, on the working of this Department.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

TEM. ZAMMIT,

Curator.

His Honour,

The Lieutenant Governor
and Chief Secretary to Government

ANNUAL REPORT, 1908-9.

Considerable additions were made to the collection, during the year, and the Phœnician pottery was re-arranged for the clearer demonstration of the characteristics of the Phœnician period.

2. The donations made to the Museum were numerous and, as usual, by persons of various classes as may be seen from the following list :—

Fleet Surgeon Mac Lean, R.N.,	...	fragments of vases from Knossos, Crete ;
Colonel A. Mac Kean, C.M.G.,	...	pieces of mosaic floor found by him at Notabile ;
Can. I. de' Conti Formosa,	...	1 marble head, 1 reel, 8 old documents ;
Prof. G. Norsa, M.D.,	...	7 Egyptian antiquities ;
Rev. E. M. Gearhart, U.S.A.,	...	16 flint implements found at Sunbury ;

Mr. N. Tagliaferro, I.S.O., ...	...	2 books and many fragments of pottery found at Cyrene, Alexandria, Malta, etc. ;
Mr. Abramo Gatt, ...	...	16 Arabic coins found in Malta ;
Mr. T. Salmond, A.M.I.C.E., ...	...	a set of photo enlargements of the catacombs ;
Can. E. Pullicino, D.D., ...	...	3 old documents and 2 books ;
Dr. O. Grech Mifsud, ...	...	2 old documents and 1 old pencil drawing by Farrugia ;
Mrs. Munday, ...	...	7 flint implements from Dartmoor ;
Rev. S. Curmi Cecy, ...	...	1 photo enlargement ;
Mr. T. Farrugia Guy, ...	...	1 set of old documents relating to Malta ;
Dr. Alfredo Caruana Gatto, ...	...	6 silver and 130 copper Arabic coins ;
Dr. T. Ashby, ...	...	potsherds from Comino, etc. ;
The Superintendent of Police, ...	...	1 coat-of-arms of G. M. Wignacourt ;
The P.M.O., R.A.M.C., ...	...	4 pharmacy jars from the Station Hospital, Valletta ;
The executors of the late Prof. Pisani, ...	...	collection of coins, etc. ;
	C.M.G.,	
The Chief Engineer, ...	...	one hard stone coat-of-arms found at Pembroke Camp.

3. The bequest of the late Prof. S. L. Pisani, C.M.G., M.D., who died on the 27th October 1908, was handed over by the executors of his will on the 19th March, 1909.

The collection of coins was examined with the assistance of the executors and Magistrate Dr. E. Parnis, who very kindly undertook to help the curator in the difficult and delicate task.

Besides the collection of coins and medals, Prof. Pisani bequeathed to the Museum his books relative to Numismatics, and to the Public Library all his books about Malta.

Prof. Pisani's bequest consists of the following items :—

- (1). A collection of decorations of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.
- (2). A collection of commemorative Medals of the Order.
- (3). A collection of Punic coins found in Malta, including coins from Carthage and Maltese coins of a punic type with Phœnician, Greek or Roman inscriptions.
- (4). A collection of Roman coins, of which 5 gold, 271 silver and 112 bronze belong to the Consular period, and 23 silver and 563 bronze to the Imperial period.
- (5). A collection of the coins of the Order of St. John from Grand Master l'Isle Adam to Hompesch : 185 gold, 418 silver and 324 copper.
- (6). Coins of the French Republic during the French occupation: 6 gold, 3 silver, 8 copper.
- (7). A collection of British coins from George III to Victoria : 129 gold, 154 silver, 112 bronze.

These collections are being gradually exhibited in the coin room of the Museum, in which the show-cases were re-arranged and modified for the purpose.

4. During the year many acquisitions were made on behalf of the Museum, including a few rare coins of the Order, some Punic pottery, a wooden coat-of-arms of Bishop Cocco Palmier and the contents of a Phœnician tomb.

5. The Phœnician rock tomb mentioned in paragraph 4 was found in a field to the south of Rabato. The tomb with vaulted ceiling was cut in the side of a hill. It contained cinerary urns with burnt bones, but no signs of bodies interred. Under a clay cup a gold medallion was found, on which the winged orb displayed over the half-moon, flanked by two serpents, is gracefully figured in a kind of filigree work. The medallion has a diameter of 25 m.m. and

weighs 6.3 grms. A similar medallion was found at Carthage (Douïmes) in 1895 and described by Delattre*. With this medallion a pair of silver bangles and fragments of two rings were found. Fragments of a small Greek vase were also recovered with the debris. Mr. T. Peet, of the British School of Rome, has affirmed that this vase can safely be dated to the 7th century B.C.

6. During the year, the Curator conducted the excavations of the western group of ruins on Corradino Hill. A small portion of the eastern group of ruins was also excavated during this year conjointly with Dr. Ashby, of the British School of Rome, but the complete clearing of the ruins is to be taken in hand during the next financial year. These ruins, both the Western and the Eastern group, were cleared out in 1892-3 under the direction of the late Dr. A.A. Caruana, and a report with plans was published in the *Archæological Journal* of March 1896. As no mention whatever was made in this report of the contents of the soil removed, it was decided to examine the ruins more carefully to obtain, if possible, a clue as to their use and as to the kind of people who erected the buildings.

The soil found in the chambers of the ruins was carefully removed and sifted.

The western group of ruins is in a very bad state of repair. Most of the large stones, being laid directly on the rock, were easily broken and moved about. It was consequently difficult to ascertain in every case the exact relative position of the stones. The floors that may have existed originally were removed during the excavations of 1893.

The examination of the soil that filled the ruins proved of the highest importance, as it brought to light several objects sufficient to show that the buildings belonged to a prehistoric period, not later than the late neolithic age.

POTTERY—The sherds found are of different types, some very coarse, others of a superior workmanship. The black hand-burnished ware is the most common, and this is variously ornamented with incised designs, recalling the pottery found at Hagiar Kim (Krendi) and also later at Hal Saffieni (Paula.)

BONES. Bones of domestic animals were plentiful, and were mixed with potsherds and with shells of molluscs of the edible varieties.

The following shells were found and were kindly determined by Dr. A. Caruana Gatto.—

Helix vermiculata (new variety), *Helix aperta*, *Ceritium vulgatum*, *Ceritium fuscum*, *Pecten varius*, *Trochus divaricatus*, *Trochus articulatus*, *Anomia ephippium*, *Nassa varabilis*, *Conus Mediterraneus*, *Stenogyra decollata*, *Ciclostoma Melitense*, *Cyclonassa Melitea*, *Columbella rustica*. All these shells are still found on our shores.

Along with the objects mentioned a good number of flint flakes and hard-stone tools were met with. The flints are all worked, but no knives and other elaborate instruments were found, the commonest object being a roundish scraper with a semilunar edge. The flint is of a grey brown colour, the black variety being present, but in a smaller proportion.

The best flint object found was a small arrowhead beautifully finished, 20 m.m. long and 15 m.m. wide at the base. The flint is of a dark amber colour.

These ruins must, therefore, be considered to have been chiefly used as dwelling places, in a district of which Hal Saffieni to the South was the centre.

Further details of the excavations will be published later on, together with the report on the Eastern and S. Eastern group of ruins.

* La nécropole punique de Douïmes (Carthage) (1895-6. Paris 1897 page 110 par. le R. P. Delattre.

HAL SAFLIENI. The excavations of the Hal Saffieni hypogeum were continued during the year, and a number of other caves were discovered and cleared out.

The hypogeum was found to extend to the North, and it is quite possible that more caves are still existent under the neighbouring houses.

More potsherds, flint stones, polished stones, beads and personal ornaments made of fossil shells and teeth, well polished and perforated, were found, but the best find of the year was a stone Steatopygous figure, discovered in a pit not far from the entrance. This statuette is 38 cms. high, 28 cms. wide at the hips, and 16 cms. thick.

The right hand is laid along the body, and the left is bent across the bosom and rests thereon. The legs are short and the feet are broken. The neck is hollowed out to receive a head, and in fact a stone head 9 cms. high ending in a peg 4 cms. long was found in the pit, fitting the neck of the statuette, very well. Curiously enough another head 9 cms. long was also found, which is hollow at the neck as if intended to fit a body ending in a peg.

The two heads have very good outlines, and the thick wavy hair is well shown, neatly dressed.

The statuette was originally painted red, as the colour is distinctly visible in some parts and in the corners. It is similar to a small one made of alabaster 7 cms. high found in another cave at Hal Saffieni some time ago, and which seems to be a copy of the one found lately.

Human bones were found in great number, but not one skeleton could be made out to have been whole and regularly laid out for burial. In the new caves as well as in those cleared the years before, the impression one gets from the distribution of the bones is that they were thrown in a haphazard way.

A preliminary report on the Hal Saffieni hypogeum with plans and illustrations is now in preparation, and will be published in a short time. This report will serve as a guide book to the hypogeum.

All the objects found in the hypogeum can now be seen at the Valletta Museum.

VALLETTA MUSEUM. A cork model to scale (1:30) of Hagiar Kim has been exhibited in the main hall of the Museum. The visitor who finds no time to drive to the ruins can thus get a fair idea of these important megalithic buildings by simply visiting the Museum at Valletta.

It is hoped that models of Mnajdra, the Gigantija and other important ruins will be likewise made and exhibited in the near future.

During the year 1908-9, 5,255 persons visited the Museum, 1,394 during week days on payment and 3,861 on Sundays gratis.

Besides personal emoluments, £ 248. 15. 4 were spent for the exploration and preservation of antiquities in these Islands, and £ 229. 14. 1 for the upkeep of the Museum and for the purchase of objects of interest.

TEM. ZAMMIT,
Curator.