

REPORTS
ON THE WORKING OF
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
DURING THE FINANCIAL YEAR
1949-50.

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Report on the work of the Museum Department for 1949-50

THE MUSEUM,

Auberge d'Italie,
Valletta.

9th October, 1950.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report on the Museum Department for the financial year 1949-50.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,

J. G. BALDACCHINO,
Director.

The Honourable
The Minister of Education.

RESTORATION OF HAĠAR QIM NEOLITHIC TEMPLES.

The greater part of the remains of Haġar Qim Neolithic Temples was excavated, under the direction of Mr. J. G. Vance, in 1839. Further excavations were undertaken by Dr. A. A. Caruana, in 1885. Members of the British School at Rome also conducted, in 1910, a short course of excavations mainly with the object of ascertaining whether in the previous explorations the ground plan had been completely discovered or whether there were any additions to be made to it.

As these remains have been subjected to atmospheric agencies for such a long time and no effective measures were ever taken to protect them from weathering, some of the megaliths, especially those of an inferior quality, suffered very severely. The extent of disintegration was in places so much advanced that the adjacent and overlying structures were in imminent danger of collapse. To prevent further damage the stones which badly needed restoration were repaired without, however, obliterating any of the original decoration or other features which had escaped destruction. Where immediate reinforcement was not indispensable but the rapid progress of decay required checking the appropriate preservatives were applied.

The top part of the corner-stone at the south-west end of the facade, besides a number of orthostats and blocks inside the main building, were restored. Three large heaps of rubble lying in the vicinity of the ruins, the modern irregular steps leading up to enclosure F (Mayr's Plan III), and the rubble walls extending from the main building to Y, W, and N, (Mayr's Plan IV), and which did not present any of the characteristic features pertaining to megalithic constructions, were removed.

Accurate records of all the work effected in these Temples are kept for future reference.

NEOLITHIC STATUETTES FROM HAĠAR QIM.

On the 17th October, 1949, during reconstruction works at Haġar Qim Neolithic Temple, three headless statuettes of Globigerina Limestone and a fragment of another one were unearthed. They were found embedded in silt beneath a horizontally placed rectangular slab of stone, 8 ft. 6in. long, 2ft. broad and 10in. thick, supported at both ends by an upright, 1ft. 6in. high. This slab, having its anterior face slightly convex from side to side and from above downwards, serves as a threshold (y) to the entrance passage into one of the enclosures (F on Mayr's Plan III).

The statuettes are remarkable for the extreme adiposity with which the human form is represented. The deposit of fat is especially marked in the abdomen and in the upper and lower limbs, but the hands and feet are relatively small. Although they are represented as undraped the sex can not be ascertained.

One of the statuettes, cut from a slab of Globigerina Limestone, is in a standing posture on a rectangular base; it measures 1ft. 7in. in height. The neck region is provided with a socket which is pierced by two holes, one anteriorly and the other posteriorly. The other two statuettes, 9½in. and 9¾in. high respectively, are in a squatting posture on a low elliptical pedestal; they differ mainly in the attitude of the limbs and in the region corresponding to the root of the neck where in one it is pierced by a hole and in the other it presents an old scar produced by a fracture. The fragment of the other statuette belongs to a figure in a squatting posture, about double the size of the two corresponding ones.

On the 31st March, 1950, another headless statuette of Globigerina Limestone was discovered in the rubble removed from Haġar Qim during the excavations of 1839, and heaped up at a distance of about 25 yards to the north of the temple. This figure sustained injuries to the right arm and shoulder; the left leg and both feet are missing. It is of the same type as the statuettes discovered on the 17th October, 1949, and very similar to the one in the standing posture. It measures 2ft. 3in. in height; it is the second largest so far discovered in the Maltese Islands, the highest being the one still in its original position at the Tarxien Temples and which must have stood over 7ft. high when intact.

NEOLITHIC STATUETTES FROM MNAJDRA.

The ruins of Mnajdra, situated about half a mile to the west of Haġar Qim, were excavated in 1840, the year after Haġar Qim had been examined. Unfortunately no contemporary report is available and no objects are recorded to have been discovered. The material extracted from the various enclosures was considered as rubbish, and, without being sifted, was removed to places in proximity to the monument and left there in heaps and mounds. After many years had elapsed some of it was spread for agricultural purposes over the adjoining rocks, which were thus converted into arable land. Presuming that archaeological specimens, unnoticed during the excavations of 1840, might still be embedded in the dumped earth a part of it was examined in December, 1949.

By carefully sifting this material many flint, obsidian and chert implements, fragments of big stone vessels, numerous neolithic potsherds and two statuettes were recovered.

One of the statuettes, wrought from Globigerina Limestone, measures 2¾in. in height. It is headless and the human form is represented as extremely adipose. It sustained some injuries especially in the region of the left shoulder. The figure is without clothing and the front of the thorax is of the female type; posteriorly the back is flat. There are four transverse creases, indicated by grooves, on the lower part of the abdomen; the hips are prominent but the nates are denoted by a plane surface. The lower limbs are not indicated and the figure rests in an upright posture on a smooth base. Both the upper limbs are extended and the hands are relatively big. This statuette is peculiar in the size of the hands, in the abdominal creases being represented by interlinear spaces, and by the clearly indicated female breast which, hitherto, has not been noted in anthropomorphic stone statuettes of the obese type.

The other statuette, made of terra-cotta, is modelled in a conventionalized fashion. Its maximum height is 2½in. It consists of a head, neck, the upper limbs and a truncadet body. The top of the head is elongated into a cylindrical process which curves anteriorly. The face is pinched and the eyes are indicated by two unsymmetrically placed holes; the buccal aperture is depicted by a faint transverse groove. The neck is thick and long. The upper limbs are represented by short tapering appendages projecting transversely and horizontally. The trunk is flattened from before backwards and slightly convex at the sides; the uneven base is pierced by two holes.

NEOLITHIC CAVE AT ĠĠANTIJA, GOZO.

On the 18th April, 1949, whilst quarrying operations were in progress at a distance of 60 yards to the north of ĠĠantija Megalithic Temples, Gozo, the workmen broke through the side of a cave excavated in the upper Coralline Limestone. This cave, ovoidal in plan, measured 8ft. in length, 5ft. 6in. in width and 3ft. 6in. in height; the long axis lying in a north-east direction. A trench, 9ft. 6in. long, 5ft. wide and attaining a maximum depth of 4ft., roughly cut in the rock with a slanting floor, gave approach to the original entrance, facing south-east. At the deepest end of the trench were lying the remains of a stone wall partially blocking the entrance to the cave.

Both trench and cave were filled with red earth and fragments of stone. In the lower part of the deposit, in the cave, numerous neolithic potsherda, pertaining to well known types of vases, were embedded. From the fragments four vessels have been reconstructed. The pottery also included a peculiar specimen, hitherto unrecorded, consisting of an oblong object, 2½in. long and 1¼in. in mean thickness, decorated with incised lines and pittings. In association with this material were also found a bone point, a chert scraper and a lump of pumice stone.

Human remains were represented by a frontal bone, probably belonging to a male, and a fragment of the left maxilla with the canine, the two premolar and the first molar teeth still fixed in their sockets.

Fragments of two mandibular rami of *Sus* sp. and numerous bones and teeth of *Bos* sp. were also present.

ROCK-CUT TOMB AT NAXXAR.

On the 18th May, 1949, whilst digging trenches for the laying of foundations of a new Government school at Naxxar (Malta 2" Map Ref. 415281), a tomb cut in the Globigerina Limestone was discovered.

The shaft, rectangular in plan, measured 7ft. 6in. in length, 3ft. in average width and 7ft. in depth; its long axis ran in a north-west direction. In the middle of each of the long sides were cut three foot-holes, placed one above the other in a vertical line.

The sealing-slab, 2ft. 6in. high, 3ft. 6in. wide and 6in. thick, was covering the entrance to the burial chamber, on the north-west side of the shaft.

The entrance measured 3ft. 1in. in height, from 2ft. 3in. externally to 2ft. 6in. internally in width, owing to splayed jambs, and 1ft. 3in. in depth; the sill, which extended in front for 8in., was 1ft. above the floor of the shaft.

The burial chamber, roughly rectangular in plan, had its floor 6in. higher than the sill. It measured 7ft. in length, 5ft. in width and from 3ft. to 1ft. 6in. in height; the long axis lying in a north-east direction. In the floor, immediately behind the sill and parallel to it, was excavated a trench, 5ft. long, 1ft. 3in. wide and 1ft. 3in. deep. In the north-east wall of the chamber was cut, 4in. above the floor, a horizontal recess, 3ft. long, 6in. high and 6in. deep, having a semi-circular depression serving as a head-rest. This chamber was provided with two lamp-holes, one in the south-east wall, 2in. from the ceiling and to the right of the entrance, and the other in the south-west wall immediately beneath the ceiling and close to the south corner.

Inside the chamber were found the following terra-cotta objects: an amphora, decorated with red lines and bearing on one of its handles a potter's mark representing a dolphin and a palm leaf, three aryballi, an unguentarium, one bowl and a plate.

By sifting the silt deposited on the floor of the chamber two copper needles and a copper ear-ring were recovered.

Scattered on the floor of the chamber were the remains of five human skeletons belonging to adults. One of the skeletons showed evidence of cremation.

ROCK-TOMB AT "TA' RUŻARJU", RABAT.

On the 16th February, 1950, at "Ta' Rużarju" Road, limits of Rabat (Malta 2" Map Ref. 340234), the roof of a burial chamber caved in under the weight of a heavy vehicle.

This chamber, rectangular in plan, measured 6ft. in length, 5ft. in width and 3ft. 6in. in average height; its long axis ran in a north-west direction. It was partially partitioned by a rock wall, 1ft. thick projecting 1ft. 6in. from the middle of the south-west side. A lamp-hole was cut in the north-east wall, 1ft. 9in. below the ceiling and 4ft. from the east corner. Access to the burial chamber was originally gained through a rectangular entrance, 3ft. 3in. high and 2ft. wide, situated in the north-east wall, 1ft. 3in. from the north corner; its sealing-slab was replaced by a rubble wall. As it appeared evident that the tomb was opened and rifled a long time ago, the shaft was not explored. Only the lower part of a terra-cotta vase, probably an aryballos, and a bronze bracelet were found.

Fragmentary remains of six human skeletons were dispersed on the floor of the chamber. They represented two adults, a male and a female, and four children, two aged 10 years and the others 4 years and 11 years respectively.

MUSEUM OF ROMAN ANTIQUITIES.

Substantial progress has been achieved in the reorganization of the Museum annexed to the ruins of the Roman Villa at Rabat. The collection housed therein includes many specimens belonging to different periods. It is intended to display material pertaining exclusively to the time of the Roman occupation of the Maltese Islands. Marble statues, inscriptions, architectural fragments, specimens of tessellated pavements, painted decorations on stucco, a hard-stone grinding mill from the ruins of a Roman building in the limits of Mqabba and coloured drawings of mosaic pavements have been transferred to this Museum.

EXHIBITION

In connection with the celebration of festivities to commemorate the raising of the Great Siege of Malta, on the 8th September, 1565, an exhibition was held in the Armoury of the Magisterial Palace, Valletta, lent for the occasion by courtesy of H.E. the Officer Administering the Government.

The exhibits included 16th century arms and armour, a collection of rare books and manuscripts, engravings, paintings, plans, photographs, commemorative medals and models. This material was selected from the collections preserved in the Palace Armoury, the Royal Malta Library and the Valletta Museum.

It is gratifying to report that this temporary exhibition proved to be very popular and especially profitable to school children.

RESTORATIONS IN THE CITADEL, GOZO.

Two badly weathered coats-of-arms, belonging to the Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem and to Grand Master Fr. Jean Lascaris Castellar (1636-57), carved on the pilasters of the old clock tower in Cathedral Square, were replaced by replicas.

A section of the Old Prisons was rendered inaccessible by relatively recent structural alterations effected in the adjacent Law Courts. With a view to having this part also available to visitors an additional doorway, leading therein, was opened in Barrack Street. The original massive doors of the cells were likewise attended to.

RESTORATION OF OIL PAINTINGS AND OTHER HISTORICAL AND ARTISTIC OBJECTS DAMAGED BY ENEMY ACTION

OIL PAINTINGS BELONGING TO THE VALLETTA MUSEUM.

Judith and Holofernes; by Jean de Boulogne.
Portrait of Grand Master Raymon Perellos y Roccaful.
Madonna and Child. Italian school. XVI cent. Panel.

Madonna and Child with St. Joseph and Angels. Bas-relief in wax.

OIL PAINTINGS BELONGING TO THE MAGISTERIAL PALACE, VALLETTA.

Lunettes:

Sailing of the Squadron of vessels under the command of Fra. Francesco Antonio De Castel Saint Pierre. 1st April, 1705.

The vessel "Santa Caterina", under the command of Fra. Giuseppe De Langon, attacked by seven Algerian ships escapes safely escorting one of them to Oran. 7th September, 1707.

Engagement of three galleys of Grand Master Fra. Emanuel Pinto De Fonseca with four others belonging to the Bey of Tunis. Three of the latter were captured and escorted to Malta. 3rd August, 1764.

Capture of two Algerian xebecs by the Venerable Baliff and General of the Galleys Fra. Don Francesco Parisio. 15th May, 1752.

Capture of the Algerian vessel "Calaburnò", in the waters of Malaga, by the squadron of the Order under Commander Fra. Giuseppe De Langon. 8th April, 1710.

Capture of two Algerian caravels, in the seas of Sardinia, by the "San Giovanni" under the command of Fra. Alessio d'Allogny de la Groix and under the orders of Fra. Carlo De Rochfort Marquin. 31st March, 1720.

Capture of the "Padrona di Tripoli" by the "San Vincenzo", under the command of Fra. Giac. Francesco de Chambray. 13th May, 1723.

Capture of the Algerian vessel "Gran Gazzella", in the waters of Lampedusa, by the "San Vincenzo", under the command of Fra. Scipione de Raymond Deaulx. 24th March, 1729.

The sinking of the Algerian vessel "Mahmet Thuil", called "Sole d'Or", in the sea of Provence, by the "Santa Caterina", under the command of Fra. Adriano de Langon. 21st October, 1714.

OIL PAINTING BELONGING TO ST. JOHN'S CO-CATHEDRAL.

Madonna and Child; by Francesco Zahra.

An old candle box.

An old reliquary box.

Four angels carved in wood and a wooden medallion forming part of the reredos in the Chapel of S. Catherine (Langue of Italy).

OIL PAINTINGS BELONGING TO THE JESUITS' CHURCH, VALLETTA.

Our Lady and SS. Anne and Joachim; altar-piece by Nicolò Lozet.

S. Agatha and S. Lucia; altar-piece by Joannes de la Preite.

The escape of S. Peter from prison; altar-piece by Mattia Preti.

The Guardian Angel; altar-piece, school of Luca Giordano.

Martyrdom of three Jesuit Saints; by Stefano Erardi.

The Flight into Egypt; altar-piece by Giov. Battista Caracciolo.

Madonna and Child.

The Nativity.

OIL PAINTINGS BELONGING TO THE PILAR CHURCH, VALLETTA.

Our Lady of Pilar; altar-piece by Stefano Erardi.

S. Lawrence.

OIL PAINTINGS BELONGING TO THE CHURCH OF S. CATEHRINE, VALLETTA.

The Nativity of Our Lady; attributed to Antoine de Favray.

Our Lady and the Holy Child, S. Anne and S. John the Baptist; attributed to Antoine de Favray.

OIL PAINTING BELONGING TO THE CHURCH OF S. ROCCO, VALLETTA.

S. Stephen; altar-piece by Stefano Erardi.

OIL PAINTINGS BELONGING TO THE VICTORY CHURCH, VALLETTA.

S. Anthony the Abbot.

Portrait of Grand Master Jean de la Vallette.

BAS-RELIEF IN WOOD BELONGING TO THE CHAPEL AT FORT S. ELMO.

S. Anne, The Virgin and Child.

OIL PAINTING BELONGING TO THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF MALTA.

Portrait of Fra. Bonaventura.

NUMISMATIC COLLECTION

DONATIONS

Mrs. Carmela Cassar:

One copper penny	1843	Victoria
One copper penny	1845	Victoria
One copper penny	1855	Victoria
One copper halfpenny	1854	Victoria
One copper halfpenny	1856	Victoria
One copper farthing	1841	Victoria
One copper farthing	1845	Victoria
One copper farthing	1846	Victoria
One copper farthing	1847	Victoria

ACCESSIONS

One silver crown	1930	George V.
One silver crown	1931	George V.
One silver crown	1932	George V.

LIST OF DONATIONS

The Collector of Customs:

A steel-yard, dated 1772, formerly kept at the Government Weighing Office, Marina Pinto. This steel-yard is made to weigh up to 40 Qantar.

The Chief Government Medical Officer:

Two old silver appliances, one for the administration of Holy Communion and the other for Extreme Unction, used at the Lazzaretto during epidemics of plague.

The Director of Public Works:

A stone statue representing the Immaculate Conception; from a demolished building in Senglea Wharf.

Remains of a stone fountain with coats-of-arms from "Il-Mandraġġ", Valletta.

Lt. Col. J. V. Abela, M.B.E., R.M.A.:

The Maltese Flag, complete with pole and chrome top, which lead the Maltese contingent in the Victory Parade, London, in 1946.

The Hon. Mable Strickland, O.B.E.:

A portrait of Lord Strickland, in gilt frame. Oils, by Chev. E. Caruana Dingli.

LIST OF ACCESSIONS

Madonna and Child. By Antonio Falzon. A bozzetto for the altar-piece at "Ta Gesù" Church, Valletta. Wood, 12½ in. high by 9 in. wide.

A kneeling figure. By Vincenzo Hyzler. Signed. Pencil drawing on yellow paper, 11½ in. high by 8½ in. wide.

The Lower Barracca. By Giorgio Pullicino. Pencil drawing on white paper, 9¾ in. high by 14¾ in. wide.

Our Lord at Getsemani. By Vincenzo Hyzler. Initialed. Pencil and wash in sepia on white paper, 5½ in. high by 8¼ in. wide.

Madonna and Child with S. Simon Stock. By Giuseppe Hyzler. A bozzetto for the altar-piece in the Lija Parish Church. Pencil and wash in sepia on white paper, 18 in. high by 12¾ in. wide.

S. Paul. By Giuseppe Hyzler. A study for a commemorative picture representing S. Paul enthroned, with S. Publius, an angel and two kneeling knights. Pencil and wash on white paper, 17 in. high by 12 in. wide.

Study of a head. By Giuseppe Hyzler. Pencil drawing on brown tinted paper, 11½ in. high by 12 in. wide.

Christ and Saints. By Antonio Falzon. In a lunette are represented Christ and SS. Agatha, Paul, Gregory and Catherine, and in three panels are depicted scenes from life of Christ. Pencil and wash in sepia, 10 in. high by 9 in. wide.

La predica al Collosseo. By Salvatore Busuttil. Engraving, 12½ in. high by 9½ in. wide.

"Melite Insula vulgo Malta". A 17th century map of Malta and Gozo. Engraving, 16 in. high by 14½ in. wide.

A set of engravings representing details of the "Colonna Trajana" drawn by Salvatore Busuttil and engraved by N. Moneta.

Three 18th century majolica vases. Cylindrical, slightly concave longitudinally. Decorated with a dark blue pattern on a lighter ground.

A late 18th century unglazed jar.

A cylindrical majolica vase with monochrome decorations and a coat-of-arms of Grand Master Pinto. Manufactured by the S. Mary Ceramic Factory, Malta. 20th century.

A collection of fifty six specimens of old glass.

Two low reliefs in bone representing the Madonna and Child. Mediaeval.

Eight models, to scale, of the Maltese Prehistoric Temples.

APPENDIX

ADMISSION OF VISITORS TO VARIOUS SITES UNDER THIS DEPARTMENT FROM THE 1st APRIL, 1949, TO THE 31st MARCH, 1950.

	Admission on payment.	Admission free.
The Valletta Museum	—	—
The Roman Villa Museum	1,740	2,857
The St. Paul's Catacombs	1,627	6,408
The Tarxien Neolithic Temples	817	1,734
The Hal Saflieni Hypogeum	1,542	640
The Għar Dalam Cave & Museum	550	447
The Ġgantija Temples, Gozo	—	829