



# REPORT

ON THE WORKING OF THE

# MUSEUM DEPARTMENT

1955-56



# M A L T A

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## Report on the working of the Museum Department for 1955/56.

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THE MUSEUM,  
Auberge d'Italie,  
Valletta.

15th May, 1956.

Madam,

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report of the Museum Department for the financial year 1955/56.

I have the honour to be,

Madam,

Your obedient servant,

C. G. ZAMMIT

Director.

The Honourable,  
The Minister of Education.

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Following the retirement from the service of Chev. Dr. J. G. Baldacchino, M.D., F.G.S., F.M.A., who had been Director of the Museum Department since the 10th October, 1947, Mr. C. G. Zammit, Curator of the Archaeological Section, was appointed Director of the Museum with effect from the 1st June, 1955.

On the 6th October, 1955, Dr. J. A. Cauchi, LL.D., Curator of the Fine Arts Section, proceeded to London for a specialization course in History of Art and connoisseurship at the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London. Whilst in the United Kingdom, Dr. Cauchi will study various museums and art galleries to acquire knowledge and experience in the restoration and preservation of works of art.

### THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

On the 12th August, 1955, the Auberge de Provence, Valletta, was handed over to this Department for the purpose of setting up a National Museum therein.

The adaptation of this Auberge as a Museum necessitated considerable structural alterations and extensive repairs to roofs, ceilings and floors. The necessary works, which were commenced soon after the building was taken over, are still in progress.

### THE NATIONAL MONUMENTS AND MUSEUMS (fees and hours of admission) REGULATIONS.

In view of the unique archaeological and historical importance of the monuments and museums under the control of the Museum Department, Government considered it opportune to raise the admission fee to the following sites:- Ghar Dalam, Cave and Museum; the Hypogeum; Tarxien Temples; Ggantija Temples; St. Paul's Catacombs; the Museum of Roman Antiquities at Rabat and the Palace Armoury at Valletta. The Director of the Museum was, consequently, authorized to charge a fee of 2s. 0d. on week days and of 1s. 0d. on Sundays for the admission of persons.

of the said sites. The admission fee for visitors under 17 years of age was fixed at 6d. on all days.

The Director of the Museum was also authorized to issue free admission tickets to school children and to other students of recognised educational institutions conducted by a responsible person.

The hours of admission to the various monuments and museums were slightly altered so that sites would be open to public for six hours on week days and for three hours on Sundays.

These new regulations were published in the Malta Government Gazette of the 6th September, 1955 (Government Notice No. 480.)

#### AMENDMENT TO THE ANTIQUITIES (PROTECTION) ACT.

It was considered necessary to amend Sections 5 and 16 of the Antiquities (Protection) Act. This amendment was made by Act No. XXIV of 1955. As the law stood before this amendment was introduced, it was absolutely prohibited to any person to demolish or alter any building or site having a geological, archaeological, antiquarian or artistic importance, and this irrespectively of any special circumstances or considerations which might justify the demolition or alteration of such building or site. It was, therefore, considered opportune and proper to allow the Minister of Education to exercise discretion in such cases by granting permission so that any necessary works might be carried out and sub-section 1 of Section 5 of the said Act was amended accordingly. As a logical consequence of this amendment and with the object of placing the Minister in a position of greater liberty in judging the merits of the above mentioned cases and, consequently, in exercising discretion, Section 16 was amended in the sense that the Director of Museum was substituted for the Minister of Education as Chairman of the Antiquities Committee.

#### MNAJDRA PREHISTORIC TEMPLES

The work of removing the field soil and other debris heaped against the outer side of the north-eastern external wall of the upper temple at Mnajdra was continued during the period under review.

The material removed rested directly on the rock floor. No archaeological remains were found during these operations.

#### PREHISTORIC TOMBS AT XEMXIJA, ST. PAUL'S BAY

In March, 1955, Mr. J.D. Evans, M.A., Research Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, was granted permission by this Department to excavate a group of six prehistoric rock-cut tombs situated at Xenxija Hill, overlooking St. Paul's Bay.

The tombs consisted of circular chambers opening off a circular shaft at a depth of about three feet below the surface of the rock. Large quantities of early neolithic (period Ib) pottery and human bones were recovered from the filling of the burial chambers; Bronze Age pottery (period IIa) was also found near the surface of the deposit inside some of the tombs and close to the entrance of the chambers.

All the archaeological material from these tombs was taken to the token museum at Casa Leoni where the pottery is being carefully examined and, whenever possible, restored. The pots which have been reconstructed so far belong to the neolithic period and some are of a shape hitherto not met with in these Islands. A comprehensive report on the Xenxija tombs and their contents is being prepared for publication by Mr. J.D. Evans.

The thanks of this Department are due to Mrs. V. Greer, B.A.(Oxon.), Hons.Hist., Dip. Anth., and to Mrs. M.D. Rickman, B.A.(London), Hons. Hist., for their help and co-operation in the sorting out and the marking of all the potshreds recovered from these tombs and for the reconstruction of a number of vessels from this and other sites.

## RESTORATIONS AT ĠGANTIJA, GOZO.

During January and February, 1956, restoration works were conducted at the Ġgantija Temples.

The rough stone blocks which were lying on the floors of the apses and which originally formed part of the interior walls of the temples, were reinstated. Minor repairs were also effected to the walling of both temples where necessary.

### ROCK TOMB AT LUQA.

On the 28th May, 1955, the Air Ministry Directorate of Works reported to the Museum authorities that a rock-cut tomb had been discovered at Luqa Aerodrome (Malta 2<sup>nd</sup> map (1934) Ref. 437205) by workmen who were engaged in levelling operations near the Hal Farrug Road.

The tomb was cut in the Globigerina limestone and consisted of a vertical shaft giving access to two laterally situated burial chambers. The shaft was rectangular in plan and measured 7 ft. 4 ins. in length, 4 ft. in width and 6 ft. 6 ins. in depth; its long axis was orientated in a north-westerly direction.

The entrance to the first burial chamber was cut in the north-west side of the shaft and measured 2 ft. in width, 2 ft. 3 ins. in height and 1 ft. in depth; its sill was level with the floor of the shaft. The chamber was roughly oval in plan and measured 4 ft. 8 ins. in maximum length, 2 ft. 8 ins. in maximum width and 2 ft. 4 ins. in height; its long axis ran at right angles to that of the shaft.

The entrance to the second burial chamber was cut in the middle of the north-east side of the shaft and measured 1 ft. 10 ins. in width, 2 ft. 7 ins. in height, 1 ft. 3 ins. in depth; its sill was level with the floor of the shaft.

The burial chamber was rectangular in plan and measured 7 ft. in length, 4 ft. 2 ins. in width and 2 ft. 7 ins. in height; its long axis ran at right angles to that of the shaft.

An irregular cavity was cut in the south-west side of the shaft, indicating the intention to excavate a third burial chamber; it measured 3 ft. 2 ins. in length, 2 ft. 4 ins. in width and 1 ft. 8 ins. in height.

This tomb appeared to have been violated a long time ago and no archaeological remains were found either in the chambers or in the shaft.

### ROCK TOMB AT HAMRUN.

On the 9th August, 1955, while workmen were digging a trench for the laying of drain pipes in a new street, unofficially known as Agius Street, which runs parallel to Broad Street, Hamrun, (Malta 2<sup>nd</sup> Map (1934) Red 457245) the burial chamber of a rock cut tomb was accidentally broken into at a depth of 2 ft. 8 ins. below the surface of the road.

The tomb was very roughly cut in a friable layer of Globigerina limestone and consisted of a vertical shaft leading to a laterally situated burial chamber. The long axis of the tomb, passing through the shaft and chamber, ran in a westerly direction.

The rectangular shaft measured 7 ft. in length, 2 ft. 6 ins. in width and 5 ft. in depth. A stone slab 2 ft. 6 ins. in height, 2 ft. in width and 6 ins. in thickness was found, covering the entrance to the burial chamber on the west side of the shaft.

The entrance to the burial chamber measured 2 ft. 3 ins. in height, 1 ft. 8 ins. in width and 3 ins. in depth; its sill being 3 ins. above the floor of the shaft.

The burial chamber was oblong in shape with rounded corner and a flat ceiling and measured 7 ft. in length, 4 ft. 3 ins. in width and 2 ft. 6 ins. in height. Its floor was 6 ins. below the level of the sill.

The following objects were recovered from the debris which filled the burial chamber:

Terra-cotta.



a) ht. 14 in., max. d. 10 in.

b) ht. 5 in., max. d. 3 in.

One jar with two handles, ht.  $9\frac{1}{4}$  in., max. d.  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in., decorated with red lines.

Two aryballoi:

a) ht.  $6\frac{3}{4}$  in., max. d. 5 in., damaged.

b) ht.  $5\frac{1}{2}$  in., max. d.  $3\frac{3}{4}$  in., damaged.

Three oinochoe:

a) ht. 7 in., max. d. 5 in.

b) ht. 6 in., max. d.  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.

c) about 3 in., max. d.  $2\frac{1}{4}$  in., damaged.

One flat lid belonging to a jar,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  in. diameter.

Four bowls:

a) ht.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in., max. d.  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in., damaged.

b) ht.  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in., max. d. 4 in.

c) ht.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in., max. d.  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in.

d) ht.  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in., max. d. 3 in.

Seven dishes:

a) ht. 2 in., max. d.  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in.

b) ht. 2 in., max. d.  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in.

c) ht. 2 in., max. d.  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in.

d) ht.  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in., max. d.  $4\frac{1}{4}$  in.

e) ht.  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in., max. d.  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.

f) ht.  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in., max. d.  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.

g) ht.  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in., max. d.  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.

Five plates:

a) ht.  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in., max. d. 7 in.

b) ht.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in., max. d.  $4\frac{1}{4}$  in.

c) ht.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in., max. d.  $4\frac{1}{4}$  in.

d) ht.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in., max. d. 6 in.

e) ht. 1 in., max. d.  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in.

Seven bilychnis lamps:

a) ht. 2 in., max. d. 5 in., used.

b) ht.  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in., max. d.  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in., used.

c) ht.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in., max. d.  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in., used.

d) ht.  $\frac{3}{4}$  in., max. d.  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in., used.

e) ht.  $\frac{3}{4}$  in., max. d.  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in., used.

f) ht.  $\frac{3}{4}$  in., max. d.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in., unused.

g) ht.  $\frac{3}{4}$  in., max. d.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in., unused.

Two Romano-Maltese lamps:

a) ht.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in., max. d.  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in., used.

b) ht.  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in., max. d. 3 in., unused.

One green glazed Roman lamp:

ht. 1 in., d.  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in.

Glass:

Two unguentaria:

a) ht. 4 in., max. d.  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in.

b) badly damaged.

The neck and base of a vessel.

A green bead, d.  $\frac{1}{4}$  in., decorated with dark blue concentric circles.

Bone.

Lying on the floor of the burial chamber were the remains of 5 skeletons belonging to adults. A few calcined human bones were also present.

#### ROCK TOMB AT QORMI.

On the 21st October, 1955, a rock tomb was discovered in St. Catherine Street (Sqaq il-Voti), Qormi, opposite street door No. 81, by Public Works Department workmen who were digging a trench in the rock for the laying of drains.

The tomb was very well cut in the globigerina limestone and consisted of a vertical shaft giving access to a laterally-situated burial chamber; its long axis passing through the shaft and chamber ran in a Northerly direction.

The rectangular shaft measured 7 ft. in length, 3 ft. 4 ins. in width and 9 ft. 6 ins. in depth. A stone slab measuring 4 ft. 2 ins. in height, 3 ft. in width and 5 ins. in thickness was found, covering the entrance to the burial chamber on the north side of the shaft.

The entrance to the burial chamber measured 3 ft. 8 ins. in height, 2 ft. 4 ins. in depth; its sill was 2 ins. above the floor of the shaft.

The burial chamber was rectangular in plan with a flat ceiling and measured 8 ft. in length, 4 ft. in width and 3 ft. 10 ins. in height. A rectangular trench 4 ft. 8 ins. in length, 1 ft. 6 ins. in width and 1 ft. 1 in. in depth was excavated in the floor of the chamber along the West wall. A rectangular cavity, 7 ins. square and 1½ ins. deep was cut in the floor, 3 ins. beyond the northern extremity of the trench. A lamp-hole 9 ins. wide, 9 ins. high and 9 ins. deep was excavated in the North wall of the chamber, 9½ ins. away from the north-west corner and at a distance of 3 ft. from the floor.

The following terra-cotta objects were found in the chamber:

An egg-shaped amphora, ht. 21½ ins. max. d. 12 ins., decorated with red lines.

Two oinochoe, decorated with red lines.

a) ht. 11 in., max. d. 5½ in.

b) ht. 8¾ in., max. d. 5 in.

One jar with two handles, ht. 9 in., max. d. 7½ in., decorated with red lines.

A jar with a high handle, ht. 6¾ in., max. d. 4½ in., decorated with red lines.

Two plates:

a) ht. 1½ in., max. d. 7¾ in.

b) ht. 1½ in., max. d. 6½ in.

One calyx, ht. 2 in., max. d. 6½ in., decorated with red lines.

One bilychnis lamp, ht. 2 in., max. d. 5 in., used.

The amphora was found lying horizontally in the trench, the lamp in the middle of the floor and one of the plates near the north-eastern corner of the chamber; the rest of the tomb furniture was found close together in the south-east corner.

Dispersed on the floor of the chamber were the remains of 4 human skeletons belonging to adults.

#### ROCK TOMB AT SANTA VENERA.

On the 26th January, 1956, the burial chamber of a rock tomb was broken into by a mechanical shovel during levelling operations in a field at the back of the old Cisk Brewery in St. Joseph Road, Santa Venera (Malta 2<sup>nd</sup> map (1934) Ref. 446250).

The tomb was cut in the Globigerina limestone and consisted of a vertical shaft leading to a laterally situated burial chamber. The axis of the tomb, passing through the shaft and chamber, was orientated in a north-westerly direction.

The rectangular shaft measured 8 ft. 5 ins. in length, 4 ft. 4 ins. in width and 3 ft. 6 ins. in depth.

A stone slab, 3 ft. in height, 2 ft. 3 ins. in width and 4 ins. in thickness covered the entrance to the burial chamber which was situated on the south-east side of the shaft.

deep; its sill was 7 ins. above the floor of the shaft.

The burial chamber was apsidal in shape and its ceiling curved posteriorly. It measured 4 ft. in maximum width, 5 ft. 6 ins. in maximum depth and 2 ft. 9 ins. in maximum height; its floor was 6 ins. below the level of the sill of the entrance.

A rectangular lamp hole, 6 ins. in width, 6 ins. in height and 4 ins. in depth was cut in the north-west side of the chamber midway between the north-east jamb of the entrance and the North corner of the chamber at a distance of 2 ft. from the floor.

The following terra-cotta objects were found inside the burial chamber:

An egg-shaped amphora, ht. 23 in., max. d. 13 in. decorated with red lines.  
One jar with two handles, ht. 13 in., max. d.  $7\frac{1}{4}$  in., decorated with red lines.  
One oinochoe, ht. 11 in., max. d. 4 in., decorated with red lines.

Two bilychnis lamps:

- a) ht. 2 in. max. d.  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in., used
- b) ht.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in., max. d. 4 in., used.

Fragments of tiles  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. in thickness.

Lying on the floor of the chamber were the fragmentary remains of two skeletons belonging to an adult male and an adult female. The cranial index of the female skull is 72.02.

#### ROCK TOMBS AT HAL FAR

On the 5th March, 1956, during the digging of a trench for the laying of a cable in a field to the north-east of Hal Far Aerodrome (Malta 2" map (1934) Ref. 484165) two rock-cut tombs were accidentally discovered.

Both tombs were newly cut in the Globigerina limestone and consisted of a vertical shaft giving access to a laterally-situated burial chamber; their long axis passing through the shaft and chamber, was orientated in a north-westerly direction. The tombs had been violated a long time ago when most of their contents were removed and the shafts and chambers filled with debris.

##### Tomb No. 1.

The rectangular shaft measured 7 ft. 9 ins. in length, 2 ft. 3 ins. in width and 4 ft. 6 ins. in depth. The entrance to the burial chamber was situated on the south-east side of the shaft and measured 2 ft. 8 ins. in height, 2 ft. in width and 6 ins. in depth; its sill was level with the floor of the shaft. A damaged stone sealing slab was partly blocking the entrance to the chamber.

Just above the entrance to the burial chamber, nine or ten signs, suggesting an inscription, were incised in the rock; this part of the shaft wall had got broken during the cutting of the trench. By good chance, however, that part on which these signs were incised had been found with very little damage to the smooth surface bearing the signs and this part was, therefore, taken to the Museum for further study, with a view to the signs being deciphered.

The burial chamber was rectangular in plan with a flat ceiling and measured 6 ft. in length, 4 ft. in width and 2 ft. 6 ins. in height. Its floor was 1 ft. above the sill of the entrance. In the middle of the floor of the chamber was excavated a trench, 4 ft. 6 ins. in length, 1 ft. in width and 9 ins. in depth, parallel to the long sides of the chamber.

A circular cavity, 10 ins. in diameter and 5 ins. deep was cut in the floor of the trench. The chamber was provided with two rectangular head-rests cut in a ledge along the south-east side of the chamber and with a lamp-hole situated in the centre of the wall



above the head-rests.

The handle of an amphora bearing a potter's mark and a used bilychnis oil lamp, 1¼ ins. in height and 3 ins. in maximum diameter, were the only objects found in the burial chamber.

#### Tomb No. 2.

Situated to the East of tomb No. 1 and at a distance 2 ft. 3 ins. from it.

This tomb was similar in shape to tomb No. 1. Its long axis passing through the shaft and chamber was orientated in a north-westerly direction. The burial chamber was excavated in the south-east of the shaft and was provided with a trench and a lamp-hole. A ledge, 2 ins. high, was roughly cut along the south-east side of the chamber.

A terra-cotta plate, ¾ in. in height and 5 ins. in diameter and several fragments of earthenware vessels were found in the soil which filled the burial chamber.

Remains of two human skeletons belonging to two adults, a male and a female were found scattered on the floor of the chamber. The cranial index of the male and female skulls is 70 and 77.77 respectively.

#### REMAINS AT BORG-IN-NADUR.

On the 5th May, 1955, the Air Ministry Directorate of Works informed the Director of the Museum that two large blocks of Globigerina limestone had been uncovered by workmen who were digging a trench in the soil for the laying of pipes at Borg-in-Nadur, Birzebbugia.

The blocks were situated in a field to the north of the Borg-in-Nadur prehistoric remains and were found lying horizontally in the loose soil, 1 ft. 6 ins. below the surface of the field and close to the boundary wall of the ruins; they were both oblong in shape and measured 13 ft. 11 ins. in length, 1 ft. in width and 9 ins. in thickness and 15 ft. 7 ins. in length, 10 ins. in width and 10 ins. in thickness, respectively.

Both monoliths were well dressed with metal tools; the shorter stone was lying almost parallel to the rubble wall while the longer one rested parallel to it, 5 ft. away.

Numerous fragments of late Bronze Age terra-cotta vessels, belonging to the Borg-in-Nadur type of ware (period IIB) and a few early Bronze Age (period IIA) shreds were recovered from the loose soil in the immediate vicinity of the blocks.

A plan showing the position of the monoliths was made and photographs were taken before the work in connection with the laying of the pipeline was continued.

#### ROMAN REMAINS AT MARSA.

On the 24th January, 1956, some Roman remains were discovered by Government workmen who were digging trenches for the laying of the foundations of the Government Industrial Technical College in Coronation Gardens, Marsa.

These remains cover an area of at least 170 feet in length and 100 feet in width and consist of the lower courses of walls in "opus quadratum". The walls uncovered so far appear to belong to large rectangular rooms or enclosures and the quality and workmanship of the Globigerina limestone blocks with which the walls are constructed show that the building, originally constructed on this site, must have been one of some importance. Systematic excavations will, however, be necessary to obtain detailed information about these remains.

The following objects have been found during the digging of trenches on this site:

Terra-cotta.

Very considerable quantities of shreds of amphoras, flagons and storage jars.



Some number of the specimens showed evidence of being water worn and several items were heavily encrusted with marine growth. No potter's marks were observed. A few shreds of plain terra sigillata were also present.

Glass.

Some fragments of thin, fine, blue-green ware; the specimens include portions of a base and a neck.

Coins:

1. A silver tetradrachm of Syracuse.  
Obv. Head of *Arethusa* surrounded by dolphins.  
Rev. Victory and chariot (Biga).  
Date: 3rd and 4th century B.C.  
Coin in a poor state of preservation.
2. Small bronze coin. *Siculo-Punic*.  
Obv. Head of *Tanit*.  
Rev. Galloping horse.  
Date: 1st half of the 4th century B.C.  
Coin in a worn state.
3. Dupondius or 2nd brass of *Marcus Aurelius*.  
Date: 161-180 A.D.  
Coin in a very worn state.
4. Antoninus of *Gallienus*.  
Obv. *Gallienus Avg.* (radiate head looking right).  
Rev. *Oriens Avg.* - sun god, standing left.  
Issue of 260-268 A.D.  
Coin in a fairly worn state.
5. A brass coin of the family of Constantine the Great AE (2).  
Obv. uncertain.  
Rev. *Fel. Temp. Repartio*. Soldier spearing a barbarian.  
Date: 350-380 A.D.  
Coin very worn.
6. A small, thin, worn brass coin of the Arab period.  
Date: C. 10th century A.D.

#### ROMAN THERMAE AT GHAJN TUFFIEHA.

A boundary wall with iron railings has been constructed around the Roman remains at Ghajn Tuffieha for the protection and preservation of this important monument.

These remains, which were discovered in 1929 (Museum Annual Reports 1929-30, 1930-31), require extensive works of restoration; for the past twenty-four years the site lay open at all times to all passers-by with the result that considerable damage was caused to the hypocaust, ablution rooms, tessellated pavements and tiled floors. Fortunately, such damage is not irreparable and with the help of existing photographic records and drawings it would be possible to reinstate the ruins and to render them fit for permanent exhibition.

#### MUSEUM AT HAL SAFLIENI HYPOGEUM.

With a view to placing at the service of the public at least a small part of the archaeological collections from the Maltese prehistoric monuments, a small Museum annexed to the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum at Paola has been set up.

Samples of pottery, personal ornaments and casts of statuettes found during the excavations and belonging to the ancient users of the Hypogeum are displayed in two

show-cases together with examples of decorated potshreds mounted on boards according to the particular phase of development which they represent.

In another show-case are displayed scale models of the principal Maltese neolithic monuments, casts of two prehistoric stone heads of statuettes from the Ggantija, Gozo, and some specimens of decorated potshreds from the Mgarr prehistoric temples.

Mounted sets of photographic enlargements representing types of vases recovered from the Hypogeum, views of Ggantija and Mgarr temples and scale drawings of the Hypogeum are displayed on the walls of the Museum.

#### EXHIBITION AT THE PALACE ARMOURY.

The annual exhibition commemorating the raising of the Great Siege of Malta of 1565 and that of 1943, was held at the Armoury of the Magisterial Palace, Valletta, lent for the occasion by courtesy of His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government. The exhibition was opened to the public from the 1st to the 12th September, 1955, and was visited by 8461 persons.

#### RESTORATION AT THE MAGISTERIAL PALACE, VALLETTA.

During the financial year under review, the restoration works on the motifs of the walls of the Armoury Corridors were completed.

The restoration works on the frieze of the Hall of St. Michael and St. George are still in progress.

The decorations in tempera and oil on the coffered ceiling and walls of Mr. Speaker's room were reinstated.

Restoration works on the friezes in oil in the rooms used by the members of the Legislative Assembly are still in progress.

#### RESTORATION OF THE DECORATED CEILINGS IN THE PALAZZO DE LA SALLE, VALLETTA.

The restoration works on the XVIII century soffitti in tempera in the rooms on the Piano Nobile of the Palazzo de la Salle, which were commenced during 1954, were brought to completion.

#### RESTORATION AT THE PALAZZO PARISIO, VALLETTA.

The XVIII century soffitti in tempera of three rooms at the Palazzo Parisio, including that in Napoleon's room, were thoroughly restored. The reinstatement of the decorations of the rooms in this Palazzo is still in progress.

#### RESTORATION OF PAINTINGS.

Magisterial Palace, Valletta.

S. Busuttil: Colossal Head of St. John - oil on canvas.

Inquisitor's Palace, Vittoriosa.

Italian school, XVIII century: Biblical subjects - oil on canvas.

Maltese art, early XIX century: St. Paul - oil on canvas.

#### ACCESSIONS.

By Gift.

Eight XIX-century cannon balls; diameter 8 in. - presented by the Director of Public Works.

Three XIX century terra-cotta jars, measuring:

Height 32 in. max. diam.  $20\frac{1}{2}$  in.;

" 25 in. max. diam.  $20\frac{1}{2}$  in.;

" 34 in. max. diam. 26 in. respectively — presented by the Director of Public Works.

A collection of 16 terra-cotta jugs of the Bronze Age period (IIa) found in Victoria, Gozo — presented by Mr. Joseph Borg, Ph.C., L.P.

Plaster bust of Chev. E. Caruana Dingli, by Emm. Borg Gauci — presented by Brigadier G. Caruana Dingli.

A collection of Maltese Butterflies — presented by Dr. C. Testa, LL.D.

#### By Purchase

##### Pictures.

Italian School, XVIII century art: A scene from Orlando Furioso (?) — oil on panel —  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in. x  $5\frac{1}{2}$  in.

Siennese art, XIV century: Crucifixion — oil on panel —  $34^{\circ}$  x  $20^{\circ}$ .

Maltese art, XIX century: An Ursuline sister taking the veil —  $19^{\circ}$  x  $16\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$ .

##### Drawings.

Brockdorff (?): Valletta and its environs — coloured lithograph —  $15\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$  x  $18\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ .

M. Bellanti: "Lo sbarco di S.E. il Molto Onorabile R. Moore O'Farrel in Malta, Primo Governatore Civile," 18 Dicembre, 1847 — Lithograph —  $11\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$  x  $15^{\circ}$ .

V. Manno: A warrior moving forward —  $16^{\circ}$  x  $10\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ .

Antonaci: St. Peter delivered from prison; after M. Preti; signed —  $11^{\circ}$  x  $8^{\circ}$ .

Map of Malta, Comino and Gozo, showing the coastal fortifications in the year 1761 — drawing and wash —  $17\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$  x  $40^{\circ}$ .

An early XVII century small map of Malta, by B. Langenes (?) —  $4\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$  x  $5\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$ .

J. Van Keuten: XVIII century chart of the Central Mediterranean, showing Malta, Sicily and the Barbaric coast — line engraving —  $21\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$  x  $24^{\circ}$ .

J. Van Keuten: XVIII century chart of the Central Mediterranean, showing Malta, Susa and Mesurata — line engraving —  $21\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$  x  $24^{\circ}$ .

#### Wearing Apparel.

Early XIX century silk bodice.

XVII century grey silk waistcoat.

XVIII century pink silk waistcoat with lining.

XIX century black velvet waistcoat.

Early XIV century old gold damask bodice.

Early XIX century damask bodice.

XIX century silk chequered trousers.

XIX century silk red chasuble striped with white.

XIX century silk pink and gold striped sash.

XIX century silk girl's faldetta.

XIX century silk shirt embroidered with gold.

XIX century brown satin bodice.

XIX century brown satin skirt.

XVIII century violet satin coat.

#### Postage Stamps.

A set of Malta Postage and Revenue Stamps, issued in 1956:

$\frac{1}{4}$ d.,  $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d.,  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d., 2d.,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., 3d.,  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d., 6d., 8d., 1s. 0d., 1s. 6d., 2s. 0d., 2s. 6d.

#### Other Objects.

XVIII century Italian majolica drug jar.

A Maltese XIX century silver filigree handbag.

A Maltese XIX century silver filigree flower holder.

XVIII century manuscript with coloured drawings "Segno che le Galere Sinsile-farranno alla Capitana, alla Vela e alla Fonda" -  $5\frac{3}{4}$ " x  $4\frac{1}{8}$ ".

#### Osteological Specimens.

One fore leg of a horse with shoulder blade.

One hind leg of a horse with half of pelvis.

One fore leg of sheep with shoulder blade.

One hind leg of sheep with half of pelvis.

#### "THE BEHEADING OF ST. JOHN" BY CARAVAGGIO.

Professor Cesare Brandi, Director of the Istituto Centrale del Restauro, Rome, had recommended in his report on "The Beheading of St. John the Baptist" by Caravaggio, that this important painting be subjected to a thorough restoration which would imply the examination of the canvas by ultra-violet, infra-red, X-ray and other processes, the relining of the painting and the removal of all recent restorations. It was also suggested that the painting be re-stretched on a modern type of stretcher. Prof. Brandi very kindly offered to undertake the restoration of the painting free of charge if the canvas were sent to the Istituto Centrale del Restauro at Rome.

As the investigations recommended by Prof. Brandi could not be carried out in Malta, the Government decided to accept Prof. Brandi's generous offer and to forward the painting to the Istituto Centrale del Restauro.

On the 3rd August, 1955, this masterpiece was packed in a specially constructed wooden case and shipped on board H.M.S. Cumberland which left for Naples the following day.

The Curator of Fine Arts accompanied the picture during its transit from Malta to Rome and personally delivered it to the Director of the Istituto Centrale del Restauro on the 10th August, 1955.

It is anticipated that the restoration work of the canvas will be completed in the very near future.

#### NUMISMATIC COLLECTION.

The collection of ancient coins preserved at the Valletta Museum, but not exhibited to the public, was very kindly examined and partly classified by Surgeon Commander P.H.K. Gray, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.M.R.D., F.R.N.S., Royal Navy, who reported as follows:

"The condition of the coins examined varies from poor to very fine. By far the greater number are copper, but some silver coins have been noted.

As far as possible, they have been grouped under City States and individual rulers, but it should be pointed out that owing to the very large number of coins, some of them remain to be classified.

##### Ancient Greek Coins.

There are a few silver specimens, but the majority are of copper or bronze. They date from the 5th to the 4th century B.C. They mainly originate from Athens and Corinth, but there is a small collection of silver *tristophori* of the late 2nd century B.C. from Pergamon.

##### Ancient Sicilian Coins.

These are well represented, the main cities being Syracuse and Naxos. Amongst this series is a fairly large hoard of small bronze coins of the so-called Siculo-Punic Variety.

Obv. Head of Tanit.



Rev. Horse.

Date: The first half of the 4th Century B.C.

Coins of this type are not often found beyond Sicily.

#### Ancient North African Coins.

These are also well represented, specimens from *Carthage* and *Cyrene* being in the preponderance. There is also a fair quantity of coins of the *Ptolemies*.

The Carthaginian series are in a fair state of preservation. The usual type shows the head of *Astarte* on the obverse with the Horse and Palm Tree symbols on the reverse.

The coins from *Cyrene* bear

Obv. Head of *Zeus Ammon*,

Rev. Silphium plant.

The North African series date from the 4th to the 1st century B.C.

#### Ancient Roman Coins.

These form the bulk of the collection. It is of interest to note that the Imperial coinage is greatly in excess of the Republican series.

The following emperors predominate:

*TRAJAN* (98 - 117 A.D.)

*ANTONINUS* (138 - 161 A.D.)

*MARCUS AVRELIVS* (161 - 180 A.D.)

*SEVERUS ALEXANDER* (222 - 235 A.D.)

*PHILIP 1st and 2nd* (244 - 249 A.D.)

Of special note is the large quantity of 'folles' of the Emperors *MAXIMIANVS HERCVLIVS* (284 - 308 A.D.) and *MAXENTIVS* (306 - 312 A.D.). These greatly outnumber the coins of *CONSTANTINE the GREAT* (306 - 337 A.D.) and his family, and from their general appearance and condition it could be inferred that they form a hoard or part of a hoard.

The majority of the 4th century A.D. coins bear an Eastern mint mark. Several uncommon specimens were noted belonging to the under-mentioned rulers:

*BALBINVS* (238 A.D.)

*VPPIENVS* (238 A.D.)

*MACRIANVS 2nd* (260 - 261 A.D.)

*CARVS* (282 - 283 A.D.)

It was of interest to discover some examples of the coins of the usurper *ALLECTVS* who was killed in Britain in 296 A.D.

#### Vandalic Period.

There appear to be a few worn copper specimens, but further confirmation will be required.

#### Byzantine Period.

This is well represented. The majority of the coins belong to the

period of *JUSTINIAN* 1st (527-565 A.D.) and his immediate successors. It is, perhaps, justifiable to connect the large amount of Justinian's coins with the probable visit of Belisarius to Malta in 533 A.D.

No late Byzantine coins have been found as yet.

Arabic Period (9th - 11th century A.D.).

A few examples only.

It is hoped eventually to augment the main collection with additions from these specimens after the classification of this collection is completed.

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF VISITORS ADMITTED TO SITES UNDER THE  
MUSEUM DEPARTMENT DURING 1954/1955 AND 1955/1956.

	1954 - 1955		1955 - 1956	
	On Payment	Free	On Payment	Free
The Palace Armoury ...	8,892	8,256	8,483	9,909
Hal Saflieni Hypogeum ...	3,346	1,267	3,836	1,315
Museum of Roman Antiquities ...	4,070	3,283	3,879	1,246
St. Paul's Catacombs ...	3,627	1,900	3,949	585
Tarxien Neolithic Temples ...	1,455	1,300	1,916	1,394
Ghar Dalam Museum ...	824	584	1,482	395
Ggantija Temples, Gozo ...	313	545	475	342
Valletta Museum (*) ...	-	-	-	-

	1954 - 1955	1955 - 1956
Total No. of visitors admitted on payment ...	22,527	24,020
Total No. of visitors admitted free ...	17,135	15,186
Revenue realized ...	£565. 13s. 6d.	£1,260. 2s. 6d.

(\*) Temporarily closed.





*Fig. 1.*

POTTERY FROM A ROCK-CUT TOMB DISCOVERED AT SANTA VENERA ON THE 26th JAN. 1956.

PLATE 2.

