



REPORT

on the working of the

MUSEUM DEPARTMENT

for the year

1958-59

Sir,
I have the honour to submit the Annual Report of the Museum Department for the 1958-59 year.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

your obedient servant,

C. ZAMMIT

Director.

His Honour The Chief Secretary,

The Palace,

Valletta.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SECTION

Dr. D. H. Evans, M.A., Ph.D., Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, was appointed to the post of Director of the Archaeological Section in 1958.

NATIONAL MUSEUM.

In the rooms open to the public only a few alterations and improvements were made in the course of the year. The most important was the addition of a relief model of the Island to a mile on which the important archaeological sites are marked. A large scale-decorated earthenware vessel from Tarxien has been restored and stood in the second Neolithic room. The order of many of the cases here and in the Punic and Roman rooms has been altered to show more clearly the sequence and development of cultures in these islands. In the Bronze Age room, a large bronze sword from Bugeja was restored and placed on display, and work continued on that room. Balaña was the same object in view. The passage between the temple worship gallery and the Punic room was adapted to take a temporary exhibition of work in the field by the Museum Department. The finds at Tarxien and Ggantija, recorded below will be the first to be put on display, illustrated by drawings and photographs. They will be replaced in course of time as more recent discoveries are made on these or other sites.

In accordance with Professor J. D. Evans's re-lettering of the prehistoric phases in his book "Malta" published in 1958, these phases are now known to antiquaries as IA, IB, etc. Phases ID and IE referred to below correspond to the old phases Ib and Ic.

The long task of cataloguing the extensive reserve collections was taken in hand again. Two sections, comprising all the Cretan material and the Maltese Bronze Age sites, have been completed. Since the Neolithic material was largely dealt with during Professor Evans's tenure of the Museum, little remains to be done to complete the cataloguing of the prehistoric collections. Restoration work on the pottery continued, the most notable examples of which have already been mentioned. The valuable assistance of Mrs. I. Ainley and Mrs. V. Greer, B.A. (Oxon.) Hons. Hist., Dip. Anth., in this field is gratefully acknowledged.

MALTA

Printed at the Department of Information.

MALTA

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE MUSEUM DEPARTMENT FOR 1958-59

THE MUSEUM,

Auberge de Provence,

Valletta.

3rd October, 1959.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report of the Museum Department for the financial year 1958-59.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

C.G. ZAMMIT

Director.

His Honour The Chief Secretary,

The Palace,

Valletta.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SECTION

Dr. D. H. Trump, M.A., Ph.D., Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, was appointed Temporary Curator of the Archaeological Section and took up his duties on 15th November, 1958.

NATIONAL MUSEUM

In the rooms open to the public only a few alterations and improvements were made in the course of the year. The most important was the addition of a relief plaster model of the Island to a scale of four inches to the mile on which the important archaeological sites are marked. The giant scale-decorated earthenware bowl from Tarxien has been restored and stood in the second Neolithic room. The order of many of the cases here and in the Punic and Roman rooms has been altered to show more clearly the sequence of the development of cultures in these Islands. In the Bronze Age room, more material from Borg-in-Nadur was restored and placed on display, and work continued on that from Bahrija with the same object in view. The passage between the temple-sculpture gallery and the Punic room was adapted to take a temporary exhibition of recent work in the field by the Museum Department. The finds at Tarxien and Ggantija recorded below will be the first to be put on display, illustrated by drawings and photographs. They will be replaced in course of time as more recent discoveries are made on these or other sites.

In accordance with Professor J. D. Evans's re-lettering of the prehistoric phases in his book "Malta" published in 1959, these phases are now known in sequence as IA, IB, etc. Phases ID and IE referred to below correspond to the old phases 1b and 1c.

The long task of cataloguing the extensive reserve collections was taken in hand again. Two sections, comprising all the Gozitan material and the Maltese Bronze Age sites, have been completed. Since the Neolithic material was largely dealt with during Professor Evans's term with the Museum, little remains to be done to complete the catalogue of the Museum's prehistoric collections. Restoration work on the pottery continued, the more notable examples of which have already been mentioned. The valuable assistance of Mrs. I. Ainley and Mrs. V. Greer, B.A. (Oxon.) Hons. Hist., Dip. Anth., in this field is gratefully acknowledged.

On the research side, work was started on a hitherto unstudied pottery ware of post-Roman date, though much more research, together with some excavations, will be necessary before a report on it can be prepared for publication. Field exploration, too, continued to add a few sites, hitherto unrecorded, to the distribution map of Maltese antiquities, and to extend the knowledge of some whose existence was already known.

TARXIEN

Restoration work at the Tarxien temples was continued. All those stones of which the survival was endangered by water percolating through cracks in their upper surface were capped with concrete. It was then possible to begin work on the restoration of selected blocks not so threatened, with the object of improving the general appearance of the site. The funds available during the year did not permit the restoration of the whole of the monuments, especially areas such as the western side of the southern temple of which very little of the original structure survives. The whole of the central and eastern temples, with the exception of the facade of the latter and the area disturbed during the Roman period, (for which see below), has now been restored in concrete, replacing the rather unsightly rubble masonry by which the original restoration was effected. At the end of the year, work was nearing completion on the eastern half of the southern temple, with its central corridor, and it was hoped it would continue into the early part of the following financial year. The last job envisaged here is referred to more fully below.

It would be well here to note that no stone has been restored without full evidence that the dimensions are those of the missing block. In the case of the height of stones where evidence of the exact measurement is lacking, the tops of the restored blocks have been left irregular to show that the originals continued upwards for an unknown, though in most cases small, distance.

Three trenches (see fig. 1) were cut in connection with this work.

TRENCH I

Since the rest of it was so well preserved, the completion of the middle temple by the restoration of the third apse on the right was considered. None of its stones survived in position, and furthermore, its restoration was complicated by the stumps of two walls of Roman date which ran across it. The first trench (see photograph and drawn section, fig. 2 and plate 1) was cut to seek evidence of the former and determine the nature and importance of the latter.

All that survived of the Neolithic structure here was the packing of large stones between the missing orthostats and the perimeter wall. Sherds from this area were apparently pure I D (1800-1650 B.C.), confirming Professor J. D. Evans's view, based on evidence from the opposite apse, that a structure of that period had stood on the site before the building of the great I E (1650-1450 B.C.) temple.

The Roman walls were of poorer, though still quite good, masonry. In view of this, it was considered preferable to leave them exposed and to abandon the idea of concreting this apse, rather than to destroy this testimony of later occupation of the site simply to make the place look tidier.

TRENCH II

The large recumbent slab in the south-west corner of trench I (marked Foundation Block on Fig. 2) called for further investigation. A small trench was, therefore, cut in the central passage, on the other side of the Roman wall (see photograph and drawn sections, fig. 3 and plate 2).

The stone was shown to be a patch levelling the bed rock to give a secure footing to the projecting vertical slab (section of trench I, fig. 2). The threshold slab leading to the second pair of apses was found to be similarly supported, as shown in the section.

The sequence of layers here proved to be very unexpected. The hollows in the bed rock were filled with earth, on which was laid a poor torba floor passing beneath the foundations of the threshold. These two layers contained pure I E (1650 — 1450 B.C.) material, including enough remains of a characteristic Tarxien offering bowl to allow of its reconstruction. Above this, a deep deposit contained quantities of earlier sherds, of period I D (1800—1650 B. C.), which must therefore have been imported from elsewhere, probably to level the site for the I E (1650 — 1450 B.C.) temple. These were sealed by two further I E (1650 — 1450 B.C.) torba floors, a reddish one laid on a pebble foundation, later made up in white, level and clearly associated with the threshold slab. The proof of a I E (1650 — 1450 B.C.) date for the structure represented by the torba floor underlying the temple is conclusive, but in flat contradiction to the evidence from the two apses. For the moment the problem remains unsolved.

Through these layers, the trench or pit was dug in which the Roman walls were built. The Roman structure, therefore, appears to be a cellar or something similar, sunk well below the ground level of that period, and explaining the destruction of the Neolithic walls of this apse and the neighbouring one of the east temple.

TRENCH III

The restoration of the main entrance portal in the facade of the southern temple was next taken in hand. Before this could be done, the area had to be cleared to bed rock or undisturbed Neolithic structure in order that the restoration could follow the original as closely as possible. Though hardly a trench in the strict sense, the area to the east of the corridor (see plan, fig. 4) was first cleared.

From this it was apparent that only four blocks were involved. The first one on the right was represented by a stump, parts at least of all its faces surviving. For its height, see below. The shape and size of the second block were determined on three sides exactly, by the back of the first, the edge of the corridor paving slab and the edge of the first apse's threshold slab, while the irregular block behind it gave a maximum figure for its thickness. The third block was shown by the platform left on the internal threshold slab to support the front of it, and a stout paving slab resting on bed rock obviously intended to serve the same purpose for its back. The last block has three faces marked by the backs of the decorated slabs which surrounded it, and the fourth limited by the smaller of the two undisturbed blocks behind. Its overlap of only 30 centimetres with the securely reconstructed first orthostat of the apse, can be closely paralleled in the eastern temple, as can the wedge shape of the third block in the middle temple.

The only unknown figure, the height, was determined by a study of the proportions of entrances throughout this and the other temples. The ratio of width to height is very uniform in the smaller doorways at 7:10 as in the corridor from the second to the third apses in the middle temple for example, but varies constantly towards squareness, a ratio of 8:10 or higher, in larger examples. This is actually a natural corollary of building multiple entrances, i.e. entrances in which the jambs and lintel of roughly equal thickness are enclosed directly within larger ones. A height of 2.50 metres, as against a width of 1.90 metres, is therefore suggested.

The actual restoration work based on these conclusions was commenced and will be completed, it is hoped, early in the coming year.

4. Giuseppe De Nitris - CASA BONDI, GOZO

The structural alterations and redecoration of the new Gozo Museum were completed but the preparation of the exhibits was held up while the showcases are prepared. It will be opened to the public as soon as the cases are made available. The heavier pieces for display, like the Egyptian triad, a Roman female statue, three Roman inscriptions and the Maimuna Arab tombstone were transferred from the Roman Villa, Rabat, and Casa Leoni, Hamrun, some returning to Gozo after an absence of a century or more. The jar burial from Kemmuna was restored in readiness for display there also.

GGANTIJA

The terrace wall below the temples was rebuilt more securely at its western end. In the course of this work, a large number of Neolithic sherds was recovered. This appears to have been a dumping area for rubbish from the temples. Most of the pottery was of the Ġgantija period I D (1800 — 1650 B.C.), with a few earlier and later sherds. Probably of the early part of the Tarxien period, I E (1650 — 1450 B.C.), or of the transitional period to this, was a fragment of a square stone bowl (photograph plate III), standing 8 centimetres high, of which the angle survives. The faces on either side of this each bear a panel recessed a little into the stone, common on Neolithic stone vessels but unusual in being highly decorated. One face is pitted in the manner of a number of slabs in this and other temples, whilst the other bears incised arcs depending from and standing upon the upper and lower margins and recalling the engrailed design carved in relief on other temple blocks and occurring even more commonly on the pottery.

A little work was done behind the perimeter wall also, to divert the flow of surface run-off water away to the south of the temple, instead of allowing it to percolate through the masonry.

OLIVE PIPPER AT XEWKIJA

The discovery of the greater part of an olive pipper of the type of that in the Rabat Museum was reported by Mr. Francis Zammit Haber of Xewkija. It is built into a field wall a half mile south of the village. It is hoped to obtain this for the new Gozo Museum in the Casa Bondi when the latter is ready to receive it.

RESTORATION WORKS AT THE MAGISTERIAL PALACE, VALLETTA

The restoration works on the friezes by Matteo Perez in the Hall of St. Michael and St. George were still in progress during the financial year under review.

Also in progress were the repair works to the lunettes "in tempera" in the Armoury Corridor.

RESTORATION OF PAINTINGS

NATIONAL MUSEUM

1. Italian School, XVIII century: Flowers.
2. Italian School, XVIII century: Flowers.
3. Balthasar Bessche: The Artist's Studio.
4. Balthasar Bessche: The Painter's Studio.
5. Balthasar Bessche: The Chemist's Laboratory.
6. After Titian: Roman Emperor.
7. After Titian: Roman Emperor.
8. G. B. Castiglione: Landscape.
9. Italian School: Portrait of Fabio Chigi.
10. Francesco Mancini(?): Madonna & Child.
11. Attributed to the school of Fontainebleau: Marriage of the Virgin.
12. After C. Maratta: Visitation. 1

JESUITS CHURCH

1. S. Erardi: St Charles Borromeo amongst the plague-stricken.
2. S. Erardi: St Francis of Sales giving alms to the poor.

SANTO SPIRITO HOSPITAL CHAPEL

Coronation of the Virgin with St Paul and Grand Master Cottoner.

MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT

1. Portrait of George III.
2. Portrait of A. Ball.
3. Portrait of H. Oakes.

New name-plates were also made for the above three pictures.

ST PAUL'S CHURCH, ST PAUL'S BAY

L. Spada: Altarpiece with the landing of St Paul.

This large canvas suffered very badly during the last war and was reduced to a pitiful state. Restoration work was still in progress at the end of the year.

On 28th June of the same year the two cases containing six paintings belonging to the collections of the Museum which had been sent to Rome on 11th June, 1957, were returned to this Department by the Istituto Centrale del Restauro where they had been cleaned and restored, free of charge, through the kindness of the Italian Government.

On 29th November, 1958 a number of jars were discovered in the cellar of premises No. 4, Barriera Wharf, Valletta. Every effort was made to ensure the proper preservation of these objects.

EXHIBITIONS

The annual exhibition commemorating the lifting of the siege after the 1565 victory over the Infidels was held at the Armoury in the Magisterial Palace, Valletta, kindly lent by His Excellency the Governor for the occasion.

The exhibition was opened to the public from 1st to 12th September and 8293 persons visited the show.

ACCESSIONS

BY GIFT

A wooden box $7\frac{1}{4}'' \times 3'' \times 1''$ — 18th century for scales and weights containing 15 brass weights — Presented by Can. J. M. Ascolese.

A set of Postage and Revenue Stamps: 1s/-, -/3d and -1½d, commemorating the award of the George Cross and issued in April, 1958. Presented by the Postmaster General.

A collection of British coins — Elizabeth II, 1958: 2s/6d, 2s/-, 1s/-, -/6d, -/3d and -/0½d. Presented by Mr John Sammut.

A model of a Gloster Gladiator aircraft. Presented by Mr. Geoffrey Dorman, O.B.E.

A collection of 16 brass coins — Roman Period and later — Presented by Can. J. M. Ascolese.

A crocodile mounted in a mahogany show case. Presented by the heirs of the late Lorenzo Testaferrata.

BY PURCHASE

1. PICTURES

Paintings

1. Spanish School, XVI century: "Head of a female Saint" — oil on canvas — $13\frac{1}{8}'' \times 9\frac{3}{8}''$.
2. Maltese School, XVI century: "Coronation of the Virgin with St John and St Paul" dated 1590, $83'' \times 55\frac{1}{2}''$.
3. Manno: "Study of drapery and head" — oil on canvas — $15\frac{3}{8}'' \times 8\frac{5}{8}''$.
4. Giuseppe De Nittis — "Genre subject" — oil on wood panel — $6\frac{7}{8}'' \times 3\frac{3}{4}''$.
5. Giuseppe De Nittis — "Genre subject" — oil on wood panel — $6\frac{7}{8}'' \times 3\frac{3}{4}''$. (Plate IV).
6. Tommaso Minardi — "Madonna, Child and St John" — oil on wood panel $27\frac{3}{4}'' \times 22''$.
7. "Barriera Wharf and the Grand Harbour" — oil on canvas $18\frac{1}{2}'' \times 31''$.
8. Roman School, XVIII century — "Madonna & Child" — oil on slate — $26\frac{3}{4}'' \times 21\frac{3}{4}''$. (Plate V).

9. Theodore Lane: "An Actor", signed and dated 1826 — oil on panel — 32" x 21½. (Plate VI).
10. Jacob Van Loo: "Whole length portrait of Jean de Fresne", signed and dated 1676 — 82" x 56½".

Drawings

1. Cigoli (?): "St Jerome" — wash — 18.¾" x 15.½".
2. Pietro Benvenuti: "Head of a Lady" — Pastel — 18" x 13¾".
3. Preziosi: "Cavos" — water colour, signed and dated 1880 — 13¼" x 10".
4. Orsi (?): "St Catherine" — pen and wash — 4.¾" x 5.¾".
5. R. Caruana: "A lady seated wearing Maltese cross" — pencil and red chalk — 13¾" x 11½".
6. Maruscelli: "Crossing of the Red Sea" — pencil and wash — 7¾" x 7¾".
7. Favray: Sheet of studies — pencil and red chalk — 8¼" x 12¾".
8. G. Bonavia: "Study of head and hands of an old man" — charcoal and chalk — 21½" x 16".
9. V. Manno: Sheet of studies — pencil (drawn on the back of an etching by D. Cunego dated 1785) — 19.½" x 13.¾".
10. F. Overbeck: "Self portrait" — pencil — 8.½" x 7.½".
11. David: "landscape with waterfall" — signed — brown wash heightened with white — 21.¾" x 16¾".
12. Brocktorff: "Governor's Palace" — water colour — 10½" x 14¾".
13. Brocktorff: "Auberge de Provence" — water colour — 10¾" x 14½".
14. Brocktorff: "Naval Arsenal" — water colour — 10½" x 14¾".
15. Brocktorff: "The Library" — water colour — 9¾" x 15".
16. Brocktorff: "First View of the Grand Harbour" — water colour — 9¾" x 13¾".
17. Brocktorff: "Piazza S. Giorgio" — water colour — 10½" x 14½".
18. Brocktorff: "Second View of the Grand Harbour" — water colour — 10.3/16" x 13.13/16".
19. Brocktorff: "Valletta and its environs" — water colour — 10¾" x 14¾".
20. Brocktorff: "Porta Reale" — water colour — 10½" x 14¾".

Prints

1. School of Raimondi: "Allegorical Subjects" — 4 on one sheet — etchings — 19¾" x 14¾".
2. School of Raimondi: "Allegorical Subjects" — 4 on one sheet — etchings — 19¾" x 14¾".
3. Pietro Testa: "Allegory of the Passion" — etching — 14¾" x 18½".
4. A set of lithographs: "Scenes from the Bosphorus, by Giov. Schranz — mid. 19th century — 19¾" x 157".
5. E. Vico: "Lucretia & Tarquinius" — etching — 12¾" x 17¾".
6. F. Overbeck: "Annunciation and Visitation" — lithograph — 18¾" x 27¼".
7. D. Berger: 1786 "The Three Arts" — stipple — 9¼" x 12¼".

2. OTHER OBJECTS.

1. Limoges Enamel: "Portrait of a man" — 8¾" x 7¾".
2. Limoges Enamel: "Portrait of Gaston de Foix" — 5.15/16" x 3¾".
3. Enamelled watch, c.1800.
4. Cloisonne Enamelled dish — 9¼" Diam.

3. FURNITURE.

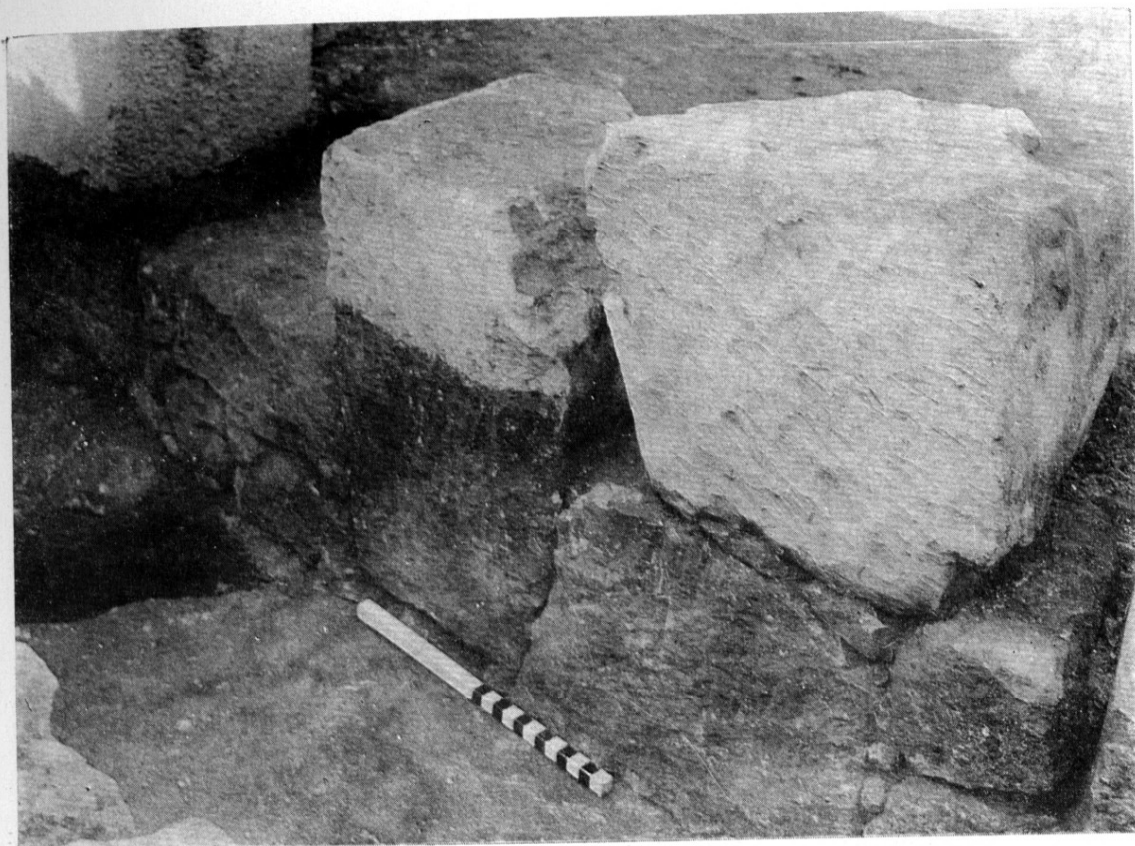
- Commode, serpentine fronted — partly gilt — bearing coats of arms of Grand Master Vilhena, XVIII century — 32¼" x 47¼" x 23½".

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF VISITORS ADMITTED TO SITES UNDER
THE MUSEUM DEPARTMENT DURING 1957/1958 AND 1958/1959.

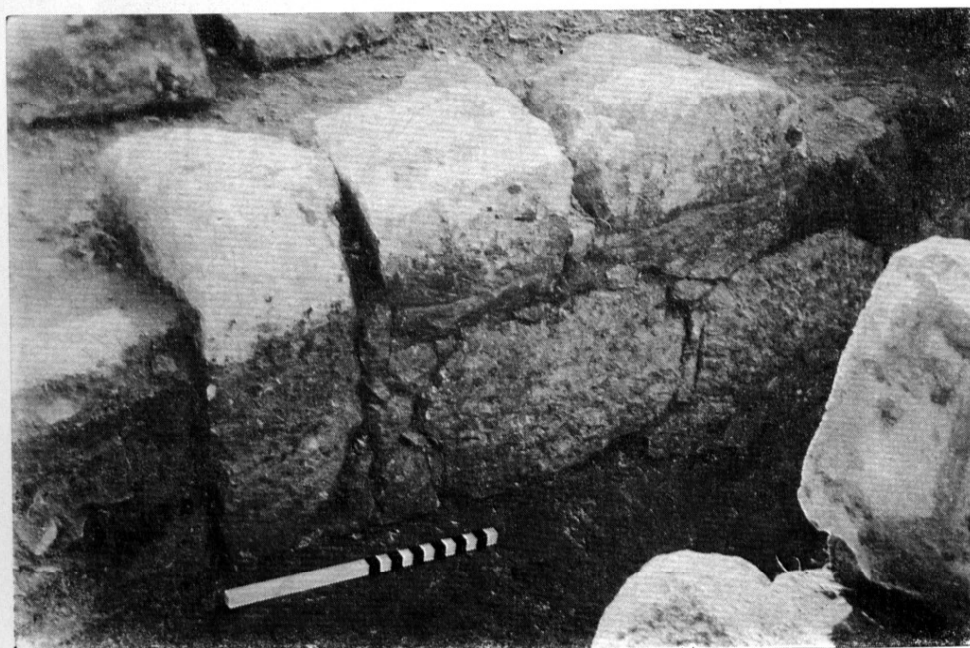
Place	1957 -1958		1958 - 1959	
	On payment	Free	On payment	Free
National Museum	12,529*	3,038*	3,200	3,783
The Palace Armoury ...	6,700	10,487	4,496	11,141
Hal Saflieni Hypogeum ...	3,756	1,762	3,053	3,191
Museum of Roman Antiquities	3,187	2,107	3,243	3,839
St Paul's Catacombs ...	2,603	570	2,784	1,719
Tarxien Neolithic Temples	1,193	985	1,745	4,721
Bħar Dalam Museum ...	2,432	776	1,917	2,801
Ggantija Temples, Gozo ...	555	164	459	926
Total	32,955	19,889	20,897	32,121
Total Admission fees collected	£2,277. 9s. 0d.		£1,687. 7s. 6d.	

* Including number of visitors admitted to Caravaggio Exhibition.

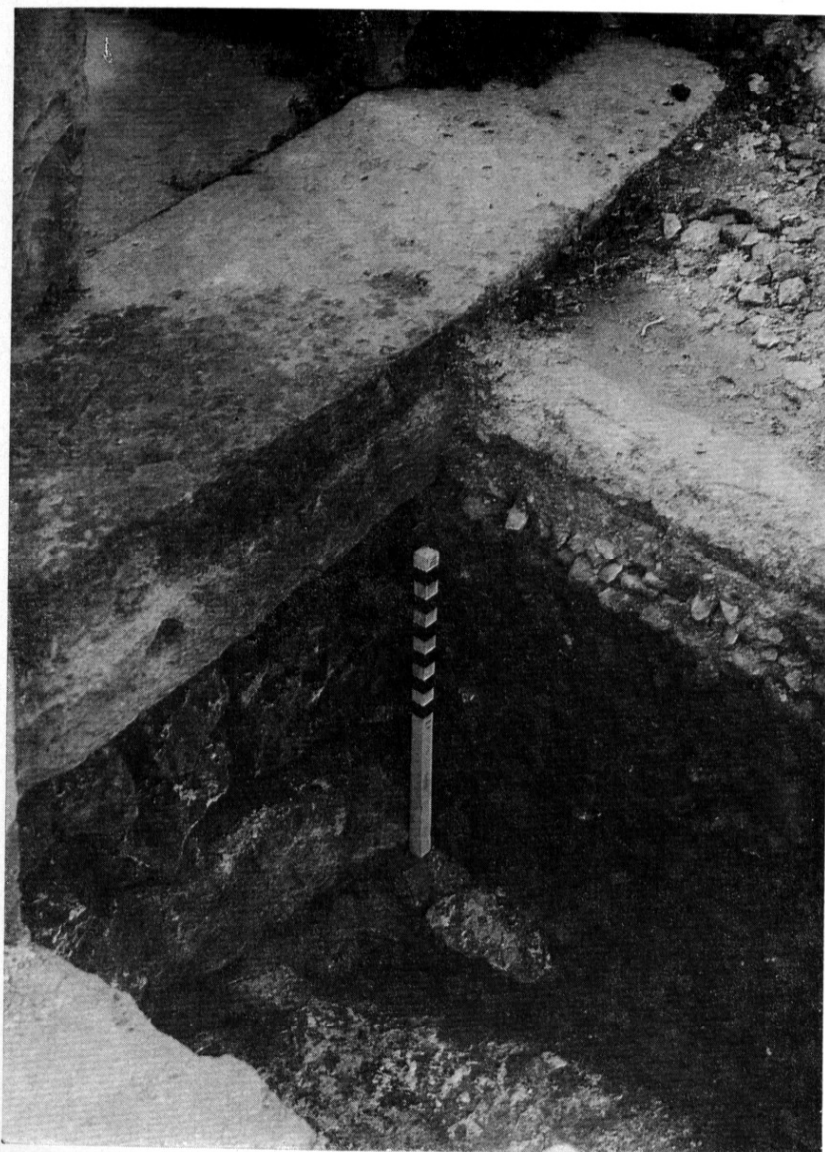
Fig. 1. Plan of the Tarxien Temples (Page 2)



a) Tarxien: Roman walling in west face of Trench I, cf. fig. 2.
Note the Toolmarks (Page 2)

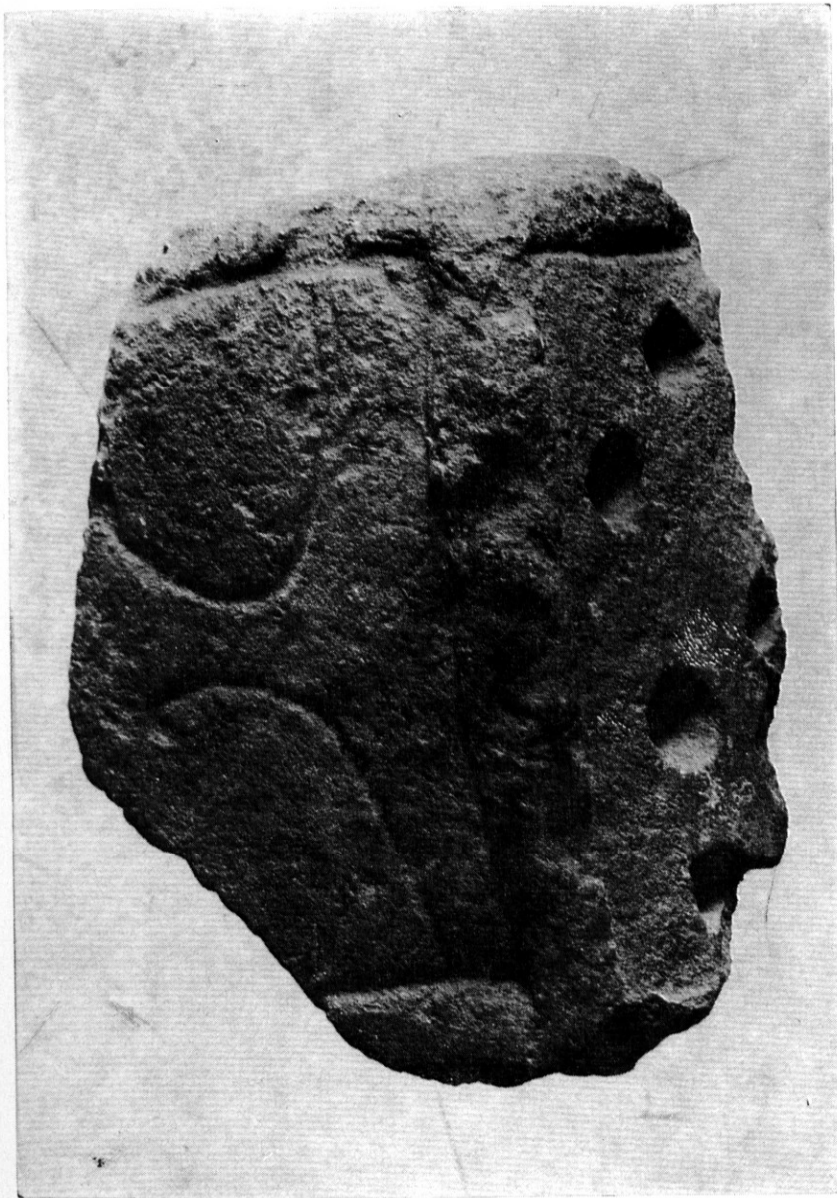


b) Tarxien: Roman walling in east face of Trench I



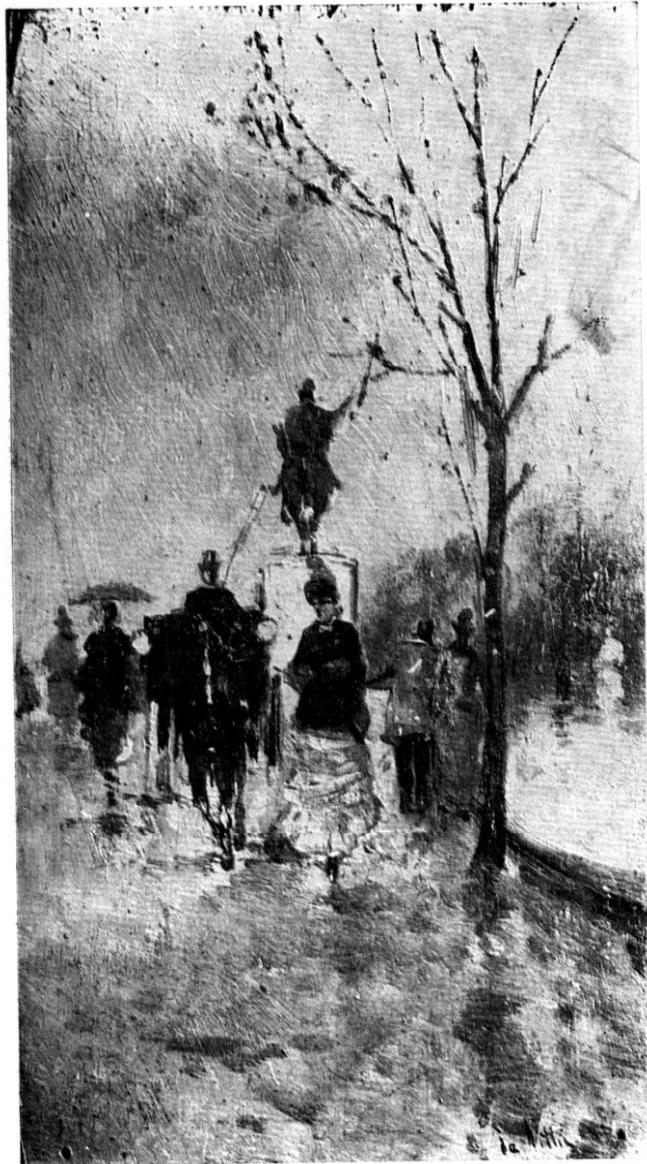
Tarxien: South-west corner of Trench II, showing the section below the threshold slab of the end apses, cf. fig. 3 (Page 2)

PLATE III



Ġgantija: stone bowl fragment. (Page 4)

PLATE IV



G. DE NITTIS (1846-1884)

(Page 5)

PLATE V



ROMAN SCHOOL XVIII CENTURY: HOLY FAMILY
(Page 6)

PLATE VI



THEODORE LANE (1800-1828) AN ACTOR
(Page 5)

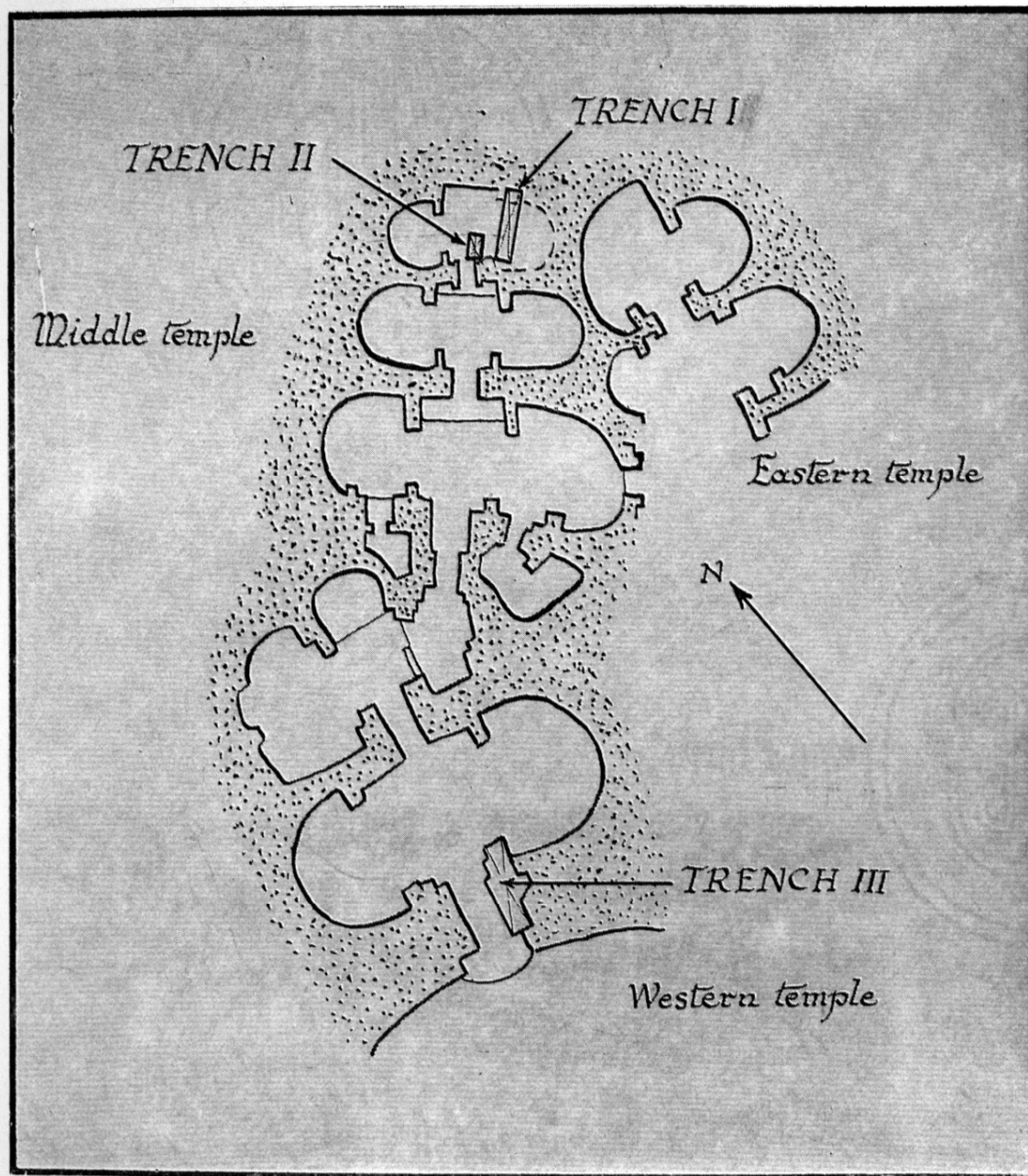


Fig. 1. Plan of the Tarxien Temples (Page 2)

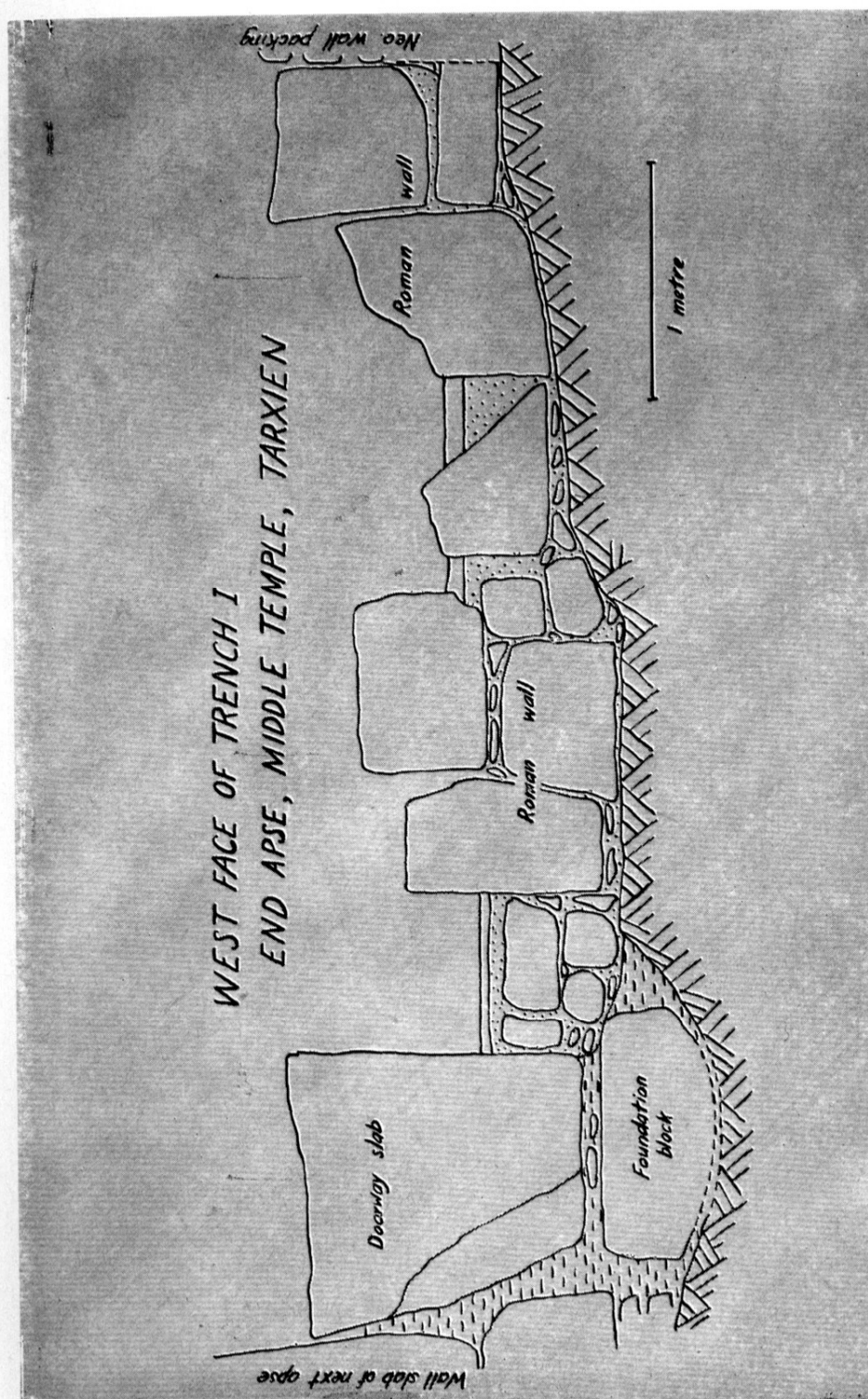


Fig. 2. Tarxien excavations: Trench I (Page 2)

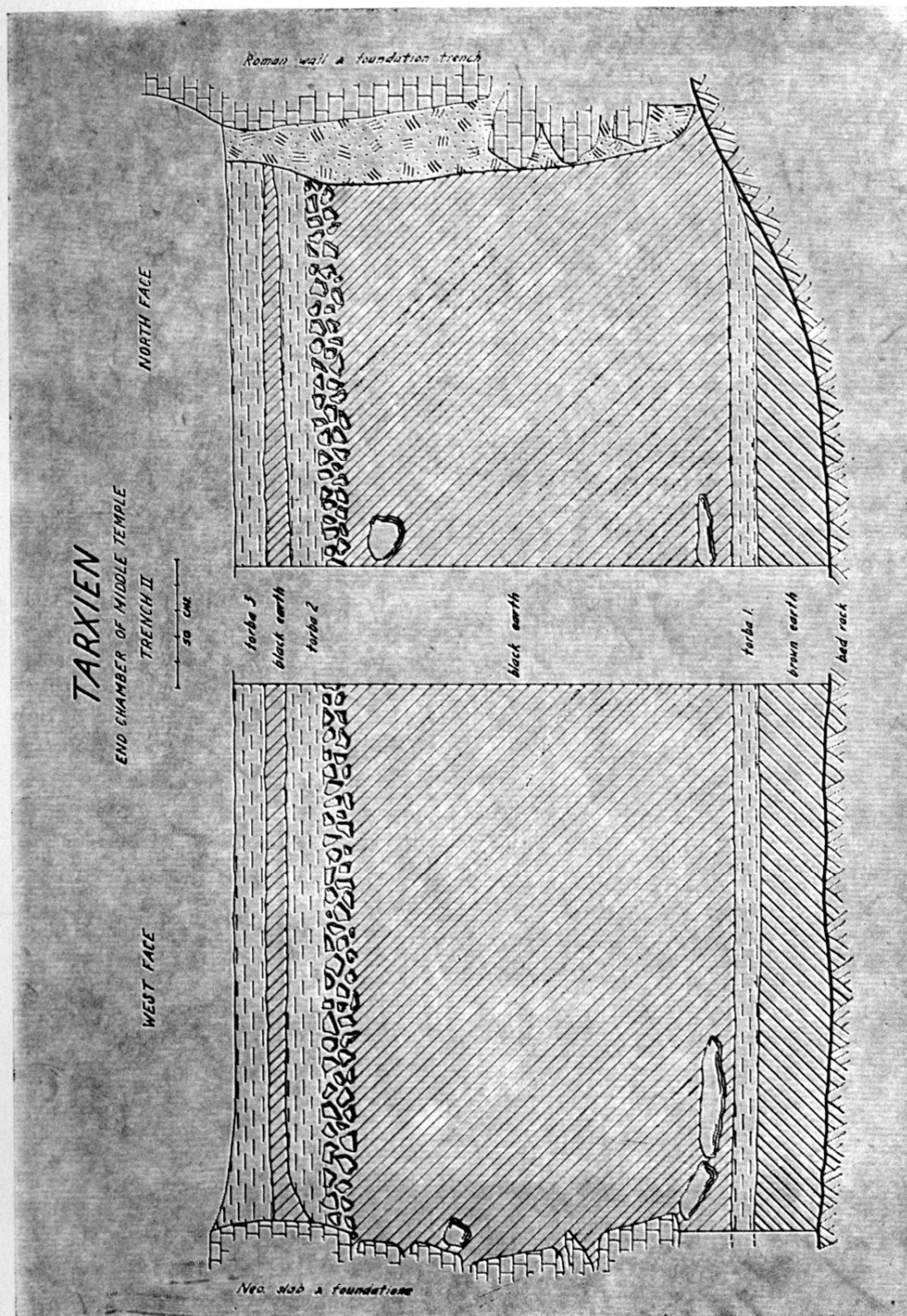


Fig. 3. Tarxien excavations: Trench II (Page 2)

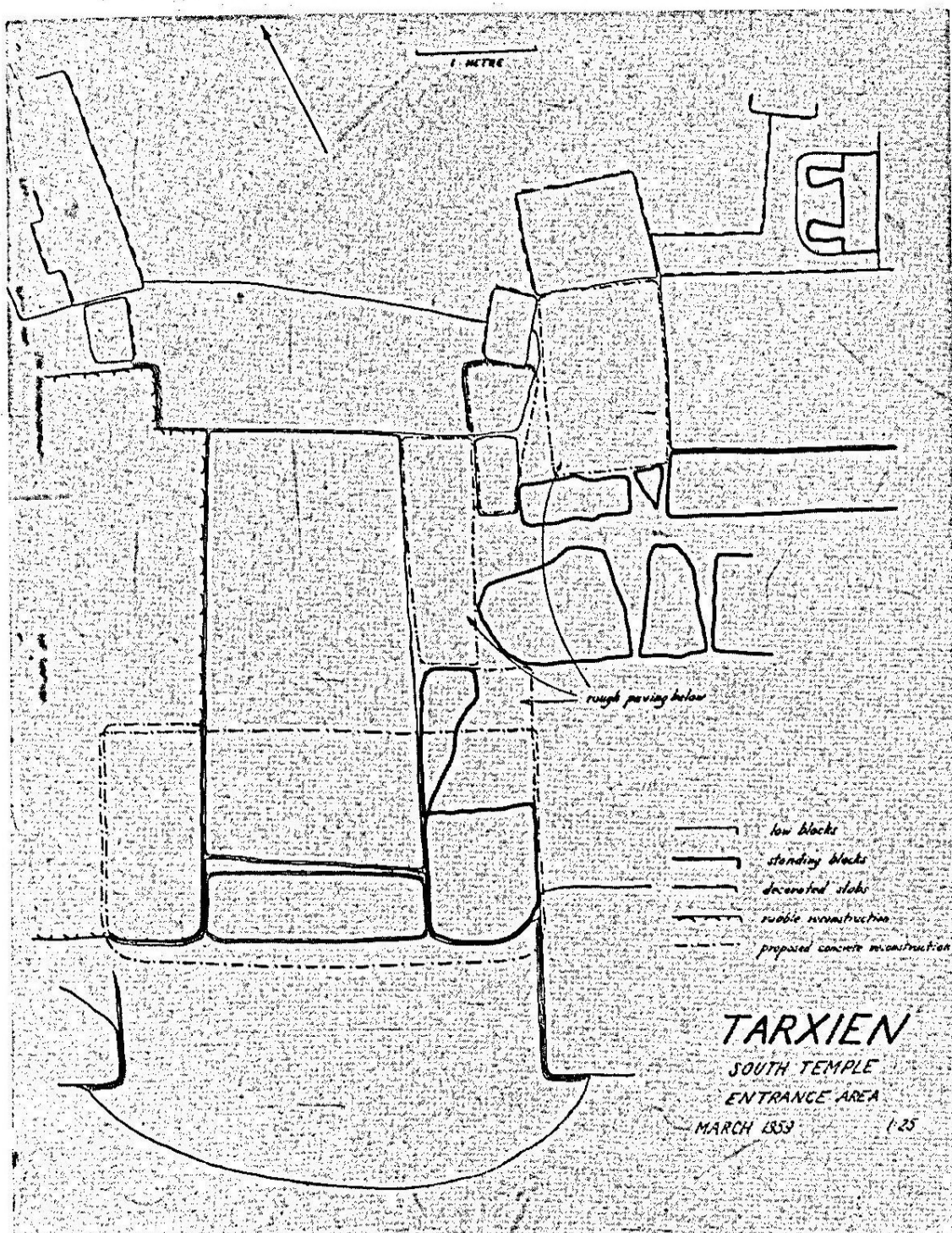


Fig. 4. Tarxien excavations: Plan of Trench III (Page 3)