



STATE OF THE HERITAGE REPORT

THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of the State of the Heritage Report is to provide a source of steady information regarding the cultural heritage of the Maltese islands. To date, such information is defused among diverse organizations and individuals. As a result, the state of Malta's cultural heritage cannot very often be assessed in a holistic manner. Policies advancing the sustainable use of the cultural heritage have traditionally been weakened by a lack of a general comprehensive view of what is actually happening in one of Malta's vital socio-economic sectors.

The Cultural Heritage Act 2002, ushered in a new period of change for the country's cultural heritage sector. The Act not only led to the dissolution of the Museums Department and the creation of new organisations, but, even more importantly, it allowed the creation of new ways of operating in a small but highly important sector. Amongst other provisions, the new Act stipulates that the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage has to prepare a report on the state of the heritage. This report is to provide one source for discussion during the annual National Forum established under article 16 of the Cultural Heritage Act.

The Cultural Heritage Act therefore provides for the updating of the report on an annual basis. This provision presents a number of challenges and opportunities. This current edition, the first in a series, sets a general pattern for the report. The pattern is not carved in stone, and is expected to

change in order to reflect developments, suggestions and changes to reflect the various needs of the cultural heritage sector. The success of the report and the usefulness of its contents therefore depend on the contributions of organizations and heritage management practitioners.

The State of the Heritage Report therefore aims to reach a number of important objectives.

One aim is that of creating a focused source of information about Malta's heritage sector. The sector has been characterised in a number of ways. Traditionally, knowledge about the sector has been limited to scholarly publications, inventories, government annual reports, budget documents, files, specialized publications and other similar sources. Apart from the numerous reports published by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority, very few texts have actually attempted to present a broader view of the country's heritage sector. In general however, the information contained in these reports has remained diffused.

Apart from broader issues, the State of the Heritage Report will have much scope in expanding data information on specific issues. Statistics, project analyses, technical issues and policy development are aspects that will in due course make an appearance in later editions of the report. Specific issues will therefore require as much attention as broader matters. In this

regard, the compilation of the State of the Heritage Report will serve as an important barometer for the heritage sector. It is envisaged that the report will provide a focused source for the creation and support of heritage performance indicators. Such indicators are paramount for the clearer understanding of positive as well as negative developments in the heritage sector.

The creation of a focused source of information points to another aim of the report, namely the exchange of data. Although the Cultural Heritage Act 2002 has established new operational and legal frameworks for the Malta's heritage sector, the sector itself has still to develop sounder ways of interoperability. Many heritage practitioners operate in relative isolation with very little sources of information being circulated freely. The State of the Heritage Report will aim to bridge part of this gap. The annual contributions of organizations and specialists will guarantee that several issues of the heritage will be covered in as scientific a manner as possible. Reliable data will be a valuable tool that will enable a better exchange of data. The State of the Heritage Report will therefore aim at giving a valid contribution to the cohesion of the heritage sector.

Exchange of data, the monitoring of trends, the economic profiling of the heritage sector as well as the various technical requirements of preservation and presentation will serve to characterise the state of the heritage. The report, built on contemporary views of such elements, will therefore serve another important purpose, that of policy development.

Policy development as a factor of sectorial advancement and capacity building, is an essential requirement. In many ways, policy development in the field of cultural heritage may not

have advanced as one would have expected. In this regard, the advances made by the former Museums Department and the Malta Environment and Planning Authority, have not gone unnoticed. During its last decade of operations, the Museums Department supported a number of attempts at legal reform, thus generating a number of policies aimed primarily at site management, museums presentation and the superintendence of cultural heritage. The enactment of the Cultural Heritage Act and the creation of new organizations was indeed the culmination of this policy building process. The Malta Environment and Planning Authority, with its forerunners the Planning Authority and the Environment Department, were instrumental in introducing several policies that were aimed to protect and integrate the protection of the heritage in the broader context of land use planning. Now, it is vitally important for the advancement of heritage policies to be placed on a sounder footing. In this regard, the role of the new established Superintendence of Cultural Heritage and the annual compilation of the State of the Heritage Report, will be paramount.

The State of the Heritage Report is only one link in a broader framework of policy development documents. Its compilation must complement the published proceedings of the annual national forum as well as the National Strategy for Cultural Heritage.

At stake is the entire issue of sustainable development and the protection of the cultural heritage. The cultural heritage of the Maltese islands is known for its unique qualities. The archipelago is known world-wide for its prehistory and its superb Baroque heritage. The archipelago possess a select repertoire of World Heritage sites and

a World Heritage town that is also the country's capital city. The landscape of the islands is remarkable for the density of the heritage that it contains. Indeed, nowhere is the concept of cultural landscape so worth promoting as in the Maltese islands. The intangible qualities of Malta's heritage lend themselves well to a remarkable cultural experiment in the middle of the Mediterranean. Whether by accident or design, this quality is one of the most attractive elements of the archipelago. Yet few people seem to appreciate how precarious such a wealth of heritage is. The Maltese islands are small, densely populated with a landscape that is constantly at risk. Within Malta's landscape, a number of environmental casualties should have been averted. Many historic town centres have been transformed; large tracts of landscape have been quarried away or developed; relentless urban sprawl still seems to be the first impression to strike the unsuspecting foreign visitor. In spite of the advancements made in development planning, the protection of the cultural and natural environment is an area of conflict. The protection of the cultural and natural environment is rarely seen as an integral element of well-being, a factor of economic growth and an essential ingredient to a quality of life. A major aim of State of the Heritage Report, will therefore be that of promoting sustainable development and the sustainable use of the cultural heritage.

In this regard success, in whatever degree and extent, depends on the ability of national government and non-government organizations to engage in a productive public debate on heritage. Sadly, Malta's heritage has often been characterised exclusively as a most useful attraction for the tourist industry. The benefits of heritage as a factor of social cohesion should not be underestimated. The engagement of the Maltese public in heritage matters is still very uneven. In general there often seems to be a lack of understanding that heritage is primarily 'public heritage'. The State of the Heritage Report will address this issue of public debate by serving primarily as a source of easily accessible information. The report will therefore serve as an important outreach tool primarily to provide a broad educational tool. Access to knowledge about our cultural heritage will improve understanding and efforts to protect heritage in a sustainable way.

Anthony Pace
Superintendent of Cultural Heritage

Valletta
2003

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Defining Malta's Cultural Heritage

2.1

Definition of Cultural Heritage



The Cultural Heritage Act provides a broad and inclusive definition of the "cultural heritage".

Article 2 of the Cultural Heritage Act defines the term "cultural property" as:

"movable or immovable property forming part of the cultural heritage"

The term "cultural heritage" is also defined by Article 2 as:

"movable or immovable objects of artistic, architectural, historical, archaeological, ethnographic, palaeontological and geological importance and includes information or data relative to cultural heritage pertaining to Malta or to any other country. This includes archaeological, palaeontological or geological sites and deposits, landscapes, groups of buildings, as well as scientific collection, collections of art objects, manuscripts, books, published material, archives, audio-visual material and reproductions of any of the preceding, or collections of historical value, as well as intangible cultural assets comprising arts,

traditions, customs and skills employed in the performing arts, in applied arts and in crafts and other intangible assets which have a historical, artistic or ethnographic value."

Furthermore, Article 3 states that:

"For the purposes of this Act, an object shall not be deemed to form part of the cultural heritage unless it has existed in Malta, including the territorial waters thereof, or in any other country, for fifty years, or unless it is an object of cultural, artistic, historical, ethnographic, scientific or industrial value, even if contemporary, that is worth preserving."

These definitions establish an important principle. Cultural heritage must be considered in all of its diverse dimensions and as far as possible, it should not be compartmentalized. The Cultural Heritage Act thus establishes a cultural continuum for our heritage, a continuum which recognizes diverse values and aspects of our past in a more holistic and unified meaning of the term.

2.2

International Obligations



Malta has been particularly conscious of its international obligations in the field of cultural heritage. Since the world war of 1939 – 1945, an increasing body of texts, charters, resolutions and conventions have been drawn up and promoted internationally. The initial impetus came from the major international organisations that emerged in the aftermath of the war. The creation of the United Nations and its sister bodies, as well as the creation of the Council of Europe, were important developments in the internationalisation of heritage management principles. Parallel to this development was the emergence of international NGOs, regional organisations, the European Union and other global institutions that promoted the need for there to be common platforms of universally-held principles.

This process led to an international *acquis* of fundamental texts covering such issues as conservation, restoration, integrated conservation, collection management, the return of stolen cultural property and other aspects. The *acquis* will continue to expand during the coming decades.

Malta has taken important steps to adopt important elements of this *acquis* and will continue to pursue a programme of examining and considering international texts and documents for possible adoption. The Superintendence will be developing and overseeing this programme on a number of levels. In this regard the more pressing priorities are the

signing or ratification of outstanding conventions, and the implementation of the principles enshrined in accepted conventions within the Maltese heritage sector.

In this regard, important developments have already taken place. Firstly, Malta has signed or ratified a number of key conventions.

Other important international instruments require careful consideration and possible adoption. This policy will be given priority, keeping in mind however, that the process can be a complex one which requires adequate resources.

Secondly, the new Cultural Heritage Act adopts a series of principles and lays down clear obligations regarding conventions. Part II of the Act, adopts language that promotes integrated conservation, the sustainable use of heritage, social inclusion as well as the promotion of fiscal policies. These principles reflect identical ones already expressed in UNESCO and Council of Europe Conventions. Article 49, specifically states that the powers and duties under the Cultural Heritage Act 2002 should be exercised in conformity with any international Convention, treaty, agreement or instrument concerning the proper use and conservation of national or world cultural property, to which Malta may be party. This innovative article strengthens the legal implications for the local use of internationally accepted norms and practices. In addition, article 50 of the

Act authorises government to ratify and become party to the Unidroit Convention on Stolen or illegally exported cultural objects. The adoption of this latter convention has been augmented by the transposition into Maltese subsidiary legislation of the European Community's directive [EEC Council Directive 93/7/EEC](#) (15 March 1993) on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State.

In addition, several national organizations, such as the Malta Planning and Environment Authority, the Restoration Unit of the Works Division, the Malta Centre for

Restoration, Heritage Malta and the Superintendence, as well as leading NGOs, have all adopted principles of international documents in their works and every day operations.

The signing, ratification and adoption of international conventions carry with them a number of important obligations. However, they also provide an important framework within which authorities and practitioners can operate. The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage will, over the coming years, endeavour to promote best practices as outlined in these international documents.

1954	Council of Europe	European Cultural Convention, Council of Europe ETS No 018
1972	UNESCO	World Heritage Convention, UNESCO
1985	Council of Europe	Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage, Council of Europe ETS 121.
1992	Council of Europe	European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Revised), Council of Europe ETS 143.
2000	Council of Europe	European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe, ETS 176.

2.3

Sites and Monuments



In Malta, sites and monuments of cultural or ecological importance are identified by a Scheduling List drawn up by MEPA. Currently there are 1,719 sites and monuments which are included in the Scheduling List. Out of these, 1,283 sites are of architectural value, 263 sites are of archaeological significance, and 173 are areas of ecological importance. The Scheduling List also provides protection through a system of grading, whereby architectural monuments can be of Grade 1, 2 or 3, and the grading of other sites ranges from Class A to Class E. Out of the total amount of Scheduled archaeological sites and monuments, there are 42% designated as Class A, 56% as Class B, and only one site is designated as Class C. There are no Class D and E listed archaeological sites. Scheduling is publicised through the Government Gazette, and the Scheduling List is also available online.

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage keeps a database listing all recorded archaeological interventions to date. This database also includes sites which are known to have existed but which are currently untraced. This database will be elaborated once the national heritage inventory is launched. The data will be available online.

The list of sites and monuments in Malta does not only include the most significant heritage sites, but it also includes several other minor sites and features. As seen through the Museum Annual Reports, especially,

the majority of archaeological sites and features in Malta have been discovered during development works. Increasingly our cultural heritage is at risk by an ever-increasing development. This risk is not limited to known sites and monuments. Many yet unknown, buried archaeological sites and features are in constant risk of being destroyed.

Unfortunately institutions managing heritage have suffered from decades of mistrust and fear by the public. The public perception is that when a discovery is made during development, the authorities would unnecessarily impede construction works. In addition, discovery of archaeological heritage often poses the risk of land expropriation. This situation is not totally untrue. Given the rich heritage of the islands, the insufficient numbers of heritage professionals are too small to deal effectively with the large workload.

There is an immediate need for this problem to be addressed. The public is to be informed about procedures related to the discovery of cultural assets. MEPA already protects cultural heritage through a series of scheduling procedures. This scheduling process is applied to individual sites and monuments, as well as to identified areas of cultural significance. However, the public should be made more aware of these measures prior to applying for development. Careful planning by applicants should involve research as to whether there is a high risk factor in

the proposed development. A substantial amount of information has already been made available on the internet by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority.

Malta is heavily loaded with responsibility in ensuring adequate conservation for its known heritage. Currently the national focus should be on protecting and conserving this heritage, rather than uncovering new sites and monuments. The known

cultural sites and monuments are not only at risk due to over-development, but also through problems of preservation. To this effect, it is necessary that a monument protection programme be developed to account for the state of conservation of individual sites and monuments. Such a programme should also identify conservation strategies for individual sites and monuments. Management plans, and their implementation should be given high priority.

2.4

World Heritage Sites



Malta has succeeded in having three nominations included on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites. These are the city of Valletta, the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum, and the Megalithic Temples of Malta. The latter actually consists of six archaeological sites, namely Ggantija, Hagar Qim, Mnajdra, Tarxien, Skorba and Ta' Hagra. Valletta, the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum and Ggantija were inscribed in the World Heritage List in 1980, and in 1992 the Committee decided to extend the listing to include the other five megalithic sites mentioned above, listing all as one site as "The Megalithic Temples of Malta".

Valletta was inscribed in the World Heritage List because it "represents a masterpiece of human creative genius", and is "directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance" [UNESCO criteria for WHS (i) and (vi) respectively].

The Hal Saflieni Hypogeum was included in the World Heritage List because it "bears a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared" [UNESCO criterion for WHS (iii)]. The megalithic temple sites were included because they are "an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in

human history" [UNESCO criterion for WHS (iv)].

Since 1987, the first historic city rehabilitation programme was set up in Malta in order to conserve, protect and present our capital city. The Valletta Rehabilitation Project developed a number of short and long-term initiatives that combine specific conservation projects, urban conservation planning and broader management strategies which should lead, among other things, to a social revitalisation of Valletta.

During the 1980s and 1990s, a major conservation and presentation project was undertaken at the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum. This project included a study of the state of preservation of the site, which led to the formulating of a strategy by which the environment of the site is monitored and controlled. Visitor flow has also been controlled. The project also involved the creation of a new visitor centre which allows for a better appreciation of the site.

In 2000, subsequent to an Experts' Meeting on the Conservation of Megalithic Structures held in Malta in May 1999, a Scientific Committee was established as part of a long-term conservation strategy for Malta's megalithic temples.

The Scientific Committee under the chairmanship of the Director, Museums Department, was entrusted with working on approaches to the

conservation solutions that might be applied for the protection of the megalithic temples. These approaches were seen as requiring research, the development of appropriate method statements, monitoring and evaluation, as well as the long-term compilation of various forms of data. Following an investigation on the causes of deterioration of the megalithic structures, consensus was reached that a form of temporary shelter should be installed on the four major temple sites, namely Hagar Qim, Mnajdra, Tarxien and Ggantija.

One of the major projects which the then Museums Department and the Scientific Committee started working on was the creation of a brief for the Hagar Qim and Mnajdra Heritage Park. This brief included the building of a visitors centre, the building of

protective shelters over Hagar Qim and Mnajdra respectively, and the creation of other visitor facilities within the Park. Much of the work of the Museums Department and the Scientific Committee has been incorporated in current projects at these two outstanding monuments.

Following the enactment of the Heritage Act 2002, Heritage Malta has been entrusted with the continuation of the Hagar Qim and Mnajdra Heritage Park Project. Earlier this month, an international design competition for the Hagar Qim and Mnajdra Heritage Park was officially launched by the Ministry for Youth and the Arts. This project will be partially funded through EU pre-accession funds, and work on the chosen design is expected to be carried out in phases starting before the end of next year.

2.5

Cultural Landscapes



Landscape is an integral part of the common heritage of humankind. The safeguarding and protection of the landscape is essential for the preservation of our cultural identity. Since the 1960s appropriate planning action has been considered an important issue in the management of the Maltese landscape. The establishment of the Planning Authority addressed this issue during the 1990s. The protection of the landscape has again been promoted through the Cultural Heritage Act 2002.

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage shares the aims of the European Landscape Convention (2000) and is promoting an increased degree of protection, management and planning in issues regarding landscape.

The sector requires new approaches and techniques to reconcile conflicting needs and necessities of modern society and sustain and promote landscape as a resource. Due to the small size of the island, modern and early landscapes are constantly under pressure from urban development. It is therefore of utmost importance that development be assessed through a multidisciplinary perspective. Biodiversity in Malta is threatened and necessary measures need to be taken immediately to address these concerns.

Public awareness in this sector is crucial. Landscape protection, management and planning needs promotion in educational institutions at various levels. Multidisciplinary programmes in landscape policy, protection and management can also address these concerns in the private sector and in associations.

2.6

Architecture



Malta has a rich architectural heritage. Our towns and villages still have important examples of town houses from different historic periods. In addition, the Maltese landscape also possesses important landmarks, such as country houses and wayside chapels.

This heritage is facing a number of problems. That which is to be saved for posterity largely depends on a question of definition and values. However, such a definition needs to take into account a historically comprehensive heritage with no particular emphasis on one particular historic timeframe. The issue of cultural values is in addition a complex one. The built heritage can act as a source of conflict, where developers and public interests are often seen to contradict national conservation policies. The built heritage is therefore a heritage at risk and more susceptible to change.

Different living requirements have influenced the development of historic urban dwellings. These are in most cases difficult to reconcile with contemporary necessities. Thus, exigencies of high social profile do not lead to the acquisition of large historic property. The loss of garden spaces and subsequently the radical transformation of important town and country houses is becoming common. This also has serious repercussions on urban core areas that can be radically transformed in character. Two important factors can augment this threat. The current depopulation trend in areas such as the Grand Harbour Area, as well as

requirements for new dwelling units can be a threat to the safeguard of this cultural property as a unit. New solutions have to be adopted for such issues.

It is also fast becoming necessary to evaluate architecture through an interdisciplinary approach. Much of our architectural heritage has important links with the local sculptural tradition. A degree of compatibility also needs to be constantly encouraged in the case of new structures built in historic urban core areas. St. John's co-Cathedral can be here quoted as an important example where architecture, sculpture and painting are inextricably linked. The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage has been working closely at curatorial level on a process of identification of issues and related support systems towards the effective implementation of a long-term conservation and restoration strategy. This solution can possibly provide a solution based on an interdisciplinary approach that can give the right context to each and every aspect of such cultural property. It is envisaged that the new Executive secretary will be working closely with the Superintendence in order to develop a long-term conservation strategy for the edifice and its contents.

The focal points of the Maltese town and village are parish churches and a number of chapels, small churches and niches. The Cultural Heritage Act 2002 provides for the superintendence of this cultural heritage through the Catholic Cultural

Heritage Committee. A degree of assistance is nonetheless provided by Government entities and non-governmental organisations. During the current year the Restoration Unit within the Works Division has restored the Church of St. Catherine at Naxxar. In the case of a second chapel at Hal Millieri, it is hoped that restoration works will be shortly initiated after the relative permits will be issued. This project is a collaboration initiative

between Din I-Art Helwa and the Zurrieq parish authorities.

Some of the most important architecture is located in Valletta, Mdina and the three cities of Cottonera. This heritage sector is the subject of funding, restoration and study through funds allocated by the Valletta, Cottonera and Mdina Rehabilitation Projects.

2.7

The Geological Heritage



The geology of the Maltese Islands represents 24 million years of sedimentary history. The scientific importance of the Maltese geological record has attracted comparatively little attention from the local public. Yet the subject has long attracted high profile scientific attention. The geological evidence of the Maltese Islands is in fact an important key of interpretation for the entire Mediterranean region.

The geological heritage of the Maltese Islands is consequently composed as much of the actual geological landscape of the Islands, as much as by the heritage of generations of scientific study and amateur collectors.

Malta's geological heritage is legally protected both in terms of its landscape dimension and in terms of movable items and collections.

Article 2 of the Cultural Heritage Act specifically defines "*movable and immovable objects of ... palaeontological and geological importance*" and "*palaeontological or geological sites and deposits, landscapes ... as well as scientific collections*" as being an integral part of the "*Cultural Heritage*".

Similarly the Structure Plan also makes provision for the protection of the geological heritage of the Maltese Islands. The Structure Plan provides protection for geological, geomorphological and

palaeontological features through the designation of Rural Conservation Areas and through the designation of Sites of Scientific Interest.

The range of geological features requiring protection, inventory and study are extremely varied and cover different areas of geological and palaeontological research.

The public collections of geological samples on exhibit at the Ghar Dalam Museum and at Vilhena Palace (Natural History Museum) are the most extensive and the most comprehensive. Smaller collections and some geological sites may be viewed in private collections. Possibly the most important privately operated heritage site on a geological theme is the Limestone Museum at Siggiewi.

The study of Maltese geology conventionally falls into two main categories, namely the study of the Tertiary Geological Epochs (Oligocene and Miocene) and the more recent Quaternary Epochs (Pleistocene and Holocene).

Tertiary Heritage

The Tertiary epoch witnessed the formation of the Maltese limestone strata in submerged marine conditions during the Oligocene and Miocene Epochs. This process of sedimentation, followed by a process of folding and faulting constitute the geological genesis of the Maltese Islands. The most important evidence

of these distant events is provided by the Maltese landscape with its extensive geological fault structures and differentiated rock strata. This processes resulted in the formation of impressive landmarks such as the Dingli Cliffs which rise to 253m in height or the Great Fault which extends from the North-West to the South-East of Malta.

Also of great importance are the ecological data preserved in fossil format within the geological sediments.

Quaternary Heritage

The Quaternary geology of Malta was formed after the islands emerged above sea level at the end of the Miocene around 5 million years ago. The Quaternary deposits and landscape features were therefore formed as a result of water erosion of a dry land mass, during the last 2 million years. This epoch is therefore associated with important erosional features such as caves and valley systems and dry land fossil remains. These fossil remains, such as the ones found in Ghar Dalam, are of great scientific importance due to their relevance to the study of biological diversity and evolutionary processes in these epochs.

2.8

Underwater Cultural Heritage



The Harbour Beds

The great majority of Malta's marine archaeology is actually located within the enclosed harbour waters, rather than in the open seas. Over the centuries, large quantities of archaeological materials have been trapped, often in high densities, in the heavy silting that occurs over the beds of enclosed harbours. The combined action of shipwreck, dumping off anchored ships and off the mainland has resulted in considerable archaeological material having remained embedded in the harbour bed silts.

It is characteristic of archaeological materials recovered from harbour beds to emerge in a good state of conservation, due to the undisturbed conditions existing in such situations. Indeed, it is not unusual for complete ceramic pots to be recovered off harbour beds - unlike the generally fragmented remains usually encountered with on land.

Although of primary scientific value, archaeological sites in harbour conditions are however most inappropriate locations for cultural/tourist sightseeing. Harbour waters are characteristically very murky and frequently highly polluted. Diving operations in these enclosed waters also have to take account of the dangers posed by the constant passage of sea craft. The busier industrial ports of Marsaxlokk and the Grand Harbour clearly present the greater dangers.

Harbour spaces are limited resources that are being constantly contended for by an aggressive range of competitive users - heavy industrial concerns, fishing, and amenity services such as yacht marinas. All these activities involve a heavy disturbance of the seabed deposits and of the littoral conditions through such subsidiary activities as dredging, anchorage and land reclamation for the creation of berthing facilities. The loss of archaeological material to this type of activity must be considerable, but it passes largely unnoticed.

Open Sea conditions

The number of archaeological sites located in open sea conditions is considerably less than those found in harbours. The constant erosive action of the open sea and the great spaces over which ancient wrecks might be located mean that archaeological sites are actually rather sparse on the sea bed and may be badly conserved.

On the other hand, diving in open sea conditions to visit submerged sites, even if only a few meters off the shoreline, is both feasible and highly rewarding. The damage, dangers and pollution encountered within enclosed harbours are practically inexistent along the open shoreline. The only exception to this rule consists in the industrial activities of off-shore fish farms. Archaeological sites in shallow, open waters are in fact so accessible and visible, that they are constantly targeted by sport divers and stripped

of any portable antiquities. A large number of wreck sites and ancient anchorage have been entirely wiped out in this way, without any official record having ever been taken. Furthermore the ability of sport divers to access ever deeper waters is resulting in the progressive degradation of deep water sites which were up to now protected by their very remoteness.

The need to develop a comprehensive inventory of underwater sites and

other cultural assets is a high priority. The inventory of these submerged assets must include classes of sites which have hitherto received scarce academic attention, such as underwater geological features and 20th Century wreck sites.

The inventory of sites will become an essential tool in protecting these sites. The inventory will allow better policing of known sites, and provide the authorities with the data to plan appropriate protective measures.

2.9

Military and Defence Cultural Heritage



Malta's long history of involvement in the military events of the Mediterranean has resulted in the creation of a large body of historical and cultural heritage on the Islands. Most of this heritage consists of architectural creations, mainly for defensive purposes. Other forms of Military heritage may however be found within museum collections, archives and even in archaeological contexts both on land and at sea.

However, most impressive of all are the harbour defences, centred on the Renaissance and Baroque fortifications of Valletta and of the Three Cities.

Yet the list of military and defence architectural heritage is far more extensive than the harbour remains on their own. Malta still possesses important traces of its Medieval defences, especially in the towns of Mdina, Birgu (Fort St. Angelo) and Cittadella. The Hospitaller Period fortifications are particularly vast, including town defences, harbour and coastal defences, as well as inland lines of defence. Further important additions to the system of defences were added in the British colonial period. These included the 20th Century defences and military infrastructure erected in response to the international situation developing

between the First and the Second World Wars.

The Military and Defence heritage of the Maltese Islands may be quantified as follows:

Medieval Fortifications

Mdina, Fort St. Angelo and Cittadella

Hospitaller Fortifications

Valletta Harbour defences including 25 kms of Bastions & Ramparts, three fortified urban centres, four forts and three concentric lines of fortifications. Three additional fortified focii – Mdina, Cittadella and Chambrai
 22 Gateways
 51 Towers & Coastal Batteries
 10 Sets of Coastal entrenchment walls, involving around 4 Km of defences

British Fortifications

Victoria Lines 12 km of infantry walls
 31 British Forts & Batteries
 Over a 100 Concrete Pillboxes, Field defences and other WWII emplacements (to be fully identified and catalogued).

2.10

The Movable Cultural Heritage



The latest available statistics quote figures for 2001. 47% of surveyed Museums and Historical sites are owned by the state. 34% are state owned and 17% are private. These percentages are roughly applicable to the current year. However, the Cultural Heritage Act 2002 has provided new parameters for defining museums and historic sites. The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage is currently assessing ways and means to identify and categorise Maltese sites and museums.

Public Collections

The major part of the movable public cultural heritage accessible to the general public is now being administered by Heritage Malta. The organization has been established by the Cultural Heritage Act 2002 to manage sites and buildings entrusted to its care. During the past year access to cultural heritage has been promoted by an outreach programme that included a series of lectures and exhibitions. Exhibitions included one of works by Antonio Sciortino to mark the Xth Edition of the Games of the Small States of Europe, and an exhibition of the statue of Neferaabet at the National Museum of Archaeology. Other tangible examples of outreach initiatives include a series of events aimed at the study and evaluation of the renowned Maltese artist Melchiorre Gafa. This project was brought to fruition after preparatory work initiated some two years ago by the Art Programme of the University of Malta. Other such events include an exhibition held in collaboration with

the Italian Cultural Institute entitled *'Dipinti di Pittori italiani del Novecento - dalla collezione del Museo Nazionale di Belle Arti di Malta'*. It is important that instances of partnerships be encouraged.

A number of entities provide exhibition space and support for hosting exhibitions and cultural events. Such services are provided by particular stakeholders such as Heritage Malta and St. James' Cavalier centre for Creativity. Local Councils are also an important asset in this respect. Figures available from 2001 state that 43% of Local Councils mounted a total of 72 exhibitions. 20% of these dealt with craftwork whilst 18% were photographic. The Superintendence has high hopes that these quoted figures have increased throughout the past and current year.

Throughout 2003, a comprehensive Audit of works in the National collection of the Museum of Fine Arts has been carried out by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage. This exercise has also been extended to Government departments and entities in whose custody a number of works of art have also been entrusted. In this manner, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage can create important audit trails and processes through which these artefacts can be accounted for and curated.

Private Collections

Malta also has a wealth of private collections that include important works of art and artefacts. This important corpus of artefacts and

cultural property is largely un-quantified and not included in inventories. No official statistics as to accessibility of this heritage are available. Some of these collections are however available to the general public through private museums. A number of these are known to exist since a degree of interaction exists between the Malta Tourism Authority and these museums. The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage will be conducting a voluntary registration scheme for these private museums in order to identify clearly the number of these museums, and their category.

It is fitting to note a degree of collaboration between private ownership and National collections. During the current year, a number of works of Art have been loaned to National Collections. Such is the case of the Turner Watercolour. Some of these collections also provide valuable cultural property for high level exhibitions. This process of making accessible private owned cultural property is to be encouraged. In most cases, accessibility is related to research and restoration processes that are only handled by a small corpus of experts and professionals in the field.

Ecclesiastical Collections

An equally large and important portion of the movable cultural heritage is Ecclesiastical. It is important to point out the dual nature of this important sector of our heritage that has an important aspect linked to cult practices. Funds for this heritage are often provided by the respective parishioners although government assistance has been important in particular cases.

A number of parishes possess small collections of cultural artefacts. In most cases these also include cultural artefacts still in use on special occasions as well as artefacts from chapels under the jurisdiction of the same parish. Most of these are only accessible on special occasions to the general public, although access is generally available on request.

Other collections are accessible on a regular basis throughout the year. These include major collections pertaining to particular parishes and to the Church institution in general. During the current year, the Parish museum of Zabbar reopened its doors to the general public. This project was funded out of parish funds and was brought to fruition through the efforts of a number of dedicated volunteers.

No official statistics as to the number of visitors and monies spent on the upkeep, conservation and display of these collections are available. Amongst the few ecclesiastical museums that charge an entrance fee one can mention the Cathedral Museums at Mdina and Gozo.

Some significant ecclesiastical property housing important works of art is state owned. In particular instances this property has no trustee title and therefore the concept of custody is rather unclear. Restoration works are often funded by such entities as the Valletta Rehabilitation Project and others. It is important that all government owned property be entrusted in custody as delineated clearly in the Cultural Heritage Act of 2002. This would create an apposite pattern for the accountability of this cultural property

2.11

Intangible Cultural Heritage



Intangible heritage is an important sector of our cultural heritage. A degree of focus has been effectively placed on traditional crafts. These are an important aspect of the intangible heritage world. A comprehensive business plan adopted by the Crafts Council for 2003 has outlined various levels of outreach at both national and international level. This has undoubtedly provided a valid platform for this sector. Alongside this process at institutional level, a number of local councils, entities and private individuals have been involved in this process of outreach. The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage as the national co-ordinator of the European Heritage Days Campaign has also focused on traditional skills and their link to the national identity. This campaign coincided with the ratification by UNESCO of an international convention to safeguard Intangible Cultural heritage.

Cultural expressions such as Maltese traditional song (Ghana) as well as traditional Maltese dance are finding their roots again thanks to initiatives being taken at Local Council level. This is also the case of particular events such as bonfires on the feast of St. John the Baptist. The performing arts need further impetus at local levels. It is also fitting to note that protection of social practices rituals and events such as village carnivals should not entail the transformation of their intrinsic rural characteristic. Nonetheless, a degree of adjustment to contemporary

necessities can be an important step towards the survival of this intangible heritage.

An important sector of Malta's intangible heritage is to be found in musical archives.

These are scattered all over the Maltese islands and generally belong to musical societies and institutions that make them accessible on particular occasions.

Important collections are housed at the cathedral museum in Mdina as well as at the Manoel Theatre. The extent of this heritage has as yet to be quantified, documented and made available to as wide an audience as possible. The same applies to the musical heritage of the various cappelle. A degree of study is nonetheless being carried out where such heritage is accessible.

An assessment of theatre productions over the past three years has spelt a slight increase in amount. Figures quoted for 2000 and 2001 stand at 176 and 171 productions respectively. Figures for 2002 stand at 185 productions. Performances have also registered a similar increase from 361 in 2001 to 397 in 2002. It is not known what percentage of these are in Maltese. The number of historic scripts re-proposed for performance are also unknown.

3

The Management of Malta's Cultural Heritage

3.1

Legal Framework



Malta's cultural heritage sector is governed by a series of legal instruments. The most recent development has been the enactment of the Cultural Heritage Act in 2002. However, the protection and conservation of Malta's cultural heritage has a long history. Over a span of just under a century, a number of legal instruments were enacted at different stages. Often these developments were very isolated in time. As a result, legislation often became isolated from contemporary developments in other socio-economic sectors.

In 1910, a Preservation of Antiquities Ordinance was enacted. The Ordinance provided a simple framework for the protection of antiquities. It was inspired in the main part by the Italian legislation, which had just been freshly enacted in 1909. Following amendments and improvements in 1922 and 1923, a final Antiquities Protection Act was enacted in 1925. The 1925 act provided for the establishment of an Antiquities Committee which, before being disbanded in 1992, assessed and advised government on the protection of heritage assets.

1910	Preservation of Antiquities Ordinance
1925	The Antiquities Protection Act
1991	Environment Act 1991
1992	Planning Development Act
2002	The Cultural Heritage Act 2002.

It was during the first three decades of the 20th Century, that the first legal framework for heritage evolved. This period was paralleled by the pioneering work of Sir Temi Zammit in the field of culture heritage. Innovation, discoveries and the establishment of displays was accompanied by the creation of an institutional framework. Foremost among these was the establishment of the Museums Department as the entity that collected, managed and displayed items of cultural heritage.

It was only after 66 years had passed that two new legal instruments, having bearing on heritage issues, were enacted. The first of these acts was the Environment Act of 1991. This law served to focus on environment protection, with provisions for the safeguarding of cultural heritage. The act was not designed to replace the Antiquities Protection Act (1925).

The Planning Development Act (1992) was then enacted to regulate and establish modern planning procedures. The act established a central Planning Authority as an autonomous agency to regulate development. The authority has recently been transformed into the Malta Environment and Planning Authority. This important act established critical principles of scheduling and grading of historic buildings. The act also introduced the concepts of urban conservation areas and protective zoning.

Malta now has a composite framework of institutions and legal instruments that in varying ways govern the protection and conservation of the cultural heritage. No single legal instrument has sole jurisdiction over heritage issues. Legal action in heritage protection matters can be initiated under any active law.

3.2

Organisations and Operators



The enactment of the Cultural Heritage Act in 2002 has radically changed Government's entire philosophy and strategy for the management of the cultural heritage sector in Malta.

The new legislation was designed to replace the Antiquities (Protection) Act of 1925, which it formally superseded in January of 2003.

Key changes introduced by the Cultural Heritage Act include:

The creation of an autonomous regulator for Malta's cultural heritage sector.

The introduction of a 'level playing field' philosophy for all operators in Malta's cultural heritage sector, be they publicly or privately owned.

Provisions for major administrative and operational changes in the public cultural heritage sector of Malta.

Government commitment for the reform of the cultural heritage sector gained momentum in 2003 with the replacement of the former Museums Department with a number of new autonomous public entities. This was further emphasised in April of 2003 with the creation of a Ministry responsible for Youth and the Arts.

2003 has therefore become a year of great institutional change and reform.

Furthermore, the need for change has gone beyond the sphere of the public sector and is progressively affecting operations within the private and non-governmental sectors.

Entities and Organisations

A – Ministry responsible for Culture

The role of the Minister responsible for Culture is more fully and more precisely defined by the Cultural Heritage Act than in the earlier legal set up. This new role now includes various measures aimed at overseeing the smooth interfacing of the various entities falling within his portfolio.

The new legislation also introduced key innovations in the way in which the Ministry and the general public can interface on matters relating to the Cultural Heritage sector. In particular the Ministry is now responsible for the preparation and implementation of:

The National Strategy for the Cultural Heritage

Art.12 of the Cultural Heritage Act requires the Minister to prepare a policy document outlining a National Strategy for Cultural Heritage. This document is meant to provide a general framework for the

performance of the various entities operating within the Cultural Heritage sector. It should also provide clear national objectives for the cultural heritage sector. This document is to be reviewed as often as may be necessary, and in any case not less than once every five years.

The National Forum

The Forum is to be convened by the Minister once a year, for the specific purpose of discussing the state of cultural heritage. The President of the Forum is to be nominated by the Minister. The proceedings of the Forum are to be published and communicated to the Minister and to the Committee of Guarantee.

Policy Needs

Further to the National Strategy / Minister is empowered by Art 55 of Cultural Heritage Act 2002 to make regulations to give effect to any provisions of the Act / or to regulate matters relating to activities effecting cultural property. This process of policy writing and regulation has been initiated with the preparation (in collaboration with SCH) in 2003 of the following Legal Notices:

Legal Notice establishing the Board for Appeals for Cultural Heritage

Legal Notice establishing the Return of Illegally Removed Cultural Objects

The Superintendence is in the process of drafting policy documents for wider distribution and discussion

Draft policy on Right of Preference

Draft policy on Return of Illegally Removed Cultural Objects

Draft policy on Institution of an Appeals Board

B – The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage has been established by virtue of Article 7 of the Cultural Heritage Act, with the mission of ensuring the protection and accessibility of cultural heritage, as defined by the Act.

The Superintendence started operating in January of 2003. The main functions of the Superintendence are outlined in Articles 7 and 40 to 48 of the Cultural Heritage Act. These include:

The setting-up and management of a national inventory of cultural property. This is a core function to the entire legal and operational remit of the Superintendence. The Inventory of cultural property is an essential tool both for the assessment and for the surveillance of Malta's cultural heritage patrimony. It is also an essential tool for the promotion of scientific research and public appreciation of that same patrimony.

The exercise of surveillance on behalf of the State over the protection, conservation, restoration, maintenance, exhibition and accessibility of cultural property;

The promotion of research in the field of cultural heritage;

The regulation of archaeological excavation and other interventions on cultural property;

The development, promotion and implementation of best policies, standards and practices in the cultural heritage sector.

The exercise of the Right of Preference on behalf of the State;

The regulation of the export and re-export of cultural heritage property;

The need to collaborate with the Malta Environment and Planning Authority to ensure the protection of cultural property. The legal mechanisms in this area including the Superintendent's power to make recommendations to MEPA for the scheduling of cultural property as defined in the Development Planning Act.

To enter into a Guardianship contract, whereby the custody and administration of immovable cultural property is passed on to a Local Council or to a Non-Governmental Organisation in order to ensure the improved preservation and public access to the said immovable property.

C – Religious Cultural Heritage Commissions

Article 52 of the Heritage Act makes provision for the creation by religious denominations of autonomous superintendence authorities to be governed by a religious heritage commission. Such commissions are to be appointed for a duration of two years by the competent religious authority. Each commission shall include one expert to be appointed after consultation with the Minister responsible for culture.

Once constituted, Religious Heritage Commissions have the same powers and responsibilities as of the

Superintendent of Cultural Heritage. Should religious denominations opt not to create such a Commission, the regulation and protection of the heritage under their care will be vested in the Superintendent of Cultural Heritage.

In 2003 only the Catholic Church appears to have appointed such a religious heritage commission. To date no interfacing mechanism has been created between the Catholic Cultural Heritage Commission and the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage. If this situation is not remedied, a *de facto* situation may arise by which the management and protection of cultural heritage in Malta is carried out according to property entitlement and not according to scientific merit. This is clearly one area that will require much more work in the coming months.

Furthermore it should be noted that as from December 2001, the Maltese Diocese has undertaken a systematic compilation of inventories of its cultural heritage in churches and other related institutions. A number of parish and filial churches, confraternities and collections have so far been included in inventories. It is hoped that in the not too distant future, this valuable documentation will be made accessible to researchers and scholars.

D – Heritage Malta

Heritage Malta has been established in January 2002 by virtue of Article 8 and 9 of the Cultural Heritage Act. The Act establishes the mission of ensuring that those elements entrusted to it are protected and made accessible to the public as defined in the Heritage Act.

Heritage Malta took over the principal operational functions that were previously carried out by the Museums Department. This includes responsibility for the care and management of the following sites and collections:

Megalithic sites:

Hagar Qim, Mnajdra, Tarxien, Ggantija, Ta' Hagra, Skorba.

Classical Sites:

Roman Villa and Museum, St. Paul's Catacombs, Tad-Dejr Catacombs, Ghajn Tuhffieha Roman Baths, Tas-Silg, San Pawl Milqi, Ta' Cacciatura.

National Collections:

Fine Arts, Archaeology, Palace Armoury, Maritime, Ethnography, Natural History, War Museum.

The functions of Heritage Malta as defined by the Cultural Heritage Act include the duty of:

Ensuring that cultural property entrusted or acquired by them, including museums, collections, sites and buildings, are conserved, restored, managed, operated, marketed, studied and presented for exhibition in the best way possible;

Performing or commissioning, under the surveillance of the Superintendent, the restoration or conservation of cultural property owned or held or administered by them;

Promoting public knowledge, education, appreciation and enjoyment of cultural heritage.

E – Malta Center for Restoration

The Malta Center for Restoration was originally set up in 1999 as a joint undertaking between the Ministry of Education and the University of Malta. However Article 10 and 11 of the Cultural Heritage Act re-established the Center as a body corporate under the remit of the Minister responsible for Culture.

The Center also includes an Institute for Restoration Studies established by statute to promote and co-ordinate the pursuit of interdisciplinary training at professional, technical and craftsman levels in all aspects of conservation and restoration.

The mission of the MCR is to become a centre of excellence for the teaching, training, research and practice of conservation and to provide services and consultation to public and private entities. The functions of the Centre:

- *To act as national consulting agency on matters relating to conservation and restoration;*
- *In consultation with the Superintendent of Cultural Heritage, advise Government on a policy of conservation and restoration;*
- *To advise and arrange for restoration outside Malta for such artefacts which cannot be restored locally;*
- *To undertake conservation projects;*
- *To promote and organise teaching and certification activities within the parameters of the Malta Professional and Vocational Qualifications Regulations.*

Since its first full operational year (2000), the Centre has completed 233 conservation and restoration projects. These concern mainly the following areas namely Paintings and Polychrome Sculpture, Ceramics, Glass, Metals & Stone, Textiles, Books and Paper as well as Architecture.

Of the total number of projects concluded over the four year operational period, 32% are conservation and restoration projects on ceramics, glass, metals and stone works and items. The same percentages apply for conservation and restoration projects on books and paper. Projects in both areas thus jointly amount to roughly 2/3 of the total number of projects carried out by MCR.

The table below provides a summary of these projects undertaken in between 2000 and 2003.

Malta Centre for Restoration Conservation

Conservation Department	Completed Projects	Projects in Progress
Paintings and Polychrome Sculpture	53	15
Ceramics, Glass, Metals and Stone	74	12
Textiles	19	3
Books and Paper	75	6
Architecture	12	10

F – The Committee of Guarantee

The Committee of Guarantee has been set up by virtue of Article 14 of the Cultural Heritage Act. The Committee of Guarantee has the important role of providing a focal point for the various agencies working directly or indirectly in the cultural heritage sector.

For this reason, the membership of the Committee is composed of the key persons in the relevant organisations, and is formed as follows:

- a) a Chairperson appointed by the Minister responsible for Culture;*
- b) a person appointed by the Minister responsible for tourism;*
- c) a person appointed by the Minister responsible for the environment;*
- d) a person appointed by the Minister responsible for Gozo;*
- e) the Superintendent ex officio;*
- f) the Chairperson of the Agency ex officio;*
- g) the Chairperson of the Centre ex officio;*
- h) the Chairperson of the Planning Authority ex officio;*
- i) a member of the Catholic Cultural Heritage.*

The functions of the Committee include the duty to:

- *Co-ordinate the Entities established under the Heritage Act, namely the Superintendence, Heritage Malta, the Malta Centre for Restoration, as well as other agencies with direct or indirect responsibility for the protection and management of the cultural heritage sector;*
- *Advise Government on the National Strategy for Cultural Heritage and subsequently oversee its implementation;*
- *Draw the attention of government or any organisation on any urgent*

action that may be required in the field of cultural heritage;

- *Maintain ongoing consultation processes with non-governmental organisations and persons working in the field of cultural heritage;*

By virtue of Article 15 of the Heritage Act, the Committee is also responsible for the administration of the Cultural Heritage Fund, which is to be set up for the purpose of funding research, conservation or restoration in the cultural heritage sector.

G – Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti

Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti was formed in 1992 by a group of private enthusiasts on Maltese cultural heritage with the backing of Government. Patrimonju is currently within the portfolio of the Minister responsible for culture.

The aim of Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti is to spread awareness of the islands' cultural heritage, through exhibitions, study, research and publications. These cultural products are designed in a manner to be enjoyed both by Maltese and by foreign visitors.

H – Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA)

The Planning Authority was originally set up by virtue of the Development Planning Act of 1991. In 2002 the Authority's portfolio was enlarged to include the administration of the former Environment Division.

The functions of the Authority include:

- *The promotion of proper planning and sustainable development on land and at sea, both public and private;*

- *The control of such development in accordance with approved development plans and planning policies*
- *The execution of a national mapping program and the updating of the national geographical database*

MEPA executes its functions in the cultural heritage sector through a number of policies and programmes as laid out in the Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands.

These policies contemplate the protection and conservation of the

- *Built Heritage, through the creation of Urban Conservation Areas, defined as 'areas of special architectural or historical interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.*
- *the listing of buildings of architectural and historical interest on a National Protective Inventory*
- *the scheduling of such buildings at an appropriate level for their protection*
- *the application of conservation policies for the protection of buildings, streetscapes, etc., in UCAs*
- *the regulation of conversion on buildings of architectural or historical interest*
- *the regulation of traffic and telecommunications equipment in UCAs*
- *the promotion of public awareness on conservation*

Structure Plan policies also contemplate the protection and conservation of

- *Archaeology, through the identification and designation of Areas and Sites of Archaeological Importance*
- *the scheduling of such areas and sites at an appropriate level for their protection*
- *the regulation of applications for planning permission for development affecting ancient monuments and important archaeological areas and sites. Depending on the circumstances, such applications will normally be refused, or provision will be made for adequate archaeological documentation*
- *the adoption and extension of the National Protective Inventory by initiating a programme of further investigation for ratings of archaeological areas and sites*

Other Structure Plan policies are intended to protect and conserve

- *Rural areas*
- *Areas of Scenic Value*
- *Ecology*
- *Sandy Beaches and Dune Areas*
- *Valleys*
- *Marine Conservation Areas*
- *Coastal Zones*

I – Sections operating within Works Division

- **The Restoration Unit**

The Restoration Unit operates within the Works Division, and falls within the portfolio of the Ministry for the Environment. The Unit operates entirely in the field of architectural conservation, tackling specific projects related to the conservation and restoration of historic buildings and monuments. The Unit also includes an important Fortifications Conservation Programme aimed at the specific problems of Malta's vast military and defence architecture.

In 2003 the Restoration Unit undertook 38 different projects involving architectural restoration, documentation, research, maintenance, as well as works aimed at improving the working conditions of historic structures. The range of projects worked on by the Restoration Unit in 2003 may be characterised as indicated in the table below.

In addition to these projects one should add a number of ongoing conservation and maintenance projects at the following historical monuments:

- St. John's Co-Cathedral, Valletta
- Grand Masters Palace, Valletta
- San Anton Presidential Palace, Attard
- Verdala President Palace, Rabat
- Villa Francia, Lija

**RESTORATION UNIT PROJECTS
UNDERTAKEN DURING 2003**

Fortifications or defence related	16 projects
Governmental Entities and Local Councils	9 projects
Presidential Palaces	5 projects
Ecclesiastical structures	5 projects
Commemorative monuments, statues etc	2 projects
Museum buildings	2 projects

- **The Rehabilitation Committees**

Works Division also incorporates within its structures three Rehabilitation Committees that operate entirely in the fortified urban centres of Valletta, Cottonera and Mdina. The committees have broad functions related to the embellishment of urban centres, the upgrading of standards of living within the same centres and the conservation or restoration of specific architectural monuments.

The Valletta Rehabilitation Project is responsible for Valletta and Floriana. It has been functioning since 1987 and has performed projects in major buildings. Some of the projects have had foreign participation and support. Major environment improvement projects include the upgrading of gardens and pedestrian areas, and floodlighting of the impressive fortifications.

The Mdina Rehabilitation Project is responsible for the old capital of Malta since 1998. In its fourth year the project has seen major restoration work on some important buildings, the removal of overhead wiring and upgrading of other areas. A project for the paving of Mdina's streets is currently underway.

The Cottonera Rehabilitation Project is responsible for Birgu, Bormla, Isla and Kalkara. It was started in 1992 and has been responsible for major projects in all areas including fortifications, buildings and pedestrian areas.

J – Local Government

Local Government was established and is regulated by means of the [Local Councils Act](#) of 1993. The principal of Local Government has been entrenched into the Constitution of Malta by virtue of Act No. XIII of 2001.

Currently 68 Local Councils are in existence, of which 54 are in Malta and 14 in Gozo.

Local Councils have become a critical factor in the effective maintenance and upkeep of urban and rural localities. They are therefore influential players in the upkeep of historic neighbourhoods, cultural landscapes as well as of local monuments.

Furthermore Local Councils often prove to be sensitive partners in issues directly effecting the conservation of local cultural heritage assets. Such assets are in fact often a source of local pride and of local identity building, and may become highly prized landmarks in the locality's landscape.

Yet the Local Councils Act does not clearly establish the status of these entities as "cultural operators" in their own right. A number of measures introduced in the Cultural Heritage Act of 2002 started addressing this legal lacuna.

In particular Article 49 of the Heritage Act empowers Local Councils to enter into Guardianship Deeds with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage for the care and management of items of immovable cultural property.

Article 16 of the Heritage Act also identifies Local Councils as one of the principal participants within the National Forum for Cultural Heritage. This is a means of formally recognising the importance of Local Councils as an operator in the cultural heritage sector.

K – The University of Malta

The University of Malta is the principal provider of educational services at tertiary level. University offers variety of courses which have a direct and indirect effect on the cultural heritage sector. These include the following Faculties and Institutes:

- **Faculties**

Architecture and Civil

Engineering

Arts

Economics, Management and

Accountancy

Education

Science

Theology

- **Interdisciplinary Institutes**

Anglo-Italian Studies

Baroque Studies

Masonry and Construction

Research

Mediterranean Institute

*Foundation for International
Studies*

Assessing the full impact of the University of Malta on the cultural heritage sector has not been carried out. It is important that this contribution be properly assessed, particularly in view of its impact on the employment levels of new graduates in the heritage sectors and on the level of their professional preparation.

L – Non-Government Organisations

A wide variety of Non-Governmental Organisations have a significant, but as yet un-quantified, impact on the cultural heritage sectors.

A number of these NGOs are specifically constituted to cover aspects of the cultural heritage sector. Some of these NGOs have come to take over in trust a number of important cultural heritage sites, fortified structures, ecclesiastical sites and archaeological monuments.

These NGO's are responsible for funding and organising conservation and maintenance works at the sites entrusted to them, as well as for providing educational and public awareness activities.

A large number of such NGOs are however only peripherally involved in heritage issues. This notwithstanding, even small NGOs may be custodians in their own right of significant archives, collections or historical structures.

The introduction of the Cultural Heritage Act has provided NGO's with formal recognition as cultural operators in their own right. As for Local Councils, the Heritage Act introduces provisions empowering Local Councils to enter into Guardianship agreements with the Superintendence and to be represented on the National Forum for the Cultural Heritage.

There is a growing need to improve the level of networking between NGOs, public entities and local government. To this end, a register should be developed of those NGOs involved in Cultural Heritage sectors.

3.3

Reforming the Cultural Heritage Sector



During the last fifteen years, a number of important developments have influenced changes in the governance of Malta's cultural heritage sector. Today, no single institution has sole responsibility over the entire repertoire of cultural heritage. While some diffusion still persists, the general trend has been towards the creation of improved institutions and mechanisms. More focused organizations can direct their energies towards specific tasks of either a regulatory or operational nature.

A broad framework of government organisations now covers such vital aspects as planning and the protection of the cultural and natural heritage, the surveillance and superintendence of activities taking place, restoration and conservation as well as the operation of sites, monuments buildings, museums and collections. In addition a number of NGOs, are actively pursuing conservation and presentation projects at various sites, most of which are of a military nature.

Date	Document / Initiative	Source	Organisational Structure proposed
1995	Operational Review of the Museums Department	Ministry for Justice & the Arts MSU	Museums Department to be restructured along curatorial & research; public programme and Finance & Administration functions in preparation of eventual migration into a Government Agency.
1995 - 1996	Change Management Team Status Reports	Ministry for Justice & the Arts MSU	Heritage Agency to take over operations of Museums Department.
1996	Heritage Bill (First Reading September 1996)	Ministry for Justice & the Arts	A Government Agency, Heritage Malta, to replace the Museums Department and superintend Malta's cultural heritage. A Heritage Committee to be set up as the formal interface between Heritage Malta and the PA to grant permits and make recommendations for the inclusion of cultural heritage in the PA's list of scheduled properties.
1997	Strategic Review of the Museums Department	Ministry for Education MEU	Assessment of situation following change of government. Identified critical functions in Museums Department which needed immediate re-engineering. Reiterated view that Department should migrate to an agency.
1997	Human Resources Audit	Ministry for Education MEU	Assessment of Change Programmes to date and proposals for improvement within parameters of new Government policy.
1998	Policy Direction for new reform process	Ministry of Education	Assessment of situation following change of government. Resumption of reform process & consultation.
1999	Heritage Seminar	Ministry of Education	Proposal to divide Heritage into Regulatory - Centralized functions and Operational - Decentralized functions.
1999	Cultural Heritage Committee	Ministry of Education	Drafting of new draft legislation.
2000-2002		Ministry of Education	Final drafting and Enactment of Cultural Heritage Act.

These organizations use a broad consultative process to address specific issues. Broader strategic issues related to cultural heritage are however dealt with through planning documents and planning policy instruments, strategic plans for tourism and specific financial and business plans for the individual organizations established by the Cultural Heritage Act, or those adopted by individual NGOs.

The absence of a clear strategy for cultural heritage will hopefully be addressed by the workings of the national Forum established under the Cultural Heritage Act. The Ministry responsible for Cultural Heritage as well as the Committee of Guarantee are key players in the development and management of a National Heritage Strategy.

Last year, the reform of Malta's cultural heritage sector entered an important stage. The enactment of the Cultural Heritage Act in 2002, launched a number of important reforms, which are relatively still at an embryonic stage of development. The Cultural Heritage Act 2002 was in fact a milestone in a series of developments that spanned almost seven years:

The Culture Heritage Act 2002, establishes a number of autonomous organizations. The creation of these entities follows very closely the consultative process that was undertaken between 1998 and 2002, that is, the period during which the stakeholders within the cultural heritage sector and the drafting of the new heritage act took place. Broadly speaking, these organizations fall into

two main categories – a regulator, or superintendent, and operators. The Act however has additional provisions that enable non-government organizations to play a more active role in the management of the cultural heritage sector.

Organizations established by the Cultural Heritage Act 2002

***The Committee of Guarantee
The Superintendence of
Cultural Heritage
Heritage Malta
The Malta Centre for
Restoration***

The Act establishes a number of other operational possibilities. Article 48 introduces the concept of Guardianship, whereby NGOs or Local Councils, can become operators of certain sites and monuments. Article 15 establishes a special fund which is to be managed by the Committee of Guarantee for the specific purposes of research and conservation.

The above stages are mere milestones in the establishment of legal and operations structures. Over the coming years, the special provisions of the Cultural Heritage Act must however be allowed to unfold in order that the full potential of the reform process would be reached. Various provisions of the Act still need to be put into full force in order that the fullest possible value of the Cultural Heritage Act can be achieved. The coming years will see this process of unfolding taking place as the newly established organizations develop their operational capabilities.

4

Social And Economic Aspects

4.1

Public Perception



Attendance figures at state-owned Museums and Sites are a useful indicator of the public's perception of culture heritage. Compiled statistics do not specifically quantify Maltese nationals visiting these Malta sites, but remain indicative of general public perceptions.

A total of 805,095 persons visited museums and sites run by Heritage Malta during the first nine months of the year. This was a decrease of 34,055 when compared to figures compiled for the same period in 2002.

19.7% (158,968 persons) of this national total visited Heritage Malta sites in Gozo. Ggantija registered the largest amount of visitors totalling 117,244. This means that 74% of visitors to museums in Gozo visited this site. Overall, this means Ggantija was the most popular site or museum in Malta or Gozo, with 14.5% of the total visitors.

In Malta, the largest number of visitors have been registered at the Palace Armoury (87,273 persons), Hagar Qim (85,187 persons) and Tarxien Temples (81,120 persons). As a percentage of the total number of visitors this would amount to over 10% at each of these sites.

The ticketing system introduced in the early months of the year has been an important step ahead in the effective administration of museums and sites,

and in the compilation of these figures.

There are no official records of visitors to private or church-owned museums in Malta and Gozo. This is a situation which the Superintendence will seek to remedy.

The immediacy of monuments, artefacts and works of art gives them an impact that is hard to equal, but the statistics compiled by the National Statistics Office (**NSO: Kultura 2000 Survey Report**) provide useful indications of the various media accessed by Maltese citizens aged over 16 years.

The written word is still a popular medium, with around 66% of the public stating they had read at least one book in the course of the year, be it for study or for other purposes. Around 30% of the public read a newspaper everyday.

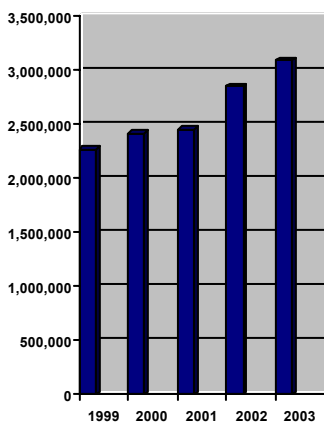
Of the surveyed public, around 32% (99,500 persons) use a personal computer. Around 7% said they access the internet everyday, mainly to seek information, and just over 3% claim to use a CD-ROM everyday.

These figures, while not specifically focused towards cultural heritage, point to the available media and to the audience that may be reached through publishing, with the consequent effect on public perception.

4.2

Investment And Costs

Malta is still far from understanding the economic significance of its cultural heritage sector. Assessing the full impact of the cultural heritage sector on Malta's economy is a priority issue.



No comprehensive study exists to assess the sector's total economic turnover, its effect on employment levels or its full financial cost. Even more elusive is the sector's economic impact on such areas as social inclusion, education, improvement to living and working conditions and environmental conservation.

One well-documented aspect of the cultural sector's economic aspect may be gleaned from the figures published annually by government in the Financial Estimates.

These publications include detailed accounts of government's entire yearly expenditure and revenues

Therefore, figures published in the Estimates provide a clear idea of how much government spends and earns on a yearly basis in the cultural heritage sector.

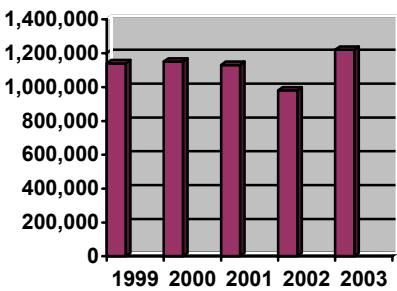
The expenditure figures reported in the Estimates are identified under two principal headings: Recurrent Votes (which includes salaries, rent, services, maintenance) and Capital (which include expenditure on construction and major infrastructural changes).

ESTIMATES OF RECURRENT AND OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE (in Malta Liri)

Entity	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Office of the President – improvements to Presidential Palaces	3,000	3,000	3,000	15,000	20,000
Museums Department	1,106,000	1,118,000	1,170,000	1,320,000	nil
Superintendence & Heritage Malta & Committee of Guarantee	nil	nil	Nil	nil	1,342,000
Malta Centre for Restoration	nil	50,000	150,000	300,000	500,000
Department for Culture & the Arts	787,000	842,000	723,000	662,400	nil
Malta Council for Culture & the Arts	nil	nil	Nil	nil	649,000
Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Manoel Theatre Management Committee	130,000	130,000	130,000	130,000	130,000
National Orchestra	200,000	200,000	200,000	230,000	250,000
St.James Cavalier, Center for Creativity	nil	30,000	30,000	150,000	150,000
Ministry for Gozo - Subsidies to Cultural Organisations & Cultural Council	13,000	13,000	13,000	14,000	14,000
TOTAL	2,269,000	2,416,000	2,449,000	2,851,400	3,085,000

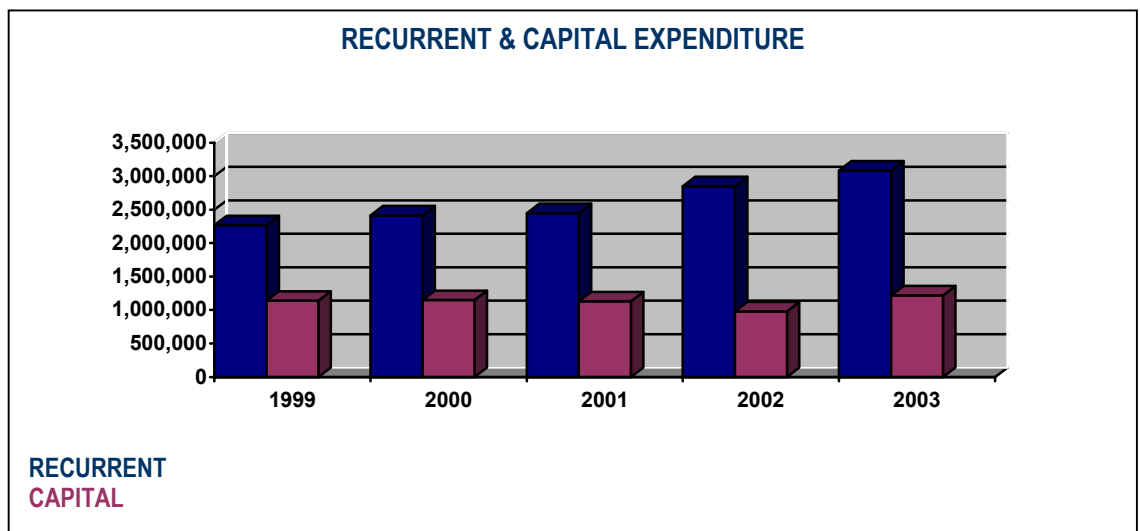
These figures indicate the minimum government spends on the cultural heritage sector. Various relevant fields of expenditure are in fact not specifically identified in the Estimates, and therefore could not be reported. The figures here reported are however strongly indicative of the significance of public expenditure in maintaining the cultural heritage sector in Malta

Understanding the economic role of the private sector is altogether much more difficult. Published data on this respect is widely dispersed, and much information must still be collected. Establishing these facts is of great importance in the planning of cultural heritage activities in the future.



Capital Expenditure (in Malta Liri)

Entity	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Improvements at Museums & historical sites, and restoration works	220,000	250,000	400,000	300,000	550,000
Surveillance, Security and Automated Ticketing System	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Restoration of Forts, Fortifications and historical places	600,000	630,000	530,000	500,000	500,000
Restoration of the Auberge d'Italie	200,000	150,000	75,000	50,000	50,000
Restoration and improvements to historical sites - Gozo	20,000	20,000	25,000	30,000	20,000
Total	1,140,000	1,150,000	1,130,000	980,000	1,220,000



It is however indicative to take note of the limited available data. In the next table for example, the revenue figures of Din L-Art Helwa are compared to those of the Museums Department for the years 1999-2002.

It will be noted that Din L-Art Helwa earned the equivalent of 3% of the Museums Department revenue from admission tickets. This is a respectable record, when one takes into account the fact that Museums Department had the most high profile sites and collections on offer to the public in Malta.

Revenue	REVENUE			
	1999	2000	2001	2002
Museums Department admission fees	879,953	882,952	886,144	840,061
Din L-Art Helwa	31,300	28,800	85,000	55,500

4.3

Cultural Heritage And Sustainable Development



The term 'sustainability' or 'sustainable development' was given prominence in the Bruntland Report of 1987 (World Commission on Environment and Development publication), *Our Common Future*. The report defines sustainable development as:

'Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

Issues of what to preserve, where to preserve and how much to preserve by way of Maltese cultural heritage are inevitably linked to issues of sustainable development in a small island territory. The geographic limitations of the Maltese islands have conditioned the way that the conflict between development and heritage preservation has developed since the end of the world war of 1939 –1945. The archipelago's development has been characterized by urban spread, quarrying, industrialization, the construction of a tourist infrastructure and other forms of land use. The transformation of Maltese landscape has been dramatic. It is not unusual for the general public to look upon the historic and cultural environment as one that is degraded beyond repair. Increasingly, public perceptions question the way that our environment and cultural heritage fail to attract adequate resources. The magnitude of conservation priorities, the restoration and rehabilitation of Malta's walled cities, as well as the need for upgrading museum and site presentation is eclipsed by what are

often perceived to be more pressing national priorities.

The relationship between economic development at a national level and heritage management has been antagonistic. The same factor applies to the environment. The enforcement of heritage protection principles and policies are often perceived as being a detriment to development and economic progress. The regulation and superintendence of cultural heritage attract uneven receptions. Heritage protection interest groups support state organized regulation. Such groups, advocate a wide spectrum of ideologies. On the other hand, several development-driven sectors have yet to integrate cultural heritage in a broader long-term economic strategy. The paradoxes of tourism for instance, where coastal development and visitor impact on historic sites and monuments have to coexist with the idea of cultural tourism, can easily be replicated for other sectors.

Indeed, an argument has yet to be articulated to support the view that Malta's economic development has much to gain from enhanced protection and management of the cultural heritage. Economic performance can be improved if the cultural heritage sector is provided with the right resources to develop in a proper way. In essence, economic performance can be enhanced if images of the decay of our heritage are replaced by perceptions of conservation and a general care of the cultural environment.

Sustainable development dictates a close relation between development and the preservation of the natural and cultural environment. Such a relationship is however not a simple one. There is in fact a great deal of unevenness in the manner in which cultural values are supplanted by a modernist misconception of what courses development should take.

The economics of cultural heritage is a discipline that requires greater attention. A foremost economic concern is tourism, which is increasingly trying to project Malta as a cultural destination. Equally important is the role of Valletta as a business centre. A degraded capital will simply create a vacuum that can be easily filled by new business centres. The recent attempts at rehabilitating the Birgu and Grand Harbour water front, have on the other hand shown that the rehabilitation of historic centres has a number of economic gains.

In addition, many of Malta's towns and villages still possess historic centres. The loss of these centres will lead to a further degradation of the quality of life of the archipelago's population. The same applies to the degradation of Malta's cultural landscape and the country's cultural heritage.

With the creation of new heritage organisation and the enactment of the Cultural Heritage Act, much more attention should now be focused on the evaluation of the sustainable use of heritage. Based on adequate indicators, evaluation should address macro and micro dimensions, such as landscapes preservation, the rehabilitation of historic centres and the proper use of monuments, sites, buildings and collections.

The introduction of conservation performance indicators will help national government and non-government organisations assess the state of the heritage against parallel indicators related to the country's economy and infrastructure development and land use. The benefits of introducing conservation performance indicators are several and essentially important for risk management at various levels of heritage assets.

Seen in these contexts, the sustainable use of the cultural heritage can become less of a 'conflict sector'. A basis for the sustainable use of cultural heritage and environmental resources can be adopted if the conservation of heritage is tied to development. In this regard, several socio-economic models have been explored or adopted world wide with varying results. In the European framework, the concept of Integrated Conservation, as developed by the Council of Europe, has become a milestone in the development of conservation principles. Integrated Conservation proposes to re-position heritage preservation and conservation by linking it to existing social dimensions. In doing so, Integrated Conservation establishes a useful mechanism for managing change in a sector whose survival depends on stability and preservation of the cultural fabric through time.

The management of change in terms of cultural heritage thus becomes the essence of sustainable use of cultural and environmental conservation. Without change, development will be doomed. Without change, cultural heritage can become susceptible to decay and destruction. Change must allow a considered use or re-use of heritage assets, without necessarily leading to irreversible transformations of the cultural heritage. By integrating the demands and timeframes of

heritage preservation with social and fiscal policies, a framework for managing change can be developed to truly meet "...the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

In this regard, the Council of Europe has led the way in promoting cultural heritage as a basic human need. It is in fact the re-positioning of the human dimension at the centre of conservation needs that has given strength to the principle of Integrated Conservation and the need for a sustainable use of the cultural heritage. Among other important documents, the Council of Europe has developed a trilogy of European conventions in support of heritage preservation. The *Granada Convention (1985)*, the *Valletta Convention (1992)* and the *Florence Convention (2000)*, together provide a framework within which protection and integrated conservation policies can be applied to architecture, archaeology and landscape.

Heritage management can therefore become an essential part of development. Preservation requires its own economic components based on human resource development, research and development, the development of necessary science and technology, national and regional fiscal policies, regulation and financing. Where such elements have not been properly developed, heritage assets have been allowed to decay. The lack of a suitable economic dimension to heritage management has been used against heritage preservation by broader economic sectors that see heritage as a limitation to production and development.

The sustainable use of the cultural and environmental heritage requires a leap of faith by political classes, developers and, equally, by heritage practitioners and environmentalists. Sustainability requires consensus, understanding and commitments towards how and where change of the historic and environmental heritage can be managed for the benefit of present and future generations.

4.4

Tourism And the Cultural Heritage Sector



It comes as no surprise that the perception of the general Maltese public is, unfortunately, that cultural heritage is of interest largely to tourists. This is due to the fact that it is particularly tourists who visit heritage sites and museums rather than the Maltese public. Whereas heritage managers should try to address this problem in trying to attract the Maltese public to our heritage, initiatives to promote the Maltese Islands' cultural heritage in attracting tourism are to be acknowledged and encouraged.

The rise of tourism as a powerful economic factor in the Maltese economy can be traced back primarily to the early 1960s. Government was then heavily committed in building up a viable tourism industry, which included its official support to specific heritage management initiatives, such as the promotion of museums particularly in Valletta and Vittoriosa. Since the 1960s, substantial public funds have been invested in the conservation and promotion of our cultural heritage. State museums have been undergoing remarkable museographic projects; conservation of heritage sites has been extensively focused on; restoration works on significant monuments have been successfully undertaken; and conservation measures for urban cores and for other less obvious cultural heritage have been taken.

Initiatives of conservation and promotion of cultural heritage should be aimed at preserving and making accessible this heritage to all, and not merely to tourists. However, it cannot

be denied that investment in our cultural heritage continues to contribute significantly in the Maltese economic sector. State museums and sites attract over one million visitors every year, and most of these visitors consist of tourists. These visitor figures represent an important source of revenue, as the income generated from the entrance tickets has been in recent years hovering around the 800,000 Maltese Liri mark. It is to be noted, also, that this figure takes account only of entries registered within State owned sites and museums, and therefore the amount of money generated by tourism within the cultural sphere, including the private sector, is by far larger than the amount quoted above.

Notwithstanding the importance of promoting museums and sites, other aspects of heritage should be promoted in attracting cultural tourism. Such aspects would include, for example, heritage walks through village cores, specialised tours focusing on particular themes, such as fortifications, churches, and so and so forth. In this kind of promotion and presentation, heritage managers as well as MTA and travel agents can all play an important role.

It is desirable that tourists, when visiting sites of cultural value, should achieve an enriching experience, which goes beyond the idea of having masses flocking through museums simply because such an event is listed on their scheduled itinerary. It is a fact that most tourists want to have fun when on holiday, but this does not

translate into giving tourists a poor experience by taking them to visit sites, museums, and, increasingly audio visual shows, often giving them incorrect but more appealing information for the sake of making the visit enjoyable. There should be good standards by which our cultural

heritage is promoted and presented. Moreover, we should be looking at a better program of promotion and presentation of Malta's cultural heritage aimed at attracting tourists who are, or become, genuinely interested by the Islands' cultural heritage.

5 **Education, Research And Outreach**

5.1

Primary And Secondary Education



The New National Curriculum focuses on the availability of opportunities for young children to engage in symbolic representation, imaginative play and other cultural activities of sorts. This process should also include the appreciation of one's own creative work and that of others.

Taken within a wide context, this would also imply an important benchmark for the creation of a proper awareness towards the cultural heritage in general.

4.4% of visitors to Heritage Malta run Museums are school children. The average for Gozo is slightly higher with 4.5%. A number of sites compare favourably well with this national average. The highest percentage was recorded by the Museum of Natural History with 25.8%. The lowest figure was registered at the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum, where 343 school children were registered for the period under review. The two state museums in Vittoriosa have registered an above average percentage of visiting school children. The Inquisitor's Palace registered a high average of 6.7%. The Maritime Museum registered 9.2% of its visitors as schoolchildren. This is the second highest average for Malta's Museums.

As far as Gozo is concerned, the highest percentage has been recorded for ta' Kola Windmill with 23%. The three museums at the Cittadella also have a high percentage of their visitors registered as school children.

In tangible terms, the lowest number of schoolchildren visiting museums in Malta was recorded for the National Museum of Fine Arts with 722 (3% of total visitors) which also falls below the National average. The Palace State Rooms also registered a small number of visiting schoolchildren to a total of 806. This is even lower and amounts to 1.2% of total visitors. The highest amount has been registered for Hagar Qim with 4,901 school children. A slightly lower total has been registered in the case of St. Paul's Catacombs with 3,795 school children. This amounts to 5.7% of the total visitors. The high percentage registered in the case of the Museum of Natural History totals 3360 in real terms. This compares well to the figures quoted for the other sites.

A number of Comenius projects also deal with Cultural Heritage. At primary level, projects in the Cultural Heritage sector deal mainly with systems of co-operation and cultural exchange. It is significant to note also the existence of a Comenius project dealing with intangible heritage. The number of projects at secondary education level is higher and relate more specifically to cultural heritage issues such as water views, memories of the Second World War period and marriage in a historical context.

Tertiary Education

A number of students are graduating in the Cultural Heritage Sector every year. These include conservation specialists, Art historians as well as Educators. It is however proving

difficult for such students to work in their chosen field of academic training.

Student organisations are an important stimulus to the evaluation

and appreciation of our cultural heritage. A concerted effort should be taken in hand so as to diffuse awareness to the cultural heritage environment at this level.

5.2

Vocational Skills And Training



The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology currently offers a vocational course for skilled craftsmen and stonemasons in heritage skills.

The Institute of Restoration Studies runs a number of courses aimed at the professional formation of the restorer conservator. The Bachelor in Conservation and Restoration Studies (Honours) is a four year programme leading to the B.Cons. (Hons.) degree awarded by the University of Malta. From the Current academic year, The Institute is offering a Master of Conservation in Applied Conservation.

Thirteen conservators will be graduating B. Cons. (Hons.) in November 2003 from the Institute of Restoration Studies. The presence of these new professionals on the cultural heritage scenario will make available new approaches and expertise in this field which will be of great benefit to the sector in general. The setting up of a co-operative by some of these professionals (RECOOP) is an important step ahead and will again make available a number of services to potential clients. This new entity hopefully joins an increasing number of cooperatives working in the Cultural Heritage sector.

The preservation of traditional skills always remains an important aspect which never ceases to require particular attention. Boat building is one such aspect and has been the focus of one of Heritage Malta's activities at the Maritime Museum.

It is imperative that an identification of such traditional skills which require immediate attention be carried out so as to anticipate problems in this field. To this effect, the European Heritage Days Campaign 2003 organised by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage has focused on the important link between traditional crafts and identity. This chosen theme provided a context for the proper and effective appraisal of this sector that includes not only historical trades but also budding crafts brought to fruition by talented personalities. The activities organised were aimed at creating awareness to the problems and necessities of this sector. However, such an awareness campaign cannot achieve its full objectives without a direct and close interfacing process with educational institutions. In this context, the training of craftsmen should be an important priority for the cultural heritage not only in the context of the chosen theme for this specific campaign but also as an important link for the provision of these skills which are an important support to conservation and restoration processes.

5.3

Public Access To Cultural Heritage



Who is the public?

Notwithstanding the efforts being made at trying to attract the Maltese public to the cultural heritage of the Islands, there remains a general misconception that this heritage is of interest largely to tourists. It is a fact that tourism provides a major contribution to the national economy, and as such it cannot be ignored that our heritage needs to be promoted in the best way possible so as to attract cultural tourism. However, there remains a clear need to make the Maltese public more aware and appreciative of our heritage. There is a requirement for the general public to recognise the value of our national heritage, and especially to see that this appreciation could actually enhance the lives of the people. Despite many excellent examples of particular projects by various organisations to reach different groups within Maltese society, there is a great deal more which needs to be done. First and foremost, a clear definition of “public” is desired, whereby it would be understood as referring to people in general – the local general public as well as foreigners, both groups in their diversity and totality. Cultural heritage belongs to, and should be appreciated by, all/everyone. When projecting or managing access to cultural heritage it is this public which should be kept in mind, and any initiative should aim at addressing this public.

Material cultural heritage and heritage information

There is an inseparable link between the actual material cultural heritage and the information generated by that heritage. The former lies within museums, collections, exhibitions, sites, architectural monuments, historic centres, and cultural landscapes, whereas the latter lies in publications, archives, catalogues, libraries, and lectures and other dissemination programmes. Besides the diversities in types of cultural heritage and heritage data respectively, there exists also a large diversity in location and ownership of heritage and heritage data. The broadest divisions can be seen, for example, between the State, the Church, and the private sector. However there are several other organisations and institutions who are direct owners, caretakers or promoters of cultural heritage and heritage information. The sector is very diverse. This plurality is in itself a strength, but it can also provide a weakness if it prevents the various facets within the sector from communicating and acting in a unified manner on issues regarding cultural heritage.

Physical access and technological access

It is imperative to recognise the ability of accessing cultural heritage and heritage data in different means. The broadest distinction is that cultural heritage and data can be accessed both physically, and, increasingly, through technological means.

Physical access entails actual visits to sites, museums, monuments, archives, libraries, and so and so forth. On the other hand, access can be achieved through various technological means, for example through virtual reality tours, digital catalogues, and digital inventory databases. An aspect which has broadened the possibility of technological access to heritage is the world wide web. The internet nowadays makes it possible for a large section of the population to have access to virtual cultural heritage and digital cultural data. The world wide web does have its limitations however, in so far as only people with the necessary means to have access to internet would be able to access heritage in this manner.

Accessibility to all

Increasingly it is becoming a priority to make cultural heritage accessible to all. The focus is largely on making heritage accessible to people with special needs. However, the issue is also to be addressed in terms of accessibility to different groups within the society, namely to people with different levels of education and interests, different ages, and different financial resources.

In addressing the issue of making heritage accessible to all, generally concentration falls upon the construction or installation of equipment and facilities for making a museum or site accessible to people using wheelchairs. Unfortunately, a much broader vision is required in adopting a policy of accessibility to all. This is by no means an easy task, as it essentially requires programmes addressing the plurality and diversity within society itself. Even when treating people with special needs, the issue is complicated in so far as there are several types of disabilities which need to be catered for. One example

is visually impaired people, whose accessibility to cultural heritage does not lie in the provision of a lift or a ramp to reach different levels within a building, but the provision of heritage information through publications in Braille, for example, or through audio means.

Moreover, the idea of physical accessibility to people with special needs requires to be fully understood. It is to be accepted that it is actually impossible for all heritage sites, museums and monuments, largely due to their own nature, to be fully accessible to people with special needs. Heritage managers are often faced with a problem of installing lifts or ramps, for example, into sites of historical or archaeological significance. This dilemma could be addressed by looking at other means of accessibility to cultural heritage. Cultural heritage can be made accessible to people with special needs especially through technological means, as well as through the provision of published material.

Other areas need to be investigated in addressing the issue of accessibility to all. Recently there has been a great deal of attention to making heritage accessible to children. Initiatives to engage children in appreciating our heritage are truly to be encouraged, as they target a particular sector of society, namely people at an early stage in their life. At this stage, it is perhaps not only the best phase when human beings can achieve their education, but another advantage in investing in today's children is that it naturally entails the education of future grown-ups. However, heritage managers have to be careful that the promotion of heritage to children is done in a way that it does not hinder its accessibility to grown ups. Very often it is becoming a trend to try and make heritage sites and museums

attractive to the younger population in such a way that their intrinsic cultural value is lost for the rest of society. The installation of new means by which to attract the younger generations should in no way rob the fascination that the cultural location might possess. The attention is not to be diverted from the actual site, monument or artefact itself, so that it is eclipsed by artificiality. Grown ups should definitely not find themselves out of place due to the attention given to making a museum or site attractive to children.

The Cultural Heritage Act 2002 and access to cultural heritage

One of the major aims of the establishment of the Cultural Heritage Act 2002 focused on public access to cultural heritage. The Act refers to right of “every citizen of Malta as well as every person present in Malta” to “benefit from this cultural heritage through learning and enjoyment”. The entities established by the Cultural Heritage Act 2002 do not only have the duty to conserve and protect our

cultural heritage, but also to manage the care, exposition and appreciation of heritage. In its principles the Cultural Heritage Act 2002 refers to “*promoting public awareness of the richness and extent of cultural heritage as an intrinsic part of humankind’s environment*”. Moreover it states that the duty to make cultural heritage accessible to the public includes the duty “*to exhibit, to research, to render accessible for research, study and enjoyment, the cultural heritage and to promote knowledge, appreciation and awareness of this heritage within the principle of social inclusion*”. The Cultural Heritage Act 2002 gives the widest possible definition of who should have access to heritage in stating that “*the right of access to, and benefit from, the cultural heritage does not belong merely to the present generation. Every generation shall have the duty to protect this heritage and make it accessible for future generations and for all mankind.*” It is also stated that the protection, promotion and accessibility of the cultural heritage shall be given very high priority in deciding public policy.

5.4

Research



Research is carried out at tertiary level by both students and lecturers. In 2003, an average of 6% of these at various levels of academic formation deal generally with cultural heritage issues. A small portion of these deals with the management, conservation and presentation of our cultural heritage. Academic staff at the University of Malta is involved directly in research related to the cultural heritage sector. One can identify a number of Faculties, and Programmes that are conducting research in this field.

A number of publishing houses also provide funds and know-how for the publication of Melitensia books and other material. Statistics for 2002 show that the public sector is the largest book publisher with 39% of published

books. The commercial sector accounts for 37%. The percentage of published books that focus on cultural heritage issues are however unquantified.

Research and cataloguing of cultural property is also being carried in support to initiatives at institutional level. Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna have conducted a survey of all existing historic postal boxes and public telephone booths left in situ all over the country. Collated information from this survey will be passed on to MEPA for inclusion in their heritage database.

6

Issues And Opportunities

Issues and Opportunities

The State of the Heritage Report for 2003 is a first step in an important on-going process. The compilation of this report and of its updates in the years to come, will help focus the public's attention to the main issues driving the Cultural Heritage Sector today.

Amongst the principal issues emerging in the current debate, the following will deserve particular attention in the coming years.

- Guaranteeing the public's right to participate in the enjoyment and management of the cultural heritage of the Maltese Islands. This provision must be achieved by improving the cultural products currently available on the local scene – sites, museums, educational tools. However it also requires interactive activities combining cultural operators, NGOs, voluntary organisations and Local Council institutions.
- Implementing the full range of protective and managerial opportunities provided by the Cultural Heritage Act 2002.
- This process has been initiated in 2003, but it must be pursued further to put in practice the full strength of this enactment. It is also necessary to further improve the level of co-operation and accountability among the various entities and operators working in the Cultural Heritage Sector.
- Pursuing high quality research and scientific objectives in the Cultural Heritage Sector. Equally important is the need to communicate the results of such research not only to specialised audiences, but also in formats accessible to the general public.
- On-going assessment of the Sector's performance in socio-economic terms is clearly becoming a necessity. Far too much is unknown of how the Cultural Heritage Sector actually works in the context of Maltese society and its economy. This lacuna in knowledge must be bridged if the pitfalls of the past are to be avoided and if the new opportunities afforded by the present are to be realised.

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