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REPORTS

on the working of

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

covering periods between

1st April 1972

and

31st July 1973

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MALTA

1973

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The Hon. P. Arnold Bazzano was again elected Speaker unanimously by the House on the 27th November, 1972, in the interval the House had held 5 sittings which had been presided by the Deputy Speaker the Hon. N. Laviera as Acting Speaker.

MUSEUM

(Period covered: 1st April, 1972 to 31st March, 1973)

1. The twelve-month period under review saw the three main Sections of the Department — Archaeology, Fine Arts and Natural History — fully committed to their respective activities, with the last two making considerable headway with new museum projects, as will be outlined further on.

2. In the field of Malta's ancient past, the Archaeological Section carried out excavations to evaluate a Bronze Age village site and the remains of an extensive Roman building. A late prehistoric village was located at Il-Wardija ta' San Ġorġ in the limits of Siggiewi and consisted of fourteen rock-cut storage pits and the stepped rock foundations of at least two dwellings. For the later period, the investigation of a Roman villa in the grounds of the Girls' Secondary School at Żejtun was continued with the volunteer assistance of a group of Maltese and Italian students assigned to the work by the Minister of Education and Culture. A salient feature of the remains was the large area taken up by the apparatus used in the production of olive oil. The two campaigns lasted from the beginning of July to the end of October.

3. The year was rather poor in the yield, through casual discovery, of ancient rock-cut tombs. At Bahrija six underground chambers were encountered during road construction, but the majority were empty and could only be approximately dated to the Puno-Roman period. The last find in this category, a Roman tomb at Imrieħel on the Valletta-Rabat road, proved of real archaeological interest when it produced, besides a repertoire of pottery items, hundreds of fragments of painted stucco which originally formed a panel set against the wall of the burial chamber.

4. Several members of the Italian Archaeological Mission paid a visit to Malta from mid-October to mid-November and carried out further studies of the material from Tas-Silġ with a view to publication.

5. The project to restore the former Admiralty House in South Street, Valletta and to adapt it into a Museum of Fine Arts was pushed on with all the resources available to the Department. By the end of the year the bulk of the masonry works in the future public areas of the building was completed and it became possible to plan for the basement, which will accommodate a self-contained presentation of historical material, to be ready by December 1973. Meanwhile, various works of art, including many paintings, were restored and others acquired in preparation for the eventual move of the Fine Arts Section from the National Museum to the new premises.

6. Throughout the year a record number of temporary exhibitions was successfully held in the entrance hall of the National Museum under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture, as follows:

Title or nature of exhibition	Exhibitor or Organiser
Drawings by Charles Schmit	U.S.I.S.
Wirja Kotba Maltin	Ministry of Education and Culture
American Workshop Venice '70	U.S.I.S.
Paintings and Sculpture	Atelier '56
Photographs	Malta Photographic Society
American Abstract Painting	U.S.I.S.
Ceramics	Paul Haber
Architectural Measured Work	Royal University of Malta Department of Architecture
French Impressionists	The French Embassy
Prints by English Artists	The British Council
Paintings	Gianni Bergamelli

7. Good progress was registered in the setting up of the new Museum of Natural History at the Vilhena Palace, Mdina. By March 1973 sections on rocks, fossils, fishes, land and sea shells, butterflies and other insects, birds and animal skeletal anatomy were practically completed, so that it became possible to forecast the inauguration of the museum about the end of May 1973. Most of these sections make full use of local material and specimens to illustrate the natural history of the Maltese Islands.

21st May, 1973

F. S. MALLIA
Director of Museum

Comparative Statement of Visitors admitted to Museums and Monuments during the Financial Years 1971-72 and 1972-73

Place	1971-72		1972-73	
	On payment	Free	On payment	Free
National Museum	15,381	3,230	14,069	3,622
Palace Armoury	20,016	8,366	19,749	8,254*
Museum of Roman Antiquities	14,142	4,069	12,970	5,644
St. Paul's Catacombs	23,255	3,110	18,919	3,605
Hal Saffieni Hypogeum	20,640	3,872	16,585	4,554
Tarxien Temples	12,264	5,407	11,473	8,099
Għar Dalam Cave & Museum	11,500	3,777	11,028	4,710
Inquisitor's Palace, Vittoriosa	1,500	365	2,263	273
Museum, Gozo	6,298	1,908	5,893	850
Ġgantija, Gozo	25,705	1,116	20,920	969
General Day Tickets	61,463	—	61,570	—
TOTAL	212,164	35,220	195,439	40,580
Total admission fees collected	£M13,389. 7s. 6d.		£M12,692.70.0	

* Inclusive of 3,823 visitors admitted during the 8th September Exhibition.