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THE MUSEUM,

Valletta, 26th May, 1907.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit the annual report of the Museum for the year ended 31st March, 1907.

2. The Committee of Management sustained, during the year, the loss of two valued members, Judge P. Debono, LL.D., who was a well-known student of our history, and the Revd. Father E. Magri, S.J. The loss of the latter is deeply felt by the Committee inasmuch as he was engaged in drawing up several important reports which he had not time to bring to a conclusion. The valuable discoveries made in Gozo by the late Father Magri, and his contributions to the study of our language and of our early history, entitle him to rank with the best scholars of these Islands.

3. The list of donors is a lengthy one, this year, and this is a welcome sign that the young institution is growing more popular every year and that the interest of the public in our antiquities is on the increase.

Mr. Filippo Farrugia, presented to the Museum a set of drawings of machinery used in the mint of the Order; Mr. Michele Zammit, an old document, alleged to be a petition written by the Rev. G. Mannarino to Sir Alexander Ball; Conte G. Messina, LL.D., some pottery found by him in a tomb-cave at Rabat; Mons. I de' Conti Formosa, D.D., a small brass cross of the Order, used on uniforms; Dr. F. Rizzo Marich a Roman clay lamp; Can. H. Calleja Schembri, D.D., a collection of 105 antique objects found at Malta, Crete, Cyprus and Rome; Prof. S. L. Pisani, C.M.G., M.D., 75 pieces of pottery and other objects found in rock tombs in Malta, and two models of warships of the Order; Chev. I. Bianchi, 2 clay ornaments from Cyrene; Lieut. W. Gatt, R.M.A., 1 small silk cross worn on the uniform of officers of the Order; Prof. N. Tagliaferro, I.S.O., 2 marble heads from Cyrene; the late Father E. Magri, S.J., a collection of rock-tomb furniture found at Haggiaria, Ta Ghammieza, Kercem, Ix-xaghra ta Ghain Lukin, Xeukija, Xakkufija, the Giants' tower, &c. at Gozo, and other objects found in Gozo and Malta; the Most Rev. Canon E. Pullicino, D.D., 3 old documents relative to the French occupation; Mr. H. R. Hyatt, C.E., a brass coin of the Order and a photo of an old grave found by him; Mr. E. Caruana Gatto, LL.D., a document signed by Can. Caruana, the leader of the Maltese rising in 1798, dated from the head quarters of the Maltese forces at San Giuseppe; the Hon. the Superintendent of Public Works, a marble pillar and a small stone coat-of-arms of Grand Master Lascaris; and the Librarian of the Public Library, 76 steel punches used by silversmiths at the time of the Order.

His Honour,

The Lieutenant Governor
and Chief Secretary to Government.

4. During the year many objects were acquired for the Museum, the most important being :— An old funereal slab with Latin inscription cut in black stone ; an old engraved slate slab ; a quantity of pottery found in rock-tombs in Malta ; a marble inscription of the time of La Cassière (1576) ; 5 gold, one brass and one ivory decoration of the Order ; one of the three gold medals with the inscription "Malta Liberata" struck by the Maltese in commemoration of their rising against the French (1798-1801) ; 1 silver coin of Grand Master d'Homedes ; old coins of Malta ; a box covered with fine tapestry with the arms of Grand Master Pinto ; 46 steel dies, seals and punches of the time of the Order ; a set of views of the Grand Harbour, 8 copper plates, views of Malta and a set of old maps of the Maltese group, &c.

5. Besides the objects presented and purchased, the Museum was further enriched by objects actually found in the course of excavations conducted under the direction of the Department.

6. In September 1906 a field at Rabat was excavated by the Curator, and 44 double Phœnician rock tombs were found. Unfortunately the tombs were already rifled and disturbed, but the necropolis was surveyed and minutely described. A sketch plan of this necropolis can be seen at the Museum of Valletta. Only one tomb was found sealed, and, although the furniture was not rich, still the arrangement of the same, left *in situ* for over 2,000 years, was of exceptional interest (see sketch in Valletta Museum). Although the tombs had been rifled, a patient sifting of the rubbish and dust yielded very interesting objects, which will throw considerable light on our history. The tombs are of a pre-Christian period, and they can be confidently affirmed to be over 2,000 years old. A selection of the furniture obtained from these rock-tombs will be arranged in a special case in the Museum. The tombs are of the ordinary late Phœnician period type, consisting generally of a deep rectangular shaft 7 by 10 feet, and from 3 to 9 feet deep. At one or both ends of this shaft a recess is dug out to hold the corpse. The mouth of the recess is, after the burial, sealed by a thick stone slab. Clay vessels and other objects are found lying about the tomb. In some of the tombs remains of interred bones were found, whilst in others evident signs of cremation were observed. In some of the tombs clay cinerary urns full of burnt bones were found ; in the others both burnt and interred bodies have been met with. A separate report on this necropolis is in course of preparation.

7. Another discovery of a Phœnician centre was made during the year at "*il-Kligha*". The Kligha is the hilly ground to the north of the Mtarfa hill, beyond the Wied-il-Kligha valley. In certain points of that district the ground is found at a small depth strewn with potsherds and here and there large blocks of stones, some of them of hard stone, are met with. In one particular point the blocks were clustered together, and on excavation a kind of deep cistern was found. The form of this cistern was peculiar and not very regular, and when the bottom was cleared a thin stream of water was observed to ooze continually, so as to half fill the dug-out cistern. Numerous fragments of clay vessels were collected, some of them very rough and some of fine manufacture. The presence of so much pottery in that far-off spot shows that numerous dwellings stood there at one time, or at least that numerous tombs existed in the neighbourhood. From the shape of the vessels, however, one feels inclined to affirm that they were not meant for funereal use.

The hills of Kligha may, therefore, be considered to have formed a populous centre in ancient times, so much so that near the top of the hills several Phœnician tomb-caves have been found some of which can be seen even to-day.

8. An other important discovery was made at *Ghain Klieb*. On the western side of Rabat, not far from the Fiddien, in a field, which is Government property, several important tombs were found a year ago, which contained rich furniture. As it did not appear that the excavation made at the time had been conducted with any special care, the Curator had one of these tombs excavated again. The tomb consists of a deep and large square shaft, which formed a kind of court, and, beyond that, a chamber of fairly large size was excavated. All round two sides of the room in this chamber three rows of niches are seen dug out in the rock.

The chamber was half full of rubbish, in which human and other bones mixed with bits of pottery were found. The whole arrangement recalls to mind the Roman columbaria, but the niches are much smaller, and are not arranged in the Roman fashion. The fragments of pottery found there are peculiar, and have never, to my knowledge, been met with before in Malta. Most of the pottery is glazed and coloured, though bits of Greek black polished vases were also found. A green glazed lamp with long nozzle is very remarkable. The glazed pottery recalls ancient Arabic pottery found in Egypt. At the bottom of the tomb-cave the rubbish was found to contain bits of gold foil and a small group of gold idols was also met with. This interesting group consists of two figures standing back to back on a common base. Their heads are joined by means of a small ring, and the whole must have been attached to a chain as a charm. The two figures represent Egyptian divinities, one of them having the face of a wolf and the other the face of a bird. Each has a flail in one hand and a *crux ansata* in the other. The group is made of solid gold; it stands 25 m.m. high and weighs 9.15 grammes. All the objects found in this tomb can be now seen at the Museum, Valletta, (case B. main hall) and a plan of the tomb is being prepared. The tomb will be preserved and made accessible to the public.

9. During the year a cluster of rock-tombs was acquired for the Government. These tombs are in the grounds to the west of St. Dominic's square, Rabat, and are the best that remain of the extensive necropolis that existed in that district (*Tal Bur*). As that site is being rapidly built upon, this interesting set of tombs would have been destroyed in a short time, and thus the historical record of the vast Phœnician necropolis would have completely disappeared. The tombs are very well cut, probably during the Roman occupation, and in good preservation. They have been surrounded by a wall, but are visible at the front through an iron railing. The ground is being cleared, and the tombs will be accessible to the public in a short time.

10. Remains of a Phœnician house, consisting of several rooms with walls made of large stones, were discovered at Kercem, Gozo, under the rubbish of an old stone quarry. Nothing of the kind had ever been met with in these islands before, and the ruins were cleared under the direction of the late Father E. Magri, S.J., who was also asked to draw up a report upon them, and to negotiate with the owner for the purchase or lease of the site. The owner asked an exorbitant price, and finding that the Government was not disposed to give it, he deliberately destroyed the remains. Thus a priceless monument which might have shed much light on Phœnician history was ruthlessly swept away by an ignorant owner, who cynically stated that that was his private property and that nobody had a right to interfere with it. It is sincerely to be hoped that this liberty to destroy historical monuments will be curtailed in the near future, and that owners and guardians of such monuments will rise to the sense of their responsibility towards society and their country.

11. During the year (1st of April 1906 to 31st March 1907) 3,589 persons visited the Museum: 711 during week days and 2,878 on Sundays.

Besides the personal emoluments, £331. 13. 8 were spent for the exploration of antiquities in these islands, and £270. 6. 0 in the upkeep of the Museum and in the purchase of objects.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

TEM. ZAMMIT,
Curator