



REPORTS

on the working of

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

for

The Year 1982

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Museums

(Period covered:
1st January, 1982 to 31st December, 1982)

1. During the year under review the Archaeological Section continued to concentrate on the re-organization of the Museum of Roman Antiquities at Rabat, and on improving the general layout of the exhibits at the National Museum of Archaeology. The latter operation included the transfer of the more important prehistoric sculptures from Tarxien, notably the two fine screens from the Middle Temple, to the Archaeological Museum at Valletta. These important sculptures are now adequately exhibited and illuminated in the main hall.

2. A rock-cut tomb of late Punic type with rectangular shaft and chamber was discovered in March during building operations at Gudja Road, Tarxien. Its subsequent excavation by the Archaeological Section revealed that the tomb was first utilized in the 3rd century B.C. but was later re-used in the 2nd/1st century B.C. and again in the 1st/2nd century A.D. Among the more important items of tomb furniture recovered from the burial chamber were a late Italic *Terra Sigillata* bowl of c. A.D. 60 — 100 stamped with the potter's mark L.R. PI (made in the workshop of *Lucius Rasinius Pisanus*); two pottery mugs, probably North Italian, of a type widespread in the central Mediterranean and the Aegean; a blown glass *Unguentarium*; and a bronze coin of a well-known type struck locally in the 2nd/1st century B.C. bearing a veiled female head on the obverse and a tripod on the reverse.

3. Another tomb of the same type was discovered at Attard, in May. The burial chamber was found to contain the skeletal remains of three inhumations; two cinerary urns with the remains of cremated individuals; and a tomb-furniture made up of several items of Punic pottery chronologically dating from the 4th to the 3rd century B.C.

4. The National Museum of Archaeology again collaborated with the *équipe* from the Coluccio Salutati University of Pescia, Italy, in the continuation of field-work commenced in August of 1981 on the site of the Roman Villa and *Thermae* at Ghajn Tuffieħa. The archaeological material obtained from the excavation is currently being studied.

5. Several members of the Italian Archaeological Mission from the University of Rome were in Malta during the first two weeks of December to continue with the study of the material excavated from the Tas-Silġ site.

6. The restoration of the important 15th century houses situated in Milite Bernardo Street, inside the

Gozo Citadel, was continued steadily throughout the year and is now nearing completion.

7. The Fine Arts Section continued the restoration and re-mounting of the Nasoni decorative ceiling panels in the Palace, Valletta, and the fixing of the panels of the Armoury Corridor in their original location was nearly completed.

Restoration work on the panels of the remaining corridor, outside the Offices of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, was commenced and is progressing steadily.

8. Various oil paintings in the Church of Our Lady of Victory, Valletta, were restored. These included full-length portraits of Grandmasters Jean de La Vallette and Alof de Wignacourt, an 18th century painting depicting St. Jerome and a 14th century Byzantine icon painted in tempera on panel. A considerable number of oil-paintings on temporary loan to various Ministries were also restored.

9. Work on the cleaning and treatment of exhibits in the Palace Armoury progressed satisfactorily throughout the year, and due to an increase of personnel it was also possible to take in hand the cleaning and treatment of the suits of armour in the President's Corridor.

10. Structural works in connection with the erection of a new hall for contemporary art at the National Museum of Fine Arts were continued intermittently by the Antiquities Section of the Works Department. It is hoped that these works be completed in the near future.

11. As in previous years a good number of exhibitions by Maltese and foreign artists were held at the National Museum of Fine Arts. Each artist exhibiting at the Museum donated one of his works.

12. The programme of temporary exhibitions comprised the following:

<i>Subject of Exhibition</i>	<i>Exhibitor</i>
Paintings	Galatea Brunswick
Paintings	Serse Roma
Paintings	Anthony Calleja
Paintings	Italian Artists
Painting and Drawings	Araldo Bonzagni
Painting and Sculpture	Jose Cassar
Sculpture	Alfonso Serafini
Sculpture	Hungarian Sculptors
Etchings	Corinth, Liebermann and Slevogt
Etchings	Ines Trombetti
Watercolours	Savio Mizzi
Watercolours	John Borg

13. As in previous years staff members of the Fine Arts Section were engaged in the examination of antiques and works of art at the Museum and elsewhere.

14. During the early months of the year under review the National Museum of Natural History concentrated on the setting up of a permanent display of mineralogical specimens the greater part of which had been bequeathed to the Museum by Dr. Louis Mizzi in the 1920's.

This new Section was inaugurated in the first week of April and was very well received by the general public.

15. Considerable attention was given by the Natural History Section to the enlargement of its various collections and to the improvement of their general layout. Work on the setting up of an adequate laboratory and a workshop on the ground floor of the Museum were also taken in hand.

16. In September work was started on the restoration of the verandah on the SW side of the bastion abutting the Museum of Natural History at Mdina. This area was earmarked for the setting up of a Cactus Garden and a Botanical Section.

17. In the course of the year several donations were made to the museum by private collectors, notably a collection of foreign pressed plants donated by Mr. Joe Borg. The Museum also acquired several important additions of bird species, mammals and mineralogical specimens, and substantially increased its collection of Maltese Tertiary fossils by a large number of fossil sharks' teeth and fossil echinoids.

18. Further research work on the ecology of Ghar Dalam and on the Pleistocene deposit infilling a fissure at Wied Inċita, was carried out by the Assistant Curator of Natural History.

19. During the year members of the National War Museum Association carried out various improvements to the National War Museum. Seven aluminium showcases were purchased for the adequate

display of a selection of uniforms and insignia and an Art Section was opened in the Annex. A portrait of Viscount Gort V.C., painted by Raymond Pitre, is included in the display. Also exhibited is a sketch by Leslie Cole, donated to the museum by Baroncino Nicholas Depiro of London.

20. A Norton Big Four 633cc motorcycle with sidecar, purchased by the Association, was restored and is now displayed in the Museum; this is a very rare vehicle.

21. Several donations were received from local and overseas sources. The most important acquisition during the year was the name-board of the tanker 'Ohio' donated by Mr. Lawrence Aquilina of Balzan.

22. A propellor and two Pheinmetall-Borsig MG 17 7.92cm calibre machine-guns were recovered from the wreckage of a Stuka aircraft on the sea-bed off Żonqor Point. The propellor and machine-guns, cleaned by Malta Drydocks and Association members respectively, are now exhibited in the Air Hall.

23. An important addition to the War Museum was the Roll of Honour of Maltese navy personnel who died in action during World War II. This was transferred to the Museum from St. Anne's Chapel in Fort St. Angelo together with a wooden plaque inscribed with the names of Maltese N.A.A.F.I. personnel who lost their lives during the war.

T.C. Gouder
f/ Director of Museums

26th April, 1983.

Statement of visitors admitted to Museums and Monuments during the Calendar Years 1981 and 1982

Place	1981		1982	
	On Payment	Free	On Payment	Free
National Museum of Archaeology	20,411	4,234	20,524	3,116
National Museum of Fine Arts	11,895	2,660	10,168	1,359
National Museum of Natural History	23,992	12,781	17,567	12,699
National Museum of Political History	281	1,650	207	2,454
Inquisitor's Palace and National Museum of Folklore, Vittoriosa	—	—	1,362	3,148
Palace Armoury	42,105	6,662	32,984	3,545
State Rooms and Tapestry Chamber	24,798	5,584	17,200	5,776
War Museum	57,031	6,727	47,138	5,987
Caravaggio Oratory	20,367	—	15,337	—
Museum of Roman Antiquities	12,920	4,431	10,753	5,330
St. Paul's Catacombs	36,282	4,373	25,710	3,954
Hal Saflieni Hypogeum	26,589	7,170	23,991	6,910
Tarxien Temples	23,154	6,217	17,611	5,060
Ghar Dalam Cave and Museum	14,346	6,312	12,221	5,125
Haġar Qim	15,299	2,507	9,475	3,575
Museum Gozo	13,675	3,254	11,685	1,848
Ġgantija Temples	59,076	6,755	32,493	4,526
Visitors in groups	237,547	—	231,895	—
TOTAL	639,768	81,317	538,321	74,412
	£M161,99,92.5		£M141,729.45.0	