



# **ANNUAL REPORT 2006**

## **THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE**

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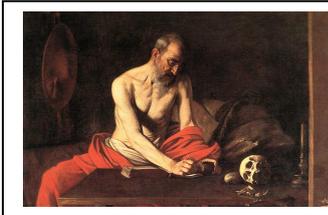
## *Legal and Policy Issues*



### 1.1 Core Functions

The core business of the Superintendence as set by the Cultural Heritage Act 2002 includes the following functions:

- Heritage Data Management and Processing: national heritage databases, national inventory of cultural heritage assets, museums and sites, clean storage/archiving of documents and artefacts, data provision to the general public.
- Planning development issues: field evaluations, planning process consultations, recommendations for scheduling, Environmental Impact Assessments, Appeals Board.
- Museums and Sites Monitoring: assessment, auditing, guardianship.
- Surveillance, Enforcement and Prosecution: all aspects of the Cultural Heritage Act 2002.
- Movement of Cultural Goods: import/export, Customs, border control, EU regulations.
- Heritage Data-Capture: field work, excavation, evaluation of art objects, collections, documentation and other, covering all territory including territorial waters.
- International Commitments: UNESCO, Council of Europe, European Union, European and Euro-Med partnership, bi-lateral and multi-lateral relations.
- Communication and Outreach: press, public relations, education, Local Councils, schools, publication programme.
- National Forum: compilation and upgrade of the State of the Heritage Report.
- Policy Development: policy, standards, guidelines, regulations, heritage management plans, advice to Government on heritage matters.



### **The National Cultural Inventory**

#### **1.1 Cultural Heritage Inventory Management System (CHIMS)**

The Cultural Heritage Act 2002 identifies the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage as the statutory body responsible for the development and management of a National Inventory of Cultural Property.

The Superintendence launched the Cultural Heritage Inventory Management System Project (CHIMS), which aims to create a new knowledge-based context for understanding, managing and disseminating data concerning Malta's cultural heritage through the creation and maintenance of an electronic database.

Following the signing of the "CHIMS Composite Agreement" between Datatrak Solutions International Ltd and the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage for the development, hosting and maintenance of the System, the implementation of the Project started in October 2005.

The CHIMS Project was divided into three phases, namely the first phase dealing with CHIMS Analysis and Design, the second phase regarding Data Migration, and the third phase dedicated to the Development of the System. The first phase, which included the creation of a new data model and all the relevant tables and data fields, an analysis of SCH business processes, and the preparation of a System's Analysis and Design Document, was completed in May 2006. The second phase of the Project consisting of the migration of existing data pertaining to the Fine Arts inventory and the GIS mapping of all the items within the same inventory was subsequently completed.

The third phase of the Project, consisting in the development of the System, its testing and implementation, is expected to be completed in February 2007.



### Land Use Issues

#### 2.1 Co-ordination with MEPA

In the course of 2006, the Superintendence has been consulted by the Malta Environmental and Planning Authority on 370 cases linked to development of properties having potential archaeological or architectural heritage assets.

#### 2.2 Major Cases 2006

##### 2.2.1 Hal Resqun Catacomb

In August 2006, the Superintendence intervened regarding works by the Awtorita` Dwar it-Trasport which was being carried out very close to the presumed site of the Roman catacomb site known as Hal Resqun. The catacomb site was consequently re-located with the assistance of the ADT. This definitive location of this catacomb ensured that the site will be protected and conserved, even in the eventuality of further road works in the area.

##### 2.2.2 Sta Margherita Cemetery

In 2005, works on the extension of Sta Margherita Cemetery in Rabat had uncovered significant archaeological remains. The Superintendence had intervened to protect these archaeological remains.

In 2006, the Superintendence proceeded to the excavation and documentation of the archaeological remains on site, utilising funding provided by the Health Department. The excavation revealed the presence of significant remains from several periods, including a stretch of monumental wall from the Late Classical period, pits related to Classical funerary practice and residual remains from the Bronze Age.

##### 2.2.3 Site at Iz-Zebbiegh

Inspection of a site, located just south off the Church of St Anne's Church in Zebbiegh has revealed a number of rock-

cut features. The Superintendence proceeded to investigate and document the site, including extensive features belonging to the Early Roman period, as well as to various deposits from the Late Middle Ages. The Superintendence consequently took measures, in agreement with the developer to ensure that the archaeologically more sensitive part of the site was conserved.

#### **2.2.4 Triq Burtlemaque, Birzebbugia**

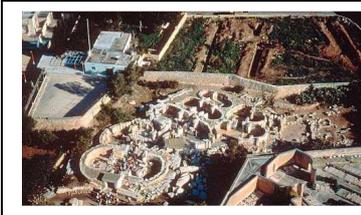
Following an application for development of a large site in Birzebbugia, the Superintendence directed a data capture exercise, including the monitored clearance of topsoil from over the site. A number of features were documented, mainly associated with the site's long history of quarrying.

#### **2.2.5 Ta' Cenc, Sannat**

The Superintendence has made a number of interventions with respect to the proposed hotel development along the ridge of Ta' Cenc. Close inspection of parts of the area outlined for development revealed a number of formerly undocumented archaeological features, including prehistoric megaliths and ancient quarry pans. These remains, which form a well preserved Bronze Age landscape, are located along the ridge of Ta' Cenc overlooking Mgarr ix-Xini. The Superintendence took steps to highlight the existence of these remains with all relevant parties to ensure they are protected at an appropriately high level, as required by law.

#### **2.2.6 Gheriexem Street, Rabat**

A well preserved stretch of ancient masonry has been identified at Gheriexem Street, Rabat, following the demolition of two houses. The Superintendence intervened to allow the full documentation of this feature, prior to its being covered by further development.



### **3.1 BOV Tarxien Temples Project**

The Superintendence participated in a number of meetings of the Project Team, during which issues pertaining to the archaeological investigations required prior to the relevant development application to MEPA for development, and to conservation and environmental monitoring of the monument were discussed. Discussion also included features related to the Visitors Centre, such as walkways and visitor flow, as well as other issues pertaining to the Project, namely educational and dissemination aspects.

### **3.2 Excavations Related to the Visitors Centre, Tarxien**

Mechanical excavation required by the present development proposal was conducted on site in April/May 2006, supervised by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage and funded by Heritage Malta. This excavation consisted of the systematic removal of deposits in the area proposed for development, reaching down to an average of 30 cm from the bedrock surface. From these initial investigations it transpired that there were two basic deposits on site, namely soil and debris consisting of relatively recent dumping of waste building material. Further archaeological investigation is required on site, consisting mainly in the manual excavation of the remaining debris above the bedrock surface in order to detect whether there are any archaeological features. Initially, excavation is being limited to a number of pre-defined areas in which the location of stilts supporting the Visitors Centre is being proposed. Further investigation shall proceed as necessary. The results of the archaeological excavation will determine whether the proposed Visitors Centre can be located in the area being investigated.

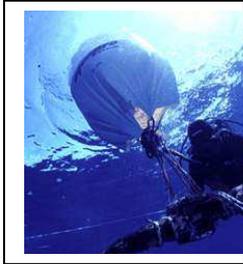
### **3.3 Removal of the Ship Graffiti Megaliths, Tarxien Temples**

Following the decision of the Scientific Committee for the Conservation of the Megalithic Temples to remove two

megaliths at Tarxien Temples containing ship graffiti from site for conservation purposes, a minor archaeological intervention was carried out by SCH in order to establish the nature of the base surrounding one of the megaliths. It was established that this megalith lies at a depth of c. 12 cm from the existing beaten earth floor surface surrounding the megalith. Moreover, the megalith lies on a worked stone which has been only partially exposed. The excavated fill consisted of soil and packed stone chippings. This investigation has allowed an informed decision on how the megaliths are to be removed from their present position. Further excavation required around the megaliths to allow their removal shall be carried out immediately prior to the lifting of the megaliths themselves, in order not to jeopardise their stability.

### **3.4 Archaeological Investigation at Hagar Qim**

The installation of protective shelters at Hagar Qim and Mnajdra necessitated a geotechnical survey to determine the method of anchoring the shelters into the ground. Four of the points identified for this survey at Hagar Qim were not located on exposed rock surface, and therefore required an archaeological investigation to ensure that no potential archaeological remains would be affected by the eventual extraction of the geological cores. The archaeological excavations were carried out by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, Heritage Malta and Operations and Monitoring Management Services. In all the areas under investigation, excavation was conducted until the bedrock surface was exposed. All areas were found to be devoid of any archaeological deposits or features.



### **4.1 Pillaging of Archaeological and Historic Sites at Sea**

Criminal proceedings have started against six persons presumably involved in the illegal recovery of archaeological and historic items from sites within Maltese Territorial Waters. Investigations into the case had started by the Police in 2005, following indication by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage. In the course of the investigation, the Police had recovered 518 cultural heritage items which had been illegally removed from marine sites.

In the course of 2006 two separate cases were initiated by the Police in Court of Magistrates. The first case was concluded, with the person involved being found guilty and fined Lm500.00. The hearing of the remaining five divers is still ongoing.

### **4.2 St. John's Co-Cathedral**

Following intervention to stop illegal excavation works under St John's Co-Cathedral in 2004, the Superintendence has been summoned to testify in a civil court case against the alleged perpetrator. Furthermore, the Police have initiated criminal action against the alleged perpetrator in terms of the Cultural Heritage Act, and following reports by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage.

### **4.3 Nadur Caves**

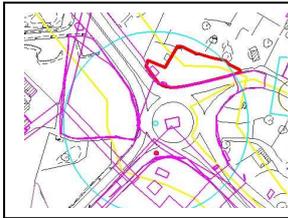
July 2006 - Following reports received from the public, the Superintendence had intervened to stop works that were reportedly causing damage to caves in Nadur. These caves had been identified by the Superintendence as having cultural heritage value. Commitment was sought from the developer that works would not cause damage to these caves.



### **5.1 Export or Movement of Cultural Goods**

In the course of 2006 and in keeping with its role, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage regulated the export and movement of cultural goods leaving and entering the country from EU States, and States outside the Union.

In the course of the year, the Superintendence monitored approximately 600 shipments of goods, and inspected several items having cultural heritage value.



### 6.0 Archaeological Investigations

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage carried out various archaeological investigations, both on land and at sea. Approximately 25 new interventions were registered with the Superintendence. A number of other important sites were carried forward from the year before.

#### 6.1 Major Cases

Besides the interventions reported in Bus 3 above, and in continuation to interventions reported in section Bus 2, the main archaeological interventions treated in the course of 2006 were the following:

##### 6.1.1 Rediscovery of the Hal Resqun Site

In August of 2006 an intervention by the Superintendence in collaboration with the ADT resulted in the rediscovery of a Mid-Imperial, Roman catacomb at a site known as Hal Resqun. The catacomb had been first discovered by Sir Temi Zammit in the 1930s and was eventually lost in the 1970s as a result of the construction of a new road. The tomb was re-identified, and certified to be in a relatively good state of conservation. It was possible to confirm that the tomb is of exceptional value, particularly due to the plentiful carved decorations found within it.

##### 6.1.2 Sta Margherita Cemetery, Rabat

Following an intervention of the Superintendence, a full scale archaeological investigation was carried out at the site at Sta Margherita Cemetery. The excavation confirmed that important archaeological remains existed at this location. In particular it was possible to determine that a substantial building had existed at this site around the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries AD. A wall made of very large ashlar blocks, and a rectangular rock-cut pit of possible ritual use was identified from this period. Important traces were also detected of a prehistoric settlement in the area. This consisted mainly of

ceramics found in-situ datable to approximately the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC., as well as residual ceramic remains from the Late Neolithic. This is the first hard archaeological evidence indicating the existence of a prehistoric settlement in Rabat.

### **6.1.3 Xatt il-Mollijiet, Marsa**

Following the archaeological works started in 2005, the investigation of this site was continued in 2006 confirming further the high scientific value of this discovery. More traces of the Imperial Roman harbour installations were discovered and documented. Furthermore, it was possible to establish through direct stratigraphic observation that the site remained in use up to the Early Medieval period. The excavation was completed in 2006.

### **6.1.4 Archaeological Site at Zebbieh**

Following an intervention by the Superintendence to protect a previously unknown archaeological site at Zebbieh, the area was extensively investigated in 2006. The investigation established that this location contained a complex archaeological record involving an early Roman complex, dating to around the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Centuries BC. The surviving features of this site consisted of two probable rock cut cisterns, masonry remains and extensive ashy deposits of unclear function. There was also considerable evidence for a Late Medieval occupation at this site, dating to and around the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. The site seems to extend well beyond the limits of the present day investigation, indicating the existence of a previously unsuspected ancient settlement.

### **6.1.5 Xlendi Project**

In early 2006 the Heritage Malta – AURORA Trust Project was launched with the aim of exploring some facets of Malta's underwater cultural heritage. The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage has been involved in this Project since its early stages, during which the identification of the site to be studied was made. An underwater site at Xlendi was identified for investigation. Subsequently, different levels of examination and data capture of the site were carried out, including a digital map of the deepwater area off Xlendi and a detailed record of the areas within the site which have the highest concentration of archaeological material. The Project also aims at identifying and implementing a security system to ensure the protection of the site, and also to initiate an outreach campaign aimed at school children.

### **6.1.6 Grand Harbour Approaches Survey**

The survey of the seabed lying off the North Coast of Malta has been continued in 2006. The survey is being undertaken by remote sensing in a joint project between the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage and RPM Nautical Foundation (USA). In the course of 2006, an area to the west of the 2005 survey was also surveyed.

### **6.1.7 Ghar ix-Xih Excavations, Xewkija**

A two week archaeological investigation was carried out at the Roman site of Ghar ix-Xih, Xewkija. This was a continuation of the work initiated in 2005. The investigation is part of a broader collaboration with the Sannat and Xewkija Local Councils, also involving the Department of Classics and Archaeology of the University of Malta. The evidence collected in the course of these two seasons of work seems to indicate that the site had a function related to cultic activity in the Roman period.

### **6.1.8 Ancient Landscape Project : Mgarr ix-Xini / Tas-Salvatur, Sannat**

Archaeological survey work at Mgarr ix-Xini, and in the adjacent area of Tas-Salvatur was continued in 2006 by a field team of the Superintendence. The survey revealed further evidence indicating the existence of a well preserved ancient rural and agricultural landscape in this part of Gozo. This survey was carried out with the financial help of the Local Councils of Sannat and Xewkija.



### **7.1 European Union**

#### **7.1.2 EU Conference on European Digital Cultural Heritage**

The Superintendence participated in a European Union Conference, held in Salzburg (Austria) entitled: An Expedition to European Digital Cultural Heritage.

The conference established the current state of digital cultural heritage within the EU, and included presentations on the main projects currently being developed in this sector through EU funding.

### **7.2 The Council of Europe**

#### **7.2.1 European Heritage Network (HEREIN)**

The European Heritage Network (HEREIN), launched in 1999, is a permanent information system gathering various services offered by governmental institutions in charge of heritage protection within the Council of Europe. Following discussions with CDPAT, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage was nominated by the Ministry for Culture and Tourism to participate in the HEREIN Project. The Superintendence was invited and consequently participated in the 6<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the national correspondents of HEREIN which took place in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in June 2006. Issues discussed in this meeting included the CDPAT and the Faro Convention, a draft agreement for HEREIN members, the new layout of the HEREIN website, the Thesaurus being built by the Project, the Epoch Project, and the virtual exhibition entitled Doors.



### 8.1 Superintendence Website

The Superintendence Website can be accessed at: [www.culturalheritage.org.mt](http://www.culturalheritage.org.mt). The site is user friendly and from the homepage, one is immediately linked to any new activity or news of the Superintendence.

In the course of 2006, the site was amended to include all the public documents developed by the Bord tal-Warrant tar-Restawraturi for public consultation.

### 8.2 Culture 2000 – Crossings, a Contemporary View

Following the 2005 exhibition on Crusades – Myth and Reality, the Superintendence organised a second initiative associated with the CULTURE 2000 Project, namely Crossings – A Contemporary View.

The 2006 exhibition was inaugurated in June at the Cavalier of Fort St. Angelo, at the new premises of the Superintendence. The exhibition ran for a period of six weeks.

The exhibition consisted of works by contemporary artists, who work with audio visual media. Two prominent Maltese artists participated to this event, which included artists from various counties of the EU and from the Mediterranean. The touring exhibition was organised in co-operation with the Pierides Foundation of Cyprus and the University of Picardie Jules Verne of Amiens. Following its opening in Malta, the exhibition will travel in 2007 to Amiens and Nicosia.

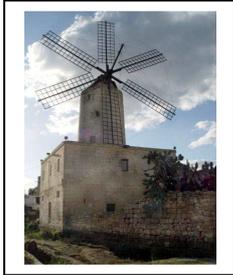
### 8.3 Mgarr ix-Xini Project

The collaboration between the Superintendence and the Local Councils of Sannat and Xewkija was continued in 2006. Most of the work undertaken was related to the development of an archaeological map of the Mgarr ix-Xini area. (Refer to Section 6.1.8)

#### **8.4 Xaghra Local Council**

Discussions with the Xaghra Local Council have proceeded regarding the development of a Guardianship Deed. The site of the Deed is expected to be the 1814 Plague Hospital sited at Ghajn Lukin. The Guardianship Deed will cover both the historic hospital complex, as well as the adjacent site of the Plague Cemetery.

The discussion on the Guardianship Deed is expected to be completed early in 2007.

**9.1 National Forum 2006**

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage assisted the Ministry for Tourism and Culture in the planning and organisation of the 2006 National Forum for Cultural Heritage.

The main theme discussed in the Forum was the finalised version of the National Strategy for Cultural Heritage. The document was presented by the Hon. Minister for Cultural to the Forum.

Attendance at the Forum was excellent, and was characterised by a good representation from the Local Councils and NGOs.

Important presentations were also made by the representatives from the Bord tal-Warrant tar-Restawraturi and from the National Archives Council.



### 10.1 National Strategy for the Cultural Heritage

The first National Strategy for the Cultural Heritage was presented to the public by the Hon. Minister for Culture on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2006.

The presentation of the Strategy was done in the course of the National Forum for Cultural Heritage, and was accompanied by an explanatory note on the function of the Strategy delivered by the Superintendence.

The publication of this document is an important landmark in the process of implementing the Cultural Heritage Act (2002). The Strategy is required by the Heritage Act and has the function of giving guidance and coordinating activities within the Ministry responsible for cultural heritage management.

### 10.2 Donations (National Heritage) Rules, 2005

In 2006 the Minister for Finance published Legal Notice 266 of 2006 entitled Income Tax Act (Cap.124) Donations (National Heritage) Rules, 2006.

This Legal Notice is of great importance to the Maltese cultural heritage sector, allowing patrons to claim tax benefits as a result of donations to cultural heritage bodies and organisations.