



Heritage Malta Update

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Consolidating Change

A lot has happened since the first edition of Heritage Malta's newsletter. The restructuring exercise has now been completed and a senior management team has been appointed. The exercise included the absorption of the former Malta Centre for Restoration housed at Bighi. This has now been named as Heritage Malta's Conservation Division. The Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage for which Heritage Malta is also now responsible runs a number of certificate, diploma, graduate and post-graduate courses in various subjects relating to conservation and restoration.

Heritage Malta has maintained the momentum in ensuring that sites entrusted to its care are enhanced. Following the successful launch of the multi-lingual audio guides at the St. Paul's Catacombs in Rabat, a similar project has been launched at the Palace Armoury in Valletta. Even in this case, visitors are benefiting from this service without having to pay an extra fee for the audio-guide as is normal practice in many museums abroad.

In addition, daily guides tours are being held in many of our sites. Staggered at different times during the day, these tours target individual visitors who visit Heritage Malta sites and are meant to assist visitors in appreciating the various artefacts on display and their relevance to Malta's history.

Educational outreach programmes have always been a priority to the national agency. Primary school pupils forming part of an organised school visit are admitted free of charge to all Heritage Malta sites with the exception of the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum. Every scholastic year, thousands of school children benefit from this programme and the agency is actively seeking to introduce new educational programmes to cater for young pupils.

The logistics have been finalized for the launch of the membership scheme which will give locals the possibility of unlimited access to all Heritage Malta museums and sites (except the Hypogeum) all year round for a reasonable annual fee. Special rates are also available for senior citizens and juniors whereas families can apply for the family card which will ensure a great deal of savings for the whole family. These membership cards make an ideal Christmas present.

As always, we continue to strive to ensure that our priceless heritage is indeed safeguarded and protected for future generations to enjoy. At Heritage Malta, we are proud to be giving a future to our past.

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THE COINAGE OF THE CRUSADERS & THE WORLD OF ISLAM

The exhibition of 'THE COINAGE OF THE CRUSADERS and THE WORLD OF ISLAM', mounted by Heritage Malta in collaboration with Emmanuel Azzopardi consists of 440 coins and is divided into six sections. The exhibition itself attempts to shed more light on the origins of the Crusades and visitors stepping into the Medieval Hall of the National Museum of Archaeology are immersed in a different historical epoch as presented through the unique perspective of coinage. Among the coins on display are those relating to Constantine the Great, the first Roman emperor to endorse Christianity, his mother Helena (St Helen), who identified the burial site of Jesus Christ and who discovered the 'True Cross'; Pontius Pilatus, the Roman Procurator of Judea who sentenced Jesus to be crucified and the famous '30 Pieces of silver' paid to Judas.

The different coins on display explain the chronological episodes which shaped the Crusades through the ages. For example the first section focuses on the coins minted by the Moors of Spain the Umayyads, the Muwahhids together with the Spanish Christian principalities of Castile and Leon and Aragon. A hoard of Arab-Byzantine pseudo fals, minted following the capture of Jerusalem in the seventh century, together with the gold coins of the Aghlabids and the Fatimids including coins of al-Hakim, who began with the destruction of the Christian Holy places in Jerusalem and the persecution of pilgrims are also displayed.

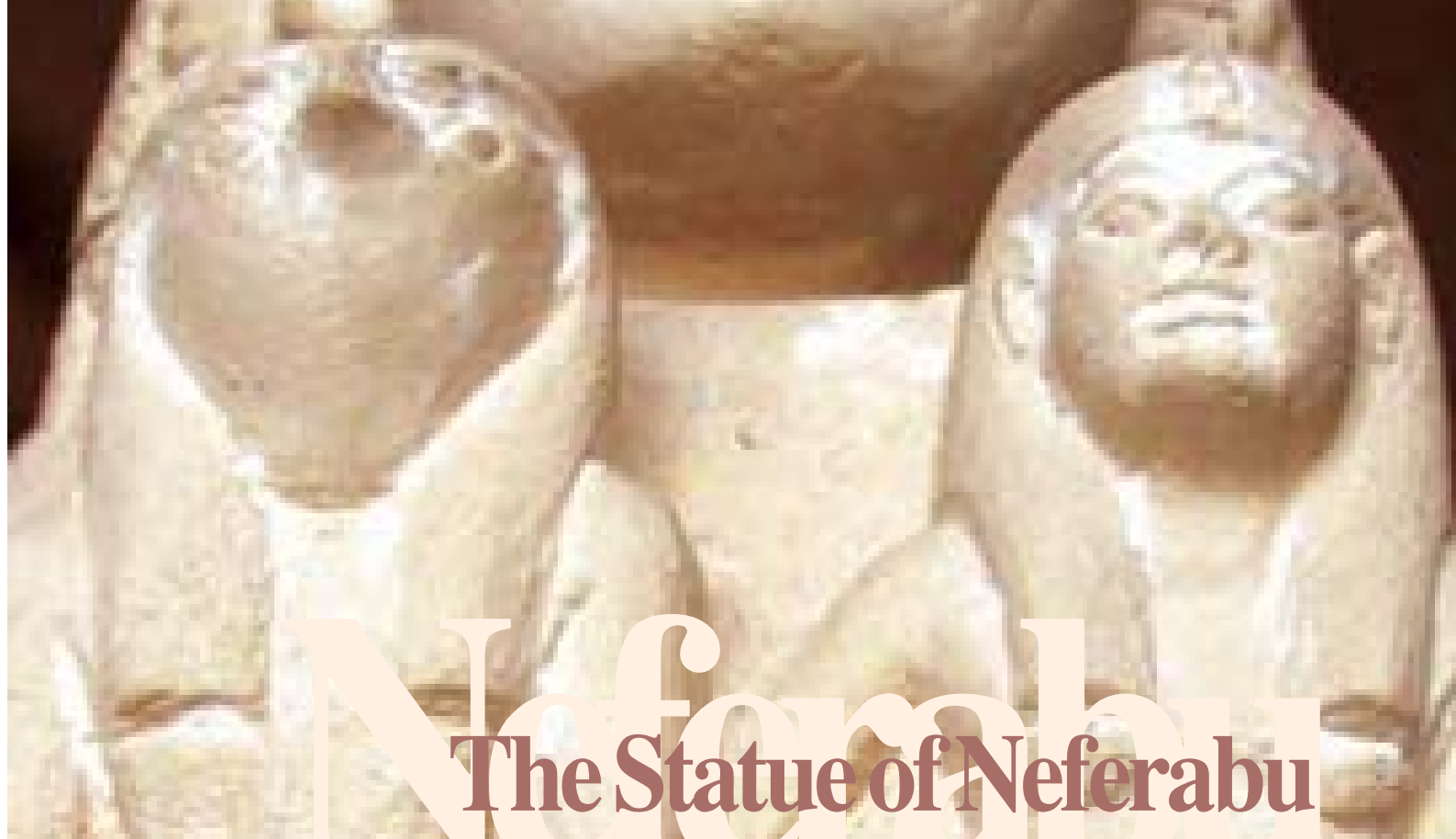
In 1071, the Seljuk Turks defeated the Byzantines and in 1084 under the leadership of the great Sultan Malik-Shah captured

Antioch. This incited one of the reasons for the First Crusade. After the Byzantine Emperor Alexius requested assistance, Pope Urban, at the Council of Clermont on 27 November 1095, appealed to the Christians to go to the east to rescue the Holy Land from the Muslims. When the armies of the First Crusade arrived in Constantinople, they made their way across Anatolia and then the Crusaders split up. Coins of the first two crusader states, Edessa, which was taken in 1098 by Baldwin and of Antioch, captured by the Norman Bohemond, together with coins of the Zengids of Mosul, who recaptured Edessa in 1144, form part of the exhibition together with a selection of western silver coins imported to the east by the crusaders. The capture of Antioch opened the road for the capture of Jerusalem, which was captured on 15 July 1099. After the Franks captured the Holy City, they started to mint gold dinars, using captured dies and imitating coins of the Fatimids. These coins are well represented alongside the Frankish silver coins of Jerusalem introduced in 1143 by Baldwin III.

The exhibition also boasts a fine selection of coins of the Byzantines and those of the county of Tripoli as well as coins of certain leaders of the crusades: Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and his son Emperor Henry VI, Richard Coeur-de-Lion, the English king who made a truce with Saladin; coins of the Teutonic Order; Venetian and Genoese, the two Italian maritime powers and their colonial issues.

A section also contains examples of coinage used by the Knights in Rhodes and Malta.

The exhibition remains open till January 15, 2006



The Statue of Neferabu

by Antonio Espinosa Rodriguez – Manager Special Projects

The National Museum of Archaeology holds a small but interesting collection of Egyptian antiquities, which includes a fine statue of a workman called Neferabu. The statue of Neferabu also known as Neferababet, is authentic and dates from the 19th Dynasty in Egypt (1295-1188BC). The statue consists of a standing figure, representing Neferabu, supporting the images of two Egyptian deities. It is beautifully crafted in the round in pure white limestone, perhaps extracted from the famous quarry at Tura in Egypt.

Neferabu worked and lived at Deir el-Medina a village built by the Pharaohs for the workmen in his employ. He was active in the first half of the 19th Dynasty that is between the years 36 and 40 of Pharaoh Ramesses II (1279-1212BC). As a person engaged in the construction of the Royal Tombs in the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens, Neferabu formed part of an exclusive group who enjoyed a special status in Egyptian society. Although his specific position remains unknown, it appears he went blind due to harsh working conditions.

This is the only known statue of Neferabu. However other images of him have been identified on a stela and paintings found in his tomb and funerary chapel. The statue probably originally formed part of the rituals celebrations and burial furnishing of this tomb.

Charles S. Sonnini, first mentioned the statue of Neferabu, in 1799 in his travelogue *Voyage dans la Haute et Basse Egypt*. He wrote that it was in the possession of an Italian monk who then gave it to a certain Monsieur Tott. Baron François de Tott visited Malta and was entertained to dinner by Grand Master de Rohan at Sant' Anton Palace. Although Tott and Sonnini travelled to Egypt together the precise circumstances of Neferabu's statue reaching Malta is not known. By 1882 the statue was exhibited in the *Cabinetto delle Antichità* at the National Library in Valletta and was described by A.A. Caruana in his *Report of the Phoenician and Roman Antiquities in the Island of Malta*. Since then, the statue of Neferabu has formed part of the National Collection of Malta.

In 1931 Sir Temi Zammit published it in his catalogue of the Valletta Museum and described it as a triad of a priest holding the figures of Horus and Maat. After World War II, Rosalind Moss wrote on the tomb of Neferabu and indicated the statue as coming from Deir el-Medina. Dr. Morris Briebrie in *The Tomb-Builders of the Pharaohs*, described the statue and dispelled the myth that it was ever discovered in Gozo. The statue of Neferabu reached Valletta directly from Egypt as an antiquity and curio, possibly in the baggage of a traveller, some time towards the end of the 18th century.





Tar



The BOV Tarxien Temples P

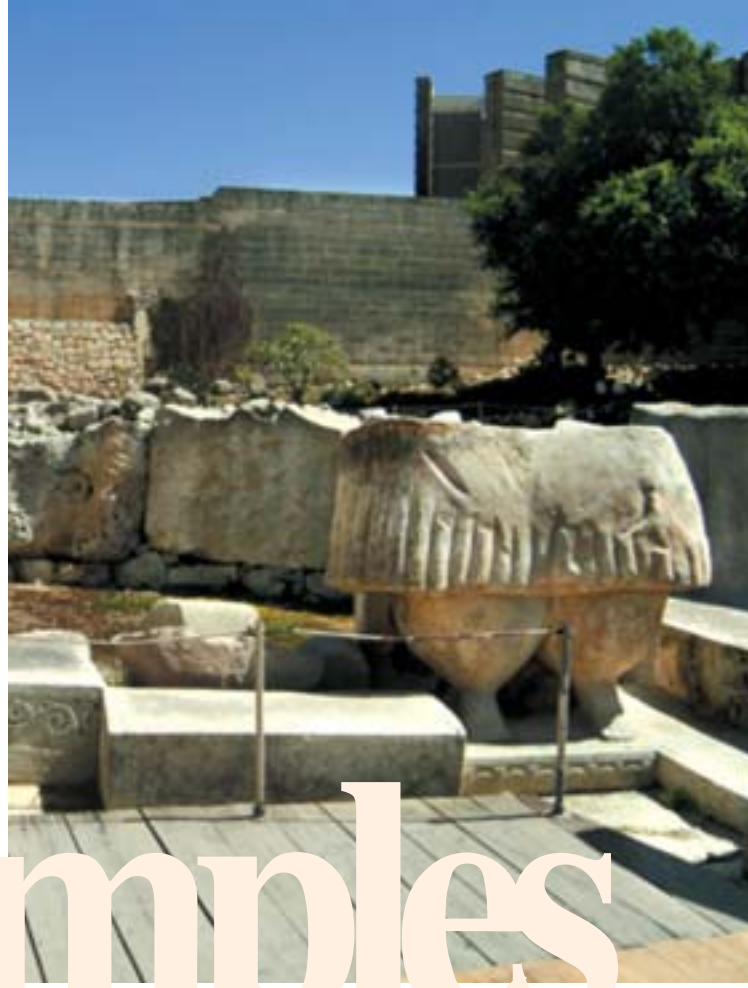


Tarxien Temples have recently been the focus of extensive conservation studies and preparations for improved visitor facilities through an agreement between the Bank of Valletta and Heritage Malta.

Unlike the other extensive prehistoric sites, such as Ġgantija, Mnajdra or Haġar Qim Temples, Tarxien Temples do not have a monumental bearing on their surrounding landscape; on the contrary, they have been rather dwarfed by the urban development, which has over time encroached within metres from the site. Nonetheless, Tarxien Temples offer a stimulating experience for visitors, holding the largest number of exceptional examples of prehistoric art and attesting an extraordinary society who produced astounding advances in art, technology and architecture, some 5000 years ago.

With the help of the Bank of Valletta, Heritage Malta is slowly turning this archaeological site into an exciting discovery for all its visitors, whilst ensuring that this experience will be shared with future generations. The BOV Tarxien Temples Project, launched in September 2003, envisages the application of the latest technology for the preservation of this unique prehistoric site, as well as the construction of a visitors' centre that will enable visitors to understand, enjoy and appreciate the value of this monument.

Some of the latest environmental monitoring equipment has been installed within a number of chambers as well as the immediate vicinity of the monument. This equipment provides precise data on the environment at the site including wind speed and direction, humidity, rainfall, solar radiation, barometric pressure and temperature. This data will be analysed by Heritage Malta's conservation specialists, allowing them to understand better the site's deterioration and the measures necessary for its preservation.



Tarxien Temples

Project: Recent Developments

Amongst the many delicate, yet unique, works of prehistoric art within the site are reliefs depicting two bulls and a sow with piglets. Due to the fragile state of these reliefs, a shelter was installed in the 1980s to protect them from natural elements, such as rain and direct solar radiation. However, this shelter was no longer adequate and thanks to the BOV Tarxien Temples Project, it has now been replaced with a new and more effective cover, which will help prolong the lifetime of this invaluable work of art.

In addition, all the necessary preparations for the 3D recording of the monument have been completed. This will result in a digital model of the site recording it in precise detail, documenting the size, shape and location of each megalith. This will prove to be an invaluable record of Tarxien Temples with more information about the site's present condition than any other traditional means of recording such as photographs and drawings could provide.

Progress has also been made with regards the design of modern visitor facilities. The building, which will house these facilities, combines the needs and expectations of the modern visitor while respecting the sensitivity of this UNESCO World Heritage Site. The visitors' centre will therefore include an exhibition area, audiovisual facilities, shop, cafeteria and activity area. It has also been designed as a completely reversible structure, having minimal impact on the site. Most importantly, the centre aims to be educational as well as fun, preparing visitors for an informative as well as enjoyable experience of the Tarxien Temples. Preparatory excavations will be starting in 2006 and construction of the centre is planned to commence next year.



For updates on the BOV Tarxien Temples Project visit our website at www.heritagemalta.org



Interview with Charles Borg

From the Royal Air-Force to the National Museums

Charles Borg joined the former Museums Department in 1970. At the time he was employed with the Royal Air Force. Originally employed on a five year contract, the ambitious Charles inquired on the possibility of a further five year renewal with the Air Force. When the army told him that they could only renew his contract for a three year period, Charles decided to seek greener pastures.

Already an avid footballer, he played alongside great local players such as Edward Aquilina and Robbie Buttigieg. In fact, when Charles was not at work, he was kicking a ball.

He learnt that the Museums Department had issued a call for applications. He applied and sat for both a written and oral examination. Charles recalls that the initial exam proved to be a tough hurdle to the extent that none of the candidates managed a pass mark. Roughly five months later, another examination was held and this time round Charles was successful. He was only one of five candidates to obtain a pass mark and hence land the job. At the time, the Director was Captain Charles Zammit who welcomed the newcomers on board.

Given that he had a contract to honour with the Royal Air Force, Charles had to pay a 90 pound penalty as an exit clause which paved the way for him to join the Museums Department. He recalls that at the time the sum was equivalent to three months' pay but the young Charles was adamant to start a new career.

He recalls that his first posting was at the National Museum of Archaeology which at the time also included a Fine Arts section.

Charles reminisces on the years gone by. He recalls the hardships that guides used to face whilst working at the museums. For example, there was no electricity at the Inquisitor's Palace although in reality very few tourists or locals visited the Palace. The admission fee at the time was only 6 pence (equivalent to just under 3c).

Charles also recalls the opening of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Spinola Palace in St. Julian's in the early 1980s. Paintings from the Fine Arts reserve collection were taken to the museum. In reality, this venture was short-lived as the museum was closed down some three years later.

Charles has worked in all museums and sites now under Heritage Malta's remit. During the course of his work, he has met various dignitaries including Romina Powell, Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston, Roger Moore and Bishop Makarios who had toured Ghar Dalam with Charles Borg guiding the tour.

Charles still carries the scar of an incident which could have had horrific consequences. A young British girl was fiddling with an old electric fan at Ghar Dalam. As soon as he realized that the girl was about to plunge her hand into the steel blades, Charles made a dash and pushed the girl out of harm's way only to have his finger severed by the fan's blades. Luckily the gash only required a few stitches to heal but at least the four year old girl was unharmed.

An avid table-tennis and snooker player as well as a keen enthusiast of air-pistol shooting, Charles Borg is currently a Gallery Site Officer in the Archaeology Section of Heritage Malta. He regularly conducts guided tours of the National Museum of Archaeology and the Roman Domus as well as other archaeological sites that are open to the public on request.

Heritage Malta was created in 2003. Yet, most of its employees had been working for the former Museums Department for years on end. This page pays a tribute to some of our long-serving members of staff.



A younger looking Charles in the 1970's

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FORTHCOMING HERITAGE MALTA EVENTS

Keeping you updated

Nelson and Malta

a Naval Hero's Vision at the Malta Maritime Museum. An exhibition tracing the life of Admiral Nelson on the 200 Anniversary of his death at the Battle of Trafalgar. The exhibition runs till January 9, 2006.



Faces of Neolithic Malta at the Salon of the National Museum of Archaeology

An exhibition of photographs of prehistoric figurines and heads by Daniel Cilia together with the original artefacts. The exhibition runs till January 15, 2006.

Luigi Maria Ugolini

An Italian Archaeologist in Malta

An exhibition tracing the history of the works carried out by Italian archaeologist Luigi Maria Ugolini in Malta. The exhibition is mounted at Heritage Malta's Head Office in Valletta till December 10, 2005. Free admission.

Drawings, an exhibition of works by Anton Grech

at the Contemporary Hall of the National Museum of Fine Arts. Exhibition is mounted between November 30 and January 10, 2006.



Crusades: Myth and Realities at the Preti Halls of the National Museum of Archaeology

An international exhibition organised by the Perides Foundation of Cyprus in collaboration with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage together with partners from Greece, Italy and France. The exhibition remains open till January 15, 2006.

The Coinage of the Crusades and the World of Islam

at the Medieval Hall of the National Museum of Archaeology. An exhibition of coins tracing the history of the Crusades. This exhibition, which remains open till January 15, 2006 is mounted in collaboration with Emmanuel Azzopardi.



Pasturi: Crafts and Practices of rural life in pre-WWII Gozo

An exhibition of traditional crib models made by Wenzu Farrugia at Heritage Malta's Gozo Area Office in the Citadel, Victoria. Exhibition opens on December 5 and runs till January 28, 2006.

Expressions

An exhibition of paintings by Emily Frendo at Heritage Malta Head Office. Exhibition will be inaugurated on December 20 and will be mounted till January 29, 2006. Free entrance.

Winter Solstice at the Mnajdra Temples

on December 22. Witness the phenomenon of the rising sun on the first day of the new season as the sun's rays light up the edge of a megalith found on the right hand side of the doorway. Early booking is recommended and a maximum of 40 people can attend this guided tour.

To secure booking, please call Head Office on 2295 4000.

For any further information on any of our forthcoming events, please visit our website: www.heritagemalta.org