A Glimpse into the Commercial and Domestic Life at It-Tokk

GODWIN VELLA

Introduction

For many centuries they remained buried but a sewer trench dug in December 1961 revealed them all. There they were: occupation levels starting down from the Early Bronze Age and up to the Mediaeval period opening to us a small window on the life and activities going on in the hub of Gozo’s town – as busy then as it is nowadays – throughout the centuries represented.

Cultural Layers

The trench – bringing sewage facilities to It-Tokk – went down some three and a half metres, exposing a series of cultural layers all along the way down. In sequence, these layers represented different phases of occupation in that area of the town, both for commercial and for domestic purposes. From simple dwelling huts in the Bronze Age to wine cellars in the Roman period, the picture we gain is that of a developing community striving to flourish.

The centuries represented by the cultural layers are over but the site with its largely commercial community is still thriving, much to retain the busy atmosphere that had always been associated with It-Tokk.
Relics Retrieved

A few surviving relics retrieved from the trench managed to make their way to the museum. Today, they are there: in the museum of archaeology within the Citadel and uphill from It-Tokk to remind us of those days when It-Tokk was no less busy than it is now.

Roman lamp retrieved from It-Tokk, Victoria, 4-5th century A.D. Two monkeys carry a bunch of grapes. 15cm long. (after Trump, D. H., 1990, Malta: An Archaeological Guide)

The Museum of Archaeology

The Museum of Archaeology is open from Monday to Sunday between 09.00 and 5.00pm. Visitors can opt for a Citadel multi-site ticket which sells for LM2.00 (€4.66) and gives holders access to the Museum of Archaeology, the Old Prison, the Museum of Folklore and the Museum of Natural Science. Further information can be obtained from Heritage Malta’s Gozo Area Office on Tel. 21564188.

Godwin Vella is Manager, Gozo Museums and Sites, within Heritage Malta.