

# AVIAN REPRESENTATIONS from prehistoric and medieval sites on the Maltese Islands.

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The aim of this publication is to catalogue the avian representations discovered in local prehistoric and medieval sites, to illustrate as many of these as possible and to register a hitherto unrecorded find of a miniature clay bird from Mnajdra (Qrendi, Malta) and of a North African oil lantern with a bird emblem on its disc.

Stylized bird drawings on prehistoric pottery, miniature replicas of birds in baked clay or avian representations as pendants are not rare finds in archaeological sites on the Maltese Islands. There is, however, no record of any Maltese cave paintings with avian representations.

Avian figures and representations are to be found also in modern culture. It is enough to look at the flags or emblems of various nations to discover the power of symbolism. Many modern nations have incorporated in their flag or coat-of-arms a representation of that powerful bird - the eagle - as an emblem of their might. Langdon (1964:117) asserts that the eagle with deployed wings and rapacious talons, a symbol of mighty power, appeared first in the Hittite (ancient Syrian) iconography, subsequently spreading from Sumeria to Asia Minor and thence to Europe.

Thus, the Romans placed this avian symbol on their banners and the Hapsburg Empire adopted the double-headed eagle as its emblem. In more recent times, the eagle was incorporated also in the flags, crests as well as postage and revenue stamps of many other nations - including Nazi Germany, Egypt and Libya. Notwithstanding that in the 1930s Roosevelt chose the physically strong Brown Bear as the emblem of the United States of America, it is the Bald Eagle that is now portrayed on its postage stamps and embassies as a symbol of its might [Pl.1].

Archaeological sites on the Maltese Islands have yielded not only representations of what are thought to be ibis, herons, ducks, geese, pelicans and other water birds but also of doves, quails,

partridges, hawks / falcons, peacocks and, possibly, cranes. These are reproduced in various media, including molluscan shell, stone and pottery. Their local record extends from Neolithic (possibly also Palaeolithic) to Medieval, Roman and Early Christian times.

## *Descriptive Catalogue*

Most of the avian representations recovered from local archaeological sites are now in the Collections of the National Museum of Archaeology in Republic Street, Valletta (N.M.A.), whilst material recovered from the sister island of Gozo is at the Archaeology Museum of that Island in Victoria (Rabat). Some of the old material recovered from both Islands, could not be located in either Institution — as it was never catalogued. The avian representations are hereunder reviewed chronologically and, whenever known, the Museum registration number of each item is also recorded. This is preceded by one or two code letters representing the initials of the site-name e.g. **Gg** for Ġgantija, **Gd** for Ghar Dalam, **Mn** for Mnajdra, **T** for Tarxien Temples, **TC** for Tarxien Cemetery, and **S** for Hal Saflieni. These code letters are followed by a stroke and another code letter indicating the composition of the specimen — whether bone (**/B**), pottery (**/P**), or stone (**/S**).

• *Ġgantija (Xaghra) in Gozo (3600-3000 B.C.) Megalithic remains, 'Copper Age'. (see EVANS 1959:151-152, Pl.74; 1971 : 232, 172). [Pls.2, 3]* The two Prehistoric Temples at Xaghra, Gozo, namely *Ġgantija* ('Torre dei Giganti') and *Iċ-Ċirku tax-Xaghara* ('Brochtorff Circle'/'*Il Giro dei Giganti*') have yielded interesting discoveries both in the field of avian remains as well as in that of avian representations. The bird bones which BROCHTORFF (1849: 5) and EVANS (1971:182) record as having been recovered from 'the upper excavations' (i.e. '*Il Giro dei Giganti*' or 'Brochtorff Circle') remained unidentified.

Two avian representations, an *Ibis* [Pl.2] and a flight of crested birds [Pl.3], were recovered from

the Ġgantija Temples which are only a very short distance away from the 'Brochtorff Circle'. Both representations have been recorded and figured, but only the pottery bearing the birds in flight is preserved.

The *Ibis* representation could no longer be traced. When A.F. Didot visited Ġgantija Temples in May 1839, he drew a plan of the two temples and made detailed drawings of the finds — including the *Ibis*. These drawings are reproduced in LACROIX (1851) where Pl.27, fig. 2 shows the drawing of the 24 cm high soft Globigerina Limestone block on which, with a few strokes of a pointed instrument, an unknown artist produced the unmistakable figure of the Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus* (L), *Velleran, Hasi tal-Bahar*). (See also Lacroix 1851: 57, footnote 1). This is a bird with a long curved beak and a long neck, standing high on its long legs [Pl.2]. The significance or the symbolism of the *Ibis* representation on the limestone block is not known. The bird was formerly listed as a locally 'very common species' but has since become 'a scarce passage migrant' which appears on the Maltese Islands in large numbers only occasionally (SULTANA, GAUCI and BEAMAN, 1975:24).

It is important to note here that Ġgantija Temples on the limits of Xaghra stand on an Upper Coralline Limestone plateau and are built of hardstone megaliths derived from that regional Formation. The much softer Globigerina Limestone block on which the Glossy *Ibis* is incised, however, is foreign to the Xaghra region and must have been transported there from some distance, as there are no Globigerina Limestone outcrops in the vicinity. This is a clear indication that early man in Malta was the earliest 'geologist' to visit this Island, for he was aware, not only of the different varieties of limestone on the Island, but also of their relative softness and durability and adopted each variety to his particular needs.

One other local representation of an *Ibis* was unearthed by Patri Manwel Magri S.J. from a Punic tomb at *Ta' l-Ibraġ*, but this will be dealt with later on, under the heading Punic Period.

More than a century after the find of the Globigerina Limestone block with the incised drawing of an *Ibis*, the Museum authorities

recovered (1954), also from Ġgantija Temples, a second interesting avian representation [Pl.3]. (see also EVANS, 1959:151, 152, 230, Pl.74; 1971, Pl.64, fig. 2) This was in the form of a 75mm fragment of a pottery bowl decorated with the incised figures of nine stylised, crested large birds gracefully flying from left to right in three rows, with outstretched long neck raised about 80-90° above the horizontal. For better contrast and a greater artistic effect, the outline of the birds is gracefully inlaid with gypsum (Hydrated calcium sulphate, Ca SO<sub>4</sub>.H<sub>2</sub>O) - a mica-like salt that is abundantly present on the Tertiary Clay slopes of the Maltese Islands.

Each of the birds has a long, backward-arched, single-plume crest, a short pointed beak, a moderately-long pointed tail and wings in different positions of flight. Six of the nine birds are complete or almost so. The incomplete bird in the right upper corner is represented in a totally different position of flight. Its wings are arched downwards and its legs are dangling, much like a heron that has just taken off and is beating its wings to gain height

• *Mnajdra (Qrendi), Megalithic remains, 'Copper Age'* (Evans 1971:231, 96).

A 48mm long pale orange-brown terracotta bird-model with a flat base (40mm x 25mm) and lacking a head, was found accidentally in one of the pathways leading to the Mnajdra Megalithic site [Pl. 4]. The discovery was made on the moonlit night of January 23rd, 1974, when Mr & Mrs Hill of the Australian High Commission in Malta (then investigating the possibility of the Temple having been used for astronomical purposes) collected and examined the nature of a small stone that kept rolling after being kicked. The find was subsequently shown to the author who identified the object and suggested donation to the Museum Department.

A few days later, before leaving the Island for a new posting in Sweden, Mr Hill obliged, but as the donation does not seem to have been registered or ever recorded in the *Annual Reports of the Museum Department*, it could not be located in the collections of the Museum of Archaeology in Valletta (1995). The specimen is consequently being herein listed and described for the record. As there is no photographic documentation of it,

the rough sketches prepared by the author when this model bird was shown to him in 1974, are likewise being reproduced [Pl. 4].

The flat base of this bird indicates that, like most of the other bird models recovered from Maltese archaeological sites, this too, is of an aquatic bird. Its markings, however, fit no known species and with the head completely missing, a great diagnostic feature is lacking. Its external decoration consisted in a single row of pittings along upper chest (semi-collar/half ring), very shallow downward-concave grooves on sides, with deep and wide 10mm-long longitudinally parallel grooves all along the wide, blunt posterior end (tail). When viewed laterally, only three grooves showed, but when viewed from above, five such like structures were seen.

Measurements of the headless bird model follow hereunder:

Neck - tail length (B) = 48mm; Perpendicular height from anterior (lower) edge of neck-fracture (E) = 20mm; Diameter of neck at site of fracture (grey surface) (C) = 8mm; Flat ovoid base: length (A) = 40mm; maximum width (D) = 25mm; width of blunt posterior end (H) = 12mm; Length of grooves on tail (G) = 10mm.

As this bird model was much larger than other avian representation finds and as it bore no perforations for threading or suspension, it was probably meant to be a household ornament or, perhaps, a cult object or a votive offering.

• *Tarxien Temples (3300-2500 B.C)*

Tarxien Temples date back from the Copper Age (Temple Building Period by Maltese standards) to the Bronze Age (EVANS, 1971:232). Evans (1971: 126 footnote 1) records that in 1921, Ashby (1924 : 95-96) unearthed from the thick *torba* floor of Room 11, the 'skull of the greater shearwater'. It was associated with a number of marine shells and some artefacts and lacks any paint markings. Its archaeological significance at this inland site is not known. Presumably, the skull, which is now no longer available for study as it cannot be traced, belonged to the Mediterranean Shearwater (*Procellaria diomedea diomedea* Scapoli, *Ciefa*), a bird that is still common on the Maltese Islands as it is both a breeding resident and a spring breeding visitor.

From the western part of the Megalithic remains of the Tarxien Temples, Dr (later, Professor Sir) Themistocles Zammit unearthed also a personal ornament (T/B. 20, here Pl.5) in the form of an ivory model of a tiny 'sitting bird' having an ovoid base (L. 13mm, B. 12mm, H. 6mm) with two converging V-perforations along its length. ZAMMIT (1916, Pl.17 fig.1; 1920:196) records that, when recovered, the bird had traces of red stain on head and back (see also EVANS 1971:145; Pl.51, fig.7). As the stylized model lacks legs, but has a flat base instead, it probably likewise represents a floating water-bird. Complete absence of surface decoration or of any other diagnostic feature does not permit any speculation as to its specific identification [Pl.5].

From this same site, Zammit recovered (1919) still another interesting avian representation in relief on a coarse grey sherd of pottery (T/P. 78) measuring 75mm x 60mm x 11mm. The decoration portrays a pair of inwardly-concave V-shaped horns (each with three red horizontal stripes close to its base) enclosing a short-beaked, short-bodied, chubby bird with erect neck (ZAMMIT, 1920:200, Pl.xvii, fig.1B; EVANS, 1959:152, Pl.73; 1971:142, Pl.47, fig.5). The representation very much resembles that of a partridge (*Alectoris*, *Hagel*) or a quail (*Coturnix coturnix*, *Summienna*). The pattern of ox-horn decoration is applied to the surface of the vase [Pl. 6].

The modern range of the genus *Alectoris* extends to Asia and Africa, but that of the sedentary Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris graeca* (Meisner 1804), *Hagel*, does not extend beyond south western Europe (COWARD, 1950:364). As partridges do not usually fly over long stretches of water, no member of the genus is now on the list of avian visitors to the Island. Remains of the Red-legged Partridge, however, were discovered by FISCHER & STEPHAN (1974:516) in the Pleistocene deposits of Ghar Dalam cave (S.E. Malta) associated with the over 130,000-year-old remains of the hippopotamus and elephant

• *Tarxien Cremation Cemetery. ( 2500-1500 B.C.).*

From cinerary urns in the Tarxien Cremation Cemetery, T. Zammit (1916:137, Pl.XVI fig.3 no. 5; Pl.XVII fig.1) recovered some carved leg-bones of birds and a large number of personal ornaments, all pierced for threading or suspension in necklaces.

Among the perforated ornaments he found also three miniature terracotta models of birds registered at the National Museum of Archaeology, Malta, as TC/P. 1015 [Pl.7], 1016 [Pl.8] and 1017 [Pl.9]. Two of these (TC/P.1015, TC/P.1017) have a flat base instead of legs. This is considered to be a sure indication that the models represent aquatic birds floating on water. EVANS (1971:63-64) calls them 'sitting birds (?ducks)'. Such representations seem to be consistent with the fact that Malta and Gozo (Ghawdex) are both islands and indicate that early man was more familiar with water birds.

TC/P. 1015 (see EVANS, 1971:161; Pl.57, fig.12). [here Pl.7]. This model is a buff, hard-fired clay ware with burnished surface (L. 64mm, W. 17mm, H. 35mm) representing a bird with a large thick beak (duck) decorated with two parallel, deeply incised rings round the neck (possibly a mallard) and two parallel zig-zag lines along the sides. The areas beyond the zig-zag lines are filled with horizontal shark's tooth decoration. As no bird with such zig-zag markings is known to visit the Island now, it is presumed that the artist took the liberty of decorating his stylized bird according to his liking. A narrow hole from top to bottom pierces the specimen for threading in a necklace. Shark's tooth decoration is both an ingenious and an aesthetic device and has been adopted by early man in Malta to decorate not only this bird model but also household pottery vessels like the two-handled jug TC/P.47, and the double-vase TC/P. 91 (see also EVANS, 1971, Pls. 54, 55, 56). Early man's collection of fossil sharks' teeth to decorate with their serrated edge some of his clay artifacts, makes him not only one of the earliest local artists, but also the earliest collector of Maltese fossils on the Island.

TC/P. 1016. [here Pl.8] (see ZAMMIT, 1916:137; Pl.XVI fig.3, no.5; EVANS, 1971:161, Pl.57, fig.13); This avian representation (L. 58mm, Breadth. 14mm, H. 25mm) is a polished small figurine of a legless bird in brown clay with four well marked white vertical lines on its neck. It was found by Zammit in 1915 amongst the numerous contents of a large cinerary urn from Tarxien Cemetery. It is pierced from top to bottom for threading in a necklace or for fixing on a rod. Unlike the previous miniature avian earthenware models, its base is not flat, thereby indicating that it is not an aquatic bird. The shape of the bird with its

typical crouched position (masking the legs) and its surface decoration - represented by painted rings on neck, cross hatching with deep grooves on back and convex-upward grooves on wings - suggest a European quail (*Coturnix coturnix*, *Summiensia*). Locally, the quail is still an abundant spring and autumn migrant that, on some occasions, reaches the Island in large numbers in April and September.

TC/P. 1017 [Pl.9] (see ZAMMIT, 1916:137; Pl.17 fig.1; EVANS, 1971:161; Pl.57, fig.14). This specimen is a dark ware (L. 67mm, W.21 mm, H. 27mm) with a shiny surface, a flat base and without any decoration. It has one vertical hole through the body and a transverse one through the neck for suspension. It was likewise unearthed by Zammit from the ashes of a cinerary urn at Tarxien Cemetery. The body shape and the undeveloped beak of this stylized bird could possibly be features of a Grebe (*Podiceps*, *Blongos*), whilst the slate-black colour could possibly be an indication of a Coot (*Fulica atra*, *Tigiega tal-Baħar*). Both birds are regular autumn and winter settlers at the bird sanctuaries at Ghadira (Mellieħa) and at is-Simar, Pwales (St Paul's Bay), Malta.

• *Hal Saflieni (Pawla/Raħal Ġdid)*.  
(3300-2500 B.C.)

From the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum - that impressive labyrinth of underground passages and chambers cut at three different levels in the soft Globigerina Limestone over an area of about 500 sq.m. - Zammit recovered a number of interesting bird pendants. The age of these finds varies considerably as the associated pottery is referable to various phases of Maltese Prehistory. These range from the Malta-Temple-Building Period (Copper Age) to the Bronze Age (c. 3000 to 2000 years ago). The bird representations are now registered at the National Museum of Archaeology in Valletta respectively as S/B 4, S/S 7 and S/S 8.

S/B 4 (see EVANS, 1971 : 63; Pl. 37 fig. 9). Under this same registration number are confusingly included nine miniature models of birds [Pl.10] that have a flattened base with a V-perforation for suspension/threading, a hunched back and a long conical neck with a small head and beak. Others lack evidence of a head configuration [Pl. 11, Pl.12]. Only one has eyes marked [Pl.13]. Maximum length of the birds is 30mm (min. 11mm), whilst max. height without neck is 15mm (min. 9mm).



Plate 01

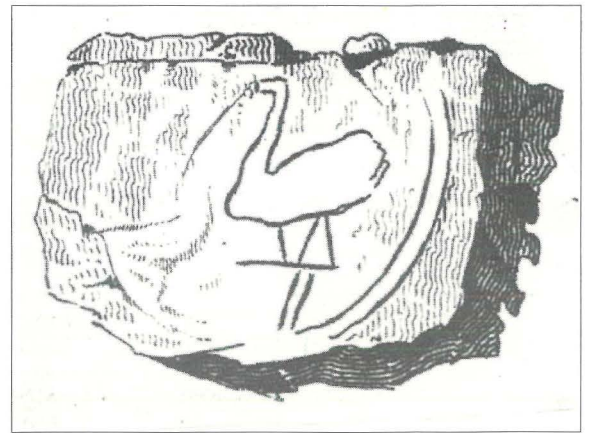


Plate 02



Plate 03

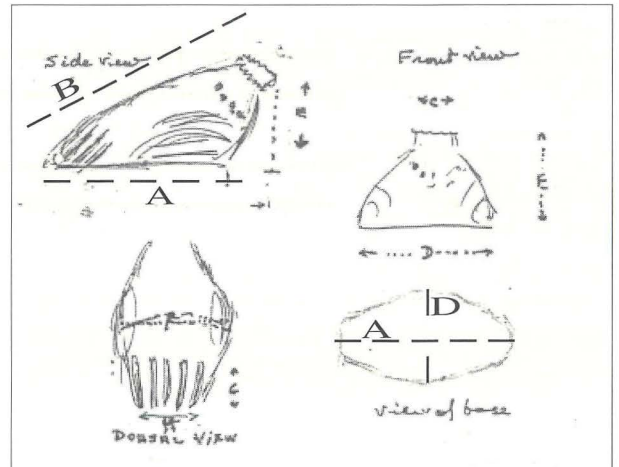


Plate 04

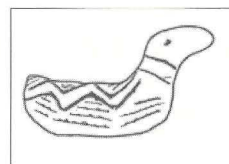


Plate 07

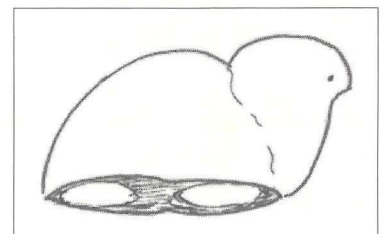


Plate 05



Plate 06

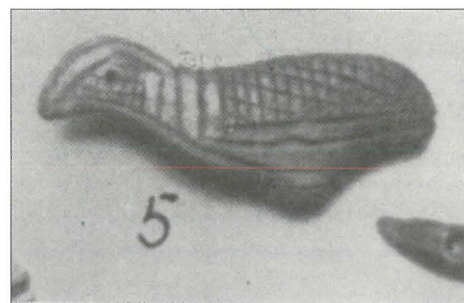


Plate 08

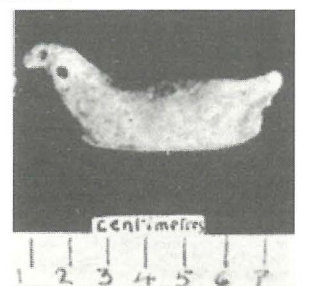


Plate 09



Plate 10



Plate 12



Plate 11



Plate 13



Plate 15



Plate 17



Plate 16



Plate 14

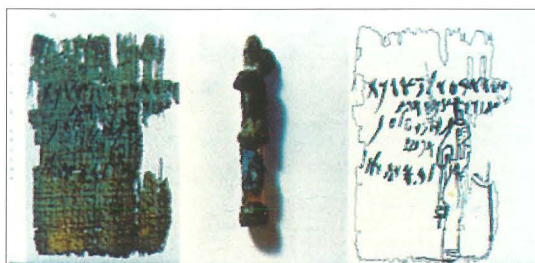


Plate 18



Plate 19



Plate 20



Plate 21



Plate 22



Plate 23

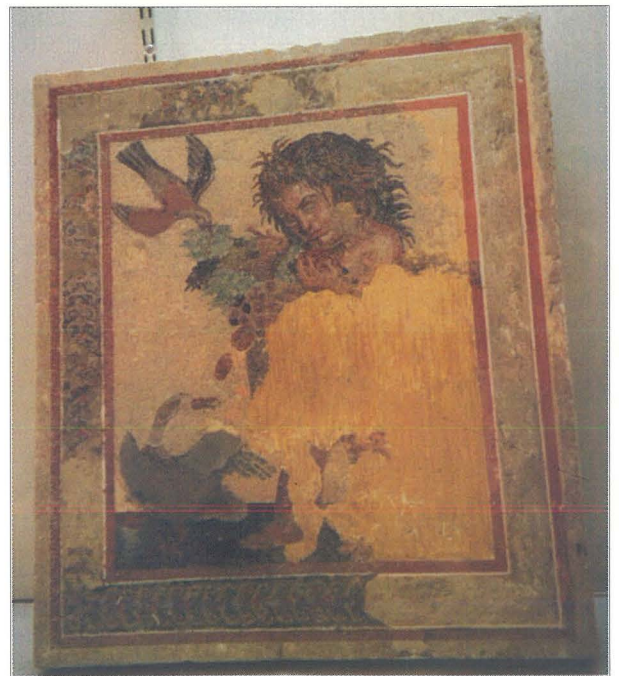


Plate 24

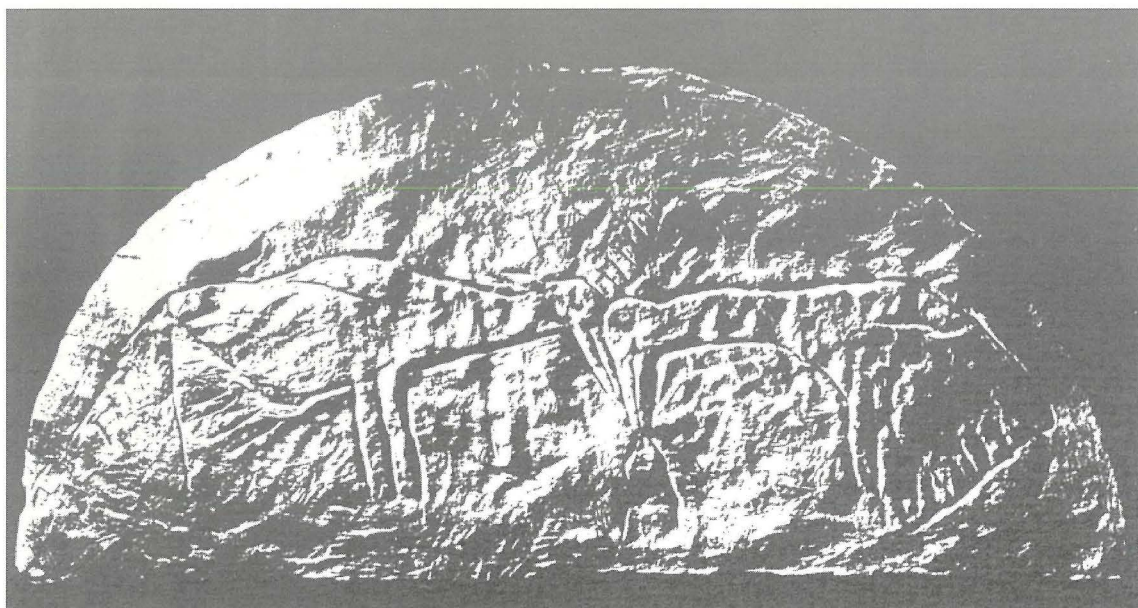


Plate 25

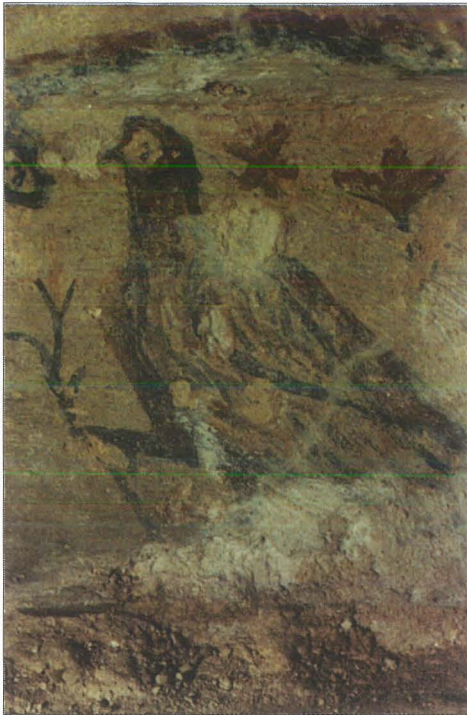


Plate 26

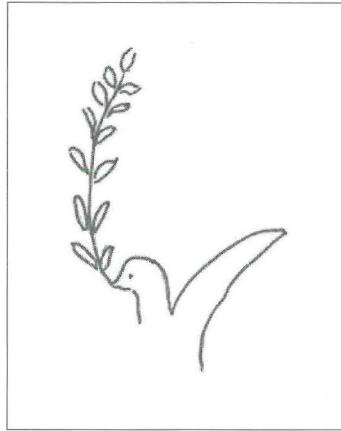


Plate 27



Plate 28

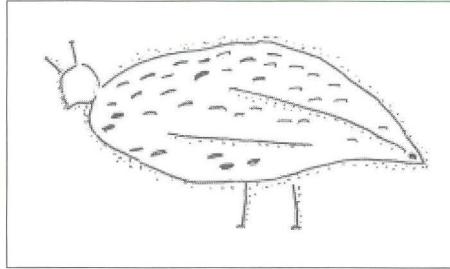


Plate 30



Plate 29



Plate 31



Plate 33



Plate 32

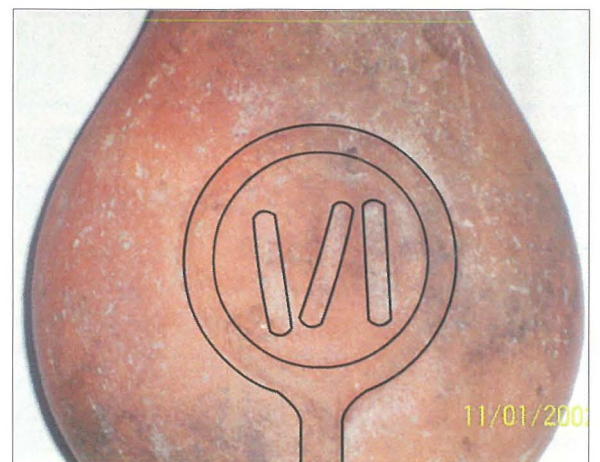


Plate 34



On the basis of their laminated structure, Zammit and Evans maintain that these miniature models were carved out of the layered shell of *Spondylus gaederopus* L. (Thorny oyster, *Gajdra*). This is an edible Mediterranean shallow-water bivalve that was formerly much more common on bottoms of Maltese harbours. Up to a couple of decades ago, this oyster could be collected close to shore (e.g. St Paul's Bay), but in recent years pollution of harbour waters has pushed the mollusc further out to sea or exterminated it completely from some areas.

The much softer bone of cuttle-fish (*Sepia*, *Sicča*) would, undoubtedly, have provided a much more easily acquired source material for prehistoric man, for the cuttle bone floats to shore and gets stranded on sandy beaches. As it is very easy to work, the cuttle bone was formerly used by jewellers to cast gold wedding rings featuring the 'clasped hands' (fidelity emblem or 'Zammit' emblem). Miniature 'birds' made from cuttle bone would likewise have had a layered structure, but they would have been much lighter and, probably, less durable.

S/S.7 [Pl.14]. This highly stylized bird pendant in well-polished hard green stone (L. 27mm, H. 24 mm) resembles some of the aforementioned models in the S/B. 4 group in having a long thick conical neck, small head, crouched body and the V-perforations in its flat base (see EVANS, 1971, Pl.37, fig.9). It bears nine enigmatic 1mm deep drill holes: four on back, four on neck and one on head.

S/S. 8 [Pl.15]. (see EVANS, 1971:64; Pl.37, figs.10) is a bird-pendant (L. 22mm, H. 17mm) with a large round head, short neck, a convex back and a flat base suggesting a floating aquatic-bird resembling a *duck*. It has no V-perforations but is pierced transversely by a hole through the lower part of its sides just above base. It is carved out of an almost flat pebble that is half hard green stone and half soft white stone. Such source material is not of local origin as no such green stone exists locally.

• *Punic Period (c. 7th - 4th centuries BC).*

Prehistoric temples have been the greatest source of local avian representations, mainly in the form of miniature models of birds perforated for suspension or threading in a necklace as a personal ornament. Punic (Phoenician) tombs,

too, have contributed some items of interest, but these are mainly in the form of amulets featuring the bird *Ibis* and the Falcon as a representation of the deities Thoth and Horus respectively. A small faience amulet, perforated at its upper end and said to represent Horus and Thoth, was recovered from a site at I-Iklin, Malta. [Pl.16]. Amulets of this type occur commonly on Phoenician-Punic sites (GOUDER, 1991: 8)

In 1887, Patri Manwel Magri S.J. recovered, from a tomb at *Tal-Ibraġ* (l/o St Andrews), a small amulet in stone bearing the image of an *Ibis*. As this talisman, an imitation of an Egyptian glazed pottery amulet, was not associated with datable material, it was not possible to have it dated precisely. On the basis of the tomb where it was found, however, it is attributable to the Punic (Phoenician) occupation of Malta (7th - 4th century B.C.)

From still another c. 7th-6th century B.C. Punic tomb located at *Għajn Klieb*, west of Rabat, the Museum authorities recovered also a rare and valuable composite amulet [Pl.17]. (see also GOUDER, 1971:311-312, fig.1; 1991:12-13). This consisted of two 25mm long gold amulets each in the form of a human figure, welded together back to back at some time in the past. One figure has the head of a falcon (a representation of the Falcon-headed deity Horus) whilst the other has a jackal's head (a representation of the Jackal-headed deity Anubis - the Lord of Cemeteries). The two deity representations were welded together presumably for better protection of the deceased person during his voyage to the Underworld.

In 1968, the National archaeological heritage was enriched further by a donation from the Hon. Dr Daniel Micallef of a very rare 6th century B.C. This 48 mm-high Phoenician Falcon-headed bronze amulet-sheath symbolizing the deity Horus contained a rolled up papyrus sheath fragment (c.7 sq.cm.) with a Phoenician inscription and the image of the Egyptian goddess Isis [Pl.18] (see also C.G. ZAMMIT, 1970: 9, A.R.M. for 1968; GOUDER, 1971:313-315, fig.2 and 1991:13). It is the cylinder's cap or cover that is shaped externally in the form of a falcon's head representing Horus. This is surmounted by the solar disc and wears the rearing '*uraeus*', or sacred hooded cobra of ancient Egypt, an emblem of royalty. It was discovered in

a Punic tomb at *Tal-Virtù*, Rabat, when construction works on Dr Daniel Micallef's villa accidentally penetrated, and destroyed, the grave.

The deity Horus, considered to be the chief physician of the gods and the symbol of the face of heaven by day, was represented by the Egyptians as a hawk or a human body with the head of a hawk. Thoth (Thout/Tahuti) was the Moon god and was represented by the Egyptians as having had a human body with the head of an *Ibis*. No such representations have been forthcoming from Maltese archaeological sites, where the deity is invariably represented by the bird *Ibis*.

Thoth was attributed with the possession of every kind of knowledge and hence considered to have been the inventor of letters, numbers, languages, arts and sciences - including medicine, botany, astronomy and architecture. His super-knowledge made him the greatest of magicians and healers and probably explains why his amulets are extremely common in Punic tombs throughout the Mediterranean (JAYNE, 1962:79-83).

Another interesting find was made in a tomb at Ghajn Qajjet, near Rabat, Malta. The treasure trove consisted of an imported Rhodian bowl bearing a neatly prepared image of a goose-like avian representation on its outside. [Pl.19]. The bowl is an imported Greek vessel of the 7th century B.C. and has acquired particular importance as it has helped to assign a more precise dating to the Phoenician material associated with it in the tomb (GOUDER, 1991:9, 12).

• *Roman (218 B.C -535 A.D.) and Early Christian Period.*

*The Annual Report of the Museum Department* for the financial year 1912-13 records the discovery, by a local farmer, of a series of well-tombs at a site known as *Taċ-Ċaġħki*, limits of Rabat. Over 48 of these rock-cut tombs and a small catacomb were investigated at this site by the Museum Dept. in 1912-13 (ZAMMIT, T., 1913), 1950-1951 (BALDACCHINO, 1954) and in 1968 (ZAMMIT, C.G., 1970). During early Roman times, this site must have been a vast necropolis. Among the fragmented human remains and the funerary objects contained within one of these tombs (1913) was an amulet (25mm x 15mm) in the shape of a dorso-ventrally flattened bird with semi-outstretched

wings [Pl. 20]. It was made of a light ruby-coloured resinous substance and had a hole at its middle for suspension. In 1995, the amulet could not be located in the local Museum of Archaeology and, as no mention of it is made by EVANS in his monumental *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Maltese Islands* (1971) - wherein he recorded all the archaeological material then available at the Malta National Museum of Archaeology - it is to be assumed that it was already not available for study at that time.

Dr T. Zammit, then Curator of Archaeology at the Valletta Museum describes the bird-amulet as being 'in the shape of a pigeon' (ZAMMIT, T., 1913:9). The illustration, which he himself prepared for his *Annual Report*, shows, however, the characteristic skull, beak and wing features of a Hawk or Falcon [Pl.20].

When in 1951, Dr Baldacchino investigated this same site, he recovered, from rock cut tomb number 23 in the grounds of the Government Elementary School, Rabat, a damaged terracotta representation of another bird (BALDACCHINO, 1954:vi-vi). As no illustration, description or Museum Registration number is given, this item, likewise, could not be identified with any certainty.

At the Museum of Roman Antiquities at Rabat, popularly referred to as 'The Roman Villa', there are, associated with other exhibits from *Taċ-Ċaġħki* tombs, two roughly made terracotta figurines each about 10cms high. They represent respectively, a cock [Pl.21] and a hen [Pl.22]. No specific reference to these two terracotta figurines could be found in the *Annual Reports of the Museum Department*.

In Roman times, the rearing of domestic animals was very common, and a more refined representation of a closely similar cock, in the form of an *oinochoe*, was recovered from Pompei (PAOLUCCI, 1999:41 fig.). From 4th Century onwards, terracotta statuettes were very popular. The chief function of these mostly hand-made naturalistic statuettes, especially those found in tombs of the earlier period, was Votive. Notwithstanding that the above-mentioned local terracotta representations, prevalent motifs in the period c.900 - 500 BC, now carry no trace of paint, it is generally held that such objects were originally *all* painted.

In the richly decorated town house which now houses the Museum of Roman Antiquities at Rabat, there is a pavement of mosaics consisting of a polychrome, three dimensional representation, with two 'doves' perched on the rim of a bowl, decorating the central panel or 'emblema' [Pl.23]. In fact, the composition, is almost identical to a mosaic now in the Capitoline Museum, Rome, major differences being in the position and number (four instead of two) of the birds. It is a well-known fact that some paintings and mosaics of Roman times are copies of famous Greek originals and this one reproduces a large composition by the celebrated Greek painter, Sosos of Pergamon (RICHTER, 1974:280 fig.394).

In the damaged emblema of an Early 1st Century B.C. mosaic in a nearby room, commonly held to represent an allegory of Autumn, a polychrome dove in flight decorates the left upper angle, whilst a perched duck fills the underlying corner [Pl.23]. Doves, like fish, were common decorative features in Roman floor mosaics and it is probable that the above-mentioned avian representations have no symbolic significance but are merely decorative motifs that contribute to fill and balance the picture (see GOUDER, 1983, figs. 3, 8).

The Early Christians likewise adopted avian representations in their long list of symbols. A very popular one is the pelican which, according to popular opinion, feeds its young with its own flesh. This is generally said to be a representation of the generosity of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Hence the presence of the bird sculptured in marble on the front of the altar of the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament at St Helen Basilica, Birkirkara.

The deeply incised avian representation of two big birds feeding their chick on the Globigerina Limestone columned portico at the Hal Resqun necropolis, located in Gudja in the vicinity of the Malta International Airport, have recently been the subject of a debate [Pl.24]. Presumably on the basis of the feeding scene, Zammit (1935) and Trump (1972) identified the birds as pelicans. Buhagiar (1992:170, 171, Fig.18a; 1998:227, 237 Fig.14) accepts Zammit's interpretation with some reservation as 'one of them wears a branched horn like a stag's antler, while the other one has an apparent tail and four legs'. The birds however have very little physical resemblance to pelicans, and Fenech (1997:145) is more critical, arguing that 'the

shape of the birds, their posture as well as their long neck and legs are more suggestive of cranes'. Cranes, tall wading birds superficially resembling herons, are now regular migrant visitors to Malta and have been visiting the Island since the Ice Age. Their presence in Maltese Pleistocene deposits was initially recorded by Lydekker (1890) and confirmed recently by Harrison (1979) and Northcote (1982, 1985).

As Mifsud & Mifsud (1997:159, footnote 166) attribute a Palaeolithic age to Hal Resqun, they speculate that the engraving in the arched space above the entrance was carried out by Palaeolithic man, and as Palaeolithic man generally always drew animals in his environment, they postulate that the avian representation is that of two extinct Maltese Pleistocene cranes, *Grus melitensis*. A plaster cast of this Hal Resqun engraving is preserved in the stores of the National Museum of Archaeology in Valletta [Pl. 25]. Further representations of the pelican in medieval times are dealt with under 'Medieval votive stone slabs'.

The white dove has always been a universally-accepted symbol of the Holy Spirit and of peace if the bird is carrying an olive branch. A number of 3rd Century frescos found in the Catacombs of St Agatha, in Rabat, Malta, represent birds among which figures prominently a dark coloured chubby 'dove' with a raised leg holding an olive twig between its toes. A number of birds in flight are seen in the background [Pl. 26] (see also CAMILLERI, 1984:41, 42, 43, 46, 47; BUHAGIAR, 1992:157 Fig.14, 161; 1998: 235, Fig.11).

From the nearby Catacombs of St Paul, Buhagiar (1998 : 236 fig.12) reproduces a fresco figuring a typical dove in flight carrying, in its beak, a small twig that is blooming at its tip [Pl.27].

Two other birds [Pl. 28, Pl. 29] are recorded from two frescos in St Agatha Catacombs. The paintings decorate the upper triangular space on the front of either side of the arched opening of a baldacchino type Early Christian tomb. The high legs of the birds exclude their being representations of a 'pelican' as recorded by Camilleri (1984:40) or of a 'dove or quail' as suspected by Buhagiar (1998: 225). The elegant shape of the left bird (Pl.28), its relatively short neck, high legs and moderately

long, pointed beak are more suggestive of a wader like the *pespisella* (Sandpiper), locally seasonally common. The artistry shown in this painting is by far superior to that shown in Pl.29 and suggests a different hand. The latter bird has a stout head with a strong, straight beak, a thick, long neck with a constriction at its base, a fairly stout body and long legs.

From Catacomb 3 of the so-called 'St Paul/St Agatha' Catacombs at Rabat, Buhagiar (1998:327) records two other avian representations. Both birds have their outline infilled with red ochre paint. One of the birds is apparently an 'unfinished symphony' of a stylized bird with long legs, large eyes and an incomplete beak. The other painting [Pl.30] represents a small-tailed large bird having two long projections over the head and several blotches of red ochre and charcoal blue paint on the body. The 'head gear' and the numerous body markings, possibly representing the characteristic 'eyes' seen on male peacocks, are suggestive of that bird. The lack of the typical long tail, however, make the avian representation, look more like that of a Guinea fowl (*Farawn*) than of a male peacock (*Pagun*).

#### *Medieval (Late Middle Ages) Votive Stone Slabs*

The Museum of St. Agatha possesses 89 medieval votive stone slabs, 19 of which are attached to the facade of the small Church overlying the St Agatha Catacombs at Rabat. They were inserted there in 1670, possibly for preservation, when the previous chapel, erected in 1504, was partially demolished. They probably formed a frieze in the old church. Two of the artifacts are dated '1504', the date when that old church was originally built (Camilleri, s.d. [1984], page 2). More than 20 of these votive slabs figure avian representations, some with the unmistakable symbolic pelican in the attitude of plucking its breast/body to feed its chicks [Pl. 31], figured by Camilleri, s.d. [1984], p.18, slab no.40; see also p.17, slabs nos. 38, 39).

#### *Oil lamps*

Amongst the large number of oil lamps housed in the Museum of Roman Antiquities, likewise at Rabat, there is one item that deserves special attention [Pl.32]. It is marked *M 57* and is said to be Byzantine, c.2nd Century A.D. It carries on its dorsal concavity (*discus*), the relief figure of a full-bearded old man holding a stick on his left and an eagle with outstretched wings and with head turned

to its right standing in front of his bust. The old man represents Zeus, the mythological god of the heavens, whilst the eagle is his characteristic emblem, which in Semitic mythology represents the sun god that was victorious over the powers of darkness and the underworld. The oil lamp, which is made of a light brown terracotta, lacks any inscription, bears two wick nozzles and has two air holes drilled in the discus — one in either wing.

Relief lamps having a discus decorated with mythological, religious, animal or floral themes were very popular in Italy in the middle years of the 1st century A.D. and continued being so until about the 6th century (BAILEY, D.M., 1972:22). The Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities of the British Museum, London, possesses a larger oil lamp (Lamp 1048, made in Italy during 1st Century A.D.) that bears an identical relief image of Zeus and his eagle. This however, is a single-nozzled and single-holed specimen (see BAILEY, 1972:30, Pl.10b).

As early as the 17th century, certain individuals, like Fra Gian Francesco Abela (1582 - 1655), author of the earliest history of the Maltese Islands, showed great interest in local archaeological finds and made extensive collections of such important material. Many of the objects which he had collected were acquired by the Order and placed for public viewing at the Public Library in Valletta. They later formed the nucleus of the Malta Museum of Archaeology which, in 1908, had its official origin in Xaghra Palace, Valletta — a building opposite St. John's Co-Cathedral. It is said (G.A. CIANTAR, 1772:173, quoting ABELA, 1647) that among the many items in Abela's collection there were oil lamps from an unstated locality bearing the stamped image of a Peacock (*Pagun*).

Peacocks do not figure on the list of local birds, but to the early Christians, irrespective of their nationality, the bird symbolized, not only the beauty, but also the immortality of the soul. Their conviction was based on the belief that once dried, peacock's meat - like the human soul - was incorruptible. The imagery of the peacock in Malta, like that of the pelican, is undoubtedly borrowed from other countries. The oil lamps bearing such an image, however, could possibly have been of local origin as this exotic bird is apparently

suspected to feature in the iconography of the Maltese rock-tombs and modern churches.

Abela's oil lamp is not figured, consequently, it is not possible to state whether the avian representation was actually that of a peacock or a layman's misidentification of some other bird. In fact, no such bird has ever been reported in literature of oil lamps in any museum of antiquities.

In the author's collection there is a single-nozzle oil lamp in red-slipped terra sigillata, max. length 129mm, max. width 76mm, which bears on its disc the right lateral view of a large dove or pigeon facing backwards towards the pinched handle of the oil lamp [Pl.33]. In its small beak, the large-eyed bird carries a stalked triangular object — apparently a bunch of grapes. In Christian lore, the bunch of grapes symbolises the wine of the Eucharist and therefore the blood of Christ. The tail of the bird is slightly fanned and the narrow wing tips arch over it. The bird is decorated all over with lines and rows of globules in relief — on wing, chest, tail and neck, where they form a collar. The lamp has marked evidence of having been used for the red colour of its 20 mm - wide round nozzle is altered by fire. It lacks inscriptions but has a peripheral canal decoration consisting of a row of three different motifs on either side — a horizontal modified S-spiral proximally, a median unit of concentric rings and a distal four-petalled flower. The disc is perforated by two circular 7mm air-holes whilst the lamp is stamped with a trade-mark on its underside [Pl.34]. This is in the form of three deep canals (width c.3-4mm, length 12-15mm) arranged vertically in a row so that the outer ones are parallel and the middle one leans obliquely to right (I / I), all within a 5mm-thick raised circle whose external diameter is 38mm. A raised rib extends posteriorly from the circle and is ultimately incorporated in the pinched 'handle'.

Its Maltese archaeological history is not known but Prof. Mgr Vincent Borg and Prof. Anthony Bonanno both agree that the ware is undoubtedly a palaeochristian North African oil lamp dateable to late 5th or early 6th century (Personal comm., 2002). Mgr V. Borg has kindly provided me with comparative illustrations from Abdelmajid (1976) and from Trost and Hellman (1996). None of the illustrations are identical to my specimen, but the 'Tunisian' lamp from the Musée du Bardo et de

Carthage illustrated by Abdelmajid Ennabli on Pl.XXXI, fig.590 likewise shows a bird with a bunch of grapes in its beak. The peripheral decoration, however, has four (not three) motifs on each side. Two of them (both similar to those on my lamp) are duplicate. The third decoration involving concentric circles is lacking in Abdelmajid's figure.

Some similarity was noted also to a Hayes Type II African Oil Lamp figured by Trost & Hellman (1996) as fig. 87 on Pl.XI. The similarity, however, is again limited to the bird, which likewise carries a bunch of grapes in its beak. The peripheral decoration is completely different.

In this connection it is interesting to record that Hayes believes that the similar collection of bilicin lamps at the Roman Villa in Rabat is not Tunisian, but Tripolitanian (Personal comm. Mgr V. Borg, 12/6/02).

#### *Conclusion and Comments*

Prehistoric cave paintings in other parts of the world show that Early Man attributed considerable *symbolic significance* to human and animal figures. In Malta, no prehistoric cave paintings of birds have, as yet, been discovered. In much later times, however, representations of certain birds and animals formed an important and interesting part of the religious symbolism of the Early Christians. It is consequently to be presumed that the considerable number of avian representations encountered in Maltese archaeological sites likewise had a symbolic significance. After all this length of time, however, we cannot now really appreciate or even interpret such representations.

The perforated tiny bird models found at the Tarxien Cremation Cemetery show that in the Maltese Islands, prehistoric Man adopted avian representations mainly for personal ornamentation. or for personal protection through the supernatural powers of the deity represented on the amulets. Some, like the larger bird model from Mnajdra, were prepared for decorative purposes. Others, like the *Ibis* on a stone slab at Ġgantija are just an expression of an artistic feeling rather than a representation of Thoth the god of Death. In addition, love of nature and appreciation of the aesthetic beauty of birds in the wild can be seen in

the dynamic representation of a number of crested birds in various flight positions incised on a five thousand year-old pottery-bowl fragment from Ġgantija. In this case, Prehistoric Man manifested evidence of great artistry to the extent of outlining each bird with gypsum.

The artist who drew the stylized figures of these crested birds can be considered to have been one of the earliest bird watchers on the Island, for he observed and represented them in various flight-positions. He noted such details as the posterior drag of the hanging feet soon after take-off, and the arching of their wings when in flight. The man must have seen the birds with his own eyes, either during his stay on the Island or before reaching it. Were it not for the discordant short beak and the very long head plume, the birds could possibly represent cranes (*Grus grus*, *Gruwwa*) or else a flock of Large Grey/Purple Herons (*Ardea cinerea / purpurea*, *Irsieset*, *Gherienaq*) or of the smaller Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Kwakk*) — a representation of which has recently figured on a local postage stamp set. All three heron species are still common visitors to the Island and, as represented in the drawing, these birds fly in flocks, generally in an inverted V-formation, slowly beating and arching their wings as shown in the incision. (Pl.3). With their short beaks, very long head plume and longish tail, however, the stylised birds resemble no known species now visiting the Maltese Islands.

Bird representations have been recorded from practically all the periods of archaeological time in Malta — including the Neolithic, Temple-building Period ('Copper Age'), Bronze Age, the Phoenician (Punic) occupation of the Island, the Early Christian Period and Roman Times. Avian representations have been encountered mainly at Ġgantija and 'Brochtorff Circle' (both in Xaghra, Gozo), Mnajdra (Qrendi), Tarxien Temples, Tarxien Cemetery and Hal Saflieni Hypogeum (Pawla), in the Punic tombs at Taċ-Ċaġhki (Rabat), Tal-Virtù (Rabat), Ghajn Klieb (Rabat), l-Iklin, Ta' L-Ibrag (St Andrews), and Tal-Horob (Xewkija, Gozo); in the ?Early Christian Catacombs at Hal Resqun (Gudja) and at Rabat (St Agatha, St Paul) and at the Roman Villa (Rabat).

From Ġgantija, Gozo, are recorded the Gypsum-inlaid incision of birds in flight and the figure of an *Ibis* on a Globigerina Limestone block. The larger unperforated miniature water-bird model from the Mnajdra megalithic site probably served as a votive offering or as a household decoration. Avian representations sculptured on pottery or prepared as amulets in baked clay or in faence have been recorded mainly from Tarxien, whilst most of the early representations from Hal Saflieni are stylized miniature molluscan-shell, stone or terracotta models of ducks and other floating water-birds. They are perforated for suspension or threading in necklaces as personal ornaments or amulets.

The portrayal of stylized birds on pottery was probably merely an artistic or aesthetic contribution, whilst the perforated or unperforated miniature terracotta models, which are thought to have served as personal ornaments or household decorations, could also have been used as protective amulets or talismans. As the *perforated* miniature bird models are somewhat similar to the Russian earthenware whistles figured by Buchner (1980:286, Pl. 354), a special investigation was carried out to exclude their being prehistoric Maltese whistles. British Museum exhibits show that larger 'Bird call' whistles, were not rare in nearby Italy. The large number of protective amulets recovered from local archaeological sites, particularly Punic tombs, reveal that ancient races inhabiting the Island of Malta were very superstitious. For protection, they often resorted to safeguards or amulets. Some of these birds featured as deity representations - the glossy ibis representing the deity Thoth and the falcon's head representing the deity Horus. Both deities are Egyptian gods, for it should be remembered that Phoenician rulers carried with them throughout the Mediterranean, not only Egyptian wares, oriental customs and lore, but also their deities.

The birds represented in Maltese archaeological finds include:

Ibis — as an incised figure on a Globigerina Limestone block from Ġgantija and as an amulet in stone from a Punic tomb at Ta' l-Ibrag;  
crested birds in flight (?cranes, ?herons ?night herons) — as incised figures from Ġgantija, Gozo;  
aquatic birds — as miniature models from Mnajdra and Tarxien megalithic Temples, Tarxien

Cremation Cemetery and especially from Hal Saflieni Hypogeum;  
 partridge or quail — as a pottery decoration from Tarxien Megalithic Temples;  
 European quail — as a miniature model from Tarxien Cremation Cemetery;  
 hawk/falcon — as an amulet in ruby coloured resinous substance from Tač-Ċaghki well tombs, as a gold amulet, as a faence amulet from Phoenician- Punic site at I-Iklin, and as a bronze amulet-sheath from Punic tombs on the outskirts of Rabat (Malta); cranes  
 — as deeply incised paintings at Hal Resqun Catacomb;  
 goose — as a decoration on an important 7th century Greek bowl from Ghajn Qajjet, Rabat.

The record of avian representations as religious symbols comes mainly from Rabat (Malta). These include mainly frescos featuring ‘pelicans’, doves and other unidentified birds at St Agatha Catacombs as well as the Medieval votive stone slabs at St Agatha. The latter feature, in relief, eagles and other avian representations, including the symbolic pelican plucking its breast or body to feed its chicks. There is now much doubt about the nature of the birds incised on the stone wall over the arched entrance of the 3-4th century Early Christian Catacombs at Hal Resqun Catacombs (Gudja). If the engraving represents pelicans, then the ‘artist’ had absolutely no idea of the physical appearance of these birds.

Lamps formed a large proportion of the votive offerings at certain shrines, but in Malta oil lamps are generally associated with funeral furniture. In addition to the record of impressions of what has been described as a ‘peacock’ and of a highly decorated ‘pigeon’ on an oil lamp from an unstated locality and of a painting in the Sts Paul/Agatha necropolis, there are also representations of other birds, mainly doves, as *decorative elements in floor mosaics* from the Roman town house in Rabat (Malta).

Whatever the reason for their preparation or the medium used in their manufacture, these avian representations — symbolic, stylised or otherwise — are a sure indication that birds had an important place in the culture of the earlier inhabitants of the Maltese Islands.

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*Illustrations of Avian Representations from Maltese Prehistoric and Medieval sites:*

Registration numbers refer to National Museum of Archaeology, Malta [N.M.A.];

Other abbreviations: L = length, W = width, H = height  
A.R.M. = Annual Report of the Museums Department

- Pl. 1. Postage and/or revenue stamps of America, Czechoslovakia, German Republic, Nazi Germany, Egypt and Libya showing the Eagle emblem.
- Pl. 2. The 24 cms high 'Ibis block' from the Ġgantija megalithic building. Reproduced from LA CROIX, 1851, Pl.27, fig.2. Lost.
- Pl. 3. Pottery fragment, Ġgantija, Gozo, L. 75 mm. Plumed birds in flight. Exhibited at the Gozo Museum of Archaeology, Rabat. No Museum registration number. Courtesy: George Azzopardi, Curator, Gozo Museum of Archaeology.
- Pl. 4. Headless orange-brown bird model, L. 48 mm, Mnajdra, 1974 (hitherto unrecorded). Original sketches by the author.
- Pl. 5. N.M.A., T/B 20. Tarxien, 1919. Wide-bodied 'sitting' bird, not decorated, L. 13mm, two V-perforations in base. Bone/ivory. Drawing by Anna Borg Cardona.
- Pl.6. N.M.A., T/P.78. Sherd with applied decoration of horns enclosing a bird with deep pitted decoration. Courtesy: Patrimonju. Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis.
- Pls.7-9. Clay bird models from Tarxien Cremation Cemetery, N.M.A.
- Pl.7. N.M.A. TC/P. 1015. Buff clay bird, burnished surface, eyes marked, decorated with incised parallel lines (two rings on neck, two zig-zagged lines on dorso-lateral side), shark's tooth-edge markings filling empty areas, a narrow, vertical, penetrating hole through body. L = 64 mm. Drawing by Anna Borg Cardona.
- Pl.8. N.M.A., TC/P. 1016. Bird in dark brown clay, polished surface. L. = 58mm Reproduced from Zammit 1916.
- Pl.9. N.M.A., TC/P.1017. Clay bird, dark, shiny, undecorated with horizontal base. L. = 67 mm. Non-penetrating holes for eyes. Penetrating hole in neck and through back. Reproduced from Zammit 1916.
- Pl.10. N.M.A., S/B 4. Nine Bird-pendants in molluscan shell. See also Pls. 8, 9, 10. Courtesy: Patrimonju. Photo by Peter Bartolo Parnis.
- Pl.11. N.M.A., S/B.4 (pars). A headless bird-pendant in molluscan shell. Note characteristic laminations. Courtesy: Patrimonju. Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis.
- Pl.12. N.M.A., S/B. 4 (pars). Two Bird-pendants in molluscan shell. Courtesy: Patrimonju. Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis.
- Pl.13. N.M.A., S/B. 4 (pars). The only molluscan shell bird-pendant in the S/B. 4 group to have eyes marked. Note characteristic laminations. Courtesy: Patrimonju. Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis.
- Pl.14. N.M.A., S/S 7. 'Bird pendant', polished imported hard green stone, L. 27mm. V-perforations in flat base and nine enigmatic 1 mm deep drill holes in back (4), neck (4) and head (1). Courtesy: Patrimonju. Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis.
- Pl.15. N.M.A., S/S. 8. Flat, legless bird-pendant, L. 22 mm., anterior part hard green stone and posterior part soft white stone. One transverse perforation just above base. No V-perforations.
- Pl.16. N.M.A. Small faence amulet representing Horus and Thot. L-Iklin. Courtesy: Dr T.C. Gouder.
- Pl.17. N.M.A. A combined golden amulet Horus + Anubis. Tomb, Ghajn Klieb, Rabat. Courtesy: Dr T.C. Gouder. Computer image cleaning by Michael Borg Cardona.
- Pl.18. N.M.A. A 4.85 cm high bronze falcon-headed amulet sheath. Tube containing Papyrus (c.7 sq. cm) with Phoenician inscription and image of Egyptian goddess Isis. 6th century B.C. Tal-Virtù, Rabat, Malta, 1968. Courtesy: Dr T.C. Gouder.
- Pl.19. N.M.A. Rhodian Pottery bowl with goose decoration, 7th century, Tomb, Ghajn Qajjet, Rabat, Malta. Courtesy: Dr T.C. Gouder.
- Pl.20. Flattened perforated amulet recorded in A.R.M. 1913:19. Not located.
- Pl.21. A cock, Pl. 22. A hen. Two terracotta figurines, H.10 cm *Taċ-Ċaghki* tombs, Rabat. Now at the Museum of Roman Antiquities, Rabat, Malta. Photo: Anna Borg Cardona, 2001.
- Pl.23. Two 'doves' on the rim of a bowl decorate the central panel or 'emblema' of a mosaic pavement at the Museum of Roman Antiquities, Rabat. Photo: Anna Borg Cardona.
- Pl.24. A polychrome dove in flight at left upper angle and a perched duck at left lower angle of a damaged Early 1st Century mosaic emblema, Museum of Roman Antiquities, Rabat. Photo: Anna Borg Cardona.
- Pl.25. Avian representation incised over main entrance to the Hal Resqun Catacomb (Gudja). Plaster cast, N.M.A. (stores).
- Pl. 26. A 'dove' with a raised leg holding an olive branch between its toes. Detail of a 3rd Century fresco, St Agatha Catacombs, Rabat, Malta. More birds in background. Courtesy: Fr Victor Camilleri MSSP.
- Pl.27. Outline of a dove in flight carrying, in its beak, a small twig that is blooming at its tip. Catacombs of St Paul, Rabat, Malta. Drawing by Anna Borg Cardona.
- Pl.28. left and Pl.29. right. St Agatha Catacombs, Rabat, Malta. Avian representations (resembling shore waders) painted in upper triangular space on either side of the arched entrance to an Early Christian baldacchino tomb in St Agatha Catacombs, Rabat, Malta. Courtesy: Fr Victor J, Camilleri MSSP.
- Pl.30. 'St Paul/St Agatha' Catacomb 3, Rabat. An avian representation that has its outline infilled with red ochre. Numerous blotches of red ochre and charcoal-blue paint adorn bird's plumage. Drawing by Anna Borg Cardona based on Buhagiar's illustration.
- Pl.31. One of the 19 medieval votive stone slabs now adorning the facade of St. Agatha Church, Rabat, Malta. A pelican plucks its breast to feed its three chicks. Courtesy: Rev. Victor J. Camilleri MSSP, Curator, St Agatha.
- Pl.32. Museum of Roman Antiquities, Rabat. Oil lamp 'M. 57' with two wick nozzles, two air holes, disc decorated with relief figure of Zeus and his eagle. Photo: Anna Borg Cardona.
- Pls.33. (Surface view), Pl. 34. (Underside view) of a North African oil lamp in red-slipped terra sigillata in Author's Collection.
- Pl.33. Disc with highly decorated pigeon and two air holes. Photo: G. Zammit Maempel.
- Pl.34. Impressed trade mark on underside. Computer image editing by Michael Borg Cardona.