

# Pipes from the Royal Naval Hospital, Bighi, Malta

John Wood

*Introduction by Christian Mifsud*

*Malta was occupied by the British in 1800 and retained at the Congress of Vienna. From 1803 until 1832 the Royal Navy's hospital on the island was housed in a variety of accommodation in or near Valletta, none of it purpose built. In 1827 the hospital could no longer cope adequately with the casualties from the battle of Navarino. In 1830 a permanent hospital site was created on the promontory of Bighi in Grand Harbour. This facility closed in 1970. Recent development on the site necessitated archaeological supervision which revealed artefacts including these smoking pipes.*

## Introduction

As one looks out from Valletta over the Grand Harbour, Bighi's ex-Naval hospital dominates the promontory between Fort Ricasoli (Kalkara) and Fort St Angelo (Birgu). Set on the edge of the San Salvatore promontory, the complex commands views over the Grand Harbour, has access to two inlets and enjoys unobstructed views of Valletta (Fig. 1).

Originally conceived as a baroque villa with extensive gardens, the complex started being built in 1675 for Fra Giovanni Bichi, Grand Cross of the Order of St John, Prior of Capua and nephew to Pope Alexander VII Chigi. Bichi did not live to see the building completed. The villa was inherited by his descendants who occupied it until the

late eighteenth century. Similarly, to several other cases, a corrupt version of the family's surname gave the name to the villa, hence 'Bighi' from Bichi.

With the arrival of the British Forces in Malta, Villa Bighi became a prime location for the development of a Naval Hospital. Started in 1830, the villa was kept as the central complex whilst two new wings were added according to designs by Sir George Whitmore in collaboration with Sir Pulteney Malcolm. Subsequently, the hospital was repeatedly modified and extended to serve sanitary needs. Bighi Hospital served to nurse and give medical care to casualties of war whenever hostilities broke out in the eastern Mediterranean, earning Malta the title of 'the nurse of the Mediterranean'. Bighi Hospital was central to the nursing of the afflicted from the Crimean War (1853-56) and during WW1 accommodated 2,500 officers and 55,400 men injured at Gallipoli (1915-1916).

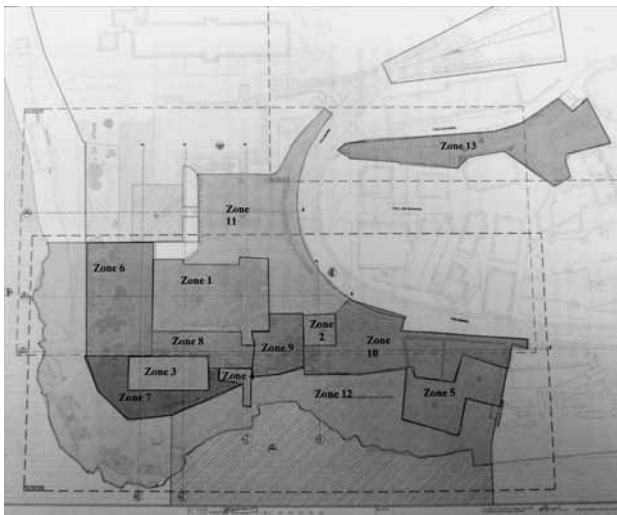
After the granting of independence to the Maltese Islands in 1964, Bighi Hospital was one of several institutions which suffered a decline and by 1970 the hospital closed its doors for the last time. For a short period afterwards, the complex was occupied as a trade school and secondary school until it had to be abandoned due to structural instability. Various complexes of the hospital and the gardens were also lost in the 1980s when these were pulled down to make space for a new road and housing estate.

In 2010, the Government of Malta submitted an application to renovate part of the surviving complex and create the National Interactive Science Centre. Starting in 2013, archaeological surveillance and investigation works were carried out by En-Sure Ltd under the direction of the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage. The archaeological



**Figure 1:** Bighi Hospital from the north. Postcard, private collection, Hadrian Wood.

remains identified on site range from remnants of the baroque garden walls to preparatory construction fills for the later hospital buildings. Various middens were also identified. It was in one of these middens that the smoking pipes under study in this article were found. This midden was identified behind the entrance of the Mental Ward (Fig. 2). Located beneath one of the windows of the Mental Ward building, the mound of debris provided a conspicuous number of smoking pipes in various states of preservation and completeness. The archaeological investigations indicate that the midden was likely a primary dumping site with various tipping lines being identified during excavations.



**Figure 2:** BGH2014/Zone 10 – The Mental Ward, built in the late 1890s.

The study of these smoking pipes was carried out at the offices of the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage in St Christopher Street, Valletta following the granting of permission from the Superintendent to study the collection. The following is a summary of the artefacts.

### British pipes

From the hospital's initiation in the 1830s Malta and its indigenous people served the UK in many ways. The latter's tastes are manifest in this collection and their familiarity with *chibouk* style pipes is apparent. However, an overwhelming 93% of artefacts are European, with which British subjects were familiar, 43% of these come from identifiable sources, 27% from Scotland, which appears first in this article. The 'B' reference at the end of each catalogue entry refers to the post-excavation archive.

### Scotland

1. A bowl (Fig. 3) with a goat's head at its base. B1.

This 'Goathead' design was produced by a number of Glasgow factories. It was mould number 77, MacDougall, Glasgow, and Thomas Davidson, mould no. 92 (Gallagher and Price 1987, 128).



**Figure 3:** Bowl depicting a 'goathead'.

2. Two bowls (Fig. 4), both with a field gun and ammunition on the right and crossed rifles on the left. B2.

These look very like pipes produced by William White of Glasgow, in a group from the early years of WWI (cf Gallagher 1987a, 89).



**Figure 4:** Two bowls depicting a field gun, ammunition and crossed rifles.

3. Bowl and stem fragment (Fig. 5). The bowl has highly stylised floral decoration. The vestige of stem bears a figure 9. B9.

This is probably a D. McDougall product from Glasgow, since they are known to have produced this pattern and '9' appears to have been a generic number that this firm used for assorted common 'cutties', listed simply as 'Scotch Cutty' in the 1900 price list. Variant of the McDougall cutty.



**Figure 5:** MacDougall cutty.

4. A bowl (Fig. 6) with thistle leaves on both sides and a leaf on the seam. The thistle is the emblem of Scotland. B10.

5. A bowl and stem fragment (Fig. 7). The bowl has an overlapping petal design, the stem has an incuse 9 and part of the looped cartouche of a maker's mark in relief. B11. McDougall pattern number 9, a variant of the 'Scotch Cutty' but of a different design from No. 3.

6. A bowl with an upright hand (Fig. 8). B24. This depicts the 'Red Hand of Ulster' which, during the Irish diaspora in the nineteenth century, was regarded mainly as a symbol of ethnic identity (Brighton 2004). However, this pipe is not from Ulster but made, probably in Scotland, for the Irish wherever they were (pers. comm. Dennis Gallagher).

7. Five bowls with fluting on their lower halves, two with wide fluting and three with narrower (two illustrated, Fig. 9). B12 and B30.

8. Part of a stem and spur stamped IRISH on both sides (Fig. 10). This, designed to appeal to the Irish, could also be a Glasgow product. B4.



**Figure 7:** McDougall pattern number 9.



**Figure 8:** Hand of Ulster.



**Figure 6:** Thistle leaf – the emblem of Scotland.

9. A stem fragment with a lip in high relief, marked 98 D (Fig. 11). B7.

The '98' is a pattern number and the 'D' the first part of the maker's name. In this instance the pipe can be identified as part of a Gladstone design from the distinctive shaped section on the stem. The only Scottish manufacturer that is known to have made a Gladstone pattern as catalogue number 98 is Davidson's of Glasgow. They illustrate

an example in their catalogue of c1880 and list a 'Large Gladstone' as pattern 98 in their 1900 price list. This firm operated from 1862 to 1911, but only had 43 patterns in about 1864, so this example can be dated to c1870 to 1910 (Gallagher and Price 1987, 124; Gallagher 1987b, 154).

10. A fragment (Fig. 12) inscribed CHRISTIE on one side and GLASGOW on the other. B6. William Christie of Glasgow was active from 1857 to 1952.

11. A fragment of stem inscribed GLASGOW and GALL... Not illustrated. B8.



Figure 9: MacDougall cutty.



Figure 10: Part of a stem inscribed IRISH on both sides.



Figure 11: Stem marked 98 D.



Figure 12: Inscribed Christie on one side and Glasgow on the other.

12. Stem fragments bearing inscriptions: GLASGOW, DOUGALL, M'DOUGALL and W WHITE (William White of Glasgow). Not illustrated. B5.

### Southern England

13. Bowl fragment with letters ...NON below the rim, above crossed torpedoes (Fig. 13). B15.

The full rim lettering should read Vernon and relates to the naval establishment of HMS Vernon in Old Portsmouth. This was originally situated on a series of old hulks in the harbour, but in 1876 HMS Vernon became the home of the Royal Navy's Torpedo Branch at Portsmouth. It later became a shore base. Similar pipes were produced by a number of Portsmouth makers (cf. Fox and Hall 1979, 22 and 42, no. 138). Portsmouth pipes seem to be made for the local market, in one case for the RN Torpedo Branch, so probably were brought to Malta as private possessions.

14. A fragment of bowl (Fig. 14) with stem marked CLEAVER/ SOUTHAMPTON. A product of Joseph Cleaver of Southampton [reference?]. B16

15. Fragment of spurred bowl and stem (Fig. 15), stem marked ... CHESTER on one side and LEIGH on the other. Probably Leigh of Portchester, business active 1840 to 1932 (Arnold 1976, 47-8; Fox and Hall 1979, 18). B16.



Figure 13: Bowl with crossed torpedoes.



Figure 14: Stem marked CLEAVER/SOUTHAMPTON.



Figure 15: Fragment marked LEIGH/ ... CHESTER.

### London

16. Stem fragments with the mark ...OP on a socketed bowl type (Fig. 16). B19.

Possibly part of a 'Crop' mark from London. Charles Crop & Sons were in business from 1856 to 1924 (Oswald 1975, 133).

17. Two stem fragments marked LONDON and C. CROP (Fig. 17). B20.

18. Fragment of stem marked WILLIAMS and LONDON (Fig. 18). B21

Possibly a product of Thomas Williams, recorded as a maker in Walker Street, Poplar, London from 1882 to 1894 (Atkinson and Oswald 1969, 225).

### Other British

19. Spurred bowl and stem fragment with mould-applied milling on rim and, on the left and right hand side, two monarchs (Fig. 19). B41.

One suggestion proposes they may be King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. So, this pipe must date from after 1902. It is possible that it depicts George V and Queen Mary, since Alexandra is usually depicted with her hair in a bun. If this is the case, it would date from after 1911.

20. A bowl depicting a crown on the smoker's left and, on the smoker's right, the Prince of Wales' feathers (Fig. 20). B25.

21. A bowl with an anchor on one side and a ship on the reverse and a leaf on the seam (Fig. 21). B18.

22. Front half of a bowl with relief decoration, possibly a ship's wheel (Fig. 22). B 40.

23. A bowl (Fig. 23) is designed to represent a rather stern human face, looking forwards. This artefact is in a dilapidated condition. B44.

24. Three variants of ROAB bowls (Fig. 24). B22.

A bowl with the head of a buffalo facing the smoker with

...OB above and deep mould-imparted milling.

A spurred bowl and stem fragment with R... above buffalo horn facing away from smoker, and shallow mould-imparted milling. with a head of a buffalo and milled rim. The stem is marked . . . R.



Figure 16: Fragment of socketed bowl marked ..OP.



Figure 17: Stem fragments marked LONDON and C.CROP.



Figure 18: Stem fragment marked WILLIAMS and LONDON.



Figure 19: Bowl with King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra.



Figure 20: Prince of Wales' feathers.



Figure 23: Human face.



Figure 21: Anchor on one side and a ship.



Figure 22: Bowl with relief decoration, possibly a ship's wheel.

A bowl with RA.. over buffalo horn facing smoker, rim with shallow mould-imparted milling and foliage around base.

These pipes were made for the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes, one of the largest fraternal societies in Britain. Variants on this design were made by many British pipe-makers.

25. Two bowls (Figs. 25) have hearts filled with lattice and a feather on the seam. B34 and 43.

26. A 'basket' bowl (Fig. 26). B26.

27. Three fragments of a 'basket bowl' with a band of tulips below (Fig. 27). B32.

28. White clay bowl decorated at the seam with a thin veined leaf and on the sides a hand above an eye surrounded by a branch of fleshy leaves (Fig. 28). B33

29. Three bowls with floral decoration with stylised rose and thistle (two illustrated, Fig. 29). B29.

These are similar in design to No. 5 but not identical and presumably by a different maker.

30. Spurred bowl and stem (Fig. 30), the bowl representing a tulip head. B39.

31. Stem marked J.W&Q (Fig. 31). B31.

This could be a retailer's mark rather than that of a manufacturer. Sometimes large retailers commissioned pipes with their own mark.

32. A fragment of stem surmounted by a reclining dog (Fig. 32). B38.

33. A fragment is from the stem of a 'Thorn' pipe, a form produced by many makers (Fig. 33). B20.

34. A stem fragment with part of a spur, stem marked SMOKE JACKS YARN/ SMOKE OLD JOE (Fig. 34). B14.

Old Joe and Jacks Yarn may be American brands of tobacco. The 'Old Joe' Camel brand of tobacco was introduced



**Figure 24:** Three ROAB bowls.



**Figure 25:** Hearts filled with lattice.



**Figure 26:** Basket bowl.



**Figure 27:** Basket bowl.



**Figure 28:** Bowl with floral decoration



**Figure 29:** Bowls with floral decoration with stylised rose and thistle.



Figure 30: Pipe with tulip head bowl.



Figure 31: Bowl with stem marked J.W&Q.



Figure 32: Stem fragment with reclining dog.



Figure 33: Thorn stem.



Figure 34: Stem marked 'Smoke Old Joe'.

in 1913 by the R. J. Reynolds tobacco company, North Carolina (McDonough and Egolf 2015, 311).

#### Decorative themes

As might be expected at a British military establishment there are several pipes which appeal to British subjects loyal to King and country. Other pipes depict items of warfare, motifs that would inspire patriotic soldiers and sailors. Also represented are variants on the design adopted by the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes, one of the largest fraternal societies in Britain. Another popular source of decoration has an animal, vegetable or mineral theme. The human face and also a pet dog have been used. There are themes with nostalgic appeal, such

as tulips and roses. Some pipes have simple geometric shapes like convex curves or oval arches.

#### Chibouks

*Chibouk*, the long stemmed Turkish pipe, translates as *pipa tal-qasba* (reed pipe) in Maltese. According to written and depicted references this style appears to have been the preference of Maltese males. Malta, home to the Knights of Saint John, was a cosmopolitan culture, not entirely self-sufficient in basics, let alone luxury items. The residents relied on imports. In 1636 there was a tobacco retailer in the harbour area. Chibouks, found the length and breadth of the Mediterranean and the Middle East, were imported into Malta. Within living memory



itinerant ‘Turks’ (North African nationals) were selling their wares in Malta, including *chibouks* (pers. comm. Guido Lanfranco).

35. Two fragments of *chibouk* (Fig. 35). The artefact on the right is a piece of bowl, rim and shank in mid brown clay. The rounded bowl is decorated around the upper half with chevrons interspersed at the edges with impressed full stops. Above and below are horizontal bands of rouletting. The other, left hand fragment, of similar clay with chocolate coloured coating is part of a bowl decorated with the common gadroon motif. B45.

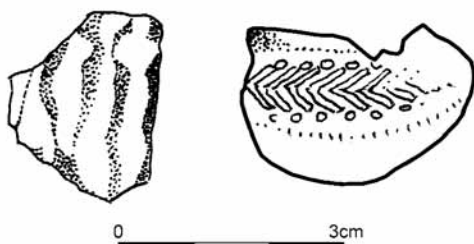


Figure 35: Two fragments of ‘pipa tal-qasba’.

36. Incomplete *chibouk* (Fig. 36). A fragment of a grey clay bowl and shank. The rim, top of the shank and termination are missing. The bowl has a trace of rouletted decoration where it would have joined the rim. Mould made. The entire fragment has a black appearance. Plain bowls are found in abundance. However, this artefact has too few characteristics to predict age or origin with any accuracy. B46a.

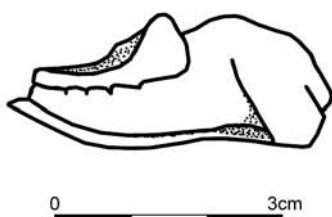


Figure 36: Fragment of a grey clay bowl and shank.

37. Incomplete *chibouk*, fragment of a grey clay pipe. Most of the bowl and all the rim is missing. The termination is badly damaged. Mould made. The body has a black appearance. What remains of the underside of a bulbous termination has the start of a keel feature running under the bowl. The sides of the keel are delineated by a rouletted decoration (Fig. 37). B46b.

38. Incomplete *chibouk*, a pale terracotta fragment of the lower part of a bowl with damaged shank. This latter

feature is lacking most of the outer surface along the top left hand side. Shank opening 8mm. The fragment of bowl has the beginnings of a gadroon decoration and the shank is embellished with bands of impressed squares and a large roulette at the start of the termination (Fig. 38). B46c.

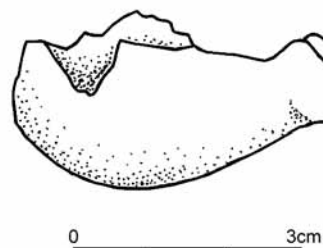


Figure 37: Fragment of a grey clay pipe.

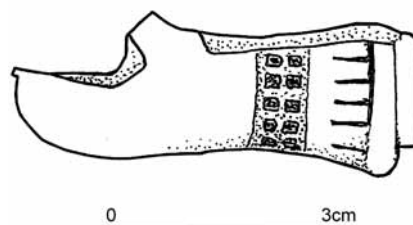


Figure 38: Pale terracotta fragment.

39. A mould-made *chibouk* in terracotta clay (Fig. 39) consisting of a bowl, shank and termination. The rim is missing. Shank opening 12mm. The shank has a round raised bump on the left side and a very worn band of rouletting where it meets the termination. There is a grey deposit inside the bowl that smokers call *dottle*. Eighteenth to nineteenth century. B47.

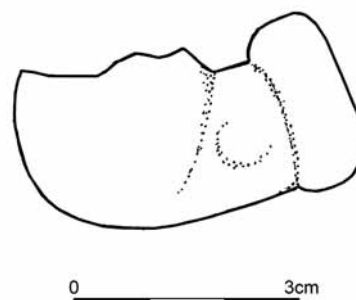
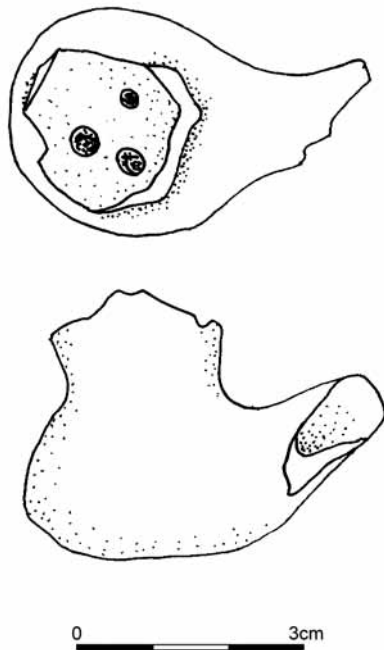


Figure 39: Mould-made terracotta ‘pipa tal-qasba’.

40. A mould made terracotta *chibouk* (Fig. 40), the bowl is complete, the rim damaged and shank partly missing. Three holes are pierced forming a grate between bowl and rim. This is a common feature on pipes produced in Venice. Ten similar artefacts, either from the quarantine harbour or Dockyard Creek, exist in private collections or the National Museum, Malta. Another artefact found in a salt water canal at Isola Lunga, Sicily was described as a hashish pipe. This idea was supported in a personal communication by J.W.Humphrey, Associate Dean at the University of Calgary, Alberta, whose work at Mytilene, Lesbos, produced artefacts with similar features (Humphrey 1990, 2-9). To my knowledge traces of cannabis are yet to be scientifically proven. B48.

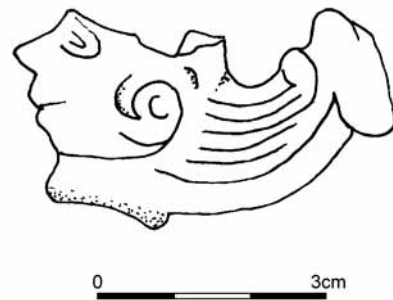


**Figure 40:** Three pierced holes form a grate between bowl and rim.

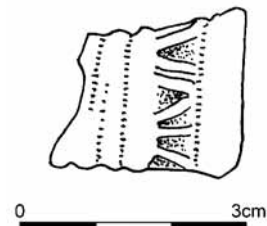
41. A very pale terracotta pipe (Fig. 41) with covering of dark brown slip which has worn off in places. The bowl is incomplete, shank and termination intact. Shank opening 8mm. The remainder of the bowl has facial features. On the shank protruding lines link the head to the termination. Facial features were popular with nineteenth century British, Dutch and French pipe makers. B49.

42. A very pale terracotta fragment with impressed triangular design (Fig. 42). Two bands of rouletting circle the narrower diameter with another circle nearest the larger end. A bore of 8mm suggests this is the termination of a shank. B50.

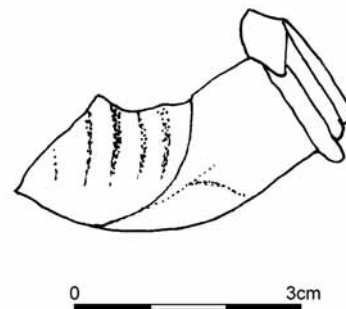
43. Fragment of terracotta bowl, shank and chipped termination (Fig. 43). This artefact has a coat of black slip. Shank opening 10mm. The bowl has a gadroon decoration and the shank tapers into a keel underneath. Eighteenth to nineteenth century. B51.



**Figure 41:** Terracotta pipe with brown slip.



**Figure 42:** Terracotta fragment with impressed design.



**Figure 43:** Terracotta bowl and shank.

## Discussion

In the nineteenth century Malta was effectively a British protectorate. Between 1854 and 1857 the island was used as a staging post for the war in Crimea. Thousands of sailors and troops passed through Malta *en route* to the Black Sea, the port and facilities of Varna, Bulgaria, being their first destination. At this time Malta was experiencing boom conditions. However, the rate of local emigration rose when hundreds of natives followed in the wake of the troops to act as batmen, or to find employment as merchants, pedlars and drivers (Price 1954).

One source of increased income was the employment of Maltese in the Crimea. Several inhabitants were employed by the Commissariat (a British military branch

catering mainly for military organisation), police, medical departments and by the dockyard for services in the Levant. A group of Maltese left with the Commissary officers in February 1854, some as temporary clerks and interpreters (NA WO Records Class 58, v109). The dockyard employed boatmen at four shillings a day (*Malta Times* 27 November 1855).

Maltese doctors were also engaged. But the bulk of Maltese were occupied as muleteers for the transport of the armies in the Crimea. By October 1855 there were about 350 Maltese muleteers receiving 2s 6d a day (PA Valletta Desp GOV vol 7). Employment in the East offered small fortunes to those who risked being engaged. And many Maltese did.

Reed pipes (*chibouks* or *pipi tal-qasba*) were popular with the Maltese and pipes manufactured in Varna have been found in Malta and Gozo. No. 15 in the Gozo museum collection has an oval mark with seven raised dots impressed in the shank, provenance of a Varna product (Robinson 1985). Another Varna pipe, Ca 1 with a stylised bird symbol (Stančeva 1972), was found in an old sewer system at the Auberge de Castille, Valletta.

Because of the characteristically small bore of the shank, Nos. 38 and 42 were probably made before the opening of Bighi as RNH. However, given the frugal nature of the working man, it is possible that they kept them as long as they could. Nos. 39 and 41 could be nineteenth century and are typically eastern Mediterranean. No. 41 is possibly French or Dutch. The remaining five reed pipes have too few characteristics to predict age and origin.

### *Maltese Shipping Registers.*

Shipping Registers suggest likely sources, Italy, Sicily, Turkey and North Africa (Fig. 44). Whilst the provenance of the reed pipes is difficult to assess accurately, they fortunately exist alongside artefacts with definite and well documented sources.

On a historical note, there are, in the Archives of the Order of St John, National Library of Malta, a number of references to the import of cannabis. Before the introduction of synthetic fibres, stems of the male cannabis plant were used to make rope. However, the large quantity of these imports suggests that it had other uses. It is well known that cannabis was 'extremely popular amongst the Muslim slaves' (Gauci 2008). Opium for medicinal and recreational purposes had been known in Malta for ages. The Knights knew the poppy as *affione* which points to its introduction into Malta by the Turks, who called opium oil *Afion kara hissar*, or the Arabs, for whom opium was *Af-yum* (Bonello 2006, 10). In 1627 Grand Master Paule decreed that opium could only be acquired through the *Protomedico* (chief government medical officer). Misuse could result in rowing in chains on the galleys for two years. While the 'free' inhabitants of Malta left little evidence of opium indulgence, the same cannot be said of the Muslim and Oriental slaves, so numerous on the island. Slaves habitually smoked opium and sometimes smoked themselves to death. This ruffled the authorities, not for the sake of the slaves' health, but the loss of financial investment. In 1629 a slave who died of an overdose by smoking opium caused an official enquiry (AOM 664, f. 157v).

Date	Carrier	Source	Part cargo (recipient)
<b>Il Mediterraneo</b>			
26 Dec 1838	Trionfante	Ismail(ia?)	5000 pipes
<b>Lloyd Maltese</b>			
24 Mar 1841	Maria della Lobra	Napoli	6 bundles reed pipes
20 Apr	Celere	Marseille	11 cases clay pipes
11 May	Salvatore	Marsala	4 bundles pipes
02 Jun	Fifteen	London	9 bundles pipes
15 Jun	Maria della Lobra	Napoli	2 mra? reed pipes
15 Jun	Lady Briggs	Marseille	4 cases pipes
23 Jul	S. Pietro Mascali	Marsala	90 bundles pipes
08 Sep 1849	Hellespont	Smyrna	1 cases pipes
24 Jul	York	Constantinople	2 cases pipes
24 Aug	York	Constantinople	2 cases pipes (Azzopardi)
06 Sep	Ionia	Constantinople	2 colli pipes (Mifsud)
27 Sep	Greek	Smyrna	1 case pipes (Theofani)
02 Oct	Chas. Tennant	Constantinople	2 cases pipes (Azzopardi)
03 Nov	Mary	Constantinople	4 cases pipes (Azzopardi, Borg)
12 Dec 1889	Moise	Marseille / Tunis	1 case pipes
15 Jun 1890	Marcotis	Liverpool	50 cases pipes
04 Jan 1900	Neva	London	? cases pipes
28 Feb	London Prince	Manchester / Tunis	1 case pipes (Mifsud)
19 Nov 1919	Serbino	Glasgow	61 cases pipes (Quintano)
24 Feb 1920	Scottish Prince	London	8 cases pipes (Brockdorff)
24 Mar	Sitra	Glasgow	140 cases pipes (Quintano)

Figure 44: Malta Shipping Registers 1838 to 1920.

In many parts of the world natives used to consume a number of plants as hallucinogens, or at least as enervating agents, of which tobacco was the mildest. In the Americas pipes dating several centuries BC are commonly found in archaeological contexts. Tobacco of the genus *Nicotiana*, discovered in the Americas, was introduced into Europe in the sixteenth century.

Once across the Atlantic the smoking pipe and its use spread eastwards with extraordinary rapidity. The pipe with stem included spread through Europe and the bowl with separate stem across Africa and around the eastern Mediterranean. The two waves met along the north-west borders of the Ottoman Empire. Given this background it is not surprising there is similarity between this artefact and some pipes from the 'New World' (Sudbury and Jung 2009).

Europeans were more familiar with the one piece white clay pipe. The shipping registers list trade from the UK and France in this merchandise. The London sourced cargoes arrived in time to supply participants in both conflicts mentioned earlier.

Of the European pipes, which form practically 93% of this evidence, there is one possible French piece in the collection, No. 1, which depicts the head of a ram. Although Davidson & Co. of Glasgow produced a 'Goat's head' pipe, the style is usually associated with continental factories. A similar 'Goat's head' was found during excavation of a cesspit off Inguanez Street, Mdina and another displayed at Gharb Folklore Museum, no provenance available.

## Conclusion

An analysis of the accompanying notes shows that the bulk of European pipes, 55%, originate in Glasgow, Scotland. London accounts for a further 16%, whilst middle and southern England and also Ireland and possibly France are represented. Dates of manufacture are appropriate to the Crimea conflict with the exception of No. 9, the Davidson from Glasgow and No. 19, although the latter are appropriate to World War 1. The excavated deposits are very much of late nineteenth century to early twentieth century dates and the pipes reflect a lot of Scottish material with smaller amounts coming from London and the south coast – the Portsmouth/Southampton area (pers. comm. David Higgins).

Off duty Victorian sailors, marines and their mates are pictured in Malta, relaxed on deck with their pipes (Darmanin 2000). Surely some pipes came as kit from UK, others were bought locally. Pipes were imported into Malta as late as 1940. Then they sold for one penny each. A child who helped unpack the crate was given a matchstick to bridge a broken stem and play at smoking (Wood 1999).

Whether hospital patients as well as local staff smoked chibouks is uncertain, although there is general evidence

of cross cultural smoking. A number of illustrations, from Hogarth's Captain Lord George Graham {National Maritime Museum, London), to a caricature of Disraeli in Malta 1830 (Attard 2001) and the anonymous sketch book of a British officer 'A Turkish Inn' all depicting Europeans' appreciation of chibouks. On the other hand, there is evidence that some Maltese used European pipes. In a picture by Caruana Dingli (1876-1950) a young male in peasant costume poses with a white clay pipe in his mouth. This was used on the 2001 4c postage stamp.

Although texts on herbal medicine, including cannabis, have existed for millennia and the known effect of cannabinoids on pain relief, inflammation and muscular control problems is recognised, there does not appear to be any record of their use at RNH Bighi. However, in a society where senior officers smoked cigars, junior officers cheroots, other ranks had their pipes and everyone's wife took *laudanum*, it is difficult to imagine that the beneficial effects of natural remedies were overlooked by the medical profession.

One can only imagine the solace afforded the patients by these pipes at such a low point in their lives, and the hardships shared with the indigenous people of Malta.

## Acknowledgements

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