

THE MARINER'S MIRROR

VOL. 87 No.1 FEBRUARY 2001

TOBACCO PIPES FROM MANOEL ISLAND, MALTA

On Sunday 11 June 2000, Malta Television ran a programme on which Guido Lanfranco discussed the subject of tobacco pipes. As a direct result, Mary Grech at the Manoel Island Service Station, Gzira, mentioned a collection that had been found in the shallow waters around Manoel Island some twenty years previously.

Site Description

The Knights had built a spacious lazaretto on the Isoletto (Fig. 1), later called Manoel Island after G.M. Anton Manoel de Vilhena, 1722-30, to house ships' crews, voyagers, merchandise and cattle as a first line of defence against cholera and plague.¹ Quarantine, a matter of at least some weeks, would be a period of forced inactivity for the mariners. It is therefore not surprising, given the sharp rise in popularity of tobacco from the early seventeenth century, to find a variety of pipes in this vicinity.

The Pipes (see diagrams overleaf)

M1 (Fig. 2) A lily shaped bowl. Most of the shank is missing except the keel part which joins the

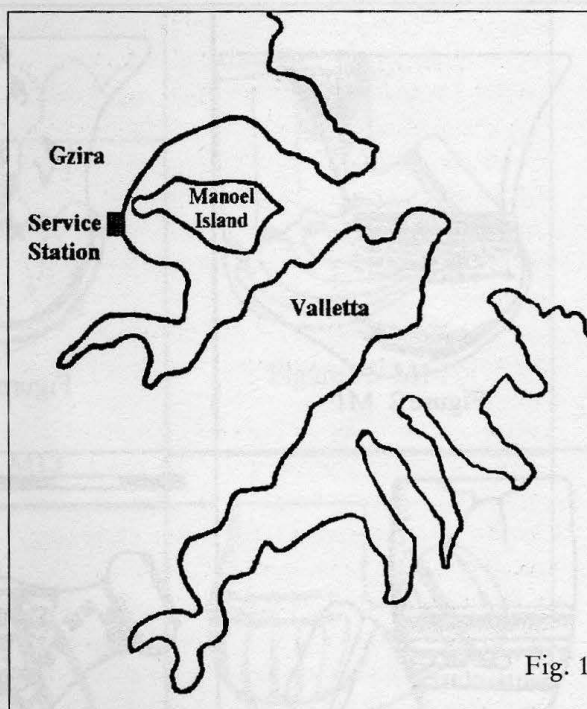


Fig. 1

bowl. Light reddish brown. There is rouletting between rim and bowl under pairs of incised lines. The upper bowl is decorated with combed crescents. This style is common throughout Ottoman domain. Nineteenth-twentieth century.

M2 (Fig. 3) A lily shaped bowl with damaged rim. The shank is broken at the keel. Terracotta with reddish slip. The bowl has a honeycomb surface with palm leaf motifs. A recognisably Ottoman design. Nineteenth-twentieth century.

M3 (Fig. 4) A mould made red clay pipe with broken rim. The base of its bowl is missing. Shank opening 10mm. The bowl has two raised bands between which is a frieze of raised dots and serpentine vines. Below the lower band are raised swags. The maker's mark BONNAUD MARSEILLE would put the date somewhere between 1880 and 1913.

M4 (Fig. 5) A bowl fragment with complete shank. The shank opening is 8mm. Brown clay. The bowl has two moulded horizontal bands between which is a grapevine in leaf and fruit. The bowl ends in a ball shaped foot. The shank has scattered flower heads. The style is similar to M3 and is possibly of similar date.

M5 (Fig. 6) A complete bowl and shank with chipped rim. Buff clay. Shank opening 7mm. The abraded decoration consists of two horizontal bands of rouletting around the bowl with raised

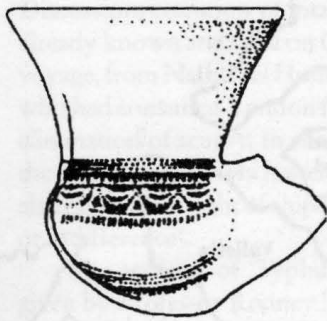


Figure 2 M1

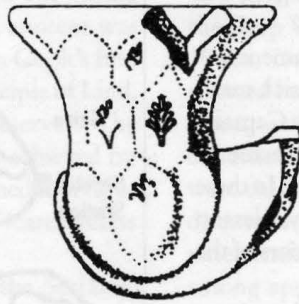


Figure 3 M2

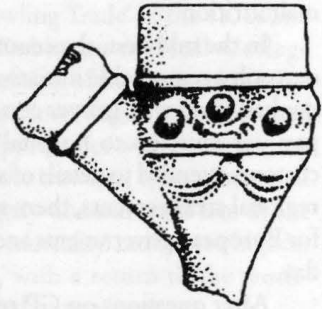


Figure 4 M3

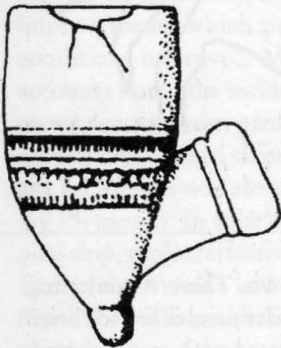


Figure 6 M5

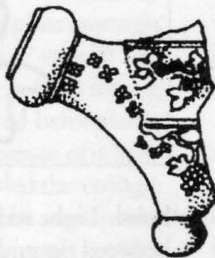
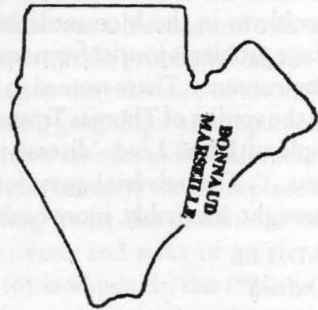


Figure 5 M4



M3 Maker's mark

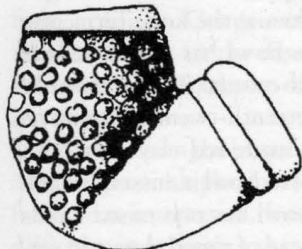


Figure 7 M6

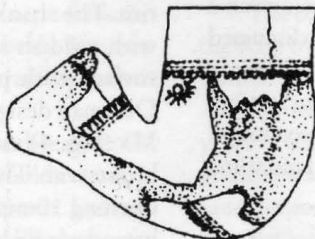


Figure 8 M7

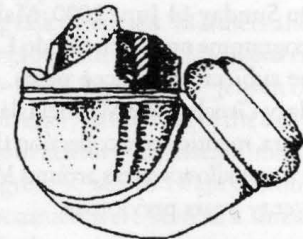


Figure 9 M8

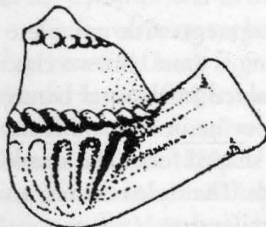


Figure 10 M9



Figure 11 M10

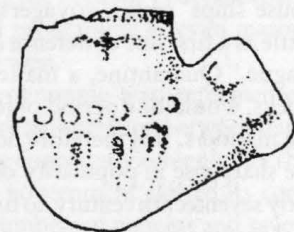
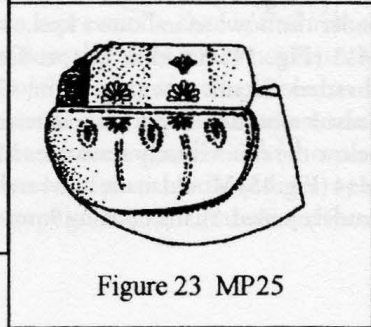
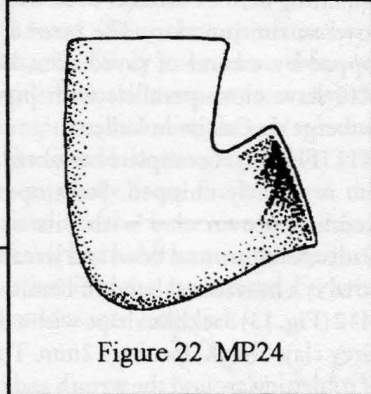
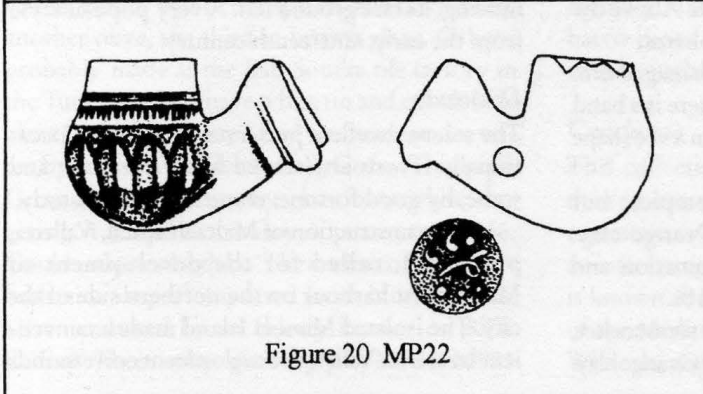
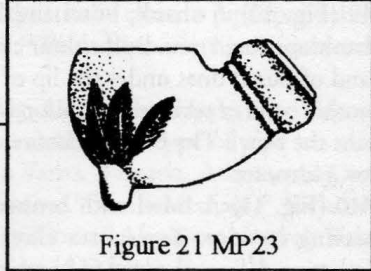
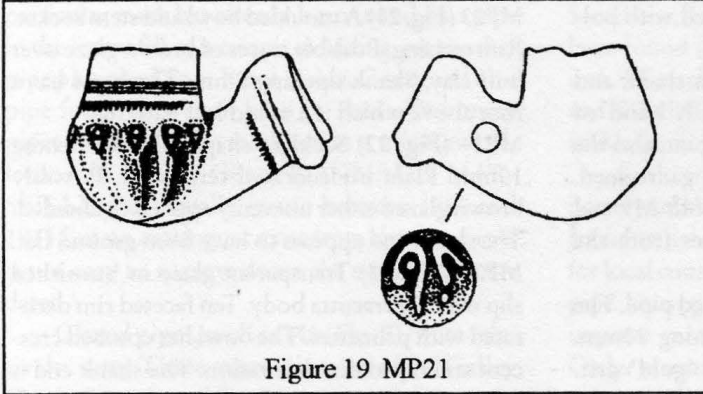
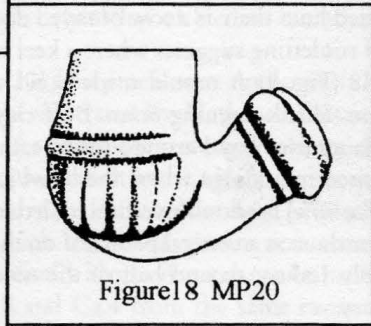
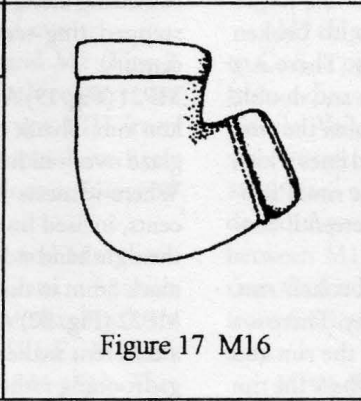
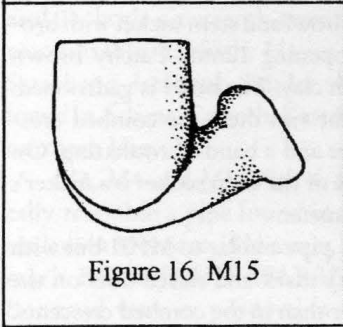
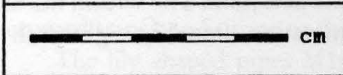
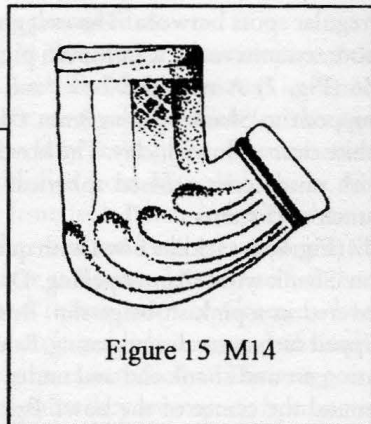
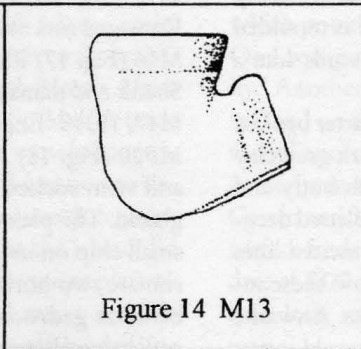
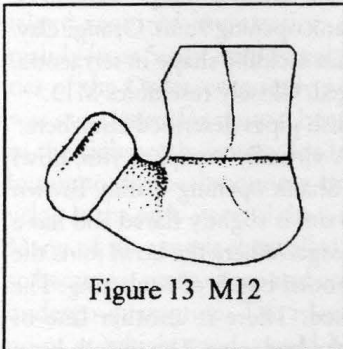


Figure 12 M11



irregular spots between. The exaggerated foot is more reminiscent of a European pipe.

M6 (Fig. 7) A moulded bowl and shank with chipped rim. Shank opening 8mm. Glazed creamy white over yellowish clay. The bowl is moulded with raised criss-crossed spherical studs like a bunch of currants.

M7 (Fig. 8) A sacklike bowl with quarter broken rim. Shank with 12mm opening. Dark grey clay covered in a pinkish/beige slip. Both body and slipped surface are disintegrating. Rouletted decoration around shank end and under incised lines around the centre of the bowl. Below these incised lines there is a row of rayed dots. A swathe of rouletting suggests where a keel would join.

M8 (Fig. 9) A mould made bowl with broken rim. Shank opening 6mm. Buff clay. There is a plain raised band around the wreath and double raised mouldings where the bowl joins the rim. The bowl has double vertical rouletted lines which continue as a vertical palm leaf on the rim. Probably Italian, second half of the nineteenth century.

M9 (Fig. 10) A shank, bowl and broken rim. Shank opening 8mm. Buff colour clay. There is a band of raised dots under the lip of the rim and another band of reverse decoration where the rim joins the bowl. The bowl is decorated with hollow gadroons.

M10 (Fig. 11) A bowl with broken shank and missing its rim. Terracotta clay. A band of rouletting defines the keel to bowl joint, also the bowl to rim junction. The bowl is gadrooned, topped by a band of rayed dots. Both M9 and M10 have close parallels with pipes from the Auberge de Castile in Valletta.

M11 (Fig. 12) A complete but abraded pipe. The rim is slightly chipped. Stem opening 10mm. Reddish brown clay with bits of 'gold' grit. Gadrooning around bowl and wreath. Above the bowl is a horizontal band of hemispheres.

M12 (Fig. 13) Sacklike shape with a damaged rim. Grey clay. Shank opening 12mm. There is a band of rouletting around the wreath and in a vee shape under the bowl to indicate a keel.

M13 (Fig. 14) Sacklike shape. Complete but abraded. Shank opening 8mm. Orange clay. Raised moulded band around termination and below the rim. Closely resembles M16.

M14 (Fig. 15) Mould made bowl and stem socket, crudely joined. Shank opening 9mm. Orange clay.

Faceted rim, each facet has abraded lattice pattern. The bowl and stem socket are gadrooned, with a raised band around the shank end.

M15 (Fig. 16) Plain sacklike shape with keel. Damaged rim. Shank opening 9mm. Orange clay.

M16 (Fig. 17) Plain sacklike shape in terracotta. Shank end damaged. Closely resembles M13.

M17, 18, 19 English pipes described elsewhere.

MP20 (Fig. 18) A virtually complete rim, bowl and stem socket. Shank opening 11mm. Brown glazed. The plain rim is slightly flared and has a small chip on its edge. Where the bowl joins the rim are two horizontal bands of rouletting. The bowl is gadrooned. There is another line of rouletting along the keel joint. The wreath has a stepped ring termination. Possibly eighteenth century.

MP21 (Fig. 19) A bowl and stem socket with broken rim. Shank opening 12mm. Patchy brown glaze over reddish clay. The bowl is gadrooned. Where it meets the rim there are combed crescents, incised lines and a band of rouletting. On the righthand side of the stem socket is a maker's mark 5mm in diameter.

MP22 (Fig. 20) A pipe similar to MP21 but with a different maker's mark and raised dots on the gadrooning rather than in the combed crescents.

MP23 (Fig. 21) A moulded bowl and stem socket. Rim missing. Possible traces of brown glaze over buff clay. Shank opening 8mm. The bowl has a foot above which is a raised leaf pattern.

MP24 (Fig. 22) Sacklike shape. Shank opening 10mm. Plain undecorated terracotta. Possibly brown glazed either unevenly applied or abraded.

The shank end appears to have been ground flat. MP25 (Fig. 23) Transparent glaze or burnished slip over a terracotta body. Ten faceted rim decorated with palmettes. The bowl has combed crescent and rayed dot decoration. The shank end is missing, its face ground flat. A very popular style from the early nineteenth century.

Discussion

The sea, an excellent preserver of ceramics, occasionally reveals artefacts of historic interest and some, by good fortune, come into safe custody.

The construction of Malta's capital, Valletta, post 1565, called for the development of Marsamxett harbour on the northern side of the city. The isolated Manoel Island made a convenient lazaretto. Valletta's development corresponds

approximately with the introduction and spread of tobacco around the Mediterranean. Stability created by the presence of the Order of Saint John encouraged trade. The lack of resources on the island required importation on a large scale, mainly from Sicily. Surprisingly, given the activities of the Order, even trade with North Africa was sanctioned for mutual benefit. Malta's trade in the eighteenth century made a useful contribution to the local economy and went on to develop in the early years of the nineteenth century. Many of the vessels that called at the island did so because it was a cheap and convenient place to undergo quarantine. The island was a sensible point at which goods could be off-loaded for onward transit to Europe or the Levant.²

The lily shaped pipes M1 and M2 (Figs 2 and 3), both nineteenth-twentieth century, are recognisably Turkish, Hayes type VIII from Sarachane, Istanbul. Similar shapes have been found in Athens, Corinth, Kastellorizo, Tunis and northern Iraq.

M3, M4 and M5 (Figs 4, 5 and 6) stylistically resemble a pipe found in Ceuta, a Spanish enclave in Morocco.³ However, M3 has a maker's mark BONNAUD MARSEILLE. Maison Bonnaud were in production 1824-1913. This particular mark has already been found on a pipe in the lower fill of a cesspit in Mdina, on another pipe ploughed up at Ras il-Bajda, Gozo, and on a pipe found in a spoil heap in Tunis. Two more pipes with the same mark are in a museum collection in Gharb, Gozo. BONNAUD MARSEILLE was actually in use between 1880 and 1913 but no catalogues exist from that time so it is not easy to narrow down the style to a closer dated.⁴

Glazed pipes, such as M6 (Fig. 7), were relatively rare. Three were discovered in Galley Creek, Birgu,⁵ one in transparent and olive green, another olive, the third in brown glaze. Others, probably made at the Bab Souika tile factory in the Tunis-Medina, have white tin and cobalt blue glaze.⁶ Another isolated find was made under water by a diver in Xlendi Bay, Gozo. This pipe, Gozo 21, has transparent glaze over white clay giving it a similar creamy appearance to M6. Could either or both be 'The cream coloured sort with nice shapes' imported from North Africa, as remembered by an elderly listener on RTK Radio? Three other glazed pipes, MP20, MP21

and MP22, are described above.

M8 (Fig. 9) Two similar pipes are part of the display in Gharb Folklore Museum in Gozo. However there are several parallels for this pipe which point to Italy as the place of manufacture. One was published from Marsala harbour, Sicily.⁸ Another from Isola Ponza in the Tyrrhenian sea⁹ and on the mainland from excavations in the Garigliano river at Roman Minturnae.¹⁰ Others come from the Tuscan town of Grosseto.¹¹ Lo Cascio and Maurici published a group of similar surface finds from eastern Sicily.¹² They suggest a date of 1870 and that they are imports from mainland Italy rather than that of Sicilian manufacture.

M9 (Fig. 10) This pipe is very similar in style to Ca.5, a pipe excavated by Nathaniel Cutajar from a disused sewer system in the Auberge de Castile, Valletta. French and English regiments were quartered in the Auberge between 1798 and 1840 after which the sewer system was abandoned. A practically identical match can be made between M10 and Ca.4 from the same excavation. Ca.4 is stylistically close to pipes published from Corinth.¹³ Probably early nineteenth century.

MP25 (Fig. 23) Matches Hayes type X from Sarachane, Istanbul.¹⁴ This type of pipe has also been found in Varna, Bulgaria, Athens and Corinth,¹⁵ Kastellorizo,¹⁶ Tunis-Medinal,¹⁷ Valletta¹⁸ and Xlendi Bay, Gozo.¹⁹ Also most bizarrely Sitka in Alaska in post 1830 layers.²⁰

Little is known about the manufacture of pottery in Malta. Certainly it was never done on an industrial scale. Some domestic ware was made for local consumption, including the odd tobacco pipe. During the time of the Knights (1530-1798) imports came regularly from Sicily where the Order maintained a base. However within living memory 'Turks' (North Africans) imported tobacco pipes rather like the caricatured Frenchman brought onions into England.

Conclusion

This collection represents a chance find rather than an excavation, therefore it may not be truly representative of the variety of artefacts from such an interesting site. It does, however, confirm what is known about the trading activities in this part of the Mediterranean, particularly with Europe. While the geographical origin of a number of these

pipes is known with some accuracy, the source of most remains unaccounted. Given the prevalence of the smoking habit and the portability of this form of solace and relaxation for hard pressed mariners, it may be possible to trace their origin through the medium of this journal.

References

- 1 V. Mallia-Milanes, *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798* (Malta, 1993), 29.
- 2 B. Blouet, *The Story of Malta* (Malta, 1992), 116.
- 3 F. Paredes, 'Pipes from Ceuta, Spain: Part 1', *Society for Clay Pipe Research Newsletter*, 53 (1998), 18-19.
- 4 M. Raphael, personal communication.
- 5 J. Wood, 'Pipes from Malta', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 27, 4 (1998), 313-30.
- 6 J. Wood, 'A Study of Clay Pipes in Tunisia', *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 33 (2000), 233-41.
- 7 G. Lanfranco, 'Old Smoking Pipes', *L-Imnara* 18, 5, 1 (1996).
- 8 M. Bound, 'Unidentified Artefacts 9', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 16, 2 (1987), 165-6.
- 9 S. Loppel, 'Un Naufragio Anonimo e Senza Storia', *Blu*, 1, 3.
- 10 P. Forlag, *Underwater Investigations at Roman Minturnae* (1995).
- 11 R. Francovich and S. Gelichi, *La ceramica dalla fortezza Medicea di Grosseto* (1980).
- 12 P. Lo Cascio and F. Maurici, 'Rinvenimenti di pipe di terracotta in Sicilia' (1997), unpublished MS.
- 13 R. Robinson, 'Tobacco Pipes of Corinth and the Athenian Agora', *Hesperia*, 54 (1985), 149-203.
- 14 J. Hayes, *Turkish Clay Pipes: a provisional typology*, BAR International Series 92 (1980), 3-10.
- 15 Robinson, 'Tobacco Pipes of Corinth'.
- 16 J. Wood, 'Pipes from the Island of Kastellorizo', *Society for Clay Pipe Research Newsletter*, 25 (1990), 8-9.
- 17 Wood, 'A Study of Clay Pipes in Tunis'.
- 18 N. Cutajar, National Museum of Archaeology, Malta, personal communication.
- 19 G. Azzopardi, National Museum, Gozo, personal communication.
- 20 D. McMahan, <http://www.alaska.net/~oha/index.htm>

JOHN WOOD
Sherington
Buckinghamshire