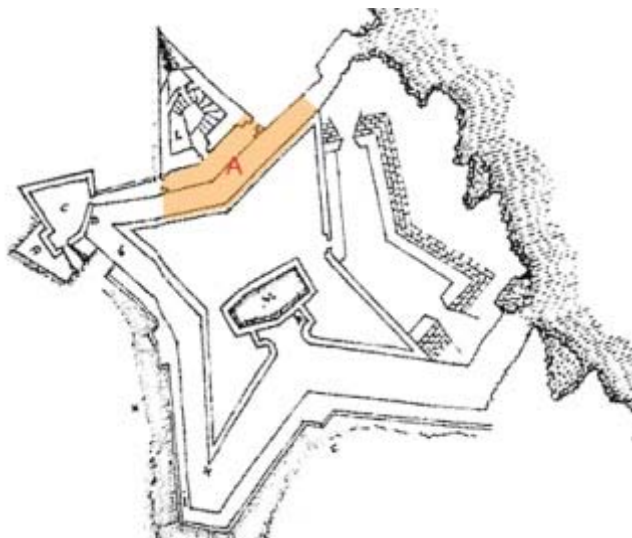


SMOKING PIPES FROM RECENT EXCAVATIONS AT FORT ST ELMO, VALLETTA, MALTA



During the 1565 siege Turkish bombardment pulverized whole sections of fort St. Elmo. Consequently in 1566 architect Francesco Laparelli was employed to virtually reconstruct the building.

There have been various alterations to the structure over time. The area highlighted in colour is the section of the original fort which was buried beneath late seventeenth and early eighteenth century alterations.

Figure 1.

Since 2009 preparatory work for the restoration and rehabilitation of Fort St Elmo have provided the opportunity for a series of small archaeological investigations. These trial excavations have now started to open up the picture.¹

The following fifteen artefacts were found by archaeologists working with the Superintendence of Archaeology, Heritage Malta. With the exception of one undated artefact these pieces are arranged by date of excavation ranging from June 2013 to April 2014.

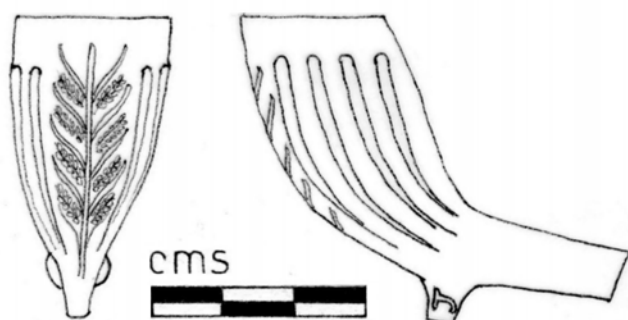


Figure 2: ELM 2012: Restoration FO block L. EST 10.06.2013.

A European pipe of white clay. The bowl and foot are intact, the stem is missing some of its length. Both sides of the bowl are decorated with raised bands, tapering at the stem. Front and rear between these bands is a 'wheat ear' decoration. A capital letter J is raised horizontally on both sides of the foot.

¹ SPITERI S. (2012) militaryarchitecture.com/index.php/Building-Methods/in-search-of-fort-st-elmo-1565.html



Figure 3: ELM 2012: P3 lift FO block T. EST 29.07.2013.

A moulded pale terracotta *chibouk* (pipa tal-qasba). The rounded bowl has a keel connecting with the shank, its rim is missing and shank termination is damaged. Shank opening 10 mm. Although the artefact is corroded it appears to have a bowl decoration with bumps similar to a blackberry. Late 17th early 18th century.

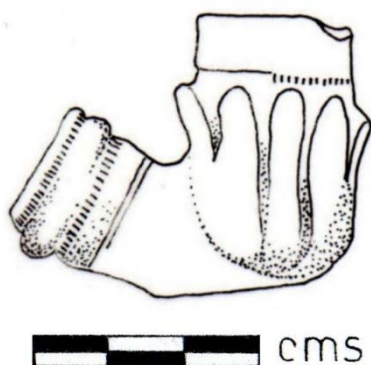


Figure 4: ELM 2012: P3 lift FO block T. EST 30 July 2013 (1 of 3).

Mould made terracotta artefact. The shank and stepped termination are intact but half of the bowl and rim are missing. Shank opening 10 mm. The termination has two bands of rouletting and two incised lines where it meets the shank. A series of elongated vertical petals decorates the bowl, above which are two incised lines and a horizontal band of rouletting. The rim is plain. The base of the keel has been somewhat flattened. Late 17th early 18th century.



Figure 5: ELM 2012: P3 lift FO block T. EST 30 July 2013 (2 of 3).

An intact bowl and shank mould made from terracotta clay. The slightly flared rim has a raised horizontal band. Three quarters of the rim is missing. Shank opening 10 mm. The keel has a flattened portion as it runs under the bowl to end in a leaf shape under the base. According to Robinson² the earliest pipes did not have the keel joint, the feature begins in the late 17th or early 18th century and was later subjected to modification.

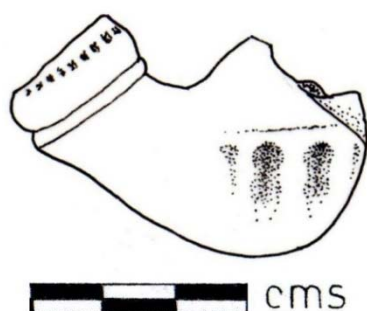


Figure 6: ELM 2012: P3 lift FO block T. EST 30 July 2013 (3 of 3).

Mould made terracotta pipe. The shank is intact with bulbous termination. The bowl is rounded, most of its rim missing. Shank opening 10 mm. A band of gadrooning decorates the bowl, the pattern worn faint and the termination is finished off with a band of raised dots. Late 17th early 18th century.

² Robinson, R. (1985) *Hesperia* 54, pp 162-63.



Figure 7: ELM 2012: ZONE 7 FO block F. EST 04 Nov 2013. Mould made pipe in grey paste with a matt black finish, possibly slip. The rounded bowl is intact although some of the rim is missing. The shank ends in a bulbous broken termination. The bowl is embellished with a series of incised stripes, these go from below the rim down to the keel. On the right hand side the stripes are practically vertical and become more sloping and curved as the pattern progresses. A common enough decoration, although this looks like an apprentice piece. There are a few stripes on the left side of the shank. Late 17th early 18th century.

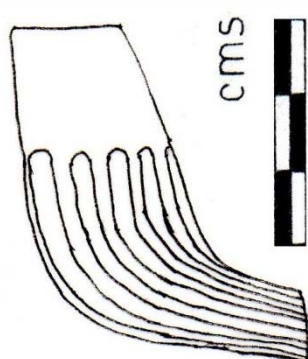


Figure 8: ELM 2012: ZONE 7 FO block E – crossing overflow – general layer. EST 11 Dec 2013 (1 of 2). Fragment of European pipe in white clay. Half of the bowl and most of the stem is missing. The bowl has a raised stripe decoration on the lower half which tapers towards the stem.



Figure 9: ELM 2012: ZONE 7 FO block E – crossing overflow – general layer. EST 11 Dec 2013 (2 of 2). Foot, base of a bowl and truncated stem of a European pipe in white clay.

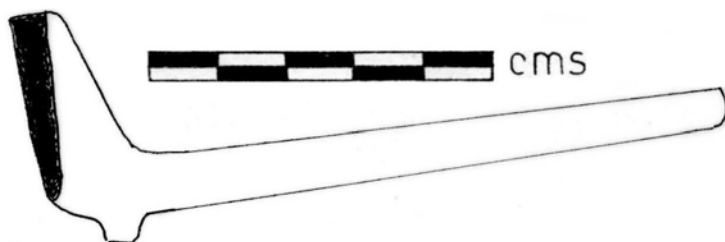


Figure 10: ELM 2012: ZONE 7 FO block E crossing overflow – general layer. EST 11 Dec 2013 (1 of 3). European pipe in white clay. Half of the bowl is missing. The fragment is undecorated, it has a foot and what appears to be an intact stem. The stem has an off-set 1 mm bore.

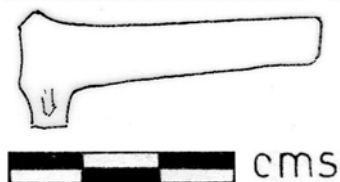


Figure 11: ELM 2012: ZONE 7 FO block E crossing overflow – general layer. EST 11 Dec 2013 (2 of 3). Fragment of stem and foot of a European pipe. The bowl and some of the stem is missing. Either a figure one or a raised hand (halt sign) is moulded on the side facing.

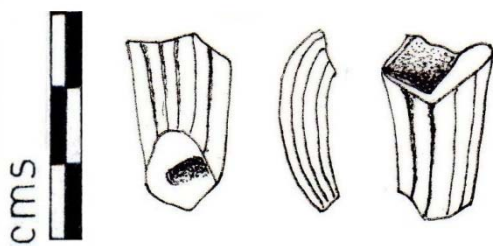


Figure 12: ELM 2012: ZONE 7 FO block E crossing overflow – general layer. EST 11 Dec 2013 (3 of 3). A hollow squashed object which looks metallic. My impression is that it more resembles part of a decorative piece than a pipe.

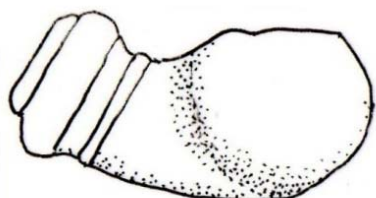


Figure 13: ELM 2012: ZONE 7 FO block E crossing overflow. EST 11 Dec 2013.

Mould made pipe in dark brown clay with blackish slip. The rounded bowl is missing its rim but shank and termination are intact. There is a plain keel under the bowl leading to a raised collar termination. Shank opening 8 mm. Late 17th century.

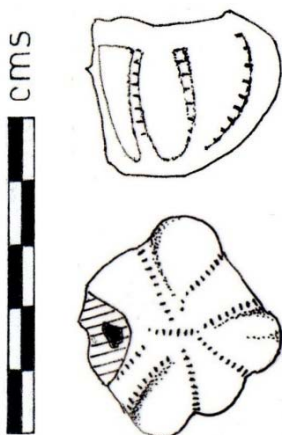


Figure 14: ELM 2012: ZONE 7 FO block E/G. EST undated.

Fragment of a mould made bowl with rim and shank missing. Pale terracotta clay finished with an ochre yellow glaze. Three claw shaped pieces have been added one each to front and both sides, the junctions crudely rouletted.

Glazed pipes are relatively rare. Of the 360+ pipes in Maltese collections eight are known to have this method of decoration. Glazed pipes were uncommon throughout the Ottoman sphere.³ Exceptionally, Tunisian tile makers⁴ and Balkan factories on the fringe of Empire⁵ have documented examples. The source of many reed pipes imported into Malta from the seventeenth century seems to be the Greek or Balkan area.⁶



Figure 15: ELM 2012: EST/KC Jan 2014.

A mould made European pipe in white clay. The bowl and foot are intact although most of the stem is missing. The rim of the bowl has a decorative band of rouletting around the lip. Both sides of the bowl have a raised seven-string Irish harp. On the side of the foot facing is a number 2 standing proud.

³ Robinson (1985) p. 172.

⁴ Wood (1999) 'A study of clay tobacco pipes in Tunis. Were they traded to Malta?'. *Post-Medieval Archaeology*. **33**, pp. 234-235.

⁵ Vyšohlid and Ridovcs (2009) *Academie Internationale de la Pipe* Volume 2, pp. 26, 66.

⁶ Wood (2009) *Academie Internationale de la Pipe* Volume 2, p. 86.

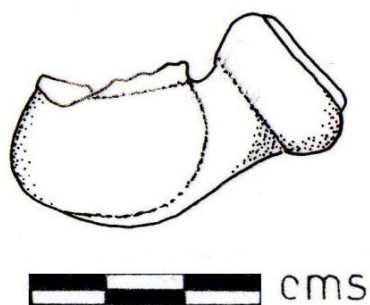


Figure 16: ELM 2012 / A17 FO block C. MD 08 April 2014.

A mould made rounded bowl in lightly burnished terracotta clay. The rim is missing although the bowl, shank and termination are complete. There are remains of a raised horizontal band above the bowl. The shank is joined to the bowl with a keel, the tapered end defined by rouletting. The bulbous termination has rouletted grooves either side of the swelling. Shank opening 10 mm. Late 17th early 18th century.

DISCUSSION

The excavations over a ten month period have revealed both European and Ottoman* style pipes. Evidently finds are of one type or the other but not both. Four reed and three European pipes were found singly, four reed pipes were together in one group and four European in another. (I doubt that Figure 12 is a smoking pipe, perhaps an ornament?).

Late in 1800 Britain made Malta a de facto protectorate. It is understandable that the European pipes are securely assigned to the 19th century. However all the pipi tal-qasba seem earlier. These have no particular distinguishing marks, therefore the date to be attributed relies mainly on style and size. Pipe smokers were notoriously conservative and fashion evolved slowly, especially among frugal working class males who, anyway, relied on imports. Comparatively earlier dates are suggested for the pipi tal-qasba.

*chibouk or pipi tal-qasba

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Peter Hammond, Society for Clay Pipe Research, UK, generously contributed his opinion on European artefacts and St John Simpson, Assistant Keeper, Department of the Ancient Near East, British Museum gave valuable advice regarding the chibouk style pipes.

JW 17/09/14