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THE COMING OF THE FIRST MOTORIZED TRANSPORT VEHICLES FOR PUBLIC USE ON THE ISLAND OF MALTA AND HOW IT CHANGED OVER THE YEARS

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Abstract

This research follows a deepening interest on how the island changed after the industrial revolution of transport arrived. It is set out to concentrate on the introduction of mechanized transport for public use on land in Malta, mainly the buses. Prior to the arrival of the motorized buses, Malta was already getting its first taste of the industrial revolution, in the form of the trains and trams and also with the steam engine boats, which were used to cross the harbours surrounding Valletta and to get to Gozo. This long essay will concentrate on the introduction of motorized land transport, which eventually led to the buses becoming the sole means of mass public transport on land in Malta. In my research I will discuss and try to discover how these motorized land transport, especially the buses operated, who brought the first ones and who owned them. The research covered the period from 1870 to 1931. I discovered that during this period Malta had three major forms of public land transport, the trains, the trams and the buses. Each operated side by side from 1905-1929, till eventually due to stiff competition with each other, the buses took over.



FOREIGN CULTURAL INFLUENCES AND MALTESE THEATRICAL IDENTITY IN VALLETTA (1731-1942)

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Abstract

This essay examines the relationship between foreign cultural influences (especially from Italy, France, Britain, and Russia) and local responses in Valletta's theatres (the Manoel Theatre and the Royal Opera House) between 1731 and 1942. The research draws mainly on field observation, semi-structured interviews and published sources. John W. Berry's acculturation theory is used to interpret local responses to different cultural influences. From Berry's theory, two response modes are visible in our material: assimilation and separation. Local absorption of these influences varied by origin and appeared to different degrees across various aspects (such as space, form, language, administration and education) in the theatres. Together, these findings point to an emergence of a local theatrical identity in the nineteenth century. The essay also invites wider surveys and deeper archive work to test these findings.



FROM KNIGHTS TO HALOPHYTES: A TOUR AT THE SALINA SALTPANS & SALT MUSEUM

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Abstract

Salt is life! It has endless uses, but most importantly, humans need salt to survive, as it is an essential mineral for proper bodily function. Since the dawn of time, the inhabitants of the Maltese islands took advantage of this precious naturally occurring resource to such an extent that they started to manipulate and engineer nature to increase the production and the quality of this versatile mineral. This study focuses on what was the purpose and evolution of the Salina saltpans during the knight's occupation, compared to the current management by Birdlife Malta. The aim of this research is to identify historical and biological connections, differences and similarities between the use of the Saltpans in the past and compared to the present. The research delves into; why and how was salt produced on an industrial scale during the knight's occupation and what pushed them to abandon the old saltpans site across the road and construct a new state-of-the-art system by reclaiming land in the bay. It explains how the site evolved since it's construction, while also revealing why the salt environment is important to local and migrating biodiversity, and why the site is now safeguarded and protected.



THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL HERITAGE OF TAS-SILG: FROM NEOLITHIC TO BYZANTINE TIMES

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Abstract

There are many archaeological sites in Malta, occupied by one or more civilisations throughout time. However, there is only one site, so far discovered, continuously occupied by all civilisations from the Late Neolithic period to Byzantine times, and that is Tas-Silg. This paper focuses on understanding how the site evolved over thousands of years, which civilisations shaped it and for what purposes, and perhaps most importantly, why they chose Tas-Silg over any other location. We are analysing factors that might have played the key role in choosing the location. The general findings suggest that certain factors were important for the prehistoric civilisations, while the Phoenicians, Romans, and Byzantine people appear to have been guided by different aspects as the prime reasons for occupying the site. The study reveals the archaeological richness of the area and the great potential for development of specialised archaeological tours focusing on prehistory and the early historical period.



THE 1975 VULCAN BOMBER AIRCRAFT CRASH IN ZABBAR: INFERNO & DEVOTION

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Abstract

This study explores the 1975 crash of the Royal Air Force Vulcan Bomber XM645 over Zabbar, Malta, an event that claimed six lives and became deeply rooted in the town's collective memory. While previous literature documented the technical and historical aspects of the tragedy, the human experience and emotional aftermath remained largely unexplored. This research addresses that gap by focusing on the lived experiences of Zabbar residents who witnessed or survived the crash. A qualitative and inductive methodology was adopted, combining bibliographic analysis, semi-structured interviews, and the examination of an unpublished compilation of eyewitness testimonies. Thematic content analysis organised the findings under three key concepts: the aviation crash and its aftermath, the lived experience, and religious attribution. The narratives gathered reveal that survivors interpreted their experience not only as a near-death encounter but as a miraculous deliverance attributed to the intercession of Our Lady of Graces, Zabbar's patron saint. This conviction seems to have transformed collective trauma into a symbol of faith and communal resilience. The crash became a defining moment in Zabbar's identity, commemorated annually through processions, plaques, and devotional art.



VALLETTA 1940-1943: FEMALE PLOTTERS, NURSES AND THE KITCHEN WORKERS IN WWII

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Abstract

Woeful. Atrocious. Ruining. These words portray powerful images associated with the acronym “war”. Vivid visions of air raids, destruction and armed soldiers are conjured reinforcing military heroism, projecting war as a man’s war. This research challenges this false perception. In WWII, first-ever in local history, Malta witnessed the rise of a new personality: women who unconditionally responded to a national call, stepped forward in unknown spheres to mark a difference. This study will evaluate the indispensable roles of three distinctive groups of women in Valletta in WWII. It examines the contribution of the female plotters who followed aircraft movements for defence, nurses who toiled arduously in emergency facilities and hospitals, and the workers in the Victory Kitchens who sustained civilians in Valletta’s darkest hours. This study recognises their wartime role, restoring the place they rightfully deserve in historical narratives. A qualitative research methodology incorporating thematic analysis was used which articulated both verbal and written testimonials to pay tribute to these women who have sadly been sidelined at the periphery of mainstream wartime literature. This study highlights their active participation with quiet resilience, without expectations clearly demonstrating that their contribution was indeed vital to Malta’s survival. This research thus corrects this historical disparity. A themed Valletta tour will be offered positioning these women’s experiences at its very core. In this manner, participants will be offered an enriching, profound and truthful understanding of Malta’s wartime chapter.



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