

Pipes from the Auberge de Castile, Valletta, Malta.

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During the excavation of an old sewer system in the basement of the Auberge de Castile, five broken tobacco pipes were found, amongst other discarded pieces of pottery, including *willow pattern* plate. The excavation was under the direction of Nathaniel Cutajar, Assistant Curator at the National Museum of Malta.

One of the most impressive Baroque buildings in Valletta the Auberge was used to quarter both French and English regiments between 1798 and 1840. During that time the sewer was obviously used for all sorts of rubbish. After 1840 a new sewer system came into operation and the old one abandoned. There is, therefore, a limited time when these artifacts could have been discarded. They share common design elements with many other published pipes, but do represent a restricted cultural background and time of disposal.

None of the pipes has a catalogue number as yet. Numbers assigned here are simply for reference in this description.

Description

Ca.1 Missing rim. Shank opening 12mm. Mould made from a gritty micaceous terracotta with a burnished umber finish. Rounded bowl with chevron rouletting underneath. The shank end is bulbous and has a single band of rouletted decoration. A stylised bird is impressed on the right hand side of the stem socket. A very similar stamp occurs on a pipe from the Athenian Agora¹. The bird stamp is characteristic of a group of pipes from Varna (Bulgaria) and this pipe may well be a product of the Varna workshops. Maltese and other merchants had in fact been conducting a profitable cereal trade with Black Sea ports since the early 19th century². There is another probable Varna pipe in the reserve collection in Gozo³.

Ca.2 A large portion of the bowl and rim of this pipe are missing. Shank opening 15mm. The clay is a micaceous terracotta containing white impurities, it is covered in a light brown burnished slip. The bowl and stem socket are

faceted. At each angle there is a rayed dot decoration and vertical combed crescents on each face between the angles. The base of the rim is decorated by a ring of palmettes over horizontal crescent shapes. Ca.2 belongs to a large family of 19th century pipes⁴.

Ca.3 Broken rim. Shank opening 11mm. Mould made in terracotta clay. Plain inward sloping rim. Rounded bowl. Keel. Stem socket has bulbous termination. A plain band between rim and bowl, shank and termination, relieves the otherwise undecorated finish. Corresponds to Hayes type XI⁵. Late 18th possibly 19th century.

Ca.4 Broken stem socket. Micaceous terracotta clay with black and white intrusions. Burnished. Short slightly concave rim. Rounded bowl with rayed dot decoration under rouletted band and incised lines. The keel junction also has incised lines and rouletting. Stylistically close to published pipes from Corinth⁶. Probably early 19th century.

Ca.5 Broken rim. Shank opening 10mm. Mould made from oatmeal coloured clay with black and white intrusions and patchy red firing marks on the surface. Gadrooned bowl with rope-work around the waist and shank end. Late 18th century?

Notes

¹Robinson, R.C.W. (1985). 'Tobacco Pipes of Corinth and of the Athenian Agora'. *Hesperia*, 54, 149-203, Pl.61, A10.

²Price, C.A. (1954). *Malta and the Maltese*. Georgian House, Melbourne.

³Wood, J. (1992). 'Pipes from Gozo (Malta)'. *Society for Clay Pipe Research Newsletter* No.39, 17-20.

⁴Robinson, *op.cit.* Pl.56, C93-99. Pl.62, A17, 19, 20, 21. Wood, J. (1990). 'Pipes from the Island of Kastelloriso'. *SCPR* No.25, 8-9.

⁵Hayes, J.W.(1980). 'Turkish Clay Pipes; a Provisional Typology' *British Archaeological Records International Series*, 92, 3-10.

⁶Robinson, *op.cit.* Pl.53, C60-65.

Tobacco pipes from the Auberge de Castile, Valletta: a closer look

During an excavation directed by Nathaniel Cutajar, Assistant Curator at the National Museum, five broken tobacco pipes were found amongst other discarded pieces of pottery in an old sewer system in the basement of the building.

One of the most impressive Baroque buildings in Valletta the Auberge was used to quarter both French and English regiments between 1798 and 1840. During that time the sewer was obviously used for all sorts of rubbish. After 1840 a new sewer system came into operation and the old one was abandoned.

In a personal communication 17 FEB 2010 NC said . . .

The deposit within the Castile culvert could very well have continued receiving material after 1840. The proposed date of the deposit is not an absolute one, and is based on the identifiable ceramics within it. This is the post quem argument – since the identified ceramics date to around the 1830/40s, then the deposit itself dates to that time or later. 1840 is actually the earliest to which the deposit could be dated to and is by no means a closed date. This date was reached through the study of the British blue on white stoneware and cream slip ware which suggested a production date between 1830 and 1840's . . .

The pipes

Ca 1 This artefact is mould made from a gritty micaceous terracotta with burnished umber finish. It has a rounded bowl decorated underneath with a rouletted chevron but the entire rim is missing. The shank end is bulbous with a single band of rouletted decoration and a 12mm aperture. A stylised bird is stamped on the right hand side of the shank. A very similar stamp occurs on pipes from Corinth and the Athenian Agora in Greece, also from Kalendarhane and Topkapi in Istanbul (Robinson 1985) also from Varna, Bulgaria (Stančeva 1972).

The bird stamp is characteristic of a group of pipes from Varna and this pipe may well be a product of the workshops there. The pipes have been dated 18th to early 19th century. Maltese merchants had been conducting a profitable cereal trade with Black Sea ports since the early 19th century. During the 1850s thousands of sailors and troops passed through Valletta to and from the Crimea. Many Maltese went with them as sutlers to supply the servicemen with liquor and tobacco.

Ca 2 A faceted shank fragment with part of a bowl and rim intact. Made of micaceous terracotta containing white impurities, covered in a light brown burnished slip. The bowl is also faceted with vertical combed crescents on each panel separated by a rayed dot decoration. The base of the rim has a ring of palmettes over horizontal crescents. Shank opening 15mm.

This artefact belongs to a large group of 19th century pipes; Sarachane Type X, Hayes (1980). 130 of these artefacts have been found in Istanbul. Stančeva (1972) believes they may originate in Varna; there are 40 similar in the museum there. Robinson (1985) also found similar pipes in Athens and Corinth. Others were found in Hungary, Romania and Russia. They are dated after 1850.

. . . the actual date of the sewer deposit could very well carry forward into the '50s or later. No problem whatsoever therefore with Ca 2's traditional dating. There also were a lot of other ceramics and glassware which remain as yet unidentified and may still indicate a somewhat later date to my first proposal. Your interpretation of Ca 2 is actually very welcome in this respect. However, I feel quite strongly that most of the deposit should date to the first half of the 19th Century . . .

Ca 3 has a rounded bowl over a plain keel jointed shank with bulbous termination. Half the plain inward sloping rim is missing. Mould made in terracotta clay. Shank opening 11mm. Undecorated except for plain raised bands between the rim and bowl and the shank and termination.

This pipe corresponds to Hayes type XI, late 18th possibly early 19th centuries.

Ca 4 This fragment has a rounded bowl and slightly concave rim. Most of the shank is missing although there is a vestigial keel under the bowl. Made in micaceous terracotta with black and white inclusions and a burnished finish. The bowl is gadrooned with a rayed dot decoration under a rouletted band with incised lines. The keel junction also has incised lines and rouletting.

Stylistically this pipe resembles other pipes published from Corinth. Probably early 19th century.

Ca 5 is a bowl and shank fragment with most of the rim missing. It is mould made from oatmeal coloured clay with black and white inclusions and patchy red marks on the surface. Shank opening 10mm. The bowl is gadrooned with a horizontal band of 'rope' work around the waist and another similar band of 'rope' work around the shank end.

In the absence of a comparison I am unsure about the date. However based on the clay colour, physical size and style - particularly the keel joint - I guess 18th to early 19th century.

Analysis

date	1750	1775	1800	1825	1850
Forces occupation			*****		
Ca 1	-----				
Ca 2				-----	---
Ca 3				-----	---
Ca 4			-----		
Ca 5	-----				
Probable pipe production	-----				

Conclusion

Pipe smokers were known to be conservative by nature and their preferred style of smoking was often slow to change, choosing to stick with the familiar. The above analysis of production dates would appear to confirm NC's feeling 'that most of the deposit should date to the first half of the 19th Century' as Ca 1, 4 and 5 were in production during that time. The theory that 'the sewer deposit could very well carry forward into the '50s or later' is supported by Ca 2's and Ca 3's traditional later dating.

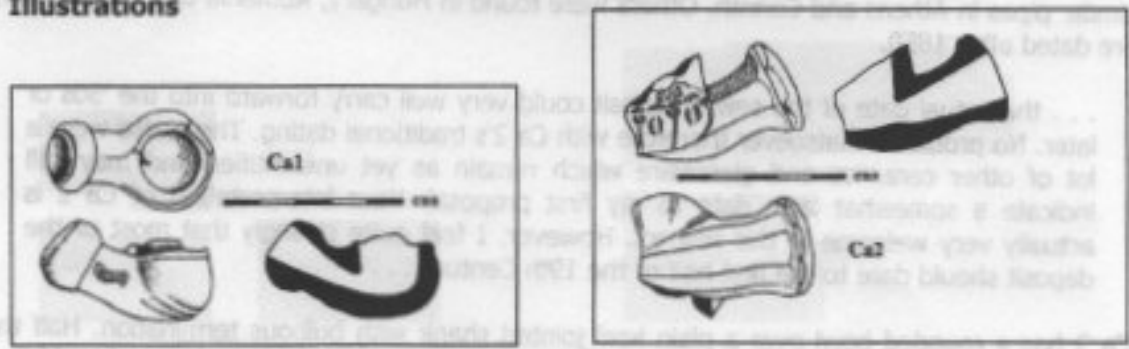
Bibliography

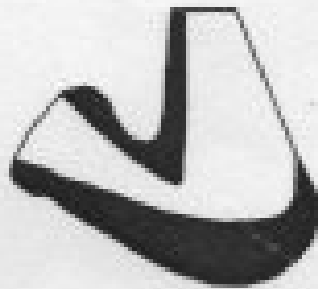
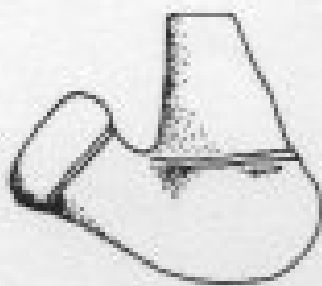
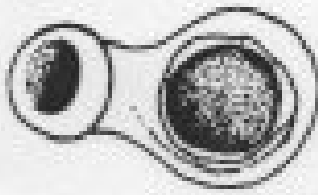
Robinson, R.C.W. (1985) 'Tobacco Pipes of Corinth and of the Athenian Agora' *Hesperia* 54, 149-203, Pl. 49, C 23 and Pl. 61, A 10, also Pl.53, C60-65.

Stančeva, M. (1972) 'La collection de pipes du Musée de Varna' *Bulletin du Musée National de Varna* VIII (XXIII), 81-89, figs. 12, 13.

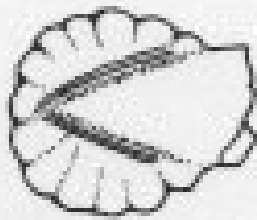
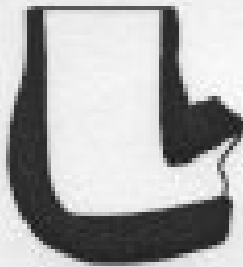
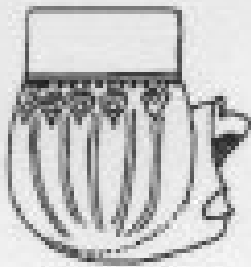
HAYES, J.W. (1980) 'Turkish Clay Pipes: A Provisional Typology' *British Archaeological Records International Series* 92, p 3-10.

Illustrations

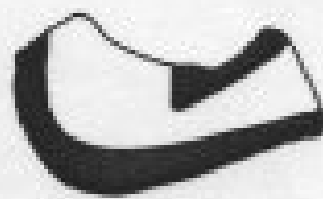
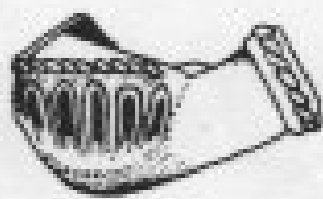




Ca3



Ca4



Ca5