

## Tobacco pipes. Mdina, Malta

The following artifacts were excavated in 1993 by Nathaniel Cutajar, National Museum of Malta. They are from a cesspit off Inguanetz Street, by the bastion wall, near to Greeks Gate, see shaded area Figure 1. The finds were stratified and designated upper or lower fill.



Figure 1

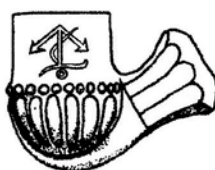


Figure 2

Figure 2. NGZ1993P4. Lower fill. One of a pair of identical mould made pipes, both with slightly damaged rims. Shank opening 9mm. Buff clay with traces of brown glaze on the keel of one. The bowl is gadrooned under a band of small hemispheres. The stem has a lotus leaf decoration. Both pipes have an impressed 'fouled' anchor on the left hand side of the rim, a maker's mark? or a motif with appeal to a sailor?



Figure 3

Figure 3. NGZ1993P5. Lower fill. Fragment of damaged bowl, the stem end missing. Pale orange clay with terracotta slip. The deep keel terminates in a double diamond motif just below the rim. There is a possible maker's mark? on the right hand side of the rim. By the end of the 17th century red became a fashionable colour for pipes. A truly red appearance was esteemed, and a special clay called *gulbahar* was imported by Istanbul pipemakers from the region of

Lake Van to make the slip that gave some pipes a rich ruby tint<sup>1</sup>.



Figure 4. NGZ1993P6. lower fill. Fragment of terracotta bowl and rim. The bowl has gadrooned decoration.

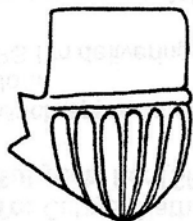


Figure 4



Figure 5

Figure 5. NGZ 1993P7. Lower fill. A terracotta stem fragment with brown slip. 11mm shank opening. Stamped (BON)NAUD (MAR)SEILLE. This is the fourth pipe marked BONNAUD that has been found in the Maltese islands. One was found in a field at Ras il-Bajda, Gozo, and two are in a private museum in Gharb, Gozo. This author also found a BONNAUD pipe at Dar Othman in Tunis Medina. The factory was in production between 1824 and 1955. Requests have been made to

the Archives Departementales des Bouche du Rhone for assistance in finding the factory catalogues. These artifacts are confirmation of a 19th century trade with Marseille. The catalogues may help with more precise dating.

<sup>1</sup> Robinson R.C.W. "Tobacco pipes of Corinth and the Athenian Agora", *Hesperia*, 54, 1985, pp149-203.

**Mdina.** Finds from a disused cesspit in the area between Inguanez Street and the bastion wall near Greeks gate. Excavated by NC in 1993.

**Figure 3.** Upper fill. An Irish pipe in white clay NGZ1993P1. 1.5mm bore at break.

"The Irish harp pattern with mould number 175 is also interesting. Normally the harp is placed more centrally on the side of the bowl and there is often milling around the rim. In the Scottish pipe lists of 1900 only one firm has a 'harp' pattern with the number 175, and that was McDougall's of Glasgow. They probably introduced this pattern about 1800 and the pipe from Malta can almost certainly be attributed to this firm. Given the life expectancy of moulds it could have been made by them until well into this century".

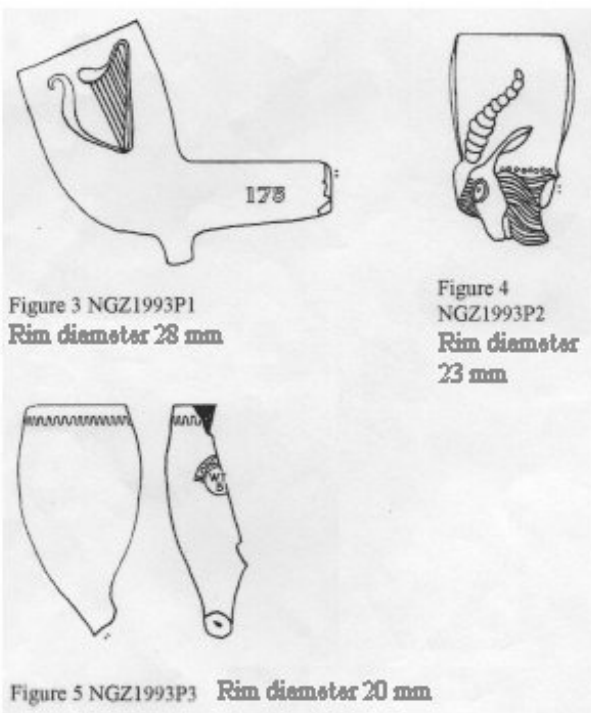
**Figure 4.** Upper fill. NGZ1993P2. The bowl of a goat's head pipe. 1.5mm at break

"While checking the Scottish lists I also noticed that Thos. Davidson & Co of Glasgow (working 1862-1911) produced a goats head pipe, just like the Mdina example. I had always associated these pipes with the continental factories, where the design was certainly popular. I have not seen one of these Scottish ones, nor an English example that I know of. The ones that I have seen usually have neat design and moulding, typical of the northern European factories, and they are often marked with French manufacturers names, etc. But the Davidson engraving looks very neat too, and so the Mdina pipe could just as well be one of their products". Incidentally a similar goat head pipe is on display in the Gharb Folklore Museum. See [Tobacco pipes from Malta](#), 21-June-1998, Gb4.

**Figure 5.** Lower fill. A fragment of pipe bowl and stem NGZ1993P3. White clay. Rouletting around the rim. W(T)B LON(DON) stamped on the bowl facing smoker. 1.25mm at break.

"The WTB pipe from London was made by William Thomas Blake, whom Oswald records at City Road, London, from 1873-1898".

JRW Oct. 1998



12/07/2013 Postscript to:

**‘Tobacco Pipes. Mdina, Malta’**



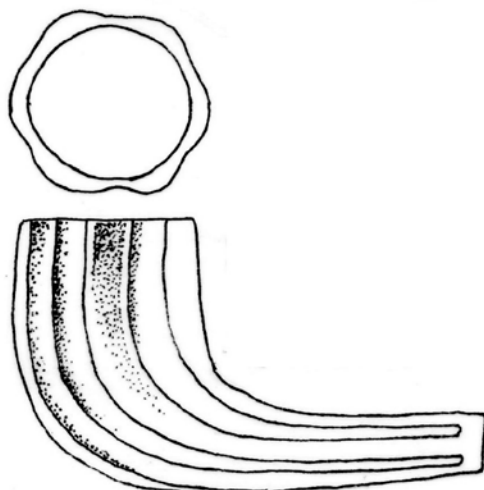
NGZ 1993 P7



NGZ 1993 P7

With regard to my report ‘Tobacco pipes. Mdina, Malta’ concerning four fragments from the 1993 Inguanez Street excavation, figure 5; it is now possible to say that the stamp BONNAUD MARSEILLE was in use between 1880 and 1913.

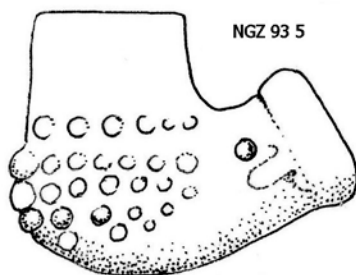
Two other pipes from the same excavation are described below.



NGZ 1993 MDINA 5

NGZ 1993/5 (European pipe)

Bowl and short stem of white pipe clay, stained with use. The bowl is fluted, the edges of which continue almost to the stem end terminating at right angles. The appearance is similar to artefacts made by Samuel McLardy of Manchester, UK, although it could have been made in Scotland by W. White of Glasgow. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup>



NGZ 93 5

NGZ 1993/5 (pipa tal-qasba)

A pale terracotta sack-shaped pipe. Shank opening 10 mm. The bowl is decorated with 5 bands of hemispheres standing proud under a plain rim. This decorative element is somewhat extended on the left side of the shank. The shank is otherwise plain with a slightly bulbous termination. Late 18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> century.



<sup>1</sup> Pers. comm. Peter Hammond.

In 2008 the bastion beneath Verdala Palace Hotel, Mdina, was showing signs of collapse. The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage organised a rescue dig. Among other artefacts this revealed four European smoking pipes, kindly shown to us at the St Christopher Street office, in 2013.

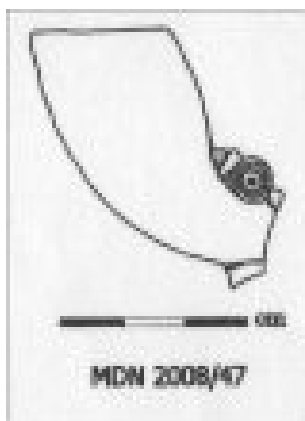


MDN 08/1



MDN08/1

No description.



MDN 2008/47. Mould made artefact of cream coloured pipe clay. Stem missing. The foot is damaged as is the decorative element on the upper bowl to stem junction.

1.8 mm bore at fracture.

MDN 2008  
1 of 2

MDN 2008 1 of 2 Mould made from cream colour pipe clay. Bowl fragment in three pieces. Harp decoration on left hand side, most of the strings are missing. 1.8 mm through beginning of stem.



MDN 2008 2 of 2

MDN 2008 2 of 2 Unstratified. White pipeclay. Bowl fragment missing left side. Broken foot. No stem. Left side of bowl decorated with eight string Irish harp.

#### Appendix: BONNAULD MARSEILLE 1824 - 1958

Alphonse Bonnaud founded a pipe factory in Marseille in 1824. The factory produced clay pipes until the business closed in 1958. Some of these tobacco pipes were specifically designed for the foreign market. One was excavated in the Tunis-Medina by Abdelazziz Daoulatli and was held in a reserve collection at Dar Othman.<sup>2</sup> During the 19<sup>th</sup> century many Maltese were involved in the cotton and salt trade to Marseille. A main street in Sannat, Gozo, is still called Triq Marsilija. Another terracotta stem fragment from the same factory was excavated from the lower fill of a cesspit situated between Inguanez street and the bastion wall near Greeks' Gate, Mdina.<sup>3</sup> In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century a farmer in Xlendi found a Bonnaud pipe while ploughing at Ras il-Bajda. That artefact was published in 1992 as part of a collection in the Gozo Museum of Archaeology.<sup>4</sup> On display at the Gharb Folklore Museum are two more examples dated between 1880 – 1913.<sup>5</sup> Two further pipes from this factory are known in private collections in Malta. Two further pipes from this factory are known in private collections in Malta, one from Ghajnsielem and another in Gzira, from the Lazaretto.<sup>6</sup> The latter was published in 2001.<sup>7</sup>