

## Prehistoric Malta

### ***(a) Mnajdra Temple Altar***

The Temple Altar is perhaps the best-known feature within the Mnajdra temple complex at Qrendi, which came to light in 1836. The Mnajdra temples are made up of the Small temple, the Lower temple and the Middle temple.

The altar, which is found in the lower temple, is perhaps the most easily identifiable feature of the temple complex and would be a suitable subject for one of Malta's euro coins to represent prehistoric Malta.



### ***(b) Statues of the Xaghra Stone Circle***

The set of limestone figures were found together at the site of the Xaghra Stone Circle in Gozo. The Circle is built on a promontory to the west of the Ggantija megalithic temples, suggesting that the site was utilised for burial purposes by the Neolithic people over the period of 4000 – 2500 BC.

The statues, or details from the collection, would form an unusual aspect of Malta's prehistoric past to feature on one of the euro coins.



### ***(c) Ġgantija Temples***

The Ġgantija Temples are thought to be the oldest free-standing structures in the world. The site comprises two Neolithic temples dating from the third millennium B.C (3600 to 3000 B.C.). The concave walls of the temples suggest that the whole structure was once roofed. The outer temple walls are impressive: the largest megaliths measure about six by four metres and the wall may once have stood at a height of sixteen metres. During the 1827 excavations, pottery, vases and statuettes were unearthed. These are now displayed in the archaeology museums in Victoria and Valletta.

The uniqueness and historical importance of the Ġgantija temples makes them a suitable subject to appear on the national side of one of Malta's euro coins.



## Renaissance Malta

### ***(a) The Baptism of Christ***

The Baptism of Christ by St John is an impressive marble sculpture situated behind the main altar in St. John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta. The sculpture, put in place in 1704, is the work of the Italian Late Baroque sculptor Giuseppe Mazzuoli (1644 – 1725).

The figure of St John featured prominently on the coins of the Order of St John that circulated in Malta during the period 1530 to 1798, so that this statue provides a strong link with the renaissance period and would be an appropriate subject to feature on one of the Maltese euro coins.



### ***(b) The Portico of the Auberge de Castille***

The stately doorway to the Auberge of Castille, Leon and Portugal is a symbol of the seat of government in Malta as the Auberge now houses the Prime Minister's office

This is the largest, and perhaps the finest, of all the auberges built at the time of the Knights (1530-1798). This Auberge was built by the Maltese architect Girolamo Cassar in 1574. Extensive reconstructions directed by architect Domenico Cachia were undertaken in 1744 during Grand Master Pinto de Fonseca's term of office.

The doorway, or a detail from it, is being proposed as one of the subjects to represent renaissance Malta on the Maltese euro coins.



### ***(c) Fort St Angelo***

Fort St Angelo is considered the most important site of Malta's military heritage. It stands on the site of a fortified Roman settlement. In medieval times, it was occupied by the Aragonese and the Angevins. In 1530, when the Order of St John arrived on the Islands, the Fort became the seat of the Grand Master and played a key role in the Great Siege of 1565. In 1912 it was officially listed as a ship by the British, and named HMS Egmont; in 1933 it was renamed HMS St Angelo.

The imposing character of Fort St Angelo and its central role in Malta's history make it a fitting subject for the national side of one of Malta's euro coins.



## The Maltese Identity

### (a) *The Great Siege Monument*

The Great Siege Monument was erected in 1920 to commemorate this epic event in Maltese history, the victory achieved in 1565 by the Knights Hospitallers and the Maltese against an invading Turkish force.

The monument depicts allegorical representations of Fortitude, Hope and Faith. Antonio Sciortino (1897-1927) created this sculpture as an expression of the determination of the Great Siege defendants and, more importantly, of the qualities deemed necessary for tiny Malta to survive in a much larger world.

The eight-pointed cross on the helmet of the central figure clearly identifies Malta with this subject being proposed for the national side of one of the euro coins.



### (b) *Malta's Coat of Arms*

Malta's emblem is described by the Emblem and Public Seal of Malta Act 1975 as a shield showing an heraldic representation of the National Flag of Malta. Above the shield is a mural crown representing the fortifications of Malta and denoting a City State. Around the shield is a wreath of two branches, of Olive and Palm, symbols of peace and traditionally associated with Malta.

The Coat of Arms is used on the common side of Malta's current coinage, and as such would provide continuity with the euro coin issue.



### (c) *Allegoric Representation of Malta*

The allegorical figure of Melita featuring the eight-pointed cross and holding a rudder, representing the country in control of its own destiny, is the work of the well-known Maltese artist Edward Caruana Dingli (1876- 1950). He drew this figure for a set of postage stamps issued in 1922 following the historical Self-Government Constitution of 1921.

This figure features in the Central Bank of Malta's fifth series of currency notes that are currently in use.



## The Maltese Archipelago

### (a) Map of the Maltese Islands

Many antique maps of Malta have been discovered in various European capitals over the centuries. A small number of these form part of a collection of maps that is in the possession of the Central Bank of Malta.

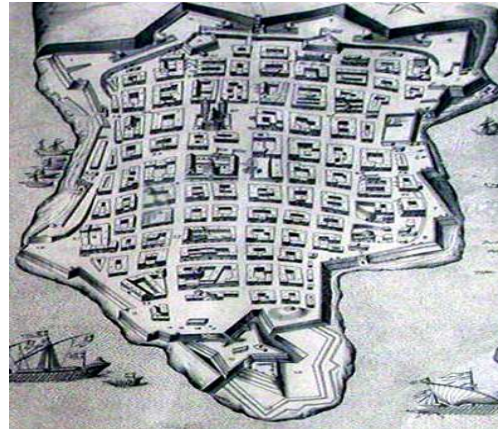
The map shown is being proposed to represent the Maltese archipelago on the forthcoming issue of euro coins. This map of the Maltese Islands dates back to 1680.



### (b) Valletta Fortifications

Valletta was built on the strategically-important Mount Sceberras peninsula, which rises steeply from two deep harbours, Marsamxett and Grand Harbour. Started in 1566, Valletta was completed, with its impressive bastions, forts and cathedral, in the short time of 15 years. It is named after its founder, Grand Master Jean Parisot de la Valette, who led the Knights of St John and the Maltese to victory in the Great Siege of 1565.

For both geographical and historical reasons, Valletta is synonymous with Malta and, therefore, represents a suitable subject for use on the national side of the euro coins.



### (c) Mdina Skyline

The skyline of Mdina, Malta's former capital city, with its baroque cathedral, bastions and palaces, is an imposing landmark visible throughout central Malta. Mdina is one of Europe's finest examples of an ancient walled city and is perhaps the most easily recognisable skyline on the Island.

Mdina is also well known to all who visit the country and, as such, it is truly representative of the Maltese Islands and a fitting subject for Malta's euro coinage.

