

S 5.2 FROM THE PREHISTORIC TEMPLES TO THE CATHEDRALS



S5.2.1

We can see how man always had some form of belief; we find examples of the main places of worship built or dug underground by the Maltese people from prehistoric times till today.

A. A conversation between SALVINU and his father TONI (at the village square on Sunday morning)

Salvinu (looking at the bell tower of the church)

Dad, I always wonder how they managed to build this big building of the church without the cranes we have today.

Dad That's right Salv, you would be surprised how many big and beautiful things man can build when they put their mind to it.

Salv, did you know that the people in Malta did not always adore God in churches like we have today?

Salvinu Yes Dad, the teacher was just teaching us about the Prehistoric Temples. Those were the places where the Maltese people used to offer animals as a sacrifice to worship their gods.

Dad Very good Salvinu. Can you name some prehistoric temples for me?

Salvinu This is an easy question Dad, Ħal Tarxien, Ġgantija, Ħaġar Qim, Imnajdra, there are so many! There is also the Hypogeum of Ħal Saflieni which is in Paola.

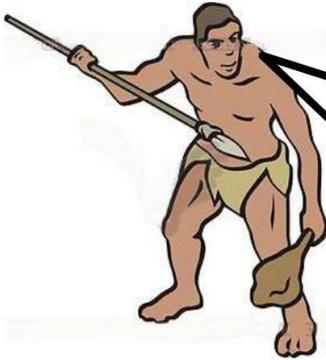
Dad Good Salv, it looks like you were paying attention to the lesson.



- Salvinu** The teacher also told us that after St Paul introduced the Christian faith in Malta, gradually the people stopped worshipping the Pagan Gods but started worshipping God and his Mother Mary and the other saints.
- Dad** You're right Salv. In fact, when the Romans ruled Malta, the people used to bury their dead in catacombs. When the Christians started using these catacombs, they too started to draw various Catholic symbols in them.
- Salvinu** What are catacombs Dad?
- Dad** These used to be dug in the rocks underground. Down there, the People of that time, including the Christians used to bury their dead and also hold religious ceremonies in them.
- Salvinu** So these are like the Hypogeum of Ħal Saflieni.
- Dad** Exactly Salv. However, the Hypogeum is prehistoric. In it they found the statue of the Sleeping women. As I told you, when the catacombs were used by Christians, they drew many Christian symbols in them.
- Salvinu** So why did they stop using them?
- Dad** First there was a time when Malta and Gozo were taken over by the Arabs. We do not know exactly what happened to the Christian religion at that time. But then, gradually, when Malta was again ruled by European leaders, such as the Normans, the Aragonese and the Knights of St. John, the Christian religion was gaining importance and many chapels were built. Until we started to build such large and beautiful churches like this one!
- Salvinu** Interesting! Thank you dad! We shall continue this conversation next time. I think we better go now because Mum will start worrying about us.

B. Read what these figures are saying and then answer the questions.

The first figure:

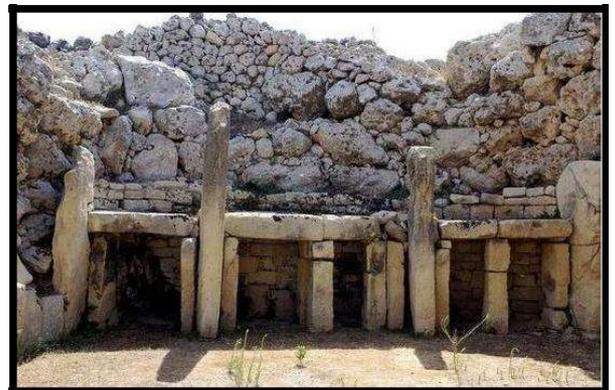


We did very well during our hunting today. We managed to catch four very big birds. These should last us for this week. Tomorrow, me and my family go to the temple to offer one of them as a sacrifice to the gods.

Underline the correct answer.

1. In which worship place do you think this man is going to go to offer the bird as a sacrifice?

- A. The Mosta Church
- B. The Co-cathedral of St John in Valletta
- C. The cathedral of Mdina
- D. The Ġgantija Temples in Gozo
- E. The Catacombs of St Paul in Rabat



2. Which of the following explains what type of belief this man had?

- A. Used to believe in Mary and the saints
- B. Used to believe in the Christian God
- C. Used to believe in many gods

3. This man used to live in Prehistoric times.

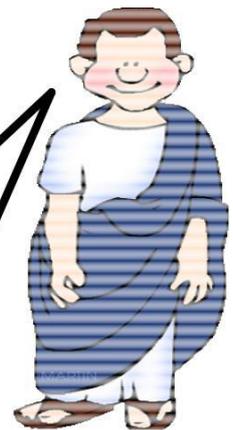
Why is it that he could not have intended to go and offer one of his birds as a sacrifice in the church of St Mary in Qrendi?

Write your reasons:



The second figure:

My name is Portio. I am a Roman citizen and I live on a small island called Melita, in a sweet city also called Melita. This morning my uncle died. Tonight, together with all my family, we are going to attend a ceremony in which we receive the Eucharist and then we bury him.



Underline the correct answer.

1. Portio's uncle was going to be buried (mark the correct answer):
 - A. In the Ġgantija temple in Gozo.
 - B. In one of the Christian catacombs.
 - C. In the co cathedral of St John in Valletta
 - D. In the cathedral of Mdina
 - E. In the Mosta church

2. Which of these explains what beliefs Portio had?
- A. He used to believe in a lot of Roman Pagan Gods.
 - B. He used to believe in Greek Gods.
 - C. He was Catholic.
 - D. The greatest God for him was the Fat Lady, the Goddess of Fertility.

3. Why in your opinion, couldn't Portio's uncle be buried in the Addolorata cemetery?

Write your reasons below.



The Third Figure



My name is Melanie. I live in Xagħra Gozo. I am 6 years old and this year I am going to do my Holy Communion. The MUSEUM is preparing us to receive Jesus for the first time. Even at school, the teachers have spoken to us about the catholic meaning of the Holy Communion

1. Where do you think Melanie is going to have the ceremony of her Holy Communion?
 - A. In the temple of Ġgantija in Xagħra Gozo
 - B. In the cathedral of Rabat Gozo
 - C. In the co-cathedral of St John in Valletta
 - D. In the main church in Xgħajra
 - E. In the Juno Temple of tas-Silġ in Marsaxlokk

2. From what Melanie said, we notice that:
 - A. Melanie worships the Fat Lady, Goddess of Fertility
 - B. Melanie is Christian
 - C. Melanie has no beliefs
 - D. Melanie worships the Greek Pagan Gods

4. In your opinion, why is Melanie going to do her Holy Communion in a church?

Write your reasons below.