

Worksheet S6.1.3

We will identify the main prehistoric temples in the Maltese Islands and examine the faith of the Maltese at that time. We will see how to take care of the temples and why.

Kevin and Sandra explore the TEMPLES PERIOD

(Writing by Leonard Grech)

Read and answer.

Kevin: Sandra, do you remember when we went to Ġgantija?

Sandra: Yes Kevin, we had so much fun seeing those large stones.

Kevin: Do you know what I think sometimes? How strong those people were!

Sandra: Probably they used to roll those large stones on large spheres of stone. They found a lot of these in temples. What is certain is that they were very talented to be able to build temples like Ġgantija, Haġar Qim, Mnajdra and Tarxien.

Kevin: You need to remember something else, Sandra; they did not have the machinery and tools of today.

Sandra: You are right. The people who built the temples are called people of the Copper Age. Copper is a soft metal and it is not suitable to make a tool out of it.

Kevin: This means Sandra that the people of the Copper Age or the Temples Period, continued to use the stone tools that they had previously.

Sandra: Exactly, Kevin. Their tools were like those of the Neolithic Age. They made use of flints, bones and other things. But they did not have tools made from metal.

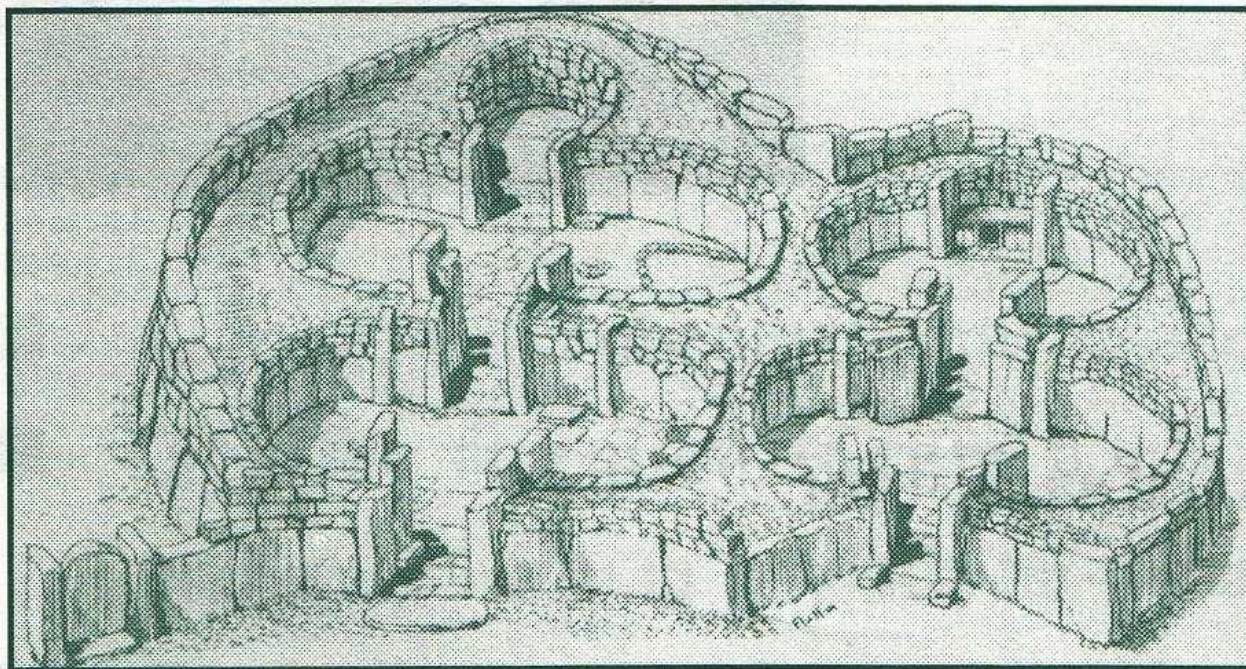
Kevin: Do you know what they had in their favour, Sandra? They could make use of limestone and this is not tough to work with it.

Sandra: Right, Kevin. However, you need to remember that limestone has its weaknesses. This deteriorates quickly, especially when it is near the sea. Besides limestone, they also made use of hard stone.

Kevin: Sandra, why don't we encourage our cousin to go visit one of the temples together?

Sandra: Good idea! We would definitely have fun.

1. The temples are called MEGLITHIC. Megalithic means:
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2. The picture shows the Temples of Ġgantija. Where are these found?
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3. How many temples are there? _____

4. There are three niches in the small temple. What do you think they were used for?
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5. **Note** that the temples have interior walls and another wall that surrounds them from the outside. The space between the inner walls and the outer wall is filled with soil and debris. In some parts of the temples, the floor seems to have been covered in limestone slabs (ċangatura).

A model of a megalithic temple found by archaeologists; it shows that most probably temples had roofs.



Kevin: They say that the temples were roofed, Sandra.

Sandra: That is what they say. In the Museum of Archaeology in Valletta there is a very small model of a roofed temple.

Kevin: I think they were very good builders.

Sandra: I agree with you; they were definitely talented in building.

Kevin: It is interesting to ask: why did they build the temples?

Sandra: And who did they build them for, Kevin?

Kevin: They say that these were sacred places. This is why we call them temples.

Sandra: They surely worshipped someone in them, Kevin – the Fat Lady or the goddess of fertility.

Kevin: And they also offered sacrifices to their god.

Sandra: The guide had told us they offered animals such as sheep and goats. Maybe they offered some other animals as well.

Kevin: It is possible, Sandra. But they did not offer people.

6. How can we arrive at the conclusion that they did not offer people as sacrifices?



7. **Remember:**

- They found the most number of statues of the Fat Lady in Hagar Qim. They also found an altar with an engraved plant on it (proof that they used to work the land/fields). Nowadays, all these remains are found in the Museum of Archaeology in Valletta.
- In Tarxien they found the largest statue of the Fat Lady together with other megalithic stones with engraved animals on them (proof that they raised livestock). These prehistoric remains are also found in the Museum of archaeology but there is a replica of them in Tarxien.

Sandra: I do not know what you think of this, Kevin; but in my opinion we should feel very proud to have so many megalithic temples in our country which are unique to the whole world!

Kevin: I agree with you, Sandra. They are not considered WORLD HERITAGE SITES for nothing!

Sandra: However, this adds more responsibility on us. We must take care of them so that they can be enjoyed by both Maltese and tourists. The temples need to be protected from the sun, wind and rain because these elements can cause great damage to the stone.

Kevin: So this is why the many prehistoric remains found in the temples were taken to the Museum of archaeology.

Sandra: And it is for the same reason, that they erected tents over the temples of Haġar Qim and Mnajdra.

8. In which temple was the largest statue of the Fat Lady found? _____

9. In which temple did they find an altar with an engraved plant on it? _____

10. Another name for the Fat Lady is: _____

11. Why are the Megalithic temples found in our islands considered as World Heritage Sites?

12. Why do you think the temples suffered so much damage since they were excavated by Archaeologists?
