

Catacombs of St. Paul and his engravings

Rabat / Malta



Eine Foto-Dokumentation von Josef Rahm Otto

Catacombs of St. Paul, Rabat / Malta

and his engravings

<http://www.heritagemalta.org/catacombs.html>

The Catacombs of St. Paul are not themselves associated with Paul but derive their name from their proximity to St. Paul's Church and Grotto. They are a fascinating labyrinth of 3rd-century AD subterranean tombs and the earliest archaeological evidence of Christianity in Malta.

St. Paul's Catacombs incorporates tombs for more than 1,000 bodies in 2,200 square meters. Not all of the site is accessible, but enough is open to the public to provide a fascinating look at several different types of tombs.

The few surviving murals, although fragmentary, are important since they constitute the only surviving evidence on Malta of painting from this period.

At the bottom of steep steps, seven meters into the catacombs, are two striking rooms divided by a central pillar.

The main crypt, on the right, has a high ceiling and at either end a raised plinth with circular table and a semicircular bench, a feature unique to Malta. Both table and bench are hewn out of the rock in one piece, forming a single architectural unit within an apsed recess. These were used for commemorative meals during the annual festival of the dead, an ancient Roman custom.

Down a couple more steps, the crypt to the left may have been a chapel - it has a recess at the far end that may have been an altar. Here there are "Luculus tombs," small rectangular recesses cut into a wall and used for children.

On the right are two long corridors about 25 meters long each, leading to groups of tombs in which the body was interred underneath the pitched roof via an opening in the lower wall. To the left is another small group of canopied tombs and a long twisty passage leading to a lower level.

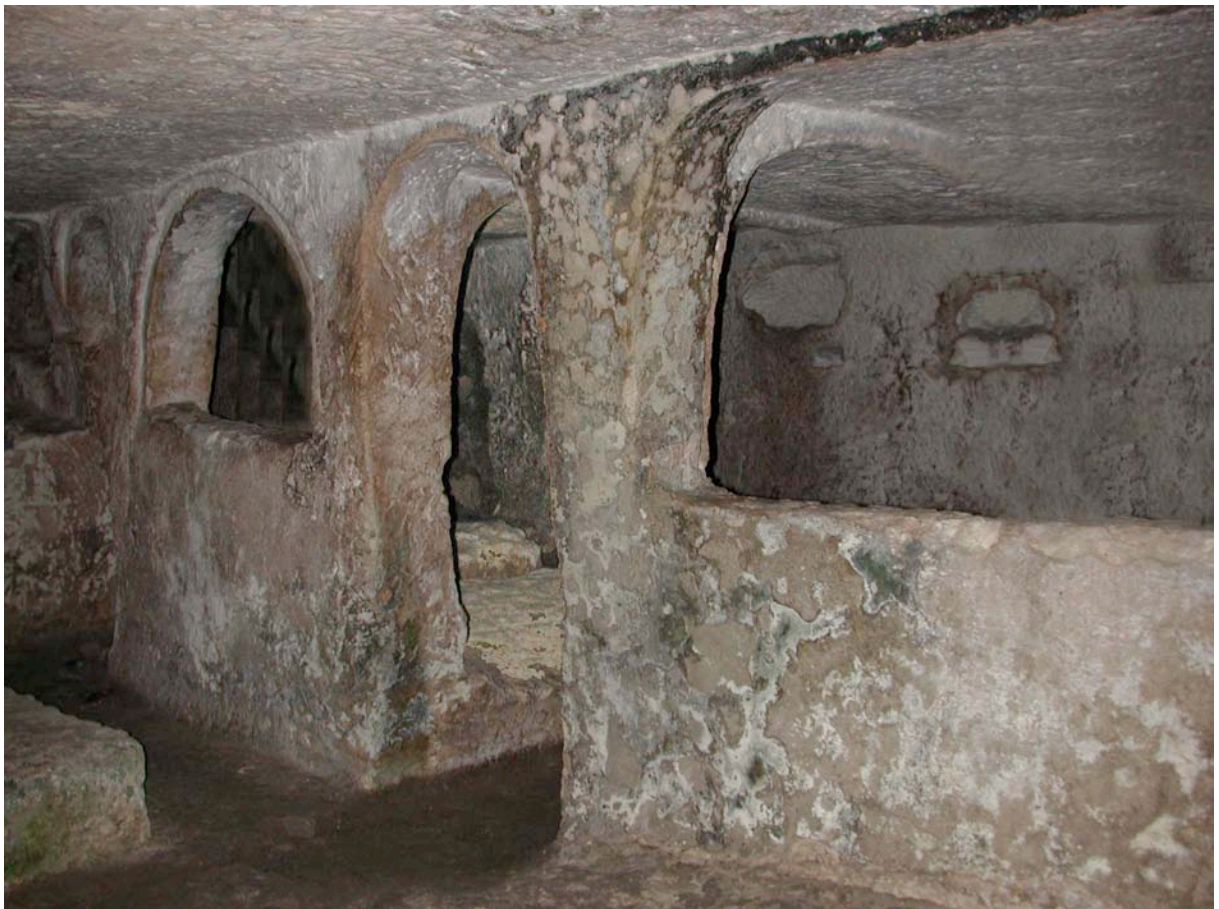
Names: St. Paul's Catacombs; Catacombs of St. Paul
Type of site: Early Christian catacombs
Dates: 3rd-4th century AD
Size: 2,200 sq m
Location: St Agatha Street, Rabat, Malta
Phone: 2145 4562
Hours: Daily 9-5 (last admission 4:30). Closed Dec. 24, 25, 31, Jan 1, Good Friday

Catacombs of St. Paul, Rabat / Malta

The Catacombs





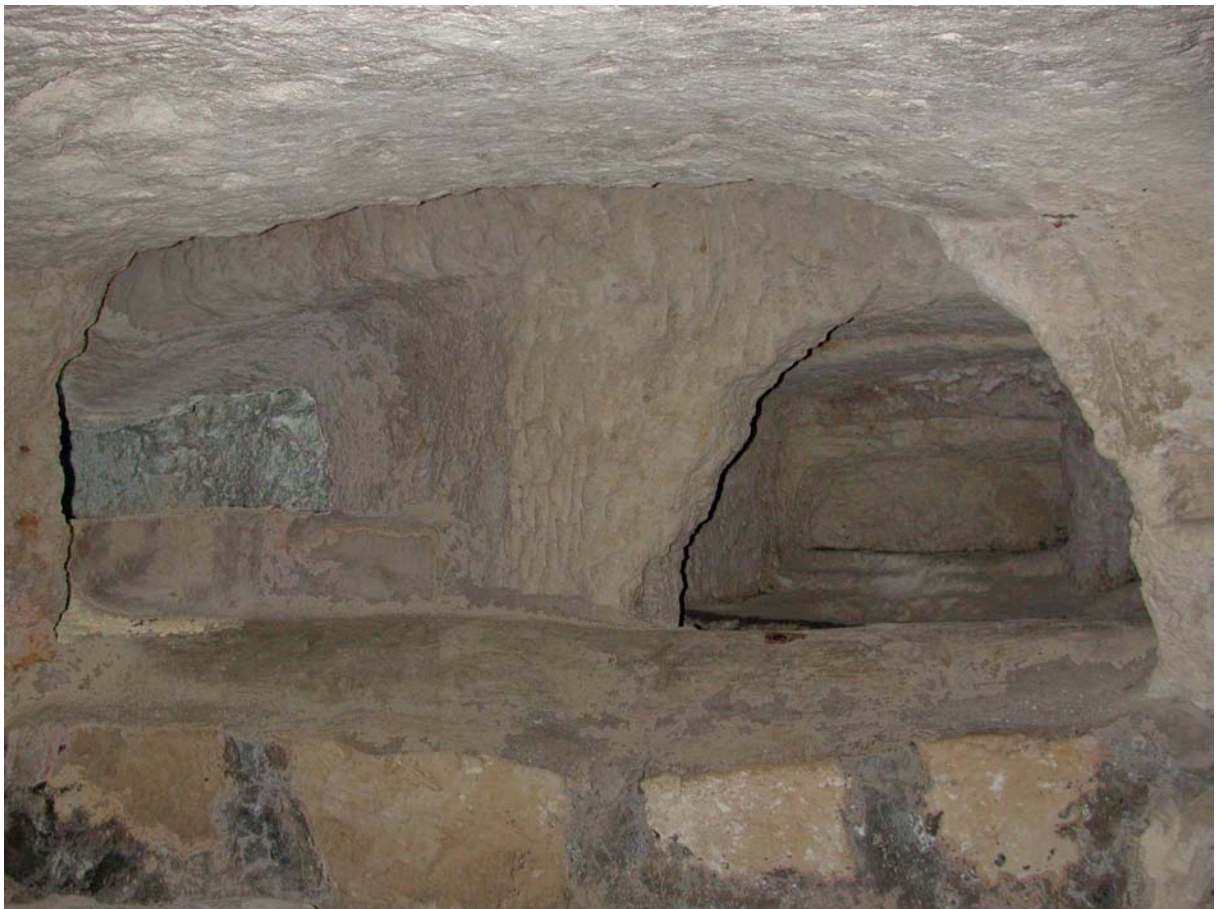
















































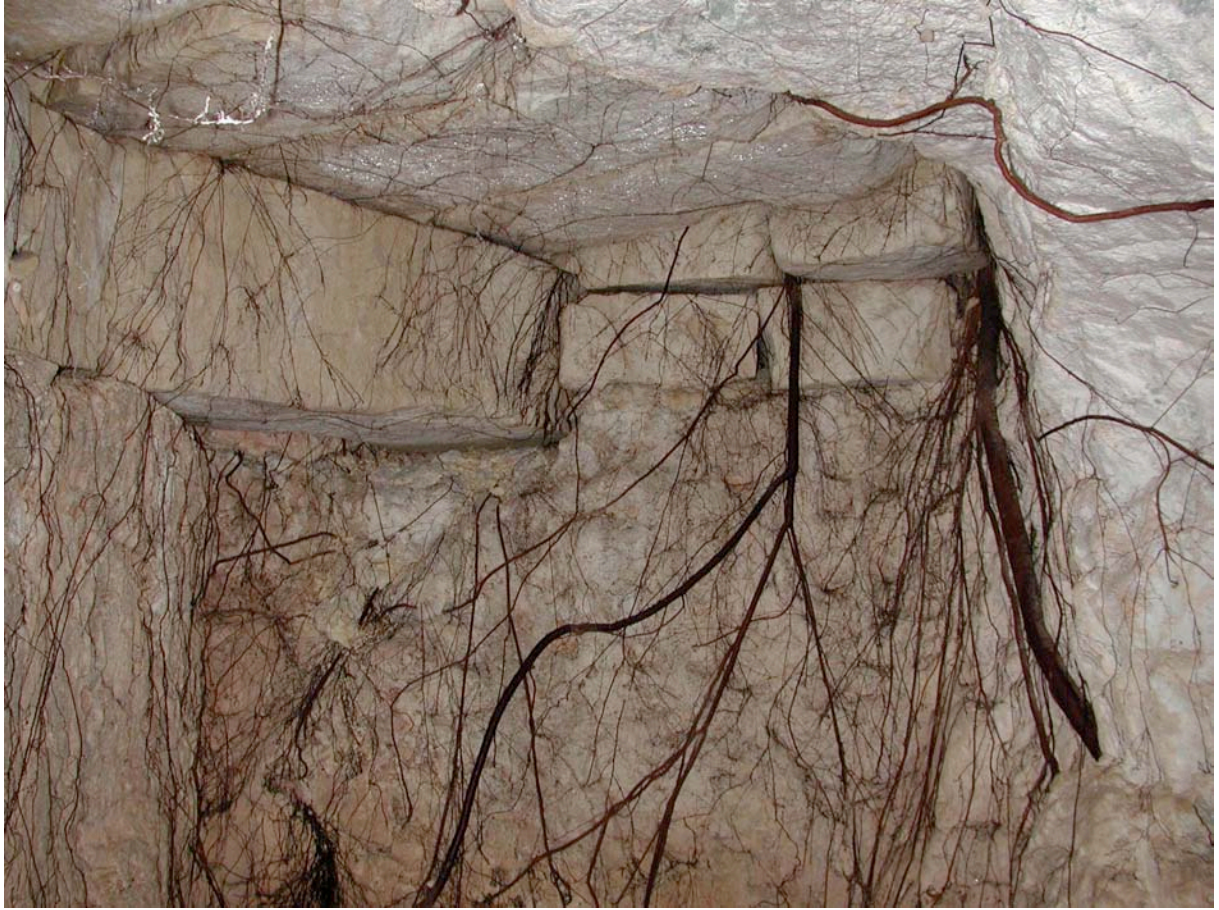


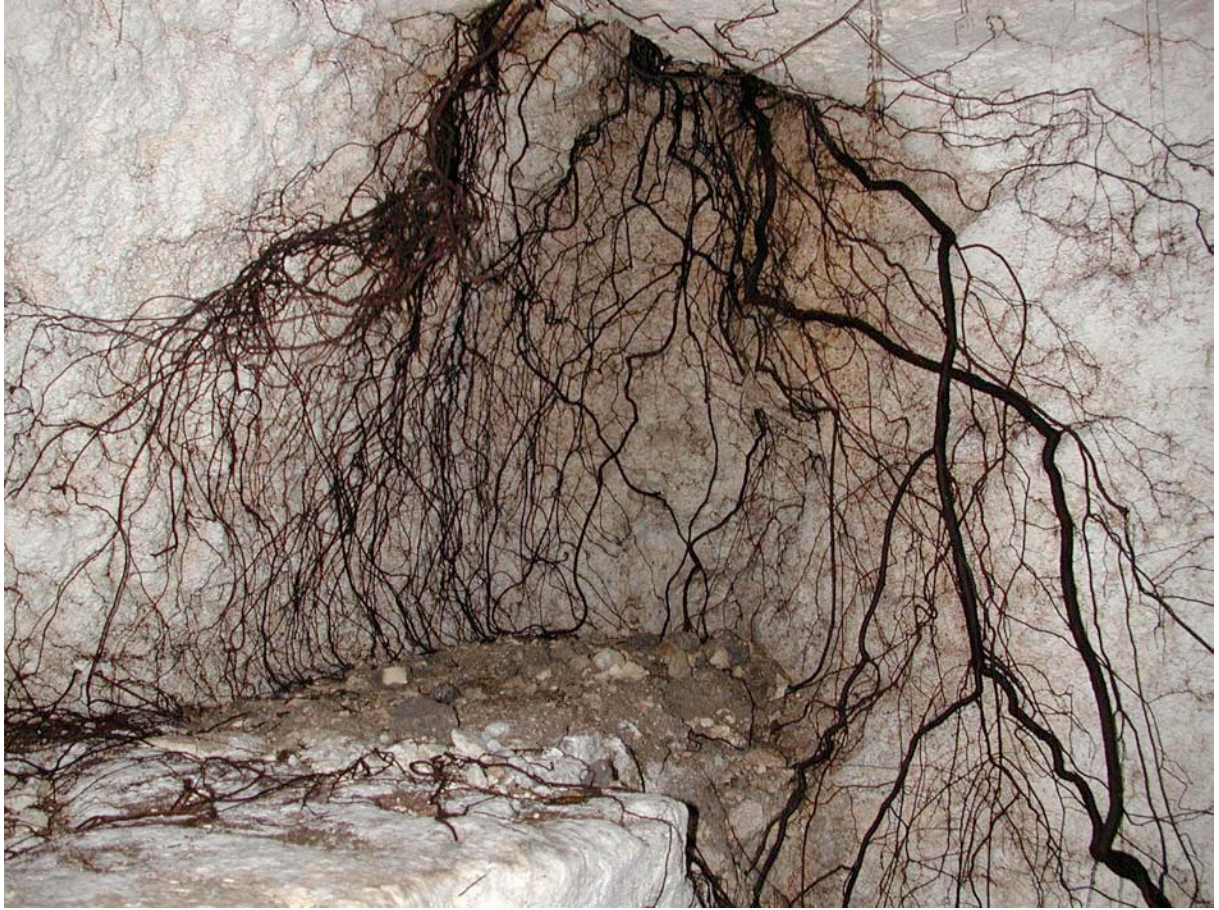
the tree roots







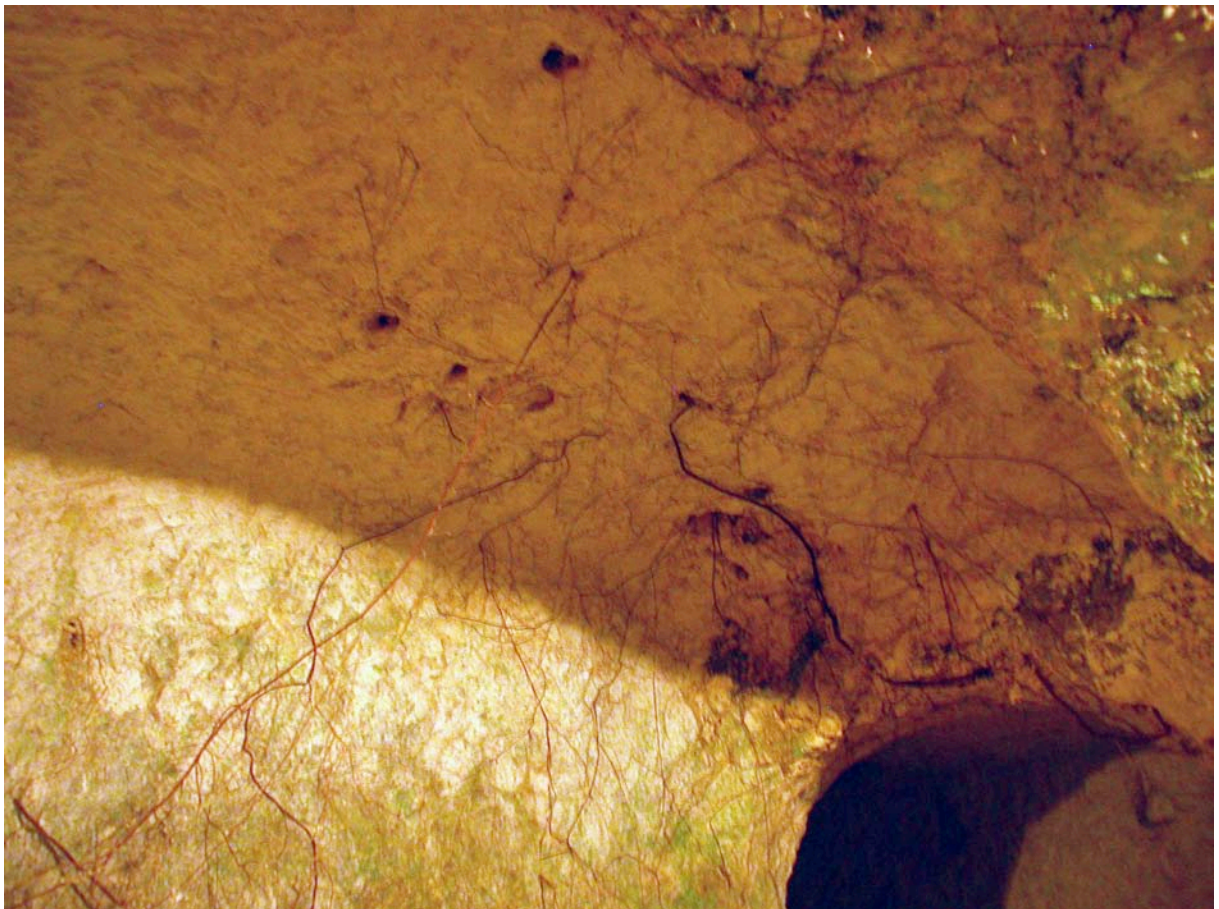












the engravings

















