

# **The Cart Ruts of Clapham Junction**

## **(Malta)**



Eine Foto-Dokumentation von Josef Rahm Otto

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Text: From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clapham\\_Junction\\_\(Malta\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clapham_Junction_(Malta))

Clapham Junction is a prehistoric site on Malta near the Dingli Cliffs. It is a complex network of tracks gouged in the rock. Its age and purpose are still a mystery of Maltese history. In general, most archeologists presume that the site developed about 2000 BC after new settlers came over from Sicily to start the Bronze Age in Malta. Beside the megalithic temples it is the most mysterious artefact on Malta.

It is reported that the name "Clapham Junction" was given by an Englishman, who later reported that it reminded him of the great and busy railway station Clapham Junction in London.

## **The tracks (Cart Ruts) Clapham Junction at Dingli**

The tracks can be found on all of Malta and on Gozo, but the site Clapham Junction (also known as Misraħ Għar il-Kbir) near the Dingli Cliffs in the south of the island is probably the most impressive – they form here a real traffic jam.

Also called cart ruts, they are up to 60 cm deep and have an average distance between them of 110 to 140 cm. Some cross while others form junctions. This creates the illusion of a great railway station switching yard.

## **Theories about the purpose**

There are numerous theories about the purpose of these tracks, the most discussed are the following:

- \* Goods were transported here on sledges which gouged the tracks into the rock.
- \* The tracks are real cart ruts for transporting goods.
- \* It is an irrigation system.

The theories of transport systems are the most popular in the discussion. Both have provoked some questions which have not been answered yet. If it were sledges, the goods moved would have been quite heavy to produce such deep tracks, therefore they would have needed a large power source to be moved: Malta is a small island with a relatively small population at that time. To fit, carts with wheels would have had to have wheels with a diameter of 1.4 meters = 4 feet 9 inches at least. Another (similar) theory says that the huge blocks of limestone had been transported along these tracks and used to build the temples. The problem is, that the ruts can be found at many places, not just near the temples.

The irrigation system theory tries to explain the tracks by the fact that the stony soil at that time was quite infertile. It was more and more difficult to provide the population with food, so that an irrigation system became necessary.



## Other suppositions

There are also other attempts to explain the tracks:

- \* The Maltese archeologist Anthony Bonanno thinks that the ruts are devices of the Phoenicians, which would mean that the tracks were made more recently, in the 7th century BC. But it is known that the activities of the Phoenicians on Malta were quite small.
- \* Other theories try to prove that Malta is the ancient Atlantis.





**Cart Ruts: Description**

Of great interest on Malta's main island are the enigmatic "cart-ruts" which crisscross the higher parts of the western plateau like railroad lines. Particularly striking examples are to be seen near the Dingli Cliffs. It is now known that these tracks were worn in the soft limestone by the runners of sleds used by the Bronze Age inhabitants of Malta and Gozo as a means of transport.









































































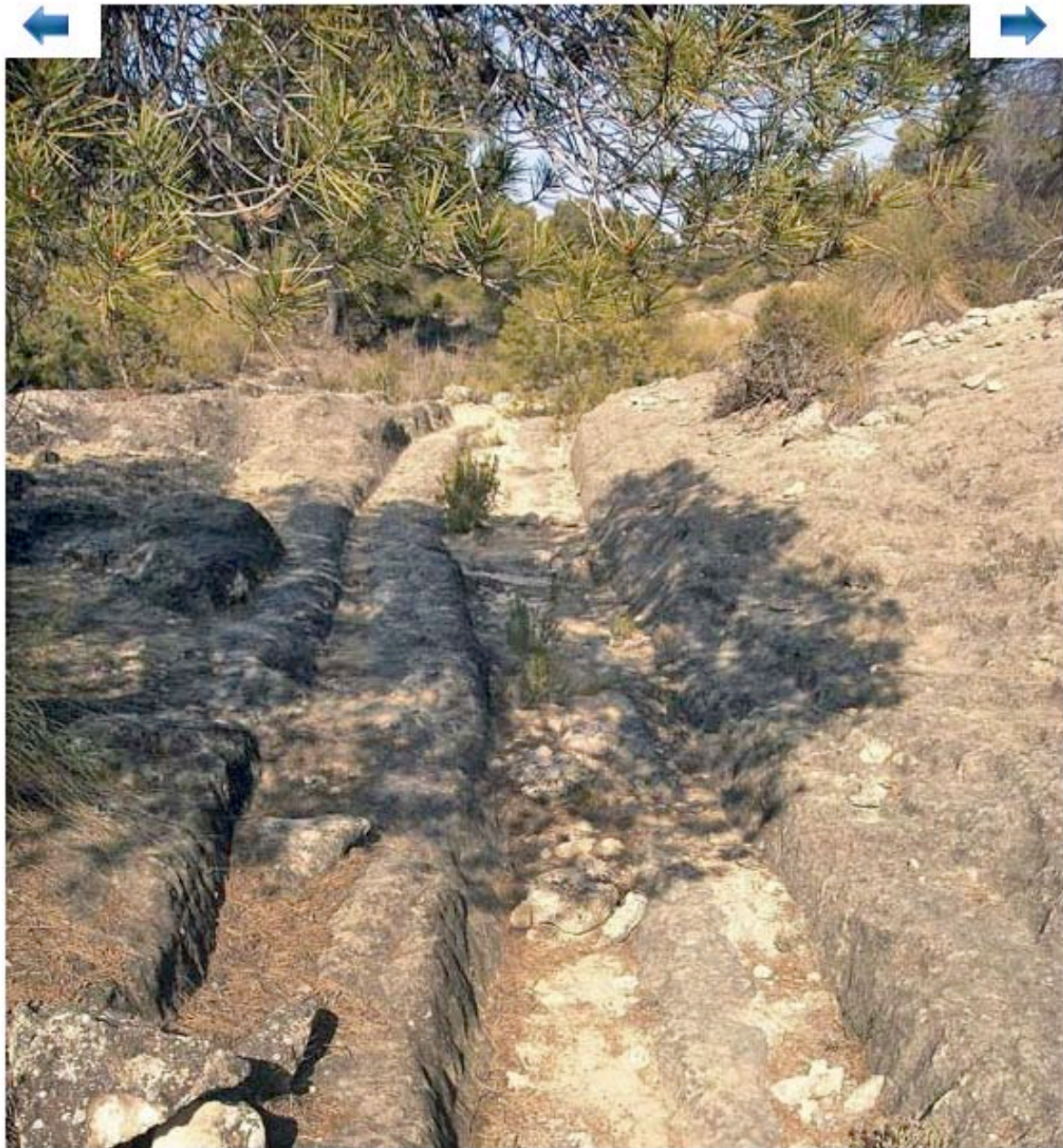
# Cart Ruts in Spain

Keyword by Google: [Cantera de Solana de la Pedrera - Las Canteras y el Camino Viejo](#)

Photos see by the Keyword

The Quarries and the Cart Ruts Way

The Cart Ruts begin at an old terrace like quarry approx. 30 meters high, with an abri with rock drawings. One can see clearly, how stone blocks were struck from the rock. The Cart Ruts are to be seen approx. 20 meters long.



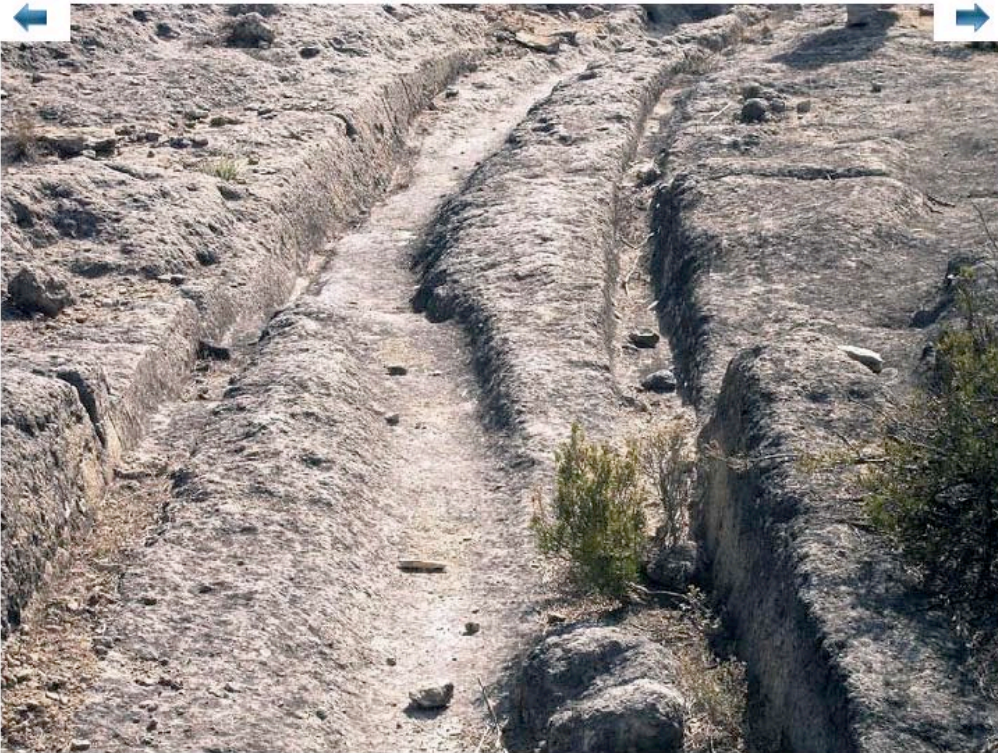
Detalle del Camino  
Imágen 5 de 11







**Calzada Utilizada para Transportar la Piedra**  
Imágen 1 de 11



**Detalle de las Rodaduras de Carro**  
Imágen 4 de 11





# **Cart Ruts in Mexico**

## **Cart ruts near Tlaxcala / Mexico**

Photo by Josef Otto

Within the typical flat and dry area of the region passed by some wadis, dry courses of river, there are at the side of a nameless stream some curious structures on the ground.

The rocks remind of the rock faces of some glacial regions being smooth on the upper side. At this mostly stony ground parallel grooves with a depth of up to 40 cm are "runin". The term "run in" has symbolic character as to remind of run in tracks in the snow for instance. These grooves have a length of 90 cm up to 9 m and run without any exception from East to West.













