

Megalithic Temples of Malta

Ħaġar Qim



Eine Foto-Dokumentation von Josef Rahm Otto

Megalithic Temples of Malta: Haġar Qim

Text from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

N 35° 49' 40" E 14° 26' 31"

Haġar Qim (IPA: [hædʒər'ʔi:m]), is a megalithic temple complex which dates from the Ġgantija phase (c.3600-3200 B.C.). The megalithic complex stands on a hilltop on the southern edge of the island of Malta and lies about 2km south-west of the village of Qrendi. About 500m from Haġar Qim, lies the Mnajdra megalithic temple. The surrounding area, which is typical of Mediterranean garrigue and spectacular in its starkness and isolation, is designated as a Heritage Park. In 1992, UNESCO declared Haġar Qim, together with other four megalithic structures, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Haġar Qim is notable for its finely-smoothed entrance facade. The structure has the largest stone that was ever used in Maltese megalithic temples (weights 57 tonnes and measures 19 feet long by 9 feet tall by 2 feet thick). Pillar altar with plant carvings, two table-altars, "fat lady" statues and the Venus of Malta were excavated for the first time in 1839. Today, they are on display in the National Museum of Archaeology, Valletta.

The ridge upon which the temple complex was built, is capped with soft globigerina limestone. Since this was the only stone available nearby, it was used throughout the construction of this temple. The effects can be seen clearly in the outer southern wall, where the great orthostats are exposed to the sea-winds, with the result that the temple has suffered from severe weathering and surface flaking over the centuries.

The Haġar Qim complex is divided into the main temple and other three megalithic structures which stand a few meters away from the main temple — even though one has no identifiable shape.

The Haġar Qim temple.

The main temple was build between 3000 and 2500 B.C. It has six large rooms, each of which is connected by an interior passage, most of which has an outside entrance. This entrance passage and first court follow the common Maltese megalithic design. This simple design was however considerably modified. The north-westerly apse was replaced by four enclosures which were independent of each other and reached through a separate entrance.

The forecourt and façade follow the pattern typical of temples across the islands. Particularly noteworthy are the larger orthostats at the corners, which are notched to take the second of the horizontal courses above. Apart from the replacement of a few original blocks which fell, such as the lintel over the main doorway, no restoration has been done.

Beyond the first pair of apses, the temple interior is more firmly screened off than is usual at other temple sites. Visual access seems to have been limited to porthole slabs. The only decorations at this point are a single, displaced sill stone bearing a pair of opposing spirals like those of the Tarxien Temples, and the most attractive of all free-standing altars discovered at temple sites.

The forecourt of Hagar Qim temple.

Through the next doorway, the right-hand apse has a curious setting of low orthostats forming a sort of pan as if intended for the corralling of animals. The left-hand side apse has a high trilithon altar on its left and three on pillar altars, two on the right with another in a small chamber behind. Less an apse than a passage, this gives access to one of the additional chambers. It consists of part of a temple unit, a central court, niche and right apse, tacked closely against the main temple. A low standing pillar stands at the end of the apse. A more complete unit – entrance, court, niche, and one pair of apses, lies to the north, and two simple oval chambers to the west.

In the external enclosing wall, the first orthostat behind the right-hand corner of the façade is one of the largest of any temple. Standing at 6.4m long, it is estimated to weigh close to 20 tonnes (metric tons). The upright menhir stands 5.2m high.

UNESCO World Heritage Site

State Party	Malta
Type	Cultural
Criteria	iv
Reference	132
Region	Europe
Inscription history	
Inscription	1980 (4th Session)
Extensions	1992



Megalithic Temples of Malta: Haġar Qim

and the engravings





scored ornamentation



small lizard on the wall



scored stone



scored stone



stonewall...



...this is not the original position of the stones



stone with scratched ornaments



stone with scratched ornaments, detail



stone with scratched ornaments, detail



unknown



another stone with scratched ornaments



stone with scratched ornaments, detail



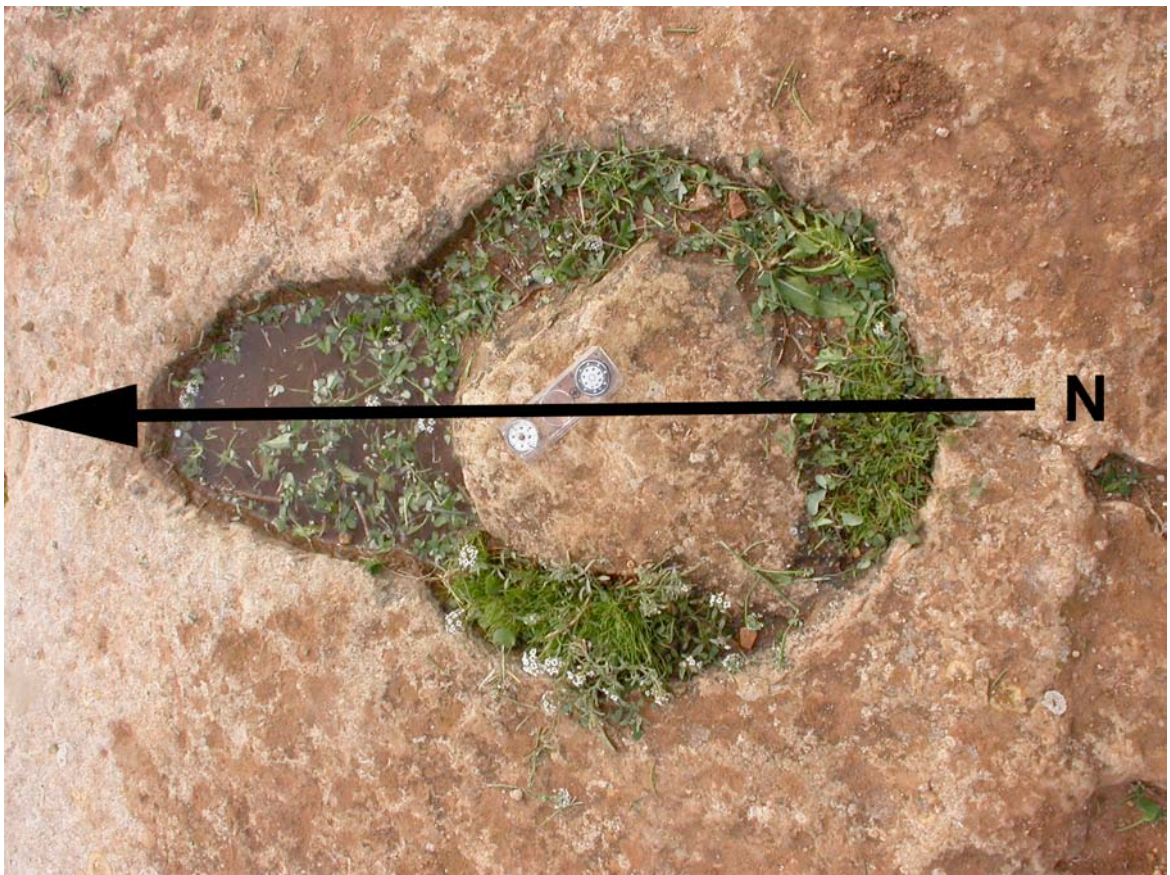
scored stone



scored stone



ancient Orienting point



northward



Engraving of a temple





window in the wall, on the right small holes for attachment



an altar room



scratched ornaments



tempel entry with scratched ornaments



detail tempel entry with scratched ornaments



tempel entry with scratched ornaments



altar room



altar room



Tabel on the altar room



table



table



altar room



altar room



an altar niche



scratched stones



entry



altarroom entry



fragment of a door



altarstone





movement sensor



movement sensor