

# MALTA: THE HALTING PLACE OF NATIONS

## First Account of Remarkable Prehistoric Tombs and Temples Recently Unearthed on the Island

BY WILLIAM ARTHUR GRIFFITHS

*Original photographs by courtesy of R. Ellis and Lieutenant Tickle*

**M**ALTA is but a tiny island, less than a hundred square miles in area, with no special beauty of hill or dale, almost without tree or stream, yet by the inscrutable decree of Destiny it has been called to fill a great rôle in the history of the world.

Situated in the narrowest part of the Mediterranean, it lies in the direct route from Gibraltar to Port Said or the Dardanelles, midway from Italy to its turbulent colony of Tripoli and from the French territory of Tunis to their watch-tower at Corfu, at the mouth of the Adriatic (see map, page 449).

Nature has thus ordained that Malta, by reason of its position, should form a center from which naval activity in this sea can be controlled.

"Some are born great . . . and some have greatness thrust upon them." It is to the latter class that Malta belongs.

Since the outbreak of the World War, Malta has resembled the Tower of Babel after the confusion of tongues. In its harbors transport after transport has anchored, each crowded with troops of varied race—English, Scot, Irish, Welsh, Australian, New Zealander, French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese marine, Serbian, Montenegrin, Greek, Cretan, Hindu, Bengali, Gurkha, Pathan, men from Ceylon and the Straits, Maori, Chinese, Annamite, Tonquinese, Egyptian, Moor, Arab, Tunisian, Congolese, Senegalese, Zouave and Chasseur d'Afrique, gay Bersaglieri—in seemingly unending procession.

Here also came, as prisoners, Austrians, Bulgars, Turks, and Germans, some from the famous *Emden*.

Malta was indeed a Haven of Refuge, and all too soon they passed onward, some to find a watery grave, many more to die by murderous poison gas, by fiery

burning oil, or by more merciful shot and shell.

Soon Malta became the Island of Hospitals, where the sick and maimed, the fever-stricken and blind, found such rest and comfort as this world can give. Ere long this privilege was denied, as the enemy submarine spared neither hospital nor passenger ship, woman nor child.

### "A PLACE OF CURSED STEPS"

Malta has thus been the halting place of many nations, and one wonders what thought or message it has given to them. "A place of cursed steps," was Byron's unpoetic tribute. "Bells, yells, and smells" is the terse but graphic description of the British bluejacket, while to the majority of visitors it is merely a treeless waste of arid stone, almost incandescent in the blinding glare of the summer sun.

In each of these descriptive phrases there is much truth; yet to those who peer below the surface Malta is one of the treasure-houses of the world, where the history of mankind can be read in lasting tables of stone.

Untold ages ago coral insects laid the early foundations of Malta, their work being afterward submerged to a great depth. Memorials of the latter period are found in the beautifully enameled teeth, about six inches long, of sharks now extinct, identical with those dredged up in the deepest part of the Pacific Ocean by the *Challenger* deep-sea expedition.

Slowly the land rose again, receiving the soil and debris from the fresh-water river of some continent now unknown. Thus were formed the marl beds to which Malta owes her means of maintaining life, as without this layer of clay the rain would sink and be lost. Next came a layer of sand, and again the coral insect brought the land to the surface of the



A VIEW OF THE WATER FRONT AT VALLETTA, SHOWING A PART OF THE BRITISH MEDITERRANEAN FLEET AT ANCHOR



GRAND HARBOR AND THE BRITISH SALUTING BATTERY IN THE FOREGROUND: MALTA

Photographs by S. L. Cassar

Malta has been a British possession for more than a hundred years. Valletta, its capital, is one of the most important ports of call in the world and is the base and resort for repair and refitment of the British fleet in the Mediterranean. The entrance of the harbor is to the left. A steamer can be seen departing through the narrows.



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Photograph by S. L. Cassar

THE GATE TO VALLETTA, SHOWING THE OLD WALLS OF THE CITY AND THE MOAT

Valletta takes its name from its founder, Jean de la Vallette, who was Grand Master of the Order of the Knights of Malta during the famous siege of the island in 1565, when the forces of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, under Dragut, were defeated. The defenders numbered between 6,000 and 9,000, while the assailants were variously estimated at from 29,000 to 38,500. Grand Master Vallette had previously participated in the defense of Rhodes, had been captured by Dragut and made to row as a galley slave until ransomed (see page 453).



Photograph by Helene Philippe

THE FORTIFICATIONS OF VALLETTA ARE PARTLY HEWN IN THE ROCK

Enthroned above its harbors, the chief seaport of the Maltese group of islands is one of the most picturesque cities of the Mediterranean.

sea. Many changes occurred, until Malta emerged as part of a mighty continent.

Dimly is seen Africa joined to Spain, Tunis, Sicily, Malta, and Italy, their shores washed by fresh-water lakes in which disported elephant, hippopotamus, crocodile, and land tortoise, until the floods descended and the earth was moved, turning the lakes into salt seas and forming the island of Malta.

PREHISTORIC MEN OF MALTA LEFT THEIR MARK IN CART RUTS

In the caves of Malta, notably that of Ghar Dalam, are to be found the rolled fossil teeth and bones of the great and pigmy elephant, two species of hippo,

petrified remains of stag, bear, and wolf, all welded into a solid mass.

As the vertical section of these deposits is examined, there appears toward the top the first signs of man-worked flints, sling-stones, neolithic pottery, and human bones. Thus is found the first trace of man in Malta.

Whether "Drift Man" was ever an inhabitant of Malta is a moot point for academic discussion. In a hilltop excavation, the underground galleries of Hal Saflieni, the ceilings of some of the rooms are covered with red clay paintings of spiral design suggesting a connection with the period of the painted caves of the Pyrenees (see also page 471). It is



A. SKETCH MAP OF MALTA, A TINY ISLAND WHICH HAS PLAYED A GREAT RÔLE IN WORLD HISTORY (SEE PAGES 450-454)

established beyond doubt, however, that Malta was inhabited by man before it assumed its present shape.

In many parts of the island where the bare rock is exposed there can be seen deep parallel lines—cart ruts—winding their way quite irrespective of the present centers of abode. Some of the cart ruts lead direct to the cliffs, while others can be traced under an arm of the sea, coming up again on the opposite shore. In other cases the tracks are broken by a geological fault, the ruts continuing on a different level. Many ruts are now covered by several feet of earth, fields having been formed on their sites (see page 455).

In later Stone Age times Malta possessed a considerable population; judging from the wonderful buildings erected in those days. Some have been investigated, but the majority are still untouched.

Beside the magnificent temple of Ggantia in Gozo, Malta possesses the unrivaled erections of Hagar Kim (page 457), Mnaidra (page 459), Corradino, Hal Saffieni Hypogeum (page 459), and Hal Tarxien (page 469), as well as numerous rough stone monuments and altars technically known as menhirs and dolmens.

The extent of some of the prehistoric buildings and the wonderful skill displayed in their erection show that man had reached a high state of knowledge even in the far-off days of B. C. 5000.

From an examination of the skeletons of the polished-stone age, it appears that the early inhabitants of Malta were a race of long-skulled people of lower medium height, akin to the early people of Egypt, who spread westward along the north coast of Africa, whence some went to Malta and Sicily and others to Sardinia and Spain.

There appears little doubt but that the early Maltese belonged to the same stock as the Iberians of Spain, the Basques of the Pyrenees, the Gauls of France, and the small, dark men of Cornwall, South Wales, and Ireland.\*

#### THE ARRIVAL OF THE PHOENICIANS

The Bronze Age dwellers in Malta left behind many interesting relics, a burial place having been found on the site of the Stone Age temple of Hal Tarxien, whose ruined walls doubtless provided good shelter for their funeral fires. Numerous urns containing human ashes were found, together with many personal ornaments, the whole providing a very good insight into their belief that the departed were not dead, but merely removed into another sphere, where they required the same food and other necessities as in this life.

History proper starts in Malta with

\* See "The Races of Europe," by Edwin A. Grosvenor, in the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for December, 1918.



Photograph by S. L. Cassar

MANY OF THE THOROUGHFARES OF VALETTA, MALTA'S  
PRINCIPAL CITY, CONSIST OF FLIGHTS OF STAIRS.  
THIS IS THE STRADA SANTA LUCIA

Perched high upon a peninsula a mile and a half long and a half mile wide, Valletta looks down on the Grand Harbor on the east and on the Marsamuscetto Harbor to the west.

the visits of the Phœnician traders, about B. C. 1500. On the Gigantia at Gozo is an inscription in Phœnician lettering, the usual script in the Mediterranean until the advent of Greek or Latin characters.

The ships of Tarshish found Malta a valuable port of call, and in this fact lay Malta's fate. In common with all islands, its whole prosperity has depended on the good-will of the ruling sea power, from the days of Tyre to the very present hour. Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Arabs, Normans, Spaniards,

Turks—all in succession held power in Malta by reason of their fleets.

It is doubtful if the Punic domination affected the characteristics of the Maltese race, as this was probably only a ruling and trading caste, few in number. It is likely that during this time or in early Roman days the custom of burial in hillside caves was adopted. Thousands of these tomb caves exist. In them is generally found an urn full of broken human bones, with a flat plate placed over the mouth and a clay lamp on the plate. Bottles of food and water were also placed in the tomb. Beautiful glass vessels of iridescent blue, purple, and green are also frequently found in these graves.

The capital of Malta was situated far from the coast—about six miles—on the highest land, the present Notabile. Here, outside the city walls, were excavated the catacombs which extend to a considerable dis-

stance. The fact that the sign of the seven-branch candlestick is carved over some of the entrances would suggest a Jewish ownership, but this is open to doubt, as the Jews have rarely thrived in Malta.

#### WHERE ST. PAUL WAS SHIPWRECKED

At Notabile was the seat of the Roman governor. His residence has been recently excavated and many interesting relics found. In A. D. 60 St. Paul was shipwrecked in the bay now known by

his name, and in the Acts of the Apostles is this account of his stay in the island:

“And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

“And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

“And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid *them* on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

“And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

“And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

“Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

“In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

“And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

“So when this was done, others also,



Photograph by A. W. Cutler

#### A FAMILIAR NAME IN A FOREIGN PORT

“The First and Last Lodging House” may be seen at Valletta, Malta, the name suggesting those inns and road-houses on the outskirts of American cities which formerly intimated by the name “First and Last Chance” that liquid refreshment might be had inside.

which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

“Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded *us* with such things as were necessary.

“And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria.” . . .

St. Paulo and St. Publio are very prominent names in the ecclesiastical history of the island, and to this day the activities of St. Paul in Malta are recited in great detail.

After the fall of Rome Malta became



FISHING IN THE HARBOR: VALLETTA, MALTA

Malta is only 60 miles from Sicily, 140 miles from the mainland of Italy, and 180 miles from Africa. The cool evening breeze which comes from snow-capped Mount Etna is one of the delightful climatic features of the island.



Photographs by S. L. Cassar

A FISHERMEN'S LANDING PLACE AT VALLETTA

The Maltese are famous throughout the Mediterranean as fishermen, merchants, and mariners. According to a recent census, the fishing industry employed about 3,000 persons operating 900 boats.

subject to various powers, until finally the Arabs, who also ruled Sicily, took possession. While excavating the Roman governor's villa at Notabile several Arab graves were found, all pointing eastward. Their Semitic inscriptions seemed strangely out of place in a Roman ruin. The Arabs built the fortress of St. Angelo, which guards the entrance to the Grand Harbor, on a site formerly occupied by a Roman temple dedicated to Juno.

In A. D. 1090 Count Roger of Normandy, having conquered Sicily, landed at Malta and exacted tribute from the Arabs. An inscribed stone over the entrance to Fort St. Angelo records the Norman victory, and several beautiful Norman buildings are still to be seen at Notabile.

The Arabs finally left Malta about A. D. 1250, having exercised rule over the island for nearly 400 years, doubtless facilitated by their language, which is closely akin to Maltese.

During the next three centuries Malta did not figure largely in history. It lacked agricultural resources and was periodically ravaged by the commanders of Turkish fleets, who dragged the unfortunate inhabitants into slavery, while famine and plague often followed in their wake.

In 1530 the population of the island did not exceed 25,000 and was probably considerably less.

#### THE BIRTH OF THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN

In that year a great change occurred. Charles V of Spain granted the islands of Malta and Gozo, together with the town of Tripoli, in Africa, to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, afterward known as the Knights of Malta.

In the early 11th century a pilgrimage to the holy places at Jerusalem was a very arduous and dangerous undertaking and many pilgrims died from exhaustion. A hospital was founded about 1085 at Jerusalem for the use of pilgrims and was dedicated to St. John. To meet various requirements, the hospital was reorganized and an Order instituted, consisting of ecclesiastics, to administer to the spiritual wants of the pilgrims, lay

brothers for secular duty, and knights for defense and protection.

After the capture of Jerusalem by the Saracens, Crusaders from all kingdoms of Christendom hastened eastward and the Knights of St. John, then installed at Acre, added members of many nationalities to their number. In 1252 the Pope granted the title of Grand Master to the head of the Knights.

For general convenience, the Order was divided into subdivisions according to the principal languages spoken by its members. The sections of the Order were the "Langues" of Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon, Catalonia, Navarre, England, Germany, Castile, Leon, and Portugal. The Langue d'Angleterre was dissolved in 1540, at the Reformation. An Anglo-Bavarian Langue was reinstated in the 18th century.

Each Langue had its own headquarters, or "Auberge," and those built at Malta are monuments of architectural beauty. They are now used chiefly as government offices and during the World War were scenes of intense activity.

#### THE TURKS DEFEATED BY LA VALLETTE

The Order removed from Acre to Cyprus and thence to Rhodes, where its headquarters remained until the island's fall, in 1522.\* The old bond between Rhodes and Malta was commemorated by the Pope, who gave the Bishop of Malta the title of Archbishop of Rhodes.

In 1565 the Turkish fleets made a powerful attack on Malta, but were finally defeated by Grand Master La Vallette, who built the city of Valletta in memory of the victory. The Cathedral of St. John, in Valletta, was also built as a burial place for the Grand Masters, the remains of those previously interred in the Chapel of Fort St. Angelo being transferred.

In the latter part of the 18th century the Langue de France was the richest and most powerful section of the Order. Lack of military enterprise and luxurious living, however, sapped the power and prestige of the Knights, who were cordially hated by the Maltese. The French Revolution at one blow deprived this

\* See "Historic Islands and Shores of the Ægean Sea," by Ernest Lloyd Harris, in the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, Sept., 1915.



Photograph by W. A. Griffiths

TOMB OF GRAND MASTER CARAFA IN ST. JOHN'S CHURCH,  
VALLETTA: MALTA

This cathedral was built in 1573-77. The interior was elaborately decorated as the Temple of Fame for the Order of the Knights of St. John. The chapels were dedicated to the nine nations of the order (see page 453).

Langue of most of its revenue, and a similar fate soon befell the other sections.

In the course of the next few years the Order sank and for a time dwindled into oblivion. The Order still exists in England and works in conjunction with the St. John's Ambulance Society and British Red Cross Society, all of which rendered magnificent service during the World War.

In 1798 the wheel of Fate again brought Malta into prominence. Na-

oleon, profiting by the temporary absence of the British fleet from the Mediterranean, seized the island on his way to Egypt. He expelled all members of the Order, confiscating their property and also that of the Church.

It is related that the solid silver gates of the Sacramental Chapel of the Cathedral of St. John were hastily painted over, in the hope of escaping notice, but in vain. They were, however, redeemed at a great price, together with the twelve silver statues of the Apostles.

HOW THE HISTORIC  
CROZIER WAS SAVED

The historic crozier that had been brought from Rhodes escaped the enemy by being thrown into a cistern by the verger. The priests afterward accused the verger of having stolen it, refusing to believe his statement; but even on his deathbed he persisted in his story, and so the cistern was drained and the crozier found.

After Napoleon's departure a governor was appointed to rule on behalf of the French Republic. Soon afterward the British fleet returned and won the Battle of the Nile over the French. Then the Maltese arose against the French garrison, which was blockaded by the British. After a gallant defense, lasting two years, the garrison finally was forced by famine to surrender.

After peace came Britain proposed to restore the island to the Order of St. John, but the piteous appeals of the Mal-

tese at last prevailed and Malta became incorporated into the British Empire — a very happy decision for its inhabitants.

Year in, year out, fresh trade has flowed through Malta, at last secure from every foe. The ships of the world soon thronged its harbors.

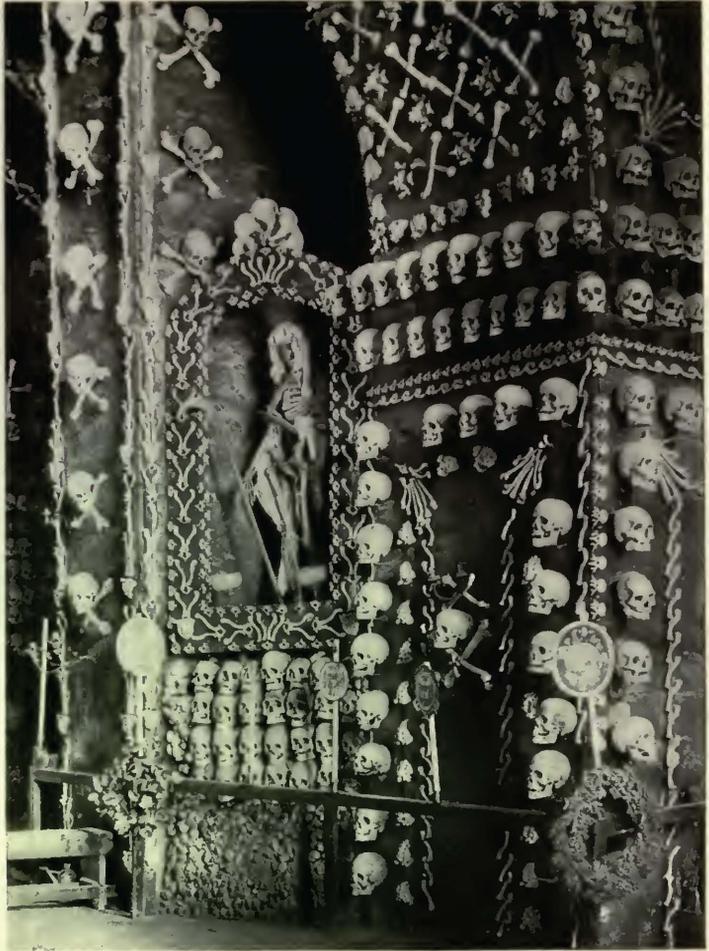
In 1825 the famous American frigate *Constitution* anchored at Malta, while after the battle of Navarino, in 1827, the British, French, and Russian fleets returned there also.

The change from sail to steam necessitated the provision of greater dockyard facilities for the British fleet in the Mediterranean, and millions of dollars have since been spent in Malta for this purpose, bringing employment and trade to the Maltese such as they had never known before.

The opening of the Suez Canal brought still further prosperity, while the increased size of warships necessitated further new docks and workshops, providing still more employment for the skillful and industrious inhabitants of the island.

#### BAFFLING EVIDENCE OF A REMOTE CIVILIZATION

Reference has been made in the preceding pages to the wonderful prehistoric remains in Malta. These are extremely abundant and afford much tangible evidence of the civilization of a past so remote as to be prior to the age of hieroglyphics and inscriptions and even of oral tradition. Their study, therefore, af-



Photograph by A. W. Cutler

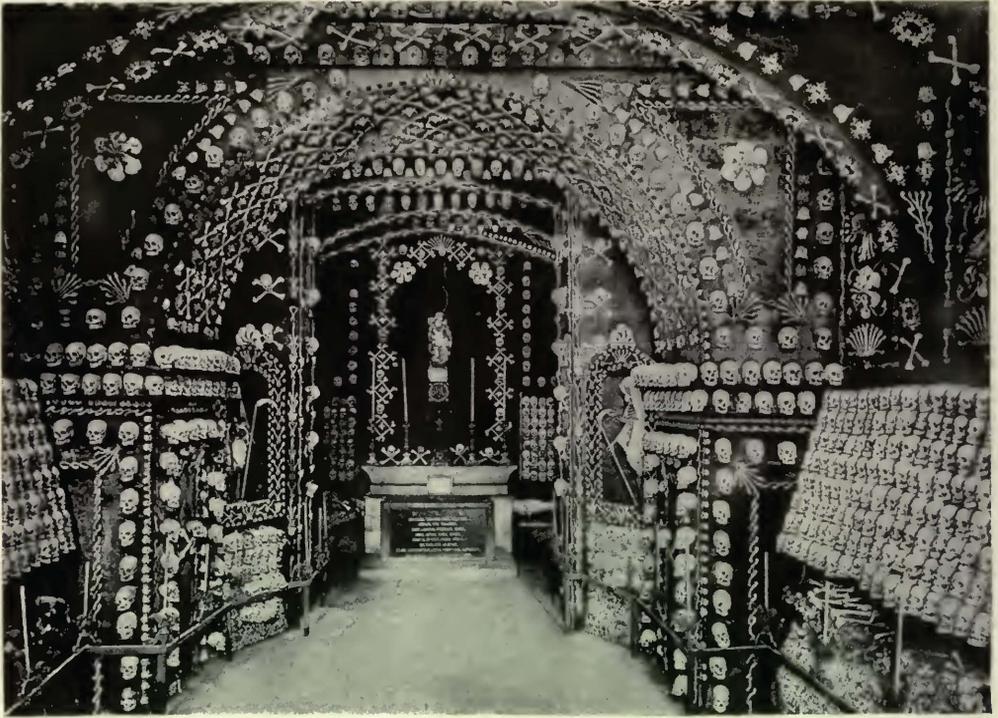
THIS MALTA MORTUARY HAS FOR ITS MURAL DECORATIONS MORE THAN 2,000 HUMAN SKULLS

These grim relics belonged to the defenders of the island who were killed by the Turks in the 16th century.

fords wide scope for theory, but the lack of absolute knowledge renders it a most tantalizing, though fascinating, pursuit.

Possibly the oldest existing evidences of civilization in Malta are the cart ruts previously mentioned. These exist in nearly every part of the island, cutting and intersecting each other to such an extent as to make the student almost despair of ever unraveling their mystery. If all the old tracks were traced and inserted on a map, the sites of the centers of habitation in prehistoric times would doubtless be revealed (see page 449).

In an arm of the Bay of Marsa Sci-



Photograph by S. L. Cassar

#### THE CHAPEL OF BONES IN VALLETTA: MALTA

Malta not only has ruins in which prehistoric man buried his thousands, as at Hal Saflieni, where the remains of 33,000 persons were found, but also such chapels as this, where the bones of the knights of the Middle Ages are preserved.

rocco, at the southeast end of the island, there are about sixty round, bottle-necked pits or wells cut out of the foreshore rock. A number of these are now under the sea. Directly over the mouths of some of them run two deep ruts, which lead into the sea and reappear on the opposite shore about a quarter of a mile away.

#### STORAGE WELLS FOR OIL OR WATER

The original purpose of these wells is not known, but it has been suggested they were intended for storing fresh water, grain or oil and were built at the edge of the water for convenience of shipment, thus suggesting evidence of foreign trade.

Black tufa stone rubbers were imported from Sicily and obsidian from the Greek islands has also been found. Similar pits, however, are found at the top of the high cliffs near a prehistoric village called Bahria.

Near this site is a megalithic ruin

called Borg en Nadur, which recalls in shape those curious Sardinian towers, the nuraghi,\* and the cart tracks appear to lead from that place to another neolithic erection on the opposite shore.

Possibly the Phœnicians utilized the Stone Age erections for their own sacrificial purposes, as a votive pillar was found in this neighborhood having an inscription in two languages, recording in Phœnician a vow to Melkarte, Lord of Tyre, and one to Hercules Archigetas in Greek.

The prehistoric remains consist chiefly of temples, villages, dolmens, menhirs, storage places, and tombs.

The best-known temples are Gigantia, in Gozo, the small island four miles northwest of Malta, and Hagar Kim, Mnaidra, Corradino, and Tarxien, in Malta (see also page 473). The last

\*See "Little-known Sardinia," by Helen Dunstan Wright in the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for August, 1916.



Photograph by W. A. Griffiths

#### THE SOLID SILVER GATES OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH: MALTA

When Napoleon stopped at the island on his way to Egypt he expelled the Knights of Malta, confiscating their property and that of the Church. These silver gates were hastily painted, in the hope that they would escape notice, but in vain. They were subsequently redeemed at a great price.

named was discovered very recently and is only partly excavated. The unique underground temple of Hal Safieni belongs in a class to itself.

#### THE GENERAL DESIGN OF MALTA'S PRE-HISTORIC TEMPLES

The general design of the temples consists of two oval or elliptical apses connected along the lesser axes by passages, at the far end of which is generally found the principal altar or object of worship.

The passageways appear to have been covered over with flat slabs and the oval chambers on each side domed, the corbeling of the walls being very strongly marked.

The compass direction of the passages leading to the principal altar varies in each temple, which was built to suit local topography. There does not appear to be any evidence of orientation or suggestion that the altars faced any special

heavenly body. The majority face south or southeast.

The ruins of Hagar Kim ("Standing Stones") crown a barren, rocky hill on the south side of Malta, about a mile from the shore. The little islet of Filfla alone breaks the wide expanse of deep Mediterranean blue.

Large numbers of massive stones, some weighing several tons, were placed on end, side by side, each being joined to the next with great skill. On top of these were placed horizontal layers of flat stones, mortised together with great accuracy.

One pillar rises conspicuously above the ruined walls. Near it, on the outside, is an altar erected before a sacred stone, while a small hole pierces the wall to communicate with an inner sanctuary and through which the priest or priestess possibly consulted the oracle.

The top of the tall pillar is hollow and shaped like a grave, and theorists suggest that possibly here infants were sac-



A CHURCH IN MALTA READY FOR ITS FEAST DAY ILLUMINATION  
 Note the hundreds of electric-light bulbs in elaborate design on the façade.



Photographs by S. L. Cassar

A RELIGIOUS PROCESSION IN MALTA

The Maltese are deeply attached to the Church of Rome, and it is said that in no other community of equal size are the religious edifices so numerous and so beautifully decorated. The first Christian bishop of the island, legend tells us, was Publius, whom Paul converted.

rificed or the dead exposed to birds of prey, as is done in the Indian Towers of Silence.\*

#### STONE FIGURES WITH PLAITED SKIRTS

When Hagar Kim was explored various interesting relics were found. One was a four-sided pillar with a flat, round top, possibly a sacramental altar. Each side is decorated with pittings at the edges, while the centers contain carvings of a many-leaved plant growing out of a vase. This decoration may represent the Tree of Life.

The most remarkable find consisted of seven stone carved figures of steatopygous females, some draped with plaited skirts and others apparently nude. Possibly they were originally painted entirely red, as red ochre paint is still largely visible.

One figure has a sort of pigtail behind, which might also have served as a handle to permit the image to be carried in a procession. None of them had heads, although sockets were found into which detachable heads could be fixed.

These figures suggest that they were worshipped as the Mother Giver of Life. They are sometimes described as the Seven Cabiri of the Phœnicians, to which nation all Maltese antiquities and even the race itself were until recently ascribed. Subsequent discoveries have proved beyond doubt, however, that these images were of neolithic age.

#### THE MALTESE LANGUAGE HAS NO WORD FOR "FATHER"

In connection with the worship of Matriarchy, it is curious to note that the Maltese language contains no word for "father" which conveys the idea of a head of a family. Their word "missier" literally means "instrument of generation" and suggests the time when descent was reckoned maternally rather than paternally.

About half-way between Hagar Kim and the shore is the neolithic ruin of Mnaidra. This resembles in general plan Hagar Kim, but is rather more ornate

and better preserved. Many of the doorways and altar stones are decorated with pittings or are finely polished. This doubtless accounts for its local name of the "King's Palace," Hagar Kim being called the "High Priest's Palace."

A special feature of Mnaidra is the double-table altars. These are flat rubbed stones a yard or two square, supported under the center by a stone pillar. The largest is called the "King's Bed," certainly a couch stony enough to insure an uneasy royal head.

Both at Hagar Kim and Mnaidra it is evident that dolmens were regarded as objects of special veneration. They may have represented the gates from this world to the next, through which all must pass, or they may have typified the abodes of the departed spirits.

A dolmen grave at Borg en Nadur has the lintel or upper cross-stone pierced in the center by a round hole, used perhaps in a sacrificial ceremony, so that the blood of the victim might fall on the occupant of the grave. Dolmen graves with a hole in the side wall-stone are much more common.

Near Mnaidra is a cave in which the remains of a peculiar kind of elephant were found, to which the name *Elephans Mnaidrensis* was given.

#### WELL-DIGGERS FIND A TEMPLE

The Corradino neolithic station stands on a broad plateau overlooking the Grand Harbor. The ruins are very extensive, consisting of several temples and a village. The ruins of the latter are distinguishable by being square instead of oval in shape, like the temples.

On the southern boundary of Corradino is the village of Casal Paula, which overlooks the broad, flat plain of the Marsa. In 1902 a well was being bored for some newly erected houses, when suddenly the foundations gave way and the whole disappeared into a dark pit. Investigation resulted in the discovery of an underground habitation which is without equal in the world.

This hypogeum, or subterranean structure, now known as Hal Safieni, consists of three series of chambers excavated out of the solid rock, on three levels. It stood in the midst of a neolithic village.

\* See "The Parsees and the Towers of Silence at Bombay," by William Thomas Fee, in the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, December, 1905.



MALTA CLAIMS A MILCH-GOAT POPULATION OF 10,000

Since Mediterranean, or Malta, fever has been traced to a micro-organism to be found in the milk of these perambulating "dairies," the goat boy is not as popular with visitors as he was in olden days.



Photograph by S. L. Cassar

HONEY MERCHANTS OF MALTA

The island was famous for its honey in ancient times, the name itself coming from the Greek word "Melita," meaning honey. In the Biblical account of Paul's shipwreck the name of the island is given as Melita (see text, page 451).



THE COUNTRY ROAD LEADING TO CITTA VECCHIA, THE FIRST CITY REBUILT BY THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA

Malta and the neighboring islands of Gozo, Comino, and Cominotto have a combined area of 118 miles, with a teeming population of 225,000. The fields of the islands are small and consist largely of terraces, the soil being walled up along the slopes of hills.



Photographs by S. I. Cassar

THE WATER-WAGONS OF MALTA HAVE TAIL-LIKE APPENDAGES

The operator walks in the rear of the cart and waves the sprinkler back and forth, thus covering the space between the curbs.



THE SOLE RELIC OF THE OLD NATIVE COSTUME IS THE PECULIAR BLACK HEAD-  
DRESS OF THE WOMEN, CALLED THE "FALDETTA"

The Maltese are a thrifty, industrious people. The women are noted for their black eyes,  
fine hair, and graceful carriage.



Photographs by S. L. Cassar

A REAR VIEW OF THE MALTESE EASTER BONNET

While farming is the principal industry in Malta, more than 5,000 women and children are  
engaged in producing the famous Maltese lace.

Two large upright stones mark the entrance below ground and near by was found a large quantity of heavy sling-stones, conveniently ready for use in case of emergency.

Drilled in the threshold floor are two holes the bottoms of which connect. Through the loop thus formed was passed a rope to tether the animal chosen for sacrifice. A large cave near at hand apparently was used as a pen for animals, the top being so low that a man could not stand erect in it.

Proceeding down the entrance passage, which is of course absolutely dark unless lit artificially, we notice on the left a round, well-like excavation. At first it appears to be an ordinary pit, but on closer examination a second inner well is seen, the top of the latter being closed by a tightly fitting lid. This was evidently used for special security. In it were found two stone figures of steatopygous figures similar to those found at Hagar Kim. The figures also had detachable heads, both of which, fortunately, were found.

Continuing, we pass a side cave now packed with human bones. At the entrance is a circular stone basin with a hole bored in its center and covering another pit which would form an ideal dungeon.

The passage finally narrows to a large dolmen-shaped doorway, and through this we pass to a lower floor, with a sudden drop of several feet. The absence of steps to the different compartments is puzzling, as it is open to doubt whether perishable wooden ones were provided when stone was available.

#### THE MYSTERIOUS MAIN HALL OF THE TEMPLE

We have now reached a long, silent cave which must have looked very weird when lit by a few hanging pottery lamps. In the center is a large upright stone.

Proceeding to the left, we climb a stone wall a yard high, also without steps, and pass through a doorway into a large circular cave which appears to be the main hall of the temple. At once the attention of the eye is called to a doorway carved out of the end of the cave at a height of several yards from the floor.

The doorway leads to a small oval cave at the back. On both sides are niches each of which probably contained a sacred pillar or other object of worship. Here the carving is beautifully worked and polished. Four other doorways lead to caves on the level of the floor. The general appearance of the niches suggests that the lower ones were excavated later and less carefully than the upper ones.

The ceiling of the room is decorated with ochre paint, partly in plain red and partly in squares alternately black and white.

#### THE HOLY OF HOLIES

Passing out of this room through a doorway erected on a step a yard above the floor, we come to what is called the "Holy of Holies," the upper portion of the room being carved and polished very ornately (see page 468).

A small room to the rear contains a stone table, over the middle of which is carved a stone hook from which some sacred object or sacrifice or possibly a lamp was suspended. The doorway of this little room has grooves for fitting a closing slab, but this would also shut out the air and the occupant would soon die of suffocation. It is remarkable that the "Holy of Holies" is the only room not decorated with paint.

In the illustration (see page 468) may be noticed a hole in the right-hand curved support, while another is near its foot. The left-hand upright of the entrance is also bored with a tie-hole. From these three places it is supposed a curtain or screen was hung to hide the holy place from the sight of persons using the steps leading down to the lowermost rooms.

In the floor, in front of the left niche, are two holes closed with plugs flush with the ground. In the right hole two pairs of ram's horns were discovered, doubtless having some religious significance.

Retracing our way from the Holy of Holies through the main hall to the room containing the large upright stone, or menhir, and turning to the left, we proceed toward another set of caves. It will be noticed that in this passage the rock, instead of sounding solid to the tread, suddenly sounds very hollow, as if there were a well or room not yet opened.



Photograph by S. I. Cassar

THE IMTARFA BARRACKS AND THE NOTABILE RAILWAY TERMINUS (IN THE FOREGROUND): MALTA

Notabile, or Citta Vecchia, is seven miles inland from Valletta, and is still popularly known as *Medina* (Arabic for town). In Roman times this city was the fortified capital of the island. According to legend, it was here that St. Paul dwelt during his three months' stay on the island, following his shipwreck.

What wonderful store of archæological wealth is perhaps here awaiting that opening!

The walls along the right of this passage are full of drill-holes an inch or less in diameter. This shows the method of excavation employed. Holes were drilled with flint points and the intermediate portions chipped away with stone hammers or chisels, several fine specimens of which were found.

Continuing along this passage, we come to another room, into which we enter with a sudden drop of a yard. Looking through the entrance doorway, the wall on the left appears quite straight at first, curving round at the end, while the right wall is very much sloped.

Descending some modern stone steps, a round recess on the left is seen. In this place a person could stand without being observed by any one approaching along the passage, while a spy-hole is provided for the use of the occupant of the recess. Two holes are also bored in the walls of the recess to spy into the adjoining cave.

#### AN ORACLE CAVE AND A SOUND-MAGNIFYING CHAMBER

Passing the recess, we come to a square entrance into a small round cave a yard or two in diameter. Possibly the oracle was kept here. A little farther in the cave, at about the level of a man's mouth, is a hemispherical hole in the side wall about two feet in diameter. Here it was noticed only a few months ago that any word spoken into this place was magnified a hundred-fold and audible throughout the entire underground structure.

A curved projection is specially carved out of the back of the cave near this hole and acts as a sounding-board, showing that the designers had a good practical knowledge of sound-wave motion. The impression upon the credulous can be imagined when the oracle spoke and the words came thundering forth through the dark and mysterious places with terrifying impressiveness.

Before leaving the oracle room, special notice must be taken of the wonderful ceiling paintings, which are the finest in the temple. Possibly the design of the spirals and disks may have some mystic

meaning in connection with the passing of the human soul through various cycles.

#### THE PIT OF SERPENTS?

Proceeding to the next room, a distant view of the Holy of Holies is obtained. This anteroom has several curious features. The roof is supported—quite unnecessarily for structural requirements—by two menhirs differing in design. The one to the right is similar to the sacred pillars at Hagar Kim (see page 457) and to the high altar of Tarxien (see page 477).

On the left is a mysterious pit. The low stone wall on the left is grooved to receive an upper stone, thus increasing its height. The pit is shaped like a funnel, with a curious slip-way worn out just below the hole in the opposite wall which communicates with the main hall.

After sloping downward and inward, the pit widens considerably and is sufficiently deep to prevent even a tall man from climbing out. It has been thought that sacred serpents were kept in this pit, the curving sides of which would prevent their escape. Possibly after the serpent had been lifted up, as was done by Moses in the wilderness, and due worship made, it would be returned to its lair through the hole in the wall. The larger entrance on the opposite side would permit of a man or woman being cast among the serpents to be stung to death.\*

Passing to the right of the pillar and then sharply turning to the left, we descend a very finely worked series of seven steps into the lowest and innermost rooms. These steps are erected on the lintel of a huge dolmen. Opposite the lowest step and isolated by a deep moat-like trench is a small inner cave wherein a priest or vestal might have sat and communed.

There are no steps to this small room and it is difficult to reach. On its right hand is a small spy-hole, through which all persons at work in the moat can be seen. Adjoining the moat and divided only by another doorway are several

\* See also an account of the serpent pits in the temples of the Incas, in "The Wonderland of Peru," by Hiram Bingham, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, April, 1913.



A STONE AGE TEMPLE SHOWING SACRIFICIAL TABLES. IN THE FOREGROUND: MALTA

Massive stones, some weighing several tons, are placed on end side by side, each being joined to the next with great skill. On top of some of these are horizontal layers of flat stones accurately mortised together (see text, page 457).

similar compartments, the last being situated almost directly under the serpent pit. The innermost room of all has four openings about a foot square leading to four tiny caves, which might have been used as places for the deposit of treasure.

This completes the itinerary of the temple, which is so complex that one can only speculate as to the use or significance of its many extraordinary features.

#### A MAUSOLEUM FOR 33,000 PERSONS

In 1906 the work of exploration was begun. Most of the rooms were found to be half-filled with earth, human bones, and broken pottery. It has been estimated that the ruins contained the bones of 33,000 persons, mostly adults. Practically all were found in the greatest disorder, and there had evidently been no regular burial of a complete body.

With regard to the original use of the hypogeum, opinions vary. It may be that it was a temple carved underground for the use of spirits who had left this world, providing them with the same type of

temple as that in which they had been accustomed to worship above ground; or it may have been a sacred college, wherein the priesthood were initiated into the mysterious beliefs of those days.

#### CURIOUS FINDS AMONG THE BONES

Whatever may have been the original use, there is no doubt that it was used in part as a burial place for the bones of the dead after a previous burial above ground.

A large number of personal ornaments and votive offerings were found mixed with the bones, and these afford much insight into prehistoric beliefs and customs. Besides the large stone female figures already mentioned, several tiny alabaster replicas were found.

A small carving was also found of a woman with a small head and large lower figure, lying on her side asleep on a four-legged couch. Her head is placed on a shaped neck-rest. The figure is clad in quite fashionable flounces and plaitings and was evidently painted red.



THE MAIN HALL OF THE TEMPLE OF HAL SAFLIENI: MALTA

Four doorways lead from this chamber to caves on the level of the floor (see text, page 463).

Another carving shows a woman, similarly clad and proportioned, lying face downward on her couch, her hands stretched forward on either side. It is suggested that the former represents a priestess dreaming near the sacred places in the hope of obtaining inspiration to declare the words of the holy oracle, while the second figure represents her in the act of worship.

A large number of axe-shaped pendants of jade or polished stone were found, suggesting some connection with the symbolic axe worshipers of Crete. Two ob-

jects representing fish were found, one being placed on a plate. Doubtless the fish was venerated as an emblem of the Giver of Life, and possibly the adoption of a fish as the sign of a fellow-Christian in the Catacomb days of Rome was the survival of an old belief. Today in Malta fish is usually eaten on the first night spent in a new house, to bring good luck.

Symbolic stones carved into the shape of sea shells, votive lamps, real sea shells, vertebrae of fish, artificial seeds, cones, tiny pillars, large spheres, and holed



THE FAMOUS HOLY OF HOLIES IN THE SUBTERRANEAN STRUCTURE KNOWN AS THE HYPOGEUM OF HAL SAFLIENI: MALTA

One of the remarkable features of this great chamber is the entire absence of any mural designs. This is the only room not decorated with paint. A curtain or screen is supposed to have hung before this holy place to conceal it from persons using the steps leading to lower chambers (see text, page 463).

stones were found in abundance, doubtless all having some special significance.

BEAUTIFUL POTTERY, IN EVERY INSTANCE SHATTERED

Much beautiful pottery was found, practically all broken. This may have been intentional, as typifying the snapping of the thread of life. The pottery varied in kind from rough clay vessels to

finely polished and glazed ware, ornamented with spirals worked with flints. Some bore bright lines of red ocher of artistic design.

Perhaps the most interesting piece of pottery found was a black polished plate, on which was drawn with flint the figures of several large horned bulls of mottled color, all instinct with life. The species of animal was identical with that carved

in high relief in the "bull sanctuary" of the latest and most wonderful discovery of all, the Stone Age Temple of Tarxien.

#### A CEMETERY FOR CRIMINALS LEADS TO AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY

Tarxien is a continuation of the village of Casal Paula, where the hypogeum of Hal Safieni is situated. It owes its discovery to the following circumstances:

A few years ago it was necessary to find a new burial place for criminals, and a site was selected on the plateau overlooking the dockyard from the southeast. While digging the foundations for the cemetery chapel the earth was found to have been artificially deposited, as it contained blocks of hand-wrought masonry. The workmen, talking among themselves, elicited the fact that in the adjoining field large blocks of stones had also been struck a few feet below the level of the soil.

As the work of excavating the hypogeum in the village was still fresh in their minds, the laborers thought possibly a similar structure might exist here.

The facts were reported in 1913 to Prof. T. Zammit, C. M. G., who had supervised the final excavation of the hypogeum. In July, 1915, he caused the blocks to be cleared of soil. They were found to be the tops of the walls of a prehistoric temple of the same shape as those of Gigantia, in Gozo, and Hagar Kim and Mnaidra, in Malta.

#### WAR FAILS TO STOP RESEARCH

The work of excavation was carried out during the hottest months of 1915 and 1916, when the soil was driest, so that it could be carefully sifted to prevent the loss of the smallest objects which might be of interest.

Here, despite the tropical sun, a small band of students, among whom was the writer of this article, labored under the able and genial guidance of Professor Zammit.

The drain of war expense on the funds of the Malta civil government permitted only a very small expenditure of money on this work during 1917 and 1918, but it was sufficient to show that the temple and its precincts extended beyond its present known limits and where secrets

unknown as yet to the world may still lie hidden.

The examination of the upper layers of earth over the site of the temple brought to light quantities of Roman and Punic pottery, practically all in fragments.

A lower layer revealed a new type of pottery, among which were found small heaps of burnt human bones. Beads, necklaces, clay objects representing birds, fishes, &c., small figures, bone ornaments, and a bronze dagger were found in this same layer. The dagger gave the clue to the mystery—a Bronze Age depository of funeral urns had been found.

This was very valuable, from the light it shed on the life and customs of the Mediterranean Bronze Age people, who probably flourished about 2000 or 3000 B. C.

Inside the cinerary urns were also found foods—wheat, beans, etc.—for the journey in the next world, as well as small objects and ornaments which had been very dear to the departed in their lifetime.

Doubtless the Bronze Age dwellers in Malta had heard the tradition that the tall stones standing, abandoned, deserted, and overgrown with weeds, had once been a sacred place, while in any case such high walls as were still standing formed a good shelter for their funeral fires. Hence the Bronze Age cemetery on this spot.

The Bronze Age layer was strongly marked with charcoal and ashes. Below this came several feet of fine sand, containing no stones or broken fragments of rock and no traces of any Bronze Age pottery or metal, clearly showing that this layer had been deposited by centuries of wind and rain, untouched by the hand of man.

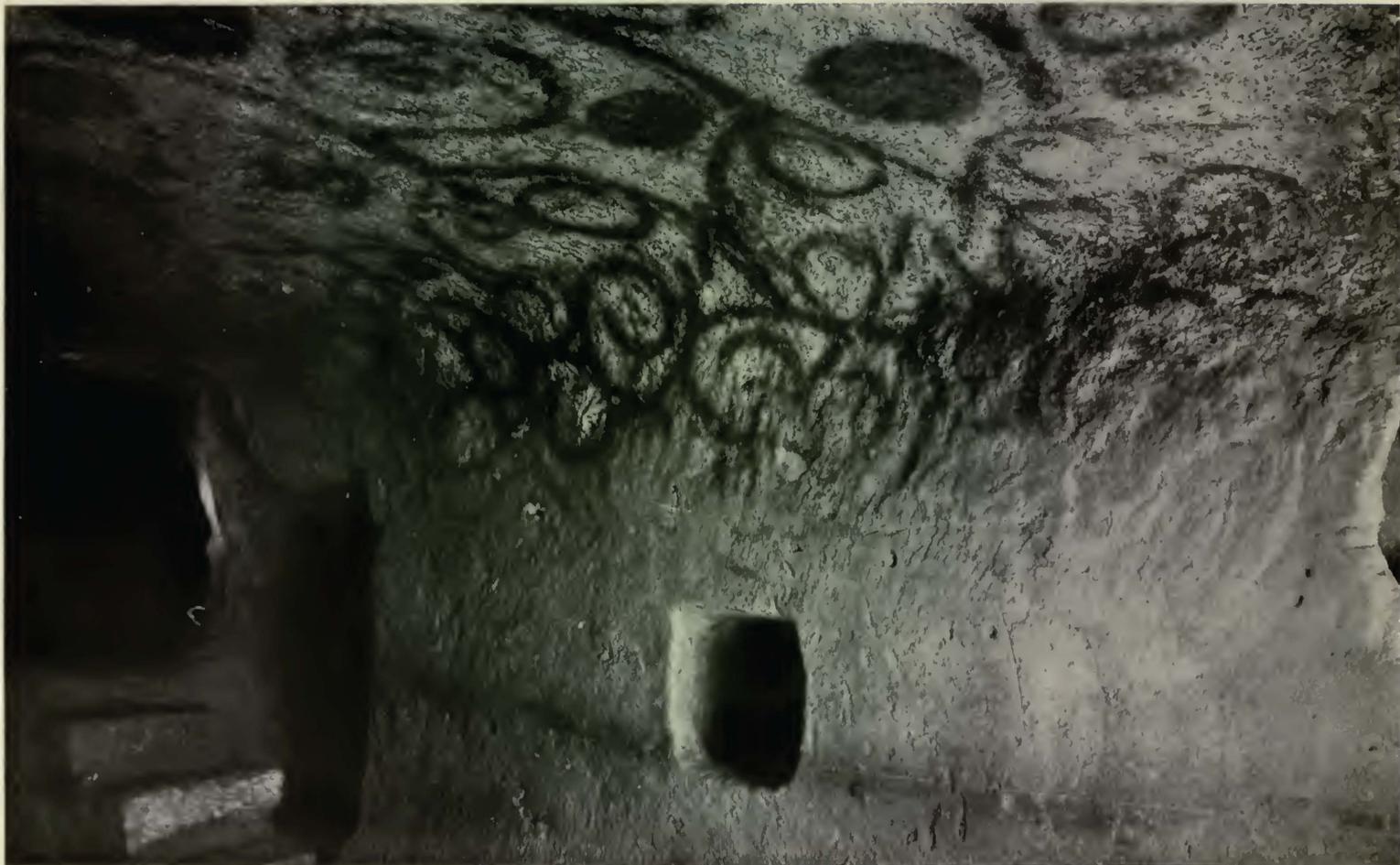
All these layers were removed by the excavators with careful and reverent hands, as was due those far-off and forgotten worshipers of the Unknown God. Finally the floor of the temple was reached and cleared as perfectly as possible.

#### A TOUR OF THE TEMPLE

The length of the buildings from end to end is about 50 yards, while the level of the temple floor is about 7 feet below that of the field.



A VIEW OF THE MAIN HALL AND THE HOLY OF HOLIES FROM THE ORACLE ROOM OF THE HAL SAFLIENI TEMPLE (SEE PAGE 465)



THE CEILING PAINTING IN THE ORACLE ROOM IS THE FINEST TO BE FOUND IN THE HAL SAFLIENI UNDERGROUND GALLERIES

A word spoken in this room is magnified a hundredfold and is audible throughout the entire structure. The effect upon the credulous can be imagined when the oracle spoke and the words came thundering forth through the dark and mysterious place with terrifying impressiveness (see text, page 465).



LOWEST DUNGEONS OF THE HAL SAFLIENI RUINS

This innermost room of the subterranean galleries has four openings leading to small caves, where the temple's treasures may have been secreted (see text, page 466).

Let us make a tour through the temple, following the rough plan reproduced on this page.

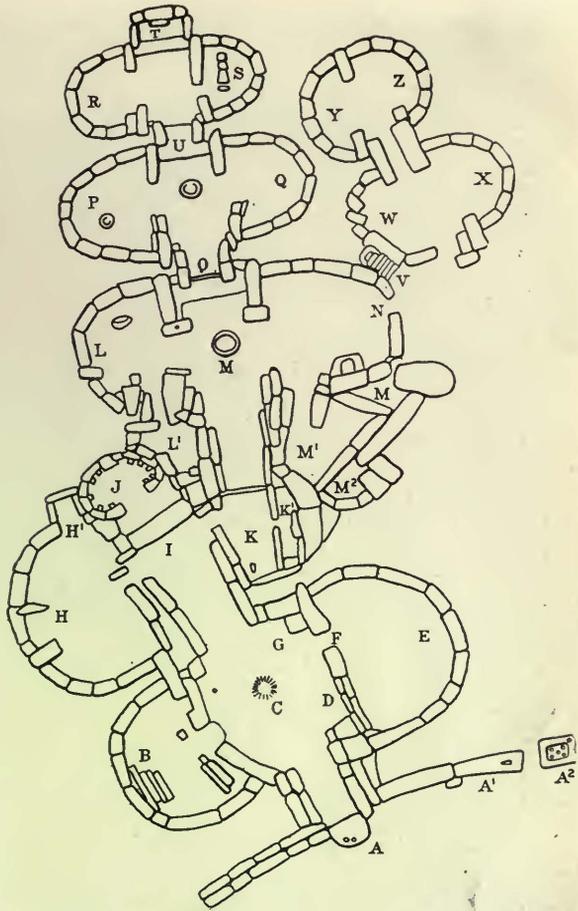
We stand first on a semicircular stone, A' in the plan, in which are drilled two holes connected at the lower ends. This is the ordinary tie-hole of Stone Age times and may have been used to tether sacrificial animals outside the temple. On each side can be traced large horizontal blocks of stone extending in a semicircular direction, doubtless the fore-court, or public place in which the people assembled before divine service.

These large blocks apparently served as foot-stones to support large upright masses of masonry forming the outer wall of the temple. One of the blocks has a conical hole in it, besides several small circles engraved on it (A<sup>1</sup>), all doubtless having some religious significance or used in the public worship or sacrifice. A few yards farther on is a stone (A<sup>2</sup>), about two yards square, in which are five holes, some of oval shape and some round.

For what purpose this stone was used is not known. Possibly it was employed in the ceremony of ablution, as a somewhat similar contrivance was found in the Stone Age temple a mile away, at Corradino, shown on page 476. It has been suggested that this was the altar of sacrifice, and that the holes were to catch the blood of the victim. This is possible, but the sacrificial victim must have been killed first, as no tie-holes exist in these stones.

After the temple had fallen out of use prehistoric boys may have found that this formed an excellent bagatelle board, and by using rounded stones and possibly numbering the holes quite a good game could be played. A quantity of round stone balls was found on this site.

Returning to position I on the plan, we enter the passage A C and arrive in the building marked B E. Facing to the right, there is a beautiful carved dado



A SKETCH SHOWING THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE CHAMBERS OF THE STONE AGE TEMPLE OF TARXIEN

These ruins have been unearthed by a band of students working under the direction of Prof. T. Zammit, C. M. G. The work proceeded throughout the stressful period of the World War, despite limited government appropriations.

round the room. In the center is the broken lower portion of a huge female figure, of which only the feet, fat calves, and fluted skirt now remain. When complete the figure was probably seven feet high. It stands on a slab of stone ornamented with egg-shaped symbols and would lead to the inference that it was the image of the Goddess of Life and Fertility. Carefully placed near her feet was found a sacred cone, possibly representing the male element.

Standing in position C of the plan, which is a spot worn away by innumer-



A MYSTIC STONE PILLAR MARKING THE BEGINNING OF THE INNER SANCTUARY OF THE TEMPLE AT TARIEN

On top of the pillar is a second stone on which is carved a circle surrounded by pit-marks. Some students surmise that the circle represents the sun and the pit-marks the stars (see text below).

able fires, and turning our back on the goddess, we see beautifully carved altar tables and an altar, in front of which is a small font decorated with pit-markings, an ornamentation noticed in other prehistoric temples.

Apparently this font had been painted red with ocher, from which it might be inferred that the ceremony of sprinkling blood for cleansing from evil was carried out even in those far-off days.

Behind these pillars is a small side chapel very beautifully decorated. One slab contains a frieze of eleven goats,

while another has four goats, a fat pig, and a horned ram or buck.

Looking again from position C to G in the plan, we see a large carved stone table or chest in front of an altar or oracle place of the dolmen type so noticeable in all neolithic temples. The large altar stone is hollow, with a detachable semicircular fitting.

Inside was found a very fine curved flint knife, as well as fragments of beautifully polished Stone Age pottery. It might be observed here that possibly all votive vessels were broken after the sacrifice, to denote the completion of the ceremony, as practically none were found complete.

Proceeding through position C to I, we reach the principal altar of the temple. The curved façade of the floor of the "chancel" cannot but arouse admiration for the wonderful skill of those ancient workers, whose only tool was a

flint. On the left corner of the carved stone can be seen a round tie-hole. The stone a little to its right and standing back two yards from it marks the beginning of the inner sanctuary, which consists of a semicircular building with five stone seats on each side of the altar. These possibly were either for images or for the officiating priests.

On top of the stone at the left entrance to the inner sanctuary is another lying horizontally with a square end on which is carved a circle surrounded by pit-marks (see illustration on this page).

Without doubt this had some reference to their religious beliefs, but the stone on the opposite side is missing.

It has been suggested that the circle represented the sun and the pit-marks the stars, while others suggest a phallic solution. A stone was found carved with two phallic pillars standing on a base decorated with pit-marks. When the two designs are considered together, possibly a key to their ceremonies and beliefs may be found.

The corbeling, very noticeable in the right wall of the inner sanctuary, would show that this building was domed over.

Entering room H, which is very badly damaged, we see a tiny dolmen-shaped altar marked H<sup>1</sup> in the plan. The top of the altar table has a hole in it, fitted with a plug. Through this a memento, such as a small bone for each sacrifice, was possibly placed for temporary custody.

Returning to position I, we enter a new and earlier temple, in which the decoration is less ornate. We first notice a small side chapel, K<sup>1</sup> in the plan. Entrance is gained through the doorway, which is so low that one is required to bow in passing.

Immediately opposite is a sacred stone of worship, broader at the top than at the bottom. Its significance is not known, but stones of this design appear in the "Holy of Holies" at other temples. On the left of this stone is a corner seat for the priest, while on the right is the altar



AN ALTAR IN THE TARIEN TEMPLE, BENEATH WHICH APPEAR THE FAMILIAR PHALLIC SYMBOLS OF THE CONE AND THE BALL (SEE TEXT BELOW).

(see illustration above), with its familiar phallic symbols of the cone and the ball.

In the passage leading from position K to O, the investigator sees holes in the masonry on each side, indicating that barriers and curtains were hung here. A straight view can be obtained down the aisle leading to the Holy of Holies, where the sacred stone faces the visitor. In the center is a much-burnt stone fireplace full of ash, M in the plan.

Looking toward the northern end of this oval-shaped building, we see at the far end an entrance, afterward closed by a huge block of stone.

Near the Sacred Stone is a round stone



A CORNER OF THE TARXIEN STONE AGE TEMPLE, SHOWING THE CARVED ALTARS, TWO SACRED CONES, AND A TOMB: MALTA

The dark patch on the right of the photograph marks the site of funeral pyres. Tarxien is a continuation of the village of Casal Paula, where the Hypogeum of Hal Saflieni was situated (see page 459).



A CURIOUS STONE WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN USED BY THE ANCIENT INHABITANTS OF MALTA IN THE CEREMONY OF ABLUTION

A quantity of stone balls was found near this slab, which suggest the possibility that at a later period it may have been used for games (see text, page 473).



THE MAIN ALTAR OF THE TEMPLE AT TARXIEN: MALTA

The graceful carving awakens admiration for the prehistoric stone-cutters, whose only implements were sharpened flints (see page 474).

plug. Here, it may be imagined, the sacrificial ox was brought in and tethered. Armed with a heavy stone axe, the priest felled the animal, completing the sacrifice with a sharp flint or obsidian knife. A huge basin or laver was used in the ceremony of purification.

The sacrifice was cut up on a large stone between the laver and the fireplace. This stone has a deep, round hole into which the blood of the sacrifice drained. The portions to become the burnt sacrifice were there cut off and placed on the sacred hearth. A large stone table on the right contained no drainage hole and doubtless was the place where the burnt offerings and oblations were dedicated to the gods.

Opposite this table of oblation is a passage leading to a small side chapel, marked M<sup>1</sup>. This contains a small altar, while on the walls are carved in bold relief three animals—a bull, a sow, and a second bull facing the first (see illustration on page 478). These carvings are among the earliest known of this type.

Two large bull's horns were found

carefully hidden under the entrance to this sanctuary. It appears, therefore, that the worship of the sacred bull, so widely spread and still existing, was carried on in Malta just as the Minotaur was worshiped in Crete.

Two doorways on the ground level, about two feet square, lead from two small rooms M<sup>2</sup> and M<sup>3</sup>, where possibly goats or lambs were kept ready for sacrifice.

Returning to room L M, we mount a long horizontal slab just beyond the round hearth. Here we are much struck with a beautifully carved barrier about a yard high. This evidently marked the part of the temple dedicated to the uses of the priests.

Between the spirals are carved two cones. Mounting over this and again noting the various curtain and door slings-holes in the side walls of the passage, we come to another oval building, P Q in the plan. This has similar features to the previous room, but is smaller and entirely without carved work except a stone screen on each side, finely decorated.



A BULL AND A SOW CARVED IN BOLD RELIEF ON THE WALL OF ONE OF THE CHAMBERS IN THE TEMPLE OF TARXIEN (SEE PAGE 477)

These are among the earliest carvings of this type known. Near by, carefully hidden under the entrance to the sanctuary, were found two large bull's horns, suggesting that this animal was worshiped in Malta as the Minotaur was worshiped in Crete (see "The Sea Kings of Crete," by James Baikie, in *THE GEOGRAPHIC* for January, 1912).

Between the screens and the entrance rose two huge pillars, now broken off at ground level. In the center of the room is a sacred hearth, while apse P contains a well-preserved altar and a font, the latter being pit-marked and still bearing traces of red ocher. In a tall slab opposite the carved screen is a black spot on the edge near the floor. When excavated the bottom of this pillar was found to be adorned with five pebbles let into the stone, three in the top row and two below at the ends. No convincing explanation has been suggested for these stones.

We now come to the last and final room, R S T U. Here no stone barrier bars the way, but the holes for the screens can still be seen.

The last apse is the smallest of all, and the inward inclination of the stones indicates that the rooms were domed over.

With feelings of awe we retrace our steps down the main aisle, and, having arrived at Room L-N, we turn to the left and find an exit marked N in the plan.

On each side is a sort of pulpit on which the priest might have stood to address the worshippers.

Possibly, an image or round stone ball, of which several two feet in diameter were found, was placed on this pedestal.

The exit leads to a much more roughly built series of rooms, marked W-X and Y-Z. Outside exit N and on the left is a flight of steps, V.

#### SECRETS OF THE PAST AWAIT DISCOVERY

Beyond these apses sufficient soil has been removed to show that the prehistoric buildings extended for a considerable distance into the next field, and that the walls are those of square, and not oval, buildings. Here it seems likely that the laity lived, and it is hoped that when funds are once more available further research may be carried out to delve into the secrets of the long-forgotten past. Here we may find one more clue in our attempt to solve the question whence man came, in the hope that we may find whither man goeth.