ARCHAEOLOGICAL SECTION NO. 2129

THE LAST report on the work carried out by the National Museum of Malta at Skorba con-
cluded the sentence, "a short season. Next season is planned to round off the excavation."
Vain hope! A full five week campaign, like all the previous ones here, has added as many problems
as it has solved.

Work began at Easter 1961 (report in The Illustrated London News for August 12) on a small
suspected temple. Since it proved larger than anticipated, we were not completely cleared until the
autumn campaign (report in I.J.N. of December 20), when outbuildings were found to the west
and a second temple suspected on the east. In the spring of 1962 (report in I.J.N. of August 11)
part of the outbuildings turned out to be a hut of an earlier, and the second temple was con-
firmed and three quarters cleared. All that remained was to be opened out to the inner wall of the
corner, and to clear one apace and the outer one, to the east. For these a short season seemed
seasonal.

Digging was resumed on October 1, the funds contributed by the Society of
Antiquaries, the British Academy, the
Malta Archeological Circle and private
subscription for earlier campaigns not yet
exhausted. Practical help was also given by the Public Works
Department and voluntary assistants.

The first three trenches were sited in a field to the east and continued, as was hoped, that the temple buildings did not extend further in this direction (Fig. 3). However, the other village on the site did, although it was found previously only out to the west. Accordingly we sheltered. We retreated a few paces until the trench was opened to the east and had been settled.

As it happened, the first of these was the Ggantija phase. "Hut of the Querns," that can be better understood now it has been completely cleared. It is rectangular, walloowed round corners, 6.3 by 2.80 meters (20 by 9 ft.). The shape is a triangle, the southern side moving down the ground, and the northern, inner wall of a small stone-lined pit close to it (Fig. 7). A smaller pit in the centre contain 120 sea shells, of the vesiculus type, and one intact (Fig. 13); but there was no permanent hearth.

At the northwestern further trench was sunk to rock near the deep
trenches of previous campaigns. From the trial hole, the east and continued, as was hoped, that the temple buildings did not extend further in this direction (Fig. 3). However, the other village on the site did, although it was found previously only out to the west. Accordingly we sheltered. We retreated a few paces until the trench was opened to the east and had been settled.

As it happened, the first of these was the Ggantija phase. "Hut of the Querns," that can be better understood now it has been completely cleared. It is rectangular, walloowed round corners, 6.3 by 2.80 meters (20 by 9 ft.). The shape is a triangle, the southern side moving down the ground, and the northern, inner wall of a small stone-lined pit close to it (Fig. 7). A smaller pit in the centre contain 120 sea shells, of the vesiculus type, and one intact (Fig. 13); but there was no permanent hearth.

At the northwestern further trench was sunk to rock near the deep
trenches of previous campaigns. From the trial hole, the east and continued, as was hoped, that the temple buildings did not extend further in this direction (Fig. 3). However, the other village on the site did, although it was found previously only out to the west. Accordingly we sheltered. We retreated a few paces until the trench was opened to the east and had been settled.
SKORBA--WHERE MALTESE BUILDING GOES BACK SOME 6500 YEARS.

FIG. 6. LOOKING ACROSS THE CENTRAL SITES OF THE EAST TEMPLE; SEE FIG. 8. AT THE HEIGHT OF THE ENTRANCE STANDS A STONE VESSEL.

FIG. 8. LOOKING DOWN INTO THE CENTRAL SITES BUT FROM THE OPPOSITE ASPECT TO FIG. 6. IN THE COMMA WAS FOUND THE SKELETON OF A PIGEON-LIKE BIRD.

FIG. 8. THE SHELL PIT IN THE OGAHTA PERIOD HUT. IT CONTAINED 138 SHELLS OF THE GENUS VENERI--AND ONE LIMPET.

Continued.] I hope to be able to do is to build up some of the many curious pedestal bases, narrower at the bottom than at the top, to find what shape of vessel these supported. As well as pottery fragments this level was very rich in domestic animal bones—cow, sheep, goat and pig. These too require further exhaustive study for the information they can give us on the animal husbandry of the time. One fact immediately obvious is the very large size of the cattle, probably of *Aurochs* (prehistoric ox). This also bears implications on the boats then available as Malta is separated from Sicily by
FROM GHR DALAM TO TARXIEH—MANY PHASES OF MALTA'S NEOLITHIC PAST, REVEALED AT SKORBA.

FIG. 8. NICKNAMED THE "BACK-SCRATCHER" AND PROBABLY A LADLE-HANDLE, FOUND IN THE RED SKORBA LEVEL IN THE DEEP TRENCH BEHIND THE TEMPLE.

FIG. 10. A MYSTERY SOLVED. SUFFICIENT FRAGMENTS OF LADLES OF THIS TYPE WERE FOUND TO ENABLE A RECONSTRUCTION TO BE MADE, RED SKORBA PERIOD.

FIG. 11. THE BACK AND FRONT VIEWS OF ONE OF A PAIR OF HIGHLY SCHEMATISED FEMALE FIGURES FOUND AMONG THE RUBBAGE INSIDE THE GIANTZA HUT. SEE ALSO FIG. 12.

FIG. 12. A TUNNEL HANDLE OF A TYPE BELIEVED TO DEVELOP IN MALTA IN THE TARXIEH PHASE—BUT HERE FOUND IN THE RED SKORBA LEVEL—1500 YEARS EARLIER.

FIG. 13. TWO ASPECTS OF A POLISHED AXE-HEAD. THE SECOND TO BE FOUND IN SKORBA (AND THE THIRD IN MALTA) FOUND AMONG RUBBAGE OUTSIDE THE ZEBBUG PERIOD HUT.

FIG. 14. FOUND IN THE CENTRAL Niche OF THE EAST TEMPLE. AN ELEGANT RAINBOW BOWL, WITH INCISED DECORATION. ITS DIAMETER IS ABOUT 4 IN.

FIG. 15. A TUNNEL HANDLE OF A TYPE BELIEVED TO DEVELOP IN MALTA IN THE TARXIEH PHASE—BUT HERE FOUND IN THE RED SKORBA LEVEL—1500 YEARS EARLIER.

FIG. 16. THE BACK AND FRONT ASPECTS OF THE SECOND SCHEMATISED FIGURE FOUND (SEE ALSO FIG. 11). THE INCISED LINES SEEM IN THIS CASE TO IMPLY CLOTHING.

FIG. 17. A TUNNEL HANDLE OF A TYPE BELIEVED TO DEVELOP IN MALTA IN THE TARXIEH PHASE—BUT HERE FOUND IN THE RED SKORBA LEVEL—1500 YEARS EARLIER.

Continued.

60 miles of open land is trying to build up on the interpretation of the site. We have, however, to expect that the surface, the construction, must be some...
Continued.] 60 miles of open sea. No line of enquiry can be ignored when one is trying to build up one's knowledge of a period in the distant past. The interpretation of the large building has been intentionally avoided. We shall need much more of it open before any guess can be hazarded. It cannot be expected to survive further to the east since the rock there rises so close to the surface, though the rest of the earlier hut, a much lighter construction, must be sought. Westward work is prevented by the temple, a difficulty we met over the Char Dalam wall on the opposite side of the site in the spring. The deposits below the mule pit in the end of the temple area show that this lay outside the Red Skerba building, the wall of which therefore presumably turns north under the temple wall and may be found emerging from beneath it where it swings back westwards. The northern trench however contained an identical Red Skerba deposit, so lies inside the same room. It is this part of the site which will call us back to the spring.