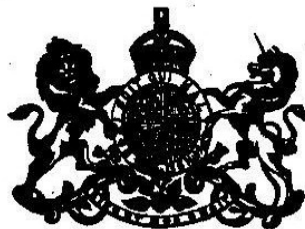


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THE
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
CURATOR OF THE VALLETTA MUSEUM
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR
1910-11.

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MUSEUM

VALLETTA.

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT OF THE VALLETTA MUSEUM
FOR THE YEAR 1911.

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CURATOR FOR 1910-11.

PREHISTORIC PERIOD.

The excavations made this year in and around the Hagiar Kim and Mnaidra ruins were extensive and very important.

Dr. T. Ashby, the Director of the British Archæological School at Rome, volunteered once more to help the Department, and in May came over to Malta where he remained for about a month.

A thorough investigation of the above-mentioned megalithic ruins was carried out, and excavations were made at nearly every point of the ruins. The nature of the various floors was studied, the boundaries of the different niches, chambers and apses, investigated, and the soil of the neighbouring fields excavated.

RESULTS OF EXCAVATIONS.

The results of our investigations were :—

- 1st. The accurate determination of the extent of the ruins and of the parts composing them ;
- 2nd. The determination of the relation of the large blocks, lying about on the floors, to the main building ;
- 3rd. The determination of the nature of the floors, and their age in relation to the building ;
- 4th. The collection of a huge amount of potsherds, flint instruments, statuettes and other objects which completed our knowledge of the monuments.

The excavations enabled us to obtain more accurate plans of Hagiar Kim and Mnaidra than any others made before, and to place in situ several blocks of stone, thus completing the buildings and rendering them more interesting to visitors.

A detailed report on the excavations made, with plans and illustrations of objects found, is in course of preparation. In a summary of this report Dr. T. Ashby writes: In the course of ten days' work at each building satisfactory results were arrived at. It was found that in front of the facade, both at Hagiar Kim and at the lower building of Mnaidra, there was a large area roughly paved with slabs of stones. This was also the case of a building of a similar nature excavated in 1909, on the hill of Cordin, and seems to have been a regular feature. No further additions (except in small details) were made to the plan of Hagiar Kim ; but at Mnaidra it was found that, besides the two main parts of the structure, there were some subsidiary buildings which, though less massive, were of considerable importance; they were perhaps devoted to domestic uses, inasmuch as a very large quantity of pottery was found in them. It was also ascertained that the site of the upper part of the main building, which is undoubtedly later in date than the lower, was obtained by heaping up against the external wall of the latter a mass of small stones, so as to form a level platform instead of cutting away the side of the rocky hill upon the slope on which Mnaidra is situated.

In both buildings there were places in the soil which had not yet been completely cleared away, and chambers in which the ancient floors of pounded limestone chips (locally called "torba") still maintained their hardness after perhaps 4,000 years. It was in that place that small objects were found in considerable quantities, numerous fragments of pottery and of flint, but no trace of metal; the former correspond absolutely with that found in the Hypogeum of Halsaflieni and in other megalithic buildings of the Island, so that it seems clear that Hagiar Kim and Mnaidra, like the rest, belong to the neolithic period.

Under one of the "torba" floors at Mnaidra a curious group of small terra-cottas, no doubt of a votive character, was found: one represents a pregnant woman, no attempt being made to indicate the form of the head; which was expressed simply by a little of the clay pinched between the finger and thumb; and in three other apparently standing figures, the head was similarly omitted. Another with an open beak and large eyes seemed, from the attempt to show plumage on the body, to represent a bird; while the meaning of others, consisting of two spirals intertwined, remains as yet a mystery. Outside the lower building a small terra-cotta bust was found resembling somewhat two stone heads which have been found at Halsaflieni, and also the leg of an obviously steatopygic statuette.

A few examples were also found of the small stone pillars, often narrowed in the centre, which are common in the megalithic buildings of Malta, both in isolation and as supports to the cover-slabs of the dolmen-like niches which are so important a feature in these buildings. In either case, Dr. Arthur Evans thinks they must be treated as baetyli or personifications of the Deity; one or two small terra-cotta models of them were discovered in the course of the present excavations.

A specially fine stone pillar, hitherto concealed by earth, more elaborately turned than any other in Malta, was found by us, serving as the support of a dolmen-like niche immediately within the lower building at Mnajdra, on the right.

THE ROUND TOWERS.

After the excavations of Hagiar Kim and Mnajdra were completed, an attempt was made to study one of the round towers built with large blocks of stones, of which examples are known at Gudja in the "Ta Hlantun" district, in the Zurrico district, at Tal Bakkari, in the Mqabba district, at Il Wilgia and at St. Julian's in the field "Ta Cieda".

The building to the North-West of Mqabba district was the one around which excavations were made with the help of Dr. Ashby. Of this round building, only a part of the eastern wall remains standing and serves the purpose of a partition wall between the two fields. Dr. Albert Mayr, in his valuable book on Prehistoric Malta, is of opinion that the round towers belong to the prehistoric period. The excavations conducted at "Tal Wilgia" have not confirmed this opinion, although the material collected has been very scanty.

The fact that foundation blocks of the western part of the wall were not met with, shows that they were carefully removed by the people who transformed the rocky ground into an arable field. The pottery was all of the ordinary Punic type, which is so common in our Islands.

PREHISTORIC WELL-TOMB.

An important discovery of a well-tomb of the prehistoric age was made in November.

A trench was being cut for the object of laying iron pipes for the aqueduct in the road leading from Bukana to the "Tal Kali" reservoirs. At a distance of about a quarter of a mile from the reservoirs, the workmen cut through a mass of bones, and the fact was reported to the Curator of the Museum. No importance was attached to the discovery and, in fact, when the Curator arrived on the spot, the trench had already been cut and cleared and the iron pipes laid down. On the South of the road, the longitudinal section of a well-tomb was visible, of which more than one half had been hopelessly destroyed. What remained of the tomb was cleared with all possible precaution.

The well-tomb was bell-shaped, beginning in a straight oblong shaft, but becoming wider towards the bottom. The length of the tomb, at the bottom, was about 150 c.m. and the depth from the surface of the road about 1m. The whole cavity was filled with stones and clayey dust, caked hard at the top. Halfway down the shaft, human bones could be seen mixed with stones, and bits of Punic pottery, of the ordinary buff colour, were extracted from this mass of debris. Evidently in Punic times a burial had taken place at this height, in a tomb already excavated. Under this layer the material was much less compact and had a peculiar appearance.

BURIAL IN RED PIGMENT.

For about 10 cms. from the bottom, a loose mass of bones and soil of a red dark colour, as if soaked in blood, could be seen. This was, in fact, the feature which had attracted the attention of the workmen.

By careful handpicking, human bones and a number of potsherds were extracted, both bones and sherds being deeply stained red.



The red pigment which proved to be an iron ochre, was intimately mixed with the objects at the bottom of the tomb. The bones were of skeletons of different ages, but their position could in no way be ascertained. A number of fragments covered with pigment were preserved and three jaws were recovered in good state of preservation. The pottery is mostly dark grey, but the black and red ware are well represented. The pottery is well baked and hand polished.

Twelve different vessels of small size were surely deposited in this grave. The pots were ornamented with incisions, mostly deep, and filled up with a white paste. They recall the neolithic ware of Halsafieni in its simpler form, [see plates VII and VIII of Prof. Tagliaferro's report, published in the *Liverpool Annals of Archaeology* Vol. III, 1910], but some of them are of the Bahria type described and illustrated by Mr. E. T. Peet in Vol. V. p. 154, plates XIII to XV, of "Papers of the British School at Rome".

Neither flint implements nor small objects of personal ornament, usually found in such tombs, were obtained; but the neolithic character of the burial is beyond doubt. The peculiarity of this burial in red pigment is of considerable importance, and connects our tomb with similar ones found in Italy and Sicily. So far, excepting the ossuary of Halsafieni, no burials of the neolithic inhabitants had been met with, and this discovery has therefore given us a clue as to where and how neolithic people were buried in Malta.

NEOLITHIC CAVE AT BUR-MGHEZ.

An important discovery, in connection with neolithic burials, was also made later on by Prof. Tagliaferro, one of the members of the Museum Committee. Prof. Tagliaferro, who was studying the bone deposits in several stone quarries to the East and North of Mkabba, following a fissure at Bur-mghez, which contained abundant fragments of deer and other extinct animals, discovered human remains at the bottom of the fissure. Further excavation showed that one of the fissures extended into a long cavern full of red soil in which over 20 human skeletons were found buried. The bones exposed for centuries to the action of a damp soil were so friable as to crumble at the slightest touch, but with infinite care Prof. Tagliaferro followed the bones, and was able to get skulls and large portions of the skeletons.

Potsherds, greatly resembling those of the megalithic buildings and of the Halsafieni Hypogeum, were found in the cave, and personal ornaments made of shell, known to be characteristic of the neolithic time, were also obtained. A few flint instruments were also obtained from the deposit, so that the connection of this cave with neolithic man of the Hagiar Kim period cannot in any way be doubted.

This discovery forcibly directs our attention to fissures and caves, so common in connection with our numerous stone quarries, as a possible dwelling or burial place of neolithic man. A careful research in this direction may complete the history of the early inhabitants of these Islands, which, but a few years ago, was buried in complete obscurity.

PUNIC TOMBS.

By the term Punic, we mean to designate the tombs which are distinctly of a pre-Roman period and which contain furniture similar to that found at Carthage and in other late Phœnician Colonies. It is a fact, however, that our Punic tombs have varied little in character from about the 8th century B.C. to the 3rd century A.D., and that their contents are not strictly comparable with Punic articles of the same period in other parts of the world.

Together with Punic furniture, we find, in the latter period tombs, other objects which are obviously later and more or less typical of the Roman tomb furniture. The passage from the Phœnician to the Roman period in Malta, as characterised by the tombs and their furniture, is so gradual, that it is often barely distinguishable by an expert.

I think it would be more accurate to call these tombs Maltese tombs, as, on a close inspection, a local colour is observed in them which absorbs both the Phœnician and Roman characteristics. As is well known, the tombs are either cave-tombs or well-tombs according to the place in which they are dug out; in the face of a rocky hill the cave type is found, on a level ground the well-tomb is met with. It is a fact that cave-tombs are in most cases older than well-tombs.

DISCOVERY OF OLD TOMBS.

Many of these tombs were discovered during the year, some by the Curator and others by people who took great care to keep the discovery to themselves.

Few are the tombs that were found in such a state as to enable us to form an idea of the disposition of the furniture and of the bodies. Even if the tomb is not rifled, very often water finds its way into the chamber. In the course of centuries, this is gradually filled up with soil which covers and cakes up all the objects which are then extracted with difficulty and which are out of their original position.

A list of these tombs is given below in the order in which they were discovered:—

TOMBS AT HAL PILATU, RABAT—In July 1910 as it came to the knowledge of the Curator that the field between the Government School and St. Paul's College, at Rabat, was to be converted into a playground, permission was asked to make excavations before the field was metalled.

Permission having been granted, the field was excavated with the following result:—

About ten well-tombs with two chambers at the end of the shaft were found, completely rifled and mostly smashed up. Three catacombs of a late type, not dissimilar from the St. Paul's catacombs, which are about 50 yards to the west, were met with, full of earth and débris and in a bad state of preservation.

The few potsherds collected were of the late Punic type and in no way dissimilar from the pottery previously met with in the neighbouring fields. These catacombs had been open for years, before the rocky ground in which they were cut was covered with soil and converted into a field. Several people stated that they used to play in these catacombs when they were young.

When the whole field was explored, it was not thought worth while to preserve any of the tombs met with. One of them, however, which was close to the north side of the school, was surveyed. This was better cut than the others and had a cross carved in relief on one of the walls. A plan was made of this tomb which presented undoubted signs of Christianity, but, as it could not be preserved, it was buried again. The plan of this catacomb can now be seen in the Valletta Museum.

TOMB AT BULEBEL IZ-ZGHIR.—A well-tomb was accidentally discovered in July at Bulebel, Iz-zghir on the road called Ta-Xiolxia, between the villages of Zeitun and Zabbar.

A gallery was being driven for the main sewer between the two villages when, in sinking one of the shafts (No. 74), a funerary chamber was entered at about 3 ms. below the surface of the road. The natural entrance to this chamber was in a field to the west of the road.

A rectangular shaft led into a circular chamber about 2 m. in diameter, closed at the entrance by a stone slab 1.11 m. long, 80 cms. wide and 10 cms. thick. In the floor of the chamber, at right angles with the entrance, was a gutter 1.2 m long, 28 cms. wide and 25 cms. deep. The floor was strewn with bones, of at least five skeletons, and bits of broken pottery. One light buff coloured plate, one enochoe, and one Punic lamp were obtained whole. This pottery was of a late type, ornamented with brown lines drawn around the vessels.

The discoverer of this tomb tried to conceal the objects he had carried away, but the Police summoned him under the new Law for the protection of antiquities, the objects were seized, and the man fined £7. It is to be hoped that the new Law will act as a good deterrent to those who are in the habit of destroying our monuments, about which they know or care very little.

76. **TOMB AT TAL-GHALIA.**—On the 6th September a farmer reported that he had found an old tomb on the eastern ridge of the plateau at Tal Ghalia at a point known as the "Taflia ta San Laurenz". The tomb was reported to be still sealed up. I arranged to have the tomb opened at once. It was a rock-tomb with a triangular shaft or forecourt cut out in front of it. This shaft was 1.22 m. deep from the surface of the ledge, the acute angle of the triangle being a little to the left of the opening and 1.13 m. away from it. The slab which sealed the entrance was 83 by 84 cms. and rather irregular in thickness. All round the edges, in contact with the front of the cave, a blue clay paste was used to fill up the space between it and the rock to keep out the water.

Notwithstanding all these precautions, rain water found its way into the chamber and carried with it sand and earth. The chamber had a ceiling which curved sharply from the entrance to the floor. The depth was only 62 cms., the height, at the middle portion, 69 cms. and the width, at the central part, 68 cms. The tomb was therefore clearly intended for the deposition of cinerary urns and not for the interment of bodies. No bodies, in fact, were found in the chamber. No lamp-holes were cut in the walls or gutters in the floor.

The following objects formed the furniture of this tomb: one large cinerary urn full of bone-ash, one large and thick bilychnis lamp of the old Punic type, one large and one small clay plates and several small clay jugs.

The soil was carefully examined, but no small objects were found. The tomb was of an old type, the pottery was of the ordinary buff colour, well baked and not ornamented. The objects were all taken to the Valletta Museum.

TOMBS AT KLIGHA.—In the Kligha valley, whilst digging a trench for the iron pipes of the aqueduct, a mass of bones was discovered in a sort of cave. The site was excavated, but the result was very meagre. A few human bones were found mixed with a few fragments of Punic pottery. A large amount of animal bones (bovine, equine, etc.) were next extracted with fragments of pottery of the same type. The layer of animal bones extended for over 50 cms., but the remains were not very old. Then came a layer of sand overlying another of pebbles to the depth of about 2 metres. The pebbles and sand were what one could expect in the very bottom of such a deep valley, but one could not think why all these bones were deposited there. Barring this curious fact, the excavation was not interesting.

34. **TOMB AT "LI-SBALL".**—Further down the same valley, at the point known as Li-Sball, the workmen found a rock tomb on the eastern slope of the valley. The tomb was dug in the face of the rock and had a forecourt 1 m. deep, 2.5 ms. long, by 1.5 ms. wide, provided with five narrow steps cut in one of the sides.

On cleaning the forecourt, it was observed that the slab covering the entrance was in situ, but had its upper third missing. On removing the slab, it was found, as expected, that the tomb was half full of red earth which had found its way slowly in the course of centuries. The soil was carefully removed, handpicked, and finally passed through a sieve.

The funeral chamber was of the ordinary type, rectangular with slightly rounded corners, flat ceiling, flat floor provided with a gutter 10 ins. deep, cut along the left side for 1.88ms. and 43cms. wide. A small square lamphole of a pyramidal section was cut on the left side, 15 cms. from the ceiling and 91 cms. from the entrance. The sides of the little niche were 15 cms. long and its base 12 cms. deep. Only one small clay enochoe and two small unguent jars were obtained

whole, but fragments of at least three different clay vessels were collected. Human bones were heaped in a corner, as if the tomb had been cleared of the bones of a previous interment to make room for another inhumation, or better, for the deposition of a cinerary urn. A broken cinerary urn was, in fact, found and many charred bones were obtained from the material that filled the cave.

No particular object was secured except a fossil shark's tooth, 8 cms. long and 4 cms. broad at the base. The great trouble taken to clear this tomb was hardly repaid by the few objects found and the scanty information obtained as to the funereal rites.

TOMBS AT KRENDI.—The excavation of several tomb-caves in the Krendi district called "Ta San Niclau", proved more interesting.

An elaborate tomb was cleared, on the 27th September, in a field known as the "Bur l'ahmar ta Lanza". This tomb opened on the western side of a nearly circular shaft 1.98 ms. wide and 2.57 ms. long, at a depth of 1.5 m. from a ledge of rock, and 1.85 ms. from the surface of the adjoining field. The shaft was widest at its mouth and was restricted at the bottom to a semicircular space 1.5 ms. wide by 1 m.

The face of the rock, in which the chamber was dug, was flat and carefully smoothed. The entrance to the chamber was nearly square, viz. 68 cms. high and 71 cms. wide, and 20 cms. thick. The chamber was round and represented a section of a circle with the chord at the entrance. The length of the chamber was 1.37 m. and 1.93 m. at its wider portion. The height, measured at the middle, was 92 cms. A gutter ran along the front wall, 22 cms. wide and 18 cms. deep, and a kind of a low shelf, cut in the rock, went round half the cave. This was intended to lead off the water that might have flown from a crevice in the rock at the back of the chamber.

An important feature of all these rock-tombs is the great care taken to avoid accumulation of water in the funereal chambers. All sorts of contrivances were resorted to, for the purpose of keeping the floor of the chamber dry, and, considering the nature of our rock, that object was seldom attained without difficulty. This cave was opened 30 years ago, and a great quantity of pottery was found and presented to the parish priest of Musta. It was not, however, completely cleared, as, by carefully removing the earth which covered the floor for about 60 cms., a good number of clay vessels and glass unguentaria were obtained.

No information could be obtained as to the funereal rites followed when the various bodies were interred, the bones having been displaced when the tomb was first opened.

TOMB AT "IL BUR TAL GHAIN".—Another tomb exists in the same locality in a field called "Il Bur tal Ghain".

Although excavations in that neighbourhood had always proved disappointing, still one could hardly resist the temptation to clean this tomb the shaft of which was half covered by a rubble wall. This wall was demolished on the 29th September and the shaft cleared out. It was a square shaft 1.83m. deep, with sides 1.52m. long. Five narrow steps were cut at one side of the shaft.

The tomb-caves were dug in the rock, one on the western and the other on the southern face of the shaft. The steps were cut out in the northern side. The mouth of the two caves was sealed by two stone slabs still in situ. Unluckily, the slabs were not in close contact with the rock, so that it was to be expected that the tombs, although unrifled, would be full of earth. The slabs were carefully removed and the chambers appeared choked with soil and loose stones. The clearing was conducted with great care and was consequently very slow.

The southern chamber was rectangular with rounded corners at the back. It was 1.42 m. long and 1.22 m. wide. The entrance was square, 70 cms. high and 22 cms. thick. Beyond the entrance a gutter, 40 cms. wide and 35 cms. deep, ran along the whole length of the cave. The floor of the tomb proper appeared, therefore, as a shelf along the outer edge. From this ran a small gutter 75 mms. deep to catch any water that might have come out of a narrow fissure in the rock just above the floor of the cave. No lamp-hole was cut in the walls.

The bones of an adult were lying on the floor, but they were so brittle as to come out with the soil that covered them. On the side of the head one glass unguentarium, a fragment of a bronze bangle and a fragment of a bronze mirror were found. The body was probably that of a woman. On clearing the gutter it was found that a number of clay vessels consisting of aryballi, plates, lamps etc., all of the common Punic type, were carefully packed at the right end. On the extreme left of the gutter the ashes of a young body were deposited.

The western chamber was of the type of the one just described. It also had a deep wide gutter beyond the entrance and a shelf-like floor on which bodies were laid. The tomb furniture was packed with care at the right end of the gutter, but other clay and glass vessels were also packed at the left hand corner. Bone ash was found mixed with the earth in the middle of the gutter opposite the entrance.

The result of the excavation was satisfactory, a good number of funereal vessels were obtained and the tombs themselves were important being differently constructed from the ordinary type of cave. The tombs were not very old, probably not over two centuries B. C.

TOMBS AT TARXIEN.—In the course of laying down a main sewer in the village of Tarxien, a tomb was, on the 14th of February of this year, discovered at Strada Tarxien, opposite houses Nos. 49 and 50.

The tomb-cave was oblong and irregular in shape, with convex walls, about 2ms. long, and 1.22 m. wide, its ceiling being not more than 60 cms. below the surface of the road. A heap of human bones was found in a corner of the chamber and in another corner charred bones were seen as if a cinerary urn had been emptied at this point. An empty urn stood in the centre of the chamber and a few clay vessels were found lying about, apparently, without any order.

The tomb was not rifled in recent times as the slab which closed the entrance was still in situ. Beyond this slab the usual shaft was found full of stone and earth. The tomb proved, otherwise, of little interest. It did not look like a very old tomb and the pottery resembled that of the second century B.C. The objects found in this tomb are being arranged in the Valletta Museum.

TOMBS AT SAN BLAS.—Whilst digging a trench for laying water mains, between the San Blas road to the North East of the plague cemetery, and the village of Siggiewi, a cutting in the rock was met with, on the 11th March of this year. On clearing the cutting, I found that a tomb of the late Punic type had been opened. It was a rectangular chamber about 1.8 m. long and 1.5 m. wide regularly cut and provided with a square entrance leading to a shaft which was full of stones. The slab at the entrance was broken and the tomb itself rifled years ago, and half filled with stones.

When the old aqueduct was constructed, this tomb was met with as, on its eastern side, the stone water-channels could be seen crossing it about 91 cms. below the road. The southern side of the chamber was broken, and through the gap another funereal chamber could be seen, quite similar to the first one, with an entrance leading to a shaft. Both shaft and chamber were full of loose stones, showing that this tomb has been opened and rifled.

The tombs were parallel to each other and opened in an adjoining corner of a field full of débris. Nothing of interest was observed in these tombs, and no objects were to be found in them except a few potsherds of the common Punic type. The place was, therefore, a burial-ground long before it was so used during the plague epidemic of 1613. Another cemetery lies neglected a little to the south. The plague cemetery is very carefully walled in and bears the following inscription "Elemosina per li poveri morti di Cristo questo locus S. Andrea Ap. a dì 11 Luglio anno 1613". A stone statue of the Patron Saint St. Andrew is still preserved on the southern corner of the wall.

TOMBS AT TAD-DAWL.—On the 31st March, the discovery of a tomb-cave was reported to the Curator. It was found to the south of the road leading to Mkabba beyond the cross road known as "Tad-dawl", where a small chapel was erected at the times of Grand Master Pinto.

The site overlooks a stone quarry, known as "il ghalka tal Misis" in the tenement called "Ta Guttaf Gandolf". The whole field, it was reported, was covered with tombs which had been destroyed when the neighbouring quarry was exploited. The one pointed out was cleared and found to be the forecourt of a set of rock-tombs which were rifled and filled with débris. Two funereal chambers opened one at each end of the forecourt. The one to the north was rectangular with rounded corners and a flat ceiling. That to the south was long and irregular and led to another one which was broken and full of large stones. On the western side of the forecourt, a niche was cut which was either the beginning of another tomb or a niche destined for cinerary urns. Such a niche is very common in this type of tombs, and, when found intact, it usually contains one or more cinerary urns with a few clay vessels. In this case the niche was quite empty. The excavations of the set of tombs led to no important discoveries. The architecture of the tombs had no peculiar features and the fragments of pottery found were of the ordinary Punic type. Fragments of glass and bronze objects were found by which the tombs could be dated to about the 2nd or 3rd century B. C.

TOMB AT RABAT.—A well-tomb was accidentally discovered in November by a farmer who was working one of his fields to the north of "Tač-čghaki" hill. The tomb contained an abundant furniture which was removed before we were aware of the fact. The furniture was, however, handed over to the Curator of the Museum and the empty tomb was inspected. The tomb was of the ordinary type, with a shaft and a rectangular chamber. The tomb was not earlier than the 2nd century, the furniture was of the Punic sort with a clear Roman influence, Maltese coins were found in it of the type which is usually dated to about the first century A. D.

CATACOMBS.

CATACOMBS AT PAULA.—In the course of the drainage works at Casal Paula a small catacomb of the Roman type was entered in Strada Sammat in August 1910. The place could not be well cleared owing to the fact that the catacomb extended under private property and was full of débris which was impossible to clear through the small opening in the street. The arcosolia could be seen with ornamented pillars and loculi cut in the white rock for one or two bodies. The place was surveyed and plans and section were drawn before the catacomb was covered in.

The discovery is important as it shows that the whole plateau which from Halsaffieni extends to the valley to the west, was once a vast cemetery from the neolithic ages. Other Roman catacombs were met with in the course of the construction of houses in the neighbourhood. Lower down in the street, a deep shaft was cleared in November. This, however, proved to be a cistern and not a tomb.

CATACOMB NEAR SAN CTALD.—Another discovery was accidentally made, on the 14th February of this year, in the space to the north of the church of San Cataldo at Rabat. The ground sank at the angle of that road during the passage of a cart. The site when cleared proved to be a catacomb by which all that district is honeycombed. The roof of this catacomb was barely 28cms, under the road surface and had given way a long time ago. The space was filled up with stones and earth to the surface of the road. Originally, a double Punic tomb with a rectangular shaft in the middle was dug out at this point, but, presumably in Roman times, the sides of the shaft were cut to a circular space in which small loculi for infants were dug.

On the eastern side, a square and neatly cut entrance leads to a set of chambers, at present adjoining a bakery and used as a store for fuel. Among the débris were potsherds of the Roman and two lamps of the transition period. These lamps, common in late tombs, are a kind of imitation of the Roman lamp, but are round in form and have a triangular lip in which the opening for the wick is found. The handle is only a rudimentary knob, and the clay of which the lamp is made, is of the buff sort and never of the red quality of which Roman lamps are made. A few worn out Roman coins were found, and the potsherds were Punic, Roman, Arabic and even Sicilian.

This catacomb had been in use even when the roof had given way, as, all along the wall, marble slabs about 30 cms. by 20 cms. were fixed by their edges into slits cut in the rock to serve the purpose of steps. Three such steps were found at a distance of about 30 cms. from each other. One of these slabs was a portion of a Latin inscription of which, however, only a few letters remain, viz:—

IMOT

F. PRO

The letters are deeply engraved and beautifully shaped, showing that the inscription was of the good Roman period. Nothing could be done for the preservation of this bit of catacomb, as the opening in the road had to be filled up without delay.

POTTERY AT TAL VIRTU'—A farmer who was clearing a deep well at Rabat, in the district at Tal Virtù, reported that he found a great amount of pottery at the bottom of the well. The district of Tal Virtù formed part of the vast cemetery which extended all over the plateau on which the modern Rabat is constructed. Tal Virtù is a name corrupted from *Ta Bir-tuta*, as the district was known in old times. The pottery proved to be Roman amphoræ and other household vessels which were in no way connected with funeral rites. The well, which was being cleaned, must have been known in early days, and the graceful amphoræ must have found their way to the bottom of the well through a series of accidents to which these fragile utensils are doomed, all the world over. No unusual shapes were observed among the fragments, and no pottery's mark was found on them which could give a clue to their age or their origin. The amphoræ did not look very old, and most probably were of local manufacture.

CISTERN AT SAN PAUL MILKGHI—The small plateau on which the chapel known as "San Paul Milkghi" is built, on the left of the road, known as "Ta Ghain Rihana", which leads from Musta to Saint Paul's Bay, is a historical place on which tradition places the Roman Villa of St. Publius where St. Paul was sheltered after his shipwreck. The word Milkghi means "welcomed" and consequently *St. Paul Milkghi* means "St. Paul welcomed." The vestiges of a Roman Villa are clearly visible on the plateau, in the centre of which the chapel had been erected by the faithful. It has always been believed that an extensive catacomb existed under the church, and on the several occasions on which I visited the place, the farmers of the neighbourhood stated that several of them had crawled into it in their boyhood. The late Dr. A. A. Caruana mentions this catacomb and Dr. Filippo Vassallo is known to have partially explored it.

During the stay of Dr. E. Becker, the German archaeologist, in Malta, who is much interested in Christian antiquities, I proposed to make an attempt to enter this catacomb of which so little was known. On the 6th February I met a farmer of the neighbourhood who pointed out to me the spot where the entrance to the catacomb was known to be and at once proceeded to open it. A shaft in the rock was found at about 1m. under the surface of the ground, 2ms. to the north of the church. This shaft was covered with stone slabs. On removing them we lowered a long ladder and went down for 2.50ms. At the bottom of the shaft was a circular space cut in the shape of a bell ending in a square mouth carefully sealed with large stones slabs. This circular space had a diameter of 4.30ms. A short gallery to the east opened in another bell-shaped cavity with a square mouth at the top.

Another long gallery opened to the north side and ended at the surface of a field where a hole was pointed out to us as a ventilating shaft of the catacomb. This gallery is over 13 ms. in length, but the mud at the bottom was so abundant that it was not possible to crawl any further. This simple inspection was enough to satisfy us that this hypogeum is not a catacomb at all, but a simple water cistern, constructed for the use of the Roman building. This cistern has two mouths, one to the north of the church and the other in front of it, and the long gallery was dug out to open into the field which was at the time the collecting ground of the cistern. The mud filled both cisterns and gallery and a minute survey was not possible under the circumstances. Should the mud be removed, it is probable that Roman pottery will be found at the bottom of the cisterns, and this may throw some light on the building and possibly furnish historical evidence in support of the cherished tradition that the place was visited by the Great Apostle.

OSSUARY IN THE ZABBAR DISTRICT—Human bones were discovered in March on the road leading from Tarxien to Zabbar, to the south-west of the Chapel known as "Il figura tal Carmnu", opposite the limekiln called "Il Calcara ta Beibet". A trench was being cut for laying a water main and the bones appeared just under the surface of the road. On my inspecting the place, I found that human bones were interred 21 cms. under the road surface for a depth of 45cms. and for an extent of fully 5 metres. The bones appeared to be massed and mixed with the red soil. It is possible that the bodies, laid down properly in the loose earth, were disturbed by the decomposition and by the pressure on the surface of the road helped by the subsidence of the soil through the action of water. What is worth noting is that no objects, such as personal ornaments or funereal vases, accompanied the bones. The bones did not seem to be very old, and no sign of graves could be found. It is probable that the burial of so many corpses was due to the result of an epidemic or an engagement in the vicinity.

The Turkish forces had a camp not far from this place in 1565, during the great siege, and it is possible that bodies were buried in a common grave after a fight. If the place were used as a burial place for Christians, during an epidemic, the survivors would not have failed to mark the place as sacred ground, as we find to be the case in many parts of these Islands. Whatever was the cause that necessitated the burial of so many bodies in a common grave, it is important to point out the spot to students of local history for future reference.

ROMAN BUILDING AT GOZO.

During the year, a very important discovery was made at Gozo, in the Ramla bay, to the east of the village of Xghara (Kaccia). It was reported to me that the farmers at Ramla were in the habit of picking up large amounts of potsherds from a mound close to the seashore, and that lately their activity in this direction had increased. I asked Mr. W. Millard, the Assistant Secretary to Government at Gozo, to see how much truth there was in this statement, and this gentleman, after due investigation, informed me that large quantities of pottery were being extracted from the sand together with bits of marble slabs.

Two men were sent to dig close to the mound, and Mr. Millard reported, in a few days, that a marble pavement appeared under less than a metre of sand. I visited the place on the 14th January, and directed that the mound should be cleared down to the level of the marble pavement, and the preliminary excavations were rewarded with success.

In a few days the floor of a room was laid bare. The pavement is made of white and coloured marble slabs with a dark band all round the room. About one metre of walls remain standing, which were once covered with stucco, coloured, to imitate marble with red, yellow and green veins. The pavement is in good preservation, with an uneven surface due to the impact of heavy stones which fell upon it when the roof of the room came down. To the east of this room, just beyond it, an octagonal bath was cleared, lined with Gozo marble slabs. From the fragments collected, it is clear that it was ornamented with small pillars and statuettes.

Other rooms were discovered behind the marble pavement to the number of eighteen. The excavation was conducted simply to ascertain how far the building extended. Stuccoed walls, mosaic pavements, tile pavements, stone benches, stone channels, furnaces and a great amount of potsherds, and fragments of glass, marble tablets and marble statuettes were discovered.

The building was erected in late Roman times, and the cause of its decay is undoubtedly due to the fact that its foundations were laid on clay, which in time moved on and brought down the whole fabric. Gradually, the sand of the sea, only 42 metres from it, helped by the wind, steadily but surely completely buried the remains.

At the time of the Order, fortifications were erected at the foot of the hill and these, being laid on the rock, must have necessitated the removal of a portion of the building. Later on, a guard room for Custom Officers was built close to the redoubt, but this has also been abandoned and left to decay.

From this point, a mound of red sand was to be seen sloping gradually to the sea, but no tradition reached us that the site was once occupied by a Roman building. Speculations as to the time in which this building was erected and as to the purpose for which it may have been used, should not be attempted before the place is properly excavated and studied. It is clear, however, that hot and cold baths were connected with the building.

The excavations were carried out under the direction of the district surveyor, Mr. Nicola Said, who was helped by Mr. Millard in every possible way.

ADDITIONS TO THE VALLETTA MUSEUM.

The potsherds and other objects found in the various neolithic stations are all lodged in the Valletta Museum. The collection has this year been enriched by the furniture of the several tombs already described and by other objects found in the course of excavations by the Curator. A few objects have been acquired for the Museum and others have been sent by Government officials and private persons.

The following objects deserve special mention :—

- 1 copper rule with tables used by the gunners of the Order in the 18th Century.
- 1 set of 14 brass weights of the time of Grand Master De Rohan.
- 1 marble capital and 5 fragments of marble ornaments.
- 1 brass wheel with numbered balls used in public lotteries.
- 1 brass "grano" of Grand Master Perellos, 1 two-tari piece of Grand Master La Vallette,
1 four-tari piece of Grand Master La Cassiere, 1 gold "zecchino" of Grand Master Garzes, 1 old silver coin of Sicily.
- 1 brass and 1 silver medal of Pius IX.
- 1 lot of lithographs and engravings with views of Malta.
- 1 silver pocket inkstand with sand bottle and pen holder.
- 1 copper plate by Zimelli (Maltese lady with faldetta).
- 1 silver seal of Grand Master Hompesch with the inscription: *Restituta Justitia Tessera.*
- 1 table spoon and 1 fork with coat-of-arms of a Knight of Malta.
- 1 decoration of the Order.
- 1 set commemorative medals—Queen Victoria's Jubilee.
- 2 water colours—scenes of the time of the Order.

DONATIONS.

The following is a list of donors :—

Prof. N. Tagliaferro, I.S.O.	One photo and several Punic clay objects.
Dr. T. Ashby, of the British School of Rome	Collection of fragments of Cretan pottery (loan.)
Mr. P. Vassallo, Notary ...	One Sicilian dollar and one half dollar.
Mr. I. Bianchi ...	One set pottery found at Carthage.
Mr. A. Vassallo, C.E. ...	Two coloured sketches by Grognet de Vassé.
Mr. Benedetto Attard, LL.D.	One glass unguentarium found at Rabat.
Mr. G. Barbaro ...	Three old clay vessels.
Mr. Enrico Calleja, P.A.A. ...	Three engravings by G. Farrugia.
Mr. Carmelo Formosa ...	One vol. Transactions of the Society of Biblical [Archaeology.
Prof. Pierre Paris, of Bordeaux ...	Old potsherds from Spain.
Rev. D. Gaetano Sammut ...	One set old prints, etc.
Mr. F. Calleja of Algiers ...	Two vols. F. Levormant-L'alphabet Phœnicien, one vol. La Langue Assyrienne, one vol. Documents de l'Assyrie et la Chaldée, and fifteen readings of Phœnician inscriptions.
The Registrar, Superior Courts ...	One silver mace of the Vice-Admiralty Court of Malta.
The Rev. Rector, St. Paul Grotto's College, Rabat	One coat-of-arms of Grand Master Perellos, one stone coat-of-arms of Bosio, one bit of marble frieze, the base of marble column.
The Curator of the Palace Armoury	One complete set of Japanese armour.
The Hon. the Supt. of Public Works	Marble coat-of-arms of the Grand Masters (most of them in fragmentary state) and several marble inscriptions.
The Asst. Secretary to Govt., Gozo...	One oil painting of the time of the Order.

The collection of Cretan potsherds sent by Dr. Ashby was given on loan by Dr. Evans of Crete.

The silver mace sent by the Registrar of the Superior Courts used to be borne before the judge of the Vice-Admiralty Court, which was abolished by the Imperial Statute 53 & 54 Victoria on the 25th July, 1890.

The inscriptions sent by the Hon. Superintendent of Public Works are given in extenso for the information of the students of the history of the Order.

I. Marble inscription 74 cms. by 74 cms; very probably removed from Gnien-Is-Sultan, the garden to the north of the Victoria Gate at the Marina.

The inscription run thus :—

EXPLICAVIT HANC AMENISSIMAM
FACIEM SUPERATA ASPERITATE LOCI
EMS. M.M. IO. PAUL, LASCARIS CASTELLAR
EX ARBORIBUS ARTIS INGENIO CONSITIS,
UT UNANIMES FRATRES DIVERSARENTUR,
ET UT LATRANTIS SIDERIS ÆSTUS AUT
NON SENTIRENT, VEL NON TIMERENT.
APERUITQUE SIMUL FONTES PUBLICÆ
UTILITATI, QUI INTER SAXA MUR
MURANTES, LAUDES PERSTREPUNT, ET
ENCOMIA.

LUCUS, FONDS, HORTUS, REPARAT, REFICIT, MANIFESTAT
ÆSTUS, RUS, FLORES, FRONDE, LIQUORE, SINU.

II. Fine marble inscription, in perfect condition, measuring 184 cms. by 84 cms.

The inscription was, probably, never put up as the letters are not polished.

E. M. M. F. D. RAYMUNDI PERRELLOS, Y ROCCAFULL
 EMULATUS ZELUM
 MAGNANIMUS PRINCEPS F. PHILIPPUS DE VENDOSME
 FRANCIAE PRIOR, DUM UBIQUE SECURITATI SATAGITUR
 AD HOSTEM EMINUS ARCENDUM
 MARITIMAS ORAS VALLIS AGGERIBUSQUE MUNIENDAS
 PRESENTIA, CONSILIO,
 ATQUE IMPENSI AERIS EXEMPLO SATEGIT,
 LAUDANTE CONCILIO, PLAUDENTIBUS OMNIBUS,
 NON PAUCIS INTER V. V. PROCERES UT NOMINA VALLORUM
 INDICANT IMITANTIBUS ANNO D. 1715.

III. Two fragments of a marble inscription of which the left top corner and another bit at the base are missing. It measured, when whole, 70 cms. by 49.

The inscription runs thus :

.....DE VILHENA
EPARATA
LOCO EXTRUCTO
PORTICO DECORATA
ITUM AUCTIS
 FONDS MED.....AREA PRIMUM
 A. M. M. JO: PAUL.....SCARIS ERECTUS
 HIC COM.....RORUMPIT
 AN. D. M.XXX

The Very Rev. Canon Mons. A. Mifsud, D.D. very kindly gave me the text of the inscription which he found printed in the Library.

IMPTE. M. M. D. ANT. MANOEL DE VILHENA
 ARCE UNDIQUE REPARATA
 SACELLO IN MELIORI LOCO EXTRUCTO
 PLATEA DILATATA ET PORTICO DECORATA

 FONDS MEDIA IN AREA PRIMUM
 A M. M. JO: PAULO DE LASCARIS ERECTUS
 HIC COMMODIUS PRORUMPIT
 AN. DNI. MDCCXXX

This inscription was originally placed on a fountain in Fort St. Elmo.

IV. Fragment of another marble inscription, well carved, on an ornamented marble slab. The slab was apparently 94cms. by 63 cm. The place from which the inscription was taken, is not known, and the meaning of the same is not clear in its present fragmentary condition.

This is what remains of the inscription, which may be completed by someone who has seen, or may see, the inscription somewhere else :—

V. EXOPTAVERANT
 CIVITATIS NOTABILIS
 UT COELUM
 QUAE RESIDIS CURSU
 SALUTRIUS REDDERETUR
 AQUAE DUCTUM
 ID PASSUS PROTRACTUM
 PATRES CONSCRIPTI
 PUBLICAE CONSULENTES
 ERSITATIS SUMTIBUS
 EXTRUI CURARUNT
 REP: SAL: CIJICCCIII

During the financial year, the number of visitors to the various places was as follows :—

Valletta Museum...	...	...	... Total 5,709
(whereof 1,454 on payment and 4,255 free).			
Rabat Museum (Roman Villa)	...	...	341
St. Paul's Catacombs (Rabat)...	...	...	305
Halsafieni hypogeum (Casal Paula)	...	...	250

Besides personal emoluments (£306. 18. 8) £248. 19. 5 was expended in connection with the exploration and preservation of antiquities, £70. 16. 8 in connection with the purchase of objects of antiquity and £59. 9. 1 on miscellaneous expenses.

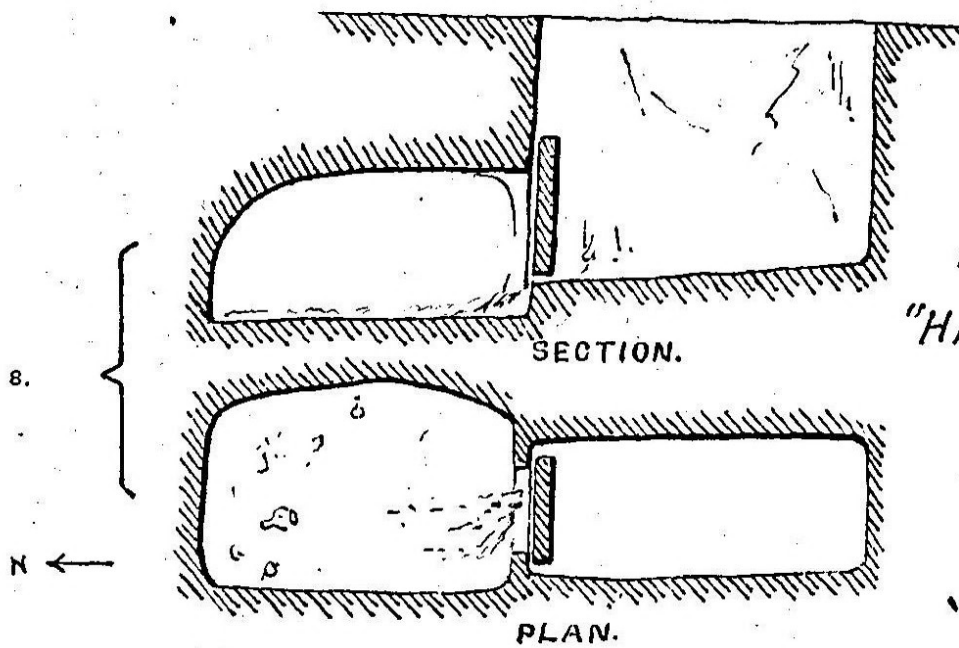
A fully illustrated report on the pottery of Hal-Safieni hypogeum by Prof. N. Tagliaferro, I.S.O., was published in the Liverpool Annals of Archaeology Vol. III (1910). The Liverpool School, very kindly, supplied the Museum with 100 reprints of this very interesting paper, which can be obtained at the Museum for 2/6 each.

An illustrated paper on the Bahria excavations and on the pottery obtained from this neolithic station, by T. Eric Peet, Esq., was published in Vol. V of the "Papers of the British School at Rome". Thanks to the kindness of the Director of the School, 100 reprints of this paper were obtained, which are now sold at the Museum at 1/6 per copy.

TEM. ZAMMIT,
Curator.

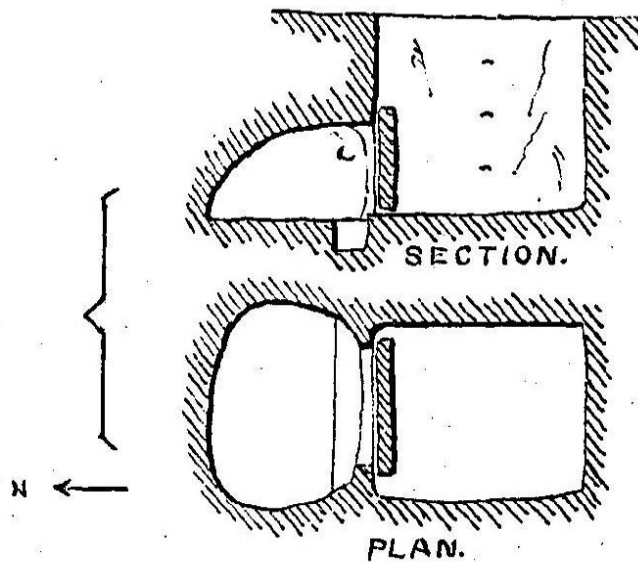


PAGE 8.



WELL TOMB
AT
"HAL TARXIEN."

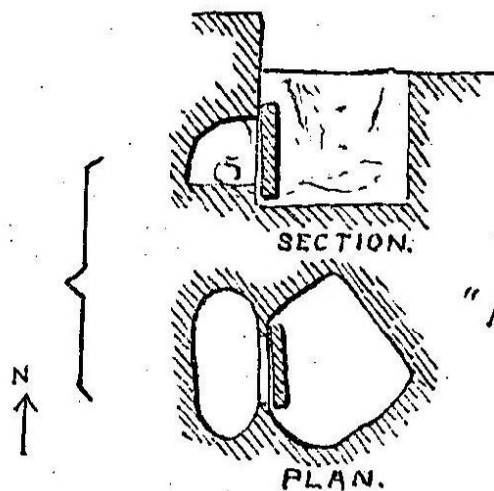
PAGE 5.



TOMB
AT
"BULEBEL IŻ-ŻĠHIR"
ŻEITUN DISTRICT.



PAGE 6.

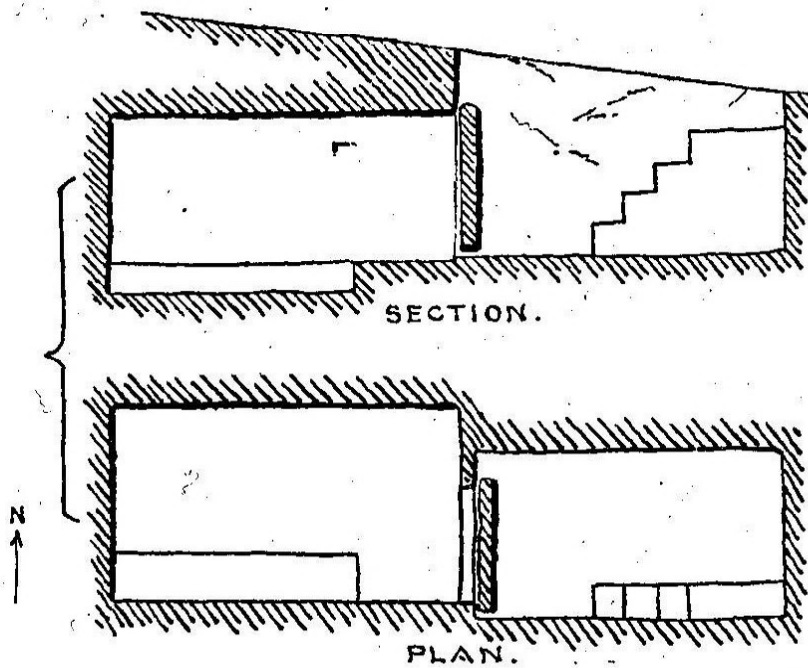


TOMB CAVE
AT "TAL GĦALIA"
IN
"IT-TAFLIJA TA SAN LAURENZ."

SCALE $\frac{1}{60}$.



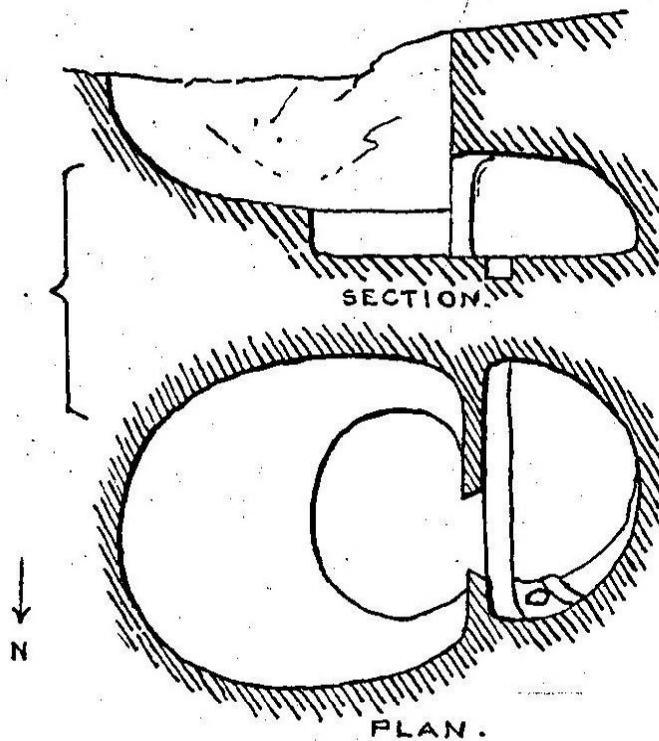
PAGE 6.



TOMB
IN "KLEIGHA" VALLEY
AT "LI SBALL"



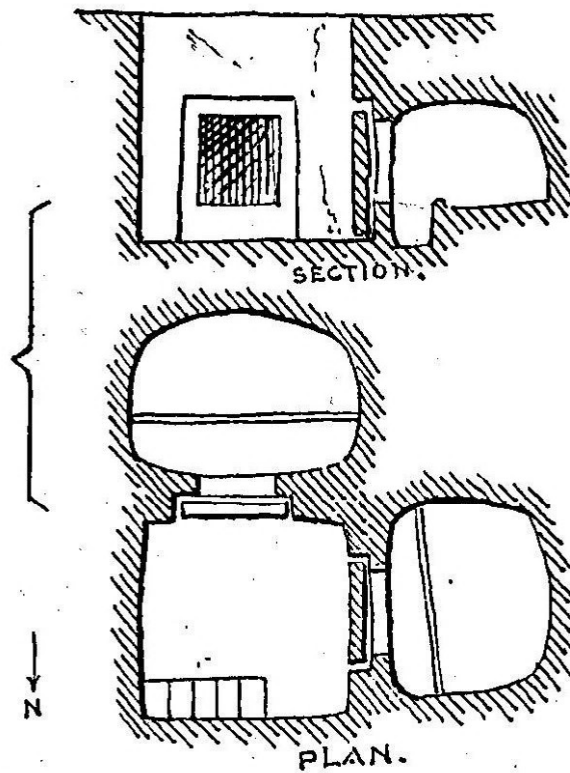
PAGE 7.



TOMB CAVE
AT "SAN NICLAU"
KRENDI DISTRICT.

SCALE $\frac{1}{60}$.

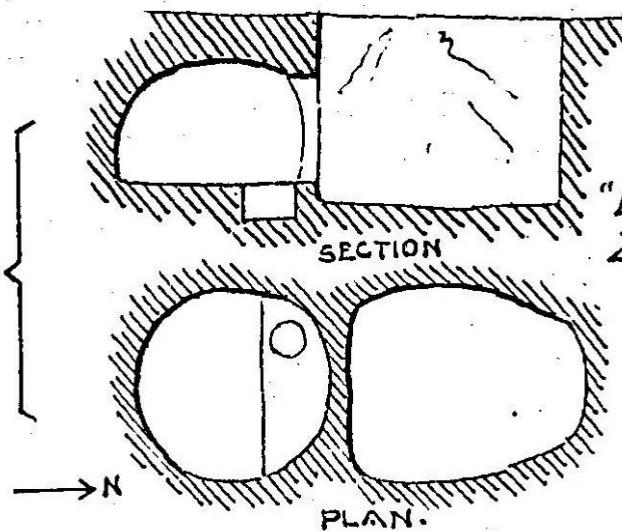
PAGE 7.



WELL TOMB
IN THE FIELD
"IL BUR TAL GHAIN"
NEAR "SAN NICLAU."
KRENDI DISTRICT.



DISCOVERED
JUNE 9TH. 1911.



TOMB
AT
"BULEBEL IL CBIR"
ZEITUN DISTRICT.

SCALE $\frac{1}{60}$.