

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
CURATOR OF THE VALLETTA MUSEUM
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR
1913-14.

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served the purpose of covers, were also obtained. Some large blocks of stones were found in one of the fields close to a round well. In one of the large blocks deep cup-like holes about 10 cms. in diameter are cut at the sides of a deep basin. An important observation made lately at Bahria is that the absence of remains of walls and other constructions can be easily explained by the existence of numerous caves under the cliff overlooking the sea. These caves are deep and bear signs of having been inhabited, some of them, in fact, are inhabited up to this day.

Cave at Gozo.

An important cave, with conclusive evidence that it was used for habitation in pre-historic times, was discovered at Gozo at the northern limit of the Village "Kaccia", at the bottom of the road called "Tal Cacciaturo", in the lands known as "Tal Masri" or "Il Pergla Iz-zghira", in the fields "Tal Makghad".

The rock surface was being broken for planting vines when it gave way. A few metres farther from the point a round hole, about one metre in diameter, was found covered with a large stone. On removing the stone the bottom of the cave could be seen about 3 metres from the surface. Going down at this point, a conical space was found encumbered with boulders and red earth which for centuries found its way with the surface water. Animal bones and some sherds, found under the surface, showed at once the nature of the cave. A couple of weeks digging under the direction of Prof. N. Tagliaferro, I.S.O., showed that the cave extended in a north-eastern direction and about 13 metres of gallery were cleared of stones and earth.

The quality of the pottery found resembles that of Santa Verna and of the other Gozo neolithic ruins. Some pieces are of the type collected at Halsaffieni, Hagiar Kim and Cordin.

Of implements, a flint knife was found and a sharp awl made of the bone of a lamb.

Bones.

The numerous bones collected and determined, so far, by Prof. Tagliaferro, are those of domestic animals such as the pig, sheep, ox, rabbit, tortoise, dog and birds.

Human bones are not wanting and a practically complete skull was obtained under 2 m. of red soil not far from a stone amulet.

Shells.

The shells usually met with in our neolithic caves and tombs are here abundantly mixed with the debris. They are mostly the *helix vermicularis*, the *ruminia decollata* and the *tapes decussata*.

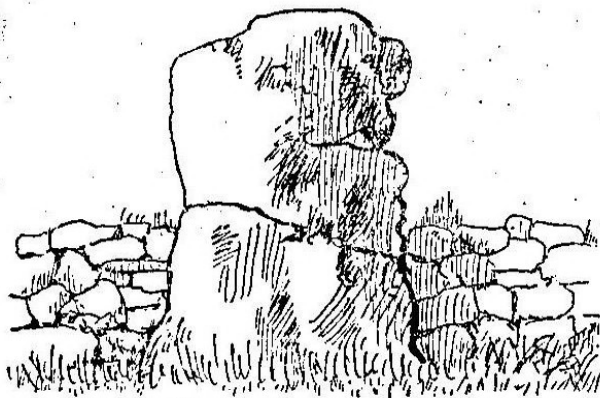
Potsherds, implements, shells and bones are mixed together without any apparent order and, so far, a systematic excavation to determine the growth of the soil deposit in this cave, has not proved satisfactory.

Menhir at Hal Far.

Behind the chapel known as "ta St. Anglu ta Hal Far" a menhir stands in a field which appears to be very shallow. The fine stone pillar is a truncated pyramid minus the apex which seems to be broken off. It consists of a hard calcareous stone quarried, probably, in the vicinity, with rough surfaces especially at the southern aspect. It is 1.67 m. wide at its base has an average thickness of 0.61 m. and is 2.89 m. high. Considering that the soil is less than 0.60 m. deep at this point the stone stands



Menhir at Hal Far. 1914. Scale 1:50



Menhir at Ghammar
90.

Scale 1:50

Menhir at ta Ghammar.

A second menhir can be seen not very far from the first one described, and to the north of it, beyond the road that from Zurrico leads to Birzebbugia. The monolith is raised on the highest point of the Ta Ghammar district. At present it is part of the boundary wall of a field but it rises so well above it that it is clearly visible from a good distance.

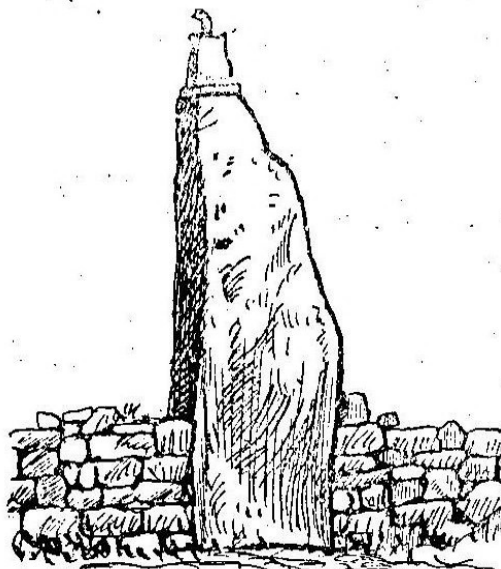
It is a slab of roughly hewn stone 2.13 m. from the surface of the soil 1.32 m. in breadth, and about 0.45 thick. The

direction of the long axis of the base of the menhir is S.E. No other megalithic ruins appear near the standing stone but from the adjacent field fragments of prehistoric sherds were collected.

Menhir at Hal Kircop.

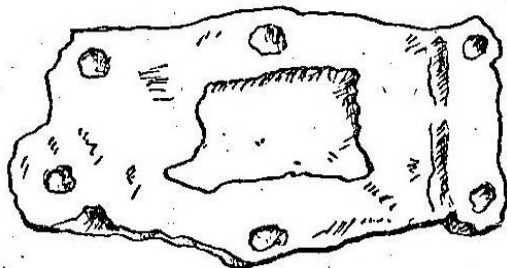
A third menhir stands close to the village on the right of the road leading from Chircop to Zurrico. It consists of a roughly cut soft building stone of such a quality as may be found in the neighbourhood. It rests on solid rock on a level with the road and for a height of 0.915 m. it forms part of the boundary wall of an adjoining field. Originally, its shape must have been that of a parallelepiped measuring 0.915 m. wide, 3.20 m. high, and 0.455 m. thick. As it now exists it has one of the sides clipped off so as to make it tapering at the upper end and to reduce its upper surface to 9 centimeters square. On this surface there is a small pedestal 0.455 m. high on which a stone cross, now broken, was made to stand.

This cross served at a time to denote the limit of the parish and the monolith is known up to this day as Is-salib "the cross". *Is-salib ta-Schla Wadda.*

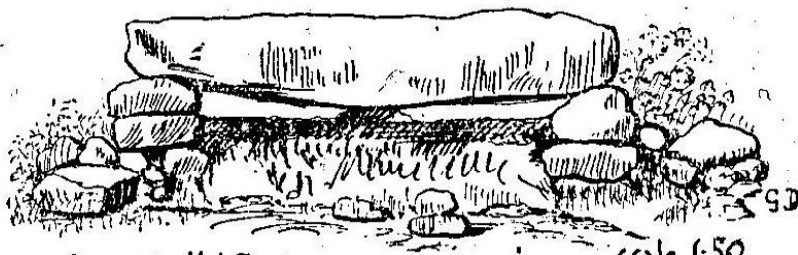


Menhir at Chircop

Scale 1:50



upper surface



Dolmen at Hal Far

scale 1:50

Dolmen at Hal Far. *Wied Lmber*

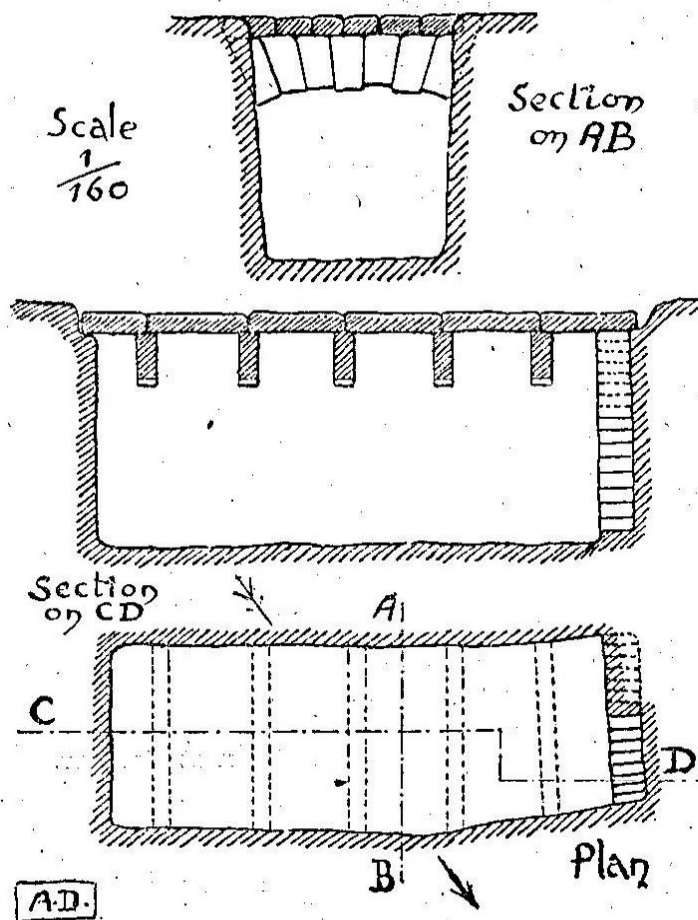
In March 1914 my attention was drawn by Prof. N. Tagliaferro, to a dolmen at Hal Far, to the south of the standing stone. The rocky ground on which the monument is constructed is strewn with the remains of megalithic structures. This dolmen, known in the neighbourhood as *Il gebba msak-kfa*, consists of a monolithic slab of hard calcareous stone of a quadrangular shape 3.66 m. in length, about 1.83 m. in width and

0.915 m. in thickness. Its southern end protrudes slightly and is rounded off. The surface is flat and, though not properly hewn and finished, it was elaborately worked for some definite

purpose. In the middle of the slab a shallow quadrangular basin, about 5 cms. deep, has been dug out. Beyond this a deep groove runs along the southern side of the stone for the whole length of the surface. All round the shallow basin, that is on both sides of the slab, cup like depressions are cut out, two at each head and two at the middle portion of the slab, at fairly equal distances. The slab is kept at a height of 0.76 m. from the ground by two layers of boulders at each of the extremities. At its eastern aspect the space under the slab is of 0.76 cms. but at the back the height of the space between the slab and the rock is reduced to 0.305 m. only, the rest being a step in the rock. It seems that the monolith was cut on the spot and raised on the side stones.

Water cistern at (tal Hlas Road) Wied Is-seuda,
in the field called "Ta l'isfar" to the right of the wide path which from the valley
leads to the Chapel of "Tal Hlas".

OLD CISTERN AT "TAL HLAS"



My attention was called to this cistern by Sir John E. Clauson. It is a quadrangular cistern of an archaic type of which several are known in the island. It measures 9.15 m. long, 3.35 m. wide and 4.56 m. deep and is covered by large slabs resting on five flat arches. At the north west side it had steps cut in the rock to the bottom and was originally rendered with hard mortar made with lime and pounded pottery (*diffun*). Two openings can be traced to the surface through which water used to be drawn.

The cistern was full of soil and stones, having been in disuse for centuries. Great quantities of animal bones were found and numerous potsherds of a Roman type, presumably portions of amphorae etc. used for drawing out water.

The cisterns of this type are very interesting not only because

of their antiquity, but also and chiefly for their being very accurately constructed with large blocks of stones.

The greatest cistern of this type is that existing at the Xghara ta Cacciatura or Xgharat Miduia, to the west of Wied Dalam (Birzebugia) known, so far, as the Phoenician Reservoir.

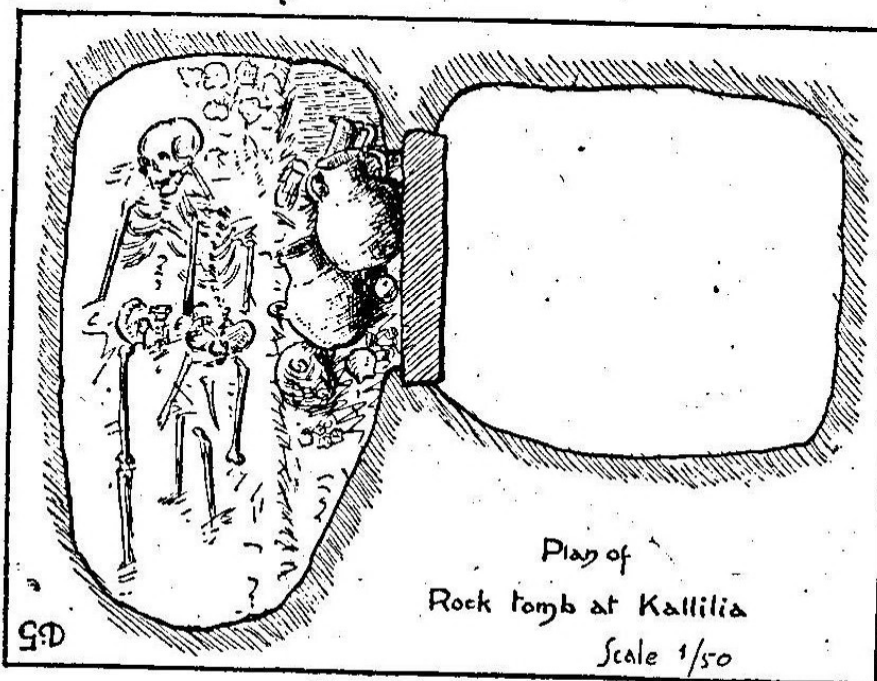
Two similar cisterns can be seen in a ruined Roman farmhouse at Tad-daul between Luka and Mkabba (see Report by Dr. A. A. Caruana, 21st April 1888) and a smaller one was discovered under the electric power station at the Marsa.

A large cistern of this type, still filled up with rubbish, exists in the district known as "Il Brolli" or "Ta Sinserna". The covering slabs which are seen at the surface are 1.83 m. by 0.61 m. by 0.66 m.

The covering slabs of another huge tank is to be seen on the road to Safi.

Punic well-tomb at Kallilia.

A very interesting tomb was found, unrifled, on the Kallilia plateau to the north west of Wied-il-Kligha. The Kallilia plateau, as stated in last year's report, is an important



site which contains pre-historic remains and pit-tombs of a Punic type. The shaft of the old cylindrical type, 1.62 m. deep, was full of stones forming a hard mass very difficult to remove. The slab which closed the burial chamber was still *in situ* and when the shaft was cleared, it remained standing, and set in a rebate cut all round the mouth of the chamber.

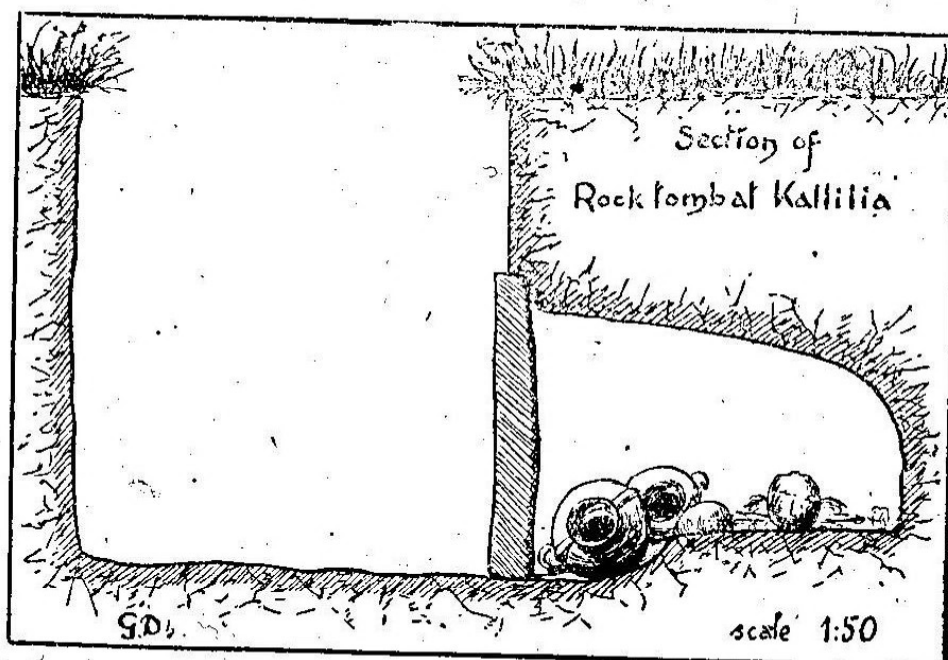
The slab of white calcareous stone (*franca*)

smooth on the outer surface, was 1.140 m. long and 1.015 m. wide. Its thickness varied from 75 mm. at the upper end to 20 cms. at the lower end and middle portion, the inner surface being irregular.

When the slab was removed the contents of the tomb appeared undisturbed, save for some red earth which, in the course of time, had filtered in along with the rain water. This red soil was massed behind the slab and sloped gently inwards on the floor of the grave.

Without removing the soil one could easily observe the shape of the tomb and its contents. At the back, the bones of at least two skeletons could be distinguished, laid in a distended position on the floor, the heads at the north western end of the cave raised on a slope cut on purpose. This slope was so marked that one of the heads, when freed from its attachments, rolled down behind the slab where it was found when the tomb was opened.

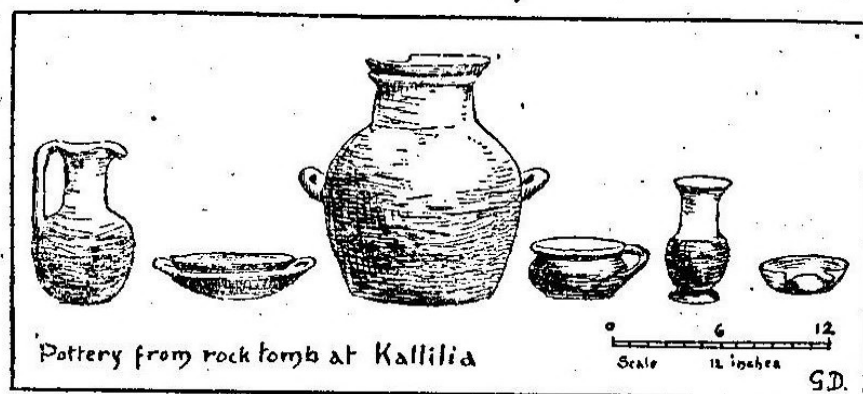
The two skeletons were laid to rest at different periods, for one set of bones was rotten whilst the bones of the other body were in good state of preservation; the skeleton of a woman was laid exactly on the other bones which were not even pushed aside, as it was the custom to do in similar cases. No trace of any



coffin was observed and from the position of the long bones, it was easy to desume that the limbs were not tightly wrapped in a shroud. No jewels, personal ornaments or costly

furniture were interred with the bodies, but corresponding to the left wrist of the young woman, a small plain copper bangle was found, the only show of ostentation in this humble resting place of a peasant family.

On clearing the tomb for further observations it was found that the floor of the chamber was roughly divided into two portions, the inner and higher one cut like a platform on which the bodies were laid and the other portion, about 20 cms. lower, was intended for the furniture. Under the small mound of earth, and partly emerging out of it, the furniture deposited with the two bodies was distinctly visible, when the tomb was opened. The damp earth in which they were embedded caused some of the clay vessels, which were badly baked, to crumble but, seen *in situ*, one could easily make out their shape.



Thirteen pieces of vessels of pottery were obtained viz: one deep bilychnes lamp, two mugs with handle and everted rim, two wide-mouthed jars, two dishes with handles and small circular base, two course basins, two globular jars and two jugs with trefoil lips.

Barring the lamp, we have here a duplicate set of vessels which were deposited with two bodies, thus showing that at this period, at least, there was a fixed ritual for the burial of the dead with a determined number of funeral vessels of a special type.

It is regrettable that from the material obtained the exact date of the tomb cannot be determined. The round shaft, the elliptical chamber, the shape of the lamp and of the vessels would induce one to date the tomb about a century B.C. At the same time one must remember that the type of some of the tombs and that of their furniture can be traced, with some modifications, from the seventh century B.C. to the third century A.D. It would seem as though the various objects necessary for a funeral could be chosen from amongst a ready-made stock in an undertaker's workshop and that the type of the vessels was adhered to, with slight modifications, for ages. This fact was observed in many countries, especially in Egypt.

DONATIONS.

The following donations were made during the year:

Inspector General Robert Bentham, R.N.—Three stone axes from the New Hebrides and the Friendly Islands.

G. Busuttil Esq.—Three copper plates and an old print.

Rev. J. A. Sim—One Roman clay lamp found at Rabat.

Salv. Vella Esq.—A passport of 1806 and a document of 1817.

H. Burt Esq.—Mounted photographs of megalithic ruins at Orkney.

The Committee of the 24th Eucharistic Congress—Three copies of the Vade-mecum, one tessera and badge, one gold medal, one silver medal, two aluminium medals and the die of the gold medal.

P. Hyzler Esq.—One wooden measure, time of G. Master Zondadari.

Giovanni Baldacchino Esq.—Eleven old documents.

Judge Dr. A. Parnis—One old document.

Fr. Calleja Esq. of Algiers—Three silver Phœnician Coins.

John Bugeja Esq.—One Pastoral Letter of Bishop Caruana.

Gius. Calleja Esq.—One dictionary of Art and Archæology.

The Malta Society of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce—Thirty mounted photos of pictures by Mattia Preti.

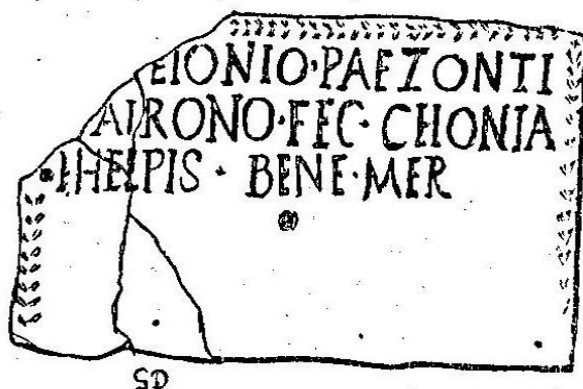
- Rev. Can. Isidoro dei Conti Formosa D.D.—One marble slab with old latin inscription.
Rev. Father Giacinto Grech O.P.—One Diploma of Doctor of Divinity, 1842.
Dr. E. Gobert, Korbus, Tunis—Three sling stones from New Caledonia.
Mr. Carmelo Brincat—A Farthing and a third of a farthing of George V.
The Hon. The Supt. of Public Works—Fragment of a marble statute found near Ta Braxia.

The following is a list of the most important objects acquired for the Museum during the year:

- 1 silver medal of De Rohan.
- 9 silver 4d. pieces and a florin of Queen Victoria.
- 6 coins of George V.
- The contents of pit-tombs found at Zeitun, Tarxien, Krendi and Kallilia.
- 25 coats-of-arms of the time of the Order.
- 1 gold and enamel Cross of the Order.
- 1 old map of Malta.
- 1 wooden measure (mezza canna) of the Order.
- 3 old prints, views of Malta.
- 3 Vols. Lapid Sepolcrali di San Giovanni.

The marble tablet presented by the Rev. Can. Isidoro de' Conti Formosa, measures 305 mms. by 195 mms. It consists of three lines of poorly formed letters enclosed in a thin palmette border. The left upper angle of the tablet is wanting and a few letters are missing.

The inscription which appears to be written between the 2nd and 3rd centuries, is the following:—



Dr. Thomas Ashby's reading of it is:—*Ceionia Helpis fecit Ceionio Paezonti patrono benemerenti*. He thinks that the persons mentioned were of Greek nationality who had been freed by a noble Roman of the Ceionia family.

22nd July, 1914.

THEM. ZAMMIT,
Curator.