



FURTHER EXCAVATIONS AT HAL TARXIEN.

During the financial year 1916-17, the Tarxien remains were further cleared; the work being taken in hand in the last week of April 1916 and stopped on the 12th September of the same year.

The approach to the main entrance was uncovered and the limits of the ruins, to the south and south-west, clearly defined. A fine slab with a convex edge was found laid at the entrance forming a sort of sill to the opening of the passage. On each side of this doorstep large stone blocks lined the outer wall which probably formed a wide semi-circle in front of a forecourt as in the case of Hagiar Kim, Mnajdra, Cordin, etc. To the west, the blocks are wanting but to the east two of them are still *in situ*. The first one, close to the doorway, is 4.5 metres long, 1.5 metre wide and 81 cms. high, the second one is smaller, and the third is fragmentary. These blocks, which may have afforded sitting accommodation to the worshippers, served also the purpose of footstones to support a row of vertical slabs which formed the outer wall of the building. Unluckily, this wall has disappeared but the stump of one of the large slabs 1.5 metre wide, 63.5 cms. thick, is still visible behind the large footstone to the right of the entrance; not much of a wall, it is true, but enough to show the importance and the size of it. Further information will probably be gathered when the soil in front of the entrance is completely removed.

The mound of soil to the left of the main entrance was cleared to floor level and a wide apse was discovered of which the retaining wall was found completely destroyed. Large fragments of the standing slabs and blocks were however found *in situ* and this enabled us to determine the boundary line and to construct a rubble wall upon it. This space, of which the floor consists of beaten earth and stones (known locally as torba), has an entrance on the main passage.

To the left of the main passage a fine smooth slab 3.70m. long, 1.21 m. wide and 18 cms. high, is laid so as to form a step. Four vertical slabs standing on this step formed two lateral niches about 78 cms. wide, one on each side, and left in the middle part an entrance to the room (F) of which the threshold, 2.23 m. long and 83.8 cms. wide, is still *in situ*. The orthostatic slabs on the left side were knocked down, but, from the fragments *in situ* and from the marks on the other stones, there is no difficulty in determining where they stood. The threshold has, on the left, the customary pair of communicating rope holes. In the niche, formed by the pair of standing slabs to the right of the entrance, animal bones and especially goat horn-cores were found. Beyond the entrance, large slabs form the wall. To the north-east a high step, 1.20m. long, is laid at the end of the apse and on it a trilithon doorway was once raised in front of a small carefully paved room. Of this doorway only the right jamb can be seen, richly ornamented with deep round pittings of the best Mnajdra type. This small room or chapel (F on plan) has in front an elaborate altar formed by a finely pitted quadrangular slab placed horizontally and supported by two slabs on end and by a central cylindrical pillar everted at both ends. The sides are flanked by two long slabs on end carefully pitted not by holes drilled by means of a borer but by tiny squares picked with a straight flint chisel. On the left, a circular hole is cut through the thickness of the slab filled up by a well fitting cylindrical plug. When this niche was cleaned all the space under the table was full of animal bones and horns of bulls, sheep and goats. The sherds collected at this site were of the best neolithic pottery, of which the most remarkable were the fragments of a thick clay vessel decorated with large bosses that filled the space between a series of well defined pointed shields.

The north-east limit of this pretty chapel is now badly defined but it is probable that it consisted of a huge block of which only a stump remains.

The northern end of the main entrance was completely cleared during the year. Just in front of this and at right angles to it is a finely ornamented block about 60 cms. high, 2.4 m. long and 83 cms. thick. As the stone did not completely fill up the front of the entrance a smaller block, 71 cms. long, was added to the right on which the running design in front was continued. As already mentioned in last year's report, (see *Archaeologia* vol. 67 plate 22, fig. 2) this block was completely buried in a fine sandy soil carried down by natural agencies and deposited in the course of years. This layer of soil extended to about 30 cms. above the surface of the stone and upon it, was the Bronze Age layer with its cinerary urns deposited at a time when all traces of the ornamented block and of the building at that level, had

completely disappeared. This fine block is ornamented with a design consisting of two rows of double S-wise spirals, cut in relief, with bifurcated ends. It forms the front of a semicircular room or chapel built at the end of the passage in front of the main entrance and on which the eyes rested as soon as the building was entered. The upper surface of the stone block is bare but it is evident, from marks left on it, that a structure, consisting probably of a central trilithon and side niches formed a fitting façade to the elaborate chapel. At the back of the room an inner façade is constructed over a smooth block 23 cms. high, laid between two long slabs ornamented towards their middle part with a parabolic line. On the horizontal block a doorway is built consisting of two sets of jambs and lintels carefully arranged. Beyond this is a recess, limited by a curved rubble wall, in which sacrificial remains of bones and horn-cores were found packed near the bottom. From this central façade, both to the right and to the left, a series of what appear to be low stone seats is constructed with well smoothed and probably red painted surfaces with a frame round the edges. The floor is smooth and made of large rectangular blocks laying carefully on smaller stones. As two of the paving blocks were found smashed by the fall of a large stone, it was possible to examine them down to the level of the floor of the main entrance. The space between the stone blocks at the bottom was filled with small chipped stones and red soil mixed with neolithic sherds among which the most remarkable was a fine red bowl with conical cover.

The walls of this chapel are formed of small stones laid horizontally and corbelled. This room was undoubtedly constructed in a later period of the stone age when the old sanctuary was enlarged by the addition of rooms to the south of the original entrance. An excellent proof of this is afforded by the eastern wall which encroaches on the space of a room of the old temple. This room is now reduced to one half its original size by the wall that passes through its middle part.

The main passage, blocked in front by the ornamented block of the chapel, leads to the right into a square space in front of what probably, in early days, was the main entrance of the old sanctuary. This quadrangular space came into existence when the niche Q was constructed and its back wall formed the southern limit of the space. The enclosure marked with the letter P, on the plan published last year, has now disappeared as the long slab across the space was found to have been laying there by accident having been pushed down, probably in the Bronze Age period, from a vertical position it occupied on the western wall.

This space is at a somewhat higher level than the main passage the doorstep overlooking the passage being 22.5 cms. high. The space O has a floor of beaten earth (torba) in which a long slab, 1.67 m. high, of a quadrangular section, with a slight but distinct curvature, is deeply fixed. This pillar, which leans slightly to the north-east is carefully trimmed and pitted on two of its sides. The other sides are rough as if, originally, meant to stand against another stone. A similar slab is fixed on the eastern wall in the same space and one can well surmise that the standing stone was erected on the western wall to match the one which is in its original position. The fact that so much trouble was taken to fix the pillar in the position it now occupies must not be lost sight of, so much so that the pillar appears to be intended to mark the middle line of the long passage dividing the old building into two symmetrical halves.

This space is therefore limited to the north by the doorway leading to the old sanctuary and to the south by a small apse at the back of the niche Q. To the west there is the entrance over a carefully worked block flanked by two smaller stones and further south a large vertical stone slab with a window like opening, similar to the characteristic entrances of several rooms at Hagiär Kim and Muaidra. Of this slab the upper portion was found wedged in the window space. In the sill of this entrance two deep rope-holes are cut connected by a deep U-shaped channel.

The eastern wall is made of another slab set on end cut out to form the frame of a doorway. The lintel of the doorway is broken but still *in situ*. In front and at the back, on both jambs, double communicating holes are drilled, two sets being cut on the inner surface. This entrance leads to a narrow oblong space with concave walls which show distinctly that the space was covered over. At the back, opposite the entrance, a slab placed on the edge appears to have been used as a small altar table. This closet was a depository of bones, the remains of sacrificial animals. Fragments of bones and early neolithic pottery filled up the space for over thirty centimetres, the upper portion being filled up with earth mixed with ashes and other remnants of the Bronze Age period. At the southern end on this space three recesses were carefully built to contain more bones. In a line with the floor a cavity is cut in the thickness of the wall at the entrance. This cavity is roofed over by a stone slab at a height of about 53 cms. Above this slab another recess, 53 cms. high, is constructed and in the space between the eastern and western wall a thick slab, supported on flat pillars at each end, forms the floor of another closet. A great number of horn-cores were found closely packed in these recesses together with fragments of stone implements such as mortars,

cones, etc., and three triangular stone slabs about 30 cms. long and 15 cms. high with rounded edges. One of these shows a deep depression on each side as if intended to be grasped at that level. These stones were probably crushers or rubbers of sort.

This room appears also to be a later addition to the old temple for the eastern wall blocks up part of the room H just as the chapel E was built at the expense of the room N.

The space O was therefore turned into a kind of ante-room where sitting accommodation was provided along the walls in the shape of smooth stone benches with slightly convex faces and raised edges.

The space O, to the north, leads to the entrance of the older temple which in all respects resembles the well known sanctuaries of Gigantia, Hagiar Kim, Mnaidra and Cordin. Considered from this point the northern and the southern parts of the building appear to be of different type constructed under different stages of art. The northern portion is massive, rude, severe, simpler in its elements, more compact and more imposing. The ornaments are fewer and more sober but, conducted with a firmer hand, are more effective. The slabs and blocks are heavier and placed with greater freedom and accuracy. The apses are wider and better designed.

In the later portion, to the south, there is no parsimony either in space or in ornament; the apses are however seldom accurately designed and the blocks never finished with care. The ornaments are more elaborate, more flourishing and more varied but they lack the firm line of the old type. A peculiar feature of the old spirals cut on stone is that they always have a flat surface, whilst those of the later date have a convex surface. The effect of the former is in many places further enhanced by a back ground of pitmarks as in the case of the two partition walls in the inner rooms.

The entrance to the first set of apses is very imposing and consists of broad vertical slabs standing on a large flagstone which serves also the purpose of a threshold. The vertical slabs are of the same height and appear to have been roofed over with flagstones of large size. Several long slabs which can well lie across the passage, some in fragments but a few quite whole, were found in the vicinity. The passage is 7 m. long and, at its inner end on each side, a monolith stands on a large footstone raised to the desired height by a layer of smaller stones.

Beyond this passage and at right angle to the same is a long oval area (CD), 14 metres. long, carefully paved with large and well fitted flagstones.

In the middle space opposite the entrance, a round stone basin about 28 cms. high and 1.10 m. in diameter, is built. It has a thickness of 115 mm. at the rim which is broken and burnt all round. It contained a hard clayey whitish material and some grey ash at the surface. This grey mass is made of burnt limestone, the product of the calcination of stone. That a fire was for a long time kept burning can be inferred from the burnt condition of the basin itself and of the pavement to the east and west of it. Logs of wood were probably burnt which were not always strictly confined to the central hearth. In the basin we found a few sherds of neolithic pottery, fragments of animal bones, tiny bits of charcoal and a flint flake.

The northern wall of the two apses C and D which curves gracefully to the north-west and to the south-east is made of large slabs on end with courses of ashlar masonry on top of them. To the north-west the apse D had an entrance which was designedly blocked up by a large slab let down from above between the jambs of the doorway made of two enormous slabs. What in the early part of the excavations was considered as part of a roofing slab is clearly the lintel of this gateway. As it was to be expected, a pair of converging holes are cut in the pavement to the south of the entrance and similar V-shaped holes are seen on each jamb of the doorway at about 1.2 m. from the floor. The right jamb shows traces of another pair of holes about 30 cms. from the floor.

The south-eastern apse C has a gateway at its furthest end but of this only the left jamb and three steps remain *in situ*. Two small V-shaped holes are cut on the left of the first step which is carefully embedded in mortar and smoothed down to make a continuous line with the flagstone of the apse. To the right, the wall of the apse disappeared but enough was left of its base to show where it stood. Both apses are perfectly symmetrical and, judging from the inward inclination of the slabs and the distinct corbelling of the ashlar masonry, it is probable that they were domed over and covered.

To the right and left of the main entrance from the south, two symmetrical doorways are constructed with huge slabs. The one to the west has a long horizontal slab in front of it whilst another slab with a pair of V-shaped holes in the middle, fills the whole passage. This entrance leads to a small room (N) across which the wall of the chapel (H) was constructed. The inner doorway consisted originally of a large slab on end in which a window-like opening was hewn as in several entrances at Hagiar Kim and Mnaidra. At present the portion forming the lintel of this doorway is wanting but what remains of it is enough to show its original

form. The small room, barely 3 metres wide, is completely out of proportion with the imposing entrance. Its floor is made of beaten earth. A double floored niche, constructed with vertical and horizontal slabs, is raised on the eastern side of this room and another niche is built in the thickness of the western wall. Both niches were intended to hoard bones and horn-cores of which a great quantity was found. The walls of this room, made mainly of large standing blocks, are disintegrated and reddened by fierce fires burnt against them, probably in the Bronze Age. The Malta limestone reddens, cracks and burns to lime when heated, rain is then bound to wash down the detached crumbling surface.

The other room to the east (M) opens on the space C and has an imposing entrance level with the main floor. This room (M) is also reduced in size by the wall of the closet W obviously constructed at a later date. The back wall to the south is formed of two large blocks of stone. In the stone block on the right a square passage is cut 55 cms. high and 61 cms. deep, leading to a small space which was a depository of animal bones. This space was completely covered but only half the dome is now to be seen. A similar recess, now badly damaged, existed in the eastern angle of the room with a square passage cut in a large block. The room has a torba floor and has the walls as badly burned as the room on the other side. The Bronze Age layer containing potsherds, ashed human bones and other material connected with the cremation of bodies, was found down to about 30cms. from the floor and not further.

The main features of this room are the figures of two bulls and a sow cut in relief on the two blocks of stone forming the southern wall. On the left a bull in profile facing to the right and a sow easily distinguishable by thirteen pairs of udders, are cut, and on the right another bull facing to the left. The figures are slightly damaged the left ones by the action of fire and the right one by the fracture of the block at the level of the back of the animal. To the right of the entrance of this room two large bull horn-cores were discovered carefully laid close to each other under the Bronze Age level. The horns are 70 cms. long and have a circumference of 30 cms. at their base. They do not form a pair for they are both of the left side. The long burial in a damp soil rendered them very brittle but eventually they were carried safely to the Museum.

The oval space (CD) is connected to a similar but smaller space (AB) by means of a passage in a line with the main southern entrance to CD. In front of the passage a slightly convex block of stone 4.7 metres long and 30.5 cms. high, is flanked by two large slabs on end with a quadrangular footstone in front of each. On the magnificent step, which is highly finished and even polished in the middle part, four stone slabs fixed at right angles to each other form a doorway 1.5 metre wide at the entrance. On the western end of this step the fragments of a large stone vessel were found. The carefully wrought vessel reconstructed and repaired was set up in the apse D. Curiously enough, the entrance to the northern apses is completely blocked up by a slab 63 cms. high evidently intended to keep out the *profanum vulgus* from the holy precincts destined for the priests or those initiated in the mysterious rites of the temple. When the excavation of this site was complete it was discovered that behind the apse (C) a flight of steps led to a level above the walls of the apses and to a special passage made of beaten earth and lime that seems to lead into the innermost part of the temple. This was, probably, the private entrance to the holy part of the Sanctuary reserved for the priests. The slab that obstructs the entrance is decorated with two spirals similar to the volutes of a Corinthian capital. The spirals with flat surfaces start from above, close to the middle line, and at their first turning they branch off towards the external angle.

Beyond the ornamented slab is a passage 2.13 m. long, 1.21 m. wide, between two pairs of slabs on end 2.03 m. high. The two inner slabs, opposite each other have two vertically connected holes about 38 cms. deep, at 96 cms. from the floor. The two pairs of holes have an outside diameter of about 10 cms. and are at a distance of 23 cms. from each other.

Behind the slabs of the passage two uprights are fixed and behind these two other slabs on end which lengthen the passage by 99 cms. and widen it to about 2.59 cms. Of the two uprights the one to the west shows a pair of conical holes about 10 cms. in diameter and 19 cms. apart, going right through the slab at about 22 cms. from the ground. The upright on the opposite side has two holes symmetrical with the pair opposite and another single shallow one 76 cms. deep, at a height of 1 m. from the floor. At the height of 1.67 m., two holes are found similar in all to the lower pair. Two well squared cubical blocks are fixed at the end of the passage which is thereby reduced to a width of 1.35 cms.

The last uprights mark the starting point of two lateral apses (A and B) each made of nine slabs on end 1.88 m. high. Each of these apses is limited at the back by slabs and in front by the uprights flanking the doorways that jut out to the south and to the north. Adjoining the entrances to the south two vertical slabs, 1.57 m. high, are set each before a low block with raised margins towards the passage. The slabs are ornamented with four spirals originating from the angles with a disc in the centre and a cone inserted between each pair of spirals. The raised ornament has a flat polished surface and a back-ground roughened

by means of round pit-holes which give a most pleasing effect. The decoration is similar on both slabs but, either intentionally or by mere accident, the slabs stand up in different positions so that the spirals appear to be different. These slabs discovered *in situ* were broken into minute fragments, probably by the action of a fierce fire which reddened the slabs at the same time as it cracked them. The fragments were pieced together and cemented and the slabs came to be reconstructed to their original form. Behind the southern pillar of the apse traces are visible of a double bottomed niche which was completely destroyed and behind the pillar of the apse B, on the opposite side, a similar niche is still *in situ*. This consisted of two slabs on end topped by a coping slab with another one fixed horizontally between the uprights thus dividing the space in two equal parts. The niche, as every other similar structure in the temple, was used as a deposit for bones and horn-cores.

Midway between the niche and the wall of the apse a cylindrical stone basin is fixed to the floor. The outer surface is ornamented with large and carefully drilled pittings. A similar basin is fixed before one of the altars of the passage T near the main entrance. Behind this basin a magnificent clay vessel 1 m. wide was found, and this is now shown in the Valletta Museum. Both the stone and the clay vessel were probably intended to hold water which must have been a necessary element in the ritual services of this ancient sanctuary. The apse B was an important one as far as one can judge by the important objects met with near the floor surface including the sherds of most elaborate pots and fragments of several clay statuettes.

Opposite the entrance to the oval space AB, is another shallow round hearth, 22.8 cms. high and about 61 cms. in diameter full of burnt lime and ashes. The rim of the basin is burnt and the floor all round is discoloured by the embers that must have been spread all round. In front of the basin another doorway is constructed upon a very fine long block flanked by two enormous uprights which limit the two apses A and B on their northern aspect. The upright to the west is broken and a good portion of it is wanting, but the one to the east is complete, though cracked at various points. It has rounded edges and smooth faces and a pair of holes, connected horizontally, is cut on its eastern surface. Towards the base, at a distance of 35 cms. from the floor, the front surface is decorated in a very original way, by the insertion of polished stones set in two lines, three stones in a row and one at each end in a lower line. The set stones were fossil shells and dark rounded pebbles fixed deeply in holes cut for the purpose. Two of the stones were wanting, one was broken and removed by unknown persons and two, which were loose, were removed and preserved in the Museum. This decoration, which was never before observed in these Islands, denotes more than any other the refined taste of the neolithic artist who tooled the huge blocks with delicate care as if they were personal ornaments and thought them worthy of being polished and even bejewelled.

As in the case of the oval space CD the entrance to the north of AB is over a slightly curved step and through a trilithon. In the principal Maltese megalithic sanctuaries the main architectural features are the two parallel oval spaces connected by means of a central passage. The end of this passage is usually a dolmen or a small apse. We expected to find something of the sort when the site beyond the oval AB was cleared, but to our astonishment a third double oval space was discovered. Beyond the trilithon of the doorway a rectangular space 2.5 m. long by 3 m. wide, ending in a low step, was cleared in the middle of which a triangular slab, visible from the main entrance in the space O, stands with base upwards. Slabs on end on each side of this space form a passage to the side apses X and Y. The western apse is semicircular and formed by nine slabs carefully jointed together. This room has a floor of beaten earth and, in the south-eastern corner, a well constructed niche made of three smooth slabs with a horizontal partition in the middle. A white mortar covers the joints of the slabs and fills up gaps and cracks in the stones not only of the niche but also of the slabs all round the room. Evidently, when that building was new the walls were carefully plastered so as to give a smooth surface which may have been likewise painted over. Traces of red ochre were in fact found at various points of the building especially on some of the stone vessels.

The niche contained the usual hoard of animal bones and bone shafts were found deeply infixed in the torba floor under the niche, so firmly that they could not be removed.

On the opposite side of the oval space a similar arrangement existed but the stones were so much pulled about that the primitive building was hardly recognizable. The nine slabs that formed the apse were carried away but it was easy to construct a rubble wall where the slabs had been, and when this was ready it was found that the arc of the apse was of the same size of the one to the west. Besides the overthrow of the walls, the floor was dug out and a double wall of roughly squared stones was constructed across the room. All this rearrangement, took place, probably, in the Roman period for sherds of pottery, such as amphorae, plates, caccabi, etc. of the Roman type, were dug out to the exclusion of any other pottery.



So far were the extensive ruins cleared up to the middle of September 1916. It is not probable that the building extended further to the north, west and south-west but great possibilities exist to the north-east and east. To the south the forecourt is still encumbered with ruins. To the north-east numerous uprights appear through the material of an adjoining field and several oval spaces will probably be cleared in the next season.

CARVINGS ON STONE.

The number of carved blocks and slabs is now very considerable. One cannot fail to note the great difference between the carvings in what we consider to be the earliest part of the building and in that of the later period. The carvings to the north of the room O are much simpler in treatment, bolder in style and conducted with greater freedom. The spirals are more complicated and their surface is always flat, the effect of the carving being enhanced by pitting, usually of the round type. In the southern part of the building the motives are more pretentious, the more complicated spirals are often branched and their surface is always convex. In the space T all the blocks bear a different ornament, there is no sign of stencilling, every spiral being designed in a free hand manner to follow a general pattern but without being tied to an absolute line.

There is likewise a great difference in the treatment of the animals carved. The bulls in the room M are more freely cut than the rows of goats in the room V.

NEOLITHIC OBJECTS—GRINDERS.

More lava and hard stone grinders were met with, showing that wheat or other grains were freely ground in the precincts of the temple. As lava is not a stone natural to the island it is evident that the implements were imported, probably from Sicily. The shape of the grinders is that usually met with in neolithic stations all over Europe, almond shaped with one flat surface and a slightly curved outline. They go, mostly, in pairs, the larger one with flat surface upwards served the purpose of a table and the smaller one was moved up and down by hand over the grain to be crushed.

MORTARS.

Stone mortars, both of hard and soft Maltese stone were obtained at different points. One of them 30 cms. high, 25 cms. in diameter and 17 cms. thick, was found firmly embedded in a stone layer in the middle of room M and in it a handful of yellow sulphur crystals and some yellow ochre was found. The layer of soil in which it was set contained Bronze Age objects and the mortar should be attributed to a later age than the neolithic. Besides the mortars several pillars, cylindrical or biconical, were found which may have been mortars, or incense burners. One object of this kind made of a fine grained soft stone is distinctly biconical and has a deep concavity at each end so that the object could be used standing on either end. A queerly shaped object, nearly spherical, with a shallow cup-like depression surrounded by a thick rim may well have served the purpose of a mortar.

HAMMER STONES.

Hammer stones and hard stone rubbers of various size were found in abundance. Many are simply large hard stone pebbles found on a beach. The rubbers are often of a triangular shape, with a long depression near the apex to take in the fingers, in two of them, a hole is cut through the flat stone to serve the purpose of a handle.

A very queer object of soft limestone is very difficult to classify and describe. It is triangular in shape 34 cms. high, 50 cms. wide at its base and 15 cms. thick. At the apex it has a slit forming two well rounded lips 10 cms. apart. A hole is cut from side to side lower down and the slit opens in this hole.

STONE VESSELS.

Several stone vessels were found in various state of preservation. Beside the cylindrical vessels fixed in the floor of rooms T and B, and the shallow basins used as hearths in the oval rooms AB and CD numerous fragments of movable stone vessels were found.

In the space R the bottom of what appears to have been a huge trough can be seen, not far from the remains of an enormous clay basin richly ornamented on the outer surface. A bottomless cylindrical stone vessel was found in room C. It is 35 cms. high, about 52.3 cms. at its wider part and 43 cms. across the mouth. Its surface is smooth and bears traces of red ochre and it has a distinct rim. It was found full of a thin gray ash mixed with soil, a few animal bones, minute neolithic sherds and a few flint flakes.

The best object of this series is a perfectly wrought stone vessel in the shape of the neolithic clay bowls of which several were obtained from the ruins. It is 92 cms. high and has a diameter of 1.16 m. at its widest part. Its lines are very graceful and the curve could not have been improved if it had been turned on a potter's wheel. Though hewn out of a large block of stone its walls are not more than 76 mms. thick, it has a graceful rim and at the line

of the shoulder it has four symmetrical bosses to imitate the handles of a clay vessel. The vessel was found crushed in the north west corner of the oval space CD and about three fourths of the fragments were recovered and put together. The lost portions were replaced by new stone so that the vessel has been, as far as possible, restored to its original condition.

STONE STATUETTES.

Beside the remains of the colossal stone statue standing at the south-east corner of the room T, fragments of smaller limestone figures were found.

The colossal statue about 3 m. high, was probably in a sitting position and what remains of it are the two legs and the lower part of a pleated skirt that reaches to the knees. The legs are very fat and pear-shaped, the left one is complete but the foot is broken, the right one is broken but the foot is whole. The skirt or kilt, both in this statue and in the fragments of small statuettes was pleated, quite a new feature in the Maltese figurines which, hitherto, were mostly found undraped.

The fragments of the smaller statuettes are the following:—

a) Base of fat seated figure on a low pedestal, the legs with very small feet are tucked away to the left. It is 21.5 cms. high, 29.0 cms. wide and 23.6 thick.

b) Headless statuette of soft cretaceous limestone, of the usual extremely obese type. The thorax is very flat but the thighs are fat and round. The small hands rest each on the corresponding thigh, the feet are broken off. It is 7.5 cms. high, 10.2 cms. wide across buttocks and 6.2 cms. deep. The figure is well finished and smoothed and is quite Buddha-like in its reposeful attitude.

c) Irregular fragment of a fair sized statuette of globigerina limestone. It represented a fat figure with skirt ornamented probably with embroidery. The right hand rests on the right knee. It measures 21.4 cms. in height.

d) Another irregular fragment of draped figure about 23 cms. high, the skirt which appears to be long and pleated as in the other figures appears to reach to the feet.

e) Fragment of fat sitting statuette naked to the waist but with an elaborate skirt as c and d.

f) Fragment of a fat statuette of the same material of which the chest, right arm and right hip only are recognisable. The figure differs essentially from all the other statuettes and appears to have been worked in high relief as part of the background is still attached to the figure.

g) Fragment of upper part of stone statuette showing naked chest and right arm. Below the waist a skirt, ornamented as in the other figures, is worn covering a very prominent hip.

h) An irregular lump of limestone on the top of which a translucent amber colour stalactitic knob has grown. These formations are very common in Maltese caves and fissures especially in the coralline limestone. The neolithic artist has utilised the globular stalactitic growth to carve a human head. The line of the face is deeply cut, the mouth is small, a large fold of fatty tissue surrounds the neck. The nose is flat but probably broken.

i) The lower part of a small fat figurine of baked clay with a fine reddish shiny surface. The figure is broken at the waist and the feet are wanting. It is represented as sitting with legs close together and very slightly tucked to the left. The buttocks are as usual very large with marked posterior flattening.

j) A small rough clay model of a naked female figure. The legs are stumpy and to represent the head the neck has merely been pinched. The right arm hangs down to the side, the left is raised to the head. It has prominent abdomen and pendulous breasts. Posteriorly a marked degree of emaciation is shown by undue prominence of the ribs and vertebrae, the figurine appears to be an *ex voto* of some pathological condition. Curiously enough it has small bits of white shells stuck into it before it was baked, in the neck, the armpits, breasts, navel, groins, scapulae, vertebrae, etc. This figurine was found under the large block of stone to the right of the main entrance.

k) An oval flattish bead of a yellowish white stone resembling alabaster but having a striated appearance with gray and yellowish lines. In one of the broad surfaces a human face is cleverly carved. The eyes are long and horizontal, the nose thick and fairly prominent, the cheek bones high, the mouth small with thick lips and a well formed chin. The back is flat but somewhat convex. A hole pierces the bead from end to end in a curved line parallel to the face, and shows that it was used as a pendant.

It is remarkable that, as shown by the numerous articles found at Halsafieni, the neolithic people in Malta made constant use of striated stones for working small objects. Such stones are not known in the Maltese Islands and must, therefore, have been imported.

UNBAKED CLAY STATUETTES.

Close to the floor of the apse B, among debris of all kinds, fragments of several thin clay statuettes were discovered. One of these statuettes was nearly whole but being unbaked and damp, it crumbled down to bits when an attempt was made to lift

it up and place it in a box. Under the circumstances the fragments were carefully collected and hardened by dipping in glue. In this manner large fragments of three statuettes were reconstructed. Not far from the place in which the statuettes were found two clay heads were discovered which must have belonged to the statuettes themselves.

These statuettes were of unbaked clay and hollow, the internal portion showing distinctly the marks of the tool that stiffened the clay all round. They all represent standing figures draped from the waist downwards, the skirt in all cases reaching to the ground and hiding the feet. The skirt hangs straight from the hips which are not abnormally fat. Several arms were found also of normal appearance. The skirts are ornamented with lines which appear to represent embroidery. Towards the middle of the skirt a jagged line, extending from the waist down to the lower edge, shows either the line along which the skirt was fastened or better a chain hanging from the waist. In two of the statuettes the neck shows a hollow cavity to take in a movable head.

The two heads found in the vicinity may well have fitted the statuettes. One of them must have been thrown into a fire which burnt it in part but hardened it at the same time thus preserving it in a good condition. The other head was smaller and fragmentary. The large head is hollow and the neck is broken, the forehead is large, the nose well formed but not very prominent, the cheeks are full, the chin is well marked, the eyes are set horizontally. It is an intelligent face modelled with skill and well finished. The head is covered by a wig with rows of curls, ending in a bevelled edge on the nape, which closely resembles that worn by English judges.

The smaller head has likewise a wig which is, however, different from the one just described. The hair is parted in the middle and, arranged in straight masses, ends sharply at the nape.

Owing to their fragmentary nature these statuettes could not be reconstructed *in toto*.

These figures were not of fat divinities, of which so many fragments were obtained in Tarxien and in other neolithic stations, but rather of priests or other important functionaries. They recall to mind the priests figured on the Assyrian monuments.

OTHER MINOR DISCOVERIES DURING THE YEAR.

MEGALITHIC RUINS AT THE MDAWRA ROAD.

We have to note the discovery of a neolithic station on the lands "ta Xiberras" to the east of the Mdawra Road that from Naxaro leads to Saint Paul's Bay. The ruins were pointed out to me by Mr. Sant L.S. & A. of the Public Works Department who accompanied me to inspect them on the 17th November, 1916. A number of megaliths are grouped at one end of a field which is limited to the north-west by large blocks. The main group of stones appear to be a series of hard stone dolmens of which three can be distinctly made out; they are contiguous and have table slabs not less than 3.6 m. long, by 1.5 m. large and about 60 cms. thickness. As far as one can judge, from the few stones that jut out above the surface of the field, the ruin must have been, originally, a circular building with a wide entrance made of slabs placed on their edge. A few neolithic sherds of the early Maltese type were collected. The site appears to be a very important one and will, to all probabilities, yield a copious return to the future excavator.

MEGALITHIC RUINS AT MGIAR.

Mr. C. Rizzo L.S. & A. has called my attention to an interesting mound of ruins to the left of the main road leading into the village of Mgiar in the district called "Ir-ramlia". The mound is locally known as "Ta haġrat".

Out of a circular mound of earth huge blocks of limestone and slabs on end emerge, some in a heap but most of them *in situ* and in a good state of preservation. In the sandy soil that fills up the ruin, fragments of neolithic sherds, flints, animal bones, etc., can be picked out in abundance. The site is a promising one and should not be lost sight of to the day when it may be properly excavated.

OLD WATER TANKS.

The importance of water tanks cannot be ignored by anyone who considers for a moment the scantiness of water in our lands and the state of agriculture in old times. The most important arable fields are provided with water tanks cut in the rock. In our days the tanks are mostly bell-shaped but in Punic and Roman times the tanks were rectangular with sides cut down perpendicularly from surface to bottom, the cistern being covered by means of large stone slabs. To such tanks which are fairly numerous little attention has so far, been given, though some of them have been described in my annual reports. (See annual reports of the Museum for the years 1914, 1915, 1916.) One of these tanks in the district called "ta Sant Anton" to the south-west of Gudja was examined in February 1916. The tank is full of earth but appears to be quadrangular about 2 m. deep and 3.5 m. long. It is covered by three slabs about 2 m. long, 1 m. wide and 30 cms. thick.

A much larger tank of the same description in another field in the same district (Ta Giawar—Sant Anton) is very deep and has three mouths, from which water was originally drawn. The vicinity of important ruins makes this large tank worth investigating.

Another cistern of the Roman type was discovered to the west of the chapel called San Niclau tal Merhla in the Krendi district. It is a rectangular tank hewn in the rock, 3 m. deep, about 4 m. long and 2.5 m. wide, covered by six slabs measuring 2.5 m. by 76 cms. and 30 cms. thick. Only a few potsherds of the late Punic type and some animal bones were obtained when the cistern was cleaned.

ROCK AND WELL TOMBS. PUNIC AND ROMAN PERIODS.

A very interesting catacomb of the Roman period was uncovered by a heavy down-pour of rain in March 1916, in the district called "Il Hrieri" to the south of Wied Kirda and the village of Zebbug. The rain water carried away the stones that covered an opening through which this catacomb was rifled years ago. When cleaned of the earth and stone that filled it, the place proved to be a family tomb with a regular entrance. Five steps led to an oblong space around which funeral chambers were dug out in the rock, one to the right, one to the left, and three in front. Each chamber was meant to lodge two bodies for which a head rest was cut in the rock at one end of the chamber. The entrance to each chamber was through an arcosolium of the well-known Roman type which could be sealed by means of a slab or tile. The catacomb is in a very good state of preservation but it was found so completely rifled that only a few sherds of the usual funerary clay vessels were found along with human bones. The discovery is important for no tombs of this type were ever met in the district.

ROCK TOMB AT TAL GHALIA.

The discovery of a rock tomb of the early Punic type at the top of the Tal Ghalia hill, a few yards from another similar grave discovered in February 1910 (See annual report for 1911) was reported in June 1916. The chamber is circular and with a roughly triangular forecourt cut in the ragged ridge of the hill. It contained much red soil carried in by rain-water embedded in which were the remains of two adult bodies, one male and the other female. The skulls were distinctly long (dolicocephalous). The only furniture that could be found was a clay amphora 30 cms. high and a thick, archaic, bilychnis oil lamp.

WELL TOMB AT SEBBIEH.

In July 1916, Mr. Charles Strickland reported that in his lands at Sebbieh in the district "Ta l'Abatia", a group of tombs were discovered and very kindly, offered to open them in the presence of the Curator. This was done on the 31st July. A quadrangular shaft 2 m. long, 1 m. wide and 2 m. deep has a narrow flight of five steps cut on one side. At the bottom of the shaft three funeral chambers, each closed by a square slab, are cut in three of the sides. Each chamber is about 2 m. long and 1 m. wide with a curved ceiling and a long trench parallel to the entrance. On the ledge behind this trench two bodies were laid and in the gutter the funereal pottery was deposited. These graves were evidently used over and over again. As the slab at the entrance did not fit properly, the chamber was periodically flooded and its contents gradually buried in the mud. The tomb furniture was of the usual late type and consisted of amphorae, long necked bottles, two handled shallow plates, deep plates and lamps which varied in type from the early to the late Punic.

TOMBS AT HAL DRAGU.

A series of rock tombs in the lands of Mr. Strickland at Hal Dragu (il Bidnia) were with the valuable help and at the expense of the owner examined and surveyed in December. The face of the hill is freely studded with old graves most of them broken and utilized by planting trees into them. The few tombs examined were in a fair condition but with the chambers buried in mud and probably rifled long ago. They were all of the second period, that is with a long barrel-shaped chamber and a quadrangular forecourt.

WELL TOMB AT MGHATAB.

A single well tomb was opened by the tenant of a Government field called "Budak ta Saïda" in the Musta district, to the west of the Mghatab road. Like the Bidnia tomb, it had a barrel shaped chamber and a rectangular forecourt 2 m. long, 61 cms. wide and 1.30 m. deep. It appears from the several groups of human bones met with that the tomb was used over and over again. Besides the bones it contained also three cinerary urns which were emptied of their contents before they could be examined. The furniture obtained was one large amphora, six shallow plates, of which three, probably, covered the urns and two clay flagons.

OLD GRAVE AT KALLILIA.

An interesting burial pit was discovered on the Kallilia plateau not far from the tombs excavated in former years. (See annual report for 1913) Whilst digging a field at a depth of about 30 cms. below the surface, the tenant struck a clay vessel which proved to be

a cinerary urn packed with the well burnt ashes of a human body. Sherds of other clay vessels embedded in a hard yellow mass of clay, were dug out close by, evidently packed on purpose in a pit at a corner of the rocky surface. The tenacious clay stuck to the vessels in such a way as to make their removal very difficult. With great labour two cinerary urns, two aryballi, one thick bilychnes lamp, one plate and one small but very interesting jar were obtained in a more or less fragmentary state. In one of the urns, along with the bone ash, an Egyptian ring was found. The ring is of tin with a bluish grey stone mounted as a swivel and used probably as a *Khetem*, or seal. It is perhaps not amiss to say that the term *Khetem*, which is the technical name of such rings, corresponds to the Maltese word *hatem*, a seal ring. The stone, in the shape of a scarab, has upon its flat face a hieroglyphic inscription which Professor Budge, of the British Museum, has kindly read for me as being "Khensu in Thebes". Khensu was a moon-god worshipped at Thebes under and after the XXVIth dynasty, say from B.C. 600 to the Roman period. That the grave was an early one can be further surmised from the presence of the small proto-Corinthian flask which, in the style of ornament resembles the plate described by Mr. E. T. Peet in Vol. XXXII page 96 of the Journal of Hellenic studies, and attributed by him to the 8th or 7th century B.C.

As the ancient tombs met with in our islands are usually very difficult to date for the lack of objects known in other countries, it is extremely important to find now and then a term of comparison capable of throwing some light on the time in which the burial took place. All the objects found in this grave are carefully preserved in the Valletta Museum as a guide to the students who are interested in the furniture of our numerous tombs.

COINS OF THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM.

The following coins of the Order were added to the Museum collection. Those marked with an asterisk were not known, so far, and do not appear in Mons. Calleja Schembri's book "Coins and Medals of the Knights of Malta", published in 1908. The number accompanying the varieties refer to Calleja Schembri's catalogue and the letters show where the new coins should be placed:—

- * 1. Claude De La Sengle—copper Dinieri—Var. 2.
+ F CLAVD DE LA SEN M
R ✱ ORDO H S P HIERVS M
- 2. Alof De Wignacourt—copper 3 dinieri—Var. 6.
- * 3. Jean Paul Lascaris—copper 3 dinieri—Var. 4.
M.M.HOSPITALI. HIERV
- 4. Antoine De Paule—copper 3 dinieri—Var. 4.
- 5. Ant. Manoel De Vilhena—silver 12 tarì piece—Var. 5.
- 6. " —copper $\frac{1}{2}$ carlino —Var. 2. (*cinquana*)
- * 7. " " " " Var. 2a.
F. D. AN: MANOEL DE VILHENA.
R ✱ . NON. AES. SED. Fides *
- 8. Ant. Manoel De Vilhena—copper carlino —Var. 6.
- 9. " " " " —Var. 7.
- 10. " " $\frac{1}{2}$ " —Var. 8. (*cinquana*)
- * 11. " " grano —Var. 1a.
F. D. AN: MANOEL DE VILHENA MM
R legend without dots *grano*
- * 12. Ant. Manoel De Vilhena—copper *carlino* —Var. 5c.
F. D. AN: MANOEL DE VILHENA.M
+ IN HOC SIGNO MILITAMVS—1726
- 13. Ramon Despuig—copper carlino—Var. 2.
- * 14. " " " " —Var. 6a.
NON. AES. SED. FIDES 1739. (* . X . *)
- * 15. Emmanuel Pinto—copper grano—Var. 5a.
✱ IN HOC SIGNO MILITAMVS 1747
R ✱ F. EMANVEL PINTO. M.M.H.H
- 16. Francisco Ximenes de Texada—silver 1 scudo—Var. 4.
- 17. Emmanuel de Rohan—silver 2 tarì—Var. 2.
- * 18. " —copper grano—Var. 7a.
F. EMMANVEL DE ROHAN. M*
- * 19. Emmanuel de Rohan—copper grano—Var. 1aa.
F. EMMANVEL DE ROHAN M.M.
obverse as Var. 1a.
- * 20. Square copper medal 4 mm. thick, 27 m. m across.
In a small square, 9 mm. at the centre, a Malta cross in relief surrounded by eight smaller squares (5 mm.) with similar crosses in relief. The reverse is plain. The medal had a drilled knob wherefrom to hang but this is now broken.

ADDITIONS TO THE MUSEUM COLLECTION.

THE FOLLOWING OBJECTS WERE ACQUIRED DURING THE YEAR:—

- 1 old miniature picture of Bishop Caruana.
- 1 marble Roman capitol.
- 4 old engravings.

THE FOLLOWING OBJECTS WERE PRESENTED TO THE MUSEUM DURING THE YEAR:—

By Mr. Emmanuele Scerri

- 1 Bronze medal, 35 mm. representing a male face with horned hat. Hebrew Inscription.
- 1 silver 10 soldi of Pius IX 1868.

By the Military Authorities

- 1 oil picture of Dr. Henin, formerly preserved in the Library of the Valletta Station Hospital.

By Mr. Joseph Balbi

- 1 set of Maundy coins of Queen Victoria, (1892).

By Mr. Beniamino Bonnici, LL.D.

- 3 liqueur glasses with coat of arms of Grand Master De Rohan in gold.
- 2 medals of Pope Pius IX.

By Mr. Joseph Busuttil

- 1 copper plate by Mallia (1813) representing Saint Publius.

By Notary Mr. C. Micallef Decaro

- 1 framed diploma of public notary, dated 1753.

By Miss E. Buccia

- 1 photo of the old Marsamuscetto gate.

THEM. ZAMMIT,
Curator.

4
H
12

Field



Fig. 1. Plan of the excavated portion of the Hal-Tarxien temple in September 1916