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Monday, 24 May, 1909.

Dr VENN, President, in the Chair.

W. L. H. DUCKWORTH, M.D., Sc.D., delivered a lecture, illustrated with lantern-slides, on

NOTES ON CORSICA : (a) THE DISCOVERY OF A MEGALITHIC SITE NEAR PONTE LECCIA, (b) THE MEN OF THE NIOLO AND ASCO DISTRICTS.

In the following notes, I have to submit some observations on the prehistoric archaeology and the physical anthropology of Corsica, made in the course of a visit to that island in the spring of 1909.

First I must point out the parts of the island to which the notes refer. A glance at the map (Fig. 1) shews that the town of Corte occupies a central position in close proximity to the highest mountains of the island. Central in situation, easy of access since the days of railways, Corte is the natural capital of Corsica, and the grim old citadel crowning its acropolis has been the scene of the most dramatic episodes of Corsican history.

In this neighbourhood, I made the observations to be detailed in the following paragraphs.

I. PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY.

The prehistoric period will first engage attention. And here one must note that whereas the prehistoric antiquities of Sardinia have been well known for centuries, and were accurately described in many cases sixty years ago, yet in Corsica the mere records are of comparatively recent date and exhaustive descriptions are few and far between.

In Sardinia, the prehistoric monuments are excessively numerous, consisting of the celebrated Nuraghi (now regarded as towers of refuge), the so-called Giants' Graves, and certain rows of stone pillars, some of the latter being roughly fashioned in the female form. Prehistoric, or at least protohistoric, cemeteries are also known.

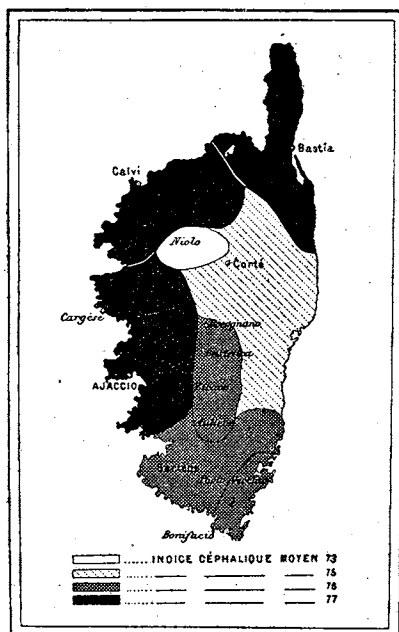


FIG. 1. Map of Corsica (from Fallot, *Revue d'Anthropologie*, Tome iv, 1889), with the distribution of head-forms as distinguished by the cephalic index. (With the permission of Messrs Masson and Co., Paris.)

In Corsica, M. Adrien de Mortillet undertook an investigation in 1883 under the French Government, and he then provided records of many menhirs and alignments. So far the monuments are similar in character to, though fewer in number than, those of Sardinia. The parallel to the Giants' Graves of Sardinia is to be found in the Corsican dolmens, which are well known, especially the group near the base of the peninsula of the Cap Corse. Prehistoric cemeteries have been found in the same neighbourhood and yielded ornaments and other

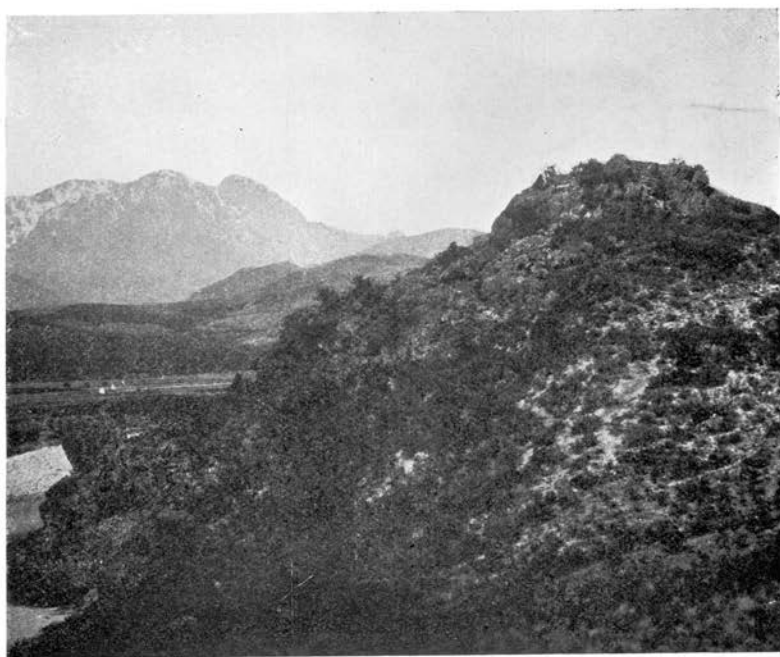


FIG. 4. View of Castello La Goulontia, Corsica, from S.E. Near the summit are the remains of megalithic walls. In the distance, the mountains above Moltifao are seen.



FIG. 5. Castello La Goulontia, Corsica. Part of wall E. (cf. plan Fig. 3) from the eastern side. The size of the stones may be estimated best by comparison with the stature of the guide (Ferrari) viz. : about 5 ft. 10 in.

objects in bronze. So far then we may note that Corsica is by no means barren in respect of these prehistoric relics, as certain guide-books would have the traveller believe. But what is still lacking from the literature of this subject, is any record of prehistoric settlements of a kind corresponding to that of Serucci in Sardinia, described lately by Dr Mackenzie of the British School at Rome.

Dr Mackenzie has already visited Corsica once since his researches in Sardinia commenced, but I have been so far unable to learn from him anything relating to his discoveries or any reference to his publications thereon. This lack of information encourages me to report the site now to be described.

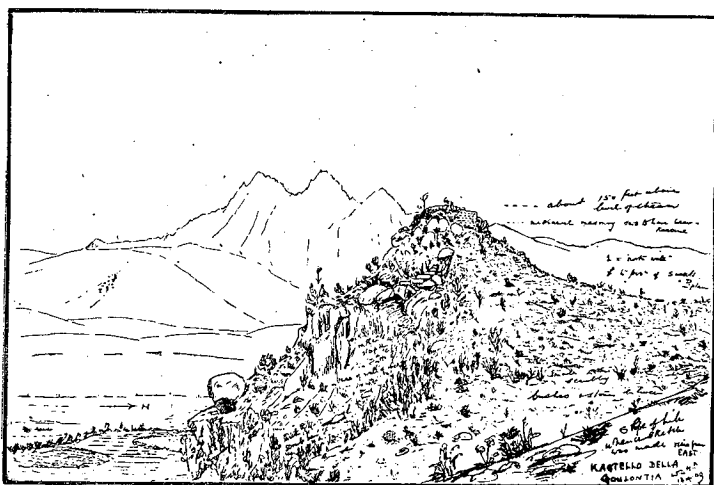


FIG. 2. A sketch of Castello La Goulontia, Corsica, from a point further east than that whence Fig. 4 was taken. The village of Prato appears as dots on the hillside in the middle distance.

About two and a half miles south of Ponte Leccia, and therefore in the central part of Corsica, the Golo river, as it flows seawards, skirts a low knoll at the eastern side of a wide alluvial tract. The appearance of this knoll, as seen from the south-east, may be gathered from the photograph (Fig. 4, Plate XXVI), and the sketch (Fig. 2); the river will be seen to protect very effectively one flank of this hillock. Otherwise the access is comparatively easy: the hillock is to some extent

detached, though a ridge (seen to the right side of the picture in Fig. 2) connects it with a much higher hill, and to this, reference will be made later.

On the southern and western aspects of this low hill, I found remains of a group of buildings, consisting of the foundations and lower parts of several walls. Portions of these are shewn in Figs. 2 and 4, while in Fig. 3 will be found a rough plan and elevation of the knoll with indications of the remains.

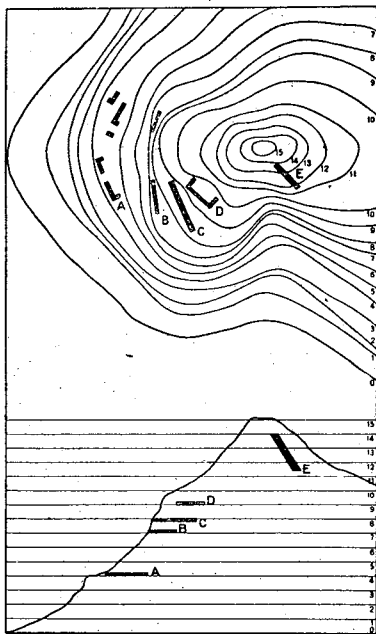


FIG. 3. Elevation (below) and plan (above) of La Castello Goulontia. The contours are drawn at distances of 10 feet. These figures are diagrammatic.

Here I must acknowledge my indebtedness to my guide in the mountains of Corsica, for having led me to this spot. Simon Ferrari joined me at Corte, and we went in the first instance to the highest mountain villages of Corsica, viz. Calacuccia and Calasima in the Niolo district. My first quest was the native mountaineer, but incidentally I enquired whether any ancient buildings were known in the Niolo. I was at once led to an

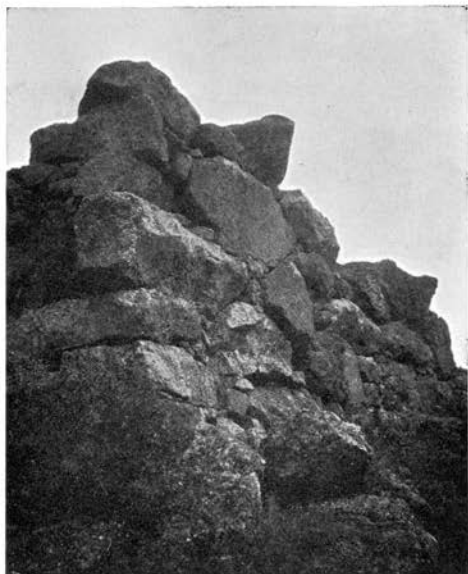


FIG. 6. Castello La Goulontia, Corsica. The north-western angle of wall D (cf. Plan, Fig. 3).

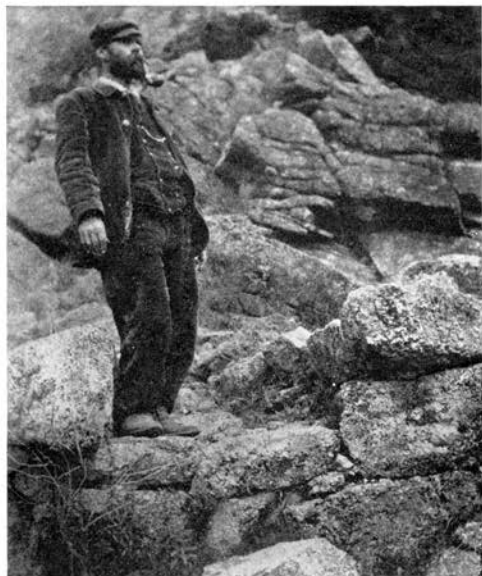


FIG. 7. Castello La Goulontia, Corsica. Remains of doorway in wall A (cf. Plan Fig. 3).

ancient building, known as the "old house" of Calacuccia. But this is clearly mediaeval¹. Mediaeval also, in my opinion, are the numerous ruins on the Corsican hill-tops: these ruins were once towers of refuge or more probably signalling-stations.

Having with me a copy of Dr Mackenzie's paper on the Nuraghi village of Serucci, I shewed this with the illustrations to my friends at Calacuccia. Then Ferrari declared that he had once seen some great stones (resembling those composing the village walls of Serucci) near Ponte Leccia, and in consequence I arranged to visit the locality.

To return to the knoll and the ruined buildings described above. The walls are composed of vast blocks piled on each other in series, without cement or mortar. The blocks are not "regularly" polygonal, nor are they so far shaped as to lie conformably in relation to one another as in ashlar masonry. They represent a distinct type of megalithic construction, as indicated long ago by Schliemann in *Mycenae*. But they seem not absolutely unworked.

I was able to recognise in the first place, the wall which I term the protecting one ("E" in the plan, Fig. 3 and Plate XXVI, Fig. 5). From Ferrari's description, I had been led to expect that the remains were those of a dolmen, for the wall "E" was all that he had seen. Certainly the lentisk bushes and other brushwood were very thick around these ruins, preventing a clear view, but further search revealed to me other walls in turn, and in the plan these are labelled from "A" to "D" and are shewn in their approximate situations.

The wall "A" is interrupted by a step, remains of an entrance doorway and of this the photograph (Fig. 7, Plate XXVII) will also provide some idea.

A few other points require further comment. In the first place, I could find no remains corresponding to anything like a dolmen or Giants' tomb, either here or in the immediate vicinity. Secondly, these buildings were not circular like those at Serucci in Sardinia but angular (cf. Fig. 6, Plate XXVII), nor were any of the walls double, or composed of two faces of stout blocks filled intermediately with smaller stones. (The

¹ Local tradition assigns it to a family by the name of Hierosolyma.

wall "E" is a possible exception to this statement.) Lastly, the presence of a curious square-cut aperture at the base of one of the walls suggested either a drain, or ventilation for some chamber more deeply situated. But no further evidence could be obtained on these points. A small mediæval tower was represented by its ruins near the actual summit.

The general impression I gained was that this was a small fortified settlement. The exact determination of the epoch to which it belongs must be made by expert authorities. A comparison of this site with those described (and represented in plans) by the brothers Siret at Fuente Vermeja and Fuente Alamo in south-east Spain, brings out some remarkable similarities. [Cf. Siret, "*Les premiers âges, &c.*"...Plates 13 and 24. Univ. Lib. Lib.: 3: 88: 20.]

Having photographed the walls and prepared materials for the construction of the very rough plan which is appended, I was returning to Ponte di Leccia, when I saw a goatherd among the bushes on the hill-side. From this man, Ferrari gained two pieces of information. The knoll is called the Castello della Goulontia: and though no one at Ponte Leccia seems to know about the cyclopean remains, yet the goatherd had once been told that here was the castle of a mad "Count" in the "time of the giants": and further that the madness of the Count was demonstrated by his selecting this as his summer quarters, while in the depth of winter he resided in a second castle somewhere up in the hills above.

On returning to the inn, Ferrari made further enquiries and we learned that in the thickly-wooded hill above La Goulontia, was a rocky summit known as Castelluccio. To this we ascended the following day. It was a fatiguing climb through a jungle of undergrowth, the masses of briar-root (giant heather) proving a substantial obstacle to progress—a veritable wild-boar's path. Ferrari called it. Castelluccio is a little rocky summit detached from a great ridge of mountain, and looking down on the valley and lower knoll from about a thousand feet above.

I was not disappointed here. As the photographs (Plate XXVIII, Figs. 8, 9) shew, Castelluccio had also been inhabited

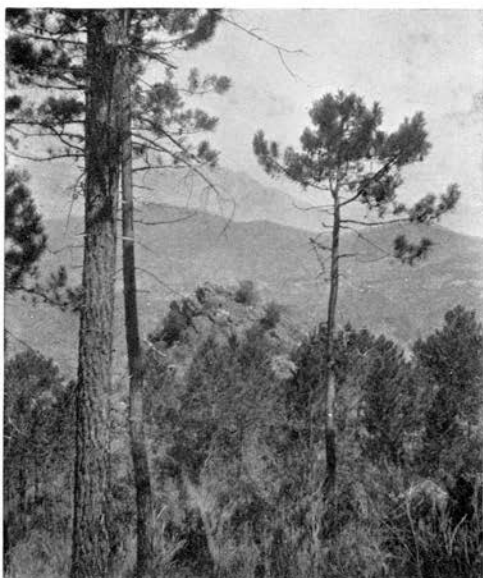


FIG. 8. View of the rocky knoll called Castelluccio, from the end of the ridge known as the Porto dei Torri. The knoll is seen between the two slender fir-trees.



FIG. 9. Castelluccio, Corsica. The southern aspect of the ruined wall near the summit of this knoll. The lowest stones in this wall were smaller than those of the higher courses of masonry.

at an early period, and though the remains were extremely scanty (in any case the site was very small in area) yet the same type of masonry obtains.

Such then is the nature of these all too fragmentary ruins. As none of this kind have been yet recorded in Corsica to my knowledge, it is with gratification that I submit this description of what is really Ferrari's discovery. On this latter fact, I desire to lay the more stress, since it is but fitting that a keenly patriotic Corsican like my guide, should feel that he has contributed, in ever so small a manner, to research into the past history of his country.

II. PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY.

Of all the districts of Corsica, those of the Niolo and Asco are generally and justly described as the most primitive. Both regions are in the high mountain spurs culminating in Monte Cinto, the highest point in the island. Both were, until recently, difficult of access. Both are separated from the surrounding inhabited regions by high mountain passes on all sides save one. In both instances the remaining path of access leads up a deep rocky defile, the narrow track sometimes descending to the torrent's edge, and again rising in steep ascent till the stream is left far below. When the gorge has been traversed, an extensive plateau is reached in the one instance. This is the famous Niolo. At Asco, the space is cramped, restricted, and formerly an extensive forest clothed the sides of the hills around the little village which gives a name to the stream and the commune. Such isolated regions are generally found to be the last refuges of persecuted peoples, and this rule may hold good very probably in the case of the two now to be considered.

The views of my guide on the ethnology of Corsica may be worth reproducing here. First then, the "tête de Corse" (of which he drew a diagram for me) differs from the "tête des Continentaux" in the backward projection of the occiput which is more protuberant in the former. Secondly, the men, and even more, the women of Calasima in the Niolo are of

great stature. Lastly, the men of Piedigrigia (a village not far from Ponte di Leccia and therefore not in the high mountains) are notorious as being stunted and of stature below the average. Piedigrigia is within the zone of malaria.

Of all the villages in the Niolo, and in Corsica, Calasima is the highest. At Calasima I found very few men, I think not more than four able-bodied adults, for at the time (April) the men are down near the coast whither the sheep and cattle are driven in autumn, there to remain until the end of April. My observations were therefore limited. But I measured the heads of two adult men (Plate XXIX, Figs. 10—13 inclusive), and give the results in the appended table. As regards stature, these men were taller than many of the Niolo men seen by me, but yet their mean stature 1739 is not very great as judged by the British standard. The occiput certainly projects markedly, as I had been led to expect, and indeed this is truly a very common feature among the Corsicans. But what struck me most, was the fairness of complexion of these men. From the moment of landing in Corsica, the existence of a blond type or types is evident, but the frequency is greatest, so far as I can judge, in the Niolo.

The women of Calasima are not conspicuous in respect of stature, nor are they more blond than the men. The latter phenomenon is I believe unusual in European populations, but none the less suggestive here. The families seen by me were old inhabitants of Calasima, and from what I heard, I gather that there is little intermarriage between the Calasima people and the inhabitants of villages situated in more favoured localities, for lowlanders dislike the idea of isolating themselves in the hills¹.

To sum up, with regard to these two men of Calasima, as the less mixed representatives of the Niolo population, I find that the stature is above the average for Corsicans, the head is dolichocephalic or mesaticephalic with the occipital projection strongly marked. The hair is quite fair or light chestnut colour, and the eyes are distinctly blue, or greenish-blue.

¹ Nearly all the inhabitants of Calasima share the surname Alfonsi. In the next village below, viz.: Albertacce, the corresponding name is Alberti.



FIG. 10. Polydore Alfonsi, Calasima, Corsica (profile view).



FIG. 11. Polydore Alfonsi, Calasima, Corsica (full-face view).



FIG. 12. Jean-Thomas Alfonsi, Calasima, Corsica (profile).

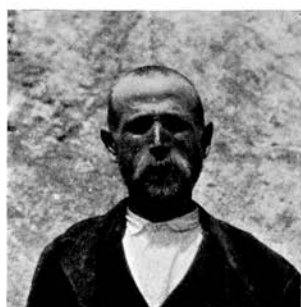


FIG. 13. Jean-Thomas Alfonsi, Calasima, Corsica (full-face view).

The physical characters of the men of the Niolo have been very fully described by Dr Girard in a communication made at Cherbourg in 1905 to the French Association for the Advancement of Science (pp. 737 et seq.). In that communication I find that the frequency of such types as those represented by the two men described by me, has been fully recognised by Dr Girard. The same author gives an excellent bibliography of the information in regard to the physical anthropology of Corsica. Here I will only mention that one of the earlier contributors to the subject (Dr Jaubert) mentions the occurrence of blond individuals, but does not regard this as important, believing the frequency to be small, and the occurrence to be in a few coast-towns only. Later researches shew that this opinion must be very greatly modified. Again, Dr Fallot has written an excellent article on the same subject, and from this I have borrowed a map (Fig. 1), exhibiting the distribution of the different values of the cephalic index in Corsica. From this it appears (and subsequent research has only confirmed the conclusion) that the Niolais possess on the average the most dolichocephalic heads in Corsica.

At Asco, the state of affairs is very different, and one is surprised at the diversity of type exhibited, and especially at the relative rareness of blond individuals. I measured at Asco the first five men I came across, and although two had blue eyes, in no single case was fair hair present. In stature the men are inferior to the men of Calasima, the head is more distinctly mesaticephalic, and the occipital projection backwards is less marked. Not only so, but the whole aspect differs in a manner hard to express, but yet unmistakable. As regards stature, these men provide an average still well above the higher (1650 mm.) of the two mean values given for Corsicans by Dr Jaubert. In respect of head-form, the maps published by Dr Fallot, shew that Asco and Calasima are in districts distinguished by differences in the cephalic index of precisely the kind noted by me.

The outstanding point of greatest interest is the occurrence of the tall blond men in the Niolo. This phenomenon places Corsica in an absolutely exceptional position among the Mediterranean islands. As lately as six years ago, we were led to

expect to find tall blonds in Sphakia, the most elevated and inaccessible province in Crete. To-day, thanks to Mr Hawes' researches, we know that the Sphakiots are not blond, nor are they the tallest of Cretans. (Whence Huxley derived his misleading statement on this subject, I have not been able to ascertain.) In Sardinia, the Barbagia district, that most closely comparable to the Niolo in Sardinia, provides recruits distinguished in the Italian army by the smallest stature of all Sardinians, combined with the maximal frequency of brunette traits. Are we then to consider that the aboriginal race in Corsica was tall and blond, while that of Sardinia was short and dark? This is a point upon which the discovery of prehistoric skeletons can perhaps enlighten us as regards stature, though of course no light can be thrown on the problem of complexion. The prehistoric crania from Corsica known to me are but two in number, and as regards form, their indices place them in the brachycephalic group. In Sardinia (so far as my researches have extended) the prehistoric crania resemble the modern examples in most respects¹. We may then perhaps learn something of the possibilities or probabilities by an appeal to Corsican history.

That history differs in details only from those of most islands in the Mediterranean. The native population, high-spirited and intelligent even now after years of oppression, has retained these qualities throughout historic time: but it seems to have been often disturbed by internal dissension at such epochs as did not see the various factions united to resist some common foe. Of the latter, the list is long and varied. The earliest hazy records mentioning Phoenicians from Asia Minor, Phoceans, Greeks from Laconia, Carthaginians and men of Ligurian or of Etruscan race, most probably recall the establishment of trading dépôts, or at most the arrival of fugitives and refugees from the countries thus enumerated. Much more definite are the descriptions of the Roman conquest and occupation: after this come records of invasion by Goths, Longobardi, Vandals and Byzantines. To these succeeded Saracens or

¹ My more recent investigations reveal the occurrence of great diversity of cranial form in the one important prehistoric series of Sardinian crania yet obtained, viz.: that from Anghelu Ruju, examined by Professor Sergi of Rome.

Moors, whose dominion is still memorialised in the expression, common even to-day, "the time of the Moors," while the negro-head in the arms of Corsica recalls the same memory. The Saracens had next to defend their possession against the Franks of Charlemagne, and were finally ejected. The Frankish lords quarrelled with one another, and a long period of unrest is marked by the rise of certain powerful families, some of these owning an Italian (Roman) origin. Meanwhile the contest between Genoese and Pisans had commenced, and Corsica fell under the dominion of the former in 1348. Next came Frenchmen accompanied by the Turkish levies of Suleiman the Magnificent, but after many sanguinary encounters, the Genoese remained in possession. Under Genoese rule and in the 17th century, a colony of Greek refugees from Turkish oppression in the Peloponnese, was planted, partly at Ajaccio, partly at Cargese in the same region, where their descendants are said to be still recognisable. These Greeks have contributed to the advance of civilisation and culture in Corsica, and Dr Stefanopoulis in particular may be mentioned as having introduced into the island, the practice of inoculation (against smallpox). I find no details of the locality or numbers of the Albanian colony mentioned by Deniker as having settled in Corsica.

In the 18th century, a romantic episode was the native revolt (against the Genoese), under a German adventurer from Westphalia, a certain Baron Theodore Neuhoff. This story may be recalled, if only on account of the pathetic ending of this short-reigned and self-styled king, who was dethroned, and took refuge in London. After a period of imprisonment for debt, he died in London, to be buried in "S. Anne's Churchyard, Westminster," where his tombstone inscribed "Theodore, King of Corsica," is said to be still extant.

If Theodore's influence was ephemeral, that of Pasquale Paoli has endured to this day. Born at Rostina, close to Ponte Leccia, Paoli is the hero of Corte, where he founded a University in 1764. But after these brief periods of independence of Genoese rule, followed by the voluntary transfer of Corsica to the British Empire, the island fell into the hands of the French, who have now possessed it for more than a century.

From the foregoing sketch, an idea may be gathered of the number of ethnical elements from age to age introduced into Corsica. Writers of authority have differed greatly as to the effects of the successive invasions, and latterly have tended to disregard the influence they might have exercised upon the earliest aboriginal stock. With this view, I incline on general grounds to agree, but admit that just now I do not see how the instances of Sardinia and Corsica are to be reconciled. But I am confident that further research in the Niolo would clear up these matters considerably. In conclusion, I may mention one point that struck me very forcibly. In Corsica, the Niolo not excepted, the name Grisoni is of frequent occurrence. In the Niolo, I stayed with a man of this name: a fair-haired, blue-eyed man of stature slightly above the Corsican average. He did not possess "la tête de Corse," but was bullet-headed. Now I find that in 1734¹, the Genoese hired a number of "Swiss and Grisons" to repress a revolt. It was thought that these mountaineers would be well-fitted to cope with the native Corsicans. The experiment failed, but possibly the mercenaries may have settled in Corsica.

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¹ Cf. Boswell, *infra*, under Literature.

Corsicans. April, 1909.

REGION AND NAME		Age	Stature	Head length	Head breadth	Cephalic Index	Hair colour	Eye colour
<i>Calasima</i>								
1.	Jean-Thomas Alfonsi ...	45	1726	187	150	80.2	Fair	Blue
2.	Polydore Alfonsi ...	50	1751 (average 1739)	194	143	73.7	Fair	Greenish blue
<i>Asco</i>								
1.	Pierre Doncarli ...	18	1751	181	147	81.2	Jet black	Dark brown
2.	Mathieu Mercuri ...	19	1701	186	149	80	Jet black	Dark brown
3.	Michel Francesceti ...	48	1676	183	143	76	Dark	Blue
4.	Jean-Thomas Ferrandini ...	29	1726	192	145	75.5	Jet black	Dark brown
5.	Joseph Andr�� Martini ...	50	1751	201	148	74	Dark grey	Blue
Average of 5		—	1721	—	—	78.7	—	—

CONTENTS

OF PROCEEDINGS, No. LIV.

VOL. XIII. (NEW SERIES, VOL. VII.) No. 3.

	PAGE
Runic Inscriptions. H. M. CHADWICK, M.A. (n. p.)	223
An Ancestor's Escape from France after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. C. P. ALLIX, M.A.	224
The Shops at the West End of Great St Mary's Church. G. J. GRAY .	235
On Four MS. Books of Accounts kept by Joseph Mead, B.D., Fellow of Christ's College, with his pupils between 1614 and 1633. Dr JOHN PEILE, F.B.A.	250
Ancient Footgear. W. B. REDFERN	262
Notes on Corsica (Plates XXVI—XXIX, Three Text Figures). Dr W. L. H. DUCKWORTH	267
Greek Coins and Syrian Arrowhead from a Roman Cemetery at Godmanchester (Plates XXX—XXXII, Six Text Figures). Rev. F. G. WALKER, M.A.	280
Sixty-ninth Annual General Meeting	291
The Zodiac Club (Plate XXXIII). R. BOWES	292
General Index for Vol. XIII.	319