FURTHER MEGALITHIC DISCOVERIES AND EXPLORATIONS IN THE ISLANDS OF MALTA DURING 1892 AND 1893, UNDER THE GOVERNORSHIP OF SIR HENRY A. SMYTH, K.C.M.G.

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Great Stones at Cordin, Malta.

The terraces of Cordin promontory were known long ago to be strewn with the relics of cyclopean structures entombed under mounds of earth and rubbish which had been allowed to accumulate upon them. The task of clearing these remains was undertaken so far back as 1840; but for reasons unaccountable to me the work was abandoned very shortly after it was begun. In my report of 1882 on the Phœnician and Roman Antiquities, the attention of Government was again called to the importance of exploring and preserving these ancient remains. Renewed excavations were begun in May, and continued to December, 1892.

The remains at Cordin are all great stones. They are lying on the slope of the hill towards the inner creek of Marsa, in the north-western extension of the great harbour, and towards the entrance to the French creek. The whole place seems to have been a large oriental sacred area, like that of Hagar-Qim and Mnaidra in Malta, and that of the Ggantia in Gozo.

Dr. A. L. Adams[1], in 1870, from the apparent smallness of the Cordin stones as compared with the other Maltese megalithic monuments, inferred that they were uncovered dolmens like those in France. Houel, in 1787, had also deemed them dolmens and circles, only the upper portions of the exterior enclosure and one of the lateral apses of the Ggantia being then visible. Now that they are cleared out, the Cordin great stones show the same configuration as all our like monuments, but having

[1] *Notes on the Nile Valley and Malta.*

formerly been exposed to safe pillage, they have suffered enormously from devastation, and have been greatly reduced in size. When their recent exploration was begun they were found in such a disordered condition that their appearance was only that of confused piles of tall stones mostly buried under the soil, without the least configuration to denote their original arrangement. A great many of the monoliths and tall stones had been broken and carted away to wall up the terraces of the newly cultivated lands in that locality, and to macadamise the neighbouring roads. In this state it was with extreme difficulty that the original plan of some of the cyclopean buildings, once existing on this spot, could be made out, an accurate survey taken, and a description detailed in this memoir.

Of the great stones at Cordin five groups could be distinguished, but of only two of these could a plan be formed, as the others did not present any structure. From extension of area, number of chambers, and situation, one of these two groups was evidently the principal sanctuary of the place. Around it, within a stone's throw from one another, on the bare rock, are the remains of the other four fanes, resembling those on the plain of Hagar-Qim and of the Ggantia. The trend of the walls of many of the internal chambers and recesses in the main building could be traced in many instances by laying bare the foundations and by the symmetrical position of other compartments *in situ*. Its general configuration was arrived at by a comparison with other better-preserved megalithic monuments existing in the two sister islands.

The accompanying plan in drawing No. 1, executed by Dr. F. Vassallo,[1] the Assistant Librarian, will explain the general appearance of the main monument as it now stands, and will help the description of its interior. The structure still *in situ* is represented by the portions coloured sienna, the parts wanting are shown by hatching.

The main building stood nearly on the summit of the Cordin knoll. Its remains show the same oval-shaped chambers and hidden recesses typical of all our megalithic monuments. Its internal configuration, however, is quite

[1] *Voyage Pittoresque*, Vol. iv, Pl. ccl.

peculiar, and different from the fan-shaped form of Hagar-Qim, or the usual juxtaposition of two pairs of chambers like the Mnaidra, the Melkart temple, it-torri Gawar, and the Ggantia. Two long suites of chambers, communicating with each other, and forming two separate parallel and adjacent rows looking north-west, constitute this monument. These chambers are very similar in plan and dimensions to those of Mnaidra and Ggantia, but not in position.

The extreme length of the enclosure now cleared is 121 feet, and the extreme breadth 100 feet. Its area is 12,100 square feet, but very probably the original extent was far greater, as indicated by some large stones beyond the present enclosure, and apparently connected with it. The greatest length internally of the left row from the main entrance is 118 feet.

Five chambers, A, B, C, D, E, form the left row, the more complete and less disturbed of the two rows. The entrance of chamber A, the first of the row, looks towards the great harbour, like that of Mnaidra and that of Hagar-Qim to the cove of Wied-iz-Zurrieq. The tall stones siding the entrance to this chamber have been removed, but its apsidal form is retained although deprived of the *septa* or screens separating its two opposite lateral apses. Its longer axis measures 38 feet, its shorter one 22 feet. As in all our great stone constructions, this first chamber is comparatively plain and without recesses.

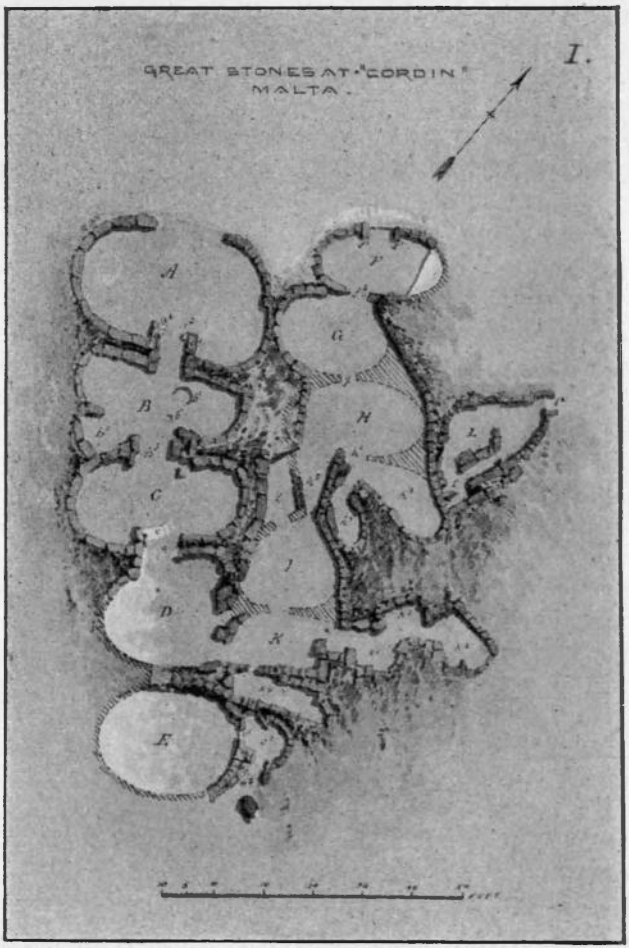
Four tall stones (a^1), two on either side, line the passage to chamber B, opposite the entrance to A. Two monoliths (a^2) form the broken jambs of the doorway.

Chamber B measures 33 feet by over 16 feet. Outside the screen, which originally cut off the right apse of this chamber, there are two holes sunk in the ground, one circular the other rectangular, marked (b^1), like those in the Ggantia, where they are similarly situated. In the left apse there is a recess (b^2) like that at Mnaidra, which interferes with the trend of the following chamber.

The passage from this chamber B to C is marked b^3. The perimeter of chamber C is entire, as are also the perimeters of A and B. It measures 33 feet by 13 feet; its figure is regular, but its internal arrangement has not been preserved.

The passage to D has two sills, marked *cc*, its level being above that of the others.

Chamber D measures 23 feet by 21 feet. The now incomplete left apse of this chamber can be traced by the foundations of the destroyed wall indicated on the plan



by hatching. Several stones mark the completion of the right apse.

The last in the suite of chambers of the left row is marked E. Its right apse is nearly complete, but the wall of the left apse has been entirely removed. It is 27 feet

long and 21 feet wide. In the wall of the right apse there is one of those mysterious hole-piercings, marked (e^1), so common in our great stone monuments. This opening communicates with the recess beyond (e^2), separated by two sills from a further one (e^3). The whole has the appearance in arrangement of the oracular recess of the inner apartment of Hagar-Qim discovered in 1885, but is of ruder construction.

The distribution of the numerous fittings of the interior right-hand row of chambers appears to have been originally much more complicated, as is the case with all our monuments of a similar nature. The great number of small recesses penetrating the chambers interfered a great deal with their typical configuration, hence this enclosure has been subject to much disturbance, and its internal arrangement to many alterations. The internal length of this right row is 100 feet, and its average breadth 50 feet. Apparently there were originally five chambers, F, G, H, I, K, all except chamber F being in juxtaposition with the corresponding ones of the left row, though without any intercommunication.

The entrance to F, like that to A, looks to the great harbour and the Marsa. Two tall stones (f^1), *in situ*, are the jambs of this doorway. Its enclosure is complete with the exception of a portion of the right apse. It is 25 feet long and 12 feet wide.

The passage (f^2) marks the entrance to the next chamber, G, which measures 22 feet by 15 feet. The left apse of this chamber still remains; the right one has entirely disappeared.

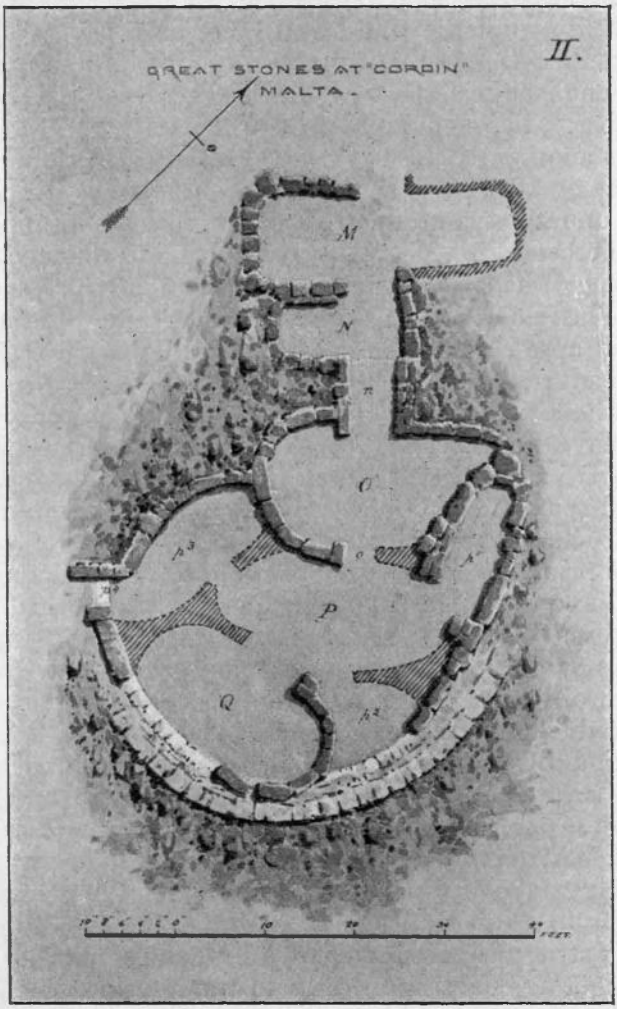
Chamber H, measuring 24 feet by 15 feet, is entered by (g). The configuration of this chamber is much interfered with by the passage (h^1) to the recesses (h^2 and h^3), and the entrance (h^4) to the next chamber.

Outside chamber H and its recesses, to the right there is an adjacent enclosure (L) with a recess (l^1), which has its entrance (l^2) quite independent of that of chamber H. It looks like a cattle-shed or sheep-pen.

The elliptical configuration of the fourth chamber I in the upper portion is not well defined; it was apparently 20 feet by 16 feet. A recess (i) is entered from this chamber.

Chamber K has retained its shape even less on account of the recesses (k^1, k^2, k^3, k^4), anastomosing with it.

Drawing No. II presents the plan of the next minor group as it now stands, the trend of the missing walls



being hatched in sienna. It is an envelope girding several chambers, with an entrance looking north-west like that of the main group. Its extreme length is 72 feet, its breadth is 52 feet.

M, the first chamber of this group is 28 feet by 10 feet. Its left apse is entire, its right one can be traced only by the foundations.

The left apse of N is preserved in its entirety; the right one appears to have been removed, probably for some outside adjacent chamber which no longer exists. Its length, if complete, would be 18 feet by 6 feet.

Chamber O, entered from (*n*), retains its left apse; its right one is interfered with by the recess (p^1) in the next chamber. It measures 22 feet by 13 feet.

P is another enclosure entered from (*o*). It measures 25 feet by 12 feet. Its configuration can be traced by the foundations, but it has otherwise entirely disappeared. Three recesses (p^1, p^2, p^3), were annexed to this enclosure. Recess (p^3) had an outside communication (p^4).

The last enclosure Q has retained its right apse entire; the left apse is completely destroyed. Its length is 22 feet, its breadth 12 feet.

In these two groups of great stones, the lower courses only have been preserved. The upper layers have disappeared altogether, so that the spring of the partially domed roofs of the lateral apses cannot be observed as in Hagar-Qim and the Ggantia.

The principle upon which the Cordin great stones are built is quite different from that of the great stone structures of Hagar-Qim. The exterior and interior facings of the lower courses of stone in Hagar-Qim are formed of large slabs hewn on either side and edge, nicely adjusted sidewise together, and placed upright in the direction of their longer dimensions like Stonehenge. These two facings are propped internally and externally at the lower end by large stones, which also form an ornamental basement. They are bound together above by string layers. which complete the building and give stability to a work of regular masonry. Besides compactness of structure, Hagar-Qim and Mnaidra present unity of design, a general refinement in the interior which is in keeping with the exterior, and an attempt at decoration. In the remains at Cordin, the lower course of stone from front to rear is formed of massive blocks ranged close together on their broad side on the bare rock and heading through the thickness of the wall. These blocks are

alternate with tall stones placed vertically, the spaces between being pointed in with smaller stones or rubble. No signs of corbelling forward or of contracting structures are observable in the walls of the lateral apses. Their interior is very rough, and, though exhibiting an apparent regularity of form, the work is of rude design and unskilful execution. The more rude are apparently the older monuments. The great stones at Cordin, like those of Ggantia, may therefore point to an earlier and more primitive era than those of Hagar-Qim and Mnaidra. If Fergusson, the author of *Rude Stone Monuments, their Age and Uses*, is right in believing that the more recent of our great stones belong to the era of the Trojan war, 1,200 years B.C., the Cordin great stones are most probably the work of the earliest colonists in Malta, about 1,500 years B.C.

The promontory of Cordin, on which the remains just described stand, is in close proximity to the shores of the inner and commodious creek of the great harbour known as il-Marsa. That harbour was of old, as we are informed by Diodorus Siculus, one of the safest shelters in the Mediterranean for local shipping and the numerous foreign-going vessels. Thus the country round and near it formed the principal thoroughfare for native and foreign trade.

Along the shores of Marsa many balneal establishments were erected. The accommodations and mosaic pavements of these baths have been frequently met with in bygone times, and recently during the extension of the gasworks in June 1889.

The Romans took great care of and kept in proper repair the mole along the great harbour, of which considerable remains were discovered by Comm. Abela and the Marquis Barbaro. One of its milestones is recorded in the inscription No. VIII of Class XIV in the Report on Local Roman Antiquities, 1882.

Just by the foot of the Cordin promontory there were found in 1768[1] extensive remains of large stores and other premises, which in all probability were used as the Custom-house of the great harbour. There were vats

[1] Report above quoted, Sec. 102.

and stores, with a vaulted roof flanked by galleries with large entrances, with porticoes, and other conveniences, evidently intended for the storage of goods and the commodities of import and export trade. A Roman marble temple of Diana had been erected there. The marble statue and some of the pillars which adorned its shrine were recovered in 1865 and are preserved in the museum of the Public Library.

The old ethnical "Tarxien" denomination of the near village points to an early settlement of Phœnicians in the immediate neighbourhood of Cordin. Numerous pagan tombs are frequently found outside the inhabited district of Tarxien and Marsa. Two old Christian cemeteries, besides one in il-Gzira bearing a Roman inscription first published by Gualtieri[1] and another on the hillock tal-Gisuiti found in 1874, are evidence of the dense population of that part of the country in ancient times. These circumstances evidently prove the inaccuracy of Fergusson's statement that the Maltese great stones are situated inland and far away from centres of population and of the Maltese harbours. They are certainly non-Greek and non-Roman, so unrefined and ungraceful are they in execution. They show no columns, no precious marbles, no mosaic pavements, or stucco coatings embellished with frescoes, like the Greek and Roman architectural monuments in Malta and elsewhere do; and their exterior, in keeping with the interior, is not ornamented with peristyles or porticoes. They are of the same style of architecture representative of the oldest non-historic remains. With respect to the materials and the mode of their construction, the Maltese great stones have been classed with the rude megalithic antiquities of other countries; though, being worked with effective and sharply pointed metal tools, they are not strictly so.

The origin and era of the Irish, British, and other Continental great stones, the race to whose skill and power they can be ascribed, and the object for which they were designed are still subjects of great perplexity. An absolute silence of the classics, even so detailed and accurate as Cæsar and Tacitus who had the opportunity

[1] *Antique Tabulæ*, Tab. cccxl.

of seeing the Celtic great stones, the former in Great Britain and France and the latter in Germany, and an absolute want of local tradition deprive megalithic antiquities of all historical evidence. By one theory our great stones, like other rude monuments, were thought coeval with the cave-man, and so were swept into the pre-historic gulf. As two lithic ages, separated by thousands of years, have been presumed to be worked by either chipped or polished stone tools and other implements found in pre-historic caves, the Maltese great stones may belong to either of these two ages, extending over a period of possibly 50,000 years. No flint tools or arms, however, like those discovered in the Danish and other Continental finds have hitherto been met with in our natural caverns; the islands of Malta, consequently, have not as yet a claim upon the existence of man in pre-historic ages. Moreover, the blows of percussion on the walls of our great stones prove evidently that metal tools, sharp-pointed and very effective, have been used in dressing them. Rudeness, indeed, is impressed on all their parts; they show a failing attempt at linear or oval outlines, roughness in opposing surfaces of blocks, and in dimplings on the walls. In making perforations for rope-hinges to a door they attacked the jambs on the lateral sides of their corners until the borings met as in the stone ages. But our great stones offer a certain style of workmanship regular in internal distribution of details, and an attempt at ornamentation; consequently they are not the rude work of man in a savage condition.

Others have regarded the cromlechs and great stones of Great Britain and the Continent either as astronomical observatories and orreries, or law-courts, or places of assembly, or even battle-fields; and so the Maltese great stones may have been.

By some these monuments, including the Maltese great stones, were considered as temples consecrated to an ophite or other bloody worship, and the dolmens as altars on which human victims were sacrificed. But the charred bones found within our enclosures are the relics of quadrupeds, mostly oxen and sheep, not of human victims. Fergusson has very rightly observed: "The Maltese great stones are too much unlike anything else in Europe, in

Africa, and in the East. They have neither any resemblance to the Nurhogs, those of Sardinia, or the Talyots of the Balearic islands. They are so unique that no useful inference can be drawn with respect to their age from comparing them with other monuments in Greece or Europe or anywhere."

Cluverius, Busching, D'Anville, Malte-Brun, and other geographers; Commander Abela, Count Ciantar, Canon Agius, and other of our early historians, were certain that a Cyclopean race, the Pheacians, expelled from Sicily by their giant brothers the Lesthngones, were the aborigines of our islands and the builders of our great stones, which were considered by them as works of defence and called Cyclopean towers. The presence of this race of Antheuses and Orions in Malta was strengthened in the opinion of our historians by the occasional discoveries in several caverns of teeth and ribs and bones of long dimensions, which were deemed remains of our giant forefathers. Canon Agius[1] records the discovery of a giant skeleton in excavating the foundations of Fort Manoel, Malta, in the time of Grand Master Manoel De Vilhena, about 1725. This fabulous existence of our giants was grounded on one or two passages in the sixth and seventh books of the Odyssey, referring that the Pheacians, driven away by the Cyclops of Sicily from Hiperia, which was presumed to be the ancient name of Malta, were led to Corfu by Nausithons, son of Neptune, and Periboea the daughter of Eurimedon king of the giants. The Greek poet or rapsodes may have alluded to an emigration of a Pheacian tribe from Hiperia, a place now identified with an ancient town on the river Hiparis on the southern coast of Sicily, on the ruins of which Camarina was subsequently erected by the Greeks of Syracuse.

A tooth illustrated by Comm. Abela,[2] found at Gozo in 1658, was presented to Pope Alexander VII by Grand Master De Redin. It has been identified as part of a molar of an extinct species of elephant. Dolomieu[3] mentions that other teeth have been found in our islands, having a crown surface measuring 8 inches, probably of an elephant;

[1] *Gozo Illustrated*, cap. iv.
[2] *Malta Illustrata*, tavola xii.
[3] *Appendix, Par un Voyageur Francois*, 1791.

and other exuviæ of hippopotami. Since the excavation of the Candia gap in 1857, a great many molars, teeth, long bones, and other remains of proboscidians and other large quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, etc., have been exhumed from the ix-Xantin fissure in 1870 by myself; in the iz-Zebbug cave by Captain Spratt, R.N., in 1859; in the Maghalaq cave and vault in the Bin-Ghisa gap, in St. Leonardo fissure, in the Melleha valley, and in the Mnaidra gap, by Dr. A. L. Adams up to 1863; and very recently in Ghar-Dalam cavern by Mr. Cooke. These explorations, among other relics, yielded the remains of several individuals of three extinct species of elephant called *Elephas mnaidræ*, of two dwarf species called *Elephas melitensis* and *Elephas falconeri*, and of the hippopotamus. These relics undoubtedly were the teeth and the ribs of giant dimensions seen by Comm. Abela and Count Ciantar, which by the learned of their times were likewise believed to appertain to a giant race of men, a belief in their case strongly confirmed by our wonderful megalithic remains.

In Fergusson's opinion the Irish cairns, the British and German barrows, the French dolmens and cromlechs, and the finds in Denmark were, like the African tumuli, sepulchres of Gaelic and other Celtic peoples, and some of them simple cenotaphs. He estimates that human deposits have been exhumed from those monuments by the pickaxe and spade to the extent of three-fourths. Thus he contended that the Maltese great stones mark the burial-places of a people who burned their dead and were very careful of the preservation of their ashes. All the great stones, agreeably to this theory, whether in the Celtic or Maltese form, as well as the pelasgic tombs in Greece and Asia Minor, and the African tumuli, belong to one style, like the Ghotic, the Grecian, and the Egyptian, with a beginning, a middle, and an end without a great hiatus; and all belong to one unbroken period, whether prehistoric or historic. They seem to be the work of active and energetic races prompted by the same feelings as ourselves and not of an unprogressive and slothful Turanian stock.

Though some of the Celtic monuments belong even to the tenth century A.D., the more ancient ones can hardly

go much beyond the Christian era. The age, however, assigned by Fergusson to some of the Maltese great stones is that of the Trojan war, about 1200 B.C. The exterior appearance of Hagar-Qim with its two lateral domes restored would resemble, in his opinion, that of Kubber Roumeia, near Algiers, which has been ascertained to be the tomb of the Mauritanian kings down to Juba II, about the beginning of the Christian era. Fergusson grounded his theory on the numerous recesses in the internal arrangement of the more complete chambers, which he compared to cupboards with shelves for the careful preservation of human ashes. He, moreover, considered that the situation of the Maltese monuments, far away from any centres of population and from the harbours of the two islands, made it hardly worth while to enter the argument to prove that they were burial-places, and not temples in an appropriate sense. Had the learned writer obtained a full and correct acquaintance with our great stones by a personal visit, he would have observed how much the internal arrangement of chambers—recesses and other details—differs from the honeycombed appearance of cupboards and niches in a burial-place. He, moreover, had his information about the situations of our great stones from Colonel Collinson, R.E., who was in Malta on service. That officer reckoned the eight miles distance of Hagar-Qim, of Mnaidra, and of Melkart ruins, from Valletta the present capital of Malta; but he entirely failed to observe that this great centre of population was not in existence during the age of our great stones. These monuments, in fact, nearly all stand in immediate proximity to our many land-locked bays, coves and harbours along the south-east, the southern, and the north-east of Malta, which, with their mid-Mediterranean position, offered safe shelter to early navigators.

The Melkart ruins stand on the knoll overlooking the Marsa-scirocco, or vast south-east harbour, within ten minutes from St. George's Bay. That whole coast as far as Xgharet-Meduviet, Marnisi, and Deyr-Limara is full of ruins of the same description, indicating that the place was once a very populous centre. The Mnaidra and Hagar-Qim great stones are within a few minutes from the

bay and cove of Wied-iz-Zurrieq, in full view of the little rock of Filfla. The heath il-Guredi intervening between them, and sloping towards the sea, has been broken up and dressed into terraced fields, obliterating all traces of a road between the two. Still on the dykes several isolated monoliths and detached blocks of stone, presenting well-marked indications of mason-work, are visible. In the inland surrounding district and in the now derelict villages of Hal-Cbir, Hal-Xiluq, Hal-Niclusi, etc., are seen the megalithic ruins of Bir-Ġabbar, Biar-Gabrun, Biar-Blat, tal-Ghenieq, il-Hereb, and tal-Barrani, mixed up with other great stones scattered in the intervening lands. From the fact of these two important monuments being in such proximity, and from the numerous ruins surrounding them, it may be safely inferred that the place formed part of an important seaport town. The place was undoubtedly a large focus of habitation, and in my Report on the Phœnician Antiquities of Malta, fol. 24, I ventured to suggest that this was most probably the site of the original Phœnician capital of Malta. It seems that its extent was limited on the north by Hal-Xiluq, on the east by Taltami, on the south by the cove of Wied-iz-Zurrieq, and on the west by Hal-ta-Buni. It drew its supply of water from Ghayn-il-Cbira, Ghayn-il-Qadi, Ghayn-Ghliem-Alla, and Ghayn-Muxa on the west, along which stand the megalithic ruins of il-Gorgenti and San Laurenz. The primitive capital may, however, have been Cabiria, which left its name recorded by Hal-Cbir, on the skirts of which village are several megalithic structures deemed works of defence by Commander Abela. The native denomination, *Cbir*, meaning great, and traditionally preserved to the place, points out that it was a notable town and not a small assemblage of a very few habitations, as it was in the time of Mons. Duzsina and Commander Abela.

We have seen the Cordin great stones in close proximity to the inner land-locked coves in the great harbour, and in the midst of a country thickly inhabited and frequented by native and foreign populations, and so are other great stones at the Wardia, at St. Paul's, and the Saline Bay, and at Melleha in the island of Malta. The Ggantia at Gozo stands on Xaghra Hill the original Phœnician capital of

the sister island, on the side overlooking the Ramla fertile valley and bay. The Qaghan and Mrezbiet great stones are near the 'Mgar cove and the sea, in full view of Kemmuna Island. The only exception seems to be that of the Hartrum lands and it-Torri-tal-Gawar, between Gudia, Hal-Safi and Zurrieq.

The information supplied to Fergusson was thus utterly inadequate and incorrect.

Those who believed in the sepulchral character of the Maltese great stones have regarded them as princely tumuli for the resting-place of the ancient worthies of the island, not inferior to the tomb of Atreus at Mycenæ, or of that of Atalyattes at Tantalcis. The number of these worthies in Malta must have been indeed very considerable, as the great stones found in the two islands are numerous. As an evidence of fact against this theory, when the former excavations were undertaken in 1827, 1839, and 1840, some of these monuments presented a variety of stone furniture and arrangement of details undisturbed, and no traces of having been once rifled. Stone and clay figures and other stones, ornamented and sculptured, were discovered, but no cinerary urns like those found commonly in our rock-tombs. Hence no local evidence, by the circumstances accompanying their early excavation, is afforded to this conjecture, based only on what has been the case in those Celtic monuments with which the Maltese great stones have been grouped.

Some of our great stones have been exposed since their exploration to enormous devastation. Their materials have been used in levelling the ground for the upper soil of humus, and in dressing the terraces of newly cultivated lands. Still, some portions of them have been preserved with their details, and by clearing the foundations the general trend of the walls and the original extent of their *ambitus* have been traced. It is by accumulating, sifting, and comparing all their internal though scanty evidence that light may be reflected upon their history. The contents, moreover, found in some of them, especially a highly interesting inscription allusive to extensive repairs, and the traditional denomination of one of our great stones, will afford a conclusive evidence to our inference that they were destined for the public worship of the deities of

nature consecrated by the aboriginal Phœnician settlers in our islands.

All our megalithic monuments, both exteriorly and interiorly, are made of one typical form, the egg, symbolizing the universe, the upper portion the heaven, the lower the earth. Uniformity of plan and design, so simple and identical in shape and dimensions of chambers and recesses, and in details, prove that the Maltese great stones served for similar purposes and were built by the same race.

A Phœnician inscription found in the Ggantia in 1855,[1] as read by W. Wright, states that the people of Gozo island had repaired the shrines of the temples of Sadam-Baal, of Ashtoreth, and of three other sanctuaries, at the expense of the most worthy Aris the son of Yuel, the Shafat son of Zibqm, the son of Abd-Eshmun; that the sacrifice was made by Ba'al-Shillekh the son of Abd-Eshmun, and the work carried on by Ballo the son of Kln, the son of Ya'azor, superintendent of the carpenters. In the reading of Renan, the temples restored by the people of Gozo were four, and there is only a little discrepancy in deciphering some of the names of the officers mentioned. The age assigned by Renan to this inscription is between the years 350 and 150 B.C., after the expulsion of the Carthaginians from Malta by the Romans.

The arrangement of the shrine of Ashtoreth, in the left apse of the anterior area of the right hand pair of chambers of the Ggantia with the steps leading to the ædicula in which was placed the conical statue of the goddess, was seen by La Marmora in 1834, and minutely described and compared to a similar shrine at Paphos.

Tacitus and Maximus of Tyre inform us that the Venus of Paphos was a white pyramid. Sir J. Lubbock, by the conical obelisk symbolising the goddess, was led to believe that the Phœnicians had erected this shrine in their bronze age.[2] Although the monoliths siding this shrine were pulled down, still in 1881, when my Report on the Ggantia was published, all the accessories of that shrine and the conical idol were in the same apse, and there remained till 1885. The late Marquis Desain, the pro-

[1] Dr. Adams, *Notes of a Naturalist in the Nile Valley and Malta*, part iv.
[2] *Prehistoric Times*, *p.* 4

prietor of the place, thoroughly ignoring the nature of that monument, with perfidious stubbornness, in spite of the remonstrances of Government, at whose expense those remains were cleared up, ordered the removal of these interesting details in his search for Greek vases.

Two of the other shrines mentioned in the inscription above referred to were probably the circles to the north of the Ggantia drawn by Houel in 1785, and by Admiral—then Captain—Smyth in 1827; and the enclosure in front of the same ruins to the south, seen by La Marmora, and believed to be a dolmen or cromlech.

In 1885 a fragment of another Phœnician inscription was found carved on one of the tall monoliths in the left-hand hemicycle of the posterior area of the left-hand pair of chambers, deciphered by Professor Sayce, of Queen's College, Oxford, who suggested as a doubtful interpretation of it, "graving-tool of . . . . ." This evidence is a direct proof of the use of the Ggantia great stones dedicated to the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, and of their Phœnician builders.

There can be very little doubt that the ruins of Melkart belong to an old temple of the Tyrian Hercules. Two conical cippi, or pillars of saline marble, adorned with foliage of acanthus at the base, of elegant form and graceful execution, found in the Melkart ruins, bear a Phœnician inscription recording the offer to the king of the earth by Abd-Osir and his brother Osir-Shamar, sons of Osir-Shamar, son of Abd-Osir. To this Phœnician inscription is added a Greek translation, in which the Phœnician names of Osir and Osir-Shamar are rendered Dionysius and Serapion. The age assigned by Renan to this inscription is about 180 years B.C. Renan, who does not doubt that the shrines of Melkart in Malta belong to the old temple of the Tyrian Hercules, states that two like pillars in the temple of Melkart at Tyre are recorded by Herodotus (II 44) and by Sanchoniatho.

In the great stones of Hagar-Qim and Mnaidra is observable internally an identical distribution and arrangement of details like at Ggantia—similar niches for statuettes, monopode tables for the reception of oblations, lateral apsidal recesses with mysterious oblique cylindrical holes, screened from public view, and indicating

the inviolability of oracular areas; and extensive outside courts for the gathering of worshippers.

Charred bones and teeth of sheep, oxen, pigs, and dogs have been repeatedly picked up by Dr. Adams and myself in many of the chambers of Hagar-Qim and Mnaidra, and there is no difficulty in recognizing such remains, found in abundance. Such finds, coupled with evident signs of fire, seem highly suggestive that these quadrupeds have been used for sacrificial ceremonies in sub-Jove temples. An altar with a pitted surface all over, and eight small pillars springing from the corners, and adorned with two serpents; a sacred slab, presenting two coupled serpents round an egg, figuring the generative power in the religious tenets of the Phœnicians, were also recovered from these remains. Seven acephalous and grossly fat statuettes, two of them seated and wrapped in a gown covered with dotted ornaments, the five others naked and squatted on oval bases, record the ridiculous figures mentioned by Herodotus and Tertullian of the seven Cabiri adored by the Phœnicians, two of whom, Axieros and Axiokersa, were females. This suggested very happily to the learned Dr. C. Vassallo, late librarian, that the Hagar-Qim seven chambers were consecrated to Phœnician worship of the seven Cabiri, or Powerful Gods. and the great stones of Mnaidra to that of Eshmun, the eighth and latest member of the Cabirian family, according to Sanchoniatho.

The great stones at Cordin show the same topography of oval-shaped apartment, with several recesses leading off, like in all our megalithic monuments.

One principal feature of Ggantia, Melkart, and Hagar-Qim is to be surrounded by *temenos*, or smaller fanes, to shelter the national deities as in a Pantheon. So also are the great stones at Cordin.

There is no direct evidence from which to infer the particular deity worshipped in the temple of Cordin; we can only conjecture it.

A primitive Phœnician settlement in the islands of Malta, and the claim of these early colonists upon our great stones, are beyond question. The Phœnicians, like all Canaanites, hated cremation after death, and adopted proper interments of their deceased in tombs made for

the purpose, so that their great stones were simply temples for public worship in the open air. The principal national deities of the Phœnicians were Baal, the generative god, and Ashtoreth, the conceptive goddess, represented by an egg. All our Phœnician inscriptions bear direct evidence that that was the worship of our Phœnician ancestors in Malta.

Among the charges brought before the Roman Senate against Verres, Cicero mentions the sacrilegious plunder of the temple of Juno, which stood on a promontory in the great harbour of Malta. Valerius Max states that a Punic inscription in that Phœnician grand temple recorded that one of the generals of King Massinissa had taken away some ivory teeth, which were subsequently restored by the king himself. Juno is the Roman name for the Phœnician Ashtoreth and the Greek Hera. In the traditional lore of the Phœnician belief, the deities of generation and fecundity were principally worshipped. This native worship of the earliest settlers of the islands of Malta was not affected by the subsequent Greek colonists and the Romans. The Greeks, who had settled friendly with the native Phœnician folk, had, as elsewhere, Hellenized the Phœnician gods and worship. In Baal the Greeks saw their Zeus and the Romans their Jupiter, generator of gods and men. They recognised Hera or Juno in Ashtoreth, and the comprehensive form of goddesses into which the Greeks and the Romans divided the conceptive principle of nature.

As the Greeks possibly made use of Melkart temple, so they may have made use of the great stones of Cordin. Prosper Aquitanicus further informs us that Ashtoreth's temple in Africa occupied a considerable area surrounded with shrines like the Cordin great stones. These circumstances may uphold the conjecture that the great stones of Cordin formed the primitive national temple of Ashtoreth, raised by the Phœnicians on the most noteworthy and extensive area in proximity to the great harbour of Malta.

The Maltese great stones are certainly pre-Roman and pre-Greek. All considerations combine in appointing to the apparently oldest ones the very remote era of the

expulsion of the Canaanites of Phœnicia and their settlement in Malta, namely 1,500 years B.C.

The construction of some of them was certainly executed before the Phœnicians' skill enabled them to work artistically and with elegance. Others appear to belong to a more recent age, after the Phœnicians had commenced to be more refined in arts. The use of these sacred areas as places of worship lingered probably up to the second century of the Christian era, as evidence is not wanting to show that relics of heathenism existed in the two islands of Malta at that time. Ptolemy, A.D. 190, positively asserts that the worship of Juno and of Hercules in Malta was then highly renowned.[1] By Roman intolerance, by right of hereditary supremacy, and finally by mere existence, the only public worship in Malta up to the time of Constantius Chlorus was heathenism. The restoration of the temple and theatre of Apollo at Notabile took place under the Antonines. Up to the same time, the college of the Flamines Augustales was preserved at Gozo. In fact, great stones stood venerated in the northern shore of Africa and in some countries of Europe up to the eighth century. The Emperors Manlius Theodorus, and Flavius Eutropius, in the fifth General Council of Carthage, A.D. 399, ordered the total annihilation of the great stone worship. A Council at Arles in 452, another at Tours in 567, a third at Nantes in 658, and a decree of Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle in 789, destroyed that worship in France. Two Councils at Toledo, in 681 and 692, forbade that worship in Spain; and a statute of the time of Canute the Great did the same in England.

During probably the third century. the Maltese great stones fell into utter decay. The upper layers, to the height of 21 or 22 feet, were gradually removed, and only the lower courses retained the shape of the original structures. The fallen material and drifting soil accumulated upon them to the height of 7 or 8 feet, affording food for vegetation, leaving visible only the tops of the taller stones. So they were entombed at the time of Comm. Abela in 1642 and so remained until 1839, when their partial excavation was commenced.

[1] *Labbeas*, Tom. iv.