


ANTHONY BONANNO

**An illustrated guide
to
PREHISTORIC GOZO**



MZ9
P.B. 97B

 **Gaulitana**
GROWS INTO AN ENCYCLOPEDIA ON GOZO

30.2513

GAULITANA — from *GAULUS*, the Roman name for the town and island of Gozo — is a series of monographs on the history and heritage of the island from prehistory down to recent times with the aim of increasing the interest of Maltese and foreigners in the varied culture of tiny Gozo.

THREE to FOUR numbers will be published every year.

Next in
Gaulitana

**THE FIFTEEN TITULAR STATUES
OF GOZO**

(with fifteen plates in full colour)

Out after September 1986

Order your copy now

Subscribe to the GAULITANA series by sending 50c EACH for as many numbers as you would like to receive up to 10 (Lm5).

THREE ADVANTAGES

- **IMMEDIATE DELIVERY** before book is put on sale in bookshops.
- **FREE POSTAGE & PACKING**
- **INFLATION PROOF:** You will not be charged extra if due to unforeseen circumstances there will be a price increase.

Fill in the form below and send it by post or hand it in to:

BUGELLI, 50 St Lucia Street, Valletta

Tel. 24809

I enclose a cheque for Lm for numbers of the GAULITANA Series:

Name

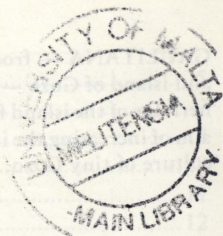
Address

Town/village-country

Telephone

Gaulitana

3



• Neolithic..... 15

• Temple Period..... 15

• Bronze Age..... 15

PART TWO..... 19

1. Gozo Museum of Archaeology: The Prehistoric Section..... 19

2. Il-Mixta at Ghajn Abdul plateau..... 21

3. Santa Verna Temple..... 23

4. Ggantija Temples..... 27

5. L-Ghar (the..... 33

6. L-Ghar ta'..... 33

7. L-Ghar ta'..... 37

8. L-Ghar ta'..... 37

9. Ta' Qigana..... 39

10. L-Imrejjiet..... 39

11. Ta' Marziana Temple..... 39

12. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

13. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

14. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

15. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

16. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

17. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

18. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

19. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

20. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

21. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

22. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

23. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

24. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

25. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

26. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

27. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

28. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

29. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

30. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

31. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

32. L-Id-Dura ta' Xagħira I-Kbira..... 41

Anthony Bonanno

An illustrated guide

to

PREHISTORIC GOZO

including seven plans and twenty eight illustrations



Victoria

GAULITANA

1986

GAULITANA — from *GAULUS*, the Roman name for the town and island of Gozo — is a series of monographs on the history and heritage of the island from prehistory down to recent times with the aim of increasing the interest of Maltese and foreigners in the varied culture of tiny Gozo.

© Anthony Bonanno 1986

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, known or yet to be invented, for any purpose whatsoever, without the written permission of the author, which must be obtained beforehand.

Editor

Joseph Bezzina
2 Ghedrin Street
Victoria, Gozo, Malta

Distributor

Bugelli Publications
50 St Lucia Street
Valletta, Malta

Correspondence should be addressed to the *Editor*. Requests for back numbers and information on subscriptions should be sent to the *Distributor*. There are *no* extra charges for overseas subscribers: packing and postage costs by surface mail to all countries are borne by the Distributor.

**Printed by
Gozo Press, Gozo, Malta.**

CONTENTS

Foreword	5
PART ONE	7
1. Gozo — geological formation	7
2. Prehistoric chronological sequence	8
• Neolithic	11
• Temple Period	12
• Bronze Age	15
PART TWO	19
1. Gozo Museum of Archaeology. The Prehistoric Section	19
2. Il-Mixta at Għajn Abdul plateau	21
3. Santa Verna Temple	23
4. Ġgantija Temples	27
5. L-Għar (the North Cave)	33
6. L-Għar ta' Għejżu	33
7. Brochtorff's Circle	35
8. L-Għar ta' Pergla	35
9. Tal-Qiġġan	37
10. L-Imreżbiet	37
11. Ta' Marziena Temple	39
12. L-Imramma Temple	39
13. Id-Dura tax-Xagħra l-Kbira	41
14. Id-Dura tal-Mara	41
15. Ta' Ċenċ Cart Ruts	43
16. Il-Ġebbla ta' Sansuna	43
17. Tas-Sruġ	43
18. Il-Haġra l-Wieqfa	43
19. Il-Haġra tad-Dawwara	44
20. In-Nuffara	44
21. Ta' Kuljat	45
22. The Cart Ruts	45
Select Bibliography	48

PLANS

* Gozo Museum of Archaeology	18
* Santa Verna Temple	22
* Prehistoric Gozo and Comino	24-25
* Ġgantija Temples	26
* Ta' Marziena Temple	36
* L-Imramma Temple	38
* Id-Dura tax-Xagħra l-Kbira	40

Gaulitana

GROWS INTO AN ENCYCLOPEDIA ON GOZO

- 1 J. BEZZINA, **The Gozo Citadel — a pictorial guide.**
- 2 J. BEZZINA, **Lourdes Home — Gozo. A story of love. 1935 - 1985.**
- 3 A. BONANNO, **An illustrated guide to Prehistoric Gozo.**

Acknowledgements

For permission to reproduce the illustrations in this book, the editor would like to thank: Royal Air Force (Crown Property), 1; the Curator, Gozo Museum of Archaeology, 2. 3. 4. 5. 19. 21; Gaulitana, 6. 7. 8. 10. 13. 14. 16. 17. 18. 22. 24. 26. 28. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35; Thomas Ashby - R.N. Bradley, 9; Directorate of Overseas Surveys - Gaulitana, 11; David H. Trump, 12. 25. 29; National Library, Malta, 15. 23; the Curator, National Museum of Archaeology, 20; Albrecht Mayr, 27.

Cover photo is by J. Bezzina.

All illustrations are copyright and none of them may be reproduced in whole or in part without the written permission of the editor of GAULITANA and their respective owners which must be obtained beforehand.

FOREWORD

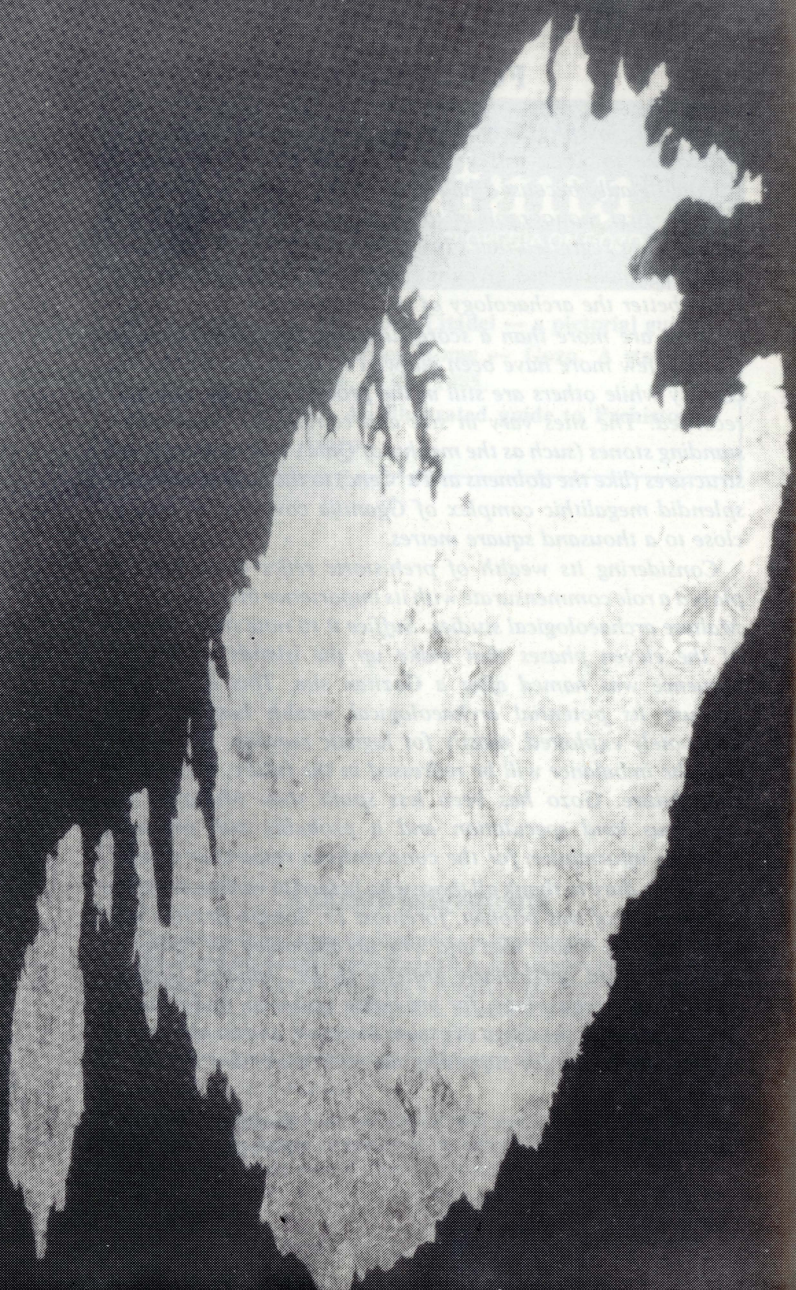
When Fr. Joseph Bezzina, editor of this GAULITANA series, invited me to write this guide to the prehistory of Gozo I accepted gladly because I had been very favourably impressed with the first monograph in this series when it appeared last year. I never regretted that decision because the preparation of this small manual has given me the opportunity of getting to know better the archaeology of our sister island.

There are more than a score surviving prehistoric sites on Gozo; a few more have been allowed to disappear within this century while others are still in the process of being officially recorded. The sites vary in size and complexity, from single standing stones (such as the menhir of Qala), through single cell structures (like the dolmens at Ta' Ċenċ) to the largest and most splendid megalithic complex of Ġgantija covering an area of close to a thousand square metres.

Considering its wealth of prehistoric relics Gozo has not played a role commensurate with its importance in the history of Maltese archaeological studies. Suffice it to note that only one of the eleven phases that make up the islands' prehistoric sequence was named after a Gozitan site. This is certainly because its potential archaeological wealth has not been adequately exploited, mostly for logistic reasons. It is hoped that the imbalance will be redressed in the future, even in the near future. Gozo has been less spoilt than Malta by the rapacious land speculation and it probably still preserves precious information for the conscientious researcher to tap.

It is my duty to thank all those who helped in various ways the preparation of this booklet, foremost Fr. Joseph Bezzina who conceived the whole idea and who accompanied me round all the sites. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Tancred Gouder, Curator of Archaeology, for providing access to, and valuable information on, the Gozo Museum material, and to Mr. Joe M. Attard of Xagħra for supplying me with important details on some sites.

Anthony Bonanno
February 14, 1986.



PART ONE

1 — Gozo - geological formation

Gozo with its 67 square kilometres of surface area is the second largest island of the Maltese archipelago and shares with Malta the latter's geological formation. Gozo's rocks are, like those of its sister islands sedimentary having been deposited on the bed of the sea of Thetis in the Tertiary period (around 25 to 7 million years ago).

At some point in time Gozo, together with the rest of the Maltese group, was forced up by tectonic movements. At various times during the Pleistocene the sea level was much lower than it is at present, so low in fact that the Maltese islands were merely the high rises on a mass of land extending southward from nearby Sicily. This continental shelf was submerged when the sea level rose during the interglacials and, finally, after the last ice age thus leaving those same land tips exposed almost precisely at the centre of the Mediterranean sea.

Working one's way down one meets a fragmented crust of relatively hard semicrystalline limestone known as Upper Coralline which often breaks up naturally into blocks of varying sizes that the Temple builders of the late Neolithic found ready for use in their impressive religious constructions. Beneath this is a thin and very uneven layer of Green Sand, but it is the underlying layer of Blue Clay which has made early life possible on the islands as it arrested the downward percolation of rain water and forced it sideways to sprout out in life-giving springs. Its predominance on Gozo is a major factor in determining the much greener landscape and greater fertility of this island when compared to Malta. This clay played also an important role in the life of primitive man as it provided the earliest building material for the wattle-and-daub and mud-brick used in domestic architecture (no trace of which has unfortunately ever been discovered on Gozo). It provided also the raw material for the production of pottery utensils and of some of the anthropomorphic figurines as well.

The layer of Globigerina Limestone below it has been, since the Temple Period, the source of an ideal building stone of a soft and easily worked texture. We find it used for the internal structures and decorated blocks inside the Ġgantija temples. Stone from the Lower Coralline layer is also sometimes used for temple construction but rarely, if at all, in Gozo.

Before the end of the Pleistocene Gozo's landscape, like that of Malta, must have had a greatly different appearance from the present one. So far no remains have been reported in Gozo of the Pleistocene dwarf elephants and hippopotami that were discovered in several caves and fissures in Malta. But it would not be too hazardous to suggest that Gozo, like Malta, must have had a much thicker tree cover, a much richer vegetation between a quarter-of-a-million years ago and man's first interference with the natural habitat of the islands some 7000 years ago.

2 — Prehistoric chronological sequence

The present sequence of the prehistory of the two islands owes its origins to the first decades of this century. Before that the Maltese megalithic temples were variously assigned to a race of giants, to Classical civilisation, and to the Phoenicians. It was the German Albrecht Mayr who, at the turn of the century, declared the prehistoric identity of those wonderful structures. As a result of his careful excavation of the Tarxien Temples between 1914-1917, the Maltese Themistocles Zammit identified two main periods for Maltese prehistory: the Neolithic and the Bronze Age. Subdivisions of the Bronze Age were subsequently identified following excavations on several sites of that age.

In the 1950s, after taking stock of all the prehistoric materials in Maltese museums and after sinking several stratified trenches on various sites, John Evans produced the still standard account of prehistoric Malta (1959) in which he retained Zammit's bipartite division and proposed a further subdivision of the two periods into phases assigning Roman numbers to the periods and letters to the phases. Later on he was to publish a very

comprehensive corpus of the prehistoric sites and materials of Malta and Gozo in his *Survey* of 1971.

In the interval David Trump conducted important and decisive excavations at Skorba which revealed two new phases and provided a series of radio-carbon (C^{14}) dates that helped setting Maltese prehistoric chronology on much firmer grounds. After these excavations at Skorba in 1961-63 it was held that there was sufficient evidence in the cultural sequence for a further major division in the chronology, namely between the culture that developed following the first settlement of man on the islands and the ensuing culture, that of the Temple builders. Thus, the first period continued to be called Neolithic and the third one Bronze Age, while the one in between, during which the Temple culture developed, was termed Copper Age to bring the whole of Malta's prehistoric sequence in line with that of Sicily and other European areas. But as the new label implies a technological development for which there is no concrete evidence in the period in question, other scholars have objected to its use and suggested new labels. The one adopted here, Temple Period, appears to be the most self-explanatory and the least confusing.

Another innovation introduced by Trump was the substitution of typesite names for letters to denominate phases. Each phase was thus named after an archaeological site where material characteristic of that phase was first found, or where it was particularly well represented.

The 1970s saw a general revision of the radio-carbon dates, following their calibration by means of another dating technique, dendrochronology (or tree-ring dating). This resulted in older dates for most of Maltese prehistory, more significantly for the Temple culture which before used to be considered an offshoot of the Bronze Age Aegean civilizations. The significance of the new general chronological pattern in European prehistory produced by the radio-carbon revolution and the subsequent calibration of its dates were fully exploited by Colin Renfrew who underlined the priority of the Maltese temples, as free-standing stone structures, to other eastern

CHRONOLOGY

(based on recalibrated radiocarbon dating)

Period	Phase	Dates B.C. c.	Gozo Type Site
BRONZE AGE	Bahrija	900- 725	Nuffara. Kuljat. Dolmens
	Borg in-Nadur	1500- 725	
	Tarxien Cem.	2500-1500	
TEMPLE PERIOD	Tarxien	3000-2500	L-Ghar. Ta' Pergla.
	Saflieni	3000-2900	
	Ġgantija	3600-3000	Ġgantija. Ta' Ghejzu.
	Mġarr	3800-3600	
	Żebbuġ	4100-3800	
NEOLITHIC	Red Skorba	4400-4100	Santa Verna Il-Mixta.
	Grey Skorba	4500-4400	
	Ghar Dalam	5000-4500	

GEOLOGICAL TIME SCALE

[Ages increase from top downwards in millions of years ago]

ERA	SYSTEM and PERIOD	SERIES and EPOCH	MIL. YRS	LOCAL FORMATION
CENOZOIC	Quaternary	Helocene	2	[last 11,000 years]
		Pleistocene		
	Tertiary	Pliocene	10	MALTA - GOZO COMINO rise from sea Upper Coralline L. Greensands Blue Clays Globigerina L. Lower Coralline L.
		Miocene	27	
		Oligocene	38	
		Eocene	55	
		Paleocene	70	
MESOZOIC	Cretaceous		130	
	Jurassic		180	
	Triassic		225	
PALEOZOIC	Permian		260	
	Carboniferous		340	
	Devonian		405	
	Silurian		435	
	Ordovician		480	
	Cambrian		570	
EOZOIC	Pre-Cambrian		3490	

Mediterranean cultures. In consequence Renfrew suggested an autochthonous evolution and flowering of the Temple Culture triggered off and sustained by a particular social system, the chiefdom society.

A return to the old diffusionist pattern, with ultimate origin in Mesopotamia of the Ubaid stage (fifth millennium B.C.) has been advocated by Euan MacKie but has so far received little support from more recent research.

● Neolithic

Human life on Malta and Gozo started with the **Għar Dalam** phase (c. 5000-4500 B.C.) after a group of immigrants crossed from Sicily, using some pretty reliable sea-craft, and settled on the two islands. They were farmers and in order to extend their agriculture to their adoptive islands they had to ship the first specimens of domestic animals and seeds over the 90km stretch of open sea that separated them from Sicily. They also brought with them some stone tools and a characteristic pottery with very close parallels in contemporary Neolithic cultures of southern Sicily. Similarities have been identified mostly with Stentinello, but more recently even closer parallels have been claimed with pottery from Monte Kronio, a site further west on the southern coast of that island, not far from Agrigento.

This pottery, known as *Impressed Ware* is characterized by geometric patterns impressed or incised on the surface of the soft clay before firing. Some motifs are achieved by impressions made by the rippled edge of sea-shells, others by series of jabs produced with the finger-nails or a pointed stick or bone. The most common shapes are a small, deep, round-bottomed bowl and a globular jar with a short tapering neck. The pottery found at *Il-Mixta* (2) belongs to this phase but some claim that it is of an even purer Stentinello pedigree than any other *Għar Dalam* pottery found elsewhere. If this were true, would it mean an earlier settlement in Gozo than in Malta?

The next two phases are named after Skorba, a site near Mgarr (Malta) excavated in the early 1960s. **Grey Skorba** (c. 4500-4400 B.C.) derives its label from the rather dull,

undecorated pottery of greyish hue which in time came to replace the impressed *Għar Dalam* ware. Eventually the same fabric started to be given a bright red coating from which the name of the last phase of the Neolithic is derived, that is **Red Skorba** (c. 4400 - 4100 B.C.). The shapes continue to be more or less the same and no decoration is applied. Bowls and jars are by now more angular and flat-based and a characteristic shape is a kind of ladle with a horn-shaped handle. Also characteristic are the trumpet-like lugs. Trumpet-lugs, ladles and red-slip, all have parallels in the contemporary *Diana* culture of the Lipari islands and Sicily.

These similarities go a long way in providing evidence for close and frequent trade links between the Maltese Neolithic farmers and their counterparts in Sicily, commercial ties that were maintained not only throughout the Neolithic, but even in the following period with its otherwise unparalleled cultural development. Further proof of this frequent commercial intercourse is the apparent total dependence of the Maltese islands on Sicilian raw-materials for stone implements: flint and lava came from that island while obsidian, for superior cutting instruments, was imported from Lipari, as well as Pantelleria (probably via Southern Sicily). What commodities moved in the opposite direction is still unascertained but a learned guess seems to be perishable products, like food and textiles.

We do not know how the Neolithic farmers disposed of their dead in Malta and Gozo even though some scattered human bones have been found in corresponding levels at *Għar Dalam* and *Skorba*. The first signs of a religious belief, however, appear in the last phase of the period on the site of *Skorba*. These consist mainly of small, fragmentary clay female figurines with marked sexual attributes. Together with other features, these figurines identify the building they were found in as a religious shrine.

● Temple Period

The ceramic production of the next cultural stage, the **Żebbuġ** phase (c. 4100 - 3800 B.C.), is completely different from that of

	Ordovician	480
	Cambrian	570
EOZOIC	Pre-Cambrian	3400

the previous phases. It is characterized by distinctly new shapes (the most typical being a pear-shaped jar) and new decoration techniques, consisting mostly of lines either painted or incised on the surface of the clay. The incised lines are often filled with a white or red paste. Even the clay is different being either dark mottled or light yellowish buff.

Although the material culture and trade links of the *Żebbuġ* phase are no different from those of its predecessor, this extraordinarily radical change in the ceramic kit has been taken to mark a clear break in the cultural sequence, indicating a new wave of immigration from Sicily which replaced the previous population. The new agricultural population, after a modest start inspired by the cultural background of their still unidentified original homeland, was gradually to set on a path of very independent cultural development leading to the magnificent Temple civilization of *Ġgantija*, *Haġar Qim* and *Tarxien*. The type-site near *Żebbuġ* (Malta) provides the first evidence of collective burial in artificial rock-cut tombs which, according to Evans, were later to inspire the shape of the temples above ground. The *statue-menhir* found in one of the *Żebbuġ* tombs provides the first manifestation of the religious beliefs of the new-comers. Whether this artistic representation is linked with those characteristic of the more developed stages of the Temple culture is not easy to say.

Mġarr, named after a temple site on the edge of the small village of *Mġarr* (Malta), denotes a short transitional phase (c. 3800 - 3600 B.C.). Pottery shapes tend to be simpler and less varied than those of the previous phase and the decoration seems to be a development on that of the *Żebbuġ* ware. The narrow incised lines of the latter are replaced by broad cut-out bands. The patterns are commonly made up of curved lines.

Ġgantija phase (c. 3600 - 3000 B.C.), named after the well-known site in Gozo, represents an important turning point in the cultural evolution of prehistoric man on both Malta and Gozo. To this phase belong the earliest datable temples and the first two, if not three, of the stages of development in their ground

plan: the lobed or kidney-shaped plan (Mġarr East), the trefoil plan (Skorba, Kordin etc.) and the five-apsed plan (Ġgantija South, Tarxien East).

The pottery shapes of the *Ġgantija* phase become more and more varied with some forms obviously deriving from ones typical of the previous phase. We now meet, for example, squat jars with a large tronco-conic neck, bowls with everted rims, shallow dishes, shouldered cups and bowls, and ovoid neckless jars. The more unexpected novelty is in the decoration technique which is achieved by scratching lines on the surface of the pot after firing. The most characteristic pattern is the *comet motif*: two curved lines joined by a small circle at one end. Other patterns, such as a chequer-board one, are produced by cross-hatching that is covered over by a red ochre paste.

Saflieni (c. 3000 - 2900 B.C.) constitutes another short transitional phase. Its name is derived from the site in which the awe-inspiring Hypogeum is situated. On one hand it carries on the *Ġgantija* pottery shapes and scratched decoration and on the other new types of decoration are introduced as well as a few new shapes, the most typical being the biconical 'Saflieni bowl'.

Tarxien phase (c. 3000 - 2500 B.C.) marks the apogée of the Temple civilization, though some students of Maltese prehistory claim there are signs of decline towards the very end of the phase, just before its sudden and mysterious disappearance. This phase is named after the temple-complex of Tarxien, a couple of kilometres inland from the Grand Harbour. To it belong the last two stages in the development of the temple plan. The western temple at *Ġgantija* represents, together with other units in Tarxien, Hagar Qim and Mnajdra, the penultimate stage, when the apse at the far end is replaced by a shallow niche. The final stage is represented by only one specimen, the central unit at Tarxien with its three symmetrical pairs of apses.

The Temple Culture reaches its climax in this phase not only in the perfection and exquisiteness of pottery craftsmanship but also in sculptural decoration, both free-standing and in relief. Spiral reliefs resembling those which are so abundant at Tarxien

once adorned the Ġgantija temples. These have faded almost beyond recognition but were very evident in the years immediately after the excavation when they were reproduced by the artist Charles de Brochtorff (1829).

Tarxien phase is characterized by a rich variety of pottery forms and decoration techniques. Most shapes tend to be angular with almost no handles or lugs, a notable exception being the peculiar *tunnel lugs*. The clay tends to be well prepared and fired very hard. The surface of the scratched ware is also highly polished. Scratched decoration remains standard but becomes more elaborate and elegant, the most popular motif being a kind of *volute*. Other vessels are decorated with applied discs against a white background, scales and rustications.

Several attempts have been made to unravel the mystery of why and how this splendid civilization came to such a sudden end after reaching such heights of artistic and architectural achievement, but none of the theories suggested so far is entirely satisfactory. The most plausible one, however, seems to be that of a religious mass hysteria, perhaps prodded on by some charismatic *prophet* who convinced the population to abandon the islands following a series of years of drought that ruined their thriving agricultural economy.

● Bronze Age

Whichever the explanation of the disappearance of the Temple people, we know that the islands were repopulated, possibly after an interval of several scores of years, by an entirely different people carrying a totally different culture. They were, in contrast with their predecessors, a warlike people using copper and bronze tools and weapons. They disposed of their dead by cremating instead of burying them. In fact, the first phase of the Bronze Age, **Tarxien Cemetery** (c. 2500-1500 B.C.) is represented by a cremation cemetery that was located right in the midst of the ruins of the abandoned Tarxien temples. Except for the possession of metal tools, the culture of the *Tarxien Cemetery* people was much inferior to the previous one. This is evidenced by the relatively uninspiring pottery which is less well shaped and consists mostly of open urns, bowls and jugs,

sometimes in groups of two or three joined together. The surface is pebble-burnished and often decorated with incised geometric patterns. In the same *Cemetery* layer at Tarxien the Maltese archaeologist T. Zammit found also a series of extremely stylized human figures in a seated posture, only two of which are recognizably female, the rest being covered with rectilinear incised patterns. One such figure shows a chequer-board design while the others bear what looks very much like a primitive Maltese cross.

The only architectural features that can be associated with this people are a number of small monocellular structures, called *dolmens*, a few of which are to be found in Gozo. Similar dolmens are common in the Otranto region of southeast Italy. They consist of a horizontal, roughly shaped slab of limestone supported on three sides by blocks of stone standing on end. Their purpose is still a mystery, though it is quite possible to have been a funerary one.

The second Bronze Age phase, **Borġ in-Nadur** (c. 1500-725 B.C.) takes its name from the site of a fortified village close to Birżebbuġa in the Marsaxlokk harbour. The village consisted of a cluster of oval huts planted on a triangular promontory which was retained to be naturally defensible on the two steep sides, but had to be fortified by a massive wall of Cyclopean style on the flatter side. Other *Borġ in-Nadur* villages are known both in Malta and in Gozo: they are almost invariably on high flat hills like the one of *In-Nuffara* (20). Very typical of this phase are shallow bottle-shaped pits in the ground which were used probably either for grain or water storage. One can still see a few of these on the *Nuffara* plateau, but about a hundred or so of similar cavities were discovered in 1860 during the reconstruction of the road leading up to the Gozo Citadel.

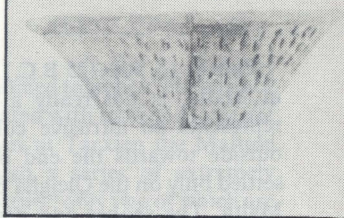
Typical of the pottery of this phase is a shiny red surface that has a tendency to flake. Its decoration consists of zig-zag geometric patterns formed by deeply cut lines more often than not filled with a white paste inlay. Shapes are varied, mostly open forms, the most characteristic being a two-handled chalice on a high conical foot, and bowls with axe-shaped handles.

Bahrija (c. 900-725 B.C.) named after another settlement site in Malta, is not really a separate chronological phase but represents an intrusive cultural group that moved in from outside towards the end of the *Borg in-Nadur* phase. They settled only on the Qlejgha promontory at Bahrija in the west of Malta. The shapes and decoration of the pottery suggest an origin or a strong cultural influence from Iron Age southern Italy, Apulia or Calabria. The pottery has a black or grey surface decorated with chiselled lines like the *Borg in-Nadur* pottery. The effect, however, tends to be richer with a preference for zig-zags and meanders.

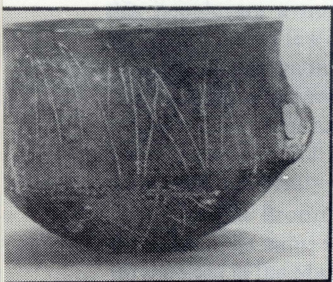
- Gozo's archaeological antiquities are housed in *Casa Bondi*, a seventeenth century house in the Citadel restored in 1937. It was inaugurated on May 30, 1960. A close look at the exhibits on the ground floor will help the visitor to understand better the preceding introduction to the prehistory of the islands and the following guide to Gozo's prehistoric sites and monuments, surveyed in chronological order.
- The following abbreviations are used:
 N — North E — East c — circa (about) p — page
 S — South W — West m — metres st — street
- Note that section numbers — in black spots — concur with those on map in the central pages.



2. Biconical cup decorated with branched spiral design from Santa Verna



3. Deep dish covered with five to six rows of pitted decoration from Santa Verna

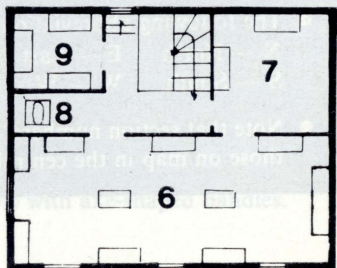
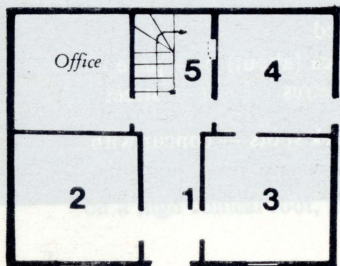


4. Carinated bowl with polished surface of reddish-buff colour from L-Ghar



5. Shouldered bowl with curvilinear decoration from L-Ghar ta' Ghejzu

6. Gozo Museum of Archeology



PART TWO

① — Gozo Museum of Archaeology. The Prehistoric Section

Access: *The Museum is situated just behind the old gate of the Gozo Citadel. From the main square of Rabat, simply follow the signs to the Citadel. For a complete guide to the Citadel, confer The Gozo Citadel, a pictorial guide, the first number in this GAULITANA series.*

Admission: (Tel. 556144). Daily 8.45 - 15.15 (October 1 to June 15), 8.30 - 13.30 (June 16 to September 30). Entrance 15c children 7c5. A comprehensive day ticket giving you access to all public Museums and to the Ġgantija Temples cost 30c, children 15c. Closed on public holidays: January 1, March 31, Good Friday, May 1, August 15 and December 13 and 25.

The barrel-vaulted entrance hall (**Room 1**) is decorated with old prints of the Ġgantija Temples.

Room 2 to the north (to the left) is devoted to the Neolithic and the Temple Period with a selective display of pottery, mostly sherds, from Ghajn Abdul, Santa Verna, the ta' Ghejzu, ta' Pergla, and l-Ghar caves at Xaghra and a tomb in the same area. The pottery from Il-Mixta is still inadequately published. It is thought to be even closer to Sicilian *Stentinello* ware than *Ghar Dalam* ware. Certainly, these sherds offer a much richer variety in their decoration than *Ghar Dalam* material from any other site. One fragment preserves two of a row of concentric circles that decorated the outer rim of a bowl. The Santa Verna temple showcase contains archaeological materials from different layers on that site, ranging from the earliest phase of the Neolithic (*Ghar Dalam*) to the last phase of the Temple Period (*Tarxien*). One cannot help noticing the absence of *Grey Skorba* and *Red Skorba* wares that are so well represented in the Museum in Valletta. Worthy of note are the four beautiful pieces of obsidian tools of foreign importation. One other item of definitive foreign origin is the red ochre lumps of which are seen among the stuff from the Xaghra tomb. Red ochre was widely used by the Temple Culture people for various purposes, such as pottery decoration, the drawings inside the Hypogeum and, occasionally, on limestone sculpture.



7. *Il-Mixta* caves at Ghajn Abdul Plateau

8. An internal view of the South cave



Room 3, opposite, is entirely dedicated to the Ġgantija temples a model of which is displayed in the centre of the room. The stone pillar beneath the window, sometimes referred to as *betyl*, could have very well been a phallic symbol. The larger stone slab next to it, also from Ġgantija, has a long relief carving of a snake along its narrow end. The snake is normally associated with divinities of the underworld or with fertility rites in ancient religions. The two limestone heads with puffed cheeks probably belonged to statues of the stylized obese type. Unfortunately they do not provide us with any help in the identification of the sex of these figures. The showcases display pottery items and other objects from the same site. Noteworthy are the fragments of plaster painted over with red ochre, which provide evidence for the internal plastering of the Ġgantija temples, the stone balls which probably served as rollers for the transportation of the large stone blocks, and a sherd from a bowl decorated with incised rows of curious birds in flight.

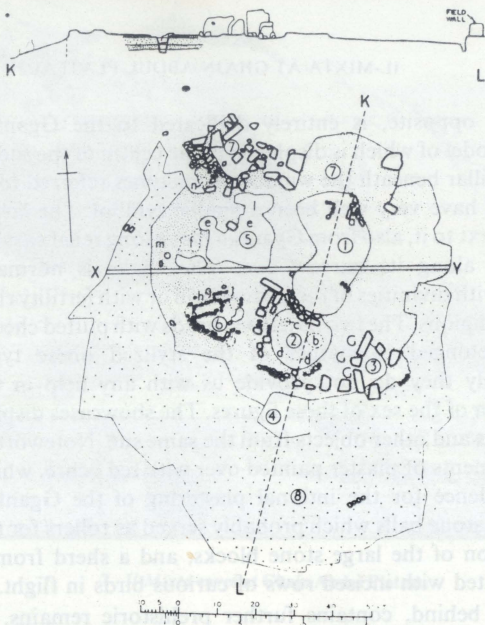
Room 4, behind, contains further prehistoric remains, in particular from the Bronze Age, recovered from the Xagħra temples, In-Nuffara, Rabat and elsewhere. Note the characteristic incised geometric decoration of the *Tarxien Cemetery* and *Borġ in-Nadur* pottery described above. Note also the anchor-shaped weights from a silo pit at in-Nuffara: these were probably loom-weights for weaving.

The rest of the Museum is devoted to later Maltese archaeology described in the first booklet in this GAULITANA series.

② – Il-Mixta at Ghajn Abdul plateau

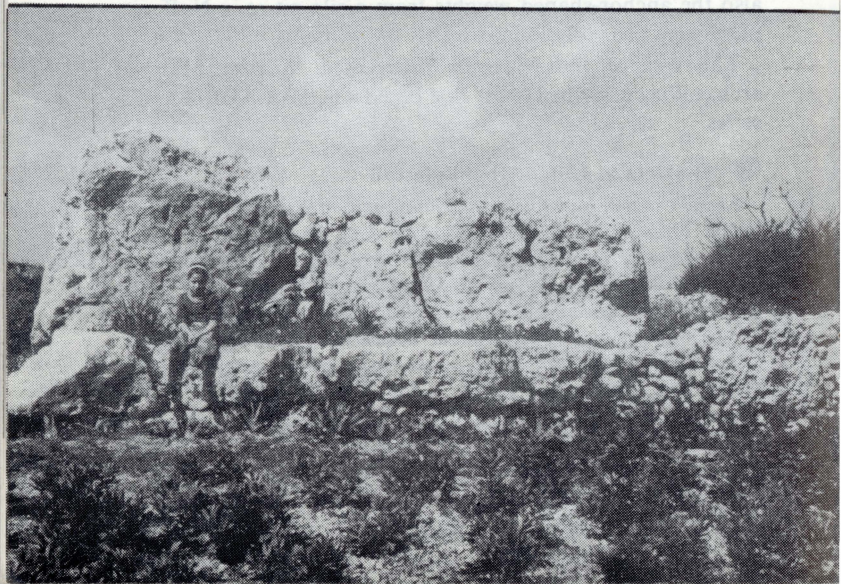
Access: From Rabat, take the southwest road to the village of Santa Luċija. From the village square proceed along Ghajn Abdul St to the north (right of church) and up Għar Ilma Hill. The site is on the northwest side of the Ghajn Abdul plateau with which it is often confused. The plateau itself is easily recognizable from the white scar and gaping hole created by the modern hard stone quarry. A footpath running beneath the north lip of the plateau brings you right beneath Il-Mixta caves.

It is in actual fact one huge overhanging shelter hewn



9. Santa Verna Temple (after Ashby-Bradley)

10. The megaliths in situ at Santa Verna



naturally on the side of the flat hill and separated into two caves by a natural pillar and a man-made wall. The south cave is known to have been inhabited till as late as the 1950s and one can see that it was well equipped with *bedrooms*, stone benches, a stone hearth sunk in the floor and stone troughs. Access to the cave was through a regular door in the wall screening it from the outer elements.

The pottery deposited with the Museum Department, which was retrieved without competent supervision, does not seem to have been discovered inside the south cave as there seem to be no recent disturbances on its floor, whereas that of the north cave appears disturbed in various spots.

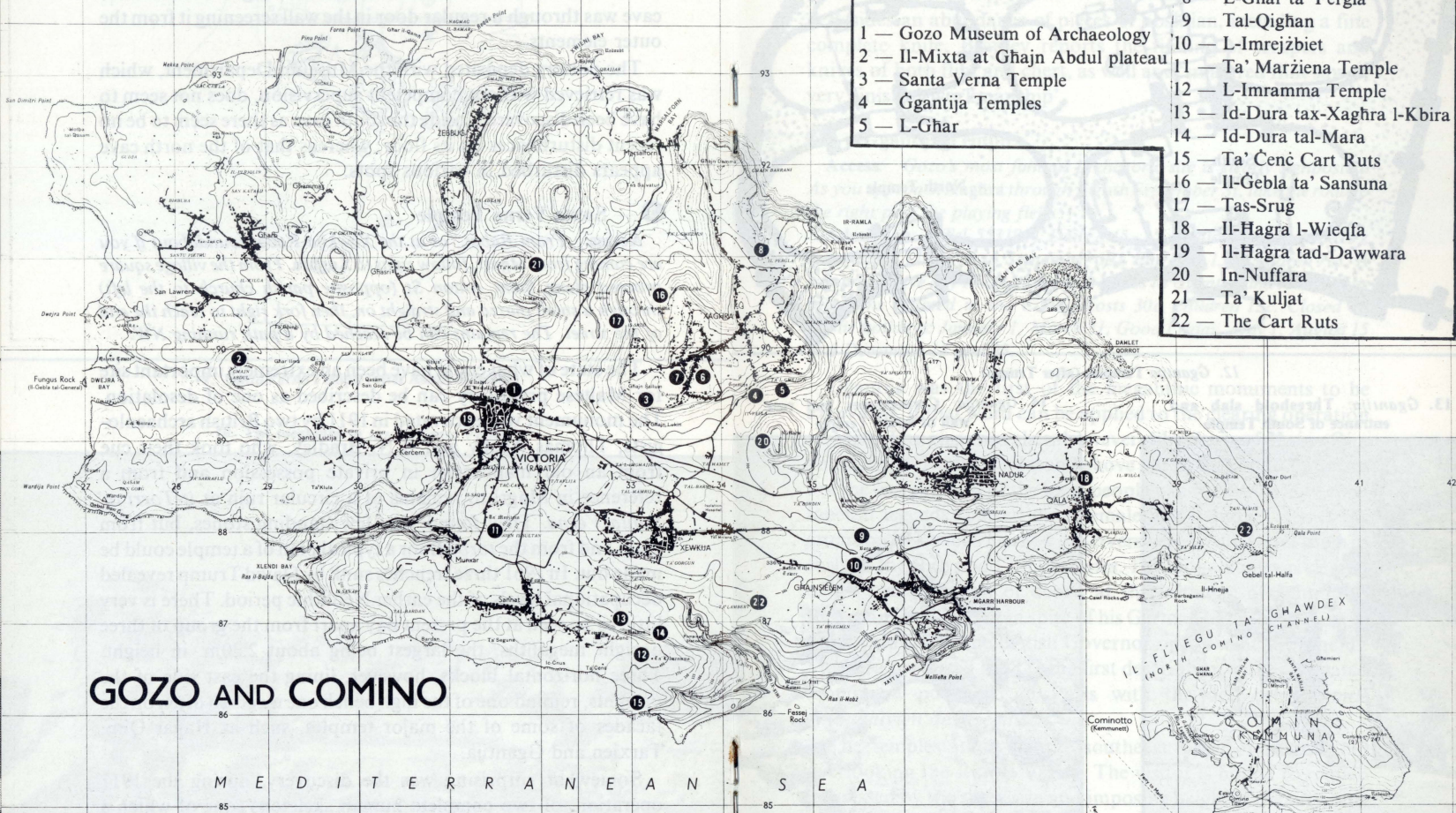
3 — Santa Verna Temple

Access: From Rabat, or at the Xewkija-Rabat roundabout if you are coming from Mgarr, follow signs to Xaghra. From the village square proceed along Saint Anton St (opposite parish church to the left) through a small piazza and straight on, then fork right to reach the end of the street. The remains can be reached by a path running NW.

The state of what could have been an extremely important site for Maltese prehistory can be described as one of desolation. The monument was excavated in 1911 by two British archaeologists, Thomas Ashby and R.N. Bradley, who took their cue from an old manuscript in private possession and from a reference in Magri to remains of a circular ruin at *it-Torri ta' Santa Verna*. They found very few standing stones, but from them and from the *torba* floor a typical plan of a temple could be made out. In 1961 three trenches sunk by David Trump revealed occupational levels of the earlier Neolithic period. There is very little to be seen at the present day apart from the group of three upright megaliths, the largest being about 2.20m in height. Three horizontal blocks, however, lining the east side of the uprights, remind one of the high bench one meets so often on the facades of some of the major temples, such as Haġar Qim, Tarxien and Ġgantija.

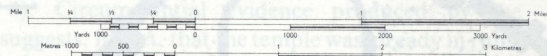
Somewhat surprising was the discovery, during the 1911 operation, of two complete human skeletons (one of which a child) and parts of at least three others in an enclosed area of the

M E D I T E R R A N E A N S E A



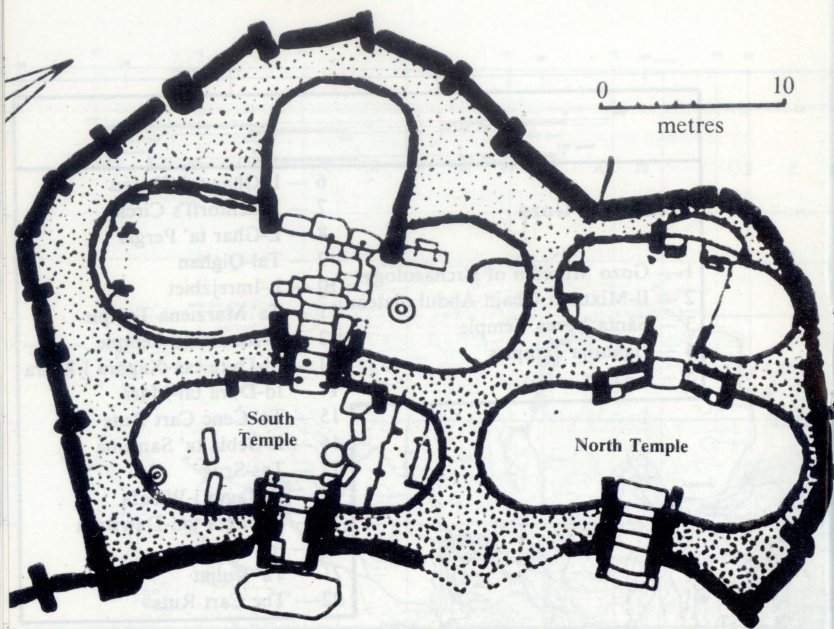
GOZO AND COMINO

M E D I T E R R A N E A N S E A



Prehistoric Gozo

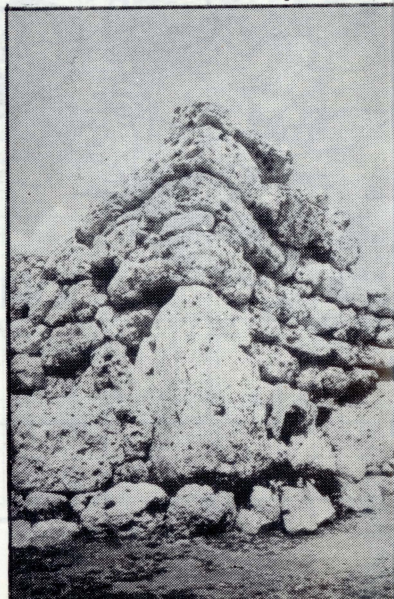
- 1 — Gozo Museum of Archaeology
- 2 — Il-Mixta at Għajn Abdul plateau
- 3 — Santa Verna Temple
- 4 — Ġgantija Temples
- 5 — L-Għar
- 6 — L-Għar ta' Ghejżu
- 7 — Brochtorff's Circle
- 8 — L-Għar ta' Pergla
- 9 — Tal-Qighan
- 10 — L-Imrejbiet
- 11 — Ta' Marżiena Temple
- 12 — L-Imramma Temple
- 13 — Id-Dura tax-Xagħra l-Kbira
- 14 — Id-Dura tal-Mara
- 15 — Ta' Cenc' Cart Ruts
- 16 — Il-Ġebbla ta' Sansuna
- 17 — Tas-Sruġ
- 18 — Il-Haġra l-Wieqfa
- 19 — Il-Haġra tad-Dawwara
- 20 — In-Nuffara
- 21 — Ta' Kuljat
- 22 — The Cart Ruts



12. Ġgantija Temples (after Trump)

13. Ġgantija: Threshold slab and entrance of South Temple

14. Ġgantija: Cornerstones and rear wall of South Temple



site (area 6). Circumstantial evidence produced by the excavation suggests, in fact, that the temple was already in ruins when the burials took place and that, therefore, they belonged to a later period. Another unusual feature was a cobble floor which surrounded the temple area on three sides.

Besides an abundance of pieces of obsidian, including a fine complete knife, Bradley reports the finding of scrapers and knives of both flint and chert, as well as a 'small red flint saw of very finished workmanship'.

④ — Ġgantija Temples

Access: *Gozo's most famous prehistoric site is clearly signposted. As you approach Xaghra through Eighth September St, take the road to the right past the playing field.*

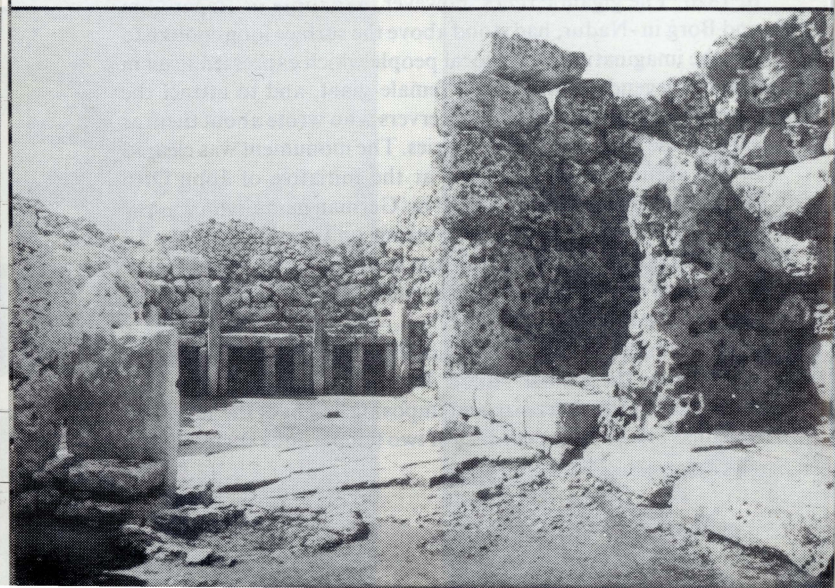
Admission: *(Tel. 553194). Daily 8.45 - 15.15 (October 1 to June 15), 8.30 - 13.30 (June 16 to September 30). Entrance 15c, children 7c5. A comprehensive day ticket giving you access to Ġgantija and to all public Museums situated in the Citadel costs 30c, children 15c. Closed on public holidays: January 1, March 31, Good Friday, May 1, August 15 and December 13 and 25.*

Ġgantija was the first of the megalithic monuments to be *excavated*, if that word can be applied to the clearing operation of 1820. The gigantic relics, however, like those of Haġar Qim and Borġ in -Nadur, had stood above the surface long enough to fire the imagination of the local people which expressed itself in fanciful legends centred on a female giant, and to attract the attention of curious learned observers who wrote about them as early as the 16th and 17th centuries. The monument was cleared of the accumulation of debris at the initiative of John Otto Beyer, an Englishman in spite of his German name, who was the representative of the British Governor on Gozo at the time. L. Mazzara produced in 1827 the first description of the excavated monument published in Paris with the odd title *Temple Antediluvien des Géants*.

The temples stand on the southeast slope of Xaghra hill overlooking the Ramla Valley. The visitor is bound to remain impressed by the sheer size and imposing height of the surviving remains. The complex consists of two temple units enclosed by a



15-16. *Ggantija*: South Temple, second section, left apse: Niches with capstone and (in foreground) circular hearth for the eternal flames; from an engraving, 1840s, by Lemaitre/Paris, above, and in 1980, below



single outer wall. The two temples do not communicate between them but have each a single entrance on a common facade in front of which is a very extensive plaza. The benches that once lined the facade indicate that some rituals must have taken place outside the temples, on this plaza, rituals perhaps connected with celestial forces: the sun, the moon or the stars. The left-hand corner of the facade is preserved to a height of about six metres. Beyond it a small niche reminds one of a more spacious but less well preserved room on the far right of the Tarxien temples with a set of mysterious holes on its floor. Between the two entrances a good section of the facade has tumbled down. It takes only a little imagination to set the huge amount of stone blocks back in place and view the spectacular facade in one's mind's eye.

The outer wall, incorporating some of the largest, one would say gargantuan, blocks ever used in Maltese buildings is solidly built with alternating headers and stretchers. The inner walls, on the other hand, are constructed of very irregular boulders reaching extremely precarious heights. Originally the resulting rough surface was plastered over and painted red. The space between inner and outer walls was filled with debris for major cohesion. It should be noted also that coralline limestone is used throughout at Ġgantija except for the large slabs of globigerina limestone that flank the corridors leading to the apses.

The **South Temple** has a five-apse plan and is manifestly the older of the two, as well as the larger and better preserved. Entrance to it is over a huge flat threshold slab. A stone block with a basin hewn in it partly obstructs the entrance. A hole in the inner floor slab could have served for pouring libations whereas the four holes on each of the inner upright slabs almost certainly held crossbars. This apparent need to secure the only access to an otherwise impenetrable enclosure suggests motivations of protection and safe-keeping of whatever was contained inside.

In the first apse to the right are the fire-reddened remains of a circular stone hearth beyond which is a low screen consisting of a semi-circular step flanked by two rectangular *altars* the left



17. Ġgantija: Outer wall of South Temple with alternating headers and stretchers

18. Ġgantija: Rear niche and back wall of North Temple



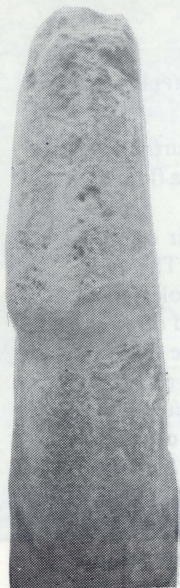
one still preserving traces of spiral decoration. A further step leads to a trilithic niche. The opposite apse has a torba floor and contains only two erratic blocks and a stone bowl.

A high step leads to the second, and larger, pair of apses through a central passage paved with stone slabs. The apses themselves have only a torba floor. Four circular holes in the entrance floor probably invited the pouring of liquid offerings before entry in this part of the temple. The apse on the right has another circular hearth. Two rows of small uprights originally met in a semicircle, similar to an animal pen. Opposite, on the rear of the left apse are three niches complete with capstones which some interpret as suggesting a triple divinity, a triade.

The larger apse at the rear of the temple is on an even higher level, the high threshold presenting a pitted pattern on the outer face. A floor slab in front of it bears an inscription whose characters are very similar to those of an alphabet devised and attributed to the temple culture by Grognet de Vassé, the 19th century antiquarian who designed the Mosta church and published an extraordinary book linking the Maltese temples with the lost Atlantis.

Though later than its companion the **North Temple** was also built in the Ġgantija phase, as was confirmed by the excavations carried out in 1954. It is also considerably smaller but with a more evolved four-apse plan having its rear apse replaced by a shallow niche. The entrance is very similar to that of the first temple, only the threshold is narrower and shorter. Even the flanking uprights carry holes intended probably for holding crossbars to secure the doors. The purpose of the two small hollows on the surface of the third paving slab is not clear whereas the two holes pierced in the rear edge were almost certainly rope-holes for manoeuvring the block at the construction stage. The last paving slab has two small hollows which recall the one in the same position in the south temple (libation holes?).

The first pair of apses are very regular even though not mutually symmetrical. Judging by available evidence they never seem to have contained anything of interest except for two



19. The Ġgantija betyl (1m high)



20. Stone head of globigerina limestone with broad face and full cheeks from Ġgantija



21. The Ġgantija snake



22. L-Ghar ta' Ghejzu and scattered megaliths

unusual *altar niches* on either side of the passage to the inner apses. There is, unfortunately, little to see even in the rear apse, namely the altar arrangement in the left apse and the rear niche, the latter being spectacularly dwarfed by the huge boulders of the outer wall behind it.

Surprisingly little archaeological material derives from these impressive buildings most of which is housed in the Gozo Museum of Archaeology. The visitor is consequently intrigued by scores of questions on what went on inside and in front of them, questions the answers for which can only be supplied by his, or his guide's, imagination.

5 — L-Ghar (the North Cave)

Access: *A cave hewn in the Upper Coralline limestone lies to the north of the Ġgantija temples, Xaghra, just across the road from the modern gate of the complex.*

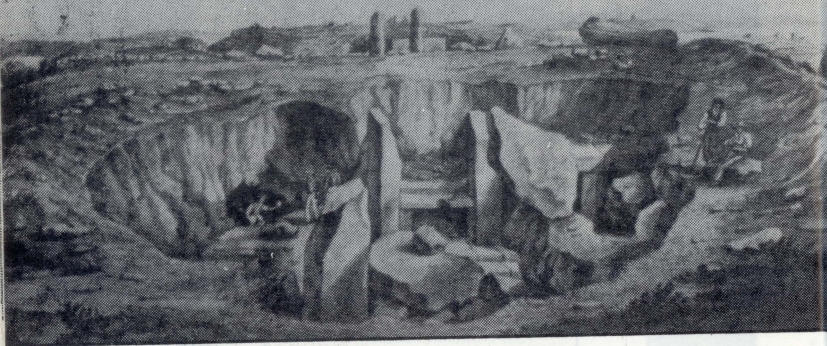
It was discovered in 1949 by workmen engaged in quarrying. One reaches it by a steep ramp that leads down to a chamber which is somewhat kidney-shaped in plan and of very rough workmanship. Originally, it was probably a rock-cut tomb but it might have served as the temples' rubbish pit in the *Tarxien* phase since it yielded a great quantity of material of that phase. A few sherds of the *Ġgantija* scratched type were also recovered together with fragments of a human skull and some animal bones.

6 — L-Ghar ta' Ghejzu

Access: *Some 300 metres to the west of Ġgantija, beyond the main road leading into Xaghra (Eighth September St) is the ta' Ghejzu cave, a natural cave about 13m long and 6m wide at its widest point and accessible through a circular opening in the ceiling on one end and a narrow shaft on the other.*

Its floor is about 1.60m below the surface of the rock. It is surrounded on all sides by natural roughly hewn recesses. When it was cleared in 1933 the cave yielded large quantities of potsherds all of the scratched *Ġgantija* style, some with abundant traces of red pigment.

Another depression, more squarely cut, on the rock surface



23. Brochtorff's Circle (Brochtorff)

24. The megaliths at tal-Qighan



towards the south seems to lead to another chamber but its exploration is hindered by a fully grown fig tree. No material is reported to have come from it.

Megaliths lie scattered in the field some having been displaced in recent years while others are still *in situ*. In the early 1970s Trump could still identify one apse which he attributed to a temple.

7 — Brochtorff's Circle

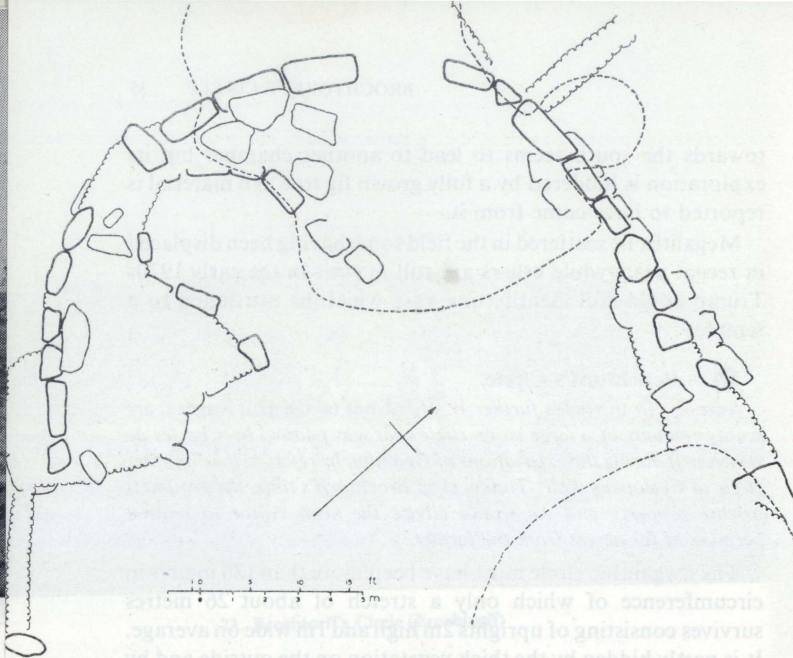
Access: *In the fields further W of L-Ghar ta' Ghejzu, Xaghra, are scanty remains of a large stone circle that was painted by Charles de Brochtorff during the excavations of Ġgantija; he refers to it as 'another circle of Cyclopean wall'. Today, as in Brochtorff's time, the ground is private property and we would advise the keen visitor to request permission for access from the farmer.*

The megalithic circle must have been more than 120 metres in circumference of which only a stretch of about 26 metres survives consisting of uprights 2m high and 1m wide on average. It is partly hidden by the thick vegetation on the outside and by the high soil level on the inner side. The rest of the circle is outlined by modern field walls which conceal some surviving megaliths. In one of his water-colour views, Brochtorff shows an excavation being conducted right in the centre of such a circular stone formation; in the cavity other megaliths are shown including an altar-like structure. A man is also depicted coming out of a cave with a human skull in hand. The location of the Ġgantija temples in the distance against the background of Malta and Comino seems to confirm the identification of the remains shown in this painting with this site.

Close by in 1912 Temi Zammit discovered prehistoric burials impregnated with red ochre in two separate tomb chambers, one of which is still accessible. The red sludge had been mistaken for *blood* by the local farmers. The pottery found in these tombs is now kept in the Gozo Museum.

8 — L-Ghar ta' Pergla

Access: *From Xaghra village square, proceed down Racecourse St (right of church) and Marsalforn St. At the Y junction turn right (or left*



25. Ta' Marziena Temple (after Trump)

26. The megalithic blocks at ta' Marziena



if you are coming up from Marsalforn) into Masri (= Egyptian flax) St – also reached following signs to Calypso Cave. Then turn into a lane going NE towards Pergla valley. L-Għar is close to the Rđum tax-Xagħra next to a deep shaft and must be approached with caution. It is besides on private ground.

A visit to this site is not to be encouraged indiscriminately and should be undertaken with great caution since a modern deep shaft cutting through the cave renders its exploration rather hazardous. The cave itself consists of a gallery extending for some 13 metres in a northeasterly direction from a circular hole, about 1m in diameter which at the time of discovery in 1913 was covered with a large stone. Pottery of the Ġgantija and Tarxien phases was recovered together with stone and bone tools. Bones included an almost complete human skull and animal bones of sheep, pig, ox, rabbit, dog, birds and even tortoise.

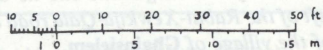
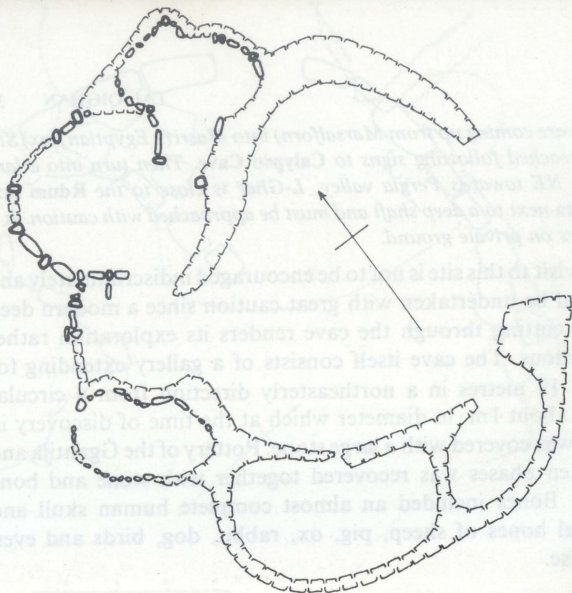
9 — Tal-Qighan

Access: *The ruins of this megalithic site lie on a slightly raised plateau on the left of the Rabat-Xewkija-Qala road about 700 metres to the northwest of the village of Ghajnsielem.*

Also known as Borg il-Għarib the remains consist of two groups of megaliths which might have originally been parts of the same monument. They have never been excavated and do not seem to fit in a recognizable plan. The more consistent group, preserving slabs of considerable size (c. 3m. high by 2m. wide), stands on the southeast corner of the plateau. The wall forms an obtuse angle with one line of megaliths running in a northeasterly direction, and another in a westerly direction. The field inside the wall is on a higher level suggesting that it could have been a section of the outer wall of a temple. The western group of smaller and more scattered megaliths line the edge of the plateau where it falls away steeply on the north and northwest sides.

10 — L-Imreġbiet

Access: *The site is to the south of Tal-Qighan, on the opposite side of the road, precisely on the right of the lane going into Ghajnsielem village.*



27. *L-Imramma* Temple (after Mayr)

28. The oval court at **tal-Imramma**



Here a small enclosure of modestly sized megaliths (c 1-1.50m high) form a fairly regular circle about ten metres in diameter. The megaliths stand on flat slabs which survive even where the uprights have disappeared. The site has never been excavated and, like its companion, has not been dated.

11 — Ta' Marziena Temple

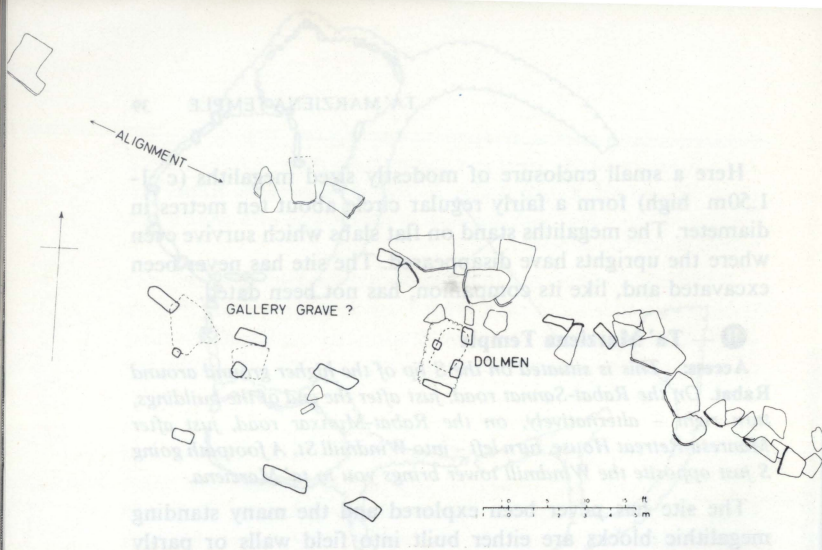
Access: *This is situated on the S lip of the higher ground around Rabat. On the Rabat-Sannat road, just after the end of the buildings, turn right – alternatively, on the Rabat-Munxar road, just after Manresa Retreat House, turn left – into Windmill St. A footpath going S just opposite the Windmill tower brings you to ta' Marziena.*

The site has never been explored and the many standing megalithic blocks are either built into field walls or partly covered by carrob and prickly pear trees. In spite of that curvilinear wall alignments can be recognized and a plan of them drawn by Trump in 1960 reveals a long semi-elliptical stretch of wall with the open side facing east. An arrangement of stones within the enclosed area suggests the shape of one or two apses of a temple. Several *Ġgantija* and *Tarxien* phase sherds can be observed on the soil surface.

Another passage a few metres to the east of the one taken to reach the previous site leads to a field lying on the edge of the ridge very close to the described remains. Here alignments of megaliths suggesting small lobed chambers project slightly from the soil and are hardly discernible. Most of the stone arrangements have prickly pears growing inside them which might not be doing them much good. Bird-trapping devices on the site, on the other hand, have incurred no apparent damage to them.

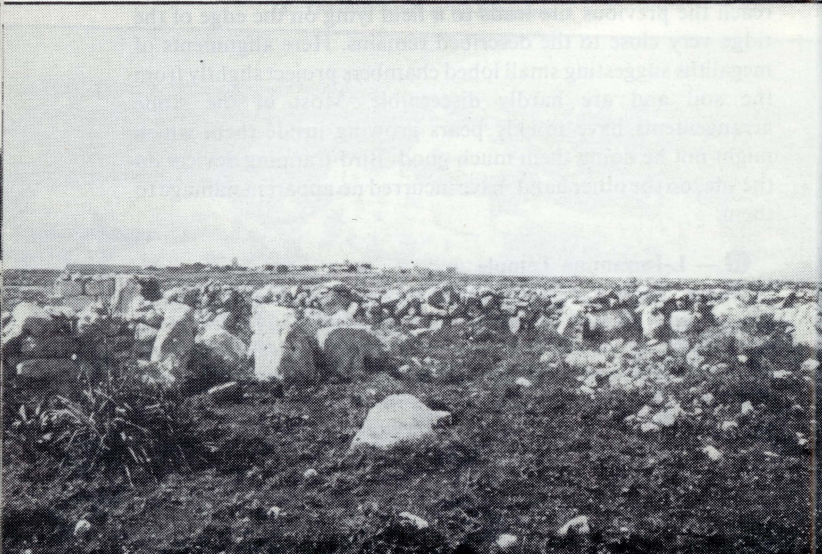
12 — L-Imramma Temple

Access: *From Rabat, follow signs to Sannat; at the village square fork to the left and follow signs indicating Ta' Ċenċ, past ta' Ċenċ Hotel and the old reservoir. Ta' Ċenċ is a rocky plateau some 145 metres above sea level (just 50 metres less than ta' Dbiegi, Gozo's highest point), with sheer sea cliffs to the S. The prehistoric sites are concentrated on the E end. The most prominent is certainly L-Imramma temple – reached by*



29. *Id-Dura tax-Xaghra l-Kbira* and adjacent megaliths (after Trump)

30. The same megaliths *in situ*



going some 600 metres E from the old reservoir and then turning S (to your right). It is located midway between two lanes.

Called also *it-Torri* this scatter of remains lies on the barren and wind-swept Xaghra l-Kbira in the ta' Ċenċ area. The site is not very inviting as any visitor would tell whether it is visited in the peak of summer or on a windy winter day; pleasant weather in spring and autumn, however, help to make it much more welcoming. The visitor will also find it terribly difficult to make some sense of the stone arrangement; it is even hard to distinguish ancient walls from modern ones. The plan produced by the German Albrecht Mayr in 1897-8 is very helpful in this respect. At the present time a modern rubble wall formation, which probably covers the old ones, encloses a sort of oval court with a series of more or less oval rooms to the north where parts of the original walls are still visible. The general impression is of a temple of the primitive type, not dissimilar to the small Mgarr East one.

13 — Id-Dura tax-Xaghra l-Kbira

Access: *A short distance E of the just mentioned old reservoir; and very close to the lip of the E escarpment.*

Id-Dura in the Maltese language certainly refers to the small dolmen perched almost at the very edge of the escarpment about 200 metres to the east of the old Ta' Ċenċ reservoir. The dimensions of the capstone given by Thomas Ashby in 1913 were 1.75 m by 1.10m with a thickness of c. 0.45m. A plan of the dolmen and the surrounding remains prepared by Dr Trump in 1960 shows a rough alignment of boulders along the edge of the escarpment and two parallel lines each consisting of three upright slabs to the west of the dolmen. The latter, unparalleled in Malta, have been compared by Trump to megalithic gallery graves in Sardinia and southeast Italy.

14 — Id-Dura tal-Mara

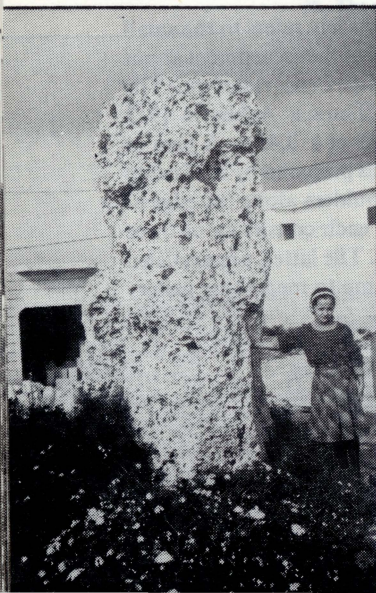
Access: *This is another small dolmen about 400 metres to the E of the other Dura.*

The capstone is also 0.45m thick but the other dimensions are

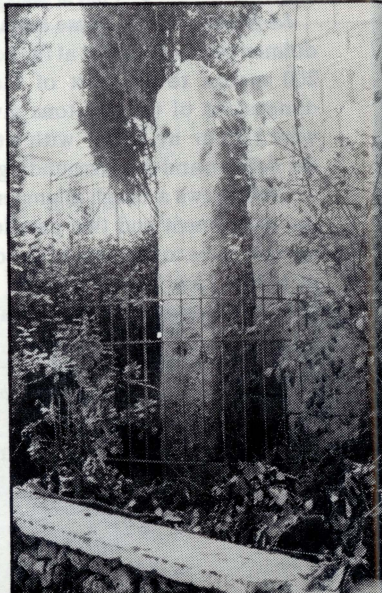


31. A dolmen: *id-Dura tal-Mara*

32. *Il-Haġra l-Wieqfa, Qala*



33. *Il-Haġra tad-Dawwara, Rabat*



somewhat larger than those of its neighbour (2.25 × 1.80 m). It is supported by narrow slabs standing on end.

15 — Ta' ĆencĀ Cart Ruts

Access: *In the same area, some 400 metres W of the old reservoir and almost on the edge of the sea cliffs, there are the mysterious cart ruts.*

Their presence here, in this remote and bare landscape, adds to their mystery. **Confer also section 22, below.**

16 — Il-Ġebbla ta' Sansuna

Access: *From Rabat, follow signs to Xaghra; from the village square proceed along Church St (opposite parish church to the right), at the crossroad turn right into Bullara St, then take first turn left into Xerri Grotto St and again right into Ġnien Imrik St. Il-Ġebbla is enclosed between the houses on the left hand side just before the Cornucopia Hotel.*

Visible through an iron gate — unless the key has been acquired from the Museum authorities beforehand — this monument consists of a huge, very irregular slab of coralline limestone, some 4m in diameter, supported only on one end. It is probably a partly collapsed capstone of a dolmen. No other signs of prehistoric life have been recorded on this northern projection of the Xaghra plateau.

17 — Tas-Sruġ

Access: *From the Xaghra village square, proceed, as previously, along Church St until reaching a Y junction. Proceed along Kortoll St (to your right) up to its end upon Xaghra's promontory.*

In 1938-9 a rock shelter on the west face of the other northern promontory of Xaghra, called *Il-Qortin tas-Sruġ*, was reported to contain a deposit of pottery of the late Temple Period together with charred bones of sheep and goat.

18 — Il-Haġra l-Wieqfa

Access: *From Rabat, follow signs to Qala; just inside the village, turn left by the village school up to the end of Bishop Buttigieg St and then follow a path going to the right behind some houses.*

Now in the process of being hemmed in between two

buildings, the site of this isolated standing stone is not a very inspiring one due to the close presence of modern heavy machinery. The stone is very roughly shaped, being approximately 1.70m at its widest point and tapering upwards. Until about 1935 it used to support a statue of Saint Joseph on its flattened top which is about 3.90 m high. As no other stone remains have been traced in the vicinity it is generally accepted as a genuine menhir. However, Temple Period pottery sherds and a green-stone axe-shaped pendant were picked up from near the stone.

North of the village of Qala, in a locality known as Is-Sidra on the eastern tip of Gozo one can follow a single pair of cart ruts for more than 50 metres. Confer also Section 22 below.

19 — Il-Hağra tad-Dawwara

Access: *This is at Rabat on the SW road leading to the villages of Kerċem and Santa Luċija, precisely where the road forks in two directions and beside the entrance (to the left) of Tad-Dawwara Nursery.*

Its uncertain antiquity has not earned this menhir-like monument inclusion in Evans' *Survey* of the prehistoric remains of the islands although it is given a passing mention in Trump's *Guide*. It is certainly too square and regular in section compared with the more orthodox menhirs; it is also abnormally tall and its date has no chance of being ascertained until, perhaps, the ground on which it stands is investigated.

20 — In-Nuffara

Access: *At the roundabout on the Rabat-Xağhra road, turn S towards the countryside chapel of Ta' Hamet and straight into a lane eventually reduced to a footpath going uphill on In-Nuffara.*

This flat-topped hill is readily marked by its topography for a Bronze Age settlement site. This is confirmed by an abundance of *Borg in-Nadur* pottery sherds scattered on its surface and by a number of bottle-shaped cavities, or silo-pits, normally associated with Bronze Age habitation sites. One such pit was reported in 1960 by Mr. Joe Attard of Xağhra as still containing some original deposits. On investigation rich *Borg in-Nadur*

material of great interest was retrieved, including small clay anchors and spindle-whorls (evidence of textile weaving), querns, and pottery with certain local traits that distinguish it from the normal wares of the same phase.

21 — Ta' Kuljat

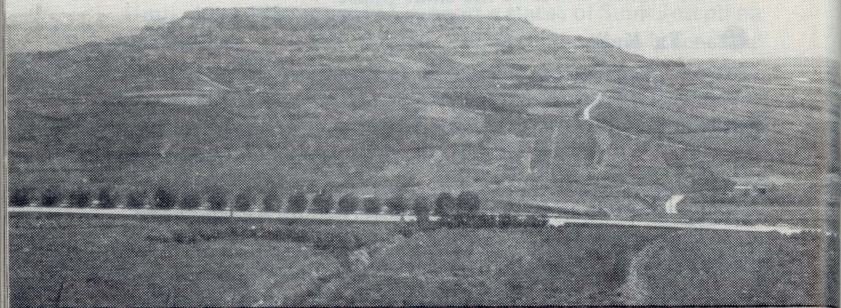
Access: *From Rabat, follow signs to Żebbuġ; at the junction in front of the Żebbuġ cemetery, take the NE lane going down the Wied tal-Qlejgħa towards Marsalforn. After a few metres there is a Y junction; follow the lane to the right and then a steep footpath going uphill on Ta' Kuljat.*

Similar silo-pits and a scatter of typical Bronze Age sherds on its surface, together with its topographical formation identify this flat-topped hill as another settlement site of the Borg in-Nadur phase. As yet no investigations have been made to confirm this.

22 — The Cart Ruts

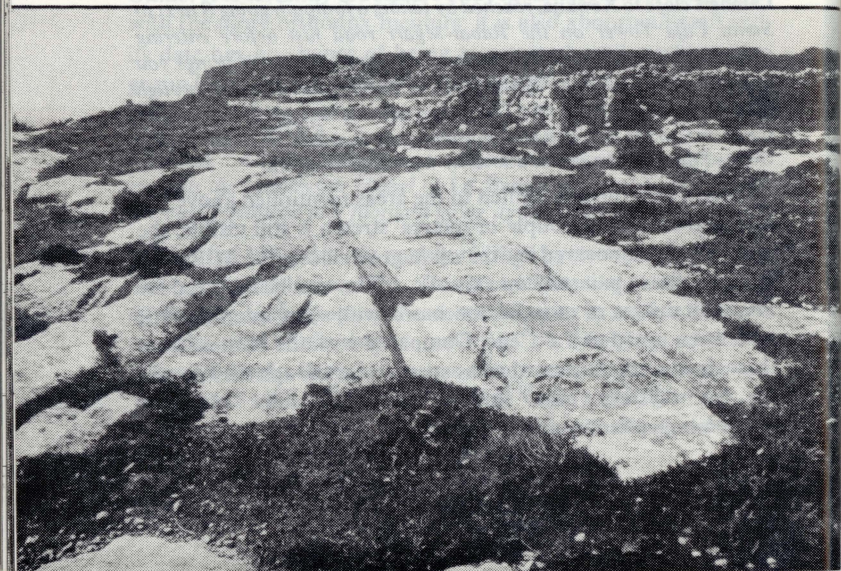
Access: *There are at least three areas with cart ruts in Gozo. The most easily accessible and the best preserved are the cart ruts at Ta' Ċenċ, reached by following signs from Sannat village square. They are to the W of the old reservoir and close to the new one almost on the edge of the sea cliffs (to be approached with caution). More cart ruts are at ta' Lambert close to Xewkija, reached by taking a footpath going S next to Santa Ċilja Tower on the Rabat-Mgarr road just before entering Ghajnsielem. After some 500 metres, a footpath to the W brings you over the area. Still more cart ruts are at Ras il-Qala. Proceed through Qala up to the Shrine of Our Lady; then take the lane going N (just after the shrine, to the left) and continue along the footpath up to the E tip of Gozo. The cart-ruts are in a locality known as Is-Sidra.*

Gozo's cart ruts are limited to the areas mentioned above. At ta' Lambert only a couple of metres' stretch is still visible; the rest have been covered by the olive grove close-by. At Ras il-Qala a solitary pair with an axis of c. 1.50m can be followed for about 50 metres or more. A few more, with some intersections, have been noted at Ta' Ċenċ. Compared with the Maltese ones these can hardly be described as spectacular though they do add to the mystery that shrouds this particular class of archaeological antiquities.



34. The flat-topped hill *In-Nuffara*

35. The Cart Ruts, *kalati* in Maltese, at *Ta' Ċenċ*



So far the cart ruts have been assigned to the Bronze Age on rather flimsy and controversial evidence. The Ta' Ċenċ ruts occur in the vicinity of the Bronze Age dolmens, although the L-Imramma ruins in the same area are probably of the earlier period. The Ta' Lambert and Qala ones do not present any other archaeological associations. In Malta, however, they tend to occur in most cases in close association with stone quarries not of the prehistoric period, as one would traditionally expect, but of the Phoenician to Roman periods. Research conducted by the present writer suggests that a solution to this intriguing problem of Maltese archaeology is more likely to be forthcoming if we directed our attention to this area of investigation.

Select Bibliography

- J.D. EVANS, *Malta*, London 1959.
- D.H. TRUMP, *Skorba*, London 1966.
- J.D. EVANS, *The Prehistoric Antiquities of the Maltese Islands: a survey*, London 1971.
- M. RIDLEY, *The Megalithic Art of the Maltese Islands*, Christchurch, 1971.
- D.H. TRUMP, *Malta: an Archaeological Guide*, London 1972.
- C. RENFREW, *Before Civilisation*, London 1973.
- J.M. ATTARD, *An historical investigation on a once lost prehistoric site in Gozo*, cyclostyled text of a lecture, Malta 1976.
- E. MacKIE, *The Megalith Builders*, Oxford 1977.
- J. BEZZINA, *Guide to the Ġgantija Temples*, Gozo 1979.
- A. BONANNO, *A Socio-economic approach to Maltese Prehistory. The Temple Builders*, in print.
- Museum Annual Reports*, Malta 1903-1904 onwards.



JOSEPH BEZZINA

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN A CROWN COLONY

The Gozo - Malta Story
1798 - 1864

with

*almost 400 pages packed with "an outstanding history of an island where, through a succession of events, its religion and politics overflowed beyond the confines of its shore involving in the process the Courts of Rome and London, the Papacy and the Crown"

- * 137 historical illustrations.
- * 1515 references all printed as footnotes (including short biographies of English, Maltese and Gozitans living at that time).
- * 10 most interesting appendices.
- * a Biography with over 400 items.
- * an analytical Index with **thousands** of entries

plus

- a short history of Gozo from prehistoric up to recent times.
- a full and complete history of the Establishment of the Diocese of Gozo.
- the social - economic situation of the Maltese and Gozitans under the English.
- an in-depth study of how priests and people practised their religion more than a century ago.
- the beginnings of the village festa.
- the relations of the British Government with the Vatican and with the local Church.

All about this and a lot more in this well researched and fascinating book.

From leading bookshops and

BUGELLI PUBLICATIONS - 50 St Lucy Str. - Valletta - Tel: 24809

- **Paperbound** Lm 5.50
- **Hardbound** Lm 7.50
- **De Luxe** Lm12.50

Tagħrif dwar il- KLABB PUBBLIKAZZJONI BUGELLI

- Tissieheb billi tħallas Lm1.00 BISS.
- Tista' ggedded is-sħubija kull sena.
- Bhala msieheb
 - ikollok id-dritt li tieħu b'NOFS PREZZ dawk il-ktieb/kotba li jogħgbuk — u m'intix marbut tixtri kull ktieb offrut b'nofs prezz.
 - tirċievi fuljett b'tagħrif dwar kull offerta li BUGELLI tagħmel lill-imseħbin tal-Klabb.
 - tkun tista' tieħu biss KOPJA WAHDA minn dawk il-kotba li jkunu offruti b'nofs prezz.

Għaddi l-ħanut BUGELLI ta' 50, Triq Santa Luċija, Valletta, u itlob aktar informazzjoni jew ċempel 24809.

— — — — aqta' ma' dan is-sinjal — — — —

Tel..... Indirizz:.....

data: raħal/belt.....

Għażiż sur Bugelli,

Jiena hawn taħt iffirmit, qiegħed nibgħatlek Lm1 (Lira Maltija) (b'ċekk/postal order) bhala ħlas ta' sħubija fil-Klabb Bugelli sal-31 ta' Diċembru, 1986.

Bhala membru fil-Klabb Bugelli jkolli d-dritt li ngawdi mill-privileġġi li joffri l-Klabb lill-imseħbin.

Isem u Kunjom b'ittri kbar:.....

Firma:.....

Anthony Bonanno was born in Żejtun, Malta. He studied at the University of Malta where he graduated B.A. (Gen.) and B.A. (Hons.). He later obtained a Doctorate 'in Lettere' from the University of Palermo and a Ph.D. from the University of London, Institute of Archaeology. A lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Malta since 1971 he published a book entitled **Portraits and Other Heads on Roman Historical Relief** (Oxford 1976), the chapter on Sculpture in **A Handbook of Roman Art** (ed. M. Henig, Oxford 1983) and several papers on Maltese archaeology and Roman art in learned journals both local and foreign. He has also been involved in archaeological excavations in Malta and abroad.



*The oldest
free standing
structures
in the world
are now believed
to be the
megalithic temples
at...Ġgantija
in Gozo from
about 3600 B.C.*

Guinness Book of Records

