

“Secrets of the Dark Ages of Prehistoric Man Revealed in Stone Tables of Malta”

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The article begins:

“In the Mediterranean Sea, at its narrowest point, lies the tiny Island of Malta, less than one hundred miles in area, possessed of a wealth of natural and architectural beauty and a storehouse of antiquities unrivaled for their archeological and historical value....The island is supposed to have originated from a coral formation and to have grown to considerable size, only to be submerged in some Earth movement and greatly diminished in area....”

(Note: Included in the scan of the last page of this article are the following articles: (1) “New Sleeping Car Service to Indiana Limestone District from Chicago.” & (2) “Slate Industry Discarding Old Methods Following Government Advice.”)

This article, which begins on the next page,
is presented on the Stone Quarries and Beyond web site.

<http://quarriesandbeyond.org/>

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Secrets of the Dark Ages of Prehistoric Man Revealed in Stone Tables of Malta

IN the Mediterranean Sea, at its narrowest point, lies the tiny Island of Malta, less than one hundred miles in area, possessed of a wealth of natural and architectural beauty and a storehouse of antiquities unrivaled for their archaeological and historical value. Because of its location the island was destined to play an important role in history chiefly on account of its strategical importance as a naval base. The island is supposed to have originated from a coral formation and to have grown to considerable size, only to be submerged in some Earth movement and greatly diminished in area. Man appeared early on the island, the existence of the earliest types of the human race having been definitely established. Previous to the Stone Age, these early inhabitants of Malta probably lived in caves, but during that age they built temples as memorials to their ancestors and their gods—neolithic temples that have no counterpart in any other part of the world. Cart ruts that criss cross the island in every direction constitute further evidence of the presence of man long prior to the races responsible for the treasures in carved stone work and masonry, or by a later migratory race from the mainlands of Southern Europe or Northern Africa. The size and extent of these temples that gave rise to the name "Holy Island," show to what extent the quarries of Malta have been worked and the present condition of the walls, the carved work and the statuary show that even the ravages of the elements during centuries of time have failed to obliterate those carvings and markings on the stone by

which archaeologists piece together their histories of these prehistoric peoples. The stone of Malta, of both prehistoric, ancient and modern use, is a very fine grained arenaceous limestone of a light straw color. Some deposits are white and occasionally white with pinkish tints. The stone is soft when first quarried, but hardens upon exposure. The first quarrymen used flint implements to remove the blocks from the ledges and to fashion and carve them for use in their temples, fragments of flints having been found in the ruins of the temples and in subterranean passages.

The earliest accounts in history concerning Malta refer to it as a haven for the shipwrecked sailors, Saint Paul having been rescued and kindly treated by the natives in A. D. 58. A record of Saint Paul's stay on the island is contained in the Acts of the Apostles. Historians, however, have set upon the date of 1450 B. C. as the starting point of the known history of the island. The Phoenicians, then the dominating power in the Mediterranean Sea, naturally ruled over Malta. Phoenicia fell and Carthage succeeded to power and possessed the island, as did the Romans immediately following them. After the downfall of Rome, Malta, like all of Southern Europe, experienced varying fortunes, finally falling under the sway of the Arabs, who also controlled Sicily. With the exception of the brief rule of Count Roger of Normandy, who landed at Malta in 1090, the Arabs ruled over the island until 1250. For several centuries Malta's history is rather vague, the island being ravaged by Turkish



The Tad-Daul Limestone Quarry on The Island of Malta, from which about 1,500,000 cubic feet of blocks were taken in 1918-21 for construction of Mediterranean Seaplane Base and barracks at Calafra, Malta. All of this stone was quarried by hand. This and other photographs used through the courtesy of C. Darmanin & Son.

pirates, visited by plagues and enjoyed no degree of prosperity. It again came into world prominence when in 1530 Charles V. of Spain at the instigation of the Pope, granted it to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, later known as the Knights of Malta. This grant brought about a renewal, or perhaps a rebirth of the hatred of the Sultan, who ordered his ships and hordes of invaders to forever put down the Knights. This almost continuous warfare between the defenders of the Cross and the followers of the Crescent culminated at one time in the defeat of the Knights in 1522 and their withdrawal from the island to become nomads. The war broke out afresh after their return in 1530 and continued unabated until in 1565 they repulsed a powerful Turkish fleet and remained in peaceful occupation of the island until the Emperor Napoleon seized the island and expelled the Knights. The French rule was brief, for the British fleet after winning the Battle of the Nile returned to Malta, blockaded the island and with the aid of the Maltese forced the French garrison to surrender. Great Britain proposed to restore the island to the Knights, but followed instead the appeal of the islanders to make it part of the empire and as such it remains.

This, in brief, is an outline of the colorful history of Malta, now a prosperous naval base that gives employment to the skillful and industrious inhabitants, and offers to the tourist one of the most delightful stops in the Mediterranean or Southern European countries. In the building of Valletta, the city that was built to be the shield of Christendom after the great siege of 1565, the island was fortunate in having within its confines a natural stone in sufficient quantities and of a quality that enabled the Knights of Malta and the Maltese to construct stately halls, temples, palaces and battlements that have excited the wonder of renowned world travelers and are used today for government offices, residences and other purposes in keeping with the new commercial importance of the island. The Palace of the Grand Masters of the Order of St. John and Malta, completed in 1574 is used by government departments, while the armoury, which is 250 feet long and 38 feet wide, and originally contained the armour suits of the Grand Masters and suits and equipment for 25,000 men, is now a sort of museum in which are shown only a portion of this original equipment. The Council Chamber of the Knights, now Parliament Hall, contains hangings of the richest of tapestries and paintings. The hall of St. Michael and St. George is now used as a state reception room and ballroom. Notable among the edifices of Valletta, the church of St. John, the official place of worship of the Knights of St. John, is acknowledged to be the greatest of the architectural works of that Maltese architect, Girolamo Cassar, builder of Valletta. It was completed in 1578 and dedicated to the patron

saint of the Order and every grand master took especial pride in its beautification, as did the Knights of each of the "Langues" or sections into which the Order was divided according to the languages spoken by its members in adorning and enriching each of its



Erecting a Small House on Island of Malta, showing construction methods with walls rising from the ground level. All of the work is done by hand.

chapels. Each of these "Langues" had its separate quarters where young knights were trained and where many of the older members lived. These "Auberges" as they were called are now used as club quarters, courts of justice, museums and other purposes. All were designed by Cassar.

The use of Malta Stone in construction work on the island dates back to prehistoric times, remains of which exist in the form of temples, villages, storage places and tombs. The best known of the temples is that of Gigantia in Gozo, the small island four miles northwest of Malta. Others are Hagar Kim, Mnajdra, Corradino and Tarxien, all in Malta. The most unique and perhaps the most interesting is the underground temple of Hal Safieni. The ruins of Hagar Kim, or "Standing Stones", on the crown of a barren rock hill overlook the sea from the south shore of Malta. It is made up of massive stones, some weighing several tons, placed end on end, each joined to its neighbor with the skill of a prac-



Opening a new Quarry of Malta Limestone, Island of Malta. Wedges are used to loosen the blocks. No machinery is used.

ticed mason. In horizontal layers stones were laid on top of these wall stones and mortised together without a flaw. A pillar of stone rises above the walls and near it is an altar, while holes that pierce the wall stones possibly enabled worshippers to see the altar or communicate with those conducting the services. As the top of the pillar is hollow, many theories have been advanced for its possible significance, some believing that it was a place of human sacrifice. The Subterranean temple of Hal Safeni consists of three series of chambers chiseled out of the solid rock and on three levels. The entrance, which is in the middle of a neolithic village, is marked by two large stones, is made through two openings drilled in the stone floor and the descent is abrupt. Caves filled with human bones, long narrow passages and oval caves and niches are encountered, rooms decorated with painted objects and carvings, and a larger room or meeting hall. Continuing through a doorway the Holy of Holies is encountered, the upper portion of which is carved and the stone polished. Other temples, with their altars, steps, inner rooms and curious carved and worked stones show to what extent the prehistoric stone cutters, working with their flint implements, were able to perform tasks now difficult of accomplishment with tools of a modern stone cutter. The quarries of the Island of Malta are worked extensively, the stone being used for local construction, while large quantities are shipped to Southern European countries, to Africa and Turkey. It is quarried in large blocks, drills and wedges being used to loosen them from the ledges. In construction work the stone in quite regular shapes

and sized blocks is set in solid masonry walls, the footing being laid for the most part on the surface of the ground, excavations for cellars being uncommon. As the quarries possess a height of excavation of fifty to sixty feet it is possible to obtain blocks of large size. The Malta and Gozo stones are equally adaptable for exterior and interior work, for monumental, statuary and carved work.

New Sleeping Car Service to Indiana Limestone District from Chicago

The growing importance of the Indiana Limestone district and the increased travel between Chicago, Bedford and Bloomington has resulted in the Monon Route of the Chicago, Indianapolis & Louisville Railway, inaugurating a new sleeping car service. It is now possible to leave Chicago at 9 p. m. and arrive in Bloomington at 3.57 a. m. where the sleeper is attached to another train and arrives at Bedford at 7.20 a. m. The service from Bedford enables passengers to enter the sleeper at 9 p. m., the train leaving at 11.54 p. m., arriving at Bloomington at 12.47 a. m. and at Chicago at 7.30 a. m.

Slate Industry Discarding Old Methods Following Government Advice

Rapid progress has been made recently in developing new and improved processes for the mining and manufacture of slate, states the Bureau of Mines, Department of Commerce, following a survey of the industry. Such changes in technology are indicative of the present tendency to place the industry on a better basis both as regards processes and products. Roofing slate which

was formerly manufactured in small independent ("shanties") is now produced in many places in large mills provided with power saws, travelling cranes and other labor saving devices. A pneumatic splitter has also been introduced to take the place of the ordinary chisel and mallet. A slate with lacquered surface in various colors and patterns has lately been placed on the market for sanitary uses.

Slate has been called "The sheltering stone" because one of its principal uses is for roofing, states Oliver Bowles, superintendent of the Non-Metallic Minerals Experiment Station of the Bureau of Mines, New Brunswick, N. J., in a report just published.

Interesting developments that have taken place within the past three or four years in the slate industry are described in Serial 2766, copies of which may be obtained from the Bureau of Mines, Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C.



Vestibule of new Missouri Theater, St. Louis, showing Wainscoat of Eastman's Cipoline; Base of Imported Verde Antique, and booth of Alabama Madre Veined Marble. Pickel Marble & Granite Co., marble Contractors. Marble furnished by the Tompkins-Kiel Marble Co.



The Tad-Daul Limestone Quarry on The Island of Malta, from which about 1,500,000 cubic feet of blocks were taken in 1918-21 for construction of Mediterranean Seaplane Base and barracks at Calafrana, Malta. All of this stone was quarried by hand. This and other photographs used through the courtesy of C. Darmanin & Son.

(photo caption) “The Tad-Daul Limestone Quarry on The Island of Malta, from which about 1,500,000 cubic feet of blocks were taken in 1918-21 for construction of Mediterranean Seaplane Base and Barracks at Calafrana, Malta. All of this stone was quarried by hand. This and other photographs used through the courtesy of C. Darmanin & Son.” pp. 545.



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Opening a new Quarry of Malta Limestone, Island of Malta. Wedges are used to loosen the blocks. No machinery is used.

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