

PREHISTORIC MAN.

A NEW CLASS OF MONUMENT.

FINDS IN MINORCA.

(By Frederick Chamberlin.)

By February of last winter, while completing a work upon the Balearic Isles and their peoples, I had covered all of the archipelago except that ancient British possession, Minorca. So off I went to Ciudadela, with all the books about the island in my baggage.

The authorities agreed that Minorca had three kinds of prehistoric monuments:—

1. The remains of some great stone mounds with a circular, oblate, elliptical or quadrilateral plane figure about 20-30ft. high and with a minimum shorter diameter of approximately the larger number—structures of uncemented huge stones usually in the rough, and with a slight batter (inclination of each side toward the centre) of between five and ten degrees, and called locally talayots (pronounced as if spelt taliyot with all the syllables accented with the same stress and elision).

2. Some two-stoned monuments from five to 12ft. high, of the shape of the Greek T, and for that reason called by the natives taulas, and pronounced töwlas.

3. Some long, low, moundlike buildings of monoliths, made in the shape of an overturned boat, with flattened stern and rounded bow, and called naus, pronounced like the English "now," from the Greek word meaning a craft of that character.

The earliest authority for the talayots, except Dr. Ramis, of Mahón, who published a list of them in 1818 in a small book entitled *Antigüedades Celticas de la Isla de Menorca* (Mahón),



is the Italian, La Marmora, who wrote the definitive work on Sardinia, "Voyage en Sardaigne" (Paris, 1839), a most remarkable labour. In that publication, this scholar, after a visit to Minorca, which was shortened by illness, wrote:—"We are able to say of the talayots that they are hollow"; and therefore, as he says, like the nurhags of Sardinia, whose exterior lines they at times resemble. This was the unanimous conclusion up to 1924, and it was founded clearly on La Marmora, Cartailhac, and Guille-mard, the three who alone of the recognized authorities had ever visited Minorca.

Then comes a small pamphlet by Juan Hernández Mora, of Mahón, the young son of Dr. Francisco Hernández Sanz, "Menorca Prehistórica," Madrid, 1924, in which he says:—

It can be said that there exist some closed talayots . . . but one must agree that the immense majority of them possess their chambers.

That might mean anything or nothing. It was evident that I could not write about the talayots without ascertaining the truth on

chamber it was nothing but a nurhag, and so deserved no more attention than it had received. If, however, it was a closed monument, the whole world had been misled.

WITHOUT A PARALLEL.

I had arranged to remain in Minorca only the four days between steamers, and the possibilities had not flashed upon me until half of my time had expired, for I had had no previous opportunity to read up the subject. Even when I had done that, I did not take the matter seriously until I found that more than half of the talayots I had already visited were without any entrances or chambers of any sort or dimensions. I tried the local authorities, but could learn nothing definite except that they, too, believed that the large majority of these structures did possess these features. Yet, there was the evidence of my own senses flatly to the contrary, for more than half of twenty-seven talayots. This was certainly a result to suggest caution. By this time my four days had gone, and so had the steamer. I was embarked, step by step, into making a visit to every megalithic monument in the island, and my stay of four days became one of four months.

In August, Dr. Francisco Hernández Sanz, president of the Sub-commission of the Spanish Government for the Monuments of Minorca, published at Mahón a small volume entitled "El Señor Frederick Chamberlin en Menorca," from which I may quote:—

Once possessed of the bibliography, Señor Chamberlin believed the moment had arrived to begin a broad and careful work of revision. Searching over the country with map, metrical measure, and cameras, without minding the wind or the rain, he has been visiting without cessation or rest, our archaeological sites, one by one, taking precise notes, and rectifying mistakes made by the archaeologists who preceded him, in his work of making a detailed catalogue of all the monuments which they contain. He has done more yet: he has discovered some others not known even in works considered to be most complete. At our request, Señor Chamberlin has been kind enough to place at our disposal his list of the talayots visited by him, a list which is all the more interesting since the only other list known, published by Dr. Ramis more than a century ago, was constructed from data which were supplied to him by his friends who were not competent in archaeology, and was therefore of very dubious worth.

There follows an alphabetical list of the talayots which I studied, with their division into classes in good condition, ruined, and with or without entrances.

The result of my investigations was the discovery of 186 talayots, 107 of which are in sufficient repair to permit the classifications mentioned. No more than 32 of the 107 ever had an entrance of any sort—that is, two of every three talayots were solid structures. Three alone had any interior chambers of the character described by the authorities, and only one had more than one apartment. Such entrances as there were showed no agreement in direction. As the talayots have neither an interior chamber nor an interior staircase, it follows that they have no true relation to the only monuments known that seemed like them, i.e., the nurhags and the chambered cairns of Great Britain. The talayots, so far as is known, are monuments without a parallel.

UNIQUE STRUCTURES.

It was, however, in the monuments of the second class, the taulas, that I took the greatest interest and from which I had the deepest thrills. Doctor Sanz writes in his book that when I went to Minorca there were known to be 13 of these enormous T structures, always standing upon high ground. Reaching up to a height sometimes of more than 12ft. and with a flat top-stone fully 12ft. long, they can usually be seen from all directions for many miles. The upright stone is often 8ft. wide and 1½ft. thick. The top-stone runs about 4½ft. wide with a thickness of 20in. By great good luck I discovered three more of these unique structures, so that the present known number is 16.

Around each taula is a stone wall which always takes the form of a horseshoe with its ends