

The Cretan Exploration Fund.

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Student of Christ Church, Oxford.



The Throne Room in the Palace at Knossos in course of Excavation.

*The following Appeal, including a Statement of last Season's work, has been
issued on behalf of the Fund:—*

THE preoccupation of the public mind caused by the war in South Africa made it impossible last year to press the claims of Cretan exploration. Sympathy, indeed, was not wanting. A representative Committee was formed, and we were able to initiate a Fund, to which the patronage of the High Commissioner of the Powers in Crete, Prince George of Greece, was accorded. Thanks to the good offices of His Royal Highness, a number of important sites were set apart for British excavation. But of the £5,000

required for the adequate realisation of our scheme, barely a tenth part was collected by private subscriptions.

Meanwhile Italian and French Missions, supported by Government aid, had already been in the field for several months. Even to hold their own it was absolutely imperative that British representatives should make a beginning. We had no choice but to embark last Spring on an enterprise which, once begun, for the honour of British Science must be carried through.

The sum of about £500 that had been privately collected was devoted to the furtherance of two separate enterprises. Half of the amount went to assist Mr. Arthur Evans in the excavation of a site, already acquired by him at Kephala on the site of Knossos, which proved to contain the remains of a prehistoric Palace. How inadequate was this contribution may be judged from the fact that five-sixths of the cost of the work—still far from completion—have fallen on the explorer's shoulders. The other half of the sum collected was allocated to Mr. D. G. Hogarth, the Director of the British School at Athens, for the exploration of the prehistoric town and tombs of Knossos and of the great Cave of Zeus on Mount Dicta. This was supplemented by £200, spared with difficulty from the annual income of the School, and by the payment of an architect from the same source.

The extraordinary results, which rewarded both these undertakings, have attracted such wide attention that a very brief statement will suffice here. The discoveries made at Knossos throw into the shade all the other exploratory campaigns of last season in the Eastern Mediterranean, by whatever nationality conducted. It is not too much to say that the materials already gathered have revolutionised our knowledge of prehistoric Greece, and that to find even an approach to the results obtained we must go back to Schliemann's great discovery of the Royal tombs at Mycenae.

In superintending the work of excavation of the prehistoric building on his site at Knossos, Mr. Evans secured the valuable assistance of Dr. Duncan Mackenzie, and he is indebted to Mr. D. T. Fyfe, Architect of the British School at Athens, for excellent plans and drawings. The unrivalled skill in such work of Monsieur E. Gilliéron was also enlisted for preserving accurate copies of the wall-paintings. The building itself, of which some two acres superficial area have been now uncovered, proves to be a Palace, beside which those of Tiryns and Mycenae sink into insignificance. By an unlooked-for piece of good fortune, the site, though in the immediate neighbourhood of the greatest civic centre of the island in ancient, mediaeval and modern times, had remained practically untouched for over three thousand years. At but a very slight depth below the surface of the ground the spade has uncovered great courts and corridors, propylaea, a long succession of magazines containing gigantic store jars that might have hidden the Forty Thieves, and a multiplicity of chambers, pre-eminent among which is the actual Throne Room and Council Chamber of Homeric kings. The throne itself, on which (if so much faith be permitted to us) Minos may have declared the law, is carved out of alabaster, once brilliant with coloured designs, and relieved with curious tracery and crocketed arcading, which is wholly unique in ancient art, and exhibits a strange anticipation of thirteenth century Gothic. In the Throne Room, the Western entrance Gallery and elsewhere, partly still adhering to the walls, partly in detached pieces on the floors, was a series of fresco paintings, excelling any known examples of the art in Mycenaean Greece. A beautiful life-size painting of a youth, with an European and almost classically Greek profile, gives us the first real knowledge of the race who produced this mysterious early civilization. Other frescoes introduce us to a lively and hitherto unknown miniature style, representing, among other subjects, groups of women engaged in animated conversation in the courts and on the balconies of the Palace. The monuments of the sculptor's art are equally striking. It may be sufficient to mention here a marble fountain in the shape of a lioness's head with enamelled eyes; fragments of a frieze with beautifully cut rosettes, superior in its kind to anything known from Mycenae; an alabaster vase naturalistically copied from a Triton shell; a porphyry lamp with graceful foliation, supported on an "Egyptianizing" lotus column. The head and parts of the body of a magnificent painted relief of a bull in *gesso duro* are unsurpassed for vitality and strength.

It is impossible here to refer more than incidentally to the new evidence of intercourse between Crete and Egypt at a very remote period, supplied by the Palace finds of Knossos. It may be mentioned, however, as showing the extreme antiquity of the earlier elements of the building, that in the great Eastern Court was found an Egyptian seated figure of diorite, broken above, which can be approximately dated about 2000 B.C. Below this again extends a vast Stone Age settlement, which forms a deposit in some places twenty-four feet in thickness.

Neither is it possible here to dwell on the new indications supplied by some of the discoveries in the "House of Minos" as to the cult and religious beliefs of its occupants. It must be sufficient to observe that one of the miniature frescoes found represents the façade of a Mycenaean shrine, and that the Palace itself seems to have been a sanctuary of the Cretan god of the Double Axe, as well as a dwelling-place of prehistoric kings. There can be little remaining doubt that this huge building, with its maze of corridors and tortuous passages, its medley of small chambers, its long succession of magazines with their blind endings, was in fact the Labyrinth of later tradition which supplied a local habitation for the Minotaur of grisly fame. The great figures of bulls in fresco and relief that adorned the walls, the harem scenes of some of the frescoes, the corner stones and pillars marked with the *labrys* or double axe, the emblem of the Cretan Zeus,—explaining the derivation of the name "Labyrinth" itself,—are so many details which all

conspire to bear out this identification. In the Palace-Shrine of Knossos there probably stands at last revealed to us the spacious structure which the skill of Daedalus is said to have imitated from the great Egyptian building on the shore of Lake Moeris, and with it some part at least of his fabled masterpieces still clinging to its walls.

But brilliant as are the illustrations thus recovered of the high early civilization of the City of Minos and of the substantial truth of early tradition, they are almost thrown into the shade by a discovery which carries back the existence of written documents in the Hellenic lands some seven centuries beyond the first known monuments of the historic Greek writing. In the chambers and magazines of the Palace there came to light a series of deposits of clay tablets, in form somewhat analogous to the Babylonian, but inscribed with characters in two distinct types of indigenous prehistoric script, one hieroglyphic or quasi-pictorial, the other linear. The existence of a hieroglyphic script in the island had been already the theme of some earlier researches by Mr. Evans, based on the more limited material supplied by groups of signs on a class of Cretan seal-stones, and the ample corroboration of the conclusions arrived at was therefore the more satisfactory. These Cretan hieroglyphs will be found to have a special importance in their bearing on the origin of the Phoenician Alphabet.

But the great bulk of the tablets belonged to the linear class, exhibiting an elegant and much more highly developed form of script, with letters of an upright and singularly European aspect. The inscriptions, over a thousand of which were collected, were originally contained in coffers of clay, wood and gypsum, which had been in turn secured by clay seals impressed with finely engraved signets, and counter-marked and countersigned by controlling officials in the same script while the clay was still wet. The clay documents themselves are beyond doubt the Palace archives. Many relate to accounts concerning the Royal Arsenal, stores and treasures. Others perhaps, like the contemporary cuneiform tablets, refer to contracts or correspondence. The problems attaching to the decipherment of these clay records are of enthralling interest, and we have here locked up for us materials which may some day enlarge the bounds of history.

The work of excavation in the Palace of Knossos is barely half completed, and yet, whichever way we turn, the relics already obtained from within its walls supply new and un hoped-for data for the reconstruction of early Aegean civilization. Nor is this all. Exploratory digging by Mr. Hogarth to the South and West of the Palace revealed a veritable Pompeii of houses of the same early period, which yielded, among other things, by far the finest series yet found of vases of the singular primitive Cretan polychrome style, unrepresented in European museums. One remarkably well preserved block of buildings appears to be a group of shrines devoted to a Pillar worship, such as is known on the Phoenician and Palestinian coasts, and of which the Palace itself supplies an example connected with the cult of the Cretan Zeus.

Finally, in the early hot season, the clearing of the Cave of Psychro, long notorious for its rich votive deposits, was also carried out by Mr. Hogarth. This cave is no other than the holy Dictaeon Cavern, in which Hesiod and Virgil state that the Supreme God was cradled. There took place the legendary union of Zeus with Europa, and therefrom, as from another Sinai, Minos brought down the Law after communion with the God. The blasting away of the fallen rocks in the upper half of the Grotto revealed a rude altar of burnt sacrifice, and a sacred enclosure or *Temenos*, cumbered with deposit from five to seven feet deep, full of vases, libation tables, weapons and implements in bronze, bone and iron, statuettes in terra-cotta, and models of every-day objects, dedicated to the God. In the lower half, a profound abyss, where a gloomy subterranean pool, out of which rises a forest of stalactitic pillars, continues into the heart of the mountain, a great surprise was in store. For not only was the bottom mud full of bronze statuettes, gems, and articles of male and female use, but the vertical slits in the pillars were found to have been used as niches, and to contain an immense number of votive double axes, weapons and trinkets. This vast cavern was undoubtedly the mysterious Holy of Holies into which Minos was supposed to have descended alone, and on emerging, as Dionysius says, to have showed the Law to the people as a gift from Zeus himself. The discoveries made in this cave cover the whole primitive period of Cretan history back to the pre-Mycenaean epoch.

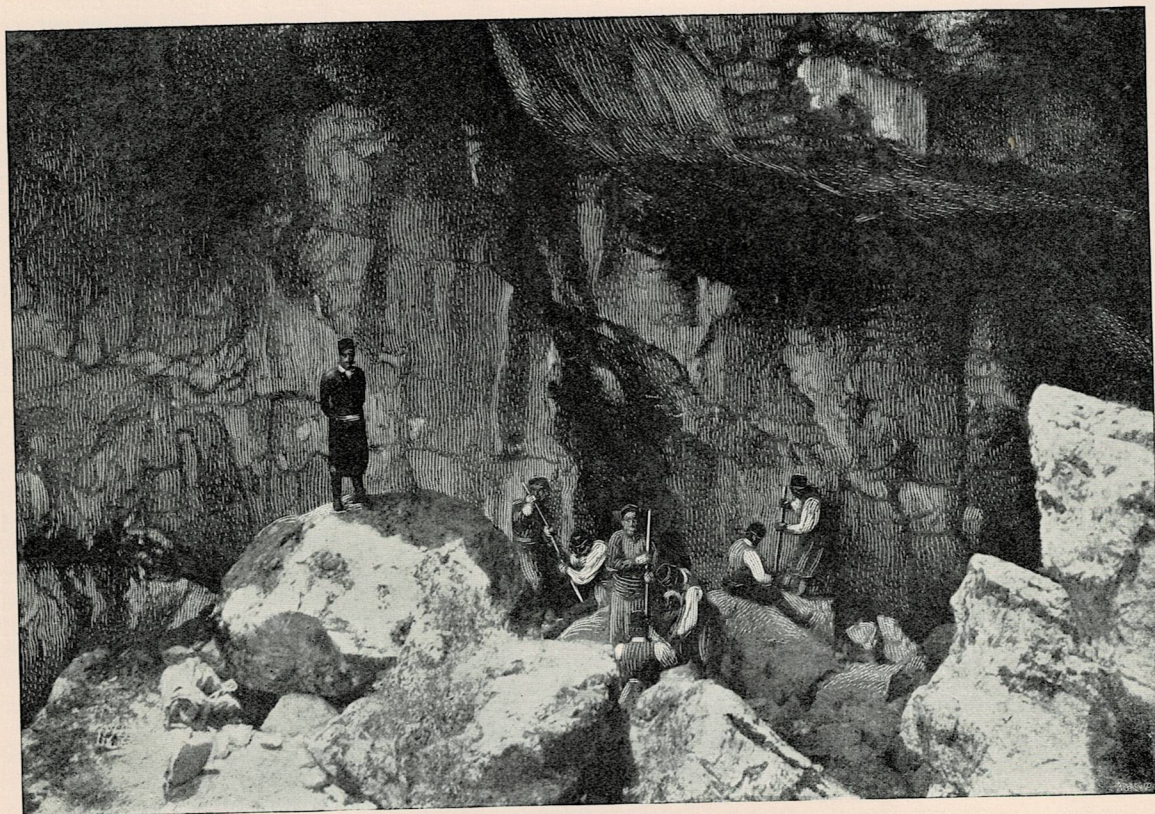
The clouds of war are at last lifting, and it is with confidence that we now appeal for help to carry on the work already set in hand. The Palace of Knossos is still but half uncovered, and the large expenditure entailed by excavation of this vast building, which Mr. Evans hopes to take up again in February next, is a severe strain on individual resources. Among the other sites included in the British Concessions are two Votive Caves, the Citadels of more than one Mycenaean city of Eastern Crete, and Praesos, the ancient capital of that region, within whose walls the language of the old indigenous stock—the Eteokretes of the *Odyssey*—survived to historic times. Here, if anywhere, should be found the key to the undeciphered hieroglyphic script of Crete; and it is to be hoped that sufficient funds may be forthcoming to begin excavation at this spot during the coming season under the auspices of the British School at Athens.

The exploration that we have taken in hand is not one confined to the back-waters of antiquarian research. It lies about the fountain-head of our own civilization. Inadequately supported as it has been, it has already produced results which throw an entirely new light on the first development of high art, the origin of letters, the early religion and ethnography of the Greek lands, the most ancient connections between Europe and Egypt. To ensure the execution of the still extensive programme before us, "The Cretan Exploration Fund" needs contributions to the amount of at least £3,000. So much impressed was

the British Association with the scientific importance of the undertaking, that at its recent meeting at Bradford, after hearing reports of the results of the late excavations, it made the exceptional grant of £145 towards the furtherance of our scheme. In this field British archaeological enterprise has been fortunate enough to obtain a strong lead, and it rests with the public to see that it is maintained.

November, 1900.

Subscriptions may be paid either to MR. GEORGE MACMILLAN (as Hon. Treasurer), at St. Martin's Street, London, W.C., or into the account of "The Cretan Exploration Fund" at MESSRS. ROBERTS, LUBBOCK & CO.'s, Lombard Street, E.C.



Dictaeon Cave. The Upper Hall, Blasting Operations.

The following Noblemen and Gentlemen have promised to act as Members of the Committee :—

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The Directors have regretfully to record the loss by death of two original members of the Committee, the late DUKE OF WESTMINSTER, K.G., and Her Majesty's former Consul in Crete, Mr. T. B. SANDWITH.

EXPLORATION IN CRETE.

(Leading article reprinted by permission from THE TIMES of November 5th, 1900.)

LITTLE argument should be needed to urge the claims of Cretan exploration to the support of the people of this country. We do not appeal to those, if such there be, who regard all archaeological research as a mere dilettante fad and cannot be made to understand that archaeology, scientifically pursued, is one of the most important, instructive, and indispensable departments of the study of human civilization. Hellenic civilization lies at the root of the intellectual life of modern Europe. We should none of us be what we are if the song of Homer, the art of Phidias, the majesty of Aeschylus, the serene melancholy of Sophocles, the humanity of Euripides, the wit of Aristophanes, the noble curiosity of Herodotus, the historic insight of Thucydides, the awakening wisdom of Socrates, the magic of Plato's style, and the mastery of Aristotle's thought had not each and all left their deposits, organic and still operative even where least recognized, in the structure of the modern mind. For that reason we can never renounce our inheritance in the fruits of Hellenic civilization. But what lies at the roots of Hellenic civilization? This is a question which history and literature proper cannot answer. At a certain point, not remote according to the scale by which we have lately learnt to measure history and time, the history of all the Greeks "wins its way to the fabulous," as one of their own historians has said. We find ourselves in a bewildering region—bewildering as Crete's own labyrinth—of mythology, legend, and distorted tradition. Many inquirers—from Thales to Max Müller—have sought to thread that labyrinth in vain. Archaeology is the Ariadne which has at last furnished the clue; and, curiously enough—and yet not so curiously, if we read mythology in the light of archaeology—it is largely in Crete itself that the clue is now being recovered. Athene, as we know, sprang full armed from the brain of Zeus, and Zeus, as we also know, was pre-eminently the divinity of Crete. Carried to Crete by his mother to save him from the unnatural cannibalism of his father, Kronos, he was nurtured in a cave of Ida, and after a struggle as long as the siege of Troy he finally destroyed Kronos and his Titans and reigned supreme in his stead.

These things are an allegory, of course, and, no doubt, an allegory to which pure mythology has contributed a large share. But they are also an allegory for which recent archaeological research bids fair to find a most striking interpretation in Crete itself. Geography, history and legend all attest the important, not to say dominant, influence exercised by Crete on the origin of Hellenic civilization. It stands alike as a barrier and a stepping-stone between Greece proper and the two continents which, long before Zeus began to reign, were teeming with the highest and most active civilizations of the ancient world. As a barrier, it was admirably situated to extend its naval sway of the Grecian archipelago—Aristotle himself notes its natural aptitude for dominion in Hellas—and, as a stepping-stone, it was certain to be the way by which the great civilizations of the East would reach Hellas, if they ever reached it at all. Its influence over Greece of the mainland and islands is attested by its early dominion of the sea, which itself points to its early intercourse with the civilizations of Asia and Africa; by the legend of Minos, the very son of Zeus himself—a legend now known to be at least partly founded on the fact of an advanced civilization and a widespread dominion in pre-historic times; and by the fact, also noted by Aristotle, that the Constitution of Crete, ascribed by legend to Minos the lawgiver, furnished the model, not in all respects, according to the same authority, improved in the borrowing, for that of Sparta. The legend of Theseus, again, and of the annual tribute of young men and maidens rendered to the Minotaur, points once more to a pre-historic Cretan dominion, including Attica in its sway. Now history and literature proper are powerless themselves to disengage the nucleus of fact from the entangling labyrinth of myth, legend, and tradition which ages unrecorded have accumulated in respect of Crete. The only solid fact which emerges is the geographical position of Crete, standing, like the British Isles, as an outpost of the Old World and a starting point for the New. Archaeology, however, and archaeology alone, can carry us further, and can corroborate legend and conjecture by the discovery of actual remains *in situ*. We might not expect to find the Palace of Minos at Knossus or the cave in which Zeus was cradled on Mount Ida, as Schliemann expected to find, and believed that he had found, the Palace of Priam at Troy and the Palace of Agamemnon at Mycenae. But, if the place assigned by geography and legend to Crete in the pre-historic civilization of Hellas is in any degree founded on fact, we might expect to find proof of it, indeed according to all analogy and experience we must expect to find some proof of it, still buried beneath the soil of the island. Such proof has now been found in abundance, and of truly amazing significance, thanks to the exertions of the British School at Athens, to the support accorded to them by the Government, to the public spirit of certain contributors, all too few, to the special fund for exploration in Crete, and to the very laudable and learned enthusiasm of Mr. Arthur Evans and Mr. D. G. Hogarth, whose joint letter describing the results of their explorations we printed last Wednesday. Minos may be a myth, but we now know that a pre-historic palace existed at Knossus, his legendary

capital, a palace which belongs to the same age of civilization as the palaces at Mycenae and Tiryns, and yet by its splendour and extent reduces them to insignificance; that it contains abundant proofs of the relations of Crete with Egypt and the East; that it reveals a high standard of art and civilization prevailing at least three thousand years ago; that it "carries back the existence of written documents in the Hellenic lands some seven centuries beyond the first known monuments of the historic Greek writing"; and that its complex and intricate structure suggests that it is the historic original of the very Labyrinth itself. Zeus is, of course, a myth. But archaeological zeal has penetrated the very shrine of his primitive worship and found it literally crammed with votive remains, not of one period only, but covering "the whole primitive period of Cretan history back to the pre-Mycenaean epoch."

All this, it may be said, appeals merely to the instincts of the scholar and the enthusiasms of the antiquary. It has nothing to do with the life we live now. It belongs to the dead and buried past, of which the late Lord Sherbrooke said, speaking of Troy, "*etiam periere ruinae*." But the historic evolution of the human race can never be devoid of interest and instruction for succeeding generations of mankind. Man is what he is by virtue of what he has been, and, if it profits us to know how Homer sang and what Aristotle thought, it profits us in like manner to know what were the pre-existing conditions of life and society which made Homer and Aristotle, and all that they stand for, what they were. History is but archaeology reduced to writing, collated, compared, and interpreted. Archaeology is but history preserved in material records, and interpreted, so far as it goes, by the same methods. If it profits us to study the geological structure of the earth, the secular evolution of the suns, so it profits us in like manner to know how our intellectual and spiritual ancestors lived and thought and worshipped in the long twilight of advancing civilization. If it be asked what archaeology has done for the modern world, the answer is that it has given us a new sense of the antiquity and continuity of history. It has furnished us with a new and potent organon for the interpretation of ancient records. It has enabled us to reconstruct the main outlines and relations of civilizations long buried and forgotten, and to see that they really stand in organic relation to ourselves. It has revealed the East as the true parent of the West, and given historic substance to the legend that Zeus brought the mother of Minos from Phoenicia. It has shown the several rays of Eastern civilization all converging upon Hellas, and there focussed to an intensity unsurpassed in history and still giving light, warmth, and colour to the life and thought of the modern world. It now seems to be showing that Crete was one of the chief agencies in the transmission and development of this transcendent illumination. It is thus no appeal to the imagination merely, it is strictly an appeal to the scientific spirit of an age which is nothing if not scientific, to ask for contributions towards the further exploration of Crete. *Vere scire est per causas scire* is the very principle of modern science; and, in the study of human evolution in its prehistoric stages, exploration is the only method which enables us to trace effects to their causes. We now know that in Crete are to be found the causes and origin of much that is still obscure in Hellenic civilization, and the elucidation of much that has hitherto been quite unsuspected in its relation to earlier civilizations. We should be quite unworthy of our common inheritance in the intellectual and spiritual evolution of Europe if we allowed the exploration of Crete, which Englishmen have undertaken, to languish for want of funds.

A house at Candia and another near the site of Knossos has been already secured and furnished to serve as headquarters of the Fund.

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CRETAN EXPLORATION FUND

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Dawkins, Prof. W. Boyd	5	0	0
Evans, Arthur J.	50	0	0
Evans, Sir John, K.C.B.	50	0	0
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Griffiths, Mrs. F. Ll.	2	2	0
Harris, Alfred	5	0	0
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Oldfield, Edmund	5	0	0
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Stainer, J. F. R.	1	1	0
Stevenson, F. S., M.P.	15	15	0
Westminster, His Grace the Duke of	100	0	0
Total	£513	0	0

* * * Subscriptions received or promised towards the second season's work will be acknowledged later.