

THE REALM OF MINOS

The Palace of Minos at Knossos : A Comparative Account of the Successive Stages of the Early Cretan Civilisation as illustrated by the Discoveries at Knossos. By Sir ARTHUR EVANS. Vol. II. Macmillan & Company. 1928.

IN the seven years that have elapsed since Sir Arthur Evans published the first volume of his "Palace of Minos at Knossos," both he and other excavators have been active, and he has had to take account of much new evidence. The second volume which has now appeared, containing 844 pages and a wealth of plates, plans and other illustrations, and divided for the convenience of readers into two parts, carries the author's task far towards completion. The previous volume, reviewed in these pages in July, 1922, traced the growth of Cretan civilisation down to the close of the Middle Minoan Age. That phase ended in a great catastrophe, of which the nature and approximate date have been more clearly defined by the excavations carried out since 1921.

The Greeks of classical times were conscious of some great disaster that had interrupted the progress of human civilisation. They visualised it as a flood which had wiped out established cities and driven the few survivors to take refuge on hill tops ; it was long before they ventured to dwell again in the plain. The useful arts were lost and had to be re-discovered. The evidence for such a break, involving the death of an old civilisation and its re-birth after an interval of barbarism, seems to have been most abundant in Crete. Hitherto it has seemed that this tradition, recorded at length in Plato's "Laws," and implicit in the narratives of Diodorus and other authors, must reflect the disaster, whatever its nature, that shattered the realm of Minos and ushered in the pre-classical Dark Ages. Sir Arthur Evans's new volume shows that the early history of Crete was punctuated by successive disasters and periods of recovery, and that they were brought about not by internal revolutions or foreign conquests, but by the irresistible forces of nature. Earthquakes again and again laid palaces and houses low ; again and again they rose from their ruins. The works of art, large and small, that have

been recovered from the precincts of Knossos were submerged in these periods of collapse and re-building. The fact that they are less abundant at Phæstos may mean that the southern region, though not immune from such shocks, suffered from them less often.

The author recounts his own experiences in the earthquake that visited Candia in 1926. As has generally been the case, the Candia district suffered more severely than the rest of the island.

According to the medieval and modern records, nine specially destructive earthquakes took place in Crete in six centuries and a half. That space of time almost exactly corresponds with the duration of the great Minoan Palace in its successive phases, and we are almost bound to infer that the same natural forces must largely account for the signs of ruin that here mark successive stages of the building.

The most disastrous earthquake of the series befell Knossos towards the close of the Third Middle Minoan Period, between 1575 and 1550 B.C. The palace at this time was a stately pile rising to a height of three storeys and hemmed in by the clustered dwellings of well-to-do courtiers and humbler folk, the latter being tower-like structures with a closed basement containing store-rooms and an entrance at first floor level. One had been occupied by a maker of stone lamps and his workshop was found as he left it, wrecked by huge blocks, some more than a ton in weight, which had been hurled from the adjoining palace wall. In two angles of an adjoining house curious sacrificial deposits were found, each consisting of the head and horns of a large ox and a portable terra-cotta altar, similar to the tripod altars found in such numbers in the Mission Warehouse at Niru Khani, to be described presently :—

These sacrificial relics, thus ranged on the floor of the basement chamber, could have only one signification. The methodical filling-in of the ruined building, and its final relinquishment as a scene of human habitation, had been preceded by a solemn expiatory offering to the Powers below. Its character recalls the words of the *Iliad* "in bulls doth the Earth-shaker delight."

The author discusses the part played by repeated experience of earthquakes in shaping Minoan religion. The subterranean "pillar crypts," constantly present in Knossian houses and associated with lustral basins, double axes and other religious emblems, lead him to believe that the Minoan Mother Goddess

was worshipped in these dark chapels as a protector against earthquakes, a "Stablisser" of these "Pillars of the House." He connects the sacrifice of bulls in this connection and the delight of the Earth-shaker in such victims with the widespread belief that earthquakes are brought about "by some huge beast beneath the Earth," often imagined as a bull.

To one who has experienced the tossing and listened to the muffled roaring from below, this popular explanation of earthquakes seems natural enough, and it may well have affected the primitive religion of Minoan Crete.

The extent of the ruin wrought by this exceptionally violent earthquake has become clear through the intensive work of recent seasons. For all its splendour, the Late Minoan palace was a reconstruction on a somewhat diminished scale, bearing marks of haste and acquiescence in the second-best. Where the sub-structures had been ruined the new walls were set back and the area curtailed.

An impressive architectural feature of the older palace had been a Stepped Portico, leading to the south-west angle of the building on the hill-top from a bridge in the glen below. Signs cut on the great blocks show that it was planned and constructed at the same time as the palace, to which it was the principal means of access from the south. It seems to have been completely ruined by the earthquake and not re-built. On the other hand the bridge contemporary with it, and a viaduct on the south side of the gorge, remained in use at any rate down to the final abandonment of the palace. The south entrance, to which these elaborate approaches led, was in fact the terminus of a main road which linked Knossos not only with Phæstos, capital of the fertile Mesarà plain, but with ports on the Libyan Sea. The survey of this road-system, carried out in 1923 and later years, was work in which the author long ago proved his skill when he explored the forgotten Roman roads of Bosnia and Albania; he has traced this Bronze Age highway and its branches with the same persistent sagacity. The surviving fragments are twelve to fourteen feet wide, upheld by massive retaining walls of undressed blocks. Sometimes there are two such walls, one above and one below, where the track runs along a shelf on a hill-side. Similar Minoan roads have been noticed both on the north and south sides of the mountainous backbone from the centre to the east

end of the island ; about Minoan settlements and lines of communication in western Crete much less is known. On the mainland roads of similar construction extend from the shores of Argolis, past Mycenæ, to the Gulf of Corinth, whence a short sea passage led to the Bœotian port of Dombrena, rich in prehistoric remains. It was doubtless by this route that goods were brought to Mycenæan Thebes, not only from Crete, but from Egypt. Waggons drawn by oxen served for heavy transport, and from the Late Minoan period onwards light two-wheeled carriages drawn by a pair of horses were used by people of rank, "chariots" for which fresh uses were soon to be found on the battlefield and the racecourse. The ass reached Crete earlier than the horse, and was used as a beast of burden, but it was long before either was ridden. In older days palanquins carried by servants had been the only means of luxurious travel, and they were retained for ceremonial purposes, as appears from a wall-painting that shows such a chair borne by white-robed priests.

We have descriptions of roadside inns in classical literature, but their actual remains are scanty. Neither the Greek nor Roman world has left us anything comparable with the hostelry built for Minoan travellers on the south side of the Vlychià brook, looking across it to the palace hill. The story of its discovery is itself a romance, too long to relate here. It consists of an outer yard bordering the road, behind it a long range of buildings, stables on the east with cobbled floors and bins containing carbonised corn, rooms for the reception of guests on the west. A broad passage led from the open yard to a paved inner court, and two-thirds of the breadth of this passage was occupied by a shallow tank in which the wayfarer washed his feet before passing in. If he wished to return and watch the traffic on the road, he could sit in a Painted Pavilion, raised five steps above the front yard and connected by a small door with the inner court. Much of the painted stucco from the walls of this *loggia* survives, and the decoration can be re-constructed. The walls were divided into panels by pilasters painted to represent wood. Six feet above the ground was painted an architrave of the same yellow colour, and above that a frieze, 11 ins. broad, representing a subject chosen, the author thinks, to give "an anticipatory assurance of good cheer," like the pictures of game in an old Dutch dining-room—a frieze of partridges, dozens of partridges, with a hoopoe here and

there for variety, set in a conventional landscape strewn in places with brightly banded pebbles and divided up by irregular masses of rock. The style is quite different from that in the House of the Frescoes, described above. Here the birds are everything, the rest mere background. Sad to say, the hoopoe "is still regarded as a special dainty" in Crete.

The stone bath, which the excavator has now restored, measured 6 by $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and was deep enough to immerse a man's legs to the knee. Jutting slabs formed seats for the bathers. The in-flow and out-flow of the water was skilfully managed; "no less than six ducts of various kinds contributed to the water system of this single chamber. It would be hard to find a better example of the Minoan delight in hydraulic devices." The room itself had been painted like the adjoining pavilion. On the other side a doorway from the yard led to a more private room containing clay hip-baths, for which water had been heated seemingly by wood fires. Beyond this point the façade turns at a right angle, and here there was found an underground spring chamber with a central basin, in which water welled up from a layer of pebbles. The margin of the basin at the entrance had been worn away by prolonged dipping of water-jars. A niche in the back wall was evidently intended to hold a lamp or possibly a candlestick, like one of variegated limestone, delicately carved, found not far away.

The earlier type with its expanding receptacle round the socket, recalling an old-fashioned bedroom candlestick, is a derivation of a proto-dynastic Egyptian form, and is evidently designed for guttering wicks like those of tallow candles. But the proportionately taller and more slender form before us recalls rather the silver services of our grandfathers' tables, and was surely intended for a stick of superfine material, such as wax.

This tiny chamber had undergone vicissitudes. At the close of the last palace period it became choked with debris and was disused. Then, after a long interval, later dwellers on the site appropriated it as a shrine. In the upper part of the mud of the basin was a round hut-shaped urn, containing the figure of a goddess with uplifted hands, and quantities of incense vessels and clay bowls containing carbonised grains of olive were found piled within the cell or in front of the entrance. This local cult is assigned to the period 1200-1000 B.C.

Thanks to the infiltrations from the gypsum springs above, the waters of which strayed from their channel in that age of ruin, the contents of the little chamber, though so near the surface, were closed, like fossils in a petrified block, for another three thousand years. The difficult process of clearing out the interior itself restored the structure—so perfectly preserved by this natural action—to its original function as a Spring-Chamber which it had fulfilled before it became a simple sanctuary cell. With the living water once more welling from the basin, and the stone lamps that once lit up the vault replaced on their ledges, this little chamber, sealed up thus by the hand of Nature herself, brings with it a strange revival of the past.

This worship at a spring was something new in Minoan religion and seems to mark the turning-point to Hellenic practice. Settlers from the mainland may have brought the custom of well-worship with them, and their sense of dependence on the goodwill of some power responsible for the water supply would be heightened in a land less well supplied with springs than that from which they came. Sir Arthur is convinced that in the Minoan period this was not primarily a religious building, but a "caravanserai," or rest-house for travellers arriving at the palace from the Great South Road.

A viaduct crossing the wide ravine has piers worthy of a Roman aqueduct, but in place of arches they supported a series of corbelled courses, brought together at the top to carry a lintel-like slab. At the bridge-head on the north shore a passage-way for privileged guests diverged to the right and mounted by the stepped and pillared portico already described. Ordinary traffic bore to the north-west, skirted the palace and its western entrances, and continued northwards to the harbour town. This imposing south façade and its approach were flung down in the earthquake that ruined the older palace, and the builders of the new palace left it as it lay.

The rebuilding must have occupied much of the sixteenth century. Undaunted, the rulers of Knossos set to work to rebuild the chief seat of their dynasty and their national religion on its hallowed site. Repeated disasters must have taught them that the region round Knossos was peculiarly liable to earthquakes, and that the hill on which their palace stood, largely composed of the debris of older settlements, offered no secure foundation. But religious conservatism tied them to the spot. Fresh studies have elucidated not only the ground plan of the new palace, but

its relation to its predecessor and the probable planning of its upper storeys. The wall paintings, skilfully reconstituted by the Gilliérons, father and son, furnish clues to the scheme of decoration. Large scale plans and architectural restorations bring before our eyes a building full of vistas, rich in light, shade and colour, with massive columns and piers that give an impression of enduring strength. In fact however the structure of the walls was inferior to that of the preceding age. Old material was used wholesale, and walls constructed of broken blocks and rubble and clay were masked beneath a covering of painted plaster. The first stage is marked by the building of private houses for the use, it may be, of members of the royal house or of high officials. Some of them encroach on the palace site, and must have been built when some progress had been made in clearing the ruins.

The decorations of these houses, built at the beginning of the New Era, continue the naturalistic Middle Minoan style. Sir Arthur places the transition to Late Minoan about twenty years after the earthquake; perhaps about 1550 B.C., when a new ceramic style (late Minoan I.a) makes its appearance. Six of the seven coloured plates in the new volume illustrate wall paintings, including some of exceptional beauty and interest that have only recently been reconstructed. It is plain that the vivid representations of animals, birds and plants, found on minor works of art, were inspired by frescoes on the palace walls, and that the painters of these did not merely reproduce a few conventional types but worked in direct touch with nature. The most wonderful and novel series of these wall paintings comes from the House of the Frescoes, discovered in 1923. This "cultured home of a small burgher" lies on the western margin of the West Court, and is of modest dimensions, as Minoan houses go, about 55 by 38 feet. Its owner, a lover of nature, chose to have his walls covered with friezes that recalled hill-sides bright with spring flowers, and for contrast the exotic beauties of a palace pleasure-ground.

Their preservation is due to an odd chance. The upper rooms which they once adorned were destroyed long ago—the Greek and Roman city extended over this part of the site; but while the house was still inhabited some Minoan owner had stripped the walls, presumably with a view to redecoration, and stacked the fragments of painted plaster in a basement room.

The pieces were mostly so thin and fragile that it was little short of a miracle that they should have been preserved at all. Their average thickness was about 4-6 millimetres, without any rougher stucco backing, as if the plaster had been laid directly on a clay surface. A few fragments were no more than 3 mm. thick. The mean width of the pieces as squared was, so far as could be calculated, about 23 cm. (c. 9 in.). Had they been simply flung down, such delicate slips would have been pulverized. It is therefore evident that the pieces must have been carefully removed, and piled in layers on the heap, with the face upwards or downwards, indifferently. . . . At one place I counted thirty-four distinct layers.

The removal, preservation and piecing together of these fragments was a work of infinite patience. The small size of the house, in which no room measured more than sixteen feet by ten, justified the hope that this "jig-saw puzzle on a large scale" might be recomposed into its original panels; in the end the essential parts of four such panels and a series of minor details have been re-assembled and put on record.

For pure naturalism the palm belongs to a fragmentary panel with a border of fantastic rock-work.

From the rocks spring wild peas or vetches—the pods shown simultaneously with spiky flowers, clumps of what seem to be dwarf Cretan irises, blue fringed with orange, and—for variety's sake—rose edged with deep purplish green. To the left, for the first time in Ancient Art, appears a wild rose bush, partly against a deep red and partly against a white background, and other coiling sprays of the same plant hang down from a rock-work arch above. The flowers are of a golden rose colour with orange centres dotted with deep red.

From behind one of the rocks rises a blue bird, evidently a "roller," a bird with greenish-blue plumage, which is still to be seen in Crete. Other panels show such typical growths as the *Pancratium* lily, the myrtle, clumps of crocus (prototypes of well-known ceramic designs) and sprays of ivy, for which the author claims a religious significance.

We were already familiar with a class of Cretan designs in which living subjects are framed by a border of rocky landscape, above and below. Such borders were often and fittingly used to frame marine subjects; the sculptor or painter had in mind the fretted coastline, the rock pools in which cuttlefish lie in wait for their prey or nautili ride as if in harbour. On the other hand, anyone who knows the mountain villages of the interior and the luxuriant gardens formed by terracing wherever water is available,

must be reminded of them when he looks at the ivy-hung, flower-tufted rock walls that furnish a setting for the picture of the blue birds. Just as the painter at Hagia Triadha showed exotic pets, a pheasant and a cat, in such a landscape, so in the House of the Frescoes there were panels showing monkeys at play in a rocky garden or in a thicket of papyrus. The painter of these scenes was certainly familiar with Egyptian wall paintings, but their most characteristic feature, the isolation of the figure within an encircling band of green and brown, is found only once in Egypt, in the tomb of Kenamon at Thebes, in which various animals are shown "in separate compartments surrounded by desert belts of sand and shingle." The author asks on which side was the indebtedness. Mr. N. de Garis Davies, who studied and copied the paintings of this tomb, had already noted its originality and suspected "that this Da Vinci of Thebes came from a northern school." Further knowledge of Cretan painting may some day enable us to decide how far the freedom of Minoan art re-acted on that of Egypt; in this case the Theban painting must be at least a century later than the Knossian.

The grouping of flowering plants and shrubs among miniature crags and pinnacles of coloured stone suggests an almost Japanese development of picturesque gardening. The rock-surfaces often "present the appearance of brilliantly veined agate or of artificially coloured onyx sliced and polished," as though the painter were copying the fantastic markings of stone vases, such as Cretan lapidaries had long been accustomed to carve in native and foreign materials. This delight in variegated stones makes it likely enough that they were used for artificial rock-work in Minoan gardens, just as the water that irrigated them was displayed in artificial fountains; for fragments of fresco show jets of water spouting upwards and spreading in a rain of falling drops. Such devices, the author points out, seem to have been unknown alike in the ancient empires and the Greek world until the Hellenistic period.

Yet in Minoan Crete, where everything connected with the flow of water had been practically considered from the earliest times and abstruse hydrostatic problems empirically solved, the appearance of an artificial fountain should hardly excite surprise. Already, in the elaborate system of water-supply of the earliest Age of the Palace, advantage had been taken of the natural law by which water finds its own level, and water-pipes had been devised that anticipate the devices

of modern engineering. At the beginning of the New Era, to which the " House of the Frescoes " owed its construction, such a refinement of hydrostatic science as the use of parabolic curves for water-channels is repeatedly illustrated among the remains of the Palace.

It would seem, then, that some of these pictures reproduce veritable rock gardens, maintained through the summer heats by irrigation and enlivened by leaping fountains ; and it is in keeping with their luxurious artificial character that some of the birds and animals that people them are natives of foreign lands. May not the sea-pieces with their borders of cut pebbles and yellow sand contain reminiscences of an aquarium where marine creatures were kept in semi-natural conditions ?

Knossos in the Late Minoan Age was not only a richer and more powerful, but a more populous city than her Greek and Roman successors—a city of 100,000 inhabitants, at least—the first such agglomeration on European soil. Even to-day, after many seasons of exploration, the extent of the town is imperfectly known. That of the palace itself is now better defined. Well-appointed houses, reproducing in miniature the architecture of the palace, have been found enclosing it on all sides. Several of them have as an adjunct to their principal hall a raised tribune or dais with a seat evidently intended for the master of the house ; whether he used it in some official capacity, as judge or tax-gatherer, or merely to emphasise his dignity as ruler of his own house, we cannot say. It appears that each head of a family officiated as priest under his own roof, for most of these houses have a pillar crypt and signs that a cult was maintained within it.

New light has been thrown on the development of this religion by the recent excavation of two important sites just north-east of Knossos. The first is a palace at Mallia, a village on the coast fifteen miles to the east, which has been excavated by the French School at Athens. Built at the beginning of the Middle Minoan Period, and therefore contemporary with the older elements at Knossos, the palace at Mallia preserves its original plan almost unaltered. Here, too, from the first there was a complex of rooms enclosing a central court. There was a pillar room, used for ritual purposes, and a range of storerooms for grain, oil and the like. The court was bordered on two sides by porticos, while another side was interrupted by a *loggia*, approached by four steps and supported, like the front of a distyle temple, by two columns.

In an adjoining recess were found, along with a painted vase of the earliest Middle Minoan date, a magnificent bronze dagger and sword and a carved stone axe, clearly of ceremonial character. The dagger is a characteristic weapon of this early period, its hilt enriched with thin gold plate. The two weapons found with it are far more remarkable. The one shows that Cretan armourers had made astonishing progress in their craft, while the axehead, partially carved into the likeness of a leopard, has unexpected Oriental affinities.

The sword, as in the case of all early weapons of the class, is of the rapier or thrusting kind, in conformity with its origin from the dagger type. But what extraordinary development in its length has here taken place! Only those who have made some special study of the gradual evolution of this weapon can fully appreciate the fact that we have here in Crete, by the close of the Third Millennium before our era, a sword which, with its pommel, was almost a metre long—exceeding by a good fifth the longest Bronze Age swords known in Europe, all of which it long precedes in date. Its hilt is 21 cm. ($8\frac{1}{2}$ inches) long, of gold-plated ivory, terminating in a faceted knob of rock-crystal, with here and there a glint of amethyst. This magnificent weapon is indeed a Minoan “Durendal”—the craft of Dædalos here forestalling that of Weland.

The axehead, carved in brown schist, has a tapering blade on one side and on the other the head, shoulders and forelegs of a leopard, wearing a collar and body harness, which “points to a beast made use of for hunting.” The decoration of linked spirals and chevrons conforms to that of the bronze weapons and suggests a common place of origin, presumably in Crete. Sir Arthur shows by comparison with Persian, Sumerian and Hittite examples, that this axe bears a near resemblance to ceremonial weapons of Western Asia and would derive thence the framework of the society, over which the chieftain who wielded it ruled. He sees in the sword and the sacrificial axe the emblems of temporal and spiritual dominion, and infers that Mallia, like Knossos, was the headquarters of a Priest-King. It is difficult, however, to believe that the palaces of Knossos and Mallia and Tylisos, which lie within a few miles of one another, represented independent communities; rather it appears that the magnate of each district was the subject of a supreme king, and was the religious head within that area, just as each citizen seems to have been in his own house.

The second site that has yielded information about Minoan religion is a settlement between Mallia and Knossos, at Niru Khani, seven miles east of Candia, where Minoan houses and quarries can be traced for more than half a mile along the coast. There are remains of a mole jutting out to sea ; near its starting-point the Cretan archæologist, Dr. Xanthudides, has laid bare a Minoan building which may be described as a Mission Warehouse. It contained in one of its inner rooms a store of between forty and fifty tripod altars of painted clay, while another contained four bronze ritual axes of giant size, the largest being 3 ft. 10 ins. in breadth. Sir Arthur accepts the excavator's conclusion :—

. . . that the house was occupied by some Archpriest of the Minoan Cult, who superintended the fabric on the spot of indispensable ritual objects such as those described, and directed their distribution. We see, moreover, from the extraordinary dimensions of the Sacred Double Axes that they were destined for expedition to very important places. As a centre for the distribution of such objects to sites in the interior of the Island, Niru Khani, backed by a succession of rugged hills, was certainly ill placed. But the very position of the building near the head of the mole that ran out from the adjoining wharf naturally marks it as a convenient warehouse for dispatch of such objects overseas. When we remember that the period when this building was in use corresponds with that of the great Minoan expansion in Mainland Greece, it looks as if a methodical attempt had been made to provide for the spiritual needs of co-religionists in the new mainland centres, and perhaps, in view of their surroundings, for some actual propaganda *in partibus infidelium* (284).

Startling as this suggestion may seem, it is borne out by evidence which proves how completely the life of the ruling caste was penetrated and moulded by religion. In the House of the Frescoes, described above, much of the basement had been devoted to ritual purposes. Here was found a stone libation table bearing an inscription, in part identical with that on the famous libation table from the Psychro cave : a votive ladle of characteristic form and a vase bearing the sign of the double axe. Moreover the walls of some of these basement rooms had borne inscriptions in " tall bright orange characters," which suggest to the author " a comparison with the Arabic texts from the Koran that decorate the walls of early mosques." These seem like guesses, but the evidence in such matters is cumulative.

We turn to the remarkable building called " the Little Palace," lying 250 yards west of the main building and connected with it

by a paved road. It covered an area of 275 feet from north to south and at least 100 feet from east to west, and was built for shelter from sun and wind in a cutting in the hill-side open to the morning sun, but escaping the noonday and evening heat. Its state apartments have much in common with those of the Great Palace, the central feature being a peristyle with eight columns at its centre and the usual series of openings, closed by curtains rather than doors, between the inner and outer Megaron. Two flights of stairs led to the upper storey, which can in some measure be restored. In the south-west angle is a Pillar Crypt, unusually perfect, containing two square pillars, and from a room which must have stood above it, there had fallen the socketed stand for a sacred double axe, and a carved bull's head, both of black steatite. This head is a wonderful piece of lapidary's work, delicately chased and inlaid. The white surface of the muzzle is inlaid with *tridacna* shell, brought from the Persian Gulf, the eyes with rock crystal,

. . . on the slightly hollowed lower surface of which are painted the pupil and iris. The pupil is bright scarlet, the iris black, the rest of the cornea white. The crystal setting is itself inserted in a border of red jasper, which surrounds the white field of the eye like the rims of bloodshot eyelids. To add to the effect, the crystal lens of the eye both illuminates and magnifies the pupil and imparts to the whole an almost startling impression of fiery life.

This ornate head was a *rhyton*, or vase for ritual libations, furnished with an inlet behind the neck and a narrow outlet at the mouth. A similar head in silver, of the same form with gold enrichments, was found in the Fourth Shaft Grave at Mycenæ, and representations of such vessels are seen on clay tablets, which seem to be inventories of pieces of plate, at Knossos and also among offerings carried by Minoans in Egyptian tomb paintings of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

The Pillar Crypt, near which this *rhyton* was found, was not the only chapel of the kind. To the east of it lay two similar rooms, the first containing two pillars, the second three. Between each pair of pillars is a square basin sunk in the pavement to receive libations. Two ingeniously contrived stairs gave access to the outer of the two crypts; the other must have been quite dark, like many of these mysterious chapels.

A similar basement room in the "Royal Villa," north-east of

the palace, shows the type in its perfection. A room 13 feet square of fine ashlar masonry, the central pillar composed of two gypsum blocks, stands on a square of gypsum pavement, bordered by a sunken channel leading to two oblong vats or basins. Here the walls are well preserved, but there is no sign of a window. Once more a special staircase gives access to the crypt from a room, perhaps a second chapel, of similar size on the upper floor.

Curious evidence of the late survival of the Minoan cult in a degraded form was found in what Sir Arthur calls a Lustral Area, adjoining the Megaron of the Little Palace. This is a room of the kind which Cretan excavators used to describe as a "bath room," a sunk compartment surrounded by a parapet which in turn supported low wooden columns. In the Third Late Minoan Period the humble folk who parcelled out among them the State apartments of the fallen dynasty turned this balustraded compartment into a shrine. They blocked the spaces between the columns with clay and plaster, and by so doing fortunately preserved a record of their convex flutings, copied from a type of Egyptian column which imitates clustered stems of lotus and papyrus. Evidence accumulates to show that these sunk compartments were used for ritual purposes, presumably ritual purifications. But the peasants who found a refuge here in the Re-occupation Period set up as objects of worship within it mere fetishes, natural concretions of stalagmite which offered some suggestion of human or animal form.

The long reign of Thothmes III, covering the first-half of the fifteenth century, witnessed close intercourse between Crete and Egypt, attested by wall paintings in the tombs of Egyptian officials and courtiers. The offerings are gold and silver vases of typical Minoan shapes, silver figures of standing or galloping bulls, ingots of copper or tin, woven belts, swords, necklaces and other objects. The author believes, however, that the painters of Thothmes III's time copied these scenes mechanically from older tombs belonging to the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Intercourse grew less as time went on.

It is interesting to compare these Egyptian friezes, representing a train of tribute-bearers, with the wall-painting of a procession that adorned a corridor in the Knossian Palace. One of its figures, preserved almost complete, is the famous Cup-bearer, a life-sized youth carrying a conical silver *rhyton*. This was but

one of a long series of figures carrying sacred vessels for use in public ritual before the people assembled in the West Court. It is thought that the painting was in two tiers. A restoration, drawn by Mr. Theodore Fyfe, brings out, as is done yet more vividly on the spot by a partial restoration of the two friezes, "the brilliant effect which these processional figures, one ranged above the other, must once have presented in this inner entrance hall." Entering from the south, the visitor had the painted pageant on either hand and saw before him a sunlit vista and a stairway mounting between two colonnades to the central group of state apartments.

Similar friezes adorned the walls of a corridor leading from the west porch towards the south Propylæum just described, which was widened to provide for the adequate display of two tiers of life-size standing figures. Its original decoration, appropriate to a narrow passage-way, had been a frieze of seated figures in one tier only; and whereas the subjects represented in the older period had been groups of ladies engaged in conversation or busy with their toilet, the architect of the New Era chose rather to represent a solemn religious procession.

Taking the entire length of the corridor from the east portal of the west porch to the point where it abuts on the landing of the staircase leading up from the south entrance of the palace as 56 metres, it appears that the number of figures on either side of this ceremonial passage-way—assuming that there were double rows—must have amounted to 224, or 448 in all, and 88 or more have been already estimated for the interior decoration of the two compartments of the Propylæum Hall. In this way we reach the total number of 536 life-sized figures, without reckoning the almost certain extension of the series to the Upper Propylæum system. It seems likely that similar processional scenes filled the back wall of the porticoes on either side of its central flight of steps, as well as the lobby into which it opened.

It was the first appearance in European art of a subject which was to become traditional and find its crowning expression in the Parthenon frieze.

The great stairway that led from the Corridor of the Procession through the South Propylæa to the central state rooms, and another leading from the west side of the central court, gave access to the north and south entrances of a central Tri-Columnar Hall, about 30 feet square, so named because it contained three columns supported by a pillar crypt below. Repeated dis-

coveries indicate that the upper room in such a case was generally used as a sanctuary, nor is the evidence lacking here. Adjoining this hall was a room, 12 feet by 14 feet, which had been used as a sacristy. When its floor collapsed its precious contents sank into the basement below, described in the excavation reports as the "Room of the Stone Vases." The treasure comprised a series of libation vessels carved in costly stones, marble, alabaster, breccia; and one vessel with a long spout modelled in bluish-green faience, clearly copied from a metal original such as was recently found at Byblos in Phœnicia. The stone vessels take many forms: heads of a lion and a lioness, a triton shell, delicately fluted cones originally copied from a bull's horn, and oval flasks, the evolution of which can be traced through intermediate forms back to an ostrich-egg bottle such as is still made by tribes in the central Sudan; the author figures an ostrich-egg vessel with blue marble mouth-piece, found in an Eleventh or Twelfth Dynasty grave at Abydos. Actual ostrich-eggs, once richly mounted, have been found in royal graves at Mycenæ, and quite recently by the Swedish expedition, at Dendra, in Argolis. Like the bull's head *rhyton*, described above, the marble lioness had inlay of red jasper in eye socket and nozzle; the eye was no doubt completed in the same way as the bull's, with a crystal lens. These libation vessels in the form of a lion or lioness's head recall the lions often represented as companions of the Minoan deities.

It is well-known that part of a head similar in material and treatment was found beneath the Temple of Apollo, at Delphi, along with an ordinary conical *rhyton*—a striking commentary on the tradition embodied in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, that his worship was brought to Delphi from Knossos. In Apollo Delphinios, the chief god of classical Knossos, Evans recognises the youthful male god associated with the supreme goddess on Minoan engraved gems and signet rings, while he believes that the goddess herself, in her aspect as huntress and ruler of the sea, continued to be worshipped as Diktyнна or Britomartis, whom the Greeks identified with Artemis or at times with one of her nymphs. As goddess of motherhood and fertility she was Rhea at Knossos, Hera at Argos, Aphrodite at Paphos, Demeter at Eleusis—old seats of Minoan worship.

Scholars throughout the world have done homage to the intuition that chose and secured this site for investigation, and

the faith that has led Sir Arthur Evans to devote to it much of his life and fortune. His work, begun with the new century, has set a new standard in the technique of excavation, the repairing and conserving of finds, and—most necessary in a building of several storeys—the replacement of perished timbers and the reconstruction of architectural features, such as stairways and pillared halls; areas that would suffer by exposure have been roofed, wall paintings removed to the Candia Museum are replaced by copies. Few scientific undertakings have been so entirely conceived, directed and interpreted by a single mind. To say this is not to overlook the essential services of Sir Arthur's able adjutant, Dr. Duncan Mackenzie, now the resident curator of Knossos, or the group of architects, Mr. Theodore Fyfe, Mr. C. T. Doll, Mr. P. de Jong and the late Mr. F. G. Newton, who have contributed accurate records of things found and brilliant reconstructions of things inferred.

The first volume has stood the test of time. It established a system of chronology and nomenclature which classified prehistoric studies in the whole East Mediterranean area. The second amplifies and confirms that system, in which so many recent discoveries, on the mainland as well as in Crete, fall naturally into place. We look forward to the volume—or volumes—that will complete the story.

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