



THE BEEHIVE TOMB OF THE "KING" AND "QUEEN" AT DENDRA.



By A. J. B. WACE, M.A., Deputy Keeper of the Victoria and Albert Museum, from Material supplied by Professor Persson, of Upsala University.

THE rich finds from the beehive tomb at Dendra in Greece, just announced by Professor Persson, of the Swedish archaeological expedition, will encourage the belief that the archaeologist is only a treasure-hunter; but the treasure he digs for is history, which, as Schliemann first taught us, may be read in broken potsherds.

No branch of Greek archaeology is more fascinating or richer in artistic and human interest than the pre-historic, which is devoted to recovering the civilisation of the wonderful pre-Homeric Bronze Age of Greece revealed principally by the work of Schliemann at Mycenæ and of Sir Arthur Evans at Knossos. This culture arose before 3000 B.C., and, extending to the beginning of the Iron Age in the twelfth century, shows us the material background to the Homeric Age, and proves that there is a substratum of fact in the early legends of Greece. Sherd by sherd the evidence is being pieced together for the outlines of a history not known to Athens in her prime, which does not depend merely on dry-as-dust archaeology, but on the study of masterpieces worthy of any country and of any age.

So it is not surprising that the Swedish archaeological expedition in Greece, which owes its inception to H.R.H. the Crown Prince of Sweden, himself one of the excavators, should have been attracted to this field. Since 1922, under the leadership of Dr. Frödin and Professor Persson, of Upsala, the Swedes have worked with great success at Asine, a Homeric citadel on the coast near Nauplia, which has been unexpectedly fruitful in remains of all periods from the early Bronze Age down to late classical times. A cemetery contemporary with the great days of Mycenæ has yielded the most valuable objects, while ruined houses of the Early and Middle Bronze Ages have produced humble potsherds more illuminating historically.

This July, when the work at Asine closed, Professor Persson co-operated with Dr. Bertos, the Greek Inspector of Antiquities for Argolis, in excavating a newly discovered beehive tomb at the village of Dendra, about six miles north of Nauplia away from the sea. They deserve the hearty congratulations of all, for Professor Persson writes: "We have had tremendous luck, cups in gold and silver, swords of bronze with handles of gold, gems, and, in short, precious things of all kinds." He has generously sent for publication a brief account in which he calls the finds "truly extraordinary, even richer than those of Vaphio," where the famous gold cups were found thirty-seven years ago.

The entrance passage to the tomb, faced with walls of a cyclopean character, runs fifteen metres horizontally into the hillside. The doorway of ashlar masonry, four metres deep and about four metres high, was completely blocked with a rough stone wall. The upper part of the vault, which projected above the level of the ground, has collapsed, leaving only one lintel slab *in situ*, set in the usual position at the level of the natural grade of the hillside. The lower part below the ground is well preserved up to a height of four and a-half metres, and is built of roughly dressed stone more regularly laid than the walls of the entrance. Such tombs were built in spaces specially dug out for them in hillsides, so that the tomb might be underground, and that the lower part, supported by solid earth all round, might be strong enough to carry the thrust of the vault.

Here at Dendra the funeral chamber is eight metres in diameter—approximately the same size as the smaller beehive tombs at Mycenæ, where the height equals the diameter—and has four grave pits

sunk below its floor. In two of these were relics of funeral offerings, fragments of bronze and ivory together with charcoal and bones. The other two pits, about six feet deep, contained the mortal remains of three royal persons still lying in state with all their rich trappings. In the larger pit lay two skele-

cups of Vaphio are about three inches high and four in diameter, so that this gold bowl is equal to the two together. Four most naturalistic octopuses swim lazily above the coral rocks of the sea floor, and below the surface, whereon float argonauts. Between them are dolphins curving gracefully as they dive. The

octopuses and the coral rocks recall a stone vessel from Mycenæ carved in relief with a somewhat similar pattern, but those octopuses are distinctly conventionalised; and the dolphins suggest a small cup of thin gold found by Schliemann at Mycenæ, which is, however, only roughly engraved.

The royal seals were found in the "King's Cup": four signet rings of silver and bronze which are not yet cleaned, and four stones with delicate intaglios, two with a splendid lion springing on a frightened bull, one with a wild goat, and one apparently with two recumbent oxen like two seal-stones from Vaphio, and one from Mycenæ. A gold cup covered with silver on the outside, two vases of silver, and a bronze vessel hid the lower part of the body. The "king" was also well equipped with weapons all of bronze: a sword with a handle of gold was at his right arm, and at his left three others, two decorated with gold and one with a rock crystal pommel; by his legs were a fifth sword with gold ornaments, four spear-heads, and two knives.

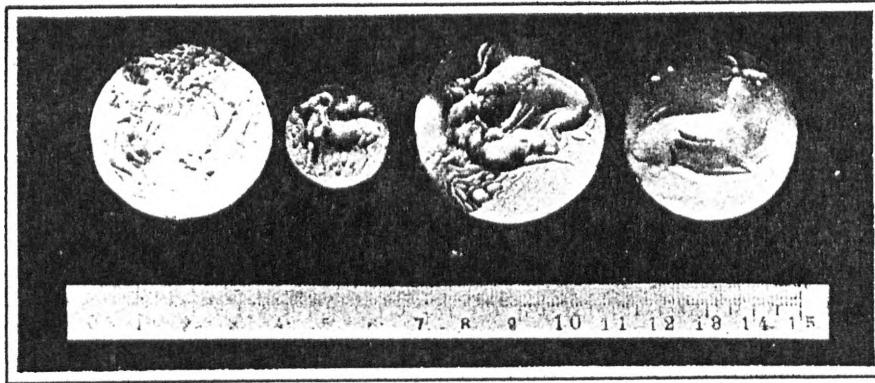
At the opposite end of the same shaft was found the "queen," apparently holding another gold cup in her bent right arm. This is most elaborately and skilfully decorated with a design of five bulls' heads inlaid in a cloisonné manner with gold, bronze, and black silver on a sheet of silver which covers the outside of the cup. This piece of plate reflects the perfect skill and taste of this remote age, and has an unusual feature, a "wish-bone" handle, somewhat similar to those of clay bowls not uncommon in Cyprus about this time. Between the two skeletons were found a necklace of sixty-one gold beads, a stone lamp, and a vase made of an ostrich egg adorned with gold, silver, and bronze. Fragments of ostrich eggs, both decorated and undecorated, occur in tombs at Mycenæ, and seem to have been used for libations.

The fourth shaft, which had a roof of stones about twenty inches below the floor of the chamber, held one skeleton, the "princess." She had a string of thirty-eight gold rosettes round her neck, a gold ring with religious figures, and below her breast the golden binding and golden ornaments of her belt.

These are the principal treasures, but the fortunate excavators found many other objects of all kinds in gold, ivory, and stone, as well as clay vases intrinsically of small value, but chronologically important. They, according to Professor Persson, do not allow the tomb to be dated earlier than 1350 B.C., or about the time of Tutankhamen. The "King's Cup" alone of the finds seems considerably earlier, and may be almost as old as the Vaphio cups, which date from about 1500 B.C. It would, however, be premature, until further details are available, to be more precise about the date of the tomb and its contents, which, in quality, though not in quantity, approach those of the shaft graves of Mycenæ.

We may, perhaps, provisionally recognise in the "king," "queen," and "princess" members of the ruling house of

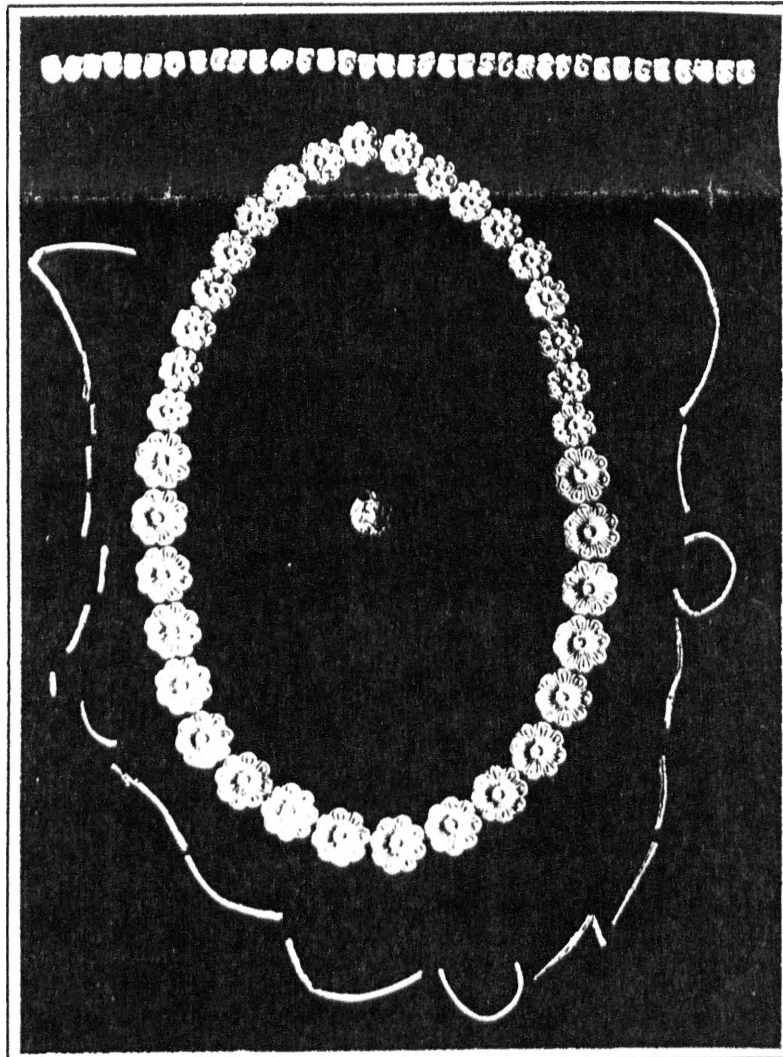
Midca, the ruined stronghold which towers above the modern village of Dendra, and, though not actually mentioned in Homer, appears in the early legends of Argolis, with Mycenæ and Tiryns, as a seat of royalty.



SEALS OF A MYCENEAN "KING" OF ABOUT 1350 B.C.: FOUR FINE SEAL-STONES FOUND IN THE "KING'S" CUP (SHOWN ON THE PRECEDING PAGE) CARVED WITH ANIMAL FIGURES, INCLUDING LIONS ATTACKING BULLS, AND A WILD GOAT.

Inside the gold cup on the "king's" breast were found his seals—four fine seal-stones, two of them carved with vigorous scenes of a lion attacking a bull, one showing recumbent oxen, and another a wild goat beside a tree. The cup also contained four signet rings of silver and bronze.

tons, one apparently male, the "king," and the other, probably female, the "queen," stretched at full length on beds of clay. It is not unusual in chamber tombs of the later Bronze Age at Mycenæ and elsewhere to find the dead laid on beds of clay specially prepared for them.



THE 3000-YEAR-OLD JEWELS OF A "PRINCESS" FOUND IN THE DENDRA TOMB: A NECKLACE OF THIRTY-EIGHT GOLD BEADS IN THE FORM OF ROSETTES, WITH A GOLD RING (CENTRE), FRAGMENTS OF GOLD EDGING TO HER GIRDLE (LEFT AND RIGHT), AND GIRDLE ORNAMENTS (AT TOP).

Photographs by Courtesy of Professor Persson, of Upsala University.

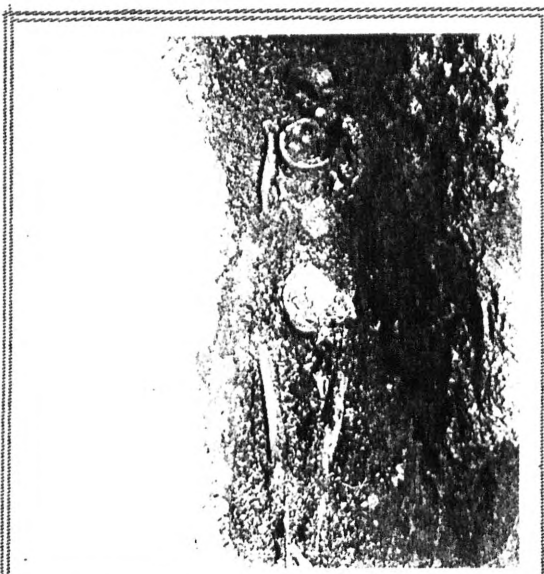
The "king" was completely covered with precious objects, and had on his chest a golden bowl seven inches in diameter exquisitely decorated with a *repoussé* design of a marine character. The gold

THE GREAT DENDRA DISCOVERY: NEW LIGHT ON PRE-HOMERIC GREECE.

PHOTOGRAPHS REPRODUCED BY COURTESY OF PROFESSOR PERSSON, OF UPSALA UNIVERSITY.



1. THE "KING'S" SKELETON *IN SITU*, WITH HIS WEAPONS (SWORDS ON SHOULDERS AND FEET), BUT THE CUPS REMOVED: A GRAVE.



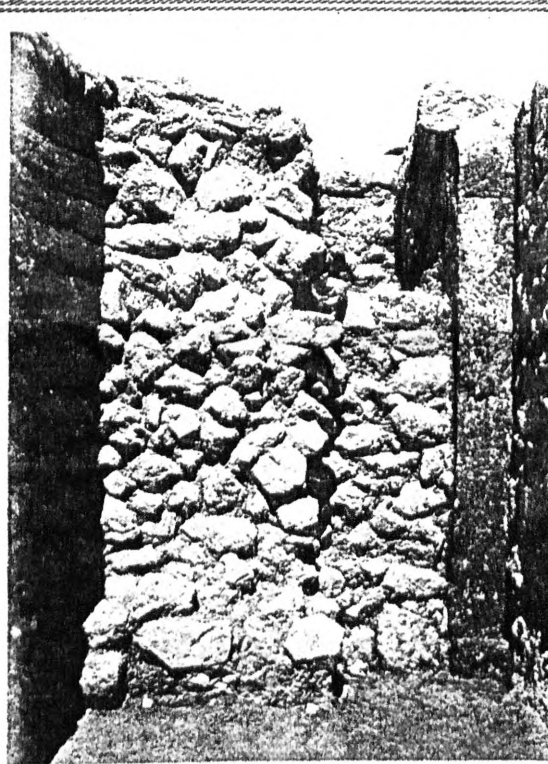
2. WITH THE "OCTOPUS" CUP (SEE FRONT PAGE) ON HIS BREAST AND TWO OTHER CUPS ON HIS BODY: THE SKELETON OF THE "KING"—ANOTHER VIEW.



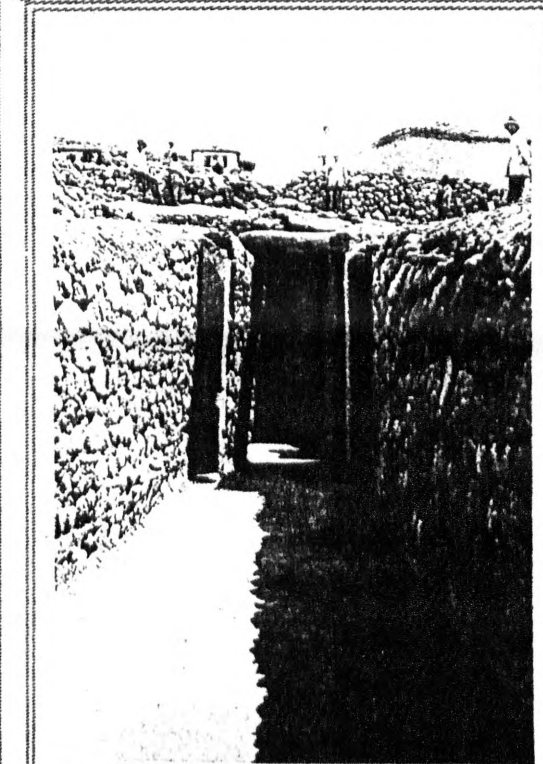
3. THE "QUEEN'S" SKELETON *IN SITU*, WITH THE "BULLS' HEADS" CUP (SEE FRONT PAGE) ON HER BREAST: THE OTHER END OF THE SAME GRAVE.



4. THE ROOF OF SLABS COVERING THE GRAVE OF THE "PRINCESS," ABOUT 20 IN. BENEATH THE FLOOR OF THE TOMB CHAMBER AT DENDRA.



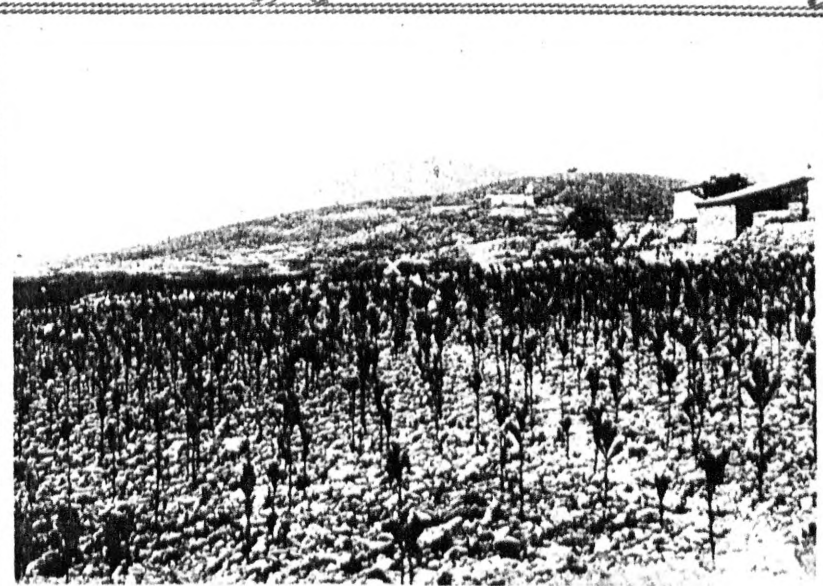
5. BEFORE REMOVAL OF THE ROUGH STONE-WORK WITH WHICH IT WAS WALLED UP: THE ENTRANCE TO THE DENDRA TOMB.



6. AFTER REMOVAL OF THE STONE FILLING: THE ENTRANCE PASSAGE (*DROMOS*) CLEARED, WITH CYCLOPEAN WALLS AND DOORWAY.



7. INSIDE THE "BEEHIVE" TOMB WITH IN-CURVING WALLS: A GROUP INCLUDING PROFESSOR PERSSON (CENTRE AT BACK) AND A MAN (IN FRONT) STANDING IN ONE OF THE GRAVES.



8. THE SITE WHERE THE TOMB (MARKED WITH A CROSS) WAS FOUND: THE SCENE OF THE GREAT DISCOVERY NEAR DENDRA, SHOWING A TOBACCO FIELD IN THE FOREGROUND.

The tomb in which the great discoveries described by Mr. A. J. B. Wace on the opposite page were made was cut in the slope of a hill near Dendra, a village at the foot of the acropolis crowned by the ruins of the Homeric citadel of Midea, near Mycenae and Tiryns. The tomb, which dates from about 1350 B.C., is approached by an entrance passage about 16 yards long and 10 ft. wide, lined on both sides with cyclopean walls. The doorway, faced with jambs of ashlar masonry, was walled up with rough stone-work, which had to be removed. The round tomb-chamber is about 26 ft. in diameter, with walls of "beehive" construction. The chamber contained four grave-pits, of which two had been disturbed in ancient times, but the other two were intact. One of the latter contained a

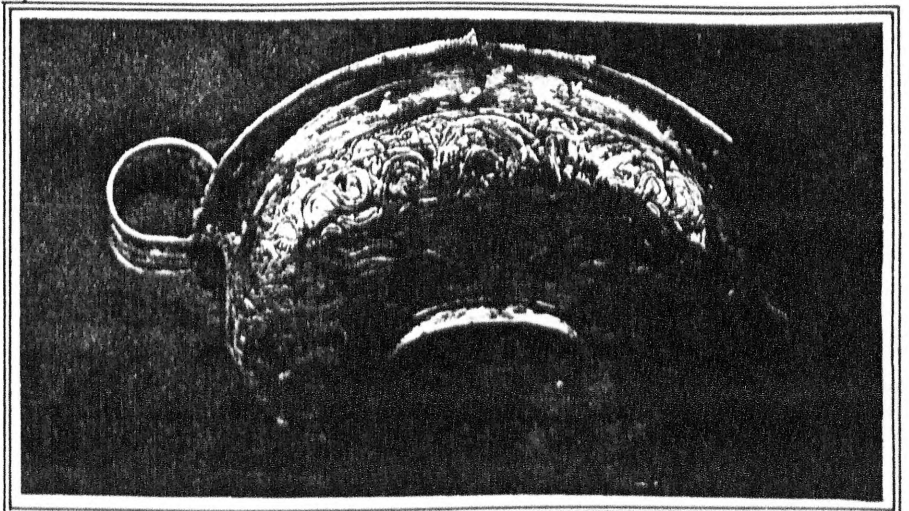
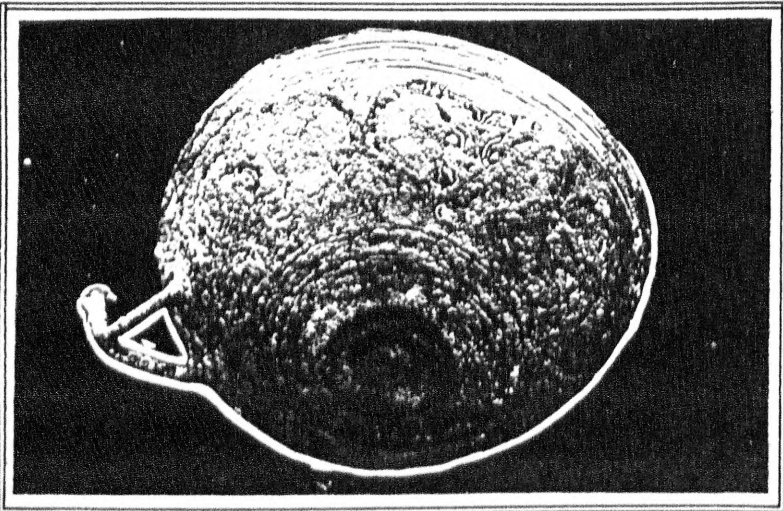
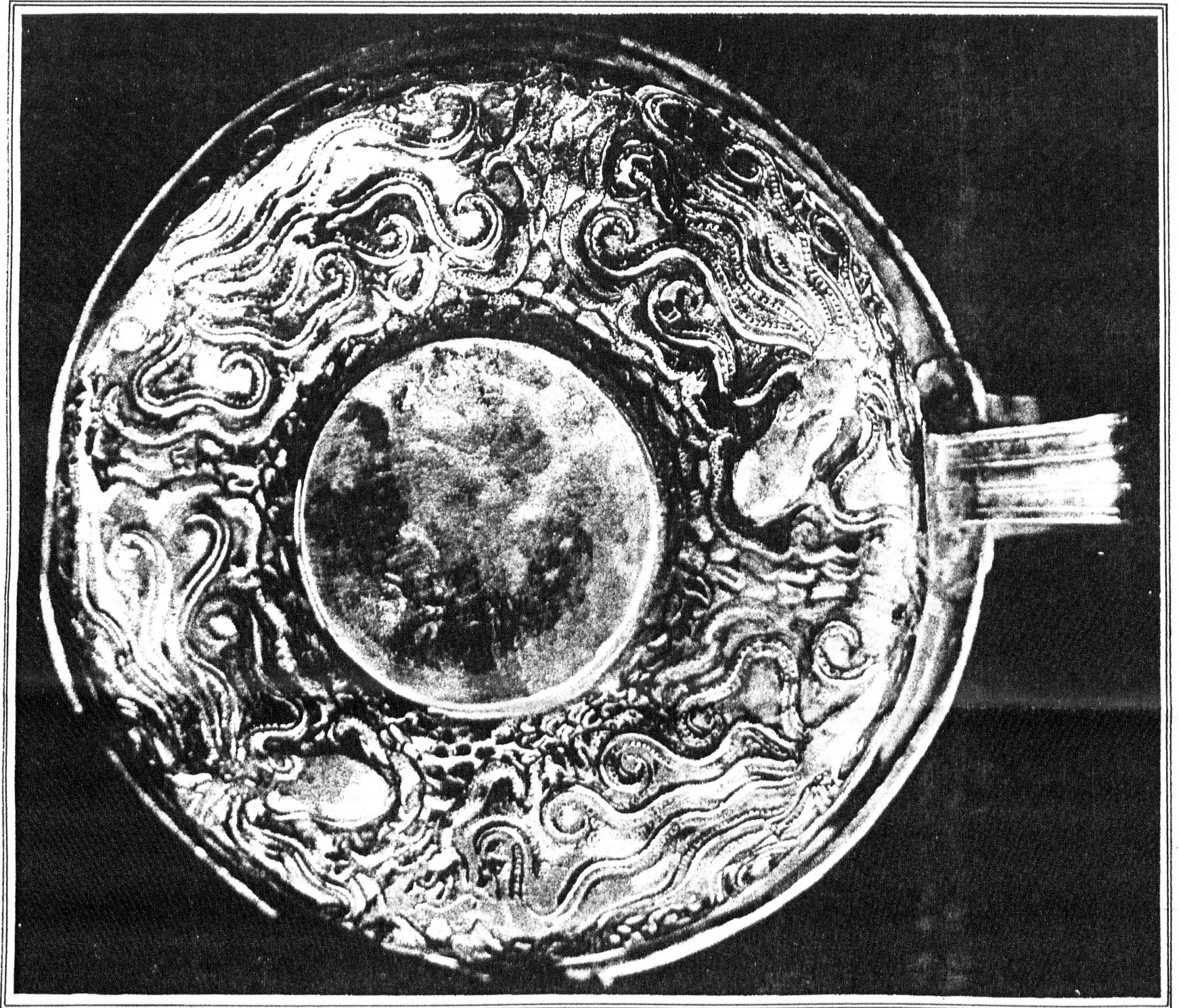
skeleton of a man at one end, and at the other a skeleton of a woman. These skeletons, which have been called the "king" and "queen," were both covered with treasures placed there when they were buried over 3000 years ago. On the "king" was a magnificent gold cup (illustrated on our front page) containing seals and signet rings, several other vases, and his swords. Another cup lay on the "queen's" breast. In the other intact grave was a female skeleton (the "princess") with a gold necklace and ring and round the waist the gold edging and ornaments of a girdle. The tomb contained many other objects of interest and value, and the whole discovery, made by a Swedish expedition under Professor Persson, is in the first rank of those relating to the pre-Homeric Bronze Age in Greece.

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1. A GREAT DISCOVERY BY THE CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN'S EXPEDITION IN GREECE: ONE OF THE FINEST EXTANT MASTERPIECES OF MYCENEAN ART—THE "KING'S" CUP, DECORATED WITH AN OCTOPUS DESIGN, FROM THE BEEHIVE TOMB, OVER 3000 YEARS OLD, AT DENDRA. (UNDERNEATH VIEW IN ACTUAL SIZE—7 IN. DIAMETER.)
 2. A SPLENDID EXAMPLE OF MYCENEAN GOLD AND SILVER WORK FOUND AT DENDRA: THE "QUEEN'S" CUP, DECORATED WITH BULLS' HEADS, FROM THE SAME TOMB.
 3. CHALLENGING COMPARISON WITH THE FAMOUS GOLD CUPS FOUND AT VAPHIO IN 1889: THE "KING'S" CUP FROM DENDRA—A SIDE VIEW OF NO. 1.
- We illustrate here and on the two succeeding pages an archaeological discovery of the first importance, made recently by the Swedish expedition to Greece organised by the Crown Prince of Sweden, who has himself taken an active part in the work. In a Mycenaean "beehive" tomb, at Dendra, Professor Persson found the skeletons of a "king" and a "queen," each covered with treasures of gold and silver. A descriptive article appears on the next page.

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