

**THE DISCOVERIES IN
CRETE: AND THEIR
BEARING ON THE HISTORY
OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATION**

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The discoveries in Crete: and their bearing on the history of ancient civilization by Ronald M. Burrows

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RONALD M. BURROWS

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A



B



C

PLATE I

VASES FROM HAGIA TRIADA

SCALE—A 1 : 3, B 1 : 2.

THE DISCOVERIES IN CRETE

AND THEIR BEARING ON
THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT
CIVILISATION

By RONALD M. BURROWS

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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P R E F A C E

THE present book is an attempt to meet a need that has been widely felt during the last few years, not only by classical scholars, but by the general cultured public. Mr. Arthur Evans's discoveries at Knossos made an impression on the popular imagination when they were first presented to the world six years ago, and the impression was deepened by the wonderful exhibition of Cretan art at Burlington House two years later. Even at that time, however, the accounts of the excavations that were accessible to the public were as fragmentary as they were fascinating. Since then the mass of new material has been so great that it has taken Mr. Evans all his time to publish the details as they came out in the various learned Journals which had a right to expect them. The promptness with which the result of each year's work has appeared is remarkable, and it has been out of the question to expect from Mr. Evans a general survey of the ground until the completion of the excavations. These have now been going on for six years, at Knossos and on other Cretan sites, and are not nearly completed. It may still be years

before we see, what we all look forward to, the great and final book on Knossos.

Meanwhile learned monographs on different sections of the subject have been fast accumulating. They form the principal contents of six successive *Annals of the British School at Athens*, and a not inconsiderable portion of the six corresponding volumes of *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*. There is hardly a specialist journal in the world that has not contributed something to the solution of the problems involved, and many of them are not easily accessible. Those of Italy, in particular, whose contributions to the subject are of next importance to our own, are undeservedly difficult of access in this country.

It is not only, too, that the literature of the subject is extensive: the literature of any subject is, if you go deep enough. The commendable promptness of the yearly reports has brought with it one inevitable corollary. Each of them largely, and often tacitly, corrects and modifies those that precede it. The Eastern Court of one year becomes the Central Court of the next; the Quadruple Staircase of one illustration loses the point of its adjective when the remains of a fifth flight are discovered; the Middle Minoan of one stage in Mr. Evans's searchings after truth is subdivided into three, or has its edges, perhaps, shaded off into Early Minoan III., or Late Minoan I. We have another Labyrinth, with many windings

and pitfalls. The bewildering quickness, indeed, with which everything moves is itself a tribute to the brilliance and fertility of Mr. Evans's ideas. He leads, and the other distinguished archæologists who are at work in the same field follow, and follow at a distance. The world outside cannot follow at all, and urgently clamours for help.

It is this help that the present book attempts to give, and the moment of its appearance, during a partial lull of excavation, is an opportune one. There is a chance to take breath and gather up the threads, with the possibility that the next month's spade-work will not put us out of date. It is written, as far as possible, in untechnical language, and does not expect its readers to know by instinct what is meant by a "Schnabelkanne," or a "Vase à étrier." It aims at giving a picture of Cretan civilisation as a whole, and at presenting it in a manner that will make it alive and real. References, however, to the original publications have been given throughout, and it is hoped that the book may thus serve, not only as a general introduction to the subject, but also as a bibliographical guide to students who wish to pursue it seriously. Its main object is to give a clear and comprehensive account of where we stand, rather than to embody the writer's original research; but the criticism of Minoan Chronology (pp. 44-6, 50-1, 66-83, 93-7), the argument as to

the Four Labyrinths (pp. 109-26), and some of the lines of inquiry opened up in the last four chapters, embody suggestions that are, I think, to some extent new.

The criticism that there might with advantage be more illustrations is an obvious one. That the book should be cheap, however, was more important than that it should be illustrated; and a desirable result will be attained if readers insist on their nearest public library taking in *The Annual of the British School at Athens* and *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, in which admirable reproductions have appeared of three-fourths of what is here described. The illustrations that are here given are at least characteristic and useful. The Strata Section gives some idea of Mr. Evans's method of classification, and the Cupbearer, on the cover, of the level of excellence reached by the art that he has made known to us. The Sketch Map of Crete is probably a better one for the purpose than any published elsewhere, and owing to the kindness of Mr. Evans and the Committee of the British School at Athens it has been possible to make the Plan of the Palace of Knossos an advance on any that has yet appeared. It is hoped that this plan will be of use to students as well as to those who visit the spot. The last that Mr. Evans published was in 1902, and even the specialist finds some difficulty in fitting into