Review

Author(s): H. R. Hall

Review by: H. R. Hall

Source: *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 8, No. 3/4 (Oct., 1922), pp. 287-288

Published by: [Egypt Exploration Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3853711>

Accessed: 14-02-2016 01:08 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Egypt Exploration Society is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

NOTICES OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Palace of Minos. A comparative account of the successive stages of the early Cretan civilization as illustrated by the discoveries at Knossos. By Sir ARTHUR EVANS. Vol. I: The Neolithic and Early and Middle Minoan Ages. Pp. 721; 542 figs., plans, tables, coloured and supplementary plates. London, MACMILLAN & Co., 1921. £ 6/6/—.

Sir ARTHUR EVANS, profiting by the comparative lull in the work of excavation caused by the war, has now produced the first volume of his great work on the palace of Knossos.

We do not say his final work, for the excavation of Knossos is nowhere near completion and fresh discoveries may impose modifications of the conclusions of the great publication in certain respects. That is unavoidable. But the work of complete publication of the results had to be undertaken at some time, the opportunity was at hand, and the material had become so vast that had not Sir ARTHUR put it into shape now it would have been later on unmanageable.

The book may advisedly be termed a great publication: one of the *opera maiora* of archaeology. Its content is so great that it is only saved from being extremely difficult to read by the compelling interest of the subject and the vivid way in which it is written. For it is no dry compendium of results. It does not confine itself to the description of Knossos alone, but, as the sub-title indicates, is a description of the whole Neolithic and Early and Middle Minoan cultures of Crete illustrated by the discoveries at Knossos.

Its illustrations do not only show us Knossos, but examples of the culture and art of Gournià, Mochlos, and other early sites which are specially interesting in connexion with Knossos. It is in fact a *corpus* of early Cretan archaeology, written *currente calamo* and with continuing interest, lightening the task of the reader by frequent changes of view-point from the description of excavations to special considerations of pottery or other classes of antiquities discovered or to historical speculations and back again in kaleidoscopic fashion. The interest and importance of the book for Egyptian archaeologists goes without saying, and Egypt takes so prominent a place in it that this review must confine itself to consideration of Sir ARTHUR's views as to the connexions of Crete with Egypt.

In the first place he brings out the fact that the Cretan stone vases of the Early Minoan period connect not only with the Egyptian stone vases of the Old Kingdom in style, but also with those of the preceding pre-dynastic period. This is an important and incontrovertible observation. Then the general contemporaneity of the Early Minoan period with the Old Kingdom and of the Middle Minoan period with the Middle Kingdom is amply attested and is clearly brought out by Sir ARTHUR. It is not a little curious that the main periods of both civilizations in their earlier stage should as a fact have been practically contemporaneous, and that their origins seem to have been, at any rate roughly, contemporaneous also, though possibly Crete was the younger of the two, so far as we can guess at present. Even the third or last phase of the Greek Bronze Age culture begins more or less at the same time as the New Kingdom. We can see that these Egyptian historical divisions really correspond to three well-marked periods of the development of Egyptian culture, and we see the same marked distinction of periods in the three Minoan ages. Of these three Minoan ages the earlier phase of the last was (again curiously) generally contemporaneous with the XVIIIth Egyptian Dynasty. The third phase of the Early Minoan period must have been more or less contemporaneous with the VIth Dynasty, the second phase of the Middle Minoan period with the XIIth—XIIIth, and its third phase with the later intermediate and Hyksos periods. Now does one gather from Sir ARTHUR's description that the Third Middle Minoan period lasted at least 1000 years, as would be demanded by Prof. PETRIE's Egyptian chronology? One sees no reason to suppose from the description before us that the Second Middle Minoan period need have lasted more than 200, if that, and the First

and Second Late Minoan periods we know did not last more than 200 years. But, apart from consideration of the description by the acknowledged master of Cretan archaeology, does one's own archaeological knowledge and sense of probability allow one to concede to the Third Middle Minoan period a range of 1000 years? Granted that there are arguments for the long date in the Egyptian case, we can see none in the Cretan. And the Second Middle Minoan period was contemporary with the XIIth Dynasty (as Prof. PETRIE, with remarkable acumen at the time, was himself the first to shew), and the First Late Minoan with the XVIIIth. Even if we telescope the Third Middle Minoan period into the Second (since work at other sites in Crete has not invariably shewn us so hard and fast a line between the two periods as is apparently visible at Knossos), how can we, on the archaeological data, make the Middle Minoan period last 1800 years, from 3400 to 1600 B.C.? In fact, it would seem that Crete is now repaying the debt she owes to Egypt. It was with the help of Egyptian chronology that Minoan archaeology first supplied itself with a chronological scheme, when the contemporaneity of the beginning of the Third Late Minoan period with the later kings of the XVIIIth Dynasty was evident at Ialysos, Enkomi, and Amarna, and the polychrome pottery of Kamares from Kahun was shewn to be of XIIth Dynasty age. Must we put 1800 years between them? Is so long a period arguable from any other excavation in Crete or Greece, leaving out Knossos? Rather we should suppose that all the Greek evidence is in favour of the short chronology, and against Prof. PETRIE's view. And in Sir ARTHUR EVANS' book the Cretan evidence certainly seems to agree with the short rather than with the long chronology.

Leaving this important point, we note with some surprise that Sir ARTHUR EVANS accepts M. WEILL's belief in the Minoan Cretan origin of the supposed harbour-works found by M. JONDET off the coast at Alexandria. M. JONDET does not himself accept M. WEILL's attribution of so early a date to his submarine engineering works, and Dr. HOGARTH, in a recent review of *The Palace of Minos* in the *Geographical Journal* for September 1922, says plainly "Nothing could look less like the outline of a practicable harbour, whether Minoan or any other, than M. JONDET's plan; and the remains in question, which have long been known to Alexandrian boatmen and port-officers, are explained far more reasonably as foundations of Ptolemaic quays and quay-side buildings, submerged by coastal subsidence." Dr. HOGARTH knows his Alexandria, and we think that his view will command general assent. Another doubtful point is Sir ARTHUR's apparent acceptance of M. WEILL's hypothetical reconstruction of the royal history of the Egyptian Intermediate period and the time of the Hyksos, which is open to manifold objections. Another authority on this disputed period, Dr. PIEPER, has already criticized WEILL on this point with effect (*O. L.-Z.* 1922, 102 ff.: "Ich kann also die Arbeit WEILLs trotz vieler richtiger Einzelheiten und beachtenswerter Anregungen nur als im ganzen verfehlt ansehen.") I can only agree, and say, less brutally, that WEILL's work is a most valuable compendium of *data* on the subject, but that his conclusions can only be received with the gravest doubts.

Sir ARTHUR rightly adopts Mr. GRIFFITH's reading of the name on the little diorite statuette of the XIIIth Dynasty found in a Middle Minoan II stratum at Knossos, as , compounded with the name of the goddess Wazyt, not that of Sebek, which is formed with the pedestal not the perch . The similarity of the convention in Egypt and Crete which represented the natural spots on the hide of the bull or cow as quatrefoils or crosses, which Sir ARTHUR points out, had already been noted by the present writer in *P. S. B. A.* 1909, p. 146, Pl. XVIII. It is possible of course that Sir ARTHUR may have anticipated me in some publication I have missed: if so we noted the fact independently.

It is rarely that Sir ARTHUR omits a reference, though in the vast mass of references in his foot-notes it would be remarkable if he were not to omit some occasionally, or make an occasional slip. The notes are a mine of references, and, as usual, admirably illustrate the wide range of the author's learning.

Among the illustrations we note many new appearances, and though the older ones suffer somewhat from their different sizes and styles due to the various preliminary publications in which they originally appeared, few fail to satisfy; the coloured plates of polychrome pottery, etc., are especially good and effective. The plans are by Messrs. FYFFE and DOLL. An unavoidable defect of the book, due to its being a first volume to be followed by two others, is the absence of an index, which makes consultation on individual points very laborious.

We must congratulate Sir ARTHUR and his publishers most cordially on the appearance of the first volume of the great and long-awaited book.

H. R. HALL.