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Editorial Notes

DURING the last century and a half the 'live spots' of archaeology have moved round from one region to another. Egypt, thanks to Napoleon, was the first, then Assyria; and later on the Aegean, Switzerland, France, Britain, Sumeria and India have each in turn been centres of intense activity or of world-famous discoveries. The causes have been due to many factors amongst which are outstanding personalities, sensational finds and pure chance. The development of new techniques also concentrates attention on the regions where they are applied, and steps up the rate of discovery. New and improved techniques have made Britain and N.W. Europe a very live region during recent decades; in the Aegean the outstanding personalities of Schliemann and Sir Arthur Evans were perhaps the main factors. Sir Arthur's achievement was first to discover and then to describe the new civilization he revealed by his excavations at Cnossos in Crete. Since his work there ended, there has been a lull in that part of the world—a natural reaction after the initial excitement.



The time is now ripe for a renewal of interest and there are signs that it is beginning. Professor Blegen is publishing his excavations at Troy, a key site for the whole region, and at Pylos he has found another large cache of inscribed 'Minoan' tablets. Further afield, the excavations of Messrs Schaeffer and Dikaios at Enkomi in Cyprus (near Famagusta) have revealed an important and hitherto unknown Bronze Age town (probably Alasia), and amongst the finds is a much weathered and almost illegible inscribed stone in a script that seems to be akin to the Minoan and to date from the 12th century B.C. The last discovery is described in this number of *ANTIQUITY* (pp. 103-5).



There is one site that may yield important new evidence—Cnossos itself. The whole area of the Great Court of the Palace is occupied by unencumbered deposits of pre-Minoan, presumably neolithic, settlements. Evans's soundings, which reached bed-rock, showed these deposits to be six or seven metres (say 20 feet) deep. There is not much change in quality, and certainly no break in the stratification. There would be no need to excavate the whole area, but we must be prepared for surprises. Supplementary excavation from the steep east and south faces of the Palace Mound would be valuable as evidence for the latest strata, and for the transition from pre-Minoan to Early Minoan; for the latest strata have been stripped from the top of the mound, to form the

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Great Court, and it is certain that these strata dipped outwards onto the slopes of the growing mound. Here there may be terrace-constructions and foundations which would make digging difficult and require revetment. The Western Court is of course available for supplementary digging: as the natural mound rises westward, the depth of deposit diminishes, and the stone-lined 'granaries', bounding the West Court, have already been cleared. (We wish to thank Sir John Myres for his help in stating the facts just given).



The problem of excavating this neolithic level at Cnossos is simply one of finance and correct technique. We should of course mention also that the British School at Athens preserves a priority of interest in excavations there. The site is of outstanding importance for all prehistoric research in this part of the Mediterranean, and the overlying remains provide a rigid and secure *terminus post quem*. Radiocarbon might well give absolute dates. Any excavation there would help to revitalize Aegean archaeology, which is on the main line from which our own civilization ultimately comes.



In the article on Publication in our last number we said that, as it seemed, instruction in publication was nowhere given. That is not correct, and we are very glad to know it. Such instruction forms an integral part in the curriculum of the Summer School directed by Dr Philip Corder for the University of Nottingham's Delegacy for Extra-mural Studies. The students are taught survey and the drawing of plans and sections and of pots, and also how to prepare reports for publication; this instruction is not given 'in the air', but with original drawings, proofs in all stages, and so forth. The School is intended primarily for those who are members of evening classes and have not the chance of a university education. In the University of Edinburgh, the Honours Course in Prehistoric Archaeology, under the direction of Professor Stuart Piggott and Mr R. J. C. Atkinson, includes instruction in the publication of reports, the preparation of line-drawings and the taking and printing of photographs suitable for reproduction. Visits are also paid to printing establishments, so that students may get some idea of the processes of letterpress, composition and block-making. In Mr Atkinson's *Field Archaeology* (Methuen, 1946: new edition in preparation) a chapter of 30 pages is devoted to this subject.