

## *Obituary Notices*

SIR ARTHUR EVANS. Past President. Born 8th July 1851; died 11th July 1941.

### I

Although the revelation of Minoan culture, in which Evans led the way with his excavations at Knossos, was the most spectacular and revolutionary of archaeological discoveries, it was not the intention of excavating that first took him to Crete. He was brought to this particular spot in his wide prehistoric range by his interest in gems, by which, as a numismatist and a collector, he was always attracted. During a visit to Greece in 1893 he came across some of the prism-seals engraved with hieroglyphs which are now a numerous and well-known class but had received no attention before that time. He was told that they came from Crete, and found on inquiry that similar gems in museum collections had the same source, so far as any source was known. The purpose of investigating this script and establishing its relations with those of Anatolia, Cyprus, and Egypt took him in 1894 to Crete, where he explored the eastern half of the island, secured or recorded a satisfactory number of gems, and was impressed by the importance of the greater prehistoric monuments, most particularly by the walls of Goulas in Mirabello and the site of Knossos near Candia. Some large stones of a standing wall at Knossos (subsequently identified as that of the Southern Terrace of the Palace) bore linear symbols which had been observed by W. J. Stillman in 1880 and had encouraged Minos Kalokairinos of Candia, with whom Evans visited the site, to make a small and not very damaging excavation in the *Magazines* in 1878. The disaster of a premature excavation by Schliemann a few years later had been averted by the Turkish Government. The inscribed stones, the certainty that here lay a considerable building of their period, and the traditions indicating the prehistoric importance of Knossos, determined Evans to undertake its excavation, and he took the first step in that direction by becoming a part-owner of the site at the time of his first visit. But his co-proprietors and the Government were unaccommodating, and it was not until six years later, with the establishment of new political conditions, that he was able to acquire the whole.

He began to dig in March 1900. The first season's work established the identity of the building as a palace and produced among many other novel finds large numbers of inscribed clay tablets. The main work of clearing the Palace went on for seven years, with the expert assistance of Duncan Mackenzie, who was mainly concerned with the stratigraphical observations and records, and Theodore Fyfe, who was responsible for the extremely complicated architectural operations and was succeeded in them by Christian Doll. Even in those early years the excavations were extended beyond the Palace to the large cemetery of Zapher Papoura, the built tombs at Isopata two miles away, and the 'Little Palace' to the west of the main building. In later years were added the 'Royal Villa' on the eastern slope, houses on the north and south, the 'Caravanserai' and well-house with the bridge over

the southern stream, the cemetery of Mavrospelio on the hills across the Kairatos, and in 1931 the magnificent 'Temple' tomb on the south road. Evans's exploration of Knossos came to an end in fact only with his ability to go to Crete. Not less arduous and costly than the excavation of the Palace was the structural work which was imposed upon him by the conditions of the site and in which he was constantly engaged. This has been much criticized, and it may be said at once that he carried it beyond what was necessary for protection, but without detriment to the ancient building except as regards appearances. It was evident in the first season that pavements and lower courses of walls in rooms like the Throne Room, where architectural or decorative details had been preserved by the earth covering, must be covered again to protect them from the weather. This was done in the first instance with wood-framed shelters, but wood does not last long in the Cretan climate and it soon became necessary to replace it with permanent materials. The partial collapse of the Grand Staircase, which leads from the Central Court down four monumental flights of stone steps to the Domestic Quarter, was the first occasion for the use of iron and stone in place of wood, and the subsequent introduction of ferro-concrete was an irresistible invitation to Evans to extend the practice, which he had necessarily adopted there, of 'replacing upper elements' and 'making the legitimate process of reconstitution appeal to the historical sense of the unimaginative'.

Provisional reports of each season's work were promptly published in the *Annual of the British School at Athens or Archaeologia*, and the final publication, *The Palace of Minos*, much delayed by the war of 1914, began to appear in 1921. Evans had meanwhile devised and published internationally his brilliant scheme of the nine 'Minoan' periods, which has become the basis of chronology in all the Aegean regions. *The Palace of Minos* was designed to be the comprehensive story of the Minoan Age with the excavations at Knossos as its central theme, and not a meticulous account of those excavations. Evans had never an intention of publishing his notebooks. But in his hands the larger subject inevitably passed the boundaries of the design. The projected three volumes, of which the third was to be small and supplementary, had grown into four, or six if separate parts are counted as volumes, by the time it was finished in 1935. In only one respect did Evans not fulfil his purpose, and that the first purpose with which he went to Crete. So far as discovery goes it was amply fulfilled; the finds of inscribed documents in the Palace exceeded all possible expectations, but they have not been fully published. The first volume of *Scripta Minoa*, which appeared in 1909, contains a general survey of the new scripts, their apparent connexions with those previously known in the Mediterranean area, and a complete publication of the hieroglyphic documents. Volumes ii and iii were to contain transcriptions and analyses and photographic reproductions of the two linear scripts and their documents, nearly two thousand in number, but they have not yet been published. The material is doubtless prepared and can be produced by other hands, even if the original documents in Crete have been destroyed or damaged in the German onslaught.

Evans was delightfully at home in Crete, on mountain roads, in camp, in villages, and in his house and garden at Knossos. He lived with his

colleagues in the early days in the Bey's House, the establishment of a former Turkish proprietor in the gorge of the Kairatos. That was malarial, and Evans would in any case have had his own house, the Villa Ariadne, which was in due course built for him by Christian Doll and designed to withstand all the rigours of the local climate, sun, wind, and earthquake. One remembers with what triumph Evans emerged from his basement bedroom on the night of the last earthquake in June of 1926, and demonstrated the immunity of the villa. In 1926 he gave all his property at Knossos, the villa with its gardens and vineyards, and the Palace site, to the British School of Archaeology at Athens, with provision for its maintenance and custody. The villa has been used since then by students of many nations, and will continue to be so used, a living memorial of the personality and achievements of its founder.

E. J. F.

## II

Evans's career as a museum official was a long one. He was appointed Keeper of the Ashmolean, then in its original home in Broad Street, in 1884. He planned and carried out, in the face of fierce opposition and lethal apathy, its removal to new buildings, behind the Taylor Institution and what was then called the University Galleries in Beaumont Street, in 1894, and when he retired from its active direction in 1908, after close upon a quarter of a century, the University gave him the title of Honorary Keeper and Perpetual Visitor—that is, member of the governing board—and also appointed him Extraordinary Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology, it being well understood that the Museum, which he had in point of fact refounded, would continue to benefit by his affectionate, enthusiastic interest, as it did increasingly and without interruption during thirty-three more years; his last visit took place only a few days before his death.

When he took office the Ashmolean was derelict. Many years before the Bodleian had carried off its valuable library of manuscripts; the coins, medals, and plaquettes followed. It had been remodelled as a natural history museum by the brothers Duncan, Keepers in the thirties of the last century, but had been superseded and seen its collections absorbed by the University Museum. As a final degradation, by a process very familiar in Oxford, the principal galleries, built for and solemnly dedicated to one great benefaction—due immediately in this case to Ashmole and less directly to the Tradescants—after being stripped of their contents, were handed over to a fresh fashionable fetish, that of examinations.

Evans's first task, and it lasted throughout his Keepership, was to gather together not only the remains of the Ashmolean antiquities, many of them disinterred from cellars under the pavement of Broad Street, but the University's other archaeological possessions, scattered in the Bodleian and other buildings. He recognized their potential value as the kernel of a comprehensive Museum of Archaeology and Art such as it was imperative that Oxford, with the broadening of classical and historical studies, should possess. But, in view of the less than tepid interest awakened by his earliest efforts, it seems unlikely that even he would have succeeded in his great

project if he had not had the good luck to annex and inspire a benefactor—Dr. Drury Fortnum, who was looking out for an appropriate recipient for his magnificent collections with a substantial money endowment.

The interests of ancient archaeology, in so far as it was represented by a small series of casts from antique sculpture, the Arundel Marbles, and a few Greek vases and bronzes, either presented by Chambers Hall or bought, in a moment of aberration, from the Roman dealer Castellani, were at that time in the hands of an exclusive and narrow-minded oligarchy which controlled the pictures and drawings in the University Galleries. This committee had induced the University Chest to buy, with very vague ideas about the use to which it might be put, a large plot of garden ground behind the Galleries building. After severe struggles and complicated bargaining Evans and Fortnum captured it as the site for their new museum. It is to this stroke of policy that Oxford now owes the existence of one of the leading archaeological and artistic institutions of the world, immeasurably surpassing in scope the wildest ambitions of those by whom the land had been acquired. None the less, it was not until 1908 that Evans procured the statutory union of the different departments and the redistribution between them of revenues which hostility had forced Dr. Fortnum to assign to archaeology only. This generous act was highly characteristic of Evans, a whole-hearted believer in the growth of civilization through tradition and the unbroken continuity of cultural history.

The step in the co-ordination of the University's possessions, which was always foremost in Evans's mind and one of the first he proposed, was only finally completed, after prolonged obstruction, when he had laid down office, the creation of a coin-room to hold the Bodleian collections, themselves incorporating the series derived from Ashmole. In this he was greatly helped by the munificence of his own college, Brasenose, and the readiness since shown by colleges owning cabinets of coins in depositing them in the Ashmolean has confirmed the practical value and acceptability of his idea.

The increased space of the new building was quickly filled. Greek vases, terra-cottas, and bronzes were collected by him during repeated expeditions to southern Italy and Sicily, notably to Taranto and Gela, and also in Athens. Yet more came through his association with Sir Flinders Petrie and his pupils and successors, so that for many years a preponderating share of the antiquities excavated by the Egypt Exploration Fund and cognate bodies was made over to the Ashmolean. Predynastic objects and those illustrating the early commerce of Egypt with Crete interested him especially, and it is owing to this that the Museum is exceptionally rich in what may be called key-specimens in those classes.

The early years of this century saw the rapid growth of the Minoan collection built up round the allotment made to Evans by the Greek Government from the results of his own excavations at Knossos and presented by him to the University. To this section he naturally gave particular care, constantly adding to it in later years. As late as 1939 he undertook a complete rearrangement of the collection, lavishly illustrating it with reproductions, plans, photographs, and drawings from his own vast store of material. Many other parts of the archaeological collections received the same

fostering attention. In short, the honorary offices conferred upon him on his retirement were to him anything but sinecures; only the difficulties of the times put an end to his attendance at the meetings of the Visitors in his last years.

Evans's benefactions to the Museum, numerous and important as they were, can only here be sketched in the broadest outline. During his term of office he repeatedly supplemented the exiguous funds allotted to the Museum's upkeep by contributions either towards special purposes in his scheme of development or towards the acquisition of particular *desiderata*. Later he came forward on many occasions with the same open-handed generosity, in one case by way of protest against what he considered callous disregard of another great benefactor.

His benefactions in kind were on the same munificent scale. The Minoan collection alone with its culminating gift of many valuable specimens, above all of his unrivalled series of seal-stones and gold rings from Crete and the mainland, would alone have earned him a lasting tribute of gratitude. But other sections, too, were similarly enriched, especially by large additions from the great collections inherited from his father Sir John Evans. From that source at different times he presented to the University Roman pottery, Anglo-Saxon jewellery and allied antiquities, and the extensive series of Stone and Bronze implements.

The inauguration of the Coin Room in 1921 Evans marked by the gift of his father's English historical medals, and at other times he added groups of Greek, Roman, ancient British, and Anglo-Saxon coins. By his will the Museum has received valuable numismatic and archaeological additions besides pictures and the first choice from his rich antiquarian library.

RALPH HARE GRIFFIN. Born 30th April 1854; died 20th August 1941

Ralph Hare Griffin died at The Warren House, Micheldever, on 20th August 1941. He was born on 30th April 1854 at Ospringe in Kent, a county for which he always had the greatest affection. His father, William Nathaniel Griffin, who was Senior Wrangler in 1837, was elected to a Fellowship at St. John's College, Cambridge, in the same year; he was an active member of the Cambridge Camden Society, of which he was President in 1843-4. In 1848 he was presented to the college living of Ospringe, where he remained until his death in 1892. His son Ralph entered in St. John's in 1873, but remained only two years. He became a Barrister-at-Law and was a member of the Inner Temple. From 1890 until 1920 he held the post of Registrar of Designs and Trade-marks. In 1921 he became Secretary of our Society, a post for which he was peculiarly well fitted, for with his wide interests and learning, his stately yet benign manner, and his shrewd judgement tempered by true kindliness, he might have served as the ideal type of a savant.

Shortly after the last war Griffin undertook the arrangement of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society's collection of rubbings of monumental brasses in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, thus beginning a