

GOURNIA

VASILIKI AND OTHER PREHISTORIC SITES
ON THE ISTHMUS OF HIERAPETRA
CRETE



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VASILIKI AND OTHER PREHISTORIC SITES ON THE ISTHMUS OF HIERAPETRA CRETE

EXCAVATIONS OF THE WELLS-HOUSTON-CRAMP EXPEDITIONS
1901, 1903, 1904

BY

HARRIET BOYD HAWES

BLANCHE E. WILLIAMS, RICHARD B. SEAGER, EDITH H. HALL



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THE AMERICAN EXPLORATION SOCIETY

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ON the north shore of Crete, a quarter of a mile from the Gulf of Mirabello, midway between Kalo Khorio and Kavousi, stands an ancient town which for 3000 years and more lay buried beneath the ruin of its own houses, under the earth and sand which Nature so mysteriously deposits, and the trees which she plants. Its existence was entirely forgotten; no tradition survived to lead travellers to the hillside, no reference to its history is found in ancient authors. Possibly a reminiscence lingers in the name of a classical city which the Greek geographer Strabo¹ reports to have been situated in the neighborhood, for "Minoa" recalls the great King Minos, who ruled Crete and the Aegean in the days when this prehistoric town flourished.

Attacked, pillaged, and burned by an enemy, the town was utterly deserted. Perhaps some descendants of the former inhabitants wandered back and reoccupied a few of the less ruined houses on the West Slope of the acropolis, where vases slightly later in style than the rest of the pottery have been found; but at least since the days of Homer's heroes, the place has been uninhabited. Until we have a key to the newly discovered writing used by the Islanders in the third and second millenniums B. C., we cannot know what this town was called by its inhabitants, and must be content to give it the modern name of the locality—*Gourniá*—by which it is already known to archaeologists.

By a scholar who visited it in 1901, the Bronze Age settlement at Gournia was said to be "the most perfect example yet discovered of a small 'Mycenaean' town uncontaminated with later remains and . . . after the two great palaces (Knossos and Phaestos) the 'sight' best worth visiting in Crete."² This statement needs only the substitution of 'Minoan' for 'Mycenaean' to make it true today. We have learned that the ancient Cretan town was heir to a civilization older and greater than that of the Achaean capital on the mainland. Of the life of the people during the Heroic Age that preceded the classical period of Greece, Gournia with its finds gives a more complete picture than is afforded by any other excavations; and as the town was scarcely touched by foreign influence, the evidence it yields concerning the high artistic attainments and culture of the early Mediterranean Race is especially significant.

Gournia, Vasiliki, and other prehistoric sites on the Isthmus of Hierapetra were excavated in 1901, 1903, and 1904, at the expense of the American Exploration Society, an organization affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania. The idea of sending an expedition to Crete was suggested to the Society by the Secretary, Mrs. Cornelius Stevenson, whose studies in Egyptian and Mediterranean archaeology had convinced her of the early importance of Crete. The Hon. Calvin Wells, of Pittsburg, Mrs. S. F. Houston and Mr. Charles Cramp, of Philadelphia, became generous patrons of the undertaking, and my Alma Mater, Smith College, gave me repeated leave of absence from my post as Instructor, to conduct these excavations.

Through three spring campaigns I had able associates. In 1901 Miss B. E. Wheeler (Mrs. E. F. Williams) shared in the discovery of Gournia; in the second and third seasons Mr. R. B. Seager helped in general supervision at the larger site and had entire charge of the smaller excavation at Vasiliki; in 1903 Miss Adelene Moffat accompanied our expedition as artist; in 1904 Miss Edith Hall made valuable additions to our knowledge of Early Minoan pottery by excavating the North Trench at Gournia. Each of these colleagues contributes to this publication; Mrs. Williams writes on certain aspects of Minoan culture,³ Mr. Seager describes his discoveries at Vasiliki,⁴ and Miss Hall shows the relation of the North Trench pottery to other Cretan wares.⁵ Miss J. B. Patten, who excavated with me at Kavousi in 1900, describes the spring flora of the Isthmus of Hierapetra and gives a list of two hundred and forty plants collected by her.⁶ For the rest of the Text and the arrangement of the Plates I am responsible. The task has demanded so much attention to detail that it could not be accomplished quickly and even long endeavor leaves it imperfect. Further delay is impossible. The reader's indulgence is asked for errors of reference, which I fear may still remain, and for the extreme condensation that has been necessary in order to promote convenience in handling the book. In describing our Plates, we have been obliged by considerations of space to omit most of our references to material discovered at other sites, but the comparisons have been made and the results are incorporated in the chapters which precede and follow the exposition of our own discoveries. In these chapters the aim has been to provide a running text for the general reader and full references for the student.

A distinguished German archaeologist has well said, "Wer Archäolog sein will, muss vor allem sehen können."⁷ A visual acquaintance with the Past, as far as this can be obtained, forms the basis of all archaeological studies. The present publication aims to meet this need by showing to a wider circle of persons than is likely to visit Crete the aspect of the Minoan town lately excavated at Gournia, its plan, and the most notable objects there unearthed. Most of these objects are now deposited in the Museum at Candia.⁸ The town itself is even less accessible, being situated on a deserted part of the coast, forty miles east of Candia as the crow flies, or sixty miles by a rough road.

Great care has been expended on the twenty-five Plates. The view of Gournia from the southeast has been chosen for reproduction in order to emphasize the character of our settlement as a seaside town, for the *maritime* Cretans of the Bronze Age were the true Minoans; their inland kinsmen lagged far behind in the development that produced the first great European civilization. The other views

¹ Strabo, II. x. ch. 4. § 5.

² Letter to the London *Times*, Aug. 10, 1901; D. G. Hogarth, M. A.

³ pp. 35, 47, 48, 51-55.

⁴ pp. 49, 50.

⁵ p. 57.

⁶ p. 58.

⁷ K. Sittl, *Archäologie der Kunst*, p. 1.

⁸ Some duplicates (including a complete set of bronze tools) and objects of minor importance, have been granted by the Cretan government to the American Exploration Society, and are now in the Free Museum of Science and Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Wherever these are listed in this book, *Pbila* is added to their description.

show at closer range the East Slope covered with houses and narrow streets, and the south end of the small acropolis, occupied by the Palace and the Public Court.

The Plan and Sections were made by Herr Sejk, well known for his careful work at Troy and Pergamon, but I am accountable for the way in which the Plan is inscribed and for the attempt to define house limits and upper and lower storys by the use of solid line, hatching, and cross-hatching. Archaeologists who do not approve of this attempt will find no difficulty in disregarding these distinctions.

In making the water-color drawings, which are reproduced with the utmost accuracy⁹ on Plates A-K, it was inevitable that the artists, Miss Moffat and M. Halvor Bagge, should follow their individual styles. M. Bagge has had greater experience and he represents the pottery *as it is*, with remarkable fidelity to the texture of the clay and its present worn condition, so that one may be misled into thinking that the shades produced by age are the original colors used by the potter; Miss Moffat's training in outdoor and life work influenced her to emphasize roundness of form and to accentuate, beyond the requirements of archaeology, the rich suggestions of original color which she found here and there on the worn surface of the vase. The two styles—one rather of undertones, the other of overtones—correct and supplement each other.

Every variety of pottery found at Gournia is represented at least once in color, except the Late Mycenaean style (L.M.III) of the Reoccupation Period, which is already well known in standard publications. By consulting the references made to the color plates (A-K) in the Descriptive Lists that accompany the monochrome plates (I-XII), one may learn the colors of all the important vases unearthed at our site.

The objects on Plates A-J appear in their actual size, but the pithos on Plate K is reduced to two-thirds. The common scale of objects on Plates I-XII is 1:4,¹⁰ except where otherwise indicated. These scales are approximate and can be corrected by reference to the Descriptive Lists, in which the principal dimension of each object is given.

Finally, a word must be said as to the method used in preparing the pen-and-ink drawings which are reproduced on Plates I-XII. All the objects were photographed to scale, as far as possible, by M. Maraghiannis, whose work forms the basis of most illustrations published by Cretan excavators, as well as of his own excellent and comprehensive album, *Les Antiquités Crétoises*. The photographs were then printed on old-fashioned "salt-paper." With the objects before him from which to study indistinct details and worn designs, M. Bagge made his drawings in water-proof ink over the prints, following the lines of the photograph exactly, and adding such features of the original as were too faint to be caught by the camera. This method ensured to his work photographic correctness and a perfection which the mechanical process cannot give. All traces of the photograph were removed by a bath in bichloride of mercury solution, leaving only the pen-and-ink drawings which were then ready for reproduction. Breaks are not indicated, except when a part of the object is missing; in a few instances where the design is continuous and unmistakable, the missing part has been supplied, but not once has a reconstruction been given about which M. Bagge or I thought there could be reasonable doubt.

There remains the pleasant duty of expressing my gratitude to many friends at home and abroad for counsel, encouragement, and practical assistance.

Dr. Hazzidakis, senior Ephor of Antiquities at Candia, Dr. Arthur Evans, Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, whose discoveries at Knossos have startled the world, and Mr. D. G. Hogarth, a former Director of the British School at Athens, who has excavated Minoan and other sites, helped to inaugurate American work in Crete. Professor Halbherr, of the University of Rome, discoverer of the Gortyna Law Code and the Palace of Phaestos, and Mr. Bosanquet, recently Director of the British School, were friends of the expedition; and so were Cretan officials of all ranks from M. Stamatikis, Director-general of Customs and M. Xanthoudides, Ephor of Antiquities, to the Demarch and gendarmes of Kavousi, capital of the *deme* in which Gournia is situated. Our Epirot foreman, Aristides Pappadhias, and his good mother strove unceasingly for the honor and success of our undertaking; and benefits came to us through the good faith and hospitality of the Cretan peasants, especially our own workmen, beyond our power to repay.

Nor was it only in the land of Crete and from those directly connected with our venture that we received assistance. My thanks are especially due to Mme. Schliemann, who gave me God-speed on my first departure for Crete; to Dr. Dörpfeld, master of all those who study at Athens the art of excavating, and willing counsellor, when he visited Gournia each year on his *Inselreise*; to Professor Tyler of the Greek Department, Smith College; the late Professor Seymour of Yale; Dr. Farabee of Harvard, Professor Stuart of Princeton, Professors Laird and Smith of the University of Wisconsin; Professor Ridgeway of Cambridge, England; Professor John L. Myres of Liverpool University; Mlle. S. A. Baltazzi, Maid of Honor to H. M. Queen Olga of Greece; Miss G. M. A. Richter, now of the Metropolitan Museum, New York, formerly of Girton College and the British School at Athens; above all to my husband, whose patient help and criticism have made the final preparation of this publication possible.

MADISON, WISCONSIN.

HARRIET BOYD HAWES.

To the descriptions of all the more important objects have been added their Registered Numbers in the Accession Book of the Candia Museum, so that further information concerning them or photographs, if desired, may be obtained through Dr. Hazzidakis, Director of the Museum, by referring to them, by these numbers. It is hoped, also, that the record thus made of finds from Gournia will be of value when a catalogue of the unique collections of this Museum shall be published.

⁹ In no case have the color-plates been retouched by hand.

¹⁰ This means that the original has four times the length and breadth, but sixteen times the area of the reproduction.

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