

CYPRUS RIVALS CRETE AS AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TREASURE ISLAND.

UNPRECEDENTED GREEK DISCOVERIES—A PALACE, RICH IN SCULPTURE, OF 550—450 B.C.

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THE Swedish archaeological expedition in Cyprus, whose work last year at Lapithos and Soli was recorded previously, has this year been working at Vouni and Dali. The excavations of Soli have not been brought to an end, but will be resumed later on. Vouni is supposed to be the ancient Aipeia, and Aipeia was the Old Soli, whence, according to the legend, King Philokypros moved, on the advice of Solon, to found a new settlement in honour of Solon called Soli. Disregarding the etymological nonsense of the

a bull, and a statuette of a cow, measuring 25 cm. The bronze statuette will give us an idea of Myron's famous bronze cow. The building where these bronzes were found is a *sacellum*, divided into three naves by wooden walls. These, of course, have mouldered, but we can trace them in the post-holes and cuttings in the floor for the walls. Partly below this *sacellum* appeared the foundations of a long rectangular building, evidently a temple. The temple, too, had been built up of wood, and that is why it has been so entirely destroyed.

of Cyprus. Excavations have already been undertaken there long ago. What remained for us to do was to attack the top of the acropolis of Idalion, where no proper excavations had yet been carried out. The result of our diggings there is of considerable importance to the history of religion. At the bottom of the culture strata we found a settlement from the latest stage of the Copper Age (Late Cypriote III., 1200-1000 B.C.). The central part of this settlement is occupied by a cult place, the first prehistoric cult place found in Cyprus. There we found a deposit of five cult bulls of terracotta, with other objects, which had all been placed on a wooden table of which carbonised remains were found. The cult continued into the Iron Age, and reached in the archaic and classical periods a high stage of development. After the classical period the holy site fell into disuse.

But it is not only a temple. In front of it is an open court where some bases of statues were found, and at the southern limit of the court the foundations of two smaller buildings were unearthed. In these buildings we found a series of votive offerings piled up: shields, swords, spear-heads, arrow-heads, and so on. The buildings are treasure-houses! A temple with treasure-houses, a typical Greek holy place!

This cult place on the top of the acropolis of Idalion is typically Cypriote in contrast to the Greek temple site on Vouni. It is consequently not a question of a temple, but of a large open court with an altar and surrounded by a wall—in fact, a *temenos*. The cult was aniconic, and, moreover, no votive statues were found, which is rather unusual: the Cypriote holy sites used to be crowded with statues. The votive offerings found in the *temenos* which we excavated are of a quite different kind. Mainly they consist of weapons. Two of the shields are beautifully decorated with stamped ornaments of lotus flowers and palmettes, and a cuirass of iron is worth mentioning as unique. But other kinds of votive offerings were also discovered: bronze bowls, bronze lamps, iron lamps, rings of bronze, iron, and silver, some with engraved signets. A bull's head of bronze, which had been used as a decoration of a wooden cist, must be reckoned among our finds of great artistic merit.

A question of the utmost importance is that of the relation between the temple and the palace. In the palace many votive statues were found; on

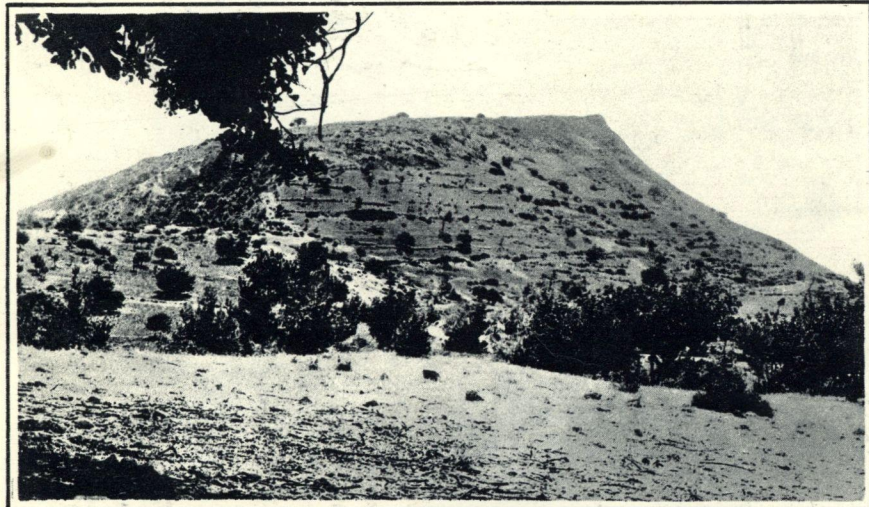
the temple site none, only some bases. The *sacellum* and the palace are contemporary. The temple is consequently earlier than the palace. Imagination combines the archaeological evidence in the following way: If the conquest of Soli by the King of Aipeia took place in the later part of the sixth century B.C., there are some contemporary events occurring in Aipeia and Soli that seem to be mutually connected. At that time a temple in Aipeia was destroyed and a temple in Soli (which we excavated last year) was erected. At the same time a palace in Aipeia and a *sacellum* above the ruins of its destroyed temple were built.

When the King of Aipeia conquered Soli the first thing for him to do was to build a temple to the god by whose assistance the conquest succeeded. In the place of the old destroyed temple of Aipeia he confined himself to building a *sacellum*, and the votive statues were removed to the palace, which he had now built for himself as a summer residence on the cool rock of Aipeia. He could afford it. He had become a mighty King controlling the copper-mines of Soli. His successor preferred to stay there all the year round, and therefore the summer palace of Aipeia was abandoned.

This is a conjecture which further excavations will perhaps corroborate. What we know is that the deity by whose assistance the King of Aipeia conquered Soli was Athena: it is a temple of Athena which we have excavated on the top of Vouni. The archaeological evidence is the discovery of four heads of Athena within the temple area—Athena in an Athenian helmet, strictly classic.

Dali is the ancient Idalion, situated in the middle

goddess called Athena by the Greeks and by them identified with the acropolis goddess of Athens. Unlike the temple of Athena at Vouni, the *temenos* of Athena in Idalion therefore affords proof of that mixture of Oriental and Greek elements which in Cyprus were eventually assimilated into a homogeneous culture.



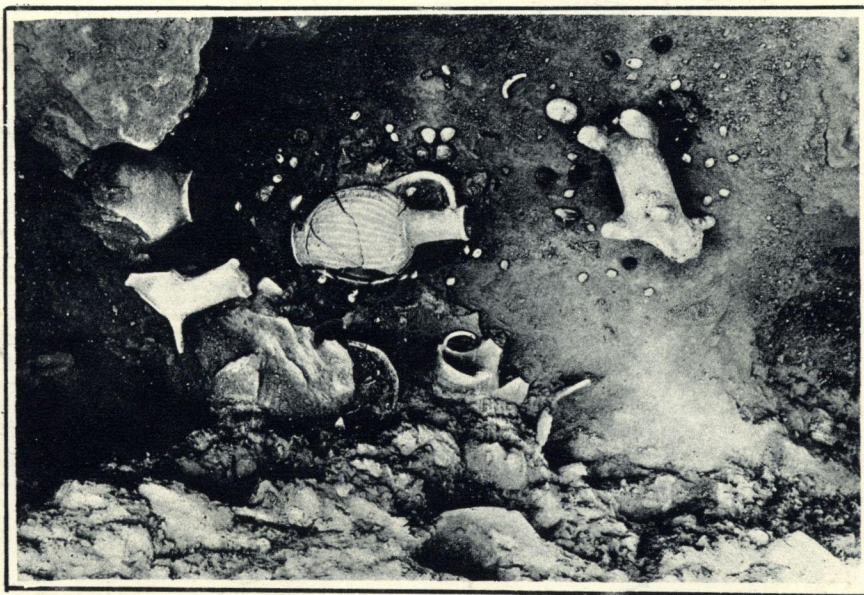
A CYPRIOTE PARALLEL TO THE PALACE OF MINOS: THE ROCK OF VOUNI, WHERE EXCAVATION HAS REVEALED "A PALACE OF THE ARCHAIC AND EARLY CLASSICAL PERIOD," WITH MAGAZINES CONSTRUCTED "AS IN THE MINOAN PALACES OF CRETE."

legend, there is no reason to reject the statement of an early connection between Aipeia and Soli.

Vouni is a steep and wild rock rising directly from the sea to about 800 feet at a distance of about four miles north-west of Soli. The excavations which started there in the middle of April have resulted in a complete success. Suddenly one day the great moment came. In the morning we had the first indication—fragments of a lifesize terracotta head; and soon we reached a stratum quite filled with specimens of sculpture: statues, heads, and statuettes of stone and terracotta which were found fallen down the steps of a staircase leading up to a monumental gateway. Bases of statues were found still *in situ* at both sides of the gate. The statuettes had probably been placed in niches higher up in the now ruined walls. Most of the sculptures show Greek influence, and some are of the same type as the famous *koré* statues found on the Acropolis at Athens and elsewhere in Greece. The sculptors who worked out these Greek thoughts in stone and terracotta lived at the end of the archaic and the beginning of the classical period—that is, about 550-450 B.C.

An architecture quite worthy of these exquisite sculptures soon began to appear. Trenches were dug to discover the extent and character of the building. Massive walls formed of well-cut, quadrangular blocks extended over an area of more than 10,000 square metres (over 10,000 square yards), all belonging to the same building—a palace! A palace of the archaic and early classical period! In the centre of it we find a large open court, from which a wide staircase leads up to the western part. There we notice terraces on different levels. This part of the palace had at least two storeys. A series of at least fifteen magazines open from a narrow corridor—in the same way as in the Minoan palaces of Crete. The trenches cut here traversed large magnificent rooms with verandahs and terraces descending in different levels to the main gate where the statues were found. Still, we have only a general idea of the palace—and scarcely even that. Its complete excavation still remains to be carried out. When that has been done the history of culture will be enriched by a monument of great importance, since no other architecture of this kind from the period concerned has been discovered within the Greek culture area.

But Vouni is not only a palace. On the very top of the rock we discovered some foundations traceable on the surface. We started excavations there, and soon we had discovered three of the most remarkable bronze figures ever found in Cyprus—two reliefs representing respectively two lions attacking



"THE FIRST PREHISTORIC CULT PLACE FOUND IN CYPRUS": RELICS OF A LOCAL WORSHIP OF ATHENA AS "A CYPRIOTE TOWN GODDESS" ON A MUCH OLDER SITE THAN VOUNI: PART OF A LATE BRONZE AGE DEPOSIT AT DALI, DATING FROM 1200-1000 B.C.

This deposit included five cult bulls of terra-cotta, two of which are illustrated on page 498.