

ARCHAEOLOGY

Explore Lost Greek City

Thriving metropolis of three centuries before Christ buried until now is uncovered by Princeton expedition. Ancient inhabitants probably sold into slavery.

► AN ANCIENT Greek city, lost to sight for more than 20 centuries in Sicily is being explored by a party of archaeologists from Princeton University under the direction of Profs. Erik Sjoqvist and Richard Stillwell.

In its prime between 300 and 200 B.C., the city was a thriving metropolis of perhaps 20,000 to 30,000 inhabitants, about the size of Chillicothe, Ohio, or Ithaca, N. Y.

A brick and tile factory furnished one of the major industries of the lost city. Several large kilns have been uncovered. One of these had a capacity of about 6,000 bricks per firing. This means that the factory was large for its time and even compares well with the capacity of our own brick and tile plants up to improvements of fairly recent years when you consider that the ancient Greeks made bricks much larger than those in use today. Some of these old Greek bricks measured two feet by two feet by two feet. In addition to building bricks, the plant also made clay tubes to serve as conduits for the city's water supply and drainage system.

The life of the city came to an abrupt end about 200 B.C. It is probable that all the inhabitants were sold into slavery after the Punic Wars in which the city probably took part.

Within 25 years after its most flourishing period this busy city was covered by ten feet of earth. On top of this earth covering the scientists found remains of a newer and smaller community, the architecture of which is Roman. This town lasted up to about 60 B.C.

The site was overgrown by forest in the time of the Roman Empire. It slept quietly during the rise and fall of the Byzantine Empire, the period of Arab domination and the Norman Kingdom. For the past four centuries, nearby farmers have grown wheat and pastured their flocks over the lost city.

The city, which still remains nameless, was rediscovered in 1953 by Prof. Sjoqvist.

Particularly interesting to archaeologists is the finding of a series of monumental flights of steps leading from the lower to the upper levels of the Agora, or civic center. Prof. Sjoqvist believes this served not

only as a simple stairway but also to give sitting or standing room for public assemblies at state and religious ceremonies. The Agora is located about a mile away from the hilltop on which the city's fortress, or Acropolis, was found.

Site of the city is located in the hilly, little-known interior of Sicily on Serra Orlando.

It is estimated that the Princeton party will be in the field for about five years.

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Florida Indians Used Oriental Porcelain

► FLORIDA Indians used rare Chinese and Japanese porcelain in the 17th and 18th centuries, finds at Florida archaeological sites indicate.

Fragments of oriental porcelain of the late Ming and early Ch'ing periods have been recovered in Indian trash heaps from north Florida to near the state's southern tip, Dr. Hale G. Smith, Florida State University archaeologist, has disclosed.

These finds do not mean there was any direct contact between the Indians and the Orient, Dr. Smith pointed out. The Indians probably came into possession of the Chinese and Japanese ceramics from salvaging Spanish treasure ships wrecked on the Florida coast, from pirates and from Spanish colonists and missionaries.

During the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, there was a lively trade between China and the Philippines, then a Spanish colony. The Spaniards shipped great quantities of oriental porcelains from the Philippines to Acapulco, Dr. Smith said. From there they were carried overland across Mexico, and were shipped on to Spain from Vera Cruz, on the Gulf of Mexico.

Spanish treasure ships often sailed through the Bahamas Channel, near the Florida coast. Many of the ships were wrecked in the treacherous waters, and Florida Indians were able to salvage some of the cargoes.

They may also have obtained porcelains from colonists and missionaries and from pirates, Dr. Smith said.

Dr. Kamer Aga-Oglu, authority on oriental ceramics with the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, has studied several of the fragments. She identified 16 blue and whites of the late Ming and early Ch'ing periods; two blue and whites with additional overglaze of the early Ch'ing; and one possibly K'ang Hsi powder-blue base sherd.

All of these specimens were of very fine quality and of good workmanship, a fact which points to origin from Ching-te Chen, Dr. Aga-Oglu said.

Other Florida archaeological specimens examined included a small group of Japanese blue and white pieces.

Dr. Smith and Dr. Aga-Oglu reported their research in the journal, *Florida Anthropologist* (Dec. 1955).

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FOR PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES—These steps recently unearthed in a twenty-two-hundred-year-old lost city of the Greeks in Sicily presumably served not only for everyday climbing up and down from one level to another of the Agora, or civic center. They also may have furnished standing room for large crowds at public assemblies and religious ceremonies. The lost city, the name of which is unknown, is being explored by Princeton archaeologists.