

or stone course of ancient Jerusalem wall is a triumph for archaeology, for the city is a difficult one in which to make arrangements for archaeological digging, the walls are much damaged and broken in line, and the various enlargements of the city by new wall-building were not simple additions of a new and encircling barrier. The additions spread mainly

northward, expanding the city in that direction.

American archaeologists are literally on the ground where the Third Wall is being revealed, for the grounds of the American School of Oriental Research are crossed by the northern boundary line of this long-lost enclosure.

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signs as possible back to forms they had in Crete.

Significant and helpful are such discoveries as that the early Cyprus language had no w, x, y, or z. Also, it made no distinction between such sounds as b, p and ph, or between t, d, and th, and consequently had only one sound in such groups.

Sound values of about one-third of the Minoan, or Cretan, writing signs are now determined, says Dr. Daniel. Using these as a key, a good many of the Minoan words are now readable, bringing the day nearer when the economics and government accounting of an ancient world power will be far better understood.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

# Mystery of Cretan Writing Solved as Isle Is Air Base

## Deciphering the Minoan Tablets Possible by Relating Them to Ancient Writings of Another Island, Cyprus

**W**HILE the isle of Crete makes World War history as a British naval and air base for Mediterranean battles, scientists who can still work at peaceful problems here in America report news of reading the mystery writing of ancient Crete.

When archaeologists rediscovered the amazing ancient civilization on this island some years ago, they were baffled by its writing. In the Palace of Minos and other ruins lay quantities of clay tablets quite unreadable. Evidently the bookkeeping files of the Minoan government, said language experts. Eagerly, they pointed out recognizable pictures of grain, of chariots, animals, men, children and deduced that these were official records of government property.

The Minoan, or Cretan, writing, experts further deduced, must have begun with picture signs about 2000 B. C. and then was simplified until about 1700 B. C. it became a convenient running script of about 40 characters. Beyond such deductions, the government records of a nation that once was an international power have remained wiped out of history.

But by a process that sounds like an Edgar Allan Poe cipher tale, or a wartime code expert's reasoning, a number of words of the lost Cretan writing can now be read. Dr. John Franklin Daniel of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, tells how it is being done.

Deciphering the Minoan tablets, says Dr. Daniel, is possible by relating them to ancient writings of another Mediterranean island, Cyprus. About 1450 B. C., people of Cyprus borrowed forms of letters from Crete for their own writing. This produced a hybrid Cypro-Minoan writing, which has been coming to light on storage jars unearthed in ruins on the island of Cyprus. Many of these inscribed jars shed brand-new light on the ancient language mysteries.

In time, this Cypro-Minoan script evolved in Cyprus into what language scholars call classic Cypriote writing. This latter is not mysterious, having been deciphered years ago.

So, the experts are now working backward from this well-known classic writing of Cyprus' people to trace as many

MEDICINE

## Skin Test for Pregnancy Gives Answer in One Hour

**A**SKIN test which tells within less than an hour whether or not a given woman is going to become a mother was announced by Dr. Frederick H. Falls, Dr. V. C. Freda and Dr. H. H. Cohen, of the University of Illinois College of Medicine.

The test is similar to those made for allergy or hayfever. It is said to be 98% reliable. Previously developed tests for early pregnancy take, according to reports of them, from 18 hours to two days. The widely used Asheim-Zondek test takes two days for a verdict.

In the test developed at the University of Illinois, colostrum is used. This is a watery liquid secreted in the breasts during pregnancy until milk formation starts after the baby is born. A tiny amount of this is injected by hypodermic needle into the skin of the forearm. If the woman being tested is pregnant, there is no reaction. If she is not pregnant, a reddish area of one or two inches diameter appears within an hour around the injection point, disappearing within about five hours.

Besides the speed and economy of the new test, it is said to be valuable because it helps to differentiate between pregnancy and abdominal tumor and also helps to determine quickly the dangerous condition in which the baby starts developing outside the uterus.

Another rapid skin test for early pregnancy has previously been announced by Dr. G. C. Gilfillen and Dr. W. K. Gregg of Dayton, Ohio. In this test a hormone is injected under the skin.

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