

## PREFACE

THE first volume of *Scripta Minoa* was published in 1909. It contained, as *Part I*, an account of the Prae-Phoenician Scripts of Crete, their Mediterranean relations and place in Minoan story (pp. 1-110). *Part II* described the Hieroglyphic or Conventionalized Pictographic Script, with its antecedents and affinities (pp. 111-293). *Part III* discussed the Phaestos Disk (pp. 294-302). An *Analytical Index* (pp. 294-302) was in effect a detailed table of contents; and there were twelve collotype plates.

In the preface (p. 10) it was announced that

'the remaining Volumes—II and III—of this work will be devoted to detailed publication of the documents of the advanced Linear Scripts of Crete, of both classes (A and B). Volume II will contain copies of the inscriptions, complete signaries, an analysis of the script and documents, and illustrative commentaries. Volume III will consist of photographic plates of the inscribed tablets belonging to this category.'

This project, however, was not continued beyond the preparations described later. During the Balkan Wars Sir Arthur Evans was preoccupied with European politics, and in 1919 he turned to the general account of his Cretan work, *The Palace of Minos at Knossos*, of which Volume I appeared in 1921, Volume IV in 1935, and the Index, compiled by his sister, Dr. Joan Evans, and revised by himself, in 1936. In Volume I, besides further discussion of the 'Hieroglyphic Deposit' of sealings and relevant seal-stones, he included a further account of *Linear Script A* (§ 29, pp. 612-48), and the *Phaestos Disk* (§ 30, pp. 647-68); and in Volume IV a long description of *Linear Script B* (§§ 108-11, pp. 591-736) and sections on the Knossian Script B in mainland Greece (§ 112, pp. 737-69), on the Chariot Tablets (§ 114, pp. 785-825), and on the Bow, Spear, and Sword Tablets (§ 115, pp. 826-71). Other observations on special points are scattered through all four volumes, and may be found through the *Index*.

Not long before his death, Evans expressed his willingness to hand over the publication of the 'linear' tablets to a qualified person, if such could be found; but he seems to have taken no such action.

At his death, on 11 July 1941, his executors entrusted me with a preliminary examination of all his papers relating to the Cretan scripts, and on my report transferred to me all their interest in them. I in turn transferred these to the University of Oxford, reserving only the privilege of continuing, so long as I might be able, to prepare the texts for publication and Evans's own notes and drawings for preservation and reference. I reported also to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press my desire to enable them to complete *Scripta Minoa*, of which they had published Volume I.

Two circumstances have impeded the execution of this plan. Though Evans had obtained express permission from the executor of Hagia Triada, Professor Federico Halbherr, to include the tablets and sealings from that site in *Scripta Minoa*, and had prepared his own photographs, transcripts, and commentary, Halbherr's Italian colleagues naturally continued their own study of them; in the spring of 1946 Professor Giovanni Pugliese-Carratelli published his masterly memoir 'Le Iscrizioni preelleniche di Haghia Triada in Creta e della Grecia peninsulare' (*Mon. Ant. dei Lincei*, XL, 422-610, pls. I-XL). It would have been a gross extravagance to duplicate this admirable publication; especially as the transcripts of Evans and of Pugliese-Carratelli almost always agree, and their other sources of information are essentially the same. There is, however, still much to be said, both about the contents of these tablets—even without deciphering the script—and about Linear Script A itself and other early Cretan Linear systems.