



No. 3

24th October, 1967

EXCAVATIONS AT PHILIA

The Ministry of Communications and Works, Department of Antiquities announces that a combined expedition from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and the University of Birmingham, England, recently completed their second season of work at the prehistoric site of Drakos near the village of Philia. The excavations were directed by Dr. T.F. Watkins and Mr. P.S. Gelling, M.A.

Continuing on the trial excavations of 1965, this year's work opened up an area of over 150 square metres of the neolithic settlement. Now some of the architecture of the ancient village is coming to light. The whole of one house and parts of two others were excavated, together with what appears to be an enclosing wall around the settlement. The houses were rectangular, consisting of a single room. The method of construction which used rough limestone blocks set in a crude lime mortar did not allow the ancient builders to make a good right angle at the corners. Therefore, they built round corners at the ends of straight walls. Inside the houses were found simple floors, renewed periodically. In one house a pair of stone bowls were set into the floor; each house had its hearth in one corner, a simple circle of pounded havara.

As before, great amounts of pottery were found, together with flint tools, ground stone axes, stone bowls, lamps, mortars and pestles, quern-stones and occasional tools of bone. The finds of this summer reinforce the archaeologists' suspicion of 1965 that the ancient village at Philia is not like any other prehistoric site excavated in Cyprus. It is hoped that further work will show that Philia illuminates one of the dark periods of Cypriot prehistory. Its culture shows similarities to other sites, such as Sotira (Limassol district) and Troulli on the North coast near Kyrenia, but it is by no means identical and has a character of its own. The expedition hopes to return in 1968 to continue its work.