

From **Report to Greco**. Nikos Kazantzakis.
(Chapter 16 "Return to Crete, Knossos").



... The custodian hurried forward to greet us and explain the site. He was a simple, jovial Cretan who wore vraches and carried a large crook. His name was David. In his many years as custodian and guide at Knossos he had learned much. He spoke of the palace as though it were his home, received us in

the capacity of master of the house. Taking the lead, he extended his crook to indicate the sites.

"Before you is the great royal court, 60 meters long, 29 meters wide. Here are the storerooms with their huge decorated jars. In here the king stocked his produce in order to feed his people. We found sediments from wine and olive oil in the jars, also olive pits, beans, chick-peas, wheat, barley, and lentils. Everything was carbonized by great fires."

We climbed to the upper story. On all sides: short, thick columns painted black and purpose. In the passageways we saw wall painting of flowers, shields, and bulls. We reached the high terrace. The happy domesticated landscape stretched all around us; at the center of the horizon lay Yiouchtas, Zeus' supine head. The half crumbling, half-restored palace gleamed with brilliance after thousands of years, once more enjoying Crete's masculine sunlight. In this palace one does not see the balanced geometric architecture of Greece. Reigning here

are imagination, grace, and the free play of man's creative power. This palace grew and proliferated in the course of time slowly, like a living organism, a tree. It was not built once and for all with a fixed, premeditated plan; it grew by additions, playing and harmonizing with the ever-renewed necessities of the times. Man was not guided here by inflexible, untrickable logic. The intellect was useful, but as a servant, not a master. The master was something or someone else. What name could we give it?

Turning to the abbe, I revealed my thoughts and asked his opinion.

"You want to know who the master was?" He answered with a smile. "What do you expect a priest to tell you except God? The Cretan's god was the master; he guided their hands and minds, and they created. God was the master builder. And this Cretan god was as nimble and playful as the sea which embraces the island. This is why landscape, palace, paintings and sea have such a faultless harmony and unity."

