

# EARLY HELLADIC HEARTH RIMS AT CORINTH

(A Note of Correction to *CMS* V)

(PLATES 87, 88)

AMONG the smaller collections in Greece of Neolithic and Bronze Age seals and sealings and other seal impressions presented in *CMS* V<sup>1</sup> is that in the Corinth Archaeological Museum. Of this collection, two fragments attributed in *CMS* tentatively to “Zygouries(?)” were in fact excavated on Temple Hill, Corinth.

These hearth-rim fragments, MF 13395 and MF 13396, are among several such from Corinth,<sup>2</sup> which with other evidence enable us to visualize approximately the extent of the nuclear settlement during the Early Helladic (EH) period. Thickly scattered finds, not only in and around the central excavation zone but also in outlying areas of Ancient Corinth,<sup>3</sup> suggest that, then as now (and during many of the intervening eras as well), there existed a more-or-less closely knit network of interlinked hamlets, small villages, or farmsteads, focused around a larger village<sup>4</sup> or town which was the seat, one supposes, of the most important and powerful local chief. This central village in Early Helladic times, a significant proto-urban center, was located (as was

<sup>1</sup>*Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel*, V, *Kleinere griechische Sammlungen*, by Ingo Pini, with contributions by John L. Caskey, Miriam Caskey, Olivier Pelon, Martha Heath Wiencke, and John G. Younger, Berlin 1975, “Corinth Museum,” pp. 393–403.

The excavations at Corinth of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens are under the direction of Charles K. Williams, II, with whose permission I study the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age material. I extend my thanks to Mr. Williams for this opportunity as well as for his interest, advice, and support; I am grateful to Professor Henry S. Robinson for permission to include 2, from the Case Western Reserve University excavations on Temple Hill, and I also thank the Secretary of the Corinth Excavations, Dr. Nancy Bookidis, for her assistance and patience with prehistoric finds, and Susan W. Katzev for preparing profiles.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Catalogue, below (7 and 9 respectively = *CMS* V, 508 and 509). In addition to these ten from the central excavations, several more examples of hearth-rim fragments were found in excavations sponsored by the University of Texas and directed by James Wiseman in the gymnasium area of Corinth, north of and one terrace below the central excavation zone; the Early Helladic area was dubbed “Keramidaki”: J. Wiseman, “Excavations at Corinth, the Gymnasium Area, 1965,” *Hesperia* 36, 1967, pp. 23–27, 40–41; “Excavations at Corinth, the Gymnasium Area, 1966,” *Hesperia* 36, 1967, p. 410.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Saul S. Weinberg, “Remains from Prehistoric Corinth,” *Hesperia* 6, 1937, esp. pp. 487–488 and 515–521; F. J. DeWaele, “The Sanctuary of Asklepios and Hygieia at Corinth,” *AJA* 37, 1933, p. 420 (Neolithic and EH deposits at the area of the Asklepieion, to be considered in conjunction with the Keramidaki finds cited in the preceding footnote); Carl W. Blegen, in C. W. Blegen, H. Palmer, R. S. Young, *Corinth*, XIII, *The North Cemetery*, Princeton 1964, pp. 1–2; T. L. Shear, “Excavations in the North Cemetery at Corinth in 1930,” *AJA* 34, 1930, pp. 403–406; F. O. Waage, “An Early Helladic Well near Old Corinth,” *Hesperia*, Suppl. VIII, *Commemorative Studies in Honor of Theodore Leslie Shear*, Baltimore 1949, pp. 415–422; and inventoried EH fragments C-1940–521, C-1940–522, and C-1940–523 from excavations in the area of the Tile Works.

<sup>4</sup>Carl Roebuck, “Some Aspects of Urbanization in Corinth,” *Hesperia* 41, 1972, pp. 96–127 (particularly pp. 98–99); also, H. S. Robinson, *The Urban Development of Ancient Corinth*, Athens 1965, pp. 4–6.

customary even earlier)<sup>5</sup> on the prominent mass of the ridge, with copious water sources adjacent, formed by the then continuous and unitary heights of Temple Hill, the Glauke prominence, and (bending southwards) Museum Hill. The hollow thus enclosed on north and west, the upper valley of the Lechaion Road, was a significant "lower town" to the central settlement. Further east were apparently burial grounds,<sup>6</sup> while along the western edge of Museum Hill and the Glauke land mass a great ravine or ditch<sup>7</sup> may have given emphatic definition to the chief settlement area.

These hearth-rim fragments are among a series of ten from the central excavation zone, three assignable to EH I, the remaining seven to EH II. Six, including the EH I examples, come from Temple Hill from contexts north of the Archaic temple, two from areas around the museum, and two from the western and southwestern fringes of the Forum. Since such pan-hearths are usually associated with houses or the courtyards of houses, they, together with the occasional short preserved stretches of EH walls that have been observed,<sup>8</sup> give us some notion of the scope of the EH I and EH II settlement. There is also some sense of increasing wealth and luxury to be gained from the more complex and elaborate decoration and shapes of the EH II hearths as compared to the simple, round hearths of EH I. It appears that both stamp- and roller-seals were used to decorate EH II hearths, and (as we learn from Tiryns<sup>9</sup>) that the same

<sup>5</sup>Much the same location was the center of the large settlement of Late Neolithic times, while the earlier, Early and Middle Neolithic, settlements seem to have focused more narrowly on Temple Hill and the valley of the Lechaion Road. Cf. Lavezzi, "Prehistoric Investigations at Corinth," *Hesperia* 47, 1978, pp. 402-451.

<sup>6</sup>The evidence is the unusual double-chambered shaft grave, and possible traces of a second like it, discovered in the first year of American excavations at Corinth, 1896: T. W. Heermance and G. D. Lord, "Pre-Mycenaean Graves in Corinth," *AJA*, ser. 2, 1, 1897, pp. 313-332. The location, in higher ground east of the valley of the Lechaion Road and outside the central settlement, with the skulls of the corpses oriented to the settlement, seems appropriate to Early Helladic burial custom (cf. conveniently K. T. Syriopoulos, *Ἡ Προϊστορία τῆς Πελοποννήσου*, Athens 1964, pp. 220-225, 288). The status of the EH burial reported in B. H. Hill, "Excavations at Corinth 1926," *AJA* 31, 1927, p. 73, is more problematical (cf. also H. Ess Askew in *Corinth*, I, ii, *Architecture*, Cambridge, Mass. 1941, p. 4, and A. L. W. Kosmopoulos, *The Prehistoric Inhabitation of Corinth* I, Munich 1948, pp. 18-19, 59). More graves might still exist to the east of the present excavation zone. For possibly EH graves in the southwestern part of the upper valley of the Lechaion Road, cf. C. K. Williams, II, and J. E. Fisher, "Corinth, 1972: the Forum Area," *Hesperia* 42, 1973, pp. 1-2.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. S. S. Weinberg, "Excavations at Corinth, 1938-1939," *AJA* 43, 1939, p. 599; and Kosmopoulos, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-39 (excavations in 1932 and 1935 south of Temple E). The Kosmopoulos deposit seems possibly to be the southward extension of Weinberg's. Cf. H. S. Robinson and S. S. Weinberg, "Excavations at Corinth, 1959," *Hesperia* 29, 1960, pp. 246-247, note 22.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. the plans and references in Weinberg, *Hesperia* 6, 1937, pp. 490 (plan, fig. 1) and 491; C. K. Williams, II, and J. E. Fisher, "Corinth, 1970: Forum Area," *Hesperia* 40, 1971, pp. 1-3; "Corinth, 1971: Forum Area," *Hesperia* 41, 1972, p. 144; *Hesperia* 42, 1973, pp. 1-2.

<sup>9</sup>K. Müller, *Tiryns*, IV, *Die Urfirniskeramik*, Munich 1938, pp. 40-46, pls. XVIII:6 and XIX (hearth rim and pithos band, respectively, stamped from the same roller seal, as Müller emphasizes, pp. 44-45). This happens to be the same roller seal used to decorate pithoi from Zygyouries (C. W. Blegen, *Zygyouries, a Prehistoric Settlement in the Valley of Cleonae*, Cambridge, Mass. 1928, pp. 121-122, fig. 114:6) and Lerna (J. L. Caskey, "Activities at Lerna, 1958-1959," *Hesperia* 28, 1959, p. 206 and pl. 42:c-e; cf. also E. T. Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age*, Chicago and London 1964, p. 39 and pl. IV:B). EH clay hearths and

seals could be used on both hearths and pithoi, perhaps by itinerant specialists. Such large and clumsy objects as hearths probably were fired *in situ* and rarely if ever moved. But much more remains to be learned of the techniques and practices involved.

## CATALOGUE

## 1. MF 13393 EH I

Fig. 1, Pl. 87

Temple Hill, trench I of 1937.<sup>10</sup> Color *ca.* 10R 3/1 (dark reddish gray)–2.5YR 3/4 (dark reddish brown).<sup>11</sup> Max. pres. L. 0.149; max. pres. W. 0.082; max. pres. Th. 0.029; min. pres. Th. 0.007; est. Diam. rim 0.385 m.

Rim fragment of roughly circular pan hearth in coarse, red, burnished ware. Bottom flat, no finish; apparently fabricated and fired *in situ*, sunk to a depth of *ca.* 0.010 m. in floor or ground. Simple, taper-rounded rim; broad concave-curved inner pan surface, lustrous, hard burnished to a dark, chestnut red. Extensive traces of burning.

## 2. MF-1977-110 EH I

Pl. 87

Temple Hill, Center Road Trench VII (1977). Color 2.5YR 3/6 (dark red), going darker in burnt areas. Max. pres. L. 0.098; max. pres. W. 0.079; est. Diam. rim 0.45 ± m.

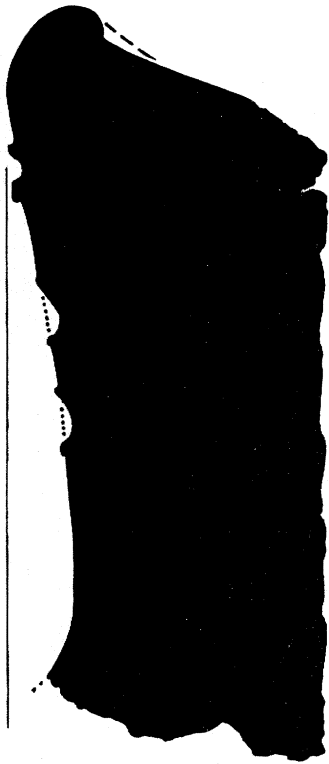
Rim fragment, mended, of simple, circular pan hearth in coarse, red-slipped and burnished ware. Bottom irregularly flat, no finish; apparently fabricated and fired *in situ*. Periphery flares to rounded lip, canted to outside, whence from highest edge interior descends in broad, shallow concave curve to flat pan. Exterior wiped roughly smooth; lip and interior red slipped and hard burnished. Fire darkening in lower pan areas.

hearth fragments have been found at numerous sites, including in the Peloponnesos Corinth, Tiryns, Lerna, and also Zygouries, Berbati, and Asine. For recent finds at Tiryns, see H. B. Siedentopf in *Tiryns* VI, Mainz am Rhein 1973, pp. 11–12, pls. 3, 4. For Lerna, the Building BG “ceremonial hearth” and others, cf. J. L. Caskey, “Excavations at Lerna, 1957,” *Hesperia* 28, 1959, pp. 203 (fig. 1, plan of Building BG with hearth indicated), 206 and pl. 42:a,b. For Zygouries, cf. Blegen, *op. cit.*, pp. 121–122 (fig. 114:1 [?], 3 [?], 4). Berbati: Gösta Säf Lund, *Excavations at Berbati, 1936–1937*, Stockholm 1965, pp. 98–101 with figs. 80–83:a-c (the Megaron House and its hearth, and other hearth fragments). Asine: O. Frödin and A. W. Persson, *Asine, Results of the Swedish Excavations, 1922–1930*, Stockholm 1938, pp. 231–232, fig. 169:3 (and perhaps 4).

Also noteworthy are the two hearths, one of them horseshoe shaped, from Askitarío in eastern Attica (D. R. Theochares, “*Ἀσκηταρίο*,” *Ἀρχ'Εφ*, 1953–1954, I' [1961], pp. 59–76, fig. 25), and the example from Eutresis, House L, Area III (H. Goldman, *Excavations at Eutresis in Boeotia*, Cambridge, Mass. 1931, p. 18: “A round clay disk . . . with a simple row of zigzags incised on the surface of a slightly raised rim . . .” was found fixed in the floor, with bones on it; the rim had a beveled profile, while the dimensions are given as Diam. 1.20, W. rim 0.05, Th. pan 0.027, rise of rim above pan 0.008–0.01 m.; cf. also plan at p. 17, and fig. 16 at p. 19). More recent finds include examples from Ayia Irini on Kea and from Thebes. For Ayia Irini, cf. J. L. Caskey, “Investigations in Keos. Part I: Excavations and Explorations, 1966–1970,” *Hesperia* 40, 1971, pp. 369–371, and “Investigations in Keos. Part II: A Conspectus of the Pottery,” *Hesperia* 41, 1972, pp. 366–368 and pl. 79 (B68, B73). Thebes: K. Demakopoulou, “*Εἰδήσεις ἀπὸ τῆς Θήβας: Ἀνεύρεση προτοελλαδικοῦ ἀψιδωτοῦ οἰκοδομήματος*,” *AAA* 8, 1975, pp. 196–197 (a hearth “?” found on floor of the rectangular room at the east and full of ash and bone; Diam. 0.62, H. 0.24, Th. wall 0.10 m.; dated to the later phase of EH II).

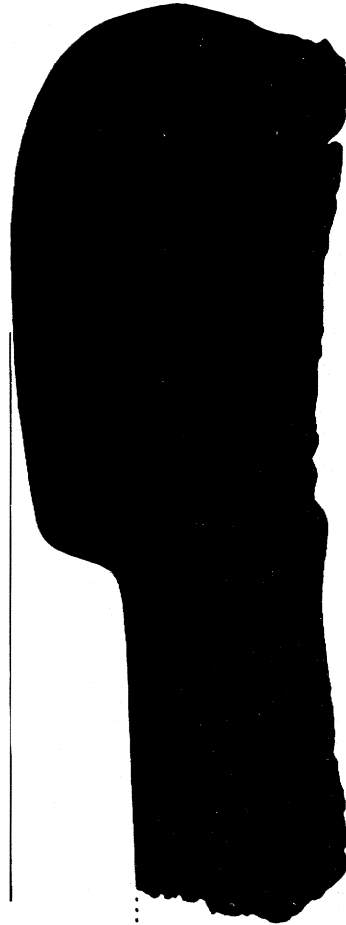
<sup>10</sup>Weinberg, *Hesperia* 6, 1937, p. 490 (plan, fig. 1); cf. H. S. Robinson, “Excavations at Corinth: Temple Hill, 1968–1972,” *Hesperia* 45, 1976, pp. 203–209, for the activities on Temple Hill prior to 1968, indicated in fig. 2 (p. 206).

<sup>11</sup>*Munsell Soil Color Charts*, Baltimore 1973. Munsell readings are for the top surface of each catalogued item and are made in natural light. Owing to the characteristic variations in fabric, firing and surface finish of handmade prehistoric wares, the Munsell readings are in many cases necessarily only approximations. Approximate readings are indicated in the catalogue by “*ca.*”



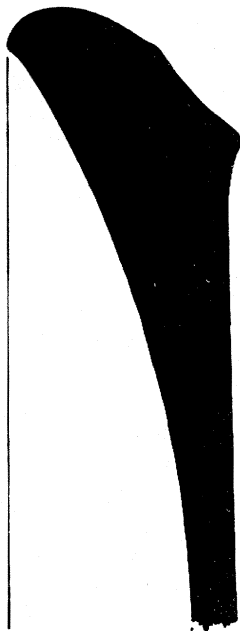
MF.13146

NO. 4



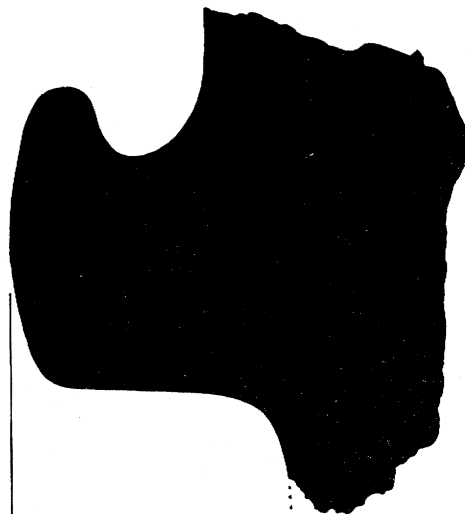
MF.76-66

NO. 10



MF.13393

NO. 1



MF.13160

NO. 6

Fig. 1. Early Helladic hearth-rim profiles.

## 3. MF 13394 EH I Pl. 87

Temple Hill, trench V of 1937. Color 5YR 6/4 (light reddish brown)–5/3 (reddish brown). Max. pres. L. 0.104; max. pres. W. 0.079; max. pres. Th. 0.021; min. pres. Th. 0.010; est. Diam. rim 0.32–0.35 m.

Rim fragment of apparently roughly circular pan hearth in coarse, red, burnished ware. Bottom unevenly flat, no finish; apparently fabricated and fired *in situ*, sunk slightly in floor or ground. Outer wall flares to angular carination, whence in to lip ridge, whence inner pan surface descends in broad, concave curve. Inner surface burnished to a pale salmon red. From carination to lip ridge, incised short vertical strokes give a pie-crust decoration effect. Traces of burning on pan.

## 4. MF 13146 EH II Fig. 1, Pl. 87

New Museum, pit 42A-south of 1931.<sup>12</sup> Color *ca.* 7.5YR 6/4 (light brown). Max. pres. L. 0.129; max. pres. W. 0.102; max. pres. Th. 0.042; est. Diam. rim 0.70± m.

Rim fragment of roughly circular hearth in gritty coarse ware. Bottom flat, with impression of matting upon which it was set. Periphery attached thereto, rising to everted rounded rim, whence inner pan surface slopes gently down for *ca.* 0.075 m., at which point it rises again sharply: here the hearth is broken. Outer periphery and top have thin, pale slip. On top is a deeply incised circumferential band, inward of which are two bands of impressed triangular wedges.

## 5. MF-1974-71 EH II Pl. 87

Forum West, grid 73-D (1974).<sup>13</sup> Color *ca.* 10YR 6/2 (light brownish gray)–6/3 (pale brown). Max. pres. L. 0.107; max. pres. W. 0.096; max. pres. Th. 0.024 m.

<sup>12</sup>The excavations carried out in 1931 preparatory to building the new Museum remain mostly unpublished; for notices of the prehistoric finds, cf. F. J. DeWaele, "Die korinthischen Ausgrabungen 1931," *Gnomon* 7, 1931, p. 610; and Kosmopoulos (footnote 6 above), pp. 29–30. Pit 42A/42A-south comprises a large and significant EH II deposit, contaminated by less than forty sherds of later date, and from which numerous inventoried examples include the "anchor" object (MF 2267) and the terracotta animal (MF 2270) published by Kosmopoulos (*ibid.*, pp. 59–60, figs. 41–43).

<sup>13</sup>Cf. C. K. Williams, II, and J. E. Fisher, "Corinth, 1974: Forum Southwest," *Hesperia* 44, 1975, pp. 1–50.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Weinberg, *AJA* 43, 1939, pp. 599–600.

Rim fragment of large, shallow, apparently circular hearth in coarse ware. Bottom unevenly flattened, no finish; indented by two fingermarks near outer edge. Broad, low rim around pan, decorated with impressed multiple zigzag or chevron, in band preserved *ca.* 0.055 m. wide.

## 6. MF 13160 EH II Fig. 1, Pl. 87

Museum West, area I of 1939.<sup>14</sup> Color *ca.* 7.5YR 7/4 (pink). Max. pres. L. 0.097; max. pres. Th. 0.058; Th. pan *ca.* 0.022; est. Diam. (if round) 1.00± m.

Rim fragment of large, possibly asymmetrical (perhaps horseshoe-shaped) hearth in gritty coarse ware. Bottom unevenly flattened, no finish; fiber or straw impressions. Hearth rises vertically from inner pan surface to flat-rounded rim, broadly everted and widening at right (as seen from inside pan), and below rim undercut outer edge of hearth is *ca.* 0.034 m. thick. Thin slip. On lip, worn pattern of broadly and shallowly impressed zigzag chevron-like band.

## 7. MF 13395 (= CMS V, 508) EH II Pl. 88

Temple Hill, trench I of 1937. Color *ca.* 7.5YR 7.5/4 (pink); slip *ca.* 5YR 6/8 (yellowish red). Max. pres. L. 0.108; max. pres. W. 0.057; max. pres. Th. 0.055; max. pres. W. rim 0.048 m.

Rim fragment of large, possibly circular hearth in coarse, red-slipped ware. Bottom flat, no finish; apparently fabricated and fired *in situ*. At bottom, outer edge broken away to height of 0.020 m. or more, whence edge slopes in shallow concave curve inward and upward, then thickening outward at rim. Flat rim slanting down towards inside of pan; thin, pale red slip; roller-seal impression in four-band undulating wave pattern.

## 8. MF 13397 EH II Pl. 88

Temple Hill, trench V of 1937. Color *ca.* 10YR 6/3 (pale brown)-*ca.* 7.5YR 6/2 (pinkish gray). Max. pres. L. 0.066; max. pres. W. 0.104; max. pres. Th. 0.041; max. pres. Th. pan 0.030 m.

Small rim fragment of large, apparently non-circular hearth in coarse ware. Bottom flat, no finish; apparently fabricated and fired *in situ*. Rim decorated with roller-seal impressed, hexastripe wave pattern; pan with stamp or roller-seal impression including a border stripe, zigzag band, and multiple-stripe chevron—perhaps adding up to a small image of a pan hearth. Traces of burning.

## 9. MF 13396 (= CMS V, 509) EH II Pl. 88

Temple Hill, trench V of 1937. Color *ca.* 10YR 5/1 (gray)-*ca.* 7.5YR 5/4 (brown). Max. pres. L. 0.130; max. pres. W. 0.086; max. pres. Th. 0.048; max. pres. W. rim 0.073; min. pres. Th. pan 0.031; est. Diam.  $1.20 \pm$  m.

Rim fragment of large hearth in gritty coarse ware; if circular, estimated diameter would be as given, but entire fragment thickens and rim widens at left (as seen from within pan), suggesting possibility of non-circular, asymmetrical shape. Bottom unevenly flat, no finish; apparently fabricated and fired *in situ*. From bottom, outer edge rises at outward angle for about 0.02 m., then in-

curves to flat upper rim, which slants slightly downward to inside, dropping off sharply in a concave curve to pan surface. Rim decorated with roller-seal impression of three interlocking bands of trisripe wave pattern, pattern width exceeding rim width. Traces of burning.

## 10. MF-1976-66 EH II Fig. 1, Pl. 88

Forum Southwest, grid 71-D (1976).<sup>15</sup> Color *ca.* 7.5YR 7/4 (pink)-*ca.* 10YR 5/3 (brown). Max. pres. L. 0.135; max. pres. W. 0.122; max. pres. Th. 0.045; max. pres. W. rim 0.074; pres. Th. pan 0.028-0.031 m.

Rim fragment, mended, of large hearth, apparently non-circular, in gritty coarse ware. Bottom rough and irregular, with impression of string along outer edge (as if to serve as straight-edge guide for fabricator); fabricated and fired *in situ*. Outer edge: quarter-round profile. Top of rim smoothed flat, as also pan, sloping gently downwards towards pan center from a straight edge carefully tooled. Rim decorated with a roller-seal pattern with outer zigzag and complex spiraloid wave. Pan decorated with stamp impression apparently in form of a tiny hearth with Kerbschnitt rim and endless rapport spiral pan, only partially preserved in area *ca.*  $0.030 \times 0.030$  m.

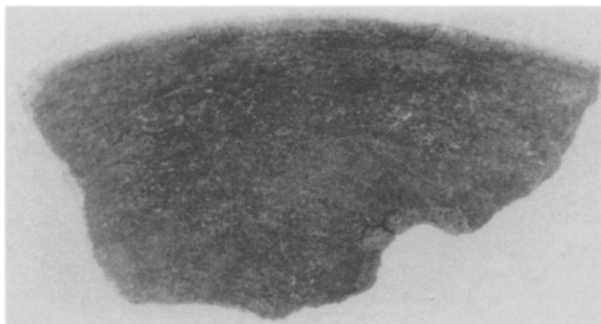
Pattern on rim seems a less fresh but otherwise exact mirror image of that on 9.<sup>16</sup>

JOHN C. LAVEZZI

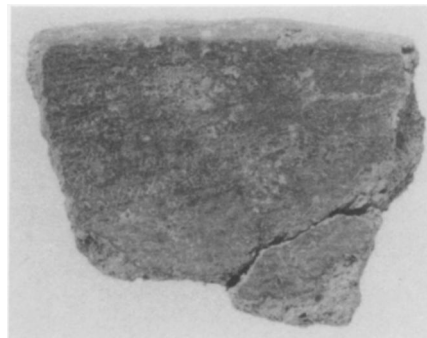
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

<sup>15</sup>Cf. C. K. Williams, II, "Corinth 1976: Forum Southwest," *Hesperia* 46, 1977, pp. 40-81.

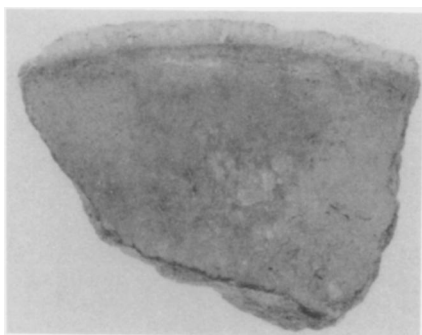
<sup>16</sup>As the impressions on hearth rims are commonly thought to be produced from wooden roller seals (e.g., J. L. Caskey, *Hesperia* 28, 1959, p. 206), it is not altogether clear how, if 10 does indeed go back to the same original as 9, this could result. Perhaps a more complicated process, and seals of other materials, would be involved.



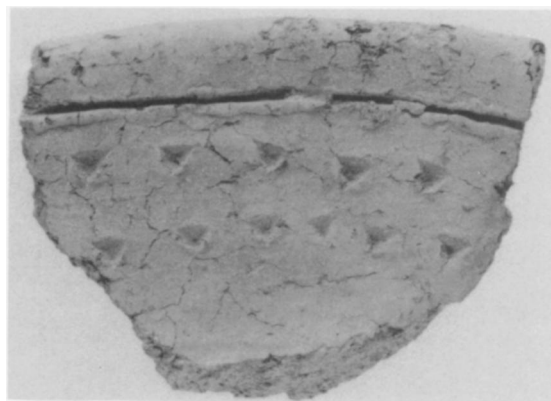
1



2



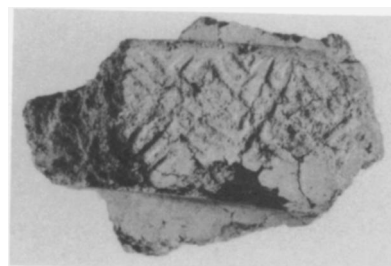
3



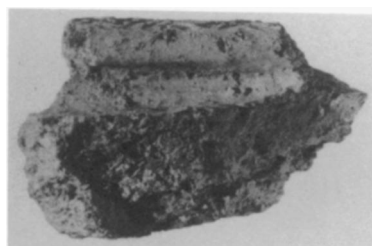
4



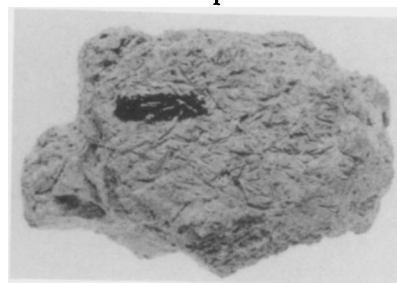
5



top



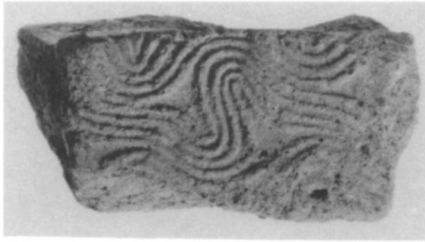
6 outer edge



bottom

Scale 1:2

PLATE 88



7



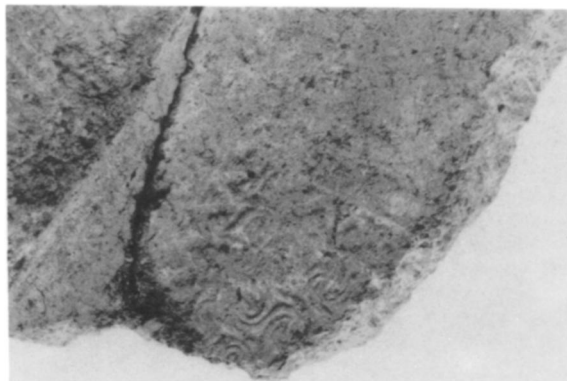
9



8



10



10 detail (1:1)

Scale 1:2 or as noted

JOHN C. LAVEZZI: EARLY HELLADIC HEARTH RIMS AT CORINTH