EXCAVATIONS AT LERNA, 1955

(Plates 38–48)

The fourth campaign of excavation at Lerna was conducted by the American School of Classical Studies from June 1 to July 20, 1955. Progress was made in the investigation of the eastern and, especially, the southern parts of the site, where the various separate pits and trenches of preceding seasons were united into one continuous area 60 m. long and 30 m. wide. Further soundings were also made on the edges of the mound, and a cemetery of the Geometric period was investigated on the southeastern slopes of Mt. Pontinos.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the Greek Archaeological Service for continued interest and collaboration, to the American Philosophical Society for a substantial grant toward the expense of the architectural studies, to the staff of the French School’s excavations at Argos for the loan of their tripod tower, ingeniously designed for the taking of photographs, and to colleagues of the Agora excavations in Athens for advice and many friendly services.

During the autumn, winter, and spring preceding this campaign the material found in 1954 was sorted and recorded at Corinth. Each excavator made detailed notes on the pottery from the sections where he had been in charge of the digging, and wrote a revised summary of his stratigraphical observations. By May of 1955 the inventory numbered 549 items of pottery and 1384 miscellaneous objects, 34 mill-

1 The regular staff comprised Mrs. Caskey and S. Charitonides, members of the expedition since its inception in 1952; Miss Elizabeth L. Courtneyn, Fulbright Scholar for the years 1954-55 and 1955-56; Mrs. C. W. J. Eliot; L. E. Cotsen, architect; and J. L. Caskey, field director. O. M. Unwin, F.R.I.C.S., joined the staff on June 21 as surveyor. C. W. J. Eliot conducted exploration of the Geometric cemetery as well as assisting in many ways on frequent brief visits from Athens. Mrs. Cotsen cleaned and registered the whole pots and miscellaneous objects as they were found throughout the season. Miss Helen Besi assisted in supervising field work from June 13 to June 19, Miss Daphne Phylactopoulou from June 30 to July 10. Evangelos Lekkas was foreman, directing a force of 30 workmen, four sherds washers, and a water carrier. The expedition was again lodged at Myloi, Andreas Totsikas serving as cook and superintending the household establishment.


3 Inventories and other records were maintained in 1954-55 by Miss Vasilou and Miss Heath, the former also drawing up a catalogue of potters’ marks and the latter assuming special obligation for the collection of clay sealings which she is preparing to publish. Miss Courtneyn and Mrs. Eliot took over the general responsibility for the records from the beginning of the campaign of 1955. Mending and restoring was carried on throughout the year by George Kachros with the assistance of his apprentices, Nikos Didaskalou and Spyros Marinos.
stones, and five coins. Uninventoried fragments of pottery, Early Helladic roof tiles, bricks, and samples of various other substances filled many hundreds of containers, already threatening to overcrowd the spacious facilities of the Corinth museum, where they are temporarily stored.

This continuing survey of the material, though preliminary in character, clarified many problems and helped us to define the further objectives of the excavation. For obvious reasons the House of the Tiles has come more and more to occupy our attention, being not only the largest and most impressive building yet found at Lerna but also marking a most significant development and turning point in the history of the settlement. Intensive efforts were therefore directed to the clearing of its eastern end, which was exposed and surveyed at the end of the campaign. In the course of this work we were afforded another opportunity of testing all the remaining layers of later date; this led to the discovery of a second shaft grave and many buildings of more than minor interest. Meanwhile the remains of strata, representing stages of habitation earlier than the House of the Tiles, received equally careful attention, and the digging on the southern flank of the mound ultimately reached another of our principal objectives, revealing undisturbed habitation deposits of the Neolithic town.

In the following account of the season’s work, which is based on the field reports of the excavators, the eastern area is treated first, then the various sections of the south-central area, and finally the Geometric cemetery.

AREA D

Investigations were continued on the eastern side of the mound under the supervision of Miss Courtney. The deep shaft in Area D (Hesperia, XXIV, 1955, p. 27) was excavated nearly two meters further, to water level, and a Classical well was cleared to the same depth; the scarp of the railway cutting was cleaned and examined north and south of the main area (Fig. 1, DB, DC); Trench DA was dug to test the strata further north in Square H 3, and Trench DD to show what remained at the extreme edge of the site, still barely discernible beyond the railway track in Squares I-J 4.

The earliest stratum exposed in Area D in the preceding campaign was marked by a house with irregular curving walls, CE (Fig. 2), in which a pithos, partly imbedded below floor-level in a mass of yellow clay, occupied the northeast corner. This house appears in the lower right-hand corner of the photograph, Plate 38, a; the stratigraphical position of all the layers here mentioned is shown in a schematic section, Figure 2. This year it became clear that the “House of the Pithos” had undergone repairs at various stages. The earliest of its floors was at 2.50 m. a.t. Outside, to the south and east, were patches of road metal. Another house with a curving wall, BI, lies south of the street in ground not yet excavated, and remains of a third, also
apparently apsidal, were noted on the eastern border of the area in 1952 (Fig. 2, Wall F). Middle Helladic pottery of familiar types was present in the deposits of this phase, but sherds and some whole vessels of shapes and wares usually attributed to the Early Helladic period were recovered in considerable numbers.

Next earlier in sequence was a stratum marked by walls of a different sort, resting at levels between 2.20 m. and 2 m. A.T. On the west side of the area lay a great accumulation of bones and broken pottery. The part of this deposit that was exposed within our trench was surrounded by a low stone barrier, CH, 0.30 m. to 0.50 m. thick and scarcely more than one course high, which described very roughly the arc
Fig. 2. Area D. Diagrammatic Section Showing the Principal Remains as seen from the South.

Fig. 3. Restored Section Showing Contour of Tumulus over Walls and Debris of the House of the Tiles, as seen from the East.
of a circle about 6 m. in diameter. Some 3 m. away toward the other side of the trench were foundations of a substantial straight wall, CL, running approximately north and south (Pl. 38, b). This was interrupted by a gateway, 0.70 m. wide, in which there was a large threshold slab and a paving of gravel and cobbles. The passage was flanked by short spurs projecting east and west from the main wall, not flush with the edges of the gateway but set back about 0.25 m. North of the gateway there was a narrow opening through the wall which may have been a drain. Throughout the whole area many small cavities were found, ca. 0.12 m. in diameter and 0.15 m. deep, filled with soft matter. Thirty-four of them were observed, the greater number north of the rubbish dump and behind the spur walls on the west side of the gate. They were presumably postholes. One may imagine a wooden construction of some sort around the gateway; the other holes do not form an intelligible pattern.

The long wall with its entranceway or small propylon appears rather more elaborate than is to be found in ordinary houses of this period. It was certainly not strong enough to serve as a wall of defence, but may have been part of an unroofed enclosure of some other kind. In the limited area cleared at this depth no further architectural evidence could be obtained. The associated pottery, like that from the stratum above, includes a small quantity of gray Minyan ware, some Early Helladic fabrics of known types, and a large amount of plain and coarse wares.

Another complex of walls, again quite different in orientation, was found at levels around 1.85 m. A.T. The most substantial of the walls, labelled CQ on our plans and section, ran roughly east and west along the northern side of the area. At its east end, which was demolished almost completely, it appeared to curve southward. Parts of other buildings were observable to the south and northeast, along with a bothros and several patches of pebble floors. A fairly continuous deposit of fine black carbonized matter, very thin in some places and reaching a maximum thickness of 0.10 m. in others, could be observed throughout this stratum.

A wall, CU, which came to light in the southwest corner of the area, was in use at the time of CQ but must have been built earlier. It forms a link with the next lower stratum, in which parts of two houses were recovered. One of these, CX, was represented by portions of its south and east walls, meeting at right angles, and vestiges of a floor at 1.62 m. A.T. The greater part of the building lies beyond the limits of the trench. The plan of House CV, however, lying largely within our area, was reasonably clear. It had a square end at the south, a straight side wall, CW, on the west, and a gently curving apsidal end at the north. There were gaps in the foundations on the south and west, one or both of which may mark the place of doorways. A floor of yellow clay with gray ash and carbonized matter lay at 1.55 m. A.T. In the photograph, Plate 38, c, a view from the north, House CV is at the upper left, Wall CU runs toward the upper right, and the southeast corner of House CX, with stones scattered, is at the lower right. Two bothroi, a few postholes, and two groups of egg-
shaped beach pebbles were found just outside these buildings. All the pottery recovered from the stratum appears, after preliminary inspection, to be of Early Helladic types.

Below this level the ground was increasingly muddy and it was necessary to interrupt the digging at intervals to allow drying by evaporation. Remains of several buildings were found. A wall in the extreme southeast corner of the area rested at 0.85 m. A.T. At the northwest was a curving wall, DG, perhaps part of an apsidal structure, bedded at ca. 0.95 m. A.T. A house called DA (Pl. 38, d), lying in and beyond the northeast part of the area, was evidently a little later, having its floor around 1.10 m. A.T. The walls of this house (e.g. Fig. 2, DB) were thick and solid, being built, like some of the others at this level, in herringbone masonry with flat stones set aslant to right and left in alternate courses. A gap in the west wall was probably made by a later bothros, though there may have been a doorway at this place. The southwest corner of the house was found broken away, and in the outer face of the south wall there was a rectangular niche, the purpose of which was not apparent.

Standing water was reached at 0.75 m. A.T. By probing below the surface it was discovered that a wall of a still earlier building ran east and west under House DA. The pottery at this depth was of Early Helladic types resembling those found in Square F 7 below the level of the House of the Tiles. Neolithic sherds were present in very small quantities.

A view of the deep cutting in Area D is seen in Plate 38, e. The top of the bank, on which is our protective barrier of stones, stands just six meters above the pool of ground water, which appears in the lower left-hand corner of the photograph. In the course of four successive seasons of excavation this eastern part of the trench has yielded, in descending order, a Geometric pithos burial, a Mycenaean layer (principally Late Helladic III B), and thirteen habitation levels of the Middle and Early Helladic periods, each separately marked in unmistakable manner by the stone socles of house walls, as well as by floors and, in many instances, streets, bothroi, and other features. Plans of each have been drawn, and the pottery and miscellaneous objects collected in accordance with their contexts.

No sharp break in continuity was observed in this long sequence of strata, and it would be a mistake at the present stage of the investigation to assign any one building to a specific chronological phase of the whole settlement. Area D is relatively small; only a few meters away another test would undoubtedly reveal certain houses that overlapped the span of two or three here noted and others that stood only briefly, being replaced several times during the life of one of ours. Fires and earthquakes seem not to have destroyed the entire community on any single occasion. Even the principal distinction between the Early and Middle Helladic layers is not obvious and must therefore be left undesignated until the pottery has been analysed in greater detail. We can say with confidence only that the Middle Helladic habitation was intensive here on the eastern side of the mound, accounting for fully three meters of the debris.
**Well D. 2**

The position of Well D.2 in the western extension of Area D (Square G 5) is shown by a double circle on the general plan, Figure 1, and appears in the diagrammatic section, Figure 2. This well, 0.90 m. to 1 m. in diameter, had been found in 1954 and excavated from the top as then preserved, 6.40 m. a.t., down to 2.70 m. a.t. The upper part had a stone lining; below, there were footholes in the east and west sides. In 1955 the shaft was cleared to water level at 0.80 m. a.t. Among the contents were terracotta spools and loomweights of Classical types, part of a figurine, a fragment of a small limestone Doric capital, and a very great number of broken tiles.

Far down in the shaft the sides were found to be soft, containing masses of fine burnt matter, sherds of Early Helladic pottery, and many flat Early Helladic tiles of a kind rather finer than those from the House of the Tiles. The face of a stone wall, apparently resting about 1.85 m. a.t., was visible in the bank. Quite evidently there are remains of an Early Helladic building, possibly of considerable size and importance, in this region. The burnt stratum is some 3 m. lower than the debris of the House of the Tiles and may represent one of the earlier phases, or the ancient contours may have been different enough to account for this discrepancy in levels.

**Scarps DB and DC**

The steep bank left by the railway cutting was cleaned and scraped this year some ten meters north and south of the east end of Area D. In Figure 1 the northern section (in Squares H 4-5) is labelled DB, the southern (Squares H 5-6) being labelled DC. Many strata could be distinguished in these banks by their color and texture, and here and there parts of stone walls and masses of fallen brick became visible. A quick test of the deposits was made by digging into the bank at different places. DC everywhere produced fragments of Middle Helladic wares. In DB, however, some irregularities appeared; the strata sloped downward fairly abruptly toward the north, and one of our samplings taken 5 to 6 m. from Area D and at a level around 4.40 m. a.t., far below the present surface of the hill, yielded fragments of very fine vessels assignable to the later stages of Late Helladic I and probably to Late Helladic II. This is a period not well represented by material from other parts of the site, and its occurrence at so low a level calls for further investigation.

**Trench DA**

An exploratory trench 6 m. long and 1.50 m. wide was dug at the west edge of the railway cutting below the embankment in Square H 3 (Fig. 1), where the surface was about 3 m. a.t. Mycenaean kylix stems and other sherds of Late Helladic III lay on the ground in this region, but the first undisturbed deposits encountered were Middle Helladic. A set of walls and remains of an oven represented an occupation level around 2.20 m. a.t., and another wall and two bothroi came to light some 0.30 m.
to 0.40 m. lower. Further floor levels, assignable to phases of the Early Helladic settlement, were noted around 1.70 m. and 1.40 m. A.T.

Trench DD

A second trial trench, 5 m. long by 1 m. wide, was excavated east of the railway track in Squares I-J 4, opposite Area D (Fig. 1). Here a low embankment of earth curves in an arc that appears to follow the original contours of the mound, indicating its size before the construction of the railway. Only a little is preserved, however. At the west end of Trench DD the surface is 2.70 m. A.T., at the east 2.20 m. A.T.; a short distance beyond lies the marshy ground that runs out to the narrow pebbly beach at the water's edge. The trench was excavated to a depth of 1.20 m. at its west end, revealing a wall 0.60 m. thick that runs north and south. Its bottom course projects eastward another 0.25 m. in a low step. Cement was found adhering to both sides of the wall and the adjacent filling contained a Roman lamp. The east end of the trench was dug to water level (here 0.61 m. A.T.). In the muddy earth only a few centimeters above the water was a ruined tile grave, the skeleton lying with its shoulders toward the east and the skull displaced. In the disturbed earth throughout this trench there were scattered fragments of Mycenaean and earlier pottery but it seems clear that the settlement of the Bronze Age had not extended this far eastward.

SOUTH-CENTRAL AREA

(Squares E-F-G 6-7-8)

Excavation in the large area on the southern crest and flank of the hill (Fig. 1) was divided as follows: Area B, the part overlying the northeast corner of the House of the Tiles and extending eastward along the north side of the Middle Helladic apsidal house M, was under the supervision of Mr. Charitonides; the southeast corner of the House of the Tiles and the region stretching east and south through Square G 7 into G 8, Areas G and AA, were cleared by Mrs. Caskey with the assistance of Miss Phylactopoulou; the opening of the western part of Building G and the remaining ground south of the House of the Tiles, westward through most of Square E 7, Area J, was directed by Mrs. Eliot; and an extension of the space due west of the House of the Tiles, Area BC, was made by Miss Courtney at the end of the season after she had finished the investigations in Area D. Miss Besi supervised the digging of a well in Square E 6 and another in G 7. Parts of over a hundred buildings were found, in addition to streets, courtyards, rubbish pits, graves, and various minor structures of different sorts. Only a few of these can be mentioned in this report. Insofar as the general sequence allows, they will be treated in the order of excavation, beginning with the latest.

* Inv. L.774; H. 0.03, D. 0.066. Broneer's Type XXVIII.
Classical Wells

Well BA.1 was discovered in 1954, its shaft passing just outside the northwest corner of the House of the Tiles. The ancient filling was first observed a little below the present surface of the ground, about 7.10 m. a.t., and was removed down to 3.85 m. a.t. This year the shaft, slightly over 1 m. in diameter, was cleared to 0.55 m. a.t., 0.30 m. below ground water. It is unlined but the sides proved to be moderately firm. Debris of early habitations could be made out dimly in the banks all the way down. The filling contained Argive and a little Attic pottery of the fifth century B.C., fragmentary roof tiles, and a number of broken saddle querns and miscellaneous stone objects. At the end of the campaign this well was refilled to the ground level of the House of the Tiles.

Well A.1 cuts through the apse of House M (Area A, Square G 7). It was first observed in 1953 around 6.20 m. a.t. and cleared at that time to a depth of 1.05 m. In 1955 it was dug to ground water level at 0.85 m. a.t. The shaft is relatively narrow, measuring 0.85 m. to 0.90 m. in diameter, and has ancient footholes cut alternately on the east and west sides. The contents comprised saddle querns, fragments of tiles, terracotta loomweights and spools, a moderate amount of pottery including part of an Attic red-figured bell krater, and fragments of terracotta figurines of archaic and later types. The shaft was refilled at the end of the season to the level of the floor of House M and part of the wall was restored above it.

Graves

Cist and pit graves were found around and under the houses of the topmost Middle Helladic strata, as in previous campaigns. They were clustered particularly in the southwest corner of Square G 6 but were distributed in general all along the northern side of the area, which falls on the crest of the mound. Most of the skeletons lay on their sides with the legs drawn up and, as usual in graves of this period, there were few offerings. An unusual double interment was found in Grave J.2 (Pl. 40, e) near the southern border of Square E 7. Upon a neatly laid floor of pebbles at 4.20 m. a.t. lay a large skeleton fully extended on its back, head to the southeast. A skeleton of smaller size, though probably also of an adult, lay in a contracted position immediately above the first, giving a startling impression of one person nestling in the arms of another. A cup and a small jug, three carnelian beads, and one of white glass were found in the grave.

Two larger and more pretentious tombs also came to light this year. One is a shaft grave of royal type, very similar to that discovered in 1954 and situated only

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5 Hesperia, XXIII, 1954, p. 13, fig. 2.
6 Cf. the graves in Squares D 7, Hesperia, XXIII, 1954, pp. 20-21, and C 6, Hesperia, XXIV, 1955, p. 48. Clearly the M. H. burials were not all concentrated in the central parts of the site.
7 Hesperia, XXIV, 1955, pp. 32-34.
5 m. to the east of it (Figs. 1 and 5, Square F 6). We shall henceforth designate these shaft graves by the numbers 1 and 2. The outlines of the second, some 4.15 m. long from north to south by 3.25 m. wide, was first noticed only a few centimeters below the surface of the ground, about 7.20 m. a.t. In plan the pit was roughly rectangular but rounded at the corners, and the sides were undercut toward the bottom, especially at the south end. More than 3 m. deep, it had obliterated almost all the northeast corner of the House of the Tiles. The southern rim was broken at the top by what looked like a small niche, 0.60 m. by 0.75 m., the lower limit of which was marked by a slab of stone at 6.10 m. a.t. In the niche were fragments of at least three plain undecorated kylixes with angular rims, a type assignable to Late Helladic III. 

Near by in the filling were a few other sherds of later Mycenaean wares, but the great mass of pottery was like that of Shaft Grave 1, including a little gray and much yellow Minyan, red slipped ware, plain buff and gray-brown coarse fabrics, Matt-painted wares with patterns in one or two colors, and a liberal sprinkling of the earliest types of Mycenaean wares (L. H. I). At least a dozen bases bear incised marks of the kind noted in 1954 (Hesperia, XXIV, 1955, pl. 15, c-f). An engaging little calf’s head, decorated with white lines on a black glazed surface, may have belonged to a figurine or may have projected from the side of a pot (Pl. 39, c). A small cup in plain ware, hastily turned and cut from the wheel (Pl. 39, b), is reminiscent of a type of vessel extremely common in Crete at the end of the Middle Minoan period and in Late Minoan I. A total of 30 large basketfuls of potsherds was recovered from the filling of Shaft Grave 2, whereas Grave 1 had yielded only 13 basketfuls.

The grave itself (Pl. 39, a), in plan a long rectangle measuring 2.95 m. by 1.30 m. on the interior, is enclosed by remains of stone walls and floored with small pebbles. Much of the masonry was removed in antiquity; the surviving parts show good craftsmanship. The interstices between the wall blocks were filled with yellow clay, and a low heap of the same substance, mixed with layers of small stone and some brown clay, stood in the middle of the grave. The pebble flooring, slightly irregular, lay at an average of 4 m. a.t. On it were found a few small bones of an adult, chiefly tarsals and metatarsals, and near the southwest corner two fine cups: one of the Vaphio shape with a simple rock pattern and a horizontal band in dull red and black (Pl. 39, d), the other a very delicate thin-walled teacup with a band of cross-hatched diamonds in dull black (Pl. 39, e). Just above the floor also were a few small bits

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9 Inv. L5.167; L. pres. 0.046.
10 Inv. L769; H. 0.071, D. 0.095.
11 Evans, Palace of Minos, I, pp. 589-590, fig. 434; II, p. 308, n. 1.
12 Inv. L598; H. 0.066, D. 0.111.
13 Inv. L597; H. 0.052, D. 0.096.
of bronze. All the rest of what one may presume to have been rich and plentiful furnishings had been taken out when the grave was opened in ancient times.

The great quantity of pottery from the filling of the shaft has not yet been studied but the vessels appear to be of the same sort as those represented in the corresponding lot from Grave 1, datable stylistically to the end of the Middle Helladic period and the very beginning of Late Helladic I. The two cups found in situ represent the final stage of development of the Matt-painted class. The presence of a few L. H. III sherds in the filling may be an indication of the time when the grave was opened. The niche in the upper part of the south rim was perhaps only a bothros of some sort, but it may have revealed the presence of the royal tomb; just possibly, it may mark the end of an exploratory trench, dug deliberately in search of this grave.

Excavation in the western part of Square E 6 yielded several small cist graves of the Middle Helladic type and one of unusual size. The position of the latter, which we call Grave BC.3, is shown on the general plan (Fig. 1). It too is a cist grave, but with massive walls carefully built of large stones, conglomerate boulders as foundations and flat slabs of limestone above. The chamber, its axis running east and west, is 0.98 m. wide and 1.83 m. long. It was found covered by two huge slabs of limestone with smaller flat stones masking the joint and surrounding the edges (Pl. 40, a). A layer of clay coated the whole surface of the eastern slab, which was intact, and lay in place over parts of the western, which was cracked. On the southeast edge of the cover stood an elegant Matt-painted cup (Pl. 40, c) and a small plain greenish-buff jug with a long beak.

When the western slab was removed (Pl. 40, b) the chamber was found partly empty, only the lower part being filled and coated with a covering of fine earth that had sifted in through the cracks. The base of a pot was visible next to the north wall, and the grave had an appearance of being quite intact. Yet we soon discovered that the floor had been disturbed, many white pebbles of which it had been composed being mixed with the soft earth filling. The whole central part of the grave had evidently been scraped out and only a few small bones and fragments were left; enough, however, to show that the occupant was an adult and had been laid with his head to the east. In the earth also were found a fragmentary bronze pin and two lead clamps for mending cracked pottery. Beside the north wall on a patch of undisturbed floor (5.48 m. A.T., 0.75 m. below the cover slab) rested two jugs, one a small undistinguished gray vessel with a horizontal rim, the other a quite fine beak-spouted pitcher in reddish-buff ware, mottled in the firing, with a twisted strip of clay applied along the outer surface of the handle (Pl. 40, d).

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14 Eastern slab ca. 1.15 m. by 1.50 m.; western slab ca. 0.80 m. by 1.25 m.; thickness of each 0.16 m. to 0.20 m.
15 Inv. L. 600; H. 0.105, D. 0.132.
16 Inv. L.595; H. 0.257, D. 0.171.
The state of Grave BC.3 is puzzling in several ways. It undoubtedly contained offerings that would have attracted robbers, and the remains as found indicate quite clearly that it was indeed opened and emptied, almost certainly from the top at the west end, on some occasion. Why, however, should tomb robbers trouble themselves to replace the great cover slab and the flat stones over the joint and even to wedge smaller stones around the rim of the cover? Why, furthermore, in this tomb as in the two shaft graves, should they remove the bones of the dead? This second question suggests a third: were the openers of the tombs in fact robbers in search of plunder, or were they possibly the descendants of the persons buried, seeking not treasure but whatever magical power was thought still to reside in the bones themselves? Classic parallels suggest themselves in great numbers, and certain of the instances reported, as for example the recovery by Kimon of bones believed to be those of Theseus, are undoubted historical events. If at some time in the Mycenaean age or later still the people of Lerna moved away from the site, it is at least plausible that they may reverently have carried with them the bones of their heroic ancestors. This is of course only an hypothesis, not subject to proof, and therefore not to be advanced or accepted without reserve. Some explanation of this sort appears, however, to be required.

**Middle Helladic Strata**

Excavation in the eastern part of the main area this year disclosed remains of eight to ten strata or habitation levels above the debris of the House of the Tiles, some more significant than others. Several of the topmost, containing large quantities of Minyan and Matt-painted wares, can be assigned without question to the Middle Helladic period, and at least two or three, at the bottom of the series, are identifiable by their pottery as Early Helladic. The intervening strata cannot be assigned until the material recovered has been more thoroughly studied.

The highest and presumably the latest floor level preserved in this region lay at 7.40 m. a.t. in Square F 6. One of the cist graves, B.16, is assignable to the same phase. Remains of house walls began to appear a little lower. Along the north edge of the excavated area a well built stone socle was revealed. It stands 0.60 m. high and belongs evidently to a house lying farther north. Next to it ran a street, on the other side of which there were traces of further buildings with floors around 6.90 m. a.t. Among them were remains of an oval structure about 1.60 m. wide by 2.50 m. long, consisting of a thin surrounding wall of bricks and a central oblong pillar of clay which may have supported an upper flooring or a domed roof (Pl. 41, a). At the east end there was an opening about 1 m. wide, partly blocked by a stone barrier, and beyond this remains of another similar complex. Some signs of burning were observable, suggesting that these may have been large ovens of some sort, possibly kilns.

17 Plutarch, *Theseus*, 36, 1-3; *Kimon*, 8, 5-7; the bones of Orestes, Herodotos, I, 67-68; more than a dozen other cases are recounted by Pausanias (see index to Frazer's commentary under the word "bones").
In the same district, among remains of houses one or two phases earlier in the Middle Helladic series, we came upon another structure of comparable form. Its walls were much more substantial, being built of stone. Horseshoe-shaped, with the opening toward the east, the chamber measured about 2.70 m. in length by 1.80 m. in width, and in the interior had a large rectangular pier which divided the space into a northern and a southern compartment. The walls were coated on the inside with clay in which grooves were left by the fingertips of the mason. Walls and clay floor showed signs of intense continued burning; the floor was blackened and the chambers were full of gray and white powdery ash, partly solidified, in which there were also pieces of a vitrified substance and some green matter, perhaps the residue from molten copper. Just outside the open end of the horseshoe was a fan-shaped apron of burnt matter, made up in layers of brown and black ash with hard white crusts. Evidently this was a furnace of some kind, raked out and refired successively. Tentatively we have called it a foundry.18

From an associated stratum, not earlier than these remains, came fragments of an asymmetrical jug coated with very shiny black glaze and decorated with patterns in dull white and orange-red paint (Pl. 43, a).19 Like numerous other pieces found at corresponding levels, this is strongly reminiscent of the Middle Minoan Kamares style, if not actually an importation from Crete.

The foundry appears to have been contemporary with the latest occupations of House M (Area A).20 Another series of buildings has now been recognized as belonging with the first phase of House M, and an extensive group can be assigned to the next earlier stage, that of Houses Q and D.21 These lie around the juncture of Squares F-G 6-7. Most of them were apsidal. They were aligned north and south or east and west and were set close together, separated by narrow lanes. Considerable remains of one, called 98 A, were uncovered this year. It had been reconstructed or remodelled at least once and had been destroyed finally in a severe fire, the brick walls falling in and covering the floor and the household furniture (Pl. 41, b). This house was 4.50 m. wide and had an apsidal room at the west end, most of which was destroyed by Shaft Grave 2 (Pl. 41, c). Thin brick partitions divided the interior. In one of the rooms there was a square corner bench of clay, overlying an earlier hearth, and a series of permanent bins, also fashioned of clay. The broken pottery recovered from House 98 A filled 25 five-gallon tins, and the mending of it has already yielded an array of large storage jars in Matt-painted, plain, and coarse wares as well as a few smaller

18 A crucible probably used in metallurgy was found near here in 1953 (Hesperia, XXIV, 1955, p. 42, pl. 14, f).
19 Inv. L. 765; L. of fragment illustrated 0.084.
vessels. Among the latter is a squat flask in black burnished ware with suspension holes at the rim and a pattern of fine incisions on the shoulder\textsuperscript{22} (Pl. 43, b).

Bone pins of fine quality have been recovered from Middle Helladic strata in all parts of the site. Four examples of these are illustrated on Plate 47, a-d.\textsuperscript{23} The "hammer-headed" pin, b), is of special interest for comparative study since parallels may be adduced from Anatolia, south Russia, Italy, and various distant parts of Europe.\textsuperscript{24}

Below the stratum of House 98 A and above the debris of the House of the Tiles remains representing at least four other significant habitation levels were distinguished in the course of excavation this year. In three of these there were very large apsidal houses, some having clear traces of central hearths (e.g. Pl. 41, d), of a type most frequently found in Middle Helladic settlements. The pottery associated with the earlier buildings of this series, however, is not of characteristic Middle Helladic fabrics, and it seems best to postpone discussion of the stratigraphical and chronological problems for the time being. Pieces of special interest from this context include a small conical cup, coated on the exterior with dark glaze over which was a broad band in dull white\textsuperscript{25} (Pl. 43, c), almost certainly imported from Crete, and a bead and pendant of dark gray steatite, evidently parts of a necklace\textsuperscript{26} (Pl. 47, g, h).

To this stage belong also some of the architectural remains cleared in Squares G 7-8, south of House M (Fig. 1): one or two houses; another workshop, from which we recovered a duck-like askoid vessel in dark gray ware with incised and punctuated decoration, related to the Early Cycladic type; and a series of retaining walls running roughly northeast and southwest along the contours of the mound. The outermost and most substantial of these is AW, which appears on the plan. It was traced over a length of some 23.50 m. The face toward the southeast, fairly well made and standing to a height of six or seven courses, was supported by four projecting spurs or buttresses. The northwest face was irregular and evidently not designed to be exposed. Fragments of developed Middle Helladic pottery were found in the ground outside the wall, whereas tests on the inner side yielded only Early Helladic wares. The other walls, little more than rows of stones irregularly set, lay higher on the slope behind

\textsuperscript{22} Inv. L.588; H. 0.079, D. 0.077.

\textsuperscript{23} a). Inv. L.4.611; L. 0.115; from Area D, House BJ (Hesperia, XXIV, 1955, p. 28). b). Inv. L.4.609; L. 0.067; from Area D, stratum at 2.85 m. A.T. (Hesperia, XXIV, 1955, p. 29). c). Inv. L.5.107; L. 0.047; from Area B, 6.40 m. A.T. d). Inv. L.5.67; L. pres. 0.05; from Area G, 5.85 m. A.T.


\textsuperscript{25} Inv. L. 768; 0.075, D. of rim estimated 0.09. Mr. Sinclair Hood, who was good enough to examine a large selection of the material from Lerna with us recently, observed that this cup finds close parallels in deposits of Middle Minoan Ia at Knossos. Cf. Evans, Palace of Minos, I, p. 173, fig. 122, nos. 7, 9, 10.

\textsuperscript{26} Bead: Inv. L.5.300; L. 0.025. Pendant: Inv. L.5.301; H. 0.034.
AW. We concluded that the whole series was probably built to raise the ground level in this sector at a time when the site was becoming crowded and more space was wanted.

*Early Helladic Period, Late Phases*

Two to four successive building levels, later than the easily recognizable debris of the House of the Tiles but certainly assignable to the Early Helladic period, were recorded at various places east and south of the great edifice in the areas which we called B, G, and J. These strata belong without doubt to a single cultural phase, being distinguished by the presence of ceramic fabrics bearing rectilinear patterns in dark paint on a light ground (Pl. 45, a-e), fine slipped and burnished ware which is fired black, gray, or reddish-brown, coarser ware with a careless smearing of black or brown glaze, vessels with multiple ridges obliquely slashed in imitation of twisted cords (e.g. Pl. 44, c), and heavy brown cooking pots, often roughly burnished, with rudely fashioned knobs and lugs. Small stemmed cups, sometimes pierced to serve as strainers or braziers like the one illustrated on Plate 43, d, also occur in burnished coarse ware.

As an example of the buildings of this stage we may take House CU, which stood in the northeastern part of Square F 7, partly overlying the ruined southeast corner of the House of the Tiles. It comprised two rooms, separated by a partition wall; the eastern 4.55 m. wide by 4.75 m. long, the western having the same width but being wholly demolished at the end. The stone socles of the walls, irregularly constructed, had an average thickness of 0.40 m. The original floor level, very uneven, was around 5.10 m. a.t.; later another was installed a few centimeters higher. Beside the north wall of the east room were remains of a hearth or domed oven with a floor made of potsherds. On the opposite side of the room was a rectangular platform, 2 m. long by 1.50 m. wide, made of a single layer of large bricks. Three bothroi were found within the limits of this room, the largest being conical in shape and descending to the unusual depth of 1.35 m. below the floor. All the debris showed signs of burning. Household implements and much broken pottery were recovered from the floors and bothroi; many sherds from the conical bothros joined others from the floor deposit.

Objects collected from House CU include a nail and pin of bronze or copper; a stone pounder, a slate disk, and two obsidian blades; three awls, a tube, a polishing tool, and a spatula of bone; a bead made from a fish vertebra; a terracotta whorl of

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27 Blegen's class C I, *Korakou*, pp. 8-10; *Zygouries*, pp. 103-106.

28 E.g. *Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, pl. 9, a. A bowl of related shape, coated brown on the exterior and decorated with a painted linear pattern on the inner side of the rim, is illustrated on Plate 43, e (Inv. L.770; H. 0.173, D. 0.271).

29 Inv. L. 579; L. of fragment 0.166. This unusually elegant piece was found in Area D in a late stratum of the Early Helladic layer.

30 Inv. L.782; H. 0.125, D. 0.127.
conical form; and a quantity of charred grain. Among the whole or restorable vessels are the following: in patterned ware, a small tankard and a miniature cup, two small and two large jars (Pl. 45, b, c), ³¹ and a two-handled bowl on a tall pedestal-base (Pl. 45, a); ³² a two-handled bowl in slipped and polished ware, mottled black and brown; a brown slipped askoid jug; a miniature tankard in plain ware and a tan jar with globular body; a jar smeared with black paint; two two-handled bowls and a large one-handled jar or tankard in coarse brown burnished ware. By far the most remarkable vessel in the whole group is a very large jar in thinly glazed ware with three flaring trumpet-shaped mouths, the rims of which are joined together by a disk over the center of the body. ³³ The shoulder bears an intricate pattern of ridges with oblique slashings. Most of the bottom of this vessel is missing and the exact shape of the base is not certain, but a fragment indicates that it was a moderately high pedestal spreading at the lower edge. Plate 43, f, shows the pot in the course of restoration.

One other building that deserves notice here is an apsidal structure, slightly earlier than House CU and assignable to the time just after the destruction of the House of the Tiles. It was about 11.50 m. long and probably 5 m. wide, with its apse to the west over the remains of Room XIII (see Fig. 5). The outline of the building, where visible at all, was marked not by the usual stone socles but by a narrow channel about 0.25 m. deep, at the bottom of which small stones were set at intervals. Near the east end, which was apparently square, there were several post holes aligned with the channel. Evidently the walls of this house were made of perishable material, perhaps reeds and clay, supported on a wooden framework that was firmly implanted in the ground. Evidence of comparable construction has been noted in contemporary and slightly later strata in Area D.

A few miscellaneous objects of characteristic types, found in the Early Helladic strata succeeding the debris of the House of the Tiles are illustrated on Plate 47: a pair of bone toggles ³⁴ (e, f); two conical terracotta objects with flanges at the sides, probably stylized figurines ³⁵ (j, k); and five fragments of anchor-shaped terracotta objects. ³⁶ (l-p).

The House of the Tiles

The east end of the House of the Tiles, including most of the north corridor, IV,

³¹ b). Inv. L.628; H. 0.32, D. 0.30. c). Inv. L.641; H. 0.31, D. 0.30.
³² Inv. L.629; H. 0.20, D. 0.20.
³³ Inv. L. 771; H. restored 0.63; D. 0.532.
³⁴ e). Inv. L.5.226; L. 0.063. f). Inv. L.5.237; L. 0.069.
a large part of Room XII, and most of the east corridor or vestibule, XIII, was cleared in 1955 (Fig. 5). Debris from the burning of the building was not quite so deep here as at the west end, and not comparable at all to the great heap over the central rooms. The contour of the mass of ruins coincides with and in part determines the state of preservation. Out at the edges, whatever remained of the walls was razed soon after the fire, as will be described below. Further damage was caused by the digging of bothroi and, later, of Shaft Grave 2, with the result that the plan of the east front of the building is much less certain than the rest.

In this year's digging Corridor IV was followed eastward from Shaft Grave 1 (Hesperia, XXIV, 1955, p. 38) to the place where it had been destroyed again by Shaft Grave 2. Beyond the latter, only a pair of stones was found in situ, marking the northeast corner of the building. The narrow space labelled XIII, only 1.15 m. wide, may have run the full breadth of the building from north to south or, more probably, was closed at the north by an extension of the north wall of Room XII. The southeast corner of the building, though dilapidated, could be securely fixed; it lay only a few centimeters beyond the line where we stopped digging in 1954.

Thus the external dimensions of the House of the Tiles at ground level can now be given with a fair degree of accuracy. From corner to corner, allowance being made for damage to the walls and the roughness of the masonry, the north side measures 25 m., the east end 12.13 m., the south side 25.10 m., and the west end 11.78 m. The diagonal from northwest to southeast is 27.67 m., that from northeast to southwest 27.84 m.

The outline of Room XII was established this year. This is the largest room of the ground floor, measuring 6.43 m. from east to west by 8.05 m. from north to south, and with its fine stuccoed walls was undoubtedly the most impressive of the lower apartments; the arrangement of the rooms upstairs has not been determined. At the northeast corner of Room XII, near Shaft Grave 2, the north wall was destroyed by one of the later bothroi, which left a gap where there may possibly have been a doorway. The principal entrance, however, was unquestionably on the east, in the place marked П on the plan, where the wall running southward had a finished end and a deep slot in the ground marked the position of the wooden sheathing that had covered the jamb (cf. Door H). The wall to the south of П was badly damaged by later intrusions. If it was originally equal in length to the northern part, the doorway was very large indeed, measuring some 2.45 m. or about eight feet \(^37\) in breadth. No evidence of inner supports has yet been discovered in Room XII. If any existed (as might be expected in so large a space) traces may still be found when a heap of debris which we left on the floor as a temporary martyr is cleared away.

The east façade of the building and the arrangement of the main entranceway

that gave upon the shallow area XIII are difficult to reconstruct, since a large section of the east wall is missing. In imagination one might here restore a sort of portico with columns standing in the line of the east wall, opposite the jambs of Door P, and alcoves at either end of XIII; an arrangement of that kind seems to be called for, but no column bases have been found. A very large irregular slab of stone, probably related to the house, was noted 1.20 m. east of the façade at a level corresponding with the floor. Investigation will be pursued further in this area.

The small amount of pottery recovered from the building in 1955 is not of distinguished quality. Its affinities are clearly with the wares of the earlier phases rather than with the new styles which followed the catastrophe. Two fragments of a remarkable stone cup

![Fig. 4. Early Helladic Stone Cup, probably from the House of the Tiles (1:2). (Restored drawing by Aliki Halepa Bikaki.)](image)

Pl. 47, i), which may have come from the house, were found in and immediately above the burnt debris. Although the upper part of the body and all but the lower attachment of the second handle are lost, there can be little doubt that this fine vessel was shaped as in the restored drawing, Figure 4. The streaked gray marble is reminiscent of the material from Mochlos and other Early Minoan sites, but the shape suggests Anatolian rather than Cretan parallels.

Although the site appears to have been crowded in most periods we have not yet found any other buildings that were certainly standing at the time of the House of the Tiles. Excavation has not yet proceeded far to the north and west. On the east and south it is clear that there were broad open spaces. The plan presented here as Figure 5 shows a number of earlier structures in order to indicate their relative size and position, but all these had been demolished and their foundations covered over before the House of the Tiles was built.

It is not clear how long the great building stood. The destruction left an enormous heap of debris, highest over Room VII and spreading outward beyond the

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88 Inv. L5.750; H. to rim 0.079.
walls. The sloping contour of this mass was noticed as early as the campaign of 1953 and again more clearly in 1954 (\textit{Hesperia}, XXIV, 1955, p. 35). Toward its edges we had observed and recorded a series of curving rows of rounded stones, which we guessed might have been laid to hold down the walls of temporary shelters (\textit{Hesperia}, XXIII, 1954, p. 23; XXIV, 1955, pp. 36, 43, pl. 20, b). In 1955 a similar but much longer row of stones came to light just south of the House of the Tiles (Pl. 42, a), and when this group was plotted on a plan with the others certain features of the whole complex suddenly became apparent. All the rows fell on the circumference of a single great circle, nearly 19 m. in diameter, which exactly bordered the principal mass of debris and had its center over the western edge of Room VII. Accumulations of gravel and small stones had been found near each row along the periphery (as in Pl. 42, a, lower right) and at various places within the circle, just above the burnt matter. Once aware of the nature of these remains, we had no difficulty in recognizing two of the rounded stones as they came to light this year over the northeast part of Room XII and another in the ground just north of Corridor IV. No continuous row had been found on the west side over Room V in the earlier campaigns; a few single stones may have been overlooked.

The circle is shown prominently on the plan, Figure 5, and the mound of debris, covered by a continuous layer of small stones, is reconstructed in a diagrammatic section, Figure 3. The arrangement was obviously deliberate, the circle being carefully and accurately laid out and the mound of debris graded to a fairly regular convexity. Earth was not brought in to form this mound; rather, considerable quantities of the fallen matter and burnt wreckage of the House of the Tiles were almost certainly carried away to leave an even shield-shaped tumulus. There was no grave or other structure in this place. The object signalized by the monument was the house itself.

For an appreciable time thereafter the area of the circle was not encroached upon by other houses, though many bothroi were dug within its limits. The apse of the temporary structure found at this level in 1955 was precisely tangent to the eastern edge of the circle; House CU, a little later in date, lay near it on the southeast. The unexplained mass of yellow clay and the small walls discovered on the west side in 1954 (\textit{Hesperia}, XXIV, 1955, p. 36) were also just outside the periphery. At least two or three generations must have passed before the general level of the surrounding ground had risen and the inhabitants began to build over the edges of the tumulus. Only in the developed Middle Helladic period, apparently, was the whole area reoccupied.

Whether the ruins of the House of the Tiles were treated with this extraordinarily elaborate attention as a mark of veneration or of execration we cannot at present even venture to guess.
Early Helladic Period, Early Phases

Remains of sizable buildings antedating the House of the Tiles, observed at various places in the preceding campaigns, were uncovered in 1955 throughout the southern part of the main area (Squares E-F 7, Fig. 1). The principal walls are shown schematically in Figure 5. They all lay below the hard-packed yellowish ground level onto which bricks, tiles, and burning ruins of the House of the Tiles had fallen. The pottery found with them confirms the stratigraphical division; unlike the assortment found in the later strata, e.g. in House CU as mentioned above, the earlier
fabrics comprise wares coated with black and brown glaze (*urfinis*), a limited amount of red and brown slipped ware and fine yellow mottled ware,\(^{39}\) and great quantities of plain wares, including the yellowish and pinkish-tan varieties appearing most characteristically in small bowls and saucers, and the darker brown and grayish types occurring chiefly in larger and coarser basins, jugs, and jars (Pl. 46, f-j). Vessels of the latter group frequently bear decorative plastic bands (Pl. 46, f) but not the fine slashed ridges of the final phases (e.g. Pl. 44, c). Patterned Ware of the standard type and "Smear Ware" are wholly lacking in the deposits earlier than the House of the Tiles.

Five or six of these early phases are represented by the architectural remains uncovered in 1955, but many of the walls, though broad and straight and well constructed, had been demolished to the lowest courses of their foundations. Floors and accompanying deposits had been lost or disturbed in the process, and some of the evidence thereby dispersed. The general sequence is clear, however, and proves that the period was a long one.

The latest of the houses in this series was EV, which interrupted the west end of Building G (Fig. 5). The eastern part of Building G, including Room A and the adjoining side of Room B, had been cleared in earlier campaigns (*Hesperia*, XXIV, 1955, pp. 43-45). Much of Room B was found to have been destroyed by military installations of the recent war. Room C was exposed in 1955. In its north wall there was a broad gap, probably a doorway; near this, in the central axis, lay a group of stones that had formed either a part of a north-south cross wall or an independent pier; further west was another group almost certainly representing a cross wall. The floor of Room C was not clearly distinguishable.

It seems probable that Building G was constructed in stages, first the broad south wall, then the walls of the compartments. Its full length cannot be ascertained, and the purpose it served is not apparent. During one or more phases of the Early Helladic settlement it formed the southern limit of the inhabited area. Immediately adjoining on the north was at least one house or room, CA. The floor of this room, around 4.50 m. a.t., showed signs of severe burning. Parts uncovered in 1953 and 1954 yielded a large group of pots and utensils (*Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, p. 27; XXIV, 1955, p. 45). Further excavation has now revealed sections of the surrounding walls and, near the northeast corner, another patch of burnt floor, on which rested a small lid in plain ware, fragments of a large basin coated with a milky wash, nine obsidian blades, a conical whorl, and a cylindrical loomweight.

A short distance northeast of CA were the remains of another room, DM, also burnt and probably contemporary in date. Parts of its north and east walls were discovered and an isolated bit of wall further south may have belonged to the building, but

\(^{39}\) C. W. Blegen, *Zygouries*, pp. 78-83.
the rest had been removed in succeeding phases, perhaps at the time of the House of the Tiles. The earthen floor, at an average level of 4.55 m. a.t., was found intact over an area of six or seven square meters near the northeast corner. On it was a thick deposit of burnt debris covering a mass of broken pottery and various implements. Postholes, stone supports, and charred remains of wooden uprights suggested that there had been shelves or racks beside the north wall, from which some of the objects may have fallen.

Among these objects are a knife blade and an unidentifiable fragment of copper or bronze; pieces of more than 40 obsidian blades; a flint blade; two stone hammers and two whetstones; a spatula and several awls and polishing implements of bone; four whorls and two weights of terracotta. Thirty pots from the floor have been inventoried, and others may be added to the list. They include saucers and small bowls wholly or partially coated with glaze paint; four sauceboats, a large askos, and a diminutive jar or pyxis with a plastic representation of a ram’s head projecting from one side (Pl. 46, c), all in glazed ware; part of a miniature askos in yellow mottled ware; two saucers, one with raised base (Pl. 46, b), and the neck of a large jar coated with a milky wash; a lid, two saucers, a jug (Pl. 46, d), a large hydria (Pl. 46, i), and several large and small jars in various types of plain ware (e.g. Pl. 46, j), some bearing bands or stripes of slightly shiny paint; and many vessels in sturdy coarse ware, large bowls (e.g. Pl. 46, f) and basins (e.g. Pl. 46, g), a jug (Pl. 46, h), three or more jars, two pithoi, and fragments of a baking pan. A number of the coarser pots are decorated with plastic bands. Several bear incised crosses (e.g. Pl. 46, a); one of the deep rounded bowls is marked with a symbol like a two-pronged pitchfork (Pl. 45, f).

Charred grains of wheat were found in one of the jars, and near by on the floor were two small groups of figs, blackened and shrivelled but still quite recognizable. In and around the pots and scattered among the debris were more than 100 bits of clay sealings which, like those recovered a year before in Room XI of the House of the Tiles (Hesperia, XXIV, 1955, p. 41), had fastened the necks of jars or been applied to the surfaces of wooden and wicker containers. The seal impressions on the pieces from Room DM were, however, fewer in total number, simpler in design,

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40 Inv. L. 624; H. 0.068, D. 0.095.
41 Inv. L. 621; H. 0.06, D. 0.109.
42 Inv. L. 591; H. to spout 0.144, D. 0.143.
43 Inv. L. 608; H. pres. 0.395, D. 0.37.
44 Inv. L. 609; H. 0.315, D. 0.303.
45 Inv. L. 605; H. 0.235, D. 0.307.
46 Inv. L. 606; H. 0.20, D. 0.378.
47 Inv. L. 604; H. 0.25, D. 0.23.
48 Inv. L. 613; H. 0.13, D. 0.17.
49 Inv. L. 612; H. 0.158, D. 0.189.
and much more limited in variety; only five types have been identified, as compared with 64 types listed by Miss Heath in the group from Room XI. Three of the five are illustrated on Plate 44: a tripartite design of interlocking spirals appears frequently with a small petal rosette, as in e) (Inv. L5.730), and an oval with hatched quadrants occurs alone, as in f) (Inv. L5.729). This pattern of hatching resembles in a general manner the design of another seal, found on the upper surface of the handle of an Early Helladic jar (Plate 44, d), which came to light near by in the debris outside the House of the Tiles. A similar type of decoration is found on raised bands that encircle the bodies of large pithoi (Pl. 44, a, b).\textsuperscript{50} Like the sealings, these vessels were in use at the time of the House of the Tiles and in the phases immediately preceding.

The large closed groups of objects from Rooms CA and DM provide a valuable body of material that can be assigned with certainty to the stage of the Early Helladic settlement immediately preceding the construction of the House of the Tiles. Supplementary material will of course be added from contemporary deposits in other areas; a yellow askos of characteristic shape\textsuperscript{51} (Pl. 46, e), previously lacking in our collection, was found this year in Area J.

Next earlier in the sequence is Wall AH (Fig. 5), which runs diagonally across the western part of this area. It was found broken at several places but undoubtedly belonged to a single structure. The south end underlies and clearly antedates Building G, whereas a section toward the north crosses a still earlier building, JD. A relatively small amount of broken pottery has been collected from these strata. House JD, the northern part of which is still unexcavated, had a large rectangular stone platform at its southwest corner.

South of JD and under the west end of EV we came upon yet another complex, JF (not shown on the plan), which represents the earliest phase of the Early Helladic settlement preserved in this region. It comprised a group of walls running at different angles and varying in thickness and style of construction; evidently they had been altered and rebuilt more than once. A deep compartment went down into the underlying layer, reaching a floor level around 3.70 m. a.t. Even here, however, the pottery in general was of developed Early Helladic types.

Mixed Filling

Limits of the mixed deposits which were observed in Trench E in 1953 (Hesperia, XXIII, 1954, p. 28) and Trench J in 1954 (Hesperia, XXIV, 1955, pp. 46-47) began to be determined as the area of excavation expanded. The debris was characterized by alternating strata and patches of red, yellow, and brown earth and clay, containing

\textsuperscript{50} Cf. K. Müller, Tiryns, IV, pls. XVI-XIX. Fragments from Lerna are quite as numerous and varied in pattern.

\textsuperscript{51} Inv. L.772; H. to rim 0.10, D. 0.134.
sherds of various Neolithic wares in great numbers as well as an appreciable quantity of Early Helladic pottery. As conjectured earlier, this must be material removed from some other part of the site during levelling operations and dumped here on the flank of the hill, presumably to create additional useful space. These operations were not, however, connected with the building of the House of the Tiles, as we first guessed, but must go back to a much earlier phase of the Early Helladic period.

The great mass of mixed filling rested, just south of Complex JF, on a hard red layer around 4.30 m. a.t. This red surface was found to be the top of a terrace of the Neolithic settlement, supported on the south by a retaining wall, JJ (Fig. 5). Our exploratory Trench E had been dug a short distance further south, missing the terrace and so probing down into the deepest mass of fill; at 1.35 m. a.t. it had not yet reached undisturbed ground. It thus becomes clear that in Neolithic times the southern boundary of the site, in this area at least, was an almost vertical embankment, which the Early Helladic settlers buried under the debris of their new installations.

Neolithic Strata

Much of the season of 1955 was occupied in clearing this southwestern corner of the main area and ascertaining the lines of division as outlined above. Plate 42, b shows the region at the end of the campaign, when there had been time for only a limited amount of digging in the undisturbed strata of the Neolithic settlement. This brief investigation began, nevertheless, to yield definite and reliable information.

Remains of three successive building levels were encountered, with floors in close sequence around 4.15 m., 4.05 m. and 3.85 m. a.t. The house walls had socles made up of small stones, rather carelessly fitted, in very marked contrast to the substantial masonry of the Early Helladic period. Enough was preserved, however, to show that these were rectangular buildings of moderate size. One of them, House JN (Fig. 5), had an interior width of just over 3 m. and was more than 5.25 m. long; the north end has not yet been revealed.

If the architecture is relatively humble in scale and execution, the pottery recovered from the floors and adjacent strata is of extraordinarily fine quality. As yet few vessels have been completely put together, but sherds and large fragments give an index of the types represented. Burnished and slipped wares occur in small quantities. The predominant fabric is a fine ware coated with lustrous red, brown, or orange glaze. A number of the pots were decorated with bold rectilinear patterns executed in the same glaze on a reserved ground. The principal shapes are cups, small bowls, and deep cylindrical or rounded jars. Most of the rims are plain, the upper part of the body being formed in a delicate single or double curve, the lower part often bending suddenly inward or having a fairly sharp angle. Cylindrical collar-like necks and bases are common. These wares and shapes find close parallels at
The Geometric Cemetery

Graves had been revealed on the lower slopes of Mt. Pontinos, a short distance beyond the southernmost houses of the village of Myloi (Pl. 48, a), when a broad deep ditch was dug there by the occupying forces during the second World War. In 1955 C. W. J. Eliot made a preliminary exploration of the region, excavating with four workmen for five days. He cleared 15 graves, most of which were near the surface or already partly exposed, and noted places where others undoubtedly lie. Ten of the 15 graves were cists built of flat slabs of stone, the rest pithos burials. All are probably assignable to the Geometric period, although half a dozen Middle Helladic potsherds and one or two of earlier date were found in the area.

The cist graves were made up of irregular slabs, large and small, set vertically, and were covered with other flat stones. Average dimensions of the graves were about 0.55 m. by 1.25 m. In most cases the body was placed in the cist with legs slightly drawn up, but a few of the skeletons were fully extended. No offerings were found in the graves of this type. Near one of them, which had been disturbed by the war trench, there were a few sherds of Early Geometric pottery. Lines of stratification in the bank of the trench made it appear that a small tumulus of earth had been heaped over this grave.

The pithoi used as burial vessels were large ovoid jars with a thick rim and a stubby foot. Some had horizontal plastic bands around the body. They varied in height from 0.95 m. to 1.30 m. and were laid horizontally, with stones propping them on either side and flat slabs covering the mouths. A great many fragments of Early Geometric pottery were found around the lower ends of two of these pithoi, presumably the remains of offerings made at the time of burial. One group of sherds showed signs of burning, though the body had apparently not been cremated.

The smallest of the pithoi, PA6.1, was partially exposed and damaged by the military trench but retained a group of funeral offerings in place (Pl. 48, b). The skeleton had almost entirely dissolved, only a few small teeth remaining to indicate that a young child had been buried here. The offerings included five Late Geometric

62 The glazed ware at Lerna is of the class often called Neolithic "Urfirnis-ware"; Mrs. Kosmopoulos named it "Corinthian Brown Ware." Pieces illustrated in her publication The Pre-historic Inhabitation of Corinth, I, pl. I, b, and pl. II, a, are paralleled by many examples from Lerna, as are the shapes shown by S. S. Weinberg in Hesperia, VI, 1937, pp. 487-524, figs. 9, 13, and 16. For the patterns cf. also E. J. Holmberg, The Swedish Excavations at Asea in Arcadia, pl. III.
pots of characteristic Argive fabric: a kantharos 53 (Pl. 48, c), a skyphos with twisted handles 54 (Pl. 48, d), a one-handed cup 55 (Pl. 48, f), a trefoil oinochoe 56 (Pl. 48, g), and a handmade undecorated jug with a wide mouth 57 (Pl. 48, e). In addition, there were a few objects of bronze: several scraps, pieces of two wire hoops, two small rings made of flat bands with zigzag chasing on the outer surface, and a well-preserved fibula 58 (Pl. 48, h). On either side of the catch-plate this bears a delicately incised representation of a water bird, one with its head forward, the other with its head turned, looking over its back. 59

SUMMARY

The campaign of 1955, following the ground work of a more exploratory character that had been accomplished in preceding seasons, furnished much new information about the architecture and topography of Lerna, as well as adding very substantially to the collection of pottery and miscellaneous objects. 60

Investigation of the Neolithic settlement has only begun, but the discovery of houses and floors in stratified sequence makes this beginning appear auspicious. The houses seen this year were rectangular and their walls rested on stone foundations, facts not surprising in themselves but of considerable interest in view of our very limited knowledge of Neolithic architecture in the Peloponnnesos. The relative date of these houses cannot yet be fixed with confidence. Being at the top of the layer, and immediately below a filling that was placed there by inhabitants of the Early Helladic settlement, they would appear to represent a late phase of the Neolithic period, but it is quite possible, and even probable, that still later Neolithic strata were cut away altogether in the course of ancient levelling and grading operations. Efforts will be made to find pertinent evidence through more extensive and deeper digging next season.

The most significant results of our latest investigations in the Early Helladic layer are the discovery of the long series of big solid structures antedating the House of the Tiles, the fixing of the whole general plan of that building itself, the recognition of the monumental tumulus that was erected over its ruins after the catastrophic fire, and, of utmost archaeological importance, the clear indications gained of a cultural

53 Inv. L.669; H. 0.125, D. 0.185.
54 Inv. L. 670; H. 0.131, D. 0.211.
55 Inv. L.668; H. 0.043, D. 0.077.
56 Inv. L.671; H. 0.12, D. 0.097.
57 Inv. L.667; H. to rim 0.095, D. 0.085.
58 Inv. L.5.564; L. 0.10.
59 For the type cf. R. Hampe, Frühe Griechische Sagenbilder in Böotien, pls. 6-17; pl. 13, no. 17 shows a style of decoration very close to ours.
60 At the present writing (February, 1956) the inventory of pots has reached the number 795, while the miscellaneous objects total 2134.
change that accompanied or immediately succeeded that event. There is an unmistakable contrast between the pottery from Houses CA and DM, of the earlier phase, and, for example, that of House CU, which belonged to the later. The distinction has been emphasized and illustrated in the foregoing account.

This change occurred before the end of the Early Helladic period. Pottery and artifacts of Middle Helladic types do not occur in the stratum associated with House CU. They begin to appear one or two or even three phases later, and at first in such infinitesimal quantities that their presence may perhaps be due to intrusions from above. Only gradually, so far as we have yet been able to observe, do the Middle Helladic fabrics become dominant; and not mere sherds but an appreciable number of whole pots in characteristic Early Helladic wares occur persistently in the deposits of this stage of transition, if such it ultimately proves to be. The case is by no means clear, particularly since houses with apsidal ends, of typically Middle Helladic form, seem to occur earlier than the phases in which Middle Helladic pottery is plentiful.

Conclusions drawn from this evidence would be premature in the present state of the investigations, but enough material has now been collected to make it apparent that the history of Lerna may have differed somewhat from that of other sites in the region. As proved by the excavations of Wace and Blegen and others, many settlements suffered general destruction and burning at the end of the Early Helladic period and, if resettled at all, showed a different cultural aspect thereafter. From this fact, however, it does not necessarily follow that events occurred everywhere in the same pattern. One might guess, for example, that in some instances the newly arrived people may not have met resistance but may rather have been induced to join peaceably with the older inhabitants in occupying a favorable site. Such may have been the case at Lerna.

In time the Middle Helladic stock quite evidently superseded the earlier people here, and, as has been reported, they remained through many successive generations. During this period, not less than before, relations were maintained with other centers, notably the Minoan and Cycladic. Toward the close of the Middle Bronze Age burials on the site itself increase in number, though in the highest strata still preserved house walls and floors continue to occupy most of the area. Ultimately the place was used for mighty shaft graves, two of which have now been discovered, implying the presence of some rich and powerful personages. Unhappily the topmost layers of the mound have been so thoroughly denuded that architectural remains of this period no longer exist. Only in isolated pockets have we found remains of later Mycenaean habitations, and evidences of subsequent occupation in the historical periods, although clear enough in their implications, are now meager and still more scattered.

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a. House of the Pithos and Contemporary Stratum, from North

b. Wall CL with Gateway, from North

c. House CV, Walls CU and CX, from North

d. Part of House DA and Associated Level, from North

e. Six Meters of Deposits from Present Surface to Water Level, seen from Southeast

Area D

JOHN L. CASKEY: EXCAVATIONS AT LERNA, 1955
a. Shaft Grave 2, from North

b. Plain Cup from Filling of Grave Shaft (2:3)

c. Calf's Head from Filling of Grave Shaft (4:5)

d-e. Matt-painted Cups from Floor of Grave (3:5)

JOHN L. CASKEY: EXCAVATIONS AT LERNA, 1955
a. Grave BC.3 with Cover Slabs in Place, from North

b. Grave BC.3 with Western Slab Removed, from West

c. Matt-Painted Cup Found on Cover of Grave BC.3 (2:5)

d. Jug in Reddish-buff Ware from Grave BC.3 (2:5)

e. Grave J.2 with Double Interment

a. Middle Helladic Oven or Kiln, from East

b. Burnt Debris over House 98A, from West

c. House 98A, from North; Shaft Grave 2 at Right

d. Large Apsidal Building in Squares F-G 6-7, from East

a. West End of House of the Tiles from South. Part of Circle of Stones in Foreground

b. Buildings of the Early Helladic and Neolithic Periods in Square E 7 at the End of the Campaign of 1955, from Southeast

a. Fragment of Jug in Kamares Style (1:1)

b. Black Burnished Flask from Middle Helladic House 98A (2:3)

c. Imported Middle Minoan Cup (2:3)

d. Strainer or Brazier (1:2). Early Helladic Period, Late Phase

e. Brown Bowl (1:4). Early Helladic Period, Late Phase

f. Vessel with Three Spouts from House CU, Square F 7, Partially Restored (ca. 1:12)

JOHN L. CASKEY: EXCAVATIONS AT LERNA, 1955
a. Pithos Fragments, Contemporary with the House of the Tiles (1:3)
b. Fragment from Stratum Preceding the House of the Tiles (3:5)
c. Fragment of Large Jar from Late Stratum of Early Helladic Settlement (1:2)
d. Seal Impression on Handle of Jar, Roughly Contemporary with House of the Tiles (2:3)
e. Clay Sealing L5.730 from Room DM, Square F 7 (4:5)
f. Clay Sealing L5.729 from Room DM, Square F 7 (2:3)
a. Bowl with Pedestal from House CU, Square F 7 (1:2)

b. Jar from House CU, Square F 7 (1:3)

c. Jar from House CU, Square F 7 (1:7)

d. Jug (1:4)

e. Fragmentary Jar (1:4)

f. Bowl in Coarse Ware from Room DM (2:5) and Detail of Graffito

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**JOHN L. CASKEY: EXCAVATIONS AT LERNA, 1955**

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_a-e_ Early Helladic Patterned Ware from Strata succeeding Destruction of the House of the Tiles
a. Bowl in Coarse Ware with Incised Cross (1:3)
b. Saucer with Raised Base (2:5)
c. Pyxis in Glazed Ware (2:5)
da. Jug in Plain Ware (2:5)
e. Yellow Askos from Area J (1:2)
f. Deep Bowl in Coarse Ware (1:4)
g. Basin in Coarse Ware with Painted Rim (3:10)
h. Jug in Coarse Ware (1:5)
i. Hydria in Plain Ware (1:7)
j. Jar in Plain Ware with Bands (1:7)
Early Helladic Bone Toggles (4:5)

Terracotta Figurines from Late Phase of Early Helladic Settlement

Fragmentary Marble Cup, probably from the House of the Tiles

Bead and Pendant of Dark Gray Steatite (3:4)

Anchor-Shaped Objects of Terracotta from Late Phase of Early Helladic Settlement (3:5)

Middle Helladic Bone Pins

Middle Helladic Bone Pins
a. Mt. Pontinos and Area of the Geometric Cemetery, from Southeast

b. Grave PA6.1 with Offerings in Place

c-d. Kantharos and Skyphos from Grave PA6.1 (1:4)
d-e. Jug, Cup, and Oinochoe from Grave PA6.1 (1:4)
h. Bronze Fibula from Grave PA6.1 (2:3)

JOHN L. CASKEY: EXCAVATIONS AT LERNA, 1955