

EXCAVATIONS AT LERNA, 1954

(PLATES 12-23)

EXCAVATION of the ancient site at the Lernaean spring was continued by the American School of Classical Studies in a campaign of about six weeks' duration, from June 28 to August 10, 1954. The staff comprised the field director, four regular supervisors of excavation, an architect, and several friends and colleagues who assisted during parts of the season.¹ We were housed this year in the village of Mylooi, directly overlooking the scene of operations, and this convenience, coupled with the experience of the site which we had gained in preceding campaigns,² greatly facilitated the work.

We would record our gratitude to Mr. J. Papadimitriou, Ephor of the Argolid, and other members of the Greek Archaeological Service for their ready endorsement of this undertaking and their friendly cooperation; to Messrs. George and Panayotis Kotsopoulos for renewing their generous permission to dig on the premises; and to the Managing Committee of the School and many other colleagues for support and encouragement.

During the winter of 1953-54, preceding this summer's work, all the material found in the previous season had been examined at Corinth, where the workrooms of the museum provide the necessary space for sorting, mending, and studying the hundreds of lots of pottery and other objects from Lerna that are temporarily housed there. Each of the excavators classified and made notes on the pottery from the areas where he himself had supervised the digging and was personally familiar with the

¹ The regular members of the staff were: Mrs. Caskey, S. Charitonides, Epimelete of Antiquities for the district, Miss Martha C. Heath and Miss Helen Vasiliou, members of the School holding Fulbright grants in the academic years 1953-54 and 1954-55, and Lloyd E. Cotsen, graduate student of architecture, who came as a volunteer from Princeton to serve as architect and surveyor. J. L. Caskey was field director. Mrs. Cotsen rendered valuable assistance by cleaning and numbering many of the objects found and recording their measurements. Mrs. Aliki Halepa Bikaki and Miss Daphne Phylaktopoulou joined the staff for limited periods and supervised the excavation of exploratory trenches. C. W. J. Eliot, Secretary of the School, made repeated trips from Athens to Mylooi in order to take part in the surveying and to fill our recurring needs of supplies and equipment. Evangelos Lekkas of Corinth again served capably as foreman, supervising the work of 24 men, three sherd washers, and a water carrier. No small share of credit for the success of the campaign is owed to Andreas Totsikas, our cook from Athens, who with modest facilities provided extraordinarily good meals and helped to keep our living quarters in order.

² "Excavations at Lerna, 1952-1953," *Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, pp. 3-30. Earlier notices are referred to there on p. 4, note 6, and p. 5, note 9; others, with additional illustrations, have appeared in *Archaeology*, VII, 1954, pp. 28-30; *B.C.H.*, LXXVIII, 1954, pp. 117-119; *J.H.S.*, LXXIII, 1953, pp. 116-117, and *J.H.S.*, LXXIV, 1954, pp. 153-154.



details of the stratigraphy. Miss Gloria Livermore, who had taken part in the campaign of 1953, began the task of drawing up the inventory, which was then taken over and completed by Miss Heath and Miss Vasiliou. The mending was again done by

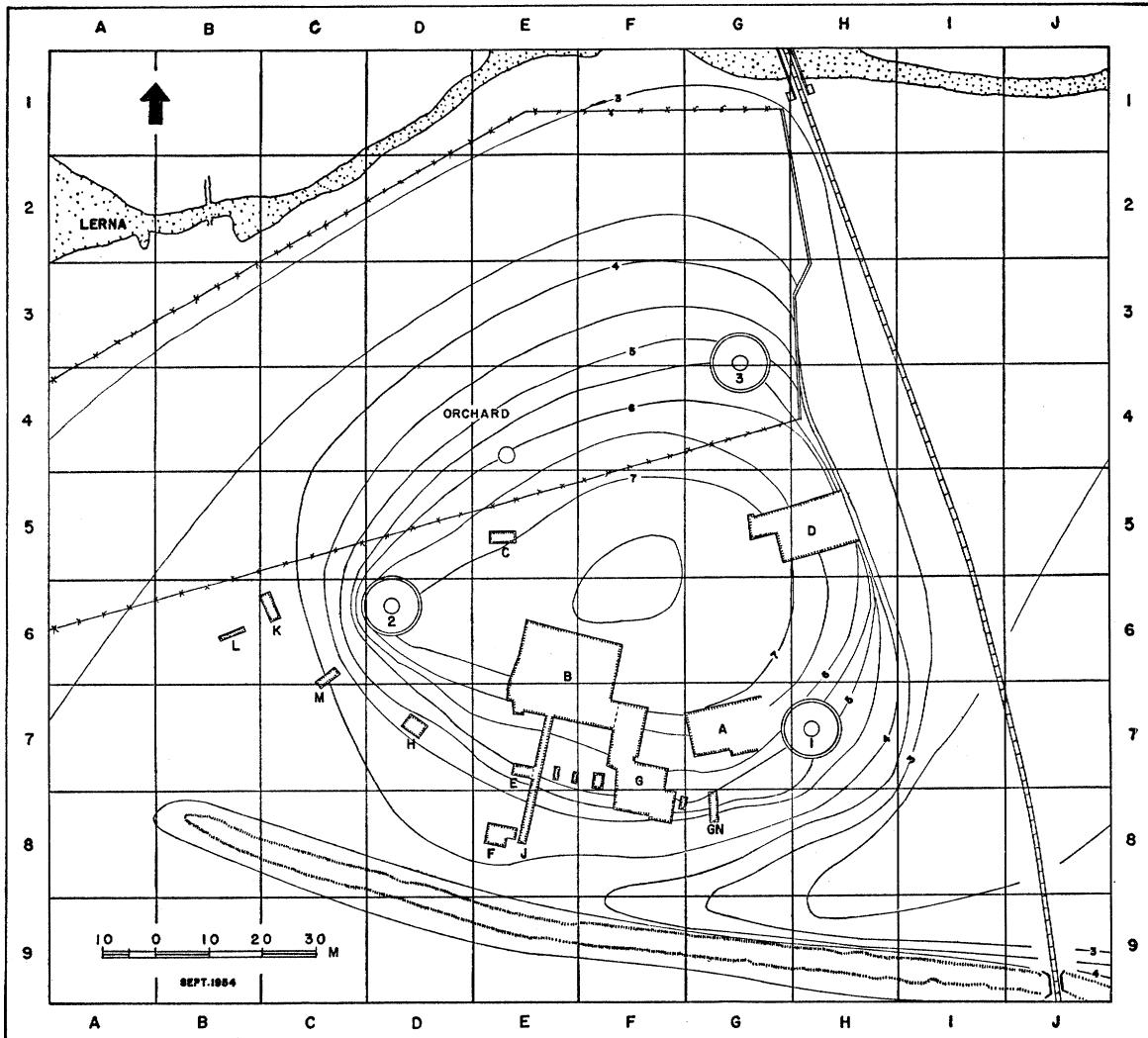


FIG. 1. Topographical Plan of the Site at Lerna (revised and corrected, 1954,
by C. W. J. Eliot and L. E. Cotsen).

George Kachros. By June of this year 228 pots, most of which are whole or restorable, and 604 miscellaneous objects had been catalogued. The information gained by the staff through this consecutive activity was of the greatest value when excavation was resumed.

In the campaign of 1954 Mrs. Caskey conducted supplementary investigations in

Area A (Fig. 1) and then directed the excavation of Area G; Mr. Charitonides opened a large part of Area B; Miss Heath supervised the work in the northwestern section of Area B and at the end of the season extended Trench J, the southern part of which had been opened by Mrs. Bikaki; Miss Vasiliou was in charge of Area D; and the trial trenches K, L, and M were dug by Miss Phylaktopoulou in consultation with J. L. Caskey. Material of all periods from late Roman back to Neolithic was found in one or another of these regions. In the following report it will be dealt with by areas and in the order in which it came to light, from top to bottom; first we describe Areas D and A on the east, then Areas B and G and Trench J, finally the exploratory trenches on the west side of the mound.³ Altitudes are recorded in meters above sea level with the designation A.T.

AREA D

Investigation of the successive layers on the eastern side of the mound beside the railway cutting, where valuable results had been attained in 1952 and 1953,⁴ was carried on by Miss Vasiliou throughout the present campaign. A small extension was made westward from the northwest corner of the area (Fig. 1) for the purpose of investigating the Mycenaean remains. The principal effort was devoted, however, to excavating the eastern part of Area D where previous tests along the scarp had revealed a deep accumulation of Middle Helladic deposits.

The western extension, 4 m. by 5 m. in size, yielded deposits like those observed last year: disturbed earth at the surface (maximum elevation 7.20 m. A.T.), then some faint traces of the Hellenic settlement, including a stone-lined well, and, from ca. 6.30 m. A.T. downward, house walls of Late Helladic III. House T, parts of which had been exposed in 1953, proved to be less accessible than we had expected. From its east side we traced a wall westward 3.50 m. to a corner where another wall ran toward the south, but the plan of the whole building could not be recovered without much more extensive digging. A few square meters of the floor at 5.40 m. A.T. were cleared, however, and yielded fragments of several pots, among which is a tall stemmed kylix of very fine fabric bearing a pattern of whorl shells (Furumark, *M.P.*, Motive 23) and bands in glossy paint shading from red-brown to black, similar in style and technique to the krater recovered from the same room last year (*Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, pl. 6, c).

One cist grave, D. 13, was found at a high level in the extreme northwest corner of the extension. It had been damaged, and only a few bits of bone lay on the pebble floor. This grave cannot have been earlier than Late Helladic III, but may have been considerably later. A bronze ring and a bronze pin of Geometric type came from its disturbed filling.

³ The author begs to acknowledge his obligation to the excavators, from whose detailed reports on the various sections of the site almost all the information in this summary account has been drawn.

⁴ *Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, pp. 6-11.

At the eastern end of Area D investigation was concentrated in a space measuring nearly 9 m. from north to south and 6 m. to 8 m. from east to west, broadening with the slope of the scarp as we descended. Within this space, beginning at a floor of the penultimate phase of the Middle Helladic period (House AH, 4.80 m. A.T., Pl. 13, a) which had been partially cleared last year, we removed the deposits of successive phases to a depth of slightly more than two meters (Pl. 12, a; cf. *Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, pl. 2, a). The area was not large enough to give a comprehensive view of the architectural systems, but by good fortune the strata were well defined, each being marked by the remains of at least one recognizable house. Five levels of habitation, below the two already known, were cleared and recorded. All yielded large quantities of broken pottery and implements of domestic and personal use. Detailed descriptions of these objects and the various architectural remains must be reserved for future reports, but some of the features of this valuable stratigraphical series may be recorded briefly.

Walls of the two latest phases, contemporary with Wall R and Room AH which were noted in 1953, were first removed. Below these were the walls of another rectangular house, BD, resting about 4.20 m. A.T., and under them in turn walls of an earlier house, BJ, and other buildings, at levels around 3.95 m. A.T. (Pl. 13, b). Black and grayish-brown Argive Minyan ware was plentiful in the stratum of BD, Gray Minyan being found in relatively greater quantities with BJ.

Nine graves came to light in these upper strata. Two may have been as early as House BJ, the others being assignable to the phases of BD and AH or even later. Eight were simple pit graves, in all but one of which the bodies were laid in the usual contracted position. The exception was Grave D. 18, into which the body of an adult had been flung face downward in an awkward and undignified manner; the arms and legs were sprawling and the neck and head twisted unnaturally. The ninth grave, D. 17, was quite different. The body of a small girl had been placed in a great pithoid jar of Matt-painted ware⁵ (Pl. 12, b) and this had been laid in the ground with a large Matt-painted jug⁶ (Pl. 12, c) closing the mouth (Pl. 13, b, foreground). The skeleton lay with its head toward the base of the jar, i. e. to the east. Only a little earth had sifted in through cracks. Beside the bones were a bronze ring and another bit of bronze. Grave D. 17 belonged probably to the occupation level of Room AH, the top of the burial urn being at 4.04 m. A.T. The lowest of the graves yet found, D. 22, was a plain interment, the skeleton resting at 3.20 m. A.T.

Below the level of House BJ lay another architectural complex which included most of a rectangular house, BS, parts of two further rectangular buildings, and the top of a curving wall belonging apparently to an apsidal house that extends southward into ground beyond the trench. At this stage there was also a narrow street with a

⁵ Inv. L.276; H. 0.63, D. 0.46.

⁶ Inv. L.273; H. 0.38, D. 0.289.

rough paving of rounded stones and pebbles, running between the houses. Various floor levels were observed, chiefly between 3.50 m. and 3.30 m. A.T. The masonry of this phase was marked by courses of rounded, elongated stones that looked like rows of big potatoes (Pl. 13, c).

The sixth Middle Helladic stratum lay at an average of 3 m. to 2.85 m. A.T. It was distinguished by traces of another sort of building, perhaps a tentlike structure supported on wooden posts. Nineteen hollows, 0.15-0.18 m. in diameter and 0.25-0.30 m. deep, full of soft matter, were discovered in the ground (Pl. 13, d). Though not aligned with perfect regularity, they clearly marked the borders of an enclosure about 3.50 m. wide, somewhat rounded at the east end; 5 m. of its length were exposed, the western part lying beyond the boundary of our present excavation. Along the south side there was a row of stones which may have anchored the material, possibly skins or wattle, of which the wall was made.

In the lowest stratum reached this year, at *ca.* 2.70 m. to 2.50 m. A.T., we again found walls with stone foundations. Two of the buildings were apparently rectangular, while three had curving sides or apses. One of the latter was named the House of the Pithos, after a huge storage jar that was partly preserved within an enclosing bend of its wall. On the last two days of the campaign an enormous mass of broken pottery was recovered from this stratum. It includes fragments of one or more pithoi, daubed on the exterior with dull orange-red paint; several jars carelessly smeared with dark paint in a manner occurring also in the final phases of the Early Helladic period; some examples of Gray Minyan ware; a squat beaked jug with high-swung handle, made of buff clay and decorated with incision and patterns in fugitive semilustrous paint; and fragments of a remarkable big vessel with cylindrical neck and flaring rim, bearing close patterns of hatching, chevrons, and meanders in dull red and black paint on a light ground⁷ (Pl. 14, a). On the shoulder are straight and arching ridges springing from ornamental lugs. The pot belongs undoubtedly to a class of Matt-painted ware, but its design is quite different from the ordinary vessels of that category, no fragments of which have been noted in our preliminary inspection of the material from this deposit. Parts of another big jar decorated with a similar close pattern were found last year in an early stratum of the Middle Helladic layer in Area B.⁸

It is not yet certain that we have reached the bottom of the Middle Helladic deposits in Area D, although the evidence observed in 1952 would indicate that pure Early Helladic strata lie only a little deeper. The level of transition will be investigated

⁷ Inv. L.287; H. of neck 0.257, D. of neck 0.21; W. of rim 0.093. Large parts of the body are preserved but have not yet been put together.

⁸ These vessels are in some respects reminiscent of the Matt-painted jars found by Soteriadis at Drachmani ('Εφ. Αρχ., 1908, pl. 5, 1) and by Miss Goldman at Eutresis (*Eutresis*, pl. XIII, and pp. 146-149). The affinities and chronology of this type of vessel require further study.

in a future campaign. Meanwhile, the material already collected from seven successive building levels promises to furnish a reliable guide to the chronological phases of the Middle Helladic settlement.

AREA A

Excavation in Area A this year was limited to investigation of House D, a building which lay below House M and was assignable to an early phase of the Middle

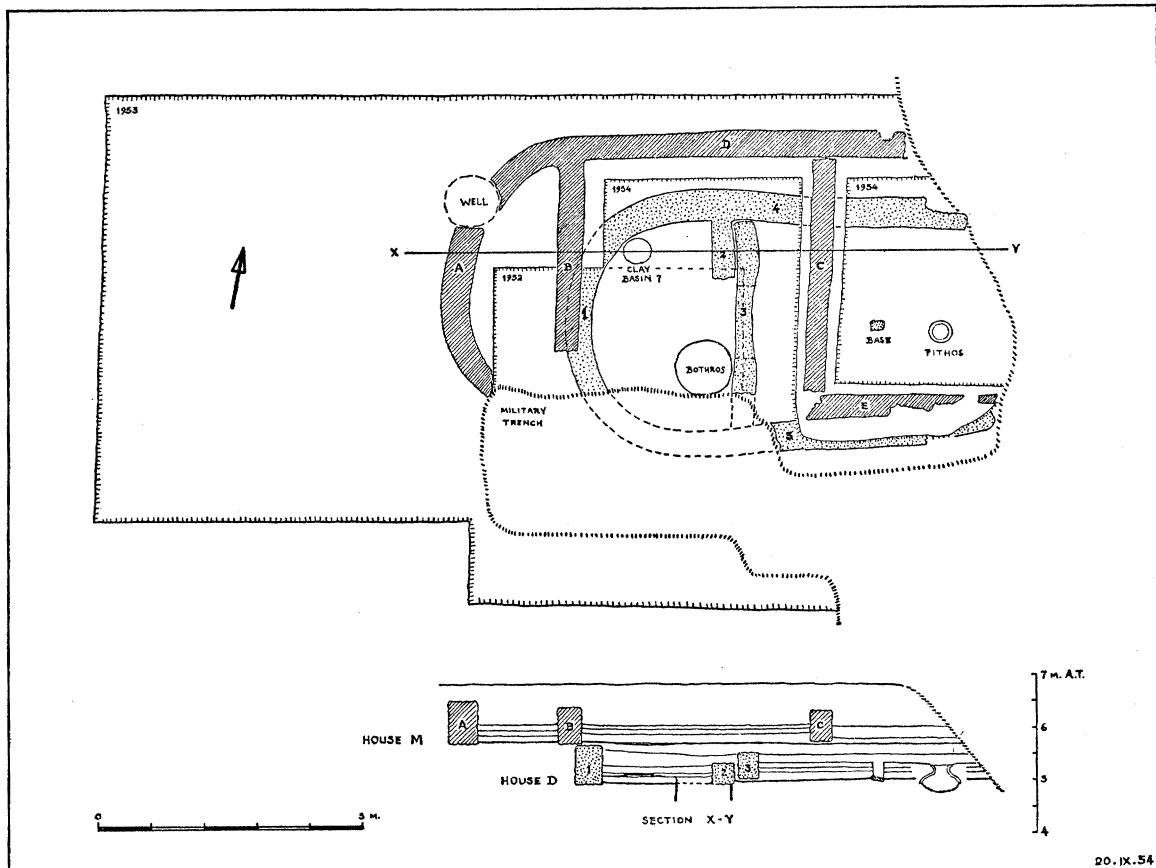


FIG. 2. Area A. Diagrammatic Plan and Section of Middle Helladic Houses M and D.

Helladic period. Evidence of its presence had been observed by Mrs. Caskey in 1952 and 1953 (*Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, p. 16). Leaving a bank of earth to support the standing walls of House M, she cut through the remaining floors of the central and eastern rooms and cleared a large part of the earlier structure, which proved to be in a reasonably good state of preservation. The walls and floors of the two buildings appear on Plate 14, b and c, and are shown schematically in Figure 2.

House D, like its successor, had an apse at its western end and was divided into separate rooms by at least one interior partition. Part of its south side was destroyed by a military trench or dugout, and the whole eastern end was lost in the construction of the near-by gun emplacement (Fig. 1, No. 1) during the second world war. The walls consisted of stone socles that had held a superstructure of crude brick. Their masonry was not so carefully fashioned as that of House M, but the west and north walls, 1 and 4, still stand in places to a height of more than 0.80 m.⁹

At the west these walls form a horseshoe curve,¹⁰ the house narrowing slightly at the center and apparently having a second set of convex curves toward the east. It is possible that the eastern parts of Walls 4 and 5 belong to a period of reconstruction; they are bedded higher than those of the horseshoe. House D may even have ended originally near the line of Wall C, but this must remain uncertain unless we sacrifice the later structure in order to make further investigations.

The earliest floor level in the west room was found at an average of 4.96 m. A.T. This corresponds with the bottom of Wall 1 and the bottom of the short spur, 2, which probably extended further southward in the first period. Walls 1 and 2 are bonded. The floor passes under Wall 3 and runs eastward to the scarp. Near the central axis of the house a flat stone, 0.31 m. by 0.45 m., was found embedded in the floor, where it had presumably served as base for an upright timber supporting the roof.¹¹

House D was severely damaged, perhaps by an earthquake (not by fire), but was repaired and reoccupied. In its second phase Wall 3 was constructed to enclose the western room, although the spur of Wall 2 still projected above the floor. A section in the middle of Wall 3, about 1.40 m. long, was found to be thinner and flimsier than the rest; this may have been the threshold of the communicating doorway. Near the wall on the northwest stood a broad low stationary vessel of unfired clay, surrounded by a paving of potsherds (Pl. 14, c). Circular in shape, it is gently concave in its upper surface and the profile of its rim is a double curve (*cyma reversa*). This object seems remarkably elaborate for a piece of common household furniture. Showing no signs of burning, it cannot have been used as a hearth, nor would it have held liquids. Perhaps it was a table for some sort of dry offerings.

A large bothros, *ca.* 1.10 m. wide and at least 1.60 m. deep, which was discovered in the exploratory sounding of 1952, can now be associated with the inner room of House D in the second period of occupation. To this stage also belonged the Matt-painted jug L. 9 (*Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, pl. 9, b) and to the next floor level the

⁹ At the close of the season we cemented the tops of all the walls in House D, as we had done a year before in House M, in order to prevent or at least delay their disintegration.

¹⁰ Cf. House Q, *Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, pp. 16-17.

¹¹ The positions of this stone and of a bothros and pithos are shown in our sectional sketch, Figure 2, although they lie south of the line X-Y.

Argive Minyan bowl L. 7 (*ibid.*, pl. 7, c). In the eastern room, when the floor had risen slightly higher, the neck and shoulder of a very large pithos were set into the ground as a sort of curbing for a storage pit. A collection of 99 coarse clay beads and some fragments of others, presumably from a single necklace, came to light this year in the upper part of the deposit.

House D seems to have survived for a considerable period. Its final destruction was by fire. The walls fell, leaving a mass of ruins in which the outlines of many individual bricks can still be distinguished in the banks of our cuttings. The heap of debris was then levelled off at the top of the stone socles, perhaps by members of the same family, who laid out House M, a larger and finer building, on the same site.

AREA B

Area B (*Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, pp. 21 ff.) was this year expanded northward into Square E 6 and eastward into F 6 and F 7. At the end of the campaign it was a roughly rectangular space, 18.50 m. by 16.25 m., with a broad corridor on the south-east leading into Area G (Fig. 1). The surface of the terrain sloped downward from an average of 7.65 m. A.T. on the north to 6.50 m. A.T. on the south. Excavation in the northwestern part of Area B was under the supervision of Miss Heath, that along the east side being directed by Mr. Charitonides. The principal objective was to uncover the Early Helladic House of the Tiles, but in the course of the work much new information was also gained about subsequent periods.

Evidence of habitation in the Classical and Hellenistic age was again found among the fragments of pottery on the surface and particularly in three wells in Area B. One, in the northwest corner, yielded sherds of black-figure and Corinthian wares and a series of nineteen terracotta spools and three loomweights, quite possibly from the equipment of a single weaving establishment. The second was found a short distance east of the first and the third in the southeastern part of the area, where it had cut into the south wall of the House of the Tiles, just east of Room XI. Two of the wells produced, in addition to pottery, fragmentary terracotta figurines of Argive type representing seated women or goddesses.¹² All three contained broken roof tiles, giving clear proof that many buildings had stood near by in historic times.

Shaft Grave

In the northeast corner of Area B a layer of pebbles, possibly road metal, came to light at 7.15 m. A.T., just below the ploughed surface of the ground, and beside its western edge only a few centimeters deeper we began to observe a large rectangular patch of soft gray earth, measuring about 2.50 m. in width (east to west) and 4 m. in length. This was isolated and dug separately, being easily distinguished from the

¹² Cf., e. g., R. A. Higgins, *Catalogue of the Terracottas in the British Museum*, I, nos. 980-983.

surrounding earth. The shaft continued downward for more than 2 m.; it had cut away a section of one wall of the House of the Tiles and bitten deeply into another, destroying the floor of the north corridor (Fig. 3). The deposit in the shaft was of uniform color and consistency; it contained a great many fragments of Middle Helladic and early Mycenaean pottery, numerous animal bones, and some few miscellaneous implements of stone and bone. There were no signs of construction and no discernible evidence of stratification in the filling. Scarcely a dozen stones were encountered, lying at random, and there was no carbonized wood or other organic matter, if we except the impalpable gray substance which colored the whole mass.

The banks of the pit were not all vertical: on the north there was a cutting like a steep chute leading into the cavity, and the south end had been undercut at the bottom. The lower limit of the soft filling was reached around 4.90 m. A.T., where we came upon an unbroken stratum of compact reddish-brown clay. This was slightly hollow in contour, varying from 4.79 m. A.T. at the center to 4.98 m. A.T. near the banks. It was clearly defined, covering the whole floor of the pit.

The four walls of the grave itself were found just below the red-brown stratum (Pl. 15, a, b). They were composed of large flat slabs of stone, firmly set in horizontal positions, and pointed at many places on the inner surface with sticky yellow clay. The space enclosed by these walls was long and narrow, measuring 3.20 m. by 1.25 m., its axis running north and south. The walls were intact at either end; on the east side a number of stones appeared to be missing; in the central part of the west wall there was a rude gap more than 1 m. long. The grave pit contained brown earth and several fallen stones; a large broken slab at the south end is visible in Plate 15, a. Under this debris was a floor of rounded beach pebbles, highest at the north (4.35 m. A.T.) and sloping gently downward toward the south.

The grave was quite empty. Not even a fragment of bone lay on the pebble floor; there were no offerings in place; only a few handfuls of nondescript potsherds were found in the filling. To make sure that we had not stopped at a false bottom we excavated a cross trench through the floor, but this yielded pottery of much earlier periods, principally if not exclusively Neolithic.

It is not easy to imagine circumstances that account for the condition in which this grave was discovered. For several reasons we are inclined to reject the theory that it was unfinished and never occupied. The pebble flooring was in place along the west side where the wall blocks were missing, suggesting that the wall had been torn out after the tomb had been built; and the great quantities of shattered but very fine pottery which we found in the filling above the grave can best be understood as remains of funeral offerings, displaced by robbers in their search for more precious objects. The stratum of red-brown clay that lay intact over the grave proper is difficult to explain by any hypothesis. Possibly the robbers laid it to give the false impression that they had not reached their goal, or in hope that it might in some way deter the spirits of the dead from pursuing them.

A selection of the pottery from the filling of the shaft is illustrated on Plates 15-17. Fairly intensive examination of the material, undertaken immediately after the excavation, has shown that very few vessels can be reconstituted. A large number of individual pots, each far from complete, must be represented by the twelve basketfuls of sherds recovered. Gray Minyan ware and coarse Matt-painted fabrics are present in small quantities, whereas Yellow Minyan and Red Monochrome (slipped) wares are abundant. Fine Matt-painted ware (Pl. 16, a, b) and fragments of Polychrome Matt-painted vessels, chiefly broad bowls or basins (Pl. 17, a, b), occur plentifully. A few sherds (Pl. 17, c) show patterns in light paint on a dark ground (Blegen's Middle Helladic class D.I, *Korakou*, pp. 32-33). Examples of the earliest Mycenaean Wares (Late Helladic I) are present in considerable numbers; among them are most of a fine spouted jar¹³ (Pl. 16, c) and fragments of cups, bowls, and small jars or jugs (Pl. 16, d-f). Unsurfaced plain buff and light tan wares and firm, fairly well refined grayish-brown coarse fabrics are also represented.

Symbols are incised or rendered plastically on 29 of the bases in red-slipped, plain, and coarse wares, examples of which are illustrated on Plate 15, c-f.¹⁴ The marks consist of dots, short and long strokes, chevrons, zigzags, and various combinations of these elements. Similar marks have been found on sherds from late Middle Helladic contexts in other parts of the site, but nowhere in such numbers as here. The symbols undoubtedly had some intelligible meaning, perhaps indicating a quantity or quality or price or the identity of the maker. They have not as yet been associated with any known system of writing.¹⁵

If, as we believe, the grave may be dated by the pottery in the shaft, it is to be assigned to the beginning of the Late Helladic period, when developed Middle Helladic styles were still in vogue. It is thus approximately contemporary with the Sixth Shaft Grave in the royal cemetery within the citadel at Mycenae and with several of the graves in the newly discovered circle outside the walls. In size and in style of construction the grave at Lerna is equal to many of these; few parallels are known elsewhere.¹⁶ Evidently this was a tomb of a royal personage or at least of a rich and powerful noble. One wonders where he lived. If his house was on this very site one fears that it may have been lost in the denuding of the hilltop, but further searches will be conducted.

¹³ Inv. L.266; H. pres. 0.155, D. 0.156.

¹⁴ c, Inv. L.264; D. of base 0.066-0.069.

d, Inv. L.263; D. of base 0.087.

e, Inv. L.262; D. of base 0.087.

f, Inv. L.256; D. of base 0.08.

¹⁵ Cf. Frödin and Persson, *Asine*, fig. 195 and accompanying description, with references to identical signs observed at Phylakopi.

¹⁶ N. Platon, 'Ο τάφος τοῦ Σταφύλου καὶ ὁ Μινωϊκὸς ἀποικισμὸς τῆς Πεπαρίθου, Κρητικὰ Χρονικά, Γ', 1949, pp. 534-573. Dr. Åkerström informs me that a comparable grave of the Middle Helladic period has been found at Berbati.

Middle Helladic Strata

The destruction of the House of the Tiles in the Early Helladic period left a great heap of debris over an extended area. Our investigations in 1954 showed that the walls and fallen matter were undisturbed to a high level in and around Room VII (Fig. 3), the surface of the heap sloping downward toward the north, northwest, southwest, and more steeply toward the southeast. Grading and new construction by succeeding generations account in part for the contours that developed in this region, and these contours in turn affected the upper layers which we have now to examine.

In the eastern part of Area B two strata of Middle Helladic habitations could be recognized, although neither the walls nor the floors were well or continuously preserved. One group of walls appeared to be associated with a floor at 7.06 m. A.T., on which were fragments of a large barrel-shaped pithos with broad horizontal flutings on the shoulder and bands of lustrous dark paint on a light ground. The earlier group, not all quite contemporary, rested between 6.40 m. and 6.60 m. A.T. One at least of these houses was apsidal. A number of bothroi were found at this level. Here also we came upon several graves, which almost certainly belonged to later phases of the period but, being simple interments between and under the houses, had left no traces at the higher levels. Grave B.12 (Pl. 14, e) held skeletons of two adults facing each other, with their knees overlapping. Next to these bones was a jar in red-brown ware bearing a linear pattern in white paint¹⁷ (Pl. 17, e), and a clay disk. Near by and only a few centimeters lower (6.56 m. A.T.) there was another grave, B.13, with a single skeleton which lacked both its head and its right leg. A more elaborate burial, B.9, was in a cist made of bricks set on edge (Pl. 14, d). These were nearly uniform in size, 0.57 m. long, 0.24 m. to 0.275 m. wide, and 0.10 m. thick. The skeleton lay on a floor of beach pebbles at ca. 6.40 m. A.T. Although it contained no offerings, Mr. Charitonides notes the possibility that this burial was associated with the shaft grave, beside which it was situated.

Three Middle Helladic strata were found in the northwestern part of Area B, where the underlying debris of the House of the Tiles was nearly 2 m. below the present surface. The latest was marked by walls and floors at levels around 7 m. A.T. Notable among the fragments of pottery found at this level is part of a large jar¹⁸ (Pl. 17, d), in shape probably not unlike the jar found near Grave B.12 but decorated with patterns in lustrous dark paint on a light ground.¹⁹ Slightly lower than these

¹⁷ Inv. L.270; H. 0.26, D. 0.226.

¹⁸ Inv. L.274; H. of fragment 0.236.

¹⁹ As noted earlier (*Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, pl. 8, f, and pp. 29-30), sherds of this brittle handmade ware are not uncommon in the middle and later strata of the Middle Helladic layer at Lerna. They occur in corresponding contexts at Asine across the gulf (Frödin and Persson, *Asine*, pp. 274-275) and C. W. Blegen has noted parallels in Messenia (*Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, pp. 160-161, nos. 6, 7), but the fabric is not yet well known.

remains but dating probably to a still later stratum that no longer exists, were three plain interments and a cist grave. The last, BA.3, held the skeleton of a child, a bronze ring, two beads of carnelian, one of glass paste, and one of terracotta in the form of a miniature jar.

Walls and floors of the next earlier phase were found some 0.30 m. deeper. One of the houses was evidently rectangular, another apsidal. Two bothroi and two more graves came to light at this level. Here also we found an amulet of greenish jade-like stone in the shape of a forearm and partly closed hand, only 0.032 m. in length.

The third and earliest of the Middle Helladic building levels in this region was at an average of 6.20 m. A. T. The house walls of this phase were better preserved and appeared to have been more carefully built than those noted above. One, and possibly a second, of these showed the curve of an apse. No bothroi or graves were discovered here.

Early Helladic Strata

Remains of the final stages of the Early Helladic period were extremely scanty in the eastern and central parts of Area B, but toward the west two strata could be distinguished. The walls, looking as if they had belonged to ramshackle houses, were narrow and dilapidated, and a great many bothroi had been cut through the floors. There were no signs of general conflagration or of sudden violent destruction at the end of this period.

The latest stratum, to which most of the walls could be assigned, lay at an average level of 5.90-5.80 m. A.T.; the next earlier, where the greater number of bothroi were found, at *ca.* 5.50 m. A.T. Miss Heath notes that each of these accumulations could be divided stratigraphically into two sub-phases. An interesting, but as yet unexplained, feature of the penultimate phase, immediately succeeding the destruction of the House of the Tiles, is the recurrence of single rows of rounded stones like those shown in Plate 20, b. Four lines of this sort have now been found, one in the northwestern, two in the south-central, and one in the extreme southeastern part of Area B (Pl. 20, a, lower right). The stones are of moderate size, 0.20 m. to 0.30 m. in length; they are placed in close order and the rows curve slightly. It has been suggested that they were laid to hold down the edges of temporary tent-like shelters.

A very thick mass of yellow clay, roughly circular in shape and 4 m. in diameter, overlay the west wall of the House of the Tiles just north of Door J (Fig. 3). It was bordered on the north and south by low stone walls, and part of its top was covered with pebbles. The purpose of this platform has not been explained, but it may become evident when the west side has been cleared by further excavation. Although it rested as low as 5.40 m. A.T., the structure was not built immediately upon the ruins of the House of the Tiles. Under the clay there were three bothroi, their rims around 5.25 m.

A.T., and an infant burial (BB.3) at the same level.²⁰ Here too were found several miniature pots: two cylindrical handleless cups with flaring lip, one of which is nearly complete²¹ (Pl. 21, g), a tall two-handled cup with patterns in red-brown paint²² (Pl. 21, i), a small patterned jar, and a diminutive askoid vessel. Their position in the ground makes it certain that they antedated the clay structure and almost certain that they were later than the House of the Tiles. Most probably, they were offerings associated with Grave BB.3.

A spindle whorl with incised decoration²³ (Pl. 22, 1) of a type characteristic throughout the Early Bronze Age at Troy²⁴ was found in the northeastern part of Area B at 5.97 m. A.T. Also of interest is a rather crudely fashioned jar exhibiting a familiar dark-on-light pattern on the shoulder and a thinly smeared coating on the body²⁵ (Pl. 21, h) which was recovered from one of the bothroi.

The House of the Tiles (plan, Fig. 3²⁶)

The debris over the standing walls and in the various rooms of the building, burnt black and red and orange by the heat of the conflagration, was gradually cleared away; then the walls, and finally the floors, were carefully scraped and brushed clean. In spite of the ruin caused by the final collapse and of the ugly outlines left by later bothroi that pock-marked the whole region, the remains of the House of the Tiles at the end of this year's campaign stood out in remarkably impressive fashion. A great rectangular complex was revealed in Area B (Pl. 18), where some of the interior partitions were preserved to a height of 1.15 m. above the floors, and the south wall of the building was traced eastward into and across Area G, beyond which it runs into unexcavated ground.

The exterior width from corner to corner at the west end is 11.75 m. This increases very slightly toward the east, the north wall being not quite at right angles with the west. The south side has been exposed to a length just short of 25 m. The western complex, as we may call that part of the building which is centered within the present limits of Area B, is 15.70 m. in length. It is made up of a great hall, VI (5.75 m. by 6.30 m.), flanked by narrower rooms, V and VII, on the west and east. Corridors III-IV and VIII-IX border the main rooms on the north and south, but at

²⁰ A second E. H. infant's grave, BA.5, was found in the northwest corner of the area at 5 m. A.T.

²¹ Inv. L.253; H. 0.083, D. of rim 0.062.

²² Inv. L.277; H. 0.117.

²³ Inv. L4.325; H. 0.016, D. 0.033.

²⁴ C. W. Blegen, *Troy*, I, fig. 128, type 23; *Troy*, II, p. 305, Table 27.

²⁵ Inv. L.275; H. 0.267, D. 0.245.

²⁶ The rooms, corridors, doors, and staircases have been designated by a new series of numbers and letters, superseding those used in the first preliminary report (*Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, p. 24, fig. 4). We intend to adhere to the revised series in all further publications until the excavation is completed. The present restored plan is diagrammatic and subject to correction in details as the work progresses.

the northwest and the southeast these are walled off into small rooms, I and XI (Pl. 19, c), which were accessible only from outdoors. In the eastern part of the building it appears that there was a very large room, XII, and beyond this another room, XIII, set off by a partition of which only a few stones have been found in place. Room XII occupies the combined width of the central apartments and the south corridor. The north corridor, destroyed in part by the shaft grave, probably continues eastward.

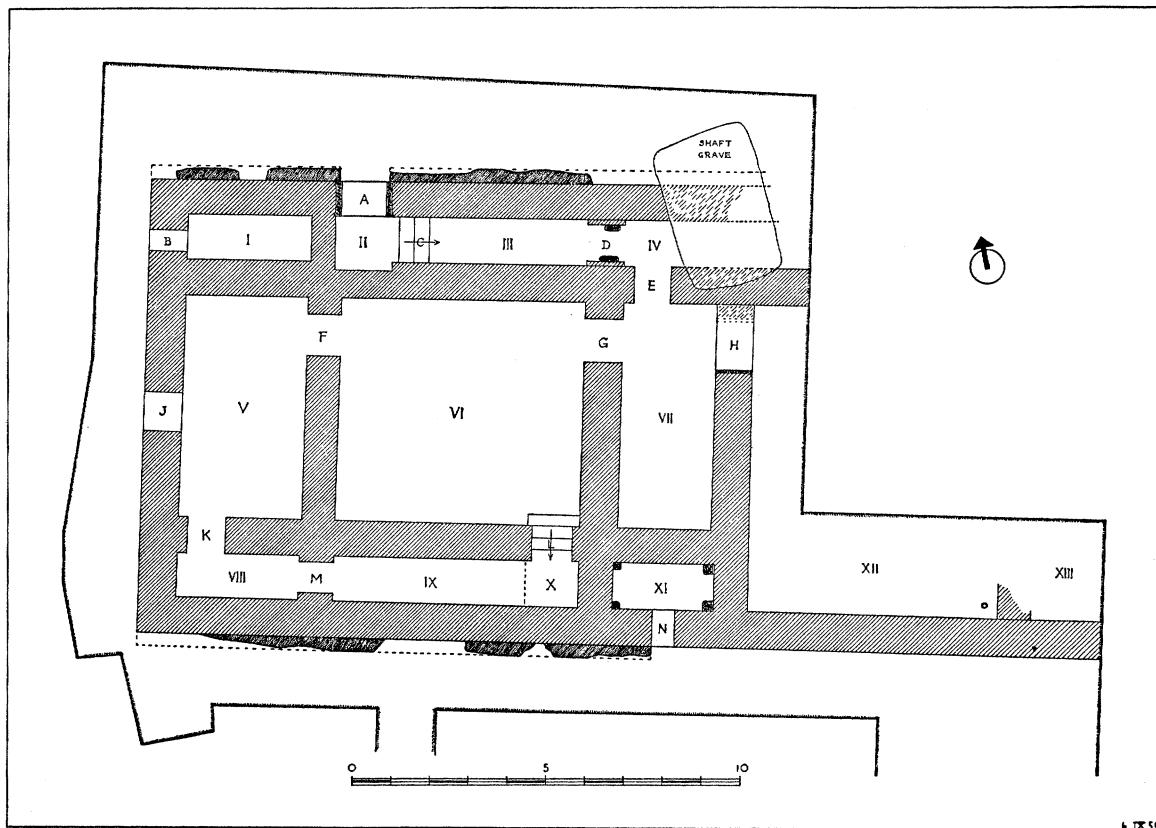


FIG. 3. Early Helladic House of the Tiles in Areas B and G;
Diagrammatic Plan of Parts Excavated through 1954.

Entrance to the ground floor from the west was by Door J; from Room V one could pass through K into the south corridor, which may have been designed as a storage space, or through F and G into Rooms VI and VII (Pl. 18, b), where Door E gave access to the northern hallway. Communication with the eastern apartments was through H, a more elaborate doorway with a raised threshold and jambs sheathed in wood. This may have been a little wider than the others, but we cannot be certain because its north side was wholly destroyed by a bothros.

Tests made below the clay threshold of Door H and in the narrow passage, M,

in the south corridor showed that the stone foundations of the walls continue across these openings below floor level. The same manner of construction is presumably to be found in some of the other openings, if not in all.

From the southeast corner of Room VI a stairway led through an opening in the wall into the space of the adjacent corridor. Four clay steps were found in 1953. These undoubtedly gave onto a landing, the position of which is designated on the plan by the number X. The platform itself was not recognizable at the time of excavation, having been largely cut away by two bothroi, but the records showed that in X there were no fallen tiles or other debris of the kind that filled the space further westward in VIII and IX. In any case there can be no doubt that a landing existed here, and that from it a staircase, presumably of wood, led upward to the second storey. We are not certain whether it rose eastward, being supported by four massive upright timbers of which we found clear evidence in the corners of Room XI (Fig. 3; Pl. 19, c), or was carried up westward within Corridor IX, balancing the arrangement that is found on the north side of the building. Places of wooden supports have not been observed in the south corridor; none existed in Passage M, but future search along the walls of IX may still reveal some traces.

Door A gave access to the house from the north (Pl. 19, b). This, like H, was a broad portal, having a clear width of 1.15 m. and being flanked by thick wooden jambs, which, if we may judge from the shape of the deep slots left in the earth at the bottom, made short returns at each corner. Inside the raised clay threshold there was a small vestibule, II, about 1.40 m. square. When this was first uncovered we were surprised to see that an obviously important doorway gave upon a blank wall, and also that this wall and the one on the west were distinctly thinner than any others in the building. The anomaly was soon explained, however, with the clearing of Corridor III, where Mr. Charitonides found clear evidence of a stairway rising eastward (Pl. 19, a). Under the mass of fallen debris he successfully disengaged the three lowest steps, made of solid clay, having treads 0.36-0.37 m. wide and risers of about 0.12 m.²⁷ A little further eastward in the corridor the walls were well enough preserved to show marks of the inclined timbers which held either side of the wooden staircase,²⁸ and in the passage at D there were deep hollows where substantial upright supports had been bedded. The walls of the vestibule and the surfaces above the steps had been finished with a smooth plaster facing, whereas the surfaces below the steps (a dark space which can have served only as a storeroom) bore the roughly combed plaster that occurs on the walls of other parts of the ground floor.

²⁷ The clay is much worn and these measurements cannot be precise.

²⁸ Bits of charred wood were found in the debris, but there is no evidence for the exact form of the upper steps. Mr. Travlos observes that they were probably not of finished woodwork but consisted rather of sturdy cross-timbers, roughly hewn, covered with clay to resemble the solid clay steps at the foot.

Rooms I and XI seem not to have been plastered; the outlines of large bricks could be seen clearly in the face of their walls (Pl. 19, c; cf. whole example, Pl. 23, f). The walls of the three big rooms, the surfaces of the door openings, and probably those of the south corridor as well as the north, were coated with clay and scored in sweeping reverse curves with some comb-like implement that left broad series of regular grooves about one centimeter apart (*Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, pl. 4, c). This interesting and decorative surface may have been intended at first merely as a preparatory ground which was to receive a second smoother coating, but the latter was not applied except in the north vestibule. Room XII, on the other hand, had a different treatment. Its walls were dressed with a sort of stucco, two to three millimeters in thickness, which seems to have been marked into panels (Pl. 19, d, e). A groove ran horizontally at an average of 0.60 m. above the floor, and two vertical grooves, 0.745 m. apart, were incised in the west wall equidistant from the north and south corners.²⁹ Traces of two and three coats of the stucco were observable in some places. It was burnt gray, but had stood the fire remarkably well. There was no evidence of painted decoration; one imagines that the room was finished with a certain sober elegance, appropriate perhaps as a hall of state.³⁰

Other official apartments or the private quarters of the ruler (if this building was indeed a palace, as seems plausible) were probably in the second storey, as we infer from the fact that the north entranceway, with all its special refinements, gave access only to an ascending staircase. It is too early at this stage of the investigation to speculate about the subdivisions of the upper storey. We may assume that the principal partitions stood directly above the massive walls of the ground floor.

If the big rooms V, VI, and VII served only for domestic functions, it is surprising that they were so nearly empty at the time of the great fire. Very little pottery was found in them; it consists chiefly of fragmentary plain bowls and shallow saucers, a few of which, however, bear unusual decorative patterns in two colors.

The small room XI yielded the only considerable group of objects yet found in the House of the Tiles. Here were recovered a great many broken vessels, including sauceboats, plain bowls and saucers, and parts of various coarse domestic vessels, all lying in a deep mass of soft black carbonized matter and crumbled bricks.

²⁹ Although precise measurements are rarely obtainable in the ruins of a building constructed of rough stone and crude brick, many of the dimensions noted suggest that the architect employed a standard foot of about 0.30 m. In terms of that unit the horizontal panel is 2 ft. high, the vertical panel 2½ ft. wide; the walls average 3 ft. in thickness; the doorways approximate 2 ft., 3 ft., and 4 ft. in width; the treads of the steps of Stairway L are 1 ft. wide, those of Stairway C perhaps 1¼ ft.; the benches outside the north and south walls are roughly 1 ft. high and 1 ft. wide.

³⁰ At the end of the season, in order to protect the crude brick walls and plaster from damage during the coming winter, we were obliged to cover them completely. This was done by the erection of stone barriers on both sides of each wall, the intervening space being filled with a cushion of soft earth. The cavities left by bothroi in the walls and floors were filled with fragments of roof tiles, belonging to the building, which we had gathered in the course of the excavation (Pl. 23, g).

This debris also yielded more than 150 lumps of hardened clay, most of which bear impressions of signets. From marks on the under sides of the lumps it appears that the clay was pressed upon the surfaces of wooden and wicker chests and round-mouthed vessels, and was then in each case marked with multiple impressions of one or two seals. None of the containers have survived, but the sealings were baked hard in the fire that destroyed the house and most of them are firm and well preserved.

A selection of pieces from this group is illustrated on Plate 22. Three of the designs are shown in drawings by Piet de Jong (a-c), others in photographs (d-i). Characteristic marks of twisted cords that fastened or bound the chests are seen on the reverse of one lump (f). The impressions of the seals, which were presumably of stone carved in intaglio, are all round, 0.015 m. to 0.035 m. in diameter. Nearly 60 different patterns have been distinguished in a preliminary examination of the material. Most are linear tripartite and quadripartite compositions, neat, balanced, and well adapted to the circular field. The motives include triangles, squares, and circles, rosettes (i), spirals (h), swastikas (i), and maeanders (d, e); spiders appear at the center of three seals (g); only a few of the designs are uncoordinated or lacking in clarity.

One similar clay sealing was found in another room of the House of the Tiles in 1953 (*Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, pl. 10, c) and another this year in Area G, but the great concentration of these objects was evidently in Room XI or, possibly, in a room just above, from which they fell at the time of the destruction. Analogous sealings have been found previously in Early Helladic contexts at Zygouries³¹ and at Asine,³² and their relationship to Early Minoan examples has been recognized. The present large group from a closed deposit may help us further to trace their origins and chronology.³³

AREA G

Starting from Trenches G and GA where an imposing Early Helladic stone wall and doorway had been found in 1953 (*Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, p. 27), excavation this year was extended on all sides until the area comprised a roughly rectangular space measuring 9 m. by 10 m. in Square F 7-8, with an extension on the southeast and a broad trench running north to the House of the Tiles, where it joined Area B (Fig. 4). In connection with these investigations three exploratory pits, GJ, GG, and GC, were dug west of the main area and two, GO and GN, on the east. All the work in this region was conducted under the supervision of Mrs. Caskey.

The principal objective was to learn more about the large wall and associated structure, which we propose temporarily to call Building G, and to ascertain their

³¹ C. W. Blegen, *Zygouries*, fig. 91, 1; button seal, pl. XXI, 4, and p. 189.

³² Frödin and Persson, *Asine*, pp. 234-239.

³³ Miss Heath has undertaken to study and publish this body of material in a separate article.

relationship to the House of the Tiles. In the course of the excavation interesting discoveries were made at various levels. On the north, where the surface of the ground was about 7.10 m. A.T., remnants of at least three Middle Helladic strata were found in place above the topmost Early Helladic deposits, whereas further south almost all the later debris had been lost through erosion and we came immediately (*ca.* 5.80 m. A.T.) upon ruins assignable to middle phases of the Early Helladic period.

An unexpected discovery among these remains of the Bronze Age was a circular structure of late Roman times that came to light in the southeastern corner of the area (Pl. 20, c). This proved to be the lower part of a potter's kiln. The surrounding wall, 0.35 m. to 0.40 m. thick, is built of fairly small stones but has sturdy foundations and stands to a height of 1.50 m. above the floor. The inner diameter of the chamber is 2.90 m. An arched doorway, 1.10 m. high, opens toward the south-southeast into a dromos bordered by stone walls that diverge slightly, being designed presumably to direct the prevailing wind from the gulf into the kiln as a forced draught. The original form of the structure and the mode of its use are not yet clear to us. The contents of the interior included many fragments of Laconian tiles (which may have been used as saggers), part of a large plain jar with horizontal ribbing, and the bottom of a lamp with a leaf pattern, assignable probably to the fifth century after Christ.

A well of the Classical period was found at the end of the north trench. This was unlined, and for the present we cleared the shaft to a depth of only 2.65 m. After its abandonment the well had been filled with rubbish: we removed more than 30 basketfuls of broken tiles and 10 of pottery, including many pieces of huge pithoi, and a terracotta spool, two loomweights, and various other objects. Among the sherds were a few fragments of red-figured ware datable around 400 B.C.

Remains of three, or possibly four, general levels of the Middle Helladic settlement were observed in the north trench. Each was marked by house walls, but many of these were truncated and battered to such an extent that it was difficult to make out the original plans. Certainly some of the houses were apsidal and some rectangular. A discussion of them in detail will be postponed until further excavation on the west, north, and east has revealed more of their remains and permitted us to correlate the various strata with those observed in Areas B and A.

Large quantities of pottery and miscellaneous objects were recovered from the Middle Helladic floors and bothroi. They have yet to be studied. One vessel deserves preliminary mention, however: a rough heavy crucible with an oval bowl, spouted at one end, and with a projecting socket into which a handle had once been inserted³⁴ (Pl. 14, f). The inside of the bowl is coated with a smooth white substance, and its rim is vitrified by the extreme heat to which the vessel was exposed. We presume that it was used in the smelting of metals.

³⁴ Inv. L.288; H. 0.09, D. of bowl 0.11.

Successive phases of the Early Helladic settlement were represented in all parts of Area G. Here, as elsewhere, floors and walls of modest houses provided evidence of at least two stages of habitation after the destruction of the House of the Tiles but still, on the evidence of the pottery, within the limits of the Early Bronze Age. The earlier of these, immediately succeeding the conflagration, was marked by numerous bothroi and another of the curious rows of rounded stones which we have mentioned above. The bronze or copper blade of a dagger³⁵ with one of its rivets (Pl. 23, a) was found on a floor in the north trench at 5.25 m. A.T. Near by, one of the large bothroi yielded a well-worked bone pin, a shell pierced for stringing, and the torso of a female figurine³⁶ decorated with patterns in lustrous red-brown to black paint on the ground of buff clay (Pl. 22, j, k). The spreading flanges at the sides and the small breasts are features strikingly similar to those of the familiar ϕ -shaped idols of the Mycenaean period, but the lower body appears to have been relatively broad, not cylindrical, and the painted decoration is wholly in the Early Helladic manner.

The south wall of the House of the Tiles and parts of Rooms XII and XIII were cleared, as noted above, in the northern section of Area G (Figs. 3, 4). They were much less well preserved than the corresponding remains of the building in Area B, where the greater intensity of the fire had baked the brick walls to a harder mass. Perhaps for this reason the later inhabitants did more grading and reconstruction in the eastern region; in any case we found it difficult to follow the sequence of strata southward to Building G, and for the time being must speak with reserve about the relative chronology. It is clear, however, that the habitation deposits associated with the House of the Tiles, one of which yielded the two cylindrical cups³⁷ illustrated on Plate 21, e and f, overlie several strata which must represent stages in the occupation of Building G.

It also appears certain that Building G was a single structure. The parts exposed up to now are indicated diagrammatically in Figure 4. Beginning at the doorway, the south wall was uncovered westward for 4.25 m. and found again in the three trial pits, though not in Trench J. The end, 15.50 m. from the doorway, was broken irregularly, not squarely finished, and we believe that the wall originally ran farther. It had been built on ground that rose toward the west; near the doorway it rested at 3.95 m. A.T. and was preserved to a considerable height (Pl. 20, c), whereas in Pit GJ the single remaining course of foundations lay at 4.90 m. A.T. Continuing at this inclination, even the bottom of the wall would soon reach the present surface of the ground. It appears almost certain, therefore, that the west end has been lost through erosion, perhaps in relatively recent times.

East of the doorway the wall runs only a short distance before being interrupted

³⁵ Inv. L4.538; L. 0.137; W. 0.031; L. of rivet 0.012.

³⁶ Inv. L4.259; H. pres. 0.05; W. 0.06.

³⁷ Inv. L.244; H. 0.081, D. of rim 0.06. Inv. L.250; H. 0.073, D. of rim 0.053.

by the circle of the kiln, and no traces of a continuation were discovered in Pits GO and GN. There is, however, a wall running northward and forming a bonded corner, 1.70 m. from the doorway, and this may mark one end of Building G, although it is now preserved for only a short distance. West of the doorway another wall runs northward and in Pit GC a few stones that escaped destruction in a military trench

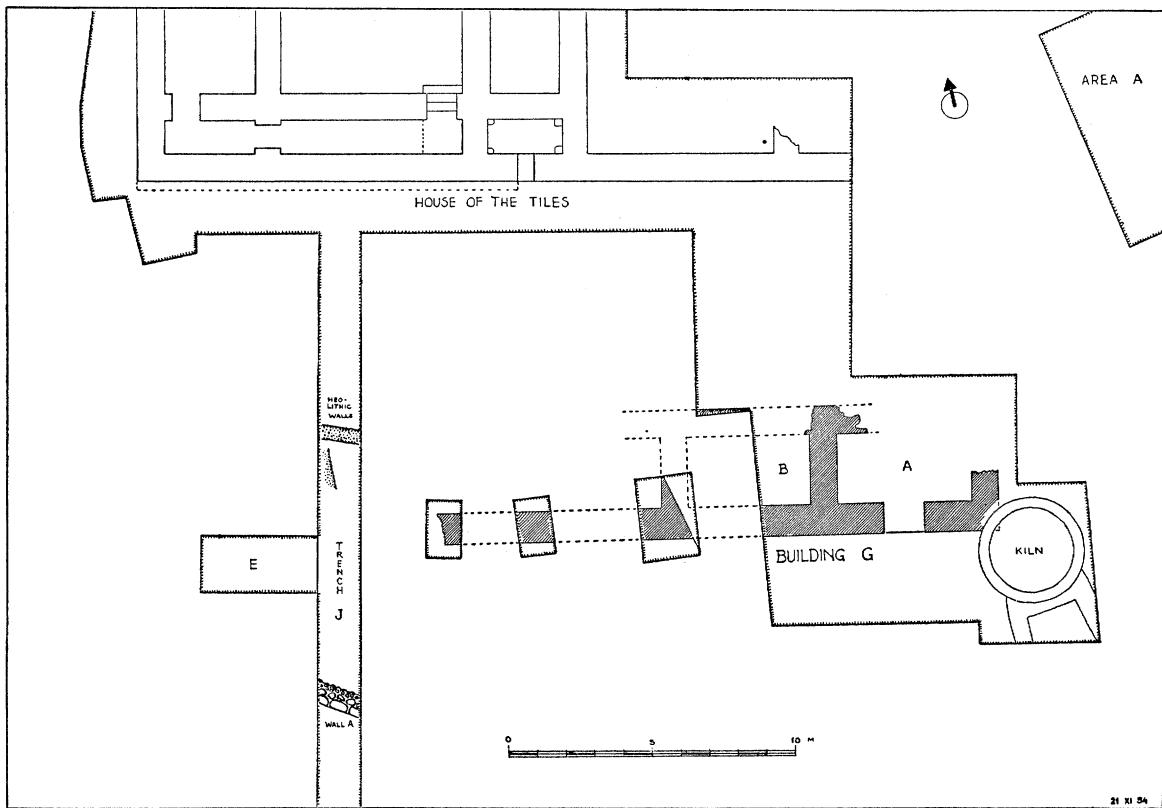


FIG. 4. Diagrammatic Plan Showing Parts of Early Helladic Building G and Other Walls in Relation to the House of the Tiles, 1954.

show the position of a third wall. These walls served to bound two rooms, possibly the easternmost of a long series. A continuous wall, now marked by scanty remains, closed them on the north. Room A, into which the broad outer doorway gives access, is 4.65 m. long and 2.40 m. wide. Room B, having the same width, appears to have been about 4.20 m. long.

Just outside the doorway the approach was paved with flagstones, which descend eastward in a series of low steps (Pl. 20, c). The threshold, showing several periods of use, seems always to have stood well above the ground level. Inside Room A we found a succession of floors and traces of yellow clay plaster on the walls. In one of

the latest stages of its occupation the southeast corner of this room was occupied by a massive, roughly rectangular structure of unworked stones. The upper parts of the walls were undoubtedly of crude brick; few traces have remained in place on the socles, but large bricks were found in the fallen debris. Here too was much burnt matter, along with fragmentary terracotta tiles and bits of slate.

In Room B military trenches had done much damage but on an undisturbed floor at 4.50 m. A.T., next to the east wall, there lay three plain saucers and fragments of a bowl in fine mottled ware, slipped and polished.

Immediately north of Room B, in an area which appears not to have been enclosed or roofed, we came upon further parts of a rich deposit of pottery and other utensils (Pl. 20, d) which had first been disclosed at the north end of Trench GA in 1953. Besides the pieces mentioned in the report for that year (*Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, p. 27), a large ovoid jar and most of a pithos were put together in the course of our work on the fragments during the winter. This year we recovered twelve small bowls and saucers, two black-glazed sauceboats of the lower rounded type³⁸ (Pl. 21, c), an exceptionally fine yellowish-orange sauceboat³⁹ (Pl. 21, b) of the taller cylindrical type, a beaked jug⁴⁰ (Pl. 21, d), a spouted jar with solid lugs near the rim, a small-mouthed jar with two handles, an askoid vessel resembling the one found last year, and fragments of several large vessels, including the rim of a very broad baking pan. With these pots were also a small stone pestle, two stone pounders roughly cubic in form but rounded at the edges, a millstone, several obsidian blades, two boar's tusks, a rectangular object of clay pierced lengthwise and bearing a seal impression, and a delicate little terracotta teaspoon with a deep bowl and a pointed tip⁴¹ (Pl. 23, c). From this area we also collected samples of carbonized wood and grain, apparently chickpeas, and a large square brick that had been hardened in the conflagration. The region appears to have been used as a kitchen. Its floor, at an average of 4.55 m. A.T., was considerably lower than the ground level just outside Room XII of the House of the Tiles.

This year's investigations tend to confirm the opinion that Building G and the House of the Tiles are related to each other architecturally and that their orientation is not fortuitous. At first sight one is led to think that Building G was an adjunct to the great edifice on the north, but the stratigraphical evidence, as noted, suggests that the latter must rather have been laid out in alignment with the former. It is also possible, of course, that the House of the Tiles had a predecessor which influenced the general plan.

Certainly there were in this area some sizable Early Helladic buildings before the

³⁸ Inv. L.282; H. 0.189, D. 0.137.

³⁹ Inv. L.268; H. 0.222, D. 0.133.

⁴⁰ Inv. L.267; H. 0.284; D. 0.19.

⁴¹ Inv. L4.546; L. 0.075.

House of the Tiles, as was shown by various exploratory trenches in which substantial walls and pavings were revealed (Pl. 20, a, right center). From one of these soundings we recovered a finely polished gray sauceboat of the deep variety ⁴² (Pl. 21, a). At this level there were numerous fragments of smooth-surfaced tiles, much finer than those of the succeeding phases; in Plate 23, e, one of them is shown on the right beside a typical rough piece from the House of the Tiles. At a still greater depth, around 4 m. A.T. in the southern part of the area, sherds of Neolithic wares began to be plentiful.

TRENCH J

In an effort to gain information about the sequence of layers on the south slope of the mound a trench, labelled J, 1.50 m. wide and 24.50 m. long, was excavated on a line southward from Area B (Figs. 1, 4). The work was supervised for one week by Mrs. Bikaki and later for five days by Miss Heath. A number of valuable topographical and stratigraphical observations were made. It soon became clear, however, that more extensive excavation would be warranted, and in fact necessary, if we are to understand the various features of this region.

At the north end of the trench were vestiges, including one bothros, of the stratum succeeding the destruction of the House of the Tiles; then burnt debris from the time of the catastrophe, and below this several walls of earlier phases. Among the last were many fragments of roofing slate which came almost certainly from predecessors of the great buildings, and here also we found a narrow curving blade of bronze or copper with a broad heel pierced for three rivets, two of which were recovered in place ⁴³ (Pl. 23, b).

About 18 m. south of the House of the Tiles we came upon a substantial wall, A (Fig. 4), 0.75 m. thick, built with a face of big stones laid in a rough polygonal style. North of it was the mixed filling containing Neolithic and Early Helladic pottery which had been observed last year in Trench E (*Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, p. 28). Although this polygonal wall looked as if it had been designed to support a terrace, it was found not to run deep. Resting at 3.25 m. A.T., it could have formed at most a sort of parapet, not a retaining wall, for the filling which we know to reach a level at least as low as 1.35 m. A.T. Thus the form and extent of the platform which seems to have existed on this side of the House of the Tiles will require further investigation.

South of Wall A the ground dropped away steeply in ancient times. Trench J, like Trench F the year before, revealed an accumulation of earth with sherds and roof tiles of the Classical period, below which were deposits containing a little

⁴² Inv. L.265; H. 0.17, D. 0.101.

⁴³ Inv. L4.537; L. 0.18, W. of heel 0.054, Th. 0.0015, L. of rivets 0.012.

Mycenaean ware and considerable quantities of Middle Helladic. Probing through the latter in a small pit just below Wall A, we found Neolithic sherds around 2 m. to 1.70 m. A.T.

In the upper part of the trench, north of the masses of mixed filling and below the Early Helladic remains, sections of two or three house walls (Pl. 13, e) were found in association with uncontaminated Neolithic deposits. The pottery includes glazed and glaze-patterned wares, red-slipped varieties, and coarse ware. One piece deserves special notice: a tubular vessel in red-slipped ware, horizontal in the body but turned upward at one end and perhaps at the other, supported on four short legs and having a handle that apparently ran lengthwise over the back⁴⁴ (Pl. 23, d).

TRENCHES K, L, M

Tests were made in three trenches, K, L, and M (Fig. 1), near the foot of the western slope, under the supervision of Miss Phylaktopoulou and J. L. Caskey. Our purpose was to ascertain how far the remains of the settlement extended in this direction and which layers were preserved nearest the surface. At the end of the season these three trenches were refilled.

Trench K, 5.50 m. long and 2 m. wide, revealed fallen stones and mixed deposits of the Classical period from the surface at *ca.* 4.10 m. A.T. to a depth of more than one meter. At the north end we found a cist grave with an adult skeleton, partially preserved, resting on a bed of pebbles at 2.72 m. A.T.; the head and shoulders, lying toward the west, had been lost when that end of the grave was broken away. A few sherds of Mycenaean ware (L.H.III) were recovered from the cist and immediately around it. At about the same level in the southwest part of the trench there were two huge boulders, which looked as if they might have been dislodged from a cyclopean wall; certainly they had been transported to the site by human agency. There was little evidence of the Middle Helladic settlement. Below 2.70 m. A.T. we found Early Helladic debris. A curving wall of stones rested at an average of 2 m. A.T., associated with a stratum of habitation deposits which yielded many sherds and one whole cup in heavy red-brown burnished ware, as well as a large spindle whorl and blades and chips of obsidian. Excavation was stopped at 1.50 m. A.T., where the earth was very damp and sticky.

Trench L, 5 m. long and 1 m. wide, ran east and west. The surface at the east end was 3.60 m., at the west 3.25 m. A.T. This slope was found to correspond approximately with that of the underlying strata, which consisted apparently of detritus from the mound. They held many fragments of plain roof tiles and bits of glass, but no architectural remains were discovered and digging was suspended at 1.05 m. A.T.

⁴⁴ Inv. L.271; H. to rim 0.114, L. pres. 0.188.

Trench M, 4 m. long by 1.50 m. wide, was sited between Trenches K and H, the surface here sloping from 4.45 m. A.T. at the east to 3.85 m. A.T. at the west. This degree of inclination also reflected the strata below the surface. Fallen stones and broken tiles were plentiful in the first 1.50 m. Then at the eastern end we came upon a ruined wall, and immediately below it a well-built cist grave containing an adult skeleton which lay on its left side, with head to the northeast. The floor of the grave, at 2.20 m. A.T., was lined with pebbles. There were no offerings, but on the evidence of a few sherds found near by this burial may probably be assigned to the Middle Helladic period. Excavation in Trench M reached a level of 1.65 m. A.T.

SUMMARY

The foregoing account is preliminary in character and subject to revision and correction as the work progresses. It is also, needless to state, far from complete. At the present writing (November, 1954) few of the architectural drawings have been coordinated and only a part of the objects found has been examined, although 162 pieces of pottery and 655 miscellaneous objects from this year's campaign have already been added to the inventories. The site is extraordinarily rich in its yield of interesting material and stratigraphical information.

In three areas we have now touched what appear to be undisturbed Neolithic deposits, confirming the belief that it will be possible after one or two further seasons to make a thorough test of these earliest layers.

The exceptionally good luck which destined our first trial trenches to disclose a corner of the House of the Tiles and the broad doorway in Building G has enabled us to make rapid strides in revealing important elements of the Early Helladic settlement. The buildings—which, it must be remembered, cover a relatively small part of the whole site—are startling by their size, their complexity, and their precision and finish, qualities that give unmistakable evidence of organizing power and technical development beyond anything previously known of this remote period in Greece. One is tempted at once to seek parallels in the great cities of the third millennium in lands further east, where superficial and possibly significant resemblances do indeed exist; but it is prudent to bear in mind that the Early Helladic objects found up to now with our buildings at Lerna are almost all of familiar local types, and that recognized importations or influences come only from the Aegean area, Crete, the Cyclades, and Troy. Many Early Helladic sites are known and our record of their pottery and implements is not negligible; but no single one of these settlements has yet been thoroughly explored. A vast round building, mysterious today only because it is inaccessible, existed at Tiryns, and there is no reason to doubt that other comparable monuments will be discovered in Greece. Meanwhile the excavations at Lerna promise to shed light on this interesting period of prehistory, showing that it was by no means crude and that it was primitive only in a chronological sense.

Investigations of the Middle Helladic settlement, although less spectacular, have also yielded valuable information. The layer is substantial, not as a result of rapid filling but of a long sequence of successive buildings, destructions, and rebuildings. In various parts of the mound where erosion has not been too serious we have observed three, four, five, and even (in Area D) seven superposed strata. The pottery and other objects collected from each of these is abundant, and the stratigraphical series thus constituted will provide evidence for relative dating. Already we are warned by the bulk of the material against academic attempts to compress the period within narrow chronological limits. There was time for change and development. From the earliest phases, which at Lerna seem not to be set off from the preceding age by a complete break in continuity, the types and relative incidence of the various ceramic wares show an ascertainable evolution. Middle Minoan influence is apparent, certainly in the second half of the period, and relations with the Cyclades were undoubtedly maintained.

The phase of transition from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age is marked by the newly discovered shaft grave of royal type, the pottery from its filling being a compendium of the older and newer styles. The mere presence of such a tomb on this site, furthermore, poses a number of provocative questions. Speculation about the occupant (or intended occupant) and about his dwelling and his domain would not be profitable at this stage of the investigation, but we are probably not rash in assuming that the ancient legends of Lerna are somehow connected with powerful figures of the Mycenaean period, the truly Heroic age of the Greeks. That the traditions should go back still further to the Early Helladic period is, even in the light of the new evidence, scarcely probable.

The campaign of 1954 has added little to our knowledge of the later Mycenaean settlement (Late Helladic III) or of the occupation in the Geometric and early Archaic periods which is attested by a scattering of potsherds. Five additional wells of Classical and early Hellenistic times, discovered this year but not yet excavated in depth, hold promise for the future. The late Roman kiln that came to light on the south flank of the mound is perhaps an isolated phenomenon. The latest objects of archaeological interest to be added to our collection are two coins of the Frankish period and an *obolos* of the reign of King George I of the Hellenes, dated 1869.

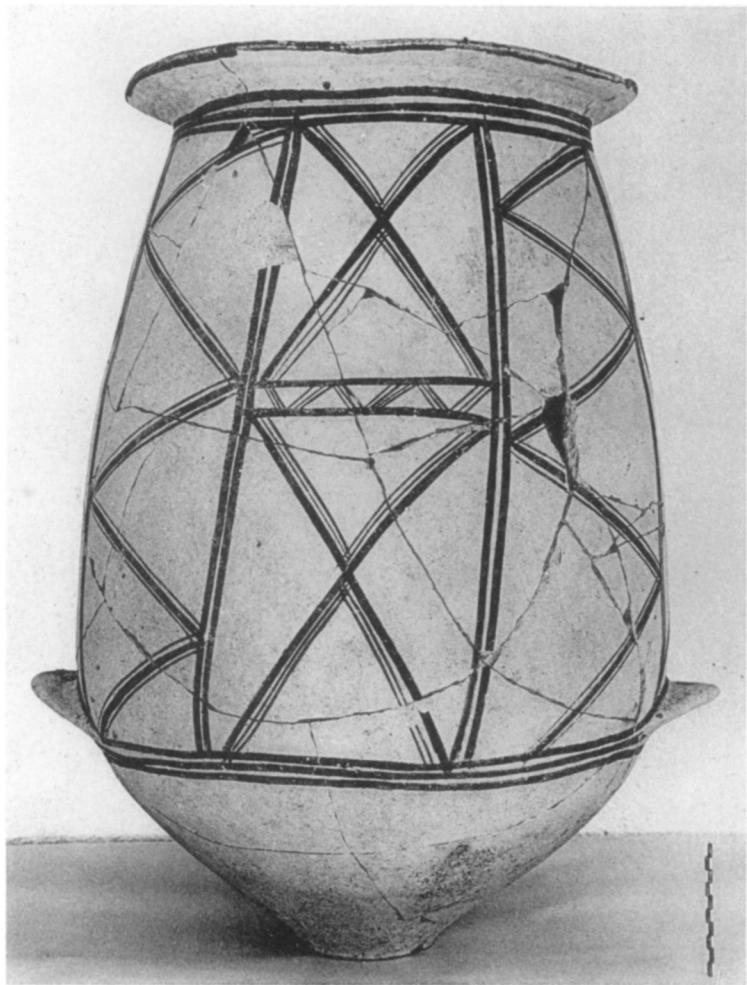
JOHN L. CASKEY

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES AT ATHENS

PLATE 12



a. Area D from West at End of Campaign.



b. Pithoid Jar in Matt-painted Ware, Used as Burial Urn.

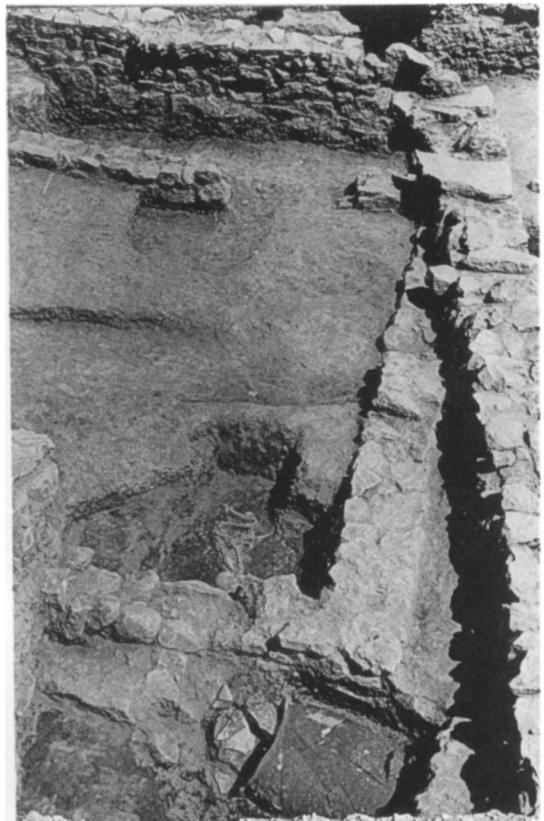


c. Matt-painted Jug Used to Close Mouth of Burial Urn. (1:5)

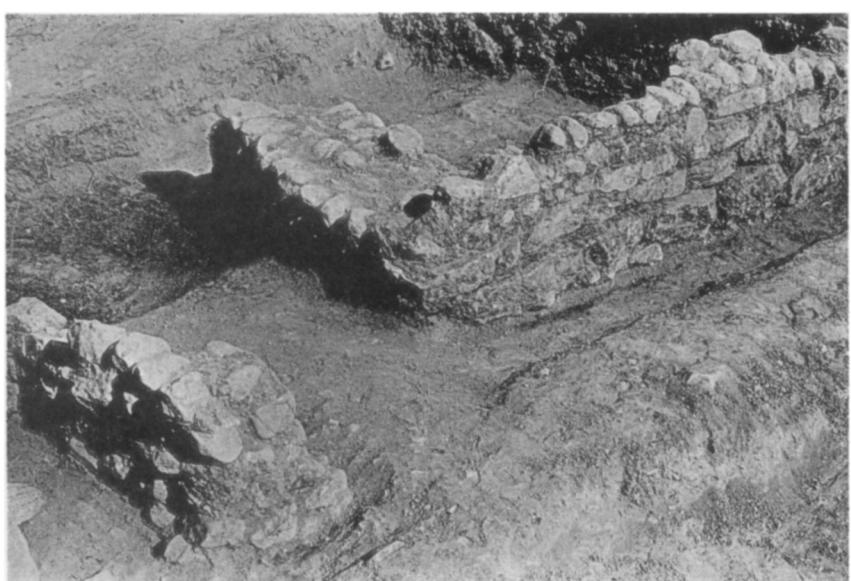
JOHN L. CASKEY: EXCAVATIONS AT LERNA: 1954



a. Area D. Room of Middle Helladic House AH, from North.



b. Area D. Walls of House BJ below those of House BD, from South.



c. Area D. Middle Helladic Walls with Courses of "Potato Masonry."



e. North End of Trench J, from South, Showing Walls of Neolithic Period.



d. Area D. Post Holes Marking Limits of Enclosure, from North.
Early Phase of Middle Helladic Settlement.

PLATE 14



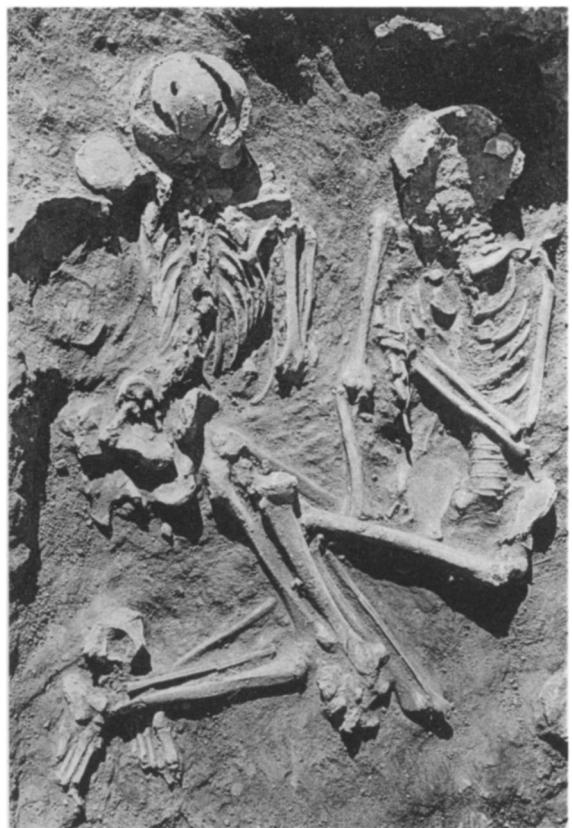
a. Neck of Large Matt-painted Jar from Early Stratum of Middle Helladic Layer.



d. Area B. Grave B.9. Middle Helladic or Early Mycenaean.



b. Area A. Walls of House D under Those of House M, from Southwest. Middle Helladic Period.



e. Area B. Grave B.12.



c. Area A. Parts of House D under House M, from South.



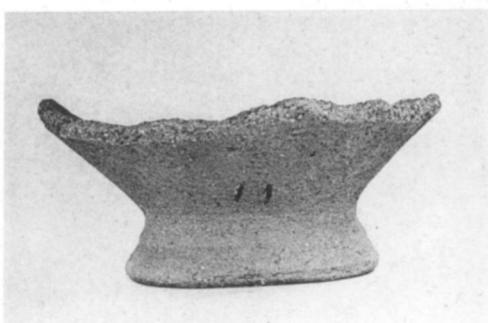
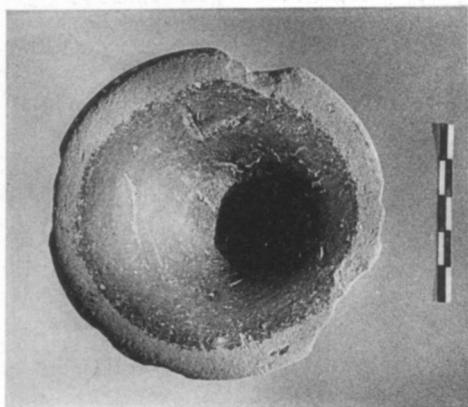
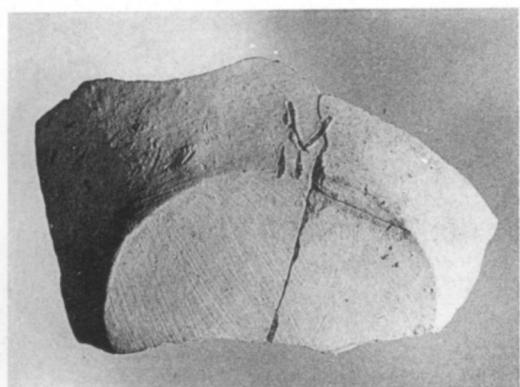
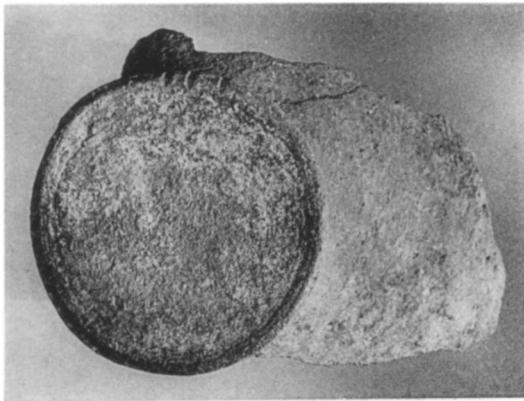
f. Middle Helladic Crucible.



a. Area B. South End of Shaft Grave during Excavation, from North.

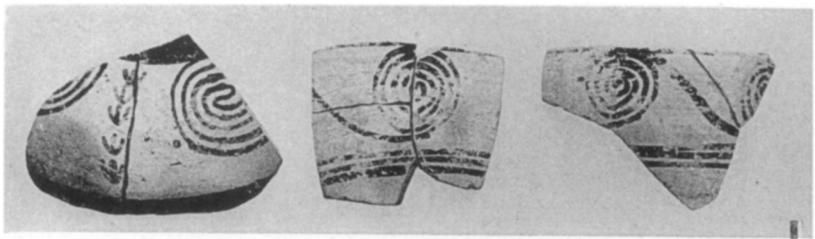


b. Area B. Shaft Grave Cleared, from North.

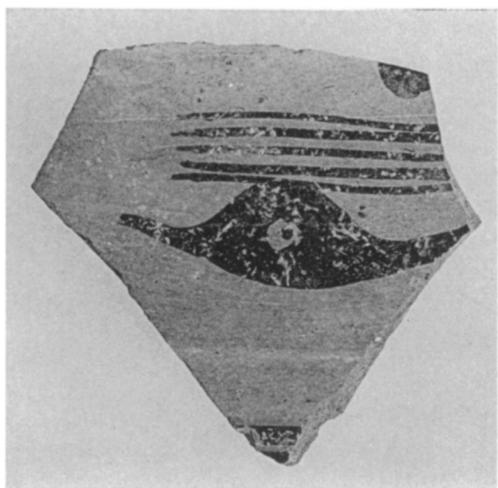


c.-f. Bases with Graffiti from Filling
of Grave Shaft. (ca. 1:2)

PLATE 16



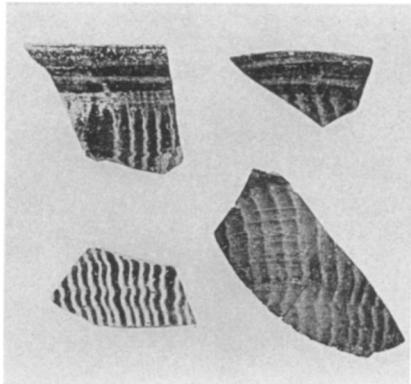
a. Matt-painted Ware, Fine Style. (ca. 1:2)



b. Matt-painted Sherd. (ca. 1:2)



c. Spouted Jar. L.H.I. (ca. 1:2)



d. Sherds with Ripple Patterns.
L.H.I. (ca. 1:2)



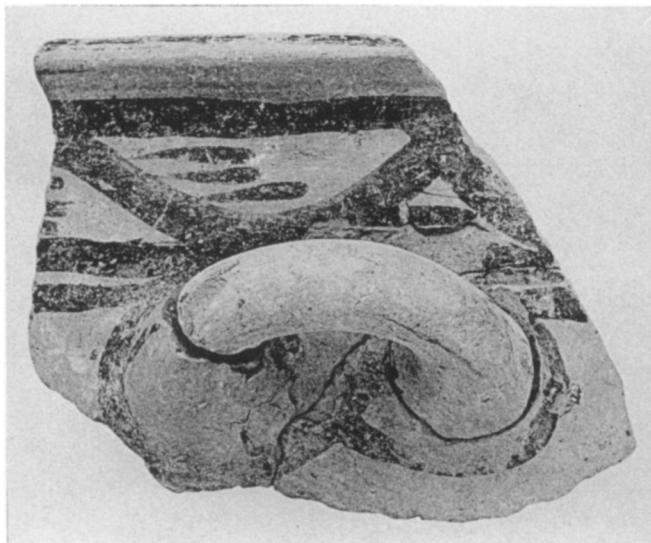
e. Fragments of Cups. L.H.I. (ca. 2:3)



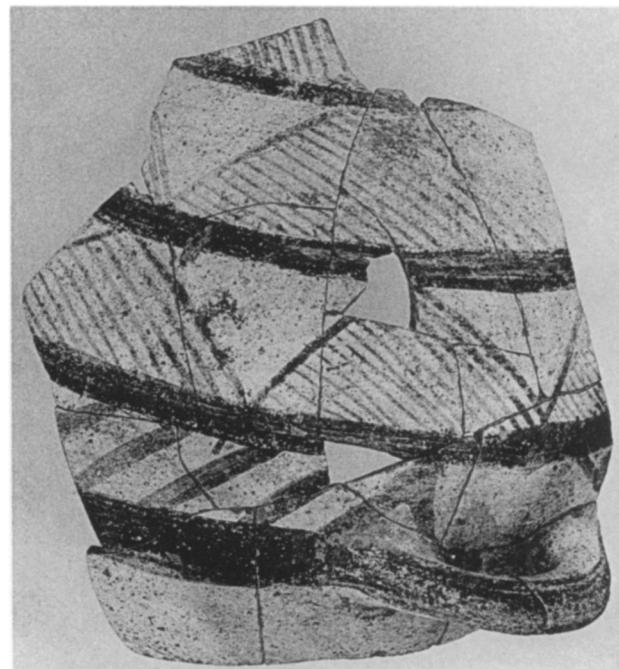
f. Fragments of Cups and Jars. L.H.I. (ca. 1:2)

Pottery from Filling of Grave Shaft.

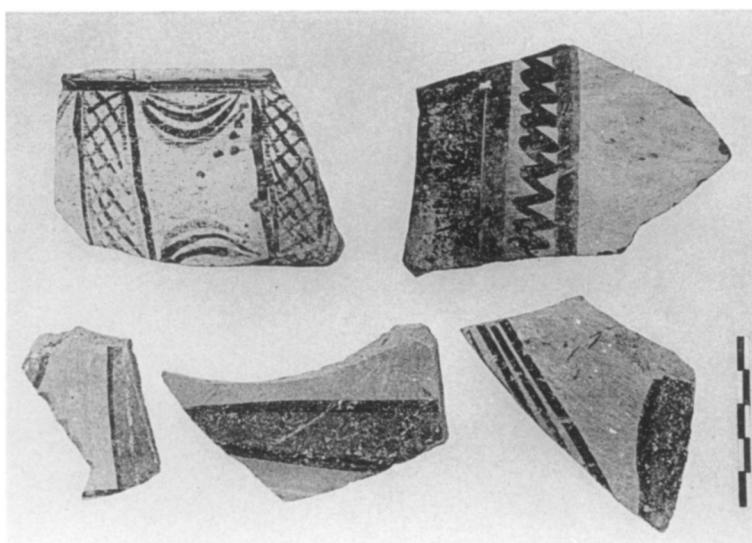
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a. Rim and Handle of Polychrome Matt-painted Jar from Filling of Grave Shaft. (1:2)



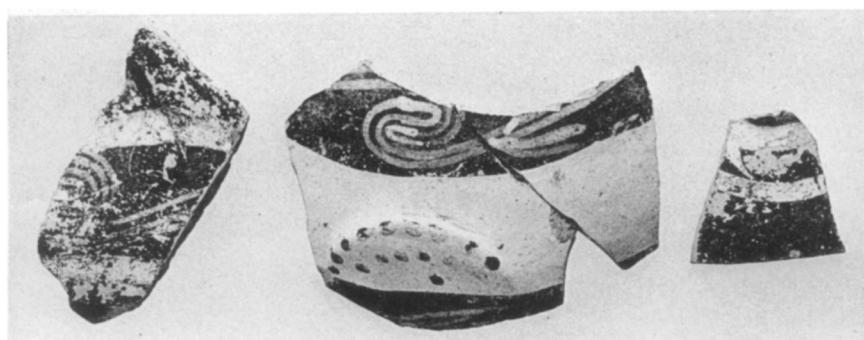
d. Fragment of Jar with Pattern in Lustrous Dark Paint on Light Ground. Middle Helladic Period. (ca. 2:5)



b. Sherds of Polychrome Matt-painted Ware from Filling of Grave Shaft.



e. Jar with Pattern in Light Paint on Red-Brown Surface. From a Watercolor by Piet de Jong. (ca. 1:4)



c. Sherds with Patterns in Light Paint on Dark Ground from Filling of Grave Shaft. (ca. 3:5)



a. Area B. Western Part of the House of the Tiles from Southeast.



b. Area B. Central Room and Adjoining Parts of the House of the Tiles from Northwest,
Showing Round Cavities Left by Later Bothroi.



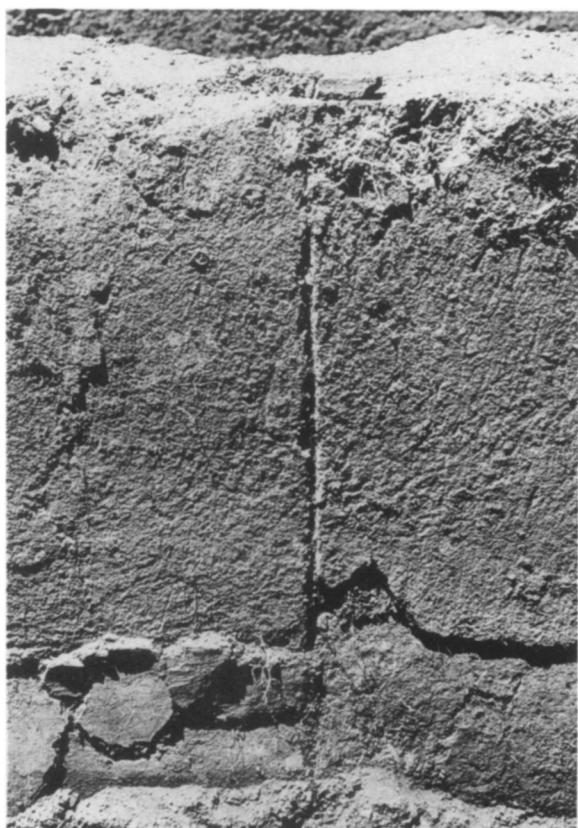
a. North Corridor (I-IV) from West.



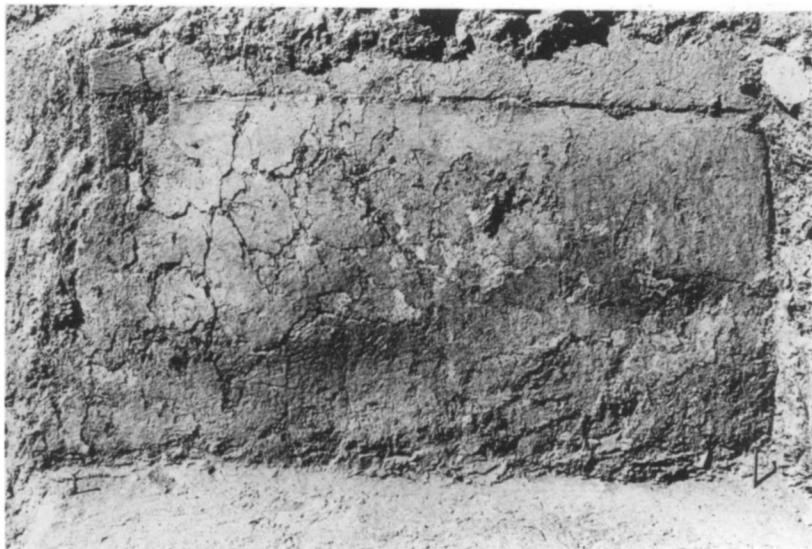
b. North Doorway (A) from Northwest.



c. Room XI from Southwest.



d. Plaster on West Wall of Room XII,
Showing Vertical Groove.



e. Plaster on North Wall of Room XII, Showing Horizontal Groove.

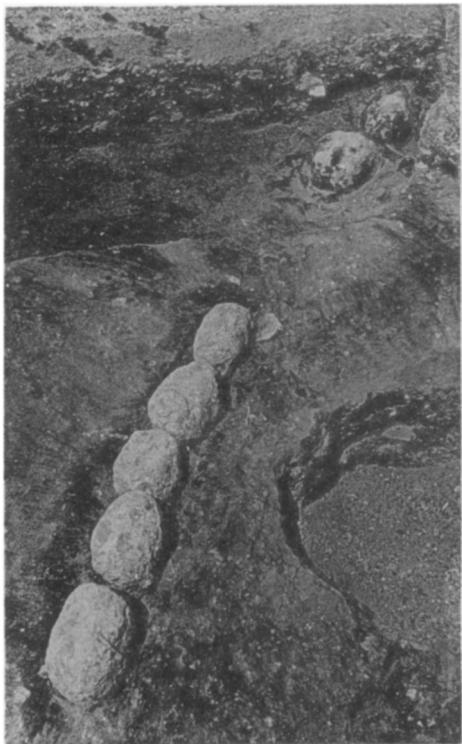
Details of the House of the Tiles

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PLATE 20



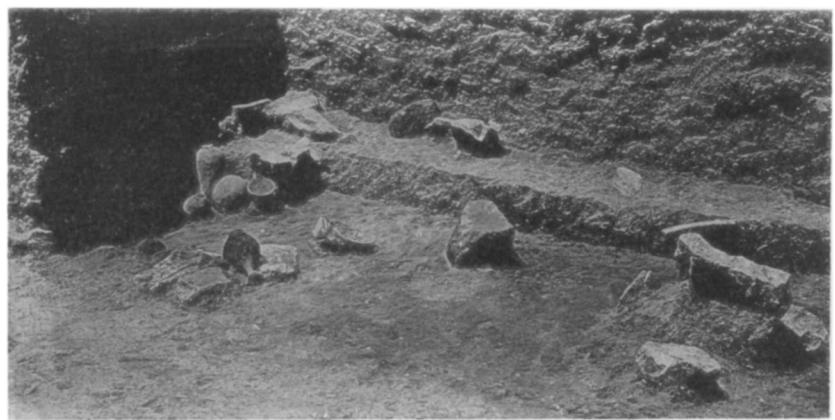
a. Area G from North.



b. Area B. Row of Rounded Stones in Late Stratum of Early Helladic Layer.



c. Area G. Part of Early Helladic Building G and Late Roman Kiln, from West.



d. Area G. Deposit of Early Helladic Pottery North of Room B, from Northeast.



a. and b. Deep Sauceboats from Area G.



c. Sauceboat with Hemispherical Body from Area G.



d. Beaked Jug with Plastic and Painted Bands from Area G.



e.-g. Cylindrical Cups from Areas G and B.



h. Patterned Jar from Late E. H. Bothros in Area B.



i. Two-handled Cup in Patterned Ware from Area B.

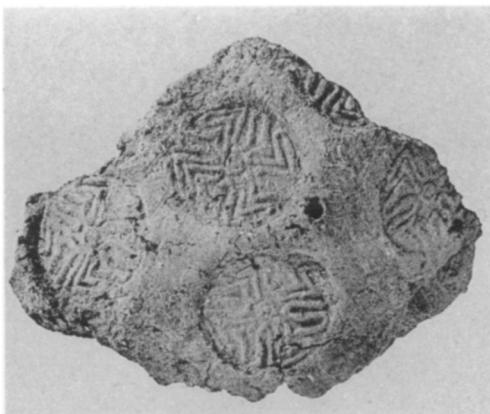
Early Helladic Pottery

JOHN L. CASKEY: EXCAVATIONS AT LERNA: 1954

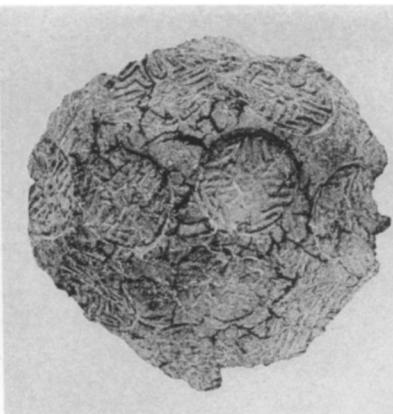
PLATE 22



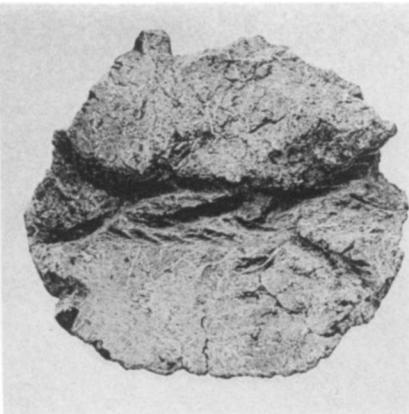
a.-c. Designs of Early Helladic Seal Impressions, Drawn by Piet de Jong. (1:1)



d. 2:3



e. 1:2



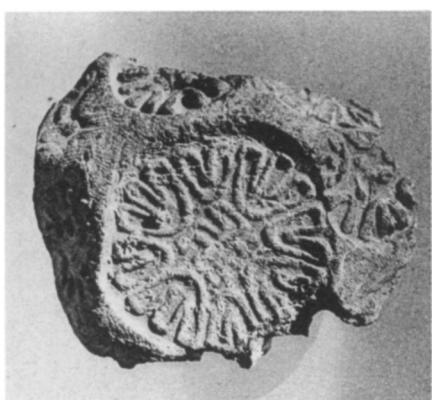
f. 1:2



g. 5:7

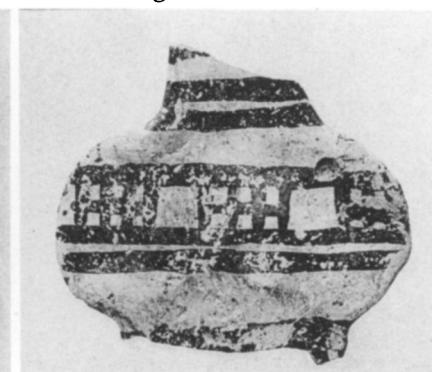
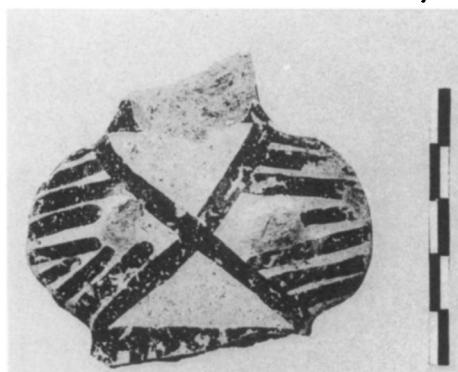


h. 1:2



i. 4:5

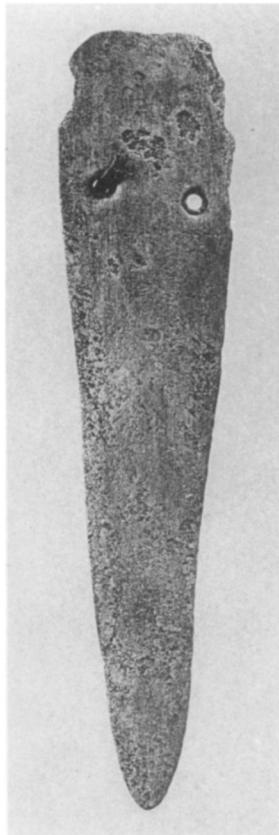
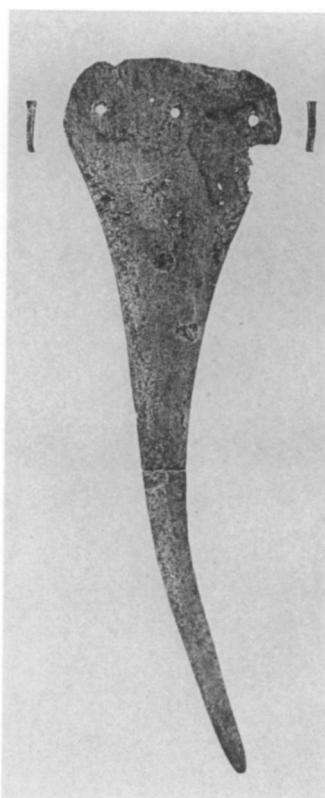
d.-i. Early Helladic Sealings from Room XI, House of the Tiles.



j. and k. Fragment of Early Helladic Figurine from Area G,
front and back. (ca. 5:7)



l. Early Helladic Whorl of
Trojan Type from Area B.
(ca. 4:5)

a. E.H. Bronze Blade from Area G. (*ca.* 3:4)b. E.H. Bronze Blade from Trench J. (*ca.* 1:2)

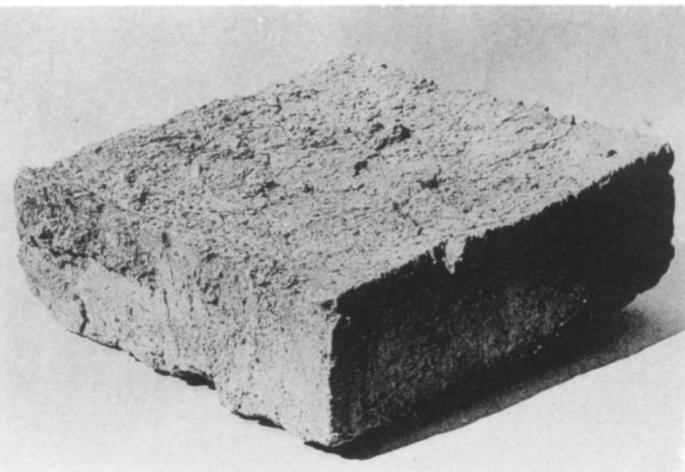
c. E.H. Terracotta Spoon from Area G.



d. Neolithic Rhyton from Trench J.



e. Fragment of Coarse Tile from House of the Tiles, left, and Finer Piece from Earlier Stratum in Area G.

f. Brick from House of the Tiles. (*ca.* 1:5)

g. Fragments of Roof Tiles from House of the Tiles.