

THE PALACE OF NESTOR
EXCAVATIONS AT ENGLIANOS—1964

From May 7 to July 31, 1964, investigations in and about the Palace of Nestor at Englianos in southern Triphylia were resumed in a thirteenth annual campaign*.

The main effort of the season was devoted to an intensive study of the pottery, the frescoes, and the other objects found in the palace, and in general to the preparation of the material for the final publication of the results.

Miss Rawson looked through and scrutinized the vast collections of potsherds from all parts of the buildings and outside them, and recorded in summary the evidence they offered. In the same manner she examined innumerable miscellaneous objects of metal, stone, bone and ivory, terracotta, etc. Many examples were selected for publication and for photographing (which was done by Miss Lang). Miss Rawson also drew up catalogues, room by room, of all things found in each.

Besides cleaning a considerable number of new fragments of plaster which came to light in 1964, Miss Lang continued her persevering study of the frescoes. She completed the catalogue of the material to be published, comprising 206 items, some of which are made up of nearly 100 fragments joined or associated together. The technique and the subject matter of the paintings have been studied in detail and comparative material from other places has been examined. Miss Lang has already written a first draft of more than half of the book on the frescoes, which it is planned to publish as Volume II of the series. In addition to the foregoing, Miss Lang cleaned and prepared for publication in the annual report two fragments of inscribed tablets, which had been recognized by Miss Rawson among potsherds found in Room 99.

Mr. de Jong has rendered in water color many new frescoes and has revised some earlier drawings of others which had been extended and modified by the addition of new fragments.

* Again we are deeply indebted for his courtesy and kindly interest to Dr. John Kontis, Head of the Archaeological Service, and also to Dr. Nicholas Yalouris, Ephor of Olympia and the Messenian district in which we worked. It is a pleasure too to have the opportunity to express our warmest thanks to Dr. Henry Robinson, Director of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, and his colleagues and staff for generous assistance and advice.

Members of the expedition in 1964, besides Mrs. Blegen and myself, were Miss Marion Rawson, Professor Mabel Lang, Mr. Pie de Jong, and John Pedley, to all of whom we offer our cordial thanks. Dionysios Androutsakis was our indispensable Foreman.

Altogether there are now 96 drawings, ranging in size from almost two square meters to small pieces of not much more than twenty square centimeters. To Mr. de Jong we owe, moreover, drawings in section of the Throne Room and of Halls 64 and 65, several water colors of pottery, and other studies.

Under the supervision of Mr. Pedley twenty probings and trial trenches were dug, for the most part on the southwestern slope of the citadel in the maze of ruined walls toward the southeast of Hall 65. (Pl. 200 a). A little new light was shed on details of some walls, and one foundation, which can be traced in a diagonal line at the bottom of the slope, may possibly be a sector of the early Mycenaean circuit wall that was discovered in 1959 at the northeast end of the hill (Pl. 200 b). Soundings along this and other walls yielded numerous sherds, many of which are assignable to L.H. I and earlier. A small excavation outside the northern corner of the Main Building revealed fallen blocks of poros lying along the northeastern flank of the north Oil Magazine. A group of trial trenches in undug ground some 15 to 30 m. northeast of Magazine 105 disclosed very little. Foundation walls of small stones were uncovered, but no floors, no floor deposits and no recognizable stratification could be discerned. Some coarse pottery gave reason to think that the building may have been built in the Middle Helladic period and was perhaps destroyed before the palace of the thirteenth century was erected.

In May it was judged advisable to remove a large mound of earth which, in the course of our excavations, had been heaped up, in an area outside the palace, along the steep northwestern edge of the acropolis. This high accumulation consisted of soil and debris which had been dug and sifted by us after having through many centuries formed a protective covering over the remains of the Mycenaean buildings. Unusually heavy rains last winter opened an alarming crevasse in the mound, raising fears that a landslide might destroy the currant vineyard below. With the help of a modern mechanical road-digger and a heavy truck, the entire hillock, measuring 1.017 tons, was in three days cleared away, and the top of the site was leveled to its original elevation. The danger of a landslide no longer exists. This was the first and only time that power-operated machinery was used at Englianos.

CARL BLEGEN



Pylos: a. Maze of Ruined Walls on Southwestern Slope of Acropolis, b. Wall of Early Mycenaean Period along Southwestern Edge of the Acropolis

C. BLEGEN