THE PALACE OF NESTOR EXCAVATIONS OF 1963

From May 3rd to July 31st, 1963 the Archaeological Expedition of the University of Cincinnati continued its task of excavation and study in and about the Palace of Nestor at Englianos near Chora in Triphylia. This undertaking, as often mentioned, is the American part of a joint Hellenic-American exploration of Western Messenia, first begun in 1939 with K. Kourouniotes as Associate, resumed and continued in annual campaigns since 1952 with Professor Sp. Marinatos as Colleague. The buildings comprised in the palace of Mycenaean IIIB have been uncovered to their full extent and the areas outside them on the acropolis have been widely tested. The work of the current season, as in 1962, was therefore mainly concentrated on studies and writing in preparation for the concluding publication.

The members of the staff were Miss Marion Rawson, Professor Mabel Lang, Peter Smith, Piet de Jong and Miss Hero Athanasiades, besides Mrs. Blegen and myself. Special mention is due also to our foreman Dionysios Androutsakes, whose services have been indispensable.

We are under deep obligation for valued help and many courtesies to the late John Papadimitriou, Director General of the Greek Archaeological Service, and to his successor, John Kontis, as well as to N. Yalouris, Ephor at Olympia, and his assistant, George Papathanasopoulos, Curator for Messenia. We are likewise grateful to Dr. Henry Robinson, Director of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Eugene Vanderpool and other officers of the School for facilities and aid generously given.

Under the supervision of Peter Smith a long stretch of the northwestern scarp of the acropolis was cleared of shrubbery and other vegetation. It had been proposed to lay a line of cement pipes inside the enclosing wire fense to carry away the rush of water shed by the roof of the Main Building in time of heavy rain and thereby to prevent serious damage to the adjoining currant vineyard of George Petropoulos. Taking advantage of this opportunity we laid bare the face of the bank to a lenght of more than 70 m. looking for possible deposits of interest, or heaps of discarded fragments of wall paintings, such as the one found in 1961, or for clear evidence of the stratification of the accumulated debris on the hill.

Stratigraphic evidence was revealed in several places along the scarp, in which some stubs of stone walls appeared. In the nearly vertical slope below the Wine Magazine remains of a substantial wall, 11 m. long, 1 m. thick, and standing in eight courses, 1.10 m. high, were exposed. It was built against the *stereo* forming the edge of the hill, in which a bedding trench for the wall had been cut. A piece of painted plaster was wedged between the *stereo* and the wall 0.95 m. below the top of the latter.

In general the stratification shows at the top a layer, 0.70 m. to 0.80 m. thick, of dark surface soil containing mixed pottery, next a stratum, 0.30 m. to 0.35 m. deep, of burned reddish clay from dissolved crude brick which yielded kylix stems and pithos fragments. Beneath the clay lies yellowish brown earth containing Mycenaean and perhaps Middle Helladic (Mattpainted) sherds. In some places a still deeper dark yellow stratum appears with associated Middle Helladic pottery.

An extensive area, 14 m. long and 2 m. wide, at the southwestern end of the northwestern scarp, in which were seen segments of several walls (Pl. 162a), yielded a vast amount of pottery that lay in alternating black and yellowish strata; this may have been a place for throwing out broken pots and other rubbish from above. Coarse and fine wares are represented, all Mycenaean, many fragments bearing traces of painted decoration. In addition bits of bronze, obsidian, flint and ivory, several terracotta whorls, and other objects were found.

Just northeast of the Wine Magazine in a small area, 1.90 m. by 1.35 m., and below a floor probably of Mycenean IIIA, a sounding was carried down to *stereo* at a depth of 1.25 m. Digging was done in a series of 19 arbitrary levels. At 0.80 m. beneath the floor were found fragments of a fine vase, decorated with double axes of the mainland type; one obsidian and two flint arrowheads came from lower levels.

Near the southern angle of the acropolis Mr. Smith opened two trenches just above the steeply rising southeastern edge of the hill inside the wire fencing. *Stereo* was reached under a layer of disturbed yellowish brown earth. Nothing was brought to light except the ruts of a path or narrow roadway worn into hardpan

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in which were found some iron nails and bits of bronze.

Farther southward trial trenches tested the area near the actual south corner of the site and were ultimately joined to the exploratory soundings of 1962 along the southern side of the elevation. Under the plowed earth Mr. Smith quickly encountered *stereo* on the upper slope; lower down the hill an irregular hollow, nearly 1.60 m. deep, was found filled with loose rubble and debris, largely chunks of crude brick, hardened by fire. The southern part of the hollow had apparently been penetrated by a deeper cutting which was also filled with debris, lumps of hardened brick and stones. Near the steep southwestern adge of the hill several dilapidated stone walls appeared, probably the ends of houses of the lower town which had been built directly against the scarp. Like the similar fill of stones and remnants of crude brick found here in 1962 this rubbish heap probably represents the wreckage which had been cleared away from the top of the acropolis in preparation of the ground for the erection of the palace of Mycenaean IIIB.

Behind the Main Building George Papathanasopoulos resumed for a few days his investigation of the deep habitation deposit that lies just outside the northwestern exterior wall of the palace. This project has not yet been finished, but a good many pieces of fine early Mycenaean pottery (L. H. I) were found, and some light has been reflected on the history of the early occupation of the hill.

Under the direction of Miss Rawson the task of cleaning the floor of the Portico of the Main Building was resumed and completed. A large part of it, especially in the northeastern section, had been finished in 1962; this year the outer side and part of the southwestern quarter were worked over by two skilled men, Nikos Rhegas and Nikos Dimitropoulos. The division into squares has now been fully recovered, the decorative motives in many squares have been recognized and a plan will be drawn by Mr. de Jong. The whole central section of the flool of the Vestibule has also been cleaned: here unfortunately the surface of the ctucco has suffered greatly from the effects of the fire, and very little of the decoration has survived. It has been established, however, that an underlying earlier floor was divided by double incised lines into rectangles, and in some instances faint vestiges of the linear patterns can be distinguished.

Many of the doorways in the Main Building and in the Southwestern Building were again exposed to view, plans of the thresholds and bases of the doorjambs were drawn by Miss Athanasiades.

Much time-consuming effort was devoted during the season to a study of the pottery found in the palace. A detailed survey was made of all the shapes represented and a classification was drawn up for use in the ultimate publication. The immense stock of household pottery recovered in the pantries (Pl. 161) offered an unusual opportunity for analysis, since this is the only comprehensive collection of such material that has yet been salvaged from a Mycenaean palace. The major part of the work was done by Miss Rawson, who had much assistance from Professor Lang in determining the form of classification and presentation, and in typing. Miss Rawson found time, too, to select some scores of characteristic examples of shapes that have been differentiated, and to supervise the photographing of them by Emile Saraphis of Athens.

The abundance of intact, or mended but more or less nearly complete pots, provided an opportunity for measuring the capacities of many vessels of numerous types. This work was efficiently done by our foreman, Dionysios Androutsakes, who used containers of certified capacities holding 1,000, 500, 200, 100, and 50 grams. All told 788 vases were measured, and Miss Lang has prepared a preliminary analysis, comparing these units with the units of analogous measurements recorded in the Linear B tablets from the palace.

A great deal of attention was likewise bestowed by Miss Rawson on the miscellaneous objects of various kinds which have been gleaned from the wreckage in the many rooms throughout the complex of buildings. In their present state, it must be admitted, almost all of these remnants are, to say the least, pitiful to contemplate; but it was judged useful as an object-lesson to sort out and illustrate typical examples to show the destructive power of a tramendous fire. For virtually all the objects made of perishable material, including most of the metals, were melted, twisted, warped, deformed or burned to ashes, and only the tablets, pots and terracottas made of clay sur

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vived the disaster, even these often in a damaged state. Representative pieces were selected by Miss Rawson and photographed by Miss Lang.

In addition to her generous aid in solving other problems Miss Lang continued her major work on the frescoes with brilliant success in joining and fitting together many pieces which provide new compositions; (Pl. 162 b) she has likewise corrected errors and earlier interpretations of some scenes. The transformation of the pink griffins from Hall 64 into dogs is only one of her triumphs. She has, moreover, compiled a catalogue of all the fragments of frescoes bearing recognizable scenes and decorative motives.

During the month of July, Mr. de Jong collaborated with Miss Lang and recorded in watercolor many of the new discoveries as well as some from earlier years not yet drawn. He also took measurements and traced the surviving remains of the patterns used in the decoration of the floors in the Vestibule and the Portico of the Megaron for drawings which will be finished in watercolor.

It had been our hope that we might be able to bring to a close this year our work in the Palace of Nestor at Englianos. Despite heroic efforts on the part of the staff, however, it proved to be impossible to work through the vast amount of pottery and other material that has been accumulated in the past twelve years; and we have with some satisfaction reconciled ourselves to the agreable necessity of continuing our activity another season in western Messenia.

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ΑΝΑΣΚΑΦΑΙ ΠΥΛΟΥ

Διὰ λόγους ὑγείας τοῦ ἀνασκαφέως αἱ ἐργασίαι τοῦ 1963 διεξήχθησαν κυρίως εἰς τὸ Μουσεῖον Πύλου. Ἐκεῖ κατέστη δυνατὸν νὰ μελετηθῶσιν ὅσα εὑρήματα εἶχον ἐν τῷ μεταξὺ συγκροτηθῆ ἐκ τῶν ἀνασκαφῶν Κουκουνάρας τῶν προηγουμένων ἐτῶν. Ὀλιγοήμερος μόνον ἀνασκαφὴ ἐπεχειρήθη εἰς Κουκουνάραν, ἵνα καθαρισθῇ πλήρως ὁ θολωτὸς τάφος Ἀκόνας 1.

Ὁ τάφος οὗτος εἶχεν ἐγκαταλειφθῆ ἡμισκαφής, διότι ὁ θόλος εὑρίσκετο εἰς ἀθλίαν κατάστασιν. Ἡ Ὑπηρεσία Ἀρχαιοτήτων ἀπέστειλε τὸν κ. Χ. Σφακιανάκην, ὅστις ἐπιδεξίως ἐπραγματοποίησεν ὑποστύλωσιν διὰ πλέγματος ξύλων (Πίν. 163 α), ἥτις σὺν τῇ προόδῳ τῆς ἐκσκαφῆς τῆς θόλου συνεπληροῦτο. Τὰ τοιχώματα ὅμως τῆς θόλου εἶχον τόσον ἐπικινδύνως διαρραγῆ, ὥστε, ἂν καὶ τὰ ξύλα ἀφέθησαν εἰς τὴν θέσιν των, ὁ τάφος συνέπεσε μὲ τὰς πρώτας βροχὰς τοῦ χειμῶνος, διότι οὐδεμία στερέωσις ἦτο δυνατή.

Πρόκειται περὶ θολωτοῦ τάφου τῆς κατηγορίας τῶν μικρῶν. Ἡ διάμετρος τῆς θόλου ἦτο 6.20 μ., οἱ δὲ τοῖχοι διετηροῦντο μέχρι μεγίστου ὕψους 2.50 μ. Τὸ στόμιον διετηρεῖτο μέχρις ὕψους 1.95 μ. (τὸ ἀνώφλιον ἔλειπε) καὶ τὸ πλάτος ἐξωτερικῶς ἦτο 1.32, ἐσωτερικῶς δὲ 1.20 μ. Δρόμος δὲν ὑπῆρχεν ἢ ὅσον ἐσχημάτιζεν ὁ τύμβος τῆς θόλου, διότι ὁ τάφος ἦτο ἐξ ὁλοκλήρου ὑπέργειος.

Εἰς τὸ ὕψος 0,70 ἀπὸ τοῦ δαπέδου ἀνεφάνησαν τὰ πρῶτα κρανία, ἅτινα εἶχον μετατοπισθῆ μετ' ἐλαχίστων ἄλλων ὀστῶν κατὰ τὴν περιφέρειαν τῆς θόλου. Εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ ὕψος καὶ εἰς τὴν δυτικὴν πλευρὰν τῆς θόλου παρετηροῦντο ἰδιαιτέρως ἔντονα τὰ ἴχνη πυρᾶς εἰς δύο στρώματα τέφρας (τὸ ἓν ἔφθανε τὰ 10-12 ἑκ. πάχους). Ἐπ' αὐτῶν ἔκειτο ἐκτεταμένος ὁ σκελετὸς ἡμισείας μόνον ἐλάφου, ἧς διετηροῦντο τὰ ὀστᾶ, δύο μόνον ὁπλαὶ καὶ ἓν μόνον κέρας μεγάλων διαστάσεων (90 ἑκ. μῆκος). Παρὰ τὸν σκελετὸν εὑρέθησαν δύο μικρὰ ἀγγεῖα, προχοΐδιον (Πίν. 163 β) καὶ δίωτον σκυφάριον (Πίν. 163 γ), χρονολογούμενα περὶ τὸ 700 ἢ ὀλίγον βραδύτερον. Ἑπομένως εὑρισκόμεθα πρὸ τῶν λειψάνων μεγαλοπρεποῦς θυσίας Ἑλληνικῆς ἐποχῆς πρὸς τιμὴν τῶν Μυκηναίων νεκρῶν προγόνων. Ἀξιοσημείωτος εἶναι ἡ θυσία ἐλάφου, ἥτις καὶ εἰς ἄλλους τάφους τῆς Πύλου ἐξηκριβώθη. Ὡς γνωστόν, τὸ εὐγενὲς τοῦτο ζῷον καταλαμβάνει σπουδαίαν θέσιν καὶ εἰς τὴν μυθολογίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τὰς θυσίας μέχρι καὶ τῶν Ρωμαϊκῶν χρόνων. Ἰδιαιτέρως ἐνθυμούμεθα τὰ τῆς θυσίας τῆς Ἰφιγενείας.

Ὁ τάφος ἦτο τελείως σεσυλημένος. Ἔφερεν ἕνα μόνον λάκκον εἰς τὸ δάπεδον, ἀλλὰ καὶ οὗτος εἶχε συληθῆ. Τοὐλάχιστον 13 κρανία περιεῖχεν ὁ τάφος διεσκορπισμένα. Ὄστρακα εὑρέθησαν ὀλίγα, πάντα τῆς μεταγενεστέρας (Μυκ. ΙΙΙ Β, ἴσως καὶ ΙΙΙ Α) ἐποχῆς, ἀλλὰ μόνον δύο ἀγγεῖα εἶναι πρὸς τὸ παρὸν πλήρη. Μόνωτος κύαθος ἀσυνήθους σχήματος (Πίν. 164 α) καὶ ἕτερος μετὰ προχοῆς, ὅστις εἶχε χρησιμοποιηθῆ ὡς λύχνος (Πίν. 164 β). Εἰς τὸ βάθος τοῦ λάκκου εἶχε περισωθῆ γλωσσοειδὲς μαχαίριον μετὰ τριῶν ἥλων (μῆκ. 0,185), εἰς δὲ τὰ χώματα τοῦ λάκκου εὑρέθη μικρὰ φακοειδὴς σφραγὶς ὑποπρασίνου χαλκηδονίου (Πίν. 164 γ). Ἡ παράστασις εἶναι λίαν ἐνδιαφέρουσα, διότι εἰκονίζει νεαρὰν ἀνδρικὴν μορφὴν προσπαθοῦσαν νὰ πηδήσῃ (ἢ

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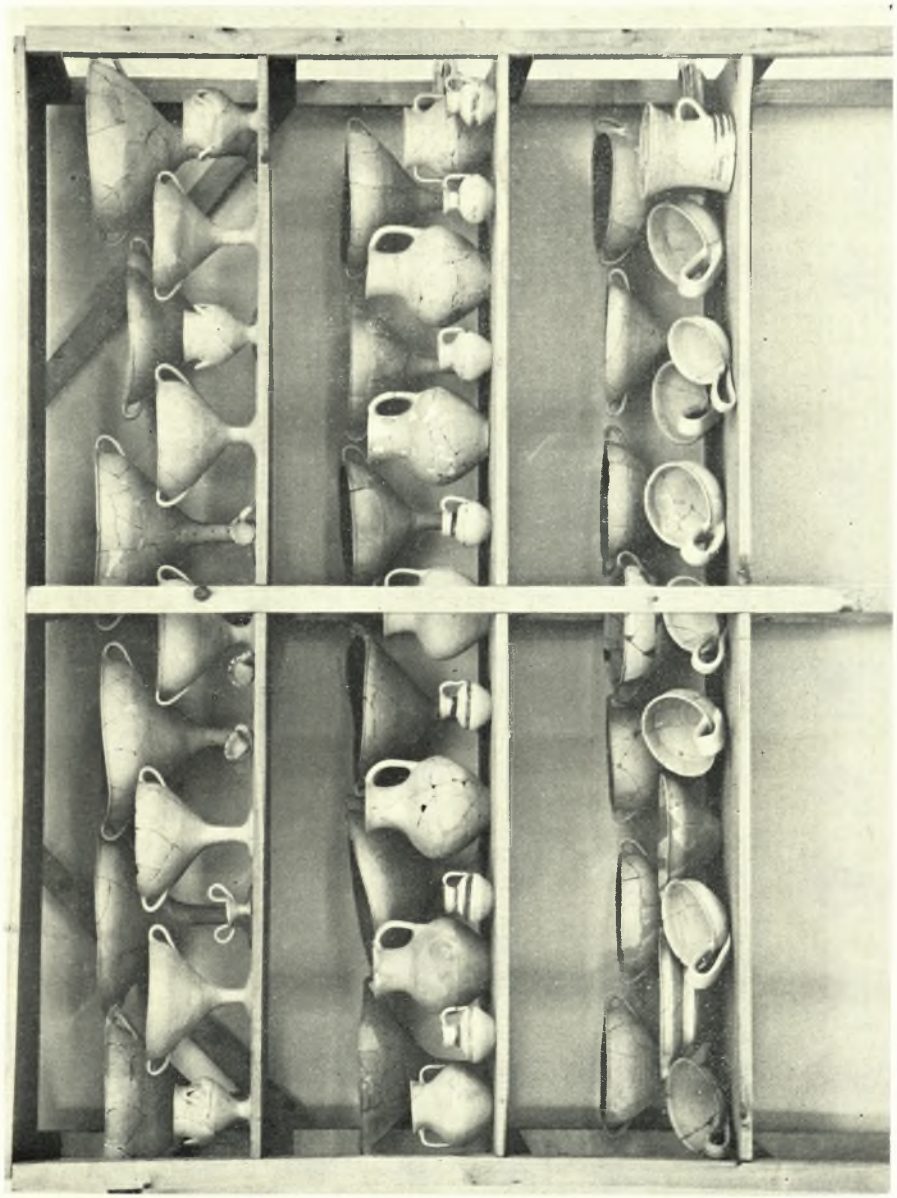

Pylos: Pots of various shapes from Pantry 20

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Pylos: a. Walls projecting from scarp near southwestern end of steep edge of acropolis, from NE.
b. Fresco of Blue Birds. Fitted together by Professor Lang and drawn by Mr. de Jong

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