

LACONIA: HAGIOS STEPHANOS

The excavations at Hagios Stephanos, near Skala, sponsored by the British School were resumed after a lapse of two years. The campaign lasted from July 8th to Sept. 5th. Work was concentrated in the same areas as in the 1960 campaign and new trial trenches were also dug.

The Alpha and Delta trenches are laid out on the crown of the hill which is more or less flat and has been much weathered in the course of the centuries. It is pitted with burials belonging to the Early, Middle and Late Helladic periods and, because of the weathering of the soil, these are often found just below the surface. Moreover, the tombs frequently disrupt the pattern of earlier walls, which have also suffered from the plough, and it is no longer easy to make out the original plan of the settlement. The Alpha trenches occupy the centre of the hilltop, the Delta trenches lie further to the north.

Alpha Trenches. This area in 1963 produced 12 adult and 5 child burials (Pl. 149 b). In many cases, unfortunately, the skeletons were not accompanied by grave goods, but one burial of the Middle Helladic period was of particular interest and importance. It was a cist grave containing the poorly preserved remains of a woman. She wore very thin bronze earrings of elliptical shape and a large bronze pin was found at the back of the skull (Pl. 148 a). In the region of the neck were a number of carnelian beads. There were also fragments of bronze wire near the left humerus bone and these are thought to have been a bracelet. On one of the fingers of the woman's left hand was a bronze ring with an oval bezel. On her chest was a shallow bi-conical bowl of coarse fabric decorated with a variety of incised designs. Four other complete pots were found with this burial, a goblet of local Minyan ware, a cylindrical cup, a one-handled cup, and a strange little pot, in shape and size like a modern egg-cup, which was pierced with a hole down the middle (Pl. 147a). The first two vases had incised or grooved decoration. The other two were plain.

A well-built cist tomb of the late Middle Helladic period contained a skeleton whose

left arm lay over a miniature pot of very original design; it may have been a lamp (Pl. 147 b). In this same tomb were the remains of another skeleton and, apparently associated with it, a one-handled cup of very fine ware. When the bones of both skeletons were taken up, yet another cup was found. It was of coarse fabric but of individual design.

One Mycenaean tomb was uncovered in the area. It was a cist grave. It contained no pottery but on the skeleton were found the remains of a bronze dagger and a pair of bronze tweezers. There was a bone toggle-pin in the region of the skull. The remains of a previous burial were also found in this tomb and with them a hoard of 35 obsidian blades, a flint scraper, and a bone pin.

Delta Trenches. This area in the past has produced several burials associated with Mycenaean pottery. 10 adult skeletons and 2 child burials were uncovered this year, but it was disappointing to find that only one of them was accompanied by a complete pot. One skeleton was of particular interest. Though poorly preserved, the position of the bones indicated that both hands and feet had been tied, the former crossed at the wrists and behind the back. Neither the orientation nor layout of the skeletons in this area (or in the cemetery in general) were at all uniform. There were two cases of the body, but not the head, being covered with a layer of stones, of which many were slabs. There were no stone sides to these "coffins".

In the last days of the excavation, a pithos burial was uncovered. It contained only a few bones but what was of interest was that the pithos was closed with a large, shallow one-handled bowl, which had been used as a lid. The bowl was of local Minyan ware (M.H.).

Beta Trenches. At the south end of the hilltop where the Beta trenches are situated there is a considerable depth of soil, but progress in the past has been made difficult by the multiplicity of ancient terrace walls found, which have collapsed and filled the whole area with stones; there has also been disturbance in the Byzantine and later periods. This year a further complication was the finding of many burials in the new trenches opened down the slope of the

hill. Several were of children, often without any grave goods; but one was buried with a complete figurine of Late Helladic III B and another with a quantity of paste beads (P. 148 b). One Middle Helladic pot was discovered in many fragments close to an adult burial. Over the head of another there was a pithos base containing a small dipper or ladle, of LH III B. A curious feature, which could not be fully investigated this year, was the finding of four skulls in a pit that had been cut through a hard earthen floor. Strewed over this floor were the remains of a pithos and a number of pot fragments from which it was possible to restore a handsome krater of the LH III B period (P. 149 a). There was frequent evidence of mud floors. In one case three different superimposed floors were noted and in another case three floors were associated with walls of three different building phases, all apparently of the IIIB period. In one trench what looks very much like a street paved with rough small stones has been uncovered.

In one sector, a depth of nearly three metres was reached. Several earth floors were cut through to reach this depth. Underneath the lower floors the sherds belonged to Late Helladic I and II with an admixture of Middle Helladic. At the lowest level a cobble floor was uncovered on which lay one Middle Helladic sherd. In a subsequent season it is hoped that it will be possible to penetrate into yet lower levels containing unadulterated Middle Helladic pottery.

Quite a variety of pottery was found in the Beta trenches including an almost complete stirrup-jar (LH III), two kylikes painted in black monochrome (LH I or II), a kylix of yellow Minyan (MH) and two coarse jars of elegant shape.

Trial Trenches. Several of these were put down in different parts of the site. In one of these a layer of small stones laid on the rock and ca. 3.5 m. in width was uncovered. They seem to be the foundations of a fortress wall, but large blocks or boulders are nowhere found on the site. Possible foundations of another, but much smaller, wall were found in this same trench a few metres higher up the slope. A quantity of Deep Bowl fragments (LH III B) were dis-

covered up against the foundations of the main wall on the inner (defensive) side.

W.D. TAYLOUR

*

KYTHERA: KASTRI - PALAIOPOLIS, 1963

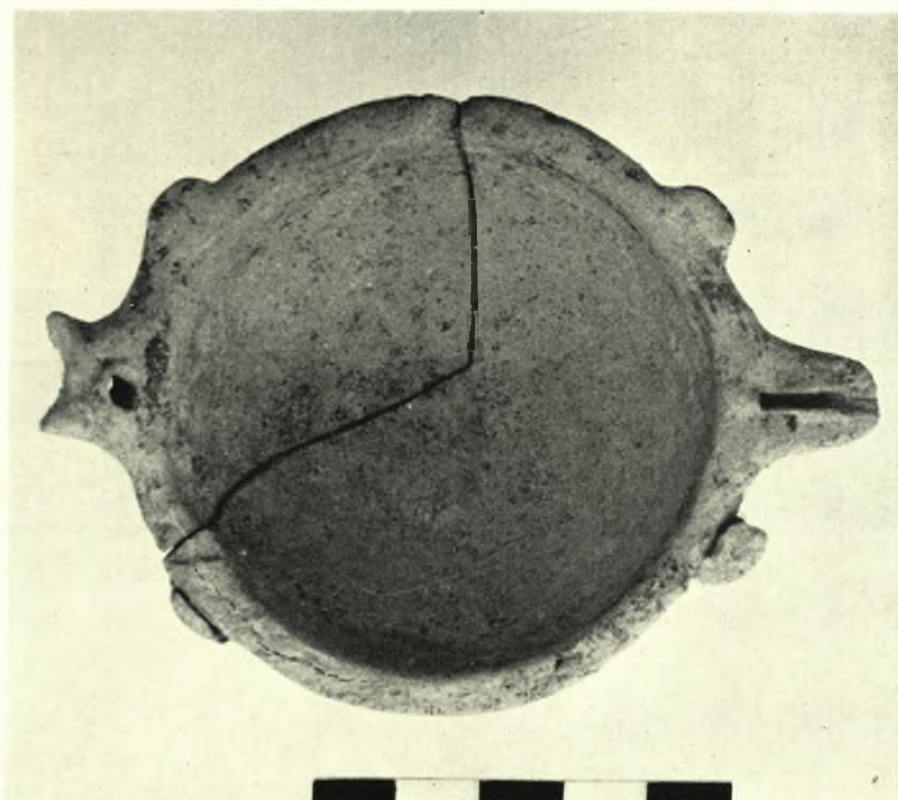
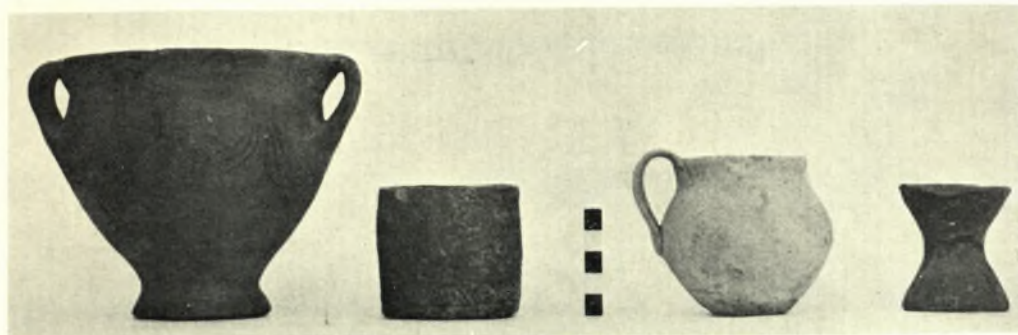
The Minoan settlement at Kastri and Palaiopolis in the southeast of the island of Kythera was discovered by Miss Benton in 1931¹. In the summer of 1963 trial excavations sponsored by the British School were begun there under the direction of the writer in association with the Pennsylvania University Museum. A topographical survey was also carried out by J. Dimick and A. Trik.

Trial trenches dug at Kastri (P. 151a) under the supervision of R. Hope Simpson revealed walls and floors of the Minoan settlement under a thin Roman overlay. Much local and imported Minoan pottery was found, the earliest so far discovered being of the Middle Minoan II B "Kamares" type, of about 1750 B.C. The latest Minoan pottery is of the fifteenth century B.C. Towards the end of the Minoan settlement much Late Helladic pottery was also in use.

Road work at Kastri had broken open the chambers of at least three Minoan tombs in 1957, when they were partially cleared. A large chamber (Tomb A) has now been completely excavated, planned and photographed. In a second tomb in the road (Tomb C) were found a fine steatite bowl (P. 150 a) and many whole clay vases of MM III and LM I A type. Tomb D nearby, excavated by N. Coldstream, yielded 132 undisturbed Minoan vases.

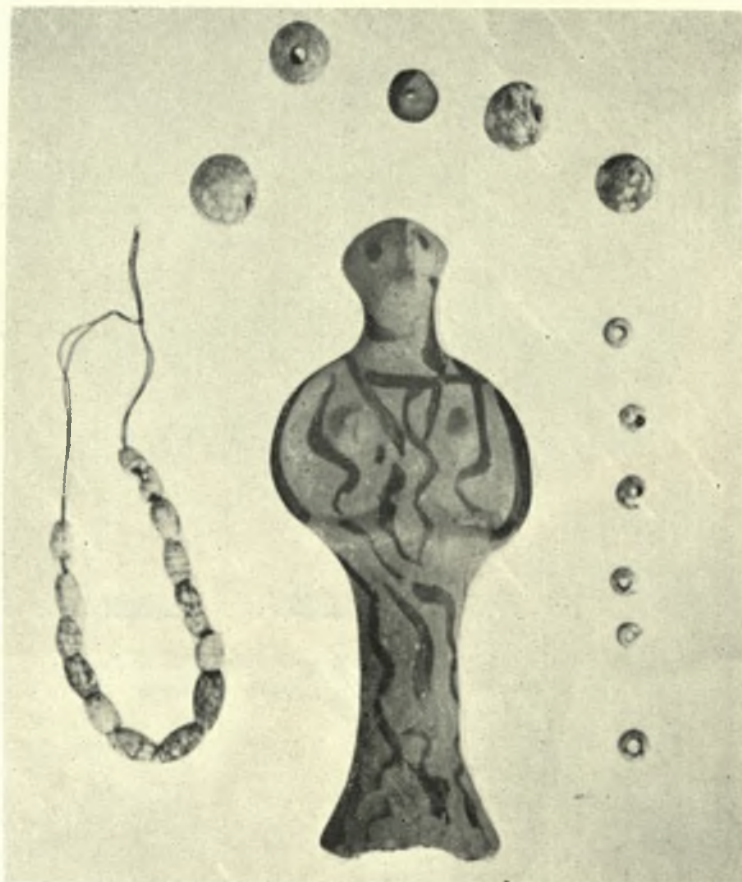
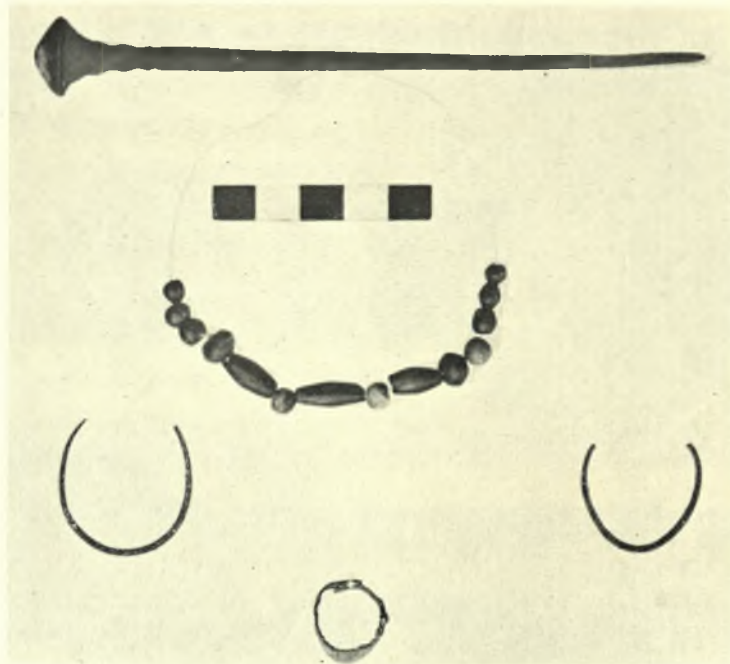
On the Asprogas ridge north of Kastri, Tomb E was excavated by Dr. Trik. Six rooms led off a central chamber, in which most of the abundant pottery was found. The vases, of MM

1. On the topography and antiquities of the area, and the location here of the ancient Skandeia, see Helen Waterhouse and R. Hope Simpson in *BSA* 56, 149 and 152-156. The ancient Kythera, which was 10 stades from Skandeia, is identified with the archaic and classical remains on the mountain Palaiokastros, inland from Kastri.



Hagios Stephanos (Alpha): a. Pottery from Middle Helladic burial,
b. Lamp (?) from late Middle Helladic cist tomb

W. D. TAYLOUR



Hagios Stephanos: a. (Alpha). Bronze pin, earrings and carnelian beads from Middle Helladic burial,
 b. (Beta). Late Helladic III B figurine and paste beads from child burials

W. D. TAYLOUR



Hagios Stephanos: a. (Beta). Late Helladic III B krater, b. Alpha trenches

W. D. TAYLOUR