

**XVI.—AN ATTEMPT TO POINT OUT THE VASES OF
GREECE PROPER WHICH BELONG TO THE HEROIC
AND HOMERIC AGES.**

BY THOMAS BURGON, ESQ.

(Read May 23, 1844.)

MEMORANDUM TO ACCOMPANY A DRAWING OF THREE VASES, (SEE
THE PLATE,) NUMBERED 239, 90, AND 224, FORMING PART OF
A COLLECTION NOW DEPOSITED IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM; AND
OF SUNDRY FRAGMENTS, &c.

- No. 239.—Vase found in a tomb at Athens, by M. Fauvel,
the resident French Consul.
- No. 90.—Vase found by Mr. Burgon, at Athens, in a grave
cut in the rock, by the side of the road leading to the
Academy.
- No. 224.—Vase found in a tomb at Melos (Insula) and
brought thence by the Rev. F. V. J. Arundell, when
Chaplain to the English Factory at Smyrna.
- A. B. C.—Three fragments of Pottery, with spiral lines,
picked up by Mr. Burgon at Mycenæ in Argolis.
- D.—Fragment of Pottery, picked up by Mr. Burgon, among
the ancient tombs (or rather tumuli) of Cyclopean
architecture, which are supposed to indicate the site
of Tantalus, near Smyrna.
- E.—Coarse Vase of black earth, about eight inches high,
without ornament, found with No. 90.
- F.—Coarse Vase of red earthenware, with zigzag lines
scratched on it. This vase was about one foot three

inches high, and contained a few burnt bones nearly decomposed. It was also found with No. 90.

- G.—Coarse Amphora of yellow earthenware, without ornament. The mouth had been anciently broken off, and was not found. The bottom of the amphora was pointed, and it contained slight traces of burnt bones. Its height, without the mouth, was $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and its original use was probably for wine. Found also with No. 90.
- H.—Ornament on an Athenian Vase in the possession of Mr. John William Burgon, from the collection of the late Mr. Thomas.
- I.—The pattern of the spiral ornament on the Slab with the Discs, from the Treasury of Atreus, now in the British Museum. (*Synopsis*, No. 177, *Elgin Room*.)

There is a well-known class of pottery, found in Greece Proper, concerning the age of which antiquaries are not agreed. Some assign it to a remote period, while others are inclined to regard it as an ordinary or cheap kind of earthenware, of a comparatively late time.

The ground of this pottery is of the natural colour of the clay, varying from a whitish yellow or pale ochreous colour, to a light brown.¹ These various tints of the ground are generally more or less ornamented with zigzag, spiral, or numerous parallel lines, bands, concentric circles, meanders, and various other forms, of a tawny red, or brownish colour, sometimes merging into dusky black, and frequently showing both the tawny red, and the black colour, on the same specimen.²

¹ According to the locality from whence the clay was procured; and probably, depending also on the furnace of the potter.

² This variation in the colour of the ornamental design is merely

The object of this short essay is to connect *the more ancient specimens* of this class of earthenware with the period of Cyclopean architecture, and by that means to show approximately,

1st. That this pottery belongs to a very remote period of Grecian History, coeval with the heroic ages ; and thereby,

2ndly. To oppose the supposition that the precious fragments of green and red marble now in the British Museum, forming part of the ornamental facing to the entrance and doorway of the building called the Treasury of Atreus, at Mycenæ, *may be* sculptures of the Byzantine times.³

It will be conceded, without difficulty, by mere inspection, that the vases and fragments before us (see the Plate), from the mere fact of the similarity and peculiarity of the manufacture and style of the ornaments, form or belong to *a class* of pottery *apart*, and are incontestably separated from the various classes of Greek vases which are painted black, and are well known to belong to subsequent periods.

occasioned by different degrees of heat of the potter's furnace, combined with the greater or less quantity of the pigment used. Long observation enables me to state that this pigment was somewhat analogous, in its colour and consistence, to tar, or molasses, which, when laid on thin, is tawny, but if applied thick, is black. An attentive examination of vases will disclose a fact not generally suspected, namely, that it is essentially *one and the same pigment*, which was used in painting and ornamenting Greek vases *in all ages* ; but of what this pigment was composed I believe no one knows.

³ " Ces fragments, qui portent en eux un caractère d'analogie avec certains détails de l'architecture Indienne & Égyptienne, peuvent bien aussi être des restes Byzantins, & avoir appartenu aux nombreux établissements religieux dont la Grèce a été couverte." — 'Expédition Scientifique de Morée ;' fol. Paris, 1833, p. 154, vol. ii.

This kind of pottery is moreover entitled to the distinction of a *separate class*, from its presenting us often with *peculiar and primitive forms*, in which may be traced the germ, or prototype, of the later and more elegant shapes with which we are more familiar. At the same time, we are enabled to conclude that this class is not the inferior earthenware of a comparatively late period, from having found, in the same grave, specimens of the most coarse and ordinary manufacture, as well as of the more elaborately finished and ornamented kind.⁴ These considerations, therefore, incline us to regard this pottery as forming a class *per se*, which we will endeavour to show is not only of very remote antiquity, but belongs to a definite period of Greek history and art.

Before entering on this question, however, it is absolutely necessary to warn the reader against expecting *demonstration* in an inquiry like the present. Let the nature of the case be fairly considered, and he will not look for stronger arguments than such as we shall have to offer—such, in fact, as the nature of the case admits. We can adduce nothing but *probabilities*, which will appear stronger or weaker as the reader approaches the subject with or without preparation; or again, as he reads with an unprejudiced or a prejudiced mind. The utmost which we propose to ourselves is, to show *a high degree of probability*; and this, in the absence of an equal degree of probability on the contrary side, should be satisfactory. “It becomes the man of education,” remarks a great philosopher of antiquity, “to require, in any particular department, only such a

⁴ The vase No. 90, and E. F. G., were all four found in the same grave, together with the two-handled cup mentioned at page 289, note 61.

degree of accuracy as the nature of the case admits. To require demonstration at the hands of an orator, is evidently about as unreasonable as allowing a mathematician to talk of a thing being probable.”⁵

We proceed to remark on the ancient vases under consideration.

It has been stated that the characteristic and most usual ornaments of the *earliest* specimens which have been discovered of this style of pottery, are *numerous parallel lines, bands, zigzags, spirals, concentric circles, &c.* Such ornaments on a Greek work of art, are, in themselves, a proof of remote antiquity; for they must, in the very nature of things, be regarded as exhibiting the *earliest* efforts of graphic skill, and we know that representations of men, animals, and other objects, were introduced *exceedingly* early. There are, indeed, but two possible ways of accounting for such rude representations:—it is the rudeness arising from remoteness of origin, or from carelessness of execution. Now it is not the rudeness arising from carelessness of execution; for the vases in question were evidently made with considerable skill. The ornaments upon them show a very careful, and even a very experienced hand. The patterns run exactly round, and fill the prescribed spaces. They not unfrequently display great archaic elegance, and sometimes abound in studied and minute embellishments. Generally, therefore, as already hinted, it may be asserted—1st, from the style of manufacture; 2ndly, from the style of painting (ornaments traced with a black pigment on the natural

⁵ πεπαιδευμένου γάρ ἐστιν ἐπὶ τοσούτον τάκριβες ἐπιζητεῖν καθ' ἕκαστον γένος, ἐφ' ὅσον ἡ τοῦ πράγματος φύσις ἐπιδέχεται· παραπλήσιον γάρ φαίνεται μαθηματικῷ τε πιθανολογοῦντος ἀποδέχεσθαι καὶ ῥητορικῶν ἀποδείξεις ἀπαιτεῖν.—Aristot. Eth. Nic. I. I. (ed. Bekker.)

colour of the clay); 3rdly, from the shapes of the vases; 4thly, from the peculiar style of ornament adopted; 5thly, from the combination of these several features, with the evidence of care and skill;—from these considerations, I say, it may be asserted, *generally*, that the monuments in question belong to a very remote period of antiquity.

But it may well be inquired whether they are not assignable *particularly* to some definite period; or, at least, whether by a careful review of all the circumstances bearing on the case, it may not be possible to confine their date within certain probable limits. Now, it has been already suggested that the monuments in question are the works of the age called “heroic;” and, in order to connect vases of this early class with the remote period to which I think they may be fairly considered to belong, it becomes necessary to advert first to the finding of the fragments A. B. C.

A little south of the southernmost angle of the wall of the Acropolis of Mycenæ, is a small sloping plot of tilled ground,⁶ which, when I was there in 1809, was *remarkably* strewed with small fragments of ancient pottery; and observing that, with respect to colour and style of ornament (which consisted chiefly of spiral lines), these fragments were quite unlike those which I had generally noticed in the neighbourhood of Athens, and other ancient sites, I was induced to pick up and preserve the three fragments in question. It may be thought that these three fragments exhibit the spiral

⁶ See a most accurate plan of the Acropolis of Mycenæ, and of the country around it, in Gell's ‘Itinerary of Greece,’ (Argolis,) 4to, London, 1810; Plate III. page 28, where this small plot of tilled ground is readily observable, about 150 yards nearly east of the Treasury of Atreus.

ornament too imperfectly ; but as they happen to be the only specimens which I picked up and preserved, that circumstance *now* can only be regretted. We rely on the testimony to be cited presently in support of the fact ; and in referring during the course of this inquiry to the fragments A. B. C., we would rather be understood as referring to the vases of which they formed parts, or to other fragments left behind in abundance, which would have answered our present purpose better than these, by exhibiting more distinct spiral, as well as zigzag lines.

I thought then, and my later experience fully confirms me in the opinion, that the plot of ground on which I was standing, was one of the most early burial-places of the inhabitants of Mycenæ;⁷ the fragments having been evidently *turned up on the spot* by the plough, and broken from time to time by the operations of husbandry. In fact, the rains of 2600 to 3000 years, had washed away so much earth from this sloping plot of ground, as nearly to lay bare the vases in the graves, and thus to expose them to the action of the plough or the spade.

It is curious that the late Sir William Gell, many years before my first visit to Greece, had been struck, as I was, *on the same spot*, by the colour, style, and quantity of the fragments of pottery which he observed. In his work just referred to in a pre-

⁷ It is well known that the cemeteries of the Greeks were situated *outside* the walls of their towns. But this plot of ground seems to be situated within the boundary of the city, between the foot of the Acropolis and the ravine. It is therefore conjectured to have been *one of the most early burial-places* of Mycenæ, and was probably used when the Acropolis alone was inhabited, with perhaps some portion of the ground in the neighbourhood of the gate of Lions. See note 63, page 291.

ceding note, he says (at page 42), "At an angle of the fortress [Acropolis of Mycenæ], on the south, overlooking the ravine and torrent, is a great quantity of broken pottery, both in black varnish and white, with spiral lines of a brown colour, which seem to have been the favourite ornament at Mycenæ."

These words show that this distinguished traveller and antiquary connected in his mind *these fragments of pottery* with some remarkable *remains of sculpture*, which he had previously observed, and which he mentions in the following words, at page 29:—"The front [of the Treasury of Atreus] appears to have been cased with *green* and *red* marble, with spiral and circular ornaments. Near the door, observe a semicircular pilaster, and its capital, very curiously carved in spiral and zig-zag lines." He gives a careful representation of this capital in Plate VII. of the same work, and also of an ornamented slab of *red* marble observable in the wall of a small Greek chapel close by.⁸

Two broken slabs, forming part of the same ornamental facing to the exterior of the doorway of the Treasury of Atreus,⁹ are to be seen in the British Museum. They owe their preservation to Lord Elgin. One is of green marble,¹⁰ and exhibits a row of spiral

⁸ This slab also formed a portion of the casing of the doorway of the Treasury, and unerringly connects itself with the capital, or base, (which is of *green* marble,) by the very peculiar forms of the ornaments observable on both, as well as by the material of which both specimens are formed, although of different colours.

⁹ See the very remarkable architectural details of this ancient construction, in the 'Description of the Subterraneous Chamber at Mycenæ, commonly called the Treasury of Atreus,' with five Plates; by T. L. Donaldson, Esq., in the supplementary volume to the 'Antiquities of Athens,' by Stuart and Revett; large folio, London, 1830.

¹⁰ About 3½ feet long.—*Brit. Mus. Synopsis*, No. 177, *Elgin Room*.

ornaments¹¹ above a row of flat circular objects, or discs. The other slab¹² is of red marble, and presents us with three rows of the same spiral ornament, of which the middle row is in higher relief and of rather larger size than those above and below it, and somewhat differently treated, particularly *in having had a small boss or stud in the centre of each spiral, probably of marble of some other colour, or perhaps of bronze.*¹³ These two highly interesting fragments have been engraved in the work of another learned traveller in Greece, as well as the pilaster and base (or capital) before mentioned.¹⁴ In speaking of the Treasury of Atreus, Mr. Dodwell describes these fragments as follows:—"Some masses of *rosso antico*, covered with spiral ornaments, and a columnar pilaster and its base, are seen lying among the ruins near the gate;"¹⁵ and at the next page, he says, "the pilaster and its base are of a soft green stone, singularly enriched with spiral and zigzag ornaments, of an Egyptian rather than of a Grecian character."

¹¹ The pattern of these spiral ornaments is shown at I. on the Plate which illustrates this Paper.

¹² About 3 feet long.—*Brit. Mus. Synopsis*, No. 180, *Elgin Room*.

¹³ This peculiarity is not marked at fig. 10, in the Plate iv. (copied chiefly from the Elgin drawings), which illustrates Professor Donaldson's elaborate work just referred to.

The large French work, '*Expédition Scientifique de Morée*,' fol. Paris, 1833, Plate Lxx., presents us with the same sculpture, copied from Donaldson, and consequently repeating the omission of the peculiarity in question. It is only in Dodwell's '*Tour in Greece*,' 2 vols. 4to, London, 1819, that tolerably correct representations of these fragments are given in a wood-cut at page 232, vol. ii.

¹⁴ Dodwell, vol. ii. page 232. See the wood-cuts and two copper-plates.

¹⁵ *Loc. cit.* page 231.

Again, when pointing out the interesting discoveries which might be made by excavating at Mycenæ, he says,¹⁶ "Vases would be discovered in great quantities if we may judge from the numerous fragments which are seen scattered on all sides; they are generally of a coarse earth, and the spiral and zigzag ornament, which is sculptured on the marbles near the Treasury of Atreus, is observed on most of the fictile fragments found among the ruins. These ornaments are generally painted black upon a yellow ground."

We have thus the unexpected testimony of this learned and observing traveller, in addition to that of Sir Wm. Gell, in full confirmation of the main point before us.

We may here advert, for a moment, to the architectural doubt¹⁷ which we proposed at the outset to notice, as it involves *the antiquity* of these sculptured ornaments from Mycenæ. It is true that the learned writer's words, "*peuvent bien aussi être des restes Byzantins,*" merely imply a passing doubt, which does not amount to an opinion, and is, moreover, unsupported by the least shadow of proof, or even by a bare probability urged in its behalf. Such a doubt, under other circumstances, would not have required notice; but, occurring as it does in a work of importance, which may be *quoted hereafter as authority*, the remark claims a few words in this inquiry.

Sir William Gell, and Mr. Dodwell, are not the only learned archæologists who saw parts of the facing of the doorway of the Treasury of Atreus *in situ*, and who have recorded their opinions of its antiquity. We find in Colonel Leake's account of the Treasury

¹⁶ *Loc. cit.* page 237.

¹⁷ See note 3, page 260 of this Paper.

of Atreus the following words:—"On the outside, before each door-post, stood a semi-column, having a base and capital not unlike the Tuscan order in profile, but enriched with a very elegant sculptured ornament, chiefly in a zigzag form, which was continued in vertical compartments over the whole shaft. These ornaments have not the smallest resemblance to any thing else found in Greece, but they bear some similitude to the Persepolitan style of sculpture. On my former visit to Mycenæ, there were several large fragments of these semi-columns lying on the ground: I can now find only one or two very small pieces."¹⁸

The united testimony which precedes, not only confirms the hitherto undoubted antiquity of the marble facing around the doorway of the Treasury of Atreus, but traces a connection between the sculpture and the pottery, the antiquity of which latter is beyond all doubt: some weight must therefore be accorded to this testimony. But perhaps,—after duly considering that these sculptures are confessed, on all hands, to be *unlike any thing elsewhere extant*, and that their style has been considered to resemble that of Egypt, Persepolis, or even India,—the best testimony of their remote antiquity may be afforded by the two precious fragments themselves, in the Elgin Room of the British Museum, where they are daily before our eyes.

The ornaments on both these slabs are in very low relief. The design is elegant, and by no means devoid of *the germ* of that strength and gracefulness which were so characteristic of Grecian sculpture in a more

¹⁸ Leake's 'Travels in the Morea,' 3 vols. 8vo, London, 1830, vol. ii. page 374. See also Donaldson (*loc. cit.*), where a confirmatory *architectural opinion* of the antiquity of this marble facing will be found.

advanced stage ; yet, on these two marbles, there is distinctly perceptible *a peculiar feebleness of execution*,¹⁹ which I look upon as indicative of the remote period, to which I think they must certainly be considered to belong ; and which, at the same time, I regard as the standing proof of their antiquity. Until, therefore, a Byzantine work of similar style be pointed out, we may dismiss the supposition that this marble facing *may be Byzantine*, as totally gratuitous and untenable.

A slight inspection of the face of the building, more especially of the surface *above the lintel of the doorway*,²⁰ proves that it was *originally* cased ; and why the casing *found there* should not belong to it, I am at a loss to imagine.²¹ It is not more singular that the

¹⁹ A combination of beauty of design and feebleness of execution, in some respects analogous to that here pointed out, is perceptible in the marble fragment preserved in the Royal Museum at the Louvre, published by Millingen, 'Ancient Unedited Monuments,' second series, Plate 1. page 1. The learned Author of that valuable work regarded that marble as perhaps the oldest extant specimen of Greek sculpture. I humbly think that he might have assigned it, without fear, to a period at least a century higher than he has done.

²⁰ See Gell's *Argolis*, Plate v., and Donaldson (*loc. cit.*), Plate 1.

²¹ If it be a Byzantine usage to face buildings with precious materials, it will not help the supposition in question, for the same usage is by far more common in the remotest periods of antiquity. The Pyramids of Egypt, among numberless examples which might be adduced, were all faced inside and outside with a finer kind of stone than that of which they were constructed ; and I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Bonomi, the well-known Egyptian traveller, for the information that there is a chamber where *a coloured facing* has been used, in the step Pyramid of Sakkara, which still retains a good deal of its blue porcelain (or enamelled) incrustation, laid over fine limestone. There are also tombs at the same place, built of crude brick, and the interior of the walls incrustated with large slabs of fine limestone, on which are painted sculptures. The late discoveries of M. Botta at Nineveh show the same usage.

exterior of this most ancient construction should have been originally faced (or cased) with decorative marble of various colours, than that the interior should have been entirely covered with another material, which has long since totally disappeared. This material, with high probability, has been unanimously supposed to have been *plates of brass*; ²² the brass nails, and nail-holes, remaining still, up to the apex of the interior, in regular positions. ²³ On the whole, the evidence afforded by the union of these different considerations, induces me to regard the sculptures in question as forming *part of the original design* of a building of the period of the Atreidæ.

It would be out of place, in this short essay, to enter into any details concerning the foundation and early history of the extant ruins of Mycenæ, or to advance any arguments in support of the general truth of the approximate chronology, which refers those remains to the period of the heroic ages. Fully convinced myself on these heads, ²⁴ I desire rather to cite the recorded opinions of others who have visited and examined the spot, and whose well-known classical and antiquarian acquirements render their testimony ample and sufficient.

²² Thus realizing the ancient accounts of *subterraneous* brazen chambers.—See Leake, *loc. cit.* vol. ii. pages 380–382.

²³ See also Gell's *Argolis*, Plate iv. and page 30.

²⁴ When, with some previously acquired knowledge of the relative ages of the different styles of building existing in Greece, one contemplates, *on the spot*, the remains of Mycenæ, with the narrative of Pausanias in mind, one assents very readily to the general truth of his account; and finds nothing forced in the opinion, that *eight centuries, at least*, may well have elapsed between the date of the construction called the Treasury of Atreus, and the building of the Parthenon.

Colonel Leake says of Mycenæ,²⁵ "The entire circuit of the citadel still subsists, and, in some places, the ruined walls are fifteen or twenty feet high. There are found among them, specimens of Hellenic masonry of various ages. The most ancient parts, although not so massive as the walls of Tiryns, are built exactly in the same manner. . . . The later reparations of the walls may easily be recognized: with this exception, every thing left at Mycenæ dates from the heroic ages."

Again, speaking of the Treasuries, page 385, he says, "As to their having been the Treasuries of the Atreidæ, it was a tradition which had descended to Pausanias in an unbroken series; and as there is no reason to doubt that they were built for the purpose which the Greek name implies, it is no more than consistent with the history of Mycenæ, to believe that the largest, or that which is nearly complete, was the Treasury of Atreus himself. . . . It is by no means improbable, that one or two of these edifices may have been more ancient than Atreus, and works of the Perseidæ."—"Nothing can more strongly show the extreme antiquity of the remains at Mycenæ, and that they really belong to the remote ages, to which they are ascribed by Pausanias, than the singularity of some parts of them, and their general dissimilarity to other Hellenic remains." In addition to what Colonel Leake has stated, the observations on this celebrated site, in Mr. Dodwell's work,²⁶ will be found to deserve a careful perusal; as will also the remarks of Sir William Gell,²⁷ and the ancient testimonies quoted by

²⁵ 'Travels in the Morea,' vol. ii. pp. 368-369.

²⁶ 'Tour in Greece,' vol. ii. pp. 229-243.

²⁷ 'Argolis,' pp. 31-35.

each. These able judges all concur in showing that the construction, called the Treasury of Atreus, as well as the rest of the existing remains of Mycenæ, except some later reparations of the walls, are works of the heroic ages.

Independent of the evidence of an early abandonment of the city, afforded by the present state of the ruins, it is known from history, that when Mycenæ was taken, B. C. 468,²⁸ by the Argives, the place was utterly destroyed and depopulated. More than one-half of the inhabitants took refuge in Macedonia, and the remainder in Ceryneia and Cleonæ.²⁹

A *gradual decline*, however, in the power and wealth of Mycenæ, long previous³⁰ to its final overthrow and depopulation, B. C. 468, may be inferred from the fact of there being no coins of that city;³¹ and perhaps

²⁸ Clinton, 'Fasti Hellenici,' vol. ii. p. 36.—Diod. Sic. xi. 65. Cf. also Strabo, viii. pp. 372 and 377.

²⁹ Pausan. Achaic. c. 25.

³⁰ Strabo dates the decline of Mycenæ from the return of the Heraclidæ.—Lib. viii. p. 372.

³¹ In like manner there are no coins of Tiryns, although coins exist in abundance of Argos and Corinth, safely attributable to a period anterior to the final destruction of Mycenæ and Tiryns. It appears therefore highly probable, that at the period of the dominion of Phidon of Argos (Strabo, lib. viii. page 358) over the Peloponnesus, B. C. 748, (Clinton's Fasti Hellen. vol. i. p. 160,) the power and influence of Mycenæ and Tiryns had so far declined, as to deprive those cities of the privilege, or the need, of having a mint; while Corinth and Argos were flourishing, and striking money. The *most ancient* coins of the two last-named places most probably date very soon after the period of Phidon, who is stated by Strabo (lib. viii. page 376), on the authority of Ephorus, to have coined the first silver money [of Greece] at Ægina. The inland position of Mycenæ, among other causes, may have induced this decline; while Argos and Corinth, situated near to the coast, were more advantageously placed for commerce.

the small number of its inhabitants who fought at Thermopylæ³² and at Plataea,³³ may furnish a ready clue to the exterminating victory of the Argives over them. It is well known, that coins are found of many cities, which are stated by ancient authors to have been destroyed in early times : such coins, therefore, proceed from a later population ; and if any such had existed of Mycenæ, it might have been argued that the fragments of vases in question, as well as the sculptures, belonged to the period of the later inhabitants ; but as no coins of Mycenæ have been hitherto found, that fact may be regarded as a strong evidence that the city was never inhabited after the destruction and depopulation recorded by the ancient authors cited in the preceding notes. Moreover, the tenor of history leads us to infer, that the policy and power of Argos would have been always opposed to any re-building or re-peopling of Mycenæ.

It will be here perceived, that the object of the facts, the historical evidence, and the observations which precede, has been —

1st. To connect the fictile fragments A. B. C. with the period of Cyclopean architecture, by means of the locality where they are found in such abundance.

2ndly. To circumscribe their age within the period of the duration of Mycenæ. In other words, to fix the range of their date between the years B. C. 1400 and B. C. 500, in round numbers : and—

3rdly. More particularly to connect them with the epoch of the building called the Treasury of Atreus, by means of the peculiar style of the ornaments, com-

³² Pausan. Corinth. c. 16.

³³ Herodot. lib. ix. 28.

mon to the sculptured facing of the Treasury, and to the pottery.

I now proceed to pass in brief review the opinions and inferences which are embraced under these three heads, chiefly in order to meet the more obvious objections which might be advanced against them, previous to endeavouring, in conclusion,—

4thly. To show, by analogy, and by other circumstances, that we may reasonably infer that vases dug up at other places, *in Greece Proper*,³⁴ or in the islands of the Archipelago, having the same style of ornament, and being of the same ancient fabric, belong to the same period.

1. We find no locality in Greece so suited to the object of this essay as Mycenæ. In general terms, all the remains are Cyclopean. We see in its huge walls, formed rather of squared rocks than of stones, as well as in its singularly constructed *bee-hive like* and massive treasuries,³⁵ the remains of a city, which, ac-

³⁴ In the prosecution of this particular inquiry, it is safer to exclude the pottery of Sicily and Magna Græcia, because in judging of the age of vases chiefly by the similarity of the style of the ornaments and of the style of the manufacture, it seems indispensable to the correctness of our conclusions that proximity of locality should be a condition. Moreover, the most ancient pottery from Sicily or Magna Græcia which ever fell under my observation, does not appear to me to belong to so remote a period as the pottery represented in the Plate.

³⁵ I cordially coincide in the opinion expressed in a recent interesting work, ('Peloponnesiaca,' 8vo, London, 1846, pp. 255-258,) that these treasuries *are not tombs*; and I would moreover add, that if any future discovery should prove any one of them to have been *used as such*, I should only infer from such a fact, that at the period of the deposit, the original use of the construction was forgotten or disregarded. The light thrown upon the *brazen chambers* of the Mythic Period of Greece, by the remarks of Sir Wm. Gell, Colonel

ording to the soundest archæological opinions, may be pronounced to accord with the accounts which refer its origin to the heroic ages.

On this ancient site, in every direction where patches of soil have tempted the labours of the modern husbandman, the attention of the traveller is continually arrested by the sight of innumerable fragments of pottery, turned up on the spot, and broken by the spade or by the plough.³⁶ He further perceives that all these fragments present a certain uniformity of colour and appearance which differs remarkably from the mixed character of those which he has observed in the neighbourhood of other Hellenic sites. From this peculiar and strong circumstantial evidence, he readily comes to a conclusion, *when on the spot*, that the pottery strewed on all sides belongs to the same period as the architecture around him.

2. It is readily admitted, that the period of 900 years, from B. C. 1400 to B. C. 500, in round numbers, however needful as a preliminary basis, is by far too wide a range to satisfy the proposed inquiry as to the age of these fictile fragments. It is obvious that they cannot be considered to belong to the whole of the period during which *Mycenæ existed as an inhabited city*, since it might be argued with considerable force and truth, that such a style of art in the manufacture of pottery could not, in the nature of human events, be

Leake, and Mr. Dodwell, on the Treasury of Atreus, in their respective works before quoted, sufficiently show that Treasuries were not tombs.

³⁶ It would be erroneous to suppose that these fragments have lain on the surface of the soil, as rubbish or *débris*, for 3000 years. They indicate the sites of cemeteries, so ancient, as often to be *within the boundary of the city*, and have been turned up at a comparatively recent period. See note 7, page 264.

expected to continue during such a long series of years.

This consideration alone, were there no other motives, would lead us to look to the shorter and more natural period *during which Mycenæ flourished*, as the epoch of this pottery; for, as before remarked, the primitive style of the ornament precludes its duration for a long period; and on the other hand, plots of ground embracing the entire site, are more or less strewn with fragments similar to those before us, and bearing that style of ornament.

3. If it be said that the occurrence of spiral and zig-zag lines, as sole or chief embellishments on the pottery and on the sculpture, is too vague or too slight a proof of an approximately contemporaneous execution, I can only urge in reply, that the coincidence occurring in the same locality, and under all the circumstances narrated, appears to me, as it appeared to Sir William Gell and to Mr. Dodwell, too remarkable an indication of proximity of period, to be mistaken by any one used to the study of works of ancient art, especially as it is not intended thereby to fix the age of any given specimen with precision, but merely to show approximately that such pottery belongs to the same remote age as the sculpture.

The structure called the Treasury of Atreus must date somewhat anterior to B. C. 1200.³⁷ It unquestionably belongs to the flourishing period of Mycenæ; and its elaborate and remarkable marble facing has therefore unexpectedly preserved to us the style of

³⁷ Clinton ('Fasti Hellenici') places the accession of Agamemnon B. C. 1200.—The triangular opening above the lintel of the doorway of the building is analogous in its construction to the triangular apertures above the entrances to the Pyramids of Egypt.

ornament of the heroic ages. We find to this day fragments of vases turned up by the plough, within a few hundred yards of that building in every direction,³⁸ and upon those fragments we remark the same style of embellishment which we find on the marble. Can any thing short of demonstration better enable us to form a conclusion that both are referable to the same period, and that a century, or at most a century and a half, is the greatest possible difference in age between the sculpture and the pottery?

If it be said that in the order of events, the fragments in question might rather belong to the last inhabitants of Mycenæ than to those of the earlier ages, we answer: 1st, that we cannot admit the duration of the use of the same style of ornament for above seven centuries; and 2ndly, that such an opinion would be opposed to the knowledge which we already possess of the fabric and style of vases in use in Greece, at the period of the destruction of Mycenæ, and earlier.

The vases to which I here allude form a *second class*. They present us with archaic black figures, on a ground of the natural colour of the clay, although the body of the vase is painted black, and has often a black star-like ornament³⁹ proceeding upwards from the foot of the vase. The older specimens of this second class may

³⁸ Colonel Leake ('Travels in the Morea,' vol. ii. p. 383) remarks, that some *ploughed* land on the slope of the hill, on the opposite side of the city, *west* of the third Treasury, (*see his Plan of the site of Mycenæ*;) was strewed with ancient pottery, and hence infers that the city covered the slope towards the plain. The pottery probably marks the line of the extent of the city in that direction, being indicative of a cemetery immediately outside the town, on the *western* side.

³⁹ This star-like ornament is common to the later vases of the primitive class, and the earliest specimens of the second class.

very safely be considered to extend above a century earlier than the destruction of Mycenæ, to B. C. 600, to which period, *at least*, I would unhesitatingly assign the well-known Athenian Panathenaic amphora,⁴⁰ now in the British Museum.

⁴⁰ This important vase has been many times published and engraved, but chiefly by Millingen ('Ancient Unedited Monuments,' 1st series, pp. 1-10, Plates I.-III.), and by the Chevalier Brøndsted, in his 'Dissertation on Panathenaic Amphoræ,' in the 'Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature,' vol. ii. Part 1. 1832, page 134. The former (probably influenced by his view of the inscription) assigns it to a period anterior to B. C. 562, and the latter to a period "not anterior to the first half of the fifth century B. C." But looking upon Athens as the source of Art and Literature, and considering with care the *style of the manufacture* of this vase, and the *style of art* displayed on it, I venture, with all deference to such high authority, to assign it to a far earlier period, on the following grounds: First, it appears to me that in judging of its age, the important difference between a Panathenaic prize amphora, found and manufactured *at Athens* itself, and those found *in Italy*, manufactured *there* at a later period by Athenian colonists, has been much overlooked. Secondly, that the distinguishing peculiarities of the Athenian amphora, *necessarily original*, are all indicative of a remote period; while the few of these peculiarities that are retained on the colonial amphoræ, indicate, evidently, a style of imitation of which the Athenian specimen must necessarily be the prototype. Among the distinguishing peculiarities to which I allude, as indicative of a far earlier age, on the Athenian vase, (and which have not been copied by the colonists, for the obvious reason that civilization had advanced several grades when the colonial vases were made,) I would notice the following: 1. The almost *Phœnician forms* of the Archaic Greek letters, *written from right to left*. 2. The *absence of reins to the horses*, which are guided by a long wand furnished with two jingling objects pendant from a hook at the end of it, and which, if dropped between the heads of the horses, upon a strap which served to keep them together, furnished a ready means of restraining or stopping them at pleasure. 3. The use of the goad, to urge them forward; the effect of which is visible in the purple indication of blood on the horse's flank. 4. The primitive construction of the wheel, which, instead of spokes, has one upright and two transverse bars. 5. The

Ascending a century higher, I completely coincide with Mr. Dodwell in the opinion he has recorded⁴¹ respecting the age of his celebrated vase found near Mertése,⁴² and which he considers as dating about

style of art in the representation of Pallas-Athene, and in forming the eye of the charioteer like the eyes of the horses. 6. The style of the vases found inside the Panathenaic amphora, and on which no stress has hitherto been laid. See 'Mémoire sur les Vases Panathénaïques, par P. O. Brøndsted, traduit de l'Anglais, par John William Burgon;' 4to, Paris, 1833, avec six planches; in which, at Plate v. figs. 1-6, these six vases are represented.

These peculiarities might not perhaps be so important, had the vase belonged to any city in Greece except Athens, or had it not been destined to be presented as *one of the public prizes* in the Panathenaic games. On these grounds, even the error in the inscription (*if it be an error*) may be urged as a proof of the *infancy of writing* when the vase was made; and finally, our attribution of it to *at least* B.C. 600, may be supported by two additional and separate arguments. The first, derived from the age of the primitive coin of Athens, now in the British Museum, and engraved at the end of the Dissertation on Panathenaic Vases, by the Chevalier Brøndsted, in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature. This coin must be referred to a period anterior to B.C. 600, and on it is represented a vase of *precisely similar form in every minute particular*. The second, derived from the age of the colonial Panathenaic amphoræ themselves, which cannot be placed later than B.C. 450-500, and which the Athenian specimen must have preceded *at least* 100 to 150 years.

⁴¹ Dodwell (*loc. cit.*), page 199. "It is difficult, and indeed impossible, to determine its age: the style of the design, however, but more particularly the very ancient and curious form of the letters, induces me to place it about 700 years before the Christian era."

⁴² The relative positions of Mycenæ, Corinth, and Mertése, form nearly an equilateral triangle, the latter place being towards the sea coast. Colonel Leake makes the following remark on this locality: "The ancient cemetery between Mertési and Galatáki, where a very ancient vase was found, which Mr. Dodwell procured at Corinth, belonged probably to Solygeia."—(*Loc. cit.* vol. iii. p. 309.) See also his map of the Morea in vol. i.; and cf. his *Peloponnesiaca*, page 398.

B. c. 700.⁴³ It may be regarded as safely claiming *at least* that high antiquity, and is one of the oldest inscribed⁴⁴ vases bearing an historical representation of high and delicate finish, which ever fell under my observation.

This most important specimen of the art of design at so early an age, is described and carefully represented in colours, in the work before mentioned.⁴⁵ It is of singular importance to us in this inquiry, not only because it was found so near to Mycenæ,⁴⁶ but because it belongs to the primitive class of vases of which we are speaking, and moreover is to be regarded

⁴³ On comparing Mr. Dodwell's vase with the Athenian Panathenaic amphora, I think the former may be anterior to B. c. 700. Both are carefully finished specimens, and both are inscribed. I do not venture, however, to assume an earlier date in the absence of any other evidence than that derived from a long habitual exercise of the judgment in the comparison of ancient monuments, but I think B. c. 700 as low a date as can be assigned to Mr. Dodwell's vase with any fair degree of probability.

⁴⁴ We may observe in the style of art of the human figures, as well as in the forms of the letters,—the position of the sigma,—the occurrence of the koph, &c., a strong resemblance to the incuse coins of Sybaris, Crotona, Metapontum, Caulonia, Posidonia, &c., &c., in Magna Græcia. These colonies were planted between B. c. 710 and 774, for the most part by Greeks from the Peloponnesus, and some of them from the immediate neighbourhood of the locality where the vase was found. Millingen (*Considérations sur la Numismatique de l'ancienne Italie*, 8vo, Florence, 1841, and Supp. 1844,) refers some of these coins to B. c. 620, 680, and 700.

⁴⁵ Dodwell (*loc. cit.*), pages 197-199, vol. ii.

⁴⁶ Mertése is only fifteen miles from Mycenæ. It adds much to the value of a comparison of vases, when the specimens compared are from the same neighbourhood, the uniform tendency of my experience having led me to consider vases to have been manufactured at, or near to, the places where they are found, except some valid objection can be shown to the contrary.

as a *transition specimen*,⁴⁷ approximately marking,—conjointly with the *Athenian* Panathenaic amphora,—the period when this primitive class, which, for the sake of distinction, I would call the Pelasgic,⁴⁸ or Heroic, merged into the second class, which may be designated as the earliest Hellenic.

If, in accordance with Mr. Dodwell's opinion, and my own best belief and judgment, the period of B.C. 700, be received as the lowest probable age of the precious vase before us from Mertése; and if, in con-

⁴⁷ The characteristics of transition on this precious vase are the letters,—the human form,—and the style of heightening the effect of the flowers, animals, &c., by scratching through the colours into the body of the vase. These peculiarities, in general, belong exclusively to vases of the second class. On the other hand, the body of the vase is *entirely* of the natural colour of the clay, which attaches this specimen to the primitive class. The transition style is moreover marked by the star-like ornament springing from the foot, which is a peculiarity decidedly common to both classes. See further, note 51, page 283.

⁴⁸ There seems to be no valid objection to the adoption of the words *Pelasgic* and *Hellenic*, to distinguish the two earliest classes of Greek vases. In so doing, I do not venture on the very dubious ground of attributing the primitive class to the Pelasgians exclusively, as specimens of *their* pottery. It may be said of the Pelasgians and Hellenes, as of the two classes of vases,—both are Greek. The elder merged into the later. The Pelasgians are indisputably connected with Cyclopean masonry;—so is the primitive class of pottery. Again, we can trace and point out an approximate period when the primitive pottery ended, but we can by no means discover its beginning, or limit *the age upwards* of certain specimens;—it is the same with the Pelasgic race. We shall find presently, that Athens has hitherto been the most fertile source, for the discovery of vases of the primitive class, under the north side of the Acropolis;—the Pelasgians were the builders of the Cyclopean wall round the Athenian citadel, which was, even in after times, called by the ancients "The Pelasgic Fortress." See Leake's 'Topography of Athens,' 2nd edit. 8vo, 1841, vol. i. pp. 309-313.

formity with the conjecture already hazarded, the age of the fragments A. B. C. is to be comprised between B. C. 1200 and 1100, we have discovered, by comparing vases from the same locality, and of careful finish, that there is an interval of four centuries between those ornamented with zigzag and spiral lines, and those presenting us with an archaic representation of a wild-boar chase, with the name of each huntsman *written*⁴⁹ near him.

Nor, on due consideration, will this interval appear too long. It is probable that transitions in the style of ornament on earthenware, were never rapid, either in ancient or comparatively modern times.⁵⁰

We will now endeavour, lastly, to strengthen our attribution of zigzag and spiral ornaments to B. C. 1200 to 1100, by pointing out the chief characteristics of *three different grades of style* with respect to *art*, and connected also with *form*, observable on vases found in Greece Proper, which obviously intervene between the two extremes just pointed out, and fill up the interval of four centuries—that is to say, which must be classed between the assumed dates B. C. 1100 and B. C. 700.

They may be approximately classed as follows, viz. :

⁴⁹ See Bishop Thirlwall's 'History of Greece,' vol. i., end of chapter vi., on the art of writing.

⁵⁰ The red Roman pottery, of the class called *Samian ware*, seems to have lasted, without much alteration, from before the time of Julius Cæsar till after Constantine; as well the unornamented, as the sort called *sigillata*; and it is very difficult to fix dates to specimens of the middle period. I have seen in Italy *dated specimens* of the earthenware called Raphael's ware, or *Majolica*, from about A. D. 1400 to A. D. 1650, which exhibited marked uniformity in style and fabric, although certainly, without the dates, the earlier and the later specimens could be distinguished. It is probable, that during the feudal ages in Europe, the style of the earthenware varied very little.

i. Meanders ;—certain Ornaments ;—certain Borders ;—certain Symbolical Representations ;—as well as real objects. B. c. 1100 to 900.

ii. Combinations of any of the above with Floral Representations, Birds and Animals ;—real, as well as imaginary or mythological. B. c. 1000 to 800.

iii. Combinations of any of the above with the Human Figure, or Groups ;—and with the occasional introduction of letters. B. c. 900 to 700.⁵¹

The arrangement of these dates is, of course, only approximative ; and has been contrived with a view to meet in some degree the difficulty of attempting to define, or assign periods to, grades of style, which must always have had a natural and strong tendency to merge into each other.

4. If it be true that zigzag or spiral ornaments, together or separate, as chief embellishments, are characteristic of the carefully finished, or better sort of pottery of the earliest periods of Grecian history, it

⁵¹ The shield of Achilles and other descriptions in Homer would favour *earlier* dates for the human figure ; nevertheless it does not occur on pure specimens of the primitive class. On the whole, *this third grade of style* may be better regarded as indicative of *the period of transition*, during which, not only the introduction of the human form, and of letters, took place, but also the improvement of heightening the effect of the old representations of flowers, birds, and animals, by *scratching through the colour into the substance of the vase*, with a sharp instrument ; which style of art is never found on true specimens of the primitive class which forms the object of this Essay. At page 200 of Mr. Dodwell's work just mentioned, there is a Plate of a *second vase* from the same ancient cemetery at Mèrtésc, perhaps a little older than the other. It has *no star* proceeding from the foot, and though highly finished, is merely ornamented with lions, stags, and flowers, and concentric circles on the knob of the lid. This specimen also belongs to the transition period, the representations being heightened by the scratching process.

might be expected that vases so ornamented would be occasionally discovered on all the ancient sites in that country, especially where Cyclopean masonry exists.

It would be also reasonable to expect that *the finding* of such pottery might sometimes be attended with circumstances indicative of its remote antiquity.

Unfortunately the complete and satisfactory elucidation of each of these two assumptions has been always rendered difficult. First, by the almost insurmountable obstacles which have at all times opposed themselves to excavations on remote sites in Greece;—secondly, by the comparative degree of rarity of the specimens themselves,⁵² and the general omission to notice or publish the facts of their discovery; and thirdly, by the little interest felt by collectors in general, for the acquisition of vases of this class, in consequence of the total absence of the human form upon them,⁵³ and even the rare occur-

⁵² I had ample opportunity of verifying the fact of the rare occurrence of tombs containing this class of vases at Athens; not only by my own excavations, but by a careful examination of the collection of M. Fauvel, the resident French Consul, which comprised the general product of nearly all the Athenian tombs which he had explored during a long course of years. I examined also the collection of Sig^r. Lusieri, who had in like manner for many years directed excavations among the tombs for Lord Elgin. The result satisfied me of the rare occurrence at Athens of undisturbed graves and unbroken vases of such remote antiquity, which is precisely what might be expected in the cemeteries of such a populous city, where each succeeding generation, in turn, was so likely to break into and disturb anterior deposits.

⁵³ Even Mr. Dodwell, when at Mertése,—after giving an interesting account of his successful discovery of the site of the sepulchres which produced his celebrated vase, and which were *graves cut in the*

rence of animals, or any thing beyond mere conventional ornaments.

As far as I was enabled to carry my personal observations and inquiries on these points, they tended to confirm the truth of the main position before us. Nothing that I ever remarked or heard of⁵⁴ militated, in any way, against it. It is, however, an open question, the solution of which these remarks are rather intended to draw attention to than finally to settle: in the mean time, the dearth of knowledge on the subject inspires me with a wish to record the little which I have been able to glean, in the hope of aiding the researches of those who may hereafter be

live rock,—dismisses *other vases of the same class* in the following words: "The other cottages exhibited vases of *the same kind*, but without any *figures* on them, or any thing which rendered them interesting in themselves."—Page 196, vol. ii.

⁵⁴ I must not omit here to notice that in excavations near Vulci, made by Sig^r. Campanari, tombs have been found which contained vases attributable to remote epochs, mixed with others of a class considered to belong to comparatively recent periods. This anomaly at first sight tends to confuse and puzzle the judgment as to their respective ages. In conversing, however, lately with Sig^r. Campanari on this apparent difficulty, he informed me that the tombs in question ought rather to be called *sepulchral chambers*, and had entrances *like the door of a house*. In ancient times, the sanctity of the original deposit had been violated, and the tomb used again by a later class of inhabitants, who still, however, had respected the vases originally deposited. This appropriation of ancient tombs to the use of the people of a later age was much facilitated by the entrances having been, *in those times*, still visible and easy of access. This fact gives to the contents of the single and separate *graves* of Greece Proper, a great preference in comparisons of the style of vases found together, and in drawing inferences as to their relative ages. Millingen alludes to this very important fact: see his Papers in the 'Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature,' vol. ii. Part 1. 1832, pages 77 and 78, and vol. ii. Part II. 1834, Supp. pages 7-9.

enabled to excavate at Mycenæ, Tiryns, Argos, Corinth, Thebes, Orchomenus, or any other place in Greece where Cyclopean masonry is observable.

Hitherto, Athens has been the principal locality where excavations have been permitted. Here, numerous very curious specimens of early pottery of this class have been from time to time discovered by M. Fauvel, the resident French Consul.⁵⁵ Of several which he obligingly ceded to me (now deposited in the British Museum), one has been chosen for the Plate, as exhibiting a fine characteristic specimen of the zigzag ornament, with numerous parallel lines, but without any spirals, and is numbered 239 on the Plate. Concerning the finding of this primitive specimen of Athenian earthenware, M. Fauvel could give me no particulars. It is of carefully finished manufacture, and covered with embellishments, and its prototype (so far as regards this individual specimen) was evidently a small basket, or vessel of wicker-work, of about the same size. This is fully evinced not only by the style of the ornaments throughout, but by the form of the body, as well as the peculiar shape of the handles, and also by the design of the ornament *at the bottom, especially outside*.

I will not venture to draw any inference from this peculiarity, except that this remarkable indication of a transition from basket-work to pottery,⁵⁶ on a specimen of *Greek fictile art*, seems in itself to furnish

⁵⁵ Representations of three of these vases, which I saw at Athens, in the collection of M. Fauvel, are preserved in the work of Baron Stackelberg, entitled 'Die Gräber der Hellenen,' Berlin, folio, 1837, at Plate ix.

⁵⁶ A *style of ornament* referable to wicker-work as a prototype, is not by any means confined to this vase, but rather seems to characterize certain specimens of this early class of vases. It is, however,

an independent argument in favour of its belonging to that people when lately emerged from a primitive state of society.

In like manner, as regards the discovery of the earthen vessel, No. 224 on the Plate,⁵⁷ I can say nothing, except that the Rev. Fr. V. J. Arundell, from whom I had it, informed me it was found at Milo (Melos Insula) in a tomb. It exhibits the spiral ornament very clearly, as well as concentric circles, and belongs to the same early class. It shows that the characteristic ornament on the pottery of Mycenæ is not peculiar to that locality.

On a vase of the same class,⁵⁸ a border, of the natural size, is represented in contrast with the spirals on the slab before mentioned,⁵⁹ at H. and I. on the Plate, merely to show the identity of motive on the pottery and on the sculpture.

The triple-mouthed vase, No. 90 on the Plate, presents us not only with zigzags and bands, but also with the somewhat rude indication of the same kind of double or continuous spiral visible on the marble, as shown at I. on the Plate. It was found near Athens, and I myself directed and superintended the excavation which led to its discovery; the particulars of which are too remarkable to be passed over without giving the facts in detail.

only on this specimen that I have been enabled so distinctly to trace *the form, as well as the ornaments*, to its wicker prototype.

⁵⁷ Now deposited in the British Museum, numbered 224, from *Melos Insula*.

⁵⁸ In the possession of my son, from the collection of the late Mr. Thomas Thomas, and which I recognize to be Athenian.

⁵⁹ In the Elgin Room of the British Museum. See note 10, page 265.

Having perceived, at about half a mile from Athens, by the side of the road which leads to the Academy, certain indications of the rock having been smoothed by the hand of man, where it projected here and there from the surface of the soil, I ordered an excavation to be made on the spot. We soon found an oblong opening, squared at the angles, indicative of a grave cut in the live rock. When the men had dug, however, with pickaxes, and with great difficulty, to the depth of a few feet, the foreman of my excavations (an Athenian husbandman, of great experience, wearing the Albanian dress, and who had been employed by M. Fauvel for many years in exploring tombs,) came to me and assured me that it was of no use to dig further on that spot. He said he recognized the earth to be *virgin soil*, and therefore that nothing could possibly be deposited underneath it. I urged the evident work of man in the squaring of the corners of the oblong hole in the rock, to which he assented, but replied, that he had *on other occasions* observed similar indications of *an intention of digging a grave*, but which, for some unknown reason, *after having been half dug*, had, like this, been abandoned without completion; and repeated his assertion, that he would consent to lose his head if any object was found. Considering the appearance of the earth, I was myself much inclined to be of his opinion, but curiosity moving me just to see *the bottom* of the supposed *intended grave*, I desired him to continue digging with the pickaxe till he could proceed no further, and myself watched the result, in momentary expectation of his arriving at the live rock. After some hours' hard labour, and having attained a depth of about twelve feet, he was *astounded* — (he crossed himself, as

if to implore protection from any demoniacal influence which had so deceived him)—by the discovery of a coarse vase of yellow earth, of amphora shape, about two feet six inches high, and with a pointed bottom, the mouth or neck wanting:—(see G. on the Plate.) Proceeding then with more caution, he found two more coarse vases, one of which was of black earth,⁶⁰ (marked E. on the Plate,) and the other red (F.), with zigzags *scratched* on it. The vase numbered 90 on the Plate then came to light, placed within a two-handled cup⁶¹ with ornamental lines painted in the same style.

The amphora (G.), and the red vase (F.), contained each, a few burnt bones; proving that the body, or bodies, had been burnt, and that the grave had been dug in the solid rock, for the reception of the vases. The vase No. 90, and the cup No. 90 A, appear to be libatory. No remains of a skeleton were found, of which some traces would have been infallibly perceived, if a body had been deposited.

In the whole course of my excavations, which brought to light nearly one hundred Athenian sepulchres, this was the only tomb which contained such ancient relics; and this was also the only occurrence of the very unusual circumstance of the earth having assumed an appearance (during a lapse probably of 3000 years), which deceived *an acute man*, who had *passed his whole*

⁶⁰ Not painted black, but black throughout, as if formed of black earth.

⁶¹ This cup is also in the British Museum, numbered 90 A. It is about $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter at the mouth, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches high. It is in a state of decomposition; the earth appears to be resolving itself into its original particles. It is ornamented with parallel lines, horizontally and vertically disposed.

life in tilling the soil of Attica, or excavating for M. Fauvel. My personal experience, therefore, in the discovery of these vases, confirmed all I had previously heard, or suspected, as to the remote antiquity of the period to which they belong.

Wishing to know how far the experience of Sig^r. Lusieri, and M. Fauvel, might confirm my own opinions and observations, I had several conversations with them *as to the finding* of this class of vases. I was disappointed, however, in hearing any satisfactory details, chiefly arising, as I perceived, from their not having always personally attended to the diggings, which I never failed to do daily from morning till nightfall. Their impression and opinion nevertheless were in favour of referring vases of this class to some indefinite and remote period. M. Fauvel called them *Phœnician vases*, and accounted for the peculiar style of ornament,—so unlike, as he contended, any thing Greek,—by a vague opinion that they had been *imported into Attica*, and were consequently not of Athenian manufacture. In this opinion I did not, and do not, by any means concur: the earth and manufacture of those found at Athens appear to me to be decidedly Athenian. M. Fauvel, however, communicated to me the interesting fact, that he had known this class of vases to have been dug up *repeatedly at places within the circuit of the ancient walls of the city*, where it is well known no cemetery would have been permitted by the laws. He pointed out to me, in particular, a site where many specimens of this kind of pottery had been found, at the foot of the Acropolis on the north side, near Sig^r. Lusieri's house, and nearly under the Erechtheium. This site must have formed an inhabited part of the city anterior to the time of Solon,

when the Prytaneium was already built.⁶² It appears therefore reasonable to conclude, that during a much earlier period,—when the Acropolis alone was inhabited, or later, when the town on the southern side of the Acropolis had grown up,—the northern side had afforded a place of sepulture, which, even if not built over in Solon's time, must have long ceased to be used as a cemetery.⁶³

On the whole it seems, therefore, not unfair to infer, —1. That such vases as those represented in the Plate, rank among the *earliest specimens* of the *primitive class* of Grecian pottery. 2. That these specimens may be referred to a period ranging from B. C. 1200 to B. C. 1000, and probably earlier. 3. That zigzag and spiral lines are among the more usual ornaments of that remote epoch. 4. That this class of pottery was not confined to one place, but was common to the south of Greece, and the islands of the Archipelago. 5. That the small fragment found at Tantalís (marked D. on the Plate) carries the same class of pottery to the western shores of Asia Minor,⁶⁴ and that, even there,

⁶² See 'Leake's Topography of Athens,' &c., 8vo, London, 1841; second edition, vol. i. Plate II. page 8, &c.

⁶³ It will be recollected that the spot, under the Acropolis of Mycenæ, where the fragments A. B. C. were picked up, occupies a position quite analogous to that at the foot of the Athenian Acropolis under the Erechtheium, pointed out by M. Fauvel. That is to say, the earliest cemeteries at each place were situated *at the back of the Acropolis, at the greatest distance from the entrance.*

⁶⁴ Of the pottery and tombs of the early inhabitants of Asia Minor, it may be said that we know nothing. The prejudices of the Turks oppose an impassable barrier to investigations which might tend to afford information. Very little is known of an ancient site near Smyrna, or of the circular tombs, or rather tumuli, formed of polygonal stones, which are to be seen there, and are supposed to mark the position of Tantalís, afterwards called Sipylum. (*Vide*

as in Greece, it associates itself with Cyclopean architecture.

To conclude : if these should appear larger deductions from our premises than those premises will warrant,—and still more, should it be thought that our premises themselves are slender and insufficient,—we can but urge the nature of the inquiry, and recur to the impossibility of producing demonstration out of probabilities. Few indeed are our data ; and some of them may be regarded as inconsiderable also ; but an argument is not necessarily a weak one because it is built upon few and minute particulars. A single impression of the human foot on the sand would be enough to prove that a human being had been there. To ourselves, the evidence already adduced seems sufficient ; but whether it may appear so to another mind, or not, we are perhaps incompetent to decide. We must be content to hope that, on our part, the arguments have been fairly and clearly stated ; and that the reader will receive them candidly and weigh them with the attention which they seem to require.

“ Si singula duram

Flectere non poterunt, poterunt tamen omnia mentem.”

It has been our endeavour in this inquiry to convince by such arguments as were capable of distinct enumeration. We have purposely abstained from

Ortelius Thesaurus Geographicus, in voce.) It was among those tumuli that the fragment of pottery marked D. on the Plate, was picked up by myself. This fragment affords the only indubitable trace, that ever fell under my observation, of the existence, in Asia Minor, of the *same class* of early pottery as that of Greece Proper, of which we are speaking. The discovery of such a fragment, on such a spot, seems worth recording. For some account and views of this

alluding to that kind of acquired knowledge which enables persons to judge intuitively of works of art, because it defies analysis. The chain of reasoning, for instance, by which men decide to what school a picture belongs, can scarcely be defined. It would be as reasonable to ask how we know a handwriting, or how we distinguish voices. Such things defy explanation. It is so with antiquity:—it is so with the vases under consideration. If I were not restrained by the fear of being thought arrogant or presumptuous, I should say that *I know* these vases to be among the oldest specimens of Greek earthenware extant. I know it from a habit of contemplating and comparing such objects almost day by day for thirty years; confirmed therein from time to time by the consentient opinion of foreign antiquaries;⁶⁵ and from having

ancient locality see *Texier, 'Description de l'Asie Mineure,'* folio, Paris, 1839-1844. Plate 129, *The Necropolis of Tantalus*. Plate 130, *The Tomb of Tantalus*. Plate 131, *Details of the Necropolis of Tantalus*. See also a notice of this ancient site in '*Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus,'* &c. 2 vols. 8vo, London, 1842, by William J. Hamilton, Esq., vol. i. pp. 46-54.

⁶⁵ Not reading the German language, I was not aware, till this Paper had been sent to press, that either the learned Editor of the posthumous work of Baron Stackelberg, (see note 55, page 286,) or the Baron himself, in the MS. which he had prepared, agrees with me in considering this class of vases to be the most ancient of Greece. In his account of the three remarkable specimens, engraved at Plate ix., to which we have already referred in a previous note, he seems to consider them to be in an "Egyptian style of art," but shows their Greek origin by a reference to Mr. Dodwell's celebrated vase already spoken of. It is curious that he makes the same remarks which I have already adduced, as to "the rarity of human figures,"—the "great delicacy and care in their execution,"—the "high antiquity of the style of ornament"—and the comparison of it with "the architectural remains discovered in the Treasury of Atreus at My-

brought to light, and carefully examined on the spot, all the vases discovered in nearly one hundred Athenian sepulchres. The great philosopher already quoted seems to allude to acquired knowledge of this kind in a well-known passage: "The unproved statements and opinions of the experienced, the aged, and the judicious, merit attention no less than those which are supported by proof; for these persons, by their experience, have acquired an eye which enables them to discern rightly." ⁶⁶

To those whose habits of thought do not allow them to step beyond the first Olympiad, into the times which certainly preceded the beginning of dated and authentic history, some apology is due for assumptions and inductions with reference to primitive Grecian art, so unusual and perhaps so startling. But believing, as the soundest and wisest writers of all ages have done, in the general truth of the "Tale of Troy Divine," and that there is fundamental truth in the chronology and history of the Mythic and Heroic periods of Greece, however obscured by the veil of remote antiquity, and the style of the narratives, I cannot refrain from asking, as an old traveller in that heart-stirring country,—What has become of the smaller objects of the art of Man, belonging to the remote periods to which we have just alluded?—

centæ." He adds that these vases were discovered "by the gate Dipylon, at the lowest of three tiers of graves, on the Sacred Way which led from Athens to Eleusis," and that the largest of the three vases "contained burnt bones."

⁶⁶ ὥστε δεῖ πρὸσέχειν τῶν ἐμπείρων καὶ πρὸσβυτέρων ἢ φρονίμων ταῖς ἀναποδείκτοις φάσεσι καὶ δόξαις οὐχ ἥττον τῶν ἀποδείξεων· διὰ γὰρ τὸ ἔχειν ἐκ τῆς ἐμπειρίας ὄμμα ὁρῶσιν ὁρθῶς.—Aristot. Eth. Nic. vi. 12. (Ed. Bekker.)

In Egypt they have been found in abundance: and if, in Greece, the lapse of ages be supposed, for the most part, to have destroyed works of iron or brass, and if our good fortune has not hitherto enabled us to discover specimens formed of gold or silver, why do we not, at least, find works of terra-cotta and pottery, which, once formed and deposited in the earth, will remain there uninjured to the end of time?—But, in truth, there can be little doubt that such works of the Heroic and Homeric ages have been already often found, and that we even possess many fine specimens without suspecting their remote antiquity.⁶⁷

Future excavations on suitable sites will test the soundness of this opinion. But they must be directed with a proper degree of previously acquired knowledge; and conducted in the presence of persons able and willing to undergo the fatigue of making a faithful record of facts on the spot. Those facts should be connected with the individual objects discovered: and the objects themselves, properly distinguished, and carefully preserved, would ultimately furnish data for proving their respective ages by an intelligent comparison of things that were found together.⁶⁸ Real

⁶⁷ Compare, for instance, the Athenian Terra-Cotta, No. 190, in the British Museum, (from the same collection as the Vases,)—representing a veiled female Divinity, seated, holding a fawn, or small animal,—with the colossal seated figure of Amenophis III. (Memnon) of black granite (*Synopsis*, No. 21, *Egyptian Room*). The form of the throne, the position of the hand, and the general character of the style of the Athenian figure, indicate the Egyptian origin of *primitive* Athenian art, and point at the same time to *the very remote age* of this interesting terra-cotta.

⁶⁸ The great superiority of the *single separate graves* of Greece Proper, over the *family sepulchral chambers* (ἰσολαία) of the Greek Colonists in Magna Græcia, for aiding us in investigations such as

knowledge of the relative ages of objects, particularly of Vases, will never be acquired without the most minute care and accuracy in the conduct of investigations in this spirit.

THOMAS BURGON.

British Museum.

those just advocated, has been alluded to in a previous note at page 285.

VASES OF THE HEROIC AGES .



D
TANTALIS



239
ATHENS



224
MELOS



E



F



G



90
ATHENS



A



B



C

MYCENÆ



1 5/8



H



I



2 1/2

J. BURTON DEL.
J. BONOMO LITH.