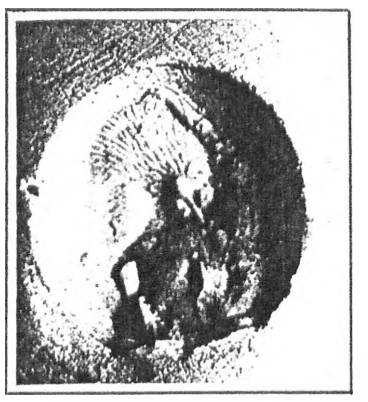
A ROYAL EXCAVATOR:

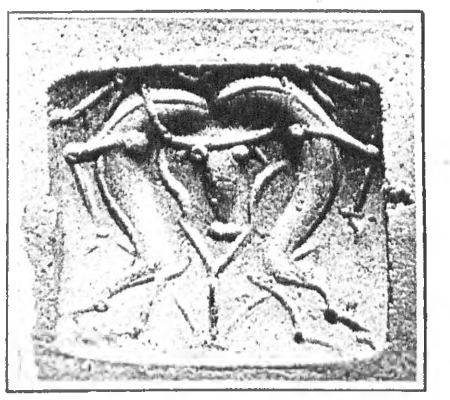
THE CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN'S DISCOVERIES AT ASINE.

By A. J. B. WACE, M.A., Director of the British School of Archæology at Athens.

ASINE, though not as famous as Mycenæ and Tiryns, is nevertheless one of the older cities of Argolis; but, as it lies slightly off the main route of travellers, its ruins are not often visited. The citadel stands on a rocky promontory jutting out into the Bay of Tolon, a few miles to the south-east of Nauplia, the great stronghold of the Venetians and the first capital of modern Greece. The bay is protected by two islets which form a natural breakwater, and the deep blue water laps round the base of the citadel, which could be approached by ships in all weathers. Hard by the south-western foot of the headland are the ruined moles of the ancient harbour, and here a small beach makes an ideal bathing place. The country round is pleasant and fertile; hills slope gently southwards to the sunny sea, and are covered with vines and dotted with olive and cypress. On the other side is a fertile plain with gardens, wheat-fields, and fruit-trees. Small wonder, then, that man should have dwelt in this favoured spot from very early times.



A SEAL-STONE FROM ASINE 2000 YEARS OLD: A LION MAULING A COW.



WITH A HERALDIC DESIGN OF A TWO-BODIED OX: A SEAL-STONE FROM ASINE.

Asine was first occupied at the beginning of the Bronze Age during the Third Millennium B.C., and after the downfall of the power of Mycenæ and the close of the Heroic Age it was inhabited by Dryopians. They took the side of Sparta in an early war against Argos, and, once the Spartan danger was removed, not long before 700 B.C., jealous Argos laid siege to Asine. After a desperate resistance, the inhabitants, to avoid surrender, embarked on their ships and sailed away as refugees to Messenia, where they founded a new Asine. The Argives destroyed the abandoned town, all but the Temple of Apollo Pythaios, and for several centuries the site lay desolate, till it was repeopled in the third and second centuries B.C., in the great days of the Achæan League. In still later times the citadel was held by the Venetians of Nauplia, who probably found here a convenient harbour for their galleys.

Such is the site where a Swedish expedition was busy excavating in the spring and autumn of 1922. The expedition was directly organised by the Crown Prince of Sweden, who himself took a very active part in the autumn campaign. He is very much to be congratulated on the great success of the excavations, which are only one instance of his keen and practical interest in all historical and artistic research. He was most ably assisted by Dr. Persson, of Lund University, and Dr. Frödin, a well-known Nordic archæologist.

On the summit of the citadel plentiful remains of the early Bronze Age have been found, with the remains of huts of that period and thousands of fragments of fine hand-made pottery. These show that the natural strength of the citadel attracted man from the very beginning of his civilisation. Round the brow of the rocks the walls of the citadel have been cleared and planned, and the entrance has been discovered. These walls, with their massive towers and terraces, date from the days of the Achæan League, but little or nothing has been found of the earlier classical period, which shows how thorough was the destruction of the city by the envious Argives. At two points, however, small *caches* of terra-cotta statuettes have been found, perhaps votives once dedicated to Apollo Pythaios. Those illustrated overleaf show a series of small figures of horsemen carrying round shields. At several places rock-cut cisterns lined with fine cement have been cleared; these date from late classical times, and indicate that the water-supply was a source of anxiety to the inhabitants in case of siege.

One of these cisterns had three chambers, and was at first thought to be a tomb, because a human skeleton was found among the débris in it. There is now, however, no doubt that it is a cistern, and so the skeleton is probably the silent witness of some mediæval murder.

In the lower city, which lies by the side of the harbour at the western foot of the citadel, underneath the ruins of houses of the second century B.C., an extensive settlement of the Middle Helladic Age (1800-1600 B.C.) has been brought to light. Here were the ruins of houses, and many relics of stone, bronze, and pottery, the latter including a splendid specimen of a burial-jar for a child, imported from the Cyclades, and decorated with geometric patterns in white. (See illustration overleaf.)

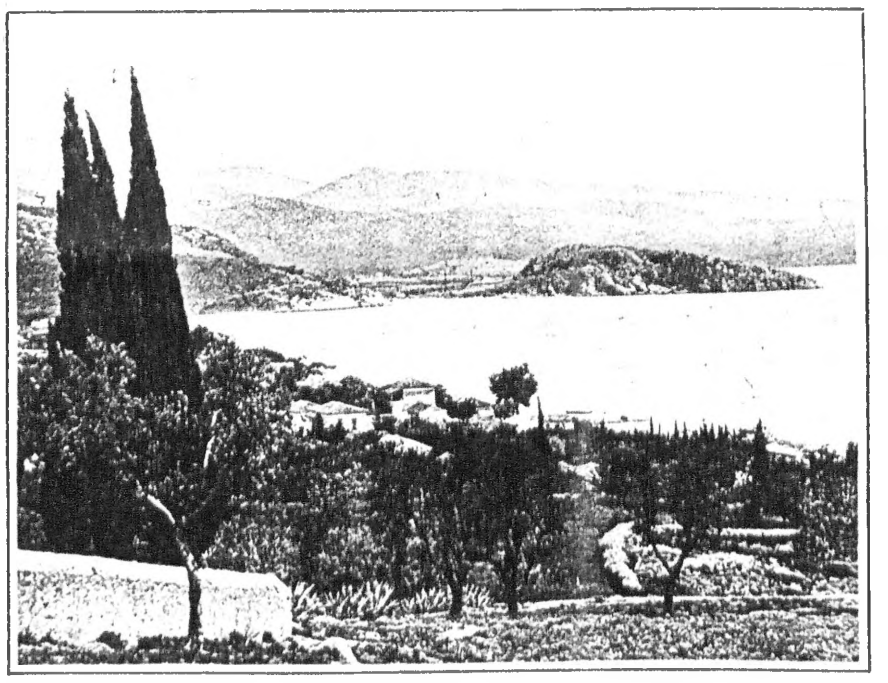
To the west of the lower town on the slope of a neighbouring hill the cemeteries have been located, and the excavation of tombs here gave excellent results. Many cremation graves of the early Iron Age were found, belonging probably to the Dryopian inhabitants of the town. These yielded quantities of good wheel-made vases ornamented with elaborate geometric patterns or quaint conventionalised animals, amber beads, obsidian knives, bronze brooches, and pins. The number and richness of these graves is surprising.

Further west on the north side of the same hill rock-cut sepulchres of the Late Helladic or Mycenæan Age (1600-1100 B.C.) have been found. Thirteen have so far been discovered, and there is little doubt that the hillside still conceals many more. Of the thirteen only the largest has been excavated, as digging a tomb demands great care and patience, if all the objects found in it are to be properly recorded and saved for science. The roof had collapsed, and in the hollow thus formed a large fig-tree had grown up; but the keen eyes of the Swedish explorers observed that the hollow was artificial, and so the fig-tree was cut away, to reveal a big tomb. This is of the usual type, but the entrance passage enters at the north-east angle, instead of in the middle of the north wall, and within the chamber off the south-west corner there are two alcoves or charnel chambers. (See top right photograph opposite.)

The tomb proved very rich, as it had been in use from the fifteenth century B.C. right down to the early Iron Age, thus showing the historical continuity of Asine, if one family tomb was in use for all those centuries. In the entrance passage one skeleton was found, and in the chamber were at least six others; one lay on a bank of stones against the east side, and another on a bed of clay towards the north wall, with the skeleton of a dog by his side. Was it the custom that the hunter should be accompanied on his last journey by his faithful hound?

Many valuable relics were discovered here, among which were at least a hundred painted vases. There were four intaglio seal stones; one shows two recumbent oxen, another a lion mauling a cow, a third a heraldic representation of an ox with two bodies, and the fourth a man, clad in the usual Mycenæan loin-cloth, holding by the horns a goat standing on its hind legs. There is a magnificent gold ring, the device of which represents an acrobat somersaulting over a bull, a very spirited scene common in the wall-paintings of Knossos. There are two silver rings; one is not yet cleaned, but it is inlaid with gold and shows a hunting scene; the other has its seal made of iron, which shows that iron was just beginning to be known, but was very rare and used as a precious metal. Other jewellery comprises over a hundred objects of gold, a small rod with a chased spiral pattern, beads and pendants with delicate granulated work, over forty thin gold rosettes once probably stitched on to the grave-clothes, eight gold leaves like those found by Schliemann in the royal graves at Mycenæ, and bronze nails with golden heads. Many fragments of silver vases, some with chased geometric designs, a fine bronze dagger and many other objects of the same metal, quantities of amber beads, glass beads, and small objects of ivory were also recovered among the débris.

The riches of this one tomb hint that many other, and perhaps even greater, treasures await the fortunate Swedes when they resume excavations on this fruitful site. Their skill and patience have been fittingly rewarded, and we know that, when the excavations are continued, everything will be done with the same scientific care, so that results of the highest historical importance are to be expected.



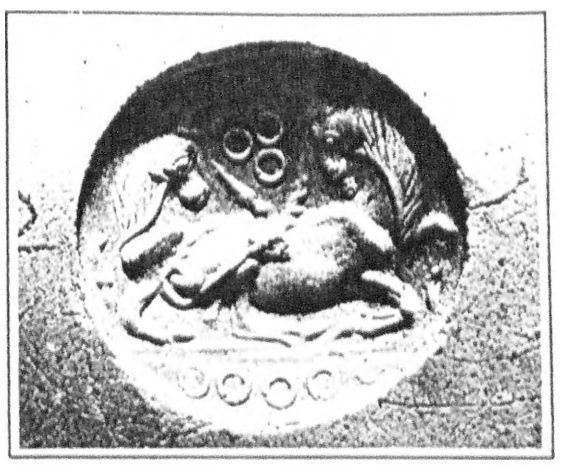
FIRST INHABITED IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM B.C.: ASINE (IN CENTRE BACKGROUND) WHERE THE CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN HAS MADE REMARKABLE DISCOVERIES.

This view of Asine, taken from the south, shows the harbour in the centre background, with the citadel (a rocky promontory) on the right, and the cemetery hill rising towards the left.

Photographs by Courtesy of Mr. A. J. B. Wace.

CARVED 2000 YEARS AGO: A SEAL-STONE WITH FIGURES OF A MAN AND A GOAT.

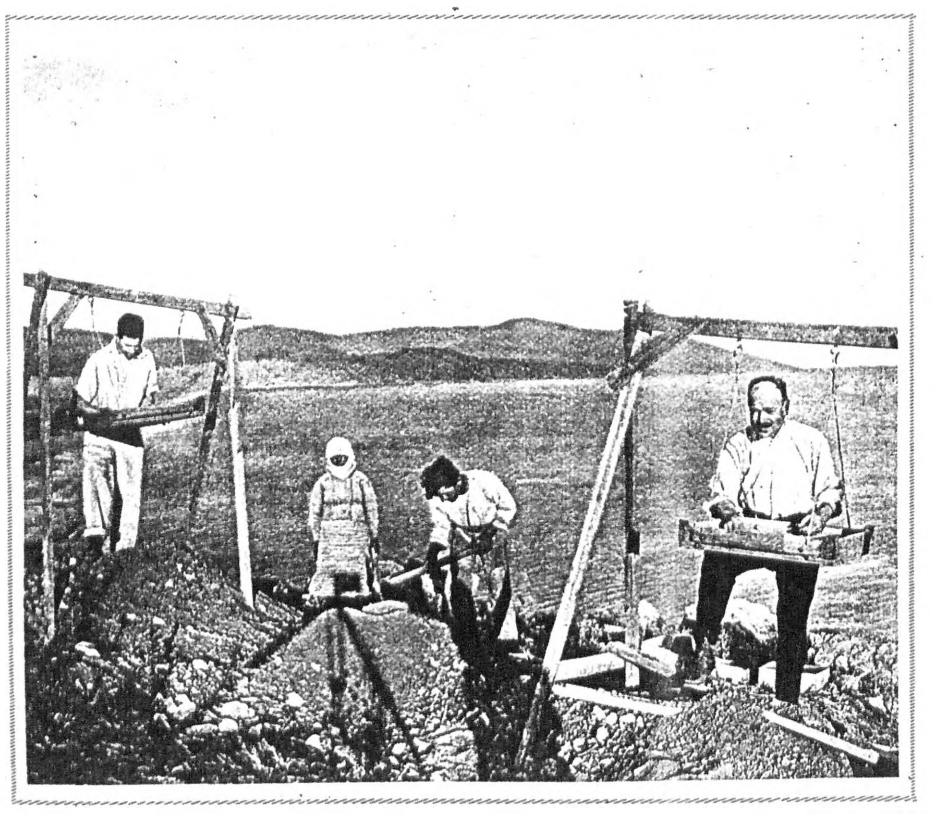
NOTE.—*Owing to lack of space, the sixth of Professor Garstang's illustrated articles on archæological research in Palestine has had to be held over, and will appear in a later issue.*



FOUND AT ASINE IN A TOMB OF THE MYCENEAN AGE (1500 TO 1100 B. C.): AN INTAGLIO SEAL-STONE—TWO RECUMBENT OXEN.

SWEDEN'S HEIR-APPARENT AS EXCAVATOR IN GREECE: ASINE "FINDS."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY COURTESY OF MR. A. J. B. WACE, DIRECTOR OF THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF ARCHÆOLOGY AT ATHENS.



THE CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN (LEFT) EXCAVATING AT ASINE: SIFTING SOIL FROM THE EXCAVATIONS TO RECOVER SMALL OBJECTS.

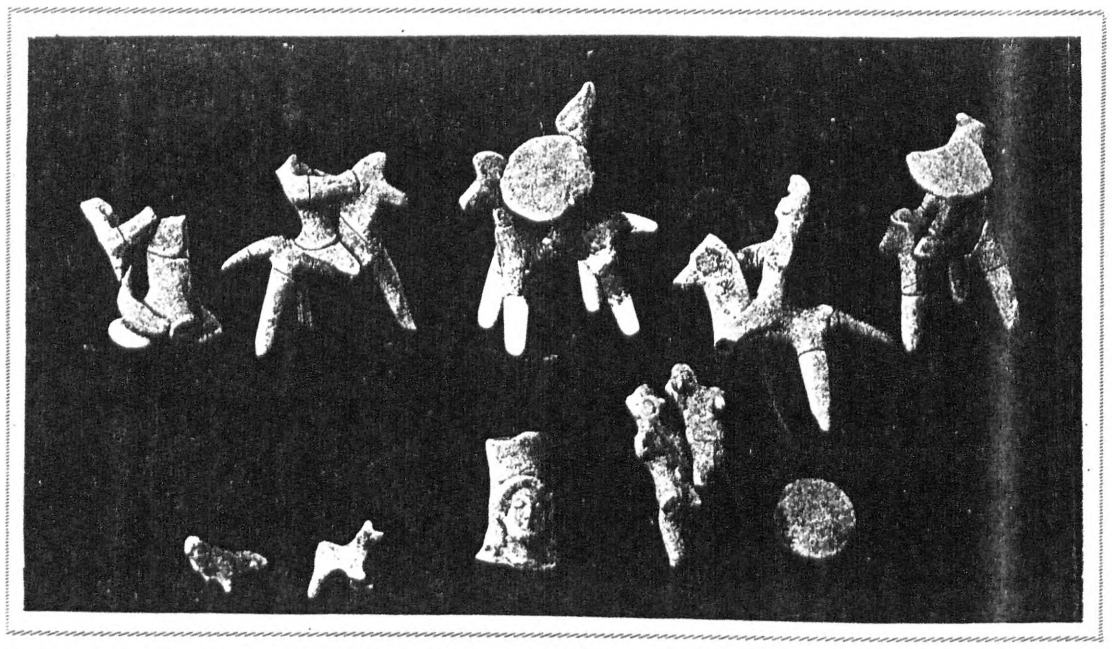
IN A MYCENEAN TOMB AT ASINE: THE PRINCE (LEFT), DR. PERSSON (NEXT), AND DR. FRÖDIN (AT ENTRANCE OF RIGHT CHARNEL CHAMBER).

IN USE FROM 1500 TO 1100 B.C.: THE BIG MYCENEAN TOMB AT ASINE FOUND BY REMOVING A FIG-TREE SHOWING ENTRANCE PASSAGE (CENTRE BACKGROUND), RECUMBENT SKELETON ON STONES (RIGHT BACKGROUND), AND ANOTHER HUMAN SKELETON, WITH A DOG'S SKULL BESIDE IT (TOWARDS LEFT BACKGROUND).

The Crown Prince of Sweden returned to Stockholm on December 16 from his archæological expedition to Asine, in Greece, travelling by way of Italy and the Riviera, where he stayed for a short visit. The excavations at Asine, described by Mr. A. J. B. Wace in his article opposite, brought to light many interesting relics of the Mycenean Age, and of a still earlier period influenced by the Minoan culture of Crete, including the fine burial-urn illustrated on page 48. [illegible] ernment, which prohibits the export of such objects from Greece, passed a special law granting an exceptional concession, that the articles found might be taken to Sweden for further study and classification, on condition that they should be returned to Greece after three years. It is proposed to continue the work at Asine later, when the rich results thus far obtained have been adequately treated. The Crown Prince of Sweden is the son-in-law of the Duke of Connaught, and a widower. He married Princess Margaret of Connaught at Windsor in 1905, and she died at Stockholm in 1920, leaving four sons and one daughter.

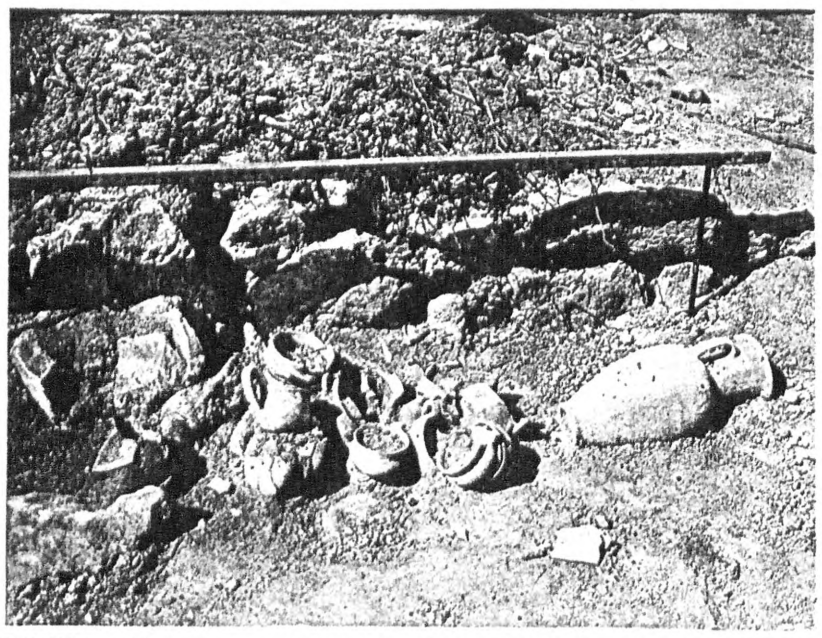
NEW LIGHT ON GREEK ANTIQUITY: "VOTIVES" AND VASES FROM ASINE.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY COURTESY OF MR. A. J. B. WACE, DIRECTOR OF THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF ARCHÆOLOGY AT ATHENS.



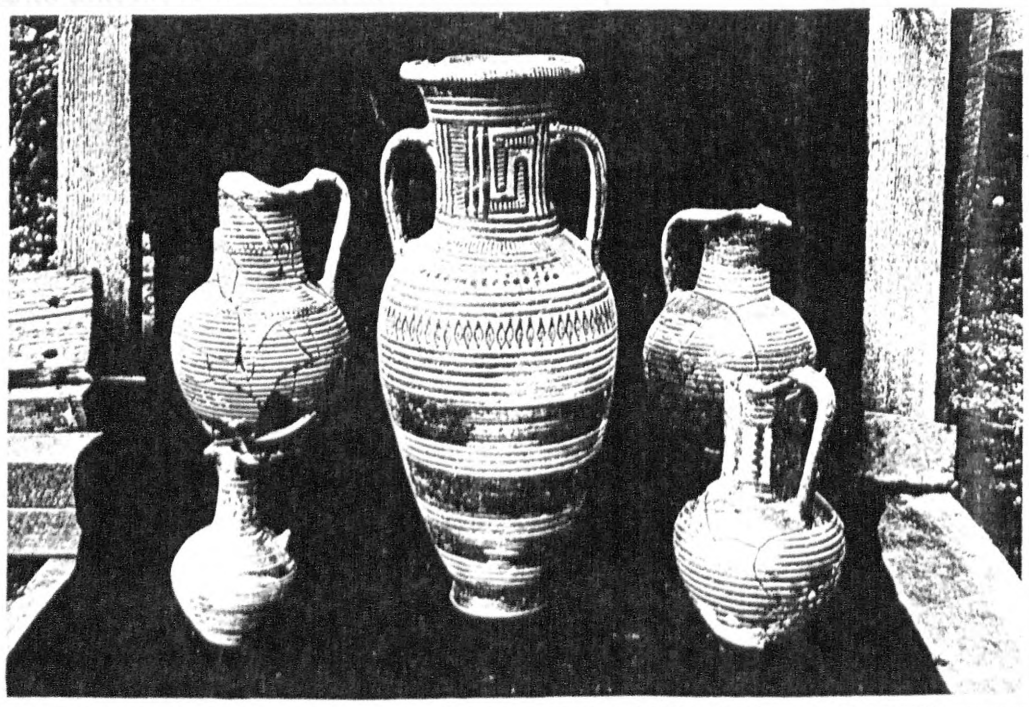
PERHAPS VOTIVE OFFERINGS TO APOLLO: TERRA-COTTA HORSEMEN WITH ROUND SHIELDS, FROM THE CITADEL AT ASINE, RARE CLASSICAL RELICS THAT ESCAPED THE DESTROYING ARGIVES.

EARLY IRON AGE POTTERY: A VASE WITH A DESIGN OF CONVENTIONALISED ANIMALS.

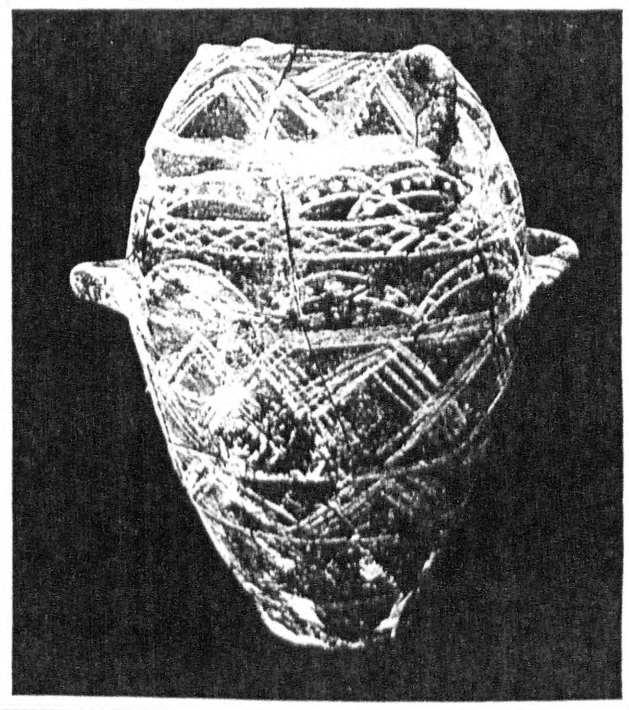


HOW RELICS OF THE EARLY IRON AGE WERE BROUGHT TO LIGHT: VASES LYING IN THE SOIL, JUST AS THEY WERE FOUND.

WITH PATTERNS OF GEOMETRIC DESIGN: EARLY IRON AGE VASES SOME LIKE MODERN TEA-CUPS.



INCLUDING THE LARGE TWO-HANDLED JAR SHOWN ABOVE IN THE SOIL, WITH OTHERS OF "CLARET-JUG" SHAPE: EARLY IRON AGE VASES OF GEOMETRIC DESIGN.



BROUGHT FROM THE CYCLADES IN THE MIDDLE HELLADIC AGE (1800 TO 1600 B.C.): A FINE BURIAL-URN FOR A CHILD.

About 700 B.C., as Mr. A. J. B. Wace mentions in his article on page 46, the town of Asine, where the above treasures of ancient Greek ceramic art were found by the Crown Prince of Sweden, was captured and sacked by the Argives in vengeance for its having sided with Sparta against Argos. Asine was utterly destroyed except for the temple of the Pythian Apollo, and consequently very few relics of the earlier classical period have been discovered. Among these few were the little figures of horsemen shown in the top left-hand photograph, possibly votive offerings to Apollo. Regarding the other subjects on this page, Mr. Wace writes: "In the lower city, which lies beside the harbour at the western foot of the citadel, underneath the ruins of houses of the second century B.C., an extensive settlement of the Middle Helladic Age (1800 to 1600 B.C.) has been brought to light. Here were the ruins of houses, and many relics of stone, bronze, and pottery, the latter including a splendid specimen of a burial-jar for a child, imported from the Cyclades and decorated with geometric patterns in white. To the west, on a neighbouring hill, cemeteries have been located, and the excavation of tombs gave excellent results. Many cremation graves of the early Iron Age yielded quantities of good wheel-made vases ornamented with elaborate geometric patterns or quaint conventionalised animals."