

MYCENAE IN TUTANKHAMEN'S TIME: BRITISH EXCAVATIONS.

By Alan J. B. Wace, M.A., Director of the British School of Archaeology at Athens.

THE British School at Athens in its third campaign of excavation at Mycenæ has been most successful. The palace on the summit of the Citadel has been re-examined and fully planned, with the result that

Other work included the excavation of the fort or signal station on the summit of Mount Hagios Elias (2500 feet), whence the news of the fall of Troy might have been flashed by fire-signal to Mycenæ below; and the excavation of a series of tombs in the newly discovered Kalkani cemetery. These tombs proved exceptionally rich, and, as they were all family tombs, had been in use for a long period. In one tomb, No. 529, over eighteen interments were found, dating from just before 1500 B.C. to 1300 B.C., or even later. This proves the continuous development of the Mycenaean civilisation.

One remarkable fact is that the later members of the family, in burying their own dead, seemed to have had no scruples in sweeping aside, or even throwing outside, the bones and other relics of the earlier interments, and removing any valuables of their ancestors' which took their fancy. This accounts for the scarcity

series of vases, many of them copies in clay of metal originals. There was a splendid string of over 120 amber beads, including a very rare one engraved with the representation of a bull. Some small pieces of gold jewellery were found; a pomegranate bud pendant with delicate granulated work; a bead in the form of a chrysalis; and a gold ring. Six engraved seal stones—one with a very spirited bull-fighting scene, another with a wounded lion biting at a dart buried in its side, a third with a Mycenaean helmet, and three others showing representations of birds and a bull—besides other treasures, including a bronze dagger in excellent condition, and many fragments of ivory inlay from a wooden casket, were unearthed here.

Tomb 529 produced some fine vases, including an octopus jar, which is already famous (illustrated on our double-page), and a few small pieces of jewellery.

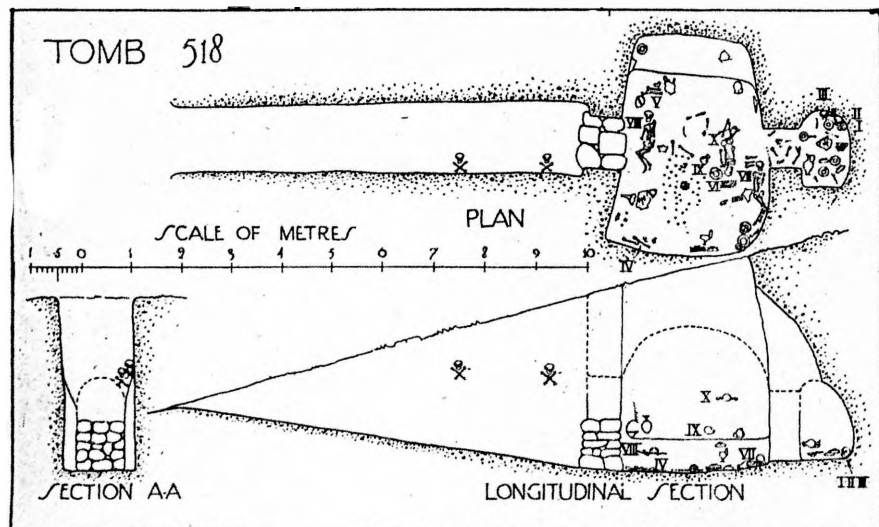
Tomb 515 gave five magnificent seal stones of the first class, and over a hundred embossed gold rosettes which had once adorned the grave-clothes.

Tomb 520 yielded a superb gold ring with a most delicate and lifelike representation of two wild goats, heraldically confronted; and the ivory lid with an intricate rosette design from a lady's toilet or powder-box; and Tomb 521 a very curious vase, with a unique and quaint design of animal figures, which may have a mythological significance and looks like a rude representation of a Zodiac.

Tomb 526 yielded two Egyptian scarabs of the Eighteenth Dynasty, which confirms the dating of the tombs already determined independently from other sources—perhaps the tomb of Tutankhamen will correspondingly yield some Mycenaean objects, which will give us yet another link in the chronological chain.

Lastly, Tomb 523 (1350 to 1250 B.C.) produced a Hittite seal stone in steatite—the first Hittite object found in Greece. This shows that there was contact between Mycenæ and the great civilisation of Asia Minor, and is one more piece of evidence that Homer's "Tale of Troy" was based on historical fact.

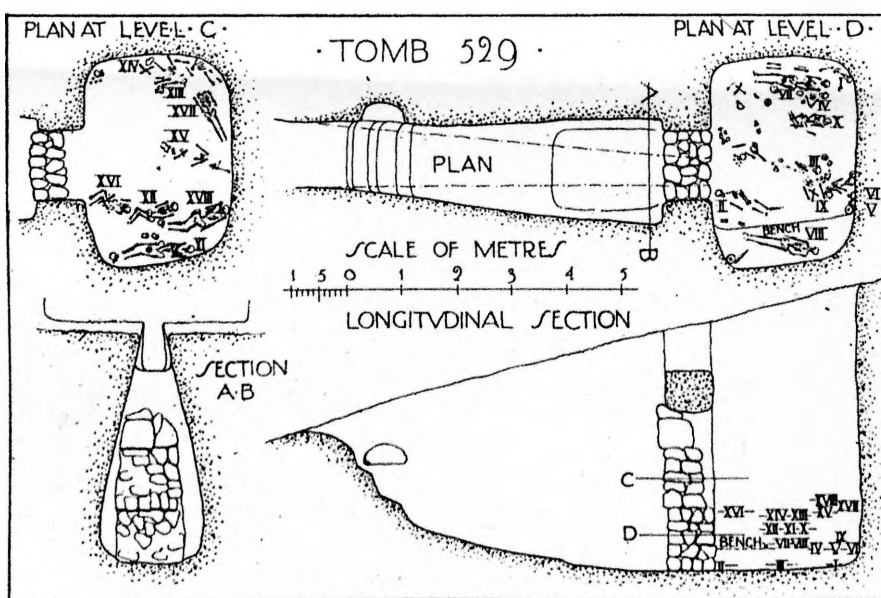
Further scientific and patient exploration of the ruins and tombs of Mycenæ, a site that is far from exhausted—the true archaeologist never regards an excavated site as worked out, for the trained eye can always read new history in its remains—will undoubtedly produce similar results of great historical importance. Though the British School at Athens is now leaving Mycenæ for another site, it is to be hoped that British enterprise will carry on the good work; for, as Schliemann recorded in his note-book in the enthusiasm of his amazing discoveries, "I can imagine nothing sweeter than to excavate Mycenæ, where every potsherd is a new page of history."



WHERE "A MAGNIFICENT SERIES OF VASES" AND OTHER OBJECTS WERE FOUND: GROUND AND SECTION PLANS OF TOMB 518, WITH ITS INNER CHARNEL CHAMBER.

it now appears, in spite of the heavy destruction it has undergone, to have been a large building with several storeys. From the south it is approached by a grand staircase, which was lit by a window and led up into an ante-chamber. Thence one could approach either the audience chamber (Room of the Throne) or go straight into the courtyard before the Great Hall. There was another entrance to the north-west, where there was a propylon flanked by a guard-room. This second entrance seems to have led more directly to the store-chambers and the private apartments, among which a tank-bath, lined with red stucco, was discovered. Local rumour already declares this to be the scene of the murder of Agamemnon. This palace, built about 1400 B.C.—probably by the king who re-founded Mycenæ, built the Lion Gate and the Cyclopean walls, and perhaps, also, the great domed tomb known as the Treasury of Atreus, for himself and his family—lies above the scanty remains of a still earlier palace. This latter was probably the residence of the earlier line of kings, called the Shaft-Grave Dynasty (about 1600 to 1500 B.C.), whose tombs were found by Schliemann in 1876. The later race of kings, the Tholos Tomb Dynasty (1500 to 1200 B.C.), probably were buried in the big domed or Tholos Tombs, built of mighty blocks of stone.

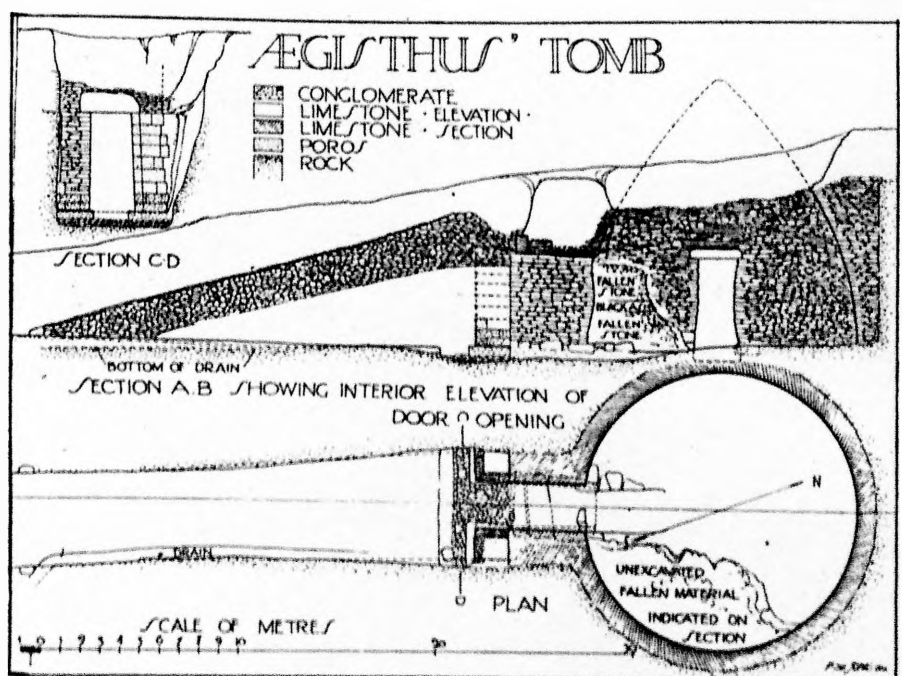
Nine of these tombs are known at Mycenæ, and the British School has carefully re-examined them all and prepared careful plans and photographs. One of these tombs, now christened the Tomb of Ægisthus, because it lies by the side of the Tomb of Clytemnestra, had never before been excavated. This is the largest of the first group, and probably was the tomb of one of the earlier kings of the dynasty. Its entrance passage, partly lined with rubble masonry, well packed with tough yellow clay, and partly cut in rock, is over seventy feet long and fifteen feet wide, and is well over twelve feet deep at the deepest point. The doorway was originally constructed of rubble masonry, packed with yellow clay; but at a later date a new façade of ashlar, worked in soft limestone, was placed in front to make the entrance more imposing, and the joints of this masonry and the older rubble-work were covered with white stucco. The dome itself, of which the peak had collapsed long ago, though it seems to have stood till 200 B.C. at least, was over forty feet in diameter and forty in height. The stone-work of its walls was ingeniously constructed, with an elaborate system of counter-weighting and wedging the stones that inclined inwards to make the dome. This shows that even at this early date Mycenaean engineers and architects had both imagination for drawing plans and the necessary knowledge for making calculations and construction. The dome had long since been plundered, but a quantity of vase-fragments of very good quality, including fragments of a series of large jars of the palace style, were found with some scraps of gold and ivory work.



WHERE OVER EIGHTEEN BURIALS (FROM 1500 TO 1300 B.C.) WERE DISCOVERED: GROUND AND SECTION PLANS OF TOMB 529 IN THE KALKANI CEMETERY, MYCENÆ. The Roman numerals in the above two illustrations denote, on the ground plan, the position of objects found. The same numerals repeated on the sectional plan indicate the strata at which the same "finds" occurred.

of precious objects in the tombs. One tomb, No. 518, had two chambers, the inner a small alcove, or charnel chamber, where the remains of the earlier interments could be swept together; and an outer chamber which had a bench on one side where a lamp was found *in situ*. Probably some kind of memorial rites for the dead were held here, and there are other indications that perhaps a sort of communion with the dead did take place. These sepulchres, with their dark chambers and narrow entrance passages, were perhaps regarded as entrances to the lower world, and would be, naturally, the place which the dead might revisit. It recalls to our mind Ulysses' descent to the lower world and conversation with the dead, as told by Homer.

This tomb, No. 518, yielded a magnificent



JUST EXCAVATED AT MYCENÆ BY THE BRITISH SCHOOL AT ATHENS, FOR THE FIRST TIME: THE TOMB OF ÆGISTHUS, SO CALLED AS ADJOINING THE TOMB OF CLYTEMNESTRA—SECTION AND GROUND PLANS.

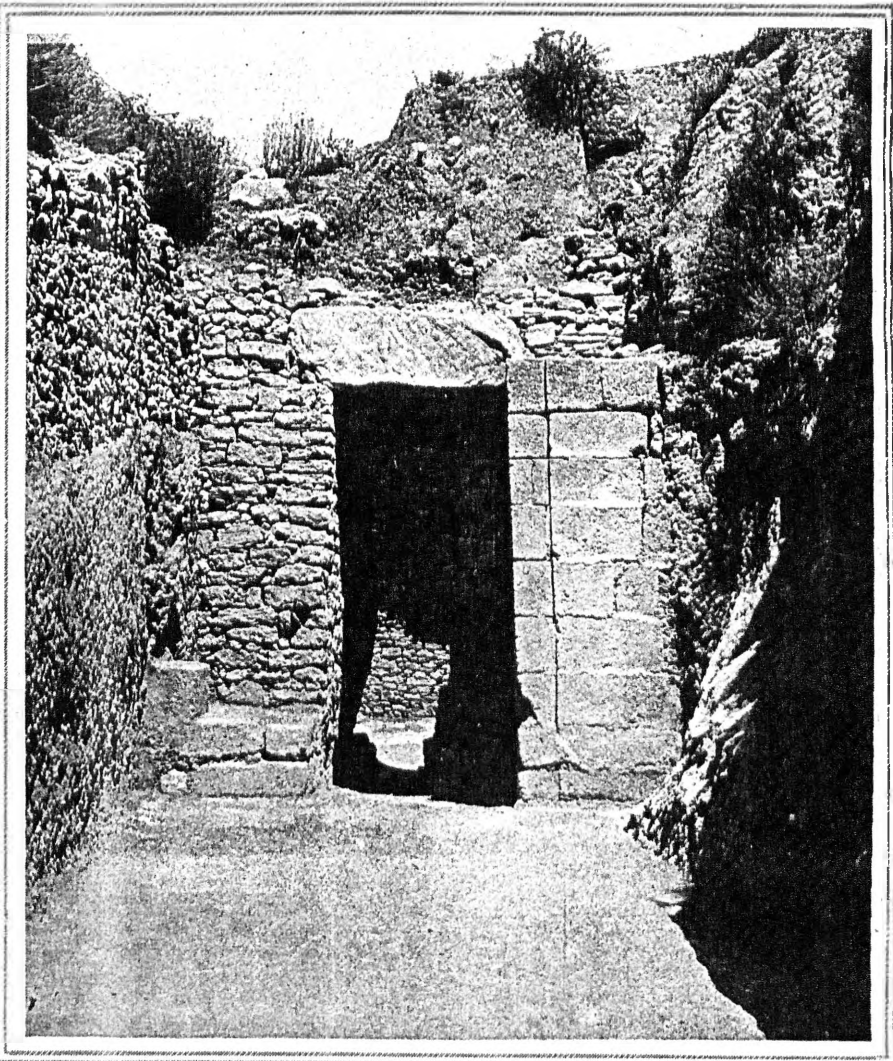
By Courtesy of the British School at Athens. Copyright Drawings by Piet de Jong, Architect to the School.

MYCENÆ IN THE DAYS OF TUTANKHAMEN; AND A

PHOTOGRAPHS BY COURTESY OF MR. A. J. B. WACE



ONCE THE APPROACH TO AGAMEMNON'S THRONE ROOM: THE GREAT SOUTH STAIRWAY OF THE PALACE AT MYCENÆ—A VIEW FROM THE WEST.



NAMED AFTER CLYTEMNESTRA'S PARAMOUR: THE TOMB OF ÆGISTHUS—THE DROMOS (ENTRANCE PASSAGE).



"ALREADY FAMOUS": A JAR FROM TOMB 529, WITH A HIGHLY REALISTIC OCTOPUS DESIGN.

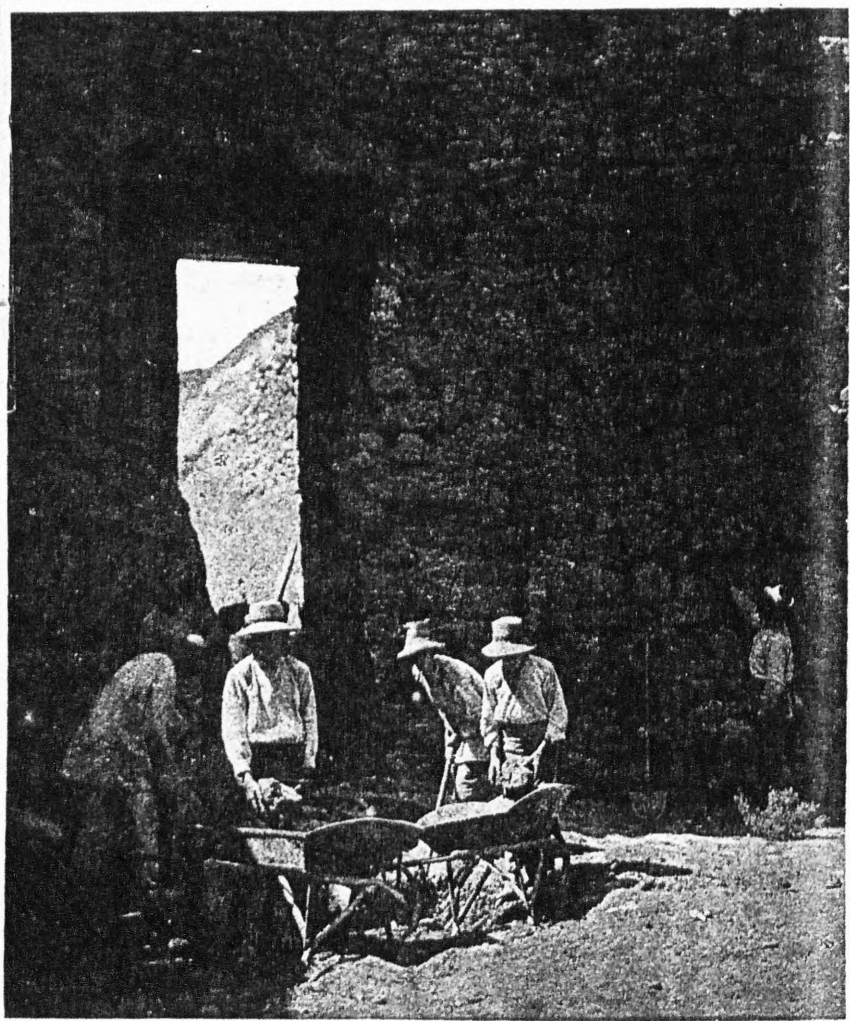


SHOWING MOUNT HAGIOS ELIAS (ON THE LEFT), "WHENCE FLASHED BY FIRE-SIGNAL";

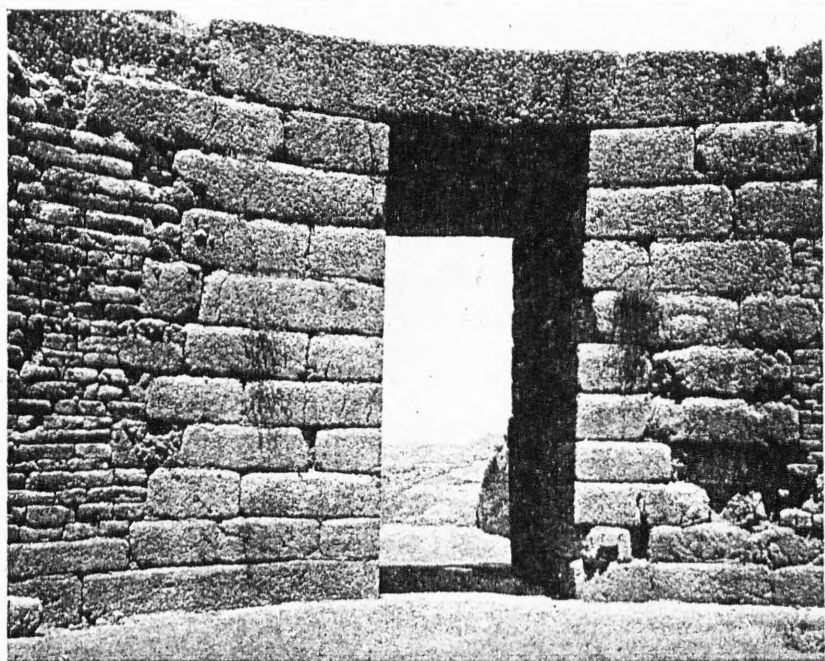
At Mycenæ, the city of Agamemnon, "where" (in the words of Schliemann, quoted by Mr. A. J. B. Wace in his article on page 525) "every potsherd is a new page of history," many such pages of absorbing interest have been opened during the recent excavations conducted by the British School at Athens. "Among the private apartments (of the palace)," writes Mr. Wace, "a tank-bath, lined with red stucco, was discovered. Local rumour already declares this to be the scene of the murder of Agamemnon." We may recall that a photograph of a bath found at Mycenæ during an earlier stage of the British excavations was given in our issue of December 4, 1920, along with other illustrations and an account of the work; also in our issue of August 7, 1920, appeared an illustrated article on Mycenæ "finds," by Professor D. G. Hogarth. Here it may be well to repeat, in explanation of the above photographs, part of Mr. Wace's description in the present number of the Tholos (domed) tombs of the later dynasty (1500-1200 B.C.). "Nine of these tombs," he writes, "are known at

BEACON THAT MAY HAVE SIGNALLED THE FALL OF TROY.

DIRECTOR OF THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF ARCHÆOLOGY AT ATHENS.



DIGGING IN THE TOMB OF ÆGISTHUS: THE THOLOS (DOMED CHAMBER).



ILLUSTRATING THE BUILDING TECHNIQUE OF THE LATE 15TH CENTURY B.C.: THE DOOR OF THE LION TOMB AT MYCENÆ FROM WITHIN.



THE NEWS OF THE FALL OF TROY MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE CITADEL OF MYCENÆ.

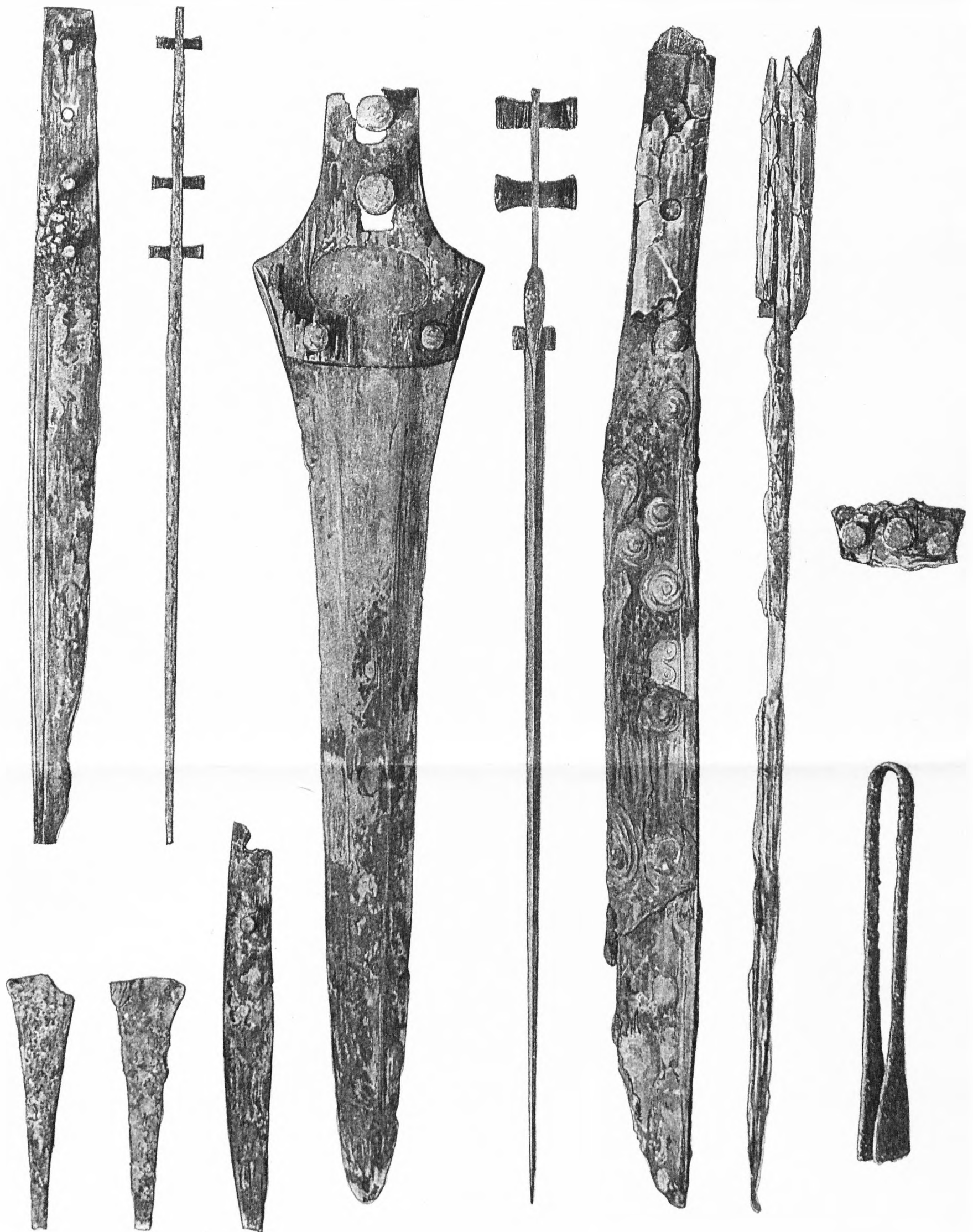


WITH A MAN'S FIGURE INDICATING THE HEIGHT OF THE DOORWAY: THE TOMB OF ÆGISTHUS, FROM WITHIN.

Mycenæ, and the British School has carefully re-examined them all and prepared careful plans and photographs. One of these tombs, now christened the Tomb of Ægisthus, because it lies by the side of the Tomb of Clytemnestra, had never before been excavated. This is the largest of the first group, and probably was the tomb of one of the earlier kings of the dynasty. Its entrance passage . . . is over seventy feet long and fifteen feet wide, and is well over twelve feet deep at the deepest point. . . . The dome itself . . . was over forty feet in diameter and forty in height. The stone-work of its walls was ingeniously constructed, with an elaborate system of counter-weighting and wedging the stones that inclined inwards to make the dome. This shows that even at this early date Mycenæan engineers and architects had both imagination for drawing plans and knowledge for making calculations and construction." The octopus vase * came from a tomb (No. 529) of which a plan is given on page 525. Allusions to Tutankhamen and to the fall of Troy occur in Mr. Wace's article.

STAINED WITH AGAMEMNON'S BLOOD? BRONZE DAGGERS FROM MYCENÆ.

By COURTESY OF THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF ARCHEOLOGY AT ATHENS. COPYRIGHT DRAWINGS BY PIET DE JONG, ARCHITECT TO THE SCHOOL.



RUSTED WITH THE BEAUTIFUL GREEN PATINA OF OVER 3000 YEARS: ANCIENT GREEK WEAPONS RECENTLY FOUND IN MYCENÆAN TOMBS, INCLUDING "A BRONZE DAGGER IN EXCELLENT CONDITION."

It is not asserted that any of the daggers here illustrated was the actual weapon with which Clytemnestra slew her lord, Agamemnon, in his bath. But such a suggestion would not be wholly fantastic or impossible, for the weapons were recently unearthed at Mycenæ, where that historic murder was committed, and apparently belong to about the same period (1500 to 1200 B.C.) as the so-called Tombs of Clytemnestra and her paramour, Ægisthus, at Mycenæ. These weapons came, however, from another part of the site, the newly discovered Kalkani cemetery, as mentioned by Mr. A. J. B. Wace in his article on another page. "Other treasures," he writes, "include a bronze dagger in excellent condition." Among the above objects are a wood-handled dagger (third from

left), dagger-points (on left, below), an ivory-handled knife (the long thin weapon on the right), and part of a handle (extreme right centre). An interesting account of early Greek metal-work and weapons is given in Dr. H. R. Hall's "Ancient History of the Near East." "To the introduction of metal," he says, "the whole development of prehistoric Greek culture was due," and he shows how Mycenaean art, both in metal and pottery, was derived from the earlier Ægean or Minoan civilisation of Crete. "The metal celt was soon supplemented by the short copper or bronze dagger, which was eventually to become a long sword. The spear-head soon followed, and the primitive Ægean was as well armed as the Babylonian, and better than the Egyptian, of his time."