MYCENAEAN VASES AT TORCELLO.

IN view of the importance of ascertaining the limits of the influence of the early civilization of the Aegean, the existence of four Mycenaean vases in the little museum at Torcello has a certain interest.

This museum contains a miscellaneous collection of antiquities, some dug up in the island itself or coming from the ecclesiastical buildings close by, some from the adjacent islands in the lagoon. Amongst a number of vases of later date are the four in question.

The first of these (No. 727) is a small pseudamphora of somewhat flattened form. The buff slip is decorated all over the body of the vase with bands of red glaze-paint. The spaces on the shoulder of the vase not occupied by the spout and handles are filled with parallel strokes gradually decreasing in length, which thus form the triangles of bars common on late Mycenaean ware.

The second vase (No. 760) is shewn in Fig. 1.¹ The technique is the same as that of the pseudamphora, but the slip is paler and thinner, and both it and the paint are not so well preserved. The decoration consists of five waves of paint rising and falling and forming a band of ornament below the handles. These were three originally; two are now missing. Above the handles near the turned-over lip of the vase is a plain band of colour, and the neck and lip are also coloured. The vase was found in 1881 in the island of Mazzorbo. Three vases figured by Furtwängler and Löschcke (*Mykenische Vasen* Pl. I. 6; Pl. VIII. 45; Pl. IX. 52) from

FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.

Ialysus form an almost complete parallel both in form and in decoration. The only difference is that the Ialysus vases have either a star or a tendril added to the wave pattern.

The third vase (No. 914), shewn in Fig. 2, is of rougher make than the others. It is of the 'feeding-bottle' shape, of which so many have been found at Kóurtes in Crete, and in other late Mycenaean deposits. It is made of rather coarse grey clay, apparently without slip, and roughly decorated with strokes of dull blackish paint. It was found in the island of Torcello in 1881.

The only other vase to be mentioned is a very small pyxis-shaped

¹ Both the figures are a little less than $\frac{1}{2}$ size.

vessel of very much the same shape as No. 33 in F. and L.'s table of vase-forms. It also has its parallel from Ialysus, cf. F. and L. Pl. IX. 55.

The linear decoration of the pseudamphora, which strongly resembles that of the Ialysus vases, the wave-pattern on the second vase, and the shapes of these vases, and especially of the third, make it clear that these importations date from the later period of the Aegean civilization.

In the same museum is a string of amber beads, some decorated with striations, and one or two clay spindle-whorls, which resemble the Mycenaean whorls in shape, though they are not formed so cleanly. On these, however, no stress can be laid, as such whorls are found in great abundance in all the North-Italian prehistoric sites.

The interest of these vases lies in connexion with the question of early trade routes, and their use by the Mycenaeans and early Greeks. The commercial importance of the head of the Adriatic in the earliest times is well known. Aquileia is mentioned by Strabo (V. i. 8) as a centre of trade. The whole question is dealt with in the chapter on Primaeval Trade-routes in Ridgeway's *Origin of Metallic Currency*.

In regard to the use of these routes by Mycenaean traders it should be noted that these vases may be assigned approximately to the same period as the Mycenaean vases found in Sicily and now preserved in the Museum at Syracuse. These vases were found with native ware of Orsi's second Sicilian period, and are of shapes that are also found among the Ialysus ware.²

Mr. Bosanquet has called my attention to two other finds of Mycenaean objects which have a bearing on this question. The first is the discovery of vases at Scoglio di Tonno, near Taranto, of the latest Mycenaean style,³ together with clay female idols of characteristic Mycenaean form. These were found in a stratum immediately above the Terramare deposits. Quagliati also claims that a figure found in the Terramare deposit of Taranto is an imitation of this Mycenaean type, and Pigorini⁴ believes that objects akin to Mycenaean occur in the Terramare deposits of the lower Po valley. Apart from this question, however, the discoveries at Scoglio di Tonno clearly shew, as Quagliati points out, a connexion between Mycenaean civilization and the latest period of the Italian bronze age.

The other discovery of Mycenaean vases in question is that made in 1843 by de Bosset, the governor for England of the Ionian islands. These vases come mostly from Cephallenia,⁵ but some probably from Ithaka. They are at present in the Museum of Neuchâtel, and have been published by M. Paul Dessoulavy in *Revue Archéologique*, Vol. xxxvii. pp. 128 sqq. From the

² See especially F. and L. Pl. I. 3, and Pl. VIII. 43.

³ Quagliati, *Bullettino di Paleontologia Italiana*. Anno xxvi. 1900.

⁴ For the question of Mycenaean influence in the Terramare deposits of the lower valley

of the Po, see Pigorini's article, *Mon. ant.* Vol. i. col. 143 sq.

⁵ A beehive tomb and other Mycenaean tombs have been found in Cephallenia at Masarakata, see Frazer, *Pausanias* iii. p. 140.

illustrations which he gives it is clear that they belong to the same late period of Mycenaean art to which the vases of Syracuse, Torcello, and Ialysus must be ascribed. Shapes characteristic of this collection are the pseud-amphora, the shape shewn in Fig. 1, three-handled, pyxis-shaped vessels like the fourth vase from Torcello, and three-handled vases of the shape shewn by Furtwängler and Löschcke (*op. cit.*) Pl. I, 3, Pl. VIII, 43, and mentioned above as characteristic of the Syracusan vases. The linear style of the decoration also points to the same period.

The finding of Mycenaean vases all of the same period at these different places, the east coast of Sicily, Taranto, and Cephallenia, points to so much maritime enterprise on the part of the later Mycenaeans that it seems more than probable that the Torcello vases came by sea from the Aegean. Herodotus (i. 163) preserves the tradition of the Phocaeans' voyages to Adria. On the other hand, in iv. 33, he gives an account of an overland route from the Adriatic to Delos by way of Dodona, the Malian Gulf, Carystus, and Tenos, and at the present day there is considerable traffic across the Pindus range where this route must have crossed it. The modern road leads from Jannina, which is close to Dodona, eastwards over the Zygos pass, and then descends to Kalambaka in Thessaly. Thence to the Malian Gulf it is flat country all the way as far as Pharsalus, where the road turns south over the hills to Lamia. No Mycenaean objects, however, seem to have been found at Dodona.

It is a noticeable fact that practically all the Mycenaean pottery found outside the islands of the Aegean resembles both in form and decoration the vases discussed above, and must therefore with them be set down to the later period of the Aegean civilization. The vases found in the islands present a much more vigorous and fresh appearance, and a less conventional dead style of decoration. The contrast can be well seen by comparing Furtwängler and Löschcke's plate XII, which represents vases from Therasia, with the plates they give shewing vases from the mainland, or still better by comparing the Melian pottery from Phylakopi with the mainland ware.

The relative lateness of this latter is clear, and in Crete a gradual transition can be traced from the earlier to this later deader style, and from it to the geometrical.

These finds, therefore, illustrate and confirm the conclusion that the age of the decadence of Mycenaean pottery is also the age in which its diffusion was widest.⁶

The historical interpretation of this remarkable fact is one of the most interesting of the many unsolved problems presented by the early civilization of the Aegean and the neighbouring countries.

Mr. Bosanquet sends me the following note:—

'In connection with the "furthest north" which you have established

⁶ Cf. 'The Pottery of Knossos,' Mackenzie, *J.H.S.* xxiii. p. 201.

for Mycenaean vases, it is interesting to notice how far their range has been determined in other directions.

‘(1) *West.* A pyxis found in Spain and published by Gascon de Golos, *Saragoza* i. Pl. III., was recognized as Mycenaean by Furtwängler (Perrot, *Histoire de l'Art*, vi. p. 940, note 5).

‘(2) *East.* The fragments found at Tell-es-Safi and other sites in Southern Palestine are described by Welch in *B.S.A.* vi. 119. For the interior of Asia Minor I know only of a fragment obtained by Crowfoot in 1900 at Utch Euyuk in the Konia desert, on the road leading from Iconium to Tyana.

‘(3) *South.* The Egyptian finds extend up the Nile as far as Thebes.’

In the Museo Aestuario, which stands a few yards off and contains the same sort of miscellaneous collection, is a large Corinthian black-figured vase. It stands about eighteen inches high, and its body is nearly spherical. The neck is short and the mouth large. The rim is sharply turned over and flat. At two points this lip widens into a broad lug which touches the tops of the horizontal handles. A vase of exactly similar shape, except that the body is not so spherical, is figured in Tafel II, 25 of Wilisch's *Die Attkorinthische Thonindustrie*. The lower part of the vase is black; the upper part is decorated with two friezes, of which the upper consists of warriors fighting, the lower of animals. The figures, being in black on the clay ground, have their details inside the outline indicated by scratches on the black paint.

The vase is of interest because Wilisch (*op. cit.* p. 109), in giving a list of places where vases of this style have been found, states that, though found north of the Alps, they are entirely lacking in the plain of the Po.

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