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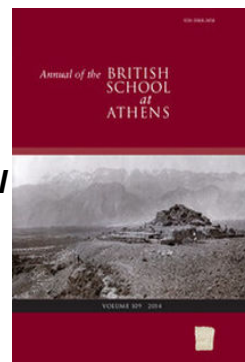
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Excavations at Palaikastro. III: § 6.—Block π

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levels of a few hand-made sherds of grey clay incised with dots and curvilinear designs, of a kind occasionally found in the ossuaries.

§ 6.—BLOCK π.

South-east of the part of this block now excavated, the ground falls away rapidly in a terraced slope, and all remains seem to have disappeared. *In this direction a limit, or at all events a break, in the continuity of the town has been reached.*

Of the first house all that is left is a row of rooms on the East side of Street ξ—π. These rooms go down to a considerable depth, and the remains in them are of the Late Minoan I period, although traces of floor levels some way up the walls show that they formed part of a house occupied at a later date. Above them at the north end of the row is a room at a higher level, probably belonging to the latest period of the town when the rise in level had led to the building of the steps that block the street just north of this point. Its only notable yield was a curious male figurine,¹ 185 m. high, of red clay covered with a red coating. The shoulders are extravagantly broad, measuring across half the height of the figure. The dress consists of a double leaf-shaped apron that falls from the belt before and behind. The hair is elaborately dressed with three flat curls on the crown, and three long tresses, one falling down the back, and one on each side over the breast. This arrangement is notable, as it exactly reproduces the hair of one of the men of Keftiu in the Rekhmara tomb at Thebes, shown on the Frontispiece of H. R. Hall's *Oldest Civilization of Greece*. Another Keftiu man (*B.S.A.* ix. p. 171, Fig. 2) shows the row of three curls.

The lower level rooms yielded a good many objects, but the most interesting was the lower part of a cup, cut out of rock crystal. This was very clearly in a Late Minoan I stratum. It was a straight-sided, flat-bottomed, round mug, 0.06 m. in diameter, with the walls about 0.008 m. thick. The bottom of a similar cup of about the same size, but more highly polished, came from Block χ. When complete these cups probably had metal handles.²

Separate from these rooms are the two houses 7-16 and 17-22, built above the scanty remains of a Middle Minoan house, of which a trace

¹ The figure may be earlier than the walls, as it was found near their foundation, and may belong to the Late Minoan II period.

² Stone vases found at Knossos possess attachments for such handles, *B.S.A.* vi. p. 31.

is left in a deposit of vases found below the later walls in π 17. These houses are shown by their floor-deposits to have been deserted early in the Late Minoan III period, and below their walls another set can be made out belonging to earlier Late Minoan II houses, from which a few vases, clearly distinct in character from the later floor-deposits, were recovered. The shortness of these Late Minoan periods is well shown here, as the later walls follow pretty closely the lines of the earlier, and it is not easy to disentangle them, whilst the Middle Minoan walls seem to have no connexion with what lies above them.¹ This holds good in most parts of the town where Middle Minoan walls have been found. The later houses were entered from the North from Street σ - π . At the earlier period there was an entrance on the western side, but this went out of use, for the entrance hall opening on the Street ξ - π was found packed with Late Minoan II vases. Most of the usual forms found in ξ 14, β 1-22 and the Zakro houses were found. Amongst them were three double vases of the form shown in *J.H.S.* xxiii. p. 256, Fig. 26, from Zakro, which had not occurred before at Palaikastro. This room was destroyed by a fire, no doubt the same that destroyed the houses in ξ , and left the similar burned deposit in ξ 14.

The objects found in the latest rooms clearly belong to the period of the pottery found in the filled-up bathroom. Besides the characteristic spouted bowls (*B.S.A.* ix. p. 315, Fig. 14, No. 2), two conical fillers shown in Fig. 5 were found. Room 9 yielded three large *pitthoi*, two of them painted, and of a marked barrel-like shape, with wide mouth and rim adapted to receive a lid. From room 18 came a magnificent painted bath, covered with a bold floral pattern, in style recalling strongly the vases of an earlier period, and markedly the $\lambda\acute{\alpha}\rho\nu\alpha\xi$ shown in *B.S.A.* viii. Pl. XVIII, XIX. The resemblance to the big flowers of panel *c* of the $\lambda\acute{\alpha}\rho\nu\alpha\xi$ is very clear, and the birds on the filler here shown (Fig. 5, *a*) recall also the bird on panel *d*, and in general this pottery from Block π is early of its kind.

Another find, with the same associations, was a plaque of rock crystal, broken on one side, from room 9. By comparing this with Late Mycenaean sword-hilts, it is plain that it was part of one of a pair, which were fastened to the hilt of a sword to form the grip. On the underneath

¹ This agrees with Dr. Evans' supposition of a great catastrophe at Knossos during the 'mature polychrome' or M. M. II. period. See p. 16 of this volume.

and unpolished side is a groove, clearly to accommodate the central rib of the blade; the part of the plaque away from the blade is missing. The upper surface has a dull smooth surface, more beautiful than the transparency of glass, and is worked into four longitudinal, slightly concave faces. A gold-mounted sword with a hilt of very much the same shape



FIG. 5.—FILLERS FROM BLOCK π . (Scale 1:3.)

was found in a contemporary tomb at Moulianá¹ in East Crete by Mr. Xanthoudides, and weapons with hilts of precisely this shape but of other materials have now been found in similar surroundings at Knossos.

§ 7.—BLOCKS ς AND υ .

On the hillock to the south of the town a preliminary trial had brought to light a fine vase, and the commanding nature of this part of the site made it a likely position for a fine house. So, notwithstanding the shallowness of the soil as revealed by trial-pits, an area of some 600

¹ 'Εφ. 'Αρχ. 1904, p. 30.