

No. 1. Map of Argolis.

CHAPTER I.

EXCAVATIONS AT TIRYNS.

Situation of the City—Description by Pausanias—Cyclopean Walls: meaning of the epithet—The Quarry—The rock of Tiryns and its bordering Wall—Galleries, Gate, and Tower—Walls and Terraces of the Acropolis—Mythical traditions and History of Tiryns—Its destruction by the Argives—Its connection with the myth of Hercules—Morasses in the Plain of Argos—The Walls of Tiryns the most ancient monument in Greece—Pottery a test of antiquity—Beginning of the Excavations—Cyclopean house-walls and conduits—Objects discovered—Terra-cotta cows, and female idols with cow's-horns—Both represent the goddess *HERA BOÖPIS*—A bird-headed idol—A bronze figure, the only piece of metal at Tiryns, except lead—No stone implements found—Pottery—Hellenic remains outside the citadel, which was the primitive city—Proofs of different periods of habitation—The later city of Tiryns—The archaic pottery of Tiryns like that of Mycenæ—Its forms and decoration denote higher civilisation than the rude walls

would lead us to expect—Older pottery on the virgin soil, but no cows or idols—Probable date of the second nation at Tiryns, about 1000 to 800 B.C. ; of the Cyclopean walls, about 1800 to 1600 B.C.—No resemblance to any of the pottery in the strata of Hissarlik, except the goblets—A human skeleton found—Whorls—Estimate of soil to be moved at Tiryns—Greater importance of MYCENÆ.

Tiryns, August 6, 1876.

IN the south-east corner of the Plain of Argos, on the lowest and flattest of a group of rocky hills, which rise like islands out of the marshy lowlands, only eight stadia or one mile from the Gulf of Argos, was situated the ancient citadel of Tiryns, now called *Palæocastron*.* It was celebrated as the birthplace of Hercules and was famous for its gigantic Cyclopean walls, of which Pausanias says, “The circuit wall, which is the only remaining ruin (of Tiryns) was built by the Cyclopes. It is composed of unwrought stones, each of which is so large that a team of mules

* See Plan A. and Plate I. The etymology of the name Tiryns (probably a Pelasgic word) is difficult to explain. It is very probable that the city was originally called Licymnia, for Strabo (VIII. p. 373) says that a citadel with that name is twelve stadia from Nauplia, and this distance perfectly agrees with that of Tiryns from the latter city. He does not distinctly say that he alludes to Tiryns ; but this is very probable, because Pindar says (*Olymp.* 7, v. 47) :

καὶ γὰρ Ἀλκμήνας κασίγνητον νόθον σκάπτῳ θένων,
 σκληρᾶς ἐλαίας ἔκταν' ἐν Τί-
 ρυνθι Λικύμνιον, ἐλθόντ' ἐκ θαλάμου Μιδέας,
 τὰς δὲ ποτε χθονὸς οἰκιστὴρ χολωθείς.

‘Because he (Tlepolemus) killed in wrath with a stick of the hard olive-tree Alcmena’s bastard brother Licymnius, who descended from Midea’s nuptial chamber and was the builder of the city.’ Apollodorus (II. 8, 2) confirms this, but says that he killed him accidentally : Τληπόλεμος οὖν, κτείνας οὐχ ἑκὼν Λικύμνιον τῇ βακτηρίᾳ γὰρ αὐτοῦ θεραπεύοντα πλήσσοντος ὑπέδραμε, ‘Tlepolemus involuntarily killed Licymnios, who approached him when he was chastising his servant with a stick.’

Eustathius (*ad loc.*) says that the first name of Tiryns was Hallis or Haleis, fishermen having been the first settlers on the rock ; this is also confirmed by Stephanus Byzantinus (*s.v.* Τίρυνς). Pausanias (II. 25, 8) says that the city received its name from the hero Tiryns, a son of Argos.

cannot even shake the smallest one: small stones have been interposed in order to consolidate the large blocks.”*

The usual size of the stones is 7 feet long and 3 feet thick, but I measured several which were 10 feet long and 4 feet thick. Judging by the masses of fallen stones, I think it probable that the walls, when entire, were not less than 60 feet high. Had the circuit wall consisted of wrought stones it would doubtless have disappeared ages ago, because its stones would have been used for the buildings in the neighbouring cities of Nauplia and Argos. But the wall was preserved on account of the enormous size of the blocks, for the later builders found it much more easy and convenient to cut the material they needed at the foot of the rocks than to destroy the wall and break up the blocks.

I may here mention that the name “Cyclopean walls” is founded on an error, being derived from the mythic legend that the Cyclopes were distinguished architects. According to Strabo (VIII. 6), the Cyclopes, seven in number, came from Lycia and erected in the Argolid walls and other buildings, which were known under the denomination “Cyclopean walls.” According to Apollodorus (II. 2, 1) and Pausanias (II. 16, 4) they built the walls of Tiryns and Mycenæ. Probably in consequence of this the whole of Argolis is called “Cyclopean land.”† There is of course no historical foundation for calling walls of huge blocks “Cyclopean,” after the mythical giant race of the Cyclopes. But as the word has come into general use, I cannot avoid employing it.

It must be distinctly understood that not every wall built of stones, without any binding material, may be called

* Paus. II. 25, 8. Τὸ δὴ τεῖχος, ὃ δὴ μόνον τῶν ἐρειπίων λείπεται, κυκλώπων μὲν ἐστὶν ἔργον, πεποιήται δὲ ἀργῶν λίθων, μέγεθος ἔχων ἕκαστος λίθος ὡς ἀπ’ αὐτῶν μηδ’ ἂν ἀρχὴν κινήθῃναι τὸν μικρότατον ὑπὸ ζεύγους ἡμιόνων· λίθια δὲ ἐνήρμοσται πάσαι ὡς μάλιστα αὐτῶν ἕκαστον ἀρμονίαν τοῖς μεγάλοις λίθοις εἶναι.

† γὰρ κυκλωπία (Euripides, *Orestes*, 965).

“Cyclopean ;” and that under that denomination are only comprised, firstly, the walls of large unwrought blocks, the interstices of which are filled in with smaller stones; secondly, the walls composed of large polygonal stones well fitted together; and, thirdly, the very ancient walls (such as we see in the Lions’ Gate at Mycenæ) where immense quadrangular blocks, rudely wrought, are roughly put together in horizontal layers, but the joints not being quite straight, there remain small interstices between the stones. House or fortress walls of well-cut quadrangular slabs, which are closely joined without mortar, can never be called “Cyclopean;” and thus, even the large subterranean Treasuries at Mycenæ and Orchomenus can in no way claim this denomination, though they may belong to the remotest antiquity.*

The quarry from which these walls were built can easily be distinguished at the foot of a rock one mile distant, which is crowned by a chapel of the prophet Elias. But this quarry does not form a pit, such as we see at Syracuse, Baalbec, or Corinth. At Tiryns, as at Mycenæ, the Cyclopean builders have contented themselves with cutting away the blocks from the rocky surface.

The flat rock of Tiryns, which is 900 feet long, from 200 to 250 feet broad, and from 30 to 50 feet high, extends in a straight line from north to south, and its margin is lined by the aforesaid Cyclopean circuit wall, which is from 25 to 50 feet thick, and in a pretty good state of preservation; but it is not always massive, being

* Cf. Ch. II. p. 28. It should also be observed that these forms of construction do not invariably denote successive steps of antiquity and the art of building. Unhewn boulders, rough quarried stones, and those which had a polygonal cleavage due to their nature, were often used for convenience by builders who were quite able to work quadrangular blocks, as is proved by walls in which the former kinds are placed *above* the last. See Mr. E. H. Bunbury’s “Cyclopean Remains in Central Italy,” in the ‘Classical Museum,’ 1845, vol. ii. pp. 147, *seqq.*, and the article MURUS in Dr. Smith’s ‘Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities.’

traversed by interior passages or galleries with ogival vaults, of which four can easily be discerned. One of these galleries, which is 90 feet long and 7 feet 10 inches broad and high and free from *débris*, has in its external wall six gate-like recesses or window openings, which reach down to the bottom. Their pointed arches are formed like the angle in the passage, merely by overlapping the ends of the courses of the masonry.*

These niches were most probably intended for archers, whilst the galleries themselves must have served for covered communications leading to armouries, guard-chambers, or towers. Of the other three galleries, two are in the south-eastern corner and run parallel to each other; the third, which traverses the western wall, seems to have served as a sally-port, and was probably concealed in some way or other.†

On the eastern side is the only gate, which is 15 feet broad. It is approached by a ramp 20 feet wide, which is supported by a wall of Cyclopean masonry.‡ The right flank of the gate is defended by a tower 43 feet high and 33 feet broad, which may have procured for the Tirynthians the credit of having been the first to build towers.§ In this place the walls are better preserved than anywhere else, and they rise considerably

* See the margin of Plan A.

† Dodwell ('A Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece') and Prof. Ernst Curtius (*Peloponnes*) consider this gallery to be a second gate, which I think impossible, as it leads straight out into the plain.

‡ Colonel Leake states ('Travels in the Morea,' Vol. II. p. 351) that the principal entrance of Tiryns is on the south side, adjacent to the south-east angle. He is right if he speaks of the present day, for there has indeed been made at that point in modern times a zigzag roadway, leading up the steep slope; but there was most decidedly no gate or entrance whatever here in ancient times.

§ Aristotle and Theophrastus, *ap.* Plin. *H. N.* VII. 56. Pliny says that the former of these authors attributes the building of towers to the Cyclopes, the latter to the Tirynthians.

above the flat summit of the mount within the Acropolis or citadel.

This citadel consists of an upper enclosure on the south, and a lower one on the north side; both are of about equal size, and are divided by an abrupt slope, 14 feet high, which was fortified by a Cyclopean wall of minor proportions. In this wall I perceive some stones shaped by art, and some even rectangular, which leads me to think that it belongs to a later time than the Cyclopean circuit walls. In the upper enclosure are a number of terraces supported by Cyclopean walls.

Through all antiquity the Greeks themselves looked upon the walls of Tiryns as a work of the demons. Pausanias* regards them as a structure more stupendous than the Pyramids of Egypt; and Homer manifests his admiration of them by the epithet “*τειχιόεσσα*,” which he applies to Tiryns.†

According to ancient tradition, Tiryns was founded (about 1400 B.C.) by Proetus, who was its first king, and whose son Megapenthes ceded the town to Perseus, the builder of Mycenæ. Perseus gave it to Electryon, whose daughter Alcmena, the mother of Hercules, married Amphitryon, who was expelled by Sthenelus, the king of Mycenæ and Argos. Hercules conquered Tiryns and inhabited it for a long time, in consequence of which he is often called the Tiryinthian.‡ On the return of the Heraclidæ (80 years after the Trojan war) Mycenæ itself, as well as Tiryns, Hysiaë, Mideaia, and other cities, were forced to increase the power of Argos, and were reduced to the condition of dependent towns. Tiryns remained nevertheless in the hands of its Achæan population, and, together with Mycenæ, took part in the battle of Plataeæ

* Paus. IX. 36.

† *Iliad*, II. 559 :—Οἱ δ' Ἄργος τ' εἶχον Τίρυνθά τε τειχιόεσσαν.

‡ Pind. *Ol.* XI. 40; Ovid, *Met.* VII. 410; Virgil, *Æn.* VII. 662.

with 400 men.* In consequence of this event the name of Tiryns was engraved, among those of the other Greek cities which had fought there, on the bronze column with the golden tripod-stand, which the Spartans dedicated as the tithe of the booty to the Pythian Apollo at Delphi. The glory which Tiryns thus acquired excited the envy of the Argives, who had taken no part in the Persian war, and who also began to consider that city as a very dangerous neighbour; particularly when it had fallen into the hands of their insurgent slaves (*Γυμνήσιοι*), who maintained themselves for a long time behind its Cyclopean walls and dominated the country.† The insurgents were finally subdued, but soon afterwards (Ol. 78, 1; 468 B.C.) the Argives destroyed the city, demolished part of its Cyclopean walls, and forced the Tirynthians to emigrate to Argos.‡ But according to Strabo § they fled to Epidaurus. Pausanias || mentions that between Tiryns and the gulf are the “*θάλαμοι*” of the insane daughters of Prætus, of which no vestige is to be seen now; they cannot have been underground buildings on account of the morass. Theophrastus ¶ speaks of the laughing propensities of the Tirynthians, which rendered them incapable of serious work.**

The myth of the birth of Hercules at Tiryns and the twelve labours he performed for Eurystheus, the king of

* Herodot. IX. 28.

† Herodot. VI. 83.

‡ Paus. II. 17, 5; VIII. 27, 1.

§ VIII. p. 373.

|| II. 15, 9.

¶ *Apud* Athenæum, VI. 261.

** Theophrastus adds that, desirous to get rid of their propensity to laugh, the Tirynthians consulted the oracle at Delphi, and got the god's answer that, if they could sacrifice an ox to Poseidon and throw it into the sea, without laughing, the evil would at once cease. The Tirynthians, who feared to fail in the execution of the god's command, forbade the children to be present at the sacrifice. But one of them having heard this, and having mixed in the crowd, they cried out at him to drive him away, on which he exclaimed, “How, are you afraid that I shall upset your sacrifice?” This excited universal laughter, and they became convinced that the god intended to show them by experience that an inveterate evil custom cannot be remedied.

the neighbouring Mycenæ, may, I think, be easily explained by his double nature as hero and as sun-god.* As the most powerful of all heroes, it is but natural that he should be fabled to have been born within the most powerful walls in the world, which were considered as the work of supernatural giants. As sun-god he must have had numerous sanctuaries in the plain of Argos and a celebrated cultus at Tiryns, because the marshy lowlands by which it is surrounded, and which even at present are nearly unproductive from want of drainage, were in remote antiquity nothing but deep swamps and morasses, which extending far up the plain engendered pestilential fevers, and could only be made to disappear gradually by incessant human labour and by the beneficent influence of the sun.

For the existence of the immense morasses in the plain of Argos we have no less an authority than Aristotle, who says,† “At the time of the Trojan war, the land of Argos being swampy, it could only feed a scanty population, whilst the land of Mycenæ was good and was therefore highly prized. But now the contrary is the case, for the latter has become too dry and lies untilled, whilst the land of Argos, which was a morass and therefore lay untilled, has now become good arable land.” Thus it will appear but natural that Hercules, as sun-god, should be fabled to have performed for Eurystheus, the king of Mycenæ, who possessed the whole plain of Argos, the twelve labours which have been long known to mean nothing else than the twelve signs of the zodiac, through which the sun appears to pass in the annual revolution of our globe.

The topography of the plain south of Tiryns appears not to have changed since the time of Aristotle, for the northern shore of the gulf consists of deep swamps, which even now extend for nearly a mile inland.

* Max Müller, ‘Essays,’ II. 79.

† Aristot. *Meteorol.* I. 14.

I perfectly agree with the common opinion that the Cyclopean walls of Tiryns are the most ancient monument in Greece; but, having the conviction that no city or fortress wall can be more ancient than the most ancient pottery of the site it surrounds, I was very anxious to investigate the chronology of the Tirynthian walls by systematic excavations. I therefore proceeded to Tiryns on the 31st ultimo, in company with Mrs. Schliemann and my esteemed friends, Castorches, Phendikles and Pappadakes, Professors of Archæology in the University of Athens.

There I engaged fifty-one workmen, and dug a long broad and deep trench in the highest part of the citadel, and sank besides this thirteen shafts 6 feet in diameter.* I further sank three shafts in the lower part of the fortress, and four more at a distance of 100 feet outside the walls. In the higher citadel I struck the natural rock at a depth of from $11\frac{1}{2}$ to $16\frac{1}{2}$ feet; in the lower citadel, at from 5 to 8 feet; and outside the citadel I reached the virgin soil at from 3 to 4 feet.

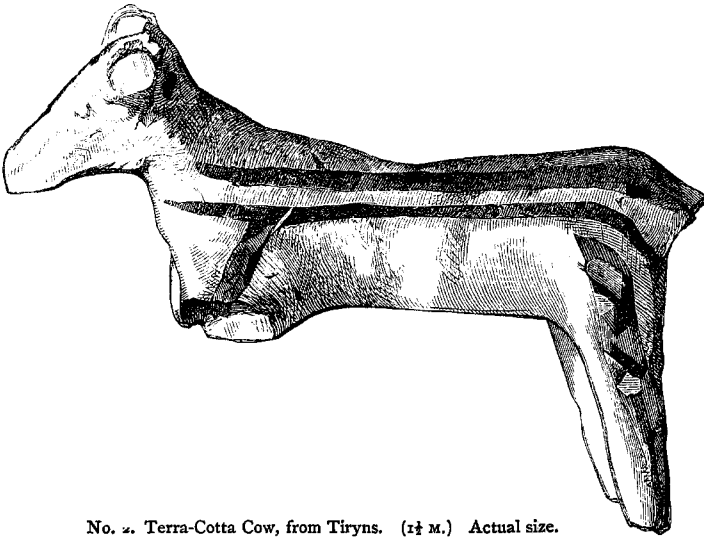
In seven or eight of the shafts sunk in the upper citadel I brought to light Cyclopean house-walls built on the natural rock, and in three shafts I found Cyclopean water-conduits of a primitive sort, being composed of unwrought stones, laid without any binding material. Though these water-conduits rest on the rock, yet I cannot conceive how water can ever have run along them without getting lost through the interstices between the stones.

Neither in the long trench nor in the deep twelve or thirteen shafts did I find any stones at all. I conclude from this that the majority of the houses consisted of unburnt bricks, which still form the building material of most of the villages in the Argolid. The houses can hardly have been of wood, for, if so, I should have found large quan-

* The exact depths are indicated by the proportional numbers appended to the sectional plans of the excavations in the margin of Plan A.

tities of ashes. All my excavations in Tiryns remain of course open, and visitors are invited to inspect them.

Among the objects discovered I must first mention the small terra-cotta cows, of which I collected eleven,* for they



No. 2. Terra-Cotta Cow, from Tiryns. (1½ m.) Actual size.

seem to solve a great problem, and are, at all events, of capital importance to science. Nearly all of them are covered with painted ornaments of red colour; one only has a black ornamentation.

At the same time I found nine female idols, seven of which are painted with red and two with black or dark yellow ornaments.† They have a very compressed face, no mouth, and a “polos” on the head; of the idol No. 8 the head is missing, and the idol, No. 10, has a broader face and an uncovered head. The breasts of all these idols are in high relief, and below them on each side protrudes a long horn, in such a way that both horns together must either be intended to represent the moon’s crescent or the two horns of the cow, or both the one and the other at the same time. I found cows and idols

* See Nos. 2-7, and the coloured Plate A, figs. a, b.

† See Nos. 8-11 on p. 12, and the coloured Plate A, fig. d.