

## LACONIA.

### II.—EXCAVATIONS AT SPARTA, 1906.

---

#### § 2.—THE CITY WALL.

FROM the 3rd till the 26th of May a series of trial excavations was made along the river bank, north of the precinct of Artemis Orthia. These resulted in the discovery of the Greek wall of the city and of traces of an, at present, nameless Heroön close to it. The following description begins from the south. (General Plan, Pl. VII.)

The part of the wall found south-east of the Artemisium is, as far as it has at present been uncovered, of a normal type (Plate VII.). It is three metres thick, built of hewn limestone blocks laid in courses with irregular jointing. Not more than two courses are preserved, and they rest on a foundation of small stones and rough blocks. Most remarkable is the deep drain running out through the wall, which here comes obliquely from the cliff to the south, between the Roman building and the river. Where the Eurotas has eaten into the bank and destroyed part of the Roman arena, the wall also has been carried away. On the cliff (General Plan, **○ 16**) a few trial pits produced one tile-stamp (of type 17, see p. 348), and revealed a long block of hewn rock, but the line of the fortification has still to be found here.

Above the Artemisium the wall was next found at the bottom of Tagari's garden (**○ 15**). Here are some earlier foundations built of small stones laid without mortar. The buildings themselves were destroyed to make room for the city wall which passes over them. It is here built as

described above, but the earlier foundations were thickened and strengthened to support the limestone base-blocks, one or two of which are still in position. From here the line of the wall inclines inland and can be traced continuously for a considerable distance (O 15, 14). The part directly north of Tagari's garden is again built on earlier foundations. On examining the inside face of the wall, we found at the bottom a foundation course of small stones 30 m. high. Above this is a similar row, 28 m. high, faced with coarse red plaster. On top of this are placed the limestone blocks,

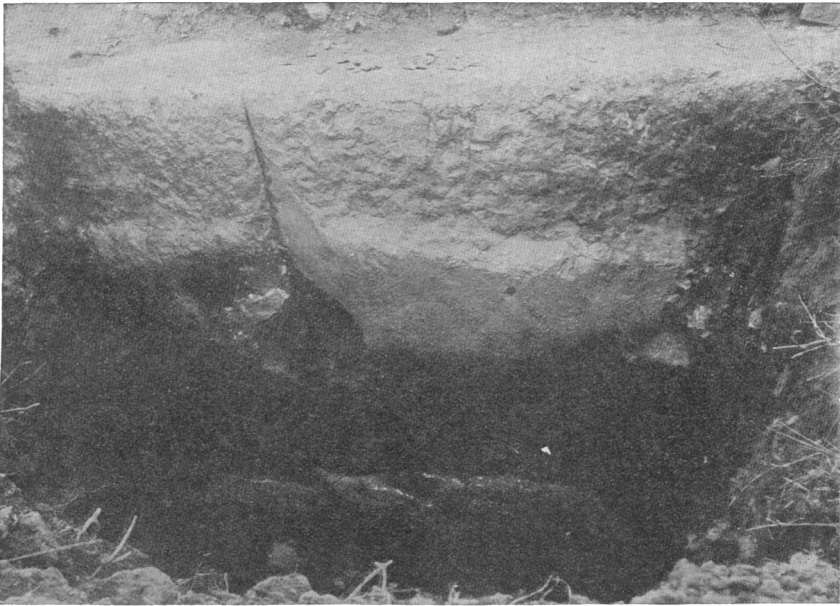


FIG. 1.—EARLIER WALL BELOW THE CITY WALL.

60 m. high, of which only the upper half is faced (Fig. 1). This shews that the ancient ground-level, when the wall was built, was only 30 m. below the present. In order to strengthen the plaster-faced wall on the outside, large rough blocks were packed against it making it three metres thick. It was here that a tile stamped *BAIAEI NABI* was found. Beyond this the wall reverts to the normal type, and varies in width between 2.60 m. and 3.00 m. A corn-field prevented us from following the line directly, but on the edge of a clover-field against the mill-stream, a curved wall was found (O 13). Whether this has any relation to the city wall or not, is not yet certain :

it seems to have suffered from a late building erected against it. Immediately to the north (**P 13**) the city wall was again found and followed to the point where it has been destroyed by the encroachment of the river. It was here that the best preserved portion of the normal type was discovered (Fig. 2). At one place it is pierced at a level of 1·40 m. below the surface, by a drain built with slabs and 29 m. wide. A little further to the south another drain runs out at a higher level, about 1·80 m. below the ground: this is made of semi-circular tiles.

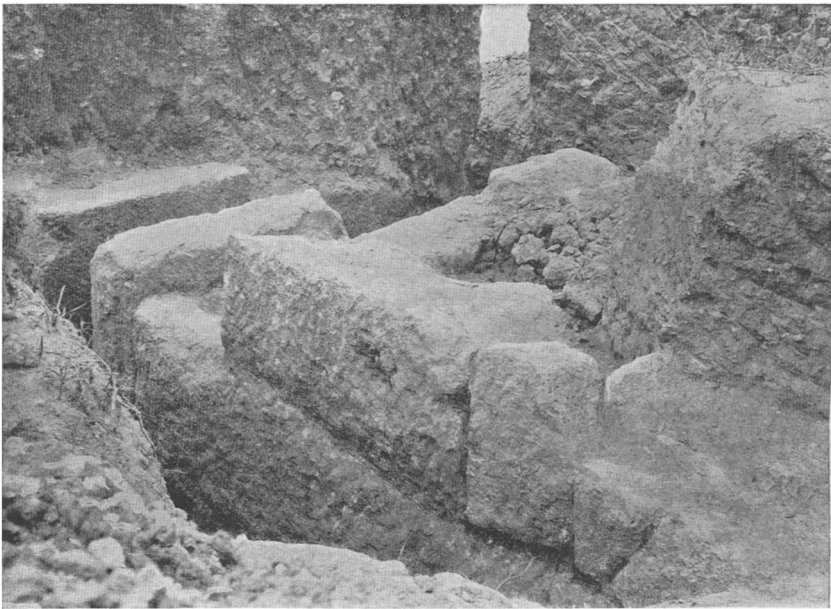


FIG. 2.—THE CITY WALL, SPARTA.

Just within the wall, on the edge of the bank, is a well, lined with small stones, whose top is 1·40 m. from the surface. This was cleared to a depth of four metres; then water appeared, and stopped the work. Near the top were found one Greek and two Roman lamps, several small vases of an elongated amphora shape,<sup>1</sup> and then below these an enormous quantity of broken tiles. A large number of these bear inscriptions stating that they were made expressly for the city wall. Mr. Dickins' discovery

<sup>1</sup> For the type cf. *B.C.H.* 1885, p. 183, Fig. 4: the discovery of such vases at Myrina shews that they are of the Hellenistic period.

of similar tile-stamps near the Altar further up the river (**P 12**) shews that the wall was close by, and is perhaps to be identified with that north of the Altar. Near the ancient bridge north of the carriage road (**O 11**), he again found traces of the enceinte of the city, which seems to have turned inland from that point. The discovery of the inscribed tiles enables us to tell how the superstructure of the wall was built. The limestone blocks resting on the foundation of small stones really form only the base of the wall. On them stood the wall proper composed of unbaked brick roofed with tiles semi-circular in section. Few fragments of flat tiles or square imbrices were found: these may have served to roof towers. The limestone base is of course necessary to prevent the brick from being injured by damp, and the tile-roof defends it against rain.<sup>1</sup> Walls of this type are common in modern Sparta.

Fortunately we have some literary evidence about the fortifications of Sparta.<sup>2</sup> Till the end of the fourth century the city was open and undefended: as Agesilaus proudly said, its citizens were its walls. But on the invasion of Demetrius Poliorcetes in 295 B.C. a fosse and a palisade were hastily constructed.<sup>3</sup> These were strengthened and successfully defended against Pyrrhus in 272 B.C. The palisade seems to have been replaced by a wall, which existed when Philip V. invaded Laconia in 218 B.C. Subsequently Nabis greatly improved the defences, which were not finished in 195 B.C., when Flaminius assaulted the city. Not long after the death of Nabis (192 B.C.) the walls were destroyed by Philopoemen in 188 B.C., which presumably means that only the brick superstructure was torn down. But they were rebuilt after the mission of Appius Claudius in 184 B.C., and were standing in the time of Pausanias. The tile of Nabis, found at the point where the limestone base rests on the foundations of earlier houses, seems to indicate that this construction is not later than his reign, 207–192. B.C. It may of course be earlier; and since we know that in 272 there was merely a ditch and a palisade, with the masonry only at the weakest points, whereas in 218 there were walls, it

<sup>1</sup> Of similar construction were the earlier walls of Athens, and those of Megalopolis and Mantinea, v. Judeich, *Topographie v. Athen*, p. 123; Gardner-Loring, *Megalopolis*, p. 115; Fougères, *Mantinee*, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> For the authorities see Frazer, *Pausanias*, vol. iii, 324.

<sup>3</sup> Justinus says (xiv. 5, 7) that the wall was begun in 317 B.C., during the war between Cassander and Polyperchon. This is in direct contradiction to Pausanias' statement that this first took place in the attack of Demetrius in 293 B.C.

is possible that Cleomenes III. (236–222 B.C.) began them. In any case it is safe to assume the date of the limestone base to be the latter half of the third century.<sup>1</sup> The regular courses with uneven jointing recall the walls of Demetrias, which are of the early third century,<sup>2</sup> and a similar style of building is to be found at Pergamon.

### § 3.—THE HEROÖN.

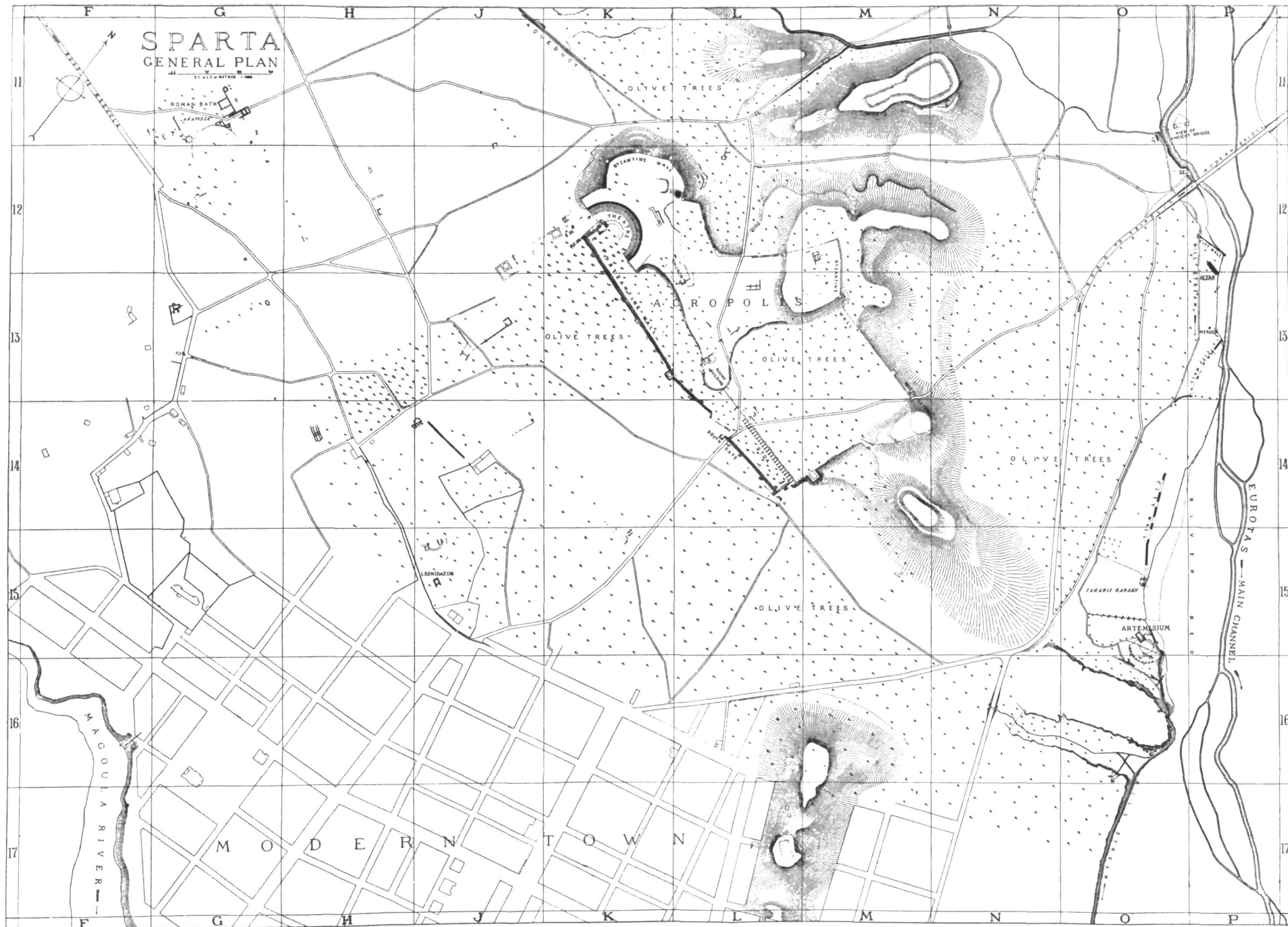
(PLATE IX.)

South of the well mentioned above and inside the city wall a series of trial pits produced important results (**P 13**). At a distance of 1·80 m. from the city wall another wall was found which varies from ·50 to ·65 m. in width. Between this, which was followed for some distance, and the city wall, traces of a pavement of beaten earth came to light at a depth of 1·40 m. On the outside of the inner wall a drain was found running parallel to it. We have here, most probably, a street that followed the city wall on the inside. The depth at which it was found agrees very well with that of a similar pavement to the west of the Altar (1·82 m.). The lower level there perhaps indicates an earlier date. In any case the level of the road was raised in a later period, as proved by the tile drain referred to above. Within the inner wall we found distinct traces of a shrine, probably a Heroön. Everywhere, except in the neighbourhood of the well, where the lower strata are composed of gravel, regular stratification ranging from the Geometric age to late Greek times was distinguishable. The Greek layer, which cannot yet be divided into early and late periods, begins at an average depth of a metre. At about 1·90 m. Corinthian pottery was found, which between 2·15 and 2·45 m. was sometimes mixed with Geometric fragments. The Geometric stratum commences at an average depth of 2·30 m., and at three metres or a little deeper the soil is virgin.

The most characteristic objects of the Greek stratum are small terracotta Hero-reliefs (Figs. 3–6). These belong to the well known class of

<sup>1</sup> It is possible that the *παραπόλια* damaged by the river and mentioned in an inscription (*C.I.G.* 1330, l. 18) were part of this wall. Unfortunately the reading, which rests on Fourmont's copy, cannot be verified. Le Bas (*Rev. Arch.* 1844, p. 709) only saw the first four lines. Ross saw it in the same state in the Sparta Museum, which was afterwards burnt with all its contents.

<sup>2</sup> Fredrich, *Athen. Mitt.* 1905, pp. 229, 235.



SPARTA.—GENERAL PLAN.