

§ 76. PARALLELS SUPPLIED BY BULL-RELIEFS IN ELGIN COLLECTION FROM THE 'ATREUS' TOMB AT MYCENAE.

Two contrasted groups of bull-catching scenes on Vapheio Cups and gems; Originate in Palace friezes; Fragmentary reliefs in Elgin Collection—material proves to be Knossian gypsum; Found in front of 'Atreus' façade; Supposed lion, a bull; Bull's head resembles Knossian; Olive-tree also introduced—from similar bull-hunting scene; Slab with stationary bull—answers to Vapheio Cup B; Elgin slabs from similar contrasted compositions; Probably executed at Mycenae, by Minoan artist; Friezes, not tympanum reliefs; Were they from side-walls of 'Atreus' dromos? Possible existence of fore-hall to tomb; Signs of restoration of dromos; Re-used lintel-block, perhaps of entrance to fore-hall.

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THE evidence of two contrasted groups of bull-catching scenes—in the one case of a wild hunt, in the other of the more leisurely episodes of capture by means of a decoy cow, so fully supplied by the Vapheio Cups and reflected in a more abbreviated form on a whole series of intaglio types itself, as already observed must be taken to point to pre-existing models in the larger Art. Of such we may now actually recognize the remains in what has been preserved to us of the painted friezes from the porticoes on either side of the Northern Entrance passage at Knossos, going back in all probability to the early part of the Third Middle Minoan Period. There are, indeed, some indications that low reliefs in painted stucco of this class already existed in the preceding phase of the Great Palace.

A suggestive pendant to this Knossian group is to be recognized in two fragmentary reliefs from the 'Atreus' Tomb at Mycenae brought home by Lord Elgin and now in the British Museum. An interesting feature of these, moreover, recently brought to notice brings them into a direct line of connexion with Minoan Crete. Their material has been generally regarded as limestone, but some abnormal appearances noted by Mr. E. J. Forsdyke, of the Department of Antiquities, led to a chemical analysis of the stone which proved in fact to be identical with the gypsum rock so largely used in the structure of the Knossian Palace and which is so abundantly forthcoming in the neighbouring hill of Gypsades.¹ There, indeed, as already mentioned, are visible the openings of large subterranean quarries. Although deposits

¹ Some years previously Dr. H. R. Hall had already expressed the opinion that the material was 'grey gypsum'.