CHAPTER 8
Ritual and Development in the Greek Sanctuary

Joseph W. Shaw

1. Evidence for Ritual in the Greek Sanctuary

One of the chief aims during the excavation and study of the various phases of the Greek Sanctuary at Kommos has been to reach at least a partial understanding of the ritual activity carried out there during the millennium-long use of the area for religious purposes. The evidence found can take a number of forms: Some of these are architectural (e.g., the use of interior benches), they may consist of interior floor features (hearth and the Tripillar Shrine in Temple B), or they may be structures outside the temples in the court (the altars). We can also learn from the remains of sacrifice and/or sacred meals and faunal offerings (e.g., bones and shells, burnt or unburnt). We also have the evidence of the basins, cups, saucers, and bowls used for eating and drinking found in the various dumps (Callaghan and Johnston, Chap. 4, Section 1, e.g., Deposits 48–49). In addition, some of the objects recovered, such as the Egyptian faience figures (M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 2, AB85 and AB86), seem to have been brought to the sanctuary specifically as votive offerings, but some (such as the terracotta bull found set on Altar C; M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 2, C9) may have represented both a gift and/or commemoration of a sacrifice.

The evidence can be expected to vary over the time that the sanctuary was in use. For instance, even within one building period, that of Temple B, Phase 2, the Tripillar Shrine seems to have been at one time the center of worship but later lost its significance as a formal locus of cult. Or, in contrasting Temples B and C, in B nothing was built on axis near the back wall, whereas in C a cult statue was introduced, perhaps as a result of influence from elsewhere in Crete, from the islands, or from the Mainland to the north. There are certain limitations to our knowledge, of course, one being that excavation could not reach all parts
of Temples A and B, since we did not want to disturb major architectural floor features. Another is the simple matter of nonpreservation in a climate such as Crete’s, where unless organic matter has been carbonized or is underwater, it is rarely preserved. Thus, any foods made from grain consumed in the sanctuary, such as cakes, or any “first fruits” that may have been offered, have simply left no trace. Only a few stone querns (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 5, Section 9, 1 and 2, Table 5.8) suggest that grain was ground in the sanctuary.

Instead, we are left with the masses of animal bones and shells, which give the probably false impression that only meat and seafood were eaten in the sanctuary. Perhaps more characteristic would be the kind of meal that Xenophon (Anabasis 5.3.7–10) provided at a festival honoring Artemis of Ephesos in the sanctuary that he dedicated to her at Skillous, with all the citizens, men, and women of the neighborhood as guests: “And the goddess provided for the banqueters/campers barley groats, loaves of bread, wine, sweetmeats, and a portion of the victims sacrificed from the sacred herd, as well as those captured in the hunt [boars and gazelles and stags]” (Goldstein 1982: 46). At Kommos, however, there was also seafood—fish, crustaceans and other shellfish, echinoids, and cuttlefish—as well as occasionally pig, although aside from hare and birds there is little osteological evidence from the sanctuary for game.

**Exterior Altars (Tables 8.1, 8.2)**

The first exterior altar at Kommos, Altar U (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 3, “The Sanctuary Area during Phases 2 and 3”; Pls. 1.50, 1.51), was built ca. 700 B.C., at a midpoint in Temple B’s career. Within it were found thousands of burnt bones (about 38 kg) representing the remains of those parts of the sacrificed animals offered to the god(s). The construction of this altar did not initiate sacrifice of animals at the site, however, for plentiful burnt bone and ash were associated with both the exteriors and interiors of Temple A and early Temple B. Very likely, there was a simple ash altar at the time, in the manner suggested by David W. Rupp (Rupp 1983: 101–2).

Altar U was constructed as a raised enclosure and is of a type referred to as a “Hollow Ceremonial Altar” and often found outside Crete. The one from Kommos and another reported from Kato Syme (Pl. 8.3), in the hills east of the Mesara Plain, are up to now the earliest of their type known on the island, and can probably be taken fairly as indicating the beginning of the tradition there.

In a late phase of Temple B a level platform (ca. 1.50 × 0.55 m and ca. 0.50 m high on the south; Pl. 1.50) was constructed along the western side of Altar U. Perhaps small animals such as sheep and goat were butchered on it. Cooking containers or instruments might have been set there as well. Perhaps animal figurines were placed there (such as those found set on Altar C of a much later date). No figurines were recovered near U, however, and so the
Table 8.1. Selected architectural forms in the Kommos sanctuary. (Buildings E, F, Q, V, W, and Z and Base Y are not included.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural Elements</th>
<th>Temple A</th>
<th>Temple B, Phase 1</th>
<th>Temple B, Phase 2</th>
<th>Temple B, Phase 3</th>
<th>Temple C</th>
<th>Room A1</th>
<th>Eastern Room</th>
<th>Western Room</th>
<th>Building D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exterior</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altar</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1 (Altar U)</td>
<td>1 (Altar U)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearth</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1 double</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small slab enclosure</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exterior size in meters (N-S × E-W)</td>
<td>554(?) × 40–670(?)</td>
<td>640 × 8.08</td>
<td>640 × 8.08</td>
<td>640 × 8.08</td>
<td>9.00 × 11.50</td>
<td>670 × 9.57</td>
<td>4.92 × 2.98</td>
<td>4.92 × 4.80</td>
<td>5.40 in diameter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interior</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supports</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Pillar</td>
<td>Pillar</td>
<td>Pillar</td>
<td>Columns</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cult statue(s)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Slab</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearth(s)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Late addition</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear platform</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Late addition</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof type</td>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>Gabled (tiles)</td>
<td>Gabled (tiles)</td>
<td>Gabled (tiles)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Shrine&quot;</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Tripillar Shrine</td>
<td>Tripillar Shrine</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior wall bench</td>
<td>North side</td>
<td>North side</td>
<td>North side</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>North, south, and east sides</td>
<td>All sides</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Interior measurements given because of additive nature of construction.

*Interior measurements given because of partition wall.
Table 8.2. Exterior built altars in the Kommos sanctuary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Altar</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Number of Phases</th>
<th>Length (E-W) x Width (N-S) x Height (m)</th>
<th>Top / Interior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Early Archaic</td>
<td>East of Temple B, Phase 2, just north of axis</td>
<td>Large blocks in reuse with rubble; built on north-south slope</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.74/1.50 x 1.47/1.35 x 0.50</td>
<td>(on south) burnt bone; “bothros” type (42A/17 and 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.05/2.30 E-W; platform added</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Late Archaic</td>
<td>East of Temple C, on axis</td>
<td>Rough ashlar; reused slabs set vertically on exterior</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.89 x 1.17 x 0.80</td>
<td>Many animal bones on top; one-third burnt (20B1/38, 59, and 60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Late Classical</td>
<td>On axis east of Temple C, west of Altar H</td>
<td>Ashlar, fine socle; rubble extension to north and top, as well as to south</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.50/1.60 x 0.83</td>
<td>Burned, covered with burnt bone from sacrificed animals; bull figurines: C9 and C17 (10A1/25 and 31, 33A/4 and 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Late Hellenistic</td>
<td>South of Altar C</td>
<td>Rough ashlar krepidoma</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.30/2.35 x 1.22/1.29 x 0.60</td>
<td>Few unburnt animal bones on top (29A/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Late Hellenistic</td>
<td>South of Altar H</td>
<td>Rough ashlar krepidoma</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.15/2.17 x 1.40/1.43 x 0.67</td>
<td>Few unburnt animal bones on top (29A/31)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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custom at Kommos of setting such offerings outside the temple might have been a late one (see M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 1, “Site Topography and Provenances of the Figurines and Figures”). While Altar U continued to be used the ground level in front of Temple B rose over the years, so that U must have been at the end of its career rather like a pit or bothros. In the meantime ashes and bone overflowed its interior and accumulated around it, especially to the south, as evidenced by the soil, which was blackened and so full of ash and bone as to be quite soft to the touch.

Although it is clear that major use of Temple B ceased around the beginning of the sixth century B.C., and religious activity in the area did not revive for two hundred years or more, the numerous similarities between the activities in Temples B and C (eating and drinking) and the items dedicated (e.g., the terra-cotta bulls) suggest strongly that certain cult practices must have continued, but on a diminished scale, during the hiatus. Perhaps those attending rites stayed in tents at such times, for lack of permanent shelters. What was felt to be necessary, however, was an altar, and it was during this period that Altar H appears to have been built. Upon it, perhaps seasonally, were laid and burnt the sacred portions of sheep or goat. A number of figurines are also associated with this interim period (M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 2, II-9).

It is not clear whether there was a substantive difference in use or intention between the earlier, freestanding phase of Altar U and its later “pit” stage. A similar consideration arises when we study the building of Altar H and (later) Altars C, L, and M, the four exterior altars associated with Temple C, for they are all of the “Low Monumental Altar” type upon (rather than in) which the sacrificed portions would be burnt. There is, however, little detectable change in the manner of sacrificing or the animals chosen.

Altar H, after enlargement, was followed by Altar C (Pl. 1.144), the first stage of which was built with the most handsome masonry used for any altar at Kommos. The quality of the stoneworking strengthens (but does not prove) the proposal that Altar C and Temple C were built at the same time, ca. 375 B.C. Despite its fine krepidoma and first two courses, there is no evidence that there was ever a projecting horizontal cornice to complete Altar C. Perhaps this is to be expected, for Cretan altars are noted for their simplicity. Altar C, in any case, was to become the most used altar in the later Greek period, to judge from its very burned upper surface, which produced 3 kg of burnt bone, while over 2.6 kg of bone was collected from around its base. More bone is associated with Altar C than with any other altar, except for Geometric/Archaic Altar U, which had already been covered over when Temple C was built.

Altar C was enlarged twice. First, its general height was raised and its length extended to the north; second, it was extended slightly to the south. Presumably this was done so that there would be more surface area upon which to place and/or burn offerings, with a preference for lengthening the altar. This preference for lengthening rather than widening altars is seen
at other sites as well. The reason for this may be determined if we note that the aforementioned terra-cotta bull had been set on the southern end of Altar C, sheltered by a pair of limestone slabs set on edge from the fires that were set further north. Thus objects may have been placed separately from sections of animals that were burnt. It is also possible that a portion of the altar was used as a platform for slaughtering.

Just west of Altar C was found a small square foundation of field stones (Pl. 1.147). Perhaps this served as a point where a priest might stand. It might also have served as a base for setting a portable altar such as the fragmentary circular one with an inscription mentioning Poseidon found within Temple C (Csapo et al., Chap. 2, 75). Immediately south of Altar C was a curious low enclosure (Pl. 1.148) made of small slabs set on edge (the altar forms its northern edge). There is no evidence to indicate clearly this enclosure’s function. Perhaps kindling was placed here, fairly far from where the fires were set on the altar, ready to be burnt along with portions of sacrificed animals.

Altar C’s popularity may have arisen simply from its proximity to the temple rather than from some more esoteric explanation, such as the preference for a particular god that might be served by a certain altar. The multiple altars at Kommos could imply that more than one god was worshipped (see Section 2, “Ascription of the Temples, Temple C, The Altars”), and that each altar found represents one or more gods being honored. For instance, at first only one god (or a group of gods) might have been honored at Altar H, then another god was introduced when Altar C was constructed, and then two more gods were added when Altars L and M (see following discussion) were built. There is evidence at Kommos, after all, for the worship of Pan (a relief; S 197; M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 5) and of Zeus and Athena (an inscription; Csapo et al., Chap. 2, 76). Moreover, there is the circular altar referring to Poseidon already mentioned. On the other hand, there is no burnt bone evidence to show that Altars L and M were actually used for burnt sacrifice, nor were fragments of bull figurines or other gifts found around them, so that a democratic “sharing out” of offerings among the respective altars hardly seems to have taken place.

While Altars C and H were being used, and probably before Altars L and M were built, a curious small pit was set in the ground just south of Temple C’s entrance (Pl. 1.116). The pit was lined on three sides by uncut stone slabs; apparently the fourth side was none other than the temple’s front wall, subsequently robbed out. Within the small pit were found charcoal, layers of clay, and 110 burnt bones (0.25 kg), all probably of sheep/goat. Clearly, it was a small bothros for offerings—it is hardly large enough to have been a rubbish pit, and besides there is good evidence to show that most rubbish from the temple was dumped to the south. Apparently, fires were set within the pit without concern for the side of the building (the blocks are now missing), which would certainly have been seared. Was this spot particularly sacred for a special reason? The explanation may be linked with whatever object (a container for liquid?) was set on the finely cut, enigmatic base just north of the entrance into Temple C (Pl. 1.118).
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Interior Altars and Hearths (Tables 8.1, 8.3)

In the sense that an altar is a place intended to receive offerings and/or sacrifice, one of the most interesting ones in the sanctuary, and unique up to this point in the Aegean, is the Tripillar Shrine (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 3, “Phase 1”). It was established along with Temple B, a result of inspiration from the East. Later, bronze and faience gifts were wedged between the pillars and, shortly afterward, a full-size bronze shield was propped up behind them. Presumably the flat stone surface in front of the pillars, just west of the rough hearth, was the place in B where offerings found in the area were set. It is likely that many of the contemporary dedications found in the dump to the south were originally set on that surface, only to be removed when the temple was being cleaned out. At a later point, after the floor level within B had risen considerably, another group of votive offerings was deposited west of the shrine, a further indication that the spot continued to be thought of as a place where dedications were appropriate.

There are two other interior features that might be considered altars, namely, the rectangular hearths of both Temples B and C, and the statue base or platform combination in Temple C. The former are discussed immediately following; for the latter, see Chapter 1, Section 5.

The tradition of informal hearths, that is, hearths undefined by stone slabs or blocks, began at Kommos during the Iron Age probably as soon as Temple A was established. That these were hearths used for cooking is demonstrated by the amount of unburnt bone and the ash within and just outside Temple A (Reese, Chap. 6, Table 6.1). That sacrificial parts of animals were offered at the same time is also suggested by the significant amount of burnt bone (125 bones burnt of 1,427 bones). A simple ash altar outside Temple A is a possibility. There may also have been an informal interior hearth on axis within A, but in order to investigate that spot we would have been forced during excavation to remove at least the first two hearths of B.

As soon as Temple B was built, a hearth of rough stones was set upon its floor, midway between the Tripillar Shrine and the central pier at the entrance to the east (Hearth 1; Pls. 1.30 [top], 1.35 [at x]). Within the base of the hearth were found a number of very burnt objects: a faience bowl (Schwab, Chap. 5, Section 11, 16), a small round disk of bronze (Dabney, Chap. 5, Section 3, 17), fragments of a bull figurine (M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 2, AB40), as well as a miniature kalathos (Callaghan and Johnston, Chap. 4, Section 1, 197). Perhaps these items were placed there as a small foundation offering to sanctify the spot. Nothing similar was found in connection with any of the later hearths of B. Gradually ash and bone accumulated, overflowing the hearth, and more rough stones were added around it to bring up the level. At about this point, some time midway through the history of Temple B, Altar U, already discussed, was constructed.

At about the same time, the first formal rectangular hearth (Pls. 1.53, 1.54), evenly bordered by slabs, was set outside Temple B, north of Altar U. It was an unusual one consisting of two
Table 8.3. Five built hearths in the Kommos sanctuary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hearth</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Exterior Dimensions (in meters)</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Interior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temple B, Phase 2, exterior double hearth to northeast</td>
<td>Early Archaic ca. 2.00</td>
<td>0.85; interior of western compartment</td>
<td>Roughly squared slabs set on edge</td>
<td>Few sherds and ashy fill (47A/18 and 24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple B, Phase 3, interior Hearth 3, incorporating Tripillar Shrine</td>
<td>Archaic ca. 0.60</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>Rough slabs on three sides with large slabs at bottom; Tripillar Shrine along western edge</td>
<td>Few sherds, much ash, many animal and fish bones, shells, and iron bit (M6 62) (49A1/45 and 67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple B, Phase 3, Hearth 4, centrally located on interior</td>
<td>Archaic 1.02; 0.84 on interior</td>
<td>0.84; 0.29 on interior</td>
<td>Long slabs set neatly on edge</td>
<td>Two burned levels; much ash, many animal and fish bones, and shells (33C/68–70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple C, original interior hearth</td>
<td>Late Classical (ca. 375–350 B.C.)</td>
<td>1.44; 1.15</td>
<td>Cut ashlar blocks on exterior with stone filling</td>
<td>Few sherds, much ash, many animal and fish bones, and shells (29A1/35 and 46A/1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room A1, original interior hearth</td>
<td>Late Hellenistic</td>
<td>2.36; 1.38</td>
<td>Long slabs set neatly on edge</td>
<td>Used as hearth (burnt; some bone) then filled with unburnt stone and earth (23A/25 and 46A1/1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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adjoining, almost square, enclosures, the eastern one of which was found largely destroyed. Within the western one was ash. The sides of the hearth were made of long thin slabs set on edge, a technique used at Kommos for the first time here but typical of many later hearths both at Kommos and elsewhere on Crete. Surprisingly enough, this double hearth of the “slab-on-edge” type was actually being used outside a building, whereas the general custom was to place the hearths inside houses and public buildings, usually on axis within a room (see Section 2, “Temple C and the Derosis Temple Type”).

It is possible that this double hearth was set up outside Temple B so that the smoke from cooking or sacrifice would not bother the diners. Perhaps it was used by those preparing the meals, who were possibly slaves. It (and the ashy fill east of it) produced largely burnt pig and fish bones. In any case, the double hearth went out of use not long afterward, while Altar U continued to be used for sacrificial burning of sheep/goat and cattle. At about the same time, another hearth enclosure, of rough fieldstone, was set within Temple B (Pl. 1.30 [middle], 1.35).

Within the latest phase of Temple B (Phase 3) there are two hearths at nearly the same level (the bottom of Hearth 3 is at +4.92 m; the bottom of Hearth 4 is at +5.05 m). As already described (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 3, “Phase 3”), Hearth 3 was set up rather roughly, using the upper part of the Tripillar Shrine to form its western side. Hearth 4 (Pl. 1.36, foreground), of finer workmanship and obviously a special effort, was set on axis between Hearth 3 and the pillar at the entrance to B. It was the first formal, rectangular slab-on-edge hearth enclosure set within the temple. As a form it was to remain at Kommos even when Temple C was built many years later. Both hearths contained much burnt mammal bone (0.60 kg of burnt sheep/goat and cattle) in Hearth 3 and 0.75 kg (burnt sheep/goat, pig, bird, fish, and shells) in Hearth 4. Part of an iron horse bit (J. W. Shaw and Harlan, Chap. 5, Section 7, 38) was found next to Hearth 3.

That these two hearths were not built at the same time is suggested by their differing construction. But which was installed first? Perhaps Hearth 3, roughly built, was used until Hearth 4, of finer construction, replaced it. Hearth 4 was probably the last formal addition to Temple B, made not long before the building was abandoned ca. 600 B.C.

With the founding of Temple C during the first half of the fourth century B.C., the tradition of exterior altars continued, as we have already seen. That of interior central hearths also continued within the temple. The major internal structural addition to the temple form was the introduction of two columns, one on either side of the hearth and on axis. The hearth between the columns in C differs somewhat from its predecessors in Temple B, for it was constructed not with slabs set on edge but with a series of ashlars blocks, often irregular on the inside, with rubble filling the interior. This hearth was found very burnt and was so filled with ash, burnt small mammal bones (0.10 kg), egg shells, and marine shells that the material had spilled out onto the floor (Reese, Chap. 6, Sections 3 and 6; Rose, Chap. 6, Section 4). On the east a block had been set partly upon the edge of the column base (Pl. 1.90), perhaps to
protect it from the fire, but more likely to serve as a stand (possibly for a pot). Eventually the hearth was covered over as the floor level rose, not long before the temple went out of use, the last building in the sanctuary to be abandoned. From that final, “squatter” phase of C there are only a few burnt areas on the uppermost floor to show where fires were lit.

It is interesting that with the building of Room A1 to the north of Temple C, centuries after C was constructed, there was a return to the simpler slab-on-edge construction, a type abandoned at Kommos many years before but which probably continued as a style in Hellenistic Crete. In some ways, however, the slab-on-edge type was superior, for the hearth then became a container rather than simply a platform on which the ash accumulated. Unless tidied up at regular intervals, the ash on the platform would simply flow out onto the floor, as it did in C. The hearth in A1 was certainly used, for at a lower interior level the surface was quite burnt and contained burnt bone, shell, and ash. Curiously, not long before the building was destroyed, this hearth became, with the addition of a good deal of earth and rubble, a platform for some other use.

With the history of the numerous formal hearths at IA Kommos summarized, their more precise functions remain to be discussed, if not defined, for certain aspects of the evidence remain unclear or ambiguous. For instance, to what extent were the various hearths used for lighting, heating, and cooking and/or for offerings or for sacrifice itself? As for lighting and heating, all one can say is that the hearths did project light and heat and would have been especially welcome at night or during winter months in Temples B and C. As far as cooking is concerned, the hearths most probably were used for preparing meals. The curious proximity of the hearth in Temple C to the temple’s eastern column base (why was the hearth not set further west?) has often provoked the thought that an apparatus, probably of metal and to which pots could have been attached, might have been set into a socket cut into the side of the column here.

One must inquire, also, whether the exterior altars were used for cooking. This is possible, of course, and the cooking of the traditional splancha (see “Animal Sacrifice at Kommos,” following) took place upon the altar as part of the sacrifice, as suggested in Plate 8.10. To designate the exterior altar as only a place for sacrifice, however, is probably incorrect: It was most likely used for both cooking and sacrifice. Perhaps the inner hearth was preferred for cooking when an altar fire had not been lit.

To what extent, however, did the interior hearth function as a place for offerings and/or for sacrifice as well? Can the term “hearth-altar” be applied to the hearths, as it has been to others in Cretan temples? First, an analysis of the burnt bones on the exterior altars of B (Altar U) and C (Altar C)—bones that one can fairly assume are parts of the sacrificed victims—indicates among the burnt sheep/goat bones, a preference for hindquarters and legs, ribs, and vertebrae, in that order, the first two always being the more numerous (Reese, Chap. 6, Section 3, Pls. 6.4, 6.6). A similar pattern appears in the ovicaprid bones from Hearths 3 and 4 in Temple B (Pls. 6.1, 6.2). In the central hearth on the slab floor of Temple C almost
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all the burnt bones are ovicaprid, with possibly some pig, but are otherwise unidentified. Were two sacrifices made, one on the altar outside and the other in the hearth inside, or were exterior altar and interior hearth interchangeable for sacrifice, depending on the circumstances? Or were the interior hearths used for libations and offerings, with the actual slaughtering of the animals taking place at the exterior altars, where offerings were made as well, at least during the periods of later Temple B and Temple C? The first possibility seems doubtful, the second likely, and the third more likely. Perhaps what really mattered was that the sacrifice was made, and various circumstances, such as the presence of an exterior altar (whether simply of ash or a built one), the number of people involved, the scale of the ritual meal, or the amount of firewood available, would dictate the place where the meat sacrifice would be made. Despite ambiguities, it seems a fair judgment to term the interior hearths at Kommos hearth-altars, since it seems clear that they received offerings, perhaps as a purification sacrifice, from the participants in the ceremonies, as suggested by Walter Burkert (personal communication).

Wall Benches (Table 8.1)

As discussed in the section on architecture (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Sections 2–5), the tradition of interior benches, or wall benches, seems to be a long one at Kommos. Although they may have appeared in Temple A, the form was certainly part of Temple B’s original scheme at least along the length of the north wall and probably along the south wall. The original bench within B (0.40 m high and 0.44 m wide) was gradually covered over in B’s final stage (Phase 3), when the floor had risen substantially. At that time, temporary wooden benches (of which we have found no trace, however) were probably employed.

In Temple C, although the early form of the benches is not clear, the line of the end of the paved floor along the side walls shows that the benches, again probably of wood, were about 0.50–0.60 m wide. These were replaced by wall benches rather roughly built of rubble of the same width as the bench in Temple B and somewhat higher (perhaps 0.60 m high). There followed two widenings, one to ca. 1.00 m (Phase 3) and the last to 1.60–1.80 m (Phase 4). One imagines that the late benches were even somewhat taller than 0.80 m, their maximum preserved height, because of the addition of the straw or mattresses that would have made them more comfortable to sit on or, for that matter, to lie upon.

The benches deserve some scrutiny. That preserved within Temple B, for instance, is only 0.44 m wide, little wider than the average chair, and would certainly have been more comfortable for people to sit on rather than lie on. Sitting when eating seems, actually, to have been the custom in Homeric Greece, for the tradition of eating and drinking while lying on one’s side, propped up by an elbow, seems to have come to Greece from the East after about 700 B.C. (Dentzer 1971: 244ff.; Bergquist 1990: 43 n. 7 [late seventh century]). The earlier custom also seems to have continued in conservative Crete, for Heraclides Ponticus of the fourth century...
remarks (3.6) that Cretans dined seated on chairs (Richter 1966: 64). Later, Athenaeus, in his *Deipnosophists* (4.142–43), quoted Pyrgion, who described how the Cretans ate in their public messes (*syssitia*) while seated around the tables (Dentzer 1971: 244 n. 6). Perhaps the two writers were referring more specifically to *syssitia* rather than ritual meals; perhaps their remarks applied more generally to everyday Cretan habits. Dining while reclining, in any case, seems to have existed in post-Archaic Crete, and it may have been non-Cretan influence that first brought the custom to the island, for *symposia* flourished outside the more conservative Mainland areas, especially in Athens. Thus the builders of Temple C probably incorporated extrawide benches in the room so that diners could sit or recline. As time went on the benches were widened again and then again, in order (one speculates) to accommodate more diners.

It is possible, of course, that these platforms in Temple C referred to here as wall-benches were really for another purpose, such as the placement of gifts. A good many shattered glass vessels (but of common type) were found on the bench in the southeast corner of the room, for instance (Hayes, Chap. 5, Section 1, 1–2, 4, 11, 13). But the pattern does not continue throughout the room, for nothing else of a dedicatory nature was found upon the benches, save in the far southwest corner, where a good many clay lamps were recovered (Pl. 1.106; Hayes, Chap. 4, Section 4, 31–33 and 38). The lamps were especially plentiful near the auxiliary statue base built just south of the original one. Perhaps gifts were placed in front of the figures. Nor is it by chance that the reused Minoan lamp (Pl. 1.109; Schwab 1996: no. 42), with its contents of faunal remains tipped over below it, was found in that corner, where it had tumbled down from the platform on which it had stood before the cornice was removed by stone robbers.

Further evidence to support the argument that the benches were intended for sitting or reclining comes, I think, from the construction of later Room A1 to the north of Temple C. In that large one-phase structure (6.70 m north-south × 9.57 m east-west on the interior), a continuous wall bench (0.65–0.80 m wide and 0.45 m high) was set in as the major interior feature around a large central hearth. The appearance of A1 and its analogy with a hall with more clearly delineated single couches at the so-called Prytaneion at Lato (see “Benched Buildings with Formal Hearths in Crete,” following) make its identification as a ritual dining hall, similar to that incorporated within C, even stronger.

Some 14 reclining people could have been accommodated within Room A1, and some 10 within early Temple C. This “minimum” capacity of 24 in the interior could be increased almost four times, of course, if the diners sat along the edges of the benches of the two rooms.

### Benched Buildings with Formal Hearths in Crete

The form of a large room with one or more wall benches and occasionally with a rectangular central hearth is becoming more common on Crete as excavations progress. Early examples are known on both Crete and the Mainland. Some researchers trace at least aspects of the
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form back into the Bronze Age.\textsuperscript{13} From the first millennium B.C., examples of such rooms date from the Geometric through Hellenistic periods and are found in houses,\textsuperscript{14} in what have been identified as Hellenistic \textit{prytaneia,}\textsuperscript{15} and in various sacral structures.\textsuperscript{16} The combination of a continuous wall-bench with a large built hearth similar to the arrangement in the rooms at Kommos has so far been reported from only three sites. At SM/seventh-century Smari, a group of at least three large adjacent rooms, still under excavation, was constructed over Minoan remains on the summit of a large hill (Vallianou 1980; 1984). Room A, the most completely published to date, faced east and was composed of an open porch, a main chamber, and a smaller rear room. The central, larger space (ca. 8.35 m east-west \times ca. 6.20 m north-south) had a stone bench (0.30 m high) lining its interior. A hearth enclosed by stones on the long sides and upright slabs on the short sides was found west of the the probable location of a central column (the base was recovered). Mazarakis-Ainian (1997: 222) believes that it is a ruler’s dwelling that, to judge from the animal bones recovered, may also have served for banquets.

The second is the “house” in the northwestern court at Phaistos.\textsuperscript{17} The room itself is 4.20 m north-south by 6.20 m east-west, with a wall bench ca. 0.50 m wide (estimated) running around the interior except along the south, where there is a substantial opening for the doorway. A rectangular hearth of slabs, burnt by fire, was set somewhat south of the room’s longitudinal axis, with bases for wooden columns to the west and east. This room has been interpreted as a house, but the presence of a continuous bench for sitting suggests a place of assembly for many people.

The third example comes from Lato, where one of the rooms concerned is the western of two large ones near the agora. These (and the auxiliary room connected with each) form what has generally been interpreted as the \textit{prytaneion} of the surrounding town (Pl. 8.5).\textsuperscript{18} The room on the west (6.30–6.40 m north-south and 8.20–8.33 m east-west) has what is probably a hearth (1.30 \times 1.88–2.00 m) set on axis. Except where there are entrances (on the north and east) there is a wide stepped bench (ca. 1.40 m wide) around the four sides of the room, upon which some seven or eight diners might have reclined.\textsuperscript{19} As restored, the separate couches would have been some 2.00–2.10 m in length. The structure is now dated to the end of the fourth or the beginning of the third century B.C. and may well be the banquet hall (\textit{hestiatorion}) of the \textit{kosmoi} (the chief magistrates of the town; Ducrey and Picard 1972: 588–91; 1980: passim).

The eastern of the two rooms (some 8.05–8.20 m \times 9.85 m) is the first entered from the agora. In its middle is a very large rectangular frame of ashlar slabs (3.00 \times 3.98 m), which, according to the excavator, contained the common hearth (\textit{koine hestia}; Demargne 1903: 216, 218). In most Cretan towns it was usually situated in the \textit{prytaneion,} or town hall, where food, drink, and presumably sleeping accommodations would have been provided. Later investigators at Lato have suggested that the so-called hearth there is really the impluvium of a peristyle court (Ducrey and Picard 1972: 573–76): Perhaps the common hearth was in the inner rather than the outer room.
It is of some interest that around the large eastern room at Lato is a low narrow bench (0.15 m high and 0.50 m wide) upon which, perhaps on cushions, people would have sat. The narrow bench in the eastern room, with the most common type of bench width in Crete, contrasts strongly with the broad elevated areas provided for reclining diners inside the western room. The presence of the two types of platforms in the same building shows that their form was determined, at least in certain areas, by function: Both types were known. At Kommos we find the same situation: Inside Temple C and Room A1 are the broader couches, whereas outside the rooms, facing onto the court, are canonic benches.

Room A1 at Kommos seems hardly to have been used, or it was cleaned out scrupulously. Perhaps a change in local conditions shortly after it was built made the sanctuary less accessible to many. Its hearth, within which were some burnt bone and shells, was nevertheless probably used as a hearth-altar. Soon, however, it was covered over, creating another platform. Perhaps the redundancy of the numerous places where one could sacrifice and/or cook partly brought about this change. Temple C to the south, however, continued in use.

Animal Sacrifice at Kommos

Iron Age Kommos provides a variety of faunal information both from sacrifices and from the ritual meals that followed. This information was gained by hand collecting, dry-sieving and water-sieving, careful identification of species, lotting of pails, and then quantification. The results do not show that sacrifice at Kommos was done in unusual ways and with different aims than one might expect, but rather that the ritual as practiced fits well with what can be gleaned from the information available about Crete, from analogous material on the Mainland, as well as from other parts of the Greek world and the Eastern Mediterranean.

As already discussed, a wealth of evidence shows that animals were sacrificed and certain body parts were dedicated at least from the early days of Temple B. Animals or parts of animals may have been burnt outside Temple A and early Temple B, but the custom of exterior altars, where a place specially built for burning was provided, was not formalized until Altar U was built in the Late Geometric/Early Archaic period. Animal parts were burned inside the temples as well, specifically within the hearth-altars discovered in all phases of B and, of course, in Temple C. It is clear, nevertheless, from the number and variety of fauna from Temple A and its two dumps that the temple was already a center for eating even before exterior altars were introduced. The number of bones (1,427) in the interior of the building, where a possible bench was found, also suggests that meals were being consumed there. In the “Southern Dump” (in Trench 34A2), the 5:374 ratio of burnt to unburnt mammal bone fragments (with only 1.3% burnt) is not basically dissimilar to the percentage in the interior (125:1,427, or 8.8%). The percentage is rather consistent throughout Temples B and C for interiors and dumps but not for the hearth-altars or exterior altars, where burnt bones, indicating sacrifice rather than eating, usually dominate. The northeastern dump of A (Trenches 42A...
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and 47A), however, has a higher percentage of burnt bones (about 20% burnt), which may indicate that the contents of an ash altar of A were thrown there, perhaps when the area was leveled for the construction of B. It is of some interest that all burnt bones from A are ovicaprid (sheep or goat) or cattle. Only two unburnt pig bones have been found from the Temple A period (see below).

As pointed out elsewhere by David S. Reese (Chap. 6, Section 6), seafood was always popular at Kommos. Shells were also left as votive offerings within Temples B and C, the primary identification of this custom being based on water- and beach-worn shells that were collected after the animals were dead. Some, especially *Cerastoderma*, a species of cockle, may have been burnt intentionally in the hearths (Reese, Chap. 6, Section 6). Fish, limpets, topshells, echinoids, and crabs were eaten in significant numbers (Rose, Chap. 6, Section 4; Reese, Chap. 6, Section 6). This suggests that they were harvested from the nearby rocky shore.

The remains of marine meals were found in many areas of the sanctuary, for instance, in great number just west of the temples. Whether some of this seafood was offered is difficult to say, although some of the marine remains are of varieties similar to those found at locations where sacrifice actually took place. Very little shell was found in connection with any of the exterior altars, but the large number of fish remains burnt in the Temple B, Phase 2, middle hearth-altar (Hearth 4), 278 of 428 bones from at least 16 individual fish (Rose, Chap. 6, Section 4), suggests that they were purposefully burnt there. It is possible, however, that fish remains were thrown into the fire as a means of disposal. The large number of burnt marine invertebrate and land snail shells from the three Temple C–period hearth-altars (that from Room A1 is included here), however, also suggests votive burning and not refuse disposal: The cockle *Cerastoderma edule* seems to have been especially chosen (Reese, Chap. 6, Section 6). It is clear, in any case, that offerings of seafood were made, by custom and perhaps convenience, inside rather than outside the temples.

For the period of Temple B, Phases 2 and 3, Altar U contained mainly burnt cattle and ovicaprid bones (Pls. 6.3, 6.4). The burning was particularly thorough (99.87%). From the time of Temple C, Altars L and M on the south (probably late) produced only a single unburnt tooth on each altar. Altars C and H, however, show that cattle and mainly ovicaprids were sacrificed. In connection with Altar C, where ovicaprids also dominate (Pls. 6.5, 6.6), a definite preference was shown for hindquarters as well, a custom also apparent in the earlier interior hearth-altars of Temple B (Pls. 6.1, 6.2). The few unburnt mammal bones and two unburnt fish bones from Altar U and one hare bone from Altar H are probably intrusive. We can conclude that cattle and ovicaprids were the appropriate animals—rather than pig, hare, bird, or fish—for offering on the exterior altars of Temple B, Phases 2 and 3, and Temple C. The meals within the temples could vary, but the formal external sacrifices were rather consistent.

In the ash of the interior hearth-altars, most of the mammal bones were found burnt: Temple B, Phase 1, Hearth-Altar 1—59% burnt, all ovicaprid; B, Phase 2, Hearth-Altar 2—97%, all ovicaprid; B, Phase 3, lower hearth-floor—55%, all ovicaprid; B, Phase 3, deposit around
Tripillar Shrine—84%, ovicaprid and cattle; B, Phase 3, Hearth-Altar 3—100%, ovicaprid and cattle; B, Phase 3, Rectangular Hearth-Altar 4—100%, ovicaprid or pig; Temple C, Phase 1, central rectangular hearth on slab floor—100%, ovicaprid or pig; C, Phase 6, southwestern upper hearth—72%, all pig. Phases 1 and 2 of B have only ovicaprid, while Phase 3 has ovicaprid and cattle (only in the ritual deposit next to Hearth-Altar 3) and ovicaprid and pig (in Hearth-Altar 4).

Together with the burnt mammals found in the hearth-altars were burnt fish bones, molluscs, eggshells, one hare bone, and one bird bone. The identifiable burnt mammal bones are usually the hindquarters, vertebrae, and ribs of ovicaprids, as found in the surely sacrificed material on the exterior altars of both Temples B and C. This suggests that the hearth-altar material may be sacrificial in nature rather than simply the remains of cooking thrown back in the fire for disposal. Since the burnt mammal bones are probably of votive character, it may therefore follow that the other remains are votive as well. It is yet to be explained, however, why the other remains are not found in comparable quantities in Altar U or upon Altars C and H.

Cattle remains are in all contexts, but there are usually more ovicaprids than cattle. For the Temple C period, burnt cattle are known only from Altar C (Pl. 6.5) and not from the interior hearth-altars. Was a particular custom involved, or had the hearth in Temple C been cleared, with the remnants being thrown into the dump next to the temple, after the cattle had been consumed? Or, as suggested in the preceding discussion of altars, was the sacrifice of cattle such an event that only the exterior altar was thought appropriate for the burnt sacrifice?

Pigs present something of an anomaly. There are only two pig bones, unburnt, from Temple A, and they begin to appear in numbers only toward the end of Temple B, when pig apparently became extremely popular. Then, in Temple C’s interior, including the hearth-altars, more pig than ovicaprid are present. With this clear evidence for the eating of pig, especially during the late stages of C (represented by the floor levels recovered from the temple), it seems particularly strange not to find remains of pig in sufficient numbers on the altars outside the temple, especially on popular Altar C, where only a few unburnt (and probably intrusive) pig bones appear.

An explanation may be sought in considering that most of the pig from Temple C’s interior represents the stage after Altar C (and Temple C as a place of worship) went out of use. On the other hand, there is ample evidence to show that toward the end of Temple B’s use, although pig was popular in the sanctuary and parts may have been offered in the interior (burnt teeth of young pig were found in the fourth, final hearth-altar of Phase 3), pig was not offered on Altar U outside.

It would seem from the evidence that ovicaprids could, according to custom, be offered within or outside the temples. Cattle, common only during the period of Temple C, were mainly sacrificed outside, although their remains were also present in small quantities in the ritual deposit around the Tripillar Shrine and the Hearth-Altar 3 of Temple B. In contrast,
pig was offered, perhaps as a kind of purification sacrifice, only in the interior of Temple B, Phase 3 (Hearth-Altar 4, with four sheep/goat and pig) and Temple C (possibly in the rectangular hearth, definitely in the southeastern upper hearth). The relevant literary sources in this connection (below) suggest that pig was never sacrificed or even eaten in Crete, which is borne out by the remains upon and in the exterior altars but certainly not by the material from within the temples. It is possible that pig was always popular for eating in the time of C, but because of Cretan custom was rarely sacrificed.

As in the case of the literary tradition concerning the Cretans’ dining habits, that about their attitudes toward the eating of pig seems erroneous. Once more, Athenaeus in his Deipnosophists (9.371–75) states:

Speaking of hogs: that the animal is sacred among the Cretans, Agathocles of Babylon, in his book On Cyclicus shows thus: “in Crete they tell the story that the birth of Zeus occurred on Mount Dikte, where there is a secret rite. For it is said that a sow offered suck to Zeus, and as she roved about, she, by her own grunting, caused the infant’s whimpering to be inaudible to the passers-by. Hence this creature is universally regarded with great reverence, and no one, Agathocles says, would eat of its flesh. The people of Praesus even offer sacrifices to the pig, and this rite is regularly observed by them before the marriage ceremony. (Gulick 1928: 4: 203)

That eating pig was more popular in Crete than our ancient sources would have us believe is further substantiated by the evidence from the Sanctuary of Demeter at Knossos, where numerous pig bones, quite possibly the remnants of sacrifice, were reported (Jarman 1973: 177).

At this point in our study certain distinctions must remain elusive. For instance, we would like to know the relative number of animals offered at any one time to the god(s) at Kommos, as well as the animals’ sexes and at what season the rites were carried out. Whether coins were exchanged is also uncertain, although it happened at other places on Crete, from the very fragmentary inscriptions that relate to such matters. For particular rites at neighboring Gortyn, for instance, certain animals would be offered at certain times of the year to certain gods, for example, perhaps to Zeus “Velkanios . . . on the fifth of the month . . . a full-grown animal, and a goat, and a female sheep to Apollo on the . . . day . . . a bull . . . to Hera a female sheep and to Demeter a pregnant sheep” (Sokolowski 1969: no. 146; amended by Michael Jameson, personal communication). Also from Gortyn, “To . . . Zeus a white female . . . to Helios a male sheep” (Sokolowski 1969: no. 147). Or, in an Argive draft treaty between Knossos and Tylissos, there was a provision that when sixty rams were sacrificed to Zeus, a leg of each victim should be reserved for Hera (Willetts 1962: 253). For one rite at Axos, an animal and a stater would be offered, but if an (expensive) ram was selected, two staters (Sokolowski 1962: no. 113). Jameson has suggested (personal communication) that this may have concerned fining a priest for excessive fees charged.
According to custom, the slaughtering would take place at the sanctuary, most likely near the altar, and probably as part of the ritual ceremony, such as that described under "Offerings and Dedications." It is possible that the iron knives and bronze dagger found scattered in the late court levels of Temple B were the actual blades used by the sacrificer-cook for the killing and butchering when Altar U was still in use; one bronze blade fragment was found on Altar C (J. W. Shaw and Harlan, Chap. 5, Section 7, 17–27, 30, and 39). For a butchering platform the participants may have used the wide flat extension of Altar U on the west or, during the time of Temple C, tables that could be taken out from the temple, Room A1, or Building B. Or, perhaps while Temple C was in use they used a portion of one of the altars, which had been swept clean. It is also possible that, as is the custom now in the villages, the stripping off of the skin and removal of the innards took place when the animal was hung up from some convenient point nearby and not as shown in Pl. 8.10.

Some sanctuaries had special regulations concerning the meat and the skin. At Hellenistic Lissos at the Temple of Asklepios, for instance, an inscription was carved on the base of a statue honoring the god:

Thymilos first knew this Asklepios here.
The son of Tharsytas set this [statue of Asklepios] up for the god.

Whoever wishes may sacrifice.
Meat may not be removed from the premises.
The skin belongs to the god.

(translation by Eric Csapo from SEG 28 [1978]: no. 750)

In such circumstances, the skin would remain at the sanctuary, to be dealt with by the neokoros (caretaker or sacristan) or the priest.

Immediately after slaughtering the splanchna would be cooked. These were the liver, lungs, spleen, kidney, and heart (the stomach, esophagus, and intestines were excluded; Detienne 1979: 75), which were prepared for roasting by placing them on spits, a few fragments of which were discovered in the dump site south of Temple C (J. W. Shaw and Harlan, Chap. 5, Section 7, 44 and 43). The roasting of the splanchna was a focal point of the sacrifice and is well known from depiction on vases (as in Pl. 8.10). Spits or obeloi are mentioned, in fact, in an inscription referring to cult equipment from the Asklepios sanctuary at nearby Lebena (Sokolowski 1969: no. 144, side B, line 1). These splanchna would be eaten by the participants in the rite, and at the same time, probably, any parts offered to the god(s) would be consumed in the altar fire. As a continuation of the same activity, the meat to be eaten would either be roasted and then boiled or simply boiled. This boiling (shown in Pl. 8.10) was thought by some (and still by others today) to be the truly sophisticated way of cooking, for it made the raw, uncured meat soft enough to be edible (as opposed to roasting). Boiling may have been
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carried out in cauldrons set on the altars themselves, but it is more likely that at Kommos, where exterior hearths are generally lacking (except for the double hearth north of Altar U), any cauldrons for the boiling would have been set in the interior of the main cult building, probably above the convenient hearth-altars.25

Before the slaughtering of the animal (Pl. 8.10) and certainly after the event, as well as before and after the eating (Goldstein 1982: 1; Pl. 8.9), the various participants would normally wash their hands, as is indicated by general custom but also suggested for at least the period of Temple C by the numerous fragments of stone basins and the base for at least one basin on a stand that were found within or in association with the temple (see J. W. Shaw, Chap. 5, Section 6, 5–12 and 2). These basins may have been set up originally outside the temple, as at Andania in Messenia, where lustral basins were to be placed within a sanctuary that was being laid out (Goldstein 1982: 36; Cole 1988b: 162). In Crete, however, basins may also have been used within the temples themselves since they have occasionally been found there. The base found next to the statue base of Temple C (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 5, Section 6, 2; Pls. 1.86, 5.15, 5.19 [at 2]) was being reused as a bench support. A rough basin, irregularly round with a raised edge (0.90 m wide and 0.12 m thick), was found broken near a block within the Geometric temple at Dreros, in front of the keraton altar (S. Marinatos 1936: 242–44; Yavis 1949: 61), where it probably functioned as an offering table. 26 Another, finer basin, although more fragmentary than the first, was found not far away. At Lato, a complete basin with a stand was discovered in the dining area of the Prytaneion (Demargne 1903: 218).

Some of the rather crude, broad stone basins found in the same general context at Kommos (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 5, Section 6, 5–10) may never have been set on stands but, rather, may have been positioned at ground level, where they may have been intended to hold water. Perhaps these basins, filled with water, were used to help clean the feet of those about to enter the temple. Special attention, indeed, was given to the feet of those visiting a temple at Tarrha, on the southern coast of Crete west of Kommos (Ginou`ves 1962: 308 n. 6).

We learn a little from literary sources about the Cretans’ eating habits. Although the reliability of Athenaeus’s sources concerning Crete is questionable, he nevertheless gives us a glimpse of what they may have been like when he quotes Dosiades’ description of ordinary Cretan meals (4.143), which, from the point of view of preparation and diet, may reflect aspects of the meals consumed at sanctuaries such as that at Kommos. These meals (syssitia) took place in the andreon:

The Lyttians pool their goods for the common mess in this way: every man contributes a tithe of his crops to his club, as well as the income from the state which the magistrates of the city divide among the households of all the citizens. But all slaves pay one Aeginetan stater per caput. The citizens are distributed in clubs which are called andria (“halls of men”). The mess is in charge of a woman who has assistants, three or four men chosen from the common people. Each of them is attended by two
servants who bring in the fire-wood; these are called faggot-bearers. Everywhere throughout Crete there are two houses for the public messes; one of these is called andreion, the other, in which they entertain strangers, is called koineterion ("resting place"). In the house intended for the mess there are set out, first of all, two tables, called "guest-tables," at which sit in honor any strangers who are in town; next come the tables for the others. An equal portion of food on hand is served to each person; but only a half-portion of meat is given to the younger men, and they get nothing of the other food. Then on each table is placed a cup filled with wine much diluted; this is shared by all who are at the same table, and a second cup is served after they have finished the meal. For the boys a mixing-bowl is prepared which they share in common, but permission is given the older men to drink more if they desire. The woman in charge of the mess takes from the table in the sight of all the best of everything that is served, and sets it before the men who have distinguished themselves in war or in wisdom. After dinner they are in the habit first of deliberating on public affairs; from that subject they proceed to call up deeds of prowess in war and to praise the men of proved bravery, in order to encourage the younger men in pursuit of virtue. (Gulick 1928, 2: 153–55)

Although andreion (dining house) and koineterion (guest house) are noted here as being separate rooms, if not buildings, their functions might no doubt have been merged in a community where only one public room was available. Dosiades does not describe the koineterion, and yet he does mention guests dining in the andreion. Most likely, therefore, the role of the koineterion was chiefly for sleeping. Ronald Willetts and others have suggested (Willetts 1955: 18–19) that the koineterion was also for the nightly lodging of a portion of the male population.

From Dosiades we can learn a little about how meals might be organized at an andreion, how the food might be shared, and how, after the meals, discussion might turn toward deeds of war and public affairs. Of course the auspices of the meals at Kommos were quite different, for there would first have been the ritual of sacrifice and gifts to the god(s). Also, at Kommos, probably a percentage of the sacrifices (meat and, as at Lissos, the skins of the beasts) would be given to those in charge of the sanctuary (for the custom, see Sokolowski 1954: passim). This last may have happened at Kommos more commonly during its later history, for during the periods of Temples A and B, when there was only one small building, the need for any official presence must have existed only when major celebrations were planned. Moreover, maintenance must have been simple and occasional. The temple could have been cleaned out easily by dumping the sweepings just to the south (where we found them) or by letting the refuse accumulate inside and then, with perhaps a bit of earth brought in from the outside, creating a new floor.

In the later sanctuary, however, which was constructed on a more lavish scale than its predecessors and featured some four buildings and as many altars at its peak during the
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Hellenistic period, more than casual maintenance was probably necessary. Partly for this reason, it has been proposed that Building B along the northern border of the court served for storage but also, perhaps, as a residence for the caretaker of the sanctuary (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 5, “Structures Belonging to the Later Sanctuary Phases, Building B”). Perhaps he would have been part time, coming from Matala, Phaistos, or Gortyn. He and any slaves assigned to him might have been charged with occasional building (e.g., extending an altar), cleaning out Temple C, or keeping the windblown sand from accumulating in the court. He may also have assumed responsibility for equipment kept permanently in the sanctuary. We learn that in the second century B.C. there was such a person in the nearby sanctuary of Asklepios at ancient Lebena, where he is referred to as the *neokoros* (Cretan *nakoros*; Sokolowski 1969: no. 144). As *neokoros*, or caretaker (like a sacristan in church), he accounted for sanctuary equipment that he had received from his predecessor and also for those objects that were acquired during his custodianship. Higher in rank above him was the priest mentioned (*iarorgos*), in this case perhaps a *kosmos* and sacrificing priest.

The relationship of a *neokoros* and priest and the workings of a sanctuary significantly larger and richer than the one at Kommos or, probably, Lebena, are evident in a particularly informative inscription from the oracular curative shrine of Amphiarus at Oropos in Attica:

The priest of Amphiarus shall attend the shrine from the end of winter until the time of final plowing, not being absent more than three days at a time, and shall remain in the shrine no less than ten days each month. He shall compel the *neokoros* to take care of both the shrine, according to the law, and those who visit the shrine. If anyone commits a wrong within the shrine, be he alien or (Oropean) citizen, let the priest impose a fine of up to five drachmae with full authority, and let him take security from the penalized one.... Whoever intends to seek remedy from the god shall pay a fee of no less than nine obols of legal currency and drop it into the offering box in the presence of the *neokoros*.... The priest, when he is present, shall make prayers and place upon the altar the sacred share, but if he is not present, the one who sacrifices shall do so; at the god’s festival those who offer private sacrifices shall make their own prayers while the priest shall pray over the victims offered by the city of Oropus. The skin of all victims sacrificed in the shrine shall be sacred. It is allowed to sacrifice whatever one wishes, but there shall be no removal of meats from the temenos. Those who sacrifice shall give the priest one shoulder of each victim, except when there is the god’s festival; then let him take one shoulder from each public victim. Whoever is in need of the god shall incubate... complying with the rules. The name of the incubant, as soon as he pays the money, is to be recorded by the *neokoros*—both of (the incubant) himself and of his city—and shall be displayed written up in the dormitory register, so that anyone who wishes may inspect it. In the dormitory men and women shall recline in separate places, the men to the east.
Unlike at Kommos, where there is no evidence for a curative cult, the visitors to the sanctuary of Amphiaraus would often stay overnight, awaiting a cure by the god. On the other hand, the rules regarding the skin and meat are similar to those at Cretan Lissos, and some of the neokoros’s duties were no doubt similar to those of his Cretan equivalents, as indicated in the inscription from Lebena (Sokolowski 1969: no. 144).

The neokoros no doubt would have stored nearby much of the equipment for which he had assumed responsibility, and certain items would have been brought out as each festival day approached. The worshippers would have arrived with some special items (probably ex-voto gifts as well as the animals to be sacrificed and eaten), and the priest might bring the simple religious equipment for the dedications and sacrifice, while the neokoros would have arranged for other matters, probably the purchase of the wine and oil, as did the neokoroi at the large Dictynnaion sanctuary in western Crete during the first century B.C. (Guarducci 1939: xi 3, line 41). Perhaps he also arranged for the cheese and other items of food, as well as the rough mattresses that were placed on the benches, the lamps, the firewood, and the like. Probably one of his chief responsibilities was to store and replace when necessary the numerous utensils and containers that were needed for cooking and eating: cauldrons for boiling, water jars, ladles, kraters for mixing wine, iron spits, and the cups, bowls, and plates on which the food and drink were served.

Ritual activity, dining or otherwise, can normally be identified through patterns that diverge markedly from domestic use. The characteristic ceramic assemblage, especially during the Hellenistic period, seems to give us secure evidence for such specialized dining. Particularly significant at Kommos are the “basins,” over 50 cm in diameter (splanchnoenderifora for serving meat: Mitford 1980: 285–87), casseroles, cooking pots (perhaps for boiling meat; one with a rim diameter of 42 cm), platters, and ladles (Callaghan and Johnston, Chap. 4, Section 1, e.g., basins 696 and 697; casseroles 787 and 788; cooking pots 747, 760, and 761; platters 603–606; and ladles 611, 689, and 690). Many of these were recovered from the temple dump; there were numerous platters in the eastern room of Building B, where they were apparently stored.

Offerings and Dedications

The sanctuary itself—the buildings and the altars—was no doubt consecrated to the god(s) worshipped at Kommos. Just as a portion of the animals sacrificed was given to the god(s) and the remainder was eaten by the devotees, part of the shrine’s function was to provide for the worshippers’ comfort and shelter. During the Hellenistic period both Room A1 and Temple C were available for dining. The participants could share their meals, especially during the time of C, in front of the temple. Another favorite spot during the same period, when
seafood meals were particularly popular, was on the elevated seaside strip just west of the
temple, with its fine view of the wide beach, the sea, and the high cliff of Nisos to the south.

Aside from the giving of portions of the victims, accompanied by prayers and entreaties,
during the period of Temple C the pilgrims occasionally set up reliefs, such as that of Pan
(M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 5), or inscribed slabs that were often brilliantly colored, such
as that dedicated to Zeus and Athena or that in which Telemanastos is mentioned (Csapo et
al., Chap. 2, 76 and 77). From the same period come the supports for basins (perirhanteria)
or tables and the base with sphinxes, also probably dedications (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 5, Section
6, 1–3).

There were other gifts as well that, after the proper invocation and sacrifice were made,
would be set upon the table or in the precinct (Rouse 1902: 342). One offering that appeared
consistently throughout Temples A, B, and C was terra-cotta bulls. All that usually remains
of such offerings are some of the legs and horns, the fragile body pieces having been broken
and become dispersed. The best-preserved of these (M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 2, C9) was
that found in 1977 upon Altar C, facing east. It was so worn by the heat of the sacrificial fire
and by exposure that its body had begun to flake apart, the pieces dropping down beside it,
near the round legs of its predecessor (Pl. 1.146; M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 2, C17), whose
body fragments had already become mixed with the surrounding sand. The findspots of these
bulls demonstrate that the animals were most commonly set on the exterior altars while
Temple C was in use. During the period of A and B, however, they were probably set up, at
least temporarily, alongside the wheeled horses and the bronze bulls, some of which were
found inside the temples as well as discarded in the dumps to the north and the south
(M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 1). Next to the western wall in Temple B was found a terra-
cotta snake (M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 2, AB39).

Some types of objects seem to be restricted to particular chronological phases. For instance,
the bronze animal figurines (bulls and a horse), disks (Dabney, Chap. 5, Section 3, 16 and 17),
shields (J. W. Shaw and Harlan, Chap. 5, Section 7; Dabney, Chap. 5, Section 3, 15), and
weapons (J. W. Shaw and Harlan, Chap. 5, Section 6) appeared only during late Temple A
and early Temple B. Faience figurines occurred only in the second phase of B (M. C. Shaw,
Chap. 3, Section 2, AB85 and AB86), with fragments of faience bowls first appearing both
inside and outside B in the so-called faience level (J. W. Shaw 1981a: 241 n. 96; Schwab, Chap.
5, Section 11, 13–17), where as we excavated they came after a while to be expected. Jewellery
appeared in B in the form of glass, faience, terra-cotta, and stone beads (Dabney, Chap. 5,
Section 3), as well as a few scarabs (Skon-Jedele and Dabney, Chap. 5, Section 4), quite typical
of the period when Oriental styles were being adopted. There were also bronze rings and a
silver ring from B and Room A1 (Dabney, Chap. 5, Section 3, 1 and 10–13). A few bits of gold
foil in that temple are all that remains of what may have been more precious offerings (Dabney,
Chap. 5, Section 3, 9).

In Temple C’s period the numerous miniature votive bowls (e.g., Callaghan and Johnston,
Chap. 4, Section 1, 825 and 826) may have been used for the ritual burning of incense. The only jewellery from C was found outside the temple, usually in the dump to the southwest, and took the form of a few bronze dress pins (and one of iron) and a ring (Dabney, Chap. 5, Section 3, 42–44, 47, 48, 57, and 38). From that period came the only wreath, a fine one of bronze and ivory (Dabney, Chap. 5, Section 3, 36), perhaps a prize or a gift to someone attending the banquets (as at Ion’s feast in the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, where the banqueters were given wreaths [Euripides, Ion 1169–70]), which was later dedicated within the temple. It could have been left on the platform in front of the statues or simply hung upon the wall or elsewhere. It might also have been a dedication to Zeus and/or Athena, who were worshipped in the temple.

Clay (and, in particular, metal) vessels were commonly dedicated in sanctuaries, but sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between those items used in specific connection with the meals and objects actually offered as ex-votos. Perhaps some were used and then offered or, after use, symbolically dedicated by deliberately smashing them (as may have been the case with those found in front of the entrance to Temple A (Pl. 1.26; Callaghan and Johnston, Chap. 4, Section 1, Deposit 3). Some clay vessels, however, are probably ex-votos, for instance, the miniature vessels. There is one from Temple B (Callaghan and Johnston, Chap. 4, Section 1, 197), and they were quite common from the dump of Temple C (e.g., Callaghan and Johnston, Chap. 4, Section 1, 810). Among the pottery offerings in Temple B were the incised cups (Callaghan and Johnston, Chap. 4, Section 1, 239 and 240; M. C. Shaw 1983), as well as numerous aryballoi found both inside and outside. They may have held scented oil or unguents for use even during a meal (Parke 1977: 21; Goldstein 1982: 1) or simply been dedications.

The function of the Archaic aryballoi was later taken over by the many unguentaria (e.g., Callaghan and Johnston, Chap. 4, Section 1, 782) in use in Temple C. Unguentaria were discarded in the southern dump, where they were found in the deep sand. The dozens of clay lamps (Hayes, Chap. 4, Section 4, passim) found in connection with the later phases of Temple C inside the temple, in the southern dump, and in the sand accumulation above Altar C suggest that the sanctuary may have been used at night. These lamps, probably votive, were at the same time also attractive and inexpensive gifts brought to the sanctuary during its later phases. Perhaps the glass flasks, plates, and bowls found in Temple C as well as a few in the dump to the south fall into the same category (Hayes, Chap. 5, Section 1, passim).

As in so many sanctuaries, there are various miscellaneous objects that may have been offered at Kommos or may have resulted from various activities carried out there. There are fishhooks from Temple B (e.g, Blitzer 1995: M 106); bone needles (Schwab, Chap. 5, Section 10, 33–39) and a “shuttle” from south of the sanctuary (Schwab, Chap. 5, Section 10, 1) from C; remains of marine invertebrates from all temples; a shark tooth and numerous vertebrae, a dog tooth, a buzzard claw, as well as a curious dedication of iron (Mi 76; Rehder, Chap. 1, Appendix 1.2) from the court of B; and loomweights from B and C and an occasional spindle whorl in B (Dabney, Chap. 5, Section 5).
If we survey these remains in terms of their mass and variety, some observations can be made. One is that the overall number in any category is not as rich as, for instance, the finds from some of the better-known cave sanctuaries. Metal tripods and votive reliefs in either bronze or terra-cotta do not even appear. On the other hand, Kommos was popular for meals and accompanying sacrifice, as indicated by the burnt bones resulting from the great number of animal sacrifices made in connection with Altar U (LG/Archaic) and Altar C (fourth century B.C.–Early Roman). Another notable feature at the site is the definite hiatus of use, but not complete abandonment, from shortly after the beginning of the sixth century until the beginning of the fourth century B.C. This period is characterized by a curious slowing down of religious activity at the site. This gap at Kommos, however, seems consonant with a similar phenomenon at many religious sites throughout most of Crete, the “empty years.”

One remarkable feature at Kommos is the almost complete lack of depictions of humans, the only exceptions being the faience figurines of Egyptian gods (who are nonhuman, really; M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 2, AB85 and AB86), the incised depictions of male runners and warriors and a female (male?) mourner (?) on the black-glazed bowls from Temple B (Callaghan and Johnston, Chap. 4, Section 1, 239 and 240; M. C. Shaw 1983), and the small bronze ithyphallic figurine from the time of Temple A (M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 2, AB79). One would have expected, for instance, that Daedalic figurines, so common at the nearby Gortyn acropolis (Rizza and Santa Maria Scrinari 1968: passim) might have been found as well.

A number of possible explanations for this lacuna suggest themselves. One is that a male god was being worshipped at Kommos (an inscription honoring Zeus was found at Kommos [Csapo et al., Chap. 2, 76]), and male gods attracted as offerings fewer depictions in human form, as one might deduce from the fact that surprisingly few figurines, as noted by the excavators, were found at the temple of Dictean Zeus at Palaikastro (Bosanquet 1904–5: 307–8). At other sites sacred to Zeus in Crete, however, at the Idea Cave or in the Dictean Cave, numerous figurines were found (for the former, Faure 1964: 100–108; for the latter, Boardman 1961: 61), and so an explanation based on the sex of the god worshipped is probably not correct. Moreover, a few figurines of humans (S. Marinatos 1936: 269), as well as the famous sphyrelaton bronzes, were found at the temple at Dreros, a temple probably attributable to Apollo. Finally, the Kommos inscription mentioned actually refers to both Zeus and Athena, and so for the period of Temple C at least, figurines might have been given in Athena’s honor, as they were given to Hermes and Aphrodite at Kato Syme (Lembessi and Muhly 1987: 106).

Another and more likely possibility is that, as seems evident at the Kommos site, figurines of either humans or the gods were never offered. This custom quite possibly began when the Tripillar Shrine was first set in. It has already been shown (J. W. Shaw 1989b: passim) that aniconic pillar worship was known earlier in Crete, on the Mainland, and in the Near East, and so herein may lie the explanation for at least the period of Temple B. For that of Temple C, when one and probably two cult statues of deities stood on the central base within the
early temple, a reasonable explanation must still be sought. Perhaps an earlier aniconic tradition of not giving such figurines still pertained despite a possible change in the character of the god(s) worshipped.

At Kommos many questions will remain unanswered in a practical way, for the material and epigraphic evidence rarely suffice and even more rarely mesh perfectly. Perhaps the gap can be bridged only poetically and then only temporarily. Having examined some historical aspects of Greek ritual and some of the evidence for ritual in Crete, in particular at Kommos, we might speculate upon at least the spirit if not the actual form of the sacrifice, so as not to leave the material remains as the sole, mute representatives of the occasion.

As Constantine Yavis has pointed out, for instance (1951: 152–53), the successive steps in the ritual of sacrifice were (a) the ceremonial procession with the victim and vegetable offerings; (b) invocation and libation, and the consecration of the vegetable offerings; (c) the slaughter of the victim at the altar and the shouts of the worshippers while the fire on the altar was lit; (d) the apportioning of the cuts and possibly the preparation of the meal for the worshippers; (e) the burning of the divine portion and libation, followed by the meal for the participants. These steps and others, including the butchering and the cooking, are shown in a sequence of drawings made on the basis of painted scenes on the shoulder of the late-sixth-century-B.C. black-figured hydria from Caere (Pl. 8.10). Only portions of the same act are shown in the famous depiction of the procession to the altar from Pitsa not far from Doric Corinth in the Northern Peloponnesse (Pl. 8.8). The worshippers on the latter, holding sprays and crowned with wreaths of myrtle (similar to the wreath from Kommos; Dabney, Chap. 5, Section 3, 36), pace forward slowly to the altar to the accompaniment of pipes and lyre. A libation is poured upon the bloody altar where the fire has already been lit; the sacrificial sheep looks on, under the anxious gaze of the youth. The foremost woman holds upon her head a tray with basket, or kanastron, no doubt with some of the ritual instruments and perhaps grains within it as well as containers of liquid near the ends of the tray.

It was common to have a procession, with music, toward the altar in the open air. The hymn sung around the altar may have been somewhat like that recorded in a poem of ca. 300 B.C. in an inscription of the third century after Christ, from the Temple of Dictean Zeus at Palaikastro, in which young men, perhaps initiated into tribal rites and dances, sang to Kronian Zeus:

O hail, thou Kronian,
O welcome, greatest Kouros,
Almighty of Brightness,
Here now present, leading thy Spirits,
O come for the year to Dikte,
And rejoice in this ode,
Evidence for Ritual in the Greek Sanctuary

Which we on the strings strike, as we
Blend it with the pipes’ sounds, as we
Are chanting our song, standing round
This thy altar, walled so well.

O hail, etc.

Since (the Kouretes), taking thee,
Child immortal, (with their shields),
There from Rhea, (kept thee away)
(With circlings of) feet, (well-hid).

O hail, etc.

(And seasons began to team) from
Year to year and Justice gained a
Hold on man and Peace that loves wealth
(Now attended all) creatures.

O hail, etc.

(Into cattle herds leap then) and
Into fleecy (flocks) leap also,
And leap into (the fields) of corn,
(Into households bearing) increase.

O hail, etc.

Also leap into our cities
And into our sea-borne ships,
And into our (youthful citizens)
Into Themis, (well renowned).

O hail, etc.

(Willetts 1962: 212–13)

Preparations would then be made, as Aristophanes shows in his Peace (11.942–62), in that case using a portable altar:
TRYGAEUS  The truths you mention none can doubt, for see I've brought the altar out.

CHORUS  Then hasten the task to perform:
        War, with its vehement storm,
        Seems for the instant to cease;
        Its soughings decrease.
        Shifting and veering to Peace.

TRYGAEUS  Well, here's the basket ready stored with barley grain, and wreath, and sword.
        And here's the pan of sacred fire: the sheep alone we now require.

CHORUS  Make haste, make haste: if Chaeris see,
        He'll come here uninvited,
        And pipe and blow to that degree,
        His windy labours needs must be
        By some small gift requited.

TRYGAEUS  Here, take the basket and the lustral water,
        And pace the altar round from left to right.

SERVANT  See, I've been round: now tell me something else.

TRYGAEUS  Then next I'll take this torch and dip it in.
        (To the victim, as he sprinkles it.)
        Shake your head, sirrah,
        (To the servant.)
        bring the barley, you;
        I'll hold the bason while you wash your hands....

Then the animal would be killed, as when Nestor honored Telemachus in Pylos with a sacrifice to Athena, a cow in that case (Odyssey 3.443–64; 470–73):

Steadfast Thrasymedes
stood by with the sharp ax in his hand, to strike down the heifer.
Perseus held the dish for the blood, and the aged horseman
Nestor began with the water and barley, making long prayers
to Athene, in dedication, and threw the head hairs in the fire.
Now when all had made prayer and flung down the scattering barley,
Thrasymedes, the high-hearted son of Nestor, standing
close up, struck, and the ax chopped its way through the tendons of the neck and unstrung the strength of the cow, and now the daughters and daughters-in-law of Nestor and his grave wife Eurydike, eldest of the daughters of Klymenos, raised the outcry.
They lifted the cow from the earth of the wide ways, and held her fast in place, and Peisistratos, leader of men, slaughtered her. Now when the black blood had run out, and the spirit went from the bones, they divided her into parts, and cut out the thigh bones all according to due order, and wrapped them in fat, making a double fold, and laid shreds of flesh upon them. The old man burned these on cleft sticks, and poured the gleaming wine over, while the young men with forks in their hands stood about him. But when they had burned the thigh pieces and tasted the vitals, they cut all the remainder into pieces and spitted them, and roasted all carefully and took off the pieces.

When they had roasted and taken off the spits the outer meats, they dined where they were sitting, and men of quality started up and poured them wine in the golden goblets. (Lattimore 1965: 62–63)

Birgitta Bergquist depicts the generic form of worship, which would obtain in numerous sanctuaries throughout the Greek world, and certainly at Kommos in its middle and later phases, as follows:

The collective, official worship of an Olympian divinity was practised at festivals and on certain fixed dates (and other, exceptional, occasions) on a site which was dedicated and assigned to the worship of the divinity. Within the bounds of this cult site there was an altar, upon which the burnt sacrifice, the central rite of the cult, was performed. The procession of worshippers assembled at dawn and proceeded to the altar. The sacrifice was carried out by the priest (on behalf of the other worshippers) standing at the west side of the altar (facing the east) and surrounded by the participants. After the introductory rites (mainly concerned with purification) the animal was slaughtered and dismembered, and the part of it which was designated for the divinity was burnt in the fire on the altar. During these ceremonies the participants invoked the divinity with prayers and hymns, performed ritual dances and mimetic scenes figuring the myth of the divinity. After that, the portion of the sacrificed animal which was reserved for the worshippers was roasted and distributed for the ritual meal (1967: 110–11).

Nor should we forget the dancing that might have taken place, described by Homer and which can be seen done in the same spirit even today at festivals in rural Crete, especially at
marriages. With such dancing in mind, Hephaistos decorated the shield of Achilles (*Iliad* 18.590–605):

> And the renowned smith of the strong arms made elaborate on it a dancing floor, like that which once in the wide spaces of Knosos Daidalos built for Ariadne of the lovely tresses. And there were young men on it and young girls, sought for their beauty with gifts of oxen, dancing, and holding hands at the wrist. These wore, the maidens long light robes, but the men wore tunics of finespun work and shining softly, touched with olive oil. And the girls wore fair garlands on their heads, while the young men carried golden knives that hung from sword-belts of silver. At whiles on their understanding feet they would run very lightly, as when a potter crouching makes trial of his wheel, holding it close in his hands, to see if it will run smooth. At another time they would form rows, and run, rows crossing each other. And around the lovely chorus of dancers stood a great multitude happily watching, while among the dancers two acrobats led the measures of song and dance revolving among them.

(Lattimore, 1951: 391)

2. The Form, Development, Ascription, and Desertion of the Greek Sanctuary

**Form and Development**

**Temples A and B**

The stratigraphy and features of the two early Kommos temples have already been presented (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Sections 2 and 3). It remains to put them in perspective, as well as one can at this point. If we begin with the founding of Temple A, for instance, the circumstances related to the establishment of this building were not intimately connected with the type of civic function of the earlier Minoan structures (Buildings N and T) upon which it was placed. On the other hand, the awe inspired by the magnitude of the Minoan work, even when in ruins, probably sanctified the ruins "by virtue of their very existence" (Snodgrass 1971: 398). One can also show that there was a time gap between the abandonment of the Minoan buildings in Late Minoan IIIB (ca. 1250 B.C.) and the SM period (ca. 1020 B.C.), when A was founded, although pottery attests to occasional visitors during the hiatus. When A was established, its founders adopted the orientation of the Minoan walls, but it was their choice to leave the building completely open to the east, although there was a sill perhaps intended
to separate the interior floor space from exterior erosion wash. This same open character, but with a central pillar, was adopted many years later (ca. 800 B.C.) when its successor, Temple B, was set in above it at a higher level.

The ritual character of Temple A is suggested independently by the few figurines, other offerings, and the character of the pottery associated with it (see Section 1, "Offerings and Dedications"). This is reinforced by the continuity within Temple B in the same categories, which are, however, richer and more varied. Moreover, B is of about the same size and orientation. It is useful, therefore, to extrapolate from what we know of B’s features and at least to speculate about otherwise unsure or unknown features of A. For instance, the clear indication of a bench along the north wall of B makes identification of the similar feature in A as a bench more plausible. It may also be reasonable to consider that, as in B, there was not an extensive platform or bench along the interior west wall of A. It is not difficult to imagine a small hearth on axis within A, underlying the series that characterized all phases of B. Perhaps this hearth was the center of activity in A, for there is no evidence for a court in front of the building, for the ground there sloped up, and the contemporary pottery dwindles away not far from the entrance (Pl. 1.15). A’s hearth was probably replaced, but at a higher level, by one in B, at which time the Tripillar Shrine was set not far to the west.

The shared features within Temples A and B — their open fronts and benched sidewall(s) — make it possible to treat the two temples jointly at least for comparative purposes. To begin with, one can note that there are few local parallels for the two buildings. One possible example, however, is in a rural area at Pakhlizani Agriada near Kavousi (Pl. 8.11; Alexiou 1956), where part of a single room facing southwest was recovered. Along its east wall ran a bench (0.40 m wide and 0.30 m high) on which stood a number of objects, including rough figurines resembling Postpalatial and PG forms as well as those continuing into the Archaic period (Gesell 1985: 57). Estimates of the building’s date range from the eleventh to the eighth century B.C. (Mazarakis-Ainian 1985: 16, n. 38). A better-preserved benched structure, but with a door off-axis and part of a larger room group rather than freestanding, has recently been found at Kephala Vasilikis on the Isthmus of Ierapetra (Eliopoulos 1998). It is LM IIIC/SM in date; ritual equipment (part of a terra-cotta throne, the base of a snake tube, a goddess with upraised hands, a fenestrated stand, and various cups and kalathoi) was on the benches that ran around the room’s interior. Also informative is a terra-cotta model, possibly of a shrine, from Chaniale Tekke near Knossos (Pl. 8.18), dated to the PG period (Boardman 1967: 64–66). The model is nearly square and contains a high bench, rather like a shelf, along its back wall (Hutchinson and Boardman 1954: 220 f., fig. 5, pl. 20.1), as well as an opaion on the roof that could have allowed the smoke from a hearth to escape (Mazarakis-Ainian 1985: 17, n. 44), a feature that may have become traditional in later temples.

An unusual feature of both Temples A and B at Kommos is that neither was closed on one (the eastern) side, whereas contemporary models or actual shrines seem to indicate closable doorways in the form of jambs (e.g., the Kavousi shrine just mentioned) or both jambs and
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doors (the Chaniale Tekke model). Perhaps this obviously intentional feature in both Kommos buildings can be attributed to the often hypaethral nature of Cretan cult.

The so-called bench sanctuary represented by Temples A and B (or, for that matter, Temple C) has numerous parallels in Bronze Age Crete, and it is quite likely that the benches in A and B, like those in the Kavousi shrine and the Chaniale Tekke model, are part of this tradition (Gesell 1985: 57; Mazarakis-Ainian 1985: 16–17). Benches or platforms are known, for instance, in the Mesara area at LM II–III Aghia Triada, which had a single closable cella with a painted floor and a bench or platform along the back wall (Gesell 1985: 41–42), or at Mitropolis or Kannia, where they ran along side walls within an LM I house partially reused during LM III (Gesell 1985: 43–44; Di Vita et al. 1984: 136).

Another consideration is that the benched sanctuary also had a long tradition in the Syro-Palestinian area (Holladay 1987: 272, table 2). The ninth-or-eighth-century–B.C. Phoenician shrine at Sarepta, for instance, featured benches along all sides with a cult focus consisting of a pillar in front of an area for offerings in the back of the rectangular room (Pritchard 1975: 14–18; 1978: 135). The pertinence in this case is provided by the argument that Temple B’s Tripillar Shrine owes its inspiration to Phoenicians, who may also have played a role in the temple’s founding (J. W. Shaw 1989b: passim). The presence of Phoenician pottery in both Temples A and B confirms this possibility (see Bikai, Chap. 4, Section 2). A significant factor in this regard is that, as already noted, both A and B were completely open on one side. This is unlike known Cretan temples and may very well be a conscious imitation of the well-known Eastern naiskos type. An Eastern influence has also been suggested for the temple on the acropolis at Gortyn.33

Of some interest in this respect is that small open cult buildings such as Temples A and B were rare in Crete and in the rest of Greece during the Iron Age. It is clear from the thorough work of Alexander Mazarakis-Ainian (1997: table I) that the forms of A and B are both very early in comparison with Greek religious structures of similar plan, and that they do not seem to be following a recognized native tradition. Nor, from the evidence, were A and B to be early examples of a later Cretan style. Even at Kommos, they were replaced by Temple C, the plan of which drew on other traditions.

The orientation to the east of both Temples A and B is also of some interest, for even though benched sanctuaries may reflect BA tradition, there is no clear pattern of orientation among the shrines of that date.34 Also, the general tendency to orient Cretan Greek temples to the east is later. Does the obviously intentional orientation of the Kommos temples, therefore, represent the beginning of a new tradition or the adaptation of one from elsewhere, or both?

**TEMPLE C AND THE DREROS TEMPLE TYPE**

With the establishment of Temple C there was both continuity with early sanctuary traditions and the introduction of new forms and, probably, associated varieties of activities. Of the earlier traditions, sacrifice and the associated ritual dining continued, the latter being provided
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for by means of well benches within C. The interior central hearth also continued. Dedications of various sorts were also made.

The differences between the earlier and later architectural traditions at Kommos, however, are particularly striking, and more significant than they might first appear.\(^35\) While the general eastern orientation of the still-rectangular building was maintained, for instance, Temple C was closed with a double door, and the open, Eastern naïskos effect that had characterized both Temples A and B was abandoned. The pillar at the entrance to B also disappeared. Instead, within C were placed two columns on axis with a rectangular hearth in between. Moreover, the center of ritual attention in B, represented there first by the Tripillar Shrine (Phases 1 and 2) and then by hearths (Phase 3), partially shifted. While the central place for the hearth continued in C, a formal statue base and an adjoining platform were installed along the back (west) wall.

Also in Temple C, the Doric order made its first appearance in Kommos architecture in the form of an elaborate doorframe at the temple’s main entrance. Of special importance, perhaps following the precedent established by Altar H during the period of partial desertion between the disuse of Temple B and the founding of C, a built altar (Altar C) was set in the courtyard. Archaic Altar U was established only toward the end of B’s career, but in the case of Temple C an exterior altar was deemed necessary for the proper functioning of the sanctuary at the time of its foundation. If our inference is correct that the axis of Temple C (and hence the placement of Altar C) was set by preexisting H, then the exterior altar takes on even more significance. It is possible that the ritual that took place around the altar (aspects of the procession, prayer, or slaughtering) became customary toward the end of the Archaic period and was reflected when the new temple was laid out.

Moreover, other buildings (Buildings D and W) were presumably established at about the same time as Temple C, unlike Temples A and B, which stood alone when founded. D and W (and later Building B and Room A1) were set in such a way to both accommodate and help create the court in front of the temple, probably indicating a conscious plan to create a sanctuary grouping or complex facing a court with altars, a seemingly unusual event in Crete, where so few planned sanctuaries are yet known.

These changes in the temples are significant in themselves within their local context. When viewed along with the other Cretan temples, however, they make it clear that the planners of Temple C adopted forms not based on precedents at the Kommos site, but upon forms that had become traditional elsewhere in Crete and that would last through the Hellenistic period. C, it will be seen, actually represents a midstage of the most completely documented Cretan temple tradition. This tradition, largely independent of Mainland influence, can best be shown in its simplest form by means of the LG temple at Dreros, Temple C at Kommos, and the Late Hellenistic Temple of Asklepios at Lissos. No doubt there are intermediate examples to be discovered in the future, and a precedent to Dreros may also be found.\(^36\) Of some interest, also, is that there exist variations of this basic single room type, which one
might call the Dreros type after the earliest (and, incidentally, the first excavated) example known.

The temple at Dreros (Pl. 8.13), thought to have been dedicated to Apollo Delphinios, consisted of a single rectangular room, longer than wide (S. Marinatos 1936: passim; for the most complete recent evaluation, see Beyer 1976). Typically Cretan interior features are the two columns on-axis with a fixed hearth in between them. There may have been a wall bench to the right as one entered. There were two platforms against the back wall, both accommodated between the axis and one of the side walls. One was for dedications; the other, an altar, probably supported the three sphyrelaton bronze figures found in this area, one male and two female, thought to represent Leto and her two offspring Apollo and Artemis. On the basis of architectural models from the Mainland, the temple’s excavator, Spyridon Marinatos, suggested a gabled roof and a porch supported by columns, but there is no evidence for either. Rather, a flat roof is to be preferred, such as we have proposed for Kommos Temples A and B. The columns may have been set so as to support a lantern, or opening, above the hearth in order to allow the smoke to escape (Mallwitz 1981: 614; Mazarakis-Ainian 1985: 33; Lembessi 1987: pl. 93).

Next in clear line of development is Temple C at Kommos, with the benches alongside three of its walls probably representing the previous tradition within Temples A and B. Similar to Dreros, it has an axial entrance and two columns with the hearth in between. There was also a focus on the cult statue set next to the back wall.

As has been pointed out earlier, the addition of the exterior altar in Temple C suggests a change in cult procedure within the Kommos context. Indeed, we can note that at relatively well preserved Kommos there are no permanent features outside the buildings reserved for sacrifice until rather late in Temple B’s history, during Phase 2, when Altar U was founded in the early seventh century B.C. What we observe at Kommos may also reflect a more general tendency in Crete to use altars set in the open air. For instance, although we can note that there was no exterior altar at the Geometric Dreros temple or at Archaic Prinias Temple A (see “Other Cretan Temple Types”), formal hearths or built altars did begin to appear outside temples during the seventh century. As evidence, one can point out Axos (D. Levi 1930–31), the Archaic phase of the Olous sanctuary of Artemis and Aphrodite (Bousquet 1938), and, although altar and temple are separated by a great distance, the Archaic period of the temple on the acropolis at Gortyn (Rizza and Santa Maria Scrinari 1968). At the largely hypaethral Kato Syme sanctuary, the earliest built altar (Pl. 8.2) was initially rectangular (1.40 × 4.00 m) and is dated to the PG period. In the Archaic period a bothros-like structure similar to that of Kommos Temple B, from the point of view of construction, was added next to it on the east. It contained only burnt bones (Lembessi and Muhly 1987).

As to the stylistic source or, more likely, sources of inspiration for Kommos Temple C, we should probably rule out Dreros, far off in north-central Crete. Rather, still-undiscovered temples in the Mesara more likely provided the inspiration. Since the Kommos sanctuary is
basically a rural one, one might look to temples in nearby civic centers, such as Phaistos and Gortyn, with which Kommos must have been intimately connected. The third example of the Dreros type is the little-known Early Hellenistic Temple of Asklepios at Lissos (Pl. 8.13), excavated some years ago by Nikolas Platon. Like Temple C at Kommos, this temple had benches, although abbreviated, on its interior and, at the end of the room, a central statue base as well as a curious basin with an opening, perhaps for liquid offerings or for a snake to enter. At least during the latest period at Lissos there was no central hearth, for the floor was covered by a first-century-after-Christ mosaic with geometric and figurative patterns. The presumably gabled roof was held up not by interior columns on axis but rather by the side walls. Perhaps the columns were omitted because there was no hearth and thus no need for a lantern, or because they were considered unnecessary for support. The visitor to the temple would probably have had an unimpeded view of the cult statue, placed high on its base, which was separated from the main part of the cella by a low railing. An unusual feature of the exterior was a Doric frieze, at least along the southern side and the facade. On the other hand, there was no exterior colonnade, for the more conservative Cretans rarely adopted the varieties of columnar architecture that typified much of the formal architecture elsewhere in the Greek world.

**Other Cretan Temple Types**

The Dreros-Kommos-Lissos sequence, single rectangular rooms sometimes with adjoining structures, can be considered the simplest representative of the Cretan type. In some cases, however, the basic unit was extended, so that a number of rooms, usually on axis, were involved, for some were provided with an extra room and/or with a pronaos, usually not columnar. The earliest example of a temple, which might be considered an extension of the plan of its predecessor at Dreros, is seventh-century B.C. Temple A at Prinias (Pl. 8.15; Pernier 1914; 1934). Prinias A has received much attention because of the richness and variety of its sculpted relief, unusual for Cretan temples, which were usually left without sculptural decoration. In terms of plan, however, the form of the interior is what we have already seen at Dreros and Kommos Temple C, with a central fixed hearth, column bases to support the roof, and a central doorway. The porch is the addition onto the basic unit, although its exact form is unknown. Luigi Pernier’s suggestion of a pillar in antis (1914; 1934) remains a reasonable solution, perhaps reminiscent of the appearance of the facade of earlier Temple B at Kommos (Pl. 1.31).

A similar temple is at Lato in northeastern Crete (Pl. 8.14; Ducrey and Picard 1970: 567 f.). This Hellenistic building somewhat outside the agora area has an enclosed, noncolumnar porch. A statue base reconstructed from fragments found within the cella has been set by the excavators in a logical position, similar to that at Kommos. The cela floor was paved with a pebble mosaic (there is no evidence for a hearth). Sacrifice probably took place at an exterior altar found outside the temple, analogous in position to that of Altar C at Kommos.
In some cases the two-room, pronaos/naos form was extended with the addition of a back room of unknown use. An example is Temple B at Prinias (Pl. 8.15), which also featured a central hearth but without the columns known in its neighbor Temple A just to the north. One might even suggest on the basis of its plan that the room furthest to the west was an addition. This extended form is, nevertheless, known as well from Phaistos from the very solidly built so-called Temple of Rhea, of the Archaic period (Pernier 1907: 259 f.; Di Vita et al. 1984; fig. 139; Cucuzza 1993; La Rosa 1994). This building had three rooms, one of which may have had an open pronaos. A similar one, but of somewhat different proportions, can be seen in the plan of an Archaic temple with three rooms, probably dedicated to Aphrodite, at Axos (Pl. 8.14), from which many Archaic bronzes derive (D. Levi 1930–31). The temple faced south upon two altars set in a small court.

In order to put the Dreros type just discussed into perspective, we should consider briefly the Cretan temples that differ from the more homogeneous group. Unlike the former, these were wider than long. Thus a high, broad space opened up on either side of the worshippers as they entered. The earliest known examples are Archaic, the largest one being the Temple of Apollo at Gortyn (Pl. 8.15), already discussed in terms of the form of its Hellenistic pronaos, one of the most venerated Greek temples on Crete and certainly the largest (Halbherr 1890; Di Vita et al. 1984: 84–86, for recent bibliography). Its roof was supported by four wooden pillars; the temple entrance had thickened walls. To the right as one entered was a repository set into the floor—a feature known from two other temples in the Gortyn area. During the Roman period there was a major conversion of the building, with the addition of an apse for the cult statue of Apollo and a monumental exterior altar (Pl. 8.6).

**TEMPLE ORIENTATION**

As already described (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Sections 2 and 3), it is likely that the original orientation of Temples A and B was determined at least partly fortuitously by that of Minoan Building T upon which A was partially set. The decisions to open the buildings to the east, however, were made independently first by the builders of A, then later by those of B. When Temple C was built, the eastern exposure was retained even though the east-west orientation of the building was changed some six degrees further to the northeast, perhaps because of the position of Archaic Altar H.

When compared with the orientations of some fourteen other Cretan temples, that of the three temples at Kommos conforms to the eastern one preferred for most. For instance, not one of the group examined faced west, the place of the setting sun. Four faced north (the temples at Dreros, the Gortyn acropolis, the Lato “sanctuary,” and Polyrhynia). Only two faced south (the temples at Kavousi and the Temple of Aphrodite at Axos). Eight, however, faced in an easterly direction (the double temple at Aptera, the Temple of Apollo at Gortyn, the Large Temple at Lato, those of Asklepios at Leda and Lissos, the Phaistos temple on the southwestern border of the Minoan palace, and Prinias Temples A and B). Of some interest
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is that all the eight just mentioned face in a southeasterly direction, a fact that may be explained, as W. B. Dinsmoor has done for a variety of Greek temples elsewhere, as the result of their having been laid out to face the sunrise on the actual day of their foundation, presumably the festival day of the divinity (Dinsmoor 1939: 35–173, especially p. 96).

Perhaps a close study of the individual temples that do not face east would reveal topographical or other reasons for the siting of one or more of them. For instance, the northern orientations of the Dreros temple and Lato “sanctuary” might be explained as a departure from the norm in order for them to face the agora, the center of activity, of their respective towns (the larger Lato temple, further east beyond the town center, adopted the eastern norm). One might also inquire about the Kommos temples, especially Temple A, which faces northeasterly rather than southeasterly. Perhaps A’s early founding, before the other examples cited, is a partial explanation: The simplest solution was chosen before more specific customs developed. If A, of SM date, had been founded during the Archaic period, the time of the Temple of Apollo at Gortyn and Temple A at Priniat, perhaps its builders would have chosen a southeasterly axis, shifting their structure away from the axis of the underlying Minoan remains. In the case of Temple C at Kommos, a more southeasterly orientation might have been chosen if the ruins of Temple B and Archaic Altar H were not already there.

The Kommos Temples as Possible Political Centers

The Kommos temples with their various phases have been interpreted as devoted to worship and sacrifice. This we believe is substantiated by the variety of artifacts offered and animals sacrificed, as well as by certain built features such as altars (Temples B and C), B’s Tripillar Shrine, and Temple C’s original statue base. Meals, especially ritual meals, are demonstrated by the faunal remains, the presence of benches, and the massive dumps of pottery used during the meals. In this context it is appropriate to examine the theory that the Kommos temples (as well as other Cretan “hearth-temples”) also performed the political and social functions of prytaneia (Samuelson 1988: 279–80). As pointed out by Ronald Willetts (1962: 304), Cretan prytaneia, like many of those elsewhere in the Greek world, were centers for official hospitality, where magistrates and other officials dined and where official documents were sometimes displayed. Within the buildings was often the koine hestia, where the sacral public fire would be maintained. Usually prytaneion and temple seem to have been separate. In at least one instance, at second-century B.C. Hyrtakina, the common hearth of the prytaneion was actually in the temple, within the Temple of Apollo Delphinios. Perhaps, as argued by Margherita Guarducci (1939: 186–87), the functions were shared at Hyrtakina because a separate prytaneion had not yet been built. Thus sacral and political activities were merged within the existing building; they also may have been merged within the Temple of Apollo at Dreros, set next to the agora, for a civic inscription was found within it (S. Marinatos 1936: 281).
Might similar circumstances have determined the function of the Kommos temples? Temple A seems too early, too small, and too isolated. Temple B is a possibility, especially in its later phases when there were other, related buildings (Buildings F, V, and Q) and perhaps a community of still unknown size in unexcavated areas to the east (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 3). From the same point of view, one might depict Temple C as part of a larger community during its later Hellenistic phases but probably not during the fourth century B.C. when it was founded. One could argue that during Hellenistic times Room A1 north of Temple C (Pl. 1.119) was used as a prytaneion, as we originally suggested.53 Perhaps it was a public building of the town of Amyklaion (for which, see "Ascription of the Site," following).

On the other hand, we have found no evidence of public records, for instance in the form of attestations to agreements such as those mentioned in inscriptions or actually found inscribed on the blocks of the Temple of Apollo at Gortyn. The few inscriptions found at Kommos, instead, seem to deal with a few of the worshippers and with a variety of gods. Moreover, a prytaneion would normally be set near or in a town center, where it would be just as accessible as the agora or the main temple of the town. Thus the identification of the benched building (Pl. 8.5) near the Lato agora as a prytaneion seems reasonable and is, moreover, supported by inscriptional evidence.54 There is a probable Cretan prytaneion at partially excavated Aghia Pelagia, where it is set among a group of contemporary Hellenistic buildings on the slope of an apparently heavily settled hill near the sea.55 Instead, at Kommos we know that at least to the north and to the west of the temples the area that could have been built upon by the Greeks never was, which would seem to be extraordinary if we are dealing with a town center of some type.56 It seems best, therefore, to view the Kommos temples as chiefly devoted to worship and ritual meals, although occasional sociopolitical uses cannot be ruled out.

Cretan Sanctuaries

In Crete during the period being discussed, there were three general types of public sanctuary where religious rites would be carried out and in which temples and other sacred structures would sometimes be erected. These were the town, cave, and what might be termed rural sanctuaries established on the outskirts of towns or in the countryside. Of the first, much still remains to be learned, since major excavation has often concentrated on prehistoric Minoan remains (as at Knossos and Phaistos) or on the often massive and extensive Imperial Roman structures that lie at the upper levels (as at Gortyn). The general arrangement of the relatively small Greek/Hellenistic town at Lato (Pl. 8.4) may, however, give us a general picture of a typical arrangement. As at Kommos, the main buildings at Lato were set on the northern and western sides of a court. Along the former was the prytaneion, with a broad series of steps in front of it for gatherings. On the western side was a stoa, the southern part of which faced a rectangular building thought perhaps to have been an unroofed sanctuary. Further south and southeast were, in order, an exedra, the temple just discussed (Pl. 8.14), and what has
been identified as a possible theater and/or a meeting place for the boulé (Tiré and van Effenterre 1978: 98–105; Ducray and Picard 1980: passim; Chaniotis 1987: 274). At Dreros the Temple of Apollo Delphinios (Pl. 8.13) was set next to the stepped agora area (Tiré and van Effenterre 1978: 94–95).

Of sanctuaries outside densely settled areas, the caves were very popular, especially during the Iron Age. Some of them were associated with the upbringing of Zeus, for instance, the Idaean Cave and the Dictean Cave (Faure 1964; for recent work in the former, see Sakellarakis 1985). Many of these were pilgrimage sites even during the Minoan period. In their pan-Cretan aspects, these cave sanctuaries may approximate in spirit the famous Panhellenic sanctuaries on the Mainland that attracted pilgrims from many areas, although the latter combined political activities as well. Although a few rough structures were occasionally built within them or near their entrances, there was little building activity connected with the rites carried out within the caves or in the open air near their entrances.

There were also rural sanctuaries of varying types. That at Kato Syme, high in the hills near a perennial spring, for instance, was characterized by hypaethral rites carried out on a site that was extensively terraced. A rectangular altar was built during the PG period to be followed by a larger Archaic one (Pls. 8.2–8.3). During the Hellenistic period a small shrine with two rooms was built (Pl. 8.2; Lembessi and Muhly 1987); a Roman inscription of the second–third century after Christ refers to the building of a temple (Lembessi, personal communication). At Amnisos the rites were also largely hypaethral, but an extensive retaining wall with steps added later was built up against the side of the hill (Schäfer et al. 1989).

Two large sanctuaries of some note, dedicated to Asklepios, were at Lebena and Lissos, both situated along the southern coast of Crete. The first (Pl. 8.16), with now-much-disturbed remains from Hellenistic and Roman periods, featured, like the Lato agora or LH Kommos, a court formed by buildings set to the north and west. Along the former, at an angle, was a stoa, probably an abaton, where suppliants to the god would sleep as they awaited his healing. On the west was, first, a very long flight of steps that continued to the south. Behind them was a stoa (also perhaps an abaton). Then followed a small room with a fine Hellenistic mosaic floor. Fixed in the floor next to the back wall was a small built underground vault or “treasury” similar to the one in the Temple of Apollo at Gortyn. South of here was the Temple of Asklepios. Only the western half of it is preserved, where there are two columns and a platform along its back wall for the cult statue(s). East of the court was the perennial spring that led south to bathing establishments for the sick. Remains of hostels for the pilgrims were found further to the south and west of the main sanctuary group (Pernier and Banti 1947: 67–75; Sanders 1982: 80–82; Di Vita et al. 1984: 117–20).

Like Kato Syme and Lebena, the Lissos sanctuary was built near a perennial spring, upon an extensive terrace designed to accommodate a variety of cult buildings. Although only partly excavated, the shrine area is still clearly enough exposed to show some of the main features of a Cretan building group dedicated to religious use. The temple (Pl. 8.13), with a
small accessory room, was set against the neighboring cliffside, facing east upon a small court that was stepped on the west and north, as if for sitting (Sanders 1982: 84). A stoa was built next to the southern side of the temple, facing the main entrance to the sanctuary that was closed by means of a double door. A broad paved roadway with steps led up to the entrance from the town area. Under the temple was channeled the water that flowed to the curative baths, one of the tubs of which is still in place in a room to the southwest of the temple. Southeast of the temple was a broad terrace that perhaps accommodated visiting pilgrims. Although the site remains only partially excavated, again the builders seem to have preferred the southern and eastern exposures.

When the Kommos sanctuary is viewed in the context of these Cretan sanctuaries, one can see that a common preference was to set the buildings on the side of a hill. At Kommos the sanctuary court would have thus been sheltered against the northwest wind, which can be very cold in winter and may continue during the summer months for weeks on end. Both the Lissos and Kato Syme sanctuaries have similar settings, although in their case the presence of a perennial spring was no doubt a, if not the, determining factor in the choice of site.57 Also of some interest is the general setting of the buildings along two sides of a court, closed on the north and west and thus exposed to the sun from the early morning through at least midafternoon. The same tendency can be noted in the Lato agora arrangement, and might be expected in some sites that will undoubtedly be excavated in the future. On the basis of our present evidence, there does not seem to have been a tendency to separate the temenos, or sacred area, from the area outside by means of a wall built around it.58

As to the type of buildings in the sanctuaries, the temple of course remains the common form. At Kommos and Lissos it is set to the southwest, whereas at Lissos it is on the north. As for facilities for visitors and pilgrims, at Lissos and Lebena there are stoas (probable abata) along the northern side of the court. At Kommos, on the other hand, during the Hellenistic period visitors could use the facilities of the large room with the continuous wallbench (Room A1), if not the temple itself (Temple C), although it is probably correct to assume that many of those visiting Kommos and other sanctuaries would simply camp somewhere nearby in the countryside. As to facilities for bathing, common in shrines of Asklepios and other curative sanctuaries, there are none at Kommos (save the sea). There are no Cretan parallels for Round Building D or for small enigmatic Building W, which was apparently intentionally isolated from Temple C from the beginning. It also seems unusual that a service building apparently dedicated solely to storage and perhaps residence, Building B, should be given such an important position facing the court.

Of some significance are the rectangular altars set in the Kommos court, where two (Altars C and H) were apparently in use from the time Temple C was founded (H, however, was earlier). Two others were added during the Hellenistic period. That none are reported from either of the two Asklepios shrines may be due less to the situation in antiquity than to the circumstances of preservation and excavation.59
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It is probably to be expected that because of the hypaethral nature of the ritual carried out in connection with most sacrifice, ash altars or built altars were common at many religious sites, at least from the Archaic period on. They are known from hypaethral sites such as Amnisos and Kato Syme, as well as outside the Idean Cave and even at Kommos during the period when only Altar H was in use. They have been found outside the Temples of Aphrodite at Axos, the Lato temple, the Temple of Apollo at Gortyn, and possibly Prinias Temple B (Mazarakis-Ainian 1987: 722, table XI.c), but exterior altars do not seem to have been obvious characteristics of temple sites such as Dreros, Prinias A and B, and Phaistos.

The use of multiple altars is unusual for any Cretan site. One altar, if there was one at all, was usually sufficient. In this matter the two altars featured in the first phase of Kommos Temple C are matched only by two at the Temple of Aphrodite at Axos (the latter, however, may not date to the period of the temple’s founding). The addition of two more altars (Altars L and M) to the original two during the Hellenistic period at Kommos adds to the unusual quality of the Kommos sanctuary and invites a special explanation (see “Ascription of the Site,” following).

Ascription of the Site

The ancient name or names of Kommos remain unsure. Concerning the prehistoric place name, perhaps future excavation of a burnt context will reveal Linear B tablets with more informative toponyms. Perhaps more complete readings of the Linear A tablets from, for instance, Aghia Triada, will help. In the meantime the closest one can come to the appropriate toponym, which could have been reflected in any name carried down into later periods, is “da-wo,” near “pa-i-to” (Phaistos?) in the LM III Knossian Linear B archives (Bennet 1985: 247). At da-wo some 10,000 units of grain, the produce of between 2,000 and 6,000 ha of land, were being assembled. With its vast potential for storage during that period in the ashlar buildings, Kommos remains a reasonable candidate (J. W. Shaw 1986: 266). Da-wo could also refer to Aghia Triada, which had adequate facilities for storage in the LM III stoa; to a combined toponym for the two sites; or to still another, undiscovered site in the Mesara (McArthur 1981: 179, 192, 197).

For the Iron Age and later periods there are two possibilities, one concerning Homeric tradition and the other that of a local known toponym. As to the first, the use and name of the site may be reflected in the epic tradition that concerns the wreck of a portion of Menelaos’s fleet when the successful warriors were returning from Troy. Near Cape Maleia, not far from Sparta, his fleet was cut into two parts, and, driven by Zeus, some went to Crete:

where the Kydonians lived around the streams of Iardanos.

There is the sheer of a cliff, a steep rock out in the water at the other end of Gortys on the misty face of the main, where
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...the south wind piles up a huge surf on the left of the rock horn
toward Phaistos, and a little stone holds out the big water.
It was there they came, and by lively work the men avoided
destruction, but the waves smashed their ships on the splinters
of rock, but the wind and the water catching up the other
five dark-prowed ships bore them along and drove them on Egypt.

(\textit{Odyssey} 3.292–300; trans. Lattimore 1965: 58)

Antonio Taramelli, the first to link the Kommos area with activity during prehistoric times,
connected the northern cliffs of Cape Nisos (immediately south and west of Kommos) with
the possible site of the shipwreck (Taramelli 1899: 296). Later, in 1924, Sir Arthur Evans
actually discovered the Kommos site and interpreted it as the southern port of Knossos (Evans
1928: 88–92). In particular he believed that the small offshore island, the Papadoploska (“the
reef of the priest”), some 300 m offshore from the site, was the “little stone” upon which some
of Menelaos’s ships were wrecked. Evans’s general views were followed by many (J. W. Shaw
1977b: 203 n.10; see also Vasilakis 1986–87: 27).

Since Homer’s topographic description so closely matches the situation at Kommos, and
the site itself was so densely settled during the prehistoric period, it is quite possible that the
tale of Menelaos, recorded later by Homer, may have been in the minds of the founders when
they established one or both of the two early Kommos temples. Thus the rites in the early
phases of Greek Kommos may have been related to hero worship, perhaps even that of
Poseidon (see “Ascription of the Temples, Temple C, The Inscriptions and Depictions”), in
an appropriate ancient setting. On the site, however, there is no concrete evidence for this
possibility, unless there is a veiled connection in the depiction on the late-seventh-century-
B.C. cup found near the Tripillar Shrine (Callaghan and Johnston, Chap. 4, Section 1, 240;
M. C. Shaw 1983). On the cup a soldier appears to be paying homage to a dead man laid out
on a bier, perhaps a legendary hero.

Another possible, although indirect, connection between the Kommos site and Menelaos
may be inferred from the toponym Amykliaos. Of those ancient towns surely located along
the Matala–Aghia Galene coastal strip, there is no question about the identification of Ma-
tala and little about Aghia Galene (probably ancient Soulia). While some ancient Mesara
toponyms remain unattributed to ancient sites, or their attribution remains questionable, only
one, that of Amykliaos, is known to have been a town (or city) on the coast and a place where
ships could take refuge.\textsuperscript{62} The names Amykliaoi and Amykliaos are known from a number
of inscriptions from the Gortyn region and are thought to represent a pre-Dorian name
connected with Amyklae near Sparta.\textsuperscript{63} Indeed, it was even thought that the Amykliaoi from
near Sparta had been among those who originally settled at Gortyn, and so it is not surprising
to learn that there was a temple of Amykliaos Apollo in Gortyn itself from as early as the
fifth century B.C.
Although we have reason to believe that the town of Amyklaion was along the shore, we cannot be certain that it was along the western rather than the southern shore. It is instructive, however, to consider that the territory of the Amyklaians is determined by Gortyn to be that of a perioecic subject, in a fragmentary inscription dated by Guarducci to the third or second century B.C. This was the approximate time during which Gortyn defeated Phaistos and inherited its rival’s lands (see “Desertion at Kommos, The Western Mesara”). There is a chance, therefore, that the territory of the Amyklaians was once within the territory of Gortyn.

Paul Faure concluded that Amyklaion was probably between Kokkinos Pyrgos, north of the Geropotamos, and Matala, suggesting that it may have been at Kokkinos Pyrgos. Eroded Kokkinos Pyrgos, however, is a poor choice for the location of any substantial ancient site, since so few surface remains are visible. In retrospect, Faure suggested that Amyklaion was actually situated at Kommos. Our foot survey to the south of Kokkinos Pyrgos has identified another possible location near Kalamaki, 3 km south of the Geropotamos and 2 km north of Kommos. Kalamaki was quite extensively inhabited during the Greco-Roman period. It is quite possible that the Kalamaki site was larger than Kommos, for it stretches far back into the valley, up to Langos. A Roman temple was associated with it; the temple foundations now serve as a podium upon which the church of Evangelistria is set at the entrance to the valley.

Of course, only direct inscriptional evidence found at either Kommos or Kalamaki could confirm whether one or the other, or both, were in the land of the Amyklaians. But even in the absence of such evidence we can reflect that it would have been singularly appropriate for people with their roots in Lacedaemon (the Amyklaians) to erect a small sanctuary near the place where they believed a famous Spartan king’s ships, those of Menelaos, had been wrecked.

**Ascription of the Temples**

**TEMPLES A AND B**

The suggestion has already been made that the early use of Temples A and B may have been associated with a hero cult. Offerings would have been brought to the hero, and appropriate sacrifice would have been made. We have not yet considered, however, the possible significance of the Tripillar Shrine, and how it, as the center of cult at least within Temple B, may suggest possibilities concerning the hero, god, or gods worshipped during the early history of the site.

The physical characteristics of the Tripillar Shrine have already been discussed (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 3). The argument that it represents, in effect, a Phoenician form, perhaps placed there by the Phoenicians themselves, has been made in detail (J. W. Shaw 1989b). The actual significance of the pillars would have been well known to Phoenicians in the homeland.
to the east and the Punic colonies to the west. Unfortunately, even in Sicily and North Africa there are no specific records to inform us. It is nevertheless reasonable to think that even in this early form the pillars implied beliefs that were part of a cosmology involving deities (later, various other signs, such as that of Tanit, were added to the pictorial repertoire). These deities would guide, enlighten, and succor. Each pillar may designate a separate god, and together perhaps a trinity, such as Ba’al, Ashera, and Astarte, or Tanit, Ashera, and Astarte, who, while being worshipped individually, were also worshipped in combination as one.69

By making and setting up the shrine, its creators probably wished to duplicate the form of worship of gods in their homeland. Perhaps a particular event at sea or a person was being remembered. There is no evidence at Kommos, however, to indicate a permanent settlement. Rather, the foreign (Phoenician) pottery suggests a passing interest, implying that Kommos was a convenient stopover point for weary sea voyagers. Similarly, although the local Cretan pottery is plentiful, its spread is limited for both Temple A and early Temple B (Pls. 1.15–1.17), when the sanctuary was restricted in size, although B was accompanied by Building Z to the south. Thus one can conclude that those who observed rites at the shrine came only at intervals and not to settle for a long time. Perhaps people from inland Phaistos, Gortyn, and other, still undiscovered, Iron Age centers in the Mesara celebrated certain feast days there. Travelers by sea could also have used the site as a staging point for trips to the Idean Cave in the high mountains to the north, where much Eastern-influenced work has been discovered.

It might seem strange at first glance that native Cretans frequenting the site could accept the Tripillar Shrine in Temple B as part of their own religious ambience. However, the idea of a symbolic representation by means of stones or pillars was well known in later Greece, and in the Cretan Minoan past (if the custom was still remembered) triads of columns and the tripartite shrine played a significant role (J. W. Shaw 1989b: 172–73; 1978a). Later glyptic and pictorial tradition in Crete, especially during the seventh century B.C., demonstrates the Cretans’ affinity for the form. In the Mesara, for instance, the triad of a male and two female gods appeared in relief in connection with the temple on the Gortyn acropolis (Rizza and Santa Maria Scrinari 1968). Elsewhere, there is the Dreros sphyrelaton triad, already mentioned, probably of Apollo, Leto, and Artemis. There is also the small bronze relief from Knossos depicting three figures within a naiskos, protected by a triad of archers, a motif known from Chania as well (Boardman 1961: 138, fig. 53).

Such triads, it has been proposed, came “to Crete and the Peloponnese from Egypt some time in the eighth century, either directly or indirectly through Phoenicia” (T. H. Price 1971: 58–59). Perhaps for this reason two faience figures of the Memphite triad, Sekhmet and Nefertum (Ptah is missing), were wedged between the pillars of the Kommos Tripillar Shrine (M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 2, AB85 and AB86). Their symbolism, although expressed in anthropomorphic form, was nevertheless similar to what was signified by the pillars. In this syncretic way these exotic, otherwise foreign introductions seem to have become a part of the accepted cult equipment.
The combination of a Phoenician triad in the shrine and the naiskos form of the temples seems to reflect Eastern rather than Cretan tradition. Moreover, the apparently ready acceptance of triad and naiskos form by the local Cretans suggests an already existing correspondence between the religious beliefs of the two cultures. With this in mind, the Cretan triad of Apollo, Leto, and Artemis, a recognized part of Cretan (and Greek) cosmology, is suggested to have been reflected for the Cretans by the form of the three pillars. Perhaps, however, they represented a combination of the chief gods (Zeus, Athena, and Poseidon) known from the inscriptions from the later Kommos temple (see “Temple C,” following). Of some interest in this regard is that Apollo has a strong connection with Amyklae in Lacedaemon, where he was worshipped at a shrine that became famous. If the Kommos shrine is in Amyklaian territory (as discussed under “Ascription of the Site”), the Phoenician connection becomes even stronger, especially since the word Amyklaion may actually be derived from a Greek transliteration of a Phoenician title, perhaps Astarte.71

TEMPLE C
The Statue Bases
In order to narrow the possibilities for the ascription of Temple C, we should consider the interior platforms set against the back wall of C, the inscriptional evidence from the site, and the unusual circumstance of the four altars in the sanctuary courtyard. Concerning the platforms, it is clear that the central one was designed, as in many temples, for the cult statue(s). Fortunately (as described in J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 6), one of the top blocks from the central platform is preserved in situ (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 6; Pls. 1.97, 1.103). Along its western edge is a cutting (ca. 6.0 cm deep) that we can reasonably assume continued on to the other blocks of the same course and served as a socket for the plinth of a cult statue.72 Another cutting on its southwest corner was 25.4 × 23.0 cm and 1.7 cm deep.

Two large limestone blocks found loose in the sand near the western end of the temple, perhaps discarded by the stone robbers because of their irregular shapes, probably belong to the upper course of the statue base. The first (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 6, § Pl. 1.170) at one time had a rectangular cutting on its upper surface, now just traceable, like that on the southeast corner of the platform block (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 6, § Pl. 1.170). For this reason, assuming that there could be a parallel arrangement along the northern side of the statue base, we have restored it in the northwest corner (as shown in Pl. 1.102). The second block (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 6, § Pl. 1.169) also has had its top cut into, in this case in a stepped fashion. If restored in the central part of the statue base (as in Pl. 1.102), its use becomes clear, for the higher part of the block then actually separates two lower areas, one to the north extending to the first loose block and the other to the south extending to the platform block, which is the only block of the upper course in its original position.

The resulting restoration (Pl. 1.102, right) creates two roughly rectangular cuttings or sinkings, generally 4.5–7.0 cm deep and each about 0.5 m north-south. Since there are two such cuttings, we should restore two figures, positioned on plinths set into these sockets, on either
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side of the longitudinal axis of the temple. With a center-to-center measurement between the plinths of about 0.80 m, there would be room for the arms of the statues as well as space between them.75

The statues were probably made of marble, for bronze figures usually did not require a broad plinth, since their feet could be dowelled directly into foot-sized cuttings in the statue base and then stabilized with lead. In such cases, the feet would often be set partially into the top of the block, with one or two dowels for each foot. In the case of marble plinths, such as the ones being suggested for the Kommos figures, lead (none of which was found, however) would have been poured around the plinth edges in order to help affix them to the blocks onto which they were set. At Kommos the plinths may have been thicker than the cuttings into which they were set for strength.74

As for the scale of the figure(s), despite the modest size of the temple, the base is large enough to suggest that the figures were at least life-size, as implied by the bone eye found within Temple C (Bo 24; M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 4).

The almost square cutting in the southeast corner of the platform block (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 6, 1) remains to be explained, as well as the channel leading into it from the west. The block is very weathered, and so the cutting was originally deeper. A number of solutions are possible, but none of those considered is yet convincing. One is that the channel held an emblem of one of the gods depicted in the sculpture upon the base.75 Another is that it served as a socket, leaded in, for a grill that was set up in front of the figures for protection.76 Still another is that it may have served as the base for a baldachino or naikos within which the figures would have stood.77 Finally, it is possible that a votive relief slab, such as that for Pan found in the temple (S 197; M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 5), may have been set there, the lower part of the slab having been cut in the form of a square tenon.78

The southern base (ca. 2.70 m long from the edge of the central base to the south wall) was added to the temple not long after it was constructed, probably in Phase 2, during the late fourth or early third century B.C. At one time it must have been quite handsome with its base molding (continuing that of the earlier base) and now-missing cornice. Unlike the base to the north, constructed of coursed ashlar, this one was faced with at least three orthostates, the difference in construction providing another indication of a time gap between one and the other.

Since the cornice and backing blocks are missing, we cannot be sure that the southern base was more than a simple flat platform, perhaps for gifts dedicated to the gods, as suggested in an earlier report (J. W. Shaw 1980a: 227). Possibly, however, another group of statues was set onto it, with small gifts being accommodated either on the area directly in front of the statues (ca. 0.50 m wide in the case of the northern base) or on any tables that may have been set within the temple.79 Indeed, displaying a plethora of statues in temples may have been a tendency at least in Hellenistic Crete. Two cult statue bases from approximately the same time seem to suggest this. That at the Temple of Asklepios at Lissos is about 2.65 m long,
and it is reasonable to suspect that a number of the still-unpublished marble statues found within that temple, now in the Archaeological Museum of Chania, may have been set there. It is difficult to imagine a single figure of Asklepios having been set in the middle of such a long podium. The cult statue at the Asklepios temple in Lebena is extraordinarily long, about 6.0 m. A number of figures were probably set there as well.

Of some interest in this regard is an inscription concerning the statues in the temple of Dictean Zeus at Palaikastro during the period 145–139 B.C. Within it were “old statues” from an earlier period, perhaps Dictean Zeus, Rhea, and the Kouretes (nine?). By the second century B.C., there were also those of Athena, Artemis, Atlas, the Sphinxes, Hera (a wooden head?), Nike, and a second Zeus, as well as others that cannot be identified with certainty (Willetts 1962: 210–11, 254). In total, there were at least ten and as many as twenty figures within the same building. This, of course, does not indicate how many figures were set in the place of honor at the back of the temple, but it emphasizes that many figures were in this one temple, suggesting what may have been local custom in Crete during the period concerned.

### The Inscriptions and Depictions

The following deities are mentioned in the Kommos inscriptions. Ten (= Zeus) [Phy]taumios (= procreative?) and Athena Euangelos (= bearer of good tidings) are recorded on a rectangular limestone slab dedicated to them of approximately the second century B.C. (Csapo et al., Chap. 2, 76). Pote[idan]i (= Poseidon) is inscribed on the side of the limestone molding of what appears to have been a cylindrical altar of the second century B.C. (Csapo et al., Chap. 2, 75). Also to be considered is the only sculptural depiction of a deity from Kommos, that of a limestone relief of Pan probably accompanied by the Graces or the Nymphs, that may be dated to as late as the first century after Christ (S 197; M. C. Shaw, Chap. 3, Section 5).

Concerning their findspots, all the fragments of the Poseidon inscription were found within Temple C, mixed with floor material, as was the relief of Pan (no other fragments were discovered for the relief, however). The Zeus inscription was found about 20 m southeast of C during sand clearing operations. The original positions of these items are unknown, of course, but their location near the temple (the findspots of most of them inside it) suggests that they were displayed in or next to it. The Pan relief may have been set into a separate base, perhaps a high one, now missing. There is no nearby cave or cliff appropriate as a typical haunt for Pan, although there may have been a grove near the sanctuary. The altar dedicated to Poseidon was probably set outdoors, where altars were normally positioned, even though all its pieces were found within the temple. Perhaps it was moved indoors during the penultimate period of C, when, like the two basin stands (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 6, 1–2), it may have been intended, after being shortened, to support an extension of the benches.

The inscription to Zeus and Athena may be considered here along with the inscription to Telemnastos (Csapo et al., Chap. 2, 77), the latter LH. They are similar in date, size, and shape.
Neither one of them appears to have been set into a separate base. No appropriate bases or cuttings for them have been found, and, moreover, the slabs are so relatively small that if set at ground level they would have appeared insignificant, even though at least that of Telemnastos was brightly colored. One possible place for their setting was into appropriate niches cut at eye level into the now-missing temple walls, in the manner of the cuttings in the bedrock in the Sanctuary of Zeus Hypsitos in Athens (Travlos 1971: 570, pl. 714). Temple walls, such as those of the Temple of Apollo at Gortyn, often served for the writing of decrees (Guarducci 1950: nos. 179–86). There was also a tradition, at least in the Mesara, for the devout to inscribe their thoughts on the temple walls, for instance at the Temple of Artemis at nearby Kalamaki as well as at Soulia.

The Altars

The four altars in the court of Temple C must, of course, be considered in this section on attribution. It is certainly significant, for instance, that shortly after Temple C was founded Altars C and H were in use (H, however, was also earlier). Also important are Altars L and M, added at a later time during the Hellenistic period, which bring the total number of built altars to four. (The small Poseidon altar might be considered a fifth, however, and there may have been more.)

One is tempted, at first, to assign to each god an altar, that is, one to Zeus, another to Athena, one to Poseidon, and another to Pan. This may very well have been the case. On the other hand, four altars do not necessarily mean that only four gods were worshipped, since a single altar may have been dedicated to two, three, or more gods. Moreover, the individual characteristics assigned to the gods, usually by means of epithets (as in the case of Athena “the bringer of good tidings” at Kommos), have the effect of creating deities that can be worshipped separately. Thus at Kommos there might have been an altar (or even part of an altar) dedicated to the bringer of good tidings and another to an Athena with a separate epithet. The fact that Zeus and Athena are mentioned together on an inscription, however, makes it likely that either each had an altar, or they shared one, Altars C and H being the two candidates, since the others are later.

Although the general gamma-shaped arrangement of the buildings around a court can be compared with the sanctuaries at Cretan Lissos and Lebena or with the agora at Lato, there is no parallel on Crete for the use of so many altars connected with a temple. Perhaps the closest parallel in planning arrangement can be found in the EH Sanctuary of the Twelve Gods, or the Dodekatheon, at Delos (Pl. 8.17). There, four large altars (along with a number of smaller altars and monuments) were set rather symmetrically east of the temple. As at Kommos, two of the main altars were set on and at right angles to the line of the longitudinal axis of the temple. Also as at Kommos, south of each of them was set one other altar. The general ascription of the complex was made by the excavators on the basis of the written evidence of the Delos temple inventories. One of the minor altars (C in Pl. 8.17) can be
attributed to Zeus, Athena, and Hera on the basis of an inscription on one of its orthostate blocks. The remaining gods worshipped in the sanctuary were deduced by the excavators to be Demeter and Kore, as well as Zeus Eubouleos, Poseidon, Aphrodite, Hermes, and the triad of Apollo, Leto, and Artemis (Will 1955: 178). There is no evidence at Kommos to show that such a multiplicity of deities was worshipped there, although the possibility nevertheless exists.

To summarize the preceding sections on sanctuary ascription, there were probably two figures on the central statue base, and there might have been as many on the later southern base. The inscriptions and sculptural evidence indicate the worship of at least four deities (Zeus, Athena, Poseidon, Pan, and, less likely, Apollo and Gaia). The four altars suggest four or more deities, again with the caveat that more than one altar might have been assigned to the same deity but with a different epithet.

On balance, however, the primary use of the two exterior Altars H and C seems to match with the original establishment of the first, central cult statue base, on which only two figures were placed (if they were indeed life-size). This duality is matched by the inscription to Zeus and Athena. As a supposition, therefore, we propose that at least in its early phases the temple was dedicated to Zeus and Athena. The later establishment of the two southern altars must have been occasioned by additions of other gods or new characteristics of the old gods and, accordingly, by some change in the sequence of the ritual being carried out. If new gods were introduced, their images may or may not have been set in a place of honor along with Zeus and Athena in the back of the temple.

One of these gods may have been Poseidon, whose small, probably later, altar has already been discussed, and who may have played a major role in the history of a site where sailors, their ships, and the fruit of the sea were constant themes throughout its centuries of use. His possible role in the early history of the Iron Age site, with regard to the wreck of Menelaos’s ships, may also have been in the dedicators’ minds. To him may have been dedicated the many fish parts found burnt in the hearths of Temple B (Rose, Chap. 6, Section 4). It is probably for the same reason that the small reef just offshore of the site, now called the Papadóplaka, was said in antiquity to have been dedicated to Poseidon, as reported in the Suda (182, “Phaistos”; Eustathius, ad Homeri Odysseam 3.296). It has also been suggested (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 5) that Base Y, south of the sanctuary, may have supported a statue of Poseidon.

Desertion at Kommos

THE SANCTUARY (CA. 50–1 B.C.)

Sometime at the end of the Hellenistic period, for reasons unknown to us, the sanctuary at Kommos ceased to be patronized by the groups of people that once came. There is some evidence to suggest that the buildings may have been destroyed then suddenly. They do not seem to
have been allowed to simply become derelict. The nature of the evidence for such a destruction should be investigated as well as possible reasons for which the buildings were not renewed during this period of generally increasing prosperity in other areas of southern Crete.

During the period being considered, as fixed by our understanding of the pottery development, the Kommos sanctuary consisted of Temple C (Phase 3 and/or 4), Room A1 to the north, Building B, and the four altars in the court, as well as Building E to the east (Round Building D and Building W had by then gone out of use). Of the interior of the temple during this period, we know only its plan, since the floor deposit (Hayes, Chap. 4, Section 3, Deposit 57; Table 1.5) dates to its later reuse. Stage 4 of the temple dump to the south (Callaghan and Johnston, Chap. 4, Section 1, Deposit 48) indicates that there was a major clean out at that time of ritual gear and pottery. What event led to the clean out is unknown, but the some 16 m² of roof tiles found in the upper levels of the temple dump suggests that a roof collapse may have preceded it (J. W. Shaw, Chap. 1, Section 6, “Roof Tiles, Simas, and Other Architectural Terra Cottas”). Lenses of ash and carbon amidst the tiles and pottery there might be interpreted as indications of burning that brought about the tile collapse. However, such lenses could also result from intentional burning of waste on the dump itself.

Room A1, which could not have been in use for long, was abandoned then. The many tiles found tumbled within it (some complete ones may have been selected out during antiquity) are clear indication of roof collapse (Pls. 1.190, 1.191). Broad swathes of burning were formed in the sand above the tiles (Pl. 1.123), suggesting that burning accompanied the collapse. This evidence is ambiguous, however, since the burning may also be attributed to a fire centered in the court and probably set at a somewhat later period.

Building B may have suffered a severe dislocation at the time, for the tile roof was found collapsed into its interior. In the eastern room the tiles were beneath a 2-m-long section of fallen masonry (Pl. 1.136). Although some charcoal was found in spots, there was not enough to suggest that burning accompanied the roof collapse. Building E’s fate is clear, for there was a tile fall in all three rooms (Pl. 1.161) and sufficient carbonized remains above the tile level to suggest a burning of the roof structure, which in turn brought about the collapse.

In summary, massive tile falls occurred at the time in Room A1 and Buildings B and E, and perhaps in Temple C. Fire accompanied that in E and perhaps those in A1 and C.

THE WESTERN MESARA (260–1 B.C.)

The limited sources for the history of the western Mesara indicate that Phaistos was independent in 260 B.C., with Matala (ancient Matalon or Metallon) associated with it in a treaty signed with Miletos. This could mean that all the area west and southwest of Phaistos, perhaps including Aghia Galene (ancient Soulia) to the north but at least from the Geropotamos River south to Matala, was under Phaistian control. Matala, some 3 km south of Kommos, probably served then as the harbor of Phaistos, but in ca. 219 B.C. it and Lebena were taken over by young warriors of Gortyn who opposed the Knossian hegemony. It is not known