Kommos Field Records and Reports.

This section of the archive is intended to provide researchers with access to original trench notebooks and reports. Most were written during the chief periods of excavation (1976-1985, and 1991-1994). For tables and Illustrations, see below.

Site Area Terminology

The Kommos archaeological site spreads some kilometers along the coastline of Crete facing the Libyan Sea. Only a part, but no doubt an important one, was excavated and this lies within the fenced area. This (Fig. 1) starts at a low hilltop on the north and leads down the natural slope to a relatively level area on the south next to the shoreline. Area terminology developed from this topographical layout: the Hilltop with its houses of the Minoan town (Fig. 2) sloped down to what we came to call the Central Hillside (Fig. 4) which in turn led to the fairly level Southern Area (Fig. 6, color plan) with a Greek sanctuary built over earlier monumental Minoan buildings.

Over the years trenches were laid next to each other, and sometimes above or even within each other when lower levels had to be reached. Those on the Hilltop and Central Hillside can be seen in Figs. 3 and 5; those in the Southern Area are in Figs. 7 and 8, the first recording the upper trenches in an area of very deep, superposed levels, upon which rest the remains of the Greek Sanctuary. Specific trench books and their relevant areas are shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3. Many notebooks record work in only one area, while others describe excavation on various parts of the site. Some are more general books kept by the Director. Most trenches were located in terms of their positioning on the site grid established before excavation began.

General Observations

The major field records are the trench notebooks written by people, often graduate students, who helped guide workmen within a specific area and also recorded the archaeological features and portable finds discovered (e.g. a hearth for the first, or pottery for the second). Many of the artifacts were sent back to the storerooms in Pitsidia for cleaning and storage. At the end of the season that same trench master wrote reports of how the work was done, as well as interpretive analyses of what was found. Along with them were filed pottery reports, which were detailed analyses of each lot (or pail) of pottery from a specific area (locus) or stratum (e.g. Trench 65A 5:25, where 5 represents the relative local stratigraphic level and 25 represents the pail number).
Anyone looking into these records should also be cautioned about their use. For instance, mistakes in identification can be made, and interpretations made in the field may be wrong, hopefully to be corrected during another season’s work. Dating, based as it was almost entirely on relative pottery styles, is also variable, for experts differ in their evaluations and even they are inclined to vary individually from year to year, depending on the state of their own research.

In order to investigate a particular area of the site here, you must first find which trenches were excavated there. You may begin by looking at Table 1, 2, and 3, showing the excavated areas and the relevant trenches. You can also consult the plans, including the trench plans, of the three areas (Figs. 1-8). Then access particular notebooks and/or reports. Each trench was assigned the number of the notebook followed by an alphabetical or numerical designation indicating the sequence of work (e.g. Trench 22A1, or 33C). The actual notebook number represents one of the usually five to seven field books used during any excavation season of five to eight weeks. The first notebook of the first year was No. 1. The designation “A” was given to the first trench recorded in a notebook. If a trench adjacent to, say, 22A was recorded in the same book, it received the designation “1,” thus becoming Trench 22A1. In cases where a new trench was opened in a new area by the same trenchmaster, that trench received a new alphabetical designation (B, C, etc.), e.g. Trench 33C which represents a trench in a third new area recorded in Notebook 33.

Below, in order, are arranged the Trench or Field Notebooks, followed by the Trench Reports. After them are numerous Specialist Reports by technicians, analysts, and other experts. These provided continuity from one year to the next as we attempted to come to an understanding of the contexts being excavated. Also there is a series of interviews of elders in Pitsidia carried out in the early days of the excavation in order to recover precious information about local history that otherwise would have been lost. Maria Shaw used these interviews in her 1981 article about Sir Arthur Evans’s visit to Pitsidia in 1924.

The notebooks were scanned directly from the originals in Toronto. The reports were scanned from microfiche records put together at intervals over the years. As a result they may differ in quality.

**Trench Notebooks and Trench Reports (see also below)**

**Tables**

Table 1. Kommos trenches and their relative areas.
Table 2. Main areas of excavation at Kommos and related trenches.
Illustrations

Fig. 1. General plan of Kommos (Giuliana Bianco).
Fig. 2. Plan of Minoan hilltop houses (Giuliana Bianco).
Fig. 3. Plan of trenches on the hilltop (Giuliana Bianco).
Fig. 4. Plan of Minoan central hillside houses (Giuliana Bianco).
Fig. 5. Plan of trenches on the central hillside (Giuliana Bianco).
Fig. 6. Period Plan of Southern Area (Giuliana Bianco).
Fig. 7. Plan of upper trenches in the Southern Area (Giuliana Bianco).
Fig. 8. Plan of lower trenches in the Southern Area (Giuliana Bianco).

Trench or Field Notebooks 1-101
(inserted, clickable PDFs)

Trench Reports 1-101
(inserted, clickable PDFs)