1990
NOTEBOOK 72

DIRECTOR'S NOTEBOOK

Joseph W. Shaw

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Excavation of Trench 72A

Excavation of Trench 72B

Marja C. Shaw

Excavation of Trench 72C
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... have been made during the last five years on the publication of Volumes I-IV of the Kommos Excavations, preparation is underway for another series of excavation seasons beginning in 1991. This season we will be engaged in both which, at times, are complex in some ways but are nonetheless satisfying. On an annual basis, if past work and the participation and donations to the cause are made possible, the effort represents a return to the site to continue to explore, and perhaps finish, the monumental Minoan civic complex of LM I and LM III dates which we began to uncover in 1980.

As described in detail elsewhere, some years ago I decided that excavation should continue at Kommos rather than at some new old site. This would complete our work and at the same time take advantage of the Pitsidia base which had been developed over the years since 1976. We would also continue to benefit from our friends and acquaintances in the village, especially our friend George Balaclava. Our site in Crete and on the Greek mainland were considered.

The aim of the new work will be made possible by the recent purchase, through the American School of Classical Studies on behalf of the Greek State, of five additional 2000m² plots. These were bought in two sections as money allowed. Funds for the first were raised during 1986-1988; the second during 1989-1990. Total cost of the transactions, including taxes and services, were about $165,000. In
present day Greek drachmae the amount, as agreed with the owner Manolis Daskalakis (and a partner living in Saudi Arabia), was 20,000,000 drachmae plus the various costs of land transfers, tax, ASCSA lawyers, notary publics, etc. The contract has been signed and I have placed the two originals in the files of the ASCSA, with copies being distributed elsewhere.

The land acquired continues south and somewhat east from that already owned along the Kommos shore line. The borders were laid out so as to encompass all of AM I Building J/T, as far as could be estimated on the bases of the earlier "tracing" and the "central" court which are assumed to have the proportions of a Minoan palace. The assumption, however, remains to be proven through excavations. The laying out of the new property lines was also done with IM III Building P in mind. We would like very much to come to understand the plan on the east, and for that reason the border of the property was jagged in that direction. Hopefully our estimate will prove to be even more a reasonable one. If we are fortunate, we will also uncover an area east of P which will contain an LM I roadway and the remains of LM I houses, and whatever was built then during LM III. The overlying sand which must be removed before formal excavation can then place graves from three to seven or more meters deep. This area to a large one. I do not expect activities along the eastern edge where even foundations will have been washed away by the sea. There may also be areas which for reasons of time or relative predictability we will not excavated. Other areas may be left for possible future excavations who wish to check and extend our own discoveries.
Concerning publication, Philip Betancourt's Vol. II (Middle Minocia Pottery) is actually "in press" this very week and should be circulating by Christmas if not before. There has been a good deal of discussion about the format of the volume, which was settled last week in a fax sent by me and handed to the University Press at Princeton. The cover will be bright red cloth, the printing on the binding as well as the main Kamares logo, will be in gold. The position and size of the logo have been fixed, largely on paper suggested originally by the press. They should be splendid. Vol. II will be followed by III, which submitted and in process. Vol. I is largely in rough form, with some problematic sections being worked up. and without yet the concluding chapter that I and MCS will write when everything is in. Perhaps it can be submitted by the spring. Another perhaps years away is Vol. IV, for which I wrote the architecture chapter during the past fall and winter in Toronto and Athens. This volume is now as far along as Volume I and may out-distance it in time since the contributors are fewer and logistics are less complex. I have also written the conclusion for this year's writing sabbatical at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.
14 June 1990

Staff for the limited season of study and preparing site work will be:

myself (director) U of T
Maria C. Shaw (Assistant Director) U of T
Peter Callaghan (Ceramicist) U of Cambridge
Giuliana Bianco (Architect and Artist) U of T
Bruce Drakes (Catalogue) U of T
Helen Whitehouse (Assistant Catalogue) U of T

also visiting
Eric Csapo (Graffiti) U of T
John Hayes (Roman Pottery) ROM
Alan Heaton (Greek Amphorae) U of Cambridge

In Pitsidia our chief aim will be to consolidate and upgrade storage facilities, a process begun in 1989 when Apartment #2 was almost cleaned of shed bags. This was done by returning some to the site and through the consolidation of the Greek deposits in the basic room of the Annex which no longer was to serve as a bedroom (the bedroom furniture was sold and Dexion shelves were installed). Some bags from #3 were also sorted through but most of them remain. No 4 went through a major transformation when at least half of the trench boxes there and their contents of catalogued objects were shifted over to the new room of the Annex and placed in new wooden boxes of two sizes. Thus the Annex has become a place for consolidated deposits, mostly pottery, from the Minoan and Greek periods; it also contains the survey pottery. Also there are all the stone tools catalogued, the bones and shells, the charcoal matrices and other materials to the kitchen, 1 of the 4 rooms there, however, remains intact.
This year more boxes have been ordered. These will replace the cardboard boxes in the remainder of April. No. 4 (the boxes will remain in place without being moved). Also, the boxes deposited for Volume II and III will be transferred from cardboard to wooden boxes. Eventually all wooden boxes would be transferred to the Archaeological Museum of Herakleion once the lease on the present Pitsidia storage facilities run allowed to lapse.

With storerooms 2 and 4 ready for finalization, we will also begin to consolidate the pottery bags in No. 3 which seems vast and crowded. Most of them contain material from the southern area. We must sort through them this summer and discard or consolidate all Greek levels with Peter Callahan’s help. Most of the Minoan material will, however, remain intact awaiting study along with the remainder to be excavated from within the Minoan building T and 7, and House X.

A physical improvement scheduled for this year is already complete, thanks to the help of our friend, George Beladassar. He arranged for and oversaw the setting in of a fibre ceiling in Apr. #1, which had a beam/reed ceiling that was constantly shedding earth and bits of reeds which littered all surfaces. Now these days are over and the room, for the first time since the building was constructed in the 1960’s is and will remain relatively clean. The work was done during May while MCS and I were in Turkey.
On the site much is planned although the scheduling remains somewhat unclear. The sequence remains with some unknowns. The chief goal is to clear enough of the ancient surface for sand and thus to start the major excavation season of 1991. We have noted certain features in the ancient remains that have not been disturbed and which are now used for the excavation work. The ancient remains in that area have been destroyed by the sea. The shore, originally in rows, extends to the edge of the new property. Perhaps 80 large trees and 100 small ones are involved. I have never counted them. The question is, will conservationists, such as we will know in the area, make a protest now that we are committed to the project which will necessitate removing many of them?

The other impediment, which is in some ways insurmountable but may, I hope, work out in practice, is the removal and re-establishment of the road recently set in by the community. It leads right across the land we want to excavate, then curves westward to end near our present entrance on the south. Unless it is removed our hands will be tied. There are many different points of view; some legal and others of opinion, local or otherwise. Locally, if we believe the present mayor, the road was put in where there already was a road that
had been outlined by a previous mayor back in 1978 or so (Irwin's Andrews' father). In reality, at least 100+ meters of the road to be built. But then, how else is any road to be built so that people can reach what they want by means of the vehicles used today? The local custom is that by mutual agreement, share in the loss of arable land created by a road passing near to or through their land. Also, that once an agricultural road is established, its legality remains unquestioned.

I, hoping that the Town would establish a road outside of our property, approached the mayor last August and he seemed, yes, to agree that such was possible and seriously entertained the idea that the Town could do so. This would have meant placing enough twelve loads of earth or the sand around the property so that tourists and town people could, as before, reach the parking area near the shore. Then, however, after consulting with the Town advisor, changed his mind and insisted in March of this year that we should put any new road in and consult with the present owner outside of our property line. When I suggested that the Town might do it, he accused me of "crooked ways" at the top of his voice near the Town square. Did he believe what he said, or was this election so close then that he wanted to protect himself? Which I would admit to the explicitity of hoping that they would want a road already paid for them by them, I would also claim that I have no legal right to get in a road, the very road that I may initiate shortly in order to find a way
out of the impasse we found ourselves in.

The ASCSA lawyer, Zacharias Biceks, has advised us in the process, and on the spot. According to Greek law, he says, expropriation must take place before any road can be set in, and the owners must be compensated. Obviously, there is the scholastic view of an Athenian lawyer not from the village, especially from a village in southeastern Crete, where the local customs are far different. Now he argues that we must follow the path of putting the road in on the Paskalakis property on our own, after consultation with the mayor. Also, he in Seita, we should not consult with Paskalakis but just go ahead and do it. He will deal with Paskalakis, he says, if the occasion arises.

The former, George Plesadakis, would (as I instinctively) follow a middle road (speaking of roads). He would split (as per custom) the responsibility, with us giving as much land as Paskalakis would lose. But whose land is the land that we have bought? It is not mine, nor did it ever belong to the ASCSA (the former purchaser): "It belongs to the Greek state, and can I decide on the state’s behalf what the state would prefer? No, but then to make a formal question of it to the state’s representative, whether the archaeological Service in Athens would stall the question. Then he might as well cancel future excavation since the general, local, and even personal problems could extend themselves forever. I must consult Biceks again. Could we give up land on the south and plan the road on Paskalakis land on the east?"