Kommos Excavations
1981

Director's Notebook
C. W. Shaw

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21 June 1981. Kommos. Season VI

Staff:

J. W. S., director

Field:

Prof. Maria C. Shaw, Scarborough College
James Wright, Bury Manor College
John Mc Eneaney, Univ. of Virginia
Steven Shubert, grad. st., U. of T.
Mary Dabney, grad. st., Columbia U.

Giuliana Bianco, excavation architect
George Beladiaris, excavation foreman

Study/Storage:

Prof. Philip Botanoroff, Temple Univ.
Vance Watrous, S.U.N.Y. (Buffalo) specialist

Katherine Schwab, chief cataloguer, grad. student, Columbia University
Jacqueline Phillips, assistant cataloguer, grad. student, U. of T.

Horace Watrous, Ph.D., in charge of tools of all kinds
David Reese, Ph.D., in charge of bones and shells, Cambridge Univ.
Lucia Nixon, grad. st., Cambridge Univ., working on domestic economy
Catherine Sow, Conservationist, Metropolitan Museum
Taylor Dabney, Photographer

Lori Grover, photographer, Field Museum of Natural History, student,
Valerie Vidlinski, photographer, student, CHA, Alumni

Franco de Ficara, grad. st., Bury Manor College, part-time helper.
Another season of excavation was, after a winter of teaching and preparation, in about to begin. The staff (previous page), with the usual exception of the assistant catalogue, the trench masters, and the two profilers, are veterans of other seasons (some began with us in 1976!). To me there seems to be a good balance of expertise and good character. Tomorrow, when the staff are arriving (K.S. and M.C.S. are already here) we will begin settling the group and general cleaning will be going on at the site. Actual excavation begins on Tuesday, 23 June, with five trenches.

I arrived some days ago, and have spent some time consulting with the foreman, George Beka- dakis — he is also our truly responsible guard during the winter. Inflation, according to the government announcement, is 25%. We are also finding it hard to subscribe to T.I.K.A., the Greek Social Insurance, which is exactly 50% of the wage (33% for medical and retirement benefits and 17% for the yearly gift). The raise this year from last year will be the most substantial one made so far, 100 A. added to the daily wage, plus 17% for the gift, a total of 36%. Not including the various benefits mentioned above, the excavation cost is the 100 drachmae increase plus 75%, a total of 50%. Only by using part of the publication fund will we be able to cover this really substantial increase. If the workers decide tomorrow that the raise will not go, I will simply let those who disagree go.

After some cleaning and adjustments, I will have, with the help of the two cooks
who are once more with us, the storeroom and rooms opposite cleaned and ready. Yesterday, after some somewhat difficult arrangements, one of the three rooms opposite was filled with Dexion shelving. This will take immediately all of the shed base from last year, leaving about 2/3 of the new shelves unfilled. After some problems we have managed to get the IH excavation up to the point that it can actually be driven to having its annual overhaul.

Accommodations This year will be taken care of chiefly in five houses. Two houses were arranged independently by others, one in the storeroom/kitchen/residence across the way, another the house where Maria and I generally stay. The main residence, however, will again be the house of Peto's and Fondo Benihano in the Plateau, now (as last year) with five rooms. We have already worked out most of the room assignment for the staff on the basis of habits, character, and sex. It will be a good group.

Thus this summer will be divided into research and excavation goals.

1. Research:
   - continued study of the hilltop houses (L. W., Spling, with some work by A. H. S.)
   - work, with some writing, concerning the stone tools (H. B.)
   - consolidation of the work already done on bone and shell
   - continuation of potting profile work for the publication.

Final research of the LM I-III hillside house (A. H.)
(2) Excavation.

> Completion of investigation of the M.M. houses on the hillside. One large trench and at least one small one.

> Completion and further investigation of the Bronze Age and Classical levels near the sanctuary.
A day of cleaning of the site with 14 workmen on Monday is followed by the first actual digging in ancient levels. There is almost no accumulation of sand (unlike in other years) and the soil is moved out rather quickly. Sand dumped from other years has either consolidated, been held now by bushes and grass that are accumulating, or has been borne away by the sea—concerning the latter, work by the _Seaborg_ crew and the dune at least 10,000 m$^3$ have been removed and spread out along the shoreline (all without T, K, A, !).

The new trenches:

**The Hillside**

Tr. 40 A. James Lovigle. A long, 5 m s/n strip alongside Tr. 35 A series, above the overlapping MM buildings discovered in 1980.

Tr. 41 A. Steven Shubert. A moderate-sized trench south of Tr. 38 B, the pit is room, also MM III. (Actually, being excavated in a few days from now).

**The Sanctuary Area**

Tr. 42 A. Maria C. Show. A rather large trench immediately in front of the temples.

Tr. 43 A. Mary Dabney. A T-shaped trench between the temples and Building 5.

Tr. 44 A. John Inc. Echoe. A rectangular trench, overlapping the s.w. part of the temple, between trenches excavated in 1980.
All of the above trenches (see 41A) are still in the upper levels of their respective areas. Both 40A, 41A, are intended to give us a clearer overall view of the Mn Hillside buildings and, generally, of the Mn houses at Kommos. These will eventually be published by James Howlett. Below, in the sanctuary, I gave to our upper, Geometric/Achaic levels position of supreme importance for this season, with the hope that we will by the end of the summer have extracted a maximum amount of information about the immediate environs of the temples during that period. 42A, immediately in front of the temples, may help determine the features associated with them (3rd Aries). 44A will remove enough floor to help us understand the southern wall of Temple B. 43A will determine more of the 'outside' levels of all periods. A major side-effect will be to illuminate more of the character of the underlying Minoan rooms - these should be seen in all instances. My great hope is that by the end of the summer we will understand at last part of the layout and have a sense of the function of their obviously important complex (a vague enough term!).
24 June 1981

40A. A portion of a wall (L1? ) begins to appear at a high level.

42A. MCS. A few small objects (pt. of a bronze wallth decoration, a cute votive cup that looked otherwise like a child's toy. Most important is the discovery of a finely tamped court surface that may in reality be the original court surface that goes with Temple C. See also 44A. This has been cleared; now we will open up the remaining of the trench to that level, which will raise a few days but make a splendid sight.

44A dM. A level, passed fairly well and only partially cleared, in front of the temple (above) but not as distinguishable as MCS's. A small, upright scythe sits above the floor (photo) but not on it.

43A mD. Rubble is removed after photography.
40A. J.W. found the same wall again; shortly
we will be tracing part of the pavement east of Ibn
Beqg's 'piqeq' (which may be an industrial area) to
the n.e. of the LM I building on the hillside. Associated
with this was [in 1978] a slab, lenders pit, left
partly unexcavated in the scarap. The remainder,
too, will be excavated, and since the function
of it remains vague perhaps some careful sieving
outside and inside will help define its possible
use. LM III sherds were found within it, but
its construction date remains unsure.

41A. S. Shrubett. Begun and in hand, probably upper
levels. Slow progress partly because one of the
workmen is whitewashing and painting the
excavation house in pitsidik, the latter is
sparking, more attractive than it has been in
years.

42A. MCS. Opening up the northern section of the
trench was an excellent idea, thus an intermediate
level, missed in the trench to the south, is found—
a lepida, a light covering and corresponding as
for, as one can see more closely with the altars
on the east than the lower, presumably original
level already reported. Only further excavation
spanning the distance to the altars, however,
will prove the case. Just below the later court
level (Hellenistic/Roman), missed in the past
by 1 cm, we discovered a fine base of a column
square, with a deep incision in the center. Fronds
(as one sees it from the robber trench on the
west) or the original court surface — we have not
seen its base yet — an inscription? Its
function will remain unknown, but it may be
the base for a peristyle-temple, a fine addition
in any case to our understanding of the appear-
ance, and, perhaps, the function of the
temple.
44A  J.M.  The level outside Temple C — a level above the subfoundation — is unexcavated and the
connection with the laying in of the subfoundation is unclear.  No trench was dug in this area.  Callaghan's
interpretation of the pottery above the level seems to coincide with our dating of 'C' to 400-395 B.C.

43A  M.D.  An upper wet level (Yellow/Brown) is defined clearly by a dry sand and earth.  This
will be photographed and levelled in the morning and we will continue down.  The trench at present is divided
into half.  Perhaps when we have reached the foundation level of B we will take the other half down to the same depth.

Unusually hot on the site, taking no account by surprise and reminding me of seven worse
days in our initial season in 1976.
40A J.D. More walls appearing although their untangling must await a few days, the job should not be difficult.

41A S.S. No change.

42A M.G.S. No inscription on the base. In the court in front we find a scattering of blocks, perhaps from the earlier archaic temple, lying on their sides and probably serving as a paving for the original floor.

44A J.M. Penetration below the level even with the foundation top of C does not reveal a foundation trench; rather, a fill with some lumps, mostly 8th century (pottery interpretation still needed, however), the surface would seem to slope down to the south—not an unexpected phenomenon.

43A M.D. Another packed layer is removed; M.D. still able in distinguishing the levels.

A bit of a breeze. All of the trenches have good groups of workers, perhaps the best group we have had so far.

New bookshelves are installed in Pitsidia for our books were overcrowding the shelves—originally I thought that I bought too many! The apothecary gleams as it never has in the past. Problems appear with the T.K.A. Some people will apparently lose their company's, farmers' insurance.
40A J.W. Continued clarification of stone tumino that will raise another day or so, we are optimistic that the walls seen at this high level are all MM, exactly what we might have hoped for.

41A S.S. Definition must await another few days if removal of small rubble. No large stones have appeared yet.

44A J.M. Penetration below the foundation level of C.

43A M.D. Much sand is being removed below a level with many fragments and a patchy burned surface. Sand important.

42A M.C.S. It is clear that there are at least four architectural levels of court of the latest temple (C).
1. Foundation, with a flint layer of chips spread far from the temple and covered with a thin layer of pebbles;
2. Establishment of a rough bench north of the base with the sound socle;
3. After time passed, another rough bench is established above the bench;
4. Accumulation of fill in front of the temple, followed by the destruction of much of the Sanctuary (the Burnt level repeated everywhere in the sanctuary except within the temple). All of this growth most interesting and important.
Most important for the earlier date are
history of the site is that below the
chip level are appearing many slabs
and blocks, some aligned. That could
make up structures below a sealed
level. We should know by Tuesday;
a crucial development.

Payday – the only Saturday that
we work during the excavation season,
and 39° centigrade. Everyone uncom-
fortable and dripping.
40A (60) Winding walls. One new development is that the "dungeon", west of the "piscina" discovered and reported on in 1949, is continuing to the east, probably below an MM (? LM) wall.

41 S S. Finally below the subsoil accumulation, a terrace south of the MM I hillside building. Pure earth and little stone at this point, the walls cannot be far below.

44 J M. From +4.80 to +4.62 m (4, 5) John finds a floor of rather, exterior surface sloping down and as far as we can see matches up with one connected with M2B's similar surface next to the foundation of B. Once again we find the lavender and orange bits of material, chalcedy for which we have no clear purpose yet. All is drawn and photographed in any case, and we continue down with hopes of finding an east-west (or north-south?) boundary wall.

43 M D. Sand levels will clarify accumulation, 2 sand during the Graeco-Roman period.

42 M C S. Finds and features accumulating. Here is what appears to be a superincidental wall (?) beneath two courses cutting across the axi of temple B. North of the axis is a rather solid wall of what appears to be loose orthostats set on edge — but we can see only their tops. Surprisingly large chunks of iron are appearing, one more or less on axis may be a floor feature, and is shaped in plan as a "Maltese Cross" with joined pieces of iron. Its height is unknown. The upper level may be B 3.
40A J.W. J.W. sick, but can spend the morning clearing more walls. In the process he finds a staircase of 4 steps and a paired stair (?), date still uncertain but quite attractive for a Kommos house.

41 S.S. Still working into the system. Dirt fill under below the small rubble surface which has been completely removed now.

42 J.M. A heavy N-S. wall appears along the west side of the trench, paralleling that found by D.O. in 1980. It lies just below the surface of Temple B and must be 8th C. or earlier, probably either LM or ERG.

43 M.D. Finally in the west end of the trench, the upper walls are reached. It appears that there is a reuse of the LM IV structure on the LM I court, in the form of a small room (perhaps two) on a high level. We have reached the floor in one place, lying as it were beneath a domino riddle of blocks. The date ascertainment is far.

42 M.C.S. Cleaning and photography chiefly, all preliminary to going deeper tomorrow. MCS careful and cautious.
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1 July 1981

410 AM. John, sick, so no work done.

41 SS. Earth fill. Coming down slowly on large stones.

44 J.M. A great deal of sand below the level of the wall found yesterday, on the east of it. Few sherds, no small finds.

43 MD. A small upper room is defined with vague 'floor' surfaces and very little pottery. Date uncertain.

42 Mrs. All day is spent cleaning a fairly definable level, mostly in part of Temple B. The surfaces covered with broken pottery, some quite large fragments with many bowls and what appears to be amphora. No specifically notable objects (save for perhaps the iron already noted). Little decorated pottery shales for Corinthian skyphos. B.C. as before toward the end of the day: 8th, 9th, 10th, and at its level (± 5.26) considerably above the higher level (B3) inside B (± 5.24). Perhaps this level was shaved down when C was built? Further definition of the pottery will be necessary before we enter into more detailed argument.
41 SS. Walls begin to appear.

44 JM. Scrap on the west scraped off, exposing the wall in this trench, D, which the base lies just below the level of the LM III pavement, which confirms that this wall is either LM III or, less likely, proto-Geometric.

43 MD. The northern wall of Space 4 (in [illegible 78]) in-depth in the upper level, apparently even with J's northern wall. This will simplify matters as we go deeper. North of 4 is an eating area, with a superficial wall (Geometric?) on the west.

40 JM. Further clearing of walls — a twisted upper level of LM 0.6 will still be defined more closely.

42 MCS. The floor deposit is cleared. A handsome plate of the Sixth appears (perhaps early) bringing the level down to B 3, as I had originally hoped. The rectangular/square enclosures are partially excavated, proving to be definitely an altar, absolutely packed with bones! Some burnt. Most important.
41 SS. A N/S wall in about the centre of the trench, apparently rather poorly built although we have been fooled in the past (e.g. 22 A3). On the west there is Sill LM III A, so with the expectation that we will be in MM fill soon, and on J. M.’s suggestion, we take another pass. On Monday we will clean along the east—west wall—probably more clearing much more than the wall face on the north.

J.M. As before - a clean ‘chicken wall’ (lots, rough wall to be removed) will be taken out once the drawings are made of it.

44 J.M. Now that the eastern 1/2 of the trench is being lowered there is little to regret, J.M. quite excited by the amount of LM architecture despite the lack of small finds.

43 M.D. As the eastern half of the trench is taken down, a fine leveling course appears along the west face of Bldg. A1; a huge block appears not far away: an abandoned block? Perhaps a heavy midden wall simply not discovered so far?

42 M.C.S. The area is cleared of its immense filling of small and rather large boxes, certainly the largest single amount recovered from any space on the hillside, hilltop, and sanctuary areas. The bottom of the area (interior — on the exterior we are still at the high level floor level) is at about the level of the floor of B 3. Is the area actually part of B 3 then? If so, then there are the two hearths on the interior of the temple at the same time. Judea!
George and I spend part of the morning in horses and find that we are required to join IKA and that the town people can still retain their OQDA farmers' privileges. Sooner or later this will happen. However, and there is an immense amount of paperwork involved. Of the 350 drachmas per day we will give to IKA, the workmen receive only 52. Of those drachmas and very little else. Only if they continue to receive IKA under other auspices will they have a chance to have a pension. At least 50% of our workmen are older and will not possibly have any benefit.
41.55. Slow clarification of our walls inside begins with first major removal of rubble. Another day of such work will be necessary before the situation is fairly clear and we can begin excavation of the eastern section first which will overlap partially on the 'pithos room' (28B) excavated in an earlier year.

40. J.W. Chosen wall removed to reveal that the stairs descend to a slab pavement of some importance. J.W. thinks that this building may be LM (?I), but agrees that we should wait a bit until the lines or non lines with the MM structures below are clarified. Here, if LM, is a building least MM that would go with the LM house to the west.

44. J.M. A clear surface with a bit of pebble pavement and some slabs appears at the point just below the level of the top of C's sub-foundations. Material just below here may help reinforce our notion of C's date.

43 M.D. Evidence seems to be mounting up to show that A1 and A2 may have been built up against a scarp cut on the west. A very large cobble block, a bit cantilevered, has appeared west of A1; left over from stone robbing?

42 M.C.S. To our surprise we meet the foundation level for Bs court clear some distance above the level originally estimated. David Rees has new