

EXCAVATIONS AT KOURION
THE BAMBOULA SECOND SEASON

Report to
Dept. of Antiquities
Cyprus
Oct. 20, 1988

The 1938 season on the Bamboula lasted from the 23d of March to the 11th of June. The season was divided between further work in the area begun in 1937 (lot 270) and soundings in the adjacent lot 236.

Work in trench 4 resulted in the establishment of the limits of rooms 31 and 41 (see A.J.A., 1938, p. 263, fig. 2) and of another room to the south of 31. This room contained a well built stone pit connecting with an oven; its purpose is not yet clear. We dug under the floor of room 41. The potsherds show that it, as doubtless the rest of the complex, was built at the very beginning of Period I (loc. cit., p. 264f, 266f, 269f).

The northeastern part of trench 2 was extended to include the circuit wall. The wall was examined in detail, revealing a much longer history than was at first suspected. In the Early Bronze Age this area was occupied by a necropolis. At some time not later than the beginning of the L.C.II period there was extensive quarrying to prepare the ground for the circuit wall. The lowest part of one of the tombs escaped demolition; we found Red Polished pottery, a bead, and a few bones in a shallow depression running under the later wall.

The circuit wall was built in the L.C.II period and continued without change until the end of the L.C.III period. It was rebuilt at about 700 B.C., after a period of decay, and was further restored, perhaps during the Ionian Revolt, and in Hellenistic and Roman times. The area outside the wall was filled in in the third century A.D. or later. In all periods except the Roman the wall consisted of a fairly well built outer wall retaining a great mass of loose stones. A fairly well defined depression running down the middle of this stony area suggests a division, the outer half serving as foundation for a superstructure of mud brick, while the inner half was kept open for quick communication between the several parts of the fortress.

Digging below the remains discovered in 1937, but without removing them, we discovered the foundations of earlier houses, of the L.C.II period. They had a different orientation from the houses which superseded them. Trench two has given a complete and detailed stratigraphical sequence from the early L.C.II through the L.C.III periods.

Excavations near the western edge of lot 270 brought to light the remains of a house of indeterminate date, Roman or mediaeval. Digging below these we found scanty traces of walls of the ninth century B.C. (Cypro-Geometric II).

We cleared two tombs on this slope of the Bamboula. One, in lot 270, contained three burial periods. At the bottom we found good Cypriote pottery of early L.C.II date. An intermediate level contained two pots of advanced L.C.II date. The top level, with two skeletons, had only a whetstone, an iron knife, and a bronze fibula of "Sub-mycenaean" type. A second tomb, in lot 236, was contemporary to Period I in trenches 2 and 4. It contained numerous examples of the "Bowl ware", together with two White Slip and one Base Ring ware bowls.

A road was followed, leading from lot 270 along the top of 236, just below the summit of the Bamboula.

Extensive quarrying since antiquity has removed the top of the hill; there is therefore no hope of recovering the buildings which once

may

have crowned it. Perhaps the only remnant we may hope for is an imposing wall, the lower part of which escaped destruction. It is just short of two meters square, and has been cleared to a depth of eleven meters. The lower part is hewn in solid rock, but the upper eight meters are very well built of rectangular limestone blocks, set in an enormous cutting in the soft konnos. It was built in the 14th century B.C., and remained open until the Archaic period.

A trench on the upper southwest slope, facing Episkopi, revealed a large bothros of still undetermined nature. A section of this was dug out, showing a stratified deposit of the L.C.I and early L.C.II periods.

Two groups of houses were found in lot 236. One of these, of the L.C.II period, is high up on the northwest slope, not far from the wall. The other is lower down, close to the old Limassol-Paphos road. Here we cleared part of a house of more ample proportions than any yet found on the Bamboula. Its latest habitation is characterized by pottery transitional between L.C.II and L.C.III, including a krater ornamented with geometric patterns, a tree, and fish, the best piece discovered up to date.

The small finds of the season include two steatite cylinder seals, several interesting terracotte figurines, numerous beads and whorls of hard stone, steatite, terracotte, and silver-lead, and much pottery. The Bamboula collection of "Cypro-Minoan" inscriptions now contains forty two items, including signs on cylinder seals, a figurine, and a small rectangle of steatite, which is probably either a weight or a gaming piece.

Most of the pottery has been cleaned and studied, with general confirmation of the suggestions advanced in A.J.A. 1938, pp. 261ff. A comparison of the Bamboula material with that discovered at Enkomi by the Swedish Cyprus Expedition shows that the early part of our Period 1 (see above) is contemporary to the Swedish L.C.II C. The houses in trenches 2 and 4, which continued to be used, with slight changes and remodellings, throughout the L.C.III period, were first built when tombs 6, 10, 13, and 19 were in use at Enkomi. The question whether this should be called L.C.II C or L.C.IIIA can perhaps be avoided by a purely chronological designation. "Period 1" lasts roughly from 1225 until 1175 B.C. The Bamboula excavations have shown that there is no clear break between the two periods.