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Review of *Keos 3: Ayia Irini, House A*, by W. Willson Cummer and Elizabeth Schofield

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Cyprus has no typical Near Eastern tells or individual sites with long sequences of occupation as do some Classical cities. Instead, its early inhabitants chose to create "horizontal stratigraphy," moving settlements from place to place within a particular region. The occupational sequence in the Kourion area is the most completely known: sites from all major phases of the nine millennia of Cypriot settlement are represented.

Swiny emphasizes this fact by arranging the sites in chronological order, from Neolithic through Medieval, with narrative discussions of the various periods connecting them. All chapters are written by archaeologists with firsthand experience of the subject, either the excavators themselves or those currently studying the material for publication. Indeed, the list of contributors itself is a tribute to the editor's diplomacy as well as her archaeological background. The cooperation of the British authorities of the Sovereign Base Areas alone resulted in the inclusion of a chapter on the archaeological remains of the Akrotiri Peninsula, a top-secret military airbase.

The text is supplemented by ample and well chosen illustrations, excellent maps, a useful glossary, and an illustrated "pottery index" that is the most concise and useful synopsis of Cypriot pottery available. Suggestions for "Further Reading" at the end of each chapter constitute a full graduate course in Cypriot archaeology. The chronological table presented is also the most comprehensive yet published for Cyprus, but its internal discrepancies probably require more explanation for the non-specialist. Unfortunately, because of the quality of reproduction, the photographs do not always show what they are intended to illustrate.

The Ancient Kourion Area is an important study of the archaeology of Cyprus, useful to anyone with an interest in the early history and prehistory of the eastern Mediterranean or the Classical world. Beyond that, however, the volume serves as an excellent guidebook to the area, with careful directions for locating the sites and finding the keys for access, descriptions of the remains to be seen (if any), and reference to whatever finds are on display in museums.

Since the Kourion area is one of the most visited in Cyprus—by tourists and by British military personnel—such a serious and substantive guide serves an important educational purpose. I therefore would like to have seen such a book include a discussion of the responsibilities and appropriate behavior of visitors to archaeological sites. Many of the best picnic spots in Cyprus are sites, and sharding for souvenirs is a common practice. Nevertheless, visitors using this guide will acquire a deeper appreciation of the ancient environment and an understanding of the real purpose of archaeology that should lead them into more constructive expressions of their interest.

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KEOS 3. AYIA IRINI: HOUSE A, by *W. Willson Cummer* and *Elizabeth Schofield*, with contributions by

Stelios Andreou and a foreward by *John L. Caskey*. Pp. xix + 172, pls. 88. Philipp von Zabern, Mainz 1984.

The last quarter century has witnessed a virtual revolution in our understanding of the Aegean Bronze Age, much of which has occurred as a result of excavations in the Cyclades. Not least among these has been the work of the late John L. Caskey of the University of Cincinnati at Ayia Irini on Keos. Of special importance is the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, which is well represented at Ayia Irini by Periods VI and VII, to which belong the imposing remains of House A, the subject of this final report, second to appear in the Keos series and the first on the Bronze Age settlements. The architectural description and analysis are presented by Cummer, and a catalogue and synopsis of the finds by Schofield and others. Three appendices include the analyses of pottery, plasters, slags, minerals and rock specimens and the radiocarbon dates for Period VII.

Cummer provides a detailed description of the rooms and an accurate set of plans and sections (pl. 9 is reproduced at an awkward scale, 1:111.11). The draughtsmanship is superb and clearly labelled. True stratigraphic sections are not published; the sections that appear are schematic and seem to have been erratically recorded. There are no detailed state plans of the floors illustrating findspots. The photographs of the architectural remains and the artifacts are of uneven quality, often too dark.

The picture painted by the chapters describing the building and summarizing its history is one of constant alteration, addition and rising floor levels. Construction in the area of the building began in the Middle Bronze Age, but House A itself only came into being during Period VI (LM IA/LC I) when a complex of rooms (35–39) was erected atop thick walls forming the NE quarter of the block. Gradually other suites of rooms were incorporated into the structure. Damages to it throughout Period VI caused substantial rebuilding, which created the stratigraphic deposits defining Period VII (LM IB/LC II), when the entire block is argued to have been consolidated into one residential unit (pp. 1, 32–33). This sequence needs further analysis. Since it is maintained that a number of suites of Period VI were independent of House A (17–18; 5–6–9), it seems equally possible that most of the other suites were also independent. Rooms 7–8–10–11 form a coherent unit and, since features below Room 7 indicate prior use of the area, the probability that their construction relates to the earlier occupation needs examination. Likewise I see no reason to assume that the basement units 25–27 and 19–21, which are described as being independent (p. 31), are part of House A. Sometimes the evidence on which the analysis is based is not clear enough for the reader to evaluate. Thus the discussion of rooms 17–18 (pp. 24–25 and 31) needs stratigraphic sections, and one would expect that the stated later erection of the eastern wall of these rooms would also be stratigraphically and artifactually demonstrable.

Since it is admitted that House A was not originally con-

ceived as a unified structure, it is unclear what is meant by the statement that "the house was built gradually in clearly defined units, starting from the northeastern corner" (p. 32). Does this statement imply that the execution of a single unified plan extended over the range of Period VI and into Period VII, a span of perhaps two or three generations? Certainly after the damage in Period VI a more coherent building emerged. Yet once again the question for this main period (VII) is whether all the rooms ascribed to the building were in fact a part of it. Interconnections among the basement rooms of the building verify the integrity of the eastern two-thirds of the structure, but there is a nearly straight dividing line between rooms 12-18 and 5-9-10-11. This division is highlighted by the reconstructed plans of the basement and ground plan in Period VII (pls. 24b, 25b). Perhaps Rooms 1-4 and 5-11, too, maintained their independence (see the authors' query on p. 39). Thus the possibility that the area of House A might have consisted of independent structures (p. 1) needs more examination with respect to building plans and settlement organization of Ayia Irini during Periods VI and VII, particularly the buildings to the west and north, areas C, F, J, and L (Caskey, *Hesperia* 40 [1971] 363-91).

Because these questions are not addressed in the earlier chapters, the reader moves with some uneasiness to Ch. 5, the reconstruction of the building. It is immediately apparent that an analytical chapter is wanting, one that deals with the architecture of "House A" in the context of the settlement and of contemporary architecture in the Aegean. Details are examined, such as the problem of overhead room for the basement entry into room 25, although the solution leaves an annoying (and perhaps unnecessary?) split-level floor in the room above 25-26. The postulation of trapdoors leading to basement rooms 20 and 38 is reasonable, as is the explanation of the 0.80 m. drop of the lowest step (for lowering and raising storage jars and other bulky items [perhaps from rooms 22 and 28] needed in rooms 30 and 31; cf. the pithos at the base of corridor 29 and discussion on pp. 14, 38). One would like to know that the pithoi of rooms 22 and 28 (unpublished) actually held grain, nuts and seeds as suggested. Despite the evidence of hearths along the eastern half, the functional interpretation of room 30 as a kitchen is not convincing, and the ambiguity of this explanation (neither traces of the flues postulated in the eastern wall nor an assemblage of specifically culinary artifacts) argues eloquently for proper recovery and analysis of organic remains. The western rooms of the complex are tentatively suggested to have had some ritual function (Room 7 is labelled "Shrine?" on pl. 25), although the finds cited in support of this hypothesis are not necessarily associated with ritual activity (an amphora with a plastic snake, rhyta, tubular stands [no. 252, not no. 253 as on p. 39]; cf. the comments by E. Schofield about this room with those of R. Koehl on the paper by N. Marinatos, in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos eds., *The Minoan Thalassocracy. Myth and Reality* [Göteborg 1984] 178). In fact, this identification obscures the question of use by emphasizing one aspect to the exclusion of others. Surely religious activity was so embedded in societal activity that it would only exceptionally be separable from subsistence and day-to-day social activity.

These analyses are weakened by a lack of reference to examples of LC I and LM I architecture known from Akrotiri, Phylakopi and numerous sites on Crete. Reconstruction of building details, such as stairways, building height and floor thickness, must be based upon comparison to accessible examples in Thera and Cretan architecture (see C. Doumas, *ArchEph* 1972, 199-219; J. Shaw, *ASAtene* 49, n.s. 33 [1971]). The neglect of these sources is all the more regrettable because they would naturally lead to an evaluation of House A in the context of Cycladic and Minoan architectural traditions. Questions about the conjunction and location of different kinds of rooms (stairways to principal living rooms, storage areas) could have been investigated. A comparative analysis of principles of planning might have been attempted, especially since the remains of Akrotiri and Phylakopi are abundant enough to allow such investigation, and initial attempts have been made for Cretan architecture (J. McEnroe, *AJA* 86 [1982] 3-19).

The opportunity for synthetic analysis of this structure is heightened by the diversity and abundance of finds, which are presented in a concise, accessible and detailed catalogue, arranged in numerical order and by room. The chapter on the restoration might have been coordinated with a comparative study of the finds by room replete with charts on the magnitude and diversity of finds in basement and upper storey rooms. Instead there follows a brief, expert discussion of the ceramic material by Schofield and a descriptive synopsis of the miscellaneous finds. Here one finds substantive discussion of the many deposits containing Minoan, Mycenaean and Cycladic vessels of interest for the student of ceramic chronology and economic exchange. Notable is the absence of non-Aegean material (except no. 1479?) in contrast to Thera (cf. the Canaanite jar, *Thera* 7, pl. 49 b from Delta 9.1). The pottery is evaluated in terms of how the stratigraphy of Periods VI and VII can elucidate the conjunction of LM, LH and LC styles. The deposits of House A are of major importance in making this coordination, particularly as they are more plentiful than at Kythera and better represent the link with the northeastern Peloponnesos. A more detailed study of the pottery is promised in the future; presumably for this reason only the whole pots and some diagnostic sherds are illustrated with photographs. They are not accompanied by the profiles and line drawings which are necessary for identifying and studying the sherds. The various wares are not described by standard terms (Munsell color codes, scales of inclusions) or defined with reference to commonly used terminology. Thus, how does "Middle Helladic Matt-Painted Ware" correspond to Buck's classes of matt-painted ware (R.J. Buck, *Hesperia* 33 [1964] 240-41)? and does "Fine Matt-Painted Ware" equal Blegen's "Class B II" (C.W. Blegen, *Korakou* [1928] 24-38) and J.L. Davis' "Matt-Painted II" (*Hesperia* 48 [1979] 243)?

"House A" is the largest excavated complex at the site, perhaps, judging from its location, the principal edifice of the ancient port town. But only in Period VII (LC II/LM IB) did it become the large integrated structure that fit into a town plan of buildings interconnected by a coherent system of alleyways. Its evolution is a document of the development of urban society in the Aegean. As such it offers the ar-

chaeologist a rare opportunity to study a changing architectural setting, to coordinate it with the artifacts distributed within and to use this information to formulate questions about societal organization in the Cyclades. House A is not palatial in character, as claimed at the outset of this volume (p. 1); instead it should be viewed as part of an Aegean town, especially a Cycladic one. The long and precisely datable evolution of the building sharpens along historical lines questions about the changing importance of Ayia Irini to the ship lanes from the Mainland through the islands to Crete. Why does House A achieve its grandest form only in LM IB after the volcanic eruption of Thera? Perhaps these problems will be investigated in future studies of the Ayia Irini excavation. They have already begun to be examined in a host of articles dealing with Ayia Irini and the Cyclades, and it is perhaps because of these that I had hoped to find more analysis in this volume.

These criticisms aside, this is a publication that can be profitably used. The detailed plans, sections and descriptions of the structures allow the reader close study of the architecture. The orderly and complete catalogue permits room-by-room analysis, and Schofield's commentary on the ceramic material and the stratigraphy will be required reading for students of this important period in Aegean prehistory.

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KEOS 4. AYIA IRINI: THE POTTERS' MARKS, by *A.H. Bikaki*. Pp. xv + 64, pls. 28, tables 4. Philipp von Zabern, Mainz 1984.

Over a full generation ago, Alice Kober (*AJA* 52 [1948] 100) offered a discouraging view of the state of research on Bronze Age Aegean potters' marks: "pottery marks have been published in such a scattered and desultory fashion that no conclusions of any kind are possible." Kober's appeal for a comprehensive, systematic approach to the study of a class of data widely distributed by period and by site was hardly unreasonable. Provided with the right kinds of information, one can use potters' marks to investigate such topics as the patterns and process of Aegean trade, the operation of local pottery industries and, to some extent, the development and relationship of Aegean writing systems. We are just beginning to do this. Until recently Kober's statement had evoked a desultory and scattered response, reasonable progress being made only on Cypriot material, primarily by researchers interested, since Daniel's seminal study (*AJA* 45 [1941] 249-82), in Cypro-Minoan writing: Masson, *Minos* 5 (1957) 9-27; Benson and Masson, *AJA* 64 (1960) 145-51; and Åström, *OpusAth* 9 (1969) 151-59. Thus Crowel, in a condensed critical survey of strictly Aegean pot marks (*Kadmos* 12 [1973] 106-108), could still justifiably lament the paucity of well published material, while placing his hopes on forthcoming publications which regrettably, a decade later, have not yet appeared. Döhl's

two-part treatment of the Tiryns material (*Kadmos* 17 [1978] 115-49 and 18 [1979] 47-70) was the first study of a sizable corpus of potters' marks (90 marked vase fragments) from a single site in the Bronze Age Aegean to conform to the standards that I imagine Kober had in mind. It is a delight to discover that Bikaki's *Keos* 4 is another.

Here is no perfunctory catalogue of consolation-prize excavation material, but an analytical presentation of data from which the author reaches well reasoned conclusions, whether definite or tentative, about central problems related to Aegean potters' marks. The Ayia Irini corpus (205 vase fragments bearing primary marks made before firing) is second in number only to the recently published Mallia corpus. The Keos pieces come mainly from stratified deposits throughout the site. They spread over all but the earliest of the eight periods of occupation (EB through LB) clearly presented on pp. 3-4, but are concentrated in periods IV-VII (MB through LC II/LM IB/LH II). Such spatial and temporal distribution makes it possible to focus on three major questions outlined in the Introduction and discussed in the concluding Commentary: 1) whether in given periods the potters' marks constituted a system, either particular to Keos or shared with other Aegean sites; 2) whether the known Aegean scripts influenced either the types of marks used or the frequency with which they were used; 3) what purposes the marks served in different periods.

The material is arranged by period. In each section the descriptive catalogue is preceded by an introduction that identifies discernible stylistic categories of marks and their relationship to marks at other sites and in other periods. Reference is made consistently to four convenient tables (pp. 44-51) which furnish the necessary breakdown of categories of marks by period; locally made and imported pieces, first generally by period and next specifically by categories within periods and sub-periods; and find-contexts by period, lot number and location. The tables are followed by concordances, a general index, and a two-page site plan. Very clear photographs are provided of all pieces; drawings of 137. Drawings of pieces IV-89 and VI-21, about which the author raises questions of identification, would have been appreciated. A more serious *peccatum omissionis* is the exclusion of the admittedly few (p. 3) pieces with signs incised after firing. It runs counter to general practice (e.g., Daniel, Döhl), which recognizes that marks made after firing can have special relevance to questions of trade or the spread and influence of marking systems (Palaima, Myer and Betancourt, *Kadmos* 22 [1984] 70).

Central among the results of Bikaki's work is the documentation of actual *systems* of potters' marks. Crowel's survey of the material then available had stressed the apparent lack of any such standardization. At Ayia Irini, however, marking systems develop in Period IV (MB I-II): one strictly local system of fingernail marks (cat. 1a); another system of oval/round impressions (cat. 2) used in common with Melos, Aegina and perhaps Lerna. In Period V, the spread of the Linear A writing system, now documented at Keos, transforms the picture. The local system disappears. The wider Aegean system continues, even into periods VI and VII, but on a much reduced scale and almost entirely on imports. A system of linear marks, displayed prominently on