

The Greek-Swedish-Danish Excavations at Kastelli, Khania 2010 – a short report

During six weeks from 19 July to 27 August the Greek-Swedish-Danish Excavations continued work in the Ag. Aikaterini Square at the Kastelli Hill (Fig. 1). The main aim of the excavation was to investigate Building 2 of the LM IIIA:2 and LM IIIB:1 periods, that had at previous excavations proved extremely productive and where Linear B tablets had been found *in situ* in 1990 (Room E, Fig. 1) and where a complete inscribed stirrup jar indicating that its contents was of royal property was discovered in 2005 (Room B, Fig. 1).

Post-Minoan deposits

Dominant from these deposits were the wall foundations of the Venetian cathedral and an Early Christian church. In the deposits connected to these foundations were found pottery sherds of the Venetian, Turkish and modern period, as well as Venetian glass, Turkish roof tiles, a kiln tripod from the Turkish period and a few modern coins of the 20th century. The floor in Room H had been destroyed by the construction of a Hellenistic well, mainly filled with painted roof tiles, while the floor of Space M was destroyed by the destruction of a Geometric well with only few finds. In the northeastern part of the excavated area was found the fragment of a Geometric wall connected to a Minoan floor, that was re-used in the Geometric period.

The LM IIIC and LM IIIB:2 deposits

These two periods were mainly represented by pits in which were found a seal stone (lentoid) in steatite and two interesting fragments of figurines. From the LM IIIB:2 period we found the north corner of a room previously excavated in 2005 and 2008 and where an almost completely preserved snake tube had been found. The interesting about the north

corner, preserved in a height of 1.10 metre is its strong inclination which may perhaps indicate that the building was destroyed in an earthquake. Further a few small floor fragments were discovered one of them with a large part of a decorated amphoroid krater.

Building 2 of the LM IIIA:2/IIIB:1 period

The architecture of Building 2 is far the most impressive as yet excavated in the Ag. Aikaterini Square with walls preserved in a height of more than 1.5 metre. The walls were of two types. One was a re-used wall of the LM I period, while the remaining walls were new constructions of the LM IIIA:2 and IIIB:1 periods. It is our impression that Spaces M, N and O were open or half covered areas while everything east of the re-used LM I wall including rooms H and L belonged to the interior of the building.

The exterior part (Fig. 2)

Dominant in this part is Space M, which had an impressive. In the space was noted six floor levels at a depth of c. 0.40. In connection with the second floor from the bottom was found a kouskouras construction with three “chambers”. The function of this structure remains unclear, although a kind of oven is likely. On all floor levels were found large amounts of obsidian, and we suppose that the space had been used for some kind of industrial activities. The latest floor at the end of the LM IIIB:1 period was covered by a up to 1.40 m undisturbed destruction level that contained mainly fallen stones and smaller pieces of mud-brick set in a burnt red soil. In this destruction debris was found a small fragment of a Linear A tablet. On the floors of the exterior spaces several more or less complete footed cups were collected.

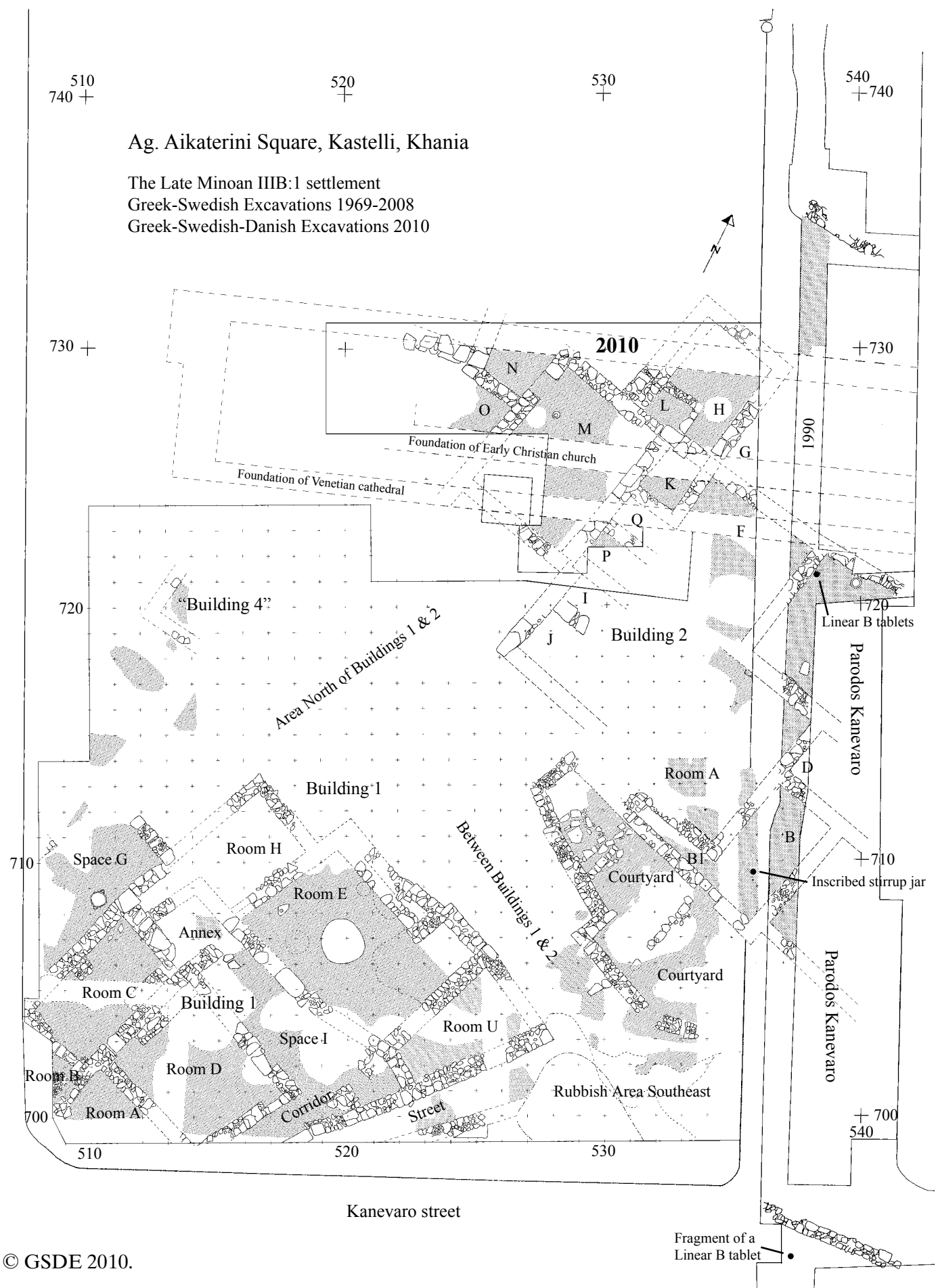


Fig. 1. Plan of the Agia Aikaterini Square showing the LM IIIB:1 settlement including the 2010 excavations.



Fig. 2. View over exterior part of the excavation at the end of the season. The LM IIIA:2 wall of Space M is preserved at a height of 1.80 metre, while the re-used LM I wall including its foundation stones is preserved in a height of 2.10 metre. Facing north. © GSDE 2010.

The interior part

In the interior part excavation was conducted in several rooms. Up against the re-used LM I wall it seems now clear that there had been five small, narrow rooms (Fig.1, I, J, P, Q and K. Room K was partly excavated. It contained six more or less complete vases, three plain footed cups, one conical cup, one kylix and a decorated medium-sized stirrup jar and a 0.15 long complete bronze knife with three rivets and a little bit of the wooden handle preserved. The northern corner of Room F revealed a 0.20-30 thick undisturbed destruction deposit and the most spectacular find was noted in the western part: remains of what appeared to be a completely preserved smaller animal. On the floor was furthermore found a large grinding stone (S 032), a plain kylix and two fragmentary spools/bobbins.

Room H (Fig. 3) was in its original shape

an oblong square room with a bench running along its western wall. At some time a small chamber (Room L) was constructed. In Room H was noted several floor levels, the last of which was covered with a 1.50 to 1.20 thick, undisturbed destruction deposit. This deposit was distinctly different in the northern and southern part. The northern part was with lots of fallen stones and marks of a very severe fire. In this part there were no finds on the floor except for a single fragmentary vase and a unique bronze hook. In the southern part the situation was quite different in that it contained a large amount of finds *in situ*. Among the pottery were a few plain footed cups, a decorated and an undecorated cup and spread over most of the area a unique Hand-made Burnished round-bottomed jar without feet. Of small finds were noted several pieces of obsidian, several fragments of bronze,



Fig. 3. View over rooms G, H and L at the end of the season. The find spot of the five seal stones and the rock crystal amulet is marked by the small white dot. Facing west. © GSDE 2010.

mother of pearl, a net sinker, the fragment of a loom weight, a complete murex shell, but above all, a little above the floor up against the east wall, were found, stacked together, five seal stones and an unique amulet in rock crystal. The seal stones were all rather large lentoids and they were all worn to varying degrees especially in the central part, where the motif could often not be seen. The motifs on the seal stones were all figural. In the same room was in 2005 found a large part of a carved ivory handle and many large fragments of bones of which several more were found in 2010.

Also the small chamber, Room L, revealed interesting finds. Mentioned can be an unusual fragmentary decorated double or triple vase of conical cup size and shape, the jaw and a few spine bones from a very large animal – cow or donkey? On the floor was furthermore found some large pieces of pumice stone and most interesting of all a seal stone in rock crystal. The seal stone is an amygdala-

loid with a sepia between two vertical lines flanked by S's. The composition most of all recalls the Cretan hieroglyphs. Also from the excavation of the floor down to original floor came surprising finds, most interesting was a small block of colour pigment – presumably Egyptian blue.

Conclusion

It is true that the project had hoped to find more Linear B inscriptions in Building 2 of the LM IIIB:1 period, but even without them the excavation produced important results. First of all it emphasized our earlier observa-



Fig. 4. The bronze knife, during process of being cleaned. © GSDE 2010.



Fig. 5. View over the Ag. Aikaterini Square. The excavated area (backfilled) is in the centre of the photograph outside the protective roof. Facing north. © GSDE 2010.

tion that Building 2 is a large well constructed complex and the finds likewise emphasized the importance the person or persons living there. The five seal stones, which were all of a type used in the Mycenaean sealing administration, (and previously the Linear B inscriptions) points to a person high up in the administrative hierarchy and the rich finds of fine pottery, carved ivory, the bronze knife (Fig. 4), the exquisite amulet, the bronze hook and the Egyptian blue points to inhabitants of some wealth. For the understanding of the activities in the building it may also be worthy of note that textile implements which have been so abundant in other contemporary deposits are virtually missing here. The amount of footed cups recorded from the rooms of the building is also spectacular. The extremely many finds of bones in rooms F, L and H from offerings and/or meals taken together with the remaining (and missing) finds need detailed studies, but it feels safe to say already now that Building 2 is one of the most important in the settlement of Minoan Kydonia from the LM IIIA:2/IIIB:1 periods. Future excavations shall hopefully reveal many more details about this building.

Further work

Two weeks after the excavation had stopped and the architectural remains had been drawn and studied in detail the excavated area including the old 1965 Trench was backfilled to protect the antiquities since this part of the Ag. Aikaterini Square is not provided with a protective roof like the old Greek-Swedish Excavations (Fig. 5). The backfill process and cleaning of the site took two weeks.

The excavation produced 325 kg of pottery of which 925 sherds and vases were inventoried. 27 vases were at the site given vase numbers, i.e. they were collected as more or less complete vases. 480 small finds were registered and inventoried. Of these 216 were pieces of obsidian. All finds were washed and cleaned. All inventoried finds got preliminary catalogue descriptions and all were (with the exception of the obsidian) photographed, and everything entered in a database with the illustrations. Also some studies of the 2005 and 2008 excavation were carried out and a preliminary report on the 2010 excavation including 24 illustrations has been produced.