Azoria Project Final Report 2015

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Introduction

Fieldwork was conducted at the site of Azoria in northeastern Crete (Kavousi, Ierapetra), for 12 weeks, including preparation (May 18-June 1); excavation (June 2-July 10); close down of excavation trenches (July 13-July 17); and finds processing, study, conservation, and reporting (July 20-August 8) at the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete in Pacheia Ammos.

The work was conducted by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), Department of Classics, under the auspices of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA), by permission of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi, and with the support of the Institute for Aegean Prehistory Study Center for East Crete (INSTAP-SCEC). The institutions contributing funding, technical and consultant support, and student participants were the UNC Research Laboratories of Archaeology; UNC-CH Curriculum in Archaeology; Duke Archaeological Field Practicum (Duke Global Education for Undergraduates); Duke-UNC Consortium for Classical and Mediterranean Archaeology; Iowa State University Program in Classical Studies; Trent University, Department of Ancient History and Classics; and the Azoria Project Volunteer Program (UNC-CH).

The 2015 core field staff consisted of the director (D.C. Haggis); field director and pottery specialist (M.S. Mook); architect (R.D. Fitzsimons); assistant director (M. Eaby); palaeoethnobotanist (C.M. Scarry); zooarchaeologist (F. Dibble); surveyor (D. Cabaniss); stone tool specialist (C. Tsoraki); registrar (J. Martini); excavation foreman (E. Kasotakis); archaeobotany assistant (G. Purcell); pottery assistant (M.B. Fitts); illustrator (K. Chalikias), site photographer (J. Feito); assistant (J. Scarry).

There were nine trench supervisors (trenchmasters): Beeby, Buckingham, Judson (UNC-CH); Shea and Gkiokas (Duke University); Vanwalleghem (Bordeaux); Mann (University of Sydney); and Juhasz (Florida State); Senn (Macquarie); 34 student trench assistants from various universities in North America and Australia; 28 workmen from villages of Kavousi, Pacheia Ammos, and Kentri; and four pottery washers from Kavousi. On-site conservation was directed by Stephania Chlouveraki (T.E.I Athens; INSTAP-SCEC) and conducted by Manolis Kasotakis (Kavousi). Object conservation was conducted by Matina Tzari (INSTAP-SCEC). Administrative support was provided by Eleanor Huffman (INSTAP-SCEC). The representative of the Greek Archaeological Service (Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi) was Evanthi Saliaka (Ianos Ike, Ayios Nikolaos). (Complete staff list is appended below).

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Summary and goals of work in 2015

Trenches excavated: 39 (34 test and extensive excavation)

Loci excavated: 247

Pottery pails/stratigraphic units and sub-units defined: 1094

Objects/small finds (non-pottery artifacts): 550—519 cataloged as of July 31, 2015

Pottery recovered/processed: data not available as of August 6, 2015

Soil samples collected: 864

Liters of soil floated and sorted: 8717

Floatation samples studied: 410 light fraction and 538 residue (coarse fraction)

Work in 2015 was concentrated in four primary areas of the site (A, B, F, and G) (Fig. 1):

- (1) Area A is the upper west slope of the South Acropolis (A3000; A3100; A2800; A3200; A3300; A3400; A3500). The goal of work was to expose more of the Communal Dining Building, expanding excavation north of A3100 and A2800, which first uncovered in 2013-2014. The purpose was to understand the form and function of the building, while closing the space between the east wall of the Monumental Civic Building (D500), and the kitchens and storerooms on the upper terraces of the Communal Dining Building recovered in 2002-2006 (A1400, A1600, and A600).
- (2) Area B encompasses the lower southwest terraces of the South Acropolis (B5000; B4800; B5000; B5300; B5200; B5800; B5500; B5600; B5700; B3400). The purpose of work in this area was twofold. First, we were interested is excavating below Archaic occupation levels in effort to expose earlier settlement remains, and to understand the extent and function of Late Minoan IIIC and Early Iron Age-early 7th century occupation. The second goal was to expand excavation along the western edge of the Southwest Buildings in order to define the western limits of the Archaic rooms along the lower terrace—B3500, B3400 and B3200. One goal of these stratigraphic soundings was to understand the date and functions of late 8th- and early 7th-century (proto-Archaic) buildings that originally occupied the west slope in the century before the major rebuilding phase at the end of the 7th century.

B5100 consisted of the space in between B100 and B1900, originally excavated in 2002 and 2003. The goal was to excavate stratigraphically the matrix exposed by the removal of a fallen boulder (in 2013). The purpose of the excavation was to determine the date and function of this space and to relate it to the Archaic kitchen in B1900 and the Hellenistic rebuilding in both B100 and B1900. The results demonstrated that the structure was part of the Hellenistic rebuilding, so it seems to have been built with the paved room in B1900 (of uncertain function), and with the reconstruction of the Archaic room in B100. The foundations of the Archaic dolomite wall, forming the bedding for the later rebuilt HL wall were exposed on the southeast side. The room's form and function is difficult to describe and interpret. It is about 2.5 m. wide and 3.5 m. long (northeast-southwest); it has a built bench in the north corner against the northeast wall, and a surface was exposed—partially of clay and pavers and partially using a worked bedrock outcrop in the middle of the room. The bedrock has a long natural fissure that may have been partially worked for use as a drain. We assume some industrial function for the space.

- (3) Area G is the southeast area of the South Acropolis. It consists of South Building 2, which we began excavating in 2014 (G900; G1000; G1200; G1300, G1400; G1500; G1600). The goal of work was to explore the full extent of this building, especially the areas north and east of room G600 (exposed in 2014).
- (4) Area F (F100, F200, F300, and F400) is the east slope. We conducted four exploratory trenches with the aim of understanding the stratigraphy, preservation, and extent of erosion in this area. While the ultimate goal was to excavate Archaic buildings away from the hilltop and immediate slopes of the South Acropolis, in order to get a broader sample of houses, the excavations in this area were not successful. In

each trench opened to date excavation exposed extremely eroded sub-surfaces—in most cases foundation fills, eroded floor bedding, and bedrock. F100, F200, and F300 were located against the inner faces of extant ancient walls; F400 was an open sounding. We will continue the exploration of the east slope in 2016.

AREA A: LOWER WEST SLOPE OF THE COMMUNAL DINING BUILDING (A2800, A3000, A3100, A 3200, A3300, A3400, A3500) (Figs. 2-4)

In Area A, we completed the excavation of two parallel rooms, A3100 and A 2800, begun in previous seasons (2013-2014), but left incomplete because of the overburden of our excavation dump. The dump was successfully removed in the final weeks of 2014 and first two weeks of the 2015 season, permitting further excavation in this area. Work in 2015 was conducted on two parallel terraces, revealing the full extent of A3100 and A2800, as well as three more rooms to the north, A3200 and A3300 on the upper of the two terraces, and A3500 on the lower terrace. The difference in elevation of Archaic occupation surfaces between the two terraces is precisely 2.0 meters. We also completed the excavation of A3000 (originally excavated as A2000 in 2004), a dining room parallel to A2000; and began work north of A3500, in A3400, in efforts to explore the transition between the Communal Dining Building and the LM IIIC Bench Sanctuary (D600) (Bench Shrine). Excavation in A3400 was not completed in 2015.

The rooms excavated in Area A represent the westward extension of the Communal Dining Building (CDB) as originally defined in 2006. Thus our expectation that the building was considerably larger and more complex, and indeed extended to the west and south, has been confirmed by our work in 2014 and 2015. The upper terrace consists of neat row of three regularly shaped rooms (A2800; A3200; A3300), each about 5.20 m. in length (N-S), and about 3.0-4.0 meters wide.

A2800 (food preparation and storage?) (Figs. 2-4)

The function of **A2800** is still not known as the floor surface across most of the room is no longer extant—our work in 2013 had exposed eroded floor packing, and underneath, a deep level of dense had large cobble fill. Excavation of the northernmost 1.5-2.0 m. space of the room exposed a patch of the original floor surface and the room's north wall. The phyllite-silt floor was best consolidated in the northeast corner, where above the surface there were fragments of a pithos within an ashy deposit. Thus the precise function of the room is unknown, though its dimensions and proximity to kitchen areas to the north might suggest a storage or food processing activities. No doorway or indication of jambs or threshold was obviously preserved in the room's north wall, though there is sufficient space for a door at the west end of the north doorway between the extant north wall and the east wall of A3100. Furthermore, given the rebuilding of the south end of A3200, with the addition of a cross wall about one meter north of the room's south wall, it is possible that a connection between A2800 and A3200 was eventually blocked, perhaps during the abandonment of rooms A3200 and A3300, neither of which show typical indications of Late Archaic destruction.

A3200 (food preparation) (Figs. 2-3)

The interconnected rooms north of A2800 (A3200 and A3300) are evidently both food preparation areas—"kitchens" in the nomenclature of this excavation. **A3200** has an oven in its northeast corner, built up against the room's east wall, and about 0.20 m. from the face of the north wall. It was built at floor level, and the preserved remains are about 1.00 m. square in external dimensions. The foundations consist of a curb of small dolomite boulders and large field stones, set on a phyllite-silt/clay bedding, and evidently packed and surfaced on the interior with pisé. Fragments of the pisé lining were found fallen within and around the installation, while in-situ lining is preserved in the northeast corner. Fragments of

the walls of pithoi were found in the oven and beside it, wedged in between the wall and the stone foundations—these could well be pieces of a flue, channel, or chimney. Fragmentary animal bones were found throughout the room, including a number of extremely burnt pieces, apparently blackened from continuous exposure to coal used to fire the oven. The matrix of the surrounding floor and occupation debris was extremely silty and ashy, no doubt residue of continuous cooking and cleaning events.

A3300 (food preparation) (Fig. 4-6)

A well fashioned doorway in the west end of the north wall of A3200 leads into the adjoining room, A3300. A3300 appears to be nearly the same shape and dimensions as A3200, and a curbed hearth, set off-center against the east wall of the room, indicates a cooking function for this space as well. The hearth is about 1.0 m. square, and is bordered by two narrow slabs of sideropetra on the north and south, and on the east, an outcrop of bedrock which is the bedding for the room's east wall. The hearth is thus open to the west. A large rounded pebble found on the hearth floor is perhaps a heating stone. The western edge of A3300 is no longer extant, and what survives is a bedrock outcrop—possibly, but not certainly the bedding for the room's western wall. The room could have been much larger than what is extant. Given that the space below and to the west (A3400) was apparently abandoned before the construction of A3500—the north wall of A3500 is built up against dense wall collapse and fill—it is possible that the actual floor area of A3300 extended out to the west beyond the line of the spine wall running east of A3500 and A3100.

In the northeast corner of trench A3300, and north of the room's north wall, an earlier (late 8th-early 7th c.) wall and clay floor were recovered—that is, the northeast corner of an earlier room that was abandoned and built over by the Archaic construction of A3300. The Archaic room incorporates part of the earlier room's east wall in its construction, but its north wall cuts into the earlier floor and abuts the earlier eastern wall. The space of this room is preserved only about 1.0-1.5 meters wide, and its north wall is constructed of dolomite cobbles and small boulders, forming a curve along the north and northeast, conforming to the bedrock outcrop that forms the eastern border of the LM IIIC bench sanctuary. Among the contents of this space, there was a deep round cup of late 8th century date, and a PG-B style krater, both vessels nearly complete (Figs. 5-6).

Neither A3200 nor A3300 had indications of Late Archaic destruction debris, and the sparse assemblages recovered consist of stone tools and spindle whorls, normal residual debris that we find in kitchen areas. Thus it appears as if the rooms may have been abandoned within the sixth-century, or at least before the early 5th c.—these are indications of the scaling-down and selective abandonment that we see elsewhere in the Building and on the site, a pattern that might be related to site-wide changes prior to the final abandonment in the early fifth century B.C.

A3400 (incompletely excavated—abandoned space in the 6th c.?) (Fig. 4)

We were unable to complete the excavation of A3400 in 2015. It is a 7.0 m. wide area between the north wall of A3500 and the LM IIIC bench sanctuary in D600, though we were not able to establish the physical transitions between the A3500, A3400 and D600—this will be a priority in 2016. Though we cannot say for certain at this point, it appears to have been abandoned space, perhaps partially filled in and supporting the western edge of A3300 to the east. The north wall of A3500 was constructed directly against boulder wall collapse and fill.

An interesting and still inexplicable feature is a one course high paved platform that runs along the western edge of the space. It is made of sideropetra and schist blocks and pavers; 1.0-1.5 m. wide and about 3.5 meters long (N-S); and runs from about a meter north of the north wall of A3500 nearly up to the south wall of the LM IIIC bench sanctuary. It is possible that the space of A3400 and the paved

platform were 7th-century constructions established for a purpose related to the earlier LM IIIC shrine—not unlike the buildings on the southwest terraces, which appear to have been constructed with reference to an LM IIIC wall and tholos tomb.

A3100 and A3500 (dining halls—suite of rooms) (Figs. 2-3)

The parallel suite of rooms on the terrace below these kitchens is of a different character. **A3100** and the adjoining room **A3500** are halls, open rooms of considerable size and the open plan, and lacking any distinctive features of specific function (such as food processing, storage, or industrial activities), the ceramic and faunal assemblages found in these rooms are evidence of drinking and dining.

A3100 is a long and narrow room, 9.5 m. long (N-S) and 3.20 m. wide (30 m²), similar in shape and dimensions to A2000 (24 m²) and A3000 (ca. 30 m²), and in area to A800 (30 m²) and A3500 (36 m²). The room appears to have been abandoned before the end of the sixth century, at some point becoming a refuse pit used to collect dining and food-preparation debris discarded from the neighboring dining rooms and kitchens within the complex. The dump was first discovered and partially excavated in 2014. In 2015, we excavated the northern 2.0 meters of the room, exposing the doorway into A3500 and the remainder of the Archaic dump. The material consists of a loose and rocky dark brown soil mixed with very dense pottery and animal bones—at the north end of the room the fill was found to be about 0.30-.40 m. deep and lying directly on the floor surface in parts, and in others, penetrating the floor surface.

The adjoining room A3500 has a width of 5.75 m. (N-S), and while the floor is preserved out to the west only about 3.0-4.0 meters, the position of a dressed dolomite rectangular pillar base in the southwest quadrant of the trench, and positioned 3.20 meters from the east wall, suggests a length of 6.40 m. (E-W), and a total room area of over 36 m², which would make it the largest hall within the complex. The south wall of A3500 extends out to the west about 1.0 m. beyond the line of the west wall of A3100 and terminates in a doorjamb, indicating a second door into A3500 from the south, and thus a western room parallel to A3100. This space, providing the access into the A3500-A3100 suite of dining rooms, is unfortunately no longer preserved—the slope is steep at this juncture and eroded bedrock as been exposed along the western edge of A3100 and A3500; the only surviving element is the doorjamb on the north, and the westward extension of the south wall of A3100 which is an exterior wall (ca. .84 m. wide) and is extant to some 2.0 m. west of the southwest corner of A3100.

A3000 (dining hall) (Fig. 7)

Work in **A3000** constituted the completion of the excavation of the dining room on the lower terrace west of A2000—a project that was discontinued in 2004. The upper terraces of the Communal Dining building are seismically tipped and angled to the west-northwest, with steeply sloping and eroding surfaces, affecting or otherwise hindering conditions of preservation, excavation and interpretation. Furthermore, the area to the immediate west and southwest of B3000 (A2900; A2600; and A2500), as well as the southern end of A2800, is eroded to a level below the Archaic ground and occupation surfaces.

In 2004, about 2-3.0 m. of the southern end of **A3000** was excavated as a continuation of A2000. This work discovered the south and east walls, the southeast corner of the room, and a well-preserved area of floor. Work was discontinued in 2004 because of the depth, density, and size of the wall collapse in the room, and the poor preservation of the room's east wall—the west wall of A2000 on the terrace above. In 2015, we excavated the middle and northern parts of the room as A3000, recovering the continuation of the eastern wall; a well preserved floor surface across the middle area of the room; as well as the room's northern wall, which has preserved doorjambs and a door pivot in situ. The doorway, evidently blocked at the time of the room's abandonment, leads from a 2.5 m.-wide vestibule, whose northern wall runs eastwest from the southwest corner of the stair and porch in A1900S. Unfortunately the wall is not

sufficiently preserved to suggest an access into the area of west of A1900S. Access to the vestibule and ultimately to A3000 and the porch and doorway of A1900S was most-likely from the west and the area of A2900. While extremely eroded today, the principal access into the suite of dining rooms (A3500 and A3100); kitchens (A3200; A3300); and the terrace of A3000 should have been either steps or a ramp ascending the slope along the south side of A3100 and A2800—the rooms have a southern aspect.

A deep boulder and bedrock fill supports the level floor surface across the middle and south end of the room, while the walls and floor of both the vestibule and the northern end are evidently sunken, slipped, and tilted dramatically to the west-northwest, and the room's western wall is no longer extant. The difference in elevation of the floor level in the middle and southern areas of the room is ca 0.70 m. higher than the sunken and slipped north part of the surface. The upper levels of material excavated in the room (A3004-A3005) included of a deep Hellenistic dump—pottery, butchering and dining debris discarded from activities associated with the 3rd-2nd c. use of the towers on the hilltop—while the preserved Archaic floor surfaces show a range of drinking and dining shapes typical of other dining rooms within the complex.

AREA B (B5000; B4800; B5300; B5200; B3800; B5500/3400; B5400; B5600) (Figs. 8-11)

The defining feature of this area of the southwest slope is a massive and megalithic spine wall (B5003), that is preserved north-south for a distance of some 14 meters, forming the eastern border for the long street that ran along the eastern edge of the Southeast Buildings, and the western edge of another parallel upper street—connected by a ramp at its northern end—that would have provided access to Archaic rooms B2800, B3300, and B1600 to the east. While the lower street was partially preserved, the area to the east of the spine wall contained a deep deposit of Archaic cobble fill, forming a continuous bedding for the upper street, no longer extant, and further to the east, the foundations of the Archaic rooms.

Excavation in this area investigated pre-Archaic (pre-late 7th century) occupation beneath the cobble fill layer east of the spine wall B5003 as well as earlier structures contained by the fill beneath the lower north-south street that extended across the southeast slope from B4000 in the north to **B5000** and **B5300** in the south, where in 2014 we recovered a segment of LM IIIC wall and a later proto-Archaic semi-circular or J-shaped peribolos positioned directly on top of the tholos tomb in B3700.

B5000 (Late Minoan IIIC wall abutting the tholos tomb) (Figs. 8-9)

In 2015, we expanded excavation in **B5000**, north and south along the direction of the LM IIIC wall, targeting the area between the spine walls. In the soundings, we penetrated the late 7th-century street packing and cobble fill, exposing the full extent of the LM IIIC wall to the south (**B5300**), which as exposed, is extant to about meters in length. An associated floor surface is preserved along the east side of the wall. Similar to the construction in B800, the wall is made up of large dolomite boulder in its foundations and second course, with smaller field stones used in the upper extant courses. The south end of the wall has no corner or return to the east to contain the floor surface, but two boulders projecting to the west at the wall's southern end could indicate a room on the west side, though no surface was discovered along the west face. It appears as if the construction of the spine wall and cobble fill layer may have disturbed the wall's southern end and obliterated a surface to the west. Furthermore, two displaced boulders, roughly on line with the wall, were discovered at little beyond the southern end, suggesting a continuation of the wall to the south, where the construction of the Archaic street and the lower spine wall may have destroyed LM IIIC buildings.

Given that a floor surface is preserved along the full extent of the wall's west side, we can say that a room or rooms were clearly associated with the construction, and that it continued further to the south, where

the sherd material is LM IIIC but the wall is no longer extant. The wall's northern end appears to have been constructed to abut the outer southeastern corner of the LM IIIC-PG tholos tomb. That is, as preserved, the wall seems to stop at the tomb's southern side, which has a regular built façade, about five courses high, that forms the south face of a wide rectangular platform on which sits the J-shaped peribolos recovered in 2014. Our assumption is that this platform is an early 7th century construction built over the LM IIIC wall and around the tholos tomb, using the wall as part of its foundations.

In this reconstruction the LM IIIC wall would have originally extended up to and behind the tholos tomb running along its east side. The platform obscures the wall at its northern end, where it terminates in another curved feature—a semicircular enclosure or peribolos about 1.5 m. wide, formed from a shallow two-course high row of dolomite fieldstones. As in the case of the J-shaped feature over the platform and tomb, this semicircular construction had no associated surface, but a post-quem date of the 7th century. Below the rocky fill supporting the peribolos was a well-preserved LM IIIC floor surface, evidence of the continuation of rooms along this terrace.

B5300 and B5200 (7th century reoccupation underlying cobble fill behind spine wall B5003) (Figs. 8-9)

Excavation east of the spine wall B5003, in **B5300** and **B5200**, exposed parts of two rooms which appear to have been truncated by the Archaic spine wall and street construction. The rooms thus appear to form part of the same building, perhaps originally extending out to the west perhaps as far as the east wall of B3700, and thus originally overlying the LM IIIC wall in B5000/B5300. The east walls of this structure are well constructed and preserved across both rooms—they are some three courses high and use large dolomite boulders in the construction. The northern room (**B5300**) is closed at the north by a very short segment of boulders and the northeast corner appears to be a double or overlapping wall. A boulder cross wall separates the north from the south room. The north room is about 5.0 m. long (north-south). The south room (**B5200**) is similarly composed, with a possible subdividing cross-wall situated about 2.0 meters from the northern end. Only about a meter or less of floor surface is preserved across both rooms from the inner face of the extant east wall and the Archaic spine wall B5003 on the west whose construction clearly truncated these rooms obscuring their function and topography.

The pottery associated with these surfaces are 8th and early 7th century, thus indications of activities perhaps connected with the Proto-Archaic Building to the northwest, and the j-shaped and semi-circular constructions and platform built over the tholos tomb. It is possible that these early rooms represent the eastern edge of a 7th century building extending out to the west, directly over the LM IIIC wall, and perhaps bordered on the west by the poorly preserved boulder wall B3715 (B5322) which is a 7th-century construction, and continuation of the east wall of the Proto-Archaic Building.

The terminus anti quem date for the beginning of post-LM IIIC activity on the site appears to be late 8th to early 7th century—study of the pottery in the Proto-Archaic Building, and finds from the early phase floor at the north end of A3300 suggest a late 8th or early 7th century date for the foundation of these structures, though we have not determined yet a solid terminus post quem or ad quem date for the foundations. Late Geometric pottery is present in these deposits, and LG phases have been recovered in soundings in B1700 and B3500 in earlier seasons, but the main phase of pre-urban activity on the site appears to be the 7th century, with evidence of early 7th century stratified in these deposits. This clearly represents a critical phase change orienting new buildings to earlier LM IIIC structures—the LM IIIC-PG tholos tomb in B3700 and the LM IIIC bench sanctuary in D600. The material traces, buildings, and installations appear, so far, concentrated in areas with distinctive early (LM IIIC) buildings that were a visible part of the landscape and the material memory of people residing in the region. This renewed interest in Azoria, in the latter 8th or early 7th century, would have been a way for certain groups to assert their connections to the site, and even to individual buildings that had some social relevance to local

kinship groups—the activities in these spaces and buildings may have served to connect social groups to known or presumed ancestral tombs, and to the LM IIIC bench sanctuary—the latter would have had a meaning or importance connected to specific households.

B3800 (sondages in Proto-Archaic Building)

In effort to determine a terminus post quem for these earlier 7th century constructions on the site, and the Proto-Archaic Building in particular, we conducted a series of excavations in **B3800**. In 2014, conducting extensive excavation in B4500 and B3000, we had decided that the Proto-Archaic Building was a preurban construction, most likely established in the 8th century and continuing in use, in three distinct phases throughout the 7th century. The building was abandoned at the end of the 7th century—the kiln room and adjacent areas (B4000, B3000, and B4500) were filled in to support an Archaic street whose southern extension was exposed in B5000, B5300, and B5200. The rooms B3800 and B3700 are clearly part of this early suite of rooms, abandoned and buried (B4000, B4100, B4400, B4500), or in disuse (B3800, B3700) at the end of the 7th century during the Archaic rebuilding phase. In 2015 we conducted a series of sondages in B3800, recovering an earlier, probably 7th century, floor surface that contained a number of stone tools—querns, grinders, and handstones—suggesting food processing. B4500 and B3700 seem to have had similar functions, probably related to provisioning feasts conducted in B4100.

B5400, B5500, B5600, and B5700 (western edge of Southwest Buildings) (Figs. 10-11)

In 2013 we had excavated a sounding in the south end of B3500 in the lowest terrace of the Southwest Buildings—a structure that appears to have been an Archaic house. Because the Archaic floor surface in B3500 had been destroyed by Hellenistic reuse in the north, and had eroded in the south, we took the opportunity to explore the building's foundations, exposing the deep Archaic cobble fill west of the spine wall that forms the eastern wall of the building. On the western edge of this sondage, we exposed a thick double wall (B3526), oriented with the terrace (north-south) and containing the cobble fill. The wall is over 1.30 m. thick, preserved about a meter high (five courses), and constructed of small to medium sized dolomite boulders and field stones, much like an interior wall. Its thickness and construction are peculiar and the form is not like the Archaic spine walls on the site, which may use sections of smaller boulders and cobbles, but normally have large boulders on a dolomite bedding. In this case, it is clear that there is a double wall of smaller stones.

Excavation in B5400 and B5600 exposed this double wall segment for a distance of 8.0 meters along the terrace—it formed the western wall of B3500 and an Archaic room in B5600. It was bordered by a 3.0 m.-wide open corridor or street along the west side, running in a north-south direction along the west side of the Southwest Building. The street was exposed for a distance of 15 meters (across **B5400** and **B5500**), where it ramps up from south to north, eventually stepping over, terminating, or jogging around an early-phase cross wall at the north end of B5500. The double wall borders Archaic rooms in B3500 and B5600, but north of B3500, the wall line becomes a single two-faced construction extending across the west side of B3400 (B5505). In the north, it is preserved to two courses high and was bedded on the level of the ramping street surface.

B5600 (Fig. 10)

South of the sondage in B3500, we expanded excavation in a 6.5 m.-wide square in order to expose the continuation of the double wall B3526 and to explore the southern area of the Archaic house. In this excavation (**B5600**), we recovered a room about 3.0 m. square with a door on the south end, indicated by a threshold in the south wall. The east and south walls are preserved to only one course and the floor surface is extremely eroded, with indications of gravel packing and cobble fill underneath. The room's north wall, and thus the transition into B3500 does not survive, but there were very likely two rooms in

B3500, with B5600 functioning as a vestibule or entrance hall into the building. Extending to east and into the baulk from the north extant end of the east wall is a segment of a thick dolomite boulder wall that forms the north wall of another room, yet unexcavated, to the east of B5600. Excavation in this area near the east scarp exposed a deep and dense deposit of roofing material, wall collapse, and occupation debris—including large fragments of a pithos. The presence of a room east of B5600 was unexpected, given the 8th/7th-century and Archaic ground surface of B3700 as well as the appearance of cobble fill along the eastern edge of B3500 (between B3500 and B5300). The Archaic ground surface and elevation of the bedrock must drop drastically from north to south, while the spine wall along the east side of B3500 must stop or turn at this juncture of B5600.

B5500 (Fig. 11)

We followed the street and west wall (B3526-B5505) north of B5400 into the area along the western edge of B3400, which is a hall of Archaic date. The excavation in 2015 discovered the west wall of the room (B3400), which now allows us to establish the full area in the 6th century—the two post bases are symmetrically centered in the room and supported a roughly equidimensional 3.20-3.50 span from both east and west walls to the central posts; the maximum east-west length is thus approximately 6.50 m., giving a minimal interior area of some 30 m².

A sondage excavated up against the face of the west wall (B5505) and against the north wall (B3203) of B3400 revealed an earlier phyllite-clay occupation surface, lying 0.30-0.50 m. below the level of the Archaic floor level. In the northwest corner of this space, the sounding also exposed a short segment of an earlier phase wall that is built with this surface—it is preserved to 1.50 m. in length, and angles to the southwest, extending out from underneath the line of wall B3203. This short segment is most likely a continuation of the eastern line of B3203, which is at the same angle, and makes use of same dolomite boulders. The west extension of B3203 was evidently rebuilt, most likely at the end of the 7th century. These soundings indicate the existence of an earlier 8th-7th century building underlying the hall in B3400, and most likely belong to the 8th and 7th-century phases exposed in the sounding in B3500.

Another early phase wall (B5506) was discovered at the northern end of B5500, on the west side of the west wall of B3400 (B3526-B5505), running at an angle to the southwest—in line with the early phases of wall B3203. The north end of the west wall of B3400 was built on top of B5506, or perhaps was built to bond with it. Wall B5506 is certainly earlier than B5505—it is bedded about 1.00 meter below the level of the Archaic street; and nearly two meters below the level of the Archaic floor surface of B3400. The wall stands to four courses high (large dolomite boulders), and seems to form a corner—a right angle—with a single roughly dressed dolomite block that should be part of a long boulder-wall exposed to the north in B5700 (B5704) and running along the western edge of the contour. The orientation of this wall in B5700 is northwest-southeast, on the same line as the dressed boulder in B5500, and may form the western limit of an early building of uncertain date, underlying Archaic levels of B3400 and B3200. In the space between wall B5506 and wall B5704, we exposed a narrow patch of floor—consolidated phyllite clay—underlying the fill and street packing. The surface was exposed at the bottom of B5504.12, and excavation to the very base of the wall was conducted in B5504.14 and .16. The pottery from this sounding has not yet been studied.

The western extension of wall B3203 (the north wall of B3400 and south wall of B3200) was discovered during excavation in B5500; the wall extends for some 3-4.0 meters to the west of the northwest corner of B3400. The wall is slipped to the west, and broken, but extends up to and over the earlier dolomite boulder wall on the west (B5704).

B5700 (Fig. 11)

Work in B5700 exposed the long boulder wall B5704, mentioned above, which runs northwest in line with the contour of the hill. The purpose of excavation in B5700, however, was to discover the western wall of the Archaic room B3200—and thus the dimensions of the room— and the disposition of stratigraphy along the west side of the room. The west wall of room B3200 was unfortunately not discovered, and the slope west of the extant preserved Archaic floor was extremely eroded and weathered. While the deeply bedded boulder wall B5704 and the western extension of wall B3203 survive, though badly tipped and slipped to the west, excavation in adjacent spaces within B5700 revealed only deeply eroded cobble fill and bedrock throughout the entire area of the trench.

AREA G (SOUTH BUILDING 2) (Fig. 12)

We exposed the basic plan of South Building 2 in 2015. In 2014 we had excavated a single room of this building—G600-1, a large kitchen with an oven built into the northwest corner. In 2015 we expanded excavation along the terrace north of G600, as well as two terraces to the west. The building consists of seven rooms across three relatively level terraces of the southwest slope; it was excavated in seven different trenches in 2015 (G900; G1400; G1200; G1300, and G1000). The stratigraphy was however shallow, especially on the lower terraces, where the walls are preserved only one to two courses. The terraces have been deep-ploughed in the early modern-recent periods, and surface soil is shallow and weathered. In most cases there was no evidence of dense in-situ wall or roofing collapse—stratigraphy that we normally associate with abandonment phases of Late Archaic. Recent agricultural use of the terraces may account for the shallow preservation of walls and the absence of debris from wall collapse it is furthermore possible that the building, or certain rooms, had been abandoned, left in disuse, and exposed in the 6th century, a situation that might account for the absence of extensive and deep deposits of wall collapse, roofing material, and in situ destruction debris. On the whole, the condition of the well preserved rooms (G600-1; G900; G1400) look taphonomically very similar to more weathered spaces such as G1000/1300—the rooms are fairly clean and contain very few in-situ vessels or objects. It was only the storeroom in G1500 (S), where, on the western side, we recovered pottery and object scatters. Rooms G1200 and G900 both have Hellenistic material penetrating to the occupation surfaces. The question remains as to whether this material represents actual HL reuse of this building or contamination caused by erosion, deep ploughing, and Hellenistic discard practices.

G1200 was eroded and the poor preservation and shallow, disturbed deposition make it impossible to determine the room's function. The sherd material on the room's surface was tumbled and weathered, suggesting residual plough-zone debris. The surviving northwest dolomite wall; the eastern spine wall, and the recessed cutting in the bedrock along on the west side of the room are all Archaic features—the cut bedrock recessed space is used elsewhere for storerooms in Archaic houses (D1300; D700E). The room was accessible from the south, via steps and a corridor in G1400 (Figs. 13-14), which has a low platform along its east wall. The G1400 corridor connected G1200 with a small square kitchen in G900. Lying slightly above the bench/paved platform in G1400 were two broken vessels (at least one hydria).

G900 (Fig. 13) was a small kitchen, some 3.5 meters square in area, with well-built doorways in both north and south walls of the room, both placed off-center. The north doorway into the G1400 corridor was carefully blocked at some point—essentially rebuilt and closing off access to the northern rooms of the upper terrace of the building. The room's access from G1400 in the north, and from G600 on the south, had wooden doors—sockets are found in each. The kitchen has a stone-built bench—with a comfortable width for seating—running along the cut-bedrock western wall of the room. A curbed hearth was placed west-center in the room, outside of the main traffic paths through the space, and a small stone slab bin uses the bedrock for one of its sides in the north. A sideropetra-block paved surface occupies the southeast corner; it is an irregular raised platform, ca. 1.00 m. square, and fitted carefully against the inner face of the east wall and the monolithic door jamb of the south doorway.

A well-preserved iron spit (Fig. 15) was found on the floor near the hearth in the north center of the room, and while Archaic pottery was found throughout the space, fragmentary Hellenistic vessels were also collected on and near the floor level, evidently contained by roofing material. This would indicate a Hellenistic date for the room, the HL reuse of the room, or intrusive activity into an original Archaic room. It is important to note that most Hellenistic intrusions into Archaic spaces at Azoria have sparse residual material—that is there is normally little occupation debris, and few material indications of the use of these spaces or indications of intensive and repeated industrial or domestic functions. In G900 (G908), the floor level produced fragments of HL vessels, though among the finds only an obelos, a stone lid, and a single stone tool were among the contents. Bone and seed material were also sparsely represented, and the floor was remarkably clean, a characteristic of other Archaic rooms of the Building. While we assume that the floor would have been exposed—if not constructed—in the HL period, it is at least possible that the pottery is post-depositional, reaching the floor level by both erosion and deep ploughing or even HL discard practices.

G900 has a doorway leading south, and providing direct access into G600, the room with the oven, which we excavated in 2014. The two rooms would form a suite of food preparation areas, suggesting the concentration and separation of these functions on the upper terrace of the South Building 2. The complexity and segregation of functions within South Building 2 reflect the pattern of spatial organization in houses at Azoria, and strongly suggest an original Archaic foundation for the rooms of the building, including G900: food processing is confined to the upper terrace (G900 and G600); storage to the middle terrace (G1500); and the main hall of the house on the lowest terrace (G1000/1300).

The lowest terrace consists of a large open room spanning two trenches, G1000 and G1300 (Figs. 12, 16). The space is irregular (trapezoidal) as the room conforms to the irregularities of the bedrock ledge which drops off precipitously on the north and east, and which was bordered by a substantial dolomite boulder wall that retained the fill supporting the outer walls of the Building. The wall on the east conforms to the bedrock contour, which may not represent the actual east/southeast limits of the room, but the outermost edge of the building. On the north, a severely tipped dolomite boulder wall closes the space and extends beyond the northwest corner of the room to the northwest, thus closing the middle terrace at its north end.

The internal area of G1000/1300 is hard to determine accurately because of the state of preservation and its odd shape and configuration. It is roughly 10 m. long (north-south) and about 5.5 m. wide maximum dimensions—in total area probably not more than 45 m²—and while apparently larger than other domestic halls recovered at Azoria (D700, A400, and B3400), which are on average 30-40 m², it is important to consider that the 6th-century hall in D1500 is a minimum of 42 m², and with its adjoining hall in D700 (over 30 m²), the combined functional space would exceed 70 m². Thus, there is considerable variation is the sizes and configurations of halls at Azoria.

The room's west wall, in the north, has a single face, is preserved to two-three courses, and built up against a high bedrock outcrop and rubble fill. The bedrock outcrop forms the broad western limits of the room on the north, while in the south, a segment of spine wall runs for about 5.0 meters to the northeast corner of G1500N. Within the room, the line of the west wall continues south, but forms a retaining wall for an earthen ramp that ascends from the space of the room up along the east side of the spine wall, and then out onto the level of the middle terrace. Access to the ramp was through a doorway in the southwest side of G1000 (Fig. 16)—the room's west wall angles to the southeast, providing an entrance marked on the south side by a door socket. The date of the room, based on pottery studied to date, is 6th century, with consistently earlier material (LG-7th century), but no indication of Late Archaic destruction.

The ramp in the southwest corner of G1000 (Figs. 16-17) ascends along the west side of the room for about 5.0 meters to a doorway and 1.5 m. wide corridor that runs along the east side G1500N. The

corridor is bordered on the east by a bedrock bedding, and its south entrance is indicated by an opening between the bedrock on the east and the southeast cornerstone of G1500N on the west. It is not clear if the corridor were meant to be roofed or partially roofed space. Access to the rooms of the middle terrace must have been from this corridor. The shallow preservation of the east wall of G1500—it is preserved only in its bedding—precludes certainty, though a possible doorway may be located 1.5 m. from the northeast corner of G1500S— indicated by a break in the east wall of the room, where a series of pavers extend beyond the wall line.

The middle terrace of the South Building 2 consists of a series of two rooms: G1500S and G1500N (Figs. 12, 17-18). G1500S is a large rectangular room, whose west wall uses the modified bedrock in its face and foundations, and is set about 2.5 m. west of the east wall line of G600. The room is large. It measures over 9.0 meters long and 5.5 meters wide (or 49.5 m²), which would make it the largest single storeroom on the site, with a potential pithos capacity of some 30 pithoi. Fragments of three pithoi were found in situ along the west side of the room (Fig. 18), where the floor is best preserved. Several other vases were found in the same deposit, concentrated along the west side, and spilling out to the middle of the room and in front of the doorway into G1500N. We have not yet studied or conserved the deposit, but the material is Archaic in date, and the storage function of the space is certain.

A doorway, with door pivot stone, leads north across a built threshold into G1500N, which is a small rectangular room of uncertain function (Fig. 18). It measures about 3.5 meters long (north-south), and three meters wide, and has a well consolidated floor phyllite-clay floor and stone-built bin in its northwest corner. An abrupt rise in the bedrock on the north edge of the room is partially built to provide a stepped access into the space to the north, which was left unexcavated in 2015. While we anticipate that the deposition here is shallow and the preservation poor because of the level of the bedrock, the area north of G1500N was likely a corridor allowing access to the kitchens above in G600 and G900.

On the north side of the G1000/1300 hall, we excavated a small sounding on the terrace in front and below the room's north wall (G1600). There was evidently a room—interior space—on this terrace, given the presence of roofing material, wall collapse and a patch of consolidated floor surface which were exposed against the north face of the wall. In situ pottery and butchering debris were found here, perhaps discarded material from the use of the neighboring hall.

The South Building 2 is an impressive structure. The organization of space in the building follows the general pattern of large urban houses at the site. Architecturally separate and spatially distinct storage rooms, food processing rooms, and halls are the norm for Archaic houses. Furthermore the architectural separation of kitchens from halls, normally by corridors, courtyards, or vestibules, is apparent in the South Building 2. Here food processing is relegated to the upper terrace in G600 and G900, and food storage to the middle terrace (G1500). The hall is spatially separate, accessible only via a corridor and ramp from the exterior of the building and the storeroom in G1500. The arrangement emphasizes another characteristic of houses at the site, which is the proximity of storage to halls. While in most examples (Northeast Building; Northwest Building; and North Acropolis Building), the hall is directly connected to one storeroom, and generally controls or mediates access to pithos stores, the ramp and corridor in G1000 lead directly from the hall to controlled space, perhaps a courtyard or room in front of the east side of the G1500 storeroom, suggesting limited or controlled access.

COMMENTS

Excavations at Azoria in 2015 have allowed us to make significant progress in understanding the form and function of the Communal Dining Building. The Building can now be seen to extend across the entire upper west slope of the peak of the South Acropolis, from just below the peak and Boyd's Building, down

to the eastern edge of the D500 hall of the Monumental Civic Building. Work in 2015 exposed three more dining halls (A3100, A3500, and A3000), and two more food preparation rooms (A3200 and A3300). The function of A2800 remains uncertain. Determining interconnections between the terraces is problematic, and in some cases impossible because of the preservation of the slope south of these rooms, and southwest of A3000. It is however possible to begin to visualize suites or sets of cooking areas (A1600 and A600; A3200 and A3300) and clusters of dining rooms (A2000 and A800; and A3100 and A3500). The communication between the various terraces and dining room A3000 remains an insolvable problem—it is possible that the access was from the west and the terraces below—perhaps a stepped access from along the south side of A3100 and A2800 into the vestibule to the north of the room. While the preservation precludes determination, the room must have had a connection to the upper terraces and an access path along the front of the porch in A1900S. Without a connection to this terrace from the south, there is no readily discernable access to A600, A1600, and the storerooms beyond. This terrace has a southern aspect.

The limits of the Communal Dining Building on the north are probably defined by the LM IIIC bench sanctuary, which was very likely exposed and visible until the end of the 7th century—though more excavation is needed in A3400 to understand the spatial, chronological, and functional transitions between the pre-urban proto-Archaic structures and the Archaic rebuilding of A3200 and A3500. Though it is clear that the Archaic building ends with the back (north) wall of A3500 and the Archaic north wall of A3300. The form and function of A1300 (excavated in 2002) is still difficult to determine; we know that the room has a northern doorway and aspect, with no obvious evidence of an access from the south. Our assumption is that the storerooms A1400 and A1200 closed the Building on the north, while the massive boulder north wall of A800 is the limit of the building on the upper terrace. The limits of the Communal Dining Building on the south are harder to determine and require more study and excavation. The discovery of a dining hall in G300, and associated kitchen in G500 would suggest the continuation of these suites onto the south slope, now obscured by the HL rebuilding.

The stratigraphic soundings conducted on the southwest slope have provided significant information on the Early Iron Age and proto-Archaic occupation of the site—the conditions after LM IIIC and before the wide-spread rebuilding of the site at the end of the 7th century.

The LM IIIC wall and surfaces recovered in B5000/B5300 are typical results of sondages conducted at the site. LM IIIC occupation is consistent, contiguous, and wide-spread across the excavated areas of the South Acropolis. The evidence indicates a substantial and important site, considerably larger than the neighboring settlements of Vronda and Kastro. What is more interesting is that the LM IIIC wall in B5000/B5300 was built immediately adjacent to and abutting the LM IIIC-PG tholos tomb on its east side. While we normally think of tholos tomb clusters or cemeteries occupying the periphery (Vronda; Chalasmenos) or some distance (Karphi; Kastro) from the settlement, it is clear that at Azoria the LM IIIC buildings extended down to the very edge of the cemetery. In 2016 we will continue to explore the southwest terraces in efforts to expose more tombs and LM IIIC structures, and to study their relationship.

After the abandonment of the LM IIIC settlement, the site shows little evidence of sustained activity through PG and G phases. While artifacts are found, evidently reintegrated into the Archaic settlement context, and pottery of the period is found in mixed deposits, we have yet to find evidence of stratified habitation of PG or G date. Indications of Late Geometric occupation have been recovered in isolated soundings in B3500, B1700, and B3900, but the significant phase of pre-urban occupation is clearly the early 7th century. In these contexts—such as the rooms of the Proto-Archaic Building, LG pottery is present and consistent, and very likely constitutes the terminus post-quem or ad quem for renewed activity at the site, but this material is residual in early 7th century deposits. The soundings conducted in 2015, in B5300 and B5200, produced more evidence of this phase. The extant architecture suggests two or three rooms of a building that was built over the top of the LM IIIC wall; its location, at southeastern

edge of the Proto-Archaic Building and LM IIIC tholos tomb, should point to a function associated with these constructions. The late-7th century rebuilding, particularly the massive boulder spine wall and street, effectively destroyed the earlier building, whose remains were buried in a deep deposit of cobble fill that extended behind the spine wall to the east, forming the foundations for the Archaic rooms in B1600, B3300, and B2800.

The deposition and rebuilding in B5300-B5200 is similar to the transformation of A3300 in the Communal Dining Building. The Archaic room effectively cut into an earlier 8th and early 7th century room, partially using the architecture of the northeast corner, but building over and into the room, leaving only its far northern end undisturbed. The rebuilding in the late 7th century is deliberate and destructive, and the condition of earlier LG and proto-Archaic occupation suggests that the transition was relatively rapid and extensive. 8th and 7th century material is often found in unusually good condition—whole vessels are not uncommon finds in such spaces. In addition to A3300, examples would include contexts in D400, B4000, B4500, and B1200. Another example is the sondage in B5500, excavated this year.

Thus the rate of the phase change is interesting and important; the transition from localized installations of the 8th and 7th century to the site-wide renovation was an abrupt and transformative restructuring event. It is likely that the Early Iron Age and proto-Archaic objects, recycled for use in Archaic contexts, were derived from selective curation activities during the late 7th century rebuilding phase. Among the finds from 2015, a Daidalic plaque fragment, recovered from the dining room in A3500 is a result of such recycling (Fig. 19), in this case probably from a shrine that had once occupied this area of the slope above the Monumental Civic Building. It is important in this context to mention that in our first phase of excavation in 2002-2006 we recovered a series of Geometric and 7th century terracotta figurines and plagues from the slope above D500 and D200. Thus the likelihood of an early shrine in this area—the predecessor of the Hearth Shrine (D900), and the successor of the LM IIIC bench sanctuary (D600)—is very good. A possible location would be in the area of A3400, which appears to have been abandoned at the time of the late 7th century rebuilding phase, and contained a paved platform that extends up to the southern edge of the LM IIIC sanctuary.

Finally work on the southeast slope produced a fairly complete plan of another Archaic house. South Building 2, while not well preserved, is by far the largest and most impressive of the houses so far recovered, in terms of size and architectural complexity. The house had a minimum of seven rooms, with an especially large hall and storeroom, and two rooms for food processing. While more complex architecturally, the building follows the basic organizational and spatial syntax of Archaic houses at the site: separate kitchens, storage rooms, and halls; the separation of kitchens from storerooms; and more direct access to or control of storerooms from the hall. In the case of the South Building 2, the distance of the hall from the other rooms of the house, and the limited access from the south via a ramp are interesting and distinctive features.

Figures

Figure 1 Azoria 2015 GPS Plan

Figure 2 Communal Dining Building (areas excavated 2015): aerial view

Figure 3 A3200 and A3500: aerial view from south

Figure 4 A3300 and A3400: aerial view from south

Figure 5 Proto-Archaic deep round cup (A3300 early phase)

Figure 6 PG-B style krater (A3300 early phase)

Figure 7 A3000: aerial view of the vestibule and north end of room

Figure 8 B5000, B5300, and B5200

Figure 9 B5000, B5300, and B5200

Figure 10 B5600 and B5400

Figure 11 B5500, B3400, B5700

Figure 12 South Building 2: aerial view from south

Figure 13 South Building 2: A1400, A900, A600

Figure 14 South Building 2: A1400 pottery deposit on platform

Figure 15 South Building 2: A900 iron obelos Figure 16 South Building 2: A1000 and ramp

Figure 17 South Building 2: G1500N and G1500S

Figure 18 South Building 2: G1500S pithos deposits in situ

Figure 19 Communal Dining Building (A3500): daidalic plaque







































