

DECEMBER 2, 1968JOHN W. WARRINGTON

For the past several years, since 1960, the University of Cincinnati has been carrying on excavations on the island of Kea. Last spring, I understood that this summer would see the termination of the physical work on these excavations.

In the Spring of 1932, when the University, under the direction of Dr. Carl Blegen and with the assistance of the Semples, was excavating Troy, I had been invited to join in the work; I looked forward to this experience immensely. I had graduated from high school with a bit of Latin and Greek and was in thrall to the classics. In 1931, I took a year off from school and read Homer with Mr. Sykes as a tutor. I could hardly wait to get to Troy. Such was not to be; illness kept me at home. From that time I have continuously been fascinated with Archeology, have had the opportunity of visiting several sites, but never while work was going on.

After hearing that the 1968 season would be the last one of active excavation, I was determined to visit the site, and made the necessary arrangements with Professor Caskey, in charge of the dig, and with Bill and Carol Kittredge of the staff.

This will not be an archeological paper, but an attempt to give some idea of the Island, more a description of the place; the excavation drew us, there, but we will leave to others more qualified the work of detailing the discoveries.

In Athens, I attempted through the travel agency at the hotel and elsewhere to find out about ways and means of reaching the Island.

Kea, one of the western Cyclades, known in ancient times as Keos, and in medieval times as Tzia, lies approximately 13 to 15 miles off the eastern most point of Attica, the site of Poseidon's temple at Sounion. A short distance, but as it turned out, it seemed for a while an insurmountable one. No one knew how to get there. There were

rumors of "boats on certain days of the week from the Peireevs, which might or might not stop at Kea depending on whether there was or was not any cargo. A call to the American Schools suggested we go to Lavrion, where there might or might not be a Caique which presumably, if it sailed, sailed at three P.M. We were, however, warned to be there at 12:00 Noon to make sure of going.

The island itself, approximately 13i miles long and 10 miles wide, rises to a height of 1,862 feet. It seems essentially barren, for there are few trees, but is quite fertile. In fact Virgil, in the opening of his Georgies, invokes Aristaeus demi-god of Groves, as he for whom three hundred Snowy steers crop Kea's rich thickets.

Politically, it, together with the neighboring Kifnos, Siphnos of gold and Delphic Treasury reknown, and Macronisos form an Eparchy whose closest American equivalent is, I believe, a township, for Greece is divided into nomes equivalent to our counties, and nomes are in turn divided into eparchies. The divisions handle only local affairs. The Government that concerns itself with all important matters is, of course, that in Athens. Greece is what we would call highly federalized.

Following our instructions, we met our taxi driver in a side street. The day before, we had hailed a cab to go to the Acropolis; the driver turned out to be very intelligent and somewhat literate in English. We asked him about going to Lavrion the next day, whereupon he volunteered to take us, but told us that, as he was from the Peireevs, he could not pick us up at the hotel. This reminded me of the fact that one cannot pick up a Cincinnati taxicab in Covington: Things are very much alike the world over.

After a beautiful drive down the Coast of Attica; passing the beautiful beaches and rounding one bluff after another, curving around narrow bays and inlets, with the water the brightest dark blue I have ever known, we came to Cape Sounion with the magnificent doric ruins of the temple to

Poseidon. From the temple hill, Kea, in the distance loomed out of the haze.

Much has been written about the light in Greece; its clarity and purity; many of you, I know, have seen William Collins' paintings depicting this light. Though it is one of the phenomena of Greece, it is absent in August; there is always a haze both over land and sea at this time of the year, and strangely enough, a smog, caused principally by the many cement plants, over Athens at most times.

From Sounion we turned North, following the channel lying between the Eastern Coast of Attica and the Island of Macronisos till we reached Lavrion, where we immediately sought out the port. At the end of the dock gleamed a large white boat, yacht-like in character; with a broad open deck at the rear and a pleasant enclosed salon toward the bow.

Was this the boat for Kea? Yes, and it would sail at three. Pleasantly surprised, we went for lunch back to the main Square of Lavrion. This is an uninviting town, the center of certain silver mines which have been worked since earliest times. There are also other minerals now being mined, so the outskirts of the town, bare hills of Attica, are no more inviting than the copper mining country of Montana. The town is dirty and dusty, and, probably because of the time, Noon, quite deserted.

We went to a restaurant, typically Greek, in that you enter the kitchen and select your food by pointing to the various pots cooking on the charcoal stove. This is one of the many customs which, when learnt, make it easy for the person with little or no Greek to travel throughout the country.

Greece is not renowned for its food. The meat is mostly oven cooked beef or veal, or scraggly chicken. Tomatoes are a part of any meal and so are eggplants. Onions are used to season, as is red pepper, and all is cooked in olive oil. The cheeses, mostly Fettah, are to my taste, vapid.

This menu is washed down with the local wine, to which a quantity of resin has been added. At first trial, the wine puckers your mouth, you think you have by mistake swallowed pure turpentine, but, while the food in time grows tasteless, the wine grows on one, and I know few people who, having given the Retsina a fair chance, have not acquired a liking for it. A meal ends with fruit and/or a honey cake dessert which is delicious, puff paste soaked in honey; - the honey of Hymetre's has been famed since ancient times. Grapes and figs were in season, delicious green grapes, seedless and sweet, and both the green and purple ripe figs. There is not much difference between the two, perhaps the purple is of a richer, more royal, flavor, but this again may be a delusion arising from the color of the skin. Along with the fruit, and at any time between meals, coffee is served, small cups of thick black liquid, served according to one's taste, very sweet, half sweet and unsweetened. This is Greek coffee and differs in no way from Turkish coffee with which most of us are familiar. Ouzo is also served at the end of a meal, or as a cocktail before a meal, or as a refreshment at any time between meals. It is a colorless liquid - distilled from wine in the same manner as brandy, - and flavored with anise which gives it a licorice taste. It clouds and becomes milky when water or ice is added to it. This drink, indigenous to the Mediterranean, is a connecting link between all Mediterranean peoples, ouzo in Greece, raki in Turkey, arach in the Middle East, zibi in Egypt, and so on around the sea throughout the littorals of Libya, Tunis, Algiers, Morocco, Spain and France. A delicious drink, going down easily, seemingly harmless, but in actuality lethal in that too much causes one's legs to collapse and turn into rubber; perambulation becomes an impossibility. Water is always served with ouzo. Throughout Greece the water is delicious. This somewhat helps to counteract the perilous effects of too much ouzo.

After a while, the heavy, oily food palls, but the liquids, water, wine, coffee and ouzo, grow in one's esteem.

Following lunch, we returned to the dock, to dismiss our taxi driver and to wait on our gleaming white boat, until we sailed. Confusion: it seemed the harbor master had refused to let her sail. Why, we never did find out; it was for one of two reasons. Her engines did not run. But if this were so, how had she arrived that morning? The other rumor was that she was a new ship, and from the Peirees, not owned by the Kean interests which had always controlled sea transport from Lavrion to Kea. It seemed that our trip was at an end. A call on the Harbor master did nothing to help. We attempted to rent a boat. Impossible! Finally he suggested that the Agia Triada, which had arrived that day from Kea might be willing to return. With our taxi driver, we returned to the harbor, located the Aghia Triada, and persuaded the crew, for what was an exorbitant price in Greek money, to take us across to the island. This was a true caique, from 18 to 24 feet long, a stubby mast forward, one-sail, a donkey engine. The boat was steered by a huge rudder, whose tremendous tiller took up most of the small deck at the stern. The engine was ahead of the tiller; a narrow deck ran around the covered cabin to the bow. There was a crew of three, an older man who seemed to be the captain, another who acted as purser, in that he collected our fares and stowed the luggage, and a boy who handled the tiller and the engine.

The cabin was in the center and forward part of the boat. Down three steps, a closed room with seats on two sides, and in the bow a small bed. It seemed commodious to us, but suddenly, after we had our baggage on, nine other people came from the large white boat and also arranged for the trip to the island. This made twelve passengers and three crewmen on the small boat. It was not bad at first. We left the harbor and ran south, heading for the southern point of Macronisos. It was choppy but a lovely day. The Greeks, both passengers and crew, were very hospitable. They forced grapes and figs on us and all was merry for the five miles to the end of the channel between Attica and Macronisos.

Then we reached the open sea. We under-

stood now why we were only using the engine and not the sail. The wind struck with such a force that any sail would have been torn away. The boat was buffeted by the waves, all passengers were ordered into the cabin, which, from seeming large, grew cramped and close with all the people. Soon all the Greek passengers were sick; they must have rued the grapes and figs they had eaten so shortly before. Fortunately, my children and I were not afflicted, except for the closeness and cramped quarters. The boat really danced on the waves; suddenly the engine quit, but again started immediately. This happened several times, until I realized that the captain was purposely cutting it whenever the propeller came out of the water.

An hour and a half later we passed between the headlands and entered the bay of Agios Nikolaos on the northwestern part of the island, passing on the left a whitewashed lighthouse shrine.

The Port of Koressia lay on our right, hugging the narrow east side of the south headland. No portion of it could be seen from the sea. It was a typical village, one street, lying alongside the bay, next to which were a few fishing boats and small rowboats. The other side of the street was lined with buildings occupied by stores and cafes. The stores were the usual bakeries, wine shops, groceries, butchers and general stores. It was interesting to note their names - a bakery was an artopoleion, a wine shop an oinopoleion - artos being the ancient word for bread and oinos for wine. Yet neither word is in current usage. I would ask for artos, after a while I would be understood and would get the bread, but usually with a little laughter. I was told that what I had asked for was "the host". It was the same with many words; though it did cause some confusion and laughter, it did work and I could make myself understood using the ancient forms but pronouncing them in the modern manner.

The buildings were mostly whitewashed plaster, with red tile roofs, one or two stories high. The town stretched about two blocks up the hill. The streets were narrow, only wide enough

for a laden donkey, of which there were many, to pass. Window boxes with geraniums brightened the white walls. The most conspicuous building was the church, conspicuous for two reasons, one its size and the other its color, a brightish orange with a green tiled dome, the only colored building amid the mass of white. In form it was typical of all Greek churches. It was built like a Greek cross, that is the transepts were the same length as the nave and the apse, all meeting together in the center under a dome.

The "motel" was full, so we were put up in a makeshift hotel. At one time a rich islander had built a factory to make pots and pans so that there would be employment for the islanders. For some reason this did not succeed; manufacturing was abandoned and the factory fell into disuse and ruin. The most distinctive relict was a huge smoke stack, obviously without any smoke, which was a landmark and guide from various directions. The second floor of one of the buildings had been fitted out as a hotel - a line of rooms, each with a wardrobe, two wood chairs, two narrow very uncomfortable beds, linsey-woolsey sheets, a night-table and one electric light bulb hanging from a wire in the center of the room; at each end of the hall was a washroom, while the bath was downstairs, a half block away. The manager, again a friendly welcoming Greek, said that with half a day's notice we could have hot water.

There were no facilities for eating here, so we dined at the "Motel" at the edge of the southern end of the bay. Why this is called a motel I never found out. The motor vehicles on the island, except for a motorcycle or so, consisted of the bus, a giant Swedish Volvo, the taxi, a very carefully polished, three-wheeled Italian vehicle, and Jack Caskey's car. The rooms seemed comfortable. Though the Kittredges had tried to get us reservations here about two months before, they had been unable to do so. Many people come every summer from Athens, year after year; it had even been difficult to hold rooms for us in our makeshift hotel.

The island, like most Greek islands, is very hilly. Though in early days there were settlements, as we will note, at sea level; in later days, because of pirate raids, the center of life was away from the coast. The capitol of Kea, Chora, following this tradition, lies up in the hills about three to four miles from the port.

The next morning we took the bus and climbed up to Chora. The road, or rather that portion of the road on which motor vehicles could travel, ended at the entrance to the town. The town is built on a ridge and stretches, for the most part, on both sides of its one main street for a block or two down the ridge. From one end of the road to the other must be a mile or more. Threading through a gate, we entered into a small square practically in the center of the town and at the lowest part of the ridge. To the North, the buildings, mostly houses, climbed to the peak of a cone-shaped hill. All white, relieved by the red tile roofs and a few spots of green where someone had planted an almond tree.

To the South the town climbed up the ridge curving to the left or East, leaving the crest of the ridge, which continued eastwardly, rising over the town.

This has been the capitol of the island since ancient times. Known as Iulis, it probably was considerably larger in population. In fact, even in our times the population has decreased considerably. In 1909, according to Baedeker, there were 4630 inhabitants, while as of 1967 there were only 1790. Walking south up the road brought us to another square, slightly larger than the other, but obviously the center part of the town. Cafes lined the South and West sides, the East side fell off into a sharp descent, carefully fenced, down the side of the ridge. This opened up a magnificent view across the valley to the terraced hills on the other side. The north side of the square was occupied by the Town Hall; a neo-classic one-story building with four cast iron figures of maidens bearing fruit, smiling down on the square from the roof, Demeter and her followers.

Iulis was the birthplace and home of two great Greek lyric poets. Simonides was born there in 556 B.C. He became famous as a poet before he left Kea. From the days of the Peisistratidae the island was affected by the artistic and intellectual progress of Athens. Kea long had a poetical and musical culture. There were two temples of the Pythian Apollo, one at Iulis and another on the Southeastern coast of the island, in whose Choregeion, a building in which choruses were trained for festivals, Simonides had taught. Later he went to Athens at the call of Hipparch and gained great fame as a lyric poet. One of his most famous poems was that he wrote on the battle of Thermopylae, a contemporaneous event which commences "Glorious the chance and beautiful the fate of those who died at Thermopylae."

Little survives except for a number of his moral sayings which were quoted by many later writers. He was one of the first to write eulogies to order, and for payment. While in Athens, he won the praise offered by the city for a eulogy on the battle of Marathon. After the Persian wars he left Athens and became one of the stars at the Court of Hiero, at Syracuse, in Sicily, where he died in 468 B.C.

Simonides' sister was the mother of Bacchylides, the second of the great poets, who was also born in Iulis, probably in 505 B.C., became famous there for his odes in honor of victors in the various games and festivals held not only in Kea but all over the Greek world, Delos, Athens, Thessaly, Syracuse. He also visited the Court of Hiero at Syracuse where he probably met and certainly influenced his younger and perhaps greater contemporary Pindar. He was a poet of great eloquence and imagination, more natural than Pindar, but without Pindar's grandeur, gravity and power.

For years, little was known of his works except by reputation. However, in 1896, at Behnesa (the ancient Oxrynychus) thousands of papyri were found which included a large part of Bacchylides' odes. There are several mentions in the odes of his homeland: "the lovely Isle," "the land of

rocky heights," "nursing vines on the sunny slopes of its hills," and other such. There is a reference in Plutarch to his having been banished from the island, but when or where, perhaps to the Peloponnesus, is not definite. He died in approximately 450 B.C.

We had been told of a magnificent lion carved in stone a mile or more out of Chora, on the road to the South. We continued along the main street of the town, passing stores, many houses, some seemingly deserted, a small graveyard with a gleaming white chapel half hidden by cypress trees, the village spring where many were filling large gasoline cans strapped to the sides of donkeys, and finally came to the lion. It lay couchant about thirty feet below the road at the head of certain terraces where the rock out of which it was carved rose out of the ground. There were a few olive trees around it. As most buildings in Greece, the wall beneath it and the steps leading to it shone with whitewash. The top of the rock out of which it had been carved slants from top to bottom at about 40 degree level and it is on this that the lion has been carved. His head looks straight at you. His face has an archaic smile, and his body stretches out supinely to the left and ends in a curved tail. Its size, twenty feet long and nine feet high makes a great impression. We had been told that no one knew when it had been carved; perhaps very early, perhaps as late as the Venetians. I personally believe it to date from approximately the time of Simonides or before.

Jebb, in his edition of Bacchylides, tells us the following legend:

"We have one specimen of primitive Cean folk-lore which breathes the old spirit of free Ionian fancy, the bright, naive, sometimes playful spirit which reveals itself in the wonderland of the Odyssey. The story relates to the far-off memory of a great drouth which once parched the island, blighting the labours of husbandman and vine-dresser. The

Nymphs of Ceos, it was said, had been scared from their haunts in the valleys and on the hills by the apparition of a lion. They fled across the sea to Carystus in Euboea. An illustration of this story can still be seen. Not far from Iulis on the east, a colossal lion, some twenty feet in length, has been rudely carved from a rock, whose natural shape assisted, or suggested, the design. The Nymphs, frightened into exile by the lion, were, of course, the water-springs dried up by the torrid heat. Then Aristaeus, the god who prospers all works of the field, came from Arcadia to Ceos, where his worship endured. Taught by him, the people raised an altar to Zeus Ikmaios, the Skyfather who sends rain and dew."

Leaving the lion and its inscrutable smile we returned through Chora to the bus stop, but found no bus. A walk back to Koressia, though, gave us time to observe much.

When describing the lion I talked of terraces. It is impossible to visualize the terraces on the island. Each hillside has been terraced from the bottom to the very top, into terraces most of which are no more than thirty feet wide and some only five or six feet wide. The retaining walls of small rocks, fitted together without any mortar, between the terraces vary in height with the steepness of the slope being terraced, but would average eight to ten feet. The wheat had just been harvested and a great many of the terraces around Chora showed the straw stubble. All the crops are grown in these terraces. Often a single olive shows its gray-green silvery foliage and knarled trunk in the middle of a small wheat terrace. There are also almond and olive terraces. Pigs grow near the walls. Prickly pear hedges separate the terraces longitudinally from one another. Vineyards grow here, other vegetables, onions, artichoke, lettuce, and the ever present tomatoes

and eggplants. It is hard to believe, but I don't think that there is a spot of the land that is not terraced. High hills show the signs. Many of these are not now in use, the walls are aumbling and weeds, all dried out as it was August, were thick. The island formerly was known for its wines. The vineyards covered these areas. The market was France, and other areas of Europe. The wine produced was a cheap, light wine, which was drunk by the gallons in Europe in the Eighteenth Century and later.

The French conquest of Algeria in the 1830's killed this industry in Kea, for the wine of Algeria, then supposedly part of the Metropolitan France, supplanted the wines from the Greek Archipelago. Perhaps the native sober character of the Keans also added to the loss of this market. This is attested by Aristophenes in his "Frogs" when he remarks of a sober man "ou Xlos arra Kelos". "Not Chian (this is from the Asia minor coast island of Chios) but Kean."

The road was built in switchbacks and serpentines. We considered cutting straight down through the fields, but abandoned this idea when we saw that we would have to negotiate the eight foot walls of the terraces. Though we like to jump, this was too much.

As I said, the walk gave us an opportunity to observe much. The almonds were ripe and were being harvested. A man and a woman would attack a tree. He would climb it, pick what he could reach, put it into a basket, fill the basket, climb down, empty the basket into a larger container which would later be transported by a donkey, reclimb the tree, and restart. She would beat the branches of the tree with a long bamboo pole, then collect her harvest from the ground, fill her basket, empty it into the donkey container, and resume. It was fascinating to watch.

Across the valley we could see a threshing floor. The harvest had already been garnered and threshed, nevertheless the sight of one of these threshing floors brought back old memories,

stemming from earlier visits to the Holy Lands. A round circle, approximately sixty feet across, was paved with stone, forming a platform of sorts; a small curb of stone outlined the circle. Into this area the grain would be brought. Here it would be flailed and then thrown into the air. The wind would then separate the wheat from the chaff, the latter being lighter would be blown away; the wheat being heavier would settle. In the Museum at Heracleion in Crete there is a black pottery vase, with a bas-relief showing this same operation. This vase dates from the Palatial Civilizations of Crete, between 2,000 and 1100 B.C. No change to date in Kea.

With ruined blistered feet we eventually reached the excavations in time for a swim. We dove off a pier next to which rusted the remains of a barge. This was evidence of another part of the islands' past history. The bay of Agios Nicholaos was one of the best harbors in the area. It also was on the direct line of shipping from Constantinople west. So it became a great coaling station. Coal would be brought in and stored. Ships would come in and the coal would be lightered out in the barges. For this the dock and rusty ruin of a barge, and the offices of the excavation, had served.

Lunch was at Vourhari, a small fishing village on the bay. Here we had a delicious meal. Ground beef or hamburger, floating in olive oil, tomatoes, and eggplant in a pepper shell, topped by molten Fedda cheese. I later learned that its name was "The Imam fainted." It seems that this glory of Turkish cooking had that effect on the local Imam when first served him.

The but de voyage was then reached; excavations themselves. Picture to yourself a small, not more than three acre peninsula stretching out into the Bay of Agios Nicolaos, at its northern extremity. Out from the land the peninsula rose toward its end to a height of 20 feet, which was crowned by a lovely little church, Agia Irini. From this church back to the mainland the excavations are taking place. To quote the Blue Guide, the

University of Cincinnati, since 1960, has been excavating a walled settlement of the bronze age where pottery in Cycladic, Minoan and Mycenaean styles has been found. There has also been unearthed a late Minoan II palace and a temple.

When we first arrived we found Bill Eittredge excavating the base of a tower which was at the northeast corner of the wall. Added to ordinary difficulties the bottom of the dig was below sea level. This seeped in; therefore, to excavate, water had to be continuously pumped out. As it was, baskets of mud were collected, to be sorted and checked later for shards.

Others were working carefully in various areas. The remaining rooms of the palace compelled one's attention. The drains and plumbing were amazing. They seemed little changed from what we had seen in the modern villages.

Next to this busy operation was a building, left over from the coaling operation, a large yard surrounded by a stone wall, and a building consisting of two large rooms at right angles to one another.

Here were stored the results of the excavations, pottery artefacts of every nature. These were going through the backbreaking task of classification. Carol Eittredge works hard at this. Others of the staff, girls from Athens, many scholars, all worked hard. This is the work, I am told, which must continue for years before one can say that the Cincinnati excavations at Eea are ended.

That night we had dinner with the staff in the Villa, again at the coaling operation, which serves as the home of many of the staff during operation. We sat in front of the house, a stone house which dated from the end of the 19th Century, and drank ouzo while watching the sun set over the entrance of the bay of Agios Nicolaoas, the lighthouse shrine turned on, the glories of the colors, and we knew again the calm contentment of Greece, and the stark simple beauty of the islands.

A good dinner, a boat trip back to Koressia, the length of the bay of Agios Nicolaoas from its northern end to its southern, and our visit but for the trip back to Lavrion early the next day, over a sea like a mill pond, was ended.

As I said earlier, I did not try to describe the excavations. However, I do know, now that I have seen a working excavation and have had the opportunity to be guided through it by one as knowledgeable as Jack Caskey, my thirty-five year wait was too long, and the anticipation fully lived up to all expectations, a fact which I find is rarely true.

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