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KOS ASTYPALAI A.

BY DUNCAN MACKENZIE.

FROM the modern town of Kos, on the site of the ancient capital at the north-east extremity of the island, to the village of Kephalos at the south-west end is a ride of eight hours.

The village¹ stands on a chalky plateau which beyond the isthmus marks the beginning of the mountain district of south-west Kos. This in turn is a repetition on a smaller scale of the mountain region, at the other end of the island, which forms the lofty termination to the long central tableland. The highest points of the mountain district are towards the south-east where the fall to the sea is very rapid. The highest neighbouring peak, Mount Ziní, is about an hour distant from the village in a south-easterly direction, while all that lies to the north-west of the main range is high pastoral country with many torrent beds. The whole interval between the village and the steep north slopes of Mount Ziní has to be conceived as a vast amphitheatre with steep auditorium overlooking Kamara Bay to the east. The village and the mountain are as side supporting-walls left and right and the projection into the amphitheatre formed by the small plateau, on which stands the little church of Panagia Palatianí, divides the larger auditorium-like hollow into two smaller amphitheatres with a structure of soft yielding chalk and sandstone rock worn down through the action of winter floods into innumerable little ravines.

The spectacle on which one looks from this amphitheatre is one of rare loveliness and interest. Away to eastward are the Knidian Chersonese, the Triopian Promontory, and the site of Ancient Knidos, to the left is the Ceramic Gulf and the high sea-way to Halikarnassos and the north, while

¹ Visited September, 1898.

on the right stretches the chain of islands that form the stepping-stones to Rhodes.

The way from the village passing along the edge of the chalk cliffs over a district of Hellenic chamber tombs curves round into what we may imagine as the upmost tiers of the amphitheatre. Just before one comes, on the left, to the small plateau, which was mentioned above as dividing the amphitheatre-like hollow into two parts, one sees a torso over life-size and without head, of a veiled, draped, and seated female figure half lying on its right side on the left hand side of the road. The round hollow in the bust shows that the head and neck were a separate piece. The type is that of Rhea-Kybele as finally fixed for later times by Pheidias¹ and a ritual inscription from the neighbourhood in the British Museum shows that the *θεῶν μάρτυρ* (Paton and Hicks, *Inscriptions of Kos*, 402, 6) must have had a cult upon our site.² The late date, however, admits the possibility that we have here a dedicatory statue of Agrippina, the wife of Claudius, in the type of the goddess (*ibid.*, inscription 119, 6, and note).

The statue had fallen down from a higher position in a steep hollow above the road to the right. We visited the spot, and this led us into a détour out of the amphitheatre region on to the heights above. Here the villagers in digging ground covered with low scrub during the leisure of winter have occasionally come upon objects that were described as earthenware figures of men and horses, but were probably fragments of stamped archaic reliefs of the 6th century. Further southward, covering broken ground with sandstone rock protruding here and there, were remains of cemented walls covering a large era. These (probably Roman) remains continued on rising ground, beyond some cultivated fields, and here we noticed two ancient olive presses, the one simple, the other double, exactly like one in the Greek fortress above Emporió in Kalymnos.³

Higher up to the south-east, on the hill of Skourdoulariés, some late Hellenic tombs lined with sandstone blocks were opened by the proprietor in his field. In the field adjoining to the south, where tombs were also

¹ cf. *Arch. Ztg.* 38, *Taf.* 1, the Kybele-statue of the Mus. Pio Clementino and, with a close resemblance to ours, the headless statue of Rhea in the precinct of the temple of the Magna Mater on the Palatine at Rome.

² An archaic terracotta I saw in private possession at Kephalos probably represented a seated Rhea.

³ The Kalymnos oilpress, together with a plan of the Greek fortress at Emporio, has since been published by W. R. Paton and J. L. Myres, *J.H.S.* 1898, p. 212, fig. 4, and p. 213, fig. 5.

reported, fragments of archaic Greek pottery were to be found lying about. The tomb-region apparently continued for a considerable distance along the pathway, which we had found again, especially on the right-hand side where some opened Greek tombs with some of the slabs still in position were pointed out on this side of some rocky boulders which form a prominent feature in the district.

We returned along the pathway and descended once more into the amphitheatre-like region, now from the south wing. On our way just before we came upon the plateau of Panagia Palatianí we halted at a large fountain, to the right of the pathway, flowing out of the right hand wall of a small quadrangle, open towards the north, into a long trough running along the foot of the other two walls. The quadrangle, with the trough, was constructed out of miscellaneous blocks from some ancient buildings. Noticeable in the middle wall was a large block of grey trachyte of rough grain with an empty metope space between two triglyphs. Most of the other stones looked like blocks from some Greek supporting, or fortification, wall. The fountain square with its northern aspect looks towards the little plateau on which, as already mentioned, is built in the south-east corner the church of the Panagia Palatianí whither we now proceeded.

In the court of the church to the right of the door we noticed the marble block with the inscription, 404, published by Paton and Hicks. The church and the court contain a great many stones from ancient buildings, notably a triglyph like the one at the fountain and an architrave block in the same grey stone. These latter remains point distinctly to some monumental building, probably a temple on the site of which the little church may have been built.

Passing beyond the church to the east we came to the verge of the plateau and saw below us all round a series of terraced plots at different levels. Descending into the first of these plots and turning round in the direction we had come we noticed a strong fortification wall of Hellenistic date running north and south and having corners preserved at the north and south ends. Remains of some building with cement against the outside of this wall could be seen at once to be of much later date. By the discovery of this fortification wall the plateau was defined at once as a kind of acropolis and it was natural to expect continuations. After a few metres the wall that runs westward from the north angle above referred to disappears and after an interval of some more metres there appears, fairly

in line with it, a much older wall of polygonal masonry belonging probably to the 7th or 6th century B.C. Below this wall is a level terrace below which again is a declivity with soft rock appearing. Projecting from this declivity in a northerly direction is a piece of wall which is almost certainly early 5th century masonry. This wall does not have the corner preserved, but further west after a short interval appears above the rock declivity a wall with the same masonry, which may be the continuation in a westerly direction of the projecting wall. Still further to the west we noticed a piece of Greek wall of a similar character with a slight change of direction towards the south-west. We have thus encircling the plateau on the east and north sides important looking walls representing at least three periods of construction. The south side of this acropolis is not so well preserved but as the structure of the declivity on this side is more yielding it is probable that much of the wall is hidden under fallen soil. In this direction also many blocks from the acropolis walls were to be seen in the dykes of the cultivated plots below, which were plentifully strewn with pot-sherds of all periods, while the walls of the fountain square almost as certainly tell a similar tale.

On one of the terraces below the plateau to the south-east stands the church of H. Demetrius with many blocks both built into it and lying about it, including the fluted drum of a column in the already mentioned grey trachyte and these may have come from some building on the spot or have been derived from the building indicated on the acropolis itself by the stones of the church there.

There was ample evidence of settlement on the terraces in the amphitheatre-like hollow in the midst of which this acropolis stands; and these continued all the way down to the harbour about a quarter of an hour distant below, where were clear traces of the Roman town and of an ancient mole protecting the harbour on the left against the northern winds that sweep across the low sandy isthmus and the long central plateau.

The tomb-region we had previously visited was now seen to form a wide semicircle inland from the acropolis and town in a way that recalled the much more imposing cemeteries of Kamiros in Rhodes. The fact that the Kybele-statue was found in such close contiguity to the necropolis suggests the further possibility that the goddess may here have been represented as guardian of tombs.¹

¹ *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, xiii. p. 558.

With such evidence of an important Greek town on this site we have now to consider the question of identification.

Captain Graves and his officers at the beginning of the forties seem to have noticed the walls of the plateau, as well as the later ruins at the harbour, though he identifies our acropolis with that of Halisarna. Ross, who touched at Kos in 1841,¹ was, through a quarantine imposed by the Turkish officials, prevented from landing, but on having been shown the original drawing of Captain Graves' chart of Kos, he expressed the opinion that Astypalaia should be substituted for the lower town of Halisarna. On a later visit to Kos in 1843 Ross (*ibid.* iii. 136) was, much to his indignation, prevented by the Turkish authorities from visiting this part of the island, and thus, on the basis of the Kephalos inscriptions, is only able to add to his previous conjecture the new one, identifying our acropolis with a town of Isthmos, which would thus be only a few minutes' walk from Astypalaia on the shore. In 1844 Ross at last was able to visit Kephalos, and in identifying the whole of our site with that of Isthmos, no longer finds any room for the Astypalaia which he had previously conjectured near the shore,² and he makes only this attempt to get out of the difficulty, that he now places conjecturally the earlier capital of Kos somewhere near the remains of an ancient roadway and harbour westward from Cape Mastikaris, on the north-west coast of Kos. As these remote parts of the island seem to have been but little visited since those days, these conjectures have been left undisputed and unverified; and it only amounts to a further conjectural amendment of Ross when Paton and Hicks (*Inscriptions of Kos*, p. xix.), being probably uneasy about a topography which places Astypalaia at so great a distance as Cape Mastikaris, suppose the earlier capital of Kos to have stood nearer hand at the Isthmus to the west, near Cape Drekanon (Cape Daphni on Paton and Hicks' map).

The following difficulties have to be kept in view:—

1. The existence of the old place-name Stympalia (Στυμπάλαια 'Ἀστυπάλαια) for at least part of our site requires explanation.
2. Ross himself admits that the name Isthmos for a town of Kos has no warrant outside of the formula *ὁ δᾶμος ὁ Ἰσθμιωτῶν* in the inscriptions.
3. The Kos Astypalaia mentioned by Strabo (p. 657) does not occur in the inscriptions.

The solution which will vindicate the tradition on which the name

¹ *Reisen*, ii. p. 89.

² *Ibid.* iv. 23-4.

Stympalia is based, is this : that Isthmos and Astypalaia are one and the same place, and that the people who inhabited the older capital of Kos did not in the inscriptions call themselves by the name of their town but *ὁ δᾶμος ὁ Ἰσθμιωτᾶν* (Paton and Hicks, *passim*). We have thus an acropolis with Greek and Roman towns going down to the harbour below it, all of which are parts of one Astypalaia. Besides this a separate town of Isthmos never existed at all. Inscriptions of the Isthmus are thus inscriptions of Kos Astypalaia and the occasional discovery still of inscriptions from our site confirms the testimony of the villagers that those already known are from the same locality, whereas inscriptions telling of an Astypalaia near Cape Drekanon or elsewhere are as unknown in Kos as in Paton and Hicks' own pages.

Thus all the evidence furnished in the *Inscriptions of Kos* is in favour of our amended topography ; while the authors themselves acknowledge that for the capital to have looked westward from near Cape Drekanon would have been singular : "for the island by nature faces eastward, and for it thus to turn its back on Asia" would certainly have been "to forgo all share in general history." But if the old capital was not on the west coast facing the smaller islands of the southern Cyclades but on the east coast where we place it, facing the Ceramic Gulf and Knidos, then Kos did not forgo all share in general history, and the old capital, like the island itself, lay "on the high road of all maritime traffic between the Dardanelles and Cyprus." It has to be remembered that it was this Kos Astypalaia and not the Kos Meropis at the north-east end of the island, later the capital, that was important enough to be a member of the famous Doric League of the Hexapolis. It would have had a far less chance of holding this position had it faced westward towards the distant Cyclades and turned its back on Asia and the great sister-city on the Triopian Promontory.