

THE MYCENAEAN THOLOS TOMB AT KOLOPHON

(PLATE 52)

IN the spring of 1922, an expedition, organized by the Fogg Art Museum of Harvard College in conjunction with the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and directed by Dr. Hetty Goldman and Dr. Carl Blegen, undertook the first season of a proposed series of excavations at the site of ancient Kolophon, near the modern village of Değirmendere in Ionia. The brief excavations revealed extensive traces of public and private buildings on and around the acropolis of the Hellenistic city and, in addition, investigated sections of three surrounding cemetery areas with tombs of the Mycenaean, Geometric, and Hellenistic periods.¹ As unsettled political conditions cut short the extent of the investigations, and further archaeological activities in the area have not been attempted, there are many questions about the site to which no sure answers can be given without the help of further excavation. This note, however, will try to set forth the available evidence, gained from an examination of the notebooks, plans, and photographs of the 1922 excavation, which deals with a monument to this date unique in Anatolia: the Mycenaean tholos tomb at Kolophon.²

The tomb lay in the third necropolis, to the west of the city, in the area of the modern village. The *muhtar* of the village brought to the attention of the excavators an area which had been the scene of some clandestine digging, and, from the second to the seventh of June, three men under the direction of Miss Goldman carried out the clearance of the disturbed area. Preliminary investigation showed that the remains were those of a small tholos tomb. The excavators' early hopes that the tomb had not been completely robbed were quickly set aside when, on the seventh of June, the tomb was entirely cleared without yielding anything more than a few bits of pottery and scattered bone fragments. A photograph taken during the excavation of the tomb, along with a sketch plan and section by Leicester Holland made after clearance, are reproduced here (Pl. 52).³

The excavation of the tomb showed that the entire area within the stone circle had been disturbed. The stones of the vault, which had been partially removed to gain entrance to the tomb, were found collapsed in the interior. Traces of the robbers'

¹ Reports on the historical material from the excavations of 1922 include: S. Noe on the coins, *American School of Classical Studies Papers for 1923*; B. Meritt on the inscriptions, *A. J. P.*, LVI, 1935, pp. 358-397; L. Holland on the architecture, *Hesperia*, XIII, 1944, pp. 91-171.

² I should like to express my indebtedness to Miss Goldman for making available the records of the 1922 excavations for study at Bryn Mawr College and to give special thanks to Machteld J. Mellink for giving me access to this material and assisting me throughout. Further thanks are due to D. Mustafa Uz for accompanying me on a visit to Değirmendere and assisting me in my inquiries among the villagers.

³ The plan and section reproduced here are tracings of Holland's notebook sketches, prepared for publication by Abby Watrous.

entry were visible on the south side of the chamber where many stones were missing and out of place. Early pottery and a large iron stud were found in the soft earth overlying the fallen stones. The fallen stones were removed, and the earth mixed with them was found to contain many fragments of early pottery and bones including a boar's tusk. All this material was gathered, left in the village of Değirmendere when the excavators were forced to leave, and has subsequently been lost.

The tomb itself had its entrance facing the northeast. The entrance was *ca.* 1.90 m. long, *ca.* 1.50 m. wide, and its walling was preserved to a height of *ca.* 1.30 m. No traces of a lintel, threshold, or differentiated dromos are recorded, but it is possible that two stones shown on the plan near the outer end of the entrance are remnants of a blocking wall. The entrance was built of unworked stones, mostly slabs, with larger stones at the base of the wall. There was little or no attempt at coursing, and it is not recorded whether the walls showed any inward slant or not.

The chamber had a diameter of 3.87 m., and, when excavated, the walls were preserved to a maximum height of 1.70 m. above the floor of the tomb. The corbeling of the walls began immediately above the floor level, and at the preserved height the walls projected 0.72 m. inward from the wall base. The walls of the chamber were built of unworked stones, again mostly slabs, with larger stones predominating at the base. (A note on Holland's plan says that the blocks average 0.60 m. long by 0.20–0.60 m. wide and 0.05–0.20 m. thick.) The floors of the chamber and the entrance were at the same level, and there were no indications of the presence of pits or built sarcophagi within the chamber.

As none of the material found in the excavation of the tomb is now available for study, one must rely on the opinions which the excavators expressed at the time and subsequently to arrive at a date for the tomb. Miss Goldman's preliminary report to the Archaeological Institute classes the pottery as Mycenaean,⁴ while a contemporary reference by A. J. B. Wace characterizes the tomb as being of the Third Late Minoan period.⁵ The most definite statement is given by G. L. Huxley who notes "a late Mycenaean tholos tomb which, so Miss Goldman informs me, was of Mycenaean III B or C date."⁶ Without further excavation, it seems that the problem of the date of this monument must rest here.

In comparison with the tholoi of the Greek mainland, the Kolophon tholos is small, its diameter of 3.87 m. placing it in the bottom quarter of a ranking of tholoi by size. However, in comparison with the Late Minoan tholoi of Crete, the Kolophon tholos fares better, ranking well above average size. Its masonry technique is unexceptional and can be paralleled both on the mainland and in Crete from L.H. I down to

⁴ *A. J. A.*, XXVII, 1923, p. 68. Cf. also *B. C. H.*, XLVI, 1922, p. 550; *Arch. Anz.*, XXXVII, 1922, p. 339; *J. H. S.*, XLIV, 1924, p. 256.

⁵ *B. S. A.*, XXV, 1921–1923, p. 395.

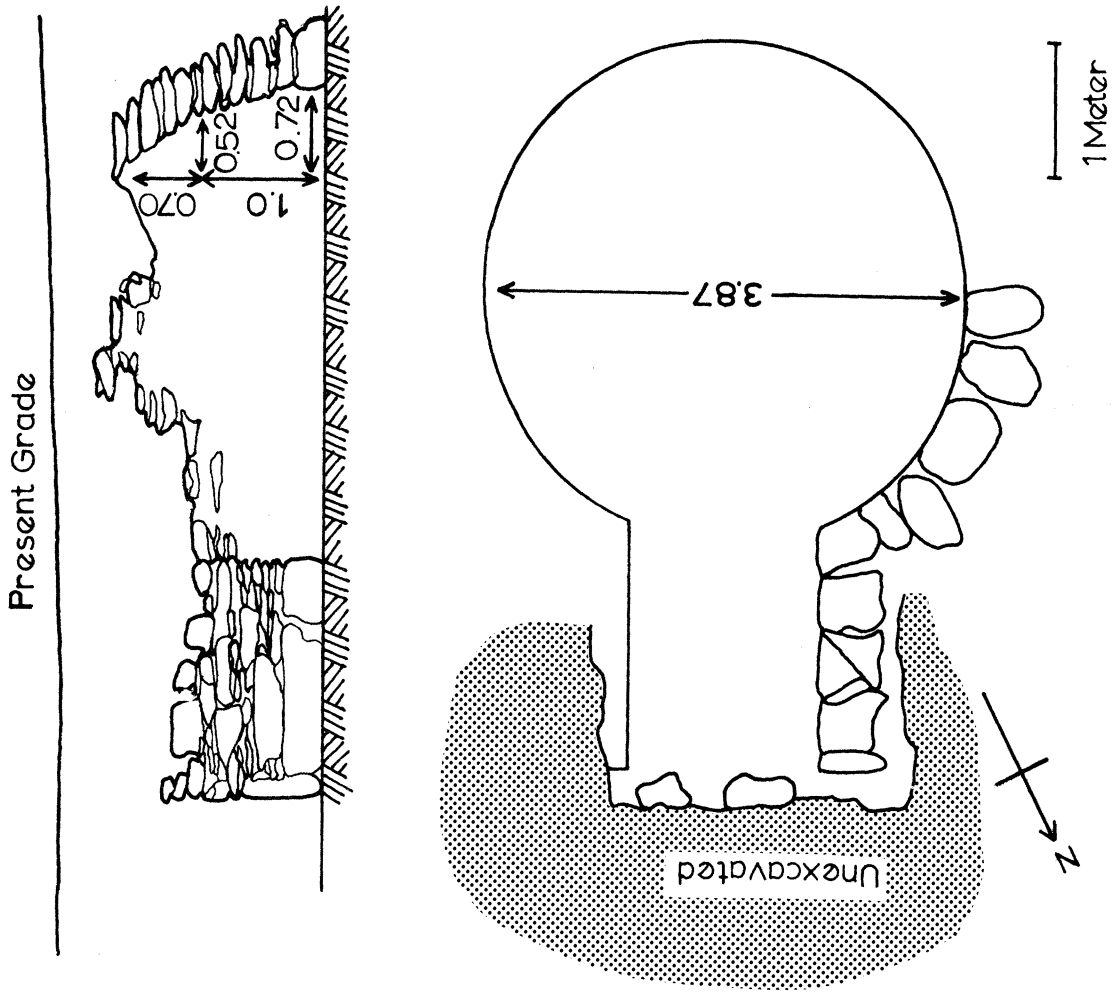
⁶ G. L. Huxley, *Achaean and Hittites*, Oxford, 1960, p. 39.

Geometric times. An unusual feature, however, may be noted in the proportions. The entrance is unusually wide in relation to the diameter of the chamber, the ratio being 1:2.6. (For comparison, the corresponding measurements for the fourteen excavated tholoi in the Argolid yield ratios varying between 1:4.2 and 1:6.7.) A closer parallelism exists with the Cretan examples of the L.M. III and later periods, although in the cases where the proportions are similar (e.g. the tholoi at Kavousi and at Vasiliki), the method of construction employed in the entrances is much different. One seems to be dealing here with a monument whose unusual proportions can be ascribed to local builders working outside the mainstream of the tholos-building tradition.

A visit to the site in the summer of 1972 revealed that the area where the tomb was located is now a level field just north of the limits of the village. No trace of the tomb is visible, and no datable sherds were found in the area. Whether the tomb has been simply filled in and plowed over or completely destroyed could not be ascertained from the surface or from an inquiry among the villagers.

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