Kommos Excavations
1977 -

Contents

Trench 15 A pp. 8 - 33
Trench Supervisor: A.C. Shaw
Excavation begins in a new trench (see NB 12) 5.45 m E-W, 5.00 m N-S, directly south of Trench 12A4 (see p. 8). The surface slopes down to the south and to the west. There is no pure sand at the top, but rather a mixture of sand and earth. In the north sector of the trench, a large block appears at the surface and is a good candidate for a wall block. The top layer is removed with:

Pail 1 (for levels see plan, p. 8)
Sand and hard sand Lev. 1-2
Sherds: 165 20 gr. LM III A; latest sherds. Unit is basically LMI; also many MM survivals. Smallsherd
Other sherds flag; bines
Inv. 438 - sherd

Work of this trench a number of rooms have been excavated, west of a series of N-S walls running roughly along the line and numbered consecutively as walls 6, 6a, 6b etc., the first number being that of a wall just north of and along the line of the east edge of the present trench. There is a tendency (so far) for the 'better' rooms to be just west of the S-N line (e.g. Rm 5 in Trenches 12A3 and 11B1). Beyond bedrock, fairly flat and generally sloping from W to E, forms a rough platform. Several circular cuttings have been found mostly along the edge and it is possible that these are connected with one of the areas by the MM people. MM sherds are found frequently right on bedrock in this area and elsewhere at the site. Eventually the level was evened here by packing earth on top of bedrock and in some cases paving with slabs (e.g. a slab floor extends west and beyond room S. The walls extending west were generally built on bedrock. The space, created are roughly rectangular and lacking walls on the cliff-side, perhaps little hearth courtyards where household activities took place. Several saddle querns and other tools were found in the general cliff-side area.
Bedrock extends furthest west along the line of the North edge of our trench. From that point on it slants towards the east allowing less and less space for the courtyard as we move north.

A solid E-W wall extend some 2.80m from the west scarp and some 1.65m south of the N scarp. (Wall 31) Its N face is still defined. Some 2.50m south of Wall 31 a new wall (32) begins to appear.

July 29

Removal of the top layer in the area between walls 31-32 bring us down to more hard packed sand mixed with earth, our usual level 2. Removal of sand + hard sand still continues further west where the ground slopes down towards the edge of the cliff.

2 pails  Pail 2 Hard sand 1/2
under pail 1 From 20.85
Sherds: 14, 470gr. Essentially LM II, with one sherd of LM II.
Other bone, red matter? piece of bronze
Invo. C743 LM II Bowl

This brings us down to a hardish surface which is probably level 3, starting at level 2.22m towards the East scarp but sloping down further west.

It is decided arbitrarily to excavate the trench in two sections. First the area west of the preserved W. end of wall 31 from wall 32 to the N scarp:

Pail 3 Sand and hard sand 1/2 each 1/1-2
under pail 1 From 20.65 NW / 20.58 SW
Sherds 6, 270gr. Unit is predominantly LM I, Latest sherd is LM III B, also LM III A.
Other: Piece of glass (1965) bone.
Invo. C746 LM I conical cup; C748 IN out bowl
C749 LM I cup; C749 Cup fr. (imported?)
There is much LM I fine sherd, generally small

M15
perhaps a dumped earth containing many earlier pottery survivals. (see plan, p. 28, for location of pail). A piece of glass is found near the cliff edge.

A third wall (33) runs N-S near the west edge of the trench. At a distance of 1.50m from the NW corner of the trench and right on the N line of the trench is found a complete conical cup. We should remember that two more conical cups were found a little further east on the southern edge of Trench 12 A 4. The one found now is at level 20.80m.

Work in the west sector of the trench shows that the hardish surface (just above floor) is now preserved much beyond (i.e. to the west) of the west termination of wall 31. Clearing to the west of here with pail 3 has brought a dawn at a hardish layer but at a lower level than further east. This may simply represent a deeper layer of the hard stratum found further to the east. However, once more we decide to dig the west sector separately and then move back to the hard surface found between the walls. The area to be dug is arbitrarily defined: c. 180m E-W and extending the entire N-S length of the trench starting from the N face of wall 32. The west limit is provided by wall 33. The surface slopes down steeply from E to W, from c. 20.60m to 20.48m. A couple of slabs have appeared next to wall 32. A floor??

Pail 4 From 20.60 at e/20.48 at w. under pail 3: Brownish compact earth
sherd; 1190g; LMIB Good Consistent unit: small bits; one red shard: LMIB
Other; bones, charcoal. Position: blade short
Inv. No. 751: Conical cup
The sherds of pail A are generally small with much LMI. Bits of charcoal also appear in the fill. It should be remembered that excavation had been discontinued south of wall 25 in Trend 12A4 because of the narrowness of space (see MB 12). Excavation can now extend to the N to wall 25. The fill here in the northern section is rather softish and there are quite a few stones and large sherds. Further south, the fill is quite compact, brown, much like the hard floor packing. As it is not possible to clarify this point before more of the Ron is dug, we stop excavating the hard fill. This hard surface now slopes down from E to W from 20.48m to 20.18m, near wall 33.

We now turn once more to the space or room between the two parallel walls 31-32. The hardish surface noted earlier (p. 11 above) is rather uneven: e.g. 20.72 m in the east section of the room; 20.65 m at the NW and 20.58 m at the SW. The first pail used here is

Pail 5 From 20.72 m at E; 20.65 m at NW, 20.58 m at SW under 2 Soft brownish earth
Sherds: Latest date LMI - several MM survivals esp. MM III
Other: Frag. of stone jar, shells, bone, cobbles
Inv. 194: F A. Sericulture head
C. 755: Stamped MM pits; C. 756: open vessel w. ripple print; C. 757: ring vessel with feet (M14); C. 758: cup? w. white floral patt. (M14)
C. 759: MM III conical cup.
Excavation continues in the room defined by walls 31-32, using pail 5. We also resume excavation N of wall 31 at level 20.71m. It is a strip some 0.60m wide (N-S) and c. 2.80m long. When the level is taken down to that of the area S of wall 25 (of Trench 17A4) the two areas will be excavated together. At the moment we use:

Pail 6 From Lev. c. 20.71
Under pail 2 Brownish earth, N of wall 31
Sherds 7, 310 gr, latest date LM1B, several MM survivals, several good sherds
Other—bone, charcoal
Inc. C 768 red, late vessel; C 769: LM1B cup; C 770: conical cup
At N-S wall is found between wall 31-32
The area here east of the west face of this wall was characterized by somewhat softer fill and the sherds were collected separately from those of further E. (Pail 5). The pail for this small space here (0.90 m wide E-W) are in:

Pail 7 From
under pail 5
Brown earth
Sherds: 910 gr, all LM1, a few MM survivals joins with p. 5. Almost nothing decorated
Other—
Inc. Sherds of C 758

The width of the new wall is 0.55 to 0.60. To the east of it there are small fallen stones but since the space is too narrow between the wall and the scarp excavation is discontinued here but continued west of the wall with a new pail. The new wall (#34) is somewhat better preserved on the west side. Max. pre hist here is 20.66m. Further east it is 20.56m and this is the level at which excavation stops here.
West of wall 34 the area to be dug is reduced to the size of 2.10 m E-W, 1.95 N-S. The level at which a new pail is used is 20.56.

Pail 8

From 20.56 m

Under pail 5
5 N of wall 31

Brownish earth

Shards: consistent MM II with many decorated sherds — spirals, many blue, white, and other.

Inv.

North of wall 31 the fill is soft and as we approach the NE corner of the trench there is some shelled stone, and darkish fill, an outcome of the explosion of mines (after WW II) nearby. A conical cup (the fourth in this area) is found at 1.45 m from the NW corner and some 0.10 m S of a N scar at level 20.50 m. The N face is gradually cleared and wall 31 proves to be quite wide (c. 1.05 m). Digging S of wall 31 with pail 8 shows wall 31 to be quite superficial (here preserved up to two courses).

The bottom course rest on earth at level 20.55 m. Its east section was actually built over wall 34 which is now clearly earlier. Pail 8 then represents material from under the floor.

It is possible that the hard surface found at level 20.71 m may have been the floor of the room but except for its hardness it did not have any other floor characteristics. No floor pottery or tools or stone tools and benches. The level reached now is 20.45 and the fill, still brownish, is softer. This may be fill associated with accumulated next to wall 34. An accumulation of stone (2-3 courses) has appeared in the corners between walls 32 and 34. This may be another earlier wall. It is now time to shift back to the area S of wall 32 and define the collapse wall.
A new wall is found here 0.65m thick and extending 5 ft from wall 32 starting at a distance of 1.60m from the E scarp. We dig a little further down east and west of this wall and south of wall 32 and we discontinue digging in this area which can be further excavated when a trench is opened to the south. Levels reached here are as follows: in the square compartment formed in the S E corner of the trench 19.47m, to the west of the new wall (wall 35) it is at 20.29m and further west close to the termination of wall 32 at 4 at 20.24m.

North of wall 31 we trace more of wall 34. (Right to 15° E of a N-S line of stones) meets wall 34 at right angles. This line may be a southern extension of wall 6 but more clearing is necessary here before the relationships of wall 4 is clarified. The explosion of mines here and the destruction of section of walls (especially 6) has obscured the situation. Since we now know the depth of wall 31 (from digging down at 15° 5 pace) we leave a large segment on the north side of a surface which may have been part of a floor? although it has none of the characteristics of a floor (starting at level 20.62m). Removal of some stones in sufficient fill just to the east of the scarpile and west of wall 34 drops down the level here to 20.42m.
We are now back in the space defined by wall 31 to the N and 32 to the S.
The fill here is softish, brown with several small stones. A probe along the west face of wall 34 indicates that it continues further down for at least another course.
The fill here will now be investigated.
The level is c. 20.45m sloping down towards the west to level 20.38 m near wall 33. We start excavation of this fill with

Pail 90 From 20.45m

under pail
Prominent, softish earth
Sherds: 4910 gr, LMI with several MM II survivals. Many LMI designs - conical cups
Other: charcoal
Inv.:

At level c. 20.37m

At level c. 20.37m, we find a partially squared quern against the west face of wall 34. The earth now becomes more compact and we might be approaching a surface or floor for there are occasional sherds lying flat. We assign a new pail for the pottery just above the presumed floor.

Pail 11 From 20.35 m

under pail 10
Hardish, brown earth
Sherds: 870 gr. Good LMI - small sherds but diagnostic - several conical cup profiles
Other: bones, obsidian flake blade
Inv. C743 Conical cup; C774 Conical cup

x The quern has 3 straight sides and one irregular. Its max. dimensions are 0.47 x 0.32 m. Its depression, following the outline of the block, is very shallow. Thickness, ca. Half a saddle quern was found in small pile of stones first SW.
Excavation continued using Pail 11. This brings us down on a rather uneven hardish surface of hard-packed earth which must be a floor and in connection with wall 31 but also 32 which still continues down. There are no complete pots, but rather mostly unconnected sherds lying around. A series of slabs, small to medium size, and of an irregular size occur in a single N-S line between walls 31 and 32 at a distance of c. 1.80m from wall 34. They are flat and it is not clear at the moment whether they are just floor slabs accidentally preserved along this line or whether they are the surface of an earlier wall. This will be investigated by making a probing 1.30m E-W x 0.70m N-S starting 1.30m W of wall 34 and right against the S line of wall 31. SherdS from this probing will go into Pail 12.

Pail 12 From 20.27 6.5
Under Pail 11
Hardish brown earth (floor packing) sherds, large sherd, LMI - small sherd for diagnostic. Other: bones
Inc.

The floor surface has been photographed before starting the probing. The slabs in the SE corner are clearly not a wall and are removed with Pail 13.

Pail 13 From 20.80m 6.4
Under Pail 11
Soft brown earth
Sherds, 1270 gr, LMI, several diagnostic, a few MM survivals
Other: bones
Inc.
Clearing of the SE corner fl brings us down to the level of the floor. On it is a cobble of oval shape and quite battered on one side which has been used as a foot.

Walls 34 and 32 are shown to bond and are most likely to have been contemporary. Wall 35 also seems to bond, at least in its lowest course with both walls. A breach exists in the structure at the junction of wall 32 and 35 at the upper two courses which is difficult to explain. It looks almost as if there had been an entrance into the room between walls 32 and 34 which was later blocked by wall 35. Wall 34 seems to make an eastern return from the point it meets wall 35 at right angles.

The slabs of the probing investigated with pail 12 turn out to be a wall. It runs for 0.90 m S. of the line of wall 31 and next stops short some 0.95 m from wall 32. This gap may have once been an entrance west and east of the new wall (0.50 m wide).

The wall is found to sit on bedrock and is preserved only for one course. The topmost level of the wall is at 20.27 m. Bedrock is reached at level 20.01 m. To the east of the wall, a little higher to its west and the probing terminated.

To determine the depth of wall 34 we dig a small area 0.50 x 0.50 in dug in the NE corner of Pail 14:

Pail 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From 20.24</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under pail 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard brown earth (floor packing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shards: 2,200 gr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: bones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inc.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The fill here is somewhat softer than in the other sounding and there is much more pottery.
Sketch of Trench 15A and part of 12A4 showing distribution of pails.

Summary of chronology of pails:
1: LMMIA + survivals
2: LMI + LMMII
3: LMMIA, B
4: LMMIB
5: LMI (+ MM)
6: LMMIB
7: LMI (+ MM)
8: LMI
9: LMMII
10: LMI (+ MM)
11: LMMII
12: LMI
13: LMI
14: LMI
15: LMI
16: LMI (+ MM)

For the northernmost section of Room A 2 (between walls 31 and 25) see Trench 12A4.

Tr. 12A4 / Pail 55: surface; MM - LMM, one Byz. sherd
   Pail 56: MMII - LMMII
   Pail 58: LMMIA

One of the workmen is now cleaning wall 33 so that its line and construction are clarified. Cleaning takes us to the edge of the hill to the west. The sherds are few and indistinct and are discarded. A bullet cartridge is found on the cliff edge. Also an obsidian segment.

In the SW corner of the trench and near wall 33 bedrock appears next to it as a grey clay area which we begin to follow. The black slopes down towards the east and rate us under the floor surface. The floor is packed here. Flakes off rather easily. Small bone, and an obsidian blade are found in the fill. An area c. 100 x 100 cm. is investigated in the SW corner and then excavation stopped here as following the burnt surface would necessitate removing down the entire floor. The burnt surface slopes down from 20.22 to 20.04 m.

The discovery of the lower floor, that at level 20.24 m now makes it important to follow this floor to the north of lab; wall 31. Excavation here had stopped generally at level c. 20.50 with a marlyr left of a higher layer at 20.57 m right next to wall 31 towards its W. end. It is decided now to leave this marlur but bring down the level of the entire space N of wall 31 and S of wall 25 of Trench 12A4.

Pail 15: N of wall 31 From 20.50 m under pail
Sherds: 2500 gr. LMM, consistent with the diagnostic sherd joiner with pails 3, 5, 6. 200 gr. bones, piece of bronze, charcoal
Inc. sherds from C 749; Sherd from C 758

South of wall 31 we reach bedrock in the sounding along with pail 14 at level c. 19.93 m. in the SE corner there is a shallow sounding cutting in the bedrock.
Digging down with pail 15 bring us down to a level sloping down gently from E to W. We are now also down to the level reached earlier in the area west of wall 31 so that the next pail will include that area as well. (ie from line a) S few of wall 31 extending W to wall 33 and all the way N to wall 25 of Trench 12A4.

Pail 16 N and W of wall 31 under pail 15 and p.
Brownish earth, rather soft
From 20.38 to 20.32
Sheds 3, 6, 20 gr. LMI, consistent, several MII survivals. ? Drain piece of floor tile; MII jar
Other: bones
Incr. C 782: MII semi-globular cup;
C 783: large terracotta piece

16a: 720 gr. LMI with MII survivals, many sherds.
Excavation continues on 16 Aug, in which we went the surface we considered a floor in the area S of wall 31. A close up photograph of shards on the floor are taken and then they are recovered in 16 Aug. In a separate bag labelled 16 Aug. There is no complete pottery. Just south, the SW hip of wall 24 and along the S face of the wall bedrock has been found, very uneven and sloping down towards the east. At the west point the bedrock surface is quite high, certainly above the 'floor' of the surrounding areas.

It is possible that what we have been calling a floor is really the packing of a floor (hence the lack of extensively preserved pottery) and that the floor surface was destroyed. A possible level for the floor may be that of the two slabs which occur high against the S face of wall 31, the higher one at level 20.38 m. Two more small slabs occur in the corner of wall 31 and 35 but even these would be too low for a floor in relation to the highest part of the bedrock.

Sketch of part of Trenches 12A4 and 15A.

20.38m: highest level of bedrock. For the rest of Trench 15A see plan p. 30. This sketch shows the north limits of Room A2.

Roll 16
Pottery in floor packing S of wall 31.