1983

KOMMOS EXCAVATIONS

TRENCH 50A
TRENCH 50A.1

Steven B. Shubert
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**Index**
Giovanni Bianco laid out Tr. 50A today. The trench is located at the southwest corner of the site, immediately to the south of trenches 36A and 37A and immediately to the west of Tr. 44A. The trench extends to the southwest and slopes down to a small freshwater spring located in the southwest corner of the site.

The main purpose of the trench is to explore and clarify the Late Minoan stratigraphy and architecture in this part of the site, continuing the work of trenches 36A, 37A, and 44A. To this end the trench has been extended east to include the walls of the LMIII building N and to the south to include a late Minoan wall running E-W which can be seen in the slope.

The trench is of irregular shape and dimensions in order to include all relevant features. Maximum N-S length is 11.2 m; E-W width about 7.80 m. On the east the trench is continuous with 44A, then indents c. 1.55 m and continues south for a further 7.90 m. On the north the trench extends 5.55 m from the corner of 37A and 44A then jogs south about 2.6 m where it meets Tr. 36A. The NE corner of the trench is defined by the north and east walls of building N.

To the east of Tr. 50A is Tr. 51A.
The area of square 50 had been cleaned of sand as Tr 29A. Most of the slope is still covered with sand, including some placed here last season to protect against erosion. Our first order of business, therefore, is to remove the sand.

In numbering the walls, we will coordinate with Tr 51A and follow the sequence established in Tr 44A (J. McIvor, 1981). The wall at the south end of the trench becomes wall no. 7, while the walls of building N become 8 and 9. (Tr 44A has walls 1-5, Tr 51A has wall 6.)

In the northern part of the trench we came upon a fair quantity of tile fragments. They fill a pail and vary from 14-17cm in thickness.

As we clear off the sand a scattering of stones appears throughout the trench, as well as four valleys formed by the run off of water to the southwest.

In the Northeast corner of the trench we found a group of very friable sherds set in the sand. A piece of pumice is also found.

Paid 1 level 1

Under paid - Tr. 29A cleaning

From depth of:

NE 5.95-5.87 NW 4.94-4.98
SE 4.99-4.98 SW 3.94-3.8

Soil: Sand

Pottery: Roman/Hellenistic
5,950gr.

Tiles

Coarse rocks

Other: Pumice

Inventoried:

* Fragments of cover tiles: .18 m² of pan tiles
We start in the northeast corner of the trench with

**Pail 2, Level 1**

Under pail 1

From depth of: N6 5.23-5.4  S4.9-5.3

Soil: hard packed sand with stones, pottery: >400g

Tiles, Hellenistic

Other: stone tool, bone

Inventoried: S1549 cobble

We find more roof tile fragments. Then we come down upon what looks like a surface with lepida and pebbles. There is only a small patch of pebbles. The clay surface only seems to extend across the northern part of the trench. We change pails and continue to remove sand from the rest of the trench.

**Pail 3, Level 1**

Under pail 1

From depth of: NE 9.9-5.1  NW 4.6-4.7

Soil: sand

Pottery: 7,500g. (2 pails)

Late Hellenistic, early Roman lamp fragment 2nd century A.D. 3 mixed

Other: stone, shell bone, carbon, roof tiles, waster pot

Inventoried: S158 stone pedestal base
we come across several large stones, but they are sitting on sand so we remove them. More roofing tiles are being found.

In the southern end of the trench we come down upon the top of wall 6, which continues southward from trench 51A. This wall seems to be a later (Hellenistic/Roman) retaining wall, but it may be situated so as to use earlier Minoan walls as a foundation. In Tr. 51A it was found to be on top of sand.

Pails 2 and 3 fill another pail with roof tile fragments. There are about 37m² of pan tiles of several different types. They vary in thickness from about 1cm to 2.9cm. Some are made of a very red fabric, while most are composed of an orange-buff fabric. We saved several of the pan tiles with raised relief. We also recovered six fragments of cover tiles, one of the red fabric and five of the orange. Three fragments of a semi or mazer plate were also recovered. The spout is 6.5cm in interior diameter and is made of the red fabric.

The surface revealed in pail 2 seems to correspond with that revealed in pails 2 and 21 in Tr. 49A (2nd century B.C.) and with that found in the east of Tr. 51A after pail 1.
We continue with pail 3, removing sand mixed with many stones from the slope. The sand is as hard as concrete here which makes for tough going.

After we finish pail 3, we decide to concentrate on the northern section of the trench as the whole trench is rather unwieldy to manage. We decide to go down in the northern 5m of the trench.

In the north bulk we notice a concentration of potsherds in the western section, so we decide to keep these separate and use two pails.

The eastern 3.5m of the lepida surface are...

**Pail 4 level 2**

Under pail 2

- From depth of: N 5.13 - 5.27
  - 5.501 - 5.26

- Soil: white clay and sand

- Pottery: Hellenistic, possibly to 1st century BC.
  - 4th C. B.C. cup fragments
  - Hydra handle: mostly coarse or large body sherds, 2,060 gr.

- Other: stone, pumice

- Inventoried: 51583 disc

The western 2.3m of the northern part of the trench where the lepida jodles off to a stony surface is dug as...

**Pail 5 level 2**

Under pail 2 and surface

- From depth of: 5.0 - 5.2

- Soil: hard packed sandy brown, some clay

- Pottery: 2,300 gr. mostly plain and coarse
SKETCH PLAN OF TR 50A AFTER PAILS 4 AND 5

The earth is very hard packed and the big picks have to be used. In the western section (pails 5) we came across some interesting bits of rock, including a piece of slate. Very little pottery is coming up on the east. A sample of rocks from pail 5 is sent back to the Apothéke including about 1/8 of the slate. A large piece of red clay like earth (-ochre?) is found near the east line of pail 5.

Under pail 4 we seem to have another surface which probably corresponds to that in Tr. 51A under pails 5 and 6. Again this seems to be hard packed clay and sand. In the western section under pail 5 we get a lot of stone rubble. This also seems to correspond with the surface revealed by pails 39, 29, 23 in Tr. 44A (2nd-1st century B.C.).
After finishing pails 4 and 5 we make another pass in the west section of the trench in order to see if the surface in pail 4 extends any further.

**Pail C** level 2
under pail 5 and pail 3
From depth of: N 4.9 - 5.1
S 4.5 - 4.8
soil: sandy brown
pottery: 1,100 gr. 1st half 7th century B.C. to C.500 B.C.
black glazed cup fragments
jaws with pail 7

Other: shell, bone, stone, iron, pumice, charcoal + mineral
Inventoried: C6287 burnt ceramic bead with incised decoration
S1528 loomweight
C6288 spindle whorl
C6306 ostrich eggshell
S1552 disc, S1585 cobbles

With this pass we seem to be in the Late Chalcolithic or Geometric period. We immediately come across lots of iron and shells along with the bead and loomweight illustrated on the opposite page. The context basically seems to be middle with lots of stones and a few blocks of charcoal.

We get some round pebbles like those from Meyer's trench to the north. Many limpet shells in this layer.

In the north scarp we see a line of white clay on the west side (west of the large stone seen on the plan on opposite page). We decide to take the west side of the trench down to this level to see if it connects with the surface we have on the east. Beneath this clay layer is a layer of limpets and then beneath this there seems to be a large sterile layer of sand above the LMIII pebble floor which covered this area.

We make another pass in the west side of the trench.
Pail 7  Level 2

Under pail G
From depth 4: N 4.7-4.9  S 4.5
Soil: darker loam (still some sand) with ash
Pottery: 21, 170g, mixed to 7th century BC
Joints with pail G: CG386 orientalizing aryballes
Joints with E: CG885

Others: shell, bone, charcoal, wood, pumice, alone
soil sample.

Inventory:
- CG299 spindlewhorl
- CG307 Cornithian black-glaze cup frag.
- I20 jug handle with inscribed delta
- CG825 cup late geometric, early orientalizing
- CG836 cup

We continue to find lots of pottery, lumped shells and also rounded pebbles and stones.
We are still getting geometric pottery. These layers must be associated with temple B.
Could the deeper soil be evidence of burning?

We come down upon the white clay layer which can be seen in the back, as we scraped down the surface to this level, the soil does seen very ash-like, especially in the north. We took a sample of this soil for water testing.
The clay surface uncovered in pail 7 peters out to the south about 3.5 m south of the north line of the trench. However, it seems to continue under the large stone in the middle of the north side of the trench (stone A) and under the surface in the northeast which was uncovered in pail 4 (p. 16-17). Stone A appears to be sitting on the surface revealed with pail 7, but projects above the surface revealed in pail 7. There is a 0.37 cm difference between the two surfaces of level 2. We take a photograph to show the relationship between the surfaces of pails 7 and 4 and stone A. We then begin to take down the northeastern corner of the trench so we can trace the surface of pail 8 in this area.

Pail 8 level 2
under pail 4 from depth of: 5.0 - 5.19
soil: sandy brown
pottery: 2,670 gr. scrappy 7th century B.C.

Other: shell, stone

Inventoried:

We limit pail 8 to the area under the surface of pail 4, but for our next pass we start at the south of the northern division of the trench.

Pail 9 level 2
under pail 8 from depth of:
soil: sandy brown
pottery: 9,320 gr. mixed geometric and orientalizing to 7th century B.C.
joins with 4
lead 4th century black glaze cup fragment
contamination from accident 5
We continue to find large rounded pebbles in pails 8 and 9. The surface revealed by pail 9 does not seem to be at the same level as the surface of pail 7. Burnt patches appear on the surface, but the soil above was not ashy.

We take another pass to the level of the surface of pail 7.

**Pail 10 Level 2**
*Under pail 9, from depth of 4.8-5.0, soil: brown pottery: 3,500 gr. Joints with 7 and 9. To 7th century B.C.*

Other: pumice, iron, bone, shells (limpets).

**Inventoried:** C6330 Orientalizing Aryballos

Some sand mixed with the brown soil at the southern end of the trench. In the bulk it looks like a mix of stone chips for pail 10.

*This surface corresponds with that of pails 7, 8; 626 in Tr. 94A*
Continuing pail 10, in the northeast corner of the trench we encounter sandy brown soil again. We change pails and finish the pass with

Pail 11  level 2  (see plan p. 24)

under pail 9
from depth of: 4.73 - 4.83
soil: sandy brown
pottery: very little - 350 gr.
To Eight centry B.C. or later

Other: shells, iron
Inventoried

Pails 7, 9, 10 and 11 all have great numbers of limpets, probably dumped in the area during post-Minoan times.

With pails 10 and 11 we have a surface basically level with that found in pail 7 in the western part of the trench.

We begin a new pass from the west taking the surface down to the level established by Tr. 37B in this area. Again more limpets come up.

Pail 12  level 2
under pail 7
from depth of: 4.51 - 4.74
soil: sandy brown with stones
pottery: 2 pails 6,470 gr.
joins with 7
To 7th century B.C.

Other: shells, iron, stone, charcoal, bone

Inventoried: C6235 cup
S1564 cobble
We remove stone A and then at about 3m from the east bulk we change pails and continue our pass.

**Pail 13: Level 2**
- Under pails 10 and 11
- From depth of: 4.6 - 4.74
- Soil: sandy brown
- Pottery: 3,820 gr. To 7th century BC.

**Pail 14: Level 2**
- Under pail 10
- From depth of: 4.52 - 4.7
- Soil: dark brown with sand and stones
- Pottery: 2,000 gr. To late 8th or early 7th century BC.

Other: iron, bone, shell, obsidian flake, limpet deposit

In the southern part of this pass the soil is darker brown mixed with sand and stones, so we give this a separate pail.

Inventoried:
- S1541 obsidian flake
- S1553 volcanic cobble
- S1574 volcanic cobble

About 2.5m south of the north bulk and 1.2m west of east bulk we come across a whole pile of limpet shells. They are not burnt and must have been eaten raw or boiled. We collect these limpets separately from the shells of the pail and label them "limpet deposit".

We find a flake of worked obsidian!
The surface of pails 12 and 13 was defined only by a few burnt patches and maybe 4-5 very small orange specks. Nevertheless, it seems to correspond to that of Tr44A after pails 11 and 30.

We change pails and make another pass to the top of wall 1.

Pail 15 level 2
under pail 13
from depth of: 4.5 - 4.6
soil: sandy brown
pottery: 2,950 gr. To second half of 8th century BC.
more of CG 331-2 junction with 13
some Proto-Geometric, but mostly late Geometric

Other: stone, bone, shells, pumice, iron, charcoal sample of orange specks.
Inventoried:

Immediately in the south east corner we came upon a patch of earth full of specks of an orange-chalk-like substance. Exactly what we expected to find in connection with the surface of pail 13. We continue to get a plethora of limpet shells.

We seem to be coming down on another surface with traces of burning. Two stones, however, project above the surface in the east near wall 1.

In the northwest corner we find a quantity of limpets in a burnt patch. This seems to be above the level of the surface as seen in the north scarp.

With pail 15 we come to the level of the southeast corner of Tr. 278 and henceforth this area will be dug with our trench. The stone rubble in this section, however, does not appear yet elsewhere in the trench.
We take the ashy-clay layer in the northwest of the Trench down to the level of the surface as traced in the pit wall.

Pail 16 level 2
under pail 15
from depth of: 4.5 - 4.57
soil: hard-packed sandy clay
pottery: 1,920 scraps to latest 8th or 7th century B.C.

Other: shells, bone, charcoal, soil sample

Inventoried: C6336 Corinthian kotyle fragment
joins with fragments in S24/3.16

At the same time we use another pail to dig a 1.5m wide strip along the south of the northern section of the Trench.

Pail 17 level 2
under pails 12-14
from depth of: E 4.45 - 4.58  W: 4.35 - 4.52
soil: brown earth with stones
pottery: 5,320gr.  7th century B.C.

Other: bone, charcoal, iron spk.?, iron lump, pumice, shell stone

Inventoried: Mi/31 iron spik
S1550 2 volcanic cobbles

I take a soil sample from pail 16 even though the soil looks very sandy now. Did the ashes blow away over the weekend? Did we dig through the ashes before we changed pails? Is it too early in the morning to see clearly?
We have another limpet deposit in pail 16

In the southern end of the trench we have more rubble appearing. Our surface extends to about a meter north of the south bank and then we have the rubble set in a dark, rich brown soil.

We make another pass across the northern portion of the trench.

**Pail 18 level 2**

under pails 15-16

from depth of: 4.16 - 4.5

soil: hard packed sand

pottery: 3,020 To late 8th century B.C.

mainly large, coarse and plain

Other: bone, stone, shell, sample of burnt sand

Inventoried: 66377 semicourse cup

The top-loader (operators) comes today at 7:30 AM and is in the process of removing our dump cabs in the southeast corner of the trench.

We are finding nothing but sand. In the center of the trench we find a patch of burnt sand. The sand in the east of the trench is becoming mixed with clay with charcoal flecks fading into the burnt sand patch. The sand in the west part of the trench is very loose with almost no dirt mixed in it all. We change pails before going down. The pure sand in the west is taken out first.

**Pail 19 level 2**

under pail 18

from depth of: 3.7 - 4.2

soil: pure loose sand
Pottery: 2,225 yr To 8th-7th century B.C.
scrap of Minoan

Other: iron lamp

Inventory:

The pure sand continues across the north of the trench and we remove it all with pail 19 also several large stones are found to be sitting on sand and are therefore removed. It looks very much like the rubble will not continue across the trench and what we have are two wall tumbles, one on the east and one on the west.

Pure sand was also found in the southwest corner of Trench 37A at a level equivalent to pails 18 and 19 in Tr. 50A (.3.4-4.5) This was removed in Tr. 37A pail 189 (N.8, p.125).
We continue with pail 19, hoping to get to the LMIII pebble floor today. About 10 cm above the pebble floor the sand becomes very hard packed and seems to form the surface on which the rubble sits. We stop pail 19 at this point and take a new pail for the southern part of the trench.

Pail 20 level 2
Under pail 17
From depth of: 4.3 - 4.45
Soil: dark brown mixed with sand
Pottery: 5570 gc
50% Iron Age, 50% Minoan
Some LMIII, mostly LMIII A

Other: pumice, bone, shell

Inventory:
C6355: LM coarse ware stirrup jar
C6354: LMIII bowl

We find the southern wall of building 8 running E-W about 1 m north of the southern edge of the northern section of the trench. This is designated as wall 10. Actually only the north face of the wall is visible.

Juliana Bianco prepares a measured plan of the rock tumble and the top of wall 10. While she is doing this, the men dismantle a small wall and move a large block which had been placed against the south scarp of Tr. 37A, clearing the way for us to go down further.

We now move to clean the surface debris from the western part of the trench on the slope.

Pail 21 level 1
Under:
From depth of: 3.3 - 4.6
Soil: hard-packed sand and rocks