KOMMOS EXCAVATIONS
1981
Area A
Trench 43A

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Contents

The account of the excavation east and northeast of Minoan Building 3, and west of Classical Buildings A1 and A2 (The Greek temple C). During the process of the work were exposed the remains of Room 4 (Kershenbaum number from 1981 publication), the east-west orthostate wall, the mapp Minoan necropolis to its north, and the "MN" retaining wall along its north. Minoan structures from Geometric to LM III were encountered along the way all recorded herein (see index pp. 149-152).
We began excavating today. The trench had been laid out yesterday. Today, the trench was subdivided along a N-S line which is parallel to the N-S wall of Building B and 3.25 m. to the east of the N-S wall of Building J. We will excavate to the west of this dividing line first in order to facilitate the removal of earth from the trench. Another dividing line was extended to the north of Building J following the line of the N-S wall. Excavation to the west of this line will be in separate pails from that to the east in order to avoid contamination from the large sand scarp to the west which may have been created in earlier times by erosion from the sea.

Excavation began with the clearing of sand in the robber’s trench to the west of Temple C (Trench 29A) and in the 10 m. wide strip to the east of Building J which was excavated until the top of the N-S wall of Building J was cleared, (Trench 27B) and in the NE corner (Trench 14A1).

After a photograph of the trench before excavation, the soil on the surface throughout 43A to the east of the line of the N-S wall of Building J was taken in the first pail:

Pail 1 - Level 2
Under: sand clearing of Trench 29 = surface at beginning of Trench 43
From: 6.18.37 To: 6.23
Soil: hard, compacted sand, mixed with some earth
Pottery: scrappy, 7th c. B.C., B.G., and coarse fabrics
As we dug pail 1 from the higher, northern end of 43A to the south there was more medium brown soil and less sand but we took a 15 cm. pass with big picks all the way across in order to clear away the surface contamination. Some burnt black ash mixed with sand was noticed along the eastern edge of the trench about 4 m. from the N. edge of the trench, such as was found in the destruction level of Temple C.

After taking the top 5 cm. in pail 1, we began again at the northern end of the trench with a new pail:

Pail 2 - Level 2
Under: Pail 1
From: 6.23, 6.84, 5.95, 5.90, 5.82, 5.71, 5.685
To: 5.88, 5.82, 5.755, 5.665, 5.725, 5.747, 5.65
Soil: soft, medium brown soil mixed with some sand
Pottery: loomweight, little but clearly into 7th cent. B.C.; much LM III +II (mostly worn)
Other: shell, charcoal, stone tool (?), asbestos, bone, soft yellow stone, plaster, iron, pumice
Inv.: C 3637 = loom weight - Bronze Age type
We continued excavating with Pail 2 until large flat stones had been cleared in the northern part of the trench. The stones are grouped together running N-S along the western edge of the trench and turning east about 2 m. south of the northern edge of the trench. The stones are resting on soil only. In the southern part of the trench, excavation in Pail 2 was stopped approximately 5 cm. above the level of sherd s and limpets visible in the scarp left by the excavation of Trench 27B. Pail 2 stopped above many other stones (smaller than the large flat stones but larger than fist-size) which are at a lower level than the large flat stones cleared in Pail 2 and which are at the northern edge of the trench.

Meanwhile Wall 6 excavated in Trench 14A1 to the north of Trench 43 was cleaned.

After finishing Pail 2, we began excavating to the west of the N-S line running N of the corner of Building J in a new pail:

Pail 3 - Level 2
Under: sand clearing of Trench 24 - surface at beginning of Trench 43
From: 6.04 to: 5.82
Soil: mixed sand, earth, rubble from erosion
Pottery: scrappy, not diagnostic
w/6th c. BC pithakhi neck+rim fr.
Other: none

Inv.: none
A N-S line of flat stones and rubble was found at the eastern edge of the western section of Trench 43A. These are on the same level as the large flat stones in Pail 2 and like them rest on soil only. To the west is the large scarp created by erosion.

After photography, the large flat stones in both sections of Trench 43A and the supporting soil down to the bottom level of Pails 2 and 3 (except 4 stones in the N-S line which the Director chose to leave in place) were removed in a new pail:

Pail 4 - Level 2
Under: Pails 2 and 3
From: 6.04 to 5.82
Soil: softer, darker medium brown soil mixed with some sand
Pottery: 5th cent. BC, with 7th c. BC, and LM (only 5 B.G. sherds)
Other: charcoal, shell

Inv: C 3638 - cup base ca. 450 BC.
C 3639 - cup base ca. 420-380 BC.

At the end of the day, the Director decided that the 4 remaining stones should be removed tomorrow in the same pail as the other stones.
We continued digging in pail 4, removing all the large flat stones. The workman also began to make a pass over the western section of the trench before they were stopped.

Now we began digging in the SE corner of the trench in an area N-S 1.50, E-W 1.10. This area was excavated first in order to remove the contamination created by a water-eroded gulley in the SE corner of the trench. This area was excavated in:

Pail 5 - Level 2
Under: Pail 2
From: 5.72, To: 5.595
Soil: Softer, darker medium brown soil mixed with sand
Pottery: BC, cup base 400-350 BC, and a Corinthianizing body, fr., otherwise scrappy
Other: Shell
Finds: C 3640 - Corinthian cup/jug? frag.

Excavation in pail 5 was stopped when the level of mixed limpets and sherd visible in the scarp was reached.

Now we returned to the northern part of the trench in order to excavate throughout the eastern section of the trench down to but not including the mixed limpet and sherd's level visible in the scarp in a new pail.

Pail 6 - Level 2
Under: Pail 2
From: 5.88, 5.82, 5.755, 5.665, 5.645, 5.675
To: 5.77, 5.675, 5.575, 5.555, 5.575, 5.75
Soil: Softer, medium brown soil mixed w/ sand
Pottery: 2 Classical (1 Attic BS, large sherd + bowl base) with 7th c. BS of Iron Age sherds + much LM III sherds
Other: Shell, bone, charcoal, soft yellow substance, pumice
Inv. none

The stones which were first exposed in the northern section of the trench in Pail 2 were cleared until the soil beneath them was visible. This level (bottom of stones) appears to correspond to the top of the limpet and shard level as limpets were exposed next to the bottom of some of these stones. The stones appear to be rubble accumulation concentrated in the NE corner of the trench. The layer removed in Pail 6 was noticeably cleaner than what lies below; the layer contains less pottery and contains less small bits of charcoal and pottery as well as being, above the mixed limpets and shards level. At ca. 968.2 X, 1108.2 Y, a large potsherd appeared to be resting on a surface. To the south of this potsherd, a patch of burnt red soil was found, about 1 m. in diameter. Another patch of burnt soil was found along the eastern scarp, ca. 4 m. from the northern scarp. The bottom of Pail 6 is level with the bottom of where Trench 14A1 overlaid Trench 43A.

The western section of the trench was along the eroded scarp was taken in a separate pail:

Pail 7 - level 12
Under: Pail 3
From: 5.82  To: 5.625
Soil: mixed earth, sand + rubble from erosion
Pottery: to at least 4th c. B.C. (scrappy)
Other: none
Inv: C3662 Creten krathos base
June 26, 1981

We stopped excavating in pail 7 when the bottom surface was level with the bottom of pail 6. The rubble in the northern section of the trench was taken out in a new pail:

Pail 8 - Level 2
Under: Pail 6
From: 5.88 To: 5.675
Soil: soft, medium brown mixed with sand
Pottery: undatable, non-diagnostic sherds
Other: none
Inv.: 

The ca. 1 m. large patch of burnt red soil and the large potsherd which rested at its edge were taken in:
(= Pot 1)

Pail 9 - Level 2
Under: Pail 6
From: 5.635 To: 5.585
Soil: burnt red earth mixed with sand
Pottery: Pot 1, undatable, 8th-7th BCE
Other: Shell
Inv.: 

After the rubble and burnt red patch which overlaid the layer of limpets and potsherds was removed, we began excavating the limpet and sherd layer from the north, throughout the eastern section of Trench 43A in a new pail:

Pail 10 - Level 2
Under: Pail 6
From 5.675, 5.685, 5.595, 5.555, 5.545, 5.555
To: 5.545, 5.500, 5.510, 5.515, 4.35
Soil: soft, light medium brown soil with a very little sand and many small shells
A handful of limpets were found in the first area excavated in the northeast corner, an area which had been covered by rubble, which encouraged us to think that the limpet and shards level is continuous this far even though the density of shell is less than it appears in the scarp at the southwest corner of the trench. Because the time involved compared to the rewards of such methods at this level, it was decided to dig with a large pick and decided not to sieve. These means that although the layer excavated in Pail 10 is dense in bits of shell, comparatively little was collected.

Another large group of limpets was found along the east scarp ca. 5 m. from the north scarp.

Because we continued to find a greater quantity of shells, especially limpets, to the south of the E-W line 5 m. south of the north scarp, we changed at the E-W line 5.5 m. south of the north scarp to:

Pail 11 - Level 2
Under : Pail 6
From: 5, 5.95, 5.55, 5.575, 5.585, 6.55
To: 5, 5.95, 5, 5.55, 5.585, 5.585, 5.585
Soil: soft, light medium soil with very little sand and many small shells

Pottery: 1 sherds in special attention (pyro lit.)
Other: shell, stone tool, pumice, iron

Pottery (update): to 6th - 5th cent. B.C. ?; B.G. cups to 7th - 6th  as later, rest pottery mostly large + coarse
The soil is the same as before and thus may just be a continuation of Pail 10. It is interesting, however, that the change should occur in line with the northernmost E-W wall of Building J. In the course of excavating from the north to the south, a darker soil appeared in the eastern part of the trench at a higher level. In the course of excavating from north to south, darker soil of a layer below the one excavated in Pail 11 appeared at a higher level in the eastern part of the trench, suggesting that the level slopes downward to the west at the southern end of the trench, and downward to the north, as the darker soil appears at a higher level to the south.

We returned to the northernmost part of the trench, where the soil is exactly the same as in the first pass in Pail 10, hence we continue digging the second pass in Pail 10. The only difference in the second pass appears to be the relative lack of pottery, although some lumps were found. As we dug, the soil appeared to be not only cleaner (less pottery, etc.) but sandier. At this point, a much of a black glazed cup of a type earlier than those already found was uncovered. We decided to change Pails because the cleaner soil with more sand may be an earlier layer than already excavated.
We began a new pail to take the clean, sandy, soil:

Pail 12: Level 2
Under: Pail 10 435 435 435 40
From: 5.545, 5.500, 5.440, 5.415, 5.455, 5.295
To: 5.295, 5.275, 5.245, 5.245, 5.245

Soil: Very soft, sandy, clean soil

Pottery: joining sherds of pot; 8th - 7th B.C.
still sub-Geo. ornament on jug; scrawny B.G. cup but diagnostic
Other: Shell, charcoal, bone,
stone kernos (in rubble accumulation), stone
Inv.: C 3718 - B.G. cup - 8th B.C.

S 869 - kernos

Excavation in Pail 12 is limited to the eastern section of the trench.

While excavation proceeded from the north to the south in pail 12,
I cleaned along the E-W strip between 5 and 5.5 m. from the N scarp. At this point, the limpet and sherd layer which overlaid the clean sandy soil to the N and the darker earth to the south does not appear to have been totally removed, perhaps as a result of the confusion in changing from pail 10 to pail 11 and the emergence of the darker earth and the accumulation of rubble in the western part of this area. Before the first pass in pail 12 reaches this point, I decided to clean this area to clarify the relationship between the darker earth and the clean sandy soil. The finds from this final cleaning of the limpet and sherd layer will be added to pail 10. This pass was extended from 5.5 m. to the S. of the N scarp to 6 m. in order to clear the far side of the rubble accumulation in the press.
As a result, we decided that although the soil was slightly darker to the south, it is essentially the same clean, sandy soil found to the north, so pail 12 will be allowed to run all the way from the N. edge to the S. edge of the trench. More stones appeared in the rubble accumulation at 6 m. 

The Director suggests it may be a "chicken" wall because the stones run along an E-W line and stones appear below these in the west scarp.

After the first pass in pail 12, I decided to take the western section down to the same level. The limpet and sherd layer does not appear in the scarp of the west section so the difference between pails 10 and 12 in the eastern section will not be made here. Contamination is to be expected as a result of the large sand-eroded scarp to the west. The west section is taken in:

Pail 13 - Level 2
Under: Pail 7
From: 5.625 To: 5.305
Soil: light brown, sandy, soft soil
Pottery: Late Iron Age, after 8th B.C. B.C.
but not very diagnostic B.C. cup, mostly coarse large vessels
Other: shell

Inv:
At the southern end of the trench, more of the limpet and sherd layer was found. Some of this material went into pail 12 before I changed back to pail 11. So from ca. 6.5 m. to the S. end of the trench, another pass was taken and the finds will be added to pail 11. In the end, I decided that what we had done was to take a second pass over the area of pail 11 (from 5 - 5.5 m. S. of the N. scarp to the S. edge of the scarp) so all the material collected will be added to pail 11, not separately to pails 10 and 11, and new elevations will be taken for the bottom of pail 11.

After the first pass in pail 12 and the removal of the western section down to the same level, we divided off the northern 2.5 m. and reserved it at this arbitrary level in order to facilitate the removal of earth from the trench. In other words, after the first p., the second pass in pail 12 will be taken from 2.5 m. S. of the N. scarp to the south edge of the trench in the eastern section only.
We began the third pass over the eastern section of the trench from 2.5 m. south of the N. scarp to the S. scarp. The soil is still the soft, relatively clean sand found in the first two passes of pail 12. Temporarily the pottery from the third pass will be reserved in a separate, unnumbered pail in case there is a ceramic change not marked by a stratigraphic change. This possibility is suggested by a Geometric sherd and concentric circles found towards the end of the day before yesterday. In the third pass, many limpets were found in small clusters.

At 4.20 m. from the north scarp of Trench 43 A and about .5 m. from the east scarp, many fragments of sea urchins were found at the bottom of the layer being taken in the third pass, along with fragments of a Corinthian cup. All the material found in this area was reserved for a new pail. Excavation in the third pass from this point south stayed at a level above that at which the sea urchin feast was found. The sea urchin feast will be considered to be part of a layer under it that taken in pail 12. After the third pass, we cleaned around the rubble along which forms an EW line at ca. 6 m. S. of the N. scarp. More stones below the rubble on the surface were visible so the rubble will remain.

We decided to designate the finds made in the third pass of pail 12 as pail 12, second of two buckets. The rubble at ca. 6 m. S. of N scarp was removed in this 2nd bucket of pail 12 as it was disturbed.
Now we begin a new pail at the point where the sea urchin east was found and to the south, taking this down to the level which was reached in the third pass at pail 12 to the north of this point. This new pail is:

Pail 14 - Level 2

Under pail 12
From: 5.3, 5.275, 5.295, 5.245
To: 5.235, 5.21, 5.085, 5.035
Soil: Brown, soft, clean sand
Pottery: Johnson sherds from near sea urchin
Lil 8th-7th B.C., 7th c. base, L.G. cup frs. 1 assoc. deep skyphos (4th c.), many dating sherds
Other: Sea urchin, soil for water sieving containing sea urchin, charcoal from near sea urchin, pink substance from near sea urchin, shell, bone, charcoal, pumice in assoc. w/sea urchin

Inv. 1

At the bottom of pail 14, limestone working chips were found at 5 m. S. of the N. scarp and from the east scarp to 0.6 m. to the west. Further south, a patch of red burnt soil was found at 6.5 m. S. of the N scarp to and extending to 8 + m. in a strip 40-60 m. wide, along the western edge of the trench which was 13 m. east of Bldg. 5 at this level. The level defined by the working chips and the top of the burnt red patch shows a slope downward to the south. The red patch was taken in:

Pail 15 - Level 2
Under Pail 14.
From: 5, 2, 85  
To: 5, 3, 5, 7, 23, 5, 235, 5, 21, 5, 0, 85, 5, 0, 35
Soil: sand, burnt red + black at S end of trench
Pottery: Corinthian? Sherd from rear working chips, joining sherd of cup w/ 1,823 joining sherd of another cup, w/ 1 of 2 (just N of E-W rubble) [see below]
Other: w/ 1 of 2: working chips, shell, stone, charcoal, bone
w/ 2 of 2 (red + black area): shell, greenish white substance, bone, charcoal, soil sample

Inv.: C 3719 - kotyle
C 3724
C 3804 - kotyle fr. Corinthian
S 878 - cobble
Pottery (cont.): 1st 1/2 of 7th c. B.C.
1 Corinthianizing kotyle and some good cup rims, some LG-E.O. B.C. cups, several large 7th c. vessel frs., E.O. white concentric O's on black, L PG - PGB winged lozenge with dots
June 30, 1981

Upon further exploration of the red patch taken in pail 15, I realized that it did not belong to a defined area but instead extended outward to the south. The sand and finds, which over lay this red soil, were taken in pail 14. We ceased excavation of the red patch in pail 15 and decided to consider the red area a burnt part of a layer which runs from the north to the south taking up the working chips with it. This whole layer will belong to pail 15. The first of two pails numbered 15 will be from 25 m. S. of N. scarp in east section to just beyond where the rubble ends, to where the burnt red part begins. The second of two pails numbered 15 will be the burnt red area to the south of the rubble.

The slope of the red patch indicates a slope downward to the east as well as downward to the south. A very black burnt patch was found in the SE corner of the trench with what may have been some working chips on top of this black patch. In the second pass from the north, a small patch of black sand was found slightly below and slightly to the north of where the working chips were found at 8 4 m. S. of N. scarp along east scarp.

Again to the south of the E-W line of rubble we dug w/pail 15 (26 ) 2 ). The portion was taken evenly down to the lowest level at which red soil was found, but on a slope downward to the south. This pass cleared the top of a wall running N-S. The continuation of wall in Trench 37A.
Having cleared the tops of walls running both EW + NS, we change pails. Because there is a S face on the E-W wall (at 6 m S of N scarp) with no north face, and the rubble at the top fell towards the south, the Director suggests the E-W wall held back sand to the N, and that there is an interior to the south which would be later than the E-W wall. We separate the area into three sections divided by a EW line at 6.5 m S of the N scarp and a NS line 0.85 m W of east scarp. The south west section which may be the interior of a room as the two wall have faces towards the south west and the rubble has fallen in it; will be taken in:

- Pail 16 - Level 2
  - Under 15
  - From: 5.04, 5.1, 4.945, 4.955
  - To: ca. 4.89, 4.83, 4.7, 4.7, 4.73
  - Soil: Sand
  - Pottery: Bronze Age, no identifiable
  - Iron Age
  - Other: shell, stone
  - Inv.

The southeast section, which is for the most part clearing the top of the NS wall is taken in:

- Pail 17 - Level 2
  - Under 15
  - From: 5.08, 4.96 to: 5.145, 4.705

Pail diagram for excavation below pail 15

Room D → Walls S and 15

Walls S and 15

Wall 5 →
Soil: sand
Pottery: Proto-geometric, scrappy, but
Phoenician amphora frags.
Other: bone, shell, charcoal, plaster

Inv. C3736 PG, krateriskos
C3737 Phoenician amphora frags.

At the same time, the west section was taken down to the level of the bottom of pail 15 in

Pail 18 - Level 2
Under Pail 13
From: 5.205 To: 5.125
Soil: sand
Pottery: whole pot for cleaning + contents
7thc. BC, 8thc. BC, cup base
Other: stone

Inv. C3671 = aryballos = 7thc. BC (?)