Kommos 1985
TRENCHES 53A AND 53A1

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Tr 53A is located between the four alters in the southern area of the site. Its dimensions are 4.10 m E/W and 7.00 m N/S, and its relation to the four alters are: .52 m west of H, .78 m west of M, .79 m east of C, and .47 m east L, measured at the corners of the trench.

Previous work in this area consisted primarily in excavating down to the levels of the krepidakia of the alters, the approximate levels from which Tr 53A will begin. Somewhere below the levels of the bases of the alters have been made west of alter H - into the area indicated in Tr 53A - as well as east of that alter, and west of alter C. (See plan p. 6 for the positions of these trenches).

Since previous work in the area of Tr 53A has already exposed the levels associated with the four alters, the purpose of excavating again in this area is to explore the Minoan levels. Specifically, as laid out Tr 53A will uncover possible eastward extensions of the Minoan orthostate wall bordering the Minoan round and the southern wall of building T (Tr 42A wall 7. See plan p. 8).

Position of Tr 53A (solid line) in relation to earlier trenches and to the four alters C, H, L & M.

Coordinates of Tr 53A:

S.W. corner: 996.58 x 1103.25 y
N.W. corner: 995.12 x 1110.10 y
N.E. corner: 999.13 x 1110.95 y
S.E. corner: 1000.59 x 1104.10 y
Plan showing the relation of Tr 53A to other structures in the southern quarter of the site.
Excavation begins today. Loose sand is swept from the area of the trench and a pre-excavation photograph is made (photo p.10). The trench is sub-divided into two equal halves, north and south, solely for reasons of convenience. We begin in the NE corner to remove the back-fill from a sounding made in this area in 1978 by John McEnroe (see Notebook 20 pp.95 - 97 and Season's Report Trench 20B1, E-W Section). The sounding extends into the area of Tr. 53 A c. 50 m from the east and c. 2 m from the north. (see fig. p.10 bottom). The backfill, consisting of loose sand and no pottery, was removed, and compact earth was encountered.

We begin a pail to dig a layer in the northern half of the trench:

* Pail no: 1
  (level 2)
  under pail: /\
  from depth of: 6.075 (NE) / 5.96 (center)
  to: 5.80 (SW) / 5.995 (E)

Type of soil: sand and sand-mixed with brown earth.

Pottery contents: little; 450 gr. non-diagnostic. To hello?

Other: —
Inventoried:

This pail was continued until hard earth was reached at all points in the northern half of the trench. Upon completion levels are taken (see fig. p. 12 top). The level of the hard earth reached after removal of backfill in NE area of the trench corresponds to the lowest level reached by Tr 2031: 5.85).

A new pail is begun, to dig the first layer of hard earth, in the northern half of the trench.

* Pail no: 2 (level 3)
  under: pail no 1
  from depth of: 5.80 (SW)/5.995 (E)
  to: 5.725 (SW)/5.905 (NE)

Type of soil: compact brown earth with some sand. Some small white and grey stones, irregularly shaped and unworn, in the NE corner of the trench.

Pottery contents: coarse red, much BG, some fro. of fine brown-glazed wove fabric. C. 3,300 gr. much Lake Archaic but some Hell.
Levels in northern half of Tr 53A at the bottom of Pail no 2

Inventoried: c6273 & c6274 Late Archaic cups
- c6275 Early Classic cup
- c6276 Lekane

After taking levels (see fig. p. 14 top), we arbitrarily change pails to dig deeper in the northern half of the trench:

* Pail no: 3 (level 3)
  under: pail no 2
  from depth of: 5.725 SW/5.905 NE
  to: 5.67 SW/5.79 SE

Type of soil: compact brown earth, clayey, with some sand. c. 5 cm. from the top of this pail numerous, small (c. 5-10 cm.) white and grey stones begin to appear in the northern half of the trench. The stones are irregular in shape and unworn.

At the bottom of the pail it appears that the greatest concentration of stones lies in the northern areas of the trench. In the NE corner, the stones are tightly packed, and in some cases larger than the rubble appearing elsewhere.

* c. 20 cm. largest 30 cm.
Pottery contents: BG, much fine brown-glazed sherds.
2,400gr. Late Archaic, 6th-early 5th B.C.
Other: bones, shells, cobbles.

Inventoried:

We take levels at the end of the day (see Fig. p.16 top) and sweep out the trench to determine the extent of the stone chips.
Today we change pails in order to remove the layer of ocher stones chips:

* Pail no. 4 (level 3)
  Under pail no 3
  from depth of: 5.67 (SW) / 5.79 (SE)
  to: 5.585 (SW) / 5.705 (SE)

Type of soil: Compact brown earth with many small white and grey stones, measuring from 5 cm to 20 cm. Unmarked, irregular in shape. A few water-worn pebbles.

Pottery contents: Coarse wares fr. of a bright red-orange fabric, at least one Geometric Sherd. C. 7,100 B.C. much orientalizing but with some late archaic cup bases. To 6thc B.C.

Other: Few bones, some shells, two cobbles.

Inventoried:

** Note: A limestone chip layer is reported from west of altar C as well, at a level from 5.69 to 5.54 m. See Season's Report Tr 10A1 and Notebook 10 p. 95.**
Levels in the northern half of Tr 53A at the bottom of pail no 4 and the locations of larger stones and rubble areas.

Type of Soil: Compact brown earth. Quite clean in the NW. Small white & grey stone chips in the south. Some water works pebbles.

Pottery content: c. 10,350 gr. Latesh late orientalizing with some E.0.

Other: Bones, a number of shells, a stone "chopper", a piece of metal. One other possible stone tool. Sample of burned earth.

Inventory:
- C 6284 B.C. cup
- C 6285 cup L.O.
- S 1539 celt
In the east part of the northern half of the trench, a series of large blocks, four of which at least suggest a major N/S wall (see fig. p. 22). At present, the blocks appear to be roughly trimmed: flat on top.

The area is prepared for a photograph (see p. 24 top), some of the above-lying rubble being left in place.

We begin to excavate the west part of the northern half of the trench, and uncover at least one larger block amidst rubble in the S/E.

Positions and levels of stones and rubble in NE quarter of Tr 53A at the bottom of Pail no. 5
NE corner of Tr 53A from west.

Today we begin by removing the rubble shown in fig. p. 22, and taking levels of the entire trench (see fig. p. 24) and of the blocks appearing in the NE corner (see fig. p. 22).

We change pails to go deeper, working from the top of the wall in the east towards the rubble in the west.

* Pail no: 6 (level 3)
  under: pail no 5
  from depth of: 5.51 (NE)/5.61(SE)
  to: 5.44(SE)/5.46(SW)

Type of soil: compact brown earth, with some rubble and smaller stone chips.

Pottery content: 4,950 gr.
  much course, many orientalising cups
  to c. 600 BC.

Other: bones, shells, piece of metal, 3 stone tools

Inventoried:
  c 6286 Kettle with ray decoration, latest datable sherd.
  $ 1567 Colada
  c 249 Tripodos
With this pail we removed a whole pot which appeared in the NW corner of the trench at the bottom of the previous pail (see fig. p. 22).

As we worked towards the southern part of the trench, more rubble was encountered along with a number of larger stones (see fig. p. 26). In the S/E corner, another small slab was found in line with the face of the N/S wall, measuring c. .30 m x .30 m.

In the SW corner, the block uncovered amidst rubble at the bottom of pail no. 5 proves to be fairly large - .60 m x .30 m - and surrounded by other large stones. Most interesting is a group of flat slabs just west of center in the trench. They are lying not flat but at an angle, one overlapping another, suggesting that they may have fallen.

A relatively large number of limpets in this pail.

We take levels and begin a new pail in the western area of the trench, beginning 1.50 m. west of the east edge of the trench:

* Pail no. 7  (level 3)
  under pail 6
  from depth of: 5.415(S)/5.475(SW)
  to: 5.315(N)/5.435(SW)
Type of soil: compact brown earth with rubble.

Pottery content: c. 950 gr. Very scrappy to Iron Age.

Other: shells, bones

Inventoried:

With this pail we clear more earth and rubble from around the stones in the western area of the trench. (See p. 28)

Having taken levels and a photograph, we remove several stones at the direction of SW Shaw and change pails to continue excavating in the west area of the trench:

Pail no. 8 (level 3)
Under: pail no. 7
From depth of: 5.315 (N)/5.435 (SW)
To: 5.21 (N)/5.29 (SW)

Type of soil: compact brown earth with rubble and stones.

Pottery content: 475 gr. non diagnostic, but some undatable Iron age.

Other: shells, bones

Inventoried:

Levels in Tr 53A at the bottom of pail no. 7
We continue to remove earth with pail no 8 and encounter a line of blocks oriented E/W (see fig. p.30). The blocks are in line c. 1.78m south of the north scarp. The western most block, visible at the bottom of pail 6, prove to be roughly trimmed, 60 x 30 x 50 cm, in dimension; it is not lying flat.

To the east of this lie two smaller blocks, and to the east of these, a rather large block measuring at least 1m as it disappears into the balk created by splitting pails.

Cleaning south of these, some of the rubble at the bottom of pail 6 (see fig. p.26) prove to be small slabs.

Having taken levels (see fig. p.30), we change pails to dig deeper in the area north of the E/W line of blocks:

* Pail no: 9 (level 3)
  under: pail no 8
  from depth of: 5.21 (N)/5.29 (SW)
  to: 5.05 (E)/5.07 (W)

Type of soil: compact brown earth

Pottery content: 475gr. non-diagnostic, but 21BC for look post 1.0 BC possible. 1Gr. or 5Tr.
Other: shells, bones, pumice, carbon, burned earth.