Kommos Excavations
Area A
1979 Season

Trench 30A - 30A2
Excavated June 27 - Aug. 6
by M.C. Shaw

20A
30A1
30A2
pp. 8 ff.
pp. 97 ff.
pp. 117 ff.
Excavation starts today in Trench 30A, of which the dimensions, surface levels and location can be seen on p. 8.

Already yesterday the trench was laid out by the excavation architect, G. Bianco, and the surface levels taken. Work begins with 3 workmen who first clear the surface of bushes and some rubble loosely lying around. To the top layer of earth is assigned:

Pail 1, C.1
Earth, some sand, small stones
Levels as seen on p. 8 to +20.21E/19.94W
Sherds: 1300 grs. worn; Minoan; 1 sherd possibly post-Minoan
Other: shells
Inv.

The trench is located directly south of Trench 24A, which was excavated in the previous season and in which were found rooms and parts of rooms belonging to the east end of the Minoan House. Directly east of the house runs a N-S road repeatedly re-surfaced, the south extension of which we should expect to find in the present trench. The numbering of rooms and walls will continue that used in the adjacent related trenches (IB2, 24A, 19B, 21B). The plan of walls and rooms of trench 24A, with which we are more directly concerned at the moment, can be seen on p. 40 of last year's NB, of which a sketchy reproduction is given here on p. 8. To the south of our trench is a still unnumbered strip of land (8.50 m x 2.50 m) and south of this Trench 24A, which is being excavated by H. Nixon.
Under the sand-earth layer appears a new fill of brownish earth and rubble. The surface still slopes down from east to west and from northeast to southwest. A new pail is assigned to this second layer:

Pail 2 (under pail 1)
From c. 20.26/19.94 W to E19.97/W 19.97
Brownish earth + rubble
Sherds: 1530 yrs. poorly preserved; Mivani;
1 definite Post-M. (joins with sherd in pail 3)
Other: large cobble with possible wear signs
Inv.

The rubble is found to be more concentrated in the area of the trench west of the anticipated southern extension of wall 22. As the slope of the fill is still rather extensive, most of the digging is concentrated on the east section of the trench where the surface is still higher.
Today we have an extra workman loaned from Trench 29 A, where sand clearing is taking place today with the use of a bulldozer. The rubble layer is still being taken down using Pail 2. More of the southern extension of wall 22 is traced.

The rubble occurs in large patches; the greatest accumulation is west of wall 22, with the larger stones, possibly wall material, being next to the wall. Another accumulation is between wall 22 and the west scarp. The stones here are rather larger and are tightly wedged in the narrow triangular space. We leave these at present unexcavated.

Wall 22 is traced for some 3.00m within the trench and then it peters out. From the large stone at the south exposed end one suspects it will have an east turn, but it could also continue further south with only lower courses preserved. At this point and at the level indicated below we change pail.

Pail 3 1.2
Under Pail 2, Rubble reach
From E 19.97/W 19.94 to E 19.86/W 19.80
Sherd s 2100 yrs LM to 3rd c. B.C.
3rd c. B.C. "Tulip cup" base; post-M. join with other
pail 2.

D66er: 2 bags of shells
Inu.
walls 22 and 23 with stone debris on road - From SW.

A photograph is taken of wall 22 as exposed so far and with the surrounding stone rubble and debris. G. Bianco takes levels of pails excavated so far and of the slabs and a few blocks of wall 22. Work continues with four workmen and still using pail 3.

The slabs must be wall debris for they are close to the wall. Further west there is now only smallish rubble. In the southwest section the fill is becoming more clear earth. Slanting medium-sized slabs appear directly west of wall 22.

After some digging in which the slabs are left unexcavated the fill under and next to the slabs is large stone, becomes darker, as if containing organic debris. In fact there is a heap of snails right under one of the slabs near the north edge of the trench. Three snails are collected in a bag separate bag a group.

In cleaning the darkish fill at the north section of the trench near wall 22, two large flat slabs are partially exposed. They seem to have been intentionally placed there, perhaps a road pavement, and were covered by the dark fill which was here some 0.86 m thick. This fill most likely corresponds with that found at the level of pail 10 of Trench 24A and interpreted there as part of surrounding debris and fallen stones. Under this debris we had encountered a hardish surface which we labelled Road Surface A (Trench 24A, pp. 19-21; 23-25, 29-31).
wall 22 and surrounding stone debris
seen from south. Apparent are walls 22
and 23 and spaces T and S of trench
24A. Levels marked by x; on wall 22:
20.08m; slab: 19.72m.

Roll I, Fr. 20: see description above

We decide to leave the fallen slab and
stone debris still unexcavated and to
continue digging in the rest of the trench.
Here no walls or other features have
appeared. One change is clear: namely
that the excessive rubble fill is finishing
and we are getting into less mixed
earth. There are still pockets of rubble,
however, here and there. The excavation
in the trench is resumed at this point with:

Pail 4 (7)
Under Pail 3 - (all trench except for
well 22 and surrounding stones)
From E.19.86/W.19.80 to E.19.86/W.19.75
Earth and small stones
Sherds: 320 g. not closely datable
Other: shells

Sheds all along have been very scanty.

The wall debris is still unexcavated and
is photographed by the end of the day
(see p. 16).
June 30

Now that the mixed and rubble top fill is more or less excavated it is decided to subdivide the trench for more concentrated careful digging. Taking the likely southerly extension of wall 24 as a guide we dig the section in our trench W. of this line. This is 5.80m N-S by 2.40m E-W. It is anticipated that here we shall find the east end of room C, the south exterior wall of the north house and part of the paved road outside, to the south. We start taking the level down with

Pail 5 6.2 - under Pail 4
Brown earth + some rubble
From E: 19.86 W: 19.75 to 19.57
Sherds: 5570 gms. L M III A: 2 - III B
Poor preserved; mostly fine buff; jiffas frags.
Other: shells
Inv.: B10: bronze blade

Excavation in the rest of the trench is temporarily discontinued.

In the section now being dug we note a concentration of rubble at the north and almost pure earth at the south. This may be a differentiation of fill inside and outside a building respectively.

A bronze blade apparently complete and well preserved is found in the earth 91 1.80m from the south scarp, 0.80m from the west scarp and at level 19.70. Its max w. is 0.03m its length 0.047m.

We are approaching the level of the tops of the walls as preserved in
The adjacent trenches, we try to trace its extensions within our trench of wall 2a and of the southern facade wall of the North House still digging with Paul 5. After a couple of layers along these lines we abandon the search as the walls are either preserved at a much lower level or they follow different lines from the ones anticipated. There are more sherd's now.

As we are approaching the level of the paved road directly south of the House we decide to dig the overlying fill separately. This is a rectangular area 1.40 m E-W and 2.40 m N-S, at the Southwest corner of the Trench. This is being excavated with:

Pail 6 1.2
under Pail 5
From 19.57 to 19.32
Brown earth
Shards: 4020 grs. - mostly unpainted -
Latest: LM III B
Other: shells; stone; pottery; naturally
Inv. perforated pebble lid

At the same level and north of this section being excavated with pail 6 we dug separately with a new pail:

Pail 7 1.2
under Pail 5
From 19.57 to 19.44/19.37
Brown earth
Shards: 770 gns. LM III A.2 - III B
Other
Inv.
The fill in the south section is mostly earth. By the end of the day we are at the level of the slab pavement of the road, but no slabs appear here.

In the north section under the earth layer is an accumulation of rubble and rough slabs, mostly near the northwest corner of the trench. These stones are left unexcavated but earth is removed from around them and beyond them. A hardish, occasionally chalkish surface is found here, especially near the stones.
The area to the east of that excavated with pails 6 and 7, is subdivided into a west and east section, taking as a dividing line that of the clear face of wall 23 of Trench 24A. We start excavating the east section, which we shall label central section to distinguish it from pails 6 and 7 of it. The last pail used in the area had been pail 4. We had stopped at a layer of earth and small stones which underlay a layer of rubble with earth. We start taking the level down with

Pail 8 1.2 under Pail 4
Earth + small stones
From 19.76 to 19.49/19.53
Sherds: 3550 gms; some small worn, concave sherds; latest: LMIIIA2-III B:1
Other: shells; lump of clay

In the west section on the assumption that we should be reaching the top of the slab paved passage running north of the house we change into

Pail 9 1.3 under Pail 6
Earth + small stones
From 19.32 to 19.20
Sherds: 4300 gms; total latest: LMIIIB
Other: shells
Inv. C181B; pyxis sherd: LMIIIA2-III B

The north part of the west section of the trench is temporarily left unexcavated. We had stopped (wth...
Roll 2, Fr. 4: Debris in Rm 0 at level reached with Pail 7 From South.

Pail 7 at a level of small stone piles associated with a hardish surface around them which is not spread uniformly throughout this section. A similar situation and at the same level had been encountered within Room 0 in the section excavated previously in Trench 19.13 (see p.37 below). This level of stone is photographed so that excavation can later be resumed later.

In the Southwest section of the trench being excavated with Pail 9 we are beginning to trace the eastern extension of the southern wall of the N. House (ie. Wall 16). It is here preserved a couple of courses lower than farther west.

In the Central section of the trench (Pail 8) piles of smallish stones appear mostly in a N-S line along the east edge of the section. Softest brown earth surrounds them.

In the Southwest section we have reached the level of the preserved top of wall 16 and we decide to dig further down replacing Pail 9 with:

Pail 10 1.3 under Pail 9
Brown earth
From 19.20 to 19.11
Shards : 1650 gns. LMM III A:2 - IV B
Few painted
Other
Inv.

In the northeast corner of this last section there is a pile of stone occupying an area 0.40m N-S x 0.70m W-E, about which we leave...
unexcavated. Wall 16 has now been traced for a length of about 1.00m, some three blocks of which at the easternmost end has what looks like a pivot-hole at its SW corner. The block, however, is too narrow (0.40 x 0.45) to be a threshold. No more blocks or slabs of the slab-paved passage and of wall 21 skirting it to the south have been found. It is possible that the building materials have been robbed. There is much of stone chips intermingled with earth. We change level once again as we seem to have reached a hardish surface of earth.

Pail 11 1.3 under Pail 10
Brownish earth, some chips
From 19.11 to 19.06
Shrds 2000 grs. mixed: MM III - LM III A -
Other: shell stone, pebbles
In

We soon reach a layer of stones with worn surface, ?a slab pavement. One more block of wall 16 is traced, one course down from the other ones.

In the Central Section among the fallen stones we begin to trace a N-S wall parallel to and some 0.65m to the east of wall 24 (see plan p. 8) [labeled well 26]
The stones at the NE corner of the South-west Section (pails 9-11) are found to be sitting on earth. When the level is taken further down in the Central Section of the trench they will be removed. One block, well cut and with an E-W orientation is found in the South-east corner of the South-west Section along the line of wall 21.
Trench 30A : From Southeast
A-D : West Section  
BCEF : Central Section, being excavated.

Level of pails 12, 13 and 14
Apparent: walls 24 and 26; fallen stones associated with dark fill at west; fallen stones along east edge of central section

Pail 13a : Pottery description
5830 gns. Some MMIII, mostly LMIII A/B,
C 1824 : spinoide whorl
C 1825 : LMIII jug
C 1823 : stirrup jar (possibly III B:2) (see drawing p.32).

Pail 12
1:3 (under pail 8)

"Corridor" east of wall 24
Brown earth + small stone
From 19.49 to 19.33
Shards: 6240 gns: octopus jar; mixed, latest LMIII B:1, possibly III A:2; mostly sherd, some deep
Other: shells; 2 pebbles; 1 cobble, perhaps used in no. (For pail 13a see p.30)

Pail 13 + 13a [re-stacked]

Room 0 - Darkish brown earth + stone
From 19.44/19.37 to 19.26
Shards: 5660 gns. Latest: LMIII B
For shards of Pail 13a see p.30
Other: shells; sample of ash fill for water sifting
Intro: bag of turpentine, piece of pumice, piece of charcoal; cobble in no. with signs of
Ino. C 1823, C 1824, C 1825

Both pails (12+13) terminate to the south along the line of wall 16 of which a few more blocks were traced yesterday in the southwest section of the trench (pails 9-11)

In the central section of the trench we resume excavation south of the line of wall 16 with

Pail 14 1:3 under part of Pail 8
Each with some stones...
C1823 Pai13a:13
Design on fragm. from top part of small stirrup jar of LMIII B base
Fine buff
pres. h. of vessel: 0.07m, max. diam. 0.114m
from re-occupation of Rm 0

From 19.53 to 19.92
Shards 220 gns. total; latest CM IIIA.2-21B.1
Other: shells
Ino.

In the area west of wall 24 (Pai13) we are coming on a surface which is quite dark and which has an occasional slab lying flat here and there. This dark fill is patchy and at the same level with fill of brown earth. A similar fill was found in Rm 0 last year, and this is clearly its continuation (for related pottery see refs. p. 37 below). As then we might assume that it represents a surface of use, probably outdoors, the dark fill being perhaps the content of result of organic matter and/or cooking.

The "corridor" contains brownish earth and the occasional fallen small stone or slab.

In the central section there is more unmixed earth except for the pile of stones noted earlier along the east edge which have been left unexcavated.

We start taking the dark fill out using for it what we label as Pai13a since the sherds from Pai13 represent adjacent fill of more brownish earth. The dark fill and the occasional slab have started at level 19.37m. The dark fill is being sieved.

The new N-5 wall is now traced to what seems like its south end, a nicely cut large block and in for most length c. 3.50 m. We can now label
Trench 30A - southwest section - From E.
Levels on walls and slab - pavement of E-W road.

In the central section of the trench it becomes clear that the stones running along the east edge are all fallen. We decide to remove these stones and then dig the entire central section together. The wall assigned to the removed rubble is

Pail 15 (2.2 - under pail 8
Fallen rubble
From 19.80 to 19.42
Sheds: 330 gns.; not much datable material; one definitely LM IIIB shard.
Other: shells; stone grooved quern frag.

Walls 26 seem to continue further down and we arbitrarily change here from pail 12 into

Pail 16 (1.3 under pail 12
Brown earth & small stone - "Corridor"
From 19.33 to 19.18
Sheds: 2500 gns. LM III A: 2: III B

Other: pebble with some wear

In the northwest section clear view of the dark fill and of the brown earth takes us down to a layer of fallen stones. This level is photographed (see p.34) and we then remove these stones (removing the dark fill around them & below them still with pail 13a)

Also photographed at this point (see p.34) is the southwest section of the trench where excavation stopped yesterday with
Trench 30A - Northwest area
level of slabs and rubble west of wall 24
x: 19.37; one of the slabs associated with
the dark ashy fill; xx: 19.37; xxx: 19.59m
a: Concentration of lumps + ashy fill

C 1827 Pail 16 + 26g
Firn sotto scala
Jar - alabastron
rim diam. 0.12 m - Fine buff
LM III date

1:3

C 1828 Pails 16, 20
LM III bowl

bowl w. incurved upper wall
h. 0.082; diam. c. 0.19 m

In the central section removal of
stones from the south half (pail 15)
reveals two walls: one runs E-W
(some 4 blocks so far), the other
(1 block) meets with it at right angles
at the west end and is oriented to the
north. Fallen stones are still being
removed in the north section.

West of wall 24 there is a concentration
of dark and ashy fill between two
rows of parallel stones; rows of small
round stones resting on earth, some 3.65 m
north of the southern edge of the trench.
Within this "space" are found a
number of lumps which are collected
in a separate bag. A sample of
black ashy fill is also collected for
water sieving at the apothecary to
determine any organic material. A similar
fill and at the same level had been
found last year in Rm 0 in Trench 19B.
Relevant pails in that trench are Pails 83,
(pp. 89-91), 13 (pp. 95-97), 14 (pp. 97-101, 107, 120)
20 (p. 111 and plan p. 110, p. 115). The
underlying level of brownish earth was
excavated here with Pail 21 (p. 115)
Once all the darkish fill is removed in the area of Pail 11 we come upon a rough surface of hard packed earth. This is now to be excavated with:

Pail 11  L. 3 Under Pails 13+13a brownish earth
From 19.26 to 19.14
Sheds: 2090 gns. Latest datable: LH IIIB

Other: Frag. of 'gourna'; shells; lump of clay.

In the Central Section the stone debris along the east edge has been removed with Pail 15. Very few sherds turned up in this location. We are now at the level of the bottom of Pail 14 throughout this section (just below the top of the wall which has appeared at the eastern edge) and we change into:

Pail 18  L. 3 Under Pails 8/14+15
Brown earth + stones
From 19.42 to 19.29/5.19.27

Other: shells

More rubble is found here continuing the pile left at the corner of the southwest section of the trench (see phot. p.37). The pile is now being excavated along with the rest of the trench, i.e. of its Central section. Rubble extends all the way to the north edge of the trench.

A rough line of stones projects eastward,
Deep cup turned out to be unconnected shade, on cleaning.

Bones; ash fill for water sieving; sample of burnt clay from "slab enclosure" area.

From wall 26 near its north end. Right at the end of the line and among loose small stones we find a bronze nail. Its exact location, measuring from the northwest corner of wall 26 is 1.50m to the south of this point and 1.40m to the east.

In the western section we are now some 0.15m above the floor level of Rm 0. Pall 17 is now replaced by Pall 19.

Pall 19

Brown earth
From: 19/14 19/15
27.250 gms.
Sherds; frags from one deep handled cup, with plaster adhering; cooking dish ash in it.

Other: 2 pebbles
Inc.: C 1832
C 1894: lower part of candle base.

An upright slab appears in the fill roughly parallel to the west face of wall 24 and 0.65m away from it. Part of what may be a second upright slab appears next to the wall. In the space between them are a few pieces of burnt clay and a small mass of disintegrated purple schist. This is likely to be an oven, like others found elsewhere in the same house. No burnt fill is as yet found in the vicinity.

As we move down in Rm 0 patches of darkish earth appear around the slab structure. We trace one more block of wall 24 and expose the north face of the preserved blocks of wall 16.
Excavation continues today with only 3 workers, the fourth one having rejoined his team at the bottom of the slope to the south. Two sections are being excavated: Rm 0 (Pail 19), where we should soon be reaching the floor and in the central section (Pail 18) where piles of large stones, looking like wall debris, are beginning to appear. A large pile occurs right next to wall 26 along the east face. We are removing the earth and leaving the large stones unexcavated. This area is photographed along with Rm 0 and we start taking down the earth level once again with

Pail 20 1.3 under Pail 18
Brown earth and stones
From 19.35 to 19.17
Shards 1200,om mixed deposit MM-
LXII 13 - joins with pail 16
Other: shells

Inv. C 1899: clay appendage on vessel? C 1828
LXII A-B bowl/cup form w. Pail 16; C 1903: frag of figurine

In Rm 0 there is a scatter of rubble and of some slabs, probably wall debris, on the floor. Some collapse must have taken place before the upper surface found July 3 (p. 37, above) came to be used. After the photograph is taken we remove all clearly fallen stones. So far we have excavated around the slab enclosure. We now proceed to its interior space, collecting the sherds from it in a separate bag, still under

In Pail 19 (label on bag: shards from hearth/stone enclosure)

We remove the top layer of fallen blocks next to wall 26 and collect the few sherds under them with pail 18.
but in a separate bag under the label 18a. The tops of another layer of stones appear underneath. We proceed to remove earth around them and along this entire Central Section of the Trench (with pad 20) so we can determine their character.

We dig within the slab enclosure. There is a flat slab between the two upright slabs. No signs of burning within the enclosure but there is burnt only fill on the outside mostly at the southeast end where more are shards of a vessel apparently in situ and to a lesser extent at the north end of the enclosure. The grey fill is dry sieved and a sample is taken to the store room for water sieving. Also in this fill are found some small chunks of burnt clay, samples of which are collected.

Wall 24 is found to extend further south at a much lower level. It is not clear whether it actually meets with Wall 16.

Along the east edge of Rm B there is much stone debris. Some slabs and rough small stones stick out of the “floor” — unless the floor is actually lower down than we thought last year.

In the slab enclosure a small mass of what looks like disintegrated purple schist was noted earlier. A couple of sherds surrounding it gave the impression of perhaps containing the mass, it’s located just outside.
the enclosure (at the northeast corner of the enclosure). It is photographed (in colour) and then excavated. Both schist and schists are put in a separate box for further study and perhaps analysis of the material.

In the central section and at its southern half (South of the south-east end of wall 26) there is a layer of rubble and stones. In the southern section and right along the east edge there are two large blocks, aligning along their east faces and cut triangularly along the west ones; good candidates, for a thick N-S exterior wall, perhaps of the North building. [later labelled wall 27]

Two large sherds of one pot are apparently on site just beyond the southeast corner of the slab enclosure. The lack of grey fill within the enclosure suggests that it was not a hearth, rather it may have been used as a kind of a stand or shelf on which to place cooking or serving dishes. The grey fill both to the north and South of the enclosure indicates that cooking purposefully done next to the enclosure. The grey fill to the south continues farther down than the level of the floor of the room.
July 6

Work continues with 3 workmen. One of them undertakes to clean off the accumulation of sand and dirt from over the floor of room Q excavated last year. In fact the idea is to clean the entire surface of this room so that a photograph can be taken before we investigate the possibility that either the actual floor is a little further down (see if there are stones sticking up from the "floor" in the east section of the room) or there is an earlier floor further down. The bottom of a large coarse pot and another thick shard have been found just to the northwest of the "threshold" block of wall 16 and they are left there to be in the photograph as part of the floor deposit.

In the central section we are continuing excavation of brown earth with Pick 20. The pile of slabs next to wall 26 is found to sit on earth. The slabs can now be removed. A possible third block is found just north of the two blocks we found yesterday, and for which we theorized might belong to the east exterior wall of the North House. Assume that this wall will meet at right angles with the east extension (not yet reached) of wall 16. We decide to take the level down only north of this presumed line of wall 16. To the south of this line many have run the slab-covered passage we found last year west of here. The lack of any raised slabs there and of upper courses for wall 16 suggest that there may have been some extensive robbing of building blocks.