

Report on the 2013 Gournia Excavations

The 2013 excavations at Gournia were conducted June 17–July 26 under the aegis of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and the supervision of the KD' Ephoreia in Agios Nikolaos, Crete. Excavations were focused on two main areas (Fig. 1): 1) in the area around the Minoan palace, and 2) along the north edge of the settlement.

Area around the Minoan Palace.

Trench 11 continued to investigate an early structure (abandoned in MM IB) under Room 18 of the Minoan palace. Partly excavated in 2010–2012, this building has preserved one (Room A) or two rooms provided with low benches and a pebble floor. On its south side the building rests on a massive early retaining wall running diagonally NW–SE below the palace. North of Room A, a bench and surface of MM IB (or later) date may come from another room.

Trenches 53 and *73* revealed more of the cobbled court (in use in MM IB) north of Room A and pebble stratum sitting on top of it. Part of an Early Minoan structure built on bedrock was discovered under the cobbled surface.

Trench 91 revealed that the cobbled court extends further to the north.

South of Room A, *Trenches 71* and *74* encountered fill packed against stone rubble lining the north wall of palace Room 15.

Trench 61 suggests that Room 17 of the palace was first constructed as an isolated space early in the Protopalatial period. It seems the room suffered a destruction by fire in MM III and was filled in shortly thereafter with a deposit consisting mainly of many fineware cups, bowls, and a few incense burners. This deposit may be evidence of ceremonies held in or near the MM III palace.

Trenches 82 and *85* were placed in the Storerooms 7 and 6 of the palace to see if Boyd had dug all the way to bedrock. Both trenches found only modern, sieved backfill.

Three trenches were sunk in the Minoan central court to look for earlier surfaces. East of House Ha, *Trench 89* found LM I fill placed on bedrock perhaps associated with the construction of House Ha. Under this fill what appears to be a small bench may come from an earlier use of the area. In the northwest corner of the court, *Trench 79* found a MM II round terracotta drain pipe laid on bedrock. Above it were fill layers dating to MM III when the central court was probably laid out. Directly to the south, *Trench 90* revealed more of the MM II line of drain pipes, and part of a wall earlier than MM III.

Area along North Edge of Settlement. Excavations along the north edge of the LM I settlement were carried out in four separate areas: 1) directly north of House Ea, 2) west of House Eb, 3) in the area around House Aa, and 4) around the Pit House.

North of House Ea, *Trench 25* was reopened in the yard of the Southeast Building. Excavated in previous years, the Southeast and Northwest building complex is associated with pottery production in the Middle Minoan I–Late Minoan I period.

Trench 25 found an EM/ MM I pottery deposit first revealed in 2011. West of the Northeast Building, *Trench 65* revealed two magazines (Room 7 and Space 8) containing LM IB vases. At a lower level, two earlier walls were exposed. Partly dug by Harriet Boyd, Room 6 to the south produced an interior spur wall, a square stone platform on the floor, and a mound of white clay similar to that used in local fine ware vases. Room 6 may be a potter's work room. Traces of earlier walls in the room were found on bedrock.

West of House Eb at the northwest edge of the natural slope of the Gournia ridge, seven trenches (*Trenches 69, 77, 81, 84, 86, 92, and 95*) uncovered a sequence of MM III–LM III walls. A pit furnace from this area produced debris from bronze working in LM IA and perhaps as early as Middle Minoan III. Covering this area were two levels: a Late Minoan IB destruction layer and a Late Minoan IIIA stratum.

On the acropolis south of House Aa, *Trench 46* revealed that the rectangular megalithic “Great Tower” was added to the northeast corner of the palace in LM IB. The walls of the Tower were constructed around an earlier Protopalatial structure of unknown function. West of House Aa, *Trench 78* was opened to investigate the extent of House Aa. Excavation found a MM II–III destruction level; in the Neopalatial period the space seems to have served as a veranda for House Ac.

To the north of House Ab, seven trenches (*Trenches 63, 64, 70, 80, 83, 87, and 88*) opened the area to the west of the two basins (1 and 2) and court along the west side of a Protopalatial cobbled street found in 2011–2012. This area produced another, quite large basin with a drain connecting it to a basin 2 to the north. A

terraced area further north had been used as a dump during the Protopalatial period. This area may have been associated with pottery production; it seems to go out of use in the Protopalatial period and was covered over in the early Neopalatial period.

Eight trenches (*Trenches 49, 57, 66, 67, 68, 75, 76, and 93*) were opened (and in cases reopened) in and around the Pit House located to the west of the old Gournia guard house. *Trench 75* revealed that the Protopalatial cobbled street north of the Pit House ran further to the west and was lined by a stone bench along its south side. A small kernos had been carved on the bench's surface. *Trenches 57 and 49* uncovered a large (5.5 m), deep (1.8 m) cistern cut in the bedrock during the Protopalatial period immediately north of the cobbled street. The cistern was apparently filled in during Late Minoan I when the Pit House was rebuilt.

Excavation at the southwest corner of the Pit House (*Trench 93*) uncovered another Late Minoan IB room. This storage space contained a pithos, coarse ware, and cooking vessels as well as six loomweights. Small pits lined the south and west exterior walls of this room. *Trenches 67 and 76* explored the northeastern corner of the Pit House. They revealed that the cobbled street north and east of the Pit House curves to the northeast and apparently ceases, or is destroyed. An east–west Neopalatial wall abutting the north façade of the Pit House continues to the east, toward the cemetery. At the base of the wall on its south side was a small LM IA deposit of nearly complete conical cups and pumice. A collapsed level of MM III–LM IA mudbrick, plaster, burnt pottery, and carbon covered the cobbled street, probably the result of the Late Minoan IB reconstruction of the Pit House.

Figure 1. Plan of the 2013 Excavations at Gournia. M. Buell & J. McEnroe.

