

Gournia: 2014 Excavation

In 2014 excavations at Gournia took place in the area of the palace, on the acropolis, and along the northern edge of the town (Fig. 1).

In Room 18 of the palace, Room A, lined with low benches, was further explored. Soundings show that the south retaining wall and pebble stratum were laid down in the Protopalatial period. This wall consists of two sections. The second section is in the eastern half, where the wall is thinner. A different masonry style is employed, and the wall sits on top of a deep rubble fill with a bedding of water rounded pebbles. Excavation in the southeast quadrant of *Trench 11* recovered: large amounts of EM IIB fill consisting of pottery, bone, shell, broken stone tools. An EM II, Λ -shaped “platform” was found to rest on bedrock. The nature and function of this Λ -shaped remains unclear. It is one of the earlier constructions in this area. It may be associated with the boulder paving to its south and west. The boulders that partially covered it may have been added at a slightly later date, perhaps during a landscaping operation. *Trench 115* between Rooms 18 and 21 of the palace (Fig. 1) revealed that the schist paving of the palace there dates to MM III. Below it was a plaster floor of Protopalatial date; below this floor was a pebble layer covering the EM II cobbled court.

In the central court, *Trench 107* encountered a possible paved street at the southern limits of the courtyard. *Trench 106* in the center of the courtyard revealed that the area was apparently cleared down to bedrock. The abundance of LM I conical cup fragments from the trench was striking and may indicate feasting in the area. In the NW corner of the court, *Trench 105* traced the continuation south of the Neopalatial drain pipe and covered drain from the palace and revealed a scatter of

conical cups, cookware and clay and plaster counters (probably game pieces) associated with the LM I use of the central court. *Trench 116* directly south of Boyd's large "sacrificial slab" at the NW corner of the court revealed an elaborate plaster floor associated with the early (MM III) palace constructed of plaster slabs lined with wood strips as in the "Banquet Hall" (XXIX) in the palace at Zakros. It was subsequently covered over by the LM I stone "sacrificial slab" visible today.

On the east edge of the acropolis hilltop, *Trench 104* revealed a sequence of structures (probably storage spaces), dated to MM IA, MM II, and MM III. A massive MM IIB, probably dumped from the area of the palace, consisted mostly of drinking vessels and cooking ware.

Along the north edge of the settlement, excavation continued in the area of the metalworking kiln. *Trench 100* produced an interior LM IA space and a metalworking area, containing slag, prills, blooms, metal fragments, crucible and kiln fragments, moulds, dated to MM III–LM IB. To the south *Trench 128* found an area of LM IIIA metalworking.

Excavation of the 2010-14 Potter's Workshop was finished. The "Annex" appears to have been an interior benched court used for by a potter, perhaps to put pots out to dry. Rooms 7 and 8 may have supported a staircase. Two potter's work stations were identified in Space 4 and Room 6. The yard between the Workshop and the Pit House was completely opened up.

South of the Potter's Workshop, *Trenches 98-100, 109, 112, 119, 121, 128, 129, 132, 133, 136, 137* revealed a large 10 room building constructed in the Protopalatial period immediately to the south (Fig. 2). The two storey complex

yielded a hieroglyphic inscription, a sealstone, a rhino beetle figurine, domestic pottery, and loomweights, indicating it served as a residence. To the south, *Trench 109* revealed two separate areas; a room used as a domestic space, associated with the structure in *Trench 99* to the north, as well as an exterior space surrounding it. Two potter's wheels indicate it too was involved with pottery production.

Finally, in the area between the Potter's Workshop and Edith Hall's North Trench upper layers produced pottery levels washed down the slope that represent a later continuation of the North trench deposit, i.e. MM IB–II. Below this debris we discovered a cluster of eleven separate (sixteen phases of use) pottery updraft kilns of MM III–LM IA date (Fig. 3). A few are complete but most are represented by sections of their channels. A heavy wall separated the kilns from the Potter's Workshops to the west.

Fig. 1. Trenches excavated at Gournia in 2014.



Fig. 2. View north of the two Pottery Workshops.



Fig. 3. View south of the cluster of MM III – LM I Pottery Kilns

