

CRETE: PALAIKASTRO, 1963

In conjunction with the British School's new stratigraphical excavations in the Minoan town site at Palaikastro in 1962, the rehabilitation of the remains exposed in the original excavations of 1902 to 1906 was undertaken at the request of the Archaeological Service. This task was completed under the direction of L. H. Sackett and M. R. Popham in the summer of 1963, when the opportunity was taken to round - off the new soundings started the previous year.

Only part of the area at Roussolakkos uncovered in the original campaigns had been left open, that comprising part of blocks Γ and Δ of the excavation plan (BSA Suppl. I, pl. 1). Here the remains had been obscured by the growth of shrubs and the collapse of retaining walls limiting the open area (P. I. 529 a, 530 a). Many walls had disappeared, including parts of the street façades. These have now been reconstituted in dry - stone walling where this was necessary to render the plan intelligible; the floors, where these exist, have been cleared and the retaining walls rebuilt (P. I. 529 b, 530 c). Some tests made to lower levels were unproductive, but in the bathroom of block Γ a number of plain cups were found in a section of the LM III a deposit incompletely excavated in 1903 (BSA Suppl. I, 84).

Half of the adjoining field containing the LM Ib house excavated in 1962 was acquired and a new approach made so that the visitor now passes by this house on his way to the old excavation, some 30 m. distant. Two rooms of

this house which had been only partially excavated have now been cleared. One of them, with apothekes on either side, yielded a large number of plain vases. Overlying these LM Ib remains scant traces of LM III occupation were found, and in a deep sounding the footings of an MM wall on the bedrock.

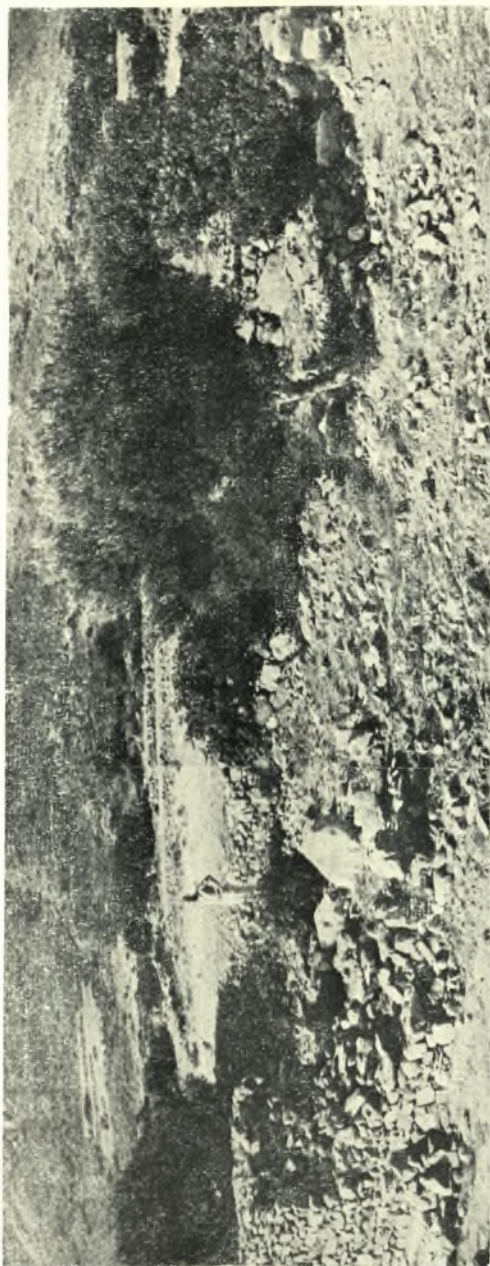
A sounding started in 1962 in the previously excavated room 1 of block X was continued below the paved LM floor. Here a deposit, including a good ivory seal and some 40 MM I vases (P. I. 530 b), was found crushed on a clay floor, which covered traces of an EM building. A second sounding north of block B (square N3 on BSA Suppl. I, pl. 1) produced upper levels with LM III, LM Ib and LM Ia sherds overlying strata rich in MM pottery.

From the trials made in 1902 on Kastri hill some scant traces of walls alone survived. These areas have now been cleaned. Sherd evidence indicates that the walls are of LM IIIc date. A test below one of the associated floors revealed on an earlier floor destruction debris datable to an earlier phase of the same period, including a bowl identical with BSA Suppl. I, 114, the only published vase from Kastri. A second test produced some fine EM III decorated pottery (P. I. 530 d) in a pocket of debris below an LM III floor.

Work has progressed on the cleaning and mending of the material from the 1962 excavations. A preliminary viewing of this well stratified material indicates that it will confirm the original excavators' findings and provide a welcome fund of fresh detail.

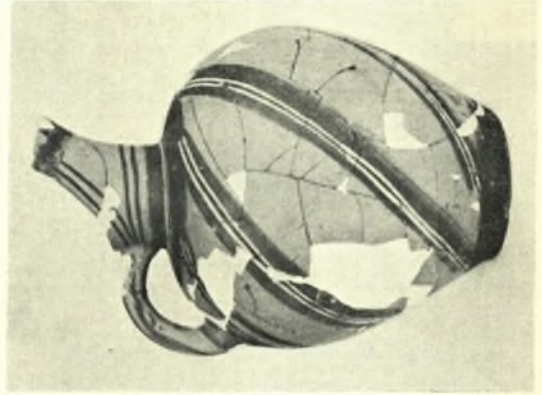
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Crete. Palaikastro: a. Block, Γ, 1962, b. The same after rehabilitation

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Crete. Palaikastro: a. Block B, 1962, b. MMI bowl from sounding in block X, I, c. Block B, 1962 after rehabilitation, d. EM III jug from Kastri (Palaikastro)
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