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SESSION 7J: Colloquium

What's New at Gournia? The Gournia Excavation Project, 2010-present

Stratigraphic Excavations within the Gournia Palace 2011-2014

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Recent excavations within the Gournia palace have revealed much new evidence for the occupation of the site prior to the construction of the Neopalatial complex and for the formation processes, ritual activities, and architectural development and phasing of the palace itself. In the central portion of the palace (rooms 18, 19, 20, 20a), a deep early Protopalatial (MM IB) fill of pebbles retained by a large terrace wall covered an even earlier, Protopalatial, boulder-paved area. Immediately on top of the fill levels, a small room was first established and later filled with secondary and tertiary cultural deposits, all still within the early Protopalatial period. Although in situ finds do not allow us to establish the room's function with certainty, architectural details such as a series of low, narrow benches that lined the room's interior and exterior facades may suggest some type of non-domestic, perhaps ritual, purpose for the enigmatic enclosure.

In the southern and southwestern portions of the Neopalatial complex (rooms 13-18b), excavation immediately below the levels reached by Hawes discovered a number of important cultural levels that shed new light on this part of the structure. Significant findings include evidence for initial construction of the palace in the early Neopalatial period (MM III) along with major renovations at the beginning of LM IB. Systematic excavations have also revealed at least two LM IB destruction levels, important ceremonial and feasting deposits in Rooms 13 and 17, the first Linear A tablet to be recovered from Gournia, and detailed evidence for the function (e.g., storage, ritual, access) of these various spaces within the palace.