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The Wall at Rachi Boska

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Rachi Boska is a low-lying ridge situated on the south edge of Perdikaria. It is oriented east-west and lies some 130 meters south of the road that runs from Kenchreai, c. 3.4 km to the east, and to Examilia, c. 2.5 km to the west. The ridge and its slopes were surveyed by EKAS during the 1999 and 2001 seasons, and the finds indicate activity and occupation in Neolithic and Bronze Age times. One of the most striking archeological features of Rachi Boska is a segment of cyclopean wall (N 4195970, E 671999; orientation – 90 degrees) on its lower north slope and parallel to the modern road. It stands c. 3 m high, c. 9.5 m long and supports the terrace above it. In 1999, it had been measured and drawn by Daniel Pullen, and the slope east and west of it had been walked in order to discover clues as to its extent, configuration and function. It was decided in the 2002 season to confirm previous observations and to gather further information concerning these points. The following is an account of this investigation.

Aside from natural processes, the major obstacle to any secure reconstruction of the wall is the recent bulldozing of the slopes into several levels of terraces. The resulting destruction and displacement of material is considerable and seems to have taken place in a general west-east direction. JN and TT walked the area extensively, and their conclusions on the geomorphological aspects will be found in TT's report. The areas east and west of the wall segment were walked by BT, DM and MG, who took GPS readings on stone blocks which were thought to be part of the original wall.

To the west, the terrace was overgrown with brush, but a line of blocks, embedded in the slope, could be followed along a downward slant for a distance of 100 m. From this point on, the terrace has been totally destroyed by bulldozing and ploughing, and no other blocks were spotted. To the east, the situation is more abrupt. Here, a deep scarp has been cut into the terrace, once again by bulldozer (blade marks are visible in the scarp walls), and any traces of architectural features have been obliterated. The sole evidence consists of scattered blocks, which were not aligned with the standing wall segment and which could not be associated with any previous structure. It is consequently impossible to trace the wall in this direction with any certainty. On the other hand, a row of 13 large boulders was found running north and perpendicular off the eastern edge of the segment. As they were of comparable dimensions to the ones in the wall itself, it may be that they originally belonged to it and had since fallen or been pushed into their present position.

During a later revisit, BT and MG noticed sherds in the scarp wall (DU 111) but were unable to glean anything meaningful. As proposed by BT, it would certainly be useful if Processing Team could find the time to have a look. It was also on this occasion that we had another look at the five narrow bands of fields, parallel to the road, and rising up the slope in terraces up to the level the wall. The area is limited to the east by a narrow path leading up to the wall, and to the west by an olive grove. As with the upper portions of the slope, these had also been bulldozed and/or ploughed along their long east-west axes. The first field just off the road was some 65m x 10m. Much to our benefit, a recent fire had burnt off the land cover exposing some stone blocks loosely strung out along its southern boundary. Some of these were clearly chunks of broken bedrock, whereas others had been cut for building purposes.

An interesting feature is the presence of a rectangular worked block (1.04m x 0.56m x 0.30m) near the west end.

The next plot is a burnt-out olive grove some 65 m x 8 m just to the south of the blocks and backed by a terrace wall built of smaller cobbles. A small concentration of larger stones, either broken bedrock or architectural, was found at the NE corner, near which a much-damaged fragment of another, smaller, worked block was discovered. On the next level, another burnt olive grove of similar dimensions is backed by a terrace wall consisting mainly of chunks of bedrock. The slope of the next terrace wall is almost all overgrown and no stones could be seen. The fifth terrace is a very narrow strip some two meters wide just below the terrace of the wall segment. No blocks at all were found in the terrace wall behind.

As for the function of the wall, any firm conclusions are impossible from the very scanty evidence we have. Tom Tartaron in his report has summed up the pros and cons of the different points of view. However, any report would be incomplete without some personal assessment. Briefly, the original wall would have been built to support either a road or ramp leading up to or along the summit of the ridge, where, presumably, a settlement was situated. Its monumentality and its presence on the conspicuous, north side of the ridge suggest it was meant to be seen as a political statement perhaps relative to the other major BA site in the vicinity, Gonia. From the LBA density maps of the EKAS survey area, Rachi Boska appears equal to Yiriza, larger than Perdikaria, but smaller than Gonia or Rachi Tsigkou.

Moreover, that this wall functioned in some way with a road seems plausible. A road through this valley is a faster route between Kenchreai and Gonia and Ancient Corinth than one skirting the north of the Ag. Dimitrios ridge. Finally, an argument for this being a fortification wall would be difficult to sustain since there is absolutely no evidence of construction to the south, east or west of the ridge

It should also be noted that while reviewing the data base on the DU's to write up this document, we discovered that the wall was not mentioned anywhere. However, on consulting the hard copies we found a relatively detailed account on it (the DU in question is 110). A comparison between the database and hard copies of surrounding DU's also showed that comments written in the forms did not appear in the data base.