

THE EXCAVATIONS IN KOMOROF'S TRENCH.

(See Fig. 22 and Plate 7.)

EAST AND WEST GALLERIES; EAST AND WEST PITS, IN BOTTOM OF KOMOROF'S TRENCH.

The excavation of Komorof's trench promised to expose the undisturbed strata of the center of the kurgan, but in the course of the examination it soon became clear that the finds made here could not be accepted without question and could merely serve the purpose of checking in part the observations made on the surface.

As has been said, on March 25 and 26, the galleries were driven in the sides of Komorof's trench to examine the layers of débris occurring between the visible vertical walls. These galleries, whose floors stood at +8 feet, penetrated 7 to 9 feet into the sides of the trench, with a height of about 10 feet. On both days the layers yielded a mass of broken stones and a great quantity of fragments of coarse, thick-walled pithoi, reddish or greenish light-yellow, in part painted; also some fragments of a finer painted ware and especially some lip-pieces of cups, without profiling, all these belonging to group γ . On the first day, however, there occurred specimens of the other variety, the red monochrome technique with a polish and the lip-piece of fine gray ware—*i. e.*, fragments of group x —which occurred in great quantities on the surface of terraces I, II, IV, and V.

In the eastern and western pits in the bottom of Komorof's trench, into which we started on March 25 for examination of the lower layers, the finds were only partially of the same kind as those of the galleries, for there occurred very many red and gray monochrome fragments. Besides this, the stratification and texture of the earth was different from that in the galleries. The earth here was loose and easily removable, while in the galleries the workmen had to exert all their strength in order to make progress. There were lacking, also, the masses of fragments of large thick walls, painted pithoi, and broken stone, which were peculiar to the galleries. It became evident that we were digging in a different kind of débris from that in the galleries—in an earth-mass, the origin of which requires a different explanation.

In order to verify the observations made in these pits in the bottom of Komorof's trench, we began on March 29 to sink shafts from the bottoms of the two galleries which adjoined the pits. A partition wall of the original undisturbed earth was left standing to separate the pits in the trench from the shafts, which were sunk in obviously undisturbed culture-strata. To a depth of +1 foot, the observations here corresponded throughout with the finds in the gallery layers above, with the single exception that an isolated piece of monochrome ware was observed. But when the partition wall fell in after about two days' work, and the digging proceeded without separation in the pits and the shafts, there came, in the west gallery at the datum-level, not only larger numbers of fragments of the suspicious monochrome ware, but even a piece of a modern iron band.

The paradox presented by these contradictory facts was explained on March 31 by R. W. Pumpelly, who demonstrated the existence in the west pit of a line