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Excavations in Midea 2008–2009

Abstract

Excavations in Midea continued in 2008 and 2009 as a Greek-Swedish programme under the direction of Dr Katie Demakopoulou in collaboration with Dr Ann-Louise Schallin. On the lower west terrace of the Acropolis excavation continued in Trench C in order to conclude the investigation of the syrinx discovered in 2007. A small trench was opened in the interior of Room I to examine the deposit below its floor. Furthermore, the cleaning of a large area outside the north section of the citadel wall brought to light a large part of a massive terrace wall. Investigations were made in three adjacent locations in the area east of the East Gate: in the baulk between Trenches 3 and 9, in Trench 9S and in Trench 12. As a result of these excavations new walls were discovered, which add to our previous knowledge of the layout of the series of rooms in this area, abutting the fortification wall. The finds include fragments of important pictorial pottery as well as a cylinder seal made in soft stone.

A. Lower Acropolis: Lower west terrace. North slope outside the Acropolis*

Introduction

In 2008–2009 excavation continued on the lower west terrace of the Acropolis, in Trench C, in order to investigate the gallery or syrinx discovered in 2007 through the thickness of the fortification wall[1] (*Fig. 1*). A small trench was opened in the interior of Room I (*Fig. 2*), also excavated in Trench C in 2007,[2] for examining the deposit below the floor of the room, which is of Late Helladic IIIC Early date, according to the pottery found. The excavation was extended outside the fortification wall with the opening of three adjacent trenches (Trenches C1, C2, C3) against the wall (*Fig. 2*). Furthermore, the cleaning of a large area outside the north section of the citadel wall, brought to light a large part of a terrace wall (*Fig.1*).

The investigation of the syrinx

In the 2008 and 2009 seasons the entrance of the syrinx in the inner face of the fortification wall as well as the area in front of it were cleared more. The entrance is flanked by a megalithic construction at its south side and a large boulder, associated with the fortification wall, on its north side (*Figs. 2–4*).

In 2007, during the first investigation of this area, a concentration of large stones at the north side of the opening (*Fig. 5*) had been interpreted as a retaining wall (Wall 3).[3] With the continuation of the excavation it became clear that it was not a real construction, but a destruction deposit containing rubble, large and smaller stones, and boulders, all fallen from the fortification wall. Some of them were arranged in a somewhat rough order, after the destruction caused by the earthquake that struck Midea at the end of the 13th century BC. Next to these stones the hasty burial of a child, apparently a victim of the catastrophe, was found; the burial had no offerings and was covered with stones.[4]

In 2008–2009 the destruction deposit with the fallen stones was removed with the aim of uncovering the entire

* Abbreviations in addition to those in standard use:FM Furumark Motif Number (see MP)
FS Furumark Shape Number (see MP)
MP A. Furumark, Mycenaean pottery. Analysis and classification, Stockholm 1941 (repr. 1972).

Acknowledgements
The excavations on the Lower Acropolis of Midea in 2008 and 2009 were undertaken with the help of grants from the Institute for Aegean Prehistory, for which we are most grateful. We thank the Director Mrs Anna Banaka, as well as the archaeologists, conservators and guards of the Argolid Ephorate for their help. We also thank the archaeologists M. Mavroeidopoulos, A. Koukou, T. Sideris, E. Roussodemou and the architect A. Kiratzis who participated in the excavations. Our thanks also go to the workmen of the excavations, especially to G. Ypsilantis, who successfully undertook the difficult task of clearing the syrinx. The finds were cleaned and mended by A. Lygidaki and K. Simotas and photographed by Y. Patrikianos with the help of grants from the Psycha Foundation, for which we are grateful. We thank Dr M.E. Caskey for checking the English text.

[1] Demakopoulou *et al.* 2009, 19–20, figs. 16, 20.
[2] Demakopoulou *et al.* 2009, 16, 22–24, figs. 16, 18, 35.
[3] Demakopoulou *et al.* 2009, 16–19, figs. 16–17, 20.
[4] Demakopoulou *et al.* 2009, 19, figs. 18–19. Similar burials, dated to the first phase of the Postpalatial period, have been found in the northern Lower Citadel of Tiryns, see Maran 2008, 61–63, figs. 47–50.

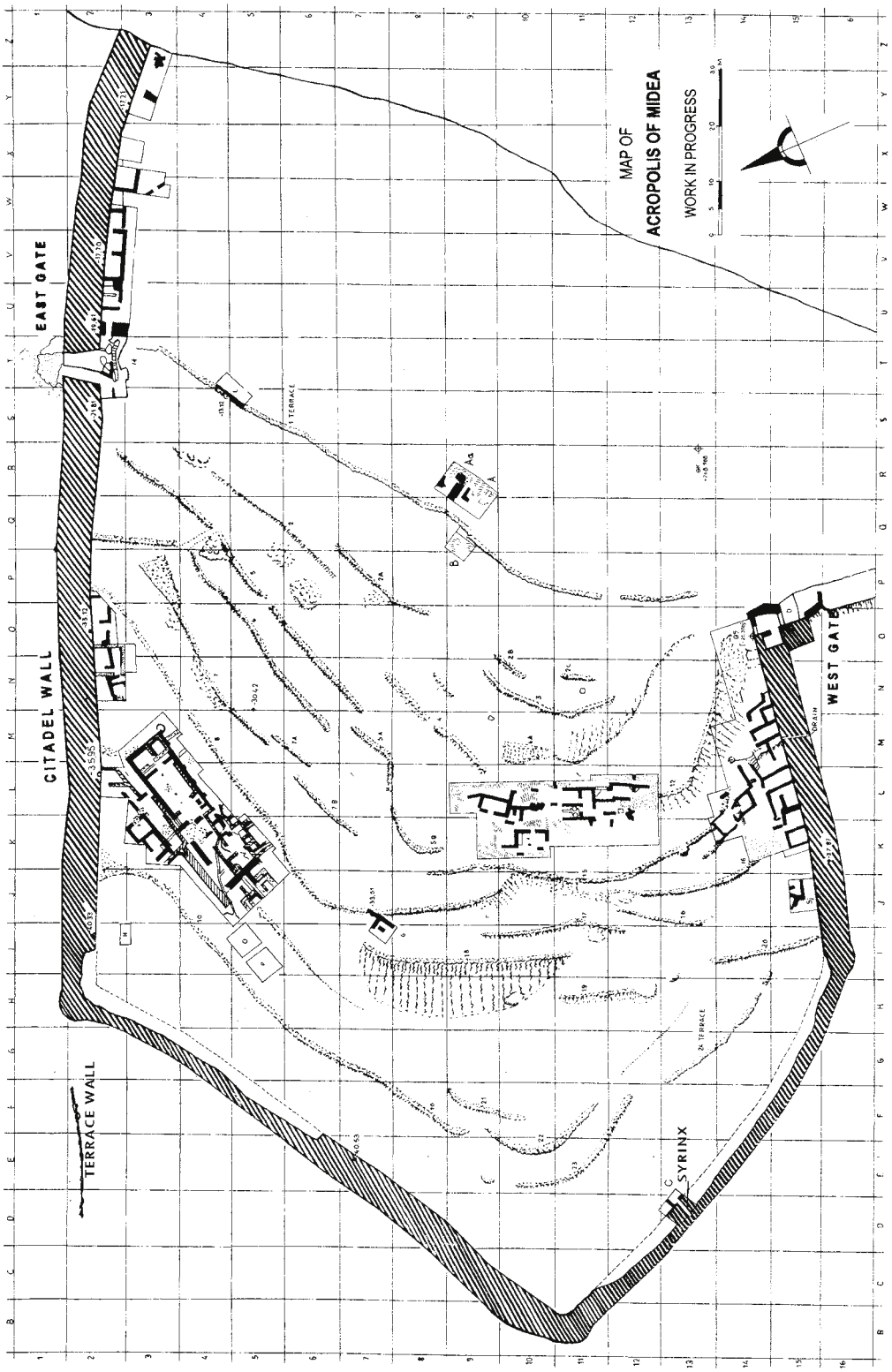


Fig. 1. Ground plan of the Acropolis of Midea (after E. Markou with additions by M. Patapatiou and A. Kiratzis).

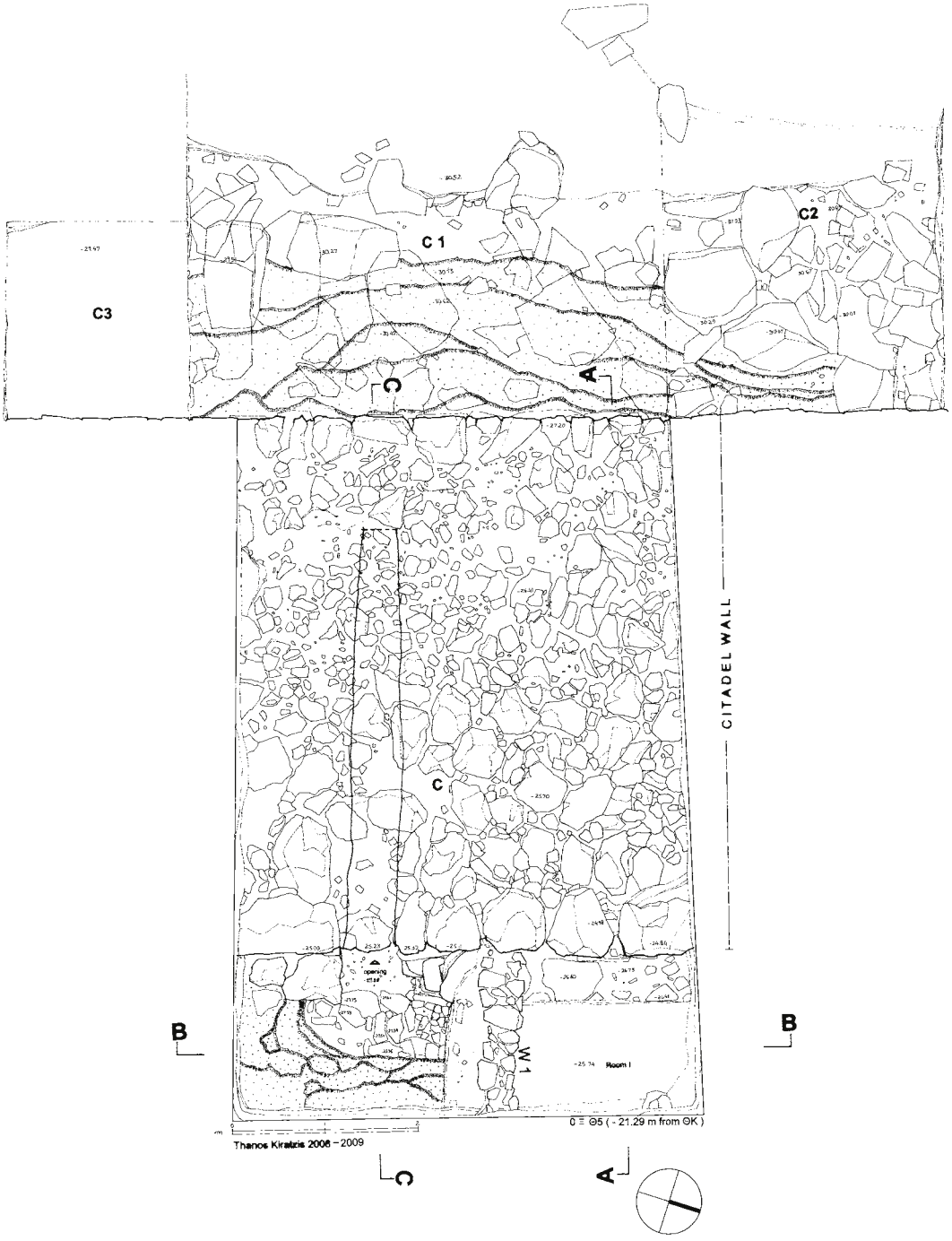


Fig. 2. Ground plan of Trenches C, C1, C2, C3.

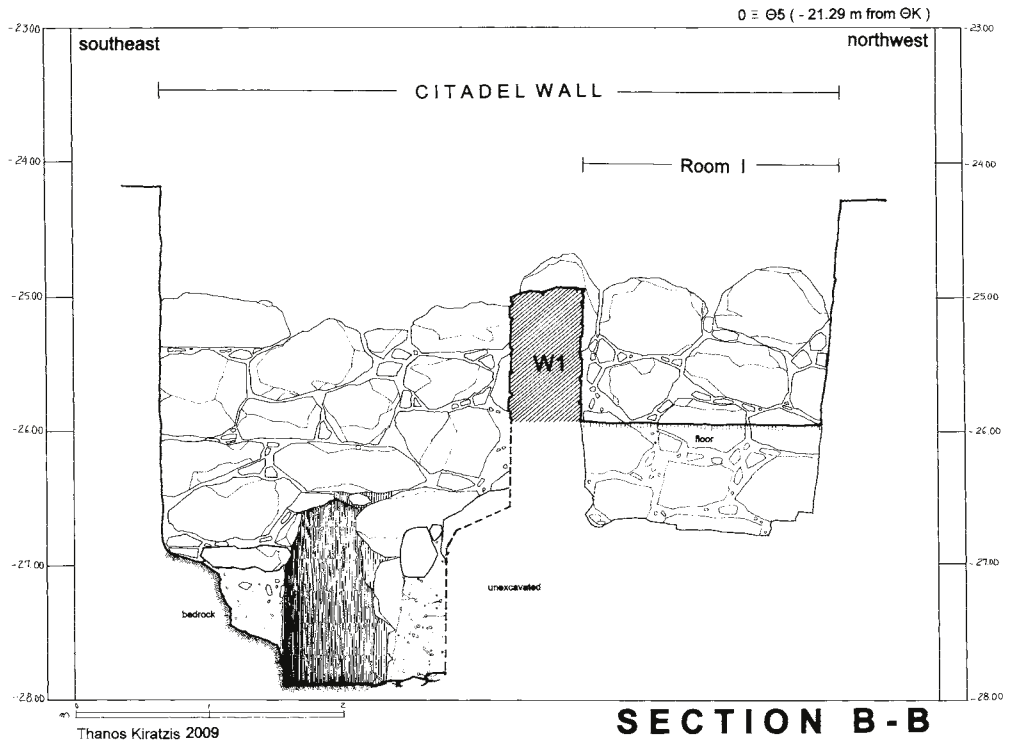


Fig. 3. Section of the area adjacent to the inner face of the fortification wall in Trench C with Room I, Wall 1 and the opening of the syrinx.

Fig. 4. View of the area in front of the entrance of the syrinx after the excavation of 2008–2009.

area in front of the entrance of the syrinx. Bedrock was revealed in a large part of this area sloping sharply towards the syrinx. It is cut vertically at the east and south sides of this area forming a rectangular shaft in front of the opening of the syrinx (*Fig. 4*). Piles of stones probably come from ruined steps, which led to the entrance of this passageway. The remains of what might have been a stone pavement obviously belong to a path with a north-south direction facilitating approach to the syrinx. With the removal of the destruction deposit north of the entrance, two of the boulders fallen from the fortification wall were uncovered; they were lying against the wall, partly covering the boulder projecting from the wall at the north side of the opening (*Figs. 4*, *6*). The entrance of the syrinx has a monolithic stone

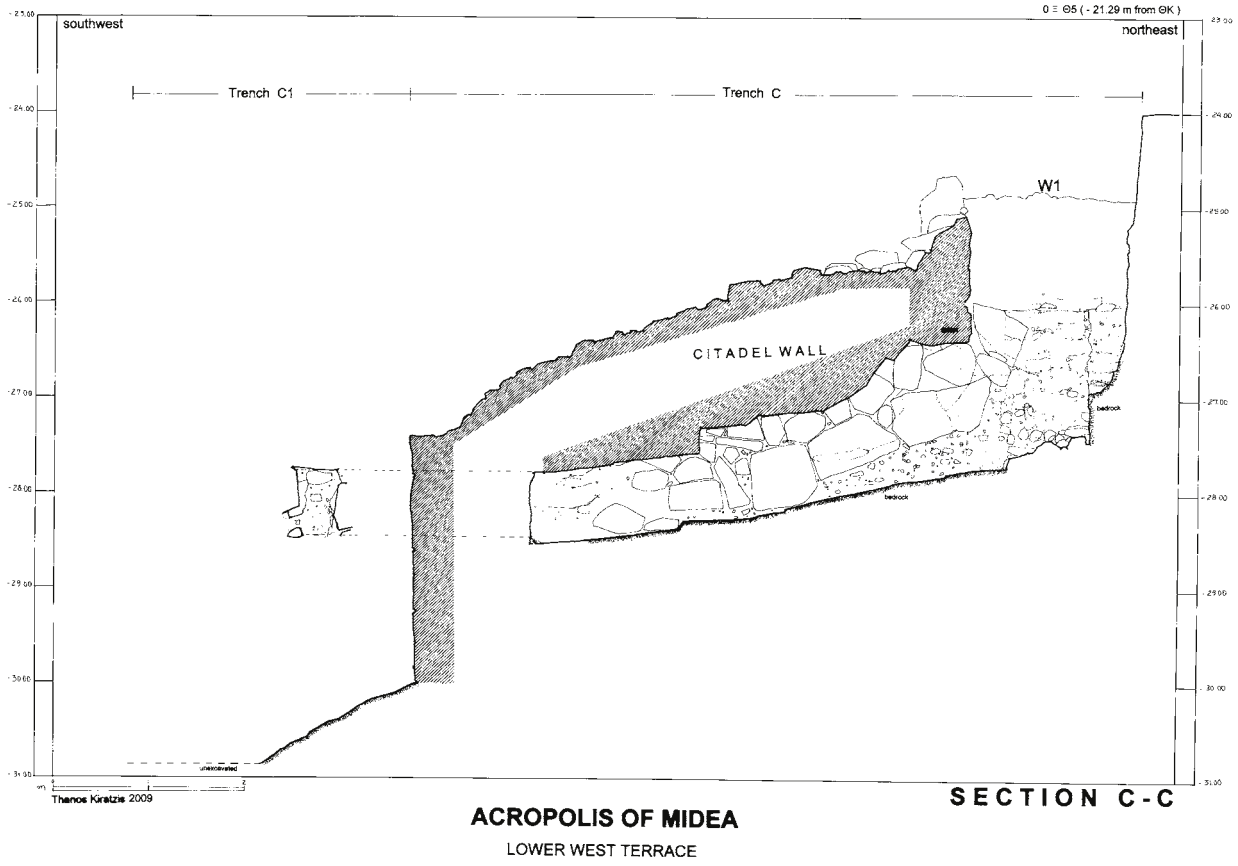


Fig. 6. Section of the north side wall of the syrinx.

Fig. 5. View of the area in front of the entrance of the syrinx during the investigation in 2007.

Fig. 7. The interior of the syrinx with the filling.

Figs. 8–9. Views of the interior of the syrinx.

lintel, 1.00 m in length and 0.50 m in thickness (*Figs. 3–5*). At the entrance the syrinx is 1.40 m high and 0.60 m wide.[5]

The interior of the syrinx was investigated at a length of 4.52 m with the removal of a filling about 0.90–1.00 m thick, which reached almost to the roof (*Fig. 7*). The investigation showed that the syrinx is a passageway in an east-west direction, running along a slightly oblique line through the fortification wall, which at this point is 5.70 m thick. It is obvious that the syrinx was constructed together with the wall, as part of the fortification system. Its side walls are built with boulders, founded on a layer of hard soil with small stones and pebbles. This layer, starting from the entrance of the syrinx, is 0.55 m thick, gradually diminishing to 0.15–0.10 m at the middle of the syrinx (*Fig. 6*). The side walls curve slightly inward towards the top, while the roof is covered for the most part with horizontal stone slabs (*Figs. 7–9*). At some points, however, the roof seems to be vaulted. The floor, which is of levelled bedrock, has a continuous downward inclination with shallow steps at several points (*Fig. 6*).

The syrinx is 1.40 m high and 0.60 m wide in the part near the entrance. These dimensions decrease gradually as the syrinx runs deeper: the height down to 0.80–0.70 m and the width to 0.45–0.30 m (*Figs. 2*, *6*, *8*). The greatest reduction of the dimensions of the syrinx is evident at a point far into the syrinx, where the excavations could no longer continue (*Figs. 9–10*). The roof of the syrinx here is lower following the inclination of the floor. However, there is still an unexcavated fill on the floor because of the difficulties of the excavation. Furthermore, the passage at this point becomes extremely narrow, so that it would be impossible for a person to get through. It is apparent that this is due to the destruction of this part of the syrinx, which was obviously caused by the devastating earthquake at Midea. The catastrophe is quite clear in the distorted and tilted side walls and the fallen stones from the walls and the roof (*Figs. 9–10*).

The small dimensions and the method of construction of the syrinx demonstrate that it was a small concealed gate, a passage, which served as a sally port. Indeed, in

[5] Demakopoulou *et al.* 2009, 19, figs. 16, 20.

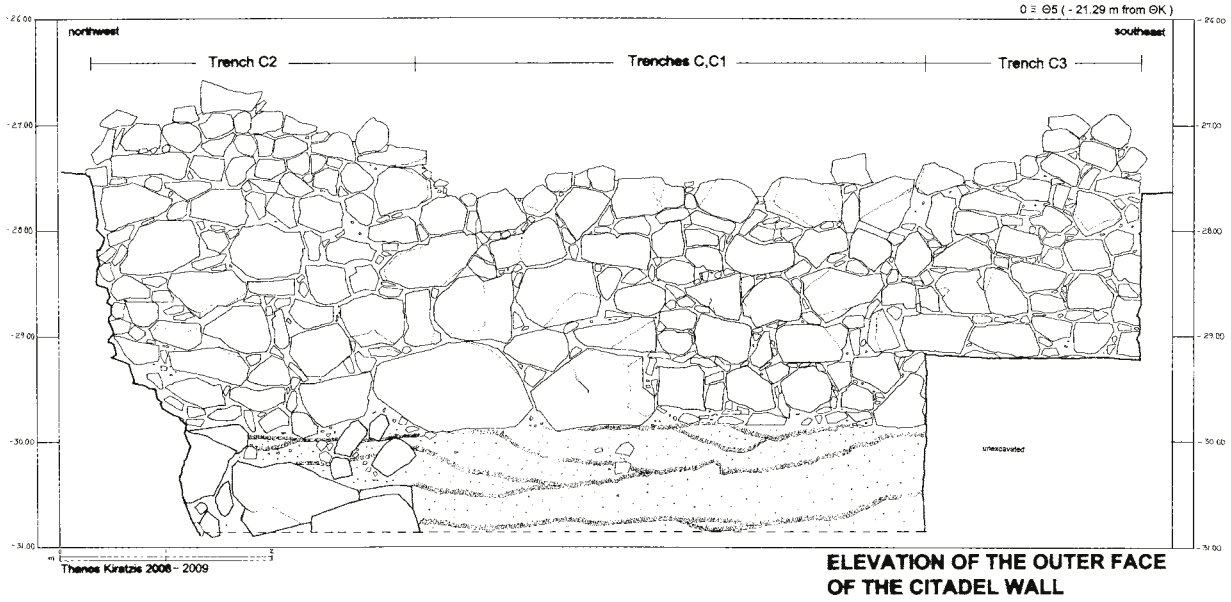
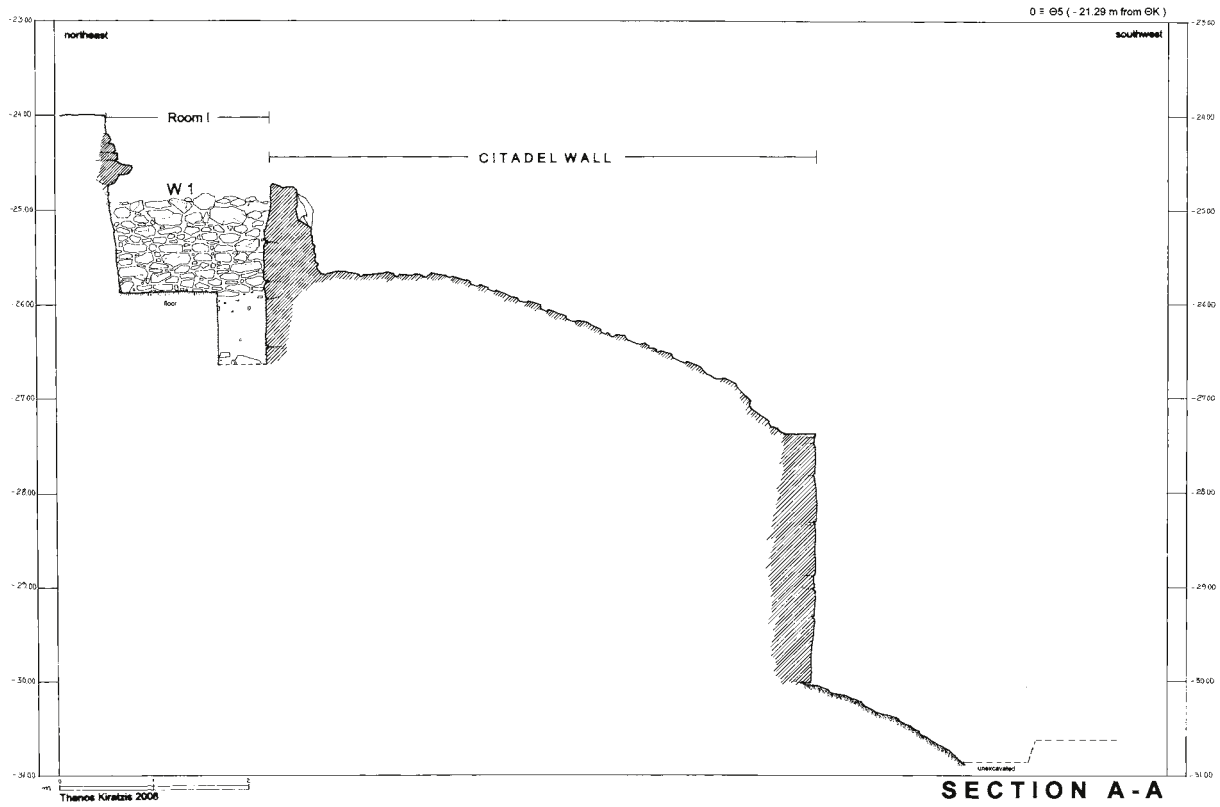


Fig. 11. Elevation of the outer face of the fortification wall.

Fig. 10. (To the left) View of the deeper point of the interior of the syrinx.

Fig. 12. View of the outer face of the fortification wall.



ACROPOLIS OF MIDEA

LOWER WEST TERRACE

TRENCHES C,C1

Fig. 13. Section of Room I, the fortification wall and the area outside the wall.

Fig. 14. View of the outer face of the fortification wall with the cut, sloping bedrock in front of it.

Fig. 15. Boulders and large stones found in front of the fortification wall.

Fig. 16. Fragmentary deep bowls of Group A from the destruction deposit in front of the sally port and from its interior.

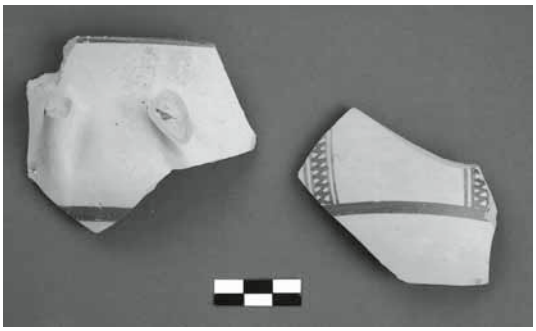


Fig. 18. Non-joining fragments of a Group A deep bowl from the interior of the sally port.

Fig. 17. Sherds of Group A deep bowls from the destruction deposit in front of the sally port.

dimensions and construction, this passage resembles the North Sally Port in the Northeast Extension of the fortifications at Mycenae.[6] A passage of this type, identified as a sally port, has recently been discovered in the north section of the fortifications of the Lower Citadel of Tiryns.[7]

The excavation stopped at the damaged part of the sally port, as it was dangerous to proceed any further to reach the exit, which would be at a distance of 1.20 m on the outer side of the fortification wall. In order to find the exit of the syrinx the excavation was extended outside the fortification wall with three adjacent trenches (C1, C2, C3) against its outer face (*Fig. 2*). The three trenches occupy a space of 10.00 × 3.00 m. A large part of the outer face of the wall was exposed for a length of 10.00 m and to a height of over 3.00 m (*Figs. 11–12*). The wall is very well preserved, built with large, medium-sized and smaller stones with some boulders only at its lower part. It was founded directly on bedrock, which is cut and forms a sloping area following the natural inclination of the hill (*Figs. 13–14*). The excavated area outside the fortification wall was covered with piles of boulders and stones that had fallen from the wall itself (*Fig. 15*). During the excavation most of the boulders and stones were necessarily removed.

Although a large part of the outer face of the fortification wall was cleared, no sign of the exit of the sally port was discerned. A closer examination of the exposed surface of the wall revealed that this section has a different type of construction from that used for most of the citadel wall and for the inner face of this part of the wall. Instead of boulders and large stones, medium-sized stones were used, especially for the part of the wall where the sally port should emerge (*Figs. 11–12*, *14*). It is evident that during the earthquake the outer face of the wall collapsed together with the part of the syrinx with the exit. This interpretation is supported by the discovery of many fallen boulders and large stones in this area (*Fig. 15*), originally belonging to the collapsed section of the wall. After the catastrophe the outer face of the wall was rebuilt and the exit of the sally port was blocked. Most of the boulders and large stones fallen on the levelled, sloping, rocky area in front of the Late Helladic IIIB2 citadel wall were not removed, but they would have been covered with a layer of soil to form a terrace.

We may conclude that the results of the earthquake were the disuse of the sally port and the repair of the outer face of the citadel wall in a different masonry style enforced by the circumstances shortly after the catastrophe, in the early Postpalatial period (Late Helladic IIIC Early). The sally port discovered in the northern Lower Citadel of Tiryns

[6] Mylonas 1966, 32, pls. 42–43; Iakovidis 1983, 35, plan 4, no. 27-7.

[7] Maran 2008, 41–45, figs. 9–11; see also the detailed description of the Tiryns North Passage by Marzolff 2008.

Fig. 19. Fragmentary stemmed bowl restored from sherds found in the interior of the sally port and in the destruction deposit.

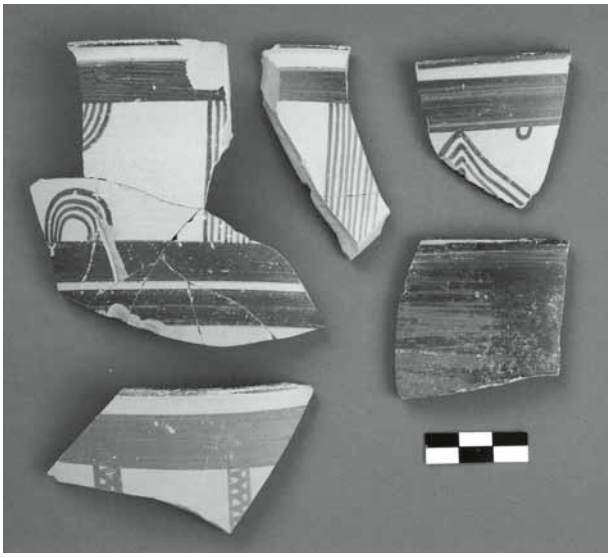


Fig. 20. Fragments of stemmed bowls from the destruction deposit.

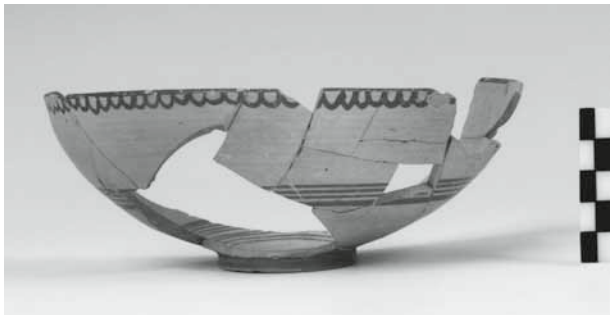


Fig. 22. Fragmentary semi-globular bowl, restored from sherds from the interior of the sally port and from the destruction deposit.

has also a blocked exit, which was closed, however, in the final Late Helladic IIIB2 period.[8]

The repair of the outer face of the fortification wall in Late Helladic IIIC Early is consistent with the construction of Room I against the inner face of the wall, near the entrance of the sally port, in the same period (*Figs. 2*, *13*). At the same time the "megaron" complex on the lower northeastern terraces, which had also been destroyed by the earthquake, was largely repaired.[9] This demonstrates that after the destruction, a substantial programme of rebuilding and repair was initiated on the lower terraces of the Acropolis.[10]

The filling removed during the excavation from the interior of the sally port was a dark, rather loose soil containing large and small stones, rubble and pebbles. A considerable

[8] Maran 2008, 43; Marzolff 2008, 104–105, figs. 84, 91b. We warmly thank Prof. Dr. Joseph Maran and Dr.-Ing. Peter Marzolff for many constructive discussions and for their important comments on various aspects of the Midea sally port.

[9] Walberg 2007, 66–69, 198, plan 3.

[10] Structural remains of the Postpalatial period have not been found on the upper terraces and in the East and West Gate areas. It appears that after the catastrophe, habitation in Midea was confined to the lower northeast and northwest terraces of the Acropolis.

Fig. 21. Stems of stemmed bowls from the interior of the sally port and from the destruction deposit.

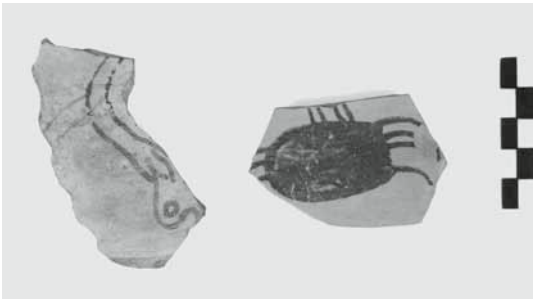


Fig. 23. Pictorial sherds from the interior of the sally port.

Fig. 24. Fragments of plain deep bowls from the interior of the sally port.

Fig. 25. Fragmentary plain dippers from the destruction deposit.

Fig. 26. Part of a storage stirrup jar from the destruction deposit.

Fig. 27. Non-joining sherds of a storage stirrup jar with a trace of a Linear B sign, from the destruction deposit.

amount of fragmentary pottery, for the most part of Late Helladic IIIB2 date, was recovered. More abundant, also fragmentary, pottery of the same date comes from the destruction deposit excavated near and in front of the entrance of the sally port. Many sherds from this deposit joined others found in the interior of the sally port. It is noteworthy that, in both the filling of the sally port and in the destruction deposit, there were also sherds of the Late Helladic IIIC Early and Middle phases. Early Mycenaean sherds were also found, as well as two Early Helladic sherds and quite a few Middle Helladic ones.

Of the Late Helladic IIIB2 decorated pottery, the most common shapes are deep bowls of Groups A and B, FS 284, and stemmed bowls, FS 305. The deep bowls of Group A predominate (*Figs. 16–18*). They are decorated for the most part with triglyphs and panels. Some have a fine line group round the interior of the base. Many sherds of stemmed bowls were recovered, of which some parts of the vessels have been restored (*Figs. 19–20*). The decoration is also panelled or zonal with broad motifs, such as the tricurved arch with fill of lozenges, FM 62, FM 73 (*Fig. 19*). Some of the sherds belong to monochrome stemmed bowls (*Fig. 20* bottom right). A considerable number of stems of this type of vase were found (*Fig. 21*). Some of them are trimmed and had probably been used as lids. In contrast to the abundance of Groups A and B deep bowls and stemmed bowls, very few sherds of rosette deep bowls were recovered. Sherds of kraters and mugs are also sparsely represented. A remarkable bowl was partly restored from many sherds (*Fig. 22*). It is semi-globular with lipless rim, ring-based, and probably handleless. The lower body on the exterior and the base in the interior are banded.[11] There is a fine line on the rim with a fringe of joining semi-circles on the exterior. This vase is of very fine quality and well preserved. Fragments of jugs of both types, wide-necked with linear decoration, FS 105, FS 110, and narrow-necked, FS 121, with a decorative shoulder zone are numerous.

[11] For this type of vase, see Mountjoy 1986, 132–133, fig. 164:1.

Fig. 28. Legs of tripod cooking pots from the interior of the sally port and from the destruction deposit.

Fig. 29. Fragments of jars of Handmade Burnished Ware from the interior of the sally port and from the destruction deposit.

Fig. 30. Part of a Group A deep bowl from the interior of the sally port.

Fig. 31. Sherds of kraters from the interior of the sally port and from the destruction deposit.

Fig. 32. Fragment of an amphoriskos or a collar-necked jar from the destruction deposit.

Sherds of amphorae or hydriae with linear decoration were also found, as well as fragments of stirrup jars, FS 173, collar-necked jars, FS 64, alabastra, FS 85, and a sherd of a rhyton, FS199. There are two sherds with pictorial motifs, one from the shoulder of a jug with a bull protome (*Fig. 23* left), the other from a krater with an unrecognizable design (*Fig. 23* right).

The plain ware includes sherds from conical and carinated kylikes, FS 224, FS 267, deep bowls (*Fig. 24*), mugs, FS 226, dippers, FS 236 (*Fig. 25*), shallow angular bowls, FS 295, basins and jugs. Numerous stems and bases of plain kylikes were found; most of them have flat bases with marked traces of the wheel. Some of the bases with part of the stem were trimmed to be used as lids.

There are numerous fragments of storage stirrup jars, some with dark-on-light and others with light-on-dark decoration. A large part of the belly of one stirrup jar is decorated with stylised octopus tentacles, a typical motif for these vessels (*Fig. 26*). From another storage stirrup jar come two non-joining sherds, one of which preserves a trace of a Linear B sign (*Fig. 27*). The coarse ware includes many fragments of pithoi and other storage vessels. There were also cooking vessels, some of them tripod. A large number of legs have been preserved (*Fig. 28*). The clay of some of the cooking pots contains silver or gold mica. Those with the gold mica could have been imported from Aegina or the Cyclades, although they may well be local products, since in shape and manufacture they resemble the large amount of cooking pots found at Midea.

Fig. 33. Sherds of Late Helladic IIIC Early (right) and Middle (left) phases from the interior of the sally port.

Fig. 34. Rim sherds of deep bowls from the interior of the sally port and from the area outside the fortification wall.

Fragments of jars of Handmade Burnished Ware were also recovered (*Fig. 29*). Some of them joined other fragments found in the destruction deposit removed in the 2007 season from the area in front of the entrance of the sally port.

Part of the lower body of a Group A deep bowl decorated with central triglyph and antithetic spirals, rudely drawn, may be dated to Late Helladic IIIB2 Late or IIIC Early (*Fig. 30*). Prominent traces of the wheel are visible on its interior. It was retrieved from the filling of the sally port. In addition to this, a few stray sherds of the Late Helladic IIIC period were found in the interior of the sally port and in the destruction deposit. To the Late Helladic IIIC Early phase belong sherds of kraters coated inside, FS 282 (*Fig. 31*), a fragment of an amphoriskos, FS 61, or collar-necked jar, FS 64, decorated with hooked stems, FM 19 (*Fig. 32*), and a sherd of a shallow angular bowl, FS 295 (*Fig. 33* right).[12] There are three sherds of Late Helladic IIIC Early deep bowls: with broad lip band and band decoration on the belly (*Fig. 34* top left); with medium band on the exterior rim (*Fig. 34* top right); with a wide band below the rim and spiral decoration on the exterior and monochrome interior (*Fig. 34* bottom left). A sherd from the shoulder of a jug, FS 106, decorated with necklace, FM 72, round the base of the neck (*Fig. 33* left) can be dated to the Late Helladic IIIC Middle phase.[13]

Fig. 35. Non-joining sherds of a Vapheio cup from the destruction deposit.

Early Mycenaean sherds were found also in both deposits, including a few sherds of Late Helladic IIA–B date mostly from Vapheio cups, FS 224 (*Fig. 35–36* bottom right) and from other closed and open vases, such as piriform jars, FS 22, and cups (*Fig. 36*). A fragment of a rounded alabastron, FS 84, with multiple stem, of Late Helladic IIIA1 date (*Fig. 37* right) and a sherd of a kylix, FS 257, with a horizontal whorl-shell, FM 23, of Late Helladic IIIA2 date (*Fig. 37* left) are worthy of mention. A few Late Helladic IIIB1 sherds also occur, including a stem of a Zygouries type kylix, FS 258.

The small quantity of pre-Mycenaean pottery recovered from the interior of the sally port and the destruction deposit include two sherds of Early Helladic II–III, one from a pithos with fingertip impressions and the other from a bowl. The Middle Helladic sherds are more plentiful. There are sherds of Matt-Painted ware (*Fig. 38*, third and fourth top right and bottom), as well as Grey and Black Minyan. Fine Matt-Painted sherds, a sherd with bichrome decoration and two Minoanizing sherds also occur (*Fig. 39*). Worthy

[12] Cf. Mountjoy 1986, 153, fig. 197:1 (Type A).
[13] Cf. Mountjoy 1986, 165, fig. 209.

Fig. 36. Early Mycenaean sherds from the interior of the sally port and from the destruction deposit.

Fig. 37. Sherds of a kylix and an alabastron from the destruction deposit.

Fig. 39. Minoanizing sherds from the interior of the sally port.

Fig. 38. Middle Helladic Matt-Painted sherds from the interior of the sally port and from Trench C1 outside the fortification wall.

Fig. 40. Fragmentary animal figurine from the interior of the sally port.

of mention are rim sherds from Yellow Minyan goblets of Middle Helladic III–Late Helladic I date. To the same period belong some knob bases of coarse cooking pots.

Other finds from both deposits are fragmentary clay human and animal figurines and part of a throne model. The human figurines belong to the Phi and Psi types, while of the animal figurines most interesting is the body of a bovid decorated with rock pattern (*Fig. 40*). The other small finds include the rim of a lead vessel, a fragment of a bronze pin, a small bronze rivet of a knife or dagger, fragments of stone tools, such as millstones and pounders, blades and flakes of obsidian and flint, pieces of fluorite, mother-of-pearl and ochre, sea-shells, and many fragments of painted plaster.

The deposits removed from the area adjacent to the outer face of the fortification wall, defined by Trenches C1, C2, C3 (*Fig. 2*), while trying to discover the exit of the sally port, were disturbed mainly in the upper layers. A large amount of fragmentary, quite worn, mixed pottery was retrieved. Most of the pottery is dated to Late Helladic IIIB2 with a few Late Helladic IIIC Early and Middle sherds. The Late Helladic IIIB2 pottery includes sherds of deep bowls of Groups A and B and a small stirrup jar partly restored from fragments (*Fig. 41*). To the Late Helladic IIIC Early pottery belong sherds of monochrome deep bowls. A sherd of a monochrome deep bowl with a reserved band with dots on the interior rim (*Fig. 34* bottom right) is dated to Late Helladic IIIC

Fig. 41. Fragmentary stirrup jar from Trench C1 outside the fortification wall.

Fig. 43. Middle Helladic sherds of Adriatic ware from Trench C1 outside the fortification wall and from the trial trench in Room I.

Fig. 42. Early Mycenaean sherds from Trenches C1 and C2 outside the fortification wall.

Fig. 44. Part of a stone tripod mortar from Trench C3 outside the fortification wall.

Middle.[14] Some sherds of Handmade Burnished Ware were also recovered. In addition, there are sherds of Early Mycenaean times including one with Marine Style decoration (*Fig. 42*). Middle Helladic pottery also occurs with sherds of Matt-Painted (*Fig. 38* first and second top left) and Minyan ware, as well as some pieces of Adriatic ware (*Fig. 43* left). The upper disturbed deposits contained many sherds of Late Roman and Byzantine periods. A large part of a Late Roman closed vase with ribbed decoration is worthy of mention, as well as fragments of two glass vases of the same period. Other finds include small fragments of painted plaster, ochre, obsidian flakes, seashells and a fragment of a whetstone. Noteworthy is a large part of a stone tripod mortar (*Fig. 44*).

Trial trench in Room I

A small trial trench measuring 1.85 × 0.50 m was opened inside Room I (*Fig. 2*) in order to examine the deposit below the floor of the room that, according to the pottery found in the 2007 season,[15] is dated to the Late Helladic IIIC Early phase. The trench is adjacent to the inner face of the fortification wall and was excavated to a depth of 0.80 m (*Figs. 3*, *13*, *45*). The deposit was clearly a debris

[14] Cf. Mountjoy 1986, 178, fig. 230:2,4.

[15] Demakopoulou *et al.* 2009, 22, fig. 13.

Fig. 45. View of Room I with the trial trench adjacent to the fortification wall.

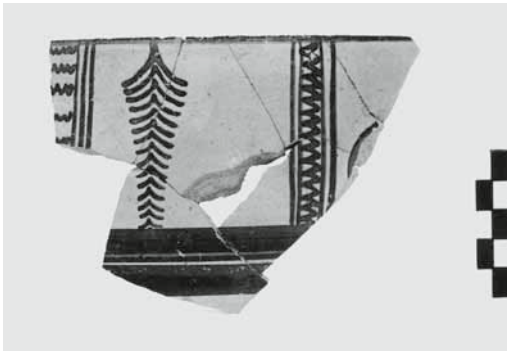


Fig. 46. Part of a stemmel bowl, mended from sherds, from the trial trench in Room I.

layer with many stones fallen from the fortification wall. It contained a large amount of fragmentary pottery of Late Helladic IIIB2 Late. This finding supports the conclusion that Room I was constructed directly over the destruction debris caused by the earthquake that hit Midea at the end of the 13th century BC.[16]

The pottery from the debris layer comprised many fragments of deep bowls of Groups A and B and part of a stemmed bowl (*Fig. 46*), bits of a small bowl with internal pattern in added white paint,[17] sherds of jugs and a miniature handmade vase (*Fig. 47*). Sherds of fine plain ware were also found, including part of the lower body of a large mug, as well as sherds of coarse vessels. Noteworthy is a small Middle Helladic sherd of Adriatic ware (*Fig. 43* right). Other finds include a fragmentary

Fig. 47. Shoulder sherds of jugs and a sherd of a miniature handmade vase from the trial trench in Room I.

clay human figurine, two spindle whorls of steatite and pieces of mother-of-pearl.

Terrace wall

Outside the north section of the citadel wall, at a distance of 20.00–25.00 m, the clearing of wild vegetation from the sloping area revealed part of a massive terrace wall (*Figs. 1, 48–49*). Its north face, preserved to a height of 0.80–1.10 m, was cleared for a length of 30.00 m. The wall is built with boulders according to the Cyclopean system. Although it is ruined in places, its construction and length demonstrate that it was a strong retaining wall built to support a roadway leading up to the East Gate, the main gate of the Acropolis of Midea. It can be compared to the retaining walls of the Mycenaean highways in the Mycenae and Berbati areas and also to those of the Tiryns-Epidauros highway.[18] The massive retaining walls of these roads were built with large Cyclopean blocks like the retaining wall of the newly-found road at Midea.[19] This road connected Midea with areas to the northwest of the Acropolis and most probably with the highway from Mycenae to Tiryns.[20] It is a major technical work of the Acropolis like the Cyclopean fortification itself, the gates and sally port, and the megalithic ramp that facilitated approach to the East Gate.

The cleaning of the wall yielded a few worn, mixed sherds of Middle Helladic, Late Helladic and Late Roman times. The Late Helladic sherds are from kylikes, cups and a feeding bottle, with some from pithoi and cooking pots;

[16] Demakopoulou *et al.* 2009, 22–23.
[17] Cf. Mountjoy 1986, 133, fig. 164:2.

[18] For the suggested Mycenaean road system in the northeast Peloponnese, see Dickinson 1994, 162–163, fig. 5.34. See also, more recently, Iakovidis & French 2003, 28–31, with map entitled "The Roads"; Hope Simpson & Hagel 2006, 146–159, figs. 3, 6–7, pls. 27–30. It has also been suggested recently that the Mycenaean Isthmian Wall was not a defensive work but a terrace wall of a roadway, see Jansen 2009, 317–328, esp. 317–320, 324.
[19] See Schallin 1996, 130–133, 173, figs. 4–9.
[20] Cf. Dickinson 1994, fig. 5.34; Hope Simpson & Hagel, fig. 3.

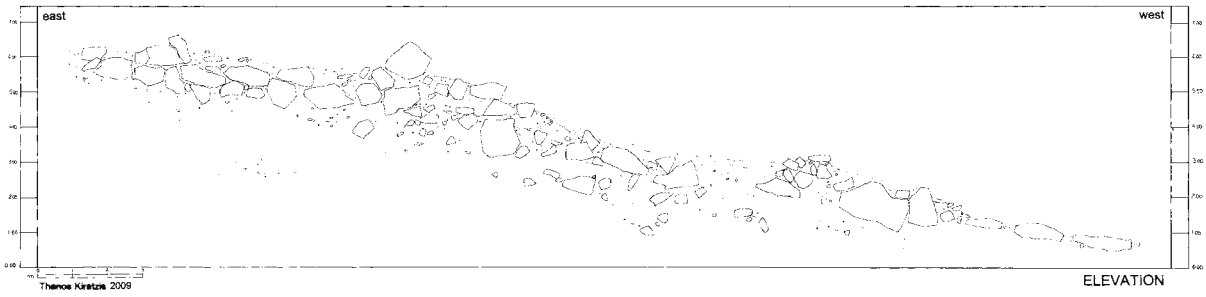


Fig. 48. Elevation of the north side of the terrace wall outside the fortifications of the Acropolis of Midea.

Fig. 49. Part of the terrace wall outside the fortifications of the Acropolis of Midea.

they can be dated to the Late Helladic IIIB period. The construction of the road with its massive retaining wall is most likely to have coincided with the building of the fortifications of the Acropolis.

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B. East Gate area*

During the campaigns in 2008 and 2009, investigations were made in three adjacent areas on the plateau east of the East Gate: 1) In the baulk between Trenches 3 and 9; 2) in Trench 9S and 3) in Trench 12 (*Fig. 50*). The baulk between Trenches 3 and 9 had been almost completely excavated in 2004[21] and in 2007,[22] and the numerous stones left in the baulk area appeared to make up nothing but rubble, but the area was now reassessed and work recommenced. Trench 9S was also excavated previously.[23] In Trench 12, where excavation was made during both seasons, work had been initiated in 2004 when a modern dump and part of the top soil were removed. [24] Although much progress was made during the two seasons of 2008 and 2009, excavation of both Trenches 9 and 12 remains to be completed.

For the 2009 campaign, a flotation device was set up on site in order to collect and identify principally the carbonised, organic remains in the soil. The Mycenaean destruction layers in the East Gate area provide excellent preservation prospects and the soil samples collected from Trench 12 all yielded carbonised seeds. In Trench 9, however, only humus soil was excavated this year and therefore carbonised material was scarce.

Acknowledgements
The 2008 and 2009 excavations in the East Gate area were undertaken with the help of grants provided by the Institute for Aegean Prehistory, Philadelphia; Herbert och Karin Jacobsons Stiftelse; Kungl. Vitterhetsakademien and Magnus Bergvalls Stiftelse. Participators in the field work in 2008 were Yannis Dedembilis, Maria Lowe Fri, Joshua Kearney, Monica Nilsson and Kostas Papageorgopoulos. In 2009 Raquel Begleiter, Yannis Dedembilis, Ebba Engström, Stella Macheridis, Madelaine Miller, Monica Nilsson and Kostas Papageorgopoulos worked in the field. The processing of the finds was under the auspices of Lena Klintberg in 2008 and jointly by Ann-Louise Schallin and Rikke Wulff Krabbenhøft in 2009. The architect responsible for both seasons was Björn Ask, with his assistant Kálmán Uray. Photographs were taken by Monica Nilsson, Ann-Louise Schallin and Kálmán Uray. Ann-Louise Schallin was in charge of the Swedish part of the project.

[21] Nilsson & Schallin 2005, 33.
[22] Nilsson & Schallin 2009.
[23] Alisøy, Nilsson & Schallin 2003, 28; Nilsson & Schallin 2005, 33.
[24] Nilsson & Schallin 2005, 34.

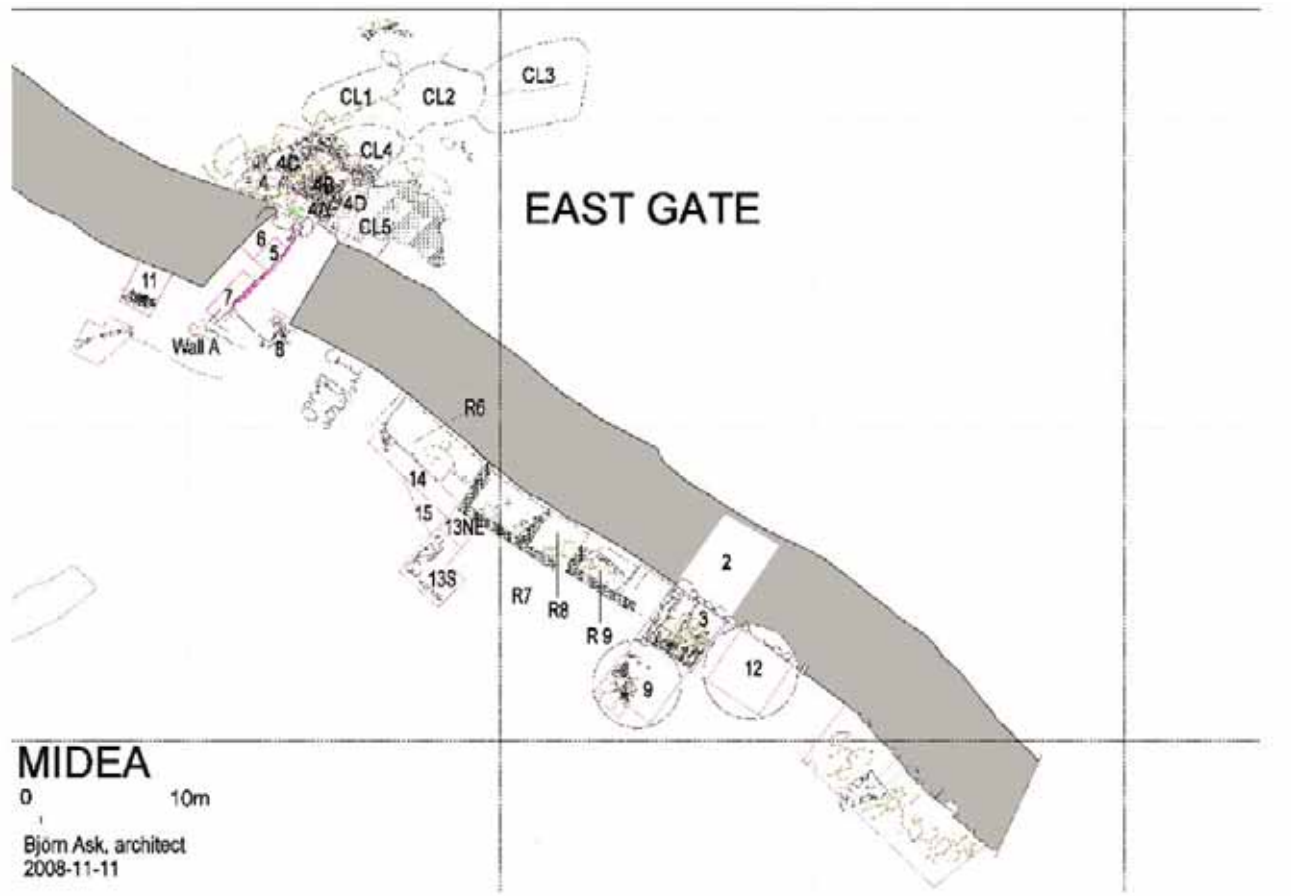

Fig. 50. East Gate areas investigated in 2008 and 2009.

Baulk between Trenches 3 and 9

Work was resumed in the baulk in order to clarify the architectural layout of rooms encircling the citadel wall. Most of the northwest part had been excavated down to bedrock in 2007. Work in 2008 revealed a wall running in an approximate east-westerly direction. The wall rested on bedrock and comprised three courses (*Fig. 51*). The new wall constitutes evidence for an additional structure built against the first series of rooms abutting the citadel wall (*Fig. 52*). The whole eastern part of the baulk was excavated down to bedrock. The dark brown soil, labelled layer 2, contained pottery, bones, and an arrowhead of obsidian. The finds date to LH IIIB and among the pottery sherds, no less than four stirrup jars could be identified (*Figs. 53–56*). One of these is a coarse ware stirrup jar, decorated with stylized octopus tentacles (*Fig. 53*); one is undecorated (*Fig. 54*) and two have banded decoration (*Figs. 55–56*). The stirrup jars belong to the LH IIIB2 destruction horizon, which is paramount in this part of the citadel area. Close to the bedrock in the south-east corner of this part of the baulk, a cylinder seal made of black stone was found. It depicts quadrupeds and chevron-shaped filling motives (*Figs. 57* and *58*).

MLF, A.-L.S

Trench 9S

The excavation in 2009 was conducted in the south part of Trench 9, thus called 9S. The aim of this season's work was to see whether any architectural structures could be discerned in this area, which seems to be filled only with an irregular mass of stones of various sizes. In the north part of the trench and in the baulk towards Trench 3, the previous season had surprisingly revealed a wall among the boulders (see the description above of the excavation of the baulk between Trenches 3 and 9). The south part of Trench 9 was extended to its original dimensions measuring 4 m. Due to the large size of Trench 9 (4 × 6 m) it was divided into in a south and a north part where Trench 9S measures 4 × 3 m.

Trench 9S slopes down towards the north with large areas of bedrock along the south trench wall (*Fig. 59*). A

Fig. 51. Wall excavated in the baulk between Trenches 3 and 9.

Fig. 52. The first series of rooms built against the citadel wall together with the new excavated wall in the baulk between Trenches 3 and 9, built abutting them.

parallel stretch of bedrock, further down in Trench 9S appeared during the excavation. Loose stones of various sizes were found continuously, although they did not belong to any structure but had probably fallen from a higher location. During the last days of work a possible structure, consisting of medium-sized stones, was excavated in the west part of Trench 9S, below the southern strip of bedrock (*Fig. 60*). This structure appears to be in line with the east-west wall in the former baulk area between Trench 9 and Trench 3 (see description above). Another possible structure was found in between the northern strip of bedrock, in the south-east part of Trench 9S, consisting of rather small stones (*Fig. 61*).

The majority of the pottery sherds excavated belong to LH III, but the Early and Middle Helladic periods are also represented, as well as post-Mycenaean periods, since there were some possible Archaic and Late Roman sherds. Among the finds, there were a toothed chert tool (*Fig. 62*) and a Mycenaean pictorial pottery sherd of the LH IIIB2 period (*Fig. 63*). The latter seems to belong to the same krater as the one found in Trench 9 in 2004.[25] The material is hard to define in this context and a careful investigation is needed in order to interpret and date the newly discovered structures.

MM, A.-L.S

Trench 12

Trench 12 is situated next to Trench 3, along the inner face of the citadel wall, where a row of buildings has been unearthed during earlier excavations (*Fig. 50*). Before excavations could start, the area (4 × 4 m) first had to be cleaned from weeds and from the surprisingly large quantity of soil that had eroded into the trench after the 2004 excavation.[26] Work was then resumed in Layer 2, the former top soil layer.[27] Middle-sized stones were found scattered throughout the area of the trench. These were removed, but their size indicates that they once constituted building material in Mycenaean walls, probably from further up the hillside. Among the small finds that were recovered from Layer 2 were Mycenaean figurine fragments (*Figs. 64–65*), an obsidian arrow head (*Fig. 66*) and a spool-shaped stone object (*Fig. 67*). In the eastern scarp of the trench was a concentration of large tile fragments, some of which had wavy finger lines. The absolute majority of the datable pottery sherds from Layer 2 belong to LH III, but one Byzantine sherd was noted. Some pictorial pottery sherds were also recovered (*Fig. 68*). Nearby was a boulder—of the type used in the citadel wall—standing on its short end. When it was removed it became apparent that it had closed the top of a pit which contained dark brown, gritty soil with several boulders and small, rough pebbles, but no middle-sized stones (*Fig. 69*). The diameter increased the further down the pit the excavation went: it had been dug through most of the deep Mycenaean destruction layers. Also, in the lower part there were no pebbles, as there had been at the top, only boulders and middle-sized stones and, yet, the pit could be clearly differentiated from the Mycenaean

[25] Nilsson & Schallin 2005, 33, fig. 67.

[26] Nilsson & Schallin 2005, 34.

[27] Layer 1 consisted of dumped soil from earlier excavations.

Fig. 53. LH IIIB2 coarse ware stirrup jar from the baulk between Trenches 3 and 9.

Fig. 56. LH III stirrup jar from the baulk between Trenches 3 and 9.

Fig. 54. LH IIIB unpainted stirrup jar from the baulk between Trenches 3 and 9.

Fig. 55. LH III stirrup jar from the baulk between Trenches 3 and 9.

filling. The soil was brown, grainy, very loose and somewhat smelly. Pottery fragments were retrieved from the pit and, although the bulk of the collection is Mycenaean in date, some significant green-glazed sherds and some light-weight fragments indicate a Byzantine or later date. However, further down in the pit, only worn Mycenaean sherds could be identified. Land snails were common at a lower level, but bone fragments were few and not well preserved, even though the soil seemed rich in organic matter. In the lower part, animal bones were more common than in the upper part and included several bones from a small rodent. The single small find was a lead object that may have functioned as a clamp. The pit was excavated during both the 2008 and 2009 seasons.

Fig. 57. Impression of a LH III cylinder seal from the baulk between Trenches 3 and 9.

Fig. 58. LH III cylinder seal from the baulk between Trenches 3 and 9.

Fig. 59. Trench 9S with bedrock outcroppings in the south.

Fig. 60. Possible structure in line with east-west wall in the baulk between Trenches 3 and 9.

Fig. 61. Possible structure in south-east part of Trench 9S.

Fig. 62. A toothed chert tool from Trench 9S.

Fig. 63. A Mycenaean pictorial pottery fragment with remains of a bird motif.

Fig. 64. Fragment of a Mycenaean Psi figurine from Trench 12, Layer 2.

Fig. 65. Fragment of a Mycenaean Tau figurine from Trench 12 Layer 2.

Fig. 66. An obsidian arrow head from Trench 12, Layer 2.

Fig. 67. A spool-shaped stone object from Trench 12, Layer 2.

When Layer 2 had been taken out, the exposed top of Layer 3 was considerably whiter in colour in the SE corner. Layer 3, which was excavated during both the 2008 and 2009 seasons, is the soil that has been deposited by erosion, filling up the rooms along the citadel wall. It is very fine-grained and consists to a large part of ash. As for the SE corner, which was separated, the ash contents were more concentrated, but it still constitutes the same layer and is equivalent to the soil seen in the stratigraphy of nearby Trench F.[28] Eventually, it became apparent that the more ashy soil in the SE corner was confined by a wall to the west, which stopped the course of the erosion process, and the pit, a later intrusion that cut through the layer. Among the small finds of the SE corner were fragments of worked bone, both triangular and square in section, one plaster fragment and three lead objects.

In Layer 3, loose, middle-sized stones were taken out from all over the trench. Along the citadel wall, however, the stones were more frequent, probably due to the fact that the wall stops all eroded material from going any further. The latest pottery in this layer dates to LH IIIB2. The small finds of Layer 3 include a bronze pin, figurine fragments (*Fig. 70*), small plaster fragments, an obsidian arrow head (*Fig. 71*) and a grinding tool fashioned from volcanic stone. Very interesting fragments of pictorial pottery add to the ones already found in these basement rooms (*Figs. 72–75*). In the 2008 excavation the top of two walls was cleared. The first wall that was encountered, Wall 1, is situated along the southern scarp. It is the continuation of the wall

[28] Åström & Demakopoulou 1986, 19–20.

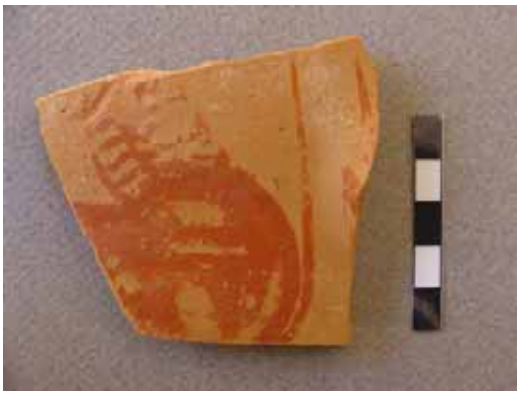

Fig. 68. Mycenaean pictorial pottery sherd depicting the front of a horse. From Trench 12, Layer 2.

Fig. 69. Pit in Trench 12.

Fig. 70. Head of a Mycenaean female figurine from Trench 12, Layer 3.

Fig. 71. An obsidian arrow head from Trench 12, Layer 3.

Fig. 72. Pictorial pottery fragment depicting a horse. From Trench 12, Layer 3.

found in Trench 3 and it stretches approximately 2/3 into the trench, towards the east, and ends in a 90-degree corner with the other wall. The latter, Wall 2, running towards the citadel wall, is preserved up to a lower level and was therefore discovered later. With these two walls, we now have the complete perimeter of the room that was partly excavated in Trench 3. Wall 1 is thus parallel to the citadel wall and Wall 2 connects the two (*Fig. 76*). The area within is part of a room aligned with the other basement/storage rooms excavated along the citadel wall, probably the eastern end of the partly excavated room of Trench 3. The area to the east of Wall 2, on the other hand, revealed no architectural features that suggest an indoor space. The finds, though, are of the same character on both sides of the wall and the eastern area is in all likelihood also part of a room.

Along Wall 1, an architectural feature that may be a bench, wall or shelf, came to light. It continues into the scarp, but ends on an outcrop of bedrock in front of the corner of the room. At this corner, only one single course of Wall 1 is visible, which may indicate an opening in an earlier phase. As for the possible bench, excavation could not clearly establish whether more courses followed below. In this area—at the corner of the room and in front of the

Fig. 73. Pictorial pottery fragment depicting birds. From Trench 12, Layer 3.

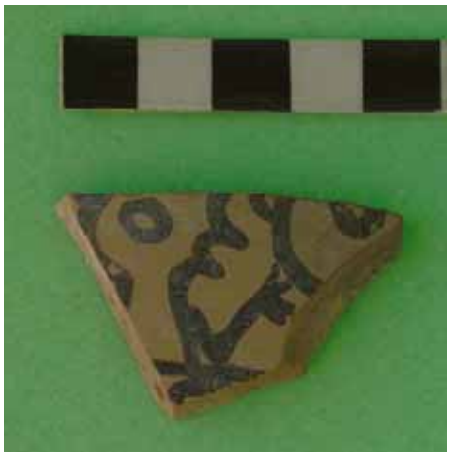

Fig. 74. Pictorial pottery fragment depicting a man. From Trench 12, Layer 3.

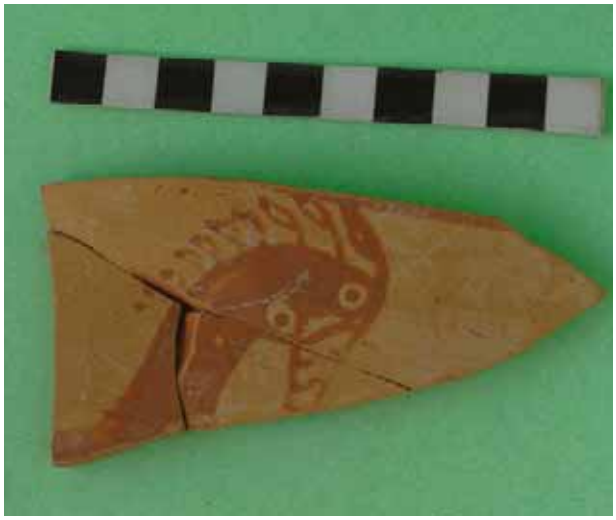

Fig. 75. Pictorial pottery fragment depicting a horse. From Trench 12, Layer 3.

Fig. 76. The newly excavated Wall 1 and 2 with the possible bench in Trench 12.

possible bench—the soil is hard, slightly more reddish in colour and contains few finds. It would appear that it is an intentional deposit to even out the higher ground level of the southern part of the room, and, perhaps, constitutes a platform on which the room was entered.

The next stratum, Layer 4, although also a layer of filling with high ash contents, is slightly different in colour and texture. The soil is harder and patchy in colour, with a tendency towards more reddish hues. Dissolved fragments of mudbrick were noticed, which probably accounts for the colour variation, and fallen middle-sized stones together with small, white lime pellets were rather common next to the citadel wall. Lime pellets are attached to the citadel wall at one spot and may represent remains of an upper floor level. White plaster fragments were found, but they were few and very small. A number of stone tools, part of an andesite quern, some fragments of terracotta female figurines, a lid made from an old sherd, two flat bronze objects, a big, flattened lead vessel together with some square lead sheets, a spindle-whorl, five blue faïence beads, and a mould-shaped glass plaque with figurative decoration (*Fig. 77*) were among the finds. Large animal bones were concentrated to the northern part of the room, among the fallen stones, and large pottery fragments from both serving vessels and storage jars were common throughout the area.

Fig. 77. A mould-shaped glass ornament with a figurative scene from Trench 12, Layer 4.

Fig. 78. A lead finger ring from Trench 12, layer 3.

Layer 5 is very loose and grainy in texture, with a brownish colour, but still constitutes an ashy filling. There was little time to investigate this layer and therefore the collected finds are few. Small, rough pebbles were unearthed and the only small find was a square lead sheet close to the spot where the lead vessel had been found earlier. When the 2009 season's work was terminated, the top of some stones and outcrops of bedrock, forming an uneven east-west line, had been laid bare in the central area of the room (*Fig. 76*).

As for the area to the east of Wall 2, outside of the room, the stratigraphy is very similar. Work recommenced in the whitish Layer 3 which contained a probable finger ring made of lead (*Fig. 78*), the head of a female terracotta figurine and two conical spindle-whorls. In the southern part of the trench, a stone packing of rather small-sized stones appeared. It is interrupted by a, perhaps, accidentally eroded channel going north-south. The purpose of the stone packing is uncertain, especially so since the area has not yet been irrefutably established as indoor space.

Layer 4 is identical to the corresponding layer on the other side of Wall 2, with small dissolved fragments of mudbrick, a patch of lime pellets stuck to the citadel wall and numerous large pottery sherds. Small finds included a small, but heavy, pierced stone sphere, two lids made from discarded pottery, part of a female terracotta figurine, a stone tool, and a large fragment of a flat, heavy roof tile—apparently Mycenaean and very different in texture and weight from the tiles found at the top of the pit.

Some excavation continued into Layer 5, which contains harder soil than on the other side of Wall 2. A biconical spindle-whorl and a lump of raw crystal were collected from this context.

The work in Trench 12 during the 2009 season proceeded through the filling from the Mycenaean disaster of LH IIIB2. There is a distinction, however, within the filling which seems to reflect the original context of the material. Layer 3 is the material that originated from buildings further up the hillside; Layer 4 is the contents of the upper floor while Layer 5, close to the floor level, constitutes the contents of the room itself.

A few surface finds close to the trench were collected and brought to the Nauplion Museum. These were a complete obsidian arrow head, two fragments of arrow heads and the fragment of a very thin bronze implement.

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